

Lessons from the Chassidische Parsha

The teachings of the Alter Rebbe in Torah Ohr and Likkutei Torah

Achievement through Opposition

ד"ה לא טוב היות האדם לבדו

פרשת בראשית
Bereishis 5782

Before creating Chava to become Adam's wife and partner, Hashem said *לא־טוֹב הַיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה-לּוֹ עֶזְרָא כְּנֶגְדּוֹ*, *It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a fitting helper for him.*

Hashem describes Chava and her relationship with Adam as being an *עֶזְרָא כְּנֶגְדּוֹ*. These two terms seem contradictory. *עֶזְרָא* means a helper. *כְּנֶגְדּוֹ* means against or in opposition to him. The Alter Rebbe presents a mystical commentary on the meaning of these words.

Male and female represent two aspects of the G-dly reality which correspond to the two primary names of Hashem; *יה-וה-ה* (*Havaya*) and *אלוקים* (*Elokim*).

In Tehillim it says *כִּי שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמִגְדָּל ה' אֱלֹקִים*, *Hashem Elokim is sun and shield*. The sun and shield are metaphors for the manifestation of G-dliness reflected in these two names and the relationship between them.

Were it not for the protective shield, we would not be able to bear the intensity of the sun's light. The shield hides and limits the light, but in doing so, it gives room for the recipient to receive it.

Havaya refers to the open revelation of Hashem's infinite light. This is like the unbridled light of the sun. Were this light to shine unrestricted, creation as we know it would not be able to exist. The infinity of the light would overwhelm all existence and we would not be able to exist as an independent creations.

In order to bring into existence created worlds that would be independent, Hashem contracted His light via a process of *Tzimtuzm*. *Tzimtuzm* is the manifestation of the name *Elokim*. Like the shield which veils the light of the sun, *Elokim* conceals and hides the intensity of the light of *Havaya*.

Whilst this concealment of *Elokim* seems antithetical to revelation of G-dliness, it actually gives rise to a great advantage that actualises Hashem's deepest desire. Hashem created the world in an independent state (*Yesh*), so that we can engage the world and reveal G-dliness within it, thereby surrendering the 'independent' nature of existence to its true source (*Ayin*). This *Avodah* generates a deep pleasure Above.

This is the inner meaning of the words *צחוק עשה לי אלקים*. The source of *צחוק*, pleasure (literally laughter) Above is specifically from *Elokim* which gives rise the independent

nature of existence that can in turn be surrendered back to G-dliness.

Chassidus illustrates this advantage with the *Mashal* of a mirror. A mirror is created by creating a silver coating on the back of the glass. This coating creates an obstruction, preventing the light from passing through as it would have done were the glass left clear. However, this coating creates a reflected light. The reflected light allows a person to see behind themselves, something that could not have been accomplished without the obstruction.

The source of the light of creation is the light of *Havaya*. The concealment that gives rise to the independent nature of the world is like the coating that blocks this light. But, like the mirror that allows us to see behind ourselves, the concealment allows us to reach levels of G-dliness beyond the light of *Havaya*.

And so Hashem said; *It is not good for man to be alone*. The *man* refers to the name *Havaya* which refers to the image of man on the Divine Throne. To create the world with '*man alone*', with the unrestricted light of *Havaya* would not be good because it would be completely subsumed.

I will make for him (Adam) an Ezer Knegdo—a helper against him. The *Knegdo* is the concealment from the name *Elokim* which stands against or in opposition the revelation of the name *Havaya*. But this *Knegdo* is in fact an *Ezer* (helper), that provides the opportunity for reaching even deeper levels of G-dly revelation.

A similar process takes place with the descent of the *Neshama* into the body. Like the name *Havaya*, the *Neshama* is a powerful G-dly force. But Hashem send the *Neshama* down to be encloded within a physical body which, like the name *Elokim*, conceals and hides the light and power of the *Neshama*. Hashem's greatest *Nachas* comes when the *Neshama* engages with the body, refining its natural coarseness and directing it to the serve Hashem. The concealment enables the *Neshama* to reach greater heights than would have otherwise been possible.

Whenever we face times or experiences of *Knegdo*; difficulty, challenge and limitation, we should view them like the mirror. These times can become our greatest *Ezer*, helping us discover deeper inner strengths, and leading us to greater achievement and accomplishment.