

Lessons from the Chassidische Parsha

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

A joyous song from a hoarse voice

ד"ה ושבתי בשלום אל בית אבי

פרשת ויצא

Vayeitzei 5782

The Parsha of Vayeitzei is something we should all be able to relate to, after all it tells the story of our own soul and its journey to this world.

Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and travels to Charan. On his way he spends the night on the Temple Mount. Before retiring, he takes a bunch of stone and places them around his head. The following morning, the stones have fused into one and Yaakov stands this stone up as a monument. He anoints the monument with oil and pledges; *"when I return to my father's house, Hashem will be my G-d and this stone which I have stood as a monument will be a House of G-d"*.

In the Chassidische Parsha, the Alter Rebbe explains the deeper meaning of this story, with specific focus on the significance of the stones and of Yaakov's promise.

The letters which spell the word Charan (חרן), when rearranged spell the word נחר. We find this word in Tehillim (69:4) when Dovid Hamelech says נחר גרוני, *"my throat is dried"*. Like a dry, hoarse throat which blocks the flow of our voice, Charan represents the blockage and concealment of Hashem's light from shining in the world.

Each Neshama descends into this world, a world of Charan; a world which hides the presence of its Creator and appears as an independent existence. The Neshama's mission is to enter this world and through Torah, Mitzvos and Emunah, transform this concealment into a place of G-dly revelation.

The blockage of Charan is created by the letter ח, a letter that is associated with Kelipah, the forces of negativity. Through the Avodah of Birurim, refining the coarse world of Charan, the ח become transformed into a ה, a letter which is similar to the ח in shape, but is associated with Kedusha - holiness.

We find a similar idea in the difference between Chametz and Matzah. חמץ represents arrogance and Kelipah. Matzah מצה, represents humility and Kedusha. Here too, the difference between the two words is one letter; Matzah has a ה in place of the ח in Chametz.

When the ח of Charan is transformed and the letters once again rearranged, they spell the word רנה (Rinah) meaning a loud and joyous song. In the joyous song of Rinah, the voice is able to emanate unhindered and be expressed in its full force and beauty.

This Avodah is represented by the stones. Yaakov takes the many stones which represent the hidden sparks of G-dliness which are scattered and hidden within the world. He gathers them and elevates them to a level of oneness with their source. The pouring of the oil down this pillar alludes to the Divine light which this Avodah draws down into the world.

Yaakov says that through this he will return "to the house of my father" - Yitzchak. Yitzchak comes from the term laughter, but written in future tense "he will laugh". This refers to the tremendous joy and pleasure which Hashem receives from our Avodah of refining the world. This pleasure will be revealed in the future times of Moshiach, for the Neshama itself to experience.

Why is it that the refining of the world generates so much joy Above?

Joy and delight comes from something novel and unexpected. The Alter Rebbe illustrates this point with an example of a talking parrot. The fact that a human being can talk is no cause for great delight, because that is what they are expected to do. A talking parrot is a source of amusement and delight because of the novelty of it.

Hashem's delight does not come from the angels or the souls in Heaven. There is no novelty in the fact that the spiritual worlds and the realm of the angels are surrendered to Hashem and radiate His presence.

But when a world which conceals G-dliness becomes an expression of Hashem's presence; when the hoarse voice of Charan become the beautiful song of Rinah; when dull and inanimate stones become a conduit for G-dly revelation, this is something unique and completely novel, giving deep pleasure and joy to Hashem

Chassidus encapsulates this mission in a simple phrase; Hashem creates the worlds יש מאין - something from nothing, in order for us to transform the יש back to אין, the something back to nothing.

When we transform the something-ness of the world back to nothing, surrendering it back to the oneness of Hashem, this is the most joyous song of all.