

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Yahrtzeit of Rochel Imeinu 5774 - How can we today emulate Rochel?

Tonight is the yahrtzeit of Rochel Imeinu, whose pleas on behalf of the Jewish people were accepted by Hashem, whose crying we rely on to this very day as we beg Hashem for rachamim and redemption.

A short while ago Rav Ovadia Yosef was niftar, and the world is a far darker place absent the light that he brought. His full name, Chaim Ovadia Yosef ben Yaakov has the same gematria as Moshlach ben Yosef. In the world of gematria, equivalent numbers are very significant.

Moshlach ben Yosef derives from Rochel Imeinu. Rochel Imeinu comprehended her inner being in constant connection with Hashem and valued that connection to the degree that she was willing to give up her role as mother of the Jewish people to avoid embarrassment for her sister Leah.

Why would someone value the inner being to the extent of giving up absolutely everything in this world? And how did Rochel know that in the moment this is what Hashem required of her? And further, why did her reminding Hashem of her action to avoid Leah being embarrassed become the basis of our eternal hope to be returned to Yerushalayim?

Over the years, the producers of the video for women shown to commemorate Rochel Imeinu's yahrtzeit answer the questions. With the passing of Rav Ovadia Yosef, and the understanding of what light leaves when a tzaddik's soul is returned to Hashem, can we begin to grapple with a shift in where our self-image is derived?

The basis for our cheshbon hanefesh for a shift in our self image can be a simple question: did I make choices and exert effort to reveal Hashem's attributes in the world over the desiring emotions? The shift in our self image that takes place when we consistently make choices and efforts to do so aligns our inner being with Hashem's will and we begin to experience a powerful joy. Yiras Hashem sets in, that losing that connection with Hashem is something undesirable.

In this way, we come to serve Hashem with love in our hearts, and the work of choosing to reveal His attributes over our natural human reactions becomes the source of great joy and benefit, now and for all eternity. Don't listen to the voice of doubt that would suggest a more rational approach. The world and nature are designed to pull us downward and yank our tzelem elokim into traps and darkness. However, our tzelem elokim is designed to intake the stimulation and unify Hashem's name and uplift the world.

It is a muscle, a spiritual muscle. Do we have enough Torah learning to trust this to be true? Nefesh HaChaim, Tomer Devorah, Chovos Halevovos, Mesillas Yesharim, Derech Hashem and Tanya all explain the concepts. We are Nishmas Am Yisrael. And this week's parsha, Vayera, contains the akeda, where Avraham brings Yitzchok for a sacrifice. A detailed look at the parsha reveals mesiras nefesh that instills to this day

emunah in us. Let us use that emunah to stir mesiras nefesh in our desire to reveal Hashem's attributes of mercy and zechus avos. And may our efforts to come close to Hashem by emulating Him reveal light in the world and a remembrance of Avraham's mesiras nefesh and Rochel's cries and may Hashem have mercy upon us and redemption b'ahava.