

Nourishment for the Neshama

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Fear Love and Awe in the Service of Hashem MiPeninei Noam Elimelech Parshas Toldos

Fear Love and Awe in the Service of Hashem

MIPeninei Noam Elimelech pp. 73-74 Parshas Toldos

These are the offspring of Yitzchak the son of Avraham; Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak.

"We can explain this verse by first explaining the pasuk "And Yitzchak planted...and he found one hundred blessings... [literally ; measures; or 'gates']. We can say that this alludes to the idea that the mission of the righteous Tzaddik must always be to elevate the Shechinah, the Divine presence which is represented by the final letter hei in the four letter Name of Hashem. We derive this from Rashi's commentary of this verse: "this estimation was for ma'aser, tithing," Rashi is hinting at what we previously explained, that Yitzchak measured himself as one measures ma'aser, which in this case means terumah, for the verse calls ma'aser "terumah". Many sources explain that teruma can be read as "tarum hei," elevate the letter hei back to its place.

The tikunei Zohar explains that the four letter Name of Hashem – yud k vav k is fractured in our exile, and the final hei which represents the divine aspect of malchus, Kingship and the divine presence called the Shechina, is in exile. Our mission in exile is to reunite the Holy name and restore Hashem's kingship, thus uplifting the final hei to its proper place.

The primary divine service is performed with awe and love; this, too, is alluded to in the word terumah which can be broken up to read, trei mimeah, two from among one hundred. A Jew is obligated to recite one hundred blessings daily with the two attributes of love and awe. For a tzaddik this is considered planting seeds because through these two attributes, awe and love, a great spiritual light is planted. This is the hidden meaning of the verse ohr zarua latzaddik – a light is planted by the tzaddik. Through this planting we find mimeah shearim, one hundred gates, with each blessing that the tzaddik makes, he opens one of the hundred heavenly gates in the upper worlds. These gates are called one hundred blessings, that is, breichos, pools and wellsprings from which the divine influx of blessing flows (blessings has the same root as wellsprings.) this then is the meaning of the verse Yitzchak planted with love and awe and he found one hundred gates of blessing.

It is taught that fear of Heaven precedes divine love in the service of Hashem, because the feelings of love grow from the initial fear of punishment. There is, however, a higher level of awe, which develops from the love. This is implied in our verse, "These are the offspring of Yitzchak ben Avraham. Yitzchak is the origin of Avraham, who represents love. In this way, ben Avraham is read to mean that Avraham is the ben, or the son of Yitzchak, who represents yirah, implying that love is born of fear.

The verse continues: Avraham gave birth to Yitzchak. This refers to the higher level fear or awe which is in turn born from love. This is hinted at in Rashi's comment that toldos, offspring, refers to Yaakov and Esav,

who are mentioned later in the parashah.

The practical outcome of all this is that it is Yaakov and Esau, Yaakov referring to rachamim, mercy and Esav to din, strict justice. Serving Hashem with awe and love awakens mercy and breaks the harsh decrees of judgment. "

For us living in 5774, the task becomes to take what the Noam Elimelech refers to regarding the exiled lower hel from Hashem's Name and elevate it:

the final hei which represents the divine aspect of malchus. Kingship and the divine presence called the Shechina, is in exile. Our mission in exile is to reunite the Holy name and restore Hashem's kingship, thus uplifting the final hei to its proper place.

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The reality for us to understand is that by nature, being in this world in a body means that we are in a constant reality of being fallen. When we give into our nature, it is hardly a surprise to us. In fact, it seems like who we are. The strength that we can take from Toldos is that when we choose to pull back our garment, right there with our fallen nature is malchus and it is completely within our power and skill group to choose to reunite the f

Shechina in exile with its Source, the malchus of shemaylm of which we have a glancing reflection in this world.

Let us be empowered to see our fallings NOT as failures but as a constant sign of the work Hashem places us here to do, from a continuing state of falling, so that we lovingly pull back our nature with awe – with real trepidation of losing the pleasure for which we are created – and experience the joy of the reunification of the lower hel.

We can do it! This is the role of nishmas Am Yisrael! And may we see a new light in the world for our efforts.