

## Nourishment for the Neshama

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#### Understanding Rachel Imeinu and her son Yosef HaTzaddik

Mesillas Yesharim p. 257-258 The Divisions of Saintliness

"It cannot be said that one who is motivated in his divine service by a desire to purify his soul before his Creator so that he can come to sit in His presence together with the just and the Saitly, to see the pleasantness of Gd, to dwell within His Sanctuary and to receive the reward of the World to come – it cannot be said that such a person is badly motivated. On the other hand, we cannot say that his motivation is a very good one either. For as long as a person is concerned with his own good, his Divine service is also performed for his own good. The true motivation, which is common to Saints, who have exerted themselves and persevered to acquire it, is to serve solely for the purpose of magnifying and extending the honor of the Master of Blessed Name. One will serve for this end only after he has grown strong in love for the Blessed One, and longs and lusts for the magnification of His honor, and is pained by anything which detracts from it. He will hope that he is at least doing his part towards magnifying the honor of the Blessed One and he will wish that all others possessed this aspiration. The shortcomings of others in this respect will pain and grieve him, not to speak of his own unintentional and accidental lapses and those resulting from his natural weakness, which makes it difficult for him to constantly protect himself against sin, as it is stated (Ecclesiastes 7:20), "A man is not righteous in the land, who will do good and not sin."

When Rachel Imeinu saw that it was Hashem's will that Leah would marry Yaakov, Rachel had a choice – she could allow Leah to be placed in that situation and become embarrassed (the emotional equivalent of death) so that Rachel would prevail in marrying Yaakov or Rachel - out of love for Hashem and in concert with His Will and pained by the thought of the embarrassment of her sister – could serve solely for the purpose magnifying and extending the honor of Hashem, out of love of Hashem and longing for His honor. Because Rachel chose to give the signals, her pleas were heard by Hashem Who promised her that one day her children would be redeemed, may it be swiftly and soon with no harm to anyone.

Rachel taught this attribute to Yosef HaTzaddik, her son, when on his way to slavery in Egypt he cried at her tomb. She reassured him that although it did not look good, that it would turn out well and that it was all good. Rachel's understanding of and love for the simple unity of Hashem was replayed in Vayegash by Yosef when he sent away the Egyptians before revealing himself to his brothers. Yosef allowed himself to be vulnerable to the anger of Yehuda and Shimon and the borthers, who could have killed him in order to return to Yaakov with Binyamin. At that heated moment, when Yosef was afraid of being killed by them, he thought of preserving them from embarrassment. Why? Yosef learned from Rachel to serve solely for the purpose of magnifying and extending the honor of Hashem, that there is nothing but the simple unity of Hashem. It is for this reason that Yosef was treated by Hashem to allow him to rule as King in an above nature way regarding the food supply.

We see in Yosef the embodiment of concern for the entire generation, for all of the descendants of Yaakov.

Mesillas Yesharim p. 263-265 The Divisions of Saintliness

"There are two considerations, then in relation to this aspect of intention. The first is that the intention behind every mitzvah and act of Divine serve be the magnification of the honor of the Presence, which derives from His creations' giving pleasure to Him, and the second that one feel pain for His honor, and long that it be perfectly magnified through the magnification of Israel's honor and through their well-being. The second aspect of intention concerns the good of the generation. It befits every saint to be motivated in his actions by a concern for the good of the entire generation, a desire to benefit and protect them....For the Holy One Blessed be Hie does not desire the destruction of the wicked; it is rather a mitzvah devolving upon the Saint to benefit and atone for them. This intention must be contained in his Divine service and it must manifest itself in his prayers; that is he must pray on behalf of his generation to seek atonement for him who needs atonement, to turn to repentance him who requires it, and to speak in defense of his entire generation."

It is incumbent upon anyone striving to reach ein od milvado consciousness, a consciousness of the simple unity of Hashem in this world, to realize that we are not separate individually existing beings, but beings who share a common soul. If I see something awry, Hashem is showing it me because I can fix it within myself, and that is what He is asking me to do – not try to fix it in another, or confront, challenge, judge or dismiss another – but to thank Hashem for the opportunity to create correction in the spiritual realms by divesting myself of the characteristic or negative emotional bonding to the circumstances that generated the pain.

Hashem is the soul of the world. He maintains the entire system of atoms, molecules, particles and more. He instills consciousness and flows emotion to us and awaits our use of free willed choice as He spins and wields emotionally provoking circumstances towards us – what is squeezed out of us? What will we do with the discrepancies between His attributes and our imperfections? Will we pray for each other and help each other bring our attributes toward Perfection or will we treat the imperfections of others with judgment, rejection, or even capitalize on the imperfections for our own gain?

It depends on the strength of our desire to serve Hashem in the manner that Rachel Imeinu and Yosef HaTzaddik reached.

Moshiach ben Yosef comes before Moshiach ben Dovid. Yehuda was a lion, Dovid HaMelech a warrior, a conquerer. Why does Moshiach ben Yosef come first? Perhaps it is because the Jewish people need to rise to the level of comprehending and living with the simple unity of Hashem, that there is nothing else, that we need to humble our sense of self – that sense of freedom which is really enslaving us – and love passionately Hashem and do His will with love and devotion. When we are there, perhaps Hashem will send us Moshiach ben Dovid to re-establish us in Yerushalayim.

May Hashem find us meritorious and redeem us speedily!