

“אֲשֶׁרִי תְּמִימֵי דָרְךָ, הֵהוּלָכִים בְּתוֹרַת ה'”

(תהלים קיט:א)

Grace Through Torah

THE TEACHING

The opening Torah of Likutei Moharan. Through the Torah (תורה) all our prayers and requests (תפילות ובקשות) are accepted, because the Torah gives grace, חן. It is called “אֵילַת אֲהָבִים וְיַעֲלֵת חָן” (משלי ה:יט), “a loving hind and a graceful doe”, because it lifts grace onto those who learn it.

How? Look for the wisdom (שכל) in every thing, and learn Torah with strength. Then the light of wisdom reaches מלכות, grace is born, and it opens a place in the listener's heart, so our words are accepted, by people and by Hashem.

MAIN POINTS

- Wisdom is the life (חיות) of every thing: the letter ה, and the sun. Look for it, and it shines on you and brings you close to Hashem: “חֻכְמַת אָדָם תְּאִיר פָּנָיו” (קהלת ח:א), “a man's wisdom makes his face shine.”
- That light reaches us through the letter ג, מלכות (kingship), like the moon, which has no light of its own. The good inclination (יצר טוב) is “יָלֵד מִסֶּכֶן וְחָכָם”, “a poor and wise child”; the evil inclination (יצר הרע) is “מֶלֶךְ זָקֵן וְכִסִּיל”, “an old and foolish king” (קהלת ד:יג).
- The good side grows strong through Torah learned with strength, as Chazal said: “אִם פָּגַע בְּךָ מְנוּל זֶה, מְשַׁכְּהוּ לְבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ” (קידושין ל:), “if this repulsive one meets you, drag him to the study hall.” When one rises, the other falls: “כִּי יֵשְׁרִים דְּרָכֵי ה', וְצַדִּיקִים יֵלְכוּ בָם, וּפְשָׁעִים יִפְשְׁלוּ בָם” (הושע יד:י), “the ways of Hashem are straight; the righteous walk in them, and sinners stumble in them.”
- Then ה and נ join into חן, grace, which engraves a mark in the listener's heart: the letter ת, “וְהַתְוִיֵּת תּוֹ”, “וְהַתְוִיֵּת תּוֹ” (יחזקאל ט:ד), and ת spell נחת, “דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים נִנְחָת נִשְׁמָעִים” (קהלת ט:יז), “the words of the wise are heard when spoken gently.”
- So יַעֲקֹב, the man of wisdom, had grace, and Yosef blessed Binyamin with it: “אֱלֹקִים יַחֲנֵךְ בְּנִי” (בראשית מג:כט), “Elokim be gracious to you, my son.”
- The Gemara's wave, “הָאֵי גִלְאָ דְּמִטְבַּע לְסַפִּינְתָא” (בבא בתרא עג:), “the wave that sinks a ship”, is the יצר הרע, out to sink the grace of Israel. Its crest of white fire is how it first comes dressed as a מִצְוָה. It is struck with clubs engraved with a holy Name: the Torah, all of it Names of Hashem.
- So the verse reads: “אֲשֶׁרִי”, look; “תְּמִימֵי דָרְךָ”, at the wisdom of “יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם” (בראשית כה:כז), “Yaakov, a whole man”; “הֵהוּלָכִים בְּתוֹרַת ה'”, learning with strength, until grace is born and every prayer is accepted.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Look for Hashem's wisdom in whatever is in front of you. Learn a little Torah with strength before you pray. And when a temptation looks like a מצוה, check it twice.

In the full shiur: 1. Grace, and the Wisdom in Everything · 2. Esav, the Two Inclinations, and Words That Enter the Heart · 3. Yaakov's Grace and the Wave That Sinks the Ship

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