

מי שיוֹדֵעַ מֵאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁטַעַם בְּאַמֶּת טַעַם אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל

Tasting the Land of Israel

THE TEACHING

Rebbe Nachman says that one who has truly tasted the Land of Israel (טַעַם אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל) can sense in another person whether he was with a tzaddik (צַדִּיק) for Rosh Hashanah, whether that tzaddik is great or small, and whether he is a true tzaddik (צַדִּיק אֱמֶתִי).

This taste can be explained to anyone who knows the taste of understanding (טַעַם שְׂכָל): a learner who feels the sweetness of a good answer to a hard question, or a wise man in any field. For

“אֲוִירָא דְאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל מְחַכִּים” (בבא בתרא קנח:), “the air of the Land of Israel makes wise.”

MAIN POINTS

- Why? Because Hashem watches it always: “תָּמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֵלֶיךָ בָּה” (דברים יא:יב), “the eyes of Hashem your G-d are always upon it.” Eyes (עֵינִים) stand for wisdom, as “וּתְפַקְחֶנָּה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם” (בראשית ג:ז), “the eyes of both of them were opened.”
- What awakens those eyes? Hashem’s pride in the souls of Israel: “יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בָּךְ אֶתְפָּאֵר” (ישעיהו מט:ג), “Israel, in whom I glory.” That glory (הַתְּפָאָרוֹת) becomes tefillin (תְּפִלִּין), called פֶּאֶר, which are expanded mind (מַחֲזִין); they enter within and break through into the eyes. That is why it is called אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
- When a Jew moves away from Hashem, the Shechinah cries: “קִלְנִי מְרֹאשִׁי, קִלְנִי מִזְרְעִי”, “my head is heavy, my arm is heavy”, the places of the tefillin. But each Jew who comes close adds to Hashem’s glory, and so to the holiness of the Land.
- Who can see Hashem’s glory? One who sees the true tzaddik, who brings people close to Hashem, for he himself is that glory. Above all “בְּצֶת הַקְּבוֹץ”, at the gathering, and most of all on Rosh Hashanah, his beauty and glory are greatest.
- One who truly looks at him receives that glory: it becomes tefillin and mind in him, his eyes become like “עֵינֵי ה'”, and wherever he looks becomes like the Land of Israel: “מִלֶּךְ בִּיפְיוֹ תִּחְזֶינָה עֵינָיו, תִּרְאֶינָה אֶרֶץ מְרֻחָקִים” (ישעיהו לג:יז), “your eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold a land far off.” Wisdom is called far off: “אֲמַרְתִּי אֲחַכְמָה וְהָיָא רְחוּקָה” (קהלת ז:כג).
- So one who longs for the Land of Israel, when he meets someone who was with a true tzaddik for Rosh Hashanah, should feel its taste, and his longing (הַשְׁתַּוְּקָאוֹת וְגַעְגּוּעִין) should be stirred, each at his level. The main thing is truth and simplicity (בְּאֵמֶת וּבְתִמְיּוּת).

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

The holiness of the Land of Israel can travel in our eyes. Look at the world the way Hashem looks at His Land, and carry its wisdom wherever you go.

In the full shiur: 1. Why the Air of the Land Makes Wise · 2. The King in His Beauty

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