

דע, שכל אחד מישראל, אפלו צדיק גדול

A Little Pain Every Day, and Holy Eating

THE TEACHING

Every Jew, even a great tzaddik (צדיק), must have some pain (צער) every day, and the greater his understanding (דעת), the greater his pain: “יוסף דעת יוסף מכאוב” (קהלת א:יח), “one who adds knowledge adds pain.”

The sweetening (המתקה) is eating in holiness and with fear of Heaven (אכילה בקדשה וביראת-שמים). A holy meal keeps the pain from growing too strong and from sliding down into harsh judgment (דין קשה), makes the mouth human, and lifts a person until the Shechinah speaks from his throat.

MAIN POINTS

- Awe (יראה) comes to a person mainly at mealtime: “לעת האכל גשי הלם” (רות ב:יד), “at mealtime, come here”, and “אין הלם אלא מלכות”, kingship, which is awe.
- Eating with that awe draws מלכות into the mouth, and the mouth becomes the stature of a man (קומת אדם): “מי שם פה לאדם” (שמות ד:יא), “who gives a mouth to man?” Without holiness the mouth is truly like an animal's, and the awe stands far off.
- Then he rises to the higher Adam (אדם העליון), “כמראה אדם עליו מלמעלה” (יחזקאל א:כו), “the Shechinah speaks from his throat”, as in “אד-נ-י שפתי תפתח” (תהלים נא:יז), “the Shechinah speaks from his throat”, as in “אד-נ-י שפתי תפתח” (תהלים נא:יז).
- Why does wisdom bring pain? “ראשית חכמה יראת ה'” (תהלים קיא:י), and “אם אין יראה אין חכמה” (אבות ג:יז). This is the passage of the tefillin (מחין) (מחין), the strap (רצועה) is awe, passing through the mind each day.
- There is a holy strap, and an evil one, “רצועה בישא”, fallen fears. A holy meal draws holy awe, and the fallen fears rise and are sweetened.
- The Gemara: “רצועה היתה יוצאה מחלקו של יהודה לחלקו של בנימין”; that tzaddik was pained every day, longed to swallow it, “וזכה ונעשה אשפוזכן לשכינה”, and merited to host the Shechinah. Binyamin is דעת (the Beis HaMikdash was in his portion); Yehudah is מלכות, awe.
- Rabbi Yosei bar Assian called an innkeeper “גבר פום דין” (עירובין נג:), “a man of this mouth”: one who eats in holiness makes his mouth a man, until he hosts the Shechinah.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

A little pain each day is not a sign that something is wrong; it comes with a mind that thinks. And the table can be holy: a blessing said slowly turns the meal into a sweetening.

In the full shiur: 1. Daily Pain and the Holy Meal · 2. The Higher Adam and the Tefillin Strap · 3. A Host to the Shechinah

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