

“וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאָמֹר”

(שמות כ:א)

The Tzaddik's Simple Stories

THE TEACHING

Binding oneself in truth to true tzaddikim (הַתְקַשְׁרוּת לְצַדִּיקִים אֱמֵתִים) is a very great benefit: through it one comes to complete teshuvah (תְּשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה), sins are atoned, judgments (דִּינִים) are sweetened, and the Holy One and His Shechinah are united.

There are two kinds of wisdom: upper wisdom (חֲכָמָה עֲלֵיָא), the Torah, and lower wisdom (חֲכָמָה תַּתְּמָא), all the wisdom in the world, which draws from it like a student from his teacher. The true tzaddik joins them again through his ordinary talk and stories with simple people.

MAIN POINTS

- The teacher's wisdom is the letter י; what the student takes in is the letter ל, the tower floating in the air, the heart that rises to hear. The student must give his heart: “לְקִנּוּת חֲכָמָה וְלֵב אֵין” (משלי יז:טז), “to buy wisdom, when he has no heart?” Together ל and י spell לֵי, “to Me.”
- When the world's wisdom breaks away from Hashem and the Torah, the moon is diminished and the Shechinah is in exile: “וַיִּנְרָגַן מִפְּרִיד אֱלֹהֵי” (משלי טז:כח), he separates the Master of the world. Each person must tie his mind, from where he is, to Hashem.
- The tzaddik's ordinary talk (שִׁיחַת חֲלִין) is very precious: “שִׁיחַתוֹ שֶׁל תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים צָרִיכִין לְמוֹד” (דברים לג:ג). He speaks even with the wicked about wars and worldly affairs, clothing the great light of the Torah in other combinations (צְרוּפִים), and ties their minds to Hashem: “וְהֵם תָּכוּ לְרַגְלָהּ יֵשָׁא מִדְּבַרְתֶּיהָ” (דברים לג:ג).
- Torah taught openly could push someone far away further: “צַדִּיקִים יִלְכוּ בָּם וּפְשָׁעִים יִכְשְׁלוּ בָּם” (הושע יד:י). So for King Ptolemy the seventy-two elders wrote “אֱלֹקִים בָּרָא בְּרֵאשִׁית”.
- So when a tzaddik passes away there is great pain above. When Moshe died the Holy One cried out “וַיִּי מִי יָקוּם לִי עִם מְרִעִים” (דברים לג:ג), “who will rise up for Me against evildoers?” לֵי, ל and י: who will lift lower wisdom out of all the bad and join it to upper wisdom?
- Through the tzaddik the diminished moon becomes full: “כֹּד מִתְחַבְּרִין כִּחְדָּא כְּדִין כָּל אַנְפִּין נִהְיִין” (זוהר ויגש), “when they join as one, all faces shine.”
- So the verse: וַיְדַבֵּר is joining; אֱלֹקִים is lower wisdom and אֶת upper wisdom; joined through “הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאָמֹר”, as לְאָמֹר means clothing: the tzaddik clothes words of Torah in simple stories.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

No one is too far for the Torah to reach. A true tzaddik finds words a person already knows and hides light inside them; when we hear his simple talk, it is worth listening closely.

In the full shiur: 1. Upper Wisdom and Lower Wisdom · 2. The Tzaddik's Ordinary Talk · 3. Who Will Rise Up for Me

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