

ספר שְׁכֵשְׁהָהּ בְּאֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל, סִפְרוּ לוֹ שֶׁם הַחֲשׁוּבִים

Holiness That Looks Ordinary

THE TEACHING

When Rebbe Nachman was in the Land of Israel (אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל), distinguished people who had settled there from our countries told him: before we came, we could not picture that the Land stands in this world at all. We thought it was “עוֹלָם אַחֵר לְגַמְרִי”, another world entirely, because of its great holiness described in the holy books and in the Torah itself.

Rebbe Nachman told this because it is needed for many matters in which people are confused by mistakes (טְעוּתִים).

MAIN POINTS

- In truth the Land looks just like our countries, and even its earth (עֶפֶר) looks like the earth here; white earth is found only in certain places.
- And yet it is extremely holy: “אֲשֶׁרִי הַזֹּכָה לְהֵלֶךְ שָׁם אֶפְלוּ אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת”, fortunate is the one who merits to walk there even four cubits, as our Sages and all the holy books praise its holiness.
- Some people mistakenly think a tzaddik (צַדִּיק), or anything holy, must be recognisable from the outside, strange in his looks or movements.
- It is not so. The tzaddik looks like all people, “וְאֶחָד־עַל־פִּי־כֵן הוּא עֲנִין אַחֵר לְגַמְרִי”, and yet he is something else entirely. Even a kosher person (אִישׁ כָּשֵׁר) is.
- So too the Land of Israel is truly set apart; the Rebbe said it has a different sky (רִקִּיעַ אַחֵר), as the Zohar on Terumah explains. Yet to the physical eye there is no difference.
- Only one who merits to believe in its holiness (לְהֵאֲמִין בְּקִדְשָׁתָהּ) can sense a little of the difference. The same with tzaddikim and kosher people: they look like everyone, yet we believe they are entirely set apart.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Holiness can look completely ordinary. Faith (אֱמוּנָה) is the eye that lets us sense the difference.

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