

“וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה קְרָא אֶת”

(דברים לא:יד)

Silence, Teshuvah and True Honour

THE TEACHING

True honour, the honour of Elokim (כבוד אֱלֹקִים), comes to one who runs away from honour. It is reached only through teshuvah (תשובה), whose heart is staying silent when insulted: turning דם, blood, into דם, stillness.

And teshuvah never ends. With every new understanding we return even for our earlier teshuvah, rising without standing still and falling without despair. The Rebbe draws all this in the shape of the letter א and in the verse “קְרָא אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ”.

MAIN POINTS

- One who chases honour gets only the honour of kings, which everyone questions: “כְּכֹד מְלָכִים חָקַר דָּכָר” (משלי כה:ב). One who flees it receives honour from Above, which no one questions: “כְּכֹד אֱלֹקִים הִסְתַּר דָּכָר” (משלי כה:ב).
- There is no כבוד without the כ, the crown (כֶּתֶר), which is teshuvah, and כֶּתֶר also means waiting. Before teshuvah the blood on the left side of the heart is strong, bringing insults and strife. The repair is silence: “דוֹם לֵהי וְהִתְחַוֵּל לוֹ” (תהלים לו:ז), until “וְלִבִּי חָלַל בְּקִרְבִּי” (תהלים קט:כב).
- Hold on to teshuvah always: “מִי יֹאמֶר זָכִיתִי לְבִי, טְהִרְתִּי מִחַטָּאתַי” (משלי כ:ט). Even confession is never free of other motives, and each new understanding of Hashem makes the last look coarse. So one who slaughters his inclination honours Hashem in two worlds.
- Be expert in running and expert in returning (בְּקִי בְּשׁוּב, בְּקִי בְּרָצוּא): “אֲנִי לְדוּדֵי וְדוּדֵי לִי” (שיר השירים ו:ג). This is the secret of Elul: “אִם אָסַק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אֶתָּה, וְאַצִּיעָה שְׂאוֹל הַנֶּגֶד” (תהלים קלט:ח).
- The א: its lower point is silence, “וְהָאֶרֶץ הָדָם רָגְלִי”; its middle line, the 1, is the shame that changes the face; its upper point is the crown. א with דם spells אדם. The upper point is three drops, the three conditions of teshuvah: “פֶּן יֵרָאֶה בְּעֵינָיו, וּבְאָזְנוֹ יִשְׁמַע, וּלְבָבוֹ יָכִין וְשָׁב” (ישעיהו ו:י).
- Rabbah bar bar Chanah's geese are sages humble as a desert: their fallen feathers are the quarrels they let go, and the oil is the Divine honour that flows to them. So Moshe, “פָּנֵי מֹשֶׁה כְּפָנֵי חֻמָּה”, is the upper point and Yehoshua the lower, joined in the tent.
- Reb Noson adds: judge every person favourably. Each Jew is a crown for Hashem, so search out every merit in him; then silence comes easily.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

True honour is not taken; it is given. One moment of silence, one good point found in another, and the courage to keep going, up or down, are how the crown is made.

In the full shiur: 1. Two Kinds of Honour · 2. From Dam to Dom: Blood Becomes Silence · 3. Teshuvah upon Teshuvah, in Two Worlds · 4. Running and Returning, and the Shape of the Aleph · 5. Moshe and Yehoshua, Sun and Moon · 6. Rivers of Oil, and Israel on the Throne · 7. Call Yehoshua: The Verse, and the Kavanos of Elul · 8. Never Stand Still, Never Despair · 9. Two Expertises, Two Names, One Way · 10. Every Jew Is a Crown for Hashem

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