

“וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשִּׁים לְפָנֶיהֶם”

(שמות כא:א)

Exile, Faith and the Counsel of Truth

THE TEACHING

The exile comes from a lack of faith (אֱמוּנָה), and faith is prayer (תַּפִּלָּה), which changes nature like a miracle (נִס): “וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֱמוּנָה” (שמות יז:יב), which the Targum renders “spread out in prayer.” The root of faith is the Land of Israel (אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל), “וְזֶה שֵׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם” (בראשית כח:יז).

Faith is whole only when truth (אֱמֶת) joins it, and truth comes by drawing close to the tzaddikim (צַדִּיקִים) and taking their counsel (עֲצָה). Tzitzis (צִיצִית) guard the eyes from the snake's counsel, so the tzaddik's counsel can be received.

MAIN POINTS

- Mashiach comes “עַד שֶׁתִּכָּלֶה פְּרוּטָה מִן הַכִּסִּי” (סנהדרין צו): when those who cover every miracle with nature are gone. There are higher and lower miracles, “תְּהוֹם אֶל תְּהוֹם קוֹרָא” (תהלים מב:ח).
- “אֱמוּנָה אֶתְקַרִּיאת, כִּד אֶתְחַבֵּר בָּהּ אֱמֶת” (זהר בלק קצח): “it is called faith when truth is joined to it.” Truth is engraved in a person through the counsel of the tzaddikim.
- Taking counsel is like a marriage, for “כְּלִיּוֹת יוֹעֲצוֹת” (ברכות סא): you receive a seed from the one you ask. The snake's counsel left a defilement, “הַנֶּחֱשׁ הַשִּׂיאֲנִי” (בראשית ג:יג), which ended at Sinai with the Torah's 613 holy counsels.
- The tzaddik's counsel is wholly a seed of truth: “וְאֶנְכִּי נִטְעַתִּיהָ שׁוֹרֵק כָּלֶה זָרַע אֱמֶת” (ירמיהו ב:כא). שׁוֹרֵק recalls the redemption, “אֲשַׁרְקָה לָהֶם וְאֶקְבְּצֵם” (זכריה י:ח): counsel brings truth, truth makes faith whole, and faith brings the redemption.
- Tzitzis guard against immorality, which depends on the eyes, “וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶּם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם” (במדבר טו:לט). So Yosef was “בֵּן פֶּרֶת עָלֵי עֵין” (בראשית מט:כב).
- The tale: “תָּא אַחֲוֵי לָהּ טוֹרָא דְּסִינַי”: Sinai is counsel; the scorpions are the snake's counsel; the white donkeys are the white threads of tzitzis; and the voice, “אֹי לִי שֹׁנֵשֶׁבַעֲתִי” (תהלים יט:י), is Hashem, as it were, regretting the exile.
- So the verse: וְאֵלֶּה is Yosef, tzitzis; הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים is truth, “מִשְׁפָּטִי הִי אֱמֶת” (תהלים יט:י); set before them like a table is the redemption, “מִלָּאָה הָאֶרֶץ דָּעָה” (ישעיהו יא:ט). Added notes: prayer helps memory, and looking at the tzitzis is a segulah for one who is ill.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Seek the counsel of true tzaddikim, and let it become truth inside you. Look at your tzitzis, and guard your eyes. And pray with simple faith that Hashem can change anything.

In the full shiur: 1. Exile, Faith and Miracles · 2. Truth Through the Tzaddik's Counsel · 3. Tzitzis and the Mountain of Sinai · 4. The Verse Explained, Memory, and Shechem · 5. The Seed of Truth, and the Wings of Tzitzis

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