

”תַּהֲמֹת יִכְסִּימוּ יָרְדוֹ בְּמִצּוֹלָת וְכוּ'”

(שמות טו:ה)

The Deeps Covered Them

THE TEACHING

Our life-force (חיות) comes mainly from prayer (תפלה): “תַּפְלָה לְקֵל-לִי חַיִּי” (תהלים מב:ט), “a prayer to the Kel of my life.” Each of the twelve tribes (שְׁבָטִים) has its own nusach and its own gate in Heaven, and through those gates come a person's match (זיווג) and livelihood (פרנסה).

When darkness surrounds a person in prayer, truth (אמת) finds the door. Every prayer should be bound to the tzaddik of the generation (צדיק הדור), who knows every gate. Prayer is the power of miracles (נסים), at home in the Land of Israel; those who cover miracles with nature (טבע) fall into exile.

MAIN POINTS

- Put your strength into the letters of the prayer and it is renewed there, “חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים” (איכה ג:כג). And faith (אמונה) is prayer: “וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֱמוּנָה” (שמות יז:כב).
- Each tribe's prayer awakens its star, which makes the plants grow. So “קִשְׁיִן מְזֻנָּוֹתָיו פִּקְרִיעַת יַם-סוּף” (פסחים קיח): the Sea split into twelve paths, and match and livelihood come through the twelve gates.
- Abba Binyamin worried “עַל תַּפְלָתִי שֶׁתֵּהָא סְמוּךְ לְמִטָּתִי” (ברכות ה:), “that my prayer be close to my bed”: מִטָּה read as מִטָּה, a tribe, that his prayer rise through his own tribe's gate.
- Yaakov included all twelve tribes and gathered every prayer to its root: “וַיֵּאָסֶף יַעֲקֹב רִגְלָיו אֶל הַמִּטָּה” (בראשית מט:לג). His prayer gave life to three worlds, מִלְאָךְ, בּוֹכָב, שָׁפָל: שָׁכָם.
- Foreign thoughts (מחשבות זרות) leave a person in the dark, yet the darkness has many doors, and truth finds them. A window has no light of its own, but a precious stone (אבן טוב) shines in the dark: so does a true word. “אִמָּה תִכְלָנָה מִלְמַעְלָה” spells אמת, and “וּפִתְחָה הַתֵּכָה בְּצִדָּה תְּשִׁים” (בראשית ו:טז): the true word (תכה) makes you a door.
- The Arab merchant in the Gemara “שָׁקִיל עֶפְרָא וּמוֹרָח לָהּ”, smelled the earth and knew each road: the tzaddik smells each prayer and knows its gate. The water is “שִׁפְכִי לִבִּי כַּמַּיִם נִכַּח פְּנֵי ה'” (איכה ב:יט), “pour out your heart like water”, which our prayers have not yet reached.
- ארץ ישראל, the place of miracles and prayer, drinks first from the deeps (תהומות), a word of wonder: “וַיִּתְּנֵם כָּל הָעִיר” (רות א:יט). Egypt is nature alone, with no place for prayer.
- Those who cover miracles with nature damage prayer, faith and the Land, and fall into exile: “תַּהֲמֹת יִכְסִּימוּ”, those who cover the wonders sank “בְּמִצּוֹלָת”, into Egypt.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Put your strength into the words of your prayer. When it feels dark, say one true word to Hashem. Bind yourself to the tzaddik, and notice the small miracles without covering them with nature.

In the full shiur: 1. Prayer Is Life, and Twelve Gates · 2. Abba Binyamin's Two Worries · 3. Doors in the Darkness · 4. A Word of Truth Opens the Door · 5. The Merchant Who Smelled the Earth · 6. Prayer, Miracles and the Land of Israel · 7. Those Who Cover Miracles

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