

“וּבְיוֹם הַבְּכוּרִים, בְּהִקְרִיבְכֶם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַה' בְּשִׁבְעֵיתֵיכֶם”

(במדבר כח:כו)

On the Day of the First Fruits

THE TEACHING

Charity (צדקה) begins by breaking one's own cruelty (אכזריות) and turning it into compassion (רחמנות), like the ravens that fed Eliyahu: “וְאֵת הָעֲרָבִים צוּיְתִי לְכַלְכֵּלָהּ” (מלכים א' יז:ד), “I have commanded the ravens to feed you.” That beginning is the hardest of all.

But it cuts off the serpent's brow (מצח הנחש), the root of the view that all is nature (טבע). Then the festivals' call is heard: all is Hashem's will (רצון). That brings awe (יראה), the vessel for His kindness (חסד), so the world stands on kindness and is healed.

MAIN POINTS

- “כָּל הַתְּחִלּוֹת קָשׁוֹת” (דברים טו:ח), every beginning is hard, like a first birth. Charity is always a beginning, “פֶּתוּחַ תְּפִתָּה” (דברים טו:ח), widening the opening in every service of Hashem.
- Our labor (מלאכה) mirrors the Mishkan's thirty-nine labors. But Hashem made the world by kindness alone, “וְאַתֶּם כֹּהֲנֵי ה' תִּקְרְאוּ” (ישעיה סא:ו), “you will be called the kohanim of Hashem.” “עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה” (תהלים פט:ג); when it flows,
- Kindness needs a vessel: awe, called רגל (foot), the end of all: “סוּף דְּבַר הַכֹּל נִשְׁמָע, אֵת הָאֱלֹקִים יֵרָא” (קהלת יב:ג). Awe comes when His will is revealed, as each festival proclaims it, a “מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ”, a holy calling. The more one hears it, the more joy on Yom Tov.
- But the wild beasts (חיות רעות), the scholars of nature, roar over that call: “שָׁאֲגוּ צִרְיֵה בְּקֶרֶב מוֹעֵדָה” (תהלים עז:ד). A great sage of holiness silences them, the brow of will: “וְהָיָה עַל מִצְחוֹ לְרִצּוֹן” (שמות כח:לח).
- Against him stands the serpent's brow, Golyas' “וּמִצְחַת נְחָשׁת עַל רִגְלָיו” (שמואל א' יז:ו). It feeds on elders (זקנים) whose days pass without new light: “קֶצֶר יָמִים, שָׁבַע רִגְזוֹ” (איוב יד:א).
- Charity repairs those fallen days: “שָׁלַח לְחֶמֶד עַל פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם, כִּי בָרַב הַיָּמִים תִּמְצָאֲנוּ” (קהלת יא:א). So Yaakov's gift won Esav's favor, “וַתִּרְצֶנִי” (בראשית לג:י), and David's stone sank into Golyas' brow: “אֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ” (משלי יא:א). In the Gemara's sea tale the bird, the raven of charity, cuts off the serpent's head again and again: “פִּסְקָה לְרִישָׁה” (בבא בתרא עז:ד).
- Each link also heals: “צִדְקָה מְרַפָּא בְּכַנְפֶיהָ” (מלאכי ג:כ). So the verse reads: a new charity, “מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה”; a holy call; and “כָּל מְלָאכָת עֲבָדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ”, a world standing on Hashem's kindness.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

When giving feels hard, that is the beginning of the real service. Let each day add a little light, and on Yom Tov, listen for the call: it is all His will.

In the full shiur: 1. The Ravens, and the Hardest Beginning · 2. Work, the Mishkan, and a World Built on Kindness · 3. Awe, the Vessel, and the Festivals · 4. The Joy of Yom Tov and the Roar of the Beasts · 5. The Brow of Will, the Serpent's Brow, and the Elders · 6. Charity Uproots the Serpent's Brow; Yaakov and Esav · 7. David and Golyas · 8. The Sailors, the Serpent, and the Precious Stone · 9. The Festivals and Charity as Healing · 10. The Verse of Shavuot, and the Whole Torah as One

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