

וַיִּחַד יִתְרוֹ עַל כָּל הַטּוֹבָה וְכוּ'

(שמות יח:ט)

And Yisro Rejoiced

THE TEACHING

When Yisro heard all that Hashem had done for Israel, the Torah says he rejoiced, and the Sages (Sanhedrin 94) add a strange detail: “שָׁנְעָשָׂה בְּשָׂרוֹ חֲדוּדִין חֲדוּדִין”, “his flesh became prickles, prickles.”

The Rebbe explains: every joy (שִׂמְחָה) lasts only for its time. Looking at the end, there seems to be no joy at all. But looking at the end of the end (סוף כל סוף), the final purpose (תכלית), there is great joy, because the final purpose is very good.

MAIN POINTS

- A wedding or a bris is a joy only in its moment; if one looks at the end, “סוף אדם”, a person’s end, there is no joy in the world.
- But the end of every end, the purpose, is “טוב מאד”, very good. That is from the soul’s side (מצד הנשמה): for the soul even death is very good, as the Sages read “וְהָיָה טוֹב מְאֹד” at the creation, for through it one comes to the ultimate good.
- A tzaddik whose body (גוף) too is pure and holy can rejoice even with his body, looking at the end: “בְּאֱלֹקִים בְּטַחְתִּי מִהַ יַּעֲשֶׂה בְּשָׂרִי לִי” (תהלים נו:ה), “in Elokim I trust; what can flesh do to me?”
- And “אֶף בְּשָׂרִי יִשְׁכַּן לְבֶטֶחַ” (תהלים טז:ט), “even my flesh shall rest secure”: the tzaddik is sure that the body too will have it very good.
- But one whose body is not so holy, especially a convert (גר), whose soul is very high but whose body came from an impure drop, cannot rejoice with his body when he looks at the purpose.
- So “וַיִּחַד יִתְרוֹ עַל כָּל הַטּוֹבָה” (שמות יח:ט): Yisro rejoiced over all the good, even looking beyond the good, to the end, and his soul was full of joy. But his flesh, בְּשָׂרוֹ דִּיקָא, prickled: as a convert, his body could not share it.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Every joy here passes. Let it point you to the purpose beyond it, which is very good, and slowly let your whole self, body too, come along.

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