



פרשת יחי

Learning Torah with eyes and ears trained to the sounds of great baalei-musar and baalei-machshavah will yield wellsprings of thought-provoking ideas. What we see and what we learn from them all depends on us as individuals. There is a classic Vort on the Pasuk of ומלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים. The Pasuk describes a world saturated by the knowledge of Hashem as abundant as the water that cover the sea. This גילוי שכינה, this revelation of knowledge, cannot be universally equal. It will most certainly depend on the individual's intellectual capacity, the depth of his thought process. This idea is conveyed by the Mashal of the sea which, on the surface, seems to be relatively flat (save a wave or two). The surface of a body of water that is two feet deep seems, in appearance, to be identical to water that is two hundred feet deep. Everyone's appreciation of Hashem's revelation would seem to be equal but in reality, they will not even be close - לא קרב זה לזה כל הלילה.

A topic that could illustrate this point is the ברכות to his children. Mefarshim are troubled to understand (49:28) ויברך אותם איש כברכתו ברך אותם, which seems to say that the twelve שבטים each got their own individual Berachos, while we know that שמעון ולוי each got reprimanded rather harshly. Rashi seems to note that those three got the general Berachos that he gave them all together, while the Sifsei Chachamim quotes Nachlas Yaakov that receiving a general bracha is not the same as receiving a tailor made bracha. See

the Sforno, and more explicitly the Ohr Hachaim, who explain that Yaakovs Berachos were designed to match each Sheivets "כפי בחינת נשמתו וכפי מעשיו" based on his vision of their future.

I recommend seeing that Ohr Hachaim inside, simply because of the powerful message he teaches, answering our question above. What he writes parallels what we heard in Yeshiva from Rav Yerucham Levovitz, Mirrer Mashgiach. This is how it is etched in my memory; it is in fact a bracha to know what your strengths are, but it is equally important to know what your faults and weaknesses are. Someone who knows you and loves you and can point out your vulnerabilities and instabilities, like being impetuous or anger management etc., is doing you a valuable service. Yaakov gave Reuven, Shimon and Levi those veiled Berachos that qualify as a bona fide blessing. The Ohr Hachaim takes this idea and elevates it to another level. He talks about every person hving a תפקיד, a unique purpose for which they were put on this world. His words: יש לך לדעת כי הנפשות כל אחת, יש לה בחינת המעלה, כהונה, for some it is מלכות, for some it is תורה, others it is גבורה, others its עושר. The holy Yaakov, with the love and insight that only a father can have, zeroed in everyone's strengths and faults and bestowed upon them the appropriate Berachos.

Both the Ramban and Rabeinu Bachya, say a startling חידוש as to why there are no more Chashmonaim (Bava Basra 3B) any longer. Because the Chashmonaim were כהנים who





assumed the Malchus, which Yaakov gave to Yehuda - לא יסור שבט מיהודה - which Ramban and Rabeinu Bachya consider to have been a חטא. Many of us usually stop at that piece, marvel at the חידוש and do not continue in the text, but there is another חידוש there. The first explanation assumes that they took something - מלכות - AWAY FROM YEHUDA. Their second explanation takes issue with the fact that they were supposed to be Kohanim - AND THEY ABANDONED WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE - they didn't take anything away, they just didn't live up to their תפקיד. It seems someone who was sent to this world for a specific purpose which he does not fulfil loses his זכות הקיום, there is no more raison d'etre. Very, very powerful words for all of us who live in a world WITHOUT נביאים to instruct us. Let us dive a little deeper.

This is a Peirush on the Ohr Hachaim called ישמה משה by a contemporary, Rav Korngot, that takes it up another level. He quotes a Zohar in Shir Hashirim on the Pasuk הגידה לי שאהבה נפשי, that one must know "שידע על מה בא לעולם" what "this גלגול" is all about. He quotes Rav Chaim Vital from the Arizal regarding the Gemara Shabbos (118B): They asked; אביך במאי זהיר טפי? What is your father very careful about, and he said ציצית; meaning, what מצוה does your father consider the reason for this reincarnation. He quotes the Kosnitzer Magid that teaches איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו, his own יצר, the one that he finds hardest to control. This is the answer given in many places to answer one of the real serious questions in life. I believe its time to request permission to land and get back to earth.

To know yourself is sometimes a difficult task. People are subject to a very active imagination- the words of Reb Yisroel Salanter about man: חפשי - his imagination runs freely without bounds, while his שכל is very limited. We have all suffered through someone who thought he was a good Baal Tefillah or a Drasha from someone who thought he had something to say. Know your strengths, and utilize them to the utmost. Learn the Torah that gives you the most satisfaction, but learn. Using the gifts that Hashem has given us allows us to benefit from all of His Berachos. May we all be זוכה.

Among those who are מצפים לישועה.

אמני דאפקיה
חיים באלף שנים

