

THE WISDOM OF KABBALAH



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Michael Laitman (p. 1946)

The wisdom of Kabbalah teaches a practical method to attain the upper world and the source of our existence. By realizing our true purpose in life, one attains perfection, tranquility, unbounded enjoyment and the ability to transcend the limitations of time and space while still living in this world.

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There is None Else Beside Him

(From the book *Shamati* by Kabbalist Y. Ashlag)

It is written that “there is none else beside Him”, meaning that there is no other power in the world with the ability to do anything against Him. And what man sees, namely, that there are things in the world, which deny the household of above, is because He wills it so.

And it is deemed a correction, called “the left rejects and the right adducts, meaning that that which the left rejects is considered correction. This means that there are things in the world, which from the beginning aim to divert a person from the right way, and they reject him from holiness.

And the benefit from these rejections is that through them a person receives a need and a complete desire for God to help him, since he sees that otherwise he is lost. Not only does he not progress in his work, but he sees that he regresses, and he lacks the strength to observe Torah and Mitzvoth even if not for Her name. That only by genuinely overcoming all the obstacles, above reason, he can observe Torah and Mitzvoth.

But he does not always have the strength to overcome above reason, that otherwise he is forced to deviate, God forbid, from the way of the Creator, and even from not for Her name. And he, who always feels that the shattered is greater than the whole, meaning that there are a lot more descents than ascents, and he does not see an end to these predicaments, and he will forever remain outside of holiness, for he sees that it is difficult for him to observe even as little as a jot, unless through overcoming above reason, but he is not always able to overcome. And what shall be the end of it all?

Then he reaches the decision that no one can help him, but God Himself. This causes him to make a heartfelt demand of the Creator to open his eyes and heart, to bring him nearer to eternal adhesion with God. It follows then, that all the rejections he had experienced had come from the Creator.

That means that the rejections he had experienced were not because he was at fault, for not having the ability to overcome, but because these rejections are for those who truly want to draw nearer to God. And in order for such a person not to be satisfied with only a little, namely, not to remain as a little child without knowledge, he receives help from above so that he will not be able to say that Thank God, he observes Torah and performs good deeds and what else could he ask for?

And only if that person has a true desire, he will receive help from Above. And he is constantly shown how his faults in his present state; that is, he is sent thoughts and views, which work against his efforts. This is in order for him to see that he is not one with the Lord. And as much as he overcomes, he always sees how he is found in a position farther from holiness than others, who feel one with the Lord.

But he, on the other hand, always has his complaints and demands, and he cannot justify the behavior of the Creator, and how he behaves toward him. And it pains him that he is not one with the Lord, until he comes to feel that he has no part in holiness whatsoever.

And although he is occasionally awakened from above, which momentarily revives him, but soon he falls into an abyss. However, this is what causes him to come to realize that only God can help and really draw him closer.

A man must always try and cleave to the Creator, namely, that all his thoughts will be about Him. That is to say, that even if he is in the worst state, from which there cannot be a greater descent, he should not leave His domain, namely, think that there is another authority which prevents him from entering into holiness, and which has the power to either benefit or harm.

That is, he must not think that there is a matter of the power of the Other Side (sitra achrah), which does not allow man to do good deeds and follow God's ways; but he should think that all is done by the Creator.

The Ba'al Shem Tov said, that he who says that there is another power in the world. Namely shells, is in a state of "serving other gods", that it is not necessarily the thought of heresy that is the sin, but if he thinks that there is another authority and force apart from the Creator, by that he is committing a sin.

Furthermore, he who says that man has his own authority, meaning that he says that yesterday he himself did not want to follow God's ways, that too is considered to be committing the sin of heresy. Meaning that he does not believe that only the Creator leads the world.

But when he has committed a sin, and he must certainly regret it and be sorry for having committed it, but here too we should place the pain and sorrow in the right order: where does he place the cause of the sin, that it is that point he should be sorry for.

And a man should then feel sorry and say: "I committed that sin because the Creator hurled me down from holiness to a place of filth, to the lavatory, where the filth is". That is to say that God gave him a desire and a craving to amuse himself and breath air in a place of stench. (And you might say, as it says in the books, that sometimes a man incarnates in the body of a pig, that he receives a desire and craving to take livelihood from things he had already determined were litter, but now he again wants to revive himself in them).

And also when a man feels he's in a state of ascent, and tastes some good flavor in the work, he must not say: "Now I am in a state where I understand that it is worthwhile to worship God. Rather he should know that now the Lord has fancied him, and for that reason He draws him near, which is the reason why he tastes a good flavor in the work. And he should be careful never to leave the domain of holiness, and say that there is another operating force besides the Creator. (But this means that the matter of finding favor in the eyes of the Lord, or the opposite, does not depend on man himself, but everything depends on God. And man, with his external mind, cannot comprehend why now the Lord likes him and after that He does not.)

And likewise when he regrets that the Creator does not draw him near, he should also be careful not to be sorry for himself, for having been distanced from the Creator, for by so doing he becomes a recipient for his own benefit, and he who receives is separated from the Creator.

Rather he should regret the exile of the Divine Presence, meaning, for inflicting sorrow upon the Divine Presence.

One should take as an example when some small organ of a person is sore. The pain is still felt mainly in the heart and mind, which are the generality of man. And certainly the sensation of a single organ cannot resemble the sensation of a person's full stature, where most of the pain is felt.

Likewise is the pain that a person feels when he is detached from the Lord, since man is but a single organ of the Divine Presence, for the Divine Presence is the soul of Israel in general. Therefore the sensation of a single organ does not resemble the sensation of the pain in general. That is to say that the Divine Presence regrets that there are parts of it that are detached from it, which she cannot provide for.

(And that might be the meaning of the words: "When a man regrets, the Divine Presence says: "It is lighter than my head"). And if man does not relate the sorrow at being distant from God to himself, he is saved from falling into the trap of the desire to receive for himself, which is the separation from holiness.

The same applies when one feels somewhat closer to holiness, when he is happy at having merited favor in the eyes of the Lord, he must say that the core of his joy is that now there is joy in the Divine Presence, from having being able to bring her private organ near her, and not send it away.

And man rejoices at having been endowed with the ability to please the Divine Presence. And this goes by the same token, because joy that an individual feels, is but a part of the joy that the whole feels. And through these calculations he loses his individuality and avoids being trapped by the Other Side, which is the will to receive for himself.

Although, the will to receive is necessary, since that constitutes a person, since anything which exists in a person apart from the desire to receive is attributed to the Creator. Nevertheless, the will to receive pleasure should be corrected to a form of bestowal.

That is to say, that the pleasure and joy, taken by the will to receive, should be intended to bring contentment above, because there is pleasure below. For that was the purpose of creation, to benefit His creations. And this is called the joy of the Divine Presence above.

For this reason, man must seek advice as to how he can cause contentment above. And certainly, if he receives pleasure, contentment shall be felt above. Therefore, he should long to always be in the King's palace, and to have the ability to play with the King's treasures. And that will certainly cause contentment above. It follows that his entire longing should be for the sake of the Creator.

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