

B”H

Im Yihye Nidahecha_Nitzavim5727

Dvar Malcus Nitzavim 5774

GATHERING THE SCATTERED ONES

IF YOUR SCATTERED ONES ARE AT THE ENDS OF THE HEAVENS, FROM THERE G-D WILL GATHER YOU... (Deut. 30:4). Firstly, the simple meaning, that those who are ‘scattered’ in spiritual terms will be gathered.

As Rashi writes on the verse ‘The L-rd your G-d will return your captivity’ (Deut.30:3), that G-d will take each individual by their hands, as it says ‘you will be collected one by one, o House of Israel.’ (Is.21:12), gathering them all together like at the beginning of the Sedra, that ‘You are all standing together’. Through this unity they will receive blessings from G-d, as it says in the liturgy ‘bless us our Father, like One’.

But in order to achieve the simple meaning, we have to attain the spiritual meaning, as explained by Chassidic teachings. These ask: why is ‘your scattered ones’ actually in the singular? (*Thy scattered one*). You would expect it to be in the plural.

The answer is that this promise applies to each individual. Our Neshamah, Soul, is ‘one’, but as it comes down into the physical world and our physical body, and the appetites of the Animal Soul, it becomes more and more scattered. So too is the case with the Divine Sefirot. As they descend lower the quality of being ‘scattered’ increases. For the nature of our world is ‘multiplicity’.

Nonetheless, really the individual is One. Even if he transgresses the Divine Will, he is still One. For ‘even though he sinned, he is a Jew’. The word for Jew here is Yisrael, a name which comes from ‘prevailing against with spiritual forces and men’. This is above the down chaining of worlds and has no limitations. Therefore every Jewish man and woman has this quality, even if they do the worst sins. This might be so serious that it cuts them off from their root – Karet. But nonetheless, their Essence is still whole. Hence G-d says about every Jew ‘the plant which I have planted, the work of My hands of which to be proud’.

When its says (as quoted above) ‘The L-rd your G-d will return your captivity’, this means Yechidah of the soul. When this is revealed, the soul is rescued from being scattered. Through Teshuvah we reveal the Yechidah of the Soul.

Teshuvah has two aspects: a good resolution for the future (which is largely based on regret for the past). This is the spiritual dimension. The practical aspect is: Viduy, confessing the sin. This relates to two aspects of the Kelipah: the soul, and the body. Thus by saying the alphabetical Viduy we erase the body of the Kelipah, while our inner good resolution we uproot the soul of the Kelipah.

But the ultimate of Teshuvah is gathering all one’s scattered ‘wills’ and focusing just on Hashem alone. This is achieved by the revelation of Yechidah.

This is particularly achieved in prayer, and especially in the Shema. The word Shema means 'gather', and this is the moment of 'gathering' all one's wills away from the Kelipot and focusing them on G-d. Shema is Shem Ayin, ayin is 70 nations, the power to do this is from Yisrael, li Rosh (I have a head), the Yechidah of the soul – gathering our wills scattered in the 70 nations. And this is expressed with Mesirat Nefesh which focuses on One and is the revelation of Yechidah.

This quality of Yechidah is always whole for every Jew, and the image of the King in the Field for the month of Elul expresses the way the Yechidah of each Jew is aroused, and this is helped/manifested in the blowing of the Shofar every day of Elul.

Now Israel are joined to the Torah, and in the Torah too is the concept of being 'scattered', namely in the Babylonian Talmud: 'He set me down in darkness – this is the Babylonian Talmud'. This means that the halachah is scattered through the Talmud, which leads to many questions. A halachic statement is made in one place, but it is contradicted by halachic statements in other places where the halachah is scattered. Only by pilpul and discovering the unity of the halachah does one retrieve all its scattered elements. In order to be able to do this, one needs 'and Hashem is with him..' (see Sanh.93b, expounding I Sam.16:18). This is the flow from the Giver of the Torah.

In prayer, the Shema is the aspect which unifies everything scattered. So too in Torah, there is an aspect which achieves unity, and that is the inner dimension, Chassidic teachings. For this is above conflict and being scattered. Only in order for it to enter one's rational mind, effort is needed. Chassidic teachings give one the strength to achieve unity in all aspects of Torah, through 'blessing on the Torah first', meaning being aware of the Divine dimension of Torah.

This is like the way that the Mesirat Nefesh in the One of the Shema draws the Divine through one's heart and soul and every aspect, one's thought and speech and action, into all aspects of one's life. Similarly, Chassidic teachings affect all aspects of one's Torah study and increase awareness of the Divine author of Torah.

So too Kabbalistic teachings tell us that there is a form of scattering even in G-d, namely the scattering of the Divine Sparks through the 'breaking of the vessels'. But here, in itself, the descent of the sparks was because G-d wanted a dwelling in the lower world. It is when man acts in the wrong way that the sparks are really 'scattered'. Through man's Teshuvah the sparks are gathered together. This has two aspects: first, 'you will return', the Teshuvah of the individual. And then 'the L-rd G-d will return your captivity'. This is Teshuvah from above.

As the Talmud says: one who comes to be purified, is helped from above. And as is pointed out by the Tzemach Tzedek, 'one who *comes*' – he has not done anything yet, he is just 'coming' toward being purified, but at once he is helped from above. Even though whatever one can do from below is infinitesimal in comparison compared with the Divine help one received, it means that the person has made a step to accomplish his or her part. And in

response G-d gathers the entire Jewish people, with the coming of Moshiach, may he come speedily in our days...

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