

B”H

Maamar – RaniVeSimchiChanuka5727 – Dvar Malchus Miketz 5774

REDEEMING THE DAUGHTER OF ZION

THE HAFTORAH FOR THE SHABBAT IN CHANUKA STARTS ‘REJOICE, DAUGHTER of Zion’.¹ What is meant by this term ‘daughter’ of Zion? Torah teachings often compare the people of Israel to a woman. The Midrash gives a parable of a king who is enamoured with a woman. First he calls her his daughter, then, as his love grows, he calls her his sister, then he even calls her his mother. But the verse in the Haftorah, speaking of the future, terms the Jewish people ‘daughter’, seemingly the lowest such term?

This is because the ‘daughter’ represents the Sefirah Malhut, Kingship. Kingship is the lowest Sefirah. But with the Redemption it will be exalted beyond all other Divine attributes

This discourse is about a love which reaches down, to the lowest level, and which thereby becomes the most exalted.

A parallel to the Midrash² about mother, sister or daughter is provided by a passage in the Talmud³ explaining the concept of Redemption: anyone who studies Torah, prays with the community, and does kind deeds is considered to have redeemed the Holy One and His people from exile. The discourse compares the concept ‘kind deeds’ with the ‘daughter’. It is in a sense lower than the other spiritual activities of Torah study and prayer. Indeed it is primarily manifested as Tzedaka, and on account of Tzedaka the Jewish people are called ‘Tzaddikim’, righteous ones.

The Talmud (BB 10b) cites a verse from Psalms (112:9) to explain the power of Tzedaka: ‘he scatters his wealth to the destitute, his righteousness stands for ever.’

The first step is giving charity which can aid someone on the lowest level, whether financially or in other terms. The effect is that the donor’s righteousness stands for ever, it reaches the most exalted heights.

The Zohar speaks of the spiritual power of Tzedaka: it enables the Tree of Knowledge, which brought death to the world, to be absorbed into the Tree of Life. In other words the Serpent, source of evil, is transformed and becomes a positive force for good.

Returning to the verse which said that through Tzedaka one’s righteousness stands for ever.

For ever’ can be explained as eternal, ie beyond time; or beyond understanding. Another meaning of the same Hebrew word (*‘ad*) is a jewel.

¹ Zach. 2:14. If Chanuka begins on Shabbat this is the Haftarah on that first Shabbat.

² Song of Songs Rabbah end of ch.3.

³ Ber.8a.

These three concepts apply to the Sefirah Keter: it is beyond the down-chaining of the worlds, and therefore beyond time; it is beyond understanding; and it is sometimes described as a 'jewel', as in a parable about the jewel in the royal crown (see below).

This verse is telling us that through the fact that the person scatters his wealth to those on the lowest level, he spiritually reaches the inwardness of Keter.

At the beginning of the Chassidic movement, the question was raised why the deep spiritual teachings should be publicised to people who could not apparently appreciate them. A parable explain this was of a Prince who became very ill, and no doctor could cure him. Then came a new doctor who said onlt the most precious jewel in te royal Crown would help. It must be ground into a powder and fed to the Prince. Perhaps a few drops will enter his lips and revive him.

The discourse explains that the inwardness of Keter is the precious stone in the crown. By scattering one's wealth, reaching the lowest level, which can also be understood as the goal to spread the wellsprings of Chassidic teachings to the most remote corner (in spiritual terms). Through transmitting the wellsprings one is given access to the inwardness of Keter, the precious jewel in the royal crown.

Thus we understand why the exaltation of the Jewish people in the future is described as reaching 'my daughter'. The daughter depicts the lowest level, which has been elevated to the highest

This helps us understand the meaning of Chanukah. The theme of Chanukah is that the Chanuka Menora should be placed in such a way that the light enters the darkness outside the home. The Talmud speaks of the time of lighting the Menoar and states that it is 'till the feet of the Tarmudians have gone'. In literal terms this means till the Tarmudian pedlars have left the marketplace. But the Chassidic explanation of this Talmudic passage is that Tarmud תרמוד is an anagram of moredet, rebellious one. The 'feet' of the Tarmudians means the lowest level of this rebelliousness. The light of the Chanuka lamps penetrate the darkness and transform the spirit of rebelliousness so that instead of being negative it becomes a force for good.

Through the service of seeking to pour Tzedaka to the lowest level each individual achieves their personal redemption, and from this comes the general redemption, redeeming the Holy One and the Jewish people.