Pnimiyut

The Inner Dimension of Torah

Vayera **פ׳ וירא תשפ״ז**

THE RUNNING

Every desire draws down its likeness from above

Rabbi Abba once met men from the East who carried books of ancient wisdom. One of those books held a teaching the Zohar preserves: the desire of a person draws down from above a spirit that corresponds to that desire. If his will turns toward something holy, holiness comes down to meet him. The direction of his desire determines what descends.

This is why the Zohar pauses over what appears to be a small detail in the opening of our parasha. Avraham was on the third day after his circumcision, the most painful day of recovery. He was ninety-nine years old. He had every reason to rest, and he had earned it. And yet when three men appeared in the distance, the Torah tells us: he ran.

The Zohar does not read this as a gesture of politeness. It reads it as a statement about how Avraham understood the structure of the world. He knew that every moment carries within it an opening, and that the way a person moves toward that opening, whether with urgency or with hesitation, determines what comes through it. His running was not despite the pain. It was an act of will. And that will drew down.

This is the principle built into creation. ה׳ sends us openings throughout the day, each one a chance to draw more kedusha toward ourselves. A moment of prayer that could go deeper. An act of kindness that presents itself. A pause in the day that could become something. Most people see the opening and continue walking. But the person who runs toward it, even when it costs something, finds that one opening leads to the next. One act of drawing kedusha pulls the next one toward him.

Avraham was in pain. He ran anyway. Not in spite of the pain, but because he saw every moment through one lens: how much kedusha can I draw here? That running is available to each of us in every hour ה׳ gives us.

A STORY

In the tradition of the Baal Shem Tov

A young man came to the Baal Shem Tov troubled. He said that more than anything he wanted to serve ה׳ throughout the whole day, but life kept pulling him into ordinary things: business, conversation, errands, meals. By evening he felt he had barely served ה׳ at all.

'Tell me,' said the Baal Shem Tov. 'Did anyone greet you today?'

The young man thought. A neighbor had nodded to him in the street. A merchant had wished him a good morning. A child had tugged at his coat and asked him a question.

'Those were not interruptions,' said the Baal Shem Tov. 'Those were doors. ה׳ opened each one. The question is whether you walked through them.'

The young man was quiet.

'Avraham ran,' said the Baal Shem Tov. 'Not because he was fast. Because he understood: every moment ה׳ sends is a door, and the person who runs toward it draws something from above to meet him. One door opens to the next. This is how a person surrounds himself in kedusha, not by escaping the day, but by running through it.'

בעל שם טוב

KAVANOT MIKVE

Shabbat

The water you enter on Erev Shabbat is the same water. But you are entering from a different place, and emerging into a different world. The weekday self, with all its carrying and its accumulated hours, enters. Something else emerges. Shabbat is not the end of the week. It is the world above. And the mikve is the gate between.

The Arizal taught that immersion on Erev Shabbat is of a different order. It is not repair. It is reception. You are opening yourself to receive what Shabbat gives, the neshama yeteira, the additional soul ה' places in a person when Shabbat enters. That soul cannot enter a closed vessel. The immersion opens the vessel.

For Shabbat Kodesh, a person should have in mind during immersion:

טבילה א' PURIFICATION

להפשיט בגדי חול של הנפש *To remove the weekday garments of the soul*

אלף - הה - יוד - הה

Intend to draw purification upon yourself through this name. It is the name of the highest source, the place from which all impurity dissolves. As you submerge, let everything that has accumulated, in thought, in speech, in deed, be drawn into the water and returned to its root.

Optional — for one who wishes to immerse further, before the final immersion:

אלף-הה-יוד-הה **פגם הכעס** *To repair the damage caused by anger*

יוד-הי-ויו-הי **ע"ב** *To repair what I have damaged in the name of ע"ב*

יוד-הי-ואו-הי **ס"ג** *To repair what I have damaged in the name of ס"ג*

יוד-הא-ואו-הא **מ"ה** *To repair what I have damaged in the name of מ"ה*

יוד-הה-וו-הה **ב"ן** *To repair what I have damaged in the name of ב"ן*

טבילה ב' NESHAMA YETEIRA

א - ה - י - ה י – ה - ו

Intend to receive the additional soul ה' gives every person on Shabbat. The first immersion purified and emptied. This one opens you to receive. Rise from the water ready for Shabbat Kodesh to enter.

לעילוי נשמת אפרת בת שמאי

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