

This Land is My Land

A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

Essay # 54—Parshat Purim and Ki Tisa, Parshat Parah 5762

We saw in the previous essay the terrible effects of idolatry, some of which can last for generations. It becomes scary when we think that this goes on and on, with never an end in sight. However, there is an end, a time when Mashiach will come and human suffering will end. For us to be worthy of that, we need to look deeply into one of the Rebbe's teachings which discusses the connection between patience and faith, and how it can lead us to the Holy Land. The following is from *Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #155.

1. Sadness is a very evil trait. A person's not traveling to the tzaddik is due to sadness, sluggishness and slothfulness. Likewise, a person's failure to pray or study Torah with inspiration and intensity is due to sadness and slothfulness - i.e., due to a lack of faith. For certainly, if one had perfect faith and believed that God is close to him and hears every single word that comes from his mouth, and hearkens to the sound of his prayer, such a person would definitely not have any sadness, slothfulness or sluggishness in his prayers. He would certainly pray properly. However, the confusion of prayer is mainly due to a lack of faith. As a result, slothfulness and sadness beset him and muddle his prayer. For sadness and the slothfulness are primarily due to a lack of faith.

This is similar to placing wheat in good earth. It grows and sprouts well, and is not harmed by winds, storms or thunder. This is because it has the power to sprout and the power to grow, and so nothing harms it. But when the wheat is put in earth unsuitable for sowing, it then rots in the earth because it has neither the power to sprout nor the power to grow.

Now, *EMuNah* (faith) is an aspect of growing power and sprouting power. As is written (*Esther 2:7*), "And *OMeiN* (Mordechai raised) Hadassah" - the expression *omein* connotes growth. As our Sages teach: Faith refers to the Order of *Zera'im* (Seeds) (*Shabbat 31a*). Therefore, when one has faith, which is the aspect of growing power and sprouting power, he is then not harmed by any obstacle, and is not afraid of anybody or anything. He prays with proper vitality and travels to the tzaddik, for he is neither frightened by nor afraid of anything in the world. But when he lacks faith, he then does not have the power to grow and the power to sprout. In that case, he literally rots, like the aforementioned wheat. As a result, he experiences sadness, slothfulness and sluggishness, and literally rots.

2. This is the concept of "*erekh apaim* (slow to anger)" (*Exodus 34:6*; one of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy). In other words, that he fears nothing and pays no attention to any interruption and confounding of his service of God, but instead does what he has to do - this is the concept of "slow to anger." Nothing can confuse him, because nothing bothers him. Rather, he does what he has to do in his service of God.

This is because "slow to anger" is dependent upon the aspect of faith. For "As long as there is idol worship in the world, there is Divine wrath in the world" (*Sifri on Deuteronomy*

13:18). But through faith, which is the reverse of idolatry, Divine wrath is eliminated. Then one merits to *arikhat APa'im* (patience), which is the opposite of *charon APh* (Divine wrath).

In other words, through faith one merits patience. He will be patient with regard to any confusion or obstacle that he experiences in his prayer and service. He will be forbearing towards everything; he will not at all be sad or slothful because of this obstacle. Rather, he will restrain his spirit from anger and not be bothered by it whatsoever. He will do what he has to do in his service and persevere throughout, and will not at all be affected by the confusions and obstacles.

All this is the aspect of "slow to anger" which a person merits through faith, which corresponds to growing and sprouting power. Through this he grows and blossoms, and is successful in his service. For he cannot be confounded by any obstacle that might make him fall into sadness and sluggishness, God forbid, and thereby obstruct him. Rather, he will do what he has to do with zeal and joy, without taking any note of all the confusions. All this is the aspect of "slow to anger"/faith/growing and sprouting power, as above.

3. And know! "slow to anger" is dependent upon the Land of Israel. There, one merits to the aspect of "slow to anger." For the Land of Israel corresponds to faith, as is written (*Psalms* 37:3), "Dwell in the Land and cultivate faith"; and as our Sages teach: Whoever lives in the Land of Israel is likened to one who has God (*Ketuvot* 110b). Hence, the Land of Israel corresponds to faith, and, as mentioned, through faith one merits the aspect of patience. In other words, as mentioned, there is no obstacle or confusion than can confound him from his service [when one merits the Holy Land]. We find therefore that the essential service of a Jew is achieved by means of the Land of Israel, which corresponds to faith/"slow to anger"/growing and sprouting power. Through this one merits strengthening his service and to take no notice of any obstruction, obstacle or confusion. For it is not possible to truly merit the service of God except through patience.

Thus, essentially, Moshe's exceptional yearning and fervor, that he felt such enthusiasm for the Land of Israel, was only for the sake of this trait of patience; because he saw that there, in the Land of Israel, one merits the aspect of "slow to anger." This is what our Sages teach: When God revealed to Moshe the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, "*Vayikod artzah*, Moshe quickly bowed to the ground" (*Exodus* 34:8). What did he see? He saw [the greatness of the Attribute of] "slow to anger" (*Sanhedrin* 111a). Because he saw the aspect of "slow to anger," which is dependent upon the Land of Israel, he therefore "*vayikod artzah* -he bowed to the ground." [*Vayikod artzah* translates as "bowed to the ground." However, *vayikod* also translates as "burned." Rebbe Nachman interprets the verse as saying, Moshe "burned to the ground," he burned with great fervor for the Holy Land, the ground of the Land of Israel.] Moshe's heart burned for the Land of Israel in order that he would merit being "slow to anger."

The Sages also mentioned another opinion: Moshe saw [the greatness of the Attribute of] truth." Yet there is no disagreement. This is because truth corresponds to the Land of Israel, as explained elsewhere (*Likutey Moharan* I, Lesson #47). The Talmud concludes there: From this we can assume that Moshe saw "slow to anger." For, as mentioned, the aspect of

patience is paramount.

And each person has to request of God that he yearn and long for the Land of Israel, and that all the tzaddikim have great longing for the Land of Israel. This is also a propitious method for overcoming anger and sadness, for "whoever gets angry, it is as if he served idolatry" (*Shabbat* 105b). But the Land of Israel corresponds to faith/"slow to anger"; the reverse of the Diaspora, which is idolatry/Divine wrath.

This is why prior to reciting the Shema in the morning prayers, an expression of faith in God's unity, we request: "May He lead us with uprightness to our Land." That is, we plead and long for the Land of Israel. Through this we merit faith, namely the Shema, our proclamation of faith.

(This lesson is available, with commentary, in Volume 10 of the English translation of Likutey Moharan.)

So there we have it. We may have erred, we may have sinned. We certainly are getting punished, whether we think we deserve it or not. We are facing an enemy today which has no trace of human decency. The Hamans and Arafats, along with the Bin Ladens, Husseins, Mu-Baraks, Sarid, Peres, Beilin, etc., all try our patience, all test our faith, all challenge our connection to the Holy Land, which binds us to God, which has kept us going as Jews throughout all of our history. We are now exposed to mass assimilation and a thorough clubbing. But we also do have the ability to arouse God's compassion to heights never before revealed. When His compassion is thoroughly aroused, we will witness Him leading us to the Promised Land.

So let's hang in there. As in the days of Purim, it can change overnight. Let's give it one last push in the right direction. Then we can merit the Red Cow, to the purity which allows us to enter the Temple Mount to attain forgiveness for all sin and atonement for all suffering.

Then we can merit drinking and getting drunk with an insobriety never before revealed in the world! Have a great Purim. All of you, all of us, all of Israel. Amen.

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