

SICHA POEM

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Shoftim, Sicha 1

— By Mrs. Chanie Gourarie, Chabad Toms River

"Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities," the Passuk does say,
The Midrash Rabbah brings a parable to explain this verse in a deeper way.
Rabbi Levi said: To what does this compare?
To a king who has many children, and the youngest to him was most dear.

He had a certain orchard which he cherished more,
Than all his possessions which he did adore.
The king said, "I will give this orchard to my youngest son,
Who more than all my children I love a ton."

So, too, Hashem said, "From all the nations that I created, I love only the Yidden,
As it is stated, 'When Israel was a lad, I loved him.'
From everything else that I created, only justice I cherish,
As it is stated, 'For I am the L-ord who loves justice,'" it's what He does relish.

Said the Holy One, blessed be He, from above:
"I am giving what I cherish to the people that I love."
"Judges and officers" are gifts that are unique,
It's the recipe for making our relationship with Hashem reach the peak!

What does this parable add and why is it necessary?
To give something to someone you love is as obvious as can be!
Why does the parable use a King specifically?
Every person could act lovingly.

How can we say that from everything that Hashem did create,
Only justice does He cherish and appreciate?
Appointing judges is connected with greatness it is clear,
So why is it important to emphasize that to a young son the Yidden compare?

For all of Noach's children, to appoint judges is an obligation,
Since it is one of the seven Mitzvos that they were given.
Yet, for justice, Hashem has a special affection,
And therefore, to justice, the Yidden have the most special connection.

Rabbi Levi speaks about an orchard which represents pleasure and luxury,
Sweet fruit can't compare to a field of grain which is a necessity,
Implying that the justice that is up for discussion,
Is not the basic justice that is necessary for a society to properly function.

When it comes to justice there are aspects two,
Judges pass judgement and officers enforce what the judges said to do.
It would seem that the officers have a more essential role,
Since enforcing the verdict is the goal.

However, the Torah describes judges in a different light,
About the Great Court in Jerusalem three things the Rambam does write:
"They are the essence of the Oral Torah, they are the pillars of instruction,
From whom statutes and judgements issue forth for the entire Jewish nation."

They are not just pillars of instruction,
But the power to innovate in Torah, they were given.
They study so that the written Torah they can comprehend,
With intellect and wisdom they develop the Oral Torah which has no end.

Although great intellect and wisdom are necessary to clarify the Halacha,
The unity of Hashem with His young son makes Him entrust us with His Torah.
A father's love for his young son is not based on the qualities of his son,
The love exists because their essence is one!

When like a young lad, ourselves we diminish,
Not only do we get something that a father does cherish,
But since we are one with the King of Justice, the only one who can create,
He lovingly gives us the power to be judges who create and innovate.

The difference between officers and judges is seen by how the Yidden,
Responded at Har Sinai when they said "we will do" and "we will listen."
Because the role of officers is to ensure that with Kabolas Ol, action gets done,
While the role of judges is to understand Torah and share it with everyone.

"We will do" comes first, not just because Kabolas Ol is the foundation,
And what is most important is the action,
But because the purpose of "we will listen" is not just to understand what to do,
Understanding is also independent of action and has its own great value!

In order to make a Dira Bitachtonim,
It's not enough to have self-nullification.
Our entire being Hashem wants to permeate,
Which includes understanding and comprehending the Torah so great.

Just as there is an advantage of studying Torah,
Over doing a Mitzvah,
Within each Mitzvah we can zoom in and seek,
Two dimensions, one universal and one unique.

The first dimension focuses on the general intention,
Which is motivated by accepting the yoke of heaven.
At this level all Mitzvos have equal value,
Hashem's desire and will is the same for all the Mitzvos that we do.

The second dimension focuses on the Mitzvah's specific intention,
Each Mitzvah purifies a specific limb or part of the person.
From each Mitzvah Hashem gets a unique pleasure,
Like a smorgasbord that has a huge variety of foods to savor.

To the specific intention of a Mitzvah, an advantage we see,
Because Hashem desired a dwelling place in this low world specifically,
Which is fulfilled through drawing Hashem down into every part,
Each person has something that only they can contribute like a unique piece of art.

The Divine pleasure invested in Mitzvos is just a glimmer,
We need to let go of how we think and feel to get to the source of Hashem's pleasure.
The only way to connect to Hashem's essence is through simplicity,
Like the connection between a young child and his father who he loves dearly.

The first day of Elul is always within the week of Parshas Shoftim,
So between Justice and Shofar there must be a special connection.
There are two aspects of the Shofar that are seemingly opposite of each other,
Shofar instills a trembling fear and is connected to pleasure.

The Tzemach Tzedek explains how this could be,
The Shofar represents the source of pleasure which transcends it completely.
Since the source of pleasure is tied to simplicity and nullification,
It takes away the sense of self and confidence which instills fear in the person.

Like the well known parable that the Baal Shem Tov does bring,
Which compares the sound of the Shofar to the cry of the lost son of the king.
The cry of the prince comes straight from his core,
Which represents Bittul which is so simple and pure.

On the other hand, from the source of pleasure comes pleasure's seeds,
Shofar comes from the word "Shapru" which means to beautify our deeds.
From the source of pleasure things that are beautiful and enjoyable flourish,
Like the pleasure that Hashem gets from Justice which He loves and does cherish.

When we act with total dedication like children,
We can access the source of pleasure which is Makor Hatanugim,
Which will lead to Hashem taking us out of Galus personally,
May it happen immediately!
