

SICHA SUMMARY

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25

Breishis, Sicha 2

The Context:

The Talmud states: “One who was born on the fifth day of the week will be a person who performs acts of kindness. What is the reason for this? It is because on that day the fish and fowl were created, [and they do not receive their sustenance by performing work for people. They are sustained by the kindness of G-d alone — Rashi] (Shabbos 156a)

The Question:

The Talmud also states that “there are three distinguishing marks of the Jewish people. They are merciful, they are shamefaced, and they perform acts of kindness.” (Yevamos 79a) If every Jew is naturally kind, what is unique about the individual born on the fifth day?

The Explanation:

The operative word is in Rashi’s comment, that the fish are sustained “by the kindness of G-d alone.” The kindness of G-d is inherently unlimited, those born on Thursday, therefore, are affected by this transcendent kindness, one that goes

beyond the conventional kindness which is the natural mark of every Jew.

In order to become capable of achieving this degree of Divine generosity, a person must first achieve self-transcendence. As long as we remain tethered to our self-conception and concerns, we cannot give ourselves entirely to the other. Only when our identity is subsumed within G-d’s can we give, like G-d, without constraints.

This is also alluded to in the creations of the fifth day, the fish. Fish enjoy fecundity, a mark of G-d’s infinite kindness, and are also totally subsumed within their source of life — the ocean. Their lack of separate identity, their total dependency on the ocean, makes them open to G-d’s kindness.

The Lesson:

The blessing of fecundity was given to Yosef and his children, as Yaakov said, “may they multiply abundantly like fish, in the midst of the land.” Our generation are children of the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, who liberally spread the wellsprings of Chassidus as far as he could, without any concern for criticism. We, too, must exercise this Divine, transcendent kindness, and continue to share the inner light of the Torah without any constriction or concerns.
