

# CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

*by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin*

There are moments when it all makes sense, when the clouds part and you actually see the light.

Krias Shema commands us: "You shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your resources.... Let these matters that I command you today be on your heart." Gutte Yidden explain that often we are so preoccupied with the daily grind of existence that we don't allow Hashem's words to actually enter our hearts. This should not dissuade us from doing mitzvos. Their merit will rest on our hearts, and when we have a moment of inspiration, our hearts will open and those spiritual sparks will enter.

Living in this "real world" is not spiritually easy. There is so much distraction and so much annoyance. Torah Yidden are also all too human, and the noise gets to us as well. But we have mitzvos to perform, and their merits rest and wait on our hearts.

Then there are those magical moments of inspiration. Our hearts open, and in flows all that sweet nectar of Hashem's love for our actions. How else can we explain the sudden rush of holiness we feel at certain moments? There is no script that can tell you when the moment will arrive or what will set it off. It could be a certain sparkle in your child's eyes. Perhaps it is a song sung extra sweetly late one Friday night, its kedusha heard as if for the first time. These are the catalysts that open our hearts to receive the reservoir of Hashem's goodness.

I make it a point to tell young students who are becoming involved in Yiddishkeit that they should look for opportunities to see spiritual greatness in action. They should try to witness moments of holiness by watching tzaddikim daven, by observing them at simchos and by hearing them sing songs of happiness. This way they will store up heart-opening images for the future.

Those raised in a frum atmosphere often take such things for granted. Yet when we are blessed with such examples of G-dliness, we should savor them tenderly. In a callous world not really conducive to spirituality, it is even more vital for us to grasp whatever comes our way. It is not enough to feel that our adherence to Torah despite the secular atmosphere surrounding us will allow us to thrive. Ultimately, adherence without tangible inspiration always becomes stale and in need of revitalization.

Anyone who ever witnessed the Pnei Menachem call out "Lechaim!" at a tish, or saw the Lev Simcha pace back and forth during davening, has within his mental landscape a vision of true holy simcha. You can recall it forever and remember how warm and loving you felt while there. I can easily

conjure up the image of the many times I witnessed the Bobover Rebbe dancing at simchos. His whole countenance shone in Divine happiness. When he danced before a kalla, you actually felt that the angels were standing alongside, clapping and singing in joy. These were moments that opened the heart and allowed all those mitzvos lying there to fall inside and take root.

King David describes such moments in this kapitel. Listen with your heart, and you can feel his joy.

*Ascribe to Hashem, you sons of the mighty, ascribe to Hashem glory and might.* We are told that "the sons of the mighty" refers to angels. Angels know full well the glory and might of Hashem. But we also know that, through the Torah, we humans can aspire to an even greater understanding. To ascribe connotes preparing. Through our performance of mitzvos, we prepare for an angelic understanding.

*Ascribe to Hashem the glory due His name. Prostrate yourselves before Hashem in the splendor of holiness.* If you seek glorious simcha, true inner happiness, then you must seek it in Hashem's ways. Only there is simcha forever. Stretch yourself out, delve into Hashem's Torah, and you will experience true splendor.

*Hashem's voice is on the waters....* Stop and listen. Hashem calls to us from every nook and cranny. The Yid who is sensitized through a Torah life can hear Hashem wherever he is.

David specifies hearing Hashem's voice on the waters. Yes, you really can hear it there through its majesty. I have walked at the waters' edge with some very special, holy Yidden. Seeing the way they gazed at the ocean waves was a lesson in tefilla.

*The voice of Hashem in power! The voice of Hashem in splendor!* You can find Hashem's energy both in the strength seen in nature's powerful events and in the still splendor of His creation. Have you ever thought about what draws you to certain settings and the feelings you have for their beauty? There is no scientific reason to explain why we should feel inspired by nature's astounding sights. The sight of beauty is the greatest proof that we were created by a loving Essence. When we see majestic sights, our hearts swell and we proclaim their beauty for no rhyme or reason. It is simply because something deep inside recognizes that Hashem lives within them, within their uniqueness.

*The voice of Hashem breaks cedars. Hashem shatters the cedars of Lebanon.* The cedar tree is tall and majestic, but it bears no fruit. Hashem's voice, His Torah, can cut through such vain barrenness and bring forth green shoots of generations to come.

In our generation, we witness this every day. High and mighty people who thought they knew all the secrets to success sit barren in their old age, bereft of any nachas from their generations. They spent their lives in huge mansions where they held gala parties to which all were invited all, that is, except Hashem. And then, wonder of wonders, some of their young offspring allowed Hashem's voice to permeate their lives. In doing so, they shattered the cedars, their elders, but in reality they are giving them true happiness.

*The voice of Hashem hews flames of fire. The voice of Hashem sends a tremor through the wilderness....* There is such joy in these words. We often use the expression a firedike Yid, "a Jew burning with fire." Hashem's holiness can burn through any coldness of heart and cut through all the numbness everyday tedium brings. Even the driest, most desolate desert can tremble with Hashem's spirit. Yidden who may seem so far away, so bleached of any warmth, can become as molten lava when they open themselves to Hashem's voice.

*Hashem sat enthroned at the flood. Hashem is enthroned as King forever.* Even when there was nothing else but disaster, when the flooded world was destroyed under the weight of mankind's own evil, even then Hashem was the Creator. He waited and saw Noah through those times of darkness, and through Noah a new world was born. The rainbow that appeared following the flood is the symbol of Hashem's constant patience. He awaits our return, waiting for us to open our hearts.

*Hashem will give strength to His people. Hashem will bless His people with peace.* Here we receive a wonderful promise: Hashem is going to give us strength! There is no debate here, no questions. Hashem will do this for us if we but accept it.

I am constantly astounded at the strength of Yidden. Simple folk, people without much learning or sophistication, often show such faith and strength that it can only be a gift given directly by Hashem. It would take a whole book just to describe some of these examples. If you want a few, go visit Yidden in the hospital or listen to loving mothers who care for ill children.

The word for peace in the holy tongue is shalom. The word shalom has its roots in shaleim, wholeness. Peace can only be ours with wholeness of being. That is why one of Hashem's names is Shalom, for His is the only true Oneness.

This, then, is Hashem's direct blessing to us. Wholeness is the peace we desire. It can be ours if we accept the joy Hashem desires for us and allow it to warm our heart.

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