

MY MASTER IS IN ME

by Rabbi Dovid Green

This week's parsha begins at the peak of the dramatic saga of Yosef and his brothers. Yosef frames Binyomin, and he is now to remain in Egypt as a slave to Yosef. Yehudah is responsible for Binyomin, and is determined to have him back at any cost. He approaches Yosef and begins a monologue which leads up to Yosef revealing himself to his brothers.

The Sfas Emes (Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter, the spiritual leader of the Gerer Chassidic dynasty, 19th century) explains this in a different light. Although we always understand scriptures in their plain meaning, there are many different levels of meaning in the Torah. They are no less valid. He states that in everything in this world there is a degree of holiness, which is the divine life-force which sustains it. Nothing is void of this deep internal point of sanctity. The goal is to find it and connect with it. How do we do it? We see the way through Yehudah's approach to Yosef.

And Yehudah approached him, and he said "Please, my master, let your servant speak a word in the ears of my master." "Please my master" is the meaning of the Hebrew words pronounced "bee adonee". The words really mean "my master is in me", but it is an idiomatic phrase commonly used as an expression of request. According to the interpretation of the Sfas Emes, it should be understood plainly, "my master is in me". Everyone has holiness from The Creator in him. Finding it depends on the amount of effort one is willing to expend in finding it. Yehudah, and his brothers were ready to take Binyomin at any cost. It was do or die at this point. They were in a state of complete abandonment to this goal.

At the point that nothing else mattered more than getting back Binyomin, and the brothers were willing to give everything for it, then Yosef reveals himself to them. At that point "Yosef" is no longer able to hold back, and he who was seen as a foreigner and a threat, is recognized as a brother.

When we take the position of Yehudah and his brothers, and we abandon ourselves to finding our true essence (represented by Yosef) with a determination, then it reveals itself to us, just as Yosef did to his brothers. Living daily with the belief that "bee adonee", my master is in me, changes our approach to life. It gives one a respect and awe for the entire creation, including oneself.

Our collective goal in life is bring to realization that "my master is in me". We only see the "clothing" of the soul of the universe. The more we internalize the attitude, the closer we become with that reality.

Good Shabbos!

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