

אושר החיים

לע"נ ר' חיים יוסף ליב בן ר' שאול יצחק ז"ל

The Essence of *Klal Yisroel*

In the third *perek* of *Avos* (3:2), *Rabbi Chananya ben Tradyon* says, "*Shnayim sheyoshvim vi'ein beineihem divrei Torah, harei ze moshav leitzim... aval shnayim sheyoshvin vi'yeish beineihem divrei Torah, Shechina shruya beineihem...* - Two who sit together without discussing any words of *Torah*, are considered a group of scoffers...but when two sit together and discuss words of *Torah*, the *Shechina* dwells amongst them."

We may ask, that when discussing those who do not talk about *Torah*, it is explained that their very nature is considered a *moshav leitzim*. However, when describing those who discuss *Torah*, the *Mishna* does not seem to describe to us *who* they are, but rather turns to the high level of *ruchnius* that was achieved; namely, to bring the *Shechina* amongst them. While this is indeed commendable, the *Mishna* does not seem to give a description about they themselves, just as it did regarding the *moshav leitzim*.

We may explain this based upon the following *Gemara* in *Kesubos* (66b). *Chazal* relate to us the story of how *Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai* was once riding on a donkey outside of *Yerushalayim*, followed by his *talmidim*, when he saw a young woman that was gathering barley from amongst the manure of the animals of the Arabs. This woman looked up at *Rabbi Yochanan*, and asked him for *tzedakah*. When *Rabbi Yochanan* asked her who she was, she replied, "I am the daughter of *Nakdimon ben Guryon*". *Rabbi Yochanan* was completely taken aback! This young woman had come from such wealth, and now she is picking out morsels of food from amongst the dung of animals?! He asked her about all of her father's previous wealth and where it had gone, to which she replied, "*Rebbi*, my father's house did not give *tzedakah* in the way that was expected of them...". The *gemara* tells us, that *Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai* cried, and said, "***Ashreichem Yisroel***, at a time that they are doing the *ratzon* of Hashem, there is not a nation that has control over them. And at a time that they are not doing the will of Hashem, He gives them over to the hands of a lowly nation – and not just to a lowly nation, but to the animals of a lowly nation!"

The *Maharsha* asks, we may understand the words that *Rabbi Yochanan* said, '*ashreichem Yisroel*' when we are doing the Will of Hashem. However, how can he also refer to the falling of *klal Yisroel* down to the lowest levels, with these same words of '*ashreichem Yisroel*'?!

He answers, while each of the nations of the world has a spiritual ambassador; or a *mazal* in the heavens, *Klal Yisroel* is different. *Klal Yisroel* does not have any *mazal*, nor do they have any emissary. Rather, their very essence and being, is that they are directly

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פרק ג'
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to Hashem. As long as they are doing the Will of Hashem, the *Shechina* is together with them. However, as soon as they go astray, the *Shechina* departs from them. Thus, we can say “*ashreichem Yisroel*” – since *all* of your actions express your true essence of being connected to Hashem. While this is surely seen at a time of fulfilling His *ratzon*, it is also seen when you, *chas veshalom* fall, and the *Shechina* departs from you.

We may now return to understand the statement of *Rabbi Chananya ben Tradyon* in *Avos*. When two *yidden* are together and do not discuss any of the *Toras Hashem*, they are clearly not doing His Will. Thus, when the *Shechina* departs from them, their very *metzias* at that moment, is nothing more than a *moshav leitzim*. However, as soon as they sit and discuss the holy words of *Torah*, the *Shechina* is now amongst them. The *Mishna* is teaching us that this is not just a great spiritual achievement. Rather, it is telling us of *the very essence of Klal Yisroel*. How would we truly define *Klal Yisroel*? As a nation who are together with the *Shechina*!

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The author's *sefer*, “*Passion for Perfection*”, includes topics such as: recognizing one's ability for spiritual greatness, the greatness of *Klal Yisroel*, *bitachon*, *tefillah*, *teshuvah*, as well as many more subjects. The *sefer* can be purchased at select *seforim* stores, from the distributor - *Zundel Berman*, or directly from the author at OsherHachaim@gmail.com.



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