

Is'arusa dili'ayla and Is'arusa dili'sata - Part 1

פרשת בא

The concepts of *is'arusa dili'ayla* (Divine awakening, or encouragement) and *is'arusa dili'sata* (self awakening and encouragement) are well known to students of Jewish theology and kabala. The Zohar states as follows:

אחרי מות שני בני אהרן, רבי יצחק פתח, (תהלים ב יא) עבדו את יהו"ה ביראה וגילו ברעדה, וכתוב (שם ק ב) עבדו את יהו"ה בשמחה באו לפניו ברננה, הני קראי קשיין אהדי:

אלא הכי תאנא, עבדו את יהו"ה ביראה, דכל פולחנא דבעי בר נש למפלח קמי מאריה, בקדמיתא בעי יראה, לדחלא מניה, ובגין דחלא דמאריה, ישתכח לבתר דיעביד בחדוותא פקודי אורייתא, ועל דא כתיב (דברים י יב) מה יהו"ה אלהיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה:

After the death of the two sons of Aharon – [In order to explain this *pasuk*] R' Yitzchak began as follows: (Tehilim 2:11) "Serve Hashem with fear, and rejoice with trembling" and it states (Ibid 100:2) "Serve Hashem with happiness, approach him with rejoicing". These two verses are [seemingly] contradictory [the first verse enjoins a service of Hashem characterized by fear and trembling whereas the second demands a service attended by happiness and rejoicing]

But this is how to understand [lit. learn] these verses. "Serve Hashem with fear" – for every service which man wishes to serve Hashem, it initially requires [the *midah* of] fear, to fear Hashem, and because of the [merit of attaining the] fear of the Master, one will find afterwards that he fulfils the dictates of the Torah with rejoicing. Regarding this it is stated (Devarim 10:12) "What does Hashem your Lord require of you but to fear"

The message of the Zohar is clear. In order to rise to the heights of spiritual inspiration, one must first devote a certain measure of personal effort, referred to as "fear of Heaven"; in other words, *is'arusa dili'sata*. As a result of his achievement, he will then "find" himself serving Hashem with the highest levels of joy, inspiration and *diveikus*. These levels of inspiration constitute a reward for the small measure of *yiras shamayim* he invested initially. They are a gift from Hashem. These profound levels of Divine "awakening" and "encouragement" are what is referred to as *is'arusa dili'ayla*.

The idea that fear of Heaven is the sole purview of mankind can be found in the Talmud: "הכל בידי שמים, חוץ מיראת שמים" – everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of heaven (Berachos 33b). First one must invest his own efforts; only then does Hashem reciprocate with the greatest measure of recompense. "פתחי" – לי פתחא כחידודא דמחטא, ואנא אפתח לך תרעין עלאין" – Just open up for me a small opening, the size of a needle hole, and I will reciprocate by widening the hole to the size of a huge gateway! (Zohar: Emor 95a) This is the way of Hashem. First one

must *choose* righteousness; **ובחרת בחיים**. Only then can he look forward to an especial *siyata dishmaya*, an *is'arusa dili'ayla* from above.

However, when we study the *darchei* Hashem further, we find a *hanhaga* which differs dramatically from the one just described. Sometimes Hashem advances an *is'arusa dili'ayla* with little or no involvement on the part of man.

ואור ביום ראשון איברי והכתיב ויתן אותם אלהים ברקיע השמים וכתיב ויהי ערב
ויהי בקר יום רביעי כדרכי אלעזר דאמר רבי אלעזר אור שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא
ביום ראשון אדם צופה בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו כיון שנסתכל הקדוש ברוך הוא
בדור המבול ובדור הפלגה וראה שמעשיהם מקולקלים עמד וגנזו מהן שנאמר וימנע
מרשעים אורם ולמי גנזו לצדיקים לעתיד לבא שנאמר וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב
ואין טוב אלא צדיק שנאמר אמרו צדיק כי טוב

Was the light really created on the first day? Is it not written "and Hashem placed them in the firmament of the heavens" and it is written "and it was evening and it was morning the fourth day"? This accords with Rabbi Elazar, for Rabbi Elazar states, the light which Hashem created on the first day, Adam was able to perceive (with this light) from one end of the world to the other end. But when Hashem looked at the deeds of the generations of the *mabul* and the generations of the *haflaga* and saw that their deeds were corrupt, He stood up and hid (this light) from them as it states "he withheld the light from the wicked". And for whom did he save it? For the righteous in the future as it states "and Hashem saw that the light was good" and good refers to the righteous as it states "elevate the righteous for they are good". (Chagiga 12a)

The "light" referred to in this ma'amar Chazal is obviously not physical; rather, it refers to profound spiritual revelations. The question seems obvious. If Hashem saw that the light would have to be hidden, why bother creating it in the first place? The answer is, the very existence of this light makes it so much easier for the truly righteous to attain the heights of spiritual achievement, even right now.

Our sages tell us that when a fetus is in its mother's womb, an angel comes and teaches it the entire Torah (Nidah 30b). The fetus is able to "see from one end of the world to the other", which means that its ability to comprehend is not hindered by corporeal limitations. However, as soon as it is born, **בא מלאך וסוטר על פיו**, an angel comes and strikes him on his mouth thus causing him to forget the entire Torah. If the fetus is destined to forget everything he learned, why bother teaching it to him? Once again, the answer is it is so much easier to internalize the precepts of the Torah if you were "already there" once before.

These examples demonstrate that sometimes the *hanhaga* of Hashem is to advance a totally *unsolicited* assistance, an *is'arusa dili'ayla* which is not preceded by an *is'arusa dili'sata*. What is the reason for this *hanhaga*? Because Hashem wants us to exercise our free will to attain the loftiest levels of spiritual achievement. By revealing to us these levels in advance, He thus enables us to attain them even after they have been taken away from us. After all, we are only returning to what already was. This is the pattern of all *is'arusa dili'ayla* which precedes *is'arusa dili'sata*. First Hashem reveals, then He conceals. He then expects us to find our way back to the revelation via our own efforts.

Nowhere can this *hanhaga* be more clearly seen than in the events which transpire in this week's *parsha*.

ואכלתם אותו בחפזון... אבא חנן אומר משום רבי אלעזר זה חפזון שכינה, ואף על פי שאין ראיה לדבר זכר לדבר שנאמר קול דודי הנה זה בא מדלג על ההרים מקפץ על הגבעות, ואומר הנה זה עומד אחר כתלנו

"And you shall eat it hastily"... Aba Chanan posits in the name of Rabbi Elazar, this refers to the haste of the Shechina. And although there is no proof to this, there is a remembrance (i.e. hint). It states "behold the voice of my beloved approaches, skipping over the mountaintops, leaping over the hilltops" and it states "behold he is standing behind our wall, looking through the windows" (Yalkut: Bo 199).

After such a protracted stay in Egypt, the *kedusha* of the *bnei Yisrael* was seriously compromised. They were destined to be the chosen nation, the *am mikabley haTorah*. But extended exposure to the *tumah* of *mitzrayim* had caused them to sink to the lowest levels of impurity. How could they be elevated so quickly from the deepest levels of corruption and impurity? How could they possibly be made worthy to stand at Mount Sinai and accept the holy and eternal Torah?

Only through a superlative infusion of *is'arusa dili'ayla* could the Jews be transformed. Only through the very appearance of the Shechina itself could the *yidden* be saved. In His "haste", Hashem, so to speak, leapt over mountains and skipped over hills to save His beloved. It was the greatest demonstration of *is'arusa dili'ayla* the world had ever seen. Even in the depths of impurity, even in the midst of the most profound degradation imaginable, the Jews were elevated to the highest levels of spiritual awareness, to an awareness that the *baal hagada* refers to as "*giluy Shechina*", a revelation of the very Shechina itself.

But as we mentioned before, there is a system to such a *hanhaga*. First Hashem reveals, then He conceals. This was the purpose of the subsequent *yimey haSefira*. After witnessing all of the miracles in Mitzrayim, after experiencing the revelation of the Shechina as expressed in the plague of *makas bechoros*, the Jews were expected to recapture the incredible levels of revelation they had been exposed to via their own efforts.

In the coming weeks, we will discuss the dangers associated with such a *hanhaga*. We will understand why it was that the Jews were able to sin after the great revelations of *kerias Yam Suf* and *mattan Torah*. And finally we will understand why it was that the Jews insisted on hearing the Torah from Moshe rather than hearing it directly from Hashem.

Good Shabbos!