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Vayigash Seeing the Truth

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Vayigash – Seeing The Truth

“Woe To Us From The Day of Judgment, Woe To Us From The Day of Rebuke”: When The True Perspective Is Revealed

In *Parshas Vayigash*, Yosef reveals to his brothers: “*I am Yosef, is my father still alive?*” The brothers were so ashamed that they could not answer him. The words of *Chazal* about this verse are well-known: “Woe to us from the Day of Judgment, woe to us from the Day of Rebuke. If Yosef was only the youngest of the brothers, yet they could not face him, surely this will be by the Day of Judgment, where man will have to give an accounting before Hashem.”

The brothers were ashamed from the sale of Yosef, in spite of the fact that they had reasoned at that time that it was permitted to sell him. But from a deeper understanding, they became ashamed because they had thought they had been speaking all this time to just an Egyptian king, and when they were informed that they were really speaking with Yosef, they realized that the reality wasn't how it had seemed.

It quickly dawned on them that their opinion of Yosef had been incorrect. They had thought that Yosef was a slanderer, and therefore they did not speak with him, for they felt hatred towards him. Now that they realized that this Egyptian king was really Yosef, they realized that Hashem was showing them that their opinion about Yosef had been incorrect all along.

This is the depth of the realization, “Woe to us from the Day of Judgment, Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke.”

Seeing The Reality In Front Of Us

When a person starts out life, he is a child, and he comprehends things based on how they appear superficially. An infant can only eat and nurse. He thinks that everything he sees is food, so whatever he finds he puts in his mouth. Slowly as he grows and develops, he sees things differently. But instead of seeing everything as food, he will see everything as a game. Everything becomes like a toy for him to play with; life to him is like one big game to have fun with. Slowly he gets older and he sees things differently. After maturing, not only physically but also mentally, he begins to see a different world than what he saw until now. He sees more and more worlds as he develops.

When he turns 13 years of age and gains *daas* he sees another world based on what he has absorbed until now. When getting married, his perspective has changed again since he has a more mature perspective towards life than beforehand. It seems that as a person grows older and matures, he absorbs more comes to understand his reality better.

But the truth is: “Woe to us from the Day of Judgment”. If a person didn’t merit the light of Torah, and the light of the *neshamah* (his portion of G-d Above), he never sees what is really in front of him. Instead, he will see other things. Just as the brothers thought they were speaking to an Egyptian king and then they realized it was Yosef. Their initial perspective towards Yosef was instantly changed, from distaste to awe and embarrassment. This is the same with how our view can change towards life. There are deeper and deeper layers to life which we can see, for Hashem has created the world with depth upon depth.

Even when people gain a more mature perspective towards life, they don’t always see the truth. Even if a person merited to grow up in a Torah home and he knows that the purpose of life is to do Hashem’s will and to learn Torah with exertion and to do the mitzvos, **he doesn’t always see the truth of what is in front of him.**

Chazal say, “Woe to the creations who are seeing, but they don’t even know what they are seeing.” It seems to a person that he is seeing the world, when he views it with his physical eyes. But he does not realize that he is not even seeing the reality that is really in front of him. The physical world and the spiritual world within it, are two totally different worlds.

It is clear that nobody sees what’s in Heaven. Physical eyes cannot see it. But upon deeper analysis, most people don’t even see the world in front of them – not even This World itself!

When one comes to the Day of Judgment, he will be “judged” for his deeds, but it is also the “Day of Rebuke” - what is this ‘rebuke’? It will be a “rebuke” when he is shown his own reality. He had thought that his own reality had been a certain kind of reality, and he will be shown that his actual reality is totally different.

There is a statement in *Chazal*, “A judge does not see except what his eyes see”. The Alter of Kelm explained: “He is not blamed for what he has decided now that he has seen it that way, but he is blamed for seeing it that way.”

When a person is truly studying Torah and it has become truly absorbed in his innards, then his entire reality becomes enlightened through the light of the holy Torah. He receives holiness from Hashem, and he changes within himself. He doesn’t just become more of a Torah scholar. He doesn’t just become more pure and holier. Rather, he sees a different world now.

If he continues to see reality in the same way as before, it means that he hasn’t changed on the inside and is only viewing the world superficially. Even if he merits to learn Torah and performs all of the *mitzvos*, although he will certainly get rewarded by Hashem, he won’t uncover an inner kind of life.

The inner layer of life is to keep seeing deeper and deeper into life. Each time a person takes a look, he can see something else entirely. We aren’t talking about high levels and perceptions such as seeing Eliyahu *HaNavi*, which is a very high spiritual level to reach. We are talking about a kind of life which anyone who wishes to be aspiring, spiritual person can uncover – to keep seeing a different world than before. That is the meaning of true spiritual growth.

External Spiritual Growth Vs. Internal Spiritual Growth

When it comes to spiritual growth, there is an external kind of superficial growth, and an internal kind of spiritual growth. The external kind of spiritual growth is to increase the amount of one's Torah learning, *mitzvos*, acts of kindness, etc. But the inner kind of spiritual growth is to live a life of truth – to keep seeing a different Creation.

Of course, if a person keeps seeing more depth to life and this doesn't cause him to improve the external layer of his life, he is clearly living a contradiction. But the true way to live is that as one increases his Torah learning and dedication to *mitzvos*, his inner-being slowly becomes purified and his perspective towards life begins to change. His perception matures, he sees a more inner perspective towards things, so he will see and comprehend things much differently than a few years ago; he will lead a different kind of life.

The Inner Layer of Reality: There Is Nothing But Hashem's Reality

When a person has this kind of true spiritual growth, his inner perspective will see a world in which nothing matters except for the will of Hashem.

There are many actions that take place in the world, and from a deeper perspective, all of these actions happen due to Hashem's will. There is nothing in Creation except for Hashem's will. From the true perspective, "*His Glory fills the world*".

The Chazon Ish writes that Hashem's reality is "constant" throughout all creations, and that this is "the secret of the world that is concealed, from those who pursue This World." Hashem is everywhere, but He is also hidden from anyone who pursues This World – and this fact is the most hidden and concealed secret, to those who are caught up in vanities of This World. By contrast, if a person doesn't pursue This World, he is a truly spiritual person, who keeps seeing deeper into reality.

Seeing deeper into reality, and having more and more spiritual growth, are all but stages in one's *Avodas Hashem*. The last stage of one's *Avodas Hashem* is to arrive at the "constant reality of Hashem."

When a person is an infant, he sees everything as food. When he gets a bit older, he sees everything as a game. When he gets older, he sees that the world is more complicated; he sees that he needs to worry about livelihood, health, child education, and if he is more spiritual, he worries about he can improve in his *Avodas Hashem*. He thinks he understands reality in front of him. He knows that there are things to take care of, there are successes and failures in life, and that is how the world looks to him.

But the truth is entirely different than this. The inner layer of Creation is that Hashem's reality fills all of the creation. It is not only found with one who is very close to Hashem, who merits recognizing it. This is an ever-constant reality.

Why don't people see this reality? Generally speaking, people can't see it due to the blockage of sins, materialism, and an attachment to the ego.

But there is a straight path that a person can take – to have constant spiritual growth – which enables him to see deeper into reality. He will then see different “worlds” each time; he will see that there is only the reality of the Creator, and that everything else on this world is like a giant covering, which can either conceal the Creator from us, or serve as a means to reveal Him.

That is all there is to reality, and there is nothing else. The countless amounts of creations in this universe, which Hashem has all created, are all but details to Creation. The one point that binds it all of reality together is that anything can either conceal the Creator from us, or reveal the Creator to us. There is nothing but either concealment or revelation of the Creator's reality.

A Life of Clarity

When one is aware of this perspective, and not just as knowledge, but as a perspective towards life which he has absorbed, then he will see an entirely different Creation. He will see a Creation in which there is nothing except the reality of Hashem so he won't become confused or sidetracked by anything else on this world.

Understandably, everyone has difficulties, but the difficulties don't have to leave a person completely bewildered. The difficulties are certainly uncomfortable for a few moments, but it doesn't confuse him completely. He might sometimes eat more food than what he really needs to eat, he might see something he shouldn't have looked at, and he might say something he shouldn't have said – but this doesn't have to confuse his perspective towards life. Life will be very clear to him since he sees one thing alone – the reality of Hashem, which existed before Creation and which will exist after Creation.

When one absorbs the perspective, both in mind and heart, the simple fact that there is nothing in reality other than Hashem's reality – his entire view towards life changes completely. This is not a mere piece of knowledge; it is an awareness that transforms a person on his inside. He will see a different Creation than before. What others see in Creation, he will see completely differently.

This is the depth of the matter that “Avraham *Avinu* was on one side of the world, and the rest of the world was on the other side.” Simply speaking, Avraham separated from the idol worship of the world and he chose to find the Creator. But there is also a more inner understanding which is entirely different. *Chazal* say that Avraham *Avinu* shined the light of *emunah* upon the world, which means that he saw only one thing in the world – he saw that there was only the reality of Hashem, and nothing else. That was all he saw. He realized that the rest of Creation was not the actual reality. He saw that there was only “*Hashem Echad*”, Hashem is One – he is the only one in all of this creation.

Coping In The Troubling Times We Live In

Without absorbing this perspective, a person will have a superficial view of this world. He takes a look at the world today and he sees whatever he sees, but he doesn't see the actual reality. He sees that there are billions of people in the world with many difficulties and hardships. In our generation especially, a person can see nothing but all of the spiritual impurity that fills the world, the many problems which deter us from living truthfully, and the many events which bewilder us. Our eyes cannot bear to see such things, our ears cannot tolerate it when we hear such things, and our minds cannot take it.

If someone doesn't see the complications of this world, he is simply out of touch with anything. But if he does see it, he wonders: "How can Creation continue this way anymore, when there are so many problems, so much pain and so much difficulty? It cannot survive anymore!"

What indeed is the solution to get by all of the difficulties of today? To try to wage war with all of the issues, and hopefully merit *siyata d'shmaya* (Heavenly assistance) to overcome all that has to be overcome? But there is a different way entirely to deal with all that we see – **we can instead see the Creation differently than how we initially saw it.**

Firstly, we can contemplate it intellectually and know it. Secondly, we can let it settle on our minds, so that our minds are at peace with it. Thirdly, we can internalize the perspective which will be entirely different! The difference between these two perspectives is like asking what the difference between the perspective of a three-year old and the perspective of a seventy-year old! If we keep penetrating further and further into the depth of reality, through constant spiritual growth, then we will see a different world entirely.

Reaching The True View

"Woe to us from the Day of Judgment, Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke." When one comes to that day of judgment and rebuke in the future, which he will surely come to – he will be judged for all his deeds, that which he did and that which he didn't do. However, the main thing he will be judged about is: **"How did you see the reality of this creation that Hashem made? What did you see in it?"** How much did you come closer to the perspective of seeing the true view of Creation, in which Hashem's reality is constantly revealed everywhere.

There are people who pursue the materialism of This World, and there are others who are interested instead in Torah and *mitzvos*, but they can also be entangled in the perspective of This World, if they don't see the true perspective towards life. Of course, those who pursue Torah and *mitzvos* in their life are much better off than those who pursue materialism, but most people, even those who exert themselves in Torah study and in doing Hashem's will, are not discovering the hidden layer of reality, which is the true reality.

In order to see it, a person needs to get there by increasing his Torah study and his performance of *mitzvos*, and through purifying his *middos*. But he also needs to have quiet times every day for contemplation, as the Chazon Ish writes in *sefer Emunah U'Bitachon*. If a person contemplates the truth about reality, amidst the most tranquil and inner place inside himself, using the understanding of his heart he can slowly open a new 'window' to look into the world from. He will become a new being entirely, as if he is born anew.

This is an inner kind of vision, and it is impossible to describe it exactly using any of the twenty two letters of the *Aleph Beis*. But it is a world which all our *neshamos* yearn for. It is a world where the truth is lived and realized. It is a world where a person lives with a palpable closeness with Hashem, at all times, an ever-constant reality.

In Conclusion: Living A Life of “Nochach P'nei Hashem”

“Woe to us from the Day of Judgment, Woe to us from the Day of Rebuke”. One needs to bring his life to a level of constant spiritual growth, and at times, he will be able to see deeper perspectives into reality. It brings a person to a life of “*nochach pnei Hashem*”, to live facing Hashem – for that is the entire reality that a person will see, when he finds it.

One who reaches this will feel a certain bliss that he is heading closer and closer towards the reality of Hashem. As Rabbi Eliezer told his son on his deathbed: “Behold, I am going to bliss, with Hashem.” One who lived a life of “*nochach pnei Hashem*” will see a creation in which everything either conceals, or reveals, Hashem.

Those words of Rabbi Eliezer on his deathbed - “Behold, I am going to bliss, with Hashem” - is the yearning of every soul, to live life in this way. It is a life that is spent on This World with Hashem, and upon leaving This World, a person continues to live with Hashem in front of him, getting closer than before. And when one finally merits reaching the Great Awesome Day of Judgment in the future, where all hearts will be returned to Hashem, it will be a recognition of truth, a simple and palpable recognition – that the entire reality of life is nothing but “*nochach pnei Hashem*”.