Chaye

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AVRAHAM LISTENED TO *Ephron, and Avraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the sons of Chais, 400 shekels of silver, accepted by the merchant*. Mundane, right? You can just see the scene, a large gathering of everyday people going about their everyday business, buying, selling, standing around talking, dealing with their children, while some "prince" of a man is "over there" bargaining with the king for the right to bury his wife in some not-yet-famous cave. It was nothing out of the ordinary for them, but for Avraham, it was beneath his dignity.

However, this is what the GR"A has to say about it:

> They are the 400 worlds that *tzaddikim* will inherit in the future world from that *Chivarta*, as it says in *Idra Rabba*, 128b: 400,000 worlds of the "white" of the skull of *Arich Anpin* emanate down, and from the light of those "white" the righteous will inherit 400 worlds in the future time. We find a hint to this in what the Torah writes, "400 shekels of silver, accepted by the merchant." (Biur HaGR"A, Sifra D'Tzniusa, Ch. 1, p. 19c)

If you learn Kabbalah and recognize all these terms, enjoy. If you don't, then where do I begin if not at the beginning?

The original light of God, called *Ohr Ain Sof* (Light Without End), is too spiritually intense for anything but it to exist. So, God reduces its intensity to allow Creation to exist and man to have free will. The system He created to do this is called the *Sefiros* and *Partzufim*, of which there are very many with all kinds of names performing all kinds of functions just to implement the will of God. This is the main discussion in the halls of Kabbalah.

Not coincidentally, the *sefiros* are structured like a human body. Not physically, but spiritually. So, the first three, *Keser*, *Chochmah*, and *Binah*, function like our three sections of brain. But *Keser*, being the highest, also plays the role of the skull, *sefiros*-speaking. Because, though we relate to our body parts in physical terms, they are really defined more in terms of their function.

Every body part is represented in the *sefiros* on some level, but generally-speaking, *Chesed* is the entire right arm from shoulder to fingertips. *Gevurah* is the entire left arm, and *Tifferes* corresponds to the torso, the body from the waist until the neck. Internal organs are also represented, but instead of bodily fluids flowing through them, it is all Divine light. All of it is just to maintain Creation and allow history to flow, always according to the will of God.

Then comes *Netzach* as the entire right leg, *Hod* as the entire left leg, and *Yesod* as the reproductive organ, the main source through which Divine light flows from inside the system to the world in which we live. *Malchus*, generally, is considered to be the "earth" on which the entire structure stands. One of my latest books, "Heaven to Earth," goes into all of this in more detail.

If you look at the top of your head you will notice that your scalp is white (unless you are bald and get suntanned up there). On a human being, it's just hidden skin under the hair, but in the *sefiros*, it's a very high level of light, one that we only get now after extreme filtering, but which will be more direct in the World to Come. Right now, we get more pleasure from a good burger or salad or something really entertaining, but, believe it or not, that's only a fraction of the pleasure one can get from direct Divine light. In this world, if you ask a person, "Great steak or God?" a lot of people might have to think about that for a bit.

But not in the World to Come. Not even as early as the Messianic Era when we finally get to see what God's light is like without a lot of the filtering. Then, no one will have any doubts about which pleasure is greater. We'll still enjoy a good steak, but not nearly as much as experiencing higher levels of Divine light. In this world, some of the luckier, more spiritual people get to taste a little of that light from time to time, and they already choose spiritual pleasure over physical pleasure.

That's actually not the point right now. The point we're trying to make is how something so mundane as a business transaction can have such phenomenal spiritual consequences. The physical world is completely intertwined with the spiritual one,

one, and when something moves down here, it moves something up there, and vice-versa. But it happens in such a hidden way that we just don't sense it, and we only get excited about what appeals to our senses in the here and now.

Obviously, at least "400" questions still exist, maybe even "400,000." The GR"A explains all of this in his commentary, and the *Sha'arei Chochmah*, a commentary on his commentary, fills in what the GR"A leaves out. If you do the work, you can understand it too. But the main point for now is illustrating how something so seemingly simple and plain in the Torah can allude to the deepest of kabbalistic secrets. You'd be *amazed*, actually—*awed*.

Latest book published: *Derech Eretz*, about how "good manners" is a lot more important to world rectification than people think (Amazon). Almost finished, b"H: *Chanukah Forever*, my latest effort to better understand the depth and centrality of the holiday of Chanukah.

Have a great Shabbos,

Pinchas Winston