

חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

Me'or Einayim

CHERNOBYL · ME'OR EINAYIM, BERESHIT

The true tzaddik (righteous one) is the "one pillar" and yesod (foundation) of the world because he binds and unifies himself with every spiritual level, from the lowest rung of free choice (the letter Tav) up to the highest source (the letter Aleph), and thereby, like a foundation lifting an entire building, raises all the worlds together with himself toward the Alufo (Master) of the world — which is why Chazal teach that the world was created and endures for the sake of even one tzaddik. Whatever befalls him, good or difficult, the tzaddik uses to draw ever closer to Hashem, while the rasha (wicked one) reacts oppositely — growing distant through blessing and only drawing near through suffering. AI SUMMARY

Tractate Yoma: Rabbi Elazar said: From the blessings of the tzaddikim (righteous ones) you may learn the curse meant for the resha'im (wicked ones), and from the curses of the resha'im you may learn the blessing meant for the tzaddikim, etc. And Rabbi Elazar said: Even for the sake of one tzaddik the world was created, as it is said, "And Elokim saw the light, that it was good" (Bereshit 1:4), and "good" refers to nothing but a tzaddik, as it is said, "Say of the tzaddik that it is good" (Yeshayahu 3:10), etc. And Rabbi Chiya said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Even for the sake of one tzaddik the world continues to exist, as it is said, "And the tzaddik is the foundation of the world" (Mishlei 10:25).

Rabbi Shimon ben Lavi said: What is the meaning of that which is written, "If it concerns the scorers, He scorns them..." (Mishlei 3:34)? If one comes to defile himself, the way is opened for him; if one comes to purify himself, he is assisted.

The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Sin dulls the heart of a person, as it is said, "and you shall become defiled (ונטמחם) by them" (Vayikra 11:43) — do not read it as "ונטמחם" but as "ונטמחם" (and your heart shall be dulled). And the commentators explained that the letter tav of "ונטמחם" is interchangeable with the letter tet, by virtue of their shared place of articulation among the letters ט-ל-נ-ת (the letters formed with the tongue against the teeth).

To understand the matter: it is known what our Sages, may their memory be blessed, said in Tractate Taanit: there is one pillar in the world reaching from the earth to the heavens, and who is it? The tzaddik (righteous one). For it is known from what we wrote elsewhere, that the Creator, blessed be He, created all the worlds through the Torah, which are the twenty-two letters of the Torah, in that the Creator, blessed be He, contracted Himself within the letters. The beginning of His contraction and emanation was in the letter Aleph, and afterward He contracted the light of the flow of His glory and splendor, together with the letter Aleph, into the letter Bet; and so with these two letters into the letter Gimmel; and so from letter to letter is the revelation of His divinity, until the letter Tav — for Tav is the final rung, where there is both good and evil: "Tav" can spell "tichyeh" (you shall live) or "tamut" (you shall die), which is the matter of free choice, as is known.

And the true tzaddik must bind himself to all the rungs, even to the lower rungs, which are in the place of free choice, which is the aspect of Tav, and draw himself close to them, rung by rung, by the secret of Tashrak (the reverse order of the alphabet from Tav to Aleph), until the letter Aleph, which is the Alufo (Master/Chief) of the world. For since even the lower rungs were created through the letters of the Torah — for the letter Tav, too, is among the letters of the Torah — there also the Alufo of the

world contracted the revelation of His divinity, as stated; only that it is at the end of the rung, far from the Aleph.

Therefore the tzaddik who binds himself to the Creator, blessed be He, must bind himself to the aspect of all the letters of the Torah, from Tav to Aleph, in order to draw all the rungs close to the Alufo of the world. This is the essence of complete service: that all the lower rungs be raised upward, as is known.

All this is based on what we wrote elsewhere.

And this is "one pillar there is in the world, and who is it? The tzaddik (righteous one)," who is called "echad" (one) on account of the unity (achdut) by which he unifies himself with all the grades, from the earth to the sky — meaning, from the end of the grades, which are in earthliness, which is the aspect of the letter tav, the final grade, up to the sky, which is the uppermost grade, the aspect of the letter alef.

And therefore the tzaddik is also called "kol" (all), as the verse states (I Chronicles 29:11), "ki kol bashamayim u'va'aretz" (for all is in heaven and on earth). And Onkelos translates it, "da'achid bishmaya ve'ar'a" (who grasps/holds heaven and earth) — on account of the fact that he is included together with all the grades and holds fast to heaven and earth.

And therefore the tzaddik is called "yesod olam" (the foundation of the world), which is like the parable of a building that stands upon its foundation; and when one wishes to raise it higher, one raises it from beneath, from the foundation, and through this the entire building that is built upon that foundation is lifted up. So too the tzaddik: when he binds himself together with all the grades, at the time that he is elevated above, he lifts up together with him all the grades — like the parable of the foundation within the building.

This is the meaning of "for the sake of one tzaddik (righteous person) the world was created" — for what purpose did Rabbi Elazar say this, and what does it yield for us? Rather, it teaches us the understanding mentioned above, that the world was created only for the sake of the tzaddikim (righteous ones), who are at the level of "one," who unite themselves with every level, as stated, and who are

elevated through all the levels. And since it is certainly, and all the more so, necessary for every single tzaddik to include himself with all the tzaddikim who are "one" — since he must include himself even with all the lower levels — therefore it says "one tzaddik," even though they are many, for they are reckoned as one on account of unity, as it is written (Exodus 19:2), "And Israel encamped there," etc., "as one heart." And therefore also in Chagigah they said in this language: "There is one pillar in the world," etc.

This is also the meaning of what is said afterward, that even for the sake of one tzaddik (righteous person) the world endures, as it is said (Proverbs 10:25), "And a tzaddik is the foundation of the world" — for were it not for the tzaddik, the world would not endure even a single moment, on account of the deeds of the wicked, who cause the world to fall and separate it from the Alufo (Master/Chief) of the world, as the verse states, "and a talebearer separates alufim (chief friends)" — meaning that they separate the aspect of the tav from the aspect of the alef. And through the bonding and unity of the tzaddik with all the levels, the world is raised above its fall and is elevated and united within the aspect of alef, which is the Alufo of the world. Through the elevation of the yesod (foundation), the entire structure is elevated, and this is why talmidei chachamim (Torah scholars) are called "builders," as the Sages said, "Do not read 'your children' but 'your builders'" — for they sustain the entire structure of the world. And this is through one tzaddik, who unites himself with the lower levels, so that the world endures from its fall, as it is said, "and a tzaddik is the foundation of the world" — meaning he is like the aforementioned yesod, which, when elevated, elevates the entire structure with it.

Therefore, whatever measure the Kadosh Baruch Hu (Holy One, Blessed be He) metes out to the tzaddik, and all the events that befall him, from everything he is elevated and binds himself above to the Borei (Creator), blessed be He. And even if Hashem, may He be blessed, deals kindly with him and shows him a shining countenance in this world, he is very fearful of Him, blessed be His Name,

because He is repaying him in this world — and because of this he cleaves and binds himself to the Borei, blessed be He, more and more.

Likewise, when he sees a curse upon the wicked, he grows stronger and rises even higher, as our Rabbis, may their memory be blessed, learned from Scripture that when the Holy One, blessed be He, executes judgment upon the wicked, His Name is elevated and raised up — this is through the tzaddik, who from everything he sees, whether concerning himself or others, whether for good or for ill, draws

closer through this more and more to the Borei, blessed be He and blessed be His Name, by binding and connecting himself with all the levels, as stated.

This is not so with the wicked: when the Kadosh Baruch Hu brings upon them blessing and good, then, on the contrary, through this they distance themselves from Him, blessed be He, as the verse says (Deuteronomy 32:15), "And Yeshurun grew fat and kicked." And it is written, "Lest I be satisfied, and I deny." But when He brings a curse upon them, then their hearts are broken and they draw themselves closer to Hashem, blessed be He.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)