חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

CHERNOBYL · ME'OR EINAYIM, TOLDOT

How does a person who has drifted from G-d return?

Me'or Einayim

Drawing on the Midrash, which resolves the doubt over whether Yitzchak's servants found water by citing their own report, "we have found water," Me'or Einayim reads the digging of the wells as a spiritual path: a person cut off from G-d through sin must dig back through faith to the living source, a way the Patriarchs taught and Yitzchak restored after the Philistines stopped up the wells of Avraham. On this reading, the servants' discovery of water and the successive wells, including those they quarreled over, mark the stages by which one, through faith, longs for G-d and returns to one's root. AI SUMMARY

On the verse, "The servants of Yitzchak came, etc.": It says in the midrash (homiletical teaching), "We do not know whether they found water or not. When it says, 'We have found water,' it is clear that they found water."

To understand the matter, let us first cite the verse (Jeremiah 2:13), "They have forsaken Me, the source of living waters." For Hashem, blessed be He, is the source from which life flows to every living thing, in every manner; there is none besides Him. Whoever cleaves to Him is attached to the root of life, whose waters do not fail, provided there is no interruption on his own part. But if, Heaven forbid, he cuts himself off from the source through his sins, he loses his life-force from it. On Hashem's side, however, there is no interruption at all, as the verse says (Isaiah 59:2), "But your iniquities have separated, etc."

One whose life-force comes from the sitra achra (the "other side") is described as "broken cisterns," which are gathered waters, into which the nitzotzot (holy sparks) of life-force fell at the time of the shattering. For this reason they are called "broken cisterns." Such a person is cut off from his upper root and is called one who "separates a chief" (Proverbs 16:28).

Therefore the Patriarchs of the world opened the channels of intellect in the world and taught knowledge to those who come into the world: how to dig oneself into the aspect of a well of living water, so as to cleave to the source from which one's life-force is rooted. Their disciples are called "servants," as the verse says, "the servants of Yitzchak," because their service of the Creator, blessed be He, came about through the Patriarchs.

But after the death of Avraham, the springs of that wisdom were stopped up, because the Philistines stopped them up. This is the aspect of the evil that became fixed in man, which gained strength over the world, and the element of earth gained strength; accordingly, spiritual and intellectual power was uprooted. Then Yitzchak his son came and took hold of his father's path. He too taught the above knowledge to the people of his generation, to return to digging toward the aspect of a well of living water, by means of many kinds of intellectual approaches and great, hidden counsels, until "Yitzchak returned and dug the wells of water."

All this comes through faith, which is the gateway to it: that one believe with complete faith that Hashem, blessed be He, "fills all the earth with His glory," that "there is no place devoid of Him," and that "there is none besides Him." Then, through faith, one will long for Him and yearn to grasp and cleave to Hashem, blessed be He. This is the aspect of nachal (a brook), whose initials stand for "Nafsheinu chikta l'Hashem" ("Our soul waits for Hashem"), which comes through faith. Through this one comes to one's root, which is the spring of the well of living water, as above. This is the meaning of "The servants of Yitzchak dug in the nachal," in the aspect of NChL, as stated.

"And they found there a well of living water, etc. They dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also, and he called its name Sitnah. He moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it, and he called its name Rechovot, for now, etc."

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5.5)