חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

LUBLIN · PERI TZADIK, TOLDOT

How can everyday actions and inner thoughts both be repaired?

Peri Tzadik

Drawing on the Talmud's reading of Shlomo's words about white garments and oil as tzitzit and tefillin, and on the Zohar's account of the patriarchs' wells, the author describes a twofold tikkun (repair) of deed and of thought. On this reading, the Shabbat meals correspond to Yitzchak's repair of deed and Avraham's repair of thought, and the third meal, which corresponds to Yaakov, leads to cleaving to the living G-d. AI SUMMARY

And there, in tractate Shabbat, Rabbi Eliezer concluded about this: "And Shlomo also said in his wisdom, 'At all times let your garments be white, and let oil not be lacking on your head.'" This alludes to a complete tikkun, to depart from physicality in the utmost perfection, both on the side of deed, which comes from the powers of the body, and on the side of thought, which is in the brain.

For "your garments" alludes to the garment of a person, which is the body, as it is written, "You clothed me with skin and flesh." For a person is called the soul and the spirituality within him, as is written in the Zohar (II, 76a): that the body is called "the flesh of a person" and not "a person." The color white alludes to the refinement of deeds, as it is stated, "Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be made white as snow," and it says, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The matters of the body are deeds, that is, that he should repair his deeds.

"And let oil not be lacking on your head": oil alludes to chochmah (wisdom), as stated in Menachot 85b. That is, to repair the thought in the brain, so that it will be wholly abstracted from the matters of this world, like one who is about to die and is going to the world of souls.

So too our forefather Yitzchak, who told him [Esav] to make him delicacies, a holy eating, so that through this eating he would merit to be before Hashem, and that He would open his lips and the blessings would come out of his mouth, as it says, "so that my soul may bless you," and as we said, and like the holiness of eating on Shabbat. Therefore he said "before I die," so that he would then be distanced from matters of physicality as if immediately before his actual death. And so Rivkah repeated this about it: "before Hashem, before my death." And so she said to Yaakov, "so that he may bless you before his death," so that he would know that now he would be blessed with the blessings in the utmost perfection, since Yitzchak would prepare himself to divest himself of all bodily matters, as if he were in the world of souls.

Afterward the Gemara says: Another interpretation: "At all times let your garments be white": these are tzitzit (the ritual fringes). "And let oil not be lacking on your head": these are tefillin (phylacteries). This also alludes to these two tikkunim, in deed and in thought. For the mitzvah (commandment) of tzitzit includes all the positive and negative mitzvot (as stated in Nedarim 25a), for it is written, "and you shall do all My commandments." The root of the positive mitzvot, which depend on action, which comes about

through love: this is the white in the tzitzit, "At all times let your garments be white." And the techelet (blue thread), it is said in the Zohar, alludes to yirah (awe), which is the root of the negative mitzvot (as explained in Chayei Sarah, section 7), and through this his garments will not be red through the act of sins.

And from the deeds of mitzvot and transgressions a garment is made for a person, as is written in the verse (Zechariah 3) regarding Yehoshua the Kohen Gadol (High Priest). And tefillin correspond to the thought in the brain. As we say, that the thought in my brain and all my senses and powers should be subjugated to His avodah (divine service), may His name be blessed.

And in the Holy Zohar on this parashah (I, 141a): that the wells that Avraham and Yitzchak dug were in order to be strengthened in complete faith; Yaakov found it already repaired and settled upon it; see there. That is, the endeavor of Avraham and Yitzchak was to repair the damage from Adam HaRishon (the first man), yet refuse still came forth from them. But Yaakov found it already repaired and had no occupation with repairing the damage; rather his occupation was to cleave to the living G-d. Therefore it is said (Taanit 5b) that he did not die, for he was like Adam HaRishon before the damage, and therefore no refuse came forth from him. And the Zohar concludes: "And now Israel are strengthened in him through the secret of the commandments of the Torah, etc., in tzitzit, etc., so too in tefillin, which one places on his head and on his arm, etc." See there.

And the commentators wrote that it is evident that the forefathers' occupation with the wells was akin to tzitzit and tefillin. This is as we discussed: Avraham's occupation was with the secret of tefillin, for he repaired the thought from the damage of Adam HaRishon. And the thought that brought him to sin was what the serpent enticed him with, in what is written, "Even though G-d said, etc.," meaning: even though He commanded, you are not accountable to listen to Him at all. And he said to him, "and you shall be like G-d, etc.," that they would be able to create worlds, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, and this is a denial of Divinity.

And our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, all his occupation was against this: to publicize His divinity, may He be blessed, throughout the world, and that He is the G-d of the earth. And he considered himself dust and ashes, and he also commanded [his household] to keep the way of Hashem, to do, etc., according to all that He would command him. And the tenth test, to slaughter his beloved son, he did not transgress, and through this he repaired the sins of thought of Adam HaRishon, which are the essence of the magnitude of the sin.

Afterward, to repair the act of the sin in actuality that he committed, Yitzchak came with the wells that he dug, which embodied the kavanah (intention) of tzitzit. And he repaired the act of the damage of Adam HaRishon, and the act is the sin in deed, the eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Therefore all of his eating was in holiness, through which he repaired that forbidden eating of Adam. And the essence of the act was the sensation of desire, and Yitzchak's trait was fear and yirah, and through this he was dried out of all desires, as we said regarding what is written, "and he dwelt in the land of the Negev" (and this was explained at the beginning of Lech Lecha).

And through the Shabbat meals we also merit to repair the two matters. The Friday-night meal alludes to our forefather Yitzchak, peace be upon him, in the repair of deed, for immediately at the entrance of Shabbat there is the arousal from Israel's side, in the remembrance of Shabbat and the sanctification of the day.

And the Shabbat-day meal, which corresponds to our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, is the repair of thought and of the chochmah in the brain, and we say, "May its lights dwell in it," that is, the light that was created on the first day, which is the light of chochmah. For in that utterance, "Let there be light," is the revelation of the attribute of chochmah, which is the brain. And one who merits through the two meals to repair the damage in deed and in thought can merit the third meal, which corresponds to our forefather Yaakov, peace be upon him, to cleave to the living G-d.

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

