חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

RUZHIN · IRIN KADISHIN, VAYERA

Can everyday talk make ordinary food holy?

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Eliezer's ordinary conversation could extract holy sparks from food and separate good from evil because he drew on the Torah he received from Avraham. Drawing on the midrash, in which Rabbi Acha says that the conversation of the servants of the forefathers is more beautiful than the Torah of the children, the author reads this as meaning that holy speech rooted in Torah can sanctify everyday words and raise the scattered nitzotzot (holy sparks). AI SUMMARY

In the midrash (the classical rabbinic homilies), Rabbi Acha said: "The conversation of the servants of the forefathers is more beautiful than the Torah of the children." We must understand the word "beautiful," since it means pleasing and splendid. Also, the phrase "than the Torah of the children" implies something more than the Torah of the children, yet that is the Torah itself.

It is known that since the sin of the first man, good has been mixed with evil, and the nitzotzot (holy sparks) are scattered, and each person must raise them up. By what means can they be raised? Through the Torah. For example, if a person wants to eat meat, the Torah commanded us first to check the knife and afterward to recite a blessing over it when eating. All this is so that every matter be done with holiness and purity, and through this one extracts the nitzotzot.

Now let us explain the verse (Bereshit 24:33): "And food was set before him to eat, but he said, 'I will not eat until I have spoken my words.'" This means that the servant said: I will not eat until I have first spoken my words, for through the speech he would speak he would extract the nitzotzot. And he told the story of how Rivkah came toward him, from beginning to end.

To understand how he could extract the nitzotzot by telling stories, the verse says (24:34): "I am Avraham's servant." I received from Avraham that the forefathers learned the entire Torah, and from the right kidney flows the Written Torah, and from the left kidney flows the Oral Torah. Avraham called Eliezer "the steward of my house," one who draws and gives others to drink from his master's Torah. Therefore Eliezer was able, even through ordinary conversation, to extract the nitzotzot and separate good from evil.

It is known that they wished to feed him deadly poison. They sat him down to eat with Betuel at one table, with two bowls, and they put the poison in Eliezer's bowl. But Betuel ate the poison, because Eliezer intended, through his holy words, to separate good from evil. Therefore Eliezer ate the good, and Betuel ate the evil.

This is what Rabbi Acha meant by "the conversation of the servants of the forefathers is beautiful": his conversation was pleasing and splendid, for he had so much holiness that through conversation he could extract the nitzotzot from the food. And by what power could he do so? "From the Torah of the children," meaning that he learned the Torah that was given to the children, and by virtue

of the Torah they can sanctify their speech and, through their speech, extract the nitzotzot from the food. And understand this.

Concluded.

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

