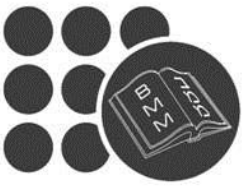
There and Back Again

A Second Journey To Kotzk



Beit Midrash Morasha
@ Arthur's Road
בית מדרש מורשה

1. "And Yaakov called his sons saying 'Come together and I will tell you what will happen to you at the End of Days'" (Bereishit 49:1)
   He desired to reveal the End to them, but the Divine Presence left him. (Rashi)
   They hinted to him from Heaven that they do not want him to do this.
   It is better that his sons shouldn't know the end and the time of redemption, but rather would long for it with great yearning.

2. "And I will take you out from under the burden of Egypt" (Shmot 6:6)
   The first step to freedom is rebellion against slavery.
   Redemption is not possible until you first despise exile.
   "Burden" is an expression of tolerating something.
   Moshe informed the Jewish people
   That The Holy One, blessed is He, would take from them the tolerance
   For the oppression of Egypt and all of the baggage that came with it,
   So that they would not be able to be burdened by it any more.
   And from this foundation sprouted redemption.

3. "And it was **כנגן המנגן** when the musician played or: when like the instrument is the musician) and the hand of Hashem was upon him." (Melachim/Kings II 3:15)
   A pure musician, who has no personal agenda in his music
   Can bring close the Redemption.
   Because the Chamber of Music is close to the Chamber of Moshiach.
   And only then "will the hand of Hashem be upon him".
   And this is the explanation of **כנגן המנגן**
   If the musician has no agenda, like the musical instrument
   Then the hand of Hashem will be upon him.

4. Tears
   Can also be a form of bribery.

5. A great generation
   Can make do with small leaders
   A small generation
   Need great leaders
   Like a desperately ill person who needs an expert doctor
   To heal him from his sickness.

6. "A man over the community" (Bamidbar 27:16)
   A leader who can tolerate every person according to his personality. (Rashi)
   Moshe saw the great importance of Pinchas
   And worried that he would be chosen as the leader,
   And it was not good in Moshe's eyes
   That the Jewish people should have a zealous leader like him.
   Therefore he asked form The Holy One, blessed is He
   That the leaders of Israel would "tolerate every person"
   That he would be a tolerant leader
   And not an extreme and fanatical one.

7. If you have studied much Torah
   Do not hold good to yourself (Pirkei Avot 2:8)
   If you are a great scholar, an instructor of Halacha and a Dayan
   Do not keep the good and lenient laws to yourself
   And the harsh laws to others.

8. There is no danger as great
   As habit.

9. "You must guard My statutes and laws
   That a person must do, and live by them." (Vayikra 18:5)
   That the Mitzvot must be done with life and with fire
   And not from habit, like a learned routine.

10. *And make us habitual in your Torah* (Siddur)
    For Mitzvot, habit is not a good thing
    As it says
    "Their reverence for Me was a learned routine"
    (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 29:13)
    This is not the case when it comes to Torah study
    Here - habit is positive and an accomplishment.

11. The mind of a person is a holy place, the Holy of Holies
The abode and sanctuary of the holy intellect
Therefore someone who thinks evil thoughts or foreign ideas
Is that not placing an idol in the Temple?

12. Some people complain that "foreign thoughts" disturb their prayer.
But are those thoughts really "foreign" to them?
After all, they are their own thoughts.

13. Not everything that a person thinks should be said
Not every that is said should be written
Not everything that is written should be published.

14. "Do not turn after you hearts and after your eyes" (Bamidbar 15:39)
Included in this prohibition
Are people who cannot learn or pray properly
Because they are worried and distracted that they may have done wrong in the past
And their soul is bitter because of yesterday's actions.

15. Death is truly nothing.
It is like a person moving from one house to another.
However the world intelligent person chooses a better house
Than the first.

16. "If you will lend money to My nation,
To the poor person with you" (Shmot 22:24)
Neither gold nor silver accompany a person to his Eternal Home
Only Teshuva and good deeds. (Tana Dbei Eliyahu Rabbah 18)
Therefore, if you want your money to accompany you to the World of Truth
Know that "to the poor person" and only what you give to the poor
Will be "with you" - after many days and years.

17. And you who are bonded to Hashem your God
You are all alive today (Devarim 4:5)
The Yetzer HaRa entices a person and says:
Serving God is bondage
And why do you want to enslave yourself?
The advice is "you are all alive today"
Tell him that today you wish
To serve your creator and no further.
Tomorrow, you will once again say this
And so too every day after that
All the days of your life.

18. "The days of our years in them are seventy years" (Tehillim 90:10)
The words "in them" teach us that in measurements a person has many years
But in essence, all of his years are included in only one hour,
Because all of the *tikkun* of all of the days of his life
Is given only into that hour in which he brought the Torah
From the hidden into the revealed,
That he performed one of the Mitzvot like the Divine Chariot
When he truly served Hashem, blessed is He
That in this he elevates all the days of his struggle
To the goal that was desired from him.

19. A person is commanded in two things:
Not to deceive himself
And not to imitate someone else.

20. "And God created man in his image
In the image of God He created him." (Bereishit 1:27)
A person must protects his image and uniqueness
And not imitate someone else
Not in deed and not in thought
Because in the beginning of creation was "man in his image"
And only afterwards "in the image of God he created him".

21. "When he becomes old, behold he is like an ape" (Midrash Kohelet Rabba 1:3)
Just as is it the way of an ape to imitate people
So too a person, when he becomes old
Imitates himself
And behaves in the way that he used to do.

22. So-and-so is learned!
He learns so very very much.
But when does he have any time available
To know something?

23. Where do we see "a foolish saint"?
Someone who Heaven decreed that they would be a fool
And he goes well beyond the letter of the law
In order to fulfil the decree of Heaven in his foolishness
And thereby becomes even more foolish.

24. Not every person is able to reach the level
That Avraham Avinu, the first Jew
Reached after the age of 48 years.
But every person can walk in the path of Avraham
That he walked in until the age of 48 years
The way of longing and seeking.

25. "And he who increases understanding, increases pain." (Kohelet 1:18)
So what?
It is worthwhile for a person to increase pain
As long as he increases understanding.

26. A *Chassid* is one whom on every word or deed
Asks from himself an accounting
What did I want in this?

27. A *Chassid* has reverence for Heaven.
A *Mitnageid* has reverence for the Shulchan Aruch.

28. There are genii in Torah
However in *Chassidut* there are no genii
In Chassidut you need to toil
Like a blacksmith toils with a hammer.

29. One who wants to be a Rebbe
Must ascend mountains and descend into valleys
To search for treasures, to knock on gates
and gates and gates
Until the heart break, the body crumbles
The heavens and the earth falter
But he still stands.

30. A certain *Tzaddik* has the power to resurrect the dead?
Really?
Resurrecting the dead is the task of the Holy One, blessed is He
A Rebbe of Chassidim needs to resurrect the living.

31. What is the difference between myself and a Rebbe?
A Rebbe helps and assists and lifts every person
Who comes to shelter in is shadow
And lifts every person
To a high level in Judaism.
However I – I do not do this.
I want every person
To work on himself and on his *middot*
And become exhausted in reaching his level.

32. There are some *Tzaddikim* who are prepared to pray
For sick people that they will be healed,
But they do not trouble themselves
To help the household of the sick person
Who are unable to provide for the home.

33. For what purpose does a Jew come into the world?
To fix up his soul?
For that it wouldn't be worth all of the effort.
He comes to uplift the Heaven.

34. Regarding Yaakov our father it says:
"And Yaakov awake from his sleep and he said..."
He prayed, learned, did something.
However with Pharaoh we find:
"And Pharaoh woke up and he slept and he dreamed a second time..."
A dream without action, passing like a shadow.

35. "This time I will thank Hashem" (Bereishit 29:35)
That I have taken more than my share
And now I must thank. (Rashi)
Why is a son of Israel called "Yehudi"?
He is named after Yehuda
And the name of Yehuda – comes from expressing praise and gratitude.
A true Yehudi must believe
That Hashem, blessed is He, does goodness with him
Far more than what is due to him from his actions:
"That I have taken more than my share"
And this is the secret of the name "Yehudi"

36. There are not enough bags in the world
In which to place the great cunningness
Of the strategies of the *Yeitzer Hara*
Against our own strategies.