

The Hidden Treasure Within You

Parshas Chayei Sarah

Transcribed and translated from previous recordings of

HaRav Eliezer Berland Shlit"a

"Avraham bows to the people of the land and says, 'Please give me the cave which is at the end of Efron's field, for full value I will purchase it, so that I may bury my dead'. Efron answers 'No, my Master, listen, may the field be yours, and the cave which is in it, take it! Bury your dead!' Avraham bows and says, 'please, take this money, so I may bury my dead there'..." (briehis 23)

Efron had a wondrous treasure in his backyard, Me'aras HaMachpela. He had Adam and Chava whose dazzling light shone from one end of the world to the other. But to him, Me'aras HaMachpela was just darkness and gloom, an utterly pitch black darkness. Since Adam and Chava were buried in this cave, Hashem made sure that the people would have a terrible fear of the cave, including all kinds of illusions that it harbored demons and ghosts. People were full of dread at the thought of even drawing near to the place. It was in such a remote spot on the slope of a mountain that no one dared wanted to buy it, so clearly Efron knew he was cheating Avraham Avinu when he sold him the cave.

Rebbe Nosson explains, that the holiest place, the holiest tzaddik, anywhere there is holiness, always seems like a place of darkness and gloom, surrounded by demons and evil spirits. As it is written, "The holier a person is from his friend the more empty he seems." "Efron" has the gematria of 400 which is the same gematria as "evil eye," the opposite of a "good eye." So, Efron saw only darkness and gloom in the Me'aras HaMachpela, but David HaMelech had a good eye, about whom as it is written, "beautiful eyes and lovely to see." He saw only the light in each Jew, only the good points in each Jew,

the holy spark in each Jew. A person sees his own light, but he doesn't see the light of others, neither his friends or even at home. Sometimes, a person sees the light of his wife, but she doesn't see the light of her husband. Or it could be the reverse: a woman sees the light of her husband and he doesn't see her light. But in truth, each person needs to see the light of others, because it is very bad for a person to see the other's weaknesses, the other's flaws. The essence of a bad eye is when a person can't stand seeing that his friend is succeeding better than him—that he feels that he is better than his friend. A person is quick to notice that his friend learns more than him or prays more than him. Why should he care if his friend is praying better than he is or learning better than he is? Every single person has a bad eye and no one is ready to accept that someone else is better than he is. If a person was able to accept that someone was better than he is, he would be able to live forever—he would be able to fix the entire world. A good eye is something altogether different. If a person wouldn't be jealous of others, would love others, would be happy with the other person's success, then he would have the eyes of the true tzaddik, who has a completely good eye. This is David HaMelech who has "beautiful eyes and is lovely to see," who is completely focused on the good, and doesn't wish bad on anyone.

Each person has countless treasures; he only needs to remove the earthliness that covers them—to escape from the klippa of Effron, from the bad eye. In every man, in every woman, in every Jewish soul there are unlimited treasures. The Jewish soul is blazing and burning for Hashem--every Jewish soul wants to do teshuva! Every Jew has a heart that is on fire for Hashem, a blazing heart that could burn the whole world. Every Jew has a fiery flame inside, "The eternal fire shall burn on the mizbeach; it shall not be extinguished." **Every single Jew can bring the whole world back in teshuva, even the greatest sinner can make teshuva, because to the extent that he can be bad, so too does he have the power to be good—he has a greater soul.**

This is what is related in the Midrash about Yosi Misita who was a heretic. He denied everything and went and joined the Romans. Whoever kept Shabbos, whoever gave his child a bris at that time was crucified. He saw that the nation of Israel was lost, erased from the earth, and he gave up and said, "Why do I need to be a Jew? I will be a Roman." So he went along with them to burn the Beis HaMikdash, threw torches with them, and before the Beis HaMikdash had finished burning the Roman's said to him, "Wait one minute! Who will go into the sanctuary to get the menorah?" They told him to go in and take something. Everyone knew that anyone who would go into the sanctuary would be burned. Whoever would go into the Kodosh Kodoshim would be burned. Everyone was afraid to enter, so they told him, "Whatever you bring out first is yours to keep." Yosi Misita went in grabbed the golden menorah and came out with it, and they said to him, "Give us that menorah! You can't take it—it's too valuable. Take some goblet, some spoon, but not the menorah!" At that moment his Jewish spark ignited—suddenly his spark was awakened. The menorah lit his inner spark, and he saw that the menorah was completely made up of light. So he held on to the menorah and said, "This menorah you are not going to get. You

are not going to get the menorah." They said to him, "What do you mean we're not going to get the menorah? It's not yours! It's the King's! We need to bring Titus the menorah." He told them, "You will not get this menorah under any circumstances; I will die together with it." And then he was completely aflame, completely on fire for Hashem. "I am returning to Judaism! I will start being a Jew." Cut me into bits!" They said, "OK," and grabbed him and put him on a carpenter's table which was used for cutting wood and began cutting into him, chopping him up. The minute they began cutting him up, he felt pleasure. Each time they sawed into him he felt such pleasure—he was full of joy and exhilaration, and he said, "I take upon myself all this suffering with love! Ribbono Shel Olam, it is good that they are chopping me apart; it is good that they are cutting me. Forgive me for all my sins! How did I join the Romans who killed millions of Jews? How can it be that I didn't realize that the nation of Israel is eternal? Baruch Hashem that they are sawing into these rotten bones, these poisoned bones that led me astray. They led me to where they led me, and Yosi Mesita is now a dedicated servant of Hashem, completely happy while they are cutting me apart, and he is still singing and doesn't feel any pain—a servant singing, 'my soul is sick with love of You.' They are chopping him apart and he is sick with love for Hashem. He only feels Hashem—he feels nothing but Hashem."

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