

The Second Pillar: Revelation of Godliness

written by Yossi Katz

January 7, 2014

II. Second Pillar: Revelation of Godliness

The second fundamental principle is to know that Godliness is being revealed to us all the time – all day and all night. There has been continuous revelation ever since the Creation first came about. On rare occasions the revelation is direct^[1]: your eyes are opened and you become filled with a genuine yearning to come closer to God. You are being called, and you hear it.^[2]

In most cases, however, the revelation is indirect.^[3] The communication may come to us in the most amazing ways, even “back to front”, as it were.^[4] Godly vitality is coming down to us even in the thoughts we have when we feel lazy, heavy, depressed, unenthusiastic, and so on. It comes to us even in the guise of atheistic thoughts, mental confusion, negative ideas and feelings, fantasies, material impulses and cravings, etc. etc. The main thing to know is that whatever you heard, see or experience, whether from a man or a woman, from someone close to you or someone distant, and especially from your wife and the members of your household – all are the words of God calling you to Him.^[5] It is through these communications that the things you need to attain your spiritual perfection are sent to you from above.^[6]

The Gemara hints at this principle when it tells us that “from the day the Holy Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to madmen and children” (Baba Batra 12b.) Prophecy means God’s communication with us, showing us where we are going wrong and what directions we need to go in. The Gemara calls those prophesying in this sense “madmen and

children” because the people giving us this Heavenly guidance are not themselves aware of the true significance of their words. They have their own ideas about what they are telling us and why. Yet even when people tell us things which seem very unfair, there is an underlying message which is for our own ultimate good.

This downward chain of revelation – which may often seem to us as if it is full of contradictory messages – has its roots in the holy controversy in the Mishneh and the Gemara, which contain the discussions and disputes between the Tannaim (the Mishnaic teachers) and the Amoraim (those of the Gemara). Although they disagree with each other, “these and these are the words of the living God” (Eruvin 13b). When it comes to the final legal decision, the Halachah, it has to be according to one of the disputants and not the other. Yet God still caused the other to put forward his opinion giving full proof from the Torah, even though his view diverges from the actual Halachah.[\[7\]](#) When it comes to practice, we have to follow the Halachah as established by the rules of the Gemara. Yet even though the words of the second teacher contradict the Halachah, we must still try to understand his approach, because his are also the words of God.

If we find ourselves faced by contradictory messages in life, that is the way the Creation has been designed in order to give us free will and thereby test us. When we choose correctly and act accordingly, we sift out the good from the bad and bring about the refinement of the Creation. All this relates to why we have to study the Code of Jewish Law, the Shulchan Aruch, every day, as emphasized strongly by Rebbe Nachman (Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom #29). A Halachic decision brings peace, as it were, between the disputing Sages. Since their disputes are the ultimate source of all conflict in the world, a Halachic decision thus helps to resolve conflict in general. Study of the Shulchan Aruch, which is entirely made up of Halachic decisions, thus helps a person make peace in

himself and resolve both his inner conflicts and those he has in the external world. He will no longer suffer from a “divided heart” (cf. Hosea 10). For “When God is pleased with a person’s ways, even his enemies” – these are the thoughts which come from the evil inclination, which make the heart twisted – “even his enemies will make peace with him” (Proverbs 1:7).[\[8\]](#)

In time to come, God “will send to the nations a pure language so that all will call on the name of God, and the idols will completely pass away” (Tzephaniah 3:9). Evil will be turned into good. For it will then be revealed that even attempts to deny God are actually a call to faith. There is a hint of this in the opening words of Leviticus (1:1): “*VaYiKRA* – And He called to Moses”. In the Torah Scroll the letter aleph in this word is written small. The remaining letters of the word, *VaYiKR*, would mean “it happened”. Concealed within all the different things which happen to a person is the voice of God, calling him – the quiet, small voice. Understand this. (Likutey Moharan I:33; 54; 62; II: 12, 78.)

[\[1\]](#) At the Splitting of the Red Sea, the Revelation at Sinai and in the Holy Temple, God’s Presence was apparent to all, and those who witnessed it wanted to serve God wholeheartedly.

[\[2\]](#) When God called to Samuel in the Temple, only he heard, but not Eli, who was then the High Priest (1 Samuel 3:1-10). At that time, it was very rare to hear the Word of God, as it is today. Because of our surroundings, it is very difficult for us to relate to God. We become hardened and insensitive to God’s light. However sometimes we begin to feel an awakening – this is the direct revelation referred to here.

[\[3\]](#) “Every day a voice calls out from Sinai saying: ‘Woe to mankind over the embarrassment of Torah’” (Avot 6:2). The call

for us to recognize God has gone out every single day since the Creation, but it is indirect, reaching each individual in a unique manner through his or her various thoughts, statements, actions and environment.

[\[4\]](#) See above, section I note 7, about why things are not always orderly. Even so. God is still present and can always be found.

[\[5\]](#) “God’s Glory calls out from everything in Creation. Even in the conversations of non-Jews, one can find God.” (Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom #52).

[\[6\]](#) The tefillin are called “ToTaFoT” (Deuteronomy 6:8). “TaT in the Caspian language means two. PaT in the Afrikan language means two. From here we learn that there are four compartments to the Head Tefillin” (Menachot 34b). This implies that even in non-Jewish words or sayings and communications one can find hints to bring one closer to God. (Likutey Moharan I, 33:2).

[\[7\]](#) The Talmud tells of a dispute between the Rabbi Eliezer and the Sages. Rabbi Eliezer called on the forces of nature to change to prove he was right. They did, but the Sages did not budge from their opinion. Rabbi Eliezer then called on Heaven for support. A Heavenly voice came forth saying that the law is according to Rabbi Eliezer. The Sages still held to their opinion – and the law has been decided according to the Sages (Bava Metzia 59b).

[\[8\]](#) “To come to the correct decision, one must have assistance from Heaven” (Megillah 6b).