

The Story of Our Lives: The Lost Princess (#9)

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Stirrings of Redemption

In our previous lesson, the viceroy (the perfect point of righteousness in a Jew) and the lost princess (the youthful passion and excitement in avodas Hashem) have been reunited in the beautiful and orderly palace of evil, where the princess has been made the queen (her power has been usurped and misappropriated, used now for unholy purposes.) Though her appearance has changed, the viceroy yet recognizes the queen as being the lost daughter of his beloved king and begins to wonder how he might be able to bring her home.

He then asked her, "How did you get here?"

Her unmistakable holiness is what jolted the viceroy's recognition that the queen of this evil place was truly the lost princess. It is that very same holiness that now prompts this question, saturated with bewilderment and incomprehension as to how such a holy power could have ended up in this terrible place.

"It happened when my father, the king, threw those words from his mouth ("may the no-good one take you")." She said. "This is the place of evil."

The princess recalls the anger her father had displayed and the dark cloud of hopelessness that had settled upon her world. She remembers how, convinced by the king's words, she had run to her room and given up on ever having a relationship with him again. This feeling of *yei'ush*, utter despair, made her vulnerable to the advances of the realm of evil. Bereft of her connection with her father, she felt as if she no longer had anything to lose and it was easy to allow her holy energies to be redirected for a foreign pursuit. Like an unanchored ship, lost at sea, her perceived lack of unconditional connection to the dock of holiness allowed her to be swept away and controlled by the furious waves of evil "and the wicked are driven like the troubled sea, unable to rest." (Yeshaya 57:20)

If she had believed (mistakenly) that her father had truly stopped caring for her when he uttered those terrible words, there was no doubt in her mind that now, after what had become of her, she had lost all hope entirely. Certainly, the king had grown only angrier with her as the years passed. Surely, she was seen as an embarrassment to the family, her name rarely mentioned and even then in hushed tones. What her future in this place looked like she knew not, but of one thing she was unequivocally certain: there was no point in her thinking about going home. There was nothing there for her anymore.

Picking up on the emotions latent in her words and the sentiments they held, the viceroy tells the princess that she is sorely mistaken.

The viceroy told her that her father was in so much pain and had searched for her for many years.

The inner point of untainted holiness within the Jewish soul is the headquarters for the unconditional relationship with the king that the princess does not believe in. It is the place which the King always cherishes, regardless of how far the Jew has fallen in the pits of depravity and distance from Hashem. Even when all hope seems lost and darkness settles on the face of the deep emptiness one has embraced, the inner tzaddik remains ever shining, testament to the perfectly pure essence of the Jew, awakening the unconditional love that Hashem has for His beloved children.

Therefore, it is the viceroy, the inner tzaddik, that can shake the passion of youth out of her devastating despair and convince her of the great hope that yet shines, like the first rays of dawn, and the sun of renewed closeness with the King that is sure to rise yet again. He tells her that not only didn't her father truly mean the terrible words he had uttered, but his love had only grown stronger as the distance grew between them; "he had searched for her for many years", over time forgiving her for her apathetic attitude that had sparked this whole fiasco and loving her more than he had ever loved her before. (see Tomer Devorah 1:5)

"How can I get you out of here?" he asked.

Having successfully convinced the lost princess of her father's unconditional love for her and his overwhelming desire for her to come back home to him, the viceroy asks how it would be possible to remove her from this place. Since she has lived here for a long time and is familiar with the workings of this evil place, the viceroy trusts that she will

be able to devise a plan for her escape. Additionally, since the princess herself and her powerful energy will certainly be necessary for her return to the realm of holiness, she is the one to come up with the strategy.

She said "It is impossible to get me out of here unless you choose for yourself a place and remain there for a full year."

Because the lost princess is not a standard captive, she cannot be freed by ordinary measures. A military raid on the beautiful and orderly palace of evil will not do the trick. Instead, there are spiritual guidelines to be carried out by the Jewish person with the aid of the confidence emanating from the inner tzaddik. Only when these goals are reached will it be possible to extricate the fire of youth from its captivity and redirect its energies toward the pursuit of holiness.

The first two guidelines relate to the realms of space and time within which human life takes place

1. The viceroy must find a specific **place**. Oftentimes, distance from Hashem and apathy toward yiddishkeit are the result of instability in one's life. When a Jew has not yet found his physical, emotional, or intellectual place, he is too unsettled to build a relationship with Hashem. He has not attained the outer environment and inner equilibrium within which to focus on spiritual goals. Instead of perfect clarity of his mission in life and the realization of how wonderful it is to be a Jew and how many blessings Hashem has bestowed upon him, muddled thoughts of anxiety, self-doubt, and bitterness cloud his vision. He sees no purpose in trying yet again after so many millions of failures, no use in expending effort in endeavors he is certain will bomb. All he can do is mope, blame others, and mourn his situation in life. In this spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually toxic place, it will be impossible to rekindle the spark of youthful excitement toward a life of avodas Hashem. The first condition

for the redemption of the princess is therefore the need to establish a place. Only from a place of health and stability will it be possible to undertake the measures necessary to free the lost princess.

Additionally, the tzaddikim of Breslov teach that the “makom”, place, to which the princess refers is Hashem, who is called “HaMakom”. In another place, Rebbe Nachman explains that Hashem is called “HaMakom” because “every single person has a place by Him.” (Likutei Moharan Tinyana 1:14) The princess is telling the viceroy that to attain the emotional stability necessary to free her, he must believe that he yet has a place by Hashem; that Hashem loves him unconditionally, believes in his ability to right all of the wrongs in his life and that, having been at his side every step of the journey, He knows what you have been through and is therefore able to judge you more favorably than any person ever could. This knowledge will provide him with the foundation upon which to begin building the grand structure of his physical, intellectual, and emotional health and stability.

2. The viceroy must remain in that place there for a specific amount of **time**, a full year. Once one has used the deep-rooted confidence of the inner tzaddik to attain a place of inner tranquility, health, and stability, he must now maintain that place for a complete cycle of time, a full year. Only after maintaining this place of health for a full year and all of the different elements that it contains; the twelve months, each with its own energy, the roller coaster ride of the four seasons, all of the various holidays and the emotions they carry, can a person proceed with the certainty that he has in fact found an island of safety in an unstable world.

In the next installment, we will explore the final three instructions of the lost princess regarding how the viceroy is to spend his year in his newfound place. See you then!

