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Yitro - 5756

This week we read about the giving of the Torah. Besides being the basis of the Jewish faith it is an event unequaled in history.

In fact no one ever so much as dared to invent such a story ... not even the religions that claim to 'replace' Judaism.

G-d, the creator of all spiritual and physical being, actually appeared and spoke to millions of Jews and defined for the first and only time in history what He wants from the world.

But according to Jewish tradition before He gave the Torah 1) He cured all those present from their ailments: The blind saw and the deaf heard. 2) Then He caused everyone to 'See' what is usually heard and 'Hear' what is usually seen (Rashi 20:14). 3) And finally, when He actually gave the Torah EVERYONE died and G-d enlivened them.(Shabbat 88b)

At first glance this makes no sense.

What do these three miracles have to do with the giving of the laws and rituals of the Jewish religion?

What possible difference could it make to future generations if a few people back then were blind or not? And what possible benefit is there in seeing sounds or hearing sights? In fact, what does it mean? How can you see a sound? And why did everyone die?

To understand this, here is a story that, G-d willing, might help . (HaGeula VaYishlach 5766)

The scene is London 1963 three religious bearded Jews are sitting around a table and one, a noted Rabbi and community leader by the name of Rabbi J. was weeping.

The previous day he had called the home of Rabbi Bentzi Shem Tov, one of the

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most outstanding Chabad figures in all London and, when Rabbi Shemtov's son in law Rabbi Nachman Sudak answered the phone, asked if he could meet with them at the place of their choice. .

Now they were sitting together in Rabbi Shemtov's home and Rabbi J. dried his eyes and began his story.

"About a half a year ago I began feeling very weak. At first I thought it might be fatigue. I rested up, took vitamins, took a vacation but it just got worse. So I went to a doctor and he didn't have good news. It was cancer in its advanced stages and he said that at best I have another month or so to live.

"I was devastated. I didn't want to believe it but I had no choice. It wasn't long before I didn't have enough strength to even get out of bed and only with the greatest effort could I move my arms and legs. The end was near.

"I started going over my life from as far back as I could remember to see if there was maybe something I should fix up. Then I remembered that about twenty years ago, in the middle of the war when things were really in turmoil I happened to meet a Chabad Chassid by the name of Yitzchak Horwitz. He was a fantastic Torah scholar and unique personality. I even heard that he was so devoted to learning Torah that he slept only two hours each night. Anyway, I don't remember why, but he gave me a Chabad book called the Tanya that he said would bring Moshiach and I put it on my shelf. .

"To tell you the truth I thought about throwing it out but I didn't. But then on the other hand I was so much against Chabad that I could never bring myself to open it. So it just sat on my shelf for all these years.

"A few days ago I opened it for the first time and read the first chapter.

"I couldn't believe what happened. It took a few minutes but suddenly I felt my body fill with life. I felt good! I got out of bed for the first time in months, walked around the house, I even opened the window and took a deep breath of cool air. It was unbelievable! So I began reading the second chapter.

"Believe me, I got half way through and felt so happy that I actually put a record on the phonograph and danced! My wife thought I was losing my mind and... to tell you the truth, so did I! But I didn't care.

"The next day I rose early and went to the Synagogue as usual, I hadn't told anyone of my illness so no one knew what was happening but when my good health continued for yet another day I decided that it wasn't just an accident.

"By this time I had already read several chapters of Tanya and it wasn't difficult to realize that all these years I was wrong; I had no real Torah justification for my hatred, none what so ever.

"That's why I'm here. I've decided I want to be a Chassid, a follower of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and I want you to tell me how to do it."

They spoke for a while and finally decided that first he should return to his doctor and if the doctor would allow it, he should travel to Brooklyn and see the Rebbe in person. There was no substitute for seeing the Rebbe.

Rabbi J. consulted several doctors, they took tests and surprisingly agreed! They all told him that there was no medical explanation for his improvement, gave him directions what to do if his condition reversed and gave their okay.

Several weeks later he was standing before the Rebbe. It had all come about so suddenly, he had always shuddered in repulsion at the name Chabad and now it was so obvious that the Rebbe was unequalled in holiness and knowledge that he was actually shaking with excitement.

But the Rebbe wasn't enthusiastic about his idea of becoming a Chassid.

"Chassid?" he answered, "I am willing to accept you as a partner. But not a Chassid. A Chassid is something totally different."

That Shabbat he attended the 'Farbringen' (gathering) of the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke for several hours and among his subjects was his disease. The Rebbe pointed out that it was a result of cells that we might think are healthy and normal, increasing in dangerous numbers and although this disease had existed previously, it was now becoming so prevalent that science was desperately trying to find a way to eliminate these extra cells.

The Rebbe compared it to the spiritual world. Brazen egotism have existed since the beginning of time but they are now increasing so rapidly and are so widespread that there must be a solution. And the solution is learning Chassidic teachings. This eliminates these 'extra' and false qualities.

Rabbi J. was elated. After the Farbringen he told everyone he met of the amazing miracle that was happening to him;. how just reading the Tanya and seeing the Rebbe completely cured him of the worst disease and made him young again. When the Shabbat was over he called home and told his wife to advertise the miracle until everyone knew.

The next day, after much requesting and lobbying, he again got an audience with the Rebbe and again repeated his request to be his Chassid. But this time the Rebbe answered more positively, "A Chassid is like a soldier; always ready to sacrifice himself to improve the entire world around him. Are you ready for this?"

He never felt better in his life. He exclaimed that he was ready. It had been almost two months now that he was healthy and he felt it would last for ever.

"I'll begin by telling everyone about my miraculous recovery!" He exclaimed enthusiastically.

But the Rebbe emphatically stopped him. "No! You must tell no one! The first tablets containing the Ten Commandments were given with miracles and thunders and they ended up getting broken while the Second Tablets were given quietly and they endured."

But it was too late. It had already been advertised.

He returned home a different man, full of life and Chassidic joy and began several projects to spread and teach Chassidut but after a few months he contracted a cold which developed complications and, as the Rebbe foresaw, he passed away.

This answers our questions.

The Torah is not just a book of Jewish rituals to get us into heaven.

Rather the Torah is the revelation of the essence of the Creator Himself.

And the Creator is the source of all life, health, spirit and truth. He creates the spiritual and the physical and when He is revealed the spiritual worlds are as nothing.

That is why everyone got healed. Because sickness is just the concealment of life and here pure life was revealed. Something like what the Tanya did to Rabbi J.

That is also why they 'heard' sights and 'saw' sounds: The revelation of the Creator was so great that it equalized the spiritual and the physical. Suddenly all the spiritual worlds that are 'far away' and only 'HEARD about' were near and 'SEEN' while the physical world that we usually only SEE became "heard" (even its most hidden and distant secrets became understood).

And that is why their souls jumped from their bodies! The revelation of pure life was so unusual to them that they couldn't take it. (In fact, that same revelation was in the Holy of Holies in the Temple together with the Ten Commandment Tablets; and anyone who entered there, except the High Priest on Yom Kippur would die from the holiness). And G-d enlivened them to give them a taste of the Raising of the Dead (see Tanya end Chapt. 36)

That is why that Rabbi Horwitz said the Tanya will bring Moshiach (and even the Raising of the Dead). Because the Tanya is the revelation of the "inside" of the Torah; the Tree of Life. It reveals the hidden (seeing what is 'heard') and puts meaning in the revealed mundane world (hearing what is usually seen).

But, unlike what the Rebbe told Rabbi J. today there is no restriction on advertising.

Today, said the Rebbe, we should advertise to ALL the world that the time for Moshiach is here! Soon all the sick will be permanently healed, war and hatred will cease to exist and eventually even the dead will rise!

It depends on us to do all we can to bring.....

Moshiach NOW!!

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