



CHABAD LUMINARIES

ד"ה והיו לבשר אחד

The Reunion of Love and Desire

Offered for Charles Myssy, whose reflections on projection and wholeness gave this discourse its conceptual foundation. This maamar is given in their merit — on the holiness of seeing a whole human being, and on the exile that begins the moment tenderness and desire are placed on separate altars.

On the Holiness of Seeing the Whole Human Being

(Developed in the spirit of the teachings shared by Charles Myssy, whose reflections on projection and wholeness provide the conceptual foundation for this discourse.)

"And they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

"You shall love your fellow as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18)

Hakdamah

There exists a hidden exile which is seldom spoken of.

Many seek to repair the world.

Few realise that the world first became divided inside the heart.

For the destruction of Jerusalem was preceded by division.

The concealment of the Divine Presence was preceded by separation.

Likewise, the exile of love begins when the human being no longer sees another soul as one.

Instead he fragments.

He divides heaven from earth.

Spirit from body.

Holiness from passion.

Tenderness from fire.

Mother from beloved.

Woman from woman.

From that moment onward he no longer encounters another person.

He encounters only mirrors of his own brokenness.

This is among the deepest exiles of consciousness.

And wherever exile exists,

the Shechinah also waits (deep dive into: what is the Shechinah?).

For every exile contains within itself the possibility of redemption.

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Everything that the Holy One created exists as a unity before it becomes many.

Light is one.

Only afterwards does it appear as colours.

Water is one.

Only afterwards does it become rivers.

The soul is one.

Only afterwards does it reveal intellect,

emotion,

speech,

and action.

Division is never the first reality.

Unity is.

This is the secret of "Hear O Israel, Hashem is One."

It is not merely a statement concerning G-d.

It is the architecture of existence itself.

Everything begins as One.

Only lower worlds experience fragmentation.

Therefore whenever man experiences division,

he is experiencing concealment rather than truth.

He mistakes concealment for reality.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that wherever a person directs his thought,

there he himself is found.

If so,

when one's inner world becomes divided,

one's entire perception of reality becomes divided.

He no longer sees people.

He sees pieces.

He no longer sees souls.

He sees functions.

He no longer beholds Divine Image.

He beholds projection.

Thus the tragedy is not merely psychological.

It is metaphysical.

For every projection is a hidden form of exile.

The sages teach that Adam was created alone.

Not because loneliness was the ideal.

But because wholeness preceded relationship.

Only one who possesses himself can truly receive another.

Otherwise he does not love.

He consumes.

He bargains.

He clings.

He fears.

He projects.

For whatever remains unresolved within becomes painted upon the faces of others.

The eyes cease seeing.

The imagination begins seeing instead.

Thus the man believes he is pursuing a woman.

Yet often he pursues only a forgotten fragment of himself.

The child first discovers love through those entrusted with his care.

From there the soul begins building its map of reality.

If tenderness and desire become separated,

then eventually love becomes associated only with safety,

while desire becomes associated only with distance.

The heart begins constructing two altars.
Upon one altar it places innocence.
Upon the other it places passion.
Upon neither altar does it place a complete human being.
Thus both women become imprisoned.
One cannot be desired.
The other cannot be trusted.
Neither is actually encountered.
Only symbols are encountered.
The holy becomes unreachable.
The sensual becomes disposable.
Both become lonely.
Not because either lacks beauty,
but because projection has replaced perception.

This is the meaning of spiritual idolatry.
Many imagine idolatry to be only the worship of statues.
Yet idols are simply frozen projections.
Whenever man attributes absolute perfection to anything created,
he has ceased relating to what stands before him.
He now relates to his own imagination.
The woman upon the pedestal is no longer free.
The woman reduced only to desire is no longer free.
Both have become images.

Neither remains a person.

The Torah opposes idolatry because only G-d may occupy the place of absolute perfection.

Every created being must remain human.

Only then can genuine love exist.

For love requires encounter.

Idolatry requires fantasy.

Where fantasy governs,

love cannot fully breathe.

Therefore understand a profound matter.

The opposite of lust is not purity.

The opposite of projection is presence.

The opposite of fantasy is witnessing.

To witness another soul without demanding that it complete your unfinished story,

this itself is an act of Divine imitation.

For the Holy One does not love us because we satisfy His deficiencies.

He has none.

He loves because love overflows from wholeness.

Thus man's work is not merely to control desire.

It is to sanctify desire until it rejoins love.

For holiness does not amputate.

Holiness reunites.

Where the ego separates,

the Divine reunites.

Where shame divides,

mercy restores.

Where fear fractures,

truth remembers.

And wherever truth remembers,

the Shechinah returns.

For the Presence of G-d dwells wherever unity is restored.

One who arrives at this level no longer says,

"I seek the perfect woman."

Nor,

"I seek only beauty."

Nor,

"I seek only holiness."

Rather he says,

"I seek a soul created in the image of the Infinite,

whose laughter,

whose wounds,

whose strength,

whose weaknesses,

whose body,

whose mind,

whose spirit,

all belong to one indivisible person."

Only then can covenant begin.

For covenant is impossible between projections.

Only persons can enter covenant.

Only whole beings can become one flesh.

Perhaps this reveals another dimension of the verse,

"And they shall become one flesh."

The Torah does not say they become one because they were identical.

Nor because they erased their individuality.

Rather,

each first returns to unity within himself,

and then two unities embrace.

This is not fusion.

It is communion.

Not dependence.

Presence.

Not possession.

Recognition.

This is love before the Throne.

This is desire purified by truth.

This is the beginning of redemption.

For whenever one human being truly sees another,

without dividing them into sacred and profane,

pure and sensual,

worthy and unworthy,
he participates in the work of Creation itself.
He restores the unity hidden since Eden.
And wherever Eden is remembered,
the Tree of Life begins flowering once more.
For the Holy One, blessed be He,
never created two women.
Nor two kinds of men.
He created only souls,
each clothed in mystery,
each bearing heaven and earth together,
each awaiting someone whose eyes have become clear enough to behold them as they truly are.
May that vision awaken within every heart.
Amen.