

As the Spoken Word

In the Kedusha of Shacharit on Shabbat, we say: "may our eyes see Your Kingdom like the word spoken". (ועינינו תראינה מלכותך כדבר האמור).

A spoken word is the final product, the revealed conclusion, of a long and complex process in which the beginning of a feeling or idea comes up from the depths of the mind, takes on the more concrete form of a defined thought expressed in language, and finally emerges out into the world by being spoken - by becoming a spoken word.

This image of the spoken word as the revealed side of a deeper process which is hidden may remind us of a pasuk in Proverbs (25:11):

משלי כה (יא) תפוחי זָהָב בְּמִשְׁכֵּיֹת כָּסֶף דָּבָר דָּבָר עַל אֶפְנֵיֹו :

"Golden apples overlaid with silver is a word well spoken"

The idea in this pasuk is that the golden apples are mostly overlaid with silver, but, like the silver of a havdalah spice holder, there are holes in it. If you look closely, you can see the golden apples. However, a regular glance will reveal only the silver.

So too, the spoken word is obvious, external, revealed. But it conceals behind it the recesses of a human consciousness, which are subtle, internal, hidden.

Rambam, in the introduction to the Guide to the Perplexed, uses this pasuk to explain the nature of Torah. Torah, he says, is like golden apples overlaid with silver. Torah has an obvious, external meaning, and an inner, hidden esoteric meaning.

It makes sense that the Torah, the Word of God, should have both inner and outer layers, because the World, the Work of God, itself has such different layers.

On the outer the level, the World is as we experience it on a day to day level. It is filled with different people and different things - things come into existence and things are destroyed.

From this perspective God is Other - Holy Holy Holy is the Lord of Hosts (קדוש קדוש קדוש) (מלוא כל הארץ כבודו): God is separate, holy in the sense of radical transcendence.

But there is also another, deeper, hidden level to the world, and thus we also say: The whole world is filled with His glory (מלוא כל הארץ כבודו) .

Beneath our day to day ordinary perception of the world, we are sometimes able to glimpse the deeper unity connecting all things, the fact that each and every thing, each and every person, is a finite expression, a specific manifestation, of the infinite and universal God - ein sof - God as the source of all existence.

These moments of perception, flashes of lightening as Rambam calls them, are moments of power and joy, when we feel ourselves organically part of the world - in an intimate embrace with the All.

At these moments our eyes see the Kingdom of God as it says in the kedushah (ועינינו תראינה מלכותך).

But these moments are few. Most of the time, our world is the world of separateness, and God is a Holy Distant God. God's presence everywhere is hidden, unseen - just as the subjective thoughts of another person are hidden until they are revealed to us in the spoken word.

And yet we strive to bring into our ordinary day to day lives, the hidden, internal knowledge that every detail of the world reveals God's presence. We try to see the

golden apples as if they were not overlaid with silver. And thus we say in the Kedusha:

May our eyes see Your Kingdom, Your Presence in the World, revealed to us as clearly as the spoken word is revealed to our ears.

That is: "May Our Eyes See Your Kingdom Like the Word Spoken"

(ועינינו תראינה מלכותך כדבר האמור)

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