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Daughter of Voice

The Psychology of Modern Day Prophecy

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***“Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi says,
Everyday a Bat Kol (lit. daughter of voice) goes forth
from Mt. Horev (Sinai) and cries out and says,
Woe to the peoples [of the earth]
because of the disgrace showed to the Torah.”***

Pirkei Avot 6:2

Rabbi Yehoshua was a profoundly spiritual man who merited receiving Divine revelations almost on the level of the Biblical prophets. Not only did he merit meeting the Mashiah; Mashiah revealed to him the secret of the time of his coming. Rabbi Yehoshua was no stranger to hearing the Divine Voice. There are many famous stories about his experiences. Rabbi Yehoshua was thus a man who knew his place as a human being and as a leader of the Jewish people. As a spiritual master, he was adept and sensitive enough to hear the Divine Voice, when others might only hear thunder or a rustling of the wind.

Rabbi Yehoshua says that everyday a voice cries out from Mt. Sinai? If this is so, how come no one is hearing this voice? (As for those who are hearing voices, we wonder about their sanity). The voice mentioned by Rabbi Yehoshua must not be a physical one, heard with one's ears. Indeed the language specifically refers to something mysterious, a “daughter of voice,” instead of a voice outright. This unique term, Bat Kol, reveals to us a profound method of how the realm of the Divine communicates with man. We must first understand the method of communication before we can endeavor to decipher the incoming message.

The holy Rabbis have stated that this mysterious Bat Kol (daughter of voice) is a minor portion of prophecy. As such the voice is actually the Voice of G-d. Hearing it and understanding its message therefore becomes essential, or else, like in Biblical days, when prophecy was ignored, disaster soon follows.

The secret to understanding the true nature of a Bat Kol is in the words itself. Bat means daughter and signifies something feminine. Kol means voice and signifies something spoken or heard. A Bat Kol is thus a feminine method of reception.

Similar to other cultures worldwide, in the mystical schools of Torah the terms feminine (and masculine) take on cosmic, universal meanings far beyond the limitations of mere human sexuality. The term masculine is used to reference the overt, outgoing and external aspects of things. Feminine is used to reference that which is covert, ingathering, and internal. Psychologically the conscious mind, which deals with the outside world, is said to be masculine, whereas the unconscious, which deals with our inner mind, is said to be feminine. Cognitive learning based on external sensorial stimulus is said to be masculine, whereas intuitive learning based on internal impressions is feminine.

With regards to Bible and prophecy, a prophet who received a vision from G-d, like Yishayahu (Isaiah), Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) and Yehezkiel (Ezekiel) experienced the masculine aspect of prophecy, in that their messages were overt and meant for the masses. There also exist other forms of communication with G-d that are not meant for public consumption, in other words are not meant to be written down and taught to the masses.

One of the more covert, inner means of communion is called Ruah HaKodesh, Divine inspiration. This subtle, almost unconscious influence in essence “grabs” a person and fills him/her with profound ideas. Sometimes, if paper and pen are handy (or now a computer) one can write down the revelations coming to mind and one will find upon conclusion that he/she has written a Divinely inspired work. Now, this does not make such a work to be the Word of G-d. This is because the individual is still choosing the writing and words. It is mostly the individual's work. It is just that there is an influence underlying the motivation of such writing, which gives rise to thoughts. The words chosen by the author in essence molds and shapes the thought and thus by definition limits it. Thus, such works are not Divinely written only Divinely inspired.

This level of spiritual communion can only occur when the individual in question is in complete observance of G-d's commandments of the Torah. For throughout the Bible, G-d says that He only speaks to those who fear Him and obey His commandments. Therefore, all others who are claiming that they are in communion with G-d, all the while that they do not observe the 613 commandments are self deceived. They are either inspired by a deceptive demonic spirit or by their own self delusions. In cases like these, strong psychotherapy and medication are necessary to help such lost souls come back to reality.

Ruah HaKodesh can overwhelm the mind of its receiver. It can fill one's mind with such thoughts and revelations that, similar to prophecy, one is left almost unaware of the physical world. When prophecy was withdrawn from mankind, all that we had left was Ruah haKodesh. Yet, the mental, psychological and holiness requirements necessary to receive this lofty state meant that it could only be achieved by the very few holy pious ones in every generation. There are two other forms of communion with the Divine that are not as overt and recognizable as prophecy or Ruah HaKodesh, but nonetheless are accessible to us all, these are dreams and the Bat Kol.

We all know about dreams. Some dreams have more meaning than others do. Yet, dreams are always blurry and confusing. Most often, a dream's power is not in what is remembered from it, but rather from what is forgotten. A dream can be compared to an operational command in computer software. A dream speaks to our unconscious mind and directs it how to influence our conscious mind. The unconscious dream thus instructs us how we are to act in a situation or what to think or feel about a certain issue. We are in essence being programmed, beneath the level of knowledge or awareness. While dreams often influence us, we are usually unaware of their influence. Dreams also can come from many different sources. They can manifest our inner most desires and thoughts. They can be influenced by other minds, human or demonic. Dreams can even be influenced by what we have eaten during our waking hours. Therefore, the amount of Divine communion that actually comes through dreams is relatively small.

What we have left is the Bat Kol, the daughter of the voice of Ruah HaKodesh. While Ruah HaKodesh fills the mind and overwhelms it, the Bat Kol subtly enters the mind and plants a conscious suggestion. The message the conscious mind receives is clear and crisp, but it is in no way an audio message heard with the physical ear. The Bat Kol is a voice that is heard by the feminine side of consciousness. It is heard inside the mind. Some would call it the piercing voice of conscience.

Do not underestimate the power of a Bat Kol, for everyday this Voice issues forth from G-d. It descends to Mt. Sinai and from Mt. Sinai goes forth throughout the world. Now, the Mt. Sinai spoken of is only a metaphor. We should not confuse the metaphor of the mountain with the real rock. Mt. Sinai is a metaphor for the Torah that G-d gave to His people Israel there. When we say that a Voice goes forth daily from Sinai we are saying that each and every day, G-d's holy Word, recorded by the prophets in Scripture speaks to our hearts and admonishes us as to the right course in life that we should follow.

Everyday the voice of conscience speaks to us, and everyday we ignore the Voice and do evil. When the Voice cries out to us, we do not recognize its Divine origins because our minds are so filled with other "voices" that the Voice from Heaven is drowned out in all the commotion. Our minds are simply too busy and too filled with garbage to appreciate and respect the truly valuable things. Yet, here I have opened the door to a deeper teaching that I see that I must here address. We must now discuss however briefly how one can quiet one's mind in order to distinguish and thus hear the Voice crying out from Horev.

The doorway to quiet thought is a silencing of the heart. This means that one must be emotionally balanced and not have any outstanding disturbing feelings. Feelings are what disturb the mind. The mystical practices of some cultures endeavor to rid one of emotions all together. The Torah recognizes that this cannot be done without causing great harm to the human psyche. Rather, instead of the removal of emotion, one is taught to train the emotions and to live a lifestyle in accordance with Torah based morality. The laws of Torah have a psychological effect that can transform the psyche from within and enable those who adhere to its ways to have a sound and peaceful heart and mind. There is only one problem faced by those who observe the Torah. It is the same problem faced

by everyone else. How does one stop from being distracted and thus disturbed by surrounding temptations, which create mental noise?

Mental noise in and of itself is not necessarily bad. Some spiritual traditions seek to eliminate all mental noise in order to hear a glimpse of the inner Voice. Torah, on the other hand, has revealed to us that this arduous path is not always necessary. The hustle and bustle of every major city creates a tremendous amount of both sensorial and mental noise. On the other hand, a full-scale orchestra playing classical music also creates a tremendous amount of noise. The difference between the two is that the noise of the city is chaotic noise. Only chaotic noise is disturbing. The noise of a loud orchestra, on the other hand, is enjoyable because its noise is orderly, soothing and melodic.

The human brain, by nature of sensorial reality, will always be bombarded by impressions coming from our five senses. This continuous input is what creates mental noise and inhibits our hearing the Voice arising from within. Sensorial input is necessary for human existence, it is not meant to be eliminated. Torah teaches us that instead of removing ourselves from the world in order to hear the inner Voice; we should instead reform our environment. Torah teaches us to change our outer world and to make its “noise” complimentary to the melody of the inner Voice. This is accomplished by the observance of the commandments of the Torah; specifically those involved with meditative practices and mystical studies. When one lives in accordance to Torah, the Torah transforms his/her life and provides fulfillment in all areas. When one learns the secret how to create harmony between one’s inner and outer world, one attains the achievement of true peace.

As is known, the Torah is far more than merely the Five Books of Moses. The Torah is an immortal entity, an expression of G-d manifest in our universe in a common form. By learning Torah and applying its lessons, one’s unconscious mind is transformed even more so than one’s conscious mind. Bonding with Torah enables an individual to reach out beyond the limits of his/her human body and to travel throughout the universe and beyond it. This is the glory of the Torah, when one’s life validates the Torah’s message and value. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. It is this opposite, the disgrace of the Torah that Rabbi Yehoshua states the Bat Kol bewails everyday.

We human beings degrade ourselves whenever we do not live up to the moral and intellectual standards designed for us by our Creator. We can make an appropriate comparison of human beings to automobiles. Unless we take care to provide proper maintenance, a breakdown is inevitable. G-d gave us all brains in our heads in order that we learn how best to take care of ourselves. While we have applied human wisdom and intellect to cultivate an improvement of our environment, we have not taken the time, or made the effort to invest in the improvement of the inner man/woman. This is the disgrace of the Torah. For Torah was given to us to teach us morality and how to live as better human beings. When we do not accomplish this task, we degrade the Torah and ourselves. We plummet into the depths of human depravity and forget our lofty potentials.

Everyone today is asking where is G-d and how may we hear his Voice. The answer is that G-d is to be found in the same place as always, deep within our hearts. His Voice can be heard speaking from His Word, the Torah. If only the majority would bond with Torah in the proper way, then all of a sudden as if by magic, the Voice crying forth from Sinai would be heard, within our minds and within our hearts. The Voice of conscience would speak to enlighten us and to direct our daily affairs. Once one is accustomed to hearing the Voice, as was Rabbi Yehoshua, the Voice would expose our minds to other things, such as knowledge about the secrets of the Torah or revelations of the future.

A prime example of those who today hear and listen to the inner Voice of Torah calling in their minds are the Jewish patriots who have settled in Yesha (Judah and Samaria, on the west bank of the Jordan River). The Land of Israel and the soul of the Jewish people are simultaneously under attack from bitter evil enemies who wish to not only destroy us physically but spiritually and psychologically as well. The Jewish patriots who the world wrongly calls settlers are the ones who with life, limb and blood hold onto the Holy Land of Israel in the face of insurmountable pressure from all the nations of the world, including the Israeli government. When these righteous sacrificing souls hold onto the Holy Land they are doing so because they are adhering to the inner Voice of the Bat Kol speaking in their hearts and souls. Their sacrifice will not go unrewarded.

Who are the ones of whom the Bat Kol cries, woe to them for the disgrace they show the Torah? These are the all politicians, Jews and gentiles alike, Israelis, Americans, and Europeans, who continually deny the Voice and seek to silence it in the hearts of the masses. Needless to say, the Voice of the Bat Kol is only a mere echo of the power that emanates the Voice to begin with. Those who seek to silence the Voice are seeking to silence the Holy One, blessed be He, the One Who is speaking. The fate of such fools is a foregone conclusion.

Let us learn from the past not to follow in the footsteps of the doomed. Let us learn to silence our own voices, and to diminish all outside chaotic noise. When we seek to silence ourselves inside, we will hear the Voice of Torah cry out. Maybe if we remain silent long enough, we will hear the Voice speak in our hearts, and then we will know what is right and wrong and what it is we are to do.

Yet, the forces of evil in the world are well aware of the danger posed to them by those who hear in their hearts the inner Voice from G-d. They seek to make outside chaotic noise grow greater and more confusing.

Woe to the peoples [of the earth] because of the disgrace showed to the Torah. Woe to the noisemakers, for they shall be silenced.