

Mothers Over Fathers

This week's Parsha, Balak, tells us how Bilam set out to curse the Jewish People, but instead, he blessed them. In his words, he said, "For from their beginning, I see them as mountain peaks and I behold them as hills."¹

The Midrash² tells us that 'mountain peaks' refer to our patriarchs, and hills refer to our matriarchs.

One of the differences between a father and mother, in relationship to their children, is the way they contribute to the birth of their children. The father gives a cell, which includes the baby in potential, but in the cell, you don't see any details. The mother takes the cell and, over nine months in her womb, she develops it into a complete baby with all the details: head, shoulders, knees and toes, and the rest of the limbs and organs.³ That is the reason why, more often than not, a child is closer to his or her mother than their father, because the mother created her child with all the details. The mother's relationship to her child is commonly one of love and closeness, whereas the father's relationship to his child is often one of fear and distance.

The same is true about our patriarchs and matriarchs – the relationship between us and the patriarchs is one of awe and distance, and our relationship to the matriarchs is one of love and closeness. That is why the patriarchs are the mountain tops – far and aloof – and why the word used to say that he sees them is *arenu*, which means to gaze from a distance. On the other hand, the matriarchs are hills, which are closer, and the word used to say that he sees them is *ashurenu*, which means to see at close range.

Everything in the physical world has its source in the spiritual. What is the spiritual source of a father and mother giving birth to a child? Emotions are called the "children of the mind." For example, it is

the understanding of the mind that produces the love or fear we have for Hashem. The deeper the understanding, the more mature are the emotions.

The mind, which gives birth to the emotions, is divided into two parts: *Chachma* and *Bina* – These are the father and mother.

Chachma is the father, it is the conception of an idea, the "eureka" moment that comes to you in a flash. You have the whole concept, but if you don't stay with the idea and contemplate its details, you will lose it.

Bina is the mother. It is contemplation, the breakdown of the idea into all of its details, solidifying the idea and making it yours. It is Bina that gives birth to the emotions, and it's closer to the emotions than Chachma, because there is a degree of separation between Chachma and the emotions.⁴

Chachma and Bina are the first of the ten attributes of the soul. The first three are the attributes of the mind, the next six are the emotions, and the last one determines how the six emotions express themselves.

The ten attributes of the soul are a reflection of the ten attributes of Hashem,⁵ the way He relates to the world. Just as Chachma and Bina give birth to the emotions, so, too, the Divine Chachma and Bina give birth to the Divine emotions, which are the building blocks of Creation. Since Bina actually gives birth to the building blocks of Creation, it relates to the physical world. Chachma, on the other hand, doesn't relate to the world, because it is separate, since it has a degree of separation from the physical world, as mentioned earlier..

Chachma represents the view from above, that only Hashem exists. When you see things from this perspective, your entire existence is nullified, because there is only Hashem.⁶ Bina represents

¹ Bamidbar, 23:9.

² Midrash Rabbah, 20:19; Tanchuma, Balak, 12.

³ Tanya, Chap. 2.

⁴ Tanya, Chap. 3.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Tanya, Chap. 35, Note.

the view from below. From this perspective everything exists, but you see everything as part of Hashem – you are part of Him as well, and your ego is nullified before Hashem.

Since we are all descendants of our patriarchs and matriarchs, we all inherit both perspectives. The view of our patriarchs – Hashem's oneness from above, which nullifies existence – and the view of our matriarchs, the oneness of Hashem from below, which nullifies the ego.

Since the most important thing is to make a home for Hashem in the physical world, to make this world into a vessel for G-dliness,⁷ this means the matriarchs' perspective is more important, as Hashem said to Avraham, "Everything that Sarah tells you, listen to her voice."⁸

Every Jewish home is a small world, which has all the ten attributes. The father is Chachma and the mother is Bina, and just as regarding the matriarchs, the mother's role in the home is more important. Although she receives from the father, as Bina receives from Chachma, she knows what her husband wants and she implements it, as our sages say, "Who is a kosher woman? One who does the will of her husband."⁹ She is the one who can make it happen, because she is the one who is in charge of the home and spends more time with the children.

And if her husband doesn't want to go on the proper path, then we can read an alternate translation to the words of our sages, "Who is a kosher woman? One who *makes* the will of her husband." A wife is in a position where she could influence her husband; using her womanly wisdom, she has the ability to motivate him to reach ever higher. When you do that, Hashem dwells in your home and it is filled with blessing.¹⁰

I am blessed to see this in my own personal home, as my wife, Dina, is always pushing me to be a better father, a better husband, a better Rabbi, a better Yid and a better person. I owe so much to her. The real hero in my life is Dina.

May we merit to see the coming of Moshiach, when we will see the woman's part in bringing of Moshiach, when the feminine will be greater. May it happen soon. The time has come.¹¹

Dedicated to my son Shalom who is celebrating his Bar Mitzvah this week, and to my wife, Dina, who is the backbone of our home.

⁷ "Dira bitachtonim" – see Tanchuma, Nasso, 16; Bechukosai 3; Bereishis Rabbah, end of chapter 3; Tanya, Chap. 36.

⁸ Bereshis, 21:12.

⁹ Tanna Dvei Eliyahu Rabbah, Chap. 9.

¹⁰ Talmud, Sotah, 17a.

¹¹ Based on *Likutei Sichos*, vol. 4, pp. 1067–1070.