

The eighth and last line of the mystical prayer *Ana B'khoakh* says, *Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto Le'olam Va'ed- Blessed is the Name of Its Glorious Kingdom for all Eternity.*"

As we've learned, *Ana B'khoakh* is ascribed to the Talmudic sage, *Rabi Nekhunia Ben Hakanah*. But this final line was probably not composed by him. You might recognize it as the line that is traditionally chanted after the *Sh'ma*. In the Talmud, *Pesakhim 56a*, this verse is ascribed to the Biblical patriarch, Jacob. It says that while Jacob was on his deathbed, his children gathered around him and said, "*Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Ekhad!*" To which he replied, "*Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto Le'olam Va'ed.*" That's the explanation for why we say *Barukh Shem K'vod* right after the *Sh'ma*- it comes from that Talmudic legend about Jacob on his deathbed.

So then why was this line also placed at the end of *Ana B'khoakh*?

If we look at both the *Sh'ma*, and *Ana B'khoakh*, there are some interesting parallels. The first word, *Sh'ma*, means hear, listen, or, pay attention. The first verse of *Ana B'khoakh* says, *Tatir Tzerua- Untie the contracted bundle*. What is the contracted bundle, the *Tzerua*? It is consciousness that's become identified with thought and feeling, producing a limited, contracted sense of self – otherwise known as, ego.

The way that your consciousness becomes "untied" from ego, the way the *Tzerua* becomes *Tatir*, is through *Sh'ma* – through intentionally bringing your consciousness into connection with your present moment experience. Why? Because being present brings out the basic quality of who you really are. Beneath the mind and all its complexity, there's a simple awareness, and that awareness is inherently free; it's not tied to anything. It doesn't judge anything, it isn't trying to accomplish anything, it doesn't care what people think about it, and so on. So, when you intentionally become present by simply being aware of whatever is present, you naturally rise out of your mind-created identity, and into your actual identity, as consciousness.

That's why the next word of the *Sh'ma* is *Yisrael*. Because when you become present, when you *Sh'ma*, you realize your identity as freedom, and that's *Yisrael*, the ones who came out of Egypt to freedom. This corresponds to the second line of *Ana B'khoakh* that says, "*Kabel Rinat Amkha- Receive the Song of Your People*" – that is, the people of Israel, the lineage of freedom from *Mitzrayim*, freedom from *tzerura*, from the limited self-sense of ego, through *Sh'ma*- through Presence. And once that happens, once you yourself become free, everything else looks completely different as well. Because now that you're no longer seeing everything through the lens of your mind, through your agendas and preferences and judgments, but rather through the open and radiant field of Presence, then the Presence that shines in all things reveals Itself – and Presence beholds Presence.

So now let's get back to the verse that concludes both *Ana B'khoakh* and the *Sh'ma*: *Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto Le'olam Va'ed- Blessed is the Name of Its Glorious Kingdom for all Eternity.*" The word that's normally translated as "glorious" is *k'vod*, which comes from the root that literally means, "heavy." It makes me think of that 60's expression, of saying something is "heavy, man." But "heavy" can also have a negative connotation, as in something feeling heavy,

or food being too heavy, and so on. So why is “heavy” used here in a positive way to indicate something fantastic or amazing?

Imagine that you meet someone at a gathering, you’re casually talking to them, and in the course of the conversation you realize that you’re talking to the Queen of England, or Bill Gates, or Dick Van Patten, whatever. Probably, your whole experience of the conversation would change. Why? Because suddenly there’s a huge context to the person that wasn’t there a moment ago. And, that context was already present within you. You already know who those people are, you just didn’t know that this person you’re talking to is one of those people. So now that you know, suddenly your perception of the person in front of you becomes much more *weighty* with this huge context, that was already present within you.

Similarly, when you look at the cup that you’re drinking your tea from, or the food on your fork, or the check-out person at the grocery store, it’s all very ordinary, no big deal. But when your own presence is ignited and you get free from the *tzerura*, from the limited self-sense of the ego, then you can recognize the same Presence in everything else, and suddenly everything gets a lot heavier. Not heavy in a negative or burdensome way, but in a way that evokes reverence, that evokes wonder. It’s like gravity that literally pulls you deeper and deeper, into the place that you already are. There’s a hint of this in the following piece of Torah:

Parshat Ki Tavo begins, “*V’hayah ki tavo el ha’aretz – It will be when you come into the land that the Divine gives you as an inheritance, to possess it, and to dwell within it...*” It then goes on to talk about a special ritual of gratitude that involves putting the first fruit of your harvest into a basket, making a pilgrimage to the Temple, and offering the fruit in gratitude for having come out of slavery in Egypt, and into the the "land flowing with milk and honey."

On a simple level, this is a farmer’s gratitude ritual for the goodness of the land. But on a deeper level, *V’hayah ki tavo el ha’aretz* – coming into the land means coming into the place you already are, coming into the full Presence of whatever is present. This is hinted at by *V’hayah ki tavo – It will **BE** when you come in* – meaning, coming in to the *mode of Being*. Our lives consist of both Doing and Being, but we tend to identify with the Doing mode. Doing means, constantly going out– constantly reaching toward a goal we imagine in the future. This is how we create and accomplish things, which is wonderful and necessary. But if it’s not balanced by the mode of Being, if there’s total identification with the mind and with Doing, then there’s no peace, there’s no contentment, there’s no coming in.

So, what’s the solution? *V’hayah ki tavo el ha’aretz* – come into this place that you are, by connecting your awareness with the Presence of the *aretz*- the earth on which we live, this body through which we live, and with whatever else happens to be present. The mind tends to lurch toward some imagined fruits in the future. Instead, bring your focus to the fruits that are already here, in the basket of this moment. Then you will be able to say as the ancient farmer said, “*Vayotzieinu Hashem mimitzrayim – Hashem brought us out of Egypt* – meaning, we are brought out of the contracted bundle of mind-identified ego through simply Being, because the Hebrew Name of God actually means, Being. *V’samakhta v’khol hatov – and then you will rejoice with all the goodness that you are given, you and the strangers among you.*”

So let's connect all this back with the words from the last line of *Ana B'khoakh: Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto Le'olam Va'ed- Blessed is the Name of Its Glorious Kingdom for all Eternity.* Take a moment to become aware of whatever is now in your field of experience, noting your sensory awareness – what you see, hear, and feel. And notice any emotional feeling tone that is present.

And now bring to mind that everything in your experience is *K'vod Malkhuto* – Everything is heavy with the One Presence, expressing Itself in all forms, in all phenomena. And while everything and every experience is temporary, Existence Itself is *Le'olam Va'ed* – always Eternal, because It is simply Reality- beyond understanding and ever-present.

And now, having a sense of gratitude for the blessing of noticing all this: *Barukh Shem* – what a blessing to be able to name the Eternal, to really become aware of It in this life.

Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto Le'olam Va'ed – What a blessing it is to name the Eternal Presence that is ever-present in the full richness of this experience, right now...