



## Re-digging the Wells of Divine Healing

### Below the Tip of the Iceberg

My friend, who is a therapist, has a picture of a beautiful glacier in her office. As awesome as it is to gaze at the sparkling ice reflecting rays of sunbeams against the blueness of the sea, we cannot even imagine all the hidden beauty of the glacier concealed below the water. Hence, we only see the tip of the iceberg. Whereas Freud used the analogy of an iceberg to describe his theory of levels of human consciousness, for me, the glacier is a symbol of our quest to uncover the hidden layers below the surface. These layers are multidimensional. They exist in the realm where the Creator is discovered within His creation, by delving into the inner dimensions of the Torah, and getting in touch with repressed layers of our own psyche. We live in time of great disconnection. Being disconnected from the inner layers of our being causes mental health issues. Even before COVID-19, the prevalence of mental illness among adults was increasing. In 2017-2018, 19% of American adults experienced mental illness – an increase of 1.5 million people from the prior year. Now, when traveling in the dimension of space is limited, it is the time to travel inward within the dimensions of soul, in order to reconnect its dispersed fragments. The work of redeeming our lost selves from their spiritual exile was the lifework of our fathers, who are known for digging wells. Beyond the metaphor of the glacier, representing the unconscious and subconscious dimensions of our psyche, the notion of digging wells is about the work of digging deeply within, probing the inner recesses of our heart and soul, to reveal our divine spark. We all contain multiple layers. There is the surface layer as well as subconscious and super conscious levels of our character. Whereas, we may seem perfectly all right on the surface, we need to go through the layers of mud, rocks and pebbles – to the source of our concealed shadow sides – hidden below the surface. Beyond our unconscious shadow sides – our super consciousness – the very core of our souls is even more deeply embedded within our psyche. Through the self-disciplinary quality of gevurah, our well-digging father Yitzchak was the most qualified to see that core, and not just know of its existence. The word בְּאֵר/be'er – 'well' is associated with the unknown deep – to delve into the most profound and mysterious. We all inherited the need to dig, to go deeply within ourselves, discovering and reclaiming the lost fragments of our selves.

### Three Wells Corresponding to Three Dimensions of Our Soul

בראשית פרק כו פסוק יח ויִשָּׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחפֹּר אֶת בְּאֵרֵת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפְרוּ בְיָמֵי אֲבִרָהֶם אָבִיו וַיִּסְתַּמּוּם כָּל־שְׂתֵי־מֵי חַיִּים:

(כ) וַיְרִיבוּ רַעֲיֵי גֵרָר עִם רַעֲיֵי יִצְחָק לֵאמֹר לָנוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַבְּאֵר עֵשֶׂק כִּי הִתְעַשְׂקוּ עִמּוֹ:

(כא) וַיַּחפֹּרוּ בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וַיְרִיבוּ גַם עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ שִׁטְנָה:

(כב) וַיַּעֲתֵק מִשָּׁם וַיַּחפֹּר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת וְלֹא רָבוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמָהּ רְחֻבוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי עֲתָה הִרְחִיב ה' לָנוּ וּפְרִינוּ בְּאֶרֶץ:

"Yitzchak dug again the wells of water, which they had dug in the days of Avraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Avraham; and he gave them names like the names that his father had given them. Then Yitzchak's servants dug in the valley, and they found there a well of living waters. Then the shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Yitzchak's shepherds, saying, 'The water is ours;' so he named the well Esek, because they had contended with him. And they dug another well, and they quarreled about it also; so, he named it Sitnah. And he removed away from there, and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he called it Rechovot; and he said, 'For now Hashem has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land'" (Bereishit 26:18-22).

The three wells that Yitzchak dug seem to fit in well with Freud's theory of the three levels of the human psyche: Id, Ego and the Super-ego. According to Freud, the id is the primitive and instinctual part of the mind that contains sexual and aggressive drives and hidden memories. The super-ego operates as a moral conscience, while the ego is the realistic part that mediates between the desires of the id and the super-ego. Without being well-versed in the teachings of Freud, or any other school of psychology, I would venture to claim that this theory only remotely resembles the Torah's teachings on the levels of the soul. The Jewish soul consists of three main levels: Nefesh, the Animal Soul, loosely corresponding to the ego; Ruach, the emotional soul, and Neshama, the Divine Soul. Whereas, the Nefesh is concerned with survival, Ruach can be jealous, angry or depressed on the one hand, while also being the source of intuition, higher consciousness and the divine inspiration of Ruach Hakodesh on the other. The next level, Neshama, has the ability to tune into the divine spiritual light to a much greater extent than the previous levels, automatically arousing the refined emotions of love and awe. Yitzchak called the first well עֵשֶׂק/Esek which means strife or contention, but which can also mean being occupied, and as a noun it refers to business. These meanings correspond well to the lowest level of Nefesh, mainly concerned with physical survival, making money, and being successful in the world. The second well, שִׁטְנָה/Sitnah meaning 'hatred,' could correspond to the second level of ruach, which includes negative emotions. However, the last well called רְחֻבֹת/Rechovot – 'expansion,' over which there was no strife corresponds to the Neshama. In this level of soul, there is only goodness, for the impure shells are unable to attach to the level of Neshama.

### The Process of Moving from Constricted to Expansive Consciousness

The purpose of Yitzchak in digging wells was to reveal the living waters, which exist below the ground, and to bring it up to the surface. The purpose is not to make water flow into the wells from another source; but only to reveal the living waters, which already exist within the wells themselves. These wells, on their own, retain the living waters, but it is covered up and blocked. When we remove the dirt, mud and pebbles, the living water is revealed. This teaches us about his spiritual work – to remove all the veils of the physical world and transform it into a vessel for Divinity. Like the living waters themselves, which rise up from below, he strove to raise it up from below to above (Rabbi Schneerson the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, *Parashat Vayera* 12). The reason a secular Jew, who embraces the Torah lifestyle is called Master of Return, is that rather than changing his way, he uncovers and returns to the truth, which was always there below the surface. When I returned to Torah in 1980, every new Torah idea, which I learned, seemed so familiar- as if I had known it before. It reverberated like *Deja Vu*, and that is how I knew it to be true. I was relearning something which was already part of myself. It had been taught to me even before I was born. It was buried deeply within my being and covered up by my secular upbringing, the Western culture, and my own inclination to separate myself from G-d. Besides the natural covering of the living waters, Yitzchak also had to deal with the negative forces that tried to prevent the holy work of digging the wells. Although the herdsmen of Avimelech chased Yitzchak's herdsmen away and shut up the wells, Yitzchak was not discouraged but continued to dig the wells until he succeeded in separating and raising the sparks from their shells. This process of moving from constricted to expansive consciousness Yitzchak coined "Rechovot."

### The Wells and the Temples

The wells describe humanity's encounter with the Torah outlook introduced by Avraham, promoted by Yitzchak and embodied in the Torah given to the Israelites. The blocking of the wells symbolizes covering up this true universal Torah with pagan doctrines. With enough persistence, the descendants of Yitzchak inherited his ability to triumph over resistance and antagonism against the truth of the Torah. When the Philistines could no longer deny the evidence of Yitzchak's special relationship with Hashem, they were compelled to stop contending with him. Their prior banishment and rejection were suddenly replaced by acceptance and admiration. Yitzchak chose the names of the wells to instill emunah, by recalling how

the precise moment of Hashem's deliverance is unknown, yet His eternal covenant will eventually be fulfilled. Yitzchak's experiences are a harbinger of the future. The three wells dug by Yitzchak refer to the three Holy Temples. The first and second temples were opposed by the nations of the world and eventually destroyed by the enemies. Nonetheless, the final well represents the future and final Beit HaMikdash – the holy Temple with the adjacent Sanhedrin, the highest court of the nation, from where justice and morality will emanate (Ramban, *Bereishit* 18:22). The third Temple will illuminate the world with true enlightenment. It will be accepted by all nations as a place for universal worship of Hashem – the one and only G-d. This final Temple will even be embraced and acknowledged by the very peoples who destroyed its predecessors (based on [Destination Yisra'el A Blog for the Lost Ten Tribes Awakening to their New Reality](#)).

### Finding Your Soulmate at the Well

Three people met their soulmate at the well: Yitzchak, Ya'acov and Moshe. Yitzchak, as it states: *"Then Yitzchak came from the way of B'er Lechai Roi"* (*Bereishit* 24:62). Ya'acov, as it states: *"He saw, and behold a well in the field etc."* (*Bereishit* 29:2), and Moshe, as it states: *"He sat down by the well"* (*Shemot* 2:15); (*Midrash Tanchuma Shemot* 10).

Many have pondered, why so many of the Biblical characters met their soulmate at the well? Water never comes alone. It is a substance wherein each drop cleaves to the other. In Hebrew, the word מַיִם/*mayim* – 'waters' is always plural. Through water, you can bind two substances together. It is, therefore, not surprising that it was at the well that Avraham made a covenant with Avimelech (*Bereishit* 21:27), and it was at the well that many soulmates met and made the covenant of marriage. The process of drawing out the water from within the depths of the well can be compared to the process of marriage. When two soulmates merge to become one, it is like two halves becoming whole, for they both draw out the hidden potential within each other. The well is a receptacle for water which symbolizes Torah. Intellectual Torah learning is not complete. To really make a commitment to Torah life, we must create a receptacle – a home in which Torah can flourish. Marriage enables a person to carry out Torah to its fullest. As we have learned, the well also represents the hidden layers of our psyche. When we have dug down deeply within our hidden selves and reclaimed our repressed fragments, we can heal and reconnect with our whole selves. Only when – through this process – we have become who we truly are, can we merge with our other half. By persistently digging down beyond the iceberg of our psyche, we might end up finding our soulmate at the well!

### The Well of Miriam

The well, which is deep and mysterious, symbolizes the woman. It is the feminine emunah that flows from the divine source and nourishes us with the sparkling drops of the Shechina. Hence the well from which the Israelites satiated their thirst in the desert, appeared through the merit of a woman: Miriam. When Miriam died, the well of water ceased, and the clear connection with the Divine flow from above became obscured. Complete emunah was necessary to reconnect with the source of life – the Shechina embodied within the Torah. This emunah had to be expressed by our subtle effort of allowing G-d's Divine influence to flow without employing too much force. This is the female power of being fluid like water, in a perpetual life-giving stream. The progression of the Oral Torah corresponds to the lifegiving water of the well. Each generation must add new vessels to bring the water down deeper into reality. The further removed from the source, the more subtle is the adjustment. Moshe, hitting the rock with harsh masculine strokes, instead of talking to it, missed uncovering G-d's miraculous supervision, and lost this opportunity to sanctify Hashem. The emotion associated with too much human intervention is anger, aggression and force. The *tikkun* (rectification) is song, as Maharal explained. "Therefore, Israel sang this song, Spring up O well; sing to it..." (*Bamidbar* 21:16-18). They sang like Miriam at the splitting of the sea. Through song we become sensitized to work with the Divine flow via completely pure faith, taught by the holy women of Israel.

## Never Stop Digging Deep!

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" (*Yesha'yahu* 12:3).

Divine salvation is a self-deriving well. The more we draw from it, the more it is refilled by the flow of new waters. But how do we become like a nursing baby, enabling the flow of renewed milk in the 'breasts' of the Shechina? We must keep digging like Yitzchak, with steadfast emunah that below the mud, pebbles and sand of Western culture, we will eventually uncover the living waters of our Creator. This way we will reveal the truth of the Torah and the innermost dimension of our soul. Even within the furthest exile, there are hidden sparks, which need to be brought home. We have spiritual wells within us from which we need to keep drawing. Wells imply digging; they imply depth. Sometimes, we need to dig deep to get to the truths of G-d and integrate them into our lives. This can take on various forms, such as digging into Torah learning, spending time in prayer and *hitbodedut*, meditating on Hashem's love and on getting in touch with deeper layers of our soul, walking in close relationship with holy people and friends, and cultivating a prayerful lifestyle. There is no one formula. Rather, we learn how to dig as we walk in the way of the Torah. When our wells get blocked, we need to allow Hashem to restore them so we can drink from the living waters. Let us continually ask Hashem if there are wells in our life that need to be unblocked. When we yearn, seek and pray for it, He will grant us life, Torah and healing!