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Transcription by Donna Anderson Maimes

Reb Shlomo Carlebach speaking:

Two people came to Reb Yisroel Rizener: One, a storyteller who had a book of stories, and the other, a great scholar who had written great treatises on halacha. So the shames asked the Rizhener who he would see first.

The Rebbe says, "I want to see the storyteller first."

The secretary was really astounded that he would call in this uneducated storyteller in preference to this great scholar, but he doesn't say anything. So he ushers in the little storyteller and the Rebbe looks at his book and says, "Oh this is such a beautiful story, it's the greatest story I ever read. The story is really holy."

Then he asks to see the scholar and his great treatise on halacha. He is looking at the book, and he says, "Oh this is so deep, it is really from Mt. Sinai." Then they both leave and the secretary comes in and says, "I don't understand it. Here is a great scholar who has studied many years, who is one of the greatest men, and you ask him to come in second. First you hear the storyteller."

"So," the Rebbe says. "I'm just doing it the way Hashem did it in the Torah. First Hashem was telling stories -- He told the story of creation, the story of the flood, the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The story of slavery, the story of redemption, and then He led us before Sinai. After he told us all these stories he gave us the laws."

Reb Nachman said G-d created man because He loves stories. The whole world is G-d telling a story. G-d is telling us stories, creating the world, creating people, telling long stories. There is such a thing as prayer, which is very deep, but, Reb Nachman says, prayer is not the deepest depths of closeness to G-d. The deepest depths of closeness to G-d is when you can tell G-d a story. The Tree of Knowledge is theories and the Tree of Life is stories.

Everything we understand comes from our consciousness. Where do stories originate? Imagination. The truth is, the story comes from beyond my consciousness, but it flows into my consciousness. The story itself is really beyond.

Reb Nachman says when you dream, you always dream stories, not theories. When your imagination is completely free, then you dream stories. When people sit and tell each other stories, they really become friends.