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PARSHAS BEHAALOSCHA

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

ARROGANCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

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Part I. The Humble Man

The Greatest Praise

In *Parshas Behaaloscha* we find some of the most glorious words of acclaim that Hakadosh Baruch Hu ever heaped upon a single human being. About Moshe Rabbeinu the Torah tells us: וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עֲנִיּוּ מְאֹד – *And the man Moshe was very humble,* מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ – *more humble than any other human being on the face of the earth* (Bamidbar 12:3).

Now, the Torah doesn't tell us that he was a *chacham m'kol ha'adam*, the wisest man on the face of the earth – although he was. And it doesn't say that he was a *zariz m'kol ha'adam* – and Moshe was that too. There are many words of praise that the Torah could have chosen to laud

upon Moshe, absolutely. And yet, the one thing that the Torah chooses to tell us is that he was “more humble than any other human being on the face of the earth.”

What Is Humility?

Now, a statement like that about Moshe Rabbeinu, an encomium of such magnitude, deserves to be studied at length; the truth is that we could spend many hours on the subject and it wouldn't be enough. However, the first thing we make note of is that this whole subject of Moshe Rabbeinu's exceptional *anivus* doesn't really make sense to us altogether. Because according to the way we usually understand the subject of humility we would have believed that Moshe was a meek person; a quiet and self-effacing man who didn't recognize his own greatness. Isn't that what humility means after all? Doesn't it mean that you have a low opinion of yourself in comparison to others; that you don't consider yourself as wise and as virtuous as others?

And so, if we were saying *pshat* in the Torah, we would have said that “the man Moshe was more humble than any other human being on the face of the earth” means that Moshe Rabbeinu considered himself inferior to everyone else on the earth. That's what I would have said anyhow.

An Impossible Conclusion

And yet, such a conclusion is impossible to conceive of. It would be preposterous for us to imagine that Moshe Rabbeinu considered himself inferior because in the Torah it's written, וְלֹא קָם נְבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה – *Never again did there arise a prophet like Moshe* (Devarim 34:10). Our great Torah teacher, Moshe Rabbeinu, wouldn't deny that *possuk*. He had to believe he was the greatest prophet – it's part of the Torah.

And it's not just *part* of the Torah – it's *the* Torah! Because that's the certification of the whole Torah; that there's no such thing as a prophecy that supersedes the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu! “Never again,” says Hakadosh Baruch Hu, “will there arise a prophet as great as Moshe.” And if anyone should come along subsequently with a claim that he has been given a vision that Moshe's Torah is abolished – “The Old Testament was good up to a certain time but I've been told directly from Hashem Himself that from now on its null and void” – so he's a liar and a false

prophet. No one will ever have the power to say, “I have been given a vision *min haShamayim* to nullify what Moshe Rabbeinu taught.”

No Inferiority Complex

Now, of all the men on the face of the earth Moshe Rabbeinu knew the Torah best and he certainly believed this fundamental principle that never again would a *navi* arise like himself. Moshe Rabbeinu believed every word of the Torah; he wasn't an *apikoris*, *chas v'shalom*. He knew that he was the only man in history to speak face to face with Hashem and that the *dvar Hashem* that had come to the *Am Yisroel* through him was the final word forever.

And so we come back to our question: How could it be that the man who was *greater* than anyone on the face of the earth was also *humbler* than anyone on the face of the earth? It presents a problem to the usual definition of meekness because Moshe certainly knew his worth; he certainly didn't have an inferiority complex.

Know Your Strong Points

So we'll have to repeat what we've said before from the Chovos Halevavos: A *beheimah*, he says, also seems to be an *anav*. You see a big ox and he's being driven down the road by a little boy. Now, your standard ox weighs more than a thousand pounds and the little boy is maybe seventy, eighty pounds. The ox could step on him and smash him in an instant, but it marches along meekly, following the boy's commands. So, you're going to tell me this ox is an *anav*?! No, it's not an *anav*, it's just a dumb ox! It has no *seichel* – it doesn't know its power; it's not aware of its capabilities.

So a leader of the *Am Yisroel*, even if he's an *anav*, can't be a dumb ox; he can't be someone who yields. Moshe Rabbeinu was not a *nebech'el*; he wasn't a milquetoast. He didn't yield to Korach or anybody else. He was a strong man, and he spoke with teeth when he had to. He showed anger too! וַיִּקְצַף מֹשֶׁה עַל פְּקוּדֵי הַחַיִּל – *Moshe Rabbeinu was angry at the commanders of the troops* (Bamidbar 31:14). Or when the *se'ir ha'chatas* was burned, וַיִּקְצַף עַל אֶלְעָזָר וְעַל אִיתָמָר – *Moshe got angry with Elazar and Isamar*. דְּרַשׁ דְּרַשׁ מִשָּׁה – He demanded to know: “What's the reason you burned the *korban*?!” He didn't walk away meekly, doubting himself. He was tough! He demanded to know! “Why didn't you eat the *korban*?!”

Sign of A Great Man

And yet, as big as he was, as imposing and tough as he was, when it was needed, he was an *anav* towards men. Certainly Moshe Rabbeinu dealt with his fellow man in a most humble manner when it was called for. All of our great men were like that – if someone *didn't* deal with others with *anivus*, then you can be sure he wasn't great.

Certainly you could be the greatest of men and yet see the greatness of others. And that very great achievement of Moshe Rabbeinu – to appreciate your self-worth and yet learn how to be humble towards all people – is one that we all have to try to imitate.

Like it says in one *sefer*, one of the questions they will ask a man in the Next World is, *Himlachta es chaveirecha alecha b'nachas ruach* – “Did you make your *chaver* reign over you with your gentleness?” (Reishis Chochma Sha’ar Ha’yirah 12). That’s a question you’re going to have to answer on the great Day of Judgment. Did you or didn’t you? Instead of ruling over your fellow by means of your attitude, by means of opening a big mouth, did you speak gently to him? Did you make him feel like he’s more important than you? It’s a question you’ll have to answer one day.

The Ignorant Arrogant

Now, it’s not as easy as it sounds because we’re *not* humble! Actually we think very highly of ourselves! And when someone thinks highly of himself, it just can’t be helped – he looks down on other people. Sometimes he’ll even talk against them and belittle them.

You hear it all the time – even by ignorant people; unlearned people stand on the telephone and you hear them knocking this one and knocking that one, belittling this person and that person. If you sit next to one of these people in the *beis knesses* and listen to him for just a little bit, you’ll find out right away that you’re sitting next to somebody great. He’s knocking *everyone*; the man sitting behind him, the *Rav*, the *gabbai*, the *chazan*. Nobody matches up to him! That’s why he knocks people – he considers himself superior and he looks down on them.

Most People Never Grow Up

It’s the most natural thing there is; even a little baby standing in his crib is full of *ga’avah*. He loves to do things to get attention; he’ll jump up and down in his crib so that you’ll clap at him. A little child thinks

he's everything. אֲנִי וְאִפְסֵי עוֹד - "I am everything and besides for me nothing counts in this world." He thinks the whole world is *battel* to him; what he wants, that's what's important in the world. And if he doesn't get what he wants, he stamps his feet and goes into a tantrum; he shouts and screams for it. The world revolves around him and only him.

Now, in the course of time, as he gets older he begins to recognize that there are other people in the world besides him and he gains a certain understanding of how to adjust to mankind.

In order to interact with society, he learns to squelch his *ga'avah* within him. But it's still there – it's very much there. What *he* does and how *he* does it and how *he* thinks, that's the right way to be. "I know that my judgment is best," he thinks. "Sometimes I can make an error, but in general my mind is more straight than most people." And he is so proud of himself that he looks down on very many people; he makes them nothing at all.

The Instinctive Haughtiness

But the cold hard truth is that a man is accustomed to considering himself important, not because he made any calculation. He never took the time to study the virtues of others and the virtues he possesses and compare them. No, he never made any such reckoning. He *instinctively* knows that he is better! It's the most natural instinct in the world!

And therefore, if we're going to overcome that instinct, it will take some effort; in order to counter that inborn feeling of your own importance you must get busy studying the good qualities of other people. Recognizing virtues in other people is the first step to becoming a humble person; a person who won't be embarrassed to answer that question, "Did you make your *chaver* reign over you?" That's the first exercise for building up our humility muscles – to spend some time looking for virtues in other people.

Practical Humility

When you start studying people individually, one at a time, you'll be amazed at the good qualities of people and little by little, the *ga'avah*, the arrogance, will start leaking out of you. When you search for the good qualities in others and realize that other people are good too, that's one of the ways to work on overcoming *ga'avah*. It's one of the

ways of beginning to walk the path of humility that Moshe Rabbeinu walked his whole life.

And that means walking the path to greatness. That's what the *seforim* say – when you look in *mussar seforim* and you study the subject of humility you see that it's the foundation of so many good *middos*. *Anavah* is a *shem hakollel*, a general term that includes many good things; all the good *middos* of character are subdivisions of humility. An *anvasan*, a humble person, is beloved by all those around. Not only is he not arrogant but he is kindly and patient; he's forgiving too. Someone who is an *anav* to the people around him is walking on the road to greatness.

Part II. The Humble Human

The Other Humility

Now, you'll notice that when it comes to *anivus* the *seforim* always emphasize *bein adam la'chaveiro*, the humility that one is supposed to feel towards his fellow man. Because that is the most usual understanding of humility. Against whom are people arrogant? Against other people! And therefore that is the definition that we usually think of – to be an *anav*, a humble fellow, to everybody. And that's why the *avodah* of studying the virtue of others is so important.

However, when you study the Chovos Halevavos and you reach the *Sha'ar Ha'keniah*, the section where he's teaching us about the *middah* of humility, you'll seek in vain if you look for the quality in the way we've spoken about it here tonight. The Chovos Halevavos is a *sefer bein adam la'Makom*, an instruction manual for how to live in this world with Hashem; and so when he talks about humility he introduces us to something entirely new altogether. Pay attention to this because this is the whole subject of tonight; it's a fundamental concept that deserves to be studied at length.

When the Chovos Halevavos talks about being an *anav* he says that humility means *being an anav towards Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. That's the definition of humility as supplied by the Chovos Halevavos – you have to learn how to be a humble person in your dealings with Hashem.

Humble To Whom?

Now, most people when they hear this, they think, “Is it really necessary to tell me to be an *anav* to Hashem?” They don’t even know what it means. But the Chovos Halevavos considers it *extremely* necessary! And he tells us a big *chiddush* – that when the Torah praises Moshe Rabbeinu for his humility it was primarily because of this *anivus*; *he was humbled before Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

Now, we understand of course that if the Torah tells us he was most humble, he was certainly humble to other people as well. Moshe Rabbeinu treated everyone with respect; certainly he was a humble man *bein adam la’chaveiro*. But what we’re learning now is that even that humility of Moshe Rabbeinu was built upon the more sublime humility – humility towards Hashem. That’s what the Chovos Halevavos is teaching us.

Humility and Awareness

Now, if we’re going to try to take something out of tonight’s speech, we should try to understand as best as we possibly can what it was that Moshe Rabbeinu did to achieve such a humility; a humility to Hashem that brought him such praise in the Torah. We certainly won’t be able to understand everything on the level that Moshe understood it, but one thing we do know is that this most humble of all men wasn’t born humble; he rose to greatness by means of a lot of work. And so, it’s something we can emulate; it’s something we *should* emulate.

So we look back in our *parsha* and we see that the first thing the Torah tells us about Moshe Rabbeinu after praising his *anivus* is that **וַתִּמְנַת הַשָּׁמַיִם יְבִיט** – *Moshe was a man who looked at the likeness of Hashem* (Behaaloscha 12:8). More than anybody else who ever lived, Moshe Rabbeinu kept before him the Image of Hashem. He couldn’t see Hashem, but as much as a human being could be aware of His Presence, Moshe achieved that.

The Humble Duke

And just like when a man stands in front of a king – even if he himself is a duke, a lord of vast estates – but in the presence of a king he is humble; he bows or prostrates himself. Let’s say the Duke of Glasgow comes to visit the King of England. Now, in Glasgow he has a big palace

with many servants; he has a chariot too with footmen – a whole retinue he has.

But when he comes to stand before the King of England, he stands humbly before him with his head bowed. When you stand near a king, no matter how great you are, you're humbled before him; if you know you're standing in front of someone important, and you have even a little bit of *seichel*, you'll feel a sense of humility.

The Humble Prophet

And so, *l'havdil*, when someone stands before Hakadosh Baruch Hu like Moshe Rabbeinu did, he's automatically humble. *Diber Hashem el Moshe panim el Panim* – Moshe knew Hashem face to Face and that's why *ha'ish Moshe anav me'od*; that's why he was the most humble of men. "Not because I'm nothing. No, I am something. I am very important." Was Moshe the smallest of men? No, he was the greatest of men and he knew that! "But I am standing in the Presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and when someone stands in the Presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu he is automatically humble."

And therefore, no matter how much Moshe Rabbeinu recognized his excellence, no matter how great he knew that he was, but he was always meek. *He was humble more than any other man because more than any other man he was aware that he was standing lifnei Hashem.* Hashem was engraved on his mind in letters that could never be erased, even for a moment. There wasn't a *hesech hada'as* – even for a second he didn't forget that he was standing *lifnei Hashem*. And if you're standing in front of Hashem you automatically become an *anav*. You don't have to study it in the *seforim*; automatically you lower your head because you're always in a mood of humility. That's how Moshe Rabbeinu lived his life, and that's why he became the *anav m'kol adam*.

Try It At Home

Now, once we understand that the true *anavah* that Hashem desires from us is a result of the recognition that we're standing always before Him, so you understand already that the more you'll practice up that you're in the Presence of Hashem all the time, the more of an *anav* you become. And that becomes an obligation that we have to keep in mind always.

The possuk says: הַשֵּׁם מְשַׁמֵּם הַשְּׁקִיף עַל בְּנֵי אָדָם – Hashem is looking down on human beings constantly, לְרְאוֹת הַיֵּשׁ מְשֻׁבָּל הָרֵשׁ אֶת אֲלֻקִּים – He wants to see, “Is there anyone who is thinking about Me?” (Tehillim 14:2). He’s looking at you all the time. And Pirkei Avos teaches us that we need to live with this understanding. דַּע מָה לְמַעְלָה מִמֶּךָ – You have to know what’s above you, עֵין רֹאֶה – an Eye is looking at you (Avos 2:1). דַּע means that you have to know it; you have to feel it with all your being. And the ones who keep that in mind, they become the true *anavim*; they become the truly humble people, because they are *humbled before Hashem*.

Practicing in Kovno

When I was in Slabodka I heard from the older yeshiva men that there was a *mussar shtiebel* in Kovno; a special *mussar* house. So I left the *seder* once and went there. I left the yeshiva and walked across the river and went to the *mussar* house. They told me it’s always locked but that there is loose brick where they keep the key hidden. They described to me where the loose brick is and they said that I should pull out the loose brick and that I would find the key there. So sure enough I saw the loose brick; I pulled it out and found the key and I let myself in.

I walked in and I was all by myself in the old *mussar* house. And I was sitting there and I was thinking, “OK; I’m here; but what should I do? It’s an opportunity.” So I was thinking I should work on this: “Hashem is looking at me.” So I sat there for an hour. For a full hour I sat there by myself, thinking that Hashem is looking at me. It was in the old *mussar shtiebel* in Kovno. I don’t regret that experience; not at all.

It’s so important and you must find time for it. The great *tzadikim* of ancient times spent weeks and months on that. Of course, they did other things too; but they constantly worked on this attitude, this awareness that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is looking. All the time, His Eyes are looking at you.

Part III. The Humble Mute

Man Of Few Words

Now, there’s another very valuable method of working your way towards the humility that comes from awareness of Hashem. When Moshe was commissioned by Hashem to go back to Mitzrayim to speak

to Pharaoh, he said לֹא אִישׁ דְּבָרִים אֲנִי – *I am not a man of words* (Shemos 4:10). So some people think it means he was tongue-tied with a stammer. But that's not so – the *pshat* in the Chumash is different from what we think.

“I am not a man of words,” means that he was a man unaccustomed to talking; he had trained himself to keep his mouth closed. And it was by means of that training that Moshe Rabbeinu achieved that eternal title of *anav me'od m'kol adam*, the most humble of all men. It's an important lesson you're hearing now – one of the ways of gaining humility is to be a man of few words.

Sometimes you watch a man sitting on a park bench and he's talking for hours. You might even envy him. You'd fall short of words if you would open your mouth and yet he's a fountain of speech; words just flow so naturally from him, and people are listening to him. And you're watching him and thinking, “What does he have to talk about so much?!”

The answer is, he's talking about himself – what *he* saw, what *he* heard, what *he* did. The man is emptying out all that he has. It's a *middah* of egoism. A person is interested in himself and he wants to show himself to others – talking is the opposite of humility.

A Shverer Rambam

And that answers for us a question, something that at first glance seems quite puzzling. In *Hilchos Dei'os* (2:3) the Rambam introduces us to the *middah* of humility; he's telling us there about the dangers of *ga'avah* and he advises us to go to the extremes of humility: שְׂאִין הַדָּרֶךְ בְּלִבְרַח – *It's not the proper path to just be somewhat of a humble person*, אֶלֶּא שְׂיִהְיֶה שְׂפֵל רוּחַ – *instead, you should be a sh'fal ruach* – it means you should be *very very* humble.

And then suddenly, in the middle of this discussion the Rambam says like this: “A man should always train himself to be as silent as possible; he should speak only in words of wisdom or words that are necessary for his daily existence.”

Now, to the casual reader it seems like the Rambam is switching gears; he's talking about arrogance and suddenly he switches topics altogether and he's warning us against unnecessary words. It seems to be a non-sequitur.

Silence is Humility

But if you'll analyze it properly, you'll see it's not so. And that's because silence is *anavah*! Not talking is both the cause and result of humility! Because silence means that you know that you are standing in the presence of Someone.

Shlomo Hamelech taught us that. In *Koheles* (5:1) he teaches us the secret to true *anavah*: אַל תְּבַהֵל עַל פִּיךָ – Don't be in a hurry to express yourself, וְלִבְךָ אַל יִמְהַר לְהוֹצִיא דָבָר לְפָנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים, – Your heart, your mind, shouldn't be in a hurry to say something in the Presence of Hashem. When you're sitting at the table with your family, your friends, Hashem is present; so keep quiet, says Shlomo. כִּי הָאֱלֹקִים בְּשָׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל הָאָרֶץ – Because Hashem is in the heavens and you're down below on the earth, עַל כֵּן יִהְיוּ דְבָרֶיךָ מְעֻטִּים – therefore your words should be few.

The Sensible Silence

If a man opens up his mouth and words flow out without restraint, so it means he doesn't feel like he's in anybody's presence! *L'havdil elef havdolos*, if you are talking with the *gadol hador*, with let's say Rav Shach, Rav Moshe Feinstein, would you talk much? If you have any sense at all you wouldn't say a word!

Let's say you meet the Sigheter Rav on Bedford Avenue; you're standing in front of him and somebody comes over to you, "Hey, Chaim! What time is it?" Would you say, "It's three o'clock"?! No you keep quiet; you keep your mouth shut when you're standing in front of your *rebbe*! Let him talk; you keep quiet. חָכָם אֵינוּ מְדַבֵּר בְּפָנֵי מִי שֶׁגָּדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ – Someone with wisdom doesn't open his mouth when he's standing in front of somebody bigger than him (*Avos* 5:7).

Quiet! He's Here!

Not only in the presence of an *adam gadol*; even if a rich man was standing here you would talk in subdued tones. A rich man once came down to our *yarchei kallah*; he was a very rich man and when he walked in everyone was subdued; it quieted down. For what? For nothing. He wouldn't give us anything anyhow. The rich sometimes give the least of all and we knew him already; he wouldn't give anything. But still, we quieted down because we were aware that we were in the presence of a wealthy person. We had a certain respect for him – we were talking in a whisper.

You see it again and again. The president of the Board of Directors walks into the yeshiva, into the *beis medrash*, and it quiets down. Right away, it's quiet. Even the *rebbe*s begin speaking quietly; the *bochurim*, instead of chattering loudly and laughing, now they're talking in subdued tones. The big man is here!

The Real Boss Is Here

Now, there's Someone who's bigger than the president of the board; bigger than Rav Shach and the Sigheter Rav, *l'havdil*. Anyone who opens his mouth and talks as much as he wants that's a demonstration that he's not standing in the Presence of Hashem. He doesn't feel it at all! There's no question about it! If you talk according to your heart's desire, then you don't believe in Hashem; you don't have any *emunah*. I don't care how you look and what you profess to be – if you're going to chatter without restraint you're not standing *lifnei Elokim*.

I'm not talking now about *frumkeit*; *frumkeit* is not *yiras Shamayim* – there's no connection at all. *Frumkeit* is a certain habit, a very good habit; but that's all it is, a good habit. *Yiras Shamayim* is something else altogether – it means you're aware of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. And if you're aware that you're actually standing in front of Hashem so you don't open your mouth and talk. The fact that you keep your mouth closed indicates that you realize that you're standing in front of Somebody. Just like you wouldn't shoot off your mouth in the presence of somebody important, you don't chatter in the presence of *Elokim bashamayim*.

Is It Out Of Reach?

Now, such a *madreigah*, such a level of awareness seems to be out of reach for most of us. And that's because for us Hashem is a word in the *siddur*, that's all. He's in the *shul* maybe; we'll give Him that. *Halevai* we should stop talking in the *shul* when the *siddur* is open. But how do plain people like us achieve such an awareness, *an awareness of the Presence of Hashem at all times?*

The answer is that there is a great principle which is taught to us by the Mesillas Yesharim who uses it extensively. It's such an important psychological principle that it cannot be overstated. Briefly stated the principle is as follows: *הַחִיצוֹנִיּוּת מְעוֹרְרֵת אֶת הַפְּנִימִיּוּת* – *The exteriority bestirs the interiority*. It means that our outward acts stir up inwardly reactions within us.

Supercharge Your Prayers

It's like a man who comes to shul in the morning and he's tired and lazy; he has no enthusiasm. So what does he do? Usually nothing. But if he learned this *eitzah* from the Mesillas Yesharim so he opens his big mouth and he forces himself to shout: הוֹדוּ לַה' קְרָאוּ בְשִׁמּוֹ הוֹדִיעוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילוֹתָיו. Out loud! He doesn't mean it at all but he shouts anyhow. And after a while his outwardliness stirs up a reaction inwardly and he becomes enthusiastic too.

The same is in case you don't love a certain person but as you pass by you give that person a friendly smile; it warms you up and you become friendly to him. You're not in the mood, but by opening your mouth, by moving your limbs and making the motions of enthusiasm, you'll see soon that it will evoke from you an attitude of enthusiasm and readiness.

It's a very important principle you're hearing now. If you want to change, then act like you're good and that's the way to stir up a reaction inside of you. Act like a gentleman. Act like a decent person. Act like you want to be *davening* with *kavanah*. You're not deceiving anybody because the result will be that it's going to warm you up and you'll actually become that.

Gaining Awareness

And so we should make use of that principle for our subject as well. So what if you're not aware of Hashem right now?! But you want it and you're willing to practice it. If we want to train ourselves to be humble like Moshe Rabbeinu, we have to do things externally to awaken those emotions of awareness of the Presence of Hashem.

If a man behaves as much as he can as if he is standing in the Presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu – even though he doesn't feel it at all but he knows that he wants to feel it and so when the time comes to open his mouth and he clamps down and desists – that's going to make him feel that he is standing *lifnei Elokim*. He doesn't feel it at all but it's going to have that effect on him. Just like the man who *does* feel that he's standing *lifnei Elokim* and he keeps quiet because of that, the one who goes through the motions is also little by little going to stir up within himself a genuine emotion of Awareness of Hashem.

It's an *avodah*; it takes practice. You practice it up a few times during the day; "Instead of opening my mouth, I'm going to squelch the

wisecrack that I wanted to say because I'm in the Presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu." By means of restraining that *leitzaanus* that you wanted to say – Don't say it! – by acting as if you're standing *lifnei ha'Elokim*, it's going to gain for you a genuine feeling of *emunah* that you are standing in front of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The purpose of opening the mouth and talking is to show, "I am here! Look at me!" And that's why it takes effort to be silent – because you're battling against this animal within you that wants to bark or meow or make noises, to show that it's there, to demonstrate *anochi*. And therefore, when a man is able to keep his mouth closed with the opposite purpose in mind, by reminding himself that he's humble before Hashem, he's already walking in the footsteps of Moshe Rabbeinu.

The True Humble

And so we come back to what is said about Moshe in our *parsha*: **וְהָיָאִישׁ מִלְּשׁוֹה עָנְיִו מְאֹד** – *Moshe was a very humble man* (Bamidbar 12:3). It doesn't say there that he was humble. No, he was humble *me'od*, very humble – "more humble than anyone on the face of the earth." And that's because he was more aware of Hashem than anyone else on the face of the earth. Because *temunas Hashem yabit*, that's why he was the *anav m'kol adam*.

True humility is the sign of an *eved Hashem* and that's why all those who serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu and believe in Him implicitly are called *anavim*. When Dovid Hamelech wanted to tell how Hakadosh Baruch Hu saved him from his enemies, he said, **יִשְׁמְעוּ עֲנָוִים וְיִשְׂמְחוּ** – *Let the humble listen and let them rejoice* (Tehillim 34:3). "I want to tell you now how Hakadosh Baruch Hu steps in and helps," said Dovid, "and you people, *you humble people*, should listen and rejoice."

Now, where does humble come in here?! All of a sudden he is calling them humble? It should have been *yishme'u tzaddikim* – "Listen you *tzaddikim*," or *yishme'u yere'im* – "Listen you ones who fear Hashem." Maybe *yishme'u maaminim v'yismachu* – "Listen up, you faithful ones and rejoice." But instead he says *yishme'u anavim* – "Let the humble, the meek listen and rejoice." What is Dovid trying to say?

The answer is that the *anav* in Tehillim is the same *anav* as in our *parsha*. It means somebody who has a genuine Awareness of Hashem. He always feels that he's standing in the Presence of Hashem. It's not merely that he signs on the dotted line, *ani maamin* – "I am a *maamin*."

You sign off that you believe in Hashem and that's all? No, that's not a *maamin*. A real *maamin* is one who feels the Presence of Hashem so strongly that he is *nichna* before Him. He doesn't have to learn in the *seforim* how to be an *anav* – he actually feels humbled! And that's because he knows, he actually *senses*, that he is standing before Hashem. And of all people in the world there was nobody who understood that he was standing before Hakadosh Baruch Hu at all times like Moshe Rabbeinu did.

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Let's Get Practical

Humility Through Silence

This week we learned about the humility of Moshe Rabeinu. Though Moshe was aware of his own greatness, his awareness of Hashem made him feel humble at all times. One who is always in Hashem's presence is not an "*ish devarim*" – a man of words, rather *devarav muatim*; his words are few. Even if we are not humble like Moshe Rabeinu, by training ourselves to keep silent because of Hashem's Presence, we grow in humility. This week I will *bli neder* remind myself twice every day that I should think before speaking because wherever I stand, I am in the presence of Greatness.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

58 – Borrowing and Not Repaying | **291** – Thinking by Torah | **614** – The Sukkah
658 – Working on the Midos | **E-9** – Rambam Laws of Opinions
E-10 – Rambam Laws of Opinions II

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The Power of a Relationship

Last Shabbos we discussed that through a Shabbos awareness we can truly sense and understand that Hashem exists! When we are aware that we are in Hashem's presence we have the opportunity to access the brachos that come along with Shabbos, since Shabbos is the *ma'yan ha-Bracha*, the fountain of **all** blessing. (Ramban, Bereishis 2:3) Through increasing our awareness of Hashem we can access all His blessings and the greatest gift of all, a relationship with Him.

Try not to forget to have a Shabbos Awareness- **and definitely don't spoil the opportunity of Shabbos!** Let's get practical.

On Shabbos it is forbidden to cook or bake: Why did the Torah forbid cooking on Shabbos for Shabbos? Imagine someone's parents came from afar. The father comes in, greets his son in law and asks, "Where is Rachel?" "She's in the kitchen baking a cake," the son-in-law says. The father replies, "I didn't come here to eat cake, I have plenty of cake at home! I came to spend time with my family. Tell her to come sit down, and let's enjoy each other's company." That is what Hashem wants of us on Shabbos and that's what "remembering Shabbos" is all about. If you prepared delicacies before Shabbos, great, let us partake of them now together. But if you weren't able to prepare, now is not the time to do so. Hashem has plenty of kugel and cake - everything in the world is His. Now is the time to sit down together, speak words of Torah, and enjoy each other's company.

On Shabbos, we also don't read secular books: Why? The answer is simple. Imagine that someone's parents came from afar to visit him and his family. Does he ignore them and pick up the newspaper?

On Shabbos There Are No Requests - Just Relationship: On Shabbos we speak with Hashem at length, but we don't ask for anything- not for *refuah* and not for *parnasah*. We only want to be friends, so to speak- to develop a relationship. We take out a *Chumash*, a *Tehilim* or a *Gemara*. And after Shabbos, we say to Hashem, "We're friends, aren't we? So please heal so-and-so, it's very important to me." Through developing our relationship over Shabbos, we gain the opportunity to ask for everything all week long - since Hashem remains closely in touch with us, so to speak. But if we make request on Shabbos, we spoil everything. This is not the time; today we have to put all such business aside. For this is a happy day. We dress nicely and serve special food, all in a festive spirit.

And it's a lot easier than we think! All we have to do is **remember that today is Shabbos and we are in Hashem's presence**. And Hashem will shower us with all His blessings. And the greatest blessing of all is to develop a true relationship with Him!

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Q&A

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QUESTION

How do we ensure that our children shouldn't fall into a rut of just doing mitzvos by rote and not really appreciating mitzvos and avodas Hashem?

ANSWER

It's a big problem this person raises; it's a serious problem, because that's exactly what's happening. Here you have a father who is a *ba'al teshuva*, he came from the outside. He has a whole closet full of skeletons. His mother and his father, his siblings, and his cousins – all of them! He's ashamed to show them. You know that we have fine yeshiva men, *kollel* men, who are ashamed that anyone should find out what relatives they have. It's a fact. Because they have relatives, we know they do.

And so he fought his way back to Torah and he became a big idealist and he married. He married a girl who is also an idealist. But now the children are born into it, and now begins the old process of getting into a rut again. Children are in the rut. Absolutely, it's a problem.

And how to fight against it? It's not simple but it most definitely can be done. You have to keep on pouring idealism into them. It's not done, that's the problem. You have to pour idealism into them! Fire has to be poured into them! *Hislahavus*, enthusiasm! You have to glamorize everything. Everything connected to Torah and *avodas Hashem* has to be glamorized. It could be done, but it won't happen on its own – it has to be done. All the time you must be busy pouring into the heads of your children more and more enthusiasm about Hashem.

June 1972

Life Questions? 

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