

אור פני משה

שיחות מוסר על התורה
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*Shmuessen from
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פרשת ויקהל - שקלים

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פרשת ויקהל

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עַדַּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֱלֹהִים הַדְּבָרִים
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת אֲתֶם: שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבָּתוֹן (שמות ל"ה, א' ב')

And Moshe gathered the whole congregation of the Bnei Yisroel and he said to them, "These are the things that Hashem commanded to do them – Six days work can be done and on the seventh day will be for you holy, a Shabbos of rest."

Living in the Presence of the Shechina

Many *mefarshim* discuss a question regarding the difference in the order of the *mitzvos* of Shabbos and *Mishkan* in Parshas Ki Sisa and Parshas Vayakhel. As Rashi explains, the *mitzvah* of Shabbos was said in Parshas Vayakhel prior to the *Mishkan*, to indicate that the building of the *Mishkan* was not permitted to be done on Shabbos. Yet in Parshas Ki Sisa, the *mitzvah* of Shabbos is given after the *mitzvah* of the *Mishkan*. Why did the Torah not present the *mitzvos* in the same order there, based on the *halacha* that the *melachah* is not *Doche Shabbos*?

Before the Cheit Ha'Eigel, M'leches Hamishkan was Doche Shabbos

In this shmuess, we will present the resolution that is offered by the Meshech Chochmah for this difficulty. In order to answer this question, the Meshech Chochmah suggests a novel *chiddush*. Unlike the *halacha* as it exists currently, forbidding the building of the *Mishkan* or *Bais Hamikdosh* on Shabbos; the *halacha* was different, says the Meshech Chochmah, prior to the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*. At that time, the building of the *Mishkan* was actually שבת דוחה¹. What is the reason for this change of the

¹ The Meshech Chochmah makes note that this is unlike the opinion of Rashi in Parshas Ki Sisa, who derives from the extra word אך in the passuk אך את שבתותי תשמור that the *m'leches hamishkan* is not *Doche Shabbos*. However, the Meshech Chochmah points out that the Gemara makes a different *drashah* from the word אך, implying that it would not be used for the *halacha* that Rashi learns, thus allowing room for his view that *m'leches hamishkan* was indeed *Doche Shabbos* at that time.

halacha? The Meshech Chochmah explains this in accordance with the *halacha* that even nowadays, when the building of the *Bais Hamikdosh* is not *Doche Shabbos*, the Avodah which is done within the *Mikdosh* is still *Doche Shabbos*. What is the understanding of this distinction between the building of the *Mikdosh* and the *Avodah* within the *Mikdosh*?

To understand this, we must first explain why all the various daily *avodos* of the *Bais Hamikdosh* were *Doche Shabbos*. The reason for this is that the *Avodah* in the *Mikdosh* is a deeper and more pronounced fulfillment of the very idea that Shabbos is intended to accomplish. Let us explore why this is so:

Shabbos is a Testimony to Brias Ha'olam

What is the significance of Shabbos? Shabbos is the day through which there is a testimony that the World was created by an all-powerful Creator.

Each Shabbos, every yid puts down all the different projects and affairs in which he is involved. He does not do work in the field, in the kitchen, nor in the factory.

His neighbor sees him and says, "Why are you not finishing your work? You will lose your money!"

The Jew responds, "Today is the day that the Creator of the World rested from Creation, and therefore, we, Jews, do the same!"

By refraining from work on Shabbos, the Jew thus testifies about Creation.

As the Ohr Hachaim in Parshas Vayakhel explains, it was for this reason that the *mitzvah* of Shabbos was given to Klal Yisroel after the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*, even as they had already received the *mitzvah* of Shabbos many times previously. The *Cheit Ha'Eigel* was a sin which bore resemblance to *Avodah Zarah*, an *aveirah* which Chazal tell us is so all-encompassing that it is equivalent to violating all 613 *mitzvos*. Until they would be able to be cleansed from this sin, they would be unworthy of having the *Shechinah* in their midst. How were they to cleanse themselves for this all-inclusive *aveirah*? The solution to this was the *mitzvah* of Shabbos. Shabbos is a *mitzvah* that is equivalent to the entire Torah, and actually has a specific quality of bringing forgiveness on oneself for the sin *Avodah Zarah*. The Gemara in Masseches Shabos (דף קיח:) tells us, "Anyone who observes Shabbos properly, even if he served *Avodah Zarah* like the generation of Enosh, he is forgiven!" Therefore, Hashem

specifically commanded them about Shabbos prior to the *mitzvah* of the *Mishkan*, so that they could attain the atonement necessary for themselves to become worthy of the *Mishkan*.

The Mikdosh is a Testimony to the Current Presence of the Shechinah

With the understanding that Shabbos testifies to the Creation, let us now discuss the *Avodah* in the *Mikdosh*. How is the *Mikdosh* a deeper fulfillment of the idea of Shabbos? The answer is that while Shabbos testifies about the Creation by the Creator at the beginning of time, the *Mikdosh* is a testimony to the constant presence of the *Shechinah* in the present. This is due to the fact that through the *Mishkan*, one could clearly sense the *hashgacha pratis* that Hashem generates into the world on a constant basis. Through the first-hand realization of the existence of the HaKadosh Boruch Hu that The *Mikdosh* afforded, knowledge of the Creation became obvious and self-understood.

'Clearly there was a Creation of the world by HaKadosh Boruch Hu, as the very Presence of the Creator is audibly felt in the Mikdosh!'

The truth of the world was readily apparent in the *Mikdosh* through the *Shechinah* that was tangibly felt, removing any room for doubts. The *mitzvos* of the *Mikdosh* were therefore *Doche Shabbos*, because they implemented the concepts of Shabbos on an even deeper and loftier level.

Why is the building of the *Mikdosh* not *Doche Shabbos*? Because before the *Mikdosh* is completed, the *Shechinah* did not yet descend, and consequently, one does not have that knowledge of HaKadosh Boruch Hu which the *Shechinah* brings. As the level of *Shechinah* that is required is not yet present, the sanctity of Shabbos retains its full severity, and the suspension of the halachos of Shabbos does not yet take effect.

Before the Eigel, the Shechinah was Constantly Present

All of this is different, says the Meshech Chochmah, concerning the act of building of the *Mishkan* that would have occurred before the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*. At that point, the *Shechinah* was already residing amongst Klal Yisroel, even without any *Mishkan*. The *Mishkan* was thus not intended for the purpose of initially bringing the *Shechinah* in their midst, but merely as a means of having a central location in which they could bring their *Korbanos*. The *Mishkan* would serve as an abode for the *Shechinah*, and hence, a vehicle through which one could connect with the *Shechinah* on a higher level. Because there was a level of *Shechinah* that was already present, it would have been permissible to erect the *Mishkan*

on Shabbos, based on the principle that the *mitzvos* of the *Mishkan* involving the *Shechinah* overrode Shabbos, as explained.

The Shechinah in the Lives of Tzaddikim

Aside for resolving the contradiction in the *parshiyos* and clarifying whether the *Mishkan* could be built on Shabbos, this *pshat* has practical relevance as well. This is because the *seforim* teach us that *tzaddikim* live their lives with the constant presence of the *Shechinah*. Although this obviously does not mean that they can disregard the *halachos* of Shabbos, it does mean that one could feel a certain level of the presence of HaKadosh Boruch Hu in their company.

My rebbe, Rav Elya Roth z"l lived his life on a completely different level than the natural order. There was no happenstance, and there was frustration or aggravation about what should have gone his way. He saw every single occurrence as a direct action of HaKadosh Boruch, intended for his benefit. It may be a clear chessed, or it may have been a message from HaKadosh Boruch Hu. Perhaps Hashem wanted to give him mussar. However, one thing was absolutely crystal-clear to him. Hashem was running the show.

Because he lived on this elevated level, he was zoche to a level of direct siyatta d'shmaya that others would not be able to experience. He once was seen waiting on line at a vegetable stand, with vegetables in hand to purchase. A talmid was speaking to him at the time, and they discussed various topics of Torah and mussar. through the conversation, it became clear to the talmid that Rav Elya did not have money to pay for the vegetables. He was simply assuming that Hashem would help him. The talmid could not understand how Rav Elya could act this way, and he waited for Rav Elya's turn, to see how the incident would unfold.

Soon enough, As Rav Elya's reached the front of the line, the seller asked him for money. Rav Elya just stood there holding his vegetables, not saying anything. The seller asked him again, and Rav Elya remained silent. The situation became uncomfortable at that point, and so the talmid pulled out some money from his own pocket and paid for the vegetables.

Afterward, the talmid could not help but questioning Rav Elya about his behavior. "I don't understand. You went to the store to

buy vegetables, but you had no money! What would you have done if I wasn't there?"

Rav Elya, though, merely smiled, and held up his vegetables. He responded, "I don't understand your question. I went to the store, and I have vegetables! Don't you see that Hashem helped me?!"

Rav Moshe Feinstein z"l lived his life with a tangible measure of Shechinah and siyatta d'shmaya, both in the leading of the Klal, as well as in his own personal life. The following incident reflects this elevated plane of existence:

A friend of mine was in a discussion with another individual – Reuven – who had a personal acquaintance with Rav Moshe. Reuven felt that Rav Moshe had a great deal of respect and importance toward him, and that therefore his own opinion should weigh heavily in any discussion. Quite understandably, it became difficult to hold any discussion with Reuven.

Matters reached a head, until my friend felt compelled to prove to Reuven that Rav Moshe did not think as highly of him as he thought. How would he accomplish this? My friend thought of an idea. Rav Moshe would often request of him to drive him to different places. On one such trip, my friend concealed a tape recorder on top of the sun-visor over the passenger seat. My friend left the tape recorder in recording mode, as he planned on mentioning Reuven in conversation during the drive, while the tape would be recording what Rav Moshe would say. He knew that Rav Moshe would never transgress the aveirah of loshon hara, but my friend felt that even with the issur of loshon hara notwithstanding, from the manner Rav Moshe would speak of Reuven, he would be able to discern Rav Moshe's true feelings.

What ended up happening? Just as my friend began the discussion, he was narrowly cut off by another vehicle. To avoid a collision, my friend was obliged to slam on the breaks. This short-stop caused the tape recorder to fall right into Rav Moshe's lap! Rav Moshe perceived what happened, and he was significantly shaken by the lesson that he had just experienced in how much one must guard his tongue.

Although the lesson Rav Moshe took is certainly true and sound, there was also a clear siyatta d'shmaya in place here. Rav Moshe

was so careful never to hurt or insult another Jew, and from Shamayim they aided him in carrying through with this practice.

This story involved Rav Meir Simchah zt"l of D'vinsk himself, who wrote the sefer Meshech Chochmah. It happened that he was unable to attend the levayah of the Kovner Rov, Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor zt"l.

When his talmidim who were present at the levayah reported back to him, he mentioned the name of certain maggid who was very popular at the time. This maggid was an excellent speaker, and he had the ability to be arouse his listeners into true hisorerus. It was obvious that he would have been asked to give a hesped at this choshuve levayah. Rav Meir Simchah turned to his talmidim and said, "I know that this maggid did not say a hesped. How exactly did this come about?"

His talmidim looked at each other in surprise. They had come to him immediately after the levayah concluded, and it was clear to them that no one had reported to him before they did. How did he know what had occurred at the levayah?

Rav Meir Simchah explained to them: "Many years earlier, there was a din-Torah between this maggid and the Kovner Rav. The outcome of the din-Torah happened to have been in favor of the Kovner Rav, to the displeasure of the maggid. As the maggid stalked out of the Bais-din, I overheard him muttering to himself, 'I'm not saying any hesped for him!'

"When I heard him say that," Rav Meir Simchah continued, "I had a strong sense that Shamayim would cause those words to come true. It was quite clear to me, and I had no doubts about it. Now that the levayah passed, I simply wish to know how exactly it was orchestrated from Shamayim that this maggid would not speak!"

The stunned talmidim confirmed that, in fact, this maggid did not speak. He had been on the roster of speakers, but he was prevented by a mishap that had occurred at the time of his turn:

This maggid was somewhat short, and a platform had been erected for him upon which to stand. As he was ascending the platform, the whole structure collapsed under him. Although he did not sustain any serious injuries, he was still badly beaten and

bruised, and he was in no condition to deliver a public hesped. He was forced to excuse himself from his designated slot, and the program continued onto the next scheduled speaker.

To Rav Meir Simchah, the hashgacha pratis was clear even before it occurred. The maggid would not speak – the question was how that would take place. Many people would blame the carpenter who built the platform, and demand that he quit his job. Others would attribute all sorts of different factors that contributed to the weak platform. While their words may have had truth to them – e.g. perhaps the carpenter should have been more careful – the outcome was directly from Hashem. The maggid would not speak, through one way or another that Hashem would orchestrate it.

The Shechinah in our Own Lives

Living on this level of *siyatta d'shmaya* and *Shechinah* is not reserved for our *gedolim*. We can all begin to live on a more elevated level, engraining the foundations of *emunah* and *bitachon* within ourselves. When we do this, we elevate ourselves and our lives into *madreigos* of closeness to the *Shechinah* of which the common person has no connection. We will experience *siyatta d'shmaya* and *hashgacha pratis* in many areas of our lives, thereby causing our recognition of Hashem to increase as a result. We can continue *shteiging* in this manner until we will live lives which are truly elevated.

When a bachur in yeshiva has a chasunah of a sibling to attend, there are generally two distinct manners of how they will approach their situation:

Chaim begins preparing to leave from the time that Shacharis is over. Although the chasunah is local, Chaim knows that he must be in pictures, and he takes the responsibility very seriously. He gets his suit ready in the middle of morning seder, and he makes sure that he has a change of hat and tie for dancing. He showers early, and by lunchtime, he is already out of yeshiva. He could not concentrate on the shiur that day regardless.

Yankel understands that he is asked to be in pictures, but knowing that the chasunah is local, he does not think about it until lunchtime. During bein hasedorim, he quickly showers and gets himself ready, and he is on time for second seder. He leaves yeshivah an hour before the chuppah, and he gets to the chasunah

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with plenty of time for pictures. Two of his married siblings had anyways been delayed, causing the pictures to have been held up. He is in the pictures without anyone having complaints on him.

The difference between these two approaches continues after the chasunah as well. Chaim is tired the next day, and he decides he needs a day off. Afterward, it is difficult for him to catch up on the previous two days of shiur, and it is a full week and a half before he is finally on schedule. Yankel takes a short nap after Shacharis, and he learns first seder with his full vigor. He participates in the shiur with a geshmake, and one can never tell that he had had to take off the night before.

It is not that Chaim has bad intentions. There are indeed times that a person needs to take off from yeshivah. However, when a person lives on an elevated madreigah, he will experience that siyatta d'shmaya to be able to not allow the interruption to distract him and take him off-course.

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כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָקְדֵיהֶם (שמות ל' י"ב)

When you count the heads of Bnei Yisroel according to their numbers

Lift Up the Bnei Yisroel

When Hashem instructed Moshe to count the Bnei Yisroel, He used the term **כִּי תִשָּׂא** / *When you will lift/count*. The Ohr Hachaim asks, why did Hashem not use the more commonly used term for counting – תפקוד?

The Ohr Hachaim explains that the command for this counting was issued after the Bnei Yisroel had sinned in the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*. At that point the Bnei Yisroel were at a very low point as a result of their *aveirah*, both in their true *madreigah* as well as in their own minds. As the Medrash teaches us, after a person commits an *aveirah*, his 'height' becomes stooped over. Hashem therefore instructed Moshe that with this *mitzvah* of counting the Bnei Yisroel, he should lift them up out of their depression and low state and restore them to their original condition.

There are two lessons which we must learn from this Ohr Hachaim:

An Aveirah Leaves Us in a Low, Depressed State

Firstly, we must recognize this reality about how a *mitzvah* lifts us up, while an *aveirah* brings us down. The Ohr Hachaim is pointing out for us something about which, in truth, each person can testify from his own life experiences.

When we say that piece of loshon hara, excusing ourselves by 'paskening' that it is a mitzvah to speak negatively about that individual, do we feel good afterwards? Certainly not. We all know that we feel absolutely horrible!

And when, on the other hand, we control ourselves, and refrain from speaking the loshon hara, how delicious is that feeling of radiance, when we experience the light of the Shechina!

As Rashi explains the *passuk* in Mishlei (משלי) ומתק רעהו מעצת נפש (כ"ז ט') *Acting in a manner that is sweet in the Eyes of HaKadosh Boruch Hu is better and more pleasurable than surrendering to one's earthly desires.*

Remembering the Lesson

We can all attest to the truth of this concept from our own experiences. We recall that feeling of lowliness we felt after we had been too lazy to learn with our child, or when we uttered that nasty comment to our family member. We remember that wonderful feeling of radiance when we did force ourselves to sit down with our son and learn with him, or when we controlled our tongues. The '*kuntz*', however, is not merely in the remembering, but in not allowing the message to slip by; let us rather store the lesson and absorb it into our beings, so that we can empower ourselves for the next time we are faced with a test. We will remember the emptiness of giving in and the wholesomeness of self-control, and *b'siyata d'shmaya* we will succeed in controlling ourselves.

Rising Up After the Aveirah Was Done

The second lesson that we learn from the Ohr Hachaim concerns our behavior after we have already stumbled into a sin r"l.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that Hashem was instructing Moshe about how to deal with the Bnei Yisroel after they had done the *Cheit*

Ha'Eigel. What was he to do? כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל / *Lift up the heads of Bnei Yisroel!*

The Torah is teaching us how a person should react after the *aveirah* was already done, and he is already experiencing that feeling of lowliness and depression. Do not proceed with that low feeling; rather, lift yourself up from it, so that you can return to the proper path!

סרו מהר – The Bnei Yisroel's Quick Descent into Sin

This *vort* of the Ohr Hachaim parallels what Rav Chaim Shmulevitz z"l used to teach us in this *parshah* regarding the incident of the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*. The Torah tells us that when Moshe did not return at what the Bnei Yisroel had understood to be the appointed time, they were at Ahron's side almost immediately, demanding that he make an *Eigel*. In the words of the passuk, (ל"ב ח') סרו מהר / *They strayed quickly*. From the tremendously high *madreigos* upon which they were standing – from uttering the words זה קלי ואנוהו at the Yam Suf, and נעשה ונשמע at Har Sinai – they plummeted into an *aveirah* which on the surface resembled *avodah zarah*, in a process which seemingly took minutes.

Rav Chaim would ask a question about this story. *Chazal* (שבת ק"ה:) describe for us the manner in which the *yetzer hara* operates: "This is the way of the *yetzer hara*: Today he says to the person, "Do such-and-such," tomorrow he says, "Do such-and-such," until he says to him "Go worship *avodah zarah*!" This means that the *yetzer hara* does not come upon a person suddenly, trying to bring him many levels lower than where he currently stands. If the *yetzer hara* would attempt to do this he would never succeed, because a person is on guard over himself, and he would not allow himself to descend into such low levels. Rather, the *yetzer hara* works gradually, first luring the individual into what are small, almost imperceptible *aveiros*, and from there dragging the person little by little into the lowest levels of sin. How then is it, questioned Rav Chaim, that in the incident of the *Cheit Ha'Eigel*, they were drawn into the most severe of sins in such a short period of time?

In a State of Confusion There is Danger of Falling Many Madreigos

Rav Chaim would explain, that the answer to this is based on the state of mind in which Klal Yisroel were at the time. As Rashi tells us (ל"ב ח') (א, the Satan displayed an image of Moshe's coffin hovering in the sky and brought a general spirit of darkness and confusion into the world. The Bnei Yisroel were in a state of depression and panic at the delay of Moshe's return, and in their fright, they worked themselves into a complete frenzy.

This is the explanation for the Bnei Yisroel's rapid descent into the depths of sin. It is true that the *yetzer hara* generally must work gradually – for an individual in a 'normal' setting, where he is in a solid, secure frame of mind. Indeed, a person will never allow himself, under normal circumstances, to be dragged into drastic levels of sin in such a quick fashion. He understands that it is wrong, and he guards himself from falling. The only way the *yetzer hara* will succeed is by deceiving him into transgressing small, 'insignificant' *aveiros*, and from there, dragging him lower and lower into levels of serious *aveiros*.

However, there can be exceptions to the rule, in which a person can fall instantly, *r"l*. When a person is in a state of confusion or depression, his usual intellectual faculties do not have control over him in the way that they usually do. In his confused or depressed state of mind, he is indeed in danger of descending many levels instantaneously. At that point, the 'first aid' for the person is to snap out of that state of depression.

For this reason, Rav Chaim would often stand at the bimah and cry out, "Rabbosai, listen to me! If you did an *aveirah*, DO NOT do *teshuva*!" He would then proceed to explain himself. After an *aveirah*, one must, of course, do *teshuva*. However, the first reaction to the *aveirah* should not be one of regret, because at that point, the individual is at a low point. If he will remain in that depressed state, there is tremendous danger that he will continue fall down the slope into terribly low *madreigos*. Instead, a person should lift himself out of the rut into which he fell. Afterward, when he is on solid ground, he should regret his action, and safeguard himself so that he will not fall again in the future.

Learning the Lesson of Teshuva from the Cheit Ha'Eigel

The Gemara (ע"ז ה') tells us that the reason Hashem allowed the Bnei Yisroel to fall into the sin of the *Cheit Ha'Eigel* was to create a precedent of *teshuva* for future generations. Let us indeed absorb this lesson of *teshuva* from the story of the *Eigel*. Rather than allowing ourselves to remain in a low, depressed state after we fall *r"l*, let us pick ourselves up and strengthen ourselves, where we can reach heights in Torah and *Avodas Hashem* that were never previously attainable.

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