

אור פני משה

שיחות מוסר על התורה

מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר רבינוביץ זצ"ל

Shmuessen from
Harav Moshe Rabinowitz zt"l

פרשת נצבים – וילך
ימי סליחות

Volume 5 Issue # 38

Sponsored by
R' Yisroel Rabinowitz (Rebo)
Talmid Ner Yisroel Toronto
In honor of my dear Rebbe
Rav Moshe Zatzal

פרשת נצבים - וילך

הָן בְּעוֹדָנִי חַי עִמָּכֶם הַיּוֹם מִמְרִים הֵייתֶם עִם ה' וְאַף כִּי אֲחֵרֵי מוֹתִי (דברים ל"א כ"ז)

[Moshe said to Bnei Yisroel,] "Even as I am still alive amongst you today, you have been rebellious with Hashem; certainly, you will be this way after my death!"

כִּי קָרוֹב אֵלַיךְ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ (ל"א י"ד)

For it [Teshuvah] is exceedingly near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart to fulfill it!

The Avodah of Teshuvah

In the end of the *Parshas Vayeilech*, Moshe Rabbeinu tells Bnei Yisroel about *Shir Ha'azinu*. In that *shirah*, Moshe foretells the story of Klal Yisroel, from their future sins until their final Redemption. Moshe prefaced it with the following message.

"I know that you have been rebellious with Hashem until now even during my life; certainly, you will be this way after my death! I therefore gather you to hear me as I call the Heaven and earth to testify as I deliver this Song of Ha'azinu!"

ממרים היתם / 'You have been rebellious' - in the Past

The Ohr Hachaim focuses on the language Moshe used to the Bnei Yisroel. *You have been rebellious.* This wording is in the past tense, implying that at that moment in time, the Bnei Yisroel were no longer rebellious. The message Moshe was imparting, however, was that they had never reached the state of perfection in *Avodas Hashem* that was expected. Moshe was saying, 'Even as I am with you, you are constantly falling and sinning; it can therefore certainly be assumed that this will continue after my death!' If so, assumes the Ohr Hachaim, Moshe should have said, ממרים אתם / *You are rebellious*, implying that that they are still in that state. Why did he only say that they **were** rebellious?

Marrying a Woman on Condition that One is a Tzaddik

The Ohr Hachaim answers this question based on a *halachah* that the Gemara teaches regarding marriage.

Schmerel, a well-known non-religious crook, approaches a woman while holding a ring in his hand.

"Will you marry me?" he asks her as he holds out the ring.

The woman looks at Schmerel with disgust. "You?! The entire town knows you as an evil lowlife. You torment people, you rob, and you damage property. In your own private life, it's no better. You don't keep Shabbos, kashrus, or any other mitzvah. You transgress the most serious aveiros. I can never be married to you!"

Schmerel does not give up. "I'll tell you what," he says. "You become married to me now, on condition that I am an absolute tzaddik."

The woman looks at him oddly.

"Ok, no problem," she tells him, and she accepts the ring from his hand.

The halachah of this woman is that she has the status of being possibly married to Schmerel. She may not become wed to another man without first receiving a divorce.

שיחות מוסר על התורה מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר רבינוביץ זצ"ל
פרשת נצבים - וילך

Why is this so? Is Schmerel not a terrible rasha? What happened to his condition that they are only married if he is completely righteous?

The answer is that the marriage is indeed conditional on Schmerel's righteousness. However, a transformation from wickedness to righteousness can take as quick as one instant. We cannot know what is transpiring inside Schmerel's mind, and we must consider the possibility that he had a life-altering thought of teshuvah at the very moment that he handed the woman the ring.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that Moshe Rabbeinu was speaking to the Bnei Yisroel in accordance with this *halachah*. Moshe was saying, 'Until now, I have seen you in a rebellious state. Your state in the present moment, however, I cannot discuss, for perhaps right now you are harboring thoughts of a complete, sincere *teshuvah*!'

Invalid Witnesses

Let us analyze the above mentioned *halachah* cited by the Ohr Hachaim regarding one who married a woman on condition of being completely righteous. The *mefarshim* discuss what would appear to be a contradiction to the *halachah*:

Let us suppose that 'Schmerel the Crook' was not the chassan. The marriage was between a fine, upstanding Jewish man and woman. Instead, Schmerel was called upon during the chuppah to serve as one of the requisite witnesses for the marriage, without whom the marriage is invalid.

The halachah is that the chassan and kallah are not married. As Schmerel is a known rasha, he is invalid to serve as a witness, and the marriage is considered to have occurred without proper witnesses.

The question is what is the difference between the two cases? Why do we not give 'Schmerel' even a questionable status as a valid witness, as per the possibility that he had a thought of *teshuvah* at the moment of his being called as a witness? Why is it that concerning a conditional marriage we entertain this possibility that his condition was fulfilled, whereas concerning his status as a valid witness we have no concern for such a possibility?

Demonstrating that One is Considering the Possibility of Teshuvah

We will *bez"H* discuss two answers to this contradiction, each of which contains an important point, relevant to the way we all should go through our own *teshuvah* processes.

The first answer given by some *mefarshim* (עיי' לה"מ הל' אישות פ"ח ה"ה, ביאור הגר"א אה"ע סימן מ"ב אות ל', ערוה"ש אה"ע סימן) is that a known *rasha* indeed has a '*chazaka*/'status-quo' as such, and there is no halachic reason to speculate that he changed his ways. Consequently, he is assumed to be invalid to serve as a witness until it is clearly demonstrated to the contrary. However, one who makes his marriage conditional on his being a *tzaddik* has demonstrated that he is contemplating changing his ways. It is apparently a very real prospect in his mind, to the point that he makes a condition based on it. If so, we must now consider the possibility that he indeed arrived at a true *teshuvah* decision at that moment. As a rational possibility now exists that the condition for his marriage was fulfilled, we must therefore act stringently in this regard by requiring the woman to get a divorce.

Making the Initial Decision

The second answer (עיי' בני אהובה בהל' אישות שם בתירוצו הראשון שיל"פ כוונת דבריו ע"ד שנת' כאן, וע"ע בחלקת מחוקק סימן ל"ח ס"ק מ"ד) to this contradiction in *halachah*, is to differentiate between the amount of *teshuvah* necessary for a person to be rendered a *tzaddik*, and what it takes to recover one's status as a valid witness. In regard to being considered a *tzaddik*, even a mere thought of mending one's ways and beginning on a proper path is sufficient. After all, he is now beginning a righteous lifestyle. Therefore, when one makes a marriage

conditional on his being righteous, we must entertain the possibility that he indeed had a thought of *teshuvah*, and that the condition was fulfilled. To have a legal status as a kosher witness, however, requires a certain degree of rectifying one's past deeds (עיין שו"ע חו"מ סימן ל"ד סעי' כ"ה-ל"ה). One must restore any stolen property in his possession, and he must break any existing connection he has with the misdeed. As that cannot be accomplished by a thought alone, a witness is assumed to retain his invalid status until it is known that he has gone through the necessary steps of rectifying his past and severing his connection with it.

Guidance for our Own Teshuvah

Teshuvah is Exceedingly Near – in Making a Firm Decision to Begin Change

Both these answers to the contradiction in *halachah* give us very practical guidance in our own *avodah* of *teshuvah*. We must realize two important points. Firstly, the *yetzer hara* tries to make *teshuvah* seem like an exceedingly difficult process, one which is almost impossible to complete. We are therefore tempted to give up in despair without making any attempt at starting. We need to realize that the reality is not so at all. As the *passuk* in this *parshah* tells us *כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיך ובלבבך לעשותו* / *For it is extremely near to you; it is in your mouth and your heart to accomplish it!* All that is necessary is to take that first step of resolving to change. As demonstrated in the *halachah* of a conditional marriage that the Ohr Hachaim cites, in the very instant of resolving to change, one is transformed from a *rasha* into a *tzaddik*. Until that point, he had the status of a *rasha*, invalid to serve as a witness, but by revealing his present desire to change, he can now be referred to as a *tzaddik*.

What we need to do is pinpoint an area in which we require change – as small as it may be – and we must make the commitment to begin that change. With that, we have already done *teshuvah*.

The Subsequent Process of Teshuvah

We may, however, question this idea. How can it be said that *teshuvah* only takes an instant? What about the process of *teshuvah*? Are there not, after all, many components involved in *teshuvah* as outlined in *Shaarei Teshuvah*, including humility, regret, sorrow, undertaking actions of self-penitence, admission of one's guilt, davening, worrying – and various other steps? How can the *halachah* be that with one fleeting thought it is considered a *teshuvah*?

The solution to this question is with the second answer to the contradiction discussed earlier. While it is true that a *teshuvah* is a lifelong endeavor, that refers only to the complete process, through which one emerges completely purified of his sin, and with the same closeness to Hashem as before he sinned. Indeed, the second of the two views maintains that to alter one's status into a valid witness in Bais Din, one must engage in a process of *teshuvah*. This does not refer, however, to the task of bringing oneself into a mode of proper behavior. As demonstrated in the *halachah* of one who makes his marriage conditional on being a *tzaddik*, even a fleeting thought is sufficient. Just a mere decision to change one's ways transforms one into a *tzaddik*. From that point on, a person begins a new, clean slate from which he may act completely righteously. True, his past is not yet rectified, and that is an obligation and responsibility which he must be fulfill. That should not, however, stop one from taking the initial step of making a change in his overall way of life.

This Initial Change Brings One to a Complete Teshuvah

Moreover, after making the initial change, one will gradually find his *neshamah* leading him into the proper steps of a full *teshuvah*. He will soon find himself reaching a state of naturally regretting his past deeds and feeling a sense of shame and humility over them. He will plead with Hashem to accept him once again and restore him to his original *madreigah*.

Based on these two important points in our *avodah* of *teshuvah*, we can indeed understand the *passuk* which tells us that *teshuvah* is near to us. The first step is just a simple resolution to change – even in a small area of one's behavior. After that step, one will begin a process of elevation until he will be naturally drawn to the concrete steps of a full *teshuvah*.

Over the years, 'Reuven' 's davening has slowly taken a turn for the worse. First, it was shmoozing before Chazaras Hashatz, which gradually led into shmoozing during Chazaras Hashatz. His own Shemoneh Esrai was reduced to a matter of seconds, without any thought whatsoever. Much of davening was spent in the lobby of the shul 'hocking' around. He would not even arrive at Shacharis each day until the chazzan had already said Barchu.

At one point, Reuven hears a soul-stirring shmuess about the importance of Tefillah. He suddenly realizes the terrible state of his own davening, and he decides to begin making changes. At that very moment, Reuven has left behind his status in Shamayim as a person who does not care about davening, to one who cares for it a great deal. Reuven is a tzaddik in this regard.

Now, Reuven must undergo the teshuvah process. He decides to begin by tackling his arrival time at Shacharis. He resolves to arrive each day before the Morning Brachos are recited. He keeps to his commitment, and he soon finds himself with a good few minutes for reciting a slow pesukei d'zimrah. He begins trying to focus on the words of pesukei d'zimrah, giving himself an uplifting start in his davening. This leads to an overall change in his attitude.

Several months down the line, a clear transformation has taken place in Reuven's davening. Reuven now looks back at his previous behavior with a profound sense of shame. He sincerely regrets his actions, and he begs Hashem to forgive him for his flippant attitude of the past.

These lessons serve as an encouragement in our own *avodah* of *teshuvah*. The *yetzer hara* wishes to deter us, and he therefore makes *teshuvah* seem to us as a long and difficult process. The Torah, however, tells us otherwise. לעשותו בפיו ובלבבך/It is in your mouth and your heart to accomplish it! We need to begin by taking the initial step of making a small change in our lives. By doing so, we can establish ourselves as righteous people who are on the road to a complete *teshuvah* bez"H.

Cheshbon Hanefesh

Let us discuss one more important and necessary component in our *avodah* of *teshuvah*. This is the task of *cheshbon hanefesh*/calculating where one stands in his *Avodas Hashem*. This *cheshbon* is important in assessing in our own selves whether our overall behavior is up to the proper standard.

A large business has many workers employed operation. While each worker is assigned with a different job, the overall goal is the same: They must benefit the company. Every so often, the owners of the company take inventory. They assess the profit brought in by each worker for the company versus the amount it costs to hire him. If it costs \$10,000 in yearly expenses to sustain a certain worker, but he brings in half a million dollars in profit – that worker is worth maintaining. If, however, that same worker brings a sum total of a meager \$100 profits, he will be summarily fired.

We, too, must make a *cheshbon hanefesh* as to whether our overall conduct brings *kovod shamayim* to the world, or *chas v'shalom* the opposite. The Mashgiach, Rav Nosson Wachtfogel z"l taught me the great importance of this *cheshbon*, and that we must make such a *cheshbon* even several times in a day. Great *tzaddikim* would constantly make this *cheshbon*, ensuring that their conduct was achieving the proper results.

This *cheshbon* is important both for the initial change in our actions – as we discover and pinpoint the areas in our lives where we must make changes, and for the subsequent process of *teshuvah* – as we assess our improvement and our achievement in the *avodah* of *teshuvah*.

ימי הסליחות

קל מְלֹךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רַחֲמִים (פתיחה לאמירת י"ג מדות הרחמים)

G-d, King, Who sits on the Throne of Mercy

וְזָכוֹר לָנוּ הַיּוֹם בְּרִית שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּ לַעֲנּוּ מִקֶּדֶם (שם)

And remember for us today the Covenant of Thirteen, as you informed the humble one [Moshe]

תִּגְמַל הַטּוֹבָה כְּיוֹסֵף לְאֶחָיו (סליחה צ"א, יום חמישי דעשי"ת)

Grant us kindness as Yosef did to his brothers

The 13 Middos of Rachamim

As we go through these days of *Yemei Haslichos* and the *Yamim Noraim*, a major component of our *tefillos* is the י"ג מדות הרחמים / *The Thirteen Attributes of Hashem's Mercy*. Hashem revealed to Moshe that these *Middos* possess a unique quality; they have a powerful ability to rescue us from misfortune. *Chazal* (ראש השנה י"ז:) tell us that HaKadosh Baruch Hu appeared to Moshe as if wrapped in a *talis* in a manner symbolizing a *shliach tzibbur* [who is leading the *tzibbur* in davening]. Hashem instructed Moshe that whenever the Bnei Yisrael find themselves in an *eis tzarah*/a time of trouble or crisis, they should daven to Hashem with these expressions of Hashem's Mercy. When they do so, they are assured that they will not be turned away emptyhanded. This story culminated on Yom Kippur, when the Bnei Yisroel were completely forgiven. We therefore repeatedly mention these *Middos* during this time of year, to invoke the Mercy that Hashem revealed at this time.

In the *nusach* of the Tefillah leading up to the recitation of the *Middos*, we say וְזָכוֹר לָנוּ הַיּוֹם / *And remember for us the Covenant of the Thirteen [Middos], as you informed the humble one*. The 'humble one' is referring to Moshe Rabbeinu, who was taught by Hashem about the *Middos*. The question is, why do we refer to Moshe by a title, and not simply by his name?

Moshe's Omission of Some of the Middos after the Sin of the Meraglim

To answer this question, let us refer to a subsequent time where Moshe was again davening to Hashem on behalf of Klal Yisroel. This was at the time of the sin of the *Meraglim*, when the Bnei Yisroel were once again at the brink of destruction. Moshe at that point mentioned these *Middos* which Hashem had previously taught him. However, Moshe did not mention all the *Middos*; he omitted seven of them. The *mefarshim* are bothered by this: If these *Middos* have such a powerful ability to revoke harsh decrees against Klal Yisrael, why did Moshe not utilize the full potential of this "master key" that was available to him?

The Ramban explains that those *Middos* which Moshe omitted were not appropriate to have been mentioned at that point, because Klal Yisroel were behaving in a manner which was not conforming with those *Middos*. Moshe did not mention the *middah* of חֲסֵד לְאֵלָפִים / *Hashem preserves the kindnesses of the Avos for thousands of generations*, because Klal Yisrael did not act in the manner of the *Avos*. The *Avos* had a fondness for Eretz Yisrael, whereas Klal Yisrael here, had shown contempt for the Land. Moshe did not mention the *middah* of וְחַטָּא / *Hashem forgives sins which were committed inadvertently*, because the Bnei Yisrael had acted in a deliberate and intentional manner. The Ramban similarly explains why Moshe omitted several of the other *Middos*.

If Moshe would have mentioned these *Middos*, rather than invoking Hashem's Mercy, they would have caused a *kitrug*.

Emulating the Middos

We learn from this Ramban, that although we were given the ability to daven with these *Middos*, it is not simply a technique and a "free pass" in causing Hashem to be merciful. These *Middos* operate on a very clear set of rules. If we try to follow Hashem's Ways, behaving in the manner outlined by those *Middos*, we will thereby earn the privilege of Hashem treating us with the same traits. If, however, we do not attempt to live in the manner of those *Middos*, we cannot expect to be treated by Hashem in that way either.

This concept is demonstrated in the language of *Chazal* when describing how Hashem revealed these *Middos* to Moshe. The language used by *Chazal* is that Hashem told Moshe, כשאתם עושים סדר הזה לפני אינן חוזרות ריקם / *When you do this series [of the 13 Middos] before Me, they will not go unanswered*. The wording uttered by Hashem was that you must do this system, i.e. it is not enough merely to recite the 13 *Middos*. We must act in the same manner and strive to emulate Hashem's *Middos* of Mercy and Forgiveness. Through this we merit to have Hashem forgive us as well.

The *Sefer Tomer Devorah* is centered completely on this concept. In this sefer, the great Rav Moshe Kordoveiro z"l, a talmid of the Arizal, discusses each one of the *Middos* and how we can apply it in our own behavior. The underlying themes running through the *Middos* are ענוה / *humility*, i.e. not demanding so much from those around us, and סבילות / *tolerance* of others' wrongdoings against us. If we will acquire these traits, we become deserving of Hashem treating us in the same manner.

Moshe Rabbeinu's Middos

Moshe Rabbeinu certainly fulfilled this precept of emulating Hashem's *Middos*, as is demonstrated from this Ohr Hachaim:

At the beginning of *Parshas Va'eira*, the *passuk* says (שמות ו' ב'), וידבר אלוקים אל משה / *Elokim, [the Name of Hashem connoting Din], spoke [harshly] to Moshe*. The Ohr Hachaim focuses on this combination of the Name 'Elokim' with the term 'Dibur', both conveying a harsh, stern expression. This was a powerful combination of strictness that Hashem was displaying to Moshe as a punishment for his having questioned Hashem's Ways when he said (שם ו' ב') למה הרעותה לעם / *Why have You done bad for this nation?* And yet, this same *passuk* continues ויאמר אליו אני ה' / *And He said [gently] 'I am Hashem'*. This is a combination of two expressions of Mercy; the Name 'Hashem' with the term 'amirah'. How did such a dramatic switchover come about? The Ohr Hachaim explains that this was a result of the personage of 'Moshe' who is mentioned in between these two parts of the *passuk*. Moshe had these *Middos* of humility with tolerance of others, and therefore he merited this changeover to Hashem's Mercy and Kindness, even at a time when he was fitting to have been treated harshly.

Let us examine some of Moshe's *Middos* as shown in the Torah.

1- Seeking to Make Peace with Baalei Machlokes

When Korach and his followers rebelled against Moshe, *Chazal* tell us (מועד קטן י"ה:) that each of them performed *kinuy* on his wife regarding Moshe. This means that each one warned his wife in front of two witnesses not go into seclusion with Moshe Rabbeinu – as if to suspect Moshe Rabbeinu of illicit behavior with his wife ch"v. After this *kinuy*, if it would ever happen that she would inadvertently find herself in seclusion with Moshe, she would be forbidden to her husband until she

would drink the *Sotah* Waters, causing the Name of Hashem to be erased. Moshe could not risk this happening, and he therefore moved his tent outside the Camp to avoid this occurrence.

If we contemplate the shame and disgrace these men caused Moshe Rabbeinu it is mindboggling.

Let us imagine that "Rav Gimpel" is a respected Rav in Lakewood. There are rumors spread about him that he has been involved in affairs with people's wives, and he is compelled to move to Howell. The disgrace and humiliation are tremendous.

We would think that Moshe would immediately daven to Hashem to have all these men punished terribly. How could they treat their leader Moshe in this way, with all he has done for them? Moshe Rabbeinu involved in *issur Eishes Ish*?! What *chutzpah*! Moshe though, does not act this way. He sends for Dasan and Aviram to come discuss their issues with him. They refuse. They declare, "Even if Moshe will poke out our eyes, we will not go speak to him!" Still, Moshe does not give up. He gets up and goes to them. Perhaps then, they will agree to communicate and 'work out' the issues. Only when they still refuse, does Moshe finally concede that there is simply no one to talk to. Then, and only then, he davens to Hashem to destroy them.

2- Completely Forgiving those who Wronged Him

Parshas V'zos Habracha, which we will *lain iy*"H on *Simchas Torah*, begins (דברים ל"ג א') וזאת הברכה אשר ברך משה איש האלוקים את בני ישראל לפני מותו / *This is the Bracha which Moshe blessed the Bnei Yisroel before his death*. The Ohr Hachaim explains that the *passuk* is stressing a few elements which were involved in this *bracha*. The previous *parshah* had ended by mentioning the fact that Moshe was not going to lead the Jewish People into Eretz Yisroel. This was, in a very large measure, a result of the actions of Klal Yisroel. They had provoked him to hit the rock at *Mei Merivah*, and they had caused him in Mitzrayim many years earlier to complain to Hashem and say *למה הרעותה*. Both of these incidents were causes of Moshe being prevented from Eretz Yisroel. Moshe had, in fact, admonished them for this in his lengthy words of *mussar* in *Sefer Devarim*. However, when it came time to give a *brachah*, the *passuk* is telling us that not only did Moshe not harbor ill-feeling toward them, but quite the contrary. He felt and displayed only the most heartfelt, good feeling to them, and delivered the most powerful brachos to them.

The Ohr Hachaim explains the emphasis of the *passuk* as follows: "*This is the Brachah*" – superior to all other brachos previously given in the Torah to Bnei Yisroel, "*that Moshe blessed the Bnei Yisroel*" – although he had been harmed through their actions, "*before his death*" – the very time when the effects of their actions were materializing.

Many people, even if they will forgive an offense that was perpetrated against them, they will still not be able to completely forget it. The incident will always remain etched in their minds and will subtly influence their feelings and actions toward the other party.

A husband or wife may remember certain incidents or situations, even many years later. The husband will always think to himself, "If my wife would have agreed to do such-and-such, we would be in a completely different place now." Even though he has long since stopped mentioning it, the feeling is still there.

The truth is, you may be 100 percent right. However, you still must move past it.

This is a lesson which we learn from the behavior of Moshe Rabbeinu, who was harmed irreparably by the Bnei Yisrael; they caused him to lose the infinite goodness of entering Eretz Yisroel. And yet, he had the warmest of relationships with them. True, when it was time to give *mussar*, he did so; but when he was taking leave of them, as a result of their actions, he gave them the best *bracha* possible, with the warmest of words.

The Zechus of Moshe Rabbeinu

We can now understand the *passuk* at the beginning of *Parshas Va'era*, which we referenced earlier. We asked: How is it that the mere mention of the word Moshe was sufficient to cause a change in the tone of Hashem toward Moshe from harsh words of judgement to gentle words of pleasantness? We can now answer: True, Hashem was angry at Moshe for having questioned Hashem's Ways. But Moshe himself dealt with people in such a completely humble and forgiving manner that he earned the same treatment from Hashem. It was appropriate for Hashem to speak harshly based on the circumstances; but to Moshe? Such a person always warrants soft treatment.

This is why we refer to Moshe in the *Tefillah* preceding the Thirteen *Middos* as 'anav'/ the humble one. We are davening to Hashem that in the *zechus* of Moshe who embodied these *Middos* in the best way possible for any human being, so should we be *zoche* that Hashem should interact with us in those *Middos*.

The Forgiveness of Yosef Hatzadik to his Brothers

Another *tzadik* whom we mention in our *tefillas* is Yosef Hatzadik. In the *slichah* which discusses these 13 *Middos* of Hashem, we say (סליחה צא) /*Grant us kindness like Yosef to his brothers*. We daven to Hashem that just as Yosef forgave his brothers and performed kindness for them, notwithstanding all that they had done to him, so too should Hashem perform kindness to us. Yosef was able to put aside his grievances for the terrible things that his brothers had done to him, and treat his brothers with kindness. The Ohr Hachaim teaches us that Yosef felt this feeling of forgiveness immediately. When Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, he said to them these words (בראשית מ"ה ד') /*I am Yosef your brother whom you sold to Mitzrayim*. The Ohr Hachaim understands that Yosef was telling his brothers, that even at the very time that they had sold him to Mitzrayim, he still had not removed the feeling of brotherly love from his heart. This means that as he was crying in front of his brothers and pleading with them for mercy, while they turned a deaf ear to his pleas – first ripping off his *kesones passim* and throwing him into a deadly pit with snakes and scorpions, and then selling him as a slave to a strange immoral land – he still did not feel any hatred toward them.

This represents a high level, which would seem to be completely beyond our capabilities. However, we should still learn from this level, and try our best on our own level to let go of our anger as soon as we are able. We can then daven to Hashem in our *selichos*, that this tremendous *zechus* of Yosef Hatzadik should stand for us.

The *Tefilla* which is said before the 13 *Middos* begins with the words קל מלך יושב על כסא /*G-d King who sits on the Throne of Mercy*. This time of year, though, is really one of judgement in which Hashem sits on the Throne of Judgement. Why do we say that Hashem is sitting on the Throne of Mercy? The answer is that we are davening that Hashem should "get up" from the Throne of Judgement, and sit instead on the Throne of Mercy. We daven for this in the *zechus* of these *tzadikim*, Moshe Rabbeinu and Yosef Hatzadik. Obviously, it is not enough to merely mention Moshe Rabbeinu and Yosef Hatzadik who emulated Hashem's *Middos*. If we wish to be *zoche* through their traits, we must also incorporate these *Middos* into our own lives.

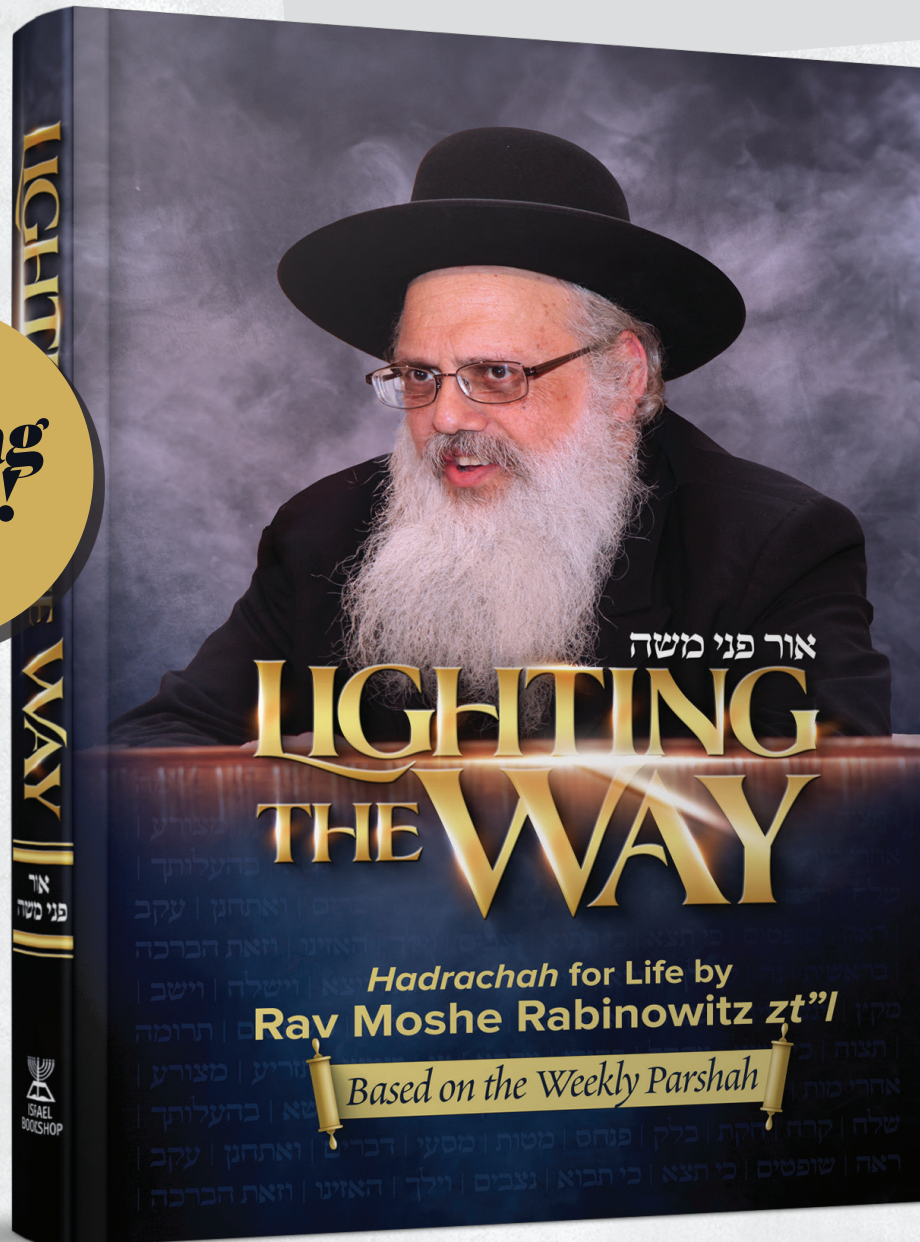
כתיבה וחתימה טובה!



ISRAEL BOOKSHOP
Publications

THE BELOVED WEEKLY PARSHAH PAMPHLET, - NOW IN - BOOK FORM!

Coming
Soon!



In each page, in each *shmuess*, readers will be able to “hear” Rabbi Rabinowitz’s vibrant voice, and the fundamental lessons he taught, coming through clearly. And the inspiration will last long after each piece has been read.