

אור פני משה

שיחות מוסר על התורה
מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר
רבינוביץ זצ"ל

*Shmuessen from
Harav Moshe
Rabinowitz Zt"l*

פרשת תצוה

Volume 6 Issue # 20

לעילוי נשמת
ברוך מאיר לייב בן
הרב שלמה אביגדור רבינוביץ זצ"ל
ואשתו אסתר בת פנחס יוסף מילר ע"ה
יוסף וחי' שרה טרייבוס
אברהם שמחה וחידי אורליך

שיחות מוסר על התורה מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר רבינוביץ זצוק"ל

פרשת תצוה

פרשת תצוה

וְאַתָּה תִּצְוֶה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

(שמות כ"ז כ')

The Piece of Moshe Rabbeinu in Each of Us

The Absence of Moshe Rabbeinu's Name

It is well known that Moshe Rabbeinu's name is not mentioned in Parshas Tetzaveh. This was because in Parshas Ki Sisa, after Klal Yisroel committed the *cheit ha'egel*, Moshe exclaimed: "וְאִם אֵין, מַחְנִי נָא מִסֵּפֶרְךָ אֲשֶׁר" - "But if you will not [forgive their sin], erase me now from Your book that You have written." Hakadosh Baruch Hu responded that only the sinners deserved to be erased from the Torah; but nonetheless, when a Tzaddik utters a word out of his mouth, it carries a lot of weight. Therefore, Moshe's name was removed from Parshas Tetzaveh. And although it precedes the story of the *egel*, we know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is always מקדים רפואה קודם למכה.

The Piece of Moshe Within Us

The Ohr Hachaim says regarding the *pasuk* "וְאַתָּה תִּצְוֶה" that every single Yid has within himself a portion of Moshe Rabbeinu. וְאַתָּה - you, every single one of you, possess a small *chelek* of Moshe Rabbeinu's *kochos*. He points out that the Gemara (Sukkah 39a) in many places quotes the *amoraim* calling each other Moshe - "מֹשֶׁה, שְׁפִיר קָאִמַּרְתָּ" (Moshe, you said well)! This was their way of complimenting each other's greatness in Torah, as if to say that their portion of Moshe Rabbeinu was shining through.

Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l, in the first piece in Mishnas Rav Aharon, says a fundamental *yesod* which follows along the same point that the Ohr Hachaim makes in our Parshah.

He begins with a famous Gemara in Maseches Brachos (33b). The Gemara brings the *pasuk* in Parshas Eikev (Devorim 10:12), where Moshe Rabbeinu tells Klal Yisroel, "וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שׁוֹאֵל מֵעַמְּךָ כִּי אִם לִירָאָה אֶת"

השם..." "Now, dear Klal Yisroel, what does Hashem ask of you? Only to fear Hashem...". The Gemara asks an obvious question: "אטו יראה מילתא זוטרתא" - is *yiras shomayim* really a small request from the Yidden? Authentic *יראה* is a level that people work for an entire lifetime to achieve! Answers the Gemara: indeed, for Moshe Rabbeinu, it is not such a tall order. The Gemara gives an analogy for this: when you ask to borrow an extremely rare item that is not found in the average household, then it would be quite impressive if the person has it; but if you ask someone who specializes in that particular field, then it would come as no surprise if he hands it to you.

Rav Aharon asks the question that so many *meforshim* have contemplated throughout the generations: *יראה* may have been a simple feat for Moshe Rabbeinu, but it definitely does not seem to be all too easy for the rest of the nation! So, what exactly is the point the Gemara is trying to make here?

The answer, says Rav Aharon, is like the *yesod* of the Ohr Hachaim - each and every Yid has a little bit of Moshe's capabilities within him, and if he is able to access it - then he too will have a far easier time attaining true *יראה*.

Accessing the Portion of Moshe

How does a person access his portion of Moshe Rabbeinu? If we focus on our *לימוד התורה*, our *chavrusos*, our *shiurim* and so on, and place them at the forefront of our minds at all times, then Hashem will bestow the gift of *יראה* upon us. We will feel that although it sounds like a nearly impossible task, it is well within our reach.

This is so important for *Kollel Yungerleit* and *balabatim* alike. Sometimes, people sit and learn in *Kollel*, but they still face enormous struggles with basic issues of *yiras shomayim*. Perhaps we can say that this is because they have come to a point that their learning is done by rote. However, the hours they spend learning should really be the highpoint of their days; the *sugyos* they toil in should be on the forefront of their consciousness as they go about the rest of their responsibilities. If they only treated their *sedarim* with this regard, then it would be a no-brainer for them to overcome a vast amount of their difficult *nisyonos*.

So too, so many working men spend the majority of their waking hours focused on their work; they contemplate about how to make their businesses more profitable, and they spend their spare time schmoozing

about their success with their peers. But honestly, why should they do that? If a person is at the stage where he needs to make *parnassah* for his family - then he should recognize that this is something that he must do, but it's not what he lives and strives for all day! Rather, he should invest his free hours in going to a *shiur* or learning with a *chavrusah*; he should spend his break time pondering the words of Abaye, Rava, and the Mishnah Berurah; this way, he will grant himself the desirable capability of being like Moshe Rabbeinu - and easily become a *yarei shomayim*.

Bringing an End to the Fourth Galus

The Ohr Hachaim also discusses the four *galiyos* in the beginning of Parshas Tetzaveh. He says that Klal Yisroel was redeemed from the first *galus* in the *zechus* of Avraham Avinu, from the second in the *zechus* of Yitzchok Avinu, and the third in the *zechus* of Yaakov Avinu. He explains that Klal Yisroel is currently suffering the fourth and final *galus*, which we will eventually be redeemed from in the *zechus* of Moshe Rabbeinu. The Ohr Hachaim then reveals the reason this dreadful exile is lasting for so long, using words that are very difficult to read: "אין משה חפץ" - Moshe Rabbeinu does not wish to redeem a nation that is *mevatel* themselves from learning Torah. He asserts that during the *yemos hamoshiach*, Moshe will rule over our nation - and he does not desire to rule over people who are not constantly עוסק בתורה לשמה.

The *seforim hakdoshim* are forever telling us to do everything in our power to bring Moshiach closer. We are always taught that each and every one of us can accomplish this great feat in our own way. Sometimes, we wonder to ourselves: "How can little old me bring Moshiach?" But according to what we were saying before, we can now have a much better grasp on this concept: we each have a *chelek* of Moshe Rabbeinu inside of us. Moshe is the future leader of Klal Yisroel, and he is waiting for us to perfect our connection with the Torah in order to finally bring the *geulah*. If we would only put a bigger emphasis on our learning, in whichever way we possibly can, then we will revitalize the Moshe Rabbeinu inside of us, and he will prompt the redemption to come once and for all.

שיחות מוסר על התורה מאת הרה"ג ר' משה אליעזר רבינוביץ זצוק"ל

פרשת תצוה

וְעִשִּׂיתָ חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט מֵעֵינָה חָשָׁב

(שמות כ"ה ט"ו)

The Power of a Pure Mind and Heart

The Pure Mind and Heart of the Kohen Gadol

Rabbeinu Bechaye in this week's Parsha teaches that the stones of the *choshen* derived their powers from the *machshava*, *kedusha* and *tahara* of the *Kohen Gadol*. Without the *Kohen Gadol* being on these lofty levels, the stones would not be capable of operating the way they did many times throughout *Tanach*.

We find that the names of Ephraim and Menashe were not written on the *choshen*, or on the stones that were placed on the *Kohen Gadol's* shoulders. Rather it was written the name of Yosef. One can ask: why is this different than the rest of the Torah that Ephraim and Menashe are counted as *Shevatim*? I thought that perhaps we can answer the following: when Yosef HaTzaddik was facing the tremendous *nisayon* with the wife of Potiphar, one of the factors that helped him defeat the *yetzer hara* was his desire to have his name engraved on the *choshen* along with his holy brothers. That event took place before Yosef's *Sheivet* was split into Ephraim and Menashe, so Yosef thought that it would be his name alone that would appear on the *choshen*, and he feared that he would not be worthy of it if he would commit this terrible sin. Since he passed the *nisayon* with flying colors, perhaps the Ribono Shel Olam insisted on giving his name a spot on the *choshen*, even though it meant that Ephraim and Menashe would not be able to be placed there.

We can learn from here the awesome power of *taharah*, of being pure of sin. The purity of the Yosef HaTzaddik in the most trying times is what garnered him the right to have his name inscribed on the *choshen*. So too, the *choshen* itself - which functioned as the *urim vetumim* - couldn't be a direct conduit between Hakadosh Baruch Hu and his people unless the *Kohen Gadol* retained a mind which was crystal clear, devoid of all iniquity and baseness.

Applying this to Wearing Tefillin

When the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh was nearing the end of his life, his wife cried to him that she was concerned about how she would support herself after his passing. He told her that they possessed one highly valuable item which she could sell for an excessive price: his tefillin. However, he only granted her permission to sell his tefillin if the buyer would guarantee to never talk devarim betailim while wearing them. The Ohr Hachaim had treated his tefillin with the utmost respect over the years, and he didn't want anybody to come along and defile one of his holiest possessions.

After the Ohr Hachaim's passing, word got out that his tefillin were for sale. Wealthy people who were aware of their immense kedusha immediately began bidding on the tefillin, hoping to become the fortunate owners of these holy artifacts. Eventually, one individual was declared the winner, and the Ohr Hachaim's almanah presented him with the tefillin. However, she made sure to inform him of her husband's unrelenting request that he not speak any idle chatter while wearing them, and the buyer firmly accepted the condition upon himself.

Soon after he began wearing the tefillin on a daily basis, the buyer recognized that he had made the purchase of a lifetime. His focus during davening became razor-sharp, his desire to wake up in the morning shot up, and his overall relationship with Hashem became considerably palpable.

One morning, one of this man's colleagues came running into Shul, asking him an extremely important question regarding their business. It was a time-sensitive matter that required immediate attention. At first, he resisted answering while wearing the Ohr Hachaim's tefillin; but eventually, his colleague's persistence got the better of him, and he blurted out a brief response.

A few moments later, he began to appreciate the severity of what he did. This was the one condition that the Ohr Hachaim had demanded - and he blew it. The man was devastated.

Shortly thereafter, his newfound elevated feelings began to evaporate. He started reverting to his old self; his fresh enthusiasm and devotion to Avodas Hashem lost its steam. Concerned about this sudden change, he brought the tefillin to be checked out. To his utter shock, the sofer showed him that the parchments inside both the Shel Yad and the Shel Rosh were completely blank. The prohibitively priced Ohr Hachaim's tefillin were completely pasul; they were just boxes housing empty pieces of parchment.

Nobody will ever know for sure how and when the Ohr Hachaim's tefillin became *pasul*. But we can assume that a person of the Ohr Hachaim's holy stature would have never ended up with such tefillin. I'm sure he would have ensured with his own hands that his tefillin were 100% kosher. If that's the case, then we can learn from this story that the phenomenon that Rabbeinu Bechaye describes regarding the *Kohen Gadol* and the *choshen* is still a reality today. Our thoughts and our tefillin are a two-way street; they provide us with *kedusha* and connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, but we are the ones responsible for arming them with their powers. If we fail to treat them with the proper reverence, then they will be incapable of binding us tightly to Hashem.¹

Even in our times, when we don't usually witness open miracles as in the past, there are countless stories of people who got their tefillin checked, only to discover that they were totally *pasul* - the *parshiyos* were inserted upside down, there were missing words, attached words - things that the *sofer* should have easily spotted while setting up the tefillin. True, these stories are not too common, but maybe they occur because we need to care for our bonding with Hashem in order to grant our tefillin their powers? If he disrespects his tefillin, then perhaps the next time he goes to get them checked, the *sofer* will fall asleep and absentmindedly *pasel* them? We need

¹ Ed. This is especially true, since the tefillin are placed near the mind and the heart, and they therefore have the power to bring *kedushah* to the person's thoughts and emotions - if he treats the tefillin with the proper *kedushah* and he prepares himself properly for the *mitzvah*.

zechusim to wear such holy items and benefit from their *kedusha*. If we are not worthy, Hashem can easily take them from us.

Dedication to Purity

A certain Talmid Chacham told me about a Kollel that he leads in Williamsburg. He described the incredibly pure aura he had arranged for the Kollel: the yungerleit daven in the Kollel, and there is a strict dedication to tefillah without talking. If someone utters a word during davening, he is asked to leave. There is no talking on the phone while in the Bais Medrash. The matzav of the learning is doing very well, and the Rosh Kollel attributes it to the fact that the Bais Medrash is treated like a true Mikdash Me'at. He believes that because the walls are treated with such awe, they in turn provide the oilam with purity and hatzlacha in Torah.

Although they had purchased a location for the Kollel, they only use it during the week; most of the yungerleit, and the Rosh Kollel himself, do not live in Williamsburg, so they can't daven there on Shabbos. So, I asked him why he doesn't try to rent it out for Shabbos tefillos to another tzibbur; this would be a great way to help him pay the mortgage for the building.

"I can't rent it out," he responded firmly. "The kedusha and taharah of our Bais Medrash is very dear to us. We honestly believe that these walls transcend our learning. How can we know that the renters will treat the Bais Medrash with the same respect as we do?" Basically, being that the Kollel couldn't ensure that the potential renters would adhere to their guidelines, they were unwilling to risk tarnishing their beloved Makom Kadosh, and by extension, the quality of their learning. They were actually willing to forgo a sizable income for the Kollel for the sake of maintaining the sanctity of their Bais Medrash.

R' Chaim Zeitchek Zatzal, who wrote many stories about the Alter of Novardok, wrote the following story:

In Novardok Yeshiva, the matzav was one of extreme poverty. The bachurim barely had a piece of bread to eat. One day, the

Yeshiva received a telegram stating that a wealthy woman had passed away, and she left a large inheritance for the Yeshiva. The Alter of Novardok, along with all the talmidim, was ecstatic. The bachurim will finally have what to eat!

The talmidim escorted the Alter to the train, hoping to see him back a week later carrying bags of money. However, to their dismay, the Rosh Yeshiva returned empty handed about three hours later.

The Alter explained what had transpired. "On the train, I bumped into another Rosh Yeshiva, and we began to talk. I asked him where he was heading, and he said 'Vilna; a woman passed away and left a large inheritance for my Yeshiva.' I immediately realized that many Yeshivos must have received the same telegram as we did, and it was going to be messy. All of the Roshei Yeshiva are going to be busy debating which Yeshiva deserves the most money; it wasn't something I wanted to get myself involved in, so I got off at the next stop and came home."

One of the more audacious bachurim snapped to the Rosh Yeshiva: "I don't understand. The Rosh Yeshiva doesn't want to involve himself in the brawl - so therefore we should all suffer? We are starving! We need the money!"

The Alter of Novardok answered: "I'd rather have a Yeshiva that has no bread than a Yeshiva that has no Rosh Yeshiva."

The Alter understood that if he would fight over money, and attempt to take a portion of the inheritance when it could also benefit another Yeshiva, then he would fall a level in his purity; his *bitachon* and his *middos* were sure to take a hit. The bachurim deserved a pure Rosh Yeshiva, and he didn't want to take that from them. This is similar to the point we were focusing on before: the importance of maintaining the purity and the sanctity of our *machshavos* and speech in order to stay connected with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

וְהַקְטִיר עָלָיו אֶהְרֹן קִטְרֶת סָמִים בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֵּיּוֹר

(שמות ל' ז')

The Segulah of Reciting the Ketores

Parshas Ketores

The end of this week's Parsha discusses the *mizbeach hazahav* and the *ketores*. I would like to share with you the words of the Zohar Hakadosh on this topic:

Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai said: "This thing is a covenant between Klal Yisroel and Hakadosh Baruch Hu: whoever reads and concentrates on the Parsha of the *ketores* every single day, will be spared from all bad things - *keshafim* (witchcraft), *pega'im*, impure thoughts... and he will not get afflicted by any bad thing on that day, for the *Sitra Achara* has no power over him."

As a side note, it is interesting to note that Parshas Tetzaveh has 101 *pesukim*, and the *siman* for that number is Michoel. It just so happens that the *Samach Mem* (the Satan), alluded to in this very Zohar with the euphemism '*Sitra Achara*,' has the numerical value of 100, just one less than the angel Michoel. This is a *remez* to the fact that one who reviews his learning 100 times cannot be compared to one who reviewed 101 times - the difference can be Michoel or the *Samach Mem*, r"l.

Of course, we must understand that when the Zohar says this *הבטחה*, it doesn't mean that life is a free-for-all - that a person could commit the three cardinal sins, and then hope to be protected all day because he said *ketores* in the morning. Rather, it means that the reciting of the *ketores* has the power of transforming the person into one who deserves all of these protections.

What the Ketores can Achieve

The Gemara in Shabbos (89a) says that the secret of the *ketores* was given to Moshe Rabbeinu by none other than the Satan. The Gemara

concludes that this must be the case, because otherwise, how else did Moshe Rabbeinu know it?

Rav Tzaddok Hakohen asks: what kind of proof is that? Moshe Rabbeinu was made privy to the deepest secrets of the Torah - בכל ביתי - נאמן הוא! How can the Gemara assume that he must have received the secret of the *ketores* from the Satan?

Rav Tzaddok Hakohen explains that when Hakadosh Baruch Hu created the world, he said "נעשה אדם". This plural wording means that Hashem incorporated every single element of the creation in the forming of Adam HaRishon. The only element in the entire universe that was left out of the grand equation of mankind was the Satan. Had the Satan given a portion of himself in the formation of the first man, then there would be no concept of following one's evil inclination; a person would be able to choose the good out of his own volition, without facing any hardships. However, now that the *Samach Mem* is a totally external force - as it has not contributed in any way to man's creation, the result is an eternal battle of trying to overpower the bad in the universe and ultimately choosing the good.

Now, the word *ketores* comes from the word '*kesher*' - a bond. The secret behind the *ketores* is that it provided Klal Yisroel with the ability to bind the evil in the world together with the good - exactly how it would have been if the Satan would have contributed to the creation of man. The capability of totally subduing the evil and controlling it was beyond Moshe Rabbeinu, for after all, he was a descendent of Adam HaRishon. This was how the Gemara knew that he must have learned it from the Satan himself. At the *tekufah* of *Matan Torah*, the nation reached an exceedingly high level of purity, and the *Samach Mem* was forced to give them one secret - one way to take hold of him and subdue him, despite the fact that he wasn't really incorporated inside them like the rest of the world. This power of the *ketores* - the power to tie the *yetzer hara* to the good within us - is the most awesome power.

With this deep understanding of the secret behind the *ketores*, hopefully we will begin reciting it with more concentration, enabling us to learn to control the evil inclination, spare ourselves from all harm, and hasten the days of Moshiach - the time when the evil will be subjugated forever.

*To subscribe to the weekly shmuess by email,
or for audio recordings of the shmuessen,
Call / Text 848-299-7212
or email: ohrpneimoshe@gmail.com*

*A sampling of the audio shmuessen can also be obtained at
www.shasilluminated.org/rabbi-moshe-rabinowitz*