

אור פני משה

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

*Shmuessen from
Harav Moshe
Rabinowitz Zt"l*

פרשת תרומה

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לעילוי נשמת
דינה רחל בת
ר' בנימין יצחק רבינוביץ ע"ה
לכבוד היארצייט א' אדר

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

פרשת תרומה

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מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבֹו תִקְחוּ אֶת תְּרוּמָתִי

(שמות כ"ה ב')

*"From every man whose heart motivates him you shall take
My portion"*

Which Donations Are Desired By Hashem?

Right at the beginning of the Parshah, the Torah states that Hashem asked Moshe to take donations from Klal Yisroel "from every man whose heart motivates him". This last specification seems a bit redundant - who else would give donations other than people who are motivated to do so?

Rav Moshe Feinstein *zt"l* had an interesting insight on how to understand this *pasuk*: Hakadosh Baruch Hu was telling Moshe Rabbeinu that He had no interest in money that was coming from people who lacked the desire to donate. Whether they were donating because of peer pressure, to earn prominence, or for any other non-*lishmah* reason - then Hashem did not want their contribution. The Terumah Hashem desired was only from people who were genuinely motivated to take part in the building of the Mishkan. Rav Moshe concludes that a person who donates with the wrong motives in mind is considered like an "אינו מצווה ועושה" - a person who performs a *mitzvah* without being commanded to do so - which means he gets much less *schar* in Olam Habah. Rav Moshe then finishes, "וכן בכל" - the same is true by all other *mitzvos*.

Doing Mitzvos With Happiness

The Ohr Hachaim (Devorim 28, 47) defines the *pasuk* in the *tochacha* of "תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ בשמחה ובטוב לבב" to mean that the retributions will come when Yidden actually do the *mitzvos*, yet their actions are not coming from a place of happiness and motivation. This is similar to the idea that Rav Moshe was saying - we need the

positive energy behind the action; otherwise it is not desired by the Aibishter.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l once met a secular Yid, and they got into a discussion about religion. At one point in the conversation, Reb Yaakov asked him, "I'm sure you know at least one verse from the Torah?"

"Yes, I actually do know one specific verse," the man answered,

"שמע ישראל השם אלוֹקינוּ השם" 'I'm guessing you're referring to 'שמע ישראל השם אלוֹקינוּ השם' Reb Yaakov asked.

"Huh? I never heard of that one," the Yid responded.

Rav Yaakov was surprised. "Then which verse is it that you know?"

The man smiled. "I know Zalmen Leib's pasuk: "תחת אשר לא עבדת 'את ה' אלוֹקיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב".

He then proceeded to recount his memories of his fellow captive in the concentration camps, a certain yid known as R' Zalmen Leib - who just so happened to be the Klausenberger Rebbe zt"l. He said that as the Rebbe toiled at the hands of the Nazis ymsh"v, he used to utter the words of this pasuk under his breath. Every time he hauled a load of bricks, every time he dug a shovel into the dirt, he was repeating the words of the Tochacha - reminding himself why the Yidden ended up in the terrible situation that they were in. He wanted to remember how important it is to serve Hashem from a place of happiness and enthusiasm.

Being Emotionally Invested

Let's say there's a couple whose marriage has its ups and downs. Now, her birthday comes along, and it happens to coincide with a period that their relationship is doing poorly. The husband, acting with complete goodwill, goes and buys her a necklace worth \$2,000. This fellow barely makes \$50,000 a year, so this is quite a sum for him, but he pushes himself to make the purchase. But when he gives it to her, she says flatly, "Keep it." How can she react this way?

After all, he was *moser nefesh* to spend a large sum of money just to make her happy - not to mention the lengthy hours of searching for the perfect piece? The answer is, when there is no love, no emotion - nobody wants gifts. We don't want to be showered with presents when we feel unloved by the giver. If the marriage is healthy, then a gift of this sort strengthens it and contributes to their relationship's growth; but if it's not in a good state, then the gift is pointless.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu says the same thing to Klal Yisroel: If the person is giving *tzedakah* because he loves Hashem and His *mitzvos*, and he yearns to give money for a worthy cause - then Hashem loves his actions and rewards him for them. However, if he doesn't feel emotionally invested in giving the money, and he has absolutely no enthusiasm for doing so - then Hakadosh Baruch Hu does not desire his gifts. They are meaningless; they are just being given due to ulterior motives.

This is the point Rav Moshe was making: a person who doesn't serve Hashem out of happiness and yearning - whether it's when he learns, when he gives *tzedakah*, or when he does any other *mitzvah* - then he is like an "אינו מצווה ועושה". Hashem has no interest in this sort of *avodah*. And this idea is one and the same with what we were saying before from the Midrash: a person's *Torah U'mitzvos* cannot exist if they are devoid of a deep connection with Hashem. We may try to convince ourselves that our actions are genuinely *leshem shomayim*, but ultimately, Hashem is a בוחן לבבות - he knows if we are truly emotionally invested or not.

"ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם"

The Midrash in this week's parsha teaches that when Hashem told Klal Yisroel, "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם" - and they shall build for Me a sanctuary, and I will reside amongst them - He was sending them an important message. Hakadosh Baruch Hu was telling His nation, "I have an only child - my dear daughter, the Torah. You, Klal Yisroel, her dear *chosson*, will be like a prince after you marry her. However, I love her dearly; I don't want to separate myself from her. I therefore ask of you one thing: wherever you go, make a place for me to dwell nearby. I just can't part with my daughter."

Rav Chaim Brim zt"l gave the following analogy regarding this Midrash:

A father was once driving along with his son when they came across a colossal palace. He asked his son, "Do you think this is the kind of palace that the prince from the Midrash would live in?"

"Let's drive around its perimeter, and I will see if it looks like a palace belonging to the one and only son-in-law of the King," the son replied.

After driving around the massive edifice, the son turns to the father and says: "No, this is clearly not the palace that the prince of the Midrash lives in." When his father asked why not, he explained his assertion: "The prince in the Midrash would have built his father-in-law a house somewhere outside the palace. It would be close enough that it would have been visible to us when we drove around. After all, the father-in-law made His words quite plain - He can't be separated from his beloved daughter. Since we don't see any house nearby, it can't be that palace."

So too - If a person becomes a tremendous Talmid Chachom and he amasses a great deal of Torah knowledge - if at the same time, he is lacking in yiras shomayim, then you can be assured that what he possesses is not truly Torah. Hashem does not separate himself from his Torah; if this person seems to have lots of it, yet he has made no room for Hashem in his life, then his knowledge is not Torah.

Low-spirited? Check Your Yiras Shomayim

When Rav Moshe Rosenstien, the Lomzer Mashgiach, would see a *bachur* who seemed low-spirited, he would tell him, "You don't understand. If you're not uplifted and excited to be a Ben Torah, who is one of the very few people who are privileged enough to sit in a Bais Medrash all day, then go home. There's no point of you being here with this kind of attitude; this work needs to be done with passion and joy."

Someone was telling me about a *Kollel Yungerman* he knows who confessed to him that he gets no satisfaction from learning. He

sits behind his shtender all day, but he comes home feeling down and unfulfilled. I can say of such a guy with 100% confidence that he has very little *yiras shomayim*. If Hashem Yisborach was real to him - not just some distant, abstract concept that he barely relates to - then he would inevitably derive pleasure from delving into his words for hours a day. Hashem and the Torah are the epitome of happiness and fulfillment; if he can't feel it, then he obviously doesn't have any internal connection with (or even solid belief in) the Ribono Shel Olam.

The Most Devoted Servant

Rav Yankel Galinsky zt"l used to say over the following story:

Czar Nikolai of Russia once met Napoleon. He shared something that was bothering him: "They say you are successful because your subjects are extremely devoted to you. But my subjects are just as devoted to me; they would give their lives for me in an instant! Why is Russia not doing as well as France?"

"It is impossible that your subjects are as devoted as mine are," Napoleon stated. "And I can prove it. Summon one of your soldiers and ask him to jump out of the window to his death."

Nikolai proceeded to do as he was told. Upon hearing his master's cruel demand, the Russian soldier bowed, and then responded: "Of course, your highness. I want nothing more than to do the Czar's desires. But I will need to know - when would you like me to do this? And from which window? Also, I will need a ladder to be able to reach the windows in this room..."

The Czar looked at Napoleon. "You see? He's ready to give his life for me," he confirmed.

"Tell him to take a seat. He did well," Napoleon smirked, and immediately summoned a French soldier.

When the soldier arrived, Napoleon instructed: "I want you to jump out of the window to your - "

Before he could finish his sentence, the French soldier was already plummeting to his death from the closest window.

Can you compare the two kinds of submission? A person can say, "Sure, I would love to do *kibbud av* by helping my father build the sukkah. But first I have to finish this phone call. Then I have to get my work pants on, and my *shmatta* shirt... I also should probably go to the *mikvah* first, and put on a gartel..." Just do the *mitzvah*! Be like Napoleon's soldiers! The *avodah* has to be done with passionate love and excitement; with the recognition that it is the greatest privilege in the world to be doing it.

Using our Connection to Guide us Through Our Pain

This loving relationship with Hashem has to carry us through our day - every single day - even when the going gets rough. If a person gets *yesurim* - his loved one is terribly ill, he needs a *shidduch*, he's going through a financial crisis - he has to love Hashem throughout the process, and even thank him for the pain. Saying, "Hashem, I can't take it anymore! I beg you, just get rid of my pain, I hate feeling this way!" - that's a deficiency in a person's connection with Hashem. It may be a high *מדרגה*, but a person should instead try to say: "Hashem, I know that you love me, and all that you are putting me through is for my own good. Thank you for entrusting me with this priceless opportunity to get closer to you. The situation is difficult for me, and I would love it if you will accept my *avodah* and take the pain away." There's no anger, there are no complaints; just pure trust, along with humble supplication for a quick *yeshua*.

The Klausenberger Rebbe called everybody together on Leil Yom Kippur, shortly after the liberation from the Holocaust. He began going through the vidduy. "What will we be doing teshuvah for tomorrow? אשמו? We didn't sin, we had no time for that! בגדנו? Who were we treacherous to? We were totally absorbed in our own suffering - there wasn't any room for these kinds of sins! גזלנו? We had absolutely nothing to steal! דיברנו? We were too terrified of the Nazis to be busy talking about anyone or anything!"

Slowly, the Rebbe went through the entire vidduy, showing how it practically did not apply to them that year. But then, after a short pause, he finally said: "I'll tell you what we have to do teshuvah for this Yom Kippur. We have to ask for forgiveness for every time we lost faith in Hashem. For all those times we hoped to not wake up in the morning. For the times we did wake up, and upon realizing that some of our friends had died in their sleep, we envied them. We thought, 'How lucky they are. I wish I could have died like them.' It's for our lack of trust in our Father that we must do teshuvah for."

The Klausenberger Rebbe was teaching us to be close to Hashem, to feel his love and embrace, even in the darkest times.

The Bais Hamikdosh and Our Batei Midrash

Chazal teach us that when Moshiach comes, all of the Shuls and *batei midrash* will come along with us to Eretz Yisroel. The Maharsha asks: why do we need the Shuls to come along? Is there going to be a shortage of building supplies in Eretz Yisroel? Answers the Maharsha: the third and final Bais Hamikdosh will be made up of all the Shuls and *batei midrash* of the diaspora. When we come to the *azarah*, we will recognize our spot in Shul; our *chelek* in the *avodah*.

With this in mind, we must remember that there are many *halachos* of how to treat a *bais midrash* with the proper respect. There are full *simanim* in Shulchan Aruch that describe how we must behave while inside a Shul. Perhaps we must review these *halachos*, and recognize that when the *pasuk* says "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם", it was referring to our Shuls; our holy places of Torah and *tefillah* are the future building blocks of the Bais Hamikdosh, and we ought to treat them in the right way. And, of course, the key to adhering to these *halachos* is developing a genuine love for the Ribono Shel Olam; a love that makes us want to keep him close by at all times.

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