



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Bo

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HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

ויאמר ה' אל-מֹשֶׁה בא אל-פַרְעֹה כִּי-אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לִבּוֹ...

And Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart..."

PERHAPS THE MOST difficult aspect of the *yetzer hara's* attacks is the devastating concealment of Hashem's presence by which they are accompanied. We feel overwhelmed by existential loneliness, a suffocating spiritual darkness which seems completely devoid of Hashem. All alone, we become convinced that we lack the strength to withstand the temptation, to escape the seductive clutches of the *yetzer hara*. But the Sefas Emes teaches the most remarkable thing. The tzaddik writes that while it may appear as if the lowly threshold of sin is the place Hashem is most concealed, in truth, the exact opposite is true! The capacity for limit within the Limitlessness of Hashem that is embodied in our ability to act against His expressed will is, in fact, the greatest revelation of His Glory. Distant from Hashem as it may appear, the ability to choose sin represents the true extent of His infinite greatness. When we realize that the premise of the very challenge we face is an overt expression of Hashem's presence, we are able to hold onto Him and find the courage to overcome the temptation and choose the vitality of a deepened closeness with Him over the death of an impasse in our most treasured relationship. This, explains the Sefas Emes, is the deeper meaning in the opening verse of our parsha. "**Vayomer Hashem el Moshe**": Hashem speaks to the



intellect within each Jew, saying, "**Bo el Pharaoh**": "When facing a spiritual challenge and the compulsion to choose to act against the Torah, take a moment to enter the theological implication of this possibility, "**ki Ani hichbad'ti es libo**": and realize that it is I, Hashem, who grants the *yetzer hara* the ability to attempt to divert your attention from Me and my Love. Find Me in the very attack of the *yetzer hara* and understand that you are not alone! I am holding you and giving you the strength to overcome! 🙏

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 👉 Hashem smites Egypt with the final three *makkos*: a locust plague devours all crops (*Arbeh*), palpable darkness settles upon the land (*Choshech*), and all the firstborns of Egypt are killed (*Makkas Bechoros*).
- 👉 The first mitzvah is given to the Jewish nation: to establish a calendar based on the lunar cycle. They are also commanded to bring the *Korban Pesach* and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and lintel of every Jewish home. The roasted meat of the offering is to be eaten that night together with *matzah* and *maror*.
- 👉 After the firstborns are killed, Pharaoh's will is shattered and he drives the Jewish nation from his land. They depart so quickly that their bread has no time to rise! Before they go, the Jews ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold, silver, and garments and leave with great wealth as Hashem had promised to Avraham.
- 👉 The *b'nei Yisrael* are commanded to consecrate their firstborn and to observe Pesach each year. They are also commanded to wear tefillin on the arm and head as a reminder of their redemption and commitment to Hashem.



P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

ולכל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִחַרְץ־קֶלֶב לְשׁוֹנוֹ...

But no dog shall snarl at the Jewish nation...

THE MEKUBALIM TEACH that there is a deep connection between the heart and the mouth, emotion and the capacity of speech – the internal and external aspects of communication. Without delving into the Kabbalistic nature of this connection (*Binah* and *Malchus*, *Hei Illa'ah* and *Hei Tata'ah*; the element of the soul associated with speech, *Ruach*, is sourced in the heart etc.), the heart/emotion is the life force which brings speech to life. When the channels between emotion and speech are open, one's words are imbued with feeling, meaning, truth, and intent. However, as the verse states, "He has honored Me with his lips, but his heart was far from Me"; when a person's speech is disconnected from his true feelings, it lacks the vitality of meaning and truth.

The Degel Machaneh Ephraim teaches that the word "Peh", mouth, is numerically equivalent to "Elokim", the divine Name associated with severity and harsh-judgment. When one ensures that his words are a clear reflection of the truth he holds in his heart, a truth which derives from the totality of his identity, this sweetens the judgments of the mouth and rectifies all severity in one's life. However, when, in speaking falsehood, one separates the mouth from the heart, this can *ch"v* brings negativity and judgment upon the person.

In this week's *parsha*, the verse states: "U'Ichol b'nei Yisrael, lo

yechratz kelev leshono", "But no dog shall snarl at the Jewish nation." This *pasuk* points to the tremendous energy of *Chessed* upon which the exodus from Egypt was founded. Not only did the Jews merit redemption, even the dogs did not bark at them. The Degel explains that this *Chessed* was triggered by the rectification affected by the Jews' aligning their speech with their innermost feelings. Pushed to the very limits of their humanity, the Jews had "cried out" to Hashem with utmost sincerity, feeling, and truth. Although, as all the tzaddikim teach, the exile in Mitzrayim was associated with "*galus hadibbur*", the disassociation of speech and heart, the redemption reflected the rejoining of those two elements. This brought about the ultimate "sweetening of the judgments" and triggered their ultimate triumph.

The Degel sees this deep idea hinted in this very *pasuk* itself. Because the Torah is written without any *nekudos*-vowels, we are given the opportunity of altering those *nekudos* for the purpose of *derash*. By changing the word "*kelev*", "dog", to "*k'lev*", "like the heart", it is possible to read the verse in the following manner: "**U'Ichol b'nei Yisrael lo yechratz**": And the entirety of the Jewish nation experienced no fright (represented by the barking of dogs), because "**k'lev leshonam**": they had made a unification between the capacity of speech and the emotions of their heart, speaking words of truth and the deepest sincerity. 🕎



The secret of redemption abides within the unification between heart and mouth; speech that is founded upon truth, feeling, and the deepest sincerity.

Profiles of Tzaddikim

Biographical sketches of the Chassidic Masters

Reb Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk zy"va

Reb Menachem Mendel was born in 1730 (5491) in what was then the Russian city of Vitebsk. Unlike many of the Chassidic Masters, Reb Menachem Mendel's father had been a Chassid, a close follower of the Baal Shem Tov himself. Menachem Mendel's father introduced him to the Baal Shem Tov when he was only nine years old, after which the young tzaddik grew to become one of the closest disciples of the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid of Mezritch.

After the passing of the Maggid, Reb Menachem Mendel settled in Horodok. Thousands of Chassidim would seek him out to ask advice or seek counsel. Many of these Chassidim were prominent tzaddikim themselves, such as the Baal HaTanya and Reb Baruch of Kossov. During this time, most of Lithuanian Jewry was under the guidance of the Vilna Gaon. Because of the quickly expanding Chassidic influence they felt encroaching on their borders, the students of the Vilna Gaon issued excommunications against the Chassidim and began doing everything in their power to push back against the rapidly growing movement.

Hoping to end the hostilities, in 1777 (5538), Reb Menachem Mendel and the Baal HaTanya traveled to Vilna, intending to meet with the Vilna Gaon to clarify certain misconceptions about Chassidus and explain what it was this movement sought to achieve for the Jewish people. Unfortunately, the meeting did not take place. Later that year, in a bid to avoid further altercations and conflicts with the students and followers of the Vilna Gaon, Reb Menachem Mendel departed for Eretz Yisrael with around 300 of his Chassidim. They first settled in Tzfat and later in Teveriah, where he left this world in 1788 (5549). Together with his followers, he laid the foundation for the future of Chassidus in Eretz Yisrael.

The tzaddik's most famous work, a remarkable sefer entitled *Pri HaAretz*, is a compilation of his letters, Torah commentaries, and reflections. While many of his teachings are esoteric in nature and quite terse, his writings are still cherished among Chassidim today, and he has remained a pioneering figure in the spread of Chassidus and the initiative to return to Eretz Yisrael. 🕎

Zechuso yagein aleinu! This section is written by R' Akiva Bruck, author of "From Behind the Curtain" (Mosaica Press)

First edition of sefer Pri HaAretz, printed by Rabbi Yisrael Yaffe in Kopyst, 1814



Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

AFTER HAVING EXPLORED the Chernovitzer's beautiful *marshal* of the three servants charged with fixing the king's crown, we must now attempt to understand the practical implications. How is one to achieve the level of awe exhibited by the third servant who is overwhelmed by the gravity of the task and pays no heed to the payment he will receive? The tzaddik teaches that a great place to start is to get into the habit of cleansing ourselves - both physically in a mikvah when possible, as well as mentally - in a state of contriteness and *teshuvah*. Mitzvos performed when one is in an unclean spiritual state do not find a proper vessel into which they can settle in the fullest expression of their glory. However, when a Jew takes the time to pause before jumping into mitzvah observance and thinks thoughts of regret over past misdeeds and acceptance of a more elevated way of living, the reverence implied in this preparation goes a long way in fortifying the awe and respect the mitzvah will foster. While seemingly unrelated, the Chernovitzer teaches that another aspect of this is to ensure that our speech is refined. Words of *tefillah* that are spoken out of a mouth used for negativity, slander, of vulgarity are unable to rise to their proper place in heaven. Therefore, in a certain subconscious way, the *tefillah* means less to such a person - and he naturally feels less reverence for the act of davening to Hashem. 🕎

This section is adapted from the sefer "Sidduro Shel Shabbos" by R' Chaim of Chernowitz zy" a (1760-1816)

Chassidus 101

Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

THE TZADDIKIM EXPLAIN that in these last generations before the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption, the *middah* or quality which requires the utmost focus in terms of refinement is the *middah* of *Daas*. Let's try to understand what exactly *Daas* is and its special role within the soul and in our *avodas Hashem*.

The meaning of *Daas*, which, while often translated as "knowledge," usually reflects one of the different aspects of intellectual processing, remains a mystery to many. Usually grouped together with the cognitive qualities of *Chochmah* and *Binah*, *Daas* is generally viewed as a solely intellectual faculty. We are taught that *Chochmah* represents unadulterated thought, a simple, unanalyzed piece of information. *Binah*, on the other hand, is the "understanding" of that information; one's complete grasp of the concept with all its details and complexity. Therefore, if *Chochmah* reflects simple knowledge and *Binah* is total mastery over that knowledge, little room is left to understand *Daas* as merely another cerebral capacity.

Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin writes that when seeking to understand the essential meaning of a certain letter or word, one must look to the very first place in the Torah that letter or word is mentioned. After the sin of Adam and Chava, the Torah tells us, "And the man *knew* (*yodah*) his wife Chava." We see that the first time the Torah expresses a form of the word *Daas* is specifically in describing Adam HaRishon's relationship with his wife. Based on this, the *Baal HaTanya* explains that *Daas* implies a deep bond and connection. This, however, begs the question: what exactly is our *Daas* connecting?

Just as Hashem created the world and is constantly perpetuating

This section is written by R' Akiva Bruck, author of "From Behind the Curtain" (Mosaica Press)

its existence through the ten *Sefiros*, ten attributes or qualities through which Hashem interacts with all of creation, so too, these ten *Sefiros* find expression within the human soul. These qualities are generally divided into two categories: *seichel* or *mochin*, which refers to the intellectual faculties, and *middos*, which correspond to the emotive attributes. *Chochmah* and *Binah* are exclusively intellectual, while the remaining seven, *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, and *Malchus* encompass all the emotional aspects of human expression. The question, again, is, where exactly does *Daas* fit in?

The tzaddikim teach that *Daas* is the *memutza*, the intermediary or bridge between the *seichel* and *middos*. In the words of the *Bnei Yissaschar*, *Daas* is "the end of thought and the beginning of action," a sort of "buffer-zone" between our thoughts and their expression through our words and actions - the bridge between the mind and heart. In other words, *Daas* is our consciousness, the "I" behind everything we do and experience. *Daas* is what enables us to interact with the world around us, utilizing the tools of *seichel* and *middos* to connect every experience and encounter to our Father in heaven.

For example, once one has developed a complete grasp over a certain area of Torah, the role of one's *Daas* is to then take that information and transform it into emotion and ultimately action. This conscious development of what we have learned into practical application is the primary component in a healthy, thriving relationship with our Creator and a passionate and meaningful *avodas Hashem*. May we merit to refine this quality and witness the *geulah*, speedily and in our days! 🕎

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

ONE OF THE Chozeh M'Lublin's closest followers was a Jew named R' Ahron Moshe. This special Yid made every effort to spend as little time as possible in the company of Jewish sinners. This was not because he looked down upon them, but because his level of purity was such that with a single glance, his penetrating spiritual vision could detect their most intimate secrets, including every sin they had committed. This awareness made him so uncomfortable that he avoided such encounters whenever he possibly could.

It happened that this R' Ahron Moshe once spent some time with Rebbe Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, the renowned Apter Rav, who was known to the masses by the title "Ohev Yisrael" - "Lover of Jews." Seizing the opportunity, R' Ahron Moshe asked the tzaddik, "I am gifted with the ability to see into the hearts of others. Often, I see things that distress me terribly! What should I do?"

The Apter Rav (who often referred to himself in the plural) thought for a moment and then replied, "My dear Ahron Moshe, in our youth we also saw things. When a Jew would come before us, we would immediately know who he was and perceive his deeds. More than this, we would see how many incarnations he had been through, and the mistakes and blemishes he made throughout each lifetime.

"Later on, we came to the realization that it is not appropriate to see into another Jew's heart and the mysteries that are concealed there, looking upon that which is not positive. So we prayed to the Merciful One that He remove from us this ability. Since then, whenever a Jew comes before us, we see only the good deeds and the soul-rectifications that he accomplished in each incarnation.

"You too, Ahron-Moshe, should request this of the Master of the world, and cease to perceive what is not necessary to see."

While we may not be on the level to look into the heart of another Jew, how wonderful would it be if we, too, were to ask Hashem to take away our proclivity toward finding the negative in our fellow Jews! "Ribbono Shel Olam, we only want to see the good in other Jews!" 🕎

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"Thank You Hashem" is a powerful sound bite. These simple words are a prayer, blessing, appreciation, sanctification, and expression of spiritual intimacy—all in one. Jews from all walks of life utter them in all life circumstances, finding meaning and strength in direct access to Hashem. Our mission is to ignite that passion and pride in every Jew worldwide. To remind us all that Hashem exists in every single aspect of life. That He loves each of us in every situation, environment, and spiritual position. And that by saying His name with gratitude, we return His love every day.

"THANK YOU HASHEM
FOR SHABBOS KODESH! WEEKLY"
IS WRITTEN BY **R' YAAKOV KLEIN**,
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