



THANK YOU HASHEM

For Shabbos Kodesh!

Parshas Va'eira

ג' בשבט תשפ"א / 3 SH'VAT, 5781 / JANUARY 16TH, 2021

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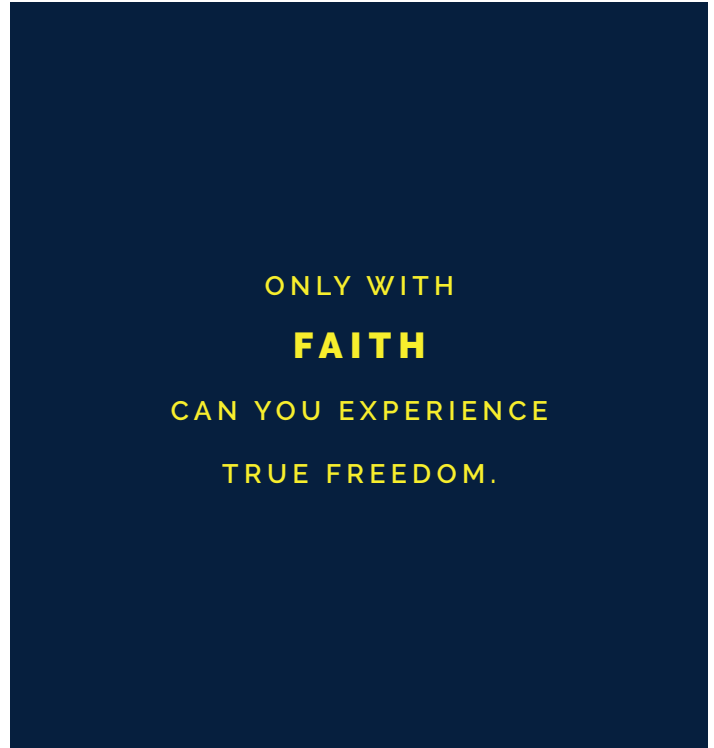
HaMeor Shebah

A Short Burst of Relevance

וארא אל-אברהם אל-יצחק ואל-יעקב...

I appeared to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov...

ON THE ONE hand, the idea that Hashem grants an individual Jew His undivided attention (see Rashi to Vayikra 26:9 and Sichos HaRan 70) seems to limit His infinite greatness. However, strangely enough, we find that when a person directs all of his focus on another person, the entire world takes on more meaning. The power of a true friendship is such that in addition to the closeness and positivity it affords to the friends within the context of their relationship, it enhances every other facet of their circumstances, brightening the entire stage upon which their lives are lived. And this is how it is with Hashem as well. Paradoxically, it is specifically when a Jew arrives at the realization that Hashem is sitting opposite him, setting aside all of His dealings and focusing intently on him alone, that he is able to truly find Hashem everywhere. While it may seem as if this thought limits Hashem, it is this very perspective which enables a Jew to experience Hashem's endless Glory as it manifests throughout creation and the various arenas of the human experience. This, explains Reb Shlomo Carlebach z"l, is why the names of the avos in our *pasuk* are separated by the word "el". Although Hashem could have saved words by writing, "*Va'eira el Avraham, Yitzchak, v'Yaakov*", the Torah divides these names to convey this aspect of Hashem's relationship with our holy nation in which each and every Jew ("*el Avraham, el Yitzchak, v'el Yaakov*") experiences Hashem's total focus and



absolute concern. It is when a Jew achieves this apparently limiting perspective that "*b'Kel Shakkai*", he is able to experience Hashem's revelation through this name which connotes Hashem's presence within every facet of creation ("*yeish dai b'Elokusi l'chol beryah*"). 🕎

Parsha Roundup

A 60-second Review

- 🕎 Hashem reveals Himself to Moshe. He promises (using the four expressions of redemption) that He will take the Jewish nation from Egypt (*v'hotzeisi*), save them from their enslavement (*v'hitzalti*), redeem them (*v'go'alti*), and acquire them as His chosen people on Har Sinai (*v'lakachti*). He will then bring them to the land of Eretz Yisrael which had been promised to the Avos.
- 🕎 Moshe and Ahron demand that Pharaoh let the Jewish nation go, but he repeatedly refuses. Ahron's staff is transformed into a snake and swallows the wands of the Egyptian sorcerers.
- 🕎 The Ten Makkos begin: The waters of Egypt turn to blood (*Dam*), frogs overrun the land (*Tzefardeiah*), lice infest all men and beasts (*Kinim*). Wild animals invade the cities (*Arov*), pestilence ravages the domestic animals (*Dever*), painful boils afflict the Egyptians (*Shechin*). In the seventh plague, fire and ice combine and fall upon Egypt as a devastating hail (*Barad*). Still, after all of these plagues, "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he would not let the children of Israel go, as Hashem had said to Moshe."

P'nimiyus haParsha

An Encounter with the Soul of the Torah

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי ה'...

And Elokim spoke to Moshe saying, "I am Hashem..."

AT THE END of last week's parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu complained to Hashem regarding the fact that things only seemed to get worse, not better, since he was sent on his mission to redeem the Jewish nation from their enslavement in Egypt. "*Lama hareiosah*," he cried. "Why are You bringing harm upon this people? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has dealt worse with these people!"

Our parsha begins with the words, "*Vayedabeir Elokim el Moshe leimor vayomer eilav ani Hashem*", "And Hashem spoke to Moshe and said to him, "I am Hashem." Commenting on the word "*Vayedabeir*", a word for speech which always connotes harshness, Rashi says that Hashem spoke harshly to Moshe here in reprimand for his improper protest of "*lama harei'osah*".

The Mei HaShiloach follows Rashi's cue but widens the scope to include the second half of the verse, where the words "*vayomer eilav*" – which connote softness and comfort – stand in stark contrast to the harsh tone of the opening. The tzaddik sees an important message hinted to in this drastic shift.

In a healthy parent/child relationship, any anger expressed over mistakes that the child makes reaches only as deep as the conditional element of the relationship. When the misstep has been addressed with the appropriate severity and consequences

suffered, unconditional love bursts forth like a mighty geyser. In that sensitive moment, the mask of anger is removed and the parent rushes to embrace his child who stands shaking, vulnerable and scared, in a desperate bid to let him know that no possible mistake could ever be big enough to sever their bond completely. With soft words of comfort and love, the parent communicates with the child on a level far beyond misdeeds, addressing the goodness at his essence, the sweetness at his core.

Using this parable, the holy Ishbitzer explains the shift in tone that occurs in the difficult verse with which our parsha begins.

"Vayedabeir Elokim el Moshe": "And *Elokim*, the trait of harsh-judgement, reproached Moshe for his inappropriate outburst. But this reprimand was only on the level of his name, Moshe; an external element of his identity from which misdeeds derive.

"Vayomer eilav ani Hashem": Immediately after conveying this scolding, Hashem, *Middas haRachamim*, spoke "*eilav*", to the very essence of his being, forever removed from sin, whispering soft words of comfort and hope and reminding him that the bond of their love runs far deeper than any mistake could ever reach. Frightful and real as it may be, divine anger is only a mask. "*Yaakov chevel nachalaso*"; a spiritual cord that runs from the deepest essence of the Jewish soul to the deepest essence of the Infinite One carries an ever-abiding flow of unending kindness and unconditional love.



Behind the mask of Hashem's anger echoes the whisper of His unconditional love.

Tohameha

Tasting the Depth of Shabbos Kodesh

THE TZADDIK BEGINS to reveal the *nimshal* of three servants and their different perspectives on being appointed to fix the king's crown. It is known that each and every mitzvah - as well as each and every Jew - is a jewel in Hashem's crown (613 *mitzvos* plus 7 *mitzvos d'Rabbanan* equals 620, the *gematriya* of *Kesser*, crown.) Just as the palace is seized with a spirit of awe and majesty when the king wears his crown, so do am Yisrael, through their lifestyle of Torah and mitzvos, cause the world to be filled with the awareness of Hashem and His absolute sovereignty over creation. However, there are three general attitudes exhibited toward this *avodah*. The first group has no sense for the grandeur and nobility of this task, and - with great difficulty - drag their way through *avodas Hashem*, motivated primarily by the promise of reward. The second group understands the import of *avodas Hashem* and yearns to serve the Creator even without receiving anything in return. However, they grow arrogant in their labor and, in the process, lose their appreciation for the awesomeness of the crown and the wondrous privilege of living a Torah life. Finally, the third group of Jews is overwhelmed by the honor they are certain has been undeservedly bestowed upon them. They perform the mitzvos with an unwavering sense of excitement and wonder stemming from their deep-seated humility and gratitude over having been chosen for this precious task. Next week, we will explore some practical pointers as to how to foster this exalted attitude toward the mitzvos. *Good Shabbos!* 🙏

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

Profiles of Tzaddikim

Biographical sketches of the Chassidic Masters

The Baal Hafla'ah zy"o

Reb Pinchas Horowitz was born in Chortkov, Galicia in 1731 (5492). This tzaddik was the older brother of Reb Shmuel Shmelke of Nikolsburg who we learned about a few weeks ago. Together, they studied under their father, Reb Tzvi Hirsch of Chortkov, for many years. At an early age, Reb Pinchas and his brother joined the movement of Chassidus, becoming close followers and disciples of the Maggid of Mezritch.

Reb Pinchas first served as the Rav in Vitkova and then in Lechovitz, after which, in 1772 (5533), he received the appointment to serve as Rav of the community in Frankfurt in addition to Rosh Yeshiva of the local yeshiva. He was beloved by Jews and non-Jews alike, renowned for his kind-hearted and gracious character. He served the community with love, caring for the sick and needy among the Jews as well as the non-Jews of his city.

He spoke out forcefully against Moses Mendelssohn's German translation of the Torah, *Biur*, which he foresaw would pull many Jews away from Yiddishkeit. Unfortunately, his suspicion was correct, and over time, Mendelssohn's ideas indeed managed to reach and influence Jewish minds across Europe. Nevertheless, Reb Pinchas was successful in creating a large movement of dedicated followers who were unwavering in their commitment to experience authentic Yiddishkeit and the spreading of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid.

Reb Pinchas is most well-known as having been a brilliant *posek*. His halachic responsa, answers to questions addressed to him from far and wide, were compiled under the title *Teshuvos Givat Pinchas*. His magnum opus and the *sefer* by which he is known, the *Haflaah*, consists of his Talmudic and Halachic *chiddushim*. He also penned *Panim Yafos*, a commentary on the Torah influenced by the teachings of his Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch. Reb Pinchas left this world in 1805 (5566), with his son Reb Tzvi succeeding him as Rav of Frankfurt. 🕎

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

Keiver of Reb Pinchos Horowitz zy"o,
Battonstraße Jewish cemetery,
Frankfurt am Main



Chassidus 101

Exploring the Foundations of Chassidus

THE ARIZAL FAMOUSLY revealed that what are colloquially known as the *yezter hara* and *yetzer tov* in fact reflect two different *nefashos*, two souls that are unique to the Jewish nation. Shlomo HaMelech teaches us, "Zeh l'umas zeh asah Elokim," "God has made one corresponding to the other." Everything in the universe has a mirror image, a parallel positioned opposite it. Therefore, everything that exists in the realm of *kedusha* must manifest in some way in the realm of *tumah* as well.

These two *nefashos* are known as the *Nefesh HaBehamis*, the animal soul, and the *Nefesh Elokis*, the Godly soul. On a basic level, these two souls respectively manifest in our desire for holiness as well as the pull toward worldly, physical things. While the *nefesh habehamis* desires to experience immediate gratification and physical pleasure, the Godly soul yearns simply to reconnect to its Creator, to experience unity with Hashem.

The Baal HaTanya explains that there are various levels of subduing or transforming the *nefesh habehamis* so that one's experience of the world is driven solely by the *nefesh Elokis*. While some of these are increasingly lofty levels reserved for tzaddikim, the Baal HaTanya wanted us to understand that each and every Jew, regardless of where they may feel they land on the "spiritual progress bar," is capable of tapping into the *nefesh Elokis* and allowing it to express itself in the most beautiful way.

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

The Rebbe explains that every Jew is capable of controlling the *levushim*, garments of the soul - the three unique faculties of thought, speech, and action. Without control of these *levushim*, the *nefesh Elokis* is incapable of expressing itself. This is where the tzaddik's famous concept of the *beinoni*, the intermediate person, comes into play. According to the Baal HaTanya, while not all Jews will merit to reach the level of a tzaddik, the level of the *beinoni* is within reach of every Jew. The Master of the world has blessed each and every one of us and continues to give us the strength to subdue the *nefesh habehamis* and to allow our Godly souls to shine.

Achieving this level, however, requires *sechel* – it demands that we work towards developing a better understanding of Torah and mitzvos as well as our relationship with Hashem. If we act impulsively, based on emotion alone, our *nefesh habehamis* can easily take control. However, when our emotions are guided by our intellect, infused with the understanding of who we are and what it is we are here to do, we are able to overcome the struggles and temptations we face and emerge victorious in all our endeavors.

With each step taken towards growing in our knowledge of Torah and our experience of *avodas Hashem*, we are actively refining our emotions, enabling us to live lives of meaning, experiencing our eternal bond with our Father in heaven. 🕎

A Quick Mayseh

A Story to Warm the Heart

REB YISSACHAR BER of Radoshitz was a close disciple of Reb Yaakov Yitzchak, the Yid HaKadosh (“Holy Jew”) from Peshischa. It once happened that the young Reb Yissachar Ber traveled to the city of Peshischa in order to visit his esteemed master. As he ascended a hill on the outskirts of the village, he heard shouts and cries from the valley below. As he drew closer, it became clear that the sounds were coming from none other than the home of his rebbe! Confused and frightened, he hurried down the hill.

When he arrived at his master’s house, he found the Yid HaKadosh, on the verge of tears, gathered with his wailing family members around a baby’s crib. The tzaddik informed his disciple that his son had fallen ill and was on the verge of death. He then took the child out of its crib and placed him in the student’s arms.

“You have come at just the right time!” exclaimed the rebbe. “We don’t know where to turn! Take the child. I am certain that you will be able to return him to me in a healthy state.”

Yissachar Ber was perplexed. Never in his life had he healed anybody! He was quite sure that he lacked any such powers. He was just a simple Jew! However, he heeded the words of his beloved rebbe and took the baby into the next room. Looking into the pure face of the infant, he began to pour out his soul before Hashem, the tears streaming down his face. An hour passed by in intense prayer. When he looked down, he found that the baby had improved to the point where it was no longer in danger.

There is nothing more powerful than a heartfelt prayer that bursts forth from a humble heart, saturated with simple faith in Hashem’s infinite power. 🙏

**“THANK YOU HASHEM FOR SHABBOS KODESH!”
IS A WEEKLY PROJECT OF @TYHASHEM**

“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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