

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Shlach 5769

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Shlach

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

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Shalosh Seudos¹ of Parshas Shlach 5766

וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: שְׁלַח-לְךָ אַנְשִׁים, וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי
 נֹתֵן, לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: אִישׁ אֶחָד אִישׁ אֶחָד לְמִטָּה אֲבֹתָיו, תִּשְׁלְחוּ--כֹּל, נָשִׂיא
 בָּהֶם... וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה, לְתוֹר אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן; וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם, עֲלוּ זֶה בְּנֶגֶב,
 וְעֲלִיתֶם, אֶת-הַהָר... וַיַּעֲלוּ, וַיִּתְּרוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ, מִמִּדְבַּר-צֹן עַד-רְחֹב לְבָא חָמַת.

“And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Send you men, that they shall spy out the land of Canaan which I give to the children of Yisrael. You shall send one man from each of their fathers’ tribes, every one a prince of them... And Moshe sent them to spy out the land of Canaan. And he said to them, ‘Get up here in the Negev and go up to the mountain... And they went up and spied out the land, from the wilderness of Tzin until Rechov, at the entrance to Chamas.’”²

“To Spy Out the Land”

The Arizal reveals that the initials of the phrase, “לְתוֹר אֶת הָאָרֶץ”—“To spy out the land”³—forms the Hebrew word לאה. This indicates that Moshe requested to send spies to search out the land in an aspect of *Leah* which

¹ The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² *Bamidbar* 13:1-2,17,21

³ *Ibid.*, 13:16

represents an aspect of mercy [since it is in a higher spiritual place that is less susceptible to the *klippos*]. But when the verse describes the itinerary of the spies, it says that they scouted out from the wilderness of Tzin **”וַיַּחֲבֹּלְבָא”** **”חַמָּת”**—“until Rechov, at the entrance to Chamas.” The initials of the phrase form the name **רחל**, which represents judgment [since *Rachel* is more vulnerable to the forces of evil.]⁴

But the Arizal himself says elsewhere that *Leah* is an aspect of judgment [since she is hidden,] and *Rachel* is an aspect of mercy [since she is the main spouse of Yaakov and is easier to grasp.] (See how the Arizal settled this apparent contradiction.)⁵

The Baal HaTanya writes that the spies did not wish to enter the land because their spiritual source was in the aspect of Leah, which represents the world of thought.⁶ They claimed that there was no reason to “descend” to the promised land, which is merely an aspect of speech. This is the aspect of *Rachel*, *Malchus* of *Atzilus*, which is the very bottommost level of *Atzilus*. The spies understood that the purpose of this “descent” was that they should fulfill Torah and *mitzvos* through physical speech and actions. But they understood that there is a higher level at which one can fulfill the Torah. [The Arizal reveals that before the sin, Adam observed the Torah’s commandments in a purely spiritual sense.] The Torah is applicable on every level, even on the level of pure thought, since everything has a spiritual counterpart above. This is not

⁴ See *Sha’ar Hapesukim* and *Likutei Torah* of the Arizal, *Parshas Shlach*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Likutei Torah, Parshas Shlach*

difficult to grasp, since we know that every spoken word is the direct outcome of thought.

Now we understand the deeper meaning of our sages' statement that Avraham fulfilled the entire Torah. This cannot possibly be literal since some *mitzvos* would have been absolutely impossible for him to fulfill. The true meaning of this statement is that Avraham drew down the supernal illumination caused by fulfilling the *mitzvos*. Similarly, the spies figured the Jewish people could forgo the level of *Rachel* or action by fulfilling the *mitzvos* in an aspect of *Leah*, pure thought. So why should the Jewish people enter the land?

But the Arizal seems to say the opposite: that Moshe wished to send them in an aspect of *Leah*, but that they fell to the aspect of *Rachel*. How are we to understand this? At the outset, we need to realize that these apparent contradictions all have deep lessons to impart that can help us in our Divine service. One reason why the word Torah has the same root as *hora'ah*, "instruction," is because everything teaches us to serve Hashem. As the Baal Shem Tov said, every Jew must understand that Hashem speaks to us through the Torah. In every verse of the Torah, in every teaching of the Mishnah or Gemara, there is another revelation of G-dliness that offers specific advice how each of us can draw closer to Hashem, each of us on our own level. This is the aspect of *Matan Torah* that can be experienced anew, each and every day.

“Dwell in the Land and Graze on Faith”

Every Jew must ascend from the aspect of *chutz l'aretz* to the level of *Eretz Yisrael*. The land is the embodiment of vital *emunah*, as we see from the

verse, "שְׁכֵן-אֶרֶץ, וּרְעֵה אֱמוּנָה"⁷—“Dwell in the land and graze on faith.”⁷ The main element of faith is belief in Hashem’s absolute Oneness.⁸ In a similar vein, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, said that the main *avodah* of the later generations will be to unify Hashem through holy *yichudim*, and that in the merit of this *avodah*, Moshiach will come. But the only way for one to engage in the *avodah* of *yichudim*, holy unifications, is through recognizing the importance of *Eretz Yisrael*, which is the physical counterpart to the *avodah* of *yichudim*. Very many people feel that the entire subject of *yichudim* only relates to the greatest *tzaddikim*, or to those who are already of advanced years. Sadly, this is a critical error, since every person must have a deep connection to *Eretz Yisrael*. We all must work to *daven* with fire and have a vital faith in Hashem. One who does not do so lives in *chutz l'aretz* [regardless of his geographic location], but one who continuously seeks to deepen his connection to *emunah* and works to make *yichudim* has a true connection to *Eretz Yisrael*. The main rule is to work at this at all times, since one whose efforts are haphazard does not “live” in Israel, since living implies constancy. The rule is that everyone must continuously bask in the light of *emunah* and *yichudim*.

The Pillars of Avodah

Before we can understand the lessons from the spies and Moshe we must first realize that there are two major paths to achieve connection with Hashem. Some people focus on learning Torah, while others put their best efforts into prayer. Still others work primarily on holy thoughts and pure

⁷ *Tehillim* 37:3

⁸ *Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud Viha'Emunah*

intentions. Each of their paths has many levels, but the pillars on which all genuine *avodah* rests are *Ze'ir Anpin*, which represents Torah study, and *Malchus*, which represents *emunah* and prayer.

The first step towards holiness is to learn Torah with diligence. For without Torah learning one cannot possibly come to any true level. This was the path of the true *tzaddikim* who never wasted a moment that could be used for Torah study, and even when they could not learn, Torah was always on their minds. In this way, every free moment could be dedicated to Torah.

The second pillar is prayer. Every Jew must use each instant to connect to Hashem through heartfelt prayers. We must continuously petition the King, thereby strengthening our *emunah* and *dveikus*. As is well known, the Baal Shem Tov revealed that we should especially focus on the aspects of *Malchus*. This is alluded to in the verse, "גְדַלּוֹתַי לֵה' אֲתִי" — "Magnify Hashem with me."⁹ The word אֲתִי forms an acronym for the words, אֱמוּנָה (faith), תְּפִילָה (prayer), and יְחֻדִים (holy unifications). It is through this threefold effort to "magnify Hashem" that one attains true *dveikus*. Through them, we learn to contemplate that Hashem fills all of creation until we are truly moved by the greatness of Hashem. But one connect to Hashem without both aspects of Torah and the threefold path of prayer.

The *Zohar* reveals that the blemish of the one who had gathered wood on Shabbos in the wilderness was confusion regarding if one should focus solely on Torah learning or solely on prayer and faith. But even if a person is unable to work in more than one area, he must never separate between the two

⁹ *Tehillim* 34:4

and mistakenly believe that one of these areas is not essential. For both paths are the ladder with which we ascend to the supernal worlds.

Unifying the Two Pillars

From the moment one opens his eyes in the morning, he must have both of these *avodos* on his mind at all times. When one finally learns with diligence every instant he can and is also engaged in unifying Hashem's Name at every spare moment, he can grasp the level of unity between these two paths. When he learns Torah it will be imbued with *yichudim* and *dveikus*, in an aspect of prayer. In addition, when he is actively engaged in the *avodos* of *Malchus*, he will also learn to be immersed in Torah. In this manner he causes a spiritual union between the aspects of *Ze'ir Anpin* and *Malchus*.

Initially one must do what he can, even though generally he will end up focusing on one aspect more than the other. When that happens, the person is in an aspect of *chutz la'aretz* [the Diaspora], which is known as a "back-to-back" unification. Although the person is always struggling to unify Hashem through Torah or prayer, the two elements are not joined.

The true *tzaddik*, however, is always filled with longing for Hashem in the sense of the *techeiles* [the blue strand of the *tzitzis*], which represents approaching the *tachlis*, the ultimate purpose.¹⁰ These *tzaddikim* are filled with yearning to reveal Hashem's Kingship in the world to such a great extent that they no longer wish to serve Hashem with two distinct *avodos*. Rather, they long to imbue one aspect with the other until they achieve a spiritual unification

¹⁰ *Likutei Moharan* I:17

that is “face-to-face,” which is associated with *Eretz Yisrael*. As the *tzaddikim* toil in Torah, they yearn to unify the aspect of *Ze'ir Anpin* with *Malchus / emunah*. During their every move, they wish only to perceive Hashem as we find in the verse, “Eye to eye, they will see Hashem’s return to Tzion.”¹¹ At all times they wish to see Hashem before them. They learn Torah for the sake of heaven and are very pained by the massive distance and impenetrable darkness that most people experience.

Even if a person is learned and has true faith, if his *avodos* are in the “back-to-back” state, he is still very far from true *dveikus*. Even though all distance from Hashem is a direct result of sin, sin can only exist when one feels complacent about his current level. When one fails to yearn to reveal Hashem’s Kingship, he is a ripe target for the machinations of the forces of evil. This is the source of all sin, and as soon as a person falls to sin he loses even the “back-to-back” connection to Hashem that he had.

Although one could easily look at himself and see that he is steeped in sin and very distant from any of these levels, he must understand that even he has a connection to all these great levels and *avodos*. This is the power of *teshuvah*, through which one rectifies everything and in Hashem’s kindness can even attain the level of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Approaching the Tachlis

Sometimes, a person may unfortunately see that he cannot divest himself of sinful behavior. Although the main path to rectify this is through true

¹¹ *Yeshayah* 52:8

teshuvah and fulfilling the command in our *parshah* not to stray after one's heart and eyes, this sometimes seems impossible.¹² When one finds that his efforts to do *teshuvah* do not appear to be working, this is sometimes a sign that he should rectify himself through accessing a higher level.¹³ One does this by rectifying the source of his sins.

The first step to rectifying sin at the source is grasping its severity. It is a direct result of such blemishes that we have remained in exile for such a long time. After one understands the nature of his sins he must learn to see that he is not all bad—he has many good points as well. Every Jew includes all the supernal levels of the upper worlds. Although he is an aspect of a wicked person in one respect, he may be like Moshe Rabbeinu in another. So as one continues to toil to do *teshuvah* in a simple state, he can still capitalize on the times that his inner *tzaddik* is dominant to begin to contemplate the aspect of *techeiles*, yearning for the purpose of creation—to unify the aspects of *Ze'ir Anpin* and *Malchus*. He must realize that Hashem placed the command “not to stray” in the *parshah* of *tzitzis* to teach that failure to fulfill this mitzvah on its simple level is rectified through powerful yearning to join the two aspects of *emunah* and Torah, which is the *techeilis / tachlis*.

Although all sin is a result of letting go of one's yearning for holiness, there are other consequences as well. It is only possible to hate one's fellow Jew because one does not yearn to come to this *tachlis*, the purpose of creation, and unite Hashem with the *Shechinah*, or join Torah and *emunah*. This is why

¹² *Bamidbar* 15:39

¹³ *Likutei Moharan* I:29

the word, תכלת, purpose [400 + 20 + 30 + 400 = 850] has the same numerical value as שנאת חנם [300 + 50 + 1 + 400 + 8 + 50 + 40 + 1 one for the kollel = 850]. It is only possible to hate one's fellow Jew if he is learning Torah and performing his *avodah* in a fractured manner. This hatred causes a separation between Hahsem and the *Shechinah*, just as learning and prayer can when undertaken in a spirit of disunity. In such a state one can feel jealous or angry at his friend who appears to learn or *daven* better, or who has more money or other material advantages that he lacks. In such a state, one feels an infusion of life-force from the physical to such an extent that he races after the physical and not the spiritual.

Entering the Land in Body and Soul

Even those of us who live in Israel are merely there in body. In soul we are sadly dry since we lack the light of unity and true *emunah*. But why do we not at least yearn to be on these levels? If we did, we would connect at least a little to these supernal levels. In as much as we yearn to attain them, we will be unable to sustain any semblance of hatred which is aroused through jealousy, illicit physical desires, and the lust for honor.

Now we can understand why Moshe told the spies to first tour the land through its length [rather than its width], since the אורך alludes to *Chochmah*, which is the *avodah* of *yichudim* and *dveikus*.¹⁴ The spies were themselves an aspect of *Binah*—the Baal HaTurim points out that they were “officers of fifties.” This is an allusion to the fifty gates of *Binah*. *Binah* means

¹⁴ *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh; Sifsei Kohein on Bamidbar 13:17.*

understanding one thing from another through an abundance of in-depth Torah study, symbolized by fifty gates. Moshe then told them to sojourn the land לרחבה, through its width, which alludes to *Binah*, since he wanted them to connect their Torah with the light of *emunah* and *yichudim*, thereby making a spiritual unification that is “face-to-face.”

But of course the spies spoke against *Eretz Yisrael*, as if this was not the purpose of their mission. They assumed that they understood more than Moshe Rabbeinu, the true *tzaddik*, since to their minds there was no need to join Torah and *emunah*. They felt that when one learns Torah he need not join this with *dveikus* and *emunah*. They thought that one could not engage in both *avodos* at once. Since *Eretz Yisrael* was obviously not accessible without continuous *dveikus*, they assumed that Moshe wished them to stop learning Torah and only be involved in *dveikus*. But since both *avodos* are essential, they wished to remain out of Israel in an aspect of *chol* where they could serve Hashem by alternating learning with *dveikus*. Although they were of very great spiritual stature, they did not comprehend that the main purpose is to be filled with yearning to join Torah with *emunah*.¹⁵

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of the phrase: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*), and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”¹⁶ Bind the aspect of *Chochmah* to your *nefesh*, the

¹⁵ See the Ohr HaChayim's explanation of their greatness in his commentary to the *parshah*.

¹⁶ From the *Shabbos zemer* “D'ror Yikrah,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

aspect of *Malchus*, to such an extent that even when you are immersed in Torah, you will still be connected to the *yichud*. Then it will be “a crown to your head”—you will attain the aspect of *Kesser*, which is the light of holy unification that will bring the ultimate redemption into the world. But one must also yearn to “guard your holy *mitzvos*—observe the *mitzvos* with great holiness by not “straying after your heart and eyes.” Then you will merit to “guard your holy Shabbos”—to repent fully of whatever blemishes you may have made [since the root of Shabbos is *teshuvah*].

Although the evil inclination is always enticing one to sin, in truth no Jew has any interest in causing spiritual damage. We all want to do *teshuvah*. But when this is hard we must go to the source where we are all revealed to contain an aspect of *tzaddikim*. In this manner we will be empowered to rectify our main error: that we do not yearn to live in *Eretz Yisrael* in a spiritual sense. We must do what we can to engage in the *avodah* of *dveikus / Rachel*, while also learning Torah. At first we need to switch from *avodah* to *avodah*, yearning all the while to connect the two. In time we will finally attain the *mochin* of *Eretz Yisrael*, when we yearn for Hashem even while immersed deeply in Torah.

May Hashem help us to break through the barriers of impurity and ascend to the Land. Although the Jewish people did not succeed in entering the land during the time of the spies—“and it will not succeed”¹⁷—Hashem will help us succeed today. As Rav Tzaddok HaKohein of Lublin explained, through stubbornly trying to ascend to *Eretz Yisrael*, we will succeed in attaining its

¹⁷ *Bamidbar* 14:41

holiness even though we are not worthy. We will merit to learn Torah with diligence and connection at every moment until the advent of our righteous redeemer, speedily in our days. Amen!

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.