

# אור פני משה

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

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*Shmuessen from  
Harav Moshe  
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## פרשת ויקהל

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לעילוי נשמת  
שריד דור האחרון  
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תנצב"ה

## פרשת ויקהל

לֹא תִבְעֲרוּ אֵשׁ בְּכָל מִשְׁכְּנֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת (שמות ל"ה ג')

*"You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the day of Shabbos"*

The Zohar Hakadosh teaches that besides for the physical *melacha*, this *passuk* is also referring to another type of fire: the fire of anger and argument. "אש" in this verse is referring to the fire of *machlokes*; it is instructing us to rid our homes of heated quarreling and shouting on the holy day of Shabbos.

The hours leading up to Shabbos Kodesh can be very tense ones, as we all know far too well. And during Shabbos as well - especially when there are guests involved - the chances of getting angry at our spouses can swell out of proportion. The Zohar is teaching us here that the proper way of preparing for and observing Shabbos is by extinguishing the flames of upset and criticism well before *shkiah* on Friday afternoon.

### Isn't Anger Always a Grievous Sin?

However, there is an elementary question that can be asked here: isn't it always prohibited to get angry and shout at our peers - especially our spouses and children? Why is it that the Zohar seems to single out Shabbos as a day that is unique to this *issur*? The obvious answer is that Shabbos is on a loftier level than the rest of the days of the week, so the misdeeds committed during this holy time are considered more severe.

But maybe we can explain it a little deeper. The Midrash says that during the creation of the world, each day of the week sought out a partner. Sunday took Monday, Tuesday took Wednesday, and Thursday took Friday - but Shabbos was left alone. So, Hakadosh Baruch Hu reassured Shabbos, and told him: "Do not fear; soon, there will be a nation called Klal Yisroel, and they will be your partner." According to this, perhaps we can say

that when a Yid quarrels on Shabbos, then he is not only hurting his wife and children, but also Shabbos itself. Shabbos is our partner on this holy day, and he doesn't want to get entangled in our discord. This is why anger and *machlokes* on Shabbos is more severe than during the week - Shabbos exclaims, "If you want to fight, then do it on your own time. Don't include me in your brawl!"

Alternatively, we can explain this Zohar with the teaching of the Ba'al HaTanya. The Ba'al HaTanya says that the root of all anger is a lack of Emunah; if a person would truly believe that everything that occurs in his lifetime has been predetermined by a heavenly decree, then he would realize that the very idea of anger is totally ludicrous. Therefore, on the day of Shabbos, when we are bearing witness to Hashem's supremacy and complete control of the entire creation, then we simply cannot lose our cool; if we do, then we defeat the whole purpose of Shabbos. By getting angry, we are effectively saying that we don't fully believe in Hashem!

### Counting the Days by Number

Rabbeinu Bechaye in Parshas Bo points out that throughout Tanach, the days of the week are never called by names; rather, they are referred to as 'the first day', 'the second day' and so on. Why? So that we should learn to accomplish the *mitzvah* of "זכור את 'יום השבת לקדשו'"; when we count the days by number, as though we are keeping track of how close we are getting to Shabbos, then we are effectively remembering Shabbos every single day of the week.

(The same goes for the names of the months; the Torah never uses the names "Nissan", "Iyar", and so on. Rather, the months are referred to by number - "Chodesh Harishon", "Chodesh Hasehini" - so that we should fulfill the obligation of "זכור את יום 'צאתך מארץ מצרים'", remembering the day we left Mitzrayim. Why, then, has it become customary to use actual names for the months in later years? Answers Rabbeinu Bechaye: during the seventy years that the Yidden spent in Bavel, they picked up these names. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu redeemed them and returned them to Eretz Yisroel, the Yidden chose to continue using these names as a

way of commemorating their salvation from the exile in Bavel. They made this decision based on the words of the Navi; see Rabbeinu Bechaye for a detailed explanation.)

Rabbeinu Bechaye is teaching us here that throughout the week, we should be looking forward to Shabbos Kodesh. The rest of the days are supposed to serve as reminders that Hashem rested on Shabbos; Sunday was the first day of creation, Monday was the second day of creation... and on Shabbos, Hashem created rest. In other words, we are supposed to be spending our days contemplating our *Emunah* in Hashem's omnipotence, and finally, basking in his glory on Shabbos itself.

### **Shabbos: Believing that Hashem Created the World**

The truth of the matter is that every person is capable of recognizing that the world was created by Hashem. Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l related the following anecdote:

*A certain professor was once teaching a lesson about computers. Suddenly, a large spider crawled onto the screen of the device that he was displaying. The professor quickly swatted the insect with a rolled up newspaper, with a visible look of disgust on his face. One of the students later told Rav Miller that the professor's facial expression at that moment almost seemed to be saying, "You miniscule, worthless pest! Who do you think you are, treading on a computer - on such an ingenious and complex invention by mankind?"*

*How foolish this thought process is, Rav Miller would preach. If this professor would only stop for a moment and think, he would realize that one tiny leg of that spider is hundreds of times more complex than his entire computer. The leg is as thin as a hair, and yet the amount of faculties it possesses is unfathomable! It's ability to differentiate between hot and cold, wet and dry; to weave intricate webs; to carry weight; to feel and react to pain; to climb vertical surfaces; the list goes on and on. The wisdom that is*

*apparent in this diminutive leg far surpasses that of the manmade computer.*

Here's another story to illustrate this point:

*The great paytan (liturgist) Rav Yehuda HaLevi had a Greek neighbor that used to debate with him about the origins of the universe. This Greek philosopher would argue that it is unnecessary to assert that the world was designed by an all-powerful creator.*

*One day, Rav Yehuda was walking past this fellow's house, and he noticed that he was in the middle of writing some poetry in his courtyard. Suddenly, the philosopher stepped away from his work and went inside. Rav Yehuda seized the moment and took a quick glance at the poetry. He noticed that the philosopher had not yet written the finishing stanza of the poem, so he swiftly jotted down an eloquent ending and went to stand outside the courtyard.*

*From his vantage point, Rav Yehuda was able to see the philosopher return to his writing. Upon noticing the poem's new ending, he grinned happily, and began searching for the one who penned this beautiful closing stanza. When he noticed Rav Yehuda, he ran over to him and exclaimed, "Thank you! What a masterful job you did! Now my poem is truly complete!"*

*"What are you talking about?" Rav Yehuda asked, feigning a look of confusion.*

*"Stop being humble. It must have been you; first of all, nobody could have written such a graceful stanza other than a talented liturgist like yourself. And second, there's nobody else here, so I know it was you," said the philosopher.*

*"You are mistaken," Rav Yehuda replied. "In fact, I was standing right over here, and I was able to witness exactly what had transpired: shortly after you left, a small mosquito accidentally landed in your inkwell. It then fell out onto your parchment, and clumsily pranced about, leaving behind all*

*kinds of black markings from its inky legs. A few moments later, a dragonfly whizzed by, and its wings dipped into the inkwell; it then flew past your parchment, and its wings added to the lines and dots that the mosquito had made. This process repeated itself quite a few times with various insects, and astonishingly, an entire verse was written," Rav Yehuda concluded, with a sincere look on his face.*

*Now his neighbor was starting to get visibly annoyed. "What is all this childish nonsense?" he retorted. He began to berate Rav Yehuda for suggesting something as ridiculous as a couple of insects accidentally creating sophisticated poetry.*

*"Well," Rav Yehuda asked, "why is it that you find what I am suggesting to be preposterous, yet you are perfectly comfortable with your own claims? After all, you think that something as intricate as a heart, or kidneys, or lungs - or all of these working in perfect unison - is perfectly likely to have burst into existence by happenstance. So why can't a mere line of poetry do the same?"*

The creation of the world has to be something that is self-evident to us. We must recognize, every single day, the message that Shabbos is here to remind us - that Hashem created the world.

### **Remembering the Purpose of Creation**

Once we're discussing the creation, let's focus on its purpose. The Mesillas Yesharim famously discusses why Hashem created the world: so that the creations will bask in the Shechina's glory. This is referring to a *ruchnius'dik* enjoyment - the most unrivaled and coveted enjoyment that there is.

Now, why couldn't the ultimate enjoyment be a physical one? Why couldn't Hashem create the world so that his creations could enjoy bungee jumping, skiing and expensive steaks? The answer the Mesillas Yesharim gives is that physical pleasure isn't real; it only lasts temporarily. The only genuine enjoyment is *ruchnius*; it lasts for eternity, and does not dissipate or dwindle

with time. The Mesillas Yescharim explains that “ אין הנשמה נהנת ” - the soul does not derive pleasure from physicalities; rather, it is repulsed by them.

Of course, physical pleasure was given for us as well; it wasn't created just for the *goyim*. It just has to be experienced at the proper time. On Shabbos Kodesh, we are commanded to enjoy good food and other *taanugim*, so that we will enjoy Hashem's creation of *gashmius'dik* enjoyment at its predetermined time and place. When the pleasure is serving an *Avodas Hashem* purpose, then, in a sense, it is actually *ruchnius*. So, although the Mesillas Yescharim says that the soul despises *gashmius*, on Shabbos it is quite the contrary. Rashi teaches that the *neschama yeseira* causes that when we consume delectable meals on Shabbos, “ אין הנשמה ” - the soul does not get repulsed by it; interestingly, he uses the same words as the Mesillas Yescharim for the opposite effect. (This *lashon* probably originates from the *kadmonim*.)

Let's finish with a *mashal*:

*You are sitting at a lavish wedding, observing a massive symphony orchestra playing beautiful music. At the other end of the table, you spot a fellow with earphones on. You peak over his shoulder and notice that he is listening to music.*

*What a fool he is! Why is he listening to recorded music, when he could be enjoying a live orchestra, playing stunning, original music right before his eyes?*

This is how lofty people view *gashmius'dik* pleasures in comparison to a *blatt* of Gemara. Let us internalize the lesson of the Mesillas Yescharim, along with the *avodah* of Shabbos Kodesh, so that we can focus on the real enjoyment - the enjoyment of the *Ziv Ha'shecinah*.

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

פרשת ויקהל

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עֵדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (שמות ל"ה א')

"And Moshe gathered the whole congregation of the Bnei Yisroel"

### **The Significance of Yidden Assembling to Hear a Drasha**

In the beginning of this week's Parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu gathers together all of Klal Yisroel to discuss Shabbos. This is the only time in the Torah that the *passuk* uses the terminology of "ויקהל משה את כל עדת בני ישראל" - that Moshe assembled the **entire** nation. The Ohr Hachaim on this *passuk* brings the Midrash that learns from these words the *inyan* of gathering congregations together to hear the words of their leader. Chazal say that when Yidden get together to listen to a *drasha*, "מתכפרין כל עוונותם" - they receive atonement for all of their sins.

This is an incredible lesson. Wouldn't many of us pay a fortune to get another Yom Kippur, a few months after the real Yom Kippur - when we see that we haven't succeeded in keeping to our commitments? Well, it might not be so difficult to obtain; all you have to do is go listen to a *drasha*. It doesn't say that it has to be a dynamic speaker; it doesn't even say that it has to be a mind-boggling speech. You just have to assemble together *leshem shomayim*, with the intention of rejuvenating ourselves and our *avodah* - and you get a *kapparah*.

### **Do You Stay, or Do You Walk Away?**

I used to wonder why this would make such a *nachas ruach* for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But the truth of the matter is - look at how difficult it is for people to come to a *drasha*! The timing just never seems to work out. We're always too busy for one reason or another. And even on Shabbos, when the Rav gets up to speak after *krias hatorah* - you have to wait fifteen minutes for *mussaf* to start either way! But still, you end up in the coffee room, socializing with your buddies. I can understand if there's a *kiddush* in the Shul, and



you're getting drawn out of the Bais Medrash by the delectable smell of the hot kugel... But honestly, what's the point of going out? You can't shmooz about business on Shabbos anyway! So you're just talking about nonsense? *Divrei Torah* are usually much more necessary for your life than the recent headlines or the weather. And just look around at how many people doze off in the middle of the Rav's speech; it's ridiculous! During the winter shabbosim, they sometimes get ten hours of sleep on Friday night; can't they just stay awake for 10-15 minutes and focus on the *Divrei Torah*?

But we definitely see that this is a tough challenge for many people. If the *yetzer hara* is so strong that it makes us do something that seems so utterly foolish, then the *kapparah* that is doled out to the listeners is pretty understandable. We must try our hardest to overcome this *nisayon*. Especially now that we know that it's Yom Kippur in there - how can we just walk out or fall asleep?

### **The Vilna Gaon: Stay Away From the Nisayon**

With regard to the *nisayon* of not attending *drashos*, I would like to discuss a well known Mishna in Pirkei Avos that says "הסתכל בשלושה דברים ואין אתה בא לידי עבירה" - pay heed to these three things, and you will not come to a transgression. The Vilna Gaon points out that the tactics the Mishna offers for avoiding sin are only effective before the sin comes; once you are already in the grasp of the *yetzer hara*, nothing can help you. His words are, "לא יועיל לו שום יראת שמים"; no *yiras shomayim* in the world can help you once you are already enwrapped in the Satan's tentacles. The only thing that can stop a person at that point is *יראת האדם*, the fear of another person. If someone is about to speak *lashon hara*, and someone he respects walks into the room, it will cause him to refrain from speaking - not because of *יראת שמים*, but because of the shame he would feel. This is the reason why we have *Hilchos Yichud* - the *יראת האדם* would stop him from sinning, even if his *יראת שמים* wouldn't.

The Gaon is teaching us that all we can accomplish with our *יראת שמים* is staying out of trouble. But once we are in the *yetzer hara's* arena, there's no way out.

### **Rav Chaim Shmuelelevitz's Approach to this Topic**

Rav Chaim Shmuelelevitz used to learn the same point from a different source. Chazal teach us that “אין אדם חוטא אלא אם כן נכנס בו” - a person does not sin unless a spirit of foolishness enters him. The question is, if the person has become subjugated by foolishness, then he should be considered a שוטה; if that's the case, then how can he ever be held accountable for his sins? Rav Chaim answers that the person will receive punishment for allowing himself to enter a situation where the שוטה exists. He was responsible for providing the שוטה with an entry point. True, once he's already in that situation - he's a goner; but he should have never been there in the first place.

One time, after Rav Chaim Shmuelelevitz gave this specific *mussar shmooz*, I approached him and asked: According to this idea, it turns out that people never receive an עונש for the actual action of the transgression; rather, they get punished for allowing themselves to enter the playing field of the *yetzer hara*. If so, how can it be that for some sins, there are more severe consequences than others? After all, the person's misconduct is always the same one - allowing himself to enter!

Rav Chaim answered swiftly, “Tell me, when a person sees a bicycle riding towards him at high-speed, does he jump out of the way with the same zeal and apprehension as when he sees a tractor trailer hurtling at him? Some *aveiros* are considered more abhorrent to Hashem than others - and we should be staying away from those with far more caution.”

With this thought in mind, we should tell ourselves - don't sit near the door when the Rav starts speaking. Don't have a day schedule that doesn't leave any room for a *shiur*, at least once in a while. When Yidden gather together for *divrei hisorrerus*, it creates a tremendous *nachas ruach* for Hashem, which results in *kapparah* for all those present. We should avoid being anywhere near the *nisayon* of stepping out before the *drasha*, for this would cause us a severe loss in the World to Come.

### **Using this Logic to Explain Yosef's Triumph**

While we are on this topic, perhaps we can explain the opinion in the Gemara that says Yosef Hatzaddik went to the home of Potiphar with the intention of doing an *aveira* with his mistress. (The Gemara says that Rav and Shmuel had a dispute whether "לעשות מלאכתו", to do his 'work', meant literally - his house chores, or it was a euphemism for committing a sin.) The question would be: how did Yosef get saved from the sin according to this view? He was already in the *yetzer hara's* playing field!

However, Chazal teach us that on that fateful day, an image of Yaakov Avinu appeared before Yosef, which deterred him from sinning. Additionally, we discussed previously that according to the Vilna Gaon, the only thing that can stop a person from sinning while he is already in the situation is **יראת האדם**. Perhaps we can suggest that Yosef Hatzaddik had trained himself to always conjure up an image of his father when he was nearing the possibility of sin. This way, even if he were to fall right into the *yetzer hara's* clutches, he would be able to access one last tactic - **יראת האדם**.

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