

# THE POWER OF VISION (1)

## The Kedusha of the Eyes

The reason Yerushalayim was established to be the center for Torah learning was that the *talmidim* there would see its great *kedusha* and the *kohanim* involved with their *avoda*. This would increase their *yiras Shamayim* and Torah learning.

(תוס' בא בתרא כ"א ע"א)

From the *AriZal* we learn that eyesight connects a person with the subject being viewed, and whatever one sees leaves an impression on his *neshama*, for better or worse. Thus an ostrich that can hatch its eggs just by looking at them.

(ס' הליקוטים פ' קדושים, קב היישר פ"ב)

When Basya, King Paroh's daughter, heard an infant's cry and opened the basket floating on the water, she was moved by a strong *rachmanus* for the baby. Though the *midah* of *rachmanus* is a Yiddishe characteristic, Basya was able to feel it, because looking at a *tzaddik* leaves a strong impression.

(תורת חייל שמונות)

## Seeing Tzaddikim

The Navi Yeshaya says, "Vehayu einecha ro'os es morecha," – "Your eyes should look upon your mentor." *Chazal* learn from here that much can be gained by seeing the face of a *tzaddik*, such as a Rebbe.

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi attributed his superior sharpness in learning, comparative to the other *tanno'im*, to his having seen Rebbi Meir's back. He added that if he had seen the face of Rebbi Meir, his mind would have become even sharper.

Conversely, the *chachomim* relied less on the teachings that Rav Sheishes heard after he lost his sight, since he was then unable to see the gestures that his Rebbe

had made while teaching.

(ישע' ל, ב, עירובין ג' ע"ב, רישלמי פ"א ח"ב)

*Chazal* relate how Yosef *HaTzaddik* was saved from committing an *aveira* when he saw the image of his father in a vision. In addition, the *AriZal* writes that envisioning the image of one's Rebbe can help him understand a difficulty in learning.

(סוטה לו ע"ב, מדבר קדומות ערך צייר צייר)

At a *farbrengen* ("ש"ב ראה תנטוי"), the Rebbe said that through envisioning the image of a Rebbe, one can be aroused in an exceptional way, and have all obstacles removed. Speaking of the Friediker Rebbe, the Rebbe said that even those who never saw him in real life can accomplish this by looking at a picture.

(התועדותות תשמ"ו ח"ד ע' 311)

A Yid who had committed many grievous *aveiros* once asked the *tzaddik* Reb Mottel Chernobyl to show him a path to *teshuva*. Seeing his *pan*, the *tzaddik* told him, "I am too old to handle this. Go to the Ruzhiner and he will help you."

The Yid traveled to the *tzaddik* of Ruzhin, and gave him the note listing all his wrongdoings. After reading it, the *tzaddik* instructed the Yid that from that day on, he should say every single word of *davening* and *benching* from a *Siddur*, even the *bracha* of *Asher Yotzar*. He further instructed him to look at his face the entire time he was at his *tish*. The Yid did as the *tzaddik* had directed and reached great heights.

(דבר ביד כ"ב ע"ב)

In the Ukrainian city of Kremenchug there lived many devout and learned Yidden, including generous philanthropists who funded the many communal needs. One of them, the exceptionally prosperous owner of a flourmill, had many dealings with elite Russian officials. Over time, he left the path of *Yiddishkeit* completely and, proud of his

riches and impressive connections, spent his time socializing with Russian ministers.

Once, while in Petersburg for business, he heard that the Rebbe Rashab was then in town, staying in a hotel. Though steeped in worldly desires, he had a strong desire to see the Rebbe, who was known throughout the world for his wisdom and *kedusha*. He arrived at the hotel when chassidim were being admitted to *yechidus*, but was refused entry by the chossid in charge.

The affluent businessman attempted to enter by force. Hearing the commotion, the Rebbe Rashab opened the door and motioned that he should be allowed in. As he entered and beheld the Rebbe, he was suddenly filled with awe and fear. He could not utter a word. The Rebbe calmed him and asked why he had come. Finally, the Yid was able to reply, "I did not come for anything; I just came to see." The Rebbe gave him a *bracha* and he left.

Years later, this wealthy man related, "From the moment I saw the Rebbe, I changed completely. Seeing his holy face made a deep impression on me. I have seen great ministers and leaders of the kingdom, but never felt any fear. Yet when I saw the Rebbe, an intense awe overcame me and I decided to change my ways. When I arrived home, I got rid of all my dishes and closed my mill on *Shabbos*."

In due course he became a proper Yid in every way and formed a strong connection to the Rebbe.

(זכרונותיו של שונקין ע' 47)

## CONSIDER THIS!

- Is the impact of vision a natural effect or a *ruchniyuslike* one?
- Will every person who sees a *tzaddik* be transformed? Why not?





# A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

## 'Kofin al Middas Sedom'

A group of people bought condos in a building and share ownership of the hallways. The owner of the only apartment on the top floor wishes to extend his apartment by closing in the hallway, and claims that the other residents will lose nothing for that space is only used to enter his apartment. Some of the other residents refuse to give consent. Must the owner of the top floor apartment take their objection into consideration?

- One who lived in another's property, without the owner's permission, is exempt from paying when the said property is not usually rented out. Although by doing so, the squatter has saved himself from paying rent for the time he resided in the other's property, we say "*zeh nehneh*" - the squatter benefited – "*vezech lo chaser*" – the owner lost nothing, and the squatter is therefore exempt<sup>1</sup>.
- Many *rishonim*<sup>2</sup> hold that this exemption applies only after the fact, but regarding a current situation, the owner may refuse to allow the squatter to live in his property even if he will lose nothing. If the squatter then ignores the protest of the owner, he would be obligated to pay.
- However, other *rishonim*<sup>3</sup> hold that Beis Din can force the owner to allow the squatter to live there for free in a case where the owner could not rent out the property even had he wanted to, based on the principle that we force a person not to behave like the people of Sodom (where they would refuse to assist others even at no cost to them).
- Practically, *poskim*<sup>4</sup> rule that since it is an unresolved dispute, we are unable to obligate one to allow another to use his property, for he can say, "I hold like the first opinion which says that an owner cannot be forced ('*kim li*')".
- Moreover, even according to the second opinion, we can only force the owner to allow another to **use** the property, but it would never be permissible for the squatter to **build** on the property. For even though the owner is unable to use it, we cannot force him to completely forfeit his property<sup>5</sup>.
- In the case of the penthouse top floor apartment, it would follow that the owner cannot evoke the principle of '*kofin al middas Sedom*' to force the other residents to agree to his extension, since (1) the issue is an unresolved debate and (2) because the extension results in the others being deprived of their property.
- However, some *batei dinim*<sup>6</sup> do force neighbors to agree in such circumstances. Perhaps their reasoning is that they see shared property as being there for the **benefit of the residents**. If for whatever reason the builder did not utilize a particular space, and later it becomes possible to take advantage of that space (for all the residents or for one of them), no claim can stop it from being used<sup>7</sup>.

1. ב"ק כ ע"א ואילך וברש"י ותוס' ח"ו מ' בשם שות"ת מהרש"ם ח"ב ס"ק קג.  
2. תוס' ב"ב יב ע"ב ד"ה גונג ובב"ק שם ד"ה הא מתחנית, נמי" ב"ק דף ח' ע"ב מדפי הר"ץ' בשם הרא"ה, וכמוות פסק רצט ולא מצא להם טעם בורו.  
3. מדרכי ב"ק ס"ז בשם יש מפרשין ונמוהם פסק הרמן'א שם.  
4. ענף י' במליאם סע' ס.  
5. ענף י' במליאם סע' ס.

לע"נ מורת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

## OUR HEROES

יע"ב חשוון

### Reb Wolf Kitzes

Reb Ze'ev Wolf Kitzes, a great *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, was known as a *gaon* in all areas of Torah. He often joined the Baal Shem Tov in his travels, and frequently represented his Rebbe in confrontations with the *misnagdim*. He passed away on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan and is buried in the *ohel* of the Baal Shem Tov.



Reb Wolf once joined the Baal Shem Tov for a meal, but did not eat from the meat which was served. He later explained that he had refrained because the meat had not been salted in the best manner, and he had chosen to be *machmir*.

The Alter Rebbe addresses the obvious question: How can it be that Reb Wolf was more *machmir* than his own Rebbe? Was the Rebbe's behavior not good enough for him?

The Alter Rebbe explains that the reason for all *chumros* which are **beyond basic halacha** are (not merely out of concern that perhaps it may not be *kosher*, rather) to separate the good from the bad (*birurim*). The mixture of bad in good and the way to 'separate' them is dependent on the *ruchniyusdike* level of the particular individual. This is why in our generation we have many more *chumros* than there had been during the times of Chazal, since we are on a lower level than them. Similarly, Reb Wolf, recognizing the greatness of the Baal Shem Tov, did not attempt to elevate that which only his Rebbe could.

The Alter Rebbe asserts that for this reason we can never learn a *halacha* from the conduct of a *tzaddik*, not *lekulah* nor *lechumrah*.

(מאמרי אדדה"ז הקברים ע' תקלא)

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### Not to Disturb the Rebbe

The Rebbe's *bitul* to the Frierdiker Rebbe was unparalleled. At the meals, the Rebbe would seldom talk, and would drink in his father-in-law's words with thirst. Reb Sholom Ber Aichorn, who served as an assistant in the home of the Frierdiker Rebbe, relates an interesting episode:

"The Frierdiker Rebbe had finished the meal, *bentched*, and was getting up to leave. Usually, the Rebbe would get up to accompany the Frierdiker Rebbe out, but his time, he remained seated.

"After the Frierdiker Rebbe left the room, we realized what had happened. One leg of the table had broken during the meal, and the Rebbe did not want the issue to disrupt the Frierdiker Rebbe's talking. So he wedged his own leg under the table, in a way that it held up the entire table. This took enormous strength.

"As soon as the Rebbe got up, the entire table collapsed!"

Dedicated with thanks and praise to the Almighty for the birth of

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