

A Dvar Torah to encourage matters of Yiras Shomayim prepared to be shared and discussed with your family at the Shabbos table

פרשת שופטים

60 THE KEDUSHA OF THE EYES

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לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה

לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

THE POWER OF VISION

Chazal say that the heart and eyes can be two 'middlemen' for aveiros, for through them a person can be led to sin. Hashem tells a person, "If you give me your eyes, then you are mine!"

(ירושלמי ברכות פ"א ה"ה)

The Arizal says that eyesight connects a person with the subject of view, and whatever one sees has an impression on his נשמה, for good or for bad. This can be seen by an ostrich that can hatch its eggs just by looking at them.

(ס' הליקוטים פ' קדושים, קב הישר פ"ב)

The של"ה הקדוש writes that the eye of a Yid corresponds to the ruchniusdike 'eye' above (עין 'תחת' עין), and when a person guards his eyes and looks at proper things, his eyes will be brightened with kedusha. If however a person looks at improper things, he separates his eyes from the kedusha and causes a פגם (blemish) above.

(של"ה פרשת משפטים ד')

A scholarly chossid once came to Kotsk and complained to the tzaddik Reb Menachem Mendel about his weak memory in Torah. "The Torah itself gives us a segula to improve memory," said the tzaddik. He then quoted the two adjacent pessukim from Shema, "ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם... למען תזכרו" – You should not follow your hearts and your eyes... in order that you remember!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 419)

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

(תורת יחיאל שמות)

The Gemara says that Yerushalayim was established to be the center for Torah learning. תוספות explain that that this was because in Yerushalayim the talmidim would see the great kedusha and the kohanim involved with their עבודה. This would bring them to have more yiras shomayim and increase their learning Torah.

(תוס' ב"ב כ"א)

Once Rabbi Yonasan was being chased by the apikorsim (heretics), so he ran from them until he entered his home, locking the door behind him. Standing behind the door they called out, "Rebbi Yonasan! Go to your mother and compliment yourself that you had

not turned around to look at us, for had you done so, you would have been running after us to join us."

(קהלת רבה א' כ"ה)

The tzaddik Reb Aharon of Karlin said: What is the surprise that the younger Chassidim are not able to uplift themselves! This is because they make light of the 'small matters.' When we, however, notice a goyishe woman with a slight breach of Tznius, we find it disgusting and turn away immediately, and upon coming home we thank Hashem for his kindness...

(קדושת עינים ע' שמו)

VIEWING KEDUSHA

There are certain holy things which Chazal say one should look at, for they have positive effects:

Looking at the heaven, causes a person to think of Hashem and brings Yiras Shomayim. When Czar Nikolai decreed that Yidden can only wear a hat with a large visor, the Alter Rebbe said, "Klipah is disturbing people from gazing at heaven, which is a known segula for Yiras Shomayim; now there will be additional avodah of turning around the hat." Indeed, many Chassidim turned around their hat with the visor away, so that they would easily be able to gaze above.

(רש"י ברכות ל"ד ע"ב, טעמי המצוות פ' ואתחנן, אג"ק רי"צ הי"ד ע' תלח)

At a farbrengen (ל"א ניסן תשל"ח) the Rebbe mentioned the practice many Yiddishe women have to surround a child with images of kedusha and Yiddishekeit and not ר"ל with non-kosher animals or ammunition. Although adults should not be exposed to such things as well, it is especially important for children who are so impressionable.

On a later occasion (כ' מרחשון תשד"מ) the Rebbe spoke of this again, this time encouraging everyone to adopt this practice. The Rebbe added that even pictures drawn for illustration purposes should be completely holy and kosher. The Rebbe connected this added level of kedusha to the imminent geulah when all impurity will be removed from the world.

(שיחיו"ק תשל"ח ח"ב ע' 140, לקו"ש חכ"ה ע' 311)

The של"ה הקדוש writes that when learning, one should look at the letters, because "אותיות מחכימות", seeing the letters of לשון הקודש makes one clever. This is also a segula that one should remember that which he learned. The Rebbe said that the similarly by davening one should look inside a siddur and the letters will

enlighten one's eyes.

(של"ה מס' שבועות תורה אור ס, תו"מ תשמ"ד ח"א ע' 485)

Also one should gaze at Tzitzis, as the Torah says that this will bring a person to remember the mitzvos, and consequently keep them; one should at the shabbos candles at the beginning of kidush, for it is a segula to heal eyesight; one should see the letters of the Torah during הגבהה, to the point that one can read them, and they will be endowed with a great light. The Alter Rebbe writes that one should make an effort to come close to the bimah to be able to see the Torah.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' כ"ד ס"ה, סי' רע"א סי"ט, שער הכוונות דף מה, פסקי הסידור בסוף שחרית)

Chazal list certain things at which one should not gaze, for they bring negative results:

It is forbidden to gaze at the face of a רשע or a Goy, for it brings the spirit of טומאה upon the observer and causes one's eyesight to be weakened. Chazal say that part of the cause for Yitzchak Avinu's loss of eyesight, was his looking at Eisav. The Tana Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha said that he merited to live long for he never looked at a רשע.

Similarly, one should not look at a person who is angry - for it causes forgetting; one should not look at the moon - except for a moment before kiddush levana; nor a rainbow (besides before making the bracha) - which causes harm to the eyes. Some say that all of these only apply to concentrated staring.

(מגילה כח ע"א, מגן אברהם רכ"ה סק"כ, שו"ע או"ח רכ"ט ס"א)

SEEING TZADDIKIM

The Navi Yeshaya says "והיו עיניך רואות את מוריד", that one should see his teachers. Chazal learn from here that much can be gained by seeing the face of a Rebbe.

Rebbi Yehudah Hanassi attributed the greater sharpness he had in learning in comparison to the other Tano'im, to his having seen Rebbi Meir when standing behind him. Rebbi added that if he had seen the face of Rebbi Meir, his mind would have become even sharper. Conversely, the chachomim would not rely so much on Rav Sheishes who was blind, since he wasn't able to see the motions of his Rebbe when teaching.

(ישעי' ל, כ, עירובין יג ע"ב, ירושלמי פ"א ה"ב)

Chazal relate how Yosef Hatzaddik was saved from doing an aveira when seeing the image of his father in a vision. The Arizal writes that envisioning the image of one's Rebbe can help him in understanding a difficulty in learning.

(סוטה לו ע"ב, מדבר קדמות ערך ציור)

At a farbrengen (שו"פ ראה תשמ"ו) the Rebbe spoke how through envisioning the image of a Rebbe, one can be aroused in an exceptional way, and have all obstacles removed. The Rebbe said that even those who never saw the Rebbe in real life can accomplish this by looking at a picture.

(סוטה לו ע"ב, התועדויות תשמ"ו ח"ד ע' 311)

Once a Yid, having committed many grievous aveiros, came before the tzaddik Reb Mottel Chernobiler to ask for a path to teshuva. Seeing his פ"נ, 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. When the tzaddik finished reading the note, he instructed the Yid that from that day and on, he should say every single word of davening and bentching from a siddur, even the bracha of Asher Yotzar. He further instructed him to look at his face the entire time he is at the Tish, this Yid should gaze at his face the entire time. The Yid did as the tzaddik directed and reached great heights.

(דברי דוד כ"ב ע"ב)

In the city of Kremenchug in Ukraine, there lived many erliche and learned Yidden, including many wealthy Yidden who would generously fund many of the communal needs. However, one rich man, the owner of a flour mill, was exceptionally wealthy and had many dealings with high Russian officials. Over time, he left the path of Yiddishkeit completely. Very proud of his riches and high official connections, he spent his time socializing with the Russian ministers.

Once while the wealthy mill owner was in Petersburg for business, he heard that the Rebbe Rashab was then in town, staying in a hotel. Although he was steeped in worldly desires, he had a strong wish to see the Rebbe, who was known throughout the world for his wisdom and kedusha. The mill owner arrived at the hotel when Chassidim were being admitted to Yechidus, but the chossid in charge refused him entry. He attempted to enter by force and caused quite a commotion. Hearing the noise, the Rebbe Rashab opened the door, and motioned for him to be allowed in. As he entered the room and beheld the Rebbe, the mill owner was suddenly filled with awe and fear, and was unable to say anything. The Rebbe calmed him and asked him why he had come, and only after some time was he finally 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, for 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 fear overcame me, and I decided to change my ways. When I arrived home, I got rid of all my (non kosher) dishes, and began closing my mill on Shabbos." He became a proper Yid in every way and formed a strong connection to the Rebbe.

(זכרונותי ששוונקין ע' 47)

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