

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Naso 5770

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Naso

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

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Shalosh Seudos of Parshas Naso 5766

”וַיִּבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אֱלֹהִים מִזֶּדֶן הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְדַבֵּר אֵת-הַקּוֹל מִדְּבַר אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל-
אֶרֶץ הָעֵדוּת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִים, וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו...”¹

“And when Moshe went into the tent of meeting that He might speak with him, then he heard the Voice speaking to him from above the *kapores* that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two *keruvim*; and He spoke to him...”¹

Rashi explains: “‘Then he heard the Voice’—Could it possibly have been a soft voice? The verse says, however, ‘the Voice.’ This was the voice that spoke with him at Sinai, and when it reached the entrance it would cease radiating out of the tent.”²

[Note: Even though this year *Parshas Naso* falls out after Shavuos, nevertheless its teachings apply to us this Shabbos no less than last Shabbos. The Beis Avrohom of Slonim taught in the name of the Tchortkover Rebbe that there is a deep reason why the Shabbos following Shavuos is popularly called “*Shabbos Noch Shavuos*.” It does not only mean literally, “the Shabbos after Shavuos,” but also that the Shabbos following Shavuos is, “*Noch a Shavuos*,” another Shavuos. It is still possible to attain that which could have been reached on Shavuos itself.³]

¹ \Bamidbar 7:89

² From *Bamidbar Rabbah*

³ *Beis Avrohom, Parshas Naso*

The Voice from above the *Kapores*

“And when Moshe went into the tent of meeting that He might speak with him, then he heard the Voice speaking to him...” The *tzaddik* merits to receive Torah by virtue of his hearing the voice from within the cloud above the *kapores*. The sound of this voice encompasses him within the light of the *Ein Sof* so that he can truly receive the Torah. One must know how to serve Hashem even from within the cloud and dark obscurity, because each and every Jew passes through countless forms of darkness where the light of *Da'as* is hidden and one must know how to serve Hashem even in this state. However, the *tzaddik* teaches us that Hashem is to be found within the “cloud,” and it is precisely from within it that Hashem speaks to him.⁴ As the verse says: “And Moshe approached the thick darkness, where Hashem is.”⁵ Even though that particular verse was speaking of Moshe himself, nevertheless each and every Jewish soul is imbued with a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu. Just as he received the Torah at Sinai, so did all of the Jewish people hear the first two *dibros* from the “mouth” of Hashem Himself. Since every Jewish soul bears a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu, each of us can merit to receive the Torah and hear Hashem’s voice.

The Divine call comes through the cloud specifically because, “He made darkness His hiding-place, His pavilion round about Him; darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.”⁶ It is because the *tzaddik* is steadfast through all ups and downs in his *avodah* that he merits to hear Hashem’s voice, and this is equally true of every single Jew. There is a prerequisite, though: one must first develop personal sanctity and purity, especially in the realm of *klippas nogah* [which is the area of refining oneself through that which is permitted]. This is why we preface our receiving of the Torah on Shavuos with the recitation of *Akdamos* [in Aramaic]; this represents the purification of the realm of *nogah* before we draw close to receive the Torah. [Aramaic is an admixture of *lashon hakodesh* and foreign speech that is uplifted and sanctified when it is utilized for Torah

⁴ *Likutei Moharan* I:115

⁵ *Shemos* 20:18

⁶ *Tehillim* 18:12

study and prayer. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught that this is called, “the completion of *lashon hakodesh*.”⁷] When we work to refine the realm of *nogah*, we can each become “men of G-d” like Moshe Rabbeinu.

Moshe Rabbeinu was certainly a man of flesh and blood, yet through doing the work of self-purification he changed his existence completely. So too, when Shavuos comes each and every Jew receives a fresh inspiration to receive the Torah like Moshe Rabbeinu, to purify himself properly so that he can hear the “thunder and lightning” of Sinai with spiritual arousal. The Torah’s holiness is that of *lashon hakodesh*, and the process of refining the realm of *nogah* is that of the Aramaic *Targum*—the completion of *lashon hakodesh*.⁸

Forming Vessels of Divine Awareness

It is not enough to simply hear the sounds; this voice of raw sound must be transformed into speech. Some people feel inspired for a few minutes but afterward they revert to their old patterns of behavior. So one must instead draw down the light of *dveikus* so that the pure sound will become actual speech—that the spiritual arousal will have enough power to change the person for the better, so that he will learn with

⁷ *Likutei Moharan* I:19

⁸ Reb Nosson of Breslov explains further how this concept relates to the specific customs of Shavuos: staying awake all night and eating dairy in the morning. Shavuos is the time of receiving the Torah, it is the completion of *lashon hakodesh* that has the force of purity that subdues the negative influence of all the seventy nations, the most powerful of which is lust. Shavuos is when we merit to guard the covenant. Personal purity is a prerequisite for receiving the Torah, and it is what made Hashem choose us from among all the other nations and “uplift us from all other tongues.” This is why we remain awake all night on Shavuos—in order to break through the *klippah* of sleep which parallels the negative within *Targum-nogah* and uplift the good that is within it to the higher state of *lashon kodesh*. This is also why we recite *Akdamos* in Aramaic—it is a very lofty song of Hashem’s praises that was composed specifically to uplift the good in *Targum*. This is also why the *haftarah* of the second day of the festival outside of Israel is the “Prayer of Chabakuk.” It, too, alludes to the refinement of the *Targum* state. And this is why we eat dairy on Shavuos morning, because the whiteness of dairy represents the process of transforming the heat and *dinnim* of the blood into the nourishing purity of the Torah. “The blood is clarified and transformed into milk.” (*Niddah* 9a) This pure whiteness which is the refined state of *tikkun habris* then flows throughout all of a person’s veins to clarify the “redness” of man’s base physical nature. (*Likutei Halachos, Hilchos Shavuos* #2)

greater diligence and pray with more focus, and sanctify all of his limbs to be a vehicle for the Divine. One must hear clearly of all of the levels that one's soul needs to attain and understand that Hashem is speaking to him directly. The un-tempered sound of Hashem's voice needs to be constricted into the vessels of speech so that it can give rise to new states of Divine awareness with which one builds up the structure of his personal *avodah*. One must hear what his own mission is and uplift the "cloud" to a very lofty place. By hearing the Voice transformed into an actual message, one uplifts *Malchus*.

As preparation for receiving the Torah, we spend the entire period of *Sefiras Ha'Omer* counting out the "days of checking of the *Eishes Chayil*" who examines herself prior to immersion and *yichud*.⁹ So too, we also examine ourselves as we count the days to the great *chuppah* that is *Matan Torah*. The main examination is our being tested through all sorts of challenges and *yeridos*. We are being sounded for how we manage to hold our own through trials, without losing our desire for holiness. Do we still cry out to Hashem that He should help us to become the way that He wants us to be? It is through the cloud and the darkness that Hashem's voice is heard. The main test of the darkness is whether we hold strong in our longing for G-dliness.

The completion of *Sefiras Ha'Omer* is actually during *Ma'ariv* of Shavuos night. Pesach is the aspect of *Netzach-Hod-Yesod*; *Sefiras Ha'Omer* is the aspect of *Chessed-Gevurah-Tiferes*; and on the night of Shavuos the *yichud* is completed after being tested in "seven times seven" ways—through all of the different permutations of challenges and situations. On Shavuos itself, the *tzaddik* uplifts all of the good points that we managed to gather during the period of *Sefiras Ha'Omer* to the highest realms so that he can draw down the light of *Kesser*, the light of prophecy and the revelation of G-dliness. It is through this process of overcoming challenges that we merit to forge a true bond with our Creator.

⁹ *Zohar* III:97a

The Man on the Throne

The Ramak explains that Hashem revealed Himself to His prophets in visions of a King on a great throne to teach us basic principles of Divine service. The throne has four legs, and there are four camps of angels that surround the Throne of Glory. This is all a parable to teach us that there are four basic forms of *avodah*: that of the lion, the ox, the eagle, and man.

When a person wants to enter into the holiness of Shavuos he really wants to reach the innermost point of *avodah* and *dveikus*, the place of the “man on the throne,” but to do that he must first pass through all of the different forms of *avodah* that are surrounding the throne. This process is also symbolized by the encampment of Levi that surrounded the *Mishkan*, the camps of Gershon, Kehas, and Merari.¹⁰ These are three facets of the mitigation of *gevuros* [since Levi is associated with the left-hand side of *gevuros*] that are accomplished by drawing down *chassadim*. When the judgments are sweetened, one comes to the level of, “from thirty to fifty” [which was the age of service of the Levi'im]—the fiftieth gate where all *gevuros* are mitigated. When this happens, the *chassadim* are doubled and uplifted and the light of *Kesser* and prophecy can descend. “And Moshe approached the thick darkness, in which Hashem is.” Through the darkness of passing through and mitigating the *gevuros*, one comes to rise to *Kesser* and find Hashem.

“Who knows the strength of Your anger, and the wrath according to the fear that is due to You?” We must withstand and understand all of the pathways of *yirah* in all kinds of circumstances, so that You will, “let us know to count our days...”—the days of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*. We will bring all of the permutations of the days of the barley offering—the *שעורים*-*se'orim* that are the measures and vessels of *gevuros* being transformed. Then we will come to Shavuos and receive, “...a heart of wisdom.”¹¹ The festivals are called *קרואי מועד*—“announced appointed times”—but they are really times

¹⁰ *Likutei Torah, Parshas Naso*

¹¹ *Tehillim* 90:11-12

of being not announced, but called. We must not be like fools who remain in the same state after the festival as they were beforehand; rather, we must hear the voice of Hashem calling to us with a specific message and change for the better. Because hearing without listening is not really hearing at all. To hear the sound and also hearken to the message we need to activate the spark of Moshe within us.

The Four Legs of the Divine Chariot

In truth, every single Jew longs to change his ways as he enters Shavuot, he is just discouraged because all his attempts until now have not lasted long. So the first thing that he must do is cling to the path of the *tzaddikim* who serve Hashem with self-sacrifice—with the love of Hashem of Avraham Avinu; the fear of Hashem of Yitzchak Avinu; the *dveikus* in Torah study of Yaakov Avinu; and the full acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven of Dovid HaMelech. They are the four legs of the Divine chariot.

When a person really longs to be like these *tzaddikim*, he is already grasping onto the Divine Throne, because the thoughts and intentions of a Jew are connected to the highest places. When one really longs for holiness through these four pathways of self-sacrifice, in a certain sense he really is a part of them at that moment. A person must really resolve to be incorporated within the absolute unity of Hashem—One, Alone, and Unique in the heavens above and on earth below. Since Hashem, “gives wisdom to the wise,”¹² once a person really resolves to seek the path of self-sacrifice and *dveikus*, it is as though his eventual arrival is assured. In this way, he merits to receive the light of Divine wisdom right away even though the path ahead of him is still long. Once he has started on the way, he is considered wise enough to receive wisdom—not so the person who refrains from undertaking the journey altogether.

Hashem does not wait for a person to change completely before He graces him with wisdom, but He does want to see that the person's innermost being and longing is

¹² *Berachos 55a*

focused on holiness and the pathways of *avodah* of the *tzaddikim*. When a person is really bound to holiness at the root of his soul, he is fit to receive the Torah. When his soul yearns for and is resolved to follow the path of the four legs of the Divine Throne, he can pass through and reach the inner essence of *avodah: dveikus* through the revelation of Torah, the inner level of the “Man on the Throne.”

The Jealousy of the Angels

Reaching this innermost level, which is that of Moshe Rabbeinu, is possible on Shavuos, when there is a revelation of the Torah of *Atika Sesima'ah*—the “hidden ancient one,” the light of the Torah’s secrets. Yet this revelation comes with danger, since the angels are jealous of this high level of Torah being revealed to man, just as they were of Moshe Rabbeinu when he ascended to receive the Torah at Sinai. “What is man that You should remember him?” they asked. Hashem told Moshe to grab hold of His Throne of Glory.¹³ The angels are jealous of the person who seeks to bind himself to the pathway of Moshe Rabbeinu.¹⁴ This is the innermost nature of the Torah—the revelation of Hashem Himself—and this is all that the *tzaddikim* seek.

A Famine in the Land

“And it was in the days of the judges judging, and there was a famine in the land.”¹⁵ When Hashem is judging all of the ways in which we serve Him through all of the *middos*, He mainly seeks out whether or not there is, “a famine in the land.” Do we hunger and thirst for the supernal land, for the revelation of Hashem’s Kingship, for His *Malchus* which is compared to the earth? Are we longing to reach the level of the, “Man who sits upon the Throne?”

This is what the angels resent—the one who seeks this level—and so they try to confuse the person and throw him off of his *avodah*. But Hashem told Moshe to grab

¹³ *Shabbos* 88b

¹⁴ *Likutei Moharan* II:1

¹⁵ *Ruth* 1:1

hold of His Throne of Glory—change the focus of your efforts to one of the other four pathways of the legs of the throne, to love and fear of Hashem, to Torah and prayer, and you will be able to throw off the angels who seek to confuse you. On the night of Shavuos, you must throw yourself into all of the four aspects of the legs of the Throne—but in your innermost heart and mind, hold fast to your desire to reach the level of, “the Man on the Throne,” the revelation of Hashem Himself. This will fill a person with the holiness of Boaz and Ruth, because Boaz represents *בו עז*, *azus d'kedushah*, the bold pursuit of *kedushah*. We have to have the inner courage to pour out our hearts before Hashem in prayer in the way of *tzaddikim*, to ask for the one most important thing—the revelation of the *Shechinah*. Even though we are far from this, we must have the chutzpah to ask that Hashem open the way for us to bind ourselves in some way to the innermost pathway of Moshe Rabbeinu.

However, to get there we must first throw ourselves into all of the *avodos* that surround the Throne; perhaps, with great effort and time, we will merit to taste the tiniest bit of the *avodah* of Moshe Rabbeinu, which is to seek the Torah's essence, so that Hashem's Kingship will be revealed throughout all of the worlds. We must long to seek only the revelation of G-dliness, and try as much as we can to avoid self-seeking. To receive the light of *Kesser* on Shavuos, we have to work on completing the refinement of *Netzach-Hod-Yesod* by purifying all of our lower aspects. We must learn the language of the angels, to say, “we will do and we will hear”—“we will do” is the refinement of the lower and external aspects of our beings, and “we will hear” is our seeking after the highest light of *Kesser* that is still so far beyond us. To reach the innermost point, we must do all we can to purify and complete the outer *avodos*, realizing all the while that our goal is the inner point and not the outer *avodah* at all.

The Descent at *Minchah*

On Shavuos after *Mussaf*, we rise to the level of *Arich Anpin*, to the highest and clearest lights. However, afterward, there is a descent to *Abba* and *Imma* during the

prayers at *Minchah*, which is only the case on Shavuos and not on other festivals. We must understand that, compared to the lofty level of *Arich Anpin* where one is only focused on the first *alef* of *Anochi*—on the essence of Hashem Himself—*Abba* and *Imma* are like the external *avodos* of *Netzach-Hod-Yesod*. The descent at *Minchah* is a reflection of the interplay between seeking the innermost aspect of *avodah* and tying it right away to the external aspects of *avodah*—the “legs” of the Throne. [*Netzach-Hod-Yesod* are collectively known as the *raglin*, or legs of the structure of the *sefiros*.] On Shavuos, when we come into contact with the actual *Kesser* of Torah, we must immediately protect our efforts at *dveikus* and seeking the revelation of G-dliness with the practical *avodos* of the “legs of the Throne.”

May Hashem help us as we receive the festival of Shavuos to resolve to really change in our Torah study and *avodas Hashem*, and not in a superficial way of the “legs” alone, but as a means of entering into the innermost nature of the *avodah*—to seek Hashem Himself.

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d'ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”¹⁶ To reach the heights of Divine wisdom, we must work on the area of the *nefesh*, which is the lowest and outermost aspect of ourselves—the four “legs of the Throne.” We must follow the paths of the *tzaddikim* who serve Hashem like burning seraphim, who have the vitality and energy of the *Chayos Hakodesh*, and who accept upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven like the *Ofanim*. Like the *tzaddikim*, we must complete the outer forms of *avodah* all for the purpose of reaching the innermost point of Divine service: the revelation of Hashem Himself—“and it will be a crown / *Kesser* to your head.”

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

May Hashem make us worthy of really receiving the Torah, of sanctifying each and every limb and transforming them all into vehicles for His service. Then Hashem's presence will rest on our entire selves, the "Man will sit on the Throne," and we will immediately and forever merit the complete redemption. Speedily and in our days, amen.

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.

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