בס"ד

Inspired Torah perspectives for our wondrous generation

Eilecha weekly

EILECHA

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צָרוֹר אֶת־הַמִּדְיָנִים וְהִכִּיתֶם אוֹתָם: כִּי צֹרְרִים הֵם לָכֶם בְּנִכְלֵיהֶם...

MEKOR

BAMIDBAR 25: 17-18

Assail the Midyanites and defeat them - for they assailed you by their deception...

MEANING

RASHI, CHIZKUNI

The vocalization of צָרוֹר connotes constancy - the Jewish nation must experience an abiding and lingering sense of enmity for the Midyanites for their attempt to shake the very foundation of our holiness. This commandment was not to be carried out immediately, but was intended to put to ease the minds of the nation who had lost so much on account of this episode while feeling that those who instigated it hadn't paid the price.

MESSAGE

REB MOSHE CHAIM EPHRAIM OF SUDLYKOV ZY"A

When our personality traits - rooted in Hashem's מידות - come to expression through the prism of the body, their perfect essence becomes sullied as they travel through the darkened ego-channel to manifest in our actions. However, because these traits are rooted in holiness, they can be sweetened by elevating them to their Source. When we remind ourselves that our drive to act out improperly is a holy trait in disguise and find a proper expression for its activated energy, this sweetens the negativity and transforms the darkness with the light of an elevated perspective.

צָרוֹר אֶת־הַמִּדְיָנִים: A Jew must bind his character traits seized by the negative forces to their source in holiness. **וְהִכִּיתֶם אוֹתָם:** This will cause these traits to interact and unite with their Source and become sweetened. **כִּי צֹרְרִים הֵם לָכֶם בְּנִכְלֵיהֶם:** This is accomplished by realizing that the only reason these traits were embittering one's life is because of their descent into the vessels of the physical body (בְּנִכְלֵיהֶם - כלי).

THE MOST DESIRABLE SERVICE

One of the foundational teachings of Chassidus is the importance for a Jew to always be aware of just how much more there is yet to be accomplished in one's *avodas Hashem*. No matter how lofty the levels a chassid may reach, he is forever striving for deeper perceptions, greater emunah, and more complete self-control. Balanced by another pole of healthy satisfaction and pride over what he has already been able to accomplish as well as the realization that he is only charged with doing what he is able, (לא עליך המלאכה לגמור), this striving never leads to sadness or anxiety. Rather, it infuses his *avodah* with a sense of yearning, excitement, and anticipation for an ever-elusive future goal (ואין אתה בן חורין להיבטל ממנה), animating his entire life with vibrancy and vitality.

Although by all external appearances, Chassidim seem to be most joyous, confident, and comfortable in their *avodas Hashem*, this impression is, paradoxically, founded upon a perpetual sense of spiritual inadequacy. The Baal Shem Tov trained his followers to perceive an ever-present lack in their spiritual development. Regardless of how advanced they may become in their Torah study, *tefillah*, or purity, he wanted them to feel as if they had only just begun. Counterintuitively, this constant, heartbroken yearning for completion and desire to further reveal Hashem's Presence in the world irrespective of past success produced a unique spirit of excitement, passion, and joy in their *avodah*.

Applying the idea that "distance makes the heart grow fonder" to elements in *avodas Hashem* which were in fact quite near, the Baal Shem Tov and his students encouraged Jews to long for their *tefillah* while uttering its very words, to yearn for the page of Gemara while actively engaged in its study. In this way, they could forever maintain a degree of "fondness" toward *avodas Hashem*, avoiding the malady of rote and spiritual apathy.

In this week's parsha we read: עֹלַת תָּמִיד הָעֲשָׂיָה בְּהַר סִינַי לְרֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ אִשֶּׁה לַה'. On a simple level, these words are translated as, "A continual burnt offering – as the one offered up at Mount Sinai – for a spirit of satisfaction, a fire offering to Hashem." But Reb Shimon Yaroslaver *zy"a* saw another meaning as well:

"עֹלַת תָּמִיד": If one wants his *avodas Hashem* to perpetually shine with the animating spirit of yearning, excitement, and anticipation, "הָעֲשָׂיָה בְּהַר סִינַי": It must be accompanied by Sinai-like humility, the constant awareness of one's deficiencies in *avodas Hashem*.
"'לְרֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ אִשֶּׁה לַה": Indeed, it is this kind of *avodah*, bursting with utmost sincerity, that gives Hashem the greatest pleasure.

THE FIERY SERVICE OF THE HUMBLE OVEID HASHEM WHO IS CONSTANTLY STRIVING TOWARD GREATER SPIRITUAL GOALS GRANTS THE MASTER OF THE WORLD THE MOST PROFOUND PLEASURE.

- Reb Shimon of Yaroslov zy"a

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THIS WEEK'S EDITION IS SPONSORED ANONYMOUSLY IN THE MERIT OF THE REBUILDING OF THE BEIS HAMIKDASH B'KAROV MAMASH!

בס"ד

Moongazing with Aspirations of Renewal

Based on teachings of R' Joseph B. Soloveitchik, R' Leibeleh Eiger & *Me'or Einayim*

Eilecha weekly

וּבְרֹאשֵׁי חָדְשֵׁיכֶם תַּקְרִיבוּ עֹלָה לַה'...

Our parsha discusses the Rosh Chodesh sacrifices. In his writings, Rav Soloveitchik compares Rosh Chodesh and Shabbos:

Shabbos & Yom Tov	Rosh Chodesh
'Revealed' *kedusha*	'Hidden' *kedusha*
Prohibition of work, obligations of *kibbud, oneg, menucha*. Davening focuses on joy, not needs.	No prohibition of work, 'regular' day, usual conduct. Davening focuses on needs, areas we lack.

Despite these major differences, Chazal ruled that if one forgot to mention Rosh Chodesh in *Amidah*, he must start over... The Rav concludes from this fact, "**Revealed *kedusha* does not exceed hidden *kedusha* in its value**. Holiness reflects the religious experience in all its complexity, even when it is not given to external expressions, when the pursuit of G-d takes place on a winding road covered in the dust of the weekday routine."

To understand Rosh Chodesh further, we turn to the middle section of *Mussaf Amidah* on Rosh Chodesh, which concludes:
כִּי בְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּחַרְתָּ מִכָּל הָאֻמּוֹת **וְחֻקֵּי** רָאשֵׁי חֳדָשִׁים לָהֶם קָבָעְתָּ...

As elucidated by Rav Moshe Weinberger, Reb Leibeleh Eiger *zy"a* explains the **חוק** of Rosh Chodesh:

- When the light of the moon begins to shine, we imagine that the light will keep getting brighter and stronger.
- With experience, we learn that there is a period of increasing size and luminosity of the moon, but eventually, it wanes.
- The חוק is Hashem's institution of this concept: **after a period of shining arrives a time of darkness**.
- The whole point of the concealment is: "בִּכְדֵי שֶׁיִּהְיֶה אַחַר כָּךְ הִשְׁתּוֹקְקוּת יוֹתֵר וְיִרְגִּישׁ טַעַם בְּנַפְשׁוֹ לְאַחַר הִתְחַדְּשׁוּת" - **to increase our longing for the light** and have a taste in our soul for something fresh, for that light to begin again.
- As humans, we tend to take things for granted. We want to believe that light will continue shining and goodness will prevail.
- Sometimes, a certain light in our lives that we took for granted gets extinguished or diminishes. We cannot understand the details of why/when/how it happens...but we *do* know that it's meant to make us want it back more than ever before.

Returning to Rav Soloveitchik's idea, holiness exists in revealed and hidden, which requires **two different modes of access**:

Shabbos & Yom Tov [Revelaed]	**Rosh Chodesh / Chol [Hidden]**
Kedusha through ***menucha*/spiritual encounters**.	*Kedusha* through ***avodah*/distinguishing**.
Prohibition of בּוֹרֵר/sorting through a mixture and separating. On Shabbos, we are in the King's 'palace', where **all** is good.	**Obligation** to **sift** through the vast mixture of the world and **extract** good from bad, *kedusha* from *chol*.

The *Me'or Einayim zy"a*, in Parshas Bereishis, discusses the moon's 'complaint', which led to Hashem shrinking the moon, and the Gemara's explanation (Chullin 60b) regarding why our parsha commands us to bring a *korban Chattas* on Rosh Chodesh:
"אמר הקב"ה הביאו כפרה עלי שמיעטתי את הירח"

- By contracting the moon, Hashem created the concept of a **mixture** of light and darkness, giving us the power to choose.
- In this world we are charged to **distinguish mixtures** - to choose the right path - and **have the willingness to labor** in order to reveal that path; we must find the good in complicated challenges, in multi-layered people, in dizzying confusion, etc.
- We relish moments of joy but are also **prepared** for difficulties and possess the strength to **excavate the good from those challenges** and **believe Hashem will renew our spirits** and **reinstate light in our lives**.
- The hidden *kedusha* of Rosh Chodesh **will be revealed as the month goes on**; a small moon that slowly becomes bigger.
- Rosh Chodesh is a **celebration of renewal** and the **patience and longing for that renewal** by constantly **seeking** more light/goodness along the journey. Eventually, with Mashiach, the world will enjoy הָאָרֶץ דֵּעָה אֶת ה' **מָלְאָה** - **total** goodness.