

THE Sfas Emes ON THE Parsha

Parashas
Eikev

תרס"ד

The Pasuk, the Gemara's Question on the Pasuk, and the Ran's Question on the Gemara's Answer

The first *pasuk* in the fifth *aliyah* says, "ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שאל" — And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d... The Gemara in *Brachos*¹ asks on this *pasuk*: "Is fear of Hashem such a small thing (מילתא זוטרתא) [that the *pasuk* would characterize it this way, that this is all Hashem asks of us]?" It answers: "Yes, for Moshe Rabbeinu it was a small thing." The Ran asks on this:² How is this an answer? The *pasuk* was addressing *Klal Yisrael*, not Moshe Rabbeinu!

The Sfas Emes's Answer to the Ran's Question on the Gemara

The Sfas Emes answers the Ran's question as follows: We are Moshe Rabbeinu. Every Yid has a *chelek*, a *nitzutz*, eternal spark, of the powers of Moshe Rabbeinu. We see this toward the end of the *Chumash*, in *Parashas V'zos Habrachah*, as the famous *pasuk* says:³ "תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב." The *pasuk* doesn't simply state that the Torah is the inheritance of *Kehillas Yaakov*; rather, it is structured in such a way that if you read it carefully, it implies that just as we inherited the Torah and each of us has a *chelek* in it, so too, we inherited Moshe and have a *chelek* in him. (The Sfas Emes translates "משה מורשה קהלת יעקב" as: "Moshe

is the inheritance of *Kehillas Yaakov*."⁴ The Zohar calls Moshe Rabbeinu רעיא מהימנא — the faithful shepherd.⁵ Just like a faithful shepherd, Moshe Rabbeinu drew us, his flock of sheep, toward his *madreigah*, to his level of knowing Hashem, so that in a sense, our *neshamos* were nourished from his *neshamah* and thus became connected to his *neshamah* and its lofty *madreigah*.

Shabbos

It is *davka* on Shabbos that Moshe Rabbeinu bequeaths his *neshamah* to us; that is the *neshamah yeseirah* we receive. Similarly, halachah allows us to trust an *am ha'erezt* on Shabbos with regard to certain matters we would not trust him with during the week, because "אפילו עם הארץ אימת שבת עליו" — even an *am ha'erezt* has "fear of Shabbos" on him.⁶ On Shabbos, *yiras Hashem* becomes a *מילתא זוטרתא* for all of us, even an *am ha'erezt*, because we receive our "Moshe Rabbeinu *neshamah*" — and *yiras Hashem* was indeed a *מילתא זוטרתא* for Moshe Rabbeinu on his high *madreigah*.



The Transfer of the Ketarim of Naaseh V'Nishma

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 84) tells us that when *Klal Yisrael* said "נעשה ונשמע" — we will keep the Torah and then seek to understand it," 600,000 *malachei hashareis*, benefiting angels, descended and tied two crowns onto the heads of each Yid (one for "naaseh" and one for "nishma"). Later, when *Klal Yisrael* sinned with the

1 33b.

2 *Derashos HaRan* at the beginning of *Drush* 10. See also *Maharsha*.

3 *Devarim* 33:4.

4 *Tanya*, perek 42b.

5 *Zohar*, Ki Sisa 193b. The phrase can also be translated as "shepherd of emunah," meaning that he shepherds emunah; he gathers and flows emunah into us. See *Tanya*, perek 42b.

6 *Yerushalmi*, *Demai* 4:1.

cheit ha'eigel, 1,200,000 *malachei chavalah*, destructive angels, descended and removed all the crowns. We all know that part. The part we might not know is where the crowns went. The Gemara teaches that they all went to Moshe Rabbeinu:

Rabbi Yochanan said: And Moshe merited all of these crowns and took them. What is the source for this? Because juxtaposed to this verse, it is stated (Shemos 33:7): "And Moshe would take the tent [ohel]." [The word "ohel" is interpreted homiletically as an allusion to an aura or illumination ("hila").] Reish Lakish said: In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will return them to us, as it is stated (Yeshayah 35:10): "And the ransomed of Hashem shall return, and come with singing onto Tzion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." The joy (crowns) that they once had will once again be upon their heads.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אֵתָה עִמָּנוּ ונִשְׁמָעָה וְאֶל־יְדֹבָר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹקִים כִּן־נַמּוֹת:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ כִּי לִבְעֹבֹר נִפְּוֹת אֶתְכֶם בָּא הָאֱלֹקִים וּבְעֹבֹר תִּהְיֶה יְרֵאתוֹ
עַל־פְּנֵיכֶם לִבְלֹתִי תַחְטְאוּ:

These *ketarim* really belong to *Klal Yisrael*, as they merited them through proclaiming “*naaseh*” before they experienced “*nishma*.” They were just “loaned,” so to speak, to Moshe Rabbeinu following the *cheit ha’eigel*. We can now understand the Gemara

Teshuvah

כָּל הָעוֹסֵם בַּתּוֹרָה לְשִׁמָּה

7 Shemos 20:16.