

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch

Ohr Torah

Parshas Vayikra

Siman #107	
In the Zohar: "And a soul that shall sin and hear the voice of adjuration," the Torah is astonished about a person – how is it possible that he could sin? Was it not that he heard the voice of the oath, etc.?	בזהר: ונפיש כי תחטא ושמעך קול אלה, אורייתא תוהא על בר נש – היאך אפשר שיחטא? ושמעך קול אלה, 'הלא היה לו לשמוע קול השבועה כו
Or he saw – that he sees the action of another person and is reminded of his own deeds. For everything that a person sees, he should take to heart, for it is not for nothing that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed him this.	או ראה – שרואה מעשה של אדם אחר ונזכר המעשים שלו. כי כל מה שאדם רואה – ישים אל לבו, כי לא לחנם הראה לו הקב"ה את זאת
(Another version: Why did Hashem show me this?) – for everything is by Divine Providence.	נוסח אחר: למה הראה לי הקב"ה את זה? – (והלא) הכל הוא בהשגחה פרטית
And if he sees a sinful matter, he should think: surely I too have done this. (Another version: I too have done a trace of it.)	ואם רואה דבר עברה – יחשוב: מסתמא גם הוא עשה (זאת). (נוסח אחר: גם אני עשיתי שמץ ממנו
And even though he knows he did not do it in action, he thought in his heart to do it. And it is known that the power of thought is more severe than the action.	ואף על פי שידוע שלא עשה זאת במעשה – הרהר בלבו לעשותה, וידוע כי כח המחשבה חמור מן המעשה
(Another version: For example, if he sees someone who had relations with a married woman and bore a mamzer – then spilling seed in vain through improper thoughts is as severe as bearing a mamzer.)	נוסח אחר: למשל, אם הוא רואה אחד שקבא על אשת איש והוליד ממזר – ומוציא זרע לבטלה על ידי (מחשבות זרות – חמור כמו מוליד ממזר
And this is [the meaning of] "or he saw" – that he sees a sinful act by another person and is reminded of something he did.	ונהו "או ראה" – שרואה דבר עברה מאדם אחר ונזכר בו דבר שעשה
Or he knew – in the manner of the verse "O our God, we are ashamed because of our deeds and humiliated to lift our faces to You."	או ידע – על דרך אלהינו בושנו במעשינו ונכלמנו להרים פנים אליך
Like the analogy of a filthy seal – if one places it on wax, the wax too becomes soiled.	על דרך משל: חותם המטנף – אם משימים אותו על (שעוה, גם השעוה נתלכלכה (נוסח אחר: גטנף
So too, when a person is filthy (or dirty) with sins and connects himself to Hashem during his prayer, speaking words upon which divinity rests (or: in which the Holy One rests),	כך, כשאדם מטנף (נ"א: מלוכלך) בעבירות, ומדבק את עצמו לה' יתברך בעת תפלתו – שמדבר דברים – (ושורה בהם אלהית (נ"א: ושורה בו הקב"ה
it becomes, so to speak, a defilement Above and causes great damage during his unification and attachment to Hashem in prayer.	נעשה כפיכול לכלוך למעלה, ופוגם מאד בעת יחודו ודבקותו עם השם יתברך בעת התפלה

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And this is [the meaning of] “we are ashamed of our deeds” – from the magnitude of the sins (or: from the power of the transgressions),	וְזֶהוּ בּוֹשִׁנוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂינוּ – מִגְדֹּל הָעֲוֹנוֹת (נ"א: מִכַּחַ), (הַעֲבִירוֹת),
and “we are humiliated to lift our faces to You” – meaning: our inner selves to You, that is, to be connected to You, because I know that I am filthy and dirty (or: because of the filth).	וְנִקְלַמְנוּ לְהָרִים פָּנִים אֵלֶיךָ – פִּירוּשׁ: פְּנִימִיּוּתֵנוּ אֵלֶיךָ, רְצוֹנִי לומר שְׁאֵהָיָה דְּבוּק בָּךְ, כִּי יָדַעְתִּי שְׁאֲנִי (מְטֻנָּף וּמְלוּכָלָף (נ"א: בְּשִׁבִּיל הַלְכָלוֹף).
And this is the trait of “nosei avon” – that the Holy One, blessed be He, bears the sin.	וְזֹאת הִיא הַמִּדָּה שֶׁל נוֹשֵׂא עֲוֹן – שֶׁהַקָּב"ה סוֹבֵל אֶת הָעֲוֹן.
And this is what it says: “Or he knew” – for <i>yada</i> (knew) is a term of connection; meaning, because of the connection to the Creator, he refrains from sins.	וְזֶהוּ אוֹ יָדַע, כִּי יָדַע הוּא לְשׁוֹן הַתְּקַשְׁרוּת, רְצוֹן לומר – בְּשִׁבִּיל הַתְּקַשְׁרוּת הַבוֹרָא – מוֹנֵעַ אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִהַעֲבִירוֹת.

[NOTE:

Expanded Insight on “אוֹ יָדַע” – Or He Knew

The Zohar is teaching a profound idea: when a person prays while still spiritually “dirty” from sin, it’s not only that the prayer is compromised — it actually causes *damage above*, so to speak. The analogy is piercing: a filthy seal pressed onto clean wax spreads its filth onto the wax too. So too, a person who connects to Hashem while inwardly stained brings impurity into the holy moment of connection.

But the Zohar doesn’t stop there. It gives hope.

When the verse says “אוֹ יָדַע” – “*or he knew*” – it’s invoking the power of **Yedi’ah**, not just knowledge but **deep connection**. Like “וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת חַוָּה” — an intimate, soul-level bond. When a person truly **knows** Hashem — when he feels bound to G-d — **that awareness alone can prevent him from sinning**.

Even if a person is struggling with inner dirt — if he maintains a strong, personal awareness of Hashem’s presence, that connection itself creates a shield.

A True Chassidic Story: The Dirty Shirt

There was once a Chassid who came to his Rebbe, deeply broken over a sin he had committed. He said, “Rebbe, I feel unworthy. Every time I try to daven, to speak to Hashem, I feel like a liar. Like a thief standing in the palace.”

The Rebbe said nothing. He turned to the window and looked outside.

Moments later, the Rebbe asked, “Do you see that little boy running home in the mud?”

The Chassid nodded.

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The Rebbe said, “Imagine his shirt is dirty. His hands are filthy. He walks into his home and runs straight to his mother, arms open. What does the mother do?”

The Chassid smiled faintly, “She embraces him.”

The Rebbe looked him in the eye: “Exactly. **Hashem doesn’t ask you to be clean before you come to Him. He just asks you to come.** And when you do — your awareness of your own dirt becomes part of your purification.”



Practical Takeaway (PT):

Even if you feel distant, even if you feel stained — **don’t hold back from speaking to Hashem.** Just acknowledging your state with honesty brings you closer. And the deeper your awareness of G-d’s presence in your life — even amidst failure — the more protected you become from falling again. “**אִי הָיָה**” – **If he *knew*, he would not sin.**

True connection transforms shame into healing. **END NOTE]**