



נועם

ה'

דברי חיזוק והתעוררות

On the שובבים *of* קדושה

פרשת וארא

On the topic of

קדושה וטהרה



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שובבים

We discussed last week the beauty that lies in these special days of שובבים and how important it is for us to seize this tremendous opportunity to achieve closeness to Hashem. Now, let us try together to work on practical areas in our עבודת השם.

עבודה of Shovavim

קדושה וטהרה

The main area that is discussed in the ספרים הקדושים is the area of קדושה וטהרה. As we mentioned last week, everything is rooted in the original אדם הראשון of חטא. However, it is beyond our comprehension and certainly the scope of this writing to explain and understand these concepts. The fact is that the צדיקים tell us that the main עבודה during שובבים is to grow in all areas of קדושה וטהרה.¹

גוי קדוש

The concept of קדושה is not a small and insignificant detail in the life of איד. It is the essence of איד. Before the תורה was given to כלל ישראל, Hashem told us: "...ואתם..." "You will be for Me..."...a "גוי קדוש". Our צדיקים tell us that anything that is prior to תורה has to be viewed with a different appreciation and perspective than all the other מצוות. The 613 מצוות are what כלל ישראל needs to fulfill in their lives. However, the מצוה of קדושה is the identity of כלל ישראל.

קדושים תהיו

Our Essence

The idea of קדושה is not simply just to do הייליגע actions. It is our mission in this world to live with "קדושים תהיו". It is not just a commandment-it has to be a mindset that we live with constantly, at every moment and in every situation.

את בריתי תשמור

The concept of living with purity is referred to in the ספרים הקדושים as שמירת הברית. Our ברית represents our קשר with ה'- our relationship with Him. When Hashem commanded אברהם אבינו about the ברית מילה of מצוה, He said:

זאת בריתי תשמרו ביני וביניכם

ובין זרעך אחריו

"This bris, this covenant you should guard and protect between Me and you and the future generations to come."

Our life, as איד in this world, is a life of holiness and purity. That is our connection with Hashem. Every child who is brought into the ברית of אברהם אבינו is being enrolled into this special army called צבאות השם-soldiers in this beautiful army. We are all guardians of this special gift that we call the ברית of אברהם אבינו. We guard it through our lofty way of life. When we live with purity and קדושה, we are strengthening our relationship with Hashem.

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The *עבודה* of *קדושה* manifests itself in every aspect of our lives. It's in the way that we walk and talk, how we eat and sleep. It is the places that we frequent, the people we associate with, all with the appreciation of our identity. *I'm a יד. I do things differently. I focus on pure intentions and on my bris- my connection with Hashem.*

The biggest praise for Hashem

The tremendous things that are brought down in the *ספרים הקדושים* is truly remarkable. It says in the *טהרות הקודש*, there are many advantages for the person who is careful to be pure in his life. Just one tidbit:

"לית שבחא קמי מלכא כמאן דנטיר קיימא דא"

There is no bigger praise in front of Hashem, like the one who keeps this Bris.

The reason is simple. Our whole existence as a nation is based on our relationship with *אבינו שבשמים* and that relationship, that *ברית*, is to live with *קדושה* and *טהרה*. Therefore, it is logical to understand that the most precious thing to Hashem is when someone guards this *קשר*.

As we proceed through the days of *שובבים*, it's so important to intensify our appreciation for this special job given to us. We have the *זכות* to be the special guardians of this relationship. Every generation passes on the baton to their children, generation after generation, keeping our connection strong through

the decisions we make in our life to live with purity and *קדושה*.

שמירת עינים

How do we practically guard the *ברית*?

The first *עבודה* to work on in the *ברית* is *שמירת עינים*: To guard our eyes. The *ראב"ד* says:

ראש לכל הגדרים שישמור האדם עיניו ואם ישמרו
את עיניו נמצא לבו שמור ומתוך שלבו ועיניו
שמורים נמצא כולו שמור

The first step that a person has to take is to guard his eyes. If his eyes are protected, his heart is secure and if his eyes and heart are secure, everything is secure.

A person who is able to protect his eyes from seeing impure things will be *זוכה* to serve Hashem properly. We have to understand the depth of this special *עבודה*. Why is it so important what we see? After all, did anything really happen?

נשמה הטהורה

Every morning we say the *ברכה* of *אלוקי נשמה שנתת בי*. We express to Hashem our understanding that we possess a *נשמה* and this *נשמה* is *טהורה*. She is pure. She was given to us, placed into a *בשר ודם* and we have a mission to protect her. We understand that only

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Hashem can control our connection to our נשמה.

Hashem created this special gift and controls how long we have it with us. We thank Hashem for this gift and we say אני מודה-we hope this נשמה will stay with us for 120 years.

The צדיקים tell us that at the same time that we are davening this beautiful תפילה, Hashem is כביכול davening in שמים and pleading with his precious קינדערלאך **"My dear child! -נשמה שנתתי בך טהורה היא The נשמה that I have given to you is pure. Please, my dear child! return her to Me pure. In the same state that she was given to you, that is how she should be returned to Me."**

How can we merit דשמיא to guard our pure נשמות?

נרי בידך נירך בידי

The מדרש tells us: Before a person comes down to this world, השם has a special conversation with every איד. He tells us: "My dear child, I am giving you My candle, My dear נשמה. Please understand-נרי בידך- My candle is now in your hands and נירך בידי-Your life is in My hands. My child, **I will protect you if you will protect what is Mine.**"

A person who lives his life with the feelings of responsibility and the knowledge of what we have inside

of us, someone who truly understands what we are protecting, such a person merits extra סייעתא דשמיא. When we watch and protect the נשמה which is טהורה, then Hashem will protect us and keep us pure.

עינים-

Windows to the Soul

The part of our bodies that connects our נשמה to the world that we live in are the eyes. The eyes are the window to the נשמה. If a person's eyes are pure, his נשמה remains pure. אחר מאה ועשרים שנה, we can confidently return her to our Creator with pride in our successful mission.

This is why שמירת עינים is so important and crucial in our עבודת השם. It is not just about seeing inappropriate things. It is the negative effects that they have on our נשמות when we are not careful. These impurities can חס ושלום stain this precious gift that was granted to each and every one of us.

The Key to Success

We have to realize that our success in our עבודת השם depends largely on the level of purity of our eyes. We daven every morning a person's עינינו בתורתך appreciation and אהבה for the תורה is dependent on his eyes. The תורה that we have is, in reality, a cover for a very spiritual light. The

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the hidden light that was created in the beginning of time was hidden in the תורה. Who can access this light? Physical eyes can't see it. It is not accessible for the public. It's reserved for those special individuals who have purified their vision. Those צדיקים who have עיני השם are able to see the true light that is hidden in the תורה.

The חוזה of Lublin זצ"ל was once seeing many people who needed guidance. After some time, he asked for some privacy. There was one חסיד who wanted to see what the Rebbe was doing, so he stayed behind. He noticed how the Rebbe opened up a sefer and started to learn. He called out: "רבונו של עולם! All the answers are in the light of the Torah! Please help me help Your קינדערלאך!"

The חוזה was the Seer. His eyes were on the ultimate level of purity. He merited to see that light. Every איד, on his individual level, has to understand that he can connect to the light of the תורה.

It's not just תורה that's affected by our eyes, but the whole way that we perceive the world. A צדיק's appreciation for the world is different than us simple people. They see things differently. They view everything through the lens of purity. Anyone that has made an effort in this area will testify to the simple fact that it changes our lives. Living with קדושה וטהרה is a different life. It's real.

First step in a חטא

עין רואה לב חומד וכלי tell us: *Eyes see, the heart desires and the body carries out the sin.* The first step in a person falling and stumbling lies in what he sees. He sees something impure...he starts thinking impure and then חס ושלום will start acting impure. A person who is looking to guard his relationship has to realize that the first step is to make sure to do whatever we can to see only good and pure sights.

The Reward

What happens when a person is faced with a challenge and overcomes?

The משנה in ארץ says:

כל הרואה דבר ערוה ואינו זן את עיניו ממנו "זוכה ומקבל פני השכינה".

Whoever holds himself back from having pleasure from an inappropriate sight will merit to greet the שכינה.

The טהרת הקודש points out that it doesn't say he **will** be פני השכינה rather he **is** פני השכינה. **At that very moment**, when a person overcomes a challenge in שמירת עינים, he is זוכה to meet the שכינה הקדושה!

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What happens next?
The טהרת הקודש continues...

ונעשה שמחה וחדוה בכל העולמות כפי
הנסיון, ושכינת כבודו יתברך שמו מתעטרת
בך ומנשקת עיניך הטהורים וכו'
*There is a tremendous simcha in all
the Upper Worlds, based on the
level of the challenge, the שכינה
crowns Herself on you and kisses
your holy eyes etc.*

Even if we don't feel it!

All these beautiful thing that are
happening to us are true, even if we
don't feel it. The טהרת הקודש
continues..

כי בזה הרגע ממשיך על נפשו קדושה גדולה
ויתירה עד שנשמתו תיכף באותו רגע מקבלת
פני השכינה הגם שגופו אינו מרגיש
ולעתיד לבא יזכה גם כן גוף הגשמי לראות
פני השכינה

*At that moment, he brings upon
himself a powerful קדושה to the
point that he greets the שכינה, **even
though his body doesn't feel it**, his
soul does and after משיח comes,
his body will also feel it!*

A person who hears these words
has to become so overwhelmed
with excitement at this opportunity!
A closeness to Hashem in such a
special fashion!

עת רצון נפלא!

Even more, there is a special power
of תפילה at that very moment.
There was a story of a person who
urgently needed a medication for a

child that was unwell. He was very
flustered and anxious and began
running to the pharmacy. While he
was on his way, he realized that he
wasn't being careful with the
proper שמירת עינים. He stopped for a
moment to compose himself and
got back on duty as guardian of his
eyes. As he was doing this, he
received a phone call from his wife
that the danger has passed and the
medication wasn't necessary
anymore.

**גירי בידך ונירך בידי I'll protect
you if you protect Me...**

Land of Opportunity

If a person were to stop and reflect
on what we are discussing now, he
would realize the tremendous
opportunities we all have daily. On
the one hand, it seems like a never
ending battle. Wherever we go, we
are surrounded by challenges. On
the other hand, we can change our
perspective and realize that every
single challenge is another
opportunity. America has been
called "The Land of
Opportunities." I think this is the
real meaning behind that title! We
have so many opportunities to
reach greatness! In one day, a
person can overcome hundreds of
challenges in this area and be זוכה
to unbelievable heights. Previous
generations never had such
opportunities! A person, with one
walk home from shul, can become

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a spiritual billionaire by
overcoming so many challenges.

עבודה למעשה
Who's in control?
What's the practical
שמירת עבודה
עינים?

A שומר over his עינים means that he's in control of his eyes. That's the עבודה. To declare ownership over what your eyes see.

ר' אהרן הגדול from Karlin זצ"ל once walked into shul very early in the morning, dancing with tremendous שמחה של מצוה. When asked why, he said that he just walked from his house to shul and was זוכה to guard his eyes.

What exactly was the big שמחה?
What was in the streets of Karlin 200 years ago at three o'clock in the morning?

The answer is that to be in control doesn't mean you didn't see anything. It means: **I was in control of my eyes. I chose what I looked at.** If a person walks on the street and his eyes are all over the place, right, left, up, down, even if at the end of his walk, he didn't see anything-he's still not a שומר עינים!
Because he had no control.

That's our עבודה: To become more and more in charge of our eyes.

Practical Suggestion

A person who wants to exercise his שמירת עינים muscles can try the following suggestion. During מנחה, for one day, don't look out of your סידור. Show yourself who's boss. It's a great exercise.

The control of the Alter of Kelm

ר' ירוחם זצ"ל writes about the Alter of Kelm זצ"ל that if he had to look to the right, he didn't simply turn his head. The Alter felt that to be a lack of self control. Rather, if he needed to see something on the right, he turned his whole body to the right. שמירת עינים.

ברשותו של אדם

הז"ל tell us that there are עבודות that are categorized as ברשותו של אדם and עבודות that are not ברשותו של אדם. There are things that are out of our control and things that are in our control. There are many aspects in terms of what we see that are not in our control, that are out of our hands. A person opens the door of his house, just as a city bus with an inappropriate advertisement zooms past is out of our control. When we are looking to define and clarify our practical עבודה, how does one zone in on the practical aspect?

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The answer is that even in this עבודה, there are aspects that are ברשותו. For example, let us say that there is a particular place that you are aware brings with it difficult challenges. Then, it's within your control not to go there. If there is a particular area in technology that causes challenges, then it's ברשותו - in your control not to enter that challenge. Someone that's not sensitive to this beautiful topic won't even think about it. Yet, now that we know what we are protecting and what our mission is - it's our ultimate זכות!

Our job is to fight

We have to keep in mind one final point in this עבודה. Hashem knows the challenges we have daily and Hashem knows how difficult it can be sometimes. Yet, these נסיונות aren't getting easier! The reason for this is simple. רחמנא חיבא בעי - Hashem wants to see our love for Him. **Hashem wants our fight! He doesn't need our victory.** As R' Yisroel Salanter זצ"ל said: Our job is to do whatever we can and the rest is up to Hashem!

!!בדמיך חיי

Hashem tells us that He saw us in מתבוססת בדמיך full of blood. The צדיקים say: That blood represents the battles we fought in

גלות. Hashem says: בדמיך חיי - My dear children, with these battles, you will merit eternal existence. The Rebbe R' Bunim said: (loosely translated in English) "As long as we are throwing punches, we are still alive!"

In Conclusion

The second week of these special days of שובבים are coming to an end. Our mission as שומרי הברית and שומרי עינים is clear to us. The opportunities that we have for tremendous spiritual growth has been internalized..... let's go fight!!

ותחזנה עיננו

משיח is right around the corner. The beauty that will be revealed at that moment is something beyond our comprehension. The revelations of the splendor of the שכינה הקדושה, the glory of the third המקדש, the לויים, the קרבנות, the כהנים, the שירות ותשבחות, the pure light of the מנורה, reunited with the אבות and אמהות... **Who will see these beautiful sights?**

כי עין בעין יראו בשוב ה את ציון

It depends on how we protected our eyes. Those lucky ones that were proud of being שומרי הברית, the soldiers that fought in this long bitter גלות, they will see all these wondrous revelations. If only we can be included in that fortunate group...if only we will merit the most cherished and beloved title.... שומרי הברית!