

ISSUE #122

י"ח אדר תשפ"ו
17/03/26



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת כי תשא

וַיִּפֹּן וַיֵּרֵד מֹשֶׁה מִן הָהָר וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיָדוֹ, לַחַת כְּתוּבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבְרֵיהֶם, מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתוּבִים. וְהַלַּחַת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים הִמָּה, וְהַמְּכָתֵב מְכָתֵב אֱלֹקִים הוּא חֲרוּת עַל הַלַּחַת. (שמות לב, טו-טז)

Moshe turned and descended from the mountain, with two Luchos of the Testimony in his hand, Luchos inscribed on both their sides; they were inscribed on one side and the other. The Luchos were G-d's handiwork, and the script was the script of G-d, engraved on the Luchos. (Shemos 32:15-16)

This week's *Sidrah* provides a detailed account of the first set of Luchos. Following this, we encounter the tragic sin of the *egel* and Moshe's subsequent destruction of the Luchos. Moshe pleaded with Hashem for forgiveness, and ultimately, Hashem commanded Moshe to create a second set of Luchos.

The Ohr HaChaim suggests that by referring to the Luchos as *לַחַת הָעֵדוּת*, *Luchos of the Testimony*, and then describing the script on the Luchos, the Torah is alluding that the Luchos themselves testify to being inscribed with Hashem's script. The testimony is highlighted by the wondrous quality of their script. As the *possuk* continues, *מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתוּבִים*, *they were inscribed on one side and the other*, indicating that the script appeared identical on both sides. Since the letters engraved on the Luchos penetrated their entire thickness, such a script could not have been created by a human hand; otherwise, the forms of the letters would have appeared different on the reverse side. An additional miracle concerning the script of the Luchos is recorded by Chazal (*Shabbos* 104a). They explain that the letters 'ם and 'ו were able to retain their form and remain readable. This was possible because Hashem performed a *nes*, allowing the middle of these letters to remain suspended in mid-air without any support.

The Ohr Hachaim further elaborates that these two miraculous signs together served as a testimony that the Luchos were the work of Hashem, for an *עֵדוּת*, *testimony*, is not valid with fewer than two witnesses. Furthermore, these two miracles correspond to the two phrases used in the *possuk* to describe the Luchos: *מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים*, *G-d's handiwork*, and *מְכָתֵב אֱלֹקִים*, *the script of G-d*.

The Brisker Rav explains that these two distinct miracles each pertained to a different aspect of the Luchos. The miracle of the letters 'ם and 'ו remaining intact without any support was related to the actual Luchos. In contrast, the miracle of the writing on the Luchos being legible from both sides was associated with the script.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that these miracles serve as a lesson about the conduct and *madreigah* of refinement necessary for one who is learning Torah. We see with the Luchos that not only was the Torah itself – meaning the writing – miraculously inscribed, but the surface of the Luchos was also beyond the confines of nature. Similarly, when approaching Limmud Torah, one must ensure they become a suitable receptacle for the words of Torah. As the *possuk* states, *כְּתוּבִים עַל לִוְחֵי לֵבָר*, (*Mishlei* 7:3), which instructs us to inscribe the Torah on our hearts. To achieve this, one must elevate oneself beyond the limitations of nature to become a fitting vessel for the Torah.

In Parshah Eikev, the Torah recounts how Hashem instructed Moshe regarding the formation of the second Luchos. The *possuk* states, *פָּסַל לָךְ שְׁנֵי לוחות אֲבָנִים כְּרַאשֵׁינִים ... וְעָשִׂיתָ לָךְ אָרוֹן עֵץ, Carve for yourself two stone Luchos like the first ones ... and make a wooden ark for yourself (Devarim 10:1).* The Ohr HaChaim on this *possuk* explains the significance of the word *לָךְ, for yourself.* The first Luchos were *מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים, G-d's handiwork,* and not made by Moshe. However, following the sin of the *egel*, Klal Yisroel were no longer worthy of such elevated, Divine-made Luchos. Therefore, Hashem instructed Moshe to carve the second Luchos himself, using physical materials.

The Rosh Yeshiva explains that Chazal (*Shabbos 146a*) teach that when Klal Yisroel first stood by Har Sinai, they were liberated from the defilement that the Nachash injected into Chavah. At that moment, they had reached an exalted spiritual state in which both their bodies and souls were filled with G-dliness. This prepared them to receive the Luchos, which were formed by Hashem's G-dly script, without any contribution from themselves. No foundational work was necessary; all they needed to do was maintain their elevated *madreigah*. However, after the sin of the *egel*, they became tainted once more. Despite their *teshuvah* and Moshe's *tefillos*, they were no longer at that same spiritual level. It was now their responsibility to perfect themselves, which was emphasised in Hashem's command to Moshe. First, Moshe was instructed to create the new Luchos, and only after that would Hashem inscribe His writing on them.

Based on the above, the Ohr HaChaim explains why Hashem instructed Moshe to create an ark for the second Luchos when he came to receive them, a step that was not necessary for the first Luchos. (The ark mentioned here is not the Aron of the Mishkan, but rather a simple wooden ark used to house the second Luchos until the Aron of the Mishkan was ready.) The first Luchos, being the handiwork of Hashem, were able to carry themselves and needed no storage other than their ultimate resting place in the Aron. In contrast, the second Luchos, due to their more physical nature, could not carry themselves and therefore required a temporary place for storage.

We learn from the Ohr HaChaim that preparation was necessary to attain the second set of Luchos – the Torah we have today. This reflects the importance of each individual improving themselves to become a suitable receptacle for truly acquiring Torah. This idea is also found in the Mishnah (*Pirkei Avos Ch. 6*), which lists 48 prerequisites for acquiring Torah, many of which may not seem directly related to intellect or wisdom. Torah can only reside in a person who is devoid of bad *middos* and filled with positive ones, indicating that significant preparation is required.

Let us strive to improve our conduct and lifestyle, becoming proper vessels for studying the Torah in its truest form. We should recognise the immense potential we have to elevate ourselves and become suitable individuals to genuinely acquire Torah.

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@gyalumni.org.