



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת כי תשא

וַיִּפֹּן וַיֵּרֵד מֹשֶׁה מִן הַהָר וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הַעֲדוּת בְּיָדוֹ, לַחַת כְּתָבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבְרֵיהֶם, מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים. 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 *parshah* recounts Moshe's descent from the mountain and a detailed description of the Luchos. The Torah uses two phrases to describe the Luchos: **מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים**, *G-d's handiwork*, and **מְכָתֵב אֱלֹקִים**, *the script of G-d*. What is the meaning of these two descriptions?

The Brisker Rav resolves this double connotation based on the Gemara (*Shabbos* 104a) which states that there were two miracles in the make-up of the Luchos. Firstly, the Gemara teaches that although the lettering was inscribed through and through, the letters 'ם' and 'ס' were still able to retain their form and be readable. This was possible since Hashem formed a *nes* where the middle of these letters remained suspended in mid-air without any support. The second miracle was that even though the script bore all the way through, the letters could be read from either side and were not reversed, which was also miraculous.

These were two different and distinct miracles, and the Brisker Rav explains that these two miracles each pertained to a different feature of the Luchos. The first miracle that the letters 'ם' and 'ס' remained intact without any support, was related to the actual Luchos. The second miracle that the writing on the Luchos was legible from both sides, was related to the script.

With this, he clarifies the double reference to Hashem's work in the creation of the Luchos.

1) The *possuk* states: **מִשְׁנֵי עֲבְרֵיהֶם** - inscribed on both their sides, with the writing going all the way through. This meant that the letters 'ם' and 'ס' had to be suspended miraculously, as the *possuk* says: **וְהַלַּחַת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים הִמָּה** - the **Luchos** were G-d's handiwork, a miracle relevant to the actual Luchos.

2) The *possuk* states: **מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים** – they were inscribed on one side and the other, allowing them to be readable from both sides. This too was a miracle as the *possuk* says: **וְהַמְּכָתֵב מְכָתֵב אֱלֹקִים** - as the **script** of G-d was required for the letters to be legible on both sides even though the writing penetrated through the entire depth of the Luchos.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that this serves as a lesson regarding the conduct and *madreiga* necessary for one learning Torah. We find with the Luchos, that not only was the Torah itself, i.e., the writing, written miraculously, but so too the surface, i.e. the Luchos, was beyond the confines of nature. Similarly, when approaching Limmud Torah one must ensure that he becomes a receptacle for the words of Torah as stated in Mishlei (7:3) - **כְּתֹבֶם עַל לִוְחֵ לֵבָבְךָ**, which instructs us to inscribe Torah on our hearts. To do so one must elevate oneself beyond the confines of nature to become a suitable vessel for the Torah.

The Chasid Yaavetz writes that the Torah can only dwell in a place void of bad *middos* and full of good ones. This concept - of acquiring Torah through immense preparation - is mentioned in Pirkei Avos (6) where the Mishna lists 48 prerequisites that are necessary for acquiring it, and is also evident from Klal Yisroel's obligation to prepare and purify themselves for three days before Matan Torah, to ready themselves to receive the Torah.

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos (6:2), based on the ending of the *possuk* in our *parshah* states:

... ואומר (שמות לב) והלחת מעשה אלקים המה, והמכתב מכתב אלקים הוא חרות על הלחת. אל תקרא חרות אלא חרות, שאין לך בן חורין אלא מי שעוסק בתלמוד תורה.

... And it says: "The *Luchos* were G-d's handiwork, and the script was the script of G-d, engraved (*charus*) on the *Luchos*." Do not read the words as *charus* (engraved) but as *cherus* (freedom), for you can have no truly free man except one who engages in the study of Torah.

Chazal teach that the freedom referenced in the above Mishna includes freedom from subservience by foreign nations, suffering and even death. The Rosh Yeshiva explains a deeper meaning into this based upon the lesson we have learnt from the beginning of the *possuk*. From that which Hashem miraculously created the *Luchos*, the Torah taught that for one to become a fitting receptacle to Torah one needs to extend himself miraculously, by improving his *middos* and elevating his stature beyond the regular confines of nature. Therefore, someone who engages fully in Torah, after having developed himself in the required manner, will be rewarded by Hashem with freedom and salvation that goes beyond the laws of nature, in the fashion of *מדה כנגד מדה*.

May we strive to enhance our conduct and lifestyle, becoming appropriate vessels to study the Torah in its ultimate manner. With this, may Hashem shower us with the extraordinary blessings and protection that are bestowed upon those who elevate themselves in the true way of the Torah.

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