



SACRED SCAR

The Rebbe explains his father's Torah

In connection with the yom hahilula, Chof Av

The Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, wrote many *chiddushei Torah*. Some of these he wrote in exile, on the margins of his Zohar, with the famous ink prepared by Rebbetzin Chana.

Many years later, the Zohar made its way to the Rebbe, and in Tammuz 5730*, the first volumes of ליקוטי לוי יצחק were printed from the notes in the margins.

The first two volumes to be printed were *biurim* on Tanya, and on Zohar Bereishis.

A few weeks later, on Chof Av, the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe walked into the farbrengen with the new *sefer* on Tanya. For the next few months, the Rebbe explained a piece from his father's *biurim* on Iggeres Hateshuva by most Shabbos farbrengens. After that the Rebbe switched to the *biurim* on Zohar.

By almost every Shabbos farbrengen until 5748*, the Rebbe would have a ליקוטי לוי יצחק in front of him, and would say a *sicha* on a *biur* from his father on the Zohar of that week's *parsha*.

Being that Harav Levi Yitzchok wrote these *biurim* on the margins of the Zohar, due to lack of paper, they are by necessity quite concise. As the Rebbe explained, since space was so limited, he only wrote the *chiddush*, leaving us to connect the dots.

In addition, he also only wrote the Kabbalah aspect of the *biur*, leaving it to us to figure out the *hora'a* in *avodas Hashem*, how it connects with Chassidus, etc.

In honor of the 75th *yahrtzeit* of Harav Levi Yitzchok, this month we will learn a *sicha* on ליקוטי לוי יצחק - *biurim* on Zohar.

THE STORY

The Zohar takes us back to the road to Cappadocia, where Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Yossi were walking. While on the road, they saw a man with a big scar on his face walking towards them.

Seeing the scar, an argument broke out between the two sages. Rabbi Abba said, "Let us move off the road and distance ourselves from this person, for his face bears witness on him that



לזכות
 דבורה לאה תחילי
 לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה
 היא עונת בת מצוה
 כ"ז מנחם אב ה'תשע"ט
 נדפס ע"י הוריה
 הרה"ת ר' משה וזוגתו מרת שרה חנה
 ומשפחתם שיחיו
 גורארי'
 טאמס ריווער, ניו ג'רסי

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he committed a major sin.” But Rebbi Yossi said that it’s probably just a birthmark.

Rebbi Abba decided to ask him.

They called him over and asked what the story is behind the scar. The person immediately became scared, and begged them to go easy on him, as the scar was the result of his sins.

One day, he explained, he committed a major sin. The next morning, he saw two people fighting. While trying to separate them, the belligerents each grabbed him by one side, and in the resulting scuffle he got this scar.

I would have died, he said, if not for a doctor that was there who saved my life.

Who was the doctor, Rebbi Abba asked. A doctor of souls, named Rebbi Samla’i, who gave me a cure for my soul. He brought me to *teshuva*, and every day I look in a mirror and remember my sin, and cry over it. Then I wash my face with the tears.

Rebbi Abba said that apparently his *teshuva* was not fully accepted, otherwise the scar would have been completely removed. Later he said, “I declare about you the *possuk* תכפר וחסאתך תכפר” (Your sin will be removed and your transgression atoned for). He then told the man to say the *possuk* three times, and the scar disappeared.

With this, Rebbi Abba said, “Surely you have done *teshuva*.” Subsequently, the man pledged

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THE ZOHAR THAT HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK HAD IN GALUS IN CHI’ILI, KAZAKHSTAN WITH HIS BIURIM WRITTEN ON THE FOLIOS. FROM THE NUMEROUS WRITINGS OF THE REBBE’S FATHER, IT IS ONLY THESE CONCISE BIURIM WRITTEN ON THE FOLIOS OF A FEW SEFARIM THAT WE HAVE TODAY.

to spend the rest of his days in Torah study, and Rebbi Abba blessed him and sent him on his way.

A CONFUSING STORY

Harav Levi Yitzchok asks many questions on this story. For our purposes, we will only bring those that the *sicha* is based on.

1. Why did Rebbi Abba see the sin on this person’s face, while Rebbi Yossi was



convinced that it was a simple birthmark, unrelated to anything he did?

2. Why was the *teshuva* of Rabbi Samla'i not good enough to remove the scar? Washing his face in his own tears sounds like a full *teshuva*; why wasn't it enough?
3. If Rabbi Abba himself said that his *teshuva* was not accepted, what changed later when he said the *possuk*?
4. Why only after the *teshuva* of Rabbi Abba did the person pledge to study Torah day and night, and not after the *teshuva* of Rabbi Samla'i?

TWO VERSIONS OF TESHUVA

The explanation is, that these two sages, Rabbi Samla'i and Rabbi Abba, each gave this person a *teshuva* according to the level that they themselves were holding by.

Rebbi Samla'i was focused on ספירת היסוד, so his *teshuva* fixed the actual sin, but not the effect it had on the rest of the person's soul. In a word, he gave him תשובה תתאה—the lower *teshuva*. Whereas Rabbi Abba, whose focus was on דעת—which is greater than יסוד—saw that תשובה עלאה (the higher *teshuva*) was not yet achieved, and in his world that meant the person did not yet do *teshuva*.

Rebbi Yossi was not at the level of Rabbi Abba, so he didn't see any sin at all. For him the person had already done *teshuva* and there was no more sin. So what was the scar? It must be a birthmark.

This is why Rabbi Abba first said the *teshuva* was not accepted, referring to תשובה תתאה. But with the help of Rabbi Abba, this person was eventually able to reach תשובה עלאה.

Now we can understand why it was only at this point that he pledged to spend the rest of his life in Torah study. This is because תשובה עלאה is connected with דעת, and once his דעת was cured, he was able to make this vow.

This is a beautiful explanation. Still, asks the Rebbe, how is it relevant for people like us, who are not on the level of Rabbi Abba or of Rabbi Yossi?

CAUTIOUS CRITICISM

In fact, there is a beautiful lesson to be learned from this story, as the Rebbe explains:

There were certain *gedolei Yisroel* who at one point criticised certain groups of Yidden.

Comes along a child, an *am haaretz*, who is very far removed from these *gedolei Yisroel*, and also decides to criticize Yidden. He gives them *mussar*, and “blessings,” all with the excuse that he's only emulating a certain great rabbi.

For this we have the lesson from the Zohar.

Rebbi Abba criticized the Jew who had sinned, not just because he was deserving of *mussar*, but because Rabbi Abba himself was holding by תשובה עלאה. When he met someone who was not by his level, he tried to **uplift** that person. Rebbi Yossi, who was also a *gadol b'Yisroel*, but since he himself was not holding by תשובה עלאה, he didn't even **see** the terrible sin that person had committed.

The same thing applies here:

This *gadol b'Yisroel* who said *mussar*, did so because due to his great stature, he saw something that needed fixing. But you? Who are you?! You're a very small person, a total *am haaretz*. You have no connection with תשובה עלאה, or even תשובה תתאה. You don't even know that there are two levels in *teshuva*!

And you surely don't know this story of the Zohar. Even the parts of Zohar that you do say, by *tikkun leil Shavuot* for example, you say without understanding. This story, you've never even heard of.

So how can you possibly say *mussar* about your fellow Jews and heap such vile curses on them?



HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK SCHNEERSON.

What's the explanation? That you're rich and משלי יח, עשיר יענה עזות—the rich answer harshly (כג, you have money so you think you can say whatever you want.

This that you blame it on a *gadol b'Yisrael*, you yourself say that he was a *gadol*. But you don't even reach the ankles of that *gadol*. He was at least holding by תשובה תתאה, whereas you אידכר מאי עבדת באורתא (ע"ז עו ע"ב).

That *gadol* used the nights to say *tikkun chatzot* and to learn Torah, but you know how you spend your nights!

You claim that the recipient of the *mussar* is also guilty of this. The answer is, that you don't even approach his level. You're busy with "programs" and money, while he is not involved in these things at all.

Rather you believe that nobody knows מאי עבדת באורתא. But Hashem knows!

Although we already spoke about how they are irrelevant and we shouldn't worry about them, another Jew might think that when a Jew with a beard says such things it means something, so we must negate this thought.

Another more subtle lesson, which applies to everyone, especially those involved with

mitvoim:

When one goes on *mitvza tefillin* for example, it's possible that he won't successfully influence the other person.

The reason is, because the person he's talking to can feel that he doesn't truly want to help him. He just wants to feel important, that he can convince people to do what he wants.

Even in such a situation, the *mitvoim* is usually successful because he is doing the Rebbe's shlichus and שלוחו של אדם כמותו (regardless of his personal motivations). But sometimes his own feelings are so strong, that they can conceal the *meshaleach*. Then it's possible that the *mitvoim* won't be successful, because the other person feels that he's not telling him to put on tefillin because he cares about him, rather out of selfishness.

How does the other person feel this? When he sees that although you put on tefillin, you do it without הלב והמוח, without the proper *kavana*.

In other words, when the *avoda* of the person that is going on *mitvoim* is lacking, it also damages his effect on other people. Like we see from the story of the Zohar, that in order to fix someone else, you must be on the proper level yourself. Only then can you truly feel that the other person is lacking and actually want to help them.

On the other hand we must also know, that המעשה הוא העיקר, action matters more than intent. As Chazal say, "every Jew must ask when will my **actions** reach the level of my forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov." How is it possible to expect that we can reach the level of the *avos*? The answer is that regarding *kavanos*, there can be differences, but when it comes to **action**, your action can truly be identical to Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov.

(*Shabbos Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim 5745*)