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The Light of the Torah

At the giving of the Torah, the original light which existed at the beginning of the Creation returned. The Torah is called "*Torah ohr*" (light) because the Torah revealed the original *ohr* of Creation, in which Hashem declared, "*Behold, let there be light.*"

The first commandment was "*I am Hashem your G-d.*" This reflected the first statement which Hashem declared in Creation, which was "*Behold, let there be light.*" When Hashem first declared that there should be light in Creation, He used his light that was already there; He took His original light, which always existed before He created the universe, and continued it into the Creation.

The root of the Ten Commandments was the first commandment, "*I am Hashem.*" Thus, the giving of the Torah – which is called '*Torah ohr*', the '*Torah of light*' – is really the light of Hashem, which fills all of existence. The light of Hashem is revealed in Creation through the Torah.

The inner way to learn Torah is by understanding that the Torah is *ohr*. It is Hashem's very light!

There is a way of life we can live in which the Torah is *ohr* to us; it is not the regular kind of life we are used to.

Living A Life of 'Torah Ohr'

There is a sefer called *Moreh HaPerishus V'Derech HaPeshitus*^[1], written by Rav Dovid HaMaimoni, one of the grandchildren of the Rambam, which describes how our ancestors lived. In that sefer, an inner kind of life is described – a life of detachment from the physical world, and to instead live totally secluded with Hashem. The basic concept of it is for a person to realize that there is an inner layer of reality, in which Torah is felt as the "light of Hashem" to us.

Why is it that most people do not see Torah as *ohr* in their life? It is because man was created from the earth. The earth is a dark kind of texture, thus, man tends to experience life through a very dark lens. Even if a person keeps Torah and mitzvos, he will naturally perceive himself as "You are earth", as Adam was told; he lives a very dark kind of existence. And this is true even if he does all the mitzvos and learns the Torah very intellectually. He lives in a dark kind of world, a world of materialism.

Life without Torah is really dark. When a person really connects to Torah, the Torah lights up the darkness of his life. It shows a person that he has an inner point in his soul, a place that is "simple"

and totally detached from the physical.

The sefer of Rav Dovid HaMaimoni, "*Moreh HaPerishus V'Derech HaPeshitus*", is a guide for how a person can separate himself from the materialism of life. It can show a person how he can abandon his once sensual kind of existence and instead help him radiate an inner depth to life – it can help a person reach an inner place of the soul which is divested from all physicality.

It is called the "*makom hapashut*" (lit. "simple point"), a point in the soul removed from all materialism; it is the deepest point in the soul, which is totally pure and devoid of materialism.

Without the light of Torah in a person's life – without accessing '*Torah ohr*' – a person is attached to materialism; when a person learns Torah in an inner way, the Torah can remove all the darkness in his life caused by materialism.

Disconnecting From A Materialistic Life

In order for a person to learn Torah in the real way, he has to give a "divorce" to his materialistic life – literally – and then his hold of materialism will weaken. In its place, he enters into an inner, radiant world of the soul, a world of real Torah: *Torah ohr*. A world in which "*The flame of Hashem, is the soul of man*"; a world of *Shechinah*, which is entirely spiritual light.

When people hear about this concept, '*Torah ohr*', they tend to think that *ohr* is just a "*moshol*" (parable) to Torah. But "*ohr*" is not just a *moshol* in which we have to find the lesson; it is a *possuk* in the Torah, that Torah is an *ohr*! The fact that Torah is *ohr* is the very reality. Sometimes our Sages describe a concept in the form of a *moshol*, but '*Torah Ohr*' is not a *moshol*. It is a reality in and of itself.

'*Torah Ohr*' is accessed when a person divorces himself from the materialistic lifestyle of this world; his soul then begins to really shine, and then he begins to feel, recognize, and see the "light" that is Torah. He sees it as a reality that he feels and recognizes.

But it is only a reality for someone who indeed detaches from this materialistic world and he wants to enter the inner reality. It is only for someone who is willing to literally give a 'divorce document' to the materialistic kind of life, whereupon he can then enter his deep place of the soul, the point of this utter simplicity.

(This inner point of the soul is called "*peshitus*" [another term for "*makom hapashut*"] or *temimus* \simplicity). It is the point in the soul in which a perfected level of Torah is revealed – a "*Toras Hashem Temimah*" (the Torah of Hashem is perfect).

When a person reaches this inner point in his soul, the Torah becomes a "Torah of light" to him – and it is a reality, not just a "*moshol*". A person can recognize it as a light – he can feel its warmth. He feels, clearly, the light; that it is existing, that it is actually *there*.

The Roles of the Intellect and The Heart In Our Life's Task

In *Sefer Moreh Perishus V'Derech HaPeshitus*, it is described that there are basically two deep ways with which how we should ideally live our life. These two ways form the basis of a person's Avodah (life's mission in serving the Creator).

One approach is for a person to use his soul, his **heart** – to have yearnings for holiness, for spirituality; and on a more subtle level, to yearn just for Hashem alone. As the *possuk* says, "*My soul thirsts for You.*" Our heart has yearnings to become closer to Hashem.

There is a more inner approach in one's *Avodas Hashem*, and this is when a person uses his mind to yearn for more knowledge of the Torah, the wisdom of Hashem. This is when one wishes to partake of Hashem's hidden treasures, to enlighten his intellect with the light of Torah, depth within depth, getting deeper and deeper into the subtlety of the Torah's wisdom. It is for one to involve oneself in Hashem's wisdom, the Torah, which was passed down to us throughout the generations.

These are two great yearnings of our soul. The first way we mentioned is a yearning of our heart, for spirituality, for Torah, for Hashem Himself. The second way mentioned is the yearning of our mind, our intellect, to know the depth of the Torah's wisdom, its secrets.

It is there [in the second way mentioned] that a person can see clearly the light of Torah; it is revealed to those who succeed in entering the inner chambers of the Torah. But it is only accessed by those who divorce themselves from a materialistic lifestyle.

Fusing Together The Intellect and the Heart

The true way to live, as described in *Sefer Moreh Perishus V'Derech HaPeshitus*, is to combine both approaches.

On one hand, we must yearn for more holiness, for more Torah, for closeness to Hashem. As it is written, "My soul is sick with love for You." But together with this, we also need to develop a deep desire to know the G-dly wisdom of Torah; that the G-dly wisdom of Hashem should fill our mind and turn our minds to think G-dly.

When we combine these two approaches – the **heart's** yearning for more spirituality, as well as to sanctify the thinking of our **mind** with Torah – we will then enter into the inner reality called 'Torah *ohr*'. We discover there the Torah of our mind - and the Torah of the heart.

The reality of what the Torah truly is becomes revealed when we reach this dimension. It transforms a person into living an angelic kind of existence, in which the light of Hashem is shining forth in him.

If a person studies the sefer of Rav Dovid HaMaimoni in-depth, his soul can enter the G-dly light that is available. He must reflect deeply into the matters of this sefer and not just peruse its pages superficially. The reader has to actually let his soul enter the *sefer*, and then, his soul enters into the light of Hashem.

'Temimus' (Innocence) and 'Peshitus' (Simplicity)

Before Creation, Hashem was One, and His Name was One; His light filled the universe. At Har Sinai, our soul – our inner depth of our soul (mind and heart together) – connected with Hashem. "Hashem and the Torah and Yisrael are one."[\[2\]](#)

When a person enters the inner reality of Torah, he can feel the *ohr* of Torah just as a person can feel the sun shining on him.

As we said before, a person needs to be connected to Torah both with his heart and mind; and then he enters into the inner depths of his soul, which is the pure *temimus* (earnestness) of the soul.

On a more subtle note, he will go above even his own *temimus* of the soul, which is the point called *peshitus*, "simplicity". When he enters that inner place, he is connected to it **both** with his mind and his heart – not one without the other.

It is then that he recognizes, feels, and sees, how the light of Hashem really fills the entire universe.

This is the level we were on when we received the Torah at Har Sinai. At the giving of the Torah, we reached an inner place in our soul in which we felt Hashem's light surrounding everything and permeating all of Creation.

When a person achieves the inner kind of life, he feels Hashem's light surrounding him. He feels himself being found entirely within Hashem's light, and thus he is purified both externally and internally, just as the *Aron* was gold on the outside and gold on the inside. He merits the state that existed before Adam's sin, in which Adam possessed "*kosnor ohr*", special garments that were made from Hashem's light.

The words we are saying here are very different from the kind of life that we see going on in the outside world. On a more subtle note, there is no real life going on today – but rather a **death**-like kind of existence.

Hashem's Kiss At Death

People don't recognize the inner kind of life we are describing, because they aren't willing to divorce themselves from the superficial, materialistic lifestyle. They have no idea that there is an inner world, an inner reality.

We all know that there is a Next World, a place called Gan Eden, in which the *tzaddikim* sit and enjoy the radiance of the *Shechinah*. R' Dovid Maimoni states in *sefer Moreh Perishus V'Derech HaPeshitus* that if a person didn't feel the light of Hashem as he lived on this physical world, when he comes to the next world, he won't be able to experience the spiritual enjoyment of the Next World – because he never connected to it yet.

It could be that he kept all the *mitzvos* and learned Torah on this world, but if he never lived the inner reality, he has never yet connected himself to the spiritual reality, and thus he cannot connect with it in the Next World!

Chazal say that although no one can see Hashem as they live, when we die, it is possible to see Hashem. When a *tzaddik* dies, he merits *misas neshikah* – a "kiss of death". The soul of the *tzaddik*, upon his time of physical death, sees Hashem's light in its full zenith. Chazal say that this is a very pleasurable experience; the soul of a *tzaddik*, as soon as his physical life ends, immediately wishes to ascend to Heaven out of great love for Hashem, like a magnetic pull.

Only a person who detaches from the materialistic kind of life merits this. The *sefarim hakedoshim* say that if someone attached himself already on this world to Hashem, he connects to Hashem's light when he leaves this world.

The "kiss of death" is obviously not a physical kind of kiss. It is an incredible yearning of the soul to attach itself to the light of Hashem, and in this sense, it is like a kiss.

The light of Hashem is really everywhere; it fills all of existence. But in order to reach it, a person has to remove all the dirty layers that are covering him; he must remove himself from the attachment to this physical world, if he wants to reveal the light.

Making This Concept Practical

If someone wants to make this concept practical and merit the inner kind of life we are describing, the opportunity is very available to him. As Chazal say, "The Torah is in a corner; all who wish to take it can come and take it."

One should take this sefer of Rav Dovid HaMaimoni – sefer “**Moreh Perishus V’Derech HaPeshitus**” – and he should learn it in-depth. And he shouldn’t just “learn” the sefer on a purely intellectual level – he should actually practice the kind of lifestyle being described in that sefer. He should practice everything it says in that sefer, not just partially.

It is a lifestyle in which a person lives with Hashem, with *temimus* (earnestness), with *peshitus* (simplicity). It is a kind of life which can take a person out of the materialistic lifestyle we recognize. It is *not* a “new” way to live life; it is the way of our great ancestors, who were like angels.

In Conclusion

In the three days before Shavuos, when we are meant to prepare to accept the Torah, we have a test before us. It is the test to see where our lives are at, what kind of life we want to live; if we really want to live a life of *Torah Ohr*. It is the test of determining where our soul is heading towards.

The soul in us, deep down, has a yearning for something, and it is an endless desire, which we are not able to silence. It screams out inside each and every one of us, and it is demanding that we detach from the superficial kind of life we see, and instead enter into the inner world.

We must disconnect from the superficial life in front of us that we see, and instead become like a convert, who is considered born anew; we must enter a totally different reality, a reality which is entirely Hashem’s light.

If we want to merit the great spiritual bliss of the Next World – the light of Hashem – we need to connect ourselves already now, on this world we live on, to that light.

May we merit to receive the Torah which we received at Sinai – in the same way we were like when we are in the desert as we received it, separated totally from materialism; may we merit to return to the true way of life, as our Avos lived.

[1] ספר "מורה הפרישות ודרך הפשיטות"

[2] Zohar parshas Achrei Mos 73a