



## Renewed Receiving of the Torah

### Parshas Matos-Masei

#### Leilui Neshmas Meira Chaya Nechama Bracha A"H

#### Bat David Mordechai V'Zelda Shaindel Sheychu

It occurred during the holiday of Shavuot. After many preparations, we merited celebrating the holy day with Rabbi Moshe Mordechai of Lelov. The experience was uplifting and moving.

The Rebbe stayed in his room until prayer time and the Torah reading which recounted the giving of the Torah. No one missed these crucial moments. After the prayers, the Rebbe held a dairy Tisch and taught Torah.

However, when he entered the room, he noticed that there was a tablecloth used for meat meals on the table. He was mildly agitated, and had it replaced.

Although the replacing of the tablecloth was not strictly required by Halacha, the Rebbe was very firm about observing the dietary laws.

The crowd was finally ready to begin the Tisch, but the Rebbe turned around and left the room. All were stunned. The Rebbe was apparently upset, his flock assumed, and were very dismayed.

The Rebbe was also deeply disturbed. He was not distressed by the mistake, but by the fact that he allowed himself to get angry on this holy day. How did he allow himself such a negative occurrence after so much preparation for this holiest of moments?

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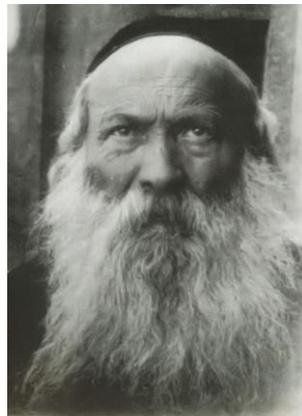
In our weekly parsha we read that after the war on Midyan, the troops return, and Moshe is angry at the commanders.

"Moshe became angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who had returned from the campaign of war. Moshe said to them, "Did you allow all the females to live?"<sup>1</sup>

Our Sages teach us that because of his anger, Moshe did not the law pertaining to the purification of the plunder taken from Midyan, and Elazar Cohen taught the laws.

"Resh Lakish said: As to every man who becomes angry, if he is a Sage, his wisdom departs from him; if he is a prophet, his prophecy departs from him. If he is a Sage, his wisdom departs from him:

[we learn this] from Moshe. For it is written, And Moses became angry with the officers and it is written, And Eleazar the Priest said unto the men of war that went to the battle: This is the statute of the law which the Lord hath commanded Moshe etc., hence it follows that it had been forgotten by Moshe."<sup>2</sup>



Why does anger cause the loss of wisdom? The Shem Mi'shmuel explains that wisdom comes from G-d, and he bestows it upon his faithful. Anyone who is angry detaches himself from G-d and from wisdom.

Our Sages teach us<sup>3</sup> that anyone who is angered, it is if he has worshipped idols, for he who is angry reveals that he has a lack of faith and does not believe that G-d has led and caused the situation he is in at the moment, and in that case he is considered an idol worshipper, by not believing in G-d's leadership.

Therefore, even Moshe could not have taught the children of Israel wisdom while he was angry and appeared to have a slight lack of faith.

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The Rebbe sat in his room and refused to go to the Tisch. He spoke of himself in harsh terms and berated himself sharply for his anger. He then told of one of the greats of the generations that when he wanted to be angry, he would ask for a ladder and climb to the top of the bookcase in his house and would take down a small package, and after this great effort, he would say with a half-smile: "well, now you can be angry."

The Rebbe did not give in to himself. He got up and went down to the mikveh, immersed himself, and returned to his room, opened the book of Psalms and read from beginning to end, while perusing the holy books, and saying to himself and to those around him: all preparations for the Torah reception must begin anew.

Only after hours of purification did the Rebbe go out to the Tisch with his face lit up and his eyes shining and lead his table as every year, in awe and holiness.

For us, it was a living book of morals on how a Jew should be fearful of sin, and even on a bit of anger, one should repent, and remember that one can always start anew. For us it was a renewed giving of the Torah.

<sup>1</sup> Bamidbar 31:14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Talmud Bavli, Tractate Pesachim 66b.

<sup>3</sup> Talmud Bavli, Tractate Shabbat 105b.