be'tovohu amonah

by

Rav Shimon Schwab

Presented on the third יארץיו of Rav Schwab"

for the benefit of

Yeshiva Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

לזכר נשמת
רבי נון הורביץ גיורא שמיעון בן החביר יזרעאל
הורביץ הוחבר משה רבנן זכריו עיטסינגר
והחת החרב יוסיף יידיםא
זכרוהם לברכה
This was delivered by Rav Shimon Schwas on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of his mother, as a memorial z’tikuy for her. The address was given to the staff and students of the Torah Institute of America in Moodus, Connecticut. The Torah Institute is a summer retreat for college age youth just becoming familiar with Yiddishkeit. This was the Rav’s last public address before his passing. It is interesting to note that in this address the Rav discussed something that will be told prior to his own passing.

It says in: 

You have started to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand. You have started to show that there is no other G-d, no other power in and of.

This is said before he died. He is now 120 years old. He was the greatest of all the Jews. All that ever was and ever will be. He spent three times forty days without food, together with the Torah. Yet, with all the Torah and the experiences he had, what does he say? You have just started. This is just the start. You have just begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand. In other words he is saying I am a beginner!

When did Moshe say this? When he was 120 years old. In other words, our world is so far away that even a person who has lived 120 years, after 120 years, he is a beginner. Still he says, I am a beginner. I am always shocked when I see these first words in the Torah, You have just started! Moshe is not making any jokes here!

Moshe is saying here, I have explored the whole world, and I find that I am at the very beginning. Who has seen more of the world than Moshe, and yet he says, "I have just started?"

The answer is that the world by the human mind, is so far away that even a person who has lived 120 years, is just a beginner.

So when you come here to Moodus as beginners, don’t think of yourselves as beginners. We are all beginners! What is the difference when you have a worm that is a half an inch long or 10 inches long? They are both worms!

The whole world, are beginners. When they come here, they know nothing; as they have been completely assimilated. But they come here as beginners.

Many of you learn in Yeshivos, or in kollel. You are beginners as well. I am also a beginner, except that I am a little further. It’s like if we all have to walk from here to Los Angeles, and I have arrived in Boston. I still have the whole country to cross.

If said this, we have to think of ourselves as being at least as far away as the Hebrew is from him.

On the other hand, Hebrew is so close. Nothing is closer! Nothing is closer! Whatever we see, wherever we look, in it, we see Hebrew. We can’t escape it! Even the English that is the Hebrew is from him.
He is so close, that when you talk to Him, all you have to do is whisper. You don’t even have to say the words, you just have to whisper. So close and so far!

We can ask a question here. It says אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא וְאֵדָו מְרַעְשָׁא וְאֵדָו מְרַעְשָׁא אֱלֹהִים עַל הָאָדָם. What is the difference between אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא and מְרַעְשָׁא? What is the difference when I recognize someone as אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא and when I recognize someone as מְרַעְשָׁא?

A נבון is my private master. I shine his shoes, I wash his laundry. On the other hand, I have nothing to do with a מֶלֶך. I recognize Him that he is my מֶלֶך, but he has no שֵׁדֶד to me.

A personal נבון has a personal שֵׁדֶד to every person. That is why he called Him an אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא. אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא is much closer than מְרַעְשָׁא. That is why when we pronounce the מֶלֶך, מֶלֶך, we say the word אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא.

By the way, some people, when they say the המֶלֶך, they say the word שֵׁדֶד with great אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא. This is because שֵׁדֶד. It is nothing. I can say it fifty times over and over and I would not be saying the שֵׁדֶד, because this word does not exist. The שֵׁדֶד does not have a ש.

If one pronounces it properly, however, he expresses that שֵׁדֶד is my personal אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא.

Rav Shimon Sofer, who was the רָב in Krakow, once met Rav Shlomo Zalman Breuer, Rav of Frankfurt. Rav Breuer was a הַטַּכְלָי of Rav Shimon Sofer’s father, the רָב. Rav Shimon Sofer asked Rav Breuer to say something which he had heard from his father in law, Rav Shimson Reuven Hirsch.

Rav Breuer answered him and said, “I’ll say something very simple”.

It says אֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא מְרַעְשָׁא מְרַעְשָׁא — He was there before anybody else.

לא תようになりました that everything has been made

לא ת[slot that He will be called מֶלֶך. Before no one ever called him מֶלֶך.

ואראֲנִי מְרַעְשָׁא will disappear

ולבֹּדֶהוּ מְרַעְשָׁא — This is a terrifying thought. All of a sudden there is nothing.

והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא — He was, He is, He will be

רָבָּנָא והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא והא היא — There is no beginning, there is no end. This is something that our mind can’t grasp.

והא הוא והא הוא והא הוא והא הוא והא הוא והא הוא והא הוא — To Him belongs all the power.

והא הוא והא הוא והא הוא — That is my Personal G-d! ⁴Yet the personal G-d.

⁴ The Rav was in a very weakened state when he delivered this address, and his voice had been seriously affected by the medication he was taking. He was only able to speak slowly and in a mused tone. However
My personal G-d. This very G-d whom we just referred to, He has a relationship to me personally. That’s the word. That’s the word ""N"". The ""N"" means my personal relationship.

It means I have a more personal and intimate relationship with Him.

He is my personal G-d, the G-d of my personal relationship. If He exercises control over me, He is like a master to me.

The ""N"" is the next of kin Who will bail me out.

In other words, in my personal relationship, I can call Him. I can then ask Him for help. He will come.

But the question is, does this mean? It does not mean I believe. I am more than belief. The common expression is to say "I believe so." The English word "believe" does not mean anything in that respect. In other words, I am totally convinced....totally convinced. Suppose all the professors in the Universities come and say to me, "Rabbi Schwab this is not a table, it is an elephant!"

I then say to them, I don’t care if you say this is an elephant. You are nothing and I am nothing. If life comes to an end, it’s a table! In other words, total conviction.

How can I get to total conviction? If I have total conviction, then I understand that whatever happens, happens because of the will of the Creator. He wants it so. That is my understanding. It is based on the Talmud, אומנה, and other sources. He is bound to me, and I am nothing. If life comes to an end, it’s a table! In other words, total conviction.

We say there is an all-powerful Creator Who creates and then it says, it’s a table. We also have the verse, וושאר בܚܕ, and then it says, we say it on Shemini Athar HaRim, מโท פוקס. The verse doesn’t say Who created Heaven and Earth, it says, אוצר הערומים. The all-powerful Creator doesn’t say, He took you out of the dust, but He created you in order to give the Torah, מכם מעתה, למאוה, in order to give the Torah.
But there comes a time when there is no more money and when there is no more life. There is a regular life. We still have אֲנִי יִדְלְכֹּכָּב as before. That is what we are now.

Knowledge that אֶדְעָה shows it to us. You don’t have to believe in a thing. He shows it to us.

Knowledge means faithful. This is when Moshe stretched out his hand. This must remain forever. That is one’s whole life. In other words, the אָמֹרְאָה which I get when I see המָלְאָאָה, must last for my whole life.

It comes sporadically, from time to time, as we had in the מִדְבָּר.

When it came to אָמֹרְאָה, it says יִהְיֶה. וְכִסֵּה. סֵפַּס. אֵין שֵׁרַע. רְפֵיהּ וְאֵין שֵׁרַע. Rִבּוּי רְגָלָיו, and through the מְעֹרֶה, לְשׁוֹנֵי אֱלֹהִים. They did say לְשׁוֹנֵי אֱלֹהִים. What did they mean when they said מְעֹרֶה? They meant, sometimes he is there and sometimes not. יִתְכַּבְרֵי. I thought that he must be there all the time. What do you mean all of a sudden we have nothing to drink?

What is אָמֹרְאָה? לָא טֵמֵא מִצְוָה, מִצְוָה, מִצְוָה. Yet I come to a place in the desert with 600,000 people, and no water, nothing to drink and now I have the אָמֹרְאָה that מְכַבִּית. I know that מְכַבִּית will take care. Why is it the situation this way? Why does this occur? Because that’s the way the מְכַבִּית wants it! Don’t ask any questions! This is the way the מְכַבִּית wants it!

It says in לְשׁוֹנֵי אֱלֹהִים, שְׁמִירַת אֲנָבָא. We all believe in the יְבִירָה, אֵין שֵׁרַע, but יִתְכַּבְרֵי. When you have a pain, that is a ש. When it hurts, that is a ש. If all of a sudden one gets a toothache, in the middle of the night and wakes up with a pain, that’s ש. You can’t deny it. It’s not your imagination. You don’t have to believe in it! It’s ש.

If he doesn’t do anything, one cannot see the יְבִירָה. So when they said יִתְכַּבְרֵי, יִתְכַּבְרֵי, they were יִתְכַּבְרֵי that there was no יְבִירָה. If he does do anything, that’s fine. If he doesn’t do any, one cannot see the יְבִירָה.

A son is sitting on the shoulders of his father and he asks the father for a favor. The son says give me this or that. Give me a drink of water! Pick up this apple! Whatever the son asks for the father does. Then someone comes over and asks the boy, did you see your father? The child answers no! When the father hears this, he throws the child off his shoulders. The boy told the truth. When one sits on his father shoulders, you cannot see your father. You don’t see him! He does everything for you but you cannot see him.

The בָּרָא אֲנָמָה, which is everything, they believed that there is ש. Even if we had no ש or no ש, when there is ש, and sometimes even innocent people suffer because of it. They believed that there is ש, but He is not there all the time, meaning that there was no אֲנָמָה.
The idea of a person has this is far away, and on the other side he is so close. I fear as a child but I go to sleep and I am not afraid. There exists shock all around, but yet, is based on the fact that you recognize what you see and that you are a man even if something doesn't happen.

Everybody in his personal life, has seen the criminal and I certainly can say that. I came out from under Hitler's rule. The fact that I am here, sitting in front of you, instead of burning to ashes in Auschwitz is not a miracle and not a miracle. There was a young man who wanted to become a rabbi, and sought to become my successor to my shule in Germany, after I left. He asked that I give him a recommendation. I said, I would very gladly give you a recommendation. He was a very fine young man. However, I told him, I will give you an answer that you should not do it. There is no hope. "No," he told me, and that.... People call that a miracle. That's not a miracle! In other words, that's being too lazy to think. I left and came to America.

After the war I received a letter from his wife who lives in Denver. She said that on their way they took him out to the concentration camp. He was one of those burned in Auschwitz. So I am here! I am here to tell the story. The word has helped me so much. It helped me and us.

Suppose, all of a sudden, one can't walk, or can't talk. One has a connection that this is a miracle and if it is good, it is good. But it is not a miracle that it will go away. The rabbi says, one thinks that means that when a person goes to the hospital he has a miracle that he will come out again. That is not a miracle! That is hopeful thinking. I hope that the people who hear my story will take me out again. But whatever he does, it comes from him and I accept it. I am happy and that gives me confidence. I feel that I am in the best hands.

Nowadays people don't do it any more, but in my times, people traveled by Greyhound bus. There used to be a sign on the busses. "Relax and leave the driving to us." The word is just to us, relax and leave the driving to Me. Relax. It is not your world! Leave the driving to Me. This is what it means. That's what it means when we say a miracle. That is what it is.

The test of truth is not that you are afraid.

But unfortunately we are afraid, and we think we are afraid. This is so moralistic when a person knows that he is not afraid, and so moralistic. If you were to ask a person, "Do you think this is a miracle?" and yet a person has a miracle (which means that whatever the person does is good), then there is no fear.

He has shown us so many miracles. I am a product of miracles, all my grandchildren are all here because I am here and that's because God did it to me. So suppose something goes wrong. That's God's will. Whatever the person does, that's good for me.
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