



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of
maamarim

given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Ki Savo 5766

Soon after the Gerrer Rebbe the *Pnei Menachem zy"l* assumed the mantle of leadership, he was asked to write a *haskama* - approbation, for *Chumashim* and *Gemaros* that would be written in Braille. This would enable those, who *rachmana litzlan* are unable to see, to read those *sefarim* by utilizing their sense of touch.

The Rebbe agreed to write the *haskama* within a few days. On the day of that request, I came to speak with the Rebbe, and he shared his thoughts with me. He said that he did consider the possibility that those who are blind, could still learn by hearing. They could sit in a *shiur*, or a *chavrusa* could read to them, or they could listen to recordings. That would seem to be an effective way for them to learn Torah. If so, why was it necessary to undertake the project of translating *sefarim* into Braille?

However, the Rebbe went on to explain that aside from the difficulty of functioning day-to-day without the power of sight, a blind person also suffers greatly from the constant reminder that he is different from those around him. Just knowing that when he is at home, he cannot take a *sefer* and learn as others do, deprives him of *simchas chaim*. Now, with *sefarim* translated into Braille, he will be able to learn at home, or bring a *sefer* to the *beis medrash* just like anyone else. This innovation will enable him to live with much more *simchas chaim*.

He added that he thought of the *pesukim* in our *Parsha*. Hashem tells *Bnei Yisrael* that after they cross the *Yarden* river and enter Eretz Yisrael, they should write on large stones, אֶת כָּל דְּבַרֵּי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בְּאֵר הַיֵּטֶב (כ"ז: ח),



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Chazal (סוטה ל"ב.) explain that the words באר היטב mean that they should write the Torah in seventy languages. The *Pnei Menachem* explained that if we were commanded to write the Torah in seventy languages so that everyone could understand, we certainly must also translate the Torah into a language understood by those who can't see.

He then quoted the words of Yeshayahu (מ"ב:יח), who said that one of the signs of the coming *Geula* will be החרשים שמעו והעורים הביטו לראות – The deaf should listen and the blind should look and see. The Rebbe explained that the development of Braille is, at least, a partial fulfillment of that prophecy.

A few days later, the publisher who wanted to produce the Braille *sefarim* told me that one of *Gedolei Ha'dor* opposed the project and explained his reasoning to the publisher. The publisher asked me to present that *Gadol's* objections to the *Pnei Menachem* and ask the Rebbe's opinion.

When I did so, the Rebbe quickly dismissed all of that Rav's objections and quoted the *Mishna* in *Pirkei Avos* (ב:ה) - במקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש - In a place where there are no men, try to be a man. He applied it to the question of Braille *sefarim*. "If there is no one who can be considered an איש because he doesn't understand the needs of others, you must try to be that איש and to care for the needs of the people.

He quickly wrote the *haskama* and enthusiastically encouraged everyone involved in the Braille project.

We must realize that even those who are עורים בעיני שכלם - people whose "intellectual eyes" can't see clearly, are also considered blind. Certainly, anyone who listens to his *yetzer hara* and does an *aveira* is blind to the results and repercussions of his actions. Now is the time that we must open our eyes to see and hear all the words of the Torah. If we do so, our eyes will have the *zchus* to see the *geula*, as described in the *tefilla*:

יראו עינינו ותגל נפשנו בישועתך באמת באמור לציון מלך אלוהים אבינו



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