

B”H

The Ink Left In the Quill

The Secret of the Alienated Jew

By Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson

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Dedicated by **David** and **Eda Schottenstein**  
in the loving memory of  
Rabbi **Gavriel Noach** and **Rivki Holtzberg**  
And all of the **Mumbai Kedoshim**

And in the loving memory of a young soul  
**Alta Shula Swerdlov**  
Daughter of Rabbi **Yossi** and **Hindel Swerdlov**

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1. Summary.

2. Sources.

3. Questions and Exercises

1. Class Summary:

The Midrash asks, why did Moses merit the radiant light which emanated from his face when he descended from Sinai? The answer: When Moses finished writing the Torah there was extra ink remaining in his pen. That ink was wiped over his head producing the radiant light on his face. What does this mean? This sounds almost blasphemous: Did G-d overestimate the amount of ink necessary and get stuck with leftovers?

By withholding the last drop of ink, G-d ‘authored’ the gvil, the white parchment surrounding each letter. The white parchment expresses yet a deeper truth not articulated in the ink of the letters. This withheld ink, too profound to be expressed on paper, represents the core of our consciousness, the quintessence of our identity, too deep to be manifested in words. It is the part of you which may unknown even to yourself. It was this “ink” which Moses revealed after the debacle of the Golden Calf.

You look at a Jew, he doesn't feel, he doesn't show up, he doesn't care. You think he is lost? No! Take a look at the white parchment and you will discover him there. In the subconscious of his heart of hearts – in the unarticulated “white parchment” of his soul—he is still connected. He too is rooted in the Jewish history and Jewish consciousness, in the Jewish faith and in the Torah. His psyche originates in the ink left behind in the “Divine quill,” “expressed” in the expression-less white parchment of the Torah. It may be too deep to be visible but it is real.

2. Sources:

<p>1. Sisa 34:29</p> <p>And it came to pass when Moses descended from Mount Sinai, and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand when he descended from the mountain and Moses did not know that the skin of his face had become radiant while He had spoken with him.</p>	<p>1. תשא לד, כט</p> <p>וַיְהִי, בְּרִדְתּוֹ מֹשֶׁה מֵהַר סִינַי, וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה, בְּרִדְתּוֹ מִן-הָהָר; וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא-יָדַע, כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו--בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֹתוֹ.</p>
<p>2. Midrash Rabah Shemos 47</p> <p>From where did Moses take the rays of splendor? Rabbi Judah son of Nachman said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Levi, when he finished writing [the Torah] with his quill, some ink remained. He passed it over his head and from it he acquired the rays of splendor.</p>	<p>2. מדרש רבה שמות מז</p> <p>ומהיכן נטל משה קרני ההוד ... ר' יהודה בר נחמן בשם רשב"ל אומר עד שהיה כותב בקולמוס נשתייר קימעה והעבירו על ראשו וממנו נעשו לו קרני ההוד.</p>
<p>3. Mishpatim 32:32</p> <p>And now, if You forgive their sin But if not, erase me now from Your book, which You have written</p>	<p>3. תשא לב, לב</p> <p>וְעַתָּה, אִם-תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם; וְאִם-אֵין--מַחְנֵי נָא, מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ.</p>
<p>4. Talmud Berachos 34B</p> <p>In the place [spiritual level] where baalei teshuvah stand, the complete tzadikim do not stand.</p>	<p>4. מסכת ברכות לד, ב</p> <p>מקום שבעלי תשובה עומדין צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדין.</p>

מקורות להשיעור:

אור התורה כי תשא לאדמו"ר הצמח צדק עמוד ב'עז; ב'עט.
ספר לתורה ולמועדים להרש"י זוין מאמר לשמחת תורה.

Questions and Exercises

1. Why did Michelangelo sculpture Moses with horns on his head?
2. Why did Moses' face become radiant only after he received the Second Tablets?
3. According to the Or Hachaim why was there ink remaining in the quill? And according to the Baal Haturim? And according to the Chanukas HaTorah?
4. What is the Chassidic explanation for the ink left in the quill? How did this ink bring healing to a broken people?
5. What is the secret of Simchas Torah?
6. Can you describe the deepest core of your being? Have you ever experienced it?
7. Can you access more of your super-conscious?
8. How did Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik describe the Lubavithcer Rebbe after attending his "farbrengen" in 1980?