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Alter(1848-1905, Poland)

‘SFAT EMET’:

- ‘Language of Truth’
- ‘Language on the Border of Truth’

The Hasidic Drasha (Homily)

TEXT

- Designed for spiritual attunement and for inspiring intentional action.
- Seeks to Inspire, not to Convince
- Reads the Torah Text through two simultaneous lenses:

As historical rendition & As addressing
the reader in her/his existential here and
now

- ‘Mosaic’ use of Jewish traditional sources

Relational Leadership & Authenticity

Goal of our study:

A Birkat Haderech-
A blessing for your journey
as a Jewish Educator

Listening to the Jewish Educator Within

Writing prompt

Beyond the random and unpredictable circumstances of my life,
beyond 'common' responses,
what best description or metaphor could I offer, that would reflect my most inner impetus for serving **Jewish** education as an educator?



**“Indeed, the children of Israel have not listened to me,
so how will Pharaoh listen,
(since/and) I am a man of
uncircumcised lips?”**
(Ex. 6:12).

We have already explained that it is because Israel refused to listen that he has these uncircumcised lips.

The prophet prophesies by the power of those who listen. This is the meaning of “a prophet from your midst ... [to him you shall listen]” (Deut. 18:15);

It also says: “Hear, my people, and I will speak” (Ps 50:7).

With your Havruta Partner

Share one instance in which you felt your lips were uncircumcised/ *Aral Sefatayim* in the context of your work; an instance in which you could not allow your most **inner Jewish educator voice** to express itself, knowing you'd not be listened to.

When it says [of the people in Egypt] that “they did not listen to Moses” (Ex. 6:9), the Midrash says that it was hard for them to abandon their “foreign worship (עבודה זרה).” Thus it is said: “No man would cast away the abomination of his eyes” (Ezek. 20:8).

This does not necessarily refer to idolatry (עבודה זרה), but to worship that was foreign to them (עבודה שהיא זרה להם). Hearing requires being empty of every thing. ...

This is the essence of exile today as well: our inability to empty ourselves, to forget this world's vanities so that we empty the hearts to hear God's word without any distracting thought.

This is the meaning of the verse: “Do not turn after your hearts [or after your eyes]” (Num. 15:39).

And it was **because** “no man would cast away the abomination of his eyes” that they walked about amid “the idols of Egypt.” Had they been ready to hear God's word, they would have been redeemed immediately.

Exodus 20

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית
עֲבָדִים.

I am the Lord **your** God, who brought thee
out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of
bondage.

Now Torah has already been given to Israel by “a great voice that did not cease” (Deut. 5:19). It has never stopped.

Each day we say: “Hear, O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is One” (Deut. 6:4); this is the voice saying: “I am YHWH your God” (Ex.20:2); it has never stopped. But we have to prepare ourselves to truly hear the *Shema*’ without any distracting thought.

That is why we mention the Exodus [in the Song at the Sea] before the *Shema*'. By being redeemed from Egypt we are emptied of all distraction and become ready to hear God's word ...

Exodus 20

אָנְכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר
הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
:מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים.

I am the Lord **your**
God, who brought
thee out of the land of
Egypt, out of the
house of bondage.

ד **שְׁמַע**, יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
יְהוָה אֶחָד. הַ' וְאַהֲבָתָה, אֵת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכֹל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכֹל-נַפְשְׁךָ,
וּבְכֹל-מְאֹדְךָ. וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר **אָנְכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם**--
עַל-לִבְבְּךָ.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord
is our God, the Lord is
One

You shall love the Lord
your God with all your
heart, with all your soul,
and with all your might.
And these words which
I command you today
shall be upon your
heart.