

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



על דשא

AL E DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

Thinking Constructively

ולחשב מחשבת לעשת בזהב ובכסף ובנחשת.

To consider designs, to work with gold, silver, and copper. (Shemos 35:32).

The word ולחשב and the word מחשבת are both missing a *vav*. The Ba'al Haturim writes that this *vav* signifies the six days of the week. Only for six days may we

Shabbos is a day that we are on a lofty plane; we are spiritual beings, not simple creatures. Weekday thoughts are not befitting such people, and thus are forbidden on Shabbos.

think thoughts relating to work—on the seventh we must rest.

Chazal (Shabbos 113a-b) instituted that certain weekday activities are prohibited on Shabbos—they based it on a pasuk (Yeshayah 55:13): וְכַבְּדוּם מַעֲשׂוֹת דִּרְכֵּיהֶם מִמָּצוֹא – *honor it by not engaging*

in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs or discussing [the forbidden]. The Gemara (Shabbos 113b and 150a) states—and *Shulchan Aruch*¹ rules accordingly—that it is only forbidden to discuss work-related matters, but thinking about them is permissible. What does the Ba'al Haturim mean, then? Why does he write that we must rest from forbidden thoughts on the seventh day, when it seems that there is no obligation to do so?

The Imrei Emes answers² that although, halachically, it is permissible to ponder one's work on Shabbos, there is still reason to be stringent.³ The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 9a) tells us that we must add time to Shabbos (*tosefes Shabbos*) before its onset and after its end. Just as there is *tosefes Shabbos* in quantity, where we add minutes to Shabbos, so too, there is *tosefes Shabbos* in quality: we must add to the quality of Shabbos. According to baseline halachah, it is permissible to think about *melachah* on Shabbos, but it should be avoided because of *tosefes Shabbos*.

The Gemara (Shabbos 150b)⁴ relates a story of a *chassid* who realized on Shabbos that there was a hole in his fence, and began thinking about how to

Submission

והזהה הטהר על הטמא ביום השלישי וביום השביעי.

The pure person should sprinkle on the contaminated person on the third day and on the seventh day (Bamidbar 19:19).

The Gemara (Yoma 42b) derives from this pasuk that the waters of the *parah adumah* can only be sprinkled during the daytime. However, this only tells us the requirement of daytime regarding sprinkling the water. For all other aspects of *parah*, such as slaughtering it and collecting its blood, we know that daytime is required from the pasuk of התורה – זאת חקת התורה – *This is the decree of the Torah* (19:1).

Rashi explains that since the pasuk writes תורה in the singular, it implies that there is only one Torah, one body of halachah, which governs all the components of *parah adumah*. Since we know that its waters may only be sprinkled during the daytime, so too, all of the components of *parah* can only be performed during the daytime.

The Sfas Emes takes issue with Rashi's explanation. Sprinkling the water of the *parah adumah* is not in the same category as the rest of its *avodos*. Those *avodos* are all steps in producing the *parah adumah*, while sprinkling the water is the practical application of the *parah*. Even if we say that there is one body of *halachos* applying to all steps of making the *parah*, sprinkling the water would not be included. The fact

1 O.C. 306:6.

2 Likutei Yehudah Parshas Ki Sisa.

3 Although he writes that it is forbidden, he cannot mean that literally.

4 According to Maharsha and Taz O.C. 307:14.

cont. on page 2

cont. on page 3

Thinking Constructively

cont. from page 1

patch it up. When he remembered that it was Shabbos, he took upon himself never to repair the fence. The Maharsha explains that although the *chassid* was only *thinking about* a *melachah* and he was doing so inadvertently, he still felt that what he had done was inappropriate. Because he was a *chassid*, he took upon himself never to carry out his plans. We see from this Gemara that it is not ideal, even if it is permissible, to think about *melachah* on Shabbos. Why did the Imrei Emes need to draw upon the idea of *tosefes Shabbos* for the idea that one should not think about *melachah*, when it seems that the *heter* of thinking about *melachah* is, itself, not optimal?

Furthermore, the Rema writes⁵ that we should feel on Shabbos as if all our work is complete. Although the prohibition of speaking about *melachah* does not include thoughts, the principle of *oneg Shabbos* dictates that we should not be concerned about our work. Why did the Imrei Emes need to develop a new idea based on *tosefes Shabbos*, if there is already a concept of watching our thoughts because of *oneg Shabbos*?

Also, the pasuk of מְחַשְׁבֵּת וְלֹחֶשֶׁב מְחַשְׁבֵּת is about the building of the Mishkan. The Gemara derives from the words מְחַשְׁבֵּת וְלֹחֶשֶׁב – *from seeking your own needs*, that it is only prohibited to discuss *your own needs*, whereas mitzvah concerns are permissible to discuss. If it is commendable not to contemplate *melachah* because of the principle of *tosefes Shabbos*, this should not apply to the Mishkan. Although we cannot build the Mishkan on Shabbos, what is permissible regarding other mitzvos should certainly be permissible here.

The Imrei Emes suggested another answer as well. מְקֻשָּׁה הַמְנוּחָה – *hammered out shall the Menorah be made* (25:31). Rashi quotes Chazal saying that

הַמְנוּחָה implies the Menorah was made by itself. Moshe had a hard time figuring out how to construct the Menorah, and Hashem told him, “Throw the gold into the fire and it will be made by itself.” The *Baalei Tosafos* write that all the *keilim* of the Mishkan were fashioned in this way: Betzalel and Oholiav contemplated the forms of the *keilim* and they were made by themselves.

Yes, it is permissible to think about *melachah* on Shabbos—but only when the work must still be actualized. In the case of the Mishkan, where the thoughts themselves constructed the *keilim*, it was in fact forbidden.

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים יַעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה – *six days work may be done* (31:15), שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה – *six days work may be done* (35:2). Why do these *pesukim* use the passive form יַעֲשֶׂה and תַּעֲשֶׂה, *it may be done*? It would seem more natural to use the active form: תַּעֲשֶׂה, *you should do*. According to the Imrei Emes, this is explained. These *pesukim* teach us that the work of the Mishkan cannot be done on Shabbos. Since the work of the Mishkan was accomplished in a passive way, these words are written in their passive form.

The Gemara (Berachos 55a) tells us that Betzalel’s name alludes to his wisdom—he was בֶּצַל אֶל – *in Hashem’s shadow*. When Hashem commanded Moshe to make the Mishkan with its vessels, He told Moshe first about the Mishkan, then the vessels. When Moshe relayed this command to Betzalel, he reversed the order. Betzalel asked Moshe, “Usually, people first build a structure and afterwards furnish it. If I build the vessels before the actual Mishkan, where am I to store them?” Moshe remarked, “Maybe you were in Hashem’s shadow when He spoke, and that is why you have such wisdom.”

It would seem that Betzalel’s question was quite simple and practical. In fact, what was he to do with the vessels until

the structure was erected? Why did Moshe consider this question to contain great wisdom? As we have learned, all the work of the Mishkan was done through Betzalel’s contemplation alone. He could have followed Moshe’s directions and designed the vessels first; there was no reason to worry about where to leave the vessels, if they did not have to come into existence before the Mishkan was built. Betzalel could have in mind, while contemplating and creating the vessels, that they should not materialize until the Mishkan was complete. If Betzalel nevertheless thought of this question, which corresponded exactly to Hashem’s command, he must have G-dly wisdom.

The Imrei Emes asks further: If the pasuk is speaking of thoughts that are permissible during the six workdays, shouldn’t the pasuk have an extra *vav*? Why is the *vav* missing?

Perhaps the Torah is hinting to us the essence of weekday thinking, and why it is forbidden on Shabbos. The reason that weekday thoughts are prohibited on Shabbos is not merely because they are related to work. It’s that these thoughts are not proper for Shabbos. Shabbos is a day that we are on a lofty plane; we are spiritual beings, not simple creatures. Weekday thoughts are not befitting such people, and thus are forbidden on Shabbos. The Torah is missing the *vav*, missing the weekday thoughts, because these are not the Torah’s interest: the Torah only discusses thoughts of a true Yid.

This is true in all aspects of life. Shabbos is a time of proper thoughts and proper mindsets. It is a time that we yearn for what is good and we can decide to better ourselves. May Hashem help us merit doing only what is good.

(ס"ג פרשת ויקהל – שקלים תשפ"ד מאמר ב)

cont. from page 2

that the waters must be sprinkled during the daytime tells us nothing about the *halachos* pertaining to making the *parah*.

Chazal⁶ explain why a cedar branch and hyssop were burned together with the *parah*. The cedar is a mighty tree, while a hyssop is a grass. The Torah is hinting to us how to achieve atonement after sinning. Sinning comes from haughtiness; one who has been haughty like the mighty cedar should lower himself like the hyssop and he will achieve atonement. The cedar branch and the hyssop were burned together with the *parah*. The

hyssop had an additional purpose, and that was to sprinkle the water of the *parah* to effect *taharah*. The cedar only existed during the burning of the *parah*; once it was burned, only the hyssop remained. The Sfas Emes asks:⁷ how does *parah* allude to a transformation from cedar to hyssop? At the time of purification, only the hyssop remains; there is no sign of the cedar. The Sfas Emes answers that when we look at the mitzvah as a whole, we see the shift from cedar to hyssop. We start off with a cedar, and at the end, at the time of purification, all that is left is the hyssop.

From the words of the Sfas Emes we see a connection between the sprinkling of the waters during the purification and the rest of the *avodah* of the *parah*. They are considered together as parts of the broader mitzvah of *parah*. With this we can suggest an answer to the other question of the Sfas Emes. The Torah writes זאת חקת התורה—there is one Torah, one set of rules that applies to all aspects of *parah*. If sprinkling the waters of the purification process must take place during the day, so too, the rest of the service must take place during the day.

(קידושא רבא כרשת צו-כרה תשכ"ד)

⁶ Rashi Bamidbar 19:22.

⁷ *Parah* 5638 s.v. *b'taam*.

Transcending Nature

זאת חקת התורה.

This is the decree of the Torah (Bamidbar 19:1).

The *Chiddushei HaRim* writes⁸ that the word חקת is from the word חקיקה – engraving; the Torah must be engraved and etched into our souls. The Gemara (Gittin 20a) tells us that engraving is a form of writing, yet there is a difference. When one writes, letters are formed by adding ink to paper. But engraving is not like that. Engraving produces letters by taking away from the object that is being engraved. זאת חקת התורה is telling us that the only way for us to acquire Torah is by engraving it in ourselves. Chazal tell us (Berachos 63b, Shabbos 83b), אין דברי תורה מתקיימין אלא במי – *The words of Torah do not last, only in one who kills himself over it. We*

must carve away and give up of ourselves; we must go beyond nature for Torah. Only this way will the Torah stay with us.

The Yerushalmi (Megillah 1:1) states that although the mitzvah of reading the Megillah cannot be accomplished after the fifteenth of Adar, technically, the whole month of Adar is suited for reading the Megillah. The pasuk (Esther 9:22) refers to Chodesh Adar as *the month which had been turned about for them from sorrow to gladness* – והחדש אשר נהפך להם מיוגון לשמחה. The whole month is one of transformation, and is suited to reading the Megillah. אשר נהפך להם doesn't merely refer to the events which overrode the rules of nature and transformed from bad to good—it refers to the people. The people underwent a transformation in the month of Adar,

נהפך להם. They overcame their physical limitations, bypassed the laws of nature, and became better people.

לֹא-ל גִּמְרָא עָלֵי – *to Hashem who fulfills for me* (Tehillim 57:3). The Yerushalmi (Kesubos 1:2) derives from this pasuk that when *beis din* adds a month to the year, Heaven agrees to the decision and changes the physical order of nature. This special power of changing the laws of nature is not limited to *beis din*. The Gemara (Berachos 49a) says that ישראל—all Yidden—are the ones who affect the *kedushas hazmanim*. We all have the power to go beyond our nature.

Rabbeinu Yonah writes, in the beginning of *Shaarei Teshuvah*, that Hashem helps people do *teshuvah* כאשר – when their nature may

⁸ See *Likutei HaRim Parshas Chukas*.

cont. on page 4

Transcending Nature

cont. from page 3

not have allowed it. Not only does Hashem give us strength to persevere, but He helps us bypass the order of nature. When we become accustomed to this world, even *chas v'shalom* to a life of sin—*teshuvah* may be supernatural, yet Hashem can raise us above nature. Hashem gives each and every Yid the ability to rise above nature and do *teshuvah*.

The entire topic of *parah adumah* is one that transcends nature.⁹ It is a *chok*, as all of its laws defy logic. On the one hand, *parah adumah* is not on the same level of sanctity as a *korban*; it is merely *kodshei bedek habayis*. It is also not offered as a *korban* in the Beis Hamikdash; rather its offering takes place outside. On the other hand, the Torah calls it a *Chatas*—implying a *korban* of utmost sanctity. Furthermore, the *parah adumah* atones for the sin of the *eigel*, a sin that was not natural. Chazal tell us (Avodah Zarah 4b) that the Yidden of that great generation would not, in the natural order of things, have worshipped the *eigel*. That generation is known as the *dor de'ah*: they had wisdom, greatness, and strong resolve, and were certainly able to withstand the temptations of the *yetzer hara*. Yet Hashem willed them to sin to teach the power of *teshuvah* to future generations. Hashem changed their nature to allow them to sin.

If nature could be changed to enable people to sin, certainly it can be bypassed to allow us to do good. Even when our nature may not allow for it, we can always

rise above nature and remember the *Ribono Shel Olam*.

וְהִקְרַב אֵלָיו כְּרִשְׁנָא שְׁתֵּר אֲדָמָתָא תְּרִישִׁי
– And those close to him were Carshena, Sheisar, Admasa, Tarshish... (Esther 1:14).
The Gemara (Megillah 12b) explains that this entire pasuk alludes to the *malachim's* defense of Klal Yisrael. *Tarshish* is the name of one of the stones of the *Choshen*, which the *malachim* invoked as a merit: Klal Yisrael served before Hashem wearing the *Bigdei Kehunah*.

Why is this stone selected? There were twelve stones on the *Choshen*, and the pasuk could have picked any one of them to allude to this merit. Perhaps we can suggest that *תְּרִישִׁי* is a contraction of *שש* (two and six) and *תר* (two and eight)—which symbolizes all that is above and beyond nature. The pasuk is telling us וְהִקְרַב אֵלָיו, if we would like to become close to Hashem in this world, we must raise ourselves above the physical. We mustn't become swamped in physical pursuits—we must overcome nature.

This Friday, כ"א אדר, is the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe R' Elimelech and we don't recite *Tachanun*. Sunday, כ"ג אדר, will be the *yahrtzeit* of the Chiddushei HaRim and again we will not say *Tachanun*. During the *shivas yimei miluim* and the whole month of Nissan there will be no *Tachanun*. One of the *tzaddikim* said that if the *goyim* only knew the delight of skipping *Tachanun*, they would all want to convert.

His point was not merely to poke fun at those who enjoy skipping *Tachanun*. *Goyim* would delight in skipping *Tachanun*, and they would enjoy skipping davening altogether. What the *tzaddik* meant was to explain why we do not say *Tachanun* on these days. We are not trying to cut down on *tefillah*, but *Tachanun* on these days is not necessary. The point of *Tachanun* is to take pause and focus on what we've done wrong and how to better ourselves. It is necessary

We must carve away and give up of ourselves; we must go beyond nature for Torah. Only this way will the Torah stay with us.

to have times that we recite *Tachanun*; that kind of *avodah* is important. However, on these special days, we return to Hashem with *teshuvah me'ahavah*—there is no need for *Tachanun*. *Goyim* do not convert because they are scared of *Yiddishkeit*; the thought is overwhelming. If they only knew the love between us and the *Ribono Shel Olam*, if they understood the *avodah* of days that we do not say *Tachanun*, they would certainly be *megayer*.

(ס"ג פרשת צו-כרה תשכ"ד מאמר ב)

9 Sfas Emes Parah 5631.