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



עַלֵּי דֵשֶׁה

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

That's the Thing

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה, זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' תַּעֲשׂוּ, וְיָרָא אֲלֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד ה'.

Moshe said: "This is the thing that Hashem has commanded that you should do; then the Glory of Hashem will appear to you" (Vayikra 9:6).

If we recognize that the yetzer hara is an outsider, we will think twice before accepting his guidance. But if we think of the yetzer hara as a part of us—that is when the threat becomes real

What is 'the thing' that Hashem commanded? Chazal tell us¹ that Moshe told Klal Yisrael: If you remove 'that' yetzer hara from your hearts, there will be *hashra'as haShechinah*.

Many *mefarshim* have sought to clarify what 'that' yetzer hara refers to. If only we could pin down the essence of the yetzer hara...

The Gemara (Yoma 69b, Sanhedrin 64a) tells us that there was one time when the yetzer hara was given over to the hands of man. The Anshei Knesses HaGedolah understood just how much the yetzer hara prevents us from coming closer to Hashem, and they wanted to put an end to it. The yetzer hara of *avodah zarah* was given over to them, and they were able to restrain it.² The Gemara tells that the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah said about the yetzer hara of *avodah zarah*, היינו האי, דאחרביה למקדשא – "That is the one that destroyed the Beis Hamikdash."

Such language usually indicates that the speaker can physically see the object and point it out. At *krias Yam Suf*, the Yidden saw the *Shechinah* so clearly that they were able to point at it with their finger and say וְאָנֹכִי וְאֱנֹכִי – "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him" (Shemos 15:2).³ Where do we find

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Angelic Perceptions

זאת החיה אשר תאכלו מכל הבהמה אשר על הארץ.

These are the creatures that you may eat from among all the animals that are upon the earth (11:2).

The Midrash⁵ asks: Why does it make a difference to Hashem if we eat kosher animals or not? It doesn't affect Hashem Himself one bit! Rather, the Midrash tells us, Hashem gave us these *mitzvos* to ensure that we, ourselves, remain pure.

Simply, the Midrash means that Hashem gave us certain laws to ensure that us Yidden do not sully our souls by eating impure animals. Yet the *Sfas Emes* explains⁶ that by these laws, the entire order of nature becomes uplifted.

There are four tiers of creations: *domeim* – inanimate objects, *tzome'ach* – plant life, *chai* – animal life, and *medaber* – 'speaking' i.e. human life. Each level must be uplifted, which occurs when it serves the stage above it. A *domeim* is uplifted by enabling a *tzome'ach* to grow, as for example the earth allows plants to grow in its soil. A *tzome'ach* enables a *chai* to survive by serving as its food. A *chai*, similarly, provides life to a *medaber*, by being a means of its sustenance. Klal Yisrael is distinguished among the *medabrim* ('speaking' life) as the one

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1 Toras Kohanim 1:6.

2 Originally, the yetzer hara of *arayos* was also given over to them, but when they contained it they were not even able to find eggs—as even animals ceased to reproduce. Ultimately, they weakened the yetzer hara for *arayos*, but did not destroy it completely.

3 Rashi.

5 Bereishis Rabbah 44:1, Vayikra Rabbah 13:3, Tanchuma 8.

6 5656 s.v. b'middah zos.

That's the Thing

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such a revelation regarding the *yetzer hara*, that would make it possible to physically point it out?

The *kadmonim* explain that before Adam Harishon ate from the *eitz hadaas*, the *yetzer hara* was external—like a ‘friend’ or neighbor who gives bad advice. After Adam sinned, the *yetzer hara* became internalized into our psyche. Now, when a person has the desire to sin, it’s as though that desire comes from within. We don’t realize that it is the *yetzer hara* goading us; it feels like this is what we truly want.

The *yetzer hara* is such a part of our makeup that when Chazal discuss the drive of the *yetzer hara* they use terminology suggesting that the person himself desires the sin. אל יאמר אדם נפשי קצה ואי אפשי בבשר חזיר, רק אפשי ומה אעשה עלי ואבי שבשמים גזר עלי – *One shouldn't say 'I am disgusted, and I don't want chazir meat'; rather, 'I do want chazir meat, but what can I do, my Father in Heaven decreed upon me.'*⁴ We perceive these urges as if coming from within—and Chazal recognized this. But in truth, the *yetzer hara* is not us. We must not let ourselves be fooled.

4 Rashi to Vayikra 20:26.

וכי תבאו מלחמה בארצכם על הצר הצר – *When you go to war in your land against an enemy who oppresses you* (Bamidbar 10:9). The Kotzker would say that once the enemy enters your land, it is much harder to fight him. When advice comes from an outsider, we take it with a grain of salt. Once we see the advisor as one of us, we readily accept his advice. If we recognize that the *yetzer hara* is an outsider, we will think twice before accepting his guidance. But if we think of the *yetzer hara* as a part of us—that is when the threat becomes real. This was the big calamity that Adam’s sin caused: people no longer identify the *yetzer hara* as an outside force.

When the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah looked to suppress the *yetzer hara*, they first had to identify it. היינו האי—they pointed it out! They made it clear that the *yetzer hara* is not part of our identity—and now it can be vanquished.

Moshe Rabbeinu told Klal Yisrael: If you want the Glory of Hashem to appear on you, realize that the *yetzer hara* is not part of you. This is true for all kinds of desires—the desire for *avodah zarah*, *arayos*, *lashon hara*, etc. We Yidden do

not want these things; it is the *yetzer hara* that wants them.

ויהי ביום השמיני – *It was on the eighth day* (Vayikra 9:1). This was the eighth day after the *shivus yemei miluim*, the day that the Mishkan was complete. Yet Chazal (Megillah 10b) tell us that ויהי connotes *tzaar*. What sorrow could there possibly be on such a special day? The Ruzhiner explains: the sorrow that, *nebach*, there was the necessity for a Mishkan. Before the sin of the *eigel* the *Shechinah* could have rested in each and every Yid. After *Matan Torah*, Klal Yisrael was freed from the *yetzer hara*; the *yetzer hara* became external. At that point, since the evil was not internalized within us, we had the ability to be a resting place for the *Shechinah*. After the *eigel*, all that changed. The *yetzer hara* became internalized again, and we could no longer have the *Shechinah* rest within us. The only way to make a place for the *Shechinah* was by building a Mishkan, and this is why, when the Mishkan was completed, the pasuk uses a word that connotes *tzaar*. If not for the *heilige* Ruzhiner saying this, we would not be able to say it.

(ס"ג פרשת שמיני – החודש תשפ"ד מאמר ב)

Angelic Perceptions

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whose speaking includes *lashon hakodesh*, Torah, and *tefillah*. Just as Klal Yisrael is distinguished among the *medabrim*, so too, there are distinguished creations among

the lower three tiers, and those items are intended specifically to serve Klal Yisrael.

The *Sfas Emes* explains that the laws limiting the food supply of the Jewish nation ensure that we raise up those items

intended for us and bring them to realize their potential.

אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס – *Don't be like servants who serve their master in order to receive a reward* (Avos

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1:3). Hashem gave us 613 *mitzvos* for our benefit, and we receive our just reward for every single mitzvah that we do. Yet, the Mishnah is telling us that we should not serve Hashem as a servant who works for his pay. We should keep Hashem's commandments as if there is no reward. We should do His will simply because it is His will.

The *Sfas Emes* adds that this does not only refer to *mitzvos*. Everything Hashem created is for His honor (Avos 6:12). Every creation is here by His will; everything in the world is Hashem's servant. Although it may seem like we have our own wants and desires, it is really all according to Hashem's will. Nature keeps this hidden from us; it is very hard for us to see that every impulse of ours is Hashem's will. The *malachim* are able to see the truth. *Malachim* are משרתיו עושי רצונו - *His servants, doers of His will*. They have no personality of their own, and they see clearly that their whole purpose and existence is in fulfillment of Hashem's will. They are true servants who serve their Master with no thought of a future reward.

The Mishnah is teaching us that when we serve Hashem, we should not serve as mortals who are entangled in our own wants and needs. We should not allow ourselves to be blinded by nature; rather, we should live with the understanding of a *malach*. We should serve Hashem like the *malachim* who serve Him without any notion of reward. We should see past the façade and recognize that everything in this world is His will.

If we did not have *mitzvos*, it would be very difficult to see this truth. Hashem

gave us *mitzvos* to purify us and give us the proper perspective.

זאת החיה אשר תאכלו מכל הבהמה אשר על הארץ. Why does the pasuk first use the word חיה, and continue with the word בהמה? (These terms are not the same. A חיה is an animal in the wild, while a בהמה is a domesticated animal.) The Gemara (Chullin 42a) derives from this pasuk that a *treifah* will not live ((too long—it will die within twelve months. The pasuk is teaching us that although animals which have split hooves and chew their cud are permissible, that is only if they are חיה—only if they are going to live. If they will not, they are forbidden.

The *Sfas Emes*⁷ points to the pasuk at the end of the *parshah*: להבדיל בין הטמא ובין הטהור ובין החיה הנאכלת ובין החיה אשר לא תאכל - *To distinguish between the contaminated and the pure, and between the creature that may be eaten and the creature that may not be eaten* (11:47). If חיה refers to an animal that is not a *treifah* and may be eaten, how, then, is there a חיה that may not be eaten?

The *Sfas Emes* explains that every being receives its *chiyus* (aliveness) when it is utilized in the service of Hashem. Kosher animals have *chiyus* when they are used properly and people eat them—as that is the will of Hashem. Non-kosher animals have *chiyus* when people hold back from eating them—as that is the will of Hashem. When we practice self-restraint, the honor of Hashem is increased. זאת החיה אשר תאכלו refers to kosher animals that have *chiyus* when people eat them. החיה אשר לא תאכל refers to non-kosher animals that gain *chiyus* by people refraining from eating them.

זאת החיה אשר תאכלו that a *treifah* does not live long. The Gemara refers to this inference as a *remez* – an allusion. There is no actual *limud* teaching us that a *treifah* does not live; it is only alluded to.

Why is this considered only a *remez*? The Rashba writes that although we already know that a *treifah* is forbidden, this pasuk teaches us an additional halachah. If we are unsure about a certain animal if it is a *treifah*, we need only to wait twelve months. Since the pasuk tells us that a *treifah* does not survive, if we see this animal survive, we can be certain that it is not a *treifah*. If this is a halachic inference, shouldn't it be considered a true *limud*, not only a *remez*?

The *Chiddushei HaRim*⁸ answers in accordance with the Rambam's view. When a doubt arises regarding a Torah law, we must err on the side of stringency. The Rishonim argue whether this obligation is *d'Rabbanan* or *d'Oraisa*. The Rambam maintains that it is *d'Rabbanan*. According to the Rambam, if there is ever a doubt as to the *treifah* status of an animal, it will always be permitted *mid'Oraisa* (but prohibited *mid'Rabbanan*). Therefore, the pasuk cannot be teaching us the halachah of the Rashba, because that halachah only applies on a Rabbinic level.

Yet according to the *Sfas Emes*, we can suggest another answer to the Chiddushei HaRim's question. The primary meaning of the pasuk is to teach us this profound lesson—that the *chiyus* of the animal comes when it is eaten according to halachah, זאת החיה אשר תאכלו. The additional rule—that a *treifah* doesn't live more than twelve months—is only a *remez*.

(ס"ג פרשת שמיי תשכ"ג מאמר א)

7 5631 s.v. b'Gemara, 5641 s.v. b'pasuk va'yidaber.

8 Chullin.

Parshah Pointers

וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם.
וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי ה'.

They brought before Hashem a foreign fire that He had not commanded them. A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them, and they died before Hashem (10:1-2).

Nadav and Avihu brought a *korban* that they were not commanded, and they were instantly killed. The Chiddushei HaRim writes⁹ that a person must do a mitzvah with such thirst and such power that he uses up every last bit of life within himself. Technically he should immediately drop dead; yet the mitzvah itself gives him renewed energy so that he may continue living and fulfilling Hashem's *mitzvos*. Nadav and Avihu did *mitzvos* the proper way—they used up every last bit of life within them in fulfilling the mitzvah. However, in this case Hashem never commanded that this *korban* should be offered. They used up every last bit of life, and there was no mitzvah there to revive them—and so they immediately perished.

Our *mitzvos* are fulfilled by rote, but if we keep the words of the Chiddushei HaRim in mind, it will raise the bar for us, and our *mitzvos* will be enhanced.

⁹ See *Sifsei Tzaddik* 13 and 16.

¹⁰ See *Maharal Tiferes Yisrael* 67.

The Gemara (Shabbos 88b) tells us that at *Matan Torah*, after each utterance of Hashem, Klal Yisrael's *neshamos* departed. This was not an isolated incident. Chazal are teaching us that this is the way we are to do *mitzvos* always—there is no difference between hearing Hashem's command or fulfilling Hashem's command. We must attach our entire existence to this one mitzvah. We should give it our all—until we perish. The only way to continue living is that, as Chazal tell us (*Avos* 4:2), one mitzvah leads to the next. We continue living so that we may continue to do *mitzvos*.

(ס"ג פרשת שמיני תשכ"ג מאמר א)



וְאֵת שְׁעֵיר הַחַטָּאת דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ מֹשֶׁה.

Moshe inquired insistently about the he-goat of the sin-offering (10:16).

The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 30a) tells us that this is the halfway point in the word count of the Torah. The first דרש is on one side, and the second דרש is on the other.¹⁰ This teaches us that on the one hand, we must דרש Torah—we must plumb the depths of the Torah. We must learn Torah, and become entrenched in Torah. Yet on the other hand, we

must be דרש ourselves—we must probe deeply inside ourselves. What has the Torah taught us?

It is told that someone came before the Kotzker, proud that he had learned all of *Shas*. The Kotzker rejoined, “But what has *Shas* taught you?” After we learn, we must examine ourselves. What did we get out of the learning?

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Chazal tell us (*Kiddushin* 30b) that Torah is the spice used to tame the *yetzer hara* – בראתי יצר הרע בראתי תורה תבלין – *harah*. If we leave the spice in the cupboard, it can't be effective. We must take the spice of Torah and use it to fight the *yetzer hara*.

(ס"ג פרשת שמיני - החודש תשכ"ד מאמר א)