



Published by Mosdot "Mikdash Le'David", Israel

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maskil Le'David

Man Must Perform Hashem's Will Only

"And the woman perceived that the tree was good for eating, that it was delightful to the eyes and that it was desirable as a means to wisdom, so she took from its fruit and ate; she also gave to her husband and he ate" (Bereishit 3:6).

It seems most surprising that Chava was persuaded to eat from the tree. Since she did not possess a yetzer hara, how was she convinced by the futile words of the serpent? This is especially difficult in light of the fact that Adam and Chava were on an extremely high level. The Midrash tells us that when the serpent came to persuade Chava, Adam was walking with Hashem in Gan Eden. This is certainly a very high level and it must be that Chava too was on this level. If so, how did they sin?

The serpent swayed Chava by telling her that if she eats from the tree she will be able to distinguish between good and bad. The Midrash writes that he told her, she will become like G-d, able to create worlds. This is perplexing. Did Chava actually think she could, *chalila*, become like G-d? What was the point of the serpent using this reasoning to convince her? Clearly Chava could not, *chalila*, become like G-d.

The explanation is that the serpent represents the evil inclination. The numerical value of *nachash* (serpent), using the rule of *kollel*, is the same as the numerical value of *satan*. What is the satan's approach? He does not openly persuade a person to transgress Hashem's word, rather he uses just the opposite tactic. He convinces a person that he is telling him to do a special mitzva for the sake of Heaven, and in this way he causes him to descend to the lowest depths. This is what the serpent did. He persuaded the woman to eat from the tree by telling her that she will thereby be able to distinguish between good and bad and she will thus be able to cleave to Hashem, give Him more pleasure, and create Upper Worlds in His honor.

This is why the serpent said to her "and you will be like G-d" (*Bereishit* 3:5). He was implying: Through knowing how to distinguish between good and bad, you too will be able to develop and continue the

creation by creating numerous worlds. This was the serpent's convincing argument, so Chava should think she was acting for the sake of increasing Hashem's honor in the world.

This is how Chava was able to be persuaded despite the fact that she did not have a yetzer hara. Far from thinking that she was being persuaded to sin, she considered it a commendable act, to be able to bring spiritual pleasure to Hashem. But this was her mistake. Adam Harishon too stumbled with this same mistake. At first he did not wish to listen to Chava, but then she explained that eating from the Tree of Knowledge is *l'shem shamayim*, to receive great wisdom and know to distinguish between good and bad. In this way they will be able to distance themselves completely from bad and have the power to create worlds for the honor of Hashem. Adam accepted these words and ate. He was entirely convinced of the correctness of the matter, to the extent that when Hashem asked him if he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, he answered that he ate and will continue to eat. This is always the approach of the yetzer hara — to persuade a person that an aveirah is really a mitzvah. In this way he ensnares us in his net from which we are unable to untangle ourselves.

I once heard someone speaking lashon hara about his friend. I immediately rebuked him and told him he was forbidden to talk in this manner. He replied that since his intention was for Heaven's sake, it was permitted. I tried to convince him that this was not the case and explained that this is the way of the yetzer hara — to make as if everything we do is for Hashem's honor. Indeed, after contemplating the matter he admitted that he was actually speaking lashon hara for personal reasons.

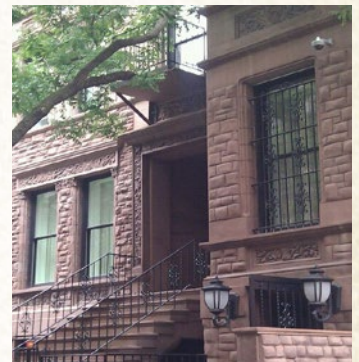
The ability to distinguish between good and bad would seemingly cause great pleasure to Hashem. So what, in fact, was Adam and Chava's sin? Their mistake was that Hashem does not want a person to build worlds and offer sacrifices through transgressing His word. Rather, Hashem's desire is that a person should do as he is commanded and not try to be clever and add to the commandments. Adam and Chava thought Hashem had given them only one commandment (not to eat from the tree), and they wished to perform more mitzvot through knowing how to distinguish between good and bad, but this was the root of their mistake.

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24 Tishrei 5785
26 October 2024

1083

Bereishit



Hilula

24 Tishrei

Rabbi Avraham ben Shmuel

25 Tishrei

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak
of Berditchev

26 Tishrei

Rabbi Asher of Stolin

27 Tishrei

Rabbi Yitzchak Hazaken,
of the Ba'alei Hatosfot

28 Tishrei

Rabbi Avraham Abichzar

29 Tishrei

Shimon Hatzaddik,
of the survivors
of the Great Assembly

30 Tishrei

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir
Hazenperetz, author
of 'Or Yakar'





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Joyous and Glad

"And G-d set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth" (Bereishit 1:17).

In the prayer recited on the sanctification of the moon, we say about the luminaries (the sun and the moon): "They are joyous and glad to perform the will of their Owner."

The question is, from where do we know they are joyous and glad? Maybe the sun is not pleased that each morning it needs to rise and shine, and maybe the moon is dissatisfied with waxing and waning each month?

Harav David Heller brings a wonderful *mashal* to explain this idea: How can one know if a worker is happy with his job? There is a simple way to check. We just need to take a look at what time he arrives in the morning and what time he leaves at night. A happy worker will arrive punctually every morning to start work on time and put in a productive day's work, and will not leave his desk until he has finished his tasks for the day.

On the other hand, a resentful worker will arrive late, if at all, and will try to escape before the end of his shift. He will come up with a variety of excuses to justify his lateness and find numerous reasons why he must leave early...

The *nimshal* is clear: Chazal came to this conclusion after observing the sun and the moon and noting "that they do not alter their assigned task."

We, too, can examine ourselves and consider how happy we are to perform mitzvot and serve Hashem. Are we constantly looking for excuses to bypass certain mitzvot, or on the contrary, are we the kind of person who looks to fulfill a commandment?

Hope is Not Lost

"The woman whom You gave to be with me" (Bereishit 3:12).

The *Midrash Rabba* quotes Rav Abba bar Kahana who explained: "It does not say and 'I ate' but 'I will eat.' I ate and will eat again."

The *Chidushei Harim* explains that Hashem asked Adam what was going through his mind when he ate: Was he thinking, "I will sin and repent" (such a person's repentance is not accepted)?

Adam answered: "This was not my intention. I ate and will eat again. This is what I had in mind and therefore I still have hope (to repent)."

No blessing for the Sense of Hearing

"To Adam He said, 'Because you listened to the voice of your wife'" (Bereishit 3:17).

The sefer *Machaze Avraham* brings this verse as a basis for why in the morning blessings we do not recite a blessing for the sense of hearing, just like we recite a blessing, "Who gives sight to the blind" for the sense of sight.

By listening to his wife, Adam Harishon brought damage to the entire world, and since the damage was a result of the power of hearing, it is not fitting to recite a blessing over it.

Investing Effort for a Curse

"By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread" (Bereishit 3:19).

R' Yosef Zundel of Novhardok, zt"l, points out that a person toils day and night to fulfill the curse, "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread." Accordingly, how much more so must he put effort into acquiring the blessing, "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem"!



FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings of Moreinu
v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik
Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto**, *shlita*

A Tzaddik Does Not Wish to Die

"All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died" (Bereishit 5:5).

Chazal tell us that Adam Harishon was designated to live for one thousand years, but when Hashem showed him all the future generations, he saw that David Hamelech would die a few hours after his birth.. Adam Harishon had mercy on him and gave him seventy years of his own life. Hashem told Adam to sign a promissory note that he undertakes to give seventy of his years to David Hamelech. Adam asked Hashem, "Do You not believe me?" Hashem answered, "No, I do not believe you," so Adam Harishon signed the promissory note.

When Adam reached the age of nine hundred and thirty, Hashem came to take back his *nesheama*. Adam said to Hashem, "Was I not given one thousand years to live?" Hashem answered, "Did you not give David Hamelech seventy years of your life?" And He showed him the promissory note.

There is an obvious question: How did Adam Harishon forget that he had signed the promissory note? Furthermore, why was it necessary for Hashem to write a promissory note for Adam?

We can answer that Adam "forgot" for two reasons:

First, Adam sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge and sin causes forgetfulness.

Second, after Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge and admitted his sin, he dressed himself in sackcloth and fasted and repented for one hundred and thirty years. Hashem accepted his *teshuva* and made him garments of skin. During those years, Adam became attached to Torah and actually felt as if he was back in Gan Eden from where he had been banished after he sinned. This feeling made him forget his sin and think he was supposed to live forever, or at least for a thousand years. Therefore, when the time came for Hashem to take back his *nesheama*, he claimed he was given a thousand years and was not appeased until Hashem showed him the document.

Since Hashem knew that Adam Harishon would repent and then forget his promise, He made him sign a document.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Supporting the Purpose of the World

"In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth" (*Bereishit* 1:1).

Rashi expounds on these words: "For the sake of the Torah which is called *raishit* (first)."

With the blessings and guidance of Maran Harav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zt"l, a certain *avreich* accepted the responsibility of supporting his friends who were studying in Kollel. As time passed, he saw great success in his efforts. Doors and hearts were open to his cause to the extent that he was able to establish a network of Kollelim.

The sefer *Mizkenim Etbonan* relates that hard times befell this *avreich* and he was no longer able to manage the budget. During the Aseret Yemei Teshuva he turned to the Rosh Yeshiva with his quandary: He was short of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, what should he do?

"What should you do?" the Rosh Yeshiva mused, "You should trust in Hashem! But in order to fulfill your obligation of *hishtadlut* (putting forth appropriate effort) you should travel to *chutz l'aretz* for one day..."

The *avreich* made the necessary arrangements and spent two days fundraising in *chutz l'aretz*. On his return he told the Rosh Yeshiva that he had been successful in amassing only half of the amount he required.

Maran answered him: "Had you gone for only one day, you would have come back with the entire amount. Since you put your hopes in your efforts and stayed twice as long as you should have, the sum you were meant to raise was cut in half."

On motzei Yom Kippur he once again approached the Rosh Yeshiva. He told him he was missing one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, and the *avreichim* were relying on this money for the approaching *chag*.

Maran considered the matter and then declared: "Travel again, but since last time you added to your obligation of *hishtadlut*, this time decrease your efforts. Go for one hour only!"

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According to this explanation, it is clear why they were only banished from Gan Eden and not punished immediately when Hashem came to speak with them. Even this was only a consequence of no longer having a reason to remain in Gan Eden since they could no longer fulfill the one commandment they had been given. Adam and Chava were sent out to this world since they were now able to distinguish between good and bad and had

He was astonished, but a directive from Maran is heeded. He only clarified if the hour should be reckoned from landing in the country, from leaving the airport or from arriving in town.

Maran replied: one hour from arriving in town!

After receiving a blessing, he set out. On the way to the airport, he purchased two beautiful *etrogim* and packed them in his bag.

On arrival in America, he gave the taxi driver the address of a certain philanthropist. On the way they passed the office of a different philanthropist. He stopped the taxi and went into the office. Not only was this philanthropist in his office, but he himself opened the door. He warmly invited him inside and asked what he could do for him.

"I have a beautiful *etrog* for you!" was the *avreich's* reply.

The philanthropist opened the box and was duly impressed. "How much are you selling this for?"

"One hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars!"

"You're joking!"

But the *avreich* was serious.

The philanthropist decided to call his Rav, and once again, the *avreich* noted Hashem's kindness: The Rav was available and answered the phone.

"Sitting here in my office is an *avreich* from Eretz Yisrael who is the head of a large network of *kollelim*. (He knew him from previous visits.) He is offering me an *etrog* for one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars!"

The Rav replied: "Do you not realize that this *avreich* did not come all the way here to sell you an *etrog* for this preposterous sum, but rather to give you the merit of supporting Torah? Buy the *etrog* at the aforementioned price."

On the spot the philanthropist wrote out a check. The *avreich* handed over the *etrog* and returned to the airport exactly one hour after arriving!

prepared themselves sufficiently to handle the yetzer hara. Since their intention was not, *chalila*, to rebel against Hashem, on the contrary they thought they were acting for the sake of Heaven, they were not punished.

Due to our many sins, instead of learning a lesson how terrible it is to be convinced that an *aveirah* is really a mitzvah, we sometimes claim that the act contains no trace of sin and continue to transgress Hashem's word.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu
v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Rabbi
David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

No Vacation from Public Responsibility

After *bein hazmanim*, the intercession between study semesters in yeshiva, a Sanzer Chassid once approached me. He told me he had repeatedly tried to reach me, but had been unsuccessful. I explained that I had taken a few days of vacation from my public involvement and had been out of town with my family.

The Chassid was astounded by my words. "Please forgive me, but I think it is forbidden for you to rest. You belong to the public. The generation needs you. How can you relax, knowing that people need your advice and guidance, as well as your blessings?"

Upon hearing his words, I wanted to give him a piece of my mind. How dare he talk to me like that? Who gave him the right to deem me public property? Don't I first and foremost owe my time to my own family? Am I not also a human being, in need of a few days of rest from dealing with all of the troubles of my fellow Jews?!

On second thought, I realized he was right. Moshe Rabbeinu dedicated his life for the sake of Am Yisrael. He even separated from his wife in order to constantly be on call for the *Shechinah*. He sacrificed everything for the sake of his nation and G-d.

Nowadays, one who is involved in the needs of the public is not required to divorce his wife, as Moshe on his tremendous level of *kedushah* did. But one who accepts the yoke of the public must know that the public relies on him to be there for them. He cannot suddenly disappear, even for a short amount of time.

This man was absolutely right. He said I was obligated to inform the public where I could be found during vacation, so that if a certain person would need my assistance, he could easily find me. I thanked him for enlightening me in this matter and promised that next time I take a vacation, I will ensure that I am easily accessible to the public.

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Al Kapuna Learning Torah



"And Hashem G-d formed Man of dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life" (Bereishit 2:7).

In a penetrating *mashal*, Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi Leib Chasman contrasts the opposing components of man who is created from earth, yet at the same time contains a spiritual life force. Rabbi Shalom uses this *mashal* and *nimshal* to give over a powerful insight.

It once happened that certain haters of religion informed on the Chafetz Chaim, and as a result he was punished with a lengthy prison term. He was put behind bars and sat in his jail cell. At that time, Al Kapuna, a famous criminal who carried out abominable acts of murder, was also apprehended. Just mentioning his name was enough to make people shudder, and the extent of his malice and cruelty caused him to be feared even by the monarchy. After considerable attempts, they managed to capture him and he was thrown into prison, into the very same cell as the Chafetz Chaim!

Now, we will try to imagine the Chafetz Chaim and Al Kapuna sitting together in prison, sharing one tiny cell. The Chafetz Chaim, short and unassuming, weak and fatigued, sits on one side of the cell, while opposite him hovers the tall and massive Al Kapuna. Quite likely, he might make a fist and punch the Chafetz Chaim with a brutal blow.

However, instead we behold a miraculous sight! The Chafetz Chaim turns to Al Kapuna and asks him for his opinion on a perplexing halacha in the Rambam. Al Kapuna starts waving his thumb and shares an answer from the Rashba! Would we believe such a sight? We would certainly think that our eyes are deceiving us. After that they both take their places by the table. The Chafetz Chaim recites the *hamotzi* blessing and Al Kapuna answers Amen. During the course of the meal, the Chafetz Chaim offers Torah insights and Al Kapuna listens carefully. Miracle of miracles!

This wonder is in fact not just a *mashal*, but a true account of what takes place inside every

human being who is configured of body and soul. Al Kapuna represents the body, which has lowly desires and wants.

The Chafetz Chaim and Al Kapuna spend time together in the *beit midrash* and also enjoy themselves with childhood games. They grow up together, eat together, and sleep together. Everything they do is carried out mutually.

Indeed, how wondrous is the sight of a person coming home from the *beit haknesset* on Friday night. The Chafetz Chaim in him starts singing *Shalom Aleichem*, and then proceeds to make Kiddush over the sacred cup of wine. When he recites the words, "Thus the heavens and earth were finished..." he is consumed by feelings of holiness, since anyone who says these words is considered a partner in the creation of heaven and earth.

And so, the Chafetz Chaim finishes making Kiddush, and Al Kapuna quickly sits down and swallows the sweet wine... The Chafetz Chaim washes his hands and recites the *hamotzi* blessing, and Al Kapuna eats with a hearty appetite...

The Chafetz Chaim sings the Shabbat *zemirot* with great devotion, while Al Kapuna steals a glance at the tantalizing dish of meat... The tasty food makes Al Kapuna want to jump in and be the boss, but the Chafetz Chaim holds him back by pronouncing, "In honor of Shabbat Kodesh."

Feeling satiated and tired, all in honor of Shabbat Kodesh, Al Kapuna is now the one who reaches for the siddur to recite the blessings after the meal. After that a small battle evolves: the Chafetz Chaim wishes to go to the *beit midrash* to learn, but Al Kapuna wants to collapse into a deep sleep. In the end they come to some compromise and Al Kapuna sinks into the couch with a newspaper, in honor of Shabbat Kodesh...

What indeed is the goal and role of a person in this world? To take the Al Kapuna in him and make him into **Rabbi** Al Kapuna! All material

influences should be transformed into spiritual desires, with all of them being used for the sake of Hashem's service. This is in accordance with the verse, "You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart," on which Chazal expound, "לבבך – (plural) with both your inclinations; with the *yetzer hatov* and the *yetzer hara*." A person should take his robust hands and legs and instead of running to do an *aveira* he should run to perform a mitzvah. Instead of enjoying a fattened duck he should enjoy the discussion of Abaye and Rava. In this way he elevates all his bodily abilities to the spiritual realm, and then his entire being will become a Chafetz Chaim. This indeed was how the Chafetz Chaim lived his life.

How can the "Chafetz Chaim" transform "Al Kapuna" and bring him to repent? Should he put a small kippah on his head? It is not likely that this will help. Al Kapuna is prepared to transgress the three cardinal sins even while wearing a kippah. It is not a deterrent for him. So what should one do? If this scoundrel causes you harm, pull him into the *beit midrash* to diligently study, review and memorize Torah, and exhaust the body by doing so. This is the way to find a remedy for a person's "Al Kapuna," and this will transform him into a completely new person!

In summation, each person is made up of two inclinations and two desires. The evil inclination rules over one's desires, while the good inclination rules over the mind. This is why the *yetzer hara* is called an old and foolish king, while the *yetzer hatov* is compared to a wretched but clever person. A person has the ability to choose whether to be drawn after his desires or to make his intellect rule over his desires!

How can a person strengthen and nurture his positive desires so they have more power than his negative ones? The answer is through Torah study! Chazal reveal this answer to us in the Gemara, "I created the *yetzer hara* – I created the Torah as an antidote" (*Lev Shalom*).



"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"

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