



Man Must Perform Hashem's Will Only

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

It seems most surprising that Chava was persuaded to eat from the tree. Since she did not yet 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 most certainly a very high level and it must follow that Chava too was on this level. If so, how did they come to sin and all the more so without a yetzer hara?

The serpent swayed Chava by telling her that if she eats from the tree she will know 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 for did Chava actually think that she could, chalila, become like G-d? What was the point of the serpent using this reasoning to convince her? It is obvious that there is no truth in this, clearly Chava could not, chalila, become like G-d.

The explanation is that as we know the serpent represents the satan, the evil inclination. The numerical value of 'nachash' (serpent), using the rule of 'im hakollel', 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 what he is telling him to do is a unique 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 through this, she will be able to distinguish between good and bad and she will then know how to attach herself to good and distance herself from evil. She will thus be able to cleave to Hashem, give Him more contentment and create Upper Worlds for 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 with the making of numerous worlds. This was the serpent's convincing argument, so that Chava should think she is acting for Heaven's sake and in doing so, expanding Hashem's honor in the creation.

This is how Chava was 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 stumbled too 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, for Heaven's sake, in order to receive great wisdom and know

to distinguish between good and bad. In this way they will be able to distance themselves in an ultimate fashion from bad and will have the power to create worlds for the honor of Hashem. On hearing these words from his wife, Adam accepted them and ate. He was so 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 had eaten and will continue to eat, since on the contrary, he considered this a mitzvah and not an aveirah and his intention with this eating was for Hashem's honor. This is always the approach of the yetzer hara- to persuade a person that an aveirah is really a mitzvah and 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 that he was forbidden to talk in this manner. He replied that his intention was for Heaven's sake and it was therefore permitted. I tried to convince him that in fact his intention was not for Heaven's sake and explained that this is the way of the yetzer hara, to give one the impression that everything we do is for Hashem's honor. Indeed, after contemplating the matter, he admitted that it was the claim of the yetzer hara and he was actually speaking lashon hara for personal reasons.

What, in fact, was Adam and Chava's sin? Will not the ability to distinguish between good and bad enable them to distance themselves from evil and thereby attach themselves to good, causing great pleasure to Hashem? But their mistake was that Hashem does not wish a person to build worlds and offer sacrifices on account of transgressing His word. Rather, Hashem's desire is that a person should do as he is commanded and should not try to be smart and add to these commandments. Adam and Chava thought that Hashem had given them only one commandment (not to eat from the tree) and they wished to perform more mitzvot by knowing how to distinguish between good and bad, but this was the root of their mistake.

According to this explanation, it is clear why they were not punished immediately when Hashem came to speak with them but were only banished from Gan Eden. 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 that they had been given. Adam and Chava were sent to this world since they now were able to distinguish between good and bad and had already prepared themselves for life in this world and how 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 stumble in this matter, to be convinced that something is a mitzvah while in reality it is an aveirah, a person claims that the act contains no trace of sin and continues to transgress Hashem's word.

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Hilula

27 - Rabbi Yitzchak Hazaken, of the Ba'alei Hatosfot

28 - Rabbi Avraham Avichazar

29 - Shimon HaTzaddik, of the Survivors of the Great Assembly

30 - Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Hazenperetz, author of 'Dr Yakar'

1 - Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of 'Tzemach Tzedek'

2 - Rabbi Yosef Buskila, Rav of Beit Shemesh

3 - Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, President of Ma'etzet Chachmei HaTorah



Walking in their Ways

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

No Vacation from Public Responsibility

After 'bein hazmanim', the intercession between study semesters in yeshiva and in schedule with the chagim, a Sanzer Chassid once approached me. He told me that 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 at my words. "Please forgive me Rabbi, 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 the troubles of my fellow Jews?!

On second thought, I realized that his words were in place and 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 his 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.



Words of our 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 successful in establishing a network of Kollelim.

The sefer 'Mizkenim Etbonan', tells over how 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 is 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 that he required.

Maran zt"l 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: What should he do, he is missing one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars? The chag is approaching and the avreichim are relying on the money.

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!"

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 took them with him on his trip.

He arrived and 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 in order 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 he wrote out a check and the avreich returned to the airport exactly one hour after arriving!

The Haftarah

"Thus said the G-d, Hashem, Who created the heavens and stretched them forth" (Yeshaya 42)



The connection to the parsha: The prophecy of Yeshaya mentions the creation of heaven and earth and all that is in it, while the parsha contains a detailed description of the creation of the world.

Guard Your Tongue

He is Fitting to Be Thrown to the Dogs

Chazal say: Lashon hara kills three people: The one who speaks, the one who accepts his words and the one about whom it is spoken. (As we know from the incident of Do'eg, he was banished from the Next World on account of speaking rechilut, Nov the city of Kohanim, about whom the rechilut was spoken, was destroyed, and Shaul was killed later on since he accepted the rechilut.) The sin of the one who accepts the rechilut is greater than the one who speaks.

Chazal tell us that one who speaks lashon hara and one who accepts lashon hara, is fitting to be thrown to the dogs, since the command, "Do not accept a false report" is preceded by the verse, "to the dog shall you throw it".



Pearls of the Parsha

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 that 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?! How did Chazal come to this conclusion, even establishing it as part of the blessing of the moon? Maybe it is considered as a blessing recited for an invalid reason?!

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 work at night. A happy worker will arrive punctually every morning in order to start work on time and put in a productive days' work and will similarly 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. Do we, at every step, look for excuses why not to fulfill a certain mitzvah, or on the contrary do we search for reasons that will obligate us to fulfill a commandment?

Hope is Not Lost

"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me what I ate from the tree" (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." (In Hebrew the verb is written in the future tense although Adam is relating to an event in the past)

The Chidushei Harim explains that Hashem asked Adam, what was going through your mind when you ate? Were you in a mind frame of "I will sin and repent", of one who is not given the opportunity to repent?

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 bless 'Who gives sight to the blind' for the sense of sight. Through Adam Harishon listening to his wife, he brought damage to the entire world and since the damage was a result of the power of hearing, it is not fitting to bless for it.

Investing Effort for a Curse

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

If in order to fulfill the curse "by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread" a person toils day and night, R' Yosef Zundel of Novhardok zt"l pointed out. How much more so must he put forth effort to acquire the blessing, "Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem"!

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya
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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 was born and immediately died, for he was only given a few hours to live. Adam HaRishon had mercy on him and gave him seventy years of his own life. Hashem told Adam that he should 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 years, Hashem came to take back his neshama. 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 to be asked: How did Adam HaRishon forget that he had signed a document stating that he undertakes to donate seventy years of his life to David Hamelech? Furthermore, why was it necessary for Hashem to write a promissory note for Adam?

We can answer that Adam's 'forgetting' was a result of two reasons:

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

Secondly, after Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge and admitted his sin, he dressed himself in sackcloth and fasted for one hundred and thirty years, occupying himself with repentance. Hashem accepted his teshuva and sewed him garments of skin. During those years Adam became attached to Torah and actually felt the taste of Gan Eden here in this world. He 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 he thought that he was supposed to live forever, or at least for a thousand years. Therefore, when the time came for Hashem to take back his neshama, he claimed that 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 that after repenting he will forget his promise and wish to continue living, He therefore made him sign a document.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



Al Kapuna Learning Torah

"And Hashem G-d formed the 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 took this mashal and nimshal and used it 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 that the Chafetz Chaim was confined!

Now we will try to imagine the Chafetz Chaim zt"l and Al Kapuna sitting together in prison, sharing one tiny room. The Chafetz Chaim, short and unassuming, weak and fatigued, sits on one side of the room, while opposite him, hovers the tall and massive Al Kapuna. He makes a fist and punches the Chafetz Chaim with a brutal blow.

However, in place of this scenario 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 playing tricks with us and we are day-dreaming. After that both of them 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. The body is represented by Al Kapuna, who has lowly desires and wants.

The Chafetz Chaim and Al Kapuna spend time together in the Beit Midrash and enjoy themselves with their 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 Hakeneset 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 "Thus... were finished..." as if becomes a partner in the creation of heaven and earth.

And so, the Chafetz Chaim finishes making Kiddush, and Al Kapuna quickly sits down and gulps 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? One can define it by saying that one must 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, "'all your heart' (it is written רבב in the plural and not רב, which signifies) with both your inclinations; with the yetzer hatov and with the yetzer hara". A person should take his robust hands and legs and instead of running to do an aveirah he should instead run to perform a mitzvah. Instead of enjoying a fattened duck he should enjoy the discussion of Abaya 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 caused you harm, pull him in to the Beit Midrash to diligently study Torah, to repeat and memorize and exhaust the body through Torah diligence. 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 good inclination and the evil inclination. 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 pitiful but wise person. A person has the ability to choose whether to be drawn after his desires or to make his intellect rule over his desires and cultivate these desires, his positive desires!

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