

A Dvar Torah to encourage matters of Yiras Shomayim prepared to be shared and discussed with your family at the Shabbos table



פרשת בהעלותך

54 RECOGNIZING THE ENEMY

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 לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה



לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

KNOWING HIS TRICKS

say that the הרע does not suddenly try to tempt a person to commit great עבירות, rather he does so in stages. At first, the הרע says to do one thing, then pushes further and eventually tries talking the person into serving זרה עבודה.

The Friediker Rebbe explained that the הרע may even begin by agreeing to the mitzvos being done ("עשה כך"), but rationalizes and limits the extent of their fulfillment. He encourages one to watch his health, be "normal", and find favor in the eyes of others, and brings proofs and explanations for all his claims. This cools a person and enables the הרע to push him further into actually committing עבירות.

(שבת ק"ה ע"ב, סה"מ קונטרסים א' ע' ל"ז ע"א)

say that throughout one's entire life, one should not rely on his righteousness, for יהונן כהן גדול served eighty years in the Beis Hamikdosh and then became a צדוקי (strayed from the תורה way).

(ברכות כ"ט ע"א)

writes that a person must always be wary of the הרע, for even when one forgets about the הרע, the הרע does not forget about the person. He acts like a friend but is really trying to completely destroy him.

A chossid once met a troop of soldiers returning from a victorious battle, loaded with plenty of spoils. The chossid told them, "Now be prepared for the real war." Surprised, they asked him to explain. "The war of the הרע when you celebrate the spoils," he clarified.

(חובת הלבבות שער יחוד המעשה פ"ה)

The Friediker Rebbe related: As a child, my father, the Rebbe Rashab, taught me Tanya, explaining in depth how a chassidishe child (חסידישער אינגל) must change himself. At that time, we learned the letter of the Alter Rebbe in which he strongly warns his Chassidim not to scorn those Yidden who have fought them, or raise themselves above them. My father explained, "The נפש הבהמית convinces a person that such behavior comes from מדות טובות דקדושה, being proud of his service of Hashem, and thus fools him into regressing further and further."

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' כ')

The Rebbe Rashab related what he had heard in a yechidus with his father the Rebbe Maharash: The הרע, though called an 'animal',

can at times act slyly, and clothe itself in the guise of a straightforward, humble tzaddik, requiring one to use much cleverness to uncover its tricks. The הרע manifests itself in each person according to his nature. One person may suddenly feel a powerful desire to learn Chassidus, yet it is from the הרע who is trying to prevent him from davening at length or similar.

The Rebbe Maharash then instructed: Take this as a general rule and remember it always. Anything that actually leads to active עבודה (changing the middos) and is met up with opposition, even the most noble, it is coming from the הרע.

The Rebbe Rashab concluded: Until then I had not known that there can be a הרע, let alone a הרע חסידישע יצר הרע.

(היום יום כ"ג סיון)

The tzaddik Reb Nochum of Chernobyl lived in great poverty. Once, a chossid brought him a gift of 300 rubles, and the gabbai, who also oversaw the needs of the home, was glad that the large debts they had accumulated would finally be paid up. When this chossid left Reb Nochum's room, tens of other Chassidim had their turn, until they stopped to daven mairiv. After mairiv, the tzaddik closed himself in his room for a while and then opened the door and asked for one of the chassidim who had been in Yechidus earlier. After the chossid left, the tzaddik continued seeing Chassidim late into the night.

After the chassidim left, the gabbai entered the Rebbe's room to request some money, having already made a listing of the amount he would pay each creditor. Reb Nochum opened the drawer where he kept the money he was given for personal use, and the gabbai was surprised to see only a few silver and copper coins, but no sign of the 300 rubles. The tzaddik told him to take all the coins, a total of 100 rubles, but the gabbai remained rooted to his place, downcast but unable to speak up. The tzaddik asked him why he looked so sad, if after all, Hashem had sent them money. The gabbai, no longer able to contain himself, asked about the 300 rubles, to which the Rebbe replied, "When I received the money I wondered why I had merited such a sum. So when one of the Chassidim told me about his lack of funds for tuition, rent, and his daughter's wedding, it dawned on me that Hashem has given me the special zechus of supporting this Yid. In fact, the amount the chossid needed, totaled the exact amount that I had received.

"However, upon deciding to give the 300 rubles to this chossid, another thought came to my mind, 'Why give so much money to one

person, when it can be divided between six families?'

"Faced with the dilemma of these two options, I closed myself in my room. After thinking it through, I came to the conclusion that the second idea, to divide the money among a number of families, was not coming from the יצר טוב, for then it would have entered my mind immediately. However, only once I had thought of the מצוה, did this thought come along to trick me." Reb Nochum concluded, "I fulfilled the advice of the יצר טוב and gave the chossid the entire 300 rubles."

The Friediker Rebbe added: From this we see how important is discernment, always knowing from where a thought is coming. This discernment can only be acquired through עבודה.

The Rebbe applied this concept: If when one begins to learn, he suddenly has the thought to go spread Yiddishkiet, or the reverse, he should know that it is coming from the יצר הרע.

(סד"ש תש"ג ע' 67)

CLEVERLY COUNTERING

Shlomo Hamelech writes in Mishlei that one should wage war against the יצר הרע using clever strategies. The ספר חרדים records this as a בלה, an obligation derived from ג"ך.

(משלי כ"ד, ס' חרדים פל"ה אות ב')

The Gemoro says that one should always use cleverness regarding the way he fears Hashem. Rashi explains that one should use all kinds of sly tactics to achieve fear of Hashem.

(ברכות י"ז ע"א)

The Medrash relates what Dovid Hamelech said to Hashem, "רבנו, של עולם, every morning upon awakening, I would plan aloud, 'Today I will visit some place or someone's home'. Then I would lead my feet to the Beis Medrash, thereby tricking the יצר הרע and not allowing him to distract me."

(ילקוט תהלים אות תת"צ, פ' בן יהוידע ברכות י"ז ע"א)

The tzaddik Reb Naftali of Ropshitz was known for his wit and cleverness. His Rebbe the holy חוזה of Lublin challenged him, "Isn't it written in Torah that one should be simple and straightforward ("תמים") in his service to Hashem?" The talmid replied, "To reach the level of תמימות, one must first have wisdom, as the chachomim have said that one should be clever in שמים."

(דור דעה ע' רל"ז)

The Friediker Rebbe said that with the cleverness of Torah, and especially chassidus, one can counter the slyness of the יצר הרע.

(סד"ש תרצ"ו ע' 223)

Towards the end of one of his personal fasts, the tzaddik Reb Dovid of Lelov was out on the road and felt an extreme thirst. Suddenly, noticing a spring of cool bubbling water, his thirst intensified to the point that he was about to break his fast and drink. He stood still for a moment to consider the matter and found strength within himself to overcome his burning thirst. Continuing on his way, he felt a great rush of joy, for he had succeeded in squashing his יצר הרע! However, a moment later, he said to himself, "This joy is not coming from the יצר טוב, but from the יצר הרע who is trying to get me to be filled with pride!" To avoid falling into the trap, Reb Dovid returned to the

spring and drank his fill.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 527)

The tzaddik Reb Yitzchok of Vorki once awoke in middle of the night and felt a desire to take a sniff of tobacco. While in bed, he was unable to reach the tobacco box and debated with himself whether to get up for it or not. If he would rise to get it, he would be giving the יצר הרע the opportunity of being able to convince him to fulfill his desires. Yet, if he would not get out of bed, he would still be giving into his יצר הרע by practicing laziness, a trait he might apply when serving Hashem. After weighing this in his mind, he decided, "I will get up and get the box, but I will not fulfill my desire to smell it."

(ילקוט ספורים)

A young chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe came to have Yechidus and ask for advice on how to rid himself of his feeling of self importance ('הרגשת הישי'). The Mitteler Rebbe began advising him by relating the following:

When kedusha and סטרא אחרא (its opposing force) were created, they asked Hashem to define their job in this world. Hashem told kedusha that he was to reveal the truth, that Hashem is the creator of the world and all creations must fulfill His commands. The opposing force was instructed to tell the opposite, that there is no ruler and everyone can do what they want. "Why would people listen to such lies?" סטרא אחרא queried, but Hashem assured him that he would be listened to as much the force of kedusha is. When he received his name and guise הקדמוני, נחש, he again objected, for such a title is enough to scare anyone, however Hashem reassured him that all would be alright.

Indeed, אדם and חוה listened to the snake and sinned. Yet, once they regretted their עבירה and אדם fasted a great deal as a כפרה, סטרא אחרא returned to Hashem and complained that now no one would listen to him, so Hashem changed his name to מלאך המות. When אברהם taught about Hashem, his guise had to be changed to שטן, which he used until Mattan Torah, when Moshe Rabbeinu revealed that there is no force other than Hashem. His name then was changed to 'יש' (ego) and he used this to fill the yeshivos and great Torah learners with strong arrogance and, succeeding in great measure.

Then came the Baal Shem Tov, who taught Chassidus and revealed that the only true existence ('יש') is Hashem and everything else is essentially non-existent. The סטרא אחרא came crying and begged to be removed from the world, for now, no one would listen to him. "Don't worry," Hashem consoled him and gave him the title 'הרגשת' (feeling of self) as a way to trap the people.

The Mitteler Rebbe concluded: Now do you know from whom you must be cautious? Chase him out; this is vital for your נשמה!

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"ב ע' 170)

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