

Good morning.

We are starting this class with a question.

Q: I notice that the first class quotation regarding coals on the head is in Perek Shira with the frog who lets the sea creature in it and quotes this perek. Anything to add in this context.

A: Perek Shira is very interesting. After it became popularized, the meforshim on it became popularized as well. One of the perushim as written by a talmid of the Chosom Sofer who was a great chossid of Perek Shira and he says something fascinating, and he says that the frog hints at a spiritual capacity that was the essence of Shlomo HaMelech. The word sephardai means to proclaim, to know. Dovid HaMelech was like a sea creature who like the leviathan who could swim from one end of the world to another very quickly. There are two kinds of tzaddikim, those that can flow, their souls are so powerful and passionate, they are compared to the leviathan, the great fish the leviathan and can go very fast. Similarly there are those tzaddikim whose passion is so great, it takes them beyond any kind of speed to move higher and faster. The average person though needs words, to chew over and digest. Shlomo gave words and ideas to give form and context to Dovid's passion.

Now bear with me. When you are talking about different levels of reality, the lowest reality is this world, the world of visibility. Above that, given Tu Beshevat was yesterday, think of it like a fruit with a thick peel. Take away the klipah and then you get to something. This parallels our interactions with physicality. In tefillah this is like seeing Hashem with our physical bodies and the world and uplifting it. The next dimension, the next world is Atzerah, formation, where Hashem on His side, is where He begins the process of things happening. The outside displays Hashem but there is an inner core is like a pit that is not edible, tzimtim halev, contraction of the heart. We can see as much as our hearts let us see, but our emotions take over and that takes us to another place. That is analogous in tefillah to speaking out praise of Hashem but our praise is limited by our ability to open our hearts. The level above that is bria, creativity itself. That is analogous to a fruit that is completely edible like a strawberry. The outside and inside are both completely edible. That is analogous to having absolute consciousness, and there there are no words because words always make limitations. That is like Shemonah Esrai where we have words of devotion but not our own voice. Dovid lived in that world but Shlomo brought it down to the world below where there are still words and he did this through thought. He was like the frog who said proclaim knowledge and by doing that, the sea creature could eat him and make this kind of awareness accessible to others.

Q. I was listening to a past class about starving the Yetzer hara. What about the idea of making something permissible because of the idea mayim geduva ...

A. It is not simple. The Torah doesn't say forbidden, it demystifies her. She takes off her garments that are pleasing (when someone is on the battlefield) and mourn so as to

Sefer Netivat Olam of the Maharal
Rebbetzin Heller
Feb 4 2007
Page 2 of 6

demystify herself. It is worth looking at the Ohr Chaim, who discusses demystification. It is not permitting it in its present form, it is taking something out of it (stolen water is sweeter) but you have to begin by making it less exciting, less cool. For example, before a friend of mine was frum, she taught in a school and she was very small, and looked like a victim. The boys would make a remark and she would say to a different boy he said something not nice...can you help me? The first boy was totally made uncool. The trick of making something uncool makes it demystified.

Q: Isn't being with her, once permitted, still on that battlefield before the whole process begins? What about that?

A: it is not clear that he can take her in the heat of battle. To take her with the full knowledge that he has to demystify her.

With that, Perek Daled. This is our last shiur for this sefer and we will have questions at the end.

A person, he tells us, who breaks dishes when he is angry or tears his clothing when he is angry, or spends money when angry, that person should be in your eyes like a person who worships idols. This is how the yetzer hara works skillfully, today he says lo to the person, do this! The next day he says do that! Until he can tell him, go! Worship idols. Meaning the yetzer hara tells a person to break one border and then another until there are no borders left.

What does it mean by equating anger with avodah zara. Let there be no foreign power in you, which is the anger. Don't bow to a power which is a foreign one. What foreign thing is there in a person's body? This is the yetzer hara. The way he deceives you is by having you put excessive fear on the people who live in the house. What is happening is that the person is so overtaken by the yetzer hara, that the person becomes the action, it isn't that he is doing the action like tearing his clothing, and it envelopes him completely, and that is why he wants to do bad. It is self expression. Otherwise why would he want to do something destructive. As an aside, this is why people hurt themselves. It is coming from having so much bad feelings within them that they have to enact it. It is because of the yetzer hara within them. It is bad expressing itself. Anything that takes a person over that they do evil, of course if they do bad they are bad (the name of the person who steals is ganif, if he actually stole, he let the concept of theft define him.) A person who does things that are bad for him can be called bad, because he is doing bad. When he himself is the victim, it is even worse.

When you are talking about a person breaking his dishes, whatever a person needs for his own use, when they limit what they use by destroying it, it is also destructive energy. Now we are moving closer to the essential person, to their mind. A person has to use their

Sefer Netivat Olam of the Maharal
Rebbetzin Heller
Feb 4 2007
Page 3 of 6

mind when they are engaged with money. How so? You can't eat or wear money, you have to spend it and you think about it. You make a plan to get money and spend it. That person is distorting and destroying all the intellectual investment they put in themselves.

We see a person's emotions in the way they spend money. Meaning, because a person is so intellectually invested with money, they develop an emotional response to money. Let's say you have a job. In order to get a job as a legal secretary, you have to become educated. When you get your salary, it tells you that you are invested, and you have an emotional investment in it..you are skilled etc. These three things relate to different aspects of what a person is. When a person tears their garments, it is as though they tear themselves, like wise with dishes or money, they are affecting themselves.

When a person not only does bad but is bad, that is avoda zara. He is serving something strange..he is strange, something foreign to Hashem. Just as avoda zara actually separates a person from Hashem when he serves the idol, so the same way a person's devotion to Hashem is lost when they serve the yetzer hara, the devotional part serves something where Hashem is not in the picture. The tragedy is the person has the energy but is misdirecting it.

He concludes this part by saying the yetzer hara creates something other..not only hashem and His world, but something else that is just as compelling, just as real. If the yetzer hara seems to be overpowering you, remember the Shema, Hashem Echad. I have to account for this, it has a root and a direction, I can't separate it from Hashem. Similarly, if they are overtaken by evil within themselves...they are not seeing Hashem as part of themselves - there is I want and Hashem wants and these are two completely separate realities for that person at that time. Especially when a person is broken through life to the point where they no longer believe in themselves at all, there is room for the yetzer hara to cause them to do things that are self-destructive. We were away for Shabbos and the father of the family overheard his Rav speaking to someone else to someone so broken he felt there is no place on the planet for him. By the time he was 50 he thought he would find another job, and he is not married. No job, not married, he feels there is no place for him. He was blaming himself. He was completely broken. The Rav said to him the only thing that matters is devekus to Hashem. The Rav began to confide in the man, that the Rav has enormous debts and he is worried about payments, but none of this affects devekus in Hashem. This is what it means when people do self-destructive things. It seems to me, Mrs. Heller, our society is so twisted that the food disorders so many are stricken with are examples of terrible things that we do to our bodies, thinking that it is good when it is so bad. The tragedy is that it is an illness, has to do with living with a foreign force within.

In the next perek, the gemara tells us that Reb Yosef really said with the tzaddikim, the yetzer tov is the only thing that can sway judgment. My heart is hollow from within me,

meaning I can make my heart go wherever I want it to go. Meaning he slaughtered his yetzer hara, he made it submit to him through fasting. Conversely, the reshaim, it is only the evil part that wins, the only judgment that is heard. A person can say, I just had to say it and chas vshalom it could be true. And benonim, sometimes one wins and sometimes the other.

The Maharal is saying that the yetzer hara is separate from the person but with a rasha, the separate self is directing the action and the yetzer tov is also separate from a person and it can run the show. The tzaddik says it is what I want to do it is completely yetzer tov, and with a rasha, it is completely yetzer hara. With a benonim, it depends on the day. Someone asked Rabbi Shteinman why he is traveling so much now he is so old. It is not easy to travel. When you read in the paper, he goes to four places in one day. He said, at this time I asked my self what I should be doing and I looked at my options and I realized Hashem gave me time that He did not give to everyone, so Hashem spared me to do something (the Yetzer tov talking) and what I can do is give people chizuk. He has been talking about tznius, I the eved Hashem, what should I be doing? Conversely, there is I the yetzer hara. What is left for me? In the 60's Bob Dylan or something, I don't want to live past 30, don't trust anyone over 30, because when you are 30 you are dead. Meaning the yetzer hara starts to lose its power at 30. What would I be alive for? The real battle for benonim is who claims our identity. The sign is that we can be bad to ourselves.

What does this pasuk mean? There is a small city with fortifications. He begins to explain, the small city is a person's body and his limbs are its population and the King who comes to surround it is the yetzer hara and he builds fortifications, which are the person's sins. The more we see ourselves as sinful, the more credibility the yetzer hara has, so I want you to hear how the yetzer hara sounds...you are bad – destroy yourself, he is bad, destroy him. I cant stand life, break those dishes. It all begins from feeling the weight of the avanut. So what do you do? The gemara finishes as follows. A poor but wise person found the city (the yetzer tov found the city) and rescues the whole city with his wisdom, and his wisdom is teshuva and masim tovim. The answer to the self hatred and the guilt is not argument (you are not guilty because really it was your mother...) but rather it is teshuva and masim tovim. See yourself doing good. Look yourself in the face. This is what I did but it isn't where I am going to stay and here is what I am going to do. Move your identity towards avodas Hashem and you can rescue the whole city. At the time, a person barely remembers this poor man, (the yetzer tov), and when the yetzer hara is there, meaning the battle for identity is one that can have the conclusion. A person's teshvua and masim tovim are the wisdom a person needs to win. What do they win? A city has 10 officers who rule – 2 hands, 2 feet, 2 eyes, 2 ears, and the sexual organ and the mouth. This means whoever wins the battle for identity gets the 10 officers. If the yetzer hara wins, it affects everything, and if your yetzer tov wins, it gets all the body members. When a person is in a certain state of being, the way they use their eyes and ears changes. For example, a 72 year old lady, not too clean, bad teeth, sandals, torn clothes, collecting. A person with a good eye, a person who sees as an eved Hashem,

Sefer Netivat Olam of the Maharal
 Rebbetzin Heller
 Feb 4 2007
 Page 5 of 6

what can I do for this person? Someone else sees this person as yuck, delete that person. She is miskain, and are not allowed to appear. Same is true with the ears. A person hears complaining and one person thinks – they are so needy like a sponge. Someone else hears a person in pain, how can I help them? The poor smell bad, but an eved Hashem would not focus on this. The winner is the one who gets the body to do what he wants.

He says a person's soul, like anything of chashivus, has to have many ways of self-manifestations. So a city is not a place with a population of one, but rather a population of at least 10 because each one absorbs the other one's energy and provides for the other and the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Similarly with a person, with the ten limbs a person is like a small city. And the city includes the people within it. Of all the things that the yetzer hara is compared to, it is compared to a King. Why? Because it wants control and this is how we identify it. It is willing to give control to no one, not even Hashem. When we want control, it is probably the yetzer hara. This person who wants to control things is not because they are so high (I am too big to submit to him or that) but our desire for control is always artificial..the angels don't desire control.

The yetzer tov is like a poor man because he is humble...he is like a poor man who can say what do you think? Tell me more. The more the yetzer tov humbles himself, the more he can be defined as that person's identity by bringing Hashem back into the picture, which can't be done if a person is proud, which is why the yetzer tov is called a poor man. The yetzer hara is called the king because it convinces the person to have a proud heart because a person with a proud heart can't identify with Hashem. If a person is arrogant, he can't see something bigger than himself. You never will see a parent losing their temper and hitting their child. If the slap is given in anger, it is not educational, but before he hit the child, he did not have Hashem in the picture. Gatlus is really the problem, we forget Hashem because our hearts were high.

The yetzer tov is called a chochom. In Pirke Avot, it says who is wise? Someone who can see the future. A midwife is a chochoma. Why is a wise person one who can see the the future? Because you can see where it goes, the outcome. The Yetzer tov makes you see the outcome. Think about the kind of person who throws dishes. A woman, not young, has a profession, she went on an interview, got a job and blew the job in one day. She came home in a state and from that mistake she started scratching her arms with her fingernails...from her hatred for herself. Now here is what she could not see at the moment. Where is this getting you? Scratching your arms not going to give you financial security. The chochom whose yetzer tov moves the person out of reaction and into taking control of their destiny to a large degree by determining who they want to be and who they want their identity to be.

They even take the person's doing teshuva, meaning the person will see there is hope. What he says is that the yetzer hara is like an old foolish king. The foolishness is that when you ask the yetzer hara where does this go, it doesn't care about the answer. That

Sefer Netivat Olam of the Maharal
Rebbetzin Heller
Feb 4 2007
Page 6 of 6

is the foolishness This is compared to the sea wave. The reshonim are like the waves in the sea, one breaks on the shore and the second wave still rises. Concerning the reshonim, they rise to flood the world and can see it is taking them to failure, but they rise anyway even though they have seen others in that place. Because of that, a person who can remember the yetzer tov and notice that there are two paths open to them won't come to evil.

We have concluded this part of perek daled and I will take questions for two minutes.

There are no questions. We should claim our identity, cut off the voice of choser, demystify the yetzer hara, don't battle it head on (gaiva) but ask Hashem for help. We will go on to a new netiv very soon, netiv hashalom.

Q How do you identify which yetzer is speaking?

A The yetzer hara speaks with the language of choser and the yetzer tov speaks with action and hope.