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Rebbetzin Heller November 26 2006

This class is dedicated lelui nishmat to Rachel Leah bat Chaim Tzvi ...we'll get back to that.

While we are waiting for the name, the idea really does affect their soul.

We left off last time with a gemara that told us what the effect of Torah is on fighting the yester hara. We are beginning on kof chof gimel, the right column.

There are seven names that the yetzer hara has. Of course when you question who cares how many names you give anything? The idea is if you give something a name, you are defining what it is to you, so the seven names of relevant.

Question from last week:

Someone asks that I explain l'fum sara agra, which we spoke about last week. The payment goes according to the suffering. The people sometimes misinterpret this to mean that the more you suffer the better you do. Logically, if that is true, if it takes a certain amount of effort to look good for Shabbos, it would be even better if you bought a sheep, shear it, dye the wool, etc. Not true. You can measure what something means to you by what you are willing to trade off to get it. Suppose I were to tell someone they lost \$100,000. Conversely if I told you that you could buy two 5 room apartment and a new car for \$100,000, they would say, what that is nothing..it is because what you are getting is better than what you are giving out. Similarly, when we do mitzvahs with the awareness of where the mitzvah takes them, they are willing to make sacrifices to get there. Let's take a simple example, a girl who is just beginning to keep Shabbos and she doesn't know what to do, she hasn't learned what to do. She sees that all her food is in the refrigerator and the light is on. For her, that means no food. To her, Shabbos is worth more than food is. That is l'fum sara agra. She is willing to make enormous tradeoffs for it, which Hashem will pay back.

In a more major sense, look at all the stories in the gemara of mesiras nefesh, Rabbi Akiva says at his horrific death, this is what I always wanted. He didn't want suffering. Having absolute allegiance to Hashem's will, this is cheap,losing your body which is lost anyway.

Let's look at these seven names. Hashem refers to it as ra. That was the name he gave it. The inclination of man is evil from his early youth. Moshe refers to it as the uncircumsized one. And you shall circumsize the uncircumsized heart. Dovid called it impure. He said, Hashem give me a pure heart. It's opposite is an impure heart, the yetzer hara. Shlomo HaMelech called it the enemy. If your enemy is hungry give him bread, or water, and you will be pouring coals on his head and Hashem will pay you back. Yeshaya called it the stumbling block. Pave pave, clear out the way, remove the stumbling block from the path of my people. Yechezkeil called it the stone, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh. Yoel called it the viper, I will distance the viper from you. And that is the end of the gemara.

Now the Maharal says, we have to understand the terms good and evil. What is evil? Let's understand evil as the opposite of good. Hashem is the source of all goodness, all life, creativity, all giving. All the middos through which we see Hashem's presence are manifestations of His goodness and the yetzer hara is the opposite, everything that conceals that.

The Maharal goes a step deeper. He says that goodness is absolute, it's real. What do I mean by real? Hashem is the cause of everything we call real. Anything that comes into being, that wasn't here originally – all that is a result of Hashem's creativity. He is not the result of anything so we call Him the absolute reality, not relative to the will of some external creator, while everything that He made is only relative in terms of its reality because it is dependent on the will of its Creator. Nevertheless everything He Created is a manifestation of Him, and we see His goodness. He saw it was good. Everything that was created gives testimony to His goodness. Because of this the yetzer hara causes absence, that which conceals, and it makes all the goodness seem absent.

I want to take this a step deeper before we go back to the text. The Maharal's book on Chanukah, Ner Mitzvah, he talks about Daniel's vision, and he stands by the sea and sees four animals rising from the depths, a lion, a bear, a tiger or leopard and one is indescribable. He understands these animals with their different features, and he saw them an embodiment of the four kingdoms that will invariably rule. He tells us that the four kingdoms are spoken from the very beginning – the world was formless and empty/chaotic and dark and faces the death. These four phrases hint to four empires that will conceal Hashem in different ways. The empires are an inherent part of creation, a result of creation. There is a distance between the Creator and creation. The creation is other than Hashem, now there is an other. The otherness already creates the consciousness of absence of Hashem. Let's listen back to what we just said.

The yetzer is the opposite, the absence. It is called evil. It's evil is in relationship to its Creator. Evil comes from otherness, but still it is something that Hashem can say this is not me, it is ra.

Moshe called it uncircumcised. A person who is uncircumcised is a completely different creation than one who is. Moshe says evil has to do with people not reaching their fulfillment or completion. To understand why this name relates to Moshe, we have to know that Moshe was on such a high level that the yetzer no longer had a connection to him. He was gdly so, the yetzer was despicable to him. Many people understand this with question that when people are great they also have a great yetzer hara.

Question:

With the rockets falling in Sderot, is it correct to think of the enemy here as an "iron" representation of the yetzer hara, an iron stick to hit us, an iron stick that loves to destroy, and if so, would it be especially wise of us to tackle this evil as exists in our own consciousness

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It is very difficult to take a complicated problem and give a yes or no answer. The question is complex, it has to do with this last of all exile, the Roman exile (iron) which ends with a sub-exile of galut Ishmael (taiva). The Romans and Ishmaelites are entwined. The qualities of the Ishmaelites are compared to the chamor, the bale taiva, the e'ven, are entwined with the gaiva of the Romans, the iron. Because they are entwined, this golus is the hardest of all. In Tehillim we refer to this last golus as one of the man of no kindness which we see all the time.

Often times people are asking the great Torah sages of today what should we work on. Oftentimes they have their own ideas of the answers. Recently some women put together an evening of prayers for various important reasons. One of the women had an agenda and saw that we are trapped in chumrios, in Ishmael's own trap, there is immodesty and everything that shows that we are being despoiled by our own bodies. She wanted Rebbetzin Heller to put the line on this is the problem. I wouldn't do it, it is too much of a responsibility and I am not sure it is true. I told her to ask Reb Eliashiv and he said he doesn't want to say it's this or it's that. Everyone knows the anguish of their own soul and this is what we are meant to look at. Certainly the middah keneged middah against Esav is the barzel.... and Ishmael is the tzada kumri .... but they are combined now in their love of destruction.

Going back to Moshe. If you are tempted, then greater people must be even more tempted. But this is not so. The yetzer hara is a greater level of yetzer hara for a greater person. It would have to be something sophisticated, something with meaning to engage them. Ordinary sins would be repulsive to a greater person like Moshe, a person of transcendence. So why is the yetzer called despicable by him?

Nonetheless, because Moshe was not Hashem, he said the yetzer covered something, whereas Hashem said it is the essence of that which could cover, of concealment. Moshe's level of revulsion was less than Hashem's although certainly more than ours.

#### Question

I always learned that the Jewish view of Yetzer Hara/ Satan is that it is created by Hashem for the purpose of free will. There seem to be situations where it appears to have more "power" and needs to be "appeased" - Seir L'azzazel, The strange circumstances that brought about the Davidic line, etc. What does that mean? Thank you.

[miriam spielman] what is the idea of "Kol Hagadol Michaveiro Yitzro GAdol Mimenon"? Does it mean their Yetzer Hara works harder/smarter, OR that they have a yetzer hara for baser things (that's how I would've understood it, since that Chazzal is always brought whenever there's an incident of an aveirah involving arayos)

The idea of appeasing the yetzer hara ...think of Yaakov. When Yaakov was born, he was holding onto Esau's heel. They could have been born separately and then everything could have been more clear. Yaakov and Esau wanted to find the world. The world is like a nut. A walnut has shells, hard shells so hard that you would think it was wood if you were a baby. The three outside shells are the three courses of evil that cannot be

penetrated by good. They have to be rejected. But then there is a fourth level, a papery cover. Ordinary material experience is in that category. You can degrade material things or you can elevate it, see it as gift of His goodness. Klipah nogah is the battleground. It is the cover not the fruit. The relationship of Yaakov to klipah nogah is symbolized by holding on to Esau's heel, he had to have a connection. In order to prevent the relationship from being reversed, he had to offer something back to Esau. How to reverse? Be on the side of the klipah. If you can get that over to your side, it will be far greater. For example, think of the painting the last supper, which captures Yushka's Pesach seder. The reason they used a seder, it is because then depth and meaning go to the other side, it has more power. When we engage with the klipah nogah, it is best for us to pay our bill – give them something of us to show that we are willing to let go, to the point that we have no desire for what they have, but we'll use what they give us. Look at the Davidic line, they give us desire – yes, we use desires for good, here is your desires back. All the things having to do with the Davidic line is all about this (Lot, Ruth, etc). Yes we draw energy from you, we use it for kedusha, We are willing to pay our dues. This is an esoteric idea.

For Hashem the yetzer is the force of concealment and has no reality. For Moshe, it is a cover, like oil on the flesh. Dovid calls it impure. A person who is impure has to be separated, go outside the tent. This is why we have the halachos, when a person leaves the camp – go away, tamei, he is separate from us. Dovid, because his level is less than Moshe, saw an impure person as a person, there was a connection, he saw the forces of evil as being another aspect of humanity, even if we reject it. It is part of me, not out there. Moshe was on the level that it was not part of him.

For example, none of us is tempted to do human sacrifice. It is not something I have to do battle with, it is out there. For Moshe, everything is out there. He is pure. When a person reaches a certain level, there are places they don't go. Dovid was closer to us, it was like me, not me, but like me. It is tamei, it is what I want out, but it is part of the persona. The difference between us and Dovid is that he could say a part of him he rejects, not a part with whom he identifies...I wish that wasn't part of me. There was no doubt about who "I" is. For Dovid, something that is impure was something he wanted distance from, no connection with. He wanted no connection with it. He didn't want the kosher version of it, he wanted it over there.

Shlomo calls it the enemy because an enemy is separate from a person. An enemy doesn't defile you by touch. Tuma does. All the halachas regarding tuma have to do with touching. Dovid's sense of refinement in spiritual matters was such that he saw tuma as repulsive, he wanted no connection, he didn't want to touch.

Shlomo saw it as the enemy, he had no equivalency about that, but he wasn't afraid to touch it. We see this in Shlomo's life. Arguably the greatest mistake in his life was the number of women he took. His intent was to take whatever holiness there was from their societies and elevate it and bring it into Am Yisroel and thus elevate the world. Take it from klipah noga and bring it to kiddusha but it didn't work because Hashem forbade it. There should have been something about the fact that Hashem forbade it which made the

act itself repulsive to him, not because he couldn't do it because for a significant part of his life he did it, but before Hashem forbade it. For Shlomo it was not repulsive. For us halavai we don't do it.

In Yeshaya, we are going down. He called the forces of evil a stumbling block. There was no hatred there, it was something you had to get passed. Nobody considers a stumbling block their enemy...it's something you pick it up and move it aside. He had no idea compared to Moshe or Hashem, that anything that is good that is hidden is a lost opportunity and anything that conceals it should be despised. To him it was something to get through and halavai we should even see yetzer hara as a mikshul.

Yechezkeil saw it as a stone. We have all experienced when our hearts are hearts of stone. We can't get anywhere in our prayers and mitzvahs, they feel like it is mechanical. But we don't feel the stone is our enemy, we think of it as normal. It stops sometimes being a stumbling block and becomes an aspect of our personality. Which is a much lower level.

Yoel who is on a lower level still called it a viper, which means concealed. It is hidden in my heart and I don't know it is there. For example, if a person calls a Rav about a certain product and really wants an answer of muter. There is no consciousness of this that there is a part of the product that might be harmful. Rather, how do I get around this as if it is a stumbling block?

#### Question

What is the idea that the yetzer hara works harder and smarter?

#### Answer

The yetzer hara...the tzaddik in question would fall to arayos because something about his yearning for devekus goes off. Every so often we hear about good people who go off and they don't plan to go off, it is that their closeness with the other person was such that they didn't notice the yetzer in their hearts, exactly what we are talking about. If they were Moshe, it would have been repulsive to the point of being impossible. If they were Dovid, it would be something outside of consciousness. Although Dovid didn't sin with Batsheva, it was beneath his madrega. His belief that it was right overtook his consciousness. For people of a higher level, there is a greater possibility of turning something forbidden into muter and mitzvah is a greater possibility than it is for us.

We do things because we want to but at least we know where the line is drawn.

When you understand that these go from the higher to the lower, then you realize that since there are only seven levels, there is a limit to how far evil goes, symbolized by 7. How? Gehinnom which is evil in its absence of Hashem, also has seven names and it is all one thing. The seven levels relate to seven kinds of people.

A person who understand sin.

A person who is hard for him to bear

A person who realizes it could cause him to fall

A person whose opposition is such that he hates it – away away tamai  
A person to whom a sin is so estranged and beyond that he has no relationship to it at all  
A person who sees that doing the sin makes a person non-human.

The consensus of the Gedolai Torah is that the problem is we no longer despise sin, that it seems almost good. We have tolerance as a virtue, but we have to see sin as harmful distancing, not ourselves, no place for tolerance.

In the attempts to bring us to that place, to make our world narrower, oftentimes there is resistance because we are not Moshe Dovid Shlomo..or even Yoel, because we reached the point where sin is familiar and comforting, and this is what evil is, the absence of anything real. There is a hint in this that it has seven names, and he concludes with this.

The yetzer hara disguises itself as something that which gives us satisfaction. Which is why the number seven is the same letters as sova, satisfaction. Let's look at satisfaction, it isn't only physical -those who have material wealth are not necessarily satisfied. Nor is it only spiritual because if a person's physical needs are not met they are not satisfied. It is a way of taking that which is physical and giving it spiritual depth and meaning. People's yearning for meaning takes them to wanting to satisfy the empty place within them with forbidden acts and thus it says the desire for forbidden relations comes – which is often the source of evil- under the disguise of bringing satisfaction. Again this is why the number 7 is involved and with that we concluded what the Maharal says are the names of the yetzer hara.

We said that the yetzer hara has names that we can identify from higher to lower. The highest is Hashem who says this conceals me, the middle level is Moshe, who sees the person who surrenders to evil as being redefined, a walking human tragedy. Dovid would see not that the person is different but the evil has to be thrown out, down mikshul down even, until we get to where we are, the hidden viper that lives in our own emotional basis that lives with our desire for satisfaction that allows us every evil imaginable. This is true of arayos, which is what the Maharal was talking about but it is also true in avoda zara. There are tremendous numbers of Jews in India. The street signs are in Ivrit, there are so many Israelis there. The viper in the heart presents it as the self is saying satisfy me through avoda zara, through arayos because there is no feeling that these things are a mikshul, are an even, are tomei are arel and ultimately distance us from Hashem.