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פרשת חקת

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## לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדור בן יצחק מאיר

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## <u>Don't Think!</u>

The איפודה העבודה ושרש העבודה teaches that the main Yetzer Hara is to get one to despair after the sin. In fact, the word עבירה is rooted in עביר, past, since after one sins the evil inclination gets one to think of his past sins causing him to despair.<sup>1</sup> In this light we can grasp אנבירה הרהורי עבירה קשו thoughts of sin are worse than the sin itself,<sup>2</sup> as thinking about one's sin can bring him to despair. There is a saying, "Hashem buries our sins in the depths of the sea and then puts up a sign that reads: No fishing!"

R' Yitzchak Isaac Sher<sup>3</sup> (1875-1952) would repeatedly say that one shouldn't think about his sins.

Hashem created us with a Yetzer Hara. It's natural. Everyone has a Yetzer Hara. The only issue is how to cope with that which is something we must learn.

R' Shlomo Wolbe<sup>7</sup> writes to one who failed to protect himself from the known sin: My dear friend! Cease your searching for what the Sefarim say about that sin. The sources that you have already found and copied for yourself—dispose of them properly. The Yetzer Hara that brings one to this particular sin is so cunning that any thoughts about the subject can stimulate one to fall again. This includes even thoughts of remorse and Teshuva. The only solution is, therefore, is to take the opposite path... To forget about the sin. That is, to give it no thought, even after stumbling. You must stop thinking about the whole subject of this sin! How? By completely investing yourself and learning, with an attempt to be Mechadesh Torah, to develop original thoughts in learning,<sup>8</sup> and specifically learning with Simcha... This matter involves a great battle. Often you will be victorious. It is possible, however, that at times you will be defeated by the Yetzer Hara. If that, unfortunately, happens, don't think about it and pay it no attention! Banish any thought about what happened and particularly beware of feelings of helplessness! This is the primary goal of the Yetzer Hara—to knock a person down and make him feel hopeless. Don't allow him that victory! Continue to learn, and with joy, as if nothing happened! ... The only solution to deal with this issue is to be involved in learning and to become accustomed to thinking in learning; in the street, after you go to bed, etc., as much as possible, but also to socialize and interact with friends... In addition, forget what you've seen in Sefarim about the punishments and difficulty of doing teshuva resulting from

This was the first time that a rebbe in the Slabodka Yeshiva fulfilled these two roles. In 1921, the Alter founded the Beis Yisrael Kollel, commonly referred to as the "Slabodka Kollel," of which R' Sher became the rosh kollel. The top students from the Slabodka Yeshiva were chosen to join the kollel, including R' Yaakov Kamenetsky. Shortly before the outbreak of World War Two, R' Sher, who was in poor health, had gone to a spa in Switzerland, and was therefore spared from the Nazi killings that left thousands murdered in Kaunas and Slabodka, including R' Grodzinski and the students of the yeshiva. He also became the Rosh Yeshiva of the Slabodka Yeshiva in Lithuania and Bnei Brak. At his funeral, eulogies were given by R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman and R' Elya Lopian.

<sup>5</sup> Bamidbar 19:2.

<sup>8</sup> In the Tzavaa (Ethical Will, 20) of R' Eliezer Hagadol, also known as R' Eliezer Ben Hurkanus, it says that no one can be Mechadesh something in Torah something that was reserved for another to be Mechadesh. Everyone has their portion in Torah that only they can bring down.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> It has been pointed out that עבירה sounds similar to the English word over, as the Yetzer Hara gets one to think of his past sins thinking that it is all over, so give up.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Yoma 29a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> After hearing a drasha (lecture) from the Alter of Slabodka, R' Sher was inspired and joined his yeshiva in Slabodka called Yeshiva Knesses Yisrael, where he learned with R' Avraham Grodzinski (later a Mashgiach Ruchani in the yeshiva). In 1903, R' Sher married the daughter of the Alter of Slabodka. They moved to Kelm where he developed a close relationship with R' Simcha Zissel Ziv (the Alter of Kelm). He learned for a short time in the Mir Yeshiva, which was led by his wife's brother, R' Eliezer Yehuda Finkel. R' Sher soon returned to Slabodka, and in 1911, he was given a teaching position in his father-in-law's yeshiva. Aside from only giving his students a class on gemara, he also gave them Mussar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Avos 2:18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> We can learn from the sun how to never give up; it may set every night but still rises to a new day.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Igros Uksavim, 1:24.

this sin. Just look at the Siddur HaGra.<sup>9</sup> What you find there should direct you in this area. I am aware that these instructions are completely different than what you have seen, but this way has the approval of the Chazon Ish. However, it is difficult to become accustomed to not paying any attention and to not giving thought. Thoughts of remorse, anguish and hopelessness constantly arise. For this reason, I request that you reread this letter occasionally. Hashem should help you ascend to the heights of Torah and Yiras Shamayim until you completely forget about this sin. And with Hashem's help you'll establish a house of Torah and father children in holiness and purity. There is no reason whatsoever to be concerned that what you have done in the past will have any effect on your ability to do this. Only strengthen yourself in learning Torah with chidush.<sup>10</sup>

We need to fulfill אזמרה לאלו-ה בעודי," sing to Hashem with what we have now. That is, we need to serve Hashem the best we can even with our faults and sins. The Divrei Chaim explained המזבח לא תכבה<sup>12</sup> a permanent fire shall remain aflame... it shall not be extinguished, that there should always be a fire in your heart (אש תמיד תוקד) for Avodas Hashem (על המזבח). Even if you sin,<sup>13</sup> this fire shouldn't be extinguished-לא תכבה.

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## Matcher Catcher

We know the one who sets up a couple is called a שדכן. What is the meaning of this word?

The <sup>14</sup>, "tells us that it is from the term tranquility and rest as the Targum on <sup>15</sup>ותשקט הארץ, the land was tranguil, is

<sup>10</sup> The Chida tells us (Devash Lfi, Maareches Ches, 4) that the Achronim are able to be Mechadesh that which the Rishonim were unable to because it wasn't time for that chidush yet. In this way we can understand the Chassam Sofer's explanation in (Tehillim 1:3) אשר פריו יתן בעתו (The simple meaning is it yields its fruit in its season.): "Its fruit" referring to Chidushei Torah which also has a designated time.

<sup>11</sup> Tehillim 146:2. <sup>12</sup> Vayikra 6:6.

<sup>13</sup> The following describes one of the more common ways that they trap monkeys. They cut a hole in a coconut and empty it of its contents. They then make a hole that is big enough for the open hand of the monkey to enter. However, it is no big enough for the monkey when he clenches his fist. In order to entice the monkey, they put some food into the hollowed-out coconut such as fruit. Once this is complete they tie it to a tree. When the monkey sees the coconut, he puts his hand in for the food, but his clenched fist remains stuck in the coconut. When the person approaches to capture the monkey, the monkey tries even harder to remove his hand from the coconut, to no avail because he is not willing to release the food. The monkey is then captured. All the monkey had to do in order to be free was to let go. How many times in life do we follow this pattern? We may be holding so tightly onto money, negative thoughts about someone or anything else.

<sup>14</sup> Shabbos 5b, s.v. אין משדכין. This is Rabbeinu Nissim of Gerona, who passed away in 1376. He was a physician and was known to have served as a physician in the royal palace. He also had knowledge of astronomy. In addition to serving as a judge and teacher for the Jewish community in Barcelona, he founded a yeshiva there. Even beyond Spain he was recognized as a rabbinical authority, and questions

ושדוכת ארעא. The feeling one has when they find their match is of such calm and serenity as they now are at ease.

The Baal Hamaor<sup>16</sup> writes that Shiduch is a term meaning קשירה, to join, arrange as this is what a Shadchan does.

The Sefer שדכן ישועות מלכו brings that שדכן is an acronym for בי שבר דלתות נחשת, He smashed copper gates.<sup>18</sup> This is because the Shadchan works hard to pair up the Chosson and Kalla to the extent that at times there are things preventing the Shiduch that are like iron and copper walls until the Shadchan finishes off the Shiduch.

Another acronym for שדכן is said from R' Yaakov Emden: <u>ש</u>קר <u>ד</u>ובר כסף נוטל, speaks falsehood and takes money. After a Shadchan was told by the boy and girl following the first date that they both weren't interested in continuing, she told each side that the other wants to give it another try. The boy and girl agreed to give it another attempt. Not too long after they were engaged and then married. Today they have a family of 13!

R' Baruch Mezbitzer writes, "When the Shadchan doesn't say any falsehood regarding a Shiduch, I guarantee that the Shiduch won't follow through ( אני ערב בזה שלא יוגמר השידוך)."<sup>19</sup> This can be understood with the following analogy. If a dog is obstructing one's path on his way to his destination, he may throw a piece of meat at a distance so that the dog will run after it keeping him satisfied. Similarly, the Satan wants to block a Shiduch from going through. To keep him pleased, we say some falsehood so that the Shiduch may follow through.<sup>20</sup>

Taking the initials of כמעט שכנה דומה נפשי, had Hashem not been a help to me, my soul would have soon dwelt in silence,<sup>21</sup> we get the word שדכן. This is because in every Shiduch, we see such השגחה פרטית, Divine Providence and as it says מה' יצא הדבר, the matter stems from Hashem.<sup>22</sup>

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of the books, Fascinating Insights and Incredible Insights in addition to being the host of The Fascinating Insights Podcast. His writings, some of which have been translated into German and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

(Shailos) were addressed to him not only from his own country, but also from France, Italy, Africa, Syria and Eretz Yisrael. He wrote in reply about 1,000 responsa, of which only 77 have been preserved. <sup>15</sup> Shoftim 5:31. See Rus 1:9.

<sup>20</sup> Another comparison to understand this is with the Mista'arvim, or Musta'ribeen in Arabic, which are the undercover counter-terrorism units assigned to the IDF, Israeli Border Police and Israeli police. These units are specifically trained to assimilate among the local Arab population. During their training, they learn about Arab culture and customs in addition to speaking fluent Arabic. Before they enter Arab territory, they dress up as Arabs to blend in with the population. Their primary missions are performing intelligence gathering, law enforcement, hostage rescue and counter-terrorism. Disguise and surprise are their primary means of accomplishing their mission. So in order for them to get to their goal, they give a part to the enemy in that they blend in.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> R' Chaim Volozhin (in Keser Rosh, printed in the end of the Siddur HaGra, 133) highlights the spiritual danger of excessive guilt in this area. He criticizes those who quote from the Zohar regarding the severity of the known transgression, yet neglect to quote the end of this same Zohar, which says that Torah study corrects this transgression. In a footnote, the Shela is quoted: אלו החסידים לומר אין תיקון לחטא אלו ... ר"ל... הם המרבים פושעים בישראל ומרחיקים מלבא תחת כנפי השכינה אשר בעל העון... בשמעו אלה אומר אין תשובה לחצי דבר, וכאשר אבדתי אבדתי כו', ואלו [החסידים] גורמים גלות השכינה, ואינן נקראים חסידים כי אם חסרים ועונשם גדול למאוד. Those stringent ones who are stringent and state that there is no correcting this transgression... they are the ones who induce an increase of sinning among us, and cause people to distance themselves from Hashem, since the sinner, when he hears that there no repentance for this sin will abandon all attempts to improve himself. These stringent ones cause the Shechina to go into Galus and rather than be called Chasidim (stringent ones) should more properly be called "Chaseirim" (lacking ones) and their punishment will be very severe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Shabbos 85b s.v. אמר. See Kidushin 44b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Tehilim 107:16.

<sup>19</sup> אות ,נשואין ,בוצינא דנהורא 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Tehillim 94:17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Breishis 24:50.