

פרשת כי תשא

חלק ג' – גליון 25

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חסד חסד חסד!

In מעשה we learn about the פרשת כי תשא where כלל ישראל fell from their high מדריגות and went and served עבודה זרה. The מדרש תנחומא writes that the נשים refused to partake in the מעשה עגל.

Whose idea was it to start the עגל? חז"ל tell us that it was the ערב רב, who eventually managed to involve most of כלל ישראל to do this עבירה. How was it possible such a thing? What was the פשט? What was lacking by כלל ישראל to allow the ערב רב to be משפיע on them until the extent that most of כלל ישראל were עובד עבודה זרה?

We hear often about the מידה of חסד, and חסד is known as being the foundation of כלל ישראל, as we know אברהם אבינו was the עמוד החסד,¹ we learn in the תורה about his *gevaldiga* מידת החסד. As חז"ל tell us that הקב"ה created the world to do

kindness to his creations, at the דרך השם writes, "להיטיב לברואים". חז"ל tell us that the world was destroyed by the מבול because of the lack of חסד amongst the people of the world, there was too much חסד going on between one and another. We're brought up with the fact that כלל ישראל stand for חסד, real חסד. We speak again and again about חסד with so many ways how to do חסד.

But today I want to bring out a point which is very important to understand, to understand that חסד has limitations.

A person has to learn to sometimes say *no* to a חסד, saying no is not going against the מידת החסד which כלל ישראל live for, on the contrary, it sometimes enables חסד to be a powerful force.

The "שלשה פסחים (קי"ג):" in גמרא teaches, *There are three people who don't have a life*, the גמרא is criticizing such people, they don't let

¹ See פרשת ויקרא תש"פ גליון where we spoke about this in length.

themselves live. One of them is a "רחמנים", explains the "רשב"ם, "יותר מדאי אין חייו חיים שאין לו מנוחה", a person who has more than necessary, he gives in to everyone and everything and helps everybody, he never ever says no, about such a person writes the "רשב"ם, "אין חייו חיים שאין לו מנוחה" – he can't live, ultimately, he won't be able to function properly.

Of course, *חסד* is a *gevaldiga* מידה, it's the character trait which כלל ישראל pride themselves with, look around at all the "גמחי"ם, look how כלל ישראל help each other, it's not found in any other nation out there, it's *לשם שמים*, look at the charity's and see how many big donations are given anonymously.

Learn to say no!

However, if a person gets so carried away with his *חסד* until the extent where he no longer has any שמחת החיים – he no longer has any מנוחה and any enjoyment, then it becomes a אין חייו חיים.

Just a משל to show the importance of saying no. When a child grows up, for the first few years he throws all his dirty clothes on the floor and his mother tidy's them up. Eventually his mother says, "When you get undressed put the clothes

in the washing basket!" That teaches the child to take responsibility for himself, and as the child grows older and older, less and less is done for him he learns to take upon himself more and more responsibility, and like this he grows to become a functioning human being. *Nebech*, a child whose parents become their slave, and everything is "yes yes yes," they grow up to become a פרא אדם, they don't grow up and they don't develop the way a child should develop. No is a *חסד*, saying no to the child is the greatest *חסד*, through the no he grows and becomes a human being.

We must know the boundaries of doing *חסד*. I heard a beautiful story which can bring out what ramifications a *no* can achieve.

The best no possible

There is a family in England until today known as the Woolfson family, a very rich family, they own many of the the big stores. The first one of the family – R' Shlomo Woolfson who moved to England in the 1800's had a family of eleven children. The family became great בעלי צדקה, they say that over the years they have given altogether over one billion pounds to צדקה, the entire old

dormitory block of Gateshead ישיבה גדולה on the Bewick road side was donated by the Woolfson family, tremendous בעלי צדקה.

One of his children was called שמואל, at the time there wasn't too much *Yiddishkeit* in England and he had a son that studied in Carmel college.

This son enjoyed skiing and he would go a few times in the winter to Switzerland to go skiing. It once happened when he decided to go last minute, but when he arrived since had not booked in advance, there were no hotel rooms available where he could stay.

He knew there was a ישיבה in Montreux, where the ראש ישיבה was the שרידי אש. At the time, one of the מגידי שיעורים of the ישיבה was בצלאל ראקאוו – the Gateshead Rov זצ"ל.

He walks into the ישיבה and he meets ר' בצלאל ראקאוו and explains to him, "Look here, I'm here in Switzerland for two weeks and I have nowhere to stay, is there place for me to stay in the ישיבה?" ר' בצלאל זצ"ל told him, "You can stay here on one condition."

"What's the condition?" the boy asked.

"You learn גמרא for two hours a day," ר' בצלאל told him.

"I'll tell you the truth," said the boy, "I've never learnt a גמרא in my life!"

ר' בצלאל זצ"ל told him, "I'll teach you גמרא for two hours a day."

– וכך היה every morning for two hours they would learn גמרא together before he went off skiing.

He came back to England, after learning גמרא for two weeks he had a *gevaldiga* תשוקה to continue learning, he went to one ישיבה, and then he went to learn in באר יעקב where he became very close with ר' שלמה וולבה זצ"ל and today he is one of the פוסקים in ארץ ישראל, known as מרביץ ר' אביעזר Woolfson שליט"א, a great ספרים תורה who has written many

He has many children all בני תורה, with one of them being ר' דניאל Woolfson ר' אהרן לייב זצ"ל who שליט"א told him to open a ישיבה in ירושלים, the נתיבות החכמה where he is the ראש ישיבה, is a ישיבה with 900 בחורים.

When I heard this story, I thought to myself, "הכנסת אורחים is lovely! without conditions and any stipulations is great!"

However, the Gateshead Rov זצ"ל made this stipulation, just to sleep in a ישיבה without learning there, no such thing, if you want to sleep in ישיבה I'm

challenging you with two hours of learning every day.

From that no, from that stipulation there came about a great משפחה in כלל ישראל, **that time saying no to** הכנסת אורחים without conditions was the greatest חסד.

A yes in every no

We must learn how in our own personal lives in our personal kingdoms which we all need to run when to say no. Very often there is peer pressure to do something or various other reasons why we want to say yes, but we must learn and train ourselves that not every time are we supposed to say yes. Often, we must say no to a חברותא, if it's not the right match for you or if he's *shlepping* you down.

Of course, חסד is one of the עמודי העולם – we can never forget the עמוד החסד, but nevertheless חסד must have limitations; and it's much more than just a limitation, **the no itself has a yes imbedded in it.**

When you say no to peer pressure, you're saying yes to a clear conscious, you know what you are doing. Every no has a yes imbedded in it.

The (אגרות כ"ט) חזון איש writes in a letter: *Mental stress is harder for a person than physical stress.* He's writing to a person

who asked for help, he therefore continues to write, "I therefore have the right not to take upon myself what you ask me to do because it's hard for me – it's going to cause me mental stress."

He tells him no! I can't manage! It's going to be difficult for me!

It once happened when the Manchester ראש ישיבה זצ"ל accepted upon himself to do a certain task, however, he wasn't managing, it was causing him tremendous נפש.

The ראש ישיבה זצ"ל said over, "חז"ל tell us, אין אדם חוטא אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות – a person doesn't sin unless a רוח שטות enters him," said the ראש ישיבה, "often there is a ענין of אין אדם עושה חסד אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות!"

If a person takes on more than he can manage and it's going to pull him down, disturb him and spoil his daily סדר היום, it's because נכנס בו רוח שטות – it's a מעשה השטן.

This is very important for us to know, whether it's in learning, whether doing חסד, whether doing things for our family, if we're doing things beyond our capabilities and we are just saying yes to every single possible request, we're going to burn out and lose out, it's not

going to work, we must understand our limits.

Don't say yes to everything

The חפץ חיים writes: The יצר הרע is the winner when a person says yes to everything. I want to do חסד, we're going to do חסד and we do חסד the whole time, but sometimes we must know that we can't say yes to everybody, and we can't do everything, if we don't have our limitations we are going to suffer.

חסד must be with limitations, when we get the חסד going with the right balance, the more powerful the חסד is, we can cause other people to grow by telling them no, and just importantly you help yourself grow by saying no! To run around saying yes to everything is not right, it becomes a life without מנוחה, it becomes אין חייו חיים.

This is what happened by the עגל – a *matzev* happened, it got exciting, חז"ל tell us they started drinking, it got *lebedick* – they became wild, and there was a tremendous peer pressure going on, “don't spoil the fun... join in... don't be a spoilt sport...”

The נשים said to them, “No!” The בני לוי said, “No!” That no was a *gevaldiga* yes. This peer pressure we sometimes feel,

the need to do what people are expecting us to do, we must realize that no is often a yes, not always must we say yes. And of course, there is a way how to say no, you don't have to be blunt, you can say, “I can't do this for you now because I must do something else! I must go to סדר! I have a חברותא waiting for me!” Of course, we can explain the no, but we must be able to actually say the no. There are those few people out there כידוע who can't be told no, it פשוט doesn't enter their consciousness the word no, when you tell them no, they *mach-meshuga*, “*efsher azoi or efsher azoi, efsher tomorrow, efsher later...*” they don't get the message, to those people we must learn how to say no properly – to hold on tight with a *shtark-kite* to the no, don't give in for nothing, no is no!

The power to say no is a positive מידה. We must remember חסד is a *gevaldiga* מידה, when אליעזר went to look for a wife for יצחק, he had one mission – one goal, he went to look for a girl with חסד, because when someone has the מידה of חסד you have the key for everything, this is the most important characteristic which you can find in a wife. The חסד is vital, עולם חסד יבנה – the world is built on

הסד, however it must come with a balance, if a person feels he's getting upset or he can't cope with the amount of הסד he is doing, he must learn to say no. The no helps them grow, it gives them the power to strive, like every child when growing up, the no helps the child develop and grow.

This is the message: Not every time we're asked to do a הסד can we say yes,

sometimes it has to be a no. הסד without boundaries, if its going to be at the expense of yourself, you have to say no. This was the כה of the רב ערב רב, they instigated the עגל, and כלל ישראל felt they would upset them if they don't join in, they felt the pressure.

The limitation in הסד, saying no, helps us grow and keep us in balance and a healthy way to grow in our עבודת השם.



"Thought on the פרשה..."

This weeks סדרה is about חטא העגל, we tell ourselves that this has no שייכות to us, but I want to explain that it has a lot of שייכות, not only does it have a שייכות, we live with it the whole time.

We can ask a קשיא: What was the טענה? The שטן came – the יצר הרע came along. Do you know hat he did? מרע"ה had a תורה, the Rebbe who we were מקבל, took us out of מצרים, he brought the מכות, עשר, he split the sea at סוף ים קריעת. He went up to הר סיני and said he's returning in forty days! He didn't come! Where is he? What happened? "בא השטן וערבב את העולם והראה דמות חשך ואפלה וערבוביא, לומר ודאי מת משה לכך, רש"י Says " – he came and mixed up the world! He made it ואפלא! As חז"ל tell us they saw the לוייה of מרע"ה, "מרע"ה רקיע שמים", משה from לוייה! After all that they became emotionally disturbed! מרע"ה is gone! A *shvverer* matzev! So what's the big טענה?

The ספרים tell us a big יסוד: The יצר הרע has a כח of דמיון, something which doesn't even start, but in your mind, it becomes *leibidick*! He puts big imaginations out there to disturb your מצוות תורה.

A משל to this רש"י: Somebody in the house comes home every single day at six o' clock, and one day it's already six thirty and he's not home. The whole משפחה starts worrying, and in the mind everyone is thinking, "Who knows?! Maybe something bad happened..." the דמיון can grow and grow until you actually see the לוייה!

This is the כח היצר, from gornished, he makes you have the biggest דמיון, that's פשט in the רש"י, it was all דמיון.

The גמרא in (ל"ב:) speaks about the פסוקים in קהלת which tell us about an עיר קטנה "A great מלך – ואנשים בה מעט, ובא אליה מלך גדול וסבב אתה ובנה עליה מצודים גדלים." (ט', י"ד) had come and made a siege around a town. The town didn't know what to do! This great מלך was surrounding them! In the town there was an איש חכם, as it says, "ומצא בה איש" – מסכן חכמה and he managed to save the town.

Explain חז"ל, "עיר קטנה זהו הגוף ואנשים בה מעט אלו אבריים", the town is the גוף, "ומצא בה איש", the king is the יצר הרע, "ובנה עליה מצודים וחרמים אלו עונות", the siege

is the *יצר הטוב*, עבירות, "ומצא בה איש משכן וחכם זהו *יצר הטוב*", and the *יצר הטוב* saves the town, *מלט* הוא את העיר בחכמתו.

The king is there with his *כל זיין* making loads of noise, the whole town is very worried, and comes a *הכם* – the *יצר הטוב* and is בחכמתו *מלט* העיר.

ל"ז would ask: *Nu!* Why do we not get told what the *הכמה* was? What was the *הכמה*? It doesn't say what the *הכמה* is? It's *חסר מן הספר*! עיקר חסר! And how do you fight a *מלך* with *הכמה*? You need weapons to go against a *מלך* who has put a siege around the town?!

I heard from ל"ז: Do you know what the *הכם* said?! "There's no *מלך*!! There's nothing there! Something you dreamt up! You heard some noises and you think there is a big *מלך*!! There's no weapons you need to fight – just use the *הכמה* to take away all the *דמיון*!"

"my *חברותא* thinks *azoi...* and *yena* thinks *azoi...* I'm not so *מצליח*, *yena* is more *מצליח*..." It's all *דמיונות* from small little things which we blow up! What does the *יצר הטוב* tell us? "There's nothing there! You blew it up from *גורניש*!"

From this came the *הטא העגל* – they blew it all up, they imagined a *לוייה* of *מרע"ה* and from that they became all *מבולבל*, the *יצר הטוב* comes and is בחכמתו *מלט* הוא את העיר, sometimes the *יצר הטוב* is a person himself, sometimes the *יצר הטוב* is a good *חבר*, sometimes the *יצר הטוב* is the *משגיח*, the *יצר הטוב* comes in different ways. Listen to him! Nothing is happening! It's all *גורניש*!

(ר' ישראל ראקאוו שליט"א)



[Transcribed by Avrohom Dov Kohn – אברהם דוב הכהן כהן](#)