

# פרשת שופטים

גליין 1

ו' אלול תשפ"א

## מאת ר' ש. קאפלן שליט"א

### *The baker and shoe maker*

About ninety years ago – from one moment to the next, various male voices began emanating from a young girls throat.

It didn't take them too long until they figured out that it must be a דיבוק – a lost נשמה, which must have entered the body of the young girl.

They took the girl to ראדן to see the leader of the חפץ חיים. The חפץ חיים

תלמיד מובהק ר' אלחנן ווסרמן instructed his תלמיד to investigate and do what needs to be done with the דיבוק.

There were various negotiations with the דיבוק and various demands until it agreed to leave and exit the body of the young girl.

Eventually, they came to the final moment, there was a מנין in the room, the דיבוק exited the body of the girl and at that split second the window cracked.

ר' יחזקאל לוינשטיין זצ"ל would say, "The entire town of ראדן went past to see this window! To see a remnant of this incredible story."

ר' יחזקאל זצ"ל would say, "It was the gossip of the entire town that day, that's all what the people spoke about."

ר' יחזקאל said, "I couldn't sleep that night, I was tossing and turning, back and forth, I simply could not fall asleep.

*"In what way am I different in my זמן than last זמן during this עבודת ה'?"*

Such a מעשה! Such a רבש"ע from the גילוי about שכר ועונש! To

witness such a story of a דיבוק and a נשמה exiting a person's body, I couldn't sleep the entire night."

The next day, Friday ר' יחזקאל went to the market to buy food לכבוד שבת. When ר' יחזקאל came back from the market he exclaimed, "The baker was the same baker. The shoemaker was the same shoemaker. The grocer was the same grocer, nobody changed one iota everyone was the same.

The entire town knew about the story, they all witnessed the cracked window, however everyone stayed the same, nothing changed.”

### ***Falling down***

Since ל"ג בעומר this year, one after the next there has been amongst כלל ישראל terrible tragedies. People have pointed out that it seems to be a certain sequence running between these events.

In the Meron disaster people fell a few feet, *nebech* so many people died. Then came Stolin-Karlin where people fell from a higher place. A few weeks later, from an even higher place – a cable car in Italy crashed to the ground. Next, even higher, a twelve-story building collapsed to the ground like a deck of cards, killing many many אידן. And then recently, *nebech, nebech*, in Ukraine a plane crashed.

Let's think about this for a moment. How many hundreds of cables cars run every day? Thousands of them all over the world. It's very rare that a cable car crashes. And just the one that crashes, *nebech* must have אידן on it.

There are thousands of high buildings in America, and the one which must collapse had אידן in it.

There are thousands of flights in Ukraine, this plane flew every day of the year, and when it crashed, again, there were three אידן on board.

No question about it, it's as clear as sunlight, הקב"ה is sending us a message. We don't have to know why all these tragedies happened. That's not our department, we are not here to understand why it happened, that's not our job.

Our job is to be inspired. And who needs to be inspired? Every single one of us!

### ***Hashem is speaking to us!***

About twenty years there was a terrible forest fire which broke out in ארץ ישראל, killing around sixty אידן who were travelling through the forest by bus, and were trapped inside, and burnt alive.

When ערב ר' עובדיה יוסף זצ"ל spoke on שבת he quoted a חז"ל which teaches that when there is a tragedy through fire, it's because of חילול שבת.

After this דרשה which spread around the country, there was a terrible uproar in ארץ ישראל. The חילונים went into a rage! “What do you mean?! You're blaming us because of what happed!”

When ר' עובדיה heard about this, he exclaimed, “You're making a mistake! I

wasn't referring to those who don't keep Shabbos. I was referring to ourselves! Are we keeping שבת like we should be? Do we know the הלכות of שבת properly? Do we know what הלכות בורר is all about!? I was speaking to the שומרי שבת, I wasn't speaking to the entire country." When we hear tragedies, we must understand that it's us which must be inspired, the רבש"ע is giving us the inspiration because we are the ones that understand to be inspired.

Every single person must say to himself, "I must be inspired! I cannot continue being the same person I was until now. I must change something around in my life. I have to move somewhere in life."

### ***The big month***

True, during the summer holidays it wasn't easy to make new changes in our life.

But now we're holding in חודש אלול, and אלול is the time of year when we have to wake up and change our lives to the better. אלול is the time when a person must really take in the inspiration and not allow ourselves just to remain the way we are.

הקב"ה has sent us the messages, no question about it, we have to change something in our lives, and it's now the time to get cracking and do something, to make some change.

### ***אלול the whole year long***

Some people ask, "Who invented the ענין of "אלול"?! Who made אלול a special time where we must change ourselves?"

Someone once came before the Manchester ראש ישיבה זצ"ל and told him, "The Kotzker Rebbe זצ"ל would say, אל" "אל" – תפנו אל האלילים" – don't turn toward the "אלול", don't make such a *major-zach* out of אלול." חודש אלול."

The ראש ישיבה said to this אייד, "Go to the מחילה of the Kotzker and ask him עולה, to say such a thing in the name of the Kotzker! Go quickly!"

"But the Kotzker said it?" the man asked innocently.

"You misunderstood the words of the Kotzker," the ראש ישיבה explained, "the Kotzker meant, "אל" "אל" – תפנו אל האלילים" – don't just turn to the "אלול", the entire year must be אלול! The entire year we must be מחזק ourselves, it shouldn't just be in חודש אלול."

As ר' ישראל סלנטר זצ"ל would say, "The entire year must be "אלול", but "אלול" itself certainly must be a "אלול"."

But who invented אלול למעשה? How old is it? we know, and ראש השנה יום כיפור that's in the תורה, but where do we find אלול?

### **ימי רצון Forty days of**

The truth is, the מקור for אלול is brought down from חז"ל.

On the לוחות were broken because of the חטא העגל.

"עלה אלי ההרה", הקב"ה was told by מרע"ה "come up to Me. The טור (שמות כ"ד, י"ב) פרקי דרבי (סימן תקפ"א) "בראש חודש אלול אמר הקב"ה למשה, אליעזר עלה אלי ההרה, שאז עלה לקבל לוחות האחרונות, ראש חודש אלול On, והעבירו שופר במחנה..." the משה commanded רבש"ע to ascend the mountain, for that is when he went up to accept the second לוחות, and they blew a שופר in the camp; because of this חז"ל were to blow the שופר every year during חודש אלול from then on, כדי "כלל להזהיר ישראל שיעשו תשובה" to remind כלל ישראל to do תשובה.

The פרקי דרבי אליעזר writes very clearly that the next forty days were תשובה ימי for the עגל. Those forty days were ימי and it was then on יום תשובה

כלל ישראל told רבש"ע where the כיפור "סלחתי כדברך".

teach that just like during that year those days were ימי רצון, always during that זמן from that year onwards, again those same השפעות come down to the world, making it a זמן of ימי רצון.

came out of מצרים and received the תורה, elevating themselves to a tremendous high level in קדושה, they were holding on a very high level, however, they dropped and lost their קדושה because of the העגל. During these forty days – from ראש חודש אלול until יום כיפור, these were the days where they did תשובה and returned to the level they were on at תורה.

These forty days are ימי רצון (see רש"י (דברים ט', י"ח), they are ימי רחמים. הקב"ה is not trying to give out punishments, הקב"ה wants us to come closer and he helps us become closer! This is a זמן of רצון where it's easier to change ourselves and become closer to הקב"ה.

The פרשה וזהר הקדוש writes in next weeks regarding the פסוק, "ובכתה את אביה ואת אמה ירח ימים", and she cries for her father and mother for thirty days, דא היא ירחא דאלול דביה סליק משה לטורא למבעי רחמין קמי הקב"ה בגין דישתביק לישראל על חובא דעגלא

"וכו", *this refers to the חודש of אלול, the חודש which מרע"ה went up to שמים to plead on behalf of ישראל כלל about the מעשה העגל...*

As the פסוק teaches regarding the אריז"ל, "והאלקים אנה לידו ושמתי לך מקום", is the אלול of ראשי תיבות.

### ***Time to change***

We must know that these days before us between now and יום כיפור are days where we must be inspired and change. We're not supposed to start changing the last moment before ראש השנה comes in, it's days where we must make a חשבון and start changing ourselves. To be מחזק ourselves in התמדה, to be מחזק ourselves in תפילה, in לחבירו. We must have a different הנהגה during these days which hopefully will continue forever.

הקב"ה has sent us all התעוררות during the last few months, and we mustn't allow these messages of inspiration to have no affect on us, we must change and move forward. We must make a constant effort to do things differently, perhaps to *bentch* with more כונה and מתוך הסיידור, to say the שם השם with more כונה; just move forward. If we don't start doing anything when אלול comes in, by the time it comes to ראש השנה, the ראש השנה won't have

such an effect on us, it has to be done with a הכנה.

### ***The trip to Los Angeles***

Let me share with you a *moridicker* מעשה – a true story, which can help us make sure to not ignore the התעוררות.

There was a איד in ארץ ישראל by the name of ר' שמעון וייטצהאנדלר who plays the violin, and when he plays the violin, it's really something special. People heard about his performance, and he would play in ירושלים in various places.

One day he gets a phone call from Los Angeles. There was a מוסד in Los Angeles which were making a major dinner in the Herzog winery where they wanted him to come and play his violin for entertainment, to be one of the main attractions of the evening.

What an opportunity! To become famous! To travel all the way to Los Angeles to play the violin! They booked him a ticket to Los Angeles. When he arrived Los Angeles, his host picked him up, placed his violin in the boot of the car, and then went to his hosts house to take a shower, change his clothes and to get ready for the big event.

With just over an hour remaining, he goes back into the car, where his hosts

drives him for an hour journey to the Herzog winery.

He arrives, opens the boot of the car, ואיננו – the violin is gone, it's not there.

How could a violin have disappeared?

It didn't take too long to figure out that it was very simple what happened. His host picked him up from the airport in his wife's car, and drove him to the winery in his own, (coming from ארץ ישראל where most people don't have any car, he couldn't have dreamt that someone has two cars!) he didn't realize the difference between the two cars.

But now it was all over, the violin was with his wife's car, and his wife couldn't even drive out to bring it, because mistakenly the host took with him his wife's keys! It would take him two hours to fetch the violin, and by then the event would have been finished.

He felt like such a fool, coming all the way from ארץ ישראל, and turning up without his violin, what a mess up, complete זביונות. Everyone had come to hear him, and he comes there without his violin, ממש גיהנם in this world, he felt like the biggest fool.

He flew back to Eretz Yisroel with ממש a broken heart, he thought this was his

chance to become famous, but nothing came out of it, a complete let down.

One year later, he sees an incoming call on his phone from Los Angeles, "Oh no!" he thought to himself, "what do they want from me now?! They probably want me to pay for the air fare they paid to bring me over last year!"

He picks up the phone, and the fellow on the other side says, "Perhaps you can come and play for us this year!"

"What?!" ר' שמעון exclaimed, "You want me to come and play for you?! After last years' experience?"

"Yes!" the man replied, "You have talents, we know you are good, we want to give you a second chance..."

"I'm coming!" he replied, "and you can pay me whatever you like..."

They *taka* gave him another opportunity, he travelled to Los Angeles, this time holding onto his violin, and played for the audience there in the hall, where it was a major success ב"ה.

### ***Getting carried away***

ר' יואל גאלד שליט"א said over a *moridicker* from this story: Our נשמות come all the way from כסא הכבוד, our נשמה is not a distant cousin of ours, we are our נשמה, the consious "I" that sees, hears

and thinks is our נשמה. The נשמה is sent from trillion of miles away, and it enters this world with a גוף.

Every single גוף is different, every single גוף has different כוחות to make a wonderful performance.

But what happens? We come and get carried away with כל מיני שתוסים and *narrish-kittan*. Just think to yourselves how many *narrish-kittan* we get involved in throughout the year, and the more *narrish-kitta* we get involved in, the more we forget about utilising our opportunities to make the best performance possible.

And אלול למעשה we feel bad, it comes to אלול and we ask ourselves, "Where are we? Where are we holding in life?! What have we done the last year? How much תורה ביטול תורה? How many times did we miss תפילה בציבור הרע? How many לשון הרע? The list goes on and on..."

Says הקב"ה, "Don't worry, I'm giving you a second chance, you can start all over again fresh and preform a wonderful performance." As the רמב"ם and רבינו יונה write that if a person takes these days and use them properly as a הכנה for the ימים נוראים, it is like they have been reborn into a new person, it's

like he's travelled to Los Angeles a second time to preform, and we must make sure not to waste the opportunity.

We are given now a *gevaldiga* opportunity to rebuild ourselves and to re-establish ourselves.

We are already holding during a few days in חודש אלול, and we must sit down and ask ourselves honestly, "In what way am I different in my עבודה ה' during this זמן than last זמן?!" Sit down for a few minutes and think where I can change, what time I get up in the morning, what is my תפילה and התמדה like, my ביטול תורה, how do I treat people?

It's אלול and we must be able to say to ourselves that we are different now from the rest of the year, we cannot be like the baker and shoemaker in Radin.

There has been countless tragedies ר"ל, tragic inspirations to wake us up, and we must take these messages with us especially now in אלול when it's a זמן to change, and say to ourselves, "In what areas am I going to change my life?" We must change direction and not just chug and cruise along life.

The Manchester ראש הישיבה would make ten new קבלות every חודש אלול! Make some קבלות and try and stick to them, to

be a different person and to make a change from the way we have been until now.

We have the second chance now and we must use it properly, because זמן אלול is a זמן where a person gets extra דשמיא, it's easier to change now than during the rest of the year, and when a person does his small bit, the רבש"ע sends down to help the person tremendous השפעות

enabling a person to do and accomplish much more than he thought he can do.



אברהם דוב הכהן כהן - Avrohom Dov Kohn

All errors, mistakes and omissions are mine

# פרשת שופטים

גליון 1

ז' אלול תשע"ט

מאת ר' ש. קאפלן שליט"א

"שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך אשר ה' אלקיך נותן לך." *Judges and officers, shall you appoint in all your cities – which Hashem, your God, gives you.* The של"ה הקדוש writes that the פרשה of the week has a connection to the week. It's no coincidence. The פרשה and the זמן are very much connected. Meaning: if פרשת שופטים falls out on the week of ראש חודש אלול, the תורה must be telling us a message which we should try accomplishing during אלול.

The תורה is telling us here that we must establish שופטים and שוטרים for each and every city.

The question is: Why does the תורה use a לשון of "לך", *for you*, instead of "לכם", when the תורה is speaking to the entire ישראל?

The חיד"א in the name of זצ"ל answers: A person has got seven שערים, *seven gates/openings*, in his body. The תורה is hinting that a person must put שופטים and שוטרים at the entrance of all of these openings, (see ר' אליה לאפיון זצ"ל who explains באריכות the difference between a שופט and a שוטר). A person must guard the openings of one's body

– what goes in and what comes out. We will discuss the opening of the body which a person must guard speaks; the mouth. A one's mouth. The תורה is warning us, every single person in

**"During these days approaching towards the ימים נוראים," writes the חפץ חיים, "a person must be extremely cautious with regards to his speech."**

comes out. We will of the body which person must guard is warning us, לך "תתן לך, כלל כלל person in

every - בכל שעריך" must put שופטים and שוטרים at the entrance of his mouth.

We want to understand the continuation of the "אשר ה' אלקיך נותן לך" – פסוק, together with what we have mentioned above.

I once heard from ר' חיים קאופמאן זצ"ל that when he was a yungerman he travelled to the Rebbe of סלונים זצ"ל who told him the following. (ר' חיים זצ"ל did not know why, but for some reason the Rebbe told over the following story:) When I was a yungerman I was a מלמד to young children in school. We were learning the גמרא in א' עמוד א' where ברכות נ"ח עמוד א' in א' גמרא

teaches that when one sees a gathering of six hundred thousand אידן, one should recite the ברכה of, "ברוך חכם הרזים" – we praise הקב"ה Who knows what is going on in the thoughts of every single person. The גמרא continues: בן זומא was standing on top of הר הבית and saw six hundred thousand people and he said, "ברוך חכם הרזים", *– blessed is the One who knows the thoughts of every person*, together with adding, *וברוך שברא* "כל אלו לשמשני". *and blessed is the One who created all these people to serve me*. The tailors, bakers and farmers are all there to serve me.

One little boy in class picked up his hand and says, "בן זומא is such a גאון!!" The Rebbe didn't give the boy a patch, but rather the Rebbe was given the ס"ד to answer the boy with the following true story that took place during those times in England. The king of England heard about a special medicine which can be produced with unique herbs which are found deep in the jungles of Africa. With creating this medicine, the king would be able to save many people in his country from a certain disease. The professor who was asked to organize the delegation, first informed the king the necessities he would require performing this task: doctors, professors, scientists, importers, etc. The king told the professor, "Don't worry the government are going to pay all the costs for success of this mission." The journey took many weeks until they reached the shores of Africa. Eventually, after making their way through the forests and jungles they reached the place where this herb grew. First, they set up their tents since they were still going to be there for a few weeks to produce the drug.

Once, during the night, one of the assistances could not fall asleep. He gets out of bed and walks around the camp. He comes across one tent and finds a candle lit. He takes a peek through the flap and sees the chief professor of this delegation extremely busy – writing, looking, writing, looking – at two a clock in the morning! בדרך ארץ obviously the assistance asked, "אדוני – the professor; at two a clock in the morning shouldn't you be in bed? What are you doing at such a late time of night?"

The professor said to him, "If I get up at nine a clock in the morning and begin my work, the work for the assistances will only be ready at two a clock in the afternoon. Do you know how long the expedition will take at that pace? Do you know how much it is costing our country every day by us being here? Every minute we are here costs

thousands of pounds. Do you understand what responsibility I have? Subsequently, I get up early in the morning so that the work should be ready immediately at nine a clock for the assistances. Like this the work gets done in much quicker time and we will ultimately not waste the countries money.”

Said the Rebbe to the little boy as follows: “Heaven forbid, בן זומא was not a גאון. בעל גאון בן זומא was rather saying – בשביל ישראל שנקרא ראשית נברא העולם – because of כלל ישראל the world was created. בן זומא – one of the greatest מתמידים of the דור, in order to survive with learning תורה required all these thousands of people.

Do you know how many thousands of people go in towards the work of one can of coke? Do you know how many hundreds of people worked so that your bike should have oil to make it run smoothly? You are encompassing many continents around the world!

The רבש"ע created a massive world with millions and billions of people in it. Each person is doing a different job. Because He created such a big world, "בראשית ברא אלקים" – בשביל התורה ובשביל ישראל" – what a responsibility I have! בן זומא was expressing the tremendous responsibility he has. “I can’t waste my time! הקב"ה put so much in place in order that I can sit and learn בהתמדה רבה. What a responsibility. If I don’t do what I am supposed to, *oy gevalt!* I am wasting so many resources, so much of what הקב"ה put into this world.”

Many years ago, when they made the M1 there was a big debate where it should begin. In those times there was mainly one ישיבה in England, Gateshead - ישיבה. There were approximately ten options where the M1 should begin, eventually it was נמנו וגמרו to begin in Golders Green! Why? So that בחורים going from Golders Green to Gateshead can go direct by coach! Everything in this world is בשביל התורה וישראל.

The גמרא in ב' עמוד ב' teaches that when משיח comes the גוים are going to come and ask for their reward for all the bridges, cars, garages, etc, they made in order for כלל ישראל to learn תורה. Says הקב"ה, "שוטים שבעולם" – fools you are! Why are they שוטים, shouldn't they be called שקרנים, liars? Explains ר' שלמה בוימגרטן זצ"ל: It's true, they are not liars, everything they made is for כלל ישראל. But they are שוטים, because if they would have had that intention, they could have received reward! שוטים they are!

The billions of people are all there so that we can learn and be able to serve the רבש"ע properly.

The פרשה begins by telling us we should put guards at the entrances of our body. אשר "ה' אלקיך נותן לך" means: The רבש"ע gave us tremendous power, tremendous organs, tremendous vocal cords, tremendous ear drums, etc. When you delve into it, you find ממש ניסים ונפלאות. Since הקב"ה gave us such a powerful body that makes a responsibility on us to guard them and use them properly.

Let us understand a bit the power of speech. The חפץ חיים writes in his ספר שמירת הלשון: The power of speech which the רבש"ע has given us to serve Him has the power to create heaven and earth! As the נפש החיים teaches that every word of תורה and תפילה impacts an enormous רושם in שמים. We can't see it, but it is happening as we speak. Every single word of תורה we speak has השפעות *gevaldiga*. We don't realize how powerful our speech is.

Why would a person want to be a president of America? באמה – what for? He works very hard the first term and after the second term the people are fed up of him? The cycle determines that by the time he goes everyone hates him, no family life, and everything he does wrong is known to the entire world.

The answer is פשוט. He wants to be president because every word he says is going to be discussed and analysed for the next week! Everyone wants to know what he says in his speeches. It's a tremendous honour to know that you have five hundred million listeners to your speech. That is the reason why a person wants to become president of America. There is no other reason.

Every איד must know that the כח הדיבור a איד has is a billion times greater than the words of the president of America!

Every word we say brings down tremendous השפעת from the עליונים. We must understand "את ה' אלקיך נותן לך" – He has given us all powerful כוחות into our body. Each דיבור we speak has tremendous powers and we must be careful to guard and not waste them.

The חפץ חיים in חובת השמירה פרק י' writes that as we approach the ימים נוראים, certainly it is very important to be cautious with regards to this כח which we have through mouth.

A person should be careful, how, when and what he speaks about especially during these days of the year. To control the speech in אלול.

May the רבש"ע help us to try and be מחזק in this topic.

מאת ר' י. צאהן שליט"א

**"לא יקח שחד כי השחד יעור עיני חכמים..." (ט"ז, י"ט)**

One of the many הלכות the תורה tells us in this weeks פרשה is, "לא תקח שחד", *a judge shall not take a bribe*. The תורה continues to give a reason for this: "כי השחד יעור עיני חכמים ויסלף דברי צדיקים", *for the bribe will blind (even) the eyes of the wise and make righteous words crooked*.

The איש חזון in his חיטחון וביטחון ספר asks questions about this לאו. Would a תלמיד חכם really become crooked because of a bribe? Does money affect a תלמיד חכם or a צדיק? A צדיק is not going to have a נגיעה because of a bit of money. Why is the תורה telling us that through the money the תלמידי חכמים will become crooked?

Furthermore, if this is the understanding, a תלמיד חכם cannot פסקן on his own cow if it's a טריפה or כשרה, since a big loss of money is involved. Seemingly, the loss of money will cause the תלמיד חכם to פסקן that it is כשר?

The איש חזון there gives his own explanation, but we will explain based on a story with the Brisker Rov זצ"ל. When the Brisker Rov married off his son, the person who hired the hall felt very honoured that the Rov had chosen him out of all the many other halls. Because of this, he wanted to give the hall free of charge. Nevertheless, the Rov was determined to pay. He was asked why he was so determined about the matter.

The Rov answered with a one-liner: "There is no such thing of getting something free of charge. The cheapest way is to pay with money." Meaning: "If I take this offer, I will owe to him constantly during my entire life. My entire life I will be to him a "בעל חוב". Accordingly, the cheapest way is to pay him money.

When a Rov פסקן on his own cow, the loss of money indeed will not make a difference, if he must lose the money, he will lose it. However, when receiving money from others - creates the Rov to be מכיר טוב. Those feelings are going to blind him. That is the nature of the world. It's not the money, which is the issue, rather it's the feelings of being a "בעל חוב", consequently, "לא יקח שחד".

# פרשת שופטים

חלק ד' – גליון 1

ז' אלול תשפ"ב

מאת ר' ש. קאפלן שליט"א

"שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך אשר ה' (ט"ז, י"ח) *Judges and officers, shall you appoint in all your cities – which Hashem, your God, gives you.*

The ר' חיים ויטל זצ"ל in the name of א"א explains why the ר' חיים ויטל זצ"ל writes, "לך" instead of "שופטים" instead of writing

*"I daven with והערב נא ה' אלקינו את דברי תורתך תורה tremendous כונה... and I work on not having any תורה... to anything other than אהבה תורה..."*

since the רבים is speaking to כלל ישראל. He explains that מרמז הקב"ה is being placed within this פסוק, aside from כלל ישראל, every single שופטים, שופטים בכל שעריך, every single שופטים at every opening of his body, a person must guard the שופטים of his body, the eyes, the ears, the mouth, "תתן לך בכל שעריך", it's a רמז to each individual to put their own שופטים at the openings of his body.<sup>1</sup>

## *Doors of one house and bedroom*

This week, I thought that perhaps the רמז here is also giving us another פסוק in this פסוק.

ר' יעקב קמינצקי זצ"ל of תלמיד א ר' יעקב his Rebbe after not seeing him for many years.

ר' יעקב קמינצקי זצ"ל asked, "How many children have you

got?"

"Eight children," the איד told him.

"Nu! So how are the children doing? Are they having a good חינוך? Are they doing well?" asked ר' יעקב.

He said to ר' יעקב "you told me when I got married that I should live in Lakewood! Lakewood! What better place can there be to live in than Lakewood!? Of course, the children are doing very well ב"ה."

<sup>1</sup> See פרשת שופטים תש"פ where we spoke about this פשט in more length.

ר' יעקב קמינצקי זצ"ל said to him, "It makes no difference where a person lives, whether its Lakewood or Monsey, Flatbush, Boro park, Brooklyn or Manhattan, it makes no difference where you live, if you want to have good children it's not תולה on where you live, we say in פסוקי דזמרה every morning, "כי חזק בריחי שעריך ברך בניך בקרבך" when a person is מחזק the bolts of his doors, then ברך בניך בקרבך – he will gave good children."

If one wants to have good children, he must make sure to bolt his door from any bad influences, it makes no difference where you live, not because you live in Lakewood do you have good children.

Perhaps this can also be a פשוט in the פסוק "שופטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך" – there is an individual instruction here as well, every person must put proper שופטים ושוטרים on the doors of their houses, to be careful what comes in. The same applies to בחורים who sleep in the dormitories of a ישיבה, to be extremely careful what comes into the bedroom, whether it's different gadgets or different types of music, or perhaps it's sometimes another person who has bad השפעות and we should be keeping far

away from, if somebody would come into the room and starts taking things away, one will be very upset and annoyed, if somebody comes into the room and starts speaking דברי נבלה and דברים אסורים we must even more concerned and upset than we would be when somebody comes in and starts pinching our stuff, we have to put those שופטים ושוטרים up on the doors, not allowing anything which can cause damage to our רוחניות to enter.

This is a רמז for each individual to guard what comes into his house and what comes into his room.

### אהבת ה'

I would like to speak about another נקודה, there is an area in the תורה which isn't spoken much about, and I believe it's very much neglected because it's not spoken about.

As we are approaching the ימים נוראים חז"ל we must remember that ה' הבעל"ט teach us in length that הקב"ה is close to us during these days, ה' בהמצאו refers to the ימים נוראים, we've spoken in the past how much הקב"ה loves us, הקב"ה loves us – הקב"ה loves His children even more than He

loves דין – even more than He loves judgement.<sup>2</sup>

Today I would like to speak about a related נקודה which I think needs to be spoken about and needs to be worked on. We find in the פרשיות of the past few weeks a מצוה which we don't focus on properly. In this weeks סדרה the תורה tells us, "כי תשמר את כל המצוה הזאת לעשתה, – אשר אנכי מצוך היום לאהבה את ה' אלקיך" – *When you observe this entire מצוה to perform it – which I command you today – to love Hashem.*

The תורה singles out loving הקב"ה. In "ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך, פרשת עקב (י"ב) שאל מעמך כי אם ליראה... ולאהבה אתו... בכל what ישראל *And now*, לבבך ובכל נפשך." *does Hashem ask of you? To fear Hashem and to love him with all your heart and with all your soul.* To fear הקב"ה and love הקב"ה are the מצוות which are singled out.

In every day, the opening קריאת שמע sentence we say is, "ואהבת את ה' אלקיך" – a command to love הקב"ה, to even love Him בכל נפשך ובכל מאדך. We see this in the תורה again and again, we say this in קריאת שמע three or perhaps even four times a day, אהבת ה' is

the first מצוה mentioned in קריאת שמע. We're often very focused on the מצוות every day, putting on ציצית and תפילין מעשיות, all these מצוות give us gevaldiga השפעות, if one has a look in חז"ל one begins to understand what every single מצוה does for a person, but where is the focus on אהבת ה'? It seems that we aren't focused enough on this מצוה which is singled out so many times which means that this מצוה has such great importance and needs to be worked on.

### ***It's either or***

The "והנה" writes, דרך השם (פרק ד' אות ח') ממה שצריך שיגביר האדם בעצמו הוא האהבה – a person must exert himself in loving הקב"ה.

How do we do this? All the ראשונים and באריכות ספרים מוסר speak about how being מתבונן in how much הקב"ה does for us, to think about the רוממות of הקב"ה, brings to אהבת ה', but that is an ענין בפני עצמו, I would like to speak about the נקודה what is מפריע – what takes us away from loving הקב"ה, which is something we must work on, especially when it comes toward the נוראים when we must create a strong relationship with the רבש"ע.

<sup>2</sup> See פרשת נצבים גליון 4 תשפ"ב



him, as the תרגום יונתן writes, "היו בוכים קריאת שמע" – *they were screaming* – וקריין שמע שמע.

קריאת שמע is about loving הקב"ה! The battle between כלל ישראל and בלעם ובלק was where the אהבה of כלל ישראל should be, they were trying to take כלל ישראל's אהבה away from the רבש"ע and replace it with a אהבה to גשמיות and immorality. That was the battle which took place in the מדבר at the end of the forty years, a battle between having אהבת ה' and to having אהבה to גשמיות.

teach us that the תאוות to ממון and to גשמיות were מתגבר after חורבן הבית, there became a *gevaldiga* draw to גשמיות, the בית המקדש was able to save a person from being drawn to גשמיות.

We want to try work on this area, to love הקב"ה, it's one of the key מצוות in the תורה. Of course, we must be מתבונן in why we must love הקב"ה, but at the same time we must work as well on enabling ourselves to be repulsed from this אהבה to גשמיות.

This is the battle in today's world, of course the world out there is filled with שמוץ and immorality, and the world is busy with גשמיות in a tremendous powerful way, in every single form there

is a tremendous draw to גשמיות, this is the battle באחרית הימים, between the two forces, the battle between allowing ourselves to have אהבת ה' and drawing us away from the אהבה to גשמיות, because it's either or, one can't have both at the same time.

### ***There is nothing in גשמיות***

We must work on ourselves to understand how terrible the דמיון of גשמיות is, גשמיות gives a person no real שמהת החיים whatsoever, a person gets nothing real from גשמיות.

Perhaps some of you read it, but there was recently an interview with R' Eli Stefasnky, a איד who gives a דף היומי every day to 12,000 people, a phenomenal thing. I never realised what a מתמיד he was, he gets up every morning at three o'clock and he goes through the גמרא רש"י תוספות with סוגיא together with the ראשונים and אחרונים, he puts in tremendous toil and effort and עמילות into his שיעור, it's הפלא ופלא.

They asked him in the interview: What motivated you to uproot yourself and your family and to move to ארץ ישראל?

He replied, "רוחניות", "I felt empty even though I was on the top of the world, I was very successful in business and we

just built a 12,000 square foot house in Chicago, with 12-foot ceilings with even an elevator. It was very opulent and I even had a big room in which to learn, but I felt like I was in a rat race for the nicest house and the nicest car. Now I live in a simple apartment in שמש בית in a building with other people which isn't very comfortable, but my life is much better.

They then asked him, "Do you miss any of it?"

"Not at all!" he replied

"You're standard of living has dramatically changed yet you're a happier person?"

"Much happier, there is a purpose to my life."

We must tell ourselves that this draw to גשמיות gives us no שמחת החיים, we get nothing at all from it.

אהב כסף לא ישבע כסף – one is never satisfied, and the same goes with תורה, תורה אהב תורה לא ישבע תורה, but it's either or, and that exactly is the great battle, to run away from the אהבה of גשמיות. If we want to work on this area of loving הקב"ה which brings a person close to הקב"ה we must work on the area of telling ourselves and controlling ourselves

knowing that there is nothing in the גשמיות, to try avoid this אהבה for the latest gadget and the latest this and that out there, this desire for גשמיות spoils the possibility to have proper אהבת ה'.

ר' ישראל מאיר דרוק שליט"א would learn with ר' חיים קניבסקי זצ"ל a few times a week. I heard from a person here in Manchester who he told that he once asked ר' חיים קניבסקי how he was זוכה to know כל התורה כולה.

He replied, "I daven את אלקינו והערב נא ה' with tremendous דברי תורתך... and I work on not having any אהבה to anything other than תורה..."

Because when there is a אהבה to גשמיות, this diminishes the אהבה to the רבש"ע, תורה, קודשא בריך הוא ואורייתא חד הוא and אהבה is one, if we control the אהבה to גשמיות then we can instil in ourselves a *gevaldiga* אהבת ה' and a *gevaldiga* אהבת התורה.

### *Time of battle*

"והיה ברכה", אברהם אבינו said to הקב"ה, "ובך חותמין", their writes, many of the ספרים הקדושים write that בעיקבתא אברהם of עבודה is an עבודה דמשיחא we אידן by, סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה. אבינו always connect the beginning and the

end, אברהם אבינו was right at the beginning of creation, "אלה תולדות השמים, והארץ בהבראם, ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ (ב', ד') *These are the products of the heavens and the earth when they were created on the day that Hashem made earth and heaven.* teach us, אברהם אבינו, "אל תקרי בהבראם אלא באברהם" was the one who symbolised אהבת ה', he took the אהבה he had to his son and gave it to the רבש"ע.

teach us that אברהם אבינו was found in the קודש קדשים at the time of חורבן בית המקדש – the place where it was תוכו רצוף אהבה the place of love between כלל ישראל and Hashem, that symbolised אברהם אבינו, he was a man of אהבה to the רבש"ע, as we say in the ברכה of אברהם every day which is the ברכה of אברהם אבינו, "למען שמו באהבה", אהבה symbolised אהבה.

This is the "ובך חותמין" – at the end of time this is going to be the battle, which we have seen so clearly during the past twenty years, this is a battle every single person must recognise, every person לפי מדירגתו must control himself, what he needs, what types of things he needs, whether it's different clothes or gadgets.

A person can live his whole life with a focus on גשמיות which is not going to bring a person to any שמחת החיים.

We must work on this, this is a חלק in our עבודת השם especially during this time of year when we are trying so hard to connect to the רבש"ע, and we cannot achieve a דרגה in אהבת ה' if we don't work on removing this אהבה to גשמיות, because the two depend on each other, the אהבה to גשמיות is a tremendous כח which takes away our ability to have אהבת ה'.

We must channel this intrinsic default of איד to have אהבה to the רבש"ע. We must stop for a second and be מתבונן: Do I love הקב"ה? Have I got an אהבת ה'? Am I working in this area of my עבודת השם? A person can bring down gevaldiga השפעות by working on this and connecting with the רבש"ע, and this can be brought into all areas of our עבודת השם throughout the day, it can be brought into every מצוה and our לימוד התורה doing it with trying to instill in ourselves an אהבת ה'.

Transcribed by Avrohom Dov Kohn – אברהם דוב הכהן כהן

