

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



על דשא

AL E DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

A Navi Who Permits Arayos

כי יקום בקרבך נביא או חלם חלום ונתן אליך אות או מופת. ובא האות והמופת אשר דבר אליך לאמר גלכה אחרי אלהים אחרים אשר לא ידעתם ונעבדם. לא תשמע אל דברי הנביא ההוא או אל חולם החלום ההוא כי מנסה ד' אליכם אתכם.

If there appears among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he will give you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, concerning

Hashem hates immorality and therefore it cannot possibly be suspended by the instructions of a navi speaking in the name of Hashem

which he spoke to you saying, "let us follow other gods whom you have not known, and worship them"—do not heed the words of that prophet or that dreamer of a dream, for Hashem your G-d is testing you (Devarim 13:2-4).

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 90a) states: Rabi Avahu said in the name of Rabi Yochanan: if a *navi* tells you to transgress any mitzvah temporarily, you should obey him, except in the case of *avodah zarah*, in which even if he causes the sun to stand still in the middle of the sky, you must not listen to him.

The Kli Chemdah¹ deduces from the Maharal's comments in *Gur Aryeh*² that the same principle applies to *arayos*. Just as a *navi* cannot instruct us to worship *avodah zarah*, so too he cannot instruct us to engage in prohibited relations, even temporarily.

The Maharal writes that although Yaakov Avinu observed the entire Torah before it was given, he nevertheless married two sisters because he was shown from Heaven that it was appropriate for him to do so. The Maharal compares this to Eliyahu Hanavi, who was commanded to bring a *korban* on Har HaCarmel despite the prohibition against bringing *korbanos* outside the Beis Hamikdash. The Maharal adds that Chazal (*Pesachim* 119b) nevertheless viewed it as a deficiency on Yaakov

Following Hashem from a Distance

אחרי ד' אליכם תלכו ואתו תיראו ואת מצותיו תשמרו וכללו תשמעו ואתו תעבדו ובו תדבקו. *Hashem your G-d shall you follow; Him shall you fear; His mitzvos shall you keep and to His voice shall you listen; Him shall you worship and to Him shall you cleave (Devarim 13:5).*

A well-known question is asked about the wording of this pasuk based on a principle established by Chazal.⁵ The word *אחר* denotes something close and immediate, whereas the similar word *אחרי* implies following from a distance. If so, it would seem more appropriate for the Torah to have written *אלקים תלכו*, since the mitzvah is to follow Hashem as closely as possible.

In his *sefer Kol Yaakov*, the author of *Melo HaRo'im* explains this with a beautiful parable. When a father teaches his young child to take his first steps, he initially stands very close to him. Once the child is able to take one or two steps on his own, the father moves back a little farther, encouraging the child to take more steps. As the child's confidence and ability grow, the father continues to increase the distance, waiting for the child to exert himself in order to reach him. The child may become upset when he sees his father moving farther away. He does not realize that his father is distancing himself only for the

¹ *Vayigash* 3.

² *Bereishis* 46:10.

⁵ *Bereishis Rabbah* 44:5. Cited in Rashi to *Devarim* 11:30.

A Navi Who Permits Arayos

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Avinu's part that he did something that would later become prohibited after Matan Torah—since we do not find that forbidden relations are ever permitted. The *Kli Chemdah* learned from the words of this Maharal that he believed that after Matan Torah a prohibited relationship would not be permitted even through a *nevuah* such as that of Eliyahu on Har HaCarmel.

He brings another proof to this halachah from Rav Yonasan Eibschutz in *Luchos HaEdus*.³ The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 93a) relates that two false prophets, Achav ben Kolayah and Tzidkiyahu

By continuing to seek Hashem even when He appears distant, a person develops his latent love into a living reality.

ben Maaseyah, falsely claimed in the name of Hashem that a particular act of immorality was permitted. Nevuchadnezzar rejected their claim, declaring, "I know that the G-d of the Jews hates immorality." Rav Yonasan explains that Nevuchadnezzar did not simply say that it is prohibited by the Torah, because a Torah prohibition can be temporarily suspended by the instructions of a *navi*. Rather he said that Hashem hates immorality and therefore it cannot possibly be suspended by the instructions of a *navi* speaking in the name of Hashem. This interpretation contains an additional *chiddush*. The forbidden act

that these false *nevi'im* sought to permit concerned a married non-Jewish woman and a Jewish man. The prohibition of adultery does not apply to a non-Jewish marriage. The only prohibition involved was that of relations with a non-Jewish woman. According to Rav Yonasan's explanation, even this prohibition cannot be overridden by a *navi*.

This point is significant because there is a *machlokes* among Rishonim whether relations with a non-Jewish woman has the same degree of severity as the *arayos* prohibited by the Torah. Rav Yonasan's interpretation would indicate that they do, since he includes them among the prohibitions that a *navi* cannot suspend. In my opinion, however, it is a *chiddush* to equate forbidden relations with *avodah zarah* as exceptions to the general rule. The plain meaning of Rabi Yochanan's statement—"With regard to all the mitzvos of the Torah... except for *avodah zarah*"—is that *avodah zarah* is the unique exception because the Torah, in our parshah, explicitly excludes it. What basis is there for extending this exception to forbidden relations, when no source for this is found in Chazal?

Indeed, the Ramban on our parshah (13:2) appears to indicate otherwise. He writes that if a *navi* attempts to uproot a mitzvah permanently—for example, by permitting pig or permitting relations with one of the *arayos*—he is a false *navi* and is liable to death. If, however, he suspends the prohibition only temporarily because of a specific need, as Eliyahu did on Har HaCarmel, we are obligated to obey him. The implication of the Ramban's words is that even if a *navi* temporarily permits one of the prohibited relationships, we are required to follow his instruction.

Furthermore, a careful reading of Rav Yonasan Eibschutz shows that his comments do not necessarily prove that he equates forbidden relations with *avodah zarah*. He may simply mean that since "the G-d of the Jews hates immorality," it is unlikely that Hashem would command such an act. Nevuchadnezzar therefore rejected the prophecy because Achav and Tzidkiyahu had never been established as genuine *nevi'im* and their *nevuah* was improbable. If, however, an established *navi*, whose authenticity had already been confirmed, were to instruct the people in Hashem's name to violate a prohibition of forbidden relations temporarily, Rav Yonasan might agree that his instruction would have to be listened to.

This understanding is supported by the *Sanhedria Ketanah*⁴ on that Gemara. He writes that the mere fact that Achav and Tzidkiyahu permitted an act of immorality did not itself prove that they were false *nevi'im*. Nevuchadnezzar rejected them because Chananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah had already contradicted their prophecy.

Moreover, we may point out that a careful reading of the Maharsha seems to indicate that Nevuchadnezzar understood Achav and Tzidkiyahu to be permanently permitting adultery with a married woman. Since no *navi* may permanently uproot any mitzvah of the Torah, their *nevuah* was necessarily false. According to this explanation as well, this Gemara does not prove that forbidden relations constitute an exception comparable to *avodah zarah*.

בנאות דשא פרשת ראה תשפ"ה

³ P. 154-155.

⁴ *Sanhedrin* 93a.

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child's benefit. By doing so, the father is training him to walk independently.

The same principle applies to a person's efforts to draw close to Hashem. At times, a person feels that Hashem has distanced Himself, leaving him in spiritual darkness. Hashem is not abandoning him; He is giving him the opportunity to grow. By strengthening his *emunah*, overcoming doubts, and remaining steadfast in his trust in Hashem despite the feeling of distance, a Yid can develop a deeper and more enduring attachment to Him.

This explains why the Torah uses the word **אחרי**. There are times when Hashem seems distant and beyond our reach. Yet

this distance is only apparent. It is a test, designed to reveal and actualize the love of Hashem that lies hidden within every Yid's heart. By continuing to seek Hashem even when He appears distant, a person develops his latent love into a living reality.

This explanation is especially appropriate in the context of this parshah. The Torah is describing one of the greatest spiritual challenges imaginable. A prophet arises, performs genuine miracles—he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass—and then urges the people to worship another god. Such an

experience can shake a person's faith and leave him wondering where Hashem is.

It is precisely in that situation that the Torah commands, *Hashem your G-d shall you follow*. Even when Hashem seems distant and His presence is hidden, remember that *Hashem your G-d is testing you*. The apparent distance is itself part of the test. It is an opportunity to overcome doubt, strengthen one's *emunah*, and deepen one's love and attachment to Hashem. Only by continuing to follow Him even from afar does a person ultimately merit to cleave to Him completely.

סעודה שלישית ראה תשפ"ב מאמר א

Parshah Medley

וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי ד' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אַתֶּם וּבְנֵיכֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיכֶם וְעַבְדֵיכֶם וְאִמְהַתֵּיכֶם וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם כִּי אֵין לוֹ חֶלֶק וְנַחֲלָה אִתְּכֶם.

You shall rejoice before Hashem your G-d; you, your sons and your daughters, your slaves and your maidservants, and the Levi who is in your cities, for he has no share and inheritance with you (Devarim 12:12).

The *Panim Yafos* writes that from this pasuk Chazal learned (*Megillah* 26a) that when a person travels to another city and takes a vow to give tzedakah to poor people, he should give the tzedakah when he returns home, to the poor people of his own city. The poor of one's own city take precedence over the poor of another city; even though at the time he made the vow, he was in another city.

The source for this is the phrase, *the Levi who is in your cities*. What is added by the words *who is in your cities*? These words teach that even when one is in Yerushalayim for Yom Tov, he should first gladden the Levi'im from his own city who have come to Yerushalayim, before giving

to other Levi'im. From here we learn that the poor of one's own city have precedence even when one is in another city.

We find the same phrase later in the parshah, in the pasuk: **והלוי אשר בשעריך לא תעזובו כי אין לו חלק ונחלה עמך**. Although the word *sha'ar* is commonly used to refer to a city, literally **בשעריך** means "in your gates." We can read this phrase as "*the Levi who is in your gates*," and explain what it means to convey, based on the Rambam's description of the character that personifies a true Levi.

The Rambam⁶ states: "Not only the tribe of Levi, but anyone whose spirit moves him... who removes from his neck the yoke of the many considerations that occupy people, in order to stand before Hashem and serve Him... such a person is sanctified as holy of holies." A true Levi is therefore one who serves Hashem with purity, wholehearted faith, and a sincere desire to cleave to Him, free from the distractions of worldly ambition.

Chazal⁷ explain that the name Yerushalayim alludes to fear of Heaven (*yirah*) and wholeness (*sheleimus*). We may say that the gates of Yerushalayim symbolize the boundary that separates those who seek *yiras Shamayim* and spiritual perfection, from those who obstruct that pursuit. Just as a city gate regulates who may enter, so too the spiritual gates of Yerushalayim distinguish those who aspire to holiness from those who draw a person away from it.

Accordingly, we may suggest that "the Levi who is in your gates" refers not only to a member of Shevet Levi, but to anyone who embodies the ideals of Shevet Levi. Whether he is a Levi or a Yisrael, wherever he may live, if he has dedicated himself to the pursuit of *yiras Shamayim* and spiritual wholeness, he stands within the gates of Yerushalayim. Such a person is, in the truest sense, a Yerushalayim'dike Yid.

סעודה שלישית ראה תשפ"ה מאמר ג

⁶ End of *Hilchos Shemittah V'Yovel*.

⁷ *Bereishis Rabbah* 56:10.



Parshas Re'eh	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbos
Brooklyn	7:46	8:53
Lakewood	7:46	8:53
Baltimore	7:53	8:55
Chicago	7:41	8:47
North Miami	7:44	8:39
Los Angeles	7:30	8:28

Parshah Medley

כִּי אִם אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ד', אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל שְׁבִטֵיכֶם לְשׁוֹם אֶת שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לִשְׁכְּנוֹ תִּדְרָשׁוּ וּבָאתָ שָׁמָּה.

Rather only at the place that Hashem your G-d will choose from all your shevatim to place his Name there, you shall seek out His resting place, and you shall come there (Devarim 12:5).

We find a striking difference between the way Hashem revealed the future location of Matan Torah and the way He revealed the future location of the Beis Hamikdash. The location of Matan Torah was disclosed in advance. When Hashem first appeared to Moshe Rabbeinu at the burning bush, He said: *When you take the people out of Mitzrayim, you will serve Hashem on this mountain (Shemos 3:12).* In contrast, the location of the Beis Hamikdash was left unspecified. The Torah refers to it simply as *the place that Hashem your G-d will choose*. The Jewish people were required to search for that place, and when the time came to build the Beis Hamikdash, David Hamelech learned its location through Shmuel Hanavi.

Perhaps this teaches that the ultimate place chosen by Hashem is not confined to one geographical location. The true place that Hashem chooses is found within every Yiddishe heart. The Torah did not reveal the location in advance, because although there would be one uniquely sanctified place for offering *korbanos*, the resting place of the *Shechinah* is not limited to the Beis Hamikdash. Wherever a Jewish heart is devoted to Hashem, the *Shechinah* finds a resting place. Likewise, every Jewish home that is built upon Torah and *kedushah* becomes a dwelling place for the *Shechinah*, as Chazal teach (*Sotah 17a*).

However, this is contingent upon our seeking Him, as the pasuk continues: *You shall seek out His resting place*. Chazal (*Rosh Hashanah 30a*) derive this idea from the pasuk: *Tzion—no one seeks her out (Yirmiyah 30:17)*. The Gemara comments: *This implies that she must be sought out*. Because of the pressures of daily life and our preoccupation with material pursuits, the *Shechinah* fades from our awareness. Only through a conscious effort to pursue closeness to Hashem do we merit to find the place where His Presence dwells.

סעודה שלישית ראה תשפ"ד מאמר א

From the Desk of the Rosh Yeshivah

Lichvod Rabbeinu Rosh HaYeshivah shlita,

I am a *bachur* studying in a *yeshivah ketanah*, and I would like to ask the following:

Should a *bachur* study *Nach*? If so, what is the proper way and pace to learn it?

What is the recommended approach to studying halachah? Should a *bachur* learn *Tur* and *Beis Yosef*, *Mishneh Berurah*, or other halachic works, and in what order?

I saw in *Rosh Golas Ariel* that the Imrei Emes held that *sifrei mussar* of the Rishonim are preferable to those of the Acharonim. Which *sefarim* are most appropriate for a *bachur*?

The Rosh Yeshiva replied:

There is absolutely no problem with a *bachur* studying *Nach*. On the contrary, it is very appropriate. One should learn at the pace of one chapter each day with the *Metzudos*.

If the yeshivah that you attend instructs you otherwise—ignore what I said. However, my opinion is that the important first step for a *bachur* in learning halachah is to learn one of the abridged works, such as *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, and to master it well, in order to know how to live as a Jew. (The *Mishnah Berurah* is too lengthy, and it is difficult to remember all that he writes.) Once that is accomplished, one can proceed to more advanced study, such as the *Tur* and *Beis Yosef*.

I recommend *Orchos Tzaddikim* and *Mesillas Yesharim*. However, merely reading these *sefarim* is not enough. A person must measure himself against each *middah* discussed, examine where he stands, and make practical *kabbalos* to improve.

May it be Hashem's will that you succeed in Torah and *avodah*.

Shaul