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DAF KESHER

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DVAR TORAH BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Midrash on our Parshah makes the following comment on a verse in Yirmeyahu: “שמעו והאזינו – Hear and listen; אל תגבהו – do not be lofty, for Hashem has spoken’ (Yirmeyahu 13:15). Hear the words of the Torah and listen to the words of the Torah. What does אל תגבהו mean? Do not cause G-d’s goodness to stay above and refrain from coming into the world ...”

What does this add to our understanding of the beginning of the Parshah? Doesn’t the Torah itself say explicitly that if Israel listens to the Torah they will be blessed and, G-d forbid, if not the opposite is true? Furthermore, the words שמעו and האזינו seem to be synonyms. What does the Midrash mean by “Hear the words of the Torah and listen to the words of the Torah”?

The author of the Shem Mishmuel (Harav Shmuel Bornshtein, זצ"ל, the Sochotchover Rebbe, 1855-1926) was bothered by these difficulties, and suggests that שמעו and האזינו refer to two different aspects of hearing. One means physically sensing the sound waves and the other means paying close attention to the intention of the speaker. One is hearing the external aspect of the sounds, while the other is listening to what is beneath the surface.

Based on this distinction, the Midrash is here describing two levels of learning Torah. One is to get the surface meaning of what the Torah says; but another level involves delving beneath the surface and trying to understand כוונת התורה, the inner intent of what Hashem communicates to us through His Torah. The Ramban tells us that the Torah encourages us to understand the themes behind clusters of mitzvot, and follow those values underlying them. “Be holy” (Vayikra 19:1) is the guiding principle behind many of the mitzvot relating to eating and intimate life; and “Do that which is just and good” (Devarim 6:18) is the principle uniting many of the civil laws and interpersonal mitzvot.

Corresponding to these two levels of Torah learning are two corresponding aspects of the Heavenly blessing. One is external bounty; this comes to us as financial success, good health, and success. However, it has a potential down-side. Physical blessing might end up in the wrong hands, feeding the forces of evil. Money and health come from G-d but, G-d forbid, might be used against His Will. But there is another level of the Divine blessing, that which comes down purely as a source of true blessing. Such שפע ברכה, a flow of blessing, will only add to the glory and honor of Hashem, for that is the inner content of all that comes down from Heaven.

Now we can understand what our Midrash teaches. The quality of our Torah and mitzvot will determine the quality of the blessing that Hashem bestows upon us. Superficial Torah and mitzvot will draw down only a superficial blessing from above. But Torah and mitzvot done with their inner intent in mind – learning Torah to search for Hashem’s Will and doing mitzvot to connect ourselves with Hashem – will, instead, draw down the limitless true blessing that only leads to true inner goodness.

Also in this week's Daf Keshet: Source Guide – “Quenching the Thirst” · “The Pursuit of Simchah,” by Rabbi Yitzchak Hirshfeld

SOURCE GUIDE: QUENCHING THE THIRST

A verse in this week's Haftarah, "All those who are thirsty go to water," plays an important part in a famous aggadic passage about someone who "meets the disgusting one," the Yetzer Hara (Evil Inclination). This source guide explores the meaning of our verse in light of that aggadta, and the meaning of that aggadta in light of the Maharal's teachings.

A. Thirst for Water

Our Haftarah tells about the wonders of the Messianic era, and includes the following verse:

<p>1. Yeshayah 55:1 Ho! All those who are thirsty go to water, and those who have no money go and buy and eat; go and buy without money and without a price wine and milk.</p>	<p>ישעיה נה:א: הוֹי כָּל צָמֵא לְכוּ לַמַּיִם וְאַשֶׁר אֵין לוֹ כֶּסֶף לְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ וְאַאֲכֹלוּ וּלְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ בְּלוֹא כֶּסֶף וּבְלוֹא מְחִיר יַיִן וְחֶלֶב.</p>
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According to Rashi and other classic commentators, water is a metaphor:

<p>2. Rashi on Yeshayah 55:1 "Go to water" – to Torah.</p>	<p>רש"י על ישעיה נה:א: "לכו למים" – לתורה.</p>
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The following comment by the Metzudot David (compiled by Harav David Altshuler, זצ"ל, and his son Harav Yechiel Hillel Altshuler, זצ"ל, 18th Century, Central Europe) seems obvious (but, as we will later see, it is not):

<p>3. Metzudot David on Yeshayah 55:1 "Ho! All those who are thirsty" – Anyone who is thirsty because of a lack of water should go to water to quench his thirst.</p>	<p>מצודות דוד על ישעיה נה:א: "הוי כל צמא" – כל מי שהוא צמא מחסרון המים ילכו אל המים לרוות הצמאון.</p>
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This verse, as the Radak (Harav David Kimchi, זצ"ל, 1160-1235, Spain) points out, expresses the following verse in the book of Amos:

<p>4. Amos 8:11 Behold, days will come, says Hashem G-d, and I will send a famine in the land. It will not be a famine for bread nor a thirst for water, but rather to hear the word of Hashem.</p>	<p>עמוס ח:יא: הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם ה' אֱלֹקִים וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעַב בָּאָרֶץ, לֹא רָעַב לֶחֶם וְלֹא צָמָא לַמַּיִם כִּי אִם לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶת דְּבַרִּי ה'.</p>
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On the one hand, there is a negative side to this verse – prophecy will cease, for a people who ignored prophecy for centuries. Yet it is essentially positive: there will be a thirst for G-d's word. Our verse, the prophecy of Yeshayah, tells us that a time will come when we will be able to quench that thirst.

The following aggadta seems to view that thirst differently than the Metzudot David and the Radak.

B. Melting Stone and Breaking Iron

<p>5. Sukkah 52b The Yeshiva of Rabbi Yishmael learned: If this disgusting one (Rashi – the Yetzer Hara) meets you, pull him to the Beit Midrash. If he is a stone he will melt; if he is iron he will break apart. If he is a stone he will melt – for it is written, "Ho! All those who are thirsty go to water" (Yeshayah 55:1), and it is written, "Stones which the water eroded" (Iyov 14:19). If he is iron he will break apart – for it is written, "Are My words not like fire, says Hashem, and as a hammer smashed by the rock (see Rabbeinu Tam's explanation in Tosafot here)?" (Yirmeyah 23:29).</p>	<p>סוכה נב: תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: אם פגע בכ מנוול זה משכהו לבית המדרש. אם אבן הוא נימוח אם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ. אם אבן הוא נימוח - דכתיב "הוי כל צמא לכו למים" (ישעיהו נה:א), וכתיב "אבנים שחקו מים" (איוב יד:ט). אם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ – דכתיב "הלא כה דברי כאש נאם ה' וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע" (ירמיהו כג:כט).</p>
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1. How does the Midrash understand our verse, "All those who are thirsty go to water"?

2. What is the significance of the two images used for the Yetzer Hara (Evil Inclination) – the rock and iron?
3. How does pulling the “disgusting one” to the Beit Midrash dissolve the rock and break the iron?

C. Thirsting, but not for Water

The Gemara quotes our verse as a proof that if you meet up with the Yetzer Hara you should drag him to the Beis Midrash. Let us follow the correspondence: Dragging the Yetzer Hara to the Beis Midrash, where Torah is learned, is like going to the water, which is compared to Torah – as Rashi comments on our verse in the Haftarah. But who is the thirsty one?

Apparently it refers to the person who is overtaken by the urge to follow his Yetzer Hara and sin! This seems to go against the commentary of the Metzudot David we saw earlier. According to him, the prophet was calling out to all those thirsty for water (= for Torah) to go drink water; according to the Gemara’s proof, it is one thirsty for sin that is sent to drink water (= Torah). The Maharal’s explanation of this aggadta explains how his thirst for one type of drink is quenched by a very different type of drink.

D. Maharal: Two Types of Evil Inclinations

The Maharal understands that stone and iron represent two different drives toward evil:

<p>6. Netivot Olam, Netiv Koach Heyetzer, Chapter 1</p> <p>And he said, “If it is of stone it will melt and if iron it will break apart,” for a person has an evil inclination in his body, what the Sages referred to as the evil inclination for lust ... For the stone is exceedingly tough, and it corresponds to the evil inclination that is stuck to physicality, and physicality does not act at all. Therefore, the evil inclination for lust is called a lifeless stone that no one turns over. But iron is the opposite; it is active, for from it comes the sword and ax and all destructive tools. It corresponds to the evil inclination of the soul that, for the soul is an active power</p>	<p>נתיבות עולם, נתיב כח היצר פרק א</p> <p>ואמר “אם אבן הוא נימוח ואם ברזל הוא מתפוצץ, ” כי באדם יש יצר הרע בגופו והוא שקראו חכמים יצר הרע דערוה ... שהאבן הוא קשה ביותר. והוא כנגד יצר הרע שהוא דבוק בחומר, שאין החומר פועל כלל. לכך יצרא דערוה קרא אבן דומם שאין לו הפכים. אבל הברזל הוא הפך זה. שהוא פועל, שממנו חרב וקורדס וכל כלי המשחיתים, והוא כנגד יצר הרע בנפש שהנפש הוא כח פועל ...</p>
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The solution for both types of evil inclinations – lust and the pull to idolatry – is Torah. But how is a thirst for sin quenched through waters of Torah?

<p>7. Netivot Olam, Netiv Koach Heyetzer, Chapter 1</p> <p>Corresponding to this the verse says, “If your enemy is hungry feed him bread” (Mishlei 25:21). That is, if he is hungry, for he entices you towards bodily lust because he is lacking; you should feed him the bread of Torah. That is, you should give the evil inclination something that is satiating so he will no longer be lacking. Through everything else a person is lacking, except through Torah, which makes him into a complete person. And when a person is complete he is removed from the evil inclination, which comes from a person’s lack. And the verse says, “If he is thirsty,” corresponding to the evil inclination towards idolatry, that is called “thirsty.” For hunger is more for the body, that needs sustenance because of its lack, whereas thirst is more for the soul – as is known, that thirst is for the soul. Therefore it says, “If your enemy is hungry feed him bread and if he is thirsty give him water” (Mishlei 25:21). And he said that the Holy One, blessed be He, will have the evil inclination be at peace with you and in your hand, as has been explained.</p>	<p>נתיבות עולם, נתיב כח היצר פרק א</p> <p>כנגד זה אמר “אם רעב שונאך האכילהו לחם, ” (משלי כה: כא). כלומר, אם רעב, שהוא מסית אותך אל תאות הגוף מפני שהוא חסר, יש לך להאכיל אותו לחם של תורה. כלומר, שיתן ליצר הרע דבר המשביע שלא יהיה עוד חסר, ובכל דבר נחשב האדם חסר חוץ על ידי התורה נחשב האדם שלם. וכאשר האדם שלם מסולק מן יצר הרע שהוא בא בשביל חסרון שהוא באדם. ואמר “אם צמא הוא, ” היינו כנגד יצרא של ע”ז וזה נקרא צמא, מפני כי הרעבון הוא יותר לגוף שצריך פרנסה מפני חסרונו, ואילו הצמאון הוא לנפש יותר כאשר ידוע כי הצמאון הוא לנפש, ולפיכך אמר “אם רעב שונאך האכילהו לחם ואם צמא השקהו מים.” ואמר שהקב”ה ישלים את היצר הרע בידיך כמו שהתבאר.</p>
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Evil inclination comes from an inner **lack**, says the Maharal. The hunger and craving for forbidden bodily

pleasures is a mistaken and tragic search to fill that lack. Torah truly completes a person, **fills the lack**, and truly satiates.

The Gemara's reading of, "All those who are thirsty go to water," especially with the Maharal's explanation, solves an obvious problem with the verse: Why do thirsty people need to be told to go drink water? The answer is that they are not thirsty for water. They are purely thirsty – or hungry, or craving – trying to fill some lack through unhealthy means. They don't realize that their thirst stems from an inner lack; and they certainly don't realize that their thirst will be quenched through drinking of Hashem's waters, the Torah.

We pray for the day when all of Israel will only thirst and hunger for Hashem's Torah, and will be able to drink of its waters and eat of its bread.

THE PURSUIT OF SIMCHAH BY RABBI YITZCHAK HIRSHFELD

One of the recurring themes of this week's Sedrah, Parshat Re'eh, is the mitzvah of simchah, rejoicing. "ושמחת לפני ה' אלקיכם" – "And you should rejoice before Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 12:12). "ושמחת בחגך" – "And you should rejoice in your holy days" (Devarim 16:14) when you visit the holy city of Yerushalayim.

It is clear that our rejoicing is closely bound up with the Beit Hamikdash and with the sacrificial service. Why? Surely most people think that the further they are from the demands of service and sanctity, the happier they are.

I'd like to offer two related definitions of simchah. 1. Simchah is what you feel when you know that you are doing exactly what you are supposed to be doing at that given moment. 2. Simchah is the sense that the joy of the spirit is not at the expense of the joy of the body, and that the joy of the body is not at the expense of the joy of the spirit.

"אין שמחה אלא בבשר שלמים" – "There is no joy as great as when one eats of the Shelamim offering" (based on Pesachim 109a). Body and soul together know that they are doing exactly what they are supposed to be doing.

Of course, life is not just about the Temple service and eating korbanot. But those experiences need to guide and inform us as we engage in that inalienable right which we call the pursuit of simchah.

שבת שלום ומבורך

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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet: DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, and Hebrewbooks.org.

We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.