

DA'AS

The *Nachash* told Adam and Chavah that if they eat the fruit of the tree, "You will become like G-d." That was the depth of the temptation. They wanted *daas*, but there are different kinds of *daas* that a person can seek. There is good and evil *daas*. When Chavah saw that the tree was good to eat, and she wanted to become like Hashem, she was attempting to use *da'as* to go beyond human limits. The desire for more *da'as* is good only when it helps a person reach up until his limits, but it becomes evil when a person is attempting to break his limits. Hashem says, "For no man shall see Me and live" when a person wants to try to "see" Hashem by trying to understand Him, he is trying to perceive Hashem using his own limited *da'as*. The result of that is death, and that was the depth of why there was a curse of death that followed the sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*.

Hashem created the world with certain limits, rules, and boundaries. When a person wants to break those limits and he doesn't want to be limited, it resembles eating from the *Eitz HaDaas* in which Adam and Chavah wanted to break their limits so that they could go beyond human limits and try to understand everything. Chazal refer to the *Nachash* as the one who "breaks the fences of the world" – and that describes the very essence of evil. Evil wants to break the rules that Hashem made. *Da'as* becomes evil we want to break rules, and even more, when we don't want to be limited in the first place.

The *Eitz HaDa'as Tov V'Ra* had two kinds of *daas* in it - a *daas tov* and *da'as*

ra, a good and evil use of *daas*. Good *daas* is when a person wants to reach up until his limits, while bad *daas* is when a person wishes to break all boundaries and be above all rules. When Chavah desired to be like Hashem, it was really a desire to escape all rules and to be above all limits. When a person lives within the rules, he is able to live properly. When boundaries are broken, a person cannot live properly. That was the depth of the curse of death. Since they didn't want boundaries, death came to the world.

How do we use *daas tov* and *daas ra*? We use *daas tov* whenever we seek to keep to the rules that Hashem made, which are needed for us to live properly. *Daas ra* is the desire to break boundaries and to want to live without any rules. Thus, trying to break boundaries through our *da'as* is called "*da'as ra*", evil *da'as*, and building boundaries from our *da'as* is called "*da'as tov*", good *da'as*.

Adam and Chavah desired to be like Hashem because they didn't realize the need to have rules. We must realize we are limited human beings, and only Hashem can be unlimited. In every soul, there are two opposite abilities: There is a spark of the *EinSof* (Infinite) of Hashem in our soul, but there are also limits on us at the same time. Through our power of *da'as*, we can recognize we have limits and that is how we properly build our *nefesh*. Without *da'as*, we cannot become a *kli* (container) to hold the light of the *EinSof*.

Whenever there are less rules and limits on people, there is chaos. When a person has no sense of rules and boundaries, there will be chaos inside his own *nefesh* and then he will also clash with others.

The world needs limits in order to function, and so does our own *nefesh*.

Daas ra, or the *Eitz HaDaas Ra* that exists in our *nefesh*, is whenever a person doesn't want rules. It is also called *medameh*, the imagination, which is the tool that the *Nachash* uses in order to break all rules of the world. The whole pleasure that a person has in doing something evil is when he enjoys a fantasy reality in which there are no rules. There is a statement of Chazal, "Like a child who runs away from school" – simply it is because the child doesn't want to learn, but it is also because a person wishes to go free from all rules.

(As an aside, when a person learns how to use this power of going beyond human limitations for the purposes of *kedushah*, it is called *Nachash d'kedushah*, using the ability of *daas ra*, the *Nachash*, for the purposes of holiness. What is it? It is the desire in a person to go beyond his limited human state and connect himself with the Infinite, to the *EinSof* of Hashem, which is a source of infinite, true pleasure.)

How can we avoid the pitfalls of the imagination (*medameh*), which is the evil use of *daas*? It is by training ourselves to see that everything has certain limitations to it. In every concept that we come across in the Gemara, we see that each concept has its defining parameters, of where we apply the rule and where we don't. The more we get used to giving definitions to each thing we learn about, we are building our ability of *daas tov*, which builds our *seichel* (intellect) that enables us to stay focused on the true reality and avoiding the *yetzer hora's* fantasy reality. דע את דעתך 003 דעת דחיבור

Q&A – WHERE IS THE OHR HAGANUZ TODAY?

QUESTION What are the roots of both the approaches of *Mussar* and *Chassidus*?

ANSWER This is a very expansive discussion, and the following is all being written in extreme brevity.

[INTRODUCTION] *Chazal* state that Hashem created a special *ohr* (lit. “light”, a revelation) on the first day and hid it away for the *tzaddikim* in the future. Thus the main, complete level of this *ohr* light has been hidden away from Creation. What remains today from it are parts of its *he’arah* (illumination, a partial level of the *ohr* light), which are called *nitzotzos*, “sparks”. Today the *keilim*, the “vessels” which are meant to contain this *ohr* (light), are only able to contain “sparks” of the light. These “vessels”, as they are manifest in our world, are a mixture of good and evil, especially ever since the sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDaas*, when a mixture of good and evil entered into everything.

[MUSSAR] The *Gra* explained the rule of the Gemara that “Where there is wine available, there is no need for any remedies”, it means “Where there is Torah learning, there is no need for *mussar*.” The reason for this is because the hidden light (*ohr haganuz*) which Hashem stored away at the beginning of Creation really became hidden in the Torah. When this light shines completely, it banishes all evil, because “the words of Torah cannot accept *tumah* (defilement).” However, when the *ohr* of Torah isn’t found at the complete level, there becomes a need for *mussar* (ethics, self-discipline). The word *mussar* is from the word “*lyaser*”, “to remove”, hinting that it is an approach in which a person can banish and remove the evil within one’s human nature, mainly through waging war with those forces of evil that are found in human nature. This connects us to the sparks (the *nitzotzos*) of *ohr* (spiritual light) which shine on this world. That is why, in the approach of *mussar*, the general *avodah* is to remove our negative *middos*

(character traits). **Reb Yisrael Salanter** taught that this is accomplished through the method of contemplating the depth of evil that a person can sink to when he doesn’t work on himself, which brings a person to punishments of *Gehinnom*, etc. Corresponding to this reflection, one also needs to make use of the light of the Torah, as a spiritual power to remedy the particular evil one is facing, by studying the particular area of Torah which discusses the evil of a particular character trait. The way to actualize this concept in our *avodah* is by reviewing many times, with passion, with “lips on fire”, a particular statement of the Torah or the Sages. Correspondingly, one also needs to make use of the imaginative faculty, by imagining the punishment for unfixed character traits. At the core of this approach is to uproot the evil from within oneself, and in this way, one actually wages war with the forces of evil. The student of R’ Yisrael Salanter, the **Alter of Kelm**, expanded the idea of reflecting into the statements of *Chazal*, through the approach of “*chochmah v’ mussar*” (wisdom and ethics). This is by learning the depth of the character traits, from reflecting into the statements of *Chazal* about them, and also by reflecting about the ways and happenings of the world. The way to actualize this concept in our *avodah* is through being orderly, precise, and serene, which is expressed through taking on small resolutions to improve. His student **Reb Yeruchem of Mir** expanded upon the above approach, through the approach of “*daas chochmah u’ mussar*” (integrated knowledge, wisdom, and ethics). It is through reflecting into the ways of conduct of the Creator, as it pertains to the Creation at large. (This approach was also mirrored by the *Ramchal* in *sefer Daas Tevunos*.) In this way, one reflects about each thing to encompass all the details. Then, a person takes upon himself small resolutions, to act upon what he has realized. The **Alter of Novhardok** established that the concept of *bitachon* (placing one’s confidence in Hashem) is the pillar of our *avodah*. This represents the state of Adam before the sin. It is about letting go of the self, through working on the concept of *bita-*

chon. This is actualized through going to an extreme in order to act upon *bitachon*, so that a person is can easily undergo a self-effacement (*bittul*) amidst strongly pursuing truth. This path enables one to strongly connect to the sparks of spiritual light on this world, and even more so, to the light itself. However, this is mainly for the purpose of removing evil from oneself. The **Alter of Slobodka** established the root of man’s *avodah* as *gadlus ha’adam* (the greatness of man), or *tzelem elokim* (“in the image of G-d”). Through this, a person is able to distance oneself from all evil, because when one realizes his greatness, he will avoid evil. This path brings a person very close to becoming attached with the very *ohr* itself. However, the purpose of this path was to “replenish the spirits of those who feel lowly and crushed in spirit”, so it makes use of the “light” for that specific purpose of healing people. The *mashgiach R’ Chatzkel Levenstein* mainly took the approach of Reb Yisrael Salanter, but he was also very connected to the concept of “palpable *emunah*”. He established clearly that the purpose of all his *avodah* was to live with palpable *emunah*, and that the entire purpose of banishing evil from oneself is to live a life of palpable *emunah*. From amidst this palpable *emunah*, he left to his eternal home. **Rav Dessler**, the author of *Michtav M’Eliyahu*, integrated the approaches of *mussar* (ethics) with *Chassidus* (devotion) together, by delicately fusing the “light of *chassidus*” into *mussar*.

[CHASSIDUS] The approach of *Chassidus* is based on the *ohr haganuz* which Hashem hid away for the *tzaddikim* in the future, and even more so, it was based on the new *ohr* which will be revealed in the future. Its purpose is to bring a person to a palpable sense of being actually attached [to Hashem]. It is also about elevating the *nitzotzos*, the sparks that fell from *kedushah* as a result of sinning, to bring the fallen sparks of *kedushah* back to its root, to the *ohr* that it came from. That is why much of *Chassidus* contains the concept of *birur*, “sorting” the sparks, which is essentially about refining the character traits, such as channeling our

misused love, misused fear, etc. back to their root. It is about elevating the sparks of *kedushah* that are contained within the mixture of good and evil in each thing. Even more so, it is about *tikkun bekeilim*, to “repair the vessels” mainly through the concept of “A little bit of light can banish a lot of darkness”, and to thereby wage war with evil. A large part of this *avodah* involves the concept of *ahavas Yisrael* (loving the Jewish people), by focusing on how “A Jew who sins is still a Jew” (*Sanhedrin 44a*), etc. This is all enabled through the *ohr* that came down to the world which can illuminate even a person on the lowest level. In order to access that *ohr*, one needs to (1) Become connected to a *tzaddik*, who brings a person to the *shoresh* of his *neshamah*. 2) To focus on the secret dimension of Torah, called *razin* (secrets), and the deeper secrets of Torah, which are called *razin d'razin* (secrets of secrets), revealed in *Chassidus*. Through this, one becomes connected to the *ohr EinSof* and shines the “oneness” of Hashem (*achdus*) onto the Jewish people – which is the depth of *ahavas Yisrael*. And that light can also spread to the rest of Creation and unify the entire world under the one reality of Hashem. The **Baal Shem Tov** mainly emphasized two parts in his *avodah*: (1) *Emunah*, also called *p'shitus* - simply attaching oneself to Hashem, and through this, one becomes *davuk* (attached) and *miskalel* (integrated) within the *ohr EinSof*. (2) *Yichudim* (certain intentions to have while doing to saying something). Through these two aspects, coupled with *ahavas Yisrael*, one extends the revelation of *Elokus* (G-dliness) upon the world, and from that, all *shefa* (sustenance) comes to the Jewish people. The primary focus of the Baal Shem Tov's path emphasized increasing the light of the *neshamah* upon oneself, as opposed to smashing the physicality of the *guf* (body).

The way of the Baal Shem Tov was explained through his students. It is known that he wanted 60 students, corresponding to 60 warriors that surrounded the bed of Shlomo. However, the one who filled his place was the **Magid of Mez-**

ritch. His *avodah* was to reveal the source of *chochmah* (wisdom) which is in *ayin* (nothingness) – a wisdom that revealed *Elokus*, G-dliness. His students and those after them continued to explain his teachings, and it would really require an entire series of *sefarim* to explain all of the details. The following is just a general description.

Each sect of *Chassidus* took a particular *middah* (trait) by which one can reveal *Elokus* (G-dliness) upon the world. This wasn't just to repair evil character, but for a higher purpose: to reveal *Elokus*. For all *middos* (traits) are really *middos* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and though repairing a certain *middah*, one elevates the *nitzotzos*, “sparks” of the holy *middah* which fell down from their source, and he also repairs the *kli*, the vessel that contains the trait. One who learns *Chassidus* needs to clarify, based on the *sefer* as well as on the life of the author of the *sefer*, what the root *middah* is, by which the author is revealing all of his words of Torah and way of *avodah*. (This is also generally true about all *sefarim*). Based on this, one can then understand the way of thinking and the path of the author, and thereby know how to go about the ways of *avodah* of the particular author. This is deep and subtle, because one needs to know the particular world, path, and trait the *sefer* is based on.

Here are some general examples [of the this insight]: The *sefer* **Noam Elimelech** is based on the trait of *yesod-tzaddik*, meaning that it is about connecting to the root, and from this, to bestow good upon a Jew. The *sefarim* of **Slonim** are mainly about *emunah*. The *sefer* *Toras Avos* established how from *emunah* comes *kedushah* (sanctity), the trait called *yesod*, and also the *kedushah* of Shabbos. **Breslev** focuses on *p'shitus* (simplicity), *emunah peshutah* (simple faith), by which one can draw forth *chochmah*, from its source that is called *ayin*. It involves having *emunah peshutah* in Hashem, and *emunah peshutah* in a *tzaddik*. The root of this is to guard the trait of the *tzaddik*, which is *yesod*. The way

of **Chabad** is *hisbonenus* (reflection), by comparing two different matters with each other. The root of this is to compare the difference between Creator and creations, and from this, to bond with the Infinite. The way of the **Sfas Emes** is to find the root that empowers each thing. The way of **Rebbi Pinchos of Koritz** is to have an encompassing view, to see each matter from above and around the matter, thereby gaining a new perspective in each matter. This is why he stressed truth, to be aware of the beginning, middle and end of a matter. It is to gain an encompassing view of a matter, so that one can see the full picture, the full truth. The way of the *Kedushas Levi* is the trait of *ahavah*. Therefore his *avodah* was to reveal an unlimited love, endless *ahavas Yisrael* and always judging others favorably. The way of the **Kamarna** is to have *emunah peshutah* and to make oneself as *ayin* (nothing). It is to use the light of *emunah*, to become a container to house the level of *ayin*. Through this one can bond with a “G-dly light” and with spiritual bliss. The way of **Reb Baruch of Medzhybizh** is *gevurah*, restraint. The way of **Reb Yisrael of Rizhin** is to have *d'veykus* in Hashem, by going above the world, to be like a king above his nation, and thereby enable *shefa* to come from above down to the world. It is like standing “above” the confusing “garden-maze” of life [mentioned in the beginning of *Mesillas Yesharim*], not because one has traversed the “garden-maze” but an ability to be above the “garden-maze” to begin with! The way of the **Chozeh of Lublin** is, as implied from his title of “Chozeh”, “Seer” – as is known, he closed his eyes for seven years which enabled him to see any detail at its root. The way of the **Ohev Yisrael** is described in the introduction to the *sefer* *Ohev Yisrael*: “Only through this *middah* (of *ahavas Yisrael*) will I be glorified in the Heavenly Court.” His *ahavas Yisrael* was firmly established in his heart. In the first section of the *sefer*, he said that “The main pleasure of man is to bestow good upon other people and give pleasure to others, and all else follows [the above is only a partial list.]

WHEN YOM TOV ENDS

We have just left Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and Succos. On Succos, when a person takes the *arba minim* and he ate and slept in the *succah*, if he feels even a little bit of *kedushah* from this, he feels a connection to the *arba minim* and to the *succah*. It is hard to leave it behind! Now, if someone didn't feel that it was so hard to part from the Yom Tov he is simply not in touch with *ruchniyus*. But if someone did feel it, what is his *avodah*? His *avodah* is to go even deeper. He can be aware that although I have left the *succah* and the *arba minim*, I am not parting ways from the presence of the *Shechinah*, from feeling Hashem's Presence which settled upon the *succah*!"

There is a well-known story about the Vilna Gaon on his deathbed, when he was holding tightly onto his *tzitzis* and he cried over how much he did not want to part from it. Yet, it is that pain of being disconnected from the *mitzvos* which brings a person to an even deeper perspective. A person leaves the *succah* and he will miss it, and he certainly needs to feel pained at leaving it. But we also know that the *Shechinah* comes to dwell on the *succah* - and a person can always remain connected to the *Shechinah*, long after Succos is over.

It is painful for a person to detach from this material world and not to feel connected to our house and to our items and everything else we have on this world, but as difficult as it is, that is our *avodah*. One must eventually reach the point where it does not feel painful for him to be disconnected from This World, and that is how a person will be successful and grow during his stay on this temporary world. But after a person has achieved that sense of separation from this world, a person should even learn how to leave the *succah* behind, to not feel dependent even on certain things in our *ruchniyus* which we had grown from. At first a person must certainly feel that it is painful to leave behind a *mitzvah*. He should miss the *succah* when he leaves it! But after he feels that pain, he must then realize that this pain can bring him to a more inner understanding, that although he is disconnecting from the *succah*, he is not becoming disconnected from the *Shechinah* that came there.

The deep way to live life is by realizing that everything Hashem has given us, whether in the material world or in *ruchniyus*, it is all *keilim*, tools that enable us to get closer to Hashem. Then we can channel our need to feel strongly connected to something, and

use it to feel connected only to Hashem, His Torah, and the *neshamos* of *Klal Yisrael*
שיחת השבוע 07 לך לך תשע"ו

On *Simchas Torah*, a person has to have at least felt a minimal amount of closeness towards the Torah. One has to feel the *Yom Tov*, to feel the *Simchas Torah*, to feel *Shemini Atzeres* - of which Hashem said, "Remain with me one more day." He has to feel that it was hard to part from Hashem after such a period of closeness, just as Hashem finds it hard to leave us at the end of *Succos*. He has to have felt that he has the opportunity to feel the reality of Hashem for at least one more day.

There is a concept that a person can extend the holiness of Yom Tov to the rest of the year. This is what we ask for in the Yom Tov prayer of *והשיאנו*, in which we ask *Hashem* to let the holiness of the festival "carry" into the rest of the year. However, the disappointing reality is that most people do not succeed in doing this except for a short amount of time. When Yom Tov comes, a non-feeling person doesn't feel any changes from the Yom Tov, whereas a person who takes Yom Tov seriously and prepares for it receives more *chiyus* (vitality and elation) from it. When Yom Tov is over, he is apt to fall from his plateau, and the fall can hurt! The *nefesh* (soul) cannot always handle the *kedushah* that came from the festival, and a person falls down soon after it is over. If we want to gain from Yom Tov, we first need to be able to feel more *chiyus* from the ordinary days of the year. Then we will be able to receive the *kedushah* of Yom Tov without losing it afterwards.

מי יעלה בהר ה' ומי יקום במקום קדשו, "Who will ascend the mountain of Hashem, and who will stand in His holy place?" This *possuk* is telling us the *avodah* we need to do throughout the year: We need to keep standing in the holy place we have risen to on the *Yomim Tovim*, to keep seeing where we are holding. We all know that Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, *Succos* and *Simchas Torah* will once again be here next year, and that we will once again return to making resolutions, developing our will for spirituality, to have yearnings for spirituality, to dance again on *Simchas Torah*. We will do it all again next year - with the help of Hashem.

But are we losing all of this, *chas v'shalom*, as the year goes on - and then we are just beginning again from scratch next year? Are we going to start over again next year simply because we have lost all those yearnings?

The truth is that the reason why many

people can't keep their resolutions for the new year is because they don't believe in themselves enough. They didn't believe to begin with that they were able to keep to what they took upon themselves. But *Chazal* established that we daven in *Shemoneh Esrei* the *tefillah* of "V'hasieinu" in which we as Hashem to extend the *kedushah* we felt on Yom Tov into the rest of the year as well! So it is definitely possible for us to keep to the resolutions and higher levels that we aspired for the coming year. Even if we can't keep to them as perfectly as we had hoped to, we can still keep to them on our own level.

The practical application is to follow the advice of the *Ramchal* in *sefer Derech Eitz Chaim*, that **every day a person should ask himself, "What am I living for? What is the purpose of my life, what am I doing here? What did I come down onto the world for?"** The *Ramchal* even says that if a person does this every day, **he is taking the path of the Avos and it is definite that he will become very close to *shleimus*** (self-perfection)! Let us follow this key advice of the *Ramchal* which is so simple and true. If someone sees a different piece of advice in another *sefer*, that's wonderful. But in Kelm, and in other places, they followed the *Ramchal's* advice, which is that one should set aside time to bring his life to a halt, and see if he is keeping to his aspirations that he had during *Yomim Noraim*. Anyone who is truthful with himself knows how necessary it is to make this basic self-accounting. And in that way, we can keep returning to the high levels that we reached on Yom Tov, throughout the rest of the year, long after Yom Tov is over. *סוכות 01 התעוררות אחרי החגים*

This weekly parsha sheet is based on translations by talmidim from the *divrei Torah* of HaRav Isamar Schwartz, *Shlit"a* the author of the Bilvavi and DaEs series. The Rav attended the Pachad Yitzhak Yeshiva of Rav Yonasan David, *Shlit"a* and graduated from the Ponovitch Yeshiva of Rav Gershon Edelstein, *Shlit"a*. The earliest of more than 50 sefarim of the Rav where enthusiastically endorsed by Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch, *Shlit"a*, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, *Shlit"a*, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, *Shlit"a*, the Tolna Rebbe, *Shlit"a*, Rav Yitzchok Meyer Morgenstern, *Shlit"a*, Rav Moshe Mordechai Karp, *Shlit"a*, Rav Sherayah Deblitzki, *z"l*, Rav Chizkiyahu Erlanger, *z"l*, amongst others. Using an eclectic approach, the Rav's teachings speak to the hearts of Jews from all walks of life.