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## Shovavim - 005 Repairing Lust

Here in this chapter we will deal with the fourth cause for the sin of damaging the Bris: having lustful thoughts towards women. We will mainly discuss one who has thoughts about another married woman – beginning from why a person has lustful thoughts in the first place, and ending up at what leads a person to actually sin with another woman, *chas v'shalom*.

The first person in history who told us how to act upon our thoughts was the Snake. Our Sages<sup>[1]</sup> ask: Why was the Snake so cunning towards Adam and Chavah? Why did it seek to pounce upon them? It was because it saw them during marital relations, and then it desired Chavah. It wanted to marry Chavah and therefore it wanted to kill Adam. Here is the first time in Creation in which thought and planning was involved.

The Sages state the Snake came upon her and violated her. This created a certain connection between woman and snake. The Zohar draws a correlation between the name of the Snake and the name of Chavah, because snake is called “*chavya*” in Lashon HaKodesh, similar to the name Chavah.

Ever since the Snake desired Chavah and came upon her, an evil desire entered all of mankind, to lust after another woman. The Snake represents evil, and the desire to have relations with a married woman is the epitome of evil – and it was the Snake who placed this evil desire in mankind.

What caused the Snake to desire Chavah? The Midrash states that the Snake saw them openly having marital relations, and then its desire for Chavah was formed. So the root of the Snake’s evil began with straying after its eyes. Then it spoke with Chavah, which brought the evil to a whole new level; it was now able to convince her and sway her. Finally, it was able to come upon her and commit an intimate act with her. So there were three stages – sight, speech, and action.

There was actually a level that came before the sight: it had devious thoughts. In this chapter, we will not address how the power of thought is rectified, because it was already discussed earlier (in Shovavim #02). Here we will discuss the three stages that came after the Snake’s thoughts: its sight of Chavah, its speech with Chavah, and its action with Chavah.

The Snake was punished measure for measure with each of these aspects. It used to be the leader of all the animals; after it sinned, it was no longer the leader of the animals, and this was a level of taking away its power of sight, for now it could not be other overseer of the all the animals. Before the sin, it was able to stand erect and see all it wanted, and now it has to slither on the ground where it cannot see well.

It spoke with Chavah, and therefore its power of speech was taken away. It committed an act with Chavah by contaminating her, which contributed to the birth of Kayin from her, and it was punished with an unusual kind of birth which other animals do not have to go through; a snake takes seven years to survive from conception until birth, whereas other animals give birth soon after conception.

A woman as well bears three distinctions which are parallel to the Snake's three aspects of sin. There is a statement of our Sages, "A woman is only for beauty", as well as "A woman is only for having children." There is also a statement, "A woman is only for a home." So a woman has three distinct aspects to her - beauty, childbearing, and being a "home".[\[2\]](#)

The beauty of a woman reflects the sin of the Snake when it saw Chavah and thus desired her. The home that is a woman reflects the speech of the Snake with her, because the power of speech is called the "home" of the thoughts. [Later we will hopefully explain what this is]. The action that the Snake did with Chavah, which was to procreate with her, is reflected in the fact that women bear children.

We already mentioned that there are some connections that still remain between the Snake and woman. Chavah's name is similar to the Aramaic word for snake - "*chavya*". We also find that both the snake and a woman are called "enemies" of a man.[\[3\]](#)

Now we will explain the aspect of speech\home in a woman. A woman can either be seen as a person connected to her husband, or she is seen as the one who bears children. This is the deeper meaning of the statement of one of the Sages, "it is enough that our wives raise our children and save us from sin."[\[4\]](#) The two abilities of a woman are the fact that she raises children and the fact that she is connected to her husband and thus protects him from sinning. In between these two roles of a wife, we find a third role, a middle point between her two roles: the fact that she is called the home. This is parallel to the aspect of speech in the Snake's sin with Chavah, for speech is called the home to the thoughts.

Before we explain the middle role of woman, which is the fact she is called the home, we first should be aware that there is an even higher level of connection between man and woman than being connected through speech: through their power of sight.

It is forbidden for a man to betroth a woman unless he has first seen her[\[5\]](#); during marital relations, man and woman must be facing each other, and this implies that they must unite through being able to see each other. When they see each other, it is not just that they are seeing each other - they are connecting with each other, through seeing each other. When they make eye contact with each other, it is a form of intimacy with each other, and it is even more intimate than when they speak with each other. To illustrate the concept, there is a kind of bird which conceives as soon it is merely viewed by its mate.[\[6\]](#)

Thus, when a man thinks about a forbidden woman to him, he is already connecting with her in a forbidden way, and this is besides for the fact that such thoughts can lead to lustful thoughts and damaging the Bris. When the Snake saw Chavah, it already connected with her. Its sight of her led to speaking with her and to acting with her, but its connection to her began with the sense of sight.

Now we will speak about the connection of speech between man and woman. Chazal warn a man not to speak with another married woman. So connection can be caused by speech, and speech can be intimate. There are also two kinds of intimacy: through speech, and through kissing. The Snake saw Adam and Chavah during intimacy and therefore it connected with Chavah though just seeing her, and it also spoke with her, which was another aspect of the evil connection it had with her.

The sin caused a need for man and woman to become united through a home. The root of the Snake's sin began when it saw them during intimacy, when they had no home of their own. So the entire concept of modesty resulted from the sin.

Before the sin, connection could be achieved just through speech alone; there was no need for a home then. Now that we are after a sin, we need a home, and intimacy must be done privately, in the home, with modesty. For this reason, the Sages forbid intimacy outdoors[7].

Now we will reflect into the aspect of sight in the Snake's sin – it caught sight of her and that is why it wanted to sin. This is reflected in the fact that women are for beauty.

Woman is called *nekaivah*, which is from the word *nekev*, “hole”, implying deficiency. If you think about it deeply, all beauty is a result of something that was missing. When two opposite colors unite, you get a beautiful result. When *chessed* and *gevurah* come together, the result is *tiferes*, beauty. Beauty is always something that sticks out and is noticed, because it bears a contrast with something else, and that is why it looks beautiful; it's about noticing difference. For example, a wall that's painted with just one color doesn't look beautiful; but when you see a wall painted with a few colors, you see the contrast of the colors, and it looks beautiful. With colors especially, you can see this concept: each color is missing pigment of the other colors, and that is what makes each color distinct. Beauty is the result of seeing differences; or from seeing deficiencies.

Beauty that results from deficiencies contains it both an external aspect and an internal aspect. The inner aspect of it is as follows. All of Creation is lacking, whereas Hashem is the only One who is not lacking. Thus, the beauty of Creation is the fact that although we are deficient, perfection can still be revealed in it – when Hashem will be revealed in this imperfect Creation.

The external aspect of it is because a woman is created from a hole, she therefore reminds man how he is lacking without her. Since a man feels lacking without her, he has a desire to look at her.

When a person feels lacking and therefore he looks to fill what he lacks – through watching women – it appears to him as if he's feeding what he lacks, but in reality, it's like drinking salty water. The mere desire in a person to turn outward of himself is already a deficiency.

What a person really needs to do is to restrain his desire to see outward, and in its place, to instead yearn for the revelation of the Creator, so that his sense of incompleteness will be filled. The whole reason why man was created deficient in the first place is to show him that he needs to reveal Hashem in his life.

Thus, the desire in a man to stare at another woman really comes from a desire in the soul to be completed by the Shechinah (Hashem's Presence), just it is being channeled in the wrong direction. The way to rectify this yearning is, that besides for shutting one's eyes from seeing improper sights, he needs to channel his yearning for completion and use it to yearn for the revelation of Hashem, and that will fix what he's missing in his life.

The act of adultery might seem like a form of connection with another, but it never lasts. It always becomes shaky and then it is gone. It is like the buildings of Pishon and Ramses, which were all uprooted.

The home, which unites man and woman, is how a true and lasting connection is achieved. When there is connection, pleasure and enjoyment always follow with it. The Snake, which tried to connect with Chavah by speaking to her, didn't receive any enjoyment in the connection, because it was not a real and lasting connection. This is the depth of why one who speaks gossip has no tangible enjoyment from his act[8]; although he a gossip is using the power of speech, his speech is not

forming any connection with others.

When one has lustful thoughts about another woman, the deeper problem is because he has a misunderstanding about what real connection is. A real connection between man and woman is a lasting connection, which is only through the home. When there it is another person's wife, he is not connected to her through any home, thus, if he happens to have a connection with her, it's only temporary; it won't survive.

Chazal say that when one divorces his first wife, the Altar cries<sup>[9]</sup>. Although the Sages permit giving a divorce for even trivial matters such as when she purposely burns the food or when he finds another to be better than her, these are situations in which they have already become so far apart from each other that they are already having such petty disputes.

A husband must realize that the connection with his wife is a permanent kind of connection, which should not ever become erased. Just as the Shechinah came to settle permanently upon the Beis HaMikdash, so do a man and woman, when they merit to have Shechinah between them, merit a home which is permanent with each other.

Before the sin, Adam and Chavah were connected to each other just through the Shechinah alone; they didn't need a home. After the sin, they lost the Shechinah, and now the way that husband and wife connect is only in the home. Therefore, one must view his wife as being a permanent connection, his home, and not as a connection that he 'happens' to have. If a husband does not view his connection with his wife as being a permanent one, this is a degree of thinking about another woman.

Right now, when we live after the sin, we need the home in order to have connection between husband and wife. Therefore, Shechinah can only come to the home when there is love between them. In the future, when we will return to the level of before the sin, the Shechinah alone will be enough to connect man and women together, and then the Shechinah will be forever.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Beraishis Rabbah 18:6

<sup>[2]</sup> Kesubos 59b

<sup>[3]</sup> Beraishis Rabbah 54a

<sup>[4]</sup> Yevamos 63a

<sup>[5]</sup> Kiddushin 41a

<sup>[6]</sup> Footnote from the Hebrew sefer: Sefer Yitav Panim of the Satmar Rebbe (Rav Yekusiel Teitelbaum zt"l) brings such a thing, but I have not found an earlier source for this; perhaps it is referring to the ostrich (bas yaanah), who can hatch an egg just by looking at it.

<sup>[7]</sup> Sanhedrin 46a, Rambam Hilchos Issuri Biah 21:14

[8] Taanis 8a

[9] Gittin 90a

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