



Rosh Chodesh Mazal - 004 Iyar | Bull

The Mazal of Iyar - 'Bull'

The *mazal* (astrological sign) of the month of *Iyar* is called "*shor*", the bull (or ox).

The *Gemara*^[1] says that there are two kinds of bulls (or oxen). One kind of bull\ox is a day-old ox, which is called "*shor ben yomo*", and the other kind of bull is "*eigel v'naaseh shor*", when a calf has matured into a fully grown ox. So there is "*shor*", and there is "*eigel v'naaseh shor*".

The *Vilna Gaon* says that the purpose of the exodus was to arrive at Sinai, where Hashem said, "*Serve G-d at this mountain*" - the giving of the Torah. After the giving of the Torah, came the sin with the *Eigel*, (the Golden Calf). The sin of 'serving' the Golden Calf caused the Jewish people to fall from their level of 'serving' Hashem at the mount of Sinai, and it plunged them into ruination ever since then. Ever since that sin, we lost the true level we were at when we received the Torah at Sinai.

The *Vilna Gaon* writes that in the month of *Iyar*, "a breach took place". This is referring to the sin with the Golden Calf, which broke our great level of spirituality and made us fall from our exalted level. The *mazal* of the month of *Iyar* is "*shor*", the bull\ox, a hint to the sin with the golden calf that happened in this month.

Every concept exists both in the side of holiness as well as in the side of evil. Let us try to understand what the holy side to "*shor*" is, and what its evil side is, and then we can draw these matters closer to our soul, so that we can take out the practical lesson to be learned from all of this.

The Depth Behind "Shor" \ The Bull

Ever since the sin with the Golden Calf, our exalted state was ruined. At the giving of the Torah, we reached perfection, and after the sin with the Golden Calf, we fell from that perfected level. This all came as a result from the *eigel*, which was a *shor*, a young bull.

In Aramaic, '*shor*' (שור) is called '*tura*' (תורא) - which is the opposite of the word "Torah" (תורה). Thus, *shor**tura* represents the force of evil that fights the level of perfection we reached when we received the Torah. Ever since then, we fell from the level of Torah to '*tura*', to the level of '*shor*'; the second set of *Luchos*^[2], which were not on the same level as the first step of *Luchos*. The *shor* of the *eigel* brought us down from the level of receiving the Torah, to a lower level of existence.

The *Gemara*^[3] says that there are two kinds of bulls. One kind of bull is a "*shor tam*", a "tame" bull, and a "*shor muad*", a wild bull. A *shor tam* gores occasionally, and a *shor muad* gores on an established basis. One is obligated to guard his *shor muad* so that it does not gore, because it has a tendency to gore; one is not obligated to watch his *shor tam*, because there is no reason to assume it will gore. What is the depth behind the concepts of *shor tam* and *shor muad*?

Yaakov Avinu was called an "*ish tam*" (wholesome man), which parallels the concept of the "*shor tam*". And in the blessings of Yaakov Avinu, it is Yosef who is compared to the *shor* (ox). The *Gemara*

derives the *halachah* of *shor muad* from the blessing of Yaakov Avinu that describes Yosef, so Yosef represents a “holy” kind of “*shor muad*”.

Thus, we have two kinds of holy manifestations of *shor* (bull\ox\ox): Yaakov parallels the holy kind of “*shor tam*” (a tame bull, who does not usually gore) and Yosef parallels the holy kind of “*shor muad*” (wild bull).

The normal *shor\ox*, or the “*shor tam*”, is for the most part docile, so it does not engage in battle. If it does harm someone, the owner must pay half the damage, but normally, it does not attack. The bull which engages in battle is the *shor muad*, the wild bull, which is likely to gore another and which must be watched.

Yosef represents the *shor muad* in the side of holiness, for Yosef will wage war with the force of Esav in the future. The evil “*shor muad*” is Esav, and in the future, this evil *shor muad* will be fought through the holy *shor muad*, Yosef. Of the future it is written, “*the house of Yaakov will be like a fire, and the house of Yosef will be like a flame, which will burn Esav like straw.*” The power of Yaakov and Yosef together will wage war against the evil wild bull, the wicked Esav, in the future. Bull will be pitted against bull, and we will see who will win.

The holy “bull” is Yaakov, who bore Yosef; the evil “bull” is Esav. This is the outline of the concept. Now we will try to understand its implications.

The Bull and The Sense of Sight

The *shor* (bull\ox\ox) is linked with the concept of sight. The word “*shor*” is rooted in the verse “*V’lo yashurenu*”, “And you shall not see”, thus the term “*shor*” is linked with sight. The word “*shurah*”, which means “row”, is related to the word *shor*; in the laws of mourning, the mourners stand amidst a *shurah* (row) right after burial [so that they can be easily seen and deciphered as mourners]. The word “*shor*” is called “*tura*” in Aramaic, and in the Torah’s language, “*tura*” comes from the word “*tor*” (as in the “*tor*” of Queen Esther), which means “order”, which is also another meaning of the word “*shurah*”.

Evil Began With The Sense of Sight

The root of all *nisyonos* (tribulations) on this world stem from the eyes. Chavah laid eyes on the *Eitz HaDaas* and desired it, and ever since then, the tribulations of mankind began.

The word “*tura*” (תורא) related to the word “*lasur*” (לתור) to “spy”, which is written concerning the Spies, when they wanted to spy the Land and see if it was safe to dwell in. [Thus, *tura\shor* is about seeing, implying the idea of checking and examining, because there is something that seems uncertain]

Earlier, we explained that after the exalted level we were on at the time of the giving of the Torah, when we fell to the sin with the golden calf, we fell because of a “bull” (the calf); it caused us to fall into the level of the “bull”. [Now we will elaborate more on this point].

When we uttered the words “*Naaseh V’Nishmah*” (“We will do, and we will hear”), before we accepted the Torah, we did so without any questioning; we did not examine if it was good or not for us to accept the Torah, because we were on a completely earnest level of having *emunah* in Hashem and in what He was giving us. Unlike the logic of the nations of the world, who considered us foolish for rushing to accept the Torah without first questioning what it was, we instead trusted in the Creator, and we believed wholeheartedly that the Torah was entirely good for us to receive; we had absolute *emunah* that our Giver was giving us something completely good, and we did not question it. It

reflected the statement of Chazal, “A bride who has beautiful eyes, does not need to be checked.”

But when we fell with the sin of the golden calf, we fell from the “Torah” to *tura*, to the “bull”, represented by the golden calf. We fell to the level of *shor\tura*\bull – a level in which we need to spy on the land of Eretz Yisrael in order to see if it was safe or not; a level in which we lost our earnest level of *emunah*, which caused us to question things and to check things out. Had the Jewish people never sinned with the golden calf, they would have gone straight into Eretz Yisrael, and there would have been no episode of the Spies that were sent into the land to check it out.

At the level of the giving of the Torah, we first said “*Naaseh*” before “*Nishmah*”, because we did not feel a need to question the authenticity of what we were receiving. We knew, with *emunah*, that it was good for us, because we trusted the One who was giving to us. But when the nation grew afraid that Moshe wasn’t returning from Heaven, they lost that *emunah*, and they fell from the perfected level they were at upon receiving the Torah. They fell from the level of total *emunah* in their Giver, and ever since then, there is a nature in people to question and examine things. That was the depth of their spiritual descent.

Hashem says, “*Follow me into the desert.*” When we went out of Egypt to go receive the Torah, we did so with total *emunah* in Hashem. That was the level we needed to be on, in order to receive the Torah. When we fell from that level – due to the sin with the golden calf, a “bull” that caused us so much spiritual defilement – we fell into the level of the “bull”, where we need to examine anything until we can trust it. Ever since then, everything needs to be examined and checked, before we can trust in it. We lost the level of total *emunah* in our Giver, and that was the depth of the ruination that resulted from the sin with the golden calf.

When one wants to examine something, he uses his eyes. He can continue to feel it with his hands, but he begins to examine something by first seeing it, with his eyes. Chavah first saw the *Eitz HaDaas*, and then she touched it and then she tasted it. In other words, she first examined it with her eyes, in order to think about what it was, and after that she wondered if she should eat it or not. But it all began with her eyes.

Everything that came after that was all but a result of first laying her eyes upon it. The entire sin began with the eyes. Hashem commanded not to eat the *Eitz HaDaas*. Why did she feel a need to check what the *Eitz HaDaas* was? It was because she saw it and laid eyes upon it. When she saw it, she felt a need to check it out, and then she thought about it more, which led her to the rest of the act.

But this was because she fell from her level of complete *emunah* in Hashem. When there is complete *emunah* in Hashem, a person doesn’t feel a need to examine anything. It is clear to a person that if Hashem said “Do not eat it”, then that is what must be done, and there is no need to question why or why not. The root of all sin therefore began with a need to examine something, to see if it’s good or not, instead of relying on Hashem’s word that it is indeed not good.

“*Zuhama*” - The Serpent’s Impurity That Entered Man After The Sin

The Gemara says that when the people stood at Har Sinai, the spirit of impurity (*zuhama*) that the Serpent had injected into mankind was now removed. What was this “*zuhama*” that the Serpent had brought upon mankind, which was now being removed?

The *zuhama* was essentially the loss of absolute *emunah* in Hashem, and the subsequent need that man feels to question and examine something, because he doesn’t trust enough in Hashem. That was the *zuhama* which the Serpent injected into Chavah. When the Serpent convinced Chavah to eat from

the tree, it ruined her pure thinking patterns, and from that moment onward, Chavah began questioning and examining things, and that is what led her to the sin.

This *zuhama* was removed from mankind when we stood at Har Sinai. How did it leave us? It left us when we said “*Naaseh V’Nishmah*”, which caused us to return, to the original absolute *emunah* we had in our Giver, when we felt no need to examine anything.

The Jewish people are compared to the bride, and Hashem is compared to the groom, Who took her into marriage, with the Torah at Har Sinai, which was our betrothal to Hashem. We were that “*bride with beautiful eyes*” – we felt no need to examine anything, because we completely trusted in Hashem; unlike Chavah, who “saw” the *Eitz HaDaas* with her eyes and then thought about it, questioned the word of Hashem, and examined what it was. At Har Sinai, we returned to the original perspective, that nothing needs to be examined and checked.

The Depth Behind The Concept of The “Tame Ox”

This is the depth behind the concept of “*shor tam*”, the tame ox. What does the *shor tam* represent? The surface definition of the *shor tam* is that it does not gore more than three times. But why is it called “*shor tam*”?

Yaakov Avinu is called “*ish tam*” (wholesome man), and “*tam*” is from the word “*temimus*” (earnestness); how can a *shor tam* be called a “*tam*” (wholesome) like Yaakov Avinu, just because it hasn’t gored three times? Where is its *temimus*?

The answer lies in the following. The Gemara discusses a kind of ox which only becomes wild on certain occasions; for example, there is a kind of ox which will only gore when it is in certain places, and then it will be wild, so it will need to be watched in those places. Why would an ox act wild only in certain places, and not in other places? If it’s wild, shouldn’t it behave like this wherever it is? It is because when an ox gores, it only gores based upon what it sees.

There are three primary examples in the Gemara of how an ox inflicts damage: through goring (*keren*\its horn); through eating (*shein*\its tooth); and through trampling (*rege*\its foot). The Gemara says that when it eats things, it is doing so out of a desire for pleasure, and when it tramples things, it is doing so because something is getting in its way. But when it gores, it is doing so with “intention to do damage”. What is the depth of this matter, that an ox gores with “intention to do damage”?

When a tame ox gores, it is not goring because it saw something. When it gores, it had no agendas; it had *temimus*. But when a wild ox gores, it gores because it saw something, and then it wanted to do damage.

The *zuhama* began with the Serpent, and the Serpent was the ultimate creature that had “intention to do damage” to man. It wanted to kill Adam and take Chavah for itself, as Chazal teach. [Soon it will be explained how the Serpent is therefore like a “wild ox” that gores intentionally, and what the root of its evil is].

We are taught that there is a concept of a “good eye” and an “evil eye”, and this concept is discussed in Chazal in a number of places, with various applications. Moshe Rabbeinu was called one who had a “good eye”, whereas Bilaam had an “evil eye”. What, essentially, is the “good eye”, and what is the “evil eye”?

The “good eye” represents a pure kind of vision, where a person is not trying to examine and see something. The “evil eye” is when a person examines everything. A person checks out something and becomes curious about it, and he is wondering: “Maybe there’s something bad here?”

Where did the first suspicion come into Creation? When did man first entertain the thought that maybe there's something bad in the world? It began with the sin of Adam. Hashem created the world and testified that it was all "very good"; everything was good, in the pure state of Creation. How then did evil enter into Creation? It was as soon as Adam stopped believing that everything was "good". He then connected himself to the perspective of evil.

This was like the wild ox that gores. When it gores, that is but the result of something that prompted it. The ox is defined as either a tame ox or a wild ox depending on how it sees things. The tame ox sees something in one way, whereas the wild ox sees it in another way. Thus, the deep understanding of the difference between the wild ox (*shor muad*) and the tame ox (*shor tam*) is because the wild ox gores when it has seen bad in something; whereas the tame ox usually sees good in something, and therefore it usually will not gore.

The 'Good Eye' (Choosing Not To See Evil) and The "Evil Eye' (Choosing To See Evil)

Earlier we mentioned that Moshe possessed the "good eye", whereas Bilaam had the "evil eye". When Bilaam said the words, "*I do not notice sin in Yaakov, and I do not see exertion in Yisrael, Hashem his G-d is with him*", this was really Hashem's perspective being uttered through him. When Hashem created the world, He testified about it that it was "very good". Hashem only saw good in it; everything was good.

Adam, in his power to choose (which actually began with Chavah), had the possibility to see evil in Creation. The possibility to see evil in Creation is like the wild ox that gores upon seeing something it didn't like. The mere fact that a person sees evil in the world is the root of all ruination in Creation!

The Sages state, "The eyes see, the heart desires, and the actions complete." The simple understanding of this is that when the eyes see what it shouldn't have, such as a forbidden sight, the heart then obsesses over it and desires it, and this leads to the action of sin. But the depth of this is that the very fact that the eyes can see evil, is already its downfall. It is not about what it has seen.

The sin of Adam and Chavah therefore didn't begin with seeing the *Eitz HaDaas*. Rather, there was a point that preceded this: the very fact that man chose to see evil. Man has the power to choose what he will see, and if he chooses to see evil in Creation, this itself is the beginning of all ruination.

The simple understanding is that all sin begins in our heart, which can choose to lust after sin or not. But Chazal teach us that "the eyes see, and the heart desires", so the power of choice really begins with the eyes, of what we will choose to see. The first choice in Creation was Chavah's choice to see the *Eitz HaDaas*. This returned with the sin with the golden calf, a bull, which gores upon seeing something.

Thus, we have learned about what the root of all ruination is (seeing evil), and where our main power of *bechirah* (choice) lies, in each and every one of us. The power of choice does not begin with the passions of the heart, but with our eyes, which see.

Our Current Avodah In Rectifying Mankind: Seeing Only The Good In Creation

What then is our *avodah*, to rectify the "eyes that see", which are the root of all sin?

Simply speaking, our *avodah* now is contained in the words of the verse, "*He closes the eyes from seeing evil.*" This is true of course, but what is the deep meaning of this?

The simple understanding is as the Gemara explains, that if one has an alternate route to take where he can avoid seeing an improper sight, he must take that path, and that is how his eyes can avoid

seeing evil.

But the depth of *"He closes his eyes from seeing evil"* is contained in the words, *"I do not notice sin in Yaakov, and I do not see exertion in Yisrael."* It is when the soul of a person only sees good and it does not see evil. This is the meaning of the verse, *"The one with a good eye, is blessed"* - when one has a soul that only sees good - when he has the "good heart" which only sees good - and his eyes will then not see evil in anything. Even if he sees the evil, he chooses not to "see" it. This is also the meaning of the verse uttered by Bilaam, *"I do not notice sin in Yaakov"*, which was really Hashem's perspective being uttered through him, the pure and untainted perspective which only sees good in Creation.

The Loss of The "Good Eye" Perspective

There is a very deep point here, which one must contemplate. Where does our soul's power of *bechirah* (choice) begin? Where does our *bechirah* lie?

When the people sinned with the golden calf, it brought them all down to a lower spiritual level, from the level they were at upon receiving the Torah; and ever since, we are currently at that low spiritual level. Where did this originate from? It began when the people did not know where Moshe was, and the depth of this is that they did not where the perspective of the "good eye" was, which Moshe represents, for of Moshe it is said, *"The one with the good eye, is blessed."* When they despaired from Moshe returning to them, they essentially lost the perspective of the "good eye". When the "good eye" is lost, that is the entranceway to all evil and ruination.

The sin with the golden calf began with the "ox" that they carved an image of, and the ox\bull is linked with the sense of sight, as we explained above. The eyes can see evil, and that is where all ruination can occur.

We can now understand better the difference between the level of the giving of the Torah, with the level we fell to after the sin with the golden calf. At the giving of the Torah, our souls only saw good. We had the "good eye". After sinning with the golden calf, our nature underwent a change, and ever since then, man sees both good and evil in Creation, and usually, he sees evil, for this world is "mixed with good and evil - it is mostly evil, and partially good."

"Hashem looked into the Torah, and created the world." The Torah is called "good", for it is called *lekach tov*, the "good purchase", which Hashem gave to us. Hashem created the world from it, so the entire creation was created from something that was entirely good, which has no bad in it. So the Creation was entirely good, in its original state. As soon as Adam sinned, the perspective changed. Now man can see evil in it, and this has become his second nature.

The Ongoing Spiritual War Between Yaakov and Esav

This is the depth contained in the ongoing war that takes place between the forces of Yaakov and Esav, which we began this discussion with.

Esav said, *"Behold, I am going to die"*, when he demanded to be fed. This can be explained on a deeper level as follows. There is a verse, *"A wise person, his eyes are on his head, but a fool walks in darkness."* This is explained to mean that a fool sees only evil in something, whereas the wise person sees the beginning state of everything, which is pure and good.

The war between Yaakov\Yosef against Esav is essentially a war about how to see things, of how to view Creations. Esav says, *"Feed me now this red stuff."* He sees what he sees: he sees the red color of the lentils in front of him, the red color of blood, which symbolizes evil. Yaakov, though, was the *ish*

tam yoishev ohalim, a “wholesome man, who dwelled in the tents”, whereas Esav is the “*ish sadeh*”, “man of the field.” One of the Sages said “My wife is only called “my home”, and my ox is only called “my field.” The ox is therefore like a field, which Esav hunts in and spends his time in.

Yaakov and Yosef each represent different spiritual powers that can fight Esav. There are two ways to fight the perspective of the “evil eye” (represented by Esav) and to reveal the pure perspective of the “good eye”.

Esav saw the “red stuff” of the lentils and connected with it; he is called Edom, which means “red”, and he only sees evil in Creation. He sees the *admimus* (redness) in Creation, meaning that he only sees the evil in Creation. Yaakov and Yosef, though, are the opposite of this. They represent the perspective of seeing only good in Creation, and they are each two distinct levels in this. Yaakov is called “*ish tam*”, and this is his power to fight Esav; Yosef though is called *shor*, the ox, and this is a different spiritual force that can wage war against Esav.

Yaakov, the “*ish tam*”, represents the perspective in which a person only sees good to begin with. *Rashi* explains that an “*ish tam*” is “someone who does not know how to swindle” – an *ish tam* is someone who does not know of evil, because he doesn’t see it, and therefore he doesn’t think of how to lie. He is a “*tamim*” (pure individual), meaning that there are no devious thoughts that enter his head at all which would cause him to think about evil. Yaakov’s power to fight Esav is through his power to see only good, and this counters Esav, who sees only evil.

Yosef, though, represents another spiritual power. Yosef was tempted with evil, he saw it and he was aware of it, but he fought it. In the blessings of Yaakov to his children, the verse describes how the young girls of Egypt would climb upon the walls to see him when he passed by them, but he would not lust after them. He saw that there was evil in front of him, but he fought it constantly.

The Powers of “Yaakov” and “Yosef” Within

These are two distinct spiritual powers in our soul, of how to deal with evil. The lower level is “Yosef”, who sees the evil and fights it. The higher level is “Yaakov”, the “*ish tam*”, who also possessed the trait of *emes* (truth), which enabled him to learn the “*Toras Emes*”, the “Torah of truth”; he had the *temimus* (earnestness) to learn the “*Toras Hashem Temimah*” (the perfect, untainted level of Torah). With *temimus*, a person only sees purity, because his perspective is pure.

In terms of our own personal *soul-avodah*, a person needs to first traverse the level of “Yosef” and then reach the level of “Yaakov.” Yosef saw evil, tried to fight it, and he tried to only see purity and good. Yosef was repeatedly tested with visual temptations, where he had to keep seeing evil and then fighting with it. He had to deal with the struggle of seeing evil. Yaakov reached the deeper place in the soul than this - “*ish tam*”, the quality of *temimus* (earnestness), the perspective in which a person doesn’t even see evil.

The Month of Iyar - A Spiritual War Of Our Vision

The month of *Iyar*, which has the *mazal* of *shor* (the bull), is therefore a spiritual war, with our vision.

All ruination began with the sense of seeing. As is well-known, the word “*Iyar*” (אייר) stands for 'אני ה' **רופאיך**, “I am Hashem, your Healer.” When we *daven* for a recovery from illness, we *daven* for “a healing of the soul, and a healing of the body.” Our body is healed when physical maladies are removed, and how is our soul healed? If there is illness in the soul, how is it healed? What is the root that heals it?

The ruination to the soul began when Chavah’s eyes saw the *Eitz HaDaas*. So when Hashem says “I

am Hashem, your Healer”, it means that He can heal the root of all illnesses that came upon the soul, which began with an improper use of the sense of sight and the damage that it caused.

How We Fight Our Spiritual Struggles

If we want to make these concepts practical in our life, we should know as follows. All of our struggles on this world, the many “wars” we have to fight on this world in our spiritual task, can be fought with two different methods. Either we can fight with the latter parts of our struggle [which will prove unsuccessful] or we can fight at the beginning point [which is the sensible approach].

“The wise person, his eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in the darkness.” The ‘foolish’ perspective is to wage war with the latest stage of war he is in; he fights with evil from a place that he has fallen into. In contrast, the ‘wise’ perspective is to wage war at the beginning point of the war, as opposed to the current and latter point of the war.

All tribulations which we have on this world can be fought either by fighting our current problems, or by fighting the beginning point of all our problems.

If a person is tempted with a sin - for example, he is tempted to speak *lashon hora* - simply speaking, he can fight it by telling himself that it is forbidden, and then try to avoid the act. That is true, but the Sages said that “When the evil inclination is present, there is no mention of the good inclination.”^[4] Once a person is already amidst a spiritual struggle, the evil inclination is dominating. *“The fool walks in the dark”* - and the evil inclination is called an “old, foolish king”; when a person is amidst a test with evil and he is trying to fight from there, it will be a very difficult battle. He is unlikely to succeed. It will not be impossible to succeed, but it will be most difficult.

What is the proper way to wage war with evil forces? When a person lives an inner kind of life, when he lives a life in which he is always purifying his thoughts, as soon as his thoughts begin to steer towards anything evil or improper, he will quickly catch himself and realize that it will take him away from the life of pure thought that he tries to live.

The *korbon olah* was brought in order to atone for any sinful “thoughts of the heart”, and the depth of this is that it rectifies a person who has returned to his beginning point. The depth of how the soul is rectified is when a person thinks about the beginning, pure state of something. When a person does not deal with the beginning of a matter, the matter festers, like a poisonous root that is left untreated.

Treating The Root

The month of *Iyar*, which is the month that contains healing, is a healing that comes through the “wise” perspective, whose “eyes are in his head” - who sees the beginning of a matter and reflects into it. It represents the kind healing that can heal the soul at the very root of whatever evil came upon the soul. Instead of healing all that has resulted from the evil, it heals the beginning point which spurned the evil in the first place.

Adam sinned at the beginning of Creation, on the sixth day, and ever since then, for almost 6000 years, we are dealing with the effects of the first sin; we are at the end of the 6000 year period. How can we deal with the evil? Should we fight the evil that has come upon us for the last 6000 years, including this period of the End of Days? Or should we fight its root, which was the sin that happened on the sixth day of Creation?

When Adam sinned, his original wisdom that he was created with was ruined. The struggles with evil that we have today are all because of the first sin, because Adam and Chavah failed to fight the evil, at the beginning point. This is the general state of mankind, and it applies individually to each soul.

Each soul has two ways to fight evil – either to fight the evil where it is currently, or to fight its beginning point.

Esav said “*Behold I am going to die*” - man’s task ends at death, so when must he fight evil? In his lifetime, man must do *teshuvah*, until his last dying day. He must wage war with all the evil which currently surrounds him, and this is true. But if he has the deeper perspective, the perspective of the “wise” person, he fights the evil at its beginning point, by quickly gaining control over his mind as soon as there is a slight divergence in his pure thinking process.

If one tries to wage war today in the area of deeds alone, it will be almost impossible for him to succeed, in the spiritual war. But if he is trying to gain control over the thoughts of his mind and the desires of his heart, he is getting to the root, and he is constantly returning to his beginning point, which is the “wise” perspective.

Treating The Root of Our Actions - Discerning Our Desires, Thoughts, and Feelings

We are saying that there are two totally different ways to live life. Naturally, a person tries to deal with the current points that are bothering him. But the higher approach to take is to get to the root of the matter, to the beginning point. When one lives inwardly and not superficially, he lives in his soul, in a world of thought, in a world of feelings, and his struggles will be with the subtlety of his feelings and thoughts.

As an example, there was once a student of Rav Dessler who dreamt that he wanted to kill his son. He was frightened by the dream and ran to Rav Dessler, asking him what it meant. Rav Dessler told the student “Sometimes, when your son is bothering you, you have a fleeting thought that you wish he wouldn’t exist. Because you are able to have such a thought, you are able to dream about killing him.” For every action, there always thoughts and feelings that are behind it.

A wise person’s perspective is that he identifies his deeper motivations, his thoughts and feelings that are behind his actions, and that is how he works on himself. As opposed to working on the level of his actions alone, he gets to the root of the matter, the beginning point, of the problem.

If one works with this approach, he will find that most of his [spiritual] *nisyonos* will disappear. He will be fighting the root of the evil, as opposed to fighting the branches and results of the evil.

The “Healing” In The Month of Iyar

The month of Iyar, of which Hashem says “*I am Hashem, your Healer*” - what is the depth of this healing? And what is the difference between the healing that Hashem Himself gives, with the healing of a doctor, who is given permission to heal?

A doctor cannot heal the very root of the illness. He can only heal a person after he sees symptoms, of how the disease has spreading and what it is causing. But when Hashem Himself heals a person, He heals the very beginning of the problem. On a personal level, when a person reveals G-dliness in his life, it reveals “*I am Hashem, your Healer*”, and then his problems can be treated at their root.

The more a person lives externally and superficially, he will only seek to correct his deeds alone. The more a person lives inwardly, he will wage war against the subtle thoughts and feelings that are behind his actions. Then he can rectify his actions at their beginning point. A person surely has to wage war with any improper deeds he is doing, but even a gentile can do this. Only a member of *Yisrael*, however, can rectify the beginning point of his deeds. Only the Jewish people are called “*raishis*”, the “beginning”, because the unique ability of the Jewish people is to rectify beginnings. This is a war that is unique only to the Jewish people.

Higher than this aspect is the war that Yaakov (and Yosef) must fight against Esav; Yaakov is the "tame ox" (*shor tam*) on the side of holiness, which must fight the "wild ox" (*shor muad*) on the side of evil. The "tame ox" on the side of holiness is the ability in the soul to be a *tamim*, to be loyal and trusting in Hashem, to see a world in which there is only good.

Connecting To The Point of Complete "Good" In Our Soul

Currently, we do not live in a world where there is only good. We live in a world which is mostly evil and with little good, as Chazal state. But in the depths of our soul, there is a pure place which can allow us to see a world which is only good and with no evil in it.

We cannot actually live from this place in ourselves, because that would be denying the world in front of us. But there is a point deep in our soul where we can access this perspective at times, of seeing only good in Creation, which was the initial state of Creation, where Hashem testified that it was all "very good".

If one connects to this place through learning Torah and through connecting to it in his soul, he lives in a world which is completely good. Of course, when he goes out in the world, he is in a place which is mostly evil. But his soul can be found in a place that is completely good. Of this it is said, "*Your world [the Next World] can be seen in your life.*"

The more a person lives inwardly and he lives this point of seeing a world that is entirely good, he will be able to wage war with the very beginning point of evil, as opposed to the results and the branches of evil, which is like the words of Esav, "*Behold I am going to die.*"

That enables a person to leave the level of existence of the "bull" that we fell to after the sin with the Golden Calf, and instead to return to the holy kind of "bull" - which sees only holiness.

Leaving The Fallen State of The "Bull" and Entering Into The Holy "Bull"

Chazal state "the bull is king of all domestic animals, for it is the heaviest of all the domestic animals". This is referring to the "bull" on the side of evil, for it is referring to the evil trait of heaviness and indifference. How does one come out of this evil heaviness?

One way is an evil way, through becoming conceited. The holy way to come out of the heaviness is through the lesson implied by the *korbon olah*, which atones for lustful thoughts of the heart - in other words, through fixing the beginning point of the evil.

Hashem says, "*I am the First, and I am the Last.*" When a person is living a life in which he is always returning to the beginning, it is revealed to him how Hashem is his true beginning point. He will also have an easier time with spiritual struggles, for he will receive a revelation of "*I am the Last*" when he is faced with the evil inclination, and Hashem will persevere for him. The more a person lives inwardly as opposed to living on his surface, when he is facing struggles outside of him, he will win those battles.

Of this it is said, "If not for Hashem's help, a person cannot overcome."^[5] But in order to receive Hashem's help, one needs to reveal "I am the First and I am the Last."

The Power To Deal With Evil At Its Root - Orderly Thought

When a person internalizes this concept, he will receive an entirely different mindset to live life with; he will receive an inner power of orderliness (*seder*) to deal with anything that comes his way. A hint to this is that the word "*shor*" is from the word "*shurah*", which means "order". When one has the

power of the *shor*\bull\ox on the side of holiness, he receives a special power of inner order to deal with spiritual struggles.

One who does not live inwardly will mainly be fighting external stimuli, and there is no order to be found on the outside world; it is all turmoil. But one who lives inwardly lives in a world of thought, which is an orderly process that keeps him stable.

This is the holy kind of *shor*\bull\ox, where a person will have a constant inner order (*shor*\ox is from the word *shurah*\order) to deal with life. His thoughts will receive order to them and this will help him deal with difficulties.

Without living in a world of thought, a person lives in the world of actions alone, so he will only be able to struggle with actions, because his struggles will be limited to actions alone, and not beyond that. In contrast, when a Torah scholar lives inwardly, he lives in a world of thought, of orderly thought - a life of holy thought (*machshavah*).

This is the meaning of Yaakov's trait of being an "*ish tam yoishev ohalim*" (wholesome man that dwells in the tents) - when there is orderly thought in one's mind [for the term "*ish tam*" parallels the concept of the *shor tam*, the tame ox, who represents the "bull\ox" on the side of holiness, which we have explained as an ability of holy sight, and an ability to maintain orderly thought] - from this, one is able to learn Torah properly, because there will be inner order given to all of his soul's abilities as well.

In Conclusion

May we merit from Hashem the fulfillment of the verse, "*All of the illnesses that I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, your Healer.*"

[1] Bava Kamma 65b

[2] The Tablets

[3] Bava Kamma 2b

[4] Nedarim 32a

[5] Sukkah 52a

Source: <https://bilvavi.us/english/rosh-chodesh-mazal-004-iyar-bull?width=640&height=450&inline=true>