

## INSIGHTS IN THE PARSHA

יין וְשָׁכַר אֶל תְּשֻׁתָּהּ | אֶתְּהָהּ | וּבְנִיָּהּ אֶתְּהָהּ בְּבִאָכְכֶם אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד

*Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication, neither you nor your sons with you, when you go into the Tent of Meeting*

There are numerous halakhic implications involved with getting drunk. They are:

- A person who drank a Revi'it quantity of wine is not entitled to give a psak halakha
- A person who drank a Revi'it quantity of wine is not allowed to pray
- A person who got drunk is not allowed to enter the beit hamikdash, unless he is otherwise not permitted to perform avodah in the mikdash for any other reason.

The Ba'al HaTurim showed that these are alluded to in this passuk. The letters of the words **וְשָׁכַר אֶל תְּשֻׁתָּהּ** serve as abbreviations for the phrase **וְאִם שָׁתָה כְּדֵי רְבִיעִית אֶסוּר** - If one drank a Revi'it it is forbidden for him to give **תְּשֻׁתָּהּ** is an abbreviation for **תְּשֻׁתָּהּ**. The prayer of a drunk is an abomination before Hashem. And the Gimatria of **אֶתְּהָהּ** - **תוֹעֵבָה**. And the Gimatria of **אֶתְּהָהּ** is the same as excluding Halalim and **יִצְאוּ** - **מִמִּימִם** Mumim, who are people anyways otherwise exempt from temple service.

## WINE TESTIFIES TO ITS CHALLENGES

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*Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication, neither you nor your sons with you, when you go into the Tent of Meeting*

The sefer Lechem Lefi HaTaf writes that the very word **יין** alludes to all of this. If **יין** - **יין** they are **יין**, one opens up the letters of each of which have **ו** as their second letter. Those three **ו** letters correspond to the words of the passuk: **וַיִּשְׁכַּר וַיִּתְגַּל**, these refer to the three steps that led to Noach's downfall.

The lesson being taught is that before anyone drinks wine, they must be extremely careful, and learn a lesson from what happened to Noach. If someone as righteous as Noach about whom G-d himself praised in his eternal book, had such a downfall as a result of intoxication, all the more so average people, such as you and I, and we must be very careful about that.

## PIGGISH BEHAVIOR

In English, we refer to people unwilling to be generous with their possessions as hogs. So, too, in the Hebrew and

– **חזירים** Yiddish languages, such people are referred to as pigs (or hogs). There is a story of the Elder of Kelm who once visited the city of Minsk to collect funds for his Yeshiva in Kelm. But many of the wealthy people in the city were unwilling to donate even small amounts, and chose to keep their money for themselves. On Shabbat, he got up to speak in the local synagogue, and before he began he announced, "Members of the Minsk community, I have good news, residents of Minsk can drink from the milk of gentiles without any problem!" The people were astonished. He continued, "You see, the whole reason we are not allowed to drink from the milk of a non-Jew is because we are concerned he mixed swine milk into the cow's milk. But in Minsk I am certain this would not happen, because the hogs in this city would never share their milk with others!"

## BLESSED IS HE WHO DISTINGUISHES

לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר

*"To distinguish between the impure and the pure"*

Regarding the difference between animals which can be eaten and those which cannot the Ben Ish Chai teaches us an impressive Gimatria. It's well known that one of the two characteristics of a Kosher animal is that its hooves are split. This, in Hebrew is called **סֹדֵק**. The Gimatria of **הַטָּמֵא** is 50, and that of **טָהוֹר** is 214. If we subtract 50, i.e. the Tamei, from 214, i.e. the Tahor, we are left with 164, or **סֹדֵק**. This is the distinguishing factor. Another lesson is taught in the name of Rabbi Akiva Aiger. The Gemara teaches us the story of a pregnant woman who, on Yom Kippur, had a craving to eat. The matter was brought to Rav Yehuda HaNassi, and he said to whisper into her ear that today is Yom Kippur. They did, and her craving stopped. The child born to her was Rabbi Yochanan. Of him the Passuk says **בְּטֶרֶם אֶצְרַךְ בְּבֶטֶן יִדְעֵתִיךָ** – before your birth in the womb, you had my knowledge. A similar story took place with another woman, also on Yom Kippur, and Rav Yehuda Hanassi said to do the same thing, but the whispers did not calm her cravings, and she

## PURITY REQUIRES POSITIVE MINDSET

וְהַנֶּשֶׂא אֶת נִבְלָתָם יִכְבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָמֵא עַד הָעֶרֶב טָמְאִים הֵמָּה לָכֶם

*And one who carries their carcass shall immerse his garments, and he will be unclean until evening. They are unclean for you*

This Passuk alludes to the type of person who can only see the flaws in the people around him. הנושה could mean literally to carry the bad. Of that person the Torah says: **יכבס בגדיו** – wash yourself! He must cleanse himself via the learning of mussar. Finally he is **טמא עד הערב** – he remains impure until he engages in the **ערב** – the Torah, of which we say **נא והערב נא**. And until he is **ערב עם הבריות**, kind and compassionate toward other people.

The Yalkut Meam Loetz tells the story of a Jewish man who traveled to the Biblical city of Kedar, where the people were accustomed to worshipping fire, which they believed to be a god. They would sometimes throw themselves in the fire, with the belief that doing so would save them from the burning of hell.

When this man arrived at Kedar, he settled in the home of an elder man, to rest from the difficult journey. He wanted to keep traveling, but news came that a band of highway robbers were hijacking the roads past Kedar, killing passerby and taking all their possessions. What did he do? He entrusted all the money he was carrying with the elder man in whose house he stayed, because Kedarian people had a reputation of being very honest. In any case, he went along his way without any of his possessions, and he was safe, because the pirates were not interested in harming people without possessions. He stayed there for a number of days to take care of the things he had to take care of, and then returned to Kedar. When he arrived, however, he was surprised to find out that the old man with whom he had entrusted his possessions was dead – he threw himself into a fire pit for the gods. His first reaction was to turn to the old man's children.

"I entrusted all of my money with your father. He was keeping it for me temporarily. Please return what is rightfully mine."

But the children heard of no such an agreement.

"We cannot give it to you unless our father tells us to"

"But your father is dead."

"Three days after they throw themselves into the fire, the souls of the dead come back to earth and instruct the families what to do with their possessions. Come to our house and our father will tell us if what you say is true."

The man could not believe what they were saying. They were pagan worshippers. All of their practices were completely against the Torah and the Jewish religion. But he went anyway, and to his bewilderment, there in the room was sitting the old man with whom he had entrusted all of his possessions. But there was a glow to

his appearance, as if of an angel. When the old man saw him, he brought him over to a cabinet, opened it up, and pointed to a box.

"In that box are all of your possessions. They are rightfully yours and you should take them."

The children saw this, and agreed that that would happen. The Jewish man stayed behind to watch what else would happen. Indeed, this man's soul was interacting with his family. The Jewish man stopped him to ask questions.

"Where will you go when you are done here?"

"I will pass the gates of hell, bow, and then continue to heaven. Whoever sacrifices himself before the fire need not go to hell, and passes directly to heaven."

"Can I follow you?"

"It is impossible. Where will you go?"

"Wherever you go, I will go. I insist on following you."

The soul agreed, until they left the house. As they were walking on the street, the soul continued to dissuade the Jewish man.

"You have nothing to see. It is impossible for you to go."

"I am not afraid, and I have nothing to lose. If what you say is true, then I must abandon my Jewish faith and follow the Kedarian religion. If I don't follow you, I might continue to live a false faith my whole life."

At that point the soul stopped, and said the following,

"You are a Jewish person. I am not really the soul of this man, I am a **טש** (an agent of the Yetzer Harah or Satan). This is what Shedim do. We appear as genuine spiritual beings to idol worshippers so that they remain in their false faiths all of their days, but we do not target the Jewish people. You must realize that there is no truth to what you just saw. That man is sitting deep in Gehenom for what he did."

All of this is referred to in Iyov, where the Passuk says **משגיא לגוים ויאבדם** – I will fool the people and lead them to oblivion. This is exactly what happens in pagan spirituality.

רציתי לברך אתכם ביום שמה, שפרנסתכם  
פורח. בריאותינו תתמיד ולא כאורח. חיוך תצמח כעציץ  
לא יתאדה כריח על שפתינו כאור זורח, וכספנו  
ונזכה לראות בביאת משיח  
אמן ושבת שלום

Shabat Shalom!!! - Rav David Yaacov

ד"ת לעילוי נשמת המנורה הטהורה  
מו"ר הגאון רבי שמעון גבאי בן רחל זצ"ל