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HEMDAT YAMIM

דִּין הַתְּנָא מ Parashat HaShavua

Teruma, 4 Adar I 5776

Look, No Wings

Harav Yosef Carmel

Parashat Teruma begins with the command to build the *aron* (ark), which was covered by the *kaporet*, from which the *keruvim* (angel-like figures) protruded. The *pasuk* describes the wings of the *keruvim* as “extending over the *kaporet*” (*Shemot* 25:20). In *Yeshaya*’s inaugural prophecy (6:2), he saw *seraphim* (a type of angel) with six wings – two covering their faces, two covering their legs, and two for flying. In the opening prophecy of *Yechezkel* (1:5-6), we again hear of wings, this time, of the *chayot hakodesh* (the holy animals) and *ofanim*.

Of course, we have no pretensions of actually understanding exactly what these *seraphim*, *ophanim*, and *chayot hakodesh* are. It is apparent from *Chazal* and from the early commentators that they represent parallel or even overlapping concepts (see *Rambam*, *Yesodei Hatorah* 2:7). We will take a quick look at the explanation of *seraphim*. The *Targum* renders the word into Aramaic as “the holy servants.” *Rashi* and other *Rishonim* say, based on the root of the word, that their job was to burn.

The above has to do with what the prophets saw when they had visions of that which those who served Hashem were doing in the heavens. We see angels (*malachim*) appearing in our world, as messengers of Hashem, in many places in the Torah and *Tanach*. One appeared to *Hagar* in the desert (*Bereishit* 16:7). Another stopped *Avraham* from slaughtering *Yitzchak* (*ibid.* 22:11). Another appeared to *Yaakov* in Aram (*ibid.* 31:11). An angel gave instructions to *Eliyahu* (*Melachim I*, 19:5). *David* saw an angel hovering ominously over *Yerushalayim* (*Divrei Hayamim I* 21:16). In all of these places and all others, a *malach* is never described as having wings. In several of those we mentioned and in others (see *Yehoshua* 5:13) an angel was armed with a sword.

Our rabbis disputed what a *malach* represents. *Rashi* says that those who merit it can see them in daily life in the physical world, and that they indeed sometimes look like people. The *Rambam* and his camp of thinkers say that one can see *malachim* only in a prophetic vision. Some thinkers note that any being or thing that acts as an agent of Hashem can earn the title of *malach*. It can be a natural phenomenon, an animal, or even someone who is man-like.

How will the various opinions deal with the *pasuk*: “Hashem makes his *malachim* of spirit, His servants a glowing fire” (*Tehillim* 104:4)? *Rashi* says that the *malachim*, who were created on the second day, are spiritual beings, but they can take on physical attributes. The *Rambam* again says that they are things one can see only in a vision. According to the third approach, they can even be something physical that serves its Maker.

What is clear from all these sources is that there is no Jewish source for angels with wings.

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Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

Timtum Halev – Part I

Question: Is there *timtum halev* [approximately, spiritual pollution of the heart] when one ingests non-kosher food in a halachically valid manner, e.g., based on *bitul* (nullification)?

Answer: We will divide our view of the sources and analysis to deal with this excellent question into three parts: 1. What causes *timtum halev*? 2. How severe is exposure to it? 3. How should concern about it affect our decisions?

What causes *timtum halev*? The classical source that introduces the concept of *timtum halev* is the *gemara* (*Yoma* 39a). It derives from the spelling of “*v'nitmeitem bam*” (you will become defiled) in the context of eating *sheratzim* (crawling creatures) (*Vayikra* 11:43) that it causes not just *tumah* but also *timtum* of the heart. (We will not try to describe it exactly – *Rashi* (ad loc.) says “it seals off and blocks out all wisdom.”) The *gemara*’s statement is that “sins causes *timtum halev*.” There are at least three ways to understand this *gemara* (the approaches are not mutually exclusive but can be complementary):

A. Acts of sin cause *timtum halev*, irrespective of exposure to a problematic object. The *Maharal* (*Tiferet Yisrael* 8) and *Rav Kook* (*Mussar Avicha* 1:4) have this understanding, which is the simple reading of the *gemara* (see *Beit Halevi*, *Bereishit* 6:5).

B. The reason that certain foods are forbidden by the Torah is their negative impact on the spirit. While it may be strongest regarding certain specific forbidden foods (e.g., *sheratzim*), this is generally true, to some degree, of forbidden foods (*Ramban*, *Shemot* 22:30).

C. Forbidden foods are not necessarily naturally damaging to the spirit, but after the Torah forbade them, they become so.

There are practical differences between these approaches. The following prohibitions seem to lack a naturally damaging element. Therefore, A applies and B does not (C depends on the case). 1. Forbidden actions that do not include ingesting foods; 2. Foods that are forbidden based on Rabbinic law – Hashem apparently created these foods to not be *timtum* causing, but the Rabbis forbade them due to various halachic concerns; 3. Foods that are forbidden because they are too holy for the eater (e.g., *teruma*, certain *korbanot*); 4. Foods that are forbidden only at certain times (e.g., food on *Yom Kippur*, *chametz* on *Pesach*); 5. Foods that are forbidden for a circumstantial moral reason (e.g., mother and child *shechted* on the same day, *ever min hachay* – see *Moreh HaNevuchim* III:48).

In the other direction, in the following cases, a prohibited food has entered the body, without moral culpability, so that A does not apply and B and C do: 1. The person eating followed halachic rules, which resulted in ingesting the forbidden food (e.g., animal had blemishes we are not required to check for, *bitul* made it permitted); 2. The eater is not forbidden to eat the food (non-Jew, small child, severely mentally disabled); 3) One needed to eat it to save his life; 4) The substance entered the body in a way other than eating.

We begin a small sampling of the many sources that provide different views of some of these matters before focusing on the most central. *Chashukei Chemed* (*Megilla* 13a) cites a *machloket* whether eating forbidden food based on an unavoidable mistake creates negative spiritual effects (*Rav Pe’alim* – no; *Ramah M’panu* – yes; see *Pitchei Teshuva*, *Yoreh Deah* 29:1). Besides saying that without fault there is no cause for *timtum*, it is also possible that Hashem intervenes to rectify the spirit of one who followed halacha (see *Derashot Haran* 11, who says similarly regarding a case in which Sanhedrin mistakenly permits something that should be forbidden).

The *Netziv* (*Devarim* 6:11) says that the reason it is better to *shecht* an animal on Shabbat for a dangerously sick person than to give him non-kosher meat is that the latter causes *timtum*. This assumes that *timtum* exists even without wrongdoing. However, the fact that all the *Rishonim* give other explanations (see *Beit Yosef*, *Orach Chayim* 328) demonstrates the opposite.

We will continue with further analysis next week.



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Ein Ayah

(from the writings of Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, z.t.l.)

Protection from Below and/or From Above

(condensed from Ein Ayah, Shabbat 2:151)

Gemara: [In this piece, the convert who had wanted to be a Kohen Gadol thanked Hillel for his faith in him.] He said: Hillel, the *anvatan* (humble and patient), may blessings rest on your head, for you have brought me close, under the wings of the Divine Presence.

Ein Ayah: The foundation of tolerance, to treat with warmth even those who, based on their actions, deserve to be distanced, is rooted in the attribute of modesty, which is built upon the nature of the spirit and the emotion of the heart. Actually, in the case of the prince of Hashem that Hillel was, this attribute was combined with the great wisdom of anticipating the future, as his great and true humility helped him remove the screen that keeps one from seeing the future. This is because one with sensitive emotions can sense by looking "in the mirror" of a person whom he meets how he will act in the future. This is the content of the convert's praise for Hillel, who had taken his natural characteristic of humility and had perfected it.

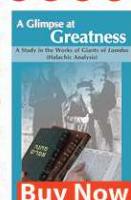
The convert said that blessings should rest on Hillel's head because this is the place of his intellect and intuition. If not for Hillel's great intellect, which enabled him to reach a deep analysis of his counterpart's spirit, he could not have grasped the hidden element of goodness in the convert's spirit. This is because at the time, it was clouded over by confused imagination which came from a lack of development and education.

The convert thanked Hillel for bringing him under the wings of the Divine Presence. This is relevant in relation to the idea that a person needs two protections from things that take him away from divine service and love of Hashem. One is to protect him from physical desires that are beneath man's natural level and drag him down to the lower level of the desire. The second is actually protection from things that are loftier than his level, because they too can cause him to stray from the path of the intellect based on unrealistic perceptions of divine service.

Bnei Yisrael, who come with the merit of their forefathers and the sanctity of the ancient legacy, need protection only from below, from human base inclinations. When one is saved from this lowliness, he will already cleave naturally to Hashem because the true philosophical perceptions are close to his heart and his nature. A convert who joins us from outside is different, in that the inner characteristics that bring true perceptions that are hidden in the light of the Torah, do not come to him by means of preparation or inheritance. Even if he has overcome the base desires by means of free will, he is still susceptible to mistakes from above, from misconceptions that are as dangerous as thoughts of forbidden desires. On the other hand, the fact that the sincere convert took upon himself to enter the divine covenant is a merit that protects him, as Hashem bestows upon him wisdom to appreciate the greatness of his clinging to Torah and *mitzvot*.

The Torah says that Hashem will have Bnei Yisrael ride on top of His wings (Devarim 32:11), to illustrate the protection from the dangers that are below. From above, Bnei Yisrael do not need protection because whoever has extricated himself from the problem of desires is connected to the seal of truth. But a convert needs protection from above by being under the wings of the Divine Presence, as his decision to accept the yoke of *mitzvot* provides for him a special protective spirit, even though it is not natural for him, until the point that he is like any other Jew. This is what the convert meant by thanking Hillel for enabling him to make it under the wings of the Divine Presence.

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P'ninat Mishpat

When Is The Debtor Rich Enough to Pay?

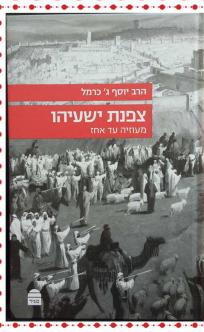
(based on Shut Noda B'Yehuda II, Choshen Mishpat 14)

Case: Reuven promised his creditors that he would pay when Hashem will “widen his boundaries” (i.e., when he will be financially more secure). The creditors now claim that if Reuven has 50 gold coins, then he has reached that level. They base themselves on the *sefer Kol Yehuda*, who cites the *gemara* (Chulin 84a). The *gemara* comments on the *pasuk*, “When Hashem will widen your boundaries … and you will say ‘I shall eat meat,’ as your spirit will desire to eat meat” (Devarim 12:20), that there should be a correlation between the amount of money one has and how he eats. Specifically, it says that when one has 50 *maneh* he can allow himself to eat meat, which thus corresponds to the situation of “when Hashem will widen your boundaries...”

Ruling: I do not like this type of ruling, which bases itself on an *aggadic* statement of *Chazal*. Furthermore, does it make sense that the amount of coins one needs to be considered financially secure is not affected by the value of the local currency? It is clear that the *dayan* who is ruling on the case has to estimate the point of the widening of the boundaries based on his good sense.

Even if we were to base ourselves on this *gemara*, we should understand that the *pasuk* of widening the boundaries is not discussing one who eats meat on Shabbatot but on one who eats meat whenever he feels the desire to do so, which sounds from the *gemara* is on a daily basis. The *gemara* says that 50 *maneh* is enough to eat meat occasionally and only when he has 100 *maneh* does he eat meat daily, as the *pasuk* describes. If the creditors want to extract money, they have to demonstrate that Reuven's financial status is equivalent to having 100 *maneh*.

[*The Noda B'Yehuda now goes into a mathematical calculation of different currencies of the time of the gemara and of his time in Europe, and tries to work out the equivalent of 100 maneh in terms of his time and place. It came out to much more than the 50 gold coins that the creditors were claiming*]. It turns out that the source that the creditors thought would help them actually harms their case. However, I still maintain that the determination of when it is considered that Reuven has enough money to pay has to be made by the *dayanim* based on the circumstances and their good sense, not by means of a source-based calculation.



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