

The Morris M. Horowitz Kollel

732 813 0682 / [morrismhorowitzkollel@gmail.com](mailto:morrismhorowitzkollel@gmail.com)

R' Yitzchok Blau

*Nasi Hakollel*

Moshe Rothenberg

*Rosh Kollel*



### פרשת שמיוני / Parshas Shemini

”כי אני ד’ אלוקיכם והתקדשתם והייתם קדושים כי קדוש אני...” ויקרא יא;מד

“For I am Hashem your G-d and you shall sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy, for I am holy...”

Vayikra 11:44

The רבינו בחיי explains that two innate powers exist within us. The כח השכל (power of wisdom) and the כח התאוה (power of temptation). He explains that the superior קדושה (sanctity) that עם ישראל possesses over the other nations stems from the fact that we have Torah and Mitzvos. Our לימוד התורה (Torah study) and עשיית המצות (performance of the Mitzvos) strengthen our כח השכל and weaken our כח התאוה. The reason why the כח השכל needs to be strengthened is because the כח התאוה is naturally stronger, as it exists in a person long before שכל does. Temptation is ingrained in us from our youth and we are drawn after it. We grow up with worldly pleasures until they overcome our wisdom, which is the true purpose of our creation and existence. Furthermore, temptation is one of the foundations of our nature. It is a necessary component of our survival; if we lack temptation than we may not take care of our basic needs. We need to eat food in order to survive, as is the case with the rest of our physical temptations.

Our שכל on the other hand is spiritual by nature and comes from the upper worlds. It is a stranger in our thick, heavy physical world and because it is a stranger it has no support; all the cards are stacked against it. These two factors give the power of temptation a natural edge over the power of wisdom, seeing as temptation comes into a person before wisdom does and because תאוה has support, unlike שכל. Therefore a person needs the Torah and the Mitzvos to strengthen his כח השכל and weaken his כח התאוה.

That's why we have of the Mitzvos of מאכלים אסורים (forbidden foods) and מצות עריות (forbidden relationships) and מצות תפלה (בציבור) (prayer with a quorum of ten men) and תענית (ritual fasts) and צדקה (charity) and גמילות חסדים (good deeds), all for the purpose of weakening our כח התאווה. This is what Chazal are referring to in the ספרי on פרשת שלח which states "והתקדשתם - זו קדושת מצוה" and then "והייתם קדושים". Which means that through the completion of the Mitzvos our כח התאווה shall be weakened and our כח השכל shall overcome, for that is the purpose of creation.

We are coming off of Pesach, a Yom Tov filled with Mitzvos that we have fulfilled. We have had copious amounts of time to learn Torah over Chol Hamoed and Bein Hazmanim. The key now is to maintain our momentum going into the new זמן. It's the summer. It's going to be hot outside. There is a famous משל (parable) about how the sun and the wind got into an argument over who could quicker make the Jew throw away his identity. The wind went first, gusting and wreaking general havoc all through the streets, but the Yid outside just buttoned up his jacket, put down the brim of his hat and kept trudging along. Then out came the sun with its warm comfortable rays, shining, beating down on the rain-drenched Yid. In a flash, his hat and jacket were off and he began to behave in quite a different manner. The כח התאווה is strong in us, naturally stronger than our כח השכל. We must redouble our efforts in our Torah learning and עשיית המצות in order to foster our כח השכל and let it shine through. Then we will be able to make the correct decisions to help us continue to grow and move forward.