

PARSHA WITH

Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ה RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS VAEIRAH

YOU ARE WORTH MORE THAN CHOPPED LIVER

The function of the Ten Plagues was to pressure Pharaoh to release Yisrael from his bondage. However, the roadblock to Yisrael's freedom was (Shmos 7,14) כבד לב פרעה מאן לשלח את העם. Pharaoh's heart is heavy and refuses to send the people out. What is the exact meaning of כבד לב פרעה that Pharaoh's heart was "heavy"?

The Medrash presents a novel interpretation to this expression of כבד לב that Pharaoh's heart (לב) was transformed into a כבד the organ of his liver. What do *Chazal* mean with this interpretation which made Pharaoh to stubbornly refuse to send Yisrael free even at the expense of receiving *Makkos*?

One is placed in this world in order to acquire the self discipline to fulfill Hashem's will. In other words he must be like a מלך who has the ability to control and subjugate every force within himself which opposes the sole sovereignty of Hashem. The *sefarim* tell us that Man has three tiers, the *neshamah*, clothed in one's intellect which is based in his head, the *ruach*, feelings and *middos* which are situated in one's heart, and his *nefesh* which is located in his liver from where the basic physical drives originate. The intellect readily shares with other individuals, likewise the heart with its feelings and emotions. Not so with the *nefesh* which is self centered and selfish.

When everything is in order: which means that the מנח, the *neshama* is in charge and it controls one's לב, which together they are the master over the כבד, the dwelling of the *nefesh habehamis*, then one earns the title of מלך which is the acronym of מנח לב כבד. However, if the כבד has taken control of the heart and together they subjugate and employ the מנח to work for them, then the reverse order spells the word כלם which means shame and destruction the opposite of a מלך from whom emanates total *kovid* and royalty.

An allusion that every Yid must make a מלך within himself is hinted in the *passuk* מלך עליך שום תשים עליך מלך the double verb of שימה hints that there is also an obligation to place on yourself עליך a king which is your *neshama*. If one adds up the acronym of this mitzvah שום תשים עליך מלך it equals נשמתיך. Also in

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the last *passuk* of the Torah the last four words are **משה לעיני כל ישראל**. The acronym of these words is **ימלך** that all Yisrael should rule and be a king (over himself). The title of **ישראל** in contrast to **יעקב** refers to the *neshamah* not the **גוף**. It is as if the Torah hints that everyone must make his *neshama* the king over his heart and *kaveid*.

Let us examine for a moment, the largest gland in the body the liver. *Chazal* say (Brerachos 61b) that the liver is the organ that triggers anger. The liver which is the dwelling place of the *nefesh* is totally composed of blood as the *passuk* says **כי הדם הוא הנפש**. It is the *nefesh* located in the lower extremity of the body, which causes one to go astray from the Torah **ונפש כי תחטא**. That is the reason that the atonement for doing *aveiros* is to sprinkle the blood of the Korban on the *Mizbaich*. This is why anger is in the liver. When the *nefesh* doesn't get its way it becomes infuriated and complains with *gaavah* "I know what I am talking about and I am being ignored. Pay perfect attention to me and you will be rewarded with incredible pleasure. This is also the reason of the expression of one who is very angry when he says "my **blood** is boiling". Now we can understand what *Chazal* meant when they interpreted the words **כבוד לב פרעה** to mean that Pharaoh's heart became a liver. It is conveying that the liver had already taken control of his natural understanding found in his heart **בינה**, and together they strove to hijack and direct Pharaoh's thoughts and logic to sway in their favor of refusing to free *Am Yisrael* from *Mitzrayim*. At this state, Pharaoh's *bechirah* had already been compromised and limited. In such a condition one thinks that only he is right and can reach even to the false conclusion that Hashem does not exist.

With the above we can understand the first two Plagues on *Mitzrayim*. In the *sefer* Degel Machaneh Efrayim he explains that the first *maakah* was blood which filled all the waters of *Mitzrayim*. This was *midah keneged midah*. By allowing oneself to be subjugated under the leadership of the liver which is composed of blood, you denied Hashem and refused to let His people go, you too will be smitten by your *aveirah* – blood.

The Second *Makka* was frogs. The *passuk* says **ותעל הצפרדע** that the frog came on the land of *Mitzrayim*. The singular form can be translated as the species of frogs came upon the land of *Mitzrayim*. It can also be translated in the singular

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form that one gigantic frog appeared. The people then attacked it with sticks trying to kill it to no avail. The more they hit it the more frogs came forth from its body from until they covered the entire *Mitzrayim* (Rashi). The Steipler Gaon wrote a remark on this *Chazal* that the *Mitzrayeem* were not stupid. Why then did they continue to hit the monster when they saw that they are causing more frogs to come out from it? He answered that when one is heated up with anger he loses his *שכל* and he can do and say stupid things. In short one's brain stops functioning correctly. This entire scenario of how the plague came about through the actions of the Egyptians themselves is also *middah keneged middah*. As we explained the liver is the source of anger that leaves in its path shame, regret and destruction *כלימה*, the opposite of *מלך*.

Furthermore on the *passuk* *ויצעק משה אל ה' על דבר הצפרדעים* the *meforshim* learn that the word *דבר* refers to the croaking noises of the frogs that were deafening from the *lashon* of *דיבור*. That is exactly what happens when one loses himself in a rage, he screams and shouts out of control. This is all a payback *מדה כנגד מדה* for letting oneself to be hijacked by the liver.

I was wondering why the only organ of Man that has the word **live** in it is the liver. One would think that the heart should be called liver since it constantly pumps blood and oxygen into all one's organs. Why does the liver with its letters convey life?

Hashem created the world for the purpose of us benefitting *Olam Habah* as the reward for discovering His *kovod*. To make it simple for everyone to understand, it is compared to the game of Hide and Seek where Hashem hides and we must seek to find Him which is His *kovod*. The challenge is that we have a *yetzer harah* that distracts us from focusing on our goal. Our task is to remove this force of the *nefesh Habahamis* in order to contact and reveal that *kovid* of Hashem. This is the purpose of life and that is why in *Lashon Hakodesh* the liver is called *כבד* from the word *כבוד*. It is only through our *bechirah* of choosing Hashem over our bodily .cravings that we bring about *kovod shamayim*. It is far from a coincidence that the *gematriah* of **כבד** is the name **הויה**. The purpose of all **existence** is to seek Hashem and choose Him and his *mitzvos* over anything else available.

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That is why in English liver contains the word live. We find verbs such as ride, drive, swim, when wanting to describe a person whose vocation is that verb we add on to them a suffix of **er** rider, driver, and swimmer. Therefore **liver** means someone's whose ambition is to live. חיים is *gematriah* חכמ which relates to the neshamah. Living has one purpose only and that is to assign all life back to its creator. We say in Benching, הרחמן הוא יזכנו לימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא. This achievement can only be obtained by controlling one's liver and כעס thereby bringing out the *kovod shamayim* that we are seeking. How does one attain לחיי of *Olam Habah*? The answer is found in the Benching itself. Before this הרחמן, we ask that ונמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלקים ואדם. The *gematriah* of חן is 58 the same of as כבד לב. When the functions of our לב and כבד will find favor both in the eyes of Hashem and people, by our aligning them both with the *neschama* of the מח which is called שכל טוב the acronym מלך Only then we can merit to לחיי which is the same *gematriah* of כבד לב.

Rav Brazil,

Gut Shabbos