

# PARSHAS TAZRIA - METZORA



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## HOW TO GROW AND ACHIEVE GREATNESS



### THE ORDER OF THE KORBONOS IS PUZZLING

Our subject today relates to the *haschalas hazman* and as it relates to the *parshah*. This week's *parshah* tells us about certain *korbanos* that are brought by a woman who gave birth. It says: וְאִם לֹא תִמְצָא יָדָהּ דֵּי שֶׁהָא, if she can't afford to buy sheep, וְאִם לֹא תִמְצָא יָדָהּ דֵּי שֶׁהָא, she takes two pigeons, אוּ שְׁנֵי בְּנֵי יוֹנָה, one is brought as a *korban olah*, which is a burnt offering, *kulah laHashem* (Vayikra 12:8), and the other one is brought as *chatas*, a sin offering. Rashi says on אחד לעולה ואחד לחטאת, that from the order of the *passuk* it would seem that you first bring the *olah* and then you bring the *korban chatas*. However, he tells us it is not so. Rashi says: לא הקדימה הכתוב, the Torah does not write the *olah* before the *chatas* to describe a practice, אלא למקראה, but only for the *kriya*. That means when you read it in the Torah you read אחד לעולה first and then you read אחד לחטאת. However, אבל להקריבה, but in the actual procedure of the *hakravas hakorban*, חטאת קודם לעולה, the *chatas* comes before the *olah*. כך שנינו בזבחים בפרק כל התדיר. So what's the obvious question?

The obvious question is, if you first have to bring the *chatas* and then you bring the *olah*, why do you have in the reading of the Torah אחד לעולה ואחד לחטאת? If the order of events is you first bring a *korban chatas*, it should say, אחד לחטאת ואחד לעולה. Doesn't that make sense? Why doesn't the Torah write it in the order of the *hakravah*?<sup>1</sup>

### NURTURING GREAT GOALS

So perforce, there is some lesson. Even though in the *halachah*, in the *seder hadevarim*, you bring the *korban chatas* first, and only then you bring the *korban olah*, but the Torah wants you - when you're reading this *parshah* - to mention and be aware about the fact that there is a *korban olah*, and mention it before the *korban chatas*. That's what *shtait*.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler says that the Torah is teaching us the appropriate *derech* in *avodas Hashem*. The *korban olah* represents the *shpitz* in *avodas*

*Hashem*. That represents us being *kulo laHashem*. That's the end game. That's the *shleimus ha'amitis*. It's *kulah laHashem*! The *chatas*, the sin offering, represents the means of a person getting there. The way a person reaches his goals in *avodas Hashem* is step by step.

### STEP BY STEP

First you work on *sur mei-ra*, "turn away from evil" (Tehillim 34:15). There are many people who attempt to ignore the *sur mei-ra*. They just want to work on *aseh tov*. And then what happens is they feel that if they work on the *aseh tov*, automatically the *ra* will go away. But the Torah says סור מרע ועשה טוב, you have to accept upon yourself to distance from the *ra*. With that approach, that is how you're *aseh tov*. So the *chatas* is brought first. That's the *sur mei-ra*, the sin offering, the cleansing, the *kapparah* for one's *cheit*. Practically, that's where you start. And then afterwards you go for the *olah kulah laHashem*. However, a person has to know that it's not enough just to be *sur mei-ra*. A person has to know that when he begins his *sur mei-ra*, it's in order to come to the *aseh tov* in the best and highest form and fashion. So you have to read about the *olah* first before you mention the *chatas*, because you have to know that the goal is *shleimus*. The goal is for me to reach and be attached to Hashem as much as possible. That's the goal. Let's say somebody is involved in bad behavior. So he says, "Okay, I'll stop the bad behavior." He says he's going to stop the bad behavior, but he doesn't understand that the ultimate goal is *kulah laHashem*. If he only says he's going to stop the bad habit, but he doesn't understand that the ultimate goal is *shleimus* and attaching himself to Hashem as much as he can, he won't end up getting there.

### TRAGEDY: OBSERVANT BUT EMPTY

I was just reading an article about a girl in Eretz Yisrael who grew up in a *frum* family. The father was a learning person. They were considered a Charedi family, not just *stam frum*. He was *arein geton* (absorbed) in learning. The mother was a regular housewife, and they had a nice *frum* family. The kids went to the best of schools. They did everything by the book. But over the years the girl noticed an interesting thing. Her mother would let them watch certain videos, but when the father came home, the mother would quickly put it all away and tell the kids, "Don't mention anything." It continued like that throughout the years, behind his back. She said her mother was a very nice lady, a very *frum* lady, but there was no sense that there was any goal and any purpose in their *Yiddishkeit*. *Yiddishkeit* was just their way of life, but there was no reason why you "do" *Yiddishkeit*. There was no mention of Hashem, not from her father, not from her mother. Her father was a busy person, and there was no connection. It was just trying to stay within the cocoon, within the box, not to step out. But there were no goals.

<sup>1</sup> מובא בספר הזכרון לבעל המכתב מאלהו (קובץ מאגרותיו ומכתביו אחד מתלמידיו, ר' אהרן וסטהיים) ששאל רבינו, ז"ל: (זבחים צ, א) חטאת קודמת לעולה אפי' להקדישה, ומ"ט בפ' תזריע עולה ואח"כ חטאת אמר רבא ההיא למקראה, ע"י רש"י, ותוס' הקשו עליו, וברש"י בחומש תזריע שם (פ"ב פ"ח) פירש כשיטתיה. והדברים תמוהים וכי מה הענין בזה לקרוא לעולה קודם בס"ת. [נר' אהרן הציע התשובה שם, ז"ל] והנה מה שהעיר מעכ"ת בשאלה ב' דעולה קודמת לחטאת למקראה (זבחים צ, א), אפשר לומר שאין אדם מסתפק במטרה שלילית בלבד וצריך תמיד גם מטרה חיובית, ואם לא יהיו לו מטרה חיובית לשאוף אליה לא יתחזק להתחיל אפי' בתשובה, משו"ה צריך להקדים קבלת העשה טוב לסור מרע, והיינו עולה קודמת לחטאת למקראה כתוס' דהקדש היינו נדרש קבלה. [וכן כתב הרש"ר הירש חמשה חומשי תורה [על ויקרא י"ב:ו] ז"ל: וכן יונה או תר לחטאת. לנדר הבא לידי ביטוי בעולה, קדמה חטאת העוף; שכן כל אימת שקרבות גם עולה וגם חטאת, החטאת קרבה ראשונה. לפני שאדם מקדיש את מעשיו לה', עליו לטהר עצמו תחילה מרשלנות ומחולשה מוסרית. עליו לרחוץ בניקיון כפיו, ורק לאחר מכן יהיו מעשיו רצויים. קודם "סור מרע" - ואחר כך "עשה טוב". אך "עשה טוב" הוא המטרה, ומשום כך מזכיר כאן הכתוב את העולה תחילה, כלשון הגמרא: "למקראה הקדימה הכתוב" (זבחים צ).] ובחיידוד כאן, צריך להזכיר את העולה תחילה (לדעת הר"ר חיים בתוספות שם, יש אף להקדיש את העולה תחילה); שכן התקדמות ועלייה אל רום תפקידו של אדם בחיים בהכרח ובמעשה - היא הניגוד הגמור, על צד החיוב, לכניעה פאסיבית לכוחות הכפייה הפיזיים של הטבע]

And then she grew up, and she met somebody, and discovered that the real story about *Yiddishkeit* is about Hashem! Yiddishkeit wasn't just another religion that happens to be our religion, or happens to be the best religion, or that we basically do the same things as all the *goyim* as long as they don't contradict our religion. We shop. We go on vacation. We go to the fanciest stores. We buy the nicest things. The same Nordstrom for them, is for us. The same Saks Fifth Avenue for them, is for us. It was a whole different *hashkafah*. She said she spoke to other people and she discovered this wasn't such an uncommon thing. People just don't understand the *mehalech* of *avodas Hashem* and this is what has to be emphasized.

## STRIVING FOR GREATNESS CONTINUOUSLY

Now, the emphasis has to be, not that you can become anything you want. You must become the best person you can be. That's what we have to tell ourselves. We have to tell this to our wives. We have to become the best we can be. And we have to tell this to our children, that they must be the best they can be. Today, there's kind of a concept where a lot of children resent that. Why do I have to be the best I can be? I'm happy the way I am. As long as I'm not doing bad stuff, isn't that enough? And the answer is, no. That's not the goal. The real purpose here is the understanding *אחד לעולה*, that's the goal. It's not enough just not to do bad stuff. You have to be *sho'eif*. You have to yearn and strive for greatness.

Now, Rav Eliyahu Dessler writes that there are many people who already get onto the road of *aseh tov* and they 'do.' They *shteig* a little bit, and they do the right thing. He says, you have to know that the goal in life is to constantly *shteig*. *Shteiging* is not something you do when you get onto an 'easy' path. No. Constant growth is required. If you look at a person who's a *frum* person, he learns every day, he *davens* every day. He doesn't have modern media in his home. He's a nice Jew. There are a lot of people like that, fine *yungeleit*. But the concept of 'you want to *shteig*?' is gone.

I remember when I got married, I joined a *chaburah* in a *kollel* and they were learning *mesechta Shabbos*. So I learned it the way I learned any other *mesechta*. I remember I came to a Tosfos and I was bothered with this Tosfos. I had a *kasha*. I couldn't understand it, back and forth. I was starting to *handel* it. I went over to an older *yungerman*, someone who is still learning today. And he told me an interesting thing. He said, "You know, those kinds of *kashos* you only ask when you're a *bachur*, when you're younger. When you get older those kinds of *kashos* don't bother you anymore." I said, "I hope that I never get older. I hope I will always stay young and these *kashos* will bother me." I said, "If I don't understand the Tosfos how can I leave it like that?" He told me, "Is the Tosfos that important? In your life, your life picture, does the Tosfos make a big deal?" I said, "If I go with that *mehalech*, nothing is going to be important. Every time that something bothers me and I push myself a little bit to understand it, that means I'm alive. I am still interested. If I learn a *gemara* and I come to the *gemara* and I don't understand the *gemara*, if I say, 'I don't understand this *gemara* - *vaiter*,' you know what that shows? It shows that I've lost interest already." If there is a button on your radio or on your computer, when you say *nu mei heicha teisa* I need to know what it does? I don't have to know what that button does. Does everybody know what every button does? No. You want to know what it could do. You want to be a *mumcheh*. You know why? Because that's where your interest lies. You want to find out new *chiddushim*.

A *mentch* has to know, R' Dessler says, that wherever a person is holding, he has to *shteig*.

Now Rav Eliyahu Dessler says: If you're holding on the lowest level of *shteiging*, you have to know and be aware that higher levels do exist, more than you understand. And this is another mistake he says people make, that they think that I'm basically *ois geshtigen* - I've achieved all there is to achieve, and that's all there is in life. I remember, I once had a discussion with a young lady and she said, "Don't take this personally, but you know, I'm not a *ba'alas teshuvah*," she said. "I went to *frum* schools. So basically, the difference between me and you is you maybe know more books and I know less books, but we're the same." I said, "Have you spent any years learning Torah, or being exposed to learning Torah or have a husband who learned Torah?" I said, "We live on different planets. We're not living on the same planet." She did not strive to be someone greater or appreciate someone else who did strive to become greater.

## BEYOND YOUR DREAMS

Rav Dessler says a person has to know that when you're *shteiging*, don't think you are already there, and that it's just a matter of more books, more lines of text left to read. When you *shteig* and then you *shteig* more and you *shteig* more, you look back and you discover that when you were first *shteiging*, you were totally and absolutely clueless, and what you thought you understood and grasped then, was *mamash* like a blind man in the darkness, even though you were doing the right thing. Because whatever you think at this point in time, he says, is only the beginning; your mind is not yet developed and the *madreigah* of your *neshamah* is not yet developed, so you don't even begin to appreciate the endless growth that is still possible. That's what you have to be aware of. It's not just, "I'm there already so therefore it's just a matter of okay, a little more." When you start off, he says, you're living in a world of *teva* and then you can't begin to be *masig* (grasp) that it's *shayach* for me to be *oleh*, to *shteig*, and to actually live in a world that's beyond *teva*. That's amazing.

You talk to the average person on the street who is *frum*, and tell him, "You know it's *shayach* to have an existence in this world that's *shelo k'derech hateva*." They say, "Give me a break. That's what you tell kids. You say make-believe stories." Everybody has - *l'havdil* - their 'Santa Clauses.' You know, the wishful thinking of Eliyahu Hanavi coming and this guy coming, and he's going to bring you this and bring you that. Oh, please - that's all nonsense." You know what that is? That's exactly this problem! Because when you're on some *madreigah*, but it's the *madreigah hatachtonah*, your perspective from which you see things now doesn't enable you to see beyond. If a fellow doesn't open a *sefer* - so he understands he can't see what's in the *sefer*. But it's a shame when a fellow opens the *sefer*, and he looks in the book, and thinks, "Nah, I've seen it all already."

## GAINING A HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

Everyone here could testify to it. Anybody in his life who focused ever on this *shteigarai* knows that he crossed a line. He went from the world of *teva*, and he started to experience things that all of a sudden were beyond *teva*. At first, he said to himself, "This must be a joke. This must be a coincidence. It's not real. It's good luck. Luck happens. Things happen." That's how a person *teitches* it up. But as a person *shteigs*, he starts to see everything in that light, and every area of his life happens from a different perspective.

Rav Dessler says, you should know that whichever level you're holding on, know there's a higher level, and that higher level will create a discovery for you. It will open your mind up to realize that where you are now is *gornisht*.

He says the rule is a person has to work to grow, but you have to live within your *madreigah*. That's why there are many people who, when they hear about this type of world - for example, when they hear about people in the *gemara* who were *zocheh* to see Eliyahu Hanavi - they think it was only possible back then. The Chafetz Chaim didn't live that long ago, the Chafetz Chaim was *zocheh* to *giluy Eliyahu*. There are a number of stories like that. Rav Chatzkel Levenstein writes that he was present with the Chafetz Chaim and *neshamos* came and they were disturbing and trying to beg the Chafetz Chaim for *tikun*. Could you imagine when a person is on that level? I can't. And I can't imagine Rav Chatzkel was on that level that he was aware of that. I'm sure that a lot of people talked to the Chafetz Chaim and they may have thought the Chafetz Chaim was talking to himself. "*Gei avek*. Okay do this. Do that." What? Is the man talking to himself? He's talking to me? No, he's talking to himself, you understand? Rav Chatzkel could see who he was really talking to and really understand what was going on, but a person who is on a very low *madreigah* would say the Chafetz Chaim is getting senile already. That's what a person would say. *Fashteit nisht*. He doesn't have a *musag* of such a thing, so he can't imagine it. He's talking to himself. *Nebach*. He's not fully focused.

That's what a *mentch* has to understand. So he says a person is *chayav* to learn about the higher levels, to become aware of such things. I remember thinking about it when I read this from Rav Chatzkel, and I was thinking it is a very high level. I remember it shook me up and it boggled my mind.

### RECALIBRATING REALITY

I remember reading another story about a fellow who was in a car accident, a major car accident in a foreign country, and he writes how he died and he was brought *lefnei beis din shel ma'alah*, and his amazement was that on the *beis din*, there were two Yidden who were still living in this world. He writes that they asked him not to mention their names. He went to them afterwards. They were *pashut* on the *beis din shel ma'alah*! Could you imagine that?! A person could live in this world and be used as a *dayan* in the next world? I can't imagine that. I would call that person a nut case; the guy needs serious psychiatry and medications. But that's because you don't understand. You live in a tiny, little world and your awareness of things is extremely limited. But if you study such ideas you could learn a little about it.

I remember when there was a *tekufah* when we were very involved with the autistic kids. What was that all about? That was just to give me an awareness of the world that I can't see. It opened my mind, expanded my thinking in ways I had never dreamt of. I thought sometimes my head was going to explode. I thought the head gaskets were going to blow because you realize that you have no idea about anything. You realize you're walking around with a plastic or a paper bag over your face and you can barely see and you think you're seeing and you don't see *gornisht*. עינים להם ולא יראו. And then when you tell someone else about it, you know what the guy says? You're starting to lose it.

Somebody just called me up who is *nebach* very sick. The person became extremely close to Hashem and started to become aware of things in their life they were never aware of, to such a *madreigah* that it's unbelievable. The person called me up and said, "My friends are telling me that I'm starting to lose it. I'm a different person. My personality is changing now. And you know you're starting to hallucinate and starting to imagine things. Everything you talk about is about spirituality. Come back to be a normal person." I said, "Your friends are on very low *madreigah* so they have not had the opportunity to become aware of what you're aware of. But *baruch Hashem*, you have become aware. Yes, you're not normal. The normal of yesteryear you're not anymore, because you *shteiged* and you grew." That's what you want - to grow. And every one of us wants to see that. Through the Torah and through *shteiging* and only through *shteiging*.

### THE END GOAL IS TO AIM HIGH

So if you're not *koreh* לעולה first, you'd not know there is so much more to *shteig* for, and that it should be your goal. Now, people make a mistake. You can't jump to לעולה. Someone who's on a low *madreigah* reads about the Chafetz Chaim, and all of a sudden he goes into a room, he closes the lights, rubs his eyes very *shtark*, and he starts to see stars and then imagines he's talking to *neshamos*. Somebody comes into the room and says, "What are you doing?" He says, "I don't know, *ich ken nisht zoggen*." "What are you doing?" "I'm talking to *neshamos*. I'm connecting to *neshamos*." You know what you say to the guy? "You're an absolute nutcase." You try to wake him up. You're trying to get him out of his reverie. "Go back into the *beis medrash* and be a *mentch*. Because you're not holding there." But if you want to know if what you see is the end - it's not the end. You have to be aware of the big world beyond the person and how little the world we live in is. And if we *shteig* - and for all of us, as you *shteig* - Hashem will make you aware of things that are unbelievable.

I'll never forget the *passuk* that spurred me on. The *passuk* says in the *chumash* (Devarim 4:29) that when you will be in *galus*, you'll be old, you'll be tired, you'll be far away and you will seek Me out with all your heart and soul. Hashem says, "I will reveal Myself to you." I remember reading that *passuk* over many, many times, and I decided, you know what? That means I could find Hashem. It's possible for me to discover Hashem.<sup>2</sup>

So I asked people. They said, "It's not *shayach*. It's not *shayach*." I said, "But in the Torah, it says you can." They told me, "In the Torah, it says a lot of things." I said, "What do you mean?" They said, "Well, you have to know. You have to understand." I said, "I understand I'm not going to be *zocheh* to *giluy Eliyahu*." I remember reading about how if you fast for forty days you're guaranteed to see Eliyahu. I was contemplating if I could do that. I didn't think so. And I think even if I got to 40 days, I'd probably be very *shvach*, and I wouldn't see *giluy Eliyahu*. I would need a hospital. But *al kol panim*, there is such a thing out there. Because there is such a thing out there, even if it is unlikely you will achieve it, it doesn't mean it's not real. But I have to recognize the *madreigah* on which I'm holding right now. So practically, you take care of the *chatas* first, and then you advance to the *olah*. But when you start, you have to know the end goal is the *olah*.

<sup>2</sup> ובקשתם משם את ה' אליהם ומצאתם כי תדרשנו בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך



## NOTHING LESS THAN THE WHOLE TORAH

There is a *gevaldige* Rav Baruch Ber in the *Birkas Shmuel* in *Kedushin*, where he brings down something from Rav Chaim of Brisk in *siman chaf zayin os beis*. Rav Chaim talks about *darkah shel Torah* and how important it is for a father to yearn, strive and teach his children as much Torah as possible. And he says there are those people that have the new-fangled ideas and they decide that they're going to limit the *limud haTorah* of their son. And they say, "You know what? It's enough. It's enough." And he decides what is enough, what the rabbis teach him in school, "That's enough." He says, and what this person is doing, he says, is removing his descendants from Hashem Yisbarach. That's what he's doing. He says, do you know what the end is going to be? שבוני ביתו, his immediate family, או הדור שאחר כך יהיה ריפורמה, or the next generation, they're going to be Reform Jews. That's what he says! And a person has to bring his kids up *al pi Torah* because the only way the father has to transmit Torah to his son, is to transmit the entire Torah that we learned at Sinai. כל המלמד לבנו ולבן בנו תורה כאילו קבלה מהר סיני - so can you imagine what would happen if a person transmits half the Torah that we learned at Sinai, but not the whole thing?! A father has to transmit the whole thing. *Kol haTorah kulah!* And that's the *ikar*. תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם. The father comes and says to his son, "You know what? For you, I'm happy if you have part of the Torah." Rav Chaim says, that kid doesn't have a chance, and he's going to become a סריס הדורות מן התורה, he's going to cut off his generations from the Torah and the *emunah hatehorah v'hakedoshah*. He says, אוי לו, woe unto that father who removes his *doros* from Torah.

Rav Baruch Ber quotes Rav Chaim's *kasha*. Rav Chaim asks, אם תשאל, if you're going to ask a *kasha*. We find a number of people who are working people, *ba'alei umnus*, that they're not such *gedolim beTorah*, and in spite of that, they're *tiere Yidden* and they're *ma'amin* in Hashem Yisbarach. How could it be? Rav Chaim just told me that if a guy is not taught the *gantze Torah* and the guy is not given Sinai, only partial Sinai, he's finished! So how is it *shayach* to find *erliche Yidden* who are simple Jews? I guess there was once upon a time such a thing. They had *emunah* in Hashem and were *tiere mentchen*.

Rav Chaim says: והדבר הוא, you want to know what the secret is? Such a person prepared himself to be a *gadol baTorah* because he learned in the *chadarim b'temimus*. This fellow went to a *cheder* as a child and he really set himself on the path to be *mekabel kol haTorah kulah*. But you don't learn *kol haTorah kulah* in *cheder*. That's the beginning. And then something happened to stop it. Not a *shitah*. You know what it was? What made him stop was either *parnasah* or *kishronos*. He didn't have the *kishron* to go on with Torah. But he was a person who was prepared. He was *muchan*. He had the *chinuch* and the preparation of Torah. That's why, says Rav Chaim, he remains a *tzaddik* and a *ma'amin*. But the person whose *hachanah* initially was to have part of Sinai, he won't make it. Maybe the father said, "You don't have to learn *gemara*." I know a school where a fellow told me they learn *gemara*. It was a Mizrahi school. I said, "What do they learn there?" So he brought me the *gemara* they're learning. You know what he brought me? He brought me papers. I said, "What is this? A joke? More *sheimus*?" He said, no, they gave papers out and they learned selections from the Talmud. It's called "selections of the Talmud."

Now, that's the type of limited *chinuch* I am talking about. I want you to know, even though we don't **learn** *gantze mesechtos*, but we **have** *gantze mesechtos*. Some *chacham* may come up one day and say, "You know, since you only learn a few *blatt* in the *sefer*, I have a good idea. Forget about buying expensive *gemaros* so someone can make a few pennies. I have a better idea! Make copies of just the first few pages. Sit and learn a few pages. This will be enough." You know what the *chiluk* is? That's the *chiluk*. The person who holds the *gantze mesechta* says, "I'm starting with the first page, but I understand that I am being *meichen* myself for the whole *mesechta*. I want to know everything in the Rosh and in the Tosfos and in the Rashi and in this and in that." The guy who buys a *gemara* and the *gemara* doesn't have Rashi, doesn't have Tosfos, and it leaves out *gemaros*, has a different Torah. It's an *andere mesechta Kiddushin*. That person has no *hachanah* to be a *tzaddik*, and he can't be a *tzaddik*. So the proper *kuk*, the proper approach, is this approach.

## GENUINE GROWTH VS. FOREIGN AGENDAS & SHITTOS

Now, the Ponovezher Rav related a very interesting story. He said he had a *bachur* in his *yeshivah* that was a *ba'al kishron* but he got *fachapped* by the *olam hata'avos* and he wasn't going *b'derech HaTorah* anymore. The Ponovezher Rav decided he's got to let this guy go from the *yeshivah*. But he was afraid if he sent him away, he'd become *frei*. But on the other hand, if he left him in the *yeshivah*, he's going to cause damage to the rest of *yeshivah*, to other *bnei yeshivah*. He didn't know what to do. He decided to bring the *shaylah* to the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish said, "Send me the *bachur*. I want to see the *bachur*." And that's what happened. The Chazon Ish saw the *bachur* and spent an inordinate amount of time with this *bachur*; he worked on him, he was *mekarev* him, and he turned him into a *talmid chacham* and an *emese yarei shamayim*. The Ponovezher Rav said that this happened not one time. It happened with many *bachurim*. So they asked the Chazon Ish, "What's the *pshat*? Why do you waste your time with these *bachurim*?" The Chazon Ish was a Torah machine. He wasn't a *kiruv man*. He wasn't a *kiruv man*. A fellow said to the Chazon Ish, "If a guy would come to you from the modern world who's *frum*, and he would come and he'd want to get close to you, you wouldn't talk to him. You wouldn't have any *shaychus* to him. You wouldn't even let him cross the threshold of your house. And here you're *mamash* being *moser nefesh*, you're being *metapel*, yourself, with a *bachur* who is a *mashchis*."

The Chazon Ish answered, "I'll tell you a *teretz*. A *bachur* that comes to a *yeshivah*, *bederech klal*, is a different case. Why does a *bachur* go to *yeshivah*?" Especially in those days, today maybe it's different. But in those days, you didn't go to *yeshivah* unless you wanted to focus on learning Torah. You didn't go there to sleep, and you didn't go there to eat. I'm not saying you didn't eat and sleep in *yeshivos* but that's not why you went. If a person decided to go to *yeshivah*, he was committed to becoming a *gadol baTorah* and a *yarei shamayim*. So he had the *she'eifah*. He had an awareness of what the goal is. But what happened? The *yetzer hara* saw the guy is capable, so he came, and he wanted to disturb him, and pull him down into the *beis hakisei* and make him into a *mushchas*. But the modern *mentch*, the Chazon Ish said, this is his *she'eifah* in life. He could be a *shomer Torah umitzvos* - but he has this new Torah. That's what it is. So that fellow, the Chazon Ish said, is not looking for more. He has his limit. He has his Torah that he created. He said: "With *aza mentch* I don't want to have any *shaychus* because he has no goal of לעולה." That's why a person has to understand that this (*shteiging*) is the *avodah* that we have to do in our life.

## SHTEIGING LIKE...A KID

What I heard from my Zeida all my life was, you have to be engaged in constant *shteiging*. If you're 50 you want to *shteig*. You're not *shteiging* in *davening*? Did you *shteig* in *davening* in the last month? If you did not *shteig* in *davening*, that means you didn't go anywhere. That means you were lacking. Are you planning on *shteiging* in *davening* this *zman*? Are you planning on *shteiging* in learning or just continuing to learn? Is it 'continuous education'? You know, lawyers and doctors have to take what's called classes in continuous education (CEs). Every year, they have to take a certain amount of hours of *chazarah* to make sure they're still on top of the *matzav* - but that's not called *shteiging*. It's continuous education to keep yourself refreshed and up to date.

A *mentch* has to understand this is the goal in the *passuk*. The Navi Hoshea (11:1) says: *כי נער ישראל ואוהבו*, "Yisrael is a child whom I loved." The Navi gives us a message from Hashem that when Klal Yisrael is a *na'ar*, *v'ohaveihu*, I love him. So Rav Yisrael Salanter explained that Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves Klal Yisrael on condition that they're *b'bechinas na'ar*. What is a *na'ar*? A *na'ar* is youth. A youth is an unfinished product. When you see a kid, you know he's going to grow up. That you know. The definition of a kid is he's growing. A kid is inquisitive. A kid is interested. He's learning new things about his life. That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves. But a person who's already reached a certain place, he's not growing anymore. He's finished. You're not expecting him to be a few inches taller when you meet him in three years. *Na'ar* means he's in the *matzav* of growth. And if a person strives to keep *shteiging*, he will continue to grow.

This is one *middah* that *gedolim* always had. *Gedolim* had these type of *hanhagos* that they were always focused on growing and *shteiging*. Rav Mordechai Gifter used to always say over from the Telzer Rosh Yeshivos, that the greatest *ma'alah*, more than all other *ma'alos* that a person could attain is *az er halt by dem shteigen*, if he is holding by *shteiging*. You know how sad it is when you meet *frum* Yidden and they don't hold by *shteiging* anymore? Rav Chaim Ozer said that every time he meets the Chafetz Chaim it's not the same Chafetz Chaim he met last time! He was *nespael*. He said, "It's *pashut*," he says. "Every time I meet the Chafetz Chaim, it's not the same Chafetz Chaim." And the Chafetz Chaim was an older Yid. The Chafetz Chaim was always *shteiging*.

We have to always *shteig*. Don't think, "We got there. Okay, so now I know a little about how to learn. I know how to look at a *gemara*." That's it? Go *vaiter*. "I want to grow in *yiras shamayim*. I want to become *frummer*. I want to become closer to Hashem. I want to know my goals." Don't say that even though right now you're holding on a low level, which we are, therefore you give up. There are many people like that. The *yetzer hara* sort of pulls them down and says, "You're not going anywhere. You're mine. You're in a sewer with me." A lot of people say, "Ok. You're right."

## JUMP OVER HURDLES AND GROW

Just recently, I saw somebody undertake to *shteig*. A person had stopped *shteiging* for a while, and the person now decided to undertake *shteiging*. I told the person, "I want to give you a warning that you're going to get unbelievable *nisyonos* from the *yetzer hara* because he doesn't want you to *shteig*. He wants to see if you understand what *shteiging* means." And the night before the person was supposed to undertake the *shteiging*, he contacted me and said, "Bad stuff is starting to happen." I said, "Say the words that Avraham Avinu used. Say, *אף על פי כן*. Just say, I don't care what. I don't care when. I don't care how." The person made a lot of *hachanos* that his big day should be perfect. And then, early in the morning, I get a text. *What should I do? My employees called off from work today and my business can't open up without me.* I said, "Kiss it goodbye." I said, "Forget it!" I said, "I'm telling you, the *yetzer hara* is not letting you go. Say *אף על פי כן*. Take it out of your mind. Say, forget about it. I'm telling you, it's going to work out. It's all the *yetzer hara*'s imagination to show you that you can't *shteig*." *Baruch Hashem*, the person passed the test and the person said, "Wow, that felt good!" Afterwards, *Baruch Hashem*, the world didn't collapse. He didn't go bankrupt and he didn't lose any money. *הרבה דרכים למקום*.

That's what we have to know in our life, Rabbosai. We're starting a new *zman*. We have to say: By the end of this *zman*, none of us want to be the same as we are now. You want to grow, step by step. You want to grow. You want to grow in many ways. In *hasmadah*, in other areas. We want to be able to be in the *beis medrash* for longer after *ma'ariv*. We're going to be *ligen* in learning more. We're not going to get sidetracked. On Shabbosos, on Erev Shabbos, we're going to be *arein geton* in learning. We want to make this *zman* a great one. At the end of this *zman*, you should be *davening* better than you *davened* until now. That means you feel you took a step up in having a *shaychus* and talking to Hashem sometime during the day. You want to feel not that you know the words. You want to feel connected with Hashem. You want to feel your sense of *chashivus* for Torah is going up. You want to feel I've been working on my *middos* more than I did. Let me work on my *middos* now. I'm going to be *machnia* myself. I'm going to go *vaiter*.

You want to know something? It's a very short *zman*. The summer *zman* is only two months and 20 days, a very short *zman*. But it's a loaded *zman*, because in the middle you have Shavuos, *kabalas haTorah*. They even give you a vacation this *zman*. I can't figure out why. They give you a Shabbos vacation. But Rabbosai, let's make a plan that at the end of this *zman*, we don't want to be the same. I want to be - if not *kulo laHashem* - I want to be more *laHashem*. And I want to know, it's only the beginning of my *shteiging*. And if we do that, we will grow *im yirtzeh* Hashem. Yes - I can't fool myself. I have to know where I'm holding right now. But there's no one here who can't learn with more *ratzon*, who can't be more *arein geton* in learning, who can't be more *arein geton* in *avodas Hashem* and *yiras Hashem*. Pick some area, and let's do it and let's grow, and let's prepare ourselves for the future.

## § IN CONCLUSION §

When the Torah writes “*echad l’olah, v’echad l’chatas*” it reveals the secret that inspires every person to become better and grow. Practically speaking, the *chatas* offering is brought first and then the *olah* offering. But, the wording of the passuk places the *olah* offering before the *chatas*. The Torah tells us that before we begin on our proposed route in life, we must first be aware that there is something called an *olah* - the next level up in *avodas Hashem*, the peak of what we can reach. This teaches us we should always strive to reach a better level of *avodas Hashem*, learning Torah and developing better *middos*. When we aim high, we might not reach it at first, but we will overcome more *nisyonos* that we would have if we had not pushed ourselves to grow. This obligates us to continuously try to grow and improve in whatever way we can, step by step. This week, I will (*bli neder*) make a goal to aim higher in my *avodas Hashem*, and identify how to upgrade and improve my learning, my *avodas Hashem*, and my *yiras Hashem*.