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נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
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Chief Rabbi of Elad, Israel MORDECHAI MALKA, Founder & President of Institutions "Or Hamelech"



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Parashat Ki Teitzei
Do Not Judge a Book By its Cover

The *parasha* begins (*Devarim* 22:10-11), "When you go out to war against your enemy, and Hashem puts him in your hand, and you take captives; And you see in captivity a woman with a pleasant appearance [*yifat to'ar*] and you desire her, and you take her for a wife." Later it states (*ibid.* 15), "If a man will have two wives; one beloved and one hated, and the beloved one and hated one bear him two sons, and the first-born is that of the hated one." Later, the *pasuk* states (*ibid.* 18), "If a man will have a rebellious son, who does not listen to the voice of his father and mother; they discipline him and he does not listen to them."

Questions:

- 1- These three topics appear together in the very same *perek*. What is the connection between them?
- 2- Our Sages teach that it is impossible for there to be a rebellious son in the manner depicted by the Torah. If it cannot occur, why did the Torah write it?

Today's Way of Thinking

When we contemplate the way of thinking in present times, we will see that it is dictated by the superficial externalities that man sees, and this is what exerts a great influence on him. This is as we can readily see, that one of the main vehicles of marketing is taking advantage of man's weakness in this area. An individual is led after the sight of an attractive package or a large variety of merchandise. Such is the case in all areas of life, whether it be in relation to a home, car, furniture, or wardrobe - man is led after what he sees. This even applies to choosing a wife. Man is led after the external impression that she makes. The woman who makes a favorable impression is the one that he selects, and he then feels as if he has struck gold. However, the Sages teach us that "man should not look at the jug; rather, at what is contained inside it." This is because all of the excitement generated by externalities is only temporary, and it is not the great sensation that appears to be. On the contrary, many times the very beauty that he was lured after serves to his detriment. For this woman's eyes are on others, and their eyes are on her. Whatever he felt for her from the outset quickly dissipates. All that remains are her character traits which accompany every man throughout his life, and it is on this which all of life's happiness depends. The same thing applies to food. Not every food which appears to delectably enticing is good for one's health. On the contrary, today there are many studies relating to food production, which prove just how much these foods can adversely affect one's health. Often, it is specifically the food that is not so enticing, which is the healthiest to eat.

Explanations of the Placement of the *Pesukim*

Now we can understand why the topics of the *yifat to'ar*, the son of the hated wife, and the rebellious son are in close proximity to one another in the Torah. In relation to the *yifat to'ar*, Rashi teaches that the Torah permitted marrying her in order to calm man's *yetzer hara*; for had the Torah not permitted him to marry her, he would have taken her in a forbidden manner. However, if he marries her, she will eventually be hated by him. This is alluded to by the *parasha* of the hated wife that follows in close proximity. Rashi then continues to state that she will eventually bear him a rebellious son, indicated by the fact that the *parasha* of the rebellious son follows it. The *Daat Zekeinim me'Baalei Tosafot* also mentions this point, adding that because David HaMelech took the daughter of Ptolemy, King of Geshur as a wife during wartime, he bore Avshalom, who wished to kill him. Avshalom also married his father's wives, and caused the deaths of many multitudes of Jews [Also see *Sanhedrin* 107a, where this matter is similarly mentioned.] This is the principle that the Torah wishes to teach us: Man must contemplate the end result. What will be the outcome if he is drawn after his eyes, thinking that this is the path which will lead him to satisfaction in life? The Torah teaches us that the outcome will be dismal. When man is lured only after beauty and external glamor without taking notice of the what lies underneath, it is a path which wreaks havoc. This is because the outer glimmer passes with time, revealing character traits that are not



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congruous with the outer beauty. Instead of leading to the sublime happiness that he thought it would lead to, it leads to arguments about every little thing, and it proves to be a relationship which lacks mutual respect. Rather, each one looks to fulfill his or her own desires, without giving a thought to the needs of the other. Naturally, this will lead to clashes with one's spouse, because most of the time, the interests of the spouses are different; each one has his or her own interests, and this results in conflicts and hatred in the home. Suddenly, this once beautiful woman has been transformed into a hated wife, one with whom he is constantly fighting. Furthermore, the Torah teaches us that the product of such a home, a home that is founded on desire gratification, creates a contaminated atmosphere which causes the children to suffer as well. For what do they absorb in such a home? Only egotism and desire fulfillment. As such, the child grows up without boundaries, until he turns into a rebellious son. Therefore, even though our Sages teach that it is impossible to fulfill the Torah's requirement for being a rebellious son, nevertheless, it is the Torah's wish to teach us that one who is lured after his eyes, will find hatred and strife in his home. He will then have a rebellious son, who is better off dead than alive, for he has no future, as our Sages teach. This is the reason for the dismal state in present times, when much to our dismay, statistics show that almost the same number of individuals who marry get divorced. This is due to the fact that the house is not built on values and refinement of character traits. Rather, it is based on external lures. Therefore, with the passage of time, the externalities fade away, and the couple are left only with their character traits. They therefore find themselves in a predicament in which it is very difficult to manage together, because they are faced with the question of who will give in to who. Each one wishes to actualize his desires and pleasures, and therefore there is constant strife in the house. To alleviate themselves of this problem instead of dealing with it, they flee the reality and get divorced. But they do not realize that they are going from bad to worse and are committing an absolute mistake. Rather, it is incumbent upon the couple to work out their difficulties. They must seek out someone who will help them have *shalom bayit* and learn how to concede to the other party. For the secret to success and happiness lies in the trait of *vitur*, concession.

Do Not Look at the Jug

These, indeed, are the words of the *Tanna* in *Masechet Avot* (4:20), "Rebbi said: Do not look at the jug; rather, at what is in it. There is a new jug filled with old wine, and an old jug that does not even contain new wine." Rashi explains that one should not look at man's external appearance and honor him because of it. Rather, he should gaze at the "wine inside the jug" and see if the individual gives off the impression of being a *ben Torah* or not. For "there is a new jug filled with old wine" – i.e., a young man who has learned much Torah, which is compared to "old wine," since it is of a higher quality than new wine. Then there is "an old jug that does not even contain new wine" – this represents an older man with an impressive exterior who does not even contain "new wine." New wine is inferior to old wine, but it is still on a higher level than water. To this is compared one with little Torah knowledge; he lacks even "new wine."

Story About the Eben Ezra and Rashi

The Eben Ezra once put himself into exile and wandered from place to place. He came to the city of R' Shlomo Yitzchaki z"l, the great Rashi. The Eben Ezra was a wealthy man, but he was disguised as a pauper. He came to the wife of Rashi and asked, "Where is the *Rav*?" However, she saw him standing there in ripped clothing with a woolen blanket on his body, and dirty. She therefore grew angry at him, thinking that he was an ordinary individual. "What do you need from him? He is not here!" she exclaimed. He said to her, "I do not need anything." He walked until the afternoon, and once again returned to Rashi's wife and asked, "Where is the *Rav*?" Once again, she replied, "What do you need him for? He has gone to lie down." Once again, he said, "I do not need anything." He went and waited two more hours, and came and asked Rashi's wife, "Where is the *Rav*?" Again, he replied, "What do you need from him? He has gone out for a stroll." "I need nothing at all," answered the Eben Ezra. He sat for a short while at the entrance. Suddenly, dogs that had been out in the pasture with the sheep began barking, pounced on him, and tore his garment. "Beloved is suffering," said the Eben Ezra, "for after the pauper follows poverty." He stood up and wrote on the entrance of Rashi's home, *I rose early to the house of the*



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*honorable one, and they say that he has already travelled; I came during the evening, and I am told that he is already sleeping ... Woe is to the pauper who was born without a star. Shlomo, Shlomo, Shlomo. "If he is a wise man, he will understand," said the Eben Ezra to himself. He then went on his way. When Rashi returned at night and saw the writing, he understood its significance. He therefore asked, "Who has been here?" They told him that an unclean man in torn clothing with a woolen blanket on his body had been there, but they had turned him away. Rashi responded that this man was "a chest with a precious pearl inside." He said that they should not have looked at the jug, but, rather, what was inside. "You see what is outside," exclaimed Rashi, "but I see what is inside. Now hurry and bring him to me, for I cannot taste anything until he is brought to me." They went and searched the entire land. They found the Eben Ezra and they brought him to Rashi, who was waiting for him by the entrance of his home. Once the Eben Ezra arrived, Rashi welcomed him and gave him water to wash himself, but he did not want it. He gave him a change of clothing, but he did not want them either. He said, "Tomorrow, I will again be a pauper, and the change will be difficult for me. Allow me to continue doing what I have been doing until now." Rashi replied that he would honor the Eben Ezra by complying with his words. Rashi summoned his wife to apologize to the Eben Ezra for getting angry at him. The Eben Ezra entered and they ate and drank together. They enjoyed speaking *divrei Torah* and eating together. He stayed with Rashi for eight days, and then he no longer wished to remain. Rashi gave him clothing, but he did not wish to accept them, except for the garment that had been torn. Rashi wished to give the Eben Ezra a lot of money, but he wanted none, except for a minute amount. The Eben Ezra remarked, "I have enough. Blessed be Hashem each day." They sent him off, and he went on his way.*

The Presidential Elections

One of the topics that all the media is speaking about now are the US presidential elections. Who will be the next president of the US, Trump or Clinton? We are believing Jews, and we know that all is from Heaven. However, the world watches how the polls rise, fall, and change from day to day. They are interested in what each candidate had to say, and about what they said about him in the media. These things influence the public's way of thinking. There is no doubt that if people would contemplate the meaning and significance of the of the presidential elections and the impact that it will have on the world, would it not be obvious who is more fitting to deal with the world's issues, and specifically the issues that face Israel? There is no doubt that it is Trump – he is a man who is by nature stronger than a woman. For a woman is unfit to be the world's leader. Even if she is wise, nevertheless, the nature of a woman is weak. Therefore, how could anyone possibly think to vote for a woman to be president? Yet this is the effect that media and sensationalism has on mankind. Usually, the outcome is less than positive, since it was externalities that influenced the voters' opinion. This is just like what happened with President Obama; the media succeeded in fooling the world. But we see that his presidency was very dismal indeed. Therefore one should not look at the jug, but, rather, what is inside.

Words of Mussar

Therefore the Torah teaches us that man is required to use the intellect that he has been given and not to be drawn after his eyes, for the results are ruin. Man must contemplate his path in life, and not act like an animal that is led by its owner. Rather, he should always try to discern the inner essence of each item and gain an understanding of whether it is good or bad. This applies both to his physical needs, and to his wealth and family as well. So too, should he guide his family along this path. By doing so, he will always merit peace and love in the home. *Amen ve'amen.*

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Mordechai Malka