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The Angel Within

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAV YONAH KARPILOV (MINSKER)

“THE POWERS OF MAN – FROM RAV YERUCHEM LEVOVITZ ZT”L.”

Creation is divided into four categories: inanimate objects like rock (*domem*), plant life (*tzome'ach*), animal (*chai*), and human (*medaber*). At first thought, these categories are entirely separate types, each disconnected from the others. The inanimate object has no power to grow, the plant lacks the qualities of the animal, and so on.

However, when we delve a little deeper, we should notice that each category can help sustain the one above it. There are certain types of plants that grow from the moisture found within rocks. Clearly, then, even the inanimate object possesses within it some power of growth. Similarly, plant life contains some spark of the animate, since plants provide life and sustenance to animals. This means that within each level lays dormant the power to move up to another level.

The Torah relates that the mouth of the donkey of Bilam was “*opened*” by Hashem” and began to speak, and Chazal prove that an animal is not inherently lacking the ability to speak; it just needs an opening. The animal turns into something human-like with just a small opening.

However, if this is true, then we must understand why they are separate categories. Why give them titles and names if each one can move up a level anyway?

It must be that these abilities to move up a level is something that lays dormant within them, and that the items themselves (sadly) do not dream of moving up to another level. They're unaware of the great power that lies within them. They remain comfortable remaining at the stage they are.

This is a great lesson that invalidates our excuses. We might think that we have no ability to grow (know that expression, “rocks for brains?”) but we must understand that one can always move up. Yes, even those at the human level can also move up!

To be human is not just having the ability to speak. There are higher levels within that, when tapped into, create the equivalence of entering a new category.

This is proven from the very same donkey! On the *passuk*, “And Hashem opened the mouth of the donkey,” the Seforno explains: “Hashem gave it the power to speak, as in the phrase ‘Hashem, open my



RAV YONA MINSKER IN CENTER NEXT TO
REB BARUCH BER

lips” (*Tehillim* 51:17). At first glance, this comparison is odd; how can the Seforno compare the donkey rising to the level of a human to the request made by Dovid Hamelech to Hashem to allow Dovid to praise Him?

It must be that speaking in praise of Hashem is also moving up a level – albeit within the human category.

Speaking in praise of Hashem is having a greater awareness of Hashem, and any new awareness, any new level of understanding, is itself an act of moving up a category.

Man can continuously become more angelic, and among *malachim*, there are endless levels. Therefore, each additional greater awareness of Hashem is a new stage of human growth.

However, there is more to analyze!

Just like one can move up a level (or many), sadly, it appears that one can move down a level as well. When Avraham was on his journey toward the *Akeidah*, he turned to Eliezer and Yishmael and asked them if they saw the fire above Har Hamoriah. They said they didn't see anything, and Avraham told them to "remain with the

donkey," while he and Yitzchak were going ahead.

Chazal explain that they (the humans) were compared to the donkey (an animal) because they could not see the prophetic vision of fire. This means that one can move down a level as well; he can go from

human to animal!

That ability, too, is dormant within us.

Instead of being defined by perceived categories, we should try to become more aware of Hashem and bring forth the angelic powers within us.

From Aleh Zayis the publisher of the new edition of Yonas Ileim

מאמר כחות האדם

ששמע מהג"ר ירוחם ליבוביץ צוק"ל משגיח ישיבת מיר

הבריאה מתחלקת לדומם, צומח, חי ומדבר, נקוט אצלנו שהם סוגים נפרדים שאינם משתייכים זה על זה כלל, הדומם אין לו כח להצמיח, והצומח אין לו כח החי וכי', אולם הרי רואים אנו צמחים יוצאים ע"ג אבנים, ועל כרחק שיש גם לדומם כח הצמיחה, כמו"כ יש בצומח מכח החי, שהרי מכיון שהצומח נותן כח חיות להחי ע"כ שיש לו קרבה ושייכות לו, וגם כמה נבראים נוצרו מהצומח.

באתנו של בלעם כתיב ויפתח ה' את פי האתון, משמע שאינו חסר בבע"ח להיות מדבר אלא ענין של פתיחה לחוד.

מכיון שכך מהו ענין ההתחלקות לד' סוגים? וצריך למר שהתחלקות זו היא רק הגדרת הכחות שלא יעפלו כל אחד לעלות, וישארו כפי מה שהגדירו אותם. הוגדר הדומם שלא יצמיח, אף שיש בו עצמו כח הצמיחה, והצומח שלא יחיה ממש, אבל באמת יש לכ"א מכחות חבירו, והרי לעתיד לבוא נאמר אז ירענו כל עצי יער.

רואים כלום, שאל את יצחק, ואמר שהוא רואה ענן קשור על ההר, אמר אברהם אתם אינכם רואים והחמור אינו רואה שבו לכם פה עם החמור, מבואר שמי שאינו רואה את הענן על ההר הרי הוא בגדר חמור, והלא ראינו זה היא דרגת נבואה שעל נביאים נאמר בפסוק וישלח מלאך, שהנביא הוא בגדר מלאך, הוי שזה בריה חדשה, מחמור למלאך.

וכמו"כ כל דרגות האדם מהקצה האחרון עד רום המעלה כל העבודה היא להעשות בריה חדשה ע"י כל ההכרה והכרה מתחילה חמור ואח"כ מלאך, ובמלאך עצמו הרי יש דרגות לאין קץ.

וכל עיקרו של עמל האדם להוציא לפועל הוכחות שבאמת כבר ישנם בו, ואעפ"כ מקודם שהוציאו לפועל הרי חסר כאן בריאה ויצירה וכמו שנבאר למעלה.

דרך הערה! מכאן חיזוק לאדם שלא יתייאש ושלא להתנצל באמלאות אם אינו מצליח בכשרונותיו ובמדותיו, כי מכיון שאבנים מוציאים פירות להפליא, מכש"כ שעל האדם להוציא מכחות אבנים שלו פירות.

אצל בלעם כתיב ויגל ה' את עיני בלעם, לא היה חסר אלא גלוי עינים, ובאמת שבכל גלוי עינים זה לא ראה כלום, אך מכיון שויגל, רק בגדר גלוי בבחינת. "ווי מען נעמט אראפ אבעלם פון אויג" אז כבר ראה מלאך.

על הפסוק ויפתח ה' את פי האתון פי' הספורנו נתן בו כח לדבר כענין ה' שפתי תפתח ע"כ. לכאורה זה היקש של פלא להקיש פתיחת פיו של דוד המלך ע"ה שהיה מבקש שיהיה לו יותר כח להכיר תהלות ה', ולהעשות רוח ממלא יוטר, לפתיחת פה האתון שזה היה בריאה חדשה.

ברם באמת כך הוא, שעם כל הכרה חדשה הרי היא בריה חדשה, ופתיחת פיו של דוד המלך להגיד שבחי ה' בריאה חדשה ממש כפתיחת פיו של האתון, לנפש היה ממלא, וכל תוספת מעלה בדרגת ממלא זהו חודש נפש היה, יצירה חדשה, ובאמת שכל דרגות האדם הם על דרך זו.

כתוב במדרש על הפסוק שבו לכם פה עם החמור, ששאל אותם אברהם, אם הם רואים את האש על הר המוריה, וענו לו שאין

Rav Yonah Karpilov (Velinski) was born in Minsk in 1909. At that time, there were many great Gedolim learning in Minsk, including Rav Aharon Kotler, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, and Rav Reuven Grozovsky. Rav Yonah Minsker – as he became known – was another Gadol of whom the city of Minsk is extraordinarily proud.

In 1918, he entered the local yeshiva, under the authority of Rav Yehoshua Tzimbeles. Rav Shlomo Meltzer became his first *rebbe*. Rav Yonah studied for five years under Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz and began publishing Torah in journals at that time. Rav Baruch Ber even wrote a glowing letter about him when he was just 16 years old!

At 17, he, along with his close friend, Rav Eliyahu Chazan, joined the Mirrer yeshiva. There, he made a name for himself as one of the leaders of the students of the yeshivah.

Rav Sholom Shapiro, a veteran Mirrer *talmid*, writes: "The yeshiva's most distinguished *talmidim* actually sat [not at the *mizrach vant* but] along the western wall, on the benches at the back. The first place was occupied by the gaon Rav Yonah Karpilov ... and in the parallel row [sat] the gaon Rav Aryeh Leib (Malin). Whoever had any difficulty with his learning went to them, and they would resolve it clearly and lucidly."

In 1930, when Rav Leizer Yudel sent a group of his finest students to learn under the Brisker Rav, Rav Yonah was chosen to be among the group, which included Rav Leib, Rav Michel Feinstein, Rav Henoch Fishman, Rav Naftali Wasserman, and Rav Ephraim Mordechai Ginsburg. Despite the challenging economic situation caused by the onset of the Great Depression, Rav Leizer Yudel financially supported the *kibbutz* in Brisk.

Legend states that when Rav Yonah had to leave the area for a short time the Brisker Rav refused to continue the *shiur* until Rav Yonah would return. Rav Simcha Sheps and Rav Binyamin Tzeilberger considered Rav Yonah to be their *rebbe*.

At the start of World War II, when all of the religious Jews converged on Vilna – as per the instruction of Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, as it was considered a safe city – Rav Yonah once again reunited with his *rebbe*, the Brisker Rav, and again attended his *shiurim*.

Rav Yonah did not travel with the Mir through Russia, and after the yeshiva escaped, he was "alone" in Kovna. This was a two-way bereavement, because the *bachurei* Mir were bereft of "the Mir with Rav Yonah." His absence was felt.

He was murdered in the summer of 1941 together with R' Avraham Grodzenski outside the Slobodka yeshivah. Hy"d.