

UNEDITED INTERNET VERSION

2019

Parshas Shemini

Pain
within
Pleasure

SELECTED DRASHAS
FROM
THE AUTHOR OF
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THAT HAVE **SOMETHING**
TO DO WITH
THE WEEKLY TORAH
PORTION

Bilvavi - Why There Must Be Pain Within Pleasure

Let's examine why there cannot be pleasure without some degree of pain. Why must it be that way?

It is because man, by nature, is comprised of two opposing natures: activity, and non-activity. Pleasure feels like something active has happened, and pain feels like something is lacking, which is an absence of positive activity. Both of these aspects in man, activity and non-activity, are needed.

If a person would only know of pleasure, he would be like a man riding a horse missing one of the ropes; he will be only to whip the horse to move forward, but he has nothing to stop the horse from running.

Thus, there is no such thing as pleasure which has no pain in it. The degree of pain involved is what enables the pleasure to be stable. Even inner pleasure wouldn't be good for a person if was endless. At some point, there has to be limitation to the pleasure, and this is accomplished through a degree of pain.

The degree of pain that is within all pleasure is needed for a person; as the Sages state, "*It is forbidden for one to fill his mouth with laughter on this world.*"¹ One is allowed to laugh, but he cannot become filled too much with laughter. Even in the future, when we will be allowed to let our mouths be filled with laughter, it will still be somewhat limited.

Pleasure represents the concept of expansion, and pain is contraction. Both expansion and contraction are the two different aspects taking place all the time in Creation. Contraction is necessary so that proper limitations are ensured. If a person would have endless pleasure, whether it's physical or spiritual, he would totally leave the limitations of his body and be divested of it.

This was the depth behind the punishment given to **Nadav and Avihu**. The holy *Ohr HaChaim* explains that they died out of their great love for Hashem, for they had entered an endless kind of spiritual bliss, which had no boundaries to it. Their souls expanded so much to the point that they were totally divested of body, because their body could not withstand the expansion.

As far as physical pleasure concerns, if there are no limitations on a person's physical pleasure, there are a few problems created from this. First of all, being that a person needs limitations, breaking the limits will result in a feeling of rebelliousness, as the *possuk* says, "*And Yeshurun got fat and kicked.*" The nature of a person is that when he becomes too pampered from the pleasure, he loses a sense of authority over himself. Another problem with indulgence in physical pleasure is that it strengthens the body's physicality, and in turn weakens a person from spirituality.

Therefore, it is necessary that there be certain limitations placed on pleasure, whether it's spiritual or physical pleasure.

¹ *Berachos 31a*