NEW

לקוטי שיחות

ACHAREI אחרי

VOLUME 1, P. 253–254

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Dedicated to

Emmanuel (Mendel) Karp

1905 - 1989

son of Bernard (Berl) and Rose (Rezele)

Manny Karp was the first of his family born in the United States, in 1905. His first language was Yiddish. Losing his mother to the Spanish Flu shaped his resilience and commitment to helping others, ultimately leading to a career as a guidance counselor in Philadelphia public schools. He also served many years as the director of Camp Akiba in the Poconos.

Karp's legacy is characterized by his optimism and unwavering dedication to learning and mentorship. Emmanuel Karp died in 1989.

ACHAREI I | אחרי א

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Shabbos Parshas Shelach,* 5716 (1956)

Introduction

We all desire. We want delicious food, physical comfort, social connection, material success, and much more. These natural drives are part of our humanity, and no one wants to kill them.

Simultaneously, we have spiritual drives; we long for something more than simple physical pleasure. Each of us has a soul that is an actual part of G-d and that inner G-dliness yearns for expression.

How can we navigate the tension between these two dimensions of our personalities? It would seem that indulging our physical wants will conflict with and perhaps compromise our spiritual growth. However, ignoring them makes us less of ourselves.

In the *sichah* to follow, the Rebbe addresses this fundamental struggle by exploring the Torah's nuanced approach to personal boundaries. By examining the paradoxical nature of restrictions – when they liberate and when they constrain – he gives us guidelines to discover how to establish boundaries for our conduct. He teaches us to see the checks we institute for our conduct as not merely precautionary but as opportunities to harmonize our physical and spiritual natures. In this way, we can open our eyes to appreciating G-dliness even as we fully experience life in this world.

Safeguarding the Sacred: The Torah's Approach to Personal Boundaries

Establishing Boundaries, Protecting Holiness

1. The Talmud[1] interprets the verse,[2] "You shall safeguard My charge," as a command to "Make a safeguard for My charge." This command is the foundation for the decrees and ordinances **the Rabbis established** as precautionary **fences and safeguards to prevent the violation of a prohibition**. This command **also obligates every Jew to set up** personal **fences and safeguards, refraining from even permitted matters** to protect himself against performing a sin. **As stated in texts of *Mussar* (ethical guidance),[3] a person should shield himself by** steering away from **100 gates of permitted matters to avoid entering** even **one gate of what is prohibited.**

א. אוֹיפְן פָּסוּק וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת מִשְׁמַרְתִּי, זָאגְט דִי גְמָרָא[א]: עֲשׂוּ מִשְׁמֶרֶת לְמִשְׁמַרְתִּי. דָאס אִיז דֶער יְסוֹד צוּ דִי גְדָרִים וּסְיָגִים דְּרַבָּנָן, אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ צוּ דִי גְדָרִים וּסְיָגִים וָואס יֶעדֶער אִיד אִיז מְחוּיָּב צוּ מַגְדִּיר זַיְין זִיךְ אֲפִילוּ בִּדְבָרִים הַמּוּתָּרִים - בִּכְדֵי נִיט צוּקוּמֶען חַס וְשָׁלוֹם צוּ אַן אִיסוּר, ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין סִפְרֵי מוּסָר, אַז מֶען דַארְף זִיךְ אָפְּהִיטְן אִין מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים פוּן הֶיתֵּר, בִּכְדֵי נִיט צוּקוּמֶען צוּ אֵיין שַׁעַר פוּן אִיסוּר.

When Too Much Can Be Dangerous

2. There are those who err, arguing, "Why search for new stringencies?" Since we are commanded,[4] **"You shall not deviate from the word that [the Sages] tell you,"** they are willing to accept the observance of the safeguards – **the** precautionary **prohibitions** to Scriptural Law – **that our Rabbis in every generation** established. **However,** they maintain that **there is no need to be overly meticulous about** observing the **precise** details of these restrictions. After all, we are speaking **merely about Rabbinic Law. And certainly, there is no need to seek new stringencies.** Indeed, even our Sages wondered,[5] **"Is not what the Torah has forbidden you sufficient?**

ב. פַּארַאן וָואס זַיְינֶען בְּטָעוּת אוּן טַעֲנֶה'ן: צוּ וָואס דַארְף מֶען זוּכְן נַיְיעֶ חוּמְרוֹת? מֵילָא דָאס וָואס רַבּוֹתֵינוּ אִין יֶעדְן דוֹר הָאבְּן גֶעאַסֶרְ'ט, אִיז "לֹא תָסוּר מִן הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יַגִּידוּ לְךָ"[ב], דַארְף מֶען אָבֶּער אוֹיךְ נִיט צוּפִיל מְדַקְדֵּק זַיְין אִין דֶעם, וָוארוּם עֶס אִיז דָאךְ מֶער נִיט ווִי אַ דְרַבָּנָן, וּמִכָּל שֶׁכֵּן נַיְיעֶ חוּמְרוֹת דַארְף מֶען גֶעווִיס נִיט זוּכְן, דַּיֶּיךָ מַה שֶּׁאָסְרָה לְךָ הַתּוֹרָה[ג].

---

1. *Yevamos* 21a.

2. *Vayikra* 18:30.

3. *Pela Yo'eitz, erech tosafes Shabbos.*

4. *Devarim* 17:11. See ***Rashi, Shabbos* 23a, and see *Rambam, Hilchos Mamrim* 1:1, *Sefer HaMitzvos, shoresh* 1, and positive commandment 174.**

5. ***Talmud Yerushalmi, Nedarim* 9:1.**

They bring further proof for their opinion from the words of the ***Talmud Yerushalmi*****,**[6] which relates that, in every person's Heavenly judgment, **he will have to give an accounting for any** food **that he saw and** yet **did not eat.**

Furthermore – they argue – since fulfilling everything the Torah asks of us **is very difficult, it is not desirable to add extra stringencies and practices so as to observe the** ***mitzvos*** **even more meticulously (*****hiddurim*****).** On the contrary, **this may lead to the very core being lost;** imposing **too many stringencies** on a person **may cause him to abandon the path of Torah entirely.**

They try to **substantiate** this premise by explaining the sequence that led to **the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, the root of all sins.** In that instance, **adding a prohibition that G-d did not command – expanding** the prohibition,[7] **"Do not eat from it"** to **"Do not touch it" – brought about the sin.**[8]

אוּן זֵיי בְּרֶענְגֶען נָאךְ אַ רַאְיָה לְדַעְתָּם פוּן דֶעם וָואס עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין יְרוּשַׁלְמִי[ד], אַז אַ מֶענְטשׁ וֶועט דַארְפְן אָפְּגֶעבְּן אַ דִין וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן אוֹיף יֶעדֶער זַאךְ וָואס עֶר הָאט גֶעזֶען אוּן נִיט גֶעגֶעסְן.

נָאךְ מֶער - טַעֲנֶה'ן זֵיי - אַזוֹי וִוי אוֹיסְפִירְן אַלְץ אִיז דָאךְ זֵייעֶר שְׁוֶוער, אִיז נִיט כְּדַאי צוּ מַרְבֶּה זַיְין חוּמְרוֹת אוּן הִידוּרִים, דוּרְךְ דֶעם קֶען מֶען חַס וְשָׁלוֹם פַארְלִירְן דֶעם עִיקָר. צוּפִיל חוּמְרוֹת קֶענֶען נָאךְ בְּרֶענְגֶען אַז מֶען זָאל אִינְגַאנְצְן אַוֶועק פוּן דֶרֶךְ הַתּוֹרָה חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, אוּן זֵיי בְּרֶענְגֶען דֶערוֹיף אַ רַאְיָה פוּן חֵטְא עֵץ הַדַעַת, שֹׁרֶשׁ כָּל הַחֲטָאִים, אַז דוּרְךְ דֶעם וָואס מֶען הָאט צוּגֶעלֵייגְט אַן אִיסוּר וָואס דֶער אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטֶער הָאט נִיט גֶעהֵייסְן, מֶען הָאט צוּגֶעלֵייגְט צוּם "לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ", דֶעם "לֹא תִגְּעוּ בּוֹ", אִיז אַרוֹיסְגֶעקוּמֶען דֶער חֵטְא.

Sanctifying the Permitted

3. This argument, however, is inherently flawed and can be rebutted as follows:

All the Torah's directives **"were given from one Shepherd."**[9] **The command, "You shall not deviate…" endows Rabbinic decrees with the** same **power and severity of Scriptural laws. The differences** in practice **between Scriptural laws and Rabbinic ordinances exist** only **because of a distinction the Torah itself** instituted **– that stringency is required regarding a doubt regarding a Scriptural law, while there is room for leniency regarding a Rabbinic law.**[10]

Similarly, regarding the obligation that each

ג. דִי טַעֲנָה אִיז אָבֶּער אַ גְרוֹיסֶער טָעוּת אוּן דֶער עֶנְטְפֶער אוֹיף דֶעם אִיז:

כֻּלָּם מֵרוֹעֶה אֶחָד נִתְּנוּ. מִצַד דֶעם לַאו פוּן לֹא תָסוּר הָאבְּן אוֹיךְ דִי גְזֵירוֹת דְרַבָּנָן דֶעם תּוֹקֶף אוּן הַארְבְּקַיְיט וִוי דִינִים דְאוֹרַיְיתָא, אוּן דִי חִילוּקֵי דִינִים צְוִוישְׁן דְאוֹרַיְיתָא אוּן דְרַבָּנָן, זַיְינֶען מִצַד דֶעם וָואס אַזוֹי הָאט דִי תּוֹרָה גֶעווָאלְט, אַז אִין אַ דְאוֹרַיְיתָא זָאל זַיְין סְפֵיקוֹ לְחוּמְרָא אוּן אִין אַ דְרַבָּנָן סְפֵיקוֹ לְהָקֵל[ה] אוּן דָאס גְלַיְיךְ.

אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ בְּנוֹגֵעַ דֶעם חִיוּב וָואס

---

6. ***Talmud Yerushalmi, Kiddushin*** **4:12.**

7. *Bereishis* 2:17.

8. See *Rashi, Bereishis* 3:3-4.

9. Cf. *Koheles* 12:11.

10. **Similarly,** the Torah itself makes **distinctions** regarding the circumstances in which **Scriptural** prohibitions can be superseded. See *Tanya,* **ch. 24. See** also **the commentaries on** ***Rambam, Hilchos Mamrim*** **1:5, and** ***Sefer HaMitzvos,*** **loc. cit.**

person has to establish boundaries for himself regarding indulgence in **permitted matters – this, too,** is included in the **Scriptural command, "You shall safeguard My charge."**

יֶעדֶער אֵיינֶער דַארְף זִיךְ מַגְדִּיר זַיְין בִּדְבָרִים הַמּוּתָּרִים, וָוארוּם אוֹיךְ דָאס אִיז אַ צִיוּוּי הַתּוֹרָה - וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת מִשְׁמַרְתִּי.

The positive commandment[11] hinted at by the verses,[12] **"You shall be holy" and, "Sanctify yourselves"**[13] – which imply, **"Sanctify yourself in what is permitted to you"**[14] – obligates a person **to act in a holy manner even when engaging in permitted matters. In addition, such conduct is also included in** the command, **"You shall safeguard My charge,"** which is interpreted as, **"Make a safeguard for My charge."**

נוֹסָף אוֹיף דֶער עֲשֵׂה׳ פוּן קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ וגו׳ וְהִתְקַדִּשְׁתֶּם, קַדֵּשׁ עַצְמְךָ בְּמֻתָּר לָךְ, צוּ הֵיילִיקְן זִיךְ אֲפִילוּ אִין דְּבָרִים הַמּוּתָּרִים, גֵייט עֶס אַרַיְין אוֹיךְ אִין וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת מִשְׁמַרְתִּי - עֲשׂוּ מִשְׁמֶרֶת לְמִשְׁמַרְתִּי.

Pre-Eden and Post-Eden: Where the Differences Lie

4. The proofs from the *Talmud Yerushalmi* and the sin of the Tree of Knowledge can be rebutted as follows: When Adam was in the Garden of Eden, he was a chariot for G-dliness and had no connection to evil. Proof of this is that the Garden of Eden cannot tolerate the existence of evil. Indeed, **for that reason, he could not remain in the Garden of Eden after the sin.**[15]

ד. אוּן דָאס וָואס זֵיי בְּרֶענְגֶען אַ רַאְיָה פוּן דֶעם יְרוּשַׁלְמִי אוּן פוּן חֵטְא עֵץ הַדַּעַת, אִיז דֶער עֶנְטְפֶער אוֹיף דֶעם:

אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן זַיְיעֶנְדִיק אִין גַּן עֵדֶן אִיז גֶעוועֶן אַ מֶרְכָּבָה צוּ אֱלֹקוּת אוּן נִיט גֶעהַאט קֵיין שַׁיְיכוּת צוּ רַע. אַ רַאְיָה אוֹיף דֶעם אִיז, וָוארוּם גַּן עֵדֶן אִיז דָאךְ נִיט סוֹבֵל קֵיין מְצִיאוּת הָרַע (וָואס דֶערְפַאר אִיז נָאךְ דֶעם חֵטְא הָאט עֶר נִיט גֶעקָאנְט זַיְין אִין גַּן עֵדֶן).

Tzadikim, "the righteous," are identified as chariots for G-d's will. Now, **a chariot does nothing other than** follow **the will of the charioteer.**[16] **As such,** in the Garden of Eden – and similarly, regarding totally righteous men in subsequent generations – **fences and safeguards are unnecessary, because there was no concern that one would stumble. On the contrary,** in such a state of holiness, **not only are the fences and safeguards superfluous, they are detrimental.**

אַ מֶרְכָּבָה - אַלְץ וָואס זִי טוּט אִיז דָאס רְצוֹן הָרוֹכֵב. בְּמֵילָא דַארְף מֶען דָארְטְן קֵיין גְּדָרִים וּסְיָגִים נִיט הָאבְּן, וָוארוּם עֶס אִיז נִיטָא קֵיין חֲשַׁשׁ מֶען זָאל נִכְשָׁל וֶוערְן, וְאַדְּרַבָּה, נִיט נָאר וָואס דִי גְּדָרִים וּסְיָגִים זַיְינֶען אִיבֶּעריק, נָאר זֵיי זַיְינֶען נָאךְ אַ חִסָּרוֹן,

When a person **is** no more than **a chariot for G-dliness and all his actions are holy, whenever he engages with any matter, he elevates it, similar to** the elevation of the food achieved by **partaking**

וָוארוּם דֶער וָואס אִיז אַ מֶרְכָּבָה צוּ אֱלֹקוּת, אוּן כָּל עֲשִׂיּוֹתָיו זַיְינֶען קְדוּשָׁה, אִיז בְּשַׁעַת עֶר טוּט אַן עִנְיָן

---

11. ***Tanya,* ch. 30. See *Sefer Chareidim,* the end of the portion** concerning **"positive Scriptural commandments."**

12. *Vayikra* 19:2.

13 Ibid. 11:44, 20:7.

14. See *Rashi* and *Sifri* on *Devarim* 14:21; *Yevamos* 20a.

15. See *Bereishis* 3:22-24.

16. See *Tanya,* ch. 23.

of the sacrifices, eating on *Shabbos*, and the like. Conversely, by refraining from engaging with **a matter, he prevents it from being elevated.** Accordingly, before the sin, when Adam was in the Garden of Eden, additional stringencies were unnecessary. The same applies to totally righteous men. **However, in situations where fences and safeguards are indeed necessary** – i.e., in our present condition, when excessive indulgence in material matters can be spiritually harmful – **they are beneficial.**[17]

אִיז עֶר אִים מַעֲלֶה, אוּן דוּרְךְ דֶעם וָואס עֶר אִיז זִיךְ מוֹנֵעַ פוּן אַן עִנְיָן, אִיז עֶר מוֹנֵעַ אַן עֲלִיָּה, וּבְדוּגְמַת אֲכִילַת קָדָשִׁים, אֲכִילַת שַׁבָּת וכו׳.

דָארְט אָבֶּער וואוּ מֶען דַארְף דִי גְדָרִים וּסְיָגִים יָא הָאבְּן, זַיְינֶען זֵיי אַ מַעֲלָה[ז].

(משיחת ש"פ שלח, תשט"ז)

---

17. **See *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar,* p. 84b,** where the Alter Rebbe explains similar ideas.

א) יבמות כא, א.

ב) רש"י שבת כג, א. וראה רמב"ם ריש הלכות ממרים. בספר המצוות שורש א׳ ומצוות עשה קעד.

ג) ירושלמי ריש פרק ט דנדרים.

ד) סוף קידושין.

ה) דוגמת החילוקים שבאורייתא גופא, תניא פרק כד. וראה נושאי כלי הרמב"ם הלכה ה, וספר המצוות שם.

ו) תניא פרק ל. וראה ספר חרדים סוף חלק מצוות עשה מן התורה.

ז) ראה לקוטי תורה במדבר פד, ב.

CREDITS:

Copyright by Sichos in English

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger
Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg
Translators

Rabbi Sholom Zirkind
Rabbi Zalmy Avtzon
Content Editors

Uriella Sagiv
David Hendler
Copy Editors

Yosef Yitzchok Turner
Typesetting

Spotlight Design
Layout and Cover

Mayer Preger
Advisory Board

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon
Director, Sichos In English

הרה"ת ר' משה יהודה בן ר' צבי יוסף ע"ה
Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky OBM,
whose commitment has brought this sacred initiative to fruition

SIE