

Zera Shimshon

Beha'aloscha

The Zera Shimshon, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachmon Michael Nachmani, was born in 5467 (1706/1707) into an illustrious family with great Rabbinical lineage. He studied the revealed and concealed parts of the Torah by the Torah greats of his day.

He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sayna and Reggio, Italy, and was recognized as a holy and pious individual, as well as a tremendous Torah scholar in all areas of Torah. He passed away on the 6th of Elul 5539 (1779).

His Seforim were named, Toldos Shimshon (The 'Offspring' of Shimshon) on Pirkei Avos and Zera Shimshon (The 'Seed' of Shimshon) on the Parshi'os of the Torah. In his introduction, he explains that since his only son had died during his lifetime, he wrote his Seforim to perpetuate his own memory after his passing.

The following is his passionate request to learn his works.

"I implore of you with ten terms of supplication to choose from my Chiddushim (novella) the piece that finds favor in your eyes, for your learning will sooth my soul etc..."

"This righteousness will stand by you forever – to 'eat' in this world, and be satiated in the next. In this merit, Hashem will repay you with children, health and sustenance.

"...and now my brothers and friends etc. do a true kindness, and with your eyes you will see children and grandchildren surrounding your table, houses filled with all that is good, wealth and honor will not cease from your children..."

לזכר נשמת

רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל

בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

ויה"ר שיתקיימו בנו ברכותיו של אותו צדיק

לזכות חיים דוד בן טייבא חוה להצלחה
וסייעתא דשמיא בכל מעשה ידיו ובכל
הענינים

לרפואה שלימה חיים שאול בן רחל
לאה

לזכות זיווג הגון בקרוב לאה בת שרה
חנה, רינה ברכה בת שרה חנה

לזיווג הגון בקרוב ממש בזכות רבינו
לאלישבע נעמי בת רחל

לרפואה שלימה בזכות רבינו דוד ברוך
בן רחל

לזכר נשמת דוד בן תמר

התאוו תאוה וגו' מי יאכלנו בשר (י"א ד')

Who will feed us meat? (11:4)

The generation of the desert was not allowed to eat meat unless it was part of a Korban. To simply slaughter an animal and eat the meat was not allowed. This is what they were complaining about.

The Zera Shimshon gives two reasons for this prohibition.

The Mishna in Avos (2:7) says, "More meat - more worms." Plainly, this means the more flesh one has - the more he is consumed by worms when he passes away. The Zera Shimshon understands these words more literally - the more one eats meat, the more the worms will have to eat when he passes away. Since the Jews of that generation merits hearing Hashem's voice at Har Sinai, it is unbefitting that their bodies should be eaten by worms. As such, they were not allowed to eat meat which, according to the Zera Shimshon's explanation of the mishna in Avos, is the cause for worms after death. Meat that is part of a korban however, is different, since the sefarim teach write that any food that is consumed as part of a mitzva or on Shabbos does not turn into worms after death. Therefore, the consumption of korban meat was allowed.

Another reason for the generation of the desert not being allowed to eat meat other than that from korbanos is based on the Gemara (Brachos 32a) that say, "A lion only roars from a container of meat". This is a metaphor for the Yetzer Hara. When a person indulges in pleasures (container of meat), he is susceptible to be influenced by the Yetzer Hara (roaring lion). The Jews in the desert had reached a very high level of connection to Hashem at Har Sinai and Hashem did not want them to lose that level. Had they been permitted to indulge in meat other than that sanctified as a korban, they would have become vulnerable to the Yetzer Hara and lost this connection.

In fact, the medrash (Yalkut §733) says that the Jews that complained about not having meat were in reality looking for a way to stray from Hashem. This is why they demanded meat. They knew the reason behind the prohibition and purposely wanted the exact food that would sever this connection.

With this idea the Zera Shimshon explains the passuk that says (Tehillim 22:27), "Eat! Humble one and be satiated." As explained when one eats, especially when one indulges in food, he is in danger of forgetting Hashem and sinning (see Devarim 8:12 and Brachos 32a). However, one who is humble rules over his Yetzer Hara. Therefore, to such an individual exclusively the passuk says, "Eat! Humble one and be satiated", since he can eat and at the same time rule over his evil inclination.

ועתה נפשנו יבשה אין כל (י"א ו')

And now our soul is dry (11:6)

The Zera Shimshon explains this complaint against the Monn as follows.

The Gemara (Shabbos 129a) says that after one does bloodletting he should eat meat and drink red wine. Red wine specifically had natural properties that are beneficial for the blood. The Jews complaint about the Monn was that although it tasted like whatever they wanted it to, it lacked the natural benefits of the food they had in mind, pointing to the fact that Monn was white (see Devarim 1:1).

This though, was a fundamental mistake in their understanding of the real natural properties of the Monn. The Gemara (Kesubos 111b) that one who 'whitens his teeth' at his friend (smiles at him) gives him more by doing so, than had he given him a glass of milk. Meaning that although milk is healthy and a smile does not contain the natural health benefits of milk, nevertheless, one profits more from receiving a smile than a glass of milk.

The Zera Shimshon writes that the Monn was 'a smile' from Hashem and therefore, although it may have seemed to lack certain natural properties beneficial for health, this was 'Hashem's smile' and therefore contained a lot more in it than any food!