

Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch
Ohr Torah
Parshas Mishpatim

"The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God."	"רֵאשִׁית בְּכוּרֵי אֲדָמָתְךָ תָּבִיא בֵּית ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ"
For a person has three stages in his years:	כי יש באדם ג' זמנים בשנים שלו
First, the years of youth, when he follows after his desires.	א' שני נערות שהולך אחר תאוות
Second, the middle years of a person, when he is not so drawn to the desires of this world.	ב' שנים אמצעים של אדם שאין בהם כל כך תאוות עוה"ז
Third, the years of old age, when he has no desires at all.	ג' שני הזקנה שאין לו תאוות כלל
The reason for this is that there are three partners in a person: the father, the mother, and the Holy One, blessed be He.	והטעם לזה לפי שג' שותפין יש באדם, אב ואם והקדוש ברוך הוא
This is the secret: A man has a desire for a woman because he has within him a portion from his mother, which is feminine.	ודבר זה הוא הסוד שאיש יש לו תאוות אשה, לפי שיש בו חלק האם שהיא נוקבא
And a woman has a desire for a man because she has within her a portion from her father, which is masculine.	ואשה יש לה תאוות איש לפי שיש לה חלק אב שהוא דכר
This is the meaning of the verse: "And in sin my mother conceived me" (Tehillim 51:7) —	וזוהו פי' הפסוק "וּבְחַטָּא יִחַמְתַּנִּי אִמִּי" (תהילים), (נא:ז)
meaning, the portion from my mother that is within me brought me to this action.	פי' החלק של אמי שיש [בי] הביאני לידי מעשה זו.
And let us return to the first matter: since a person has the three aforementioned partners,	ונחזור לענין ראשון, לפי שיש באדם ג' שותפין ה' הנז
therefore, in the years of youth, a person has many desires due to the portion of the mother within him.	ולכן בשני הנערות יש [לן] לאדם תאוות רבות מצד חלק האם שיש בו
In the middle years, he does not have as many desires, because the portion of the mother within him has already diminished.	ובשנים אמצעיים אין בו תאוות כל כך לפי שכבר, כלה חלק האם שבו
However, he still has desires due to the portion of the father within him.	אבל עם כל זה יש לו עוד תאוות מצד חלק האב שבו

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But in old age, he has no desires at all, for he is then under the portion of the Holy One, blessed be He.	אבל בימי הזקנה אין לו תאוות כלל לפי שהוא חלק הקדוש ברוך הוא
Thus, if a person refrains from desires in old age, this is not remarkable.	נמצא כי מה שאדם פרוש מתאוות בימי הזקנה אין זה רבואתא
But if a person refrains from desires in the days of youth, when he still has the portions of both father and mother within him, this is a great virtue.	אבל אם אדם פרוש מתאוות בימי הבהרות, בזמן שיש בו עדיין חלק אב ואם, זו היא מעלה גדולה
This is the meaning of the verse: "The first of the first fruits of your land"—meaning, in the days of youth,	וזהו פי' הפסוק ראשית בכורי אדמתך, ר"ל בימי הבהרות
"You shall bring to the house of the Lord your God."	תביא בית ה' אלקיך
"You shall not cook a kid" (<i>gedi</i>)— <i>gedi</i> has the same letters as <i>giyd</i> (sinew),	לא תבשל גדי", [גדי] הוא אותיות גי"ד
"in its mother's milk"—meaning, through the portion of the mother within him, he separated from desires.	בחלב אמו, ר"ל ע"י חלק הא"ם שבו פירש מתאוות
(And even though what I will now write is not a direct continuation of these words,	[ואף שאין המשך לדברים אלו [שאכתוב]
nevertheless, I will write the wording [alternative version: in the wording] in which I heard it.)	עם כל זה אכתוב הלשון [נ"א: ובלשון] ששמעתי [זו היא
And in this too, there is a secret regarding meat in milk, as mentioned.	וגם בזה הוא סוד בשר בחלב כנזכר
Since the <i>giyd</i> (sinew) consists only of flesh.	לפי שהגיד אין בו רק בשר
This is also why the covenant of speech (<i>brit halashon</i>) and the covenant of circumcision (<i>brit hamaor</i>) are one secret,	וזהו ג"כ שברית הלשון וברית המעור הם סוד אחד
for both of them consist only of flesh.	לפי שבשניהם אין בהם רק בשר
This is the secret of why the term <i>brit</i> (covenant) is repeatedly mentioned in " <i>Your covenant in your flesh,</i> "	וזה סוד מה שנזכר כמה פעמים לשון ברית, בבשרכם
for in these covenants, there is only flesh.	לפי שאין בבריתות הנזכר רק בשר
(However, the true secret alluded to in this verse—I do not recall.)	אבל הסוד האמיתי המרומז בפסוק הנזכר (זה) [איני זוכר]

[NOTE: Expounding on the Text: This passage explores a deep spiritual concept about human desires, their sources, and the significance of self-restraint, particularly in one's

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youth. It draws upon the three partners in the creation of a person—the father, the mother, and God—and explains how they influence a person's desires throughout life.

1. The Three Phases of Life and Desire:
 - In youth, a person is dominated by the influence of their mother's portion (representing femininity and physicality), leading to strong earthly desires.
 - In middle age, the influence of the mother's portion lessens, but the father's portion (representing masculinity and structure) still creates desires.
 - In old age, when a person is closer to God's portion, desires fade entirely.
1. The key idea here is that self-restraint in old age is not an achievement, because natural biological forces diminish. However, restraining oneself in youth, when both the maternal and paternal influences are strong, is a great spiritual accomplishment.
2. Interpreting "The First of the First Fruits":
 - The Torah commands bringing the "first fruits" (*bikurim*) to God. The text interprets this allegorically: the "first" represents youth, the time of peak physical strength and desire.
 - Just as a farmer brings his first and best produce to God, a person should dedicate the strength of their youth to spiritual service.
1. The Prohibition of Cooking a Kid in Its Mother's Milk:
 - The phrase "*You shall not cook a kid (gedi) in its mother's milk*" is connected to the Hebrew word *giyd* (sinew).
 - The text suggests that the mother's portion within a person (representing physical desires) should not "cook" or overpower the person's spirituality.
 - The deeper meaning: true greatness is when a person separates from their desires while still young, rather than allowing them to dominate.
1. The Secret of the Two Covenants (Bris Halashon and Bris Hamaor):
 - The passage connects two sacred aspects: speech (bris halashon) and circumcision (bris hamaor).
 - Both are covenants (bris) involving flesh, representing the refinement of both physical and verbal expression.
 - Just as circumcision symbolizes sanctity in physicality, proper speech symbolizes sanctity in communication.
 - The idea is that spiritual discipline should extend to both the body and the tongue, reinforcing the Torah's emphasis on ethical speech and physical holiness.
1. The Repeated Mention of Covenant in Flesh:

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- The Torah often mentions “*Your covenant in your flesh*”, emphasizing that the human body itself carries a divine mission.
- The text hints at a deeper mystery (which the author admits he does not fully recall) related to how these physical covenants reflect divine realities.

Practical Takeaway (PT):

- Give your best to God while you are young. Just as the first fruits are dedicated to the Temple, the strongest years of life should be used for spiritual growth.
- Holiness is about restraint. True spiritual achievement is not merely avoiding desires when they fade, but choosing restraint when they are strongest.
- Sanctify both body and speech. The Torah’s emphasis on *bris* (covenant) teaches that both our actions and words should reflect holiness.
- Don’t let the “mother’s milk” (physicality) dominate the “kid” (spiritual potential). Learn to channel physical energy toward growth rather than indulgence.