

The parsha starts off וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל רָאשֵׁי הַמָּטוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' This פסוק is different from most of the other דברות that משה רבינו was given, in two significant ways. Usually it's וידבר משה or וידבר ה' וידבר משה אל בני ישראל or אל משה לאמר. But here, he's talking to the ראשי המטות, which is very unusual. The second aspect is זֶה הַדָּבָר, which is a very חשובה לשון as רש"י points out immediately. משה רבינו uses the לשון of זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה', while the other נביאים said ה' אמר לך to tell you that Moshe's level of נבואה was on a significantly higher מדרגה. But if we think about it for a second, that's not the usual syntax of the פסוקים elsewhere in the Torah. What would have made more sense, to stay consistent with other פסוקים? It would have said: וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות לבני ישראל, זה הדבר אשר צוה השם לאמר. That's the usual format. But here, the לאמר comes before הַדָּבָר. What is that telling us?

The תורה, whose יארצייט was this past week, the Lutzker Rav, Zalman Sorotzkin זצ"ל, has a very detailed and important lesson to be taught about the significance of the human being, and how our ability to speak makes us the pinnacle and highlight of מַעֲשֵׂה בְרָאשִׁית. He explains that the order is different from the norm so you can read it: לֵאמֹר - to say, זֶה הַדָּבָר. In other words, the זֶה הַדָּבָר is part of what you have to say. That's why the לאמר comes before it. לֵאמֹר, you have to say, זֶה הַדָּבָר. The ראשי המטות have to tell ישראל בני not only the נדרים of דינים but, זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה'. You have to know all the הלכות of נדרים, but that's because this is זה הדבר. Exactly in the same way that you know that eating שְׂקִיצִים, נבילות וטריפות, every other מצוה in the Torah that were given as a ציווי השם, in exactly the same way, when you make a נדר, you have to follow all of the rules that הקדוש ברוך הוא gave you for the הלכות of קונם נדר, the whole מסכתא of נדרים.

And that's why by נדרים it says זה הדבר. What is it telling you? This is חשוב. When you talk, when you open your mouth, you got to remember this is your power that השם gave you. Watch how you talk. The דיבור of an אדם can change everything. The דיבור of an אדם, your power of speech, can take something that's מותר and make it אסור. The Torah emphasizes this because it's so hard for us to understand that. "What do you mean? We know the lot of חוקים, but my simple speech can say that this thing before was מותר is now אסור?" That is an astounding חידוש.

This piece of מאכל was totally permitted, but if I say קונם עלי, then it becomes אסור to me. What does that mean? A בשר חזיר can be מזיק a person's נשמה. But if someone makes a נדר and says that this thing, which was previously מותר, is now אסור to me, it's מזיק to his נשמה in exactly the same way as חזיר would be. It creates טמטום הלב. If somebody eats something that's not kosher, it's מטמם him. We know countless stories where kids weren't doing well in Yeshiva, it turns out they had something that was not allowed to be eaten. It's נוגע to the נשמה.

Why did this need to be said to the ראשי המטות? What's the lesson to be learned from that? Who's a ראש? Somebody who's chosen or who elected to be a נשיא, became a leader. But what does that mean? It's a very nice title. President, להבדיל, governor, mayor. Is it a title? Or does it have a הלכתית status? The answer is yes, the title of נשיא has a הלכתית status. He has to bring a different קרבן if he does an עבירה. He brings a שעיר on his חטאת. Everybody else has to have to have כבוד for him. You're not allowed to go against his word. אסור להמרות את פיו. And certainly you can't be מקלל a נשיא.

So we see that the מהות, the actual existence of a נשיא is on a different level, a different מדרגה, from another person. So that is part of this זה הדבר. What is that זה הדבר telling you? That your דיבור, your human input, has the ability to מקדש everything. If you want to take this דומם and you want to be מקדש this to בית הבית, now it has קדושה. Why? Because you said so. If you say I'm מקדש this to בית הבית. If you harvest your field, take off a שטיקל grain and say "This is תרומה, it's now תרומה. If a זר eats that, חייב כרת. So you can take a דומם and make it be קדוש. You can take a צומח and make it קדוש.



And you can take an animal and say, הרי זו עולה, it is now an עולה, if you say הרי זו שלמים, it's a שלמים. It has קדושים קלים, קדשי קדושה, קדושה, whatever it is. And a person can also have that ability. If he's a נשיא, his level of קדושה goes up. So we have the ability to change the טבע of the world from the lowest to the highest. And that is the power of דיבור. So let us be a little bit more respectful of our power of our tongue.

Of course, this is a message that connects to being careful with ניבול פה, רכילות, לשון הרע, and all the עבירות we're already familiar with. But this idea sheds new light on it. It tells us that we are truly elevated. We have the potential to become elevated, if we remember this power, if we keep track, and if we try to become better people, not only in our מעשים טובים, but even in our דיבור.

