

Inspirations from the Haftarah-The Frum Yetzer Harah

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

In the Haftarah for Parshas Behaaosch we come across the verse from Zecahriah 3:1 which reads, 'and he showed me Yehoshua he Kohen Gadol before an angel of Hashem and the Satan was standing at his right to accuse him. Yehoshua was the Kohen Gadol at the time of the rebuilding of the second Bais Hamikdash. He was a Tzaddik but his sons had married gentile women as was tragically a major problem at that time. These daughters-in-law were a stain on his otherwise record of righteousness. This is what Satan had on him. The language of Satan being on the right is rather noteworthy. The Chofetz Chaim points out that Saatan and the yetzer harah, the evil inclination are one and the same as we are told by Chazal. Generally, right is associated with good and left with evil. This is true in many other cultures as well. As a matter of fact the world sinister in English which means dark and evil is derived from the 'on the left'. We know that left-handedness was looked at negatively till relatively recently in Western culture. It is known how even in America in the 1800's and perhaps still today in some places, children are trained to write with their right hand even if they are left handed by nature.

In Meclachim 22 we find the Navi talking to King Achav and states that he saw Hashem's court with the angles on the left and on the right of the throne. Rashi asks on how we understand left and right by Hashem since he is non physical and the idea of sides is not applicable. He explains right means judging in favor and left means judging against.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that Satan will often use the Torah itself to mislead people. Very often he will urge people to be so careful in the performance of mitzvos that in the end he/she just gives up wanting to do the ratzon Hashem due to strain of unnecessary caution. He may push one to learn well into the night and as a result, miss davening with a minyan the next morning. Therefore it is imperative that make sure all of our good intentions really are *leshaim shamayim* and coming for the yetzer tov and not chas veshalom, the yetzer harah. The yetzer hara can even be very 'frum' to suit his purpose of leading us down the wrong path.