

Devarim

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Hilula

8 - Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi, Rav of Jaffa

9 - Rabbi Bentzion Moshe Yair Weinstock

10 - Yissachar son of Ya'akov Avinu a"h

11 - Rabbi Moshe Malka, Rosh Yeshiva 'Dhel Moshe'

12 - Rabbi Chaim Kohen Perachia, the 'milkman'

13 - Rabbi Natan Neta Shapira, author of 'Megaleh Amukot'

14 - Rabbi Mordechai Bardugo, the Marbitz

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy" a



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

The Yetzer Hara – Both Brother and Foe

"You shall command the people, saying, 'You are passing through the boundary of your brothers the children of Esav, who dwell in Seir; they will fear you, but you should be very careful'" (Devarim 2:4)

Moshe Rabbeinu warned Am Yisrael when they cross the border of Seir they must be careful not to provoke the children of Esav. They should also be particular to pay for any food and drink they take from them. It seems surprising that Moshe Rabbeinu calls the children of Esav, "your brothers." Do not Chazal say (Sifri, Beha'alotcha 69), It is a rule that Esav hates Ya'akov and constantly seeks to kill him? So why did Moshe see fit to call them brothers, a term symbolizing peace and unity?

Chazal say (Kiddushin 30b), Hashem created the Yetzer Hara and counter to it created the Torah, a remedy for the ailments of the Yetzer Hara. In Hashem's eyes, the existence of the Yetzer Hara in This World is essential, for without it man would not have free choice whether to follow the path of good or evil; he would be drawn only to the good. It is only in the merit of the Yetzer Hara who tries to influence a person to take the path of evil, that man is faced with the choice whether to obey it and pursue evil or follow Hashem and His Torah and thereby earn reward.

Man's reward in the World to Come grows in accordance with the enormity of the test he withstands. And the stronger a person's desire to overcome his Yetzer Hara, the more Hashem helps him, for one who wishes to purify himself is assisted (Shabbat 104a). The more a person studies Torah while in Yeshiva, the greater is his protection from the Yetzer Hara even when he leaves its gates, since the Torah he studied continues to accompany and protect him when he comes face to face with the Yetzer Hara.

This is what Hashem said to Moshe (Devarim 2:3): "Enough of your circling this mountain; turn yourselves northward." Meaning, until now you sat round the mountain and engaged in Torah, until the place became sanctified through your Torah study and was considered like a Yeshiva, a place designated for studying the Holy Torah. The Yetzer Hara already learnt that in this dwelling place of yours around the mountain, he has no power to make you stumble because your Torah protects you, so he is afraid to start up with you. But if you want to double your reward and strengthen yourselves in Torah in a more intense fashion, you must travel away from this place, while holding on to the Torah, and turn northward to the place where the Yetzer Hara is found, called 'tzafon – north' (Succah 52a), which can also mean hidden, as the Yetzer Hara is very underhand... Only when you journey away from the protective walls of the Yeshiva, does the battle with the Yetzer Hara become difficult and more acute. But then, if you are victorious, your reward grows in proportion, for the greater the test, the greater reward you receive in return.

Esav represents the Yetzer Hara, therefore Moshe told Bnei Yisrael they shouldn't think they can kill the Yetzer Hara or terminate his presence, because This World is also the dwelling place of the Yetzer Hara, as per Hashem's wish.

In fact, This World belongs more to the Yetzer Hara than to man, for Ya'akov and Esav made a clear allocation between them: This World belongs to Esav while the World to Come belongs to Ya'akov, the pillar of Torah. Since it is impossible to completely rid This World of the Yetzer Hara, one should treat him as a brother who occupies the same house. A brother one does not send away, but we must defeat him through studying the Holy Torah, for when the voice is the voice of Ya'akov, the hands of Esav are not capable of overcoming those who study Torah.

The more a person prevails over his Yetzer Hara, the more he elevates himself. But at the same time one must always remember the Yetzer Hara does not disappear completely; he only changes his form and place and one can never know how and when he will surprise us. The power of the Yetzer Hara grows outside the walls of the Beit Hamidrash, therefore when one closes ones Gemara and leaves the study halls, one must continue to engage one's head and thoughts in words of Torah, then the power of Torah will stand for him to overcome the Yetzer Hara and thereby increasing his reward.

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu called the children of Seir "brothers." Even though one must be vigilant of them and their influence, nevertheless it is only through them that the power of free choice exists in the world, and if one succeeds in defeating them one is granted great reward.

Moshe Rabbeinu also added (Devarim 2:6), "You shall purchase food from them for money so you may eat; also water shall you buy from them for money so you may drink." "Kesef – money" is derived from the term "kisufin – longing", as David Hamelech expressed (Tehillim 84:3), "My soul yearns, indeed it pines, for the courtyards of Hashem." The Jewish soul longs and yearns to cleave to the Holy Torah which is more valuable than all the silver and gold in the world. So if we are to defeat the children of Esav who are compared to the Yetzer Hara, we must possess a longing for the Holy Torah, for it is only with the power of the Torah that man can overcome the Yetzer Hara.

It follows then that the Yetzer Hara is both a brother and a foe. On the one hand it entails great danger to a person's spiritual state, but on the other hand without it the world cannot exist. And in its merit man has free choice and can elevate himself in Torah and yirat Shamayim, if he knows how to protect himself from it and emerge victorious. The choice is in our hands – whether to succumb to the counsel of the Yetzer Hara, or fight against it through Torah study. And Hashem assists those who choose to fight against the Yetzer Hara and subdue it.



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Cushioning Tragedy with Blessing

When I visited Poland in 1994, I was accompanied by the chazzan of the Aleppo Beit Haknesset, Mr. Meir Abadi, together with a female relative. He related that this woman's son had been involved in a horrific car accident and was lying in a hospital bed, unconscious. The doctors did not have much hope for his recovery.

When I heard this story, I instructed Mr. Abadi and his relative to go down to the ground floor of the building we were in and recite Tehillim on behalf of this young man for the next fifteen minutes. After that they should return to my room. In the merit of Tehillim said with a broken heart, my holy ancestors zy" a would serve as advocates for the boy before Hashem.

They did as I suggested. When they came back up, I handed the chazzan a piece of paper on which I had written a blessing. I told him to hurry to the hospital and place the paper under the boy's pillow.

The chazzan did not believe he would be allowed to approach the boy who lay in intensive care, but he went anyway. Divine intervention was at play, opening all doors before him. Within a short time, the paper was under the boy's pillow.

A few hours later the miracle occurred. The boy opened his eyes and asked for a drink. After a short time, he was transferred to a regular ward. With Hashem's kindness, he merited a complete recovery.

I am often overwhelmed by the power of pure faith. But many times, the Satan is involved and one may find the more one prays, the more problems arise. The main thing is not to despair of Heavenly mercy and continue praying and hoping for Hashem's salvation.

The Haftarah

"The vision of Yeshayahu" (Yeshaya 1)

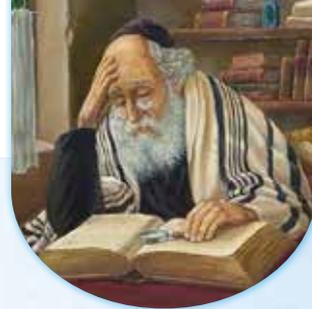
The connection to Shabbat: The Haftarah speaks about the punishment that will befall Bnei Yisrael due to their sins – the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. This is the third of the three special Haftarat Chazal established to be read during the three weeks leading up to Tisha B'Av.

Guard Your Tongue

Lashon Hara from an Educator

An educator often has to discuss his students' progress and challenges with the parents, other teachers or principal. A lack of clear guidelines as to what constitutes lashon hara can lead to a permissive atmosphere where everything is discussed with everyone. We may also come across the other extreme, in which the educational efficiency of the instructor is impaired due to a simplistic approach of guarding one's tongue.

As a general rule, one can say that matters concerning education are considered as beneficial speech which permits discussing a student's shortcomings with relevant parties. However, one must be particular to observe the conditions that permit speaking lashon hara for a beneficial purpose.



In Our Father's Path

Sincere Crying and Pleading Versus Unjustified Crying

On the verse (Bamidbar 14:1), "The entire assembly raised up and issued its voice; the people wept that night" Chazal expound (Ta'anit 29a): Rava said Rabbi Yochanan said, that day was Tisha B'Av. Hashem said to them, 'You wept without a cause, I will establish [this night] for you [as a time of] weeping throughout the generations!'

The root of the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and source of our long, bitter exile, explains the Maggid, HaGaon Rabbi Elimelech Biderman shlit" a, is a lack of faith. Their needless crying demonstrated they had complaints against Hashem. Since they blemished their complete faith that Hashem is with them always in every situation, the terrible Churban came about.

This teaches us that one of the main rectifications regarding the Churban must be strengthening our faith in Hashem, the Merciful Father, who seeks our good at every moment, and not give in to unjustified crying. Even though strengthening our faith is a lifelong effort and there is no moment one is not obligated to implant complete faith deep inside, nevertheless during these days when we are mourning the Churban whose root is unwarranted crying, we should put extra focus on this service.

The following story took place one Tisha B'Av during the Holocaust, related by the granddaughter of HaGaon Rabbi Hillel of Kalmia zy" a. Like thousands of our brethren, she was separated from her mother and husband and sent to one of the camps. On Tisha B'Av morning, the Nazis ordered all the inmates to stand at attention in the courtyard. It was a clear day with nary a cloud in sight.

The wicked Nazis ym" sh instructed them to sit down on the ground, covered with jagged, sharp stones which pierced their legs. They then treated them to a 'performance' by the best of their musicians, deliberately delighting in upsetting them with music on this bitter day of Tisha B'Av.

This woman could not bear the great humiliation and cried out from the depths of her heart: "Father in Heaven! Do not act for my sake, not even for the sake of Your people Yisrael, but for the sake of Your honor. Open up the heavens and pour down heavy rain which will end this terrible desecration of Your Name."

Within a few moments, dark clouds appeared in the skies. Hashem opened up the heavens and heavy rain began to fall. The wicked Nazis took themselves and their instruments and bolted. The Jews sighed in relief and were able to return to their barracks. The woman related that during the entire period of the war, this incident was a great source of strength for her and fortified her belief that our Father, our Shepherd, is watching over us every step of the way. She saw how despite the great concealment, Hashem listens to the pleas of those who cry out to Him.



Pearls of the Parsha

One Repeats Something Important

"These are the words Moshe spoke to all Israel, on the other side of the Jordan" (Devarim 1:1)

The Book of Devarim is also called Mishna Torah – a repetition of the Torah, since before his death Moshe Rabbeinu repeated the entire Torah to Am Yisrael.

Why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to repeat the entire Torah before his death? No doubt during their forty years of wandering in the Wilderness Moshe Rabbeinu reviewed the Torah with Bnei Yisrael. And even if there is benefit in an additional review of the Torah, why did it have to be written anew in the Book of Devarim?

HaGaon Hatzadik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlit" a answers this question: Hashem wanted to teach Am Yisrael that a Jew merits understanding the Torah and observing its mitzvot appropriately only when he reviews his learning time after time without interruption. For when one reviews and repeats something, it demonstrates appreciation for it. Something one does not like or appreciate, one does not repeat; something important and valuable one repeats again and again.

If someone wishes the Torah to penetrate his heart and become an inseparable part of him, he must review "These are the words." In this way he demonstrates appreciation for the Torah and will merit the Torah being absorbed into his bones.

Whatever I Have is as Precious as Gold

"Between Paran and Tophel, and Lavan, and Chazerot, and Di-zahav" (Devarim 1:1)

Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zy" a in his sefer the Holy Ohr Hachaim, brings several explanations on this verse. On the words "And Di-zahav" [lit. abundance of gold] he expounds, "One should not enthusiastically pursue things that seem important to one who loves the fortunes of This World, for one who follows his heart's desires will nullify his avodat Hashem. Man must be satisfied with just the essentials, alluded to by the words "Di-zahav", meaning he should say 'enough' to gold.

He also offers a different explanation, "He should consider all he has as sufficient, as if he possesses much gold, in line with the Mishna (Avot 4:1), 'Who is rich? He who is happy with his lot.' In this way he will turn his heart to the lofty service of Hashem, the Living G-d."

Rebuke Before Death is Considered as a Will

"It was in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first of the month" (Devarim 1:3)

Rashi explains that Moshe only rebuked Bnei Yisrael close to his death. Who did he learn this from? From Ya'akov who only rebuked his children just before his death. We find that Yehoshua, Shmuel and David also followed this conduct.

Rashi adds there are four reasons why one only offers rebuke close to one's death. One reason is so he should not find himself rebuking and repeating the rebuke.

The difficulty is however, that to the contrary, the verse says "הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ – You shall reprove your fellow" (Vayikra 19:17) and Chazal explain the double expression signifies one should rebuke even one hundred times.

The Oznaim L'Torah explains there is a difference between rebuke given by a father to his son or Rav to his talmid, and rebuke offered to one's fellow.

Particularly regarding a fellow Jew there is an obligation to rebuke even one hundred times, but with a father and son or Rav and talmid, where the son is obligated to honor his father and the talmid is obligated to honor his Rav, we are afraid that if the father/Rav rebukes his son/talmid repeatedly, they will grow accustomed to not listening and begin to consider the prohibited act as something permissible, as is the case when a transgression is repeated. This is why a father and Rav should not rebuke repeatedly.

However, the time before the passing of a father or Rav, is a beneficial opportunity to offer rebuke. These parting words are considered like a will and are generally taken to heart more than regular rebuke.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon
Hatzadik Rabbi David Chananya
Pinto, shlita



Torah Has the Power to Protect from Sin

Parshat Devarim usually falls close to Tisha B'Av, the day the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed. The inherent connection between Parshat Devarim and Tisha B'Av lies in the fact that since Am Yisrael were not particular about engaging in the Holy Torah, as a result they stumbled with the sin of lashon hara. This led to baseless hatred, the Shechina was exiled from their presence and they were exiled from their land (see Yoma 9b). This teaches us an important lesson. Torah has the power to protect man from sin and enables him to guard the purity of his mouth. However, when man is lax in using his mouth for Torah study, he begins to use it for secular matters and quickly deteriorates from bad to worse, stumbling with the prohibitions of lashon hara, motzi shem ra, false oaths and other similar sins.

We know that when Hashem offered the Torah to Bnei Yisrael, they declared (Shemot 24:7), "we will do and we will obey." This means they wholeheartedly accepted upon themselves to study and observe the words of the Holy Torah, even before they knew what it entailed. In fact, since Bnei Yisrael's declaration was like an oath, as their offspring we are obligated to abide by this oath and not G-d forbid desecrate it, so as not to transgress the command (Bamidbar 30:3), "he shall not desecrate his word."

The Navi tells us (Yirmiyahu 34:8-22) that in the time of king Tzidkiyahu Am Yisrael observed the Torah law and released their servants in the seventh year. However, shortly thereafter they changed their minds and took their servants back. When Hashem saw Bnei Yisrael profaning the Torah law and even going back on their own words, He punished them for this, measure for measure and brought about that they too became slaves to the nations of the world.

This demonstrates the severity of profaning the words of the Holy Torah. Bnei Yisrael added to their sin by not only disregarding the Torah law, but also desecrating their words. Despite at first deciding to release the servants, they changed their minds and quickly brought them back. Since Hashem saw His sons were profaning His and their own words, He decided to punish them with the full severity of the law and therefore destroyed the Beit Hamikdash and exiled them from their Land.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Learn How to Rebuke

As part of Moshe's rebuke he mentioned "Di-zahav", referring to the act of making the Golden Calf. "Moshe said to Hashem: The abundance of silver and gold You gave Am Yisrael until they said enough, caused them to make the Golden Calf" (Yalkut Shimoni remez 797).

It seems the essence of this rebuke is Moshe declaring Am Yisrael not guilty. Rather, it was the abundance of gold that led them to make the Golden Calf!

Our great Sages were always particular to observe the mitzvah of "You shall reprove your fellow", but at the same time they preserved the honor of those on the receiving end and also ensured others would not humiliate them.

Our Sages said (Yoma 9b): "Why was the second Beit Hamikdash destroyed? Because of baseless hatred." There was hatred among them and they were not prepared to forgo to one another. They were not wise enough to understand that the one who forgoes and forgives gains the most!

The Gaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Ohr HaChaim' and one of the greatest machzirei b'teshuva of our generation – who studied well the halachos and details of the mitzvah of rebuke – enlightens us in his sefer Mishkani Acharecha with several points to take into account concerning this mitzvah. He begins by stressing that the timing of the rebuke must also be chosen with the utmost care.

First of all, we must know there are times unsuitable for rebuke. The Mishna says (Avot 4:18): "Do not appease your fellow in the time of his anger." Sometimes a person makes belligerent statements: "I will not allow them... I will take this till the bitter end..." And those around try to stop him: "What do you think you are doing?" But one must be

aware that "anger lingers in the bosom of fools" (Kohelet 7:9). At this moment one is forbidden to rebuke; anything said will be of no benefit at all. No rebuke in the world enters the heart of one who is angry. One must give him time to calm down, to drink a cup of coffee and have a bite of cake, and only once he is relaxed and satisfied can one begin speaking to him.

Even then, one must act wisely and first begin with light conversation. Ask him how his child is doing in the Talmud Torah. Is everything okay with him? Hashem is so kind to you. How many children are on the streets, and you Hashem blessed with diamonds! He must love you dearly! And then by the way to slip in, "...about what happened yesterday, I know you are certain so and so is guilty, but..." and so forth, with wisdom and intuition. But not when he is angry, for then nothing will help.

Offering rebuke is one of the hardest things. Moshe Rabbeinu did not rebuke Am Yisrael the entire forty years they wandered in the Wilderness for good reasons. Sometimes we are shocked to see people doing certain things, but before rebuking them harshly it is advisable to speak to them and try and understand what brought them to act in this way. Sometimes the responses are surprising and totally unexpected!

The Flowers will Live and You Will Die?

As a bachur, relates HaGaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlit"a, one Shabbat I was at my parent's home in Teveria. Leaving the Beit Knesset Shabbat morning, I noticed one of the congregants who had prayed with us watering his garden. I was shocked. A Jew who prays in the Beit Knesset watering his garden on Shabbat?!

I could have shouted at him: "Fool! You deserve to be stoned! You are watering your garden on Shabbat!" But G-d forbid! This is not the way to rebuke!

I passed by and called out: "Shabbat Shalom! It was so nice to see you in the Beit Knesset!"

He smiled and returned my greeting. And I continued gently: "Do you know, there is a law concerning watering on Shabbat... It is comparable to sowing on Shabbat."

He immediately replied: "G-d forbid. I know it is forbidden to sow, I am just watering... The unfortunate flowers, in this heat, forty degrees, they can wither... I am not doing anything, just watering them a bit so they shouldn't die..."

He spoke with such innocence; I could not believe my ears... He was certain he was strictly observing the Shabbat. He goes to the Beit Knesset, makes Kiddush, eats cholent, and only waters the flowers a bit so they shouldn't perish...

I told him: "Do you want the flowers to live while you yourself may die?"

He invited me inside to explain further. I accepted his invitation and began speaking to him. It turned out he had no idea it was forbidden to water on Shabbat. "Believe me, I had no idea!" he apologized. "I am Shabbat observant and do not even use electricity. I had no idea about this prohibition..."

We studied the relevant laws and he thanked me greatly. He eventually understood that it was a forbidden act but I gave over everything pleasantly, not in a way that would have caused him to react: "You don't tell me what to do!" How did I achieve this? Because my first reaction was to greet him respectfully with 'Shabbat Shalom'!

When we know how to speak to those who are far from the truth and treat them with honor and love, we merit drawing them closer. There is no doubt, there are many ways to offer rebuke, but we have found rebuke presented in this fashion is more easily accepted and successful. The Jews we come into contact with are not heretics, they are Jews who are lacking knowledge but possess faith that is dormant in their hearts and only needs awakening. "Should you wake or rouse the love" (Shir HaShirim 2:7).