

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת עקא עדנה  
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל  
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# על דשא

## AL E I DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

## Teshuvah in Adar

עברו ושובו משער לשער במחנה.

*Let every man pass back and forth from gate to gate in the camp* (Shemos 32:27).

Moshe Rabbeinu instructs Shevet Levi to punish the Yidden

Stop focusing on  
“yes Gehinnom, no  
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who worshipped the *eigel*. My father explained<sup>1</sup> that שובו alludes to *teshuvah*, and משער לשער alludes to *yiras Shamayim*, which is called the gateway to Torah (Shabbos 31b). Moshe Rabbeinu was not merely disciplining Klal Yisrael; he was trying to persuade them to do *teshuvah*. Why does it say *shaar* twice, משער לשער? The second *shaar* represents the gateway that comes after *yiras Shamayim*—the gateway of *ahavah*. When is the time for *ahavah*?

The time for *teshuvah me'ahavah* is now, in Chodesh Adar.<sup>2</sup>

From the times of Ezra Hasofer, it was customary to translate while reading from the Torah, so that the people would understand what was being read.<sup>3</sup> After each pasuk was read, the translator would read aloud the *targum* of that pasuk (Megillah 23b). However, certain *parshios*, such as the episode of Reuven and Bilhah, were not translated, so as not to disgrace those involved in the story (Megillah 25a). Yet this exception was not universal. The Mishnah tells us that the story of the *eigel* was read and translated. The Gemara asks: Isn't this obvious? Why shouldn't the story be translated? The Gemara answers that we would have thought it appropriate to cover over the shameful act of Klal Yisrael; yet we don't, because the opposite is true—we would rather shame them and atone for their sin.

My father asked, what does the Gemara mean that the opposite is true? The point that the Gemara made originally still stands—it is a *bizayon* for Klal Yisrael! Yet we would rather go through *bizyonos* and receive a *kapparah*. Why didn't the Gemara say simply that

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## Real Stalwarts

והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים בכל דור ודור.

*These days should be remembered and celebrated in every generation* (Esther 9:28).

The pasuk tells us that the days of Purim must be both remembered (*zechirah*) and celebrated (*asiyah*). We *remember* Purim by reading the Megillah, and we *celebrate* by fulfilling the mitzvos of the day. There is another way that we remember Purim, and that is by reading *Parshas Zachor*. Haman was a descendent of Amalek, and by reading the *parshah* of Amalek, we are remembering the days of Purim. The Gemara (Megillah 30a) tells us that we must first *remember* and afterwards *celebrate*—the pasuk is prescribing a specific order. This is why we read the *parshah* of Amalek the week before Purim: first we remember, and then afterwards we celebrate by doing the mitzvos.

When Purim falls on Erev Shabbos, this is not so simple. Shushan Purim will be Shabbos. Do we still read *Parshas Zachor* the week before Purim? Or maybe we read it on Shabbos—which is itself Purim. There is a *machlokes* in the Gemara about this. Rav says that we must read *Zachor* the week before, so that we remember before we celebrate. Shmuel says that we read *Zachor* on Shushan

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1 Pnei Menachem pg. 206, 218.

2 Sfas Emes Shekalim 5631, 5639, Likutim to Rosh Chodesh Adar.

3 Rambam Hilchos Tefillah 12:10.

# Teshuvah in Adar

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despite the *bizayon*, we prefer to translate to receive a *kapparah*?

Here we see the power of *teshuvah me'ahavah*. The Gemara (Yoma 86a) tells us that *teshuvah me'ahavah* uproots the original *aveirah* and transforms it into a mitzvah.<sup>4</sup> The *Chasam Sofer* writes<sup>5</sup> that if someone eats *neveilah* and then does *teshuvah me'ahavah*, each *kezayis* of *neveilah* that he ate is considered, to his credit, like a *kezayis* of the *Korban Pesach* eaten in Yerushalayim! This is what the Gemara means that the opposite is true. Through the *שבו מן העוון*—through the *teshuvah* which reaches all the way to *teshuvah me'ahavah*—the *eigel*

is transformed to the good. The sacrifices offered to the *eigel* are transformed into *korbanos* for Hashem. Through *teshuvah me'ahavah*, these *korbanos* that were offered to the *eigel* are themselves the atonement for the *eigel*. Of course, we want the *parshah* to be read—and translated! The reading of the *parshah* itself serves to reverse the *bizayon* contained within.

We mustn't wait until we have reached the level of *teshuvah me'ahavah*. If we sit around and wait until we properly serve Hashem *mi'yirah*, and are ready to move on to *ahavah*, it will never happen. Whenever we have a moment of inspiration, we should use it to tap into this *ahavah*. We

should stop focusing on “yes Gehinnom, no Gehinnom,” and focus instead on the love that is between us and Hashem. We must understand that just like a father's unending love for his child, so too is Hashem's love for every Yid. Hashem gave us life, and He sustains us every single second! When we realize Hashem's great love for us, it will inspire us to feel a great love for Him—*k'mayim hapanim l'panim*.

Klal Yisrael accepted the Torah again in Chodesh Adar—*me'ahavah*, and this is the *avodah* of Chodesh Adar. May Hashem help us and may we be *zocheh* to do a complete *teshuvah me'ahavah*!

(ס"ג מאמר ג פרשת כי תשא תשפ"ב)

4 See Rashi ibid. s.v. *kan*; see *Sfas Emes* Purim 5637 s.v. *kenos*.

5 *Derashos L'Shabbos Shuvah* 5771 and elsewhere.

## Real Stalwarts

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Purim. Since Shushan Purim is on Shabbos, we remember and celebrate at the same time.

*לעשות אותם ימי משתה ושמחה* – *To make them days of feasting and gladness* (Esther 9:22). The pasuk, discussing the Purim *seudah*, uses the word *לעשות*, and because of this, *asiyah* is always used in the Gemara as a reference to the Purim *seudah*. How then, asks the *Turei Even*, are we remembering and celebrating at the same time? The Yerushalmi states (Megillah 1:4)—and *Shulchan Aruch* rules accordingly<sup>6</sup>—that when Purim falls on Shabbos, the *seudas Purim* takes

place the next day, on Sunday. Why does Shmuel say that the *zechirah* and *asiyah* will take place on the same day, when the *asiyah* will only take place the following day? In fact, because of this question the Maharalbach writes that the Bavli argues on the Yerushalmi. If Shmuel says that remembrance and celebration happen on the same day, it must be that, according to the Bavli, the *seudah* of Purim takes place on Shabbos.

However, the *Machatzis Hashekel* provides an answer to the *Turei Even*'s question. The Bavli actually agrees with the Yerushalmi, and the *seudas*

*Purim* is on Sunday. Yet, *asiyah* in this case does not refer to the *seudas Purim*. Reading the *parshah* of *Vayavo Amalek* (the *parshah* that is always read on Purim day) and reciting *Al Hanissim*, are sufficient to be considered *asiyah*. Although we do not have the Purim *seudah* on Shabbos, since we read the *parshah* of Purim and we recite *Al Hanissim*, Shmuel considers the *asiyah* to take place on Shabbos. Thus, he maintains that *Zachor* (*zechirah*) should be read on Shabbos at the same time as the *asiyah*.

We learn from the *Machatzis Hashekel* that there are two different

6 O.C. 688:6.

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# Real Stalwarts

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types of celebration on Purim. Yes, there is a celebration of the *seudas Purim*, an *asiyah* of making a *gashmius* celebration. But there is another type of *asiyah*, another type of celebration. וְהִימִים הָאֵלֶּה וְנִעְשִׂים הַזְּכָרִים—the pasuk here is referring to a different celebration, one that goes together with *zechirah*. Remembering Amalek, remembering the fight that Hashem has with the powers of evil, goes together with a different type of celebration. This *asiyah* is accomplished by reading the *parshah* of Amalek and by giving thanks to Hashem with *Al Hanissim*. This celebration is a *ruchniyus* celebration. The *poskim* may discuss whether there is an obligation to drink a little wine on Shabbos of a *Purim meshulash*, but all agree that the main celebration of this Shabbos is spiritual.

The Gemara (Megillah 7b) states, חייב איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן

איניש לבסומי בפוריא עד דלא ידע בין ארור המן

One is obligated to become inebriated on Purim until he does not know [the difference] between 'cursed is Haman' and 'blessed is Mordechai.' The Ezor Eliyahu, who was a talmid of the Kotzker, explains: *Baruch Mordechai* and *arur Haman* refer to the two ends of the spectrum. *Baruch Mordechai* represents that which is good—mitzvos; and *arur Haman* represents that which is bad—*aveiros*. Between these two extremes lies an area of *reshus*—actions which are neither mitzvos nor forbidden. On Purim we must reach a *madreigah* בין ארור המן – until we do

not recognize between. We must come to the realization that there is nothing between an *aveirah* and a mitzvah: if it is not a mitzvah, it is a sin. This resonates with the *Chovos Halevavos*<sup>7</sup> who writes that there is nothing *permissible*—it is either a sin or a mitzvah. A real Kotzker *vort*, as befits one who was raised in the court of Kotzk.

How do we put this into practice? The Baraisa (Kiddushin 39b) states that Heaven is good to one who has more sins than mitzvos, and one who has more mitzvos is treated badly. The Gemara explains that this refers to a יום טוב ויום ריש – a *good day, and a bad day*. One who is a tzaddik (having more mitzvos than *aveiros*) is treated badly—that is, at times he has a bad day, to atone for his sins so he can merit *Olam Haba*. The rest of his life is pleasant. One who is a *rasha* (having more *aveiros*) is treated well—at times he has a good day, to make sure he receives his reward in this world for any mitzvos that he did. The rest of his life is miserable. Rav Nosson Lubart explained this with the common saying, *amol a malach, amol a galach*. We vacillate between two worlds. At times we are uplifted and we are like a *malach*, and other times, *chalilah*, quite the opposite is true.

The *avodah* on Purim is for each and every one of us to reach a level where we will not know any gray areas. We have the opportunity to establish ourselves on Mordechai's side of the spectrum—and from there we will not budge.

How do we go about making a steadfast *kabbalah*? וְקִבַּל הַיְהוּדִים – *the Yidden accepted* (9:23). Why is וְקִבַּל written in singular form? Even later, when the pasuk is read: קִיְמוּ (וקבלו) וְקִבְּלוּ, in the plural, it is still written in the singular! The Gemara (Bava Basra 24b) tells us that a pot owned by partners never gets hot and never gets cold. Rashi explains that since each partner relies on the other, nothing ever gets done.

A *maschal* is related in the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*<sup>8</sup>: There was once a traveler who came to a large city, and he was invited to stay at the house of one of the *chashuvim*. The townspeople wanted to honor this *chashuve* guest and they sent nice gifts of wine and honey. One man, thinking himself wise, thought, I must send a gift, but why spend money? So many people are sending nice gifts, if I send a jug of water no one will notice. The problem was that he was not the only one to think that way... Most of the gifts were water.

If we are reliant on others, nothing will ever happen. Our *kabbalah* will not endure. The Megillah tells us of that *kabbalah* יִסְיָו מִיָּצִיחַ לֹא יִזְכָּר – *their remembrance will never perish from their children* (9:28). The Yidden of that time made an everlasting *kabbalah*. For a *kabbalah* to endure, we cannot rely on our friends. Such a *kabbalah* must be singular.

(ס"ג מאמר א פרשת תצוה – פורים המשלוש תשכ"א)

7 *Shaar Avodas Elokim* 4.

8 *Parshas Pinchas* 3, and elsewhere.

# Real Yidden

איש יהודי הָיָה בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבִּירָה וְשֵׁמוֹ מֶרְדֵּכַי.

*There was a Jewish man in Shushan the capital whose name was Mordechai* (Esther 2:5).

The Gemara tells us that Mordechai was called Yehudi because he was *kofer b'avodah zarah*, and anyone who denies *avodah zarah* is called Yehudi. Anyone who expends effort, and withstands the temptation of *avodah zarah* earns the title of Yehudi. But what will be with us, who are not tempted by *avodah zarah*? How are we Yehudim? We don't have a *yetzer hara* for *avodah zarah*. Just as we ask our brothers who are not *shomer Torah u'mitzvos*, with what are you Yehudim? So too, we should ask ourselves!

But in truth, there is a part of the *yetzer hara* for *avodah zarah* that still exists. לא יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֵל זָר – *There shall not be inside of you a foreign god* (Tehillim 81:10). What is a foreign god that resides within us? The Gemara (Shabbos 105b) tells us that this refers to the *yetzer hara*. Each one of us has our internal *avodah zarah*, our own internal Amalek. By rejecting that *avodah zarah*, we earn the title of Yehudim.

When we imagine killing Amalekim, we think of scouring the earth for Amalekim. We think this is our task if we are to fulfill the mitzvah. But there is no need to search; we needn't look further than our own selves. We must work on cleaning out our internal Amalek. It is told of the Chasam Sofer that in his youth he merited killing a descendant of Amalek, which brought him great joy. This was fitting for someone of his stature. He was able to better destroy the Amalek within him by expressing his hatred. Yet, we are not at his level. For us, we must focus on our own internal Amalek. If we

overcome our *yetzer hara*, we deserve the distinction of being called Yehudim. But if we don't, we are not considered Yidden; we belong to that *avodah zarah*; we serve alternative gods. We may be still servants of Achashverosh, still enslaved to our physicality, but we must realize that, in truth, we are servants to Hashem.

וַיִּשְׁנֶה וְאֶת נַעֲרוֹתֶיהָ לְטוֹב בֵּית הַנָּשִׁים – *he switched her and her maid-servants to the best in the harem* (Esther 2:9). Rashi explains וַיִּשְׁנֶה as *he switched her*. The *mefarshim* ask, Rashi only explains a pasuk when it is difficult, or to prevent us from erring. Here, neither of these reasons applies. There is no room for error, and the translation is simple—why did Rashi explain?

After the war, Rav Aharon Noach Yuskovitz, came before his grandfather. After five years of war, he still had *peyos*, a beard, and was bedecked in his *chasiddishe levush*. The Imrei Emes said, “Noach, you have remained the same, you haven't changed one bit.” When R' Noach left, he burst into tears. He said, “That's why I went through five years of the war? To remain the same? How could it be that I remain the same, after going through seven levels of Gehinom and so many tests?”

This is what Rashi is telling us. Besides for the simple explanation (Heigai changed the way he dealt with Esther), there is a deeper meaning. Esther went through many tests in Achashverosh's palace. They changed her. By going through all the tests, she was changed for the better—she became a better person.

וּמֶרְדֵּכַי לֹא יִכְרַע וְלֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה *But Mordechai would not bow and he would not prostrate himself* (Esther 3:2). Why is יִכְרַע and יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה written in the future tense? It should say וּמֶרְדֵּכַי לֹא כָרַע וְלֹא הִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה. Mordechai went

through a test and he came out a better person. Any time a Yid goes through a *nisayon*, and is *omed b'nisayon*, he grows stronger. He becomes a new person who is changed for the better. Mordechai didn't bow to Haman—but he also will never bow to Haman. By not bowing, he ensured that he will not bow in the future.

Sometimes we may not feel this way. We go through different *nisyonos*, and we feel that we are not able to make it. We work hard and overcome the *nisayon*, but

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when the next *nisayon* comes, we can't do it anymore. In truth, that is not the case. Every time we stand up against a *nisayon* we become different, better, and stronger. We are now able to overcome new *nisyonos* that we could not have overcome in the past.

There is no need to elaborate; every person has gone, or is going through hardships. But we should not be foolish. Hashem sends *nisyonos* to change us and make us better people; He knows we are capable. We must recognize this and feel worthy of the *nisyonos* that we go through.

(ס"ג מאמר א פרשת תצוה – פורים המשלוש תשכ"א)