

The Sweetness of the Parasha

משיחותיו של הנה"צ רבי מנחם ברוך יאודע שליט"א בעל 'מותיקות התורה'

A Story for the Shabbos Table

Words That Can Build – Words That Can Destroy

About twenty years ago, I began teaching sixth grade. I invested greatly in both the learning and in showing a warm, encouraging face to my students. Hashem blessed me with a pleasant demeanor and a special ability to create a positive, welcoming atmosphere, and I used these gifts in the classroom as well.

There was one boy in the class named Moishy. No matter how hard I tried to connect with him, it didn't succeed. He rarely spoke at all—especially not to me. I attempted several times to call him in for a conversation, but he wouldn't cooperate. It seemed as if he preferred to remain in his own world, and my attempts to reach out were only an intrusion. I consulted with the teacher who had taught the class in fifth grade and asked how Moishy had behaved with him. He told me, "Moishy was always in his own world. I hardly felt his presence. I tried to engage him, but once I realized he wasn't interested, I left him alone. And so he remained isolated."

Hearing that, I immediately decided I wouldn't let it remain that way. I understood that I had to proceed wisely and began to daven to the One Who grants wisdom, asking for guidance:

Lesson from the Parasha

To Build a Mishkan of Good Eye

Our parashah is a continuation of the previous one, Parashas Vayakhel, where Moshe Rabbeinu reiterates the details of the construction of the Mishkan and its vessels. Yet, despite the continuity, the Torah separates these two parshiyos—and we must understand why.

At the beginning of our parashah, Moshe Rabbeinu enumerates before Klal Yisrael the donations that were brought for the Mishkan and how each item was used.

Chazal ask: Why did Moshe feel it necessary to give a public accounting to the nation? After all, Hashem trusted him completely, as it says: **לֹא כֵן, עַבְדֵי מֹשֶׁה בְּכָל בֵּיתוֹ נְאֻמָּן הוּא**, "Not so is My servant Moshe, in all My house he is most loyal" (Bamidbar 12:7). The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni) answers with a striking teaching:

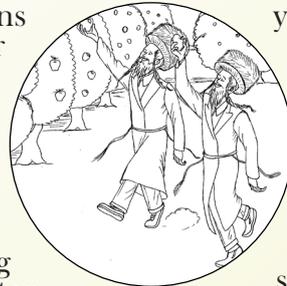
"Why did he make an accounting with them, when Hashem trusted him? Because Moshe heard Am Yisrael speaking behind his back, as it says: **וְהָיָה כְּבָא מֹשֶׁה הָאֵהָרָה**, 'And when Moshe entered the Tent...' What were they saying? Rabbi Yitzchak says: They spoke his praise—Fortunate is the one who bore him! Hashem speaks with him constantly; he is perfect before Hashem.

But Rabbi Chama says: **וְהִבִּיטוּ אַחֲרֵי מֹשֶׁה**, 'They looked after Moshe'. They spoke derogatorily—Look at his neck, look at his thighs, look at his legs... he eats from Jewish money, drinks from Jewish funds... all that he has is from us Jews!

And his friend would reply: 'Foolish! A man who manages the entire work of the Mishkan—would you not expect him to be wealthy?' When Moshe heard this, he made a shvu'ah to them: 'Once the Mishkan is completed, I will present you with a full account,' as it says: **אֵלֶּה מְקוּרֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן**, "These are the accounts of the Mishkan."

Let us explain this: Moshe Rabbeinu was entirely devoted to Klal Yisrael. Even as a young man, he went out and beheld their suffering in Mitzrayim. He then carried out Hashem's mission to redeem them, accompanying them through all their tribulations — yetzias Mitzrayim, Krias Yam Suf, and even at the cheit ha'eigel, when he was prepared to sacrifice himself for the sake of the people.

And yet, when something did not go exactly as expected — when a small sum went unaccounted for—Klal Yisrael immediately began to suspect





Moshe. They asked: What happened to the 1,775 silver pieces? And Moshe Rabbeinu had to give an exact breakdown and emphasize: "וְאֵת הָאֶלֶף וְשֵׁבַע וְהַמְּאוֹת וְהַמִּשָּׁה וְשֵׁבַע עֶשְׂרֵים וְשֵׁנִים לְעִמּוּדִים", "And the 1,775 were used to make hooks for the pillars..." The trop (cantillation mark) on these words is azla geresh—a sharp emphasis—to highlight how they suspected him even of minor things.

Let us bring this closer to our world with a relatable analogy: Imagine a devoted Jew who risks his life by entering the terrifying tunnels of Gaza to rescue hostages suffering in darkness and torment (may Hashem swiftly bring light and salvation to all who are in distress, and return them healthy and whole to His service). Can we imagine those very hostages suspecting him afterward of theft or wrongdoing? He sacrificed everything for them! And yet, Chazal teach us: If a person does not train himself to develop an ayin tova—a generous, positive eye—he may end up suspecting even the one who saved his life.

This is why the Torah interrupts the flow of the Mishkan's construction and its donations with a detailed accounting by Moshe Rabbeinu. Because the true essence of the Mishkan is to instill loyalty—to Hashem and to His faithful servants. And if a person lacks that inner loyalty—which is the true penimiyus of the Mishkan—then all the physical beauty of the Mishkan and its vessels will have no impact on him.

Thus, the word Mishkan is doubled in the passuk: "אֵלֶּה מְקוּרֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת", "These are the accounts of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of Testimony"—For before we build the Mishkan outside, we must first build a Mishkan inside our hearts, purified through a generous and trusting eye, loyal to the Creator.

In Parashas Naso, the Torah elaborates in detail about the encampments and journeys of Klal Yisrael with the Mishkan. Each time, they would erect the Mishkan anew and then take it down again. One might ask: Why was this necessary? Could Hashem not have performed a miracle allowing the Mishkan to travel along with the Amud Ha'anah? Why was there a need to camp and move repeatedly—sometimes staying in one place for only a single day, as the Torah itself describes?

The answer is that Hashem was teaching Klal Yisrael an eternal foundation: Every person goes through different nisyonos (tests and trials) in life. Sometimes he builds... and suddenly, he must take apart what he worked so hard to construct. Hashem may decree that he must move to a different home, change his workplace, face challenges with children or parnassah, and so on. And this, precisely, is the test: Does the person view everything with an ayin tova (a generous and faithful eye)? Or does he fall into complaining, thinking chas v'shalom that he is unwanted or cast aside?

Chazal teach us a foundational principle for life: "This world is like a wedding feast." How long does one prepare for a wedding? Weeks and months of planning... yet the actual celebration lasts just a few short hours. And whatever one manages to "grab" during that time—that is what remains. If a

person rejoices in that moment, and "grabs" Torah, mitzvos, and good deeds—he leaves the wedding with something truly valuable. But if he spends the time complaining, not only does he miss out on the joy he could have had—he leaves empty-handed.

This is not just a parable—it is life itself. Life passes quickly. The person who is filled with complaints and narrow vision will always find fault. He will even suspect those who have benefited him and will deny the good he received. Not only will he lack simchah, he will also leave this world empty of spiritual content. On the other hand, one who possesses an ayin tova sees everything in a positive light. Joy fills his heart, because he understands that it's not worth being upset over fleeting details. He will leave this world full and enriched—prepared for Olam HaBa.

Moreover, every challenge and transition in life will remind him that he is but a guest in this world—and true permanence lies only in the Traklin, the Olam HaBa—not in the temporary hallway of Olam Hazele.

But we must remember: An ayin tova does not appear on its own. In order to merit this quality, a person must consciously choose to amplify all the good that Hashem Yisborach showers upon him. He must learn to magnify the kindness of others—to see and appreciate everything that the people around him do for him. He must enter his home with a song of Eishes Chayil on his lips, filled with heartfelt appreciation for the simple truth that he is not alone, but blessed with a wife who awaits him at home. He should acknowledge all that she does—how she washes his clothing, prepares nourishing food, and supports him in countless unseen ways.

Chazal tell us (in the censored passages of Maseches Sanhedrin 43a) about Oso Ha'ish (Yashu) how he descended to heresy and rebellion. When Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perachyah praised the hospitality of an inn they had visited, this man responded with a negative remark about the hostess: "Her eyes are too narrow!" He failed to see good; his eye was critical, not generous. Eventually, he suspected his own Rebbe of rejecting him while he meant only to cover his eyes for krias Shema—a suspicion born not of truth, but of ayin ra'ah, a twisted bad eye that saw negativity in all things. Thus, he veered off the path entirely.

Chazal teach us at the end of Maseches Berachos: "A good guest says: How much effort did the host exert for me! How much meat he brought me, how much wine he poured for me, how many fine breads he served—all that he did was for my sake. But a bad guest says: What effort did the host really make for me? I only ate one slice of bread, one piece of meat, one cup of wine—everything he did was really for his wife and children."

The lesson is clear: Enlarge the good that others do for you. A person with a positive eye is filled with gratitude and never denies the kindness extended to him, and he doesn't get upset and angry over small things.

In the final Mishnah of Maseches Pe'ah, it says:



"Whoever is not lame, nor blind, nor crippled—and makes himself out to be like one of them, will not die of old age until he becomes one of them." Meaning: One who constantly looks for flaws and finds flaws, will eventually be surrounded by real deficiency and suffering. But one who trains himself to look for good—in everything and in everyone—Hashem entrusts him with more good.

And this includes seeing the good within ourselves, to rejoice that we are healthy, that we are privileged to serve Hashem, that we have a home and a family. Such a person, rooted in awareness of the good, remains strong even when others belittle him. He does not feel the need to retaliate, for he is simply too immersed in his blessings to be concerned with petty insults.

From all of the above, we learn: Parashas Pekudei must serve as a guiding light for our lives. Moshe Rabbeinu, despite all he did for Klal Yisrael, was forced to provide a detailed financial accounting—because they suspected him. This teaches us a vital lesson—when a person does not develop an ayin tova, any misunderstanding, any lack of clarity — will lead him to deny all the abundant good that was done for him.

But when a person trains himself to see the overflowing good bestowed upon him by Hashem, by his family, and by all the messengers of kindness in his life—he will rejoice deeply in simply being alive, healthy, and surrounded by blessings. Instead of complaining—he will become full of debt of gratitude, offering thanks to Hashem and to those around him.

And this is the foundation of Pesach: The Torah opens the Aseres HaDibros with the words: "אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם", "I am Hashem your God Who took you out of the land of Egypt"—recognize the good, you are no longer a slave, you are free — so choose to be a servant of Hashem out of love and gratitude.

Birchas HaIlanos

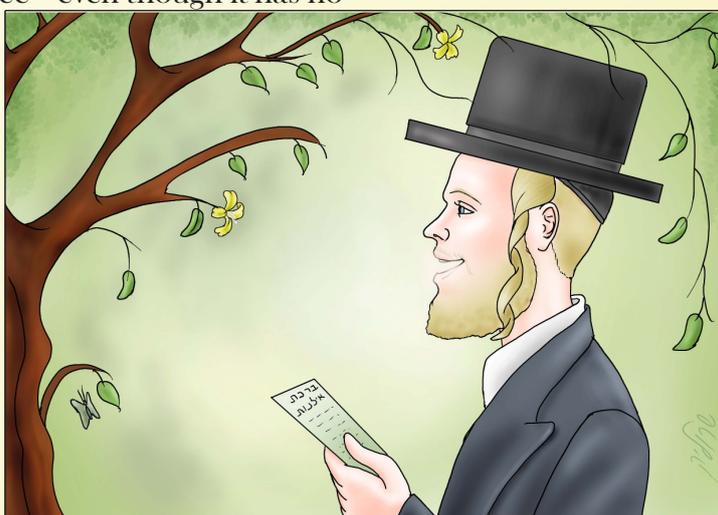
In the coming week, with the arrival of Rosh Chodesh Nisan, we merit to say a unique brachah—Birchas HaIlanos. Chazal teach that when you see a blossoming tree—even though it has no fruit yet—it proclaims a silent faith in Hashem's love. Though you don't see the fruit, know that the fruit is coming. It will take months of slow, hidden growth—but eventually, you will eat of it and enjoy its sweetness, lovingly prepared for you by Hashem. And this is but a small example of His endless love

This berachah teaches us to step outside ourselves and begin seeing the good that surrounds us. A person may be so immersed in what he lacks that he becomes blind to the overflowing cup of blessing before him. Therefore, we are commanded to contemplate the renewing wonders of creation in this season—to become inspired by the blossoming trees, the sweet fruits yet to come, and the good people, beriyos tovos, all around us, and bench Hashem for all of it. To acquire good lenses—spiritual glasses that allow us to see the world as good, to walk in joy both in

Sweet Pearls

.Olam HaZeh and in Olam HaBa

That is why in Birchas HaIlanos we bench Hashem for the good human beings and "שְׂכָרָא בְרִיּוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהֵנוֹת בְּהֵם": the good trees



Who created", "בְּנֵי אָדָם", good creatures and good trees, to bring pleasure to mankind." Take a moment to see all the beriyos tovos that surround you. Hashem is not withholding anything from you

Give thanks for your family, and most importantly—your wife. Daven that these good and wondrous beriyos that Hashem gave you remain with

you for a long life of health. Daven for more children. Thank Hashem for the children you already have. Thank Him for your friends. For every person who helps you in any way—directly or indirectly

In Birchas HaIlanos, we are meant also to reflect on the middos tovos of our fellow Yidden and all in each community in Am Yisrael. To notice the good we receive from every person—and through that, to be strengthened in Ahavas Yisrael. To feel a desire to support, to encourage, to uplift every Yid

How could I gain entry into the quiet inner world of this withdrawn child and give him a good feeling about himself? I knew that the boy's entire future might depend on it. I spoke with his parents, who themselves were quiet and reserved. From them I understood that they weren't very involved, and it became clear that I had to work on my own.

With Hashem's help, an idea flashed in my mind—I would appoint him as my personal assistant for various small tasks. Perhaps through this role, he would begin to open up and feel more part of the class and the social circle. At the end of class, I called Moishy over and asked him if he would like to be my helper. I explained that it wouldn't be anything difficult—just small errands and things of that nature. At first, it seemed like he was unsure how to respond. I told him he could think about it and give me his answer the next day. The following day, I called him again and asked if he had thought it over. He nodded affirmatively, and I said to him, "I'm truly happy you'll be helping me. You're a smart and good boy, and I need a helper like you."

For the first time since the beginning of the school year, I saw a faint smile appear on his face. I understood then that I had taken the right step. Already the next day, at the end of class, when all the children went out for recess, I called him over, took a ten-shekel coin from my pocket, and asked him to buy three oranges for me so I could make fresh juice. Moishy took the money and left. After about half an hour, recess ended, and I expected to see Moishy in his seat and the oranges on my desk. But when I entered the classroom, I saw neither Moishy nor the oranges.

I thought perhaps he was just running a bit late and would arrive any moment. During the whole class I waited for him—but he never came. During the second recess, I began to feel genuinely concerned for his wellbeing. I had pangs of guilt for sending him out. I called his home, thinking maybe he had returned there—but no one answered, and I didn't know what to think. I hoped that by lunchtime he would surely return. I was upset with myself for sending him, and deep inside, I was angry that after I tried so hard to help him and give him a good feeling, he had taken advantage of it and acted irresponsibly. After all, I was responsible for him, and I was very worried.

At lunchtime, he knocked on the teachers' lounge door, holding a black plastic bag with three oranges inside. He handed them to me shyly. I noticed on his face signs of tiredness and thirst—it was clear that he had been running around for quite a while during the past hours. All the stress and worry I had felt during that time were about to erupt on him in one outburst, but at the last second, I caught myself. I smiled and said, "Thank you very much!" I handed him a cup of water and told him to return to the classroom.

I stepped back into the lounge and, to my good fortune, spotted a calm and experienced teacher sitting nearby. I went over to him and said, "I have a student who did something very serious, and I need your advice on how to punish him." He asked me what had happened, and I told him the whole story—how I had wanted to lift up Moishy, so I sent him to buy oranges, thinking it would take just a few minutes, but it ended up taking hours, during which I was filled with stress and anxiety for his safety. Now he had returned with three oranges in a black plastic bag, and I was nearly certain he had been playing in the park

the whole time, and then during lunch break grabbed three oranges from home, put them in a random bag, and pocketed the money.

The old teacher heard me out and said: "You had a good intention to uplift the child. It would be a pity to ruin that—and worse, you might end up causing damage. I suggest that for now you do nothing. Only at the end of the school day, after you've calmed down a bit, call the boy and ask him exactly what he did during all those hours and where he bought the oranges."

I followed his advice and walked into the classroom with mixed feelings. At the end of the day, I called Moishy over and asked him gently, "What did you do all the time you were out buying the oranges?" He lowered his head and said: "Rebbi told me to buy oranges for juice. I went to the fruit and vegetable store next to the Talmud Torah and asked if he had oranges for juice. He said he had oranges, but he didn't know what 'oranges for juice' meant. I told him that I needed oranges especially for juice, but when I saw he didn't understand me, I went to another store and asked there too, and got the same answer. That's how I went from store to store. Everyone told me they had regular oranges, but they didn't understand what I meant. I saw that none of the stores in the neighborhood had what I needed, so I walked to another store outside the neighborhood.

Eventually, I arrived at a store where they actually make orange juice. I asked the owner if I could buy oranges for juice, because I figured that in his store the oranges must be specially for juicing. But he told me that he doesn't sell oranges, only the juice itself. Still, I pleaded with him, and told him that the Rebbi had sent me specifically to buy oranges for juice, and I would be so happy if he could sell me just three oranges.

In the end, he took pity on me and sold me three oranges in a black bag.

I was so happy that I succeeded in fulfilling my mission faithfully, and I walked all the way back until I came back."

I was so moved by Moishy's words and by his loyalty—how much he had run around for my sake, with such sincerity, simply because he thought that there was such a thing as "special oranges for juice." I was ashamed of myself, that instead of appreciating him, I was filled with anger toward him and wanted to punish him. And I thanked Hashem for sending me that calm and wise teacher who held me back.

At that moment, I realized: The words that were at the tip of my tongue could have completely crushed Moishy's spirit. They could have done far more damage than anything he had ever experienced before. Immediately, I turned to him and said warm, heartfelt words—praising his loyalty, and telling him how happy I was that I had chosen him as my messenger.

And the truth is: More than I helped Moishy that year—uplifting him and setting him on the path of growth—Moishy helped me. He gifted me with a profound life lesson: A lesson in patience, and in judging others favorably.

Because of him, I now always strive to uplift my students, and remind myself that maybe there are things I don't understand. And instead of seeing only the external act, I try to see the pure heart inside. And through this, I've been zocheh to find paths into their hearts and uplift their spirits.