



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFAT & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

תשפ"ה

דברים

פרשת

MOTIVATING CRITICISM

On his last day on this world, Moshe Rabeinu addressed the entire nation, recounting their experiences from the day they left Mitzrayim and admonished them for their misconduct. In the midst of his monologue, Moshe told his people "I say to you today that I cannot carry you alone". At first glance, it would seem that Moshe is admonishing them for overburdening him with their troubles, complaints and rebellious activities, yet if this was his intention, what did he mean to add a few pesukim later when he exclaimed "eicha esa l'vadi" - how can I carry you alone? Moreover, his introductory remark to this first statement—"I say to you today", doesn't really fit with the critical tone portrayed by the "eicha esa l'vadi" that is usually read in the tune of the eicha.

While others take a different approach, the Meshech Chochmah understands Moshe Rabeinu's first statement as a beracha to k'lal Yisroel. Simply put, k'lal Yisroel was too big for a single leader to handle, even under the best of circumstances. It is not humanly possible for a single individual to personally attend to the needs of millions of people, even if there are no issues between them, and so Moshe first gave a heartfelt beracha that K'lal Yisroel should continue to multiply in numbers in a way that no leader would ever be able to handle them alone.

It is therefore worthwhile noting that it was only after Moshe offered his berachos, that he began to rebuke them for all the stress they had caused him over the last 40 years. This, is an important lesson for every leader, teacher, parent, and friend. Sometime, we have to criticize. Often, it is our job to do so and ignoring this responsibility is no less than negligence in chinuch or protecting others from harm. Yes, we must be critical, but it is important to first compliment and give credit where it is due. Many of us realize this much, and when we don't follow through, it is only because we fail to translate theory into practice. However, there is another point here, that is perhaps not quite so obvious. When Moshe offered his berachos, he stressed the same points he mentioned when criticizing. Quite often, we'll compliment our child or student on their strengths before criticizing their weaknesses. While this is definitely better than just criticizing, imagine how much more effective we could be if we noted the positive in the negative. If a child hears how many great things he could accomplish with his super high energy level - instead of just how smart he is - he might be more motivated channel his excess energy in a positive fashion and be less disruptive.

כי המשפט לאלקים הוא א"ר חמא ברבי חנינא אמר הקב"ה לא דיין לרשעים שנוטלין מזה ממון ונותנים לזה שלא כדין אלא שמטריחין אותי להחזיר ממון לבעליו: (סנהדרין ח.)

Not only do the wicked judges rule unjustly and collect payments from the innocent and pass them on to the undeserving, but in doing so, they trouble Hakadosh Boruch Hu to have to collect the monies and return them to their rightful owners.



*From the desk of
the Rosh Kollel...*

Welcome to all our new subscribers!

Exciting things are happening in the kollel! Mazal to to the kollel on completing its 16th year. As we enter the 17th year, we look forward to a lot of great things as the kollel, its beis medrash, and kehilla continue to be a real asset to the community on so many levels. We have reached the final stages of organizing and cataloging our vast otzar ha'seforim (around 3,000 volumes). This new system will not only improve learning in the kollel, but with benefit the broader community as well.

THE SEFER IS OUT! - *In honor of reaching our 16th year, I have published the Shabbos derashos on the haftarah and parsha which were said within the walls of our beis medrash. This is a second volume to the edition published upon our 10th anniversary five years ago. To find out how to get your own copy, email me at: rabbi@torahkollel.com*

From the early hours of the morning, until late at night, the beis medrash is and active asset to the community at large. Mosdos Avahas Yehonoson - "Torah Kollel" continues to impact on the community at large in many ways and exists thanks to the benevolence and generosity of its supporters around the world. Consider having a part of this tremendous zechus by sponsoring a sefer, a day, week or month of the Torah Kollel. Contact us at info@torahkollel.com for further information.

- Rabbi David Lewin

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Sugyas ha' Sedra

SHABBOS CHAZON

Although a father may wear his Shabbos clothes to his baby's bris during the nine days, the Rema writes that on Shabbos Chazon, one should not don his Shabbos clothes, but should only change his undershirt etc. l'kavod Shabbos. Indeed, this was the custom among much of Ashkenazic Jewry for generations. Today however, the prevalent custom however is to change into our Shabbos clothes and follow the rulings of the Vilna Gaon and Ya'avetz who were adamant that one should not make such a public display of aveilus on Shabbos. And today it is difficult to find people who observe Shabbos Chazon as per the Rema.

The Chazon Ish took even greater issue with this and abolished some of the other customs that are prevalent in much of K'lal Yisroel: The custom in most shuls in chutz la'aretz is to sing Lecha Dodi to the tune of "AleI Tzion" (one of the Tisha B'Av kinos). The Chazon Ish was very much against this display of aveilus and this is probably one of the reasons why this custom is uncommon in Eretz Yisroel. He also opposed reading the posuk 'eichah esa l'vadi' and the parts of the hatarah to the tune of Eichah which is the prevalent custom today, even in Eretz Yisroel.

It is true that those who disagree with the Rema have a legitimate question: What about the public display of mourning on Shabbos? The Rema was also aware of this general rule and was for some reason, not concerned. Why not, and how did it come about that the poskim changed their minds and decided not to follow this Rema?

The Aruch HaShulchan explains that really, there was no change. In the times of the Rema, people dressed the same during the week as they did on Shabbos. The only real difference was that their Shabbos clothes were designated for Shabbos, and often a bit more expensive and of higher quality. However, there was no blatantly obvious difference between them. Wearing weekday clothes was therefore not considered to be mourning publicly. As time passed, Jews began to dress differently on Shabbos than they did during the week and the poskim pointed out that by not wearing their Shabbos clothes, they would be making a public statement, and so they should therefore, not follow the ruling of the Rema. Accordingly, someone who dresses the same on Shabbos as he does during the week, should follow the Rema. Certainly, one who has more than on shabbos suit, should opt to wear the lesser of the two this week.

HaRav Yaakov Kaminetsky zt"l offers a novel approach in understanding the two customs: He explains that when we are to comfortable in golus, we are in greater need of being reminded of the churban. In the times of the Rema, Ashkenazi Jewry was relatively comfortable, and the Rema felt that on Shabbos Chazon, they had to be careful not to forget that they were in golus and he instructed them to abstain from donning their Shabbos clothing. As time went on and the threat of pogroms and poverty hung over us, we needed every Shabbos as a respite and taste of the geulah we desperately await. Shabbos Chazon was no different, and so but putting on our Shabbos clothing we intensified our hopes for future geulah which will ultimately be a day which is completely Shabbos.

We would like to offer a slightly different approach: In Eicha, the posuk reads "kumi roni ba'laila" - get up and sing at night. Yes, 'roni' comes from the word 'rina' which is one of the Torah's terminology for song. It seems odd that in the dark of night, in the midst of lamenting destruction, the navi should tell us to get up and sing! R' Shimshon Pinkus (in Shearim baTefilah) explains that singing praises of Hashem out of joy is a segula to access a tremendous shower of beracha and so, when things appear very dark, it is specifically then that we should sing, so that we can access yeshuos. Perhaps then, as life in Europe became more difficult, we were in a greater need of yeshua and so we had a greater need to be upbeat. Shabbos is the source of all beracha and so on Shabbos Chazon we began to sing and rejoice in an effort to merit a shefa of beracha that will ultimately bring us the yeshua.

When Shabbos is not only Shabbos Chazon, but is erev Tisha b'Av. Many eat fleishigs for this seudas ha'mafsek, and in the words of the Shulchan Aruch, we eat like Shlomo HaMelech ate when he ruled as king. Despite the tragedy, we should celebrate the beracha we have. Let us sing to Hashem, and through this rina, may we merit a shefa of beracha on all fronts.



Chazal list ten expressions of tefilla. The number ten represents a complete and inclusive unit. For example, the aseres ha'dibros contains within them the entire Torah, and the world was Created with ten utterances. Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that from this we can understand that there are not just different approaches to tefilla, but rather different aspects which are to be employed at different times and in different situations. Just like in Torah study one must learn meseches Shabbos to understand the halachos of Shabbos, and Bava Kama to understand damages - learning Zevachim in depth will not make one competent in hilchos Shabbos - similarly, one must

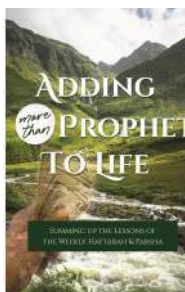
employ the correct approach to tefilla when and where they are called for. For example. When we say "rofei cholim" at the beginning of shemoneh esrei, we are praising Hashem for His ability to cure, and it is only later in the beracha of refa'einu that we daven for friends and family who are ill. One who has the opposite kavana and screams "rofei cholim" isn't praising Hashem, and if he praises Hashem in the beracha of refa'einu, he has squandered an opportunity.

SPARKS OF SHABBOS

The Torah refers to Shabbos as 'the seventh day'. This is more than just a matter of a sequential number. R' Shimshon Pincus zt"l explains that the 7th always represents malchus and so we call Shabbos the day of malchus. He goes on to explain what this means. In the world, there are two components to every chesed; ratzon (will) and yecholes (ability). A person might be inspired and pledge to give a large amount to a certain cause and has the means to do so but a day or two later, he lacks the desire to part with his money. Another fellow might have a real will to help, but lacks the wherewithal to do so. A king however, wants to help, and has the ability to do so. This is malchus. Really, Hashem's benevolence knows no bounds and He has ability to shower us with beracha, except that His malchus is hidden. Ultimately, this is the purpose of Creation; to reveal it and on Shabbos, the Ribono Shel Olam's true malchus is clearer and more visible.

L'maseh...

The Sefas Emes was orphaned as a child and was raised by his illustrious grandfather, the Chidushei HaRim. As a young bochur, the Sefas Emes came late to shacharis one day, and as his father figure and rebbe, his grandfather chastised him for not being there on time. Later on that day somebody told the Chidushei HaRim that his grandson had been up learning the entire night and took a couple hour nap before davening. Based on this new piece of information, he understood that the musar and rebuke was out of place and so he summoned his grandson and asked him why he didn't tell him that he had been up all night learning, but the Sefas Emes replied with a question: "and give up the opportunity to hear divrei mussar from 'the Zeida' (his esteemed grandfather)?"



DIVREI HA'NAVI - ADDING PROPHET TO LIFE

The posuk urges us to repent: "Lechu na v'nivachecha yomar Hashem, im yihyu chata'eichem ka'shanim, ka'sheleg yalbinu, im ya'adimu ka'tola, ka'tzemer yihyu." (Hashem will say, go seek rebuke, if your sins will be like red silk, they will become white like snow, if they are red like a worm, they will become like wool.) The wording here, is somewhat awkward: It would make more sense for Hashem to summon us to come, and not tell us to go. Furthermore, it should more appropriately read 'amar Hashem' – that Hashem said, and not in the future tense that He will say.

Chazal (Shabbos 89b) tell us that the posuk really refers to future times, and Hashem will tell the Jewish people to go seek rebuke from the avos. We will argue that there is no one to go to; after all Hashem told them how we would be oppressed in Mitzrayim and they didn't protest. Furthermore, Yitzchok went so far as to bless Eisav and we are still suffering from this today. Hashem will reply, that since we will completely depend on Him, he will turn our red sins into pure white.

This gemara too, leaves us with a lot of questions: First of all, why should the fact that the avos didn't rush to ask for Hashem's mercy in golus impede their ability to rebuke us in later generations? Furthermore, what is Hashem's response that since we depend on him, our red sins will become white?

The Ben Yehoyada explains that every Jewish neshama is a cheilek Eloka mi'maal – hewn out of the kisei ha'kavod. In order to protect it, the neshama is clothed in a spiritual light which surrounds it. This cloak protects it and clearly publicizes its tremendous kedusha, superior to the malachim. When a person sins, this garment is worn out, and if a person wanders very far from Hashem, he sheds this surrounding light completely. In the morning, we recite two berachos over this protective layer: "malbish arumim" for those who have strayed quite far, and "ha'mosein la'ya'eif koach" to strengthen our worn out garments.

In a similar way, the Malbim explains the double mashal of the posuk: If our sins will be like red silk, which is a dyed material altered from its original color, He will transform it into snow. Even if with stray so far and become like the worm which is intrinsically red, He will rectify it and turn it into wool.

Having given the above introduction, the Ben Yehoyada suggests that our question really stems from a misreading of the words of the posuk and the gemara: While n'vachecha, can mean rebuke, it also stems from the word "l'hochiach" – to prove, and so, Hashem wasn't sending us to the avos for rebuke, but rather, He sent us to the kivrei avos to daven and mend our spiritual clothing which became worn out. Understandably then, we are concerned that they won't have enough mercy on us to help, and so, we turn to Hakadosh Boruch Hu instead, for His help in replacing and mending our spiritual clothing.

The Ben Yehoyada goes on to tell a story of a certain Jew who had committed every single sin under the sun. He became remorseful and was willing to accept full punishment for his actions. He went to a rav, telling him that he was willing to undergo capital punishment at the hand of beis din but since this was not possible, he could find no remorse. The rav told him that the only thing he could do was to lie down on the floor and the rav would then melt lead and pour it into his mouth. The rav proceeded to prepare the potion by melting the ingredients and the man lay on the floor and opened his mouth. At the last moment, the rav motioned for his servant to bring him a jar of honey and he began to pour its contents into the man's open mouth. Startled, he asked for an explanation. The rav told him that since he completely gave in to the Ribono shel Olam, he has achieved full teshuva and everything is very sweet now. Similarly, explains the Ben Ish Chai, once we affirm our complete dependency on Hakadosh Boruch Hu, He will rush and restore our spiritual clothing.

מזל טוב... יהיה יותר "טוב" !

This week the kollel completed its 16th year!
We are looking forward to an even greater 17th year !