

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Ki Seitzei 5780

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פרשת כי תצא תש"פ

Why did Amon and Moav deserve such a harsh punishment?
לא יבא עמוני ומואבי בקהל ה' גם דור עשירי לא יבא להם בקהל ה' עד
עולם על דבר אשר לא קדמו אתכם בלחם ובמים וגו' ואשר שבר עלך את
בלעם בן בעור: (כ"ג - ד - ה)

An Ammonite or Moavite shall not enter the assembly of Hashem; even the tenth generation shall never enter the assembly of the Lord. Because they did not greet you with bread and water on the way, when you left Egypt, and because he [the people of Moav] hired Bilaam the son of Be'or against you, to curse you. (23:4-5)

There are some difficulties here. First, we see that Amon and Moav were harshly punished, never to enter the assembly of Hashem because they did not greet Klal Yisrael with bread and water on the way. Why did they deserve such a severe punishment for not giving the Yidden water and bread? Secondly, the Torah uses the phrase לא קדמו

אשר לא קדמו בלחם ובמים *"Because they did not greet you with bread and water on the way which really has no meaning. It would be sufficient to state לא קדמו בלחם ובמים?*

Thirdly, What was the sin of hiring Bilaam? There is another difficulty in this Parsha; why didn't the Egyptians receive the similar punishment of not being able to enter the assembly of Hashem, after all they made Klal Yisrael suffer through hard labor and torture? The answer to all this can be: Rashi explains the words על דבר

"because of the word," *"because of the advice they gave you, to cause the Jewish girls to sin".* — [Sifrei 23:114] Now to come to the answer:

the Gemara Yevamos 79a states: There are three distinguishing marks and traits of the Jewish people. They are merciful, they are modest, and they perform acts of kindness. Based on this we see that Amon and Moav lacked all three of these qualities. They lacked: mercy רחמנים, by hiring Bilaam to harm the Yidden. They lacked: גומלי חסדים, kindness, by not giving bread and water. It is now understood the words of *"על דבר"* because of the advice they gave you, to cause the Jewish girls to sin. The sin was that they lacked the trait: ביישנות, being modest. This is why the Torah must add the words *"על דבר"* to solidify in the Posuk the lacking of the three qualities that they lacked, and the reason for the harsh punishment. However, the Egyptians, even though they lacked the Middah of רחמנים, mercy, they still gave enough food to Klal Yisrael, which is kindness, and they did not cause the Yidden to sin. This is the reason that the Egyptians didn't receive the harsh punishment of Amon and Moav. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

Another insight: Why did Amon and Moav deserve such a harsh punishment and not the Egyptians?

The Torah lists two transgressions that Amon and Moav committed. One; they did not greet you with bread and water

on the way, when you left Egypt. Secondly, They hired Bilaam to curse the Yidden. The consequence was the punishment *An Ammonite or Moavite shall not enter the assembly of Hashem;* All the commentaries ask: Why was it necessary for the Torah to give two reasons why Amon and Moav are perpetually excluded from the assembly of Hashem? Wasn't their hatred sufficiently apparent in their failure to greet the Jewish People with bread and water after the Exodus? The answer can be: For the single sin of not giving bread and water to Klal Yisrael, Amon and Moav had an excuse. They could have said, "We would love to have rushed out and brought bread and water to the Jewish People, but we just couldn't pick up the tab for a couple of million people. We are really sorry about that". Therefore, the Torah adds the idea of Bilaam! They certainly found enough money to hire the greediest and highest paid sorcerer in the world, Bilaam, to curse the Jewish People. We see in Parshas Balak where Bilaam says to the emissaries of Balak even if you pay me with a house full of gold I cannot go against the will of Hashem. Hence we see how much they were willing to pay Bilaam to do the job. So Hashem exposed their lie and said to Amon and Moav: "If you were willing to spend an enormous amount to bring in the star wizard of his generation, you could have certainly found bread and water for the Jewish People". That is why the Torah lists these two transgressions, to prove that this act showed their hatred to Klal Yisrael and therefore do not deserve to be in their congregation. This answers the reason for the severe punishment to Amon and Moav.

HaRav Hatzaddik Reb Mordechai Of Nadvorna says the same idea, in different terms, with a Maashel, which also answers why the Egyptians didn't receive the same punishment as Amon and Moav: A Neshama came before the heavenly court and was asked: "why didn't he give any charity"? The Neshama answered: "It was not my fault, as Hashem created me with the nature on being stingy, and I wasn't able to part with my money". The court accepted his defense and said "He may proceed to Gan Eden"! The Neshama was glad and was escorted to Gan Eden. The guard stationed outside looked at the Neshama, and was startled to see such a Neshama, who never gave Charity, to enter Gan Eden! The Guard asked the Neshama, why didn't he give charity? The Neshama answered the same answer he gave to the heavenly court. The Guard began to rebuke him: "I know that you bought for your wife the most lavish jewelry, as well as expensive furniture. If you were stingy by nature, why weren't you stingy when buying these items? I am sorry you do not merit Gan Eden"! The Nadvorna Rebbe continues: The Egyptians, who were mean to Klal Yisrael, had a legitimate alibi. Hashem planted in them a tremendous hatred towards Jews, therefore, it was not entirely their fault. Whereas, Amon and Moav, they might have had a alibi, that they were created with the nature of being stingy, and

therefore did not offer bread and water to the Jews. However, when it came to hiring Bilaam, money was no obstacle, and

they weren't stingy, therefore, they received the harsh punishment, of not being able to enter the assembly of Hashem.

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

******Reb Shaya Kerestirer performs Techias Hamaisim to save a Yid******

At the Levaya of Reb Shayala from Keresteir, a Yid named Yitzchok, who was unknown to the Chassidim, was crying uncontrollably. After the Levaya, a few Chassidim come over to him to ask what his connection to the Rebbe was, and why he cried so bitterly? He answered, "I owe my life to the Rebbe! Now I can finally tell my story which I had to keep to myself for many years."

"I own a successful bar in a city not far from Kerestir. The Gentiles were very friendly neighbors, and we had very good relationships between us. When World War 1 broke out, the economy was shattered and people began to blame the government, and the Yidden for the problems. On weekends, the Gentiles didn't work, and they had a lot of free time. Fearing that the Gentiles would start rioting against the Government, and the Yidden, if they got drunk, the government placed a ban on selling alcoholic beverages on those days. One Shabbos, a neighbor of mine came knocking on the door. He had to have just one drink. I pleaded with him: "It's against the law and if they catch me selling to you today I will be put to death. The Gentile answered "I am your friendly neighbor. I won't tell anybody." I tried to evade the sale, but the Gentile threatened me, and I reluctantly gave him one cup.

That got me in trouble as the Gentile demanded that if he wasn't given another cup he would tell the authorities about the sale. I was now in a dilemma – either way I would be in trouble. Petrified, I gave the Gentile another cup. The Gentile became very drunk, and began acting wild. I pleaded with him to calm down but it was to no avail. The Gentile said that he would tell everyone that he had brought a drink on Shabbos from me. I lost my cool, and took a thick stick and hit the Gentile. The Gentile collapsed to the ground, and died!

Now I was in shambles. But I composed myself, and took out a Tehilim, and began to daven to Hashem to direct me to the right course of action. After finishing Tehilim a thought came to my mind. Not far from me, there was a Wonder Rebbe in Kerestir. I decided to hide

the Gentile under a bed, and as soon Shabbos would be over, travel to Kerestir.

On Motzei Shabbos, I came to Kerestir just as the Rebbe finished making Havdallah. I ran over to the Rebbe hysterically. The Rebbe tried to calm me down, and brought me into his room. I told the Rebbe the whole story. The Rebbe listened and asked sternly "Why did you do such a wild thing"? The Rebbe then went into a deep trance. After a few minutes the Rebbe awoke, went to his closet, and took out 2 coins. He then put them over the candles from Motzei Shabbos, said a blessing over them, and handed them to me. The Rebbe instructed me to put these coins in the hands of the Gentile and say, "Yeshaya Ben Moshe, the Talmid of Reb Hershel from Liska, and the Sanzer Rav, orders you to pick yourself up and go home!"

I thanked the Rebbe, and ran home to do what the Rebbe had told me to do. I placed the coins in the hand of the dead Gentile and Lo and behold, he began to move and then got up on his feet! I politely told the Gentile that he fell and hurt himself, and that he should go home now, as it was very late.

The Gentile came home and his wife confronted him. "Again! you spent our last money on your drinking, when we are starving from hunger" she said. They got into an argument, and after a brief altercation, the Gentile fell to the floor and died.

I heard what had happened, and quickly traveled to Kerestir to tell the Rebbe, and thank him for the wondrous miracle that he had performed. The Rebbe brushed aside the miracle, and said sternly, "You still killed a Gentile on Shabbos, which even though it was unintentional, you still sinned. In order for you to rectify the sin, you must go into exile for one year. I also forbid you to tell this story to anyone as long as I live." I thanked the Rebbe for saving my life, and promised to do as I was told.

R' Yitzchok concluded by telling the Chassidim: "Now that the Rebbe has passed on I can finally tell over the story". Rav Aaron Bleich and Rav Mendel Rubin were live witnesses who retold this story many times.

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