

עזרי דשע

**Alei Deshe - Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on
the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur**

Focusing On the Past

וּלְבָנֵי אַהֲרֹן תַּעֲשֶׂה כְּתָנִת וְעִשִׂיתָ לָהֶם אַבְנֵי־טִים וּמִגְבָּעוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם לְכָבוֹד
וּלְתִפְאָרֶת - For the sons of Aharon you shall make tunics and make them
sashes; and you shall make them headdresses for glory and splendor
(Shemos 28:40).

The wording of this pasuk is unusual. Instead of one introductory command of you shall make, each article of the bigdei kehunah is prefaced with its own directive that it should 'be made.' Furthermore, regarding the Kesones and Migba'as, the pasuk says תַּעֲשֶׂה, in the future tense, but regarding the Avneit, it says וְעִשִׂיתָ, which is in the form of past tense. Granted, the vav prefix changes it from the past to the future tense; but why isn't it written in the simple form of future tense, תַּעֲשֶׂה, like the other begadim?

It seems that the answer to the first question lies in the second question: the reason תַּעֲשֶׂה needs to be repeated is because the two garments commanded as תַּעֲשֶׂה are interrupted by the Avneit's directive of וְעִשִׂיתָ.

The Gemara (Horiyos 13b) relates that R. Shimon Ben Gamliel told R. Nassan that his appointment as av beis din was due to קמרא דאבוך - the belt of your father. Simply, this was a reference to R. Nassan's father's prestige. But the sefarim hakedoshim explain that his father's 'belt' was a reference to his father's kedushah; it was this zechus that stood by his children.

Since the bigdei kehunah were to be made for בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן, the sons of Aharon, the Avneit (the belt) symbolized that their

stature as kohanim was due to the kedushah of their fathers. This is why the Torah writes וְעִשִׂיתָ - in the form of past tense – regarding the Avneit; the kohanim's birthright to kedushah is only in the merit of their predecessors.

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**We can grab hold of
my father's Avneit, and
use it to heighten our
kedushah and defeat
our yetzer hara, thus
fulfilling my father's
constant teachings.**

We may suggest another approach. The Gemara¹ teaches that each of the bigdei kehunah atoned for specific sins; the Avneit atoned for 'thoughts of the heart.' The Gemara elsewhere (Bava Basra 164b) states that there are three sins which nobody is spared of every day, including 'thoughts of sin.' My father² wrote that this cannot be understood literally; chas v'shalom that every person must have actual thoughts of sin every day. Certainly, Hashem would not have placed us in such circumstances. Rather, it means that every day, every person is faced with thoughts of sin, with nisyonos which attempt to lure him to such thoughts. This is the circumstance

which Hashem created for us.

Regarding the Kesones and the Migba'as, the pasuk writes תַּעֲשֶׂה, in the future form, because their atonement would only be necessary in the future, if and when people transgressed the aveiros for which these begadim atone. But for the Avneit, the pasuk uses the past form of וְעִשִׂיתָ, because the Avneit atones for thoughts of sin, which face every person every day, and which certainly faced Bnei Yisrael in the past.

¹ Zevachim 88b, Arachin 16a

² Pnei Menachem, Behar 5755 p. 182

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

This week will be the yahrtzeit of my father, the Pnei Menachem, zy”a. Both explanations we have given for the pasuk’s wording of וְעָשִׂיתָ can be connected to the yahrtzeit.

During his mother’s illness, my father invested great effort and expense into the mitzvah of kibbud eim, and would daven at the ohel of his father, the Imrei Emes, that he merit righteous children in that zechus.³ My father loved every person like his own child, so whoever follows in his ways and adheres to his teachings is connected to him as a son – and will be zocheh to yeshuos in his merit and through his tefillos. This is the – קַמְרָא דַּאבוּךְ the belt of your father, that we can all connect with; we can grab hold of my father’s Avneit, and use it to heighten our kedushah and defeat our yetzer hara, thus fulfilling my father’s constant teachings.

The Gemara (Yoma 39b) relates that forty years before the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash, there were signs indicating its imminent destruction; among them, the doors of the Heichal would open on their own. This continued until R. Yochanan Ben Zakkai shouted at them, “Heichal, Heichal, I know that you are destined to be destroyed. But why do you frighten yourself?” Sfas Emes explains that R. Yochanan Ben Zakkai was actually shouting at the hearts of the Jewish people: Wake up! Look what your actions are causing; the doors of the Heichal are opening on their own, a sure sign that its destruction is at our doorstep!

³ See *Otzar Michtavim*, 47

⁴ *Pnei Menachem*, Tzav pp. 23, 30

⁵ As is written (28:30), וְהָיָה עַל לֵב אַהֲרֹן - and they shall be on Aharon’s heart.

Our second approach to וְעָשִׂיתָ was based on the Avneit’s atonement of thoughts of sin. Both during the years of my father’s leadership (which were short in number but high in quality) and in his derashos throughout the years, he would ‘yell at the hearts’ of Yidden to be pure of sinful thought. If, as Chazal say, no one is spared of thoughts of sin every day, certainly מדה טובה מרובה (a positive measure is greater); my father’s constant, holy words, inspiring us to purity of heart, can continue to inspire us every day to refrain from sin and do teshuvah for our aveiros.

The Gemara states that the Avneit atones for thoughts of sin “because of where it is.” Rashi explains that the Avneit is placed opposite the heart. My father pointed out⁴ that it is the Choshen that is placed over the heart,⁵ not the Avneit. My father explained that the Avneit was placed between the heart and the lower body. Thoughts of sin come about by the lack separation between these parts of one’s body; thus, the Avneit atones “because of where it is” – in the place where separation is necessary to protect against nisayon. This atonement is needed when people fail to recognize the greatness of the gifts Hashem gives us — our holy neshamah, our senses, and our heart — using them instead for matters contrary to Hashem’s will. This can only happen because people fail to appreciate the great importance and sanctity of the Jewish soul.

(תצוה תשפ”ב, ס”ג מאמר ב)

Purging The Amalek Within

The haftarah of Parshas Zachor (Shmuel I 15:4) states, וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׂאוּל אֶת הָעָם - Shaul had all the people summoned. Radak, citing Targum Yonasan, explains וַיִּשְׁמַע as “and he gathered”; Shaul gathered all the people so that they would listen to him and wipe out Amalek. Clearly, mechiyas Amalek requires the power of the rabbim, the greater community. The Sfas Emes⁶ derives this concept from a statement of Chazal:⁷ “[Yaakov’s] and his sons’ gatherings saved him from Esav.” Our power against Amalek lies in our unity and joint strength.

⁶ See *Zachor* end of 5637, Purim 5634 and 5649

⁷ Bereishis Rabbah 84:1

⁸ Chapter 18

It is notable that the first parshah of Shema is written in the singular form, while the second parshah is in the plural form. Why is this?

The first parshah is the essence of kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim, accepting Hashem’s kingship. This lies within the power of each individual. The Baal HaTanya writes,⁸ “Even the most irreverent and sinful Jews almost always will give their lives for kiddush Hashem, suffering harsh torment so as not to deny the Oneness of Hashem. This, although they may be boors and ignoramuses who do not know the greatness of Hashem.” Since each individual Yid has the

capacity for true kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim, the first parshah is written in the singular form.

But the second parshah of Shema is about kabbalas ol mitzvos, accepting the obligation of mitzvos. Although every Yid would willingly lay down his life for Hashem’s Name, when it comes to living for Hashem’s Name – fulfilling the myriad daily mitzvos – the strength of the tzibbur is crucial. To truly accept the obligation of mitzvos requires the strength of the community. This is why the second parshah is written in the plural form. And this is why the koach harabbim is necessary for mechiyas Amalek. Wiping

out Amalek can only be done by accepting the responsibility of mitzvos, as we shall see.

Every haftarah is connected to the Torah reading of the week. This week's haftarah sheds light on the very essence of mechiyas Amalek, putting it in clear perspective. The haftarah records Shmuel Hanavi's rebuke to Shaul, after he failed to fully wipe out Amalek (Shmuel I 15:17): הַלֹּא אָמַלְתָּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְהָא - Though

into the water.⁹ This is the power of kabbalas ol mitzvos – one does what one must, without any cheshbonos.

Shmuel's intent when rebuking Shaul was: You descend from the head shevet of Yisrael – the shevet that is first to fulfill Hashem's command; you are certainly capable of carrying out a mitzvah to its fullest. You need to listen to the word of Hashem and fulfill it without making calcula-

that on Shabbos, all Bnei Yisrael are united as one. Amalek – who held power was over the stragglers of Bnei Yisrael,¹² those ejected from the Ananei HaKavod – has no power over the unified Klal Yisrael¹³ of Shabbos. For this reason Parshas Zachor is read on Shabbos. And this, too, is why mechiyas Amalek requires the strength of the tzibbur; Amalek is powerless over a united community.

Shmuel's reprimand of Shaul continues (15:18), וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ ה' בְּדֶרֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ וְהִחַרְמְתָה אֶת הַחַטָּאִים אֹתָם - Hashem sent you on the way, and He said, "Go, destroy the sinners, Amalek, and wage war with him until you have exterminated him." The mefarshim¹⁴ wonder about the repetitive phrase עַד כְּלוּתָם אֹתָם; since Shmuel was already discussing Amalek, why did he need to stress אֹתָם, them?

We may suggest that עַד כְּלוּתָם does not refer to the annihilation of the people of Amalek, but to the purging of Amalek from the hearts of Bnei Yisrael. This form of mechiyas Amalek is no simple task. We can holler, "Machoh timcheh!" and plaster announcements to that effect, but Amalek takes no heed; it remains nestled in the heart. It is only by toiling to rid our hearts of wickedness that Amalek can be weakened.

In the time of Shaul, the mitzvah entailed killing the nation of Amalek, but that could only be done through a total and impartial kabbalas ol mitzvos, through ridding the heart of any trace of Amalek. Only to the extent that Amalek would be purged from the heart would Bnei Yisrael succeed in annihilating their people. This, then, is what Shmuel meant: עַד כְּלוּתָם, as much as you will be rid of your internal Amalek – אֹתָם, will their people be exterminated.

(תרומה – זכור תשפ"א, ס"ג מאמר א)

We can holler, “Machoh timcheh!” and plaster announcements to that effect, but Amalek takes no heed; it remains nestled in the heart.

you may be small in your own eyes, you are the head of the tribes of Israel. The mefarshim note that הַלֹּא אָמַלְתָּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְהָא implies that Shaul was a member of the greatest tribe of Israel. Since, in fact, he came from Shevet Binyamin, the youngest of the shevatim, it would seem proper to simply say, רֹאשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתָּה, you are the head of Israel.

Targum Yonasan explains the pasuk as follows: “The merit of the shevet of Binyamin, your ancestor, caused [your appointment as king], because they wanted to cross the Sea before Bnei Yisrael; because of this, Hashem anointed you as king over Yisrael.” Indeed, the Gemara (Sotah 36b) relates that when Bnei Yisrael reached the Yam Suf, the shevatim began to quarrel, each one wanting to be the first to enter the sea, until Shevet Binyamin leaped ahead and plunged

tions. Although the mitzvah of mechiyas Amalek in its simplest form requires killing the members of Amalek; its first and most vital step is total acceptance of the mitzvos, without cheshbonos, and giving over one's heart for the Ribbono Shel Olam. This requires a koach harabbim.

Magen Avraham¹⁰ writes that although reading Parshas Zachor is a mitzvah d'Oraisa, the Torah does not mandate that it be read on Shabbos, because the community gathers in shul on Shabbos (– and more specifically, the Shabbos before Purim, in order to connect the story of Amalek with the story of Haman). On the most straightforward level, Magen Avraham means that the communal presence in shul will prevent individuals from forgetting to fulfill the mitzvah. But it runs deeper. The Sfas Emes¹¹ writes

9 They were prevented by Shevet Yehudah from actually entering first.

10 O.C. 685

11 *Zachor* end of 5637

12 As the pasuk (Devarim 25:18) says, *erom derebmun srelggarst eht fi neve taht dda yam eW .raer ruoy ta sgnilkaew eht lla ,siomdnih erew ohw uoy fo esoht kcurst eh dna – וַיִּזְנֹב בְּךָ כָּל הַנְּחֻשְׁלִים אֶחָדֶיךָ – slaudividni suoremun rehtar tub ,puorg a ton erew yeht ,net naht*

13 See *Sfas Emes*, Purim 5638

14 See Rashi

A Depth of Re-acceptance

The Gemara (Shabbos 88a) relates that at the time of Mattan Torah, Hashem coerced the Jewish people into accepting the Torah by holding the mountain over their heads and threatening to bury them with it. The Gemara then states that this raises a question as to the enforceability of the Torah, since it was not accepted willingly — but the Yidden voluntarily re-accepted the Torah during the time of Achashverosh. Rashi comments that the new acceptance was “from the love of the miracle that occurred to them.”

Sefarim wonder about the Gemara’s wording. Why does it say, “During the time of Achashverosh,” connecting the Yidden’s re-acceptance of the Torah with love, to Achashveirosh? Shouldn’t it have instead said “During the time of Mordechai”?

The Gemara (Megillah 14a) states that the removal of Achashverosh’s signet ring accomplished more than did all the forty-eight nevi’im and seven nevi’os, since they did not bring the Yidden to teshuvah, while the removal of Achashverosh’s ring did. How do we understand this? When Esther was made queen, the Yidden felt confident and safe, having “a sister in the palace.” But when Achashverosh removed his signet ring, their confidence disappeared, and they realized that their fate depended on Hashem alone.¹⁵ The level of inspiration gained by a whip to the heart far outdoes that of miracles and yeshuos, and such a ‘whip’ is even more effective when inflicted during a time of fear and uncertainty. At times like these, a person wakes up to the realization that everything is controlled by Hashem. It was this inspiration that led to the Yidden’s re-acceptance of the Torah out of love.

We may now understand that since Achashverosh caused the Yidden’s reawakening by removing his ring, eventually inspiring them to willing re-acceptance of the Torah, the kabbalas haTorah is linked to the “time of Achashverosh.” In fact, the Midrash¹⁶ sees the name אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ as a hint to Hashem, Who controls אַחֲרֵי־תְּחִלָּה וְרֵאשִׁית, the end and the beginning. This means that through Achashverosh, the Yidden recognized that everything is in the hand of Hashem, Who is the Cause of all occurrences.

We may take another approach. Ever since the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, we are bereft, and אֵין לָנוּ שִׁיּוּר רַק הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, our only remnant is the Torah. When the Beis Hamikdash stood, we were able to serve Hashem through korbanos; now, our only recourse is through Torah study. As the Gemara (Menachos 110a) states, one who studies the halachos of korbanos is considered to have brought a korban. Torah study is our only remaining way of connecting to Hashem.¹⁷

During the time of Purim, the Beis Hamikdash no longer stood.¹⁸ At such

a time, a loving acceptance of the Torah is even more powerful, since it is rooted in a powerful draw to the Torah, our sole means of connection to Hashem. When there is no Beis Hamikdash, we grab onto the Torah for dear life, never daring to let go of our lifeline. This is why the Gemara connects the reacceptance of the Torah to “the time of Achashverosh.” Mordechai’s lifetime included a time when the Beis Hamikdash still stood, but our subjugation under Achashverosh was entirely during the period of churban. It was this element of churban Beis Hamikdash that infused the new acceptance of the Torah with a unique wholeheartedness, with its great level of desire and willingness.

We may offer another, practical approach. The Gemara (Megillah 14a) gives several reasons why we do not recite Hallel on Purim. One reason is that the pasuk (Tehillim 13:1) says, הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי ה' - Praise, servants of Hashem. After the miracle of Purim, the Yidden were still “servants of Achashverosh,” and not exclusively “servants of Hashem,” so it is not fitting to recite Hallel on that miracle.

Accordingly, one might think that an acceptance of the Torah made while we were still “servants of Achashverosh” would be lacking. But this is not so. Galus can only impede a kabbalas haTorah if it was made out of coercion and fear; an acceptance from love is not limited by circumstance. For this reason, the Gemara stresses that the reacceptance of the Torah was during the “time of Achashverosh.” Although we cannot recite Hallel on a miracle while we were “servants of Achashverosh,” our loving kabbalas haTorah during that very time stands strong, and cannot be hindered by hardship or suffering.



The Gemara (Megillah 14a) states, “Forty-eight nevi’im and seven nevi’os prophesized for Yisrael, and they neither subtracted nor added to what is written in the Torah, except [the mitzvah of] reading the Megillah.” The Sfas Emes¹⁹ asks: With the mitzvah of Megillah an element was “added” to the Torah, but what was “subtracted” from the Torah with this mitzvah?

One of the reasons given in the Gemara (Megillah 14a) for why Hallel is not recited on Purim is that the Megillah reading is itself considered Hallel. In truth, however, although the once-a-year reading of the Megillah is a holy and uplifting event, it is no substitute for the heartfelt recital of David Hamelech’s pesukim of Tehillim, when a Yid pours out his heart with ה' כִּי אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ - Please, Hashem, for I am Your servant (Tehillim 116:16). Thus, when the Nevi’im instituted the mitzvah of reading the Megillah, effectively preempting the recital of Hallel on Purim — there was indeed an element of “subtraction,” since the greatness of David Hamelech’s Hallel would be lost to Purim.²⁰

(פורים תש"פ - סעודת פורים בביהמ"ד)

15 This inspiration was gained by the very removal of Achashveirosh’s ring, even before he handed it to Haman; when he handed it to Haman, the Yidden faced an even greater level of *hastarah* (veiled Heavenly conduct). The Gemara (Megillah 11a) applies the following pasuk (Tehillim 124:2) to Haman’s rise to power: בָּקוּם עָלֵינוּ אֲדָם - when a man rose over us, and comments that he was a ‘man’ and not a king. *Sefarim* explain that whereas a king’s actions are ordained by Hashem, as the pasuk (Mishlei 21:1) says, לֵב מֶלֶךְ בַּיָּד ה' - the heart of a king is in Hashem’s hand; a mere minister has a greater element of free will and can choose to inflict harm. Thus, when Achashveirosh handed his signet ring to Haman, enabling him to do as he pleased, it was a very dark moment for the Yidden.

16 See *Rikanti*, Vayeitzei, cited by *Mechir Yayin* 1:14

17 For this reason, Chazal (Yoma 71a) say that one who gives wine to *talmidei chachamim* to drink, is as if he brought *nesachim* (wine offerings).

18 Similarly, the original *Mattan Torah* was before the building of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

19 5661

20 Although one may recite Tehillim on Purim, and some have a custom to rise early *Hallel*, with its accompanying passion and feeling.

Purim morning and recite the entire *Sefer Tehillim*, it is not equivalent to a true recitation of

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