

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



ענין השבוע

AL EI DESHE

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

Perfection of Adversity

The Midrash¹ states that Yitzchak Avinu dug five wells in Be'er Sheva, corresponding to the five Chumashim. The Midrash enumerates which well corresponds to each Chumash, and connects the last well, Shivah,² to Sefer Bamidbar. The Midrash explains that Bamidbar completes the seven (*shivah*) *sefarim* of the Torah. This is followed by the obvious problem: there are only five

is divided into three *sefarim*: from the beginning until (10:35) הָאָרֶן; the *parshah* of הָאָרֶן; the rest of the Chumash.³

But why is it Bamidbar that “completes” the seven *sefarim* of the Torah? Shouldn't it be Devarim, the last of the Chumashim? And if Bamidbar could be considered the completion of the *sefarim*, the same could be said of any of the other Chumashim. Why Bamidbar?

Yefeh To'ar, the primary *mefaresh* on the Midrash, offers two explanations:

1. Whereas the other Chumashim each contain only one *sefer*, Bamidbar contains three, so it is seen as completing the seven *sefarim*.

2. The Gemara (Shabbos 116a) explains the pasuk (Mishlei 9:1), הַצְּבֵרָה עִמּוּדֵיהָ שִׁבְעָה – *she carved out its seven pillars* as referring to the seven *sefarim* of the Torah. Since Bamidbar is divided into three *sefarim* in order to bring the number of *sefarim* to seven, it is considered the completion of the seven *sefarim*.⁴

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While it may be true that in Shamayim, the Torah remains clean and pure, locked up in the aron kodesh; nonetheless, only in the lower worlds can the Torah's perfection be expressed.

sefarim to the Torah. The Midrash answers that this is in accordance with Bar Kapara, who maintained that Chumash Bamidbar

1 Bereishis Rabbah 64:8

2 Bereishis 26:33

3 See Shabbos 116a

4 This approach of *Yefeh To'ar* is novel; the Gemara does not seem to indicate that Bamidbar was divided in order to reach a sum of seven *sefarim*, only that the Torah was divided into seven *sefarim*, which are hinted to with הַצְּבֵרָה עִמּוּדֵיהָ שִׁבְעָה.

Setting Roots

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹבָב בֶּן רְעוּאֵל הַמִּדְיָנִי חָתָן מֹשֶׁה נֹסְעִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר ה' אֵתָּן לָכֶם

Moshe said to Chovav son of Reuel, the Midianite, the father-in-law of Moshe, "We are journeying to the place of which Hashem has said, 'I shall give it to you.'" (Bamidbar 10:29)

Rashi comments: "*We are journeying* – immediately; within three days we will enter the Land. They traveled this first journey intending to enter Eretz Yisrael, but they sinned with the *mis'onenim* (complainers)."

The Maharal⁷ points out a seeming problem. Rashi to Maseches Shabbos (116a) writes that Bnei Yisrael's first sin in the *midbar* was *kivros hata'avah*. If so, in his comment on our pasuk he should have written, "But they sinned with *kivros hata'avah*." The Maharal answers that *kivros hata'avah* on its own would not have prevented Klal Yisrael from entering Eretz Yisrael immediately. Only once they sinned with the *mis'onenim*, and became *נטרש בחטא*, rooted in sin, having sinned twice – were they punished in this manner.

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Perfection of Adversity

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Let us take another approach. The Gemara (Shabbos 88b-89a) states that when Moshe Rabbeinu was in *Shamayim* to receive the Torah, the *malachim* pleaded to Hashem that the Torah remain in Heaven. Why should the Torah be wasted on the lowly world below? Moshe replied that while it may be true that in *Shamayim*, the Torah remains clean and pure, locked up in the *aron kodesh*; nonetheless, only in the lower worlds can the Torah's perfection be expressed. Only where there is a *yetzer hara*, where jealousy and *ta'avos* exist, and where humans struggle to overcome all of these and keep Hashem's Torah – only there can the Torah's objective be achieved.

This phenomenon of man's struggle to keep the Torah is expressed most in Chumash Bamidbar, where Klal Yisrael faced many tests in the wilderness and repeatedly struggled and fell. In this way, then, Bamidbar “completes the seven *sefarim* of the Torah”; it expresses the Torah's perfection by describing Klal Yisrael's struggles to overcome the *yetzer hara* and keep Hashem's will.

This is particularly true of Parshas Beha'aloscha. The Gemara (Shabbos *ibid*) teaches that the *parshah* of בְּנִסְעַת הָאֶרֶץ is situated to separate two tragic occurrences from each other. There is an important lesson here. Tests and hardships surround a person from all sides, and the way to break through them is with בְּנִסְעַת הָאֶרֶץ, by holding tight to the *koach* of Torah. This is alluded to in the *Zohar hakadosh*,⁵ which

states that Yitzchak's naming of the well “Shivah” corresponds to the seven *ananei hakavod* which surrounded Bnei Yisrael in the *midbar*; a reference to the Torah, which gave Bnei Yisrael the ability to withstand the *nisyonos* and pitfalls they faced.

Bnei Yisrael's journey through the *midbar* was a prototype for all time, for each Yid's travels through the wilderness of life, where he struggles with tests and adversity. The proper path through life isn't always lit up; it is often murky and unclear. A person may lack the proper mindset to deal with life's hardships. But through the Torah one can gain clarity on the proper way to live in this world, on the way to elevate himself above the *nisyonos* he faces. The Torah teaches us the correct way of life and provides us with life in its truest form.

The pasuk (10:21) states, וַיִּסְעוּ הַקְּהֵלָה, תַּיִם נוֹשְׂאֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ – *Then journeyed the Kehasim, bearers of the sanctuary*. The *mefarshim* point out that regarding the families of Gershon and Merari, the pasuk (10:17) states, וַיִּסְעוּ בְנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן וּבְנֵי מֵרָרִי – *then journeyed the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari*, prefacing them with בְּנֵי, the sons of. Why are the Kehasim not similarly called “the sons of Kehas”?

The Rambam⁶ writes: “This is not only true of *Shevet Levi*, but any person in the world whose spirit motivates him and whose wisdom leads him to understand to distinguish himself and stand before Hashem and serve Him

and know Him; and he walks properly in the way G-d created him and throws off the yoke of the many calculations that people seek – he is sanctified as holy of holies, and Hashem will be his portion and inheritance for all eternity.”

The Rambam does not mean to limit this to those who dedicate their entire lives to Torah and *avodah*; his promise includes those who are preoccupied with earning a living and cannot totally disengage from worldly pursuits. These Yidden, too, can take hold of the *koach haTorah* and rise above the lowliness of this world. This is why Kehas, the bearers of the *Aron*, is not prefaced with בְּנֵי; any Yid, even one who is not from Kehas' biological family, can grab hold of the *Aron HaKodesh*.

The Gemara (Sotah 35a) states that וְהָאֶרֶץ נוֹשֵׂא אֶת נוֹשְׂאֵיהָ, the *Aron* carried those who carried it. Why didn't Hashem afford Kehas the great *zechus* of *tircha d'mitzvah*, laboring to fulfill a mitzvah, by actually carrying it?

וְהָאֶרֶץ נוֹשֵׂא אֶת נוֹשְׂאֵיהָ means something else: those who apply themselves to the Torah are lifted and elevated above this world. This isn't only true of Kehas, but of any Yid who contemplates what his life's purpose is and how he is to live life. As the Gemara (Shabbos 94a) says, חַי נוֹשֵׂא אֶת עַצְמוֹ, a living being carries itself. Any living person has the ability to carry himself above life's trials and hardships and nourish himself from the life-giving Torah.

(בהעלותך תשפ"ב, ס"ג מאמר א)

5 Vol. 3, 302b

6 End of *Hilchos Shemittah V'Yovel*

Setting Roots

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The Maharal's choice of expression seems redundant. Why does he say that Bnei Yisrael were punished because they "became rooted in sin" and also that they "sinned twice"?

The Gemara (Bava Kamma 67b-68a) asks why one who steals an animal and slaughters or sells it must pay four or five times its worth. R. Akiva explains that it is because he has become נשטרש בחטא. Rashi explains, "He laid down roots; he became entrenched in sin because he acquired (*koneh*) the animal, so his act [of theft] was effective." Since the animal's owner already despaired of it, selling the animal and transferring its ownership caused it to be acquired by *shinui reshus*, and the theft was thus sustained and reinforced. However, the Gemara eventually explains differently. The thief receives this fine even if he sold the animal before its owner despaired of it – so it could not be acquired, and the act could not take effect – because he "repeated his sin." We see that there is a distinction between becoming "rooted in sin" and "repeating" one's sin. Thus, the Maharal means that not only did Bnei Yisrael sin twice in the *midbar*, but they became נשטרש בחטא, and it was for this that they were punished.

The exact complaint of the *mis'onenim* is not clear in the *pesukim*. Rashi (11:1) says that the people complained, "How much have we exerted ourselves on the road!" If they had focused on where they were heading – to Eretz Yisrael, to build the Beis Hamikdash, to great *madreigos* – they would have traveled joyfully. But they were worn out; they didn't have *koach* to keep Hashem's commandments. Why?

Because they had become entrenched in *aveiros*, so their *avodas Hashem* became burdensome.

The root of feeling burdened by *avodas Hashem*, of lacking joy and energy in following Hashem's path, is התאוה תאונה (11:4). One who is attached to the pleasures of this world and seeks them out, invariably loses excitement for Torah and mitzvos; he performs them with heaviness and lack of zest. His davening is without *varmkeit*, and he doesn't learn; fulfilling mitzvos feels strenuous to him. He has no *cheshek*; he doesn't feel the spiritual light inherent in every mitzvah. This is what the Maharal means with נשטרש בחטא; their sins set roots in their hearts so that they lost a taste for *ruchniyus*. They could not enter Eretz Yisrael in this state; what connection could one who seeks out physical desires have with Eretz Yisrael?

Hashem replied to the people's complaint and said He would send *slav*; it would be עד חודש ימים, עד אֶשֶׁר יֵצֵא מֵאַפְּךָם, לְזָרָא – *Until an entire month of days, until it comes out of your nose, and becomes nauseating to you* (11:20). Rashi comments on the word לְזָרָא, "You will distance it more than you originally brought it close." In this understanding, the *alef* is as if it were a *hei*; לְזָרָא is the same as לזרה – the *slav* would become foreign and distant.⁸

Baal Haturim explains it differently. לזר א can be read as א' לזר, one entity became foreign. What entity was this? Just as the *mann* could taste like whatever was desired, so too could the *slav*.⁹ There was only one exception: the *slav* could not taste like the *livyasan*. This was the

one thing that was foreign to the *slav*. But why?

The term *livyasan* connotes connection,¹⁰ as in (Bereishis 29:34) הִפְעֵם יְלִיָּהוּ אִשִּׁי אֵלַי – *This time my husband will become attached to me.*¹¹ *L'asid lavo*, when we eat of the *livyasan*, we will merit a close connection with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. When Bnei Yisrael desired to feast on meat, although Hashem granted their desire – that meat could not synchronize with the *livyasan*. Desire for physical gratification cannot work in tandem with a longing for connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. One who seeks to dine on meat will encounter hardship and feel tired and uninterested when it is time to enter Eretz Yisrael or keep the Torah and mitzvos.

The root of feeling burdened by *avodas Hashem*, of lacking joy and energy in following Hashem's path, is התאוה תאונה

One must know that desiring physical pleasures and nurturing a *cheshek* for *ruchniyus* are two divergent paths. If one engages in the first path, he will find no enjoyment in Torah and *tefillah*. But he will have no excuse that it was difficult; it was his choice to develop an alternative taste. On the other hand, one who chooses to toil in Torah and guard his thoughts will find joy in Torah and *tefillah* and all the mitzvos.

(מתיבתא לוס אנג'לס, ב' שלח – בהעלותך בחו"ל תשפ"ב)

8 See R. Eliyahu Mizrachi

9 This is *Baal Haturim's* novel understanding.

10 See *Shittah Mekubetzes*, Bava Basra 75a

11 See Targum

No Rush

וַיִּצְעַק מִשָּׁה אֶל ה' לֵאמֹר קַל נָא רִפְּא נָא לָהּ

Moshe cried out to Hashem, saying, "Please, G-d, heal her now." (Bamidbar 12:13)

The Gemara (Berachos 34a) derives from this pasuk that one who davens for another need not mention his name, since Moshe did not mention Miriam's name in his *tefillah*. I was told that my father, the Pnei Menachem, ruled that when a newborn girl is in need of *tefillos*, her parents do not need to rush to name her, since the Gemara says that a name is not necessary for *tefillos*. I was asked about this: the *poskim*¹² write that this applies only when one is in the presence of the person he is davening for; otherwise, he must mention his name. If so, it would seem that the newborn should be named as soon as possible, so that people could daven for her properly in any location.

The truth is, I am not familiar with the details of what took place when my father issued this ruling; although I heard it from a reliable source, the context of the story and the nuances of my father's wording may render it specific to that scenario. Nonetheless, I will try to explain as I imagine my father intended.

To start, it should be noted that the above understanding of the *poskim* – that one must mention the name of the one in need when he is not present – is not universal; some authorities disagree.¹³

But it would seem that even those who maintain that this is the *halachah* are in agreement that it applies only when he has a name; if not, one can certainly daven for him without a name. Although it is possible that even before a child is named, he is already known by his future name in *Shamayim*;¹⁴ this would not impact the way we are to daven in this world, since in this world he does not yet have a name.

Additionally, even if we suppose that in general one must mention the name of the person he is davening for, it seems clear that it is sufficient to mention *either* his name *or* his mother's name. Otherwise, how does one daven for a *ger*? Certainly, one does not mention the *ger's* non-Jewish mother's name. In fact, we find a similar concept in the Mishnah (Gittin 87b): a witness can sign either his name or his mother's name.¹⁵

Even if a woman has more than one child, a person can daven for any of them by mentioning only the mother's name. This is evident, because suppose there were two ill people with the same name and mother's name; certainly, one wouldn't need to include their grandmothers' names in his *tefillos*. In the same manner, one's mother's name is enough, even if she has multiple children.

All this being said, my father's citing of the above Gemara to support his ruling

is difficult to understand. Even if it is true that one need not mention a name in his *tefillos*, the Gemara would not seem to be proof to this. In the case of the Gemara, Moshe was davening in Miriam's presence; one could argue that that was why he didn't need to mention her name.

I believe my father meant to show from the Gemara that mentioning the name does not necessarily add quality to one's *tefillah*; otherwise, Moshe would have mentioned Miriam's name even though he was in her presence. If so, the same is true where a child does not have a name; his parents need not rush to name him, and it will not detract from the *tefillos* on his behalf.¹⁶

Ultimately, it is impossible to know my father's true reasoning for his ruling. He may have felt for whatever reason that it would be better not to name the baby too soon, even though she would be without a name for *tefillos*;¹⁷ relying on the opinions that understand the Gemara literally: one need never mention the name of the person he davens for.¹⁸

After all, the custom is to mention the name and mother's name when davening for one in need. Indeed, the *Pri Megadim* writes¹⁹ that it is best to be as explicit as possible when davening.

(בנאות דשא – בהעלותך תשפ"א)

12 O.C. 116 and 119

13 See *Pesach Einayim*, Berachos 7b

14 See Sotah 2a, "Before one's creation, it is announced, 'The daughter of *ploni* to *ploni*'" with Maharsha. It is also said in the name of the Arizal that one's name is dependent on the *shoresh* of his *neshamah*. See also *Zohar hakadosh*, Vol. 2, 12a; *Igra D'Kallah*, Bereishis 17:15.

15 See Ya'avetz, Berachos 34a who implies the contrary; see also Ya'avetz, Shabbos 66b and *Midrash Talpiyos*, ענף כישוף ד"ה ונראה ד"ה אמ"ה.

16 See *Degel Machaneh Efraim*, end of Beha'aloscha; his intention seems to be that even according to the above Gemara, there is an advantage to mentioning an ill person's name even in his presence.

17 See *Erech Lechem* of the Maharikash, 119; *Chasam Sofer*, Nedarim 40a s.v. *V'ahavta*; *Otzros HaSofer*, issue 23 p. 119 (**notations of R. Yechiel Baum**).

18 This is the opinion of the Meiri and Ya'avetz (**ad loc.**) and others. The Meiri explains that רחמנא לבא בעי, Hashem's greatest consideration is what is in one's heart; Ya'avetz explains that קמי שמיא גליא, Hashem knows who one is davening for.

19 O.C. 119