

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



עילוי נשמת

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

Fighting the Good Fight

The pasuk in Tehillim (106:26-27) depicts Hashem's response to the *chet ha'meraglim*: וַיִּשָּׂא יְדוֹ לָהֶם לְהַפִּיל אוֹתָם בַּמִּדְבָּר, וְלִהְפִּיל זֶרְעָם בְּתוֹךְ הַיַּבֵּשׁ וְלִזְרוֹתָם בְּאֶרְצוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְלִזְרוֹתָם בְּאֶרְצוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְלִזְרוֹתָם בְּאֶרְצוֹת הַגּוֹיִם וְלִזְרוֹתָם בְּאֶרְצוֹת הַגּוֹיִם. *Then He lifted up His hand [in an oath] against them, to cast them down in the wilderness, and to cast down their descendants among the nations, and to scatter them among the lands.*

Only a victory won with mesirus nefesh, with extraordinary effort, is passed on to one's children. When a person wins over his yetzer hara after a hard fight, he makes the battle easier for his descendants.

It is told that R. Yisrael of Chortkov asked the Imrei Emes about this pasuk: Indeed, our parshah speaks of Hashem's oath that Bnei Yisrael would wander in the *midbar*. But where do we see an oath that Bnei Yisrael would be scattered among the lands?⁶ The Imrei Emes replied that it is inherent in Hashem's words (Bamidbar 14:21), וְאִלְמָּה לֹא אָנֹכִי אֲנִי וְאִלְמָּה לֹא אָנֹכִי אֲנִי וְאִלְמָּה לֹא אָנֹכִי אֲנִי.

וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹד ה' אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ, *But as I live – and the glory of Hashem shall fill the entire world.* Hashem's glory would only spread around the world when Klal Yisrael would go into *galus* and be scattered around the lands. Hearing this, R. Yisrael was amazed, and remarked, "Only the *manhig hador* could say such a *terutz!*"⁷

Galus is not limited to the Diaspora; Eretz Yisrael, too, can be a *galus*. People are in *galus* within themselves as well – *galus hanefesh*. When *avodas Hashem* becomes difficult, and a person nonetheless prevails and continues on – the glory of Hashem is revealed. When a person toils to do what's right despite hardships, he fills that space in the world with *kevod Hashem* and brings great pleasure to Hashem.

The Gemara (Berachos 3a) says, "מה לו לאב" – What is it to a Father who exiled His children, and woe is to children who were exiled from their Father's table." The *mefarshim* explain that מה לו is meant as אוי לו ("woe," as well), but is written this way out of *kavod* for Hashem.⁸

Let us explore this more deeply. *Galus* is only expressed as "woe" on our end, because

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וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן נוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

Moshe called Hoshea son of Nun "Yehoshua." (Bamidbar 13:16)

Rashi explains that the name Yehoshua was a *tefillah*: קָה יוֹשִׁיעַךְ מֵעֲצַת מְרַגְלִים, *May Hashem save you from the plot of the meraglim.*

Many *mefarshim* point out that the Torah refers to him as Yehoshua even before the story of the *meraglim* – in the contexts of the war with *Amalek*¹ and the *chet ha'egel*.² The *Rishonim*³ answer that although his name was already Yehoshua before the story of the *meraglim*, Moshe intended to impress upon Yehoshua that he had been called that name as a *tefillah* to be saved from the *atzas meraglim*.

But what was unique about the *chet ha'meraglim* that Moshe had to remind Yehoshua that he needed Hashem's salvation? Why was this not as urgent during the *milchemes Amalek* and the *chet ha'egel* as well?

There is a great distinction between them. *Amalek's* attack on Bnei Yisrael was an attack on *kedushah*; the war against them was a spiritual war. As the pasuk (Shemos 17:16) says, מִלְחָמָה לַה' בְּעַמְּמֵלֶךָ, *Hashem maintains a war against Amalek.*

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6 See Radak ad loc. Although the *churban Beis Hamikdash* and Bnei Yisrael's future exile were indeed a result of the *chet ha'meraglim*, R. Yisrael was asking where we see that Hashem made an oath to this effect.

7 See *Likutei Yehudah Hachadash*; *Torah Ohr* of the Malbim

8 See sources in *M'Pi Seformim V'Sofrim*, Va'eira p. 46 footnote 1

1 Shemos 17:19, 33:11

2 Shemos 17:13

3 See Rashbam and Chizkuni

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we can't understand it. But regarding Hashem, it is expressed as "what?" – it's a question that has an answer, although we don't know what it is. In truth, everything Klal Yisrael experiences is calculated, in order to fill the world with *kevod Hashem*. This is the purpose of *galus*, and Hashem has great pleasure and *nachas* from our *avodah* of *galus*.⁹

Tzaddikim said of the Cantonists who remained true to *Yiddishkeit* despite terrible hardships, that they might be delaying *Mashiach*; because when *Mashiach* comes, Hashem will no longer have the *nachas ruach* that He derives from them.¹⁰ The same is true of every Yid, each according to his level. When a Yid overcomes his *yetzer hara* and triumphs over his *nisyonos*, he fills the world with Hashem's glory.

The pasuk (Mishlei 3:14) says, כִּי טוֹב סַחְרָה, כִּי טוֹב סַחְרָה – *for [Torah's] commerce is better than the commerce of silver*. Similarly, we say in the *piyut* for Simchas Torah, כִּי טוֹב סַחְרָה – *for its commerce is better than all [other] commerce*. Rashi on our *parshah* (13:17) writes, "It is the way of peddlers to display the lesser quality merchandise first, and afterwards the higher quality." Breaking through our *nisyonos* is difficult, but that is because the highest quality merchandise – the Torah – is only reached after first enduring hardship; hardship in Torah, in the way of the Torah, and in the Torah's teachings. But one who puts in true effort will merit to see and experience the goodness of Torah.

The pasuk says (14:21-23), וְאִלֵּם חַי אֲנִי, וְיִמְלֵא כְבוֹד ה' אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ, כִּי כָל הָאֲנָשִׁים הָרְאִים

אֶת כְּבוֹדִי וְגו' וַיִּנְסוּ אֹתִי זֶה עֶשֶׂר פְּעָמִים וְגו' אִם יֵרָא וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְאַבְתָּם, *But as I live – and the glory of Hashem shall fill the entire world – that all the men who have seen My glory... and have tested Me these ten times... if they will see the land that I have sworn to give their forefathers!* In *Kedushas Levi*, the Berditchever wonders about the pasuk's wording: כִּי usually means "because" – which implies that Hashem's glory will fill the world *because* the people would die in the wilderness. How do we understand this?

The Berditchever explains that since those who were present at *Mattan Torah* were freed of the *yetzer hara*,¹¹ they didn't need to struggle in *avodas Hashem*.¹² As a result, *kevod Hashem* was not magnified to as high a degree. Only once they would die, and their descendants – who were not present at *Mattan Torah* – would toil to serve Hashem despite the *yetzer hara*'s enticements, would there be a true *אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ* כְּבוֹד ה' וְיִמְלֵא כְבוֹד ה' אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ.

Overcoming the *yetzer hara* is not an easy task, but, as Kalev said (13:30), עֲלֵה נִעְלָה וְגו' כִּי, יָכוֹל נוֹכַל לָהּ – *We shall surely ascend... for we can surely do it!* My father would point to a teaching of the Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 31a), that a double expression, such as *הַשֵּׁב תְּשִׁיבם* or *הוֹכִיחַ תּוֹכִיחַ*, indicates that an act should be repeated even a hundred times, until the objective is accomplished. In the same way, if a Yid does not admit defeat when faced with difficulty, but repeatedly puts in effort to overcome and persevere through hardships, then he will ultimately triumph – כִּי עֲלֵה נִעְלָה כִּי, יָכוֹל נוֹכַל לָהּ.

The *Ohr Hachaim hakadosh* writes a beautiful *vort*, which we otherwise could

not say: The pasuk (14:24) states, וְעַבְדִּי כָלֵב, עֵקֶב הַיְתֵה רוּחַ אַחֲרָת עִמּוֹ וַיִּמְלֵא אַחֲרָי, וְהִבִּיאֵתוּ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר בָּא שָׁמָּה, וַיִּזְרְעוּ יוֹרְשָׁנָה – *But My servant Kalev, because a different spirit was with him and he followed Me wholeheartedly, I shall bring him to the land to which he came, and his offspring shall possess it*. Why is only Kalev given the title "עַבְדִּי – My servant," and not Yehoshua? It is because Yehoshua had assistance in overcoming the challenges he faced: Moshe's *tefillah* for him, and the added *yud* in his name. For him, the *nisayon* was less challenging. But Kalev was on his own; he battled the *yetzer hara*¹³ – the רוּחַ אַחֲרָת עִמּוֹ – and emerged victorious. This is why Hashem referred to him as "My servant, Kalev." When a person works to overcome *nisyonos* and hardships to serve Hashem properly, he is *עַבְדִּי*, a true servant of Hashem.

We may add that regarding Kalev, the pasuk says, וַיִּזְרְעוּ יוֹרְשָׁנָה – *and his offspring shall possess it*, whereas the pasuk that discusses both Yehoshua and Kalev (14:38) does not say that their descendants would keep their inheritance. Why? Because only a victory won with *mesirus nefesh*, with extraordinary effort, is passed on to one's children. When a person wins over his *yetzer hara* after a hard fight, he makes the battle easier for his descendants. Indeed, even one who doesn't find the strength to fight for his own sake can find motivation to fight for his children's sake.

(פרשת שלח תשפ"ב – ס"ג מאמר ב)

9 See *Derashos Chasam Sofer, Shabbos Shuvah* 5562 (vol. 1, 16b) with *Hagahos Sha'arei Yosef* (33c).

10 R. Yehoshua and R. Yissachar Dov of Belz are said to have made this remark when staying in Vienna, see *Shenos Bikkurim, Kedushas Shabbos* p. 754. See also *Be'eros HaMayim* of R. Hirsch of Riminov, entry "*Teshuvah*."

11 *Shemos Rabbah* 32:1

12 Although Chazal indicate that the *yetzer hara* returned after the *chet ha'egel* (see *Shemos Rabbah* *ibid*; *Tanchuma*, Ki Sisa 16; *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu*, 26; *Eiruvin* 54a; *Avodah Zarah* 5a); seemingly, *Kedushas Levi* maintains that its power was reduced upon that generation.

13 This is why he went to daven at the *kevarim* of the *Avos*, as the Gemara (*Sotah* 34b) relates.

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Yehoshua understood on his own that a war like this can only be won with Hashem's assistance, just as the Gemara (Kiddushin 30b) teaches that one cannot defeat the *yetzer hara* without Hashem's help. Yehoshua was fully cognizant, as well, that the *chet ha'egel* was a machination of the *yetzer hara* meant to lead Bnei Yisrael astray; it too needed to be fought as a מלחמה לה'.

But by all appearances, the planned journey of the *meraglim* was no cause for

concern. All its members were upstanding people who simply planned on scouting out Eretz Yisrael. What could be wrong with that? This is why Moshe impressed upon Yehoshua at that time the message of his

name: קה ישיעך מעצת מרגלים. There is a hidden conspiracy, a hidden *yetzer hara* in this journey, and a hidden *yetzer hara* is more dangerous than an open *yetzer hara*. Only with Hashem's help, said Moshe, can you be saved from the *meraglim's* scheming.

The *Zohar hakadosh*⁴ indicates that indeed, Yehoshua was only given that name at the time of the *meraglim*; the Torah uses this name earlier on account of what would happen later. But in the cases of others who received new names – such as Avraham and Yaakov – the Torah never uses the new name before it was given. What's the difference?

One of the *yetzer hara's* main tactics is to blind a person to the future. *All that counts is the indulgent pleasure of this fleeting moment – don't think about what will happen tomorrow.* Because *aveiros* seem sweet in this world and mitzvos seem to cost us, one who only considers the here-and-now is easy prey for the *yetzer hara*. Fighting the *yetzer hara* requires keeping one's eyes wide open to the future.

aveiros as mitzvos. We may add that he dyes *aveiros* by painting the world's attractions in bright, eye-catching colors that lure a person to them. Color is, after all, merely an externality that presents an object as more interesting than it truly is. This is the *koach* of the *yetzer hara*: catching people's attention with the bright colors of this world, using vivid imagery to present nothingness as something to pursue. The Rebbe R. Bunim of Peshischa said that the *yetzer hara* can tempt even a blind person through its imaginative powers; but if someone would lose his faculty of imagination, the *yetzer hara* would be powerless over him.

At *milchemes Amalek*, where Bnei Yisrael fought the forces of the *yetzer hara*, the Torah refers to Yehoshua by his future name, the name that held a message and *tefillah* for success in fighting evil. When fighting the *yetzer hara*, one must keep sight of the future.

This lesson is relevant to us in our daily lives as well. When we practice Chazal's teaching⁵ that איזהו חכם הרואה את הנוולד, *Who is wise? He who foresees the future* – when we envision and foresee that we will one day stand trial before Hashem, then we can correctly assess the best way forward, considering the gains of a mitzvah against the losses of an *aveirah*.

(בנאות דשא – שלח תשפ"ב)

Because aveiros seem sweet in this world and mitzvos seem to cost us, one who only considers the here-and-now is easy prey for the yetzer hara. Fighting the yetzer hara requires keeping one's eyes wide open to the future.

4 Vol. 3, 158b
5 Tamid 32a

With Worthy Intentions

ויהיו בני ישראל במדבר וימצאו איש מקושש עצים ביום השבת
Bnei Yisrael were in the wilderness, and they found a man gathering wood on the Shabbos day. (Bamidbar 15:32)

Chazal¹⁴ say that the *mekoshesh* committed his act *l'shem Shamayim*. There was a sentiment among Bnei Yisrael that since they would no longer be entering Eretz Yisrael, they did not need to keep the mitzvos

anymore; the *mekoshesh* was *mechallel Shabbos* in order that he would be killed, and the Torah's authority would be established.

The Maharsha¹⁵ cites a question: although the *mekoshesh* had good intentions,

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14 Midrash cited by *Tosafos*, Bava Basra 119b s.v. *Afilu*; see Targum Yonasan
15 Bava Basra 119a

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how was it permissible for him to be *mechalleh Shabbos*? He answers that since he only did the *melachah* so that people should see the result, it was a *melachah she'einah tzrichah l'gufah* – like one who digs a hole and does not need the hole but the dirt, which R. Shimon maintains is not a *melachah*.¹⁶ (Although a *melachah she'einah tzrichah l'gufah* is forbidden *mid'Rabbanan*, this *gezeirah* was not yet decreed.¹⁷) Nonetheless, he was put to death, because the witnesses who warned him did not know his intentions, which were only *devarim sheb'lev* (intentions of one's heart), and he was judged based on their testimony.

*Tosafos HaRosh*¹⁸ defines the limitation of *devarim sheb'lev* as having two components: 1. The person is not believed that he maintained the intent in question; 2. Even if he had the intent, it does not impact the *halachah*, even from the standpoint of *Shamayim*.

The Maharsha characterizes the *mekoshesh's* intent as *devarim sheb'lev*; does this mean that even if he had his stated intention, it is irrelevant, like the second point of the *Tosafos HaRosh*? If so, the Maharsha's original question returns: since, ultimately, it was a forbidden act – how could he do it?

Clearly, the concept of *devarim sheb'lev* did not nullify the intention of the *mekoshesh*. This makes sense, because in actuality he did not need the product of the *melachah* and did it for a peripheral reason – it is by definition a *melachah she'einah tzrichah l'gufah*. Furthermore, R. Akiva Eiger writes¹⁹ that anything that is mainly contingent on intent is not subject to *devarim sheb'lev*. There are also *Rishonim*²⁰ who maintain that *devarim*

sheb'lev only pertains to matters that are *bein adam l'chaveiro* (interpersonal).

Seemingly, the Maharsha means that the *mekoshesh's* intent was *devarim sheb'lev* in the sense that he was not believed that he had this intention, like the *Tosafos HaRosh's* first point – all the more so since he kept quiet about it.

The Ya'avetz²¹ disputes the Maharsha's answer: in cases of *dinei nefashos* (capital punishment), *beis din* searches for any lead that could exempt the defendant. Certainly, they would take into account his *devarim sheb'lev*. The Ya'avetz proves this from *eidim zomemin*, who are exempted from death when they claim to have had certain intentions.²²

But it seems that this is no proof; *eidim zomemin* do not need to be warned to be punished, so we can take their words at face value. But the *mekoshesh* was warned not to do the act and replied that he would do it anyway. If so, why would we regard what he might claim he intended? It is like a claim of *oness* (duress), which does not exempt one from punishment.²³

The Ya'avetz further makes his point from the Gemara's statement²⁴ that *beis din* listens to the defendant himself if he claims to have a source of merit (of which nobody else is aware). But a distinction can be made here too: the Gemara is referring to where he claims to have a legal argument, not to where his defense is based on his intentions.

The Ya'avetz offers the following explanation of his own: although, indeed, the *mekoshesh* should have been exempted because of his intentions (since, in the Ya'avetz's

opinion, *devarim sheb'lev* would be regarded in this case), he was nonetheless punished because when a generation is lax, *beis din* can punish even when punishment is not legally mandated.²⁵

But this is difficult to accept, because the pasuk (15:35) clearly says that Hashem dictated the *mekoshesh's* punishment: וַיִּמָּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה – וַיִּמָּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה: “The man shall be put to death...” The Gemara, as well, discusses the manner in which he was warned. If his punishment was extrajudicial, there would be no need for a special command from Hashem, and the manner he was warned would not be of halachic significance.

The *Acharonim*²⁶ ask on the Maharsha's approach: since Hashem – Who knows man's intentions – commanded that the *mekoshesh* be killed, it should be proof that a *melachah she'einah tzrichah l'gufah* is considered a *melachah*.

The Gemara (Makkos 5b) states that *beis din* does not kill *eidim zomemin* if the person they testified on was already killed by *beis din*. The Ramban²⁷ explains that since Hashem agrees to the ruling of a *beis din* – if they killed somebody, he was certainly deserving of death for other sins, if not the sin he was charged with.²⁸ If so, the same could be true of the *mekoshesh*. Although he was technically exempt because his act was a *melachah she'einah tzrichah l'gufah*; nonetheless, Hashem commanded that he be killed (concurring with the judgement on this world), but this may have been because he deserved death for other sins.²⁹

(בנאות דשא – שלח תשפ"ב)

16 See *Kedushas Levi* who makes this same point; see also *Pnei David*

17 See *Beis Ha'Otzar, Klal 1 no. 4 s.v. וע"ע בב"ר*, in parenthesis

18 *Kiddushin 49b*

19 *She'elos U'Teshuvos, Kamma 23*

20 See Meiri, *Kiddushin ibid*

21 *Hagahos Ya'avetz on Maharsha al HaTorah* (recently printed in *Kovetz Yad Moshe* of R. M.Z. Feldman, p. 54)

22 לאסרה על בעלה באנו, *Sanhedrin 41a*

23 The distinction is clearer according to *Chiddushei HaRim (Chiddushei Sugyos to C.M. 30)*; also printed on *Sanhedrin 30*, that *eidim zomemin* are punished for their intent and not their actions; if so, an alternate intent could certainly exempt them.

24 *Sanhedrin 42b*

25 *Sanhedrin 46a*

26 See *Beis Ha'Otzar, Klal 1 no. 4 s.v. וע"ע בב"ר*; *Kovetz Shiurim, Bava Basra 360*

27 *Devarim 19:19*

28 See second answer of *Kesef Mishnah, Hilchos Eidus 20:2*. This is similar to the Gemara's statement (*Makkos 10b*) that Hashem arranges that somebody who killed accidentally without witnesses, will do so again with witnesses, so that he will go into *galus* for his previous killing as well.

29 See also *Rosh David* (beginning of *Pinchas*, s.v. והלא) and *Ruach Chaim* (14) of the Chida