

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



על פני השטח

AL EY DESHE

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

Giving Our Heart

The story is told that Rav Meir Shapiro was once visiting a certain town during the summer and was hosted by the local *rav*. Shabbos morning, as he accompanied the *rav* to shul, he noticed a sign on a storefront window: "Frozen ice cream under the *rav's* supervision." This did not sit right with Rav Meir; in his view, a *rav* should give his *hashgachah* to matzos, *arba'ah minim*, *shechitah* or

what he thought of his shul's davening, to which Rav Shapiro replied, "The davening was 'frozen ice cream under the *rav's* supervision.'"

I am always reminded of this story during Parshas Va'eschanan. The pasuk says (Devarim 4:8), וְנִי גוֹי גָדוֹל אֲשֶׁר לֹו חֻקִּים וּמִצְוֹת – *And which is a great nation that has righteous decrees and ordinances like this entire Torah.* Rashi explains that in this context, צְדִיקָה means proper and agreeable. The *mefarshim* explain that *decrees and ordinances* cannot be called "tzaddikim" in the regular sense of the word; only a person who exercises free will to make good choices can be called a tzaddik. *Ikkar Sifsei Chachamim* puts it this way: "The term "tzaddikim" is not applicable to *chukim* and *mishpatim*, which do not have any life."

While the concept is true and is indeed Rashi's intention, the phraseology disturbs me. How can one say that mitzvos "have no life"?! Mitzvos performed without life are like "frozen ice cream under the *rav's* supervision"!

The Chida cites a *mashal* to illustrate this concept: The lion, king of the

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The Mishnah (Taanis 26b) teaches: "There were no *yamim tovim* for the Jewish nation like *Chamishah Asar B'Av* and Yom Kippur." Much has been said on the reasoning and depth of the joy of Tu B'Av. Let us explore an approach of *Tiferes Shlomo*, who explains the depth of Tu B'Av together with that of Shabbos Nachamu.

After the sin of the *egel*, Moshe requested of Hashem (Shemos 33:18), הַרְאֵנִי נָא אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ – *Show me now Your glory.* This is difficult to understand. In an earlier pasuk (32:34), Hashem told Moshe, וּבְיוֹם פְּקֻדֵי וּפְקֻדָתִי עֲלֵהֶם – *and on the day that I make my account, I shall bring their sin to account against them.* Rashi cites the explanation of Chazal⁷ that any time Jews are punished for their sins, Hashem includes a small measure of retribution for the *chet ha'egel*. Although Moshe achieved forgiveness from Hashem for the Jewish people, it would not seem to be the right time to ask for so great a gift as ⁸ הַרְאֵנִי נָא אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ.

A Yid must know that he is connected to אֱלֹהֵינוּ; he belongs to the Shem itself. We must feel this deep attachment in our bones.

mikva'os – not to far-out indulgences like ice cream. Nevertheless, he made no mention of it to the *rav*. When they arrived at the shul, Rav Meir, who was a *chassid*, found the davening to be cold and unfeeling, and he was turned off by the dry davening. At the conclusion of davening, the local *rav* asked Rav Meir

7 See Sanhedrin 102a
8 See Ramban 33:12

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beasts, fell ill. His trusted advisors told him that in order to be healed, he would need to eat a fox's heart. The lion immediately dispatched fearsome beasts as messengers to obtain a fox's heart for him. They cornered a fox and demanded that he donate his heart for the welfare of the king. But the fox replied that he had left his heart at home since he didn't know that the king needed it. He told the messengers that he would go immediately and fetch it; they needn't worry. Needless to say, he was never seen again.

The *yezer hara* is like a lion, fearsome and difficult to overcome. Even when one is not victorious over him, he must not give the *yetzer hara* his heart; let the *aveirah* be performed without fervor. Mitzvos, on the other hand, should always be done with one's whole heart, with warmth and emotion.

The pasuk says (4:14), וְאֵתִי צִוָּה ה' בְּעֵת, הָהוּא לְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים לַעֲשׂוֹתָם אֲתָם – Hashem commanded me at that time to teach you decrees and ordinances, that you shall perform them. Rashi explains¹ that וְאֵתִי לַעֲשׂוֹתָם is like – לַעֲשׂוֹתָם אֲתָם to perform them.² We might note that the pasuk uses a different word – לַעֲשׂוֹתָם. Why? Moshe intended a message: Mitzvos must be done in such a way that לַעֲשׂוֹתָם, they remake the one who performs them. How is this achieved? By doing them with

joy and life. This changes the person and molds him into a better Jew.³

The pasuk states (4:4), וְאֲתָם הַדְּבָקִים, בְּה' אֶלְלִיקְכֶם חַיִּים כְּלַכֶּם הַיּוֹם – But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d – you are all alive today. The *Ohr Hachaim* explains this based on the halachah⁴ that prefixes to a *Shem Hashem* may be erased, but not suffixes. For example, the *mem* of מַה may be erased, but not the *chaf-mem* of מַלְלִיקְכֶם. This is because the *Shem* sanctifies the letters that follow it.

The *Ohr Hachaim* notes that the Name הו"ה is never suffixed, since it the *Shem Ha'etzem*, the “actual” Name of Hashem, so nothing can be attached to it.

One might have thought that one can only cleave to Hashem as a “prefix” — without gaining holiness, just as the *Shem* הו"ה can only have a prefix. The Torah therefore says, וְאֲתָם הַדְּבָקִים בְּה', אֶלְלִיקְכֶם; a Yid can be *davuk* to Hashem as a “suffix” too, as in אֶלְלִיקְכֶם, and become sanctified and uplifted by the connection to Him.

Let us try to understand this a little deeper. The *Acharonim*⁵ discuss the above halachic distinction between a prefix and a suffix to a Name: does it depend on the letter's placement vis-à-vis the Name, or does it depend on whether it is written before or after the Name is written? This question is relevant when writing

a Sefer Torah, which does not need to be written consecutively. If, for example, one wrote the suffix before writing the Name, perhaps it could be erased? *Divrei Chaim* concludes that this is not the case; it is only the placement of the letters that matters, not the chronology of its writing. Where a letter is determines whether it is descriptive of the *Shem*, and is therefore counted as part of it – such as the suffix of אֶלְלִיקְכֶם, your G-d; or if it is merely an introductory detail – such as מַה, from Hashem – and is not part of the *Shem*.

How beautifully this fits with the *Ohr Hachaim's* above explanation of וְאֲתָם אֶלְלִיקְכֶם הַדְּבָקִים בְּה'. Everybody believes that there is a Ribbono Shel Olam – but everybody knows, as well, that there are planets in outer space. Our *emunah* in Hashem cannot be limited to this sort of intellectual acknowledgement. A Yid must know that he is connected to ה' אֶלְלִיקְכֶם; he belongs to the *Shem* itself. We must feel this deep attachment in our bones.

With this frame of mind, one will do mitzvos, daven, and learn Torah with a feeling of belonging to Hashem, which leads a person to a warmth in *avodas Hashem* and helps one easily overcome his *yetzer hara* and serve Hashem properly.⁶

(ואתחנן תשפ"ב, ס"ג מאמר ב)

1 29:11

2 See R. Eliyahu Mizrahi and *Gur Aryeh*, ibid

3 See ב' דר"ה תשפ"א – עברא דדשא עמי תלד יום

4 Rambam, *Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah* 6:3; *Shulchan Aruch*, Y.D. 276:9

5 See *Divrei Chaim*, vol. 1, Y.D. 57 and vol. 2, Y.D. 121; *Avnei Nezer*, Y.D. 360; *Otzar Hamelech*, *Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah* 6:3

6 In the first edition of Rashi, there is an additional explanation to וְאֲתָם הַדְּבָקִים בְּה' אֶלְלִיקְכֶם that the mitzvos make one's *yetzer hara* “righteous.” By performing mitzvos properly and with feeling, the *yetzer hara* is changed and is made to cooperate in one's *avodas Hashem*.

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However, when Hashem forgave Bnei Yisrael for the *chet ha'egel*, the pasuk says (32:14), וַיִּנְחָם ה' עַל הַרְעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לֵעֲרֹב – *Hashem reconsidered regarding the evil that He declared He would do to His people*. This doesn't simply mean that Hashem decided to act kindly toward Bnei Yisrael instead of pouring out His wrath against them; it means that, *k'vayachol*, He regretted His initial declaration that He would do them evil and the anger He had shown them.

The comfort of Shabbos Nachamu is internalizing that although we are yet in *galus*, nonetheless, we believe with perfect faith that Mashiach will come any day

Additionally, Hashem regretted creating the *yetzer hara*, which had caused Bnei Yisrael to sin. It is explicit in Chazal (Sukkah 52b) that Hashem regrets four things, including the creation of the *yetzer hara*. We can now understand that at this time of Hashem's forgiveness for the *chet ha'egel*, it was a time of great joy and closeness to Hashem and a very auspicious moment – and an ideal time for Moshe to ask הֲרֵאֵנִי נָא אֶת כְּבוֹדְךָ.

9 Sifri 24

10 See *Ben Yehoyada*, Taanis 30b; *Gevuras Ari*, end of Taanis

Tiferes Shlomo continues: This is the meaning of נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יִמְרָא אֶלְקֵיכֶם – “*Comfort, comfort, My people,*” says your *G-d* (Yeshayah 40:1). נַחֲמוּ connotes regret, like וַיִּנְחָם ה' Hashem expresses regret on the harshness of the *galus*. The comfort of Shabbos Nachamu is internalizing that although we are yet in *galus*, nonetheless, we believe with perfect faith that Mashiach will come any day – as Hashem regrets the distance placed between Himself and the Jewish nation by the *galus*.

Concludes *Tiferes Shlomo*: This is why “There were no *yamim tovim* for the Jewish nation like *Chamishah Asar B'Av*.” With the conclusion of Tisha B'Av, it is not merely the end of the period of mourning. As Tisha B'Av is relived each year, Hashem is aroused to *nechamah*, to regret for our subjugation to the nations; and this begins the *yemei ratzon*, the period when Hashem draws us near. Thus, Tu B'Av is the greatest of *yamim tovim*.

Tu B'Av is a propitious time for *tefillah*. May Hashem grant everyone their needs. But it is much more than that. Tu B'Av obligates us to reflect these feelings back toward Hashem. The pasuk states (Devarim 1:27), וַתֹּאמְרוּ בְּשִׁנְאָת ה' אֱתָנוּ – *You said, “Because of Hashem's hatred for us did He take us out of the land of Egypt.*” Rashi comments, citing Chazal,⁹ that Klal Yisrael projected their own resentment and thus saw it

in Hashem. In the same manner, when Hashem shows Klal Yisrael a loving countenance, the light reflects in the hearts of the Jewish nation. When, *k'vayachol*, Hashem expresses regret for the distance He placed between Him and us, we need to arouse in our hearts, as well, a deep regret for the distance we placed between us and Him with our sins. This must be not merely *teshuvah* but *teshuvah* out of love.

The *mefarshim*¹⁰ wonder why the Mishnah lists the greatness of Tu B'Av before that of Yom Kippur. Based on the above it is clear. We cannot approach Yom Kippur soiled with sin; we must first cleanse ourselves. This cleansing process begins with Tu B'Av, as we shake ourselves off with true regret for our misdeeds and prepare for the great and awesome days that are approaching. The way to achieve this frame of mind is to be aware that the Jewish nation's single focus and goal is to draw close to Hashem and understand His ways. Our passions and energies must only be for holiness, not for mundanity.

On Shabbos Nachamu and Tu B'Av a person can arouse himself to *teshuvah me'ahavah* by mirroring Hashem's regret for His distance from us, with heartfelt regret for having traded longing for *kedushah* for pursuit of vanity.

פרשת ואתחנן – שבת נחמו, ט"ו באב – תשפ"א, ס"ג מאמר ב

Taking Responsibility

וְשִׁנְנֵתָם לְבָנֶיךָ

You shall teach them thoroughly to your sons.

(Devarim 6:7)

Rashi comments, citing Chazal,¹¹ that this refers to teaching one's students. What is the root of the obligation to teach Torah to others? Rabbeinu Bachaye explains in *Kad Hakemach*¹² that it is the principle of *arvus*, every Jew's responsibility to ensure that other Jews keep all the mitzvos. One might think that if so, the obligation to teach Torah should be limited to teaching practical halachah. But it seems Rabbeinu Bachaye means that we must ensure that other Jews fulfill the mitzvah of learning Torah, including portions of it which are not practically relevant.

But according to Rabbeinu Bachaye, why must one teach *ketanim* (minors)? After all, they are not included in *arvus*, so adults are not responsible to ensure that they keep the mitzvos. It seems farfetched to suggest that *arvus* would obligate us to teach a *katan* in his youth in order to ensure that he will keep the mitzvos when he matures. Perhaps Rabbeinu Bachaye maintains that *ketanim* are indeed included in *arvus* (at least insofar as adults' responsibility toward them), as is maintained by Maharit.¹³

In *Sefer Hamitzvos*,¹⁴ R. Yerucham Fishel Perlow discusses at length whether *arvus* obligates a person to provide objects of mitzvos, for example, matzos, to others who cannot afford them. He considers that perhaps since one who cannot afford to buy matzah is exempt from the mitzvah, another person would not have a stronger obligation vis-à-vis him than he himself, so *arvus* would not obligate the other person to provide him matzos.¹⁵

If we assume that *arvus* obligates a person to monetarily enable another to fulfill a mitzvah,¹⁶ we may consider where one has already given

one-fifth of his income to *tzedakah* (so he may not give more), and he encounters someone who needs money to fulfill a mitzvah. Perhaps just as one must spend more on his own mitzvos than his limitation for *tzedakah* spending, the same is true regarding his obligation of *arvus* – and thus, he must assist his friend in fulfilling his mitzvah.

What if a person only has access to one matzah? Should he use it for his own mitzvah, or give it to his friend in keeping with *arvus*? It is clear that *arvus* is not stronger than one's own obligation, so he is not obligated to give the matzah to his friend.¹⁷ But why is this different than the obligation to teach Torah, where (unless the student is exceptionally sharp) the teacher sacrifices his own higher level of learning for the sake of *arvus* toward the student's mitzvah of *talmud Torah*? Apparently, since the teacher does achieve the mitzvah of *talmud Torah* as well, albeit in a reduced form, *arvus* obligates him to teach Torah to others.

This has other ramifications as well. Although, as above, one who has only one matzah should give precedence to himself over others; nonetheless, just as a teacher must sacrifice his higher level of learning to teach another Torah, so must one sacrifice his standard of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautification of the mitzvah) and suffice himself with lower-standard matzah in order to provide another Jew with matzah.

My son, R. Yaakov Aryeh Leib, showed me that this concept – that one must sacrifice *hiddur* to enable another to do a mitzvah – is written explicitly by *Magen Avraham*¹⁸ in reference to *ner Chanukah*.

Erech Shai questions this: according to the opinion that *arvus* does not apply to *mitzvos d'Rabbanan*, why must one sacrifice his own *hiddur mitzvah* to enable another to fulfill *ner*

Chanukah? Perhaps we may suggest that since *ner Chanukah* is meant to achieve *pirsumei nissa* (spreading awareness of the miracle), one's own fulfillment of the mitzvah is enhanced when others light *ner Chanukah*, since the miracle is further publicized. Thus, the obligation to enable others to light *ner Chanukah* is not merely due to *arvus*, but to one's personal obligation in the mitzvah. But if so, *Magen Avraham's* ruling that one must sacrifice his own *hiddur* to enable others to fulfill *ner Chanukah*, cannot be extrapolated to other mitzvos, such as matzah.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 29b) states that if a person needs to fulfill *pidyon haben* both on himself and on his son, “מצוה דגופיה עדיף – his own mitzvah takes precedence.” *Tosafos Chachmei Angli'ah* explains that this is derived from the principle that one's own life takes precedence over the lives of others. Clearly this is true even in the sense of mitzvos.

In *Kiryas Sefer*,¹⁹ the Mabit discusses a case where either a father or his son can learn Torah. He says that the father must give himself precedence, because if he doesn't learn, he will not be able to teach his son either. Why doesn't the Mabit say that this is akin to the Gemara's case of *pidyon haben*, where one's own mitzvah precedes that of others? In fact, the Mabit cites this principle elsewhere;²⁰ why doesn't he apply it to *talmud Torah* as well? Perhaps the Mabit felt that since one must, in fact, sacrifice his higher level of Torah learning to teach others, the rule of *מצוה דגופיה עדיף* might not apply to Torah learning. He therefore introduces a new reason why one's own Torah learning takes precedence: so that he will be able to teach his son.

(בנאות דשא - פרשת ואתחנן, שבת נחמו תשפ"ב)

11 See Sifri

12 *Inyanei Torah* 1 s.v. *Chayav*

13 Kiddushin 70b. See also *She'elos U'Teshuvos Chikrei Lev*, O.C. 45; *She'elos U'Teshuvos Tuw Ta'am V'Daas* (of R.Shlomo Kluger), *mahadura kama*, addition to 270; *Beis Yisrael* (of the Kozhnutzer Maggid), Berachos 48a no. 5; Glosses of R. Elazar Moshe Horovitz to *Tosafos*, *ibid*; *Pnei Menachem*, *Mo'adei Simchah* p. 56 column 2 and p. 57 column 2. It is notable that although *Be'ur Halachah*, 689 s.v. *V'nashim* cites *Pri Megadim* as being in doubt whether *ketanim* are included in *arvus*; *Pri Megadim* himself, in several places (689, 489, *Pesichah Kolleles* vol. 2 *se'if kattan* 17 and vol. 3 *se'if kattan* 28), is clear that *ketanim* are not included in *arvus*.

14 Vol. 3 from p. 206

15 See our glosses to *Sefer Hamitzvos*, ad loc.

16 After all, if *arvus* obligates one to expend time for another (by teaching him Torah), why should money be different? There may be grounds to distinguish between the two, but that is a discussion all its own.

17 There may, however, be grounds to *permit* him to give away the matzah, so that he would not be considered in neglect of his mitzvah.

18 671:1

19 *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, chap. 1

20 *Hilchos Bikkurim*, chap. 11