

PARSHAS KI SEITZEI

לעילוי נשמת ר' ניסן בן ר' שמואל והעניא בת ר' גרשון • לעילוי נשמת וועלוועל בן שלמה הלוי ז"ל • לעילוי נשמת ר' אלטר חיים בן ר' יצחק • לעילוי נשמת חיה גולדה בת יונה

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Brothers

R' Shua Gold

The Torah repeatedly uses the word "אָחִיךָ – your brother" when discussing the mitzvos of hashavas aveidah and ribbis.

Regarding an aveida the Torah says: "If your brother is not near you and you do not know him, you shall gather it into your house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it, and you shall return it to him." (Devarim 22:2-3)

Later, regarding ribbis, the Torah says: "You shall not charge your brother interest.... You may charge a non-Jew interest, but your brother you shall not charge interest, so that Hashem, your G-d, will bless you in everything you undertake." (Devarim 23:20-21)

Rav Shmuel Berenbaum zt"l asks why the Torah repeats the word אָחִיךָ so many times. If the point were simply to exclude a non-Jew from these halachos, the Torah could have used the word רֵעֵהוּ – his fellow.

Rav Shmuel explains that the Torah is teaching us how one Yid must look at another. We are not merely acquaintances or members of the same nation. We are brothers.

Logically, someone who finds a lost object might think that it was sent to him as a gift from Shamayim. Similarly, a person might reason that just as he may rent out his house or animal, he should also be able to "rent out" his money and collect interest.

But when someone truly feels that the other person is his brother, everything changes. He feels the pain of someone who lost a possession, and he feels the burden of someone who needs a loan.

Rav Shmuel notes that we read these parshiyos during Elul. When we think about the needs of another Yid, Hashem responds middah k'neged middah and thinks about our needs as well.

Rav Shmuel illustrated this with a story. He once traveled to another city for the wedding of a close talmid, and many Mirrer Yeshiva bochurim joined him. One of the local roshei yeshiva expressed surprise and said that in his yeshiva, no more than ten bochurim were permitted to attend an out-of-town wedding.

Rav Shmuel asked him, "If the chosson had brothers in the yeshiva, would they be counted among the ten?"

"Of course not," the rosh yeshiva replied.

Rav Shmuel smiled and said, "In the Mir, all the bochurim feel like brothers to one another. And how could brothers not come to the wedding?!"

Middos Maake the Man

R' Shmuel Herzenberg

The Torah states that a male Amoni or Moavi may not marry into Klal Yisrael. The Torah gives two reasons: Amon did not provide Bnei Yisrael with bread and water when they left Mitzrayim, and Moav hired Bilam to curse them.

The Rishonim discuss why these actions were so severe that they resulted in a prohibition that continues for all generations.

The **Kli Yakar** explains that Amon's wrongdoing went beyond simply refusing to provide food and water. Their intention was to leave Bnei Yisrael hungry so that they would be forced to eat from their idolatrous sacrifices, ultimately drawing them toward avodah zarah. Their refusal to help was therefore part of an attempt to spiritually corrupt Klal Yisrael.

The **Ramban** offers a different explanation. Amon and Moav descended from Lot, who was saved from S'dom in the zechus of Avraham Avinu. They therefore owed a debt of hakaras hatov to Avraham and his descendants. Instead of showing gratitude by helping Bnei Yisrael, Amon refused them basic provisions and Moav hired Bilam to

curse them. This represented a serious failure of hakaras hatov.

Rav Yeruchum Levovitz, in Daas Torah, points out that we see from here just how important hakaras hatov is—even generations later. But he asks: Why should all future generations of Amon and Moav be affected by the actions of their ancestors?

Rav Yeruchum explains that certain middos can become deeply rooted within a people. The lack of hospitality and hakaras hatov displayed by Amon and Moav was not merely an isolated failure. It revealed a fundamental flaw in their character. Because this deficiency remained part of them through the generations, the prohibition remained as well.

Rav Yeruchum contrasts this with the defining qualities of Klal Yisrael. The Gemara in Yevamos describes Yidden as baishanim, rachmanim, and gomlei chassadim. The Gemara in Beitzah relates that an Amora was able to recognize that someone came from the eirev rav because he saw that the person lacked compassion. Rachmanus is so deeply rooted within Klal Yisrael that its absence was itself revealing.

This gives us something important to think about during Elul. Teshuvah is not only about identifying what we have done wrong. It is also an opportunity to recognize the good middos that Hashem has placed within us and ask ourselves whether we are living up to them. By identifying these qualities and consciously strengthening them, we can allow our true character as Yidden to guide us through the teshuvah process.

WEEKLYTIDBITS

Alive in Elul

Reb Elimelech Biderman shares a beautiful allusion to the month of Elul. The word אלול can be read as an acronym for the Yiddish words, "לעבעדיג און ווייטער לעבעדיג" - "lively, and lively again". The message is that teshuvah is not meant to leave a person broken, discouraged, or weighed down by his failures. Quite the opposite. Teshuvah is

an opportunity to begin again, and that itself should be a source of tremendous joy.

Reb Meilech cites the **Chasam Sofer**, who writes that when a person begins the process of teshuvah, it is an **עון פלילי**, a severe sin, to remain immersed in sadness. The purpose of recognizing our mistakes is not to become trapped by them, but to use them as the beginning of something better.

Perhaps that is the spirit with which we should enter Elul. Look honestly at what needs to change, but do so with hope and simchah. Keep trying, keep growing, and above all, keep moving forward. Elul is not a month for giving up. It is a month for becoming alive again.

Tehillim

There is an interesting phenomenon in Tehillim, Perek 9, pesukim 14-15: **חֲנֻנִי ה' רָאָה עָנִי מִשְׁכָּאֵי מְרוֹמָי מִשְׁעָרֵי מוֹת. לִמְעַן אֲסַפְּרָה כָּל תְּהִלָּתְךָ בְּשַׁעְרֵי בֵּת צִיּוֹן אֲגִידָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ**

The Ibn Ezra points out that the word **חננני** is unusual because it contains three nunnin. In other places, a word with the same meaning is written with only two nunnin, with a dagesh taking the place of the missing nun. Here, however, all three nunnin are written out.

The Midrash explains that these three nunnin allude to the first three galuyos that Klal Yisroel endured. The fourth and final galus, Edom, is alluded to later in the pasuk with the words **“ראה עניי משנאי”** – see my suffering from those who hate me.

Dovid then asks Hashem to save him so that he can praise Him. The Malbim explains that Dovid wants to rejoice and praise Hashem for all the new miracles that Hashem will perform for him.

These pesukim can become our tefillah as well. We ask Hashem to save us from our enemies just as He saved Dovid. The Tehillas Hashem adds that **חנני** comes from the word **חן**. We ask Hashem to find favor in us and show us chesed even when we may not deserve it. We can ask Hashem to finally end this fourth and final galus, so that we too can rejoice and praise Him in Yerushalayim.

WEEKLYSCENARIO

You meet an old friend whom you have not seen in ten years. As you begin catching up, you ask where he lives and how many children he has. He responds sheepishly that he is divorced. You immediately feel terrible

and apologize. What can you do in the future to try to avoid situations like this?

Something to think about:

When speaking to people, it is always important to be as sensitive as possible. We never know what another person may be going through, and even a seemingly innocent question can sometimes touch on a painful area.

At the same time, we have to recognize that we will occasionally make mistakes. Every person has a unique life situation, and it is impossible to know what may be difficult or sensitive for someone. The goal is to become more thoughtful about how we speak.

For example, asking someone how many children they have may seem like an innocent question, but we don't know if they are struggling in that area or any other difficult situation. It may be better to begin with more general questions: “Where are you living these days?” or “How is your family?” Then allow the other person to share whatever they feel comfortable discussing.

When we genuinely care about others and make an effort to think before we speak, we can daven that Hashem should give us the siyata d'Shmaya to say the right thing and avoid inadvertently causing another person pain.

WEEKLYHALACHA

I was combining bottles of wine. I poured a few ounces from an almost empty bottle of non-mevushal wine into an almost full bottle of mevushal wine. Is this wine still considered mevushal?

The Rema (YD 123:5) discusses this situation. He writes that if non-mevushal wine was mixed into mevushal wine, some view the mevushal wine as if it were water. In this case, the rule is that if the amount of mevushal wine is six times greater than the non-mevushal, the non-mevushal portion is batel (nullified) and the wine may be considered mevushal. Others say that so long as the mevushal wine is the majority, the mixture is viewed as mevushal. However, the Shach (123:10) cites the Ohr Zarua who writes that these leniencies are only intended for situations of great financial loss. Lichatchila, one must view the wine as non-mevushal. The Maharshach (3:85) as well writes that we can only rely on this leniency *bidieved* (after the fact), and even then only if the mevushal wine were six times the amount of the non-mevushal.

Is there an obligation to honor a Levi?

The Yerushalmi (Berachos 5:4) records that Rabbi Yehushua Ben Levi (who was a Levi) said that in all his days, he never said a beracha before a Kohen, and he never permitted a Yisroel to say a beracha before him. The Tur (OC 201) writes that it would seem from this Yerushalmi that there is a mitzvah to honor a Levi; therefore, for example, if there is no Kohen, the Levi should be offered priority for Bentsching. However, the Tur writes that the Maharam MiRottenburg (his father's Rebbe) said that there is no obligation to put a Levi first. Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi always went first when there was no Kohen because he was the greatest Torah scholar, not because he was a Levi. On the other hand, the Bach writes that the first opinion of the Tur seems more compelling.

The Magen Avrohom (201:4) cites another Yerushalmi that says that we only give extra honor to the Levi'im when the Beis Hamikdash is standing (and the Levi'im are serving in the Beis Hamikdash). The Magen Avrohom points out that there is a seeming inconsistency: The Tur and Shulchan Aruch in Hilchos Tzedakah (YD 251) rule that even today a Levi receives tzedakah before a Yisroel (in a situation where everyone has the same needs) because of the extra honor due to a Levi, yet in other areas we do not honor the Levi first. The Drisha (YD 251:3) explains that tzedakah is different. We are obligated to support the Levi so he can survive to see the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash, since he will then be needed in the service of the Beis Hamikdash. However, in other areas which involve honoring him, he does not receive more honor than a Yisroel.

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FRIDAY

7:27 Candle Lighting
7:45 Shekiya

SHABBOS

6:13 Neitz
8:51 Krias Shema (MA)
9:36 Krias Shema (Gra)
10:43 Zman Tefillah
12:58 Chatzos
1:32 Mincha Gedolah
7:44 Shekiya
8:27 Tzeis Hakochovim
8:56 72 Minutes

RIDDLE ME THIS

Why can the first day of Rosh Hashanah never fall on a Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday?

LAST ISSUE - Q: Two people each kill someone **בשוגג**, accidentally. Both flee to an **עיר מקלט**. Yet for one of them, the **עיר מקלט** provides protection, while for the other, it does not. Why?

A: The halacha is that an **עיר מקלט** in which the majority of residents are murderers does not provide refuge.

In our case, before the first person arrived, 49% of the city were murderers. His arrival brought the number to exactly 50%, so the city was still **not רוב רוצחים** and it protected him. When the second person arrived, however, he tipped the balance to a majority of murderers. The **עיר מקלט** was now **רוב רוצחים** and could no longer provide refuge for him.