

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Bamidbar - Shavuos year 8 #338

פרקי אבות 1

פרשת במדבר - שבועות תשע"ח

The prelude to Kabalas Hatorah

וידבר ה' אלי-משה במדבר סיני: (א א)

"Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai" (1:1)

The Midrash Rabbah says: בג' דברים ניתנה התורה, באש, ובמים, ובמדבר' (במד"ר א' ז') "The Torah was given with three things – with fire, with water and with wilderness... Why with these three things? Just as these things are free for all mankind, so are the words of Torah free...." The Dubno Maggid explains that fire, water and wilderness symbolize the three qualities needed to grow great in Torah. Fire: The person's Divine service must be aflame and with fervor within him. Water: The person must thirst for words of Torah just as one thirsts for water. Wilderness: He must be content with little and be as free of materialism as the wilderness. This is a prelude to Kabalas Hatorah on Shavuos. The Preparation to Receive: Before receiving the Torah anew on Shavuos, one must correct his character traits and purify himself so that he will be a fitting receptacle for the sanctity of Torah. Therefore, the Sages instituted the study of Pirkei Avos during the weeks between Pesach and Shavuos. Pirkei Avos open with the words, "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai," as if to say: While all the lessons and guidelines for proper behavior contained in this tractate are a credit to those who follow them, the primary intent in following them should be to make oneself a fitting receptacle for Torah. (Sefas Emes of Gur)

Lead by Example will bring great results

שאנו את-ראש כל-עדת בני-ישראל: (א ב')

Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel. (1:2) We find a similar pasuk כי תשא את-ראש בני-ישראל When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, (Shemos 30:12) The Kotzker Rebbe states that these words ראש בני-ישראל can also mean a leader and a guide for Klal Yisrael. To attest to this Pshat we notice that the ראשי תיבות- initial of the words ראש בני-ישראל is רבי, which alludes that a *Manhig*, leader, has to be a true leader. However cautions that the word רבי is also the abbreviation רע בעיני ה' "bad in the eyes of Hashem." This comes to teach us that there are no compromises for a leader, either he is a good Leader or the opposite. (Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk) We can elaborate on these quality words: The word שאנו or כי תשא also means to alleviate one's self. This adds to the pshat of the Kotzker Rebbe. The Manhig or leader has to raise his spirituality and be a role model to his congregants. When the leader's are true role models, that will cause their congregants also to rise in Avodas Hashem. It is told that a chassid of R' Menachem

Mendel of Kotzk asked for the Rebbe's blessing that he merit sons who would study Torah with devotion. The Rebbe told him, "I suggest that you study Torah with devotion so that your sons will follow your example. For if not, then your sons will do the same – request that their sons study with devotion while they occupy themselves with other matters is a defeating purpose". **The lesson is, lead by Example.** (Yehuda Z Klitnick)

One must always consult a Daas Torah

וימת נדב ואביהוא לפני ה' בהקרבתם אש זרה. ויבנים לא-היו להם: (ג ד')

And Nadav and Avihu died before Hashem when they brought alien fire ... and they had no children... (3:4). The implication is that if they would have had children, they would not have died. The question is why is this so? However Chazal, Our Sages, give two reasons for the premature passing of Nadav and Avihu: 1) They entered the Mishkan while intoxicated; The Torah states וְיִשְׁכַּר אֱלֹהֵי-תִשְׁתֵּה אֶתְהוּ | וְיִבְנֶיהָ אֶתְהוּ בְּבִאֲכֶם אֱלֹהֵי-מוֹעֵד וְלֹא תִמְתּוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם | אֶתְהוּ | וְיִבְנֶיהָ אֶתְהוּ בְּבִאֲכֶם אֱלֹהֵי-מוֹעֵד וְלֹא תִמְתּוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם | (שמות י ט) *Do not drink wine that will lead to intoxication, neither you nor your sons with you, when you go into the Tent of Meeting, so that you shall not die. This is an eternal statute for your generations* (Shemos 10:9). 2) They acted improperly by deciding a halachah in Moshe's presence. The underlying character flaw exhibited by both of these acts is a lack of respect. A father of children has a deeper sense of propriety. By demanding respect from his children, he comes to appreciate the value of showing esteem and regard to parents and teachers. Nadav and Avihu had no children. They could not fully understand the overriding importance of respecting parents and teachers. This explains how they were able to decide a halachah in their teacher's presence, and how they were able to enter the Mishkan while under the influence of wine. One must always consult a Daas Torah. (Shir Ma'on on the Chasam Sofer)

Experience the Taste

R' Elya Lopian would say: If someone who had never tasted wine would ask me to explain that taste to him, I might say, "Did you ever taste something sweet? Did you ever taste something sour? Well, the taste of wine is a combination of sweet and sour." But this explanation is not sufficient. One can only know the taste of wine by actually experiencing it. So it is with the life of one who toils in Torah. The joy in life which dedicated Torah study brings with it cannot be conveyed in words. It must be experienced. (Lev Eliyahu, Vol. 1)

A freilichen Yom Tov

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

*****The Sanzer Rav's Ruach HaKodesh frees an Agunah*****

The Sanzer Rav Harav Chaim Halbershtam זצוק"ל, known as the Divrei Chaim, was reknowned for his ability to resolve intractable cases of *agunos* "chained women" and free them to remarry and have a normal Jewish family life. When a case was presented to the Rav, he would mentally review the Talmud and legal codes from seforim lying in front of him on the table. This was witnessed by the Gaon Rav Yosef Shaul Natanzohn, Rav of Lemberg and author of Shoel Umaishiv, as well as the Gaon Rav Shlome Kluger, when they presented a notoriously difficult case to the Sanzer Rav. With his unsurpassed expertise, he developed a psak which eluded other rabbinic contemporaries – and a woman remarried *al pi Torah*. After word of this landmark case spread, Rabbanim the world over submitted their most difficult cases of agunos to the Sanzer Rav. Invariably, he was able to advise the Rabbanim on a way to unchain the agunah in question. There was grumbling in some quarters that the Sanzer Rav was too lenient in his solutions, but most Rabbanim recognized his Gaonus and held him in the highest possible esteem.

One day a young lady whose husband had deserted her years earlier came to the Sanzer Rav, begging for his help. The Rav asked her many details of her plight and wanted to know why she hadn't come to him sooner. She answered that her father had been able to support her until now, but he had recently died and the support evaporated. However a relative of hers had offered to marry and support her. But she needed to be freed from her existing marriage. The husband's whereabouts were unknown, and she wanted him presumed dead. The Sanzer Rav focused deeply, as if in another world and plumbed the depths of the commentaries. After a long period of deliberation, the Rav turned to the young lady and said gently, with deep seriousness and compassion, "I cannot find any grounds to liberate you, my child. This pains me deeply."

Amidst tears and anguish, the aguna left the Rav and decided to stay in Sanz to look for work as a maid. She went repeatedly to the Sanzer Rav begging and crying for help, but even the great Gaon did not have a solution for her plight. Or so it seemed. That year before Rosh Hashana she was summoned to the Rav who told her there was a city in Hungary called Balash-Yarmut with the Gaon Reb Dovid Deutch as their Rav author of Goren Ledavid. "Travel to Rav Dovid with a letter from me and he will help you," were the Sanzer Rav's instructions, which the aguna followed. Rav Deutch found the letter puzzling, to say the least. In the past it was always he who had turned to the Sanzer Rav for help with agunos, and yet here was the Sanzer Rav asking him to find a solution.

The Rav asked the agunah many questions but reached the same apparent conclusion as his more illustrious counterpart in Sanz. But he did offer some hope: "I personally don't see a solution for you. The only thing I can offer you is to stay as my guest for a while, and help the Rebbetzin. The Sanzer Rav surely had a reason for sending you here. Maybe your husband is in this vicinity somewhere, and we don't know it. Let's just bide our time."

Through Hashgacha Pratis, foreseen by the Divrei Chaim, as they were speaking, the local shoemaker knocked on the door to bring the Rav a pair of shoes that he repaired. When the aguna caught sight of the shoemaker she fainted straight away – and he beat a hasty retreat. When the woman came to herself she was hysterical: "That was my husband! I'm as sure as the day follows night!"

The Rav asked how she could be so sure after so many years' separation. She told the Rav, "I know some physical simanim on him that no one knows. Those marks will identify him beyond a shadow of a doubt." The Rav took her seriously, especially in light of the fact that the shoemaker fled without demanding payment for the work! But on the other hand, the Rav knew the shoemaker to be an honest man, married with a wife and children!

But all the pieces of the puzzle fit together: the lady's 100% identification, the shoemaker's arrival and conduct at the crucial moment, and the Sanzer Rav's intervention. The Rav knew he had to act fast. He summoned the chief of police, told him the background, and asked for backup at the man's house while he confronted him. The chief agreed and went with the Rav to the shoemaker's house, with a backup team waiting outside. The Rav confronted the miscreant, who of course denied everything. But when the Rav told him that he knew of identifying marks that the aguna told him about, and that police were waiting outside to arrest him for bigamy, the man owned up to his deceit. The Rav called the aguna who confidently identified him yet again. The Rav struck while the iron was hot and called in the sofer and witnesses to write the get. The police officer promised the man that if he cooperated with the get, he would not be prosecuted for bigamy and desertion, as long as he left the country. The get was finalized within the hour.

News of this episode spread like wild fire and all the Rabbanim in Galicia and Hungary saw a clear example of Ruach Hakodesh, and revered the Sanzer Rav even more than they had before.

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