

Pardes Yehuda

← Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick →

Parshas Devarim

year 8 #303

פרק ג'

פרשת דברים תשע"ז שנת חזון

Introduction

אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן במדבר בערבה מול סוף בין פארן ובין תפל ולקן וחרצרת ודי זהב: (א א)

These are the words which Moshe spoke to all Israel on that side of the Jordan in the desert, in the plain [Mol Suf] opposite the Red Sea, between Paran and Tofel and Lavan and Chatzeros and Di Zahav. The first verse of Parsha Devarim lists the names of several places where Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael. However, Rashi observes, Rabbi Yochanan said: We have reviewed the entire Bible, but we have found no place named "Tofel" or "Lavan" "Mol Suf," or "Di Zahav." these places do not actually exist; Rashi explains, these terms subtly allude to the occasions when Bnei Yisrael sinned against Hashem during their sojourn in the wilderness. "Mol Suf" refers to their protests at the Yam Suf, where they berated Moshe for leading them out of Egypt; "Lavan," which literally means "white," hints to the incident when they complained about the manna, referring to it as "this white stuff"; and Chatzeros referring to the machlokes of Korach, "Di Zahav" refers to the gold used in the fashioning of the golden calf.

Preserving Man's Dignity even in rebuke

Moshe began his final address to his people by making indirect reference to their sins over their last forty years in the desert. Even as he sat down to administer rebuke, to criticize the people for their rebellious conduct, as the words משה אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה indicate rebuke, he still ensured to do so gently and respectfully, in a manner that would preserve their dignity and not hurt anyone's feelings. Very often, when we offer criticism, we do so without restraint, chiding and humiliating the individual for his mistake. Moshe teaches us that criticism must be spoken softly and delicately, with utmost respect. Even somebody who committed a wrong, even a sinner, deserves our respect and his dignity must be preserved.

Severity of the sin of the calf

According to this Rashi we have a difficulty, since the episode of the sin of the calf preceded the episode of Korach, why does the Posuk list this rebuke last? The Sifri on the Posuk says in the name of Rebbe that the sin of the calf was the severest sin Klal Yisrael committed against Hashem. Therefore Hashem had Moshe list this sin at the end to remind Klal Yisrael how severe this sin was and to refrain from ever considering such an act and to continue repenting. Chazal teach us that in every punishment to Klal Yisrael, it includes in it some punishment for the sin of the calf.

Wishing all a meaningful fast and the speedy redemption of the long exile and the building of the Bais Hamikdash

You can overcome the Yetzer Hara

Another insight from this Posuk: Moshe Rabbeinu is giving Mussar to Klal Yisrael for their dubious ways of the last forty years in the desert. Normally a person would come to a point of *Yiush* / to give up. "If the *yetzer hara* can seduce me to such lowly deeds, I must be on a very low level." This is a misconception, because the *yetzer hara* can convince any person to commit all types of sins, and it doesn't mean that he is on a low level. This was the message loud and clear from Moshe. והינכם היום and *behold, you are today*. Chazal learn from the word היום everyday is a new day. Start fresh. All this means that Hashem has pleasure from him, when he overcomes his *yetzer hara* to serve Him. The Torah promises that if you will overcome the *Yetzer Hara* and give Hashem the pleasure then: ה' אלהי אבותיכם יסף עליכם ככם אלף פעמים: *May Hashem the Lord of your forefathers add to you a thousandfold as many as you are, and may He bless you, as He spoke concerning you!*

"The tests are too difficult for me.

It is impossible for me to pass them." This notion is also a misconception, because the rule is that Hashem doesn't test a person beyond his abilities. When a person has a test, it means that he has the powers to pass it. This is logical, because why should Heaven test us, if it is beyond our capabilities? A story relating to the test of Hashem, happened to a chosid of Rebbe Yisrael Perlow of Stolin זצוק"ל -Niftar 2nd day Rosh Hashanah 1921 and buried in Frankfurt-. The chosid had invested a lot of money in a shipment of merchandise. Most of the money was borrowed but he felt it was a sure deal. As he was anxiously waiting for the cargo ship to arrive, he received a telegram stating that the ship sunk and all the merchandise was lost. The man was devastated, and he even fainted. He was revived and asked that he be brought to the Rebbe. The Rebbe comforted him, "You have nothing to worry about. It was another ship that sank." And it was exactly so. The chassidim began to brag about their Rebbe's Ruach Hakodesh! When the Rebbe heard the story the chassidim were inventing, the Rebbe explained "this was no act of Ruach Hakodesh. He was following a chazal: Hashem does not impose on a person a test which he cannot handle. When he saw how his chosid was devastated, he knew that it must be a false rumor. Hashem doesn't test people beyond their abilities. Imagine a Rebbe in Cheder. It would be ridiculous if he would test elementary boys on a high school level. So too, Hashem certainly doesn't test us beyond our capabilities.

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

In the zchus of Hachnasas Kallah a catastrophe was avoided

There is a housing complex in Yerushalayim renowned until today as "Battei Horenstein." It is on Rechov Yeshayahu and Pri Chadash right near the Zichron Moshe Shteiblach. As we approach the day of Tisha Bav, I wanted to share some history that was a tradition for many years on the night of Tisha Bav. Thousands of Yidden gathered in the large courtyard of "Battei Horenstein." The speakers wailed and brought about the significance of the Churban and the need for the Bais Hamikdash. There was never a dry eye in the crowd. The quiet night with the powerful amplifiers many more were able to listen on from the comfort of their home.

This tradition continued for many years. However, the need for new apartments arose and the courtyard was filled up with a new housing complex. The young generation would never comprehend having such a crowd in this small alley of the current "Battei Horenstein."

Reb Dov Ber Horenstein was a wealthy, generous Boyaner chassid who lived in Yerushalayim the latter part of the 1800's well over 120 years ago. His door was always open for the many needy *Yerushalmi Yidden* in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Once Reb Zorach approached Reb Dov Ber for help in marrying off his daughter. Reb Dov Ber asked 'how much does he need for the wedding?' Reb Zorach calculated and answered a sum. Reb Dov Ber told him to wait and went into his chamber and came back with an envelope and gave the poverty-stricken Reb Zorach the fantastic sum of money to cover the entire wedding, saying, "All I ask is that you invite me to the wedding." A year passed and the wedding was to take place. A short while before the chuppah, Reb Zorach suddenly remembered that he had forgotten to invite his benefactor. Reb Zorach told his future son-in-law that he had to go and personally invite Reb Dov Ber, for to send an emissary would be an insult. The chassan decided to accompany Reb Zorach, as did a whole group of guests. They were surprised to find the Horenstein's front gate locked, as they were known to maintain an open house. They all climbed over the fence and found the front door locked as well. They knocked, but there was no answer. Fearing something was wrong, they rushed to the rear and found the back door open. They quietly entered the home and were shocked to find Reb Dov Ber and his wife bound and gagged, lying on the floor. "What's going on here?" the chassan shouted. Suddenly, three men dashed past them and disappeared into the darkness outside. Reb Zorach and his escorts quickly untied the elderly couple. They noticed that silver and other valuables had been stacked up in the kitchen. They had entered during an attempted robbery.

Once the Horensteins recovered from the ordeal, they asked "what was the purpose of their visit?" Reb Zorach excused himself for not coming sooner to invite them to the wedding of his daughter as he had promised to do so! Reb Dov Ber and his wife were not in the spirits to go to a wedding. However after a few drinks of Lechaim they were convinced to join the wedding. Reb Dov Ber now realized that his generosity to Reb Zorach, and the latter keeping his promise in return to invite him to the wedding, had saved his life just in the nick of time.

Reb Dov Ber realized that this was a direct result of the help he had extended to Reb Zorach in marrying off his daughter. Reb Dov Ber and his wife were the honored guests at the wedding and they dispersed a lot of Tezdakka at the wedding. To show his appreciation to Hashem, Reb Dov Ber approached the Kollel from Vohlyn who had owned a large lot in the new city of Jerusalem and offered that he will build a housing development of 30 apartments for newly married couples who could not afford apartments, where they could live rent-free until they were able to buy their own apartment. The Chanukas Habayis ceremony was held in 5668/1908. A year later his wife Doba Leah passed away ד' תמוז תרס"ט

That year Reb Dov Ber became ill and he pledged the Kollel another 25 apartments if he would recover and Hashem sent him very soon a recovery and as soon as he left the hospital he gave the Kollel a down payment for the 25 apartments. Hashem repaid him and he lived another 9 years. He was niftar י"ח ניסן תרע"ה

All this occurred in the zchus of his Tzedaka. Many great Tzaddikim and Roshei Yeshivas lived in this great complex. The famous Rosh Yeshiva and author of the Birkas Avrohom on Shas, Reb Avraham Erlangers שליט"א still resides there. Reb Dov Ber was rewarded with the wise words of Shlome Hamelech in Koheles 7:1 טוב שם משמן טוב A [good] name is better than good oil. The Mishna in Pirkei Avos chapter 4:13 states רבי שמעון אומר, שלשה כתרין הם, כתר תורה, כתר שם טוב, וכתר מלכות, וכתר פהונה וכתר מלכות, וכתר שם טוב עולה על גביהן: Rabbi Shimon says: There are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood and the crown of monarchy - but the crown of a good name outweighs them all.

Reb Dov Ber's name is still an ongoing legacy and another story attesting to the advice of King Solomon in Koheles. "שלה לחמך על פני המים, כי רבב המים תמצאנו" (קהלת יא א) Cast thy bread upon the waters, for you shall find it after many days. שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו

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