

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' ישראל מנחם
בן הרה"ח ר' אלתר הלל ע"ה
רבינוביץ
גלב"ע כ"א סיון ה'תשע"ו
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

גדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

דעם רבינ'ס און ארט

A Word
on the
Parsha

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חוקת

וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ פָּרָה אֲדֻמָּה... (ט"ב)

And they shall take for you a red cow...

The word "אֵלֶיךָ" implies a deep and personal connection between the mitzvah of *para aduma* and Moshe Rabbeinu. Indeed, we find this connection in a Midrash: "Rebbi Yossi ben Rebbi Chanina said: Hashem said to Moshe, 'To you I reveal the reason for *para aduma*, but for everyone else it is a *chuka* (law without a reason)'; "Rebbi Yossi ben Rebbi Chanina said: [The *possuk* is] an allusion [to Hashem telling Moshe] that 'all of the other *paros adumos* will disappear—but **yours** will remain.'"

What is the meaning of this link between Moshe Rabbeinu and the *para aduma*?

Meforshim on our *parsha* explain that the *para aduma*'s capability to cleanse a person of *tumas meis* (impurity arising

from contact with a corpse) stems from the fact that it served as an atonement for the *chet ho'egel*. If not for the *chet ho'egel*, the *Yidden* would have been rid of the *malach hamoves*, and the whole concept of death would have been eradicated from their midst. Since the *para aduma* served as an atonement for the *source* of death—the *chet ho'egel*—it, therefore, had the power to 'atone' for the *results* of death—to cleanse a person of *tumas meis*.

This is where Moshe Rabbeinu comes in: In order to overcome mortality and death, a counter-force is needed, the concept of *nitzchiyus*—immortality.

The Chachomim tell us that the handiwork of Moshe is eternal; even regarding the very life of Moshe, we are taught that "משה לא מת"; Moshe never passed away. In other words, Moshe Rabbeinu embodies the idea of *nitzchiyus*.

In order for the *mitzva* of *para aduma* to fulfill its role of purifying a person from *tumas meis*, there needs to be the element of Moshe Rabbeinu tied to it—the element of *nitzchiyus*.

Takeaway:

A person can attain an element of *nitzchiyus* through total *mesiras nefesh* and *bittul* to Hashem. If a person experiences a case of spiritual “death”—separation from *Elokus*—he can “purify” himself and reconnect with the Source of life by arousing a feeling of *mesiras nefesh* and *bittul*. This will impact his *avodas Hashem* as a whole, influencing a change for the better.

Davening is an opportune time to awaken this feeling of closeness and devotion to Hashem. Over the course of the day, one can think back to davening and feel empowered to overcome any obstacle in *avodas Hashem*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 33, p. 127)

בלק

וַיָּקָם בִּלְעָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחֲבֹשׂ אֶת־אֶתְנָנוּ... (כב, כא)

And Bilam arose in the morning
and saddled his donkey...

“From here [we learn] that hate causes a disregard for the standard [of dignified conduct], for he saddled it himself. Hashem said [to Bilam], “Rasha! Their father Avraham has already preceded you, as it says, ‘Avraham arose in the morning and saddled his donkey.’” (Rashi)

Hashem’s words to Bilam, “Their father Avraham has already preceded you,” imply that Bilam’s act of saddling the donkey was actually *to his credit*(!), and thus could have assisted him in his mission of cursing the *Yidden*. Only because “their father Avraham has already preceded you,” were his evil hopes dashed.

This presents an obvious question: How can an act of hatred ever have been considered a *merit* for Bilam?!

Later in the *parsha* we find that when Bilam comes to the realization that Hashem is not going to allow him to curse the *Yidden*, he tries a different tactic, reminding Hashem of the *Yidden’s aveiros*, in the hope that by doing so, Hashem’s anger would be aroused and he would then be able to curse them (see Rashi 24:1).

We can apply the same thinking here: Bilam’s intent in saddling the donkey by himself—which is an expression of his irrational hatred of *Yidden*—was to hint at the fact that the *Yidden* also behaved irrationally sometimes; as expressed in the fact that they committed various *aveiros* throughout their journeys in the desert. This, he hoped, would provoke, *chas v’sholom*, Hashem’s anger towards them, and help him succeed in carrying out his evil plan.

It is in response to this that Hashem said, “Rasha! Their father Avraham has already preceded you”: Avraham’s act

of saddling the donkey himself, which was an expression of his eagerness to fulfill Hashem’s will—a *super-rational* behavior—preempted the actions of Bilam. In other words, the *superrational* behavior of Avraham—stemming from his *love* for Hashem—preempted and undid the *irrational* behavior of Bilam—which stemmed from his *hatred* for *Yidden*.

Takeaway:

The *yetzer hara*—who hates holiness and goodness—can cause a person to veer off the straight and narrow path of Torah by acting irrationally and committing an *aveira*.

The remedy for such situations is to invoke the intrinsic and superrational love for Hashem that every *Yid* possesses as an inheritance from Avraham Avinu. Through awakening this superrational love, not only is one able to get rid of his *aveiros*, but he can also redeem the sparks of *kedusha* which have become trapped in the hands of *kelipa* because of his *aveiros*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 28, p. 157)

פינחס

פִּינְחָס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הִכְהֵן הַשֵּׁיב אֶת־חַמְתִּי מֵעַל בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאוֹ אֶת־קִנְאָתִי בְּתוֹכָם וְלֹא־כָלִיתִי אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְאָתִי. לָכֵן אָמַר הַנְּנִי נָתַן לֹא אֶת־בְּרִיתִי שְׁלֹום. וְהָיְתָה לֹא וְלִזְרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו בְּרִית כְּהֵנָּה עוֹלָם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר קִנְאָ לְאֶלְקָיו וַיִּכְפַּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (כה, יא-יג)

Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon Hakohen has turned My anger away from the *B’nei Yisroel* by his zealously avenging Me among them, so that I did not destroy the *B’nei Yisroel* because of My zeal. Therefore, say, “I hereby give him My covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for his descendants after him [as] an eternal covenant of *Kehuna*, because he was zealous for his G-d and atoned for *B’nei Yisroel*.”

These *pesukim* are puzzling: Pinchas wasn’t the only one to “turn Hashem’s anger away from *B’nei Yisroel*”—Moshe did the same (and not just once, but *many* times, as related in the Torah)! What was different about Pinchas that he merited such an incredible reward—the *Kehuna*—for him and all his future descendants?

Furthermore, not only do we not find Moshe being rewarded with a special covenant “for him and for his descendants after him,” but we actually find that when Moshe asked Hashem for something similar—to “let my sons inherit my honor”—Hashem *denied* his request!

Here is the answer according to Chassidus: It is true that both Moshe and Pinchas had the merit to save the *Yidden*, but they did so in different ways: Moshe took the *spiritual* route, through intervention from *above*—he davened to Hashem, and Hashem answered his *tefilla* and aborted the decree. Pinchas, on the other hand, turned away Hashem's wrath through a *physical* act which caused the situation *below* to change—he killed Zimri, thus arousing the *Yidden* to do *teshuva* and thereby end the plague.

This distinction is reflected in the type of self-sacrifice that they demonstrated on behalf of the *Yidden*: Moshe was willing to give up his *spiritual* life—the life of his *neshama*—for their sake (as the *posuk* says, "...but if not, erase me now from Your book which You have written"); whereas Pinchas *literally* risked his life for them (as Chazal relate, that the people of Shevet Shimon wanted to kill Pinchas and he was saved by a miracle).

Moshe and Pinchas represent two different paths in one's *avoda* to influence and sanctify one's environment: Moshe represents a "top-down" approach, drawing down *giluyim* from above, which causes darkness and materialism to dissipate. Pinchas represents the method of "bottom-up"—changing the physical world from within, refining it, and raising it to a higher spiritual level.

One difference between these two approaches: The influence of the "top-down" approach doesn't penetrate the innermost parts of material reality. Therefore, its effect can only be temporary and eventually disappears together with the *giluyim* that prompted it. But when the approach is "bottom-up," it causes a change from the inside, and its effect is therefore sustainable and everlasting.

Since Pinchas's act was in the "bottom-up" category, the effect of which is *eternal*, he was rewarded with an *eternal* covenant ("It shall be for him and for his descendants after him")—the *bris* of *Kehuna*.

Takeaway:

There are people who are very passionate when it comes to *ruchniyus*; like davening and learning; but ignore the *avoda* of uplifting their *gashmiyus'dike* life. Or, they *are* involved in doing their *avoda* with *gashmiyus*, but they are not concerned with what is happening with those around them. These lifestyles are not always sustainable. True, while one is occupied with affairs of the *neshama*—or even with *avoda* with *gashmiyus*, but staying in his own bubble, so to speak—he is, indeed, in a wonderful, spiritually healthy space. But then, when he is forced to deal with worldly affairs, not only does he not remain above it all, but on the contrary, they drag him down, *rachmana l'tzlan*.

In order for one's *avodas Hashem* to be sustainable, it is crucial that together with the inner spiritual *avoda*, one must also deal with the outside—both with his personal "outside", as well as the literal outside—and utilize them for the purpose of Torah and *mitzvos*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 18, p. 344)

מטות-מסעי

The Torah uses two different names when referring to the tribes of *B'nei Yisroel*—"שבטים" and "מטות"; both of which (loosely) mean "branches."

The difference between the two names is that "שבט" means a branch that was just recently cut from the tree (or is even still attached to it), and contains moisture from fluids of the tree; whereas a "מטה" has been detached from the tree long enough to become a dry rod, and has no more moisture from its source.

The above leads to another distinction: The moist "שבט" is soft and weak, and can therefore be bent and turned any which way. However, the dry "מטה"—which has seemingly lost all connection with its source—is tough, strong, and harder to bend.

These two interconnected distinctions represent two modes of existence of *Yidden*: The "שבט" symbolizes a time in which the connection between *Yidden* (the "branch") and Hashem (the "Tree") is evident and visible to all (like during the Beis Hamikdosh eras). Whereas the "מטה" symbolizes a time in which this relationship is concealed and not visible to the naked eye; as is the case during the time of *galus*.

Just like in the *moshol*, the "מטה" being further from its source is the reason for its strength, so too in the *nimshol*: It is precisely the (apparent) distance and separation of *Yidden* from their divine source that awakens within them previously untapped strengths and capabilities. It is with this new-found strength and resilience that we are able to overcome the hardships of *galus*, and the temptations of the *yetzer hora*; we are determined to remain connected to Hashem despite all the difficulties.

Thus, it is *davka* when we are in a state of (seeming) disconnect, when Hashem conceals Himself, that we can reveal a much deeper and more real connection with Hashem.

Takeaway:

The purpose of *galus*—an existence in which *Elokus* is concealed, and we are able to feel disconnected from Hashem—is to reveal within a *yid* an even deeper and more powerful resolve and energy in his *avodas Hashem*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 18, p. 382; *ibid.* vol. 28, p. 281)