



דעם רבינ'ס א ווארט

A Word
on the
Parsha

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משפטים

כי תקנה עבד עברי שש שנים יעבד
ובשבעת יצא לחפשי הנם: (כא, ב)

Should you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work
[for] six years, and in the seventh [year], he
shall go out to freedom without charge.

Why is *eved ivri* the first topic to be discussed after *mattan Torah*? It is, after all, a completely negative phenomenon (i.e. a thief who is unable to repay what he stole and therefore sells himself as a slave)? Isn't this contrary to the principle of not beginning on a negative note (Bava Basra 14b)?

If we dig deeper, though, we'll realize that it is *precisely* at this point in time—immediately following *mattan Torah*—that the need arises to clarify the laws of one who is caught stealing:

As long as *mattan Torah* lasted, *Elokus* was experienced as a visible and tangible reality in this world. In such circumstances, it was not even possible to go against the will of Hashem. But after *mattan Torah*, when the revelations were not apparent and *Elokus* was no longer perceived in a tangible way, the potential arose for a person to think that Hashem is not watching. This, in turn, could lead to someone going against the will of Hashem, *chas v'shalom*.

This is the meaning of “stealing” in spiritual terms: Just as a thief carries out his deeds stealthily and in the dark, hoping

that no one will catch him in the act, so too, a person who does an *aveira* does so based on the mistaken assumption that Hashem is not watching.

This is why the *Mishpatim* open with *halachos* connected to a thief: Now that the possibility of becoming a “thief” arises, the need to provide the *tikkun* (כי תקנה עבד עברי)—the rectification—for such behavior arises as well. The *posuk* provides us with the *tikkun* in the following words: “שש שנים יעבד ובשביעית יצא לחפשי חינום”; “he shall work [for] six years, and in the seventh [year], he shall go out to freedom without charge”. The remedy for the “thief” comes about through the *avoda* of Teshuva, and by refining and uplifting oneself together with one's surroundings. When this work is completed, one is guaranteed that he will be granted true freedom from his *yetzer hara*.

Takeaway:

“Whoever buys a Jewish servant, it is as if he bought for himself a master” (*Kiddushin* 20a): We are *avodim* of Hashem, and Hashem needs to—so to speak—listen to what we say. Yidden have already declared that “כלו” —the time for *galus* is up—and there is no more reason to wait. The time has come for *Elokus* to be revealed openly, with the coming of *Moshiach tzidkeinu*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 673; *Toras Menachem* vol. 30, p. 112; *ibid.* vol. 39, p. 109)

תרומה

וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֵתֶם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנְחָשֶׁת: (כד., ג.)

And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and copper...

The Beis Hamikdash functioned in accordance with the principle of "אין עניות במקום עשירות"; "there is no poverty in a place of riches" (Tamid 29a); meaning that all activities which took place in the Beis Hamikdash—no matter how small—were done in the most lavish way possible. Even the seemingly ordinary task of giving water to the animals used for daily *korbanos* (as preparation for their *shechita*) was done using a gold cup! Why, then, was silver and copper used in the building of the *mishkan*—shouldn't it have been built entirely from gold?

The answer to this question lies in the spiritual significance of these three metals—gold, silver and copper: We find that Chazal view gold and silver as each having an advantage over the other. The superiority of gold is due to its preciousness and greater value. Silver, on the other hand, has the advantage of being the mainstream form of currency used, and therefore—practically speaking—more useful.

Copper lacks both of these qualities—it is even less valuable than silver, and less commonly used as a medium of exchange.

These three metals symbolize three states in *avodas Hashem*: Gold represents the *baal teshuva* whose *avoda* is on a higher plane than that of a *tzaddik* (just as gold is more valuable than silver). Silver represents the *avoda* of the *tzaddik*, which—though not as lofty as that of the *baal teshuva*—is the primary *avoda* which Hashem intended for the world (just as silver is the primary form of currency). Copper represents the *rasha*, someone who has neither of the above mentioned qualities.

We can now understand what the Torah is teaching us by instructing *Yidden* to use *all* three materials in the *mishkan*: The task of establishing a *mishkan*—transforming materiality into a dwelling for the *Shechina*—was given to every single type of *Yid*, including those who have not yet done *teshuva*—the "copper" group. They too have a part to play in building the *mishkan* and bringing *Moshiach*.

Takeaway:

1. Those who consider themselves to be in the "gold" or "silver" category need to understand that the only way they can accomplish "ושכנתי בתוכם" is by connecting and uniting with the "copper" group, and not make the

mistake of staying separate. From gold and silver alone the *mishkan* can't be built; copper is crucial as well.

2. Those who consider themselves to be "copper" may feel dejected and think: "Who am I to participate in the building of the *mishkan*?" They need to understand that they are a vital component in the *mishkan*, and, in a way, even more so than the gold and silver (e.g., we find that the supports for the entire *mishkan* were made solely of copper).

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 152)

תצוה

פְּעֶמֶן זָהָב וְרִמּוֹן פְּעֶמֶן זָהָב וְרִמּוֹן עַל-שׁוּלֵי הַמְּעִיל סְבִיב: וְהָיָה עַל-אַחֲרֹן לְשֵׁרֶת וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹלוֹ בְּבֵאוֹ אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְפָנָי ה' וּבְצֵאתוֹ וְלֹא יָמוּת: (כה, לד-לה)

A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the bottom hem of the robe, all around. It shall be on Aharon when he performs the service, and its sound shall be heard when he enters the Holy before Hashem and when he leaves, so that he will not die.

Why was it important for the Kohen Gadol's entry into the *kodesh* to be accompanied by sounds? Furthermore, the *possuk* clearly states, "לא ברעש ה'"—Hashem is not to be found in the noise. The *Shechina* is *davka* revealed in a "קול דממה"; "a small, still, sound". If so, the Kohen Gadol should have made his entry with the *least* amount of noise possible?!

The explanation is as follows: The idea that Hashem reveals himself specifically in silence—as opposed to commotion—is referring to a lofty level of G-dly revelation; the *giluy* of "שם הוי". *Giluyim* associated with "שם אלוקים", however, are manifested—not in silence—but with fanfare.

The lesson in *avodas Hashem*: The level of "קול דממה דקה" is attributed to someone who has reached a place of total *bittul* before Hashem. His *avoda* extends all the way to "שם הוי", which, as mentioned previously, is manifested specifically in a "still, small sound".

However, the *avoda* for someone who has not yet achieved this kind of *bittul*, and thus still struggles with negative forces and his own *yeshus*, is different; it extends only as high as "שם" "אלוקים". His *avoda*, therefore, is "ברעש", a "stormy" *avoda*; like someone fleeing from danger.

The Kohen Gadol represents the entirety of *klal Yisroel*; both those on the loftier level, as well as those on the 'bottom of the robe'; "שולי המעיל"; whose *avoda* is performed with "noise". Therefore, the Kohen Gadol entered the *kodesh* (1.)

accompanied by noise, which (2.) emanated from the hem of his robe.

Takeaway:

1. Being that we are living in the final moments of *galus* which are referred to as עקבתא דמשיחא (“the bottom hem of the robe”), our *avoda* of bringing *Yidden* closer to Hashem (“to the *kodesh*”) needs to be with “bells”—with a *shturem!* This includes going out to the streets and calling out for *Yidden* to put on Tefillin, put up *mezuzos*, give *tzedakah*, etc.—something that was not done in previous generations.

2. The way to combat the “קול המונה של רומי”—the “commotion” created by the secular and material world—is by making a “commotion” of *kedusha*, specifically in those places where the “noise” of the material world is loud.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 337)

כי תשא

מַחֲנֵי נָא מִסִּפְרֵךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ (לב, לב)

...Erase me now from Your book,
which You have written.

Rashi elaborates on these words and says that Moshe’s request to not be mentioned in the Torah was in order “that they not say about me that I was unworthy to beg mercy for them [Bnei Yisroel].”

One wonders: How is it possible that at such a fateful time—when the future of the *Yidden* hangs in the balance and Moshe is begging Hashem for their survival—Moshe is thinking about his personal honor?

The truth is that Moshe was not worried for his own honor, but rather for the future of Bnei Yisroel: If, *chas v’shalom*, Hashem would not forgive the *Yidden* for the *chet ha’egel* and Moshe’s name remained in the Torah, it might be interpreted incorrectly. People might assume Moshe was unwilling to forfeit the *zechus* of being mentioned in the Torah in exchange for the survival of *Yidden*, and that this unwillingness then made him unworthy of actually saving them. As a result of this misunderstanding, future generations might learn to behave in such a way as well—to prioritize their own welfare over that of Bnei Yisroel.

This, according to Rashi, is why Moshe was prepared to be *moser nefesh* on behalf of the *Yidden*; in order to bestow on

all future generations the strength and ability to have *mesiras nefesh* for a fellow Jew.

Takeaway: It is not enough to have Ahavas Yisroel for every single *Yid*. One must have *mesiras nefesh* for the sake of every single *Yid*, a *mesiras nefesh* which must be expressed in “אהבה את הבריות ומקרבו לתורה”; to bring them closer to Hashem and His Torah.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 21, p. 175)

ויקהל

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדְּבָר
אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה ה' לֵאמֹר. קַחוּ מֵאֵתְכֶם תְּרוּמָה לַה' (לה, ד-ה)

And Moshe spoke to the entire community of the children of Israel, saying: “This is the word that the Lord has commanded to say: ‘Take from yourselves an offering for Hashem...’”

According to the Ramban, the mitzvah to make the Mishkan was given to Moshe earlier, before the *chet ha’egel*. It was on the day after Moshe descended from the mountain—after the *Yidden* were forgiven—when he relayed the mitzvah to the *Yidden*. This means that the mitzvah to build the Mishkan remained in effect throughout the time of the *chet ha’egel!*

One can derive an incredible lesson from this:

A person might think that in order to build a Mishkan—to transform the physical world into a dwelling place for Hashem—they must first do complete *teshuva* for all their *aveiros* and receive Hashem’s forgiveness. Until then, though, they cannot be involved in building the Mishkan.

The Torah is teaching us that this is incorrect, as we see clearly from the fact that the *mitzva* of “ועשו לי מקדש” remained fully intact during the very moments in which the *chet ha’egel* took place. Even one who has not yet done *teshuva* needs to help build the Mishkan, and that in itself will eventually put him on the proper path.

Takeaway: The *aron* contained within it the second set of *luchos*, as well as the broken pieces of the first *luchos*; representing the state of *yidden* following the *chet ha’egel*. This serves as a message for us that every single *Yid* has a place in the Mishkan and is enjoined to do their part in making this world a *dira lo yisborech*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 153)