1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah
A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

PARSHAS DEVARIM – HATOV VEHAMEITIV

From the Archives of Mishulchan Shlomo – Rabbi Caplan on the Parsha

In this week's parsha Moshe Rabbeinu recounts the disastrous incident of the Meraglim (spies) whose report frightened and discouraged Bnai Yisrael. "And you slandered in your tents and you said, 'Because of Hashem's hatred for us did He take us out of Mitzrayim to deliver us into the hands of the Emori to destroy us'" (Devarim 1,27). Rashi informs us that they had it all wrong: "**He** indeed loved you but **you** hated Him."

Bnai Yisrael were fully aware of their numerous lapses in the Desert for which they were often punished severely. They knew that they had not lived up to Hashem's expectations of them. So they concluded that Hashem must hate them. If so, why would He perform miracles to save them from their formidable enemies? They had it all wrong; He didn't hate them.

At times when we are faced with impending tragedy, when things look bleak all around us we wonder if Hashem really loves us. And when tragedy actually strikes, G-d forbid, when it seems like the whole world is crashing down upon us, we may actually conclude that Hashem hates us.

When we look at our world today – in the year 5775 – when our enemies and the enemies of civilization have become so emboldened and dangerous, when moral decay has not only become pervasive but even legitimized, when we are each aware of our own personal shortcomings. There is the temptation to conclude that G-d must really hate us.

Rashi sets us straight. Hashem may not be happy with us or with humanity in general. Indeed, He may be disappointed if not totally disgusted. He may even bring tragedy and suffering – *chas veshalom* – upon us, but He still loves us. It is a love which is an expression of His deep care and concern for us and which bestows on us what we **need,** not necessarily what we want.

At the time of the destruction of the first Bais Hamikdash, the enemy entered the Holy of Holies and witnessed the Keruvim embracing each other (Yoma 54a). The Maharsha asks how the Keruvim could have been embracing since the Gemara in Bava Basra (99a) states that when Bnai Yisrael were not fulfilling Hashem's will, the Keruvim turned away from each other.

I would suggest that when Bnai Yisrael are not fulfilling His will, Hashem is displeased with them and demonstrates this through the Keruvim turning away from each other. However, at the time of destruction when Hashem's displeasure was clearly evident, He wanted to demonstrate that even in the face of such a calamity His love for them endures.

The Gemara in Pesachim (50a) states that although we recite the *bracha* of Hatov Vehameitiv (Who is good and does good) on good tidings and Dayan Ha'emes (the true judge) on tragic news, in the era of Mashiach we will recite Hatov Vehameitiv on all tidings. We will look back at all of our history – on all of our *tzaros* – and say it was all good, it was all strictly for our benefit. Although right now this perception is totally incomprehensible to us, nevertheless we can always be assured throughout that Hashem truly loves us and cares about us.

Tisha B'Av is a time to focus on all the tragedies that have occurred and that continue to plague us: the loss of the Bais Hamikdash, the long bitter *galus* that ensued, the persecutions and holocausts, and the decimation of our people physically and spiritually. We reaffirm that Hashem is the Dayan Ha'emes. Yet we recognize that He is not only a Just G-d, He is also a Loving G-d. And He is waiting for us to cry out Eichah – How could it have gotten so bad? How long can it last? When will we be able to say only "Hatov Vehameitiv"? *Bimheira beyameinu*!

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

Please contact R' Ungar (Ymungar@gmail.com) with questions or comments

QUESTION: I was standing on my corner on ליל שבת talking to a friend when my brand-new bracelet that my grandmother bought for my birthday ripped open and fell down. This was a very expensive bracelet. What was the proper way or is there a proper way I could take it home?

ANSWER: In certain instances, חז"ל give a special היתר to do an איסור דרבנן. When one is about to have a הפסד מרובה and it is sudden, one may be allowed to do certain actions to save the loss from happening. A person loses it when it comes to their money and to prevent a bigger איסור from happening they give a היתר. In the case we are discussing, if it is indeed expensive and a big loss for the owner, the first and best option is to get a גוי to take it to the closest safe place. If that is not an option, the second best is to walk less than ד' אמות (approximately 6 feet) and then pass it to a friend who can walk 6 feet and then pass it back to you. You can do this until you reach the closest רשות היחיד to which you can put the bracelet into with a שינוי by throwing the bracelet into the רה"י with the back of your hand. After every 6 feet it should preferably be put down on the ground. If you're alone, you can walk 6 feet, stop, put it down, and then again, etc. and throw it in when reaching a safe רה"י.

עי' סימן רס"ו. כל הסימן. בפרט סעי ז' ומשנה ברורה ס"ק י"ז – י"ח.

THE SUCCESSFUL SALMON GEFILTE FISH

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Avi had an upcoming yahrtzeit for a loved one. To commemorate the day, he decided to make a large siyum. He wanted it to be a beautiful event, filled with Torah, food, and inspiration.

Avi loved fish, so he planned a special salmon dinner for his guests. He invited 300 people and called a local fish market to arrange a huge order of fresh salmon. He asked the owner, Eldad, to prepare the fish several days before the event so everything would be ready on time.

Eldad was excited about the large order. It was one of the biggest orders his store had ever received. He purchased a tremendous amount of fish and even borrowed money and hired extra workers to prepare everything for the siyum.

But then, on the day of the event, tragedy struck. A war broke out. Rockets began flying, alarms sounded, and people remained indoors. Sadly, Avi had no choice. He called Eldad and said, "I feel terrible, but nobody is going to be able to come to the siyum. We have to cancel the event."

Eldad was devastated. He had spent a large amount of money purchasing the fish, borrowed money to cover the order, and hired workers to prepare everything. Now he was left with hundreds of pounds of salmon and no customers. He worried that this mistake would put him out of business.

But then his wife had an idea. "Instead of letting all this salmon go to waste," she said, "why don't we try something new? Let's turn it into salmon gefilte fish. Maybe people will like it."

They followed her suggestion and created a unique type of salmon gefilte fish and began selling it. To their surprise, customers loved it! The sales were incredible, and they recovered almost all of their money. They suffered only a small loss.

But then something unexpected happened. Word spread about this amazing new salmon gefilte fish. People began coming from all over to buy it. Eldad's store became extremely successful. Within a short time, he became a very wealthy man.

A few months later, Eldad called Avi. "There is still one thing we need to settle," he said. "The bill for the fish order that was canceled. You still owe me for that."

Avi was surprised. "What do you mean?" Avi asked. "You sold the fish! You didn't lose any money. In fact, that canceled siyum turned your store into a huge success. You became wealthy because of that salmon. You should actually be thanking me. Maybe I should actually own a percentage of your new business because it all came because of me.

Eldad replied, "But that's not fair. I invested the money, hired the workers, and prepared the fish because of your order. The fact that something amazing happened afterward doesn't erase the fact that you never paid me for your order."

They decided to bring the question to a Rav. Does Avi still have to pay for the canceled order, even though Eldad ended up becoming much more successful because of it? Or does Avi have a point? Since Eldad actually benefited from the situation and built his business because of the leftover salmon, perhaps Avi should not have to pay anything, and perhaps Avi should be paid by Eldad because of Eldad's profits. What do you think? See Chashukei Chemed Nedarim Page 544.

Regarding last week's question about the empty vort, Rav Zilberstein (C'C Nedarim page 554) answered that it was permitted for the speaker to praise the Chassan even though he did not know him personally. This is similar to what Chazal teach regarding the mitzvah to praise a bride. However, regarding the money the speaker received, Rav Zilberstein ruled that he should return it. The father did not give him the money merely because he had delivered a good speech. He gave it because he believed that his daughter was marrying a good person. Since it later became clear that the groom was not a good person, the money had been given under false pretenses. The speaker should therefore return it.

YITZCHOK VARSHAVER

When Rav Yitzchok Hutner was sitting shivah for his wife, two giants of mussar, R' Meir Chodosh and R' Shlomo Wolbe, came to console him at the same time. The three rabbanim were discussing the educational approach of the Alter of Slabodka, and R' Hutner recalled the prodigious and often scathing rebuke that the Alter frequently leveled at him.

Upon hearing his description, R' Wolbe turned to R' Meir Chodosh and said, "Is it possible to teach talmidim in our generation in the same way that the Alter dealt with his own talmidim? It seems to me that bachurim today wouldn't be capable of dealing with this type of tochachah. It would simply cause them to rebel or become broken!"

R' Meir replied, "If our talmidim felt that their rebbeim loved them as profoundly as the Alter loved us, they would be able to accept even the level of powerful rebuke that we received from the Alter."

R' Hutner then shared a personal anecdote:

"One day, I decided that I could no longer endure the Alter's harsh censure, and resolved to leave the yeshivah. However, I had derech eretz," he added, "and I forced myself to go to his home first and inform him that I was leaving. The rebbetzin answered the door and asked for my name.

"'Yitzchok Varshever,' I replied. R' Hutner was known by this name because he came from Warsaw.

"'Oh!' the rebbetzin exclaimed. 'So you are the talmid for whom my husband is constantly fasting and davening!'

"When I heard that," R' Hutner concluded, "I immediately changed my mind. I informed the rebbetzin that I no longer needed to see the Alter, and I turned around and went back to the yeshivah."

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