

Parashas
Shoftim

• 748 •

ב' אלול תשפ"ו
5786

י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
רבי גמליאל הכהן
רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

השפעה שלילית מכל חטא קל

טיב המערכת

ודרשת היטב

And you shall investigate well

The holy Rebbe of Komarno relates in his sefer Heichal HaBerachah about the holy Baal Shem Tov, that once he saw someone who desecrated Shabbos, and he was very distressed by this, for he said that if from Heaven he was shown this matter, it is a sign that he himself had blemished in this area. And from Heaven it was revealed to him that once he had made use of a Torah scholar, and Chazal say that a Talmid Chacham is in the aspect of Shabbos, and for a person on his level this was considered as if he had desecrated Shabbos. "And similarly, it once occurred with a talmid who was sitting on the night of Tishah B'Av after midnight, and he was performing unifications and writing the secrets of the Torah, for it was a postponed fast, and there was also a bris milah on that day; therefore he was lenient with himself and diverted his mind from mourning... and he encroached upon the boundary of the wicked ד"ס. Therefore, the wicked one provoked him in that week and brought him to great anger, and through his anger he caused that another wicked person stabbed a knife into the stomach of a wicked person like himself and killed him. And the holy Baal Shem Tov told him that all of this he caused, and he repented also for this."

The Midrash says, "Every place where it says 'the people' it is an expression of disgrace, and every place where it says 'Israel' it is an expression of praise." And behold, in our parashah the Torah says that if there is a man or woman who went and served idolatry (17:4), - "ודרשת היטב והנה אמת נכון הדבר נעשתה התועבה הזאת בישראל", - "and you shall investigate very well, and behold it is true, the matter is correct, this abomination has been done in Israel." And we must understand: why did the Torah write it with the expression "Israel"? Can it be said that those who stumbled and served idolatry are considered important?

The answer is found at the beginning of the words of the aforementioned Heichal HaBerachah: "According to what is known from Maran the Arizal, the Baal Shem Tov, when a righteous person commits a minor sin, it causes a simple person to commit a severe sin." And according to his words the posuk can be explained as follows: that if it is told to you that the lowly among the people stumbled in a severe sin, know that "this abomination has been done" because of "Israel" — meaning because of the important ones among the people, for they stumbled in a minor sin and caused the lesser people to transgress a severe sin.

And these words should cause the strings of our hearts to tremble, for every time that we see that someone did something bad, then not only do we not judge him, but rather we should search within ourselves where we are blemished in that same matter, and we should fulfill within ourselves "and you shall investigate well" until we know what we must correct and return in repentance.

Tiv HaTorah - Shoftim

The negative influence of even a minor sin

וְהִגַּד לְךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ וְדַרְשָׁתָּ הֵיטֵב וְהִנֵּה אָמַת נְכוֹן הַדָּבָר נַעֲשִׂיתָה הַתּוֹעֵבָה הַזֹּאת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: (יז, ד)
And it will be told to you and you will hear, and you shall investigate well, and behold It is true, the matter is correct, this abomination has been done in Israel. (17:4)

It is stated in the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah, Parashah 20:23): "Every place where it says 'the people' it is an expression of disgrace, and every place where it says 'Israel' it is an expression of praise."

In light of this, there is room to ask: why does the posuk before us say, "this abomination has been done in Israel"? Can it be that those who stumbled in the sin of idolatry are considered important?! Why are they not called "the people"?

However, the saying of HaGaon HaKadosh, Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz, is known that when a Jew in Warsaw wears a garment with buttons (which at that time was the style of the modernizers), then a Jew in Paris apostatizes, Rachmana litzlan. For all of Israel are like one body, and when there is a small blemish in the head, it makes a tremendous impression in the rest of the limbs.

This is what the posuk is saying: if "it will be told to you and you will hear" that the lowly among the people stumbled in a low and severe sin, understand that "this abomination has been done" because of "Israel" — the important ones among the people. For they stumbled in a minor sin, and this caused the lesser ones to transgress a severe sin.

These matters are explained at length in the holy sefer Heichal HaBerachah by the holy Rebbe of Komarno (Parashas Shelach, 103a, regarding the mekoshesh - wood gatherer), who writes: "According to what is known from Maran the Baal Shem Tov, when a righteous person commits a minor sin, it causes a simple person to commit a severe sin. As is known, that once [the Baal Shem Tov himself] saw one of the masses who desecrated Shabbos, and he sighed greatly about this, wondering in what manner he himself had desecrated Shabbos that he should see someone desecrating Shabbos. And they showed him from Heaven that he had made use of a Talmid Chacham, who is called 'Shabbos,' and through this it was considered for a person like him as desecration of Shabbos. And similarly, it once occurred with a Talmid who sat on the night of Tishah B'Av after midnight, and he was performing unifications and writing the secrets of the Torah, for it was postponed, and there was also a bris milah on that day; therefore he was lenient with himself

and diverted his mind from mourning, and he entered into the domain of that wicked one and encroached upon the boundary of the ם"ס. Therefore, the wicked one provoked him that week and brought him to great anger, and through his anger he caused that another wicked person stabbed a knife into the stomach of a wicked person like himself and killed him. And Maran told him that all of this he caused, and he repented also for this," end quote.

And so wrote the holy Rebbe of Dinov in his sefer Bnei Yissaschar (Maamarei Tishrei, Maamar 4, Ot 6): "We have received from the students of the Baal Shem Tov, even a righteous person, when he sees some sin in another person, this is certainly not by chance. Why did Hashem arrange that he should see that transgression? It must be that he also has some trace resembling that sin. And he is shown it from Heaven in order that he should examine his deeds. And it is told from the students of the Baal Shem Tov that it happened that one saw someone desecrating Shabbos publicly, and he stood astonished as to why he was shown such a thing, and he examined his deeds, for it must be that he has such a sin. He examined and found that recently he heard degradation of a Talmid Chacham, who is called 'Shabbos,' as it says in the Zohar, and he remained silent," end quote. Behold, from their words it is clear that if a righteous person stumbles in a minor sin, he thereby causes that some lesser person will stumble in a severe sin, Rachmana litzlan. And then it is arranged from Heaven that the righteous person will see that sin, and he will recognize that he is the one who caused it through his minor sin, and through this he will be aroused to repent for his minor sin, and in

this way he will awaken repentance also in the one who transgressed the severe sin because of him.

And it must be known that these matters were not said only regarding the true righteous. For even those who are not completely righteous are considered righteous relative to those who are lower than them, and when they stumble in a minor sin, they also cause that those lower than them will stumble in more severe sins.

These matters must serve as strengthening for a person when the yetzer entices him to transgress one of the mitzvot, Rachmana litzlan. For one of its arguments is that this is only a "minor sin." And aside from the fact that one must respond that it is forbidden to trample even a "minor sin," one must also respond that in truth it is not only a "minor sin," since this sin has offspring, and who knows how many generations it can produce. For there are many levels among the souls of Israel, and when a righteous person sins, he causes a stumbling block for one who is on a lower level than him, and the sin of that lower-level person also causes a stumbling block for one who is lower than him, and so on. And regarding each such offspring it can be said, "the strength of the son is greater than the strength of the father," Rachmana litzlan, for each one is more severe than the one before it. And for all of these, the first righteous person bears responsibility, and who knows if there is any end to the matter.

Support for our words can also be found in the words of Chazal (Kiddushin 40b): "Rabbi Elazar son of Rabbi Shimon says: since the world is judged according to its majority, and the individual is judged

according to his majority, if he performed one mitzvah — fortunate is he, for he has tipped himself and the entire world to the side of merit. If he transgressed one sin — woe to him, for he has tipped himself and the entire world to the side of liability."

The simple understanding of this statement is that every individual can be that one who tips himself and the entire world through his deeds. However, there is room to explain that it also refers to the offspring that emerge from his sin, and it can be explained thus: "since the world is judged according to its majority and the individual according to his majority," one might think that he is only an individual, and it is unlikely that he will be the cause of a general downfall. Therefore, it teaches in a language of certainty that this is not so. Rather, he must know that even if "he performed one mitzvah — fortunate is he, for he has tipped himself and the entire world to the side of merit; if he transgressed one sin — woe to him, for he has tipped himself and the entire world to the side of liability," for in truth it is not only one sin, and he does not know how many consequences this sin will generate, and how severe they will be.

With this we can understand what is written later (posuk 7) regarding the rectification of this sin: 'ובעת הרע מקרבך' - "and you shall remove the evil from your midst" — in the singular form. For it is speaking to the righteous person who desires to remove from Israel the severe sin of idolatry, and it tells him that the removal must be "from your midst" specifically, for when he repents for the minor sin that he himself committed, those lower ones who sinned because of him will also be aroused to repent, and they too will correct their deeds.

'A miser pays dearly'

'קמץ משלם יקר'

In the hallway of the shul, a notice was posted announcing a special promotion for a high-quality color printer.

Another mispalel and I each purchased a new printer.

The gabbai heard that we had bought printers, and he asked me that whenever there was a simcha in the shul, I should print notices.

In order that the burden should not fall only on one person (on me), he would divide the task between me and the other mispalel.

The gabbai was happy that he no longer needed to run to a print shop every time a notice was needed, and I was happy to perform a chesed - kindness for the shul.

After some time, the gabbai apologized to me that the other fellow's printer had broken, and therefore he asked that all the printing be done by me, with payment. I refused to accept payment, especially since on average the printing amounted to only a few pages a week.

And now we come to Hashgachah Pratis: it turned out that the other

mispalel did not want to be a "fool," and therefore he did not print for the shul, claiming that his printer was not functioning.

After some time, he came to ask me if I also needed to replace the ink in my printer every two weeks. I answered him that I had not replaced the ink for many months since the day I bought the printer. He could not understand how it was that by him the ink ran out so quickly, while by me there was a blessing in the ink.

And the cost of the ink was more expensive than the printer itself...

It took a long time until we uncovered the mystery, and this was its solution: with the type of ink that our printers used, which operated by injection, it was necessary to print at least one page each week; otherwise, the ink would dry out. Since every week I printed at least one page for the shul, my ink did not dry out and lasted a long time. But the other fellow, who was unwilling to donate a few pages, ended up paying dearly for the ink!!!

ו.ש.

סיב ההשגרה

This is cited by Rabbeinu the Bach zt"l (Orach Chaim 581:2), who adds several words to clarify and sweeten the concept: during these forty days, repentance is especially accepted, as one's heart draws close to his Beloved through teshuvah, and then his Beloved draws close to receive that repentance with love. This is likewise codified in practical halachah in Mishnah Berurah (introduction to siman 581).

In the holy sefer Sefas Emes, in several places throughout these parashiyos, the elevated level of deveikus and closeness to Hashem during the days of Elul is described as akin to the sublime "eis ratzon—a favorable time," which is during Minchah on Shabbos Kodesh—the level of ra'ava de-ra'avin—as stated in the Zohar HaKadosh (2:88a): "Ra'ava de-ra'avin is revealed, and the Ancient Holy One discloses His will; all judgments are subdued, and favor and joy prevail in all." (See his explanation in Parashas Vayelech 5634.)

It was the custom of Maran, the holy Admor of Sanz-Klausenburg zt"l, the author of Shefa Chaim to ascend during the month of Elul to the Kiryas Sanz neighborhood in the holy city of Yerushalayim. There he established his residence during these days of favor, serving his Creator with trembling devotion, heart and soul, in the large apartment prepared for him above the central beis midrash.

Adjacent to the Rebbe's residence stood a distinguished beis hasknesses of the Sephardic community. As the Day of Judgment approached, a group of its congregants entered his home to receive his blessing.

The Rebbe received them warmly, with a radiant countenance, and blessed them with great love. He then said to them: "I will reveal to you something from the depths of my heart. One of the reasons I cherish coming here during Elul is because of you! For you begin reciting Selichos immediately from Rosh Chodesh Elul. At that hour—four in the morning—you gather in your beis knesses near my home and begin together, with unified voice, to chant the piyutim with melody and song, using ancient tunes that gladden the heart, passed down through generations."

He described how he would sit at that exalted hour of profound eis ratzon, filled with abundant mercy and kindness before dawn, and listen to their pure and refined prayers that pierce the heavens. It is known that once Selichos begin, the very nature of the days themselves is elevated to a higher level within Elul. This holy tzaddik would sit and listen to the melodies of the Sephardic Selichos, weeping profusely, deeply stirred by the power of their prayer.

In his youth, the author of Nesivos Shalom of Slonim zt"l, fell ill with the disease of tuberculosis, which was then very widespread. In the absence of effective medications—which had not yet been developed in those days—his condition worsened from day to day, and he became extremely weakened.

One day, during the month of Av, when he came for a medical examination, the physician carefully

טיב והמעשיות

The Forty Days of Repentance

אני לדודי ודודי לי (שיר השירים ו, ג).

I am to My Beloved and My Beloved is to me.
(Shir Hashirim 6:3)

The Sheyarei Knesses Hagedolah writes (Hagahos Tur, Orach Chaim 581:2): **אני לדודי**—the initial letters spell Elul, while the final letters form four yud's, whose numerical value is forty, corresponding to the forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur.

evaluated the severity of his illness and ruled that he must undergo surgery in order to save his life. It was a complex and intricate procedure, and its cost was considerable—but "all that a man has he will give for his life." They began discussing the necessary preparations for the operation.

In the course of their conversation, the young Rav Shalom Noach paused in thought and then asked the doctor: perhaps it would be possible to postpone the operation until after Simchas Torah?

At first, the doctor refused, explaining that such a procedure could not be delayed for so long, as it was essential for his survival, and it would be improper to endanger himself by waiting several months. However, after persistent pleading and repeated requests to explore every possible option to defer the surgery, the doctor convened a special consultation of physicians. They deliberated extensively over this complex question, seeking a viable way to postpone the operation.

Ultimately, they concluded that if he would maintain strict and careful rest throughout the interim period, it would be possible to delay the surgery by two months. Although this involved a certain degree of risk, given the patient's earnest insistence, they agreed to his request.

The distinguished physician then prescribed a rigorous regimen of rest for the coming two months, so that he might safeguard his health and prevent any further deterioration.

Indeed, those two months passed peacefully. The patient adhered meticulously to all instructions, guarding his physical condition with utmost care. After Simchas Torah, he returned to the hospital to proceed with the scheduled operation. However, the doctor explained that since additional time had elapsed, it would be necessary to repeat a full series of examinations and imaging studies to assess the progression of the illness.

The young tzaddik entered the radiology room, where the doctor conducted a comprehensive set of scans. When the physician reviewed the results, he stood astonished and bewildered.

"What is going on here?" he exclaimed with great excitement. "Your condition has improved remarkably—the entire situation has reversed for the better! You no longer require any treatment, and certainly not surgery! Tell me, please, how did such a dramatic transformation occur in just two months?

Did you perhaps receive some new medication without my knowledge?"

"I did not take any medication at all," replied Rav Shalom Noach with a gentle smile, "nor did I consult any other doctor during this time. I simply followed your instructions carefully, ensuring proper rest for both body and mind."

However, he continued, revealing the matter as one who shares a hidden confidence: "When you determined in the month of Av that, based on my condition, I required surgery, it occurred to me that your ruling was entirely correct according to the state of my body as decreed upon me during the previous Rosh Hashanah. But now, as a new year approaches, and on the great Day of Judgment everything is opened anew, a person is judged again with fresh decrees—for good or otherwise.

"If so, I realized that I have the ability to rectify my deeds and return in complete repentance during the holy month of Elul—to plead and supplicate before the King Who sits upon the Throne of Mercy, that He alter the decree for the good."

As alluded to by the expounders of hints in the verse read during the month of Elul (Devarim 21:13), וְיָשְׁבָה בְּבֵיתָהּ, וְכִבְּתָהּ אֶת אֲבִיהָ וְאֶת אִמָּהּ יָרֵחַ יָמִים, וְאַחֵר - בֵּן תְּבֹאֵה אֵלֶיהָ - And she shall remain in your house, and weep for her father and her mother for a month of days; and afterward you may come to her. This alludes to the month of Elul—the month of favor—where through sincere repentance, with weeping and tears, one may merit a favorable judgment. As elaborated at length in the Zohar Chadash (Parashas Ki Seitzei 98b): "Rabbi Shimon said: Woe for this and woe for that... and she shall weep for her father and her mother for a month of days—this refers to the month of Elul, during which Moshe ascended the mountain to seek mercy before the Hakadosh Baruch Hu, so that Yisrael might be forgiven."

"Therefore," he concluded, "I intensified my repentance, prayer, and supplication. I poured out my heart before my Creator with many tears during the Yamim Nora'im, beseeching directly the Great Physician—blessed be He, Who heals all flesh and performs wonders—that I should not require the surgery, which might confine me to bed for many months and greatly hinder my Torah study and service of Hashem. And now, baruch Hashem, I see that my tefillah has been accepted—the decree has been nullified, and everything has been transformed for the good."

Rabbeinu, the gaon and tzaddik Rav Zundel Kroizer zt"l, author of sefer Ohr Hachamah, would constantly arouse others regarding the obligation of deveikus: a Jew must continually reflect on what Hashem desires of him. In every matter of mitzvah, he would remind me: "Think lishmah!"

A person whose faith is a guiding light, who lives it tangibly, possesses an entirely different worldview from that of the masses. In every matter, he perceives the ultimate truth.

On one occasion, I was present at a joyous gathering together with Rav Zundel. Nearby sat two individuals discussing the occasion, and one

Being close to holiness, he merited on many occasions to be counted among the members of the special minyan that took place in the home of

לחגוג לכל חג ומועד באוירה והנהגה ראווה

עם כל הגושמאק ובשעם נפלא

ספר

טיב האמורים

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חול

One of the matters he related concerned the manner of the Shemoneh Esrei of the Chazon Ish. His entire stance in prayer was one of dread, enveloped in supreme awe. In accordance with the principle of “one who stands before the King,” as elucidated by Rav Chaim zt”l (Hilchos Tefillah 4:1), that this intent is indispensable in every Shemoneh Esrei, being intrinsic to the very act of prayer—so did he stand for a long time, in intense concentration, until he completed his prayer. With

The voice of my Beloved knocks: Open for Me, My sister,
My beloved, My dove, My perfect one!
(Shir Hashirim 5:2)