

לעילוי נשמת  
מרת עקא עדנה  
צפורה ע"ה וסרטל  
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



# על דשא

## AL EY DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

## Hashem Comes First

וראיתם את הארץ מה הוא.

See the land—how is it? (Bamidbar 13:18)

The Sfas Emes sees in the story of the meraglim a message for all Yidden. We are all messengers—shluchei mitzvah. We were sent by Hashem to fulfill our shlichus properly.

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The key to understanding our shlichus is to ask ourselves, אַתְּ הָאָרֶץ מֶה הוּא – what do we see in the land? We live in a world of physicality. Millions of people live to gratify themselves, and they don't pay any attention to the One who sent them here. Ephron told Avraham Avinu, as they negotiated the sale of Me'aras Hamachpeilah, אַרְבַּע מֵאֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מֶה הוּא – Land worth four-hundred silver shekels; between me and you—what is it? (Bereishis 23:15). The difference between those who recognize Hashem and those who don't is the difference between Avraham Avinu and Ephron. Avraham Avinu saw in the Me'aras Hamachpeilah an opportunity for ruchniyus. The opening of the cave parallels the shaar hatefillos in shamayim. Until the Beis Hamikdash was built, it was the holiest location on earth. Ephron, on

the other hand, saw an opportunity to make money; if he could inflate the price, all the better.

Dovid Hamelech said, ה' קִצֵּי – Let me know my end, Hashem, and the measure of my days—what is it? (Tehillim 39:5) Dovid Hamelech wanted to know how to use his days to their fullest.

וְאָדָם בִּיקָר בֶּל יִלִּין נִמְשָׁל כְּבַהֲמוֹת נְדָמוֹ – As for man, in glory he shall not repose; he is compared to silent animals. (Tehillim 49:13). The Malbim reads: he is compared to animals; they are alike, and explains that נְדָמוֹ is a stronger resemblance than נִמְשָׁל. נִמְשָׁל is only a comparison, while נְדָמוֹ means almost identical; not only is man compared to an animal, he is likened, almost identical. But according to this, why use the word נִמְשָׁל at all?

Reb Chaim Vital<sup>1</sup> explains that נְדָמוֹ means inanimate (דומם). A person was sent to this world to fulfill a purpose, and if he doesn't use the opportunity, he is much worse than an animal. An animal may be lowly, but it fills a need. A threshing ox threshes, and a dairy cow produces milk. A person who does not fulfill his shlichus is compared to an inanimate animal—one that appears in a painting—an animal that has no purpose.

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם בְּבָאֲכֶם – Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them, "When you come to the land" (Bamidbar 15:18). The Sifri differentiates between the mitzvah of challah and the other terumos and maasros. The obligation to separate terumos and maasros did not begin immediately upon entering Eretz Yisrael; it only took effect after the conquest of the land, which entailed seven years, and settling

## Faithful Servants

וְלֹא תִתּוֹרוּ אַחֲרֵי לִבְבְּכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם.

You shall not explore after your heart and after your eyes (15:39).

Parshas Shelach opens with meraglim and ends with meraglim. The parshah opens with the story of the ten meraglim who failed in their mission; only Yehoshua and Kalev succeeded. The parshah ends by telling us not to follow after our hearts and our eyes. Rashi tells us that our heart and eyes are meraglim for the body—they explore their surroundings, and bring us messages. We can learn from the two successful meraglim, Yehoshua and Kalev, how to be successful with the two meraglim that reside within us.

Yehoshua and Kalev were protected from the counsel of the meraglim through tefillah. Moshe davened for Yehoshua—יְהוֹשֻׁעַ – Hashem should save you from the counsel of the spies,<sup>3</sup> and Kalev went to Chevron to daven at the Me'aras Hamachpeilah and invoke zechus avos. The method of Yehoshua and Kalev, gaining protection through tefillah and zechus avos, is how we protect our hearts and our eyes from sinning. Every single Yid has zechus avos in the tefillos of his zeides and bubbes that their children follow the proper path.

There is more to be learned from the meraglim. ועבדי כלב עקב היתה רוח אחרת עמו – My servant Kalev, because there was a different spirit with him, and he remained loyal to me (14:24). The Ohr Hachaim hakadosh explains why only Kalev had the distinction of being referred to as Hashem's servant: After Moshe Rabbeinu's tefillah, Yehoshua had no nisayon; he had absolutely no desire to join the wrongdoing of the meraglim. But Kalev had a רוח אחרת עמו—he still had a strong foreign spirit within him, driving him to be part of the meraglim. But he overcame that

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the land, which took another seven years. The mitzvah of challah, however, began immediately upon entering Eretz Yisrael. The reason for this is simple: The obligations of terumos and maasros only apply to those who have land. When they harvest their grain and produce, they become obligated. Until Klal Yisrael was settled, there was no obligation of terumos and maasros. Yet for challah, it is not necessary to be a land owner. Anyone who makes dough is obligated to separate challah; thus, the obligation should apply immediately.

Yet there is a deeper meaning. Challah is to be separated עֲרֹסְתֶכֶם, at the beginning stages of your dough (i.e. before you eat from it). Before enjoying the bread,

challah must be taken. The obligation of challah begins immediately upon arriving in Eretz Yisrael, before the Yidden settle in and take care of their personal needs. The sefarim hakedoshim write<sup>2</sup> that challah alludes to avodas Hashem that is done before worrying about our own needs. Ruchniyus and the Ribono Shel Olam come before gashmiyus.

When Chazal say that Adam Harishon is חֲלֹתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם – the challah of the world, they allude to this concept. The job of mankind is to put Hashem first.

Whenever we begin a new stage of life, we must always put Hashem first. When a chassan begins to build a yiddische shtub, the beginnings must

be for Hashem. Young bachurim must designate their early years for Torah and avodas Hashem. But, in truth, this applies to all of us. The Sfas Emes explains the Mishnah (Avos 4:20), הַלּוֹמֵד יֶלֶד לְמָה הוּא דּוֹמֶה – One who learns as a child, to what is he compared?—יֶלֶד refers to every person, no matter their stage of life. Every day, one is a child in comparison to the next day. Each day, we must feel like a child in his early years who must devote all his days to Hashem. As Dovid Hamelech said, מִדָּת יְמֵי מָה הִיא. Middah is a utensil. We must fill our days with important things—things that are worth storing in a utensil. We would not waste a utensil on garbage and narishkeiten.

(סעודה שלישית פרשת שלח תשפ"ד מאמר א')

2 Avodas Yisrael, Maor VaShemesh, Magen Avraham and others.

## Perspective and Purpose

Yidden have always believed that the parshas hashavua is not merely a way to complete the Torah by year's end. There is a strong connection between what happens to Klal Yisrael and the parshas hashavua.

In Parshas Beha'alos'cha we are promised וְנוֹשְׁעֵתֶם מֵאִיְבֹכֶם – you will be saved from your enemies (10:9). After that, the Torah speaks of the Aron Habris, (וַיְהִי בִנְסֹעַ הָאָרֶן (10:35)—the core of Klal Yisrael. The Torah that we learn and fulfill. The Torah that guides us.

וַיִּפְצוּ אִיְבֹיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנְאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ – Arise, Hashem, and let your foes be scattered, let those who hate You flee before Hashem. Rashi explains that our enemies gather—be they hidden underground, or in any hiding place. The Ribono Shel Olam can take them out, scatter them, chase them, and destroy them. As we witness consistently, Hashem sends nissim and does great things.

ה' רָעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵר – Hashem is my shepherd, I may not lack (Tehillim 23:1). Tzaddikim explained that Hashem leads us just as a shepherd leads his flock. Sheep don't know cheshbonos. They know only that they have a leader. If we think like sheep and don't give credence to our own actions, לֹא אֶחָסֵר—we will not lose out. All our strength, abilities, and hard work—everything is from Hashem.

אֶלֶּה בְּרֶכֶב וְאֶלֶּה בַּסּוּסִים וְאֶנְחֵנוּ בְּשֵׁם ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר – Some with chariots, and some with horses, but we—in the Name of Hashem, our G-d, we call out (Tehillim 20:8). There is a psik, a break, after the word וְאֶנְחֵנוּ. We would think that וְאֶנְחֵנוּ goes with the end of the pasuk: Some trust in their chariots, but we believe in Hashem. The psik suggests that וְאֶנְחֵנוּ should be read separately.

When we say וְאֶנְחֵנוּ, we must pause. They trust in their chariots... And we? We are successful, we're smart, we're capable, we have technology, we have great plans... Pause! No—all this is also nothing! Yes, Hashem may bring our salvation through all these intermediaries, but all we really have is אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִזְכִּיר.

כִּי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְבְּךָ רַבִּים הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה – When we are scared, and things are not running normally—that is when we must have emunah. Perhaps you will say in your heart, "These nations are more numerous than me" (Devarim 7:17). Specifically at this time, when we worry, the Torah tells us, לֹא תִירָא מֵהֶם – You shall not be fearful of them (7:18).

אִם תִּקּוּם עָלַי מִלְחָמָה בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בּוֹטֵחַ – If a war should rise against me, in this I trust (Tehillim 27:3). The sefarim explain that when a war rises up, we must have faith in the war itself. Hashem is the מִלְחָמָה. He brought the war, He runs the war, and I trust Him to take care that everything turns out correctly.

May Hashem watch over us, that Yidden shouldn't be hurt, not in Eretz Yisrael or anywhere else. We recognize the value of the Torah, those who learn it, and those who support it. May this be the true בִּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֶן, and may we see yeshuos v'niflaos.

(הודעה בקו הקהילה ערש"ק בהעלותך תשפ"ה)



## Faithful Servants

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drive and remained loyal. It was this power that gave him the distinction of עבדי קלב.

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A רוח אחרת resides within us. Our eyes and hearts provide many external distractions; yet with willpower, we can remain loyal. And when we succeed, we earn the distinction of an eved hashem.

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The Yerushalmi (Berachos 9:5) differentiates between Avraham Avinu and Dovid Hamelech.<sup>4</sup> About Avraham Avinu it is written נמצאת את לבבו נאמן לפניך – You found his heart trustworthy before You (Nechemiah 9:8). לבבו means both of his hearts, the yetzer

tov and the yetzer hara. Avraham made his yetzer hara good, so both of his hearts were trustworthy before Hashem. Yet Dovid said, ולבי חלל בקרבי – My heart is hollow inside me (Tehillim 109:22). Dovid was not able to convert his yetzer hara, and so, he had no choice but to extinguish it.

According to the Yerushalmi, we can understand Dovid's words: ה' כי אני אנה – Please Hashem, for I am Your servant, Your servant, son of Your maidservant (Tehillim 116:16). What was Dovid adding by saying that he was the son of Hashem's maidservant?<sup>5</sup>

אנה refers to the physical aspect of a person.<sup>6</sup> Dovid Hamelech had a yetzer hara—he had human desires. But this was why he was able to say עבדך. One who overcomes his desires is an eved Hashem.

There are many temptations, many things pulling us away from serving Hashem, but if we remember that we are His servants, we will be able to overcome the yetzer hara.

The Torah warns against following our yetzer hara in the parshah of tzitzis. Tosafos explains<sup>7</sup> that tzitzis is compared to the seal of a slave. Slave owners insisted that the seal be worn at all times, and slaves were scared to be caught without it.<sup>8</sup>

Tzitzis serve as a constant reminder Who our Master is. If we remember our Master, and we keep our eyes from gazing inappropriately, our tzitzis will help us overcome our temptations, and we will be true avdei Hashem.

When Rav Yitzchok Blazer aged, he refrained from speaking much. He explained, based on Chazal (Arachin 15b), that Hashem created two barriers for the tongue: the teeth and the lips. These prevent us from talking inappropriately.<sup>9</sup> When he lost his teeth in his old age, he was only left with one barrier and so he had to be extra cautious.

Our eyes only have one barrier, the eyelids. How are we to guard them? The answer lies in our pasuk, ולא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם. The Rambam writes<sup>10</sup> that improper thoughts are only found in a mind devoid of Torah and wisdom. If we are careful to guard our heart by keeping occupied with Torah and ruchniyus, our eyes will be guarded. Even if at times we see things we shouldn't, they will not make an impression on us. This is no easy task, but with this avodah we bring great nachas ruach to the Ribono Shel Olam.

The 23rd of Sivan is the day the second set of letters were issued by Mordechai and Esther, overtaking Haman's decree. Through our actions, we write letters. Even when the first edition is badly written—we have already followed our heart's desires, and seen what we shouldn't—there is always teshuvah. The yetzer hara has no claim to us, and neither do our sins. Each day is a new day and it does not have to carry the baggage of yesterday. We have a clean page, and we must begin writing the story of our lives anew.

(סעודה שלישית פרשת שלח תשפ"ד מאמר ב)

4 We are not capable of measuring such great people. All we can do is learn what Chazal said, recognizing that our understanding is limited.

5 This question is asked by the Zohar hakadosh Lech Lecha 87a. The Chossid Yaavetz answers that a slave who was captured will constantly try to escape, while one born into slavery serves his master loyally and happily. Dovid Hamelech was born into the service of Hashem, and he served happily.

6 As the malachim said about Moshe Rabbeinu, (b88 sobbahS) מה לילד אשה בינינו

7 Menachos 43b s.v. chosam.

8 Shabbos 57a.

9 Unfortunately, we tend to pay these barriers no heed, and speak rather freely.

10 End of Isurei Biah.

## The Cry of the Heart

I want to share a thought about the inyana d'yoma which is not bittul Torah.

One of the missiles damaged an institution for children with special needs. We know from the talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov that even a grain of sand doesn't move without cause, and this is certainly true for larger events. We don't know the cheshbonos of Shamayim, but we may speculate. Why did it fall and destroy davka the homes of people who are so vulnerable to any change in routine?

The Belzer Rav arrived in Eretz Yisrael after the war without a beard. I believe that he performed many miracles on the way to Eretz Yisrael, and even greater miracles during the war; yet he did not save his beard. For the defenders of the Yidden in Heaven, here was something for them to show—“Ribono Shel Olam, look what they are doing to Your children!” Perhaps the same can be said here. These are the true melamdei zechus. Perhaps they can't express it, but the heart expresses it.

I was once at a chasunah where there was one of these pure souls who is physically limited. He was making loud noises and people found it disturbing. But I pointed out that it was the Eibershter Who created this vessel and the vessel cries out to its Creator. When a baby cries at a bris, we say ה' כי אָמַלְלָנִי – Favor me Hashem for I am feeble (Tehillim 6:3). The same is true here. It is the cry of a neshamah to its Creator.

Of course, there was additional merit in this incident because of those who helped out. But the entire incident was essentially a tefillah that could raise other tefillos with it. The hardship increases zechuyos and defense for Klal Yisrael during these times. May Hashem help that our enemies be destroyed without any harm to Yidden.

# Hashem's Tests

וְהָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר עָלוּ עִמּוֹ אָמְרוּ לֹא נוֹכֵל לַעֲלוֹת אֶל  
הָעָם כִּי חֲזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ.

The men who ascended with him said, "We will not be able to ascend to that people, for it is too strong for us (13:31).

The Gemara (Sotah 35a, Menachos 53b, Arachin 15a) tells us, דבר גדול דברו מרגלים באותה שעה, כביכול אפילו בעל הבית אינו יכול להוציא משם – The Meraglim spoke a serious statement at that time. K'vayachol, even the baal habayis (Hashem) is not able to remove His utensils from there.

My father, the Pnei Menachem, noted that the meraglim did not believe Hashem incapable. It is impossible that these great people of the dor de'ah made such an egregious error. But when they saw the mighty giants who fell from the heavens (13:33<sup>11</sup>), they realized that there is immense kedushah in Eretz Yisrael. The greater the kedushah, the more it is obscured, and the more we must be on guard. The Imrei Emes said that the main yetzer hara is in Eretz Yisrael.<sup>12</sup>

The Midrash tells us<sup>13</sup> that Hashem only sends nisyonos to a tzaddik. As an analogy, a potter would never knock on his rickety utensils to test them, because he knows they will break—he will only knock on the sturdy ones. So too, Hashem only bangs on the tzaddik. The meraglim had no doubt that Hashem had the ability to bring Bnei Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael—but how would His utensils last there? We would never be able to live up to our nisyonos.

וַיֵּחָס כָּלֵב אֶת הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר עֲלֵה נֹכַח לָהֶם – וַיִּרְשְׁנוּ אֹתָהּ כִּי יָכוֹל נוֹכַח לָהּ – Kalev quieted the people toward Moshe and said, "We shall surely ascend and conquer it, for we can surely do it!" (13:30) Kalev contended that the meraglim were making a grave error. Eretz Yisrael may present difficult challenges, but if Hashem is bringing us there, He knows we can be successful. אָרַץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנִי וְכַמְעָשָׂה אֲרַץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אָנִי

– מביא אתכם שמה לא תעשו  
of Eretz Canaan, which I am bringing you there, you shall not do (Vayikra 18:3). The actions of Canaan were worse than those of any other nation. Yet, since Hashem Himself is bringing us there, He must know we are capable.

Whenever a nisayon presents itself, we should never focus on its difficulties. We must instead recognize Who sent the nisayon our way. If Hashem sent it, He believes in us. Even if we slip from time to time, we must not lose hope.

The Sefer Hazeckus writes<sup>14</sup> that the nisayon may have been very strong and the meraglim may have had a point. But Hashem said to go to Eretz Yisrael. Even if the people would have ended up in Gehinnom—if Hashem says to do it, you jump. If they would have withstood the nisayon of the meraglim, and strengthened their emunah, even if after that the generation did fail in Eretz Yisrael, they would have lit the way for Klal Yisrael.

The Rebbe R' Elimelech would say that if the heavenly beis din would decree that he receive punishment in Gehinnom, he would happily jump in. We are not here to receive the personal benefits of Gan Eden. We are here to do the will of Hashem!

כָּלֵם אֲנָשִׁים – They were all men (13:3). Rashi explains that the word אֲנָשִׁים indicates men of distinction: when the meraglim were chosen, they were all righteous. But further in the parshah (13:26) Rashi writes that they already had evil schemes before they left. Were they righteous at the outset, or not?

Perhaps this paradox underscores the mistake of the meraglim. At that time, before they entered Eretz Yisrael, they felt Hashem's presence. But they worried about the future. Who would help them through the difficult nisyonos in Eretz Yisrael? What they failed to realize is that Hashem stands by us even during the most difficult trials.

They were righteous at that time, but they didn't know how they'd retain their faith when the big nisyonos came.

The Gemara tells us that the meraglim said something very serious. Chazal did not mean that it was ridiculous. The meraglim had a true point—Eretz Yisrael would bring many trials. Yet the meraglim were missing the broader outlook. Hashem sent us to Eretz Yisrael for a reason, and we must follow Him regardless of what we think.

This is true for every nisayon that comes our way. We may feel it is beyond us, but we must realize that Hashem sent this our way, and He knows we can do it. It is no simple task. The nisyonos are hard, and we must invest all our energies to pass these tests. Only then will we succeed.

וְהִתְחַזְקֶתֶם וְלִקְחֶתֶם מִפְּרֵי הָאָרֶץ – You shall strengthen yourselves and take from the fruits of the land (13:20). Moshe Rabbeinu directed the meraglim to take from the fruits; how could Yehoshua and Kalev neglect their duty?

The Sfas Emes explains<sup>15</sup> that וְהִתְחַזְקֶתֶם was a condition. Moshe Rabbeinu only wanted them to take the fruits if they felt strong. Since the meraglim felt like grasshoppers next to the giants (13:33), they should not have taken the fruits.

The Rambam rules<sup>16</sup> that taking the fruits of a land serves as an act of acquisition. Moshe Rabbeinu wanted the meraglim to make an acquisition of Eretz Yisrael. However, the Gemara (Bava Basra 142a) writes that an acquisition must be made with certainty.<sup>17</sup> Moshe Rabbeinu wanted them to take the fruits to make an acquisition, but this would only work if they were certain about taking Eretz Yisrael. If they were strong, they would take Eretz Yisrael and pass the nisyonos; but they were not, and they had no business taking the fruits.

(סעודה שלישית פרשת שלח תשפ"ג מאמר א)

11 See Rashi.

12 Because of this, the Imrei Emes would tell people in the new yishuv in Eretz Yisrael to go out with their peyos down, and not be nispael from the modern cities of the time.

13 Bereishis Rabbah 34:2, Shir Hashirim Rabbah 2:46.

14 S.v. shelach.

15 Likutim, beginning of Shelach.

16 Hilchos Mechirah 1:16. Generally, it is understood that taking fruits serves as a proof of ownership; yet the Rambam includes this as an act of acquisition as well.

17 The Gemara discusses a case of a ger who died, and it is uncertain whether there are family members to inherit his property. A kinyan made on these properties is invalid, because one is not sure if it will indeed become his, or if it belongs to an inheritor.