

# NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM  
THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l

ישראל בן רחל נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה  
MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM  
FROM THE PARSHAH

Never Too  
Late

וַיְהִי אֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ טְמֵאִים לְנֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַפֶּסַח. (במדבר ט, ו)

**There were people who were impure due to contact with a corpse and they could not make the *Pesach* offering. (*Bemidbar* 9:6)**

We see a wondrous thing with the *Korban Pesach* that other *mitzvos* don't have. It is *Pesach Sheni*.

The general rule with *mitzvos* is if they have a specific timeframe, and it passes, the *mitzvah* may not be made up. It doesn't really matter why a person failed to perform the *mitzvah*, whether it was his fault or not, it's just a simple fact that the time for the *mitzvah* has passed, and he can't do it anymore.

The *Pesach* offering is different. It may be made up later. Someone who was impure, or was far away, and couldn't bring the *korban* in its proper time, may offer it a month later, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Iyar. This is called *Pesach Sheni*.

This teaches us an important principle about Torah and *avodas Hashem*. It often happens that a person didn't have the opportunity, for various reasons, to grow and develop himself in Torah and *mitzvos*. Let's say he didn't grow up in an observant home. What does he do now?

If he says לָמָּה נִגְרַע – “Why should we be left out” – like the people who missed the *Korban Pesach* said, and he insists that he, too, should be given the same spiritual opportunity as others, and he exerts himself to make up what he missed, he can attain a “*Pesach Sheni*.” He can reach greatness in Torah, even if he started late and never got a Jewish education when he was young.

The greatest *Tanna* of all was R. Akiva, and *Chazal* emphasize the fact that he was a late starter. He didn't begin learning until he was forty years old. But he was motivated to make it up, he took upon himself the task, and he worked hard. He didn't just go to a *daf yomi shiur* for an hour a day. He decided that he was going to become a real *talmid chacham*. He put all his energy into it, despite his responsibilities to his wife and children. And he became the greatest of the great.

This shows us that a person can make up what he

missed in childhood, and attain the greatest heights there are.

The Chazon Ish wrote about a person who is already a mature adult and didn't learn in his youth that people might disqualify him from becoming a *talmid chacham*, and the person himself might not feel obligated to go into the *beis midrash* and seek out Torah. He recognizes an obligation to set himself regular times for Torah learning, but not to grow and advance and uplift himself in Torah. He despairs of himself and dozes off. But this is a mistake. As long as a person is alive, he must try to grow more and more.

Anyone who sees himself as lacking the virtues he

aspires to have, and wishes he could be born again, so he could attain greatness in Torah, is making a mistake. He doesn't need to be born again. If he now starts learning the right way, if he exerts himself to understand the *sugyos*, and he reviews them again and again so he remembers them, he will surely come to have acquisitions in the *Torah Hakedoshah*.

The same applies to reaching levels of *yirah*, such as *davening* with proper *kavanah* and reciting all the *berachos* properly, or guarding oneself from *lashon hara*, and so forth. Even if he isn't young anymore, he can definitely start right now, as if he was just born today. And he will experience special *siyata d'Shmaya* in his service of *Hashem*, and will eventually fulfill his aspirations. ●

## Bye Bye Enemies

וַיְהִי בִּנְסֻעַ הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה ה' וַיִּפְצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ: וּבִגְחָה יֹאמֶר שׁוּבָה ה' רַבּוֹת אֱלֹפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (במדבר י, לה-לו)

And it was when the *Aron* travelled that Moshe said, "Arise, *Hashem*, that Your enemies may scatter, and those who hate You may flee from You." And when it rested, he shall say, "Return, *Hashem*, the multitudes of Yisrael." (*Bemidbar* 10:35–36)

*Chazal* had a tradition that these two *pesukim* which form this passage are special. They are considered a whole *Sefer* on their own.

*Hakadosh Baruch Hu* made signs [of an upside-down *nun*] before and after this

passage because it is considered a Book all on its own.<sup>1</sup>

If these two verses constitute an entire *chumash*,

1 *Shabbos* 116a.

### לעילוי נשמת

אמינו מרת חיה זיסל עלקא בת ר' שמעון דויטש ע"ה

ומרת אסתר רויזא בת אברהם יחיאל דויטש ע"ה

ומה"ר משה בן אליעזר ע"ה ומרת חוה בת דוד האמבורגער ע"ה

ומה"ר ברוך זאב בן נפתלי ע"ה ומרת גיטל צביה בת מרדכי קראוס ע"ה

ומה"ר שמעון בן צבי דב ע"ה ומרת בלומא בת אפרים מעגלו ע"ה

נרבת משפחת מרדכי דויטש

then they must contain a very important message.

There are indeed deep meanings to this passage. But let us focus on a very important one for our times.

Until recently, most people felt relatively comfortable where they lived. But now that we hear the “Intifada” has penetrated all parts of *Eretz Yisrael*, there could be a bomb ready to detonate or a terrorist carrying a gun anywhere. America, too, is not safe like it was. There is so much violent crime, especially directed toward those who are visibly Jewish.

About this, the Torah says: וַיְהִי בְנִסְעֵ הָאָרֶץ – “When the *Aron Hakodesh* travels.” The *Aron Hakodesh* contained the Torah and represents the Torah. When the Torah travels from place to place, when it rests not just in the big *yeshivos* and central *batei midrash*, but goes out to every city and town and neighborhood where Jews live – when the *Aron Hakodesh* of Torah comes to every home, and Torah is learned everywhere – then the next part of the verse is fulfilled.

קוּמָה ה' וַיִּפְצוּ אֹיְבֶיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנָאִיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ – “Arise, *Hashem*, that Your enemies may scatter, and those who hate You may flee from You.” The power of Torah repels our enemies and causes them to flee in

all directions.

It is not so when וַיִּבְנָחָה – “When it rested.” When the Torah rests in only one place, and doesn’t reach Jews everywhere, then רַבּוּת ה' שׁוֹבָה ה' – “He shall say, ‘Return, *Hashem*, the multitudes of Yisrael.’” Then we pray to *Hashem* to bring all Jews to return in *teshuvah*. Because unless they do *teshuvah*, and learn Torah, we are in great danger from our enemies who seek to destroy us.

The *Mefarshim* also explain these verses as alluding to the day that a person departs this world.

“When the *Aron* travels” refers to when a person goes to the next world. If he learned Torah during his lifetime, he is like the *Aron Hakodesh* that has Torah inside it. If so, “Arise, *Hashem*.” For such a person, *Hashem* comes to greet him. And due to this, “Your enemies scatter.” All the accusing angels created by his sins will scatter. “And those who hate You will flee from You.” Those that follow after him, seeking to harm him, will all flee because of the power of Torah.

“And when it rested, he shall say, “Return, *Hashem*, the multitudes of Yisrael.” Thanks to Torah, a person will merit coming to a perfect resting place among the *tzaddikim*. ●

## PARSHAH TOPIC

## Tongue Power

וַתְּדַבֵּר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמֹשֶׁה עַל אֲדוֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכֹּשִׁית אֲשֶׁר לָקַח. (במדבר יב, א)

**Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe concerning the Kushite woman he married. (*Bemidbar* 12:1)**

**If Miriam, who did not intend to denigrate Moshe, was punished thusly, surely it will be so for someone who speaks denigratingly about his fellow. (*Rashi*)**

### Strength is Verbal

This talk is on the occasion of a *siyum* for the books *Chofetz Chayim* and *Shmiras Halashon*.

The tongue, the power of speech, is the glory and greatness of a human being. With his hands and feet, how much a person accomplish, for good or bad? He can build a little and destroy a little. But with his

mouth, a person can build whole worlds or destroy them. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed *Beis Hamikdash* and exiled the Jewish people by the power of his mouth.

A number of decades ago, a very evil man arose, Hitler, may his name be blotted out, and he brought terrible destruction upon the world by the power of speech. If he would have gone into a Jewish home and kicked them with his feet, how much damage could he have done? If he would have walked down the street and punched every Jew he saw, how much destruction could he have caused? It would be negligible.

But he didn't operate that way. He gave speeches that incited people to hate, and thereby destroyed entire countries and killed millions of people.

On the other hand, *lehavdil*, the Chofetz Chayim was one Jew who saved the entire world. The world without the Chofetz Chayim and the world with the Chofetz Chayim is a completely different place. If we would not have merited having a Jew like the Chofetz Chayim, it would be a different world, a world in which people don't know *halachos*, don't know what is *lashon hara*. Much of the beauty of the Jewish people would be lacking. And the Chofetz Chayim built all this with the power of speech.

It says **וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לִנְפֶשׁ חַיָּה** – “Man became a living soul,”<sup>1</sup> and Onkelos explains it to mean, “A speaking spirit.” The correct description of a human being is “one who speaks.” This is a human being's primary strength. In the end, we aspire to be a human being. And the correct definition of a human being is a Jew who knows how to watch his mouth.

A great person is one whose mouth is under his control, and a lowly person is one whose mouth knows no restraint and is not controlled by him. A

person's nature depends on his mouth.

This is why it is so serious to speak disparagingly about others. It has tremendous destructive power.

What we need to think about is what brings a person to speak ill about his friend or neighbor? What is this sin rooted in?

## The World is for You

Most people have heard *Chazal's* teaching:

Therefore, Adam was created as a single individual, to teach you that anyone who destroys one Jewish soul is considered by Scripture as if he destroyed an entire world... Therefore, each person must say, “The world was created for me.”<sup>2</sup>

The context of this teaching is someone who comes to court to offer testimony in a capital case. The judges would warn the witness that his testimony could cause the defendant to lose his life, and if the testimony is false, and the defendant is thus put to death unjustly, he should not think that he caused only one person to die. He destroyed a whole world.

“Each person must say, ‘The world was created for me.’” This saying, if we think about it, is powerful and shocking. And hard to understand.

It means that each one of us is saying to himself, “*Hashem* created the whole world, He created *Avraham Avinu* and *Yitzchak Avinu* and *Yaakov Avinu*, as well as *Moshe Rabbeinu* and *Aharon Hakohen*, and the Twelve Tribes, and the Chofetz Chayim and all the rest of the world – all for me!”

This may be compared to someone who built a house, brought in fine furniture, Persian carpets, expensive paintings, hung a crystal chandelier in the living room, fitted out the kitchen with all the

1 Bereishis 2:7.

2 Sanhedrin 37a.

best electrical appliances money can buy. The whole house is equipped and arranged down to the last detail.

*Baruch Hashem*, everything is ready. When he moves into his new home, he holds a lavish banquet for his friends in honor of the *chanukas habayis*, and also here, he makes sure nothing is lacking. An awesome buffet with beef and fish and everything good, and also cakes and ice creams for dessert.

During the *chanukas habayis*, two ants crawl into one of the corners. One ant says to the other, "You see all this? The buffet table, the furniture, the carpets, and the safe over there with all the money and jewelry? It's all for me."

A mouse who snuck in said the same thing. He heard about the *Gemara* that says, "What does a good guest say? Look how hard the host worked... and everything he exerted himself for, he did only for me."<sup>3</sup> After all, "The world was created for me!"

We would say, "No, you are making a mistake. *Chazal* weren't talking about mice, only about people!"

But let's think about ourselves. An ant in this house is more significant than people are in the world, if we look at it in percentages. The worth of the average individual today as compared to that of *Avraham Avinu* is less than the worth and value of an ant compared to the finest house in the world.

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3 *Berachos* 58a.

R. Chayim of Brisk was a great man and was not prone to exaggerate. Once he was asked by a great *talmid chacham*: What would happen to me if I would see *David Hamelech*? What sort of inspiration would it bring me to? Rav Chayim answered: If you would see *David Hamelech* you would be literally burnt up by his *kedushah*. You could not live in his presence for even a moment. If you would just see him from a distance, you would die immediately.

This is in fact what the *Gemara* says:

It was said about R. Yonasan ben Uzziel that when he would sit and engage in Torah study, any bird that flew over him would immediately burn up.<sup>4</sup>

When they would learn Torah as it was given from Sinai, fire would come. Surely this is so for *David Hamelech*. So if a Jew like us would see *David Hamelech*, he would be burnt up by the *kedushah*. Literally.

Yet, *Chazal* say that every Jew needs to say that not just *David Hamelech* but even the *Avos Hakedoshim* and all the *Gedolei Olam* were all created by *Hashem* just for him. How does that make sense?

The truth is we can't really understand it all the way. We need to just accept it. But in any case, we need to know that every Jew has a unique trait and understanding that no one else has, and *Hashem* loves him or her so much for it that He is willing, so to speak, to create the whole world just for that individual Jew. ●

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4 *Sukkah* 28a.