



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV

TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT KI TAVO

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PARASHAT HASHAVUA RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Don't Worry, Be Happy

If a person isn't in a particular emotional state it's not always easy for them to alter their feelings. They can perhaps choose to act happy but that isn't the same thing as being happy. This idea creates a challenge in understanding the emotional demands that are placed upon us in the Torah. In this week's parasha there is a long list of unpleasant consequences for the Jewish people and one reason given for them is "because you didn't serve Hashem your God with joyfulness (בשמחה) and with gladness of heart, due to the abundance of all things" (Devarim 28:47). It seems disproportionate to have such severe consequences as a result of a lack of joy which is often beyond our control.

To better understand the nature of joy the Torah is demanding of us we can look at the beginning of our parasha (Devarim 26:11) where it says "You shall rejoice (ושמחת) in all the good which Hashem your God has given to you". This joy is a direct result of a person bringing the first of their crops to Hashem and verbally recognizing the historical arc, guided by Hashem, that brought their prosperity. When a person develops their appreciation for what they have and the awareness that their success was supported by Hashem they will achieve the joy that is required.

The Mishna (Avot 4:1) teaches us, "Who is rich? He who is satisfied (השמח) with his lot". A wealthy person is one who is satisfied in what they have. Our parasha teaches us that in order to gain this feeling of satisfaction, it is necessary to reflect on how we arrived at our current state and to recognize that it was directed by Hashem. This ideal was manifested in the approach of Yaakov Avinu who after years of financial strug-

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gle with his father-in-law told his brother "Hashem has favoured me and I have all" (Bereishit 33:11). The operative word in both the text describing the joy we can achieve and Yaakov Avinu's approach is "all". What he had is what he was supposed to have, no more and no less.

The person who is lacking joy and deserving of punishment described in the curses is one who believes that what they have is either due solely to their efforts or chance.

This attitude leads a person to a feeling that they could have had more if only... This person is tormented, thinking of how it could have been better and has difficulty being satisfied with what they have. This approach was epitomized by Eisav when he told his brother "I have an abundance" (Bereishit 33:9). Both Eisav's words and the people lacking joy focus on their quantitative abundance and there is no recognition of it coming from Hashem and being enough.

When the Jewish people reject Hashem's involvement in their successes the natural consequence is for Hashem to allow them to fend for themselves without His support. We are "fewest of all peoples" (Devarim 7:7) and following historical forces we would be oppressed and annihilated. Only with Hashem's support can we survive. If we deny this support and as a result find ourselves without it, the consequences of the parasha become historically inevitable.

Our emotions might not be in our direct control but our ability to consider our place in the world and our connection to Hashem is. By reflecting on this truth we can strengthen our awareness of Hashem's involvement in our lives and become a people who is deserving of that involvement which in turn will grant us the bountiful blessings described in our parasha.



Yeshayahu 56

In Chapter 55, Yeshayahu informed the reader that Hashem is willing to accept our repentance; even if human beings would not be so forgiving, Hashem’s approach is different from ours. Chapter 56 begins with a simple recipe for that repentance: Guard justice (*mishpat*), and practice righteousness (*tzedakah*). This is a familiar formula; back in Parshat Vayera Hashem justified His selection of Avraham, explaining that he would teach his children to perform *tzedakah* and *mishpat*. (Bereishit 18:19) Leaders are charged with performing *mishpat* and *tzedakah*. (Devarim 16:18, Shemuel II 8:15, Melachim I 10:9, Yechezkel 45:9) And *tzedakah* and *mishpat* are particularly prevalent throughout Yeshayahu, who promotes the pair no fewer than 16 times. (1:21, 1:27, 5:7, 5:16, 9:16, 16:5, 26:9, 28:17, 32:1, 32:16, 33:5, 51:4-5, 56:1, 58:2, 59:9, 59:14) This is one of the messages that unifies the

entire book of Yeshayahu.

Yeshayahu then specifies (56:2) that the penitent person is someone who 1) guards Shabbat, and 2) guards his hand from wrongdoing. Per Malbim, the reference to Shabbat is meant to represent our relationship with Hashem, and “wrong-

Repentance means perfecting our relationship with Hashem and with humanity.

doing” refers to our relationship with other human beings. Repentance means perfecting our relationship with Hashem and with humanity. Radak suggests that Yeshayahu emphasizes Shabbat because of its singular importance in bringing about our national redemption.

Yeshayahu then turns to those who are unable to produce children, and promises

them that their righteousness will ensure that they will be remembered. He addresses those who are not part of the Jewish covenant with Hashem, and pledges that their righteousness will also be rewarded. Their offerings will be accepted at the Beit haMikdash in Jerusalem, even as Hashem gathers in all of the Jews. (56:3-8)

Then, in a stunning change of tone, Yeshayahu expresses wrath against those who are not loyal to Hashem. In Chapter 55 he called upon the people to seek Hashem; now he summons wild beasts to attack those who lead the people astray. According to Rashi these are political leaders; most commentators contend that these are false prophets, specifically. Yeshayahu describes them as blind and mute, seeking only satisfaction in sleep and satiation. (56:9-12) This message of rebuke will continue in the ensuing chapter.



Week 2: Rambam’s Virtue Ethics

To understand Rambam’s conception of ethics, let us outline three common ethical theories:

1. Consequentialism: Whether an action is deemed ethical depends on the *results* of the actions. Perhaps the most famous consequentialist theory is utilitarianism, where the result sought is the greatest happiness.
2. Deontological Ethics: Rule based theories according to which the ethical nature of an act is determined solely by its intrinsic ethical value.
3. Virtue Ethics: The primary goal of performing ethical actions is shaping the personality of the actor.

While the first two theories may value virtue, it does not define the concept of ethics.

Rambam embraces a version of virtue ethics. He succinctly writes:

As a decent man, one must cultivate the virtues and avoid the sins. In doing so, he will perfect the specifically human which resides in him and will be generally different from the animals. (Commentary to Sanhedrin 10:1, Twersky translation)

In addition to fulfilling the mitzvah of *veahavta lereacha kamocho* (you shall love your friend as yourself) when performing acts of kindness (see Avel 14:1), Rambam highlights another mitzvah, *vehalachta bederachav* (and you shall walk in His ways) as mandating imitating the *character traits* that the Torah uses to describe God (*imatatio Dei*):

Just as He is called “Gracious,” you shall be gracious; Just as He is called “Merciful,” you shall be merciful; Just as He is called “Holy,” you shall be holy; In a similar manner, the prophets called God by other titles: “Slow to anger,” “Abundant in kindness,” “Righteous,” “Just,” “Perfect,” “Almighty,” “Powerful,” and the like. [They did so] to inform us that these are good and just paths. A person is obligated to accustom himself to these paths and [to try to] resemble Him to the extent of his ability. (Hilchot Deot 1:6, ALHaTorah translation)

Simply put, part of *acting good* is *becoming a good person*. (Rambam earlier clarifies that entails following the middle path in each trait.)

Next week we will clarify the kind of traits one must pursue.



Last Weekend at the Cottage

Question: We are approaching the last weekend before the start of the school year and the holiday season. Many people are planning to spend the long weekend in the cottage to enjoy the summer sun outside the city. Is it allowed to sunbathe on Shabbat? Is it allowed to apply sunscreen on Shabbat? And is it permissible to open a sunshade and take shelter under it?

Answer: Great question! Let's answer each part separately.

Sunbathing - In the Responsa "Minchat Yitzchak" Part 5, Siman 32, it is brought that a person standing in the sun with the intention of "getting a tan" violates the prohibition of dyeing. "Minchat Yitzchak" supports his words from the Talmud, which forbade a custom of placing hot dough on the face and removing it so that the face becomes red as a result of this act. This implies that a person is prohibited from "burning" his skin in the

sun to get a tan. However, The "Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata" is lenient [18 footnote 70] since as opposed to the case of applying dough on one's face, sitting in the sun doesn't involve an action.

Sunscreen - Some contemporary halachic authorities wanted to prohibit applying sunscreen due to the prohibition of "smearing" [*memareach*] However, there are several reasons to be lenient:

1. In many cases, sunscreen is in liquid form, and the prohibition of "smearing" does not apply to liquid substances, as explicitly stated in the Mishnah that it is permissible to anoint oil on the body on Shabbat [Shabbat 111a, and Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 327:1].
2. In many cases, sunscreen is absorbed into the body, and according to the Magen Avraham, there is no prohibition of smearing with a substance that is

absorbed [Magen Avraham Orach Chaim 316:24, as cited by the Mishnah Berurah 316:49].

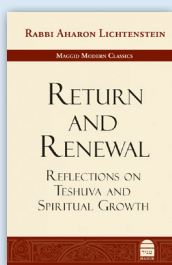
3. Nowadays, sunscreen mainly comes in spray form, and spraying it onto the body is explicitly permissible on Shabbat, with the prohibition being specifically in the action of smearing and not in applying [As brought in the book "Orchot Shabbat" Chapter 17, Halacha 19].

Opening a sunshade on Shabbat - The Rema in Orach Chaim 644:3 permits opening and closing the roof of a sukkah that is attached by hinges. Therefore, the "Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata" [Chapter 24, Halacha 13] states that it is permissible to open a sunshade on the Sabbath since it is connected to the ground from before Shabbat.

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymann@torontotorah.com.



Week 2: Two Types of Teshuva



Return and Renewal: Reflections on Teshuva and Spiritual Growth
By Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein
Maggid Press, 2018

Just as there is learning bi-beki'ut and be-iyyun, there is teshuva bi-bekiu't and be-iyyun. Certainly on a basic level, one must bring searching and examination to bear upon the whole range of one's life, all facets of one's activity, and all aspects of one's personality, values, and self... But at the same time, there is indeed to be commended and recommended teshuva that is be-iyyun, by focusing on certain areas. (Page 54, "The Integrity of Teshuva")

this is referred to as learning *bi-beki'ut*, covering a lot of topics, and learning *be-iyyun* focus on one particular area.

Here, Rav Lichtenstein notes that this balance exists in teshuva. On the one hand, we approach the new year making sweeping commitments about all areas of our lives. This is *teshuva bi-beki'ut*. However, we cannot discredit *teshuva be-iyyun*. Identifying a particular area of improvement and focusing directly on that - why we do it, its negative impact on our lives, and what steps we can take to improve.

This Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, let us identify just one area in which we will go in depth and perform teshuva at the deepest levels.

The book can be purchased from Koren Publishers at tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD. Use the code TorontoTorah for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website.

In nearly every aspect of our lives we face a dilemma: How do we balance breadth and depth? Do we choose to prioritize focus in one area at the expense of other areas? Or do we choose to address a lot, never quite mastering anything? In terms of Torah study,



TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Source: Devarim 29

- (1) Moses called to all Israel, and said to them, “You have seen all that Hashem did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land;
- (2) the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders.
- (3) But Hashem has not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.

Questions to Discuss

- Why weren’t the miracles witnessed in Egypt enough for their hearts to “know”?
- When in your life have you “seen” but at the same time felt that you did not have the “eyes to see”?

After Shabbat, please share your family’s answers with us at nsonenberg@torontotorah.com to enter our raffle for a challah and six bilkas from Richmond Bakery to enjoy at your Shabbat table next week!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

| | | | | |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Shabbat | Halacha from the Parsha | Clanton Park | After Hashkama Minyan | Rabbi Mann |
| | Gemara | BAYT | Between Mincha & Maariv | Rabbi Gutenberg |
| Sunday | Tzurba M’Rabanan | Or Chaim | 8:30 am | Rabbi Shor |
| | Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Seuda | Clanton Park | 9:00 am | Rabbi Mann |
| Monday | Teshuva in the Tales of Rebbe Nachman | Zoom | 2:00 pm starting Sept. 11 | R’ Rakovsky |
| | Towards Tishrei | Shomrei Shabbos | 8:30 pm | Rabbi Mann |
| Tuesday | Shivat Tzion | Zoom | 1:30 pm | Rabbi Horovitz |
| | Women’s Gemara Shiur | Or Chaim | 8:00 pm | Rabbi Anstandig |
| | Women’s Contemporary Halacha Shiur | Clanton Park | 8:30 pm | Rabbi Mann |
| Wednesday | The Nature of Sin and the Evil Inclination | Zoom | 10:00 am | Rabbi Sonenberg |
| | Contemporary Halacha: Tishrei Edition | Clanton Park | One hour before Mincha | Rabbi Mann |
| | Gemara Bekiut | Or Chaim | 8:00 pm | Rabbi Sonenberg |
| Thursday | Tzurba M’Rabanan | Or Chaim | 8:00 pm | Rabbi Turtel |
| | Gemara Iyun | BAYT (Mizrachi/Milevsky) | 8:00 pm | R’ Diena |
| Sun–Thu | Community Night Seder | Or Chaim | 8:00–9:00 pm | |

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Tishrei in a Night | Shaarei Shomayim | Sunday, September 10 at 8:00 pm |
| Tishrei in a Night | BAYT | Wednesday, September 13 at 8:00 pm |
| Book Club | Or Chaim | Thursday, September 21 |

YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

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Rabbi Jared Anstandig
R’ Ezer Diena
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