

## Just Enough

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me?”

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

The teachings of our Sages have infiltrated many cultures other than our own, to the extent that most people can quote well-known Torah sayings without realizing that the source is our Holy Book.

One aphorism that always rings true regards the perception of personal wealth. “Who is rich? He who is happy with his portion” (*Abot* 4:1). The simplicity of the statement belies the difficulty of achieving this state of bliss. Most denizens of this material world get caught up in the unsatisfying pursuit of physical pleasure. This senseless race with no finish line only yields dissatisfaction. It is like chasing the horizon. One perceives the horizon as being a mile away, and starts running towards it. Minutes later, the mile has been run, but the horizon still stands exactly one mile away. It is a moving finish line that can never be reached.

In the world of business, it is always the “next deal” that will bring happiness. Yet as soon as that transaction is concluded, it’s on to the next one, then the next. “He who loves money will never be satisfied with his money.” That is another, not-as-well-known piece of Rabbinical wisdom.

In life, you will be faced with situations which require decision making. What you might like to do at a particular time may conflict with what you must do to earn more money. When you stand at that crossroads, consider which of the two paths before you will yield more happiness. If you start to collect happy moments rather than dollars, you will find out years later how truly rich you have become. (One Moment with Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

## A Chime on Time

Rav Yissachar Ber of Radushitz (1765-1845) was traveling with a group of *Hasidim* and had to stay in an inn overnight. When he awoke the next morning he went directly to the owner and asked, “There was a clock in the hallway that chimed every hour on the hour. Is there a history to that clock? Did someone special own that clock?”

“No,” replied the owner. “We’ve had the clock for years and as far as I know it’s a clock like any other clock.”

“Well, I believe there is something very special about that clock,” said the Rebbe. “You see, I have heard many clocks in many places chime every hour on the hour. And every time I hear those chimes, I am reminded that it is one hour closer to my death. It is depressing but true. However, with this clock, every time it chimed it made me think, ‘It is one hour closer to *Mashiah*’s coming!’ I never had such a thrilling thought when other clocks chimed.”

The owner investigated and indeed discovered that, years earlier, the *Hozeh* of Lublin owned this clock. When he passed away one of his children inherited it but eventually fell on hard times and had to sell some of his possessions. The clock was sold and then resold to numerous people until it came into the hands of this innkeeper.

Excitedly he reported his findings to the Radushitezer Rebbe. (In the Spirit of the Maggid)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לֹאֲהָ בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## **Congregation Magen Abraham**

479 Monmouth Road - P.O. Box 444

West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

(732) 870-2225



SHABBAT DEBARIM ☆ שַׁבַּת דְּבָרִים

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 1:1-27

**JULY 24-25, 2020 4 AB 5780**

Candlelighting: **8:00 pm**

Morning Shema by: **8:29 am**

Evening Shema after: **8:58 pm**

Shabbat ends: **8:57 pm (R"Y 9:29 pm)**

**Watch for an email for full Shabbat schedule of minyanim**

**This bulletin is dedicated by Joey & Sophia Mizrahi  
in memory of Jimmy Shrem** לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת גִּמְלֵאל בֶּן עֲמֵר

**The Fast of Tish'ah B'Ab will begin on Wednesday night, July 29 at 8:10 pm and end on Thursday night, July 30 at 8:43 pm. Details to follow.**

**Mabrook to Charlie & Lauren Dadoun on the engagement of their son, Simon, to Eliah Perez.**

## A Message from our Rabbi

**“אֵיכָה אֶשָּׂא לְבָדִי טְרַחְכֶם וּמִשְׁאָכֶם וְרִיבֵכֶם”**

**“How can I alone carry your trouble and your burden and your quarrels?” (*Debarim* 1:12)**

In *Parashat Debarim*, Moshe reviews the episode that led to the appointment of judges to assist him (*Shemot* 18:13-26), explaining that he was unable to carry the burdens and quarrels of the Jewish people singlehandedly. However, although the word “*masa*” is normally translated as “burden,” in this case the *Ramban* writes that it is a language of prayer. The *Ramban* explains that Moshe was expressing his inability to be solely responsible to pray for the entire nation and all its needs. However, it is difficult to understand why prayer is described as a burden, especially when there are many other *misvot* far more difficult and physically taxing than prayer.

Rabbi Ozer Alpert explains this concept beautifully. Harav Simha Zissel Brodie explains that when we pray for another Jew who is suffering and in pain, it is not sufficient to merely petition Hashem on his behalf. We are expected to actually feel his hurt, and to call out to Hashem to alleviate not only his agony, but ours as well. The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 12b) says that a Torah scholar is expected not only to pray for the other Jew, but to make himself physically ill through his entreaties and petitions.

Accordingly, Moshe complained that when he prayed on behalf of the nation, he felt their collective pain, and he described it as a *masa* – heavy burden – to be carried.

As a practical application of this concept, Rabbi Yisrael Reisman recounts that when Rabbi Avraham Pam returned home in the morning, he was unable to eat breakfast right away. After the morning prayers in the Yeshiva concluded, Rav Pam met with people seeking his advice and assistance. Invariably, they would share their plights and difficulties with the *Rosh Yeshiva*, who took their suffering to heart to the point that when he came home, he first needed time to calm down, as he was so agitated that he was unable to eat. Just like Moshe and every great leader, he personally felt the pain and anguish of other Jews in distress.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Reuven Semah

## Speaking Louder

Moshe is saying his last good-byes to his beloved nation. He stands at Israel's border and reviews forty years of trials and tribulations, the good times and the bad, and how his nation Israel matured to become the inheritor of the Promised Land. The first verse in this week's portion alludes to the ensuing topics of discussion. The Golden Calf, the incident with the spies, and the time when Israel faltered at the idol *Ba'al Pe'or* are amongst the many issues that are re-examined.

But the Torah defines Moshe's rebuke by confining it to a specific time frame. The Torah tells us that only "after smiting Sichon, king of the Amorites, and (the giant) Og, king of Bashan, did Moshe begin explaining this Torah (rebuke) to them." (*Debarim* 1:4)

The fact that the Torah makes a point of stating that the reproofs occurred only after Moshe smote two powerful enemies has obvious connotations. *Rashi* explains: "if the Jews were to say, 'What has Moshe done for us? Has he brought us into the Land? How does he have the right to rebuke us?' Moshe thus waited until the defeat of the last two major enemies before rebuking the nation."

Perhaps Moshe wanted to tell us a bit more.

Reb Mendel Kaplan was a Rebbe at the Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia from 1965 until he passed away. In the later years, he would conduct an early morning class with a select group of students. He would study with them *Daat Hochmah U'Mussar*, the magnum opus of his Rebbe, Rabbi Yeruchum Levovitz, the *Mashgiach* of the Mirrer Yeshiva of Europe and later Shanghai. Each day the group would meet before *Shaharit* and listen to their elderly Rebbe discuss deep philosophical issues concerning the nature of man and the profound eternal struggle he faces.

One night a heavy snow covered the streets of Philadelphia. As the boys trudged into the classroom they were dazzled by the view of the dawn breaking over the white blanket that softly covered the frozen ground. But an even more amazing sight beheld them inside the classroom. Rav Mendel was at sitting at his desk wearing his boots, gloves, and an overcoat that was as warm as his expression. "Today we will learn the *real Mussar* (ethics)," he smiled. "Don't take off your boots and coats." He closed the large tome on his desk and pointed to six shovels neatly stacked in the corner of the classroom.

With that, he took a shovel, walked outside, and began to lead the boys in shoveling a path from the dormitories to the *Bet Midrash* where the entire school would soon conduct their morning prayers.

Moshe knew that for forty years he had admonished his nation on issues of faith, trust in Hashem, and belief in the prophets. He had put his honor on the line, as he

constantly defended their misdeeds. He prayed for them as they battled with *Amalek* and prayed for them when G-d's wrath was upon them. But he had yet to do physical battle.

The call came. Moshe had to fight the most notorious and powerful rulers of the region, Sichon and Og. They were stronger and bigger and surely more aggressive than he was. His faith was on the line. He had to teach real *Mussar*. Only after conquering those two foes, showing his people that he too can get down in the trenches, did he begin to admonish the nation for forty years of various improprieties.

Sometimes, if you'd like your friend to become as pure as snow, you can't just talk about it. You have to shovel it. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetky)

## Personal Judge

"How can I alone support your bother, your burden, and your arguments? Take wise and understanding men for yourselves, who are known to your tribes, and I will place them at your head. You answered me and said, 'You have told us to do a good thing.' And I took the heads of your tribes, wise and understanding men, and I placed them as heads over you, ministers over thousands, ministers over hundreds, ministers over fifties, and ministers over tens, and police for your tribes." [*Debarim* 1:12-16]

The *Seforno* says that there is an implied rebuke in the appointment of judges over Israel — Moshe is reminding the Nation of Israel of their sins. For even though they were given the news that they would enter the Land of Israel without fighting for it, receiving something far greater and honorable than all their property, nonetheless they could not stop bickering and arguing — to the point that every group of ten needed its own personal judge. Why is there a minister over every ten people? Because even then, disputes were so common that ten people could keep a judge busy.

The first word of verse twelve, "*Eichah*," is the same as the first word of the Book of Lamentations that we read on the Ninth of *Ab*. The Ninth of *Ab* is the day of mourning for the destruction of our two Temples and other Jewish tragedies, and it follows *Shabbat Parashat Debarim* according to our calendar.

Here, perhaps, in the connection of "*Eichah*" to "*Eichah*," we can find an additional layer of rebuke. Our Sages tell us that the First Temple was destroyed because Israel had violated the "cardinal sins" of idolatry, murder and immorality — while the second was destroyed because of baseless hatred. A connection can easily be drawn from the sin described by Moshe, to those things which destroyed the Temples.

On the one hand, the *Seforno* implies that each person was overly concerned about his own property, to the point of pettiness. But in order for an argument to reach the courts, there also needs to be a lack of communication, an inability to reconcile differences, and a corresponding lack of concern for the other person's property. After going to the courts, when the loser no longer has any justified claims against the other, all that remains is... baseless hatred. The same baseless hatred that can lead to murder. Immorality, as well, often includes a lack of concern for another person.

If needless hatred begins with a lack of communication, there is hope that increased communication can remove the hatred and divisions that remain between us. With proper communication, we can counter the misinformation that often causes hatred, and develop new relationships outside our own groups. In short, as we mourn the Temple's destruction, we can also find the tools to make our own best efforts to ensure that it is rebuilt — speedily in our day, Amen. (Rabbi Yaakov Menken)