

need to complain about what is not to their satisfaction. Such people would be happy – but!

A happy person spends time explaining rather than complaining. Looking for the good in others and for the best in every situation, the joyful soul does say “but” when justifying the negatives in another: “She would be a better dresser, *but* her parents have no money and no taste in fashion,” or, “He would be a better learner, *but* he never got the proper tutoring.”

Make yourself and others happy. Train yourself to spend time explaining rather than complaining. You can do it if you really try...but maybe you haven't tried as yet!
(One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

A Sight for Sore Eyes

“To my dear friend, leader of the Jewish people, Royal Physician to the sultan, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon.

“As of late, I have been suffering a terrible disease, one which ails me to no end. It is not the pain so much that disturbs me; rather, it is the clouding of my eyesight, which no longer allows me to study the sacred texts and pursue my writing.”

The letter went on to describe the various symptoms, and begged for medical advice to cure the eye ailment. It came from a dear friend of the *Rambam*, the *Ibn Ezra*. The two Rabbis had forged a close relationship over the years, and now the *Ibn Ezra*, whose illness the doctors had deemed hopeless, turned to his friend for help.

The *Rambam* penned a reply: “It is difficult to diagnose and treat your ailment on description alone. Please honor me with a visit so that I might better see what ails you, and, with the help of Hashem, help you to see once more.”

The *Ibn Ezra* prepared for the journey, excitement mounting over the thought of the reunion with his friend, as much as with the hope of a cure. Imagine his shock when, instead of the warm welcome he expected, the *Rambam* refused to greet him.

The *Rambam* shouted for a student to lock the *Ibn Ezra* in the stable. Ignoring his friend's cries, the *Rambam* returned to his books.

Humiliated and bewildered, the *Ibn Ezra* allowed himself to be led. The *Rambam's* disciple put him upon a bale of straw and left, locking the large heavy door behind him. The *Ibn Ezra* was left alone to ponder his fate. He could think of no explanation for the awful treatment he was getting here. The two Rabbis had always been the best of friends! In utter despair, he burst into bitter sobs. Hot tears coursed down his cheeks as he bewailed the loss of his treasured friendship.

A few minutes passed. Something was happening. His eyes were clear! Well, now there was no longer any reason to remain here. His eyes were better, and he wasn't having the most pleasant visit either. He banged on the door, in the hope that he would be allowed to leave.

The door opened. There stood the *Rambam* himself. His eyes were friendly and his smile wide.

“*Shalom*, dear friend,” he said warmly, extending an arm in greeting. “I hope you are feeling better. I owe you an explanation for your treatment here this morning. When you wrote me regarding your problem, I knew that the only treatment for your problem was to flush your eyes with tears. I told you to come here so that I could cause you to cry over the way I treated you. The bitter tears I caused by being a ‘cruel’ host was the medical treatment you came for.”

The *sadikim* embraced, and the *Ibn Ezra* enjoyed a wonderful visit with his brilliant friend, the *Rambam*. (Brilliant Gems)

The Lorraine Gammal A"H Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת לֹאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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שַׁבָּת כִּי־תָבֹא * שַׁבָּת כִּי־תָבֹא

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 60:1-22

SEPTEMBER 4-5, 2020 16 ELUL 5780

Candlelighting: **7:05 pm**

Morning Shema by: **8:53 am**

Evening Shema after: **8:03 pm**

Shabbat ends: **8:02 pm (R"Y 8:34 pm)**

Watch for an email for full Shabbat schedule of minyanim

**This bulletin is dedicated by Ralph Hazan and family
in memory of Leon Hazan** לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמָת אֲלֵיהֶוּ בֵּן סֵלְחָה

**Mabrook to Avi & Victoria Dwek on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Yaakov.
Mabrook to the grandparents, Jack & Debbie Matalon.**

**Mabrook to Danny & Marilyn Safdieh on the engagement of their daughter, Miri,
to Avraham Sutton.**

A Message from our Rabbi

”וְעֵנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֶלְקֶךָ אֶרְמִי אֲבִד אֲבִי...”

“And you shall call out and say, ‘An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather...’” (Debarim 26:5-10)

Our *perashah* begins with the all-important *misvah* of expressing your appreciation to Hashem for all that He does for you. Those words must be a true expression of one's feelings and not lip service. If we constantly enumerate all of the benefits Hashem bestows upon us, we will begin to actually feel appreciative to Hashem.

Rabbi E. Nisenbaum quotes Rabbi Yissocher Frand, who relates a story of a student who notices his *Rosh Yeshivah* prayed much longer than everyone else. He mustered up the courage to ask the *Rosh Yeshivah* why his prayers took so long.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* replied, “You see, before I begin *Modim*, the paragraph expressing appreciation to Hashem, I try to focus on what I must be thankful for: my wife, my children, my grandchildren, our health, my privilege to teach Torah, and many other things. It's a long list, and it takes a long time.”

It is a Jew's responsibility to express his appreciation.

The *Daf Yomi Siyum*, the worldwide program where participants study a page of *Talmud* each day, was celebrated at MetLife Stadium. At the conclusion of the

program, a policewoman was seen making notations on a small pad. She told someone she was marking down how many people said, “Thank you” as they left. She was overwhelmed by the crowd’s expression of gratitude.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

Can We Face this Day Alone?

“Gaze down from your Holy residence, from the Heavens, and bless your nation, Israel, and the land which You have given us as You swore to our forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.” (*Debarim* 26:15)

Our Torah prescribes a declaration to be made at the end of the third year, when a person has completed giving his “*ma’aser ani*,” one-tenth of his crops to the poor. “And you shall say before Hashem your G-d, ‘I have removed the Holy [tithes] from the house, and I have also given them to the Levi, to the stranger, the orphan and the widow, according to all your Commandments which You commanded me; I did not violate Your Commandments and I did not forget’” [26:13]. At the end, the person says the verse above, calling down blessing upon Israel.

Rashi says in *Parashat Vayera* [*Beresheet* 18:16] that whenever “gazing” is mentioned in the Torah, the intent is negative. In that *perashah*, the angels left Avraham and “gazed” towards Sedom, which was then destroyed. Our case, however, is the exception, when we are commanded to ask G-d to gaze down upon the nation. *Rashi* explains that the power of gifts to the poor is so great that it “reverses the attribute of anger to mercy.”

The *Divrei Shaul* explains this, based on the *Zohar*. In *Melachim* II 4:13, the prophet Elisha asks the Shunamite woman if anything might be said to the authorities on her behalf, and she replies, “I sit among my people.” The *Zohar* says that she did not want to remove herself from the congregation. She did not want to be singled out. Were she to do so, she would be judged independently, and this is worse than being judged together with everyone else. Individuals may sin, but the nation itself is a Holy nation.

If Hashem gazes down upon one individual, to judge him as an individual, this is negative. But in our case, when the person is making the declaration that he has given charity as appropriate, that he has given of himself on behalf of others, and has placed the needs of the community ahead of his own — then the Holy One, Blessed be He, judges him together with the congregation, which is favorable towards him. This is why the person says “and bless your nation, Israel.” He does not ask for himself as an individual, but rather for the entire nation — and within the blessing of the nation, he too is blessed.

Rosh Hashanah is approaching — the Day of Judgement. On that day, each individual is judged. How can we face this day, alone?

Our Sages teach us that return to G-d, prayer and charity reverse a bad decree. Return to G-d and prayer — we understand why these are singled out, since they reestablish the connection which we have broken through our errors and sins. But why is charity so special?

The *Divrei Shaul* has answered this question. Charity demonstrates that we care about others. We care for their needs. We are not merely living for ourselves, and cannot, then, be judged merely by ourselves. We must be judged only as part of the congregation, as part of the Holy nation.

May we all merit a favorable decree this Rosh Hashanah! (Rabbi Yaakov Menkan)

Absence of Joy

At the end of the *Tochachah* [verses of rebuke in our *Perashah*], the *pasuk* says that these ninety-eight terrible curses come “as the result of your not having served the L-rd, your G-d, with joy and with good spirit (*b’simhah u’btub lebab*) when you had and abundance of everything” [*Debarim* 28:47]. This is an unbelievable statement. It seems harsh that such terrible curses should befall the Jewish people, just because people are lacking what seems to be a “*hidur misvah*” [glorification of a *misvah*, which is not absolutely necessary] of observing commandments in a state of joy.

Moreover, there is another difficulty: Our Sages tell us that the *Tochachah* that we find at the end of *Sefer Vayikra* corresponded historically to the events of the First Temple period; this *Tochachah* — in Parashat Ki Tabo — is referring to the period leading up to the destruction of the Second Temple. We all know that the Sages tell us that the reason the Second *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed was because of baseless hatred (*sin’at hinam*). So these two teachings of *Hazal*, our Sages, seem contradictory. What was the reason for the destruction of the second Temple — Was it ‘baseless hatred’ or was it ‘failure to serve G-d with joy’?

Perhaps there is no contradiction. The Torah is referring to the underlying cause of the *hurban Bayit Sheni* [destruction of the Second Temple]. The underlying cause was lack of *Simhah* [joy]. Failure to serve G-d with joy, in turn, leads to *Sinat hinam*.

What does this mean? *Hazal* say that *Talmidei Hachamim* [scholars] increase peace in the world. How is this done? I once saw, written in the name of Rav Chatzkel Abramsky, z”tl, that a person who is a Talmid Hacham, in the real sense of the word, is a person who is at peace with himself. He is happy and satisfied with what he is accomplishing in life. As a result, he exudes his inner happiness and inner peace and that has an effect on other people.

When a person is happy with himself, the feeling is contagious. He is willing to share that peace and that happiness. Those feelings affect other people. When a person is not happy with himself, he is miserable and he dislikes other people’s happiness or success. Just as happiness rubs off, so too unhappiness rubs off and such a person cannot be satisfied with anyone else’s success.

Hazal are telling us that because you were not happy with your lot and you were not *b’simha*, therefore the consequence is baseless hatred. When a person is not happy with himself, he cannot tolerate others having any kind of happiness either.

There is thus no contradiction. The Second Temple was destroyed because of *Sinat hinam*, but *Sinat hinam* results from people who are not happy with themselves, are not *b’simhah*, and are not doing *misvot b’simhah*. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

But

“But” is a word that usually signals *lashon hara* – negative forbidden speech. For example, “Jacob is a nice guy, but I suspect his honesty,” or “Sarah is a good cook, but I can’t stand her taste in clothing.” When people speak negatively about others, they attempt to excuse themselves by testifying to the truth of the negative fact just expressed. After all, can they be blamed for noticing obvious flaws in other people?

On the other hand, when the subject is Yours Truly, the word “but” introduces an excuse for an error in judgment or a personality flaw. “I would have taken care of it, but I did not realize that...,” or, “Yes, I did do it, but it was because...”

Complainers are people who see the negative in everyone and everything. Such individuals cannot accept the good in their surroundings because of the overwhelming