



TORAH תורה
MITZION מציון
KTM MONTREAL



THE KTM DAF PARSHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM THE DESERT IS TURNED BY RABBI EITAN MAAZARI (ROSH KOLLEL KTM MONTREAL)

There are two main characteristics in the desert that distinguish it from a place of settlement, defined by the prophet Jeremiah in two separate verses.

The first definition:

הַמּוֹלִיד אֶתְנֹן בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ עֲרֵבָה וְשׂוֹחָה בְּאֶרֶץ צִיָּה וְצִלְמֹת בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא-עֵבֵר בָּהּ אִישׁ וְלֹא-יָשֵׁב אָדָם שָׁם:

Who led us through the wilderness. A land of deserts and pits. A land of drought and darkness. A land nobody had traversed, where no human being had dwelt.

This is anthropological wilderness. Somewhere no one lives or builds settlements.

The second definition appears in an earlier verse:

זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ תְּקֵד נְעוּרַיִךְ אֲהַבַת כְּלוּלְתֵיךָ לְכַתֵּךְ אֶחְרַיִךְ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה:
I accounted to your favor, the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride. How you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

Beyond being simply a place not intended for human settlement, "desert" is also a place not intended for anything to grow, 'A land not sown'. The commentators interpreted: 'not sown' does not merely mean that the desert is not sown with grain and fruit, but also that it is full of strong antibodies against any process of growth and sowing.

God wants very much to have a dwelling in this world; he wants the desert to be like paradise in the Garden of Eden, and the prophets express this desire many ways:

וַיַּשֵּׂם מִדְבָּרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן וְעֲרֵבְתָהּ כְּגֵרִיד
He made her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the Garden of God

וַיִּשְׂשׂוּם מִדְבָּר וַצִּיָּה וְתִמְגַל עֲרֵבָה וְתִפְרַח כְּחַבְצֵלֹת:

The arid desert shall be glad; the wilderness shall rejoice and shall blossom like a rose.

This is why the Holy Torah, which we received on Shavuot, was received in the desert.

The wanderings of the people of Israel in the desert are an expression of God's counsel, which seeks to turn the desert into a land where humans can dwell, and of His vision that, even in the desert, a power will be revealed that grows and grows –A 'Garden of God'.

The water that came out of Miriam's well turned the desert into a place where endless kinds of grasses and trees grew. Ezekiel's prophecy of the end of days describes how living water will come out from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem and reach the Dead Sea, turning the whole desert between into a place where there is life. There will be a resurrection of the dead, and our seeing eyes will not believe that a desert could become inhabitable.

The strength for all of this, we acquired from our wanderings in the desert, and not just because we sinned; rather, it is because, from the beginning, the road to Jerusalem passes through the desert. For this reason, it will become a fertile land inhabited by man.

PARASHAT NASSO
13 SIVAN
JUNE 2, 2023
CANDLES: 8:18 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 9:35 P.M.

SPECIAL SHIUR BY RAV YITZCHAK NERIYA, RAM & DIRECTOR YESHIVAT TORAH BITZION AND FORMER ROSH KOLLEL TUESDAY JUNE 6TH 8:15 PM IN THE BEIT MIDRASH



CONTINUED

This is the story of our lives. Sometimes, a person may look at their external surroundings or, equally importantly, reflect inwardly on themselves, in the mirror, and despair: Here I am, as if to say that the external environment is a desert, while they themselves are unsown land.

Rabbi Mordechai Alon brings the words of the Alter Rebbe in Likutei Torah on our parsha, amazingly describing this person:

Do you know who is the 'man' who did not sit in the desert? On Shavuot, in Ezekiel's "מעשה המרכבה", we will read:

ועל דמות הכסא דמות כמראה אדם עליו מלמעלה:

And on top, upon this semblance of a throne, there was the semblance of a human form.

Looking outside, or rather inside, we may say to ourselves: there is no adam. The supreme man is God, and while we aspire to be like Him – for this we are called 'man' – we can never be like Him or approach near to Him, because we exist in a desert world!

And this desert appears to us so vast, terrible, and menacing, with the seraphim and snakes that never seem to let up; and so,

we believe that a desert is a desert is a desert, and conclude we are powerless to change it, because there is only sand –endless sand.

But then came the eternal instruction:

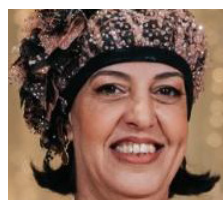
ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם:

And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.

We may be inclined to think of this world like a desert, devoid of benefit or life. But the Torah came to teach us that precisely in this desert do we find our role: to make the wilderness bloom.

It is in the desert that we must build a tabernacle for God, as he desires; and only in so doing, here on earth, will we discover that each and every one of us in the world of action does indeed have the ability to approach and resemble the supreme man, and be called man.

The road to Jerusalem passes through an unsown land, a land with many difficulties and struggles. But when, despite all this, we overcome – when we reach Jerusalem, and build the Temple, to connect with God – then we will be called adam.



MESSAGE FROM THE PARASHA BY SHIFRA MAAZARI

In our Parsha, Hashem commands the priests to bless the children of Israel. Why were the priests chosen to bless the people, and not the Torah sages of each generation?

The reason why Hashem chose to bless the children of Israel through the priests is explained by Rabbi Aharon Walkin in the introduction to his book "מצא אהרון", we find in the Gemara (Sotta 68):

בגמרא (סוטה ל"ח): אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי אין נותנין כוס של ברכה לברך אלא לטוב עין שנאמר טוב עין הוא יבורך כי נתן מלחמו לדל אל תקרי יבורך אלא יברך

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (the Ribal) said, "We do not give a cup of blessing to bless except for a person with a good eye, as it is said, a person with a good eye will be blessed because he gave his bread to the poor, don't read be blessed, but he will bless."

The Maharsha explained: a blessing is fulfilled when it is given by a person with a good eye, and the blesser is interested in the happiness and success of the person whom he blesses, to the point that he yearns with all his heart to see his success - this value is very special, and not every person deserves it. And because of this, Hashem precisely chose the priests to be the blessers of Israel, since they surely desire in their heart and soul that all Israel be blessed and succeed in all their actions. The priests themselves have no part in the land, and their source of livelihood and their lives are priestly gifts that they receive from the hands

of the Israelites, therefore, they will certainly bless Israel with a whole heart and love. The blessing of Israel is their blessing, and the more the grain of Israel increases, the more Israel will give a contribution, challah and firstborn. The Hida א"ח explains that when the children of Israel were commanded to take silver and gold from Egypt before they left Egypt for their work for hundreds of years, the tribe of Levi were the only ones who did not take it, because they did not work in Egypt. And as a reward for their honesty, they got to bless Israel with livelihood for all generations!

Shabbat Shalom!



PARNESS HAYOM :: SIVAN

- 1 SIVAN | Manny Dalfen, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Morris Dalfen z"l
- 3 SIVAN | Karl Fallenbaum, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Armand Zvi Fallenbaum z"l
- 3 SIVAN | The Aspler Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of Rita Aspler z"l
- 22 SIVAN | Moshe Reiss, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, David Reiss z"l
- 23 SIVAN | Kamal Gabbay, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his mother, Muzli Gabbay z"l



THE DUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE NAZIR
BY ZOHAR AVRAMOVIZ

One of the interesting topics appearing in our parsha is the Nazir. The Nazir is the one who accepts the special laws of holiness and celibacy mentioned in our parsha, for example: not to drink wine, not to be defiled by the impurity of a dead person, etc. Usually, this lasts for a fixed period.

The Torah does not clarify why a person might decide to take a Nazir vow, and also avoids a clear value judgment of the Nazir. It does not determine whether it is recommended or only allowed. On the one hand, it says about the Nazir that "he is holy to Hashem". On the other hand, it states that at the end of his period of asceticism he must bring a sin offering, as if he had done something bad.

This is how a dispute arose between most of the great men of Israel throughout the generations. Some argue that the Nazir deserves praise. He chose of his own free will to live in a high degree of holiness and the sin offering he is required to make is because he is returning to normal life: the sin lies in ceasing monasticism. Some argue that the sin lies in abstinence, because the Nazir deprives himself of some of the pleasures of the world that God created. The dispute is not only interpretive. It is also ideological. This is a dispute over the idea of a life of abstinence.

The Rambam's opinion in the Mishnah Torah is particularly interesting. Within the same book, he takes a positive and a negative position towards the Nazirs. In הלכות דעות in the Mishnah Torah, he presents a negative position towards the Nazirs and says that it is "a bad path, and it is forbidden to follow it". However, in הלכות נזירות he rules accordingly to a positive position and says that monasticism is a beautiful and fine thing and compares the Nazir to a prophet. How can the Rambam - write such contradictory positions in the same book?

The answer lies in the Rambam's insight into the moral life according to Judaism. According to his method, there are two different ways to live a moral life: the path of the disciple and the path of the wise. The wise walk the "middle way", the path of moderation and balance. The wise know the dangers of extremism and of what is lacking. He balances the opposing pressures and stays away from the extremes. The Hassid, on the other hand, does not follow the middle path because he understands that there are cases where it is required by Halacha, and sometimes it is also used as a response to the ills of society.

The devotee and the sage are not just two types of people. They are two ways of understanding the moral life. Is the goal of moral life to reach personal perfection - or to create pleasant relationships and a fair, just, and compassionate society? The intuitive answer for most of us would be -both. And this is where the Rambam's philosophical acuity stands out. He diagnoses that it is impossible to grasp one goal without letting go of the other. These are two separate paths to life that do not exist together.

As individuals, Hassidim are people of noble character. But you can't build a society that is all Hassidic, because the truth is that the followers are not really interested in society. Their concern is for the salvation of their souls. It is this deep insight that led the Rambam to his dual, seemingly contradictory position towards the Nazir. The Nazir chose, at least for a while, to adopt a life of extreme asceticism for himself. He is a Hassid. He chose the path of personal perfection. This is a noble, exemplary, and praiseworthy choice. That is why the Rambam says of his act that it is "handsome and fine", and that the Nazir is equal to the prophet.

But this is not the way of the wise. And if we want a reformed society, we need wise men. The wise man is not extreme, because he understands that other people must also be considered. He remembers that he has a family, that he has a community, and that there are people in the family and community. The wise man knows that he cannot turn his back on all his obligations and lead a noble single life. Therefore, from a personal point of view the Nazir is a Hassid - but from a social point of view he is, at least as an image, a "sinner" who needs to make a sin offering.

Maimonides lived the life he preached. From his writings we know that his heart went out to asceticism. There were years when he worked day and night on compiling his interpretation of the Mishnah, and later compiling the 'Mishnah Torah'. But he also recognized his responsibility towards his family and community. On the one hand, a renowned doctor internationally, and on the other hand, a wise halachic scholar that the eyes of world Jewry are focused on.

Maimonides was a wise man who yearned to be a Hassid - but he knew that he could not do so if he wanted to fulfill his responsibility towards his people.

Shabbat Shalom!





POP OF
Colour





DEL MAR JEWELLERS
4058 JEAN TALON WEST
(514) 875-4800
EST. JEWELERS 1978



THE ULTIMATE PROMISE BY ZAKY ABOUDI

This weeks' Parasha contains Birkat Kohanim. While outside of Israel this blessing is recited only on holidays such as Shavuot last week (for Ashkenazim), in Israel we do it every single day. With time, we have become very familiar with this blessing. What does the blessing itself mean and what can we learn from it?

כב וַיְדַבֵּר ד' אֱלֹהֵי מֹשֶׁה לְאֹמֶר: (כג) דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבַרְכוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲמֹר

לְהֵם: (ס) (כד) בְּרַכְוּ ד' וַיִּשְׁמְרֶוּ: (ס) (כה) יָאֵר ד' וּפְגִי אֱלֹהֵי וַיְחַנְּוּ: (ס) (כו) יֵשָׁא ד' וּפְגִי אֱלֹהֵי וַיַּעַם לֶה שְׁלוֹם: (ס) (כז) וְשִׁמוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָנִי אֲבָרְכֵם:

(22) The LORD spoke to Moses: (23) Speak to Aaron and his sons: Thus shall you bless the people of Israel. Say to them: (24) The LORD bless you and protect you! (25) The LORD deal kindly and graciously with you! (26) The LORD bestow His favor upon you and grant you peace! (27) Thus they shall link My name with the people of Israel, and I will bless them. במדבר, ו, כ"ב-כ"ז

The first thing that jumped out to me when reading the blessing is that both in the introduction and in the conclusion the blessing is aimed at the many, using plural language ("say to them", "bless them", etc...), whereas the blessing itself is recited in singular, aimed at the individual [in English the word used is "you" and that can be either singular or plural, in Hebrew it is written in an explicitly singular fashion]. I think that this duality emphasizes the fact that everyone is included in the blessing (plurality) while at the same time leaving every individual with their own unique space, allowing every person to get their own blessing (singularity).

The second thing I would like to look at is the structure of the blessing itself. Just by looking at the words, it is pretty evident that the three passages are building. The first Pasuk is 3 words long, the second is 5 and the third is 7. In each of the Psukim Hashem's name is mentioned as the second word and the Kohen

wishes for two things to happen from Hashem.

ד' וַיִּשְׁמְרֶוּ: - The first blessing given here is the most basic thing you would think of wishing someone when blessing them in the name of Hashem. The simplest way to understand the words is that the Kohanim are wishing that Hashem would give us the bare necessities, being blessed means financially stable and being protected is a fundamental thing every person deserves.

יָאֵר ד' - In the next blessing we see more of a relationship forming. Being "blessed" doesn't necessitate a relationship. A king is capable of blessing and protecting his subjects without knowing them on a personal level. In this second verse Hashem gives us a sliver of attention, He acknowledges us. Not only does he "יָאֵר פָּנָיו" (light his face) – but He does it on a personal level, as seen by the fact that this is conveyed in the first person.

יֵשָׁא ד' - The third and final level includes a real relationship and a promise for peace. This blessing is the highest level on two fronts. We've moved past acknowledgement and into Hashem truly listening to us. In the previous line Hashem recognized us each as individuals, but now he is listening to us. It's possible to be polite with a lot of different people and give them a moment of attention every now and then, but it is a whole other level of relationship when someone is willing to stop for a moment and listen to what you have to say. Here, Hashem is saying that he will listen to our prayers and answer them. The second part of this line is the peace "שְׁלוֹם". In the beginning of the blessing, we were promised protection-protection implies that there are dangerous things out there. Peace is all that we strive for, in a world of peace we don't just co-exist, we live together, we grow together.

The Kohanim act as mediators between us and Hashem, allowing us to cultivate a relationship with him that results in the ultimate promise - peace.

