

פרשת דברים

The Cyanide Antidote

In this week's פרשה the Yidden gathered to hear the final words of משה רבינו, their dear מנהיג and צדיק, who led them faithfully in the desert all the years. משה started the speech mentioning many names of places that the Yidden traversed through. רש"י explains that משה enumerated these names as an indication of the Yiddens' sins at those places.

Further in the speech we see that משה continued describing the sins of the Yidden and described some of it in detail. משה mentioned specifically the difficulty he had in leading them and the sin of the מרגלים.

משה also enumerated every war and step the Yidden experienced in the process of invading ארץ ישראל.

The אור החיים writes that משה spoke to all the Yidden including the ones that weren't even born yet. He spoke to our

generation and to all generations yet to come.

The purpose of the speech was to review the תורה, yet it started with the מוסר mentioned in the פרשה.

We need to understand the purpose of the address. What's the point of mentioning all the inequities of the Yidden when they have already repented for their sins? מוסר is meant to inspire one to improve their behavior, actions, or performance, not to remind him of something he did wrong a while back.

רש"י didn't mention the sins outright. רש"י explains that it was done in this way not to embarrass the Yidden. If that's the case, why was it okay for משה to mention the sin of the מרגלים in detail?

משה רבינו was the ultimate dedicated leader of the Yidden. It was at this time that he wanted to impart a most fundamental lesson to the Yidden; a

lesson which can either make or break a person.

At the time of WWII there was a certain family of high Nazi affiliation. At the end of the war, when Nazism was defeated, the parents committed suicide and took along their children with them. The family used cyanide poison to accomplish this.

This poison works by instantaneously paralyzing all muscles of a person. It is a poison that every single spy infiltrating the enemy has in his possession. It is potent, powerful, and deadly. Even the smallest amount of it has a deadly effect.

There's a similar poison that is deadly in the spiritual realm as it is in the physical realm: negativity. Negativity paralyzes a person and prevents him from living his life. One is rendered powerless after taking even the slightest amount of it.

One may not even realize the effect it has on him and the frequency of his negative thoughts. Let's take an example of one waking up in the morning. What is naturally the first thought one experiences? It is usually how tired or exhausted he feels. The next step is the thought of blame such as he should have gone to sleep earlier, etc. One experiences literally hundreds of such thoughts daily. He may not realize how debilitating these thoughts are.

Another step of a negative person is the constant reminders of his negative actions. One will often actively remember the negative parts of his day or past months but barely the positive aspects. Examine your negative thought and see how frequent and debilitating they are.

Not only does thinking negatively paralyze a person it causes a person to actually act in a negative way. It's what מצוה גוררת מצוה גוררת says אבות פרק ד' in משנה עברה גוררת עברה and מצוה Positivity creates positivity and the opposite happens with negativity.

Hashem created a person with a tendency to have these thoughts and is up to that person to work on himself to focus only on the positive. The more בטחון and אמונה one has the easier it is to think positive. Let's take the above scenario and see what can be done differently. It is a fact if someone wakes up tired or exhausted. The next step isn't. If one believes that Hashem controls everything and it's all good, he can believe that his current state is also good and meant to be. The fact that he went to

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sleep late was also meant to be for reasons beyond comprehension but orchestrated from Hashem.

Positive thoughts infused with אמונה empowers and propels one to reach and achieve new heights. Once one tries to live with positivity he automatically inspire those around him such as his spouse and children.

This is the message and lesson that משה transmitted to the Yidden with his final lecture. He was essentially telling them that all the negative events that transpired all these years were meant to happen. משה didn't mention specifically each sin, to show them that one shouldn't focus on negative events. If one wants to focus on it for the purpose of doing תשובה he can only do so by thinking about it ברמיזה; in the same way משה mentioned it to them now.

משה demonstrated another point. He set aside a specific time and only then did he mention their negative behaviors. So too, one who wants to improve or do תשובה, thus requiring him to review negativity, can only do so at a specific time that he sets aside for this purpose. Doing otherwise in a haphazard manner will derail one's day, life, and success

The reason that משה did elaborate on the event of the מרגלים was to show them

that the lack of אמונה arouses negativity. He was telling them that the עבירה of the מרגלים started with the Yidden not believing what Hashem said regarding ארץ ישראל. They didn't believe that it's a good land like Hashem said it is. The result was that the Yidden looked at ארץ ישראל in a negative light and then they lost everything. Had they had אמונה they would have been saved from the מרגלים. One who believes that every action is from Hashem has more immunity from negativity.

משה also enumerated every step of acquiring ארץ ישראל. He did so to show the Yidden that every little step a Yid does brings him closer to Hashem.

There's a story about ר' נתן of תלמיד the ר' of נחמן מברסלב. He said that before he became the ר' of נחמן תלמיד he tried being a מתמיד. He sat down in Shul at the beginning of the day and told himself that he would learn nonstop for many hours. Reality had it that he was disturbed right when he stared and thus he gave up from being a מתמיד that day. However, he took upon himself that he would be a מתמיד the next day. The next day however, he didn't have the fortitude to sit and learn thus another day was gone. So it continued for many years.

After he became the תלמיד of ר' נתן, he discussed his difficulty of being a מתמיד with his Rebbe. ר' נתן told him that he shouldn't try being a מתמיד for a full day. Rather, he should only aim to be a מתמיד a few minutes every day. ר' נתן started with the few minutes and ultimately achieved to be a true מתמיד.

This concept of aiming for a little isn't a sort of trickery to get someone to accomplish a lot by doing a little at a time. Absolutely not! It is the belief in the little. We see this in many places in the whole תורה. The famous statement of תפסת מרובה is exactly this.

One needs to aim and believe in the little. This is the only way for one to stay positive and live fully connected to Hashem.

In review; משה told the Yidden that they need to believe in the little. They need to stay positive. They shouldn't think of negativity other than a set time and even then, only ברמיזה. All of this can only happen with true אמונה and בטחון.

א גוט שבת