



THE **שבוע** MATTERS

לע"נ ברוך בענדיט וברכה גרוס ע"ה
by Mr. & Mrs. Duvy Gross

שבת קודש פרשת וישלח | מסכת יבמות דף ע"ט

INSIGHTS FROM OUR CHABUROS

Compassionate,
Bashful, and Kind

שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו הרחמנים והביישנים וגומלי חסדים

Every year we recall the heinous acts of hatred perpetrated by Amalek against the helpless, hindmost stragglers of the Exodus. Other nations stood stunned by the way Hashem's miraculous might was marshaled to face the enslaved Israelites from Egyptian bondage. The Amalekites, descendants of Eisav, dared to defy Hashem. Their enmity of Israel exhibited evil as the driving force of their decadent society. Other nations may wage war for territorial expansion or economic enhancement. Attacking Israelites at the Exodus offered neither advantage. Amalek's motivating force was pure hatred and unadulterated evil. The Midrash notes that Amalek castrated the deceased and cast the milah heavenward. Just as Eisav discredited the birthright, Amalek discredited the symbol of Avraham's covenant with Hashem. Consequently, the Midrash concludes that Amalek remains as our people's eternal enemy. The Jewish people are characterized as being compassionate, modest, and exhibiting loving kindness (Yevamos 79a). These values remain our people's principal policy and practice in interpersonal relations. In marked contrast, Amalek represents man's inhumanity to man. These philosophies are diametrically opposed to one another. They cannot co-exist. Consequently, the Torah directs us to combat evil in all times and places. Hashem and Am Yisrael are allied in this continuous combat.

The Gaon of Vilna comments that Amalek appears in various forms and not necessarily as a people in a particular time and place. Amalek is akin to evil inclinations that create "quarrel mongers and gossip mongers" in our very society. These tendencies must be encountered and overcome in every generation - "מדור דור" (Shemos 17:16).

May Hashem help us vanquish evil that perpetrates terrorism and physical devastation. May He likewise help us overcome evil that generates social divisiveness and communal division.

PARSHA CONNECTION

In this week's daf we learn about the famine which afflicted בני ישראל for three years during the time of דוד המלך. This famine was due to the fact that שאול was not properly eulogized and that שאול caused the גבעונים to lose their livelihood. We can understand why not eulogizing שאול caused everyone to suffer, since he was the king and everyone bore the responsibility to mourn his loss. But why was everyone held responsible for the גבעונים? The answer may be found in this week's Parsha, where we learn that שמעון killed out the entire city of שכם. The Torah writes: ויהי ביום השלישי בהיותם כאבים ויקחו שני בני יעקב שמעון ולוי אחי דינה איש ויהיו חרבו ויבאו על העיר בטח ויהרגו כל זכר שכם. The next פסוק tells us that they also killed שמעון. Why would they kill everyone else before killing שמעון who is the one guilty of abusing דינה? The Alshich Hakadosh explains that the sin of NOT stopping שמעון was even greater than what שמעון himself did. This is because שמעון was driven by his desires, and while his actions were wrong they were explainable. By contrast, everyone else who were not influenced by passion and desire should have stopped him, and had no excuse. Perhaps this is also why בני ישראל were punished for standing by and not helping the גבעונים.

STORIES OFF THE DAF

"There are three signs that identify the Jewish people..."

אמר שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו הרחמנים והביישנים וגומלי חסדים

Once, on the Tunisian island of Djerba, a terrible plague descended upon the community and drove food prices sky-high. One of the most respected members of the community was Rav Yehudani Kohein, zt"l, a man distinguished by his great wealth no less than his Torah scholarship. Although Rav Yehudani had more than enough means to see his household and many other families through the trying period, he wanted to get the money where it was needed in a way that would not embarrass the recipients. He especially wanted to help the island's scholars who had no savings.

After a great deal of thought, Rav Yehudani finally hit upon a way. He went to Rav Mautak Chadad, zt"l, with a vessel filled with gold coins and said, "The plague is among us and who can say who will live until tomorrow and who will be weakened with their household? People in such a situation are essentially helpless, so I have decided to deposit bits of money with various trustworthy friends so that I am ensured that at least some of my resources will be safe from marauders. Please do me a kindness and guard some of my fortune...on one condition. I wouldn't feel comfortable using you to ensure that my money is safe if you yourself needed money. Take whatever you need—you can return it at your leisure, or not at all. Perhaps your use of our money will be the act of chessed that will save my family's life! In any event, I appreciate the feeling of security very much and would be grateful to you for your help."

Once the plague was over, Rav Chadad ran into a number of Djerba's other talmidei chachamim and asked them how they had survived the calamity. To everyone's surprise, they all told the same story! Rav Yehudani's "deposits" literally saved these scholars and their large families from untold tragedy!

HALACHA HIGHLIGHT

Must blood for transfusions come from Jews?

אמר שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו: הרחמנים והביישני וגומלי חסדים

King David said: "There are three characteristic marks of this nation: they are merciful, bashful, and they perform acts of kindness."

The Poskim consider the permissibility of transfusions from blood donated by non-Jews. Rav Hillel Posek¹ addresses this solely from the perspective of the forbiddance of ingesting human blood. He finds no prohibition in receiving this blood even for an individual suffering from a non life-threatening illness (חולה שאין בו סכנה). He bases this decision on the fact that human blood is only Rabbinically forbidden², and in this case the blood is not eaten or consumed in the conventional manner, but is introduced intravenously by a machine.

Rav M'ordechai Yaakov Breish³ and Rav Ovadia Yosef⁴ introduce another consideration: the potential spiritual effect of the incorporation of this blood. Both compare this to the discussion regarding nursing a child from a non-Jewish woman. Rav Yosef cites the Rashba⁵ who writes that a child may nurse from a non-Jewish woman, since for nursing a child there is no legalistic distinction between the milk of Jewish and non-Jewish women. However, the Rashba adds that as an act of piety one should only have a child nurse from a Jewish woman since Jews are distinguished by three unique qualities as mentioned in our passage, and being nourished from the milk of a Jewish woman will instill the child with the proper traits, while the milk of a non-Jewish woman may have the opposite effect. Therefore, being that blood and milk share a relationship⁶, just as the milk affects the person, so too would transfused blood. Notwithstanding this concern, both concluded that in the face of a life threatening situation, the medical concerns outweigh this one. They differ, however, in the event that Jewish blood would be available after some delay. Rav Breish opines that even so, one should not delay, and the available blood should be used. However, Rav Yosef determines that if the need is not particularly pressing and there would be no danger in delaying until blood from a righteous Jew would be available, then as an act of piety one should wait⁷.

1- שו"ת הלל אומר (ח"ד סי' ע')

2- ע"י יו"ד (ס"ט סו)

3- שו"ת חלקת יעקב ח"ב (סי' פ) [ח"ד (סי' יג) במהד"ח]

4- שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ח (חחול ס' יא)

5- רשב"א (יבמות ק"ד ע"א) וכן ראה ברטב"א ובמאירי (שם) וע"י ברמ"א

(יו"ד ס' פ"א ס"ז)

6- ביבי"א שם ציין לבכורת (ו ע"ב)

7- ובמעשה רב ראה בס' ויחי יוסף, תולדות רבי יוסף גרינוואלד מפאפא (ח"ב פט"ז,

עמ' לח) ובס' בדמיק חיי (עמ' 62) בש"ס הרב מפוניבז (ח"ב פרק לו, עמ' רצג)

שממדת חסידות שני גדולים אלו הקפידו מאוד שלא לקבל דם אלא מיהודי טהור

MUSSAR FROM THE DAF

Three Defining Middos

אמר שלשה סימנים יש באומה זו הרחמנים והביישני וגומלי חסדים... כל שיש בו שלשה סימנים הללו ראוי להדבק באומה זו

The Gemara describes an incident towards the end of the reign of King David towards the end of the reign there was a three-year famine and the cause was revealed to be because the people bore a grudge against the Jews having lost their livelihood as a result of killing out. The Jews refused to forgive the people unless they were given seven sons to hang. When King David saw that the people did not have the three central middos of Israel he decreed that no one could ever marry into Israel. What specific action pushed David to create this decree? There have been many nations who have afflicted Israel in severe ways but they are still allowed to convert and marry into our nation? Rashi seems to say it was specifically because they didn't have the three middos. However, the Gemara seems to say that anybody who does not have these three middos. It doesn't say that anybody who is missing one of these three middos. The Rambam (I, 10, 12) and Bais Shmuel however imply that the people did not have any of the three middos! Where do we see them lacking in these other two middos? Rav Wolbe explains that the opposite of chesed is to be a taker and the ultimate taking is murder. We see that the people would only be appeased if they could murder seven of Shaul's sons. This demonstrates that they lacked the middos of Israel. When the people were asked for forgiveness not only did they refuse but they demanded a very hefty price to give their forgiveness: the killing of 7 sons of Shaul. Such a request requires significant brazenness (עזות פנים) and their heavy-handed response shows that they had no shame. We see from this incident how crucial middos are to Klal Yisroel. These three middos are not simply going above and beyond what the law strictly requires). Rather they are the essence of who we are as a people, and it therefore behooves us to particularly strengthen ourselves in these three areas.

POINT TO PONDER

The Gemara discusses the story of the people during the time of King David and their insistence that they get seven of King David's children to hang them as retribution for what King David did to them. Why did they ask for seven? Is there any significance to this number with regards to their claim?

Response to last week's Point to Ponder:

If there are rumors about a person and their offspring survive for three generations can we rely on this halachically to determine that the rumor was in fact false?

The Gemara writes that since the Gemara says that a person does not survive more than three generations we can assume that it's a definitive proof. Therefore if the offspring of a suspected person survives more than 3 generations it is conclusive evidence that the allegations were untrue.

ר' יוסף שמואל שמעלקא ב"ר יצחק מערמעלשטיין ז"ל, Shelly Mermelstien, ל"ג

For more points to ponder by Rabbi Yechiel Grunhaus, or insights by Rabbi Gutterman, please visit our website, dafaweek.org, or download the app

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The shavua matters is published by the Daf a week program under the rabbinical guidance of Harav Meir Stern shlita and Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita

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