

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

פרשת

תזריע

VOL 155

An Unbreakable Brotherhood - Pesach

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל | יעקב אליעזר בן חנה נשא

The Medrash states, “Since Klal Yisrael was so loved by Hashem, why did He give them over to the enemy? Rebbi Chaninah says that He did so since all the Middos of Hashem are Middah K'neged Middah. In the beginning, before they went to Mitzrayim, the children of Leah would degrade the children of the maidservants, and they did not act towards them as brothers. This was very difficult in the eyes of Hashem, and the Holy Spirit cried out and said, ‘You are all beautiful.’ Hashem said, ‘How can I make them accept the children of the maidservants? I will bring them to Egypt and they will all be slaves. Then, at the time that I redeem them I will give the Mitzvah of Korban Pesach for them and their children and grandchildren to be busy with. They will all declare we were slaves to Pharaoh. Now, they are all equal.’ Why did Hashem go so far? It was to let His greatness and praise be known to the world, and that they should know how to make peace between his people, therefore His name is Shalom...”

We tend to think of the concept of Middah K'neged Middah as a punishment. Which in this circumstance would mean, since the children of Leah caused pain to the children of the maidservants therefore they now deserve to suffer, as an atonement. However, this Medrash introduces us to a new perspective on Middah K'neged Middah, one in which it is not a punishment but a way of repairing what went wrong. The concept is being used here to explain that since a distance was created between the brothers, Hashem orchestrated a situation that would repair this breach and unify the brothers. This perspective can help us have a deeper appreciation for the challenges that we face, leading to a greater focus on the message of the challenge, rather than the challenge itself.

Another lesson that can be gleaned from this Medrash is the importance of Shalom. We know that the children of Leah were Tzadikim of the highest caliber, and any flaw expressed by the Torah would be unnoticed by us, if not for the Torah magnifying the sin. So we are in essence talking about an extremely small breach in Shalom by the children of Leah that was passed down to their descendants. Now Hashem saw this tiny breach and said, “How can we repair it, and get the children of Leah to view them as equals?” The solution for this was, the suffering for 210 years in Mitzrayim, so that they would all come out as equals and say we were slaves in Mitzrayim. This is similar to a sentiment often expressed by holocaust survivors who would say, “We were together in the camps.” They weren’t brothers and they didn’t come from the same town, however the suffering that they experienced together created a new sense of brotherhood that could not be broken. We see from here how far Hashem was willing to go to repair a small breach in Shalom, he was willing to put the nation that He loves through terrible suffering, all to create peace. It should be noted that the generation that said, “We were slaves,” were only descendants of the original brothers. It seems that the breach in Shalom gets passed down genetically in some form.

We live in a world where Shalom has been devalued. Differing views are met with insults, and character assassinations are the norm. It would only be normal for us to be influenced by the outside world, and start losing our own sensitivities to the importance of Shalom. Therefore, it is so important for us to focus on ideas that remind us of the importance of Shalom, so that we can maintain and increase our value of Shalom.