

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

THE MAHARAL'S EDITOR

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

The Maharal's editor was his wife Perel. She found eight mistakes in his copious writings.

"Since I was a teenager," she said, "there wasn't a single day that I did not dedicate five hours to Torah study."

While they were courting, the Maharal gave his future wife a course of study.

"Rabbi Samlai taught: [With regard to the] Torah, its beginning is an act of kindness and its end is an act of kindness. Its beginning is an act of kindness, as it is written, 'And G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and clothed them' (Gen.3:21). And its end is an act of kindness, as it is written, 'And he was buried in the valley [in the land of Moab]' (Deut.34:6)." - Sotah 14a

What point is Rabbi Samlai making?

Maharal explains that even though there are punishments mentioned in the Torah, we should know that "the beginning and the end is kindness." Ideally, the Torah would not contain any punishments at all.

The punishments that are written are not for the sake of punishment, but to cleanse the person and elevate them to a new state of being.

We find a similar idea in this week's parsha, Tazria (it's actually a double parsha, Tazria-Metzora).


Parshas Tazria speaks almost entirely about the affliction of *tzara'as*, which was commonly understood to be a punishment for lashon hara (gossip).



The first eight verses speak about childbirth, and the parsha is called Tazria, which means to conceive.

Wouldn't it make sense for the parsha to be named after the bulk of its content, namely, the *tzara'as* affliction?

The Rebbe explains that the parsha is named Tazria -- to conceive -- to hint that within every moment of suffering and/or punishment is a seed of opportunity, a seed of growth.

When a seed breaks apart in the ground, that is actually the beginning of growth. 

Hayom Yom Iyar 1

At a farbrengen during the days of sefira (at some time in the years 5651-5653, 1891-1893) someone said to my father, "The Alter Rebbe's chassidim were always keeping count." My father took a great liking to the saying, and he commented: "That idea characterizes man's avoda. The hours must be 'counted hours,' then the days will be 'counted days.' When a day passes one should know what he has accomplished and what remains yet to be done... In general, one should always see to it that tomorrow should be much better than today."

שו"ת ME A QUESTION

Q: Do fish have to be caught/killed a certain way (like livestock need to be shechted) or can you go bow fishing and eat the fish after?

A: When the Jewish people were in the desert and began to complain for lack of meat, Moshe said to Hashem:

"If sheep and cattle were slaughtered for them, would it suffice for them? If all the fish of the sea were gathered for them, would it suffice for them?" (Bamidbar 11:22).

The Gemora (Chullin 27b) notes that when it comes to meat, Moshe said "slaughter," but it says "gather" for the fish.

The Halacha is that fish merely need to be "gathered" and then may be killed and eaten (assuming of course that it is a kosher species).

Q: During Pesach, a gentile aide in my home took a chametz cup out of the cabinet and put it in the Pesach sink (which had Pesach dishes in it). Everything was dry. What should I do?

A: You can simply return the cup to the chametz cabinet. Source: Shulchan Aruch HaRav O.C. 451:1-2

א גוט שבת
און א גוט חודש!

When the ship looks like it's sinking

SPELLING

by Tzipah Wertheimer

In Lashon Hakodesh every detail matters. The greatest impurity is referred to a *negah* - a blemish of leprosy. The malady is so severe that the leper must stay away even from other impure individuals. On the other hand, the greatest spiritual joy and connection to The One Above is called *oneg*.

The kabalistic work attributed to Avraham Avinu, Sefer Yetzira, points out that in Hebrew, *negah* & *oneg* contain the same letters - *ayin*, *nun* and *gimmel*.

In fact, the only difference between the spelling of these polar opposites is the placement of the letter *ayin* (which literally means eye). If you place the *ayin* first - the word is *oneg* and denotes spiritual ecstasy. Placing the *ayin* at the end of the word gets you *negah* - total impurity.

This is much more than a glass-half-full or half-empty. This is pure, unbridled light vs. turbulent concealment and darkness.

If you stand on the seashore and bare witness to a ship in the midst of a storm, you might lose hope. But then the mast, the highest point, of the ship breaks though the waves and comes into sight. A trained eye will recognize that the ship is not sinking! The storm is temporary and the danger will pass. The tall standing mast means that indeed the ship is managing in the turbulent waters

If one's eye will look at the world with a positive objective, situations and circumstance won't sway their perspective. When the *Ayin* (eye) comes first you notice to mast above the storm.



In the Torrent of lives challenges is can be life saving to focus on our connection above that always remains on solid ground.

When the *Ayin* (eye) is at the end of the word, it is influenced by the available data and makes and assessment after the fact. The ravaging storm becomes foreboding and fearsome. The vision is a result of what's happening in the world.

The Leper who is suffering from a *Negah* will ultimately repent and become a better version on themselves. Even a completely righteous person cannot stand on the level of the true Baal Teshuvah. The recovered leper can reaches the greats heights.

The Baal Teshuvah alters their outlook and transforms their *Negah* into *Oneg*.

Chassidic Story The Silver Coin

Leah & Yeruchem lived a simple shtetl life with barely any extra money to spare. One winter things were especially dire and there was no money for food.

Late one night Yeruchem went outside to relieve himself (as was done in those days) and his eye noticed something glimmering in the dirt. He bent down an picked up a silver coin.

Leah was thrilled! "We'll finally be able to buy fresh bread and even some chicken for our starving children," she said.

"it's not ours," Yeruchem informed his wife, "I pledged it to Tzedaka."

"What about our poor children who are going to sleep hungry?" Leah protested.

"If a man gave me a gift in such a degrading way, I would not accept it! If Hashem wants to provide for us, He can do it in a much more dignified fashion. Just wait and see," Yeruchem reassured his wife.

Later that evening, two merchants knocked on the door. "We are the best of friends," they explained, "and we're in the midst of a business dispute. We're on the way to the Lemberg Rav to settle things according to Halacha but the snow is so severe. We can't continue travelling, may we stay with you for the night?"

Yeruchem & Leah welcomed them in and the Merchants shared all the delicious food they had brought for the road. Yeruchem and the men exchanged words of Torah.

Realizing their host was a great Talmud chochom they asked Yeruchem if he would listen to their case and offer a ruling. The host was only too happy to oblige and he gave a clear and thoughtful ruling that was agreeable to both sides.

The merchants were so grateful, they gave Yeruchem a generous sum as compensation and did not need to travel on to Lemberg. Yeruchem went to the Bais Medresh and dropped the silver coin in the Pushka with a much gratitude to Hashem. ☺

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