

Kindert Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Devarim

Your Pure Neshama

“Who knows the third *bracha* that we say each morning?”

“*Elokai neshama.*”

“Correct Shaya. What is the theme of this *bracha*?”

“It is a blessing of thanks to the Creator.”

“Very good, Motti. What are we thanking Him for in this *bracha*?”

“We express our gratitude for the *neshama* (soul).”

“Excellent Nachman. ‘*Elokai Neshama*’ follows directly after the blessing of ‘*Asher Yatzar*’. After we finish praising and thanking Hashem for the wondrous body that He has given us, we proceed to thank Him for the pure soul that He has placed within that body.”

“What is so special about our *neshama*, Rebbe?”

“That is one of the subjects of the *bracha*, Reuven. Firstly, the *neshama* is described as *tehorah* (pure). It comes from a place of purity. It is free from *chet* (sin). The gemora (Berachos 10a) relates that just as Hashem is *tahor*, so too the *neshama* is *tahor*. Just knowing this fact gives us great *simcha*! Hashem has given us a wonderful gift! A pure *neshama*! However, it is also a big obligation to keep that *neshama tehorah*.”

“How do we do that, Rebbe?”

“We stay away from impure influences. We guard our eyes from seeing or reading the wrong things, our ears from hearing impure language or music, our legs from taking us to the wrong places, our mouths from speaking impure words, and our minds from thinking improper thoughts. We should fill our minds with beautiful thoughts and our mouth with the pure words of Torah and prayer.”

“Amen!”

“And so the *bracha* continues with praises and thanks to Hashem . . . You created the *neshama* (during the six days of creation), You fashioned it, You blew it into our bodies (at the time of birth), and You guard it there (all the days of our lives). Until when will Hashem guard your souls in your bodies? Until your final day, when He takes it back to the *olam* (world) of *neshamos*. Even over there, He will continue to guard it until that great day of ‘*techiyas ha’mesim*,’ when the departed will come back to life.”

“Speedily and in our days!”

“Amen! The blessing compares the sleep of the night to the ‘sleep’ of death. We cited the gemora (Brachos 57b) in our *peirush* of ‘*Modeh Ani*’ which states that sleep is 1/60 of death. Our *neshamos* are partially removed from our bodies and our senses and motor system partially shut down. The restoration after sleep is compared to the return of the *neshama* to the *guf* (body) at the time of *techiyas ha’mesim*.”

“Precisely, Chaim. The sefer *Yesod Vi’shoresh Ha’avodah* relates that we

should say this *bracha* with great enthusiasm. ‘I thank You Hashem my G-d and the G-d of my fathers, Master of all deeds, Lord of all *neshamos*!’ You have given me a pure holy soul. You guard it. I believe with all of my heart that the day will come when all of the departed will come back to life! What a great *simcha* that will be! May we experience it right away!”

“Amen!”

Kinderlach. . .

You have something very special and valuable – a pure neshama. It is the most valuable thing in the world. Hashem created it, formed it, placed it inside of you, and guards it there. You also need to guard it. Keep it as pure as the day it was created! Stay away from all of the bad influences that bring tumah (impurity) onto the neshama. That gives Hashem such nachas ruach to see such a pure neshama. Waking up each morning is similar to that great day when all of the departed neshamos will wake up from the sleep of death. You will see all of your family members, teachers, friends, and neighbors that have left this world. Great grandpa and grandma will be here to hug and kiss you again, just as they did when you were a little boy. Their parents, grandparents, ancestors, and all of the neshamos of Klal Yisrael that were ever alive, from the days of Adam HaRishon until today will come back. You can meet Rashi and ask him all of your questions on his peirushim. You will meet Avraham Avinu, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe Rabbeinu, Aharon HaKohen, Dovid HaMelech, Shmuel HaNovi, Rebbe, Rava, Abayee, Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai, the Rambam, Ramban, Rav Yosef Karo, the Arizal, the Vilna Gaon, and the Chofetz Chaim! For this we thank the Almighty, Creator of the universe. ‘All neshamos will praise You, Hashem!’



The Roots of Destruction

“How can I alone bear your contentiousness, your burdens, and your quarrels?” (Devarim 1:12). This verse begins with the word “*eicha*”. The Medrash Rabba (Eicha 1:1) points out the two

other verses in Tanach that begin with the same word. “How the faithful city (Yerushalayim) has become unfaithful! She had been full of justice and righteousness, but now murderers...Your princes are rebellious and associates of thieves; each of them loves bribery and pursues payments. They do not render justice to the orphan; the grievance of the widow does not come to them.” (Yishaya 1:21-23). The Novi Yishaya admonishes the Jewish people for their corruption. He warns them to search their ways and do *teshuva*. Finally, -- years later, Yirmiyahu HaNovi sees Yerushalayim conquered and destroyed. He writes Megillas Eicha - lamentations over this tragedy. “Alas she sits in solitude! The city that was great with people has become like a widow...” (Eicha 1:1). What is the connection between these three verses?

The Kesav Sofer has a compelling explanation, which teaches us an important lesson for Tisha B’Av. What was the state of Klal Yisrael in the times of Yishaya? Corruption was rampant. People stole from each other, and cheated widows and orphans. They were not even afraid of justice, relying on bribery to save them from punishment. Yishaya asks, “*Eicha*?” (How can it be) that Klal Yisrael has fallen to such a low level? The answer is that the roots are in the previous “*eicha*”. Moshe Rabbeinu asks, “How can I alone bear your contentiousness, your burdens, and your quarrels?” There were too many disputes for him to handle alone. Therefore, he had to appoint judges to handle the burden of cases. This situation would be good for the corrupt ones. They could now go to a judge who did not know them and bribe him, something they could never do with Moshe Rabbeinu. And so, criminals persisted, unjudged, unpunished. However The Almighty is the Ultimate Judge. If there is no justice in the earthly court, He converts the guilty in His Heavenly Court. Therefore the destruction came, and Yirmiyahu said, “*eicha*”.

Rashi expands on this idea, pointing out other faults of the Jewish people. They were rebellious – criticizing Moshe Rabbeinu, and complainers – creating problems even when everything was good. These are the seeds of the destruction that we mourn. These are the problems that have caused us so much suffering.

Kinderlach. . .

Why suffer, when you can do something about it? Instead of creating disputes, let us create peace. Mevater (give in) and come to an agreement. The argument will stop before it starts. Instead of criticizing people, encourage them. You can surely find something good to say to them. How can you even think about complaining? Just look at all the good that Hashem has done for you! May we merit to see these days of mourning become days of rejoicing and simcha!

Kindert Torah © Copyright 2010 ❖ All rights reserved to the author Simcha Groffman ❖ P.O.B. 5338, Jlm, 91052, Israel ❖ Tel: (02) 585-2216

Kindert Torah is distributed each week Bayit Vegan, Beit Shemesh, Beit Yisrael, Cleveland, Efrat, Geula, Haifa, Johannesburg, Kosel HaMaaravi, Machane Yehuda, Manchester, Mattersdorf, Milwaukee, Minchas Yitzchak, Moshav Mattisyahu, Neve Yaakov, North Miami Beach, Psagot, Telz Stone, Toronto, Zichron Yaakov and other cities.

Subscribe for yourself or sponsor your shul. Just 120\$ per year. All contributions are deductible from Maaser Kesafim. #615#