

**Yad Avraham Institute**  
WEEKLY TORAH COMMENTARY SERIES

*Parshas Devarim*

July 20, 2007

In Loving Memory of  
**Simcha Chaiya Bat Dada o'h**

May her neshama have an aliyah

**Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita***

<i>Inside This Week's Edition</i>	<u>Page</u>
<b>1. The Individual vs the Community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Torah, The Source of Clarity</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Utilizing the Endowment of Clarity</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Our Spiritual Deficiency Reflected Through the Destruction of the Temples</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. The Complication of Aspiring for Wealth</b>	<b>5</b>

**Previous Topics:**

The Jewish People Reflected in Existence

Setting Precedence

The Consequence of Witnessing a Sanctification of G'd's Name

Pitting the Power of the Jew against the Nations of the World

Yehoshua's Qualification as Moshe's Successor

**About the Yad Avraham Institute**

The Yad Avraham is a Torah learning institute located in midtown Manhattan. Classes are offered every day during the week starting at 5:50am and throughout the day. Classes in Chumash, Halacha, Hashkofa, Gemara, and general topics are well attended by businessmen, professionals, and students. The Yad Avraham invites you to participate in our extensive offerings of classes and events.

If you would like to receive this Weekly Torah Commentary Series by email

Please call 212-371-9555 or email:

[info@yadavraham.org](mailto:info@yadavraham.org)

**TUNE IN TO OUR LIVE VIDEO BROADCAST OF CLASSES**

**And over**

15,000 online classes 24 hours a day

[www.yadavraham.org](http://www.yadavraham.org)

**Yad Avraham Institute**  
**New York**  
**July 20, 2007**

**B"H**

## *Parshas Devarim*

*Presented by*

**Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita***

***Dean***

### ***1. The Individual vs the Community***

The Prophet Yeshaya states, "No longer bring the worthless meal offering (mincha). The incense offering is an abomination." G'd is saying through Yeshaya that these two communal offerings have no value. The Gemara in Tractate Yoma tells us that the Second Temple was destroyed due to the a lack of unity among the Jewish people, thus leading to baseless hatred (sinaas chinam).

Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk explains the words of the Prophet Yeshaya. According to Torah law, a meal offering (mincha) cannot be brought as a partnership. Meaning, if several individuals choose to bring a meal offering jointly it is not valid. If this is so, then how is a communal meal offering brought, since it is the offering of the entire Jewish people, which is comprised of many individuals? What is the discerning element that differentiates between a communal offering and one that is comprised of many individuals (partnership)?

A tzibur (community) is an entity in which all of its members have a common interest and a concern for one another. Although a tzibur is comprised of many individuals, because of its level of unification, it is considered one entity. The individuals of the community do not retain their individuality vis-à-vis the communal entity. On the other hand, a partnership is comprised of individuals who enter into an agreement with their own self-interest in mind. Thus, each of the parties in a partnership retain their own identities. As long as there is love and unity among the Jewish people, where each individual is concerned for his fellow, then the communal offering represents the entity known as "tzibur (community)." However if, there is dissention and fractionalization among the people, as a result of a lack concern for one another, the communal offering assumes the profile of a partnership. Thus, the communal meal offering becomes worthless.

Regarding the incense offering being considered abominable to G'd, Reb Meir Simcha explains that one of the eleven ingredients that was contained within the incense offering was a spice known as "chelbina." On its own, chelbina was a foul smelling ingredient; however, when it was combined and coalesced with the other ingredients of the incense offering, its properties enhanced the fragrances of the other ingredients. The Gemara tells us that the chelbina represented the segment of the Jewish people who were considered "evil" (rishaim). Even the evil person, when integrated and influenced by the other positive elements of the Jewish community, will in his own right contribute something positive to the whole. However, this was only possible if the community was unified, where its members were concerned for one another. Regarding the Second Temple period, when the Jewish people were fractionalized as a result of baseless hatred, the incense offering was considered an abomination to G'd. The chelbina, on a spiritual level, was no longer integrated and coalesced with the other ingredients.

It is interesting to note that verbal consecration alone is sufficient to qualify an animal for an offering on the altar; however, regarding the meal (mincha) offering and the incense, they do not attain their consecrated status to be qualified for the altar unless they are placed into a ministering vessel. Reb Meir Simcha explains that the meal offering, in order for it to be acceptable, must contain a specific measure of flour. If one were to consecrate an amount of flour that does not conform with what is prescribed by the Torah, it is not a valid consecration. Until the flour of the meal offering is placed into a ministering vessel it is viewed as separate particles of flour and not as one entity. Only after being placed into the ministering vessel are the particles united- thus conforming to the meal offering the Torah. The same is true regarding the eleven ingredients which comprise the incense offering. They only assume the status of one entity after being placed into the ministering vessel, thus

qualifying them to be burnt as an offering on the golden altar.

The Jewish people is comprised of many individuals. If there is a unifying factor present, they will be seen as one entity. If there is an understanding and belief that each individual's predicament is predetermined by G'd, then there is no basis for dissention or fractionalization. Consequently, each Jew will complement the other. However, if one believes that it is his own initiative that brings about his success, then there is a basis for envy and hatred, which is an impediment for the unification of the Jewish people. The fear and belief in G'd is the equivalent of the sanctity of the ministering vessel that unifies the meal offering and incense offering.

## **2. Torah, The Source of Clarity**

The Prophet Isaiah states, "If your sins are crimson (like a crimson thread) then they will be restored to the whiteness of snow. If they are like a (red) worm, then they will be restored to the whiteness of (washed) wool." The whiteness of snow is the most pristine color of white; however, the whiteness of washed wool is to a lesser degree. The Jerusalem Talmud in Tractate Shabbos explains that the sins that are compared to a crimson thread are referring to the sins of the First Temple period. While, the sins that are compared to the (red) worm refer to the sins of the Second Temple period.

The Gemara in Tractate Yomah explains that the First Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people had violated the three cardinal sins – forbidden sexual relations, murder, and idolatry. After they had repented (teshuvah), the Jewish people returned from exile to Jerusalem to rebuild the Second Temple. They were fully atoned after 70 years of exile in Babylon. The Gemara continues that the Second Temple was destroyed because of *sinaas chinam* (baseless hatred among Jews).

The Gemara tells us that Reb Yochanan was asked, "Which generation was greater – that of the First Temple period or that of the Second? It would seem that violating the three cardinal sins would be considered more severe than *sinaas chinam*, thus causing them to have greater liability." Reb Yochanan responded, "Look at the Citadel (Temple). After the Jews of the First Temple period repented, the Temple was restored after 70 years. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple, although the Jewish people had repented, it has not yet been restored. Evidently *sinaas chinam* is more severe than violating the three cardinal sins." The Gemara explains,

"The sin of the First Temple was revealed (three cardinal sins) therefore the end was revealed (Temple rebuilt). However, since the sin of the Second Temple was concealed (baseless hatred between Jews), the end (of the exile) remains concealed (unknown)."

The gravity and seriousness of the three cardinal sins are obvious. No ethical or moral human being can deny the inherent evil of these acts. If one had transgressed any of these three areas, he could eventually fully appreciate the wrong of his ways and do a sincere repentance. Consequently, G'd brought about the end of the first exile, and the Temple was restored after 70 years. However, the gravity of the sin of *sinaas chinam* is more insidious and not appreciated as being evil. Although one may be in violation of baseless hatred, he will not perceive it as such because of his justification of attitude. Therefore one does not see himself as a transgressor. This is the meaning of the Gemara when it states that the "sin was concealed." Because one does not internalize the negativity of baseless hatred, one does not do a proper teshuvah. Consequently, the end remains concealed—evidenced by the fact that the Temple has not yet been rebuilt.

Reb Meir Simcha of D'vinsk explains that a crimson thread is essentially white and it is only colored with crimson dye. It is only a superficial covering concealing the true nature of the thread. If one were to wash the dye from the thread it would be restored to its pristine whiteness (that of snow). The sins of the First Temple, although serious/cardinal, were not indicative of the essence of the Jewish people. Rather, it was a result of their distraction. On the other hand, the redness of a worm emanates from its essence. Therefore it cannot attain or be restored to a pristine white, but only can be dulled, which is the equivalent of washed wool. Baseless hatred is not something that is only superficial, but rather it is an expression of the essence of the person.

The Jerusalem Talmud tells us that although Achov, the king of Israel, was a pagan/ idolater, whenever the Jewish people went into battle under his leadership, they did not experience any casualties. They merited Divine Protection because there was love and unity among them. People did not speak negatively about one another. This was not the case during the Second Temple Period.

The root cause of *sinaas chinam* is one's lack of understanding and belief in G'd. If one truly understands that one's personal predicament in life is determined by G'd, for example, if one should be wealthy or poor or if

one should succeed or fail, there would be no basis for envy between people, which leads to hate. It is only when one feels that it is within his own ability to determine his fate that he will be envious of another's success.

The introduction to the Midrash Eicha tells us that G'd had said at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, "I wish that they (the Jewish people) had abandoned Me but kept My Torah. Because the innate illumination of Torah would have ultimately led them back to the good." Even if a person falls to a level where he transgresses the three cardinal sins, the study of Torah has the innate ability to give him clarity to appreciate the wrong that he had violated – thus allowing him to repent.

### ***3. Utilizing the Endowment of Clarity***

The Mishna in Tractate Taanis tells us that five tragedies befell the Jewish people on the ninth of Av (Tisha B'Av). The first tragedy that had occurred was the sin of the spies which resulted in G'd's decree that the generation should perish over a forty-year period in the desert. The First and Second Temples were destroyed on the ninth of Av. The destruction of the community of Betar and the plowing under of Jerusalem by the Romans occurred on this day.

The Torah tells us that when the Jewish people heard the slanderous report of the spies regarding the Land, they wept. Although G'd had promised them a Land flowing with milk and honey, they believed the report of the spies that the Land was not conquerable and that they would surely not survive. As a result of their baseless crying, the Gemara in Tractate Taanis tells us that G'd had said, "Because you cried when you had no reason to cry, I will designate that day as a day of crying for all generations." Thus, the ninth of Av was designated as a day of tragedy for the Jewish people. It would seem that the ensuing tragedies such as the destruction of the First and Second Temples came upon the Jewish people as a punishment for their baseless crying after the incident of the spies. However Chazal tell us differently.

The Gemara in Tractate Yomah tells us that the First Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people had violated the three cardinal sins – forbidden sexual relations, murder, and idolatry. The Second Temple was destroyed because of *sinaas chinam* (baseless hatred among Jews). If the basis for these tragedies was because the Jewish people had failed spiritually in each of these

situations, then the tragedies are unrelated to the original crying that was baseless.

The basis for sin is a lack of clarity. If one were to understand and appreciate the wrong of a sin, then he would not transgress. The Jewish people had witnessed many revealed miracles in Egypt and in the desert. G'd had destroyed the most powerful nation in the world and split the Sea for them. G'd had revealed Himself to them at Sinai at an unprecedented level of face-to-face communication in order to give them the Torah. He had promised them that He was going to take them to the Land that was bountiful with blessing and good. One would think that after witnessing and experiencing all of these miracles, that the Jewish people would have had the clarity and ability to internalize their relationship with G'd. Consequently they would have rejected the report of the spies. Despite their previous experiences and spiritual orientation, they believed the spies because of their lack of trust in G'd. Because the Jewish people had chosen to ignore that which was obvious, G'd punished them, measure for measure. Clarity is an endowment and gift from G'd. The Jewish people were provided, through their many miraculous experiences, with a special level of clarity. They did not utilize it as G'd had intended them to. Thus, He revoked His gift and consequently they were vulnerable to sin. As a result of this lack of clarity, the Jewish people justified transgressing in areas as serious as the three cardinal sins. During the Second Temple period, rather than appreciating what should be basic to Jewish belief, they fell to a level of baseless hatred for one another.

We find something similar regarding Pharaoh's behavior. The Torah tells us that G'd hardened the heart of Pharaoh, meaning his power of free choice was revoked. Rambam explains that initially Pharaoh had the power of choice; however, because he chose to ignore and deny the obvious revealed miracles that he had witnessed, G'd withdrew his ability to choose. He no longer processed information within a rational context. Just as the Jewish people chose to ignore the obvious, despite their gift of clarity at the time of the spies, they were subsequently punished by having that clarity withdrawn from them just as Pharaoh was punished. When one is put into a position to make the right choice when it is not difficult to do so, and he chooses to do the wrong thing, it is possible that if this is repeated too often G'd will withdraw the ability in the future. The example would be if one is bestowed with wealth, which would allow him to pursue a path of Torah study without any difficulty but he chooses to pass on that option, G'd will ultimately withdraw the gift of wealth. As

it states in Ethics of our fathers, “The one who does not study Torah in a context of wealth will do so in a context of poverty. However, the one who studies Torah in a state of poverty will do so in a state of wealth.”

#### ***4. Our Spiritual Deficiency Reflected Through the Destruction of the Temples***

The verse states in the Portion of Terumah, “**Gold, silver, copper...**” These were the metals that were needed for the building of the Mishkan. The Midrash tells us that gold is alluding to the Mishkan that was built by Moshe because it was precious and beloved to G'd as gold. Silver alludes to the first Temple that was built by King Solomon because the level of wealth that the Jewish people had possessed at that time was so great that silver could be found in the streets like stones. Copper alludes to the Second Temple because there were five things that were lacking (Continuous Divine Presence, the Ark...)

Reb Chaim of Volozhin in his work *Ruach Chaim* explains that a human being is comprised of three parts: the life source (*Nefesh*), spirit (*Ruach*), and the soul (*Neshama*). All physical movement emanates from the *Nefesh*. This life source is shared by man and animal alike. *Ruach* (spirit) is the spirit that gives man the power of speech/ability of expression. *Neshama* is the spiritual essence that man possesses which is the basis for his intellect. Just as each individual person is comprised of these three elements, so too do the Jewish people, as a nation, possess these three components.

Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, our Patriarchs, the founding fathers of the Jewish people, respectively represent and perfected each one of these components. Avraham is the equivalent of the *Nefesh* (life source) of the Jewish people. This was manifested through his pronounced characteristic of *chesed* (kindness). *Chesed* expresses itself through physical movement. As the Torah tells us that Avraham “ran” to attend to the needs of the wayfarers. Yitzchak represents the *Nishama* of the Jewish people. He was considered to be the “unblemished offering.” Just as the Kohen (Priest), when he officiates, if he were to have an improper thought the sacrifice would be invalidated (*pigul*), so too was Yitzchak pure in thought. Yaakov, our Patriarch, who was continuously engaged in Torah study, corresponds to the *Ruach* (power of speech) of the Jewish people because Torah study manifests itself through articulation.

If one wanted to classify the Mishkan and the two Temples according to the understanding of Reb Chaim of Volozhin, one would say that the Mishkan of Moshe was intended to perfect the *Nishama* (soul) of the Jewish people. The generation who received the Torah at Sinai was the most spiritually advanced.

The First Temple built by King Solomon was intended to address and perfect the *Ruach* (spirit) of the Jewish people, which is characterized through the articulation of Torah. The Gemara in Tractate Nidarim sites a verse which states, “and My Torah they had abandoned.” The Gemara explains this to mean that they did not recite the blessing which precedes the study of Torah. The commentators explain that this was an indication that they did not study the Torah as G'd's wisdom in order to be proficient and meticulous in the observance of the mitzvos; but rather for the sake of intellectual pursuit. Since the Temple was intended to perfect the spirit (*Ruach*) of the Jewish people, which corresponds to Torah and they ultimately failed, the Temple no longer had relevance to them. It was therefore destroyed.

The Second Temple, was intended to perfect the *Nefesh* of the Jewish people, which is characterized through one's physical involvement to address the mitzvos between man and his fellow, such as *chesed*. The Second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred between Jews. Baseless hatred is a serious impediment to performing acts of loving kindness/*chesed*. Thus, failing in this area at the most extreme level warranted the destruction of the Temple.

Today, the Jewish people do not have the Mishkan or either of the Temples because of their spiritual failings. However, if we were to perfect our *Neshama* through the service of G'd (*tefillah/prayer*) and our *Ruach* through the study of Torah and our *Nefesh* through the performance of acts of loving kindness then we would merit the rebuilding of the Third Temple speedily in our time.

#### ***5. The Complication of Aspiring for Wealth***

The Midrash cites a verse from Psalms, “ ‘It is not found in the East and it is not found in the West...’ What is the meaning of this? One should not mistakenly believe that one becomes wealthy by traveling the globe (from the East to the West). Even if one were to travel the high seas by boat or traverse the desert from the East to West, he will not come upon wealth... If this is so, then how does one become wealthy? G'd takes the wealth from one individual and bestows it upon another. As it states in

Psalms, 'G'd Judges – one He lowers and the other He elevates.'" Although it is within G'd's ability to provide an unlimited amount of wealth to the world, He chooses to endow it within a specific and limited amount. Then it becomes a question of who is deserving of that endowment. The individuals who are meritorious receive the fortune of those who deserve to lose it.

The Midrash continues, "This is the reason possessions are referred to as 'nichasim.' They are concealed from some (nichsim) and appear to others. Why are coins called 'zuzim'? It is because they move (zoz) from one person to another...A matronly gentile woman asked Reb Shmuel ben Chalafta, 'How long did it take G'd to create the world?' He responded, 'It took Him six days.' She asked him, 'Since the completion of Creation, how does He occupy His time?' He answered, 'He makes ladders.' There is a continuous evaluation of who is to ascend and who is to descend the ladders. If one is deserving, he ascends; however, if he were to fail, he will descend the ladder. This is the meaning of the verse in Psalms 'G'd Judges – one He lowers and the other He elevates.' G'd continuously judges the world to see who is deserving and who is not. What is the proof of this? When G'd wanted the Tribe of Gad and the Tribe of Reuvain to become wealthy, He toppled the Midianites before the Jewish people specifically to allow the Children of Gad and Reuvain to acquire their wealth."

It seems from the Midrash that G'd wanted the Midianites to be destroyed so that the Tribes of Gad and Reuvain should attain their wealth. However, the Torah states explicitly, "**G'd spoke to Moshe saying, Take vengeance for the Children of Israel against the Midianites...**" Because they had caused the Jewish people to sin with the Baal Peor, which caused a plague to come upon the Congregation of G'd. How do we reconcile this apparent contradiction between the Midrash and the verse?

G'd could have destroyed the Midianites Himself through a plague for the incident of Baal Peor. However he commanded the Jewish people to avenge His name so that they could be the beneficiaries of avenging His Honor and simultaneously having the Tribes of Gad and Reuvain becoming wealthy.

It is interesting to note that Chazal tell us that the reason the Tribes of Gad and Reuvain were the first to be exiled from the Land was because they chose not to enter into the Land with their brethren due to their wealth. The Torah tells us that prior to entering into the Promised Land (after 40 years of wandering), the tribes of Reuvain and Gad approached Moshe and requested that their portion of

land be on the Trans-Jordan side rather than entering into the Land. The Torah states, "**The children of Reuvain and the children of Gad had abundant livestock – very great. They saw the land of Yazeir and the land of Gilead (Trans-Jordan) and behold! – it was a place for livestock.**" By requesting not to enter into the Land it was an indication that they valued their wealth more than being integrated among the Tribes.

The Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin states, "It is not the mouse that is the thief it is the hole." If the mouse did not have a hole into which he could escape, he would not steal. One cannot fail unless there is a setting for him to fail. The Tribes of Gad and Reuvain would not have failed by requesting to remain on the Trans-Jordan side had it not been for the wealth that they had received through the destruction of the Midianites. G'd provided them with a context in which they had to make a choice to succeed or fail. Their choice was inappropriate.

Very often a person aspires for success or wealth not realizing and appreciating the difficult setting into which he is entering. As we see from the Tribes of Reuvain and Gad. Had they not become wealthy, they would have entered into the Land without any reservation.

#### YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

##### **Monday Through Friday**

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Pirkei Avos (Maharal)
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar – Derech Hashem
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Chulin
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna - Rabbi Rovner
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi
2:00pm	Mincha

##### **Special Weekday Classes**

##### **Monday**

11:30 – 12:30pm **Talmud: Taanis**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

12:30 – 1:30pm **Talmud: Pesachim**  
Location: Shandholt 488 Madison Avenue  
Between E.51<sup>st</sup> and E.52<sup>st</sup>

##### **Tuesday**

12:10 - 1:10pm **Torah Insight Based on the Parsha**  
Location: Yad Avraham

##### **Wednesday**

11:30 – 12:30 pm **Talmud: Taanis**  
Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL.)  
Enter on 54<sup>th</sup> Street

1:00—2:00 pm **Daas Tevunos**  
Location: Yad Avraham

##### **Thursday**

10:30 –11:30am **Duties of the Heart**

Location: Yad Avraham  
12:00 – 1:00 pm **Talmud: Taanis** Sunrise Capital 641  
Lexington (25<sup>th</sup> FL)