

A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

*This weekly sheet is brought to you by **Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman** of the **New West End United Synagogue** in conjunction with **Shapell's/Darché Noam***

PARSHAT KEDOSHIM

DVAR TORAH: THE STRANGER IN YOUR LAND

When Hashem tells us, in our Parshah, not to torment or take advantage of the גר (literally – stranger, usually refers to a convert), it adds a seemingly misleading word. The Torah says, " וְכִי יִגּוּר אִתְּךָ גֵר בְּאֶרְצְכֶם לֹא תוֹנוּ אֹתוֹ – "And when a stranger will live with you in your land, do not torment him" (Vayikra 19:33). The word "בְּאֶרְצְכֶם", "in your land," is striking: is it possible that this prohibition only applies in the Land of Israel?

Harav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, זצ"ל (1816-1893), the Netziv, addresses this difficulty (Haamek Davar Vayikra 19:33). He says that the word "בְּאֶרְצְכֶם" is added to our verse to teach us that the prohibition applies especially in our own land, not only in our own land. Why is there a need for a special warning not to take advantage or torment the ger in our own land?

The Gemara says, "There are three that love each other: strangers; [servants; and ravens]" (Pesachim 113b). Strangers form a natural support group. They love each other because they need each other. They are all uprooted and vulnerable, and know that what happens to one of them could happen to another. They will naturally avoid taking advantage of each other. When Jews are themselves strangers, outside the Land of Israel, they will naturally be careful about how they treat others that join them.

On the other hand, "in your land," when Israel is living in its own land and as a host population is in a secure and powerful position, the Torah needs to specially warn against taking advantage of the ger. The ger is unfamiliar with how business interactions work and often does not speak the language well. He is a potential victim and might never even know that he was victimized. We are told by the way this verse is worded, says the Netziv, to be especially careful and sensitive when relating to the ger in the Land of Israel.

The Netziv points out that in this verse the Torah shifts from singular to plural: " וְכִי יִגּוּר אִתְּךָ גֵר בְּאֶרְצְכֶם לֹא תוֹנוּ אֹתוֹ – "When a stranger will live with you (singular) in your (plural) land, do not take advantage (plural) of him." This is because it was common for a ger to join up with individuals; but we are collectively responsible to make sure we treat gerim properly. We must not turn a blind eye when they are spoken to improperly or the victims of mistreatment.

This verse, as understood by the Netziv, describes a detail of one of the major themes of the Torah. Hashem tells us in His Torah – and this is echoed and amplified by the Prophets – that He wants us to build a society in the Land of Israel that is guided not only by laws, but also by love and sensitivity. It is to be guided by values like "Do that which is just and good in the eyes of Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 6:18) and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18). We are commanded – not only as individuals but as a society – to care for the widow and orphan, the poor and the weak, and to relate with love and respect to the ger. Hashem wants us to develop a society in His Land that is not only full of justice, laws, and righteousness, but also warmth and care.

SOURCE GUIDE: INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

The starting point of this week's source guide is a verse in the Book of Yishayahu foretelling the return of the People of Israel to their land. A comment by the Malbim about the wording of that verse brings out two different aspects of the ingathering of the exiles.

A. The Lost of Israel, the Scattered of Yehudah

Yishayahu's prophecy about the ingathering of the exiles – part of the Haftarah of the 8th day of Pesach and read by many on the morning of Yom Ha'atzmaut – includes a double expression:

<p>1. Yishayahu 11:12 ... And He will bring in the lost ones of Israel and gather the scattered ones of Yehudah from the four corners of the world.</p>	<p>ישעיה יא:יב ... וְאַסַּף נְדָחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִפְצוֹת יְהוּדָה יִקְבֹּץ מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת הָאָרֶץ.</p>
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Harav Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel, זצ"ל, (1809-1879) known by his acronym as "the Malbim," paid close attention to the subtle differences between seemingly synonymous words, and devoted a special section of commentary on the Tanach to clarifying the precise meanings of biblical words. He notes that our verse uses two contrasting pairs of words: וְאַסַּף goes along with נְדָחֵי whereas יִקְבֹּץ is paired with וְנִפְצוֹת. What are the precise meanings of these two roots – אספ and קבץ?

אספ means to bring something in to a special place. To illustrate this the Malbim gives a number of examples:

<p>2. Malbim on Yishayahu 11:12 – Word Explanations We mostly find the root אספ used for bringing something in to a special place ... "He (Yosef) brought them in to jail" (Bereishit 42:17), "... No man (of the people of Givah in Binyamin) took them (the Levite and his concubine) into their home ..." (Shoftim 19:15).</p>	<p>מלבי"ם לישעיה יא:יב - חלק באור המלים פעל אספ מצאנוהו ברוב על כניסת איזה דבר למקום מיוחד ... "וַיֹּאסֶף אֹתָם אֶל מִשְׁמֶרֶת" (בראשית מ"ב:י"ז), "... וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֶסְפָּא אוֹתָם הִבִּיתָהּ ..." (שופטים י"ט:ט"ו).</p>
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This is why אספ was chosen to describe the return of "the lost ones of Israel." They were outside of their land and G-d brought them back. The Malbim notes the contrast between Yehudah and Yisrael in our verse:

<p>3. Malbim on Yishayahu 11:12 – Topical Explanations "He will gather" – the Ten Tribes that are not scattered but displaced. They are all living together beyond the river Kush, according to the tradition of our Sages. He will bring them in and have them enter their land.</p>	<p>מלבי"ם לישעיה יא:יב - חלק באור הענין "ואסף" - העשרת השבטים שהם אינם מפוזרים רק נדחים ממקומם מהלאה לנהרי כוש, ושם יושבים כולם מקובצים יחד, כמו שבא בקבלת חז"ל, אותם יאסוף ויכנס לארצם.</p>
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The root קבץ, in contrast, "always means gathering together things that were scattered." The Malbim illustrates this contrast in two other verses:

<p>4. Yishayahu 13:14 He (Bavel) will be like a lost deer and like sheep with no one to gather them ...</p> <p>Bereishit 49:1 Yaakov called out to his sons: Come in and I will tell you what will happen to you in the end of days. Gather together and listen, sons of Yaakov; and listen to Yisrael your father.</p>	<p>ישעיה יג:יד וְהָיָה כְּצִבֵּי מִדְּחַ וּכְצֹאֵן וְאִין מְקַבֵּץ ...</p> <p>בראשית מט:א-ב (א) וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל בְּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאִסְפוּ וְאִגְדְּתֶם לְפָנַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא אֲתָכֶם בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים. (ב) הִקְבְּצוּ וְשִׁמְעוּ בְנֵי יַעֲקֹב וְשִׁמְעוּ אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיכֶם.</p>
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Sheep flock together and are gathered by a shepherd; whereas the deer is a loner but needs to return to his own place. Yaakov brought his sons into his room before his death; but he sensed that there was still need for inner unity between them. That explains his double call before blessing them.

The Ten Tribes were exiled by Sancheriv. They were relocated as a unified group, but need to return to their land, the Land of Israel. But the Kingdom of Yehudah, after the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, was scattered all over the world and also needs to be gathered together. The ingathering of the exiles includes two aspects – entering the Land of Israel and gathering together. The prophecy of Yishayahu develops both of these aspects, unity and return:

<p>5. Yishayahu 11:11-13 (11) And it shall come to pass that on that day, G-d will continue, a second time, to with His hand acquire the rest of His nation, that will remain from Assyria and from Egypt and from Patros and from Cush and from Elam and from Sumeria and from Hamat and from the islands of the sea. (12) And He will raise a banner to the nations, and He will gather the lost ones of Israel; and the scattered ones of Yehudah He will gather from the four corners of the earth. (13) And the envy of Ephraim shall cease, and the adversaries of Yehudah will be cut off; Ephraim will not envy Yehudah, nor will Yehudah aggravate Ephraim.</p>	<p>ישעיה יא:יא-יג (יא) וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסִיף אֲדֹנָי שְׁנִית יְדוֹ לַקְּנוֹת אֶת שְׂאֵר עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאַר מֵאַשּׁוּר וּמִמִּצְרַיִם וּמִפְתּוֹרִים וּמִכּוּשׁ וּמִעִילָם וּמִשִּׁנְעָר וּמִחֲמַת וּמֵאֲזֵי הַיָּם. (יב) וְנִשְׂא נֶס לְגוֹיִם וְאֶסֶף נְדָחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִפְצוֹת יְהוּדָה וְקִבְץ מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת הָאָרֶץ. (יג) וְסָרָה קְנֻאת אֲפָרַיִם וְצָרְרֵי יְהוּדָה יִכְרְתוּ אֲפָרַיִם לֹא יִקְנֹא אֶת יְהוּדָה וְיְהוּדָה לֹא יֵצֵר אֶת אֲפָרַיִם.</p>
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B. Ingathering of the Exiles in the Shemoneh Esrei

In light of the Malbim’s observation about Yishayahu’s prophecy let us now take a closer look at the tenth blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei that focuses on קיבוץ גלויות, the ingathering of the exiles. It opens based on another verse in Yishayahu:

<p>6. Yishayahu 27:13 And it shall be on that day, that a great shofar shall be sounded, and those lost in the land of Assyria and those exiled in the land of Egypt shall come and they shall prostrate themselves before the Lord on the holy mountain in Yerushalayim.</p>	<p>ישעיה כז:יג וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וּבָאוּ הָאֲבָדִים בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשׁוּר וְהַנְּדָחִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַה' בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.</p>
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<p>7. Siddur – Silent Prayer Blow the great shofar for our freedom. Raise a banner to gather our exiles. And gather us together from the four corners of the world. Blessed are You, Hashem, the one who gathers the exiles of His nation Israel.</p>	<p>סדר תפלה – סדר עמידה נוסח אשכנז תִּקְעַ בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵירוּתֵנוּ. וְשֵׂא נֶס לְקִבְץ גְּלוֹתֵינוּ. וְקַבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד (מְהֵרָה) מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת הָאָרֶץ (לְאַרְצֵנוּ). בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מְקַבֵּץ נְדָחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>
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Note how the two aspects of the ingathering of the exiles are woven together in the blessing. What is the relevance of the two additions words that appear in some versions of this prayer? Eidot Hamizrach and some versions of Nusach Sfard tack on the word **לְאַרְצֵנוּ** and some versions of Nusach Sfard add the word **מְהֵרָה**. Note how the closing of the blessing combines **מְקַבֵּץ** with **נְדָחֵי**: Is that out of sync with the Malbim’s approach to Yishayahu 11:12?

Further Learning

The Maharal (Gur Aryeh on Devarim 30:3) comments on a cryptic Midrash Rashi quotes about the return of the People of Israel to the Land of Israel. The Torah says, וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצָךְ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיצָךְ "וְיָשֻׁב ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרָחֲמֶךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצָךְ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיצָךְ" – "Hashem will return **with** your exile and have mercy over you; and He will return and gather you together from all of the nations where He scattered you" (Devarim 30:3). Rashi comments: "רבותינו למדו מכאן – "Our rabbis learned from the formulation of this verse that, so to speak, that the Divine Presence dwells among Israel during the distress of their exile; and when they are redeemed He formulates the verse as if He Himself was redeemed. He will return along with them." When Israel returns to its land, Hashem, so to speak, returns along with them. The Maharal takes on the question: Why, even though Hashem sent Israel into exile because of their sins, did He, so to speak, write in the Torah that He Himself went into exile and returns to Israel with them?

MAINTAINING THE BALANCE BY RABBI YISROEL CHOLEVA

The end of Parshat Kedoshim and the beginning of Parshat Emor seem unrelated. Emor begins with the verse, "Hashem said to Moshe: Say to the Kohanim the sons of Aharon and tell them, 'Each of you shall not contaminate himself to a dead person among his people'" (Vayikra 21:1). Parshat Kedoshim closes with a warning against consulting with Ov or Yidoni, a pagan practice punishable by death. Asks the Baal Haturim: What is the connection between the end of Parshat Kedoshim and the beginning of Parshat Emor?

He answers that the purpose of Ov and Yidoni was to consult the dead in order to reveal the future. Therefore, if a Jew asks, "How will we know the future since the avenue of Ov and Yidoni has been prohibited to us?" we can therefore answer, "Turn to the Kohanim who will ask G-d through the Urim Vetumim, part of the special garments of the High Priest, and thereby know the future."

There is a very important principle being taught here by the juxtaposition of the Ov and Yidoni of Parshat Kedoshim to the Kohanim of Parshat Emor. Every force in this world has a positive aspect balanced by a negative aspect. In our example, there is an improper way to reveal the future, through Ov and Yidoni; and, alternatively, there is a path of holiness to reveal the future, through the Kohanim.

We see this principle – that there is an equal negative force to every positive force – in the famous Gemara that tells of how the sages got together and nullified the evil inclination for idolatry (Sanhedrin 64a). At the same time that this desire was eliminated the power of prophecy was taken from us. The world must exist in a balance between good and evil; and therefore, if one is weakened; to maintain the balance the other must also be diminished.

However, this correlation works in the reverse direction as well. If there is a particularly negative force growing in the world logic dictates that to maintain the balance an equally strong positive force must be emerging as well. When we look around the world and see the powers of evil growing and tragedies befalling those around us, we have to look out for that positive counterforce and tap into it. Just like we have the choice to follow Ov and Yidoni down a negative path we also have the choice to turn to the Kohen and strive forward towards holiness. This fundamental choice is ultimately what makes us unique as human beings – the ability to choose good over evil when they are at equilibrium.

Let us look this week at different things in our own lives that we can do in a different way, a more positive and giving way, a way that infuses holiness into ourselves and those around us. Let us abandon the Ov and Yidoni and choose the path of the Kohanim, a path of turning to Hashem and following in His ways.

שבת שלום ומבורך

*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at www.darchenoam.org +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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