

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 DEVARIM

DVAR TORAH: REBUKE THE WISE MAN

Our Parshah opens with Moshe rebuking the People of Israel, and the People of Israel accepting the rebuke. Rebuke is a major part of the entire book of Devarim. Rebuke is also a mitzvah, and a common part of human interactions. How can we prepare ourselves to positively respond to rebuke – like the People of Israel – and how – like Moshe – can we give rebuke in a way that it won't be rejected?

There is a verse in Mishlei whose simple meaning can help us receive rebuke. The verse says, "אל תוכח לגי"פן ישנאך הוכח להכם ויאהבך: "Do not rebuke the scoffer lest he hate you; rebuke the wise man and he will love you" (Mishlei 9:8).

Why will the wise man love you for rebuking him? It is because he is more concerned with becoming a better person than preserving his image. To receive rebuke properly the listener must realize that the person rebuking or criticizing him is helping him, and he'll benefit by listening. (Note that professionals often hire trainers, consultants, or coaches to criticize them to help them improve.)

Harav Yishayah Horowitz, זצ"ל (1565-1630, known as the Shelah Hakadosh), has a creative reading of this verse that teaches us how to give rebuke. Here's how he reads it:

אל תוכח לגי - Don't rebuke by calling the person a גי, by calling him a scoffer, by telling him how terrible he is.

פן ישנאך - He's only going to hate you because of that.

הוכח להכם - Rather, give rebuke by telling him that he's wise, but that his behavior isn't fitting for his high status, for who he really is.

ויאהבך - Then he'll love you and be much more willing to listen.

Harav Yair Bacharach, זצ"ל (1639-1702, known as the Chavot Yair, quoted in Harav Alexander Zushia Friedman's Ma'ayanah Shel Torah, Vayikra, p. 116-117) makes a similar creative reading of the Torah's formulation of the mitzvah of rebuke:

הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך - Surely rebuke your friend (amitecha – colleague, friend)." Relate to him as an equal, a friend, as an essentially good person with a lofty soul who has temporarily erred.

ולא תשא עליו חטא - Do not look down on him as an evil person. "Do not heap sin upon him." Do not deem him a sinner.

The greatest rebuke combination is like that of Moshe and the People of Israel. Those receiving rebuke were only interested in bettering themselves and eager to listen; and the one giving rebuke appreciated and communicated the greatness and potential of his listeners.

SOURCE GUIDE: CHILDREN OF THE ALMIGHTY

The word **הואיל** appears three times in the Tanach: once in our Parshah; once in the Book of Shmuel; and a third time in the Book of Hoshea. The Baal Haturim explains the special message this teaches us. This source guide follows the Baal Haturim's lead and ends up with an important message for these days leading up to and including Tisha B'Av.

A. Devarim, Shmuel, and Hoshea

The word **הואיל** appears three places in Tanach: in the Torah's introduction to our Parshah; in the prophet Shmuel's last speech to the People of Israel; and in Hoshea's prophecy about the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of their many sins (note that commentators work with three possible meanings of **הואיל** – begin, want, and swear – the translations below follow Rashi's):

<p>1. Devarim 1:5 On the [eastern] side of the Yarden in the Land of Moav, Moshe began to explain this Torah, saying ...</p> <p>2. 1 Shmuel 12:22 For Hashem will not desert His nation, for the sake of His great Name. For He swore to make you His nation.</p> <p>3. Hoshea 5:11 Efraim is taken advantage of; they are justly crushed; for they desired to go after the command [of idolatrous false prophets].</p>	<p>דברים א:ה בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה בְּאֶר אֶת הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת לְאָמֵר.</p> <p>שמואל א' יב:כב כִּי לֹא יִטָּשׁ ה' אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל כִּי הוֹאִיל ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶתְכֶם לֹו לְעָם.</p> <p>הושע ה:יא עֲשׂוּק אֶפְרַיִם רְצוּץ מִשְׁפָּט כִּי הוֹאִיל הַלֶּךְ אֶחְרָי צוּ.</p>
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The expression “going after the command” is cryptic. The Gemara assumes that it refers to following the directives of idolatrous false prophets. The Gemara quotes our verse as support that the prohibition against idolatry is one of the seven Noachide laws:

<p>4. Sanhedrin 56b Hashem, G-d, commanded [Adam] (Bereishit 2:16) – This refers to the command against idolatry. How does “He commanded” imply idolatry? Rav Chisda and Rav Yitzchak bar Avdimi [cited different sources]. One said [it is based on the verse]: “They have quickly strayed from the path I have commanded them, and they made [a molten image of a calf]” (Shemot 32:8). The other said, “Efraim is taken advantage of; they are justly crushed; for he desired to go after the command (Rashi – he desired to go after the command of the prophets of the Ba'al)” (Hoshea 5:11).</p>	<p>סנהדרין נו: "ויצו" (בראשית ב:טז) – זו עבודה זרה. מאי משמע? רב חסדא ורב יצחק בר אבדימי חד אמר "סרו מהר מן הדרך אשר צויתים עשו להם וגו'", (שמות לב:ח). וחד אמר "עשוק אפרים רצון משפט כי הואיל הלך אחרי צו (רש"י - מפני שנתרצה ללכת אחרי צווי של נביאי הבעל)" (הושע ה:יא).</p>
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B. Baal Haturim, Kiddushin, Divrei Yatziv, and Rashba

Harav Yaakov ben Asher, זצ"ל (1269-1340), known as the Baal Haturim, builds on the connection between these three verses:

<p>5. Baal Haturim on Devarim 1:5 The Mesorah records that “הואיל” appears three times in Tanach. One is “Moshe began” (Devarim 1:5). Another is “Hashem swore to make them His nation” (1 Shmuel 12:22). Another is “They desired to go after the command” (Hoshea 5:11). This is connected with what they said (in Kiddushin 36a), “No matter what, they are called the children of the All-Present One – whether they do the will of G-d through keeping the Torah – as in the verse “Moshe began [to explain the Torah]” – or whether they worship idols – as in the verse, “They went after the command.”</p>	<p>בעל הטורים על דברים א:ה "הואיל" – ג' במסורה. "הואיל משה" (דברים א:ה). ואידך "כי הואיל ה' לעשות אתכם לו לעם" (שמואל א' יב:כב). "הואיל הלך אחרי צו" (הושע ה:יא). היינו דאמרו (קידושין לו.) "בין כך ובין כך קרויים בניו של מקום, בין עושין רצונו של מקום שמקיימין את התורה – דהיינו "הואיל משה" – ובין שהם עובדין ע"ז – דהיינו "הלך אחרי צו."</p>
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The Baal Haturim here refers to the following dispute recorded in the Gemara:

<p>6. Kiddushin 36a “You are sons of Hashem your G-d” (Devarim 14:1) – when you act like His sons you are called sons, but if you do not act like sons you are not called sons. These are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Meir says: No matter what (whether you act like sons or not), you are called sons. For it says, “They are foolish sons” (Yirmiyahu 4:22), and it says, “[They are] sons who are not trustworthy” (Devarim 32:20), and it says, “Bad offspring, destructive sons” (Yishayahu 1:4), and it says, “Instead of Him saying ‘You are not My nation,’ it will be said of you, ‘Sons of the living G-d” (Hoshea 2:1).</p>	<p>קידושין לו. “בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם” (דברים יד:א) – בזמן שאתם נוהגים מנהג בנים אתם קרוים בנים, אין אתם נוהגים מנהג בנים אין אתם קרוים בנים, דברי ר' יהודה. רבי מאיר אומר: בין כך ובין כך אתם קרוים בנים שנאמר, “בָּנִים סְכָלִים הֵמָּה” (ירמיה ד:כב), ואומר, “בנים לא אמון במ” (דברים לב:כ), ואומר “זרע מרעים בנים משחיתים” (ישעיהו א:ד), ואומר “וְהָיָה בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר לָהֶם לֹא עַמִּי אַתֶּם יֹאמַר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֵל חַי” (הושע ב:א).</p>
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The Klausenberger Rebbe, Harav Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam, זצ"ל (1905-1994), explains what is at the core of the dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Meir:

<p>7. Divrei Yatziv 4, Yoreh Dei'ah 244 For according to Rabbi Yehudah the reason they are called children is because they accepted the Torah from Him, may He be blessed (and talmidim [students] are referred to as children – see Sifrei Vaetchanan 9). It follows that when they do not keep the Torah they are not referred to as children. But Rabbi Meir holds that they are called children because the Holy One, blessed be He, formed and created us, as it says in Kiddushin 30b and Niddah 31b, “There are three partners in a person: the Holy One, blessed be He, his father, and his mother. Rashi comments that the Holy One, blessed be He blows a soul into him. Therefore the Children of Israel, who have a Divine soul from above, are called children. This is why whether they keep the Torah or not they are still called His children.</p>	<p>דברי יציב ד' – יורה דעה רמ"ד שלדעת רבי יהודה הטעם שקרוים בנים הוא לפי שקבלו תורה ממנו יתברך, וממילא כשאין שומרים את התורה אין קרויים בנים, ור"מ ס"ל דקרויים בנים משום שהקב"ה יצר אותנו ובראנו, וכמ"ש בקידושין ל' ע"ב ובגדה לא ע"ב שלשה שותפין באדם הקב"ה ואביו ואמו, וברש"י שהקב"ה נופח בו נשמה וכו' עיי"ש, ולזה בבני ישראל שיש בהם נשמת אלוקי ממעל קרויים בנים ואשר בין כך ובין כך קרויים בנים.</p>
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The Rashba (Harav Shlomo ben Avraham ibn Adret, זצ"ל, 1235-1310, in Teshuvot Harashba 1:194 and 1:242) says that, even though, in general, we rule according to Rabbi Yehudah in disputes against Rabbi Meir; in this case Rabbi Meir’s opinion is based on such compelling evidence that we rule according to Rabbi Meir.

C. Tisha B’Av

Perhaps Rabbi Meir’s approach gains special significance around Tisha B’Av, when we find ourselves focusing on Israel’s sins and the destruction that came in their wake. Rabbi Meir reminds us that our status as children of the Almighty never wavered. The Divrei Yatziv explains why – because our relationship with Him, like our status as children of our physical parents, is independent of our behavior. We are not only His students because He taught us the Torah; we are His children because he formed us and our souls are eternally connected to Him.

SHABBAT TISHA B'AV BY RABBI YISROEL CHOLEVA

This year we have the interesting occurrence of Tisha B'Av falling on Shabbat. Since on Shabbat we are prohibited both from fasting and from observing external signs of mourning, Tisha B'Av will be kept on Sunday, the 10th of Av.

At first it may seem quite strange to push off a fast day. After all, the fast day commemorates something that happened on that specific day, making it simply irrelevant any other day of the year. The Gemara (Megillah 5b) addresses this issue by presenting the following dispute: Rebbi (Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi) requested to “uproot” Tisha B'Av that occurs on Shabbat. He reasoned that since it has been pushed off, it should be cancelled completely. However, the majority of the Sages disagreed with Rebbi, and held that even when Tisha B'Av must be moved, it should still be observed on the following Sunday.

In the sefer *עבודת ישראל*, the Kozhnutzer Maggid, Harav Yisroel Hopstein, זצ"ל (1737–1814) presents a novel approach to this dispute. The Hebrew word “to uproot” (לעקור) shares the same root as the word (עיקר) which means “primary.” He suggests that Rebbi was not trying to say that Tisha B'Av should be cancelled completely. Rather, he was saying that the main focus of Tisha B'Av can still be observed even though it is Shabbat; and therefore it is unnecessary to fast on the next day. The Slonimer Rebbe, Harav Shalom Noach Brozofsky זצ"ל (1911-2000), in the *נתיבות שלום*, explains as follows. There are two aspects of mourning: remembering the past, what was and no longer is; and there is also a longing for the future. The mourning of Tisha B'Av not only causes us to bewail the destruction of the Temple, but also to focus on its rebuilding. In fact, the Gemara (Shabbat 31a) says that when a person is brought to judgement at the end of their life, they will be asked, “Did you look forward to the Final Redemption?” What positive actions did you take towards achieving this goal? Tisha B'Av is not simply a day of fasting and afflictions, but also contains a strong element of actively working to bring the Redemption and build the Third Temple. Rebbi's opinion was that this positive, future-oriented aspect of Tisha B'Av is what is primary. Since this aspect can still be observed on Shabbat, there is no reason to fulfill the secondary aspect of fasting on the next day. The Kozhnutzer Maggid continues: what better way is there to answer that one looked forward to the Final Redemption than that on Tisha B'Av, the culmination of a period of intense mourning and loss for the Jewish people, we are still able to celebrate and enjoy Shabbat? Despite the difficulty of the time, we still dress up, eat three festive meals, sing zemirot and revel in the spiritual offerings of our Day of Rest.

There is a famous Gemara which describes the Keruvim (Cherubs on top of the Aron Kodesh) in the Temple as having alternating positions: when the Jewish people were fulfilling Hashem's will, they would embrace; and when the Jewish people would sin, they would turn away from each other. The Gemara describes how at the time of the destruction of the Temple, the Romans found, to their great surprise, that at the moment of the Jewish people's defeat the Keruvim were in a tight embrace. Despite the hardships and distance, Hashem was still hugging the Jewish people, letting us know that we are His nation and He still loves us. When Tisha B'Av falls on Shabbat, it gives us the opportunity to, so to speak, hug Hashem back.

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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