



“And they shall fine him one-hundred silver shekels”

The Tikun for One Who Speaks Ill of the Torah Is One Hundred Daily Berachos

This week's parsha is parshas Ki Seitzei. In this essay, we will focus on a marvelous insight from the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh and how it relates to the shofar-blowing of chodesh Elul. Here are the pertinent pesukim from the parsha (Devarim 22, 13): **“כי יקח איש אשה ובא אליה ושנאה, ושם לה עלילות דברים והוצא עליה שם רע... ולקחו זקני העיר ההוא את האיש ויסרו אותו, וענשו אותו מאה כסף ונתנו לאבי הנערה כי הוציא שם רע על בתולת ישראל, ולו תהיה לאשה לא יוכל לשלחה כל ימיו.”** **If a man takes a wife, is intimate with her and hates her, and he makes libelous charges against her and gives her a bad name . . . Then the elders of the city shall take that man and punish him. They shall fine him one hundred silver shekels and give them to the father of the girl, because he defamed a virgin of Yisrael. And she shall be his wife; he shall not send her away all the days of his life.**

According to the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh, the holy Torah hints to us in this passuk what the tikun is for someone who defames the Torah, which is considered to be a Jew's spouse. This is taught in the Gemara (Berachos 57a) in relation to the passuk (ibid. 33, 4): **“תורה צוה לנו משה מורשה קהלת יעקב, אל תקרי מורשה אלא מאורשה.”** **“The Torah which Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Yaakov.”** Do not read the word in this passuk as **“morashah”**—meaning an inheritance—but rather as **“m'orasah”**—meaning a betrothed one, implying

that the Torah was betrothed to Yisrael like a woman is betrothed to her husband.

Now, if a Jew besmirches the Torah—his virtual spouse—by claiming that he studies Torah but he is unable to make a decent living and lacks adequate food and money to live off of, the tikun is: **“They shall fine him one hundred silver shekels.”** In other words, he must recite one hundred berachos daily. As we have learned in the Gemara (Menachos 43b): **“חייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום”**—**a person is obligated to recite one hundred berachos daily.**

“When a man takes a wife” Alludes to the Torah

Here is how the Ohr HaChaim interprets the passage above: **“When a man takes a wife”** refers to Jews who turn away from the Torah. They claim that there are not enough hours in a day to earn a decent living. The passuk says that **“he is intimate with her,”** because the light of the Torah shone on them at Har Sinai, they accepted the luchos, and they became wed to the Torah. **“And he hates her”**—implies that they do not want to give her (the Torah) her proper due. He does not appreciate the berachah associated with the study of Torah. **“And he makes libelous charges against her and gives her a bad name.”** He admits that he took her as his wife but is adamant that he was not able to support himself; he had to knock on others' doors to find sustenance.

In other words, the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh interprets the **“libelous charges”** as the false claims of Jews who distance themselves and their children from the Torah alleging that those who study Torah do not realize any form of berachah in their livelihood. Hence, they are not interested in studying Torah—G-d forbid!

HKB”H Will Seek Restitution

For this reason, the Torah says (ibid. 22, 15): **“ולקח אבי הנערה ואמה והוציאו את בתולי הנערה אל זקני העיר השערה—then the father of the girl and her mother should take and bring proofs of the girl’s virginity to the elders of the city.** This implies that HKB”H and the Shechinah—the father and mother of the girl, the Torah—will defend the honor of the Torah. They will demonstrate to the heavenly “beit-din” the amazing power of the Torah to support and provide for all those who study Torah, both materially and spiritually. This concurs with the statement in the Mishnah (Avos 6, 2): **“אוי להם לבריות מעלכונה של תורה”—woe to them, to the people, for the affront to the Torah.**

The narrative continues: **“They shall punish him.”** He should realize that he is being punished for being remiss in the study Torah (Berachos 5a). Clearly, there is no set amount of time for Torah-study. So, if this person sees that he is studying Torah but is being punished nonetheless, without being guilty of any sin or transgression, he should understand that he neglected to study as much as he should have and was capable of. For that they are punishing him.

“They shall fine him one hundred silver shekels”—this alludes to the one hundred berachos a Jew is obligated to recite daily (Bamidbar Rabbah 18, 21). The sages derived this obligation from the passuk (ibid. 10, 12): **“ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך”—and now, Yisrael, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you.** The word **“מה”** (what) is read as **“מאה”** (one hundred); additionally, the word **“ועתה”** is associated with teshuvah—the need to make amends and make

something whole. **“And give them to the father of the girl”**—the one hundred berachos are addressed to Hashem, the father of the girl, so to speak. **“Because he defamed a virgin of Yisrael”**—namely, the people of Yisrael represented by the Shechinah.

One Hundred Berachos to Restore the Honor of the Torah

To gain a better understanding of the remarks of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh, we will refer to a teaching in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 1): **“בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם—the world was created by means of “ten utterances.”** Our sacred sefarim teach us that these “ten utterances” correspond to the “ten sefiros,” which represent ten midos (attributes): **keser, chochmah, binah, chesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzach, hod, yesod, and malchus.** HKB”H manages creation with these ten midos. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 14, 11) bases this on an exposition of the passuk (Bamidbar 20): **“כף אחת עשרה זהב”—“one ladle of gold weighing ten (shekel)”**—corresponding to the **ten utterances with which the world was created and corresponding to the ten sefiros of “belimah”** (nothingness, abstract, ineffable).

This coincides with what the great Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen, zy”a, writes in Pri Tzaddik (Toldos 7): **“Wherever the number ten is found, it alludes to the Aseres HaDibros, which are associated with the “ten utterances” of creation—the ten sefiros that Hashem, blessed is He, imparted to the creation of the world.** Along these lines, we find in the sefer Benayahu Ben Yehoyada (Kiddushin 49b): **“Ten measures of chochmah descended to this world.” . . . There is no abundance (divine influence) in the world that is not comprised of “ten,” corresponding to the “ten sefiros.”** Therefore, the world was created with **“ten utterances.”**

Now, the tenth attribute is **“malchus,”** which represents the holy Shechinah; for HKB”H rests His

Shechinah among the people of Yisrael to reveal **His sovereignty** (“malchus”) through them. Furthermore, the midah of “malchus” is the source of the light of Torah she’b’al peh, as taught in the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 17a): “מלכות פה תורה שבעל פה קרינן לה”—this midah is associated with the mouth and the power of speech; it is called Torah she’b’al peh. Thus, someone who slanders a person who studies Torah she’b’al peh, claiming that the Torah is not able to sustain and provide for him, is slandering and defaming **“a virgin of Yisrael”**—namely the holy Shechinah represented by the midah of **“malchus, which is called Torah she’b’al peh.”**

The One Hundred Berachos Are One Hundred Conduits of Bounty from Above

I would now like to introduce an interpretation of the passuk (Bereishis 26, 12) the Shela hakadosh (Toldos) brings down in the name of the Recanati: “ויזרע יצחק בארץ ההוא וימצא בשנה ההוא מאה שערים ויברכהו” —**Yitzchak sowed in that land, and in that year he reaped a hundredfold; thus had Hashem blessed him.** The source of all abundance that descends from the heavens is the ten midos. Each midah is comprised of ten; thus, there are one hundred midos altogether. Now, since the midah of “malchus” is the tenth midah, it receives bounty from all of the midos above it. This means that it is comprised of one hundred berachos. This then is the meaning of the passuk: **“In that year he reaped a hundredfold; thus had Hashem blessed him”**—one hundred conduits of berachah were bestowed upon him from the midah of “malchus.”

He says that this is why we are obliged to recite one hundred berachos daily; they enable us to draw an abundance of good from the tenth midah—the midah of “malchus”—which is supplied by all of the other midos. These are one hundred conduits of bounty with which HKB”H provides an abundance of good from the midah of “malchus.” We receive this bounty from the one hundred conduits by reciting one hundred berachos daily.

We can expand on this concept based on what the divine kabbalist, the Ridbaz, writes in Metzudas David on the rationales for the mitzvot (Mitzvah 16). Regarding the mitzvah of rebuking your fellow, the Gemara says (B.M. 31a): “הוכח תוכיח, אפילו מאה פעמים” —**“you shall rebuke,” even one hundred times.** He explains that this is because the sinner damaged the one hundred conduits that supply the bounty. This also provides a nice explanation for Rashi’s comment related to the mitzvah of tzedakah (Devarim 15, 10): **“You shall give him,” even one hundred times.** In keeping with this discussion, this implies that as a reward for giving tzedakah, the one hundred conduits that supply bounty from above will open up for him.

This explains nicely the assertion of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh that the tikun for making slanderous remarks about the Torah is to recite one hundred berachos each day: **“כי הוציא שם רע על בתולת ישראל, שהיא השכינה שהיא כללות ישראל, והיא מדה העשירית שכוללת מאה, והיא נקראת תורה שבעל פה כידוע ליודעי חן.”** **Because he made slanderous remarks about a Jewish virgin—a metaphor for the Shechinah representing the congregation of Yisrael associated with the tenth midah comprised of one hundred components. To those in the know, she is called Torah she’b’al peh.** In other words, he insulted Torah she’b’al peh, which is the midah of “malchus,” which contains one hundred gates. Hence, the appropriate tikun is to recite one hundred berachos to repair the damage he did to the source of heavenly bounty.

The Ohr HaChaim concludes his sacred remarks by interpreting the conclusion of the passage under discussion: **“And she shall be his wife; he shall not send her away all the days of his life.” Even though there is no absolute time-requirement for Torah-study, one must designate set times to study. This person, however, who spoke ill of the Torah, must frequent her doorsteps every day and every night—“he shall not send her away**

all the days of his life.” . . . He must live with her the rest of his life—the Torah must be his craft (constant companion).

Explaining why This Slanderer Did Not Benefit from His Study of Torah

It now behooves us to consider the practical significance for each and every one of us of the relationship between reciting one daily berachos and the tikun of someone who slanders the Torah. How does reciting one hundred berachos a day eliminate the yetzer hara who brainwashes a Jew to the point that he sees no benefit or berachah in learning Torah—that he thinks he must abandon the Torah in order to make a living?

To clarify the comment of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh—that reciting 100 berachos daily constitutes a tikun for besmirching the Torah—let us refer to the Yismach Moshe (Eikev). He addresses the statement in the Gemara quoted above regarding the obligation to recite one berachos every day based on the passuk: “ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך”. Rashi, the Midrash Tanchuma (Korach 12), and the Midrash Rabbah all explain that this obligation is derived by reading the word “מה” (what) as “מאה” (one hundred). Thus, instead of saying: “**What** does Hashem want of you,” it says: “**One hundred** is what Hashem wants of you.”

The Yismach Moshe is bothered by this exposition and tries to reconcile the fact that the passuk actually says “מה” and not “מאה”. To do so, he refers to what the Rama writes on the first section in the Shulchan Aruch. He cites the Rambam’s invaluable advice in Moreh Nevuchim as to how to acquire “yiras Hashem”: A person should always envision that he is standing in the presence of the King of Kings, HKB”H:

“I have set Hashem before me always.” This is a fundamental principle in the teachings and conduct of the righteous, who walk in the presence of the Lord. One should always have in mind that he

is in the presence of HKB”H and should act and speak accordingly. **Surely, a person’s actions and speech when he is at home alone or with his family are not the same as his actions and speech in the presence of an important person like a king. All the more so, if a person has in mind that HKB”H, in all of His glory, is standing over him and observing all that he does . . . he will be overcome immediately with fear and submission toward Hashem, blessed is He, and will always be embarrassed to act inappropriately.**

Surprisingly, however, there are many Jews who know and believe that HKB”H and His glory are everywhere. Yet, they are still not overwhelmed with “yirah” by the fact that they are standing in the presence of the King of Kings.

One Hundred Forces of Tumah Separate a Jew from His Maker

To explain the matter, the Yismach Moshe refers to what the Shela hakadosh writes in parshas Chayei Sarah. In the name of the yetzer--למא—the first two letters ס”ם are associated with tumah, whereas the last two letters א”ל are associated with kedushah. This is the implication of the Gemara’s statement (Succah 52a): “לעתיד לבא מביאו הקב”ה ליצר הרע ושוחטו”—**le’asid la’vo, HKB”H will bring the yetzer hara and slaughter it.** Currently, the existence of the yetzer relies on the ability of the two letters ס”ם to be sustained by the letters א”ל. In the future, however, HKB”H will terminate that sustenance. In other words, its unholy component—the letters “**samech-mem**”—will be eliminated, and only the letters א”ל will remain in its name. Thus, it will be transformed into a holy malach.

Based on this understanding, the Yismach Moshe explains that the yetzer hara possesses one hundred forces of tumah stemming from its unholy, evil component, the two letters ס”מ, whose gematria equals one hundred. The function of these negative

forces is to create a barrier between a Jew and HKB”H. This barrier and separation make it difficult for a Jew to imagine that he is actually standing in the presence of HKB”H, which is necessary to instill in him a sense of awe and reverence.

To overcome this barrier, our sages of blessed memory gave us the wonderful device of reciting one hundred berachos every day to Hashem with sincerity and proper intent. Correspondingly, they negate those one hundred forces of tumah. In the absence of this barrier separating us from our Maker, we are able to envision ourselves standing in the presence of the King of Kings and conduct ourselves with the appropriate awe and “yirah.”

Now, let us analyze the passuk expounded on by Chazal: “מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה את ה' אלקיך”—**what (‘מה’) does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you but to fear Hashem, your G-d.** The language of the passuk makes it sound like fear—“**yirah**”—of Hashem is a simple matter consistent with the term “מה”—implying that it is no big deal. Yet, this is definitely not true! In fact, it prompts Chazal to query (Berachos 33b): “אטו יראת שמים מילתא זוטרתא היא”—**is “yiras Shamayim” such a simple (small) matter?**

Therefore, to explain the matter, they expound: **Do not read “מה” but instead “מאה”.** Because if we read the word as “מה”, the passuk implies that fear and reverence of Hashem is an easy, simple matter. But if we read the word as “מאה”, the passuk is imploring us to recite one hundred berachos daily to subdue the powers of tumah of the “**samech-mem**” that create a barrier between us and Hashem. By reciting one hundred berachos, it will become much easier to fear and revere Hashem, because we will be able to envision ourselves as standing in His presence. That is the message of the passuk: “מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה”. This is the gist of his sacred words.

This enlightens us and helps us better appreciate the teaching of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh regarding the passuk: “וענשו אותו מאה כסף”. He suggests that reciting one hundred berachos is a tikun for someone who besmirches the Torah by claiming that it did not provide him with an adequate livelihood. Let us refer to the following Mishnah (Avos 3, 9): “כל שיראת חטאו קודמת לחכמתו חכמתו מתקיימת, וכל שאין יראת חטאו קודמת לחכמתו אין חכמתו מתקיימת”—**if one’s fear of sin takes precedence over his wisdom, his wisdom will endure; but if his wisdom takes precedence over his fear of sin, his wisdom will not endure.** So, when a person blames Torah she’b’al peh—metaphorically the “virgin of Yisrael”—for not providing him with an adequate livelihood, he has no one to blame but himself. For, it is evident that his fear did not take precedence over his wisdom. Therefore, his wisdom did not endure, and he was not provided with an adequate livelihood.

Therefore, his tikun is: “וענשו אותו מאה כסף”. He is required to recite one hundred berachos daily with sincerity and proper intent to subdue the one hundred forces of tumah of the yetzer hara that prevent him from placing his fear of sinning ahead of his wisdom and acquiring the desirable trait of “yiras Hashem.” By reciting one hundred berachos, his fear of sinning will take precedence over his wisdom, and his wisdom will endure. As a result, he will be granted an abundance of berachah and success in all his endeavors.

The Practice of Blowing Shofar in the Month of Elul Elicits Teshuvah Stemming from Yirah

We can now elaborate on the relationship between parshas Ki Seitzei and chodesh Elul—the month of teshuvah. The Tur (O.C. 581) explains in the name of the Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer (46) the rationale for the practice of blowing the shofar during the entire month of Elul. It commemorates the fact that Bnei Yisrael

blew the shofar when Moshe Rabeinu ascended to the heavens to receive the second set of luchos; it was a reminder for the people not to fall prey to avodah-zarah. The Tur adds that this practice inspires Yisrael to perform teshuvah, promotes the compassion of HKB"H, and confounds the Satan.

The Tur quotes the passuk (Amos 3, 6): **"אם יתקע שופר: —is the shofar ever sounded in a city and the people do not tremble?!"** This suggests that our sages of blessed memory instituted the blowing of the shofar throughout the month of Elul to encourage teshuvah, because it causes trembling and promotes "yirah." This arouses the people of Yisrael to perform meaningful teshuvah.

Furthermore, Rabeinu Sa'adiah Gaon enumerates ten reasons for the mitzvah of blowing shofar. In the third reason, he says that it is aimed at calling to mind the revelation at Har Sinai, where it says (Shemos 19, 16): **"ויקול שופר חזק מאד"—and there was a very loud sound of the shofar.** This will inspire us to accept

upon ourselves what our forefathers accepted upon themselves with the declaration **"na'aseh v'nishma."** Additionally, we know that HKB"H renews creation annually on Rosh HaShanah. According to the Midrash (B.R. 1, 1), HKB"H looked in the Torah and created the world. So, by calling to mind the acceptance of the Torah at Har Sinai, we participate in the renewal of creation.

Thus, before accepting upon ourselves anew the obligations of the Torah on Rosh HaShanah via the blowing of the shofar, our sages instituted the practice of blowing the shofar during chodesh Elul to motivate Jews to perform teshuvah based on "yirah." This ensures that the wisdom accrued from accepting the Torah will endure paving the way for the renewal of creation with bountiful goodness—in keeping with the words of the passuk (Mishlei 3, 16): **"אורך ימים בימינה —length of days is at its right; at its left is wealth and honor."**



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