

# Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

Chayei Sarah 5769

**And Avraham gave gifts to the children of his concubines, and he sent them away from Yitzchak his son while he was still alive, eastward to the land of the east. (25:6)**

Rashi says, quoting Sanhedrin 91a: “He gave them the name of impurity.” This is a strange statement. Why would the righteous Avraham Avinu teach impurity to his children?

Rabbi Yaakov of Motroyelle, one of the Baalei Tosafos, explains, “Avraham taught them to call their idols with a name of impurity, such as Peor and Markulis, which are so called because they defile them. But originally they called their idols by the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, as it says, ‘Then they began to call in the name of G-d’ (Bereishis 4:26).” (Hadar Zekeinim; Tosafos Hashalem)

Avraham Avinu was upset over the fact that the gentiles called their idols by the name of G-d. He saw that this would lead the Jewish people astray. Therefore he had children with Hagar and Keturah and dispatched them among the gentiles with the mission to change the names of the idols to names of impurity and defilement; then it would be easier for the Jewish people to avoid them.

This is the meaning of the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 61:1) that applies the first verses of Tehillim to Avraham Avinu: “And he will be like a tree planted on streams of water, that gives its fruit in the proper time, and its leaf does not wither, and all that he does will be successful” (Tehillim 1:3). Gives its fruit in the proper time – this refers to Yishmael. And its leaf does not wither – this refers to Yitzchak. And all that he does will be successful – this refers to the children of Keturah.” Why does the Midrash consider Yishmael and the children of Keturah such great accomplishments? The answer is as explained above: Avraham considered it a great accomplishment to make sure that idols are called idols and not confused with G-d.

Similarly in our time, it is a great misfortune when heresy, sin and destruction of the Torah are called by holy names. The Zionist state is called Israel, their language is called Hebrew, their currency is called shekel, and living and dying there is called Kiddush Hashem. If we emulate Avraham Avinu and take whatever steps are necessary to change those names and call a sin a sin, then we will have eased our trials and accomplished a great thing. (Divrei Yoel, p. 538)

\* \* \*

Every morning we make a blessing thanking Hashem “who did not make me a gentile.” The Taz (Orach Chaim 46:4) asks: Why don’t we say this blessing in positive language: “who made me a Yisroel”? (This is indeed the version of the blessing in Menachos 43b; but the Tosefta, the Rif, the Rambam, the Rosh and Shulchan Aruch all say “who did not make me a gentile” and this is our custom.)

The Yalkut Shimoni at the beginning of Parshas Haazinu says that at the time of the redemption, the Jewish people will be embarrassed of its sins and say to Hashem, “How can You redeem me? My witnesses are still here, for You called

heaven and earth as witnesses.” Hashem will reply, “I will take them away,” as it says, “For behold I will create new heavens and a new earth” (Yishaya 65:17). The Jewish people will say, “My name is still here!” Hashem will reply, “I will take it away,” as it says, “You will be called by a new name which the mouth of Hashem will specify” (Yishaya 62:2). Why will the Jewish people be embarrassed of its name, Israel?

The answer is that the name “Israel” was actually originally the name of the Satan, the guardian angel of Esav (Pirkei Rabbi Eliezer 37). When the name was given to Yaakov Avinu, it became sanctified and purified. As long as the Jews continue in the ways of their forefather Yaakov, their name remains holy. But when they rebel against Hashem, their name has no holiness at all, and on the contrary it is worse than the names of other nations, since it is the name of the Satan. This explains the almost unbelievable fact that we see today, that the heretics and sinners have adopted the name “Israel” for themselves. They pride themselves on bearing this name, which they have used for their defiled purposes in service of the Satan.

That is why the Jewish people will be embarrassed of this name at the time of the redemption, and that is why Hashem promises to change it to another name, to be specified at that time. And possibly the reason why neither the Navi nor Chazal tell us what that new name will be is because they feared that if it were to be known, the Zionists would steal that name as well.

Now we understand why we do not say a blessing “who made me a Yisroel.” The Men of the Great Assembly foresaw with holy inspiration that a movement of heretics would one day adopt the name “Yisroel” for themselves, and then the true Jews would no longer be proud of this name. Rather, they made the text of the blessing negative “who did not make me a gentile,” for that applies for all time. (Machzor Divrei Yoel, Succos v. 2 p. 28)

Those who do not have e-mail can now receive this sheet free every week by regular mail. To order write to the address below.



True Torah Jews  
183 Wilson St. PMB 162  
Brooklyn, NY 11211

For additional copies of this publication,  
or to sponsor an issue,  
**PLEASE CALL 718-841-7053.**