

Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

Shavuos 5769

And G-d spoke all these words, saying... (Shemos 20:1)

The Gemara (Berachos 12a) says that the kohanim in the Beis Hamikdash used to say Aseres Hadibros (the Ten Utterances) every morning. This custom, the Gemara tells us, was at one time followed in all synagogues outside the Beis Hamikdash, but Chazal put a stop to it because of “the argument of the heretics.” These heretics would point to the recital of the Aseres Hadibros, which the Jews heard directly from Hashem, as proof that the rest of the Torah, which came to us through Moshe Rabbeinu, was not true.

The Aseres Hadibros were recited daily because they contained the foundations of Judaism (Rambam, Commentary to the Mishnah, Tamid 5:1). The Yerushalmi (Berachos 1:5) says that the whole reason why G-d commanded us to say Shema every morning was because it contains references to each of the basic principles in the Aseres Hadibros. Yet Chazal forbade the public reading of the Aseres Hadibros themselves, because stopping the spread of heresy was more important than anything else.

Similarly, the Gemara says that if a heretic wrote a Sefer Torah, even if he wrote every word correctly, it must be burnt (Gittin 45b). The Rambam (Yesodei Hatorah 6:8) explains that although destroying holy scriptures and the name of Hashem is usually a great sin, in this case it is permitted because the heretic does not believe in the holiness of Hashem’s name and writes it as if it were any other word. And, the Rambam continues, not only is it permitted to burn this Sefer Torah, but it is an obligation to do so, in order not to leave any record of the heretics or their actions.

If this is true of a Sefer Torah written perfectly, how much more is it true of the Modern Hebrew language invented by the Zionists. Even if they had changed nothing at all of the original Hebrew language, it would be forbidden to speak it, since it was the Zionist heretics who started the practice of speaking it. All the more so now that they have made tremendous changes in the vocabulary, grammar and style of the language. Modern Hebrew was invented to make it easy to translate word-for-word from European languages into Hebrew and vice versa. The true Holy Tongue has its own character, its own life and its own expressions. It is the language of Hashem, in which every word comes directly from the words of Hashem to a prophet (Chasam Sofer on Bereishis 11:1). It is language which, by its limited vocabulary, teaches a Jew to express himself in a holy way, as befits a servant of Hashem (Rambam, quoted by Ramban on Shemos 30:13). But the Zionists have butchered it and molded it to fit exactly word-for-word with the European languages. The Jew who writes in true Lashon Hakodesh expresses pure Jewish thought and pure Torah views on life, but the Zionist speaks like a gentile under the thin disguise of a new language. Zionist Hebrew is nothing but English in translation.

The Zionists made their new language conform to European languages in several ways. First of all, they constructed words from existing Lashon Hakodesh forms to refer to objects and concepts that were recently invented or discovered, such as clock, car, microphone, address, airplane, minute and tomato. Secondly, they constructed words from existing Lashon Hakodesh forms to match a foreign expression or term even in cases where no new concept was involved, such as their words for age, personal, despite, interesting, problem, calendar date and office. Thirdly, they borrowed words from

other languages for objects or concepts that existed already in the past and did not need a new word, such as citation, actual, history and organization.

And they were not satisfied with merely modeling the language after foreign languages. They made it much worse than foreign languages by taking existing words from the Tanach and other holy sources and giving them totally new meanings. It is regarding these kinds of changes that the inventor of the Modern Hebrew language said that his intention was “to fight against religious Jews.” Examples are their words for electricity, tie (in a game), furniture, wedding hall and fairytale.

Let us take the example of electricity. In the Haftarah for the first day of Shavuos we read the vision of Yechezkel, the Maaseh Merkavah, one of the most esoteric and difficult chapters of the Nevi'im. The reason we read it on Shavuos is because Yechezkel's vision was similar to what the Jewish people saw at the Giving of the Torah at Sinai (Rashi on Megillah 31a). The Mishnah rules that a sage who understands the secrets of Maaseh Merkavah may not teach them even to a single student, unless that student is wise enough to understand it on his own (Chagigah 11b).

Of all the words used by Yechezkel to describe what he saw, perhaps the one most shrouded in mystery is the word “chashmal,” which appears two times in our Haftarah. The Gemara (Chagigah 13a) gives two explanations: angels of fire that speak, or angels that are sometimes silent (chash) and sometimes speak (memalelos). Still, the Gemara makes it clear that the meaning of this word is too deep for a human being to fathom. The Gemara tells of a child who was learning Yechezkel in cheder and understood the meaning of chashmal, and a fire came out from the chashmal and burned him up. After this incident, the Sages felt that the Book of Yechezkel was too dangerous, and they were ready to remove it from the Tanach and hide it away. But Chananya ben Chizkiya said to them, “Not everyone is as wise as this child.”

On the second place where the word occurs (1:27), Rashi says something that he says in no other place: “It is not permitted to think about this verse.”

Yet thanks to the Zionists, every Jewish child and adult who speaks Modern Hebrew uses this holy word many times a day, for the most mundane and common thing. The word that once made every Jew tremble with Yiras Shomayim has become a household term used to refer to lights, radios, ovens and washing machines. When a Jew who has been exposed to the Zionist language studies Yechezkel, he misses the point.

In Uvdos Vehanagos Leveis Brisk (v. 4, p. 190) we read that the Brisker Rav once said, “The Zionists' use of this word from Yechezkel shows that they deny the meaning and existence of that holy concept mentioned by the prophet Yechezkel.”

The Brisker Rav pointed out many other falsifications of the Holy Tongue committed by the Zionists, and his blood would boil with anger whenever he heard someone speak a word or expression of Modern Hebrew. When he spoke to Bnei Torah who did not understand Yiddish, he would speak in Lashon Hakodesh with the Ashkenazic pronunciation, but never in Modern Hebrew. He said, “The motive of those who introduced Modern Hebrew was to create a language barrier between the younger generation and the older generation, so that each one should not understand the other.”

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