

COMMENTARIES OF THE DUBNO MAGGID

PARASHAS KI SEITZEI

In this week's *parashah*, the Torah says (Devarim 25:13): "You shall not have in your pouch one weight and another weight, a large one and a small one." Here the Torah exhorts us against cheating in business, or even possessing the means to do so. In expounding on this verse, the Maggid links it to a teaching by Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei 3:31-33: "Do not envy the pillager, and do not choose any of his ways. ... Hashem's curse is upon the house of the wicked, while the abode of the righteous He blesses." We [previously presented](#) the Maggid's discussion of the connection between the verse from our *parashah* and the passage in Mishlei. We now present some further discussion that the Maggid presents on the passage in Mishlei.

The Maggid's starting point is a statement by David HaMelech (Tehillim 125:4-5, homiletically): "Do good, Hashem, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts. And as for those who slip, may Hashem carry away their crookedness with the wicked, and peace will be upon Yisrael." The Maggid explains as follows. People are generally disgusted by garbage and do not want it lying around all over their homes. So they keep in their homes a garbage can and deposit the garbage there. When the garbage can gets full, they haul the garbage out to a garbage dump. Similarly, Hashem has set up a system for clearing our environment of all remains of the various forms of evil. He arranges for people who are completely wicked to serve as repositories of the fruits of evil-doing, and when they get full, He disposes of them by sending them to their deaths. Occasionally a righteous person slips and uses wrongful means to achieve some gain, be it money, possessions, or honor. When this happens, Hashem arranges for a completely wicked person to get hold of this gain, either directly or indirectly, thereby rendering the righteous person clean. In the passage from Tehillim quoted above, David is describing this process.

In this vein, regarding the completely wicked, Malachi declares (verse 1:4): "They will be called the border of wickedness." Just as people have designated garbage dumping zones, so, to, Hashem makes the completely wicked serve as designated zones, with defined borders, for wickedness. The process of transferring wickedness to the completely wicked is reflected in the Yom Kippur service in the Beis HaMikdash. Regarding the he-goat for Azazel, it is written (Vayikra 16:22): "The he-goat will bear upon itself all their iniquities to a desolate land." Expounding on this statement, the Midrash in *Yalkut Shimoni, Torah*, 576 speaks of the Jewish People's sins being transferred to the evildoers (עוונותיהם של ישראל גונתן על עשו הרשע). This is what Shlomo means when he says that "Hashem's curse is upon the house of the wicked." In a similar vein, Yirmiyah declares (verses 5:26-27): "Among My people are found wicked men ... as a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit."

In Tehillim 1:4, David HaMelech contrasts the righteous with the wicked:

Praiseworthy is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, and has not stood in the path of the sinful, and has not sat in the conference of scorners – whose desire is instead for Hashem's Torah, and who meditates on His Torah day and night. He is like a tree planted by brooks of water, which yields its fruit in its time, and whose leaves never wither – and everything he does will succeed. Not so are the wicked; rather, they are like the chaff that the wind drives away.

There is a key difference, the Maggid says, between a righteous person's eating and a wicked person's eating. The righteous person, as Mishlei 13:25 says, eats to satisfy himself, in order to use the energy he obtains from the food to learn Torah and serve Hashem. The righteous man fulfills Shlomo HaMelech's exhortation to know Hashem in all his ways (Mishlei 3:6), so that even his eating is a mitzvah act. Thus, his eating is transferred from the realm of physicality to the realm of sanctity – it becomes bound up with his soul. And just as a righteous man's righteousness and service to Hashem endure forever (cf. Tehillim 111:3, 112:3, 112:9), so, too, the means which enabled him carry out his service to Hashem endure forever. By contrast, a wicked man's eating, and, in fact, all his activities, are bound up with his body, and their existence ceases when the body dies. They are lost, as if scattered by the wind.

Thus, David likens a righteous man to "a tree planted by brooks of water, which yields its fruit in its time." Throughout the time a righteous man spends in this world, he produces spiritual fruit through learning Torah and serving Hashem. Moreover, his "leaves never wither." Here, David is using leaves as a metaphor for all the activities the righteous engages in to care for his body; just as the leaves of a fruit tree protect the fruit, so, too a righteous man's physical pursuits support his service to Hashem. Thus, the righteous man will receive reward not only for his Torah learning and his mitzvos, but also for the effort he invested in his physical pursuits. As David says, "everything he does will succeed" – including his physical pursuits. And then David continues: "Not so are the wicked; rather, they are like the chaff that the wind drives away." Nothing about the wicked person or his activities has any genuine worth; they are like chaff containing no seeds for producing a crop, and thus they are destined, in the words of Daniel 12:2, for shame and everlasting abhorrence. Accordingly, there is no harm in using the completely wicked as spiritual garbage cans, for they contain nothing of value that would be spoiled thereby.