

דברים starts with words of תוכחה, which all of the מפרשים discuss in great detail, how משה רבינו used a lot of interesting, diplomatic לשון to try to give כלל ישראל the תוכחה in the nicest way he could. This occurred five weeks before he was נפטר.

There's a דבר תורה from Rav Guttman from Ramat Shlomo, brought down in an old Torah Tavlin, which I thought was very meaningful.

The Torah is showing us how to give תוכחה. Moshe had to remind the people of their עבירות, to help them understand what they did wrong, and to encourage them to do תשובה. He made every effort to retain their honor and dignity, and he chose his words carefully. However, each and every one of us knows exactly what משה רבינו was talking about, all the tremendous עבירות that כלל ישראל, unfortunately committed.

The מצוה of תוכחה has a number of specific conditions. Quite often, however, not giving תוכחה is an even bigger מצוה unless one can be sure that his words will be accepted. We see that אברהם אבינו pleaded with סדום to save the city of סדום, and yet, we never see אברהם אבינו giving תוכחה to the people of סדום. Why? He knew that they would not listen to him. They would make choizek of him; they would be ליצנות with him. There's no point in giving תוכחה if it will not be accepted.

This is a tremendous זכות to כלל ישראל. R' Avraham Pam זצ"ל learns from the pasuk in משלי that you don't give a תוכחה לץ because you will only be met with ליצנות. However, if you give תוכחה to a חכם, he will accept those words. אברהם אבינו did not allow himself to be mocked by the ליצנים of סדום, because it would take away his credibility.

However, משה רבינו knew exactly who he was talking to. He was talking to כלל ישראל. And for them, there is tremendous זכות in giving תוכחה, because they will get the message, they will learn the message, and be able to do תשובה.

Right now, in these three weeks before תשעה באב, is a great time to do teshuvah. It's the time of בין המצרים, when הקדוש ברוך הוא is out there begging us and pleading with us to do תשובה, and He will accept us with open arms. Let's utilize the opportunity.

