

In the Desert – Part 3: Conquering Anger by Yielding Rights

This is part 3 of a mini-series I have entitled “In The Desert”, since the Torah portions for June are all in *Bamidbar* which is replete with real life lessons—things that we *must* conquer in our faith-walk to be successful in the Lord. However, *Bamidbar* is loaded with principles that we must pay close attention to, in order to avoid great pain.

Principle Number 1 – We Must Learn to Limit What Comes Out of Our Mouth

Rebbetzin Marilyn developed a teaching back in 1991 (before *KS* existed) based on last week’s *Parashat (Shelach)* called *Without Murmuring or Complaining*. In it she shared that the Holy Spirit revealed to her that (among other relevant things she taught on that message) we must honor the Lord in the authorities He has placed over us by limiting our words and focusing on the Lord, not on the people and circumstances around us.

Principle Number 2 – We Must Learn to Transform Sources of Irritation

Life is full of sources of irritation. Both insight and discernment are needed to identify and transform sources of irritation into spiritual motivation. The benefits or harm of these can be compared to a grain of sand: in the eye, it will cause an irritation, infection and loss of vision; but in an oyster, it will cause an irritation, secretion, concretion and then a very valuable pearl. Many of our attitudes and actions are influenced more than we realize by that which irritates us. Which one will it be for us?

Principle Number 3 – Conquering Anger by Yielding Rights

Nothing is more destructive to an individual, a marriage, a family, or a congregation than anger. The wounds and scars on even one angry outburst can last long after the cause of the incident is forgotten. Scripture states: “*Do not associate (KJV, make no friendship) with any man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man*” (Prov. 22:24). Anger is the result of tension that comes from the guilt of wrong responses to past situations. It is **a neglect or refusal to yield rights to God**. Also when we refuse to forgive tension builds up. But unfortunately, tension is cumulative so that when a new situation occurs which reminds us of the past we are prone to respond/erupt in anger. A proper response to anger is to treat it as a signal to go back and clear up past offenses. There is a Biblical connection between anger and lust. A person who has problem with one will often have a problem with the other. This is true because of the buildup of guilt and tension and the lack of restraint in satisfying personal passions. To make matters worse, often a person will have unresolved anger or bitterness toward a parent which will only be vented against the partner thereby allowing that bitterness to defile them.

Yielding Personal Rights

Anger is the opposite of meekness. *Yeshua* in speaking of Himself said “... *for I am meek...*” (Matt. 11:29). The CJB translates *meek* as *gentle*. Clearly when a person is angry they are on the opposite extreme of gentleness. It is noteworthy that of all things the Lord could have said about Himself, He chose the word meek/gentle. There are many Scriptural references to being meek: (1) The meek will have good judgment in Ps. 25:9; (2) The meek will learn the Way of God in Ps. 25:9; (3) The meek will inherit the earth in Ps. 37:1; (4) The meek will respond to “*Good Tidings*” in Isa. 61:1; (5) The meek experience increased joy in Isa. 29:19; (6) The meek will radiate inward beauty and a quiet spirit in 1 Peter 3:4; (7) The meek will be ready to give and answer (empowered witnessing) in 1 Peter 3:15. It is impossible to have a conflict with someone unless personal rights are involved. As husbands we are to “**Prepare ourselves for the most exciting part of our spouses’ day**” by praying on the way home that God will help us yield your rights (your right to relax, your right to eat, your right to rest, your right to have quiet time, your right to watch the game, your right to not be bothered, your right to be off duty, etc.)

Example: One evening five members of one family silently sat around a table. For many years they had not been able to achieve harmony among themselves. They needed help. Each one was given a sheet of paper to describe the last three situations in which they lost their temper. The top seven things they wrote were: (1) The right to express personal opinions without being jumped on; (2) The right to be accepted as an individual; (3) The right to plan how free time will be used; (4) The right to privacy; (5) The right to earn and spend money; (6) The right to choose friends; and (7) The right to control the use of personal property.

In the case of the girl whose sister takes her clothes, there are at least two rights involved: (1) the right to control the use of her own clothes and (2) the right to have her own mother understand her position. The first step in conflict resolution is always to **Identify the Personal Rights** involved. The second step should be obvious to Believers, but it is not – we should **Transfer Our Rights to God**. A wise saying is that *what we own will surely over time own us*. Therefore we should own nothing! Rights and responsibilities always accompany ownership of personal property. Isn't it all God's property anyway? Why not explicitly give it to Him so that our own mind and spirit hear this being done. You see in the girl's case she *owned* the clothes (never mind that it was the parent's who paid for them) and she maintained the rights and responsibilities for her clothes. If she were to transfer the ownership of her clothes to God, the God would assume the chief responsibility to protect her clothes as well as the rights to their use. God will always take good care of His own property. Thus thirdly we should also **Transfer Ownership of Our Possessions to God**. This transfer of ownership can be done through a sincere prayer of dedication. Lastly we should prepare ourselves to **Thank God for Whatever Happens**. This concept of thanking God for whatever He allows to happen is the *key to yielding rights*. It allows for the possibility that God may test sincerity by allowing possessions to be misused. God will always use life situations for His own glory if we allow Him to!

Yielding Personal Rights not Responsibilities

In considering personal rights here are some of the rights we must carefully turn over to the Lord in order to gain meekness/gentleness: (1) Self-Will; (2) Dating; (3) Clothes – Appearance; (4) Money & Possessions; (5) Knowledge; (6) Friends; (7) Music; (8) Future; (9) Health; (10) Reputation; (11) Schedule – Time; and (12) Activities. You can surely add your own to the list and I encourage everyone to make their own.

In yielding rights, we must be careful not to yield responsibilities. We are not advocating being irresponsible, we are advocating being meek and gentle. For example, a student cannot say, "I gave my right to good grades to the Lord, and therefore, I do not have to study as hard anymore." Similarly a parent cannot say, "I gave my right of disciplining my children to the Lord and am no longer responsible for disciplining them." In both cases these are responsibilities given by God and He has not changed His mind (Mal. 3:6), so therefore we should not confuse them with personal rights. When we yield our rights to God, we can be sure that He will allow situations to develop in which these rights we have supposedly yielded will be withheld from us. If we find ourselves becoming angry when this happens, we can be sure that our yielding of these rights was not complete in our own mind. Anger (which is a signal) may also reveal related rights which were never identified and yielded. We must learn to develop inward qualities through loss of rights.

We can also expect that when He tests us in the areas of rights, He will also give us corresponding insights in His Word and wisdom. For example, in the area of self-will it is written "*Not my will, but Your Will be done*" (Mk 14:36). In the area of dating and personal relations it is written "*Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee*" (Ps. 73:25) When it comes to clothes it is written "*a meek and quiet spirit are in the sight of God a great price*" (1 Peter 3:3,4). In money and possessions Scripture states "*Set your affections on things above not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:2). For knowledge we read "*His delight is in the Torah of Adonai and in His Torah he meditates day and night*" (Ps. 1:2) When it comes to friends Yeshua said "*He that receives you receives Me*" (Matt. 10:40). For my right to music it is written "*Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Messiah*" (2 Cor. 10:5). For our future we have "*Seek Ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matt. 6:33) In health the Lord said "*My grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect I weakness*" (2 Cor. 12:9) In terms of my reputation it is written "*He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His own name sake*" (Ps. 23:3) When it comes to schedule He said "*He that be greatest among you let him be servant of all*" (Matt. 23:11) And finally in all activities He said "*whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Cor. 10:31)

In the desert *everything* is tested and we are all prone to fight for every "*right*" we believe we are entitled to, e.g., my time, my space, my money, my, my... But if we yield our rights to God, we will find peace for our souls and not only survive but benefit from a desert experience. Is it possible to live life without anger? You bet