



Parshas Va'eschanan

For the week ending 11 Av 5756
26 & 27 July 1996

Summary

Although Moshe is content that Yehoshua will lead the nation, Moshe now prays to be allowed to enter the Land of Israel in order to fulfill its special mitzvos. However, Hashem refuses his request. Moshe reminds the Bnei Yisrael of the gathering at Sinai when they received the Torah — that they saw no visual representation of the Divine, but only the sound of words. Moshe impresses on the Bnei Yisrael that the revelation of Sinai took place to an entire nation, not to a select elite, and that only the Jewish People will ever be able to claim that Hashem spoke to their entire nation. Moshe specifically enjoins the Bnei Yisrael to “pass over” the event of the gathering at Sinai to their children throughout all generations.

Moshe accurately predicts that after the Bnei Yisrael have dwelled in Eretz Yisrael they will sin, be exiled from the Land, and be scattered among all the peoples. They will stay few in number but eventually they will return to Hashem. Moshe designates three “cities of refuge” to which a person who kills inadvertently may flee. Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments and then teaches the Shema, the central credo of Judaism—that there is only one G-d. Then Moshe warns the people not to succumb to materialism and forget their purpose as a spiritual nation. The Parsha ends with Moshe exhorting the Bnei Yisrael not to intermarry when they enter into Eretz Yisrael, as they cannot be a treasured and holy nation if they intermarry and become indistinguishable from the other nations.

Commentaries

PRAYERLINE

“And I beseeched Hashem at that time, saying” (3:23)

The phrase “At that time” hints to a prayer for generations unborn: Whenever the Jewish People will find themselves in times of anguish, unable to pray properly because of the oppression of exile, Moshe’s prayer will arise for them.

Even in the most numbing unhappiness, when the cord of prayer to the lips has disconnected from the heart and all they will be able to do is merely utter the words, Moshe’s prayer will arise for them. “At that time”, when all they will be able to do is “saying” and there will be no feeling in their words, this prayer of Moshe prayer will arise in front of Hashem.

(Rabbi MiAmshenov)

PRAYERLINE 2

“With all your heart” (6:5)

A similar idea is hinted to in the phrase “With all your heart” in the Shema. Rashi explains the following phrase “With all your soul” to mean “even if He will take your soul.” So, similarly – even if He will take your heart. Even when doubts gnaw away at your heart, even when it is confused and you don’t see the Hand of Hashem, even then, serve Him – “With all your heart.”

(Chidushei HaRim)

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ZUSHIA'S LESSON

"And with all your resources" (6:5)

Reb Shmelke of Nicklesburg once asked his rebbe, the Maggid of Mezrich, "How can one possibly fulfill what our Sages teach us that we should bless Hashem for the bad things that happen to us just as we bless Him for the good? How is such a thing possible?"

The Maggid replied to him "If you wish to find the answer to your question, go to the Beis Midrash and there you will find my talmid, Reb Zushia. From him you will learn the meaning of this teaching."

Reb Zushia, it was known, was a man terribly beset with every kind of trouble and affliction. He was poverty stricken and chronically ill.

When Reb Shmelke asked Reb Zushia how we can bless Hashem for bad things the same way we bless Him for good, he replied "I can't understand why the Rebbe should have sent you too me. Only someone who has had to endure hardship and affliction could possibly give

you an answer, and, Baruch Hashem, everything in my life is good! How am I supposed to teach you how a person can accept bad things with happiness, with *simcha*?"

Likutei Amaraim in Iturei Torah

HEARTY WORDS

"And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart." (6:6)

A Jew says twice a day "And you will love Hashem, Your G-d, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your possessions." It's all too easy to say this in a "broadcasting" way – speaking to one's neighbors but not to oneself. So immediately the next verse comes to remind us, "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart" – because the heart is often as far from the mouth as the heavens from the earth.

(In the name of the P'shisker Rav)

Haftorah: Isaiah 40:1-26

The Shabbos immediately following Tisha B'Av is called *Shabbos Nachamu* -- The Shabbos of Consolation. It takes its name from the first word of this week's Haftorah -- "Comfort, comfort my people says your G-d." The Prophet reminds the people that the time of the Exile of

Jerusalem has come to an end. The Midrash tells us that Hashem asks Avraham to comfort Jerusalem, but he does not succeed. He is followed by Yitzchak and Yaakov and Moshe who are also unsuccessful. Finally Hashem Himself comes to comfort the Holy City.



INSIGHTS INTO THE ZEMIROS
SUNG AT THE SHABBOS TABLE
THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS.

MAH YEDIDUS - םִשְׁשׁוּׁן
"HOW BELOVED..."

"To kindle the flame with a blessing"

להדליק נר בברכה
l'hadlik ner bivrocha

Lighting the Shabbos candles expresses many of the dimensions of this holy day.

The soul of man is compared to a candle – "The candle of Hashem is the soul of man" (Proverbs 20:27). On Shabbos a Jew acquires an extra measure of soul – the " *neshama yeseira*" – and the candles he lights pay tribute to this spiritual gift.

Shabbos itself is like the light of a candle. You can light many candles from one candle without diminishing its light at all. So, too, the Shabbos spiritually illuminates all the days of the week without suffering any loss of its own power.

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