

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET  
ON PARSHAS VAESCHANAN - 5756

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Parashat Va'etchanan 5756 - "The double motif of Shema"

The Weekly Internet  
P A R A S H A - P A G E  
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== This week's Parasha-Page has been dedicated by Rabbi Dr. Eli Turkel, to the memory of his father, Israel (Reb Yisroel Shimon) Turkel, O.B.M.

== Parashat Va'etchanan 5756

\_\_THE DOUBLE MOTIF OF "SHEMA"\_\_

Hear O Israel ("Shema Yisroel"), Hashem is our L-rd, Hashem is One! Love Hashem with all your heart, all your soul and all your wealth...Teach the words of the Torah to your children; speak them while sitting at home and while on the road, when you go to sleep and when you rise. (Devarim 6:4,5,7)

The above verses from this week's Parasha begin the prayer known as "Keriyat Shema". Reading the Keriyat Shema twice daily constitutes a biblical injunction. The Gemara tells us why this particular selection is read as the first of the three selections that comprise the Keriyat Shema:

Said Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah: Why is Shema Yisrael read before V'haya Im Shamo'a? Because it is necessary to first accept upon ourselves Hashem's sovereignty [by saying "Hear O Israel..."] before we accept upon ourselves to fulfill His commandments [in V'haya Im Shamo'a]. (Mishnah, Berachot 13a)

The Mishnah makes it clear that the primary emphasis of the verses of Shema Yisrael is that we are accepting upon ourselves Hashem as our King.

II

However, the Gemara later in Berachot points out what would appear to be an entirely different theme in Shema Yisroel:

Said Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai: It is appropriate to read Shema Yisrael before V'haya Im Shamo'a because Shema Yisrael instructs us to learn the Torah ourselves, while V'haya tells us to teach it to others [and one cannot teach the Torah before learning it one's self - Rashi]. (Berachot 14b)

From this it would appear that the keynote of Shema Yisrael is that we must learn the Torah. As the Gemara (ibid.) continues, the two sources do not disagree; Shema Yisrael underscores \*both\* the theme of accepting Hashem's sovereignty and of learning His Torah.

The Torah-learning theme that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai attested to is again evident in a statement he himself made elsewhere.

Said Rav Yochanan in the name of R' Shimon bar Yochai: One who reads Shema Yisrael morning and evening has fulfilled the injunction that "the words of this Torah shall not move from your mouth (Yehoshua 1:3)". (Menachot 99b)

Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai is telling us that Shema Yisrael not only \*bids\* us to learn the Torah -- it is a self-fulfilling lesson! The biblical requirement to recite Shema twice daily is not only meant to remind ourselves of our obligation to learn Torah. It is actually starting us on our way, providing us with a minimal amount of Torah study through reading Shema itself. Similarly:

When a child begins to speak, it is incumbent on his father to teach him two verses [in order to begin him in the study of Torah -- Shenot Eliyahu to Berachot 3:3]: "Moshe gave us the Torah, it is the legacy of the Jewish People (Devarim 33:4)": and "Hear O Israel...." (Sukkah 42a)

Shema Yisrael is the archetypal Torah-learning.

III

The two motifs encapsulated in Shema Yisrael are reflected in the blessings we recite before saying Shema Yisrael in our daily prayers. In the morning, Shema is preceded by two blessings: The first ("Yotzer Or") describes the grandness of the celestial bodies which constantly bear witness to the exalted nature of their Creator. This is a proper blessing for the aspect in Shema Yisrael that emphasizes accepting Hashem's sovereignty -- a lesson that may be learned through reflecting on the heavenly bodies (see Tehillim 19:2; Parasha-Pages for Sukkot and Vayishlach 5756).

In the second blessing ("Ahava Rabba") we beseech Hashem to teach us His Torah. This corresponds to the second aspect of Shema. (The Gemara in fact tells us that this prayer serves not only as a blessing upon the recital of Shema, it serves as a blessing upon Torah learning in general as well (Berachot 11b)). The same two themes repeat themselves in the blessings that precede the evening recital of Shema ("HaMa'ariv Aravim" and "Ahavat Olam").

It may be shown that these two themes are actually one and the same. As the Midrash tells us:

We are told to love Hashem (Devarim 6:5)-- but how does one bring himself to love Him? The verse provides the answer: "The words of the Torah which I command you today shall remain in your hearts...(ibid 6:6)" -- through this, you will come to recognize the Creator and cleave to His ways. (Sifri, Devarim #33, quoted in part by Rashi to Devarim 6:6)

Learning Hashem's Torah is a direct path towards developing a love for Hashem and accepting His sovereignty. When we see the beauty of the Torah's laws and its outlook on life, we appreciate the love that Hashem has bestowed upon us by giving us His Torah and we show our love for Him in return. This is why the pre-Shema blessings on the Torah (Ahava Rabba in the morning and Ahavat Olam at night) both begin with an emphasis on the love that Hashem has shown us.

IV

The Torah learning involved in reciting Shema is poignantly described by the Maharal (16th century Prague):

Pronouncing the words of the Torah alone is not the desired goal. The main goal of learning Torah is understanding what is learnt, and it is normally impossible to \*fully\* understand any part of the Torah.

Reading the Shema however, is different. Although, Shema too, is a selection from the Torah, it is meant to be \*read\* although it ought to be understood as well, nevertheless, reading it alone is the most important part of the Mitzvah -- which is why we refer to it as "the \*recital\* of Shema ("Keriyat Shema"). When one enunciates the Shema properly, it is therefore Torah learning of the highest level [i.e., it is comparable to learning any other portion of Torah with the highest level of understanding!] (Maharal in "Netivot Olam", Netiv Ha'Avodah Ch. 9)

One source for Maharal's words is undoubtedly the Gemara's statement (Berachot 10b) that one who reads Shema as required by the Torah is



seemingly clear reasons. The Torah's judicial system and codification of tort law are the blueprint for common law the world over. Yet the Torah does not emphasize observance of Mishpatim as such. It tells us that in order to be an example of wisdom and clarity unto the nations, we must observe the Chukim, laws that are difficult to comprehend even for those born as Jews. The question is obvious: wouldn't the open observance of the esoteric laws of Judaism bring question if not contempt to the eyes of the nations? Why are Chukim specifically rendered as the acts that will have the world look at us and say, "surely a wise and discerning people is this great nation."

In 1993, six years after the death of my revered grandfather, a biography, "Reb Yaakov, the Life and Times of Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky," was printed by Mesorah Publications. Based on years of my uncle Rabbi Nosson Kamenetzky's research and the fine writing of Yonason Rosenbloom, it was an instant success. The book shed unseen light on a Torah giant, perhaps never known by the masses. In addition to the splendid biographical research, the book is filled with hundreds of encounters with myriad personalities who were touched by the brilliant sage. From young children to prime ministers and United States Senators, Reb Yaakov was able to relate to each of them on their level.

The book also relates how Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan revealed to an Orthodox publication how surprised he had been when Reb Yaakov made a prescient prediction that the Soviet Union would cease to exist.

Our Yeshiva had purchased 10,000 volumes of the book as a fundraising-educational mailer. I did not realize that the Senator's name happened to be on our mailing list until I received a beautiful letter on United States Senate stationery. After thanking me for sending the "wonderful book," the writer said, "If I may quibble with one small point in an otherwise brilliant volume, the author reports that I was surprised by Rabbi Kamenetzky's prediction of the fall of the Soviet Union.

"Truth be told, I was never surprised by Rabbi Kamenetzky's insights. They only reaffirmed to me the age-old biblical promise that Torah knowledge is your wisdom and understanding before the nations of the world." The letter was signed Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

We tend to flaunt Judaism with the reasonable laws: honoring parents, charity, and all the of the basic tenets of moral life. To the outside world, however, we tend not to display the more difficult issues: Kashruth, Shatnez and the like. We are afraid that they are too bold and incomprehensible; surely they cannot designate us as a light unto the nations.

This week, the Torah tells us that there is nothing farther from the truth. It specifically exhorts us that through our Chukim we will be considered as a "light unto the nations." After we have set standards of morality and honesty we earn esteem in the eyes of the world. Then no Torah law or vision will be viewed archaic or inconceivable. We can predict the collapse of the second-most powerful nation on earth in its prime. Foreign relation experts may react with shock and surprise, but deep down they will wait for the prediction to materialize.

The Torah chides us this week that there is nothing in its writings that will embarrass us. Any command, even the most complex and difficult to comprehend, when performed with faith, honesty, and commitment, will cast us as a light unto the nations.

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HALACHA FOR 5756 SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO  
PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Safeguard the Sabbath day... you shall not do any work... (5:12-14).

### Crockpots on Shabbos

QUESTION: Is it permitted to place food in a crockpot on Friday afternoon in order for it to be cooked and warm for Shabbos?

DISCUSSION: There are basically two kinds of crockpots on the market. One(1) is designed as a free-standing pot which is filled with food and then placed on top of the heating element. The heating element does not encircle the pot at all. This type of crockpot may be used on Shabbos as long as the food in the pot is half-cooked(2) by the time Shabbos arrives(3).

The other type of crockpot(4) consists of a pot holding food which is inserted into another, bigger pot. The outer pot completely surrounds the inner pot (insert) on three sides. The heating element is built into the walls and base of the outer pot. The Halachic concern pertaining to this type of crockpot is the rabbinic prohibition of Hatmana, insulation. The Rabbis forbade the insulation of all foods, even prior to Shabbos, if the insulation will add heat to the food(5). Contemporary Poskim debate whether inserting the inner pot into the outer pot is considered "insulating" it, which is forbidden by the Rabbis, or not. There are three areas of dispute which we will attempt to describe briefly :

There are Rishonim who hold that it is forbidden to place a pot - even on Friday - in burning coals. It is considered as if the coals are insulating the pot. In their view, the only permissible way for a pot to be left on a fire is to place the pot on a grate, over the fire, not "in it"(6). Other Rishonim argue and hold that as long as the top of the pot is uncovered "and air can get to it," the pot is not considered to be insulated. Although the Rama(7) rules according to this view, it is not clear if he considers it sufficient that the top is uncovered so that "air can get to the pot," or if he would require that the sides be exposed as well. Thus, some Poskim(8) understand the Rama to hold that when a pot is surrounded on three sides ?as is a crockpotX, even if the top is not covered, it is still considered insulated, since no air can reach the sides of the pot.

The second issue to consider concerns the proximity between the outer and the inner pots. There is usually a small air pocket which separates the two pots. It is questionable whether this small space is sufficient to consider the insert as being physically separate from the outer pot and thus not being insulated by it, or if the outer pot is so close to the insert that it is insulating it(9).

The third issue to consider is whether Chazal prohibited insulation when its purpose is not to warm the food but to cook it. Since a crockpot is used for cooking, not for warming, it has been suggested that the rabbinic decree would not apply.

What do contemporary Poskim rule? Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv rule stringently on all of the points listed above and do not allow the use of this type of crockpot on Shabbos. Harav S. Wosner and Harav C.P. Scheinberg rule leniently and permit this type of crock pot to be used(10). There are reliable sources who report that Harav M. Feinstein had also ruled leniently concerning this type of crockpot.

Harav Elyashiv, though, suggests a simple solution for those that want to use this type of crockpot. He suggests placing several stones(11) between the insert and the outer pot. This way, the insert will rest on the stones and not on the floor of the outer pot. Since the stones will raise the insert above the rim of the outer pot, the sides of the insert will be exposed to the air. In this fashion, no violation of Hatmana will occur.

Simply putting silver foil between the insert and the outer pot does not resolve the problem of Hatmana.

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HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra

FOOTNOTES:

1 Produced by Westbend, Inc. and others.

2 In time of urgent need, if it is cooked a third of the way through it is also

permissible.

3 Note that we are not discussing removing and then returning the pot on Shabbos, nor are we discussing stirring or removing food from this pot on Shabbos.

4 Produced by Hamilton Beach, Rival and others.

5 For the reasons behind this rabbinic decree, see Shabbos 34a and Mishnah Berurah 257:1.

6 The Mechaber 253:1 rules like this opinion. According to the Chazon Ish 37:19, the Halacha is like this view.

7 OC 253:1. This is the Halachah according to the Mishnah Berurah.

8 This is clearly the understanding of the Pri Megadim 259:3 in explanation of the view of the Rashaba and the Taz. There is some uncertainty as to the view of the Chayei Adam and the Mishnah Berurah on this issue, see Otzros Hashabbos pg. 256 for a lengthy analysis.

9 See Shaar Hatzion 257:43.

10 Responsa from all of the quoted Poskim are published in Otzros Hashabbos pg. 514-522.

11 A more practical choice - in lieu of stones - would be to crumple large piece of silver foil into balls.

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YESHIVAT HAR ETZION VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH PROJECT  
(VBM) PARSHAT HASHAVUA  
PARSHAT V'ETCHANAN  
by Menachem Leibtag

In memory of gershon ben reuven hacohen z"l, father of ruth reingold.

Unfortunately, we are more familiar with the sidur than we are with Chumash. In this week's shiur, we will show how a careful study of the internal structure of the main speech in Sefer Dvarim will help us better appreciate our daily recital of the "kriyat shma".

#### INTRODUCTION - TWO PARTS TO THE MAIN SPEECH

In last week's shiur we discussed the division of Sefer Dvarim into several speeches which Moshe Rabeinu made in Arvot Moav prior to his death.

Recall, that the main speech (chapters 5->26) opens with a recap of the events that took place at Maamad Har Sinai (5:1-6:3). In this introduction, Moshe retells the story how Bnei Yisrael become fearful at Matan Torah and request to hear the remaining mitzvot from Moshe (5:20-26).

In God's reply to Moshe concerning this request, we find the key towards understanding the internal structure of the main speech:

"Go say to them Return to your tents, But you remain here with me and I will give you the entire MITZVAH, and the CHUKIM and the MISHPATIM which you shall teach them, for them TO OBSERVE IN THE LAND which I am giving them..." (5:27-28).

God's reply to Moshe includes TWO KEY WORDS which will repeat themselves numerous times in the speech:

(A) HA'MITZVAH, and

(B) CHUKIM & MISHPATIM. [Store this in memory for a minute.]

God then promises Bnei Yisrael that should they keep these mitzvot, which Moshe is about to repeat to them, they will prosper and live a long life in this Land (5:29-30/ also 6:2-3).

Afterward, Moshe introduces these laws, which he is about to teach for the last time, in a very similar fashion using the same two key words:

"And this is the MITZVAH, the CHUKIM & MISHPATIM, that God has commanded me to teach you to be OBSERVED IN THE LAND which you are about to enter and conquer..." (6:1)

In other words, the mitzvot which are to follow constitute a 'guidebook' for Bnei Yisrael as they ENTER THE LAND. As we will now show, this guide is presented in TWO distinct sections (parallel to their introduction in 5:28 and 6:1, above):

A) the MITZVAH section - (Chapters 6->11)

Parshiot V'etchanan -> Eykev

B) the CHUKIM & MISHPATIM section - (Chapters 12->26)

Parshiot Re'ah -> Kitavo

As we identify where each section begins and ends, we will explain the distinction between them and the significance of their presentation in this manner.

HA'MITZVAH - "ahavat Hashem"

As we explained in last week's shiur, after the Moshe's lengthy introduction (5:1-6:3) the mitzvot themselves begins with "shma yisrael..." (6:4), which is followed by the most

fundamental MITZVAH, i.e. the commandment to love God: "And you shall LOVE God with all your heart and all your soul... and these laws which I "MTZAVEH" [command you] today, teach them to your children..." (6:5-6)

In the spirit of this mitzvah, the parshiot which follow apply this principle of "ahavat Hashem" to Bnei Yisrael's forthcoming conquest of the land:

6:10-15 / Not to forget God once you settle down in the land.

6:16-19 / Not to 'test' God in the land as you did in the desert. Act justly and you will conquer the land.

6:20-25 / To pass on this tradition to your children, to remember that God took you out of Egypt etc.

7:1-11 / Not to make treaties with the people of Canaan, rather you must destroy their idols etc.

7:12-16 / Should you keep these laws, the land will be blessed, crops will grow etc.

7:17-26 / Not to fear the enemy; God will help you conquer them, just as He helped you against Pharaoh.

8:1-20 / Remember how God provided for you in the desert, therefore - once you provide for yourself in the land, DON'T forget God, especially when you become affluent etc.

9:1-10:11 / Remember how bad you behaved during the 40 years in the desert. God is helping you now out of His Mercy, for you don't deserve to enter the land - Remember this...

10:12-11:9 / When you enter the land, the most important mitzvah is to fear God, remember what He has done for you.

11:10-21 / The rainfall in the land of Israel will act as a barometer of your spiritual behavior...

11:22-25 / the finale - if you keep this MITZVAH, God will assist you in the conquest of the land.

[Note especially 6:10,18; 7:1,13,16,22; 8:1,7; 9:1,4-6; 11:10-12,13-17,22-25!]

The finale of this unit at the end of Parshat Eykev forms the conclusion of this entire section:

"If, then, you faithfully keep this MITZVAH that I command you, to love God .... you will CONQUER nations greater than you... No man shall stand up against you... (11:22-25)

Note the use of the word MITZVAH in the above pasuk. It summarizes all the laws of this unit, and forms the conclusion of this MITZVAH section of the main speech. God now promises Bnei Yisrael that should they keep this "mitzvah", i.e. if they enter the land with the proper attitude, they shall surely be worthy of His assistance in their conquest of the Promised Land.

The opening psukim of Parshat Re'ah (11:26-30) could be considered a conclusion to this section as they promise a BLESSING or a CURSE on the land, depending if Bnei Yisrael keep this MITZVAH or not. They could also be considered an opening to the next section (see Further Iyun).

THE CHUKIM & MISHPATIM SECTION / "halachot"

The opening psukim of the next section - the CHUKIM & MISHPATIM - are very easy to identify:

"You are about to cross the Jordan and conquer the land... when you settle it take care to observe all the CHUKIM and MISHPATIM that I have set before you. (11:31-32)

THESE are the CHUKIM and MISHPATIM that you must keep...." (12:1)

Immediately after this introduction, we find numerous parshiot which contain specific laws which Bnei Yisrael must keep

upon entering the land, which continue until the beginning of Parshat Kitavo (chapter 26). For example, establishing a center (a Mikdash) for offering korbanot; laws of kashrut, appointing a king and judges; celebrating the holidays, laws pertaining to murder, stealing, business, marriage and divorce etc.

[This section will be explained in detail, iy"h, in the following shiurim.]

At the conclusion of this section, once again we find a repeat of the key phrase:

"God commands you today to keep these CHUKIM & MISHPATIM, keep them with all your heart..." (26:16)

[Note that 27:1 begins a new speech.]

This analysis shows the clear distinction, both textual and thematic, between the two sections of the main speech:

- A) HA'MITZVAH - the proper attitude towards God;
- B) CHUKIM & MISHPATIM - the specific laws which Bnei Yisrael must follow in order to become God's special nation.

Before we explain the significance of this structure, let's return to our analysis of the MITZVAH section.

#### SHMA / 'BOOKENDS' OF THE MITZVAH SECTION

As we explained above, the very FIRST parsha of the MITZVAH section is none other than the FIRST PARSHA of "kriyat shma" (6:4-9). Similarly, the FINAL parsha of this section was none other than the SECOND PARSHA of "kriyat shma" - "v'haya im shmoah..." (11:13-21)!

Thus, the first two parshiot of "kriyat shma" which we recite twice daily, are actually the 'BOOKENDS' of the entire MITZVAH section. This section begins with "Shma Yisrael... v'havata" and concludes with "v'haya im shmoah..." (11:13-21).

Most likely, this is the reason why Chazal chose that we read BOTH these two parshiot in "kriyat shma". In doing so, we fulfill our obligation of the mitzvah:

"v'hayu ha'DVARIM ha'eyla asher anochi M'TZAVEH etchem ha'yom al l'vavecha, v'shinantem..." (6:6)

"Ha'dvarim ha'eyla" may actually be referring to the entire speech, or at least the entire MITZVAH section. However, since this section is too lengthy to read twice a day, we recite instead the opening and closing parshiot of this MITZVAH unit. Since they form its 'bookends', reading these two parshiot is equivalent to reading the entire section!

[See Sota 41a in regard to the 'parshiot' which are read at the "Hak'hel" ceremony, where Sefer Dvarim is to be read in its entirety, but certain sections are skipped!]

#### CHASIDIM AND MISNAGDIM / A COMPROMISE

So what section is more important? The MITZVAH section - which deals with proper attitude, or the CHUKIM & MISHPATIM section - which details the specific mitzvot which one must keep?

The climatic ending of the entire speech, found in Parshat Kitavo, alludes to the proper balance between the two sections:

"This day (the day of the speech) God commands you to keep these CHUKIM and MISHPATIM, and you should keep them with ALL YOUR HEART and all your soul... God has affirmed on this day that you are His "am segula" ... that you shall be a "am kadosh" as He promised [at Har Sinai]..." (26:16-19)

[Note the thematic connection between these psukim and the 'preamble' to Maamad Har Sinai (Shmot 19:3-6)!]

This 'finale' closes not only the CHUKIM & MISHPATIM section, but also beautifully relates it back to the MITZVAH section.

These "chukim u'mishpatim" must be kept "b'chal l'avcha u'vchal naf'shecha" - the key words of "kriyat shma" (compare 26:16 to 6:5). The more specific and technical laws - the "chukim u'mishpatim" (B), must be kept with the proper attitude of "ahavat Hashem" (A) as explained in the "mitzvah" section. Sefer Dvarim strikes the ideal balance!

#### TWO TYPES OF "YIRAH"

As explained above, the introduction to the main speech in Sefer Dvarim details the events which took place at Maamad Har

Sinai, when Bnei Yisrael are overcome with fear. Sefer Shmot records this very same event from a different perspective. A short examination of the apparent discrepancies between these two accounts will help us better understand the pro's and con's of "yirat Hashem".

Let's begin with the account in Sefer Dvarim. After hearing the Ten Commandments, Bnei Yisrael turn to Moshe in fear saying:

"Let us not die, then, for this FEARSOME FIRE WILL CONSUME US; if we hear the voice of God any longer, we shall die! For what mortal ever heard the voice of the living GOD speak out of the fire, as we did, and lived? YOU GO CLOSER and hear all that God says; then you tell us everything that God tells you, and we will listen and do it." (5:22-24)

God concedes to this request, attributing to its positive aspect:

"I have heard the plea that this people made to you; they did well to speak thus. MAY THEY ALWAYS BE OF SUCH MIND, to REVERE Me and follow all My Commandments..."

Thus, in Sefer Dvarim, this fear is praiseworthy.

Sefer Shmot records a very similar incident that took place immediately following the Ten Commandments, which according to some commentators (see Ibn Ezra) describes the same event:

"All the people saw the thunder and lightning..., and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance and asked Moshe: You speak to us and we will listen, but let not God speak to us, lest we die. Moshe answered them: BE NOT AFRAID, for God has come only in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may be with you forever..."

(Shmot 20:15 -17)

Here, Moshe is not pleased with this fear. Moshe does not suggest that the people return to their tents. Instead, he demands that Bnei Yisrael stand steadfast and confront God directly!

Is there an quarrel going on between God and Moshe Rabeinu in regard to the value of "yirat Hashem" (the fear of God)?

Understanding two aspects of "yirat Hashem" will help us appreciate this contention.

#### POSITIVE FEAR

When one recognizes God's infinite greatness, he can become totally enthralled with the possibility of encountering the Almighty, yet out of his humility feel that it be improper to confront Him directly. This fear is commendable, for it reflects an ideal balance between possible closeness and necessary distance.

#### NEGATIVE FEAR

A person who is not interested in a relationship with God would view a Divine encounter, such as Har Sinai, as a nuisance, for it is meaningless to him. Fearful of its inherent danger, he prefers distance and limited responsibility. This type of fear of God, like a 'child running away from school', should be abhorred.

One could suggest that Moshe, because of his experience with Bnei Yisrael thus far, is concerned that the people's fear stems from the latter reason. God, on the other hand, aware of the nature of man's haughtiness, stresses the positive aspect of this fear.

When the mitzvot of the main speech actually begin, we find a beautiful resolution of this inherent conflict.

Because these mitzvot are being given by Moshe, and not by God, due to the people's FEAR of Ma'amad Har Sinai, God intentionally begins the mitzvot with the commandment of "ahavat Hashem" - to LOVE God.

"Shma Yisrael... and you must LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might..." (6:4-5)

The love of God and the proper appreciation of His laws assures that one's fear will strengthen his relationship, rather

than weaken it.

shabbat shalom  
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. Recall that Parshat Re'ah opens with several psukim dealing with the "bracha u'klala" (11:26-31), concluding the MITZVAH section. Note the this parsha abruptly stops here, but continues in Parshat Kitavo before Moshe Rabeinu's next speech. Note the obvious connection between 11:26-31 and 27:2-7.

In other words, the beginning of Re'ah forms as a 'buffer' between the two sections of the speech. Furthermore, the "bracha & klala" could be considered the 'bookends' of the "chukim u'mishpatim" section.

1. Try to explain significance of this covenant. Relate it to the tochacha in Kitavo and the covenant made at Har Sinai.
  2. Would this have been necessary had the first generation (that went out of Egypt) entered Eretz Canaan?
- B. Note the machloket between the Chizkuni, Ibn Ezra, and Ramban in regard to when the events of Shmot 20:15-18 took place.

1. Relate this machloket to the apparent discrepancy between Dvarim 5:4 and 5:5 !
2. Should this machloket change any of our conclusions in the above shiur?

C. The mitzvot which follow the Ten Commandments in Sefer Shmot, parallel to those given in Sefer Dvarim, begin in Shmot 20:19 and continue until 23:33.

1. Which of these mitzvot are repeated in Sefer Dvarim?
2. Those which are repeated, are they repeated word for word?
3. If not, could those in Mishpatim be considered a 'capsulated' version (i.e. Shmot 23:14-17 to Dvarim 16:1-17).
4. Could there be a reason for this ? Relate to Shmot 24:3-7!  
What is "sefer ha'brit"?
5. Can any of these mitzvot in Parshat Mishpatim be found elsewhere in Chumash (try Bhar- shmitah)? Can you explain why?
6. Are there any other collections of mitzvot similar to Mishpatim or Sefer Dvarim anywhere else in Chumash?  
If so, where?
7. Relate all the above to the 'drashot' of psukim by chazal of "klal u'prat" etc.

D. Go through the 'mitzvah' section of Sefer Dvarim (6->11) and try to pick out which mitzvot were 'added' now in the fortieth year.

1. Is there a key phrase that repeats itself that helps you identify them?
2. Note that many mitzvot sound as though Moshe Rabeinu is speaking to Bnei Yisrael as they left Egypt, and as though they themselves went out of Egypt and witnessed the plagues etc. How does the above shiur explain this?
3. See 6:16, why is "masa" the only example, when did this take place?
4. Compare 7:7-11 to 9:4-7, use the above observation to explain the apparent discrepancy between these psukim.

E. Chapter 4, at the conclusion of the Speech I, includes a very detailed warning against making idols (see 4:9-24).

1. Why are these laws included in the opening speech?  
(How do they relate to the fact that Moshe will soon die?)  
[Recall what happened last time that Bnei Yisrael thought that Moshe was dead!]
2. Read 4:15-20. In the list of warnings, note the examples of images which Moshe warns that Bnei Yisrael should not make.  
Compare each one carefully to the first perek in Breishit!  
Can you find a connection?  
Is Moshe worried about "avoda zara" - worshipping other gods or making an image of Hashem? Explain why!
3. Note the use of the word "tavnit" in these psukim.  
Relate it to the use of "tavnit" in Shmot 25:1-7.  
[note that these are the only times in Chumash that the

word "tavnit" is used.]

Is there anything in the Mishkan which is an image, which could be considered a representation of God or His revelation?

Does this image also relate to the story of Creation.

(relate to Breishit 3:24!)

4. Use your answers to questions 2,3,&4 to answer question #1 again. See also Rambam in Hilchot Avodah Zara 1:1.

Shabbat-B'Shabbato: Vaetchanan 5756

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"WITH ALL YOUR WORTH"

by Rabbi Yehudah Shaviv

Twice a day, as part of the recitation of the Shema, we read the passage, "You shall love your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your worth" [Devarim 6:5]. The first two requirements, heart and soul, are fairly clear. On the other hand, the third demand, "meodecha," translated above as "worth," is not clear at all. However, it is important to understand this passage, as it defines a very important mitzvah, that of loving G-d.

Onkolous and Rashi translate the word as property, or money. This is based on the last Mishnah in Berachot. However, the order of the demands in the passage is then problematic. Once we have been commanded to love G-d with all our souls, that is, even if He takes away our soul, what is added by a demand for money? According to Rabbi Eliezer, the answer is: "Some people love their money more than their bodies, and therefore the passage demands: 'with all your worth'" [Berachot 61b]. A recent sage explained that this might be true only for individuals and not for the entire community, and therefore when the Torah commandment is in the plural it only demands "Love your G-d and worship Him with all your heart and with all your soul" [Devarim 11:13], but does not require "all your worth."

The Mishnah in Berachot gives another explanation for the passage: "With all your worth -- Be very thankful to Him for every measure that He gives you." This would seem to be the source of the law that "a person must recite a blessing for bad tidings just as he does for the good." And the sequence of the passage implies that whole-hearted acceptance of what appears to be a harmful event can be more difficult to achieve than dedication of heart and soul. Thus, the phrase "with all your worth" rightly appears at the end, as the high point of the requirement of this mitzvah.

When G-d finished the act of creation, he was satisfied, as is written, "G-d saw all that he had done, and behold, it was very good" [Bereishit 1:31]. The word "meod" in this passage has been interpreted many ways. For example: "The sages say in the name of Rabbi Chanina, the letters of 'meod' are the same as the letters Adam, as is written, 'behold, it was very good'" [Bereishit Rabba 9:12]. This implies an optimistic approach to the creation of mankind. This may also provide an insight into another interpretation of the passage. The Jew is required to love G-d with all of his human traits, in order of the following priorities: (1) with all his heart; (2) with all his soul; (3) "bechol meodecha" -- paying the utmost attention to his true personality. If the demand "with all your soul" may sometimes mean "even if He takes your soul," then "meodecha" may be a demand to love G-d in life, with all the vitality and vigor possible.

\* PG LifeLine - Vaeschanan

Dedicated in loving Memory of Yitzchak Zvi ben Asher Aryeh  
Please pray for the speedy healing of Masha Miriam bas Basya, Tziporah Chaya Sarah bas Basya, Alta Chana Baila bas Basya, Menashe Vigdor bas Miriam, Sarit bas Esther, Shlomo ben Esther, and Sara Riva bas Chana.

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"G-d became angry with me for your sake, and He did not listen to me, and HaShem said to me, 'you have enough; speak no more to me concerning this matter.'" [3:26]

Many times previously, Moshe had prayed to G-d after the announcement of a punishment - and Moshe had always received a favorable answer. Here he was refused. Why? "For your sake." The Malbim explains: HaShem revealed to Moshe that He was not preventing his entry into the land of Israel because he was angry with Moshe [as with the other cases, He could have forgiven him]. Rather, He was doing this for the benefit of Israel.

But what does this mean? How could Israel benefit? The Malbim continues: if Moshe were to have entered the land, even as an ordinary individual rather than the leader, nonetheless the Holy Temple would have been built immediately under his direction. A Temple built by Moshe would never be destroyed - and this would have tragic consequences for Israel. In this situation, when Israel sinned against HaShem and demanded punishment, He would be forced to vent His anger against Israel themselves. But with the Temple built by someone other than Moshe, when Israel sinned, He would destroy that Temple and vent his anger on wood and stones.

Obviously this bears further explanation. Isn't this cruelty? How can G-d be "angry?" Yet we understand that just as a father punishes his son in order to bring him back to correct behavior, so too does HaShem guide Israel his people - and not only as individuals, but as a single communal body. We can never understand why tragedy strikes individuals, but we can, guided by the Prophets, see every tragedy as a message for the entire Jewish community: improve yourselves. This is not cruelty, but mercy - just as a father corrects his son, so too must HaShem correct us.

And in the end, it is far less painful for the son to have his car taken away, than it is to be hit. All the more so do we see G-d's mercy when he prefers to have the Holy Temple, His "dwelling in the midst of the camp," destroyed - rather than see the destruction of Jews.

Later in the parsha, we read a section which is also read on the morning of Tisha B'Av. "When you have children and grandchildren, and have grown old on the Land, and you pervert yourselves, and you create an idol, any sort of image, and you do evil in the eyes of G-d to anger Him; I bring heaven and earth as witnesses upon you today, that you shall be utterly destroyed, quickly..." [4:25-26]

Rashi says that through the word "V'Noshantem" [and have grown old], Moshe hinted to them that their first exile would begin 852 years after their entry into Israel - the numerical value of the Hebrew letters in "V'Noshantem." Yet we know that historically, the exile actually began after only 850 years. Was HaShem quick to anger, and again - was he cruel with His people?

Rashi answers, based on the Talmud Sanhedrin 38b, that this was, once again, Divine mercy. "He acted charitably towards us, by bringing it two years before its time," in order to prevent fulfillment of the decree that "you shall be utterly destroyed."

Rabbi Shmshon Raphael Hirsch explains that this was not a random choice of time or response. Given another two years, Israel could have descended fully to the degraded level of the Canaanites who preceded them, and who were destroyed and dispersed forever. HaShem was quick to bring about the destruction of His Temple and our exile, in order not to destroy His people. [Like the Canaanites, individuals might have lived on, but the Jewish people would have come to an end (Heaven forbid).]

The reading continues: "And HaShem will scatter you among the nations, and you will remain few in number among the gentiles, wherever HaShem will lead you." [4:27] Once again - is this a cruel decree? Once again, quite to the contrary. The Malbim says: "this as well will He do to save you; He will not exile you to one place, but scatter you, in order that you be dispersed among the nations. For then, if they enact decrees and destruction in one place, you will find space and rescue in another place... thus a remnant will always remain; although few in number, nonetheless you shall not be entirely destroyed."

Yet the parsha acknowledges that the result of exile - inevitably, or so it seems - is an estrangement between HaShem and the Jewish people, or between Jews and our own spirituality. "And there you shall serve gods, the work of human hands, wood and stone, which do not see, hear, eat [taste] or smell." [4:28]

Nonetheless, the door back to G-d is open, and Moshe says through prophecy that we shall enter that door: "And you shall seek out HaShem your G-d from there, and you shall find him, when you seek Him with all your heart and

with all your soul." [4:29] Through everything that happens, we are destined to return to our closeness to G-d and our spiritual lives. For whatever reason, that which we were unwilling to do while in the Land, we will do in exile. But here, too, all may not be as it seems. The Hebrew word "Ki," used above in "[Ki / when] you seek Him..." also means "if." IF you will seek HaShem with all your heart and with all your soul, you will find Him. A big if?

And Moshe says it again. "[Ki / when / if] you will please ask about the early days, which came before you..." [4:32] He is speaking, from the Torah scroll, to the Jews that experience the exile, the dispersal to foreign lands that he prophesied would occur. Says the Ibn Ezra, "when you shall ask - ask now." In our day. Moshe is speaking to us. \_If\_ you ask, you will find... "... has there ever been anything like this great thing, or has anything like it ever been heard? Has a nation ever heard the voice of G-d speaking from the fire, as you heard, and lived? Or has G-d ever gone to take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, with trials, signs, open miracles, and war, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with great and terrible things - like all that which HaShem your G-d did for you in Egypt, before your eyes?" [4:32-34]

But why, then, in the midst of his prophecy, when he has so accurately laid our situation out before us, does Moshe say "Na" [please] - "If you will please ask...?" For whom are we doing a favor?

Like everything else, I think the answer is, for ourselves. When Moshe describes the destruction and exile, he uses the plural forms. And he even says that "You [plural] shall seek out HaShem your G-d." But you - singular - shall find Him when [or if] you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul, and you - singular - must please ask the questions. Whenever tragedy occurs, we - each of us, individually - should ask the questions that turn us to spiritual pursuits and away from tragedy. What better consolation can there be, than recognition of the beauty of our connection to G-d?

King David said, "Precious in the eyes of HaShem is the death of His pious ones." [116:15] Our generation lives not only after a Holocaust moderated by the destruction of wood and stone... but one that was not. And countless of HaShem's children were consumed.

We must look past the tragedy - for ourselves. We cannot make the Holocaust the center of Jewish existence, but allow past experiences to spur us to greater closeness to HaShem and Jewish spirituality. Then we can move forward.

"You shall surely console my nation, says your G-d." [Isaiah 40:1, the Haftorah]

Good Shabbos, Rabbi Yaakov Menken

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NCYI Divrei Torah - VaEtchanan Parshat VaEtchanan Shabbat Nachamu

Guest Rabbi: Rabbi Yaakov Feitman Young Israel of Beachwood, Ohio

Parshat Vaetchanan and Shabbat Nachamu are forever intertwined. In our Chumashim. On our calendars. In our hearts. What is the inner meaning of this eternal bond? There are six opinions in the commentaries about the relationship between the two sets of Luchot -- the stone tablets of Torah -- and the two versions of the Ten Commandments printed in the Chumash:

- 1) The Ibn Ezra cites several of these opinions. The first is that the words on the original Luchot were the ones we find in Parshat Yitro and those on the second Luchot were those we read in our Parsha, Vaetchanan. This is also the opinion of the Maharal (Tiferes Yisrael, 44) and the Netziv. 2) The second is that one of the Luchot had the first set (Yitro) engraved into two columns and the second of the Luchot had the second set (Va'etchanan) engraved in two columns as well. 3) The third is that the first set was on one of the Luchot and the second set was on the other. 4) The Ramban and the Alshich HaKodesh hold that both of the Luchot were identical, using the text we find in Yitro, but Moshe Rabbeinu explained the Ten Commandments using the changes we find in this week's Sedra. For instance, when he told Klal Yisrael about Shabbat, he added the word Shamor from Va'etchanan to teach them about the prohibitions of Shabbat in addition to Zachor which conveys the positive commandment to make Kiddush. 5) Rashi (according to one version) holds that both sets contained composite of Yitro and

Va'etchanan, using combination words such as zachorshamor. 6) Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky is of the original opinion that Shamor was written in both sets (for a more in-depth review of these various opinions, see Shaarei Aharon, pages 157-159). According to all opinions, however, even those who hold that the text of the Luchot was identical, the physical Tablets were different. Of the first Luchot, the Torah testifies that they were "the work of G-d" but the second Luchot were the work of man and only the writing was G-dly. The Malbim and the Netziv explain that the reason for this change from the first to the second Luchot related to the reduction of Klal Yisrael's spiritual level after the sin of the golden calf. Before the sin, spirituality triumphed over the material world and the Luchot untainted by sin would have constituted an eternal unforgettable reservoir of knowledge, understanding and inspiration. In the presence, however, of a sin as momentous as that of the golden calf, this lofty Madregah could not be maintained and the Luchot produced exclusively by G-d had to be destroyed. It would seem, therefore, that the second Luchot, when compared with the first, constitute an ongoing indictment of the people of Israel. Their very existence, apparently inferior to their predecessors, cry out that we have sinned and fallen from the noble place our Creator planned for us. But there is another side to this story. One of the sources commonly cited to prove that the first Luchot exhibited the words in Parshat Yitro and the second the words in Va'etchanan is the following extraordinary Gemara (Bava Kamma 55a): Rav Chanina Ben Agul asked Rav Chiya bar Abba: why does it not say Tov ("good") in the first of the Ten Commandments but it does in the second? Rav Chiya bar Abba answered, before you ask me why it says Tov ask me if it says Tov, for I do not know if it says Tov or not. Go to Rav Tanchum ben Rav Chanilai who studied under Rav Yehoshua ben Levi who was an expert in Aggadah. He went to him and he answered "because they were destined to be broken. . . And if they were destined to be broken, what effect would that have on the word Tov? Rav Ashi answered "G-d forbid that goodness should end for the people of Israel." Major commentaries (see Pnai Yehoshua and Maharatz Chayos to Bava Basra 113a) struggle with this Talmudic riddle. Could it be that major rabbis of the Talmud would be unfamiliar with simple verses in the Torah? Indeed, some Rishonim (see Tosfot ibid) come to that conclusion. Another approach, however, reinterprets Rav Chanina's question as dealing with the issue we discussed above. Are the Asarat HaDibrot we read in our Parsha the ones which were carved on the second Luchot or not? If that was the question, then one indeed requires an "expert in Aggadah" not just one who knows Chumash (see Pachad Yitzchak to Shavuot 12:2 and 18:18; Rabbi Reuven Margolios, HaMikra VeHaMesorah, pages 7-9). In any case, one conclusion which may clearly be drawn from this discussion is that, while the second Luchot were clearly on a lower Madregah than the first, they were able to include the word Tov (in the Mitzvah of honoring parents it says "LeMaan Yetev Lach" -- it will be good for you) while the first Luchot, which were destined to be broken, could not. The Maharal, in his commentary on the Talmud, explains that Bnai Yisrael, before the sin of the golden calf, paralleled the level of Adam HaRishon -- the First Man -- in that their level was more angelic than human. The Madregah known as Tov, however, relates to human beings, with all their frailties, who live in this world, sin, repent and achieve goodness in the Next World where their sins are ultimately forgiven. In the words of the Maharal: "For all of Israel has a share in the World to Come. Even those who sin receive their punishment in this world but they have a share in the World to Come." Thus we see that there is something about the second Luchot which, while reflecting imperfection, allows -- through its human element -- for repentance and renewal. Rabbi Gedalya Schorr, ZT"L, refers to this as this great power, the power to push aside the darkness and concealment and to reveal the light was not in the first Luchot. So what is the special Nechama -- the consolation -- which the prophet offers us this Shabbat? The Yalkut notes the double consolation and tells us it corresponds to the double sin and the suffering which resulted. But what is this dual consolation? One of the interpretations is given by the B'nei Yissachar (page 116b) in the form of a parable. A patient suffers from a near-fatal fever and all medicines and therapies have failed. The doctors have given up hope and called for vidui (confession) and for the family to gather round. Despite the physicians having given up, the patient rallies, the fever breaks and his life is spared. But he is extremely weak, drained by the experience, unbelieving

that he is actually cured. The less experienced physicians are alarmed at the patient's weak condition and wish to medicate him further but the more seasoned ones know better. They know that at the moment of near-death, there is no fever and no disease, no illness and no malady. It is the near-death experience which leaves the person weak indeed; but it is the weakness of the newborn baby, a frailty which brings with it the blessing of rejuvenation and new life. The prophet is told to console the people with the knowledge that G-d knows that their remorse has been so great, their anguish over the loss of their holy places and even holy self has been so profound that they were considered nearly dead from the experience. That itself is their cure and salvation. But when they are told the good news, they cannot believe their ears. They deny the possibility, they reject the happy tidings. Then they are told that it was the depth of their punishment, the torment of their pain itself which has saved them. Programs such as the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have discovered only recently what the Torah has always taught us -- that usually someone cannot be motivated to pick himself up until he has hit rock bottom. Although at the moment of impact, that moment is the nadir -- the worst second in a life replete with failure -- in retrospect it will be viewed as the turning point toward salvation. It is thus the bottom -- and the most important of steps to the top. The loss of the first Luchot was a devastating blow to the people who had left Egypt, walked through the Red Sea and stood under the mountain to receive the Torah. But it was also the moment they were assured of an enduring Tov in their eternal lives. As they hit the rock bottom of idolatry and other sins, they saw the potential for an eternal Tov which would come to them in the form of Luchot formed by a human hand, a hand extended to them in love and willingness to accept their repentance. The bond between Va'etchanan and Nachamu is that which makes us most human and Jewish. It is the ability to triumph over sin and death, loss and destruction. And to be consoled that our suffering has not been in vain. Goodness has been preserved forever. And it will be ours.

daf-hashavua Va'etchanan 5756 Copyright 1996 United Synagogue Publications

This edition is dedicated in memory of Professor Sidney (Zalamm) Greenbaum

Va'etchanan - The Shema by Rabbi S Silberg, Hendon Synagogue  
The Shema is the very centre of our morning and evening prayers. It consists of 3 sections of Torah (Devarim 6:4-8; 11:13-22 and Bemidbar 15:37-42). It proclaims the existence and the Unity of G-d, Israel's loyalty to Him and to His commandments, Divine Justice and a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. With every fibre of his being the Jew accepts the truth of these teachings. It is a positive Torah command to read the Shema twice a day, during morning Shacharit and evening Maariv prayers. "You shall speak these words when you lie down and when you rise up" (Devarim 6:7). The 3 paragraphs are regarded as one unit but the actual command can be fulfilled by the recital of the first verse alone. This first verse therefore - Shema to echad "Hear Israel, the L-d is our G-d, the L-d is One", has to be said with the utter conviction and with absolute concentration as to its meaning. We cover our eyes that nothing should distract us when we recite this first verse. According to their order in the Torah, the first paragraph of the Shema should actually come second (the 3rd paragraph first) but it is placed first because it opens with the concepts of the Unity of G-d, acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, the love of G-d and the study of Torah, the basic pillars on which Judaism stands.

V'hayah comes second because it commands us to keep all the Mitzvot and finally Parshat Tzitzit which also refers to remembering all the Mitzvot (Rambam). The letters Ayin of Shema and Daled of echad are writ large in the text of the Torah. They form the word ed meaning "witness". The Jew, when he recites the Shema bears witness to the existence and Unity of G-d to the world at large.

An individual praying alone, introduces the Shema with 3 words Kel Melech Ne'eman. They bring the total number of words in all 3 paragraphs to 248

which correspond to the number of parts in the human body (Tanhuma). They are omitted when praying with a congregation, since the Reader says aloud the last three words Hashem Elokeichem emet. The initial letters of Kel melech ne'eman spell Amen meaning truth or belief. In the same way that we answer Amen to a blessing to affirm the truth of this blessing, so we affirm the truth of the concepts found in the Shema. Another ancient tradition suggests that Kel Melech Ne'eman mean He was G-d before even the world was created. (Kel) That He is King of this entire world (Melech) and that He will keep His promise to restore the dead to life (Ne'eman) (Rokeach). The Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachot) gives a further powerful reason for reciting the Shema twice a day. The three paragraphs between them encapsulate the Ten Commandments "I am the L-d your G-d" is found in the words Hashem Elokeinu (The L-d is our G-d). "There shall be no other gods beside Me" is found in Shema echad (The L-d is One). "Do not take the name of G-d in vain" is understood in the word V'ahavta (You shall love the Lord your G-d) He who loves the King does not take his name in vain. "Remember the Sabbath day" we find the words L'maan tizkru (So that you should remember and do all My commandments) Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi explained the words L'maan tizkru with particular reference to Shabbat which has equal weight with all the other Mitzvot together. "Honour your father and your mother" occurs in the phrase "L'maan yirbu y'meichem (so that your days will be multiplied) the very same reward promised for honouring parents. "You shall not murder" is found in the words Va'avadtem M'Herah (You shall perish speedily). He who commits murder is executed "You shall not commit adultery" can be found in the warning V'loturu acharei l'avchem (You shall not stray after your heart and eyes). The heart and the eyes are the go between for sin. "You shall not steal" is clearly indicated in the words V'asaphta d'ganecha tiroshcha v'yitzharecha (You shall harvest your own corn wine and oil) "You shall not bear false witness" is indicated in the words Hashem Elokeichem emet (I am the L-d your G-d who is true; false testimony is the same as denying that G-d is the Creator "You shall not covet your neighbour's house" is clearly seen in the words Al m'zuzot beitecha (on the doorposts of your house) on yours but not someone else's house. The Ten Commandments forming, as they do, the nucleus of all the 613 commandments enhances even further the message and claims of the Shema and the reason why it should be recited twice a day.

The phrase Baruch shem k'vot malchuto l'olam vaed "Blessed be the name of His glorious Kingdom for all eternity" does not appear in the Torah anywhere. In the prayer it interrupts the text taken from the Torah. These words were the response of the congregation on Yom Kippur when the High Priest uttered G-d's name in the service or whenever Hashem's name was uttered in a blessing. It was introduced into the Shema out of deference to Jacob who said it before he died. He had challenged his sons "Perhaps some of you disagree with G-d?" They replied "Listen father Israel (Shema Yisrael) "Just as you are in full agreement with Hashem, so are we." (Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad) To which a relieved Jacob responded Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto L'olam voed. What should we do when we recite Shema? Asked Chazal. Should we insert it? Moses did not. Should we omit it? This would be disrespectful to Jacob. They compromised that we say it quietly. This is the reason why it is always printed in our Siddurim in small type.

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B"H Torah Studies Adaptation of Likutei Sichos by Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks Chief Rabbi of Great Britain

Based on the teachings and talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on the weekly Torah Portion - VAESCHANAN

The 9th of Av is the date on which both Temples were destroyed. Each year, on the subsequent Shabbat, we read as our Haftorah the famous passage of consolation from Isaiah "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people."

The Midrash tells us that this is, literally, a two-fold consolation for the loss of the two Temples. And yet, would not one have been sufficient?

For the First Temple saw a greater revelation of the Divine Presence than the Second, so that our grief and our consolation for its loss encompasses our feelings for the Second Temple.

The Sicha, however, argues that there was something unique about the

Second Temple, and that this has repercussions for our daily religious life. At the heart of its analysis is the distinction between two different approaches to G-d: Through righteousness and through repentance.

#### ONE CONSOLATION OR TWO?

This week's Haftorah, the first of the "Seven Weeks of Consolation" after the 9th of Av, begins with the words "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people."

The Midrash explains that this apparent repetition refers in fact to two consolations and two tragedies: The loss of the First and Second Temples.

But this is not as simple as at first sight. The idea of consolation is that, when a calamity befalls a man, even though a second person may not be able to restore his loss, he still gives comfort by his sympathy.

And if the man has sustained not one loss but two, then he can certainly be comforted twice over.

But in the case of the Temples, the consolation lies in the fact that a Third Temple will be built to replace those that were destroyed. And since the First Temple was greater than the Second in the revelations it housed and the miracles it witnessed, replacing it would, in itself, be replacing the Second Temple as well.

The First contained all that was in the Second, and more. So it follows that the consolation for the loss of the First would in itself include consolation for the loss of the Second.

The answer is, that though the Second Temple was, in absolute terms, less exalted than the First, it still had certain unique virtues. Thus, the Talmud interprets the verse, "Greater shall be the glory of the latter house than the former," to refer to the Second Temple, which was greater than the first in its size and duration.

This is why there will be two consolations, for the Third Temple will combine the virtues of both its predecessors.

#### Tabernacle and Temple

To understand what the unique virtue of the Second Temple was, we must first see the way in which a Temple as such went beyond the Tabernacle that accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness. Both were "dwelling-places" of G-d's presence. But the Temple was a permanent dwelling, the Tabernacle a temporary one.

For, there are two elements in drawing down a high degree of holiness to this world:

(i) where the holiness is apparent in the physical, but it does not actually transform it. This is a manifestation of the power of the spirituality, in that it can even permeate so gross a being.

(ii) where the holiness actually transforms the physical; that the material becomes, as it were, a "vessel," or receptacle, to holiness. This is an even stronger revelation, whereby the "light" not merely affects, but intrinsically changes, the physical.

Similarly, the Tabernacle was holy: "And they shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst."

Its sanctity extended even to the curtains, the beams, and the ground on which it rested. But these were not the source of its holiness. The source was in the revelation from Above, the infinite light of G-d which shone within it. That is why, when the Tabernacle was moved, its previous resting-place ceased to be holy ground. For its holiness was not from itself: It lasted only as long as the Divine Presence rested there.

But the sanctity of the Temple was vested in the physical materials from which it was built. Even after its destruction, the ground on which it rested was, and still is, sacred.

This is the inner meaning of the fact that the Temple was built by Solomon. For in his reign, "the moon reached its fullness," in the words of the Zohar.

The sun gives light; and moon reflects it. And in spiritual terms, G-d is the source of light, and the earth receives it. Whereas the Tabernacle had the sanctity of G-d's light, the holiness of the Temple lay in the very material of which it was constructed, in the things of the earth which were dedicated to G-d. It was as the "moon" which receiving G-d's light and reflecting it outwards to the whole world.

#### REFLECTED AND GENERATED LIGHT

But there is a difference between the moon as it is now, and as it will be in the World to Come.

Now it draws its radiance from the sun. But in the future world, "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun." It will shine, not with reflected

light, but with its own.

And this is paralleled by the difference between the two ways that the world and its beings are purified and transformed.

We may be changed by a light that comes from above, as a pupil learns from his teacher. He may come to understand what he has been taught, to the extent that, through his own efforts, he reaches the very essence of the subject. But still he is a reflection of his teacher. He is like the moon, shedding a light that came to him from elsewhere.

We may, on the other hand, be changed by a light from within. When a person, for example, returns to G-d after forsaking His will, he does not do so because of any revelation from Above. On the contrary, at the point of return, he is far from visions of G-d. He does so because of a prompting from within. For every Jew, in the true depths of his being, seeks to do G-d's will: It is merely that sometimes his inclinations get the better of him, and hide his real nature.

The essence of the Jew is that he is part of G-d. And the change that he brings to his life when he returns to G-d is from within, in the strictest sense. He penetrates the surface of his inclinations, and finds G-dliness at the core of his self. "All flesh shall see . . . for the mouth of the L-rd has spoken." He reaches the word of G-d through his flesh itself, through seeing the real nature of his existence. Such a person is like the moon of the World to Come. The light he casts is from the fire that burns within him.

The Word, the Command, the Return

There are therefore three stages:

Receiving light from elsewhere, reflecting it, and generating light from within.

They are mirrored by three facets of Judaism:

Torah, the commandments (Mitzvot) and the act of return (Teshuvah).

Torah is the word of G-d, the light from Above. Even though, when we learn Torah, we become united with it, Torah is always the giver of light and we are always the recipients. In our learning we add nothing to it, we merely strive to uncover what was already there.

But through the Mitzvot, we both receive and give light. By wearing tefillin or tzitzit we turn parchment and wool into holy objects. By abdicating our egos in favor of G-d's will, we refine the world: "The Mitzvot were only given so that, by them, all creatures should be purified."

Whereas the Torah exists eternally in itself, the Mitzvot need the partnership of man. The Torah, although it speaks of the physical world, does not enter into it. But the commandments require physical acts and objects, and they change the fabric of the world. The Torah is like the "light of day" which illuminates but does not change that upon which it shines.

But the commandments are like the "light of a lamp" in which wick and oil are turned into flame. Nonetheless, the Mitzvot are still a reflected light. They need, first, the word of G-d who commands them.

But the ba'al teshuvah - the person who returns to G-d - has shut himself off from the word of G-d, and returns because of a flame within himself that refuses to be separated from its source.

By the mitzvot a Jew sanctifies only what is permitted to him. But by teshuvah he sanctifies his whole past life, lived in the realm of forbidden acts. His past sins become his merits. And this is the unique virtue of the act of return: It sanctifies not only a part, but the whole of experience.

The Second Temple

We are now able to understand the unique significance of the Second Temple.

During the period of the First Temple, the Jewish people were in general at the level of "righteousness," living a life of obedience to G-d's commandments. The light it gave to the world was a reflection of the will of G-d.

But the Second Temple belonged to a time of repentance and return. The world was being sanctified from within, through Israel's own spiritual resources. Thus it is significant that its building was ordered by Cyrus, the king of Persia, a non-Jew.

This is why we needed two consolations, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people."

For the two Temples each had its own distinctive virtue. The revelations of G-d's presence which belonged to the First were greater, but those of the Second were more inward. They issued from the very texture of the physical

world.

Thus the Talmud says that the greatness of the Second Temple lay in its size (space) and its duration (time). For it drew its sanctity from man's own efforts to purify his finite world, not from G-d as He is above space and time.

The consolation will be the Third Temple, in which the light from above and the light from within will combine.

WHAT CAN BE LOST, AND WHAT CANNOT

All inner meanings of the Torah have their reflection in Halacha (Jewish law).

We can see that the land of Israel had a greater sanctity during the First Temple than during the Second. For - to take one example - when Rosh Hashanah fell on Shabbat, the Shofar was blown throughout the land in the First Temple times, but in the Temple alone in the time of the Second. On the other hand, the land lost some of its sanctity with the destruction of the First Temple, but none with the loss of the Second.

The laws attaching to the land of Israel show that the First Temple conferred a more intense holiness; the Second, a more permanent one. This can be compared to the two sets of tablets on which Moses received the Ten Commandments. The first set was the more miraculous: But they were broken. The second were not. So too the First Temple conferred greater holiness on Israel, yet when it was destroyed that sanctity was removed. But the holiness of the land in the time of the Second Temple persists for all time. By reading this week's Haftarah, "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people," we remember not only what was lost, but what survives. The generation of righteousness may belong to the past and the future. But the generation of return is a present possibility. It is the enduring heritage of the Second Temple. And by turning possibility into fact we bring close the time of the Third Temple - the twofold and final consolation.

(Source: Likkutei Sichot, Vol. IX, pp. 61 -70.)

bircas@netvision.net.il Va'Eschanan

Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

"And you shall love HaShem" (6,5)

The Mefarsh asks in the name of the Ramba"m regarding the mitzvah of loving (HaShem) and similar (mitzvos) that it is not possible to command something that depends on a person's nature.

The Sfas Emes answers that the truth is that the question is itself the answer. For we learn from this (mitzvah) that it is in the nature of every person of Yisroel to love HaShem Yisborach with all his heart and with all his soul.

However (this ability may be) buried within the depths of his heart, but through the desire and longing to expose this love (he can do so). In this regard it is said "I exerted myself, and I found it." (Gemora Megilla 6b) And the Sifri elaborates " 'And these words will be . . . ' (6,6) why was (this) said? Because it says 'And you shall love . . . ' I might not know how (to come to love). Now, when you put these words to your heart, you will come to know The One who Spoke and the world (came into) existence . . . " The explanation of this is as (was said) before: through a person putting this to his heart perpetually, and longing to come to the love of his Creator, the spirit of sanctity which is within him is revealed to him. In this regard it is said "And he planted eternal life in our midst" (Bircas HaTorah).

(We can generalize) that all the mitzvos of the Torah are comprehensive principles. The details, how to (be able to) fulfill the mitzvos, are in the category of the Oral Torah. This is why "the words of the Sages are preferred . . ." (Gemora Avodah Zorah 35a), for the words of the Sages (serve as) an introduction (as to) how to come to fulfill the mitzvos which are explicit in the Torah. For the words of the Torah are directed to a person who (has reached a sufficient level of) perfection that he can grasp (this) for himself. This is the characteristic of the Oral Torah.

And even though it is difficult to explain (how to) fulfill "with all your heart . . ." nevertheless there has to be the desire and the longing to achieve this at every moment, and through this, the "gates" in the heart of the person are opened.

"And you shall love HaShem your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your greatness." (6,5)

The Divrei Eliyahu brings the Davar Eliyahu in the name of the Gaon of Vilna

who quotes the gemora (Berochos 61b) "Rabbi Eliezer says: if it says 'with all your soul' why does it say 'with all your greatness' and if it says 'with all your greatness' why does it say 'with all your soul'? If you have a person whose body is more dear to him than his money, for this reason it says 'with all your soul,' and if you have a person whose money is more dear to him than his body, for this reason it says 'with all your greatness.' Rabbi Akiva says 'with all your soul' even if He takes your soul."

The Maharsh" a asserts that Rabbi Akiva is coming to explain the words of Rabbi Eliezer; but this is forced. In addition, this (viewpoint) is intrinsically implausible, for is there any person in the (whole) world whose money is more dear to him than his body? Everything that a person has, he will give to save his soul (life), "for when he dies, he will not take anything (with him)" (Tehillim 49,18).

But we can explain it in this way: "If you have a person whose money is more dear to him than his body", refers to a person who will arouse himself to do a mitzvah with his body more (readily) than he will (for a mitzvah) with his money, because he will disregard physical effort, but he will not (readily) spend (his) money. (This person) is counseled that he must do (mitzvos) with his money, and (the Torah) instructs him "with all your greatness."

Rabbi Eliezer is not speaking at all about giving his life (for a mitzvah), only about physical exertion and monetary expenses. But (he considers that) there is no requirement to give up one's life for mitzvos. And Rabbi Akiva argues, and says " 'With all your soul' even if He takes your soul." For a person is obligated to give his life for the mitzvos of HaShem Yisborach. Now it fits in well what his students said to (Rabbi Akiva, while the Romans were executing him by raking his flesh with rakes of iron, and he was saying Kri'as Shma) (Berochos 61b) "(Is a person obligated even) to this extent?" This appears to be puzzling; (why) should his students say such words to him, (asserting) that he should not surrender himself for Kiddush HaShem (the sanctification of HaShem).

But now it all fits in well; for they held like Rabbi Eliezer, that a person does not have to surrender himself to death (for the sake of a mitzvah), but only to suffer the burden of afflictions. Thus they were amazed, and asked him "To this extent?" you do not need any more (striving, you have done enough DR). He answered them "All my life I was in distress over this possuk" for he himself considered that "even if He takes your soul" (his obligation is unchanged); "and now when I get the opportunity, I should not fulfill it?"

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Message from the Haftorah Parshas Vaeschanan - Shabbos Nachamu Yeshaya 40:1

This week's haftorah begins the special series of haftorah portions relating to our final redemption. In this introductory reading the prophet Yeshaya delivers Hashem's warm words of comfort to the Jewish people. After nearly two thousand years of exile the time has finally arrived for the Jewish nation to return to Hashem and to the Promised Land. The painful scars of exile, persecution, and rejection by Hashem remain fresh in the minds of the Jewish people. In addition, they find it difficult to approach Him after all their defiance and disregard for His will. Hashem therefore turns to His nation and expresses to them warm words of comfort and console. Hashem instructs the prophet Yeshaya, "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call her because her long term has been served and her sin has been forgiven. She has received a full measure from Hashem for all her sins." (4:2) The Jewish people find it difficult to accept that Hashem is truly interested in them. Although, the time for redemption has come they have not thoroughly cleansed themselves from all of their wrongdoings. They question, "How can they entertain the lofty ideal of establishing a perfect relationship with Hashem without having perfected their ways?" Hashem

responds, "Your sins have been erased because you have suffered an abundant and full measure for them." (ibid.) The Malbim (ad loc.) explains this to mean that the harsh severity of their sufferings compensated for their incomplete steps of repentance. The Jewish people deserve their redemption after enduring and outliving their most horrifying and tragic experiences with steadfast faith in Hashem.

During their painful exile they have consistently demonstrated their unwavering commitment to Hashem and their inseparable attachment to Him.

The prophet continues, "A voice is calling from Zion clear the road of Hashem, smooth out the Land of Israel as a path for our Hashem. All valleys will be raised and all mountains levelled...and the glory of Hashem will be revealed." (40:3-5) Hashem's deep concern for His people encompasses

all aspects of their return. The roads of return will be clear and smooth and Hashem will be waiting for His Jewish nation with 'open arms'. Yeshaya says, "Announcer of Zion, ascend a tall mountain; raise your voice with strength without any fear and say to the cities of Judah that their Hashem is here." (40:2) Yeshaya adds that no nation will stand in their way and that every power will release them from their tight hold. He states, "All nations are like nought before Hashem, they are not considered an entity to Him." (40:17) "He renders princes nothingness, the powers of the world worthless." (40:23) Yeshaya tells the Jewish people that they have nothing to fear because from Hashem's perspective nothing is standing in His way. Their redemption will be clear and perfect, an open demonstration of the hand of Hashem.

Our Chazal (see Yalkut Shimoni Yeshaya 443 and Beraishis 162) share with us

an important insight regarding Hashem's words of comfort. They quote the passage in Shir Hashirim wherein the Jewish people address Hashem at the time of redemption and say, "If only you, Hashem could be like a brother to me." (8:1) Chazal explain this to refer to the indescribable compassion that Yosef Hatzadik displayed towards his brothers. After all the inappropriate behavior the brothers displayed to Yosef they could never forgive themselves for their misguided actions. They therefore delivered a message to Yosef beseeching Him to forgive them and not harbor ill feelings towards them. In response to their plea, the Torah states "And Yosef comforted them and spoke

to their hearts." Chazal indicate that mere words of comfort and assurance were not sufficient to allay their fears. Yosef therefore spoke to their hearts and redirected their thinking. He showed the brothers how meaningful they were to him and how their safety and prominence were key factors in Yosef's attaining and maintaining his position and glory. The Jewish people express their wish that Hashem do the same for them and act towards them as Yosef did towards his brothers. Chazal conclude that if Yosef allayed all

his brothers' concerns and fears certainly Hashem will do the same for His people. When instructing His prophets to comfort the Jewish people, Hashem

therefore chooses these very same words, "comfort them and speak to their hearts." Yeshaya is charged with the mission of conveying to them how significant is each and every Jewish person to Hashem. Yeshaya says about our redemption, "Hashem will lead us like a shepherd tends to his flock, gathers them in his arm, carries them in his bosom and gently leads his young ones." Yeshaya tells us that Hashem cares for every Jewish soul with individual concern as does a shepherd for his sheep. Although the Jewish people strayed so far and suffered so much Hashem still cares about them in an indescribable measure. Yeshaya beckons the Jews not to be hesitant or embarrassed to return to Hashem. Hashem cares so much for every one of them that, despite their past experiences, they will undoubtedly enjoy a most perfect relationship with Him.

The haftorah concludes, "Lift your eyes heavenward and see who created them;

He who brings out the myriads of stars by number and calls each one by name;

.. not a single one is overlooked." In view of the above, Yeshaya's final message is quite clear. Although the myriads of stars are scattered over the

vast expansion of the heavens, Hashem identifies with each one of the stars, his loyal servants by name and purpose. The Ibn Ezra explains (see Tehillim 147, 4) we should view ourselves, the Jewish people, in this same vein.

Although we are scattered over the vast expansion of the earth Hashem still identifies with each and every one of us by name and purpose and eagerly awaits our personal return to Him. These are true words of comfort, spoken to the heart of Yerushalayim, which will foster a perfect relationship with Hashem. May all of the Jewish nation, mourners of Zion and Jerusalem be comforted with our final redemption soon in our days!

by Rabbi Dovid Siegel, Rosh Kollel (dean) Kollel Toras Chesed of Skokie Haftorah, Copyright (c) 1996 by Rabbi Dovid Siegel and Project Genesis, Inc.

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