

WEEK OF

July 30 2017

8 Av, 5777

WEEKLY PARSHA NEWSLETTER

BS"D



Parshat Va'etchanan

*By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen*

PARSHA

HALACHA

STORY

Q&A

SHIURIM

JOKE

RIDDLE

QUOTES

DAVEN FOR

PARSHAT VA'ETCHANAN

Moshe Rabeinu begins this week's parshah by telling Bnei Yisrael how he pleaded with Hashem to let him see Eretz Yisrael:

"I implored Hashem at that time, saying: 'My Lord, Hashem you have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand, for what power is there in the heaven or on the earth that can perform according to Your deeds and according to Your mighty acts? Let me now cross and see the good Land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain and the Lebanon' (Va'etchanan 23-25).

The prelude and the plea seem disjointed. What connection is there between Moshe Rabeinu having begun to see "Hashem's greatness and strong hand," and his next request to enter Eretz Yisrael? It is as if Moshe Rabeinu's strategy is to tell Hashem, "I have just begun to see Your greatness, please let me culminate this great experience with a grand finale entering Eretz Yisrael."

This seems odd. Is it possible to compare the land he desires to enter with all he saw during the amazing journeys in the midbar? Is there any sight comparable to the splitting of the sea?

Will there be any produce as amazing as the mann? Will there be any water sweeter than that of the rock? Can Moshe Rabeinu honestly be hinting that Eretz Yisrael could be the peak of His glory, as opposed to an anticlimax to forty-years filled with miraculous events?

The answer can be explained with a story.

When Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky studied in Eretz Yisrael many years ago, he often spoke with his father's cousin, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, author of Alei Shur and Mashgiach of Yeshiva Be'er in Yerushalayim.

Being a talmid of the great musar luminaries of the previous generation, Rabbi Wolbe was a very soft-spoken man. In his quiet manner and measured words, his message of musar message impacted thousands through profound talks and prolific writings.

One day, when Rabbi Kamenetzky was in his home, he was discussing with the Rav a bit about his Swedish roots and European topography. They came to the subject of the Swiss Alps. Rabbi Kamenetzky then mentioned that he heard in the name of the Brisker Rav, the revered mentor of Rav Wolbe's generation, that when the Mashiach will come, he will transport

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya

Michael ben Yonah

Ro'ee ben Rachel

May bat Ilana

Ben Tzvi ben Ilana

Gidon ben Esther

Esther bat Mazal

Yosef ben Devorah

Yaffa bat Rivka

Baruch Chai ben Zoya

Rivkah bat Malkah

Nissan ben Liza

Gavriel ben Toviyo

David ben Liza

Baila Chava
bat
SorkaFreida Leah
bat
Pesha RachelYehoshuah Mordechai
ben
Leah GitaChaim Yehudah
ben
AidelEfrat
bat
Shifra Tanya

the Swiss Alps and place them in Eretz Yisrael.

Upon hearing these words, Rav Wolbe's tranquil demeanor changed immediately. He stood up to his full height with fire in his eyes and yelled, "Der Brisker Rav hut das kain mohl nisht gezagt! The Brisker Rav could never have said that!"

Rav Wolbe continued with a long soliloquy whose passion never left Rabbi Kamenetzky.

"There are no mountains as beautiful as those in Tzefat. There are no lakes as beautiful as the Kineret. And there is no city that sparkles like Yerushalayim! Mashiah need not bring anything because it is all here!"

Rabbi Kamenetzky was not certain if on an aesthetic level, he could agree with the Rav's vision or comprehend the reality of his perspective. However, he did feel one thing. Though beauty and glory are subjective, the passion expressed by Rabbi Wolbe is one that Rabbi Kamenetzky and hopefully every Jew should strive to attain.

Perhaps Moshe Rabeinu was pleading as an expression of the Jew's eternal longing, appreciation, and passion for Eretz Yisrael. His statement, "Hashem, you have just started to show me the power and the glory" was as though Moshe Rabeinu understood that all the nisim, the splitting of the sea, the miraculous mann, the water from the rock, were only a prelude to Eretz Yisrael and would not compare to the greatness attainable from the majestic experience of **entering** the land.

It is a longing every Jew should have, whether waiting for the redemption from a balcony in Boca, or atop a mountain villa perched high in the Swiss Alps.

Moving on: This week is *Shabat Nachamu*; the Shabbat of "comfort." It is named that because of the first pasuk of the *haftarah* that is read this week: "Nachamu, nachamu, Ami yomar Elokeichem - comfort, oh comfort My people, says your G-d" (Yeshayah 40:1). *Shabat Nachamu* is always the first Shabat after the fast of Tisha B'Av when we mourn the destruction of the first and second Bet Mikdash.

The continuation of the *haftarah* speaks directly to this mourning: "Dabru al lev Yerushalayim ve'kiru eleyah ve'kiru ki

malah tzeva'ah, ki nirtzah avonah, ki lakchah mi'yad Hashem kiflayim bechol chatoteha - speak tenderly to Yerushalayim and declare to her that her term of service is over, that her iniquity is expiated; For she has received at the hand of G-d double for all her sins" (Yeshayah 40:2).

This is the first of the seven Shabatot following Tisha B'Av and leading up to Rosh Hashanah, called *Shivah De'nechemtah* - the seven Sabaths of comfort. Each Shabat we read a comforting nevuah until we are once again ready to face Hashem on Rosh Hashanah. This cycle plays out annually.

First there are the three weeks prior to Tisha B'Av in which we sink to the depths of sadness - and then seven weeks in which we make our way out of the tragedy and into the joy of the Yamim Ha'nora'im and the Chag Ha'Sukot which is completed with Simchat Torah.

It seems strange that the parshah on *Shabat Nachamu*, this Shabbat of comforting, is *Vaetchanan*. The parshah begins with Moshe Rabeinu (a"h) relating to Bnei Yisrael how he begged Hashem to be allowed into Eretz Yisrael. This plea is all the more poignant in that Moshe Rabeinu already knows that the sentence has been decreed and that he will not cross over into Eretz Canaan. The Midrash makes it a point to teach us that from Moshe Rabeinu we learn never to despair concerning davening and what seem like "unanswered prayers."

When Hashem answers Moshe, it is not in an idyllic mode. As a matter of fact He responds in anger saying, "Rav lach! Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again."

This "enough," points to a complex set of issues. The Gemara and Midrash note that this is the same phrase that Moshe Rabeinu used when he condemned Korach and his cohorts: "Rav Lachem! You have gone too far sons of Levi" (Bamidbar 16:7).

The Midrash in Devarim Rabah concerning this states the following: "The Holy One Blessed is He said to him: 'Moshe, I am One who repays payments. What you did is being done to you. You said: 'Rav Lachem! You have gone too far.' I, too, say: 'Rav lach! Enough.' You said:

PARSHAT VA'ECHANAN

Continued

'Pay no regard to their offering' (ibid. 15). I also said: 'Never speak to Me of this matter again.'" Moshe said to Him: "What did I do? Because I said to them 'Listen you rebels' (Numbers 20:10)?! For the sins of others you are going to kill me?"

How painful this must have been for Moshe Rabeinu. He thought that he was defending the Divine order in telling Korach and his accomplices that they had overstepped their bounds. He thought he was reasserting Hashem's authority. Yet, he was punished. So Moshe Rabeinu sadly asks "For the sins of others you are going to kill me?"

The first rebuke to Moshe is that he is overstepping his authority just as Korach did. This must have stung even more since this is exactly what Korach himself said to Moshe Rabeinu. "You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and G-d is in their midst" (Bamidbar 16: 3). It is as if in these last moments Hashem is taking Korach's side.

How different this is than Hashem's declaration after the incident of the Egel when He was through with Bnei Yisrael and he angrily told Moshe: "Now, let me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation" (Shemot 32:10). Hashem was about to wipe Am Yisrael off the face of the earth and make a great nation of Moshe Rabeinu's seed alone.

Hashem both granted Moshe the power to stay His hand and also made it obvious that Moshe alone was worth as much to Hashem as all of Bnei Yisrael. There again Moshe Rabeinu defended Am Yisrael's life and future.



RIDDLE

When they are caught, they are thrown away.
When they escape you itch all day.

WHAT ARE THEY?
(Answer on Page 5)



And yet, here, in this week's parshah, Moshe Rabeinu stands alone with Hashem and there is no one to defend him. Hashem is the accuser, using language coined by Korach.

This exchange with Hashem was elaborated upon by the chachamim. According to one Midrash, Moshe Rabeinu begged to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael even as a simple person, not a leader. When Hashem refused this, Moshe asked for his body to be taken in and buried. Hashem refused this too. In his desperation, Moshe did not grasp that the line that Hashem was drawing was not unexpected. The leadership that was needed in the desert was radically different than the leadership that would be needed in Eretz Yisrael.

The generation of the desert was a transitional generation who were totally dependent on Hashem and on Moshe Rabeinu for their very sustenance. But once the Yarden would be crossed there would be a need for political institutions, military structures, agricultural infrastructure and so forth. Moshe was a leader who was seen by the people as resembling Hashem (kivyachol). When he descended Har Sinai bearing the Luchot Ha'brit his skin shone with a radiance of angels. "Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moshe... for all the great might and awesome power that Moshe displayed before all Israel." (Devarim 34:10-12)).

But once the Yarden was crossed, Bnei Yisrael would now need the leadership of Yehoshuah ben Nun (a"h).

Continued on page 4

VA'ETCHANAN

Continued

This world of discourse and pain in a two word phrase returns us to the question we asked at the beginning: Why, on the Shabat Nachamu when we are recovering from the trauma of Tisha B'Av, do we read of Moshe Rabeinu's distress?

The high point of this week's parshah is, of course, the retelling of the story of receiving the "Ten Sayings" (*Aseret Hadevarim*) at Har Chorev. In this moment of revelation Moshe Rabeinu was at his peak. Hashem would speak and Moshe would relay the word of G-d to Am Yisrael. Bnei Yisrael was fearful of being exposed to the full power of Hashem's revealed glory and they were all too happy for Moshe Rabeinu to be their Divine mediator. This arrangement also found favor in Hashem's eyes who saw in it righteousness and humility.

Why did the revelation take the form of an introduction ("I am the Hashem your G-d...") followed by a series of commandments and prohibitions? Why was it not enough to merely bask in the revealed glory of Hashem?



For someone like Moshe Rabeinu, who was on a spiritual level that was unattainable by any other mortal, this might have been enough. Chachamim inform us that Moshe's face resembled Hashem's face (we do not know what this implies). Moshe Rabeinu was imbued with the Divine spirit.

However, once Bnei Yisrael crossed the Yarden they would be spending most of their time in a struggle (at times epic and at times mundane) for survival. Most people would not walk in "radical amazement."

The eighteenth century Chasidic Master Reb Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (a"h) taught that the commandments were the ways to enact revelation in our lives. They are the concrete containers of the transient experience of Hashem's glory.

This too is what Moshe Rabeinu could not accomplish. When he was alive and leading Am Yisrael, the people knew that Hashem was in the Ohel Moed (Tent of Meeting) and that his reflected glory was in Moshe's face. There was not much that they had to, or could personally do to bring Hashem down to earth more than this.

Moshe's tenure as leadership was the time in which Bnei Yisrael was fed Divinity literally with every mouthful. It was, however, Am Yisrael's task to live a G-d infused life on their own, in the mundane details of existence. This could not be done for them. This was not Moshe Rabeinu's expertise.

And so, in the wake of the destruction of the holy *Bet Hamikdash*, we are comforted in the knowledge that now we have to create communities and gatherings which are a *Mikdash Me'at*, a miniature Bet Mikdash - not by building replicas of the Bet Mikdash but by doing deeds which create concrete containers for the transient experience of Hashem's glory.



Every time we keep the Shabat or we treat workers fairly we reaffirm the Exodus from Egypt and create a lasting monument to Hashem's revelation. We read of Moshe Rabeinu's moment of painful realization that his chapter in history was drawing to a close and we realize that now all of us, hold the responsibility for enacting the revelation of Hashem in the world.

Entering Eretz Yisrael was a vote of confidence in that Hashem believed in our own spiritual abilities. Having spent all those years with a leader on the caliber of Moshe Rabeinu, taught us how to interact with Hashem, to feel happy with His mitzvot and to engage Hashem with more love than fear.

The fact that Hashem has enough faith in us that we can succeed in doing this is in itself a great comfort. Rising to the occasion is now our challenge.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

"A person's true character is revealed when he is angered, when he drinks intoxicating beverages and when he has monetary dealings with others."

(Keritut 13b)

A CUTE STORY

An older man went to the doctor for his annual physical. The nurse asked him how much he weighed. He told her, "I weigh 135 pounds."

Then she weighed him and the scale read 160.

She then asked him how tall he was. He said, "5 feet, 5 inches."

The nurse measured him and he was only 5 feet, 3 inches.

So she took his blood pressure and told him, "Sir, your blood pressure is very high."

"Of course it's high," he said. "When I came in here I was tall and slender. Now I'm short and fat!"

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ANSWER TO RIDDLE

Fleas

QUOTES

** "We are never deceived. We deceive ourselves." **

** "Life is full of people who will make you laugh, cry, smile until your face hurts and happy that you think you will burst. But the ones who leave their footprints on your soul are the ones that keep your life going." **

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Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking
 on the following dates:

Date: Aug 09, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Aug 23, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: August 26, 2017 - Shabat

Time: 5:00pm

Place: 1364 E7th - Bklyn, NY

Date: August 27

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 420 Booth Ave.
 Englewood NJ 07631

Date: Sep 06, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Sep 12, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: To Be Announced

**SPECIAL ELUL GATHERING
 IN HONOR OF ROSH HA'SHANAH**

Date: Sep 27, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

ANNOUNCEMENT

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Kíneret Sarah Cohen

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Shiur To Post Wednesday, Aug 2

Parshat Va'etchanan

The Power Of Prayer

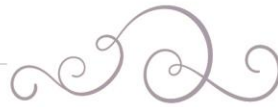
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Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!



Candlelighting Time

7:49PM
NY TIME



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