A DEEPER INSIGHT

Moshe Rabbenu pleaded that he be allowed to enter into Eretz Yisrael. Once he would be there, it is clear that his residing there would allow him to see the land. What was the need for Moshe to also emphasize his intention that he be enabled “to see the good land”?

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, Admo’r of Kotzk, explains that Moshe did not request simply that he be allowed to observe the landscape of the land superficially. His intent was that by entering the land he would be able to merit the experience of a deeper, more qualitative insight into the holiness of the land. Moshe’s intent was that by entering the land he would be able to merit the experience of a deeper, more qualitative insight into the holiness of the land.

NOT TO SUBTRACT - BUT ALSO NOT TO ADD

It is readily understood why one should not detract from a mitzvah. Shortening the span of a holiday or placing fewer parashios in tefillin clearly destroys the entire mitzvah. However, one may ask why the Torah also forbids adding to a mitzvah. If one feels uplifted by adding an extra day of Sukkos for example, why not?

The Dubno Maggid answers this question with a parable. There was once a man who continually borrowed objects from his neighbor. However, each time he would return it with an additional object. For example, if he borrowed a spoon, he would return two spoons. Eventually the lender became curious as to why the borrower did this. Upon being asked, the borrower simply said that every time he borrowed an object, while it was in his possession, it “gave birth to a new one”! While the lender didn’t believe this tale, he felt no reason to terminate the relationship since he was profiting by it. One day, the borrower came to ask his neighbor to lend him a very expensive silver menorah for a party. The lender was delighted to agree to this, expecting that he would receive two menorahs at the end. However, after the party was over, the borrower came to the lender and told him that unfortunately he could not return the silver menorah to him since “it died”. The lender was furious with him, and shouted, “What do you mean it died? Menorahs are inanimate objects!” The borrower responded: “If you are ready to accept gain based on my tale that an object can ‘give birth’, you must be willing to accept the rationale that an object can die as
well.”
In the same way, says the Dubno Magid, if a person can rationalize that he can add to a mitzvah to make it “better” in his eyes, so, too, he may come to be able to rationalize detracting from a mitzvah in order that it will be more acceptable or convenient.

Rabbi Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explains that Moshe did not fear that the people would stray immediately upon their entrance into Eretz Yisrael, but rather, the longer they would be in the land, the more danger there would be. He saw it coming only when the second and third generations will have been born in the land - when “they will have become old (in the land)”. The word צꢯי is not the opposite of “young” (that would be צꢯך), but rather the opposite of “new” or “fresh”. Only when the nation will have had two or three generations behind it born in the land will its inhabitants consider themselves as “natives”, originated from the land. The time when they had no home, no land belonging to them, will have passed from their minds and they will have completely forgotten their origin and Whom they have to thank for the land and for being permitted to remain in it. It was not for nothing that Hashem has interwoven into our minds, to be forever freshly remembered, the concept of קֵלֵּלָה קְוֶרֶת אֵת בֵּית אֶפְרָיָים מַרְשָׁי כָּל יָמֵי חוּדֵש - “that you shall remember the day of your exodus from the land of Egypt all the days of your life”. It was not for nothing that Hashem established His festivals and His great institutions of Shemitta and Yovel for the ever-recurring acts of the united national remembrance of the origin of the land and of its belonging to Hashem. Not for nothing was the “young of the flock” appointed by Hashem to be the eternal symbolic representation of His people in their relation to Him. In our individual and national relationship with Hashem we have no greater enemy than the change from our fresh, youthful enthusiasm of the awareness of belonging to Hashem to the worn out, apathetic condition of “having grown old in the Land of Promise” - when that which was the longed-for goal of our hopes and wishes has become “ours” and we “grow old in the possession of it”.

Hashem is the only real sustainer of their existence, as revealed in the history of the origin of the nation and of the whole universe. As the awareness of this truth fades, the people will think of themselves as being their own masters, and they will throw themselves into the arms of heathen depravity, which considers all individual and national existence only as the product of the physical forces of the world. People would then tend to see these natural forces as those which form countries into cradles of nations, and it is from these powers that the nation and the individual have to wrest their fate. Then they will no longer look to Hashem for the granting or denying of their prosperity, even though it is Hashem who blesses them in and through His land according to how they regulate their doings, and their abstaining from doing, in accordance with His will which He revealed to them. Rather, it is the land itself, with all its visible effective material forces to which they look. And eventually people may see in Hashem not the provider but rather the one who is obstructing the joys of life, with His laws always demanding the refraining control of their sensuality, and imagine that by making it a principle to disobey His laws they are achieving for themselves a happy course.

Thus, as we observe the mitzvos, we should keep a constant and fresh awareness that it was Hashem who took us out of Egypt and gave us the Land of Israel.

EVENTUALLY, PEOPLE MAY SEE IN HASHEM NOT THE PROVIDER BUT RATHER THE ONE WHO IS OBSTRUCTING THE JOYS OF LIFE.

Rav Itzele of Volozhin illustrates our verse with the following parable. A wealthy man had a wonderful daughter, a charming and talented young woman of outstanding character. He took a son-in-law for his beloved daughter, a bright yeshiva student, and happily agreed to support him with an open hand, as long as the young man would dedicate himself to devoted Torah study.

Unfortunately, the fellow was not too diligent, and his studies were not
productivite. Yet, he concealed this from his wife’s family, and he continued to feign an appearance of intense study, while the opposite was actually true. This situation persisted for several years, by which time several children were born to the young couple. The man now felt that there was no reason to continue his charade. By now, he figured, his father-in-law would accept him, at least for the sake of the grandchildren, and continue to support him even if he would reveal his true nature. He therefore decided that he could now act as he felt, contrary to his original commitment, and he could leave the beis midrash behind.

Moshe addressed the nation and warned them in this regard. After you enter into the land, “and you have children and grandchildren”, you might determine that Hashem would now allow you to stay in the land perpetually. You might think that there will no longer be a risk of exile, and that Hashem will certainly be merciful, at least for the sake of the children, no matter how you conduct yourselves.

Nevertheless, Moshe quickly pointed out that a sense of complacency would be dangerous and without base. “Today, I will call the heavens and earth to testify” - that if the conduct of the nation becomes corrupt, and they act contrary to the will of Hashem, “you will risk being quickly expelled from the land”.

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TO ACCEPT THE YOKE OF HEAVEN FIRST

The order of the reading of the paragraphs of the Sh’m’ma is coordinated and synchronized so that we first declare our acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, followed by our acceptance of mitzvos. According to the Imrei Emes, the Rebbe from Ger, this is also the source for the custom to introduce our mitzvah observances with the declaration of “L’shem yichud”. With this simple statement, we focus our intent and affirm our recognition that our purpose is to increase kedushah in the world. With that introduction, and at that point, we then set out to fulfill the mitzvah at hand.

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Dushinski, a former head of the Beis Din of Yerushalayim, once asked his father, Rav Chaim, to explain why the custom at a bris milah in Yerushalayim is for the father of the newborn boy to say the verse “Sh’m’a Yisrael” before the bris is performed.

Rav Chaim explained that the Mishnah (Berachos 13a) quotes Rav Yehoshua ben Korcha who says that the first paragraph of Sh’m’a must be read before the paragraph of “ה’ אלהינו יתברך”, because it is appropriate to express our acceptance of the yoke of heaven before we accept the yoke of mitzvos upon ourselves. He explained that, here, too, we are about to perform the mitzvah of milah, which is the moment we introduce the baby into the realm of mitzvos. Therefore, it is most fitting that we first read the verse of Sh’m’a, which is the acceptance of the yoke of heaven, before we have the baby introduced into the observance of mitzvos.

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ONE’S SOUL AND ONE’S MIGHT

It is common that when a person is ill, or suffering from poverty, or elderly, he turns to Hashem and contemplates his relationship with Him. This, however, does not yet prove a person’s genuine love for Hashem. It may be that the person is turning to Hashem due to his fear of the imminent frailty of his condition. The test as to whether one’s underlying approach in his serving of Hashem is based upon a relationship of love is when he does so while he is physically healthy and financially secure.

The Chasam Sofer notes that the Torah commands that you must “love Hashem...with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might”. When a person loves Hashem when his heart is complete and he is in full control of his capacities and powers, including his physical abilities and financial resources, then his love of Hashem is shown to be genuine.

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Some other mitzvos may not have been performed properly. Again, the person might not have studied about them, and he therefore was not aware of their observance. In fact, he did not fulfill some of the mitzvos at all. In result, he might be surprised to find out that he must give an accounting for all of his actions in this world. His mitzvah observance is evaluated, and, as a result, he may be held accountable for all his actions in this world in the next world. His mitzvah observance is evaluated, and, as a result, he might be surprised to find out that he did not fulfill some of the mitzvos at all. In fact, he may not have studied about them, and he therefore was not aware of their observance. Some other mitzvos may not have been performed properly. Again, the person might imagine the anger which the king felt toward the contractor and toward the workers, who had not specifically referred to Mishnah. The Chofetz Chaim illustrates the message of the verse with a parable. A king once instructed that as the work progressed, the name of the king was inscribed upon every brick. This was in order to ensure that the builders focus their intention and realize that their efforts were directed for the king himself. At one point, the king arrived to inspect the progress of the project and to see how his instructions were being carried out. He was disappointed to find that only a few of the buildings had been completed, and many had not even been started. Among those that had been finished, he found most in a filthy and abandoned condition. Finally, the king did find a few structures that seemed to be built according to his detailed design. Yet, he was horrified when he noticed that his name was inscribed on the brick together with the name of his arch enemy. One can only imagine the anger which the king felt toward the contractor and toward the workers, who seemed to be so irresponsible and defiant. The Torah contains six hundred and thirteen mitzvos. Each mitzvah must be fulfilled according to its guidelines and specifications as outlined in the Shulchan Aruch. Every mitzvah must also be performed with the proper intent, and that is for the sake of Heaven.
have neglected to understand the details and rules which the particular mitzvah demanded. Still other mitzvos may have been fulfilled, but the person’s intent might have been tainted with foreign thoughts and ideas. A person may do a virtuous act, but he may do so for self-serving purposes. These situations are analogous to when the king arrived to monitor the progress of the task which was assigned to his servants. We are the servants of Hashem, and our mission is to live our lives according to the Torah. When some mitzvos are left undone, others unfinished, and still others tainted because the intent in performing them was overlaid with ulterior motives, the scenario could become shameful.

Our verse sets the tone for proper observance. The Targum translates the phrase “It shall be as righteousness for us” to mean that the situation should be “as a merit”. We can expect that our lives will be lived in a manner which will represent us with pride on the day of judgment, “when we keep all of the mitzvos”. Our actions must always be “before God our Lord”, in that our intentions should always be for the sake of Heaven, and they should be done “as God has commanded us”, with all the details and according to the rules as set forth in the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch.

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Halachic Corner
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Zmanim for Parshat Vaeschanan 5779

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Just as one’s speech and walking are different on Shabbos, so, too, should his clothes be special. Just as one gets dressed up when going to a special place or to meet an important person, he must also be appropriately dressed for the day of Shabbos. This law does not depend on whether the person stays at home or goes out - the time itself is special. However, too much emphasis should not be placed on clothing to the extent that it becomes the topic of conversation in shul. (Igeres HaGra)

From all these halachos (speaking, walking, dress) we see that every moment of Shabbos must be outwardly apparent as a unique day. This is the only way to perform oneg Shabbos while at the same time keeping the spirit of k’vod Shabbos.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. Besides fulfillment of his request, what was Moshe davening for by using the term עָנָן (“and I emplored”)?
   See Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch on 3:23

2. What specifically did Moshe want Bnei Yisrael to always remember when he used the term יִדֵּח (“only”)?
   See Ibn Ezra 4:9

3. How was Moshe complimenting Bnei Yisrael by using the terms וַיִּקְרָאָם וַיִּכְבָּשָׁם (“and you approached and you stood”) in describing how they came to Har Sinai?
   See Ha’amek Davar 4:11

4. Why in the repetition of the הָעָמַדְתֵּךְ עָמָד כְּפָר年中国 mentioned here, is the Torah more specific, mentioning the ox and the donkey regarding the resting of animals on Shabbos?
   See Rambam 5:14

5. Why does the Torah interrupt Moshe’s speech to Bnei Yisrael with a discussion about the יִסְרוּ הַיַּמִּים (cities of refuge)?
   See Rambam and Ibn Ezra to 4:41

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Blitstein Institute Dean Dr. Chani Tessler and her husband Mordecai on the engagement of their daughter Leora to Gad Koenig; to incoming HTK Kollel couple, Joseph & Aliza Roth, on their marriage; and extending heartfelt condolences to Co-President of Yeshiva Parents of HTC, Rochel Garfinkel, on the loss of her mother, Mrs. Chaya Sara Blitstein, z”l.
- Hebrew Theological College’s Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro will take place this Thursday, August 22, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Joshua Zisook will speak on “Insights into Sh’mar”. Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shiur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more information: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or jzisook@htc.edu.
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- Ida Crown Jewish Academy will be offering Sports Clinics in wrestling, baseball, fencing, girls’ and boys’ basketball and cross country with our own Ida Crown coaches and players for students in grades 3-8. Sports Clinics will be held on August 19, 20, and 21. Come find out what it’s like to be an Ida Crown Ace! All kids welcome! For more information and to register, visit our website at www.icja.org or call 773-973-1450.

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Science Carnival for the whole family! Join the Walder Science Center on Sunday, September 15, from 12:30-3:30 PM, for an exciting collection of science exhibits, activities, and of course our famous Live Science Show (2:00 PM) for the whole family! Great Chicago Food and Beverage Restaurant will be on site with a BBQ lunch menu! We are located at 3050 W. Touhy Avenue in the Albany wing of Congregation Adas Yeshurun.

Special unplugged/acoustic kumzitz! Musical Melave Malka series is back at Young Israel of West Rogers Park! Featuring The Carlebach Combo. Saturday night, August 17th, Motzaei Shabbos Nachamu, at 10:00 PM. Live Jewish music in a friendly-kosher environment. Free ice cream, drinks, and chip and pizza available for purchase - donations requested.

Learn to play Pickleball at our beginners workshop or just drop in for Open Play! It's the fastest growing racket-sport, combining tennis and ping pong skills with a paddle and whiffle ball. Beginners Workshop: Wednesdays, August 21 - October 2, from 1:30-3:00 PM. Equipment provided and pre-registration required. Open Play on Mondays, August 26 - October 7, from 2:00-4:00 PM. Bernard Horwich JCC. Register: jccchicago.org/sports.

Save the date! An Evening of Inspiration with Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, Monday, September 16, 8:00-9:45 PM, at Arie Crown Hebrew Day School (4600 Main Street, Skokie). For men and women. Presented by the YU Torah Mitzon Kollel's Aron and Rivka Friedman Living Torah Series. For more information, call the Kollel office, 773-973-6557.

Join the YU Torah Mitzon Kollel as they kick off the new year at the Annual Summer Event, A Taste of the World! September 8th, at Noah's of Lincolnshire (200 Barclay Blvd., Lincolnshire 60069). 6:00 PM Reception, 7:00 PM Dinner. (Under 30? Redeem your discount!) Register at www.torahchicago.org or call the office at 773-973-6557.

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The Wi-Fi Cheva recommends that you start your day with a Good Morgan! Good Morgan Café! Located in the Wi-Fi Building on McCormick Blvd., Good Morgan offers a delicious array of breakfast and lunch specials daily. Try their delicious Belgian waffles or omelet specials! Don’t miss their famous fried whitefish sandwich and other tasty sandwiches and wraps. Open daily 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

In loving memory of our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Miriam Saltzman, ר"ת, on the occasion of her fourth yahrtzeit on 18 Av. Your memory lives on in your great-grandchildren, who follow in your footsteps of Yiddishkeit. - By the Backman, Drapkin, Gerson, Weinstein, Gotlieb, Saltzman, Yoffe, Steiner, and Rosby families.

In loving memory of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, ראשת צבריים ע"ש, ר"ת, Pauline Litz, on the occasion of her 42nd yahrtzeit on the 13th of Av, and ר"ת בר ס汰, ופ.Consumer, Dr. Bernard Litz, on the occasion of his 21st yahrtzeit on the 20th of Av. They exuded love of Torah, family, chessed and ma'asim tovim. May they continue to be role models to their families. May their memories be for a blessing. - The Litz, Bensinger, Sharfman, and Harris families.

By Rabbi Dr. Avraham Isenberg, and Rabbi Dr. & Mrs. Yacov Isenberg, and their families, in loving memory of their beloved father and grandfather, Rav Zvi HaRav Zvi Isenberg, on the occasion of his twentieth yahrtzeit on 22 Av. ר"ת ופ.Consumer.

By Chana & Phil Kovalsky and family in memory of our beloved aunt, Eva Chudnof (née Bozman), ר"ת, on the occasion of her eighth yahrtzeit on the 22nd of Av. Eva was the sister of our late mother, Rebbitzen Leah Chaimovitz.

By Melanie and Moshe Neiditch, Yakov Neiditch, and Marsha and Jeff Schneiderman, in loving memory of our mother and savta, Libby - Leeba bat Yehudah Leib Chaikil, ר"ת, on the occasion of her yahrtzeit on 20 Av. May her memory be for a blessing.

By the Silverstein family, the Mayesky family, the Isenberg family, and the Lerer family in memory of our beloved father and grandfather, Rabbi Isaac Mayesky, ר"ת ופ.Consumer, on the occasion of his 33rd yahrtzeit on 21 Av. May his memory be for a blessing.

Lilku vit Peshatim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Max and Mary Sutker and Louis and Lillian Klein, ר"ת. May their memory be for a blessing.

Answers:
1. Moshe wanted his prayers to be answered. He also asked that he should have the ability to make himself worthy for his prayer to be answered.
2. Moshe wanted Bnei Yisrael to always remember the day that they were at Har Sinai.
3. These are terms of running with excitement. Even though Har Sinai was full of fire, Bnei Yisrael desired to get as close as possible.
4. The ox and the donkey specifically are animals used for working the land. Hashem was adding more power to the teams, which were already strong.
5. Ibn Ezra says that this just happened chronologically at that time, so the separation of the cities of refuge were mentioned here. Ramban disagrees and says that Moshe mentioned this commandment as part of his call to action for Bnei Yisrael to follow Hashem’s will.}

Prepared by Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand, Editor, and Mrs. Naomi Samber, Managing Editor
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