



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

OD YOSEF HAI
50 FINCHLEY LANE, NW41DJ
TEL: 020 8203 5701

Thoughts on Parashat VAETHCHANAN

Year 23

by Dayan Abraham David

In this parasha we have the Shema which contains the most important sentences of our belief in G-d, the acceptance of His Kingship, '*Kabalath Ol Malchut Shamayim*' and the Unity of Hashem. The Yalkut Shimmoni gives a new insight into the mitzva of Kriyat Shema which we recite twice a day: at night and in the morning. He explains with a parable of a hacham who had a son who would serve him with two full meals every day, one in the morning and one in the evening. The son became poor and could no longer afford this. His father called him and told him "I know you cannot afford these two meals but it will give me just as much pleasure if you listen to my drashot in the Beth Hamidrash twice a day instead". Similarly, since G-d had foreseen the destruction of the Temple so depriving Yisrael of the opportunity of bringing the Korbanot, the Shema in the morning and in the evening would take the place of the Tamid of the '*Shahar*', morning, and the Tamid of the '*Ben Arbayim*', evening.

From this it would seem that the Shema would be instead of the Korbanot. But the Talmud Berachot which is brought down in the Rambam tells us that the Tefilot represent the Korbanot; Shaharith for the Tamid

HaBoker, Mincha for the Tamid of the evening, Musaf on Shabbat and Festivals for the Musafim etc. and Arbit for the Chelev and Evarim left on the Mizbeyach to be burnt at night. The Yalkut, in another chapter, brings a connection saying that the 18 berachot of the Amida were instituted as an indication of the 18 times the name of G-d is mentioned in the chapters of the Shema. We know that the offerings of the sacrifices and the pleasure G-d derives from them was not from the actual material objects offered but the thoughts and concepts behind the offerings. The Yalkut, in Parashat Tzav, tells us that Bilaam tried to outdo all the Avot with the large numbers of his offerings and was even willing to offer two of his children in order to do better than Abraham Avinu so that he would get his own way. G-d told him, "Your thoughts are not acceptable, it is Aaron's Log Shemen and small offering I look forward to, for his humility and his pure thoughts". The Korban must, first and foremost, be the person offering himself, '*Adam Ki YaKriv MiKem*', of yourself.

In the Shema we accept '*Ol Malchut Shamayim*', the Kingship of G-d upon ourselves, his uniqueness and complete unity. But we also hear what G-d wants from us from the chapters of the Shema which, according to the Midrash, even has indications of the ten commandments. This is also the first thought we must have before an offering so that we will know Who we are offering to with our request and

what is required of us. We could add that the drasha the father refers to in the Midrash is divrei Torah. For kriyat Shema is divrei Torah, the dvar Hashem, the words of G-d. And even though the tefillot (Amidah) were in place of the korbanot (offerings), they had to be preceded by the drashot ie Kriyat Shema which connects us to Hashem through His words ie Torah before our prayers to our King. It was really Kriyat Shema that prepares us to communicate in the right set of mind in our tefillah which is in place of the korban. So it is with Tefillah, we must recognise Who we are standing before and Who we are communicating with before we pray. The body of Tefillah is in place of the Korban, the physical offering. The Kriyat Shema before the Amida, prepares us for the recognition and acceptance of His will.

The Rambam in the 4th chapter of Hilchot Tefilla writes that the lack of Kavanot HaLev in the Amida, disqualifies the tefilla. Yet he says in the 10th chapter that the lack of Kavanah in the first Beracha, disqualifies the tefilla and necessitates repetition. Rabbi Chaim of Brisk explains that there are two types of Kavanot in prayer. The first kavana refers to recognising and knowing before Who we stand in prayer, before the Shechina, and that is absolutely necessary and would disqualify our prayer. The second kavana is understanding and thinking about the words we say in prayer and even though we should concentrate during the whole prayer, it is lack of concentration only during the first beracha that would disqualify the prayer and necessitate repetition.

We do not have a Beth Hamikdash and Korbanot. Let our Kriyat Shema and prayers be acceptable to Hashem until the rebuilding which we hope will be soon.

Amen

TORAH GEMS

In the Haftarah we read immediately after Tisha B'Ab commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem and the Beth Hamikdash the Nabi consoles the Jewish People with the words of Hashem '*Nachamu, Nachamu Ami*';'. In fact even on Mincha of Tisha B'ab we say these pasukim of consolation. How can we be consoled even on the day commemorating the destruction? Is it not like someone consoling another when his dead lie before him '*Keshemeto mutal lefanow?*' And why '*Nachamu*' twice? What are the two consolations? We could explain that a person could be consoled in two ways over a disaster. One, that perhaps things could have been much worse and the second that this disaster could bring about greater benefit. To explain the first we have a Yalkut in Tehillim Chapter 79 on the Pasuk '*Mizmor leasaf Elokim Bauh Goyim Benashlatecha timu Hechal Kodshecha*'. A song of praise to Asaf, 'G-d the nations have advanced into your inheritance and defiled your Holy Temple'. Why a song of praise referring to such a destruction and defilement, it should have been a lamentation '*Kinah mebayeh*'.

The Yalkut answers with a parable of a king who had a spoilt son who, after many warnings about his bad behaviour, he still did not listen to his father and continued his bad deeds in his chambers in the palace, to the embarrassment of the king. Until the king could not stand it any more, he then entered the prince's chambers with his soldiers and destroyed everything in it in his anger. When asked why had he destroyed a part of his own palace he replied it is better to vent my anger on wood and stone as a lesson than to take it out on my son. And so G-d destroyed His own Temple and vented his anger on wood and

stone so that the Jewish People should learn their lesson and He would not have to destroy them. In the destruction of the Holy Temple we are shown G-d's love for us and how it could have been worse, and the whole Jewish People might have been lost as have other nations in the history of the world; the first consolation. The second, we see from the Talmud in Makot, when Rabban Gamliel, Rabi Eliezer, Rabi Yehoshuah and Rabi Akiva saw the ruins of the Temple Mount with foxes burrowing there (as we see human ones doing so today), they began to cry but Rabi Akiva laughed. When they asked him why he laughed at such a sorry sight of our Holy Temple he answered them; we find two prophecies placed one next to the other. One of destruction and the other of hope and the rebuilding of Jerusalem to its full glory. Why? To give us hope for when we see the fulfilment of the bad, then we can be sure that the good would follow. After they had seen the destruction in full, '*Sion Sade Techaresh*', they could now look forward to the fulfilment, the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple to its full glory. For if one prophecy came true so must the other, '*Nachamu, Nachamu Ami*'.

Tisha B'Ab and the whole history of our exile is one of a small nation at the hands of the nations of the world like one little sheep among seventy wolves who are unable to close their jaws upon her. This can only be because of Divine intervention. As Moshe tells us in the Parasha that even in our exiles among the nations '*Ki rachum Hashem lo yarpecha vi lo yashehetecha ve lot yishKach et brit abotechah*'; Because G-d is merciful, He will not loosen His hold on you and will not allow you to be destroyed because of the covenant with your Fathers. Rabbi Yaacov Emdem who lived through many of the pogroms and troubles of his time in Europe around the middle of the 18th century, said: "Many have tried to

injure us but were not able to destroy us!" By my soul when I contemplate these great wonders of our continued existence they have taken on a greater significance than all the miracles and wonders that Hashem, Blessed be He, performed for our fathers in Egypt, in the desert and when they came into the Land. The longer this exile extends the miracle of Jewish existence becomes more obvious; to make known G-d's mastery and supervision over nations and history.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Despite all the unfortunate influences Am Yisrael are being bombarded with, we are still a very special people and the hearts of our people are with Hashem. I was once not so long ago on a plane to Israel. On the plane I noticed a noisy group of young Israeli's apparently returning from a football event they had travelled to see, their appearance was hardly Jewish with funny haircuts and other accessories. I walked towards my aisle seat at the back of the plane a couple of seats before that a woman seated next to a frum man stood up and told me the seat you are heading for you will not be comfortable with the lady seated there. Here have my seat and I will sit there. I was quite surprised by the offer, she was the last person I would have expected such respect from. She was not exactly dressed modestly, it seemed she also had some tattoos, nose rings and dyed hair. She was Israeli and I am sure Jewish. Nachamu ami. I was in for another surprise. I had not had the opportunity to pray mincha before boarding the plane. Sometime after we had taken off I looked around to see if we could make a minyan, there was another Rabbi on the plane and he told me no chance to make a minyan, there are only 3 people who could join us. Anyway as we were talking one of

the group I mentioned before came up to us and said, are you looking for a minyan to pray? I said yes. He told me "Al tidag", don't worry you will have one. He turned to his friends "Chevra Tsrechim minyan", soon the group converged at the back of the plane, some used their hoods to cover their heads others we gave our own kippot from under our hats, we tried to find siddurim to give them. We even gave ours, we had an overwhelming minyan and we did not hear a word of complaint from the stewards and crew whose kitchen space we occupied (you can imagine why). One of the crew even took out a kippa from his pocket and joined us for prayer. I was sheliach tzibbur and really felt the power of the prayers of those young men, who meticulously answered every amen with fervour. I felt inspired in my prayers as on erev Yom Kippur. We prayed Arbit as well and then they all came to ask for berachot. Mi ke amcha Yisrael. Nachamu nachamu ami.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

When the Temple was destroyed the Rabbis decreed certain laws to help us remember the destruction.

1. When decorating our homes we should leave an 'Aamah al Aamah', an 18 inch square, in a prominent place not plastered or painted or decorated to remind us of what we have lost. Preferably this should be on the wall opposite the entrance to the home where it can be seen when we come in or go out.
2. In a banquet with guests, we should leave an empty dish or empty place without a plate to remind us.
3. A woman should not wear all her jewellery at once but leave out some to remind her of the Churban.

4. At a wedding we break a glass. Our Askenazi Brethren and some Sephardim, put a little ash on the head of the Chatan, to remember Yerushalayim on happy occasions. Even in an engagement, it is a good custom to break a plate.

5. No Tachanun is said on Friday 27th July which is Chamisha Asar B'Ab for the very many good things which happened on that day.

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by Jason
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses
followed by a kiddush**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724*

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	8:41 pm
Shabbat terminates	10:00pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat for the summer	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 pm
Shiur Pirke Avot	7:15 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	8:20 pm
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit for the summer	7:30 pm

**DO NOT LIGHT YOUR SHABBAT
CANDLES BEFORE PLAG HAMINCHA
WHICH IS 7:18 PM**