



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on VAETCHANAN by Dayan Abraham David

The word Vaetchanan has a numerical value of 515, the number of prayers Moshe Rabbenu made pleading to enter the Holy Land. We learn from the words written here about his prayers and the four conditions we need for our prayers to be accepted:

1) A person should beseech as a poor man in need begs at the door as it says: *'Betachnun im Yedaber rash'* as Moshe did Vaetchanan.

2) The prayers must be directed to the source of all Mercy *'il Hashem'*. When we stand for the Amida, we should have in mind whom we are directing our prayers to.

3) The correct time for beseeching: *'Va ani tefillati lecha Hashem et ratzon'*, as it says here: *'Baet Haheh'* after the success of the battles of Sichon and Og, Mincha is a good time as when Eliyahu Hanabi challenged the Priest of Baal; or after doing a Mitzvah or when the Tsibbur are praying.

4) Your beseeching should be clear and explicit as was Moshe's

prayer and not given to other interpretations. We see here the power of prayer even though Hashem had made a decree on Moshe not to enter the land had he prayed one more tefillah, his prayers would have been answered. G-d found it necessary to forbid him to add another tefillah. *'Al Tosef daber Elai Badavar Haze'* this was because Moshe had to remain behind to bring in his generation in the future. *'techiyat hametim'*

He was miraculously shown the whole land from across the Jordan, his prayer did help somewhat. Rashi tells us that Vaetchanan is derived from the word *'Chinam'*, free. He explains that even though the Tzaddikim can make their beseeching, relying upon their good deeds, they do not. Instead they ask G-d for a free gift *'matanat chinam'*, solely from His Mercy and Goodness. But we may ask that since Moshe was not being granted his request to enter the land as a free gift *'matanat chinam'*, why did he not ask on behalf of his good deeds which would make the request stronger? It would seem that even though Tzaddikim could request on behalf of their good deeds, they are reluctant to do so

since it might take away from their merits in the world to come. As we see from the story of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa who had nothing for Shabbat and prayed to Hashem. A hand came down from Heaven and gave him a table leg made of gold. He gave it to Rabenu Hakadosh who gave him money on deposit for it. When he told his wife how he was able to buy all the food through receiving the leg from Heaven, she refused to benefit from the food unless he promised to return it after Shabbat saying she did not want her husband's table in Heaven missing a leg. He went back after Shabbat and prayed and a miracle happened, a hand came down from Heaven and took the leg back. This was considered a greater miracle than the first for Heaven gives and does not take back.

The Kli Yakar argues that even Tzaddikim do not have the right to request for the good deeds they have done, for we are all in debt to G-d and He does not owe us anything since he has given us all we need in this world. *'Ma ashiv la Shem kol tagmoli alai'*, what can I give back to Hashem for all He has done for me. He explains the Midrash differently, Tzaddikim do not ask a reward for the Mitzvot they have done. They make a request for the mitzvot they will be able to fulfil with the granting of their request, his request to enter the land, was to keep the Mitzvot only possible in the Holy Land. He did not want to go in to the Land to eat its fruit but to fulfil more Mitzvot and that could have been a legitimate request. But

Tzaddikim, like Moshe, in their humility do not rely on this for fear of not fulfilling this in the future, hence they ask for *'matanat chinam'*, free gift from G-d.

GEMS – **Haftarah Nachamu nachamu** **ami**

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, 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 harm 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

Sometimes, even with our best intentions to concentrate on the words of our Tefillah (Amida), we wander away with our thoughts and suddenly find ourselves near the end of the Amida and we give up. But in fact we should continue with what is left. The Chafetz Chaim explains this with an analogy of a young girl selling apples in the market place. A group of hooligans overturned the basket and began grabbing the fruit. She stood and watched in dismay until a wise man advised her to grab as many apples as she could and these at least she would save.

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 Wednesday 5th August, Chamisha Asar B'Ab for the very many good things which happened on that day.

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences 8:34 pm

We should not light candles before 7:13 pm

Shabbat terminates 9:50 pm

Mincha Erev Shabbat 7:15 pm

Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat

Shacharit 8:30 am

Shabbat :Latest Shema

Magen Avraham 8:39 am

Shabbat Latest Shema Gra 9:15 am

Shiur by Dayan David 6:30 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm Shabbat 7:30 pm

Arvit 10:00 pm

WEEKDAY TIMES

Shacharit 7:00 am

Sundays 8:00 am

Mincha 7:30 pm

followed by Arbit

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS CONCERNING COVID-19

PANDEMIC

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LE'NAFSHOTECHEM

VEHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA