

PARSHAS VAESCHANAN

לעילוי נשמת ר' ניסן בן ר' שמואל והעניא בת ר' גרשון • לעילוי נשמת וועלוועל בן שלמה הלוי ז"ל • לעילוי נשמת ר' אלטר חיים בן ר' יצחק • לעילוי נשמת חיה גולדה בת יונה

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Shabbos and Shabbos Nachamu, our Ir Miklat

R' Barry Stein

On Shabbos Nachamu, we read how Moshe Rabbeinu separated the arei miklat, the cities of refuge. An ir miklat was not merely a place to escape danger. It was a place where a person who had caused tragedy could stop, reflect, and rebuild his life. After the pain and destruction of Tisha B'Av, Hashem gives Klal Yisrael our own ir miklat: the holy comfort of Shabbos Nachamu.

Rav Avigdor Miller teaches that nechamah does not mean forgetting the Beis Hamikdash or moving past our mourning. True comfort means understanding that our tears have a purpose. The sadness of Tisha B'Av should awaken us to recognize what we lost and inspire us to become the people worthy of its rebuilding.

The Slonimer Rebbe teaches that a Jew is never truly lost. Even when a person feels distant because of failure, sin, or hardship, the path back remains open. Torah, tefillah, and the kedushah of Shabbos become his refuge, allowing him to return and attach himself again to his Father in Heaven.

The name Av means father. Av is the father of the months that follow. From the tears of Tisha B'Av, we move toward Elul, the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, Sukkos, and finally Simchas Torah. The journey begins with brokenness, but it ends with closeness. Our deepest nechamah is the yearning to return to Yerushalayim, to rebuild the Beis Hamikdash, and above all, to feel once again that we are standing close to Hashem.

The Koach of Ayin Tovah

R' Tuli Berger

In this week's parshah, Moshe Rabbeinu fervently pleaded with Hashem to allow him to enter Eretz Yisroel. The Gemara in

Meseches Brachos teaches that Moshe Rabbeinu davened 515 tefillos—the gematria of the word Va'eschanan. Although Hashem decreed that he would not enter the Land, He granted part of Moshe Rabbeinu's request. Hashem commanded him to ascend the mountain and view Eretz Yisroel from every direction—west, north, south, and east.

This is difficult to understand. The Gemara in Meseches Sotah tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu did not want to enter Eretz Yisroel in order to enjoy its fruits or its beauty. His sole desire was to fulfill the mitzvos that can be performed only in Eretz Yisroel. If so, what was accomplished by merely seeing the Land? What was the significance of this privilege?

Rav Shmuel Berenbaum zt"l explains that Moshe Rabbeinu did not simply want to look at Eretz Yisroel. He wanted the opportunity to place an ayin tova upon it.

The Gemara at the beginning of Meseches Bava Basra teaches that a person should avoid looking at his friend's flourishing field, lest an ayin hara, chas v'shalom, cause harm. We see from here that a person's gaze has the ability to affect another. If an ayin hara can have a negative effect, then certainly an ayin tova—for middah tova merubah—has the power to bring abundant brachah.

We find this concept elsewhere as well. At the end of Parshas Beshalach, during the battle against Amalek, Moshe Rabbeinu stood atop the mountain while davening for Klal Yisroel. The simple explanation is that by raising his hands in tefillah, Klal Yisroel would look toward him, be inspired to daven as well, and merit victory. However, the Ramban offers another insight. Moshe Rabbeinu stood specifically on the mountain so that he could see Klal Yisroel and place an ayin tova upon them. The Ramban similarly explains in Parshas Bamidbar that Klal Yisroel were counted before Moshe and Aharon so that they could look upon each person with an ayin tova.

Perhaps this also explains why Moshe Rabbeinu longed to see Eretz Yisroel. Although he would not merit leading Klal Yisroel into the Land, he still desired to cast an ayin tova upon it, so that the Jewish people would be blessed with success, brachah, and siyata d'Shmaya throughout their years in Eretz Yisroel.

WEEKLYTIDBITS

Self-Esteem

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avos teaches that one who publicly embarrasses another person is considered as though he has shed his blood. Why is humiliation viewed as such a grievous offense—so severe that Chazal compare it to taking a life?

Rav Bunim Schreiber quotes **Rav Don Segal** shlita, who explains that a person's entire being and avodas Hashem are built upon how he sees himself. When a person has a healthy sense of dignity and self-respect, he naturally wants to live up to that image. He thinks, "A person like me doesn't do such things," and that inner dignity helps protect him from falling into aveiros.

When someone is publicly embarrassed, however, that sense of self-worth is damaged. He begins to see himself as less valuable and less capable, and once that foundation is weakened, he becomes vulnerable to spiritual decline. Aveiros that once felt beneath him may no longer seem out of character.

This is why Chazal compare humiliation to taking a life. By destroying a person's self-esteem, one can undermine the very foundation of his avodas Hashem and set in motion a spiritual decline that may never have occurred otherwise.

How careful we must be to preserve the dignity of every person. By helping others feel valued and respected, we strengthen the very foundation upon which they build their lives and their avodas Hashem.

Tehillim

The **מלבי"ם** explains that our **נשמות** do not belong to this world. They existed before creation, and at their essence, every **נשמה** is the same. The only difference is the physical person in whom each **נשמה** resides.

When a person passes away, the **נשמה** itself does not change. It simply leaves its temporary home in this world and returns to its true home—**הקדוש ברוך הוא**.

This is the meaning of the pasuk, **ה' מעון** ("ה' מעון אתה היית לנו" (תהלים צ:א). Hashem has always been, and always will be, the dwelling place of our **נשמות**.

Perhaps this also explains why the Gemara in Megillah says that **ה' מעון אתה היית לנו** refers to **בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות**.

Our **נשמות** are naturally drawn to their Source. Although we live in a physical world, our **נשמות** feel most at home in places where they can connect best to Hashem. That is why **בתי מדרשות** and **בתי כנסיות** are called Hashem's dwelling for us. Through tefillah and Torah, our **נשמות** reconnect with their true home and find the environment where they are most comfortable.

Your Personal Tefkid

Rav Ahron Lopiansky quotes the Darchei Moshe, who relates that **Rav Moshe Feinstein** zt"l would say that every person is given a unique measure in life. One person receives a large vessel, while another receives a smaller one. Our mission is not to compare the size of our vessel to someone else's, but to fill our own as completely as we can.

A person with a smaller vessel who fills it to the top has accomplished more than someone with a much larger vessel who leaves it only partially filled.

Each of us has a unique tefkid. Hashem places us in the exact circumstances, with the exact strengths, challenges, and opportunities we need to fulfill that mission. He doesn't expect us to be someone else—He asks us to become the very best version of ourselves.

True greatness is not measured by how much we have been given, but by how faithfully we use what Hashem has entrusted to us.

Bitachon

Bitachon is about expecting good without a doubt. totally reliant on Hashem. the Rabbeinu Bechai in the kad hakemach writes that we need to be so sure just as we expect the sun to come up each day we need to have firm belief that Hashem will give us what we need! That is the true mitzvah of Bitachon.

WEEKLYSCENARIO

At times, you may notice someone in shul who seems very simple or perhaps a bit unusual. How do you find it within yourself to walk over, take a genuine interest in him, and listen to what he has to say?

Something to think about:

Pirkei Avos teaches, "Al tehi vaz l'chol adam"—do not look down upon any person. The meforshim explain that nothing in Hashem's world exists without purpose. If something was created, it has value. Even a leaf on a tree should not be damaged without a constructive purpose because it, too, has a place in Hashem's world.

How much more so is this true of every person. Every individual is inherently chashuv. The teaching of Chazal, "Bishvili nivra ha'olam"—the world was created for me—applies to him just as much as it applies to you.

Now imagine that someone told you this seemingly simple fellow was an extraordinarily wealthy and influential person. Wouldn't it suddenly become much easier to treat him with respect, strike up a conversation, and take a genuine interest in his life?

The truth is that he possesses something far greater than wealth. He is a precious creation of Hashem, with a unique purpose that no one else can fulfill. If Hashem considered him important enough to create an entire world for him, then surely he deserves our respect, our attention, and our kindness.

WEEKLYHALACHA

If I accept an early Shabbos and daven ma'ariv before sunset, do the berachos of ma'ariv count towards my 100 berachos of Shabbos?

Rav Betzalel Stern writes in Sefer B'tzel Hachochma (4:155) that starting Shabbos early and davening ma'ariv does not change the day of the week. Although one may no longer do melacha, it is still Friday, and the 11 berachos recited during ma'ariv will not

count towards the 100 berachos of Shabbos. As previously noted, we recite 13 fewer berachos on Shabbos than on a weekday, and the missing berachos are made up with additional food. In the summer months when sunset is late, many people make an "early Shabbos". If one follows the ruling of B'tzel Hachochma and ma'ariv Friday night is not counted for Shabbos, a total of 24 berachos are missing (if Kiddush and hamotzi were said before sunset you will be missing even more), and it will be very difficult to reach the goal of reciting 100 berachos for Shabbos.

Perhaps most people follow the opinion of Rav Ovadya Yosef zt"l (Yabia Omer OC 10:7) who disagrees with Rav Stern. He writes that once a person davens ma'ariv, it is considered nighttime for them, and all the berachos of ma'ariv can be counted towards the hundred berachos of the next day. He offers the following proof. Shulchan Aruch (OC 30:5) writes that if a person did not put on tefillin during the day and davened ma'ariv early before sunset, he may no longer put on tefillin. By davening ma'ariv, he turned it into night, and it is forbidden to wear tefillin at night—even though the sun is still shining. (In truth, Mishnah Berurah (30:17) points out that there are those who disagree with the Shulchan Aruch. Since tefillin is a mitzvah min ha'torah, and it is not actually night, the Mishnah Berurah recommends putting on tefillin, albeit without a beracha. Apparently, Rav Ovadya Yosef felt the position of the Shulchan Aruch is primary.)

Since reciting 100 berachos daily is a mitzvah d'rabbanan, it would appear that one may follow the lenient opinion of Rav Ovadya Yosef and count the berachos of an early Shabbos for the Shabbos calculation.

Adapted with permission from outorah.org

FRIDAY	SHABBOS
8:02 Candle Lighting	5:46 Neitz
8:20 Shekiya	8:34 Kriyas Shema (MA)
	9:24 Kriyas Shema (Gra)
	10:37 Zman Tefillah
	1:02 Chatzos
	1:39 Mincha Gedolah
	8:19 Shekiya
	9:06 Tzeis Hakochovim
	9:31 72 Minutes

RIDDLE ME THIS

Usually we read from a parshah three times the week preceding it. When is it possible to read from a parshah four times, before reading it on Shabbos morning?

LAST ISSUE - Q: Can you find at least six books of Tanach whose names appear in this week's parsha? A: In Parshas Devarim, the following books of the Tanach are named: Devarim (Devarim 1:1), Bamidbar (Devarim 1:1), Eichla (Devarim 1:12), Yehoshua (Devarim 1:38), Vayikra (Devarim 3:14), and Melachim (Devarim 3:21).