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DAF KESHER

SHAPELL'S / YESHIVA DARCHE NOAM · MIDRESHET RACHEL V'CHAYA · JACK E. GINDI Z"L PATHWAYS ISRAEL & PATHWAYS PLUS

This Daf Kesher is dedicated In memory of Tova bat David, ז"ל, and Chaim ben Benyamin, ז"ל.

DVAR TORAH ALL TEN AT ONCE

Before the first verse of the Aseret Hadibrot (Ten Statements – the Ten Commandments) the Torah says, “G-d said all these things, saying” (Shemot 20:1). Most of this verse seems to be superfluous. Couldn't the Torah have just said, “G-d said” and proceed to “I am Hashem your G-d” and the rest of the Aseret Hadibrot? Rashi quotes the answer that appears in the Midrash (Mechilta Parshat Hachodesh Parshah 4), that Hashem first said all of the Aseret Hadibrot at once, as one statement, and only then said them one by one. “G-d said all these things” means that He said all ten statements in one Divine utterance. This explains the verse, but begs the question asked by the author of the Shem Mishmuel (Harav Shmuel Bornshtein, זצ"ל, 1855-1926, Poland, in his comments on Parshat Yitro 5672): What was the purpose of Hashem saying all ten statements at once? The People would not understand them when said together, and they would eventually hear them separately.

He explains that when Hashem said all ten statements as one simultaneous utterance He was not communicating to the conscious mind, but to the roots of Israel's soul, שורש נשמתם. At that inner level, the Jew is one unified being and grasps the totality of Torah. That aspect of the person which is not differentiated into its variety of components and senses can tap into the Torah not yet differentiated into details and sentences.

That inner reception of the totality of Torah in one moment prepared Israel for each of the Aseret Hadibrot, as well as for all of the details of the Torah – each and every mitzvah, verse, and halachah.

There is a very important practical ramification of this metaphysical description of the first stage of the Aseret Hadibrot, says the author of the Shem Mishmuel. There is value, he says, in learning even when one's mind and heart are not engaged, even when he is not “into it” and cannot concentrate.

וזה לימוד לכל איש הטרוד בענינים שונים אשר בלתי אפשר לו ליישב דעתו וללמוד, אל ישגיה על זה אלא יתחיל ללמוד אע"ג – This is a lesson for any person who is preoccupied with different matters that make it impossible to concentrate and learn. He should ignore all of that and start learning – even if he does not know what he is saying. For even though he does not understand it (with his conscious mind and intelligence), the source of his soul does understand.”

Though, of course, there are many possible reasons for lack of concentration and focus, and many methods of dealing with those difficulties, the author of the Shem Mishmuel teaches us one possibly helpful strategy. Learning, he says – saying the words, even without comprehension or concentration – activates the Jew's inner being that is receptive to the inner core of Torah. That will, in turn, little by little, affect lower aspects of his soul and draw them back into Torah. Eventually, his concentration and focus can return and he can actually comprehend what he is learning. A person should not delay learning until he is able to have full concentration, as the Mishnah says, “Do not say when I am free I will learn, lest you never become free” (Avot 2:4 – see also Shabbat 63a). The goal is true concentration and comprehension, but the means to that goal are to start learning in a way only comprehensible to the roots of our Neshamah because of Hashem's One Utterance.

Also in this week's Daf Kesher: Source Guide – “Moshe Took a Captive” · “The Critique Seeker,” by Rabbi Dovid Schoonmaker

SOURCE GUIDE: MOSHE TOOK A CAPTIVE

The Midrash describes Moshe bringing down the Torah from Heaven as “capturing a captive.” In what way was the Torah a captive? The same Midrash also describes the Torah as both a gift and an acquisition. Aren’t these mutually exclusive? This source guide is based on essay in the Sfat Emet that addresses these difficulties.

A. Taking a Captive

The starting point of the Midrash is a verse in Tehillim about Moshe Rabbeinu on Mount Sinai:

<p>1. Tehillim 68:19 You ascended on high and took a captive. You acquired gifts to be with man, and even those who stray, to dwell, Hashem, G-d.</p>	<p>תהילים סח:יט עָלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שְׁבִיתָ שְׂבִי לְקַחַת מִתְּנוּת בְּאָדָם וְאֶף סוֹרְרִים לְשֹׁכֵן קָה אֲלֵקִים.</p>
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The Midrash unlocks the meaning of this cryptic verse:

<p>2. Shemot Rabbah 28:1 “You ascended on high and took a captive” – The normal way of the world is that one who enters a country takes something that the eyes of the people of the country are not focusing on. Yet Moshe ascended on high and took the Torah, which everyone was lifting their eyes towards. This is [the meaning of] “You ascended on high and took a captive.” Is it possible that because he captured it he took it for free? The verse teaches us [that this is not so] through the words, “You acquired gifts to be with man.” It was given him through acquisition. Is it possible that he is obligated to give money? The verse teaches us [that this is not so] through the word “gifts.” It was given as a gift.</p>	<p>שמות רבה כח:א “עלית למרום שבית שבי” – בנוהג שבעולם הנכנס למדינה נוטל דבר שאין עין בני המדינה עליו. ומשה עלה למרום ונטל את התורה שהיו הכל נושאים עיניהם עליה. הוי “עלית למרום שבית שבי.” יכול מפני ששבה אותה נטלה חנם? ת”ל “לקחת מתנות באדם.” בלקיחה נתנה לו. יכול יהא חייב ליתן לו דמים? ת”ל “מתנות.” במתנה נתנה לו.</p>
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Why is the Torah referred to as a captive?
How is the Torah both “acquired” and a “gift”?

B. Torah’s True Place

A number of the essays in the Sfat Emet on our Parshah (by Harav Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter, דצ”ל, the Gerrer Rebbe, 1847-1905) relate to these difficulties:

<p>3. Sfat Emet – Parshat Yitro – 5638 In the Midrash: “You ascended on high and took a captive.” For the main [dwelling place of the] Divine Presence is in the lower worlds. It turns out that the Torah was being held back up above. That is why it is referred to as a captive. Now Moshe Rabbeinu, of blessed memory, went back and returned the Torah to the lower worlds. This is as it was prepared to be from the beginning of Creation.</p>	<p>שפת אמת – פרשת יתרו - תרל”ח במדרש “עלית למרום שבית שבי.” כי עיקר שכינה בתחתונים. נמצא מה שהתעכבה התורה למעלה. הוי נק’ שבי. ועתה חזר מרע”ה והחזיר התורה לתחתונים. כמו שהי’ מוכן להיות מתחילת הבריאה.</p>
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Why is the Torah referred to as a captive? Because just as a captive is forced to be in an unnatural location, the Torah was forced to be in Heaven instead of its natural habitat, the lower worlds, earth. [The author of the Sfat Emet does not interpret the Midrash as saying that Moshe snatched the Torah from its natural Heavenly habitat.] The Torah had previously been held captive in Heaven because of human sin, but its natural place is on earth, because Torah goes along with the Shechinah – the Divine Presence – whose place is on earth:

<p>4. Bereishit Rabbah 19:7 The main [place of the] Shechinah (Divine Presence) was in the lower worlds. When Adam Harishon sinned the Shechinah ascended to the First Heaven. When Kayin sinned it ascended</p>	<p>בראשית רבה יט:ז עיקר שכינה בתחתונים היתה. כיון שחטא אדם הראשון נסתלקה שכינה לרקיע הראשון. חטא קין נסתלקה לרקיע השני.</p>
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to the Second Heaven. [When the] generation of Enosh [sinned it ascended to the] Third Heaven; the generation of the Flood ... to the Fourth; the generation of the Dispersion ... to the Fifth; the Sodomites ... to the Sixth; and the Egyptians of Avraham's generation caused it to ascend to the Seventh Heaven. Corresponding to them, seven righteous ones emerged – they were Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, Levi, Kehat, Amram, and Moshe. Avraham emerged and brought it down to the Sixth Heaven; Yitzchak emerged and brought it down from the Sixth to the Fifth; Yaakov emerged and brought it down from the Fifth to the Fourth; Levi emerged and brought it down from the Fourth to the Third; Kehat emerged and brought it down from the Third to the Second; Amram emerged and brought it down from the Second to the First; Moshe emerged and brought it down from Above to Below.

דור אנוש לג', דור המבול לד', דור הפלגה לה', סדומיים לו', ומצרים בימי אברהם לז'. וכנגדן עמדו ז' צדיקים ואלו הן: אברהם, יצחק, ויעקב, לוי, קהת, עמרם, משה. עמד אברהם והורידה לו'. עמד יצחק והורידה מן ו' לה'. עמד יעקב והורידה מן ה' לה'. עמד לוי והורידה מן ה' לה'. עמד קהת והורידה מן הג' לב'. עמד עמרם והורידה מן הב' לא'. עמד משה והורידה מלמעלה למטה.

C. Torah and Israel

The Torah's natural place is in this world; and its natural partner in the world is the People of Israel:

5. Sfat Emet – Parshat Yitro – 5638
Behold, the Torah is prepared for and ready for the Children of Israel when they are intact. For the Torah is the way of truth and the way the world should run. Therefore, when the Children of Israel are standing at the level of truth they are automatically ready for Torah.

שפת אמת – פרשת יתרו - תרל"ח
והנה התורה מוכן לבנ"י כאשר הם מתוקנים. כי התורה היא דרך אמת והנהגה אמיתית. לכן כשבנ"י עומדין במדריגת האמת. הם מוכנים ממילא לתורה.

The Children of Israel, when they are in their ideal state, are exactly matched with and ready for the Torah. When the Children of Israel are living truthfully they are in sync with the Torah's truth and automatically ready. This explains the complexity of our relationship with the Torah – it is both an acquisition and gift:

6. Sfat Emet – Parshat Yitro – 5638
This is what is meant, in the Midrash, by "It was given to them through an acquisition" even though it is a gift. For this is the way the world was created, that through those in the lower worlds perfecting their actions they cling to their higher source. Then the Torah is automatically given to them as a gift.

שפת אמת – פרשת יתרו - תרל"ח
זו"ש בלקיחה ניתנה לו אף שהיא מתנה. מ"מ כך נברא העולם, שע"י תיקון המעשים שיש לתחתונים דבקות בשורשן. ממילא התורה ניתן להם במתנה.

The expression "ascending up on high" alludes to teshuvah – repenting and perfecting one's self. The process of Israel reconnecting to Torah begins with teshuvah. Through teshuvah, continues the author of the Sfat Emet, the Jew perfects himself. This causes him to "cling to his source," to live in sync with his true self. Because he lives truthfully, he is automatically ready for Torah, which is truth. Ideally, Torah and the Divine Presence are the core of our lower worlds. This world should truthfully run according to Torah and be reunited with the People of Israel in this world. But that demands that Israel live truthfully. When that happened – at Mount Sinai – Moshe was able to recapture Torah and restore it to its natural habitat.

THE CRITIQUE SEEKER BY RABBI DOVID SCHOONMAKER

Yisro criticized Moshe Rabbeinu's judgement of the Nation of Israel and Moshe was extremely receptive. As the Torah says: "Moshe listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he said" (Shemos 18:24). Moshe typified one of the character traits needed for kinyan Torah – acquiring the Torah – that of being an אוהב את התוכחה, one who loves rebuke (Avos 6:6).

Most leaders would not be so receptive to such a critique (especially from a father-in-law). In fact, most people have great trouble dealing with critique. There is a broad spectrum of ways people deal with critique; and they break down into three main categories. Most people's reactions to critique range from angry, passive, or friendly **rejection**; to resentful, cringing (when being criticized), neutral, or appreciative **consideration**, to resentful, cringing, neutral, or appreciative **acceptance**.

However, there is a fourth category: the "**critique seeker**." He is one who so clearly sees the value of critique that he not only responds well to it (as in "appreciative acceptance"); he even seeks it out and **asks** others for it. This is a sign that he has reached the level which Chazal describe as **אוהב את התוכחה**.

To appreciate the critique seeker we can compare critique to Kiddush Hashem – sanctifying the Divine Name. It has been said that it is easier to die "al Kiddush Hashem" than to live "al Kiddush Hashem." Living day in and day out in a way that causes a Kiddush Hashem requires, in a certain sense, more strength than making the one time decision to fight against all of one's senses and give up one's life to sanctify the Divine Name. It is similarly easier for a person to collect himself and make a one-time request that others critique him, than to happily receive critique from **unexpected** sources and at **unexpected** times. That second level requires a greater level of **אהבת התוכחה**.

These are two sub-categories of the "critique seeker": one who asks for it after much emotional preparation and another who seeks critique **without** specifically asking or preparing for it. He is always prepared and always seeking it out. We can name these subcategories "**the basic critique seeker**" and the "**the perennial critique seeker**." The perennial critique seeker will also be willing to accept criticism not offered in the kindest, most comfortable way. He is interested in the truth and sees others' input as a gift. If someone gave us a \$1000 bill in an unfriendly way we would take it with a smile. To the perennial critique seeker, others' criticism of his actions, behavior, or character is a \$1000 bill.

There is a higher level than the perennial critique seeker. This is a person who is not only prepared and looking for other's input, but searches deeply and finds critique (**ביקורת**) where another person would never see it. He is "**the quintessential critique seeker**." The perennial critique seeker looks for and accepts others' **clear** input, but he can also overlook a cue. When a friend subtly hints that he has been offended, the quintessential critique seeker immediately **hears** the criticism. He not only learns from others, but also from his own experiences and from what goes on in the world. Everywhere there are lessons for him. Harav Shlomo Freifeld, זצ"ל (1925-1990, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Sh'or Yoshuv), said that his famed rebbe, Harav Yitzchak Hutner, זצ"ל (1906-1980, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin), was the world's greatest "masmid (diligent learner)" because he always learned from everything.

The quintessential critique seeker misses no lesson because he **really** loves others' input. When we really love something we don't miss a beat. A child knows where to find the chocolate his mother has hidden. He is sensitive to her smallest indication about its location and immediately capitalizes on the information.

This is the level that I imagine the Baalei Mussar, and certainly Moshe Rabbeinu, reached.

שבת שלום ומבורך

<p>Find out more about Shapell's Darche Noam at www.darchenoam.org & +972-2-651-1178 - 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem</p> <p>To dedicate a Shapell's Daf Keshet contact Emuna Diamond at emuna@darchenoam.org.</p> <p>The Daf Keshet, a project of Shapell's Darche Noam, is prepared by Rabbi Eliezer Kwass, edited by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon, and distributed by Emuna Diamond. To join the Shapell's Daf Keshet mailing list contact us at dafkeshet@darchenoam.org.</p>	 <p>Shapell's Darché Noam דרכיה דרכי נעם</p>
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The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, Hebrewbooks.org, and the Tanach section of Chabad.org.

We continue to pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.