

Vayoel Moshe

Shavuot

A collection of talks and lessons, on the weekly Parasha and Holidays, from the scion of the holy lineage, Rabbi Yoel Pinto, son of our holy and esteemed Admor, Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, Chief Rabbi of Morocco. Torah thoughts, novelties and explanations, precious teachings to illuminate the Parasha and Holidays, rich with novelties in all realms of the Torah, esoteric reflections, from throughout the weekly portions and Holidays. • Issue No. 3 • Parashat Bamidbar, 5781



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How did Moshe Rabbenu convince Am Yisrael (the Jewish people) to defeat their evil inclination, and ultimately accept the Torah

In preparation for the holiday of Shavuot let us explore the Torah's verses that discuss Am Yisrael's acceptance of the Torah.

The holy Torah tells us that after Am Yisrael arrived at Mount Sinai, God ordered Moshe Rabbenu to relay the commandments to Am Yisrael. Moshe Rabbenu did as he was commanded. Am Yisrael subsequently responded (Shemot 24:3)

כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר הַשֵּׁם וְנַעֲשֶׂה

which translates to: "All the words that God has spoken we will do".

The Torah then continues

וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַשֵּׁם

which translates to: "And

Moshe wrote all the words of God"...

וַיִּקַּח סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם

which translates to: "And he took the Book of the Covenant and read it within the hearing of the people".

Rashi explains that Moshe Rabbenu relayed over the entire narrative of the Torah from the beginning. They subsequently answered "All



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three types of people who study Torah

There are three types of people who study Torah: A) There are those who their only interest is to study Torah, and be mentally connected all times to the Torah. They seek to hear every word their Rabbis say, and have set goals to achieve. B) There are those who study, because "everybody else is studying".

They have no specific aspirations, yet, they follow the prevailing movement. C)

There are those who have nothing better do with their life, and nowhere else to turn. They place themselves in the "exile" of study, and are awaiting to be redeemed.

These three types of people exist in other areas of life as well. There are those who appreciate the path they took, and those are living as their routine is "exile."

the words that God has spoken we will do”.

What is the reason Moshe Rabbenu relayed over the Torah at this point? Moreover, prior to Moshe Rabbenu saying over the Torah to Am Yisrael, they said “we will do”. However, only after Moshe Rabbenu read them to the Torah, did they say “we will understand”. What was different, that only after Moshe relayed the Torah to them that they added the words “we will understand”?

The evil inclination seeks to minimize a person’s self worth

Moshe’s reason for relaying the Torah from the beginning was in order to repel a certain attempt by the evil inclination. The evil inclination’s objective is to diminish Am Yisrael’s motivation to serve God. He seeks to cause them to think that only the deeds of the truly righteous have any effect. However, this is a fallacy. God awaits and values every small commandment or good deed everyone from Am Yisrael does. Every moment of Torah study is precious in God’s eyes. As Rabbi Tzadok Hacohen of Lublin writes in his work, Tzidkat Hatzadik (explanation 154) “Just as one must believe in God, one must believe in himself”. He explains that one must not think that his service of God is a job that he gets rewarded for. Rather, every action he does is scrutinized by God. Every good deed makes God happy, and every sin causes Him sorrow. He extrapolates this from the verse

וְאֵינֶנּוּ בְּהַשֵּׁם וְזָכַרְנוּ עִבְדֶּיךָ

which translates to: “and they believed in God and in Moshe, His servant”.

It is taught in Kabbalah (the esoteric teachings) that all the souls of all Am Yisrael were inside Moshe Rabbenu. Thus, when they believed in “Moshe, His servant”, they believed in themselves. They believed in their souls that were inside Moshe Rabbenu.

This lesson is strengthened by what is taught in the Zohar (vol. 2 page 32b) that when Am Yisrael sins they so to speak obstruct God, and when they do good they so to speak empower God. The Zohar learns this from the verse (Tehillim 68:35)

תָּנוּ עֹז לְאֱלֹהִים

which translates to “Attribute strength to God”. King David was hinting that if one is to follow God’s word, he is in terms strengthening Him.

Every Jew’s action are written in the Torah, and have an impact upon the entire world

Through this we can explain why Moshe Rabbenu relayed the Torah in its entirety. The evil inclination was telling Am Yisrael that just forty days prior they were serving idols. How could they now be “sons of God”? How could they suddenly receive the holy Torah which is so precious to God? In order to fight off these types of thoughts Moshe Rabbenu relayed the entire narrative of the Torah, including their history. When they realized that their history was recorded in the same place as the account

of Avraham, Yitzchak and all the righteous individuals, they understood how important they are to the world. Am Yisrael complained to Moshe Rabbenu that they needed water. This was recorded in the Torah, as well. From this they saw that each and every one of their actions was so important. Through this, they were able to defeat the discouraging thoughts of the evil inclination.

The way of the evil inclination is to tell a person that even if he studies Torah, he will not produce novel interpretations

We will now answer the question of why only after Moshe went over the narrative of the Torah did they say “we will understand”. The evil inclination uses another tactic to sway a person away from Torah study. He tells him that even if he spends many hours toiling to understand the Torah in depth, he will never fully comprehend its depth. He will never be able to produce novel explanations. However, this is also a fallacy. The Arizal explains (Shaar Hagilgulim Hakdama 17) that there are six hundred thousand souls in Am Yisrael, akin to the six hundred thousand Jews that left Egypt in the exodus. There are also six hundred thousand explanations of every idea that is taught in the Torah. Every soul of a Jew is responsible for one of these novel interpretations. Each interpretation can only be revealed by the Jew who it was assigned to. The Arizal continues and says that not only for the simple interpre-

tation is this true; rather, it is true also even for the esoteric parts of the Torah. Each and every soul has a novel interpretation that no other can reveal. Even the greatest of the early sages did not know these interpretations, for they were not revealed to them.

A Jew in our days can product novel explanations that even the greatest sages of yesteryear could not

We can now understand how it is that so many novel in-

terpretations are revealed in later generations that were never discovered before. Those sages were the wisest and most knowledgeable, yet they were not able to reveal it all. This is due to the fact that they could not reveal the novel explanations that were not meant to be revealed by others.

Thus, when Moshe Rabbenu read over the Torah to Am Yisrael, each and every Jew felt their personal connection to the Torah. This connection is through their responsibility

to reveal their novel interpretation. This is why when they received the Torah they said "we will understand".

Just as then did the evil inclination fight to sway man away from Torah study, so too does he today. One must constantly remember these two things: A) each and every action a Jew does has many repercussions. B) The immense potential that a Jew has to reveal novel interpretations. If he does not toil to reveal them, they will never be brought out to the world.

Through the study of Torah the holy sparks are raised and the redemption is brought closer

The day of Shavuot is the day when God descended from the Heavens to Mount Sinai to give Am Yisrael (the people of Israel) the Torah. When God descended, the earth was filled with thunder and lightning. Moreover, the Midrash Tanchuma (Vayishlach explanation 2) records that twenty two chariots of angels descended from the Heavens. The Shach famously explains the source of these voices. He says that those sounds that were heard when God descended, was the sound of the angels crying. They were crying over the fact that the Torah was being taken out of Heaven.

Why was the Torah given in an abandoned desert?

Why did God decide to give the Torah in an abandoned desert? Wouldn't it be more dignified if the King, God descended to a place occupied

by people? Additionally, why did God not give the Torah in Eretz Yisrael? So many of the commandments are specific to Eretz Yisrael.

During creation and when Adam and Chava sinned many sparks fell into the darkness. Our job is to raise them back to holiness

The following reason that will be presented as to why God gave the Torah specifically in the desert can shed light on an important lesson God wanted to teach. This lesson can be found in the teachings of the Arizal regarding the holy sparks falling into impure places. This falling of holy sparks happened twice in history. The first time it happened was when God created the world. These sparks fell into impure places due to the fact that when God created the world

He created something called the ten "Sefirot", channels which were vessels in which God would send down sustenance to the world. However, the first time God created these channels they couldn't handle the amount of sustenance that God was sending through them. They therefore broke and the sparks scattered. Subsequently, God created ten new Sefirot. My father, our holy and esteemed rabbi, may God protect him, discussed this concept in depth in this year's discourses.

The Arizal explains that this process was predetermined. For man's job in this world is to choose between good and evil. If those holy sparks were not to fall there would be no test for man whether to make the right choices or not, for there would be no evil inclination.

The second time holy sparks fell into darkness was when Adam sinned. When Adam disregarded the word of God and ate from the Tree of Knowledge all the souls of all of Am Yisrael were in him. After the sin, some of those souls were scattered amongst the seventy nations of the world.

The reason for the dispersion of Am Yisrael into different parts of the world, was in order that they regather and uplift the sparks. The study of Torah and fulfillment of the commandments are the “magnets” to gather these lost sparks. Am Yisrael were decreed to be exiled in Egypt for four hundred years. This was due to the immense amounts of sparks that were scattered there. When Am Yisrael is to complete the gathering of the sparks, the redemption will come.

There are two methods to lift the sparks, Torah study or fulfilling the

commandments

Even though there are two methods to lift these sparks, either through Torah study or fulfilling the commandments, the most effective way is through Torah study. Maran Hachida in his work “Ahavat David” (discourse 14 for Parashat Zachor) explains why Torah study is the most productive way to lift the sparks from darkness. He explains that when Adam sinned, all of his limbs benefited from the eating. However, his voice did not receive any benefit. This means that all of man was impurified by the sin except for his voice. Therefore, if someone uses his pure voice for Torah learning it has much more of an effect.

Through Torah study one raises even the sparks that are far

Another attribute that puts Torah study above any other commandments is that in order to lift the sparks using the commandments, one must be in close proximity to them. However, when one stud-

ies Torah he is able to raise even sparks that are spread throughout the world. Thus, God enacted that one who studies Torah need not travel throughout the world, for his job of raising the sparks can be accomplished anywhere.

The Torah was given at Mount Sinai to allude to the lesson that Torah study can raise sparks anywhere in the world

Based on this idea, we can now understand why the Torah was given in the desert. Since God instilled in nature that people do not reside in the desert, logic follows that there are less holy sparks there. When God gave the Torah in such a place, He hinted that even in this place where there aren't many holy sparks, one can raise the scattered sparks. This is the power of Torah study. Even in places where it is not studied it creates a positive effect. The study of Torah is the greatest method to bring about the complete rectification of the world.

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Whatsapp +1 (917) 459-8776
Email TorahPinto@gmail.com

