

# עֵטֶר הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת ואתחנן  
שבת נחמן  
ט' באב תשס"ה  
August 20, 2005

Candle Lighting:	8:30
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:59
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:35
Latest שחרית:	10:43
Earliest הבדלה:	9:32

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## A LINGUISTIC LAUNGAUGE

Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe, PhD. Menahel

*Sefer Devarim* contains Moshe Rabbeinu's final days on earth, as he prepares the people with a review of their history in the desert and fills them with guidance and wisdom for their entry into Eretz Yisroel. In addition to giving *tochacha* to the nation, the Torah also tells us that, "בעבר הירדן בארץ, מואב הואיל משה באר את התורה הזאת לאמר *On the other side of the Jordan, in the land of Moav, Moshe began to explain this Torah, saying...*" Rashi comments on this that Moshe explained the Torah to them in seventy languages.

It is very difficult to understand why this was necessary. After all, everyone in Bnei Yisroel spoke *lashon hakodesh*; was it not sufficient to have the Torah explained in their mother tongue? Furthermore, if they did not understand the complexities and depth of the Torah in their own language, of what help would it be to then discuss it in other, foreign languages?

The Telzer Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Eliyahu Meir Bloch *zt'l*, quotes Rav Yosef Leib Bloch *zt'l*, who offered a very profound explanation of this action of Moshe. He said that when we acquire an understanding of something in its true sense, this is not dependant on the amassing of dry, cold facts, which comes through the simple understanding of the syntax of the words being communicated. Rather, deeper understanding, or *binah*, are imbued within the heart and mind of an individual and hang on the edge of the

*neschama* itself. We require techniques and procedures to facilitate this process, pedagogical tools to transcend surface understanding. While the overall body and basic meaning of the Torah could be communicated in one language, in order to transmit the depth and profundity of the Torah, Moshe required the seventy different languages, each with its own vernacular and idioms, and each complementing the other. While of course the deepest meanings of the Torah are contained within

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## A NUMBER COUNTS

Yaakov Sonnenblick, Mesivta Graduate

At the end of this week's parsha the Torah deals with the question, "Why did Hashem pick Bnei Yisroel over all the other nations?" It goes on to answer that Hashem didn't desire Bnei Yisroel because they are more numerous than the other nations, they are not; they are the fewest of all the nations. Rather the reason is, "כי מאהבת ה' אתכם ומשמרו את השבעה" - *because of Hashem's love for you and because He observes the oath...*" Moshe Rabbeinu gives two reasons for Hashem's choosing Bnei Yisroel. Firstly, He found them worthy of His love, and secondly, because of the oath He made to the patriarchs. The Ramban explains that the reason for Hashem's love is not given, but it can possibly be because He knew that Bnei Yisroel's faithfulness would be unswerving. It is only natural for someone to choose a friend who will remain loyal no matter how great the difficulty. "It doesn't matter how much great pain they may endure, they will still remain loyal."

In his great wisdom, The Ramchal adds quite an interesting point. He says the main *sechar* of a *Yid* in *Olam Habaah*, more than his mitzvah itself, is the *tzaar* and agony he goes through, yet still remaining loyal to the Ribono Shel Olam.

There is a famous story that portrays this point very well. Someone once came to the Satmar Rebbe, Reb Yoel Teitlebaum *zt'l*, and asked him for a *bracha*. The Rebbe told this man, "You want a *bracha* from me? To receive the best possible blessing, you should go to the shul, and when the *Yiddin* role up their sleeves to put on their tefillin – find the *Yid* with the numbers on his arm. Such a person is more fitting than me to

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*Yiddin* role up their sleeves to put on their tefillin – find the *Yid* with the numbers on his arm. Such a person is more fitting than me to

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ויתעבר ה' בי למענכם ולא שמע אלי ויאמר ה' אלי רב לך על תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה (ג:כנ)

HASHEM BECAME ANGRY WITH ME FOR YOUR SAKE, AND HE DID NOT LISTEN TO ME, AND HASHEM SAID TO ME, 'ENOUGH! DON'T SPEAK ANY MORE TO ME REGARDING THIS MATTER'

In this week's *parsha* we are told that Moshe Rabbeinu will not be going into Eretz Yisroel – his long awaited desire would not be achieved. Interestingly enough, Moshe had davened to Hashem many times before when a bad verdict was passed, and he was always answered with salvation. Over here however, that is not the case. Why is this so?

The Malbim explains by using the words from the pasuk, "for your sake." Hashem revealed to Moshe that He was not preventing his entry into Eretz Yisroel because He was angry with Moshe [as it was with the other cases, if so He could have forgiven him]. Rather, He was doing this for the benefit of the Bnei Yisroel. But how is this possible! The Malbim explains that had Moshe gone into the land as the leader or even as an ordinary individual, things would have been drastically different. Moshe would have had the power to build a Beis Hamikdash almost immediately - and a house for Hashem built by Moshe could never be destroyed. In this hypothetical situation, when Bnei Yisroel sinned against HaShem and demanded punishment, He would be forced to vent His anger against the Jewish People themselves. Yet with the Beis Hamikdash built by someone other than Moshe Rabbeinu, when the Jews sinned, Hashem would destroy the Beis Hamikdash and vent His anger on wood and stones.

This is a very delicate matter and obviously needs some clarity. The situation seems unfair. Why should the Bnei Yisroel have to suffer? How can Hashem be truly "angry"? Amazingly enough, here lies the answer. We all know Hashem guides the Jewish people like a father does a son, and

punishes them in only the proper way. This is meant to get them on the right path and certainly not to hurt them. In the end, it is far less painful for the son to have his radio taken away for using it wrongly than it is to be hit most powerfully by his father's fist. All the more we see Hashem's love for us; He would better have His own dwelling destroyed rather than His people.

Later in the *parsha*, we go through a section that is also read on the morning of *Tisha B'Av*. "When you have children and grandchildren, and have gotten old on the Land, and you change yourselves, and you create an idol, any sort of image, and you do evil in the eyes of Hashem to anger Him; I bring heaven and earth as witnesses upon you today, that you shall be completely destroyed [4:25-26]."

Rashi points out that with the word "*venoshantam*, and have gotten old", Moshe hinted to them that their first exile would begin 852 years getting into Eretz Yisroel - the *gematria* of the letters in the word *venoshantam*. Yet we know that in actual history, the exile actually began after 850 years. Why did the Bnei Yisroel begin their punishment early? Was Hashem quick to anger, and again - was he cruel with His people?

Rashi answers that once again this was really true kindness. The reason Hashem started the punishment early was to make sure the second part of the deal of "*you shall be utterly destroyed*" never would have a chance of happening.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains that given another two years, the people could have descended fully to the degraded level of the Canaanim who preceded them.

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## STORIES OF NECHAMA

by Avi Lieberman

After a long and blessed life well into his nineties, Alexander Strulovic recently passed away. He was a survivor of the Holocaust, and was a source of strength and vitality to all who knew him. Right after the war, Alexander was able to make his way to Caracas, Venezuela, and ultimately became quite wealthy. He invited his sister and her husband to come visit him, to which they enthusiastically obliged.

His sister, Monica Hollander, was very excited about seeing her brother after such a long and dark period, and prepared for her trip with anticipation and eagerness. During the flight, the Hollanders made acquaintance with a man sitting next to them, also a survivor of the camps. The plane eventually landed, and the three together exited the plane at the immigration station; the site before being allowed into the country. Monica explained to this acquaintance that because of her brother's wealth, he would be able to meet them at the station, and accompany them throughout all the checkpoints into Caracas without delay. The man was very impressed. "This brother must be very rich and prosperous to achieve such status," he stated to the couple.

When Alexander approached his sister and brother-in-law, he saw the man next to them and paused with shock and astonishment. "You!" Alexander pointed at the man with revulsion. "I know who you are." The man didn't seem to recognize who this wealthy person was, but stood with silence in anticipation of an explanation.

"We were in the same death camp," Alexander began. "You worked in the kitchen, and were always a big and robust guy – you didn't have to suffer like the rest of us. People used to come to you for any scraps of food they could get their hands on, and one time I came begging for potato peels. I

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YAAKOV SONNENBLICK (Continued from page 1)

give *brachos*." The Rebbe was impressing that a *Yid* who went through the Holocaust and suffered so much pain and anguish, yet still remains a *frum yid* is the one who is really fitting to give blessings.

This story is very much related to this week's *parsha*, appropriately situated right after *Tisha B'Av*. On this day of mourning, Klal Yisroel is really mourning for the hardships we've gone through. We should try to remember that it doesn't matter what challenges Hashem gives us, as long as after the *nisyonos* we are still good *Yidden* with the desire to fulfill *ratzon Hashem*. With such strength and *bitachon*, let us truly merit the appearance of a world without *tzaar* or anguish. . . with the coming of *Mashaich Tzidkeinu*, *bimheirah biyameinu*. *Gut Shabbos Yidden!*

RABBI YAFFE (Continued from page 1)

*lashon hakodesh*, Moshe needed to convey the nuances and fine distinctions to ensure proper transmission of its most sublime connotations.

Why, however, was it necessary to explain the Torah in seventy languages? Would nothing less than this suffice for Moshe's purposes? Chazal understood that it was in seventy fundamental variations that mankind could express its thoughts. From this source, the many hundreds of languages that are spoken advanced. For this same reason, it was required of the members of Sanhedrin to have facility in all of the seventy languages [*Maseches Sanhedrin* 17]. In order to judge properly and to plumb the depths of each litigant's testimony they needed to be able to understand the person in the language in which he formulated his own thoughts and feelings.

From this, we see how multifaceted the Torah requires us to be in our own understanding of its secrets. A single, monolithic approach will never suffice if we wish to fathom anything beyond its surface. Instead, we must approach our learning with creativity, freshness, and an openness to a variety of approaches as long as they remain consonant with Torah hashkafa and our mesorah.

On a personal note, these final weeks mark the "end of an era" for our publication, the Ateres HaShavua. For the past two years, the multi-talented Avi Lieberman and his dedicated staff have raised an already excellent publication to the level of a professional Torah journal, widely read and acclaimed. Editor Lieberman's devotion to his project is already part of the lore of our yeshiva and I want to wish him and his staff a heartfelt thank you and *yasher kochachem*. May you continue to go *mechayil el choyil* and enjoy further growth and *hatzlacha* in all your future endeavors.

Which pile did your copy come from?



ATERES HASHAVUA CENTRAL

REUVEN DAVIES (Continued from page 2)

Hashem went quickly to start the *galus* so He wouldn't have to destroy the Bnei Yisroel! Once again we see that these discrepancies are actually for the benefit of the people and they each relay the same message - how much Hashem loves us.

We would think we have presumably solved all our difficulties, but a *pasuk* further on still seems to stand out. "And Hashem will scatter you among the nations, and you will remain few in number among the nations, wherever Hashem will lead you [4:27]." Once again this verse looks bad, if not seemingly unjust? The Malbim explains that just as the other *pesukim* are for our benefit, this one is as well. He explains that if Hashem was forced to put the Bnei Yisroel in exile He will never leave the Bnei Yisroel in one place, but scatter them so that they can never truly be destroyed. Therefore, if one part fails, another will live on with the chance to unite with Hashem once more!

This final point instills within us hope that although we may be scattered throughout the nations of the world for many years, we will never be destroyed. Yet this harbors one condition: as long as we try to unite ourselves with our Creator, we will be tested but nevertheless find a way to return home.

Yet how can we do this and find the connection to

finally bring us out of our *galus*? Moshe Rabbeinu gives us the answer. When Moshe tells the Bnei Yisroel of their mission throughout *galus*, he uses the word "Ki" when explaining, "[Ki / when] you seek Him." The word "Ki" also means "if." Putting the words in different context we can now read it, "If you will seek Hashem with all your heart and with all your soul, you will find Him." That's a very large "If"! But why, then, in the midst of his prophecy, when he has so accurately laid our situation out before us, does Moshe say "Na; please" - "If you will please ask...?" For whom are we doing a favor?

Rav Yaakov Menkin answers that the answer is for ourselves. Although Moshe spoke in plural to the people about searching for Hashem, it is up to each and every one of us to find Him. When we are finally finished searching for Hashem, will we be ready to embrace him? Only "If" we truly want to find Him will we succeed. This was the message Moshe was trying to convey and the message Hashem Himself was trying to tell the Jewish People through "tough love" May we be *zache* through this to find Hashem speedily in our days and be ready for the coming of Moshiach, *bimheirah bijameinu amen!*

"People think the custom of giving a *kvitel* to a Rebbe is so he will know who to daven for. But I tell you that the real purpose is for whenever an accusation arises against a Jew in Heaven, the *kvitel* comes forward and says, "here's a plain, ordinary Jew - and look how much he's suffered!"

He is constantly menaced and plagued with hardships, yet he hasn't change his Jewish name or identity. And if we were saved from Egypt because we didn't change our names, how much more deserving must be a simple Jew who turns for help to his Rebbe!

This is why we give a *kvitel*!" [Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam *zt'l*; The Klausenburger Rebbe]

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM (Continued from page 2)

was very small and weak, and everyday was a new challenge for me to stay alive. Everyone present agreed to let me have the peels, but you vehemently objected. You pointed at me with a defiant stare, and declared, 'Don't give him, he's going to die anyway'."

Silence and astonishment fell over the man. He couldn't imagine that this was the person standing before him today - a man who so shortly after the war became so victorious and successful. A person that would go on to live for many years and see his children and grandchildren grow in the path set before them. A man so close to death was able to arise and prosper once again? How could this be?

Yet this is the power of a Jew - someone who puts his faith in Hashem can rely on Him for sustenance and assistance. As we leave Tisha B'Av and continue our present exile, we must carry on with the strength and knowledge that even through such dark and trying times, our Father is always there to guide and protect us. Let us truly merit salvation and deliverance, and ultimately see the era of our return to Hashem's golden reign over the entire world.

# אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך (ו:ה)

AND YOU SHALL LOVE HASHEM YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR WEALTH

The Gemara in *Masseches Berachos* [י"ד:] states that one who wishes to properly accept Hashem's dominion upon himself should wash his hands, don his *tefillin*, say *krias shema* and *daven*. Rabbeinu Yona explains that the *tefillin shel rosh* are placed on our heads, corresponding to the *neshama*, to remind us that our souls and minds must always be subjugated to the service of Hashem. We place the *tefillin shel yad* on our arms, opposite our hearts, representing the fact that we must always overcome the base desires that emanate from our hearts, and instead use our body to properly carry out our *avodas Hashem*. As such, the wearing of *tefillin* plays an integral role in our acceptance of the yoke of Hashem's mastery.

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l infers from this explanation of Rabbeinu Yona that the *tefillin shel rosh* represent the soul and the brain, reminding us that we must serve Hashem "בכל נפשך," and that the *tefillin shel yad* correspond to the heart, and warn us that we must also serve Hashem "בכל לבבך." However, there are those, such as the Ibn Ezra who argue with Rabbeinu Yona, and maintain that "בכל נפשך" refers to the control of our personal desires, and is represented by the *tefillin shel yad*, and that "בכל לבבך" refers to our thoughts and our *neshama*, which also must be primarily focused on our service of Hashem.

Rav Yaakov points out that this *machlokes* has practical *halachic* ramifications. There is a *machlokes* amongst the *poskim* as to which of the *tefillin* should be written first. The Rama writes that just as the *tefillin shel yad* are put on first, so too the *tefillin shel yad* should be written first. The Tur and the Rambam argue, and maintain that the only priority accorded to the *tefillin shel yad* is that they are worn first; however in all other aspects the *tefillin shel rosh* are given precedence. Rav Yaakov explains that this *machlokes* really hinges on the understanding of our *pasuk*. The Rama, who maintains that the *tefillin shel yad* are given primacy across the board, would understand our *pasuk* like the *shitah* of Rabbeinu Yona that "בכל לבבך" refers to the *tefillin shel yad*. Since the *tefillin shel yad* are listed first in the order of the *pasuk*, they are given preference with regard to all *halachos*, not just the order in which they are put on. However, the Rambam and Tur would use the Ibn Ezra's understanding of the *pasuk* that "בכל לבבך" refers to the *tefillin shel rosh*. As such, the *tefillin shel rosh* are given predominance in all areas, with the exception of the sequence in which they are put on.

The Satmar Rebbe zt"l once asked, "Who is a smart chassid? A man like the one who fell ill and was seemingly near death and came to see my father, Reb Chananyah Yom Tov Lipa, author of the *Kedushas Yom Tov*. The man's doctor recommended that he travel to Vienna, where there were expert physicians who might be able to help him. Yet he was afraid that his failing health might not allow him to reach Vienna."

He went to the Rebbe and, in tears, poured out his story. The Rebbe responded, "I take responsibility until you reach Vienna."

The chassid calmed down. He returned home, and never set out on the intended trip. If the Rebbe had undertaken to guarantee that he would remain alive until Vienna, what was the hurry to get there?

"The chassid went on to live another fifteen years!"



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