

Torah Weekly



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Parshas Vayelech

For the week ending 6 Tishrei 5756
29 & 30 September 1995

Summary

On this, the last day of his life, Moshe goes from tent to tent throughout the camp, bidding farewell to his beloved people, encouraging them to "keep the faith." Moshe tells them that whether he is among them or not, Hashem is with them, and will vanquish their enemies. Then he summons Yehoshua, and in front of all the people, exhorts him to be strong and courageous as the leader of the Jewish People. In this manner, he strengthens Yehoshua's status as the new leader. Moshe teaches them the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*: That every seven years on the first day of the intermediate days of Succos, the entire nation, including small children, is to gather together at the Temple to hear the King read from the Book of *Devarim*. The sections that he reads deal with faithfulness to Hashem, the covenant, and reward and punishment. Hashem tells Moshe that his end is near, and he should therefore summon Yehoshua to stand with him in the *Mishkan*, where Hashem will teach Yehoshua. Hashem then tells Moshe and Yehoshua that after entering the Land, the people will be unfaithful to Him, and begin to worship other gods. Hashem will then completely "hide his face," so that it will seem that the Jewish People are at the mercy of fate, and that they will be hunted by all. Hashem instructs Moshe and Yehoshua to write down a song - *Ha'azinu* - which will serve as a "witness" against the Jewish People when they sin. Moshe records the song in writing and teaches it to Bnei Yisrael. Moshe completes his transcription of the Torah, and instructs the *Levi'im* to place it to the side of the *Aron* (Holy Ark), so that no one will ever write a new Torah Scroll that is different from the original - for there will always be a reference copy.

Commentaries

"And Moshe went and spoke these words to all Yisrael" (31:1).

Why doesn't the Torah tell us *where* Moshe went, rather than just "*And Moshe went...*"? The reason is that Moshe went inside each and every Jewish person.

In every Jew throughout the ages, there is a little spark of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. Thus, the end of the verse is in fact the place where Moshe went - "*And Moshe went...to all Yisrael.*"

(*Mayana Shel Torah in the name of the early Tzadikim*)

"...the reason small children should be brought to hear the Torah read... (is so) the parents will be more careful in their observance of mitzvos."

"...At the end of seven years ... you shall read this Torah before all Israel...the men, the

women, and the small children" (31:10 - 12).

How often do we see that people who are very far from religious observance, when faced with the necessity of educating their children, will suddenly become much more religious! Rashi, commenting on this verse, says that the reason small children should be brought to hear the Torah read at the time of *Hakhel*, is "*to cause reward to those who bring them.*" In other words, the Torah is implying that the reason for the children coming has nothing to do with the influence that it might have on the children themselves. Rather, by wanting to set a good example for their children, **the parents** will be more careful in their observance of *mitzvos*, and be sure to come to hear the King read the Torah at *Hakhel*.

(*Rabbi Michael Schoen*)

HOSHANA RABA **ALL NIGHTER**
SEE REVERSE FOR DETAILS

“Hashem spoke to Moshe, ‘Behold your days are drawing near to die’” (31:14).

Why does the Torah use the plural your *days*? Surely it would be more accurate to say “the *day* of your death is drawing near”? The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* explains that there is a mystical concept that the *neshama* is divided into many segments, and that when a person reawakens each day, a different portion of the *neshama* descends into the body. Corresponding to the number of these pieces is the length of a man’s days. It is these sparks, these shards of the soul, that the Torah is speaking about when it says “*your days are drawing near to die.*” In other words, all the parts of the *neshama* that have ascended from Moshe Rabbeinu, day by day, *draw near* to him, return to the body, and will now ascend as one piece when he leaves this world.

“My anger will flare against it on that day and I will forsake them; and I will hide My face from them and they will become prey....It will say on that day ‘Is it not because my God is not in my midst that these evils have come upon me’” (31:17).

When terrible affliction befalls the Jewish People, they will take this as a sign that they have failed Hashem so totally that there is no way for them to find their way back to Him through prayer and *teshuva* (repentance). But, Hashem tells them that He will never desert them – rather they will *feel* that they have been deserted because He has hidden His face. However, He is always there protecting them.

(Sforno)

HOSHANA RABA

ALL NIGHTER

SATURDAY NIGHT OCTOBER 14

Classes and lectures from 8:30pm until dawn

Rav Nachman Bulman • Rav Nota Schiller • Rav Mendel Weinbach • Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb • Rabbi Dr. Akiva Tatz • Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram • Rabbi Saul Mandel

Sunrise at the Kotel

REFRESHMENTS SERVED ALL NIGHT

At The Ohr Somayach Main Campus,
22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Jerusalem

Haftorah: Hoshea 14:2-10; Yoel 2:11-27; Michah 7:18-20

The Shabbos between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is called *Shabbos Shuvah*, which means both ‘return’ and ‘repentance’. The first word of this week’s Haftorah is ‘*Shuvah*’ – “Return O Israel to Hashem, your G-d, for you have stumbled in your iniquity.” Just as a person who has been found guilty by the courts and his only hope is to throw himself on the mercy of the king, so too the prophet exhorts the Jewish People to throw themselves on the mercy of the Supreme King of Kings, and beg for clemency, for He alone, in His great kindness, has the power to overrule the verdict and forgive their sins and transgressions.

Two ideas from the Sfas Emes on Shabbos Shuvah

This is the first Shabbos of the year, and because of this, its sanctity needs to be especially guarded – as it is the *first*. The Talmud states, “if the Jewish People had kept the first Shabbos, no nation nor tongue could have ruled over them.” On Rosh Hashana a new order is created for all of the days of the year. Thus, if the first Shabbos of the year is correctly observed, then the whole year is perfected.

Shabbos is an aid to *teshuva*. As our Sages teach (*Brachos* 37), a ‘*tzaddik gamur*’ (completely righteous person) cannot stand in the place where a *ba'al teshuva* (someone who returns to Judaism) stands. *Tzadikim* uphold the world, as it says in Proverbs, “A *tzaddik* is the foundation of the world”; but the way of a *ba'al teshuva* is *before* the world and *above* the world, as the Talmud says “*Teshuva* preceded the world” (*Pesachim* 54). Shabbos *also* has a light which is higher than the seven days of the week – a reflection of the World to Come.

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insights into Shabbos Zmiros

Parshas Vayelech

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