

THE CHABAD WEEKLY

Vol 6, #45

Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

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The Consolation of Exile

Eikev is one of the "Seven [portions] of Consolation." Since its Haftorah deals with redemption, we must accordingly say that the Torah portion does so as well.

As we find ourselves in a state of exile, redemption can be better understood by first discussing exile and its underlying causes. When we become aware of the cause of exile, we will know how to rectify it, which in turn will lead to the Redemption.

This can be compared to a physically ill person who knows the nature of his malady. He will then go to a doctor and know what to say to him. The doctor in turn will then know how to heal him. Thus, the very awareness of illness and its symptoms is already "half the cure."

The same is true with regard to exile. Knowledge of its cause is the beginning of redemption, for knowing what brought on an exile prompts the nation to heal itself and thus attain a state of redemption. In the portion of Eikev, Moshe reviews the Jewish people's 40-year sojourn in the desert, a place he describes as "great and fearful, filled with snakes, fiery serpents and scorpions."

All the above not only describes the desert, then, but also our present exile, existing as we do in the "desert of nations." Knowledge of these details is in fact a consolation, for when we know how to extricate ourselves from the desert, and go on to do so, then the current state of exile ceases.

In describing the desert as a great desert, we come to understand the primary reason why exile among the nations is described as being in a "desert of nations." It is because Jews are a distinct minority there, just as a desert is sparsely inhabited.

This, unfortunately, may lead the Jews to see the desert as indeed "great," and the un-Jewishness of the environment so vast that they feel unable to withstand the culture and mores that seem to engulf them.

In truth, absolutely nothing can impede a Jew in his spiritual service of Torah and mitzvos. When a Jew acts with pride and displays his Judaism unabashedly, then "all the nations of the world behold that G-d's Name is upon you, and they fear you."

But when a Jew thinks that the "desert of the nations" is "great" and that he himself is puny, this in itself serves to perpetuate a state of exile.

Thinking of the world as a "great desert" can lead to an even greater descent: A person might not only think of himself as puny in comparison to the "great desert," but feel abject fear, thinking that the "other" has total control over him. He then becomes afraid to act like a Jew even when not in direct contact with the world, for maybe someone in that "great and fearsome desert" will become aware of his Jewish actions, even though they are performed only in the privacy of his own home.

This leads to being bitten by the "snake," which our sages describe as having "searing venom." In spiritual terms, this means that the person becomes totally engrossed by the heat and passions of the world around him, thereby diminishing his passion for Judaism. This absorption leads to an encounter with the "fiery serpent" - becoming so smitten by the heat of worldly matters that the fire of Judaism is utterly extinguished. In turn, this leads to the "cold venom" of the scorpion, which renders its victims entirely "cold" to spiritual matters. Knowing that lack of tenacity in the "great desert" leads to all these problems, a Jew is able to hasten the end of exile by standing up proudly for his Judaism, and marching on to the Redemption with the speedy arrival of our Righteous Mashiach.

Based on Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, pp. 372-375

Heat and Cold

The most solemn and sacred part of our daily prayers is the amidah ("standing" prayer), where the soul achieves the height of intimacy in its communion with its Creator. So sacrosanct is this prayer that the Talmud instructs: "Even if a king greets him, he should not respond; even if a snake is coiled around his heel, he should not interrupt."

However, the Talmud goes on to qualify this law by explaining that the "snake" in question is one whose venom is not life-threatening. Thus, if a scorpion, whose sting can be fatal, threatens a person while he is praying, he should interrupt his prayers.

Like the human being it comes to instruct, the Torah consists of a "body"—a code of law that governs the physical life of man—as well as a "soul"—an inner dimension that addresses our spiritual selves. And every part of the Torah's body has its counterpart in the Torah's soul. Every law in the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch encapsulates within it a deeper significance, instructing the inner life of man in addition to his external behavior.

The same is true of the legal distinction between a "snake" and a "scorpion" as regards the interruption of prayer. Our sages tell us that a snake injects a person with a "burning" poison, while a scorpion's poison is "cold. Translated into the terms of "the service of the heart" that is the inner essence of prayer, there are two types of spiritual maladies that threaten the soul in its quest to come close to G-d. The first is a "burning poison"—the heat and passion of earthly desires. A second spiritual threat is the poison of "coldness"—the apathy which leaves a person indifferent to everything and anything, material and spiritual alike.

In Maimonides' description of Abraham's quest for truth and his recognition of the One G-d, we read that, initially, Abraham was "immersed amongst the foolish idol-worshippers of Ur Kasdim; his father, mother and the entire population—he amongst them—all worshipped idols." Asks Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi: why is it important that we know that the first Jew once worshipped idols? But it is precisely because Abraham worshipped idols, answers Rabbi Schneur Zalman, that he came to recognize the divine truth. Because he cared, because he passionately and devotedly served what he had been misleadingly taught to regard as worthy of worship, his sincere desire matured into a desire for G-d. Had he been indifferent to the idols of his native land, he would never have searched for and discovered the true G-d.

Thus the Talmud says: "Even if a snake is coiled around his heel, he should not interrupt." Even if you feel threatened by a poisonous heat, keep on praying. Place yourself in G-d's hands and beseech Him to guide you to the truth. If your intentions are pure, your profane heat will be transformed into a holy fire.

On the other hand, if a person is threatened by the frigid poison of a scorpion, he must interrupt his prayers. When a person is faced with the icy sting of indifference—even if it is only his "heel" (i.e., a lowly and marginal part of the self) that is threatened—he must conduct a full re-assessment and re-orientation of his spiritual life. Nothing positive and holy can ever spring forth from coldness. (Based on an address by the Rebbe, Shabbat Eikev 5716 (July 28, 1956) From: Week in Review, Vol XII No 46) – meaninfullife.com

PIRKI AVOS

"Ben Zoma said ... Who is rich? He who is content with his lot." (4:1)

QUESTION: Why didn't Ben Zoma say "Who is rich? He who is content with his money."

ANSWER: The word "ashir" - "rich" - is an acronym for einayim - eyes - shinayim - teeth - yadayim - hands - and raglayim - feet. Hashem has given these as a gift to human beings and expects us to use them for Torah study, prayer, and good deeds.

The eyes should be used for reading Torah and looking favorably at other Jews. With the teeth one should eat Kosher food and speak well of others. The hands are to be used to give charity and extend help to anyone in need. With the feet one should go to shul and to yeshivah.

A person who has "healthy" eyes, teeth, hands and feet is indeed rich and should be grateful to Hashem. A man who is content with G-d's gift and who utilizes his body exactly as Hashem intended is truly an ashir - a wealthy person. (From: VeDibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky)

The Mittel er Rebbe quoted the Al ter Rebbe: "Ahavat Yisrael must possess one to the very core of I life itsel f."

Footnote: 1. Ad Mitsui Hanefesh. The identical phrase is used by the Sages (Sifri, Devarim 6:5) to describe the required degree of loving G-d, "...with all your soul etc...", i.e. up to, and including, readiness to give up one's life. (From Rebbe's Hayom yom 18 menachem av).

*The first thing you must know before anything else applies: Truth demands chutzpah. If what you are doing is the right thing to do, don't give two cents about what others have to say. Without that knowledge secure in your heart and soul, don't imagine you can take a single step forward. Once you've passed its test, then you can begin to grow.
- meditations and everyday wisdom from the teachings of the Rebbe by Zvi Freeman*

PARTICIPATE IN DAILY CLASSES

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| <u>Sunday</u> | 8:00 AM | Gemara-Tractate Rosh Hashana (men) |
| <u>Monday</u> | 8:30 PM | Chumash (men and women) |
| <u>Tuesday</u> | 8:00 PM | Gemara-Tractate Makos (men) |
| <u>Wednesday</u> | 8:30 PM | Halacha and Tanya (women) |
| <u>Thursday</u> | 10:00 AM | Chassidus (women) |
| | 8:00 PM | Class for Beverly Hills Highschool Students |
| <u>Daily</u> | 6:45 to 7:15 AM | Chassidus |
| | Between Mincha and Maariv | Halacha |

There will be no classes on Sun-Tue, August 17 - 19.

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM
Sunday 9:00 AM
Mincha/Maariv: 7:40 PM

SHABBOS PARSHAS EKEV
August 15, 2003

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 7:24M
Friday Mincha: 7:40PM
Early Minyan: 6:10M

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:35 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- **Tanya 8:45 AM**
- **Shacharit 9:30 AM followed by Kiddush & Cholent**
- **Pirkei Avos 6:30 PM**
- **Mincha 7:15 PM followed by Seuda Shlishit**
- **Shabbat ends 8:24 PM**

Seudah Shlishit this week is being sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Aminzadeh in honor of Talli's birthday.

Yartzeits: Jack Mayerhoff – Av 16, Leo Novak – Av 19, Riva Fredrich – Av 20, Yitzchak Dafner – Av 20, Marvin Levinston – Av 23.

Happy Birthday to Bassie Shusterman & Chaya Trinca.

Happy Anniversary to Dr and Mrs. Alan Dauer, Dr. and Mrs. Zeev Rav-Noy.

GOOD SHABBOS!