

Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Metzora

A New Affirmation

"Avi, the next six verses of the Pisukei DiZimra are taken from the book of Nechemia (9:6-11). At that time, the Beis HaMikdash that Shlomo HaMelech had built lay in ruins. The nation had returned from the golus (exile) of Bavel only a short time before. They had celebrated their first Succos in Eretz Yisrael with great joy – greater than they had experienced since the days of Yehoshua Bin Nun."

"What a simcha!"
"Indeed. However, they realized that their past behavior was not acceptable. Therefore, they gathered together on the day after Succos, fasting, donning sackcloth, with earth upon them. This mass demonstration of teshuva came from a resolve not to repeat the shortcomings of the past.¹ It culminated with a new affirmation of Hashem's sovereignty over the universe, and His selection of Klal Yisrael as His chosen nation. 'You alone are Hashem. You made the heavens ... All their legion, the earth and all that is upon it, the seas and all that is in them, and You give them all life. You selected Avram, brought him out of Ur Kasdim, and changed his name to Avraham. You found his heart faithful before You, and sealed the bris (covenant) with him to give him the land of the Canaanite ... You saw the suffering of our forefathers in Mitzrayim. You heard their outcry at the Yom Suf. You imposed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all the people of his land ... You have made a Name for Yourself, as clear as this very day. You split the sea before them and the crossed in the midst of the sea on dry land. You hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone in turbulent waters."

"That is a concise summary of the highlights of Hashem's wonders and favor for Klal Yisrael throughout the centuries."
"Yes, Avi. It ends with the splitting of the

Yom Suf, which brings us to the last selection of the Pisukei DiZimra – the Shiras HaYom."

"May we all recognize Hashem's greatness and kindness, and praise His Holy Name forever and ever!"
"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . . Klal Yisrael's relationship with our Father in Heaven is legendary. Our hearts strive to be close to Him. When we falter, and realize our mistakes, we immediately do teshuva. We correct our errors, regret them, and go forward with a new resolve never to repeat them. That is what happened in the times of Ezra and Nechemia. The people did teshuva and renewed their affirmation that the Almighty is the Master of the Universe. We are His chosen nation, and He Has favored us throughout our long history, and continues to shower us with kindness to this very day. With this in mind, we are prepared to serve Him with all of our hearts. Come, let us sing together the Shiras HaYom!

Over All Five

"Hello, everyone. I'm home."
"Shalom, Abba. How are you?"
"Wonderful, Chaim, Baruch Hashem. Thank you for asking. How are you? How was your day?"
"Great, Abba. We learned a very interesting Mishna today."
"That's fantastic Chaim. Tell me all about it."
"It is in Mesecta Makkos, the third chapter, the ninth Mishna. Someone can plow one furrow and commit eight sins."
"Wow. What are the sins?"
"He plows with an ox and a donkey together, which are both hekdesh (property of the Beis HaMikdash). He plows kelai hakerem (a field which has grapevines

and wheat mixed together) on the shmitta year, on yom tov. The field is also a graveyard and the man plowing is both a Kohen and a nazir (who are both forbidden to enter a graveyard)."



"Chaim, that is truly fascinating. I learned something similar today. About an action which carries the weight of many sins."

"What was it Abba?"
"It was a Medrash on Parashas Metzora. The Medrash was speaking about the plague of tsoraas, which comes from speaking Loshon Hora. The word 'Torah' is used five times in the parasha in reference to the plague of tsoraas. This is to teach us that one who speaks Loshon Hora transgresses all five books of the Torah."

"Oy vey."
"There is more, Chaim. The Tosefta in Mesecta Peah (1:2) lists sins for which a person is punished in this world, but the main punishment is reserved for the next world: idolatry, immorality, and murder. Loshon Hora is equal to all of them."

"Words are really powerful, Abba."
"That's right, Chaim. Watch what you say."

Kinderlach . . . We are all trying to do lots of mitzvos and avoid doing any aveyros (sins). Two weeks ago we learned about the animals which are forbidden to eat. You would not dream of eating chazir (pork). It is a terrible aveyra. This week we learn that we must be just as careful about what comes out of our mouth, as we are about what goes into it. One word of Loshon Hora is a sin against the whole Torah. All 613 mitzvos! The punishment in this world is bad enough. What happens to the sinner in the next world is unspeakable. Watch what you say.

¹See Nechemia 9:32-37

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