

PARSHAS VAYEILECH SHABBOS SHUVAH

By Rabbi Yaakov Feitman, Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi

Although there are only two formal *tochachos* – sections of admonition and chastisement – in the Torah, Parshas *Bechukosei* and Parshas *Ki Savo*, this week's Sedra also contains devastating words about our future. Yet, when we read carefully, we see that there is a powerful hidden consolation. Hashem tells Moshe Rabbeinu that after he passes away, "this people will rise up and stray...I will conceal My face...many evils will encounter it...It will say on that day 'is it not because my G-d is not in my midst that these evils have come upon me?' And then I will conceal My face" (31:18). One of the most frightening sentences in the Torah is that Hashem will hide from us. Many Gedolim indeed saw the churban of Europe known as the Holocaust as a manifestation of "*hester ponim* – Hashem hiding His face."

Many years ago I had the privilege of recording the words of my rebbe, Rav Yitzchok Hutner zt"l (see *A Path Through the Ashes*, page 44) explaining this cryptic passage. He noted the ancient question, "If Klal Yisrael did teshuvah, why did Hashem hide His face again?" The Ramban reveals that this teshuvah was, in fact, incomplete. At the End of Days we will recognize that our problems result from the fact that Hashem is not in our midst, but we will at first not realize or admit that it was the result of our sins. Then Hashem will, so to speak, step away so that we will search for Him. This will result in the complete teshuvah which will bring Moshiach. This is a different approach than that of the Seforno, who asserts that saying "Hashem is not in our midst is not teshuvah at all." The Ramban is teaching us that it is teshuvah, but an imperfect repentance, which is brought about by Hashem "hiding" once again from us but this time making Himself more accessible.

Perhaps we can reconcile the Ramban and the Seforno in the following way. We know that during the most recent churban-Holocaust, many Jews indeed felt abandoned by Hashem. Others were able to find Hashem even in the horrors of Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen. Since none of us have the right to judge those who lost their faith in that horrific purgatory, we can only marvel with deep reverence at those who retained their emunah despite all. My rebbe felt that a Jew who even uttered the words "Where is Hashem?" was implicitly calling out to Him, despite his doubts. The Ramban sees this as the beginning of viduy and teshuvah. The Seforno sees it as part of our "leaving Him." Either way, these events represent a process which eventually leads us back to Hashem.

The Magid of Mezerich once noticed a little girl crying in the zoo. When he asked why she was so sad, the girl replied that she was playing hide and seek" with her friends, she was the one hiding but her friends abandoned her, didn't look for her at all and went home. The Magid smiled at her and advised her to go home as well. However when she left, he too began to cry. He told his Chassidim, "Hashem, too, hides from us but wants us to seek Him, but we have given up and not even tried our best." He lifted up his holy eyes and said to Hashem: "I know that You, too, are crying (Yirmiya 13:17), please do not wait for us. Just come home to Your dwelling in Yerushalayim." Let us do our part through teshuvah and Hashem will surely do His as well, bringing us the Geulah Sheleimah in this New Year *im yirtzeh Hashem*.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A G'MAR CHASIMAH TOVAH

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

PARSHAS VAYEILECH SHABBOS SHUVAH

BY RABBI YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

This week we will discuss questions and answers about Yom Kippur

Question: Does a woman who has a positive pregnancy test have to do kaparos for the baby?

Answer: No kaparos are not necessary until the fetus is 40 days old (Nitey Gavriel, Yom Kippur, page 78).

Question: If one missed kaparos entirely before Yom Kippur, can it still be made up?

Answer: Yes, until Hoshanah Rabbah at the end of the day (She'eiris Simchah 8).

Question: May one use Maasar money for kaparos?

Answer: No (Kitzur 131:1; Mishnah Berurah 605:6).

Question: If someone is not fasting on Yom Kippur for medical reasons, does he still have a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur:

Answer: Yes (Sedei Chemed, 1:3).

Question: Are there any special foods which we should eat on Erev Yom Kippur?

Answer: Yes. We eat round chalos dipped in honey, fish, chicken and kreplech filed with meat (Orchos Chaim 604:1; Mogen Avrohom 608:7; Darchei Chaim Vesholom 744).

Question: When should one go to the Mikvah on Erev Yom Kippur?

Answer: Preferably, one should go after chatzkos (12:50 P.M.), but in any case no earlier than 11:50 A.M. (Tur 606; Chayei Adam 144:6). One should not be confused by those who have a minhag to immerse earlier, such as talmidei Chasam Sofer, since they go a second time after the Seudah Hamafsekes.

Question: How many Yohr Zeit candles do we light on Erev Yom Kippur?

Answer: Many people just light one for their parents even if both have passed away (Rama 610:4; Mateh Ephraim 603:8; Kitzur 131:7). However, others (Eliyahu Rabbah 610:4; Darchei Chaim Vesholom 743) say to light one for each. If one does not have a minhag, I recommend that a candle should be lit for each person who passed away.

Question: What is the "gezunte licht" (healthy light) which some people light before Yom Kippur?

Answer: This is actually a Halacha (Shulchan Aruch 610:4; Mogen Avrohom No. 3) that requires every married man, even if his parents are alive to light a Yohr zeit type candle which will last for the entire 24 hour period of Yom Kippur. Women generally do not light this candle, although they may do so if they wish (Mateh Ephraim). For various Kabbalistic reasons, this candle is primarily associated with the well-being of men, not women.

Question: Do we eat a hard-boiled egg dipped in ashes at the Seudah Hamafsekes (meal before the fast)?

Answer: No. This common error is based upon a mistake in comparing the Tishah B'av Seudas Hamafsekes with that of Erev Yom Kippur. The Tishah B'av meal represents the Seudas Havra'ah which is fed to an aveil, a mourner " . However, the Erev Yom Kippur meal is the exact opposite. It represents the mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur and according to others, it is the meal we should be eating on Yom Kippur which is a Yom Tov (Shalah, Sidur Otzar Hatefilos and Sidur Ha'Ari z"l).

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