



Tiferet

ת פ א ר ת



TIFERET HASHABBAT

This Week in Tiferet

Preparing for a two-day Yom Tov always takes a lot of time and effort – especially when you are hosting 71 students as well! This year, as in the past, Tiferet was pleased to be able to provide a beautiful and inspiring Rosh Hashana for our students at their home away from home in Ramat Beit Shemesh. We were joined for a minyan in the Tiferet Beit Midrash by one of the local minyanim, and our students were invited to meals at the homes of the Tiferet faculty and friendly neighbors. Even though it is difficult for our students to be away from their families on the chagim, we are glad that they are able to spend the chag with their "Tiferet family!"

תורת תפארת

Moving Away

Parashat Vayeilech – Yom Kipur

Rav Natanel Lebowitz

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein was once walking in the streets of Bnei Brak when he happened upon a crying young boy. Not wanting to walk by a crying Jew without seeing if he could help, he stopped and asked the lad what was wrong. The boy related that he was in middle of a game of hide and seek with his friends. He hid in such a great spot that nobody could find him. Rav Levenstein did not understand why that brought the child to tears. Isn't winning the game a good thing? The boy explained that his tears were not because he hid so well but rather because everyone stopped looking for him. Upon hearing this, Rav Levenstein also began to cry. When the child asked why the Rav was crying, Rav Levenstein said that this is what Hashem must feel like when His children stop seeking Him.

In this week's parsha, we find a very puzzling, if not troubling, sequence of events. Hashem tells Moshe that after Moshe passes away, we, his people are going to have a hard time. We will forsake the Torah and worship other gods. Because of this, Hashem will hide his face and tragedies will befall us. The Torah continues that we, Bnei Yisrael, will say that "the reason these bad things are happening is because Hashem is not within us."

It would seem that Bnei Yisrael's realization is teshuva-esque. We would hope that the Torah would continue with Hashem then realizing that we do love Him and welcomes our return. Especially during this time of year, where we hope Hashem accepts our repentance, we hope that this will be the outcome.

However, Hashem continues the narrative that upon hearing the people's proclamation, He responds by hiding His face. In fact, to stress the severity of the broken relationship, the Torah states the word "hidden" twice. The Mosef Rashi (an explanation on the Chumash) comments that this is the most severe prophetic reproof that we ever find. After all, we know that being alone, separated from Hashem who "hid his face", is the worst punishment that we could have brought on us.

If the Jews seemingly do teshuva by recognizing that tragedies were happening because

Continued on pg. 2

תורת תפארת (המשך)

Hashem was not with them, why does Hashem respond by seemingly moving further from us? What was the problem with this teshuva?

Rav Hirsch explains that although the Jews recognized that tragedies were happening because Hashem was not with them, they focused the blame on Hashem. Hashem is the one who moved. As opposed to taking responsibility, we state that He distanced Himself. However, this is not true. Hashem never changes. He never moves. His commitment to us never wavers. When we sin, we are the ones distancing ourselves from Him.

We see a parallel in the way Hashem created the universe. Although people used to think the sun revolved around the earth, we now know that the sun never moves. It is a permanent fixture at the center of everything. It never changes and never wavers. Everything revolves around its constant state. It is man who moves. This is symbolic of when we do mitzvos, we move closer. When we sin, we move further away.

The Ramban suggests a second answer. Even had their realization been accurate, there was a different shortcoming in their confession. Even if they meant wholeheartedly that wanted to return, all we find is their statement. There was no follow up action. They paid lip service to not want suffering but what did they do about it? Because they were right there at the doorstep of greatness and repentance, and then fell short of changing, His Essence becomes more hidden. Like we previously said, not because Hashem is digging in deeper but rather because realization without action is even more insulting to Hashem.

It is definitely difficult to repent and to own up to the things we do wrong. It is even harder to admit that our lives need to be heading in a different direction than the one in which we are currently leading. The hardest level of repentance is to actually change. We are creatures of habit and whether it comes to dieting or davening with more kavana or carving out time in our schedule for a chavrusa, it is difficult to develop new habits. But as we stand in these Days of Judgement we need to know that is what Hashem is looking for. It is easy for us to commit, but can we really change? We should not get burdened by how much we need to change. Even if we pick one area to improve, that is still a change. But we need to commit and we need to make change happen. We need to make a meaningful New Year's resolution.

יהי רצון מלפני אבינו שבשמים that Hashem give us the insight to be honest with ourselves and what we are all about and give us the strength and the fortitude to always get close to Him.

Mazal Tov!

Mazal Tov to Michelle Fleksher (5770) on her engagement to Yishai Kadry! May they be zochim to build a bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael together!

Mazal Tov to Vicky Malka (5768) on her engagement to Jacob Dachs! May they be zochim to build a bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael together!



Reunited, and It Feels So Good Jen Gardner (5775, 5776)

The following idea was adapted from a Shiur given by Rabbi Andi Yudin.

The גמרא says that there is no greater טוב יום than Yom Kippur, no greater day of simcha. Why is that? What is the simcha of Yom Kippur? We can't eat, drink, or wear leather shoes, so why should I be excited for Yom Kippur?

Rav Pincus gives a משל: A father goes with his son to the shuk to get his lulav. The father is busy picking out the perfect one, and the son wanders off to look at other things. They get separated, and lose each other. The father goes over to the police, and the policeman says, prove to me he is your son. All of a sudden, the son comes running out and gives his father a big hug. The police man doesn't need any more proof, the hug was enough. Now they are much closer than they were before, they drifted away a little but now they are back together.

Over the year, our נשמה gets dirtier and dirtier. But on Yom Kippur, Hashem takes my נשמה and cleanses it. Just like a mikvah purifies our bodies, Hashem purifies our נשמות. To purify our bodies, we emerge into a body of water, but to purify our נשמות, we run into Hashem's arms and reunite with Him.

We have drifted the whole year, but we come back on Yom Kippur, and now we're closer with Hashem than ever before. We drifted away, done a lot of things we shouldn't have done this year, but we come back together, closer than ever, and that is true simcha.

We should be excited for Yom Kippur because we get a chance to live at least for one day solely for the purpose that we were created for. We get to experience the simcha of Yom Kippur.