

Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Nitzavim – Vayelech 5784

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Moshe gives chizuk to Bnei Yisroel.

כִּי־קָרֹב אֵלַיךָ הַדְבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְבְּךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ:

“Because it is very close to you, this matter. It is in your mouth and in your heart to fulfill it.” (Devarim 30:14).

What is “this matter?” Also, what does it mean it is close? Saying it is in one’s heart and mouth is saying it is close, why the double expression?

These final instructions by Moshe are taken in context both by their wording and by their attached pesukim. This pasuk is the last of a four pasuk parsha; from the {ס} closed break that closes pasuk 10 – pesukim 11 through 14. This parsha commences with כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲנִי מְצַוְנֶךָ הַיּוֹם וְלֹא רְחֹקָה הִוא: “Because this commandment that I / Anochi is commanding you today – It is not too complex (lit. wonderous) for you and it is not too distant.” (Ibid 30:11). In order to understand our pasuk this pasuk has to be explained as to (1) which mitzvah, (2) what does it mean ‘not too complex’, and (3) why is it considered ‘not distant’ instead of “not too distant from you?”

The Torah said earlier, at the end of last week’s portion, “These are the terms of the covenant which Hashem commanded Moshe on the plains of Moav, besides (in addition to) the covenant which Hashem made with them on Mount Chorev.” (Ibid 28:69). That covenant was the Ten Utterances. More specifically, “Hashem said, ‘Behold! I / Anochi am entering a covenant opposite the entire nation, I will work such wonders that have not been created in all the lands and in all the nations, and the entire people will see that I am within their midst.’” (Shmos 34:10). Then the next pasuk says, “Guard for yourself, all that Anochi commands you today!” (Ibid 34:11). These two pesukim refer to Hashem dwelling within the midst of the people. This was done when the Mishkan was erected. It also refers to Hashem dwelling within the people themselves. So long as they hold themselves to Hashem’s covenant, Hashem dwells in their hearts and in their minds. This pasuk is explained by Yirmiyahu. “Because this covenant that I will enter into with Bnei Yisroel at the End of Days...I will put My Torah within them, inscribe it on their hearts.” (Yeremiah 31:33). Not only is Hashem to dwell among Bnei Yisroel but the Torah does also, *within* each and every one of Bnei Yisroel.

Moshe warns Bnei Yisroel that when they are long in Eretz Yisroel, “Guard the statutes and the commandments that Anochi commands you today, that it be good for you, and your children after you.” (Devarim 4:40). This is an exact reference to that bris that Hashem made with Bnei Yisroel and then renewed on the plains of Moav. The Torah reiterates this bris several times. “These matters shall be that Anochi commanded you today upon your hearts.” (Ibid 6:6). This is another reference to internalizing the bris. In fact, nineteen times Moshe warns Bnei Yisroel about this covenant that “Anochi

commanded you today.” Time and again Moshe refers to the bris and makes sure Bnei Yisroel understand how important it is to keep it.

This bris must be kept because it is very nearby. It is not unobtainable. It is not something where one has to travel far to reach it or to work hard to obtain it. It is quite close; indeed, it is already upon one’s heart. Hashem did not guide Bnei Yisroel by Way of the Philishtim to go to Eretz Canaan “because it was near.” (Shmos 13:17). The Way of Philishtim was right there. One would have thought Hashem would lead them that way because it was nearby. Further, Moshe sings to Bnei Yisroel that Hashem does not rush vengeance on the nations of the world who attack and mistreat Bnei Yisroel “because near is their day of distress.” Hashem needs not to expedite something that is already nearby, or actually in existence. Their day of reckoning is already upon them.

Even if Bnei Yisroel do stray and they are cast out of the Land, they can do teshuva, return, and Hashem will return to them, too. (Devarim 30:3). Even if cast out, there is hope. This is also explained by Yeshayahu, “So said Hashem, guard judgment and righteousness, because your salvation is nearby to come, and My righteousness shall be revealed.” (Yishiah 56:1). The salvation will not be coming from a nearby place nor will it come “soon” in time. It is already within them. The bris that Hashem made with Bnei Yisroel has the Brochos and yeshuos already built in.

The Torah is read that because these are the commandments that Hashem made a bris with you today, they shall not be too complex to understand. (Devarim 30:11). Hashem would not enter into a covenant with Bnei Yisroel that Bnei Yisroel would not comprehend, understand, or be able to fulfill. This is direct contrast to other so-called religions of the world who claim that Bnei Yisroel were cast out and Hashem gave a chance to others. The Torah is making it clear that this bris is something that is able to be fulfilled. It does not take wonders to fulfill it. Further, it is not distant. (Ibid). It is not something that one must journey to get it. While a life’s journey and experience help in understanding the Torah, novices that have not even left their mother’s house can still gain something and fulfill it. It is, generally, not distant. It is not in the heavens (ibid 30:12), and it is not on the other side of the sea (ibid 30:13). Look within and find it.

“Because it is very close to you.” The Torah is always nearby. It is always within reach, one need not look outside to get it, but inside. The word קָרִיב “nearby” also means “relative.” (Shmos 32:27; Vayikra 21:3). The Torah is even considered one’s own relative. It cannot be too complex or difficult because it is inside a person, learned and fulfilled to each person’s own abilities and talents.

“This matter.” This is the great matter. This is *the matter*. The utterance. It is the bris that Hashem made with Bnei Yisroel on Har Sinai through the Aseres Hadibros and the civil and criminal laws that followed. This is all instruction for not only existing in Eretz Yisroel but existing and thriving through time.

“In your mouth and in your heart to fulfill it.” The bris is a sign on one’s hand and on his heart “so that the Torah of Hashem shall be in your mouth.” (Shmos 13:9). Read it, that the Torah is already in your mouth. One need only speak it. Learning and doing are two halves of fulfilling this bris. May Hashem accept our teshuva mercifully.