

Shemos 2013

1.

Clinging to holiness

“He said ‘cast it on the ground,’ and he cast it on the ground and it became a snake. Moshe fled from it.” (4, 3)

"ויאמר השליכהו ארצה וישלכהו ארצה ויהי לנחש וינס משה מפניו."

Nachalas Tzvi page 141:

The Shemos Raba (parsha gimel (3) siman yud beis (12)) states that an important non-Jewish woman once said to Rav Yosi ‘my god is better than yours.’ Rav Yosi asked her why that was so. She responded that when Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe by the burning bush, Moshe hid his face. However, once Moshe saw the snake (which was her god), he ran away! Rav Yosi responded that she was mistaken. **By the burning bush, Moshe had nowhere to run since Hashem fills the whole world as stated in Yirmiya (23, 24) unlike the snake. Once one takes a few steps away from the snake, he doesn’t have to worry about it. That’s the reason why Moshe ran away from the snake.**

The Nachalas Tzvi offers a completely different reason as to why Moshe ran away. **Moshe didn’t run away from the snake because he was afraid.** There is a story of a pious person who was asked ‘aren’t you afraid of being in the desert alone?’ He responded ‘I am embarrassed to be afraid of anything other than Hashem.’ (Chovos Halevavos) **Rather, Moshe ran away from the tummah (impurity) of the snake. Dissimilarly, since Hashem is the source of all holiness Moshe wanted to be as close as possible, therefore, Moshe obviously did not run away! From here we see that a person needs to cling to kedusha (holiness). We need to plant ourselves in a Yeshiva or any good environment and attach ourselves to Rebbeim and good friends. In addition, we also need to run away from bad places, people, and influences that distance us from Hashem.**

2.

Shnayim mikrah v’echad Targum

Rav Chaim Yaakov Zuckerman (Otzer Chaim on the first page) points out that the roshei teivos (abbreviations) of the word Shemos stands for shnayim mikrah v’echad Targum (= שמות תרגום). This alludes to the Gemara in Berachos (8) that says a person always needs to finish the parsha twice, and Targum (or Rashi) once. The Gemara then states ‘anyone who finishes the parsha with the tzibur (congregation) will have long days and years.’ (אמר רב הונא בר יהודה אמר רבי אמי לעולם ישלים אדם פרשיותיו עם הצבור שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום, ואפילו עטרות ודיבן, שכל המשלים פרשיותיו עם הצבור מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו.)

Rav Zuckerman asks why this allusion is specifically hinted to here, at the beginning of sefer Shemos, and not in Bereishis. Seemingly it would be more logical to have this allusion in the beginning of Chumash when we start the new cycle of shnayim mikrah?

When the Jews were in Israel they learned all of the Torah in Hebrew. However, once they went into exile in Egypt, Hashem knew they would no longer be speaking only lashon hakodesh (Hebrew). Therefore, Hashem wanted them to make Hebrew their ikur (main/primary) language, and the foreign language, secondary, even in the exile. Hashem wanted to maintain and keep the status quo of shnayim (two) mikrah, and only echad (one) Targum, meaning that Hebrew should be the primary language, as opposed to echad mikrah and shnayim Targum. This is why we have the allusion to shnayim mikrah precisely in Shemos, when they were in galus (exile). It is because there was a potential concern that the Jews would not use Hebrew as their primary language.

The Shulchan Aruch (siman 285) states that a person is obligated to do shnayim Mikrah v'echad Targum!

Why is the reward specifically longevity? The Yalkut Mefarshim (on that Gemara in Berachos) quotes the Re'aim who says a main point of shnayim mikrah is to become accustomed to the parsha, in order to be able to learn it. The Gemara in Berachos (55a) states that there are three things that shorten one's life. One of the things that shorten one's life is one who gets called up to the Torah and doesn't go. Therefore, since it used to be that the person receiving an aliyah would learn that aliyah as well, if someone didn't review the parsha, he wouldn't be able to go up and it would shorten his life!

The Maharal (Tiferes Yisrael (page 45)) says there are three levels of Torah: the revealed level (available to everybody), the hidden level (only available to certain individuals), and the highest level which discusses the deep esoteric concepts of the next world. (No-one merits understanding this level.) Targum alludes to the revealed Torah because everyone knows it. (In their day and age Aramaic was their primary language.) The shnayim mikrah is the next level, i.e. the hidden. (The reason for this is not every Jew knew Hebrew (similar to today.) One of the shnayim mikrah's alludes to the chachamim who understands Hebrew. The second reading of the shnayim mikrah alludes to the highest level. One who does shnayim mikrah will merit spiritual longevity because of this second reading.

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