



A Taste of Torah

In Deep

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Some of the most dire prophecies that we as a nation have seen unfold during the course of history appear in this week's parsha. Hashem tells Moshe that the Jewish Nation will follow the false gods of the pagan inhabitants of the Land of Canaan.

Hashem continues, "My anger will flare... I will conceal My face from them and they will become prey, and many evils and distresses will encounter it (the Jewish People). 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?' But I will surely have concealed My face on that day..." (Vayelech 31:17-18)

These verses seem to contain several superfluous elements. Why does the verse stress that the Jewish People will become prey; is stating that great evil and distress will befall them not sufficient? Furthermore, what is the purpose of the question being asked by the Jewish Nation, "Is it not because my G-d is not in my midst..."? Lastly, what is the meaning of G-d repeating that, following this question, He will surely conceal His face - that concealment already occurred prior to the question!

The Sefer Arvei Nachal (Rabbi Dovid Shlomo Eibeschutz; 1755-1813) provides us with a fascinating insight into how to view evil and challenges in life. It is axiomatic in Judaism that while G-d created evil, He did so for the purpose of revealing a greater good that would have otherwise been beyond our ability to perceive. The mechanism for evil's existence, he explains, is that a kernel of G-d's *ratzon* (will) for good gives this evil

existence. Kabbalistically, this kernel of *ratzon*/goodness is known as a *nitzutz*. Once the *nitzutz* hidden within is revealed and pulled from the evil, it has no spark of life to provide its existence, and the evil vanishes, leaving only the revelation of G-dliness in its wake. Thus, when a person encounters negativity, a way to speed up its destruction is to search for the goodness it is meant to bring out; once that goodness is truly exposed, the evil will cease to exist.

However, there are times when an evil so great arises that it befuddles even the most righteous, spiritually advanced individuals as they struggle to understand what its purpose is. When this great evil rears its ugly head, even the most faithful may be led to believe that perhaps G-d has lost control of things; perhaps evil has, indeed, escaped and is wreaking unbridled havoc in the world, with no oversight. It is about this seemingly unrestrained evil that the verse speaks. Initially, Hashem will hide His face as evil will take hold. But that evil may be within the ability of mere humans to comprehend; they will be able to perceive that Hashem stands behind it and wishes to discipline and guide His people to return to Him, or recognize other positive purposes to this pain.

However, there may come an evil of such magnitude that the Jewish People will become prey. When prey is consumed, it is completely destroyed, and there is nothing left; the predator completely subsumes the prey within itself. "Prey" thus describes a destructive force that appears to allow

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Stories for the Soul

The Best Way to Die

Rabbi Chaim Peretz Berman, Rosh Yeshiva (Dean) of the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnai Brak, once described the tremendous dedication and sacrifice his rebbi (and previous Rosh Yeshiva of Ponevezh Yeshiva), Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach (1899-2001), had for Torah study.

Rabbi Berman related that he once came to discuss something with Rabbi Schach at the Ponevezh Yeshiva when the latter was already well on in years. Rabbi Schach motioned with his hands that he was not feeling well and was too weak to speak. Rabbi Berman pleaded with Rabbi Schach that he return home to rest, but the elderly Rosh Yeshiva refused to leave the *bais medrash* (study hall).

Rabbi Berman, however, would not take no for an answer and continued to plead with Rabbi Schach to return home and rest. Finally, Rabbi Schach turned to his student and told him, "I am eighty years old, and I must consider that my end will be sooner than later. Feeling so ill, I thought this might be my time to leave this world. If so, it would be better to leave while bent over a volume of *gemara* than while lying in bed."

In this week's parsha, Hashem informs Moshe that come what may, the Torah will never be forgotten from the Jewish People. It is the dedication of the Jewish People to the Torah that has preserved us through millennia of hardships and suffering.

Kollel Happenings

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START: MAXIMIZING THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE DAYS OF AWE

Rabbi Moshe Heyman will present a class for women, *Count to Ten: Aseres Yemei Teshuva as the Start of the Year* on Monday, October 7, at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissachar, 4902 S. Xenia St. (back room) at 8 pm.

PRE-YOM KIPPUR SMORGASBORD

Choose from several different classes as you prepare for Yom Kippur. Thursday, October 3rd at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center, 7:45-9 pm, for men. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact rsh@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at EDOS, 198 S. Holly St. at 11:45 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Birthday | 4) Royal reading |
| 2) Able but not allowed | 5) Guaranteed to never forget |
| 3) Seven into eight | 6) Inside or outside |

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Eliezer Silver Part XXII

Rabbi Silver's words touched a chord, and the young man attended the ceremony. The young man's name was Simon Wiesenthal, who later dedicated his life to hunting for escaped Nazis and documenting the horrors of the Holocaust.

Another famous story attributed to Rabbi Silver involves the many Jewish

children who ended up in Christian orphanages during the war, either placed there by desperate parents or having ended up there on their own as they fled. While these orphanages saved their lives, these children were spiritually murdered by the Church, as the nuns raised them to be faithful Christians.

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no light at all to emerge.

When this horrible event occurs, people will wonder, "How could this happen? There is no purpose in this! Is it indeed possible that G-d is not here in this darkness, controlling this calamity?!"

To this question, G-d replies that He is indeed with us in this dire situation, but He has hidden Himself so deeply as to be imperceptible; it will be all but impossible to sense any shred of G-d or good in this situation.

Hashem continues and tells Moshe that the Song of Ha'azinu will describe these events. And while this song does, indeed, describe many tragedies and great suffering, it also foretells that eventually, the Jewish People will emerge into a far greater world in which evil and suffering are completely destroyed as G-d's presence

and goodness are fully revealed. For it is precisely the darkest moments, when there is absolutely no light at the end of the tunnel, that produce the greatest revelation that Hashem always was standing by our side.

We, as a nation, have experienced tragedies that defy description. These are disasters on a scale that have left many people bereft of their faith, as they could not perceive G-d in the midst of these events. Far be it from those who have not lived through these devastations to pass judgment. But we must also recognize that ultimately, there is a purpose hidden very deep within the evil which will one day bring forth a spiritual light of unimaginable greatness. The revelation of this light will be ours with the arrival of Mashiach, may he come speedily in our days.

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| 1) Birthday 31:2 s.v. anochi | 2) Able but not allowed 31:2 s.v. lo uchal |
| 4) Royal reading 31:11 s.v. tikna | 5) Guaranteed to never forget 31:21 s.v. ki lo |
| 6) Inside or outside 31:23 s.v. mitzud | 3) Seven into eight 31:10 s.v. shivim |

Parsha Quizzers - Answers