

Devarim 2015

1.

The best defense is good offense

Nachlas Tzvi page 435

“These are the words that Moshe spoke to all Israel, on the other side of the Jordan, concerning the wilderness, etc. and Di-zahav (abundance of gold); Etc.” (1, 1)

"אלה הדברים אשר דבר משה אל כל ישראל בעבר הירדן במדבר וכו' ודי זהב."

Rashi quotes the Sifri that explains that Moshe is mentioning all the places that the Jews angered Hashem. Would Moshe mention the sins of the Jews? The pasuk (Vayikra 23, 40) states “you shall take for yourselves on the first day (of Succos) the fruit of the citron tree (Esrog) etc.” The Torah instructs us to take the daled minim on the first day. Is it the first day of the month or is it the 15th day of the month of Tishrei which is actually the first day of Succos? The Medrash Tanchuma answers that it is the ‘first day of accounting of sins’. (ראשון לחשבון עונות.)

One who does teshuva out of love converts his intentional sins into merits as stated in mesechas Yuma (86b) (זדונות נעשות זכויות). From the first day of Tishrei (which starts the Yomim Noroyim (days of awe)) our teshuva (repentance) was motivated by yirah (fear). However, on the first day of Succos we do teshuva out of ahava (love) when we perform the Mitzvos of Lulav, Esrog, eating and sleeping in the Suka. This transfers our intentional sins into merits. When the Medrash says it is ‘first day of accounting of sins’ it means the sins can transfer into merits. The new generation, to whom Moshe was speaking, replaced the sinful one who died in the desert (See Rashi in Chukas). The new generation did teshuva out of ahava, thereby converting their intentional sins into merits. This is why Moshe mentioned the places where the Jews angered Hashem in order to transfer their sins into merits.

2.

Stars

Moem Loez chalek alef page 85

The Jews are compared to stars. Why? Stars have the ability to provide light to far away locations. So too, the Jews will illuminate to far distances. Another reason is as follows; just as stars respect one another and do not argue, so too tzaddikim (righteous people) don't argue with one another. (On unimportant non Torah related matters.) Another reason is as follows; one star can destroy the entire world. So too, one tzadik is able to destroy the entire world with one utterance. We find a similar concept related in the Gemara in Shabbos (33b). When Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai came out of the cave, he burned that which he looked at. Lastly, Hashem loves the Jews so much. Every day Hashem removes and returns stars. Hashem also counts the Jews. This is similar to one who has a lot of money, he constantly counts it. Even though he knows how much he has, he nevertheless counts it because he cherishes his money.