

Va'eschanan 2014

1.

Getting the best of both worlds

Nachlas Tzvi page 444

“Let me now cross and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan.” (3, 25)

"אעברה נא ואראה את הארץ הטובה אשר בעבר הירדן."

The Devarim Raba relates a conversation between Hashem and Moshe. Hashem told Moshe when Moshe pleaded to enter Israel that he cannot have it both ways. If I forgive you for hitting the rock for water instead of speaking to it, as I commanded you, then I will not forgive the Jews for making and worshipping the golden calf. They will therefore, be prohibited to enter Israel. If you want the Jews to be forgiven and allowed into Israel, then you will be prohibited to enter Israel.

The Nachlas Tzvi explains the Medrash as follows; if Moshe was allowed to enter Israel and build Beis Hamikdash (Holy Temple), then it wouldn't ever be destroyed, due to its lofty level of holiness. However, at the same time, if the Jewish people would sin they would be completely annihilated. Whereas if Moshe was punished by being prohibited to enter Israel, then if the Jewish people would sin, then Hashem wouldn't destroy them, but rather would release His anger by destroying the Beis Hamikdash.

Moshe tried to hold the rope from both sides. He tried to get the best of both worlds. We must realize that Judaism believes in the physical, just it must be done at the right place and time. One is obviously not allowed to do something prohibited. The truth is we are able to get the best of both worlds in a permissible way as well. For example, we can enjoy food. The caveat and condition is that the consumption must be accompanied with a beracha before and after.

2.

Shabbos

Meom Loez page 353

“the seventh day is Shabbos to Hashem, your God.” (5, 14)

"ויום השביעי שבת לה' אלהיך."

Shabbos must be for the sake of Hashem. This means that we shouldn't think about anything pertaining to this world. Rather, our thought process should be focused on severing Hashem in the right way. On Shabbos we shouldn't think about any pain that we have. The reason for this is Shabbos is a very happy day. Even wicked people, who are in hell, rest on Shabbos. This is analogous to a king who had a son. His son was about to get married. The father prepared a very nice crown. Everyone was very happy. The king had someone who punished those who were guilty. On the day of the wedding, due to the extreme joy that existed, the punisher didn't punish anyone. Since Shabbos is such a happy time, sinners do not get judged on Shabbos. This is why

we are commanded to rejoice on Shabbos. This is why candles are lit and nice silverware is used. We greet Shabbos like a chason (groom) who awaits his kala's (bride's) arrival or like a host who is expecting a very important guest. Only the best must be prepared. The Gemara in Shabbos (119) relates that there are two angels who escort everyone when they leave Shul. One of the angels is a good one and the other is a bad one. If the table is set and everything is properly prepared, then the good angel will bless that family and the bad angel will unwillingly respond amen. However, if the table isn't set and everything isn't properly prepared, then the bad angel will curse that family and the good angel will unwillingly respond amen. (תניא, רבי יוסי בר יהודה אומר שני מלאכי השרת מלוין לו לאדם בערב שבת מבית הכנסת לביתו, אחד טוב ואחד רע. וכשבא לביתו ומצא נר דלוק ושלחן ערוך ומטתו מוצעת, מלאך טוב אומר יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך. ומלאך רע עונה אמן בעל כרחו. ואם לאו, מלאך (רע אומר יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך, ומלאך טוב עונה אמן בעל כרחו.)

He continues (page 354) and quotes the Gemara in Sanhedrin (57) that says a goy (non-Jew) who keeps Shabbos is liable to death. What is the reason for this punishment? This is analogous to a king who was talking to his wife, the Queen. Suddenly, someone walked in between them. Surely, this person is liable to die, he is considered rebellious. Since Shabbos is a sign/covenant that the Jews are the chosen nation, therefore one who interrupts the conversation between us and Hashem is liable to die.