
א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

בי שבט תשפ"ד-1/12/2024

וארא

abisl Torah.wordpress.com

גמילות חסדים The Reward for

By Eyal Levin

In this weeks פרשה, וארא, 'ה, tells משה to request from פרעה to let the עברים go so they can pray to 'ה, as it says, "וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו ה' אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר שְׁלַח אֶת-עַמִּי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהָנָה לֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ עֲדָכָה:"

"And say to him, Hashem, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say, let My people go that they may worship Me in the wilderness. But you have paid no heed until now." (שמות ז:ט"ז) The word "הָעִבְרִים" here is surprising, because, at this point, we are supposed to be referred to as בני ישראל not עברים. Additionally, surprisingly translates הָעִבְרִים as דְּיְהוּדָי (The Jews), and not as דְּעִבְרָאִי (The Hebrews) nor דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל (The Israelites). Additionally, in the entire תורה, שמות and beyond, translates עברי as עברי, but in ספר בראשית, he directly translates עברי as דְּיְהוּדָי.

To resolve this seeming contradiction, the ביאורי אונקלוס says that אונקלוס really wanted to translate דְּיְהוּדָי in the entire תורה, including בראשית, because at the time, we were already known as the יהודים, and אונקלוס wanted to give more clarity by changing the name from דְּעִבְרָאִי to דְּיְהוּדָי. But since יהודה wasn't born yet, it didn't make sense to call us דְּיְהוּדָי, so instead אונקלוס called בני ישראל, עברי.

However, this answer doesn't make sense, because אונקלוס wouldn't change the translation from עברים to יהודים, just to bring clarity that they were the same people. In fact, it brings more ambiguity, because that would imply we were not the same people as our forefathers and ancestors in בראשית.

Therefore, we can put forward a different answer. The reason that אונקלוס translates הָעִבְרִים in שמות onwards as דְּיְהוּדָי, is because it was already prophesied that יהודה was going to be the leader of the Jewish people at the end of בראשית when יעקב blesses his children, פרשת ויחי, בני ישראל. Many commentators say the reason יהודה was blessed to be the leader of the Jewish people is because he offered to sacrifice himself when יוסף was about to take בנימין away falsely for stealing his golden cup. Here, we see that even after hundreds of years, יהודה was still considered the leader because of the great act of מסירת נפש he had done long ago.

We can learn from יהודה that whenever we give something up to help others, whether that be as small as a pencil, or as big as imprisoning yourself to save your half-brother, we will be rewarded by הקדוש ברוך הוא in this world and the world to come. May we always strive to do the right thing, even if we have to lose something in order to help someone else.

The Relationship Between Man and 'ה

By Daniel Girard

וארא, meaning “And I appeared,” is a narrative that speaks directly to our human spirit, it’s a story of redemption and a complicated journey to freedom. At the heart of the פרשה stands משה, our humble leader who is thrown into the front lines by 'ה. משה is tasked with confronting the mighty פרעה and guiding בני ישראל towards ארץ ישראל, the land which they were promised. משה is an amazing testament to the idea that even in the face of a seemingly impossible task, one person with the help of 'ה can create change.

This פרשה encourages us to take charge in the face of adversity. משה and אהרן keep going back to פרעה to raise warn him of the next plague, but פרעה doesn’t listen, so 'ה brings the plague. This shows us that even when things seem like they aren’t going the right way 'ה will help guide us as long as we put in the work. It is also a potent reminder that our journeys will have problems and there will be people who hold us back, but we must continue to grow and work on ourselves.

וארא also helps us reflect on the relationship between Man and 'ה. משה as we know, is the only person to ever talk “face to face” with 'ה. Seeing this burning bush speaking to him, commanding him to go and redeem בני ישראל out of מצרים. After a quick back and forth משה agrees. This is incredible! The amount of אמונה and ביטחון that משה had to have in 'ה is incredible. After fleeing from his home and living as a poor shepherd, to just pick up his whole life shows an incredible amount of belief, a level we can all strive to achieve.

The relationship between 'ה and Man is crucial, but as we learn from the עשרת הדברות, so is the relationship between Man and Man. The only way to get around in life is through physical relationships. We can learn from משה and the relationship that he had with his brother, אהרן. When משה explains to 'ה his speech impediment, caused by the coals in his childhood, 'ה lets משה know that his brother, אהרן, would be happy to do so. This shows the importance of keeping relationships with your siblings and the people you love. The courage shown by אהרן is inspiring, as he accepts a mission that wasn't even given to him, out of the pure love for his brother and his people.

In this time it is so important to band together and express our belief in 'ה, in order to fight against our enemies. There are many lessons we can learn from this פרשה, but if you had to take away one it would be אמונה in 'ה. Yes, בני ישראל are going through a very tough time, and yes we might not understand now or even ever, but we just have to trust 'ה’s plan.

Editors in Chief: Binyamin Orkaby and Ephraim Fischer

Editors: Yochanan Cramer and Eitan Orkaby

Faculty Advisor: Rabbi Jaffe



Write a Dvar Torah for א ביסל תורה



Receive א ביסל תורה on WhatsApp