

# PARSHAS VAESCHANAN

*by Gedalia Litke*

1. The Poskim speak of Parshas Vo'eschanan being read the Shabbos immediately following Tisha b'Av. This is an unusual construct, as normally we speak of a particular Parsha being read in advance of a particular moed (Jewish Holiday). Instead of saying that Vo'eschanan is to follow, why not say that we read Dvorim right before Tisha b'Av - it would make sense especially since the Chayt Hameraglim (Sin of the Spies), a theme of Parshas Dvorim, occurred on Tisha b'Av.

Rav Soloveitchik ZT'L explains: It is true that a theme of Parshas Dvorim is the Chayt Hameraglim; but a theme of Vo'eschanan (occurring in the section of Ki Solid Bonim which we also read on Tisha b'Av morning) is that Klal Yisroel can and will do Teshuva (Repentance). 4:30. Taking a cue from the fact that we read the Torah portion of Vo'eschanan/Teshuva on Tisha b'Av itself (rather than reading Dvorim/Meraglim), the Poskim wish to reference the positive outcome to emerge from the destruction and to emphasize the opportunities available in the wake of destruction; they therefore express themselves in terms of Vo'eschanan/teshuva, rather than Dvorim/Sin.

2. Also in the Ki Solid Bonim section of Parshas Vo'eschanan (4:23-24), Moshe speaks of the uniqueness of Klal Yisroel's having been privileged to hear HaShem's voice at Har Sinai. In this context Moshe says rhetorically that Klal Yisroel could question whether such an event (a nation hearing HaShem's voice and surviving the experience) ever occurred in history. Moshe says we could inquire "from the day when HaShem created 'man' on the earth and from one end of the heavens to the other". Rashi explains that in a simple sense this means we could ask any person who ever lived and we'd understand how unique our Har Sinai experience was.

Rashi continues with a deeper explanation; the 'man' of the pasuk refers to 'Man/Adam', the original man, and the pasuk is teaching that Adam's stature or height reached from 'one end of the heavens to the other'. The obvious question on the deeper explanation is why is this a good place to teach us a lesson about Adam's stature; doesn't this belong in Parshas Breishis? The Maskil L'Dovid addresses this question: Moshe is telling Klal Yisroel that they could even ask Adam HaRishon, the Man of incredible stature, and he would confirm that Klal Yisroel's experience of hearing HaShem's voice at Har Sinai eclipsed what even he, Adam, ever experienced. Teaching the lesson of Adam's stature here enhances the point being made to Klal Yisroel about their uniqueness and responsibilities.