

# HE WILL RETURN

by Shlomo Katz

## Parshios Netzavim & Vayeilech

### He Will Return

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Today's Learning:

Bava Batra 5:2-3

O.C. (Mishnah Berurah) 8:12-14

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Ketubot 7

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Yoma 30

Our parashah promises, *"He will return and gather you in from all the peoples to whom Hashem, your G-d, has scattered you."* Chazal observe that the Torah does not say, "He will return you." Rather it says, "He will return." It seems that Hashem, Himself, will, so-to-speak, do teshuvah.

R' Yochanan Luria z"l (died 1577) explains: Hashem will repent for exiling us, even though He (obviously) committed no sin. The lesson in this is that we, too, should not be ashamed to repent. Indeed, if He who was not on the wrong path promises to change His ways, then certainly we can and should leave a path which is wrong.

To what may Hashem's promise be compared? asks R' Luria. To a doctor whose patient is afraid to take the medicine which has been prescribed for him. In order to show the patient that the pills are not harmful, the doctor may himself swallow some. So, too, a person may be afraid to change for the better because such a change is an implicit admission that his old ways were misguided. Such an admission can be embarrassing and painful. Hashem therefore says, "I will change My ways first (i.e., gather your scattered people), then you can follow Me."

R' Luria adds: I used to disapprove of tzaddikim who constantly fast and afflict their bodies. I reasoned, "Hashem has created the human body in an ideal fashion, and a person who protects that body enhances his ability to obtain knowledge." Later, however, I realized that these tzaddikim, who

fast to obtain atonement although they have barely sinned, make it possible for those who really have sinned to repent without standing out or being noticed. Regarding these tzaddikim it is said (Daniel 12:3), "Those who bring merit to the public will shine like the stars forever." (Meshivat Nefesh)

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From the Parashah . . .

*"See -- I have placed before you today the life and the good, and the death and the evil . . . and you shall choose life, so that you will live, you and your offspring."* (Devarim 30:15, 19)

R' Pinchas Horowitz z"l (18th century rabbi of Frankfurt, Germany; author of several widely used Talmud commentaries) writes: The Talmud states that a person should confront his yetzer hara. The first tool in a person's arsenal, says the Gemara, should be Torah study; the second tool should be reading Shema; the last tool, recalling the day of death, i.e., reflecting on the fact that man's destiny is to die. The commentaries ask: If recalling the day of death is the ultimate weapon against the yetzer hara, why not use it immediately?

R' Horowitz answers: Our verse addresses this question. *"See -- I have placed before you today the life and the good, and the death and the evil."* Man can combat the yetzer hara by focusing on "the life and the good," by joyously studying the Torah which is the "Tree of Life" and by reciting Shema which affirms the existence of a Loving G-d. Or, one can combat the yetzer hara by focusing on "the death and the evil," by worrying about the punishments that await the sinner. Which is preferable? Our second verse answers this question. *"You shall choose life, so that you will live, you and your offspring."* The first tool in a person's arsenal against the yetzer hara should be the Torah, Tree of Life. Recalling the day of death should be only a last resort. (Panim Yafot)

[Ed. note: Based on the foregoing, we may explain as well why the verse ends *"so that you will live, you and your offspring."* Generally, one who adopts a joyous approach to serving Hashem is more likely to raise offspring who will live their own lives according to the Torah than is one who serves Hashem out of fear and causes his children to perceive the service of G-d as a burden.]

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*"Moshe went, and he spoke these words to all of Yisrael."* (Devarim 31:1)

Many commentaries ask: Where did Moshe go?

R' Reuven Horowitz z"l (18th century Polish rabbi; disciple of the chassidic rebbe R' Elimelech of Lizhensk) explains:

Man is called "holeich" / "one who goes." Angels, on the other hand, are called "omdim" / "those who stand still." The reason for this is that man is called upon to continuously grow. Angels, in contrast, are spiritually stagnant.

The Zohar teaches that although no person will ever achieve Moshe's level of prophecy, every

person can, if he works hard enough, achieve Moshe's level of righteousness. This, says R' Horowitz, is what Moshe is telling Bnei Yisrael in our verse: "I went." "I never stopped growing throughout my life." "And he spoke \*these words\* to all of Yisrael." These very words are relevant to each of you. (Duda'im Ba'sadeh)

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From the Haftarah . . .

*"I will rejoice intensely with Hashem, my soul shall exult with my Elokim, for He has dressed me in the raiment of salvation, in a robe of righteousness has He cloaked me, like a bridegroom who dons priestly glory, like a bride who bedecks herself in her jewelry. For as the earth brings forth her growth, and as a garden causes its sowings to grow, so shall my Master, Hashem/Elokim, cause righteousness and praise to grow in the face of all the nations."* (Yeshayah 61:10-11)

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (rabbi of Brody, Galicia; died 1869) commented on these verses in a number of derashot.

In a derashah delivered in 5620 / 1860, he focused on the first verse, which describes how Hashem has dressed us as brides and bridegrooms. R' Kluger explained: Everyone knows that the most beautiful bride and the most handsome bridegroom may not be so pleasing to look at beneath their fancy clothes and make-up. So, too, our repentance on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur may be little more than window dressing. Nevertheless, Hashem takes pride in us as if we are his beautiful brides. This is part of His great kindness towards us.

In a derashah delivered the following year, R' Kluger focused on the connection between the first and second verses quoted above. He said: The midrash says that we should shave and don clean clothes in anticipation of Rosh Hashanah because we are confident that we will be inscribed for a good year. But can we really be so confident? After all, many righteous people die in any given year!

The answer is that if a righteous person dies at a particular time, then that must be what is good for him. Of course, we ordinarily cannot see how that is the case. Nevertheless, as the second verse above tells us, "as the earth brings forth her growth, and as a garden causes its sowings to grow, so shall my Master, Hashem/Elokim, cause righteousness and praise to grow." When a farmer puts seeds in the ground, they must first decay before anything can grow from them. One who knows nothing about agriculture thinks that the farmer is throwing away perfectly good seeds, but we know better. Similarly, what seems bad to us, who do not know Hashem's ways, is actually good.

This is alluded to by the verse's use of the name Hashem/Elokim (i.e., the Name is spelled as if it is says "yud-keh-vav-keh" but it is pronounced "Elokim"). The Name Hashem reflects G-d's Attribute of Mercy, while the Name Elokim reflects His Attribute of Justice. In reality, they are one and the same. The first of our verses says as well, "I will rejoice intensely with Hashem, my soul shall exult with my Elokim . . ." The prophet tells us that one who understands can see that the two Names reflect the

same G-d. (Kohelet Yaakov: Elul p.265-266)

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Editor's Note: Due to a distribution error, many readers received a year- old issue of Hamaayan last week instead of the correct issue. The article below, which appeared last week and is part of an ongoing series, is repeated for the benefit of those readers.

*"What will we eat in the seventh year?"* (Vayikra 25:19)

As we saw [two weeks ago], one of the methods by which farmers can observe the shemittah but food can still be distributed to consumers who cannot come themselves to harvest the hefker / ownerless fields is the Otzar Bet Din / "judicial storehouse." Below is the text of an Otzar Bet Din contract authored by R' Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz z"l (the Chazon Ish) prior to the shemittah of 5702 (1951-52). It appears in the work Otzar Bet Din, by R' Y.F. Adler.

- 1.** [Name1] [Name2] and [Name3] agreed to serve as a bet din in the city to establish an Otzar Bet Din for the needs of the public.
- 2.** After having established the bet din, they have agreed with Mr. [Name4], may his light shine, that he will be their agent to supervise his own field and others under his control and to perform any necessary, permitted labors, either himself or through hired workers, so that nothing will be wasted or destroyed.
- 3.** The aforementioned gives the bet din the right to gather the fruits of the above-mentioned fields into his own storehouse, and to the [specified, e.g.,] southern part of his shed, and to store them there.
- 4.** The above-mentioned field is in the village of [Place1] and the shed is also there.
- 5.** The bet din hereby designates that above-mentioned location as the Otzar Bet Din.
- 6.** The bet din hereby designates 150 Israeli Lira as the salary of the aforementioned and also as rental for his property [i.e., the storehouse and shed].
- 7.** The aforementioned will collect his salary, plus a proportionate share of his out-of-pocket expenses, from the buyers of the produce.

We have signed this, Erev Rosh Hashanah 5702.: [Name1] [Name2] and [Name3].

[Ed. note: As explained last week, this agreement fulfills the Torah's requirements because it 1) prevents the farmer from hoarding "his" produce, 2) prevents the farmer from profiting from "his" fields, and 3) ensures that produce is available to the public. At the same time, it ensures a livelihood for the farmer who otherwise would be out of work during the shemittah year and also ensures that the fields are left in the hands of those who best know how to preserve them. Note that paragraph 2 limits the farmer to performing labors that are permitted during the shemittah.]

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ('lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah'), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at **Torah.org** start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page.

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