

VA'ETHANAN 1 - MOSHE'S PRAYER TO ATTACH HIS SOUL

At the opening of the parasha Moshe recalls what appears to have been his final unsuccessful prayer to enter the Holy Land. In Sefer Bemidbar in detailing the actual event the Torah reads God said to Moshe - "Climb up to the Avarim mountain where you will be able to see the land...afterwards you will be gathered onto your people." 1 This is what Moshe is referencing in our parasha "At that time I pleaded with God saying...let me see the good land across the Jordan - the good mountain (Yerushalayim) and the Lebanon (Bet Hamikdash). 2 Ramban notes that Hashem did not hearken to his voice at that time and so he prayed once again 3 "Let the omnipotent God of all living souls"...4 It was this final request that Moshe was referencing when he writes in our parasha "Let me go over - I pray to you and see the new land that is beyond the Jordan". 5 R. Meir Bikayam in his Meir La'ares offers a novel interpretation of this final supplication of Moshe regarding entering the land. The verse begins אעברה נא - Ok Hashem - I acknowledge that you have refused me entrance into the land while alive - but have you considered in allowing my soul to return and join the collective soul of Israel in the secret of עיבור נשמה - attachment of the soul? 6 We will explore the nature of his request and what he hoped to accomplish thereby.

TRANSMIGRATION VS ATTACHMENT OF THE SOUL

R. Hayyim Vital in his Shaar Hagilgulim explains the concepts of transmigration גלגול and attachment עיבור of the soul according to his teacher R. HaAri. As a baby enters the world he is endowed with a soul. If it had been decreed that this soul return to the world after a prior sojourn on earth - it enters a newly born baby in the secret of גלגול - transmigration. It will stay with the body - without permission to leave until the time of death. Besides having his own soul one can merit an additional soul in the secret of עיבור - attachment. This additional unrelated soul can attach itself to a main soul of an individual according to certain rules - but theoretically at any time during one's sojourn here on earth. It often comes to assist the main soul in performing misvot. The attached soul often belongs to a once righteous individual who lacked the merit to perform a particular Misva while in this world. He will descend into the world temporarily attaching himself to a worthy individual for a specific period necessary to complete a Misva or set of misvot for himself and the attached individual. 7

MOSHE'S PRAYER

We know from the Mekhilta that Moshe already had resolved himself to the fact that he was to die on the eastern side of the Jordan River. In fact, he had even requested and was denied an opportunity to enter the land even as מת. According to this source - Moshe related this fact to the people - "My bones shall not pass over the Jordan." 8 Earlier we cited Moshe's request that he be allowed to enter the land in the secret of עיבור - attachment of the soul. In this context he calls to Hashem as "The omnipotent God of all living souls." 9 Obviously calling upon the Creator in his capacity as the Force in charge of souls. Surely in this capacity he might allow an entrance of his soul into the land via the secret of עיבור attachment." Moshe desired the spiritual betterment of other Jews - He would seek to pass over אעברה - in the secret of ibbur to assist his people the collective nation of Israel in fulfilling the misvot related to the land. Armed with this information - we can understand a teaching of R. Simlai found in the Talmud "Why did Moshe Rabenu desire to enter the land? Did he need to eat the fruit or sate himself with its bounty? Rather this is what Moshe said to himself - there are many misvot the Jewish people have been commanded - I will enter the land so that all misvot will be fulfilled thru me." 10 Sefer Me'ir La'ares implores us to take heed of the expression "all misvot will be fulfilled thru me". Surely, he writes - that this is a hint towards his request that he led them to doing the misvot related to the land via his attachment to their collective soul. 11 Concerning this request we are told that he was apparently also

rejected - As is evidence from Hashem's response. "It is not necessary for you to assist via attachment to the collective souls of Israel convening these misvot - but rather they will be led by their new leader Yehoshua as it says in the verse "and charge Yehoshua ". 12 This response writes the Ramban - constitutes the rejection of Moshe's request.

MISVOT OF THE LAND

There still appears to be one problem. It is fine if we say that Israel does not require the assistance of Moshe in the secret of attachment of his soul to help Israel. For this task they have a capable leader in Yehoshua. But what about Moshe? Doesn't his soul require עיבור - attachment for its own Tikun? His soul was apparently lacking all Misvot associated with the Land? To this R. Simlai expounded - Hashem said to Moshe "Do you seek anything other than to gain reward?" I will reckon it for you as if you have performed them." 13 Since Moshe desired the spiritual betterment of other Jews - as the Talmud continues to detail from a verse in Isaiah "Therefore I will assign him a portion for the multitudes and he will divide spoils with the mighty in return for having poured out his soul for death and being counted among the wicked yet he bore the sin of the multitudes and prayed for the wicked." 14 From this source it is apparent that Moshe needn't worry about his own Tikun - thru his selfless dedication to the people - Hashem has already taken care of things and has accepted his desires as if he performed these misvot.

MERITING HELP THRU ATTACHMENT OF A SOUL

The Talmud teaches that one who comes to purify himself - receives assistance in the matter. 15 What is the nature of this heavenly assistance? R. HaAri cites an explanation of this teaching from the Avot DiRibbi Natan. Namely that he who purifies receives assistance from the Souls of the Righteous. R. HaAri adds that this is effectuated through the law of עיבור - attachment of the soul. 16 The Shemen Sasson in his commentary to Shaar Hamisvot adds that if one in his lifetime lacks the merit to perform a certain Misva - he can merit to fulfill it without having to transmigrate back into the world. If for example he did not fulfill the Misva to redeem a first-born donkey - he can complete his sojourn after his death by attaching his soul to one who is performing it. 17 The performer - if he merits will receive this "heavenly assistance" from above. If he is sensitive, he will realize that a Holy soul has attached itself to his - joining him in the performance in the Misva. R. HaAri details certain practices one should do to merit an attachment of a Holy soul. It appears to me that to this end - there was an implication by our Rabbis when they said - that one should perform misvot that are neglected by others. Simply understood - be aware that "Rare" misvot have been underperformed in previous generations. This would warrant an activation of the Holy Souls who seek to attach themselves to those who are striving to perform them. To this end - one should strive to purify himself in doing misvot and merit a possible סעִיבּוֹר נְשִׁמָּה assist him in the Misva. He will thereby raise the level of his own Misva while at the same time helping a soul in fulfilling a Misva he did not merit to fulfill while alive. 18

Shabbat Shalom

Victor Bibi