

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michoel Nachmeni zy"u, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



אמרות שמעון

Ha'azinu

**הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי פִי
(דברים לב, א)**

“Give ear, heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth.” (Devarim 32/1)

Rashi asks what was the reason that *Moshe* called the heaven and earth to witness that *Bnei Yisrael* entered a covenant with *Hashem*. He answers that if in future generations *Bnei Yisrael* will claim that they never accepted the covenant with *Hashem*, then the heaven and earth, which will exist forever, will be able to contradict them and give them their reward if they deserve it or their punishment if they deserve it.

Zera Shimshon points out that at the end of *Parshat Nitzavim*, *Rashi* gives two other reasons. Firstly, that when bad will befall the Jewish people they will be able to give testimony that *Moshe* warned them.

And a second reason is in order that when we look at the heaven and earth we can learn not to break the covenant that we have with *Hashem*. "*Hashem* said to *Yisrael*, "Look at the heavens which I created to serve you. Do they deviate from their character? Could the sun not rise from the east. Look at the earth which I created to serve you. Can it deviate from its character? Could you plant wheat and barley will grow? Therefore, if these creations who don't get any reward for what they do don't deviate from their character, you who will get rewarded, and be punished if you sin, surely shouldn't stray from what you must do!"

Zera Shimshon asks, why the change?

He answers that there are three types of calamities and badness that *Hashem* brings on people.

Firstly, punishment for our sins like the ones mentioned in *Parshat Ki Sovo* that we were expelled from *Eretz Yisrael*.

The second type of calamity that can happen to a person is a result of a natural disaster. A *rasha* who is in the vicinity of that disaster gets hurt. However, *Hashem* will protect a *Tzadik* who happens to be there.

The third type is a result of a person's *mazal* (a persons' predestined fate caused by the constellation under which he was born or the place where he lives).

According to this *Zera Shimshon* explains, that *Rashi* mentioned three different reasons for their being witnesses parallel to the three types of calamities.

Parallel to calamities that are punishments like the ones mentioned in *Ki Sovo*, *Hashem* made the heaven and earth witnesses that we were warned and therefore we cannot complain why we are being punished.

Parallel to calamities that are the product of natural disasters, *Hashem* tells us to look at the heaven and the earth and learn from them that just like they don't deviate from their responsibility, we also shouldn't stray from our responsibility to do the *mitzvot* of *Hashem*. If we do stray, then *Hashem* will also change the normal working of nature and bring calamity.

Finally, parallel to calamities that are the product of one's *mazal*, *Hashem* made the heaven and earth witnesses that if we don't keep the *mitzvot* they will punish us through the authority that they received from the *mazal* in the beginning of their creation.

(‘זרע שמשון’ פרשתנו אות א)

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ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Yom Kippur

One Achieves Atonement for His Sins When Ashamed of Them

כל העושה דבר עבירה ומתבייש בו מוחלין לו על כל
עונותיו. (ברכות יב, ב)

Anyone who commits a sin and is embarrassed of it, is forgiven for all his sins.

The Gemara learns this lesson from the words that the prophet Shmuel told King Shaul. This occurred on the eve of a major battle with the Philistines, and Shaul was deeply afraid. He desperately sought Heavenly counsel. When Hashem ignored his entreaties, he enlisted a forbidden medium to achieve communication with the spirit of the prophet Shmuel, who had recently died. The Gemara quotes a Passuk from the dialogue between Shmuel's spirit and Shaul, and learns this lesson from Shmuel's words.

Anyone who commits a sin and is embarrassed of it, is forgiven for all his sins. For it is stated: And Shmuel said to Shaul, "Why did you disturb me, to raise me up!" Shaul replied, "I am in great distress, and the Philistines are at war against me; Hashem has turned away from me and does not answer me anymore, neither through the hand of the prophet nor in dreams, so I called upon you to inform me what I should do". Now, Shaul did not mention the fact that he was not answered through the Urim VeTumim as well [i.e. this was a slip of parchment upon which the Ineffable Name of Hashem was written and which was inserted into the breastplate worn by the Kohen Gadol], and this is because he was embarrassed that he had massacred the residents of Nov, the city of Kohanim [i.e. he was embarrassed to complain that the Kohen's breastplate did not assist him when he had ordered the massacring of so many Kohanim when he wrongfully accused them an act of treason punishable by death]. And from where do we know that, after being embarrassed for this sin, Shaul was indeed actually forgiven by Heaven for all his sins? For it is stated: And Shmuel said to Shaul... "Tomorrow you and your children will be with me". And R' Yochanan said that the words 'with me' means in my enclosure in Gan Eden [i.e. since Shaul was destined to enter the enclosure in Gan Eden occupied by the great prophet Shmuel, all his sins must have been forgiven].

The commentaries ask that we can clearly deduce that Shaul

was actually not forgiven for all his sins, from the fact that after this incident we find the Jewish People being punished for Shaul's sins. It happened after Shaul's death (שמואל ב' כא א-ו) that there was a famine for three years. Dovid inquired of Hashem as to its cause, and Hashem responded that it was because Shaul had killed the Gibeonites. The Sages explain that what had occurred was that the Gibeonites were woodchoppers and water drawers for the inhabitants of the city of Nov, and when Shaul ordered the massacre of Nov, seven Gibeonites were killed, and the rest were left without a livelihood. The prophet goes on to relate that Dovid asked the Gibeonites how he could atone for this injustice so that the famine would end. The Gibeonites replied that seven of Shaul's sons be given to them and they will hang them.

It is these tragic incidents, which were brought about as punishment for Shaul's sin, that seem to challenge the idea that the Gemara presented - that after feeling ashamed for his sin of massacring the Kohanim of the city of Nov, Shaul was forgiven for all his past sins - for the sin of killing the Gibeonites should also have been forgiven along with any other sin of Shaul that was forgiven, and hence any ensuing punishment for that sin would be superfluous.



The Gemara in Yuma (פ"ה ע"ב) teaches us a lesson regarding the atonement for sins which a man has committed to his fellow man. עבירות שבין אדם למקום יוה"כ מכפר, עבירות שבין אדם לחבירו אין יוה"כ. *For sins between man and Hashem Yom Kippur atones, but for sins between man and his fellow, Yom Kippur does not atone until he appeases his fellow.*



In view of this, we can understand that although Shaul was certainly forgiven for all his sins, as the prophet Shmuel had clearly indicated, nevertheless, that specific sin of killing the Gibeonites was not forgiven. The reason for this is because the killing of the Gibeonites was a sin between one man and another, and therefore even after achieving atonements for his other sins, Shaul was unable to be forgiven for the sin of killing the Gibeonites so long as they did not forgive him. Hence, the sin still carried the severe punishments, until Dovid was able to appease them by handing over seven of Shaul's children, through which he obtained the Gibeonites' forgiveness.

(פרשת אמור אות י"ט זרע שמשון)

Published and distributed by The International Organization to Disseminate the Works of The Zera Shimshon
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