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כסלו תשפ"א

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RETIRES SHIUR

The daily retirees shiurim will be resuming again in person this week. Join Rabbi Szmerling for a Gemara shiur. Followed by Rabbi Mendel Gurkov on Sefer Hachinuch. Monday-Thursday 10:00am.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא **חידוש** Chiddush



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Digging our own wells

Parshas Toldos describes how Yitzchak dug wells. Below we present a deep explanation on what a well represents;

At the beginning of creation, Hashem created a river which flowed from Eden to water the Garden of Eden. This river would split into 4 tributaries and from it, all other rivers would receive their waters. This river is the River Pras.

From there, the waters of Pras flowed underground to form the subterranean water-table which feeds the natural wells and springs. At the site of a natural spring, these waters breach through the earth and fountain upwards towards the surface. With a little bit of digging, one taps into the underground waters of the Pras to reveal their waters.

Even though they receive their waters from the Pras, natural springs possess a quality which is superior to the waters of a river. The waters of a spring are called מים חיים, living waters.

This description describes our daily spiritual journey.

Every morning we start off our day immersed in a reality of spirituality. Before davening we learn Chassidus and during davening we try to meditate on the greatness of Hashem and the secrets of His oneness - how all of creation is like nought before Him. Through this meditation we arouse feelings of love and a deep desire to unite with Hashem.

Where is this desire satisfied? Where can we achieve connection with Hashem? It is through the study of Torah in which Hashem's presence is found, and through which we quench our thirst for connection with Him. And so, after Davening we sit to learn a shiur, channelling our spiritual excitement into the words of Torah.

This morning routine of spirituality flows like a river. The river is a flow of G-dliness which emanates from Hashem who is referred to as Eden. Its flow is drawn down through our meditation during davening. Like the river which flowed from Eden to water the Garden (גן), our meditation during davening is channelled into Torah study which is represented by

the Garden (גן) has the Gematria 53 which refers to the 53 Parshios of the Torah).

But as we leave the Shule and Beis Medrash to go out into the world, our minds, instead of delving into the mysteries of G-dliness, are focused on our business dealings and worldly pursuits. The river which flowed so strongly in the morning disappears, buried under the dirt and rubble of physicality.

So how do we maintain our feelings of connection and spirituality?

Throughout the day, we are presented with opportunities to fulfil Mitzvos; giving Tzedaka, doing acts of Chesed, wearing Tzitzis etc. Each Mitzvah is a mini-connection. In the middle of the workday, it connects us back to our spiritual state and resolve at the start of the day.

Even though our feelings of connection have been buried under the soil and rubble of our worldly pursuits, the Mitzvah is like a spring or well which bores through the rubble to tap into the waters of G-dliness which had disappeared.

These Mitzvos actually possess a deeper G-dly quality than Torah study and davening. Torah study and davening require preparation, our Kavanah and emotion. But the Mitzvah, albeit a physical action, comes from such a lofty level of G-dliness that it does not require preparation or Kavanah. The action alone suffices to draw down this revelation.

The additional quality of natural springs is their status of being *Mayim Chaim*, sweet and nourishing waters. The sweetness comes because the water has been purified by being forced through the sediment and rubble of the earth.

The rubble of the concealment of being out in the physical world in pursuit of our physical needs leaves us thirsting for the waters of spirituality, arousing a deep craving and yearning for connection. When we take the time out to dig away the dirt and fulfil a Mitzvah, these small drops of water have this deeper nourishing quality and their sweet freshness will quench and nourish our thirsting souls.

The weekly Halacha analysis

Veyiten Lecha on Motzai Shabbos

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Veyiten Lecha is a Tefillah which is recited on Motzai Shabbos. It is a collection of Pesukim of Brachos from the Tanach.

The opening Pesukim are the Brachos which Yitzchak gave to Yaakov in Parshas Toldos¹. The entire Tefillah is referred to as Veyiten Lecha after its opening words.

There are different Nuschaos of Veyiten Lecha. Some are lengthier, including different types of blessings. Others are more abbreviated².

Early sources and reasons

The practise of reciting Veyiten Lecha on Motzai Shabbos is alluded to in the introduction to the Zohar³ which teaches;

Those who wait to light the candle on Motzai Shabbos until after the Seder Kedusha (V'ata Kadosh), the wicked in Gehenom accept upon themselves the justice of Hashem and they bring upon him all of the blessings recited by the Tzibbur – Veyiten Lecha and Baruch Atah Ba'ir.

(This is based on the idea that the souls in Gehenom are released over Shabbos and only return after Havdalah. This is one of the reasons that we add the extra Tefillos of Viyi Noam and Veata Kadosh on Motzai Shabbos)

The earliest Halachic source to refer to the custom or reciting Veyiten Lecha on Motzai Shabbos is the Sefer Hamanhig⁵, authored by Rabbi Avraham ben Nossan of Lunil (12th Century). He writes that after we say the Viyhi Noam, which is a Psalm of blessings, we add additional blessings from the 20 verses of Veyiten Lecha.

In his commentary work on the Tefillos, Avudraham, Rabbi David Avudraham (1300s Spain) writes about the custom of saying Veyiten Lecha on Motzai Shabbos. He refers to this Tefillah not as Veyiten Lecha, but as יפתח ה' לך את אוצרו הטוב, which is another Posuk which we recite.

He explains that we recite this prayer because it is filled with Pesukim of blessings and success (ברכה והצלחה) as a good sign for the upcoming week, that our handiwork should be blessed.

Another Rishon who references this custom is the Kol Bo, who writes that after the Chazzan says Havdalah in Shule, he says Veyiten Lecha which are verses of blessing recited as a Siman Tov (good sign). It is also mentioned in Tanya Rabasi and Shiblei Haleket.

Siddur Beis Avraham explains that Veyiten Lecha is said on Motzai Shabbos because the Zohar teaches that the 6 days of the week receive their blessing from Shabbos. Through saying the Pesukim of blessings, we draw down the blessings from the '6 days Above' (a reference to the Sefiros) into the '6 days below'.

Other reasons for the custom is to delay bringing out Shabbos (according to the opinion that Veyiten Lecha is recited before Havdalah). It is also to ensure that no one gets left alone in the Shule because the community finishes davening before them. Further, Veyiten Lecha has Pesukim from Torah, Neviim and Kesuvim and we want to start our week with the merit of Torah⁶.

Yechiel Meir of Gustinin is recorded as saying "I don't know how it is possible for a Jew to have Parnasa during the week without saying the verses of Veyiten Lecha on Motzai Shabbos.

The Mechaber does not mention the reciting of Veyiten Lecha, but it is brought by the Ram"o in the Shulchan Aruch⁷ as well as in his work Darkei Moshe.

When to recite it?

There is a Machlokes whether Veyiten Lecha should be recited before Havdalah or afterwards.

Avudraham writes that this is recited after Havdalah in Shule as does the Kol Bo. Other Poskim who rule this way include; Elya Rabbah⁸, Chida⁹ and Kaf Hachaim¹⁰. This was also the preferred practise of the Ariza"¹¹. In the siddur, the Alter Rebbe rules that Veyiten Lecha is said after Havdalah.

One of the reasons for this is that not everyone knew these Pesukim by heart and would need to use candlelight to read them. Preferably, one should not benefit from light on Motzai Shabbos before reciting the blessing of Meorei Haeish¹² in Havdalah and so Havdalah would be recited first.

After noting that the Rishonim write that Veyiten Lecha is said after Havdalah, Pri Megadim¹³ writes that the custom is to recite it before Havdalah. The reason is to delay the recital of Havdalah as late as possible so as to maintain the Kedusha of Shabbos¹⁴. This is also the opinion of the Levush and the Psak of the Mishna Berura¹⁵.

The custom of the Ariza"¹⁶ was to recite Veyiten Lecha at home after Havdalah. Some ex-

plain that this was following the Sefardi custom of reciting Veyiten Lecha after Havdalah (which he would say at home). However, if the Ariza"l was in the Shule of the Ashkenazim, he would recite Veyiten Lecha in Shule (before Havdalah) so as not to separate from the community¹⁷.

Chabad custom is to recite Veyiten Lecha after Havdalah. In Sefer Haminhagim¹⁸ it is written that on Motzai Shabbos of Chanukah, the order (at home) is to recite Havdalah, light candles and only then recite Veyiten Lecha.

Other customs

Shaar Hatziyun¹⁹ writes that the custom is to say Veyiten Lecha next to the Havdalah candle, before Havdalah is recited. Siddur Harokeach writes that these Pesukim should be said out loud. It is customary to recite Veyiten Lecha while standing.

Saying with someone else

There is a custom of saying Veyiten Lecha together with another person²⁰. The Rebbe²¹ explained that this is so we say "May Hashem give to you" to someone else and that we hear "May Hashem give to you" from someone else.

It is recorded that the Rebbe Rashab would say Veyiten Lecha together with his son, the Friedike Rebbe, looking into the same Siddur. The Rebbe said that once in S. Petersburg, the Friedike Rebbe called him to stand next to him and say Veyiten Lecha from the same Siddur²². The Rebbe also related that even though the Friedike Rebbe's time was very precious, he would wait after Havdalah to say Veyiten Lecha with one or more other people while looking in the same Siddur²³ (even though this would take more time).

1. Breishis 27:28
2. See Shaar Hakollel 32
3. 14b
4. Machzor Vitri 145
5. Hilchos Shabbos
6. Siddur Rabbeinu Shlomo Migermaiza
7. OC295
8. 295:6
9. Moreh B'etzba 163
10. 295:12
11. Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Hashabbos 24
12. Eshel Avraham Butshash 298
13. Mishbetzos Zahav 295:3
14. See Shaarei Teshuvah OC 599
15. Biur Halacha
16. See Kaf Hachaim 295:12
17. See Piskei Teshuvos 295:4 quoting Siddur HaAriza"l. Taamei Haminhagim
18. p71
19. 298:3
20. Segulas Yisroel in the name of Mendel of Rimmanov. Taamei Haminhagim
21. Hamelech Bemesibo 2:39. Sichos Kodesh 5739 1:52
22. Hamelech Bemesibo ibid
23. Sichos Kodesh ibid