

Parshas V'Eschanan

Parshas veschanan is a special parsha in that we are repeated the 10 commandments as well as the first parsheos of shema.

There must be a reason why the 10 commandments are repeated and especially the language nuances that differentiate the first to the second round and that one of the most significant paragraphs for all Jews (the Shema) is stated here.

In keeping on the intentionality theme that everything in the Torah happens not only for a reason, but with specific intention, we now know that at this point in the chronology the Jews were at the tail end of their travels through the desert. At this point Moshe will be leaving as the leader of the Jews, he therefore leaves them with the messages of how to be in the holy land.

Given the 'issues' that arose with the first round of trying to enter the land, i.e., with the meraglim, and the resulting 38-year extension in the desert, it was paramount at this point that Moshe restate the purpose and restate the "mission" as it were.

Famously the 10 commandments differ in a few key words, such as regarding the observance of Shabbos, the first iteration of the 10 commandments we are told "zachor" whereas in this parsha we are told "shamor".

The Gemara¹ in Berachos 20b states that it is the obligation to observe and to sanctify, and women are included and obligated in all the mitzvos pertaining to Shabbos (possibly even more than men, as 2 of 3 female centric observances are candle lighting and challa- although the mitzva of taking challa isn't surrounding Shabbos necessarily but today, challa is disproportionately taking for making challa on Shabbos).

Zachor- remember, as said in the first 10 commandments in Parshas Yisro is a curious language, as remember can connote you have a memory, that you are required to remember, but prior to giving of the Torah, theoretically, there was no observance of Shabbos as they had now begun to observe it with its laws. Perhaps that isn't the case, that they always had observed the 7th day as a day of rest. The day of rest which reminds us of and instates our fervent belief in Hashem having created the world in 6 days and resting on the 7th day. The Jews knew this to a degree, therefore Hashem said remember. Furthermore, it is at Sinai that all the laws edicts and observances would be uttered such that specific laws of observance of Shabbos can now occur as they are meant to be. During the travels in the desert, and through the development of the Mishkan the authorities knew how to keep the laws of Shabbos. Keeping them in the desert as they travelled, and Hashem gave the Jews Man etc. perhaps the experience of Shabbos was

¹ The gemara in Shabbos 33b states that an elderly man was observed on erev Shabbos holding to myrtle branches when asked what they are, he said they are in honor of Shabbos. To which they replied, why 2 myrtles, wouldn't one suffice, to which the man replies, one is for Zachor the other is for Shamor. The minds

different then it would be observed entering the land of Israel. Furthermore, the remembering, can also connote future memory, that is to remember the laws that will be taught.

By the time the Jews were ready to enter the land, and Moshe is leaving them with his final communications which would appropriately be building off the laws that we now remember, to guard/observe them. Shmira- observe comes with huge amounts of laws, (a shomer, is a person who watches something for someone else. The laws of shmira, make the Shomer responsible for the object being watched. In our case with Shabbos, the Shabbos is the item to be guarded, Shmira is the laws of observing it, that make us responsible for the day.)

Observing Shabbos is paramount to the creation of the world, as our observance of the day reflects our belief in Hashem, and when we show our belief in Hashem, Hashem in turn provides us with all that we need. As keeping Shabbos concretizes the order of the world how it must be, and in doing so Hashem maintains His part of keeping everything moving along as it must be.

Then we have the Shema. This is the most significant prayer and paragraph in Judaism as it is the prayer that the smallest child to the most observant person knows. It is the phrase screamed by someone if they are sacrificing their life to Hashem. It is the phrase used in end of life as it is in the beginning. "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad".

This line connects to the 10 commandments of this parsha and the Shmira. Hearing is a method by which one can create and subsequently conjure a memory. Seeing, and hearing are two ways to confirm something is real. Shmira- observing, is seeing, which is what we are told with the 10 commandments and Shabbos specifically. Then we are told to Hear, in Shema, to cover all bases that Hashem is the Master of the Universe, who knows all, controls all and creates all.

As is famously known, the observance of Shabbos, and the extended Shema prayer are referred to the events of "going out of Egypt" (Devarim 5:15, etc.), as opposed to the creation of the world. The first iteration of the 10 commandments, refers to the creation of the world in Zachor, whereas here, Shamor, is based on the creation, and the exodus from Egypt. As it is now the method through which we can realize the goal of "lasos lo dirah bitachtonim".

As I have said elsewhere, quoting the Chassidic Masters (Alter Rebbe, Friedeker Rebbe etc.) that the Echad at the end of Shema, (and not Yachid – one as opposed to only), is due to the make-up of the word Echad, as Aleph, Alufo Shel Olam, Ches, 7 rekiim and aretz, and daled, the 4 directions all combine to reflect Hashem's Sovev Kol Almin and Mimaleh Kol Almin (surrounds the universe and fills the worlds), being that Hashem is everything and the life force of everything.

Pesukim 5:20-25 all include the word (root or derivative) of Shema, and in posuk 26 we finally see Shemira. There are 6 expressions of Shema, that could relate to drawing down of the six elements used in the creation (Bara Shis- Bereishis) which leads us to Shemira, as we see in Posuk 26. Everything in Judaism and this universe is a process of development. It is a

manifestation and an iteration of drawing Gdlines down into this world. Ultimately in posuk 26, the Shemira we crown Hashem with Malchus by observing the mitzvos. (The fact that the 26th posuk tells us the Shemira is no coincidence. 26 is the numerical value of the holiest name of Hashem, which is the bringing together of Echad (13) and Echad as it says in Zecharia, when will Moshiach arrive, or be a time of, Hashem Echad U'shmo Echad.)