

# BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' IN ENGLISH

PARSHAS V'ESCHANAN (NACHAMU) – 15 MENACHEM AV 5781

Bostoner Rebbe shlit"א – Yerushalayim

Secretariat Email: [bostonrebbe@gmail.com](mailto:bostonrebbe@gmail.com)



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“You who cling to Hashem Elokeychem, you are all living today” (Devarim 4:4). The Panim Yafos points out that the first word ‘You’ אתם has the same letters and numerical value as the word ‘Truth’ אמת. Therefore, the Pasuk can be reinterpreted as when Emes ‘Truth’ clings to ‘Hashem Elokechim’ today you are alive. This concept is actualized when we recite the Kriyas Shema and add the word אמת Emes to the end of the final Pasuk to construct the phrase ‘Hashem Elokeichem Emes’.

When these words are repeated by the Chazzan the total number of words in the Kriyas Shema is raised to 248, which corresponds to the 248 positive commandments and the 248 limbs of the human body. The Panim Yafos concludes that one who recites the Kriyas Shema twice a day and bonds Truth to the name of Hashem with the proper Kavana, is given life in all of one’s 248 limbs.

In addition the Panim Yafos points out that the Gematria of Yisroel ישראל is 541 and together with ה' (26) and אלקי (46) we have a sum of 613. Meaning when all of Yisroel affix themselves to Hashem through the performance of all 613 Mitzvos, both the 248 positive Mitzvos and 365 negative Mitzvos, the 248 limbs and the 365 sinews are endowed with the life.

We find the concept of גר שתגיייר כקטן שנולד דמי that a Gair who converts to Judaism is likened to a newborn throughout Chazal to explain why according to the Torah a Gair is permitted to marry other biological relatives that converted or why a Gair does not receive an inheritance from his biological father.

The Meshech Chachma in Parshas V'Eschanan suggests that the source for גר שתגיייר is based on, “Go say to them: Return to your tents” (Devarim 5:27), that husbands and wives could return to their tents to cohabit (see Beitzah 5b). When the Torah was given, there were many marital relationships that were previously permissible that now became prohibited. Amram, Moshe’s father, for example, was one of four sinless individuals (Shabbos 55b), nevertheless he married Yocheved, his aunt, which is prohibited according to the Torah.

Thus, we can surmise that many of the married couples who came out of Mitzrayim were in permissible marriages that became prohibited after Matan Torah. However, Hashem told Moshe to instruct everyone to return to their tents unequivocally, without any limitation. Seemingly, many married couples would be required to divorce and should be instructed by Moshe to do so. The Meshech Chachma concludes that receiving the Torah was part of a process of conversion from Bnei Noach to Yisroel and each person must have had a status of being reborn, severing all past biological ties to each other, and this is the basis of גר שתגיייר כתינוק שנולד דמי

The difficulty with this approach, is that if Klal Yisroel at Matan Torah severed all biological ties to one another, they would also be severing all ties to their ancestors as well, as we mentioned a Gair does not inherit from his biological father according to the Torah (see Kiddushin 17b). Accordingly, this would Chas V'Shalom sever our Zchus Avos from Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, something Moshe Rabbeinu invoked after the Chet HaAigel when advocating for Klal Yisroel. Furthermore, all the laws of inheriting Eretz Yisroel, as we learned in previous weeks about Bnos Tzafchad, would all be non-sensical since all of Tzafchad’s daughters who were born before Matan Torah would have no legal Torah right to inherit.

The Panim Yafos cites the Gemara (Shabbos 88b) that when Klal Yisroel received the Torah, their souls left their bodies and they were revived with Tal Techiyah. The Midrash adds that when the people said these words וחי את האדם וחי כי ידבר אלקים את האדם (Devarim 5:21) it refers to Moshe Rabbeinu, who was the only individual whose soul did not leave him during Matan Torah.

Perhaps it was the process of dying and being resurrecting that gave Klal Yisroel the status of being ‘reborn’, not because of their Gayrus. Accordingly, each member of Klal Yisroel would still retain their original connection to their ancestors for the sake of Zchus Avos and the laws regarding inheritance. However, in the realm of Arayos, since their rebirth was not through the womb, but rather by their souls departing and reentering their bodies, none of the prohibitions of forbidden relationships would apply.

May this Shabbos bring comfort to Tzion and Yerushalayim and may we see the coming of the Go’el Tzedek speedily in our days.