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תשפ"ד RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS VAYIKRAH ZACHOR

## PURIM - THE WAR AND THE GAZA METRO

It is estimated that the length of the tunnels in Gaza are nearly 500 miles long which make it a nightmare for the IDF to win this horrible war with Hashem's help. Did one even ask himself why this war is different from all the other wars? That in תשפ"ד we must descend underground in order to battle with the enemy? Allow me please to share a few thoughts with you.

The *passuk* says וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך כי ה' הוא האלקים בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד it is incumbent upon every Yid to Know and bring to his heart that Hashem is *Elokim* in the heavens above and on the earth underneath (the *shamayim*). Why does the *passuk* have to mention that the earth is beneath the heavens isn't that obvious? The answer is that it means to convey even on earth and **under** the earth. This is how Rav Ahron from Belz ztl translated it. He was once riding in a train and told his *gabai* to wake him up when they enter a tunnel if he is sleeping. When the train entered a tunnel the *gabai* kept his word and woke up the Rebbe from his dozing. Quickly the Rebbe put his hand over his eyes and started reciting the *Shemah Yisrael*. When he finished the *gabai* asked why did you have to say *Shma* in the tunnel? The Rebbe smiled and said do you think this opportunity of accepting the yoke of heaven under the earth comes around very often?

This is not the first time that *Am Yisrael* were involved with actual *avodas* Hashem under the ground. The *passuk* says ותמלא הארץ אותם. When *Am Yisrael* were in *Mitzrayim* "the earth was full of them". The Chasam Sofer learns that the *passuk* means this literally. When Pharaoh's decree of killing the Jewish male children came about, the mothers would go to the fields to give birth. Afterwards the earth would open up and swallow the newborns and *malachim* would nurture them underground and the *Shechinah* was present to keep them serene and happy. These children grew up under the earth and when they got older they returned to their homes and parents. They were the ones at *Kerias Yam Suf* who sang זה אלי ואנוהו because they recognized the *Shechinah* at *Yam Suf* since it was present with them under the earth. (Shmos Rabba 1,12)

וכיון שמתעברות באות לבתיהן וכיון שהגיע זמן מולידיהם הולכות ויולדות בשדה תחת התפוח שנאמר (שיר ח) תחת התפוח עוררתיך והקב"ה שולח מלאך משמי מרום ומנקה אותם ומשפר אותם כחיה זו שמשפרת את הולד שנאמר (יחזקאל טז) ומולדותיך ביום הולדת אותך וגו' ומנקט להם שני עגולין אחד של שמן ואחד של דבש שנאמר (דברים לב) ויניקהו דבש מסלע וגו' וכיון שמכירין בהן המצריים רצו להרגם ונעשה להם נס ונבלעין בקרקע ומביאין שוורים וחורשין על גביהן שנאמר (תהלים קכט) על גבי חרשו חורשים ולאחר שהולכין מבצבצין ויוצאין כעשב השדה שנאמר (יחזקאל טז) רבבה כצמח השדה נתתיך וגו' וכיון שמתגדלין באין עדרים עדרים לבתיהם שנאמר (שם) ותבאי בעדי עדיים אל תקרי בעדי עדיים אלא בעדרי עדרים וכשנגלה הקב"ה על הים הם הכירוהו ותחלה שנאמר (שמות טו) זה אלי ואנוהו:

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There are two types of tunnels through which a crime can be committed. The *passuk* says אַם הגבב במחתרת ימצא (Shmos 22,1) that the way of a thief is to enter through a tunnel by which he tries to conceal himself from others while he does his crime. Then there is a spiritual theft when one makes believe that Hashem is not or cannot be watching. It is in this scenario that he too imagines that he is in a tunnel outside of Hashem's view. A **ganav** who steals during the nighttime is punished by paying double for his theft due the fact that he feared Man more than he feared Hashem. The *Lashon of Chazal* is גַּנֵּב דַּעַת עֲלִיּוֹן. An example to this is found by Kayin after he killed Hevel, when he responded to Hashem's inquiry where is Hevel your brother, "I do not know" as Rashi points out.

One could be surprised to hear that the *ganav* that the Torah speaks about in the tunnel just might be you! The Ramah at the beginning of the *Shulchan Aruch* mentions a fundamental *passuk* that one must focus on as much as possible לַגְדִּי תָמִיד to picture Hashem present with you all the times.

הוא כלל גדול בתורה ובמעלות הצדיקים אשר הולכים לפני האלהים כי אין ישיבת האדם ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לבדו בביתו כשיבתו ותנועותיו ועסקיו והוא לפני מלך גדול ולא דבורו והרחבת פיו כרצונו והוא עם אנשי ביתו וקרוביו כדבורו במושב המלך כ"ש כשישים האדם אל לבו שהמלך הגדול הקב"ה אשר מלא כל הארץ כבודו עומד עליו ורואה במעשיו כמו שנאמר אם יסתר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו נאם ה' מיד יגיע אליו היראה וההכנעה בפחד השי"ת ובושתו ממנו תמיד (מורה נבוכים ח"ג פ' נ"ב)

The *passuk* לַגְדִּי תָמִיד announces that a *Yid* should not fall into the *yetzer harah's* trap of seduction by being persuaded to imagine himself in a tunnel and no one sees what he is about to do, which includes even Hashem. That he shouldn't worry he is behind closed doors or his dream vacation spot is on a private island and he can let loose. One might not meet another *Yid* there but Hashem was already on the island before you even arrived there. This distorted fantasy is included in the *passuk* which warns וַיִּדְעַת וְהַשְׁבוֹת אֶל לַבֶּכֶךְ כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים בְּשֵׁמִים **ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת** which is to be interpreted even in a tunnel. This includes a physical tunnel under the ground or even a man made mental imaginative tunnel dug in one's mind. The message is the same, Hashem is watching and you can never escape His scrutiny. An allusion to this very *pshat* is in the *gematriah* of שׁוֹיֵתִי יְהוָה לַגְדִּי which equals (עה"כ) **מתחת** (עה"כ) which symbolizes and includes even the imaginative tunnel. Even the word **מחתרת** is a combination of two words **תחת מר** that in the tunnel, the **master** of the universe has His eye on you.

At *Matan Torah* the *passuk* says וַיִּתְּצֵבוּ בַתְּחִתִּית הַהָר that Am Yisrael stood underneath the mountain. Hashem lifted the mountain which was hollowed out, and placed it down on Am Yisrael (Maharsha). Hashem said if you will keep the Torah fine but if not, there will be your burial place. However, the *Rishonim* ask why did Hashem give them an ultimatum when

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*Yisrael* already committed themselves to observe the Torah with their declaration of **נעשה ונשמע**? The Medrash Tanchumah (Noach) answers that the commitment of **נעשה ונשמע** was only for the Written Torah not the Oral one.

According to this *mamar* we can answer using the Medrash Tanchumah. The written Torah is not a full detailed 24/7 obligation with which we are occupied. Aside from the six constant mitzvos, there are lapses from mitzvah to mitzvah. However, the Torah *Shebeal Peh* is replete with *taakanos*, *chumros*, *mitzvos Derabanan*, *mussar*, learning and toiling over *Shas*, *Rishonim*, *Acharonim*, etc. For an example from the Torah if I don't have a four cornered garment I am **פטור** from the mitzvah of *tzitzis*. However, the *Rabbanan* instituted to wear a four cornered garment with *tzitzis* the entire day to be reminded of Hashem and His Torah. The four sections of the *Shulchan Aruch* can keep one connected to Hashem from morning to night without a lapse.

Hashem by placing the hollow mountain over them was giving *Yisrael* a sound advice of not falling into the trap of **אם במחתרת ימצא הגנב**. The only way that you would not keep the Torah is by living in tunnels with the rationalizations that Hashem is not watching. Don't be fooled for there is no bigger lie than this. **שם תהא קבורתם** your tunnels will cause both your physical and spiritual demise. Every detail is accounted for and recorded forever. This is why you must accept also the Oral Law for it will ensure that you will have consciousness of Hashem before you always, and you will not earn the title of a **גנב**.

Klal *Yisrael* is fighting the type of challenging war that we never encountered in our entire history, a Tunnel War. Nothing that occurs to *Am Yisrael* without the *hashgacha* of Hashem. We therefore must ask ourselves what does Hashem want from us now? The nature of our battle with our spiritual enemies must be one which involves the tunnels that we have set up in our hearts and minds that erroneously gives us the distorted fantasy that Hashem is not watching nor is He interested in what we do.

The lusts and craving of our *yetzer harah* make us forget the simple kindergarten song of *emunah* we have been taught "Hashem is here Hashem is there Hashem is everywhere. Up up down down right left and all around, here there and everywhere that's where He can be found". In this ongoing battle **מאויבי תחכמני** we must become enlightened to tear down *our* hiding tunnels and infuse ourselves with a greater **יראה** of Hashem. The word **יראה** which means fear also means to see. For when one realizes that Hashem *sees* every move and blink of an eye that you make, it should arouse in us a greater *yirah*.

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There are tunnels that can be used for *kedusha* as well. Queen Esther as her name suggests was herself a living hidden tunnel. Her identity was concealed from even the king who married her. With all the persuasion and bribery she remained צניעות, a closed mystery especially of her Jewishness. When Esther removed her tunnel of secrecy, immediately the *yeshuah* of Am Yisrael came about.

The *passuk* says of the Purim period ואנכי הסתר אסתיר I will conceal the fact that I am concealing myself from you. Hashem in *galus* goes into the mode of *Hester Panim*. Purim was a time where Hashem even put his concealment in a tunnel. Hashem said if you treat and act with me like you are in a tunnel and I cannot see you, then I will also act with you that I cannot see you and your *tzaros*. When we turned to Hashem and exited our tunnel by doing *teshuvah*, Hashem also exited His hiding from us and revealed Himself by saving His nation.

Before Purim we did *teshuvah* and we removed our tunnels seeking to find Hashem in our presence. Therefore Hashem took Himself out of his tunnel and saved us. By leaving our tunnel by Purim, we exited the tunnel of which Hashem warned us not to make by placing us in a tunnel constructed by the hollow *Har Sinai*. On Purim we left that tunnel as well, and accepted the Oral Law which we originally did not want to receive קיימו וקבלו היהודים. It was the Oral Law that would refrain us from building for ourselves a tunnel in our relationship with Hashem. On Purim we accepted the Oral Law through which we will be able to fulfill שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד by having our *Chachamim* establishing ways to contact and remember Hashem in our daily lives and strive to get close to Him.

The Ramah above brought the *passuk* אם יסתיר איש במסתרים ואני לא אראנו if a person will hide in a concealed place will I not see him anyway! This *passuk* alludes to Shabbos which through the *neshamah yesairah* helps us remove the tunnel fantasies within ourselves. The first two words אם יסתיר is *gematriah* השבת with the four letters. The word במסתרים with its seven letters equals יום שבת with the kollel. On Shabbos one turns himself from being a גנב דעת עליון into the *gematriah* of הן referring to the *passuk* הן עם לבדד ישכון.

Our *Chazal* tell us that those who die outside of *Eretz Yisrael* will go through tunnels under the ground leading to *Eretz Yisrael* in order to experience *Techiyas Hameisim*. If we took ourselves out of the heart and mind tunnels in our relationship with Hashem during our lifetime, we can be assured that Hashem will also take us out of tunnels that lead to *Techiyas Hameisim*.

By destroying our inner tunnels we are simultaneously destroying those of our enemies. Let us do our part and bring the *geulah* אבי"ר.

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Gut Shabbos ,

*Freilichin Purim*

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