

# Va'etchanan 2020

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The second portion of Deuteronomy, *Va-et'chanan*, is an unusual Torah portion in many respects. Not only does it contain both the Ten Commandments and *Sh'ma* passages, let alone a number of other elements that have entered into our liturgy, but it is also read after Tishah B'Av (the ninth day of Av), launching the seven Shabbatot of consolation leading up to Rosh HaShanah. As it is recited, Jews throughout the world evoke the Revelation at Sinai and reassert the continuity of the covenant following their commemoration of the destruction of the Temple and the loss of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine nearly two thousand years ago.

**Dr. Jonathan Cohen, HUC-JIR**

English

Intro: today is shabbat Nachamu. As we experienced the destruction of the Temple, Isaiah now tells us - be comforted, the best is yet to come.

Alan Lew and the structures crumbling - seven weeks for RH. This is the time of reassessment and rebuilding new structures. Our seven weeks kick off with the guidelines: Shema and Ten Commandments.

## Deuteronomy 3:23-29

(23) I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, (24) "O Lord GOD, You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no god in heaven or on earth can equal! (25) Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon." (26) But the LORD was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. The LORD said to me, "Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again! (27) Go up to the summit of Pisgah and gaze about, to

## דברים ג': כ"ג-כ"ט

(כג) וְאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־יְהוָה בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר:  
 (כד) אֲדַגֵּי יְהוָה אַתָּה הַחַלּוֹתָ לְהַרְאוֹת  
 אֶת־עַבְדְּךָ אֶת־גְּדֻלָּתְךָ וְאֶת־יָדְךָ הַחַזְקָה אֲשֶׁר  
 מִי־אֵל בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה  
 כַּמַּעֲשִׂיךָ וְכַגְּבוּרָתְךָ: (כה) אֶעֱבְרָה־נָּא  
 וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר  
 הַיַּרְדֵּן הַהוּא הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהַלְּבָנוֹן: (כו)  
 וַיִּתְעַבֵּר יְהוָה בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי  
 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי רַב־לֶךָ אֶל־תּוֹסֵף דַּבֵּר  
 אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדְּבָר הַזֶּה: (כז) עֲלֶה אֶרְאֶה  
 הַפְּסָגָה וְשָׂא עֵינַיִךָ יְמִינְךָ וּצְפֹנָה וְתִימְנָה



least turn me into a beast of the field. They eat grass and drink water, they live and they see the world, and sing a song before their creator, thus let my soul be amongst them. God said to Moses: "Enough!" Moses said to God: Master of the World! If you won't let me enter as a person, nor as a beast of the field, then at least turn me into a bird in this world. They float upon the four winds of the world, and they gather their food all day and at night return to their nest, thus let my soul be amongst them. God said to Moses, "Enough!" What does it mean, "Enough!"? Thus God said to him: Enough of what you've said, for I don't wish to show how hard it is for the teacher and how insufferable the student is.

### **Bamidbar Rabbah 18:18**

18 "It is enough for you, sons of Levi" (Numbers 16:7). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe, "You have struck with a stick, and you will be struck with that with which you struck. You said, "It is enough for you." And tomorrow you will hear, "It is enough for you" (Deuteronomy 3:26).

### **במדבר רבה י"ח:י"ח**

רב לְכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי (במדבר טז, ז), אָמַר  
הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמַשָּׁה אֶת מַחֲתֵית  
בְּחוּטְרָא וּבְמָה דְמַחֲתֵית אֶת לְגִי, אֶת אֲמַרְתָּ  
רַב לְכֶם, לְמַחֲרָא אֶת שְׁמַע (דברים ג, כו): רַב  
לְךָ.

### **Midrash Yelamdenu:**

*Let me go, please (na)...* Why did Moses use the word Na (please)? Everything Moses asked God for, he asked for using the word na (please): "Forgive, please!" (Num 14:19) "God, please, heal her, please!" (Number 12:13) and "Let me go, please..."

I heard that they taught Moses, our teacher, in heaven that when one prays and uses the word na (please) twice in their prayer, this prayer is received. As it is written, "God, please, heal her, please!" Moses here began to say, "Let me go, please and I will see..." and it was Moses intention to finish sentence by saying please (na) again, and thus God said, "Enough! do not continue to speak about this." God interrupts so that Moses does not say please (na) again.

### **Midrash Yelamdenu:**

*Let me go, please, and I will see the good land...* Why was it that Moses tried so hard to be allowed to enter the land of Israel? Perhaps he needed to eat of its fruit, or perhaps he needed silver and gold? Rather, thus was what Moses said: Master of the World! Many are the commandments that You gave to Israel through me, and many aren't done except in the land of Israel, as it says, "These are the rules and laws that you will guard and do in the land." (Deut 12:1) Let me enter with them and preform the commandments with them, in order that I will receive reward in the future. God said to Moses: Do not be upset about this, for I will write through the prophets all of the commandments that I have given through you, and if even one Jew does it and upholds even one of the many mitzvot, you will have a place with that Jew in the future to come, as it says, "Therefore I shall apportion to him in plenty." (Isaiah 53:12)

**Deuteronomy 5:2-3**

(2) Adonai our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. (3) It was not with our ancestors that Adonai made this covenant, but with us, the living, every one of us who is here today.

**Rashi on Deuteronomy 5:3:1**

(1) NOT WITH OUR ANCESTORS — That is, not only with our ancestors, but also with us.

**Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

(1) And this is the Instruction—the laws and the rules—that the LORD your God has commanded [me] to impart to you, to be observed in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy, (2) so that you, your children, and your children's children may revere the LORD your God and follow, as long as you live, all His laws and commandments that I enjoin upon you, to the end that you may long endure. (3) Obey, O Israel, willingly and faithfully, that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly [in] a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, spoke to you. (4) Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. (7) Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. (8) Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; (9) inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9****דברים ה':ב'-ג'**

(ב) יהוה אלהינו כרת עמנו ברית בחרב: (ג) לא את־אבותינו כרת יהוה את־הברית הזאת כי אִתָּנו אֲנַחְנוּ אֵלֶּה פֶּה הַיּוֹם כָּלֵנו חַיִּים:

**רש"י על דברים ה':ג':א'**

(א) לא את אבותינו בלבד כרת ה' וגו'. כי אתנו וגו':

**דברים ו':א'-ט'**

(א) וְזֹאת הַמִּצְוָה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְלַמֵּד אֹתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: (ב) לְמַעַן תִּירָא אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשֹׁמֵר אֶת־כָּל־חֻקֹּתָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ אֹתָהּ וּבְנֶךָ וּבְנֵתֶךָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וּלְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוּ יְמֵיךָ: (ג) וְשָׁמַעְתָּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׁמַרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר תִּרְבּוּן מְאֹד כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ לְךָ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבָשׁ: (ד) שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד: (ה) וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּכְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּכְכָל־מְאֹדְךָ: (ו) וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לְבָבְךָ: (ז) וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: (ח) וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאָזְנוֹת עַל־יְדֶיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: (ט) וְקָתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: (ס)

**דברים ו':ד'-ט'**

(4) Hear, O Israel! Adonai is our God, Adonai alone. (5) You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) Take to heart these instructions with which I charge you this day. (7) Impress them upon your children. Recite them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. (8) Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead; (9) inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(ד) שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:  
 (ה) וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ  
 וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדְךָ: (ו) וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים  
 הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְנֶךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לִבְּךָ:  
 (ז) וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ  
 בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִקְחֶתְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:  
 (ח) וְקִשְׂרַתְּם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטָטְפֹת  
 בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: (ט) וְכַתַּבְתָּם עַל־מְזוּזֹת בֵּיתְךָ  
 וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: (ס)

Every generation must think that the Torah was given directly to them.

Gersonides

#### Rashi on Deuteronomy 6:5:1-4

(1) **You shall love** Perform His words out of love, for one who acts out of love is not like one who acts out of fear/awe. One who serves his master out of fear, once (the master) overburdens him, leaves and goes away (Sifrei Devarim 32:1).

(2) **with all your heart** — with your two inclinations (the יצר הטוב and the יצר הרע) (Sifrei Devarim 32:3; Berakhot 54a). Another explanation: **בכל לבבך**, with all your heart — your heart should not be divided about the Omnipresent (Sifrei Devarim 32:4).

(3) **with all your soul** — even if He takes your soul (Sifrei Devarim 32:5; Berakhot 54a).

(4) **with all your might** — with all your property. You have a person whose property is dearer to him than his body, and so it says, “*and with all your property*” (Sifrei Devarim 32:6). — Another explanation: **ובכל מאדך** — You shall love Him with each measure (מדה) that He measures out to you, whether the measure of good or the measure of calamity. Thus also did David say, (Psalms 116:13 and 3) “*If I*

#### רש"י על דברים ו':ה':א'-ד'

(א) **ואהבת**. עֲשֵׂה דְבָרֶיךָ מֵאַהֲבָה, אֵינוֹ דוֹמֵה הָעוֹשֶׂה מֵאַהֲבָה לְעוֹשֶׂה מִיִּרְאָה, הָעוֹשֶׂה אֶצֶל רַבּוֹ מִיִּרְאָה, בְּשִׂיחָה מִטְרִים עָלָיו מִנִּיחוֹ וְהוֹלֵךְ לוֹ (שם):

(ב) **בכל לבבך**. בְּשְׁנֵי יִצְרֶיךָ (ספרי; ברכות נ"ד); דְּבָר אַחַר **בכל לבבך** שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לְכָּךְ חִלּוּק עַל הַמְּקוֹם (ספרי):

(ג) **ובכל נפשך**. אֶפְלוּ הוּא נוֹטֵל אֶת נַפְשְׁךָ (ספרי; ברכות נ"ד):

(ד) **ובכל מאדך**. בְּכָל מְמוֹנָה, יֵשׁ לָךְ אֲדָם שֶׁמְמוֹנוֹ חָבִיב עָלָיו מִגּוֹפוֹ (ספרי), לְכָךְ נֹאמַר בְּכָל מְמוֹנָה. ד"א — **ובכל מאדך** בְּכָל מְדָה וּמְדָה שֶׁמוֹדֵד לָךְ, בֵּין בְּמְדָה טוֹבָה בֵּין בְּמְדָת פְּרַעְנוּת, וְכֵן דָּוִד

*lift up the cup of salvation, [I will call upon the name of the Lord]; If I find trouble and sorrow, [I will call upon the name of the Lord]”.*

הוא אומר (תהלים קט"ז) כוס ישועות  
אשא צרה ויגון אמצא וגו' (ע' ספרי):

#### **Rashbam on Deuteronomy 6:5:1**

ובכל נפשך, according to the plain meaning of the text “even if it will cost your life.” It must mean this: seeing that the Torah had already covered all the other bases when it wrote בכל ללבך, “with all your heart,” the meaning is that while alive you are to love God with all your heart, if your faith and love for God is put to the test and you must choose that or your very survival, you must choose the former.

**רשב"ם על דברים ו':ה':א'**  
ובכל נפשך - לפי פשוטו: אפילו נוטלין  
את נפשך, שהרי כבר אמר: בכל  
לבבך.

**On your heart...** Namely that these should rule your heart, that you control your heart, and not have your heart control you.

#### **R. Menahem Mendl Alter of Kalish**

Said R. Levi: HaKBaH appeared to them like a picture which is visible from all angles. A thousand people may gaze on it and it gazes on all of them. So is HaKBaH. When God spoke, every individual Israelite maintained: To me the word spake! "I am Adonai your (plural) God" is not written here, but "I am Adonai your (singular) God."

Said R. Yose: In accordance with each and everyone's personal capacities did the word speak to him. Do not be astonished at the manna which came down on the Israelites - each one tasting the flavor he was capable of appreciating - the infants in accordance with their capacities...the young men in accordance with theirs...and the old men in accordance with theirs. If that was so in the case of the manna, that everyone tasted the flavor they could appreciate, the word (the sacred word of Divine revelation), all the more so!

Said David (Psalm 29:3): "The voice of Adonai is in strength." It does not say "in *his* strength" but just "strength" - in accordance with the strength or (capacities) of each man.

#### **Yalkut Shimoni: Yitro 286**

