



Parashat Ki Tavo 5772 - #248

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On the Haftarah...
Loving Nations
[Yeshayahu 60:1-22]

Two thousand and seven hundred years ago, Yeshayahu prophesied: The day will come when all humanity will recognize the amazing contribution of the Nation of Israel and they will live in great joy.

"The load of a caravan of camels will overwhelm you, the first-born camels of Midian and Ephah, all coming from Sheba. They will carry gold and frankincense, and they will announce praise of Hashem. All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together for you. The rams of Nevayot will serve you, they will be brought up willingly upon My altar and I will glorify My House of Splendor" (Yeshayahu 60:6-7).

In the time of our final return to Zion, the very nations of the world who oppressed us over the course of thousands of years will accept blame and attempt to fix the wrongs they perpetrated. At the end of the Exile, we will return to having sovereignty over our Land and will beam with joy: "Lift up your eyes around and see, they are all gathered together, and come to you. Your sons will come from afar, and your daughters on the side. Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will throb and become enlarged, because the abundance of the sea will return to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you" (ibid. v. 4-5). This

generous outpouring by the nations of the world will not have as its goal exerting pressure on us but rather, expressing their deep recognition for what we have done for them.

"And the sons of those who afflicted you will bow before you. And all those that despised you will bow down at the soles of your feet. And they will call you the City of Hashem, the Sign of the Presence of the Holy One of Israel" (ibid. v. 14). In the final calculation, all of humanity will recognize and express its gratitude for the amazing contribution to human history made by the Nation of Israel. All of the nations will then joyously take part in the revival of the Nation of Israel, out of the understanding that this is the source of their joy (see Orot, Orot Yisrael 5, 15).

The great messianic hope will be actualized: "And nations shall walk by your light, and kings by the radiance of your shining" (ibid. v. 3). To a certain extent, this prophecy was already fulfilled during the time of King Shlomo (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 1:10), but its full actualization will take place in the Future Days. We can already feel an example of this level in our days. The First World War was a catastrophe: not only did European Humanism fail to stop the violence of war, it failed to curb Western man's brutality, which exploded in all of its perversion and cruelty. Following the war, humanity felt a deep need to correct its path, to correct one of history's greatest injustices. The Nation of Israel was on the receiving end of this need, when the nations agreed that we could recreate our national home.

These good intentions did not last long, since a short time after the Balfour Declaration the English decided to guard their relationship with the Arabs and placed their narrow national interests over truth and justice. Humanity then sunk into the Second World War, and we – the Nation of Israel – were swept up in this horrible cesspool.

But in the end, justice will prevail and the nations of the world will try, to a certain extent, to compensate us for previous perversions and help us: "For the residents of the islands hope in me, with ships from the Port of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, with their silver and gold, for the sake of Hashem your G-d, and for the Holy One of Israel, who has brought glory upon you. And strangers will build your walls and their kings will serve you, for in a moment of anger I struck you, but with My full will have I showered mercy upon you" (ibid. v. 9-10).

But humanity will not unanimously reveal its affection toward us. There will still be nations who refuse to embrace our message, and they will have to accept the consequences: "For the nation and kingdom that refuses to serve you will be lost, and such nations, will be utterly destroyed" (ibid. v. 12). Such a nation will not understand that by interfering in our return to our Land, they are cutting off the branch upon which they sit.

This period will be complex: "For darkness will cover the earth, and thick darkness the nations, but Hashem will make you shine, and His Glory will be seen over you" (ibid. v. 2). For some it will be a period of light, but for others it will be a period of darkness.

Maran HaRav Kook explained (Orot, Orot Yisrael 5, 15) that in this final struggle, there will be a certain number of nations who refuse to accept the light which emanates through the Nation of Israel, a light which includes ethical demands and places limits on the pleasures of this world. They will therefore desire the destruction of the Nation of Israel. But in the End

of Days, all of humanity will understand that through these demands one is provided with the greatest joy and pleasure. Therefore, on that day, those who understand will love us and their greatest honor will be to serve us, as the prophet Zechariah (8:23) says: "Ten men from all of the languages of the nations will hold the corner of a Jew."

We will then finally be able to experience eternal joy, which is the ultimate purpose of our world, together with all of humanity. "The sun will no longer provide your light by day, nor will the moon be your light by night, but Hashem will be an eternal light for you, and your G-d will be your Glory" (ibid. v. 19). The Rambam explained in Moreh Nevuchim (2, 29) that this Redemption of the Nation of Israel will be the final one, and there will be no future exiles, as it says (ibid. v. 20): "Neither your sun nor your moon will set, for Hashem will be for you an Eternal Light, and the days of your mourning will come to an end."

It has become clear to all of humanity that the Nation of Israel, despite periodic episodes of unethical behavior, is righteous in its essential nature: "And Your Nation is complete righteousness, they will inherit the Land forever" (ibid. v. 21).

Rav Aviner on... What would Rabbi Mordechai Breuer have said about the new approach to the study of Tanach?

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Ki Tetzei 5772 – translated by R. Blumberg]

There's no need to guess. Eight years before his passing he himself wrote about this subject. Rabbi Mordechai Breuer has great merit, especially for his teaching of Tanach. It was he who invented the "Dual Aspects Approach" in order to confront Biblical Criticism.

What, after all, does Biblical Criticism claim? That the Torah contains contradictions and discrepancies in style. It is as though our Talmudic and Medieval Sages did not notice any of these things or offer any explanations for them. Yet the Biblical critics thought they had discovered America, and they offered a very simple solution: The Torah was not recorded by Moshe. Rather, it was a collation of various authors over hundreds of years. Each wrote a portion, until an editor came along and combined their efforts together, despite the contradictions between them. He liked them all, and he did not wish give up on any one of them. He therefore assembled and combined them into a composite whole. Yet that same editor was a bit of an absent-minded professor, so he did not render the content and style uniform.

Such was the offering of Biblical Criticism.

Yet before we proceed, I shall enlist a humorous idea suggested by Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook, zt"l. He proposed imagining that three thousand years after the passing of our great master Rambam, suddenly researchers appear calling themselves "Rambam Critics", and they will notice, in their great wisdom and perspicacity, that there are differences between Rambam's "Guide to the Perplexed" and his "Mishneh Torah", and furthermore, that even within the Mishneh Torah itself there are ostensible contradictions. They will think that they have discovered America, and with their penetrating senses will offer as a solution that it cannot be that the same Rambam wrote all of these things. Actually, they will say, Rambam never existed! Perhaps he was just a legend. He was given this name in memory of Moshe. Actually, numerous authors down through the generations wrote separate pieces of the Mishneh Torah. One understood astronomy, a second understood mathematics, a third medicine, etc. (Ma'marei HaRe'eiyah in the article "Sheker Bikoret

Ha-Mikra", p. 470).

Yet Rabbi Mordechai Breuer, who was a genuine rabbi, a G-d-fearing man and an important educator, was in fact convinced that that the proofs of Biblical Criticism are the truth and that it would be impossible for one man to write the entire Torah from start to finish. He also held that the solutions provided by our Talmudic and Medieval Sages regarding textual discrepancies did not solve all the problems. Indeed, he said, it cannot be that one human being could have written the entire Torah.

And yet there really was no "problem", for on very simple reason: it was not a human being who wrote the Torah, but **the Master of the Universe, who gave us the Torah at Sinai. Certainly it would not be too hard for G-d to write in varying styles, to varying content,** or, for that matter, to speak in two languages. Who, after all, can tell G-d what to do? And if G-d in His wisdom so decreed it, He could even hand down the Written Torah in the style of an editor who purposefully left discrepancies, cracks, fissures, lack of uniformity, and varying styles. As the all-encompassing rubric informs us "**The Torah employed a human style of speech**" (Nedarim 3a. Ibid.).

Rabbi Breuer therefore decided that he accepted all of the interpretations of the Biblical Critics, from start to finish, without adding or subtracting from them, for, indeed, G-d did write contradictory things. The reason He did so is that all things have a dual aspect to them, and such was the name of his approach: the "Dual Aspects Approach." Each aspect represents one characteristic of G-d. Thus, he accepted the claims of Biblical Criticism, but Judaized them, rendering them suitable to our faith.

It is true that on the surface the Torah is full of contradictions and discrepancies, but in truth it was handed down by G-d to Moshe. As stated, such is the meaning of "The Torah employed a human style of speech". Or, as Rav Breuer put it, "The Torah speaks in the language of different human beings, differing from one another in their thought and style, yet it also speaks in the style of an 'editor' who resolves all the discrepancies."

For many years, Rav Breuer taught in post-high school yeshiva using his Dual Aspects Approach, and so out of the bitter he produced the sweet. Out of heresy he created a new learning approach, and he generally did not reveal to his students that the source of these aspects was Biblical Criticism. To his mind, there was a two-fold benefit to his approach: 1) it saved one from the heresy of Biblical Criticism, and 2) it produced fine, new and reputable interpretations.

It is true that, as noted above, Maran Ha-Rav Kook held that there is no cause for dealing with this heresy, which constitutes total falsehood, and he wrote just that to his disciple Rabbi Dr. Moshe Seidel, asking him not to engage in resolving the contradictions posited by Biblical Criticism, but to observe the holiness of the Divine Torah as an integral unit.

"I ask of you... Cast off, in one fell swoop, all the illusory falsehoods, all the sterile conjecture of those non-Jews who have contaminated our pure oil" (Igrot HaRe'eiyah, Igeret 478).

He explains that severing the Written Torah from the Oral Torah was what led to the "total destruction" of those who "stray after the nonsense of the non-Jews"... "those who authored those fundamentally contaminated works, with their arrogant 'Biblical Criticism', totally the product of wickedness and folly" (Ma'amarei Ha-Re'eiyah, p. 177).

As far as the heresy that unfortunately exists within the Jewish People, explains Rav Kook, that is not caused by any discrepancies between Torah and science, which he calls "science-related heresy", but by the unethical behavior of the Torah's standard bearers, which he calls "moral heresy" (Eder Ha-Yakar, pp. 42-43).

The one who deepened and expanded the Dual Aspects Approach of Rav Breuer was Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun. He accepted Rav Kook's comments regarding moral heresy, but not his rejection of confronting Biblical Criticism. He held like Rav Breuer that Biblical Criticism must be recognized in order to be opposed. While he developed the Dual Aspects Approach further, he remained faithful to Rav Breuer's approach.

Yet very many of the Approach's students, and their own students, in turn, G-d fearing people who cherish the Torah, have already gone further and created still another innovation.

They have claimed that if we have gone as far as we have, why can't we say that the Torah was given down through the generations by various prophets rather than directly, and orally, from G-d to Moshe? That way, the Torah remains Divine! What difference does it make whether it was Moses or the other prophets, whether it was written all at once or over the course of many generations?

That approach was severely attacked by Rav Breuer (Megadim 30, Tevet 5759-1999), as "not being a Jewish belief as handed down to us by our Sages, but a new belief that people fabricated out of their own minds."

Let it be clearly stated that Rav Breuer never recanted his Dual Aspects Approach, yet he was worried about his many students who received that method from him but without his foundation in faith. Those students argue that Rav Breuer stopped mid-path, and they are merely continuing onward. They say that the Torah is certainly divine, but was written by different prophets, and do not understand why their master so stubbornly insisted on saying that it was all recorded by Moshe. Rav Breuer responds that those **students do not understand the profound difference between Moshe and the rest of the prophets:**

"The Torah is not a prophecy that the prophet utters out of his own mind based on what G-d showed him via a vision, a dream or a riddle. Rather, the Torah is a divine creation that the prophet received from G-d, exactly as is. Moshe had no part in writing the Torah, and nothing in the Torah was made up by Moshe."

True, those students admit that their approach contradicts that of our Talmudic sages.

Yet they emphasize that nowhere does it say that someone who says the Torah was not written by Moshe has no Heavenly portion. Rather, it says, "Whoever says that the Torah is *not from Heaven* has no Heavenly portion" (Sanhedrin 99a). Those students, for their part, say that the Torah comes from various prophets. Thus, its Heavenly value remains, hence they do not hesitate to disagree with the Mishnaic and Talmudic sages regarding something for which one does not lose one's heavenly portion. Yet, as noted, Rav Breuer explains that belief in the entire Torah coming from Moshe is the accepted faith of the Jewish People from time immemorial – that the Torah transcends time and place, that it transcends the universe, and preceded the universe.

Rabbi Breuer's disciples argue that he stopped in mid-path, yet he answers that, quite the contrary, they are stuck in limbo, and must decide between two worlds: "They will either advance on to Jewish belief or withdraw to the heresy of Biblical Criticism. Yet they cannot stop in mid-path at a juncture where it is impossible to stop at all"... "These people have created a new belief that differs from Jewish belief and from the heresy of Biblical Criticism." And this is the tragedy of this approach. It leads its adherents to a dead end with no exit. They cannot turn to the heresy of Biblical Criticism, for that would force them to abandon the Torah, and of that they are incapable. At the same time, they are unable to elevate themselves to Jewish belief. Thus they remain caught in the narrows, devoid of heresy but bereft of faith."

Rabbi Mordechai Breuer wanted to confront Biblical Criticism. He did so in a particular manner, yet what ultimately occurred unfortunately was that many of his students and his students' students were left shattered.

It should be pointed out, by the way, that Biblical Critics themselves are unimpressed by Rav Breuer's words. They argue that by the standards of Biblical Criticism they do not pass muster, because his approach ignores some of their claims, and is therefore nothing more than apologetic.

Thus, Rav Breuer's approach loses out from both directions. And the same point can be made against Biblical Criticism. Sometimes something is so false that even its opposite is false.

As for us, let us say together with Rav Mordechai Breuer, "I firmly believe that the whole Torah which we now possess is the same which was given to Moses our teacher, may he rest in peace" (Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith).

Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Serving Torah Scholars

A student who was serving in our Rabbi's home was in doubt whether Elisha's pouring water on Eliyahu's hands was considered "serving Torah scholars" (Berachot 7b, Ein Aya – Berachot chap. 1:87). Once, when he brought our Rabbi a cup of tea, he asked: "Ha-Rav, is this serving a Torah scholar?" Our Rabbi was quiet for a long time and said: "It is unclear if I am worthy of being called a Torah scholar." He was quiet again and then added: "The essence of serving a Torah scholar is learning (halachic) reasoning as Rashi explains" (Berachot 47b). (Ha-Rav Eliyahu Mali)

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