

Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce

Weekly Bulletin

Shabbos Nachamu



פרשת ואתחנן

When relating the greatness of Jewish revelation, Moshe tells us something unique about our heritage. In fact, it is a powerful detail that separates us from any other civilization on the face of this earth.

He says: *"For inquire now regarding the early days that preceded you, from the day when Hashem created man on the earth, and from one end of heaven to the other end of heaven: has there ever been anything like this great thing, or has anything like it been heard? Has a people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and survived?"* (Devarim 4:34)

What is interesting is the latter part of the pasuk the words "and survived." Isn't the great claim that Jews heard Hashem speak not through an intermediary but rather directly to them at Har Sinai?

Why then does Moshe add the words, "and survived?" Isn't our direct conversation with the Almighty absolute proof of undeniable Divinity? And though the commentaries point out that survival after such revelation is surely miraculous, survival after revelation surely does not sound as powerful as the revelation itself.

Moshe could have just as well stated, "Has there ever been anything like this great thing or has anything like it been heard? Has a people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard?"

That alone should prove our unique qualities to any skeptic. Obviously, the addendum, "and survived!" adds a unique Jewish perspective.

The prospective employee walked in to the president's office seeking a job. After an

extensive interview, the fellow was offered a job with a decent salary.

"Are there health benefits?" he asked.

"No, young man," the president responded, "we do not offer health benefits."

"Oh," the young man countered, "in my last job we had a full medical and dental package! Tell me," he added, "is there sick pay?" "I'm sorry son," responded the boss, "in this company, you get only paid for the days you work!"

"Well," protested the eager want-to-be worker, "in my last job they gave me two weeks sick pay! But tell me," he offered, "are there paid vacations?"

"I'm sorry," the boss responded once again, "there are no paid vacations, but you can have a week off in August without pay!"

"What?" retorted the astonished young man. "In my last job we each had one-month paid vacation! Well, are there year-end bonuses at least?"

"NOOO!" the prospective boss bellowed, tired of the young man's questions.

"Do you give us a car?" the prospective employee pursued.

Again, this time quite emphatically, the boss responded, "No!" At this point, the president of the company did not let his prospective continue his inquisition; instead, he asked one simple question of his own.

"I don't understand," he said. "If your last employer gave you full health benefits, sick days, paid vacations, cars, and end-of-year bonuses, why in the world would you want to switch to this company?"

The young man shrugged. "My old company went bankrupt two weeks after it started!"

Moshe Rabbeinu asks Klal Yisrael the 4,000 year-old question. While many nations tell stories about great miracles that occurred to the founders, never is there an entire race who can say "my grandfathers and grandmothers witnessed the miracles!"

Judaism is the only religion that proudly declares that 600,000 adult men, and an equal or greater number of women and children, stood at Mount Sinai and saw God speak to them directly. They passed on that great vision to their children, and their children to their children, until this very day. "It is not an esoteric fable," says Moshe, "They lived!" The vision of Sinai is not ancient history. The vision is alive!

Others tell tales of miraculous events witnessed by a handful of disciples who left no descendants. The Rambam traces history from the foot of Sinai to the footstools of the Gemara!

Thus Moshe declares to his people a message that as relevant to us as it was them in the arid desert some 3,312 years ago.

There is no nation on the face of this earth, which claims to have experienced multitudes of miracles occur to masses of people -- all of whom lived to pass the revelation to their children's ears.

Yes, in other cultures, there may be tales of a few miraculous events attributed to a few people. But when you dig for the roots and the original protagonists, you won't find them they went bankrupt.

Adapted from Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

This week's Kiddush is sponsored by Avraham & Chaya Engel and Hershy & Elaine Weinberg in honor of the respective yartzheits.

The shul will be maintaining a cholim list to be updated every Rosh Chodesh. All those wish to submit cholim can email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one the gabbaim.

Have a Simcha to announce? Email announcements to mailings@agudahsouth.com.

Zmanim

Mincha/Kabbalas Shabbos: 7:05/8:40

Candle Lighting: 8:36

Shacharis: 8:45

Zman Kriyas Shema: 9:39

Pirkei Avos Shuir: 7:35

Mincha/Shalosh Seudos: 8:25

Maariv/Motzei Shabbos: 9:43

Have a Good Shabbos.