

VA'ETCHANAN

ABOUT THE STORY OF VA'ETCHANAN

The Story of Va'etchanan opens with Moses pleading with God through prayer. Moses was not praying because he wanted something from the Creator; rather, it was to maintain his connection to the Creator. When we ask for the help of the Creator through prayer, we, too, are creating a closer connection to the Creator. It is essential to understand that we're not alone in this world and that we need to ask the Light for help. Praying should not be something we do only in times of need; it's an important tool for us to use all the time to connect to the Light.

MICHAEL BERG ON VA'ETCHANAN

The portion of Va'etchanan begins with Moses telling the Israelites, "I begged the Creator to let me enter into the land of Israel." We know that Moses initially was meant to lead the Israelites not only out of Egypt and through the desert, but also to bring them into the land of Israel. But that never happened. It says in the Torah that because Moses did not perform the miracle of getting water from a stone as the Creator had asked—hitting the stone instead of speaking to it—he would not lead the nation into the land of Israel. It is seen as a punishment for Moses. However, the kabbalists teach that this is the wrong way to view it.

Moses not entering the land of Israel was not a punishment, but rather an effect of the Israelites' low spiritual level; they did not deserve for Moses to lead them there. The teaching here is very profound: many times we pray and ask for things, but because our vision of our lives and of what we think we should have is often wrong, we don't have clarity on what we are meant to accomplish and the challenges that we are meant to go through. Oftentimes, there is a disconnect between the prayers that we speak and the true desires of our soul.

It is an important understanding to know that a prayer which comes from our soul is always answered. There are times that we ask for things, or pray for things, and we don't receive them. This isn't because our prayers are unanswered; it is because our soul did not pray for them. If, for instance, a person is in a challenging or difficult situation that he'd like gone from his life, but his soul knows that by going through that challenge he will be able to elevate, then his soul doesn't pray for that challenge to be removed. The man might say those words in prayer, but his soul does not.

The lesson we want to take from this week's portion is that we need to ask the Creator to give us clarity on what our soul wants. The clearer and stronger our connection is to the true desires of our soul, the more we will see that our prayers are always answered.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

Ekev, the next portion of the Zohar, calls on us to reawaken our desire to be constantly working towards elevating our consciousness. In doing so, we remove any blockages from our connection to the Light. This week, remember to infuse consciousness into your thoughts, words, and actions, thereby establishing a limitless connection to the Light.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.