



Torah Reflections: Conversations on the Weekly Parsha Parshat Vaetchanan 5785: Never Give Up

Integrating Torah into one's life through reflection and conversation can be an incredibly fun and engaging experience. It's a journey of discovery, where ancient wisdom and timeless teachings come to life in our daily experiences. Through reflection, we have the opportunity to dive deep into the rich tapestry of Torah, extracting profound insights and lessons that resonate with our modern lives. The joy lies in the 'aha' moments, those instances when a Torah verse or story suddenly connects with our personal challenges, aspirations, and values. And when we engage in conversations about Torah with others, it becomes an interactive exploration, where diverse perspectives and interpretations enhance our understanding. These dialogues often spark excitement and intellectual curiosity, making the learning process both enjoyable and fulfilling. Torah becomes a vibrant and dynamic part of our lives, offering not just guidance but also a source of endless fascination, connection, and growth.

NOTE: Don't feel obligated to go through every source or answer all the questions—unless you want to. Even one source, or one question will give you plenty of material for discussion and meditation. Enjoy this!

Some Thoughts from the Parsha

"I pleaded with the L-RD at that time, saying... Please let me cross over and see the good land... But the L-RD was angry with me for your sakes... and the LORD said to me: 'It is enough for you; speak no more to Me of this matter.'"
(Deuteronomy 3:23–26)

Moses longed to enter the Land of Israel. He had been told clearly by G-d that he would not—because of the incident at the rock—and that Joshua would instead lead the people across the Jordan. And yet, he prayed. Not once, but many times—tradition says 515 times, the numerical value of the Hebrew word Vaetchanan ("I pleaded"). G-d finally told him to stop.

Why did Moses persist when the answer seemed final? And why did G-d say, "It is enough for you"—as if the prayers had already achieved something, even though Moses' request was denied?

Our sages teach that the very act of persistent prayer—especially when the situation looks hopeless—is itself a profound lesson. The Talmud says, "Even if a sharp sword rests upon a person's neck, he should not stop himself from seeking Divine compassion" (Berachot 10a). G-d's mercy is never exhausted.

This is the "enough" G-d referred to: Moses' example of not giving up had already taught Israel how to keep turning to G-d, no matter how impossible the odds. That was a gift to the nation as great as entering the Land itself.

This lesson reaches beyond Israel's story. Every human being created in G-d's image can draw near to Him in prayer. For Noahides, this does not mean taking on Jewish commandments or festivals—which would be creating "new laws" (mechadesh dat)—but it does mean being creative in finding ways to turn to G-d sincerely and consistently. Just as Moses poured out his heart to G-d, you too can develop



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your own ways of speaking to Him daily—thanking Him, asking for help, confessing wrongs, and seeking guidance.

The key is not to give up. Prayer is not only about results—it is about the relationship. Sometimes the answer is “yes,” sometimes “no,” and sometimes “not yet.” But every moment spent reaching toward G-d shapes the heart and strengthens the soul.

Now, reflect on the following questions:

1. Have I ever stopped praying because I thought the situation was hopeless?
2. What regular time or space can I create to speak with G-d?
3. Do I treat unanswered prayers as wasted—or as moments of growth?
4. How can I be creative in worship while staying within the boundaries G-d has set?

May we all learn from Moses’ example—never to despair, never to stop reaching out, and always to trust that G-d’s compassion is endless.

Shabbat Shalom!