

## OLAM HABA EYEBALLS

I recently realized what my biggest life problem is. Why I can't focus in davening and learning. Why I can't forgive and forget. Why I can't make those important decisions in life when faced with crisis, or deal with conflict and chaos. It is a problem with my eyeballs.

I've been printing 1000 parsha sheets of self-introspective Torah for the last 6 and a half years. I was told so many times by publishing companies, "Rabbi Farhi, if you would only write more stories... People LOVE stories! You'd make best sellers!" But the answer, I realized, is that I am always writing stories. Every introspective Torah idea I write is the underlying story behind my life story and the stories of many others. This article is the idea behind ALL of our stories. It is the Olam Haba Eyeball story.

I see my world as the world I see. But the real world is the Olam Haba world. G-d created the world with the intent that we wear Olam Haba Eyeballs. ברוך אלוקינו שבראנו לכבודו... והיי עולם נטע בחוכנו It is a lifetime of work. To live a life of נצח. To transcend time. But so many times, I foolishly stick to Olam Hazeh Eyes, because they are so "sticky". It is like the fellow who is stuck with a stock of Nasa Eclipse Eyeglasses. You have use of those only before and during the eclipse. No one will buy that stock today. The faster you get rid of that useless stock, the better. Olam Hazeh Eyes work for you only when you have a nice car, a nice paycheck, and things go your way... But when the "eclipse" is over, you don't want to be stuck with

those glasses. Get rid of them as fast as you can! All the pain you have in life is because you are trying to hold on to those stupid eclipse glasses. The faster you get rid of your Olam Hazeh Eyes, the easier it will be for you to focus on davening and reconnect. The faster you will be able to make those important life decisions. And the faster you will find serenity.

The stories of our rabbis are all Olam Haba Eyeball stories. R Yisrael Salanter sees a candle late at night at the shoemaker's shop, and the shoemaker bangs away with the last drip-drop of his candle. He tells R Yisrael, "As long as the candle is still burning, I can keep fixing." R' Yisrael, with his Olam Haba Eyeballs, says, "As long as I am alive, בך ה' נשמת אדם, I can still fix my soul..." R' Yisrael! What is the connection? What is the relevance? But R' Yisrael has different eyeballs than most of us. And that is what he saw. What he heard. What he lived. All of the Chafetz Chaim stories. They are all Olam Haba Eyeball stories. About conceptualizing.

Imagine, for a second, that you meet Tarzan in the jungle. You pull out a map of Israel, point to Jerusalem, and tell him, this is where I live. If you go north, you will get to Rosh Hanikra. Go south, and you hit Eilat. Go west, and you hit the ocean. East, and you hit Jordan. He looks at you, and says, "What is this map thing? This is just a piece of paper with different colors, lines, numbers and letters (!)", because he sees only a two dimensional piece of paper. He does not

understand that the map on the piece of paper represents a three-dimensional world, charting places and the distances between them. But to you, there is something much deeper than that page. Olam Haba is seeing our 3d world with a fourth dimension. The spiritual dimension.

Our parents, our grandparents, lived more Olam Haba Eyeball lives. The Lower East Side Jews that gave up their parnassah, getting the pink slip each and every Friday, and still staying strong, positive and proud, all had Olam Haba Eyeballs. For many of us, Olam Haba sounds scary, unknown, distant, so we stick to our Olam Hazeh stories, our Olam Hazeh Eyeballs, lacking the spiritual dimension. And then, we can't be the Jews we want to be, and we just can't figure out why not. The worst things can happen to us when we stick to our Olam Hazeh eyes. Because the only way we can be the Jew we want to be is if we are calm, courageous, and consistent. And to be those "three C's", we need to be able to transcend the other 3 C's: circumstance, conflict and crisis. We need Olam Haba Eyeballs, with the spiritual dimension in them.

In this week's parasha, the Torah tells us about the mitzvah of Shiluach Haken. 'You can take the baby birds from the nest, but you have to send away the mother. Do this, so that your G-d will give you good, and you will merit longevity'. Elisha Ben Avuyah sat in the valley of Ginosar, learning Torah. He was the Rebbi of Rebi Meir, and R' Meri was the anonymous Tannah of Shas and one of the pillars of Torah Sheh b'al Peh, the Oral Torah. So, just imagine who R' Meir's Rebbi was. And as he learnt Torah, he noticed a fellow climbing up a fig tree, to take a nest of chicks, while sending away the mother bird. The man climbed down the tree, but did not make it to the bottom before getting bitten by a venomous snake. End of story, end of life. No longevity, no good life, and Elisha is left confused. He looks at his Book, he looks at the circumstance and can't make sense of the contradiction. So, Elisha gives up the Book, and becomes Acher. The other one. And lives a life that is the opposite of Judaism, until he cries on his deathbed, hoping that maybe G-d will accept his Teshuva.

The Talmud explains that Acher made this mistake, because he did not know how R' Yaakov explained that verse of the Torah. 'Longevity' is referring to life in the Next World; the good life is referring to the Next World. Acher didn't know this, so he rejected everything that he had believed until then, because of what seemed to him to be a glaring contradiction. But didn't Elisha know that there is a Next World?

The answer is, yes, he did. But this world is full of contradictions not to be resolved until we get to the Next World. So, to get by sane, it is not enough to know that Olam Haba exists. You need Olam Haba Eyeballs. You need to be someone who, when you speak about a good life, you are referring to a spiritual life. A good wedding is a spiritual wedding. A good marriage is a spiritual one. So, when the Torah says that a person who performs the mitzvah of Shiluach Haken is going to have long life, a good life, OF COURSE IT IS TALKING ABOUT THE NEXT WORLD!!! Acher missed that point, because he did not have the Olam Haba Eyeballs, and that led to his demise.

Trying to describe Olam Haba is like trying to paint a picture for a blind man, or play a tune to someone who is deaf. The Talmud refers to Olam Haba as a place that is **יום שכולו ארוך**, A day that is entirely long. R Dessler explains what "A day that is entirely long", means. Every minute of Olam Haba is Eternal. How so? Because every minute is above Past, Present and Future.

Take a piece of paper with a little hole in its center and place it over a map, the hole over Jerusalem. All you see is Jerusalem, nothing else is seen, although it is there. Move the paper with the hole to Rosh Hanikra, and Jerusalem can't be seen. Take off the piece of paper, and the whole map is exposed, at once. The whole Israel. In this world, we can experience only the present. The past, the future, cannot be experienced in the present. But take off the paper, and you see past - present - future, all as one, with no boundaries. That is one minute of Olam Haba, experiencing past, present and future, all at the same time. To be an Olam Haba person means to be able, in your mind, to transcend past, present and future and not get stuck

on any one of them. It means being fully aware of the fact that what we are aware of now is not the whole picture. There is much more than the 'now'. To be able to say, "Make G-d King" over all three, ה' מלך ה' מלך ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד.

On Rosh Hashana, according to the Ramchal, this is what we are judged on. If we are Olam Haba people, if we will have Olam Haba Eyeballs, and if we will have an Olam Haba life, a spiritual life. And this is our prayer: למען אלוקים חיים... וכרנו לחיים.

## YOUR OWN NEW TESTAMENT

The *Ben Sorer Umored* is the child we know who went astray from his parents, and went astray from the ways of the Torah. We all know that the word *sorer* means to go astray. But what does the word *moreh* mean? Rashi and the Targum explain this word as rebellious. But usually, that word means teaching. What did this rebellious child teach? And to whom?

The Yalkut Gershuni writes that this boy is not only a bad kid. He gets others to join him in crime, so that he won't burn in hell alone. He teaches others his Torah, as he teaches himself his own Torah. For a person to become a sinner, he needs to create his own Torah. He needs to make his own New Testament, to justify his inappropriate behavior. Even Eichman justified his behavior, saying that he was just following orders.

The more I coach, the more I realize that everyone has their own story. I realized that productivity and performance are closely connected to the 3 S's. State, Structure, and Story. Our State of Mind, will have a powerful effect on our performance and productivity, in any given situation. The Structure that we are in has an equal effect on our performance and productivity. But the most powerful effect on performance and productivity is the Story. How did you get into this area of productivity or performance? Why are you there? When did you start and when will you end? Who are you up against, and who is on your side? Where is this story

taking place?... Most of the time, the client is not even aware of all the parts of his own story, until he gets into some sort of bottleneck between his motivation and his goal.

Studies have proven that story telling is an extremely potent form of persuasion and motivation. Stories set your brand. Stories build your identity. And people sometimes give up everything they have, because they cannot give up on their version of the story. Even G-d wrote the Torah in story fashion, because that is the way the human mind connects with concepts. When one spouse calls me for help with Shalom Bayit, I know that the only way I can help them is if I can listen to both stories, find the contradiction between the two stories, and figure out how they can both buy into a third story. When I help a yeshiva student with his conflicts in religious observance, it is usually not the religion that he wants to be coached on. It is about his personal story in the religion, his story with his relationship with G-d. "What is your story?" is a powerful question. Everyone has a story, a perspective on their place in the family, how much they deserve, and how much they were mistreated.

The *Ben Sorer Umored* could not have become such bad kid, if he did not have a story. When a religious teenager takes off his yarmulke, he is not just taking off a piece of clothing. He has a long story that is behind it. The *Ben Sorer Umored* has a story; he has a belief that this world is where it all begins and

ends. And that the easy life is the good life. And he teaches others his story, to make himself feel that there is credibility to his story, that he does not stand alone.

We start off the Selihot saying, לך ה' הצדקה ולנו בושת הפנים *To You G-d, is Righteousness, and all we have is shame.* The difference between a sinner and one who sinned is that the sinner has a story of self-justification, while the one who sinned realizes his wrongdoing. This is the beginning of Selihot, because the first part of repentance is to alter our story. And this is what we mean in the beginning Piyut of Yom Kippur , לך א-לי , when we say with a tear on our cheek, ובהלתי בתורתך- ובהרתתי בתורתך. *And I was repelled by Your Torah, and I chose my own Torah.*

When we do *Teshuva*, when we change from our sinful ways, we are ridding ourselves of

our story and buying into G-d's story. Our story is that we are Orthodox Jews, so we are okay. Relative to the place from which I started out, I have come quite far in my religious observance. But G-d has a different story. His story was, is, and will always be, the Torah, Shas, and Shulchan Aruch. It does not make a difference how digital or crazy the world becomes; Obama, Clinton, or Trump: G-d does not change His Story. His story is an old one, starting from before Creation, freeing us from slavery, keeping us alive through the exile, and giving us all an ultimatum; to choose which world is of higher importance, this world or the next. His Story is the story of our accepting his Kingship over us and the Universe, even if it is a digital Universe. And His story is always the real story, while our story is just digital. Just as fast as you created it, you can delete it.

SHABBAT SHALOM, YOSEF FARHI

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