



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ז' שבועות תשע"ז - במדבר - 27th May 2017 - Volume 9 - Issue 43

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the recent births of a grandson to Mr & Mrs Moshe Chaim Cohen in Israel and a great granddaughter to Mr & Mrs Chaim Tzvi Moller also in Israel.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs David Newman on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah this week of their son, Yisroel Meir. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davening at their home, 20 Rutland Drive.

Mazal Tov to Mr & Mrs Donny Wilks on the birth of a baby girl. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Dr and Mrs Michael Wilks.

Tikun Leil Shavuos

We will be holding a Tikun Leil Shavuos with a programme of Shiurim starting at 12.45am. You can also learn in the Shiur rooms, or in the hall (together with Manchester Mesivta). See back page for further details.

Oneg Yom Tov

We look forward to welcoming you to an Oneg Yom Tov which will take place on the second day after Mincha.

Siyum Mishnayos

The annual Mishnayos Siyum takes place next Shabbos, Parshas Noso. All those who took on to learn Mishnayos are reminded to finish learning them by then.

The Antidote

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Shavuos is upon us. This coming week, ב"ה, we will recall the single most important event in the history of Creation: the giving of Torah.

More significant than Creation? For sure, as Rashi explains at the beginning of Bereishis, and the Talmud emphasizes (Shabbos 88a). Without Torah the world has no reason to exist. This is remarkable considering how vast the universe is, how many people are living, and how little Torah has been learned throughout the ages.

More important than the Jewish people? Put it this way: the Jewish people cease to have meaning without Torah. Once upon a time we were unique because we descended from Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. If last week's parsha reminded us of anything, it is that we can come close to destruction if we stray from Torah.

Bris Avos—Covenant of the Fathers—makes sure that the Jewish people are never COMPLETELY destroyed. The Holocaust, and all the pogroms before that, showed us that, without Torah, we can come disastrously close to it (Bava Basra 60b).

Yet, here we are again, straying from Torah en masse. Out of about 13 million Jews in the world today, only a couple of million are Torah-observant, many of whom could also afford to improve their commitment. How does it happen?

How does it happen? The better question is, how does it not happen more often?

I do not have to look very far to find children who grew up in Torah

homes now running in the other direction. Some may still believe in G-d, many do not. Some may still believe Torah came from G-d, most don't even care. All of them have embraced secular attitudes, sometimes to an extreme.

Sometimes it has to do with soul nature. Certain souls have a more difficult time with moral adherence than others—in ANY generation, let alone in one as pleasure-oriented as ours. Like iron filings passing a magnet, they are drawn by natures to the source of the "magnetism."

Others aren't so much attracted by a secular lifestyle as they are repulsed by a Torah one. They see inconsistencies, hypocrisies, and

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת במדבר

Mincha	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.38pm-7.55pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.59am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.28pm
Rov's Shiur	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	10.33pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.25pm

ליל א שבועות

Mincha	8.10pm
Seder HaLimud followed by a Shiur from the Rov	Following
Candle Lighting	9.10pm
Maariv	9.40pm
Earliest Time For Kiddush	10.27pm
Tikun Leil	12.45am

יום א שבועות

1st Shacharis	2.56am
2nd Shacharis	9.00am
Mincha followed by a Shiur by Rabbi Ari Thumum	9.10pm

ליל ב שבועות

Maariv	10.10pm
Candle Lighting	No earlier than 10.40pm

יום א שבועות

Shacharis	9.00am
Mincha followed by an Oneg Yom Tov	9.10pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	10.41pm
Friday Shacharis	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am

spiritual “equations” that just do not work out. They just don’t have the luxury of blind faith to skip over their intellectual and emotional “mountains” to retain a devotion to Torah.

Some might be angry at G-d. They feel that they were dealt a bad hand by G-d, evident by the success others around them enjoy. They have struggled for reasons they do not understand and have assumed that either G-d is unfair or unaware. They believe that they have no reason to be committed to a G-d Who is not committed to them.

Then there are the millions who are simply the “next generation.” It was their ancestors who changed their mind about Torah Judaism lifetimes ago, leaving their descendants to grow up with their spiritual legacy, or lack thereof. They reject Torah because they have no idea what it is, or why Orthodox Jews still follow it.

What a spiritual mess. The trend is only worsening since more Jews tend to leave the fold than return to it. Not only does it take untold resources to help even a single Jew rediscover his ancient but relevant spiritual heritage, it first and foremost takes an open mind and willing heart to even make such an opportunity possible.

This Shabbos I was a guest in another community. On Motzei Shabbos, a young man passed me on the street and as he did, I could see and feel his distance from Torah Judaism. He still wore a kippah, b”H, but he looked and acted like someone for whom that was only a temporary miracle.

For a moment, I was intellectually and emotionally overwhelmed (I still felt it the next day). Automatically, I considered what I could say or do to open his mind to a Torah lifestyle. It made me feel like a “David” fighting a “Goliath.”

The “Goliath” is the world to which the young man has been drawn. It is the sense of pleasure to which he is running. It is the promise of fulfillment to which he believes he is fleeing. It is so REAL to him.

How can I fight that?

“Hey young man! Why would you want to leave the religion of your ancient ancestors for one of the modern world of which you are part? Why would you want to belong to a world that promises fame and fortune when you can belong to one that demands humility and satiation with whatever you have?”

“Why would you choose a society,” I could ask him, and the millions of other children and adults like him, “in which modesty is the opposite of a virtue, when you can live as part of one in which it is often pursued to an extreme? In a Torah world,” I could point out to him, “you get to pray at least three times a day. In a secular world, you don’t have to pray at all!”

What was my response to myself at that point when I realized the extent of the uphill battle?

“We need Moshiach, now, badly.”

That’s what I told myself, about three times in a row. It was my only acceptable answer to the situation. We need a HUGE miracle today to bring back non-Torah Jews, and the Torah Jews who think they have it right, but don’t. Me included.

I mean, we tell potential converts that they are attempting to join a people that struggles daily and suffers in every century. Why join? Why stay if you already belong?

No one ever “disproves” Torah. They just choose not to prove it to themselves so they can rationalize ignoring it for a life of spiritual abandon. Few people are intellectually honest enough to check it out regardless of the consequences of finding out that it is actually from G-d.

That is when I realized what the holiday of Shavuos is truly about. It was not about the giving of Torah as we all say, think, and teach. It was about G-d GIVING US the Torah. It was about three million Jews who could have easily “gone off the derech,” and who did, being elevated to the point of, “We will do and we will understand”

because of their G-d experience.

The Leshem explains that the Final Redemption, when it eventually occurs b”H, will only begin on Pesach. It’s actualization will only happen on Shavuos. I think I know why: Even though G-d Himself performed the tenth plague back in Egypt, it was only on Shavuos that He actually SPOKE to the Jewish people.

The Torah warned us in last week’s parsha, and will again later in Parashas Vayailech, about hester panim, the hiding of G-d’s face. It tell us that the punishment for not listening to G-d is that He will stop talking to us, at least on the level He once did. That was the level on which even souls with Torah-opposite natures had a tough time turning their back on.

As that young man kept walking further away from me last night, oblivious to my sizing him up and feeling his position, I realized why my “David” was no match for his “Goliath.” When the future king of Israel confronted his Goliath in the Name of G-d, he really meant it. Everything about him said so.

Had I “fought” this young man’s Goliath in the Name of G-d, looking at and hearing me he would have sarcastically said, “Riggght.” He would have heard ME giving the Torah to him, not G-d through me. My observance just does not project that reality enough to convince him.

I wish I could find that young man once again. I still don’t think I have anything to tell him that might open his heart and mind to Torah. As always, G-d will have to do that. I just want to thank him for the life-altering insight over which he caused me to stumble that fateful Motzei Shabbos.

Thanks to him, I’m going to have a different, a more accurate focus this Shavuos. I’m going to think about how much Torah I’m actually “getting” from G-d, and how much is only a function of what I want Torah to be, or because of what the society around me wants me to be. Fixing that, I realize now, is the only way to truly celebrate Shavuos and use it as the opportunity it really is.

Chag Samayach. And, have a successful and REAL Kabbalas HaTorah from G-d Himself.

What’s in a Name, and Holy Pride

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Reporting the results of a census should be a straightforward affair, you would think. Not much room for drama. The Torah, though, offers us unending delights and surprises, and does not disappoint us even here. The difference between Hashem’s directive to take the count in our parshah differs strikingly from its counterpart a short distance from here in parshas Pinchas. In our parshah, the command ends with the phrase “by number of the names.” In the census reported later, the command comes to a screeching halt with what is here the penultimate phrase: “according to their father’s house.” What is insufficient about the later phraseology that needs further amplification here? And if the “number of the names” language is important, why delete it later on?

Accentuating individual names, suggests the Sforno, stresses the importance of the individual. (We know from considerable experience that names in Chumash are highly descriptive, distilling the unique essence of the named object.) The earlier of the two censuses of Bamidbar, the one in our parshah, counted people who had left Egypt in the great Exodus. These were elevated people, those many commentators refer to as “the generation of understanding.” By the time we get to parshas Pinchas, the baton has been passed to a new group. The generation poised to enter the land of Israel was of lesser accomplishment and stature. They possessed great qualities born of their “families” and “father’s houses,” but individual greatness was not so widely distributed.

The Sforno’s approach stands our perspective on the two generations on its head. The foibles and failings of the earlier generation are

chronicled and detailed for us by the Torah. Regarding the latter generation, we hear no complaints. The navi pithily sums up their spiritual output in a single line that evokes our envy: "Yisrael served Hashem all the days of Yehoshua." We are forced to conclude that the more frequent indiscretions of the earlier generation flowed from its greatness, not from its weakness! Because those who left Egypt lived on a more elevated plane, their yetzer hora was that much greater as well. They were met with more numerous and more difficult challenges; their relatively infrequent but dramatic failures make up much of Chumash Bamidbar.

It was the second generation, the lesser of the two that succeeded at entering the land. In one regard, occupying a position of lesser stature has its advantages. Both Chida and the Shalah HaKodesh argue that the word Canaan and hachna'ah (submission) are related. In other words, the holiness of the Land has little tolerance for those who cannot or will not completely subjugate themselves to its exacting demands. (Toras Avos notes the parallel language in "tovah ha-aretz me'od me'od,"/ the land is exceedingly good, and the epigram in Pirkei Avos, "me'od meod hevei shefal ruach" / exceedingly be of humble spirit. The overlap suggests that the land is exceedingly well suited to those who are of exceedingly humble spirit.) The generation that accepted the evil report of the spies was told by Hashem that they would be barred from entering the land. Their progeny, whose safety they had sought to protect, the "little ones" – they would enter the land. This is a double- entendre; it alludes to the fact that the next generation would be "little ones," not as great as their predecessors. Precisely because of this, they would be able to inherit Israel. The greatness of the first generation made it particularly hard for it to banish all ego needs and subjugate itself entirely to the land. The relative simplicity of the generation that followed allowed it to make the absolute commitment to the land; hence it was better positioned to take possession of it. (Bais Avrohom explained a passage in the Zohar in a similar fashion, finding significance in simplicity where others would overlook it. The Zohar says, "One who is great, is small; one who is small is great." Bais Avrohom interprets this as referring in the first case to people who actually are great, and in the second to those who are in fact small. A person who is conscious of his greatness becomes smaller because of that consciousness. One who is small and realizes it, possesses an element of greatness! He fits the description in Tehilim "a heart broken and humbled, O G-d, You will not despise.")

We could suggest an entirely different approach to answer the difficulty that results from the Sforno's depiction of the generation that entered the Land as spiritually less significant than the one that left Egypt. Having at one point been mired in the spiritual morass of Egypt, the primary path in avodah of this generation was in purifying themselves of the tumah that surrounded them. Put more simply, they practiced sur mera – resisting and turning away from evil. The next generation's task was the other half of the matched set: aseh tov – actively performing good works. They were charged with entering the land, making it theirs, and building the Beis Hamikdash.

These two different paths of avodah require two very different mind sets. As Beis Avrohom writes elsewhere, the sur mera model requires vigorous self-confidence. Yosef HaTzadik – the finest example of resisting evil – ably demonstrates this. At the most dramatic point in his confrontation with Potiphar's wife, she "grabbed him bevidgo, by his garment." The same letters (with altered vowelization) yield bebegido, in his rebellion. Yosef could be grabbed, was most vulnerable, by calling attention to his prior failures and misdemeanors. "Do you think you are perfect? You have rebelled against Hashem often enough through your failings! With such a record, how harmful do you think one more sin is going to be?"

Yosef's response blazes a trail for the rest of us. "There is no one greater in this house than I." The yetzer hora often tells us that we are of little importance. We can despair of greatness; we don't have what it really takes. Another sin is a small thing, given our general worthlessness.

We can resist such a yetzer hora only by asserting our value and our worth. We gird ourselves with ga'avah dekedushah, with holy pride. We must animate ourselves with the spirit of "his heart was elevated in the ways of Hashem." We must assume the posture of a chasid and yirei Hashem, to whom such lowliness would be unthinkable.

The generation of the wilderness battled the battles of sur mera. To weather the counterattack of the yetzer hora, they needed to feel this holy pride. They had to cherish appropriate feelings of self- importance, not reject them. The Torah takes note of this by underscoring their individual importance in counting them "by number of the names."

The next generation did an about-face, and preoccupied itself with the production of good deeds. Borrowing from the gemara, the more a person bends himself in submission and humility, the better. The path to positive avodah begins by muting one's sense of worth and importance.

Or as the Magid of Mezerich put it, "From the ground, you can't fall."

The 'Week' Link

Rabbi Boruch Leff (Torah.org)

Passover has its seder. Purim has its Megillah reading. Chanukah has its menorah. Sukkot has its sukkah.

Shavuot, however, seems to be quite a barren holiday in terms of rituals and commandments. True, many have a custom to remain awake the entire night studying Torah on Shavuot, but this is a custom and not an obligatory law. The Torah does not prescribe any particular directive to be performed on Shavuot. This unique aspect of Shavuot, in contrast to the other festivals, is extremely surprising.

Shavuot is certainly a more significant, more inspirational festival than any of the others. The others derive their validity, both legal and spiritual, from the giving of the Torah, which occurred on Shavuot. Why then must we struggle to find meaning in Shavuot? Beyond the special sacrifices brought on the festival, why shouldn't the Torah assist us, as it characteristically does, by requiring an observance of some kind that would call to mind the giving of the Torah? Why isn't there an obligation to recant the story of the Sinai Revelation on Shavuot, similar to the commandment on Passover to tell of the Exodus?

More questions:

The name Shavuot means "Festival of Weeks." We refer to it as such in the prayers of the holiday. This name is derived from verses in various places in the Torah, which states: "You should count seven weeks... Then you should observe the Holiday of Weeks."

We see clearly that the name "Weeks" is a descriptive culmination of the 49 days/seven weeks count which began on Passover.

Strange. Wouldn't it have made more sense for the holiday to be called the "Festival of Torah"? Even if, for whatever reason, that name would be rejected, the name "Weeks" seems quite dry and incidental. True, we just completed a count of seven weeks, but why is it important to call the festival "Weeks"? Are we celebrating the weeks counted, or the day of the giving of the Torah?

In addition, the Torah never refers to Shavuot by a particular calendar date as it does with all other holidays. Passover is described as the 15th of Nissan, Sukkot the 15th of Tishrei, and so on. Yet Shavuot is mentioned as "seven weeks or 49 days after Passover." The Torah implies that if theoretically no one would count the seven weeks, Shavuot would not take place that year. Shavuot can only exist when and if the counting preparations have occurred. Why is this so?

It would appear, evidently, that we are indeed rejoicing in the "weeks." This is because without the preparatory weeks, we could not accept the Torah.

The purpose of the counting period is to enable us to prepare for receiving the Torah. We cannot expect to accept the Torah without adequate preparation.

In receiving the Torah, we are entering into a marriage with G-d. Any good marriage consists of a man and woman who have grown spiritually and emotionally throughout their lives as individuals, thus preparing themselves for bonding with another person. Without proper preparation, a marriage begins on shaky ground.

Similarly, we must prepare ourselves for G-d's giving of the Torah. If we would not prepare for receiving the Torah, it would be impossible for the Torah's goals, directives, and instructions to stick to us and make an impact. We must first become people worthy of hearing the Torah's sophisticated message. We must work on our character and only then can we utilize and apply the Torah. This idea is expressed in the Talmud: "Without proper character, there is no Torah."

So G-d established a holiday in which we rejoice in the weeks spent in preparation for the giving of the Torah. We revel in the beautiful and refined people that we have become as a result of the previous seven weeks, knowing that it is only due to this tremendous self-improvement that we merit receiving His instructions for living, carrying out G-d's plans for the world through the Torah.

Celebrating the counting and preparations also brings to life the concept of the application of Torah being primary, and not just the intellectual study, even if one studies with sincere and holy intentions. The goal of study is to impact upon all of our actions and thoughts in fulfilling the entirety of the Torah's 613 laws. On Shavuot we accept and recommit ourselves to the wholeness of Torah.

This clarifies a common misconception regarding Shavuot and returns us to our opening question as to why Shavuot has no specific mitzvah or observance prescribed.

Generally, it is understood that the focus of Shavuot is the commandment to study Torah. While this may be true if measured by a standard of time, since we do spend the entire Shavuot night studying Torah, it is inaccurate, nonetheless. Rather, the focus of Shavuot should be a reestablishment of our connection to the entire Torah, with all of its laws.

Whenever we experience a festival, we are not simply commemorating an event; we are reliving it. Every festival is an opportunity for growth because the festival is infused with spiritual forces that were unleashed due to some historical event.

On Shavuot, the Jewish people received and accepted the Torah. Thus, every year we accept the Torah anew, and we must find ways in our personal service of G-d to strengthen our commitment to all of Torah.

Perhaps it is for this reason that the Torah does not prescribe a specific ritual observance for Shavuot. On other holidays, the Torah gives specific directions both in the letter and the spirit of the laws. At times, one can "get lost" in the performance of the ritual and fail to achieve significant general growth due to a lack of focus on the general meaning of the festival. The Torah accounts for this, but for most holidays allows the fulfillment of an observance to suffice.

On Shavuot, however, the Torah does not want us to become "distracted" by the performance of any specific commandment. The giving of the Torah is far too powerful and all encompassing to enable any expression of specific ritual through physical action to be meaningful. The Torah includes all commandments. A mitzvah ritual obligation would actually detract from, not enhance, the general goal of a recommitment to the entire Torah on Shavuot.

We learn all night and as much as possible on Shavuot to show how precious the Torah is to us and to express our great desire to know all of G-d's Torah. It is only with knowledge of the Torah that we can begin to allow it to impact upon us as people. Only through the knowledge of Torah will our character improve, and only through study will we become familiar with all its laws. But we can't allow Torah study alone to "steal" the day. We must realize that the focus of Shavuot must be to recommit ourselves to the entirety of Torah and its laws.

בס"ד

Ohr Yerushalayim invite to you to תיקון ליל שבועות

Shiurim Programme

		
12.45am - 1.25am	1.30am - 2.10am	2.15am - 2.55am
Rabbi Yossi Chazan שליט"א	Rabbi Yakov Hibbert שליט"א	Rabbi David Eisenberg שליט"א

Chavrusa Programme in association with Manchester Mesivta in the Hall from 1.00am

Shiur rooms available for learning b'Chavrusa

Shacharis 2.56am

Refreshments kindly sponsored by Brackmans Bakery

בס"ד

Ohr Yerushalayim invites you to an עונג יום טוב

שבועות on second day

Mincha at 9.25pm

Followed by Oneg with Divrei Torah from

שליט"א Rabbi Aron Kampf & R' Oshi Wilks נ"י

עונג יום טוב