



Ohr Yerushalayim News

1st June 2024 - Volume 16 - Issue 47 - בחקותי - כ"ד אייר תשפ"ד

News This Week

Kiddush

There is a Kiddush following davening in honour of Shabbos Mevorchin. If you would like to sponsor or part sponsor it please contact Marc Zimmel.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this week:

Weds, 28th Iyyar - Vivienne Fagleman for her father

Thurs, 29th Iyyar - The Rov for his mother

Lost Property

A reminder that personal property left on the Shul premises will be disposed of every Rosh Chodesh

Ner Lamaor

We would like to thank those who have already committed to sponsor towards Ner Lamaor. There is still dedication opportunities of a month or part of one. Please speak to either Chizky Salomon or Avi Stern for more information and to discuss payment options. In the Zechus of sponsoring the benefactors should get the Brocho - וכל מי שנותנים נר למאור - וכל מי שנותנים נר למאור - וכל מי שנותנים נר למאור

The Sound Of Torah Study

Rabbi J Rubinstein

During the Second World War, the Ponevezer Rov, Rav Yosef Shlomoh Kahneman, set about rebuilding in Israel, his Yeshiva which had been destroyed in Ponevez, Lithuania. Incredibly, at the same time, he created institutions to care for children arriving in Israel, whose parents had been killed in the Holocaust. One group of children arrived, having spent time in exile in Uzbekistan. A religious reporter asked a child what have you learnt? To his amazement the child answered I am learning Gemara Bovo Kamo. It emerged, there had also been an elderly learned Rav exiled in Uzbekistan. He had taken it upon himself to write out Gemara Bava Kamo with Rashi's commentary by memory, on scraps of paper, and taught it to the children. They learnt it with the traditional chant of Gemara study. The reporter wrote, the Ponevezer Rov took these children to his institutions, which were close to the sound of the waves of the Mediterranean Sea hitting the coast of Israel, and ensured that the sound of their learning would grow, and overcome any other sound. Then appropriate vignette, for a week in which we read a Parshah which describes the different possibilities of what might happen to the Jewish people; and says it all depends on whether they are learning Torah. The Parshah begins with the words אם בחקתי תלכו "If you go in my statutes" which Rashi explains, means if you study Torah; and then portrays an idyllic future for the Jewish people. The Parshah however continues, ואם לא תשמעו לי "And if you do not listen to me", which Rashi says, means if you do not learn Torah. The Chumash goes on to depict a nightmarish future for the Jewish people. Rashi on Chap. 26 Verse 16, describes clearly a seven stage deterioration of the Jewish people. It is set in motion by the people not learning, which leads to them not practicing Judaism because they have not learnt about it, and then a step by step decline, which concludes with their complete rejection of belief in Hashem.

My own approximate analogy would be, learning Torah is like a power station which generates power to the whole community. With it Judaism flourishes, without it the whole of Judaism rapidly declines. After detailing the exile and terrible suffering which will befall the Jewish nation, if they forsake Judaism, the Chumash says, כל ימי השמה ואתם בארץ אויבכם אז תשבת הארץ והרצת את שבתתיה "All the days the land is desolate and you are in the land of your enemies, then the land will be appeased for its rest years"(Chap 26 Verse 35). This means their failure to fulfil the command to rest the land every seventh year, called Shemittah. The problem is, failing to observe Shemittah, is not a sin which has been mentioned in the introduction to the punishments of the Jewish people. Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky answers, the previous Parshah of Behar was all about the Shemittah and its consequences. He explains, the people were not meant to spend the Shemittah having a holiday, they were supposed to utilise it for study of the Torah. Therefore, when this Parshah says, "If you go in my statutes", meaning if you study the Torah, and later on says, "And if you do not listen to me", meaning if you do not study the Torah, it is discussing whether or not they kept the Shemittah properly. Both Parshayos have one continuous theme; the future of the Jewish people depends on the sound of learning prevailing, which is what the Ponevezer Rov understood so well.

Toil Trouble

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

The portion of Bechukosai begins quite simply. Hashem tells us: "If you will walk in My ordinances and observe My commandments and perform them. Then I will provide your rains in their time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit" (Leviticus 26:3-4) Rashi the premier commentary on the Torah, has a mission to define the simple explanation of the verse. He rarely deviates from the simple pshat (explanation), unless he prefaces his remarks by stating his intention to do so. In this instance Rashi explains the concept of "walking in My ordinances" not as mitzvah observance or following in the Ways of the Almighty. Rather, Rashi explains walking in G-d's ways as toiling in Torah study. Rashi explains his commentary: One might think that this [verse] denotes the fulfillment of the commandments; but when Scripture follows by stating and you shall keep My commandments and do them, it is plain that in this passage there is mentioned the fulfillment of the commands. How then must I explain 'Im Bechukosai Teleichu?'" As an admonition that you should study the Torah laboriously.

Clearly when Rashi translates the words, he seems to deviate from

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	7.43pm - 7.55pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.56am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.37pm
Rov's Shiur	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	10.42pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Fri ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.40pm

the simple meaning. Instead of explaining, "If you go in my path, he states, If you will toil in Torah." Walking in Hashem's path may mean many things. Surely many of them can be simply understood from those words. But toiling in Torah does not seem to be one of them. In a very popular day school, the Morah was reviewing the meaning of the prayers with her young charges. "Children," she asked in her melodious voice, "Who knows what Shema Yisrael means?" The hands shot up and waved frantically. "I know! I know!" came muffled shouts from the youngsters who each had their siddurim opened to the proper pages. "It means 'Hear O Israel!'" "Wonderful!" responded the young teacher. "And who knows what Baruch Atah Hashem means?" Again the students raised their hands in excitement. "It means 'blessed are You Hashem!'" "Good," she exclaimed. "Good. Now for a hard one. Who knows the meaning of Amen?"

There was a moment of silence and then little Joey raised his hand! "That's simple every time it says Amen in the Siddur the translation appears right next to it!" "It is," asked the Morah. "Sure," said Joey. "Everyone knows that Amen means Cong.*" I learned the Rashi and learned a lesson. Sometimes we read words and we translate from Hebrew to English. We nod our heads as if it makes sense, and we don't give pause to think about the true meaning of what we have just said. Often, however, even in the simplest form the mere translation of words does not constitute the actual meaning of a verse. Indeed the Hebrew Im Bchukosai Talaichu translates word by word as "If you will walk in My ordinances" but when learning Torah we must do more than merely look at the words and then translate. We must delve deeper. We must analyze seemingly redundant phrases. We must get to the depth of the true meaning of the words. Indeed, we must toil in Torah!

A One-Sided Affair Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"I will remember My covenant with Yaakov and also My covenant with Yitzchak, and also My covenant with Avraham will I remember..." (26:42)

At the conclusion of the "tochacha" – the admonition which records the devastating punishments that Bnei Yisroel will receive for abandoning the covenant with Hashem, the Torah relates that Hashem will ultimately remember His covenant made with the Patriarchs and in their merit Bnei Yisroel will be redeemed.

Rashi cites a Midrash that questions why the word "zachor" – "remember" is juxtaposed to the Patriarch Avraham, "es brisi Avraham ezkor", and to the Patriarch Yaakov, "vezocharti es brisi Yaakov", yet there is no mention of the word "zachor" in connection with the Patriarch Yitzchak?

The Ba'al Haturim addresses the same issue and suggests that Hashem particularly remembers the merits of Avraham and Yaakov, for they observed the mitzvos both in Eretz Yisroel and outside of the land of Israel, whereas Yitzchak only observed the mitzvos in Eretz Yisroel. Therefore, continues the Ba'al Haturim, both Avraham and Yaakov are referred to by Hashem as "avadi" – "My servants", while this appellation is not conferred upon Yitzchak.

Rashi in Parshas Toldos cites the Midrash which states that Yitzchak was not allowed to leave Eretz Yisroel because he was an "olah temima" – "perfect elevation offering", having been offered as a sacrifice by his father. Due to his heightened level of sanctity, he was instructed to remain in the Holy Land. How could Avraham and Yaakov, who served Hashem in a land of lesser sanctity, possess greater merits than Yaakov whose relationship with Hashem was on a higher plane?

In Parshas Eikev, Rashi comments that the purpose of wearing tefillin and placing mezuzos on our doorposts outside of Eretz Yisroel is so that we will be well versed in the observance of these mitzvos upon our return to the Land. The Ramban expands this notion to include all mitzvos, implying that the purpose of observing mitzvos outside of Eretz Yisroel is solely to prevent us from forgetting how to perform them, for only in Eretz Yisroel are we truly bound by their performance. The Ramban requires further elaboration, for it appears as if there is no intrinsic value in performing mitzvos outside of Eretz Yisroel.

The Midrash records an analogy which offers insight into the Ramban's words. A king who is angered by his wife sends her back to her father's home. While there, her father instructs her to continue wearing her regal clothing and cosmetics. The Ksav Vekaboleh explains that the message of the Midrash is that aside from causing her to remember the required procedure for when she will eventually be summoned back to the palace, continuing to wear her royal garb serves an additional purpose; by maintaining her own elevated status, she affords honor to her estranged husband. Similarly, by performing the mitzvos outside of Eretz Yisroel, we show our desire to continue our relationship with Hashem, and in doing so, we bring Him honor. Mitzvos actualize our relationship with Hashem. In Eretz Yisroel, where Hashem's presence is discernable, the reality of the relationship affords Bnei Yisroel a sense of reciprocity for their actions. We feel closer to Hashem as we perform more mitzvos and being able to sense this closeness gives us fulfillment. Outside of Eretz Yisroel there is no immediate sense of reciprocity, for Hashem's presence is concealed. All mitzva observance is performed as a one-sided relationship. The only motivation for continuing to observe is the desire to obey the word of Hashem, for the fulfillment which is attained through a reciprocal relationship is lacking. Yitzchak reached great levels of sanctity and maintained a flawless relationship with his Creator, yet he was not faced with the challenge of serving a Creator under circumstances where there was no perceived relationship. Avraham and Yaakov excelled in their observance even when the relationship appeared completely one-sided. Therefore, their merits have a greater impact upon their descendants. It is this notion that the Ba'al Haturim is alluding to when he states that only Avraham and Yaakov are referred to as slaves, for a slave does his master's bidding irrespective of an existing relationship.

Yitzchak may be compared to a son following the wishes of his father; whereas it is a relationship of a higher level, it is not as commendable as a person who accepts to be a slave without receiving the fulfillment of a reciprocal relationship.

