



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ב אייר תש"פ – בהר בחקותי – 16th May 2020 - Volume 12 - Issue 40

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Yitzchok and Miri Douek on the birth of a boy.  
Mazel Tov to Leo and Rachel Stern on the engagement of their daughter Shoshana to Tuvia Fagen.

### Yom Yerushalayim - Friday 22nd May

The Shul minchag is not to say Tachanun at Shacharis and Mincha in Yom Yerushalayim.

### Chaim Aruchim

We wish the following Chaim Aruchim for upcoming Yahrzeits this week:  
Monday 24th Iyyar Rabbi Y.Y. Katz for his mother  
Friday 28th Iyyar Vivienne Fagleman for her father  
Apologies for any errors or omissions and for those who had Yahrzeits over the last several weeks that have not been included till now. We wish you all a Chaim Aruchim.

## Out of the Depths

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

And G-d spoke to Moshe on Mt. Sinai, saying, "Speak to the Children of Israel and you shall say to them: When you come to the land that I am giving you, the land shall rest a Shabbos to G-d." (Vayikra 25:1-2)

RASHI COMMENTS ON these verses and explains:

What [special relevance] does the subject of Shmittah have with Mt. Sinai? Were not all the commandments stated from Sinai? However, just as with Shmittah, its general principles and its specific details were all stated from Sinai, likewise, all of them were stated—their general principles [together with] their specific details—from Sinai. This is what is taught in Toras Kohanim (25:1). It appears to me that its explanation is that since we do not find the laws of Shmittah of land reiterated on the plains of Moav in Devarim, we learn that its general principles, specific details, and explanations were all stated at Sinai. The Torah states this here to teach us that [just as in the case of Shmittah,] every statement that was conveyed to Moshe came from Sinai, [including] their general principles and specific details repeated and reviewed on the plains of Moav.

The issue is that the Torah slips in the words, "on Mt. Sinai" into the verse first quoted above. Normally when G-d spoke to Moshe, the verse doesn't mention this, so the question is, why add these words now? Rashi answers, to indicate that just as all the laws of Shmittah were given at Mt. Sinai, so too were all of the laws of every mitzvah given at Mt. Sinai, even if they are not mentioned in the Torah until later.

Fine. But that doesn't answer another question: Why Shmittah? Why is this particular mitzvah the one G-d chose to use to teach this important lesson, that ALL mitzvos were given at Sinai in detail? What, if anything, does Shmittah have in common with Mt. Sinai?

The Torah adds some additional information that helps with this:

"I am G-d, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be a G-d to you." (Vayikra 25:38)

The Talmud learns from this verse, that G-d can only really be the G-d of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel (Kesuvos 110b). The truth is, we learn this earlier from Ya'akov Avinu who, on his way to the Diaspora, said this:

And Ya'akov took a vow, saying, "If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way, upon which I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear; and if I return in peace to my father's house, and G-d will be my G-d... (Bereishis 28:20-21)

What did he mean, "and G-d will be my G-d"? Wasn't G-d ALWAYS his G-d,

## "את מקדשי תיראו"

שליט"א The Rov

The great awe and respect that should be given to the **בית הכנסת** can be learned from the well known story brought in **ספר חסידים קכ"ח** concerning **יעקב ב"ר יקר** one of the teachers and often quoted by Rashi. Others retell it as the grandfather of Rashi, who every Friday would sweep the steps leading up to the **ארון קודש** with his long beard. In the merit of showing such honour to the **הקב"ה** and his **תורה** he was blessed with a grandson who is recognised as the greatest of all commentators of **תנ"ך** and **גמרא**.

no matter WHERE Ya'akov went? Not on the level G-d was in Eretz Yisroel, as Dovid HaMelech would later say, and the Talmud would explain:

"For they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave to the inheritance of G-d, saying, 'Go, serve other G-ds.'" (I Shmuel 26:19). But who told Dovid: "Go, serve other G-ds?" Rather, this comes to tell you that anyone who resides outside of Eretz Yisroel is considered as though he is engaged in idol worship. (Kesuvos 110b)

This is what Ya'akov was saying to G-d:

"I am being forced to leave Eretz Yisroel due to no fault of my own. Please go with me and act towards me on the level You normally do when I am in Eretz Yisroel!"

And as even Lavan himself pointed out, G-d did exactly that. Because Ya'akov was on a divinely-originated mission in Padan Aram, G-d accompanied him as if the borders of Eretz Yisroel had been spiritually expanded to encompass Ya'akov away from home. Being above space and time, the spiritual world can do that, if and when G-d agrees to it.

Clearly this had been the case at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Torah. It was in the Diaspora, and yet Har Sinai had the status of the Temple Mount while G-d "hovered" over it. The desert bloomed for them like Eretz Yisroel eventually would. This is why perhaps the generation of the spies later got the impression that Eretz Yisroel can be anywhere, rejecting the actual Land of Israel for the desert...Spain...Eastern Europe...the Western world, etc.

The whole point of Shmittah is exactly this, to bind these two ideas together, that G-d is our G-d, made official at Har Sinai and the receiving of Torah, and that Eretz Yisroel is the place to best actualize this unique and holy relationship. By making Shmittah the throwback to Kabbalas HaTorah, it made sure that at least every seven years the Jewish people were reminded of the

## Davening Times

### שבת פרשת בהר בחקותי

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos | 7.15pm                   |
| Candle Lighting           | 7.25pm-7.40pm            |
| Shacharis                 | 9.15am                   |
| סוף זמן ק"ש               | 9.06am                   |
| 1st Mincha                | 2.00pm                   |
| 2nd Mincha                | 6.00pm                   |
| 3rd Mincha                | 9.06pm                   |
| Motzei Shabbos            | 10.11pm                  |
| Sun                       | 7.15am / 8.20am          |
| Mon / Thurs               | 6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am |
| Tues / Wed / Fri          | 6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am |
| Mincha & Maariv           | 7.45pm                   |
| Late Maariv               | 10.15pm                  |

intimate and intricate connection between the Land of Israel and the Har Sinai event.

That's one level. There is at least one more.

Just as the seventh day of the week is Shabbos for a Jew, the seventh year of tending the land is Shabbos for the land. The issue is not so much Shmittah, but the "Shabbos" it represents, and what that is supposed to facilitate: a deeper connection with G-d that supersedes time and space, just as Kabbalas HaTorah did in its time.

It's almost like a Sci-fi movie, the kind where a person opens a normal door but finds a whole different plane of reality on the other side of it. The door may not be physical in this case, but the higher plane of reality certainly is there. In this case, the door is the mitzvah of Shmittah itself, just like Shabbos. The act of doing the mitzvah as prescribed opens the "door" to what awaits on the other side.

Recently I have been doing a webinar called, "Mindfulness, Torah, and Redemption." In fact, I have just completed a book of the same name, which I hope to get into the Amazon store soon, b"H. As the title indicates, it is about the idea of mindfulness, except from a Torah perspective. Where the rest of the world leaves off, this book and webinar continues on.

The main point is how the "moment" is more than just time. We humans are time-bound, and what we call the "Present" is just a threshold over which the Future becomes the Past. For us, time is elusive, and unable to travel faster than the speed of light, we can't "stop" time.

But we can rise above it. We can attach ourselves to G-d, Who is eternal, and therefore is, by definition, the "Present." Above time, G-d has no future or past, because they are not relevant to Him. Being eternal, everything only exists in the Present, at least as far as we can understand.

If a person really wants to be "in the moment," which is where the exhilaration of life is, they have to attach themselves to G-d as much as they can. Learning Torah the right way does this. Performing the mitzvos the right way does this. Certainly Shabbos does this, which is why it is one-sixtieth of the World-to-Come...and time seems to have a different quality than on the other six days of the week.

This is Shmittah as well. It's not just about taking a year off from working the land, and having more time to learn. It's about taking a year off from the mundane reality of the previous six years, and learning how to rise to a higher spiritual plane...similar to that at Har Sinai and the giving of Torah. Now it makes great sense to specifically connect these two events.

## Lag Baomer & Ahavas Yisroel

Boruch Mordechai Michaels

Based on a Dvar Torah by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky

Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky relates a passage in the Zohar (Vayikra 59b: written by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who died on lag baomer), that once there was a drought. The Rabbis decided to approach Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai to ask him to offer prayers that the earth be blessed with rain.

Upon seeing them arriving he expounded the verse "Hineih mah tov umah na'im shevet achim gam yachad" — "How good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers also in unity" (Psalms 133:2). Rabbi Shimon asked, "Isn't the word 'gam' — 'also' — superfluous?"

Rav Shimon answers that this verse refers to the golden cherubs that were atop the Aron. The cherubs served as a barometer of the intensity of G d's relationship with Israel. When they faced each other, this indicated G d's pleasure with Israel. However, when the cherubs turned away from each other, this demonstrated G d's displeasure with Israel (Yoma 54a).

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that Rabbi Shimon's profound message was that the direction of the faces of the cherubs is a reflection of how Jews in this world relate to each other. When their faces are turned away from another, G d forbid, it means that there is a profound lack of ahavat Yisrael — love of a fellow Jew — and a lack of achdus Yisrael — unity among Jews. When such is the case, Hashem, too, is not pleased and He, also, so to speak, turns His face from the people and the land. However, when ahavat Yisrael and achdut Yisrael prevail, Hashem cherishes the love and unity that prevails among His children and in turn, gam yachad also He — the One and Only — is with them and provides all their material needs in abundant measure.

Thus, our verse (Psalms 133:2) states that when the two "brothers," i.e., the male and female cherubs, were seen to dwell together, the Jews knew that Yachad **יחד** (which in this context is translated as the One), Hashem, was also (**ו**) with them.

The way for Am Yisrael to achieve the level where Hashem is present with us

is by shevet achim. When we are united and communicate with each with love, then, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai says, will Hashem be "gam yachad"; then Hashem, the One and Only will also be with us.

## The Most Miraculous is the Ordinary

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

I will provide your rains in their time.

[Note: The single most famous and oft-quoted piece of Meshech Chochmah appears in this parshah, 26:44. It is too good to miss. However, because it has been translated elsewhere (e.g. Nechama Leibowitz's "New Studies in Vaykra" p. 618) I thought it better to work on a different piece with which fewer are acquainted. ]

Meshech Chochmah: What is the nature of this berachah? Chazal[2] see it as something beyond abundant rainfall when it is most needed for crop growth. Rather, they see this referring to rainfall on Friday evenings, when people are indoors celebrating Shabbos, and the needed precipitation does not come at the price of interference with other human activity.

Chazal mean to convey to us that what we call teva / nature contains a dimension full of wonder and surprise, and that is keyed to Man's obedience to G-d. When Man heeds G-d's commandments, Nature itself becomes more elegant and cooperative.

We would never refer to rain falling at times convenient to us as "miraculous," at least not in the strict sense of the word. We usually reserve that designation for events that are entirely inexplicable, not just improbable or serendipitous. The "real" miracle, we think, is the blockbuster event that rips pages out of the Divine rule book. It is this "real" miracle that we long for, but usually have to settle for the humdrum ordinariness of existence.

Chazal tell us that we are wrong. The greatest value lies in the ordinary and regular. Hashem designed incredible grandeur and beauty into His rules. Those fully take into account the actions of Man; they play out in synch with the laws of the Torah. They are nothing but a succession of less dramatic miracles to which we become accustomed. The opening words of our parshah — "If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments"[3] — essentially state that untold richness presents itself when Hashem's laws of Nature are allowed full-throated expression. That richness represents the aim of Creation. When Man sins, those laws are muffled and stifled, resulting in a less than perfect world.

Because it is easy for Man to lose sight of the connection between a beneficent Nature and the Providence of G-d, He arranges at times what we erroneously look to as the "real" miracles — the complete reversal of the laws of Nature. They remind us Who is in charge, Who orchestrates everything. While these are effective, they do not fit into the essential scheme of things. They are wake-up calls, necessitated by Man's blindness and smallness. The fullness of teva, of a world operating the way it was designed to, is essential and "real."

This is why the person who says Hallel every day is a blasphemer, while the one who recites Ashrei regularly is assured a place in Heaven. The former praises Hashem only for the events that violate the expected conduct of Nature (and apparently finds plenty of them); the latter praises G-d for the amazing richness of Nature operating the way it was designed to.

Given Hashem's ability to easily undo any laws He created, the obvious miracle, like supplying the Bnei Yisrael with mohn, is dramatic, but not so surprising. More wondrous is the system whereby all living things are constantly supplied with their needs and nourishment.

When the gemara extols Ashrei for following the alef-beis, it alludes to this natural system, in which many steps are interconnected to produce the final result, and no step is missing. Man, who is a partner to this system in that his actions are necessary in producing, gathering, and preparing different food items, nonetheless finds himself in a world which regularly produces the ingredients he needs.

A midrash explains the oft-repeated phrase "I am Hashem." It says that this (the Four-Letter Name) is His Name, and the one assigned by Adam. Adam comprehended how things took place, and how G-d fashioned nothingness into somethingness, and somethingness into the myriad form that surround us. Avraham, on the other hand, called G-d Adon/ Master — and was the first to do so. He looked at the world, and discovered G-d's mastery of it.

Adam (and others before Avraham) looked to G-d, and discovered through Him the workings of the world. Avrohom, however, looked at the world, and discovered G-d. The others knew the Cause — and comprehended the effect. Avrohom studied the effect, and came through it to know the Cause.

**If you have the desire to spread Divrei Torah on the Parsha or on any other interesting topics, please contact Boruch Michaels via the following details: Mobile (Call, Text, WhatsApp) : 07419747766, Email: boruchmichaels@gmail.com**