



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ז שבט תש"פ – משפטים – 22nd February 2020 - Volume 12 - Issue 30

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Ariel Lima on his engagement to Talia Esther Rocha from Yerushalayim.

Mazel Tov to Gary and Orley Zolty on the occasion of Tehilla's engagement to Chanina Broder of Ramat Bet Shemesh.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There is a kiddush after davening in honour of the golden wedding anniversary of Miles and Linda Levine, Mazel Tov!!

David and Zara Newman invite the Kehilla to a kiddush after davening at their home, 20 Rutland Drive, in honour of the the birth of their granddaughter, Rina, to Shea and Tammy Erlich

Try Not To Read This During Davening... Joseph Rosenhead

Those of you who learnt Daf Hayomi this week (Berachos 48b) will have come across a possuk from this week's parsha: "You shall serve Hashem your G-d, and He will bless your bread and your water and remove illness from amongst you" (Shemos 23:25). The Rambam (Sefer Hamitzvos- mitzvah aseh 5) cites this possuk as the source for the chiyuv midoraisa to daven. According to the Rambam, the scope of this obligation includes giving praise, making requests and giving thanks to Hashem (Hilchos Tefillah 1:2). However, the Ramban (Hasogas Haramban L'sefer Hamitzvos- mitzvah aseh 5) disagrees with the Rambam. He maintains the chiyuv to daven is only miderabanan. However, the exception to this is in times of suffering. In such situations, the Ramban agrees that one is obligated midoraisa to daven. I would suggest the Ramban's reasoning for making this distinction, is due to the fact that only tefillah has the capacity to remove any difficult decrees from a person (NB. Pnei Yehoshua on Berachos 32b-א"א-ד). Therefore, the chiyuv midoraisa to daven is only applicable to such situations, as it is only in response to these situations that the unique function of tefillah is fulfilled.

Yet, why according to both the Rambam and Ramban, does the Torah only state: "And He will bless your bread and your water and remove illness from amongst you"? The simple understanding of the possuk seems to imply that the purpose of davening is purely so Hashem will physically sustain us? I would suggest, the reason why the Torah specifies the obligation to daven in the context of one's parnossa and health, is because it is particularly in these areas that a person is prone to forgetting about Hashem.

In Parshas Eikev, the Torah warns against thinking: "kochi v'otzem yodi oso li es ha'chayil ha'ze" (Devarim-8:17), which the Ibn Ezra interprets as specifically referring to disregarding Hashem as the provider of money. Additionally, the Torah uses the double expression: "V'rapoh Y'rapeh" (Shemos-21:19), to teach that it is ultimately Hashem who grants permission for a doctor to heal people (Berachos 60a); rather than someone's recovery being merely due to a doctor's own expertise (NB.Divrei Hayomim 2-16:12). Hence, by explicitly mentioning parnossa and health, the Torah is emphasising that we must remember to include these in our tefillos as well. Whereas, other

circumstances where one must daven to Hashem- to give praise, to express all other requests, to give thanks for all other things (Rambam) / in all other crises (Ramban) - a person does not have this same resistance towards recognising Hashem. Therefore, they do not need to be explicitly mentioned in the possuk, in order to establish that there is a Torah obligation to daven in these circumstances. Rather, it is sufficient for the Torah to just say the general phrase: "You shall serve Hashem", for these to be included within the chiyuv midoraisa to daven.

I would also like to suggest three metaphorical explanations for these three words: "bread", "water" and "illness", which relate to three other specific reasons for why we daven.

1) Bread- In Tanach, the word "lechem" invariably means bread or food. However, a well-known exception to this is Rashi's interpretation of the phrase, "Ki im halechem" (Bereishis-39:6). Here, "lechem" refers to Potiphar's wife. For as the Kli Yakar explains [I have expanded slightly on his exact words], just like bread satiates a person more than any other food, so too marriage creates a unique sense of satisfaction between two people that is superior to any other interpersonal relationship. Incidentally, this could explain why it is customary for the chosson and kallah to give the challah out at their chassuna. Perhaps, this gesture symbolises the new feeling of satisfaction that they have following their marriage to each other.

Water- In Parshas Beshalach (Shemos 15:22), the Torah says: "And they went three days in the desert and found no water"; to which the gemora in Babba Kamma (82a) comments: "Ein mayim elo Torah"- "the term 'water' refers to nothing other than Torah".

Illness- An almost identical promise to "remove illness" from those who serve Hashem, is found at the beginning of Parshas Eikev (Devarim 7:15). However, interestingly, there is a subtle difference between the wording used in Parshas Eikev and this week's parsha. In Parshas Eikev, Hashem promises to remove illness, "mimecho";

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת משפטים

Candle Lighting	No later than 5.15pm
Mincha	5.20pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.48am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	5.02pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	6.22pm
Ovos uBonim Melava Malka	7.22pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed Rosh Chodesh	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	5.25pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

מברכין אדר, פרשת שקלים

No later than 5.15pm
5.20pm
8.45am
9.15am
9.48am
10.45am
1.30pm
5.02pm
Following
6.22pm
7.22pm
7.15am / 8.20am
6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
5.25pm
8.00pm

whereas in our parsha, the term “mikirbecho”, is used. In Babba Metzia 107b, the gemora interprets the former as referring to ‘ayin hora’, the external negative influence that affects a person. Therefore, this would suggest, “mikirbecho” which can be translated as, “within you” (E.g. Bereishis 25:22) is referring to a person’s internal negative influence-the yetzer hora.

Hence, in combining these three interpretations, davening could be defined as being an opportunity to ask for: Hatzlocha with one’s wife / family (“bread”); hatzlocha in limmud hatorah (“water”) and help in performing maasim tovim / avoiding aveiros (“remove illness”). Indeed, maybe this explains why we specifically say at a bris: “K’shem shenichnas l’bris ken yikones l’torah, ul’chuppa, ul’maasim tovim”.

These are evidently the three ultimate aspirations one should have in life; therefore perhaps this initial tefillah essentially acts as the “blue-print” for the rest of the tefillos that this new Jewish child should say throughout his life. The purpose of life and therefore by extension, the purpose of tefillah is for a person to be able to achieve hatzlocha in: ‘Torah’ (“water”), ‘chuppa’ (“bread”) and ‘maasim tovim’ (“remove illness from within you”).

2) A further interpretation for the word ‘lechem’ is given by the Metzudas Dovid on the phrase: “Come and eat from my bread” (Mishlei-9:7). Here, the word ‘lechem’ refers to Torah; for just like eating ‘lechem’ is pleasurable for a person, so too is limmud hatorah. Hence, in conjunction with the previous interpretation of the possuk, an alternative understanding could be: One must daven in order to achieve hatzlocha in limmud hatorah- (“bread” and “water”). This will enable a person to ultimately overcome his yetzer hora- (“remove illness from within you”); as the gemora in kiddushin 30b says: “I created the yetzer hora and I created Torah as its antidote”.

The yetzer hora is considered an ‘illness’ and the way to cure this illness is through Torah. Indeed, the Chovas Halevavos (5:5) describes the challenge presented by the yetzer hora as the “milchomah gedolah” that we face throughout our lives. Hence, a fundamental function of tefillah is certainly to ask for the means to succeed in this constant battle.

3) Bread- On Pesach, we are only allowed to have “lechem oni” (Devarim 16:3) as opposed to regular ‘lechem’. The symbolic significance behind this obligation is that in keeping away from any regular ‘lechem’, we distance ourselves from the midda of kavod; for just like bread rises when sufficiently baked, so too seeking kavod causes a person to raise themselves up above others (Sefer Hachinuch-Mitzvah 117).

Water-Rabbi Chaim Vital (Shaarei Keduasha-1:2) lists four main categories of ‘bad middos’ that originate from the core elements that Mankind is made from: Fire, air, water and earth. He explains that the midda of taaveh originates from water; for just like water causes many pleasurable things to grow in the world, so too the middah of taaveh causes the desire for pleasure to grow within us.

Illness-In Babba Metzia 107b (mentioned above), another explanation given for the expression, “illness” in Parshas Eikev, is that this refers to the gall bladder [for the gall bladder makes a person’s entire body ill]. Additionally, there is a Midrash in Vayikra Rabba (4:4) that discusses the function of ten organs in the human body. Here, the gall bladder is further described as being responsible for the middah of kinnah.

Hence, a final interpretation of “bread”, “water” and removal of “illness” could be that, through davening to Hashem one is able to overcome the negative middos of: Kavod (“bread”), taaveh (“water”) and kinnah (“illness”). Indeed, this interpretation could explain why tefillah in particular is described as being: “berumo shel olam”- at the top of the world (Rashi on Berachos 6א דברים). The Mishnah in Avos (4:21) says that “the middos of kinnah, taaveh and kavod take a person out of the world” (Avos 4:21), therefore tefillah specifically stands at the top of the world to act as a protective shield against the negative impact of these middos.

Climbing Unto Love or Falling into Lust

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

As a child, whenever I arrived at this week’s Parsha, I recall feeling something of a letdown. From the beginning of Bereishis, each Parsha had its own riveting narrative, the various strands culminating with the awesome climax of the giving of the Torah. Immediately after this climatic event, comes Mishpatim, in which the drama seems to fizzle out. The Torah shifts its focus to elucidating the intricate laws of damages, interpersonal relationships and prohibitions that inform day-to-day Jewish life.

In the coming weeks, the body of technical material grows to even larger proportions as we are asked to master the detailed instructions governing the construction of the Mishkan, followed by complex laws concerning all the various sacrifices brought therein.

It’s difficult for many to move from the compelling narratives of Bereishis and part of Shmos into the Torah’s technical and legalistic dimension, following the Divine revelation. A thought occurred to me this week that might make for a smoother transition into Parshas Mishpatim.

It’s fascinating to read of the extensive preparations that preceded the Divine revelation at Sinai. And yet, the climax of it all, the shattering, emotionally charged moment that the world had anxiously awaited for generations-the giving of the Ten Commandments-was over in a few short minutes. The Divine presence abruptly departed; the people were then allowed to ascend the mountain. What an anti climax! “Is that all?” some people may have wondered, bewildered. This view, however, obscures what actually took place.

Any relationship of enduring value rests primarily on the quality and depth of the commitment. A truly meaningful and genuine bond does not need lengthy, poetic declarations of love to validate it. An encounter with an elderly couple who have weathered many of life storms together aptly illustrates this point. Their sensitivity to one another and mutual understanding and commitment is reflected even in a casual meeting of the eyes.

Words and finite expression tend often to dilute. The ultimate relationship is one that is forged by a mutual pledge of commitment that will prevail over any and all of life’s vicissitudes. That can take a brief moment but it establishes a reality that is meant to stand the test of time. An essential prerequisite in the building of such a bond is a spiritual and emotional preparedness nurtured over time.

The Jewish people had prepared for this climatic moment for generations. The relationship with Hashem took root with the Avos Hakedoshim. It was tested in Egypt, the crucible of suffering where, as abject slaves, the people’s ego and identity were humbled – the perfect preparation for an eternal union with Hashem.

Finally, the ‘moment’ of marriage at Sinai arrives. It only takes a moment, just as the yichud ceremony constituting the consummation of every marriage takes but a brief few minutes. But now comes the litmus test that determines the true value of the marriage, where we demonstrate our willingness not only to meet our responsibilities to one another, but to discover precisely what the others’ needs are.

Enter Parsha Mishpatim. The wedding at Sinai was exciting, but living a ‘real’ married life is far more meaningful. And so, this year when we open the Chumash to Mishpatim, perhaps we will experience instead of a letdown, a twinge of excitement.

It sometimes takes a while to detoxify a Hollywood-intoxicated student who thinks after one date that he has met his bashert. “Rabbi,” he tells me, “it was love at first sight; I fell in love.” “No you didn’t,” I counter, “you fell in lust.”

A true relationship is never one that seems to just descend from the clear blue sky. It takes a great amount of work to lay the foundation, The true yardstick of how real the love and devotion are will only be proven over many years, in the crucible of the arduous, demanding responsibilities that follow. When we arrive at Parshas Mishpatim the true journey is about to begin.