

Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim

Vayitzei 5777

Shabbos and the Opening of the Wells

Introduction

In this week's parashah it is said (Bereishis 29:1-3) vayisa Yaakov raglav vayeilech artzah vnei kedem vayar vehinei beer basadeh vehinei sham shelosha edrei tzon rovtzim aleha ki min habeer hahi yashku haadarim vihaeven gedolah al pi habeer vineesfu shama chol haadarim vigalilu es haeven meial pi habeer vishishku es hatzon viheishivu es haeven al pi habeer limkomah, so Yaakov lifted up his feet, and went toward the land of the easterners. He looked, and behold-a well in the field! And behold! Three flocks of sheep lay there beside it, for from that well they would water the flocks, and the stone over the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks would be assembled there they would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep; then they would put back the stone over the mouth of the well, in its place. The Ramban cites the Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 70:8) that states that this entire episode regarding the wells and the shepherds removing the large stone alludes to the pilgrimage of the Jewish People on the three festivals and the drawing of the water alludes to the receiving of Divine Inspiration. The replacement of the stone alludes to the

festival in the future at the time of the Ultimate Redemption.

Yaakov's meeting with the Shepherds Alludes to Shabbos

If we were to continue in the vein of the Medrash, we can suggest that the subsequent verses refer to Shabbos, which we find juxtaposed to the mention of the festivals in Parashas Emor. Thus, we read that Yaakov queries the people regarding their origins, and they respond that they are from Charan. This can allude to the idea that the weekday is akin to anger, as we find in the beginning of the parashah where it is said (Bereishis 28:10) vayeitzei Yaakov mibeer sheva vayeilech Charana, Yaakov departed Beer Sheva and went toward Charan. This verse can be interpreted homiletically to read that Yaakov left Beer Sheva, i.e. he entered into Shabbos, the seventh day, and Charan, i.e. anger, left. Yaakov then asks if they know Lavan. What was the purpose of Yaakov asking this question? Perhaps the idea is that the Shem MiShmuel writes that Calev and Pinchas, the two spies sent by Yehoshua, understood from Rachav that the inhabitants of the land were subdued, because Rachav was Lilis, the great demon. Once Rachav acknowledged that the inhabitants were fearful of the Jewish People, the spies knew that the land would be conquered by the Jewish People. Thus, Yaakov was wondering how Lavan was faring and if he would

be able to be victorious over Lavan and his evil schemes. The shepherds responded that they know who Lavan is, i.e. that he is Balaam, the master sorcerer (see Gemara Sanhedrin 105a and Rashi Ibid; Targum Yonasan Bamidbar 22:5). Yaakov then queried them if there was peace by Lavan and they responded with the word shalom, peace. The Baal HaTurim notes that Yaakov asked haShalom lo, is there peace with him, and the shepherds responded shalom, peace. The Baal HaTurim writes that they did not answer that Lavan had peace, as it is said (Yeshaya 57:21) ein shalom amar Elokai larishaim, 'there is no peace,' said my G-d, 'for the wicked.'

The Shabbos Connection

Based on what we have mentioned previously, we can suggest that Yaakov, who reflects Shabbos, wished to know how he could subdue Lavan, who in a later reincarnation would be Balaam. The shepherds responded, shalom, peace. The Gemara (Shabbos 119b) states that when a Jew arrives home from shul on Friday night, he is escorted by two angels, one good and one evil. If when he arrives home and finds the lamp burning, the table set and his bed made, the good angel says, "may it be the will of HaShem that it should be this way the next Shabbos as well," and the bad angel is forced to answer amen against his will. If the table is not set, however, then the bad angel says, "May it be the will of HaShem that it should be this way the next Shabbos as well," and the good angel is forced to answer amen against

his will. Thus, the shepherds were intimating to Yaakov that the manner in which to subdue Lavan would be by Yaakov conducting himself properly and then Lavan, i.e. Balaam, would be forced to answer amen. It is noteworthy that the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh (Bamidbar 23:24) explains that this is the rationale for why the Torah records the blessings that Balaam proffered on the Jewish People, as HaShem desired that the evil angel, i.e. Balaam, be forced to acknowledge that the Jewish People are blessed. HaShem should allow us to merit the holiness of Shabbos of which it is said (Prayer of Kegavna recited by Nusach Sefard) "when the Shabbos arrives, she unified herself in Oneness and divests herself of the Other Side [any trace of evil], all harsh judgments are removed from her."

Shabbos in the Zemiros

Kel Mistater

This mystical Zemer was composed by Avraham Maimin, whose name with the addition of chazak, is formed by the acrostic. Avraham was a student of Rabbi Moshe Kordevero, a member of the Kabbalistic school of the Arizal, and he lived from 5282-5330 (1522-1570 C.E.)

הָאֵל-הַגָּדוֹל עֵינֵי כָל נְגַדָּהּ. רַב חֶסֶד גָּדוֹל עַל
הַשָּׁמַיִם חֶסֶדָּהּ, O great G-d, all eyes look
toward You, O great One of abundant
kindness, higher than heaven is Your
kindness. While we look to HaShem
with our physical eyes, awaiting His

salvation, we acknowledge that His kindness is above the heavens, i.e. beyond our comprehension. It is said (Tehillim 55:23) הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל-יְהוָה יִקְרָא וְהוּא יַכְלִיכֵם, cast upon HaShem your burden and He will sustain you. The Mefareish in Masseches Tamid writes that whenever Scripture uses the term השלכה, casting away, it means casting more than twenty amos. We know that a Menorah or Sukkah that is above twenty amos is invalid because לא שלטא בה עינא, the eye cannot see above twenty amos. Thus, Dovid HaMelech is teaching us that we should act our burden upon HaShem to the point that we cannot see it, i.e. we do not even comprehend where the salvation comes from.

Shabbos Stories

Reb Shimon the Holy Miser

In the city of Cracow resided an elderly, wealthy Jew, Reb Shimon. His wealth was well known to the people of Cracow; just as well known, however, was his stinginess. All the days of his life, he did not so much as give one coin to tzedakah. Thus his nickname: “Shimon the Miser.” One day, Reb Shimon passed away. The town’s burial society decided to bury him in a disgraceful manner and lay him to rest on the outskirts of the cemetery, a place reserved for the lowly members of the town. That Friday afternoon, the rabbi of Cracow, Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller (author of “Tosafos Yom Tov”), sat in his home engaged in Torah study. Suddenly, he heard a faint knock at the

door. “Come in,” the rabbi called out. The door opened and in walked Reb Zalman, one of the poor men of Cracow. “Rebbe,” said Reb Zalman, “could you please help me? This week, I do not have even one coin in order to buy food for Shabbos.” “What do you mean by, ‘this week’?” asked Rabbi Heller. “What did you do until this week?” “Until this week,” answered Reb Zalman, “every Friday morning, I would find an envelope placed under my door containing the amount of money I need to buy food for Shabbos. Yet this morning, I checked under my door and there was no envelope! I am therefore left without any money to buy Shabbos food.” While they were conversing, there was another knock at the door. Another pauper walked in; he, too, came to ask for money for Shabbos. He was followed by another pauper and yet another.... They all had the same request: “Rabbi, please provide us with our Shabbos needs.” The wise rabbi deduced that the man who had passed away that week, an individual who everyone had thought to be a miser, was in reality a hidden tzaddik who had performed the mitzvah of tzedakah with utmost secrecy. Every week, Reb Shimon had apparently provided scores of Cracow’s poor with the funds to acquire their Shabbos needs. The rabbi made a public announcement: “I order the entire community to gather in the shul at once!” The rabbi, wrapped in his tallis, ascended the podium, opened the ark, and declared, “We, the people of Cracow, are gathered here today in order

to beg forgiveness from one of the tzaddikim that lived in our midst. His greatness went unnoticed by us; we denigrated him and called him, 'The Miser.' "In the name of the entire community," cried the rabbi, "I hereby beg for total forgiveness from Reb Shimon, who was a righteous and holy Jew!" Years later, when it came time for Rabbi Heller to depart to his Heavenly abode, he requested to be buried next to the tzaddik, Reb Shimon.

Bahndeet Mutterl

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky writes: When I was two years old, I visited My grandfather, Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory, together with my parents. After four years as a widower, my grandfather had recently remarried and my step-grandmother was just getting used to the new family. I entered the apartment and immediately began playing with items that were not meant to be touched. To distract me, my new grandmother called to me. "What is your name?" she asked.

Beaming like a politician with a prepared response, I shouted, "bahn-deet Mutterl!" Mutterl, of course, was a nickname for Mordechai, an affectionate sobriquet that I was called in memory of my great-grandfather. But bahn-deet, a term that in all vernaculars, from Yiddish to English, means bandit, shocked all of the adults. Obviously someone had labeled me a troublemaker right from the onset of my career.

My mother was beet-red, as her new mother-in-law began chiding her upon

the use of derogatory nicknames for children, even in jest.

Before my mother got a chance to defend herself, my grandfather, whose brilliance through the years had earned him the reputation as the great peacemaker and conciliator par excellence, stepped out of his study and declared "it's all my fault."

Everyone looked shocked. In what way was the great sage Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky, responsible for a two-year old child running around and declaring himself a bandit?

"Let me explain," my grandfather began. "Young Mordechai is named for his grandfather Boruch Mordechai Burstein. However, I asked my son to follow my tradition and give only one name, as in Biblical times. That's my opinion, and it is something my daughter-in-law is not accustomed to. The name Boruch was totally left out." The great sage continued.

"I'm sure you are aware of the name Benedict, or even Bendet. Those were Jewish names that were translations of Boruch, just as Wolf was for Zev and Ber was for Dov. Our daughter-in-law was refused the opportunity to name her son Boruch Mordechai, but can we stop her from the affectionate memories she evokes if she calls him Bendet Mutterl?" (www.Torah.org)

Shabbos in Halacha

Wringing and Laundering

3. כיבוס – Laundering

The Prohibition

3. Wringing

It is forbidden mideoraisa to wring out any absorbent fabric for the purpose of cleansing it, because wringing is the final step in the laundering process. We have already seen that even where one does not intend to cleanse the fabric, *wringing* is nevertheless forbidden miderabbanan (by Rabbinic Decree).



Shabbos Ta'am HaChaim: Vayeitzei 5777

Is sponsored לזכר נשמת האשה החשובה מרת חיה אסתר בת ר' משה צבי הלוי אוקוליקא ע"ה לרפואה שלימה and as a zechus ת.נ.צ.ב.ה. חיה דינה חביבה בת שושנה בתוך שאר חולי ישראל.

Sponsorsips \$180.00

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Prepared by Rabbi Binyomin Adler

For sponsorships please call 248-506-0363

To subscribe weekly by email, please email

ShabbosTaamHachaim@gmail.com

View Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim and other Divrei Torah on www.doreishtov.wordpress.com