

# עטרת השבוע

## Ateres HaShavua

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov  
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת ויחי  
ט"ז טבת תשע"ג  
December 29, 2012

Candle Lighting:	4:17
First קריאת שמע זמן:	9:01
Second קריאת שמע זמן:	9:37
First תפלה זמן:	10:00
Second תפלה זמן:	10:24
שקיעה	4:36
Earliest הבדלה:	5:26 (50 minutes)

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### GOING BEYOND

By Yonah Nisanov, 12th grade

In Parshas Vayechi, Yaakov gives brachos to each of his children before he passes away. He even elevates Yosef's two sons, Ephraim and Menashe to the high level of Shevatim. During Yaakov's bracha to Ephraim and Menashe he said, בך יברך "by you shall Israel bless saying, May G-d make you like Ephraim and like Menashe" This is the bracha that is given on Shabbos by the seudah from father to son. The question begs to be asked, why did Yaakov tell the Bnei Yisrael to bless their children to be like Ephraim and Menashe over any of the other Shevatim? If you look at the bracha that is given to the girls on Shabbos, we bless them to be like the four Imahos so wouldn't it make sense to do the same by the boys and bless after the three Avos?

An answer which is given is that Ephraim and Menashe achieved more than their potential. Up until this point, Ephraim and Menashe were not part of the Shevatim as it was only fit for the sons of Yaakov. Since Ephraim and Menashe were not the sons of Yaakov they were not included in the Shevatim. Ephraim and Menashe grew up in one of the worst environments possible! Egypt was one of the worst, yet they still measured up and went beyond their potential. Despite all of the distractions that they had with them they were not only good, but even great like Yaakov's own children. Accordingly fathers bless their children to be like Ephraim and Menashe as they hope they will inspire their children as well to go beyond their potential and accomplish great things.

When a boy is born after eight days, a bris milah is performed. During the ceremony we bless the boy, "May this (name of boy) become a Gadol." From just  
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### TO TELL THE TRUTH

By Gavriel Guttman, 12th grade

פרשת ויחי begins with יעקב realizing that his end is near. As the רד"ק explains, יעקב simply noticed that things were becoming more difficult for him as he continuously lost strength. This realization according to the רד"ק wasn't from some divine inspiration. Rather it is something that most people came to experience towards the end of their lives. After being hit with this realization, the first thing on יעקב's agenda is to assure that he has a proper burial. He calls for יוסף and tells him to swear that he will ensure that יעקב is not buried in מצרים. The exact לשון of the פסוק is "ויאמר לו אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך שים נא ידך תחת ירכי ועשית עמדי חסד ואמת אל נא תקברני מצרים" (מז:כט) "and he said to him, please if I have found favor in your eyes, please place your hand under my thigh and do kindness and truth with me, please do not bury me in Egypt."

Many of the Meforshim focus on the explanation of the words חסד ואמת, what exactly is the act of "kindness" in this circumstance and to the same effect, which aspect of the fulfillment of יעקב's request would be an "act of truth"? Rashi explains that the word אמת is really adding to the word חסד meaning that the חסד that יוסף would be doing for יעקב is a true חסד presumably because there is no שכר בעולם הזה expected in return. This Pshat however is difficult to fit into the words of the פסוק as a "ו" separates אמת from חסד. If the פסוק is to be explained according to Rashi then the פסוק should have said "חסד של אמת". Perhaps due to this difficulty in Rashi the רד"ק gives an alternative Pshat. In fact, he switches the order of the words in his פירושו. He first explains אמת and then חסד. He says that the אמת is the part that יוסף would be fulfilling the inherent obligation to bury his father. The חסד, the so called "extra-curricular" action is the act of carrying יעקב from מצרים to be buried in ארץ כנען. Now although this pshat seems very logical and fits with the implicit basic interpretations of the words חסד and אמת, there still is a major problem. The fact is that יעקב says to

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Yonah Nisanov (continued from page 1)

looking at the words one may say that it looks like we are hoping that the boy grows up and becomes a strong and healthy man. However, it is much deeper than that. When we say becoming a Gadol we mean spiritual greatness "gadlus". We bless the child to become great just as Ephraim and Menashe did. Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky writes that a person should never settle for less. Always strive higher to reach greater heights. Spirituality is like a ladder. If one is not going up then הם ושלום they would be going down. We always need to reach up to greater heights like Ephraim and Menashe did. Every Jewish person's potential is massive and we learn from Ephraim and Menashe that we could even surpass that potential.

Additionally, why is the Bracha given בראכה וכמנשה? Why is Ephraim mentioned first if Menashe was the oldest of the two? In order to understand the answer we need to look at what Ephraim and Menashe were really all about. Ephraim was a Yoshev Ohalim, just like his grandfather Yaakov was. However, Menashe was always by his father's side assisting him and doing whatever his father Yosef asked. Menashe was in a state of nesoyon, always around the Mitzriem. Ephraim did not have the tests that Menashe went through because he did not involve himself in the affairs of Metzriem. They were both elevated to the level of the Shevatim. However, Menashe was elevated through passing all the tests that Hashem presented to him and Ephraim through his intense serving of Hashem through Limud Hatorah, avoiding the tests. When fathers bless their sons to be like Ephraim and Menashe, Ephraim is mentioned first because fathers want their sons not to have to experience the nesyonos that Menashe experienced but rather to be like Ephraim and become elevated through Limud Hatorah. However, we all know that it is not always possible to have a situation where someone could be learning all day. That is why the fathers also bless their sons to be like Menashe, if they cannot be like Ephraim at least we hope for them to be able to pass the nesyonos that Hashem presents to them and to overcome them and reach their full potential as Torah Jews.

Gavriel Guttman (continued from page 1)

do this action first as a חסד and secondly as an act of אמת. But if אמת refers to the basic obligation and חסד to the "extra-curricular" act, then shouldn't אמת be listed first? Generally, being יוצא the עיקר is more important than the לפני משורת הדין and the פסוק should therefore go in order of priority. Why isn't this so?

I believe the answer to this question lies within an explanation that the רלב"ג offers on this פסוק. The רלב"ג explaining the words "אל נא תקברני במצרים" explains that this was so important to יעקב for three reasons. The first reason was that since a person is remembered in the place where he is buried, יעקב wanted to be buried in ארץ כנען because that was where his children would live and thus he would be remembered. Secondly, יעקב didn't want to be connected with the בני ארץ מצרים after death because they were bad people. He strongly desired to be buried with his parents and grandparents who were Tzadikim. Lastly, יעקב wanted to highlight the good qualities of ארץ כנען and to show that people should try to live there. The רלב"ג ascribes motives in the exact order in which I listed them as to why יעקב requested to be buried in ארץ כנען as opposed to מצרים. The first reason and the second reason are both personal requests; he wanted his children to remember him and he didn't want to be associated with מצרים. The last reason given by the רלב"ג was a universal truth that יעקב was trying to give over that ארץ כנען is a good place to live. So since an additional motivating factor behind יעקב's request is fulfillment of his personal needs, יעקב first calls the act a חסד and secondly אמת because his main intention was not only to give over this message of "אמת" - the benefit of ארץ כנען - but also to take care of his personal needs. This can also be seen from the fact that יעקב says "שים נא ירך תחת ירהי" which according to אבן עזר and רמב"ם is a sign of servitude; putting oneself under the control of another. Although there was "אמת" behind all of יעקב's request, the primary portion contained חסד as well, and is therefore placed first.

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The well-fed soldiers, on the other hand, will never be ready to fight. They'll be so disconcerted and worried over any little inconvenience or discomfort that crops up, that they won't be able to concentrate on the battle.

In short: The pleased soldier has no peace of mind. He changes מצבים constantly. Every little thing throws him off so that he never functions. He is worried about everything except for his goal. The well-trained soldier has one מצב only. He is fighting for his king and his country. Period. Hunger, pain and weariness don't budge him one inch.

That, says Rav Yerucham, is מנוחה. The peace of mind and tranquility of spirit to remain focused on one's goal. The ability to embark on a path and never waver. You shoulder your pack and march steadily on.

טוב realized that to attain the pleasure of a Torah life you need מנוחה -the stability and tranquility to stay the course regardless of the situation.

to attain this מנוחה he bent his shoulder to bear the yoke of Torah. He focused on his goal. He established the one overriding מצב from which nothing could sway him. This מנוחה let him enjoy כי נעמה. This is the מקום התענוג האמיתי the -עולם הבא מנוחה. This is the וקראת לשבת עונג of מנוחה.

With this explanation of מנוחה we can now reconcile the statement that עולם הבא is שבת ומנוחה and our principle that Torah requires מנוחה, with the statement of חז"ל that עולם הזה ולא בעולם הבא that Torah scholars do not have מנוחה in either this world or the next. We will also answer our original questions of how כלל ישראל are an עם מדשני עונג, and why that is our connection to the מנוחה of Shabbos.

On one level, מנוחה is the cessation of activity. On this level the מנוחה שבת is the rest it provides from the struggles of the week.

But, as we explained, true מנוחה is the peace of mind to pursue לימוד התורה and spiritual growth. It is an active מנוחה, not a passive מנוחה.

In עולם הבא, the *Maharsha* explains, Torah scholars have the מנוחה, the peace from worldly burdens, to go from strength to strength with the מנוחה of מנוחה -אין להם מנוחה the tranquility of spiritual activity and growth in closeness to Hashem.

This is why we are an עם מדשני עונג. We have the ability to transcend all our worldly burdens and difficulties, and in all situations immerse ourselves in the one מצב of serving Hashem. Throughout the darkest periods of our history we sustained ourselves with the נא of והערב. We know the laws of economics and we know that true pleasure and fulfillment come from לימוד התורה. We saturate ourselves with this true עונג all week long. We can therefore fully appreciate the peacefulness of Shabbos when we have the מנוחה to pursue the מנוחה of מנוחה, אין להם מנוחה, that we shall be fortunate enough to merit in the שבת ומנוחה.

## Thoughts On The Haftorah

By Ari Halpern

This week's haftorah tells of Dovid HaMelech relaying his last requests to his heir, Shlomo, before his death. He tells Shlomo that he must seek retribution from two people who committed terrible wrongs: Yoav ben Tzruyah and Shimmi ben Geira. When relating this message, Dovid uses a slightly different terminology when he tells Shlomo to dispense justice to Yoav than he uses when he refers to Shimmi. He tells Shlomo to "bring Yoav to his grave," whereas, by Shimmi, he is told to "bring Shimmi's blood to his grave." Why is there a mention of blood by Shimmi, but not by Yoav?

The Rinas Yitzchak explains that in order to understand the change in language we must first examine the crimes that the two men perpetrated. Yoav, the general of Dovid's army, killed two people in cold blood, and also defied Dovid's commands, the sin of Moraid Bi'Malchus. Shimmi openly rebuked Dovid and, during the civil war between Dovid and his son, Avshalom, he sided with Avshalom for a period of time – another example of Moraid Bi'Malchus.

Murder, a crime against HaShem, that was committed solely by Yoav, is punishable by death. Morid Bi'Malchus, a crime that was perpetrated by both individuals, is a crime solely against the king. In other words, the king has the power to either pardon the individual or punish him, up to, and including, the death penalty. A person who has been Moraid Bi'Malchus, although technically liable to the death penalty, may still be left alive. That is why Shimmy, who was Moraid Bi'Malchus, was to have his blood brought to his grave – he was a live person who still has blood. On the other hand, Yoav, who committed murder, was unconditionally liable for death and, due to this, was not considered to have blood. He was, as inmates on Death Row are described, a "Dead Man Walking."

מקדש השבת ומברך שביעי ומניח בקדשה לעם מדשני ענג (ברכת מעין שבע)

It's Friday night. The tranquility of Shabbos descends on Hashem's nation as they congregate in their shuls to accept the sanctity of Shabbos and the blessings of the seventh day. They praise and thank Hashem for His beneficence in bestowing upon them the מתנה טובה from his treasure house, the great gift of Shabbos.

Every day of the week has its partner. ערב שבת has מיישי רביעי. יום שני has יום ראשון. Shabbos? Who can be a fitting partner for this holiest of days? Only those who will remember this day to keep it holy. The Jewish nation is the partner for Shabbos. The עם קדוש and the יום קדוש.

What descriptive title can characterize and encapsulate the essence of this nation who throughout their tempestuous and turbulent history staunchly upheld the holiness of Shabbos, because who more than they could truly appreciate the relief and elevation that the Shabbos brings to a nation whose week has been embattled by the mundane and embittered by the profane? -a scattered nation? עם מפורד ומפורד - עם שרדיי חרב - a persecuted nation? גוי קו ומבוסה - a downtrodden nation? Not us. Every Friday night we thank Hashem for granting the מנוחה שבת to the עם מדשני ענג - the nation suffused and saturated with pleasure. Through the millennia of privation and pogroms, expulsion and exile; bursting and overflowing with pleasure. How can we even begin to understand this?

Further, even if the distillation of our experiences somehow contains a suffusion of ענג why is it this aspect of our lives that is used to connect us with the מנוחה of Shabbos? Isn't our eager anticipation each week for the arrival of Shabbos because of the respite it offer s us from the ששה עשר העבד? Isn't the sleep of the worker pleasant, as *Shlomo Hamelech* said, because can מנוחה really be appreciated by one who is always filled with ענג?

In *Yaakov Avinu's* bracha to שבט יששכר it says וירא מנוחה כי טוב ואת הארץ כי נעמה ויש שכמו לסבול ויש שכר. יששכר says that tranquility was good and that the land was pleasant so he bent his shoulder to bear a burden. At first glance this is very difficult to understand. For one who has discovered how good peace and tranquility are, and is seeking to enjoy the pleasantness of the land, carrying a burden does not seem to be the best way to attain this. Wouldn't a life of leisure and luxury be much more suitable to achieve the goal of מנוחה?

In economics there is a principle known as the law of diminishing returns. This law states that the enjoyment and pleasure that is derived from a product or experience diminishes with each successive use. It is because of this law that companies are always changing and updating their products and are spending fortunes on advertising, packaging, and presentation. It is because of this law that we are constantly being bombarded with new and improved, and the absolutely latest breakthrough in potato chip technology.

The אור החיים הקדוש explains this phenomenon. If a person will honestly analyze all the physical pleasures of this world he will realize that their enjoyment comes primarily from the delightful pictures he has painted in his imagination, and in his anticipation of their fulfillment. Once he actually indulges his desire, let's say, by way of example, for food and drink, not only is he no longer attracted by that same piece of cake that moments earlier had looked so appealing and enticing, but he is repulsed by it. How often have we heard from someone who has just indulged in a gluttonous feast, the words 'I don't think I'll be able to look at another piece of food for a week'?

This says the אור החיים הקדוש, is because it is the person's need for fulfillment that creates the attraction, not the intrinsic pleasurable of the object of his desire. This attraction is necessary so that a person should not neglect his physical well-being, but pursuing worldly pleasures to excess as a means of fulfillment results in a sense of emptiness, despair and diminishing returns. Physical pleasures do not bring ענג and מנוחה - if they were really that good on their own, the manufacturers could sell them in a plain brown wrapper.

True enjoyment and fulfillment come from the pursuit of spiritual goals which bring a person to עולם הבא, a time of eternal tranquility. It was in order to attain this goal that Rav Yerucham shouldered the burden of Torah, because Torah is a commodity which yields increasing returns.

This explains וראת הארץ כי נעמה, that the true pleasures of the land are its spiritual ones and are worth shouldering a burden for. But where is the מנוחה?

Rav Yerucham Levovitz of Mir explains with a משל. Soldiers in an army must be fit and ready for battle. The most elite troops, the Special Forces, doubly so. How are they trained and made ready for war? Well, you wake them up in the middle of the night for a twenty-mile hike. You subject them to the most inhumane and torturous conditions. You drag them through cold, heat, and rain. You deprive them of sleep, and feed them rations that are barely edible. Why? Wouldn't it make more sense to feed them well, let them rest and relax in comfort, and save their strength for the heat of the battle?

No, says Rav Yerucham. The bone-tired, weary, wet and hungry soldier is the one who is ready to fight. Changing מצבים (circumstances or situations) won't faze him. The harsh realities of war, of life in the trenches, won't send him into panic. He has been trained to function under all conditions.

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