

One may even be ignorant of the mere existence of certain *misvot*. Thus, in addition to *bitul Torah*, one will be confronted with many other *bitulim* – instances of neglect. On the other hand, for the one who toils in Torah, Hashem will have ample reward, not only for the *misvah* of studying itself, but also for the proper fulfillment of many *misvot*. (*Vedibarta Bam*)

A Nod of Approval

Once on an intercity bus ride toward Jerusalem, I noticed a highly respected *rosh mesivta* and *maggid shiur* making a request of the bus driver. “It is now 2:15 P.M. At exactly 3:00 I have to give a class to some boys, at a yeshivah right near the entrance to Jerusalem. If I go with you all the way to the Central Bus Station and then go back to the yeshivah, I’m afraid that I will be late to the class and I will cause my students to lose valuable time from their Torah study. So could you please stop first at the bus stop right at the entrance to Jerusalem so that I can go straight to the yeshivah and start the class on time?”

The driver, however, answered, “I’m sorry, sir. There are no stops between here and the Central Bus Station.”

“But it’s on the way. You won’t have to do anything other than stop for a moment to let me off,” the *rosh mesivta* pleaded. “Listen,” he tried a different tactic, “do it for the sake of the Torah, and may this merit help you and protect you. Please.”

“Sir,” the driver said emphatically, “will you please be seated.”

The *rosh mesivta* went back to his seat, sat down and in moments was deep in a *sefer*. He had made every effort he could, and whatever would be would be. You could see on his face that he had decided that it would be a waste to spend another moment of thought on the subject.

For my part, I wondered who was right. On the one hand, I understood the driver. He had to follow procedures faithfully, and couldn’t make changes for every passenger, no matter how spiritually motivated the request might be. On the other hand, my heart contracted to see the distinguished, honorable Rabbi defeated.

But there was no point dwelling on the issue. The driver had stood his ground and the *rosh mesivta* was deep in his *sefer*. The argument was over.

A few minutes later I was witness to the end of the story. If I hadn’t seen it myself, I would never have believed it.

At the entrance to Jerusalem, right in front of the bus stop where the Rabbi had wanted to get off, the bus crashed into the back of another bus which had stopped short in front of it. With a startlingly loud noise, the windshield of our bus cracked as we braked to a sudden stop.

The driver immediately opened both front and back doors and the passengers, a bit flustered, got off, each heading in his own direction. It was a few minutes before 3:00 P.M. The Rabbi gathered his books and strode briskly to the yeshivah to begin his class on time. (There is no Such Thing as Coincidence)

The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בַּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

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שַׁבַּת בְּהַר-בְּהֻקוֹתַי * שַׁבַּת בְּהַר-בְּהֻקוֹתַי

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 16:19 - 17:14

MAY 15-16, 2020 22 IYAR 5780

Candlelighting: 7:47 pm

Shabbat ends: 8:46 pm (R"Y 9:18 pm)

See enclosed sheet for full Shabbat schedule

This bulletin is dedicated by the Betesh family
in loving memory of Sharon Betesh לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת שְׂרוֹן בַּת שָׂרָה

This bulletin is dedicated by Mitchell & Robin Antar
in memory of Rose Antar לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת רוֹז בַּת אֶסְתֵּר

A Message from our Rabbi

”וְנָתַתִּי גֶשֶׁמִּיכֶם בְּעֵתָם”

“Then I will provide your rains in their time.” (*Vayikra* 26:4)

It says in *Parashat Behukotai* that as a result of our observing His *misvot*, Hashem will give us our rain in the right time. It is interesting that the Torah calls the rain “our” rain. But, isn’t the whole world Hashem’s? In the previous *perashah* Hashem says, “For the land is Mine!” (25:23)

The truth is the whole world belongs to Hashem, but the rain is ours. It’s ours even before it comes down, because all the rain that falls is for the sake of Israel.

It says in the *perashah*, “I will turn to you” (26:9). *Rashi* explains, “I will turn away from all of My concerns in order to pay your reward.” It’s an amazing statement, that Hashem says He will turn away from everything He does in order to fulfill our blessings. Why is this? The answer is that the Jewish people are the purpose of the entire universe. All of the suns, all of the heavens, all of the angels, all of these for the crown of creation, the Jewish people. Hashem’s goal is to give us abundant wheat, until we are overloaded with wheat. The entire world is for this.

Rain on time is not reward for our *misvot*. The rain on time is a reflection of the world running in the correct way. The world runs properly through the observance of *misvot*. This is the world in order.

Even though the Jewish people are very few compared to the population of the world, which seems to say that we are not really so important, that is if you view the

world with physical eyes. However, when the eyes see correctly, they see that this is the order of the world.

I think we can all agree that the world is more in disorder than in all of history. How can we put it back in order? Many people say an effective vaccine will do it. Will it? Only our *misvot* can do it. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

True Value

Immediately after the *Tochechah* (rebuke), the Torah continues with the section of *Arachin*. Every person has a certain set value (based on his or her age range and gender). A person can donate his “*Erech*” (value) to the *Bet HaMikdash*. An entire section in the Torah and a whole Tractate in the *Talmud* are devoted to these laws.

Why does the section of *Arachin* follow the section of the *Tochechah*? It is somewhat of an anti-climactic ending to *Parashat Behukotai*. However, *Parashat Behukotai*, with the dramatic *Tochechah* that should literally send shivers down a person’s back – especially with our knowledge of the hindsight of history – ends with this very technical section of the laws of evaluations.

The Nazis, *yemach shemam* (may their name be blotted out) had a sinister habit when they came into a town and rounded up the Jews. They wanted to first humiliate the Jews. It was not bad enough to cart them off and kill them; they first humiliated them before sending them to their deaths.

They would take the primary Rabbinic figure in town and pick on him and humiliate him. When they came to the village in which the Klausenberger Rebbe, zt”l, (who survived the war) lived, they brought him into the town square and gathered all the people. The Nazi guard threw him down to the ground and kicked him. The Nazi then sneeringly said to him, “So, you still think that you are the Chosen People?” The Klausenberger responded “Yes.” Then the Nazi guard hit him with the butt of the rifle. He repeated his question, “You still think you are the Chosen People?” The Klausenberger Rebbe again responded, “Yes.”

The Nazi said, “You stupid Jew! How could you say that? How could you say you are the Chosen People? Look what I am doing to you.” The Klausenberger Rebbe told the Nazi guard, “As long as we are not kicking and beating innocent people we are the Chosen People and you are not!” This means – even when a person is degraded physically, emotionally, and psychologically, he can still maintain his sense of humanity and his sense of dignity. Such a person is still a member of the Chosen People.

The Kotzker Rebbe explained that the reason why the laws of *Arachin* follow the section of the *Tochacha* is that the Torah is trying to teach us that a person always has an “*Erech*”; come what may, even after the greatest degradation and the greatest humiliation – nevertheless, a person has an *Erech-Atzmi* [a personal value]. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

A Separate Peace

This week the Torah bestows its promise of blessing and peace to those who follow in the path of Torah. *Rashi* is bothered by the seeming redundancy of walking in statutes, and heeding commands. He explains that “walk in my statutes” refers to arduous Torah study, and “heed my commandments” refers to keeping the *misvot*.

And then there is peace. Hashem promises that if we adhere to the directives, “I will bring peace to the land.” In the same verse, the Torah also tells us that “a sword will not pass through your land.” If there is peace, then obviously a sword will not pass through. What is the meaning of the redundancy? Once again, *Rashi* explains that the

“sword passing through” is referring to a sword that is not directed against our people; rather it is a sword that is passing through on the way to another country. Thus the two types of peace.

But maybe there is a different type of peace; one that does not refer to guns and ammunition, but rather to a peace that is on another level.

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein of B’nei Berak tells the story of Rav Eliezer Shach, the Ponovezer Rosh Yeshiva, of blessed memory.

Rav Shach once entered a shul and sat down in a seat towards the back, and, while waiting for the minyan to begin, Rav Shach began to study Torah. Suddenly a man approached him, hands on his hips, and began shouting at him.

“Don’t you know that you are sitting in my seat?” the irate man yelled. “Who are you to come here and just sit down, without asking anyone permission?”

Rav Shach quickly stood up and embraced the man. He hugged him lovingly as he begged the man for forgiveness. He agreed to the irate man’s every point.

“I am so sorry for taking your seat even if it was for a few moments,” he pleaded. Please forgive me. I must have absent-mindedly sat down there. Please forgive me.”

The man was taken aback at the *Rosh Yeshiva*’s humility, and immediately apologized for his rude behavior.

“After the prayers, students of Rav Shach approached him and asked why he so readily accepted blame and begged forgiveness for what surely was not a misdeed. After all, why should he not be able to sit down in the seat. Rav Shach explained, “If Torah is all that one aspires to have, then everything else in this world, all the items one would normally squabble about have no significance. When one is immersed in Torah, a seat is meaningless, a place is meaningless. Surely a material object is not worth getting upset over, surely no less are they worth fighting over. Why shouldn’t I apologize?”

The Torah tells us a secret to peace in our community. If we toil in Torah, there will be peace in the land. The Torah is telling us that if we immerse ourselves in Torah then all the temporal objects that are the fulcrum of most fights are meaningless.

We think of peace as a concept that occurs between nations. However, we often forget that what we need is peace within our own community. A separate peace. (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky)

Ethics of the Fathers

It is customary to study *Pirkei Abot* (Ethics of the Fathers) during the six weeks between Pesah and Shabuot, one chapter every Shabbat.

וְיָאֵם בְּטִלְתָּ מִן הַתּוֹרָה, יֵשׁ לְךָ בְּטָלִים הַרְבֵּה כְּפִגְדָּךְ

“If you should neglect the [study of Torah] you will have many causes for neglecting [it] confronting you.” (*Abot* 4:10)

The word “*kenegdecha*” – “confronting you” – is superfluous?

Rabbi Meir is advising man to minimize his business activities and engage in Torah. The common excuse for not doing so is “I have no free time to give up.” Therefore Rabbi Meir says, if you are neglecting Torah study with the excuse that your business keeps you extremely busy, remember that you waste time for your personal pleasures which are “*kenegdecha*” – “against you.” They are proof that you have time when you want it. Examine yourself honestly, and you will indeed see that you waste much time for unnecessary pleasures. And if so, there is no excuse that you cannot take off time from your busy schedule for the study of Torah.

Alternatively, through neglecting Torah study, one will not only lack the *misvah* of learning Torah, but also not know the proper methods of observance for many *misvot*.