

SHABBOS AND THE OPENING OF THE WELLS

by Rabbi Binyomin Adler

Introduction

In this week's parashah the Torah relates how Yitzchak dug wells and the shepherds of Gerar quarreled with the shepherds of Yitzchak regarding the wells. The Ramban (Bereishis 26:20) writes that the Torah relates the episode of the wells that Yitzchak dug to allude to the Bais HaMikdash. The first well was called Esek, strife and struggle, as this alludes to the first Bais HaMikdash that was destroyed by the Babylonians, and the second well was called sitnah, hatred, as this name alludes to the second Bais HaMikdash that was destroyed by the Romans. The third well, however, was called Rechovos, expansion, and this name alludes to the third Bais HaMikdash that HaShem Himself will build and there will not be any quarrel or strife involved in the building of the third Bais HaMikdash. Drinking water and drawing the Divine Spirit

One must wonder, though, why the Torah chose to hint to the building of the Bais HaMikdash specifically in the section that discusses Yitzchak's struggles with the Plishtim. Furthermore, regarding the well that Yaakov encounters prior to marrying Rachel, the Ramban (Ibid 29:2) writes based on the Medrash (Bereishis Rabbah 70:8) that the three flocks of sheep alludes to the three festivals when the Jewish People make the pilgrimage to the Bais HaMikdash. The flocks drinking the water allude to the drawing of Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit that was manifested in the Bais HaMikdash. There also we must understand why the Torah chose to allude to the Bais HaMikdash with an apparently mundane episode of sheep drinking water.

The gates are open on Shabbos and one can enter those gates with preparation

It is said (Yechezkel 46:1) *ko amar HaShem Elokim shaar hechatzer hapinimis haponeh kadim yihyeh sagur sheishes yimei hamaaseh uvayom haShabbos yipaseiach uvayom hachodesh yipaseiach*, thus said the Lord/Elokim: "The gate of the inner courtyard that faces eastward shall be closed during the six days of labor, but on the Shabbos day it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened." The Sfas Emes (Toldos 5643) writes that the Mishna (Avos 5:6) states that the mouth of the well was created on Erev Shabbos. The explanation of this is that Shabbos is the well and HaShem allows a Jew to prepare for Shabbos prior to Shabbos. In this way one can connect the days of the week with Shabbos. Thus, writes the Sfas Emes, according to the manner that one aspires to receive the Shabbos with joy, HaShem will show him the correct path to enter into Shabbos.

Shabbos and Yom Tov are times of extra spirituality

The Sfas Emes (Noach 5647) writes further that Shabbos and Yom Tov are the times when the gates of heaven are opened for an extra infusion of spirituality and it is at these times that one can ascend to greater spiritual heights. We can now understand why the Medrash and the Ramban write that the opening of the wells alludes to the festivals because it was specifically on the festivals that the Jewish People witnessed in the Bais HaMikdash the revelation of HaShem in all His glory. This revelation allowed them to draw from the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit.

The Shabbos connection

We have mentioned that on Shabbos one can actually experience the well of water, which is a metaphor to an increase in spiritual influence in our lives. One must recognize that Shabbos is a well of fresh water that can literally bring the soul back to life. Throughout the week we are engaged in Torah study and performance of mitzvos. Nonetheless, our study of Torah and performance of mitzvos on Shabbos is akin to a man in a desert who discovers an oasis. He may have been drinking water from his canteen but the oasis is on a different plane. Similarly, Shabbos is on a different level than the rest of the week, and it is the Holy Shabbos that provides the spirituality for the rest of the week. Hashem should allow us to recognize the holiness of Shabbos and to prepare for the Shabbos properly so we can drink from its spiritual waters.

Shabbos in the Zemiros Menuchah Visimchah Composed by an unknown author named Moshe
Shabbos: A day of desire

Yom Shabbason yom machmadim, on this day of Shabbos, day of delights. The Baal HaTurim (Bereishis 2:2) writes that it is said vayechal Elokim bayom hashevii, by the seventh day G-d completed His work. The Targum Yerushalmi renders the word vayechal to mean vichamad, and He desired. It is for this reason, writes the Baal HaTurim that we recite in the Shabbos Shemone Esrei the words chemdas yamim oso karasa, 'Most coveted of days' You called it. It is noteworthy that in addition to Shabbos being the most coveted of days, HaShem fashioned clothing for Adam and Chava on Friday and these clothes were referred to as the bigdei chamudos, the precious garments (Bereishis 27:15 and Rashi Ibid). One reason they were given this name is because Esav coveted these vestments from Nimrod. Yaakov disguised himself as Esav by wearing these garments and Yitzchak gave Yaakov the blessings. It would seem, then, that when one desires blessing, he actively demonstrates his desire for the blessing. Thus, Shabbos is referred to as a day of desire, because we desire the blessing that comes through Shabbos.

Shabbos in Tefillah

Making HaShem's Name known on earth

Vizichricho malkeinu yispaar bashamayim mimaala vial haaretz mitachas, and may Your remembrance, Our King, be glorified in the heaven above and upon the earth below. The Medrash

(Bereishis Rabbah 59:8) states that Avraham told Eliezer that initially HaShem was only the G-d of the heavens as His Name was not yet known amongst the people. Now, however, Avraham had made HaShem's Name known amongst people, so HaShem had become the G-d of the heaven and the earth. In a similar vein, we declare here that HaShem's Name and remembrance should be known in the heavens and in the earth. One must talk to people about HaShem and His wonders so that His Name will be known throughout the land.

Shabbos Story

Kosher for now, kosher for eternity

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky writes: This past summer 30,000 Boy Scouts joined together in Virginia for a national Boy Scout Jamboree. Among the myriad groups of scouts who attend this event that occurs every four years are many Jewish Scouts as well. Mike Paretsky, a Vice Chairman of the GNYC Jewish Committee on scouting, was the kosher food liaison to the jamboree. Special food was ordered from O'Fishel caterers of Baltimore, so that the Jewish scouts would be able to nourish their bodies as well. One of the scoutmasters, a Jewish man, caught a glimpse of the kosher offerings. He had never eaten a kosher meal in his life, yet when he saw the special meals, something stirred. He and his troops were being served pork-this and bacon-that for breakfast, lunch and supper, and all of a sudden this man decided he was sick of the monotonous treif stuff. He wanted to eat kosher. Scoutmaster Paretsky gladly let him partake in a meal, but that was not enough for the fellow. The man decided to keep kosher during the entire jamboree!

Mr. Paretsky agreed to accommodate the neophyte kosherphile, but a skeptic approached him. "Mike," he said, "why are you wasting your kosher food on this fellow? He is not going to eat kosher after this is over, and he observes absolutely nothing! Why waste the food on him?"

Mike answered with an amazing story of the Chofetz Chaim. When Russian soldiers entered the town of Radin, Jewish townsfolk prepared kosher meals for the Jewish soldiers in the Czar's army. Soon their acts of charity seemed to fly in their face as they saw the soldiers devour the food and then stand on line to receive the forbidden Russian rations. When they complained to the Chofetz Chaim and threatened to stop preparing kosher food, he reflected with an insight that must be passed on to generations.

"Every mitzvah that a Jew does, every good deed and every bit of kosher that he eats is not a fleeting act. It is an eternity. No matter what precedes or ensues, we must cherish each proper action of a Jew." [Reprinted with permission from Torah.org]

Shabbos in Navi Shmuel I Chapter 18

On Shabbos we are satisfied with our portion

In this chapter we learn of Dovid becoming successful and popular amongst the Jewish People, and

Shaul becoming intimidated by Dovid. Shaul then decided that he would not kill Dovid directly. Rather, Shaul would have Dovid wage war with the Plishtim and Dovid would be killed by the Plishtim. Shaul had his servants tell Dovid that in lieu of a dowry, Dovid would have to kill one hundred Plishtim and then Dovid could have the hand of Shaul's daughter in marriage. Dovid and his men proceeded to kill two hundred Plishtim and Shaul gave Dovid his daughter Michal as a wife. The episodes involving Shaul and Dovid are a lesson for all of us. One has to be satisfied with the portion in life that HaShem has given him and not be jealous of other people's accomplishments. Shabbos is a time when we are all equal in our portion, as the entire day of Shabbos is a gift from HaShem. Thus, we should focus on being satisfied with what we have, as we say in the Shabbos Shemone Esrei *sabeinu mituvecho visamcheinu bishuasecho vitaheir libeinu liovdecho biemes*, satisfy us from Your goodness and gladden our souls with Your salvation, and purify our hearts to serve You sincerely. Once we are satisfied with our portion we will be able to help others to become satisfied with their portion.

Shabbos in Agadah

Shabbos is a field of holiness

It is said (Shir HaShirim 7:12) *lecho dodi neitzei hasadeh*, come, My beloved, let us go to the fields. The Pinei Menachem writes that the Arizal explains this verse to mean that on Shabbos, the wilderness is transformed into a field. A wilderness is an ownerless area. The Zohar states that there are fields and there are fields. There is a field that all the blessings and holiness resides within that field, as it is said (Bereishis 27:27) *kireiach hasadeh asher beiracho HaShem*, like the fragrance of a field which HaShem has blessed. This field is the field of Shabbos and the field of the Bais HaMikdash.

Shabbos in Halacha

Summary

One who removed a pot from the blech prior to Shabbos and intended on returning it and forgot to do so is allowed to return it on Shabbos, as long as the food was completely cooked and is still warm.

One who removed a pot from the blech on Shabbos and set it down or intended not to return the pot, bidieved he is allowed to return the pot to the blech if it is completely cooked and still warm. In a situation of great necessity, this would be allowed even if it was set down and one intended not to return it.

If the fire under the pot of fully cooked food was extinguished, one can transfer the pot to a different blech while it is warm.

If one removed the wrong pot from the blech, he will be allowed to return it, even if he set it down and intended not to return it, provided that the food is fully cooked and is still warm.

Text Copyright © 2008 by Binyomin Adler and **Torah.org**