

Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim

Toldos 5777

Shabbos and the Opening of the Wells

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

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.)

תּוֹצְאוֹתֶיהָ הַמְשִׁים שְׁעָרֵי בִּינָה. אֲמוּנִים נוֹצֵר יְ-הוּ-וְ-הוּ-וְ-הוּ, its overflows are fifty gates of understanding – faithful ones are guarded by HaShem. The simple reading of the words אֲמוּנִים נוֹצֵר יְ-הוּ-וְ-הוּ is that HaShem guards the faithful ones. We can suggest an alternative interpretation, as the word אֲמָן, besides meaning faith, also means to cultivate. Thus, we are saying that faith needs to be cultivated, and the word נוֹצֵר here means to observe the growth of faith, like one preserves and guards the cultivation of a tree.

Shabbos Stories

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-that 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 townfolk 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." (www.Torah.org)

Shabbos in Halacha

Wringing and Laundering

3. כִּיבוּס – Laundering

The Prohibition

2. Scrubbing

It is forbidden mideoraisa (by Torah Prohibition) to scrub any wet fabric or to rub two parts of the fabric against each other.

This stage of laundering is forbidden with the use of all materials, whether absorbent or not. Thus, although one is permitted to wet a plastic tablecloth, one may not scrub it while wet (neither with one's hands nor with an implement).

With plastic, one is allowed to brush lightly to loosen dirt; the prohibition is to rub forcefully. However, with absorbent fabric, one is prohibited even

from rubbing lightly. [Note: this prohibition applies only to soft materials, not to hard surfaces such as wood.]



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