

Shabbos: Ta'am HaChaim

Pinchas 5784

A Glimpse of Redemption

Introduction

(This was written in 5768.) The period referred to as Bain Hametzarim, the Three Weeks, is almost upon us, and it is worth our while to reflect on our current situation. This week we heard about the Israeli and terrorist group prisoner swap, where the Israelis received the bodies of two soldiers who were killed al Kiddush HaShem, sanctifying G-d's Name, while the terrorists received in exchange live murderers with Jewish blood on their hands. Although I normally refrain from using current events and politics as a springboard for insights in the weekly Torah portion, it is noteworthy what the terrorist declared when he reached his safe haven in Lebanon. According to news reports, the terrorist announced, "I return today from Palestine, but believe me, I return to Lebanon only in order to return to Palestine."

Returning to Eretz Yisroel

Leaving aside the intent of this murderer's words, let us focus on how this statement can be applied to us. We have been in exile for almost two thousand years. Every day in our prayers we declare that we wish to return to Eretz Yisroel. What does it mean to return to Eretz Yisroel? Are we saying that we wish to live a life completely according to the Torah, or are we merely engaging in some form of nostalgia? Every individual must decide for themselves what returning to Eretz Yisroel means, but there is one thing that we can all agree upon. The idea that we are all still in exile is a fact that no one can dispute. The Gemara (Kesubos 111a) states that the Jewish People are cautioned from ascending to Eretz Yisroel in a forceful manner. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon every Jew to anticipate the arrival of Moshiach and yearn for the day when we will all return to the Land that HaShem promised to our forefathers. Thus, we should also declare, "we have left Eretz Yisroel to reside in the exile, against our will, but believe me, I am only

in the exile in order to return to Eretz Yisroel.”

The Mitzvah of Seeking out the Bais HaMikdash

The Ramban (Parashas Korach) is of the opinion that there is a biblical commandment to seek out the construction of the Bais HaMikdash. Are we seeking to reach the point where we can be confident that the Bais HaMikdash will be rebuilt? Fortunately, we have an opportunity every week to taste a semblance of the redemption and this occurs on the Holy Day of Shabbos.

The Messianic Era is to Study Torah

The Rambam (Hilchos Melachim 12:4) writes that the sages and the prophets did not desire the Messianic Era for the purpose of dominating the nations of the world or for the purpose of eating and drinking and being merry. Rather, they desired the Messianic Era so that we should be free from oppression and thus we will be able to study HaShem’s Torah and thereby merit a portion in the World to Come.

The Shabbos Connection

Shabbos is a day when we rest from our labor and toil of the week and we have the opportunity to engage in praying to HaShem and studying His Holy Torah. The Gemara (Shabbos 118b) states that were the Jewish People to observe two Shabbosos properly, they would be redeemed immediately. We have the opportunity, this Shabbos, to observe the Shabbos as an entire nation. If we will all observe the Shabbos properly, we will not need the reminder of the Three Weeks and Tisha Baav to remind us that we are still in exile, longing to return to Eretz Yisroel. May we see today the fulfillment of the verse that states (Yeshaya 52:8) kol tzofayich nasu kol yachdav yiraneinu ki ayin biayin yiru bishuv HaShem Tziyon, the voice of your lookouts, they raise their voice, they sing glad song in unison; with their own eyes they will see that HaShem returns to Tziyon.

Shabbos in the Zemiros

Shimru Shabsosai

The composer of this zemer is Shlomo, a name formed by the

acrostic of the first four stanzas. Nothing definite is known about him, although some speculate that he was the famous Shlomo ben Yehudah ibn Gabriol. The zemer concentrates on the requirement to honor the Shabbos with culinary delights and closes with the assurance that the observance of the Shabbos will herald the final Redemption.

ישוררו שם רבני, לויי וכהני, ואז תתענג על י-ה-ו-ה
ה, there my singers will exult,
my Levites and Priests, and
then you shall take pleasure
with HaShem. The Sages
constantly exhort us to refrain
from construction of the Bais
HaMikdash on Shabbos. We
learn from this that the holiness
of the Bais HaMikdash is akin to
the holiness of Shabbos.
Perhaps this is the message of
this passage, that when the Bais
HaMikdash is rebuilt, there we
will take pleasure with HaShem,
similar to what it said regarding
Shabbos (Yeshaya 58:14) ואז
תתענג על י-ה-ו-ה, then you will
delight in HaShem.

Shabbos Stories

The Heilege Rebbe, The Rebbe Reb Melech from Lizhensk

The Sabba Kaddisha of Radoshitz, in his sefer, Niflaos (vol. 1, pp. 21- 22), recorded an amazing story about the formulation of this "Prayer before Praying." The story goes like this: When he was a child, the Sabba Kaddisha was once visiting Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. He was conversing with chassidim from the Rebbe's inner circle in front of the Rebbe's home when several extremely tall men came and hurried into the house. When they reached the doorway, they had to stoop down to enter since they were so unusually tall.

The holy Rebbe closed the door behind them before the chassidim could catch a glimpse of their faces. They waited outside until the visitors left to see if they could recognize them. Again the chassidim were astonished when the men left. They did so in such a hurry that they could not make out the men's features and just saw their backs; they left so fast they almost vanished. The

chassidim realized that something unusual had just taken place, and they decided to investigate and find out what had occurred. The elder chassidim among them approached the Rebbe and asked him to explain the strange incident.

This is what the Rebbe told them: "When I realized that most people cannot concentrate properly on their prayers anymore due to the awesome burdens of earning a livelihood, and they lack the time and the understanding to concentrate fully, I decided to rewrite the standard formula for the prayers. I would write a new, short and concise version that would be equally understood and grasped by everyone. The holy Members of the Great Assembly, the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah (the original authors of the standard prayers from the time of the Talmud), realized what I intended. They came here to ask me not to change even one prayer from their established formula. I took their counsel and discussed the matter with them. They advised me to establish a prayer to pray before the formal prayer service. This would help anyone who lacks the concentration and

proper devotions that are necessary for all formal prayers." This "prayer before prayers" is the Yehi Ratzon prayer printed in many siddurim in the name of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. [Reprinted from a Free Download from the book "Mipeninei Noam Elimelech" translated and compiled by Tal Moshe Zwecker by permission from Targum Press, Inc.]

There is a story told of the Rebbe's brother the Rebbe Reb Zisha of Hanipoli. After Rebbe Elimelech passed away he was approached by his brother's students to be their new leader. Rabbi Zisha declined and explained his reason with a parable. "The possuk in Bereishis 2:10 states "And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden and from there it split into four paths." The Torah is eternal and alludes to all events above and below for all generations. Eden alludes to our holy master the Baal Shem Tov. The river was his student the holy Mezritcher Maggid. The garden refers to my brother the Rebbe Elimelech. This then is the meaning: a river flows from Eden to water the garden, the Torah flows as water from the Baal Shem Tov by way of the

Mezritcher Maggid to the Rebbe Elimelech. From there it separates into four paths: they are 1. The Holy Rebbe the Chozeh or Seer of Lublin. 2. The Holy Rebbe Avodas Yisrael the Koznitzer Maggid. 3. The Holy Rebbe Mendel Rimanover and 4. The Holy Ohev Yisrael the Apta Rav. You need no Rebbe other than them.”

Don't Slander Anyone, Even Yourself

The pious and humble Tzadik, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan of Radin, known as the Chofetz Chaim, was once riding a train to Radin. He wore a simple cap and traveled alone, and hardly anyone knew who he was. A middle-aged Jew sat down beside him and asked him where he was going. The Chofetz Chaim answered softly, “to Radin.”

The man was excited. “Do you know the saintly Chofetz Chaim? I am going to Radin just to see him!”

The Chofetz Chaim was unimpressed. “M'nyeh,” he shrugged. “I don't think he is so saintly.”

The visitor was so appalled that he slapped the old man and left

his seat shouting. “How dare you make light of the leader of our generation!” A week later the man came to the humble abode of the great Tzadik. Lo and behold, the old man from the train was sitting by the table in the dining room. The man collapsed in shock.

He could not stop apologizing for the incident on the train when the Chofetz Chaim halted him.

“Do not worry, you taught me a great lesson,” said the sage. “One may not even slander himself.”

Shabbos in Halacha

Opening Food Packages

II Practical Applications

As we mentioned previously, it is preferable that one opens all containers and packages prior to Shabbos. The following procedures should be followed in the event that one inadvertently did not open the container prior to Shabbos.

D. Paper and Plastic Bags

Bags also fall under the prohibitions of *tearing* and *forming an opening*, and one may only tear bags in a

destructive manner (without tearing any words or pictures.)



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