

PARSHAS BECHUKOSEI

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

In the initial Berachos mentioned in the Sedra, the first is that Hashem will provide “your rains in their proper time.” Why is this bracha so prominent and what is its significance? The Kli Yakar relates the rain to the mitzvah first mentioned in Rashi, to learn Torah regularly. Therefore if one is *koveah itim* – has established times for learning which are scrupulously kept, he will also merit having the rains *b’itam* – at the proper time. He goes on to quote the famous Medrash (here 35:1) that Dovid Hamelech said that he often thought that he was going to a meeting or something else secular but he found his legs carrying him to the Bais Hamedrash to learn Torah. This is reflected in the first words of the Parshah “If you *teleichu* walk in My statutes,” meaning that we must establish strong patterns of action which will “keep us on the dererch” even if we wander off a bit.

My rebbe, Rav Hutner zt”l used this concept to explain what seems to be an odd request we make of Hashem every morning. We ask “*vesargileinu b’sorosecha* – accustom us to Your Torah.” This seems to fly in the face of the common preference to constantly seek newness and freshness in our avodas Hashem. We are always referring to *chiddush* – renewal – in our davening and learning so that we are not praying or studying by rote or habit. So why would we ask for *hergel* which implies a certain level of regularity and perhaps even monotony? He answers that our lives oscillate constantly between these two opposites. We do in fact seek to renew ourselves daily but if we do not have set structures and established norms, it is easy to deviate at times of stress or distractions. Therefore, we must have a set time to learn and daven, a makom kavua, a regular place to pray and almost inexorable habits which guide us. Then we can infuse these routines with excitement, new *kavanos* and insights. But without the regularity, we would be constantly forced to rethink our plans and commitments.

This method and philosophy of life is most readily expressed by our attitude toward rain. On the one hand, it is such a *regular* part of our lives that we often find it annoying and at the very least, an unwelcome part of our day. But on the other hand, its absence is a serious problem and often devastating to the farmers and by extension, all of us. The *Tzror Hamor* points out that the word used here is *gishmeichem* – **your** rain. The Torah could have simply promised rain. Why the possessive **your** rain? He answers, as we learned from the Kli Yakar, that regular rain depends upon our regular *sedarim* in learning and avodas Hashem. There was a famous story in the time of Rav Moshe Galanti zt”l, where there was a draught in the Middle East which affected all of the residents, Jew and gentile alike. However, since the Jews were known to have “the keys to rain,” the Turkish ruler imposed a gezerah – decree – giving the Jews three days to produce rain or be expelled forever from the land, including Eretz Yisrael. Eventually our tefilos indeed miraculously brought a torrent of life-giving showers which saved the crops for all. Once again the Jews were shown to possess a special relationship with the heavenly gift, which was then appreciated more than ever.

It is no coincidence that all *gashmiyus* – prosperity and material goods – are related to *geshem*, rain. We need only learn to balance the freshness and the regularity to bring all blessings upon the world.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

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KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

We continue this week with general questions about Yom Tov, in honor of upcoming Shavuos.

Question: How do we fulfill the mitzvah of Simchas Yom Tov?

Answer: In the time of the Bais Hamikdash, this mitzvah was fulfilled by eating the meat of the Korban Shelamim. In our days, men fulfill it by drinking wine and eating meat, preferably not poultry.

Question: Does it make a difference what kind of wine one drinks and what about grape juice?

Answer: Any wine is good but not grape juice which Halachically does not cause joy. If someone does not have wine, he may drink grape juice.

Question: How much wine must he drink to be yotzei?

Answer: According to RavMoshe Feinstein zt"l he should drink 4.44 ounces.

Question: How does one fulfill the mitzvah for women?

Answer: The poskim write that a man should give his wife a gift for Yom Tov. It does not have to be something she can use or wear on Yom Tov but it must be something that she personally would benefit from and enjoy.

Question: Are a man and woman equally obligated in Yaaleh Veyavo?

Answer: No. Women are not obligated to eat anything special for Yom Tov, including bread, since it is a mitzvas asah shehazman grama – a time related mitzvah. Therefore, unlike a man, if a woman forgot Yaaleh Veyavo in Bentching on Yom Tov she does not repeat Bentching. The exception to this is the Pesach Seder. Since she is obligated to eat Matzah, she *must* say Yaaleh Veyavo. If she forgot, she must bentsch over.

Question: On Shavuos why don't we say Yom Mattan Torah, the day we received the Torah, like we mention what happened on the days of Pesach, Succos, Rosh Hashanah etc?

Answer: The Belzer Rebbe, Rav Yissachar Dov Rokeach gives a various important answer, which goes to the heart of the Yom Tov and Am Yisrael itself. First he raises the famous question as to why only Shavuos does not have any mitzvos of its own. We know that Pesach has matzah, Succos the Succah and the Four Minim, Yom Kippur fasting etc. However, the mitzvah of Shavuos would seem to be learning Torah but that rests upon us every day of the year. Therefore we say *zman* Mattan Torahseinu not just one day. The Rebbe continues that the Torah is actually above time and cannot be limited to a particular Yom Tov or day. It would therefore be completely inappropriate for us to focus on one mitzvah when on Shavuos we received the mandate to learn constantly, all year long.

This teaches us how important this upcoming Yom Tov is, since it defines our very being and essence. It therefore behooves us to prepare ourselves properly by making sure that we have shiurim, chavrusos, seforim and everything we need set for Shavuos, so that we can be mekabel the Torah properly for this night and for all other days of the year as well. We must also remember that many Poskim hold that Shavuos is our day of reckoning for our Torah learning and spirituality in general. Let's do it right on Shavuos night!

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