

SCHEDULE

שבת קדש

Candle Lighting & Mincha 5:14 PM

Daf Yomi - *By Pinchas Friedman* 7:30 AM

Shacharis - Followed by Kiddush 8:30 AM

-Sof Zman K"ס- א"ג 9:04 א"ג 9:44

Mincha 2:15 PM

Mincha - *Followed by Shalosh Seudos* 5:05 PM

Special Guest Speaker: Rabbi Yaakov Berkowitz

Maariv - 6:24 PM

Father/Son Learning 7:15 PM



The FINAL

Avos U'Banim 7:15 PM

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*Thank you Aryeh & Miriam Dickstein
for sponsoring last week.*

Rabbi Teichman regrets that he will be away this Shabbos but we have a very special guest storyteller Rabbi Yehuda Spatz!

Special thank you to Yoni Herman, Moshe Berry and all the sponsors for another great season!

Weekday Minyanim

Sunday

Shacharis I 6:50 AM

Daf Yomi 7:30 AM

Shacharis II 8:30 AM

Mincha / Maariv 5:20 PM

Weekdays

Daf Yomi 5:45 AM

Shacharis:

-Monday & Thursday 6:40 AM

-Tue, We, Fri 6:45 AM

Mincha (Mo-Th) 1:45 PM

MINCHA/MAARIV 5:20 PM

MAARIV (Mon-Thurs) 7:45 PM

Daf Yomi (Take II) 9:00 PM

Maariv (Monday-Thursday) 9:45 PM

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Refuah Shelaimah

Rabbi Teichman is away this week spending Shabbos with his son Mutti who had a successful surgery Thursday to correct a condition related to his illness a few months ago. The procedure was successful and this is a great step for Mutti toward a full recovery. The recovery from this procedure over the next few days is delicate and painful so please have

מתתיהו מרדכי בן חסידה in mind in your Tefilos.

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Rabbi Teichman

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Issue #368

RABBI'S MESSAGE:

The Grass IS Greener on the Other Side!

One of the Six Remembrances we are commanded to remember each day is to recall the receiving of the Torah at Mount Sinai in its full grandeur.

There is an ancient custom recorded that on the holiday of Shavuot we are to spread specifically עשבים, grass and herbage throughout our Shuls and homes in commemoration of the apparent sprouting of foliage on the mountain. We know that there was vegetation there because the Torah later on forewarns, prior to the giving of the Second Tablets, to make sure the animals refrain from grazing on the areas facing the mountain. (שמות ל"ג)

The Rama states that with this display of 'grass' we remember 'the joy of the giving of the Torah'. (או"ח חסד סע' ג ברמ"א)

Of all the details enumerated regarding this momentous event why is the presence of 'grasses' singled out and how does it imply joy in particular?

A remarkable assertion is made by the Holy Alshich.

We are told earlier in the Torah that it was during קציר חטים, the wheat harvest that Reuven lovingly presented his mother Leah with דוודאים, flowers. (בראשית ל"ד)

The holiday of Shavuot is entitled חג הקציר Festival of the Harvest (שמות כ"ט) because of its proximity to this season. It was evidently on the eve of Shavuot that Reuven brought this gift, the Alshich alleges.

Furthermore, after Rachel asks Leah if she may partake of these beautiful flowers and Leah consents, Rachel then gives her conjugal right to be with Yaakov that night to Leah in exchange. From that union, on the very night of Shavuot, Yissachar was conceived, the one who would for all posterity become the paradigm bearer of the yoke Torah!

Rashi points out that these flowers were of the variety called סיגלי, Viola Odorata, emphasizing that it is 'עשב' in the category of 'grass'. The Talmud indeed states that because it is herbage rather than a tree, the blessing one makes on this particular fragrant violet is בורא 'עשבי' בשמים, Who creates fragrant herbage, as opposed to בורא עצי 'עשבי' בשמים, Who creates fragrant trees. (ברכות מג.)

What is the mystery behind this mystical grass and its significance?

When G-d created the trees on the third day of creation he commanded them to give forth its fruit לפי מינו, to its kind, so that each specie would not intermingle with another. Despite the fact that the grass was not so directed, the Torah records how it nevertheless 'gave forth its herb yielding seed after its kind' not intermingling even though it would more naturally be inclined to intermix. The Talmud relates how the grass logically concluded that if trees which instinctively separate from one another were commanded not to mix, how much more so should grass with its proclivity to encroach upon each other, should refrain from mingling. Upon observing this phenomenon the chief angel exclaimed, יהי כבוד ד' לעולם ישמח ד' במעשיו (תהלים קד לא), The glory of the Lord will be forever; the Lord will rejoice with His works. (חולין ט.)

There exists a tension between what is instinctive and that which logic dictates. The goal is to refine and define our instinct by what is objectively correct.

There are three principles upon which our world exists, ועל הדין ועל האמת ועל השלום, law, truth and peace. (אבות א' י"ז)

Peace, שלום, represents our desire for שלמות, harmony in our lives and emotional balance. Law, דין, is the awareness that emotion alone cannot govern our reactions no matter how noble they may be. It is only when we submit to a higher value and intellect that we can hone and perfect our emotional responses. The product of that delicate balance is truth, אמת, the essence of Torah itself.

The word used for herbage in a collective sense is דשא, an acronym for שלום אמת דין, because it was the grass stifling its instinct to intermingle by allowing it to be tempered by a higher logic that produced its healthy response of evident truth. (לבוש הקדמה לחר"מ)

The other word that is used in creation to describe each species of grass is עשב, serves as an acronym for עושה שלום במרומי, He who makes peace in His high places.

When one successfully meshes emotion to intellect that's when one experiences exquisite and heavenly calm and harmony.

Throughout the Torah and Midrash Rachel is the one who exudes enthusiasm, displaying and reacting emotionally to many situations. We are left until the redemption with the image of Rachel crying for her children to return. Leah never displays her emotion publicly but is rather depicted as always calculating and strategizing how to maximize her role as an effective matriarch. She suffers her sense of rejection silently not allowing her inner turmoil to interfere with her mission. Her son Reuven sensing her greatness, but also her quiet pain, presents her with a bouquet of violets, of the family of 'grass', symbolic of that sense of duty that disallows instinctive emotion to interfere with a greater goal that the grass so nobly proclaimed at its creation.

Rachel wishes to partake of this great inspiration as well. When she requests the flowers Leah responds: "Is it a small matter you have taken my husband that you wish also to take my son's dudaim?"

Leah certainly knew and appreciated the great sacrifice Rachel made in giving her the signs that saved her from the clutches of Esav. But Leah also knew that it was only at the last minute that Rachel implemented her plan and that she struggled to do what was 'just' in the face of her powerful emotions. If Rachel were to merit children Leah knew she would have to submit fully to דין, the strict law, in quieting the strong emotional pull in the quest of שלום, inner harmony, in order to finally merit bearing a child. Rachel rises to the challenge holding her 'trophy' flowers and proving her resolve by sacrificing her conjugal right to Leah, in testament to her powerful role as an adherent solely to the will of G-d.

From that expression was borne אמת, the ultimate truth, Torah, embodied in the great persona of Yissachar who so ably carries the mighty yoke of Torah with absolute joy!

Is it then any wonder why we spread herbage in our homes and Shul on this remarkable day?

We have discovered the secret to joy that was first revealed at creation, echoed again during the lifetime of our illustrious matriarchs and that inspired us once again by its message at Mount Sinai. We reiterate that lesson each Shavuot as we reflect on the joy G-d displays when He observes this magnificent balancing act that assures us a lifetime of happiness and accomplishment if we master this skill.

We are called the עם סגולה, a cherished nation. The great Chassidic Master, Reb Dovid of Lelov taught that this alludes to the fact that we are like the nikud of the סגולה, two dots atop a single one. This represents the notion that no matter how you turn over the Jew he remains unchanged and still cherished just like the segol remains the same no matter how you topple it over.

Perhaps we may suggest it also alludes to this delicate balancing act between our emotion and intellect that must remain properly and delicately balanced atop that single dot of truth, the Torah, upon which our entire universe stands, defining all we do with its brilliant light. It is in the perfecting of this skill that true joy can be attained.

The displaying of עשבים, herbage, on Shavuot is our affirmation that by submitting to a higher intellect we will achieve true שלמות, joyous harmony in our lives, by defining our emotions and drives by the word of the One whose very essence and name is שלום, peace. It is the עשב, the very symbol of עושה שלום במרומי He who makes peace in His high place, which embodies this ideal.

Indeed the 'grass' IS greener on 'the other side'!

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YAHRTZEIT

Sema Frager, for her father

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