

עטרת השבוע

Ateres HaShavua

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת לך לך
ח' חשוון תשע"ד
October 11, 2013

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|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Candle Lighting: | 6:03 |
| First קריאת שמע: | 9:11 |
| Second קריאת שמע: | 10:21 |
| First תפלה: | 9:51 |
| Second תפלה: | 10:48 |
| שקיעה | 6:19 |
| Earliest הבדלה: | 7:09 <small>(50 minutes)</small> |

All times are for The Five Towns

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IN HOT WATER?

Rabbi Yossi Bennett, Assistant Menahel

"ויהי אומר אל-אברהם, אחרי הפרד-לוט מעמו, שא נא עיניך וראה, מן-המקום אשר-אתה שם--צפנה ונגבה, וקדמה ונמה." (בראשית י"ג:ד)

It doesn't take very long to boil water. Of course, it would depend on how much heat the water is being exposed to, the salinity of the water and the quantity of the water. For 6-8 cups of tap water, it should take about 9-10 minutes. But it doesn't take very long. Yet, if one were to try and boil water and stop every minute or two, remove the water from its heating source, and then return it for another minute or two, continuing this process...even forever, you don't need to be a food scientist to know, the water will never boil!

There is an unusual posuk towards the end of sh'lishi of this week's parsha. After Avraham Avinu separates from Lot, and Hashem, once again, returns to speak with him, He instructs Avraham to "lift up [his] eyes and look, from where [he] is there, north, south, east and west." (13:14) Hashem continues, in the next few pesukim, to pledge to Avraham that the land at which he was looking would be given to his children; a significant posuk in the history of Klal Yisroel, the guarantee that Eretz Yisroel would be ours. Profound, intense, exciting would all be valid descriptions for (continued on page 2)

GOT EMUNAH?

Binyomin Goldstein, 12th Grade

"המין בה' ויחשביה לו צדקה" (בראשית ט"ו:ו)
"And Avraham Trusted in Hashem
and Hashem found it to be righteous"(15:6)

This posuk is written regarding Hashem telling Avraham that he was going to have a child.

Rashi comments that Hashem found that it was so great that Avraham trusted in Hashem when he was told he would have a child.

The Rambam asks a simple question: Avraham was known for his tremendous emunah and bitachon. He easily passed every test that Hashem gave him and never complained or questioned, even when it was very difficult for him. So why does Hashem feel that this seemingly easy test for Avraham was so great? Why would it be so difficult to have emunah in this instance more than any other time?

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, shlit"a, writes a possible answer. We know that when we do mitzvos that don't come easily we get more merit because of the famous adage from the sages "Lefum Tzara Agra" meaning that the harder it is to perform a mitzvah, the more merit you will get in the world to come. Not just that, but if you conquer the hard tests the schar you will get for an easier test will be as much as if you passed a hard test, and it will come easier to you with time.

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ATERES HASHAVUA

Rabbi Bennett (continued from page 1)

this posuk. So, why then, did I describe it as unusual? Well, what's strange is not the guarantee being made here by Hashem to Avraham (that, in fact, is exciting!), but the language of "from where you are there." It seems completely unnecessary.

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh (d"r "Min hamakom") points out this difficulty and explains it as follows:

The reason the posuk needed to say "from where you are there" [is because] here, Hashem performed an incredible miracle that he (Avraham) was able to see from north to south and from west to east from one place without having to turn around.

Wow! That is unbelievable! Almost as if Hashem created a panoramic picture of all of Eretz Yisroel directly in front of Avraham Avinu. But the question begs to be asked – Why? We know that Hashem does not simply perform miracles arbitrarily. In fact last week's Parsha is a proof to that, in that Hashem instructed Noach to build a massive 300 x 50 amah teivah when anyway the inhabitants would not be able to fit inside without resorting to a miracle. Why? Because Hashem does not perform miracles willy-nilly. So why the need for this miracle here?

The Gemara in Nedarim (50a) relates the well-known story of Rebbe Akiva returning home to his wife Rochel after 12 years of learning by Rebbe Eliezer and Rebbe Yehoshua. Yet, when he reached the threshold of his house, he overheard his wife speaking with a rasha (the words of the Gemara, not mine) saying how her father was right to have forbidden his property to her (for marrying Rebbe Akiva). Firstly, because he is not like us (in status) and, secondly, because he has left her as a widow in her own lifetime! The righteous Rochel immediately responded that if her husband would listen to her, she would tell him to learn another 12 years! On his heels, Rebbe Akiva turned around and learned for another 12 year amassing his tremendous achievement of 24,000 talmidim.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zt"l, in his Sichos Mussar (Achrei Mos, 5731 and Shoftim 5731) asks a very simple question. Why didn't Rebbe Akiva walk inside even for a moment, even for just a cup of coffee, to see his eishes chayil who was being moser nefesh in allowing him to sit and learn all these years? Didn't she deserve to see her husband just once after 12 years of being separate from him?

Rav Chaim answers with a very profound thought. We think in terms of mathematics, that 12 years plus 12 years equals 24 years. That, says Rav Chaim, is not the case by limud HaTorah. In fact, the

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Binyomin Goldstein (continued from page 1)

So even though this was a pretty easy test for Avrahams standards, since he conquered all the hard ones Hashem gave him much for schar for the easy ones as well.

So what can we learn from this story of emunah?

In today's world, the trials and tribulations that clal yisrael faces every day are enourmous. Distarctions and disturbances run rampant in the modern society. The tests that Hashem administers to us everyday are enourmous. Maybe the lesson taught from Avraham can be learned in our day and age too. If every singke day we toil and work on ourselves to not succumb to the outside ditractions, we will get so much merit that even for doing seemingly lesser tasks we will get as much, if not more merit in the world to come and what a reward that is.

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Stories of Tzaddikim

Ari Somerstein, 12th Grade

R' Yitzchak of Nischiz was a very holy man who was very sought after for his saintly blessings which almost always came true. People came from near and far just to get the tzaddik to daven for them! He was especially known for curing illnesses. His tefillos on behalf on rofehs went directly to heaven and were never refused. The Rebbe loved his all jews and always prayed for them. However one time a fatally ill man came to him but the Rebbe refused to pray on his behalf. "you may live or you may die. I cannot guarantee anything. I don't know if I can help you at all", said the Rebbe. The man was broken. The Rebbe was his last option. He had went to the top doctors, and paid out huge sums of money. He could not understand why the rebbe was so unsympathetic. This man knew of numerous people who the Rebbe had helped, why wasn't he able to help him?! "do you want to know why won't pray for you?" the Rebbe finally answered. "it is because you rely on me, you think that only I can help you. But you are incorrect. You are the one who can help yourself, you must pray to Hashem and place your trust in him. Only if you realize that refuah can come only from Hashem, can I help you if you put your entire trust in me a human being, then I cannot help you. Let me tell you a story: a couple once came to R' Yisrael of Kozhnitz, who was also granted special powers to help people. They wanted him to help them find a significant amount of money that they had misplaced. "bless us Rebbe, that we find our large sum of money which we have lost" they begged. R' Yisrael refused. They were extremely surprised. Whispering between themselves, they took out a gold coin and said, "here Rebbe, take this and distribute it to the needy poor people, but pray for us!" Still the Rebbe refused to help this couple. He sat back and said, "for sixty gold coins, perhaps, I will be able to help you." "sixty gold coins!" the woman gasped. "for that amount we do not need you! We can pray to Hashem to help us!" she was about to take back her original single gold coin when R' Yisrael smiled and said to the couple "Now I can help you, now that you have put your trust in Hashem, I can also help you out, but as long as you thought that only I could find your money, I could not help. You must realize that I am only a small messenger of Hashem on earth, here to do what he asks of me, if you place your trust in Hashem then I can use my powers to help you." Like that couple concluded R' Yitzchak of Nishchiz, "you came to me as if I were another doctor, some sort of miracle worker, perhaps, you have forgottem of the genuine doctor, Hashem who is the true healer of all."

B'dehilu Urchimu

Naftali Engel, 12th Grade

The Rebbe Rashab, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber of Lubavitch, once said:

"Bereishis is a joyous parsha, even though it's end is not too pleasant. Parshas Noach is all about the flood, though it has a joyous ending with the birth of Avraham our father. Lech Lecha though, is a truly joyous week. Every day of the week we live with Avraham, our father, who was the first person to dedicate his life to spreading G-dliness in the world, and Avraham's trait of self sacrifice has since been inherited by all Jews."

This begs the question: if Bereishis had ended a few verses earlier, it would have been a very joyous Parsha, since it's "not too pleasant" parts would have been included with the more somber Parshas Noach. Similarly Parshas Noach could have ended before the birth of Avraham, keeping its content more uniform. Why is it arranged so that the first two Parshiyos contain contradictory themes, and only Parshas Lech Lecha is the first "truly joyous week"?

Bereishis describes the work of G-d, Noach; the efforts of man; and Lech Lecha, the unity of man and G-d. Therefore Bereishis ends with the birth of Noach, and that "Noach found favor in the eyes of G-d", since neither of these events required any work from Noach, they were both the work of G-d.

Noach ends with the birth of Avraham and his efforts to come close to G-d, this was included in Parshas Noach because G-d did not communicate with Avraham and this continued with the theme of Parshas Noach – which speaks of the efforts of man. Only in Parshas Lech Lecha do we begin to read of the convergence between G-d and His creations. For only when G-d spoke to Avraham for the first time, at the beginning of our Parsha, did the Era of Human-G-dliness cooperation begin. This communication to Avraham was the precursor to the giving of the Torah, which brought this cooperation into a system of 613 mitzvos.

G-d told Avraham to "Go Away (Lech Lecha)" from all his prior values – "from your land, your birthplace etc." This brand new era of cooperation with G-d required a totally fresh approach: the willingness to progress beyond that which man can do on his own (the them of Parshas Noach was mans own efforts), so that he can become a true partner with G-d in enacting the devine plan of creation.

(Based on Likutei Sichos, vol. 15, p. 83ff.)

HALACHA CORNER

Rabbi Yossi Bennett, Assistant Menahel

In this issue, we will briefly discuss what one should do regarding wearing his tefillin shel yad if he has a bandage or cast on the arm on which he normally puts tefillin. (This discussion is specifically regarding the placement of the batim, not the retzu'os, for which there are more leniencies.)

Depending on which part of one's arm is covered by the cast will determine the appropriate method of placing his tefillin. If one's entire bicep area is covered, then the tefillin should be placed on top of the cast over the area which it is normally placed. Although normally one need not cover his tefillin shel yad (even though it is better to do so) [Ram"o O.C. 27:11 and Mishna Berura there], in this case, one must cover his tefillin shel yad (by his shirt or jacket sleeve) in order to fulfill the requirement of "a sign for you and not a sign for others" [Mishna Berura 27:16, 18]. One should not make a bracha at this time, rather, when placing his tefillin shel rosh, he should make both brachos (l'hani'ach tefillin and al mitzvas tefillin) followed by boruch shem kevod... [Mishna Berura 27:18].

If the cast, however, does not cover the entire bicep area, it seems that one should place his tefillin directly on his arm, even though that may be higher than he would normally place it. In this case, although we normally follow the halacha quoted by the Ram"o [O.C. 27:1] that the proper placement of the tefillin shel yad is at the midpoint of the bicep, in this case, since that is impossible, one may follow the opinion of the Vilna Gaon, quoted by the Mishna Berura [27:4], that anywhere on the bicep is acceptable. The bracha of l'hani'ach tefillin should be said.

*Adapted from R' Doniel Neustadt's Halacha Discussion Series
and should not be relied upon for a p'sak halacha.*

(Rabbi Bennett continued from page 2)

yiras shomayim necessary for a king.

But it's even more than that. For one might argue, that in the end of the day, you are achieving the outcome you set forth. Meaning, if my goal was to learn for 24 years, in actuality, I amassed 24 years of learning!

But the truth is it's not so. L'mashal, if I were to show you parts of a beautiful work of art or play for you only parts of a beautiful piece of music, not only would you not appreciate and understand the vision and intent of the artist or musician, in fact, it may even look or sound terrible!

Rav Chaim explains that this is true by learning as well. Not to the degree that it will sound terrible, but that learning in piecemeal is a far cry from learning b'retzifus – with continuity. It's the masterpiece versus bits and pieces of it. In essence, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." (Aristotle)

This was Hashem kavanah in presenting Eretz Yisroel to Avraham Avinu in one panoramic vision. For if Avraham would have seen Eretz Yisroel in four separate and disparate views, true, it would still have been incredible, but it would not have been the same at all. The fact that Hashem presented Eretz Yisroel in one breathtaking vista gave Avraham Avinu a genuine idea of what Eretz Yisroel really was.

So let's remember that, true, it depends on a number of factors to precisely determine how long it takes to boil water, but water will never boil if the breaks from the fire are too long, too consistent and too profound. **The same holds true for limud Torah. We can never break for too long from the fire of Torah!**



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