

עטרת השבוע



ATERES HASHAVUA

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לז"נ
 שרה שיינדל
 בת אריה משה

פרשת ויחי י"א טבת תשע"ד DECEMBER 15, 2013	
Candle Lighting:	4:10
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:54
Second זמן ק"ש:	9:30
Sunrise:	7:10
Latest זמן תפלה:	10:16
שקיעה:	4:28
Earliest Havdalah:	5:18
<small>(50 minutes)</small>	
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THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

By Rabbi Elchonon Zomber, MAY Faculty

“ואני נתתי לך שכם אחד על אחיך אשר לקחתי מיד האמרי בחרבי ובקשתיי” (בראשית מ"ח כ"ב)

“And I have given you Shechem, one more than your brothers, which I took from the land of the Emorite with my sword and my bow.” (Beraishis 48:22)

At the end of Perek מ"ח, Yaakov Avinu, nearing death, blesses Yosef by giving him Shechem which was captured “With my sword and with my bow”. *Rashi*, in his second explanation, states that Shechem refers to the birthright that Yaakov pried from Eisav's vise, and *Unkelos* translates ‘sword and bow’ as “בצללותי ובבעותי”, references to prayer.

The obvious question is that if Yaakov was referring to *Tefilla*, then he should have stated so explicitly, instead of using metaphors. Also, why use two expressions for prayer when seemingly one would have sufficed?

The *Meshech Chochmah* (Rav Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk) explains that although *Tefilla* is the weapon of choice for *Bnei Yisroel*, *Unkelos* had a deeper meaning in mind when referring to a ‘sword and bow.’ The set *Tefilla*, prescribed for us by the *Anshei Kneses HaGedola*, is very effective, even when it is not recited with the utmost intensity and concentration. In this aspect it is like a sword which, due to its sharpness, can inflict harm easily, even without applying much force.

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FAITH IN G-D ALONE

By Moshe Golombeck, Alumnus

”דן ידין עמו כאחד שבטי ישראל. יהי דן נחש עלי דרך שפיפון עלי ארח הנשך עקבי סוס ויפל רכבו אחור” (בראשית מ"ט ט"ז-י"ז)

“Dan will exact judgment for his people; the Tribes of Israel will be like one. Dan will be like a snake on the path, a viper on the way, which bites the heels of a horse causing the rider to tumble off backwards. For Your salvation do I long, Hashem.” (Beraishis 49: 16-17)

Dan is described as a protector of his people, and an extremely dangerous foe to his enemies. However, immediately after saying so, Yaakov declares “לישועתך קויתי ה'” “For Your salvation do I long, Hashem.” Despite all of the protection that Dan or any human can offer, Yaakov always depends ultimately on *HaKodosh Baruch Hu*.

The *Baal Shem Tov* once sent two of his *talmidim* to a distant country in order to purchase wine for Pesach. His students were anxious to please their *Rebbe*, so they made every effort to do the job right, to return with wine which was unquestionably *Kosher L'Pesach*.

They went out to the vineyards, helping to

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Rabbi Zomber (continued from page 1)

However, a person also has the opportunity to construct his own prayer, that caters to his own needs and requests. In this instance the efficacy of such prayer is contingent on one's passion and zealotry with which he utters those *Tefillos*. This is analogous to a bow and arrow, which can only be effective when used with the proper force.

Yaakov Avinu is teaching us that both types of *Tefillos* are important. We can not have one without the other. The set *Tefilla* gives us a foundation and structure, whereas our own *Tefillos* allow for innovation, individual expression, and an opportunity to really communicate to Hashem our personal needs. Hopefully, if we utilize both types of weapons, we will always emerge from our everyday "battles" in triumph.

Moshe Golombeck (continued from page 1)

pick the best grapes. They meticulously supervised the pressing of the grapes to ensure that no *chometz* was anywhere nearby. They ensured that the wine was sealed in the strongest casks, which they then transported back under their constant supervision.

Immediately after their return, they unsealed the casks and tasted the wine, and it was delicious. They briefly left the room to tell others that they had come back with wine that met the highest standards, both in taste and in *kashrus*. When they returned to the room, they were greeted by a *goyishe* worker, chewing on a ham sandwich, who exclaimed, "That's delicious wine you have there."

Of course, the entire casket was rendered *treif* and all their effort had been in vain. The *Baal Shem Tov* would definitely not be able to use this wine. With broken spirits, they went into their *Rebbe*, to explain how the wine was lost in such a strange way. With penetrating insight, the *Baal Shem Tov* told them, "You did everything you could, everything possible, to guard the wine. You were so careful, in fact, that you forgot to ask Hashem to watch over you. You left no place for His protection."

Throughout life, we must realize that although we must put in the effort, the ultimate salvation can only come from *HaKodosh Baruch Hu*. In this *zechus* may we all be *zoche* to greet *Moshiach Tzidkeinu Bimheirah Biyameinu!*

Stories of *tzaddikim* (continued from page 3)

the *shidduch* will be broken. R' Aaron gave her the money for the dowry. Several weeks later, she again approached him, this time crying that she had no money to buy her daughter a wedding gown. R' Aaron quickly pulled out the money to cover the cost of the gown. R' Aaron's wife, upset by this said "I can understand why you gave her the money for the dowry in order to save the *shidduch*, but why did you give her the additional money for the gown? That was not necessary to save the *shidduch*. You could have given the money to other needy people." R' Aaron responded, "That idea occurred to me too, then I reflected, if this is the counsel of my *yetzer tov*, then why did it not urge me to give this money to the needy before the widow came? I could only conclude that this was the counsel of my *yetzer hara*, and I absolutely refused to listen to it."

There was a person who had the privilege to be the driver of the Amshinover Rebbe. As befitting of a Gadol B'Torah, the man would always dress appropriately when driving, sporting a suit and hat.

One day, the weather was very hot. The sun was shining bright, and in his heavy attire, the driver was sweating profusely. When the Rav came out of his appointment, the driver asked him, "If the Rebbe doesn't mind, it is very hot and uncomfortable today, and I was wondering if it would be okay to take my jacket off?"

The Amshinover Rebbe's face turned pure white, and the man became worried. Was his question not right to ask? Is it possible he could have survived a little longer with his jacket on? The Rebbe answered, "I don't mind that you asked to take your jacket off, but how could you say that Eretz Yisroel is uncomfortable? How could a Jew who should have such a connection to its holiness speak this way about the Holy Land?" Such was the Amshinover Rebbe's love of Eretz Yisroel.

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STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Chezky Friedman, 12th Grade

R' Nochum was a *talmid* of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch, and when the *Maggid* lectured R' Nochum stood afar, able to hear every word from a distance. One time, the *Maggid* was telling his other *talmidim* about R' Nochum's greatness, and R' Nochum drew closer and closer, eventually sitting right beside the *Maggid* and cupping his ears. The *maggid* said, "when I lecture on Torah, R' Nochum hears every single word from a distance, but when I was relating of his greatness to the other *talmidim*, he could not hear it, and he thought I must have been whispering. That is why he drew close. He is truly humble and has trained his ears not to hear what he did not wish to hear."

R' Mordechai's wife passed away at a very young age, and he took for a second wife the daughter of R' Dovid Leikus, a *talmid* of the Ba'al Shem Tov. R' Dovid was always of a joyous demeanor, even though he was beset by many tragedies, including but not limited to, losing his wife and several of his children. His demeanor did not change even when he was sitting *shivah*. "The Baal Shem Tov says that Hashem does nothing bad, no matter how it may seem at the time, it is just that with our human perception we cannot see the good." The townsfolk who knew his disposition avoided the usual platitudes of consolation. However, two people who came from afar were not aware of this, and they said the usual adages. "What is man, and what is his life?" "Man is like a broken potsherd, like a dream that vanishes." Etc. In order to appeal to them, R' Dovid acted as if in he was grief stricken. But when they continued their litany, he was no longer able to tolerate it. "Listen here," he said, "A human being is very dear, more precious than the heavenly angels. Wherever he is in this world, or the next, the divine light shines over him. There is no agony, no evil, no travail, only Divine goodness. We must obey the rituals of mourning as prescribed by the *Shulchan Aruch*, but with true faith in Hashem's infinite benevolence, we need not feel sad."

A poor widow complained to R' Aaron of Karlin that she had made a *shidduch* for her daughter, but that if she does not deliver a dowry,

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B'DCHILU U'ACHIMU ~ WITH LOVE AND WITH AWE

Naftali Engel, 12th Grade

“וְהָיָה אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אֲבִיךָ חָלָה”

“A short time later, someone said to Yosef; ‘Behold your father is ill.’”

Until Yaakov, there was no illness prior to death. A person would sneeze and his soul would depart. Yaakov prayed for illness so that a person would have time to prepare a will for his heirs and say goodbye to loved ones before he passes away (Bava Metzia 87a)

The most important legacy one can bequeath to his children and descendants is the knowledge of serving G-d. When Yaakov was on his deathbed and called his sons together to reveal to them the time of the final redemption, the Shechina suddenly departed from Yaakov, leading him to suspect that one of his children may be unworthy. They reassured this by declaring “*Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad.*” Yaakov then responds “*Baruch shem kevod malchuso le’olam va’ed*”, knowing that he had successfully bequeathed his legacy to his children. (*Pesachim 56a|Likutey Halachot VIII, p.48a*)

In our times we are witnessing signs of redemption in the world, and it is tremendously upsetting to see that the Jewish people have their “eyes closed” and do not take note of what is occurring. Primarily these signs are changes in the way world leaders are acting towards Jews and Jewish values. The opposition against Jewish observance has ended, most notably in the former Soviet Union where approximately one third of the Jewish people there have found themselves able to observe *Torah* and *Mitzvos* for the first time in 70 years!

Furthermore the manner in which non-Jews perceive Jewish observance, even in the western world, has changed radically in the past generations. Consider that before World War II, many thousands of Jewish families found themselves unable to earn a living if they were Shabbos observant, even in America. Yet now we find Jews, even Jews who proudly display beards and peyos, accepted and respected by society.

However the painful fact is that we have taken all this for granted; we fail to recognize that these are unprecedented changes of Messianic proportions. The redemption is no longer an unrealistic dream – we merely have to “open our eyes” to see that the time for redemption has indeed arrived. (Based on *Sichas Shabbos*)

HALACHA CORNER

Rabbi Yossi Bennett, Assistant Menahel

In this issue we will briefly review the *halachos* associated with reciting of “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*.”

In the diaspora, beginning at *ma’ariv* of the evening of December 4th (the night before December 5th) on a regular year (excluding a solar calendar leap year), the addition of “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*” is made in the 9th *bracha* of the *Shemona Esrei*, the *bracha* of *Bareich Aleinu*. This addition is a petition for rain during the rainy season of the year.

If one forgot to say “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*,” the *halachos* are as follows:

- If one did not yet say Hashem’s name in the closing *bracha* of *Bareich Aleinu* then the best recourse would be to say “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*” and go back and continue from “*al p’nei ha’adamah...*” again. If one simply continues where he was holding after saying “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*,” that is fine, unless he is already after “*u’vareich shenoseinu...*” in which case he should say “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*” and then go back to “*u’vareich shenoseinu...*” [Mishna Berura 117:15]
- If one already said Hashem’s name in the closing *bracha* of *Bareich Aleinu* then it is the opinion of the *Mishna Berura* to wait until the *bracha* of *Shema Koleinu* and insert “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*” after the words “*reikam al tishiveinu...*” [Mishna Berura 117:16]
- If one only said the words “*Boruch atah Hashem*” but not “*Shomei’ah tefilah*” then it is better to complete the *bracha* with the words “*lamdeini chukechah*” and then say “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*” and continue with “*ki atah shomeiah tefilas amchah...*” [Mishna Berura 117:19]
- If one completed the *bracha* of *Shema Koleinu* but did not yet begin the next *bracha* of *R’tzei*, “*v’sein tal u’matar l’vracha*” should be inserted before beginning *R’tzei*. [Shulchan Aruch 117:5]
- If one already began the *bracha* of *R’tzei* then he should return to the beginning of the *bracha* of *Bareich Aleinu* and repeat/continue from there. [Shulchan Aruch 117:5]

If one already completed *Shemona Esrei* (by reciting the *posuk* of “*y’hiyu l’ratzon imrei fi...*”) then he must repeat *Shemona Esrei*. [Shulchan Aruch 117:5]

Not to be relied upon for *p’sak halacha*.

Geshmake Gemmatrios

Yehudah Auerbach, 12th Grade

- In the beginning of the *parsha*, someone alerts Yosef that his beloved father, Yaakov, is sick. Yosef arrives at the bedside of Yaakov and Yaakov exerts himself to sit up on the bed. The *pasuk* says “*וידתחוק ישראל וישב על המטה...*”. *Rashi* comments on this *pasuk* saying that Yaakov did this in order to give honor to the throne, even though Yosef was his son. The Steipler Gaon shows this with *gemmatria*. The words *וידתחוק ישראל* are the same value as the words *שחולקים כבוד למלכות*, he gave honor to the throne.
- When Yaakov begins to give the *brachos* out to the shevatim, he first blesses the sons of Yosef, Ephraim and Menashe. He gives the famous *bracha* of *Hamalach Hagoel*. At the end of the *bracha*, Yaakov says “*וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ*”, “and may they reproduce abundantly like fish within the land.” *Rashi* says on this that Yaakov meant just like fish have no *ayin hara*, evil eye, on them, so too the sons of Yosef will not have *ayin hara*. The Steipler comments that the words *וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ* are the same value as the words *וואין עין הרע שולט בהם*.
- When Yaakov continues his blessing he gives the land of Shechem to Yosef. He says he conquered Shechem “*בחרבי ובקשתי*”, with my sword and my bow. *Rashi* says on this that Yaakov conquered Shechem with *tefillah* to Hashem. The words *ובתחנון*, with *tefillah* and asking, are the equivalent of the words *בחרבי ובקשתי*.
- When Yaakov blesses Shimon and Levi, he starts off by criticizing them on their actions of wiping out Shechem. The *pasuk* writes “*כי באפם הרגו איש וברצונם עקרו שור*”. *Rashi* says the ox is compared to Yosef so Yaakov was alluding to the fact that they also wanted to eliminate Yosef. The Steipler brings this *Rashi* into the realm of *gemmatria*. The words *באפם הרגו איש* are equal to the words *בהעיר שכם*, in the city of Shechem. The words *ורצו לעקור את יוסף*, they wanted to uproot Yosef.



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