

# תורת אור חיים

Divrei Torah published by the students of ישיבת אור חיים of Toronto.

## פרשת נשא

Edition שבועות

סיון תשס"ה

### הג השבועות "עצרת" of The

Rabbi Moshe Goldberg

"ויוצא משה את העם לקראת האלוקים מן המחנה ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר"

***"Moshe brought the people forth from the camp toward G-d, and they stood under the mountain."*** (פרק יט, פסוק יז)

In פרשת יתרו, we read "ויוצא משה את העם לקראת האלוקים מן המחנה ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר" - "Moshe brought the people forth from the camp toward G-d, and they stood under the mountain." "ויתיצבו בתחתית", literally means "stood under." Rashi interprets it according to its simplest meaning that they stood at the foot of the mountain.

In the Gemara שבת (פה עמוד א), פסוק is interpreted as a threat to the Jews "מלמד שכפה הקב"ה עליהם את ההר כגיגית ואמר להם אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב ואם לאו שם תהא" תוספות asks "If you accept the Torah fine, but if not your burial will be there". בני ישראל already say "נעשה ונשמע", and thereby accept the Torah on themselves? תוספות answers that Hashem felt that once they would be exposed to the wonders of Har Sinai, they might be frightened and consequently back down. This "threat" therefore came to reinforce the Jews to remain strong in their commitment towards the Torah.

The Medrash Tanchumah gives another interpretation. There are two categories of Torah: תורה שבעל פה and תורה שבכתב - The Written and Oral Torah. Granted, בני ישראל said "נעשה ונשמע", only regarding תורה שבכתב. Therefore Hashem's "threat" refers to תורה שבעל פה. With תורה שבעל פה, one must toil to understand it, to learn the Ramban, Ritvah, Rosh etc. It isn't easy to say "נעשה ונשמע" regarding a commitment like תורה שבעל פה, therefore, they had to be forced into accepting it. It was only centuries later in the days of Mordechai and Esther that the Jews reaccepted the תורה שבעל פה מאהבה - as the Gemara teaches "קיימו וקבלו היהודים - קיימו מה שקבלו כבר" - They reaccepted what they had already accepted in the days of Moshe at Har Sinai.

Someone once asked Rav Levi Yitzchak from Barditchev, why שבועות is not referred to as "עצרת" in the Torah, while other holidays, such as שמיני עצרת and שביעי shel

pesach are called עצרת?

Rabeinu Ovadia Seforno answers that the word עצרת means spiritual gathering which represents a level of holiness which we must attain. After the חטא העגל, בני ישראל lost this madregah regarding שבועות. However, if בני ישראל lost this madrega, then why do we find that שבועות is referred to as עצרת in the mishnah and gemarah?

The answer is given that we may have lost the madregah of עצרת by שבועות in תורה שבכתב, but through תורה שבעל פה - delving into רמב"ם, תוספות etc we are able to regain that madregah as the Zohar teaches us "ישראל ואורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא חד הוא". Therefore, the term עצרת was only mentioned in the Gemarah by שבועות, encouraging us to work to achieve the status of עצרת once again.

There is a profound lesson to be learned from here. From our own Torah study we can recreate the level that we were on before the חטא העגל. We should all seize the moment of שבועות ליל תיקון in order to regain the madregah of עצרת in our time!

## **שלום in the Home**

Eli Lesser

**וּכְתַב אֶת הָאֵלֶּת הָאֵלֶּה הַכֹּהֵן בְּסֵפֶר וּמַחֵה אֶל מִי הַמְרִים"**

**And the Kohen shall write these curses in a scroll and erase it into the bitter waters (Bamidbar 5:23)**

In this week's Parsha we learn about the laws of a sotah. When a woman was accused of infidelity she was able to prove her innocence by swallowing a special drink in which was placed a section of the Torah with Hashem's name on it. If the woman was guilty of adultery then she would die. If however, she was guilt-free then she would benefit from the potion and she could once again return to live with her husband in peace.

Although it is generally strictly forbidden to erase Hashem's Name, He demands that we do so in order to bring peace between a man and his wife. The Maharal explains that G-d is willing to allow his name to be erased to bring שלום to the world since שלום is, in fact, one of Hashem's names. He allows us to erase written letters in order to achieve a living embodiment of His name. One name is blotted out but a more powerful one takes its place.

The Midrash relates that there was once a woman who came home very late because she was listening to Rabbi Meir's lecture. Her husband grew angry and demanded that she go to *Shul* and spit in Rabbi Meir's eye. Rabbi Meir realized the problem and pretended that he had an ailment in his eye. "Please", he said to the woman, "I need you to spit in my eye seven times so that I will be cured of my great pain." After finally convincing her to do so, he told her to go back and tell her husband that she spat, not once, but seven times in Rabbi Meir's eye. Rabbi Meir explained to his students that if the Torah allows even Hashem's name to be erased in order to make peace between a husband and wife then all the more so we must forgo our own honour to bring peace.

## מעשה of the Week

Doron Mahareta of blessed and saintly memory was one of the eight yeshiva students who were massacred on Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar ה'תשס"ה in ישיבת מרכז הרב in Jerusalem. Doron wanted to learn Torah in Mercaz HaRav, one of the best of Israel's yeshivas. Unfortunately, since his early schooling was in Ethiopia, he lacked a strong background in Gemara. The yeshiva rejected him, but he did not give up.

He asked, "If you won't let me learn Torah, will you let me wash the dishes in the mess hall?"

For a year and a half, Doron washed dishes. But he spent every spare minute in the בית מדרש. He asked the other boys what they were learning, and spent most of his nights and all of his שבתות delving into the same Gemara as the other boys.

One day, the "dish washer" asked the *Rosh Yeshiva* to test him. The *Rosh Yeshiva* politely smiled and tried to gently dismiss Doron; but Doron wouldn't budge. He forced the *Rosh Yeshiva* into a Torah discussion.

The next day, he was no longer a dish washer, but a full-fledged "*yeshiva bachur*".

On weekends, when Doron would come home to visit his family in Ashdod, he'd spend the entire שבת either in the Melitzer Shul or the neighboring Gerrer *shtiebel* learning the *Shulchan Aruch* and its commentaries. Three weeks before his death he finished the entire *Shulchan Aruch* and its principle commentaries.

Doron's story of dedication to learning Torah is comparable to the *Gemara's* account of Hillel nearly freezing on the roof of Shmaya and Avtalion's yeshiva (*Yoma*, 35b). It is a story that should provide all of us with inspiration for this upcoming שבועות and for years to come! ה' ינקום דמו!  
!תנצב"ה -

**שבת שלום והג שמח!**

You can subscribe to receive the תורת אור היים every week by email by sending a message to [t.orchaim@gmail.com](mailto:t.orchaim@gmail.com).