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**Shabbat - Bechukotai,**

**שבת פ' בחקתי - פרקי אבות - פרק ה**

**Sat. 31 - 1 Jun. 2019 - 27th of Iyyar, 5779 -**

**כ"ז באייר תשע"ט**

**Issue Number 900**

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| Baal Koreh         | Mr Jacob Oved    | (Page - 708).  |
| Mufteer & Haftarah | Mr Nissim Tricot | (Page - 1179). |

**Mevarchin Hahodesh**

**מברכין החודש**

**Rosh Hodesh Sivan on Tuesday.**

**ראש חודש סיון ביום שלישי.**

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Shir Hashirim, Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat & Arbit.                   | 19:00 |
| Shabbat Candles.   | 20:51 |
| Shabbat Shahrit - Followed by Kiddush. (Shema 8:17).               | 08:30 |
| Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a.                        | 19:30 |
| Mincha Shabbat - Followed by Seuda Shlishit. (Sunset - 21:08).     | 20:30 |
| Arbit Motzei Shabbat.  | 22:20 |
| Shahrit Weekday - (Sunday - 07:30).                                | 06:30 |
| Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a.                        | 18:30 |
| Mincha & Arbit.  | 19:15 |
| Next Friday: Shir Hashirim, Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat & Arbit.      | 19:00 |
| Next Friday: Candles. <b>Shabbat. Bamidbar &amp; Erev Shavuoth</b> | 21:03 |

**Bechukotai** 5779 (Leviticus 26:3-27:34)

May 26, 2019 | by [Rabbi Kalman Packouz](#)

**GOOD MORNING!** What is the most important question in life? Perhaps: "Is there a God?" If there is a God, then there is every possibility that God created the world with a purpose and our lives have meaning. If there isn't a God, then all was created randomly and meaninglessly and the only meaning in life is that which we choose to impose upon our lives.

**If there** is a God, then there very well may be consequences for our actions; God may have a standard of behavior He expects us to live up to and if we don't, then to use the colloquial "there is hell to pay." If there isn't a God, then it is only the justice of mankind we

need to be concerned about. As one wit put it, "If there is no God, then there is only one commandment, not ten: 'Thou shall not get caught.'"

**There are** at least four possibilities:

1) never think much about the question  
2) espouse believing in God without thinking about the consequences  
3) believe in God and think that how we decide to lead our lives is exactly how God wants us to live it or  
4) believe in God and believe in a Revealed document of God's will.

**There are** reasons why people do not believe or do not want to believe in God and resist investigating if there is a God: 1) because there is evil in the world; bad things happen to good people

2) they look at belief in God as a crutch for losers who can't make it on their own  
3) if there is a God, it implies that there is purpose to creation, values to live by and ultimately restrictions. People do not like restrictions in their lives.

**However**, even if one has strong questions on how God runs the world or doesn't want restrictions in his life, it does not change the objective reality: Either there is a God or there isn't a God. Because one person believes there is a God or another person doesn't believe in God, does not make a difference as to whether God does indeed exist.

**Does it** make sense to pursue the question whether or not there is a God who is Creator, Sustainer and Supervisor of the Universe Who dispenses reward and punishment? Does it make sense to pursue the question whether the Torah is a revealed text from the Almighty instructing us how to lead our lives?

**I once** overheard a conversation with a person who proudly proclaimed, "I am an atheist!" Rabbi Noah Weinberg responded, "Fabulous! I have always wanted to meet a real atheist. Do you know that an atheist is a person who has evidence that there is no God. What is your evidence?" The young man responded, "Uh, I guess I am really an agnostic."

**The rabbi** responded, "I am truly disappointed. I was really excited about meeting an atheist, but an agnostic is second best! Do you know an agnostic is a person who has evidence that one can't know whether there is a God? What is your evidence?" The fellow responded, "I guess I really just never looked into it that much."

**Probably** most of us have never looked into the questions that much or have thought out reasons why we believe, if we do. Actually, the first of the Ten Commandments is the source for the *mitzvah* "To Know There is a God". One is obligated to investigate the question and to clarify the evidence of God's existence. This is different than "faith." Faith is an emotional leap to a conclusion. Belief is a point on a continuum from "no knowledge" to "absolute knowledge." The more evidence we have of the existence of God, the stronger is our belief.

**How would** one go about investigating these 2 questions? For a book on "Is there a God?" I highly recommend [Permission to Believe](#) by Lawrence Kelemen. For a book on "Did God give the Torah?" I highly recommend [Permission to Receive](#) by Lawrence Kelemen. Also, on [ShabbatShalomAudio.com](#) you can listen or buy Rabbi Noah Weinberg's lectures on "Evidence of the Existence of God" (4 part series that examines evidence for both questions) and "Can We Believe God Spoke at Sinai?" by Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg.



## TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

### **Bechukosai, Leviticus 26:3 - 27:34**

**The Torah** portion sets forth the blessings that you will see in this world in response to your deeds.

**It then** continues with the Tochachah, words of admonition, "If you will not listen to Me and will not perform all of these commandments..." There are seven series of seven

punishments each. Understand that God does not punish for punishment's sake; He wants to get our attention so that we will introspect, recognize our errors and correct our ways. God does not wish to destroy us and will never annul His covenant with us. This is the Almighty's guarantee to the Jewish people: " ... I will not grow so disgusted with them nor so tired of them that I would destroy them and break My covenant with them, since I am the Lord their God." (Leviticus 26:44-45) He wants to prevent us from becoming so assimilated that we disappear as a nation. I highly recommend reading Leviticus 26:14-45.

**Many religions** place their basis of faith in far away promises. The Talmud teaches, "He who wishes to lie says his witnesses are far away." For example, "I have witnesses that I paid back the money I owed you, but they happen to be visiting Europe" -- or "Have faith in our religion and you will get Heaven."

**While Judaism** believes in an Afterlife, a World to Come, the Torah makes no promises that are "far away." It makes definitive statements of consequences. This week's portion says, "If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them; then I will provide your rains in their time, and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit. Your threshing will last until the vintage, and the vintage will last until the sowing; you will eat your bread to satiety and you will dwell securely in your land. I will provide peace in the land, and you will lie down with none to frighten you ... I will make you fruitful and increase you..."

**The portion** ends with instructions regarding gifts to the temple, valuation and redemption of animals, houses, fields ... and lastly, the second tithe and tithing animals. And thus ends the Book of Leviticus!

\* \* \*

**Dvar Torah**  
*based on Love Your Neighbor by*  
**Rabbi Zelig Pliskin**

**The Torah** states:

"And a man shall stumble upon his brother ..." (Leviticus 26:37).

**Rashi** cites the Sifra (a midrash) which explains this verse thus: "One shall stumble through the iniquity of another, for all the people of Israel are responsible for each other."

**Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan**, the Chofetz Chaim, related the following analogy: Mr. Cohen loaned Mr. Green a large sum of money. Mr. Shapiro agreed to guarantee the loan; he would pay Mr. Cohen if Mr. Green will be unable to pay. If Mr. Green were investing his money in a business that was sure to lose money, Mr. Shapiro would definitely do everything in his power to prevent Mr. Green from becoming involved in that business. Mr. Shapiro knows that if Mr. Green wastes his money, the obligation to repay the loan will be his.

"**The same** applies to preventing others from transgressing," said the Chofetz Chaim. "If someone has the ability to stop another person from transgressing and fails to do so, he is held liable for that offense. Therefore, we must do everything we can to prevent transgressions."



**Hot Kiddush presented:** Thank you to everyone who came and took part in the Hachnasat Sefer Torah on Monday, to Honour our new Sefer Torah and The Haftarah for our Parents Naim and Saida Z”L. It was a special occasion for the Cohen Family and your presence meant a lot to us all. Following such a fantastic event, we are delighted to announce that we will start reading from the new Sefer Torah & Haftarah for the first time this coming Shabbat, 01/06/2019 - 27 Iyar 5779 parsha Bechukotai. We would be honoured for you to join us this Shabbat. A hot Kiddush will be sponsored by the Cohen Family.

**Seuda Shalishit:** presented by Abraham Peretz אב"ר, in memory of his late grandmother Elaham bat fortunée ע"ה.

**Dear all:** It is a Jewish tradition to have flowers in a Jewish home to celebrate Shabbat and our Jewish Hagim. Following the success of last year's flower demonstration before Shavuot, we asked the Rebbetzin to give another evening of flower arrangement demonstration, on Wednesday the 5th of June, 2 Sivan 5779 time 19.30, at Ohel David Synagogue, £10.00 pp Follows by refreshments. You can book by calling Chava on 07751 434797.

**Dear all:** we would like to start Sunday breakfast after Shahrit 08:30, please approach Ghassan, David or Adel to confirm your attendance, we will notify you when we start.

**Stone setting:** Reuben Farag ben Eliyahu Rahamim Twena ר"ל, stone setting will take place on Sunday the 2nd of June at 9:00am, Edgwarebury Cemetery.

**Stone setting:** Shaoul Imzayin ר"ל, stone setting will take place on Sunday the 2nd of June at 10:00am, Edgwarebury Cemetery.

**Ladies Gallery:** We are starting the plan for Ladies Gallery and we need your support, you can call Ghassan, David or Moshe for any update.

**Kolel every Sunday:** We are still having a Kolel every Sunday at the Synagogue hall from 09.30am - 12.00pm. Everyone is welcome.



Quote of the Week

If you got everything you wanted,  
it would be called a vending machine.  
However, since you don't -- it's called Life.