



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATES

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Rabbi & Mrs Yosef Yitzchok Chalomish on the occasion of Shayelle's Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davening at their home, 47 Cavendish Road. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Dr and Mrs Zev Davis

Mazel tov to Mr Danny Dresner on his engagement to Reuvena Frankel. The Kehilla is invited to a Lechaim at 9 Wilton Avenue on Sunday between 7.00-9.00pm.

חיים ארוכים

We wish Arichas Yomim to Mrs Petra Rodrigues-Pereira on the Petira of her late father Mr Mark Goldstone o"n. The Shiva will take place at 15 Mayfield Road until Thursday morning. Maariv is at 8pm, no visitors between 12.00-1.00pm and 3.00-7.00pm.

Earlier Davening This Shabbos

Please note due to timings this Friday the times of Mincha and Kabbolas Shabbos are earlier at 5.55pm and 7.17pm.

Hilchos Shmitta Shiurim

The second of Rabbi Aryeh Silkin's Shiurim on the Dinim of Shmitta in Chutz La'Aretz takes place on Shabbos afternoon between Mincha & Maariv.

Yomim Noraim Seating

Anybody requiring seats for Rosh Hashono and / or Yom Kippur is asked to please text their requirements to 07779681354 or email office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk.

Shtenders

There are still Shtenders available for sale at a subsidised price of £100. Please note they are only for use in the Shul. For further details please contact the Gaboim.

Yom Tov Collection

The Rov has started his pre-Yom Tov collection for local families. All donations are welcome.

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Glad tithings

Dani Epstein

On an occasion when I travelled to Gateshead despite having not committed a crime, my family and I ended up in the Metro centre for some reason I forget. This vast sprawling complex is a maze of shops selling all manner of goods, some of which we failed to identify probably due to the linguistic and cultural barrier, and is large enough to hangar the entire FedEx fleet of aircraft, or so it felt anyway.

What was not apparent was that the Anglican Church owns a 10% interest in the complex, along with the associated land. And that's not the only thing they own, either. In rural areas alone they own 120,000 acres of land. 15% of its portfolio is invested in London's West End. It's safe to say that they are not particularly worried about the price of biscuits, since their portfolio is worth around £4.3 billion.

Where exactly did this all come from? Surely the Church was a religious institution, rather than a property firm? Well, in the times of Henry VIII the monks were running the show, and they were grand masters at leeching

money from the poor and squeezing sizeable donations out of the rich. They were so wealthy that the Bishop of Durham was known as the Prince-Bishop. They were also morally corrupt and debauched.

Now, להבדיל אלף אלפי הבדלות, we can pose a simple question. Why does מעשר, tithing, exist in the Torah framework? We can see from so many cultures that putting any sort of economic power into the hands of the priestly caste is just asking for trouble. Why would the Torah command us to do likewise if the risks are so great?

At the economic level, the Malbim tackles this question in a novel fashion. The underlying principle behind מעשר comes from the dream of Yaakov in Bereishis (28:22): – כל אשר נתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך – and everything You shall give me I shall tithe. Now, since Hashem has no need for anything Man creates, the tithe is given to whoever Hashem designates as its recipient. This principle is extended even to the result of one's labour, which also has to be tithed, since this comes from Hashem too, as we read in Devorim (8:18): כי הוא הנתן לך כח לעשות חיל – for He is the one who gives you the strength to prosper.

Initially, the בכור (who was first-born of every family if male) was supposed to have been dedicated to the service of Hashem, working a shift in the Beis Hamikdash and receiving מעשר as a stipend. After they sinned, however, the Leviim and Kohanim were dedicated to the service of Hashem instead. Not just as employees of the Beis Hamikdash; they became the teachers of the nation, and served as the gold standard for everyone else to admire and desire to emulate.

Since their duties precluded the possibility of being involved to any great extent in economic activities, they were presented with מעשר as a source of income in the same way the בכורים would have received. When the Bnei Yisroel entered Canaan every individual was entitled to a portion of land. What should have happened was that 10% of each plot should have been given to the Leviim and Kohanim. However, as noted above, the tribe of Levi was dedicated to the service of Hashem, and therefore would be unable to work the land. Instead, the 10% land that was their due remained with all the other tribes, and these tribes were expected to work that land on behalf of the tribe of Levi.

This results in 3 types of tithes:

The Week Ahead

פרשת כי תבא

Mincha 1 / Candle Lighting	5.55pm / Not before 6.12pm
Mincha 2 / Candle Lighting	7.17pm / Not after 7.17pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.451am
Shacharis	9.00am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 7.15pm
Hilchos Shmitta Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	8.20pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	7.15pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	5.40pm / 7.00pm

1) 10% of the output of the land that they hold in trust, so to speak, for the Shevet Levi.

2) 10% of the output of the land that is their own

3) 10% of the output of the labour they have invested into the land

Parenthetically the Malbim notes that technically the Torah does not tithe the profit of one's labour, rather the tangible product itself. However, he differentiates between the profit one gains from the land as a result of one's labour, and the profit generated by the land itself. For example, one might work equally hard for two years, but the two years might generate disproportionate harvests if one year was very dry and the other very wet. Conversely, if one worked really hard one year, and basically "got by" the next, and the land produces identical harvests in each year, clearly a larger proportion of the second year came about as a result of the land, not one's labour.

Given this, the produce of any given year will consist of two indeterminate portions: one being the output of the land of its own accord and the second being the output as a result of one's labour. Since in any given year the proportion of each could vary considerably, this results in a situation wherein one does not know how much to attribute to the land's natural output and that of one's labour with regards to **מעשר**.

So now it's a question of dealing with the distribution. 10% of the farmer's land is really being held in trust for the Shevet Levi, and so that proportion of the produce undoubtedly goes to them. However, since the farmer is holding this land in trust, he still ought to tithe **מעשר** on the 90% of the remaining produce from his own lands, and on the fruits of his labour. Exactly how much would depend on which part of the remaining produce can be attributed to his own labour, and how much to the natural output of his land. It would be possible that all the output was a result of the land's natural output, or all as a result of his labour, or a combination of the two.

Now, if all the harvest was due to the land's natural output and not the farmer's labour, the farmer is still due to tithe his portion of the land, the remaining 90%. If the produce was entirely the result of his labour, which also ought to be tithed, the labour that went into the 10% he has already tithed to the Leviim is covered by that. If the produce was a combination of the natural output of the land and the farmer's labour, then there is a partial tithe due.

The upshot of this is that the second tithe is indefinite; perhaps it is not due at all, perhaps partially perhaps totally.

In order to resolve this issue, continues the Malbim, Hashem commanded that two years of the seven-year Shmitta cycle should consist of **מעשר שני**, a tithe which has to be consumed, **בטהרה**, but one which the farmer may consume as well. His entitlement comes from the fact that he is an a servant of Hashem, and is eating this produce from the High Table, so to speak, as opposed to his own.

In the third and sixth years, this doubt results in a tithe that is given to the poor. Although the farmer appears to lose out here, since he has a doubtful part in this tithe, this is also considered as **tzedokoh** even though it is a compulsory tithe as opposed to a voluntary donation.

If we examine a society such as Britain prior to the reformation or even to the Incas who controlled millions of people despite numbering approximately 100,000 of their own, the clergy exerted their influence to extort money out of the populace.

Not so in the Torah. At the foundation of the entire tithing system is a simple monetary entitlement – the land that is held in trust for Shevet Levi. No Levi or Kohen could walk up to a farmer and demand his tithe, because the entitlement to distributing this largesses is owned by the farmer - he is the one who decides which Kohen or Levi will be the recipient of his **מעשר**.

This careful balance prevented the priestly caste from abusing their power to grab a power base for themselves that was not their due, creating a hegemony based on their position as priests.

Furthermore, since the purpose of the Kohanim and Leviim were not only to serve in the Beis Hamikdash but also to act as the teachers of the entire nation, both through deed and word, this dependence on the populace insured that the potentially powerful priestly caste were at the very least forced to be polite to everyone, since the priests' income was in the hands of the farmers.

What infinite foresight, knowledge, wisdom and genius was invested in every facet of our Torah, to the extent that it permeates every aspect of our lives. How brilliant the psychology that balances all the power within the system. Hashem, after all, invented the human psyche, and therefore it should hardly come as a surprise that He is the supreme psychologist.

Communication, Communication, Communication!!! Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

In this week's Torah portion, we read the *tochacha*, a grim litany of frightening curses that Hashem promises will befall the nation if they stray from Him. The Torah also outlines the *tochacha* in the parsha of *Bechukosai* at the end of *Leviticus*. There, too, the Torah elaborates on the outpouring of wrath and the chilling punishments that will afflict the Jewish people should they abandon the Torah.

However, there are significant differences between the two portions. Most interestingly, the conclusion of the *tochacha* in *Bechukosai* ends on a positive note with the words of consolation, "I will remember for them my covenant with Yaakov and my covenant with Yitzchok and my covenant with Avraham, and I will remember the land". However, the *tochacha* in this week's Torah portion ends off on a calamitous note: "You will be offered as slaves to your enemies yet - but no one will even want to buy you."

The *Zohar*, commenting on the difference between the concluding notes in the two parshios, explains that the *tochacha* in *Bechukosai* addresses a specific failure distinctly different from the one in *Ki Savo*. There, Hashem is responding to our callous indifference to Him, described as "walking with Him *"b'keri"* -casually. "If you walk with me casually, I in turn will treat you casually," Hashem warns us. My relationship to you, says Hashem, will reflect your relationship to Me. If you show no concern for my commandments, I will show no concern for your needs!

In this week's *tochacha*, however, we find the expression, Hashem will smite you. This choice of words signifies the fact that Hashem Himself will dispense the punishment-as opposed to abandoning the Jewish people to the whims and cruelties of their enemies-will offer a measure of comfort and consolation.

I once asked my Rebbe, the Nesivos Sholom of blessed memory: Who is in a worse position, an individual who is so immersed in material indulgences that he totally neglects his spiritual obligations, or one who is skeptical, agnostic and constantly locked in philosophical battle with his Creator? He told me that the former has sunk to a lower level, for although he is not directly defiant, he is prone to wander further from his moorings and completely lose sight of his purpose in the world.

On the other hand, one who is rebellious and angry with Hashem is at least engaged in some form of dialogue, and subliminally acknowledges His Creator.

Perhaps this is *Zohar's* meaning. The *tochacha* in *Bechukosai* reflects the one who walks with Hashem casually, completely forgetting his father in Heaven as he immerses himself in a materialistic and narcissistic life. To such a person, the Torah first outlines the frightening consequences of his heedless way of life, and then offers the reassurance that although the person will have drifted far from his legacy, he will ultimately remember his rich ancestral roots and will be assisted from Above on his journey "homeward."

However, the *tochacha* in *Ki Savo* refers to those who openly rebel against Hashem, embracing false gods and the popular "isms" of the day. In response to *Klal Yisroel's* abdication of their special relationship with their Creator, Hashem smites back with relentless force. Embedded in His "retaliation," however, are the seeds of comfort arising from the realization that Hashem is not "finished" with us. No matter how blindly defiant and disloyal we are, Hashem will never sever His relationship with us; by afflicting us with hardships, exile and suffering, he will force us to turn back to Him.

In our own lives, we are often confronted with stormy relationships that result in acrimonious interaction. Nevertheless, as long as we keep the lines of communication open and maintain some form of dialogue, we can work on keeping alive a sense of mutual respect and brotherhood. It is only when we throw the relationship overboard and completely write one another off that hope for reconciliation dies, leaving both sides poorer.