

Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

Eikev 5768

And you shall teach them to your sons, to speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the way, when you go to bed and when you get up. (11:19)

The Gemara (Kiddushin 29b) derives from the word "sons" that only men must study Torah, not women. However, women are rewarded if they make sacrifices for the sake of their husbands' Torah study, as the Gemara says in Kesubos 62a, quoting the verse (Tehillim 127:2), "Vain it is for you who get up early and settle down late, eating the bread of suffering – so He will give for His beloved sleep." The Gemara understands this to mean: It is vain for you to toil to earn a living, because G-d gives livelihood to those who deprive themselves of sleep in order to study Torah. The words "deprive themselves of sleep" refer not only to the Torah scholars themselves but also to their wives, who wait up late at night for their husbands to return from the House of Study.

Another interpretation of this verse was given by the Rabbi Moshe of Ujhel, the Yismach Moshe, in his commentary Tefilah Lemoshe on Tehillim. He says that the word "kum" – get up – is used in another place (Amos 5:2) to refer to the Jewish people's arising from exile. Thus "mashkimei kum" means those who make early the arising from exile, i.e. those who force the end of exile, attempting to end it before the coming of moshiach. By so doing they are actually prolonging the exile.

Some people claim that even a false messianic movement is a good thing because it wakes Jews up from the slumber of exile, to remember that they are waiting for moshiach. But the truth, says the Yismach Moshe, is the opposite: when Jews forget to wait for moshiach, they are actually bringing moshiach nearer, as the Gemara says (Sanhedrin 97a): "Moshiach comes due to a diversion of our attention from him."

Thus we read the verse as follows: Vain it is for you who attempt to arise from exile early! You are actually "m'acharei sheves" – causing the redemption to come later. And as to your argument that you are waking Jews up – G-d will give the redemption "liyedido" – to His beloved Jewish people – "sheinah" – sleep, that is, when the Jews are sleeping in exile and diverting their attention from redemption."

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