"Recalling the Covenant"--an Important New Torah Commentary

View PDF



Would you like to study Torah with a Rabbi who has mastery over the text, depth of understanding, and breadth of knowledge? Do you want a teacher who not only is steeped in classic rabbinic interpretation, but who is aware of and sensitive to the literary features of the text, the relationships of Torah narratives with ancient stories of the Near East, insights of modern biblical scholarship?

All of us should want such a Rabbi and Teacher of Torah.

We have such a Rabbi and Teacher of Torah: Rabbi Moshe Shamah.

Rabbi Shamah is a remarkable man and a remarkable scholar. He has been serving for many years as Rabbi of a Sephardic Congregation in the Syrian Jewish community of Brooklyn. Over the years, he has taught and written about the Torah texts, and has engaged in lively conversations on the various interpretations of the words of the Torah. A close disciple of the late Rabbi Solomon D. Sassoon, Rabbi Shamah has learned from his teacher to study the Torah text with great care and exactitude, patiently extracting meanings that most readers would miss.

Rabbi Shamah has published a monumental commentary on the Torah: “Recalling the Covenant: A Contemporary Commentary on the Five Books of the Torah,” (Ktav Publishing House in association with the Sephardic Institute and Tebah Educational Services). This commentary takes the reader, patiently and thoughtfully, through the texts of the Torah. In its over 1000 pages, it reminds us of things we always knew (or always should have known!); and it opens new channels of information and interpretation that awaken our own intellectual faculties.

This is not a book that one could (or should) read in one quick sitting. Rather, it is a volume to be studied slowly and carefully; we need to imagine ourselves as students in Rabbi Shamah's synagogue, listening carefully to his explanations and his methods of text analysis. Indeed, as we read his book, we feel that we can hear his voice—the book is a fine reflection of his style of communicating ideas.

This is a book to own. One shouldn't buy it and then place it on the bookshelf. Rather, one should keep the book handy and study it week by week, reading the comments on each weekly Torah portion.

A RECEPTION IN HONOR OF RABBI SHAMAH AND HIS NEW TORAH COMMENTARY WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 13, AT 7 P.M., AT CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL, 2 WEST 70TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY. COPIES OF THE BOOK WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE.

THIS PROGRAM IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.