



Ohr Yerushalayim News

16th May 2015 - Volume 7 - Issue 44 פרשת בהר בחקתי - כ"ז אייר תשע"ה

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Josh Shields on the birth of a son. The Sholom Zochor takes place at their home, 14 Dorchester Avenue.

Mazel Tov to Rabbi & Mrs Benji Silverstone on the occasion of the Bar Mitzva of their son, Zevi, this Shabbos.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davenning this Shabbos for Shabbos Mevorchin which is part sponsored by the Rov in honour of the forthcoming Yahrzeit of his mother on Monday.

New Shacharis Minyan

There will be a new weekday Shacharis Minyan taking place at 8.00am.

Ladies Event

All ladies of the Kehilla are invited to a Breast Cancer awareness evening taking place in Shul on Tuesday evening from 8.15 - 9.15pm.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Cause For Effect

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you. (Vayikra 26:33)

Parashas Ki Savo in Sefer Devarim is read just in advance of Rosh Hashanah to remind us that there is a Judge in Heaven Who judges man on earth. It reminds us of the cause-and-effect relationship built into Creation, of our responsibility to uphold it, and of our culpability when we fail. Bechukosai, the other "fire-and-brimstone" parshah, is read in advance of the holiday of Shavuot to remind us where we received the responsibility for which we are judged on Rosh Hashanah.

It's complicated. Punishment is not only in response to the sins that are performed, but also for how punishment is carried out. It seems, from the Talmud, that Heaven is also concerned about appearances:

Rebi Yossi ben Chanina said: [The verse says,] "Like the flame that goes forth from between the potsherds, I looked, and behold a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud with a fire flashing up, so that a brightness was round about it; and out of the midst thereof as the color of Chashmal, out of the midst of the fire" (Yechezkel 1:4). Where did it go? Rav Yehudah said that Rav said: "It went to subdue the whole world under the wicked Nebuchadnezzar." For what reason? So that the peoples of the world should not say, 'The Holy One, Blessed is He, delivered His children into the hand of a lowly people.' The Holy One, Blessed is He, said, "Who caused Me to be a servant to idol worshippers? The sins of the Jewish people caused Me." (Chagigah 13b)

The verse is part of the vision of "Ma'aseh Merkavah" that Yechezkel had and described. The fire, of course, was spiritual and very Kabbalistic, but its impact on history was to assist Nebuchadnezzar in his takeover of the known world of that time. This is what G-d meant when He referred to Himself as "servant to idol worshippers."

What compelled G-d to act in this seemingly peculiar manner? The fact that the Jewish people were on their way to exile in Bavel—Babylonia—over which Nebuchadnezzar was king and ruler. It would have looked "bad" for G-d and the Jewish people had they been exiled to Bavel and Nebuchadnezzar not become the feared conquerer that he became. If they were going to be exiled, it had to be to a place "worthy" of

conquering G-d's people.

You would think that it wouldn't even make a difference at that point. If the Jewish nation reached a level where they became in need of exile, didn't they also reach a point where G-d should have turn His back on them? Yosef HaTzaddik may have gone into his exile in style, but it was just the opposite case for his descendants, especially those who were taken in chains to Bavel.

Is the idea literal? If yes, does it always apply? It would explain why the Greeks conquered their world before exiling the Jews of their time, and the Roman Empire spread vast and wide before doing the same. Is it the reason for Hitler's, ysv"z, unprecedented and "miraculous" takeover of Europe as he prepared the way for the Holocaust? If yes, then this would lend new and frightful meaning to the following:

All punishment comes to the world because of the Jewish people. (Yevamos 63a)

We might have thought that the "chicken" came before the "egg," but in this case, the opposite appears to be true. We watched nations become more powerful and then assumed that they just "happened" to overrun the Jewish people along their way to domination. The assumption has been that the Jewish people just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Apparently not. Apparently we should be able to predict history by the extent to which we, as a nation, backslide. If it is only a little then we can expect peace and international cooperation. If it is a lot and even catastrophic then we can expect some nation to emerge on the international scene in a block buster kind of way and have crazy success at subduing its enemies and increasing its reach of terror.

The relationship between what we do spiritually and what our enemies accomplish militarily, the Talmud is saying, is direct:

Onkelos the son of Kolonikos was the son of Titus's sister. He wanted to convert to Judaism, and went and raised Titus from the dead by magical arts and asked him, "Who is most in repute in the [other] world?"

He replied, "The Jewish people."

"What about joining them?" he asked.

The Week Ahead

פרשת בהר בחקתי	שבת מברכין סיון
1st Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.10pm / Not before 7.24pm
2nd Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.40pm / 8.02 - 8.10pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.06am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
1st Mincha	6.00pm
2nd Mincha	9.04pm
Rov's Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	10.09pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tuesday ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

He answered, "Their observances are burdensome and you will not be able to carry them out. Go and attack them in that world and you will be at the top, as it is written, "Her adversaries have become the head, etc." (Eichah 1:5). [This means that] whoever harasses the Jewish people becomes the most powerful nation. (Gittin 56b)

So direct is the correlation that we ought to pay serious attention to the rise of evil powers, especially the ones which are "gunning" for us. It should inspire to do some serious teshuvah, and quickly:

An official close to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei asserted that his government has a G-dly ordained right to annihilate Israel, Al Arabiya reported on Tuesday. The "government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has divine permission to destroy Israel," said Mojtaba Zolnour, a Khamenei representative in the elite Revolutionary Guards. According to semi-official state news agency Fars, Zolnour said that, "the Noble Koran permits the Islamic Republic of Iran to destroy Israel." He added that, "Even if Iran gives up its nuclear program, it will not weaken this country's determination to destroy Israel." (The Algemeiner, May 13, 2015)

As the article says, such threats are nothing new coming from Iran. They have spewed forth from the mouths of Iranian leaders ever since the Shah was deposed and replaced by the ayatollahs. They have never made any secret of their dreams and plans to eradicate the Jewish state. This is why PM Netanyahu takes them at their word and is fighting to move the world to as well.

What is different today is President Obama. Just as he did a 180 regarding the Arab world when he first came into office, he has done one now with respect to Iran and its nuclear program. The Western world in the late 1930s could not deal with the Nazi threat, and were not prepared to fight against it, so they pursued a path of appeasement. Rogue nations are causing the same problem today and once again, appeasement is becoming the accepted means to maintaining world peace.

President Obama's approach to Iran and Islam in general is so off-base in so many obvious ways that it becomes credible, for many, because it is just too incredible otherwise. The world had Iran where it wanted, at least on the ropes, when the American government decided to capitulate and pursue a path of peace. Perhaps, just as 9/11 made the current Administration think that improving relations with the Arabs while distancing itself from the Israelis would make a more secure America, it thinks the same about Iran as well.

I think this is also the reason why the President had a tough time using the "G" word with respect to the Armenian massacre by the Ottoman Empire starting in 1915. The Armenians are big on this, and it really matters a lot to them for current leaders to acknowledge the genocidal part of their past. Instead, President Obama talked around it and refused to state the simple and obvious fact.

Why? Because the Ottoman Empire in that part of the world evolved into the Republic of Turkey, an American and Nato ally. It is also an Islamic state, though a secular one. Obama can't use the "G" word because, as always, he is terrified of offending the "A" world. In true liberal fashion, he appeases the enemy while shunning the ally.

But that's not the main point here. In this discussion it matters less why the American President is empowering the Iranians than it does that he is. The fact that it is against logic makes it even more important, applying the verse, "This is from G-d, that which is wondrous in our eyes" (Tehillim 118:23). The wondrousness of a historical event is what makes it appear more like overt Divine Providence.

Ironically, it was unusual circumstances that put another Democrat, President Truman, into Office just at the time the Jewish people needed an advocate in the White House back in 1948. It is a Democrat as well who has also come to Office as a result of unusual and even questionable circumstances, just at a time that the Jewish people, apparently, require an antagonist in the White House.

This is not to absolve the US President of any blame for what he has done and plans to do. This is to shift the focus to the real issue at hand. Though it is the American President who is empowering a Jewish enemy, it is the Jewish people who are empowering the American President, and Kabbalah explains how.

It is a long and complex discussion, but this is the long and short of it. Though gas fuels cars, what fuels gas? Though electricity moves heavy things, what moves electricity? Energy. What is energy? Well, it's . . . it's . . . something we find in gas and electricity and in people as well that gives things life and lets them move. We don't know exactly what it is, but we are

well acquainted with what it can do.

The reason why science cannot adequately define energy is because they are trying to understand it in physical terms. Energy is not physical but spiritual, holy sparks of Divine light to be exact. They are in everything that exists and animate all that lives.

Including evil, because just as gasoline fuels a car that is used to help others in need, likewise does gasoline fuel getaway cars used for robbing banks. One source of fuel with both a good and potentially bad application. One source of life, but it can be used to do good or to do evil.

To maintain free will, evil has to exist. To maintain evil, holy sparks have to be shared. This is something G-d has established and oversees, to make sure that evil gets only as many sparks as it needs to do its part to help man exercise free will, and not more. Evil exists, but it can be kept in check and used as a vehicle to earn reward in the World-to-Come.

If evil becomes overly dominant in society it is because it has gained access to additional holy sparks, more than its Divinely-allotted amount. Somehow the Divinely-established balance has been lost, and history has shown us what happens to the world and man when that occurs.

How can that happen? Kabbalah explains that the additional holy sparks feeding evil can only come from the Jewish people, from the sins they commit. Either they are doing things they shouldn't, or not doing things they should. Even doing the right thing at the wrong time or in the wrong place feeds holiness to evil.

How do we know when this is happening? We first learn this lesson from Ya'akov Avinu:

He heard Lavan's sons saying, "Ya'akov has taken everything that belonged to our father; from our father he has gained so much." Ya'akov saw Lavan's face, and it wasn't the same as before. (Bereishis 31:1-2)

Anti-Semitism is the key. When dislike of Jews increases it is a sign that evil is getting stronger in the world, and that it is getting more than its due of holy sparks. That is when it is time to do some serious national introspection, and to find ways to stem the flow of holy sparks to the side of evil before it overcomes the side of good.

Tefillah Nuggets

Dani Epstein

מחיה מתים אתה Reviver of the dead are You

This particular brocho opens with – אתה גבור You are mighty. In which case, asks the Chofetz Chaim, why is the word אתה repeated here? We could simply say מחיה מתים without the אתה, since it is already implied.

To answer this question the Chofetz Chaim turns to the gemoroh in Taanis (2a):

אמר ר' יוחנן ג' מפתחות בידו של הקב"ה שלא נמסרו ביד שליח ואלו הן מפתח של גשמים ומפתח של חיה ומפתח של תחיית המתים מפתח של גשמים

Rav Yochonon said: three keys are retained by Hashem, and were not entrusted into the hand of a messenger and these are they: the key to rain, the key to childbirth and the key to the revivification of the dead.

The reason for this is simple. Were the key to rain, and by extension success in business, to be handed over to a malach, and angel, almost no-one would have any parnossah. The malach will look around and say: "Hang-on, this fellow spoke loshon horah yesterday; today he can starve as a salutary lesson. That fellow forgot to make a brocho over his biscuits; let him starve today and tomorrow he might remember to do so."

Perhaps the malach might give parnossah parsimoniously; we would still see thousands dying every day.

Only Hashem, in His infinite mercy and boundless patience, is prepared to provide everyone with parnossah despite their shortcomings.

This applies to childbirth as well. How many women would survive childbirth on their merits alone? If the malachim would be in charge of childbirth, few women would survive.

How much more so when it comes to – תחיית המתים the revivification of the dead. How many people would actually make it?

The gemoroh in Kesubos (111b) says: כל המשתמש באור תורה אור תורה מחייהו וכל שאין משתמש באור תורה אין אור תורה מחייהו - anyone who makes use of the light of Torah, the light of Torah will revive him, anyone who does not make use of the light of Torah, the light of Torah will not revive him.

A malach would take one look at the average person and say: "What portion in Torah does this person have? Why revive him?"

Yet Hashem in His infinite mercy will find whatever merit He can in order to revive this person. Perhaps this person helped a Talmid Chochochom or contributed towards a Torah cause. Only Hashem can extend His merciful judgement this far; a malach certainly could not.

This explains the seemingly unwarranted repetition of the word – אתה in that Chazal wanted us to understand this concept that תחיית המתים in its various forms – which includes our daily sustenance, childbirth as well as revivification – is handled directly by Hashem, and not through an intermediary, hence we say "Reviver of the dead are You".