



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ג אב תשע"ו – עקב – 27th August 2016 - Volume 9 - Issue 5

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to Dr and Mrs Mike Wilks on the birth of a great grandson, born to Mr & Mrs Zevi Saperia.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Lenny Horwitz on the birth of twin grandsons, born to Mr & Mrs Dubbi Horwitz.

Support the Minyanim

As we're now in holiday time, a reminder to all those in town to please support the Shul Minyanim.

The Reward Will Be In the End **Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)**

This week we read the parsha of Eikev. "V'ha'yah aikev tishm'une ais hamishpatim... {And it will be 'eikev' you will accept the judgments...}[7:12]" The word 'eikev' has many different meanings which the different commentators incorporate into their explanation of the passuk.

The Targum explains 'eikev' to mean 'in exchange.' In exchange for your accepting the laws, the passuk continues and says that Hashem will maintain the covenant and kindness of which He swore to the Patriarchs.

Rashi explains the word 'eikev' to mean 'heel.' If you will accept those 'light' mitzvos which a person (often) tramples on with his heel...

Eikev can also mean the end, as the heel is the 'end' of the body. The Baal HaTurim often explains the connection between the last words of one parsha and the first words of the following parsha. Here he points out that the previous parsha, after commanding us to keep the commandments, concluded with the words: "Today to do them [7:11]." Our parsha begins: "V'hayah eikev--And it will be in the end." Today, this world, is the place to fulfill the commandments but the reward will only be in the end, in the world to come.

Last night my wife and I visited an old neighbor of ours who had lost her husband while we were away in the States. I had mentioned them in parsha-insights a while ago but I feel it deserves to be repeated.

They were both survivors of the Holocaust. He had been married with children when the atrocities began. By the end of the war he was alone in a way that I don't think any of us could even imagine. She was single when she was sent to Auschwitz.

My wife and I learned to be sensitive to her sensitivities. My wife once 'snapped' the gum she was chewing while our neighbor was visiting. She jumped and suddenly had a look of terror on her face. She, blushing, explained that the sound reminded her of the whips she had been subjected to. Another young couple in the building once brought home a dog. She took refuge in our apartment which was the closest door available. She explained that 'Dr.' Mengele Y"SH had wanted to know what happens when a human is bit by a dog and nothing is done to treat the wound. She was chosen as the 'patient' and since then had a tremendous fear of dogs.

They met after the war and married. Wanting to start a more hopeful life than Europe could offer, they were part of the 'illegal immigration' to Palestine. When the State was declared, life didn't become all that much easier for them. She would often laugh, hearing about the aliyah rights that the government granted immigrants and comparing it to

what they had been faced with on their 'aliyah' about thirty five years earlier. We received rent subsidies on our apartment--they lived in tents. We had three years during which we could buy a car and all major appliances tax-free--they were draining swamps. The list went on and on.

Two children were born to them, a son and a daughter. The son fought in the Six Day War but died as a very young man. I never got clear if he died in the war or from an illness afterwards.

When my wife and I moved to Israel they were already older people. He worked hard in the kitchen of one of the local institutions. She would deliver the mail. Until they became too old and feeble, they were there daily, earning their honest living.

They were people who had borne so much pain and suffering and yet carried on with their lives with happiness and a sincere devotion to Hashem. I often thought that any one of the things which they had endured probably would have knocked me right out of the batter's box. But they endured.

As we were sitting and talking last night, reminiscing about her husband, a"h, my gaze fell onto the numbers still etched on her arm. I thought to myself that we really don't have too many people like this left. People who suffered so much only because they were Jews--and yet didn't budge.

We are accustomed to such comforts and luxuries. One of my Rabbeim once said that when we want to describe to our children how hard it was when we were kids, we'll have to tell them that when we wanted to change the channel of the television, we had to actually get out of our chair, walk to the television and turn the dial...

I also thought about the Rashi that I quoted above. Rashi spoke about the commandments which get trampled on--I was thinking about the people who get trampled on.

She said to us a number of times that this world doesn't seem to have any room for her. Money, money, money. That's all that seems to matter. That is the idolatry of today. That's all people want--that's all people respect. Everyone wants it but don't want to work for it. (And that was her assessment without her ever having heard about IPO's

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת עקב

1st Mincha / Candle Lighting	6.35pm / Not before 6.45pm
2nd Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.40pm / No later than 7.56pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.39am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	7.57pm
Shuir by Josh Shields	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	9.02pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

and internet stocks...)

Her husband of blessed memory worked hard and simply in order to earn his living. He never expected anything from anyone else and never wanted anything from anyone else. Amongst the Sages of the Talmud we find Rabi Yochanan the sandal-maker. That is how he is referred to throughout the Talmud. Productive, honest, proud. My neighbor was a potato peeler—those were the only ‘chips’ he worked with. Productive, honest, proud. Very often, those are the people who get trampled on.

Our parsha warns: “Be careful not to forget Hashem your G-d... You’ll build beautiful houses, have much livestock, amass large amounts of silver and gold... and forget Hashem.[8:11-14]”

Every person is created in the ‘form’ of Hashem. Last night I was thinking that perhaps forgetting the poor, ‘insignificant’ people is included in this warning not to forget Hashem. The truth is that we are the ones who stand to lose the most by not getting to know and learn from such incredibly stalwart people. As I was looking at the numbers on her arm I was thinking that the window of opportunity is slowly closing. May Hashem grant us the wisdom to open our eyes and our hearts.

National Consequence

Rabbi Aron Tendler (Torah.org)

Expressing appreciation is central to the proper social workings of families and society. As an interdependent, integrated entity, we must be able to communicate our understanding of the value imparted when we are given a gift, a helping hand, a bit of advice, a word of encouragement, or a listening ear.

This is in contrast to the animal world where interdependency is a by-product of nature and instinct. The lion’s den, the ant hill, or the beehive function as perfectly effective societies because Hashem has ordered them to be so. The worker bee, ant, or lioness, do their jobs because the law of the jungle dictates such behavior, whether or not they are acknowledged and thanked for doing so.

This is not so with the human species. We are told that “if not for the fear of government (meaning: potential societal punishment) man would swallow alive his fellow man”. Humankind must be taught and trained in the necessary decencies of social expectations and behaviors.

The most basic unit of human interaction is the parent – child relationship. It is essential for the continuity of the human race and framed in basic, instinctual feelings. A mother and father are protective of their child far beyond the basic necessities for survival. In many instances, the parent cares and protects far beyond what the child’s behavior would dictate.

In such instances, parents must be trained, against their instinctual tendencies, to show “tough love” for their more difficult and wayward children. However, these same feelings of love and protection are not instinctual in the child – parent relationship.

Children are easily able to ignore the primacy that parents have, and should continue to have, in their lives. Under the rationalized guise of independence and individual expression, children can be exceptionally hurtful and uncaring toward their parents. They too must be trained to understand the value imparted to them from parents who raised them, cared for them, stood beside and behind them, and imparted to them the ultimate gift of life. They too must be trained to express their appreciation for all that the parents have gifted to them.

In last week’s Parsha, Moshe reviews the Ten Commandments. As everyone knows, the fifth commandment is to “honor one’s father and mother”. The inclusion of this law on the Luchos shows the importance that Hashem placed upon this fundamental relationship, as well as underscoring that such a relationship is not necessarily instinctual. (e.g. the Torah does not command us to sleep, breathe, or eat.)

The relationship between the Bnai Yisroel and Hashem is often described as that of a parent to a child and a child to a parent. It reflects the total dependency that a child has upon his parent and the total dependency that the nation has upon Hashem. The natural tendency of the child and the nation is to deny their dependency upon the parental figure. However, as the child must be taught to understand the primacy of the parent in his life, so too must the nation be taught to understand the primacy of G-d in their lives.

Expressing appreciation begins with understanding. Our expectations for appreciation are far greater when relating to a maturing or adult child than with a younger child. The maturing child has the ability to understand how important parents are, and to recognize the fundamental gift of life that they have imparted. The same is true for the Bnai Yisroel. Hashem had a far greater expectation that we would express our appreciation (through our adherence to the Torah) after we had matured than when we were just starting out.

The 40 years in the desert were our years of national maturation. The daily manifestations of G-d’s caring in the setting of the desert emphasized our total dependency upon Hashem. This assaulted our natural tendency toward independence and forced us to acknowledge our dependency and our responsibility to express appreciation. As Moshe said good-bye to his beloved nation, he explained to them their fundamental dependency upon G-d, and forewarned them about their tendency to deny it.

Pasuk 17, Chapter 9 in this week’s Parsha states, “...be careful that you do not say to yourself, “It was my own strength and personal power that brought me all this prosperity”. Moshe forewarned us that our personal and national downfall will come about when we do not give Hashem His due credit.

Regardless of personal education, training, initiative, ingenuity, national unity, effort, military might and intelligence, our successes are the direct result of Hashem’s ongoing direction and intervention, and it is incumbent upon us to express that understanding and appreciation.

As the Bnai Yisroel were poised to enter the Land of Israel, Moshe directed their attention to the realities of being the “Chosen People” living in the “Promised Land”. The bottom line was cause and effect, action and reaction. As pointed out, the experience of the desert taught them basic dependency upon G-d. This was most evident with the Mana that fell daily from heaven and in the fact that their shoes and clothing hadn’t worn out.

These experiences were the foundation for the nation having absolute confidence and faith in Hashem regarding the future battles for the Land. However, His protection came with a price tag: expressing their appreciation by following His Torah and His Mitzvot, and removing from Eretz Yisroel all idolatrous practices and influence. The Land was and is a special place where the symbiotic relationship between G-d, Land, and People is manifest in the dirt, stones, fruit, and rainfall.

By keeping the ways of Hashem, all of nature will serve us faithfully. Children will be born whole and healthy; the farms will provide for a strong economy; our cattle herds will grow and prosper; and the Land will flow with milk and honey. We will be victorious in battle and our military successes must be attributed to G-d, and only G-d.

Don’t make the mistake of thinking that we merited our successes. If the past was any indication of the future, then we were destined to sin and lose faith, and to “test” G-d. G-d will then want to punish us; yet, His promise to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, will guarantee His forgiveness. Hashem simply wants us to show our understanding and appreciation by listening to His laws and reaping the benefits of His natural law.

The second paragraph of Shema, which is recorded in the sixth Aliya, captures the essence of Parshas Ekev. A closer look at this paragraph, and the entire concept of cause and effect, suggests that the Eretz Yisroel is ruled by a system more intimate than reward and punishment. We don’t just receive reward and punishment. As judiciously mandated through our actions, we put into effect a consequence that is as natural to the workings of the universe as nature itself. Through keeping the Torah we empower a system to function, as intended, in the service of humankind. If we do not fuel the system through our adherence to Halacha, then the natural system grinds to a halt resulting in famine and destruction. Moshe presented these conditions to the Bnai Yisroel as they prepared to occupy the land. Appreciation through devotion, commitment, and faith is the only thing that G-d asks in payment for His love and protection.

“...what does Hashem want of you? Only that you remain in awe of G-d, that you follow all His paths, love Him, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.” (10:12)