



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr and Mrs Henry Brownson on the birth of a granddaughter to Mr and Mrs Yosef Chaim Brownson in London.

Mazel Tov to Mr and Mrs David Steinberg on the birth of a grandson to Mr and Mrs Saul Steinberg in London.

Mazal Tov to Mr and Mrs Yehuda Issler on the engagement of Esti to Mottie Sandler from Gateshead. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Mr and Mrs David Issler.

### Simchas Beis HaShoeva

The Shul will be holding a Simchas Beis HaShoeva on Motzei Yom Tov, Tuesday October 18th, from 9.00pm onwards, in the Rov's Succa at 48 Waterpark Road. Everyone is invited.

### Hoshanos

Hoshanos once again will be available via the Shul. Please put your name and quantity required on the list on the notice wall.

### Leil Hoshana Rabo

We are pleased to offer in conjunction with PBM (Professionals Beis Hamedrash) a learning programme to which the wider community is welcome. Details inside.

## Now Or Never

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Listen, O heavens, and I will speak! And let the earth hear the words of my mouth! (Devarim 32:1)

The Talmud says that after history as we know it is said-and-done, the gentile nations of the past will complain to G-d that they were short-shrifted (Avodah Zarah 3a). They will argue that they lost their chance to go to the World-to-Come because they were not given Torah and mitzvos. Had they received Torah like the Jewish people, they will say, they too would have upheld it and earned their own portions in the World-to-Come.

Right.

"Why did you not clamor for Torah while you were still in the previous world?" G-d could ask them.

"We would have," they might say, "had we known what it was leading to."

"Why did you not check and find out while you still could? Why didn't you investigate Torah and see why Jews believed in it?"

"Well, ah . . ." they will be forced to say.

In any case, the Talmud continues, G-d will humor them nonetheless. He will tell them:

"Fools! Only one who prepared from before Shabbos will have what to eat on Shabbos!" (Avodah Zarah 3a)

In other words, G-d will tell them, just as a Jew had to prepare before Shabbos in order to have cooked food on Shabbos, likewise you had to have to perform mitzvos in the previous world to enjoy their benefit now.

"Nevertheless, I will give to you an easy mitzvah called 'Succah.' Go

perform it!" (Avodah Zarah 3a)

This statement causes bells to go off in the Talmud. Mitzvos in the World-to-Come? Not possible, as Rebi Yehoshua explains. The Torah, at the end of Parashas VaEschanan, says that mitzvos can only be performed in this world, not in the World-to-Come. Was G-d merely playing a joke on them?

The Talmud says no. G-d doesn't play jokes on His creations.

In any case, the Talmud continues:

Immediately, all the gentiles build succos on their roofs. G-d however makes the sun beat on them like it does in the heat of summer. [When the heat becomes too intense] the gentiles kick their succos and leave. (Avodah Zarah 3a)

If G-d does not play tricks on His creations, then why did He make it impossible to fulfill the mitzvah He gave them as a test? As the Talmud points out, even a Jew is allowed to leave the succah in such extreme and uncomfortable conditions. What did G-d prove?

The Talmud answers:

[A Jew] would leave, but they would not kick the succah [in frustration]. (Avodah Zarah 3a)

The difference between a Jew and a gentile, the Talmud says, is not the mitzvah per se, but each relates to it. What does kicking something in anger reveal? That the person feels betrayed, taken advantage of, cheated. If a Jew is forced out of the succah for reasons beyond his control, he does not feel slighted by G-d, but reprimanded. He does not see himself as the abused, but as the abuser.

The verse says:

Fortunate is the man whom You, G-d, chastise, and from Your Torah You teach him. (Tehillim 94:12)

G-d did not play a trick on the gentiles. He set them straight about Torah and mitzvos. He told them it wasn't the mitzvah itself that counted most, but how the person doing the mitzvah relates to it. This is what Moshe Rabbeinu tried to teach the Jewish people prior to his death when he said:

Now, Israel, what does G-d, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear G-d, your G-d . . . (Devarim 10:12)

Isn't fear of G-d only ONE of 613 mitzvos? What about the other 612 mitzvos?

That was the whole point, Moshe Rabbeinu was teaching. Once a person masters fear of G-d, the rest of the mitzvos for him become far more "natural." For the person who truly fears G-d, performing mitzvos becomes second nature, as they will actually become in the Messianic Era when there really will be no yetzer hara anymore (Succah 52a).

A major part of reaching the ultimate level of fear of G-d is Divine chastisement. We do not know ourselves as well as G-d does, and only He can set us on the straight path and keep us there. If we don't heed His "advice," how can we possibly achieve personal spiritual perfection?

Kicking the succah on the way out proved to the gentiles that even if they had mitzvos to perform in this world, they would never have achieved the fear of G-d they are meant to promote. They would not have developed the proper relationship to them, and therefore

the mitzvos would not have accomplished what they were meant to develop in the person performing them.

It is one's relationship to mitzvos that really counts the most, as the Talmud may also be alluding to on a different level. This however is only perceivable after first explaining a concept the Maharal revealed. It is a mind-blowing idea to say the least, and it helps to answer the question the Talmud raises about mitzvos in the World-to-Come.

The halachah of Eruv Tavshillin was created by the rabbis to allow a person to prepare for Shabbos on Yom Tov. In general, one is not allowed to prepare for another day on Yom Tov, only for the day itself. However, sometimes Yom Tom is on Friday, and preparing for Shabbos on Thursday is not always the ideal thing.

Therefore, by preparing an Eruv Tavshillin on Thursday when it is still permissible to cook for Shabbos, a person has essentially begun cooking for Shabbos before Yom Tov. The Eruv is a legal device designed to extend the Shabbos preparation process into Yom Tov so that the cooking can be completed on Friday.

Eruv Tavshillin is an interesting halachah to discuss, but not here. What is important is the idea it teaches, and how it pertains to this discussion, including the mitzvah of Succah. For, just as the walls of the succah enclose that which is within in, likewise does the Eruv Tavshillin enclose Yom Tov within it. One's relationship to mitzvos in this world, it will turn out, will act similarly with respect to the Messianic Era as well.

The halachah says that an Eruv Tavshillin allows cooking for Shabbos at a time when it is not otherwise permissible because of what was performed before Yom Tov. Similarly, the Maharal explains that a person who correctly performed mitzvos beyond the Messianic Era when there was a yetzer hara will be able to perform them in the Messianic Era when there won't be one. Since he performed mitzvos when he had to fight the yetzer hara, he will be allowed to perform mitzvos even when there is no yetzer hara to fight.

To what end? All the reward for performing mitzvos is from overcoming the yetzer hara who tried to interfere with doing them. No yetzer hara, no resistance. No resistance, no reward, right?

Wrong, says the Maharal. Part of the reward for properly performing mitzvos while we have a yetzer hara is the opportunity to perform them when we will no longer have one—as if we still do. Just as mastering fear of G-d makes the other 612 mitzvos easier to perform, but does not reduce the reward for doing them, likewise properly performing mitzvos in this world gives us the reward of Messianic mitzvos without any loss of benefit.

This is the deeper meaning of, "The reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah" (Pirkei Avos 4:2). The reward of a mitzvah performed in this yetzer hara-oriented world is the opportunity to perform a mitzvah in the yetzer hara-less world, and continue to receive reward for it. The interest accrued from the proper use of free will in this world pays dividends long after free will becomes a concept of the past.

According to the Talmud, this is true not just of the Messianic Era, but even into Olam HaBa—the World-to-Come. This is what G-d will tell the gentiles at that time when they complain about their lack of mitzvos in this world. "Mitzvos still exist," He will tell them, "but only for the person who performed them in the previous world and developed the proper relationship to them. Only the person who prepared on 'Erev Shabbos' can eat on 'Shabbos.' Your complaint," He will prove to them, "is far too little, and far too late."

Knowing this, one is now ready to better appreciate this week's parsha, and the holiday of Succos that follows.

**No Magic Kingdom** **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)**

When I will proclaim the Name of Hashem, ascribe greatness to our G-d.

Meshech Chochmah: We can conceptually telescope the function of the Jewish people into a simple, neat formula: Our purpose is to live within the natural world, but to demonstrate the imprint of Hashem's providential supervision of our individual lives. We are to sow and

plant and reap – but to then take the first portions of our crops to the beis hamikdash, and to G-d's holy servants there. Three times yearly, we are to entrust our possessions to Hashem's protection, as we show ourselves before Him in the Temple. The enmity of surrounding peoples is held in check by their fear of Hashem. In all of our doings, we invoke and bless the name of Hashem. The upshot of living this way is that when we act properly, the earth itself acknowledges our behavior by more generously yielding its produce. This happens within the laws of nature, and does not require altering them through miraculous intervention.

This kind of life style is, despite its physical and material trappings, a spiritual existence. To those who understand, it is clearer that olam habo.

Such, however, was not the life the Bnei Yisrael lived in the time of Moshe. That life tore asunder all laws of nature. The ordinary conventions of life did not operate. The mohn fell daily; the Pillar of Cloud and the Presence of Hashem were open and manifest.

G-d truly walked before them. It was a grand moment – but did it have anything to do with the actual purpose of life that we outlined above? They lived in a kind of olam habo – not in this world! Chazal emphasize how surreal was their existence. "Grace is false" – this refers to the generations of Moshe and Yehoshua; 'Beauty is vain' – this is the generation of Chizkiyahu; 'The woman who fears Hashem – she is to be praised' – this is the generation of R. Yehudah b'rebi Ela'i." The grace shown to the generation of the Wilderness is false, as we showed above. Chizkiyahu's time was also punctuated by the miraculous, including the incredible defeat of Sancherev's army. But in the time of R. Yehudah b'rebi Ela'i, six yeshiva students shared a single garment and studied Torah. They lived entirely within the confines of natural law, and elevated it by their decision to study Torah even in poverty. In those other generations mentioned in the midrash, their was almost no room left for the exercise of free will; Hashem and His Will were so apparent, that the room for struggle was constricted.

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If commonplace miracles make life artificial, what was the point of those generations? The answer is that they placed our people on a firm footing for the future. Just as the first two commandments of the Ten establish the most important foundational elements of the Torah, the forty years in the wilderness created an experiential basis for emunah. It was not the miracles per se that accomplished this (other than for the least astute among them), but what the Bnei Yisrael were able to do with their time, once their needs were miraculously provided. They had four magical decades to pore over the Torah, to explain it well and deeply, and in so doing, acquire a bedrock faith which they transmitted to their offspring.

For this, they needed a Moshe. Moshe redirected their energies to the task of deeply comprehending Torah. This was a very different role from that of previous greats. The avos did not generally see Hashem as a constant worker of miracles. Avrohom, our Founding Father, was not even granted a burial plot for his wife through G-d working out a miracle or a deal for him. He had to acquire title the hard way, paying a premium price. Not so Moshe, who was entirely at home with miraculous existence – and understood its place and its value.

Thus, the Zohar calls Moshe the “spouse of the matron.” The latter, according to the Gra, means the Shechinah, which relates to the world through natural means, in accordance with the name Elokim, the aspect of G-d that uses fixed law.

Moshe is the complementary spouse of the fixity of law. Through his mastery of the miraculous – the opposite of law – he instructed the Bnei Yisrael to be able to live lives within the limitations of natural law, but to live them so richly as to bring blessing and abundance even within the world of teva.

This, then, is the meaning of our pasuk: When I (singular, i.e. Moshe) will proclaim the Name of Hashem – the Doer of miracles, who breaks the laws of nature at will – then you (plural, i.e. the Bnei Yisrael) – ascribe greatness to Eloken, to the aspect of law. The life you lead in the here and now, in the ordinary non-miraculous world will lend power to the Heavenly Court to shower blessing in return, even within the confines of the laws of nature.

## The Happiness Box

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

Every once in a while when reading a bed time story to the younger children I find myself in the end wiping a tear from the corner of my eye and wondering if any of the children are really capable of appreciating the depth of the seemingly simple story, if it is not meant more for the parents and if we get it either.

One such book reappeared on the bookshelf recently. It must have been with all the stuff for sukkos 'cause it certainly belongs there. It's called, “The Happiness Box”. The plot is something like this. There's this kid that's never happy with what he has. He finds things to complain about all day. Whatever he has is not enough or not just right and all he can find is fault.

One day after his family moves into a beautiful new house a giant package arrives. It's a washing machine or some other large appliance and the kid is suffering from existential nausea because it's not for him. His clever father convinces him that the box is the real item of desire and it's just for him. It's called “a happiness box” and while inside one must think only happy thoughts.

This boy accepts the premise of the box and at first begrudgingly but later with greater ease is able to generate happiness producing thoughts such as; “Sometimes my mother makes dinners I like.” And other such affirming statements that put him into a state of mind that makes him feel rich and full. After a while he's complaining a lot less. Then he becomes anxious about going to summer camp because all his possessions need to fit neatly into a duffel bag and he would have to leave “the box” at home. What would become of his state of happiness? He then realizes the great truth that the happiness is not in his box but in his head. The important life lesson is well learned. The children are fast asleep but I am more awake.

The simple child's story reminds me a little of a bad joke about a fellow who claims his dog is so talented he can do anything he is

commanded to do. The challenge is taken up by a friend who throws a stick a distance and commands the dog, “Fetch!”

The dog looks up at him and begins his diatribe. “All day long people tell me what to do. Roll over! Jump! Go through the fiery hoop! Good dog. Bad dog. Sit! Heal. Eat this! Don't eat that! I can't take it anymore. It's no fun being a dog. I hate it. I wish I were never born! The fellow interrupts the dog and tells him with a sense of outrage, “All I asked you to do was fetch.” The dog answers back with surprise, “Ohhhhhh! I thought you said “Kvetch”.

Sukkos is referred to in our liturgy as “the time of our happiness”. How do we celebrate? We leave our lovely homes and sit exposed to the elements in little boxes. We are commanded by the Torah; “and you should rejoice with your holiday and be only happy!”

Maybe the story is not so simplistic and the joke not so (as we say in yiddish) “farfetched”. It's very easy to be focused on what's missing in life; to give special recognition to the cruel and heartless; to the unfinished business of history and history of business. Even more so these days we need a way to regain a sense of optimism. How about 7 days in “a happiness box” to see what's right in G-d's world. Hearing clearly the commandment as it is pronounced is a critical point. No where does it say, “kvetch”!

We all know how we can feel sometimes and how it creates a contagion of negativity. Therefore we hung two signs in our sukkah. One upon entering reads, “You are entering a no kvetching zone”. The other posted prominently reads, “Don't even think of kvetching in the sukkah!” The Vilna Gaon called this the hardest mitzvah in the Torah to fulfill. So, don't expect it to happen with a simple story, a bad joke, by reciting an imperative verse, or by hanging a humorous sign but it sure is a good beginning.

## Shemini Atzeres

Dr. Nosson Chayim Leff (Torah.org)

Let us work with the Sfas Emes's very first ma'amar in the section entitled “Lesukkos” (“For Sukkos”). This ma'amar has much to tell us both about Sukkos and about Shemini Atzeres.

The Sfas Emes begins by telling us that the eight days of Sukkos give the world its life for the entire year. That is, on Rosh Hashana, HaShem decides the measure of chiyus (vibrancy, vitality) for the world in the year to come. But it is on Sukkos that the chiyus actually flows out to give life to all creation. The Torah provides a unique mitzva as a metaphor for this feature of reality. That mitzva is nisuch hamayim, the ceremonial offering of waters poured over the mizbei'ach (altar), on Sukkos (and only on Sukkos).

The chiyus that flows to the world on Sukkos is a life-force for olam hazeh (literally, “this world”). But the Sfas Emes is probably using the term to refer to physical/material existence in general). Obviously, non-Jews also participate in olam hazeh. For this reason, the fact that Sukkos is the time when chiyus flows out to the physical/material world has an important implication. It implies that non-Jews, too, have access to this life-force. The Torah provides a metaphor to express the connection linking the nations of the world to HaShem on Sukkos. That metaphor is the korban (sacrificial offering) of 70 bulls that we bring over the course of Sukkos. The format of this korban reflects the notion that 70 nations comprise all humankind. Thus, as we see, the Torah provides a place for all nations to participate in the celebration of Sukkos.

By contrast, the chiyus that flows out to the world on Shemini Atzeres is for the life of olam habba (literally, the “world to come,” but again, probably intended by the Sfas Emes more generally to refer to the life of ruchniyus — spirituality). That life is uniquely for Bnei Yisroel. Why? Because this chiyus hapenimiyus (inner life-force) is expressed through Torah, and Torah is the central feature of our lives.

But there is a major problem. In olam hazeh, we can perceive only the world's external appearance. Thus we see nature, but not HaShem, Who is behind nature. Because our perception of the world is misleading, we are at risk. For, as we know, bad metaphysics leads to bad physics, Fortunately, the Sfas Emes tells us, we also have available protection in our exposed, dangerous situation. The mitzva of sukka

