



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to Dr & Mrs David Wolfson on the engagement of their granddaughter, Esti Wacks from Gateshead to Boruch Grant from Manchester.

Siyum Mishnayos

The Siyum on Sidrei Nezikin and Kodshim will take place after Davening this Shabbos followed by Kiddush in the Shul hall.

Evening Chaburah

The evening Chabura led by R' Moshe Aron Gurwicz will be starting the third Perek of Kesuvos, אלו נערות, on Monday evening June 5th. If you are interested in joining there are Chavrusos available, please speak to Avi Stern.

Sefira Shakedown

Congratulations to the Shul Sefiras Shakedown team and all their generous sponsors for winning the category of most pledged money, winning 20% of the pot, almost £3,000 for the Shul.

Thank You

Thank you to Yehuda Cramer of Flower Haven for the beautiful floral arrangement that adorned the Omud over Yom Tov.

The Lesson of "Count Also The Family of Gershon"

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Parshas Naso begins with the instruction to "count also the family of Gershon" [Bamidbar 4:22]. Levi had three sons — Gershon, Kehas, and Merari. We learned at the end of last week's parsha that the Leviyim were counted separately from the rest of the Jewish people. Parshas Bamidbar contained the description of the counting of Kehas, one of Levi's sons. Our parsha, Naso, picks up where Bamidbar left off, with the instruction to count the family of Gershon! This will be followed by the commandment to count the children of Levi's third son, Merari.

The Abarbanel asks why the Torah split up the counting of Leviim in such a strange fashion. We would expect that either all three branches of the family of Levi should be mentioned in Parshas Bamidbar since they already began there with the counting of the Kehas branch of the family or else Parshas Naso should have begun with the counting of the Leviim and should include all three branches of the family! What is the purpose of splitting up the counting of the Leviyim?

The Daas Zekeinim m'Baalei HaTosfos point out another anomaly. With the counting of Kehas, the Torah writes "By the word of G-d, in the hand of Moshe" (al pi Hashem b'yad Moshe). Likewise, with the counting of Merari, the Torah also writes "al pi Hashem b'yad Moshe." However, concerning the counting of the family of Gershon, the Torah only says "al pi Hashem" — it does not mention "b'yad Moshe."

The Daas Zekeinim concludes that apparently, the counting of the family of Gershon was done by the family of Gershon themselves! Moshe Rabbeinu just asked them to give him a number. The family performed a self-census and gave the tally back to Moshe, but Moshe himself was not involved in the counting. Why should that be?

With Abarbanel's answer to his question, we can perhaps understand the teaching of the Daas Zekeinim as well. The Abarbanel says a beautiful thought. Levi had three sons — Gershon, Kehas, and Merari. Gershon was the eldest son. In Judaism (and in the world in general, for the most part) the first born always receives the preeminent position. He receives a double portion of his father's inheritance. He is the bechor. He always has special importance.

However, among the sons of Levi, the family of Kehas had the most significant duties. This was the family that was assigned to carry the Aron [Ark] and the other keylim ["vessels"] of the Mishkan. Gershon did other things, but the second born received the preeminent assignment, not the first born. As the Abarbanel points out, this was somewhat of a slight to the Bnei Gershon. The Abarbanel says that even though the Almighty had His reasons for giving the Bnei Kehas the more preeminent role, it is still necessary to take into account the feelings of the first born. He must be compensated with some sort of a "consolation prize". It is necessary to make him feel good, in spite of the fact that he has been slighted. Therefore, Parshas Naso begins with the words "Count also the Children of Gershon..." Gershon gets prime billing at the start of the parsha to make him feel good.

The Abir Yosef adds that this could also explain why the counting was done by the Bnei Gershon themselves rather than "through the hand of Moshe," as was the case with the other families of Levi. This is another attempt to compensate them for the "slight" of having their first-born status bypassed in the distribution of assignments. It is telling them "you have special status, you have special integrity. We will trust you to count your own family members and report back to Moshe without requiring Moshe to go around to your tents and count noses." This too was in order to make them feel a little better.

We see this theme in another place in the Torah as well. When Yaakov Avinu gave his blessings to Yosef's sons, he gave the more preeminent bracha to Ephraim, rather than to his older brother Menashe. Yaakov wanted to put his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Menashe's head, but they were not standing in that direction.

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת נשא

Mincha	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.45pm-7.55pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.56am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.39pm
Rov's Shiur	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	10.44pm
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	10.40pm

Yaakov could have said, "Ephraim, why don't you move over here and Menashe you move over there." However, Yaakov did not do that. Yaakov crossed his arms to place his hands where he wanted them to be without asking the boys to move. He did that because – despite the fact that he felt it was necessary to "slight" the bechor, asking Menashe to "move over" would have been adding insult to injury. Yaakov was sensitive to Menashe's feelings and even though he did need to "slight" Menashe, he insured that this would be done in the gentlest fashion possible.

There is a lesson here for all of us. I will share with you where I use this lesson. I have students who are in the stage of life where they are going out on dates in order to look for their destined partner in life, their shidduch. Many times, a bochur will go out with a girl three, four, five times or sometimes even longer and then he will decide "she is just not for me." So, he will need to "deliver the news." He will need to tell the girl "Thanks, but no thanks." I tell the bochur that when he is in that type of situation (For example when a boy from the yeshiva in Baltimore has been dating a girl from New York and now wants to terminate the relationship...) that he should go into New York, look the girl straight in the face, and tell her as gently as possible, "I do not think this is going any further." This is how a person should end such a relationship. It should not be done over the phone. It should not be done through the shadchan [matchmaker]. It should be done like a mentch [gentleman].

Now, I know that travelling from Mt. Wilson Lane (the location of the Ner Israel campus) to Ocean Parkway (in Brooklyn) involves at least \$100 in car expenses — gasoline prices being what they are as well as tolls throughout Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. This is not a cheap trip for a "non-date." However, I tell them that it is worth it. It is worth it because phone calls are not the proper way to break up with a girl. "No"s are painful. When you give somebody a "No", you should try to deliver it in the gentlest way possible.

This is of course a mutual thing. When a girl drops a boy, it is very painful as well. So, do it the right way. I do not need to fire people, because I am not a boss. But I am sure that some in my audience have the need to sometimes fire employees. This is a very unpleasant experience. So, you should try to make it as painless as possible. Again, a "no" or a rejection are painful — but leaving a person a voice mail or a text message that they are fired, is not the way to go. I am not speaking of a case of gross negligence or fraud or something like that. However, there are many situations where an employer just does not need an employee anymore for no fault of the employee. It is sometimes necessary to "cut down expenses." Tough times occur. You cannot afford the person anymore. Do it right!

This is the lesson of "Count the Children of Gershon, also them..." The Torah places their census in this most prominent position in order to lessen the sting of losing out in terms of having the preeminent assignment among the family of Leviyim.

I Never Do Anything Wrong Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)

"Speak to the Bnai Yisrael and say to them: any man whose wife shall go astray and commit treachery against him. . ." — Bamidbar 5:12

The Torah describes the details of a sotah. If a woman acts in a manner that causes her husband to suspect her of infidelity, he should warn her not to go into seclusion with that other man. If she violates this warning, then the husband is to take her to the Kohain. The Kohain will give her the "bitter waters" to drink. If she was unfaithful, she will instantly die. If she was not unfaithful, she will be redeemed and blessed.

When the Torah lays out the details, it uses an unusual expression: **כי תשטה** "If a man will 'tisteh' his wife." The word "tishteh" comes from the root "shoteh," which means insanity. It's as if to say, "If a man will accuse his wife of insanity." Rashi is troubled by the use of this expression. He explains, based on the Gemara, adulterers do not sin until a wave of insanity enters them. The Siftei Chachmim explains this to mean, "until their yetzer harah teaches them it is permitted."

It seems clear from the Siftei Chachmim that the modus operandi of the yetzer harah is to convince the potential sinners that the act

tempting them is permitted. Only when it succeeds, and they are convinced, will they then transgress.

This statement — people only sin when they are convinced that it is permitted — seems difficult to understand. If we are dealing with a pious, proper Jewish woman who got into a bad situation, she knows that the act that she wants to commit is forbidden. How can the yetzer harah teach her that it is permitted? On the other hand, the Torah may be speaking about the opposite extreme — a woman who has gone off the path and just doesn't care. Why does she need the yetzer harah to tell her it is permitted? She doesn't care.

So on both sides of the spectrum, the yetzer harah either should not be able to convince the person that it is permitted, or it shouldn't need to convince them. The answer to this question is based on understanding one of the most consistent quirks of human nature: "I never do anything wrong." Whether dealing with sophisticated adults or schoolchildren, whether Supreme Court justices or convicted felons, the human seems never to do anything wrong. Wardens will tell you that their jails are filled with self-proclaimed innocent men. Criminals aren't wrong. Thieves aren't wrong. Murderers aren't wrong. You won't find a gangster proclaiming, "Yes, it is evil to murder and pillage, but what can I do? I am weak and give into my desires." Instead, you will hear an entire belief system explaining that his approach to life is actually better for society and the world.

The question is why? Why can't man just admit: it is wrong to steal, but I want to do it anyway? The reason for this has to do with the inner working of the human. HASHEM created man out of two distinct parts. One is comprised all of the drives and passions found in the animal kingdom; it is simply base instincts and desires. The other part of man is pure intellect: holy, good and giving. That part of me wishes to be generous and noble and only aspires for that which is good.

Because this part of me is made up of pure intellect and wisdom, it would never allow me to sin. It sees the results too clearly. It understands that all of HASHEM's commandments are for my good and that every sin damages me. Because of this crystal clear insight, the human would not have the free will to sin. In theory, he could be tempted to sin, but he would never actually come to the act. It would be akin to sticking his hand in a fire. In theory he could do it, but it would never happen. It's a dumb thing to do. So if HASHEM created man with just these two parts, man would not have free will in a practical sense.

To allow man to be tempted so that he can choose his course and be rewarded for his proper choices, HASHEM put another component in man: imagination. Imagination is the creative ability to form a mental picture and feel it as vividly as if it were real. Armed with an imagination, man can create fanciful worlds at his will and actually believe them. If man wishes to turn to evil, he can create rationales to make these ways sound noble and proper — and fool himself at least. If he wishes, he can do what is right, or if he wishes, he can turn to wickedness. Even his brilliant intellect won't prevent him. He is capable of creating entire worldviews that explain how the behavior he desires is righteous, correct, and appropriate. Now man has free will. The answer to the Rashi is on two levels. First off, we see the power of rationalizing. Even a fully mature, pious woman who grew up in the best of homes can be convinced, on some level, that illicit relations are permitted. The yetzer harah will use her imagination and create clever and creative ways to explain that black is white, in is out, and arayos is permitted. As ridiculous as it sounds, that is the power given to the yetzer harah.

The second idea is that even the woman who seems to be off the derech and wouldn't need an excuse really does. No human can ever do something that is wrong. Because of the greatness of her soul and the truth that she knows deep down inside, she understands that for a married woman to go to another man is forbidden. The only way that she can perpetrate this act is if she has a rational way of explaining how in fact it is permitted. The human is incapable of doing something wrong. The only way he can do something wrong is by making it right.