



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ח"ט מרחשון תשע"ח – תולדות – 18th November 2017 - Volume 10 - Issue 17

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Kehilla on our 19th anniversary. there will be a Kiddush (Nidcha) next Shabbos to celebrate.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Mark Duman on the occasion of Doniel's Bar Mitzvah this week. The Kehilla is invited to Kiddush after Davening in Stenecourt.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Josh Shields on the occasion of Shmuel's Bar Mitzvah this week. It takes place in Ohel Moshe followed by Kiddush after Davening in their home 14 Dorchester Avenue. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Mr & Mrs Sidney Shields

Bernard Morris ז"ל

It is with regret that we inform of the Petira of Bernard Morris - Dov Yitzchok ben Ephraim Elchonon ז"ל. The family are sitting shiva at 25 Sandmoor Court, Leeds, LS17 7JY till Tuesday morning. Shacharis 7.30am, Mincha 1pm and MAariv 8pm. Visiting times during the day are between 2.30 – 5.30pm.

As a Kehilla we are learning Mishnayos as a Zechus for his Neshomo with a Siyum on the Shabbos after the Sheloshim - Shabbos Channukah.

All members are encouraged to take on some mishnayos from the notice in the foyer. May we only share Simchas.

Unusual Pregnancy

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

The children struggled within her. She said, "If so, why am I thus?" She went to inquire of Hashem. Hashem said to her, "There are two nations are in your womb; two regimes shall be separated from your insides; might will pass from one regime to the other; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Rivka's reaction is difficult to understand. Why would a painful pregnancy get her to doubt her existence? What insight did she hope to gain by seeking Divine insight? The forecast of painful pregnancies goes back to Chava! Nothing new or remarkable there. Was there anything so out of the ordinary about the stirrings she felt inside her?

The answers she received don't seem to address her questions. Explanations about the future roles of her two sons do not tell her anything about how to deal with her pregnancy pains. What is the difference between "two nations" and "two regimes?" The two phrases don't match each other, either. Since the first speaks of two entities that are within her, the second one should speak of two that exit or leave her – not that "separate" from her. Why did Hashem throw in the information about the older son serving the younger? It may have been important, but had nothing to do with Rivka's question!

Now, we may realize that a number of these questions are behind the position of Chazal that Rivka in fact was not puzzled by the pain or the stirrings, but about the bizarre behavior of the child (at that point she was aware of only a single fetus) within her. She felt the stirrings when she passed a place of kedushah – but also felt them when near a shrine to avodah zarah. This is where her questions began, but there was more to them than just this confusing and conflicted behavior.

For the rest of the back-story, we need turn to another passage in Chazal. Antoninus asked his friend Rabbenu Hakodosh about the time that the yetzer hora attaches itself to each new person who comes

into this world. Is the yetzer hora created alongside the new being, residing, so to speak, in the new fetus as it develops? Or does it first become part of the new child only when it emerges from the womb as an independent being? The gemara's conclusion is that the latter is true. Would the yetzer hora enter any earlier, a fetus would rebel at its confinement, and seek to escape it mother's womb.

This question – coupled with the unusual phenomena associated with her pregnancy- plagued the panic-stricken Rivka. Perhaps, she thought, the yetzer hora of the child I carry indeed had an early beginning in its development. If this yetzer hora is there and already acting out, am I going to find myself victimized by an attempt to prematurely escape, which might easily kill me in the process!

It was this question that – not a search for medical advice – prompted Rivka to seek the counsel of Shem and Ever. Were the bizarre symptoms that she experienced brought on by a very active yetzer hora – in which case, it might easily kill her in an attempt to exit and run? If not – if the yetzer hora simply does not arrive that early – then how to explain the contradictory tendencies of whatever was inside her, stirring to leave in the vicinity of a beis medrash and also a place of idolatry?

HKBH provided the authoritative answer. Rivka – you have nothing to fear from a yetzer hora- driven abortion attempt. The yetzer hora is not a player in your pregnancy. You are most definitely not in mortal danger. The strangeness of your symptoms owes to the most unusual composition of the contents of your womb. While the behavior of the twins seems like they are acting according to their inclinations, this is not because of the active yetzer hora of one of them. The behavior is but a sign, a harbinger of what will play out in their lives years later.

The proof is that at the moment, they are evenly matched. The stirrings are just as likely in front of a shul as near avodah zarah. Know that this will not be the case when they emerge – at which time the yetzer hora of one of them will indeed become active. In "real life," there will constantly be a struggle between them – but one will always prevail over the other. There will not be balance, but a shifting of power from one to the other. In time, the older will serve the younger. He will

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת תולדות	שבת מברכין כסלו
Candle Lighting	3.53pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.58pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.46am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.12pm
2nd Mincha	3.42pm
Shalosh Seudas	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.02pm
Ovos uBonim	6.02pm
ראש חודש	7.00am / 8.00am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.50pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

presage this battle between them by holding on to the heel of his brother as they emerge into the world. At the moment of their birth, they will be twins / tumim. The word is related to tam, complete, whole-hearted. They will come in to the world unafflicted by a yetzer hora that developed in utero. In that regard, they will be like everyone else. Your present fears, Rivka, can therefore be allayed.

I Have Yichus

Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)

“And Yitzchak prayed intensely opposite his wife because she was barren. And HASHEM listened to him, and Rivka became pregnant.” — Bereishis 25:21

The Imahos were all barren. Not simply incapable of having children, they lacked the very organs necessary to conceive. Knowing this, Yitzchak and Rivka davened for a miracle. They each stood in their opposite corners, imploring, entreating, and begging HASHEM to allow them to have a child. After twenty years of pleading, HASHEM granted the miracle — Rivka became pregnant.

However, the posuk says: HASHEM listened to his prayers. Rashi makes the observation that it was to his prayers that HASHEM listened and not to hers. Rashi explains that this is because Yitzchak was the son of a tzaddik, whereas Rivka was the daughter of a rasha (wicked person). Since there is no comparison between the prayers of a tzaddik who is the child of a tzaddik to the prayers of a tzaddik who is the child of a rasha, HASHEM listened to his prayers and not to hers.

Wasn't Rivka greater because she overcame her upbringing?

The problem with this Rashi is that we know that a person isn't judged according to where he is now, but according to where he came from. The fact that Rivka came from “lowly stock” and yet managed to overcome her upbringing is to her credit — she is even greater because of it. In fact, just one posuk earlier, we are told that Rivka was the daughter of Besuel, the sister of Lavan, and from a city of devious people. Rashi explains that the Torah repeats her lineage there to show to us how great she was: “Even though her father was wicked, even though her brother was wicked, and even though she came from a town of wicked people, she was righteous.” Precisely because she came from the house of wicked people and wasn't negatively influenced, she was considered greater than if she had been born into a house of holy people. Yet here we see that because she came from the house of wicked people, her prayers weren't accepted. This seems to be a direct contradiction.

The answer to this seeming inconsistency is that there are two systems involved in weighing a person's merits. The first system is based on the individual: Who am I, and what have I accomplished in this world? Based on where I started, based on the talents and abilities given to me, how far did I go? How much did I change? That is the system that is used to measure me when I leave this earth. Who am I now, compared to who I was when I started?

However, there is a second system that comes into play when a person stands in front of HASHEM during davening.

The following parable helps us understand this system. A loyal friend of the king had a son who turned to bad ways. When petitioning the king to have mercy, he won't present his case based on the merit of his son — he asks the king to remember who he is. He asks the king to remember all the years of loyal service that he provided, to ignore the faults of his son, and to remember the love and devotion that he has proven to the king.

So, too, when the son of a tzaddik comes in front of HASHEM, it may well be that his merit alone isn't sufficient to change the judgment. Based on his merit alone, he may not deserve whatever it is that he is requesting. But the merit of his father who stands for him carries him far beyond his own arguments.

When Rivka stood in front of HASHEM, she was a very holy woman, but as great as she was, her merit alone was not sufficient to bring forth the type of miracle needed. When Yitzchak stood in front of HASHEM, he was effectively twice as tall as Rivka because his own merit and the merit of his father were working for him. It may well be that Rivka herself was greater because she had overcome the obstacles of her father's house, but in terms of asking mercy from HASHEM, she stood alone. Therefore, HASHEM listened to Yitzchak's prayer and not to Rivka's.

This concept has great relevance to our lives. There may be many times when we think about approaching HASHEM for help and may say to ourselves, “Am I worthy? Do I have the right to ask, let alone expect HASHEM to grant this request? Am I so great that HASHEM should change the course of events for me?” And the answer may well be no — our merit alone is not sufficient. Based on who we are, based on what we have done, it may very well be that we have no right to expect these things from HASHEM.

However, Chazal were very wise when they crafted our tefillos; they are based on invoking the merits of the Avos. When we make requests from HASHEM, we begin by asking in the merit of Avrohom, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. As children of the Avos, we request that HASHEM remember their righteousness and answer our requests in their merit, not our own. By ourselves, we may not merit health, well-being, or parnassa, but we ask that in the zchus of our forefathers, HASHEM have mercy. Understanding this concept can help us relate to the unique power and effect that our tefillos can have, well above what we may be entitled to.

Am I selling my birthright for the proverbial bowl of beans?

Benjamin Rose (Shortvort.com)

In this week's parsha the Torah relates to us the birth and growth of Yaakov and Eisov, the twin sons of Yitzchok and Rivkah. About them the Torah states: “And the children grew, and Eisov was a skilled hunter, a man of the field. Yaakov was a simple man, who dwelled in tents. Chazal say that Yaakov engaged in spiritual and intellectual pursuits in the study halls of Shem and Eiver.

“And Yaakov was cooking food when Eisov came exhausted from the field. ‘Give me some of that red stuff, because I'm exhausted’ said Eisov. ‘Sell me your birthright today,’ replied Yaakov. ‘I'm going to die (anyway), what do I need a birthright for,’” concluded Eisov. (Bereishis 25:27-32) Eisov sold his birthright which had only to do with spiritual entitlements, for a portion of red lentils, and he didn't even give it a second thought

Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky, writes that Eisov thought the whole issue of the birthright was a big joke. The Midrash states that Eisov brought a group of lawless friends who joined in the fun of belittling the birthright and lauded Eisov for getting the better end of the deal.

Years pass, and the incident becomes part of the distant past. Yitzchok becomes blind. Aware of his own mortality, Yitzchok decides that the time has come to bless Eisov, his first-born. These blessings go hand in hand with the birthright. Rivkah overhears Yitzchok sending Eisov to hunt for food which he will eat before giving the blessings. She convinces Yaakov to pretend to be Eisov and receive the blessing instead. He succeeds, and in the end Yitzchok even agrees to Yaakov being the beneficiary of the blessings. Eisov returns, and the day's events become clear. “And Eisov cried an extremely great and bitter outcry.” “Bless me as well, father. Don't you have one blessing left father?” Eisov is exposed. He sold the birthright for a bowl of lentils. Eisov is no longer laughing.

Eisov teaches us a great lesson with his deeds. This event in the life of Eisov analogizes the choices we face in our own lives, and their repercussions. The bowl of lentils represents the material world. Wholehearted pursuit of the material world is often at the expense of our spiritual growth, and the opportunity to develop a relationship with the Creator. Material attainment often ends in disappointment. What was absolutely ridiculous to Eisov before he carefully considered it was a source of extreme pain and regret at a later point in his life. This is the meaning of the words of our Sages: “the evil are filled with regrets.” A great man once said that we don't only need to prioritize what is important, and unimportant. We also need to prioritize what is important, and what is more important. Our sages comment: “the only things which accompany us into the afterlife are our Torah study and performance of commandments.” Everything else which we amass we leave behind. Ask yourself: do my priorities only encompass things pertaining to the material world? Am I selling my birthright for the proverbial bowl of beans? Am I truly happy and satisfied with my successes? What gives me a sense of true fulfillment? Let us learn from Eisov, and not repeat his ill-fated choices.