



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

ט כסלו תשע"ט – ויצא – 17th November 2018 - Volume 11 - Issue 19

Please join us this  
Shabbos for a special



Kiddush after  
Davenning

## Smokescreen

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

It just doesn't make sense. After more than twenty years of toiling in the house of Lavan (Laban), Yaakov (Jacob) wants out. He should have been entitled to. After all, he married Lavan's daughters in exchange for years of tending the sheep, He increased Lavan's livestock population many fold, and he was a faithful son-in-law despite a conniving huckster of a father-in-law. Yet when Yaakov leaves Lavan's home with his wives, children, and flocks, he sneaks out, fearing that Lavan would never let him leave. He is pursued by Lavan who chases him with a vengeance. But Yaakov is lucky. Hashem appears to Lavan in a dream and warns him not to harm Yaakov. Eventually, Lavan overtakes Yaakov and accosts him. "Why have you led my daughters away like captives of the sword? Why have you fled, secretly, without notifying me? Had you told me you wanted to leave I would have sent you off with song and music!" (Genesis 31:26-27)

Yaakov answers his father-in-law by declaring his fear. "You would have stolen your daughters from me." Lavan then searched all of Yaakov's belongings looking for idols missing from his collection. Yaakov was outraged. He simply did not understand what Lavan wanted. Yaakov responds to the attack by detailing the tremendous amount of selfless work, through scorching heat and freezing nights, that he toiled in order to make Lavan a wealthy man. Reviewing the care and concern that he had for his wives and children, Yaakov declares that he is not worthy of the mean-spirited attacks made by his father-in-law, Lavan. And," Yaakov adds, "If not for the protection of Hashem, Lavan would have sent me away empty handed." (Genesis 31:38-42)

Yet Lavan is unmoved. Like a stoic, unyielding dictator, Lavan responds. "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flock is

my flock and all that you see is mine." (Genesis 31:43)

What can be going on in Lavan's mind? What motivates a man to be so selfish and unreasonable?

My friend Reb Yossel Czopnik told me the following true story about Yankel, a heavy smoker who went to see a certain hypnotist who had cured a large number of people. In a method that combined hypnosis, electrodes, and a little cajoling while placing little metal balls behind the ears, patients swore that the urge to smoke had been totally eradicated from their minds.

Yankel went to the doctor and underwent the entire ritual. The balls went behind his ears, the electrodes were attached to his temples, and the doctor began to talk.

"Let me ask you, Yankel," questioned the doctor of the well wired patient, "every time you inhale a cigarette do you know what is happening? Close your eyes and imagine your lips puckered around the tail pipe of a New York City bus! Now, take a deep breath. Imagine all those noxious fumes filling your lungs! That is what the cigarettes are doing to you!"

Yankel went home that night still wanting a smoke but decided to hold off. "Maybe it takes one night," he thought.

The next morning nothing seemed to change. In fact, on his way to work, he had queasy feelings. As soon as he entered his office Yankel picked up the telephone and called the doctor.

"So," asked the doctor, "How do you feel? I'm sure you didn't have a cigarette yet! I bet you have no desire for them anymore!"

Yankel was hesitant. "Honestly, Doc. I'm not sure. One thing I can tell you, however. All morning long, on my way to work I was chasing city buses!" Lavan just wouldn't get it. No matter how clearly Yaakov explained his case, twenty years of work, the devoted labor under scorching heat and freezing cold, Lavan just stood unmoved. "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, and whatever you have is mine." When the sickness of egocentrism overtakes the emotional stability of a human soul; one can talk, cajole, or persuade. The Almighty can even appear in a dream and do his part. It is helpless. Unless one actually takes the initiative to realize his or her shortcomings, anything that anyone may tell them is only a blast of noxious air.

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת ויצא

זמן שבת	3.55pm
Mincha	4.00pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.14pm
2nd Mincha	3.44pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.04pm
Ovos uBonim	6.04pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
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

## The Fools of the World

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And Lavan answered and said to Yaakov, "The daughters are my daughters, and the sons are my sons, and the animals are my animals, and all that you see is mine. Now, what would I do to these daughters of mine today, or to their children, whom they have borne? (Breishis 31:42)

Lavan was positioned to be one of the great people of all time. Rochel and Leah were his daughters and our sages tell us that Bilhah and Zilpah were also his progeny. He was as much a patriarch of the Nation of Israel as Yitzchok Avinu if not more. All twelve tribes of Israel were his grandchildren. In the end he is one of the most diabolical villains of our history. He gets dishonorable mention in the Haggadah every year as being worse than Pharaoh who wanted to destroy only the males while "Lavan wanted to uproot everybody". What went wrong?

The Maharal identifies this as the first and deepest root of anti-Semitism. He explains that there are five generic categories of entities in the universe; 1) Inanimate, 2) Organic-Growing 3) Animal 4) Speaking Human, 5) Israel – Servant of HASHEM. He explains that one group does not cannibalize its own species. Usually a parent wants to protect his young and in the human world even grandchildren are revered. However when his daughters became Israel-Servants of HASHEM, then his deep hatred eclipsed his natural paternal love. His children produced a Holy Nation in spite of him not because of him. He can accept no credit.

In a futuristic story the Talmud (Avoda Zara 2A-B) tells us of conversation between The Almighty and the nations of the world when the Epoch of the Moshiach will have already dawned. Here it is in an abbreviated form: In the times to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will take a scroll of the Torah in His embrace and proclaim: "Let him who has occupied himself with this come and take his reward!" There upon the Kingdom of Edom (Rome) will enter first before Him... The Holy One blessed be He will say to them: "With what have you occupied yourselves?"

They will reply: "O' Lord of the Universe, we have established many market-places, we have erected many baths, we have accumulated much gold and silver, and all this we did only for the sake of Israel that they might have the leisure to occupy themselves with the study of Torah." The Holy One blessed be He will say in reply: "Fools of the world, all that you have done, you have only done to satisfy your own desires. You have established marketplaces for the purpose of prostitution, baths to indulge yourselves, and as for the silver and gold they are mine... Are there any amongst you those who have studied Torah?" They will exit in disgrace.

After Rome has departed Persia enters... And to the question of the Holy One Blessed be He, "What was your occupation?" They will answer, "We have constructed many bridges, conquered many great cities, we were engaged in many great wars, all for the sake of Israel to enable them to study Torah." The reply to which will be, "All that was done by you was done for your own sake! Fools of the world, bridges you made for the collection of taxes, cities you conquered to impose labor and as to waging war, I am the Lord of battles... Are there any amongst you who have studied Torah?"

The Brisker Rav ztl. asked about the truthfulness of this dialogue. These nations are making up a last minute story just to ride on the coattails of the Jewish Nation that did devote itself to Torah study. They're telling lies and making excuses. Why then does The Almighty only refer to them as "fools of the world"? They should rather be called what they really are—"liars".

In the grand scheme of things they are really telling the truth. They made bridges and banks that benefited the Jewish People and actually enabled them to study Torah. The reason they are more fittingly titled "fools" is because they only failed to have that benefit in mind. Lavan too missed a golden opportunity. Everything was his as he declared. It could have remained his, but such are the fools of the world.

## Phenomenon & Miracle

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Ya'akov got up early in the morning and took the stone which he had placed under his head. He set it up as a monument and poured oil on the top of it. (Bereishis 25:18)

WE ARE NOW in Chanukah territory. Kislev has begun and the Zohar says that the 24 days of Kislev in advance of Chanukah correspond to the 24 letters of the second verse of the Shema. The 25th day, when Chanukah begins, corresponds to the 25 letters of the Shema. I now have three books on the topic: The Light of 36, Chanukah Lite, and Once Revealed, Twice Concealed, so if you want a better understanding of all of this, read the books.

It has been pointed out countless times how the miraculous military victory that led to the holiday of Chanukah plays second fiddle to the main Chanukah miracle of the Menorah. The most common explanation is that, as amazing as the military victory was, it was not impossible, just highly unlikely. Smaller armies, if clever enough, CAN bring down larger armies, and have at different points in history.

One day's worth of oil burning for eight days IS impossible without a miracle. It's not even a phenomenon, just plain miraculous. The military victory could not have happened without Heavenly help, but maybe it was just a temporary respite from exile. Who says it was meant to become a holiday?

But, when the oil burned for seven extra days, well, that was a whole different story. That meant G-d had changed the world, albeit temporarily for the Jewish heroes of that time. It revealed, retroactively, just how miraculous the military victory had actually been.

It is not unlike the story of the manna. The Torah writes:

G-d told Moshe, "I am going to rain bread for you from heaven, and the people will go out each day and collect it, so that I can test you, to see if you'll keep My Torah or not. Vehayah—on the sixth day, they should prepare that which they will bring; there will be twice the amount they collect daily." (Shemos 16:4)

That was in advance of discovering the extra portion of manna for Shabbos. This was after it:

Vayehi—on the sixth day they collected the double portion of bread, two omers; the leaders of the people reported it to Moshe. He said to them, "This is what G-d said . . . It is a Shabbos, a holy Shabbos to G-d . . ." (Shemos 16:22)

In the first verse, in which G-d tells Moshe of the impending miracle, it begins with the word "vehayah." However, in the second verse about the actual collecting of the Shabbos portion, it begins with the word "vayehi." The Talmud explains that there is a difference between these two words: "vehayah" alludes to a joyful event, and "vayehi" indicates a sad occurrence.

Thus, the verse of when Moshe learns of the double portion begins on a happy note. The verse that records the realization of the miracle begins on a sad note. Why this difference?

Because there were two ways to collect the double portion of manna for Shabbos. The most obvious way was to physically collect two omers, and see the extra one not rot. The second way was more dramatic: collect one omer while saying, "L'chavod Shabbos Kodesh"—this is for the honor of Shabbos—and watch one omer become two!

A miracle like that would have been totally outside the natural realm, and would have transformed the entire nation. Collecting two omers and watching one not rot as it normally did would have only been a "phenomenon." It would have been worthy of investigation, but not of much excitement. Its transformative powers would have been far weaker. It was to this latter category of miracle that the military victory of Chanukah belonged. It was to the first category of miracle that the miracle of the Menorah belonged. The military victory was like collecting two omers and one not rotting: not likely, but possible. The Menorah burning for seven extra days was like collecting one omer of manna and watching it become two because of a couple of words—simply impossible, without a miracle.

The same thing happens to Ya'akov Avinu in this week's parsha as well. After he had his fantastic dream of the ladder, he built a monument to G-d and then anointed it with olive oil. Where did he find oil if Eliphaz, Eisav's son, robbed Ya'akov of everything he owned?

The midrash explains that a jar of oil just "happened" to be attached to the rock Ya'akov slept on. It was a highly unlikely occurrence, but not an impossible one. Stranger things have happened for the Forefathers.

But, as excited as Ya'akov was to find the oil, he became FAR more excited when he used it to anoint his monument, and he ended up with the same amount of oil with which he started. THAT was impossible, clearly a miracle.

It's a hard thing to get used to, like getting water from a rock. We have a difficult enough time relying on "phenomena," but it takes a real ba'al bitachon, someone who trusts in G-d completely, to believe a miracle can occur for him out of nowhere. But that is precisely what we're supposed to be working on during this 24-day build-up to Chanukah, the belief that miracles do happen, even in the most impossible of ways.