



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Yosaif Bernhardt on the birth of a son. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 9 Falcon Court.

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs Michael Wilks on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Mr & Mrs Gershon Wilks in Israel.

### Yarchei Kallah

Hearty thanks to all our Yarchei Kallah speakers especially Rabbi Danan who travelled from London and Gateshead respectively to give us his entire Sunday mornings, and more.

Also to Shefa Mehadrin and Brackmans for their physical nourishment.

Finally, Yasher Koach to Mark Duman for arranging this event.

### Shul Melava Malka

A reminder to save the date for the Shul Melava Malka taking place on Motzei Shabbos Parshas Terumah. Formal invitations will be sent out in the coming week.

## THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### The sting is in the tale Dani Epstein

Afghanistan. A mountainous, dusty and arid region, land-locked and sharing borders with Pakistan, Iran and the big bear of the region, the USSR.

It was December 1979 and the armored fighting vehicles of the Soviet 40th Army rolled into the country, along with heavy artillery and support trucks, to take on the Mujahideen.

At first glance it looked like the odds favoured the Soviets; the overwhelming power of heavy weaponry was set to crush the poorly armed insurgents, who had nothing but .303 Lee-Enfield replicas they manufactured themselves in small workshops. This notion of superiority was soon dispelled, as the invaders realised that their main armament was very vulnerable in the muddy roads of mountainous region, and the Mujahideen were experts at manipulating the cragginess of the area to their advantage.

Enter the Mil Mi-24, a large helicopter gunship that rapidly became a game-changer. This airborne fortress swiftly struck fear into the Mujahideen with its ability to manoeuvre rapidly and maintain a far longer presence on the battlefield than fast-flying jets. Sporting a brace of 80mm rockets under stub wings and a 23mm machine gun pod, the Mil Mi-24 could also carry one thousand kilos of iron bombs in various configurations. In addition the helicopter was equipped with armor designed to withstand 12.7mm/0.50in calibre rounds. This formidable weapon platform helped to turn the table on the initial insurgent victories.

The Mujahideen soon realised that they, too, needed a game-changer; something that gave them a chance at striking back at that terrible aircraft, as well as put a dent into the constant barrage unleashed by high-flying flying jets. The British-design Blowpipe guided missile they were using proved to be far less accurate than was initially expected, and the Swiss-made Oerlikon anti-aircraft machine guns were being over-fired, with the result that the barrels wore out very rapidly and became inaccurate. All in all, the outlook was bleak and it seemed that the skies were the sole purview of the Soviet air force.

It took quite a while before the CIA, who had been secretly funding the insurgents, decided that they would need to provide the Mujahideen with something that would give them a fighting chance.

Soviet pilots woke up a to a new dawn on September 25, 1986 when a CIA-supplied FIM-92 Stinger brought down a Mil Mi-24 gunship. This shoulder launched ground-to-air missile proved to be very capable and turned out to be a powerful psychological weapon as well; boosting the insurgent's morale and depressing that of the Soviet pilots in turn. In the first year of action, the Stinger was responsible for destroying half of the Soviet helicopters deployed in Afghanistan. The introduction of the Stinger proved to be a turning point for the Mujahideen, culminating in the withdrawal of Soviet forces in February 1989.

This week we read about a not entirely dissimilar situation. The Bnei Yisroel had just left Egypt, and were supposed to go straight to the promised land, and yet Hashem did not take them through the land of the Plishtim which would have been a beeline to their intended destination. The Torah explains this decision quite simply: **פֶּן יִנָּחֵם ה' עַם** – **בְּרֵאֲתָם מִלְחָמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרָיִם** in case the people will change their mind when they see war, and return to Egypt. They had witnessed the

### The Week Ahead

פרשת בשלח	
Candle Lighting	3.57pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.02pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
<b>סוף זמן ק"ש</b>	10.18am
Mincha 1st Minyan	1.30pm
Rov's Pirkei Ovos Shiur	3.21pm
Mincha 2nd Minyan	3.51pm
Motzei Shabbos	5.11pm
Ovos uBonim	6.26pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	4.05pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	4.13pm (Shabbos 4.08pm)

superpower of the ancient world being brought to its knees – why would one fight scare them sufficiently to drive them back into the arms of their former taskmasters?

Says the Malbim, what we should have seen was the Bnei Yisroel arming themselves in an insurgency and battling their way out of Egypt, stripping their oppressors of all their assets in the process, instead of being thrown out by Pharaoh. Why didn't this take place?

For this he provides two answers. The first being that the **גאולה** took place far earlier than it was supposed to, since the 400 hundred years that the enslavement was supposed endure fell short by 190 years. For this reason alone it would have been impossible for them to expect to win in battle, since they would have attempted something out of the proper chronology and the time was not right.

The second reason illuminates a principle that we can incorporate it into our daily lives. To fight against the odds – a superior armed force in this case, they needed much more than the battle tactics and weapons that they could glean from their former taskmasters. In all likelihood, the Bnei Yisroel outnumbered the Egyptian army, but sheer numbers, however, is never a guarantee of success. The Soviets had seemingly unstoppable and overwhelming forces arrayed against the Mujahideen, and they still lost.

The Egyptians had an ace up their sleeve – their chariots. These vehicles were a miracle of ancient-world technology with a laminated sprung suspension that was one of the closest guarded secrets of the realm. The suspension and design of the chariot provided a relatively stable moving archery platform that could carry far more ammunition than a lone rider, and turned the charioteers into a highly mobile, lethal and hard-to-hit fighting units. The skilled equine archers could even tie the horses reins around their waists and fire their arrows while steering the rapidly-moving carriage with their bodies controlling the horses! The Egyptian chariots were to the Bnei Yisroel what the Mi-24 was to the Mujahideen – a formidable weapons platform that they had no way of destroying.

There were two things the Bnei Yisroel needed to accomplish in order to take on the Egyptians and win. Firstly, they needed the heart to fight. One of the foremost reasons the Soviets lost was that the Mujahideen were prepared to die fighting. You need that kind of heart and the valour it forges to win against an immeasurably superior force.

At that point, the Bnei Yisroel simply did not have the heart for a fight. They were battered and bruised, they had lost men, women and children in the most terrible part of the **שעבוד מצרים** and they were suffering from the psychological effects of being slaves for so long. This lack of heart and courage was the first barrier against them freeing themselves militarily, because without the conviction they could win, there was no receptacle for the **ברכה** of Hashem to have an influence on.

The second reason, continues the Malbim, is because their belief in Hashem that He would deliver was not really there. Despite all the miracles they had witnessed, they simply did not believe that Hashem had the capabilities to help them overcome the superpower of the ancient world in a head-to-head battle.

So fighting their way out of Egypt was simply not going to happen, and

therefore the Torah tells us: – **ויהי בשלח פרעה את העם** it was when Pharaoh sent the people. Hashem had to make Pharaoh send them out, since they had no way of battling their way out of there.

This explains the reason the Torah gives for not taking the highway to Canaan. Had they gotten into a battle with the Plishtim, they did not stand a chance of winning despite all the miracles they had witnessed so far since they did not have the heart for a fight and did not believe that Hashem would be capable of delivering a victory to them.

What they needed was a game-changer. They needed something that would give them the courage they required to fight and the belief in Hashem that would give them a militarily superior advantage. What they needed was something like the Mujahideen getting Stingers.

So Hashem diverted them – **דָּרַךְ הַמִּדְבָּר יַם סוּף** through the desert to the Reed Sea. This turned out to be a powerful psychological event as well as an incredible spectacle. Firstly, it was the first time the Bnei Yisroel actually believed that the whole spiel Moshe had been selling them – freedom and entry into the land of milk and honey – could actually be possible. When they witnessed the miracles of the **יַם סוּף** they suddenly believed in Hashem and his servant Moshe. They now were gaining the two things they needed to win a war: the courage to fight, and belief in Hashem. Secondly, when all the surrounding nations opened their morning papers to discover that three million Ivri slaves as well as an entourage of assorted no-chshleppers had miraculously crossed a sea and then killed off the premier fighting force of the region in one fell swoop, the shock and awe of this incredible feat literally put the fear of G-d into their hearts. So now the ante was most definitely upped.

Taking the Bnei Yisroel through the desert was the next stage of the plan. Originally, prior to the sin of the spies, they were supposed to have stayed in the desert for one year, during which they would receive the Torah and build up their courage and fighting spirit.

Rather than take them straight to the **יַם סוּף** Hashem led them in a roundabout way in order to avoid any fights that they were not ready for and to confuse Pharaoh into thinking he could have them back. In this way, Pharaoh was drawn to chase them into the **יַם סוּף** which was the first step in preparing the Bnei Yisroel to enter future battles.

All this preparation took place right from the start, when they were about to leave Egypt for good. So the **פסוק** now explains: **וְחַמְשֵׁים עָלוּ – כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֲרָץ מִצְרַיִם** the Bnei Yisroel left Egypt armed. These weapons were useless to them, since they did not have the heart to fight, and therefore there was no spiritual receptacle for the **שפע** from Hashem – the abundance of blessing, to pour into. So despite the fact that they were armed, and as the Malbim continues to say, that they studied the art of war during their sojourn in the desert, that “killer punch” – their Stinger – they only received after they experienced the miracles of **קריעת ים סוף** and **מתן תורה**.

The upshot of this is that in our lives we too need believe in ourselves and believe in Hashem to expect any level of success. Even if we have the tools to accomplish whatever it is we want to achieve, be it a degree, business acumen or the ability to sell freezers to Eskimos, if we lack those two elements - the conviction that we will succeed and the belief that Hashem will grant us the success – there is little chance of actually accomplishing much.

The miracles of the **קריעת ים סוף** and **מתן תורה** were designed to forge a belief in Hashem which would in turn act as a receptacle for His bounty, and to provide some kind of a merit that would allow the bounty to flow at all, as well as provide them with physical courage. In order for us to be able to believe that Hashem will help us in our endeavours, we too have to create a source of merit, because without that there is no spiritual receptacle to receive the bounty and abundance that Hashem wishes to grant us, whether or not we are packing Stingers.

## DID YOU KNOW? תפילה 2

As **פסוקי דזמרה ברכה** of **ישתבח** is the concluding **אז ישיר** (on weekdays). Therefore if one ends **פסוקי דזמרה** some time before the chazzan one should not wait, but rather say **ישתבח** right away.

See O Ch 53 (3) MB [9]

All questions of Halocho should be directed to the Rov