



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב
 Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Donny Wilks on the birth of a daughter. Mazel Tov also to grandparents, Dr & Mrs Michael Wilks.

Save The Date
 The Shul will be holding a Lag B'Omer event on Sunday 18th May, further details to follow.

Annual Siyum Mishnayos
 The annual Siyum Mishnayos will take place Parshas Behaloscha and there are still opportunities available. See the notice wall for more details.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Superhuman Strength Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And you should not profane My holy Name but let Me be sanctified in the midst of the Children of Israel, I am HASHEM Who makes you holy, that brings you out of Egypt to be to you a G-d, I am HASHEM. (Vayikra 22:32-33)

That brings you out of Egypt: On this condition- (To be to you a G-d) (Rashi)

I am HASHEM: Reliable to grant reward. (Rashi)

The whole exodus from Egypt was only for this express purpose that we should not desecrate but rather sanctify HASHEM's name. How does one profane or sanctify HASHEM's name? Why is the verse punctuated with "I am HASHEM"? Rashi tells us it's to remind us that that HASHEM is guaranteeing payment to whoever accomplishes this primary task. Why here, in this verse, is there a greater need of assurance?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch ztl. defines desecration of HASHEM's name- Chilul HASHEM as follows: "With every refusal to sacrifice- any impulse of our being, and any attraction which draws us, any fiber of ourselves, any tiny morsel of our possessions -from the fulfillment of His Will, we are "mechallel HASHEM". The Name that should be the highest, the holiest, and the most absolute for us, on which the justification for which all our existence and possessions depends, and as such should rule over us and all of ours with absolute power, we make that Name "challal"- a "lifeless and powerless corpse".

Rabbi Hirsch explains what it means to sanctify HASHEM's name in the midst of the Children of Israel: "G-d and His Holy Will are to be considered as the holy highest, as the underlying condition of all Jewish life. And that which every offering teaches and which is vowed and undertaken at every offering- to offer up on the altar of our G-d, every drop of blood, every urge and aim of our wishes, all the active power of our limbs, all our food, our well-being, and the joys of our life for the carrying out of His Holy Will. That is to be the picture of the life of every single individual for our own perfection and for a teaching example to every one of our contemporaries. Such is the Jewish mission..."

Why the extra reinforcement about receiving a reward for succeeding in this mission? It could be that for the same reason we find in other places when HASHEM's name is restated as the crowning point at the conclusion of a verse, for example. "Don't go about as a talebearer in

your nation, and don't stand idly by your brother's blood, I am HASHEM! (Vayikra 19:16)

On this verse too Rashi tells us: "I am reliable to grant reward and exact payment!" Why is that necessary here too? These are things that no one in the universe could know about. What's the sound of one hand clapping? If one swallows his tongue and decides not to engage in Loshon Hora no person can detect or measure the power of that exercise of self-control. Therefore the Vilna Gaon quotes the Midrash, "For each and every moment that a person seals his mouth, he merits a hidden light that no angel or other creature could ever estimate!"

Similarly if one fails act. It's hard to prove a negative. Nobody can know for sure how much one could have done or should have done to prevent tragedy and save a life but, perhaps if aware, the person himself and HASHEM!

A few years back an elderly Russian Jew in that quietly lived out his later years in Brooklyn passed away. A funeral ceremony was held in the Shul where he was a regular attendee. The Rabbi had only a very basic sketch of his life. He was married and he and wife had never had children. Very little was known about his life in Russia or since coming to America. After the Rabbi's abbreviated eulogy the wife of this man asked if she could speak, and with her heavy Russian accent and in a few words she revealed a whole world of Kiddush HASHEM. She said, "People want to know why we never had children. I'll tell you why! In Russia there was no water!"

Of course there was water in Russia, but what she intended to communicate ever so subtly was that there was no Mikvah to be found. They endured a marriage and remained apart all their childbearing years so as not to be in violation. May HASHEM reward them amply for their example and grant us one part of their superhuman strength.

Holier than Thou Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

One of the most disheartening episodes that occurred during the 40-year desert sojourn is recorded in this week's parsha. A man quarreled with a fellow Jew and left the dispute in a rage. He reacted by blaspheming Hashem. This abhorrent behavior was so aberrant that no

The Week Ahead

פרשת אייר	
Early Mincha / Candle Lighting	6.45pm / not before 7.06pm
2nd Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.30pm / 7.42 - 7.55pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.17am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 8.36pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	9.41pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday Bank Holiday	7.10am / 8.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Mincha & Maariv all week	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	6.55pm / 7.30pm

one even knew what the punishment was!

So Hashem reviewed the grievous penalty for the deplorable act. As in any society, the ultimate act of treason was met with a capital sentence. The Torah declared a death penalty. But curiously enough, Hashem does not leave it at that. When the Torah reveals the penalty for the heinous act of blasphemy, it continues:

"And one who blasphemes the name of Hashem shall be put to death... And if a man inflicts a mortal wound in his fellow man, he shall be put to death. If he inflicts damage then restitution shall be paid. The value of an eye for the loss of an eye, the value of a break for a break the value of a tooth for the loss of a tooth. And one who wounds an animal must be made to pay. (Leviticus 24:15-21)

Shouldn't blasphemy be in a league of its own? Surely the act of affronting G-d Almighty can not be equated with attacking human beings. And surely it has no place next to the laws of injurious action towards animals! Why, then is t

Rabbi Y'honasan Eibeschutz one of Jewry's most influential leaders during the early 1700s, was away from his home for one Yom Kippur and was forced to spend that holy day in a small town. Without revealing his identity as Chief Rabbi of Prague, Hamburg, and Altoona, he entered a synagogue that evening and surveyed the room, looking for a suitable place to sit and pray.

Toward the center of the synagogue, his eyes fell upon a man who was swaying fervently, tears swelling in his eyes. "How encouraging," thought the Rabbi, "I will sit next to him. His prayers will surely inspire me."

It was to be. The man cried softly as he prayed, tears flowed down his face. "I am but dust in my life, Oh Lord," wept the man. "Surely in death!" The sincerity was indisputable. Reb Y'honasan finished the prayers that evening, inspired. The next morning he took his seat next to the man, who, once again, poured out his heart to G-d, declaring his insignificance and vacuity of merit.

During the congregation's reading of the Torah, something amazing happened. A man from the front of the synagogue was called for the third aliyah, one of the most honorable aliyos for an Israelite, and suddenly Rabbi Eibeschutz's neighbor charged the podium!

"Him!" shouted the man. "You give him shlishi?!" The shul went silent. Reb Y'honasan stared in disbelief. "Why I know how to learn three times as much as he! I give more charity than he and I have a more illustrious family! Why on earth would you give him an aliyah over me?"

With that the man stormed back from the bimah toward his seat.

Rabbi Eibeschutz could not believe what he saw and was forced to approach the man. "I don't understand," he began. "Minutes ago you were crying about how insignificant and unworthy you are and now you are clamoring to get the honor of that man's aliyah?"

Disgusted the man snapped back. "What are you talking about? Compared to Hashem I am truly a nothing." Then he pointed to the bimah and sneered, "But not compared to him!"

Perhaps the Torah reiterates the laws of damaging mortal and animals in direct conjunction with His directives toward blasphemy. Often people are very wary of the honor they afford their spiritual guides, mentors and institutions. More so are they indignant about the reverence and esteem afforded their Creator. Mortal feelings, property and possessions are often trampled upon even harmed even by those who seem to have utmost respect for the immortal. This week the Torah, in the portion that declares the enormity of blasphemy, does not forget to mention the iniquity of striking someone less than Omnipotent. It links the anthropomorphic blaspheming of G-d to the crime of physical damage toward those created in His image. It puts them one next to each other. Because all of Hashem's creations deserve respect.

Even the cows.

Seize The Moment

Rabbi Chaim Dovid Green (Torah.org)

This week's parsha tells us about the three major festivals. They are Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkos. They are milestones of celebration in the cycle of the Jewish year. After thousands of years there are still individuals and entire communities large and small that continue, year after year in the prescribed season, to eat matzah, learn Torah and build Sukkahs. How does the redundant marking of time have such lasting ability? Can't the yearly repetitive circle become more of a round rut?

In Berdichev, the home of the famed Rabbi Levy Yitzchok there was an individual whose job it was to be the communal collector of charitable funds. As a need arose such as the wedding of an orphan, he went around town collecting. The people of the town though none too rich themselves, always gave with a smile and a blessing for the needy. The charity collector tried not to show his face more often than necessary. It was the day before Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. After finishing one of his appointed rounds for a cause, the young man was approached by a local resident. "Did you hear?" the man asked. "The Jewish innkeeper couldn't pay his rent of 300 rubles to the landowner". "The innkeeper, his wife and children have all been imprisoned in one of the landowners decrepit dungeons until he receives payment!" "I just returned from a collection!" the young man exclaimed. "But I can't let the family wait in that hole till after Yom Kippur when I can collect the funds". "Why for that amount, I'll need to go to the people of Berdichev and the surrounding towns as well!" "What shall I do?" The young man began walking as he thought and eventually found himself outside of the very inn that was rented by the unfortunate innkeeper.

Inside the inn were several young Jewish men who, disregarding the holiness of the upcoming day, were drinking and in general, carrying on. Upon seeing the young charity collector they beckoned to him, hoping to have a little fun in the process. "Who are you begging for now?" one inquired to the amusement of his friends. Out of desperation the young man informed them how the innkeeper whose schnapps they were imbibing was at that very moment suffering along with his family and that he feared for their survival even overnight. He explained that he needed three hundred rubles immediately. The drinking party said they would supply the entire amount if the young man would down three glasses of 180 proof vodka. One for each hundred rubles. Now they knew full well that this gentleman was not in the habit of drinking more than a "Ichaim" on Shabbos. What kind of Yom Kippur could he have after consuming so much alcohol? Drink he did and after two of the required three glasses, two thirds of the agreed upon money was stacked on the table. Before downing the last glass the young man requested that the donors please get the money to the landowner immediately after the third glass was done, then they were to carry him to the synagogue. The family would go free and at least he would sleep off his stupor in the atmosphere of the holiness of Yom Kippur. He drank the last glass, promptly passed out, and was carried to the synagogue accompanied by a rowdy parade.

Those who were assembled to pray took one look at the man and knowing his sterling character, concluded that the truth would come out eventually. News of the family's release and how it came about spread. The service was begun. When the Torah scroll was taken from the ark the young man began to come out of his sleep. Seeing the Torah in his state, he concluded that it must have been Simchas Torah, the culminating holiday of Sukkos! He rose, grabbed the Torah and began dancing wildly in a circle, singing loudly. The congregants wanted to take the Torah back. It was hardly behavior befitting Yom Kippur! Rabbi Levy Yitzchok lifted his hand to stop them. They watched as the young man went about in his reverie for a few more minutes and then they caught both the Torah and the young man as they slid downwards. They carefully placed him back on his bench to continue a peaceful sleep.

Rabbi Levy Yitzchok then addressed the assemblage. "Our charity collector performed an incredible act of self sacrifice to free captives, a great mitzvah as we all know". "The spiritual heights which he attained in doing so propelled him beyond Yom Kippur to Sukkos". "The holiness of Sukkos is a preparation for the culmination of the High Holy Days with Simchas Torah". "Do you see why I stopped you from ending the man's dance?" concluded Rabbi Levy Yitzchok. "For him, it really is Simchas Torah!"

"To everything there is a season" - Koheles/Ecclesiastes 3:1. The cycle of the Jewish year is at once ancient yet fresh and full of life. More than we keep the Torah, it keeps us. It brings a guide from the past to the present while giving hope for the future because the cycle is not a circle but an upward spiral. It is therefore not a case of "Been there, seen it, done that" because in reality, we've never been at this very juncture in history before! Through the festivals one can "seize the moment" to enhance national, communal and personal growth. How unique! How exciting!