



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

12th October 2013 - Volume 6 - Issue 14 - פרשת לך לך - ח מרחשון תשע"ד

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

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Leo Stern on the occasion of the Aufruf of their son, Gavriel, this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush in their home, 2 Pearl Avenue, after Davenning. The Chupa takes place on Monday at 3.30pm at Stenecourt and Simchas Chosson v'Kallos takes place at the Beis Yosef Hall, Bury New Road at 10.30pm.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Peter Nissen on the occasion of the Bar Mitzva of their grandson, Mikey Mocton, this Shabbos.

### Children's Shabbos Group

The children's Shabbos group restarts this Shabbos.

### Winter Timetable

A reminder that we've now moved to the Winter timetable for Minyanim. The Rov's Pirkei Avos Shiur restarts this Shabbos before the second Minyan for Mincha.

The late Minyan for Maariv during the week is at 8.00pm throughout the Winter.

### Girl's Rosh Chodesh Group

We welcome all girls year 5 and up on Sunday from 7pm to 8pm to join in the Rosh Chodesh Group Meet, make friends and socialise with girls from your Shul whilst making Challas and decorating fabric snap on bracelets.

Looking forward to seeing you. Cover charge £2.

### Burial Board

Anyone wishing to join the Shul Burial Scheme can do so by speaking to Avi Stern on 07813 326423. The joining fee will be waived for new members under 30 who join before Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

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

### Defying Natural Order

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

In this week's Torah portion we find the moving exchange between Avraham and Hashem, in which Hashem promises to secure the Land of Israel for Avraham's future descendants. To this promise, Avraham responds, 'But I have no children that will perpetuate my values and spread them to the world at large' 'Whatever you give me is insignificant if the dreams that are closest to my heart remain unrealized'!

Hashem directs Avraham to step outside, gaze up at the stars and count them. "So shall be your seed!" he promises. 'Your children will fill the world like the stars'.

It certainly paints a fascinating scenario. But why did Hashem require Avraham to first count the stars? What was the purpose of this exercise in futility? And are we truly as many as the stars. Are we not told by Hashem that we will always remain the smallest of the nations?

A scintillating insight is presented by the saintly Imrei Emes that addresses this very point. Hashem told Avraham to go out and count the stars and he immediately obeyed. Have you ever tried to counting stars? Before very long it becomes a frustrating and nigh impossible task. One soon forgets which ones were already counted and which ones remain to be calculated. Yet Avraham persisted in fulfilling Hashem's command. He continued to count until Hashem said "Enough!"

"So shall be your seed." said Hashem. Your children too will assume seemingly impossible tasks to fulfill my slightest whim. They will scale mountains and traverse oceans in their quest for the truth. They will tenaciously abide by my Torah's teachings in the face of impossible challenge. They will remain locked in a transcendent bond with their Creator even under the most trying circumstances. Neither tantalizing material delights nor the dazzle and shine of humanistic and enlightened philosophies will seduce them.

Hashem was not simply comparing Avraham's descendants to the stars. He was promising him that his act of counting the stars--a seemingly futile task simply would be an indelibly etched into the genetic makeup of his progeny.

In the darkest hours of our history, confronted with barbaric persecutions and seemingly insurmountable difficulties, the Jewish people tenaciously clung to the Torah's teachings, defying the natural order. This ability to exist on a sublime and transcendent plane is a spiritual force we inherited from Avraham, and it sprung from Hashem's promise to him that this force would be forever implanted in his descendants. When we are cognizant of these sublime powerful energies that are embedded in our genes we too can emulate our Avos Hakedoshim and realize our life's potential to its fullest measure.

### Living Miraculously

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

Suddenly the word of HASHEM came to him saying, "That one shall not inherit you. Only him that comes from within you shall inherit you." And

### The Week Ahead

#### פרשת לך לך

Candle Lighting	6.06pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.11pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.12am
Mincha 1st Minyan	1.30pm
Rov's Pirkei Ovos Shiur	5.19pm
Mincha 2nd Minyan	5.49pm
Motzei Shabbos	7.09pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	6.00pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	5.55pm (Shabbos 5.50pm)

He took him outside and said, "Gaze now, toward the Heaven, and count the stars if you are able to count them!" And He said to him, "So will be your offspring!" (Breishis 15:4-5)

According to the simple meaning he took him outside to see the stars... (Rashi)

Why would we need to know that Avraham was inside that he had to be taken outside to see the stars? The Torah is not a French novel filled with frivolous details or choreography. What type of chair was Avraham sitting on? How had the expression on his face changed? These would be interesting things to know but we are taught only those points that have eternal relevance. Hence Rashi continues to tell us: "According to the Midrash He said to him, "Go out from your astrology, which you have seen by the signs of the Zodiac to the effect that you are not destined to have children... Alternately, He took him out of the cavity of the world, and this is what the expression "habata" –gazing means which denotes looking down from above." (Rashi)

We see that the prime Patriarch and Matriarch of the Jewish People according to normal means were not able or destined to have children together. It is only by stepping outside of the natural realm of the universe does the building of the Nation of Israel begin. By definition the Jewish People, are therefore, an unnatural people. We do not exist in a normal and natural way ultimately. Perhaps this is the meaning of, "There is no Mazel in Israel!" (Tractate Shabbos 156A) It doesn't mean we have no-good mazel but rather we are not locked-in and limited to the normal format of national existence.

Arnold Toynbee in his monumental work, *The Study of History*, explores the rise and fall of not less than 21 civilizations. He found the Jewish People to be an historical anomaly. Leo Tolstoy wrote, "The Jew is the emblem of eternity. He whom neither slaughter or torture of thousands of years could destroy, he who neither fire nor sword nor inquisition was able to wipe off the face of the earth, he who was able to produce the oracles of G-d, he who has been for so long the guardian of prophecy, and transmitted it to the rest of the world such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is as everlasting as eternity itself." It was Mark Twain too who observed and wondered aloud, "All things are mortal but the Jew; All other forces pass but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Rabbi Yakov Emden wrote in the early 1700's "Many have tried to injure us but they were not able to destroy or wipe us out. While all the great civilizations have disappeared and been forgotten- the Nation of Israel who clings to G-d is alive today! What will the wise historian answer when he examines this phenomenon without prejudice? Was all this purely by chance? By my soul, when I contemplated these great wonders of our continued existence, they took on greater significance than all the miracles and wonders that HASHEM, Blessed be He, performed for our fathers in Egypt, in the desert and when they entered the Land of Israel. And the longer this exile extends, the miracle of Jewish existence becomes more obvious to make known G-d's mastery and supervision over Nature and History!"

The Story is told of Louis XIV asking the philosopher Pascal for some proof of a supernatural force in the world to which Pascal is reputed to have replied, "Why the Jews, you majesty, the Jews."

We have lived for millennium as a sheep amongst seventy wolves, and we continue down the gauntlet of history like those who walked through the split sea. It can easily be observed that according to natural means those surging walls of water should have drowned us and those hungry wolves have had their fill a long time ago but for the grandest mystical reason we are originally founded and continue to find ourselves living miraculously.

## Attitude Conditioning

Rabbi Pinchas Avruch (Torah.org)

As a means of increasing the capacity of the human to bond with his Creator, G-d gave Avraham the mitzvah of milah. This surgery involves removal of the "orlah", a term which does not so much designate a part of the anatomy as much as it refers to a barrier which inhibits our spiritual growth. "You shall circumcise the flesh of your orlah and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you." (Beraishis 17:11) The Torah

notes that Avraham performed milah on himself "on that very day" (17:23 & 26). Rashi explains that the exceptional wording refers to Avraham's conviction to perform the commandment immediately, not to wait until it was dark. A later hour would have allowed his enemies and others of his era to claim, "If we would have seen, we would have prevented him from fulfilling the Divine will."

We find this unique wording of "on that very day" in the episodes of Noah's entry into the ark, the Children of Israel's exodus from Egypt and Moshe's climbing Mount Nevo to die. Rashi explains that these three are similar as all three had antagonists who did not want these events to occur and could have threatened to prevent them. But the masses did not smash the ark, the Egyptians did harm one Jew as they left slavery and the Jewish nation could do nothing to stop Moshe's demise. In all three cases, G-d's design was realized. But why does Rashi only link those three together? Why is Avraham's fulfillment of the Divine will despite the potential objections of others not included? And why is there a need to say "on that very day" twice?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein clarifies that, unlike the other three incidents linked by Rashi, Avraham's milah was really his own personal affair, an issue that did not directly effect the greater public. Additionally, they were not so evil as to spitefully prevent the completion of his charge. Rather, despite the fact they would not stop him, they would ridicule him - an incredibly powerful deterrent. Avraham needed spiritual reinforcement. Akin to the teaching of our Sages (Tractate Mo'ed Kattan 27a) that a transgression performed twice accustoms one to embrace the misdeed as permissible, similarly, performing numerous times in the face of scoffers habituates one to fulfill G-d's will with ease in adverse conditions. Avraham's completion of milah on the multiple members of his household - alluded to by the multiple references to "that very day" - habituated him to not cower under the glare of others.

The knowledge that G-d has given us the mitzvos as a gift with which we forge our connection to Him is a powerful motivator. The skeptical stare of others can be a powerful counterforce. Our spiritual "muscles" of motivation and resolve need advance training and conditioning if they are to perform properly in our times of challenge.

## G-d Taught Abraham Kindness

Yehuda Katz (Shortvort.com)

"And G-d said to Avrom, Depart from your land, your birth place, and from your fathers house.....(12:1)

A famous question can be asked on this verse, as follows: The order of the departure is in reverse order, normally a person first departs from his father's house, birth place and then one's land. However, the verse does it just the opposite. Why? I would like to propose an original answer, Bezrat Hashem. This verse is teaching us a tremendous lesson and insight into G-d's boundless kindness. G-d never requests of a person something that is not within that person's immediate reach. When G-d asked Abraham to leave the safety of his environment, this was truly a test in faith. However, G-d made this request in a progressive manner from least difficult to more difficult as evident from the verse. This was done to show Abraham and us how much consideration G-d has for the feelings of a human being. It was done with kindness, not in a harsh manner.

A person must develop spiritually and otherwise in a progressive manner step by step, not in quantum leaps. If G-d was kind and understanding to Abraham in this regard, shouldn't we be just as kind to ourselves, children, or anyone else when dealing with how we progress from level to level spiritually? Little by little a person can grow spiritually, quantum leaps towards levels that we are not ready for will only prove futile. We find this very concept in Sefer Even Shelema, chap.4:10 (Teachings attributed to the Vilna Gaon), as follows: "There are times when a person begins to go on the proper path and afterwards abandons this undertaking because it's too hard. This person might blame G-d for his failures. However, it's really the person's own fault because he desired to jump to the highest level all at once and this is the very cause of his failure." Do not jump to high levels which are beyond your capabilities, but let's progress towards greatness step by step. Perhaps we will find success.