



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ג"א תמוז תשע"ג – פרשת פינחס – 29th June 2013 - Volume 6 - Issue 1

LATEST NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST NEWS

Welcome to Volume 6!

After five years, and over 50,000 printed pages, the Ohr Yerushalayim News enters its sixth year.

We take this opportunity to remind the Kehilla that submissions of Divrei Torah from members are actively encouraged - give it a go!

Kiddushim

Mr & Mrs Adam Bookman invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush after Davening at their home, 69 Upper Park Road to celebrate the birth of their daughter Michal.

Mr & Mrs Avi Smith invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush after Davening at their home, 4 Holmfield Avenue, Prestwich, from 11.30am to celebrate the birth of their daughter Elisheva.

Speaker Request

If anyone knows of a holocaust survivor who is willing and able to share their story with the Kehilla, please contact Mark Duman

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Still Waters Run Deep

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

Life sustaining water, eau d'vivre, bottled at the source from the most pristine and exotic locations line the shelves in every supermarket, each bottled in an eye-catching and enticing container. Apparently, even with the plethora of soft drinks and beverages that are on hand, crystal clear, pure water is the most sought after drink after all. Intuitively, we understand that the more natural it is, the more we can enjoy and appreciate its life-sustaining properties.

In this week's Torah portion we find a reference to a Temple ritual, the Simchas Beis Hashoeva, that was performed with this most elemental substance; pure water. It was perhaps the most pivotal and prominent celebration in the Beis Hamikdash. Each Sukkos, a water libation was poured onto the altar amidst a euphoric outburst of festivities and celebrations that lasted throughout the Chag.

The Talmud tells us that it is impossible to describe the outpouring of joy that accompanied this simple act of pouring water on the Mizbayach. "Whoever has not witnessed the joy apparent at Simchas Beis HaShueavah has never seen true joy in their life," the Talmud states.

Why the unbridled joy that accompanied this ritual? And why doesn't the Torah spell out the details of this climactic event? Why is it merely alluded to in the Torah with the letters of the Hebrew word "mayim" (meaning water) interspersed between the verses that detail the sacrificial offerings brought on the festival of Sukkos. Why is this ritual so shrouded in secrecy?

The Talmud reveals that the this special celebration was ordained from the very origin of creation. The Torah tells us that when Hashem created the world, His unity and presence were complete in the world; the shechinah hovered over the waters. Of course, the only thing that Hashem had created outside himself was the reflection of His presence, as is the natural property of water. The Torah teaches that with Hashem's creation of planet Earth, spiritual and metaphysical forces were given physical expression through what we know as the natural order.

At this time, the Sages tell us, the lower waters cried before Hashem, "We wish to be close to You and One with You. Why can we not be united with

our original source in the Heavens (Shamayim, comprised of Aish, fire, and Mayim, water)?"

HaShem pacified the lower waters by reassuring them that they will be unified with their celestial source in a most auspicious manner. On each Sukkos, the Jewish people will observe the ritual of pouring water over the altar, symbolizing the unification of the lower waters with their Heavenly source. This rather enigmatic statement of the Sages requires explanation. How did the waters become reunited with their Source by being poured on the altar? And why was this ritual accompanied with such an outburst of uninhibited joy?

The Hebrew for water, Mayim, gives us insight into water's very essence. It is a palindrome that can be read identically from beginning to end, and from end to beginning. The letter "Mem" always represents a material reality, something that Hashem created outside of Himself. Thus, its numerical value is forty, an expansion of the number four, which reflects the properties from which all matter is composed.

There are four polarities and directions to the world, which is comprised of four essential properties. The embryo is formed into a cohesive state within the first forty days, and the number forty and four hundred figures prominently in many of the laws, rituals, ideas and fact surrounding the material world. For example, the Torah tells us that the waters of the mighty flood rained down for forty days in Noah's time. Moreover, Esav, representing the material world, fought Yaakov who represents the spiritual world, with four hundred men.

The material world is a reflection of the upper world when it is bound and connected with the "yud," the presence of the Divine. Then the water has realized its Divine mission of creation, sustaining and giving life to the lower world with the objective that it bonds with the Upper World, revealing Creator and Creation and truly connecting this world to its Source.

It was this recognition that the Jewish people attained on the festival of Sukkos after gaining atonement for their sins on Yom Kippur and reconnecting with their Divine Source. By pouring the water on the altar they demonstrated that they too, like water, were completely viscous in Hashem's presence, and displayed their readiness to conform to whatever

The Week Ahead

פרשת פינחס

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.56pm - 8.00pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.57am
Mincha 1st Minyan	6.00pm
Mincha 2nd Minyan	9.54pm
Followed by the Rov's Pirkei Ovos Shiur	
Motzei Shabbos	10.59pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.45pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	7.30pm

שמונה עשרה – אבות: תפילה

אבותינו	ואלוקי	אלוקנו
our forefathers	and the G-d of	our G-d
- or -		
our ancestors		

Translation:

Why do we mention the fact that Hashem is our G-d before mentioning our forefathers or ancestors, who after all preceded us? They really should get a mention first, and we should therefore say:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוקי אבותינו ואלוקנו

You are the source of all blessings, G-d of our ancestors and our G-d.

Rav Dovid Gottlieb has a brilliant moshol – parable – that he uses to introduce the concepts encapsulated here; I have embellished it ... ever so slightly.

Imagine a mediaeval Barony, whose lord is kind and just and benevolent. One day, George, an otherwise fine fellow, becomes destitute, and realising he has no other option he submits himself as a serf of the Baron.

Now all of a sudden he is owned body and soul by his lord. Fortunately for him, the baron is very kindly disposed and quite generous, so when a stranger comes through the village, George praises his baron as being kind, generous and all-round really nice guy.

George's son Fred, on the other hand, is born a serf. He has no choice in the matter. The baron owns him lock, stock and beer keg and he has no say in the matter one way or the other.

In Fred's case, after being lubricated by a beer or five, he nonetheless praises the baron to one and all, whether or not they are disposed to listen, by also saying what a really nice guy he is. The way he says is slightly different, though.

"Even if I would not be a sherf", he says as he struggles to operate his jaw in synchrony with his pickled brain. "I would chooshe ve baron as my lord. He ish vat good. Fact." Then he slumps forward onto the floor, to be thrown out by the landlord later that evening along with all the other bodies the more sober patrons are using as foot-warmers.

We take Fred's approach (albeit in an altogether more sober fashion) when we talk about our relationship to Hashem. We do not have a choice in acknowledging Hashem as our G-d and, Lord and master, if we were born as Jews. What we say, though, is that we would choose Hashem anyway, even if we were to have had the choice.

This makes the precedence of mentioning Hashem as our G-d as opposed to our ancestors coming first very logical. We need to declare our own fealty first, before we are in a position to mention that of our antecedents.

Short of that, there is no better way to leave this world than as a hero making the supreme sacrifice on behalf of God and His Code of Morality. It is the only way to bypass Gihenom along the way to the World-to-Come, as did Rebi Akiva and the rest of the Ten Martyrs:

A Heavenly Voice proclaimed, "Happy are you, Rebi Akiva, that you are destined for life in the World-to-Come!" (Brochos 61b)

So, even though sports figures are thought to be some of the biggest heroes today, they are not from God's point of view, and it takes a lot more than a 'sacrifice fly' to bypass Gihenom, or to leave it all. Given the salaries and stardom they enjoy, including movie stars as well, the only people who make any real sacrifice are those who have to pay these people, and put up with their personalities, especially when they assume themselves to be spokespeople on behalf of mankind.

So, yes, it is tough being a hero, a true hero, which often earns you the wrath of not only your enemies, but sometimes even of your allies as well. Yosef HaTzaddik had to suffer through the latter even more than the former. Many heroes have been put through the ringer just because they were brave enough to identify problems in the society of which they were a part, and for trying to make improvements while others clung to the status quo.

But, at least the only One we have to impress will indeed be impressed. And, though He won't always help us out in this world, you can be sure that He will help us out in the next world, where it counts the most. Heaven has a special place for heroes, and its worth everything just to get there.

life conditions Hashem would subject them to. This was the highest and most joyous moment of the year for it crystallized the purpose of Creation. It is perhaps for this reason that the exalted ritual and celebration of Simchas Beis Hashoeva is merely alluded to in the Torah. It cannot be explicit for it embodies a profound mindset that we must arrive at on our own. If we are simply following the instruction manual in the Torah, we will be missing the point. We have attained this lofty level of awareness from our own inner recognition and our yearning to come close to Him.

There can be no greater joy and happiness than that we are secure in fulfilling our Divine mission and mandate, elevating ourselves and the world to the higher spheres and the Heavenly Throne. There can be no greater joy than that experienced when the Jewish people melt into the presence of Hashem and are one with our Divine source.

Being a Hero

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

The story of Pinchas is another example of a misjudged and unappreciated Jewish hero. Pinchas went ahead and risked everything, his portion in this world and his portion in the World-to-Come to right the wrong that had already resulted in the deaths of 200,000 Jews, and all the Jewish people wanted to do was string him up. What would have happened had God not stood up on his behalf and cleared his name?

It is hard to be a hero, at least when doing so goes against the grain of others. Sports heroes have a good time of it, because they are entertaining, at least for the people who like their team. They even get paid obscene salaries to do their thing just so people can be entertained.

Others are not so fortunate. While in Toronto recently, I happened to read an article about the riot in Vancouver last year after the local hockey team struck out, so-to-speak, by losing the Stanley Cup in their own home town. Though, based upon previous experience, the police had anticipated and prepared for such a violent reaction, still, the riot happened so quickly that it caught the authorities off guard, and resulted in a lot of injuries and tremendous damage.

The article said that, in the beginning, some people tried to contain what they could, but they got beaten up. Brave people that they were, they could not stand up to a crowd with a mob mentality, people for whom losing a sports game was moral justification to injure innocent people and destroy millions of dollars worth of property.

Just imagine what would have happened to Pinchas had God not stood up for him at the last moment, probably exactly what happened to Chur when he tried to stop the Erev Rav from making the golden calf: brutal death. When people feel self-righteous about their complaints, they also feel justified to take the law into their own hands, even if that means staining them with the blood of others.

Is it really worth it in the end? Many people have said 'no' over the generations, and have stood back and looked the other way, or have looked on in horror while doing nothing at all to help the victims. Who says I have to sacrifice my life for another? Who says I even want to?

Then, of course, there are the Rebi Akivas of history, who know how to go out in a blaze of glory:

When Rebi Akiva was taken out for execution it was the hour for reciting the Shema, and while they combed his flesh with iron combs, he accepted upon himself the Kingdom of Heaven. His students said to him, "Our teacher, even to this point?"

He answered them, "All my days I have been troubled by the verse, 'with all your soul,' that is, even if He takes your soul. I said, 'When will I have the opportunity of fulfilling this?' Now that I have the opportunity should I not fulfill it?"

He prolonged the word Echad [of the Shema] until he died while saying it. (Brochos 61b)

As the Talmud says, a person can live his entire life as a righteous individual, only to become evil at the end. Some have done just the opposite, going from evil to good at the last moment. And, though there are those who acquire their portion in the World-to-Come after a lifetime of righteousness, there are some who do it in a single moment, usually their last, which can be the defining moment of a person's life:

Granted that there are those who have died peacefully, by what the Talmud calls Neshikah, or Divine Kiss (Brochos 8a). But that is for people whose lives were a blaze of glory, a blaze of Divine Glory, because everything they did sanctified the Name of God. It is a death that only a few have enjoyed over history, people like the Avos and Imahos, and Moshe, Aharon, and Miriam.