



Ohr Yerushalayim News

7th February 2015 - Volume 7 - Issue 30 – פרשת יתרו – י"ח שבט תשע"ה

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Eruv Guest

The Eruv has been set up for just over a year and many of the community have benefited from it. We are pleased to have the Rov of the Eruv, Rabbi Avigdor Grossberger as our guest for Shalosh Seudas where he will speak about the Eruv.

Members are encouraged to support it from less than £5 month, details of ways to donate can be found on their website, manchestereyruv.org.uk

Bas Mitzva Rosh Chodesh Group Special

Girls in Year 5 and above are invited to a special, Bas Mitzva Rosh Chodesh group this Sunday - see back page for further details.

Nach Yomi

The Nach Yomi programme, covering the whole of Nach at a rate of 10 Pesukim a day, completes the cycle this coming week. The cycle started around the time Ohr Yerushalayim moved to its' own building. It's therefore a good time to get on board for the next cycle.

The cycle calendar is in the Shiur rooms and further copies are available for those interested to take.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

We Were Not Chosen For Our Brains

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Although the Revelation at Sinai and the narration of the giving of the Asserres HaDibros is certainly the dramatic pinnacle of this week's parsha, the parsha begins on a very different note. Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, arrived; he observed the situation that Moshe Rabbeinu was busy the whole day adjudicating between people; he advised that this was not a good system and he recommended a system of higher and lower courts. Therefore, Chazal say that Moshe's father-in-law (who had multiple names) was given the additional name of Yesser because a portion was added to the Torah in his merit ("Yesser al shem she'yiter parsha achas b'Torah").

The Talmud records a dispute as to whether the events in this week's parsha are recorded chronologically or not. In other words according to one opinion Yisro initially came before the giving of the Torah as the events are recorded in our parsha and according to the other opinion Yisro came after the giving of the Torah, in which case the story of his initial coming does not appear in true chronological sequence.

Regardless, literarily the prelude to the acceptance of the Torah is the narrative of Yisro coming and giving Klal Yisrael this "novel plan" of establishing a hierarchical court system. This matter needs to be analyzed. Why is this the beginning of the story of "Kabalas haTorah"? Why is our Parsha not known as "Parshas Kabalas HaTorah" or why is not this Shabbos known as "Shabbas Kabalas HaTorah"? Why is it "Parshas Yisro" and "Shabbas Parshas Yisro" as if somehow the message of Yisro's coming almost overshadows the significance of Matan Torah?

The Or HaChaim haKadosh suggests a very novel answer to this question. In truth, the Or HaChaim writes, Yisro's idea is not "rocket science". The idea of the efficiency of a division of labor and the practicality of implementing a hierarchical court system is something that Klal Yisrael should have no doubt figured out on their own without Yisro.

However, the Almighty wanted to send a message to the Jewish people of that generation and of all future generations that wisdom DOES exist amongst the nations of the world and that "there are some wise gentiles out there." The lesson is that the Jews should not think that Hashem chose them because they are the wisest of all nations. We were not the only nation to whom Hashem chose to give the Torah because we necessarily have higher IQs than non-Jews. The reason why the incident with Yisro is the introduction to Kabalas HaTorah is to teach this lesson. Why then were we Chosen? We were chosen because of Divine Kindness and because of Hashem's love for the forefathers. It was because of the merit of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. Granted, they may have been smart, but that is not what the Almighty valued in them. Hashem valued the fact that Avraham was the Master of Chessed [kindness] par excellence. He valued Yitzchak because he was the Master of Gevurah [spiritual strength]. He valued Yaakov because he had the attribute of Emes [truth]. G-d values the forefathers because of their respective attributes and because those were the attributes they passed on to their descendants. This is why "He Chose us from all the nations."

Unfortunately, there is sometimes a perpetual misperception in certain segments of our society. The misperception is that the nations of the world are stupid. This is an inappropriate Jewish outlook. There are in fact very bright people from the nations of the world. The last time I checked, Bill Gates is not Jewish. When my computer crashes, I do not know what to do and he does. Therefore, he is at least smarter than I am! Warren Buffet has made billions of dollars in the stock market and most of us have not. He too is smarter than we are. I am sure that there are brilliant doctors that are non-Jewish and there are brilliant lawyers that are non-Jewish and there are brilliant scientists that are non-Jewish.

Our Chosen-ness has nothing to do with brains. It has to do with middos. This, the Orach Chaim haKadosh is teaching, is the reason we were chosen. At the end of the day, this is what it is all about.

Rabbeinu Bechaye points out that when the Torah talks about the greatness of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, and Dovid, it never

The Week Ahead

פרשת יתרו

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|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Candle Lighting | 4.45pm |
| Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos | 4.50pm |
| Seder HaLimud | 8.40am |
| Shacharis | 9.00am |
| סוף זמן ק"ש | 10.03am |
| 1st Mincha | 1.30pm |
| Rov's Hilchos Shabbos Shiur | 4.05pm |
| 2nd Mincha | 4.35pm |
| Seuda Shlishis | following |
| Motzei Shabbos | 5.55pm |
| Ovos uBonim | 7.10pm |
| Sunday | 7.15am / 8.20am |
| Monday / Thursday | 6.45am / 7.10am |
| Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday | 6.45am / 7.20am |
| Mincha & Maariv | 4.55pm |
| Late Maariv | 8.00pm |

comments about how smart they were. Moshe is praised for his modesty, not for his brains. Noach is praised for his righteousness. Because of his Tzidkus, he was saved, not because of his brains. Yaakov is described as a simple person (ish Tam). Nothing about brains or intelligence or IQ is mentioned.

The bottom line is that the central challenge of Judaism is working on a person's character traits (middos). The Vilna Gaon says on the verse "Hold fast to discipline (mussar / character); do not let go. Be careful with it; watch it for it is your life." [Mishlei 4:13]: The reason we are here in this world is to improve a character trait, which we have thus far not perfected. Therefore, a person must always work hard on this, for if one does not improve on his middos while here, what is the purpose of life?

This is an important idea to remember in raising our children. We value brains so much, we value grades so much, we value success so much. But when our children come home from school with a report card that says they are polite, they are kind, they are helpful to others, we should make as big a deal about that as we do when a child gets straight As. At the end of the day, this is what it is all about – Hold fast to character discipline, do not let go.

The Chosen

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

In this week's parashah, Hashem calls us His "Am Segulah," often translated "Chosen People." Many Jews are uncomfortable with this title, as if it implies that Jews look down on other groups. Not so, writes R' Shimon Schwab z"l. We do not look down on other groups. It is no praise to assert that one is chosen from among inferior beings. The very fact that the Torah calls those who observe the Torah and mitzvot the "Chosen People" is a testament to the lofty stature of all of mankind. Likewise, R' Schwab writes, if one believes that all studies other than Torah are worthless, then the thanks that one gives for having received the Torah is meaningless. What glory is ascribed to Torah knowledge if its distinction is that it is superior to nonsense?!

What then does it mean to be an "Am Segulah"? R' Schwab explains: We find (in Rashi to Bereishit 24:50) that Lavan is called a rasha because he did not respect his father. Why? Lavan was not Jewish, and he had no mitzvah to respect his father! On the other hand, the Gemara relates that a gentile by the name of Dama ben Netina honored his father by not awakening him even though he (Dama) lost a valuable business opportunity as a result. Why do the Sages extol this person who had no mitzvah to honor his father? Seemingly he was a fool for losing a fortune at the expense of that good deed!

What our Sages are teaching is that honoring one's parents is an element of basic human decency. What, then, is added when the Torah commands us to honor our parents? Honoring parents as required by the Torah *begins* where honoring parents because of common sense *ends*. The Torah is calling on us to practice something higher than basic human decency, which even others practice. That is what it means to be an "Am Segulah." (Selected Writings p.290)

"Moshe told his father-in-law everything that Hashem had done to Pharaoh and Egypt for Yisrael's sake . . ." (18:8)

R' Avraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer z"l asks: What did Moshe tell Yitro? Didn't we read already, "Yitro . . . heard everything that Elokim did for Moshe and for Yisrael, His people"?

He explains: Yitro heard all about the Ten Plagues and the Exodus. However, Yitro was bewildered. Why did Hashem seemingly allow Pharaoh to toy with Him? Since Hashem knows the future, He must have known that only the Plague of the Firstborn would move Pharaoh. Why didn't He bring that plague immediately and be done with it?

R' Sofer continues: We know the answer to that question, because Hashem told Moshe (10:1), "I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn so that I can put these signs of Mine in his midst and so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt and My signs that I placed among them--that you may know that I am Hashem." The Ten Plagues were meant to teach the world, in general, and Bnei Yisrael, in particular, about Hashem's power. But Yitro had no way of knowing that until Moshe told him, in our verse, "everything that Hashem had done to Pharaoh and Egypt *for Yisrael's sake*." (Ketav Sofer)

We cordially invite
year 5 and up
to join us for a
special Bas Mitzvah
Ohr Yerushalayim
Rosh Chodesh group
this Sunday
from 5.30pm until 7pm

Presentation
with
Rebetzen Cohen

Hot abaya,
Cream cakes
and more!

Great
entertainment
including a
Chinese auction
with
prizes!

Cover charge: £5 each.
£3.50 each for two girls or more

Tefillah Nuggets

Dani Epstein

שמונה עשרה – גבורות: תחיית המתים

The revival of the dead

The Abudarham poses a question. Why are there – uniquely – three mentions of the same topic, i.e. תחיית המתים in this paragraph? These consist of:

מְחִיָּה מְתִים אֶתְּהָ
מְחִיָּה מְתִים בְּרַחֲמֵים רַבִּים
וְנִאֲמַן אֶתְּהָ לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים

In no other paragraph do we observe this degree of repetition. After all, once we have mentioned – תחיית המתים – the revival of the dead – once, this should suffice?

His answer is predicated on the assumption that the phrase תחיית המתים does not necessarily refer to the revival of the dead, but also refers to other events and instances that are related to the sustenance of life.

Therefore, the first mention of תחיית המתים refers to being revived after sleeping. We say the phrase בידך אפקיד רוחי in Your hands I entrust my spirit (quote in Adon Olom referring to Tehillim 31:6) – prior to going to sleep. When Hashem revives us in the morning, and provides rain and dew for our sustenance, this too is a form of the "revival of the dead". Hence the proximity of משיב הרוח . תחיית המתים

This "revival" is in one aspect even greater than the eventual revival of the dead, as we see in (ז.ז): מסכת תענית:

אמר ר' אבהו גדול יום הגשמים מתחיית המתים דאילו תחיית המתים לצדיקים ואילו גשמים בין לצדיקים בין לרשעים

"Rav Abahu said: Greater is the day of rain than the revival of the dead, since the revival of the dead is only for the righteous, but the rain is for both the righteous and the wicked."

The second mention – מְחִיָּה מְתִים בְּרַחֲמֵים רַבִּים is in fact self-explanatory since it is followed by: – סוּמְךָ נֹפְלִים וְרוּפֵא חֹלִים וּמְתִיר אֲסוּרִים – He supports the fallen, cures the sick and frees the imprisoned. These are all considered forms of תחיית המתים.

Finally, the phrase – וּמְקַיֵּם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עַפְרָה and He maintains His faithfulness to those who sleep in the earth – introduces the last mention of תחיית המתים which in fact is talking about the actual revivification, במהרה בימנו.