



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Anna Shields on her engagement to Dovid Halpern  
 Mazel Tov to Charles and Joyce Khan on the Bar Mitzvah in Israel of their grandson Akiva son of Danny and Miriam Shwedel

### Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush this week sponsored by Stephen Wieder in honour of the recent Yahrtzeit of his father.

### Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this week:

Shabbos, 25th Shevat - David Wolfson for his father  
 Sun, 26th Shevat - Laura Ann Hassan for her mother

### Lost Property

A reminder that personal property left on the Shul premises will be disposed of every Rosh Chodesh

## The Four Cups Of Wine

Rabbi J Rubinstein

This week, on Tuesday night and Wednesday, it was the Yartzeit of Rav Matisyohu Salamon, the revered Mashgiach of Lakewood Yeshiva. It is surely appropriate to quote an explanation of his, on this week's Parshah. Every Pesach on Seder night, we drink four cups of wine corresponding to the four expressions recorded in this week's Parshah, which Hashem used to promise deliverance to the Jewish people. They are "והוצאתי" - "And I will bring out", "והצילתי" - "And I will save", "וגאלתי" - "And I will redeem", and "ולקחתי" - "And I will take". In fact when we drink the cups of wine we are recalling the four stages of redemption which those expressions foretold. Rav Matisyohu quoted a commentary on the Medrash which explains, the redemptions were from extra decrees which were imposed on them, while they were in Egypt. They were, the extra rigour with which they had to work, the decree to drown the baby boys, the slaughter of Jewish children which took place so that Pharaoh could bathe in their blood, and the insistence of the Egyptians that the Jews find by themselves the straw for making the bricks. The redemptions from these decrees took place while they were still in slavery. But even after they were completely redeemed, they still gave thanks for those "mini-redemptions" from the harshest decrees, which had occurred along the way.

Rav Matisyohu said, this teaches us that even while we are still in exile, we must thank Hashem for "mini redemptions" which we experience from individual troubles. We must take them as a reminder that Hashem has not forgotten us, and will one day bring us a total redemption. Arguably, the greatest of those reminders, is the very survival of the Jewish people, in spite of thousands of years of antisemitic persecution. Perhaps one could add to that, the words of Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato (In "Maamar Hachochmoh). He wrote, when a lumberjack fells a tree, he aims blow after blow until the tree finally falls. It is the final blow which actually fells the tree but it is the accumulation of blows before which causes it to happen. In a similar way, when Hashem took us out of Egypt, He showed us a great light and drew us up spiritually, from the low level we had sunk to. The four cups of wine, celebrate four levels of spiritual achievement which were attained in Egypt. But the spiritual triumph was still incomplete when they came out of Egypt. It will only be absolutely complete, with the total defeat of all evil, with the coming of Moshiach. But each year, says Rav Luzzato, when we observe the Mitzvah of the four cups we achieve another spiritual victory, which brings us closer to the ultimate redemption (like the individual blows to

the tree). It is the continuation of one long process.

These are two separate explanations about the four cups of wine. But they both teach us the importance of appreciating each stage of redemption. One in the physical realm, and the other in spiritual terms, both of which occurred in Egypt, and continue to occur. May the accumulation of these redemptions, rapidly climax in the final redemption represented by the cup of Elijah the prophet, which is always placed on the Seder table.

## Selling Water

Dr Michael Wilks

Shemos Rabbo 9 states the following on the possuk:

וְגַם אֲשֶׁר-בְּיַד הַיְּהוּדִים הָיָה מָוֶת. The fish that were in the Nile died

"Rabbi Avin HaLevi, son of Rabbi, said: Israel became wealthy from the plague of blood. How so? If an Egyptian and an Israelite were in one house and the tub was full of water, and the Egyptian went to fill the jug from it, he would remove it filled with blood, but the Israelite would drink water from the tub. The Egyptian would say: 'Give me a little water with your hand.' He would give it to him, and it would become blood. He would say to him: 'Let you and I drink water from one bowl,' and the Israelite would drink water and the Egyptian blood. But when he would purchase it from the Israelite with money, he would drink water. From this, Israel became wealthy."

What is the link between the possuk "The fish that were in the Nile died" and the drosho of Rabbi Avin HaLevi that the Jewish people got rich. This is explained by Rav Naftoli Hirz Av Beis Din of Lvov in the sefer "כמוצא שלל רב".

We need to look into how the plague of blood worked.

1] Did the river itself change into blood but when a Jew came to drink from it the blood changed back to water ... or

2] The river was unchanged but when an Egyptian came to drink from it the water changed to blood but for the Jew, the water remained unchanged.

We can answer the question from the quoted possuk. If the water had indeed changed to blood, then there it would be obvious that the fish died. So we must conclude that the water had not changed to blood but only when an Egyptian came to drink from it did the water change to blood. And so we see an additional miracle that the fish died in the water (and not in the blood).

This creates a difficulty because we generally have a principle that it is best to have the least number of open miracles. There were many more Egyptians than Jews and by having the water change when contacted

## Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	4.21pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.26pm
15 Minute Parsha Shiur	Following
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.13am
Mincha	1.30pm / 4.13pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	5.33pm
Ovos uBonim/Bonos	6.33pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.30pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

by an Egyptian makes the number of open miracles larger. R' Avin's statement answers this point. If the river was blood, then the water produced in the hands of the Jews would have been the product of a miracle. And then we are forbidden to have benefit from the product of a miracle. Seeing however that the river was natural water (and only changed into blood through the Egyptians), and so could be sold to the Egyptians.

So it turns out according to that according to Rav Naftoli Hirz's reading of the Midrash:

- The river was unchanged but when an Egyptian came to drink from it the water changed to blood
- The fish died in the water (and not in the blood)
- The Jews could sell the water to the Egyptians since it was not the produce of a miracle.

## Hail To The Chief

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Vaera. In last week's parsha, Moshe's first appearance before Paroah to demand freedom for his people, Bnei Yisroel, had led to a harshening of the conditions. The same quota of bricks was being demanded with the straw no longer being provided. Moshe was angrily rebuked by some members of Bnei Yisroel.

Moshe is now given comforting words of encouragement to deliver to Bnei Yisroel but they didn't accept his words. This was because they were too "short of breath" due to their tortuous state and the "hard work" they were being subjected to [6:9].

We find a strange situation in Mitzrayim. While the slavery was going at full tempo, Moshe and Aharon were able to visit the palace of Paroah at will. Rashi [5:4] brings the Medrash that teaches that the entire tribe of Levi was exempted from the hard labor of slavery. The Ramban there explains that every nation had their wise men who would study and teach their laws. As orchestrated by Hashem, Paroah allowed the tribe of Levi to serve in that capacity for Bnei Yisroel and as such they were exempted from the slavery.

Rav Yonasan Eibeshitz offers a fascinating explanation. He writes that Paroah foresaw through his sorcery that the redeemer of Israel would be from the tribe of Levi. Paroah wisely understood that someone who was not being persecuted along with the rest of the nation would not be able to serve as the instrument through whom that persecution would be stopped. Only a person experiencing equal suffering could serve as the leader of a suffering nation. He therefore specifically exempted the tribe of Levi from the bondage, hoping to thereby thwart the development that would be necessary for one of their members to develop into the redeemer of Israel.

This, he explains, was actually the attitude of Bnei Yisroel in the passuk that we mentioned above. "They (Bnei Yisroel) didn't accept Moshe's words due to their shortness of breath and hard work." They, wallowing in the cruel bondage, couldn't accept that Hashem would choose as their redeemer a member of the tribe that was exempted from that bondage.

If so, how was Moshe in fact able to develop into the redeemer?

Moshe had two sons: "One's name was Gershom because he said, 'I was a stranger in a strange land.' And one's name was Eliezer because the G-d of my father helped me and saved me from the sword of Paroah. [18:3-4]"

I recently heard an interesting explanation. What kind of stranger in a strange land was Moshe? He was brought up in Paroah's palace in incredible luxury. When he fled to Midyan, he was taken in by Yisro who also seems to have been fairly well to do. What difficulties was Moshe referring to? Furthermore, why does the passuk use the words, "because he said," to introduce the explanation of Gershom's name but not by the explanation of Eliezer's name?

Although Moshe was in fact brought up in luxury, far removed from the bondage, he suffered along with the rest of Bnei Yisroel. As he grew older he "went out amongst his brothers and saw their suffering." Rashi explains that what he saw entered his heart and he suffered along with them. "He saw an Egyptian hitting an Ivri, one of his brothers," and he killed that Egyptian [2:11-12]. Although doing that endangered his life and certainly destroyed his cushioned existence in Mitzrayim, that didn't hinder his response. His brother was being persecuted and he felt that persecution. He responded.

That was the stranger in the strange land that Moshe was referring to. Although he wasn't actually being persecuted, "he said" and totally felt that he was. As the passuk said: "One's name was Gershom because he said, 'I was a stranger in a strange land.'"

We often think that we are feeling someone else's pain but are usually fooling ourselves. Earlier this week I led a group of forty students on a two-day trip to Eilat. We had an incredible time hiking and snorkeling. On the last hike we had climbed a rocky mountain for about an hour when, upon reaching the summit, we were enthralled by the beauty of the Gulf of Eilat, nestled between the mountains of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, that stretched out before us.

I guess I was a bit too mesmerized by the sight because on the way down the mountain I slipped and twisted my knee. It didn't hurt much the rest of the way down, nor did it impede the afternoon snorkeling but by the end of the five-hour bus ride back to Yerushalayim, it was pretty stiff, swollen and hurting.

The next morning, I borrowed a cane and hobbled around pretty slowly. As I was making my way around I realized that it really bothered me to walk like that and have everyone else breeze past me. I thought about some friends who have disabilities and thought of how they must feel knowing that they'll be in that state far longer than the day and a half that I was. I realized that although I might have thought that I was feeling their pain, I really wasn't. It's incredibly hard to feel as if you're there when you're really not there.

Moshe felt the pain that Bnei Yisroel were experiencing. He really felt their pain. He wasn't there but, at the same time, he was totally there. If he hadn't been, he never could have been their redeemer.

That ingredient is necessary whether one wants to be a leader of Yisroel or just a true, helping friend to others.

## The Insult of Galus

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

I have heard the groans of the Bnei Yisrael whom Mitzrayim enslaves.

Did we not already know that it was the Egyptians who enslaved the Jews? Would it not have been more appropriate to simply say, "I have heard the groans of the Bnei Yisrael?" A short distance from here, the Torah states, "Therefore tell the Bnei Yisrael, 'I am Hashem. I will take you out from under the burdens of Mitzrayim.'" The Torah could have economized on words by stating, "Therefore tell them..." Here, as well, the stress on Bnei Yisrael seems unnecessary, if not jarring.

We know that HKBH somewhat artificially commuted their sentence before its full 400 years had passed. We are used to thinking that He had no choice, as it were. They were on the brink of complete cultural assimilation. It was now-or-never. Had He waited any longer to redeem them, they would have slipped to the 49th level of spiritual degradation. While this is true, our pasuk clues us in on an entirely different reason for their early release. Thegalus in Mitzrayim was, in and of itself, an intolerable slight to Hashem's kavod. That His beloved children were in exile was insulting to Him, even without considering their horrible suffering and pain. This insult could not continue for another 190 years. The Torah accentuates "Bnei Yisrael" to indicate that all of them were the beloved children of the holy Avos.

Just why does thegalus of the Jews dishonor Hashem? Thenavi says, "Have pity, Hashem, upon Your people. Let not your heritage be an object of scorn, for nations to dominate them. Why should they say among the nations, 'Where is their G-d?'" The shame, then, is in our detractors gleefully pointing to our exile as evidence of G-d's disappearance. It is kevod Shomayim to be able to point to Hashem's presence in and control of everything; His absence is the polar opposite.

There is a deeper way to appreciate the stinging insult ofgalus. The Zohar teaches, "When Yisrael is in the Holy Land, their sustenance comes to them from an elevated place. They give a portion, a remnant to the idolatrous nations. All the nations are not sustained but from that remnant. Now that Yisrael is ingalus, the situation is reversed, and it is only a remnant that is left for them. Woe to the prince who waits for the portion of a servant."

In other words, galus substantially changes the way that Hashem' berachah is transmitted to us. In Eretz Yisrael, the Divine influence flows directly to us. It continues on to others, but only because we channel it to them. Tragically, ingalusthe roles are reversed. Parnasah flows through the impure channels of the rest of the world, and we are left with the dregs that are left over.

This is the meaning of Hashem's message: "Behold, I am sending you the grain and the wine and the oil. You will be sated from it. I will no longer make you a disgrace among the nations." Is our disgrace lessened by full pantries? Rather, thenavitells of a time when Hashem will say, "I am sending you grain," meaning directly to you, rather than through the conduit of the nations. The restoration of the direct channel between Hashem and His people eliminates the disgrace among the nations.