



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

- מזל טוב**
 Mazel Tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the occasion of the Bar Mitzva of their grandson, Shabsi, son of Rabbi & Mrs Meir Cohen in Gateshead this Shabbos.
 Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Yosaif Bernhardt on the birth of a son. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 9 Falcon Court, Park Street.
- Kiddush**
 Mr & Mrs Ari Craimer invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush this Shabbos after Davenning at their home, 99 Park Road in honour of the birth of their daughter, Lily - Mazel Tov!
- Annual Mishnayos Siyim**
 A reminder that the annual Siyum Mishnayos takes place on Shabbos Parshas Behaalosecha. This year we are learning Sedorim Moed and Noshim. There are still some slots available to learn, see the list on the notice wall.

The Most Miraculous is the Ordinary

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Meshech Chochmah: What is the nature of this berachah? Chazal see it as something beyond abundant rainfall when it is most needed for crop growth. Rather, they see this referring to rainfall on Friday evenings, when people are indoors celebrating Shabbos, and the needed precipitation does not come at the price of interference with other human activity.

Chazal mean to convey to us that what we call teva / nature contains a dimension full of wonder and surprise, and that is keyed to Man's obedience to G-d. When Man heeds G-d's commandments, Nature itself becomes more elegant and cooperative.

We would never refer to rain falling at times convenient to us as "miraculous," at least not in the strict sense of the word. We usually reserve that designation for events that are entirely inexplicable, not just improbable or serendipitous. The "real" miracle, we think, is the blockbuster event that rips pages out of the Divine rule book. It is this "real" miracle that we long for, but usually have to settle for the humdrum ordinariness of existence.

Chazal tell us that we are wrong. The greatest value lies in the ordinary and regular. Hashem designed incredible grandeur and beauty into His rules. Those fully take into account the actions of Man; they play out in synch with the laws of the Torah. They are nothing but a succession of less dramatic miracles to which we become accustomed. The opening words of our parshah – "If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments" – essentially state that untold richness presents itself when Hashem's laws of Nature are allowed full-throated expression. That richness represents the aim of Creation. When Man sins, those laws are muffled and stifled, resulting in a less than perfect world.

Because it is easy for Man to lose sight of the connection between a beneficent Nature and the Providence of G-d, He arranges at times what we erroneously look to as the "real" miracles – the complete

reversal of the laws of Nature. They remind us Who is in charge, Who orchestrates everything. While these are effective, they do not fit into the essential scheme of things. They are wake-up calls, necessitated by Man's blindness and smallness. The fullness of teva, of a world operating the way it was designed to, is essential and "real."

This is why the person who says Hallel every day is a blasphemer, while the one who recites Ashrei regularly is assured a place in Heaven. The former praises Hashem only for the events that violate the expected conduct of Nature (and apparently finds plenty of them); the latter praises G-d for the amazing richness of Nature operating the way it was designed to.

Given Hashem's ability to easily undo any laws He created, the obvious miracle, like supplying the Bnei Yisrael with mahn, is dramatic, but not so surprising. More wondrous is the system whereby all living things are constantly supplied with their needs and nourishment.

When the gemara extols Ashrei for following the alef-beis, it alludes to this natural system, in which many steps are interconnected to produce the final result, and no step is missing. Man, who is a partner to this system in that his actions are necessary in producing, gathering, and preparing different food items, nonetheless finds himself in a world which regularly produces the ingredients he needs.

A midrash explains the oft-repeated phrase "I am Hashem." It says that this (the Four-Letter Name) is His Name, and the one assigned by Adam. Adam comprehended how things took place, and how G-d fashioned nothingness into somethingness, and somethingness into the myriad form that surround us. Avraham, on the other hand, called G-d Adon/Master – and was the first to do so. He looked at the world, and discovered G-d's mastery of it.

Adam (and others before Avraham) looked to G-d, and discovered through Him the workings of the world. Avrohom, however, looked at the world, and discovered G-d. The others knew the Cause – and comprehended the effect. Avrohom studied the effect, and came

The Week Ahead

פרשת בחקותי	שבת מברכין סיון
Mincha	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.46-7.55pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.55am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.41pm
Shiur from Rabbi Y Y Katz	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	10.46pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.40pm

through it to know the Cause.

... But We're Afraid To Ask **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

The Torah does not usually leave room for official questions of faith. It tells us, in no uncertain terms, what our responsibilities are and the commitment we must make to be observant Jews. Every mitzvah entails sacrifice. Sometimes it requires a monetary commitment, sometimes a commitment of time and morals. Not often does it consider the human trials one encounters in mitzvah performance. They are our problem and we must deal with them as human beings and as Jews.

Yet this week the Torah uncharacteristically provides leeway for those who may waver in their commitment.

In Parshas Behar the Torah charges the Jewish people with the laws of shmittah. Every seventh year, we are told that the land of Israel is to lie fallow. No work is to be done with the earth. There is not to be a harvest, nor may the ground be sown or reaped.

Observing shmittah is a true test of faith. Imagine! One must not harvest his grain but instead rely on pure faith for his daily fare. Yet the Torah does not leave us with the austere command. The Torah deals directly with the human emotion related to the issue. In Leviticus 25:20 the Torah foretells a human side. "And if you will say in your heart, 'what shall we eat in the seventh year, behold the land has not been sown nor has it been reaped?'" Hashem reassures the people that His bounty will abound in the sixth year and they will live the seventh year in comfort.

This is not the only time the Torah realizes human wariness. In reference to the command of conquering the Land of Canaan, the Torah states in Deuteronomy 7:17: "Perhaps you shall say in your heart, 'these nations are more numerous than me. How will I drive them out?'" Once again Hashem reassures His nation that He will not forsake them.

The question is glaring. Why does the Torah answer to human psyche? Why doesn't the Torah just command us to let the land lie fallow, or conquer the Land of Canaan? If there are problems or fears in our hearts, they are our problems. Those fears should not be incorporated as part of the command.

Isidore would meet his friend Irving every other week while doing business. "How are you Irving?" Isidore would always ask. "How's the wife and kids?" Irv would always grunt back the perfunctory replies. "Fine." "A little under the weather." "My son Jack got a job."

This one sided interrogation went on for years until one day Isidore exploded. "Irv," he said abruptly. "I don't understand. For six years I ask you about your wife, your kids, and your business. Not once mind you, not once did you ever ask me about my wife, my kids, or my business!"

Irv shrugged. "Sorry, Izzie. I was really selfish. So tell me," he continued, "how is your wife? How are your kids? How is your business?"

Izzie let out a sigh of anguish and began to krechts. He put his hand gently on Irv's shoulder, tightened his lips, and shook his head slowly. "Don't ask!"

Reb Leible Eiger (1816-1888) explains that there are many questions of faith that we may have. The faithful may in fact fear the fact that there is fear. "Is it a flaw in faith to worry?" "Am I committing heresy by fearing the enemy?" "Am I allowed to ask?" The Torah tells us in two places, "you will have these questions. You will ask, 'how am I going to sustain myself and family?' 'You will worry,' 'how will I conquer my enemies?' 'Will I be destroyed?'" The Torah reassures us that there is no lack of trust by asking those questions. We mustn't get down on ourselves and consider questions a breach of faith. Life and sustenance are mortal attributes. They warrant mortal fear.

Adam, the first man was originally blessed with eternal life without having to worry for his livelihood. After sinning, he was cursed with death and was told that he would eat by the sweat of his brow. The Torah assures us that it is not only human but also acceptable to worry about these two issues — one's livelihood and survival, as long as we believe in the reassurances about those worries.

Good News in the Middle of the Tochacha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

There is a very long and interesting Ramban in this week's parsha, which attempts to demonstrate that all the terrible things in the Tochacha (those things that the Torah predicts will occur if we do not keep the mitzvos), did indeed happen.

For instance, the Ramban says that the pasuk [verse] "G-d will return you to Egypt in boats" refers to the days of Titus when the Jews were loaded onto boats and shipped as slaves to Egypt. The Ramban brings many different examples... "The King which you will appoint over yourself..." refers to Agrippa; the pasuk hints to the fact that he was not worthy of being a King.

Finally, the Ramban says that the pasuk [26:32] "I will make desolate the Land, and your enemies who dwell upon it will be desolate" (V'shamemu aleha oyeveichem hayoshvim bah) is not a curse, but rather is a blessing. It is a bit of "good news" in the middle of the bad: the pasuk tells us that our Holy Land will not accept our enemies upon it. The Ramban says that this is a great proof of the Divine Hand in action. "For there cannot be found throughout the world a land that had been so good and fertile (which now became so desolate and inhospitable)".

If you want to be a Believer, says the Ramban, all you need to do is look at Eretz Yisroel. Look what happened there for 2000 years when Romans, Arabs, Turks and the British was occupied it.

It had previously been a beautiful and fertile land, but under foreign dominion, it became the most desolate of lands. The Torah assures us that from the day we left Eretz Yisroel the land would not accept any other nation or populace. They all tried to settle it, but were not successful.

This is the meaning of what the Torah says, "Your enemies will be desolate upon it". No nation will ever be successful at inhabiting Eretz Yisroel, except Klal Yisroel [The Jewish Nation].

What would happen if the Indians came to the Federal Government and said, "We made a silly mistake 200 years ago. We sold Manhattan Island to you at a rock bottom price — \$24. We realize that you're entitled to a profit, so we'll give you \$48 for Manhattan"? Or even if they would offer 48 million dollars! Or 48 billion dollars! Guess what? There would be no sale. What has happened to Manhattan Island in those 200 years? Considering its value now, there is no way the Government would ever give it back.

Imagine if other nations had been successful in making Eretz Yisroel profitable. Imagine if in 1948, it was a beautiful and productive land. Would they have consented to returning it to the Jewish People? However, as the Ramban says, they were not able to develop the land. In 1948, when we came to ask, "Can we have the land back?" those in power may have thought, "Do you mean that strip of land that's hard like iron, in which nothing grows? Are you talking about that worthless strip of land in the middle of the desert? Good Luck with it!" This is Divine Providence, as promised by the Torah in this week's parsha.

I have always wondered — if one examines the Middle East — Saudi Arabia has oil, Qatar, Iraq, Yemen all have oil, every country has oil. Even Egypt has oil. How is it that from our Holy Land, the choicest of all lands, we cannot squeeze a drop of oil (at least until very recent discoveries)? Is this "the Eyes of the L-rd are upon it from the start of the year to its end?"

However, what would have been in 1948, if the British were sitting on a Saudi Arabia? What would have been if they were sitting on a Kuwait? Obviously, they would not have been so eager to give black gold to the Jews. This is part of "Your enemies will be desolate upon it."

The upshot of all of this is that if we seek a lesson in Emunah [Belief (in G-d)], if one is unimpressed with all the other miracles and wonders that G-d has performed... Just look at this Ramban, just look at this pasuk, just look at that Land. If our eyes are open, we will see the Hand of G-d and His Divine Providence upon us and upon all the Jewish people.