



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"א שבט תשע"ח – בשלה – 27th January 2018 - Volume 10 - Issue 27

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Eric Sievers on the birth of a granddaughter to Mr & Mrs Shenker in Yerushalayim.

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs Avrohom Meyer on the birth of a granddaughter to Mr & Mrs S Meyer in Tzfat.

Mazel Tov to all those who learn Mishna Yomi on completing Seder Moed. It is an opportune time for new people to join in learning 2 Mishnayos a day starting this Shabbos with Yevomos.

### A Horse, A Donkey, and Paroh

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

"The whip for a horse, the bridle for a donkey, and the rod for the back of fools." A midrash sees this as commentary about three historical figures, rather than farm animals. It links the horse to the Paroh of Bereishis, the donkey to his colleague Avimelech, and sees Moshe's Paroh as the fool who needed the rod. We will unpack Chazal's deep intent in doing this.

Hashem reserves a special hatred for the one who employs speech as his weapon of choice to strike at his fellow. The Torah includes him on its short list of people who are cursed; Chazal include him among the four groups who are not allowed to receive the Divine Presence. (It is a tragic but all-too-common error that speech does not rise to the bar of action, and that the Torah concerns itself with prohibited actions alone. This is patently untrue.)

Battery-through-speech comes in two varieties, depending on whether the underlying hatred of a person for his fellow (which undoubtedly underlies the attack) is overt or covert. Each has a relative advantage and disadvantage for the victim. When the hatred is open and manifest, the victim knows what to expect. He can often protect himself from its effects. On the other hand, it is a constant cause of aggravation and worry. When hatred is hidden, the victim cannot agonize about what he does not know. He also, however, has no way of warding off its ill effects.

How does the evildoer decide which kind of hatred to deploy? For the most part, when he is motivated by some raw, primal hatred, he cannot keep it hidden. He is interested in hurting the other, and the hurt is maximized when it is out in the open. When, however, his hatred of the other grows out of self-love, i.e. he wants to destroy and displace the other so that he can move into his position, he will conceal his hatred.

"For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful have opened against me. They have spoken to me the language (tongue) of falsehood." The pasuk initially deals with the "mouth," and then switches to "tongue." Other pesukim do the same, or similar. It seems to me that the nuance that the two terms refer to the different forms of evil speech we have considered. Chazal observe that the tongue is kept in check by two barriers that can block it from being weaponized – the mouth, and the teeth. Thus, references to an evil mouth refer to speech that is openly and manifestly hateful, just as the mouth (or lips) are revealed and obvious to all. When a pasuk speaks of the more hidden and devious kind of evil speech, it employs the term

## לעלוי נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

### But I Am Sooo Hungry!

One may not eat or drink anything before kiddush whether on Friday night or Shabbos morning. This prohibition applies equally to men and women and includes even drinking water.

On Friday night, the obligation for kiddush begins at the onset of Shabbos and therefore at that time the prohibition begins.

In the morning, the obligation for kiddush begins immediately after one concludes Shacharis and therefore the prohibition begins at that time. However one who during the week drinks tea or coffee before Shacharis may do so on Shabbos without making kiddush first.

"evil tongue" – just as the tongue ordinarily remains hidden behind its natural barriers.

Avraham and Soro experienced similar ordeals in Gerar and in Egypt. Yet the rulers of these two places reacted very differently when they learned that Soro was not Avrohom's sister, but his wife. Avimelech in Gerar protested, affirming the innocence of himself and the probity of his countrymen. He acts genuinely hurt at the suggestion that law-abiding citizens in a law-abiding country would be complicit in stealing a man's wife from him. Paroh made no such declaration. He simply chides Avrohom for not revealing that Soro was married, implying that had he and his people known that, no one would have compromised her purity.

They were both wrong, of course. Many people in Gerar were prepared to ignore any and all statutes, and deliver Soro for the enjoyment of their leader. Avimelech hid behind a veneer of civility, insulating himself against the criticism of others, and his own conscience, convinced that he and his people were a cut above the rest. Egypt lacked the veneer; Paroh recognized that the laws of his realm were themselves flawed and unjust. They offered no protection to the stranger, even if they would have been heeded. And they

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת בשלה

Candle Lighting	4.24pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.29pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.11am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.46pm
2nd Mincha	4.16pm
Shalosh Seudas	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.56pm
Ovos uBonim	6.36pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.35pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

weren't!

Paroh, according to the passage with which we opened our discussion, is likened to the horse responding to the whip. A horse comprehends somewhat. When the aroma of independence becomes too powerful for it to exist, the snap of the whip reminds it of its place. It returns to its place in the order of things, properly chastened.

Avimelech is the donkey restrained by the bridle. The whip won't do. Avimelech, convinced of his advanced morality, will not respond to a reminder. He requires something stronger. He is the uncomprehending donkey. The bridle doesn't remind – it forces the animal to go precisely where its master wants it to. It closes off options. Paroh was discomfited by a plague; Avimelech was restrained and prevented from mischief by stopping up all his orifices.

Where does the Paroh of Shemos fit in? For much of the story, he resembled his predecessor. He would have responded to the whip – to a reminder by Hashem of Who was in charge, once he had made that determination. He didn't, only because Hashem artificially hardened his heart.

This changed after the Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, and apparently found themselves with their backs to the sea, encamped before the shrine of Ba'al Tzefon. Paroh saw opportunity he never had before. This Jewish G-d must have run out of strength, relative to the Egyptian god. He thought he could deal them a mighty blow. He became the uncomprehending donkey, which needed something more than the whip. Paroh soon found himself paralyzed into inaction, staring at walls of water that threatened on all sides. He was boxed in. All options had been closed off.

In other words, Moshe's Paroh was treated to both the whip and the bridle. Together, they are called the rod that is required for fools.

Hashem's treatment of all sinners follows this pattern. Eventually, sins exact their price. Some sinners are nudged back to proper living by a reminder from His whip. Others require more direct intervention that removes their ability to commit further sins. Still others are the fools who must be beaten again and again.

And HASHEM said to Moshe, "Why shout at Me? Speak to the Jewish People and they should cross. Shemos 14:15. After months of witnessing the hand of HASHEM, the entire Jewish nation — three million strong — marched out from slavery to freedom with flourish and fanfare.

Escorted by clouds of glory, walking through a desert made smooth by overt miracles, they travelled as one. It seemed that the troubles of the Jewish people were finally behind them, and they were being escorted to their final redemption . . . until the clouds directed them to a dead end – the sea. Stopping there, the Jewish people looked up and saw Mitzraim chasing after them. With nowhere to turn, they waited while Moshe called out to HASHEM. HASHEM answered back, "Moshe, why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Jewish people and let them travel." At that point, the entire nation crossed the Yam Suf.

## The Merit of Trusting Hashem

**Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)**

Rashi is bothered by the expression that HASHEM used: "the Jews need only travel." What did HASHEM mean by that? How could they travel when an entire sea was in the way? Rashi explains that HASHEM was saying there is nothing that will stop the Klal Yisroel because they are worthy of the greatest miracles ever known to man. Rashi then enumerates the reasons that they are so worthy. 1. The merit of the Avos. 2. Their own merit. 3. The merit of the trust that they had in HASHEM at that moment.

The difficulty with this Rashi is that he lists all three reasons in same breath as if they are equal, and clearly they aren't. The first two, the merit of the Avos and the Jews' own merit, refer to overall perfection across the gamut of human activity. The Avos were living, breathing Sifrei Torah. We learn from their every action and thought. Their combined merit is hard to imagine. And even the second cause, the merit of the entire Jewish people, was stupendous. While not every member had remained on the highest level, as a nation they had remained loyal to HASHEM. After spending months witnessing HASHEM's direct

involvement in their lives, they had grown to great levels across many different areas: chessed, emunah, ahavas Yisroel, emes... How can we compare one single aspect — their trust in HASHEM — to the merit of the Avos or to the merit of all of their actions put together? It would seem to be dwarfed by comparison. Yet Rashi put these together as if they are all equal reasons that HASHEM would create miracles for the Jewish people.

The answer to this question is based on understanding HASHEM's relationship to this world. The Chovos Ha'Levovos explains that because HASHEM created this world, HASHEM feels a responsibility, if it could be, to sustain it. Much like if I invite you to my home, it is my obligation as host to take care of your needs, so too HASHEM feels almost obliged to support all of His creations. However, there are different levels to HASHEM's direct involvement in the running of this world, what the sefer Derech Hashem calls "hashgacha klalis" and "hashgacha pratis."

Hashgacha klalis, or general intervention, refers to HASHEM's involvement in the "big picture" issues: famine, war, epidemics, natural catastrophes, and maintaining the multitude of systems that allow for life as we know it. It is a given that HASHEM is constantly and permanently involved in the running of this world at that level. However, the specific details and the day-to-day running of the world HASHEM has given over to a host of forces that He created and maintains, but allows to actually carry out the laws that He set. These forces determine much of the outcomes that befall humanity.

Hashgacha Pratis, or personal intervention, is very different. This refers to HASHEM's personal involvement in a nation's or a person's life. It includes HASHEM actually supervising directly, watching over and taking care of the needs of those individuals.

General intervention is a given; it is something that HASHEM assures to all of creation as a birthright. Personal intervention is quite different; it must be earned. By dint of being the children of the Avos, the Jewish nation merits personal intervention — provided they keep certain conditions. One of these is that they must recognize Who runs the world. In this regard, it functions on a continuum. The more a person trusts in HASHEM, the more, if it could be, HASHEM feels an obligation to take care of that person, and the more HASHEM will be directly involved in that person's life. It is almost as if HASHEM says, "How can I not take care of him, he relies on Me, he trusts in Me.

This seems to be the answer as to why the "merit of their belief in HASHEM" was so pivotal at Krias Yam Suf. In terms of the objective weight, there is no comparison between the merits of the Avos and their current trust in HASHEM, but trust in HASHEM operates on a different level. It alone can be the reason that HASHEM will save a people. It was almost like HASHEM was saying, "How can I not take care of them? They trust in Me. They rely on Me. I have to save them." And that trust alone was reason enough to split the sea.

This is a powerful lesson to us in the effect of trusting in HASHEM. While we are obligated to act in the ways of this world, we are equally obligated to trust in HASHEM. We have to go out and do our part, follow the laws of nature, knowing all the while that exactly that which HASHEM has decreed will come about — no more, no less, no sooner, no later.

However, the amount of our trust in HASHEM will directly affect how much HASHEM will intercede on our behalf, and this may have a huge difference in many situations. For example, there may be times when we don't warrant receiving that which we need. Whether it's health, success, or sustenance, it may well be that according to the letter of the law, we don't special assistance, and certainly not the right to ask HASHEM to intervene on our behalf. In that situation, it may be our trust in HASHEM alone that will bring us HASHEM's help. When we rely on HASHEM and trust in Him, HASHEM, if it could be, thereby feels almost obligated to take care of us.

Trust in HASHEM is the basis of our belief system. It is also one of the most comforting thoughts that a human can come to. And it is also one of the most effective ways for us to secure HASHEM's direct involvement in our lives — even in a manner that we might not otherwise deserve.