



Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"ג שבט תש"פ – בשלה – 8th February 2020 - Volume 12 - Issue 28

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to David and Zara Newman on the birth of a granddaughter to Shea and Tammy Erlich.

Mazel Tov to Eli and Suri Treuhaft on the occasion of the wedding of Chaim Yehuda to Orli Baumann this week. The Aufruf takes place this Shabbos in Ohel Torah followed by Kiddush.

Mazel Tov to David and Vera Issler and David and Chani Steinberg on the Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos of their grandson, Meir Issler.

סובבי"ם Series

Taharas Hamishpacha Refresher and Shalom Bayis series for men by R' Shaya continues this Thursday and every Thursday night 8.15 - 8.50 until Thursday 20 February.

Shockingly Awesome Doctrine

Dani Epstein

In 1996 the National Defense University published a paper which proposed a new fighting doctrine known as "Rapid Dominance". In a world that had recently observed the end of the Cold War, where the geopolitical landscape had undergone extensive change and a new era of the information-oriented society had emerged, its authors discussed a radical change in strategy for the military which they snappily entitled "Shock and Awe".

This concept became the catch phrase of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, where in which a combined force of troops from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Poland invaded Iraq. Despite Poland having contributed a breathtaking 194 soldiers, with only 21 days of major combat and in little over a month, the coalition roundly defeated Iraq, which might have been due to the additional 130,000 American and 45,000 British troops, but well done Poland anyway. All this despite Muhammad "Comical Ali" Saeed al-Sahhaf's assurances that there were no American tanks in Baghdad whilst there were some only a few hundred meters away.

The Rapid Dominance doctrine has a simple concept at heart: "to affect the will, perception, and understanding of the adversary to fight or respond to our strategic policy ends through imposing a regime of Shock and Awe." Essentially the philosophy espouses pouring ridiculous amounts of troops and material into the theatre of war that the enemy's will to fight melts away in fear.

This was precisely the opposite situation that Bnei Yisroel found themselves in when they left Mitzrayim. Even though they had witnessed Egypt being brought to its knees, they were fourth-generation slaves and had endured the terrors and agonies the Egyptians had inflicted upon them. They were cowered and the last thing they had on their minds was going to war. Oh, they were armed alright, but what use is a sword or spear if you have never been trained to use one? Who would go into battle against the most advanced army in the known world, with their high-tech chariots providing a stable shooting platform to the archers who were marksmen down to a man?

Consider, however, the other side of the equation. A nation that had been enslaved for over two centuries produced a saviour who grew up in the very palace of their tormentor and had now brought the country to its knees. Whatever the source of power this man had – whether it was his god or something entirely different – he wielded his magical abilities like nothing anyone had experienced before. Nature bowed to his very will in a magnificently awesome and terribly destructive manner. Who would go

up against a man like that? Who knew what he would do next?

The balance of power appears to be fairly even, yet despite this we now have the Bnei Yisroel standing at the edge of the Suf sea crying out to Hashem to save them as the Mitzriyim are thundering towards them kicking up dust. Why the Bnei Yisroel so worried about the Egyptians when the last time Moshe took them on he decked them in ten rounds? Just how suicidal was Pharaoh when he knew that he stood little chance against Moshe?

To answer all of these questions and perhaps more we have to understand two things: the psychology of the situation and Hashem's SIOP (Single Integrated Operational Plan).

A clue can be found in the first verse of the sedrah:

“לֹא-נָחַם אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵינֵי-פַרְעֹה וּבְעֵינֵי-הָעָם”

“בְּרֵאשִׁית מִלְחָמָה וְשָׁבוּ מִצְרַיִם”

“Hashem did not lead them through the land of the Plishtim in case the people had a change of heart when they saw war and consequently would return to Egypt.”

The very fact that the verse mentions that they did not go through Philistia and then offers a justification for this implies that the most logical route would have actually been to go through there.

One could argue that going straight to Canaan would have left them open to being tracked by Pharaoh and suffer an attack by the remnants of his army, however it's worth bearing in mind that they were not actually on the run. Pharaoh had not only given them permission for a three-day break, he had in fact chased them out in person. There was no need to take evasive action. Therefore the Torah offers an explanation for the detour – taking the direct route had consequences.

The Avraham observes that the Bnei Yisroel, unlearned as they were in war and still recovering from the terrors of the oppression inflicted on them had no heart for war. Had they wandered into Plishti territory, the Plishtim would take up arms against them as any country would when being invaded by such a vast hoard. Rather than stand and fight, they would have turned around and legged it back to Egypt. This was not exactly what was in the SIOP.

He offer three additional and compelling reasons for this move. First of all, the plan all along was to go through the desert. Every time Moshe

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת בשלה

Candle Lighting	No later than 4.47pm
Mincha	4.52pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.03am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	4.36pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.56pm
Ovos uBonim	6.56pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.55pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

turned up with a demand for the release of the Bnei Yisroel, it was a consistent request to allow them to worship their god in the desert. Had the journey started off by travelling through Plishti territory Pharaoh would have had a perfectly legitimate reason to call Moshe a liar, since it would be obvious that they were legging it with no intention of returning. Secondly, the remains of the Bnei Efrayim were still scattered across the land of the Plishtim. Had they observed that terrible incident then even without a war they would have had a change of heart and returned to Egypt and slavery, knowing they did not stand a chance of surviving for very long in the region due to the military inadequacy.

The third – most compelling reason – lies in the very next verse. To better appreciate the lay of the land, we will employ a technique from cognitive psychology: chunking. Defined as “a process by which individual pieces of an information set are broken down and then grouped together”.

If we chunk the first two verses we get the following list:

- Pharaoh sent out the people
- Hashem avoided Philistia
- Hashem was concerned they might relent
- He detoured them through the desert
- The Sea of Suf (yup, it just gets dropped in)
- The people were armed

The connection between the first four items has already been explained. They left with permission, the land of Plishtim represented multiple hazards, therefore they might change their minds consequently the desert was chosen. Great.

The Sea of Suf? The arms? What do they have to do with anything?

They were in fact all part of the SIOP.

Mentioning that the Bnei Yisroel were armed right after the very reason for not sending them into battle within the first few days of freedom indicates that the arms had no purpose at this juncture, but that war was most definitely in the offing. At some point anyway.

Clearly the Sea of Suf had something to do with the military material as well since they are cheek by jowl in the verse. What is the connection?

Remember the doctrine of Rapid Dominance? Well, the original plan was going to be the following. Leave Egypt, jog through the desert, park in a lay-by and receive the Torah, enter Canaan and conquer the land. That's a lot to squeeze into a month or three with little time to learn how to fight. Or much time to gain some courage after two centuries of abject slavery. If, on the other hand, a resounding defeat could be organised that would send shock waves through the region, that would be half the battle. How about, just as a wild example, the absolute and total defeat of the Egyptian Special Forces in one go? That should do nicely.

Hashem's SIOP was very straightforward. Get the Bnei Yisroel out of Egypt, hand them a resounding defeat that will put the fear of, well, not so much god but annihilation, into the nations of the region and then enter Canaan. Going to the Sea of Suf was a crucial part of the plan, because that was the designated place for the final and resounding defeat of the Egyptians that would melt the courage of the region's nations – Shock and Awe.

And boy was it a success. Even after forty years of wandering through the Sinai this abject defeat of their tormentors resounded throughout the region. As Rochov, that lady-of-negotiable-affection, said (Yehoshua 2:9): “דַּעְתִּי כִּי-גַתְנוּ ה' לָכֵן אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְכִי-נִפְלְאָה אִימַתְכֶם עָלֵינוּ וְכִי נִמְגַו כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי־הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם”

“I know that Hashem has given you the land and that your awe has fallen upon us and that all the dwellers of the land have melted before you.”

“כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הוֹבִישׁ ה' אֶת־מִי יַם־סוּף מִפְּנֵיכֶם”
 “Because we have heard that Hashem dried up the waters of the Suf Sea before you”.

Now to get back to the first question. Why did Pharaoh take on the Bnei Yisroel at the Sea of Suf, and why were the Bnei Yisroel crying out to Hashem?

Let's see. Hashem tells Moshe that he will harden Pharaoh's heart yet again. Not fair! I hear someone cry. Well, says the Abravanel, all Hashem was going to do was level the playing field again; take away the fear and horror of watching his country being trashed, the firstborns dying yada yada, and give him the possibility of deciding for himself – on a level playing field – as to whether or not he wanted to chase down and kill his recently emancipated slaves. The choice was genuinely Pharaoh's to make.

Some of the escapees rapidly tired of the desert scene, the in-flight entertainment and catering and made their way back to Egypt. They got picked up by the Egyptian Stasi who hauled them in front of the king for a righteous interrogation. Pharaoh hears that the multitude wandered here and there and back again clearly looking rather lost in the featureless desert. Aha, he thought, there's no GPS signal out there and they are trying to find a way to escape. Well, in that case it's time we brought them back. So Pharaoh was duped into attacking Bnei Yisroel in order to provide a public and spectacular defeat that would ring in the ears of the Middle East. He was going to be playing a leading role in the main event, i.e. dying spectacularly. Of course he could have been killed in one of the makkos right there in Egypt, or could have died some other way, but that would have missed out on one of the central elements of the SIOP.

The Torah tells us that Bnei Yisroel did not have the conviction and valour to be able to fight despite being armed to the teeth and had little time in which to learn the art of war, so Hashem was going to give them a kick start by showing them how easily He could get them out of the frying pan into the fridge, hence the Sea of Suf action.

Is any of this relevant to us today? The answer to that should be obvious. We are now, in my estimation, in the period of “Kibbutz goliyos” which is Stage One of the Moshiach era. In inherent part of this period is, sadly, war. No, not Gog and Magog, who knows what that's all about, but fighting Hamas, Hezbollah and anyone else.

However, we have been in a 2,000 year golus and in the process forgotten how to fight. We used to be the fiercest, most courageous, daring, innovative and all-round-lethal fighters that existed. Today the army is more concerned about being the most moral army in the world than taking the fight all the way and vanquishing their enemies once and for all. Sure you might ask who is the Moshiach figure then? I have no idea. We have to trust that at some point the path will clear for one charismatic figure who will unite our people under the banner of Hashem's Torah and get the job done.

We have to bear in mind, however, that just as the Bnei Yisroel needed nurturing to learn the art of war, so do we. The Torah promises us that if we do what Hashem says, He will figure out a way to get us to where we need to go.

We can all participate in the war effort, either by engaging in Torah and mitzvos, or fighting. The ideal, however, is having our warriors engaging in Torah and mitzvos as in times of yore, because then our eyes will witness the sort of victories that currently we only read about in Tenach.

Q&A

Kids

1. Where did the **בני ישראל** camp originally in the beginning of this week's sedra?

2. After how many days did parah hear that the Jews had left? **פרק יד**

פסוק ה

Adults

1. In **פרק יח** **פסוק יח** the Torah says that the Jews were armed, why?

2. If the Jews travelled day and night would they not become tired after a few days?

3. Why was **פי החירות** called this? What was its original name?

4. What does the word **ויגד** it was told to parah mean in **פסוק יד** **פרק יד** **ה**?

(Sforno) They returned and told parah that the Jews had no intention on returning to Egypt.

4. Paroh sent spies with the Jews so he could find out where they were after 3 days. (Rashi)

3. Pitom was its original name, the word **פ** refers to its location being in a ravine between two hills and **תורת** of the freedom refers to the freedom of the slaves.

2. Such a large camp could only travel a short distance at a time, they would travel a bit in the day and then rest then travel again a bit in the evening. The two pillars made it possible to travel whenever necessary. (R' Bachya)

1. Although a nation under hashems direct protection should not need arms, it is the Torahs way that people should conduct themselves in a “normal” way, then hashem would intervene when necessary. (R' bachya)

Adults

1. Succos 2. 3

Kids

Answers