



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Bobbie and Rochel Graham on the recent birth of a grandson to Yanky and Avigail Graham

25th Anniversary

A reminder for any members who have not RSVP'd to do so, so we can plan accordingly!

There will be only be one Shacharis Minyan at 9:15 on Parshas Mishpotim, the anniversary Shabbos.

Chaim Aruchim

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

Shabbos, 17th Shevat - Gabi Schwalbe and Adina Kaufmann for their mother

Thurs, 22nd Shevat - Michael Lewin for his mother

Thurs, 22nd Shevat - Leivy and Dassy Goldman for their daughter

Hakomas Matzeivo

The Hakomas Matzeiva for Mrs Debbie Schwalbe עייה, mother of Gaby Schwalbe and Adina Kauffman, will take place at Phillips Park Beis Olam at 11am this Sunday 28th January followed by a L'chaim at 4 Stobart Avenue Prestwich

Opportunities For Kindness

Rabbi J Rubinstein

Every day we repeat in our daily prayers הים שירת הים - "The Song of the Red Sea". There is a phrase in it, which is easily overlooked. נחית בחסדך עם. "You led with your kindness, this nation You redeemed" The Chafetz Chaim explained the significance of those words. The Medrash says, when the Jewish people were in Egypt, they gathered together and made a covenant with one another; to do kindness with one another, to remember the covenant of Abraham Issac and Jacob to serve only Hashem, and not to forsake the language of the family of Jacob. The Chafetz Chaim says, they made a covenant to do kindnesses with one another, because they saw there was no escape from the decrees of Pharaoh, and the slavery was getting worse day by day. They undertook to perform kind deeds towards one another so that Hashem would respond by being kind to them. In the event, Hashem did lead us out of Egypt, as the verse indicates, through his kindness. The Chafetz Chaim adds, this is in keeping with a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud which states, even if all other merits are used up (such as the merits of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs) the kindness of Hashem, which is invoked by the kindnesses which we do to one another, will never go away.

This is also referred to, in the famous verse from Jeremiah, כה אמר ה' - "So says Hashem, I remember for you the kindnesses of your youth" (Jeremiah 2:2). Hashem does not forget the kindnesses we did to one another in Egypt.

From all the above, we learn that in times of difficulty for the Jewish people, a very powerful merit to invoke the kindness of Hashem, is for us to engage in kindnesses to our fellow Jews. At the present moment, which is certainly one of great difficulty for the Jewish people, that is a very relevant teaching.

The following, little known incident, is an example of someone who understood the primacy of helping other people. It is published in the history of the Nevardok Yeshivos. Among a group of pupils of the Nevardok Yeshivos, who were exiled by the Russians to Siberia, was R' Sholom Kaiver. When others in the labour camp were sighing and groaning from

their suffering, he could be heard singing positive melodies to words like כי עמונו א-ל - "Do not fear from a sudden terror" - "For Hashem is with us" Whenever they were told to line up with the threat of solitary confinement if they were too slow, he never panicked but went at his own pace. Space does not allow for a full description of his remarkable behaviour at that time. Suffice it to say, there was only one time when he was seen to be running as fast as he could. That was when he was running to the kitchens to get portions of food for people who were ill! He sought out people who were ill and tried to help them in every possible way.

In our own completely different circumstances, we can still seek opportunities to do kindnesses and do them with alacrity. May we merit to do them, and hasten the redemption.

Masterplan

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This weeks parsha, Beshalach, begins with the possuk (13:17) "Vayehee, and it was, when Paroah sent the nation". We've mentioned before that the word 'vayehee' connotes sorrow. Why is a term of sorrow used to introduce the ecstatic moment of our liberation!? Another question commonly asked is, why is Paroah, of all people given the credit for sending B'nei Yisroel?

The Ohr Gedalyahu quotes the medrash that the term 'beshalach', in addition to meaning 'sent', can also be defined as 'accompany'. The possuk now assumes a totally different meaning. In a spiritual sense, Paroah accompanied the nation. The Torah commands us to escort our guests and to escort the deceased. The Maharal explains that the purpose of this mitzvah is to create a lasting bond and connection between the two parties. Paroah's 'escorting us' meant that we were still carrying 'Paroah' along with us. We had yet to rid ourselves of the many negative influences manifested by Paroah himself.

With this, we can return to the questions we began with. We asked why is a term of sorrow used and why does it say that Paroah 'shalach'. The lasting effect of Paroah, which we carried along with us, darkened that bright moment of our liberation with a certain degree of vayehee, of sorrow. In a physical sense we left Mitzraim, but in a spiritual and emotional sense, Paroah was still with us. We were not yet truly free.

This also explains the continuation of the possuk. Hashem couldn't lead us through the land of the Plishtim, lest we'd want to return to Mitzraim! Only that lasting influence of Paroah would allow us to entertain the thought of return.

We now needed to encounter and grow through different experiences in order to cleanse ourselves from this influence and ready us to receive the Torah. One very vivid experience was our being pursued by the Mitzrim and the ultimate splitting of the Yam Suf.

Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	4.24pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.29pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.12am
Rov's Shiur	Not this week
Mincha	1.30pm / 4.15pm
Motzei Shabbos	5.35pm
Ovos uBonim/Bonos	6.35pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
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

The possuk (14:10) states that as Mitzraim were chasing B'nei Yisroel "u'Paroah hikreev", literally defined that Paroah drew close. The medrash explains that in fact, Paroah caused us to draw close! The fright of seeing Paroah and his whole army in hot pursuit caused us to draw close to Hashem through tfilah, prayer.

Rav Chatzkel Levisnshtein zt"l explains that the purpose of Paroah chasing us was to bring us to this elevated level of tfilah. A topic we've discussed a number of times is our misunderstanding of true cause and effect. Often, when going through a difficult experience, we call out to Hashem to help us. We superficially perceive that we are davening in order that Hashem will deliver us from that predicament. In fact, Hashem sent that event in order to raise our level of tfilah! It was our need for hisro'vus, spiritual arousal, that caused Hashem to send us that situation!

This explains a very basic question on tfilah raised by the Nefesh Hachaim. If we accept that all events which transpire in this world are merciful decrees of Hashem, how can we call out to Him to change these decrees? Aren't we like a patient who cries out for mercy to the doctor who insists that amputation is critical to stop the spread of infection?! According to Rav Chatzkel, there is no difficulty whatsoever! There was no need for the 'operation'! The true intention of scheduling the 'operation' was to cause us to pray! It was only intended to spur us to realize our latent potential, and to connect to our Creator on an even deeper and more intimate level!

Another way of viewing tfilah is suggested by the Sefer Halkarim. Granted, Hashem will only do what is best for a person, but what determines who that person is? As a person changes, that which is best for him also changes. One of the most dynamic ways of growing and developing oneself is through a vivid 'face to face' encounter with one's Creator. One should walk away a changed person with revamped priorities. As sincere tfilah changes our goals and attitudes, Hashem's decrees are 'updated' accordingly. The amputation is no longer necessary, the patient's test results have changed drastically!

An additional purge of the Paroah influence was achieved and internalized with our singing of "Az yashir"(15:1), the praise, sung for our deliverance. The Baal Haturim notes that the word 'az' (then), begins both Moshe's praise and Moshe's earlier complaint. "Uma'az Ba'ati el Paroah"(5:23), from the time that I came to Paroah, from then, he has worsened the fate of the nation. The medrash takes this a step further by relating that Moshe was saying, "I sinned with 'az', I'll now say shira with 'az'".

The Beis Halevi elucidates the deeper message of this medrash. If one finds himself in a difficult predicament and Hashem delivers him, he feels a sense of gratitude. If he's feeling thanks only for being saved, his gratitude is no greater than had he never been placed in that predicament.

The shira (song of praise) sung by Moshe and Bnei Yisroel was of a totally different nature. We weren't singing for simply having been redeemed. Our gratitude was for having been the medium through which Hashem's power and greatness were publicized. We rejoiced for the oppression, to the same degree that we rejoiced for the deliverance! Moshe chose the same word to stress his different view of the sequence of events. Whereas before I complained when the oppression augmented, I'm now singing praise for that initial worsening of our fate!

That recognition that every phase of every event we experience is an integral part of the masterplan, was a major step away from the Paroah that was shadowing us!

May we each, as individuals, and collectively, as a nation, properly view the events sent to us from above. May we use them as the vehicles of growth and self realization that they were intended to be. May we purge the traces of Paroah that linger in each and every one of us and merit the ultimate and final redemption.

Pride and Prejudice **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

The beginning of this week's portion describes the Jews' exodus from Egypt. Jews gathered their possessions and took gold and silver from the Egyptians. With sacks of dough they prepared for a trek into the unknown desert. One person, however, was preoccupied with other treasures. Exodus 13:19: "Moshe took Yoseph's bones with him, for Yoseph, had made the children of Israel swear, saying, "Hashem will remember you, and you shall bring up my bones from here with you."

The Midrash explains a verse in Proverbs 10:8: "A man with a wise heart shall choose Mitzvos." "This verse," says the Midrash, "refers to Moshe during the Exodus. While the entire nation was busy collecting gold, silver, and precious stones from their former masters, Moshe was busy looking for the remains of Yoseph, the pioneering sojourner who laid the groundwork for Jewish survival in exile."

An obvious question arises. Why is Moshe lauded as a man searching for

Mitzvos and praised as one who has special wisdom? Didn't the Jewish people gather gold and silver at the request of Hashem? The Torah openly commands the people in Exodus 11:2 "that each man ask his fellow (Egyptian) man and each woman ask her fellow (Egyptian) woman for gold and silver utensils."

If that is the case – both Moshe and the Jews were all doing Mitzvos. Why then, is Moshe considered "wise of heart?"

During the early 1920s, Velvel Epstein drove a truck on the Lower East Side for the Mittleman Seltzer Company. He delivered promptly and was courteous to his customers. But one day a most terrible event occurred. A horse-drawn wagon veered in front of his truck and he swerved sharply to avoid it. Dozens of cases came barreling out of the truck and went crashing to the cobblestones. Glass and bubbles were everywhere, and Epstein knew that his career at Mittleman's Seltzer Company was over.

All of a sudden from the small throng of spectators a heavy-set man appeared with his fedora outstretched in his hand. He turned to all the onlookers. "Why are you all just standing there? Let's help this poor man out!" With that he thrust a ten dollar bill into the hat and passed it around. He cajoled and persuaded the gathered to help the driver in his plight. After a few minutes the man had gathered a sizable collection and approached the hapless driver.

"Now, young man. You give this money to your boss, and I'm sure he will be happy with the compensation!" With that the distinguished gentleman disappeared from the crowd.

The onlookers were amazed. "What a mensch," cried one woman. "A real hero," shouted another. "Such a mitzvah!" declared a third.

Epstein rolled his eyes heavenward. "Mitzvah, Shmitva," he sighed, "that was Mr. Mittleman!"

There are many, many Mitzvos to do. Some are very enjoyable and easily performed. Some even mete out to us personal gain and honor. Others, however, require self-sacrifice and hard work. The mitzvah of retrieving gold and silver was quite honorable. However, there may have been much self-motivation involved. We do not know where the actual wealth finally ended up. It may have been contributed to the Mishkan (Tabernacle), or it could have served as a portion of the Golden Calf. One thing we do know. The bones of Yosef that were taken by Moshe served as an inspiration to a generation that faced hardship, questions, and uncertainty. Even today, those bones, interred in Shechem (Nablus), still do. That is, thanks to Moshe, the man of wise heart who had a vision of the future.

The Best Choice

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him..." (13:19)

The Talmud relates that while Bnei Yisroel were preoccupied with obtaining the wealth of the Mitzrim, Moshe was ensuring that the remains of Yosef and his brothers be transported to Eretz Yisroel for burial, thereby fulfilling the oath that Yosef had adjured Bnei Yisroel. The Midrash continues that Hashem proclaimed "Chacham levav yikach mitzvos" – "The wise hearted take (for themselves) the mitzvos". The implication of the Talmud is that Moshe concerned himself with the performance of mitzvos whereas the rest of Bnei Yisroel were out satisfying their greed.

In last week's parsha Hashem pleaded with Moshe to urge Bnei Yisroel to take the valuables of the Egyptians prior to departing Mitzrayim so that our Patriarch Avraham would not complain concerning the treatment of his nation. Bnei Yisroel were "borrowing" the Egyptians' valuables to fulfill the commandment of Hashem. Why does the Talmud not view their actions as the performance of a mitzva? Why is Moshe described as "chacham" – "wise" for performing a mitzva and not "tzadik" – "righteous"?

The difference between the mitzva performed by Bnei Yisroel and the one performed by Moshe Rabbeinu is that Moshe was concerned with the performance of a communal responsibility, whereas the rest of the nation engaged in the performance of individual responsibilities. Great objectivity is required in order for a person to choose to perform a mitzva which does not directly benefit him individually, over a mitzva which does. The chacham is defined as one who learns from every man for he has the objectivity to put aside his own perspective and predisposition for those of others. Therefore Moshe is described as "chacham" for his behavior.

Throughout our lives we are faced with choices that pit the benefit of others against those of our own. Both options may even qualify as mitzvos, making the choice more difficult. It is easy to rationalize our actions as appropriate if they qualify as mitzvos. However, the right choice must be concluded objectively, and not based upon our own personal agendas.