



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Malcolm Fagleman on the birth of a granddaughter, Tamara Esther, born to Mr & Mrs Dudu Gabay in London.

Kiddush This Shabbos

The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davenning in the Hall sponsored by Mr & Mrs Dov Black in honour of Adina's Bas Mitzva.

Siyum HaShas - Update

The remaining unallocated sections for the 18th anniversary Shas learning are now on the noticewall. Members are encouraged to sign up so we can complete the list.

Old Idea, New Application

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

It came to pass on that very day, that G-d took the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt with their legions. Shemos 12:51

IT IS TIME TO talk redemption, not just because the Torah is about to. We may be closer to the Final Redemption than we believe, and there are things we need to learn to be ready for it. After all, as the Zohar says, the Final Redemption will be similar to the first redemption from Egypt. Our past is also our future, and there are some things to which we need to pay close attention, evident by some contradictions that have seeped into Jewish consciousness.

For example, we are taught by our rabbis that the best way to learn Torah is to maintain a diet of bread and salt, and to sleep on the floor:

This is the way of the Torah: Eat bread and salt, drink measured water, sleep on the ground, live a life of suffering, and labor in the Torah. If you do this, "You are fortunate and it is good for you" (Tehillim 128:2). "You are fortunate" in this world, "and it is good for you" in the World to Come. (Pirkei Avos 6:4)

Having read this, now go talk to a shadchan and make a match for your daughter. Before you even get to talk about the character traits of your daughter, you will have to talk about you the character traits of your wallet. You will be met with a list of demands that more than likely will include an apartment. Some even ask for a second one, from which to collect rent over the years.

That's if you want to marry your daughter off to a up and coming talmid chacham, or at least someone who considers himself to be in that category. If you're prepared to settle for less, then you might get away with a lot less financially, and even find your future son-in-law a lot less demanding.

I'm not going to discuss the right or wrong of this type of attitude. I'm merely pointing out how, in recent generations, the advice of our rabbis somehow became outdated. Perhaps we're just too weak to live up to such high standards, even though the Talmud warns that Torah really only comes from the mouths of the poor (Nedarim 91a). Was that only in spiritually stronger generations?

Not only this, but we expect to be successful today. There will always be poor people in the world and among the Jewish people, at least until Moshiach comes. But whereas once the vast majority of the Jewish people fell into this category while only a few managed to rise above the ranks of poverty and achieve financial security, today it seems to be

the opposite. What we call "poor" today was "middle class" only just 150 years ago.

Even Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, noted this about American Jewry back in the 70s, except he did not seem to accept the situation as being fine for the current, "weaker" generation. On the contrary, he noted, it is what inhibited many recent Torah scholars from becoming Torah leaders in their generation. He advocated that American Torah Jewry, to "catch up" to their European predecessors, distance themselves from a material life as much as possible.

To be sure, there is nothing wrong with material affluence. It is not the root of all evil. It's the spiritual cost of having it that is the problem. Even though, in the right hands, it does a lot of good and helps a lot of people, its owners tend to be its "employees" at best, and slaves at worst. Wealth tends to belong to a "circle of friends" whose main interest and focus is not Torah learning and the proper and scrupulous performance of mitzvos.

Do not get me wrong. I am not someone who lives according to the mishnah, nor do I strive to, unfortunately. I do limit my attachment to the material world somewhat, which I find easier to do living in a small community in Israel. When I lived in the North America I found it very difficult not to get caught up in the wanting of more "gashmius", especially since so many around me, in my "frum" community there, were increasing their wealth and possessions yearly. It was an negative spiritual atmosphere that was hard to fend off.

We may all be in for a big surprise, according to the Zohar (large case) and the Mitok Midvash (small case):

DAY WILL COME before the arrival of Moshiach THAT WILL BE for the Jewish people AS IT WAS AT THE LEAVING OF EGYPT, REGARDING WHICH IT SAYS, "AND YOSEF DIED, ALL HIS BROTHERS AND THAT GENERATION" (Shemos 1:6). This means that the knowledge and grasp of Torah will end, and their lives will become embittered just as the exile overpowered them after the death of Yosef. There will be "poverty" of Torah in the final generation, and financial poverty which deny them the strength to properly be involved in Torah. With respect to this it says,

The Week Ahead

פרשת בא

Candle Lighting	4.04pm
Mincha	4.09pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.17am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.27pm
2nd Mincha	3.57pm
סעודה שלישית	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.17pm
Ovos uBonim	6.32pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.10pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

THERE WON'T BE DEATH IN THE FINAL GENERATION EXCEPT FOR POVERTY, BECAUSE A POOR PERSON IS CONSIDERED DEAD (Nedarim 64b), TO FULFILL THROUGH THEM, "AND I WILL LEAVE OVER IN YOUR MIDST A HUMBLE AND POOR PEOPLE, AND THEY SHALL TAKE SHELTER IN THE NAME OF G-d" (Tzephania 3:12), AND TO FULFILL THROUGH THEM, "YOU DELIVER THE HUMBLE PEOPLE" (II Shmuel 22:28). (Zohar, BeHa'alosecha, Ray'a Mehemna 153a)

There is no question that the financial situation has worsened over the last 10 years. Everyone points it out, especially the "Givers." Between the greed-fueled stock market crashes and the greed-fueled scandals, money is just not flowing in the Jewish world as it once did. It has affected everyone, even the honest people, and the Zohar addresses this as well:

THE WEALTHY WHO REMAIN among the Jewish people WILL FULFILL the words of the verse, "YOU ARE LAX, JUST LAX" (Shemos 5:17). They are LAX IN TORAH learning themselves AND LAX IN DOING charitable GOOD FOR THOSE WHO COULD LEARN TORAH, AND THE MEN OF VALOR, that is, the Torah scholars WHO ARE CIRCULATING from necessity FROM CITY TO CITY AND DO NOT RECEIVE FAVOR or mercy. (Zohar, BeHa'alosecha, Ray'a Mehemna 153a)

The Zohar, interestingly enough, does not stop here with its prediction for the End-of-Days, and its comparison of the Final Redemption to the first one. It even anticipates the reason for the withholding of funds, and it will not be as people say:

THEY ARE LAX, the wealthy people claim, BECAUSE OF THE WEIGHT OF TAXES, and that this is the reason why they cannot support Torah scholars. IF YOU SAY that the reason is because THEY ARE BURDENED BY THE WEIGHT OF THE TAX, AND THAT this is why THEY DO NOT DO GOOD, it is not true. They are simply lax and the opposite is the case. Not sufficiently helping Torah scholars causes taxes to become burdensome, which in turn prevents them from being generous with Torah scholars. Regarding them it says, "LET THE LABOR FALL HEAVY UPON THE MEN AND LET THEM WORK AT IT" (Shemos 5:9), that is, let there be HEAVY TAXES UPON THEM. Thus, though at first they willingly refused to help Torah scholars in the end they be forced not to support them. Thus it further says, "AND LET THEM NOT SPEAK ABOUT FALSE MATTERS" (Shemos 5:9) that is, by increasing taxes and making it very difficult to support Torah scholars THEY WILL actually NOT BE SPEAKING FALSELY since it will be as they say. (Zohar, BeHa'alosecha, Ray'a Mehemna 153a)

The verses quoted by the Zohar are of course talking about the situation for the Jewish people in Egypt at the end of the oppression, which was very different from the situation as it exists today. Without the Zohar, one would never have thought to interpret them in such a way as to apply them to the final exile and redemption, and certainly not in the manner that the Zohar has explained them. This is even though there are strong comparisons made between the leaving of Egypt and the Final Redemption.

It is clear from the Zohar who is destined to be the "Pharaoh" at the time of the Final Redemption: Money. At first it will enslave us because we have it, then it will enslave us because we don't. Given the direction of the economy and all the warnings from financial analysts around the world, it may soon be difficult to remember the good and prosperous days of Yosef, so-to-speak.

Against a backdrop of a lottery that is now, at this moment, the biggest in history, \$1.5 billion last I heard, are voices of doom and gloom regarding the world's economy. As they talk about oil reaching \$16.00/barrel, they warn that the collapse this time will be worse than the one in 2008, because there are no emerging markets this time, such as that of the Chinese, to carry the day. There is no safety net, and this spells catastrophe for 2016, they predict.

The timing is definitely uncanny (read: Divine Providence). It fits in with so many Torah predictions about this year, especially being a Motzei Shmittah year, which always has the potential for redemption. If you think the Arabs are desperate now, wait and see what "Defcon 5" looks like for them when they can no longer reap the benefits of being oil rich like they have been used to doing until now.

The whole world may become desperate, and desperate people do

desperate things. If history has anything to say about the predicted potential "financial armageddon," in the words of a well-known economist, it is this: it is not be good to be a Jew among non-Jews when money becomes scarce. It will certainly not be good to be a wealthy Jew among desperate non-Jews.

All of it will though will be for the one thing that it is always for: turning hearts back to G-d. The Zohar says that we invite crisis when we do not follow in His ways, so whatever follows is to right the wrong. Therefore, it is now as good a time as ever to become an expert in concepts such as trust and faith in G-d.

People will mock such ideas, they usually do. Nevertheless, at this point, it is the only real preparation for what happens at the end of an exile. Maybe this is what the Talmud means when it compares the Final Redemption to the first one, also in terms of how many people will survive. The midrash says that it was position and money that kept four-fifths of the Jews in Egypt when the time to leave came. They all perished in the Plague of Darkness as a result. According to the Talmud, the situation will be likewise in the Messianic Era as well (Sanhedrin 111a).

They too mocked. They mocked Moshe Rabbeinu and the whole idea of redemption. They mocked the idea of leaving Egypt for the desert, and relying upon G-d. They felt more secure taking their chances in Egypt post-Exodus than in the desert with a G-d they were just coming to know. In the end, they mocked themselves to death.

The Spies and their generation also paid for their lack of trust in G-d. They worried about the future and chose to take their chances in the desert rather than risk their lives by taking the land of Canaan, as G-d commanded them to do. In the end, they also paid with their lives. They "feared" themselves to death.

Now the question is being put to our generation. Where are we going to put our trust? Which chance will we see as the better one to take? Are we prepared, spiritually, for what may be coming up materially? We should have clear answers for all of these questions because, apparently, history is not so forgiving and second chances are often out of the question.



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Gemoro Chabura