



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to Bayla Brandeis and Penina Wieder for the Yahrzeit of their mother on Thursday, 8th Shevat

Matsa And All The Mitzvos

Rabbi J Rubinstein

Last week I mentioned it was the Yartzeit of Rav Matisyohu Salamon. This week, there inescapably comes to mind an incident recorded in a booklet put together by ladies who are teachers in Lakewood, of their experiences with him. Rav Salamon was on his way from Lakewood to the Catskills for an important meeting. They had been driving for two and a half hours when the phone rang. It was a 17 year old girl who was an orphan, and she was crying. In parenthesis I must mention, Rav Salamon himself lost his father at an early age. He always told orphans "We are part of the same club, members of a club must always be there for one another, I will always take a call from you unless I am actually giving a shiur". He told the girl "I am coming back to Lakewood to see you, together we will work out whatever is bothering you". Without further ado, the car was turned around back towards Lakewood, phone calls were made to cancel the meeting, and he went to see the girl. One might say, perhaps the girl's problem could wait. But sometimes when someone is emotionally upset, if you catch the problem in time you can save them, but if you leave it, the harm is done and the person remains emotionally damaged.

In one of his many articles, Rav Salamon quotes Rav Yerucham Levovitz who said, when you are given an opportunity to do a Mitzvah, it is as if somebody has offered to give you a lift. The driver says I will sound the horn outside your door, if you come out immediately you will get the lift, if you delay I will be gone. If Hashem gives us the chance to do a Mitzvah at a particular time, it is like He is saying, seize the opportunity now, afterwards may be too late.

This applies to helping people, but it is also equally true with all other Mitsvos as well. When the Jewish people were about to come out of Egypt, they were given the Mitzvah of the Pesach offering, and they were also told ושמרתם את המצות - "And you shall guard the Matsos". Rashi quotes the Medrash, Rav Yoshaye said, "Dont read the text, you shall guard the Matsos, but rather read it, you shall guard the Mitzvos; just as you must not delay and allow the dough of Matsos to become Chametz, so you must not delay doing Mitzvos, if it comes to your hand do it immediately" Rav Chaim Friedlander explains that the phrase "Dont read the Matsos but rather the Mitzvos", does not mean we should misread or amend the Verse, it means the underlying message of this command applies to all Mitzvos.

He elaborates further, the dough of Matsah does not become Chametz by one positively doing something wrong, it becomes Chametz by one simply doing nothing. By leaving the dough and failing to attend to it immediately, it will rise by itself and be ruined for the Mitzva of Matsa. So with all Mitzvos, by doing nothing and failing to get on with performing the Mitzva, the Mitzva is spoilt.

In short, inertia and procrastination should have no place in the performance of Mitzvos. In the words of Hillel, וואם לא עכטו אימת, "And if not now, when?"

Eternal Pesach

Rabbi Shaya Klyne

והגותם אותו חג לה' לדורותיכם חקת עולם תחגוהו [Pesach] as a festival for Hashem; for your generations you shall celebrate it as an eternal statute.

Why do we still celebrate Pesach? We can understand why it was celebrated back then, because we were no longer under the clutches of the Egyptians, and we became free men, but now, when we are back in גלות, what is the purpose of the celebration? Are we not back to where we started?

Rav Chaim Friedlander compares the process of the Jewish nation's slavery in Egypt to a child in the mother's womb. The foetus was developing internally, hidden from the outside view. Hashem was forming the Jewish people, and preparing them for redemption, while He remained hidden. Our exodus from Egypt is compared to the birth of a child. In דברים, the Torah describes the exodus as Hashem taking a nation from within a nation. The Midrash compares that just as a foetus is pulled out of the womb, so too Hashem extracted the Yidden from the land of Egypt. At the time of "child birth" we suddenly experienced open miracles, like a child who sees his parents and light for the first time when born.

Our Exodus from Egypt was not just a physical reason for celebration, but also a spiritual reason for celebration. In fact the spiritual celebration explained somewhat the suffering that we went through for the first 210 years. It was the day we emerged as Hashem's children.

The משך חכמה explains this is what the pasuk quoted above is alluding to. ו'הגותם אותו חג לה' when a person celebrates his Yom Tov as a festival for Hashem, when he has in mind the spiritual breakthrough that came about through the exodus, then לדורותיכם חקת עולם תחגוהו, the generations will celebrate it as an eternal statute.

Oy Vey!

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

"Don't get mad," said the philosophers of the eighties, "get even." I am not sure if the objective of the ten plagues was for the Almighty to get even with the nation that had enslaved His people. Certainly there are Midrashic sources that correlate the ten plagues as direct punishment for Egyptian crimes against the Jewish people. (Tana D'bei Eliyahu Chapter 7) So perhaps we might say that the Jewish people got even.

There is, however, no scriptural reference to the fact that they

Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	7.35pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.40pm
15 Minute Parsha Shiur	Following
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.08am
Mincha	1.30pm / 4.25pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	5.45pm
Ovos uBonim/Bonos	6.45pm
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	4.45pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

got mad. In fact, each time Moshe went to Pharaoh a serene and calculated negotiation occurred. "Let My people serve Me," Moshe commanded. When Pharaoh refused his obstinence was met with a clear and calculated threat. "If you refuse to allow the people to leave, I will send the following plague in you land." And so it went. Sometimes a plague immediately followed a warning, other times plagues came with no warning at all. When Pharaoh found Moshe and arranged for a cessation of the scourge, Pharaoh reneged on his commitment soon after. Moshe became frustrated, perhaps he even became impatient, but there was no anger until the final plague. Then, he not only got even, he got mad.

Moshe warned Pharaoh with the words of Hashem, "At about midnight, I will go out in the midst of Egypt and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die." (Exodus 11:4) Though Moshe detailed the ramifications of the plague he was greeted with an apathetic response.

Finally the Torah tells us, that "Moshe left Pharaoh in burning anger" (Exodus 11:8) Why, only then did Moshe storm out in a rage? Was he not accustomed to the callous recklessness of the Egyptian leader? What irked him during the last encounter more than any of the previous ones?

The great physicist Albert Einstein escaped the Nazi inferno to find a haven in the United States. During World War II his letter to President Roosevelt initiated the effort that spurred the creation of the atomic bomb. His theory of relativity was a prime factor in its development, and Einstein knew the destructive power that his ideas could potentially release. When Einstein heard in an August 6, 1945, radio broadcast that an atomic device was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, he reacted with stunned silence. After a moment of somber reflection he only found two words to say. "Oy vey!"

Rabbi Shimon Schwab (d.1994) explains that Moshe had patience with Pharaoh up to a point. Throughout the ordeal, the reckless king's obstinate decisions caused a great amount of discomfort to his people. Even when his advisors pleaded, "How long will this man [Moshe] be an obstacle, let them [the Jews] serve their G-d," Pharaoh refused. His recalcitrance brought plagues of pestilence, boils, locust, and darkness – in addition to blood, frogs, and lice. All of these afflictions were vastly uncomfortable – but not fatal. Even the fiery hail did not harm the G-d-fearing Egyptians that sought shelter.

The last, the Plague of the First Born, had the most devastating ramifications. It meant the deaths of thousands of Egyptians "from the firstborn son of Pharaoh to those of the maidservant who was behind the millstone." It was devastation so powerful that the Torah says that "such has never been and will never be again." (Exodus 11:6) Pharaoh was able to stop the imminent destruction with one simple word – "Go." Yet he chose to remain steadfast in his denial, bringing the downfall of his people and the death of innocents. And that callous and reckless behavior infuriated Moshe, whose compassion for the simplest of beings earned him the right to be the leader of the Jewish nation. The stark contrast displayed by his nemesis appalled him to the point of rage. The Torah commands us, "do not to hate the Egyptian, for you were a sojourner in his land." (Deuteronomy 23:8) The Torah's attitude toward a nation that held us captive is even more compassionate than that of its own leaders. Barbaric leaders egging on many simple people throughout the world, to act in a self-destructive manner are reminiscent of the Pharaoh who destroyed his own family to save his ego. It's enough to make anybody – even the most humble man who ever lived – very angry.

The Perfect Day

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Bo, containing the final three plagues followed by Bnei Yisroel's exodus from Mitzrayim.

"And it was in the midst of this day, Hashem took Bnei Yisroel out of the land of Mitzrayim... And Moshe said to the nation: Remember this day that you left Mitzrayim, from the house of bondage... On this day you are going out, in the month of the Aviv (spring). [12:51,13:3-4]"

Rashi explains by bringing the Medrash. "Didn't they know in which

month they left Mitzrayim? Rather Moshe was telling them to focus on the kindness that Hashem had showed them by choosing a good month for taking them out—not too hot, not too cold, no rains."

What is the significance of Moshe specifying that on this day you are going out?

The S'forno writes that on that particular year, the lunar month during which they left Mitzrayim came out in the springtime. Moshe was telling them to guard and maintain the character of that day. Make the necessary leap years to ensure that this lunar month will always come out in the spring.

The Jewish year is counted according to the lunar months. With each month consisting of a touch more than twenty-nine and a half days, the twelve-month year comes out to approximately three hundred and fifty four days. The solar year consists of three hundred and sixty five days. As such, the lunar month runs at an annual eleven-day deficit. It is interesting to note that the Moslems, who also go according to the lunar year, don't compensate for these eleven days. As a result, their holidays gradually work their way through the different seasons, falling eleven days earlier (according to the solar cycle) each year.

As we learned in the passuk above, we are commanded to adjust our calendar, keeping it synchronized with the solar year, thereby ensuring that each holiday will always fall out in the same season. This is done in the following manner: Every nineteen years, the lunar year would fall behind two hundred and nine days (nineteen [years] x eleven [days] = two hundred and nine). Therefore, within every nineteen-year cycle we have seven leap years. A Jewish leap year has an additional thirty-day month. Seven out of every nineteen years we have thirteen instead of twelve months in the year. That keeps us even with the solar year and its seasons. (These seven years x thirty days actually makes up two hundred and ten days. That extra day is accounted for by the fact that neither the lunar nor the solar years are perfectly even numbers.)

What is the underlying concept making it so crucial to maintain the holidays in their proper seasons?

Rav Eli Meir Bloch zt"l explained that there is a common misconception. People often think that after the world had been arranged with different seasons—planting, growing, ripening, harvesting, gathering—the holidays then fell out in the properly corresponding time. Pesach, the holiday of freedom, fell out in the spring. Shavuot, the holiday of the Torah being given, fell out in harvest time.

The truth, however, is actually very different. In the highest spiritual realms, there is a 'time' that is particularly suited and conducive for freedom. This is called Aviv. It is a time of renewal and birth. A time suited for a fresh start that will enable growth and development toward a far loftier aspiration. Freedom was not an end in and of itself but rather served as a means. It served to plant seeds for the nation. The fruits, born from those seeds, were only harvested seven weeks later when we stood at the foot of Sinai and received the Torah.

Being that there was this Divine Will of Aviv, this concept pierced its way down through the spiritual worlds, ultimately manifesting itself in our coarse, physical world as the season that we call spring. A time of planting, a time of things only beginning to develop and ripen. But the source and purpose behind this season is the freedom that it manifests.

The cold, barren inactivity of winter is a reflection of the spiritual freeze we were subjected to during the enslavement. The Aviv broke through the cold with the warming rays of the sun and the delicate seedlings peeking their heads out from the thawing earth. That physical manifestation of Aviv heralded the arrival of the Divinely designated time for freedom. We left Mitzrayim but immediately began counting the days toward Sinai. The harvest time, reflecting the Divinely designated time of generous bounty-giving, is the course exterior containing within the most precious bounty ever presented to mankind—the Torah.

"On this day you are going out, in the month of the Aviv. [13:4]" Maintain that day. Maintain the totality of the opportunity and the experience. Use it to the maximum every year.