



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ח"י שרה - כ"ב מרחשון תשע"ח - 11th November 2017 - Volume 10 - Issue 16

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Rov & Rebbetzen on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Doniel Mosbacher in Zurich.

Mazel Tov to Family Ross on the occasion of Danny's Bar Mitzvah in Heathlands this week.

Mazeltov to Dr & Mrs David Wolfson on the occasion of the birth of a granddaughter to Mr & Mrs Ben Rapport in Israel.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Bernard Levey on the birth of a granddaughter to Mr & Mrs Eli Barron in Israel

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davening sponsored by Mr and Mrs Menashe Cooper in honour of the recent birth of their daughter Penina - Mazel Tov.

חיים ארוכים

We wish חיים ארוכים to Mrs Esti Epstein on the Petira of her late father Mr Mark Schwinger ז"ל. The Shiva takes place at 50 Stanley Road until Monday morning.

A Wife for Yitchak

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

I will adjure you by G-d, the G-d of the heaven and the G-d of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites . . . (Bereishis 23:3)

BEFORE GETTING STARTED, I want to mention that in 1996, the OU, together with ArtScroll, published one year's worth of Perceptions in book form. The sefer was well-received, b"H, some people even saying that reading it at the Shabbos table had become an integral part of their Shabbos experience.

For years I have wanted to publish a second volume, but it always seemed too big an undertaking to do on my own. I am pleased to say, b"H, that it is finally done, and PERCEPTIONS, Volume 2 is now available in three formats: Softcover and Kindle through Amazon, and PDF in my online bookstore. The investment benefits both you and me. Now back to this week's parsha.

WE KNOW HOW Adam HaRishon found his wife. Process of elimination. She was the only human female in the world at the time, so his choice was limited. No shadchan needed. Fortunately for the first man, she was custom made just for him.

We DON'T know how Noach met his wife, or even how Avraham and Sarah decided they were soul mates and married. It is only in this week's parsha with the selection of Yitzchak's wife, that we are privy to the process that brought these two righteous soul mates together, the future parents of Ya'akov AND Eisav.

That's right, AND Eisav.

Avraham was very specific about who Eliezer brought back home to marry Yitzchak. He made Eliezer vow not to deviate from his instructions, as they later did with the Kohen Gadol in the Second Temple period. It wasn't just about finding a future daughter-in-law with whom Avraham could be comfortable. It was about finding someone who could give birth to the foundation of the future Jewish people.

And Eisav too?

The truth is, yes. Apparently, Eisav the "Rasha" was supposed to have been Eisav the "Tzaddik," the fourth of four Forefathers. It was true, the older one, Leah, was meant for the older one, Eisav, and the younger one, Rachel, was destined for the younger one, Ya'akov. It's just that something went horribly wrong, and though Leah remained worthy, Eisav did not.

It is amazing to think about how the Jewish people have always been their own WORST enemy, and this case, quite inadvertently. Two of our biggest enemies have historically been Yishmael, now the Arabs, and Eisav, eventually all the Christians. Ironically, their origins are the same as ours.

Was it something Yitzchak and Rivkah did, or didn't do? What about Yishmael? How did he become so dangerous? True, his mother was Hagar, an Egyptian princess. His father was Avraham, and he grew up in a house of righteousness and prophecy. Why did it not rub off more than it did?

And what happened to Menashe? His father, Chizkiah HaMelech, was almost Moshiach. Chizkiah turned the entire country back to Torah, cleaning up the spiritual mess left behind by his father. Menashe's mother was the daughter of Yeshayahu the prophet. You don't get a much more of an Aishes Chayil than that!

Yet, Menashe became a rasha. He undid all the good his father had accomplished, and returned the nation BACK to the evil ways of his grandfather. What had been missing from his chinuch? After all, Chizkiah even knew through prophecy what his son COULD become, and he must have tried with all his might to avoid it.

As if to make matters even more confusing, what works with some children does not always work with others. Some children can grow up in a house where everything seems to be on track, and still go against the spiritual grain. Others grow up in the most unfitting spiritual environments, and yet find their ways in Torah. There are a lot of surprises in both directions.

Of course this is not only true with respect to raising children. It also

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת חיי שרה

Candle Lighting	4.04pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	4.09pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.40am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	3.21pm
2nd Mincha	3.51pm
Shalosh Seudas	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	5.11pm
Ovos uBonim	6.11pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.00pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

has to do with making money as well. Some people seem to make money even without trying, while others who try so hard to get ahead do not succeed.

We have no questions regarding those who work hard and succeed, or those who do not and fail. We expect that. Nevertheless, it was part of Moshe Rabbeinu's question to G-d. He didn't only ask G-d why some righteous people experience bad, and some evil people receive good. Once that was a question, he also wanted to know why some righteous people DO receive good and some evil people DO experience bad, since it was no longer an absolute. By what criteria are such outcomes decided?

It's not clear from the Talmud if Moshe Rabbeinu was answered. If he was, he did not pass on the information to us, at least not on a Pshat level. There IS no Pshat level for this answer. It is ONLY on the level of Sod, Kabbalah, that a person can even begin to approach an understanding of how G-d runs this world. On the level of Sod, there is at least a hint to the philosophical undercurrent of history.

Think about it for a moment. G-d is infinite. Do we even know what that means? His thoughts and plans incorporate much more than we'll ever know or relate to. His Essence is so beyond us that we can't even talk about it without becoming guilty of idol worship on some level. His perfection is beyond any concept of perfection that even the greatest human kind can comprehend. And we think we have the wherewithal to understand history?

Kabbalah has names for the intellectual abyss that separates our perception from G-d's, but they all mean the same thing. As much as we DO understand life and history, Divine mysteries abound and always will. There are things going on, that impact our lives that are rooted in levels so sublime that we can't even sense them. We're not even aware of them, for the most part, until they leave their mark through some event that just does not make sense to us.

This is why Torah is so essential. There is so much we cannot control in history. Such things are too far beyond us. So, G-d gave us the Torah and said, "Here, follow this. If you stick to the plan, at least you will stay out of My way and not interfere with the good I am arranging for you. I may even make it look as if you are a partner in the process." So, yeah, Eisav was born from Yitzchak and Rivkah. Sure, he became one of the most evil people in history. But, at least Avraham went to his grave knowing that he had done all he HAD to do, to assure a positive outcome when choosing a wife for Yitzchak. The rest, he knew, was up to G-d and part of a Master Plan that was FAR beyond his ability to know.

Baruch Hashem!

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

He [Eliezer] said, Baruch Hashem, G-d of my master Avraham, Who has not withheld His kindness and truth from my master.

Most of us don't enjoy getting credit for something we did not do. Except for the truly humble, most of us certainly don't appreciate when someone else gets credit for something that was our doing. Poor Eliezer is ignored by Chazal, who deny him the credit for an innovation of his in our parshah, awarding it instead to Yisro!

The words of the familiar exclamation roll off our lips without difficulty. "Baruch Hashem!" As popular an expression as it is, it was not always the standard reaction to learning about something exciting and positive. Chazal point to Yisro's "Baruch Hashem" as the first time that Man offered a berachah to Hashem for His performance of a miracle. In Yisro's case, it was the news of all the wonders that Hashem had performed for the Bnei Yisrael at the time of the Exodus. Why do Chazal ignore the same words of berachah offered by Eliezer, as he looked back at the wondrous way in which Hashem bestowed quick success upon the mission that Avraham had assigned him? Moreover, the gemara elsewhere criticizes Moshe and his people for failing to say, "Baruch Hashem," at the time of yetzias Mitzrayim, leaving it for Yisro. Why had they not in fact learned the practice from Eliezer, and followed his example?

Of course, Eliezer was not really being shortchanged. "Berachah" means different things in different contexts. The most frequent use of the word is decidedly not as an expression of acknowledgment or

thanks. Primarily, it is related to the idea of become full or enriched. It expresses the wish that Heaven should be enabled, kevayochal, to overflow with even greater abundance in its influence upon our world. HKBH willed it that Man's berachos should have an effect upon the Upper Worlds. Man's recital of the formula of a berachah, is the spiritual currency with which he pays for even greater berachah to flow from Heaven. It is as if the berachah is a bit of spiritual lubricant that keeps the flow of blessings to gain strength.

This effect, however, is limited entirely to natural phenomena in the natural world. In the world of "ordinary" events, our berachos feed into the system. Overt, manifest miracles are different. These extraordinary events are not part of the pattern of ordinary natural phenomena, but a consequence of Hashem apparently overriding the laws He established to govern "ordinary" time. They are not dependent upon Man's immediate spiritual input; they are not empowered by any berachah recited over previous episodes of such miracles. When a miraculous outcome has been previously assured, it will occur whether or not Man davens for it or acknowledges some other miracle by reciting a berachah. Thus, Hashem prods Moshe at the banks of the Yam Suf: "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Bnei Yisrael and let them move forth!" Hashem had assured both the outcome, and the miraculous manner it would occur. Further davening was therefore unnecessary.

Eliezer had witnessed a miracle. The miraculous answer to Avraham's need came, however, completely within the boundaries of teva, of natural law. Eliezer knew that he had to utter a berachah, and he understood that such a berachah would facilitate other wonderful interventions by Hashem – all within the parameters of the laws of nature. His berachah was not only significant, but it can be seen as the model for all berachos of thanksgiving.

Eliezer's "baruch Hashem" did not speak to the events surrounding yetzias Mitzrayim, all of which mocked the laws of Nature. Moshe and the Bnei Yisrael saw no room for a berachah, since no natural order stood behind those events. Eliezer's berachah was irrelevant to their situation.

It took Yisro to invent a new sort of beracha – pure thanks and acknowledgment for a pure, open miracle.

A Different Relationship

[Rivkah] said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" The servant said, "He is my master." She then took the veil and covered herself.

"That man" (halozeh) implies a person who leaves a strong, frightful impression. Rivkah noted that his very appearance was overpowering. When she learned that he was the man to whom she was to be married, she felt unworthy and small. She therefore veiled herself – in embarrassment!

From this first meeting with her future husband, the nature of their relationship was set. It was not to be the more open relationship that existed between Sorah and Avrohom, and between Rochel and Yaakov. When those matriarchs disagreed with their spouses, or had something strong to say, they did not hold back. Rivka's strong awe at first sight of her husband to be placed an obstacle in their relationship that would never be removed. It would never become one of relaxed candor.

Divine Hashgachah was at work in making this happen. The incident described in our pasuk made a crucial difference in the unfolding of the story of Yaakov and Esav in parshas Toldos. Rivka knew the bitter truth about Esav. She understood Esav's manipulative powers, how he could glibly convince his father that he was righteous, or at least not evil in the extreme. Nonetheless, Rivka did not – could not bring herself to – share her observations and suggestions with her husband, in order to deny Esav a beracha that would be inappropriate to him. The upshot of this is that Yaakov received a different berachah from his father than he would otherwise have gotten. It was HKBH's Will that this should happen – and the first encounter between Rivka and Yitzchok was an example of His Will at work long before the event, setting the stage for this to happen.