



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week
Tues, 12th Tammuz - Jenny Lewin for her mother
Fri, 15th Tammuz - Michael Wilks for his mother

Hakamat HaMatzeva

The Hakamat HaMatzeva for Marian Lopian **מרים בת שמואל שלמה ע"ה** will take place on Sunday June 27th **ז' תמוז** at Agcroft Cemetery at 2.15 pm

All Pain, No Gain

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

It is not so easy having a brother like Esav. We ask one little favor, it wouldn't cost him a dime. We wanted to pass through his land on the way to Canaan. In fact, he would be able to make some money off the venture. But he says no. And he does not just say no the way they tell you to just say no, this no is a resounding exclamation that warns of war. If you follow the chain of events, it is important to note that the Jewish pleas for mercy and understanding were met with such vociferous antagonism.

Moshe first sent emissaries from Kadesh to the king of Edom – “So said your brother Israel – You know all the hardship that has befallen us. Our forefathers descended to Egypt and we dwelled in Egypt many years, and the Egyptians did evil to us and to our forefathers. We cried out to Hashem and He heard our voice; He sent an emissary and took us out of Egypt. Now behold! we are in Kadesh, a city at the edge of your border” (Numbers 20:15-17).

After Moshe defines the hardships and trials that the Jews endured he makes one small request. “Let us pass through your land; we shall not pass through field or vineyard, and we shall not drink well water; on the king's road shall we travel — we shall not veer right or left — until we pass through your border.”

The commentaries explain that Moshe promised not to use the water from the miraculous well, rather they would purchase water from the Edomites. In fact, Moshe was willing to pay for any amenity that the Jews used. But it did not help. Edom was not satisfied and turned his back on his cousins. More so, he responded with a threat. “The king of Edom said to him, “You shall not pass through me — lest I come against you with the sword!” (ibid v.18) The Children of Israel said to him, “We shall go up on the highway, and if we drink your water — I or my flock — I shall pay their price. Only nothing will happen; let me pass through on foot.” Edom replied, “You shall not pass through! Then Edom went out against him with a massive throng and a strong hand.” The Torah concludes that Edom refused to permit Israel to pass through his border, and Israel turned away from near him. (see Numbers 20:18-20) Rashi quotes the Midrash Tanchuma Beshalach Esav was irked by that detail of the Jew's narrative, “We prayed to Hashem and he heard.” And so he responded: You pride yourselves on the “voice” which your father bequeathed you as a blessing, saying, “And we cried unto the Lord and He heard our voice” (cf Rashi on v 16); I, therefore, will come out against you with that which my father bequeathed me when he said, (Gen :27:40) “And by thy sword shall thou live.” It seems that despite the story of oppression, once the Jews mention their spiritual proficiency, Esav balks. Why is

there a vehemence directed at Yaakov's declaration? What irked Esav when he heard about Yaakov's successful supplications?

I heard this Soviet Union story during the height of Brezhnev's reign back in the 1970s. After a two month hiatus, the monthly potato shipment to Moscow was supposed to finally arrive the next morning. Two hours before dawn, a throng of people began queuing up in the Russian winter's frostiness, in front of the market. After half an hour the official stepped out of the shop. I am sorry we will not be getting enough potatoes to service all of you. All Jewish comrades must return home. There will be none for you. The rest of the crowd smirked as they continued waiting in the bitter cold for the anticipated delivery. Two hours later, the proprietor emerged. “One of the trucks broke down. All non-communist party members should go home. They too trudged off into the cold. It was only another three hours later when the storekeeper emerged again, this time breaking the news to the remaining party faithful. “I apologize, but the trucks have broken down and will not be delivering potatoes this month. All of you should go home. This time there was only frustration, “Those cursed Jews have all the privileges!”

The Torah tells us how Edom reacts to Yaakov's misfortune. When the Jews talk about their long captivity, there is no emotion. When they mention the torture and affliction there is no compassion.

But the minute the Jews allude to even a minor success, one that alleviated their torture and pain, “we prayed to G-d and he stopped the oppression,” Edom snarls.

He retorts, “Jew are you boasting about your spirituality. I, too, have my talents I live by the sword and I will greet you with it!” He forgets that our prayers did not advance our position. It did not cause us to inflict undue harm on other nations. It just let true justice be served on our tormentors. One thing our enemies ought to learn. If you don't appreciate our pains, at least admire our gains!

Everyday Miracles

Rabbi Pinchas Avruch (Torah.org)

The Mishna (Rosh HaShanah 3:8) notes the similarity between the raised hands of Moshe during the battle with Amalek and the copper snake atop the staff that induced healing for those bitten by the serpents following their complaint against G-d's justice. “And it happened that when Moshe raised his hand Israel was stronger and when he lowered his hand Amalek was stronger.” (Shemos/Exodus

Davening Times

פרשת חקת

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.55pm-8.00pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.30am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.54am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.55pm
Motzei Shabbos	11.00pm
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	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.50pm

17:11) But could Moshe's hands wage a battle or lose a battle? Rather this is to teach that whenever Israel looked on high and subjugated their heart to their Father in Heaven they prevailed, but if not they failed. Likewise we understand, "G-d said to Moshe, 'Make yourself a fiery serpent and place it on a pole and it will be that anyone who was bitten will look at it and live.'" (Bamidbar/Numbers 21:8)

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler comments that these events demonstrate the incredible power inherent in a tangible image to impact the heart, for without such images it would be impossible for a person to focus and inculcate into the depths of his heart the spiritual concepts he has learned. The importance of this truth is why the Torah so strongly emphasizes the psychological effect of a physical icon.

Rabbi Dessler explains that the potential that comes from looking heavenward is the contemplation of the capacity for evil that is called "Amelek". The nation of Amelek is the living manifestation of this awful force, but the capability for such malevolence is latent in everyone. Witnessing Moshe's hands heavenward inspired the warriors' reflection on their own deeds and attitudes, as did the meditation of the Jewish Nation on the copper snake.

Rabbi Dessler further elucidates that this clarifies the rationale for the Torah's choice of Hebrew verbiage to reference the pole – "nais" – a word that is commonly used to refer to a miracle. One who contemplates the delicacy and magnificence of an orchid or the human eye appreciates that "nature" is simply the miracles to which we are accustomed due to our constant exposure. This familiarity serves to cloud our perception of the Divine in nature, such that we accept the tangible as being no more complex than its appearance indicates. Spiritual forces and consequences are easily missed and ignored. The departure from nature, that which people call "a miracle", is the suspension of the order of nature to allow one to comprehend G-d's role in the world and appreciate the reality of spiritual forces at play around us. One who ponders this concept realizes that those spiritual forces of miracles are no less present even when nature proceeds as one expects. Thus, the world "nais" is used to describe the staff upon which the fiery snake was affixed.

G-d has His plan for Creation, and our actions do not determine the outcome of events. Indeed, our responsibility during our time in this world is not to accomplish, but to make the right decisions – G-d conscious decisions – in our effort to succeed. But that does not mean our choices are meaningless. Our decision to either foster a relationship with the Divine or allow the strength of that bond to weaken and fissure impacts the spiritual realm in concrete, but humanly indiscernible, ways. Our Jewish lives are filled with icons – a Torah scroll, tzitzis strings, a mezuzah on the doorpost – to assist us in keeping our focus, to remind us of the spiritual forces and consequences, to serve as the "nais" that refreshes our appreciation of life's daily miracles.

Reasons and Tastes

Rabbi Zev Leff (Shortvort.com)

The Midrash (Kohelles Rabbah 7:23) relates that Shlomo Hamelech made a special effort to understand the reasons for parah adumah (the red heifer). IN the end he concluded that the subject was still far from his understanding. Parah adumah remained the classic example of a chok, a Divine Law whose purpose completely eludes us.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 21b) explains that the reasons for the mitzvos were not revealed because in each case in which reasons were given even Shlomo, the wisest of all men, was led to err. The Torah prohibits a kind from marrying an excess of wives lest they turn his heart away from Hashem (Devarim 17:17). Shlomo decided that he therefor ignore it with impunity. At that moment, says the Midrash the yud of the yarbeh — from which the prohibition is derived — prostrated itself before Hashem and said, "Ribbono Shel Olam, Shlomo is nullifying me. Today it is I, tomorrow another letter, until the entire Torah will be abrogated."

HaKadosh Boruch Hu responded, "A thousand like Shlomo will be nullified, but one bit of you will never be nullified." In the end, Shlomo himself admitted, "That which I thought I understood in the Torah was mere foolishness, for who can fathom or question the

wisdom of the King?" (Shemos Rabbah 6:1).

The Midrash is extremely difficult to understand. It seems to imply that Shlomo's error lay in his understanding of the Torah. Yet it appears that his failure was due to misplaced confidence in his own powers rather than misunderstanding the Torah.

The Mishnah (Berachos 33b) rules that one who says, "As Your mercies, G-d, devolve on the mother bird and its nest, so too, have mercy on us," must be silenced. The Gemara explains that the requirement of sending away the mother bird prior to taking her eggs is solely a Divine decree, not based on the desire to be merciful to the mother bird, as the forbidden prayer would seem to imply. Yet the Sages themselves say (Devarim Rabbah 6:1): "...So, too, G-d's mercy extends to the birds, as it says, 'When you discover a bird's nest...send away the mother...'"

To resolve this contradiction, we must distinguish between a taste and a reason. If we were asked why we eat, we would answer that we must eat in order to live. If questioned further why we eat bread and not stones, we might refer to the necessary nutrients available in bread but not in stones. But if asked why human beings need these nutrients, or why we are capable to extracting needed minerals from bread and not rocks, we could say nothing more than that is how G-d created the world and the answer lies exclusively in His mind.

Even though we eat to stay alive, Hashem created the world in such a way that our food also has a pleasing taste and aroma. But that taste should never be confused with our reason for eating. Even if our taste buds were destroyed we could not taste our food, we would still have to eat. And if we let our taste buds guide our choice of foods, we might soon die of malnutrition.

The mitzvos are the spiritual nourishment of our neshamah. Why or how a particular mitzvah nourishes our soul we cannot know any more than why G-d created bodies which require certain nutrients. But Hashem wanted the mitzvos to be palatable to us, so he infused them with taste — ideas and lessons — that we can understand. We must never confuse, however, the lessons of the mitzvos, with their underlying reasons. Thus all the extensive literature explaining the mitzvos always refers to these explanations as Ta'amei Mitzvos, literally "the tastes of the mitzvos."

In this light, Meiri explains the verse, "For it is chok for Yisrael a mishpat to the G-d of Yaakov" (Tehillim 81:5). For us, all mitzvos are ultimately chukim, unfathomable decrees. But to Hashem they are all mishpatim, based on an overall plan known only to the Divine mind.

If one entreats G-d, Who has mercy on the birds, to similarly have mercy on us, that entreaty reflects his own determination that he understands the reason for the mitzvah from G-d's perspective. That is a mistake. We can never know why G-d decreed a particular mitzvah. But to learn from the mitzvah a lesson of mercy, as an enhancement to our performance of the mitzvah, is perfectly acceptable. That is the intent of the Sages in the Midrash mentioned above.

With this distinction between reason and taste, the error of Shlomo becomes clear. The explanations given for the prohibition of marrying too many wives are themselves only ta'amei haTorah — from the mitzvah based on these explanations is totally unacceptable. Thus Shlomo's error did not lie exclusively in overconfidence in his own self control. He also misunderstood the Torah by confusing "tastes" and reasons. For this reason, it was the yud that went before Hashem to complain, for the yud represents the command which supersedes all human reckoning as it originates from the Divine mind (Shiurei Da'as, Part III, "Bein Yisrael La'Amim").

All mitzvos are intrinsically chukim, unfathomable Divine decrees. With respect to some, even the ta'am is obscure, and they are categorized as chukim, and in some the ta'am is more easily discerned, and they are called mishpatim.

Parah adumah is called Chukas HaTorah, a law of the Torah, and not Chukas HaParah, the law of the red heifer, because it demonstrates in the clearest fashion that the entire Torah is based on a Divine understanding beyond our ability to fathom. Only when we base our performance of mitzvos on submission to the decree of the Creator, will they be performed with perfection.