



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Laurence and Linda Ross on the birth of a granddaughter to Joel and Miriam Ross

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following davening jointly sponsored by Yochanan Diveroli קרמר דויד בן דוד , and Nesanel Davidson in honour of the Yahrtzeit of his father next Shabbos.

Chaim Aruchim

We regret to inform of the Petira of Julius Shapiro, father of Elana Shapiro, in South Africa. Elana is sitting Shiva there from tomorrow afternoon till Tuesday morning and can be contacted on 0748262610614. We wish her Chaim Aruchim We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this week:

Shabbos, 10th Iyyar - Jonny Berkovitz for his father

Tues, 13th Iyyar - Rebetzen for her mother

Thurs, 15th Iyyar - Bobbie Graham for his mother

Fri, 16th Iyyar - Tony Levinson for his father

Fri, 16th Iyyar - Anne Wilks for her mother

Respect

Rabbi J Rubinstein

דאם -"Do not despise any person", is a teaching from Pirke Ovos (Chap. 4 Mishnah 3) which is easily and often overlooked. It gives me great pleasure to record here, a story told by Rabbi Shlomoh Zalman Unsdorfer of Pressburg, in his lectures on that Mishna; because Rabbi Unsdorfer was killed in Auschwitz. The notes of these lectures, were found in the rubble in Pressburg after the war, and published in a limited edition. May this be a fulfilment of the Verse דובבות בקבר -"His lips continue to teach, from beyond the grave".

There was a time when Pressburg was conquered, I think by the Prussians, in a war against France. The Rav of Pressburg, Rav Moshe Sofer known by the name of his published works "Chasam Sofer", was accused of aiding and abetting people to sell arms to the French. (The charge was fabricated by someone who had lost a court case which the Chasam Sofer had adjudicated.) A court martial was arranged. On the day of the trial, the general in charge suddenly stood up, adjourned the proceedings and called the Chasam Sofer to a separate room. After a short time, he came back to the courtroom and declared that the Chasam Sofer was acquitted of any crimes. Afterwards it emerged that decades before, the Chasam Sofer had shared lodgings with this General, then an ordinary soldier, and the Chasam Sofer who had a towering intellect, had helped him with his general studies. The General had recognised his one time mentor, and in gratitude acquitted him completely. Rabbi Unsdorfer brought this episode as an illustration of the principle "Do not despise any person" In fact, Pirkei Ovos presents this as sound practical advice, but it can also bring about a great Kiddush Hashem.

ולא תחללו את, Parshah, את, תלולא

"And you shall not profane my name and you shall sanctify my name", the Sefer, "Maayon Hashovua" brings an extremely sharp but accurate, portrayal of Chillul Hashem-Profanation of Hashem's name. The author says, he once had a conversation with a veteran of the Vietnam war. The soldier explained, when you are in a straightforward battle with an opponent, you know it is your skill and strength against his. But when you are in the jungle, and you know that behind every tree there can be hidden eyes, waiting for an opportunity to kill you, and with every step in the undergrowth you might hit a concealed tripwire, which will trigger an explosion which will blow your whole patrol to smithereens, that shatters your nerves in a completely different way. The Sefer Maayon Hashovuah writes, some sins are like straightforward opponents, for example the temptation to eat non-kosher or behave immorally. But Chillul Hashem is much more insidious. With a careless word, or action, or mannerism, one can give a bad impression of how religious Jews or Jews altogether behave, which is a Chillul Hashem-a profanation of Hashem's name, and we are told, Chillul Hashem is the most difficult of all sins to atone for (Talmud Yoma 86a). Like the soldier in jungle warfare, we need to be constantly on our guard against it. Conversely, Kiddush Hashem-making people think favourably about Judaism, is the greatest of Mitzvos (Ibid).

However, if we constantly adhere to, אל תהי בז לכל אדם -"Do not despise any person", and treat every person with respect, it acts as a safeguard against causing Chillul Hashem, and usually brings about a Kiddush Hashem. It is a simple rule which produces colossal results.

The Power of Connection

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

They were ten of the best and finest Jewish men, the pride of the Jewish people who had emerged in the Egyptian exodus. And yet these ten men brought untold calamity upon their people. Sent by Moses to reconnoiter the Promised Land before the people actually crossed into it, these ten spies brought back the most slanderous and distorted reports to the desert encampments. They caused such dissension and turmoil that the entry into the Promised Land was postponed for nearly forty years, after the entire generation had passed away and a new generation emerged.

Is there anything constructive to be learned from these ten wicked sinners? Strangely enough, it seems that there is. In this week's

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.15pm
בת זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	7.27pm - 7.40pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.04am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.11pm
Rov's Shiur	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	10.16pm
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	10.20pm

Torah portion, we read that Hashem "will be sanctified amidst the Jewish people." The Talmud points out that "amidst" refers to a minyan, a quorum of ten men, the minimum number of Jews whose presence is required for prayers and readings of special sanctity. How do we know this? By an exegetic comparison, the Talmud explains, to the word "amidst" that appears in the narrative of the spies. Just as that "amidst" refers to a group of ten, so too does the "amidst" of sanctified prayers and readings refer to a group of ten. But the question immediately jumps out at us. Why did the Torah see fit to derive the guidelines for the minyan from the number of slanderous spies? Could this information not have been conveyed in some other fashion?

The commentators explain that the Torah is teaching us a very important lesson here. There are many forces in the physical world which we instinctively view as destructive, such as dynamite and the splitting of the atom. But in actuality, these very destructive forces can be put to beneficial use. Dynamite can be used not only to wreak destruction but also to clear a path through mountains and forests for new highways to serve civilization. The splitting of the atom does not necessarily have to result in mushroom clouds over populous cities. It can also be harnessed to provide power for industry and private homes. Everything depends on how it is used.

The forces in the spiritual world also follow the same pattern. If a group of ten men could produce results of such destructive intensity that calamity would befall millions of Jews, this was clearly an extremely potent spiritual force. Clearly, the connection effected by the critical mass of ten Jews was so powerful that the group became far greater than the sum of its parts. Surely, this selfsame force could also be harnessed for the good to create the proper spiritual environment for prayers and readings of special sanctity.

A general deployed his army on the battlefield, preparing for the onslaught of a vastly superior enemy force. He exhorted his troops to rise above their limitations in numbers and weaponry, to fight heroically and defeat the enemy against all odds.

The battle began, and the army held fast, fighting desperately for every inch of territory. But as the battle wore on, the superiority of the enemy began to take its toll. First the right flank caved in, then the left flank. The center held out for a while longer, then it too collapsed. Only one battalion entrenched on a hilltop held out. They fought furiously and with utmost bravery until they broke through the enemy lines. They attacked the enemy's communications and command posts, wreaking such havoc that the battle ground to an inconclusive halt.

The soldiers in the heroic battalion all received medals and commendations, eventually becoming the subjects of military legend. "How could your few men have accomplished such an amazing feat?" the captain was asked at the ceremony.

"It's quite simple," said the captain. "Before the battle, we all made a pact that we were willing to die for each other and the fatherland. We all connected and became one solid group, not just a collection of individuals. There is no limit to what a group of men can do."

In our own lives, we often tend to withdraw into our own insular little worlds, enjoying the comforts and pleasures of our homes and hearths with only a tangential relationship to the community at large. By doing so, however, we forgo the opportunity to be part of a greater good. But if we connect with others in the community, if we forge alliances for the accomplishment of important goals for the community, we can tap into the enormous spiritual power of the group and reap the benefits in every aspect of our lives.

Holier Than Thou

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

One of the most disheartening episodes that occurred during the 40-year desert sojourn is recorded in this week's parsha. A man quarreled with a fellow Jew and left the dispute in a rage. He reacted by blaspheming Hashem. This abhorrent behavior was so aberrant that no one even knew what the punishment was!

So Hashem reviewed the grievous penalty for the deplorable act. As in any society, the ultimate act of treason was met with a capital sentence. The Torah declared a death penalty. But curiously enough, Hashem does not leave it at that. When the Torah reveals the penalty for the heinous act of blasphemy, it continues:

"And one who blasphemes the name of Hashem shall be put to death...And if a man inflicts a mortal wound in his fellow man, he shall be put to death. If he inflicts damage then restitution shall be paid. The value of an eye for the loss of an eye, the value of a break for a break the value of a tooth for the loss of a tooth. And one who wounds an animal must be made to pay. (Leviticus 24:15-21)

Shouldn't blasphemy be in a league of its own? Surely the act of affronting G-d Almighty can not be equated with attacking human beings. And surely it has no place next to the laws of injurious action towards animals! Why, then is it

Rabbi Y'honasan Eibeschutz one of Jewry's most influential leaders during the early 1700s, was away from his home for one Yom Kippur and was forced to spend that holy day in a small town. Without revealing his identity as Chief Rabbi of Prague, Hamburg, and Altoona, he entered a synagogue that evening and surveyed the room, looking for a suitable place to sit and pray.

Toward the center of the synagogue, his eyes fell upon a man who was swaying fervently, tears swelling in his eyes. "How encouraging," thought the Rabbi, "I will sit next to him. His prayers will surely inspire me."

It was to be. The man cried softly as he prayed, tears flowed down his face. "I am but dust in my life, Oh Lord," wept the man. "Surely in death!" The sincerity was indisputable. Reb Y'honasan finished the prayers that evening, inspired. The next morning he took his seat next to the man, who, once again, poured out his heart to G-d, declaring his insignificance and vacuity of merit.

During the congregation's reading of the Torah, something amazing happened. A man from the front of the synagogue was called for the third aliyah, one of the most honorable aliyos for an Israelite, and suddenly Rabbi Eibeschutz's neighbor charged the podium!

"Him!" shouted the man. "You give him shlishi?!" The shul went silent. Reb Y'honasan stared in disbelief. "Why I know how to learn three times as much as he! I give more charity than he and I have a more illustrious family! Why on earth would you give him an aliyah over me?"

With that the man stormed back from the bimah toward his seat. Rabbi Eibeschutz could not believe what he saw and was forced to approach the man. "I don't understand," he began. "Minutes ago you were crying about how insignificant and unworthy you are and now you are clamoring to get the honor of that man's aliyah?"

Disgusted the man snapped back. "What are you talking about? Compared to Hashem I am truly a nothing." Then he pointed to the bimah and sneered, "But not compared to him!"

Perhaps the Torah reiterates the laws of damaging mortal and animals in direct conjunction with His directives toward blasphemy. Often people are very wary of the honor they afford their spiritual guides, mentors and institutions. More so are they indignant about the reverence and esteem afforded their Creator. Mortal feelings, property and possessions are often trampled upon even harmed even by those who seem to have utmost respect for the immortal. This week the Torah, in the portion that declares the enormity of blasphemy, does not forget to mention the iniquity of striking someone less than Omnipotent. It links the anthropomorphic blaspheming of G-d to the crime of physical damage toward those created in His image. It puts them one next to each other. Because all of Hashem's creations deserve respect.

Even the cows.