



Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"ח אלול תשע"ז – כי תבא – 9th September 2017 - Volume 10 - Issue 9

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov To Mr & Mrs Josh shields on the birth of a boy. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 14 Dorchester Avenue. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Mr & Mrs Sidney Shields.

Mazel Tov to Family Ross on the occasion of Dovid's Bar Mitzva this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davening in the Shul hall.

Rov's Yom Tov Collection

The Rov is currently collecting for the annual distribution of top-up funds to local families for Yom Tov.

Generous Donations should be given to the Rov at any time.

Please Keep Us Updated

If you have changed address in the last few months please let us know so we can update our records. Please email details to office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk

How Many Miracles?

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Moshe summoned all of Yisrael and said to them, "You have seen everything that Hashem did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Paroh...the great trials that your eyes beheld, those great signs and wonders...I led you for forty years in the Wilderness, your garment did not wear out...bread you did not eat..."

The Torah tells us that after the death of their father, Yosef's brothers grew apprehensive about his attitude towards them. Perhaps Yosef indeed hated them for their treatment of him, and would now exact vengeance.

Chazal expand upon this. What precipitated their fear, Chazal say, was Yosef's behavior when he came across the pit into which they had cast him before they sold him into slavery. Yosef pronounced the berachah for such occasions: Blessed is the One who performed a miracle for me in this place.

We are perplexed by this. There was nothing remarkable about Yosef's behavior that should have alarmed his brothers. In marking the place with gratitude towards Hashem, Yosef did exactly as halachah requires! Why were they so concerned?

Upon reflection, however, Yosef's berachah was somewhat peculiar. While Yosef's life was spared that day at the pit, it was not the last time Hashem performed a miracle for him. His deliverance from Potiphar's dungeon-pit was perhaps more significant, elevating him to the position of Viceroy over all of Egypt. Halachah requires a person who was treated to several miracles to acknowledge all of them when he visits the place that any one of them occurred. If Yosef wished to fulfill his obligation as the beneficiary of miraculous assistance, he should have included this other miracle as well in his berachah.

Perhaps Yosef attached little importance to his position of greatness in Egypt. He never ceased longing for the days in which he lived an idyllic Torah life, studying Torah with his father. Perhaps he lived his

role so reluctantly that he did not think of it as a miracle at all.

This, however, was the worst fear of his brothers! Looking back with guilt at their mistreatment of Yosef, the shevatim could console themselves (as Yosef in fact told them earlier) that their evil intention had been reversed by Hashem into a great blessing – for Yosef, and for the family.

Listening to Yosef's berachah at the pit, however, they heard that he omitted mention of the miracle of his elevation to greatness. They realized that Yosef did not see it as a great blessing to him. If so, they reasoned, there was nothing to mitigate the evil they had perpetrated against him, and they began fearing for their lives.

The precision of Chazal's choice of words becomes apparent. Yosef's brothers became agitated when they heard him give thanks for the miracle performed for him "in this place," i.e. at that one, single location, in contradistinction to other places, which Yosef disregarded.

From Yosef's response to his brothers' fears we can determine that they did not understand Yosef's mindset. He certainly did regard his rise to power as important and significant. It allowed him, to save the lives of his family in famine-ridden Canaan. He appreciated this miracle, and thanked Hashem for it.

Why, then, did he not mention this later miraculous intervention when he stood at the site of his sale into slavery, where his life had been spared after his brothers had originally agreed to kill him? Perhaps the difference is in the beneficiary or beneficiaries of the miracle.

Ordinarily, it makes sense for a person to recollect all the miracles performed for him whenever he mentions any single one. Why? Because it is not only the quality and magnitude of a miracle that is impressive, but the number of Divine interventions on a person's behalf. The reason is that every miracle has a price; the way Chazal put it, each miracle results in a reduction of a person's available pool of merit. This means that after a first miraculous deliverance, a person

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת כי תבא

1st Mincha / Candle Lighting	6.10pm / not before 6.20pm
2nd Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.26pm / no later than 7.26pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.48am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	7.24pm
Rov's Shiur	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	8.29pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thu	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tue / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.20pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

has less spiritual currency to draw on.

If he merits a second, or third deliverance, we become even more impressed with Hashem's chesed. The beneficiary has less to "offer" for the special treatment; nonetheless, G-d comes through for him. It follows that when a person thanks Hashem for His intervention at some location, he should mention all other interventions. In doing so, he adds greater dimensions to Hashem's goodness.

This line of reasoning does not apply to miracles performed for the tzibbur, for the many. Hashem ordinarily delights in heaping much kindness on the community. "Hashem rejoiced over you to benefit you and to multiply you." He does not "deduct" anything from some corporate account. To the contrary, it is meritorious for the community to be the vehicle for displaying Hashem's chesed on a grand scale.

It follows that in the case of miracles performed for the many, each one can be considered by itself. There is no compelling reason to mention other, unrelated, miracles when focusing upon a single example.

We've arrived at the different positions of Yosef and his brothers. The latter assumed that Yosef was not particularly grateful for his miraculous rise to fame and fortune. He, they thought, would have preferred to do without it.

Yosef, however, corrected them. He certainly did appreciate the material benefits of his position. Why had he failed to make mention of it when he thanked Hashem for his earlier deliverance? Because, he explained, he viewed his position as a benefit not chiefly to himself, but to the many.

While they had intended to harm him when they sold him, "G-d intended it for good." Hashem saved him that day, and years later, elevated him to a position of prominence, not for his own pleasure, but so "that a vast people be kept alive." The second miracle was performed primarily for the many, and he therefore did not mention it in his berachah for the first.

As far as Yosef's attitude towards his brothers, however, nothing had changed. Yosef indeed valued his position, and understood that the Hand of G-d had been involved in his sale to Egypt. He had long ago forgiven his brothers for their intentions towards him. Nothing had changed. They had no reason to fear for their lives.

Prologue to an Epilogue **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)**

Gaze down from Your holy abode, from the heavens, and bless Your people Yisrael, and the ground that You gave us, as You swore to our forefathers, a Land flowing with milk and honey.

The last mitzvos in the Torah are those of hakhel (the national gathering during Sukkos of the year after shemithah, during which the Torah is read by the king) and writing a sefer Torah. This is what we've become accustomed to think, and is certainly one valid way of looking at things.

It's not the only way, however. Both of those mitzvos deal with the transmission and preservation of the Torah. They take for granted a completed body of Torah that must now be safeguarded for posterity, and passed along from generation to generation.

So where does that body of laws and regulations end? Everything points to the verses immediately preceding ours, which deal with ma'aseros, the three tithes that are separated and offered according to the calendar of the seven-year shemithah cycle. (We might point out the serendipitous discovery that ma'aseros, including the ma'aser of animals, also close out Chumash Vayikra.

These mitzvos are unique. No other mitzvos involve what the Torah spells out here: a formal declaration that the mitzvos have been properly performed. This viduy ma'aser/ ma'aser confession persuasively argues that these mitzvos express some important truth or principle about Torah life generally.

The three ma'aseros bring home to us the Torah attitude towards material possessions. The first ma'aser goes to the Levi, the full-time Torah teachers of the Jewish people. Giving the Levi ten percent of

our produce is an investment in our spiritual instruction, and therefore in the quality of our spiritual lives.

The next ma'aser is taken to Yerushalayim, either directly or in the form of its monetary redemption. There, it is eaten within the walls of the city by the owner and others of his choosing. In other words, the second ma'aser is not given away at all, but lavished on the person who nurtured its growth from the soil.

Living a Torah lifestyle demands that we take care of our physical selves. Rather than punish or flagellate our bodies, we treat them as tools through which we elevate ourselves, so long as we can partake of material things in an environment redolent with holiness and elevation – just like the holy city in which ma'aser sheni is eaten.

The last of the ma'aseros shows our central concern and focus on the well-being of others. Our foray into the world of the material requires that we think not only of our own well-being and elevation, but of our neighbors as well. Ma'aser ani replaces ma'aser sheni during two of the six pre-shemithah years, and is given directly to the poor.

Taken together, the giving of ma'aseros amounts to wondrous formula for making good use of the material world. When a person stands and declares – twice in a shemithah cycle – that he has fulfilled all the obligation of the ma'aser system, he essentially states that he has taken the bounty granted to Him by G-d, and used it admirably and responsibly according to His Will.

He has dedicated His gifts to spiritual advancement, to uplifting the material, and to the benefit of others. The person who can look back at the previous three years and announce that he indeed fulfilled in purity all the requirements of the ma'aser system is justified in asking G-d to gaze down from His holy abode...and bless His people Yisrael."

We should be less surprised that specifically these three mitzvos out of the 613 require this unique verbal declaration. They amount to a capsule summary of so much of the entire mitzvah system! It is entirely appropriate as well that they are, in effect, the final mitzvos of the 613, other than those still to appear in the Torah's "epilogue," which will deal with the transmission of the Torah. (Interestingly, Vayikra, the great instruction regarding living a consecrated life, also concludes with two mitzvos of ma'aser: ma'aser sheni, and ma'aser of animals born to the flock.)

The three ma'aseros of our parsha are not treated equally. Despite the fact that all of them are implied in the ma'aser declaration, ma'aser sheni gets the most attention within the text, and plays a special role in the halachic treatment of the pesukim.

Chazal tell us that a person who had no obligation in ma'aser sheni (e.g., one who purchased land in the third year, and therefore never had occasion to separate ma'aser sheni in the previous two years) cannot make the ma'aser declaration. Somehow, the meaningfulness of separating ma'aseros in general is diminished by not having separated ma'aser sheni. On the other hand, despite the specialness of ma'aser sheni, it is not the first of the three that is separated. In fact, ma'aser rishon, the first ma'aser, has pride of place. It must be separated first.

Our earlier analysis explains these confusing details perfectly. Ma'aser sheni may be the gold-standard, the most important segment of the three-part ma'aser statement. Think of how many mitzvos of our Torah draw on the mega-theme of sanctifying and elevating the material!

On the other hand, we must understand that we have no chance of success whatsoever without firm and deep instruction in Torah. We are entirely dependent upon what is implied by the first ma'aser: the one that goes to Levi, the national Torah teachers. The illumination provided by their mission is the necessary precursor to our elevating our material surroundings. Its separation, therefore, must always precede that of ma'aser sheni.

Without ma'aser rishon, there is no ma'aser sheni. Without both of them working in tandem, we do not successfully bring the body of the Torah's instruction to us to its successful conclusion.