



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Rov & Rebbetzen on the wedding this week in Switzerland of their granddaughter Avigail Mosbacher to Mordy Hommel.

Mazel Tov To Mr & Mrs Chizky Salomon on the occasion of Eli's Aufruf this shabbos. There will be a Kiddush after Davening in the marquee at Beis Menachem.

Lech-Lecha In Discussion

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

G-d said to Abram, "Go from your land, your birthplace, and your father's house . . ." (Berei-shis 12:1)

MOST PEOPLE THOUGHT I was crazy. Only a few said they would join me if they could. As for me, I love travel and adventure, and this was a great opportunity for both. I would do "Lech-Lecha" myself, and retrace the historical and heroic steps our greatest ancestor of all, Avraham Avinu.

After months of research and of saving up money, I set out for Ur Kasdim, the birthplace of Avraham. Easier said than done, because there is no longer any place called "Ur Kasdim." There is only a lot of discussion from over the ages as to where it might have been.

In 1862, Henry Rawlinson identified Ur Kasdim with Tell el-Muqayyar, near Nasiriyah in southern Iraq. In 1927, Leonard Woolley excavated the site and identified it as a Sumerian archaeological site where the Chaldeans were to settle around the 9th century BCE. Recent archaeology work has continued to focus on the location in Nasiriyah, where the ancient Ziggurat of Ur is located.

According to the Rambam, and before him, the Roman historian Josephus, Ur Kasdim could be located at one of various Upper Mesopotamian or southeast Anatolian sites, such as Urkesh, Urartu, Urfa or Kutha. Not knowing which city for sure, I decided to visit all of them.

Iraq today is not the Mesopotamia of Avraham Avinu's time, though after thousands of years, there are still many cultural similarities. Even the people living there today may have migrated from other countries over the millennia. It would take a fair bit of imagination to go back in time and try and imagine what it must have been like for Avraham.

According to the Midrash, Avraham Avinu's father, Terach, was an idol merchant with close connections to the ruler of that time, Nimrod. In those days, EVERYONE believed in idols. This is why it was such a BOLD and DANGEROUS move to disparage them, something Avraham started to do from the tender age of THREE YEARS OLD.

Talk about being mature for one's age!

Talk about rocking the boat!

Needless to say that Avraham became a very "popular" individual, in a dangerous sort-of-way. When he was older, he mocked the idols and tried to convince people not to buy them. After he destroyed the idols in Nimrod's own palace, Nimrod had him chained and thrown into a dungeon for 10 years, thinking it would force Avraham to rethink his position.

After the 10 years were over, Nimrod brought Avraham out of jail and demanded that he accept him as a G-d. Avraham, of course, refused, and was sent to be burned to death instead. Everyone brought wood to contribute to the fire, and 900,000 people came to watch the spectacle, certain that Avraham, only 50 years old at that time, would die that day.

The exact opposite happened. Avraham miraculously survived the fire, and Nimrod was the one who was humbled. A lot of converts were made that

לעלו נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

V'sein Tal u'Motor – in Eretz Yisroel

In Eretz Yisroel, one begins to daven for rain, adding V'sein Tal u'Motor in Borech oleinu, from 7 Cheshvan (which was this past Tuesday), while we in Chutz la'aretz begin this year on the evening of 5 December.

A visitor to Eretz Yisroel, (a ben chutz la'aretz,) during this time must add V'sein Tal u'Motor to his davening like the local minhag as long as he is there. Upon returning, a ben chutz la'aretz may resume his local minhag until 5th December. Some are of the opinion that in this case, where he has already begun davening for rain, he should continue saying V'sein Tal u'Motor in shomeia tefilla.

In all cases, one who davens for the omud, must follow the local custom.

day, once Avraham walked away from certain death, totally unscathed. It was all the proof they needed that Avraham's G-d was the REAL G-d, ushering in two years later the "2,000 years of Torah."

Avraham's near death told Terach that it was time to leave Ur Kasdim with his family. This made MY next stop what had been THEIR next stop, the city of Charan which, apparently, is thought to be Harran, a city whose ruins lie within present-day Turkey. I even planned to travel part of the route by camel, as they had done.

It was in Charan that Avraham and Sarah, his wife, really stepped up their outreach effort. As the Torah says, they "made" souls there. It is also where Avraham parted ways with his father, after he received the call from G-d to move on to Eretz Canaan. It was in Charan that Terach died.

As a footnote on history, apparently Terach had done teshuvah for his idol-producing days. You can't live with a son like Avraham and not wake up to the truth about G-d along the way. But, I also remembered reading that Terach later reincarnated into Iyov, whose suffering completed whatever teshuvah had been left unfinished when Terach had died.

As I stood where Charan once existed, I tried to imagine Avraham and Sarah teaching the world around them about G-d, and the major historical revolution it must have started. It changed the way people would think and act forever.

Then came the call: Lech-lecha, but not when many people think it was.

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת לך לך

זמן שבת	5.48pm
Mincha	5.53pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.19am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	5.01pm
2nd Mincha	5.31pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Motzei Shabbos	6.51pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	5.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Avraham was NOT 70 years old at the time G-d appeared to him and told him, "Lech-lecha." He was only 55 years old when G-d told him, "I am G-d, Who brought you out from Ur Kasdim . . . Take your wife and all you own and go to Eretz Canaan."

I followed suit. At the age of 26, I made my own "lech-lecha," catching a short flight from Istanbul to modern day Eretz Yisroel. I was met at the airport by a guide who came highly recommended to me, both for his knowledge of Tanach and Eretz Yisroel. He liked my idea of retracing the footsteps of the Forefather of the Jewish people.

"So where have you been so far?" he asked me, loading my bags into his trunk. I noted that the car looked pretty new, which meant it probably had good air conditioning. I couldn't wait to get into the car.

"Ur Kasdim," I told him, buckling up

"Ur Kasdim?" he asked me, checking his mirror before pulling out. "They actually know where that is?"

"Not for certain," I told him. "But I had to be in the general area, which was good enough for me."

"Interesting," he told me, in Hebrew accented English. "I would like to have been there with you."

"It was. VERY interesting," I said. "It's thousands of years later, yet, somehow, just being there made me feel connected to Avraham and his journey."

We discussed many of the things I saw and experienced while in Iraq, and how I traveled by camel on my way to Charan. He asked me if I preferred to continue to travel by camel, or to stick with the car. I told him about the old cigarette commercial, in which a guy says he would travel a mile for a camel. I told him, "I just traveled SEVERAL miles ON a camel, and it was enough for me. An air conditioned car suits me just fine for the rest of this journey!"

"The war between Nimrod and Kedarla-omer," he told me, "took place after Avraham had already been in Eretz Yisroel for 10 years."

"So, that would have made Avraham . . . 65 years old at the time."

"Nachon . . ." he confirmed. "When it says, 'He said to him, 'I am G-d, Who brought you out from Ur Kasdim, to give you this land to inherit it' . . ."

He quoted the whole verse in Hebrew. I was impressed . . .

The Greatness of the AVOS **Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)**

"And it was as they came close to coming to Egypt, and Avram said to his Sari his wife, "Behold, now I know that you are a beautiful woman." — Bereishis 12:11

HASHEM told Avram to leave Charan and go to the land of Canaan. When Avram arrived, there was a famine in the land, and he was forced to go down to Egypt. While traveling there, he said to his wife, "Behold, now I know that you are a beautiful woman."

Rashi, in the name of the Medrash, explains that up until this point Avrohom Avinu didn't notice his wife's physical appearance. Because they were traveling, the situation caused him to become aware of it, and he now recognized that she was a beautiful woman.

This Rashi becomes difficult to understand when we focus on why HASHEM created beauty in a woman.

Men and women are different in almost every way imaginable. They speak differently, act differently, and have different value systems. It would seem near impossible to take two individuals from different backgrounds, with diverse natures and upbringings, put them together for a short time, and then ask them to live together for the rest of their lives in peace and harmony.

In all relationships, differences of opinions tend to escalate, so feelings are hurt, and eventually the liaison ends. Most business partnerships end with a fight. Most friendships weaken when people go their separate ways. It seems impractical to expect the institution of marriage to succeed.

To allow marriages to flourish, HASHEM placed within the heart of man the capacity to form a bond of love. Love allows a couple to overlook each other's shortcomings, to ignore their partner's flaws. It is the glue that holds a marriage together.

To help form this bond, HASHEM created a number of catalysts. One of these is a woman's beauty. When a husband notices his wife's appearance, there is an awakening in his heart. He feels attracted to her, and this increases the love and attachment he feels towards to her. This element is so significant in creating that bond that a man is not allowed marry a woman without first seeing her in case "she may be ugly in his eyes."

The Torah's approach to a successful marriage is not to ignore the physical, but rather to understand that it is a tool to be used for greater devotion and

attachment of husband to wife. So how is it that Avrohom wasn't even aware of whether his wife was attractive or not?

The answer to this question seems to be that because of the great level of spirituality they were both on, matters of physical beauty were irrelevant. Apparently Avrohom was on the level of loving his wife totally and completely for her inner beauty — for who she was as a person. The external would neither have helped nor hurt. If her physical beauty would have added a dimension to the love and devotion that he felt towards her, we have to assume that he would have used it as such. Rather, it was something that wouldn't have added to the already powerful bond and attraction he felt towards her.

What we see from this is an amazing illustration of the great spiritual planes the Avos and Imahos were on. To Avrohom and Sarah, it wasn't that the physical took a back seat; it was irrelevant; it didn't weigh in at all. They lived on such a pure level that they bonded as a couple with complete and utter devotion, without any need of the physical drives that HASHEM put into mankind.

This concept has great relevance in our lives. We are told that a person must say, "When will my actions reach the level of the Avos?" Chazal teach us that to reach greatness, we must use the Avos as role models. We are supposed to study their lives, see how they conducted themselves, and emulate their ways.

However, there are two dimensions to the lessons that we learn from the Avos. Some lessons are direct. We can see how they acted in a given situation, and we attempt in our own lives to imitate those deeds. In this mode, we use the Avos almost as mile markers to plan and measure our growth.

The second type of lessons that we learn from the Avos are much less direct. These lessons are not as much about how to act as they are how to understand the greatness and the potential of the human. We see the enormity of the Avos and Imahos, recognize how much they towered over us, and we use them as a guide, a North Star against which we set our compass.

When we see that people who walked this earth, ate, drank, and slept as we do, yet reached levels that are almost beyond our comprehension, we aren't asked to imitate those actions, but to expand our horizons. I am not expected to be like them, nor will I ever be asked to do what they did, but if that is what a human is capable of, then it breaks through the barriers of what I thought was possible. Their actions expand my understanding of what is possible for me.

It is important to remember that in our own lives and marriages, physical elements are important. A wife should do her best to make herself attractive to her husband, and a husband should do his best to make himself attractive to his wife. We aren't Avrohom Avinu and Sarah Imenu. Therefore, we were given tools to help create a powerful attachment that withstands time and the travails of life. Physical attraction isn't the end goal, but it is a key element and driving force in a successful marriage and a Torah home. At the same time, it is important to have in front of us an image of what a human can aspire to so we can set our goals for our own greatness.

Tznius and Kavod

Binyamin Rose (Shortvort.com)

"And he moved from there to the mountain on the east side of Beis-El and pitched His/Her tent" (Bereishis 12:8)

Rashi from Bereishis Rabbah 39:15 states that the vowels in the word Ohelo/his tent are written so that the word is pronounced Ohelah/her tent. This tells us that Avrohom put up Soroh's tent before his own. This was because he wanted to honor her more than himself (see Gemara Yevamos 62a).

It is important to note that Avrohom and Soroh were not on shidduch dating anymore. They had been married many years and they still acted with respect and formality with each other. One must never stop showing Kavod to his wife.

The Mattenos Kehunah says that Avrohom was concerned for her Tznius as it says in Tehillim 45:14 "All of the king's daughter's Kavod is in the palace". He may be saying that this was an additional factor because if her going into a tent was only for modesty she could have gone into any tent (see 18:19, where she is praised as a Tzenuah for being in the tent, but not "Ohela – her tent").

Still, why is it necessary to add the factor of Tznius to what the Medrash said?...

Isn't it enough that he put up the tent to show her honor?

We see that Tznius is a part of Kavod. In addition to all the other reasons for a man or woman to act modestly it is also showing Kavod for themselves or self-respect.