



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד"ר מרשון תשפ"ד - 21st October 2023 - Volume 16 - Issue 16

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Ari Douek and his parents, Yitzchok and Miri, on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos. The Kehillah is invited to a Kiddush after davening in the Shul hall.

Mazel Tov to Simcha Green on his Bar Mitzva this Shabbos.

Mazel Tov to Daniel and Liesbeth Harris on Hadassah's wedding to Yoni Mechlowitz this Wednesday

Mazel Tov to James and Yudit Glass on the birth of a baby boy.

The Sholom Zochor takes place at 31 Richmond Avenue

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to Esti Epstein for the Yahrtzeit of her father this Wednesday 17th Cheshvan

Fall Back

A reminder to put your clocks back one hour this Motzei Shabbos

Maintaining Standards

Rabbi J Rubinstein

In the winter of 1940, Jewish activists who belonged to a group which were not particularly religious had a method of enabling many Jews to escape the clutches of Hitler. But they did not have the funds necessary to implement their plan. They sent a few representatives to the Ponevezer Rov to ask if he would help them. They were not very hopeful because the Rov was strongly identified with religious groups who had always opposed their group. The Rov took out a cheque signed it and gave it to them. They told him he had omitted to write in the amount the cheque was for. He replied, he would tell them how much he had in his account and they could fill in the cheque with however much they needed. For the purpose of saving Jewish lives he was prepared to give all his savings. Years later in Israel, the Rov opened an orphanage for children who had escaped the war. The government appointed an official to examine the orphanage to which they were contributing funds. The official turned out, to be one of those who had asked for, and received, money from the Rov before the war. When the official discovered who he was being asked to supervise, he said, I dont need to check up on the Ponevezer Rov, he has enormous credit with me.

Behind this story lies a great principle. The Rov had not opposed that group in the past, because he had a personal animosity towards them, or because he was not concerned about their welfare. He opposed them, because he understood they were misguided in their lack of belief in Judaism, and he did not want anybody else to be influenced by their attitudes. But when it came to helping them physically, and certainly when it came to saving their lives, he was prepared to give them every penny he had.

A similar idea is to be found in this week's Parshah. אברהם אבינו recommended that לוט and he, split up and go their separate ways (Chap. 13:9). Rashi explains, לוט's shepherds had justified to themselves, their animals grazing in other people's lands. אברהם אבינו did not want his shepherds to be influenced by that attitude, so he decided they should separate. In other words he was insistent on maintaining his own standards. But this did not mean he was any less concerned about לוט's wellbeing. For this reason, in the next part of the Parshah we find, when לוט was captured, אברהם אבינו risked life and limb, to go and save him. This twin approach, of being meticulous about

preserving our own beliefs, even to the extent of staying separate when necessary, from some people; but still being concerned about their welfare, and having no personal animosity, is something which is frequently applicable in contemporary life.

So Too Will Your Offspring Act Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

The pasuk says, "And Avram said, 'My L-rd, Hashem Elokim: What can You give me being that I go childless and the steward of my house is the Damascene Eliezer?'" (Bereshis 15:2). Avraham frets to the Ribono shel Olam: What is going to be of me? I have no heirs! He fears that his servant Eliezer will inherit his entire household. Hashem responds: "...That one will not inherit you; only the one who shall come forth from within you shall inherit you." (Bereshis 15:4). The Ribono shel Olam then took Avraham outside, directed his attention to the sky, and asked him if he could count the stars. Obviously, this was impossible. The Almighty told Avraham "Thus will be your seed." (Bereshis 15:5). This is what your nation is eventually going to be like.

I saw a beautiful insight from Rav Meir Shapiro. The following is what I believe he means to say:

There is a problem in this pasuk. The pasuk says that Hashem took Avraham outside and told him to count the stars. Then the pasuk says, "And He said to him (Vayomer lo...) so will be your seed." Inasmuch as Hashem has already been the one speaking in this pasuk, the repetition of the words "Vayomer lo" are superfluous. We already know who is talking!

Rav Meir Shapiro explains that the words "Vayomer lo" need to be inserted into this pasuk because something happened between Hashem's earlier statement to Avraham and His subsequent statement to him. Hashem told Avraham "Go outside and count the stars." So Avraham indeed went out from his tent, looked heavenward and began counting: "One, two, three, four..." He started counting the stars even though this was an obvious impossibility. Hashem told him, "Avraham, you are trying to do the impossible." Avraham responded, "But you told me to count the stars so I tried to count them." Hashem responded, "Oy! This is what the Jewish people will be like!" They will look at something that seems like an impossible dream, and they will attempt to make it happen! "So too will your descendants act." That ability to look at a situation and not be turned off or discouraged by what seems to be impossible does not stop the Jewish people from trying to make the effort.

If we study examples throughout Jewish history, we are in awe of what the Jewish people experienced and how they were able to pick up and start again. You know many such events. We do not need to

Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	5.32pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	5.37pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.26am
Rov's Shiur	4.46pm
Mincha	1.30pm / 5.16pm
Motzei Shabbos	6.36pm
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	4.25pm GMT
Late Maariv	8.00pm

go back to ancient times. We need only look back 75 or 80 years. Consider a few examples:

Rav Aharon Kotler came to America in 1941 from Kletzk, where he had Gedolei Yisrael as talmidim. When he started a yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey, where were his students holding?

Rav Muttel Katz, who lost his entire family in Telshe and came to the United States in the 1940's, took boys from public schools and made them into Torah scholars, building in the process a major Yeshiva in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Rosh Yeshiva zt"l (of Ner Yisroel), was walking with Rav Schwab in Baltimore. They walked by a building on Garrison Blvd and Liberty Heights Avenue. (Don't go there today.) He told Rav Schwab, "Ah, this will be the dormitory for the Yeshiva." There were eight bochrim in the Yeshiva at the time, and the building he was eyeing had capacity for 50 bochrim.

When Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman walked along the sand dunes of Bnei Brak and envisioned the Ponevezh Yeshiva that he planned to reestablish there after its European destruction, he was told "You are dreaming." He responded, "I may be dreaming, but I am not sleeping!" This ability to pursue a goal even if it seems impossible began with Avraham. Avraham started counting the stars, expecting to learn their number even though it was a Mission Impossible! So too is the practice of his offspring.

No Room For Fiddler-On-The-Roof Yiddishkeit

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

"I will bless you, and make your name great. You shall be a blessing."

The three elements in this pasuk, say Chazal, are references to the three avos, as they are referenced in the firstbracha of Shmonah Esrei. Nonetheless, they are not treated equally. The conclusion of that bracha mentions only one of them: Magen Avraham. We are kept in the dark as to why it is that only Avraham is featured at the end of the bracha.

We'll get to the answer only after dealing with another question, this time in Chumash Devarim. "I have placed life and death before you, blessing and curse. Choose life! so that you will live, you and your offspring." Who is going to respond to this? If a person is already convinced that he is obligated in all the mitzvos (as mentioned in previous verses), he will observe them without the dramatic appeal. If he does not believe, then no threat is going to change his mind.

The point may be that observing mitzvos is insufficient. Many people do so, simply out of force of habit. Observance is something that the family does. It is part of their life-style – meaningful practices that are sprinkled on as a garnish to life otherwise unrelated to Hashem. They don't see themselves as created for the sole purpose of serving Hashem, either because they don't comprehend what this means, or because they just don't believe it.

The difference between the two attitudes becomes apparent in the education of their children. Those whose own observance is simply the continuation of the life-style they knew when they were young are not going to make following the dictates of the Torah the primary focus of their parenting. Those who understand that they exist only to serve HKBH will communicate that to their children as well.

The first one who fully understood and committed himself to a life of singular purpose was Avraham. He also inculcated his values in his son Yitzchok, and Yitzchok did the same with Yaakov. That is not to say, however, that Yitzchok and Yaakov were merely carrying on "tradition." Their greatness was in blazing their own trails in avodas Hashem, having found their own ways to commit themselves to Hashem's service.

The Torah demonstrates this when it says, "I will remember my covenant with Yaakov, and also my covenant with Yitzchok, and also my covenant with Avraham." Why are they given in reverse chronological order? Rashi says to teach us that each was sufficient on his own. What this may mean is that each one's contribution was sufficient through his own avodah, and not merely a product of his upbringing. Although Yaakov had a supportive father and grandfather, his commitment to Hashem resulted from his own achievement.

This explains Moshe's challenge to his people in Devarim. Choose life! Commit yourselves to a life whose chief goal is drawing closer to Hashem. Don't make the mistake of coasting on the vehicle of family practice. Choose a Yiddishkeit of real depth, rather than one of

ceremony and "tradition!"

We arrive back at our pasuk and its lesson. Yes, each of the avos made his own contribution, and each one is worthy of mention. Still, we conclude the firstbracha of Shmonah Esrei with Avraham, because his job was more difficult than the others. He had to buck the trend in his home. Yitzchok and Yaakov achieved their own greatness, but the task was much easier for them. They at least received a jump-start from their early chinuch.

We therefore put Avraham front and center. He was the first, by reason of his determined personal choice, to provide an antidote to the Fiddler. The latter would soon be toppled from the roof where he shouted "Tradition!" by changing times. Avraham lives on.

The Sweet Aroma

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

Our Parashah opens: "Hashem said to Avram, 'Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.'" Later, Avram (later known as Avraham) wanders further—throughout the Land of Canaan, to Egypt, and to the land of the Plishtim.

In contrast, we read about Avraham's idolatrous ancestors (Yehoshua 24:2—a verse quoted in the Pesach Haggadah), "Your forefathers—Terach, the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor—always dwelt beyond the [Euphrates] River." They remained in one land and were not asked to wander from place to place. Why?

R' Gedaliah Silverstone z"l (1871-1944; rabbi in Belfast, Ireland and Washington, D.C.) explains that there is a positive aspect to Avraham's wanderings and, likewise, to those of the Jewish People throughout our millennia in exile. Specifically, it serves to publicize the Name of Hashem throughout the world. R' Silverstone writes: When one has a pleasant-smelling air freshener, he walks through all the rooms of the house with it so that its aroma will be distributed throughout. In contrast, when one has foul smelling tar or gasoline, he keeps it in the cellar or garage so that its aroma will not be widely-distributed. Likewise, when it comes to idolators such as Terach and his ancestors, it was better for mankind that they remain in one land. In contrast, it is to the world's benefit that Avraham and his descendants travel widely. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Korban Pesach [1939 ed.] p.30.)

THIS SUNDAY

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Mitzvah of making
ציצית
For our **חיילים** in Israel

Help us make
500+

Where & When?
Sunday 29th October
2pm - 4:15pm (Kiddush & Moshav 4:35pm)
Ohr Yerushalayim
For Men & Boys (supervised by an adult)

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