



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד טבת תשפ"א – מקץ – 19th December 2020 - Volume 13 - Issue 23

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Chisky and Avital Salomon on the birth of a grandson to Eli and Ruthie Salomon

Mazel Tov to Doniel Chalomish, his parents Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok and Naomi Chalomish and grandparents Zev and Debby Davis on the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah this Shabbos.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:

Shabbos, 4th Teves - Yisroel Meir Cope for his mother

Tuesday, 7th Teves - Ilana Shapiro for her mother

Significance Happens In Threes

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

At the end of two years of days...

Rashi tells us the miketz means "at the end of." Seemingly for emphasis, he then continues, "Every usage of ketz signifies that end of something." Now, we're not quite sure what question Rashi sought to address. Assume that he found some difficulty in the text. He wishes to let us know that miketz meant "at the end," and that would solve the problem, i.e. it would fit nicely with the meaning of the verse. What need would he have to let us know that it means "the end" in a host of other places as well?

Rashi, I believe, is continuing with what he presented in the previous pasuk. Because Yosef placed his hope and trust in the intercession of a human being, he had to languish in captivity an additional two years. Twice he had used the expression "you will remember me;" for each one, he had to pay the price of a full year's incarceration.

If the point of the pasuk is to make known Yosef's guilt, however, then the terms of his punishment ought to be crystal-clear in the text. It should be manifest that Yosef's redemption was delayed for a full – i.e. not approximate – two years. At first glance, that does not seem to be the case. For this reason, Rashi emphasizes that miketz means "at the end of" a full two years. Elsewhere, a single day takes the place of a month in halacha. Sometimes, a single month is reckoned as a year. This was not the case in regard to Yosef. His years ended "at the end," i.e. after a full two years, with no shortcuts included. The passage of an exact, full two years indicate that they are linked to something specific in Yosef's life, i.e. his two requests of his former cell-mate to remember him, and intercede on his behalf. The Torah uses the word miketz to make this entirely clear.

Why is the passage of two full years linked to the punishment for sin? Because the year that we follow is the lunar year of 354 days, a number divisible by three ($3 \times 118 = 354$). Three is a recurring number in regard to facing up to sin. The neshamah can be treated to three rounds of purification through reincarnation. The navi speaks of Hashem tolerating three bouts of sin, but not a fourth. Yosef, prior to revealing himself to his brothers, had them imprisoned for three days, hoping that they would look back and regret their previous behavior.

To work properly, it seems, teshuvah requires a three-fold contemplation. We see this in the lashes administered by the court, which number 39 – which is also divisible by three. One cannot fully repent without understanding how he came to transgress. That includes recognizing that three distinct phases are involved in moving from thought to deed, and each must be addressed by the sinner. Each chet involves an arousal of a will to sin; an imaginative planning of the illicit deed; and finally, translating the first two stages (which take place only in one's mind) into concrete action.

People are surprised that Yosef was subjected to such a harsh punishment for what seems to us to be a minor infraction. We have two thoughts to offer.

First, the punishment in fact did not cause so much suffering to Yosef. He was not incarcerated like a common prisoner. He was, in fact, in charge of all the prisoners. He exercised so much control – and did a good job of it – that his superior (who officially was in charge of the prison – gave Yosef free rein, and did not scrutinize his work.

Second, we often see that HKBH is far more exacting with greater tzadikim than with ordinary people. Yosef was a tzadik, and held to a higher standard. The process paid off. At their beginning, he had urged the two imprisoned officials to share their dream with him, implying that G-d had given him great powers of interpretation. After two years to consider what he had said, he phrased things very differently when he stood before Paroh. "It is not my wisdom! It is G-d Who will respond with Paroh's well-being." He completely de-emphasized his own role, and attributed everything to Hashem. Yosef had used the two – full – years wisely!

Things Are Not Always as They Appear

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

One of the very perplexing things in this parsha is the fact that Yosef appears to be taking revenge against his brothers. He is playing games with them. He torments them. He knows who they are and puts them through a long charade, accusing them of being spies and accusing Binyomin of being a thief. It goes back and forth like that. What is Yosef doing? We are speaking about 'Yosef haTzaddik' (the 'Righteous one.')

The Ramban asks a question that bothers everyone. Yosef was now second in command in Egypt. He certainly could have sent some kind of message to his father and told him, 'I am alive. Come down and see me.' Even if he has a grudge against his brothers and wants to torment and torture them, but why was he apparently so callous regarding the emotions of his father? Why didn't he send Yaakov Avinu a message that he was alive and well?

The Ramban provides a whole approach to answer this question. He says the reason Yosef did not do this is because he was trying to bring his dreams to fruition. Yosef had two dreams. First, he dreamt that the eleven brothers would bow down to him. Then he had a second dream that his father would also bow down to him. The Ramban writes that Yosef had to see the fulfillment of those dreams. Therefore, when the ten brothers came down and bowed down to him, the first dream remained unfulfilled. For that reason, he demanded that all eleven brothers come down. When the brothers came down with Binyamin and bowed before him, the first dream was now fulfilled in totality. However, the second dream was not yet fulfilled. That is why he

Davening Times

פרשת מקץ

Zman Shabbos & Lighting	3.35pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.40pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.45am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.09am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.40pm
Motzei Shabbos	4.50pm
Ovos uBonim	5.50pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Friday Asoroh B'Teves	7.00am / 8.00am / 9.30am
Mincha	1.15pm
Mincha & Maariv	3.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

hatched this plan. It was not that he intended to seek revenge or torture the brothers, but the dreams had to be fulfilled!

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, in his sefer *Emes L'Yaakov*, writes the words, "and I am like dust under the soles of his feet" (in comparison to the Ramban, one of the great early commentaries) "but", he goes on, "I do not understand what the Ramban is saying." He asks: What kind of mitzvah is it to see that a person's dreams become fulfilled? That is no justification to put his brothers and father through the wringer, to play this cat and mouse game with them, just to ensure that his personal dreams from decades ago come to fruition!

Rav Yaakov goes on to give his own explanation for Yosef's behavior. His explanation is that Yosef had to teach the brothers a lesson. The lesson, succinctly stated, is that things are not always as they appear, and that it is possible to jump to wrong conclusions. This is exactly what the brothers did. They falsely suspected their innocent sibling (choshed b'Ksherim). That is what Yosef was trying to accomplish here. The brothers knew that they were not spies. They knew Yosef was a smart fellow. How could he make such a gross error and accuse them of being spies?

They did not learn the lesson the first time. Rav Yaakov points out that when they found the goblet in the sack of Binyomin, they accused him and said (Rashi brings this surprising Medrash) "You are a thief, the son of a thief (referring to the fact that his mother Rachel stole the 'Terafim' from her father Lavan)." This was despite the fact that they were accusing Binyomin—whom they knew to be a Tzadik (righteous individual).

There are some people that we all trust implicitly, such that come what may we know that they would never do such a thing. "Ay" – the 'evidence'? There must be an explanation! But they did not do that. In spite of the fact that Binyomin was a Tzadik, they said "You're a Ganav (thief)!" Despite the fact that they knew Yosef was a Tzadik, they said "You're a Rodef (have intent to murder)!"

"I am going to show you" says Yosef, "that if people jump to conclusions—they look merely at the 'evidence'—they can make serious mistakes." That is why he had to put them through these trials and tribulations—so that they would finally see what they did wrong.

When Yosef says the words "I am Yosef—is my father still alive?" they were not able to respond to him "for they feared his presence." The Midrash says that this was musar (rebuke, reprimand or chastisement) to them, for which they had no response. What was the musar? "We were wrong." That is the biggest musar! It is the hardest fact to face. They now realized that for twenty years they were making a mistake, they were living a lie. There is no greater musar than this.

That is the lesson he wanted to teach them: Things are not always as they appear.

I heard an incident from Rabbi Isaac Bernstein, who links this Biblical event with a beautiful story involving the Ponnevizer Rav (Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman 1888-1969) and Reb Aryeh Levin (1885-1969). The Ponnevizer Rav called a meeting with all the great men of Eretz Yisrael over the dire financial straits of the Yeshivos in the Holy Land. Reb Aryeh Levin was in attendance at this meeting. In the middle of the meeting, before they came to any type of conclusion, Reb Aryeh Levin excused himself. He said, "I have an important errand that I have to take care of. I need to leave." And he left in the middle of the meeting. Once Reb Aryeh left, the whole meeting dissipated. It fell apart because they were not going to come to any conclusion without him. There was no point in having further discussion about any major decisions, because no one wanted to undertake a major initiative without Reb Aryeh's concurrence.

After the meeting broke up, the Ponnevizer Rav starts walking to wherever he had to go. He passed by a florist shop, and who should he see there in the florist shop? It is none other than Reb Aryeh Levin. Rav Kahaneman went into the florist shop and said to Reb Aryeh, "Excuse me, but this was the important errand that you had to take care of that caused you to break up our meeting? Just so you could buy someone flowers!?"

Reb Aryeh responded that he was not in the store to buy flowers. He was there instead to buy a potted plant. Okay. So???

Reb Aryeh told him that he had a friend who was deathly ill who was in a sanatorium. (According to another version of the story the person had leprosy.) He had a disease that was deemed in those days to be so contagious that anything the person owned or brought with him into this facility had to be burned after the person died—his clothes, his bed sheets, his possessions, everything had to be burned. This man was now near death. It bothered the friend that they were going to burn his Tefillin.

Reb Aryeh Levin went to the florist and bought a potted plant. He was going to dig out the dirt that came with the plant and put the Tefillin under the plant in the dirt, since the hospital staff was of the opinion that a living organism was not affected by this illness—so he would be able to remove the plant (under which the Tefillin were buried) from the facility. He would thus be able to make the deathly ill person feel at ease that his Tefillin would not be burnt, because they would be removed along with the plant by Reb Aryeh after the

person died. This Jew would be able to go to his grave knowing "My Tefillin were not destroyed!"

The Ponnevizer Rav apologized to Reb Aryeh and begged his forgiveness for being "Choshed b'Ksherim" (suspecting him unjustly).

A person can appear to be as guilty as anything. The stolen goblet can be in his sack of wheat. Someone can excuse himself from an important meeting to go to a florist, but things are not always as they appear. That is why Yosef felt he had to put his brothers through such an ordeal—to teach them that lesson.

What Troubled Pharaoh **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)**

In the morning, his spirit was agitated, so he sent and summoned all the necromancers of Egypt and its wise men. Paroh related his dream to them, but none could interpret them for Paroh.

The modern form of anti-Semitism is fueled to a large extent by a perception by non-Jews that they are dependent upon Jews. They find it intolerable that they need to receive from Jews, a small, insignificant people relative to them. Ironically, they have this mostly wrong. There is a dependency at work, but it has nothing to do with receiving from Jews. They needn't receive anything at all. Their dependency is in the course of history, which will never occur independently of the fortunes of the Jewish people. Indeed, their story line is written entirely in Jewish characters. When G-d decrees that Jewish fortunes are ascendant, then so are those of other nations. The same is true when Hashem decrees something different.

Before he even heard the interpretation of his dream, Paroh was agitated and overwrought. Why should he have reacted that way to a dream of fat cows and lean cows? There was room for curiosity, to be sure. Perhaps even concern. But agitation seems inappropriate.

"Paroh was dreaming, and he was standing over the river." In his dream, Paroh was not standing beside the river or near the river. He stood over, atop the river. It was the single part of his dream that he understood, and he was terrified by its significance. "The evil stand above their gods; Hashem, however, stands [protectively] over tzadikim, as it says, 'Hashem was standing over him.'" Paroh realized that standing over the river meant that he had rejected his god. He had to hope that no one else caught wind of this. He did not divulge this detail to those who arrived to interpret his dream. Even to Yosef he subtly edited the story, and described himself standing beside the river, at its edge.

Yosef's response to Paroh, however, took notice of Paroh's apostasy. He emphasized, "It is G-d Who will respond with Paroh's welfare." He told Paroh that it was entirely proper that he had let go of his baseless devotion to the Egyptian river god. That god would not help him. The real G-d, however, would help him understand his future.

Yosef was ecstatic. He realized that he had conveyed to Paroh and his court the reality of Hashem's existence. Yosef understood the commonality of fate share by the nations and the Jews. If he had succeeded in substantially elevating the Egyptians, then the position of Klal Yisrael had also improved. Yosef began believing that he had succeeded in his personal mission of reclaiming souls from the world community, just as his brothers believed. (Thus, "Yosef recognized his brothers," i.e., he recognized and agreed with the position they had held in the past.) The mandatory galus that had been foretold to Avraham had been fulfilled through his personal exile in Egypt; the rest of the family had been spared. Geulah was at hand.

Ironically, the rest of the shevatim reversed their original position as well. They had been reluctant to participate in the galus, hoping that Yosef would endure it on his own. They now capitulated, and understood that the entire family would have to enter into a state of galus! (Thus, "They did not recognize him," i.e. they did not expect a Yosef who now thought that a larger galus could be avoided.)

As the shevatim began to accommodate themselves to the idea of a protracted exile, they had to think of taking up residence in a new country, away from the holiness of Eretz Yisrael.

Regrettably, the importance and centrality of Israel began to lessen in their minds, as the reality of living elsewhere loomed larger. In the course of time, this diminution of importance became magnified in the minds of their descendents. The Torah makes note of it. As soon as Yosef sees his brothers, he accuses them of being spies – an allusion to the spies that their descendents would send into Canaan centuries later, who would undervalue the kedushah of the land. The consequences of the negative report that they brought back were sourced in this moment of the acceptance of the Egyptian galus by the brothers.

The counterforce to diminishing the centrality of Eretz Yisrael was Binyamin – the only brother who was born there. For this reason, Yosef examined the relationship of the shevatim with him. He was pleased that they resisted dragging Binyamin into the exile, and tried to keep him in Eretz Yisrael. Yosef pushed further when he framed Binyamin for the theft of his goblet. He wished to see if the connection between the brothers and Binyamin – the crucial link to get them back to Israel – was deep and strong.

When he convinced himself that it was, the rest of the story could proceed.