



Ohr Yerushalayim News

א מרחשון תשע"ח - נח - 16th September 2017 - Volume 10 - Issue 13

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to Dr & Mrs Micahel Wilks on the arrival of a new granddaughter born to Shulamis & Chaim Lichtenstein in Yerushalayim

Mazal tov to Dr and Mrs Michael Wilks on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson Oshi Wilks in Israel.

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs David Wolfson on the occasion of their granddaughter's wedding next week in Gateshead.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush this Shabbos after Davenning sponsored by Mr Peter Nissen who would like to thank all those who helped him during the many weeks he was immobilised. Their help morning and evening, bringing him to Shul or a Shiur and visting him at home was really appreciated. He was very touched by all your kindness.

Shalosh Seudas

The new Shalos Seudas season resumes this week after the second Mincha (1 hour 20 mins before Motzei Shabbos). If you would like to sponsor, in full or jointly, please put your name on the corresponding week on the list on the newswall. Weekly sponsorship is £65.

Shabbat UK

Shabbat UK takes place on Parshas Lech Lecha, October 27th/28th. Many hosts and guests have already been paired up but if you are still looking to be involved in this amazing Kehilla event we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact Bruria Brysh (07808 898 445) or Deborah Levine (07958 777 011)

learn and teach others, it has to do with the concept of chayn. Clearly, it is worth understanding what chayn is.

Before we do it is worth pointing something out that is an important part of the chayn discussion. The verse above seems only complimentary. Noach's generation was bad and angered G-d. He decided to destroy them. Noach was excluded from the judgment because, unlike everyone else in his generation, he had CHAYN.

True. But, maybe the verse is conveying something else as well, something that seems to support those who question Noach's approach to saving the world. Perhaps the verse is saying that though Noach found chayn in the eyes of G-d, he did not find chayn in the eyes of his fellow man, and THAT is why they did not listen to him.

Weren't they all evil people? Yes, but so were the people of Avraham's time. Did he even have to care what such people thought of him? Avraham seemed to. Besides the mishnah states:

Which is the straight path? That which is beautiful to the one who uses it, and beautiful for him in the eyes of others. (Pirkei Avos 2:1)

Arguably, the rabbis who authored this statement did not mean that a person has to go around pleasing EVERYONE. After all, evil people are evil because they like evil things, and people who similarly do evil things. A righteous person could never stoop to such a level, even for the right reasons.

Did they only mean in the eyes of other RIGHTEOUS people? If so, you wouldn't need a mishnah for that. It would just be stating the obvious. It would seem then that the rabbis were referring to a large group of people between these two extremes, people who are easily confused by what they don't understand. They can be pulled in the wrong direction as a result.

For example, a person can be strict with himself, which makes him disciplined, and strict with others, which makes him hated. Rebi Shimon bar Yochai spent 12 years in a cave with his son, devoted to nothing but deepening his understanding of Torah and performing mitzvos. He certainly made G-d happy.

When he came out of the cave though and saw people involved in

Chayn

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

But Noach found chayn in the eyes of G-d. (Bereishis 6:8)

THE END IS near. That's what Noach told his generation for 120 years, as he sawed and hammered away to build his refuge-on-water for the upcoming Great Flood. But did anyone listen? Not a one, at least not beyond his own family.

Whose fault was that? The people of his generation, right? Well, not so fast. As Rashi points out at the beginning of this week's parsha, at least one side of the discussion in the Talmud has something to say about Noach's approach to outreach. In fact, they fault him to some degree for not being more aggressive in changing the hearts of his generation, as Avraham was.

So then why was Noach even saved? The Torah says:

But Noach found chayn in the eyes of G-d. (Bereishis 6:8)

In other words, Noach had a redeeming quality: chayn. Normally translated as "grace," it is clearly much more than that if it saved Noach from world destruction. On the contrary. Somehow it has to be tied up with the entire purpose of life if it mitigated Noach's judgment at a time of Divine anger.

This is why chayn is the root of such important concepts as "chanukah," which means "dedication," and "chinuch," which means "education."

Whatever it is that a person is supposed to dedicate his life to, or

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת נח

Candle Lighting 5.46pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos 5.51pm
Seder HaLimud 8.40am
Shacharis 9.00am

סוף זמן ק"ש

1st Mincha 10.20am
2nd Mincha 1.30pm
Shalosh Seudas 5.29pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos Following
Sun 6.49pm
Sun 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

שבת ראש חודש מרחשון

worldly matters, he could not relate, and burned them up with his vision alone. A Heavenly Voice told him to go back to his cave and to stop destroying G-d's world. A year later, he was far more sensitive to the needs of others and allowed to leave his cave for good.

Or a person can be easy going, which relaxes him, and easy going with others, which makes them think he doesn't care about anything. Life is about balance, and the difficult part is finding it.

In fact, the Hebrew word for "beautiful" employed by the Mishnah is not the typical word used in such a context. It is the word "tifferes," which implies balance. Avraham was the trait of Chesed, or Kindness. Yitzchak was the trait of Gevurah, or Strength. Ya'akov was Tifferes, the perfect balance between the two.

That is harmony.

That is TRUE beauty.

This would imply that there was something unbalanced about Noach. He was balanced enough to have chayn before G-d, but not balanced enough to have chayn before man. To think G-d does not care about that is a mistake, as Noach found out the year he had to take care of what remained of the world. It was far from a picnic.

Nor did he look forward to the brave new world waiting for him once the waters receded and the door of the Ark opened a year later. He had to be coaxed from the Ark by G-d Himself. He probably spent a lot of time wondering about what he could have done differently to avoid the Flood in the first place.

So where did his chayn fall short?

Avraham Avinu was the answer, which is why HE was the first forefather, and not Noach. Avraham knew who he was and what he stood for. He was most at home living in a holy environment and talking with G-d. He learned Torah, the Talmud says, and we can assume that he loved it and learned it as well as he humanly could. He was, in yeshiva vernacular, "Shtark," religiously intense.

Being somewhere unholy did not "shter," that is, contradict or interfere with that. When he had to talk to non-spiritual people, instead of G-d, he never lost himself or forgot his goals in life. In other words, nothing made him feel spiritually insecure because the reality of G-d was so firmly implanted in him. Nothing could stop him even for a moment from being who he was.

This allowed him to focus on others when he needed to, and to tend to their needs and wants. As they say, "Your spirituality is someone else's materialism." This means that when you care about other's most basic material needs, you are acting spiritually.

People appreciate this. They are grateful for it, especially if they see that what they NEED you don't even WANT. They feel the care and concern, and they feel valuable in your eyes. This makes them feel special, and it allows them to avoid being on the defensive. Survival, they realize, is not an issue around you.

Consequently, they are more open to a relationship with such a person, and more importantly, to learn from them. They might even be willing to make some sacrifices for a higher cause, because feeling the other person's chayn puts them in touch with their own chayn, that is, their soul.

You see, G-d can see a person's soul and spirituality even if it remains bottled up inside. He reads hearts, and knows what a person really thinks and wants. He can sense a person's chayn even if not projected to the outside world.

Not people though. If a person's soul is not visible to others on the outside, they won't see it on the inside. If a person appears to them to be religiously extreme, they will not see it as a lesson about life, but as a reason to run the other way. The most secular person can tolerate someone else's religious extremism if it doesn't prevent them from being respectful to others who are unlike them.

As far as outreach goes, it has a long term impact. If a person is sincerely Torah observant, nothing can change their way of life. They may compromise from time to time, but they will stay true to Torah values overall. History has shown that time and time again.

Secular people, on the other hand, are that way by default. A non-religious lifestyle is never the result of a moral choice, but of an

immoral or amoral choice. They are vulnerable to change over time if they do not feel defensive around religious people. This too has been proven countless times in the past. Shields down, the truth has a way of reaching anyone's soul, and then empowering it to choose right over wrong. This then gives THEM chayn in G-d's eyes, and in the eyes of others.

Torah Anthropology

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

I would like to share a comment of the Maharal on a very interesting Rashi in this week's parsha.

Rashi remarks on the pasuk, "And he sent forth the raven and it kept going and returning until the drying of the waters from upon the earth." [Bereshis 8:8] When Noach thought it might be safe to emerge from the Tayva [Ark], he sent out the raven. However, the raven did not fly out in search of dry land as Noach had expected but just circled the Tayva, flying back and forth. Rashi, quoting the Gemara states: "The raven did not go on its mission because it was suspicious [of Noach] with regard to its mate..." [Sanhedrin 108b]. As strange as it seems, the raven was afraid that Noach would take its wife while he was "off the boat" doing his mission!

I once heard a true story about a young man in a Baal Teshuvah Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael. His Rebbe came over to him and asked him how things were going. The young man replied "things are going pretty well except that I read a Rashi today that is ridiculous." Which Rashi was he referring to? It was the above cited Rashi that the raven was afraid Noach would have relations with his wife while he flew away on a mission.

The Rebbe carefully explained to him that such teachings of Chazal have to be understood in the light of the nature of Aggadic literature in general. They are really metaphors. There are messages here. Chazal are trying to teach us here something that has nothing really to do with ravens. It has to do with human beings. As Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch writes, "the Torah is the anthropology of the Ribono shel Oalm — how the Ribono shel Olam understands human beings."

The Maharal explains the metaphor of this teaching about the raven rejecting Noach's mission.

Ravens by their nature are obsessed with the relations they have with their mates. They are so obsessed by these relations that this is all ravens think about. Therefore, says the Maharal, since the raven was constantly obsessed with thoughts about having relations with his mate, he projected those same obsessions onto everybody else. He assumed that everybody must be thinking the same thing he was. The Maharal writes that it is very common amongst creatures (man included) to project their own thoughts and shortcomings upon others. There is a popular saying "What Peter says about Paul says more about Peter than it says about Paul." Think about this statement. This means that if a person goes through life thinking that everybody is out to get him — besides being somewhat paranoid — it is because he really does have such thoughts about "getting" other people. Individuals really project their life view of how they think and how they act and they are convinced that everybody else thinks and acts like that as well.

Therefore, says the Maharal, since the raven was so obsessed with sexual relations with his mate, in his mind he was convinced that this is what Noach must be thinking about as well. Therefore, he suspected Noach of having intentions towards his mate.

This lesson of Chazal is not trying to teach us so much about ravens as it is about ourselves, about human beings in general. It is teaching us that how we view life and how we view people says a lot about us. If we are negative about people, if we are skeptical of their motives and suspect them of wrong doing and ill-intent then that is really a function of how we view the world. These same thoughts may be the farthest thing in the world from those other people we cynically suspect.

The lesson about the raven is not so much a teaching about birds. It is a teaching about human beings — which is the purpose of the entire Torah. In the words of Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch this is "Torah anthropology".