



Ohr Yerushalayim News

6th January 2024 - Volume 16 - Issue 26 - שמות כ"ה טבת תשפ"ד

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Eli & Suri Treuhaft on the occasion of Avrumie's wedding to Jade Suissa on Tuesday. The aufruf will take place in Ohel Torah followed by a Kiddush for men only.

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush after davening sponsored by Nati Sebbag in honour of the recent Yahrtzeit of his father, לע"נ הרב, חיים ארुכים Chaim Aruchim.

Chaim Aruchim

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

- Shabbos, 25th Teves - David Wolfson for his father
- Sun, 26th Teves - Laura-Ann Hassan for her mother

יעקב אבינו We Are Descendants Of

Rabbi J Rubinstein

ואל תביאנו לא לידי חטא..... And do not bring us in to the hands of sin.....and the evil inclination should not rule over us". Within these apparently simple phrases, which seem to repeat themselves, there is a meaningful and powerful lesson for every Jew. Of course we pray for divine help not to sin, but there is also another stage. If we do err- and which human being does not! We pray ואל תשלט בנו יצר הרע "The evil inclination should not take over our lives". It is so easy when one has done something wrong, to accept that one cannot help doing it, and then somehow one no longer feels obliged to keep that part of Judaism.

Sometimes it can go much further. If for some reason, one has not been able, on occasion, to maintain a whole area of Judaism, one concludes "That is not for me". Then in that area, one is no longer ruled by the Torah, but by some other inclination. It is one thing to accept a ruler, even if one is sometimes negligent about his instructions. But it is quite a different thing, not to accept him as a ruler in the first place. The trouble is, the first stage can lead to the next. That is the significance of the phrase, ואל תשלט בנו יצר הרע.

Rav Dovid Kiviat writes, on this week's Parshah, the way to prevent this occurring, is to identify clearly, with a group of people who want to keep the Torah. He says, this is the reason it states in the first verse of the Parshah, באו יעקב איש וביתו - "With Jacob, each man with his household, they came". Each person came with their family, but they acknowledged יעקב as their head. As the Jewish people descended in to Egypt, with all its pressures and temptations, as long as they consciously belonged to the family of יעקב they were safe.

This idea is surely relevant to everyone. Who can claim, never to have sinned?! But as long as we proudly acknowledge that we are descendants of יעקב אבינו, aspiring to follow in his footsteps, and identifying with others who have the same aspirations, then we have not slipped in to יצר הרע - being ruled by the הרע, and we can still progress in the future.

The following episode does not illustrate precisely the above idea, but there is a connection. In 1932 The Chafetz Chaim's Yeshivah was desperately short of funds. The Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Moshe Landinski travelled to England to raise money. On one occasion he spoke in a Shul in Liverpool, whose members were far from religiously committed. He said (approximately) "In outward appearance we are different, my

Polish Rabbinical clothes look strange to you. But our hearts and souls are the same, we are brothers, children of the same father". Tearfully he begged them to support the Yeshivah. They responded to his appeal. I would say, because they still identified themselves as Jewish.

Change Your Attitude

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we begin the Sefer of Shemos. "V'eleh shmos Bnei Yisroel haba'im Mitzraima {And these are the names of Bnei Yisroel that came to Egypt)... Yosef, his brothers and the entire generation died. [1:1,6]" The descent to Mitzrayim was related to us in Breishis - why is it repeated again at the start of Shemos?

The Ramban explains that this is the Book of Galus and Geulah. The descent is reiterated now since this is the very inception of the galus. The Kli Yakar offers an additional explanation. He asks why the new sefer begins with the word "And". He explains that after Yosef's death, the Egyptians had a completely different attitude to the Jews. Even though the Jews had already been there for a while, this change of attitude made them feel as if they had just come. "And these...came." They came before but now it seems that they came again.

What brought about this marked change of attitude?

"And a new king arose in Mitzrayim who didn't know Yosef [1:8]." The Medrash understands that it was actually the same Paroah. As the Jews began to multiply and fill the land of Mitzrayim, the people approached Paroah and demanded that he find a solution for this Jewish problem. Paroah responded angrily to them: "Fools! It is only through them that we've been eating and now you want to turn against them?! Were it not for Yosef we wouldn't be alive!" When they saw that Paroah wouldn't comply, they removed (impeached) him from the throne for three months. When Paroah told them that he'd do as they wished, he was reinstated. This 'new king' acted as if he didn't know Yosef.

However, to understand that our difficulties arose as a result of an internal Egyptian power struggle would be very superficial. The Nation of Hashem cannot be touched by the whims of other nations. They can only be the pawns who inadvertently bring about the fulfillment of the Divine Will.

The Medrash continues and teaches that when Yosef died, Bnei Yisroel 'canceled' bris milah, saying: "Let's be like the Egyptians". Hashem then took the love the Egyptians had for the Jews and turned it into hatred.

The Beis HaLevi asks the obvious question. How could it be that this holy generation, coming right after the generation of the Tribes

Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	3.49pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.54pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
Rov's Shiur	3.14pm
Mincha	1.30pm / 3.44pm
Motzei Shabbos	5.04pm
Ovos uBonim/Bonos	6.04pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
ראש חודש	6.45am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.55pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

themselves, cast off the mitzvah of milah? Furthermore, he says, the Medrash teaches later on that when the Jews were circumcising their sons, the Egyptians tried to convince them not to. "Don't circumcise, your children would be like the Egyptian children and the oppressive slavery will be lightened." The Jews responded: "Our forefathers, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov didn't forget their Father in Heaven, and neither will we. We therefore see that the mitzvah of bris milah was adhered to and performed throughout the period of slavery. How can this be understood in light of the Medrash above which stated that they canceled bris milah?"

The Beis HaLevi explains that the Bnei Yisroel knew that they'd be enslaved in Mitzrayim for a long, arduous four hundred years. With the death of Yosef, they knew it would soon begin and they were frightened. How would they survive? They thought that if they'd get close to the Egyptians and lessen the differences between them, then the animosity and the severity of the enslavement would in turn be lessened.

The only mitzvah they had was bris milah. This caused a physical difference between them and the Egyptians – the type of difference that they were concerned about. They therefore decided to perform the bris milah as commanded but to immediately afterwards stretch the remaining skin thereby concealing the fact that the bris had been performed. This, they felt, would cover all bases. The mitzvah had been performed but the harmful repercussions of that performance would be avoided.

Although there was no actual transgression in doing this, nevertheless the results of this plan could have been disastrous. Without a recognizable difference between them and the Egyptians, the Jews were in danger of being assimilated into the degenerate society of Mitzrayim. One aspect of bris milah is that we should be, and remain, apart from the societies which accept and display standards that are very foreign to us.

How did Hashem deal with and prevent this danger? "And a new king arose in Mitzrayim who didn't know Yosef [1:8]." Hashem planted a hatred toward us in the hearts of the Egyptians. This wasn't a punishment as we hadn't done anything wrong. It was a safeguard that Hashem deemed necessary to ensure our unique role and destiny in the course of mankind.

As long as we were differentiating ourselves from the Egyptians, they didn't have this hatred – it wasn't necessary. Once we were looking to break the barriers between us and the Egyptians, Hashem produced a different type of barrier.

Ultimately, at the time of the redemption when we separated ourselves from the Egyptians by sacrificing the korban Pesach and by openly performing the bris milah, we then found favor in their eyes.

I heard in the name of Rav Chaim Volzhiner that if a Jew doesn't make kiddush then the gentile makes havdalah. If a Jew doesn't sanctify himself but rather, tries to melt into the society of the gentiles, then those gentiles will decide to exclude him, keeping him separate (havdalah). No Jews allowed in this country club...

Unfortunately, we often see things in a backward and twisted manner. We see someone openly displaying his Judaism and we feel uncomfortable, thinking that such behavior only brings hatred against us. In fact, as we've learned from the Beis HaLevi, the exact opposite is true.

Rav Avrohom Twersky, who dresses in Chassidic garb, was once approached by a very irate Jew. "What's the matter with you?! Why do you insist on prancing around in that medieval get-up? Don't you realize how ridiculous you look? You bring scorn and derision onto all Jews!"

"I don't understand thee and what thou hast said," Rav Twersky responded. "For you see, I am Amish and this is the mode of dress that we've maintained throughout the generations."

"I beg your forgiveness," pleaded the quickly back-pedaling Jew. "I didn't realize that you were Amish. You should know that I only have the utmost respect for you and your people – keeping your ways without bowing to society's whims of the day."

"Well, in fact, I'm Jewish," Rav Twersky informed the now thoroughly confused fellow. "Why can you respect in others what you can't respect in yourself?"

May we recognize the unique role we are meant to play and understand that it's only our firm commitment to being who we are that enables

us to play that role.

Believing Skeptics

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Hashem said to Moshe, "I shall be as I shall be." And He said, "So you shall say to the Bnei Yisrael, 'I shall be' has sent me to you."

Chazal see here a back-and-forth between Hashem and Moshe. Hashem first announces Himself as the One Who is with them in their present ordeal, and will be with them as well in future ordeals. Moshe objects. They are suffering enough! Why burden them with the knowledge of future tribulation? Hashem accepts Moshe's argument, and modifies His calling card. "Just tell them I will be with them through their present difficulties.

Now, Hashem does not "change His mind" in the manner of human beings. His intention to tell them about future exiles had to have profound purpose. The reason that purpose was not implemented was purely practical – that the Bnei Yisrael were in no shape to deal with it. We, however, need to understand what that purpose was.

The answer, I believe, begins with an observation. On the one hand, the Bnei Yisrael were not exactly bowled over by all the miracles that Moshe performed. Ironically, Paroh was more influenced than they were! He would have capitulated earlier, had Hashem not hardened his heart. Towards the end, he complied with His demands. The Bnei Yisrael, however, had to be driven out Egypt! It seems as if it was harder for them to muster some emunah in Him. In several places, Chazal refer to them as ketanei emunah/of little faith.

On the other hand, Chazal praise the Bnei Yisrael for their emunah! "In the merit of their emunah they were redeemed." Yet, as we have seen, they displayed very little emunah at all. Which is it, then? Lots of emunah, or very little?

It's both, really. Because they had unswerving emunah in what had been passed down from the avos, they had little emunah in Moshe's predictions of ageulah around the bend. They possessed a tradition that they would be exiled for four hundred years. They knew that they were not even close to the end of that period. Moshe's narrative clashed with a tradition to which they adhered tenaciously. While Hashem in His mercy was willing to shave off many decades from the original time-table, the Bnei Yisrael had little reason to believe that this was happening. Hence, they remained skeptics throughout the period of the Ten Plagues.

Midrashim tell us that our longgalus caused, in part, by the fact that the original four hundred years of Egyptian exile were never completed. The missing years had to be compensated for later on in Jewish history. That was Hashem's point, precisely. "I will be with them in this exile, as well as the exiles down the road. Those will be necessitated by My shaving 190 years off what I had told Avraham. Therefore, there is no contradiction between the tradition of a 400 year exile and their early delivery from it."

Moshe demurred. The people were just not ready to hear about future pain. Hashem acquiesced. Therefore, they held on to the tradition of 400 years. While at times they were moved by what Moshe did, they quickly reverted to their negativity. They were the last to be convinced. All of this is to the credit of the Bnei Yisrael! They are tenacious in holding on to their most basic beliefs. They are not easily swayed by the latest fad. Their beliefs do not flutter in the wind, or swing between extremes like a pendulum. When a false prophet arises, they reject him, even after he performs wondrous miracles. The Egyptians had nothing similar in their belief system, so it was not as difficult to bring them to their knees and reject their own gods.

Moshe originally begged off from his selection as the deliverer of Israel, and from the mission itself. "Who am I that I should go to Paroh, and that I should take the Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt?" Rashi sees this as two different questions. Who am I that I should be chosen, and what merit do the Bnei Yisrael have that they should now be redeemed? Hashem's response to the questions was, "This is your sign that I have sent you: When you take the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain."

How can there be a "sign" in what has not yet taken place? This is what Hashem meant. The stubbornness that you, Moshe, detect in them now is an asset. It means that once they fully embrace some truth, they do not abandon it easily. That means that once they accept the Torah on this mountain, they will cling to it for millennia, just like they now cling to the tradition of 400 years that they received from the avos.