



Ohr Yerushalayim News

11th January 2020 - Volume 12 - Issue 24 - י"ד טבת תש"פ

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to R' Johnny and Louise Goodman on the occasion of Yosef Aharon's Bar Mitzvah this shabbos. There will be a Kiddush after Davening in the Shul hall.

Mazel Tov to Dr and Mrs Meyer on the birth of a great grand daughter to Moshe and Sheine Reich in Williamsburg, and a great grandson and great grand daughter to Moishe and Esther Landau in Williamsburg

Save The Date

The Shul Melave Malka will take place Motzei Shabbos Beshalach Feb 8th. Invitations will be emailed to members next week. We look forward to what will be an enjoyable evening.

Hachnosas Orchim

We are currently updating our records with regard to people who would be happy to be asked to host individuals that require Shabbos/Yom Tov meals. If you would be happy to host and are not already on the list then please inform either David Jacobs on 07779132157 or Ben First on 07519882812.

The Bank of Life

Aaron Gouldman

Parshas Vayechi starts with a description of Yaakov Ovinu's impending passing, the pretext for the giving of blessings to his sons. We find however a strange formulation in the second possuk – 'ויקרבו ימי ישראל למות', which simply translates as 'And the days of Yisroel approached, to die...'. We get the gist of it, but why does the possuk speak as if the days themselves are turning in after a hard lifetime's work?

The Ohr HaChaim explains, based on the teachings of the Arizal, that the soul of a person is made up of various units, referred to as nitzotzos (literally, sparks) and each of these units are attached to a single day of a person's life. When a person goes to sleep at night, this allows the nitzotzo to ascend heavenward and be stored in the individual's spiritual bank account. This is what the gemara means (Berachos 57b) when it says that sleep is a sixtieth of death. If the day was spent well with Torah and Mitzvos, then that day's nitzotzo receives its fix and can start to gain interest. If it could have been spent better, then Hashem grants us the kindness of withdrawals, whereby we have the opportunity to fix any mis-spent days through teshuva. At the same time Hashem does not permit any 'good' days to be affected negatively once safely deposited. This works because, during our lifetime, the daily nitzotzos do not completely detach from the soul.

At the end of our life, however, these illustrious sparks gather together with what is left of the neshomo, ready for their final transfer. And this is what the possuk describing with Yaakov Ovinu.

Hashgacha had it that the 14th cycle of Daf Yomi started this past Sunday, the first day of the week with respect to Parshas Vayechi, when many of us will have read the above possuk as part of Shnayim Mikra. The Sh"l HaKadosh famously taught that the Parshiyos of the week always correspond to the time of year they are read. The Baal HaTanya further explained that each of the seven Aliyos in each parsha corresponds to the exact day in which it is read as part of Shnayim Mikra. Legend has it that he wouldn't allow anyone to leinin his shul if they didn't know the inner connection between what they are leining and the day of the week it corresponds to! Whether or not we are able to take part in the daf yomi cycle, we can take encouragement in our own avodas Hashem from the

fact that each day is a separate entity, yearning for us to fill it with Torah and Mitzvos, and once deposited that day's bounty can never be taken away from us. May we all be zoche to live each day to its fullest, and thereby merit the day שבונו טוב.

Journey Without A Passport Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Ya'akov called for his sons and said, "Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you at the end of days." (Bereishis 49:1)

IT ALL STARTED when I decided to make sure my passports were up-to-date. I had stopped traveling outside of Eretz Yisroel for a couple of years already, and hadn't needed them for a while. But as family gets older, you never know when you might have to make a quick trip, and updating passports takes time. So I decided to check out my Canadian passport, since I had already renewed my Israeli passport the previous year.

To not misplace them, I usually left my Canadian and Israeli passport in an inside pocket of my computer bag. Since I always took that bag on the plane with me when I did travel, I left them there even when not traveling. And I always kept my bag in a specific place so I would know where it was at all times.

The first time I thought of this and looked for my bag, I could not find it. It was not in its traditional place, nor close by. I did a light check in a couple of other possible places, but did not find it. Not wanting to spend any more time, I abandoned my search for the time being, assuming that a more thorough look would reveal it to me.

I considered looking for it again a few more times, but it wasn't until I decided to accept a speaking invitation in the States that I began to hunt in earnest. I was certain that it had to be in my house somewhere, since I rarely used my computer outside of the house. Theft seemed out of the question because not too many outside people have come through our home over the years, at least that I could remember.

One of the rooms that I know I had brought the bag to was full of things, and it seemed a good chance that if I could not find the bag somewhere else, it could be buried underneath a bunch of stuff. But when we had occasion to clean that room shortly after, to my surprise and dismay, the bag was not there.

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת ויחי

Candle Lighting	No later than 3.56pm
Mincha	4.01pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.50pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	5.10pm
Ovos uBonim	6.10pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Wed / Thurs / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.05pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Of course I did the Rebi Binyomin segulah for finding lost objects. And though it has had some very interesting results in the past, even Rebi Binyomin could not find my bag for me. And even though I remain convinced that the bag is somewhere in my house, I had to consider getting replacement passports while I still had time.

The Israeli passport was easy to replace, b"H. I could do it close to home, and after filling out the proper paperwork, paying the fee again for the second time in two years, I received a replacement passport within a week. One down, one to go.

Canadian passports are only issued through the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv, about an hour from my home, depending upon the traffic going into Tel Aviv. According to a scan of my passport that I kept in my computer, I could have had to renew it in another year anyhow. I filled out the forms, including the one reporting that it was lost, paid the fee on line, and sent my documents by 24 courier service to Tel Aviv.

Ten days later, my envelope had yet to be delivered, and even worse, the post office had no idea where it was. The only problem is that it was the one time I had sent my original documents in, my Ontario birth certificate and driver's license, instead of photocopies. I had not read all the small print in the instructions, and forgot to have my guarantors sign copies of both sides of each document. To save time, I sent in the originals.

Now I had to wonder if someone at the post office had felt the identification pieces in an envelope addressed to the Canadian Embassy, and stolen them. Was someone running around using my identity for all kinds of diabolical schemes, like the stories talk about?

After pressing the post office, they finally found it, b"H, and told me that it was out for delivery. Weird, but at least that episode was over. Now I just had to hope that the Canadian government would not cause any problems for me, because the clock was ticking.

In the meantime, the people bringing me over to the States wanted to lock in my flights, so we booked them. In which name? The name I always use, my English one, "Paul," since that it is the name on my Canadian passport which I use outside of Israel. Didn't even think twice about that one.

The Canadian Embassy contacted me the following week and said, for the first time, that they would need a scan of my Israeli passport, which, b"H, I had already received. I dutifully sent it off with a little note saying, "You will notice that my name on my Israeli passport is 'Pinchas.' That's just my Hebrew name which I use together with my English name."

A couple of days later, I received a reply from the embassy explaining that Pinchas on my Israeli travel document constituted an official name change. I would have to change my Hebrew documents back to "Paul," a MAJOR headache, or receive documentation from the Misrad HaPanim, the Israeli Ministry of Interior, confirming my name change from "Paul" to "Pinchas." It would also have to be translated to English, and then notarized. Ching-ching. More money.

As I considered my two options, it occurred to me that it would be much easier to change everything to Pinchas once-and-for-all, than everything back to Paul. EXCEPT, I all-of-a-sudden realized, by newly booked plane ticket. I remembered once hearing that plane tickets, once issued, are non-transferable.

I called up the agent responsible for the booking and explained the situation. "That's a catastrophe," she told me. "The airlines will not let you change your name on the ticket now that it has been issued!"

Great. Not only did I not have a Canadian passport to go to the States, which would have necessitated paying for a visa as an Israeli citizen, but I didn't have a ticket either. And if I had to book a whole new ticket from scratch in the right name, it would have eaten up most of my speaker's fee. I was already racking up the expenses from taxis, etc.

I contacted KLM, my overseas carrier directly, about the situation. They politely told me that they could not help because the ticket was not purchased directly from them, but through an agent. So I called my agent again and pleaded with her to plead with them and see what they would be willing to do under the circumstances.

Not that much. Turns out that since my domestic carrier is different than my overseas operator, everyone's hands are tied...to my pockets. All said and done, I had to pay a fine and cost for a more expensive ticket that is about one-third my speaking fee. OUCH. But at least I have a ticket,

b"H, and at least it wasn't for the FULL replacement value.

I still have not found my briefcase, and probably won't until I have finished going through everything, so it can laugh at me while I cringe. I personally delivered my notarized document to the embassy last week, the highpoint being that I got to use the high-speed train between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv for the first time. It was great! Quick, smooth, comfortable, and I got to work the whole time both ways, b"H.

I am still awaiting my Canadian passport, but hopefully that is just a matter of another week or so, b"H. Once I have that, b"H, that part of the saga will finally be over. Hallelukah!

Well, kind of. Turns out that when I rebooked my ticket, I had to change airlines. Originally I was supposed to arrive in my host city by 2 pm, giving me about six hours until I have to speak that night. Now, instead, I will arrive at 6 pm, b"H, and if on time, I will have only TWO hours to get behind the podium and do what I was brought in to do.

So now I will be on pins and needles until I arrive, b"H, concerned about making people wait for me. And I will probably will have to only pack a carry-on to avoid any luggage hold ups at the other end, which means taking less clothes than I will probably need over a week.

What a story. Why have I had to go through all of this? There can be dozens of reasons, and whatever the right one is, it is ALL for the good. I really know that. But there is one really important thing to point out here, something that has been in my mind ever since the situation began to go south...WITHOUT my passport.

But it will have to wait until next week, b"H, and though it will address Parashas Shemos, it will address this week's parsha as well. I didn't drag you through my personal passport misery looking for "company." If you want a hint to what I mean, take a look at the verse with which we began.

A King-Size Mistake

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"...foremost in rank and foremost in power. Water-like impetuosity – you cannot be foremost, because you mounted your father's bed..."(49:3,4)

Yaakov rebukes Reuvein for acting in an impetuous manner when moving his father's couch to Leah's tent. As a result of this action, Reuvein loses his right to the monarchy and Priesthood for which he was destined.¹ Why does Yaakov condemn Reuvein's impetuosity? Would the sin not have been greater if Reuvein would have acted in a calculated manner? Does acting impetuously not mitigate the transgression?

The Torah teaches that it is prohibited to remind a penitent as to his past transgressions.² Reuvein is the quintessential penitent; the Torah relates that Reuvein was not present when the brothers sold Yosef, for he had returned to his sackcloth and fasting to atone for his transgression concerning moving his father's couch.³ Why then does Yaakov rebuke Reuvein for a transgression for which he had already been repenting for at least thirty-nine years? Why is the quid-pro-quo for Reuvein's transgression the loss of his leadership position in Klal Yisroel?

When repenting for a transgression which we have committed, we very often focus on the transgression, rather than the character flaw which is at the root of the transgression. Yaakov's intention in rebuking Reuvein was not to condemn him for the transgression for which Reuvein had already repented; Yaakov was identifying for Reuvein the character flaw which caused him to commit the transgression, impetuosity. Impetuous behavior is symptomatic of a lack of self-control.

This is not the first time we find Yaakov censuring Reuvein for behaving in a manner which lacks forethought. When the brothers explain to Yaakov that Yosef has incarcerated Shimon and is refusing to release him unless they bring Binyamin before him, Reuvein offers his own two sons' lives as a guarantee that he will return Binyamin home safely. Here too, Yaakov admonishes Reuvein for his foolish suggestion.⁴ Clearly, Yaakov is sensitive to Reuvein's character flaw, his impetuosity.

In addition to effectively controlling his subjects, one of the primary functions of a leader is to teach his subjects self-control. For this to be possible, the leader must himself project and image which reflects the highest standards of self-control. Therefore, Reuvein, who has displayed that he behaves in an unrestrained manner, is denied the opportunity to have the monarchy stem from his descendants. Similarly, the responsibility for the sanctity of the Priesthood can only be placed in the hands of a person who epitomizes self-control, for holiness manifests itself wherever self-control is found.