



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ב"ר מרחשון תשפ"ב – י"ז – 23th October 2021 - Volume 14 - Issue 16

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Jake and Aviva Lewis on the birth of a girl, Mazel Tov also to grandparents Charles and Joyce Khan.

Mazel Tov to Eli Ritvo and parents, Zev and Sara Malka, on the occasion of his Bar Mitzva this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after davening in the Shul Hall.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week: Shabbos, 17th Cheshvan - Esti Epstein for her father

Weds, 21st Cheshvan - Eric Sievers for his mother

Thurs, 22nd Cheshvan - Rabbi YY Katz for his father

Did Yishmael Get Preferential Treatment From Hashem?

Jonathan Grosskopf

In Posuk 17, Perek 21, Parshas Vayeira, the Torah states, "... and Hashem heard the cry (prayer) of the youth (Yishmael) in his present state."

Rashi quotes Midrash Bereishis Rabbah 53:14 to say that the Angels remonstrated with G-d concerning Yishmael's prayers for water and recovery from his illness. "Will YOU create a well for him whose descendants will one day (post the destruction of the first temple) kill YOUR children by thirst?"

G-d answered them, "but at present, is he righteous or wicked?"

"He is righteous," they replied.

"Then I shall judge him according to his present deeds." This is the meaning of "in his (Yishmael) present state."

Mizrachi explains the Angel's answer to mean that whilst Yishmael was innocent of the accusation that he had not killed anyone by thirst, nevertheless in Posuk 9, Perek 21, the Torah states, " Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, who had been borne to Abraham mocking."

Midrash explains that "mocking" means the 3 Cardinal sins of Idolatry, Murder and Adultery.

The Zohar Chadash posits that the Angels did not cite the "mocking" transgressions because Yishmael was only aged 17 at that time, and the heavenly court does not punish a person who is below 20! Also, he would ultimately repent his sins: see Posuk 17, Perek 25 in Parshas Chaya Sarah.

The Maharshah wonders whether Yishmael should have been punished in the same manner that a rebellious son is put to death due to future actions?

He answers that the Angels wanted Yishmael to be killed because of the future murderous actions of his descendants, who killed many Jews who were being led into exile by Nevuchadnezzar. This suggestion is unsustainable because a rebellious son is killed because of his own future actions, but at this moment, Yishmael's spiritual future was undecided.

Finally, every morning we conclude the introduction to the "Korbonos" prayers by quoting from the introduction to the Sifra, a Beraisa in the name of Rabbi Yishmael; proof positive that Yishmael did teshuvah!

On Whose Account? Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Avraham Avinu did not only perform kindness, he defined it, and he

eternalized it. This week, the Torah tells us how three angels disguised as Arabs passed by Avraham's tent a mere three days after his bris milah. Avraham ran to greet them and offered them food and shelter from the blazing sun.

"Let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and recline beneath the tree. I will fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves, then go on — inasmuch as you have passed your servant's way" (Genesis 18: 4-5). Avraham brings butter and milk; he slaughters cattle; Sora bakes. All for three total nomadic strangers. But his actions do not go unnoticed.

Each one of his services, every nuance of his actions, was repaid years later in miraculous fashion. The Medrash Tanchuma tell us that the Almighty repaid Avraham's children for every act that Avraham did towards the nomadic wayfarers. "Because Sora and Avraham gave their guests bread, the Jews were given bread from heaven (manna). Since he offered water, so too, water from a rock was offered to the Jews in the desert! As Avraham washed the travelers feet, so too, Hashem washes us from sin." And so on.

Even the manner in which the hospitality was expressed, merited reward. The Medrash tells us: "in the merit of Avraham saying "a little water be brought," Hashem declares, that He "will thrust these nations from before you little by little; you will not be able to annihilate them quickly, lest the beasts of the field increase against you" (Deuteronomy 7:22). And so for saying "a little," our enemies will disappear, little by little.

There are three powerful questions to ask. The first request, "let a little water be brought and wash your feet," needs to be analyzed. Rashi tells us that Avraham did not bring water himself, rather he asked, "let water be brought." He asked his servant to bring water. Everything else he did himself. Why did someone else get water?

Second, Rashi also explains that the water was not for drinking; for that Avraham gave milk. Avraham wanted water to wash their feet, as the nomads of those days worshipped the sand, and Avraham did not want that form of idolatry brought into his home. But that, too, needs explanation. If the water was meant to wash idolatry, Avraham, the greatest adversary of idolatry, should have showered and hosed the potential spiritual contaminants with a deluge of water. GEVALT!

Davening Times

פרשת וירא

Candle Lighting	No later than 5.41pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	5.46pm
Hashkomo	7.30am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.22am
Mincha	1.30pm / 5.25pm
Motzei Shabbos	6.45pm
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	5.35pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

AVODAH ZARAH! IDOLS! Get them out of my home! Yet Avraham only asks, "Have a little water brought." Why just a bit? Why someone else? And third, why is he rewarded for the words "a little bit of water?" Is getting only a little water meritorious?

Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant, known as Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, the founder of the mussar movement, was invited to for a meal at the home of a wealthy individual. They began the meal with the traditional netilas yadayim, the washing of the hands for bread. Rabbi Salanter, opened the spigot, and filled the cup with the minimal amount of water required by Jewish law. He proceeded to slowly pour the minimal required amount of water on his hands and made the blessing. After he took his first bite of bread, his host expressed his wonder. "Rabbi!" He exclaimed, "Is it not written that he who washes with much water will be blessed with prosperity! Surely, I am not lacking for water, and you could have washed liberally. Why did you use such a meager amount for the ritual washing?"

Rabbi Salanter smiled. "Who schleps your water from the well?"

"Why, my maid!" Exclaimed the patron. "Surely I am not the water carrier!" "Aha," declared Rabbi Lipkin. "You want me to wash liberally, depleting the water supply in the barrel. And then your maidservant will have to schlep more water! I should be a tzaddik on her back? No! I would rather use the minimum amount of water, spare her the pain, and fulfill the standard requirement of the halacha. As far as blessing for prosperity, I guess that will come from somewhere else. But surely my blessings, nor any religious stringency, will be carried for me on the back of your maid."

Perhaps Avraham did not want to deal with the idolatrous sand. He did not to touch it or wash it. So he asked someone else. He asked an errand-boy. But if that was the case he made sure to say "a little water." In no way would Avraham, the great rival of idolatry ask for more water than necessary. Because you can't place the burden of your stringencies on the backs of others.

From Dust to Gold

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Va'yaira. "Va'yaira ai'lav Hashem. {And Hashem appeared to him (Avrohom).}" [18:1]

The Talmud [Sotah 14A] teaches that Hashem had come to visit Avrohom who was then convalescing after his circumcision.

"And he was sitting by the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day."

In his debilitated state, Avrohom was sitting in anticipation of there being some passersby in order that he'd be able to fulfill the mitzvah {commandment} of hosting guests. Hashem had made it an unusually hot day in order that Avrohom wouldn't be bothered by guests. When He saw the sorrow and void that Avrohom felt in the absence of this mitzvah, He sent three angels in the guise of men.

Rav Sholom Shwadron zt"l points out that if Avrohom was so upset about the absence of guests on one day, we can safely deduce that his house was filled with guests each and every day. Taking into account the teaching of the Sages that Avrohom had an inn where he offered food, drinks and lodging, we can again safely assume that those who had slept over the previous night did not venture out on this oppressively hot day. Therefore, even on this day, there were guests that Avrohom was hosting.

If so, why was it so crucially important to Avrohom that he host new guests?

Rav Sholom explains that Avrohom's lofty and exemplary service of chesed {acts of loving-kindness} wasn't simply performed on a physical plane. The food that he gave the guests was a means of teaching them to appreciate the blessings that Hashem imparts to the world. He didn't want to simply give them to eat but rather to teach them how to eat.

The same way that Hashem renews His creation every single day, Avrohom thirsted to create new souls, by revealing to them Hashem's existence, each day. That spiritual chesed of a new revelation was something that he couldn't fulfill through the guests of the previous day. He therefore waited by the entrance of his tent, hoping to fulfill

his partnership of the creation, that day too.

With this we gain a deeper understanding in the words of the Sages who taught that in the merit of the food that Avrohom served his guests, his descendants would be fed manna during the trek through the wilderness. He served people earthly food, teaching them to eat in a heavenly manner—Hashem served his descendants heavenly manna (sorry).

Avrohom, on his level, was striving to fulfill the spiritual aspect of even a physical chesed. On our level, perhaps we too can learn from an incident which occurred in Rav Sholom's life that revealed to him how even a simple, 'physical' act is actually replete with incredible, spiritual-chesed potential.

When one of his small children had fallen ill, he decided to bring the other children to stay by his mother-in-law for a few days. On the way there, he met Rav Isaac Sher who asked him where he was going. Rav Sholom explained that one of his children was sick so he was bringing the others to his mother-in-law.

After a brief silence, Rav Isaac asked simply, "Well, what then?"

Rav Sholom didn't understand what he meant and didn't respond.

"Why and what for?" Rav Isaac asked again.

Rav Sholom, raising his voice slightly, repeated his explanation.

Rav Isaac then looked at him sharply, commenting: "The big animal is leading the small animals." (In the animal kingdom, parents show concern for the well being of their progeny.) He then explained further. "How do you differ from the animals? You are on your way to do a chesed for Jewish children, who also happen to be your own children!"

Rav Sholom related that on that same morning he later saw his wife carrying two buckets of water that she had drawn from the well. Whispering to himself, "I hereby am ready and willing to perform a chesed for a Jewish woman, who also happens to be my wife," he took the buckets from her.

Over the following few months, Rav Sholom worked on transforming all of his actions to conform to this new attitude. Whenever he did anything for his wife or children, his intention was focused on doing chesed. As he saw it, he was changing dust to gold!

Rav Sholom was once walking along with his Rebbe, Rav Eliyahu Lopian zt"l, when they saw a man repairing the street. "Look at that man," Rav Eliyahu commented, "he is so involved in doing mitzvos—he's helping to settle the Land of Israel! Too bad that he's missing the intention to do a mitzvah. If the focus is only to earn a living then we lose the value of the mitzvah..."

The story is told that in the Chofetz Chaim's town of Radin, there was a pharmacist who had completely left the ways of Judaism. One day the Chofetz Chaim entered his store, gave him a warm hug and began to lavishly praise him. "I'm so jealous of your portion in the World to Come!" he told him. "The merits you have are incredible—you save the lives of hundreds of people. To save one life is an incredible chesed and were it not for you and your medications, hundreds would have died!"

The pharmacist was very moved by the Chofetz Chaim's words but demurred, saying that he was simply doing his job and getting paid handsomely for his efforts.

The Chofetz Chaim explained further that, of course, he was entitled to get paid for his work and thereby support his family but that he should add the intention to help save people's lives to the work that he was anyhow doing.

This pharmacist began to have that intention when he was dispensing medications and soon went through a transformation. He seemed to be greeting people more nicely; he was more concerned with their situations and more patient with his directions. It gradually began to dawn on him that there were many other mitzvos besides this one and he eventually became observant of all the commandments.

Turning dust to gold... The opportunities abound within the deeds that we are already performing.