



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ד כסלו תשע"ז – 24th December 2016 - Volume 9 - Issue 21

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel tov to the Rov & Rebbetzen on the engagement of their granddaughter Faygy Rubin from Glasgow to Shloimi Shmidt from Monsey.

### Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davenning in honour of Shabbos Mevorchin which is, as yet, unsponsored. If you would like to sponsor in full or part please contact Avi Stern or Oshi Wilks.

### Ovos uBonim Timing

Please note that for the next two weeks Ovos uBonim will take place an hour and a half after Shabbos for 45 minutes.

### Three In Doubt

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons, since he was a son of his old age....His brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved most of all his brothers.

Had Reuven known that the Torah would write about him that he heard Yosef's cry, and attempted to save him, he would have carried him off on his shoulders. Had Aharon known that the Torah would write about him that he would see Moshe and rejoice in his heart, he would have gone out to meet him with instruments and dancing. Had Boaz known that the Torah would write about him that he handed Rus enough grain that she ate and had left over, he would have fed her fattened calves. In the past, the navi would write of the mitzvos of men. Today who writes? Eliyahu and Moshiach – and Hashem adds His seal.

Communications failure, we would call it. The brothers misread everything to do with Yosef.

Their jealousy led to hatred, which meant that they looked at him with a jaundiced gaze, and saw evil where none was intended.

It began with their misunderstanding the relationship between Yaakov and Yosef. Parents can show favoritism in two ways. Sometimes, a child born in a particular place in the birth order will elicit more closeness than that shown to his siblings. This happens often with first children – and last children, like Yosef. Jealousy born of such feelings, while not pleasant, is not generally so severe. The other children understand that the specialness has nothing to do with the essential character of any child, but is simply an accident of birth. It doesn't say anything about them. Such closeness is called choosing a son among the other sons. It is a product of when the child became a son relative to his siblings.

Sometimes, though, parents show special closeness because one child demonstrates talent, promise or accomplishment in excess of his brothers. This is called choosing from among the brothers, not from among the sons. The brothers perceived Yaakov's choice as reflecting the latter process, while in Yaakov's mind it was really the former. (Note the choice of words in our pesukim. "Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons;" the brothers stress his choice from among "all his brothers.") Because the brothers believed that Yaakov saw Yosef

as somehow better than the rest of them, it was especially hurtful. Their jealousy turned to hatred, and they viewed everything Yosef did with suspicion. They were certain that their father believed the "evil reports" about them that Yosef brought to his father, while in truth, Yaakov dismissed the stories as youthful excess on the part of Yosef. All these tensions came to a head on the fateful day that Yosef sought out his brothers as they grazed the sheep some distance from their home base. Tragically misunderstanding his intentions, the brothers judged Yosef to be a threat, and determined to kill him.

Reuven saw things differently, and endeavored to save Yosef, with an eye on returning him to safety. His proposal to cast Yosef into a pit (one populated, according to Chazal, by dangerous snakes and scorpions, at that!) and avoid having to actively spill his blood seems a bit strange. It is true that Yosef had a better chance of surviving in a snake-pit than if they killed him on the spot, but why was Reuven satisfied with half-measures? If he was not convinced that Yosef posed a threat to his brothers, why did he not go much further in protecting him?

It is possible that Reuven himself was not sure that he read Yosef properly. He was certain that he should not be certain! That was enough to take a principled stand against actively shedding his blood. But his uncertainty about Yosef's true intentions militated against fully sparing him. Reuven was caught between opposing possibilities, and therefore saw himself governed by the principle of **יָבִיחַ** / **שב ואל תעשה עדיף** / when in doubt, remaining passive is preferred to being active. Had Reuven known that the Torah would write approvingly of his efforts to save his brother, i.e. that the Torah itself found Yosef blameless and innocent, he would have carried Yosef off on his shoulders, as the midrash says.

Aharon found himself in similar circumstances when his brother Moshe rejoined his people after a long separation. Aharon was overjoyed to see his younger brother, and hastened to greet him.

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת וישב

Candle Lighting  
Mincha  
Shacharis  
סוף זמן ק"ש  
1st Mincha  
Rov's Shiur  
2nd Mincha  
Seuda Shlishis  
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos  
Ovos uBonim  
Sun - Thurs  
Fri Rosh Chodesh  
Mincha & Maariv  
Late Maariv

### שבת מברכין סבת

3.37pm  
3.42pm  
9.00am  
10.16am  
1.30pm  
3.02pm  
3.32pm  
Following  
4.52pm  
6.22pm  
7.10am / 8.10am / 9.30am  
7.00am / 8.00am / 9.30am  
3.40pm  
8.00pm

His thoughts were genuine – but private. He saw no need to display his emotion – to let the world and, most importantly, his brother witness his joy through an effusive display of pleasure. Such a display is sometimes called for when we wish to reassure another party of our delight in their presence. We show them how much we value their presence by loud proclamations of our delight. Aharon was confident in the lofty spiritual plane of his brother. He would need no confidence-building. It was perfectly okay to keep his inner joy under wraps.

Aharon did not realize that Moshe very much needed to hear words of reassurance from Aharon. Everything the Aharon thought about Moshe's righteousness was correct – and then some. Aharon did not, and could not, have known about Moshe's reluctance to assume the mantle of leadership, for fear that he would be trampling on the feelings of his older brother.

We have still not adequately explained Aharon's quiet reception for his brother. Standard procedure calls for turning the spigot of honor wide open when we receive an important person. What harm could there be in receiving Moshe with a dramatic welcome ceremony?

Indeed, harm was possible. In the same way that we are told to act shelo lishmah because it can lead to the more perfect lishmah, we must be wary of travelling the reverse route. People who are praised for their work that is entirely lishmah sometimes grow into the role of public hero. The lishmah gradually erodes into the shelo lishmah of acting in order to receive the public accolades. Honor, reasoned Aharon, has to be given judiciously. Not knowing whether or not it would be helpful to Moshe, he too applied the passivity principle of **שב ואל תעשה עדיף** and met Moshe with pure joy in his heart – but not on his lips. Had he been able to resolve his doubt – had he known that the Torah would record the meeting as one of brotherly love – he would have shouted his enthusiasm from the tent-tops.

Boaz completes our set. He had heard of the great sacrifice that Rus made by not abandoning her mother-in-law, and in converting to Yiddishkeit. He was impressed enough to single her out for special treatment in the field in which she was gleaning. He gave her extra grain.

But why not go all the way, and sit her down to a sumptuous meal, and then supplying the needs of Rus and Naomi? What would be wrong with a show of appreciation for her acts of chesed?

Boaz faced a similar predicament. Acting with unbridled emotion in welcoming the convert from Moav might be appreciated by Rus – but it might also erode the purity of her decision. She might, in time, come to enjoy the limelight, and become less of a tzadeikes for it. Boaz decided, as did his two predecessors, to take the safe route of passivity.

We moderns seem to face many more questions that cry out for answers that are not forthcoming. We have long ago lost the navi who could answer the questions of how to act when in doubt. What happens today?

Today, there is only one way of ascertain which approach, which ideology, with political party to follow when multiple paths open in front of us. Eliyahu and Moshiach make the determination. In other words, we see the effect that our decisions and actions have on the unfolding of history. Which group made the greater contribution in the work that must be done prior to the arrival of our redeemer. History is what determines who was right, and who was wrong.

When we can recognize a path that has been blazed through time, we can also see how Hashem adds His seal to the process. We see how He aids some decisions through magnificent Divine providence that furthers His agenda for mankind. Studying history, with an eye on Hashem's providential role in it, allows us to finally resolve our doubts.

## The Lost Jewel

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

Last week's Parashah ended with a list of Esav's descendants and their family groupings. Our Parashah opens (37:1): "Yaakov settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan." Rashi

z"l writes: "After the Torah has described the settlements of Esav and his descendants in a brief manner . . . it explains clearly and at length the settlements made by Yaakov and his descendants and all the events which brought these about, because these are regarded by the Omnipresent as of sufficient importance to speak of them at length. Thus, too, you will find that in the case of the ten generations from Adam to Noach it states, 'So and so fathered so and so,' but when it reaches Noach it deals with him at length; Similarly, of the ten generations from Noach to Avraham it gives but a brief account, but when it comes to Avraham it speaks of him more fully. This may be compared to the case of a jewel that falls into the sand; a man searches in the sand, sifts it in a sieve until he finds the jewel; when he has found the jewel, he throws away the pebbles and keeps the jewel."

What is Rashi adding with the parable about the lost jewel? Moreover, couldn't the Torah have told us the history of Yaakov's family without telling us the history of Esav's family?

R' Tzaddok Hakohen z"l (1823-1900; Rebbe in Lublin) explains: Yaakov's family is discussed alongside Esav's family to allude to the Jew who is lost among the gentiles – the jewel lost in the sand. Even that "jewel" still sparkles with the glow leftover from the revelation at Har Sinai, Rashi is telling us. Even that Jew is not really lost, for he will someday return to us. (Quoted in Mi'gedolei Ha'chassidut Vol. VII, p.61)

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## Shabbat Candles & Chanukah Candles

The Gemara (Shabbat 23b) states: Rav Huna said, "One who regularly lights candles will have sons who are Torah scholars."

Rashi z"l explains: Since it is written (Mishlei 6:23), "For a Mitzvah is a lamp, and Torah is light," therefore, through the Mitzvah lamp–i.e., Shabbat candles and Chanukah candles–the light of Torah comes.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisrael) explains this connection further. He writes: The parallels that our imagination draws between our observed experiences and esoteric spiritual concepts should not be readily dismissed. G-d created man with all the powers that he needs to grow spiritually, and the powers of imagination and illustration also have a role in accordance with G-d's goodness and wisdom. Since we instinctively feel a connection between physical light and the wisdom of Torah, that instinct must be something that can direct us to the correct path in life, to follow in G-d's ways. [Ed. note: In English, too, we speak of someone who is educated as "enlightened," while the period in history when there was relatively less education or scholarship is called the "Dark Ages."]

R' Kook continues: One who regularly lights candles will develop an appreciation for the benefits of light and will realize how unpleasant it is to dwell in darkness. Such a person will not think of light as a luxury. Moreover, the more light that a person is used to, the more he will appreciate each additional lamp that is lit, even if it does not add to the amount of observed light. This should help a person understand that the same thing is true of Torah study–the more that one studies Torah regularly, the more he will appreciate additional study. And, the more that one has enjoyed his initial Torah studies, the more he will recognize the necessity of additional study. It is this personal growth that makes it more likely that one will have children who are Torah scholars. (Ein Ayah: Shabbat ch.2 no. 28)

R' Chaim Shorin z"l (mid-1800s; rabbi of Khaslavitch, Belarus) comments on the above verse, "For a Mitzvah is a lamp, and Torah is light," as follows: The Zohar teaches, "A lamp without a light is worthless." This is teaching the importance of studying the parts of the Torah relating to a Mitzvah (the light) before performing the Mitzvah (the lamp). This refers both to practical study (i.e., Halachah) and more esoteric study. Knowing the laws of the Mitzvah better before performing it makes it a "stronger" Mitzvah. Knowing something about the Mitzvah's esoteric aspects strengthens the impact that performing the Mitzvah has on one's faith. (Divrei Chaim: Parashat Chayei Sarah)