



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mr and Mrs David Newman invite the Kehilla to the engagement of their daughter Tammy to Shea Erlich of Hendon this Sunday from 5-7 at their home 20 Rutland Drive.

### Simchas Torah Luncheon

As Boruch HaShem the Kehilla has grown, this year we will be holding a catered buffet lunch in place of the formal sit down luncheon. We look forward to welcoming members old and new.

### School of Soft Knocks Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Parshas Vayelech has Moshe handing the reign of power to his beloved disciple Yehoshua, who now will grasp hold of the destiny of the Children of Israel. Moshe does not leave him without first guiding him through the difficult mission of leadership. At the end of Parshas Vayelech, (Deuteronomy 31:7), "Moshe summoned Yehoshua and said to him before the eyes of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous and do not be broken before them, for Hashem your G-d — it is he who goes before you.'"

The Torah does not specify what "strong and courageous" actually means. I conjured my own visions of how to be strong and courageous when dealing with a "stiff-necked" nation. It entailed exacting demands and rigid regulations. The Medrash, however, offers a totally diametric explanation.

The Yalkut Shimoni, a compendium of Midrashim compiled in the Middle Ages, discusses a verse in Hoshea. "Israel is but a beloved lad and in Egypt I had called them my child." It quotes the verse in Deuteronomy 31:7, and explains the words "strong and courageous." Moshe explained to Joshua, "this nation that I am giving you is still young kids. They are still young lads. Do not be harsh with them. Even their Creator has called them children, as it is written, (Hoshea 11:1) "Israel is but a beloved lad."

Can the Midrash find no better words to translate the phrase telling Joshua to "be strong and courageous" other than be patience and understanding? In which way does forbearance show strength? How does courage translate as tolerance?

In the years of World War I, a young student who was fleeing the war-ravaged city of Slabodka sought refuge in Tiktin, a village near Lomza, Poland. A prodigious Torah scholar, he compensated for room and board by becoming a simple cheder teacher. He gave his lecture in a small schoolhouse, but the townsfolk were quite suspicious. There were no shouts from inside the one-room schoolhouse as it was with other teachers; the boys seemed to be listening. Rumor had it that the young man even let the children play outside for ten minutes each day in the middle of the learning session.

They decided to investigate. They interrupted his class one morning and were shocked. The kanchik (whip) used by every cheder-Rebbe was lying on the floor near the trash bin. Upon interrogating the children the parents learned that this radical educator never used it.

Outraged, the townsfolk decided to call a meeting with their Rabbi to discuss the gravity of the situation. Who knows what ideas a teacher

## לעלו נשמת דוב יצחק ב"ר אפרים אלחנן ז"ל

### קידוש לבנה

The **עשרת ימי תשובה** is a time for going beyond the letter of the law in the performance of **מצוות**, praying that **הקב"ה** should judge us favourably with mercy rather than strict judgement.

A paradox arises in halochah as to the ideal time for the **מצוה** of **קידוש לבנה** (quality or quantity?)

After ones forgiveness on **יום כפור** when we are in a happy and joyful mood would seem to be the best time for this **מצוה**. However the opposite view maintains that one should do as many **מצוות** as possible during the ten days and therefore before **יום כפור** is better.

Practically either opinion is acceptable so long as one can see the moon!

who would not use the kanchik was imbuing in our children? They worried.

The local Rabbi pointed to a picture of Rabbi Isaac Elchonon Spector,

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת וילך

Mincha	7.12pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.12pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.52am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	7.05pm
Rov's Shiur	Following
Motzei Shabbos	8.15pm

### שבת שובה

### עשרת ימי תשובה

Sunday Selichos	6.00am / 7.40am
Monday Selichos	6.00am / 6.30am / 7.45am
Mincha & Maariv	7.05pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

### ערב יום כפור

Selichos	6.20am / 7.00am / 7.45am
Mincha	3.00pm
Kabbolas Yom Tov	7.02pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.02pm
Kol Nidrei	7.22pm

### יום כפור

Shacharis	9.00am
Yizkor	Approximately 12.15pm
Mincha	5.04pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	8.04pm

Thursday	6.40am / 7.05am / 7.55am
Mincha & Maariv	7.00pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm
Friday	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am

the leader of Lithuanian Jewry. "Do you see that picture of the Kovno Tzadik?" He asked the townsfolk. "One day thousands of homes across the world will have this young man's picture hanging on their walls."

The elderly Rabbi was right. The young man became the leader of a generation, teacher of thousands and dean of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath. It was the beginning of, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky's career in education.

Moshe, the guide and architect of Jewish leadership, was empowering his disciple with a message of guidance. The words "be strong and courageous" embodied leadership of love and understanding. One can not talk of forbearance and patience without talking of strength and courage. But more important: one can not show true strength and courage if he is not patient and understanding.

### **Judgment in Need of Merit** Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Evil will befall you in the End-of-Days because you will do evil in the eyes of G-d, and will provoke Him to anger by what you do. (Devarim 31:29)

THIS VERSE WAS said by Moshe Rabbeinu in 2488, or 1273 BCE, 3,291 years ago. Here we are, now in 5779, 3,291 years later, living in that period of time he referred to as the "End-of-Days." And, we can testify that, just as Moshe warned, evil has befallen us, the Jewish people.

Well, not this year, thank G-d, at least SO far. Right now it is relatively quiet for the Jewish people, compared to what it was like in the 1940s. Not that we don't still provoke G-d by what we do. We CERTAINLY do. It's just that, for some reason, G-d is having MERCY on us at this time and we should NOT take it for granted.

Because it is not. It is not "granted." In fact, it may only be the calm before the storm. There still IS one more "War of Gog and Magog" left to go—there are supposed to be THREE historically—with the last being the worst ever. Even if WE can't see How. Even if WE can't see WHEN.

Yes, there IS the possibility that it has already happened. But, if it had, wouldn't we have known about it if it did? A major world war is not something happens outside of one's peripheral vision. Something as big and devastating as a major international conflict usually takes Center Stage when it occurs.

UNLESS, that is, it didn't happen all at ONCE.

As the Vilna Gaon explains in a few places, there is also the installment plan. That's where G-d takes a major unbearable suffering and divides it up into a lot of smaller bearable sufferings that are spread out over centuries, or even just decades.

He wrote THAT before there had ever been a Holocaust like the one in World War II. Anti-Semites before that had the will for one, but not the technology to pull it off. We needed the Industrial Revolution and all the advances since for that.

Since World War II, most of the "noise" has been in Israel. Most of the Jewish suffering has been there, fending off enemies that will stop at nothing to end the Jewish State. Has it been enough to constitute the FINAL War of Gog and Magog, or at least MOST of it?

Some would like to believe that the war has been an ideological one. We have been at war spiritually, and there is certainly a lot of truth. The casualties have been spiritual, and horrific. The Jewish American assimilation rate, we are told, is at LEAST 80 percent, with 1 in 2 Jews marrying "outside."

This has been called, appropriately, a SPIRITUAL Holocaust. And, as many point out, it is much BETTER, from a World-to-Come perspective, to die PHYSICALLY as a Jew than for a Jew to die SPIRITUALLY. So, maybe the final War of Gog and Magog is a spiritual one that is affecting countless Jews AROUND the world, and of which so few know or appreciate.

Let's face it. When conventional war occurs, EVERYONE knows about and follows it anxiously, UNTIL it is over. When a spiritual war occurs, like the one we are currently fighting, many people may know about it, but few care much about it, if it is not affecting their family personally. For the most part, people relate a lot more to PHYSICAL pain than to SPIRITUAL pain.

In fact, physical war usual evokes feelings of sympathy for the victims. Spiritual war can actually make the "victims" seem like "enemies." Jews

who assimilate or intermarry can be looked upon as traitors to the nation, and evoke anger and delight when they fail. They only get sympathy from others who understand how they became so disenfranchised from the Jewish people.

But here's a point to consider. What does G-d say about them? How does G-d look at their lives? He knows who they are, what they have been through, and what can truly be expected from them given all the factors that make them who they are today.

From our perspective, they may appear whole and happy, which makes it hard to feel bad for them. From G-d's perspective, however, they may be more like handicapped people running the same race as people without the same hindrances. From HIS perspective, their lack of commitment to Torah may be forgivable, whereas ours may make us culpable. We just don't know.

Of the many things that still haunt me about the Holocaust, the one that unsettles me the most is how Divine Providence arranged it that religious and non-religious were made to look alike in the camps, and suffer the exact same inhumane conditions. No one expected the Nazis to show more or less respect to the religious than secular Jews. But they only worked for G-d; they were HIS instruments of Divine justice at that time. Siblings can lord themselves over one another, but parents love all their children the same.

Of course there is a big difference between someone who performs mitzvos and someone who doesn't, certainly with respect to reward in the World-to-Come. But we don't all start off from the same place in this world, and many secular Jews, even if they were once religious, given OUR paths in life, might have ended up living by Torah more devotedly than we do. We just don't know.

What we do know is that when we don't judge others to the side of merit, or show the proper amount of sympathy and empathy towards others less fortunate than us, physically OR spiritually, then it reflects badly on us. And THAT can turn a spiritual war into a physical one as well, G-d forbid.

It is no small matter that we enter Yom Kippur by first making a point of forgiving others who have wronged us. "Tefillah Zachah" is such an important introduction to Kol Nidrei that people try and get to shul early enough to say the whole thing. The wrong was the wrong, and the person will have to answer to G-d for having committed it, but not to US. We just don't know enough to properly judge the offender for what they have done. No matter how hard we try to wear their shoes, they will never fit just right.

Recently, it finally occurred to me why the Arizal placed such an emphasis on people accepting upon themselves the mitzvah to love others as they do themselves upon entering shul. Why not when we first wake up? Why specifically upon coming to pray?

Because, you notice people's idiosyncrasies a lot more when praying in the same minyan, and they can be VERY annoying. Without realizing it, such annoyances can cause a person to mentally and emotionally "separate" themselves from such people, spiritually breaking up the minyan, so-to-speak. Communal prayer is supposed to be just that, communal, and harboring negative sentiments towards others interferes with that.

But, it is next to impossible to love an "annoying" person unless you first judge them to the side of merit, another mitzvah. You have to be able to say to yourself, "I would never do what they are doing. But maybe they have a reason for doing it, one that is not relevant to me, but is to them."

The crazier the world gets, the more idiosyncratic people become. It makes this mitzvah harder, but that only increases our merit in Heaven. And, merit is what we need in life, especially at this time of year, ESPECIALLY to hold off or prevent any evil coming to the nation at these End-of-Days.

It's a given that we're going to beg G-d for forgiveness for our sins against Him. It's right there in the Machzorim. But, our greatest merit may come from what's NOT really there, and to borrow the language of the Talmud: Just as you have judged others to the side of merit, may G-d always judge you to the side of merit. Gmar Chasimah Tovah.