



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד' טבת תשפ"ה - 4th January 2025 - Volume 17 - Issue 22

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Dean and Susan Kaye on the birth of a grandson to Shmuel and Nechama Kaye in Israel

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to Elana Shapiro for the Yahrtzeit of her mother on Tues, 7th Teves

Feeling The Needs Of Others

Rabbi J Rubinstein

When Napoleon's armies swept through Eastern Europe, in his attack against Russia in the beginning of the nineteenth century, he passed through many towns and villages in Eastern Europe with large Jewish populations. On one occasion, the local populace hosted a festive reception to welcome the conquering French forces. Without prior warning, Rabbi Binyamin Diskin (1798-1844) was summoned to give a speech at the gathering. He quoted from this week's Parshah and said, "The story in the Bible relates how Hashem ordained that Joseph became the viceroy of Egypt, so that he could welcome and look after his family there. But why did Hashem cause him to suffer as a prisoner in an Egyptian dungeon before he became the viceroy. Hashem could unquestionably have manipulated events, so that Joseph became Viceroy without being imprisoned beforehand? Rav Diskin answered, sometimes people who have never suffered persecution become rulers, and are very cruel to the people under their power. But if they have endured persecution themselves, it increases the chances they will be considerate to those under their control. For this reason, Hashem wanted Joseph to be a prisoner before he became ruler". Rav Diskin turned to the newly liberated Polish leaders present at the reception and said to them, "You know what it was like to suffer under Russian tyranny, now that you are in power, we hope you will learn from your experiences, and be considerate to the Jews who have come under your rule".

This was a diplomatically astute speech to give at that time to the Poles. But perhaps the underlying idea can be addressed to Jewish people as well. The Chumash tells us (Devorim 24;17), "Do not pervert the judgement of a stranger an orphan and do not take a pledge of a garment from a widow. And you shall remember that you were a stranger in the land of Egypt" Amongst all the calculations Hashem had, when He caused us to go through the slavery in Egypt, was also this message, our suffering and deprivation in Egypt in Egypt were intended to instil in our characters a sensitivity for those in need. Presumably this is part of what was meant when Hashem referred to the exile in Egypt as a refining furnace (Devorim 4; 30). The exile was an experience which was meant to refine our characters and ensure we always have compassion and care for the needy in our society.

Just to remove any possible misunderstanding, this Dvar Tora is not meant to refer to the current situation in the Middle East where we are under attack from bloodthirsty, ruthless enemies. This Dvar Tora is meant to remind us that we are proud that the distinguishing features of the Jewish people have always been that they are רחמנים ביישנים וגומלי חסדים—"People who are merciful, people who are capable of shame, and people who do kind deeds" (Talmud

Yevomos 79a). In our own personal lives, we must ensure that we never become so ensconced in our own comforts that we do not feel the needs of others. We must continue the attitude which was instilled in us by the example of Joseph, and our experiences in Egypt, so many years ago.

"No Man" Signifies That It Was All Part of a Divine Plan

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Parshas Vayigash must be one of the most dramatic parshiyos in the Torah. Yehudah pleads one final time "How can I go back up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest I see the evil that will befall my father!" (Bereshis 44:34). The pasuk then says "And Yosef could not endure in the presence of all who stood before him, so he called out, 'Remove everyone from before me!'" (Bereshis 45:1) Even though throughout all these parshiyos, Yosef has been giving the impression that he is not Yosef and he had been making his brothers really sweat, he can no longer do that. The viceroy of Mitzrayim certainly always had attendants, staff and servants in his presence. He had not been alone with his brothers. He ordered everyone other than his brothers to leave the room. Then the pasuk concludes: "...Thus no man stood with him when Yosef made himself known to his brothers." (ibid.)

But this conclusion of pasuk 45:1 is redundant! The beginning of that pasuk already says that Yosef ordered everyone out of the room. Why do we need the end of the pasuk to restate the fact that no man stood with Yosef when he made himself known to his brothers?

I saw a beautiful answer given to this question, written in the name of Rabbi Shmuel Brazil. In order to appreciate this answer, I will give you an analogy:

About a year-and-a-half ago (on the first day of bein hazemanim before Pesach), I was working at my desk, and I had some errands to run. I knew I had to go, but I decided that I wanted to finish something first. I stuck around for a couple of minutes longer. I finished what I had to do. I then drove down Mt. Wilson Lane, making a right turn onto Reisterstown Road, as I must have done thousands of times in my life. I was turning by the green light and suddenly, the next thing

Davening Times

זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	3.47pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.52pm
15 Minute Parsha Shiur	Following
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.19am
Mincha	1.30pm / 3.42pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	5.02pm
Ovos uBonim	6.02pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
עשרה בטבת	
Ta'anis Starts	6.26am
Shacharis	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.55pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

I knew a car flew into me. I wound up in the corner of that little shopping strip on the corner of Mt. Wilson and Reisterstown Road. I didn't know what happened. I asked myself "Did I go through a red light? What just happened to me?"

Within several minutes, I found out exactly what had happened: There was a fugitive of justice who was wanted for kidnapping and attempted murder in Washington D.C. He crossed state lines, making it a federal case. The United States Marshall Service was chasing after him.

The marshals went up Reisterstown Road and this fugitive went down Reisterstown Road. He must have been going 70 or 80 miles per hour. The cops were in hot pursuit. This fugitive came to the red light on Mt. Wilson Lane and Reisterstown Road. After kidnapping and attempted murder, a red light was not about to stop him. He plowed into one car, plowed into a second car, and then plowed into my car before plowing into a truck which finally stopped him from going any further.

He got out of his car and started running towards the woods. The marshals ran after him and beat him to a pulp. In the meantime, my car was totaled. I am thinking in my mind that I should be suing the United States Government: Frand vs. the United States of America. I was disabused of that notion because a person cannot sue the U.S. Government when they are after somebody. At any rate, Baruch Hashem, I walked away from the incident without a scratch, despite the fact that my car was totaled. The insurance gave me a nice settlement, v'nomar Amen!

But my initial thought was that had I gotten up from my desk when I had originally intended (two or three minutes earlier), this would have never happened to me. It was only because I left my house when I did, and because I was at Reisterstown Road at that specific time, that I was involved in this multiple vehicle traffic incident.

Such a thought is kefira (heresy). For whatever reason, the Ribono shel Olam wanted me to get into that accident. The reason is between me and the Ribono shel Olam. The way to look at what happened is not that because I waited the few extra minutes, I was involved in an accident. Rather, the proper perspective of the matter is that it was decreed in Heaven that I should be involved in that accident, and consequently, I hesitated leaving home for a few extra minutes so that I would be in that place at that time to be involved in that accident. This is the way a person must look at life. We see this many times with elderly parents. I knew a very elderly gentleman who was living with one of his daughters in New York. He decided to come down to live with his daughter in Baltimore, and not long afterwards, he died.

Everyone's reaction is "If he would have stayed in New York, this would not have happened. The schlepping and the effort of the relocation were too much for him. That is why he died." No. That is not true. He died then because when he was born, it was decreed upon him exactly when he would die and where he would die.

That is the way a person needs to look at life. We should never engage in "What if?" scenarios. We believe in Hashgocha Pratis (Personal Divine Providence). We wind up in a certain place at a certain time because the Ribono shel Olam wants us there at that time.

Rav Shmuel Brazil says beautifully: "Yosef ordered all the people out of the room "v'lo amad ish ito" (and no man remained with him)." Who was this "v'lo amad ish ito"? Who was this man?

Before answering this question, consider another pasuk all the way



אבות וכוונות טובות

back in Parshas Vayeshev. Yaakov tells Yosef to go and check out where his brothers are. Yosef starts wandering and he can't find his brothers. The pasuk says, "And a man found him, and behold he was blundering in the field; the man asked him 'What do you seek?'" (Bereshis 37:15) Rashi there says this man was the Angel Gavriel. The Ribono shel Olam put Gavriel over there in order that he should meet Yosef and direct Yosef to Dosan, where he would meet up with his brothers.

That, says Rav Brazil, is the man the pasuk is referring to here in Parshas Vayigash where it says "And there was no man that stood with him." Yosef did not say "You know what? If I would not have met that man all the way back then, I would have come home to my father and said to him, 'Guess what? I can't find my brothers.'" Yosef did not let the thought enter his head that had he not met that man, he would not have met his brothers, and the brothers would not have sold him as a slave, and he would not have gone down to Mitzrayim, and he would not have been in the dungeon, etc., etc., etc.

The pasuk says "the man was not standing with him" to emphasize that Yosef realized that what happened to him was not at all attributable to the chance appearance of "that man," but rather, it was all part of a Divine plan. The Ribono shel Olam wanted this entire long and difficult story to occur.

The Right Way Home

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"and he said to them 'Do not agitate on the way'" (45:24)

Rashi cites the Talmudic interpretations for this verse and then offers the simple meaning of the passage. The Talmud states that long strides are harmful to a person's health, and Yosef was cautioning his brothers that in their haste to return home, they should not travel in a manner which could be injurious to them. The other interpretation offered by the Talmud is that they should not involve themselves in Halachic discussion, lest the matter become so involved that they may lose their way. As to the simple meaning of the verse, Rashi says that Yosef was preempting any quarrel which may occur regarding responsibility for Yosef's sale. He therefore cautioned them not to quarrel on their way home.

It is understandable why, after Yosef's revelation, it would be important to enjoin his brothers concerning their travelling in a healthy manner, for in their excitement to return home, they may become careless. Similarly, enjoining his brothers not to quarrel is a concern which could arise at this juncture. However, why would Yosef be concerned about his brothers becoming so involved in a Halachic debate that they lose their way? There is no law preventing a person from Torah study while travelling; on the contrary, the Torah commands us to study even while we travel – "uvelechtechu baderech". Furthermore, the Midrash offers an interpretation which appears to contradict the Talmud's interpretation. The Midrash records that Yosef enjoined his brothers not to desist from the study of Torah as they traveled. How do we reconcile the Talmudic and Midrashic interpretations?

It is common to see individuals who harbor ill feelings, yet behave civilly toward one another when required to do so. However, if a dispute should arise, although it may have no connection to the reason why these two individuals are at odds with each other, the dispute will become the vehicle through which they vent their anger. All too often, the issue which is used as the vehicle to vent anger is of a spiritual nature, allowing the disputants the avenue to voice their feelings in an even more heated manner.

Yosef was aware that his brothers may be harboring ill feelings toward each other as a result of his sale. He therefore cautioned them against entering into a heated Halachic debate, for this could be the avenue by which they vent their ill feelings and blame one another. The possibility of such a debate was of especially great concern to Yosef, for if it would cause them to lose their way, it could endanger their lives. The Midrash is explaining that Yosef's intention in instructing his brothers not to desist from Torah study was to warn them to focus on the issues, and not fall into the trap of using their Torah debate as a vehicle through which to vent other non-Torah disputes which may arise.