



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

ט"ז כסלו תש"פ – וישלח – 14th December 2019 - Volume 12 - Issue 20

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Aaron and Judith Gouldman on the birth of a boy. The Sholom Zochor takes place from 8.30 at 35 Sedgley Park Road.

### Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a kiddush after davening sponsored by Elisheva Horwich as a *הודאה* on recent good news.

### ברוך דיין האמת

We regret to inform of the petira of the mother of Mr David Newman. He is sitting Shiva till Sunday morning at 20 Rutland Drive. Shacharis 7.00, Sunday 8.15, Mincha 1.30, Maariv 7.30. Shiva ends Sunday morning. Rest time 3 - 6 and no visitors after 10pm. Simchas

### Special Spirits Shabbos

Thank you to all those who donated so generously. For those who have not yet given a donation there are still envelopes available in the foyer. Donations should be handed to either R' Jonny Goodman or Avi Stern.

## Retribution For The Impingement Of Israel's Pure Morality

Boruch Michaels

In this week's Sedra, Dina is captured and violated by the Prince Shechem and according to some commentators including Ramban, even by Chamor his father.

When Yaacov was informed about the defilement of the daughter, he was "silent". When Chamor arrives to negotiate a diplomatic peace process with Yaacov, he still remains silent. Rav Hirsch explains that this silence shows that already beforehand he knew only too well how hopeless any appeal to justice or human rights would be. Yaacov knew that there was no diplomatic solution. He realised that only action could be taken to save Dina. This resort to force would be a matter for younger hands as he was 97 at the time.

Therefore, by implication, Yaacov agreed to the actions of the brothers to kill the people of Shechem to save Dina. However, Ramban asks a seemingly obvious question: Why was Yaacov angry with Shimon and Levi for killing the people of Shechem if he knew it was going to happen? Ramban answers: Yes, Yaacov agreed to the plan. Yaacov thought that the people would refuse to be circumcised. Even if they would listen to their prince and they would all be circumcised, they would come on the third day when they were hurting and they would rescue Dina from the house of Shechem. Maybe they would even go so far to kill Shechem and Chamor since they both abused Dina. This was agreed on. However, Shimon and Levi wanted to take revenge upon the entire city but they were outvoted by Yaacov and the rest of the brothers. Thus, they took matters into their own hands and killed all the men of the city. It is plausible that Yaakov's anger that cursed them was because they killed innocent men who were just being punished for the actions powerful overlords.

Ramban asks: How could Shimon and Levi have spilt innocent blood like this?

Rav Hirsch answers. Israel was a weak and defenceless family. They relied on their moral principles and spiritual nobility to command respect from the surrounding nations. When this was disgraced because Dina was a Jew-girl, the brothers were outraged. Shechem would never have done this to one of his own citizens nor another country. [Maybe this is the first incidence of antisemitism.] It aroused a fear in the brothers that was not

originally present. Before this episode, they had no fear of being attacked. They were a holy family metaphorically situated above the immorality and lowly standards of other nations. Now that their rights had been infringed upon, and the surrounding 'friendly' nations had not responded in their defence, they realised the truth. They were in fact no longer valued and respected as they had been in the times of Avraham. Yes, their actions were extreme, but in their minds, Shimon and Levi concluded that in all cases: Antisemitism is unjustified. This Prince would never have allowed himself to act as he did were it not a foreign, friendless, forsaken Jew-girl. Simon and Levi thought that the sword must be grasped to protect the purity and honour of the Jewish women and to be feared in a situation where another nation would consider doing anything similar. The daughters of Jacob should never be considered at anyone's disposal.

Despite this seemingly noble viewpoint, Yaacov rebuked them for killing the innocent, pillaging the town and creating a potential political situation where the surrounding nations would find an excuse to annihilate the Jewish people. Even on his deathbed, Jacob was critical of their extensive and expansive passion for justice without considering potential consequences. This is why the political and military future of Israel was given to Judah and they were passed over for leadership.

Nevertheless, on his deathbed, Yaacov blesses Shimon and Levi that their lust for the recognition of Israel's worth and lofty destiny should be integrated into every sphere and thought process of Jewish life. This purpose ultimately leading to a life-giving and sustaining effect of saving their Jewish brethren from degradation in spirituality for all time.

To conclude, it is clear that Shimon and Levi are critiqued for punishing the innocent. However, according to Rav Hirsch, Shimon and Levi's motives were holy and justified. Their desire to maintain Israel's spiritual standing and reputation is a message that was vital for teaching the Jews in exile whilst wandering amongst the nations of the world to remain steadfast in spiritual principle. It is clear in verse that Chamor's intention was that Israel be swallowed up and dissolved by their integration into Chamor's society: "We will take their daughters to ourselves as wives" & "Their cattle and substance and all their beasts will be ours". Shimon and

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת וישלח

Candle Lighting	No later than 3.34pm
Mincha	3.39pm
Rov's Shiur	8.45am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.10am
Children's Group	10.45am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.28pm
Shalosh Seudos	Following
Motzei Shabbos	4.48pm
Ovos uBonim	5.48pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.35pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Levi sought to avoid this scenario and to stabilise Israel's moral superiority. Rav Hirsch concludes this piece: It is because of the fact that we are the most obstinate and unyielding of nations did Hashem choose to forge specifically our nation into a tough, lasting steel and to choose us to be his role models to demonstrate to the world the wonder of G-d's might and rule and the power of his Torah.

May we have the strength of character and confidence in our Emunah to uphold our morality and to avoid foreign influence and integration by less spiritual cultures.

## **A Few Small Jugs**

**Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)**

To go back or not to go back, that was Jacob's question. Whether 'tis better to risk the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune for the few small jugs he had left behind or whether it was simply not worth it. If Jacob had asked any of us we would surely have told him to forget about the jugs. But Jacob followed his own counsel, and he went back. As we read in this week's Torah portion, terror reigned in Jacob's encampment. The passage of thirty years had not cooled off Esau's blood, and now, he was advancing rapidly with an army of four hundred fearsome warriors. In the middle of the night, Jacob spirited his family across the Yabbok Creek, but then he mysteriously returned. Why? The Sages tell us he came back for some small jugs that were left behind. Was this wise? Should he have taken such a risk for some small jugs?

The commentators explain that by this very act Jacob demonstrated his relationship to the material world around him.

A material person views himself as the master of his possessions. In his opinion, it is up to him to decide what is important and what can be discarded. He follows one measure and one measure only, his own needs. A material person's needs are the focus of his life. Therefore, the more an object caters to his needs, the higher its value.

A spiritual person, however, has a completely different view of the world. His life is directed towards serving Hashem, and he knows that his own material needs are not significant in their own right. He recognizes that his possessions were given to him by Hashem to enable him to fulfill his purpose in life, but he does not presume to know exactly how that will be accomplished. Therefore, he cannot put a value on any material thing. All he knows is that if Hashem gave it to him it is important, no matter how large, no matter how small. Jacob saw his possessions as instruments entrusted to him by Hashem, and thus, they were all of equal value and equal significance.

A general was sitting on the veranda overlooking a river and writing his reports. After a while, he grew tired. He put down his pen and sat back to watch the flowing waters. Suddenly, his pen fell off the table and rolled across the floor, over the edge and into the river.

A young lieutenant lunged for the rolling pen, but the general stopped him.

"Don't exert yourself, my young friend," he said. "It's not important. It is not an expensive pen, and I have plenty more of them."

The general extracted another pen from his pocket and began to write. An hour later, he stopped to rest once again, and once again, his pen rolled off the table. This time, however, the general jumped off his seat and scrambled after the pen. He caught it just before it rolled off the veranda into the river, and he breathed a long sigh of relief.

"I don't understand, sir," said the lieutenant. "This pen is exactly like the one for which you told me not to exert myself. It is a very unremarkable pen, and you have plenty of them. Why then did you make such an effort to keep this pen?"

"You are quite right," said the general. "But you see this particular pen was given to me by the king, and therefore it is very special to me. You cannot measure its value in the same way you would measure the others."

In our own lives, we may sometimes need to step back and realign our value system, to reaffirm in our own minds that only spiritual gifts have real and lasting value and that everything else is but a tool and an instrument. We cannot allow ourselves to lose sight of our transcendent goals and devote our lives to collecting instruments. Think about it. What will we be left with in the end? A large collection of instruments but nothing accomplished. Rather, we should view our material possessions as instruments that give us the freedom and the ability to pursue and

achieve our lasting spiritual goals.

## **No News is Jews News** **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

Yaakov's family faced a tremendous crisis. While passing through the city of Shechem, Dena, their sister was attacked and was violated by Shechem, the son of King Chamor, who bore the same name as the city. Shechem later claimed that he desperately wanted to marry her! No one in the entire city brought the prince to justice and Yaakov's sons were not going to ignore that behavior.

They were not ready for open warfare either, and so they developed a ruse. They claimed that they were ready to form a harmonious relationship with the entire population of the city of Shechem. "We will give our daughters to you, and take your daughters to ourselves; we will dwell with you, and become a single people" (Braishis 34:16). However, there was one condition. Every male of Shechem had to circumcise. Yaakov's children insisted that it would be a disgrace for the daughters of Abraham to marry uncircumcised men.

Upon direction from King Chamor and Prince Shechem the entire town agreed, and three days later, when the people of Shechem were in painful recuperation from their surgery, Yaakov's children avenged Dina's honor. Despite Yaakov's consternation, they attacked the male population and wiped them out.

The question is simple: Why ask the people of Shechem to circumcise? If Yaakov's children wanted to attack them, why go through a process of converting them? They should have asked them to fast for three days. That would have made them even weaker. They could have asked them to hand over all their weapons. Why ask them to do an act so blatantly Jewish?

On September 30, 2000, the word intafada was almost unknown to the average American. And then the riots began. On one of the first days of what has now been over three years of unceasing violence, against innocent Israelis, The New York Times, Associated Press and other major media outlets published a photo of a young man who looked terrified, bloodied and battered. There was an Israeli soldier in the background brandishing a billy-club. The caption in everyone of the papers that carried the photo identified the teen as an innocent Palestinian victim of the riots — with the clear implication that the Israeli soldier was the one who beat him. The world was in shock and outrage at the sight of the poor teen, blood oozing from his temple crouching beneath the club-wielding Israeli policeman. Letters of protest and sympathy poured in from the genteel readers of the gentile world.

The victim's true identity was soon revealed. Dr. Aaron Grossman wrote the NY Times that the picture of the Israeli soldier and the Palestinian on the Temple Mount was indeed not a Palestinian. The battered boy was actually his son, Tuvia Grossman, a Yeshiva student from Chicago. He, and two of his friends, were pulled from their taxicab by a mob of Palestinian Arabs, and were severely beaten and stabbed. The Israeli soldier wielding the club was actually attempting to protect Tuvia from the vicious mob.

All of a sudden the outrage ceased, the brutal attack was almost ignored and a correction buried somewhere deep amongst "all the news that is fit to print" re-identified Tuvia Grossman as "an American student in Israel." It hardly mentioned that he was an innocent Jew who was nearly lynched by Arabs. This blatant hypocrisy in news coverage incidentally help launch a media watchdog named Honest Reporting.com.

Rav Yonasan Eibeschutz, zt"l, explains that Yaakov's children knew something that was as relevant in Biblical times as it is in today's "New York" times. Yaakov's sons knew the secret of society. Have them circumcised. Make them Jews. Then you can do whatever you want with them and no one will say a word. You can wipe out an entire city — as long as it is not a gentile city.

If Shechem had remained a gentile city had the people not circumcised according the laws of Avraham then Yaakov's children would have been condemned by the entire world. But Yaakov's children knew better. They made sure that the Shechemites, went through a Jewish circumcision. Shechem now was a Jewish city; and when a Jewish city is destroyed, the story becomes as irrelevant as an American student attacked by a Palestinian mob in Yerushalayim! Unfortunately it is that simple and that old.