



Ohr Yerushalayim News

בס"ד – וישלח – ט"ז כסלו תשפ"ב – 20th November 2021 - Volume 14 - Issue 20

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Michael and Debbie Black on the birth of a granddaughter to Binyomin and Raisy Black

Mazel Tov to Bobbie and Rochel Graham on the Bar Mitzva this Shabbos of their grandson Chaim Menachem Goldman.

Mazel Tov to David and Zara Newman on Simcha's wedding this week in London. The Aufruf takes place this Shabbos followed by Lechaim after davening at 20 Rutland Drive

Mazel Tov to Nati and Sharon Sebbag on the wedding on Monday of Chaya to Yishai Lister.

Chaim Aruchim

We regret to inform of the petira of Mrs Debby Davis, wife of Dr Zev Davies, and mother of Mrs Nomi Chalomish. The Shiva takes place at 45 Cavendish Road, until Monday morning. Shacharis 7.15, Mincha 1.00, Maariv 7.45. Rest times 1-3, no visitors after 10pm.

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:
Sun, 17th Kislev - Chaya Bolet for her father
Tues, 19th Kislev - Howard Sacho for his father

Landmark Decision

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

This week's portion entails many of the trials and tribulations that Yaakov Avinu endured, both on a national level and on a very personal one. First, he prepared to confront his brother Esav, the results of which would produce either war or reconciliation. Then he battled an angel who dislocated his sciatic nerve. Then finally, Yaakov confronted his brother, playing the role of diplomat-warrior. He carefully weighed how to treat him with Chamberlain-like appeasement or Churchill-like aggressiveness. He returned from that encounter unscathed, but not long afterwards, the Torah tells us that Yaakov's own daughter was brutally violated, which led to a war in which his sons decimated the city of Sh'chem. Then he endures the death of Devorah, who was his mother Rivka's nursemaid.

But all these roles that Yaakov plays — the angel-fighter, the warrior-diplomat, even the father whose daughter is attacked, are different then the role Yaakov must play in another tragic incident in this week's parsha. Yaakov simultaneously becomes a grieving widower during the birth of his final child, Binyamin, who is born an orphan for life. Rachel, Yaakov's beloved wife, dies in childbirth. Now a wayfarer on a trek to Chevron, Yaakov must bury his wife. But Yaakov does something strange. He does not bury her in the family plot in the M'aras HaMachpelah, which was bought by Avraham and reserved for the forefathers and their spouses. Yaakov opts instead to bury her where she dies in Bais Lechem.

Surely Yaakov had no objection to travelling with a deceased whilst trekking to a final resting place. After all, he asked his own children to bring him from Egypt to Canaan after his demise, surely a longer and more arduous trek than Bethlehem to Chevron? Why then did he bury Rachel in Beth Lechem? The Midrash tells us that Yaakov foresaw that one day Jews would be in exiled from the Land of Israel. They would plod down the road leading from Jerusalem toward the Rivers of Babylon. They would pass the Tomb of Rachel and they would cry. She in turn would join them in their prayers. Therefore Yaakov opted for a burial site for Rachel on the road to Babylon. But aren't there many places to pray? Isn't every stone on every road holy? And doesn't Hashem hear prayers and see tears even when they are not shed by a graveside? What gift did Yaakov give his children by relinquishing Rachel's eternal resting-place for a way station on the oft-traveled road of Galut? Is there perhaps an even deeper intent with Yaakov's plan?

Anatoly Sharansky's trials and tribulations from the time of his arrest in March 1977 through his release in 1987 included the Soviet Union's most notorious prisons and labor camps. It was a tormenting journey, but along the arduous term there were many encouraging little reminders that the One Above was holding his hand.

One day during his trial, Sharansky's firmly requested to be allowed to select a lawyer of his own choosing rather than the stooge given to him by the Soviet authorities. The judge who presided over the kangaroo court reacted by declaring a brief recess and had Anatoly thrown into a tiny holding cell. There was hardly any light in the dank compartment, and there was nothing for Sharansky to do but wait for the proceedings to resume. To pass time he stared at the various curses and inscriptions scratched on the walls by prisoners who also sat and waited like he was for the decisions of their mortal fate.

However, Anatoly did not notice the curses etched by the previous men that once sat in that cell. Instead, he saw a message of hope and inspiration scratched on the wall. A Magen David etched in the wall, stood out proudly amongst all the other frivolities of frustration. The words Chazak V'Ematz (Be strong and fortify yourself) were energetically etched underneath it. It was signed Asir Tziyon (Prisoner of Zion) Yosef Begun. Begun knew that like him others would pass this way and he engraved for them a mark of hope.

Yaakov realized that the experience of his personal pain should not be limited to his own personal suffering. He converted it into a message of hope and inspiration for the ages. Rachel was transformed from a symbol of despair and grief into a symbol of hope for eternity. Yaakov foresaw that one day the Jews would leave Israel, shattered and broken. By having Rachel's final resting place as landmark in their agonizing journey, they, too could garner a message of hope. They would see Yaakov's pain and remember his triumphant endurance. They would understand that despite his sad life, Yaakov persisted. His children united and his legacy was impeccably unblemished. And though he often stood on the desolate road surrounded by enemies, his future was never renounced. And his children's future, too, will never despair. For Rachel cries for them, and she will not stop until they return to their true borders.

The Torah Forbids Plowing With a Shor and a Chamor Together

Rabbi Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

This week's parsha contains the terrible story that happened to Dina bas Yaakov. She was captured and violated by Shechem, who then wanted to marry her. Rabbeinu Bachaye brings the following Medrash Tanchuma.

Davening Times

פרשת וישלח

Candle Lighting	No later than 3.51pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.56pm
Hashkomo	7.25am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.49am
Mincha	1.30pm / 3.40pm
Motzei Shabbos	5.00pm
Ovos uBonim	6.00pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs / Fri	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.50pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Shechem told Yaakov: I know that your grandfather Avraham was a prince, as it is written "A prince of Elokim are you in our midst" (Bereshis 23:6) and I also am a prince in this land. Let the daughter of a prince marry a prince. It is a perfect match."

Yaakov responded that a Nasi (Prince) can only be a "Shor" (ox). Avraham is referred to as a "Shor" as it is written "And Avraham ran to the cattle" (Bereshis 18:7) and it is written "...and many crops come forth by the strength of an ox (rov tevuos b'koach shor)" (Mishlei 14:4). Yaakov insisted that it was not a good match. My grandfather was a prince who was a Shor (ox) and you are a Chamor (donkey)! (Shechem's father was named Chamor.) The Torah decrees "You shall not plow with a Shor and a with a Chamor together" (Devorim 22:10). In effect, Yaakov told his potential mechutan, "I'm sorry, the Torah forbids a combination of a Shor and a Chamor. We can't make this Shidduch."

In order to explain this rather perplexing Medrash, we need to introduce a concept that we mentioned in past years. In the beginning of Parshas VaYishlach, Rashi says that Yaakov instructed his messengers to tell Eisav, "I have been living with Lavan, and I tarried until now." Rashi famously elaborates: During this time, I did not become a distinguished officer but I have been a mere stranger. There is no justification for you to hate me based on jealousy of the blessing my father gave me that "You shall be a ruler over your brother."

"I know you still hate me for taking the Brochos that our father thought he was giving to you. But listen, they did not help me at all. Thirty-four years later, I am still a stranger living on the road. All these years later, and I have no dominion whatsoever over my brother. I am a nobody, and you have no reason to be jealous of the blessings I received."

Rashi elaborates on the words "And I have oxen and donkeys, cattle, male and female servants" (Bereshis 32:6) as follows: Father said I would be blessed with the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, but my property is neither from the heaven nor from the earth. Again, Yaakov emphasizes to Eisav that the blessings were not fulfilled, there was nothing for Eisav to be jealous about, and, in fact, it could be that Eisav got the better half of the deal by taking the lentil soup—at least that was something concrete.

There are several problems with this Rashi. For instance, Rav Moshe Feinstein asks that the Brochos that Yitzchak Avinu gave to Yaakov were a nevuah (prophecy). Is Rashi suggesting that Yaakov is denying the veracity of this nevuah? Is he saying that Yitzchak was wrong? Is he, Chas v'Shalom, accusing Yitzchak of uttering a false prophecy? Rashi cannot be saying that Yaakov was suggesting that these prophetic brochos were worthless.

Second, brochos are never fulfilled instantaneously. The fact that Yaakov has not yet seen the benefit of these blessings in no way diminishes their value or significance. The truth of the matter is that it took hundreds of years for them to be fulfilled. Yaakov's descendants were in Egypt for 210 years, and they were in the Wilderness for another 40 years. The Blessings were really not fulfilled until the time of Shlomo haMelech. What is Yaakov telling Eisav – the blessings are worthless because they were not fulfilled? Wait! They will yet be fulfilled in full!

When someone starts a business, he should not expect to make his fortune within the first six months of opening the business. Bill Gates started Microsoft in a garage in Seattle, Washington. He did not become a billionaire overnight. It takes time. Everything takes time. It is only in our generation that we expect instantaneous results. Cooking is too slow, so we need to microwave our food. Postal services are too slow, so we need to send faxes. Faxes are too slow so we need to send email. Everything needs to be this instant. But that is not the way all of life works, and it is certainly not the way ruchniyus works.

So, we have two questions: 1) Theologically, how could Yaakov say that the prophetic blessings were not fulfilled, and 2) Of course they were not fulfilled YET – give them time to reach their historical moment of fulfillment! The explanation is that Yaakov knew exactly with whom he was dealing—Eisav. The Sforno in Parshas Toldos shares a very important principle, not only about Eisav, but about wicked people in general. The Sforno interprets the pasuk "Sell to me like the day (ka'yom) your birthright" (Bereshis 25:31) as follows: You, Eisav, live for the day—for today. You put so much effort into today's work that you are now so exhausted so you can't even tell the difference between a bowl of soup and the color red. There is no doubt that you will not be able to perform in the function of the firstborn to minister before the L-rd Almighty, to do that which is appropriate for a bechor.

Yaakov tells his brother, "This job is not for you. You are a "ka'yom" man! You are a man that lives for today." The difference between tzadikim and reshaim is that reshaim live for the moment. They want instant gratification. They

don't have the long view. Yaakov, on the other hand, had a long view of life. He knows that not everything is instantaneous. Some things take time. If you take the view that the bechora will eventually entail the Service of Hashem and a permanent job in the Beis HaMikdash, then it means something. This is how a tzadik views the matter. Yaakov tells Eisav "I know you have no interest in being the bechor, because you are only a "Ka'yom man."

This is the general approach of virtually all reshaim. They trade an Olam Kayam (a permanent world) for an Olam Over (a transitory world). When people are faced with the dilemma of choosing the pleasure of the moment or choosing the long-term view at the cost of deferring instant gratification, people that don't possess a sense of spirituality always choose the TODAY. They don't look at the long view.

Yaakov knew this facet of Eisav. He certainly knew very well that the brochos would take hundreds of years to be fulfilled. But that did not make a difference to him. He was willing to wait. On the other hand, he understood with whom he was dealing. He knew that if Eisav still did not see fruits of this blessing after 34 years, he would consider them worthless. Yaakov was talking Eisav's language when he sent the message to Eisav: Look what happened to me... I am just a ger. I have no land. I have received neither blessings of heaven nor earth these past 34 years. However, Yaakov himself understood that he was in it for the long haul, and was in no way denying the value or validity of these blessings.

Rav Avrohom Bukspan of Miami uses this concept to suggest an interpretation of the Medrash that Rabbeinu Bechaye quotes. (I am a Shor and you are a Chamor and the Torah says a Shor and Chamor cannot plow together. Therefore, Dina and Shechem cannot marry each other.)

What is the difference between the avodah of a Shor and that of a Chamor? The work that an ox does is for the future. Oxen plow the field, making it fit for sowing. In the spring, a farmer plows his field to prepare it for planting. It takes months for wheat to grow but the oxen are out in the field long before the seeds are even placed into the ground. The avodah of the shor is for the future.

What is the avodah of a Chamor? A donkey schleps things. The farmer has a load he needs to take from point A to point B, so he puts it on the donkey who does the work of schlepping it for him. The difference between the ox and the donkey is the difference between the long view and the short view. The Shor is an animal whose whole function is to serve what is going to come in the future. The Chamor serves today's needs: I need to get this load to my house or to the barn or to the market right now!

This is what Yaakov Avinu said to Shechem ben Chamor: I am a Shor and you are a Chamor. We are not compatible and cannot be harnessed together because the Torah prohibits plowing with an ox and donkey under one yoke.

There is a second difference between an ox and a donkey. An ox chews its cud; a donkey does not chew its cud. Why does an animal chew its cud? It regurgitates the food over and over and over. It does not just eat a meal and that is the end of it. The food it consumes is a meal that goes on and on, by virtue of the constant regurgitation of the cow or ox or other kosher animals. This is also an aspect of looking at the long view.

Yaakov tells Shechem – we are not a match because I am a Jew and you are not a Jew. A Jew looks at life based on what is going to be down the road. We take the long view of life and history. You are a Chamor. Just like a donkey looks only at the present – that too is the way you view life. This is not a compatible Shidduch.

I heard that Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, who was Rav in Zurich Switzerland many years ago, was once counselling a couple who were having marital problems. The husband came to Rav Soloveitchik and said "My wife is making a mistake. She just isn't right! We can't come to terms." Rav Soloveitchik responded, "Maybe your wife is not right. But if you have Shalom and the house is tranquil then your children and grandchildren will grow up in such an environment and will be different people – much better people! Take the long view of life. The view of a Jew is always the long-term view. "Granted, your wife may be wrong in this argument. But if you take the long view of things and consider the effects of long term Shalom Bayis, it is far more important than the short-term victory over your wife in proclaiming 'I was right!'"

The whole point of being a Jew is that we are not into it for instant gratification, or just for the here and now. We are in it for the future as well. Therefore, he advised this congregant to give in to his wife, because in the long run, it will be for the best.

That is the difference between Yaakov and Shechem. That is the difference between Yaakov and Eisav. That is the difference between a Yid and a non-Yid.