



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ח טבת תשפ"ב – וארא – 1st January 2022 - Volume 14 - Issue 26

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to David and Eunice Wolfson on the recent wedding of their grandson, Yitzchok Aryeh Wacks.

Kiddush

There is a Kiddush this week after davening sponsored by Nati Sebbag in honour of the recent Yahrtzeit of his father, we wish him Chaim Aruchim.

Gemoro Chabura

R' Moshe Aron Gurwicz's Chabura will iyh be restarting with a new Masechta, Makkos, this Tue 4th Jan at 8.15pm. If you would like to join or need a Chavrusa, please contact him on 07968 381665.

Mixed Messages

Jonathan Grosskopf

הן בני ישראל לא שמעו אלי ואיך ישמעני פרעה ואני עגל שפקתי:

Perek 6, Posuk 12, Rashi says that this is an example of one of the ten Kal V'Chomers (A fortiori) mentioned in the Torah. Why does Moshe need to say then that he has a speech defect?

Da'as Zekainim - Ba'alei Tosefos posit that Moshe did not know that Bnei Yisroel did not listen to his message because of the extra hard work imposed on them by Pharaoh. He thought that he could not enunciate his words correctly. But this begs the question, why did the people listen to his initial message in Posuk 31, Perek 4, Parshas Shemos, that G-d had remembered them?

Maybe, now they did not want to hear Moshe's message because their lives were made more intolerable due to his initial attempt to get Pharaoh to let them go. Moshe had seemingly failed in his divine message to take Israel out of slavery!

According to Ohr Hachayim & Siporno, Moshe felt that the real problem lay in the perception of Pharaoh to Moshe's message; that was not something that Pharaoh wanted to hear. This perception was made worse because of Moshe's speech impediment. As a result of his first attempt to get Bnei Yisroel out of Egypt, even for three days, Moshe felt utterly bereft of self-confidence, as was shown in Posuk 23, Perek 5 Parshas Shemos. This lack of self-confidence is the basis of Moshe's questioning of his divine mission, especially to Pharaoh.

Divrei Dovid opines that Moshe could not inspire Bnei Yisroel because of a speech defect. Moshe felt that he needed additional divinely based powers of persuasion if he was ever to be successful with Pharaoh. It did not help that Pharaoh did not believe that Hashem existed and that he should listen to HIM! Moshe felt, correctly, that only when Bnei Yisroel "saw" the punishments being meted out to Pharaoh and their lives becoming better that they would believe in Moses.

In Posuk 31, Perek 14, Parshas Beshalach, the Torah states that it was only when Bnei Yisroel "saw" the bodies of their Egyptian masters dead on the shore of the Red Sea did they believe in Hashem and Moshe, HIS servant!

Proof in the Putting **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

This week, the Torah tells us how the Egyptian exile entered its waning moments as the dawn of redemption begins. Moshe and Aharon threatened Pharaoh with strong repercussions if Hashem's will was not fulfilled and the Jews were not redeemed from Egypt. But before they took action, Moshe and Aharon proved they were messengers from Hashem by displaying their ability to control and even change nature. The first miraculous spectacle occurred on a governmental level, in Pharaoh's

palace. After those demonstration did not impress the ruler, only then did the nation feel the brunt of Hashem's punishment they were stricken with the plague of blood.

Moshe and Aharon did not enter the palace of the tyrant unaware of his arrogance. They had met him before and were mockingly rebuffed. But this time they were equipped to prove their powers and authority. They were forewarned that their adversary would doubt their authority, and he would ask them to produce celestial credentials with a sign that they were truly Divinely ordained.

Hashem tells them, "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Provide a wonder for yourselves,' you shall say to Aharon, 'Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh — it will become a snake!' " (Exodus 7:9).

The Noam Elimelech, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, questions the wording. What would Pharaoh mean with the words "Provide a wonder for yourselves"? He asks. The wondrous act was not for Moshe and Aharon, rather it was for Pharaoh! Shouldn't the posuk read "provide a wonder for me"? With these words did Pharaoh, the master showman whose world renowned chicanery held Moshe at bay for a year, teach us something about the nature of miraculous occurrences that prove a point to a skeptic?

P.T. Barnum was a master showman who astounded hordes of foolish curiosity seekers with displays of the bizarre and the seemingly impossible.

One of his amazing displays had a lamb grazing peacefully in a display cage, while two fierce lions strolled nonchalantly only a few feet away. He obviously felt that the exhibit would attract hundreds who would marvel at his pretended prescient fulfillment, albeit partial, of the prophet Yishayahu's (11:6) description of the Messianic era. "And the wolf shall lie with the lamb, and the leopard will lay down with the kid, and the lion shall walk with the lamb dwell peacefully."

One of Barnum's friends, who was amazed at the sight of this post Messianic mimicry, asked in wonder, "how long do you think you will be able to maintain this exhibit?"

Barnum shrugged his shoulders, smirked, and replied sardonically, "as long as my diminishing supply of lambs holds out!"

Reb Elimelech of Lizensk explains the words with which Hashem warned Moshe and Aharon, "It will be when Pharaoh will ask, 'give for yourselves

Davening Times

פרשת וארא	מברכין שבט
Zman Shabbos	3.44pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.49pm
Hashkomo	7.25am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
Mincha	1.30pm / 3.39pm
Motzei Shabbos	4.59pm
Ovos uBonim	5.59pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon Rosh Chodesh	7.00am / 8.00am / 9.30am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.50pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

a sign.”

Pharaoh the charlatan would know the difference between a true sign and a spectacular hoax. The difference is how the performer perceives it. Pharaoh's conniving magicians performed sorcery that they themselves knew to be filled with lies. As performers, they were not impressed.

Pharaoh would ask for a sign, not only that would impress him, but would impress Moshe and Aharon as well.

The greatest accomplishment in life, and the greatest way to influence others in a meaningful and lasting way, is to be as impressed and excited about one's own actions as are others.

A parent or teacher who discusses Torah with true enthusiasm, impressed by the Heavenly genius contained within, will surely impact a child in a more meaningful way than a parent who exudes an “I heard this one already” attitude toward his audience. Pharaoh understood that, and Hashem told his Divine messengers that Pharaoh, who knew very well how to lie, would ask for the real sign — one that generated the same excitement for the messengers as well as the recipients. It was not only a sign for himself, but for Moshe and Aharon as well.

The Proof is not always in the way something is received. Sometimes the proof is in the putting! Good Shabbos

Ask! Please ...

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week's parsha of Va'aira continues with the transition from galus to geulah, exile to redemption. The only purpose of the galus was to lead toward geulah; the purpose of a seed being planted is to ultimately reap the harvest. This entire process had already been foretold to Avrohom as part of the covenant generations earlier. Furthermore, the very purpose of creation was the emergence of a people who would connect to Hashem by adhering to His will and word that would be transmitted to them. This would only take place as the redemption stage would move from Mitzrayim {Egypt} to the giving of the Torah at Sinai.

“And I have heard the cries of Bnei Yisroel {the Children of Israel} whom the Egyptians are enslaving and I have remembered My covenant. [6:5]” The Sforno explains: A cause of the redemption was Hashem hearing their cries and prayers in their times of trouble.

This might appear a bit strange. What role did prayer play in a process that not only had been foretold but upon which the existence of the world depended on?

“And every shrub of the field was not yet on the earth and grass of the field had yet not sprouted for Hashem had not yet caused it to rain on the earth and there was no man to work the soil. [Breishis 2:5]”

Why was there no rain? Because there was no man to work the soil and there was no one to recognize the benefit of rains. When Adom came and understood that they were necessary he prayed for them, they descended and the trees and grass sprouted. [Rashi]

The world needed rain in order to exist. Hashem wanted to give this rain, as He wanted his creation to continue to exist. But that wasn't enough to bring the rains. Man needed to ask for it.

Why was this established as a principle upon which the world was created? It might mistakenly appear to some as a major ego issue...

We've mentioned many times that the root of the Hebrew word 'olam' {world} means hidden. The definition of the word 'olam' is thereby the place wherein Hashem hides Himself. It is the difficulties that one overcomes and the world-mask through which one's perception pierces, which brings a person from their personal galus to geulah.

Without feeling that something is lacking we don't reach out to connect. When that which is recognizably lacking seems to appear on its own without having been requested, a person assumes a smug self-complacency. He feels no need to connect to a Force that is beyond him. He can live out his entire earthly existence without ever even touching upon the reason for which he was granted this earthly existence.

One of the greatest gifts that Hashem gives is the need and subsequent ability to call out and to connect to Him. The fulfillment of the purpose of creation is based on that.

This was made clear at crucial junctures. The vivid, vibrant, dazzlingly colorful canvas that we call the world was dull, drab and lifeless before prayer transformed it. It was one of the first lessons that Adom needed to be taught.

And at the time when the galus was about to begin its transformation into geulah; when that group of individuals was about to be transformed into a nation; when the world was about to take a major step forward

toward realizing its purpose; at that point the lesson needed to be taught again. Everything would stop dead in its tracks. The spiritual creation of this new, Torah-revealed world would remain spiritually dull, drab and Torah-less unless and until man would call out to Hashem, realizing his dependence on Him and thus realizing the purpose of existence.

“And I have heard the cries of Bnei Yisroel {the Children of Israel} whom the Egyptians are enslaving and I have remembered My covenant. [6:5]” Without that, it wouldn't have happened. And it is our calling out to Hashem for our personal and national, spiritual and material needs, which brings about the deliverance of the treasures that He is so eagerly awaiting to give us.

The Effort Department

Rabbi Shlomo Jarcaig (Torah.org)

Following the narrative in which G-d elucidated to Moshe (Moses) how he would approach Pharaoh and Pharaoh would ignore him, the Torah states “Moshe was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.” (Shemos/Exodus 7:7) As there are no extraneous letters, no less words or phrases, in the Torah's text, this verse's presence is perplexing. The Torah is very clear about Moshe and Aaron's ages at their death, and that they died in the fortieth year of the travels in the wilderness; why do we need to have their current ages calculated? More so, what is the significance of their age at this time; if Moshe had been sixty-three or seventy-seven, would it change the impact of the narrative? Finally, of all the events at this stage in Jewish history, why does the age need to be told specifically “when they spoke to Pharaoh”?

Rabbi Shimon Schwab explains that the Torah emphasized their ages because of their significance to Pharaoh's own decrees: eighty three years previous Pharaoh instructed the Jewish midwives that all Jewish male children were to be killed immediately after birth, and three years later the order was revised to demand all Jewish male children be thrown into the Nile. These decrees, executed to prevent the existence of a redeemer who would lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, actually spawned Moshe's elevation to greatness. Without Pharaoh's command, Moshe would never have been hidden in the basket and cast into the Nile, never have been taken in by Pharaoh's daughter, never been raised in Pharaoh's own home and never learned the requisite lessons of leadership. Pharaoh's efforts to the contrary notwithstanding, the Divine will came to fruition, as it always had and always will.

No matter the lessons to be learned from historical experience – whether one's own experience or the experience of others related by reliable narratives – all human beings, like Pharaoh, want to believe that the events around them are as simple as they appear to one's own perception. Everyone rationally knows that he cannot possibly fathom the entirety of every scenario into which he enters, but now in that situation, he is forced to absorb the reality and make snap decisions.

The “Pharaoh”s of the world have nothing to follow but their limited scope of vision and their feeble intellects to navigate this expansive universe of reality; good fortune to them. But the G-d conscious Jew knows that he is not in control; he understands that his Heavenly Parent is in full control and has addressed every perceptible and imperceptible variable. The Divine will will come to fruition, as it always has and always will.

The G-d conscious Jew knows that his job is “simple”: forge the bond of love and trust with the Divine Parent by following the timeless instruction offered in the Torah as he makes his best effort to attend to the situation. As Rabbi Tarfon taught us (Pirkei Avos/Ethics of Our Fathers 2:20-21), “The day is short, the task is abundant... you are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it.”

A parable is told of a man who works in the production department of a large manufacturing concern, who is asked about the health of the company's sales. The production worker responds that production is as busy as always, so he does not think about sales. “My job is production. My attention and energy are consumed by my focus on my production objectives. Just as the people in sales trust me to produce the product they are selling, I trust them to sell the product I am manufacturing. I do my job and they do theirs.”

The G-d conscious Jew knows his production objective is clear: build and strengthen his G-d consciousness by utilizing the direction of the Torah – the manual of Divine “production specifications” – while he expends his best effort to address life's challenges. He does not worry about the end result because he is fully focused on his job in the “effort department”. Results? That is G-d's department.