



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Yitzi Barron on the birth of a boy. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 2 Cavendish Court, Holden Road from 8pm.

Childrens Group This Shabbos

The childrens group takes place this Shabbos for years 2-4 from 10.00am

Ovos uBonim

As Shabbos is going out later, Ovov uBonim will be starting an hour after Motzei Shabbos.

Been There, Done That

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

"I, your father in law Yisro, am coming to you . . ." (Shemos 18:6)

HISTORY IS CONVOLUTED, something we can appreciate more today. A lot of it has been straightforward, but a lot of it has not. Sometimes, though, events can be demystified somewhat on a different, or rather, a deeper level of understanding.

Yisro is a good example of this. He is famous as Moshe Rabbeinu's father-in-law, a merit he earned, we are told, by rejecting every form of idol worship in his time. Like Avraham Avinu before him, he seems to have been a truth seeker, the reward for which was to find THE Truth Itself.

The story behind the story? It's more complicated. It is also built upon a pre-existing relationship between Yisro and his famous son-in-law going back in time all the way to the beginning of history. Yisro alludes to this when he says:

"I, your father in law Yisro, am coming to you . . ." (Shemos 18:6)

According to the Arizal, the first letters of the three Hebrew words for, "your father-in-law, Yisro"—Aleph-Ches-Yud—spell "ahchee," which means "my brother." On a Pshat level, Yisro referred to Moshe as his son-in-law. On a Sod level, he called him his brother. This is why:

Since the Nefesh of Kayin is one to which the impurity of the snake greatly latches on, and the evil within it overcomes its good, [the Nefesh of Kayin] reincarnated into the Egyptian . . . Moshe, who was [the reincarnation of] Hevel, wanted to rectify him by killing him using the "Ineffable Name," i.e., the 42-letter Name [of G-d], to separate out the evil out from within him and bring it to the level of good and holiness. On the day that [Moshe] killed the Egyptian, it entered Yisro . . . and he converted. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Introduction 36)

Though Moshe Rabbeinu and Yisro were son-in-law and father-in-law in their current lifetime, they had been Kayin and Hevel in a previous one. Thus, when Yisro, previously Kayin, brought Moshe, previously Hevel, into his family, he atoned for his murder of his brother back at the beginning of history.

Furthermore, explains the Arizal, Tzipporah, Yisro's daughter and Moshe's wife, was part of the atonement process. The Midrash says that Kayin's jealousy of Hevel stemmed from the fact that Hevel was born with two twin sisters, while he had only been born with one.

Since at that time sisters became their brother's wives, Hevel had two wives while Kayin only had one. This made Kayin jealous enough to murder his brother.

Apparently, the Arizal reveals, Tzipporah was the reincarnation of Hevel's second twin sister. When Yisro gave her to Moshe Rabbeinu as a wife, this was really Kayin giving her back to Hevel. Quite bizarre, given that there is nary a hint of any of this anywhere in the story.

It does show how multi-layered history is. It reveals how ancient forces can drive modern day events and people. It illustrates how current events may only be modern day versions of older and far more significant ones.

Does it really make a difference to know such hidden information about people and history? No doubt knowing past reincarnations does fill in some important blanks in history, but aren't they blanks we had already learned to live with?

Sometimes, but not always. Sometimes the blanks being filled are current, and the missing information provides important insight into events of the day.

They frame current history in a far more relevant manner, and may even allow for life-saving preparations. This example is from the Zohar on last week's parsha:

Rebi Abba said in the name of Rav Yeisa Elder: "This is what Rebi Shimon said: 'In the future, The Holy One, Blessed is He, will revive all the kings who caused suffering to the Jewish people and Jerusalem: Landrionis, Lelupinos, Nevuchadnetzar, Sancheriv, and the rest of the kings that destroyed His House. They will rule as before, and they will gather other nations with them. In the future, The Holy One, Blessed is He, will pay them back in a revealed manner around Jerusalem . . .'" (Zohar, Beshalach 58b)

Ancient kings, modern times. The future being referred to is the Messianic time, OUR time. The souls are from the past, but they will be brought back thousands of years later for a return engagement at the end of history. It will be payback time for past destructions and

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת יתרו

Candle Lighting	5.08pm
Mincha	5.13pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.51am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	4.26pm
2nd Mincha	4.56pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.16pm
Ovos uBonim	7.16pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	5.20pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

anti-Semitism, but in a modern setting.

Putting that interesting Kabbalistic detail about history aside, we can open our newspapers and read about current events. The big topic: Israel and the so-called Two-State Solution.

Twenty-five years ago most people, including many Arab countries, did not care much about the Palestinians, even if they did not like the Jews. The world had other more pressing issues to deal with at the time. Life was a lot calmer in those days, and many Westerners were mostly intent on climbing the social ladder and improving their material level of comfort.

The UN was more in the background back then. But, made up of many representatives from Muslim or anti-Semitic countries, resolution after resolution was put forward to sanction what they called the "Zionist State." The only reason why it did not get much publicity then was because the resolutions kept getting shot down by the few friends Israel had in "high places" in the UN.

The winds of change began to blow back in 1991, after the Persian Gulf War. They did not pick up significant speed, however, until President Obama's time in office. All of a sudden, Israel's most valued friend at the UN became less so, and the UN became emboldened in its anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian approach to Middle-East politics.

Obama and the UN have not looked back since. One of his last acts before leaving office was to abstain from an anti-Israel resolution for the first time in American history since the founding of the State. Many believe it was Obama and Kerry who pushed the UN from behind the scenes.

Many also believe that Obama, et al, will continue to push the UN to push Israel towards the two-state solution, even after leaving office. And, as the nations GATHER under the banner of the UN AGAINST ISRAEL, one might wonder if it is even possible to put aside that interesting Kabbalistic detail about history. On the contrary, it seems as if OUR period is becoming that interesting Kabbalistic detail about history.

If so, we may not be watching only a gathering of modern leaders and enemies ganging up against the Jewish state. We may be watching a gathering of Biblical enemies in the bodies of modern leaders ganging up against the Jewish state.

Clearly this would transform current events into something bigger than any headline can address.

It would also beg the question: Historical payback time may be at hand. Are we ready?

The Astonishing Potential of Man

Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)

"And Yisro... heard that which HASHEM did for Moshe and Yisrael" With these words, the Torah explains what motivated Yisro to join the Jewish people. He heard all of the great miracles that HASHEM did: the ten Makkos, the splitting of the sea... all done for Moshe and Yisrael.

Rashi makes an observation on this posuk. The Torah seems to equate Moshe to the entire Jewish people, with the words "that which HASHEM did for Moshe and Yisrael." This implies that all of the stupendous events of Yitzias Mitzraim had been brought for these two equals: Moshe and the entire Jewish nation.

Rashi explains that not only is this correct, it is what the Torah is teaching us. Moshe really was the equivalent to the entire nation. The Torah said "that which HASHEM did for Moshe and Yisrael" to teach us this very point.

The problem with this Rashi is that it doesn't seem possible that one human being could be the equal to an entire nation. At this time, the Jewish people consisted of approximately three million men, women, and children, including many Zakainim, and many very righteous individuals. As great as Moshe may have been, how is it possible that one person could be the equivalent to so many?

The answer to this question lies in understanding the difference between physical and spiritual growth.

On a physical plane, the human is capable of extraordinary accomplishments. An Olympic athlete can take a bar weighing over 500 pounds and in one smooth movement lift it over his head – an act that seems beyond human capacity. Yet this athlete didn't start out lifting stupendous amounts. He began just like anyone else, and through a program of progressive weight training, he changed his physicality. By systematically challenging his body, he developed strength that is astonishing.

But that growth is limited. As strong as he may be, he is still made of flesh and blood. He can't bench press a freight train, or pick up a house. And, if he was hit by a truck, he would end up much like you and I would. While he may have changed his muscularity and body mass index, his growth remains within the bounds of physical limitations.

Spiritual growth, on the other hand, is far more expansive and almost limitless. To better understand this, it may be helpful to focus on understanding who we are.

The "I" that tells my fingers to move, my tongue to speak, and my legs to walk is a spiritual entity. I was once sitting under HASHEM's throne up in Shamayim and have now been temporarily put into this heavy cloak of physicality. In the near future, I will once again separate from this body, and in whatever state of perfection that I have reached, will live on forever.

HASHEM custom-designed this world, and our current existence, specifically so that we can grow. We were given all the challenges and tools needed to shape ourselves into powerful spiritual entities that can tower over the greatest celestial beings.

The difficulty that we have in understanding our potential is because we think in physical terms and try to apply them to the spiritual realm. However, spirituality has a very different set of rules.

If we were to borrow a physical moshol, it would work something like this.

Imagine that HASHEM created a world solely so that man could become as physically big and as strong as possible. In this world, rather than his growth being slow and incremental, it happens almost instantly and without limits.

So our prototype man shows up to the gym on day one weighing 150 lbs., puts 100 lbs. on the bar, and starts lifting. Because the work that he puts in brings about results, he grows.

The next day, he shows up to the gym weighing 200 lbs. of solid muscle. He now puts 300 lbs on the bar and starts lifting – easy as pie. And this work also brings about results, so the next day he walks into the gym weighing 250 lbs. and can easily lift 400 lbs.

The startling part is that the growth is exponential. Because each day he is bigger and stronger than the day before, he can now do more work, which itself challenges his body to a greater extent, and thereby causes increased growth. Because the increased growth builds on growth, within a short time he will be a towering hulk, able to accomplish physical feats that are beyond our comprehension.

This seems to be the answer to Moshe Rabbeinu.

He was created with a unique nishamah, and he used his potential fully. From his first moments of understanding, he devoted himself to the service of HASHEM. As a result, he grew.

That growth was compounded exponentially, level after level, until he became so huge that he alone equaled an entire generation of people. Something that is impossible in the physical world: but can be realized in realm of the Nishamah.

The application to us:

This concept is very relevant to our lives. We were created with almost unlimited potential to grow, to change our inner essence. And that growth is something that we enjoy for eternity.

When a person focuses on his true potential, life itself takes on a whole different dimension. Every moment is a precious opportunity to reach levels and acquire riches that will last forever.