



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Noach and Shoshi Fletcher on the birth of a granddaughter to Ari and Leah Fletcher in Israel
Mazel Tov to Michael Black on the birth of a granddaughter to Ephraim and Miriam Daniel
Mazel Tov to David and Zara Newman on the Bar Mitzva of their grandson, Ari Haffner, this Shabbos
Mazel Tov to Dani and Esti Epstein on Basya's engagement to Sam Niman

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening as yet unsponsored. If you wish to sponsor in full or part please speak to Marc Zimmel

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit:
Tues, 16th Cheshvan - Raymond Blackston for his mother
Weds, 17th Cheshvan - Esti Epstein for her father
Fri, 19th Cheshvan - Charles Khan for his mother

Fall Back

A reminder that the clocks go back one hour on Motzei Shabbos

Seeing What Is Really Important

Rabbi J Rubinstein

In a world obsessed with public recognition and "Image", the following story contains a salutary lesson. Rabbi Avrohom Pam's mother employed as a housekeeper, a widow who was an apparently simple woman. This woman had a friend who was also a widow, who needed a loan. The housekeeper lent her friend \$100. Shortly afterwards the friend died without having repaid the loan. Rav Pam's mother happened to be walking near the housekeeper at the funeral procession for the friend who had died. The housekeeper was whispering in Yiddish, "Ich bin dir mochel, ich bin dir mochel (I forgive you I forgive you). She obviously knew she had lost the money, but her main concern was, that her friend should not be held accountable for the unpaid debt in Heaven! That housekeeper may have appeared on the outside to be an ordinary woman, but in fact she was a spiritual giant. Rabbi Pam used to tell this story and emphasize how important it is, not to underestimate people. There is an interesting episode related about the Chasidic Rebbe, Rav Elimelech and his brother Rav Zusha. They were travelling incognito from place to place and reached a village called Ludmir. The only person who invited them to stay, was a poor man called Aharon. A few years later when they had become famous, they arrived in the same village, in a carriage pulled by horses. One of the wealthy men of the village invited them to stay with him. They sent their carriages and horses to him, but they stayed with the same Aharon who had hosted them on their first visit. When the rich man asked them why they did not come to stay with him, they replied, "We are the same people who came to this village once before, when you did not invite us, only now that we have come with a carriage and horses you have invited us, it appears that what you are really interested in, is the carriage and horses, so we have sent them to you, but we are staying with the man who hosted us the first time."

This story is sometimes compared to what happened to אברהם אבינו -

the Patriarch Abraham. He travelled down from Israel to Egypt and stayed at various inns. At that time he was still a poor man. When he travelled back from Egypt to Israel, he had become wealthy, but he made a point of staying at the same inns. (See Rashi on Chap. 13 Pos. 3). I personally recall an apparently simple woman of limited means, who quietly took in a refugee family and looked after them for some time. Very few people noticed and appreciated what she had done, but she was a great woman. We have to learn to notice and appreciate, wonderful deeds performed without fanfare or publicity. And when we do Mitzvos ourselves, we should be happy to do them without public acclaim. In the words of Pirkei Ovot, אל תסתכל בקנקן ולא במה שיש בו, "Dont look at the container, but rather look at what is inside it" (Chap. 4 Mishna 27).

The Power of Dirt

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

I want to begin with a very interesting ha'arah (insight) on a very famous Gemara in Masechta Taanis 21a. The famous Tanna, Nachum Ish Gamzu, was called by that name because he always said "Gam zu l'tova" (This, also, is for the good). Nachum Ish Gamzu was Rabbi Akiva's rebbe. When Rabbi Akiva said "Kol ma de'avid rachmana letav avid" (Whatever Hashem does is ultimately for the good), he got that from his rebbe, Nachum Ish Gamzu.

One time, the Jews were in sakana (danger) and they needed to send a present to the Caesar (the king). They decided that the best person to bring the present to the Caesar was Nachum Ish Gamzu, because nissim (miracles) were always happening to him. They gave Nachum Ish Gamzu a chest of avanim tovos umargalyos (precious stones and pearls) to give as a present to the Caesar.

Nachum Ish Gamzu went, and on the way, he stayed at an inn overnight. The unscrupulous group of hotel owners looked inside the chest while Nachum Ish Gamzu was sleeping. They saw that it was full of avanim tovos umargalyos. They removed the avanim tovos umargalyos and they put in afar (dirt) instead. In the morning, Nachum Ish Gamzu continued his mission, unaware of the switch.

After the present was delivered, the Caesar opened the chest and, lo and behold, what he always wanted, a chest full of dirt! The Caesar thought that the Jews were making fun of him. This is the present you give the Caesar? They were about to kill Nachum Ish Gamzu, when Eliyahu Hanavi suddenly appeared, looking like a member of the king's court, of his royal entourage. Eliyahu said "Wait, not so quick. Maybe this isn't regular dirt. Maybe this is the same afar that their patriarch Avraham used in battle, in which he threw a handful of dirt and it became spears and arrows."

The Caesar had one country with which he was in constant battle and war. He couldn't overcome them. The Caesar said, "Go to battle with

Davening Times

Candle Lighting	5.39pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	5.44pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ט	10.22am
Mincha	1.30pm / 5.23pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.43pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Monday / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	4.35pm GMT
Late Maariv	8.00pm

that country. Use this afar.” They went to battle, the dirt turned into spears and arrows, and they were able to conquer the country. As a reward, the king filled the chest again with *avanim tovos umargalyos* and gave Nachum Ish Gamzu a grand exit.

Nachum Ish Gamzu stopped off on the way home at the same inn, with the same chest, now refilled again with *avanim tovos umargalyos*, escorted by a brass band. The innkeepers asked him what happened. He explained that he gave them the afar, and the Caesar was very appreciative. Nachum Ish Gamzu didn’t bother telling them the rest of the story.

The innkeepers said, hey, let’s try this ourselves. They filled up a chest with afar. They came to the Caesar and told him that the dirt the Jew gave him was from their field. “This is our dirt.” The Caesar tries it. Lo and behold, it’s just plain dirt and he kills the innkeepers. Beautiful story. Rabbi Avraham Buchspan sent me an interesting ha’arah from the Ostrovtzer Rebbe, who was among the *gedolei rabbonim* and *admorim* in pre-war Europe. As a matter of fact, someone told me that Rav Elyashiv had a picture of the Ostrovtzer Rebbe in his sukkah. That means the Ostrovtzer Rebbe was *mekubal* (accepted) not only by *chasidim* but by *misnagdim* as well.

The Ostrovtzer Rebbe asks, first of all by Avraham Avinu, the *Ribono Shel Olam* has many ways of defeating armies. We see this throughout Jewish history: *Sancheirev’s* army all died. We saw what happened to the *Mitzriyim*. Why come up with this idea of afar, that throwing afar turns it into bows and arrows and spears? Why did the *Ribono Shel Olam* specifically use afar to help Avraham Avinu in this battle? There are many much more conventional ways to have done it.

The Ostrovtzer Rebbe says that this is an example of *midda k’neged midda* (measure for measure), as follows: Successful people, and even not-so-successful people, if they are even somewhat successful, they naturally attribute their success to “*Kochi ve’otzem yadi asa li et hachayil hazeh*” (My own strength and the power of my hand have produced for me this wealth or success). This is one of the big *nisyonos* (tests) of life. If you are successful in whatever you may do, you may think it’s because you are smart. “I’m talented. I’m personable, etc.” Everyone needs to know that it has nothing to do with you. It is not *kochi ve’otzem yadi*, because we are all nothing but afar *ve’eifer*. We are just dirt. That’s what we are.

Adam *yesodo me’afar vesofu le’afar* (A person’s origin is from dust, and his end is to dust). It is a constant *nisayon* (test) to not let it get to your head. People always need to realize that we are afar. Without the *Ribono Shel Olam*, we are literally powerless and can’t do a thing. It is very hard for us to come to grips with that, but that is the reality.

For Avraham Avinu, who truly believed and didn’t merely preach, it was not just lip service. Avraham Avinu, who said *anochi afar ve’eifer* (I am dust and ashes), realized that without the *Ribono Shel Olam*, as successful and as great as he was, at the end of the day, *adam yesodo me’afar*. Avraham understood, believed, and practiced this, so when it came to making a *nes* (miracle) for Avraham, what did the *Ribono Shel Olam* use? He used afar because Avraham Avinu actually believed that he is only afar and that *Ein od milvado* (There is nothing else besides Him). If the *Ribono Shel Olam* wants, He can turn afar into a weapon, and if He doesn’t want, the greatest army in the world won’t be successful. The *midda k’neged midda* over here is that the *Ribono Shel Olam* is emphasizing to Avraham Avinu that this is your *schar* (reward) for believing and for preaching and living *anochi afar ve’eifer*. I am going to show you that I can turn afar into a weapon, just like I can make you into a successful human being, even though you are only afar. The Ostrovtzer Rebbe said that is why Nachum Ish Gamzu received the same reward. When a person constantly says *gam zu letova* no matter what happens in life, what is he in effect saying? He is saying that everything is in the *Ribono Shel Olam’s* hands. I can do nothing. This is what He wants. *Gam zu letova*, this must be good because this what He wants. *Gam zu letova* is based on this concept that I, by myself, have no *kochos* (powers) whatsoever. I am just afar *ve’eifer*. When a person realizes that and lives like that, he can say *gam zu letova*.

Perhaps we can connect this to an interesting Gemara and *Nefesh Hachayim*. The Gemara in Chullin 7b teaches that *Ein od milvado* is something that we need to constantly think and say and try to make real. *Ein od milvado*. Without the *Ribono Shel Olam*, we are powerless, we can have no *hatzlacha* (success), and we can’t even take a breath. Rabi Chanina adds “and even *kishafim*” (magic). *Ein od milvado*. There is no force in this world other than the *Ribono Shel Olam*. He’s the be-all, he’s omnipotent, he’s omniscient. He’s all of these things.

What does Rabi Chanina mean by “even *kishafim*.” In earlier times, *kishuf* was a real koach (power). This is not some character on Sunrise Highway who claims that he can read palms. This was real magic. It was a koach.

Rabi Chanina demonstrated the meaning of “*Ein od milvado* and even *kishafim*.” The Gemara says that there was a *machshefa*, a woman who practiced witchcraft. She wanted to get the dirt on which Rabi Chanina stepped. Why? Because this way she would have some kind of connection with Rabi Chanina and therefore, she could use her magical powers to curse Rabi Chanina. Rabi Chanina sees that this woman is trying to get the dirt. He says that she should take the dirt. “It doesn’t bother me. She is not going to be successful.” Why? Because *Ein od milvado*. Because there’s no power other than the *Ribono shel Olam*.

The Gemara asks, Rabbi Yochanan says that *kishuf* does have koach and *kavyachol* they make the *pamalyah shel ma’alah*, the heavenly court, weak. The answer is that Rabi Chanina is different because he has a lot of *zechusim* (merits).

Kishuf is a koach to many people, but not to Rabi Chanina. This is a little beyond our, or at least my, *hassagos*, but the *Nefesh Hachaim*, Rav Chaim Volozhiner, in Shaar 3, Perek 12, writes that the *Ribono shel Olam* did give a koach to *kishafim*. At least in earlier times, He did give *kishuf* a supernatural power, but of course only to the extent that the *Ribono shel Olam* granted. And anyone who truly believes *Ein od milvado*, has nothing to worry about.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner says that when the Gemara says in *Maseches Chullin* that Rabi Chanina had a lot of *zechusim*, it does not mean that his Torah was so great. It does not mean that his *ma’asim tovim* (good deeds) were so great. What does it mean by a lot of *zechusim*? It means that he believed *Ein od milvado* with his entire being. If you believe *Ein od milvado*, *kishafim* are powerless. That’s why Rabi Chanina didn’t need to worry.

Based on this, we can explain another famous Gemara in *Maseches Berachos*. The Gemara says on daf 33 that there was a community that had an *arud*, which was some kind of snake that used to harm people. They asked Rabi Chanina what to do about this snake. Rabi Chanina ben Dosa told them to show him its den, its hole. He put his foot over the snake hole, the snake came and bit him, and guess what? The snake died.

Why? How could Rabi Chanina ben Dosa do that? Because *Ein od milvado*, therefore, there is nothing to fear. If the *Ribono shel Olam* wants me to live, I will live.

Don’t try this at home because we’re not on that *madreiga* (level), but Rabi Chanina ben Dosa was on that *madreiga*. Many of you may know that when the Brisker Rav and his sons were escaping from Europe, and they got to a point at which there were some Nazi soldiers who wanted to check their papers, the Brisker Rav told his sons to think only one thing: *Ein od milvado*. That’s what they did. They didn’t panic. They didn’t fall apart. They concentrated on that concept of *Ein od milvado* and all turned out well. *Ein od milvado*.

This afternoon, I happened to be driving and listening to the radio. There was an interview with a fellow who’s a doctor and sociologist at Yale University. He just wrote a book about the lasting effects of the coronavirus, what it has changed and what it will change, and how society will change. The book is called *Arrows of Apollo* or something like that.

Be that as it may, one of the things that the author wrote is that during the coronavirus, religiosity is up. People are becoming more religious, which really is just a manifestation of the old principle that there are no atheists in a foxhole.

Does this mean that people are going to permanently become more religious? Probably not. But if even the secular world recognizes that people have no one upon whom to rely except our Father in heaven, how much more so, we, who have the *Ribono Shel Olam* as so much a part of our lives...

Most doctors, when asked about Corona, will tell you, “I don’t know.” The truth of the matter is, no one knows.

As we’ve spoken about many a time, the *Ribono Shel Olam*, is emphasizing to us *Ein od milvado*. There’s no force, there’s no koach, and there’s no *chochma* (wisdom) other than the *Ribono Shel Olam*. It is so easy to slip back into our old ways, but we really, really need to think about what the *Ribono Shel Olam* is doing to us. The *Ribono Shel Olam* is demonstrating beyond any shadow of a doubt that He’s the one who runs this world.