



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the birth of a grandson to Naftoli and Ruchama Cohen in RBS
Mazel Tov to Avi and Debbie Stern on the birth of a grandson to Zevi and Tami Stern in London. Mazel also to great grandparents Michael and Bayla Brandeis
Mazel Tov to Yosef Yitzchok and Nomi Chalomish on Soro's engagement to Meir Kaplin, Manchester

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening sponsored by Noach and Shoshi Fletcher in honour of the recent wedding of their daughter Sari to Yair Aronstam in Israel

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit:
Sun, 7th Cheshvan - Rov for his father
Thurs, 11th Cheshvan - Dani Epstein for his father

Shalosh Seudas

The new season restarts this Shabbos א"י. Please try and assist with the cost of the סעודה by sponsoring or jointly sponsoring a week by putting your name against a Sedra on the list on the notice wall in the foyer

Every Moment Of Life

Rabbi J Rubinstein

The seven laws known as, שבוע מצוות בני נח, "The seven Commandments of the sons of Noah" which Hashem wants all of humanity to keep, are listed towards the end of this week's Parshah. They include the prohibition against suicide. The words used are, ואך את דמכם לנפשתכם אדרש, "But your blood which belongs to your souls, I will demand" However the Hebrew word אדרש "I will demand", used here, is not usually used in this kind of context. Usually, the Hebrew word employed is פקד - "Recall", as in פקד עון אבות - "Who recalls the sins of the fathers on the children" and other places.

Rabbi S. Y. Zevin points out, the word דרש - "Demands" is used when one wants to obtain something from a person, which really belongs to another person. An example would be, the verse which describes somebody who is trying to recover an article he lost, from the individual who found it. There it says, דרש אחיך אותו, "Your brother demands it". Behind this choice of words, says Rav Zevin, there is a great lesson. The life of a person does not really belong to him, it belongs to Hashem, who allows the person to have it for a period of time, therefore he has to treat it with appropriate care and reverence, and hence the prohibition against suicide.

One could perhaps add to this, therefore one should make good use of every day one is granted this precious gift. Dayan Abramski used to tell about the time he was exiled by the Communists to Siberia. One night he was lying squashed with other prisoners on some boards. His neighbour noticed that he had not fallen asleep and said to him, "Why dont you sleep, are you wandering when will the Russians come to kill you?" "No" replied Dayan Abramski "The Russians will soon come to wake us up and I will get up and say, מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים שהחזרת בי נשמת, "I give thanks to you Hashem, that you have returned in me my soul". Afterwards Dayan Abramski started thinking to himself, what is it I am going to thank Hashem for; that I am going to spend another day in the freezing cold chopping wood without Tallis and Tefillin, or the possibility of fulfilling any other Mitzvos? The prayer continues, בחמלה - "With mercy", what mercy is

there in living such a life? But then he thought about the last two words of the prayer, רבה אמונתך, "Your faith is great". The straightforward meaning is, Hashem's reliability is great, but it occurred to Dayan Abramski, perhaps it could also mean, having faith in Hashem is great. In other words, every second one is alive and has faith in Hashem is immeasurably great, even in such circumstances, or perhaps particularly in such circumstances. In future years, the Dayan often repeated this idea, although he emphasized, it is not the straightforward meaning of the phrase.

All this reminds us, how much we should appreciate, and be grateful for, every moment of life and put it to the best possible use - even in difficult circumstances.

Ark D'triumph

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

You gotta believe. Day in, day out for 120 years, Noah built an ark. Naysayers and scoffers chided him, mocked him, and continued on their path to self-destruction. But Noah continued to build.

It must have been terribly difficult for Noah. A man alone, predicting calamity. He was the only human doing something to save himself. Yet despite 10 years of outreach and cajoling to curious onlookers to mend their evil ways, he was not able to persuade one member of civilization to join him. Why?

The Torah tells us that when Noah finally entered the ark for the journey of salvation amidst the world's destruction he almost had to be forced. "And Noah entered the ark because of the flood waters" (Genesis 7:1). Rashi explains that even Noah himself was considered one of those with only modest faith. Noah did not enter the ark until the rains fell and he realized that disaster was imminent.

Surely his failing was minute by our standards. After all, Noah was handpicked by G-d Almighty to save and perpetuate civilization. Yet his minor flaw is recorded. There must be a lesson for all of us in the Torah's documentation of it.

British physician John Abernathy, in addition to being a renowned surgeon and teacher in the late 18th Century, helped patients with an array of emotional problems. He once related the story of a patient who entered his clinic complaining of severe bouts of melancholy and depression. It seems that the artisan lost faith in his own abilities. He felt he was not living up to his normal standard. He was beginning to fail at his life's work. After examining him, Dr. Abernathy made a simple suggestion.

"Go see the famous comedian, Grimaldi. He is known to cheer those who are depressed and he would do wonders for your spirit. He will make you laugh and that would be better than any drug I should prescribe."

The patient looked even glummer. "It won't help me," sighed the despondent patient. "I am Grimaldi."

Noah worked extremely hard to build the ark, but he could not rehabilitate one soul. Perhaps the Torah tells us the reason why he was unable to convince anyone to join him.

Davening Times

Candle Lighting	5.55pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.00pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ט	10.16am
Mincha	1.30pm / 5.38pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.58pm
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	5.50pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Noach himself would not enter the ark until the rains forced him in. He did not run to the boat with a battle-cry of unshaken faith. For whatever reason, perhaps he felt that G-d's compassion would ultimately overcome His wrath: still, he did not show clear, unwavering belief that the flood would come.

In order to bring Jews close to Torah, in order to build souls, one must be steeped in the faith so powerfully that he need not be pushed into his own ark of his own salvation. In addition to building it, he must breathe it, live it and be totally committed to it.

One can build great arks, but unless the passion of his faith exudes from his soul, it may never touch others. He may save himself and his family, but no more.

My grandfather, zt"l, once told me that if a certain secular writer would have seen the Chofetz Chaim, he could never have believed that man evolved from a monkey. The Chofetz Chaim's radiance emanated a spirit which thundered the sanctity of his very essence.

In order to promote true faith one must be unwavering in his own commitment. Any lack thereof, albeit well intentioned, may get lost in a large, doubting crowd. For without one's own sense of absolute faith he will never lead others into his own ark d'triumph.

What a Deal!

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Noach. A mere ten generations after creation, the world had reached a state of depravity that necessitated its destruction. However, "Noach ish tzaddik, tamim hayah b'dorosov {Noach was a righteous man, perfect in his generation}.[6:9]" Only Noach, his family and all those that would sheltered in his taivah {ark} would be saved from the flood.

What were the grievous sins which were being committed?

"And the land was destroyed before Elokim..."

Rashi explains that the "destroyed land" is a reference to its spiritual state, as it was filled with adultery, incest and idol worship.

"...And the land was filled with thievery. [6:11]"

The usual term for thievery is 'gezel', yet here the passuk {verse} uses the term 'chamas.' The Medrash explains that this term refers to stealing an amount so insignificant that it is unclaimable in court (less than a sha'veh prutah). When a merchant would bring out a basket full of lupines (a type of herb) to sell, people were careful to come and steal only one or two stalks. Ultimately, the vendor was left with nothing.

It's a bit hard to understand the mind-set of the 'dor ha'mabool' {the generation of the flood}. Adultery, incest and idolatry were all part of the daily schedule. But stealing? Me? A thief? G-d forbid! I'd never really steal anything... Maybe help myself to a few lupines, (maybe a few towels from the hotel). But to steal? Heaven forbid!

Why were these debased and corrupted people so careful to avoid actual stealing?

Rav Sholom Schwadron zt"l explains that a person can be involved in the worst of things and yet consider himself to be a tzaddik {righteous}. While he's enjoying that which he stole he's relishing the feeling that he's so cautious and observant of the injunction against stealing.

Rav Sholom relates that he was once walking through the back-streets of Jerusalem. In the distance he saw that when people would pass near to a certain place, they would grab their noses and run. As he drew closer he started to smell a putrid odor but still didn't know where it was coming from. As he drew even closer and the odor grew that much stronger, he noticed a group of people gathered around a large sewage pit.

Realizing that the sewer was the source of the smell, Rav Sholom's first inclination was to distance himself as quickly as he could from there. However, he was overcome with curiosity. What fascinating sight was holding the attention of all of those people in spite of the sickening odor? He too went close to the sewage pit and was amazed by what he saw.

This was a very large, main sewage point into which many smaller sewage routes emptied. As such, the stench was incredible. Inside were a number of workers trying to open up a blockage with, all of that which one expects to find in a sewer, flying all about. Amazingly, one of the workers had moved off to the side, cleared out a little area, sat himself down and was enjoying a falafel. The same enjoyment and satisfaction that one feels when dining at an elegant restaurant was being experienced by this 'subterranean sanitational engineer' in this sewer!

As Rav Sholom was walking away (at a rather rapid pace) he began to contemplate what lesson could be learned from what he had just seen. How was it that he was gagging from the smell already from a distance and yet this worker, sitting in the midst of the smell's source, was able to enjoy his falafel? Why wasn't he gagging? Rav Sholom understood that when one is in the midst of the stench, he doesn't even smell it...

I recently took my sons to Yad Vashem, the holocaust memorial museum

in Jerusalem. There's a quote there from one of the S.S. men who was in charge of one of the concentration camps. He said that it was very important, while being involved in his 'work' all day, to still be a good guy—a good father, husband and friend—once he got home. In the midst of the stench, one doesn't even smell it...

The 'dor ha'mabool' {the generation of the flood} were able to relish their abstention from actual theft as they were committing every other forbidden act in the book. I'm really a good guy. Those other acts don't define who I am. This defines who I am. I'm really a wonderful person. No need for me to work on myself.

"Elokim said to Noach, the (time for the) end of all flesh has come before me because the land is filled with chamas {the aforementioned type of stealing}.[6:13]"

The ultimate cause of the flood wasn't the adultery or the idolatry—it was the 'chamas.'

As such, it follows that the 'new world order' which would follow the flood would deal with illicitly gained wealth...

The Medrash relates that falsehood approached Noach, wanting to enter the ark. Noach responded that nothing can enter without a partner. Falsehood then met up with loss and destruction who asked, "Where are you coming from?" Falsehood explained that Noach had turned him away because he didn't have a partner. "Would you be my partner?" he asked loss and destruction. "What will you give me?" it responded. Falsehood offered a deal. "Any profit that comes about through me (through falsehood) will be given to you (loss and destruction)." With the deal agreed upon, they entered the ark.

That deal stands until today.

The Sign of the Olive

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

For forty days and forty nights, the Great Flood seethed over the surface of the earth, sweeping it clean of the corruption that had polluted it. Noah's family and the selected animals huddled together in the storm-tossed ark, a minuscule capsule extracted from the doomed world, waiting to be injected into an unknown new world that would emerge beyond the deluge.

Finally, the waters began to recede. Noah opened the windows of the ark and sent out a dove to find a sign of dry land. "And the dove returned to him at evening time, and behold, an olive leaf was grasped in its mouth." (Bereishis 8:11) One can well imagine the excitement which greeted the arrival of the little leaf, this precious symbol of a new world and a new future. But why did the Torah find it necessary to specify that this particular leaf was an olive leaf? Would the symbolism have been any different had it been a leaf from another tree?

The answer lies in the singular nature of the olive among all other fruits. The primary purpose of the fruit of the olive tree is not for use as a food. It is meant to be crushed and squeezed and pressed until its golden drops of oil are extracted. This oil is then put into a candle and ignited, issuing forth . . . light!

Granted that light is a physical phenomenon, that a flame is merely a cloud of oxidizing gasses with rapid molecular activity. But in its outward appearance, a flame seems to strive upward in defiance of the laws of gravity. Quite properly, then, a flame is considered a symbol of spirituality. Light is, of course, a symbol of wisdom.

In this context, the olive becomes a symbol of the bridge between the physical world and spirituality. Just as it is possible to squeeze a light-giving flame from the physical olive, so too is it possible to extract golden drops of spirituality from this temporal physical world. All of creation is a manifestation of the Divine, and if we penetrate to its core, we will undoubtedly find the spirituality which forms its very essence.

When the bird brought back the olive leaf to Noah and his family, the message conveyed was very sharp and profound. An entire world had just been destroyed because it had become completely physical, focused exclusively on promiscuity, greed and self-gratification. Now, there would be a new start, a second chance. But what was to prevent a recurrence of the old mistakes and the old corruption?

The sign of the olive provided the answer. The new society needed to encompass a totally different attitude, a totally different perception of the physical world. People needed to understand that the entire world was like an olive and that only by extracting its spirituality could they keep it on an exalted level.

Our mission in life is to strip away the shells from our experiences and our surroundings and focus on extracting the essence of spirituality. We must seek the presence of our Creator wherever we go and whatever we do. Not only will this prevent us from slipping into sinfulness, it will enrich every precious moment of our lives and give value and meaning to our very existence.