



Ohr Yerushalayim News

1st January 2011 - Volume 3 - Issue 24 – פרשת וארא – כ"ה טבת תשע"א

THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Avi & Debbi Stern on the birth of a daughter. Mazel Tov also to the grandparents, Mr & Mrs Michael Brandeis.

Kiddush

The Shabbos Mevorchin Kiddush takes place this Shabbos after Davening and is sponsored by Mr & Mrs Andrew Addleman on the occasion of Andrew's 40th birthday - Mazel Tov!

Shabbos Group

A reminder that the children's Shabbos group takes place this Shabbos.

Rov's Gemoroh Shiur

The Rov's weekly Monday night Gemoroh Shiur starts the 3rd Perek of Meseches Shabbos this Monday - all past and new shiur members are welcome to attend.

Seforim Sale

There will be a Seforim sale on Sunday of Seforim and books which are surplus to requirements. All proceeds will go to the Kinyan Seforim for the Shul. Please contact the Rov for further details.

THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

The Melodious Start of the Redemption

Eric Sievers

This week's parsha contains both the darkest days of the exile, and the start of the redemption. The Torah tells us that the Jews could not listen to Moshe's welcome news, because of "shortness of breath and hard work". Nevertheless, seven of the ten plagues are sent against the Mitzri'im. None of these plagues hurt B'nei Yisroel. Indeed, we can try to imagine what it might have been like during the first plague, when an Egyptian taskmaster might have come up to a Hebrew, grabbed a flask of clear water and tried to drink. The liquid turned into a sticky, red, glutinous mass as he proceeded. Only when he paid for the water, did it remain potable. Even the Hebrew slave would have been amazed!

How marvelous is Hashem's gift of imagination!

The Mechilta asks rhetorically, "Do you ever find that a person is visited with good news and he is not happy?" Why then does it say, "They did not heed Moshe"? Rather, it was difficult in their eyes to separate from the idolatrous service of Egypt.' Perhaps the problem was that they could not imagine the visions of redemption that Moshe was offering them?

Perhaps this helps us to understand that the plagues were not merely punishments for the Mitzri'im. They were also deep and meaningful lessons in bitochon for B'nei Yisroel, especially as none of the plagues disturbed B'nei Yisroel in Goshen. Hashem tells Moshe to tell Pharaoh, in varying ways,

[Before the plague of blood] "In this you shall know that I am Hashem." (Exodus 7:17)

[Before the plague of wild beasts] "In order that you shall know that I am Hashem in the midst of the land." (ibid. 8:18)

[Before the plague of pestilence] "... In order that you should know that there is none like Me in all the land." (ibid. 9:14)

Initially, it seems that neither Pharaoh nor B'nei Yisroel fully recognise the power of Hashem. Even Moshe Rabeinu is chided for questioning Hashem's actions in a way that even the Ovos did not do. As the panorama unfolds, the extent of Hashem's power against the false gods of Egypt is revealed, then His power to protect His People is revealed, and finally each individual is treated precisely as he deserves down to the smallest detail, even including the animals and vegetation. This powerful contradiction to the accepted secular philosophy of those days, and up to the present, was surely for us too.

We are reliably informed that we live in times of ikveso demeshicho, when the Kingdom of Hashem will be finally established on Earth. Despite more than two millennia of exile, times of persecution, recession, etc., we are about to be redeemed! We have been almost battered into submission by the length and darkness of this exile. Even in places of Torah learning, the soton can still be found. How are we to imagine that redemption is still possible? How can we listen to those who would lead us to yemos hamoshiach, without being considered foolish? When one feels forlorn, it is not unusual to seek substitutes to soothe sore spirits. Once they are made habitual, it becomes extremely difficult to unseat the status quo. Sometimes we are even tempted to mock others whose faith seems stronger than our own. One dare not stand between the drunk and his drink!

Every day, when we daven, we are required to put geulah (redemption) right next to tefilah (amidoh, asking for our needs). What is the purpose of this rule? We must first recognize within ourselves,

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת וארא	שבת מברכין שבט
Candle Lighting and Shabbos	3.44pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.49pm
Seder Halimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.18am
Mincha 1st Minyan / 2nd Minyan	1.30pm / 3.43pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	3.13pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	4.58pm
Ovos uBonim	6.13pm
Sunday 1st/2nd Minyan	7.20am/8.20am/9.30am
Monday	7.10am/8.10am/9.30am
Tuesday	7.20am/9.30am
Wednesday / Friday	8.20am
Thursday ראש חודש	7.00am
Mincha & Maariv All Week	3.50pm
Late Maariv Minyan	8.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	3.57pm (Shabbos 3.52pm)

1. Why did the בני ישראל not listen to משה?
2. Who was the third son of קהת?
3. How old were משה and אהרן when they spoke to פרעה?
4. Where did the Egyptians dig for water?
5. What happened to the צפרדע after the plague ended?
6. How did the מכה of שחין start?
7. Which crops were spared from the ברד?
- H. In which way did פרעה speak arrogantly?

how much we owe Hashem for all His kindnesses to us, both individually and collectively. Each day and each person is different, but for some of us sometimes, this might be no more than an intellectual acknowledgement of the facts, an emunah sichlis. (I am grateful to Rabbi Wittler, who spoke recently at the Ziv Hatorah seminar, for the following beautiful insight.) We therefore have to express our gratitude to Hashem aloud, even to sing His praises, so that our faith becomes an emunah chushis, something we feel, that we get emotional about. We then have no doubts at all, that Hashem can and does answer our prayers. Only now are we truly ready to pray tefilah.

To be worthy of redemption, we need to use our imaginations, to be brave enough to think, "What if . . . ?" When we make the effort to learn whatever Torah we can, with sincere effort and humility, to do kindness to others and to sing Hashem's praises whenever we can, to give ourselves the chance to make our tefilos effective by refraining from idle chatter in Shul, surely Hashem will reciprocate by hastening the ultimate redemption, speedily in our days.

Good Shabbos.

Feeling Human Beings

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

HASHEM said to Moshe, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land; it shall become lice throughout the land of Egypt.'" (Shemos 8:12)

Say to Aaron: This plague was not initiated by Moshe for the soil did not deserve to be stricken by Moshe because it protected him when he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Therefore it was stricken by Aaron. (Rashi)

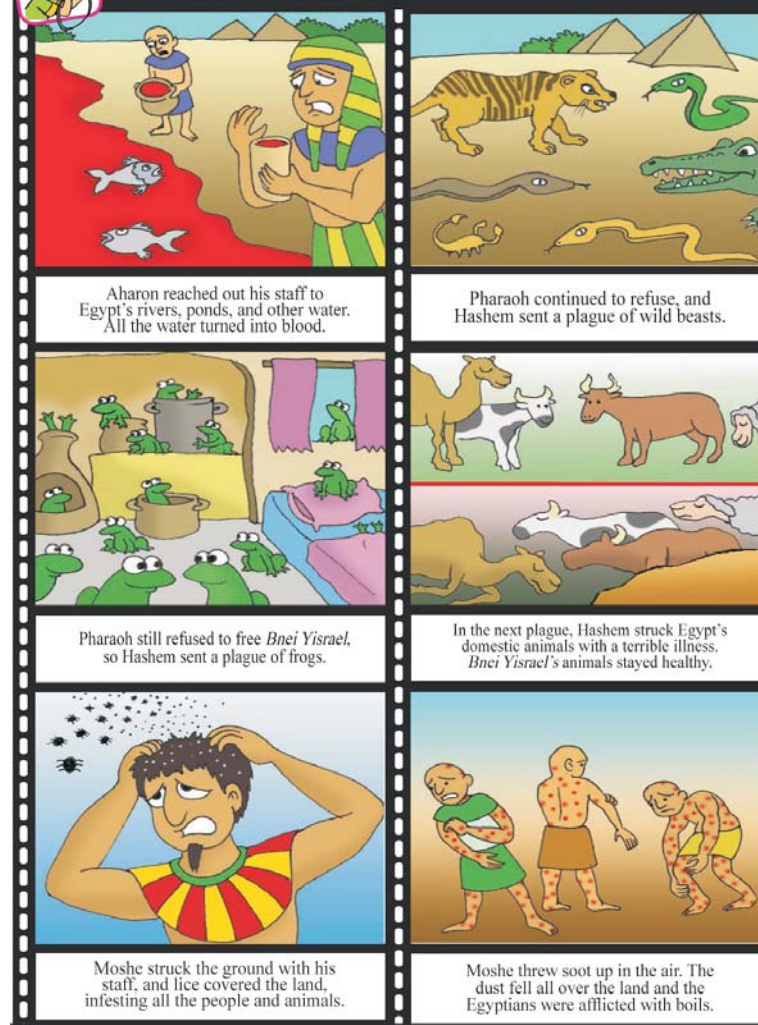
What great deference is shown to the soil of Egypt!? Even while Egypt is being disassembled plague after plague Moshe is disqualified from striking the dust because it had saved him. What's going on here? Does the dust of Egypt really care whether Moshe or Aaron hits it? What would be so terrible if Moshe would be the one?

I recently heard the following remarkable story: Rabbi Yisaschar Frand was approached after a lecture he gave somewhere in Connecticut, by a somewhat elderly gentleman with a slight European accent wishing to register a serious complaint. Politely but firmly the man insisted that he had a problem with something that Rabbi Frand had written in one of his books on Parshas "Lech Lecha" on the verse where Avraham is promised by HASHEM that He will bless those who bless Avraham. Rabbi Frand asked to be reminded what he had written. With almost perfect recall the man reminded the Rabbi.

There was a story told there with great attention to historical detail, about a Jewish family during the 2nd World War that in desperation, anticipating the brutal invasion of the Nazis, had to give up their precious son to a gentile family. They understood there was a good chance they may never return, and therefore they made an appeal to the host family that if by any chance they did not come back they should contact family in Silver Spring,



Parsha Snapshots



Maryland. They were provided with all the necessary information before the parents disappeared.

After the dust of war had begun to settle it became clear that the parents were not coming back to pick up their child and it was a safe assumption that they had perished. The host family then took the child to the local priest and requested that he baptize the boy. The priest asked them why they were baptizing a now older child. It is usually done earlier. The parents gleefully related that it was a Jewish child that they were left to care for and how the parents had entrusted them to send him to relatives America if they failed to return. The priest listened to all they had to say and he then refused to baptize the Jewish child. He insisted that if the parents wanted him to be sent to his relatives that is what they are morally obligated to do, and that is what they did. As it turns out that Polish priest was later appointed to become Pope and so he stood on the world stage for many decades, Pope John Paul. Rabbi Frand was highlighting that perhaps the enormous honor that redounded to that priest was for doing the right thing and refusing to baptize a Jewish child and insisting he be reunited with his family's family.

Rabbi Frand asked the man what was wrong with the story or the message of the story. At this the man became very emotional and he told Rabbi Frand, "I am that boy! How could you cast my adopted parents in such a negative light?! They saved my life! They are like my real family! I send them money! I visit them every year! How could you write about them that way?!"

Rabbi E.E. Dessler ztl. explains that of course the dust of Egypt is inanimate and void of feelings. Striking it would only have had a negative effect on the character of Moshe. For him to do so would diminish his sensitivity in the realm of gratitude. Now we can estimate "how much more so" with feeling human beings