



Ohr Yerushalayim News

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to Rabbi & Rebbetzen Cohen on the birth of a grandson to Mr & Mrs Moller in Hendon, London.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Noach Fletcher on the birth of a son. The **שלום זכור** will be held at 39 Singleton Road.

New Shiurim Series

We are delighted to announce a series of three shiurim to be given by Rabbi Kupetz **א שליט"א** on the subject of **מגילת אסתר**. The shiurim will be held on Sundays 22nd February and 1st & 8th March, from 8.00-9.00pm in the Shul. There will be a Minyan for Maariv at 7.45pm. Men and Ladies are welcome to attend.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

What's News

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Though the marquee event of this week's portion surrounds the epic event of Matan Torah, the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, there are still many lessons to be learned from every pasuk of the parsha, even the seemingly innocuous ones. Rabbi Mordechai Rogov, of blessed memory, points out a fascinating insight from the following verses that discuss the naming of Moshe's children.

"Yisro, the father-in-law of Moses, took Zipporah, the wife of Moses, after she had been sent away, and her two sons - of whom the name of one was Gershom, for he had said, 'I was a sojourner in a strange land.' And the name of the other was Eliezer, for 'the God of my father came to my aid, and He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.'" (Exodus 18:2-4).

After Moshe killed the Egyptian taskmaster who had hit the Hebrew slave, Pharaoh put a price on Moshe's head. The Medrash tells us that Moshe's head was actually on the chopping block but he was miraculously saved. He immediately fled from Egypt to Midian. In Midian, he met his wife Zipporah and there had two sons.

The question posed is simple and straightforward: Moshe was first saved from Pharaoh and only then did he flee to Midian and become a "sojourner in a strange land." Why did he name his first child after the events in exile his second son in honor of the miraculous salvation from Pharaoh's sword?

Rav Rogov points out a certain human nature about how events, even the most notable ones, are viewed and appreciated through the prospect of time.

Chris Matthews in his classic book Hardball, An Inside Look at How Politics is Played by one who knows the Game, tells how Senator Alben W. Barkley of Kentucky, who would later serve as Harry Truman's vice president, related a story that is reflective of human nature and memory. In 1938, Barkley had been challenged for reelection to the Senate by Governor A. B. 'Happy' Chandler, who later made his name as Commissioner of Baseball.

During that campaign, Barkley liked to tell the story of a certain rural constituent on whom he had called in the weeks before the election, only to discover that he was thinking of voting for Governor Chandler. Barkley reminded the man of the many things he had done for him as a prosecuting attorney, as a county judge, and as a congressman and as a senator.

"I recalled how I had helped get an access road built to his farm, how I had visited him in a military hospital in France when he was wounded in World War I, how I had assisted him in securing his veteran's benefits, how I had arranged his loan from the Farm Credit Administration, and how I had got him a disaster loan when the flood destroyed his home."

"How can you think of voting for Happy?" Barkley cried. "Surely you remember all these things I have done for you!"

"Sure," the fellow said, "I remember. But what in the world have you done for me lately?"

Though this story in no way reflects upon the great personage of Moshe, the lessons we can garner from it as well as they apply to all of us.

Rabbi Rogov explains that though the Moshe's fleeing Pharaoh was notably miraculous it was still an event of the past. Now he was in Midian. The pressure of exile from his parents, his immediate family, his brother Ahron and sister Miriam, and his people, was a constant test of faith. Therefore, the name of Moshe's first son commemorated his current crisis as opposed to his prior, albeit more miraculous and traumatic one.

Sometimes appreciating the minor issues of life take precedence over even the most eventful - if that is what is currently sitting on the table.

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת יתרו

Candle Lighting	No later than 5.01pm
Mincha	5.06pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.56am
Mincha 1 st / 2 nd Minyan	1.30pm / 5.03 pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	5.33pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.08pm
Ovos Uvonim	7.08pm
Sunday 1 st / 2 nd Minyan	7.20am / 8.20am
Sunday Mincha & Maariv	5.10pm
Monday / Thursday	7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	7.20am
Maariv Monday - Thursday	7.45pm
Shabbos Next Week	5.14pm

And now if you will listen well to My voice and observe My covenant, you will be to Me the most beloved treasure of all the peoples, for Mine is the entire world. You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Shemos 19:5-6)

What is the purpose of mentioning, “for Mine is the entire world”? Where does that fit into the discussion? A great commitment is being demanded of us and a cosmic carrot is dangled before our eyes to induce the first giant step. What is the relevance of stating in that context the to whom the world belongs? What could it possibly mean? There are likely multiple approaches to this verse. Let’s try three that are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

1 - It may be comparable to a rich future father-in law promising his would be son- in law a huge reward if he can make his daughter happy. The father- in law reminds the lad of how profoundly wealthy he is. “I own hundreds of hotels and buildings and banks. Just be good to my daughter!” This notion is supported by the Mechilta’s explanation of the words “You will be to Me”: “What is the meaning of “to Me”? You will be available to Me and busy with Torah and not busy with other things.” If it’s not already too obvious, the Torah may be likened to the daughter and HASHEM to the father- in law and we the Jewish People are the son-in law to be. If we are dutiful and loyal to the Torah, then huge rewards are promised because “Mine is the entire world”, all goodness is at My disposal! This statement amplifies the size of the inducement package.

2 - It could be that the father-in law in our little parable is quieting the nerves of his future son-law. He knows that in order remain properly focused on the task the son-in law needs to be assured that the material means are guaranteed to be there. Anticipating that the son-law might wonder and worry, “What happens if this industry crashes or that business goes under, how will I be able to remain loyal to the cause of learning and living Torah amidst shifting material conditions?” So the bride’s father assures the boy not to concern himself overmuch because the whole world is his and even if one part of the economy falls other opportunities will become manifest. So confirms the prophet Chaggai, “Mine is the silver and mine is the gold, says HASHEM!” The Vilna Gaon states in his commentary on Mishlei, “The main point of giving the Torah to Israel is that they should place their trust in HASHEM... Because the main thing is to gain complete trust and that principle envelops all the Mitzvos!” Therefore HASHEM tells us, so to speak, “Trust me! You can afford to dedicate yourself to Torah! The entire universe is completely under My control!”

3 - The verse might also be emphasizing a slightly different point. What does it mean to be “the most beloved treasure”, as promised in the verse? “You will be to Me the most beloved treasure of all the peoples”: The Pesikta Rabba explains, “Just as a treasure is dear to a person more than everything else that he possesses, so is Israel beloved before the Holy One Blessed is He!” What is HASHEM telling the Jewish People? “Of all My possession you are My dearest and that’s not an insignificant matter because the whole world is Mine!” This declaration helps us grasp with a profound sense of proportion the esteem boost buried in the word “treasure”.

It was told about the Klausenberger Rebbe ztl. that during the 2nd World War the Nazi’s were once beating him mercilessly and all the while they were taunting him with words, “Tell us Rabbi, do you still think you are the chosen people?” They would laugh with derision and continue the abuse. At one point the Rebbe told them, “If you’ll stop beating me for a moment I’ll give you the answer.” They paused to hear what he had to say. “Yes!” he told them, “If our roles were reversed and I would be in a position of total control over you like you are over me now, would I be doing to you what you are doing to me!? We are still the chosen people”

To endure as he did one would have to surmise the size of the prize, and the must to trust, and the pleasure of the treasure.

Spontaneous Consensus

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

The six hundred thousand people gathered around Mount Sinai didn’t discuss it beforehand. They didn’t consult with each other and decide on a consensus response. As we read in this week’s Torah portion, Moses

descended the mountain as Hashem’s messenger and offered the Torah to the Jewish people. They asked no questions, held no conferences. And yet, they responded in one spontaneous outcry, “We will do it!”

How could such a thing happen? Whoever heard of even six Jewish people being of one mind, let alone six hundred thousand?

Let us read a little further in the Torah. “And Moses referred the words of the people back to Hashem.” Here again, we are puzzled. Why would Moses have to convey the response of the Jewish people back to Hashem? Didn’t Hashem know on His own what the Jewish people had said?

The commentators explain that we are all a composite of body and soul, material and spiritual. Our material side responds to our environment, to our specific needs, to our situation. But our spiritual side completely transcends the physical and temporal. The spirit in its purest form is a divine spark, a blaze of eternal fire that responds only to the ultimate truths of the universe and is entirely impervious to the petty considerations of mundane existence.

Divisions and disagreements only arise when we are focused on our material sides. Since innumerable factors affect our material existence, no two people ever really experience the exact same conditions. Therefore, it is almost inevitable that there will be some differences in the way we react and respond to diverse situations. But if we step back from our material existence, if we reach deep within ourselves and connect with the divine spark that resides in all of us, we can break free of all the pettiness of the mundane world and soar into the exalted realm of the pure spirit. And in this world we are all one, luminescent divine sparks united by our perfect connection to the Source from which we are all derived. There are no divisions, no disagreements.

Had the Jewish people related to the Torah as a set of instructions to govern and improve their material lives, they would undoubtedly have responded with a plethora of questions, opinions and suggestions. But they understood that the Torah functions on a much more profound level, that it is the channel which connects the divine spark within each of us to the Master of the Universe, that it provides the wings on which our spirits can soar to the highest spheres of Heaven. In this light, there were no divisions among them, and they responded with a spontaneous consensus.

This then is what the Torah is telling us. “And Moses referred the words of the people,” he explained their universal agreement, “back to Hashem,” by attributing it to their total focus on connecting with Hashem.

A king was once travelling through the outlying districts of his realm. In one very remote village the people gave him a wonderful welcome, and the king was so moved that he promised them a gift. After much reflection, he decided to give them an airplane, since this would connect them to the rest of the country and improve their economy and quality of life. The airplane was delivered, and the people sent the king letters thanking him for the precious gift that had so enriched their lives.

Several months later, the king visited the village again. The people greeted him with great festivity and took him to see the airplane he had so generously gifted to them. He was taken to a lush meadow beyond the village, and there it stood in all its gleaming splendor. All around the airplane, families were enjoying picnic lunches. Teenagers sat on the wings, their legs dangling off the sides. Children scampered excitedly through the fuselage and cockpit, sliding down the emergency chutes and running back up for another turn. Everyone was having a wonderful time. When the king appeared, they all applauded and shouted their gratitude.

“My dear people!” the king cried out. “What are you doing? This thing flies!”

In our own lives, we all appreciate the ideals and values of the Torah. We know that the timeless wisdom of the Torah is as fresh and relevant to contemporary life as it was three thousand years ago. We know that it prescribes a way of life full of wonderful benefits and rewards. But do we also realize that “this thing flies”? But indeed it does. If we connect with the Torah on a spiritual level, we can transform ourselves and enrich our lives in ways we never thought possible.