



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

פרשת נצבים וילך - כ"ה אלול תשע"ג - 31st August 2013 - Volume 6 - Issue 10

## THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Mr & Mrs Peter Nissen on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Mr & Mrs Daniel Nissen.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Sammy Morhaim on the birth of a boy. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 9 Bland Road.

### Children's Group

The children's group takes place this Shabbos.

### Rov's Mishnayos Shiur

This week's Mishnayos Shiur is replaced by one on the subject of Eruv Tavshilin.

### Rosh HaShana Newsletter

We aim to release a newsletter on Tuesday night with the full Yom Tov timetable.

## THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### Youthful Discretion

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Children play a major role in this week's double portion. In Nitzavim, Moshe tells the nation, "You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem." He enumerates the different categories of people, from elders to water-carriers, and he makes sure to include everyone, even the small children (cf. Deuteronomy 28:9-10).

In Vayeilech as well, the Torah is cognizant of the youth. Moshe commands that every seven years "the men, the women, and the small children, and your stranger who is in your cities shall gather in Jerusalem to hear the king read the Book of Devorim" (ibid 31:12). Commentaries expound that the aforementioned children are those who are too young to understand. But Moshe also talks about youngsters who have a basic grasp as well: "And their children ... they shall hear and they shall learn to fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days that you live on the land to which you are crossing the Jordan, to possess it." The Ohr HaChaim explains that this verse refers not to toddlers, but rather to children who are old enough to learn the fear of Hashem. What troubles me is the end of the posuk, "they shall learn to fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days that you live on the land to which you are crossing the Jordan, to possess it." Shouldn't the Torah say "all the days that they live on the land to which they are crossing the Jordan"? After all, we are teaching them, not the adults! Why does the Torah tell us to teach the children, for all the days that their parents live on the land to which you are crossing the Jordan, to possess it?

Lieutenant Meyer Birnbaum was one of the only Orthodox US army officers commissioned during World War II. Last year, he spoke at our yeshiva, and though I was enraptured by the harrowing tales of his war-time activities, one small incident that occurred to him as a young boy growing up in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn during the Depression did not escape me.

In those days, few young men attended yeshiva or were committed to vigorous Torah observance. Meyer went to public school as well, but his parents wanted to raise him as an observant Jew. His friends would

often make fun of his yarmulka, and few attended his bar-mitzvah. But that did not deter him. In fact, from the time he was old enough his mother would make sure that he attended the mincha service.

Imagine the sight. A young boy coming to pray together with a group of elderly men who were hanging on to their tradition while their inheritors looked for newfound freedoms outside the decaying walls of the synagogue. Even the men who came to pray were only there to say kaddish for a dearly departed. So when young Meyer entered the portals of the shul for the very first time their eyes widened in amazement. Their shock turned to pity as they assumed the young boy came to shul for the same reason that most of them came, and for the very reason that they prayed their children would one day come the sole purpose of saying kaddish.

The moment came when the kaddish yossum, the mourner's kaddish, was to be recited, and the congregation began in a cacophonous unison the hallowed words, "Yisgadal V'Yiskadash." Meyer just stared up into space, waiting to answer the first responsive Amen. He was startled by the jab in the ribs by a crooked finger, which left his searing side and began pointing to the correct place in the prayer book.

"Nu!" shouted the man, "They are saying kaddish!"

"I know that they are saying kaddish!" answered Meyer.

"So, what are you waiting for? Say along!"

Meyer did not understand where the conversation was heading. But he had no time to think when another old man looked his way, motioning for him to join the mourners in the kaddish recitation!

"But I don't have to say kaddish!" answered Meyer tearfully, "my parents are alive!"

"Your parents are alive?" asked the old-timer incredulously.

"Yes, thank G-d, they are both alive! Why do you think that they are dead

## The Week Ahead

### פרשת נצבים וילך

#### Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos

6.15 / 7.00pm

Candle Lighting

Not before 6.37 / 7.09-7.25pm

Seder HaLimud

8.40am

Shacharis

9.00am

סוף זמן ק"ש

9.41am

Mincha 1st Minyan

6.00pm

Mincha 2nd Minyan

7.48pm

Followed by a Shiur from the Rov on the subject of Eruv Tavshilin

Motzei Shabbos

8.53pm

Sunday Selichos

6.00am / 7.30am

Monday

6.00am / 6.45am

Tuesday

6.00am / 6.55am

Wednesday ערב ראש השנה

6.00am

Mincha & Maariv Sun-Tues

7.45pm

Late Maariv

10.00pm

Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov

7.36pm

Remember Eruv Tavshilin

and that I should say kaddish?"

They gathered around him as the final Amen was said and explained their actions. "We could not imagine someone your age coming to shul for any other reason!"

The Torah tells us that children must be trained and taught not for post-parental existence, but rather it tells the parents "all the days that you live on the land to which you are crossing the Jordan." You must teach them to practice while you can enjoy the nachas as well! Torah is a living entity, not only to pass from dying embers to rekindle new flames, but rather to pass a vibrant torch with leaping flames onto the youth whose boundless energy will inspire new generations, when even you live on the land that Hashem has given you!

### **An Urge to Be Even Better**

**Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)**

It is not in heaven... (Devarim 30:11)

The Torah is not found amongst those who think they have reached the heavens. (The Kotzker Rebbe)

They make him take an oath to be righteous and not to be wicked. Even if the whole world says you are righteous you should be in your eyes like one who is wicked. (Talmud Nida)

Don't consider yourself wicked! (Pirke Avos Chap. 2)

I have placed life and death before you, blessing and curse; and you should choose life... (Devarim 30:19)

With Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur bearing down upon us it's hard to know how to see ourselves. There even seems to be some mixed signals coming from the sagely sources. Am I good or am I bad? Let's try a few approaches!

A friend of mine tried to call me up Erev Rosh Hashana and apparently misdialled. A woman with a heavy Russian accent answered the phone. Not recognizing the voice, he asked, "Is this the Lam residence?" She answered sternly, "I am afraid you are a mistake?" Of course she misspoke but he called me moments later and told me he felt a little devastated. He hadn't realized he was a mistake. There's a world of practical difference between understanding "I made a mistake" and feeling "I am a mistake".

A few weeks ago my older boys were lightly teasing and testing their youngest sister at the table. One quizzed her strongly asking, "Are you good or bad? She shot back without hesitation, "Both!" They pressed her again, "Good or bad? Which one?" She wouldn't be intimidated a bit. She answered with a single word again, "Both!" How profound was that exchange!

I once asked the famous psychiatrist and author Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski if he could give me a working definition of "positive self-esteem". Without hesitation he said, "Knowing your good points and your bad points simultaneously." At first it sounded remarkably simple but later gained appreciation for its depth.

I realized that seeing only good points makes us haughty while seeing only bad points leaves us vulnerable to depression. Seeing them alternately puts us on an emotional rollercoaster ride. Being aware of both simultaneously creates a healthy balance. We can neither become too high on ourselves considering our faults nor too low when we know our goodness.

Having that healthy balance allows us to face our failures and faults without fear of feeling like a mistake. Then we can enjoy the benefits of criticism that help make the good better and the bad a little less so. Wondering aloud, "Are we good or bad?" I guess the smart answer is "both". As the "days of awe" draw near, though, some may begin to feel an urge to be even better.

### **This Time, Let's Do It Right**

**Rabbi Yaakov Menken (Torah.org)**

"And you shall return to HaShem your G-d, and you shall listen to His voice, like all that I have commanded you today, you and your children, with all your hearts and with all your souls." [Deut. 30:2]

This Torah reading, which discusses Return to G-d, is read annually on the last Shabbos of the year. It reminds us that the Ten Days of Return are approaching. We will soon celebrate Rosh HaShanah, the beginning of the new year, the Day of Judgement. Then, on the tenth of Tishrei, we will observe Yom Kippur, which we often translate as the Day of

Repentance.

In Jewish thought, we don't like to talk about "repentance." The non-Jewish versions of sin and repentance are so pervasive that we cannot hear these words without imagining fire and brimstone. The Hebrew term "Teshuva" means \*return\*, as found in our verse: "and you shall return to HaShem your G-d." The idea of return is to go back home, to be the children of G-d we were created to be, and live up to our spiritual potential. Fire and brimstone have nothing to do with it!

The best form of return is not motivated by fear of G-d or fear of punishment. True return is motivated by love.

When we look at our parents and all they have done for us, we feel grateful. We love them. We want them to be proud of us, and we want to do the favors they ask of us.

The same should be true in the relationship with our Father in Heaven. It's not always easy to do what is morally right, but we know that He sees everything we do, and we want Him to be proud. This is return motivated by love.

How powerful is this return? Our Sages say that if a person's return is motivated by fear, then his or her deliberate transgressions are treated as if they were careless errors. But if one is motivated by love, than those same deliberate transgressions are converted into merits!

The Chassidic master, the Ba'al Shem Tov, offers a parable: if a person walks into a dark room and turns on the light, then the darkness disappears. To anyone who walks into the room afterwards, it is as if it were never dark at all.

Return, he says, is so powerful that it can transform a person in much the same way. Even a past filled with misdeeds can be turned to light.

For most of us, unfortunately, it is easy to think of some wrong we committed that we would rather not have done. The fact is that if we commit ourselves to returning to G-d, to trying to do what is right, we can wipe those transgressions away.

In order for this process to work, of course, it must be sincere. And the first thing which one must do is to stop misbehaving.

Maimonides, in his codification of Jewish Law, says (Hil. Teshuva 2:3): "One who confesses with words, but has not decided in his heart to abandon [his transgressions], is like a person who goes to a ritual bath while holding something unclean in his hand: immersion in the bath will not help him until he throws the item away!"

The Talmud in tractate Rosh HaShanah says that the verse, "Seek out HaShem when He can be found, call upon Him when He is close" (Isaiah 55:6) refers to these Ten Days of Return. Maimonides also says (Hil. Teshuva 2:6) that "even though return... is always beautiful, during the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur it is exceptionally so, and is accepted immediately."

We now have a special opportunity, in the days that lie ahead, to make lasting changes in our lives. We can more easily throw off the weight of our past errors, and decide to do better in the future.

Let us take full advantage of the chance we are given to do it right, this time around!

### **This is THE Year**

**D Fine (Shortvort.com)**

There's a bit of a discrepancy in one of our psukim this week. 11;12 says that the Land of Israel is "a land which HaShem your G-D seeks always, always are the eyes of HaShem your G-D on it from the beginning of THE year (H'ashana) until the end of year (shana)."

Why does it say that beginning of THE year but just the end of year - why not the end of THE year? The Satmar Rav gave an answer in the realm of drush. Every year, at the beginning of the year we say to ourselves that this is going to be THE year - i will fix myself, achieve x, y and z, and become a better person. But at the end of the year, it's just shana; just another year. Nothing great was achieved and it was not THE year that you expected.

He continues that in nushach sefard kedusha we ask HaShem to redeem us and the acharis kerishesis - the end of the year should be like the beginning of the year. Ie that at the end of the year we will be able to look back and say this really was a great year; it was THE year that I envisioned at the beginning of the year.