

Where G-d Wants Us To Be

by Rabbi Jared Vidars

Just a few days prior to Yom Tov, an individual of financial means encountered a Rebbetzin whom he knew and held in high esteem. Knowing full well the costs associated with preparing a proper Yom Tov and the financial pressures facing this woman's household, the person respectfully inquired, "Are you okay in terms of Yom Tov?" Without hesitation, the woman answered, "Yes. We're exactly where G-d wants us to be." Her faith and trust in God was a palpable, living force in her life. It was the prism through which she processed her existence.

This despite the fact that she had lost an infant not too long ago. This despite the fact that during the course of that care she had to relinquish a teaching position that she held so dearly.

Surely, if complaining was anywhere on this woman's radar screen, she had plenty of "raw material" to fill her mind, heart and days with bitterness, sadness and seemingly well-grounded kvetching. Moreover, her confident, matter-of-fact, unhesitating response spoke volumes. She did not merely utter the "party line." She responded with the clarity, confidence, conviction and optimism of a person who is cognizant of God's benevolent presence in their life - always and at all times.

"When the cloud was raised up from upon the Mishkan (tabernacle), the Children of Israel would journey on all their journeys. If the cloud did not rise up, they would not journey, until the day it rose up. For the cloud of Hashem would be on the Mishkan by day, and fire would be on it at night, before the eyes of all the House of Israel in all their journeys." Rashi: "At any stage of the journey which they would travel, the cloud would rest at the place in which they were to encamp." [1]

Perhaps this is the reason why the Torah [2] bothers to recount each of the myriad stops along the Jewish People's 40-year sojourn in the Wilderness. Some of the places were lush and pleasant like Elim where they were encamped alongside 12 springs. Others were arid and unpleasant like Marah where there was no water to quench their thirst. Some produced watershed events like the sending of the spies and others were marked by the passing of beloved leaders such as Aharon and Miriam. Still others remain mere geographic locations regarding which the Torah does not reveal any further details.

Every single location merited eternal mention in our Eternal Torah for one reason and one reason only - because they were exactly where God wanted His People to be. And so too, as the Jewish People's timeless voyage continues - the Nation and each and every one of us - are "exactly where G-d wants us to be."

We misplace car keys and eyeglasses. Airlines misplace baggage. Parents even misplace children amidst the sea of humanity at carnivals or crowded grocery stores.

But G-d does not "misplace" souls. To the contrary, each and every member of His beloved family is cherished and accounted for. More than that, at every moment, we are exactly where God wants us to be - and somehow, somehow, wherever that place may be - it is surely the best possible place for us. (Regardless if we harbor thoughts to the contrary). When we allow our outlooks and perspectives to be filtered through this prism of purposefulness and Divine design, our happiness will be less vulnerable to the "slings and arrows" of life. Our frustrations may seem less insurmountable. Our sense of confidence will be steeled against that pesky second-guessing which so often takes us out of the moment. For knowing that we're exactly where God wants us to be is indeed the key to rejoicing in the here and now.

BITS of INFO

Synopsis of Current Events Gleaned From Various News Sources

Submitted and Edited by Sherine Levine

✧ At its annual carnival, the Belgian city of Aaist featured a parade including a float on which bulbous-nosed Jewish puppets stood on money bags, marchers were dressed in Klu Klux Klan costumes, and young Europeans wore black-face makeup. The mayor of Aaist said it should be allowed. The float also featured dancers in costumes mirroring the puppets whose routine began with a shout of "shalom" and included a move in which a pocket was opened, exposing something that was not clearly visible in a video of the event. The annual carnival at which the anti-Semitic float was displayed was honored in 2010 by being added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which did not respond to questions or issue a statement about this year's parade. UNESCO has passed a number of resolutions denying the Jewish people's connection to Jerusalem and attempting to refute historical evidence proving Jewish connection to the land in which the modern Jewish state exists. [World Israel News]

✧ Just a week after the Chief Rabbis of Jerusalem issued a ruling that prohibits Jews from ascending the Temple, Palestinians stormed the Sha'ar HaRachamim (Gate of Mercy, AKA Golden Gate), an area that had been closed off to Jews and Muslims for 16 years. After the rabbinic declaration calling on Jews to refrain from ascending the Temple Mount and the Muslim takeover of the Gate, a committee of Temple Mount Organizations called for a mass Jewish presence on the Temple Mount, Jewish prayer, and the construction of a synagogue. Assaf Fried, spokesman for the Temple Organization, explained that their call for a Jewish presence on the Temple Mount was not a contravention of Jewish law. Fried stated: "We do not intend to belittle the rabbis who rule that it is forbidden to go to the Temple Mount. We respect them greatly. But the issue is still a debate among the rabbinic authorities with opinions in both directions. There is no doubt that Jewish law permits Jews to ascend, if certain conditions are met. There is a doubt about where the boundaries lie for the section that is only permitted to Kohanim." [Breaking Israel News]

✧ An insensitive NYC Sanitation Police Officer refused to move over into an empty parking spot as he issued a summons. Instead, he caused an entire Boro Park street packed with school buses to backup, causing hundreds of children to remain on their buses. The officer ignored repeated requests by residents who kept asking him nicely to simply move into the empty space so traffic can continue to flow on 53rd Street between 13th and 14th Avenues. [Yeshiva World]

✧ There's no boycott of Israeli goods in Gaza. According to the Gaza Economy Ministry, 65% of all Gaza's imports are made in Israel. Products made in Gaza are unpopular due to lack of supervision, poor quality control, forged expiry dates, and poor safety standards in Gazan factories. [unitedwithisrael.org]

✧ Twenty-one Israelis are ranked on this year's Forbes 2019 world Billionaires list, up from 18 last year. The wealthiest Israeli as defined by Forbes in Eyal Ofer, ranked 149 with a fortune of \$9.4 billion. In second place is Stef Werheimer, ranked 303 with \$5.7 billion. In third place is Israel's wealthiest woman, Shari Arison, ranked 355 with \$5 billion. [Globes]

RECIPE

Eating hamantaschen on Purim is a must and this chocolate filled hamantaschen recipe is delicious even though it doesn't have butter or margarine. Enjoy. Remember to send your favorite recipes to leahlie@aol.com

Non-Dairy Chocolate Filled Hamantaschen
(Kosher.com/Sweet Moments: Rega Matok)

Ingredients:

For the Dough:

1 ½ cups flour

2/3 cup confectioner's sugar, plus additional for topping

1 teaspoon baking powder

Pinch of salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 tablespoons oil

¼ cup water

For the Filling:

100 grams Elite bittersweet chocolate

3 tablespoons coconut cream or non-dairy whipped topping

1 large egg

Combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl. Add vanilla, oil, and water and combine with your hands just until the dough comes together. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for about an hour.

Break the chocolate into cubes and place in a medium bowl. Add coconut cream or non-dairy whipped topping. Melt together in the microwave or a double boiler until chocolate everything is melted and mixture is combined.

Add egg and combine until it is well incorporated into the chocolate mixture. Chill for half an hour in the refrigerator until firm. It should be a spreadable texture.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to a quarter inch thickness. Cut out circles of dough. Into the center of each circle, place one teaspoon of chocolate filling. Fold in a hamantaschen shape (pinch corners well so cookies don't open while baking) and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Heat oven to 340 degrees Fahrenheit. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until they turn golden. Allow to cool to room temperature. Dust with confectioner's sugar before serving.

Note:

▫ You can keep hamantaschen in airtight container for up to a week.

▫ You can use your favorite filling in place of chocolate.

