



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Avi Smith on the occasion of Aryeh's Bar Mitzva this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davenning in Stenecourt Hall.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Frenchie Freedman on the birth of a grandson, born to Mr & Mrs Avi Blachman. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 26 Moor Lane.

Timetable Correction

Please note the correct time for Mincha & Maariv during the coming week is at 7.40pm rather than 7.50pm, not as stated on the distributed timetable.

Summer Ovos uBonim

The Summer season of Ovos uBonim starts this Shabbos at 5.00pm followed by Mincha at 6.00pm.

Ladies Shiurim Questions

The first ladies pre-Pessach Shiur takes place on Tuesyda. Questions relating to Pesach should be handed to the Rov ahead of the Shiurim.

מעות חסין

The Rov is gladly accepting מעות חסין which will be distributed to "local" families to help with the costs of Yom Tov.

מכירת חמץ

The Rov will be available for מכירת חמץ from Monday after Davenning.

what maintains everything at all times.

Binah, which means "understanding," happens to be the eighth sefirah (from the bottom), not the one you might expect to be associated with the miraculous. Miracles are supernatural and therefore defy logic. The natural world we can understand to a large degree. The spiritual realm we have to learn about.

Nadav and Avihu taught this the hard way. It wasn't just the wine. They were drunk on spirituality as well, the realm of eight. Kabbalah explains that their souls were so spiritually sensitive that they were the basis of prophecy for everyone into whom they reincarnated. If anyone could feel the power of the eighth day, they could.

The problem was that they created a custom-designed response to it, what the Torah calls an "authorized fire offering." Their passion was amazing but its expression was outside of the realm of the acceptable at that time. Thinking outside the box is not always a good thing.

They thought they understood—binah—the spiritual realm enough to use it to its spiritual advantage. They were dead wrong in the end, making the point that as much as we think we understand the spiritual basis of reality, we only understand a fraction of it.

That sounds more like the ninth sefirah, Chochmah, usually translated as "Wisdom." Regarding chochmah, Shlomo HaMelech wrote, "The wisdom is distant from me (Koheles 7:23). Even though the Talmud says that this refers specifically to the Parah Adumah, or the Red Heifer, a statute, it is really true of all Divine wisdom.

The resolution is actually in the blessing we say each day for knowledge:

You graciously bestow knowledge upon man and teach mortals understanding. Graciously bestow upon us from You, wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

In this blessing, we acknowledge that even binah—understanding—is a gift from G-d. Thinking itself is a gift. Learning the right information to properly analyze a situation is the direct result of Divine Providence.

Dependent Independence

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

And it was on the eighth day that Moshe summoned Aharon and his sons and the elders of the Jewish people. (Vayikra 9:1)

SINCE G-d MADE the world in seven days, the number seven is associated with the limited physical world. The number eight, therefore, represents the supernatural reality of the spiritual world to which the Mishkan and the service that occurred in and around it belonged.

Chanukah, therefore, which celebrates the miracle of the oil, is an eight-day holiday. Bris Milah, which proclaims the supernatural status of the Jewish people, occurs on the eighth day from birth. And thus, it was on the eighth day that Nadav and Avihu brought their unauthorized fire offering and died miraculously, as a result.

Likewise, there are eight days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This may seem incidental, but it's not. We take teshuvah for granted, but it is miraculous. It is a miracle that we can even do teshuvah, and a miracle that our teshuvah can fix what we did wrong.

All of this is interesting for a number of reasons. One such reason has to do with the 10 sefiros—Keser, Chochmah, Binah, Chesed, Gevurah, Tifferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchus—the spiritual entities G-d created and employs to transmit His Divine light into Creation. This is

The Week Ahead

פרשת שמיני	מברכין ניסן, פרשת פרה
Mincha	6.45pm
Candle Lighting	6.55pm - 7.10pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.56am
1st Mincha	1.45pm
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	7.33pm
Rov's Shiur	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	8.38pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.40pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

Reaching a “right” conclusion only occurs when G-d wants it to occur. This is why at times average intelligent people come up with solutions that “geniuses” overlook.

It says in Tehillim:

The secrets of G-d to those who fear Him. (Tehillim 25:14)

Knowledge is a secret of G-d. Understanding is definitely a secret of G-d. This verse is saying that more than a good mind a person needs to fear G-d to truly understand anything in life. This is the merit that earns a person the “right” to get the Heavenly help necessary to correctly analyze and assess life’s situations.

As mentioned a couple of week’s ago, fear of G-d has a few connotations. In general though it means making truth one’s highest priority, more than personal bias. We lost prophecy once people stopped listening to prophets. We lose access to the truth when we stop pursuing it.

The first thing to point out is that the pursuit of knowledge is not necessarily the pursuit of truth. It was a tree of knowledge of good AND evil, not because there is evil knowledge but because there is knowledge that can be used for evil. It will all depend upon one’s spiritual orientation while pursuing the knowledge.

It is ironic that the Talmud predicted that truth will be a rare commodity just in advance of Moshiach’s arrival. It is ironic because no generation has ever known so much or been able to access as much knowledge and as easily as this generation. All of the knowledge is rooted in truth and yet its truth eludes so many.

It has to do with the spiritual orientation of the generation. Being progressive has been defined as the elimination of religion and Biblical moral standards. Religious extremism has made it easy for liberals to push their agenda. Man is in, G-d is out.

Consequently, people learn a lot but understand little about life. Society has never been so liberal, and yet 80% of Americans suffer depression. It is very hard to be happy about being “you” if you do not understand who “you” is supposed to be getting out of life. That’s depressing.

The starting point to becoming wise, and not just knowledgeable, is the realization that wisdom is a gift from G-d. When G-d told Moshe to assemble the Mishkan, Moshe complained that it was not possible for him to do so. G-d told him, “You just busy your hands with it, and I will do the assembling.”

This is true, not just of the Mishkan, but of everything we do as humans. Whether it is the movement of a finger or the contemplation of a complex life issue, it is all G-d’s doing:

All is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven. (Brochos 33b)

One of things I enjoy about writing the most is how I lose myself in it. I just write without giving much thought to the origin of the ideas I use or my ability to move the necessary body parts to type. Just the fact that I know how to use a computer, no matter how user friendly it is, is a miracle that I take for granted each day.

Sometimes though in the “heat” of writing, ideas and words flow so fast through my fingers and onto the page, and in a way or on a level that impresses even me, that I stop and realize how it is not me that writes. It never is, but it just seems so natural that I become fooled into believing that it is me who works out the ideas, and then finds the words to express them.

This week is the third special Maftir for this time of year, Parashas Parah, the mitzvah of the Red Heifer. In Temple times it was necessary to become spiritually purified from contact with the dead, which was required for being able to eat from the Pesach offering. This is why we read about the mitzvah just in advance of the holiday of Pesach.

Symbolically, the Parah Adumah represents the concept of chukim, or statutes, laws of the Torah that seem to defy human logic for one reason or another. They are different from mishpatim, judgements, whose logic seems to talk to man because they seem to benefit society in obvious ways.

The truth is, chukim serve to remind us that G-d’s logic is far beyond

human logic, and this includes mishpatim as well. G-d has chosen to share some of His understanding, but not all of it. The part that He has shared is called “Mishpatim,” while the part that remains concealed is called “Chukim.” Either way it is wisdom and understanding that comes from G-d, not man.

This is a difficult pill to swallow for many who define themselves by their mental individuality and prowess. They’d rather live with the impression that they are independently wise than admit intellectual dependence on G-d. They assume that it means “enslavement,” but they could not be farther from the truth:

The Tablets were the handiwork of G-d, and the script was G-d’s script engraved on the Tablets. Do not read charus—engraved—but cheirus—freedom—for you can have no freer person than the one who engages in Torah study. (Pirkei Avos 6:2)

This is because the human mind is limited and quite fallible. Sometimes it does not know it has made a mistake until after the fact, which can often mean after a catastrophe. Depending on G-d means depending upon perfection, on omniscience and omnipotence. The G-d-fearing person all of a sudden has access to knowledge and ability that far surpasses his own.

In short, a person who turns to G-d for his understanding, something Nadav and Avihu failed to do, may be dependent on another, but it is on “another” with unlimited power. When that happens, we learn from Megillas Esther, even a normally limiting situation can’t hold him back.

This is why even Achashveros ended up dancing to “music” that Mordechai and Esther played, so-to-speak.

Learning to Listen

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

...And Aharon fell silent (10:3)

This Possuk is referring to the tragic incident of Aharon's two sons being put to death for their transgression on the inaugural day of the Mishkan. The Torah implies that Aharon would have had an argument to make before HaShem but chose to be silent.

Rashi (ad loc) informs us that Aharon was rewarded for his silence. HaShem spoke with him alone to deliver the section of the Torah that deals with those Kohanim that are in a drunken state being prohibited from entering certain areas of the Mikdash. What was the quid pro quo of his silence being rewarded with HaShem directing His words to him alone?

The Talmud (Gittin 36b) has very high praise for those that suffer in silence: "Our Rabbis taught, those that suffer an insult but do not insult in response, those that hear their disgrace but do not reply, those that do the will of HaShem out of love and are joyful in their suffering; on them the verse states 'Those that love HaShem will go forth like the sun in its full strength.'" While it is true that these lofty souls are exhibiting an unusual level of self-restraint, what does the Talmud mean by "they are joyful in their suffering"? Doesn't this seem masochistic?

The reason these individuals are able to achieve a very high level of restraint and are actually joyful in their suffering is because they are fully cognizant that nothing in this world happens by accident. If they suffer insults and other indignities they realize it is coming directly from HaShem and it is a message for them.

While it is true that the individual delivering the insult is doing a terrible thing, the fact remains that the pain it causes is really coming from HaShem. In other words, they have something within their behavior that needs to be rectified. They are joyful because they realize that HaShem cares about them and wants them to improve. On this point, the Talmud is teaching us that if they have learned this lesson ultimately they will not be diminished - just as the sun is powerful at its full strength.

Aharon was silent for he understood that every tragedy that happens is a message for those that are affected by it. He understood that this wasn't merely a punishment for his sons, he was being punished as well (perhaps for his role in the Golden Calf?). Aharon controlled himself as he understood that HaShem was speaking to him. He is therefore rewarded by HaShem delivering the next portion of the Torah directly to him.