



Ohr Yerushalayim News

מתרומה – ד' אדר א' תשע"ו – 13th February 2016 - Volume 8 - Issue 31

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr and Mrs Chizky Salomon on the occasion of Tova's wedding to Shragi Steinberg on Tuesday. The Chupa takes place at the Hilton suite at 3pm, Simchas Chosson v'Kalloh is at Oldham Town Hall from 10.30pm.

Mazel Tov to Mr and Mrs Simcha Shadmi on the occasion of Ari's wedding to Chavi Bude in London this week. The Aufruf takes place this Shabbos in Ohel Torah followed by Kiddush at their home 56 Upper Park Road.

חיים ארוכים

We regret to inform the Kehilla that Simon Joseph is sitting Shiva for his late father, Mr Brian Joseph, at 7 Hurstwood Road, London NW11 0AS until Monday morning. Shacharis 7.45am, Mincha 1.30pm, Maariv 8.00pm. Simon can be contacted on 07531 503 380.

Ovos uBonim Melava Malka

A reminder that the Ovos uBonim Melava Malka takes place on Motzei Shabbos at 7.30pm in Shul.

Ladies First Aid Course

It's not too late - the course takes place this Sunday 14th and next Sunday 21st February from 7-9pm. Cost for both sessions will be £10 for members/£15 for non members. To register interest or for more information please contact Esther Blima Graff 07704327082.

The Mishkan & The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

And they shall make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in their midst. Shemos 25:8

THE SECOND LAW OF Thermodynamics states that in any cyclic process the entropy, a state variable whose change is defined for a reversible process at T where Q is the heat absorbed, will either increase or remain the same. Clear? Not for me either. Let's move it down a notch or two.

If you make a cup of hot coffee and leave it, it will cool down. If you don't do something to maintain the heat, it will naturally become a cold cup of coffee, thanks to the Second Law of Thermodynamics. In layman's terms, it is a law of physics that describes how the universe is naturally chaotic, and how order, by definition, will eventually result in disorder. Things decay. People die. Even the universe will eventually reach maximum entropy and end.

It was a surprise to physicists to find this out, and it took time to become accepted. After all, the world looks so orderly, and other than all the wars that have occurred throughout human history, man has been so productive. It turns out, however, all he was really doing was temporarily harnessing the power of chaos.

For example, a car uses fuel to move. Gas is pumped into the engine where it is combusted, resulting in tremendous chaos, and used to drive the pistons which drive the car. Even our bodies do it, taking food and breaking it down, creating chaos, after which it is sent to different parts of the body to nourish and energize it. There are of course chaotic by-products. The human body creates

waste. A car causes pollution. People become tired from working and things wear down from use. If we do not make an effort to maintain something, it will eventually break down and entropy. It is the way of the world.

Kabbalistically as well. The Torah states:

The earth was null—tohu—and void—vohu... (Bereishis 1:2)

From the Torah it sounds as if G-d increasingly banished the primordial chaos with each passing day of Creation. From the Talmud, it is clear that He merely built on top of it:

Reish Lakish said: "Why is it written, 'And it was evening and it was morning, the sixth—HA-Shishi—day' (Bereishis 1:31)? What is there to learn from the extra Heh? The Holy One, Blessed is He, made a condition with Creation and said to them: 'If the Jewish people accept the Torah you can continue. If not, then I will return you back to null and void.' " (Shabbos 88a)

It wasn't that G-d didn't finish the job. Leaving tohu in Creation was finishing the job. It is what compels man to get involved in the Creation process every single conscious moment of his day. It is what makes free will consequential and, therefore, meaningful. It is the inherent chaos of Creation that allows us to "purchase" a ticket to the World-to-Come, by necessitating the building of a Mishkan.

Even according to the opinion that the Mishkan was not the direct result of the golden calf, it is still the result of entropy. Simply, the Mishkan was a place to worship G-d. On a deeper level, it was our effort to reign in the tohu of Creation and harness its destructive power to a positive end. It was spiritual discipline, which is constantly under attack by the agent of entropy, the Sitra Achra, a.k.a. the yetzer hara.

There was always meant to be a Mishkan, just as there was always meant to be a Temple. The only question was, which form would it take? Would every person be his own personal Mishkan, or would there first have to be an external, temporary one? According to the other side of the argument, the golden calf answered that question, thanks to the entropy that resulted at the base of Har Sinai, channeled through the Erev Rav.

The Week Ahead

פרשת תרומה

Candle Lighting	4.57pm
Mincha	5.02pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.57am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	No Shiur this Shabbos
2nd Mincha	4.45pm
סעודה שלישית	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	6.05pm
Ovos uBonim Melava Malka	7.30pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	5.05pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Physically, it is hard to deny the fact. A person can dream of walking through a wall and even imagine attempting it. Trying to do it is another thing altogether. He can jump off a cliff and try to fly, but unless he has developed a way to do it, gravity will teach him a lesson he will never forget, if he survives the fall. Fact is fact.

Not in the movies, though. In the movies, entropy can be circumvented. All a producer has to do is follow a script with a happy ending. If he wants, he can even defy nature by using special effects. Of course, he will be doing no such thing, but filmed just so it can give the audience the impression that man has more control over Creation than he actually does.

Not just in the movies, but also in our imaginations. We are constantly devising schemes and means to avoid pain and suffering, tools of entropy. When we fail, and we must, we suffer indignation and frustration as if the universe is the one in violation of its laws, not us. We don't consider that the reason why the American Constitution had to state that every man must be free to pursue happiness is because it is so elusive, thanks to the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Well, at least that is what the physicists call it. They don't learn Kabbalah and most don't even believe that Torah is from G-d. They certainly don't consider that Judaism knows the "why" to their "how." Why should they if the Jews themselves don't accept that "First Law of Torah," that the terms "yesurim" and "ahavah" actually go together?

The Talmud discusses the idea of suffering several times throughout "Shas." One of the most detailed of those discussions, however, is at the beginning of the first tractate. It is there that the Talmud first discusses the reason for suffering, and its virtue (Brochos 5a). It ends off the discussion by introducing the concept of "Yesurim shel Ahavah," or "Suffering of Love."

What is "Suffering of Love"? You would think that love would be a good reason not to make someone suffer. Most people spend a lot of time, energy, and resources to protect their loved ones from suffering. Being human, our success is limited. G-d, Who is completely unlimited actually afflicts those whom He loves with suffering:

Those whom G-d loves He chastises. (Mishlei 3:12)

To be clear, there is nothing wrong with trying to end suffering. The Talmud says this as well. Suffering is debilitating and interferes with the performance of mitzvos. The issue is not whether or not to visit a doctor, or to take a prescribed medicine or not. It is about what you do until something works to relieve the pain. It is about the order a person imposes upon the chaos in his life in order to become, in the process, a human Mishkan.

There is a famous story about a person who went to a doctor to resolve a health issue. "Why am I sick?" he asked the doctor. The doctor told him, "Don't ask me why you are sick. Ask me why you are not sick more often, and in a more serious manner!"

Given the millions of things that can go wrong with our bodies, it's nothing short of miraculous that we are alive, let alone that we can do such amazing things and survive. Our bodies are complex but sensitive machines with countless working parts. Health is the product of a very delicate balance than can easily be upset.

Yet, we approach life as if it is the most obvious given. We deal with our bodies as if they are sturdy metal army tanks capable of withstanding tremendous abuse. We feed ourselves with little or no thought about the many complicated processes involved in turning that food into live-sustaining energy.

That is, by extension, the way we treat the world in general. We assume that order is natural and that chaos is just order that has gone wrong. In truth, chaos is natural and order is just chaos that has gone right. We can hope for the best but really should not be too disappointed when the worst happens instead. It's only natural.

The bottom line is that order is something we must create. Winning is something that must be achieved. Wealth can be inherited, but personal greatness cannot be. Physique can be the result of inherited genes, but its uses is a personal choice that is what ultimately defines a person. People try to "stack the deck" and "cheat the hangman," but that kind of success is either temporary or illusionary.

I always wondered how it could be that on the glorious day of

inaugurating the Mishkan, Nadav and Avihu could ruin it all by bringing an unauthorized fire offering (Vayikra 10:1). Similarly, how could Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest man of all history (other than Moshe Rabbeinu) marry the daughter of Pharaoh the very night the Temple was completed? How could such wrong happen at a time of such right?

I don't have that question anymore. I have since come to realize that it was as inevitable for Nadav, Avihu, and Shlomo HaMelech to do what they did. Was it any different from Adam HaRishon eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil one hour after being explicitly told by G-d Himself not to? It is the way of a history fueled by chaos.

This is one of the reasons why there are so many "segulos" for shalom bayis, peace in the home. A lack of marital peace is not necessarily a sign that it is a bad match. It is a sign that chaos is being allowed to do its thing in the home. It is a sign that more order is necessary, and more will to make the order.

Just what that will is and which order is required differs from couple to couple. If they can't find it, the marriage will end in divorce as per the second law of thermodynamics. If they can find it, either because one of the two has the will for both of them, or they come to a common level of order together, the result will be a Mishkan, as the Talmud states: Rebi Akiva explained: When a man and woman are true to each other, G-d rests His Divine Presence between them. If, however, they are not true to each other, a fire will devour them. (Sotah 17a)

As Rashi explains, the Hebrew word for man—Ish—and for woman—Isha—are identical except for the Yud of "Ish" and the Heh of "Isha," the first two letters of G-d's Name. If the couple becomes spiritually unworthy, G-d removes His Holy Name from between them, transforming both "Ish" and "Isha" into the word "aish," or "fire." The marriage consumes itself.

This is not only the secret to a good marriage, it is the secret to ordering all aspects of life. Infuse life with G-d, and the fire becomes one that allows us to serve G-d and fulfill our purpose, just as on the altar in the Mishkan. Remove G-d from life, and life becomes a consuming fire that destroys everything in its path. Even the Temple, a stone building, burned when that became the case with the Jewish people.

Vows in a Time of Distress

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

The midrash teaches that at the moment when Bnei Yisrael said, "Na'aseh ve'nishmah" i.e., when Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah unconditionally, Hashem said, "Let them take for Me terumah." R' Chaim Aryeh Lerner z"l explains this as follows:

There is an opinion in the gemara that one is not permitted to take a vow. How then did Yaakov take a vow (Bereishit ch.28). Tosfot explains that all agree that one is permitted to take a vow in times of trouble.

We might think that precisely when a person is anguished he cannot be trusted to fulfill his vows. However, G-d trusts us to have faith in Him and to repay our vows even if He seems not to be answering our prayers.

For example, when a Jew promises to give charity as a merit for an ill relative, G-d is confident that the vow will be fulfilled even if the relative does not recover. It is a Jew's nature to accept G-d's decrees.

The gemara (Shabbat 88a) records that a certain heretic told the sage Rava, "You are an impetuous nation! You should have heard what G-d was offering before you accepted it." Rava responded by explaining that when Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah unconditionally without even knowing its contents, they expressed their faith in Hashem that He would not mislead or disappoint them. This is precisely the same Jewish trait that was mentioned above in connection with the making of vows.

We learn a halachah from Yaakov's vow. From the fact that he said (Bereishit 29:22), "I will repeatedly tithe to You," we learn that one is permitted to give up to two-tenths, or one-fifth, of his wealth to charity. This is alluded to in the word "terumah" as well, as we can read the word: "to'rem heh"/"he gives five (i.e., one-fifth)."

However, we could not learn this halachah from Yaakov's vow if we did not know that Yaakov was permitted to take a vow. And, we would not know that Yaakov was permitted to take a vow in his time of trouble if the Jews had not said, "Na'aseh ve'nishmah."

This is why at the moment when Bnei Yisrael said, "Na'aseh ve'nishmah," Hashem said, "Let them take for Me terumah."