



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Mr & Mrs Naftoli Cohen.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Johnny Berkowitz on the birth of a grandson, born to Mr & Mrs Avishai Berkovitz.

Friday Night Shiur

Now that we're in the winter season, the Friday night Shiur restarts this week for about 15 minutes and takes place straight after Maariv in the Shiur rooms.

Ovos uBonim Season Restarts

The new season of Ovos uBonim restarts this Motzei Shabbos - the perfect time to do your kids Kodesh homework!

Ovos uBonim takes place an hour and a quarter after Nacht in Shul.

Intifada 2.1 Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

Sarah said to Avraham, "Drive out this handmaid and her son . . ." (Bereishis 21:10)

It's a conspiracy. This is a phrase that excites some and makes others nauseous. For some, conspiracies are the spice of life while for others they are the source of unwelcome paranoia. Everyone knows they exist, but no one really knows to what extent.

Though "conspiracy" has a negative connotation not all conspiracies are bad. Some are in the best interest of others, such as when parents conspire to trick their child into taking medicine he or she needs but won't take. Sometimes leaders will make decisions for the welfare of their constituents and disguise what they are doing to avoid interference.

The greatest conspirator of all is probably G-d Himself. He is constantly directing history in backhanded ways, fooling us into believing that history is going one way when it is really going another direction altogether. Kabbalah calls this "mirmah u'tachboles," which means "trickery and scheming" (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Ch. 38), or "allilus," which means "pretext" (Tanchuma, Vayaishev 10), or "kavshei d'Rachamana," where are "secrets of G-d" (Brochos 10a).

Everything He conspires to do however, as the Talmud states, is for man's own good (Brochos 60b). Though we do not always see it that way, and even get angry at G-d for it, at the end we will even agree to all that G-d did "behind our backs."

One example of this has to be Yishmael. In last week's parshah he was born at the insistence of Sarah. At the end of the parshah he received Bris Milah, which the Zohar says, entitled him to Eretz Yisroel for 1300 years, which he now has a hard time giving back. And, in this week's parshah he is sent packing with his mother, which couldn't have done very much good for his already limited love and respect for Yitzchak and his descendants.

Indeed, all the suffering we're going through now because of the Arabs is the result of what occurred in these two parshios. None of it would have been possible or would have happened if G-d hadn't sanctioned

and set it up. He certainly told Avraham to listen to Sarah when it came time to send Hagar and Yishmael away.

Understanding this comes from understanding a specific idea that is the basis of all of history.

It seems as if the Jewish people have been at war forever. There have been periods of respite, but far less than there have been periods of being vilified, hunted, pillaged, massacred, etc.

If someone believes in the Torah then it should come as no surprise. The Torah speaks more than once about the Divine response to straying from Torah values, which is not the hardest thing to do. There are 613 commandments and though they do not apply to everyone, enough of them do to make life a spiritual challenge.

Part of the question is why such punishment has affected righteous and non-righteous alike. There are a few answers to the question. One is tikun. Suffering rectifies a person and the world, especially when it is "unwarranted" and accepted with love, something that can only apply to righteous people.

Another answer is that the righteous may not be as righteous as they seem. They may be guilty of things that we don't notice but Heaven does. As the Talmud says, G-d deals with the righteous to a hairsbreadth, holding them responsible for sins for which the average person could never be held accountable.

It could have to do with reincarnation. It is explained in Sha'ar HaGilgulim how, unbeknownst to everyone especially the person himself, the mistakes of a previous incarnation can be the source of suffering in one that follows.

There is another explanation as well, one that is more global and Kabbalistic. Nevertheless, it is important to know especially as a "keitz," a Divinely-designated time for redemption, at least on some level, approaches.

As incredibly diverse as the world is, everything is basically a function

The Week Ahead

| פרשת וירא | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Candle Lighting | 4.26pm |
| Mincha | 4.31pm |
| Seder Halimud | 8.40am |
| Shacharis | 9.00am |
| סוף זמן ק"ש | 9.28am |
| 1st Mincha | 1.30pm |
| Rov's Shiur | 3.40pm |
| 2nd Mincha | 4.10pm |
| סעודה שלישית | following |
| Maariv & Motzei Shabbos | 5.30pm |
| Ovos uBonim | 6.45pm |
| Sunday | 7.15am / 8.20am |
| Mon / Thurs | 6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am |
| Tues / Wed / Fri | 6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am |
| Mincha & Maariv | 4.20pm |
| Late Maariv | 8.00pm |

two kinds of Divine light, Chesed and Gevurah, literally “Kindness” and “Strength.” The diversity is the result of the varying of the mixture of the two from creation to creation.

According to Kabbalah, Chesed is compared to water. Like water it emanates out and shares itself with whatever it comes into contact. It also tends to unify, just as water turns grains of flour into a unified dough. It reveals G-d and is often the result of a revelation of G-d.

Gevurah, on the other hand, is compared to fire. It is a light which constricts and restricts. It causes fragmentation, just as fire turns a piece of wood into individual ashes. It is the source of evil within Creation and very often results in Hester Panim, the “hiding” of the “face” of G-d.

Few people ever happily sin. People in general do not like to do the wrong thing and regret having done so after the transgression has occurred. They often speak about being overcome by temptation, as if some inner force, called the “yetzer hara,” overpowered them forcing them to sin.

This is Gevurah at work. First, Gevurah may be the reason why the person has not learned enough to avoid the sin, or to appreciate the consequence of succumbing to temptation. Then Gevurah creates the temptation to do the wrong thing while providing the rationalizations to do it. Finally, Gevurah provides the necessary energy to carry out the sin from start to finish.

What if a person decides to resist his temptation and do the right thing instead? What if he puts up a fight against his yetzer hara and chooses not to succumb to its machinations? That too is a function of Gevuros as well.

The same way that Gevuros is the energy that compels a person to sin it is also the energy that a person uses to exercise self-discipline. This is the basis of every spiritual test and self-growth: Will Gevuros overcome the person and cause him to sin, or will he use Gevuros to overcome temptation and avoid sin?

For Creation, there is not much of a difference between the two. For the person, there is all the difference in the world.

This is because there is a set amount of Gevuros to be used in the world, and when they have been completely consumed history comes to an end. Whether a person sins or avoids sin, either way Gevuros are being used.

The important difference is what happens to the Gevuros after they have been used. A sin may use Gevuros, but what was consumed cannot ascend to its rightful place in the spiritual realm until it has been spiritually cleansed. This translates into “cleansing” punishment for the sinner, unless he does teshuvah first.

If however Gevuros are used in a positive manner, one that is consistent with the purpose of Creation, then they are instantly rectified, something Kabbalah calls “Mituk HaGevuros,” literally, “sweetening the Gevuros.” The moral act itself rectifies the Gevuros, spiritually enhancing them, and they can ascend to their place in the spiritual realm immediately.

Not only this, but every time a person “sweetens” a Gevurah, it becomes a portion of his World-to-Come. Sweetened Gevuros are the merit that we build up in this world to “spend” in the next one. This is how mitzvos earn us reward in Olam HaBa, and why the more you put into a mitzvah the more you get out of it.

Nothing sweetens Gevuros better than Mesiras Nefesh—self-sacrifice. The greatest service of G-d is not the amount of mitzvos one has completed, but the self-sacrifice invested in the mitzvos one is performing.

This is why even though both sinning and performing mitzvos consume Gevuros and further the cause of history, the latter is preferred by G-d and man. How much self-sacrifice does it take to sin? How much punishment has man endured to purify the Gevuros he used to sin instead of a mitzvah?

The problem arises because of something the Talmud calls “keitzin,” literally “ends” but which refers to Divine deadlines for some aspect of redemption. If G-d didn't care how quickly history wrapped up there

would be less of a need for all the suffering the Jewish people have undergone.

But He does care, and the redemption clock is always ticking on the rectification of the Gevuros of Creation. This means that a certain amount of Gevuros must be used up by the time a keitz comes, or all of the Gevuros by the time THE Keitz arrives, that is, THE Final Redemption.

In fact, though you can't always tell when a keitz is coming you can often tell when one has occurred. This is when something redemption-oriented happens just after something painful has occurred to the Jewish people. The greater the suffering the greater the keitz.

It's like going to a store to purchase something that is only on sale for the day, and not having enough money. It is unlikely that the storekeeper will settle for a lesser price, forcing the purchaser to make up the difference.

A solution might be to offer to work off the balance. The person can pay the difference in “suffering,” that is, by performing some kind of task for the storeowner that he deems equal to the money that is lacking.

Likewise, if a keitz is coming and more Gevuros remain unrectified than necessary, according to the Divine plan, to “pay” for the upcoming keitz, there are two possible solutions. Sometimes the keitz can be pushed off to a later time, which can have negative consequences if the Jewish people need it to remain safe.

Other times, when a keitz cannot be pushed off, another form of “payment” of Gevuros becomes necessary to make up the “balance.” The Holocaust was such a payment, which is what people mean when they say that the modern state of Israel was founded upon the ashes of the Holocaust.

Whether the period of suffering lasts years or whether it lasts a short time, it always for the sake of using up Gevuros. That is not something easily understood during the suffering, or even after it. One day in the future when history reaches its end and Creation, its intended purpose, all the pieces will fall into place.

Once again, the Jewish people are under siege. The world thinks that it is because the Israelis refuse to grant the Palestinians statehood, and to surrender additional Jewish land. Jews think that is simply because the Arabs hate them and use every opportunity they can to murder, or at least harm the Jewish nation.

All of that is only true on a superficial level. It is the mechanism that Heaven uses to create the scenarios that accomplish the real task, that of consuming and sweetening Gevuros. The change to the status quo that has resulted in yet another Intifada is not simply because the Arabs have become restless and impatient. They are always that way.

Rather, it is because the status quo of history has changed. A keitz is coming and too many Gevuros remain unrectified to allow it to occur, while history, apparently, will not allow it to be pushed off any longer. The additional suffering to the Jewish people, be it physical or psychological, is in order to make up the “difference” to pay for the upcoming keitz.

The only question remaining is, how big a keitz will it be, and much of a payment will we have to make up?



It's back!

**Restarting this Motzei Shabbos
at 6.45pm!**

**Fathers bring your sons,
sons bring your fathers**