



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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פרשת בראשית - כ"ז תשרי תשע"ו

News This Week

מזל טוב

- Mazel Tov to Rabbi & Mrs David Braunold on the recent birth and Bris of a grandson in London.
- Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Moshe Bakst on the recent birth and bris of their son Dovid. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Mr & Mrs Chizky Salomon.
- Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Peter Nissen on the recent birth and bris of a grandson born to Mr & Mrs Dovid Nissenbaum.
- Mazel Tov to Mr and Mrs Chizky Salomon on the engagement of their daughter Tova to Shragi Steinberg.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush this Shabbos after Davenning in honour of the Chosson Bereishis, Dr Zev Davis

סעודה שלישית

The **סעודה שלישית** season restarts this Shabbos after the second Minyan for Mincha

Work Around

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." (Bereishis 2:17)

From the story itself it seems as if immortality was an option. Until man ate from the Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra—the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—he was free of death. Had he not eaten, seemingly, he would have remained that way forever and death would have been only a potential, not a reality.

The Midrash says otherwise: "Go and see the works of G-d, awesome in deed toward mankind" (Tehillim 66:5): Go and see how when The Holy One, Blessed is He, created the world, He created the Angel of Death on the first day as well . . . Man was created on the sixth day and yet death was blamed on him! To what is this similar? To a man who decided that he wanted to divorce his wife and wrote her a bill of divorce, after which he came home holding it, looking for a pretext to give it to her. He told her, "Prepare me something to drink."

She did, and taking it he said [to her], "Here is your Get." She asked him, "Why?". He told her, "Leave my house. You made me a warm drink."

She said, "You were able to know [before coming home] that I would prepare you a warm drink that you wrote a bill of divorce in advance and came home with it?"

Adam said something similar to The Holy One, Blessed is He, "Master of the Universe! The Torah was with You for 2,000 years before You created the world . . . and what is written in it, 'This is the law when a man will die in a tent' (Bamidbar 19:14). If You had not decided that Your creations should be able to die, would You have written this? Yet You blame death on me!" (Tanchuma, Vayaishev 4)

As Adam HaRishon astutely pointed out, death is an integral part of the Torah. There are all kinds of laws to do with death, from laws of mourning to laws of ritual purity. It's not as if they did not have to exist and G-d only later included them to adapt Torah to man's changed reality. The mitzvos are eternal, including the laws to do with death and dying.

There is however an interesting idea that provides direction for this

discussion. The Talmud says the following:
Jewish sinners who transgress with their bodies . . . go to Gehinom and are punished there for twelve months. What does "Jewish sinners who transgress with their bodies" mean? Rav said: This refers to the head which does not put on Tefillin. (Rosh Hashanah 17a)

If the person is involved with Torah learning then it is as if he put on Tefillin, as the Mechilta says: One who is involved with Torah learning is not obligated in [the mitzvah of] Tefillin . . . (Tosfos)

On the surface of it, the wearing of Tefillin and the learning of Torah seem to be two separate mitzvos. Though both share the goal of bringing a person closer to G-d, each is a unique way of doing so and seems to compliment the other. Otherwise, why would they be two different mitzvos?

The discussion becomes even more difficult to put into perspective when one considers another "replacement" for Tefillin.

The Torah tells us that Ya'akov Avinu served his uncle and father-in-law, Lavan, for 14 years. During that time he did little to increase his own personal wealth, which he took the next six years to do. Though he made his uncle rich in a conventional manner, he seemed to use less conventional means to speed up the process of acquiring his own wealth:

And Ya'akov took himself moist rod[s] of trembling poplar and hazelnut, and chestnut, and he peeled white streaks upon them, baring the white that was on the rods. He thrust the rods that he had peeled into the gutters in the watering troughs where the animals would come to drink opposite the [other] animals, and they would come into heat when they came to drink. The flocks came into heat by the rods, and the animals bore ringed, spotted, and striped [young]. And Ya'akov separated the sheep, and he turned the faces of the animals toward the ringed one[s] and every brown one among Lavan's animals, and he made himself flocks by himself, and he did not place them with Lavan's animals. It came to pass that whenever the animals that were bearing their first would come into heat, Ya'akov would place the rods in the troughs before the eyes of the animals, [in order] to bring them into heat by [means of] the rods. If the animals would delay he would not place them, so that the ones that delayed were Lavan's, and the ones that bore their first became Ya'akov's. The man became very wealthy, and he had prolific animals, and maidservants and manservants, and

The Week Ahead

פרשת בראשית	שבת שובה
Candle Lighting	6.12pm
Mincha	6.17pm
Seder Halimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.10am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	5.54pm
סעודה שלישית	following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	7.14pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Friday	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	6.05pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

camels and donkeys. (Bereishis 30:37-43)

Again, on the surface of it, it would seem that this episode has nothing to do with the mitzvah of Tefillin. On a deeper level though it turns out that it does everything to do with Tefillin. When Ya'akov placed the sticks into the gutters he accomplished the same thing as the mitzvah of Tefillin. What? How?

An analogy will help. When a person winds a watch he is only aware of the small dial that he can barely turn with his fingers. If he is changing the time then he will also notice the hands of the watch move as well as he turns the dial, though not at the same rate as the dial he is turning. But, he probably won't even think twice about how that works.

If he opens the watch he will be surprised to learn that the dial he turned is not directly connected to the hands of the watch. Rather, there is an intricate system of large and small gears that mesh together to make it possible for the watch to be wound and with accuracy. Furthermore, he will find a coiled spring that allows the watch to tick at a consistent rate and to keep relatively accurate time. The more expensive the watch the more intricate and refined the system will be.

The average person does not open watches to see how they work. Whether they are wound or battery-operated digital watches, most people do not give much thought to what makes an item work. As long as they function well, or can be repaired by an expert when they don't, then people are satisfied.

This is true of the material world, and of the spiritual world as well. Does the average person have any idea of what actually happens when he or she prays? Or, when a person performs a mitzvah does it occur to him or her that something other than obedience is being accomplished? Do people even know that there are invisible "gears" being "turned" when they perform a good deed?

In the physical world there is something called a "work around." It is a term that means a person has used an alternative method to accomplish a particular goal usually achieved by another, perhaps more straightforward process. It could be that the principle method is not working or that there is a more advantageous reason to use the work around. Either way the glitch has been "worked around" and the desired result has been accomplished.

If the goal being attempted and the system to achieve it is not sophisticated, a simple work around is enough. If the opposite is true, then a work around requires intimate knowledge of the system and how it works. Otherwise it will fail and perhaps even make the situation worse.

If you think a million dollar watch is intricate, it is nothing compared to the inner workings on the spiritual world. If you think that a half-million dollar supercomputer is incredibly sophisticated, it is child's play compared to the phenomenally intricate system of sefiros and partzufim Divinely-designed and installed to bring the life-supporting light of G-d to man. It is the same system that also allows the spiritual light that man generates through mitzvos to ascend to the upper worlds, spiritually nourishing them and allowing for blessing in return.

The study of such a system falls under the category of Torah learning called "Sod," or "Kabbalah." It is also the basis of many manmade miracles.

There are miracle workers who simply have the merit to ask G-d to do the supernatural and He complies. They're not really miracle workers, but people for whom seemingly supernatural things occur for one reason or another. The Talmud is filled with many examples of such people, two of the most famous being Chanina ben Dosa and Choni HaMagel.

There are also miracle workers who simply understand the not-so-simple spiritual system of Creation, and know which sefiros to "press" and which ones to "avoid" to get a desired result. They can even figure out times of the day that are more appropriate for certain acts to increase the possibility of achieving a "miraculous" result. They are spiritual technicians.

In the world of mechanical devices, a really good technician can often resurrect something that most others gave up on, including less capable technicians. When the device comes back to life, the happy owner will often say to the "hero," "You're a miracle worker!" The technician if he is humble will deny the superlative and just explain which principles of physics he took advantage of, to bring the seemingly irrevocably dead device back to life.

Likewise, people often call Kabbalists "miracle workers" for providing information or a desired result that seemingly could only be arrived at through supernatural means. If they are authentic, which means G-d-fearing, then they will refuse the appellation knowing well that they are blessed to understand how G-d runs His world and to use that knowledge to help others.

This brings us back to the middle of the discussion. Ya'akov, like all of the Avos, were master Kabbalists. When they acted, especially on such history altering levels, it was with a tremendous knowledge of how to use the physical world to impact the spiritual realm in very precise ways. At the time that Ya'akov made his fortune, which he did only for holy and historic reasons, he needed to access the energy of Tefillin and the sefiros to which they correspond. The custom made sticks he used were a "work around." This now brings us back to the beginning of the discussion.

Though death was the punishment for disobeying G-d and eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it was more a form of tikun—world rectification. By eating the forbidden fruit, Adam HaRishon tipped the scales, so-to-speak, and death was the counterbalance. If you are going to add a weight to the left side of the scale then you have to add one as well to the right side to keep the scale in balance. Death was also more than this. You can't be the opposite of life, the opposite of immortality and not be some central concept and underpinning of Creation. It is interesting how when G-d made the covenant with Avraham, he told him:

I am the Almighty G-d; walk before Me and be perfect. (Bereishis 17:1)
There are different Hebrew words that could have been used to say "perfect," but the one that G-d chose is "tamim," which can also mean "pure," or "simple." In fact, it is the same word used to describe Ya'akov Avinu in his early days, before he was forced to become more directly involved in the direction of Jewish destiny:

Ya'akov was an innocent man, dwelling in tents. (Bereishis 25:27)
The Hebrew word for "innocent" is "tam," and its spelled Tav-Mem. Not coincidentally, these are the same letters of the Hebrew word for "death," except in reverse. Also not coincidentally, the Talmud says: Ya'akov did not die. (Ta'anis 5b)

Thus, though Adam HaRishon was correct, that death was a concept built into Creation long before he sinned, its application was decided because of his sin. The perfection that G-d asked of Avraham and the innocence with which Ya'akov Avinu lived accomplished through life what death accomplishes through, well, death.

The very few who have known this, understood this, and lived their lives accordingly to it were those very few who also beat death.

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