



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

פרשת תזריע מצרע - א אייר תשע"ה - 25th April 2015 - Volume 7 - Issue 41

## T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Stephen Weider on the birth of a grandson, born to Mr & Mrs Binny Berlin.

### חיים ארוכים

We wish **חיים ארוכים** to Mrs Vera Issler on the Petirah of her mother, Mrs E. Kind.

### Ovos uBonim Summer Season

The new Ovos uBonim Summer programme starts this week at 5.00pm on Shabbos followed by Mincha at 6.00pm.

### AGM Nominations

A reminder that nominations for the forthcoming AGM need to be submitted no later than Tuesday 28th April to [office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk](mailto:office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk).

### Siyum Reminder

There are still plenty of Mishnayos available for the annual Siyum which takes place after Shavuot. Please put your name against the Mishnayos you intend to learn on the list on the notice wall.

## T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### The Meaning of Life

Rabbi Chaim Dovid Green (Torah.org)

"When a woman will conceive and give birth..." (Leviticus 12:2). This week's parsha continues the detailed discussion of ritual disqualification. There are times when entering certain places of sanctity and eating certain sanctified foods are prohibited, those times being when we find ourselves in a state of ritual disqualification. The Torah notes that this is the case for a woman after giving birth to a child.

These verses lead the midrash into the discussion of the purpose of the creation of humankind. "This is what is stated: 'You have formed the front and back of me...'" (Psalms 139:5). Reish Lakish said: "The front," this is (refers to) the first day (of creation), and "the back" this is the last day (of creation). If one merits he is told "you have preceded the entire creation." If not, he is told (even) a mosquito preceded you in creation."

The Yalkut Lekach Tov quotes several questions on this midrash. Firstly, mankind was created on the 6th day of creation. Why is he told (if he merits) that he was created before everything else? Secondly, why is it so terrible to be created last? We save the best for last.

The work Bais Yitzchok quoted by the Yalkut Lekach Tov, explains as follows. Once many great philosophers joined together to contemplate the world and everything therein. Their goal was to come to understand the purpose that every creature serves, and the benefit that each one brings to the world. After long and arduous work, they indeed found a purpose for everything. Some things are for food. Other things serve as cures. Some things serve mankind, such as horses and donkeys, etc. They concluded that nothing however minute is created for nought.

After their study was concluded, they celebrated its success with a great feast. Amidst the drinking and celebrating, one of the wise philosophers turned to the others and stated: "We have indeed

labored and succeeded in finding the purpose of all there is in the world. However, there is one creature which we have missed completely. We have not given any thought as to its purpose; MANKIND!

What need does the world have for us?" No one could come up with the benefits which mankind brings to the world. On the contrary, the more they delved into the subject, the more they realized that he does only damage, and no real good. They chop down trees, slaughter and eat animals and fowl and fish, and they destroy and eat plant life to name just a few things. Everything mankind does is only for his own good, and selfish needs.

The conclusion that they subsequently reached is that mankind has a higher purpose than other forms of life in the creation. This also brought them to the conclusion that there is a soul which lives beyond the lifespan of the body.

The conclusion of the team of philosophers coincides with the Torah perspective. We possess this knowledge from our Torah and our sages who taught us that everything in the world was created to aid us in doing G-d's will. That is the fulfillment of its purpose in this world, when we utilize the world with for that end.

When a person works, for example, in a field, he does all of the necessary jobs which cause the earth to yield its harvest. Afterwards, he refines the produce, and he scrupulously separates and distributes the tithes required by the Torah. That act gives a new and higher dimension to the entire process. When he eats the food he has grown, he recites a blessing to G-d, and recognizes his Benefactor. The produce becomes a vehicle through which he serves G-d. That is its intended purpose, and its life's mission.

It has realized its true potential. Consequently, mankind is not destroying, but elevating the entire creation. This is the meaning of telling him that "you have preceded the entire creation." You were the original thought for which all things were created, and you have lived

### The Week Ahead

#### פרשת תזריע מצרע

1st Mincha / Candle Lighting	6.40pm / Not before 6.55pm
2nd Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.20pm / 7.29 - 7.45pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.27am
<b>Ovos uBonim</b>	<b>5.00pm</b>
1st Mincha	6.00pm
2nd Mincha	8.19pm
Rov's Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	9.24pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

your life according to G-d's expectations and elevated the entire creation.

On the other hand, when a person acts irresponsibly, and does not use the world for its intended purpose, then he is indeed destroying the creation for his own selfish purposes. In that case he is told: "the mosquito preceded you." You have lowered yourself to the level of a thief and a force of destruction.

We are here for a reason. Let us take it to heart and utilize the creation in a way that elevates it. Let us not use our good fortune for our own ends, but rather in a way through which we can show our gratitude to our Creator.

**We Have the Manual for Life!** **Rabbi Yaakov Menken (Torah.org)**

"This shall be the law of the Metzora..." [14:2]

A "metzora" was a person afflicted with tzara'as, a spiritual ailment that looked like leprosy -- but which could also strike a person's clothing or house. Our Sages said (Medrash Tehillim and Yalkut Shimoni): "HaMetzora: HaMotzi Ra." The Metzora was "[he] who put forth evil." They taught us that it came to a person who spoke Lashon Hara, who gossiped and spoke evil about others.

There is a story in the Medrash concerning a traveling medicine salesman, who came through various towns around Tzipori and called out, "who would like to purchase the potion of life?"

One of the Sages who lived there was Rebbe Yannai. Rebbe Yannai heard the salesman, and went over to him and said, "bring your bag here -- sell me some!"

The salesman replied, "you don't need it, neither you nor those like you." [Rebbe Yannai was a Torah scholar, and Torah provides its own protection.]

Nonetheless, Rebbe Yannai pressed him, until the salesman brought out a book of Psalms. And he showed him Psalm 52:14, "Who is the man who desires life, who loves days, to see good?" Asked the salesman, "What are the next verses? 'Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking falsehood. Turn away from evil and do good, desire peace and pursue it!'"

Rebbe Yannai said, "all the days of my life I read this verse, and I did not understand its simple meaning -- until this salesman came and taught it to me."

Rebbe Yannai believed that the verse referred to the world which is truly good, the World to Come. Guard your Tongue, and you will be rewarded -- which, of course, is true. But the potion salesman, who came with all sorts of medications, taught him that guarding your tongue works in the "here and now." It's good medicine!

Honestly, I understood this as a gift from Heaven, a reward for not gossiping. We see in the Torah that G-d promises to lengthen the lives of those who honor their father and mother (Exodus 20:12), and I thought that this was similar.

The Kochav MiYaakov explains that even this is not all it means. Think, he says, about what gossip causes: fights, hatred, animosity -- things which quite literally harm the health of a person, which shorten his life.

The wisdom of the Torah isn't just trying to tell us how to get a good seat in Heaven. The Torah is called Toras Chayim, Instructions for Life. A recent book began: "we're all flying on this big blue spaceship, which has no instruction manual." But it does -- and we have it.

Just yesterday a reporter called me, concerning an upcoming article about religion on the Internet. Someone had told him that the Internet was forcing clergy to make religion "more relevant." It had to affect people's day-to-day lives, he said, or they wouldn't frequent religious Web sites.

I told him that I really couldn't respond -- Judaism is so hands-on that there's nothing to change. Judaism is all about learning and doing. As the Kochav MiYaakov writes, guarding your tongue is not only a mitzvah, which will be rewarded in the World to Come, but a simple medicine, something which improves the health of a person and extends his life.

People who try to "make Judaism more relevant" don't know what

Judaism has! Judaism is about taking the lessons and applying them to new situations. Judaism is about making our daily lives more G-dly -- and happier, and longer, at the same time.

## Self-Help

**Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)**

In defining the laws of tzora'as, the disease that afflicts gossips with a white skin blemish, the Torah outlines a detailed process in which the plague is contracted, diagnosed and cured. The afflicted, one who has contracted tzora'as, is referred to as a metzora, and the Talmud tells us that the disease of tzora'as comes from the sin of slander.

As soon as the potential metzora notices the discoloration of the skin, he must immediately visit a kohen for spiritual counsel. The kohen is the only one who is able to either declare a state of impurity by officially acknowledging the disease, dismiss the initial diagnosis, or announce the recuperation. Of course, one who has indulged in the evils of scandal and gossip would be better served by a priest, and it is the kohen who shall guide the metzora through the healing process.

If, after an incubation period that follows the initial observation, the tzora'as subsides, the afflicted patient is declared tahor and may return back to the camp from which he has been expelled.

In the second of this week's two portions, the Torah reviews the healing process, which involves, among other rites, offerings and immersion in a mikveh. But before any of this is done the Torah tells us that the "kohen shall go to the outside of the camp and shall look (at the afflicted one) and behold the tzara'as affliction has been healed from the metzora" (Leviticus 14:3).

A number of commentators are intrigued by the Torah's extra verbiage. It would have been enough to state, "and behold the tzara'as affliction has been healed." Why must the Torah add the words, "from the afflicted metzora"? Of course, the wound was healed "from the metzora." Surely it was not healed from the kohen!

A fellow decided to go out drinking after work. At 2 a.m., the bar closed and he went home drunk. He tip-toed up the stairs, tripped and fell head over heels, landing on his face, breaking the nearly empty pint bottle that fell from his back-pocket. The broken glass cut him on his cheek and forehead. Being so drunk, he did not immediately realize he was injured.

A few minutes later, as he was undressing, he noticed blood, so he checked himself in the mirror. He repaired the damage as best he could under the circumstances, and he went to bed.

The next morning, his head throbbed, and his injury was painful. He hunkered under the covers trying to think up some good story when his wife came into the bedroom.

"Well, you surely must have been drunk last night," she said. "I thought you promised to stop drinking!"

"I worked late," he said, "and I came home after you were asleep."

"That's a lie," she replied. "What are the cuts on your face all about?"

"Oh, I tripped on the way out of the office," replied the man as he felt the dried blood on his cheek and forehead. He felt for the band-aids, but there were none. He thought that he had bandaged and applied ointment to the wounds.

His wife laughed cynically. "You were very drunk last night, and I won't put up with it any longer!"

"What makes you so sure I got drunk last night, anyway?" he countered.

"Well," she replied, "my first big clue was when I got up this morning and found first aid cream and a bunch of band-aids stuck all over the mirror."

Perhaps the words, "healed from the afflicted metzora," teach us a lesson about every affliction that stems from a spiritual malady. There is nowhere to find the cure but from the afflicted himself. External salves are only band-aid solutions that do not affect the core problem. If the issue that caused the affliction in the case of the metzora was immoderate and unacceptable gossip then the remedy must come from within. There is no excuse, nowhere to place the blame but on the metzora himself and the only way the plague will heal is when the "tzara'as affliction has been healed from the metzora."