



Ohr Yerushalayim News

י"ז אלול תשפ"ו - כי תבוא - 29th August 2026 - Volume 19 - Issue 9

News This Week

Mazel Tov

Mazel tov to Eric and Sue Sievers on the engagement of their grandson, Avrohom Zvi Davies to Estie Leigh from London

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening, sponsored by Miles and Linda Levine in honor of the Yahrzeit of Linda's mother, Toby Levine

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this week:

Shabbos, 16th Elul - Petra Rodrigues-Pereira for her father
Thurs, 21st Elul - Joy Berkovitz for her father, Marilyn Sacho for her father and Linda Levine for her mother

Fine Print

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

There is nothing more disheartening than a curse. And this week the Torah singles out specific violations that are worthy of the epithet, "cursed is he who..." The Torah tells us that the nation was divided into two parts. Six tribes stood on Mount Grizim, and the rest stood on Mount Ebal. The Levites began to specify the sins that the Torah prefaced with the harsh warning, "accursed is one who," and the nation would respond amen. Included among the terrible crimes are one who moves his neighbors' boundary and one who misleads a blind man on the road. The curses also include carnal sins and striking a person covertly (Deuteronomy 27:12-25). In fact, almost each curse is directed toward a sin that entails some degree of surreptitiousness. All except the final curse, "Accursed is the one who does not uphold the words of the Torah to perform them" (Deuteronomy 27:26). Rashi explains the last admonition as a general warning to heed all the laws in the Torah lest one suffer the curses.

The Ramban, however, softens Rashi's severe interpretation. He explains that the curse is not cast on one who actually commits a sin, but rather on those who scoff at the validity of the Torah's laws.

Following his simple explanation, the Ramban writes something startling. "It appears to me that the words 'accursed is the one who does not uphold the words of the Torah' refers to one who is called upon to do the hagbah ceremony in the synagogue and does not stretch out the Torah wide enough for the congregation to see the words."

For years I was terribly disturbed by that explanation. I could not fathom the sense of comparison. How can the Ramban equate one who does a poor hagbah with those who surreptitiously undermine the welfare of their neighbor or create clandestine instability within the family? How can we attribute the harsh words of accursed to one who does not have what it takes to do a proper hagbah?

On a whistle stop tour during his term in office Calvin Coolidge's train stopped in St. Louis where a crowd of nearly 2,500 people gathered to hear him. He was sleeping in his rail car when the train stopped at the station and Colonel Starling, Coolidge's personal assistant and agent-in-charge, nudged him awake.

"Mr. President," he said while tapping him on the shoulder, "there are almost three thousand people who are waiting to hear you!"

The remarkably restrained Coolidge and the first lady stepped out onto the train's observation platform. The crowd applauded wildly. Then the local master of ceremonies called for silence. "The President is about to speak now!"

אלול תשפ"ו

Urgent appeal from the Rov

תשובה תפילה וצדקה

מעבירין את רוע הגזרה

With the approach of the ימים נוראים I remind and request each and every member or Mispalel, who is able, to support the annual collection for funds to help those of our Kehilla who require a "top up" for Yom Tov expenses.

All donations are gratefully accepted with a ברכה for a שנה טובה ומתוקה.

Donations can be made in any of the following

1. Directly to the Rov (in Shul or at home) either cash, cheque or voucher payable to "The Beis" (charity no. 1175468)

2. By bank transfer to A/c Name: The Beis Sort Code: 53-81-36 A/c No. 86290711 Reference: RHC 87.

Please note and use new charity name and reference. Thank you for your generous response

תזכו למצוות ולמעשים טובים ולשנה טובה ומתוקה

The President stood silently with his wide smile. He straightened his jacket and smoothed his hair and appeared very presidential. The crowd waited anxiously for him to begin his speech. The President waited, too. Just then, there was a hiss of air as the brakes were released and the train began pulling away from the station. The President, still smiling, raised his hand, waved, and spoke. He said, "Goodbye."

Perhaps the Ramban is telling us more. When one displays the parchment of the Torah but does not unfurl the columns, he deprives a congregation of seeing the true essence of Torah. He parades with a Torah scroll with the shiny handles and the traditional parchment. It looks beautiful, and majestic. It even looks very Jewish. And the crowd waits for the real context to be shown and seen. But if those columns are not unfurled for the congregation to read, the stark reality of G-d's command is hidden

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.05pm
Candle Lighting	7.13pm-7.30pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.41am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
Mincha	6.00pm / 7.53pm
Motzei Shabbos	8.58pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

behind the splendor of the moment. The one who does hagbah is in effect misleading the blind, sneaking a false border and making overt displays of honesty that are rife with deceit. For in reality a serious truth is being underhandedly hidden. And for that, the Ramban links him with the definitive consequences of those who morally deprave Torah ideals. Obviously, one who proudly unfurls the truth and tells the story as it appears, is worthy of the greatest blessings offered in the Torah. For there is no greater blessing than the open honesty and true teaching of Hashem's will. Lifting a Torah, unopened, in front of a waiting audience is nothing more than dissapointing an excited crowd who are waiting for a substantive speech. You may be waving enthusiastically, but all you are saying is goodbye.

Influencing Others

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Ki Savo. It begins with two commandments applicable to when Bnei Yisroel will dwell in the Land of Israel. The first mitzva, bikurim, is that the first fruits are to be brought to the Beis Hamikdash and given to the Kohen. The second mitzva is called viduy maaser. On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and the seventh years of the seven-year cycle of maaser, a person recites a viduy that he has distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner.

Moshe also commands Bnei Yisroel what to do when they'll cross the Yarden, entering Eretz Yisroel. "Elah ya'amdu l'varech es ha'am ol Har Grizim... v'elah ya'amdu ol ha'k'lala b'Har Aival {These (tribes) will stand on Mount Grizim to bless the nation ... and these will stand on Mount Aival for the curse}[27:12-13]." Rashi quotes the Talmud [Sotah 32A] which elucidates the exact proceeding which took place. Six tribes ascended Har Grizim and six ascended Har Aival. The Kohanim, Levi'im and the Holy Ark were assembled in the middle. The Levi'im turned toward Har Grizim and began with the first blessing: Blessed is the person who will not make a molten image etc. Both groups answered: Amein. They then turned toward Har Aival and pronounced the curse: Cursed is the person who will make a molten image etc. Again, both groups answered: Amein. This was the procedure for each of the eleven blessings and curses.

The final blessing was: "Blessed is the person who upholds the words of this Torah to fulfill them [27:26]." Rashi explains that this encompasses the fulfillment of the entire Torah. The Ramban quotes the Talmud Yerushalmi which explains differently. This commandment, according to the Yerushalmi, applies to the king and the other leaders in power. They are commanded to use this power to make sure the Torah is upheld and fulfilled.

The Chofetz Chaim carries this concept a step further. This obligation doesn't apply just to the national leaders but to every person who can influence others...

In truth, there isn't a person in the world who can't influence others to a certain degree. Every person, using their abilities within their circle of relatives/friends/co-workers/acquaintances can have a profound impact. Very often we'll procrastinate with a certain endeavor until a little push, coming from left field, will finally impel us to begin. We then realize how our procrastinating caused us to miss out, both on the aforementioned blessing and on the wonderful sense of gratification gained by touching others in a meaningful way.

I teach at a Yeshiva called Neveh Zion. For quite a while, the person running our web-site had been asking me to write something on the weekly parsha. Not wanting to have the responsibility of turning something out each week, I repeatedly refused. Many months later, during a trip to the States, one of my talmidim related to me that he and others would enjoy reading some thoughts from me each week. I agreed to write some divrei Torah and send them out. Upon returning to Eretz Yisroel, I informed our web-master that I'd be writing weekly and that he could post it on our web-site. For me, that little push opened up a whole new world.

People run to different tzaddikim and mekubali to receive their blessings. Imagine how we'd jump at an opportunity to receive a blessing from all of the Kohanim and Levi'im, in the presence of the Aron, with the entire nation answering 'amein'. That opportunity to 'plug-in' to this resounding blessing given by Har Grizim and Har Aival is available to us constantly. The Chofetz Chaim lived by this concept. Family purity was a cause that the Chofetz Chaim constantly sought to promote. When he would hear that a town was not maintaining proper mikvah facilities, he would tirelessly travel there to speak to the townspeople and urge them to correct the situation. If it was a town that was close to his hometown of Radin, he felt an even stronger sense of responsibility to impress upon

them the importance of this mitzva.

The Rav of Lida asked the Chofetz Chaim to come speak to his people about the importance of family purity. He was hoping to raise the necessary funds to rebuild the mikvah which had fallen into a state of disrepair. The Chofetz Chaim asked his son-in-law, Rav Zvi, to accompany him but the trip kept getting delayed.

A few weeks later, during the month of Elul, the Chofetz Chaim suddenly confronted Rav Zvi. "The High Holy Days are approaching and I have nothing to show for myself when I'll be judged. Let's travel to Lida and try to convince them about the mikvah." They went but were unsuccessful in their bid.

One freezing cold day, in the middle of the winter, the Chofetz Chaim informed his family that he had decided to travel back to Lida. "Wait until the weather warms up," they urged. The Chofetz Chaim's pointed response was that when they'll ask him in heaven why he didn't try again at Lida, the excuse that it was too cold would certainly not be very well received. Again the Chofetz Chaim tried to convince them and again he was unsuccessful.

When the Chofetz Chaim was preparing to move to Eretz Yisroel, he traveled to bid farewell to his neighboring towns. He arrived at Lida and summoned the community leaders. "You know how much effort I've expended to convince you to renew the mikvah. You also know that I didn't succeed. I'm not blaming anyone because I don't know who is to blame. However, I am asking you to do me a favor. I am already an old man and will soon be entering the World of Truth. They will demand of me: 'Yisroel Meir! You lived near Lida! How were you silent when you knew that they didn't have a proper mikvah?' I'm asking you to write and sign that I was not at fault... Please write that I asked, I pleaded, I begged but my words were not adhered to."

The community leaders sat in shocked silence. Such a request shook them to their very core. Finally, one leader began to speak. "Rebbe, don't say we didn't listen — it's not too late!" Right there, sufficient sums of money were pledged to renew the mikvah.

We may not exactly be 'Chofetz Chaims', however, every person can have a positive influence on their surroundings.

Every person — their impact... Every person — those blessings...

The Root Of Unhappiness

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with happiness and goodness of heart, when you had everything in abundance"(28:47)

The Torah attributes all of the horrific curses which will befall Bnei Yisroel to not serving Hashem with happiness. The complaint is not that we will not serve Hashem, rather, although we will serve Him, the stress is upon the fact that it will not be done with happiness. Citing the Zohar, the Ramban teaches that the admonition in this week's parsha refers to the period of the second Beis Hamikdash through its destruction and the subsequent exile.¹

The Talmud states that the second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because of "sinas chinam" — "baseless hatred".² This would appear to contradict the reason offered by the Torah, that the destruction was precipitated by Bnei Yisroel's not serving Hashem with happiness. How do we reconcile this contradiction?

The Torah attests to the fact that we were unhappy, even though we had everything. This is mirrored by the contemporary phenomena which finds a high percentage of depressed and disenchanting people to be those who enjoy success and high social standing. Why do people who apparently have everything that life has to offer, still exhibit a lack of happiness?

A person can only be truly happy if he appreciates what Hashem has given him. However, if a person is egocentric, considering himself deserved of all that he has, he will not be content by that which is already his; rather, he will be focused on those things which are not yet his, but to which he feels entitled. If a person goes through life with the attitude that everyone owes him, he will constantly be miserable, never satisfied with what he has. Furthermore, since he feels he is entitled to everything that he desires, a person who has something he desires becomes an immediate threat to him. He begins loathing that person for no reason other than the perception he maintains that that person is withholding from him an object which should rightfully be his. It is this type of loathing that the Talmud defines as baseless hatred.

Consequently, baseless hatred can be traced back at its inception to our lack of appreciation for what Hashem has done and continues to do for us. Therefore, sinas chinam is not a different reason than the reason offered by the Torah as to what precipitated the destruction of the Temple; it is a manifestation of being unhappy when serving Hashem.