



Ohr Yerushalayim News

בס"ד – בראשית – כ"ו תשרי תשפ"ב – 2nd October 2021 - Volume 14 - Issue 13

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Osher and Sara Sternbuch on the birth of a baby girl
 Mazel Tov to Malcolm and Vivienne Fagleman on the recent birth of a grandson to Nechemia and Judy Fagleman
 Mazel Tov to Daniel and Reuvena Dresner on the recent birth of a grandson to Mr and Mrs Moishe Aaron Frankel
 Mazel Tov to David and Eunice Wolfson on the recent engagement of their grandson in Gateshead.

Chaim Aruchim

We regret to inform of the Petira of the late Mrs Miriam Grossberger, mother of Mrs Leah Lehmann. The Shiva takes place at 62 Waterpark Road too Wednesday morning, Shacharis 8am, Mincha 1.30pm, Maariv 8pm, rest times 2-3.15, 7-8 and after 10pm

Chaim Aruchim to Tony Levinson on the recent petira of his mother.

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

Sun, 27th Tishrei - Mark Duman for his father

Mon, 28th Tishrei - Eunice Wolfson for her mother

Weds, 30th Tishrei - Mark Shapiro for his mother

The First Sin

Jonathan Grosskopf

I shall attempt to set out several possible explanations for why Chava and Adam sinned by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge.

Perek 3 of Parshas Bereishis starts with the "conversation" between the Snake, the Yetzer Ho'ra and Chava. She told the Snake: "that all the fruit of the trees were allowed to be eaten except for that of the tree (of knowledge) in the middle of the garden." However, she added incorrectly (cf. Posukim 15 /16, Perek 2) that one could not touch that tree! This additional comment proved to be her undoing as the snake "pushed" her against the tree, and nothing happened to her, and it was but a small jump from disproving her contention to saying that everything regarding that tree was wrong!

Pirkei De Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Yonoson say that Chava "saw" the Angel of Death. As she had eaten from the tree of knowledge, she felt that she would die and Adam would marry another woman (Rashi), and so Chava also gave the fruit to Adam to eat!

The Chizkuni adds that as she had touched the tree and incurred the death penalty, she may as well eat from the fruit: Being hanged for stealing a sheep as a lamb!

The Chiddah notes that as she gazed at the tree, she was entranced by the possibility of having G-dlike knowledge. The tree looked enticing to eat, and that disproved her reasoning that Hashem's commandment was because the tree and its fruit were poisonous. The eye sees, and the heart desires, and this is why we are commanded to "look" at our Tzitzis and remember all Hashem's commandments.

Finally, I have heard an explanation that suggests that Adam and Chava wanted to internalise the evil inclination so they could fight it and do

the right thing. i.e. what Hashem wanted them to do. However, that was a mistaken belief that had tragic consequences!

Really SOMETHING

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

BREISHIS... In the beginning of G-d creating the heavens and the earth was astonishingly empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the spirit of G-d was hovering over the face of the water. (Breishis 1:1-2)

What was the first thing that was created? The answer may be surprising, but it is openly stated in the first verse. In order to get it right let's begin from the beginning!

Why did the Torah begin with the letter BEIS? Beis is the 2nd letter. Years back I spoke to a group of scientists At NASA (v' Nishma) and they all agreed that no one has even a hint of a theory about what might have preceded the BIG BANG, which is the dominant paradigm about the origin of the universe. We know what preceded the BIG BEIS of BREISHIS. It was the ALEF of ADON OLAM ASHER MALACH B'TEREM KOL YETZIR NIVRA... Master of the world Who was the King before anything was created. It was the ALEF of OHR AIN SOF, "The Endless Light", which the mystical books use in reference to HASHEM. Also it was the ALEF of ANOCHI HASHEM – I am HASHEM which was pronounced to the entire Nation of Israel on Mount Sinai. Before the world was HASHEM!

The Zohar says the HASHEM looks into the Torah and creates the world. Like the light of a camera passing through film and projecting an image on a screen so the illusion of this world is manifested. The word for create in that first verse in Torah is BARA. It means to create something from nothing. We take things that already exist and reshape or reorganize them. HASHEM created the laws of physics and every molecule of existence from before scratch. From a physical standpoint The Almighty created the world SOMETHING from NOTHING because there was no physicality prior to HASHEM willing it into existence, but from the ultimate spiritual standpoint HASHEM actually created the world NOTHING from SOMETHING, because HASHEM is eternal existence.

Davening Times

פרשת בראשית

Candle Lighting	No later than 6.30pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.35pm
Hashkomo	7.30am
Shacharis	9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.05am
Mincha	1.30pm / 6.20pm
Motzei Shabbos	7.32pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Fri	6.45 / 7.20am / 8.00am
Wed / Thurs Rosh Chodesh	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	6.20pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

Now we can go back to our question. What was the first thing that was created? The answer is NOTHING! It's the "illusion" of a world that on the extreme micro and macro scale is more empty space than substance. TOHU v'VOHU... "astonishing emptiness" or as King Solomon says, HEVEL HAVALIM...breath of breath.

Now let's be very practical about applying this knowledge. We walk away from 51 Days of AVODA – spiritually rigorous days, starting with Rosh Chodesh Elul and concluding with Simchas Torah, and all we have is one small but very powerful souvenir. MASHIV HaRUACH v'MORID HaGESHEM... a small phrase added to our daily prayers. We begin mentioning the need for rain in Israel, as we credit HASHEM for delivering winds and bringing down the rain.

Taken literally, though, the words take on a new dimension. How so? HASHEM miraculously contracts the most sublime Ruchnios – Spirituality and collapses it into Gashmios – physicality. Though our Avodas HASHEM, our spiritual efforts, we discover the pure spirituality in the material world around us and within us, and we return it to HASHEM.

It starts with us first making best use of the stuff we have and converting it to RUCHNIOS and then we are granted and entrusted with even more GASHMIOS. Now let us visit the words literally and understand our mission in this world and the mandate of this tiny phrase. Literally, "Return the RUACH (spirituality) and bring down the GESHEM (materialism).

When we go from the BEIS of this world that houses us for a finite period and return to that ALEPH. That spells out BEIS – ALEPH, BA... OLAM HABA – the world to come, the world that comes from our journeying in this world. This vacuous universe may look like NOTHING from an ultimate perspective, but we can turn it back into really SOMETHING!

The Eternal Embrace

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"...for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die" (2:17)

Adam is warned that on the day he eats from the Tree of Knowledge, he will die. The commentaries explain that the death to which Adam was subjected, was the loss of his immortal status; after Adam ate from the forbidden fruit, man became mortal^{1}. The punishment visited upon mankind for Adam's disobedience appears to be vastly disproportionate to the transgression. What is the correlation between the transgression and the punishment? The very notion that Hashem meted out such a severe punishment evokes images of the vengeful and punitive G-d. How do we reconcile this event with the description of Hashem being a loving and merciful G-d?

The thought of one's own mortality or the mortality of a loved one often leaves a person feeling depressed. Therefore, we frequently block out all thoughts of death because of the morbid feelings it evokes. How does a person view death with a healthy attitude?

Among the nations of the world respect to the deceased is shown by burying the body in a fancy casket. This also offers solace to the mourners. The most durable and impenetrable coffin is sought out. In some cases hermetically sealed containers are acquired to retard the decomposition process. In contrast, Halacha dictates that the coffin should be easily decomposable^{2}. The custom in Eretz Yisroel is to bury without a casket, placing the body directly into the soil. Seeing a loved one placed ignominiously into the earth is among the most excruciating experiences a person will endure in his lifetime. Why would the Halacha appear to be insensitive to these feelings?

The Midrash states that Hashem created the potential for death in the world even before Adam transgressed. Commenting on the verse describing the sixth day of creation "And Hashem saw that it was very good", the Midrash relates that "good" refers to the potential for life, while "very good" refers to the potential for death^{3}. How can death be described as "very good"?

The verse records that Hashem created man from the dust of the earth. Rashi cites two opinions as to the source of this dust. According to one interpretation, Hashem gathered dust from all the corners of

the earth to ensure that "kol makom sheyamus sham tihiyeh koltaso lekevurah" – "wherever man dies, the earth will absorb his remains after burial^{4}." The simple reading of the text implies that had man not been formed in this manner, his corpse would be rejected by the earth. Decomposition is a function of the soil interacting with organic matter. All creatures decompose in the soil, irrespective of whether they were created from the dust of the four corners of the world. What then does Rashi mean when he says "so the earth will absorb man's remains"? The second interpretation is that man was formed from earth which was taken from the place where the Altar would rest in the Temple. Axiomatic to the study of Rashi's commentary to the Torah is the rule that whenever Rashi offers more than one interpretation, the interpretations coalesce with each other; they are different perspectives of the same concept. How can these two interpretations be reconciled?

The Talmud records that Cleopatra asked Rabbi Meir whether man will emerge clothed after the resurrection. He answered her that if a simple seed of grain planted in the ground emerges layered with many husks, surely man will emerge well attired. Rabbi Meir was revealing to us the Jewish definition of burial^{5}. The purpose of burial is not to dispose of the corpse; rather, burial is the beginning of the recreation process. Just as a seed flourishes and blossoms after being planted, the burial process reconnects man to his source, allowing him to be recreated and emerge in a perfected manner determined by his actions when he was alive.

Soil in each part of the world reacts differently to various types of seeds. Hashem created man from all the types of soil to ensure that the planting of his body would not be inhibited by the soil of the place where he would be buried. Rashi's words are that man should be "niklat" in the soil. This term is used to describe the successful implanting of a seed or conception. Burial is not just a process that allows for the disintegration of the body; it is the process that allows the perfected body to sprout, ready to accept the soul at the resurrection.

The Hebrew word for grave is "kever", which is also the Talmudic term for the womb. The grave represents the beginning of eternal life in the same manner as the womb is the home for a new child. The two interpretations as to where the dust used to create man came from are offering the same insight. The Altar on the Temple Mount was the place through which man connected to his Creator. Man was formed from the same place through which he connects to his source. Similarly, man is created from the four corners of the earth in a manner which allows him to reconnect back to his source.

Adam was created with the perfect body and soul, allowing him to experience an unparalleled relationship with his Creator. The sin distanced him from Hashem and imbedded imperfection within both his body and soul. Death was not a punitive act by a vengeful G-d. On the contrary, death is the process by which we can once more reconnect to our Creator and remove the imperfections that hinder our relationship with Him. Allowing man to reconnect is the ultimate chesed. Hence, Hashem saw that it was "very good" for this process allows both our souls and our bodies to reconnect.

The burial is the process by which we recreate the body, divesting it of all impurities. Therefore, Halacha does not allow for the preservation of the body in its current state, for this would deprive a person of the great chesed that Hashem has given us. The nations of the world who view death as the final step in a person's life attempt to preserve the dead body, thereby maintaining the last vestiges of his existence.

The Jewish perspective on death is comforting to a person for it diminishes the fear we have of the finality of death. Instead of being disconnected, we are actually reconnecting. The Torah appropriately refers to death as "asifa" – "ingathering".⁶ This sense of reconnection is borne out by those who have been present at the time of a person's death. It is common for a person to exclaim "I am coming father" or "I am coming mother" for the feeling of reconnection prevails upon the soul as it is departing.