



Ohr Yerushalayim News

בראשית - כ"ט תשרי תשפ"ז - 10th October 2026 - Volume 19 - Issue 14

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Avi and Debbie Stern on Sara's engagement to Yakov Weissbraun, son of Yitzchok and Rivka. The Lechaim takes place on Sunday from 1.30-6.30pm in the Shul hall
Mazel Tov to Charles and Joyce Khan on the recent Bas Mitzva of their granddaughter, Batsheva Kreditor, daughter of Eli and Rebecca in Israel

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening sponsored in honour of the Chosson Bereishis, Dani Epstein

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit:
Sun, 30th Tishrei - Mark Shapiro for his mother
Fri, 5th Cheshvan - Mike Krebs for his mother

Lost Property

A reminder that personal property left on the Shul premises will be disposed of every Rosh Chodesh

Shalosh Seudas

The new season starts next Shabbos א"ח. Please try and assist with the cost of the סעודה by sponsoring or jointly sponsoring a week by putting your name against a Sedra on the list on the notice wall in the foyer

Our Greatness and Our Limitations

Rabbi J Rubinstein

Thomas Malthus was an economist who lived from 1766 until 1834. He said, that because the human population of the world doubles at regular intervals but food production increases less rapidly, the point would come where the population would outstrip the food supply. However his theory, which became known as the Malthusian theory, has largely been discredited because of factors which he did not anticipate, such as agricultural innovations which enabled food production to outpace expectations.

This is typical of the way in which unexpected events and developments, can make nonsense of the best worked out predictions and calculations. The most obvious example in recent times, being the covid pandemic. Who would have expected, that we would be reduced to living, as we had to live at the beginning of the pandemic, before it happened?! In reality Hashem is like a master puppeteer who brings on to the stage, different players at crucial junctures in the story, which determine the outcome. But the spectator cannot see the puppeteer, or the strings by which he moves and manipulates the puppets. We have to make the best effort we can in life, but we know that ultimately the outcome of what we do, depends on Hashem, who can bring in to play, factors we could not even think of in advance, such as changes in health or technology or countless other occurrences. This is equally true on the world stage, and in our individual lives

This idea is in fact, an extension of a commentary by Rav Shimshon Refoel Hirsch, on the types of work forbidden on Shabbos. Can we explain why are we forbidden to light a match on Shabbos, yet we are allowed to move around a heavy piece of furniture, which requires much more effort and labour? Rav Hirsch explains that by the end of the six days of creation, Hashem had placed before man all the materials of the world. Mankind was then able to build with them and develop them

further. But on Shabbos, the Jewish people are forbidden to do thirty-nine kinds of work. The kinds of work are all creative activities, in which mankind takes the materials he has, and develops them further; such as writing or building or cooking. The criteria are not the amount of labour involved, but rather the way they demonstrate the way we can transform the world around us. The prohibitions are to teach us, that although we can build and develop and invent, ultimately Hashem controls what we can do. So for one day, a week instead of exercising our mastery over the world, we are reminded that really we are not in charge. (Hirsch Shmos Chap 35 Verse 1)

Rav Shimshon Pincus used to say, although we have seen the rise of the sun in the morning, many times before, that is no reason for us not to marvel afresh each day at the beauty and power of the sun as it rises. In a similar way, this is not the first time we have read the story of creation in the Parshah of Braishies, and it is not the first time we turn after Yomtov to proceed with a new year. But that is no reason for us not to appreciate once again, the greatness of creation and the potential of humankind; but at the same time, to have the humility to recognise our Creator and that He continues to control our lives.

When the Argument Outlives the Cause

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

This week's parsha contains the machlokes (argument) between Kayin and Hevel that ultimately resulted in Hevel's murder at the hands of Kayin. This is the first machlokes in the Torah, and as such, it serves as the prototype for understanding machlokes in general.

The pasuk says "Vayomer Kayin el Hevel ochiv. Vayiheeh bihiyosom basadeh. Vaykam Kayin el Hevel ochiv vayehargayhu" (And Kayin said to his brother Hevel. And they were in the field together. And Kayin got up against Hevel his brother and he killed him.)

The pasuk says that Kayin spoke to Hevel. Rashi says that they got into an argument. But Rashi doesn't say what they argued about.

As an aside, the Medrash discusses what they fought about. The Medrash offers several possibilities. One opinion is that they argued over property. Another is that they argued over where the Beis Hamikdash would be built. A third is that they argued over marriage. The Medrash provides several possible explanations, but Rashi leaves the issue unresolved, and more importantly, the Torah itself never says what was said.

As an aside to the aside, someone once said that all fights are about one of three things. Fights are either about money, religion, or family matters like marriage, etc. All the real fights in the world are about one of those three things, all of which the Medrash mentions.

The bottom line is, despite the fact that the Medrash explains the machlokes, the Torah does not explain it. True, there are many times when the Medrash provides background, color, nuance, and details for

Davening Times

Candle Lighting	6.11pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.16pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ט	9.35am
Mincha	1.30pm / 6.03pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	7.13pm
ראש חודש	7.00am / 8.00am / 9.30am
Monday חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	6.20pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

things that are not in the Chumash. The Torah often omits background information. But here the Torah begins the conversation and then suddenly stops. If the Torah wants us to know Kayin said something, why doesn't it tell us what he said? And if it doesn't want us to know what he said, why mention the conversation at all?

I heard a beautiful pshat(explanation) from my good friend Rav Avraham Bukspan in Miami Beach. He shared a sad but true pshat in the pasuk. He said that most fights outlast the fight. Sometimes people don't even remember what started a machlokes. All they know is that there is a machlokes. The issue that sparked the machlokes may have disappeared years ago, but the machlokes itself remains.

That is exactly what the Torah is teaching. "Vayomer Kayin el Hevel ochiv." Rashi says they got into a machlokes. What was the machlokes about? The Torah never says because, in the end, the subject of the machlokes is not the story. The machlokes is the story. The issue may disappear, but the damage caused by the machlokes often remains.

The Torah continues. Kayin gets punished for what he did to Hevel. The Torah is never merely punitive. It is consequential. When the Torah punishes, the punishment reflects the aveira (sin) and teaches something about it. Kayin's punishment is no exception.

What was Kayin's punishment? He became a na venad – a wanderer. He became a nomad. He did not have a home. He needed to be constantly on the move.

Why is this the mida kinaged mida (measure for measure)? Why is this the consequence of what Kayin did to Hevel? Why is na venad the proper response that the Torah gives him? The answer is because in the end, a machlokes is about a person standing firm. A machlokes usually begins when a person decides, "I am not moving." We often call it standing on principle, standing firm, or holding our ground. The language of machlokes is the language of immovability.

The Torah says, do you know what's going to happen when you make a machlokes because you had to stand strong? The Torah's response is striking. Because Kayin insisted on standing his ground, he becomes na venad. The person who refuses to move becomes the one who can never find a place to stand. You're going to be na venad. You're never going to be settled and happy.

I will share one final ha'ara (insight) on this trajectory. Kayin had several einiklach (grandchildren). The Torah highlights an extraordinary parallel. Kayin's descendants include names such as Chanoch, Lemech, and Mesushael. Kayin's younger brother Sheis's descendants include Chanoch, Lemech, and Mesushelach.

The Torah seems to be drawing a comparison between the two families. On the surface, both families appear remarkably similar. Yet one family line endured and one did not. A person consumed by machlokes may continue building, but the machlokes occupies his thoughts and drains focus, energy, and permanence from everything else he does. Kayin wanted to stand his ground, but he became na venad. His descendants bore many of the same names and achieved many of the same accomplishments, yet his line had no lasting kiyum (continuity). In contrast, Sheis inherited the legacy of Hevel, who was not a baal machlokes, and from him, the future of the world was built.

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. 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. 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. 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 tihyeh koltaso lekevurah" – "wherever man dies, the earth will absorb his remains after burial."

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. 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". 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.