



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ז"ת מרחשון תשע"ז - ח"י שרה - 26th November 2016 - Volume 9 - Issue 17

News This Week

Kiddushim This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davening sponsored by Mr and Mrs Andrew Addleman in honour of Izzy's 4th birthday.

Mr and Mrs Henry Brownson invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush in honour of the recent birth their first grandchild, Gabriella Bluma Leah, at 17 Park Street after Davening.

Being On Guard For the Satan Behind Us

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Sarah is the only one of our Matriarchs whose age at the time of her passing is documented in the Torah. We are explicitly told the age of each Patriarch at the time of their death, but only Sarah has this distinction among the Matriarchs. The Torah tells us at the beginning of the Parsha that she died at the age of 127. What is the significance of this distinction?

Furthermore, the pasuk [verse] documenting Sarah's age strikes us as being redundant: "Sarah's lifetime was one hundred years, and twenty years, and seven years; the years of Sarah's life." [Bereshis 23:1] The next pasuk goes on to say that "Avraham came to mourn for Sarah and to cry for her." According to ancient tradition, the letter chaf in the word Livkosa [to cry for her] is written small. The Baal HaTurim explains that the reason the letter is diminished in size is that since Sarah lived to such a ripe old age, Avraham Avinu minimized the amount of crying he did for her. According to the Baal HaTurim, it did not suffice for us to surmise on our own that since Sarah was 127 years old when she died, it was probably not such a tragic funeral that inspired a great deal of crying. For some reason, it was important for the Torah to explicitly make note of this fact (by use of the diminished letter chaf). Why is this so significant for us to know?

The Nesivos Shalom (the Slonimer Rebbe) writes the following idea in his sefer. Every night we say in the Mariv prayer: "Remove the Satan from in front of us and from behind us". It is obvious to all of us what the purpose of the "Satan in front of us" is. Many times, we are on the way to do something positive and we find it becomes very difficult to accomplish the task. This is due to the "Satan in front of us" who tries to prevent us from doing mitzvos. We do not have to search any further than last week's parsha (Vayera) for an example. Chazal tell us that the Satan wanted to get in the way of Avraham Avinu and not let him accomplish the Akeidah [binding] of Yitzchak.

But what is the significance of the prayer to remove the "Satan from behind us"? How can there be a "Satan behind us" if the mitzvah has already been completed? The Nesivos Shalom explains that sometimes after we have already completed a mitzvah, or passed a nisayon [spiritual challenge] things don't work out the way we thought they would and we begin to "second guess" our righteous acts. We wonder whether or not we did the right thing. The Satan never gives up. He may lose battle after battle, but he does not give up the war so easily.

I have heard more than once cases of highly successful individuals who originally were not observant and decided to become Baalei

As we count down the final week gearing up to the 18th anniversary Shabbaton, the 't's are being crossed and the 'i's are being dotted to ensure nothing is missed from what is gearing up to be a momentous Shabbos.

With over 400 people dining together on Friday night, a sumptuous buffet Kiddush Shabbos day and an exhilarating Siyum Hashas and gala Melava D'Malka, this weekend will bring fond memories for many years to come.

There's just enough time left for everyone to complete their learning to help bring together an incredible feeling of Achdus within the Kehilla.

Teshuva and fully Sabbath observant and then subsequently their business tanked. It creeps up in people's minds: Why is it that when the person was non-religious everything he touched turned to gold and now that he is religious, everything he touches turns to dust?

What does the person think? What do the people around him think? This is the idea of "Remove Satan from behind us." After the good deed is done, the Satan does not want you to be at peace with it. Even if the person was not contemplating going back to where he came from spiritually, nonetheless, it is no longer the same. It is with a regret and remorse that one decided to do the right thing and become religious.

Our parshios, the Nesivos Shalom explains, contain a classic example of Avraham Avinu facing the Satan in front of him in Parshas Vayera and then confronting the Satan in back of him in Parshas Chayei Sarah. The Satan behind him is, as Rashi says (based on the Medrash), that Sarah died suddenly out of the shock of hearing that her son Yitzchak was almost slaughtered. This scenario was an act of the Satan. Sarah was supposed to die in any event, no matter what happened. But the Satan arranged that someone would come to her door and tell her about the Akeida and just at that moment, she would die. Everyone, including Avraham, could come to the false conclusion and say "This

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת חיי שרה	שבת מברכין כסלו
Candle Lighting	3.43pm
Mincha	3.48pm
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.55am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
Rov's Shiur	2.54pm
2nd Mincha	3.34pm
Seuda Shlishis	Following
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	4.54pm
Ovos uBonim	6.09pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.40pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

is what I get for the Akeida?”

The Satan knows that she would have died at that time regardless of whether or not the Akeida took place. It was not the news of the Akeida that killed her, it was G-d's having said that these are the days of her years. Her time was up. That is why, says the Slonimer Rebbe, the Torah writes “one hundred years and twenty years and seven years.” This is why the Torah spells out the age of her death – so that we should not for a minute think that she died prematurely because of the Akeidah. That is why the Torah reiterates “the years of the life of Sarah”. When Sarah was born, she was given a certain amount of years and a certain amount of days and on a specific day and in a specific place and a specific time she was destined to die.

Many times we have an elderly parent living with one child and then they decide to move the parent to another child and then the parent dies. There are typically all sorts of guilty feelings. ‘If this, if that’, etc. No! Everyone has their time and place where they are going to die.

This is the way it was with Sarah. No one appreciated this more than Avraham Avinu. That is why the word Livkosa [to cry for her] has a small chaf. There was not a tremendous amount of crying because this was not the case of a tragic sudden unexpected death, which causes people to cry. The Torah wants to record for us that the crying was muted, because it was part of the natural life cycle destined for Sarah to die at this ripe old age of 127.

This teaches us that we must always be on guard, not only for the Satan in front of us, but for the Satan behind us as well.

Shevuah: I Solemnly Swear Rabbi Osher Chaim Levene (Torah.org)

The Mitzvah: A person must be careful to observe every oath and vow that emerges from his lips. Having pronounced an oath, he cannot desecrate his word (except in extenuating circumstances when this can be annulled) but is obliged to take all the necessary steps to fulfill his pledge.

Eliezer, the loyal servant of Avraham, was instructed by his master to find a wife for his son and heir. To guarantee the success of the mission, at Avraham's insistence, Eliezer undertook a Shevuah, an oath. In it, he affirmed that he would not choose a Canaanite woman for Yitzchak. Traveling to Avraham's family, Eliezer was successful in this endeavor – choosing Rivkah as the righteous spouse for Yitzchak and future matriarch of the Jewish people.

There are two general categories of promises. A Neder is a vow that impacts and transforms “the object” in question. For example, a Neder not to eat a food transforms the earlier permissible item into something that is now forbidden. A Shevuah, oath relates to the “subject” himself rather than the object. The Shevuah by Eliezer to fulfill Avraham's instruction was binding on “himself”. One thing is clear from the laws of oaths and vows, is how the Torah is most empathic that a person does not take speech lightly: “What your lips have uttered is what you must keep” (Deuteronomy 23:24).

That an oath and vow should have the potency to determine what course of action man adopts is puzzling. Why should the utterance of man's breath obligate him to the extent that he effectively becomes “bound” to honor his word?

The answer lies with a deeper grasp of the force and intensity of speech.

The creation of the universe came about through speech: “By the word of G-d, the Heavens were made.” (Psalms 33:6). And the creation of man, himself a microcosm of the world, was similarly via becoming “a creature of speech”. The Torah relates how G-d breathed into Adam a soul of life transforming him into “a living being”, which is interpreted as meaning Ruach Memalehah, “a speaking spirit” (Genesis 2:7 and Targum Onkeles ibid).

Speech, the point of connection between body and soul, is what defines humanity. An outward revelation of the inner force and essence within man, speech is that which reveals who a person is. It captures his identity and is expressive of his life force (See Maharal, Gevuros Hashem Ch.28). Accurately reflecting how man projects his life force and soul outwards through speech, the mouth's lips

are, remarkably, the only parts of the body whose inside is turned outwards!

Only man with a soul can relate to G-d and tune into sanctity. And the faculty of speech elevates him head and shoulders above all other creatures, such that he is accorded the epithet Medaber, “Speaker” (See Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi's Kuzari). Speaking is essential for human relationships and for man's relationship with G-d. Because man's speech emanates and relates to his soul, it naturally involves the issue of holiness. Not meaningless or vain promises devoid of any substance; on the contrary, man's speech – like life itself – is absolutely sacrosanct.

Serving G-d must be through the realms of thought, speech and action. What man says relates to his essence – and hence unreservedly impacts upon him, shaping and even determining his actions. This is what swearing is all about. By making an oath or vow, ever-mindful that his words relate to his identity and life-force means that they must be honored and upheld whatever the costs.

The natural outflow of this, is the imperative that man use language – just as his thoughts and actions – as a tool for spirituality; certainly, he dare not “profane his words” (Numbers 30:3) or abuse this faculty. The potency and impact of speech exhorts us not to use this in idle chatter or gossip. Rather, speech – as expressive of man's life force – should be the springboard for the Jew to strengthen his resolve in mitzvah performance, in prayer and in Torah study.

FREE LAND *(40,000 silver coins, service charge)

Rabbi Yaakov Menken (Torah.org)

When the time came for Avraham to bury Sarah, he knew the exact location that he wanted (the Cave of Machpela), and its owner: Efron the Hittite. So Avraham goes to the Hittites, and asks to speak to Efron. During the story of the negotiations and Avraham's purchase, Efron is mentioned some eight times, always spelled Ayin Fey Reish Vav Nun. Except once: when the money is handed over, it says that Avraham gave the money to Ayin Fey Reish Nun – without a Vav.

Why? Rashi explains that this Vav was taken away from Efron, because he said a lot, and did not even do a little. When first approached, he said to Avraham (“in front of all the Hittites, all those that came within the gates of the city”), “No, I don't want you to pay for it! It's a gift, please take it to bury your dead.” So in public he declared that he would give Avraham the field for free. Avraham insisted, and Efron then reacted “My lord... what is 400 silver coins between me and you?” So all of a sudden, Efron was asking for 400 pieces of silver, instead of nothing.

The truth is that even this wasn't good enough. When the money was given, it was money that was “good for the money-changer.” Apparently, there were certain places where they had very large coins, called Centurions, that were worth about 100 regular coins. When Avraham finally paid, this was the money he gave – essentially, 40,000 silver coins, instead of nothing.

Now, so what? What does it mean to take away a Vav? Does Efron care that the Torah misspelled his name?

The answer is that in Hebrew, the word for dirt is Afar – Ayin Fey Reish. Ayin Fey Reish Nun, which we read as Efron, can also be read “Afran” – a dirt person. Efron was dirt.

In Jewish thought, this means a great deal – because man was born from dust, and from G-d Himself. So which do we choose to emphasize, and what do we choose to be? We ought to be choosing G-dliness over dirt.

Efron was considerate enough to give us good advice on what not to do. We do not want to promise to do great things, and then do nothing at all – because by demonstrating that our final concern is only our own lust for money or power, we show that we are avoiding spirituality, and are similar to dirt. But if we say little, and then follow through with efforts that even exceed our promises, then we demonstrate that we are concerned with giving to others. Our concern for others shows that we are worthy of being called “G-dly”, and this is a worthwhile goal.