



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ל אב תשע"ט - ראה - 31st August 2019 - Volume 12 - Issue 6

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel tov to David and Rochel Leah Jacobs on the birth of a boy. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 1 Mildred Avenue Prestwich.

Mazel Tov to Malcolm and Vivienne Fagleman on the recent birth of a grandson to Hudi and Dassa Scherer.

Candle Lighting This Week

Please note the correct time for candle lighting this week is 7.10 - 7.15 not as previously published on the summer timetable.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a kiddush this weekly jointly sponsored by Miles Levine and Yosaif Bernhardt on the occasion of the yahrtzeits of their respective fathers.

Chizuk for Elul and Shiur Pesicha for Keitzad Mevarchin

The Rov and R' Shaya are both beginning Keitzad Mevarchin in their Gemoro Shiurim. The kehilla are invited to a Shiur Pesicha on Monday 2 September at 8.15 in the back Beis Hamedrash

Birds of Pray

Aaron Gouldman

We try, but it's hard. We are in esteemed company, though. A seemingly innocent discussion in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Brachos 2:4) relates how two of the most revered sages confided to each other their struggles to achieve proper focus during davening:

'Said Rabbi Chiya Rabba to Shmuel; "I once tried to have kavono, but all I could think about was who goes before the king first, the General or the Governor!". Replied Shmuel; "I count the birds".'

R Yehoshua Heller, who was known as the Darshan of Telz, wrote a whole sefer to explain this line in the Yerushalmi. He suggests that the topic of this puzzling conversation was the connection between the brachos of the Amidah, and their source in Tanach. We find a related discussion in Talmud Bavli (Brachos 28b) which gives several suggestions for what the brachos of the Amidah correspond to: Hashem's name in Tehillim 29, the names of Hashem in Krias Shema, and even the vertebrae in the spine. Since the Torah is always precise in its comparisons, we can assume that the brachos in the Amidah correspond in order to their frame of reference.

Rebbi Chiya Rabba's dilemma was that he just couldn't work out in which order to view Krias Shema while going through the Amidah and thinking of a different mention of Hashem's name at each bracho. Should the comparison go in 'Chumash-order', with the third paragraph of Shema (the Governor, who sits 'closer' to the king) coming before the first paragraph (the General), or should the comparison proceed in order of importance, as we read it every day?

Shmuel, on the other hand, has a lot more explaining to do, and that is where Parshas Re-eh comes in.

In an almost identical narrative to that of Parshas Shmini, Moshe Rabbenu tells the Jewish People on the cusp of entering Eretz Yisroel, about all of the non-kosher birds that they must avoid. There is quite a long list, but the sage Shmuel is telling us in the passage quoted above not to worry, because he has already counted them and matched them up to the brachos of the Amidah! The only problem with this pre-casio arithmetic is that there appear to be 21 birds listed, which is a couple more than the number of brachos we are used to saying. We don't need to look further than Rashi (Devorim 14:13) however, to resolve this and come back to our familiar number of 19.

So if we want to know what the sage Shmuel's advice would be for someone struggling to concentrate in shul, it would be to count through all of the non-

kosher birds listed in the Torah! While it is certainly worthwhile knowing exactly how the Neshet (Eagle) corresponds to the bracho of Magen Avrohom, our abrupt arrival in the month of Elul means that we need to turn our attention towards the task at hand- Teshuva. Thankfully, Shmuel has advice for us here too, and it only requires a single hand for counting as well as some basic aviary knowledge.

In the fifth bracho of the Amidah we ask for Hashem's help in our returning to his Torah and his service. The fifth non-kosher bird listed is the Chumash is the Oraiv, or Raven. Ravens are white when born, then go completely dark later in life. The Medrash Tanchuma paints the picture as follows: "When a baby raven is born, the father says to the wife: 'This isn't my child!' and he leaves his mate."

R' Heller explains that the Raven conjures up the image of the absence of Teshuva, which focusing on can prompt us to think about the real Teshuva that can be made. The process of genuine Teshuva takes us from a state of darkness into light, whereas the Raven makes the opposite journey in life.

In addition to the benefit to the individual trying to concentrate on their davening, there is also a universal message to take from Shmuel's teaching. On Succos the Torah tells us to bring seventy bulls over the 7 days, which we offer 'on behalf' on the other nations of the world (Tanchuma, Pinchas 16). In the time when the Beis Hamikdash is not standing, and we offer our 'lips instead of the bulls' (Hoshea 14:3), it is our Tefillos which bring sustenance to the entire world. Shmuel is telling us that even the non-kosher birds of prey need us to pray for them.

We Are His Children

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week's parsha, R'ay, gives us a very clear glimpse of the attitude the Torah enjoins us to have towards death. "Bunim a'tem laHashem Elokaichem, lo tisgo'd'du... I'mais {You are sons of Hashem your G-d, do not gouge yourselves over a death} [14:1]." The custom of the Gentiles was to scratch and cut themselves in order to show and vent their agony over the death of a dear one. We are prohibited from acting in such a fashion. Why? Because we are sons of Hashem.

What is the connection between our being the sons of Hashem and the prohibition of gouging ourselves over the death of someone we loved?

Of the different explanations of the many commentators, I find the Ohr HaChaim and the Chizkuni to be the most poignant.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that the Torah is teaching us that death is a loss to those that remain alive—not to the one that died. It can be compared to a

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת ראה

Mincha
Candle Lighting
Shacharis
סוף זמן ק"ש
Children's Group
1st Mincha
2nd Mincha
3rd Mincha
Rov's Shiur
Motzei Shabbos
Sun Rosh Chodesh
Mon / Thurs
Tues / Wed / Fri
Mincha & Maariv
Late Maariv

ראש חודש אלול

6.45pm
7.10pm - 7.15pm
9.15am
9.42am
10.45am
2.00pm
6.00pm
7.49pm
Following
8.54pm
7.00am / 8.00am
6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
7.45pm
10.00pm

person who sent his son to a faraway land in order to start a business there. The son settled in that place and over time became very close to many fine people there. After many years, the father summoned the son to return home and the son acceded to his wishes.

The son is not lost. Those who had grown to know and love him are no longer able to see him and to build the relationship further, but the son is not lost. On the contrary, the son is returning home to his father. The thought of those friends going ahead and gouging themselves over the agony of the son's departure is preposterous. Sadness and a melancholy feeling of detachment are in order. Gouging is definitely out!

"Bunim a'tem laHashem Elokaichem." At 'death,' the person is simply returning to the Father. The duration of that person's visit to this transient world has come to a close. The time has come for the return trip—to return home. Therefore, "Lo tisgo'd'du... I'mais {do not gouge yourselves over a death}." Reacting in such a way really contradicts our beliefs.

The Chizkuni explains that the basis for the command not to gouge ourselves is that we are the sons of Hashem—we are mere children. Do we have an understanding of why we live and why we die? Can we fathom the Divine decisions which determine these occurrences? A child does not comprehend the decisions that a mature father makes—we too are children. "Lo tisgo'd'du {do not gouge yourselves}."

These concepts are illustrated by R' Yom Tov Ehrlich's powerful story, based on the writings of Rav Chaim Vital, the primary student of the great Kabbalist, the Ariza"l.

Yosef, who had recently married, walked back from shul with his youngest brother, Dovid, to wish their mother a good Shabbos. In the house all was ready for Shabbos—the table was set and the candles glowed brightly. However, the empty seat at the head of the table upset the tranquillity. Their father had died two years earlier and their mother had not found peace since then. The smile she tried to force as she wished her sons a Good Shabbos couldn't hide her tears. "Mommy, it's Shabbos, we're not supposed to be sad," Yosef said gently. "But it was exactly two years ago today that your father died, how can't I cry?" she replied. "That explains this Shabbos but not last week and two weeks ago. Father is now in Gan Eden and your tears must be upsetting him. They also show Hashem that you're not willing to accept His judgment. Mommy, please forgive me for speaking this way," Yosef apologized. "You are right, I know that everyone wants me to be happy again—I will try my best," she promised.

Yosef left to go to his house and Dovid made the Kiddush on the wine. A calm serenity seemed to envelope the seuda and the entire house. As she went to sleep, the mother felt an internal peacefulness that she hadn't felt since her husband's death. She began to think that she's not alone. Others have gone through it and made it and so could she.

As she drifted off to sleep she dreamt that people were running and she began to run with them. They ran through a dark forest until, with a burst of light, the forest ended. The bright sun glimmered off a sparkling blue stream, running through a garden filled with beautiful flowers. Suddenly, a white-bearded Jew wearing a long white garment appeared and gently asked her if she'd like to see her husband. With her heart pounding she followed him to a tree full of beautiful ripe fruit, overlooking a spacious clearing surrounded by a golden fence. There were colorfully dressed Jews sitting in rows learning Torah from a young man.

The class finished and she saw the teacher approaching them. When she saw that it was her husband, she nearly fainted and leaned against the tree. When she regained her composure she cried out, "Why did you leave me at such a young age?"

"Please understand that the world in which you live is a world of exile," he explained serenely. "People are sent there to complete specific tasks or to rectify earlier transgressions. This is the true world. Before you ever knew me I was a Torah scholar and perfectly righteous. My only fault was I was unwilling to marry and bring children to the world because it would have disturbed my studies.

"When I left the world I began to ascend to ever higher levels but at a certain point I couldn't ascend any higher because I had never married and had never had children. I was sent back to the lower world to marry and have children. I married you and when our seventh child was born, I was called to return to Gan Eden. Great is your merit that I was your husband. When the right time will come, we will again live together in this world in delight."

"Why doesn't our Yosef prosper in his business affairs?" she continued to question.

"I'm sure you remember the litigation that Yosef had with another Jew," her husband responded. "He was legally correct but was guilty of causing the other person great pain. He faced a harsh sentence but I prayed on his behalf

that he be given only four hard years. In just one more year, that period will end and he will prosper."

"And what about our Dovid? Not a single shidduch {prospective spouse} has been offered and I have no money to make a wedding." He smiled and explained: "Dovid's wife was late in coming—she's now only thirteen years old. In five years they will move to your city, she'll get engaged to Dovid and they will finance the entire wedding." In a pained voice she asked, "And why was our three year old son killed by a drunk?" "Follow me," her husband answered with a smile. They began to walk to a light-filled garden. Brilliant beams of multi-colored light shone from above while beautiful songbirds flew from tree to tree singing the praises of Hashem. Suddenly she saw leaping circles of fire positioning themselves near her in column-like formation followed by small angels who also settled near her. She felt her soul slipping away and her husband quickly placed a flower near her nose to revive her. A canopy made of sparkling stones appeared before her and under the canopy stood a small angelic form that she recognized as her son.

"Why did you leave me when you were so young?" she asked. "Everything is done according to Hashem's plan," he answered. "I had been in the world once before and during one of the wild attacks against my town, gentiles had murdered my entire family. I, at the age of six months was the only survivor. A kindly gentile woman took me into her home and raised me until I was redeemed by Jews. They taught me Torah until I became a great scholar. When I left that world I was received here with great joy. I reached a point where I couldn't rise higher because I was nursed by a non-Jewish woman. It was decreed that I be born again to a Jewish mother and live those early years in purity. After three years there was no reason for me to remain in that lowly world so I was returned to here. You have a great merit that you helped me to reach this next level." The child laughed softly and disappeared from view. Her husband continued: "You now see that there is an answer to all of your questions. Hashem does no evil." He escorted her back to the tree where he had met her. "It is very good here but I can't bear to see your suffering. You will do me a great favor by living happily. A shidduch has been proposed for you. Please accept it."

With that he vanished and the old man led her back through the forest. She awoke a different person, soon remarried and lived a life of contentment. "Bunim a'tem laHashem Elokaichem"—we are His children.



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