



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ה אב תש"פ – ראה – 15th August 2020 - Volume 13 - Issue 6

News This Week

Chayim Aruchim

We wish Miles Levine Chaim Aruchim on the occasion of the Yahrzeit of his father on Thursday 30th Av.

Holiday Minyanim

During the annual summer holidays we ask those left in town to please support the Shul Minyanim.

The daily 9.15 Minyan continues throughout the summer and we ask those who can, to support it and come on time.

Extended Life Under Lockdown

Aaron Gouldman

The name of the upcoming month of Elul is known for the numerous remozim (hints) to it that are found all over the Tanach as well as the Siddur. We are all aware of at least a few of these, but how many of us have stopped to think why are there so many and what practical difference does they make to us?

The first of four remozim quoted by the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (128:1) comes from the Arizal, based on a possuk in Parshas Mishpotim. In describing the procedure for one who commits homicide accidentally, the Torah says (Shemos 21:13) that ultimately the outcome was determined by Hashem, and there will be a place for him to flee to, known as an Ir Miklot (Refuge City). The words used are **אָנָה לִיְדוּ וְשִׁמְתִי לָרָה** of which the roshei teivos (first letters) spell out Elul. The Arizal therefore explains that Elul is a refuge city in time which can facilitate our teshuva process, even to help us correct accidental wrongdoings.

Reb Moshe Shapiro expands on this comparison, referring us to the Gemora in Makkos 10a. The Gemora there derives the halocha that the refuge cities must be sign-posted at every crossroads. This enables the accidental murderer to easily find his way to safety. So too, he explains, Elul needs to be sign-posted everywhere we look, so that we hopefully do get the hint and take advantage of the refuge Elul provides!

This gives an explanation of why there are so many remozim for Elul, but what about relating to them in practical terms? To take one, highly relevant example from the second remez brought by the Kitzur: In Parshas Nitzovim, Devarim 30:6, we are promised that Hashem will symbolically circumcise our hearts and the hearts of our children. The words used here are **אֶת־לִבְכֶם וְאֶת־לִבְבְּנֵיכֶם**, which are, of course, another allusion to Elul through the roshei teivos. Reb Moshe Feinstein in Drash Moshe explains this remez to warn us that it is not enough to focus on our own self-improvement plan, rather we need to make sure the entire household are involved.

The recent lockdown period has in many ways given us opportunities to work on this facet of household growth. In many cases, our children have gone from the extreme of almost never seeing us daven to until recently seeing us daven three times a day. Hopefully they have also seen us learning more often whether alone or in remote shiurim. We have had to provide their kodesh curriculum leading up to Pesach, Shavuos and Tisha B'Av. All of this has given us opportunities to engage with our children and give over to them what Yiddishkeit really means to us, thereby giving them the opportunity to discover and 'own' their connection to Hashem and his Torah.

On a personal note, I do have high hopes for my kids, but I never imagined that at ages 4 and 2 they would be up every weekday morning to attend a Daf Yomi shiur and even make insightful comments when they heard something that peaked their curiosity. For example, "Daddy, did he just say donkey??", to which I give an encouraging nod and smile as they take another spoonful of cornflakes.

Getting back on track, Parshas Re'eh starts off 'See, I am placing in front of you today, a berocho...on condition that you listen to the Mitzvos Hashem that I command you today'. The simple reading of this according to Rashi and Ramban is that we are worthy of blessing when we follow the Mitzvos Hashem each day. When Hashem thrusts us into a situation such as lockdown, our reaction is the only thing in our control. If we can strive to always be positive, and to involve the entire household in our spiritual pursuits, then G-d-willing we can draw down an abundance of brocha into the world, for a year to come of healing and redemption.

So, who can name the most remozim to Elul and which one speaks to you? The title of this dvar torah doesn't count.

The Meat of the Matter Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

In this week's portion, the Torah allows us to partake in our material desires, but only according to Torah proscriptions. The Torah clearly allows the consumption of meat, albeit with a few caveats. The Torah states "If the place that Hashem, your G-d, will choose to place His Name will be far from you, you may slaughter from your cattle and your flocks that Hashem has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat in your cities according to your heart's entire desire. Even as the deer and the ayal are eaten, so may you eat it, the contaminated one and the pure one may eat it together: Only be strong not to eat the blood — for the blood, it is the nefesh — and you shall not eat the nefesh with the meat" (Deuteronomy 12:21-23).

Nefesh has various meanings, simply stated it is the life force of the animal — perhaps what we would call "the soul of the matter." Clearly, the consumption of blood is a despicable act in the Torah view (a fact conveniently overlooked by the centuries of libelers who had us drinking, mixing, baking and cooking with it.) In addition, the process of extricating all blood from the animal is clearly and intricately defined through the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch. However, delineating the prohibition as one of combining the consumption of the nefesh with the meat surely goes beyond the prohibition of eating or drinking blood.

Surely there is a deeper connotation to the prohibition of the strange concoction of nefesh and meat.

Rav Yehuda Laib Chasman was considered to be one of the luminaries of the mussar movement. Before he immersed himself completely in the world of Torah and mussar, he had a business that sold flour to bakers. He

Davening Times

פרשת ראה

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

מברכין אלול

7.30pm
7.40pm-7.55pm
7.30am (שוכן עד) 7.55am
9.30am
9.30am (שוכן עד) 9.55am
2.00pm
6.00pm
8.28pm
Following
9.33pm
7.30am / 8.30am / 9.15am
7.00am / 8.10am / 9.15am
6.50am / 8.10am / 9.15am
7.45pm
10.00pm

would devote a portion of his day to his business and the remaining time he would spend at the famed Talmud Torah of Kelm under the tutelage of Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv, the illustrious Alter of Kelm. One day on the way into the Yeshiva, Rav Ziv called Reb Yehuda Laib over to the side and pointed to the white powder that covered the sleeve of his jacket. Rabbi Chasman took this observation to be a clear moralistic evaluation.

“Rabbi Ziv is pointing out that the flour is becoming part of me. If it is already all over my garments, and it is still with me when I leave my store, then it has become too much a part of me.”

With that, he made a personal decision that changed his life completely. He returned home, and figured out together with his wife that the amount of their current assets would more than cover any outstanding debts and allow them to sustain themselves. They sold the business, and Rabbi Chasman enrolled full-time at the Volozhiner Yeshiva, eventually emerging the great luminary whom we all revere.

Some of us like meat: whether it is the actual beef or the proverbial materialistic affairs in which we indulge. And that's OK to a point. After all, we are only human.

But the Torah tells us to be careful to separate the soul from the meat. The holy from the mundane. It wants us to understand that other than the quest for the prime rib, which we wish to consume, there are more noble pursuits that should consume us. Therefore, the Torah tells us to clearly delineate the difference and tells us that although we may indulge in worldly pleasure we should be careful not to allow the soul to become devoured with the meat. Thus, it clearly commands, “Do not eat the nefesh with the meat.” A good meal is totally permissible. It even lifts the spirit. However, materialistic indulgences as such should surely never become our obsession or sole desire. For then, it will become part of our nefesh. It will become tantamount to our soul desire.

A Closer Look

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

See that I place before you this day a blessing and a curse... (Devarim 11:26)

IT'S A COMMON expression in probably all languages. A person can be talking to someone for a while, and all of a sudden, in order to make a point, they'll say, “Look...” as if to better grab their listener's attention, even though they already have it. They probably don't even know they said it, or even what they mean by it. It can be kind of automatic.

In general, people will start a sentence with, “Look” as a way to focus people on the point they want to make. It's a way of saying, “Pay attention to this. This is what I really mean to say, which you will also see if you look more closely at the matter.”

Moshe Rabbeinu has been talking to the people non-stop since Parashas Devarim. The ENTIRE book is a one-day discussion, though we read it in 11 episodes. True, he could be saying “See!” now in this week's parsha because some people may have been losing their concentration. More than likely, he is trying to take the Jewish people deeper into the following matter.

(The following is from a chapter in an upcoming book called, “Not So Bad.”) Redemption has been hotly anticipated for almost 6,000 years—by CREATION. It EXISTS for redemption, because it cannot fulfill its reason to be until it occurs. As long as exile remains a reality, Creation hobbles through history.

Mankind too. Mankind was created into Paradise, the ORIGINAL and far more ULTIMATE version of redemption. Having been expelled LONG ago from Gan Aiden, it has been mankind's mission to return there—we were MADE for it—and can't be happy until we do.

That's why we CHEAT. It's either that or live depressed, which many do. We are wired to be happy, and when we're not, especially for extended periods of time, or for reasons we can't accept, we break down. We either give up, or find ways to fake it.

There is no greater pleasure in life FOR EVERYONE than being closely connected to G-d. If that sounds like religious marketing and advertising, it's only because those who have failed to grasp this, have done their VERY best to make it seem that way. This way, they can avoid the need to earn the right to return to Paradise, and make a lot of money off a lot of people who haven't.

What people also don't understand is how EVERY other pleasure in life, is just a very watered down version of the original one. The pleasure they enjoy from anything, even illicit pleasures, is the spark of G-d within it with

which they have interacted spiritually. Unearned, and how much more so if stolen, it can only be fleeting, resulting in an insatiable desire to have more and newer ones.

Fortunately for man, Creation offers many.

Unfortunately for man, Creation offers many.

The first statement does not need an explanation. The second one does. It's the reason why we're still in exile, 5,778 years later, and making Creation pay for it as well. People are born, raised, and live according to the wrong idea of pleasure and fulfillment. Consequently, mankind greatly under-strives, settling for far lesser forms of pleasure and quality of life.

Noah in his time understood this, but failed to impress the people of his time with it. Avraham succeeded somewhat in showing this incredible truth to his generation, but it didn't stick. Their intellectual capacity was not great enough to counter the magnetism of the sensual pleasures of the physical world.

Hopeless, at least for the time being, G-d turned away from the bulk of mankind. He chose instead to build a NEW nation from Avraham, one that could grow up with THE TRUTH from the beginning. Clearly the world was not going to change. Success depended upon the creation of a nation that didn't NEED to change, just improve.

Torah, given exactly 500 years after the birth of Avraham, helped with that. It provided new structure for an ancient wisdom, a guided means to an endgame known since G-d spoke to our first ancestor.

The fundamental difference? Clearly Torah does not shun physical pleasure AT ALL. Indeed, so MANY mitzvos inherently promote the greatest of material enjoyments.

Shabbos.

Yom Tov.

Relationships.

The list is long.

Rather, the ESSENTIAL and ETERNAL difference in approach to life that Avraham Avinu discovered, and then passed down to his son Yitzchak, who later passed it on to his son, Ya'akov, etc. was this:

Physical pleasure is not the GOAL of life. It is a wonderful BY-PRODUCT of doing the will of G-d.

The goal in life is doing the RIGHT thing, the G-dLY thing. Our core is spiritual, so we are, in essence, spiritual. We crave spiritual success, and would know this automatically if the drives of the body, which is only clothing for the soul, weren't so “loud.”

The truth is, physical pleasures are even MORE enjoyable when they are spiritually-justifiable. We can argue that point and fight against it, but we can't change it because it is the way we were MADE, as the Torah says:

And G-d created man in HIS IMAGE; in the IMAGE OF G-d He created him... (Bereishis 1:27)

So there.

As the mishnah says, this world is only a corridor to the next world. It means that whatever pleasure we enjoy in this world, it pales compare to the pleasure we're in for in the World-to-Come. And THAT pleasure will be COMPLETELY spiritual.

Shabbos is kind of bridge between both worlds, the present one and the one to come. It is considered to be one-sixtieth of the World-to-Come, to indicate that one can, if they observe Shabbos in holiness, experience additional levels of spiritual pleasure from physical activities.

This is because, and this is REALLY important to know, the things we enjoy can provide varying levels of pleasure. The level of pleasure is based upon the person performing the pleasurable act, and the manner in which it is done. The more spiritually capable a person is, the more they are “permitted” to access deeper levels of pleasure.

This is both a secret and not a secret. Righteous people know this and live by it, which is why they require SO little to get SO much out of life. The rest of the world experiences it from time-to-time, when they add a spiritual element to their physical experience. But they just don't understand it well enough to apply it to their everyday lives.

Besides, they are constantly being told by the media that TRUE pleasure comes from physical pleasures WITHOUT spiritual connection. And most people are either too naive or unquestioning to realize they are being conned out of a higher quality of life. And this approach has spilled over into the Torah world as well...