



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד"ר אב תשפ"ד - ראה - 31st August 2024 - Volume 17 - Issue 6

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Rov and Rebetzen on the birth of a great grandson to Shimon and Naomi Wagshal in Israel

Mazel Tov to Nati & Sharon Sebbag on the wedding on Monday of their daughter Rachel to Refoel Dovid, son of Yosef Yitzchok & Nomi Chalomish. The Aufruf takes place this Shabbos in Shul followed by Kiddush at 47 Cavendish Road

Mazel Tov to Michael and Bayla Brandeis on the wedding this week of their grandson, Dovid Sonnenberg, to Gila Neumann.

Mazel Tov to Eliezer & Sara Issler and Dan & Rochelle Smith on engagement of Rikki to Josh. The vort will take place א"ה on Thursday from 7.30-9.30pm in the Stenecourt new hall.

Chaim Aruchim

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

Shabbos, 27th Av - Marilyn Sacho for her mother

Tues, 30th Av - Shirley Dinowitz for her mother

Tues, 30th Av - Miles Levine for his father

Fri, 3rd Elul - Yosaif Bernhardt for his father

Fri, 3rd Elul - Joe Levene for his Father

Lost Property

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

It Is Meant To Be Personal

Rabbi J Rubinstein

A chaplain in Baltimore, was once asked by a woman to visit her husband in hospital, who was terminally ill. She warned the chaplain, her husband was an atheist and it would be better not to mention G-d, when speaking to him. The chaplain went to visit the man and spoke to him for a few minutes without mentioning G-d. Just as he was about to leave, the man said, Rabbi, arent you going to say some kind of prayer with me? The chaplain said to him, "your wife told me that you dont believe in G-d". "Yes" concurred the man, "but just in case!" (Reported by Rabbi Frand in his book "Its never too Little")

That is certainly the attitude to religion adopted by some people. The absolutely opposite attitude, was demonstrated in the following episode. At the beginning of the Second World War, the Rov of Brisk was in Warsaw when it was being bombed by the Germans. It was just before Succos, and the Rov remained preoccupied with obtaining Hadassim, to go with his Lulav, which met every strict requirement that he normally adhered to. The great scholar Rav Menachem Zemba met him and asked him, "At a time of emergency like this, when Jewish blood is being spilt like water, would it not be good enough to rely on lenient opinions regarding what makes Hadassim Kosher for use with the lulav?" The Rov replied, "Were Hashem to say to an individual Jew, I want you to go now, and obtain Hadassim, would he not go and make sure he got the best Hadassim possible, even in these circumstances? The trouble is we dont feel strongly enough, that Hashem commanded us individually, and that he commanded us today. But that is what the Torah tells us when it says in the Shema, והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך, "And these things which I command you today shall be on your heart" This means, we have to feel in our hearts, I-meaning Hashem, am commanding you-personally, on this particular day, to do the Mitzvah".

The crucial difference between these two stories is the degree of immediacy and personal relevance, felt by the people concerned. I presume that most of us are somewhere between these two examples. Therefore it is relevant to us to note, that this week's Parshah opens

with Hashem stating, "See I am putting before you this day, blessing and curses. The blessings if you listen to the commands..... And the curses if you dont listen to the commands.... It begins with the word ראה, which is the Hebrew word used when telling a single person to see something. If one is telling many people, the Hebrew word should be ראו, -the plural form of the instruction. Rav Eliyohu Boruch Finkel explains, the singular form is used, although was is addressed to all of the Jewish people, to emphasize that it applies to each individual personally. He brings the above story about the Rov of Brisk, to illustrate the idea.

Fortunately, most of us do not live in circumstances remotely similar, to those the Brisker Rov experienced at that time. But we can still be inspired not to "pass the buck" of doing Mitzvos, to someone else, and not to defer them to another time. They do apply to each one of us, and should be fulfilled היום-this day.

Needs and Desires

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

When I stand in line in a pizza shop or bagel store, I anticipate the counter fellow asking me, "So what do you need?" That's because I often answer, "bread and water." Then I smile and add, "that's what I need. Now I'll tell you what I want." Of course I go on to order a potpourri of unneeded calories, that are comfortably arranged on the a staple of Western man dough. To some of us those toppings are the deep insight to the verse in this week's portion, "Man does not live by bread alone" (Deuteronomy 8:3). Of course as thinking Jews, we know the verse does not refer to bread or pizza garnishing. The suffix of the verse, contains the important message "rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of G-d does man live" (ibid).

By all means, this week's portion tells us to keep life in perspective what we want, what we need and an attitude we must ingest and ultimately exude in the way we live our lives.

But the truth is the Torah seems a bit contradictory. It tells us, "He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you the manna that you did not know, nor did your forefathers know, in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live, rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of G-d does man live."

Did Hashem not sustain us with a physical form of sustenance? Hashem did not say, "Do not worry; survive without bread;" rather he sent us a form, albeit a miraculous form, of bread. So, if eventually we need bread, and it does sustain us, how is He telling us that man does not live by bread alone?

A well-known therapist in the New York Metropolitan area received a phone call late one night.

"Doctor.' the frantic voice on the other end of the phone pleaded. "I must make an appointment for my six-year-old son. He is in desperate need of a therapist."

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.55pm
זמן שבת & Candle Lighting	7.08pm - 7.20pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.42am
Mincha	6.00pm / 7.47pm
Rov's Shiur	Following Mincha
Motzei Shabbos	8.52pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed ראש חודש	6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.40pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

"And what makes you think he needs a psychologist?"

"Well, his mother and I are separated. During the week, our son stays by his mother. On the weekends he is with me." The man continued. "Well we just began this arrangement. Tonight as his mother was about to put him to bed, he began to wail. 'I want to go back to Daddy!'"

"She tried unsuccessfully to convince him to go to bed and finally gave up. She got him dressed, and drove him across town to my place.

"How did that work out?" asked the doctor.

"Well," continued the father, he came to my place. Everything was fine until he was about to go to bed. Then my son began to cry incessantly. 'I want to go back to Mommy!' This time I had to drive him, and then..." The doctor listened a few more moments and then he interjected, "I don't know if your son needs a therapist, but he definitely needs parents!"

The Torah is telling us a very special message. Of course, we need bread to sustain us. We must use the world's physical resources to aid in our sustenance. But there is a message sent when in the evening we have nothing and the next morning we have manna. The message is that the physical sustenance we need be it agricultural nutrition, medicinal remedies, or a boost in business is all Heavenly ordained.

Hashem afflicted us and starved us. Then he gave us food that was totally measured, meted, and doled by His Divine hand. That daily ritual became a metaphor for eternity. Physical amenities are the very source of physical existence. But the source of that sustenance may never be overlooked. Man needs bread. That is the way of the world. But just don't forget our Father who sends it. We may need therapists. But don't forget the parents!

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 tishgo'd'du... l'mais [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 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 tishgo'd'du... l'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 tishgo'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 {synagogue} 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 tranquility. 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 {The Garden of 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 {festive meal} 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 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.