



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Chizky and Avital Salomon on the birth of a grandson to Shragi and Tova Steinberg. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 66 Cavendish Road.

Mazel Tov to Rabbi and Mrs Y Y Katz on the engagement of their grandson Yitzchok Katz (London) to Shani Spitzer.

Mazel Tov to David and Chani Steinberg on the birth of a grandson to Eli and Hadassah Serruya in London

Kiddush This Shabbos

Yisroel Meir and Naomi Cope invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush after Davenning in the Shul hall in honour of the recent birth of their daughter, Carmela Freida.

Pesach Newsletter

We are pleased to announce that we are working on a bumper newsletter for Pesach with Divrei Torah on the הגדה submitted by members.

We are trying to cover as many portions of the הדגה as possible.

To book your spot please contact contact Boruch Michaels via the following details: Mobile (Call, Text, WhatsApp) : 07419747766, Email: boruchmichaels@gmail.com.

Matzo Baking Chabura

We are planning on making a Chabura for Matzo baking for men, and boys over Bar Mitzvah on Monday evening 15th April, the cost will be approx £30 person and you get your own matzos. Please let Eliezer Issler know if you are interested as numbers are limited 07968 490575.

מעות חיסין

Donations should be made to the Rov for מעות חיסין for distribution to needy local families to cover Pesach expenses.

מכר חמץ

The actual sale of חמץ takes place in the בית דין on ערב פסח before midday. However, those people who are going out of town for the whole of פסח or whose premises will be completely closed, may avail themselves of a מכירה arranged by the בית דין on the 13th ניסן, and may thus obviate the need for חמץ בדיקת. Both of the above sales may be arranged through the Rov at his home at any time by prior arrangement, or in Shul after Davenning.

Light Over Leprosy

Jake Lewis

Chazal gave a spiritual rather than physiological explanation for the disease tsara'as (generally translated as "leprosy") which affected not only the body but also clothing and the walls of houses. Several sins could possibly be the cause: Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Because of seven things the plague of leprosy is incurred, namely, slander, the shedding of blood, a vain oath, incest, arrogance, robbery and envy (Eiruchin 16a). However, most concur that the main cause for tsara'as was slander and gossip.

Rabbi David Aaron says that in Kabbalah it is taught that the world we live in is a product of our perception of reality. The philosopher Immanuel Kant probed this concept. He asked: Do we see reality or do we see our perception of reality? Kant's answer is that we do not see reality, but only our perception of reality. In other words, is this world reality? No, this world is your perception of reality. Therefore, the focus and clarity of your consciousness will determine the kind of world you live in.

Each one of us has a choice. You can believe that this world is filled with the



Rumors

Halacha allows for certain rumors to be reckoned with, but never are they to be accepted as fact.

The halacha distinguishes between a rumor that may have some credence from that which is mere character assassination.

If the subject is known to have enemies in the community who are very possibly the source of the rumors, it may not be granted any legitimacy.

Even if everyone in the community has a favorable opinion of the subject, the rumor would have to circulate throughout the community for one and a half days without losing strength before it could be taken seriously.

When a rumour does seem to have validity, halacha allows for it to cast doubt on the status of the person(s) involved; e.g. where the report concerns the subject's status as a kohen or similar issues of lineage.

The unfortunate reality is that rarely is a rumour anything more than wide-scale loshon hora.

We thank the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation powerofspeech.org for the use of this material

presence of G-d who cares about it and guides it. Or you can believe that this world is one big accident, a chaotic mess. The choice is yours. But remember what you believe is ultimately what you will see and experience. What you believe creates the world you live in.

How would we act if we really believed that G-d's presence filled our lives, our homes, our offices, our cities, our world? How would we speak to our family? How would we treat the stranger? To the extent that I think, speak, and act in accordance with this heightened awareness, to that extent, G-d can be present in my world.

The so-called "good- deeds" and "rituals" of Torah tradition are designed to be building blocks to nurture and concretize consciousness all day long, so that we can channel G- d's presence into the world and into our lives.

By increasing our consciousness of G-d, I thereby allow the light of G-d and all the gifts of spiritual wealth to pour into the world. Few realize the true goodness in deeds and the real richness in rituals. They are really invitations to G-d. What we are saying in both words and actions is, "G-d, I want to get You into my life!"

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת תזריע

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

ראש חודש ניסן

6.45pm
6.59pm - 7.10pm
9.15am
9.51am
10.45am
2.00pm
6.00pm
7.39pm
Following
8.44pm
7.15am / 8.20am
6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
7.45pm
10.00pm

The Kabbalah teaches that we have the dimmer switch in our hands. We can either turn the light of G-d up, creating a whole and radiant world filled with health and joy, imbued with the presence of G-d, or we can turn the dimmer down, creating a dark, gloomy, ugly, Godless world. Our consciousness, which is nurtured by our thoughts, speech, and actions, becomes the vessel to receive the divine presence and the vehicle to transmit the divine blessings into our daily lives.

The Power of Birth

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week's parsha, Tazria, begins with the laws of a woman who gave birth. Upon giving birth to a male, a woman is t'mayah (ritually impure) for a seven-day period. If she gave birth to a female, her period of impurity extends for fourteen days. The possukim (verses) then enumerate the sacrifices brought for a baby boy at the end of forty days and for a baby girl at the end of eighty days.

Many find difficulty with this concept of a woman becoming t'mayah after birth. They erroneously see this as an implication that birth is in some way 'dirty' and thereby brings on impurity. The fact that this period of impurity is double when a girl is born further exacerbates this perception.

In order to properly understand this we must gain a proper understanding of the concept of tum'ah (ritual impurity).

Tum'ah does not seem to work according to the rules that we'd assume would apply. Animals have no tum'ah during their lifetime, human beings do. Furthermore, upon death a Jew has a greater level of tum'ah than a gentile.

The commentators explain that when an existing kedusha (holiness) departs, a vacuum is formed. That void which is created is immediately filled with tum'ah. The greater the level of kedusha, the greater the degree of tum'ah that will fill the void.

During one's lifetime, one has tremendous potential to bring 'tov' (good) and holiness to this world. While asleep, a person is incapable of performing any such acts. As a result, a 'ruach rah', a certain degree of tum'ah, sets in to fill the void formed by that lack of potential. Upon awakening, that potential kedusha returns. The ruach rah is pushed to the fingers and n'tilas yadayim (the ritual washing of the hands) is performed in order to remove that ruach rah.

The Talmud teaches that sleep is 1/60th of death. That temporary state of inability experienced during sleep becomes permanent at death. At that permanent state of inability the tum'ah sets in at a far greater level. The greater the potential for bringing tov into this world during life, the greater the vacuum that is created at death and filled with tum'ah. The corpse of a Jew therefore has a greater degree of tum'ah than that of a gentile.

Now lets see how this can be applied to the tum'ah of a woman after childbirth.

Our goal is to become as similar to Hashem as we can. "Just as He is compassionate, so too must you be compassionate..." Our life goal and project is to emulate Him to the best of our ability.

If we were to choose one word to best describe the unique character of Hashem, an excellent choice would be 'Creator.' At what point does a human being moves as close as possible to becoming a 'creator'? A woman at childbirth! At that time she is as 'G-d-like' as we ever can be. However, after birth she is no longer in that state. That kedusha is no longer there. A vacuum is formed—she becomes t'mayah.

Why is the period of tum'ah twice as long after a baby girl is born? Because she created a being which has the potential to create. She created a creator. However, once the birth had been completed, she is no longer in that state. The drop is that much more precipitous—the void is that much greater. She is t'mayah for twice as long.

People have feelings of emptiness and voids at different points of their lives. Perhaps these are the tangible stirrings of the vacuum created black of connection to holiness—the holiness for which we were created. May we merit to fill that void with the types of acts which make us most similar to our Creator.

Spot Wrong

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

If a person has upon his skin a white blotch, discoloration or spot and it is suspected of being a mark of the tzara'as affliction upon his skin, he shall be brought to Aharon Ha-Kohen, or one of his children the kohanim. (Vayikra 13:2)

THE KOHEN STUDIED Michah's arm with great seriousness, and said, "Tzara'as of the skin is evaluated on the basis of three symptoms, and any one of them indicates that the tzara'as is advanced. One is a discoloration of the hair in the affected area, from the natural color to white." Michah looked at the white blotch on his arm. He felt VERY uneasy, even humiliated. He had been

warned. "You're speaking loshon hara!" his friend Osniel had told him, "and I want no part of it!" But the yetzer hara is powerful, and in some people overwhelming. Michah had a difficult time controlling his tongue, and an even more difficult time admitting when he hadn't.

"No I'm not!" he barked back. "I have a good REASON to say what I'm saying!" "So did Miriam!" Osniel retorted, "and see what happened to her! White as snow! We're not told to remember what happened to her for no reason!" Michah scrunched his face, recalling the episode with Moshe's sister, but still reluctant to give in. "And you can't get much more l'Shem Shamayim than Moshe Rabbeinu!" Osniel continued. "He also was given tzara'as for what he said about the Jewish people!"

Now Michah looked away, defiant. He had a difficult time admitting he was wrong, his own undoing. There would come a time in history after the temples had been destroyed, and the Jewish people were exiled to distant lands, when a person could delude themselves as Michah now did. Divine Providence would become covert, making it possible for people to miss the Divine point of their suffering. "Hmm," the kohen said, having difficulty finding enough signs to confirm that Michah indeed had tzara'as. "What do you think?" Michah asked, a slight tremble in his voice, clearly humbled by the incident. "Well," the kohen explained, "had your lesion met the criteria of tzara'as, I would have had to declare you tamei right now. But it doesn't..." "So I'm okay?" a prematurely excited Michah asked. "Not really," the kohen answered him. "I have to confine you to your home for seven days..."

"You mean I can't go out of my house for SEVEN days?" "That's right," the kohen answered him, "or have visitors." "Ouch!" Michah said, considering all the ramifications of his new status. "It hurts, doesn't it?" the kohen asked him. "It certainly does!" Michah answered. "Well, imagine the impact of your loshon hara on the person you spoke about...and in the spiritual realms above!"

Michah could only look at the ground and feel a sense of shame. "You can fool some of the people some of the time," he thought to himself, "but God NONE of the time!" as his tzara'as made eminently clear.

The kohen could see that Michah was finally getting it. "I'll be back in seven days to check on you again...to see if you actually have tzara'as."

"What will you be looking for?" "For one, to see if it spread in the meantime." "And if it hasn't?" Michah asked, a little hopeful. "Well," the kohen answered him. "There is a difference in protocol depending of the type of lesion. For example, for patches of the skin, another confinement period of seven days is necessary." "ANOTHER SEVEN DAYS?!" "That's right," he said, "And for boils or burns, a kohen declares it merely a tzareves..." "A tzareves?" Michah asked. "What's that?" "It's a scar. If it's only a scar, then there are no further examinations, but for bald patches or lesions of the scalp or beard, another confinement period of seven days is also necessary. However prior to this second confinement period, the individual is shaved around the 'nesek,' leaving a rim of two hairs completely surrounding the bald spot to make any spreading visible."

Michah's face dropped with the thought of having to endure another seven days locked away in his house. He would be cut off from the world he loved to be a part of.

"After the second confinement period of seven days," the kohen continued, "both those with patches on the skin as well as those with bald patches are re-evaluated once more. If the criteria for tzara'as have still not been met, then the person is declared pure. All they have to do is wash their body and garments. Having been confined, they are considered to have been impure, in some sense."

Michah considered all that he heard. "That's a lot of details," he said to the kohen. "More than you know and have discussed," he told Michah. "Tzara'as is serious business, because loshon hara is serious business."

Michah thought about his friend, Osniel's warning, and how he had downplayed it. Now he was paying the price. "What was I thinking?" he asked himself. "Why did I take the risk?"

"My work here is done," the kohen said. He gave Michah a few final instructions before leaving. "Thank you for coming by," he said, contrite. "I promise I will try and control what I say for now on!" The kohen smiled, and said. "That's good. But it's not me you have to make that promise to. It's God, and yourself." "I suppose," he said.

The kohen left, and Michah closed the door on the world he would not be a part of for seven days. Would he ever live down the embarrassment? To take a step in the right direction, he took out a scroll of Tehillim his grandfather had left him, and began reciting. He prayed to God to help him in the future, every now and then looking at the blotch on his arm to see if it was gone to spare him any additional pain, and be the cause of more.