



Ohr Yerushalayim News

פ - א אייר תש"פ - תזריע מצורע - 25th April 2020 - Volume 12 - Issue 37

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to David and Zara Newman on the birth of a grandson to Elchonon and Shaina Newman in Israel.

Mazel Tov to Dr & Mrs Meyer on the birth of great granddaughter to Zev and Miriam Landau in Williamsburg, a great granddaughter to Aaron and Gitel Kalish in London and a great grandson to Moishe and Rochel Stock in London.

חיים ארוכים

Chaim Aruchim to Sharon Sebbag on the recent petira of her father, Mordecai Dovid (Mark) Held.

Not So Alone After All

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

But, if the kohen looks at it, and there is no white hair in the baheres, and it is not lower than the skin and it is dim, the kohen shall quarantine him for seven days. (Vayikra 13:26)

IT CONTINUES TO be ironic how the parshios have something to say about the current situation, perhaps this one more than others. These parshios are the only ones that discuss the halachos that lead to "biddud— isolation." It is the technical word used for quarantine here in Israel, and the one the Torah uses for the person who gets tzara'as, physical leprosy for spiritual reasons.

As Rashi later explains, isolation of the metzora was measure-for-measure. For distancing others from one another through loшон hara—derogatory speech—the metzora was socially-distanced from others by going into isolation. It was supposed to make them personally feel the impact of their words and cause them to do teshuva.

Of course, such laws would not work today, unless the Bais Din also denied the metzora all access to social media. Today you can go into your own closest and still attack others via the social media network, as long as you have an Internet connection or good phone reception. To REALLY be in biddud today, a person would have to leave behind all of that, or at least greatly limit it to official business alone.

There's another aspect of biddud as well, at least for the Torah Jew, that not too many are considering. Personally, I missed it until now, focusing only on my inability to be part of a minyan, and not so much on the place in which the minyan was occurring, in a SHUL. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why we have lost access to it.

The Talmud states that since the destruction of the Temple, the "shul" has become somewhat of a minuscule replacement for it. There is no ACTUAL replacement for the Temple, but we need something in the meantime, to keep us connected to the idea of one. That has been the Beis Knesses, the synagogue, the shul, so that when we finally DO get our Temple back, it should be quickly in our time, we'll still be familiar with the idea of a place that G-d "inhabits."

Of course, most shul-going people are aware of the necessary decorum of a such a holy place, though they may forget themselves from time-to-time. It's difficult enough to hold G-d in your mind while praying. Holding Him there even during non-prayer times is even MORE difficult for many.

Besides, is G-d REALLY there? Isn't the whole idea just a "zecher," something we do to remember what it once was like? Everyone knows we're living in a time of "hester panim." The Shechinah long ago withdrew to higher planes of existence. What aspect of G-d's Presence is LEFT, to give shuls such an elevated status, that we should treat them like the miniature temples they're meant to be?

We could get Kabbalistic at this point and blow away the whole concept of space and time, but that would get intellectually messy. Besides, the point can be made in simpler terms, and that's good enough for this discussion.

There is something in Kabbalah called a "roshem." Basically, the word means "impression," as in, the person made a good impression on others. Kabbalah teaches that when it comes to things of holiness, these always leave some kind of holy impression wherever they go. So, yes, if you doven mincha at the bus station or at an airport, even without a minyan, the kedushah—holiness—you created while there remains after you have left. Anyone who walks through it will get a burst of holiness, the amount depending upon how much was created in the first place.

This is a fascinating concept with a lot of corollaries. But the main point is that once there is kedushah in a particular place, it can never really leave that place completely, even if its source has. Therefore, even if G-d has withdrawn from the lower levels of Creation, His roshem remains behind ALWAYS where He was.

But there is more, and the Talmud alludes to this. When it says that a shul is a "Mikdash Miat," a miniature Temple, it is not speaking figuratively only. It is saying that every time a shul opens up anywhere in the world for the right reasons, it is endowed with some of that roshem. It is imbued with some Temple holiness...which is why it is SO important to maintain the sanctity of the place.

It is also why the Talmud says that in the Messianic Era, the shuls will fly to Eretz Yisroel from all over the world. It is their Temple sanctity that makes them relevant to Eretz Yisroel, but ONLY if it was a place that the Shechinah could inhabit. If people did not conduct themselves in the "shul" as necessary to host the Shechinah, then it will never have received its holiness or connection to the Messianic Era.

Davening Times

שבת פרשת תזריע מצורע

Candle Lighting	7.30pm-7.45pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.20pm
Shacharis	9.15am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	8.20pm
Motzei Shabbos	9.25pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

שבת ראש חודש אייר

Candle Lighting	7.30pm-7.45pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.20pm
Shacharis	9.15am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	8.20pm
Motzei Shabbos	9.25pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

I never really thought much about any of this, until now. At first I thought that it was the minyan itself that I missed, which I do. But that wasn't what carried me. If anything, it often frustrated me, going faster than I wanted to go.

Rather, it is the Shechinah that carries each of us who come to its place of "residence" to pray or for any other holy activity. Walk through the doors of an official shul, even if in someone's basement, and you are welcomed by the Shechinah itself (Brochos 9b). Then as you pray it prays with you, strengthening you, allowing you to draw on it as a source of spiritual energy if you make the effort to put yourself into your tefillah.

Perhaps this is a major part of the biddud of the Metzora. Would you speak loshon hara if you knew G-d was listening in? Of course not. But then again, isn't He ALWAYS listening in? Of course He is. Then how did you speak loshon hara? Because you forgot that He was there alongside you the entire time, since His glory fills the entire world at ALL times.

So the Torah says, since the loshon hara speaker acted "alone," he has to live alone. And as most of us have learned over the last few weeks, it's when you are most alone that you most feel the Presence of G-d. There's nothing else TO feel, because there is nothing else to distract us away from the Presence of G-d.

There is more. Tzara'as was an affliction of the skin, because that is what changed as a result of the loshon hara of the snake back in the Garden of Eden. Adam's skin went from spiritual light to physical skin, and the world became more material as a result. He had acted as if G-d wasn't there, and his change of skin was the result. The speaker of loshon hara acts as if G-d isn't there, and gets a skin affliction as their consequence.

It is a message to take to heart at this time of "biddud" without even getting into what might be the measure-for-measure of this current pandemic, which is questionable. But we do know one consequence: solitary confinement and social distancing. It may not only be about the wronging of other people as much as people acting as if G-d doesn't exist, or doesn't care about what they do. He does. And He's EVERYWHERE at ALL times.

We're going to find this out sooner or later. If sooner, then things just might get better. If later, then expect things to...

Warning: Loshon Horah Kills!

Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier (Torah.org)

A peddler approached the city of Tzipori and called out, "Who wants to buy the potion of life?" A crowd gathered around him. Rebbe Yanni said to the man, "I would like to purchase some." The peddler responded, "It's not for you and your type." Rebbe Yanni persisted. Finally the peddler took out a Tehillim and opened it to the posuk, "Who is the man who wants life? Guard your tongue from evil."

Rebbe Yanni exclaimed, "All of my life I've read that posuk, but I never appreciated how simple it was until this peddler revealed it to me!" — VaYikrah Rabba 16:2

What did the peddler reveal to Rebbe Yanni?

The difficulty with this Medrash is that it doesn't seem that Rebbe Yanni learned anything new. He clearly knew the posuk before the peddler said it. As he was a Tanna, he had mastered the entire Torah and understood the meaning, depth, and implications of those words. What new concept did Rebbe Yanni learn from the peddler?

The answer to this can be best understood with a moshol. Imagine that a mother and father are looking for the right yeshiva for their son. After much investigation, they hit upon the perfect solution. It has the right type of environment, the right type of boys, just the right blend – a perfect fit. But then they hear the news. The boys in that yeshiva smoke!

"Oh my goodness!" the mother exclaims "Now what? It may be a great yeshiva, and our son might flourish there, but everyone knows that smoking kills. It's a habit that's very difficult to break. It's just not

worth it."

So they decide not to send their son to that yeshiva.

Now let's play out the same scenario with just one adjustment: same young man, same yeshiva, same perfect fit. However, instead of the parents finding out that the boys smoke, they find out that the boys in that yeshiva speak lashon harah. What would we anticipate the parents' reaction to be?

"Oh my goodness! The Torah warns us against lashon harah! With one conversation, a person can violate dozens of prohibitions. And worse, it can easily become a lifelong habit. Lashon harah kills... It may be a great yeshiva, but forget it. We can't take the chance!"

Somehow it doesn't seem that that would be the reaction. More likely, their attitude would be, "Listen, it's not something we are happy to hear, but it isn't a reason to disqualify a good yeshiva."

Let's analyze the difference in their reactions. Assuming that these are well-educated people, they know that the Torah specifically, clearly, and definitively tells us that speaking lashon harah kills, and that guarding one's tongue is the Torah's guarantee to long life. They have heard many shmuzin discussing the severity of this issue, and they don't question it.

On the other hand, while they are aware that smoking has a high correlation to various diseases, only a small percentage of people actually die from smoking-related complications.

So smoking, which might kill, they fear, yet lashon harah, which they know definitely kills, they aren't that concerned about. How are we to understand this anomaly?

The answer is that when medical science tells us something, we accept it as truth. These are the facts; this is reality. Unfortunately, when the Torah tells us something, it just isn't real. "You need a lot of emunah to really accept that. I don't know if I am on that level." And so in the parents' minds, "Lashon harah. . . well, I mean, a mitzvah it's not, but it surely isn't as dangerous as smoking. Smoking really kills!"

This seems to be the answer to Rebbe Yanni. As great as he was, and as much as he accepted every word of the Torah as completely true, on some level it wasn't 100% real to him. The peddler revealed to Rabbi Yanni that the Torah teaches us that "lashon harah kills" in its most simple, direct meaning. It then became real to him.

Why Do We Have One Eye Weaker Than The Other?

Rabbi Moshe Kormornick (Shortvort.com)

This shall be the law of the Metsora on the day of his purification: He shall be brought to the Kohen (14:2)

The Mishna learns from these words that even if the Metsora is a Kohen himself and capable of determining if such a blemish makes him impure, he is still required to seek the ruling of another Kohen as to his current state of purity and may not rely on his own ruling.

Why would this be the case, if the Kohen is knowledgeable to rule on other people's blemishes, why is he not trusted on his own?

The answer is that the purification process of a Metsora is not a medical process, it is a process of teshuva. Since the blemish stemmed from the Metsora's haughtiness (in that he treated his fellow Jew badly – an act that stems from over-evaluating his own self-worth), the Metsora must humble himself by asking another person about his blemish.

Another answer is that often, when we look at our own faults, we tend to justify them and overlook their seriousness, but when it comes to the faults of others, we are only too quick to judge unfavourably and look down on their transgressions. For this reason, the Kohen must ask someone else about his own blemish, because when it comes to his own faults, he may not be capable of seeing so clearly.

This is the conclusion that Rav Yisroel Salanter came to when he pondered why most people have one eye weaker than the other. He answered that the weaker eye is to see the faults of others, whereas the stronger eye should be used to see our own faults.