



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Dr Howard and Marilyn Sacho on the recent birth of a grandson in America.

Mazel Tov to Doni Kaye and parents Dean and Susan on his wedding this week to Adina Bauman.

Farewell And Hatzlocho

We bid farewell to families Dovzi and Anne Lopian, Adam and Sorele Bookman, Aron and Miriam Kampf and Benji and Shiffy Silverstone on their Aliya and wish them much Hatzlocho for the future.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish the following Chaim Aruchim for Yahrtzeit this week:

Sun 12th Av David Issler for his mother

Tues 14th Av R' Yosef Yitzchok Chalomish for his mother

Tues 14th Av Steven Mills for his father

With Sadness and Hope

Adam Bookman

On the cusp of our family's departure, I have chosen today (Thursday) to write these words on behalf of my family, as the inherent sense of loss lends itself to the sentiments I want to express.

I must start with Shevach v'Hodo l'H' that I have been Zoche to have had involvement in our Shul since inception. I recall so clearly saying Brochos for the Omud Shabbas Parshas Toldos all those years ago (though whether it took 25 minutes....).

These last few weeks have been truly a gift for it appeared we would not have the opportunity to return to the Shul before we left, and I am grateful to those that have facilitated our safe reopening which has allowed me to take my leave in an appropriate manner.

The Shul has for so long been where we have brought up our children (two of whom will lyH continue to Daven here), and is not only our mokom for Tephillah and Torah, but also the centre of my social interaction, for my closest friends also call Ohr Yerushalayim home.

The greater Manchester's collective admiration for Ohr Yerushalayim lies so clearly in our stated core value of Kovod HaRov. Reb Berel, one can see from our family Simchas, we do not have tables of various Rabonim joining us, for we only have had one address and telephone number for the numerous sha'alos and requests for eitsah over the years. The character of the Shul has been shaped by your caring guiding influence which makes us the envy of many a Kehillah. And of course of late, this responsibility has now become a shared venture with the appointment of Reb Shaya, to whom I wish to offer a personal Hakoros Hatov for your friendship and support and the Harbotsos Torah that you have brought into our Kehillah.

Turning to the day to day management, presents a difficulty as these are people who shy away from public approbation, a mistake I have made several times in the past. And so I say to our President and his Committee and our newsletter editor come-all technical support, keep up the wonderful work, building on your progress to date.

My co-Trustees however require mention this once. Dov and Chizky, it is with a sense of immense loss as we embark upon this move, but that is salvaged with the pride that I feel as I look around at what you have achieved (with some back-office assistance). May Ohr Yerushalayim continue to be an example to all as to how a Shul is so lovingly cared for and nurtured.

Sorela and I have found schools, somewhere to live, and gone some way to putting in place arrangements for work. But one part of the puzzle that remains to be filled is of course a Shul. Numerous people have said that I will start something there, but Ohr Yerushalayim is a sum of all its parts and only embodies its unique nature on account of the individual contribution of each of you. I recall at the 18th anniversary dinner thanking the Kehillah for making our Shul what it is, for without our Mispalleim, we are a building,

albeit a beautifully appointed edifice. A mokom Tephillah made up of other mispalleim will never be able to fulfil for me that void that I take with me. And so I look forward to joining with the Kehillah (in our place, back left) as we welcome the arrival of Mashiach together b'korov.

A Pandemic Of Our Own

Dani Epstein

Remember the last time the world shut down? I can read your mind – Noach does not cut it. Nope, during the great flood everyone died, remember? It's not like they opted to shut down, they had no choice on account of being rather dead. Small difference.

Currently we are all living through an historical event that is quite literally unique: the entire planet shuts down to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Ah, you say, but what about the Swedes? Well, when the rest of the world is no longer travelling to or from your country, like it or not, you have shut down. The point is, never before in history has the entire planet been in the same proverbial boat. The World Wars were not World Wars, since the entire world was not embroiled in them. Previous pandemics did not affect the entire world, and most countries did not go into anything resembling lockdown even during the Spanish Flu.

If this in itself is not sufficiently impressive for you, then consider this: despite the incredible advances made in all areas of medicine, a cure or vaccine for COVID-19 has thus far eluded our finest and brightest. More so, studies are being published almost weekly with regards to COVID-19 and it is astonishing to see how the previous week's findings are mitigated or entirely invalidated by the next week's results. We simply can't get a handle on this disease. The mind boggles.

Nu, so at this point you are expecting some kind of mussar-based vort, how Hashem controls the world and that He sent this small virus to teach us this lesson. I'm going to have to disappoint you, because if you need someone to work that out for you, then you have issues I cannot resolve. Additionally, I am fundamentally opposed to publishing observations on the blindingly obvious.

I think an interesting question would be: "What has COVID-19 to do with Tisha b'Av?" Probably nothing, but there is a link there, if slightly tenuous.

The last chapter of mishnayos Taanis starts off with Bircas Kohanim. If you started at the beginning of Taanis and got thus far you would be forgiven for wondering if the mishna is ever going to get around to mentioning Tisha b'Av and what on earth the priestly blessings have to do with fasting. It does eventually get to discuss the topic, although it's some six mishnayos in. There Tisha b'Av makes a brief appearance, some halachos for the Nine Days and the week of Tisha b'Av are mentioned and before we turn around the girls are dancing in the vineyards in the middle of Yom Kippur (if you think I'm making this up, go and look for yourself).

It all just seems a little, well, odd. What did Rabi Yehudoh Hanossi have against Tisha b'Av that he relegates it to the very last page of the very last chapter and even then it gets very little coverage? Odder yet that the last mishna in Taanis is longer than the two mishnayos dealing with Tisha b'Av combined and all it's talking about is the

Davening Times

פרשת ואתחנן

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.15pm
Candle Lighting	7.28pm-7.40pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.30am (שוכן עד) 7.55am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.20am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am (שוכן עד) 9.55am
1st Mincha	2.00pm
2nd Mincha	6.00pm
3rd Mincha	9.01pm
Rov's Shiur	Following
Motzei Shabbos	10.06pm
Sun	7.30am / 8.30am / 9.15am
Mon - Fri	7.00am / 8.10am / 9.15am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

שבת נחמו

15th of Av and Yom Kippur vineyard dance. Where is the balance here? So, let's look at Tish b'Av itself and see if we can figure this out. We are all very familiar with the topic. Every year we sit on the floor and recite kinnos written in a highly abstruse and poetic language and recall the trials, tribulations and horrors we endured as a nation every since the Churban of the Bayis Rishon. And this is important. Far more important than merely an anthropological device for maintaining our national identity. Allow me to briefly illustrate this with a personal anecdote.

A few days ago a fruit platter appeared mysteriously onto our morning room table. Within the mix of fruits were some strawberries. Worried that I might not have the opportunity to partake of the cornucopia without swift intervention, one of my blessed offspring set some aside for me including a couple of the aforementioned berries.

At some point during this impromptu feast, someone came to the realisation that the youngest two chez Epstein were absent, and we hurriedly re-arranged the meagre offerings of the leftovers into an elegant-ish display, which we proudly waved them towards.

Alas and alack this ploy backfired, as my youngest burst into tears. Why was he crying? Because he saw strawberry leaves and realised that despite the otherwise, ahem, bountiful selection he had missed out on his favourite fruit.

I went over to him and told him: "Why are you crying? If you cry now, you won't enjoy the fruit you have in your hand. As it is, why cry for something you never had? Cry for something you actually did have that someone took away from you. No-one took anything away from you, you never had the strawberries in the first place, so don't cry." He calmed down after this, bless him, but perhaps this was also influenced by secondary inducements on the part of his mother, such as a packet of salt and vinegar crisps. Chinuch is a complicated business.

After this incident I mulled over the thought I had imparted to him. Ever year when the three weeks come around I mentally shake my head in wonder that we are still doing this. Why do we still mourn the Beis Hamikdosh? When will we stop mourning it? When we eventually do get around to building the Third Beis Hamikdosh, I bet there will be people sitting on the floor on Tisha b'Av saying kinnos. Let's face it, we have all kinds of crazy.

Why should we still mourn? After all, we now have back our land. We have a powerful army to protect it, a burgeoning economy and a unique title: Start Up Nation. Sure some of us are here, some of us are there, but by and large this is hardly the Spanish Inquisition, with or without mustard-free ham sandwiches.

You might argue that we are still under the rule of the nations of the world. America dictates Israeli foreign and internal policy at times, Europe has rife anti-Semitism as well as BDS. Surely all these are indicators that we are no-where near even the **עקבתא דמשיחא** – the footsteps of Moshiach?

These arguments fall apart after the smallest of examinations. America dictates the foreign policy of any country it provides aid to, so that's roughly a quarter of the world. It also dictates foreign policy to countries it does not provide aid to, although not always quite as successfully. Israel receives the grandest forms of largesse from our cousins over the pond, so it's hardly surprising the country is sometimes referred to as the 51st State.

However, this is a simplistic view of the actual reality. The facts are that the money coming from the States is in essentially the form of coupons to be spent at American military superstores, not free cash. There are two sides to this arrangement. Israel gets the latest and shiniest toys, and the USA gets to inject \$3 billion into their arms dealers arms every year. Israel also provides America with security information and technical know-how, such as how to take nice pictures of Beirut with an F-35 in the foreground.

If you add the few actions of Trump, such as the move of the embassy to Jerusalem, the rubber-stamping of the Golan Heights into Israeli sovereignty and so on, all of a sudden there is a clear pattern of quid-pro-quo emerging. Arguing that Israel is beholden to American foreign and domestic policy is ludicrous. Furthermore, many Israeli military experts have argued that Israel no longer requires this largesse from the cousins across the pond and should cease supping off the plate of the Land of the Free. Although \$3 billion is a lot of wonga, for an economy the size of Israel's it's actually not such a big issue, and America is well aware of how tenuous their hold on Israel is.

The fact that Israel still takes this hand-out clearly indicates that there is a lot more to the whole thing than simply free guns. It's very much a two-sided exchange.

So, we can safely conclude that Israel – and therefore we – are no longer under the rule of the nations of the world.

You might argue, but what about Iran? They have 25,000 Jews trapped there. What about here? According to the CST we have hundreds of incidents every year. Surely we are in golus here as well?

Iran is a tough one. I don't have a glib answer and can only say "wait and see". Once the kibutz goliyos has completed, Iran will be a much easier proposition to deal with, provided they have not been nuked into oblivion before then, of course. With regards to everything else, I would point out that when the government pays for the security guard outside my shul, pays for my school where they teach Torah, fights for my equality - arguing that this is still golus is absurd. Are there anti-Semitic incidents occurring in Europe? Definitely. However, this is not a golus issue. Golus is when we are under the rule of foreign nations who make us dhimmi or second

class citizens just because we are Jews; who oppress us with laws specific to us. Even the meshuggene Ayatollahs proclaim to anyone who is listening (essentially Hezbollah and possibly Kim Ding Dong in North Korea) that they are not anti-Semitic, they just want to destroy Israel; a subtle difference but that's the Middle East for you.

The question still stands – why are we mourning?

I think the answer lies in some of the lessons we have learned from the ongoing pandemic as well as my son's contretemps with the fruit platter.

Time was when dustbin men were nothing but a nuisance, since they went around doing their job whilst we sat around fuming in the traffic caused by the lorry. Time was when nurses were a fixture of the hospital who were largely ignored.

Of course once my eldest daughter commenced placement in the MRI as part of her nursing degree I got to enjoy an insider's perspective of the profession, but that was me.

All of this changed in a matter of a week. Right after Purim, with little or no fanfare, people started decorating their dustbins with cute pictures and adorned their windows with rainbows. Every time I went past a window with a rainbow in it and the letters "NHS" (lehavdil bein hatomay vehatohor) my heart kvelled with nachas, since in no time at all my daughter was at the thin edge of the wedge in a COVID-19 ward and a genuine heroine. Every day a new dictat was issued as to what PPE was to be worn where, when and how, when they had to change their scrubs (roughly ten times a day) and eventually they had to be tied into surgical gowns for the most basic procedures. Even the Kohen Godol with the shemoneh begodim and bigdei lovon on Yom Kippur had it easy compared to these chevre dealing with the magefoh at ground zero.

All of a sudden pop stars were no longer popping, football players were no longer footing balls, the glitterati had their parties cancelled while nurses were being applauded every Thursday and dustbin men were shown appreciation in a way they were never shown before.

For once in humanity's history everyone realised what the ikkar was, and what they could do with the tofeil. You don't need pop stars, you don't need footballers or movie stars, but dustbin men? They turned up in a pandemic? They are heroes. Nurses? Doctors? They are the front-line combatants in this vicious war.

Now that we are emerging cautiously into the sunlight, chassunes and bar Mitzvahs are slowly starting again, but instead of a cattle market with extravagant fripperies, small and heimish is the order of the day. Having recently attended a micro bar Mitzvah I can report first-hand what a tremendous difference it was. Every single person there counted – every single one of them. It was gemutlich (Yekkish for pleasant and comfortable), and the baal simche himself cooked the food (even his wife said so, so I assume they were not lying).

We now have an opportunity to stand back and take stock and ask ourselves: what truly is important for us? What do we really need? What makes us tick?

So, just like my son and his strawberries, we can't mourn for the Bayis Shlishi, because we never had it. We can mourn for the first two, because we actually did have those, and each one represented a tremendous loss for us.

However, our circumstances have changed since then, and it has been an awfully long time since we last saw a korban on Har Habayis. It's impossible to mourn something for that long and genuinely mean it, hence all the Tisha b'Av "events" these days.

So here is a thought. By now we really should have had a Bayis Shlishi. Why do I say that? Because we have the money, we have the land and we have the knowledge how to build it. The only thing preventing the Bayis Shlishi is politics. Or, in more concrete terms, a total breakdown in achdus.

Tisha b'Av has become a central theme in our existence, and today this is wrong. It should be almost and afterthought, something which we mourn because we have yet to claw back our national unity and fend off the current plague of sinas chinom. Perhaps this is why Rabi Yehudoh Hanossi left Tisha b'Av to the very last minute. It should not be an ikkar. It should not have the central role it has today, because it is an embarrassment. Every year we sit down on the floor, we should mourn the fact that we are not nationally ashamed of ourselves that we have failed to start work on Har Morioh.

The last mishna in Taanis ends off:

אֲיִנָּה וְרֵאִינָה בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן בְּמֶלֶךְ שְׁלָמָה בְּעֶטְרָה שְׁעֶטְרָה לֹא אָמוּ בְּיוֹם הַתְּנַתּוֹ וּבְיוֹם שְׁמֹחַת לְבוֹ (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ג). בְּיוֹם הַתְּנַתּוֹ, זָה מֵתוֹן תּוֹרָה. וּבְיוֹם שְׁמֹחַת לְבוֹ, זָה בְּנֵין בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
Similarly it says, "Daughters of Zion, go forth and gaze upon King Solomon wearing the crown that his mother gave him on his wedding day, on the day of the gladness of his heart". "On his wedding day": this refers to Matan Torah (the Giving of the Torah). "And on the day of the gladness of his heart": this refers to the building of the Temple.

Clearly Rabi Yehudoh Hanossi was conveying that the joy of the Beis Hamikdosh far outweighs the sadness of the destruction of the previous two. This is our message for today: Tisha b'Av should not be the focus of attention, the third Beish Hamikdosh should be. If anything, Tisha b'Av should spur us on to trying to somehow or another rid ourselves of the terrible sinas chinom we suffer from and together – united – undertake this vital task of reconstruction.

The very last words of Mishnayos Taanis are the most appropriate to end with: **שִׁבְנָה בַּמְהֵרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ אָמֵן**