

* Read a review from Katanga's Simchas Torah Lunch.

* There will be a shiur (Gemorah Brachos) at Mark Franck's house on Shabbos afternoon at 5:10pm.

Katanga

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Caulfield
Beth Hamedrash Weekly Newsletter

D'var Torah

THE INFORMATION AGE...

by Rabbi Yaacov Haber (ou.org)

There is a story I have been selling all week. Someone came to his Rabbi with a serious problem. Yom Kippur is coming and the Mets game comes out the same time as Kol Nidrei! The Rabbi put his arm comfortingly on the shoulder of his congregant and said Marvin, what are you worried about? That is why G-d made VCR's. The man stepped back and breathed a sigh of relief. He said, "Rabbi, you can tape Kol Nidrei!"

We are in the dawn of a new millennia. Technology is soaring. The vehicles in place for disseminating information are mind boggling. There has never been so much information available to so many people so quickly. No one talks about kilobytes or megabytes. I myself am very involved in using the new medium to teach Torah to multitudes. Little children talk about gigabytes, which is a billion bits of information traveling at super sonic speeds. There is a real danger to all this. Virtual reality is not reality. Where information is something that enters from the outside, our Yiddishkeit emanates from the soul. It is not about hearing, seeing, or knowing; the Neshama must be present.

The tree from which Adam and Eve ate is correctly translated as the 'tree of knowing good and evil.' Eitz HaDaas. Eating from this tree was the supreme sin of massive consequence. This was the original sin. What did they do wrong? What is wrong with knowing good and evil? I understand there may be a sin in coming into too close contact with evil. But what can possibly be wrong with knowing good?

According to Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, eating the forbidden fruit - had nothing to do with betraying God. The original sin, which resulted in humanity's exile from paradise, was a betrayal of self. Man wanted to get it from the outside, externally, instead of generating truth from ones self.



G-d endows man with the innate ability to distinguish good from evil. When one questions that inner voice one is actually questioning ones own soul. The fundamental sin according to R. Kook is that when Adam ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he accepted the opinion of the snake rather than holding firm to his inner convictions. When he accepted the opinion of the snake he lost himself. As the juice flooded into his mouth upon the first bite, Adam tasted the loss of his core certainty of being. According to the Zohar, the tree of knowledge is the tree of uncertainty. In effect, when man ate the fruit of the tree of good and evil, he brought the uncertainty of the world into his very being. (R. Kook, Orot hakodesh 3:140)

The original sin is thus the sin of information. Living in the information age it is a sin with which we can easily identify. We surf around the real and virtual world collecting packets of information, but in our pathological drive for knowing, we can cloud and lose our basic certainties about reality. A marriage is a great spiritual milestone for us as Jews. I asked a choson a few weeks ago what he was doing to get ready for his wedding. He told me he's surfing and has already found a few helpful sites. We are guilty of knowing without feeling. Doing without experiencing. The result is that we cannot even retain as our own that which we do know. We live under the illusion that more information - more knowledge, and more technology - will somehow make us wiser, happier and even more spiritual. It's not true! We can watch a thousand Kol Nidrei's and know all about davening and it will do very little for us.



Let's make this year the year of kavana - 'conviction and feeling'. The year of being there, of standing before Hashem as a community, of listening to our Neshamas and being true to ourselves. This is really the step we have to take.

Thoughts for the week:

"Killing time damages eternity."

"Character is that which reveals moral purpose, exposing the class of things a man chooses or avoids." (Aristotle)

"A man who does not lose his reason over certain things has none to lose." (Gatthold Ephraim Lessing)

"Tatslotto is a tax on people who are bad at maths."

Other Developments

* On Shmini Atzeres, the shule enjoyed the traditional Gruber-Schon kiddush. The following day, Simchas Torah, Mr & Mrs Kinderlerer made a kiddush in celebration of the honour of Choson Torah. Yasher Koach.

* A special hearty Mazel Tov to our Chasanim, who have been honoured by the Shule this Simchas Torah!

- Mr & Mrs M. Kinderlerer - Choson Torah
- Mr & Mrs D. Grynberg - Choson Breishis
- Mr & Mrs Y. Elkus - Choson Kol Han'orim

May Hashem grant them good health, happiness and naches from their families and may they always make smachot!

MAZAL TOV

* A very hearty Mazal Tov to Alon Ledder and Danielle Laser on the occasion of their affruf this week in Sydney.

* Katanga would like to wish the happy couple, their parents and extended families much naches and simchas in the future.

KATANGA'S SIMCHAS TORAH LUNCH

It was with great anticipation that people approached Simchas Torah Day this year, as for the first time, the annual Katanga Youth Minyan Simchas Torah Dinner had moved from the night to the following day.

After a morning and early afternoon spent in Shule, enthusiastically singing and dancing Hakofes and then partaking in the Chosen Torah Kiddish, over 50 people made their way to Aroona Rd. to celebrate Yom Tov lunch together.

Once there, the intimate crowd of Katanga Chevra shared the spirit of Simchas Torah through a catered meal including schnitzel, rice, salads, ice-cream and of course the obligatory Simchas Torah drinks.

Ezra May entertained the crowd with a Dvar Torah explaining a source for the minhag of Simchas Torah and the opportunity it provides to judge how successful an

Parsha Overview - Bereishis

The Five Books of Moses begins with the Six Days of Creation, the Shabbat, the story of the Garden of Eden - the first transgression, consequences and expulsion; Cain & Abel, the ten generations to Noah, the Almighty sees the wickedness of man in that generation and decrees to "blot out man" (i.e. the flood). One of the most profound verses in the whole Torah is "And God created man in His own Image." Since God does not have a physical being, this means that we are endowed with free-will, morality, reason and the ability to emulate God Who bestows kindness.

Elul, Rosh Hashona & Yom Kippur one had, given that the way a person behaves when relaxed and celebrating is far more reflective of his character than when un-naturally acting like an 'angel' on the strictly controlled Yom Kippur.

The great success of the lunch can easily be seen by the fact, that although tired and sweaty and with a big day of dancing and eating behind them, the last people did not leave until right before Shule at 7:00pm, after davening Mincha earlier.

Many thanks must go to the organisers and helpers without whom we would still be going hungry; Chumi Franck, Isaac & Shoshi Berkowitz, Yigal & Shana Aron, Jack Zaks and of course Isi & Miriam Pacanowski who were the chief promoters, organisers and driving force of the successful lunch. Yasher Koach to all and looking forward to doing it all again next year.

Announcements

- Welcome back to Dov & Nicole Paluch after their trip to South Africa from Yom Tov. Sholom Aleichem and Beruchim Atem Bevoiachem.

- This week is Shabbos Mevorchim as we bless the coming month of Cheshvan. Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan is on Wednesday and Thursday (17-18 October).

- Minyanim times for this coming week are: Mornings: first minyan @ 6:15am, second minyan @ 7:00am.

Mincha at 6:30pm followed by shiurim. Ma'ariv at 7:10pm.

- Anyone interested in joining the roster for presenting shiurim in the Youth Minyan should speak to Ezra May, or email us here.

- Please join us for our Katanga weekly Squash game on Sundays @ 6pm at Gardenvale Squash Centre. If you are interested in attending, please let Mendi Slodowitz know.

Suggestions or comments regarding our website or newsletter? Email us - we would love to hear from you.



Wishing everyone a Shabbat Shalom & Gut Shabbos and Chag Sameyach!

"The Editors"