

# ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1481 AUG 20<sup>TH</sup> '22 כ"ג אב תשפ"ב

פרשת עקב

PARSHAT EIKEV - SHABBAT MEVARCHIM  
AVOT CHAPTER 6

OU  
ישראל



אשר נשבע ה'... ארץ זבת חלב ודבש דברים י"א: ט'



Dear Torah Tidbits Family  
**Rabbi Avi Berman**  
Executive Director,  
OU Israel  
page 4



Simple Faith  
**Rabbi Judah Mischel**  
Mashpiah, OU-NCSY  
Executive Director, Camp HASC  
page 28

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT EIKEV

CANDLES 6:43PM • EARLIEST 5:56PM • HAVDALA 7:56PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:35PM

# Table of Contents

---

**04** Dear Torah Tidbits Family  
Rabbi Avi Berman

**06** Aliya By Aliya Sedra Summary  
Rabbi Reuven Tradburks

**12** Interpreting a Journey  
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

**16** The Power of Gratitude  
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

**22** Probing The Prophets  
Rabbi Nachman Winkler

**24** Manna- Appreciating our Lot  
Rabbi Shalom Rosner

**26** Bountiful Blessings  
Rebbetzin Shira Smiles

**28** Simple Faith  
Rabbi Judah Mischel

**40** Is Shemithah Produce to be Preferred?  
Rabbi Ezra Friedman

**44** Simchat Shmuel  
Rabbi Sam Shor

**46** The True "Measure" of Israeli Fruits  
Rabbi Moshe Taragin

**50** A Shul Kiddush as the "Third" Meal  
Rabbi Daniel Mann

**52** Rav Kook and the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

**54** A Message That Matters!  
Menachem Persoff

**58** The Y- Files Weekly Comic  
Netanel Epstein

**60** Torah 4 Teens By Teens  
Yoni Gelband // Shraga Fein



## Shabbat Mevarchim

המולד יהיה יום שבת קדש, שש עשרה דקות וחמישה חלקים אחרי שמונה בבקר  
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ישראל לטובה

Rosh Chodesh Elul is on Shabbat, August 20th and Sunday, August 21st



## This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

**About the Photo:** The cover picture was taken just days ago on OU Israel's new NCSY's Chai summer program.

NCSY Chai is an 18-day summer adventure in Israel's North for Israeli anglo teens who are striving to reach new heights. NCSY offers incoming 10th-12th graders the opportunity to connect to Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and Am Yisrael in a fun and exciting environment with unforgettable experiences. The all boys program and campus is located in the breathtaking community of Chispin in the Golan Heights.

Find out more info at [Chai.ncsy.org](http://Chai.ncsy.org)

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



CANDLES	EARLIEST	EIKEV	HAVDALA	RE'EH		
				Candles	Earliest	Havdala
<b>6:43</b>	5:56	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	<b>7:56</b>	6:35	5:49	7:47
<b>7:00</b>	5:58	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	<b>7:58</b>	6:52	5:52	7:49
<b>7:01</b>	5:57	Beit Shemesh / RBS	<b>7:57</b>	6:53	5:50	7:48
<b>6:58</b>	5:56	Gush Etzion	<b>7:56</b>	6:50	5:50	7:47
<b>7:00</b>	5:58	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	<b>7:58</b>	6:52	5:51	7:49
<b>6:59</b>	5:57	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	<b>7:57</b>	6:51	5:50	7:48
<b>7:00</b>	5:58	Netanya	<b>7:58</b>	6:52	5:51	7:49
<b>6:59</b>	5:57	Be'er Sheva	<b>7:57</b>	6:51	5:51	7:48
<b>7:00</b>	5:58	Rehovot	<b>7:58</b>	6:52	5:51	7:49
<b>6:43</b>	5:58	Petach Tikva	<b>7:58</b>	6:35	5:51	7:49
<b>6:59</b>	5:57	Ginot Shomron	<b>7:57</b>	6:51	5:50	7:48
<b>6:50</b>	5:58	Haifa / Zichron	<b>7:59</b>	6:42	5:51	7:50
<b>6:58</b>	5:56	Gush Shiloh	<b>7:56</b>	6:50	5:49	7:47
<b>7:00</b>	5:58	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	<b>7:58</b>	6:52	5:51	7:49
<b>6:58</b>	5:56	Giv'at Ze'ev	<b>7:56</b>	6:50	5:50	7:48
<b>6:58</b>	5:56	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>7:56</b>	6:50	5:50	7:47
<b>7:01</b>	5:59	Ashkelon	<b>7:58</b>	6:53	5:52	7:50
<b>7:00</b>	5:58	Yad Binyamin	<b>7:58</b>	6:52	5:51	7:49
<b>6:54</b>	5:56	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	<b>7:57</b>	6:45	5:49	7:48
<b>6:58</b>	5:56	Golan	<b>7:56</b>	6:50	5:49	7:47

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:35 PM • next week - 8:27 pm**

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,  
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)



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## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat**  
**Aug 17-27 / 20-30 Av**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>5:12 - 5:19</b>
Sunrise	<b>6:05 - 6:12</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:24 - 9:26</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:45 - 8:48</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:30</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:43 - 12:40</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:16 - 1:13</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>5:58 - 5:48</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:25 - 7:14</b>

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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



If one year ago someone would have asked me to describe the *kochot* (strengths) that I have been given by the Almighty, I might have told them that I can connect with teens from diverse backgrounds, I can identify areas of need in *Am Yisrael* and do what I can to be a good son, husband, father and grandfather. What I would *not* include is having the ability to make *shidduchim*.

I was fortunate enough to find my wife at a young age, date and propose to her in a relatively short amount of time. And it was only as the years went by that I realized many of my friends were not so fortunate and were struggling to find their *zivug* (soulmate). In an effort to do my part I tried setting people up but typically got one of two responses. "What on earth were you thinking?!" or "She's a nice person, but it's a no."

At some point I finally decided that *HaShem* gave me many *kochot* and *shidduchim* was not one of them. After all, in the *Talmud, Sotah 2b* it says:

"אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן וְקָשְׁיָן לְזוּגוֹן כְּקָרִיעַת יָם סוּף..."

"Rav Yochanan said, it is as difficult to match couples in marriage as was the splitting of the Reed Sea..."

For many years I held onto the belief that making *shidduchim* was simply out of my wheelhouse. But that changed one year ago. On *Tu B'Av* last year I saw a post by a dear friend, Rav Yoni Lavi, asking people to take one hour to write the names of the male

and female singles they know and dedicate time setting them up. While it seemed like a harmless request I felt *shidduchim* was best left to the experts and hoped others would be inspired by this challenge.

But weeks passed and I found myself preparing for *Rosh HaShana* when a horrible feeling came over me as I thought about Rav Lavi's request. In the time I spent working for the OU - whether it be in Vancouver building its NCSY chapter or in my current position at OU Israel, I have a broad network of wonderful people. What would I say to the *Borei Olam* when He asks me what I did with the *kochot* He gave me to help make *shidduchim*?

On the first night of *Rosh HaShana* I turned to my wife and committed to helping those looking for *shidduchim* this year. Understanding that such an important *mitzvah* would require a tremendous amount of *siyata Dishmaya* (help from Heaven), my wife and I turned to *HaShem* and reaffirmed our commitment to helping His children, asking for some Divine guidance along the way. After the *chag* we created two WhatsApp groups for ourselves - one for men looking for *shidduchim* and the other for women. Whenever we were approached by someone looking to get married, we would send their name in the respective WhatsApp group, and every so often we would sit down to review the list to see what connections we could make.

Six months ago it just so "happened"



that I received a call from Dovie Rosengarten, a dear friend and adopted son of my family, whom I first met in Vancouver at an NCSY *shabbaton*. He called to tell me he had moved to Israel – a milestone we’d been waiting to celebrate together - and I eagerly invited him to spend the following *Shabbat* with my family. I can’t explain it any other way, but when I saw him, something clicked. I thought of someone else whom I had only recently come in contact with but had never met - Nechama Feuerstein, another Vancouver-born *olah* whose parents served as *Rav* and *Rebbetzin* in Vancouver for 15 years.

To be perfectly honest, the idea made no sense because I hadn’t formally met Nechama - her family left Vancouver before my family arrived and I only connected with her a few months prior over phone calls and voice notes. But it just so “happened” that a close friend of Nechama, Dovie and my family, Lauren Wolbromsky, was also spending that very *Shabbat* with us. And both Lauren and my wife had the same idea as me.

By motzei *Shabbat*, after making some phone calls to mutual friends, Dovie and Nechama were set to go out the following week. Last week, on *Tu B’Av*, Dovie proposed to Nechama at the *Me’arat Hamachpelah* (Cave of the Patriarchs) in *Chevron*.

When I received this photo from them on Friday morning I couldn’t stop the tears streaming down my face. With the help and guidance of the *Borei Olam* and mutual

friends, I made my first *shidduch*. And it just so “happens” that the very institutions *Rav* and *Rebbetzin* Feuerstein led and founded were the ones that allowed Dovie to mold his life into what it is today.

The night before *Tu B’Av*, I had another special *zechut* (merit) of reciting two *brachot* (blessings) and speaking under the *chuppah* of another NCSYer from Vancouver, Leiba Spivak, and a friend of my brother’s who grew up with us in *Har Nof*, Akiva Meizel. Needless to say it was a miracle to see two vastly different worlds become one and I was once again struck by the tremendous *siyata Dishmaya* that must have been provided for Leiba and Akiva to find one another.

I can no longer say that the field of *shidduchim* is best left to the experts because *shidduchim* are in the hands of *HaShem*. However, each and every one of us has the opportunity to serve as the *kli* (vessel) through which a *shidduch* comes about. I

invite you to join me in taking Rav Lavi’s challenge to heart. Spend one hour writing down the names of those you know who are looking to find a *shidduch* and see what you can do. *B’ezerat HaShem*, we should be successful in our efforts!

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring *Shabbat*,



Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)



# EIKEV



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven  
Tradburks**  
Director of  
RCA Israel Region



### **1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Devarim 7:12-8:10)**

On the heels of you keeping the mitzvot, G-d will keep His covenant with you. And love you. You will enjoy success: economic, health, military. Should you fear the nations in the Land, wondering how you will prevail over them, remember what G-d did in Egypt. The signs, the wonders, the outstretched arm. He will do it to these nations too. When you enter the Land, remember the manna in the desert. G-d relieved your hunger through manna, to teach you that bread comes from Him. Now when you enter the Land, it will be different: streams and springs, wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates. You will eat and be satisfied and bless G-d for all this bounty.

There is a lot of love in this parsha. His

love for us translates into giving us the Land. Later, we will see our love for Him is translated into our loyalty to the mitzvot.

Besides the love, we are told to remember. Remember the manna. There was no food in the desert. He fed you. Remember that. He provides your food. In the Land, it will look completely different to you. The food grows on trees, wild wheat and barley. Who needs Him? Remember the manna and Who provides.



### **2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (8:11-9:3)** Be mindful amidst all your success that you not forget its Source. Even after

He has led you all these years, you are apt to say “all this success is my doing”. Remember: He is the One Who gives you this success, as an expression of the Brit he made with you. If you forget Him, He will vanquish you. As you vanquish nations in the Land, so too will it be with you, on the heels of your ignoring Him. Great nations await you; fortified cities, strong people. Know that He will champion your cause and they will be overcome by you.

The symmetry of the “heels” is pretty. We began the parsha with “eikev”. On the heels of your loyalty to the mitzvot, G-d will shower you with love. We end this section with the counter; you will be vanquished on the heels of ignoring Him. Beautiful poetic symmetry.



### **3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (9:4-29)** Do not assume your displacement of the nations is due to your righteousness and their folly. It is rather due to their

failing and G-d's covenant to you. Remember: you have a long history of your own folly. At Horeb: I ascended the mountain to get the tablets, Divinely inscribed with all



The OU Israel Family wishes  
Mazel Tov to

**Alan & Barbara Gindi & family**  
on the marriage of their daughter

**Shoshana to Joshua Cooper**  
Mazel Tov to the grandmother Rachel Gindi

He spoke at Sinai, for 40 days. But He ordered me to descend for you had made an idol. With the tablets in hand, I descended, shattering them upon seeing the golden calf. I ascended again to plead for you. And there were other moments of folly. But I pleaded, appealing to the covenant, that you are His people.

Moshe has employed the word remember 3 times in this parsha. When you are afraid of the strong nations, *remember* the wonders of Egypt that He wrought and will do again for you. When you have fabulous success in the Land and are tempted to push G-d out of your life, *remember* that He provides as He did with the manna in the desert. And now, when you feel superior to the nations of folly, *remember* the golden calf, your terrible moment of folly. Moshe is preoccupied with the machinations of the mind, our short memories, our self-delusions. Remember our history, he says. Learn from it. He champions our cause. He is the source of our success. And. Don't let it go to your head. You suffer foibles like all others. Bad mistakes. But, as we will see in the next aliya, He does not give up on you. And that says more about His greatness than it does about yours.



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (10:1-11)** G-d said to me: chisel 2 stone tablets to replace the first and make an

Aron for them. A second set as the first were made and put in the Aron. I descended with the Aron. The Leviim shall be G-d's ser-

Condolences to Devra Ariel  
and family on the passing of her  
**SISTER a"h**

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vants; they bore this Aron. I implored successfully for you not to be destroyed. G-d said: go up and take the Land I promised to your forefathers.

This is the conclusion of the story of the golden calf. Moshe is telling the people to remember this story to temper their feelings of superiority. Don't feel superior; the golden calf was quite a failure. However, in this conclusion, he emphasizes a different point. Reconciliation. As if to say: you are not a perfect nation. You have failed and you will in the future too. But despair not. G-d's commitment to you is more powerful than your failures. And that is exactly Moshe's point. Do not say that your supplanting the nations in the Land is due to your piety. For you fail. But rather it is due to G-d's powerful commitment to you that transcends your failings, as egregious as they may be. After all, He transcended the golden calf.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (10:12-11:9)** Now, what really does G-d want of you?

Only this: fear Him, walk in His ways, love and serve Him and keep all His commands of you. His is the universe, yet he chose to love your forefathers. So circumcise your heart and quit stiffening your neck. Fear, serve, cleave to Him. He is your

May the Torah learned  
from this issue of Torah Tidbits  
be לע"נ and in loving memory of

ליבע בת משה ע"ה

**Lynne Grossman a"h**

beloved wife, mother, grandmother  
on her 15th yahrzeit

א"ל מנחם אב

*The Grossman Family*

G-d. As you yourself have seen: you descended to Egypt with 70 souls, all the wonders He wrought, the defeat of Egypt's might at the sea, the desert, the earth swallowing the rebellious ones in the Korah rebellion. You have seen all this; hence, keep the mitzvot to prolong your stay on the Land.

These 20 verses are very difficult to summarize, as they are so stunningly beautiful. This is Moshe with his hair down. It is like he leans a bit closer, elbows on the table, and confides: listen, really, what does G-d want? Now, one would think maybe a one word, one phrase answer. Like: loyalty. Or walk humbly with Him. Or truth. Moshe's answer is not what to do but the deepest aspirations. Moshe answers: you know what G-d wants? He wants emotion, aspiration, feelings, sensitivity. He wants your deepest being to want Him, love Him, cleave to Him. Drop the inhibitions, the distractions, the fluff of life and give your deepest self to Him. What a phrase: circumcise your heart, quit stiffening your neck. Meaning, give Me your true heart, don't be stubborn. This aliya ranks up there with the most powerful of the Torah. For Moshe baits us with a simple question: after all, what does G-d want? And in his answer, shares with us his deepest feelings, a most profound answer: He wants you to want Him, love Him, be preoccupied with Him. Hold nothing back.



**6<sup>th</sup> aliya (11:10-21)** The Land of Israel is not like Egypt: Egypt is fertile, with an abundance of

water. Israel relies on the rain from the heavens; hence G-d gazes upon the Land the entire year. (2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of Shema) And if you will keep the mitzvot and love



G-d with all your heart, then there will be rain. If you sway from this and serve other gods, then there will be no rain, nor will the crops grow. Be cognizant of this all the time, speaking of it with your children and in all you do. As this love of G-d will prolong your success in the Land.

This is a new twist on the theme of loving G-d. Not only will your military success depend on your love of G-d. But the rain too. And you'll need rain; not like Egypt. It's almost like G-d is saying: I am bringing you to the promised Land because of my love for you. But, it is a Land that will require you to defeat nations to occupy it. And a Land that requires My showering it with rain. And the success of both of these, the military and the rain, require you to love Me. So, in a nutshell: I love you and I am bringing you to a Land where you will need to love Me.



**7<sup>th</sup> aliya (11:22-25)** If you do the mitzvot, love G-d and cleave to him, then you will prevail over

the powerful nations of the Land. G-d will make them fear you and none will be able to stand up to you.

Moshe turns the tables on the natural feelings of the people. They are fearful in the face of the people of the Land. Moshe tells them: instead of focusing on fear of them, focus on love of G-d. And the fear? G-d will take your fear of them, and turn the tables: they will fear you.

## HAFTARAH

**YESHAYAHU 49:14- 51:3**

This week's *haftorah* is the second of a series of seven "*haftorot* of Consolation." These seven *haftorot* begin on the Shabbat

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following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

The exiled Jewish people are concerned that Hashem has abandoned them. Hashem responds by reassuring them that it is not so. God compares His love and mercy for His people to that of a mother for her children.

The navi then describes the ingathering of the exiles which will occur when the Mashiach arrives and then concludes with

encouraging words, reminding us of what had happened to our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah. Just as they were blessed with a child when it seemed impossible, so too, Hashem will send us the Redemption at the end of days. ■

## STATS

46th of the 54 sedras; 3rd of 11 in D'varim  
231.83 lines in a Torah; rank: 14th  
10 Parshiyot; 6 open, 4 closed  
111 p'sukim - rank: 26th (4th in D'varim) Same number as Vayikra, but larger  
1747 words - rank: 16th (3rd in D'varim) Same number as Ki Tavo; Ki Tavo has more p'sukim; Eikev has more letters  
6865 letters - rank: 14th (3rd in D'varim)  
Eikev's p'sukim are long - 3rd longest in the Torah in words and letters per pasuk. This accounts for rise in ranking in those categories.

## MITZVOT

8 of 613: 6 positives, 2 prohibitions

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• **Yosef Ezriel ben Chaya Michal**  
• **יהונתן בן מחלה**  
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• **שלמה בן אסתר**  
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Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"When it comes to pass, if you hear these judgements" ( 7:12)

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The chasid R Avraham Chaim son of Gedalyah from Zloczow Ukraine (1726-1816) pointed out that the word Vehaya refers to "joy" . And "when-"ekev" referring to the end of our exile - the "heels" of the Mashiach..we will continue to " listen" to the word of G-d because then the joy will be even greater.

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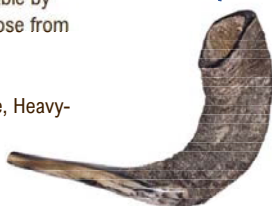
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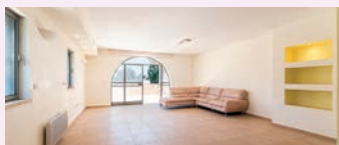
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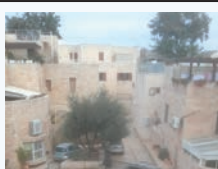
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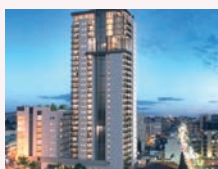
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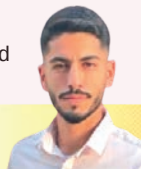
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# Interpreting a Journey

The Shiva D'Nechemta, Seven Weeks of Consolation, connect two seemingly disparate calendar periods: the sorrowful days surrounding Tisha B'Av and the majestic Yamim Noraim, Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

What lessons emerge from the calendar's linkage of the three weeks of Mourning to the Yamim Noraim? What connections can be drawn between these two, very different, periods of the year?

Perhaps the two major signposts for this journey- the fasts of Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur- offer the connections we seek. These occasions, after all, share two critical, unique features.

Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur are the only full fast days on the Jewish calendar. In addition, they are the only fasts that include the five halachic *inuyim* (afflictions): the prohibitions on eating and drinking, washing,

anointing, marital relations and the wearing of leather shoes.

Yet as similar as these days are, they are also poles apart. Yom Kippur is a biblical fast day; Tisha B'Av is of rabbinic origin. Tisha B'Av remains immersed in sorrow; while Yom Kippur is cautiously, solemnly optimistic.

Tantalizingly similar, yet deeply disparate, are these days somehow connected?

An answer may well emerge from the mists of history...

Intriguingly, the rabbis draw yet another link between Yom Kippur and Tisha B'Av. Each of these occasions, they say, originates in a seminal sin committed at the dawn of our nation's story.

*Yom Kippur is born as a result of the chet h'egel, the sin of the golden calf.*

*Tisha B'Av emerges as a consequence of the chet hameraglim, the sin of the spies.*

Although the rabbis support their contentions through calendric computation, their intended message obviously strikes deeper. There are no coincidences on the Jewish calendar. *To the rabbinic mind, concrete philosophical bonds link these two fast days to tragic transgressions deep in our nation's past.* What are these connecting links and how can they help deepen our understanding of these two most important observances in Jewish tradition?

The sin of the golden calf reflects the Israelites' desperate desire for distance from the

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*demands of an omnipotent God.*

From the outset, the Israelites are unable and/or unwilling to face the new responsibilities thrust upon them at Sinai and they respond with immediate retreat: "And the entire people saw the thunder and lightning and the sound of the shofar and a smoking mountain and they trembled and stood from afar. And they said to Moshe, 'You speak with us and we will listen; and let not God speak with us, lest we die.'"

And when, forty days later, Moshe apparently fails to return from the summit of the mountain at the expected time- and the people face a reality where they will be required to interact with God directly, without the benefit of Moshe as their intermediary- their desperate desire for *distance from God* becomes an overwhelming fear. The Israelites create a golden calf to take Moshe's place, to stand between them and their Creator.

In the aftermath of the sin, after punishing those most directly involved, God moves to educate the nation to the ramifications of their crime. Threatening to distance Himself from the people, as per their expressed desire, He forces them to glimpse the emptiness that would result from such distance. The nation, in response, falls into mourning.

God thus reminds the Israelites of a fundamental truth that courses through all human relationships. *While safety can be found in emotional distance, the desire for such distance produces a life of emptiness.* Only those willing to risk the pain that can result from

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nearness to others will ultimately experience the potential beauty of close friendship and love.

God's message to the people in the aftermath of the *chet ha'egel* is powerful and clear: *If I am absent from your lives, you will be safe. Through distance, you avoid the vulnerability that would accompany My close connection with you.*

*You will also miss out, however, on the grandeur that would have resulted from our closeness, as well.*

We can now begin to understand why the rabbis perceive a fundamental connection between the sin of the golden calf and Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year.

Yom Kippur is the day when, yearly, we move to repair the inevitable distance that has developed between us and our Creator. We mourn our loss of perspective, explore our missteps, and admit our failings. We atone for our consistent tendency to pull away from God through our practice of *comfortable* rather than *confrontational* Judaism. We pledge to move close again – close enough to allow divine law to challenge our lives and test our personal commitments.

The message of this holiest of days is clear. *The distance that develops between man and God can be repaired.* Just as God ultimately forgives the Jewish nation at Sinai and invites them, once again, fully into His presence; so, too, through the process of *tshuva* on Yom Kippur we can reconnect intimately with our Creator.

At the core of the *chet hameraglim*, on the other hand, lies a profoundly different failing, one that yields a profoundly different divine response.

Ultimately the spies and the nation are guilty of a *loss of faith in themselves*. Not only do they doubt God's ability to bring them into the land, but, even more importantly, *they lose trust in their own capacity for change*. They see themselves still as "grasshoppers," as the slaves who toiled under Egyptian rule. They negate the transformative impact of all that has occurred during and after the Exodus.

To this failing, God responds with harsher judgment. Intergenerationally, the nation is forgiven and will ultimately enter the land. The generation of the Exodus, however, remains irredeemable. *When man loses sight of his own majestic potential, he simply cannot achieve.*

The connection drawn by rabbinic thought between the sin of the spies and the mournful day of Tisha B'Av now becomes abundantly clear.

In stark contrast to the ultimately optimistic, reparative day of Yom Kippur, Tisha B'Av remains, each year, an occasion primarily rooted in mourning and sorrow. We bemoan our own replication of the sin of the spies, our loss of personal and national vision, our inability to rise above our pettiness and spite, our failure to glimpse the majestic potential in others and in ourselves.

Because of these continued failings, Tisha

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B'Av rings, over and over again, to the divine decree that, according to the rabbis, was delivered as the Jews wept over the report of the spies: *You have cried for naught, and I shall establish for you crying across the generations.*<sup>1</sup>

*We can now also understand the journey shaped by the Shiva D'Nechemta.*

*The calendar mandates: Before you can arrive at Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, you must first course through Shiva Assar B'Tamuz and Tisha B'Av. Before you can repair your relationship with HaShem, you must first regain faith in yourselves. Meeting a challenge that is yours alone to meet, you must arrive at a vision of who you can truly be.*

*Our tradition thus reminds us of yet another truth fundamental to all human relationships.*

*Only individuals armed with a healthy self-image can hope to relate healthily to others.*

*Correspondingly, only those who are aware of their own self-worth; only those cognizant of their own majestic potential; can successfully approach God on the holiest of days.*

*The journey of the Sheva D'Nechemta challenges us to "rediscover ourselves" before we begin the task of repairing our relationship with God. ■*

1 Talmud Bavli Ta'anit 29a.



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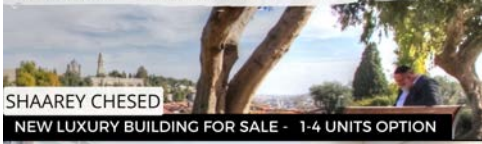
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## The Power of Gratitude

In the early 1990s, one of the great medical research exercises of modern times took place. It became known as the Nun Study. Some seven hundred American nuns, all members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the United States, agreed to allow their records to be accessed by a research team investigating the process of ageing and Alzheimer's Disease. At the start of the study the participants were aged between 75 and 102.<sup>1</sup>

What gave this study its unusual longitudinal scope is that sixty years early the very same nuns had been asked by their Mother Superior to write a brief autobiographical

account of their life and their reasons for entering the convent. These documents were now analysed by the researchers using a specially devised coding system to register, among other things, positive and negative emotions. By annually assessing the nuns' current state of health, the researchers were able to test whether their emotional state in 1930 had affected their health some sixty years later. Because they had all lived a very similar lifestyle during these six decades, they formed an ideal group for testing hypotheses about the relationship between emotional attitudes and health.

The results, published in 2001, were startling.<sup>2</sup> The more positive emotions – such as contentment, gratitude, happiness, love and hope – the nuns expressed in their autobiographical notes, the more likely they were to be alive and well sixty years later. The difference was as much as seven years in life expectancy. So remarkable was this finding that it has led, since then, to a new field of gratitude research, as well as a deepening understanding of the impact of emotions on

2 Deborah D. Danner, David A. Snowdon, and Wallace V. Friesen, "Positive Emotions in Early Life and Longevity: Findings from the Nun Study", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 80.5 (2001), pp. 804-13.

1 See Robert Emmons, *Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.



physical health.

What medicine now knows about individuals, Moses knew hundreds of years ago about nations. Gratitude – *hakarat ha-tov* – is at the heart of what he has to say about the Israelites and their future in the Promised Land. Gratitude had not been their strong point in the desert. They complained about lack of food and water, about the manna and the lack of meat and vegetables, about the dangers they faced from the Egyptians as they were leaving and about the inhabitants of the land they were about to enter. They lacked thankfulness during the difficult times. A greater danger still, said Moses, would be a lack of gratitude during the good times. This is what he warned:

When you have eaten and been satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, when your herds and flocks have grown abundant, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have has multiplied, your heart may become proud, forgetting the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery... You might be tempted to say to yourself, 'My power, the strength of my own hand, have brought me this great wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the power to do great things, upholding the covenant that He swore to your ancestors... (*Deut. 8:12-18*)

The worst thing that could happen to them, warned Moses, would be that they forgot how they came to the land, how God had promised it to their ancestors, and had taken them from slavery to freedom, sustaining them during the forty years in the wilderness. This was a revolutionary idea: that the nation's history be engraved on

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people's souls, that it was to be re-enacted in the annual cycle of festivals, and that the nation, as a nation, should never attribute its achievements to itself – “my power and the might of my own hand” – but should always ascribe its victories, indeed its very existence, to something higher than itself: to God. This is a dominant theme of Deuteronomy, and it echoes throughout the book time and again.

Since the publication of the Nun Study and the flurry of further research it inspired, we now know of the multiple effects of developing an attitude of gratitude. It improves physical health and immunity against disease. Grateful people are more likely to take regular exercise and go for regular medical check-ups. Thankfulness reduces toxic emotions such as resentment, frustration and regret and makes depression less likely. It helps people avoid over-reacting to negative experiences by seeking revenge. It even tends to make people sleep better. It enhances self-respect, making it less likely that you will envy others for their achievements or success. Grateful people tend to have better relationships. Saying “thank you” enhances friendships and elicits better performance from employees. It is also a major factor in strengthening resilience. One study of Vietnam War Veterans found that those with higher levels of gratitude suffered lower incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Remembering the many

things we have to be thankful for helps us survive painful experiences, from losing a job to bereavement.<sup>3</sup>

Jewish prayer is an ongoing seminar in gratitude. *Birkat ha-Shachar*, ‘the Dawn Blessings’ said at the start of morning prayers each day, form a litany of thanksgiving for life itself: for the human body, the physical world, land to stand on and eyes to see with. The first words we say each morning – *Modeh Ani*, “I thank you” – mean that we begin each day by giving thanks.

Gratitude also lies behind a fascinating feature of the Amidah. When the leader of prayer repeats the Amidah aloud, we are silent other than for the responses of *Kedushah*, and saying Amen after each blessing, with one exception. When the leader says the words *Modim anachnu lach*, “We give thanks to You,” the congregation says a parallel passage known as *Modim de-Rabbanan*. For every other blessing of the Amidah, it is sufficient to assent to the words of the leader by saying Amen. The one exception is *Modim*, “We give thanks.” Rabbi Elijah Spira (1660–1712) in his work *Eliyahu Rabbah*,<sup>4</sup> explains that when it comes to saying thank you, we cannot delegate this away to someone else to do it on our behalf. Thanks must come directly from us.

Part of the essence of gratitude is that it recognises that we are not the sole authors of what is good in our lives. The egoist, says Andre Comte-Sponville, “is ungrateful

3 Much of the material in this paragraph is to be found in articles published in *Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life* @ <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu>.

4 *Eliyahu Rabbah*, Orach Chayyim 127:1.



because he doesn't like to acknowledge his debt to others and gratitude is this acknowledgement."<sup>5</sup> La Rochefoucauld put it more bluntly: "Pride refuses to owe, self-love to pay."<sup>6</sup> Thankfulness has an inner connection with humility. It recognises that what we are and what we have is due to others, and above all to God. Comte-Sponville adds: "Those who are incapable of gratitude live in vain; they can never be satisfied, fulfilled or happy: they do not live, they get ready to live, as Seneca puts it."<sup>7</sup>

Though you don't have to be religious to be grateful, there is something about belief in God as creator of the universe, shaper of history and author of the laws of life that directs and facilitates our gratitude. It is hard to feel grateful to a universe that came into existence for no reason and is blind to us and our fate. It is precisely our faith in a personal God that gives force and focus to our thanks.

It is no coincidence that the United States, founded by Puritans – Calvinists steeped in the Hebrew Bible – should have a day known as Thanksgiving, recognising the presence of God in American history. On 3rd October 1863, at the height of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln issued a

5 *André Comte-Sponville, A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life, New York: Holt, 2001, p. 133.*

6 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 137.



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Thanksgiving proclamation, thanking God that though the nation was at war with itself, there were still blessings for which both sides could express gratitude: a fruitful harvest, no foreign invasion, and so on. He continued:

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy... I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the

full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.

What might such a declaration made today – in Israel, or the United States, or indeed anywhere – do to heal the wounds that so divide nations today? Thanksgiving is as important to societies as it is to individuals. It protects us from resentments and the arrogance of power. It reminds us of how dependent we are on others and on a Force greater than ourselves. As with individuals so with nations: thanksgiving is essential to happiness and health.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does Rabbi Sacks note is a dominant theme in Devarim. Can you think of examples?

How often should we give thanks, and to whom?

How do you think a proclamation like Abraham Lincoln's would be received today? ■

Covenant and Conversation 5782 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l. These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of the 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org).

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Over these years, I have shared with you the approach taken by the Tosafot in Masechet Megillah (31b) that these seven haftarot of consolation following Tish'a B'Av, the "shev d'n'chemta", were compiled by the rabbinic scholars to be read in ascending order, with each haftarah expressing a greater promise of comfort and consolation than did its previous one. In studying this week's haftarah with the hope of uncovering its additional promises of comfort over last week's haftarah, HaRav Moshe Lichtenstein is struck by a uniqueness that makes this reading stand out from last week's haftarah... as well as from every other one of the seven selections of consolation.

Rav Lichtenstein notes that these nevuot shared by Yishayahu were not for the generation of the churban alone but were meant to be messages of solace to all the generations who would suffer throughout the long galut. For that reason, every one of the prophecies of comfort read during these weeks addresses the pain of the nation who witnessed the destruction of the Beit Mikdash, but speaks as well to those who would struggle in the Diaspora from the oppression – the hatred, the expulsions, the pogroms, – that they would suffer over the years. Hence, much of the prophecies focus upon the

glorious future that awaits them, the geula that would surely arrive and the comforting promises that the grief that accompanied the people throughout their unwelcome stay in foreign lands would come to an end.

That, however, is not the focus of this week's haftarah. In these prakim of Sefer Yishayahu (49-51) the navi faces a more basic – and a more threatening – fear of the generation. It was a national depression brought upon by the feeling of total desperation, even surrender, caused by the belief that, as the haftarah's first words express, Hashem had abandoned them. And, given that assumption, they were convinced that they were lost; that they had no hope at all. If G-d had abandoned them there could be no return, no redemption and no future.

And, as absurd as it may seem to us, it was a very real belief for those who, for generations, had seen Hashem as the national protector of Israel and viewed the Beit HaMikdash as – quite literally – the "House of Hashem" that could never be destroyed and who knew that

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Eretz Yisrael was their eternal home, promised to them by G-d.

Yet, now they were defeated by a seemingly more powerful “deity”, now they had seen the “House of Hashem” destroyed and now they were exiled from the land G-d had promised them.

Would you not feel abandoned? Depressed? Hopeless? This was the challenge that faced Yishayahu.

But we would be mistaken to believe that the prophet was speaking to but one generation (a generation that was yet to experience the disaster some 150 years later!). The words of the navi cried out to many generations in the future. Whether they were heard by the Ashkenazic Jews who saw the Rhine River flow with Jewish blood after the Crusaders massacred the center of Jewish life in Western Europe, or they were read

by the Sepharadic communities expelled from Spain and watching one third of their number killed, or studied by those Jews who impoverished themselves to witness the arrival of the self-proclaimed mashiach, Shabbatai Tzvi – only to watch him convert to Islam, or chanted by those who suffered through the Russian pogroms, or the German death camps. Did they not also feel abandoned? Depressed? Hopeless?

Yishayahu spoke to all of them.

“Hatishkach isha ulah?” Hashem could no more abandon His children – in ANY generation – than could a mother abandon her young child!

His message is eternal. And that is precisely the purpose of reading the words of the nevi'im each Shabbat. Not to read what WAS said then – but to realize what it IS saying... to us now. ■



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# Manna- Appreciating our Lot

וַיַּעֲנֶה וַיִּרְעֹבָךְ וַיֹּאכְלֶךָ אֶת־הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדָעוּ  
אַבְתֵּיךָ

*And He afflicted you and let you go hungry,  
and then fed you with manna, which you did  
not know, nor did your forefathers know...*  
(Devarim 8:3)

When Moshe Rabbeinu recalls what transpired in the *midbar* throughout the nation's 40 year journey from Mitzrayim to Eretz Yisrael, one of the main items highlighted is the manna God provided to nourish and satiate the people. In the pasuk cited above, however, there is a statement included that relates to the fact that we and our forefathers were not previously familiar with the manna. Why is this statement necessary? We were not introduced to the manna until the generation that wandered in the desert. Why would we have hypothesized that it previously existed?

Notwithstanding that the nation was provided with this miraculous substance that

tasted like any delicacy one desired and whose content was fully absorbed in one's body thereby creating no waste, the people still complained that they were hungry and desired the "delicacies" they ate in Egypt. How could they be so unappreciative of this food that literally fell from heaven?

The Ketav Sofer suggests that the clue to their dissatisfaction appears in the pasuk we cited above. They thought to themselves: if the manna is something so special and so beneficial why did our Avot not merit it? When Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov experienced a famine, they descended to Egypt to seek food. Why did God not provide them with manna? In addition, the fact that the manna got absorbed in the body and created no waste may have led them to consider it potentially dangerous. What God intended to serve as a benefit they perceived as detrimental.

What the nation failed to recognize is that God prefers to act within the natural realm (טבע). God did not deem it necessary to create a supernatural miracle to assist our Avot. He provided for them within a natural realm. However, in order to instill in the nation that were just slaves, a sense of trust and belief in Hashem, they required supernatural miracles. Starting with the 10 plagues, splitting of the red sea and the various miracles that transpired in the desert, including the daily allotment of the manna. The people were short sighted

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and looked to the past and suspected that had the manna been beneficial surely our forefathers would have been worthy of receiving it.

We are to derive an important lesson from their behavior. One is not to judge happiness or wealth in comparison to others. That generation was granted a great gift but neglected to appreciate it because their predecessors were not offered the same. Today we cannot rely on miracles and should appreciate all blessings God bestows upon us, without comparing anything to our neighbors. We should be happy with our lot.

This is a message that is derived from the last of the *asseret hadibrot* as well. When we are told not to covet, the Torah lists that one should not covet a neighbor's house, wife, housekeeper, animals, etc. It then concludes with an all-encompassing phrase: "and all of your friend's possessions." Why, then, did the Torah need to specify particular items? The all-encompassing phrase of "all of his possessions" would suffice to include the prohibition of coveting in its totality.

The Torah here is teaching us that when we look at someone else, we can't just pay attention to the one item we desire. We have to realize that that item is part of a package deal. Perhaps that individual has a nice house or car, but he is ill or has a complicated relationship with his wife or children.

We should look inward and appreciate our "package", even if we feel we may be lacking in one area. Each family in the desert received the portion they needed to flourish. May we be able to recognize and be grateful for all Hashem has provided to us, including the "dough" allotted to us. ■

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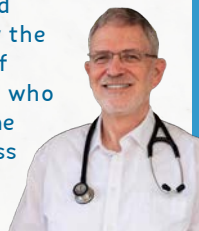
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# Bountiful Blessings

*Brachot* and *segulot* are sought after and promoted by many to access their desired solutions to issues and problems. Yet there are a number of *segulot* that indeed have their source in the holy *sefarim* and hold tremendous power. One such *segulah* for a secure livelihood is based on a mitzvah in *Parashat Eikev*. “*Veachalta, vesavata, u’beirachta es Hashem* – when you eat and are satisfied, you must therefore bless your G-d” (*Devarim* 8:10). We are enjoined to thank Hashem for the food we have eaten and enjoyed. When a person recites *Birkat Hamazon* with *kavanah* - mindfulness, it brings tremendous bounty and abundant prosperity.

The *Be’er Hetiv* [?] also points out that “*peh sofrit*,” the “final *peh*,” is the only letter in the Hebrew alphabet that we don’t find in *Birkat Hamazon*. We find this letter in words such as “*af*” and “*ketsef*,” meaning “anger” and “fury”. This suggests that one who recites *Birkat Hamazon* with focus and

intention will be saved from Divine wrath and enmity.

The “*Harachaman*” section after the fourth *brachah* is a curious element of *Birkat Hamazon*. Why was this section added? Why do we have such exalted requests such as *kibbutz galuyot* and *Eliyahu Hanavi* at this time? Further, unlike the *Shemoneh Esrei*, here we first daven for Hashem’s glory before asking for our own personal needs. (Interestingly, the *nusach of Edot Hamizrach* has 18 “*Harachaman*” entreaties to parallel those in *Shemoneh Esrei*.) Why is this?

In the *Viduy Ma’asrot*, the declaration for removing tithes, we say, “*Hashkifah meme’on kadshecha* – look down from your holy habitation” (*Devarim* 26:15). The Chafetz Chayim comments that this tells us that the moments after one performs a mitzvah becomes a special time to daven, an “*et ratzon*.” We ask Hashem, ‘may You look down upon us with favor.’ Since *Birkat Hamazon* is a mitzvah *deorayta*, a Biblical commandment, (for women it is a Rabbinic ordinance), it is a particularly significant opportunity to storm the Heavens with all our requests. It is of similar import to the powerful force present at the time that women fulfill their special mitzvot such as candle lighting and *hafrashat challah*. Thus, we can entreat Hashem for lofty and grand requests.

The Kotzker Rebbe expounds on the

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power of *Birkat Hamazon* from a midrash that features Avraham Avinu. The Midrash explains how Avraham inspired so many people to recognize monotheism by serving them a satisfying meal. When his guests offered their thanks, Avraham told them, "Don't thank me, thank the One who has provided everything!" He would then teach them about Hashem's great kindness and glory. Imagine, says the Kotzker Rebbe, if these people embraced a relationship with Hashem as a result of thanking Him for their food, how much more can we Jews reach higher levels of closeness to Hashem every time we thank Him for everything we have! Hence, notes Rav Schorr in *Halekach Vehalebuv*, after we recite *Birkat Hamazon* we become so elevated, that we first think about *Kevod Shamayim* before we think about our own needs.

Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen, in *Pri Tzadik*, notes another powerful effect of reciting *Birkat Hamazon*. The very first sin of mankind came through food. Each time we eat a meal and thank Hashem, it allows us to realize the source of all we have. Thanking Hashem keeps us from feeling haughty, arrogant and conceited. Each *Birkat Hamazon* that we say creates another opportunity to be *metaken* that sin and enables us to daven for Eliyahu Hanavi to come redeem us and bring us all back to our Land with wholeness and ultimate goodness. ■

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## Simple Faith

Rebbe Avraham Dov of Avritch, zy'a, the "Bas Ayin", was a leading disciple of the Kedushas Levi, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, and one of the great Chasidic masters of Ukraine in the early 19th Century. A Rebbe for over forty years, the Bas Ayin moved to Eretz Yisrael in his mid 60's where he encountered a series of extraordinary challenges and tzaros. He survived a kidnapping and a pogrom at the hands of Arabs, in addition to the poverty and deprivation experienced by most olim. He also saw the miraculous salvation of his congregants during the devastating earthquake that decimated Tzfat in 1837, and led the Jewish community in the period of rebuilding.

The first year of their aliyah was particularly difficult and Reb Avraham Dov had strong doubts about their decision to leave their family, talmidim and a thriving Chasidic community behind. They had settled in the Galil, which was still underdeveloped. After a year under extremely difficult living conditions, the Bas Ayin came to the conclusion that he and his wife would be better off returning to the shtetl.

One balmy autumn afternoon, the Bas Ayin was walking back home from shul and was taken aback by all sorts of noises — banging, clanging and chatter coming from

the surrounding rooftops. The Rebbe asked one of the local women who was climbing down a makeshift ladder from her roof what exactly was going on.

The balabusteh seemed surprised by the question. "Rebbe! We're clearing our roofs!" The Bas Ayin was still uncertain as to what she was talking about. "Rebbe, all summer long we make use of our flat roofs for storing our winter cooking utensils and dry goods. Today, we're bringing all of our pots, pans and supplies inside so they don't get soaked by the rain!"

The Bas Ayin looked upward; it was sunny, with nary a cloud in the sky. He was even more confused than before.

"Forgive me, but surely the Rebbe remembers that tonight is the 7th of Mar-Cheshvan, and that we will switch our nusach to include וְתָן טֵל וּמָטָר לְבָרָכָה, 'And give dew and rain for blessing!' If we don't bring in all of our supplies before davening this evening, the rains will wash everything away!"

Reb Avraham Dov was awestruck by the

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depth of the woman's emunah p'shutah, simple faith, and rushed home to share the encounter with his wife. That day, they committed themselves to staying in the Holy Land.

Our sedra features the continuation of Moshe Rabbeinu's final address to Klal Yisrael, and includes the blessing and reassurance of our entering the Land of Israel, where we will enjoy the Divine providence and revealed good of the land flowing with milk and honey:

אֶרֶץ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ דָּרַשׁ אֹתָהּ תָּמִיד עֵינֶי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּהַ מְרֻשֵׁית  
הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה:

"The land that Hashem looks after; the eyes of Hashem your God are always upon it, tamid, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Devarim, 11:12).

Rashi notes that while Hashem obviously

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cares for all lands, אלא כביכול אינו דורש אלא אותה, “it is as if the Ribbono Shel Olam is only doreish, ‘actively looking after’, Eretz Yisrael.” Only through the care and special concern which Hashem bestows upon Eretz Yisrael, does He care for all the other lands along with it. Being in the Holy Land is an experience of being in the physical presence of the Melech, and within the armono shel Melech, palace of the King.

Our sedra further accentuates the blessing and privilege of being in “God’s Land”, in His dwelling place:

למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע ה' לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים על הארץ:

“...in order that your days may increase and the days of your children, on the land which Hashem promised to your forefathers to give them, as the days of heaven above the earth.” (11:21)

The Sages of the Gemara calculate שנותיו של אדם, the length of a person’s life: “And how long is a person’s life? Seventy years. But subtract the first twenty years of his life — one is not punished for sins committed then, since in Heavenly matters, a person is only punished from age twenty. Fifty years remain for him. And subtract twenty-five years of nights (as he is usually asleep or taking care of his needs); twenty-five years remain for him. Subtract twelve and a half years during which one prays and eats and uses the restroom, and a mere twelve and a half years remain for him.” (Shabbos, 89b)

Reb Aharon, the holy Rebbe of Belz, zy’a, reflected on the higher implication of our pasuk in light of living in Eretz Yisrael. Every moment we dwell in the Holy Land, we are surrounded by Kedusha and fulfilling a positive commandment. In the Upper

Worlds, the “length” of a person’s life is measured specifically in terms of the time they spend in active, conscious service of Hashem. Therefore, even while passively fulfilling the commandment to live in Eretz Yisrael, our “days are increased.”

Furthermore, if we live with the intent of fulfilling the injunction בְּכָל־דְּרֶכֶיךָ יָדָעוּהוּ, “Know Him in all your ways” (Mishlei, 3:6), we are actively engaged in avodas Hashem throughout our days and nights. Then, from the bedroom to the boardroom and everywhere in between, our every choice and physical movement reflects a higher purpose. Living with a consciousness of knowing Hashem b’chol derachecha shifts the existential accounting of our lives to include every moment as having been truly lived.

And this, explains the Belzer Rebbe, is another meaning of Hashem’s promise that we will experience life כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ, “for as long as the heavens exist above the earth/upon the land”. In other words, when we ‘know Him in all our ways’, when with faith we live with ‘upon the Land’, in the palace of the King, all our ‘days on the earth’ are qualitatively equal to ‘days in heaven’. Our whole life comes alive with the revealed good, the Heavenly milk and honey of emunah p’shutah.

May our lives be increased — both in quantity and quality! And wherever we may be, in all our ways, may we live with the Kedusha and the simple faith that flows from Eretz Yisrael. ■

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Journey Through the  
Siddur

**Rabbi David Walk**

**10:20 AM**

Likutei Halachot:  
Discover the Deeper  
Meaning in Halacha

**Rabbi Azarya  
Berzon**

**11:30 AM**

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:  
Daniel, Ezra, Nechemia

**Rabbi Yitzchak  
Breitowitz**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-  
Sanhedrin Perek 4

**Rabbi Jeff  
Bienenfeld**

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MON, AUG 22

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin**

**Pearl Borow**

Divrei HaYamim (L'Ayla)

**10:30 AM**

The Thought of Rav  
Soloveitchik

**Rabbi Aaron  
Goldscheider**

**11:45 AM**

Halacha and Agada in  
Contemporary Society

**Rabbi Shmuel  
Herschler**

**8:30 PM**

Semichat Chaver Program

**Rabbi Elyada**

**Goldwicht** (The Bais)  
(Resumes Aug 29)

TUE, AUG 23

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin Smiles**

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)  
(Resumes Sept 6)

**9:30AM**

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning  
in Mitzvot **Rabbi Yitzchak  
Breitowitz**

**10:30AM**

Parshat HaShavua

**Rabbi Yossi Goldin**

**2:00 pm**

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin  
Perek 4 **Rabbi Jeff  
Bienenfeld**

**7:30 PM**

Safrut Course (The Bais)  
**Rabbi Tzvi Mauner**

**8:00pm**

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi  
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WED, AUG 24

**9:00 AM**

Medina and Halacha

**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**

**10:15 AM**

Contemporary Issues in  
Halacha and Hashkafa

**Rabbi Anthony  
Manning**

**11:30 AM**

Great Jewish Thinkers

**Rabbi Alan Kimche**

(Resumes in Fall)

**12:30 PM- Trailblazing  
the Text of Tanach-  
Lunch and Learn**

**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**8:30 PM**

Halachic Controversies

**Rabbi Aschi Dick**

(The Bais)

(Resumes Aug 31)

THURS, AUG 25

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua

**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua

**Rabbi Baruch  
Taub**

**11:30 AM**

Unlocking the Messages  
of Chazal

**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin

Perek 4

**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**



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Password: OU Israel

### Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM

MonHalacha, 7:00PM Wed

### Rebbetzin Shatz

(L'Ayla)-Insights of  
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

### Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua

Wed. 8:30PM

[https://us02web.zoom.](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902)

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# Is *Shemitah* Produce to be Preferred?

During the last few *shemitah* cycles, the consumer has had numerous options for purchasing fruits and vegetables. In some circumstances, families with certain kashrut norms might prefer not to be hosted by others who do not keep their same standards. This could also apply to *kedushat shevi'it* – produce that is holy because of its growth during the year of *shemitah*. Is it legitimate to abstain from purchasing and consuming *shemitah* produce in one's home or when being hosted by others?

## ***Shemitah* produce served at a meal**

There is a dispute among authorities whether there is a positive mitzvah to consume *shemitah* produce. Three main opinions exist, some say there is a positive mitzvah (*Tashbetz*), others claim there is absolutely no mitzvah whatsoever (*Chazon Ish*), and the third opinion maintains that although there is no obligation to eat *shemitah* fruit, if one does so he has performed a mitzvah (*Torat Ha'aretz*).

Although many later authorities rule that there is no obligation to consume *shemitah* produce, it is clear that in many situations such produce should be eaten. For example,

Rav Nissim Karelitz (*Chut HaShani, Shevi'it* p.245-246) ruled that while there is no mitzvah to consume *shemitah* produce, in a case where someone is present at a meal with *kedushat shevi'it* food which will spoil if he doesn't eat it, he is obligated to consume it. This is based on *Ramban*, who learns from the term לאכלה – (*l'ochla*, “to eat”) in the verse the command not to ruin the fruit; in a situation where a person has a direct opportunity to eat or the food will rot, he has done a mitzvah by eating the produce. (See *Amudei Eretz* p.120.)

Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner in his responsa *Shevet Halevi* (4:232) does not seem to rule definitively regarding a mitzvah to eat *shemitah* produce. However, his ruling is quoted elsewhere regarding a case in which one has two types of food in front of him, one which has holy *shemitah* produce and the other which does not. Rav Vosner ruled that one is obligated to choose the *shemitah* food, since according to many authorities there is a mitzvah to consume *kedushat shevi'it*. Even according to those who disagree, there is no doubt that actively avoiding eating such food is not the manner in which one should treat holy *shemitah* produce (See *MiBeit Halevi* 6, p.176.) Similarly, Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl is quoted as ruling that since *kedushat shevi'it* produce is connected to a mitzvah, it should be consumed whenever possible, similar to bread used for an *eruv* that should be consumed (*Responsa Avnei Derech* OH:141).





## Should the public prefer *kedushat shevi'it*?

As previously mentioned, in a situation where *shemita* produce is served to an individual, it is certainly appropriate to eat it. However, regarding obligating the public to purchase or prefer *shemita* produce, the halachic ruling is more complicated. In today's modern market, *shemita* produce is readily available to the public; the *Otzar Beit Din* system has vastly developed over the past few *shemita* cycles, and in many cities in Israel one can acquire *shemita* produce in a properly halachic fashion. But

is there an obligation to actively search out and travel in order to do so? Most *poskim* rule that there is no positive mitzvah to eat *shemita* produce. Thus, there is no halachic obligation on the individual to make extraordinary effort to purchase *shemita* produce, as opposed to, for example, the mitzvah of eating matzah on the holiday of Pesach. Nevertheless, certain *poskim* advocate for the public to purchase *shemita* produce.

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wine. They received halachic guidance from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv. After the *Otzar Beit Din* was set up and the process approved, Rav Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv published a letter supporting these wine-makers. In the letter, they requested that the public should support these dedicated Jews and purchase the wine distributed by *Otzar Beit Din*. Rav Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv added that those who consume the wine will be performing a mitzvah according to *Tashbet*"z and others. The fact that those *Gedolei Torah* mentioned the opinion that there is a mitzvah is perplexing, since that is not the accepted ruling. It seems that Rav Auerbach and Rav Elyashiv felt it important that the public be aware of the preference for *shemita* fruit. Additionally, they apparently reasoned that even though an individual may not be obligated, the public should make an effort to help those who keep *shemita* properly, supporting observant Jewish agricultural workers who face great difficulties. This perspective is similar to the idea cited by other *poskim* that when one has an option to buy fruit and vegetables from non-Jews or purchase produce that has *kedushat shevi'it*, one should purchase *Otzar Beit Din*. This is based on the *halacha* that one should prefer purchasing merchandise from a Jew over a non-Jew when possible, as our Sages derive from the verse (*Vayikra* 25:14) "...or [when you] buy any from your neighbor...." (See *Sifra Vayikra* 25:14.)

#### **In summary:**

- When served holy *shemita* produce at a meal there is no reason to abstain, rather it is preferable to eat it.

- Even though there might not be an absolute obligation to actively purchase *shemita* produce, it is surely preferable over buying produce from non-Jewish farmers. ■

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

In our *sedra* this week we read the familiar verse- (*Devarim* 8:10): וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ

*When you have eaten and been satiated, you shall bless the Lord your G-d upon the good land that he has given unto you.*

This verse serves as the basis for the recitation of *birkat hamazon*, as well as the recitation of *brachot* in general before or after eating, as a sign of our appreciation and acknowledgment that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* has provided that sustenance to us.

Our *Chazal* in the *Gemara* in *Brachot* (35b) explain this idea further:

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בַר פִּפְא: כָּל הַנִּהְיֶה מִן הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלֹא בְרָכָה כְּאִילוּ גּוֹזֵל לְהַקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְנִסְתָּ יִשְׂרָאֵל

*Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa said: Anyone who benefits in this world without reciting a blessing it is as if he has stolen from G-d and from Knesset Yisrael...*

The concept of acknowledging that *Hashem* has provided us with sustenance and the importance of declaring our appreciation for that sustenance makes sense, but how are we to understand this statement that if we fail to recite a *bracha* upon deriving benefit, that somehow we have

also stolen from the Jewish People as well?

***Rabbeinu B'Chaya***, points to this *gemara* in his commentary on our verse. He explains that we need to understand that a *bracha* is not solely a vehicle for expressing our appreciation to G-d, but also the vehicle, the pipeline to bring further blessing, sustenance and goodness into the world. If we were to derive pleasure or benefit in this world without reciting a blessing, we would not only be coming up short in our show of gratitude to *Hashem* for that sustenance, but we would also be missing out on the opportunity to help others by the power inherent in that *bracha* to metaphysically channel and provide additional sustenance to descend into this world.

Similarly, the ***Be'er Moshe, the Admor of Ozerov zy'a***, explains that each time we recite a *bracha*, the spiritual cognition of the gifts that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* bestows upon us, is not only a manifestation of *Hakarat HaTov* for all we have received, but simultaneously becomes the catalyst to experience further *bracha*. When we acknowledge and are cognizant that *Hashem Yitbarach* is indeed the source of all blessing, then it opens us up spiritually and metaphysically to seeing and experiencing more and more *bracha* each and every day.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may each of us merit to recall the incredible dual capacity for goodness contained within every *bracha* we recite. ■



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# The True “Measure” of Israeli Fruits

They heard the reports and they had seen the actual fruit. They had personally witnessed the gigantic grapes hauled back by the spies. They had gazed at outsized figs and succulent pomegranates. Additionally, they recalled Moshe’s promise, decades earlier, about a Land of milk and honey. It was finally time to transition from monotonous manna to luscious fruit and abundant produce. Finally, they could take leave of the sandy desert and enjoy the lush pasturelands of Israel.

Moshe doesn’t disappoint them. He lists seven varieties of crops and fruits which are indigenous to the Land of Israel: wheat, barely, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and honey. This catalog is a balanced list of basic grains for nourishment, essential fruits for both vitamins and commerce, as well as scrumptious delicacies.

It is uncommon for one single region to yield both grains, as well as olives and pomegranates, fruits which typically require tropical climates. Yet, Israel is outfitted for *both*, precisely because it isn’t a *specific* region. Instead, it is a microcosm of *all* the world’s regions, and it covers a broad

range of climates and topographies. Everything can be found in this magical Land of Hashem.

### Lyrical Fruits

Fruits and cops in Israel are more than just edibles. The epic saga of Shir Hashirim portrays a legendary courtship between a king and a peasant girl, which, in reality, is an allegory for our relationship with Hashem. At various points in the story, the woman, or the Jewish people, are compared to grapes, pomegranates, wheat, figs, and honey. The “fruits of Israel” are poetic metaphors for the beauty of the Land and the splendor of its people. Hashem conveys his love to us both through fruit metaphors and also, by providing actual produce. Moshe channels the mystique of these fruits to excite the people about the Land of their future.

### Halachic Manuals

Interestingly, Chazal viewed these iconic and visually appealing fruits as a handbook of halachic measurements. These fruits aren’t only symbols of the Land’s fertility, they are also codes for halachic measurements and quantifications, known as *shiurim*. For example, wheat assists us in determining tzara’at impurity. If someone lingers in a house afflicted with tzara’at long enough to consume wheat bread, he becomes impure. Similarly, figs represent the minimum “size” of food which, if carried from private to public domain on Shabbat

constitutes a violation of the melacha of hotza'a. Of course, everyone is familiar with olive-sized 'k'zayit' *shiur* which governs the halachic act of eating. The fruits aren't just romantic symbols of our love with Hashem and His Land, they are also halachic instruments affecting a wide range of halachic applications.

What are these seven fruits and crops? Are they beautiful embodiments of the Land of Israel or are they halachic codes? In truth, they are both, since our association with the Land of Israel is both halachic and poetic. The fruits convey a dual metaphor reflecting the two modes of our love for Israel.

### A Land of Commandments

The midrash frames Moshe's request for entry into Israel as a desire to fulfill mitzvot which weren't compulsory outside the Land. Living in Israel, in the immediate vicinity of Hashem, requires and invites greater halachic dedication. It is inconceivable that the presence of Hashem doesn't also mandate greater halachic obligation. The closer we stand to Hashem and the more intimate our relationship, the more augmented our duties and our commandments.

Entire *systems* of halacha pertain only in Israel, from agricultural laws to national

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obligations such as building a mikdash, appointing a king and eliminating idolatry. Moreso, the Ramban asserted that *all mitzvot* are limited to the Land of Israel. Mitzvot outside the Land of Israel are merely rehearsals for authentic mitzvah performance upon our return to Israel. Our tradition has rejected this extreme position, but this opinion captures the spirit of “augmented” halachic responsibilities in Israel.

For this reason, Chazal deciphered the seven fruits as codewords for halachic information. The orchards and wheatfields of Israel are legal manuals guiding our adherence to halacha.

### **Processing Redemption with Halacha**

Our relationship with Israel, though, must not be reduced *purely* to “halachic calculus”, and cannot be appreciated solely by assessing how many extra mitzvot apply in this land. This type of halachic calculus generated a radical position asserted by a 12<sup>th</sup> century Tosafist named Rav Chaim Cohen. He argued against emigration to Israel, as immigrants would become entangled with unfamiliar halachot which are difficult to adhere to. Instinctively, we disagree with this attitude and bristle at the notion of avoiding halachic responsibility – even if the halachic duties are complicated and challenging.

This extreme 12<sup>th</sup> century position highlights a general tendency to frame our relationship with Israel and with redemption, purely through halachic models. This is understandable, given that we have absolutely no tradition about redemption, and we are advancing along uncharted historical territory. This is the first time that we are experiencing redemption without prophetic

guidance. In the absence of any concrete masorah about redemption, it is reasonable and even logical to fall back upon halachic paradigms for guidance.

The issue, however, is that redemption, by definition, doesn’t naturally fit into halachic models. Redemption is a history-altering experience which awakens the deep soul of Jewish consciousness. It is a historical lyric sung by The Jewish imagination throughout the generations. The sound is growing louder as Hashem calls us back from the wastelands of exile urging us to partner with him in the closing chapter of human history. This divine echo can’t be construed through the halachic terminology of obligations and prohibitions. Of course, we cannot, G-d forbid, violate one iota of halacha in the “service” of redemption, however, redemption can’t and shouldn’t be understood solely through a halachic lens. Redemption is a poetic leap of the Jewish imagination- a return to the orchards and olive groves of our past romance with Hashem.

### **Two Examples of Halacha-ization**

Often the issue of reciting hallel on Yom Ha’atzmaut is incorrectly viewed as a barometer for a person’s commitment to the redemptive experience. It is perfectly legitimate for someone to decline to say hallel based on numerous halachic considerations, while still deeply identifying with this historical process. Redemptive attitude cannot be gauged through halachic instruments. It is too personal and too historical.


Likewise, the question of whether living in Israel constitutes a mitzvah is often cited, when discussing the redemptive nature of the State of Israel. Only if there is an actual mitzvah to live in Israel, the argument



goes, should 1948 be defined as redemptive. Famously, the Rambam omitted living in Israel as a mitzvah. Does that mean we should be less devoted to the process? Again this is a misapplication, as, ironically, living in Israel may be too large and too seminal to be shrunk into a specific or narrow mitzvah. It may be *too seminal* and *too important* to be listed among the roster of 613 activity-based mitzvot. Again, a halachic model- in this case defining an act as a mitzvah- may not be capable of fully capturing the spirit of redemption.

Many voices call us back to our Homeland. The Land of augmented halachic observance is calling us. The Land of ancient romance between Hashem and His people is calling us. A Jew must answer each of these calls. The fruits of Israel are speaking again.. in stereo. ■

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## A Shul Kiddush as the “Third” Meal

**Question:** Can I count the cake and other foods I eat at a “shul Kiddush,” followed by a regular Shabbat meal at home, as the second and third meals of Shabbat?

**Answer:** The question arises only if one is lenient on what constitutes *seuda shlishit*. The *gemara* (Shabbat 117b) derives from the *pasuk* about the *manna* to be eaten on Shabbat (Shemot 16:25), which uses the word “*hayom*” (today) three times, that one should have three meals on Shabbat. The straightforward reading of the *gemara* is that the three meals are primarily equivalent. Since the first two Shabbat meals must include (two loaves of) bread (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 274:1; *ibid.* 289:1), we should expect the same for *seuda shlishit*. Indeed, this is the principle opinion of the Shulchan Aruch (OC 291:4-5), except when it is quite difficult (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, the Shulchan Aruch (*ibid.*) cites as a minority opinion the possibility to fulfill *seuda shlishit* with foods other than bread. The Talmudic source for possible leniency is a *gemara* (Sukka 27a)

about a rejected opinion about Sukkot. R. Eliezer says that one must eat fourteen meals on Sukkot and that if he missed one, he should eat an extra meal on the night of Shemini Atzeret. The *gemara* asks that the bread meal he has on Shemini Atzeret is for that day and answers that the *hash-lama* (make-up meal) is by eating *minei targima* (there is a *machloket* exactly what that is – see Tosafot *ad loc.*) in addition to the regular meal. Tosafot (Berachot 49b) cites Rabbeinu Tam as learning from here that one does not need bread to be considered a modest halachic meal, for example, for *seuda shlishit*. Most *Rishonim* (see Beit Yosef, OC 291) say that at least *seuda shlishit* requires specifically bread because of the derivation from the *manna*. There are, though, those who do not have *seuda shlishit* with bread, and they have whom to rely upon.

As mentioned, all agree that bread is required for the second Shabbat meal, even though cake is enough of a meal to give *Kiddush* its halachic status (Shulchan Aruch, OC 273:5). So, your regular meal is needed to count for the second meal. According to some, that meal must start before *chatzot* (Aruch Hashulchan, OC 288:2). If this meal started before the earliest time for Mincha (half an hour after *chatzot*), it is too early for *seuda shlishit* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 291:2), and even if it extends from morning to afternoon it cannot serve as both the second

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



and third meals (see Levushei Srad ad loc.). Stopping the meal with *Birkat Hamazon* and then starting a new meal again, could be a potential possibility (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 291:3 and Mishna Berura ad loc. 14). However, this is presumably not a more attractive practical option than making a small *seuda shlishit* some time later.

It is plausible to make the following halachic claim. Perhaps after having a proper daytime bread meal, we can say that the *shul Kiddush* constituted retroactively a third meal. While there is an expectation that there will be three meals at three different times of Shabbat (Rambam, Shabbat 30:9), perhaps the important thing is that at the end, fulfilling all of the requirements (two full meals, having eaten after the time of *Mincha*) in whatever order is enough. Rav Shimon Sofer (Hitorerut Teshuva I:74) left this as an open question and a possible *limud z'chut* for those who have a pre-meal *Kiddush* and do not eat *seuda shlishit*. The Shevet Halevi (I:57) does not view this a viable approach. He cites the Bach (OC 291) who says that the logic of Rabbeinu Tam to treat a non-bread meal as a meal applies only when it follows a full daytime meal, as another full meal might not be expected. However, a small meal **before** the big meal is not considered a halachic meal toward the three required meals.

In summary, while it is plausible that the setup you describe could remove the

need for *seuda shlishit*, it relies on unlikely assumptions. Therefore, it is significantly better to either have bread at the small meal (i.e., Kiddush) or to have at least a small *seuda shlishit* sometime in the afternoon. ■

## Having a dispute?



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**GOLDSCHIEDER**

# Rav Kook's Meeting With the Lubavitcher Rebbe

In the summer 1929 the Rebbe of Lubavitch, Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, known affectionately in Chabad circles as the *Frierdiker Rebbe*, visited the Land of Israel. He stayed for a period of time in the Old City of Jerusalem. Rav Kook requested to meet with the revered Rebbe.

Rav Kook asked his close colleague, Rabbi Aryeh Levin to escort him on the visit. When they arrived at the Rebbe's door, they were welcomed and Rav Aryeh Levin was privy to hear the conversation between these two towering figures. They addressed the most pressing issues of the day and also conversed in the depth of Torah and the spheres of Kabbalah.

Rav Aryeh Levin reported that at one point Rav Kook turned to the Rebbe and proceeded to share his singular perspective regarding loving the nation of Israel as a whole and the notion of rebuilding the nation on the holy soil of Eretz Yisrael.

"Being present at that meeting I learned something fundamental about Rav Kook's approach that I never fully grasped until that moment," said Rav Aryeh Levin.

"When it comes to caring for another Jew one should not limit the notion of *mesiras nefesh*, (giving one's soul) to merely offering financial resources or giving of one's time to help another Jew. One must understand the implications of the obligation 'to sacrifice for another Jew' in the most literal sense: One must *give* one's *soul* for the sake of others. In other words, even if it means paying the price of your own spiritual perfection, relinquishing one's own *olam habah*, it is well worth it, when engaging in saving another Jew." (*Heichal HaAhava*, p.175)

In the same vein, Rav Kook was known to have virtually carried all of the nation of Israel on his shoulders and in his heart. He felt their joys and pains as if they were his own. On one particular occasion Rav Aryeh Levin took note of the endless concern and empathy Rav Kook extended toward his beloved people. He asked his mentor, "How





does one merit to feel an inseparable bond with their fellow Jew?" Rav Kook answered him: "Is this not the way of the Almighty? The verse states: 'You are the children of the Lord.' The Almighty cherishes every Jew in the same way a mother or father adores their own child. We as Jews are instructed by the Torah to follow in Hashem's ways, *ve'halachta be'drachav.*" For me, there is no other way than accepting my role as a father who instinctively exhibits endless love for his beloved children." (*Heichal HaAhava*, p.399) ■

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# A Message That Matters!

Hashem tells us we are stiff-necked people. Indeed, we can be stubborn, rebellious, ungrateful, and short-sighted, such that so soon after “Har Sinai,” we worship a “golden calf.”

When we behave in ways inconsistent with Hashem’s will, we tend to rationalize our actions, for it is hard to recognize and accept our omissions. Moreover, in the face of castigation for our misdemeanors, we will likely retreat into any number of justifications.

In this week’s Parsha, Moshe dwells on several issues, including preparing the people for entry into Eretz Canaan and life in the “New World.”

In part, Moshe focuses on the spies whose report invoked fear and terror among the people. On the surface, the people had good reason to cry after hearing that “*there, we saw a people stronger and taller than we, great cities fortified to the heavens...and giants!*” (Devarim 1:28).

Logic and reason would posit that there was no way an inferior Israelite army could defeat those well-fortified Canaanite giants. However, for their misgivings, rationalizations, and lack of faith in Hashem, the people paid a forty-year extremely high price!

Now, asks Jon Levine – in a short but incisive comment on Moshe’s description of the spies in this Parsha – would the people still fail to believe in God and cower in fear as the conquest of Canaan drew near? And how would Moshe broach the subject to his nervous flock?

Levine points out that when Moshe prepared the people to attack Canaan, he used the precise terminology the scouts had previously used (see above). Thus, in his words, Moshe had told the people, “*Go and dispossess nations, greater...than you, cities fortified to the heavens, a people great and tall, the giants*” (ibid 9:1-2).

So, rather than ranking out the people and arguing that the spies’ report was exaggerated and their claims irrational, Moshe recreates the spies’ language to the letter – *seemingly validating their plaint!* But no! By using the spies’ vernacular and familiar prose, Moshe assuages his doubting listeners. Now they were on the same wavelength.

And now, Moshe could more easily tell his wayward flock not to worry – because not they, but Hashem was fighting their wars (cf. ibid 9:3-4).

If only our leaders and foes alike would imbibe that message. And, for our part, may we be deserving today that Hashem will so deliver our enemies into our hands.

Shabbat Shalom. ■

Menachem Persoff

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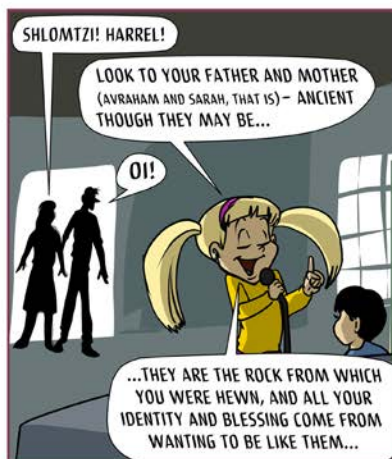
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BY  
NETANEL EPSTEIN

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### Yoni Gelband Modiin Chapter Director **Moshe's Important Lesson**

In our Parsha, Bnei Israel are on the brink of the Holy Land, about to enter the land that was promised to Avraham. Moshe gets up in front of the crowd to teach one of his final lessons, don't forget Hashem. Moshe informs Bnei Israel that they will have a major surplus in the land of Israel, they will live comfortable lives and won't starve. He then warns them, having so much good can lead to Bnei Israel forgetting where their success is coming from.

In today's world we can see that we live in a dream. We all have water to drink, food to eat and sometimes even allow ourselves a little family vacation. It is very easy to forget that Hashem is the one that gave us this tremendous *Bracha*. We can now understand why *Birchat Hamazon* was given in this week's Parsha.

Moshe is telling us: "When you live the dream, when you are happy with your success, when you feel on top of the world; you will remember who gave you everything. You will remember that Hashem is the one that gave you the potential to succeed and thus you must thank him and remember that you aren't all that". *Birkat Hamazon* helps us stay humble and praise Hashem for all the good we have in the world.

May we always succeed in our goals while remembering who we need to thank. Shabbat shalom 😊



### Shraga Fein 12th Grade, Beit Shemesh **Conquering Our Homeland**

As a Jew, moving to Israel at the age of 4 was a very interesting experience. Mostly because I was coming from New York where it is a different experience.

In NY there is less freedom, especially nowadays. It seems like every week you hear about another antisemitic attack just because someone is visibly Jewish. Here that isn't the case at all. Being a Jew is who you are and who everyone is. We're one big



NCSY Israel wishes much success to **Yoni and Rina Gelband** on their Shlichut this coming year in Toronto and a thanks you for all they've done for the teens of Modiin/Chashmonaim!

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family and one big house. Other religions don't have a specific land. There are Christian and Islamic countries, but that isn't 'the land'. Israel, with all the religious plurality that exists here, is the Jewish homeland.

The last thing Parshat Eikev talks about is our covenant with God that if we follow in his ways we will receive this land as our inheritance. We've had this promise from Avraham Avinu. The promise of a land is more than just a place to have for ourselves, to have freedom and safety from attacks. It is also the freedom to be who we are. Take Shabbat in Israel, no cars, everyone walking, and everyone respects Shabbat. Outside of Israel, you don't have that feeling. Not only that but there are plenty of mitzvot that can't be done outside of Eretz Yisrael. You don't have Shemita, you don't have the Beit Hamikdash and Birkat Kohanim.

This Parsha is a reminder that our relationship is a cycle. That God gave us this Land so we can do the mitzvot, but also since we do the mitzvot, we get this land from God. It's important to remember that, appreciate it, and continue to uphold our end of the bargain.

"Naaseh v'nishmah" said by our ancestors, shows just how accepting we are. We're a nation of doers, Israel was born through blood, sweat and tears. In Egypt, the Midbar, and throughout history that has remained true. It's truly important to appreciate the land God gave to us, and the land we haven't given up. ■

NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, empower teen olim to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at [israel.ncsy.org](http://israel.ncsy.org)

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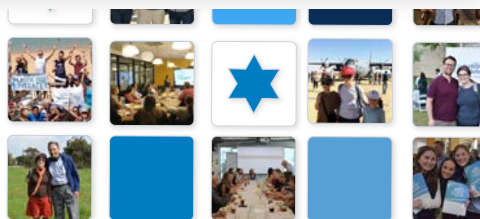


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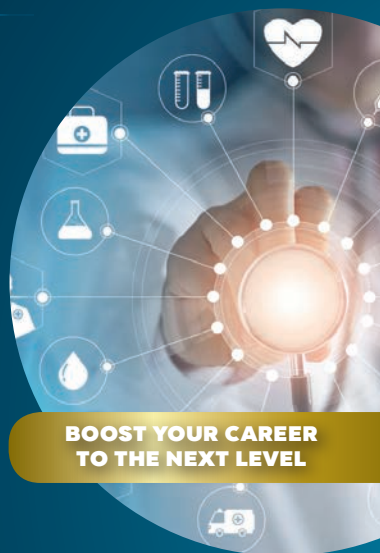
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