

ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1531



ט"ז אלול תשפ"ג • 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

פרשת כי תבוא
PARSHAT KI TAVO

AVOT CHAPTER 3-4



Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary
Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Page 12



We Have "Earned"
A New Tefillah Voice
Rabbi Moshe Taragin Page 58

ואלה יעמדו על-הקללה בהר עיבל
ראובן גד ואשר וחבולן דן ונפתלי - דברים כז:יג

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT TIMES PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

CANDLES 6:28PM • EARLIEST 5:43PM • HAVDALA 7:40PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:19PM



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THIS WEEK'S COVER IMAGE!

Photographd by Zev Rothkoff

I live in Efrat. My parents brought me on Aliyah as a child. The is a photo of the altar on Har Eival and is a reminder of our connection to this land.



A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Be'it Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

והיה בעברכם את הירדן תקימו את האבנים האלה..בהר עיבל (כז:ד)

"And when you have passed over the Jordan, you shall erect these stones... on Mount Eival." (27:4)

The command to the Israelites was, upon their entering the Land, they were to erect stones on Mount Eival and write upon them the words from the Torah. They were to inscribe the curses that would be used as retribution if they failed to keep G-d's words.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888, Germany) asks if it was appropriate to inscribe words of Torah, even ones of curses, on a steep and barren mountain like Eival? It would be more in place to glorify G-d's Torah on a beautiful and fertile mountain like Mount Gerizim.

Mount Gerizim seems like a better location to etch in all the Torah's words in order to fulfill this command.

Rabbi Hirsch answers that the fulfillment of the Torah's commands and the ability to raise us closer to G-d can be attained even from the poorest dirt and soil on this Land. It is, therefore, also a mountain like Eival that is chosen to write down words of G-d, such that even a Mount Eival can provide a platform for the Torah and forming a closeness with G-d.

Shabbat Shalom

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



	KI TAVO			NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH		
	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA
Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	6:28	5:43	7:40	6:19	5:36	7:30
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	6:45	5:46	7:42	6:37	5:38	7:33
Beit Shemesh / RBS	6:46	5:44	7:41	6:37	5:37	7:31
Alon Shvut	6:43	5:44	7:40	6:35	5:36	7:31
Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	6:45	5:45	7:42	6:36	5:38	7:32
Modiin / Chashmonaim	6:44	5:44	7:41	6:35	5:37	7:31
Netanya	6:45	5:45	7:42	6:36	5:38	7:32
Be'er Sheva	6:44	5:45	7:41	6:36	5:37	7:32
Rehovot	6:45	5:45	7:42	6:36	5:38	7:32
Petach Tikva	6:28	5:45	7:41	6:19	5:37	7:32
Ginot Shomron	6:44	5:44	7:41	6:35	5:37	7:31
Haifa / Zichron	6:35	5:45	7:42	6:26	5:37	7:32
Gush Shiloh	6:43	5:43	7:40	6:34	5:36	7:30
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	6:45	5:45	7:42	6:36	5:38	7:33
Givat Zeev	6:47	5:44	7:40	6:38	5:36	7:31
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	6:43	5:44	7:40	6:35	5:36	7:31
Ashkelon	6:46	5:46	7:42	6:37	5:39	7:33
Yad Binyamin	6:45	5:45	7:41	6:36	5:38	7:32
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	6:38	5:43	7:40	6:29	5:35	7:31
Golan	6:42	5:43	7:39	6:33	5:35	7:30
Nahariya/Maalot	6:44	5:45	7:42	6:35	5:37	7:32
Afula	6:44	5:44	7:41	6:34	5:36	7:31
Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 8:19PM • Next Week - 8:11PM						

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

Daf Yomi this Shabbat: Kidushin 20



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JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat
August 30 - Sept 9 / 13 - 23 Elul

Earliest Tallit and Tefilin	5:21 - 5:28
Sunrise	6:13 - 6:19
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:26 - 9:27
Magen Avraham	8:48 - 8:50
Sof Zman Tefila	10:30
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:39 - 12:36
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:11 - 1:07
Plag Mincha	5:45 - 5:34
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:10 - 6:58



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

In the Berman household we uphold a custom at the start of every summer requiring simple sheets of paper and pencils. Sitting individually with each of our children, my wife and I ask them to put together two lists - one which details what they plan to do every day during summer break, and the other detailing what they want to accomplish before the school year begins.

On the first list my kids typically jot down daily activities like davening, learning for a set period of time, catching up with friends, barbecuing, hiking, among other ideas. The other list tends to be more creative, including activities such as painting a new area in the house, finishing projects they started during the year, teaching themselves a new skill, and so on.

My wife and I started this tradition in recognition of how important it is for our kids to feel purposeful and accomplished - especially in the summer - when too many children

enter the school year wondering how summer vacation flew by without much to show for it. Of course, relaxation, playing with friends at camp, and enjoying downtime is important, but nothing builds self-esteem

quite like a sense of accomplishment.

It is with this mindset that I marvel at an amazing effort that has been led by teens over this summer in our OU Israel Youth Center in Kiryat Gat. It is a project that goes far beyond utilizing free time for something purposeful, and has come to symbolize *ahavat Yisrael*, *hachnasat orchim* and *kibbutz galuyot*.

Torah Tidbits readers who have had the *zechut* to make *aliyah* know the difficulties involved in leaving a world of familiarity and comfort to build a

home in *Eretz Yisrael*. However, the fact that schools across the country teach children above the age of fourth grade English, eases the experience for many Anglo *olim*. On the other hand, *olim* from Ethiopia, Spain, Russia and even France may have a more difficult time adjusting to the



language barrier as it is not as commonly taught or easily understood.

The language barrier between Ethiopian Jews and Israelis has kept many communities insulated, preserving their customs and culture over the years. As a result, many Israelis have yet to experience the richness and beauty of Ethiopian culture. Following a recent project led by teenagers this summer, all of that is about to change.

There is an established Ethiopian community in Kiryat Gat and many of its teens participate in and are members of our OU Israel Youth Center there. Following the conclusion of the school year, our advisors and teens in the city took upon themselves the building of Beit Gojo.

The newly established Beit Gojo offers an opportunity for visitors to learn about the Ethiopian community, led by a guide, with four activity stations:

1. Build Gojo huts in mud as they once did in Ethiopia
2. Participate in experiential trivia and learn about the journey of Ethiopian Jews to Israel
3. Prepare pita bread from scratch - from grinding the wheat and forming the dough, to baking and eating fresh bread
4. Participate in the traditional Bunna

Maflat coffee ritual and enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee

Groups of teens and families have visited Beit Gojo over recent weeks and the feedback we have received since the start of the project has been overwhelmingly positive. What is perhaps most meaningful is that Beit Gojo is an ongoing building project in which

visitors can take an active role in *kibbutz galuyot* and help build more huts for the campus. I expect Kiryat Gat's Beit Gojo will be the first of many throughout the country.

As the school year begins I can only begin to imagine how proud our Kiryat Gat teens are with what they accomplished over their summer break. Not only did they apply themselves to a project and brought their vision to life, but they created a meaningful experience for others to partake in, while bridging gaps between cultures.

I wish a tremendous *yasher koach* to these teens and encourage Torah Tidbits readers to visit Beit Gojo and learn about Ethiopian

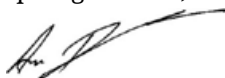
Jewry in a family-friendly (and delicious!) setting. You can find videos of the Beit Gojo experience on OU Israel's Facebook page. To learn more contact Guy Ephraim 054-3115982 or email: beitgojo@gmail.com.

As we begin preparing for the *yamim noraim*, I encourage you to save the date(s)



for Torah Yerushalayim and Torah Modiin. After B"H receiving so much positive feedback about how this event transformed and uplifted people's *yamim noraim* and provided the opportunity to immerse themselves in Torah and inspiration, we are running this program in two locations. Our aim is to enable people in those cities and surrounding communities to become inspired as part of our efforts to help *Anlo olim* throughout Israel thrive spiritually and socially. Please refer to our Torah Tidbits ad for more information.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org



מזל טוב

To the recently married couple

Yael Libson & Yona Seiferas

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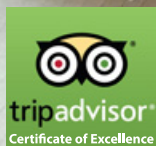
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L'maan lo niga larik. “Let us not toil in vain.” The deepest wish of each of us is that we achieve what we set out to accomplish, and therein lies our greatest satisfaction. Rav Yitzchak Hutner noted that this is a quality that was built into us from our very inception. Whereas creation generally is described in a single phase, “G-d said, ‘let there be light,’ and there was light,” when it came to the creation of man G-d began with a planning phase: “Let us make man in our image....” Explained Rav Hutner (Pachad Yitzchak, Shavuot 25:18-19):

“It appears that the path of man’s creation is suited to his ongoing existence. The uniqueness of man lies in his capacity for conscious and thoughtful choice, in which behaviors and actions are a

product of premeditated decisions (shilton hada’at). It is therefore fitting that within the very process of his creation the value of thoughtful planning is apparent, with two phases: first the decision to make man and then his actual creation. This is why when a person achieves a goal that they had planned and envisioned, they experience deep satisfaction. The perfect match between the plan and its actualization brings to the person the most uplifting and inherent satisfaction, irrespective of the specific goal.”

This reality is underscored in the negative by our Parsha’s sobering description (Devarim 28:29-33) of the terrible difficulties included in its words of warning (*tochacha*):

“You will not carry your pathway to a successful conclusion ... You will betroth a woman and another man will be her husband, you will build a home and you will not live in it, you will plant a vineyard and will not enjoy its first vintage. Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes and you will not eat from it ... The fruit of your soil and that of your toil will be consumed by a people that you do not know, and you will only be cheated and crushed all the time.”

There is nothing more frustrating and painful than a failed mission, and there is nothing more satisfying than achieving our goals.

**We will mark the 7th yearzeit of our
dear husband, father, grandfather
and great-grandfather,**

Rabbi Joel Litke z”l

**on Thursday afternoon
September 7 - כ"א אלול**

**We will meet at the main parking lot
of Har Hamenuchot at 5:45pm**

Litke, Sorotzkin and Gruner Families

Rosh Hashana is the anniversary of the day Hashem, said, *naaseh adam*, “let us make man,” planning and achieving our creation. It is the day when we follow G-d’s model by planning and build our own future and redesigning ourselves. Indeed, the Talmud (Yerushalmi Rosh Hashana 4:8) derives from the biblical word *va’asitem* (Bamidbar 29:2) that is used uniquely regarding the Rosh Hashana offerings, that this is the day when we recreate ourselves. Whereas the *teshuva* of Yom Kippur has us look back on past failures, on Rosh Hashana each of us is empowered to look to the future, to say to ourselves *na’aseh adam*, “let us make man,” planning and imagining who we want to be and what we wish to accomplish. That is the formula for our ultimate satisfaction, the fulfillment of our unique human qualities and capacities.

“Let us not toil in vain.” ■

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Each week we will share one of OU Israel's impactful programs helping English speaking olim with their klita and impacting Israeli society.



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ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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PARSHAT KI TAVO

The parsha begins the conclusion of our Torah. The book of Devarim consists of Moshe's long speech at the end of his life. His speech is crafted beautifully, a magnum opus of past, present and future. He began with a review of our history, including successes and failures and their lessons for the impending settling of the Land. He then outlined what a Jewish society shall look like; 170 mitzvot including ethical monotheism in all its color, nation building of judiciary, legislature and executive and the high ethical calling in the life of the individuals. Parshat Ki Tavo has but 6 mitzvot. It is the beginning of the conclusion of Moshe's charge to the people. It is followed by 4 very short parshiot, which combined would be a long parsha. Meaning, we are barely a parsha length from the end of the Torah following Ki Tavo. This is the end of our Torah. And this section deals not with the present task at hand, the impending settling of the Land. It gazes into the future; the distant future, the exile that follows the successful settlement of the Land.



1ST ALIYA (DEVARIM 26:1-11)

When settled in the Land,

bring your first fruits as an offering. When offered, declare the following: My forefathers descended to Egypt, were enslaved, called out and You redeemed them with a strong arm, bringing them to this Land of milk and honey. And I am acknowledging that I have benefitted from all that, rejoicing in all the good I have been given.

This mitzvah of Bikkurim, of first fruits, is a rich one. But besides its own beauty, lies its significance in the narrative of Devarim. In Bikkurim, the successful farmer gives a full-throated expression of how fortunate he is to be where he is. He stands on the shoulders of our history. Egypt, redemption, the Land and now little me, enjoying a bounty in the Land. That is a beautiful mitzvah of gratitude and appreciation. But it is also foreshadowing. Know, my people, Moshe is saying, know that this is the way you should live. Appreciative, aware, a sense of history, placing G-d at the core of your success. And rejoicing, having simcha. This is a foreshadow to the horrible curses Moshe will outline should this ideal not be realized. Here is the way it should be. And could be.



2ND ALIYA (26:12 - 15)

In the 3rd year, declare that all tithes have been given: I have given the holy tithes as well as those to the Levi and the needy. I have done all that I have been commanded to do. Gaze down from Your holy place in the heavens and bless us in this Land flowing with

Mazal Tov to the Menache, Wolgel, Coven,
Sofer and Trejger Families on the Wedding of



Yosef Dovid and Yaffa Oriah



milk and honey.

The division of the parshiot of the Torah wanted these 2 mitzvot to be included in Ki Tavo and not as the concluding list of mitzvot in Ki Teitzei. Because Moshe is no longer concerned with what Jewish life will look like in the Land. He is rather getting ready to relate the Curses. He has described the essentials of Jewish society that is about to be created. Now he is peering into the future. When we are no longer in the Land. It might be downright demoralizing to hear your leader speaking about your impending failure. So, Moshe must give encouragement. Here are some mitzvot that you will do as a farmer. The people think: oh, we are going to be successful farmers, bringing first fruits and giving tithes. An image of success. That is encouraging.



3RD ALIYA (26:16 - 19)

Today G-d is commanding you to keep His laws with all your heart. You declare today that He will be your G-d and you will keep His laws. And He declares that you will be a treasured nation, to elevate you, to be a glorious and holy people.

A brief statement but a powerful one. We are both committed: we to Him, He to us. This is our noble calling. The entire Torah has been this story; we are His people, He is our G-d



4TH ALIYA (27:1 - 10)

Moshe with the elders commanded the people: upon entering the Land, establish a monument of stones with this entire Torah written upon it. Build an altar in front of it, offer offerings and rejoice before your G-d. Moshe, the Kohanim and the Leviim spoke: know

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that today you are G-d's people.

Monuments, stone, permanence. The Torah shall be permanent in the life in the Land. Note the people Moshe enlists here: first, the elders join him in commanding the people. Then, the Kohanim and the Leviim. The encouragement of the people comes from all levels of leadership.

And the word Hayom, today, occurs 3 times in just 4 verses in the previous aliya and 3 times in just 10 verses in this aliya. Rashi comments that the mitzvot should feel to us as if they were given to us today; fresh, exciting, relevant. But the other side of this reciprocal relationship should also be fresh daily; that we should feel daily, all the time, that G-d views us as a treasured nation. The mitzvot should be fresh; the majesty of our station should be fresh daily as well.



5TH ALIYA (27:11 - 28:6)

Moshe commanded the people: 6 tribes shall be on Har Gerizim, 6 on Har Eval. The Leviim shall be between the mountains, pronouncing the following, affirmed with Amen by the people. Cursed is the one who: makes idols in private, curses parents, alters the Land demarcations with his neighbor, deceives the blind, manipulates justice of the weak, commits incest, strikes another privately, takes a

bribe resulting in corporal punishment, or fails to keep the Torah. **The Blessings and Curses: If you keep the mitzvot**, you will be a glorious nation. You will be blessed with children, with produce, and flocks.

The dramatic presentation of who is cursed is conspicuous; all things done in private. With all the needs of communal leadership, the core of our religious life is our personal relationship with G-d. It is the things done in private that truly convey our allegiance. When no one is looking, He is. And this is foreshadowing of the upcoming blessings and curses. For we will never truly be in a position to assess the fullness of the righteousness or failing of our people, for who can see into the hearts of human beings.



6TH ALIYA (28:7 - 69)

You will be blessed with military success, with an abundance of G-d's treasury, and excelling over others. **But if you do not do the mitzvot**: you will be cursed. In offspring, produce, flocks, illness. Enemies will chase you. You will be carrion in the field. Illness, blindness, dementia, wandering without direction. You will not enjoy the fruits of your labor; they will be snatched from you. This will all drive you mad. You will be carried off to other nations, serving idols there. Your efforts there will not be successful. You will sink, other nations rise. You will be derided as one who abandoned G-d, refusing to serve Him in your success. All

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will disintegrate; your family, your social structure, those dear to you. Illnesses will decimate you. In lieu of being as the stars of the heavens, you will be miniscule. You will be thrown around the world, serving idols, finding no solace, fearful day and night. You will even end up back in Egypt, the place you were to never return. This is the covenant of the plains of Moav.

This aliya is the aliya of the curses; what will occur due to our abandonment of G-d and of mitzvot. And it is long; at 63 verses, one of the longest in the entire Torah. In this, Moshe moves well beyond the present. He has been preoccupied, understandably, with what is necessary to build the Jewish nation successfully. He has described what we can anticipate in life in the Land; its challenges, like idol worship, and its glory, its bounty. Now, he peers into the distant future. There will be a time of exile. I know, we haven't even entered the Land, but there will be a time when we will lose this Land. We will lack gratitude, lack allegiance and be exiled. Our experience in exile will be horrible; illness, failure, insecurity, total societal breakdown. And how does it all end? Uh, well, it doesn't. There is no happy ending. We are left hanging; wandering, suffering, decimated. Oh, but that is this parsha. In the most beautiful of parshiot of the Torah, Moshe returns to pick up the future next week, the parsha of Teshuva. But ending this description of the curses with no conclusion is powerfully poetic, leaving us with a feeling of terrible dread.



7TH ALIYA (29:1 - 8)

Moshe called the people and spoke: You saw all the wonders

of Egypt, but it has taken to this day to understand its meaning. He guided you, defeated nations, and gave you their lands. So keep this covenant, to live insightfully.

This deceiving short aliya has a surprising and profound brief statement. "It has taken until today to understand our history". We shall never allow ourselves to be facile, to be presumptuous, to feel we understand history and G-d's ways. It took those in the desert 40 years to fully appreciate their history, the dynamic of G-d in their history. Understanding His ways is no easy matter.

YESHAYAHU 60:1-22

This week's *haftorah* is the sixth of a series of seven "*Haftarot* of Consolation." In exhilarating terms the navi describes what will unfold during the Redemption. Beginning with the resurrection of the dead and the ingathering of the exiles, continuing with the joy and abundance the Jewish people will then experience. The navi also spotlights the gifts that will be brought to G-d from all of the nations of the world.

In the end, the Jewish nation will no longer experience the hatred of the other nations, be despised and derided. The day will come when there will no longer be violence nor mourning, Hashem will shine His eternal light on His beloved people. ■

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Pesukim are longer than average for the Torah, but short for Devarim.

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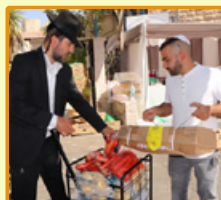
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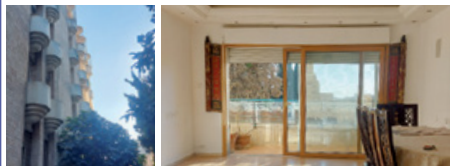
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the opportunity of having Tziporah in
his life, to learn of her caring, patience and
happiness, to overcome her challenges. May
Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world,
in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama
shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with
tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a
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Walls Have Ears

We all have our secret lives.

I don't mean to say that each of us has a sinister side, which we wickedly act out in some deep, dark, private world. What I do mean is that we all act differently when we are alone, or with a few close intimates, than we act when we are out in public, among others.

There is no one who is so behaviorally consistent that he is the same person in the privacy of his own home as he is in the workplace or marketplace.

Nor do I suggest that there is anything wrong with the fact that we each are two

persons, and perhaps even multiple persons, depending upon the social context in which we find ourselves.

It is problematic, however, when we act hypocritically, presenting a pious and altruistic face to the world, while acting cruelly and crudely in our own homes and with our families.

In this week's Torah portion, *Parshat Ki Tavo*, there appears a particularly piercing and perceptive verse: "Cursed be he who strikes his fellow in secret—and all the people shall say, Amen."

In no way does the Torah imply that he who strikes his fellow in public is to be blessed. Rather, the Torah recognizes the tendency humans have to reserve the worst side of themselves for their secret social settings, even when they behave meritoriously in their public social worlds. It is the façade, the contrast, between public demonstrations of righteousness and private acts of fiendishness that is cursed.

Sinning in secret is particularly offensive

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in the religious personality. He or she who believes in a God who is omniscient, and who yet sins in private, is guilty, not merely of hypocrisy, but of heresy. If God knows all, how can you delude yourself into thinking that your secret misdeeds can go undetected?

The *Shulchan Aruch*, the Jewish code of law, opens with a statement recognizing that a person's behavior, when he is alone at home, is very different from his behavior when he appears before a great king. And it urges the religious person to be aware that he is always in the presence of the great King of Kings, the all-knowing God.

But it is not only from a spiritual perspective that it is wrong to act demeaningly in private. There is a practical aspect as well to the importance of behaving properly even in secret. There always is the very real possibility that our secrets will be "leaked" and that things we were sure would never be known will become embarrassingly exposed.

I know of no place where this is conveyed more cogently than in these words of caution, to be found in *Ecclesiastes* (10:20):

Don't revile a king, even in your intimate thoughts. Don't revile a rich man, even in your bedchamber; For a bird of the air may carry the utterance, And a winged creature may report the word.

Indeed, as Rashi says (*Berachot* 8b), the walls have ears.

The passage in this week's Torah portion that condemns secret violence also gives quite a comprehensive catalog of other sins which tend to be performed behind

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closed doors. They include elder abuse, criminal business practices, deceiving blind persons, subverting the rights of the helpless, incest and bestiality, and the acceptance of bribery. Quite a list, and one that has certainly not lost its relevance over the centuries.

I am not so naïve as to think that we are required to act in an absolutely identical fashion in our "secret chambers" as we do out in the "real world." To a certain extent, it is necessary and right that we maintain a façade of sorts when we interact in public. We all have, and need, our masks and personas.

But many times, we go too far and indeed split our personalities between the Dr. Jekylls of our external visible behavior and the Mr. Hydes of our inner sancta. How well advised we would be to set as an objective for ourselves the words of the Daily Prayer Book:

"A person should always be God-fearing, privately and publicly, acknowledging the truth and speaking it in his heart." ■



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THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l
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May the learning of these Divrei Torah be לעילוי נשמת
HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Ariele zt"l

לעילוי נשמות

פנחס בן יעקב אשר וגולדה בת ישראל דוד איז ע"ה ועזריאל בן אריה לייב ומעניה בת יצחק שרטר ע"ה

We Are What We Remember

One reason religion has survived in the modern world despite four centuries of secularisation is that it answers the three questions every reflective human being will ask at some time in their life: Who am I? Why am I here? How then shall I live?

These cannot be answered by the four great institutions of the modern West: science, technology, the market economy, and the liberal democratic state. Science tells us how, but not why. Technology gives us power, but cannot tell us how to use that power. The market gives us choices, but does not tell us which choices to make. The liberal democratic state - as a matter of principle - holds back from endorsing any particular way of life. The result is that contemporary culture sets before us an almost infinite range of possibilities, but does not tell us who we are, why we are here, and how we should live.

Yet these are fundamental questions.

Moses' first question to God, in their first encounter at the Burning Bush was "Who am I?" (Ex. 3:11). The plain sense of the verse is that it was a rhetorical question: Who am I to undertake the extraordinary task of leading an entire people to freedom? But beneath the plain sense was a genuine question of identity. Moses had been brought up by an Egyptian princess, the daughter of Pharaoh. When he rescued Jethro's daughters from the local Midianite shepherds, they went back and told their father, "An Egyptian man delivered us." Moses looked and spoke like an Egyptian.

He then married Zipporah, one of Jethro's daughters, and spent decades as a Midianite shepherd. The chronology is not entirely clear but since he was a relatively young man when he went to Midian and was eighty years old when he started leading the Israelites, he spent most of his adult life with his Midianite father-in-law, tending his sheep. So when he asked God, "Who am I?" beneath the surface there was a real question. Am I an Egyptian, a Midianite, or a Jew?

By upbringing he was an Egyptian, by experience he was a Midianite. Yet what proved decisive was his ancestry. He was

a descendant of Abraham, the child of Amram and Yocheved. When he asked God his second question, “Who are you?” God first told him, “I will be what I will be” (Ex. 3:14). But then He gave him a second answer:

Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, *the God of your fathers - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob* - has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, the name you shall call Me from generation to generation. (Ex. 3:15)

Here too there is a double sense. On the surface God was telling Moses what to tell the Israelites when they asked, “Who sent you to us?” But at a deeper level the Torah is telling us about the nature of identity. The answer to the question, “Who am I?” is not simply a matter of where I was born, where I spent my childhood or my adult life, or of which country I am a citizen. Nor is it answered in terms of what I do for a living, or what are my interests and passions. These things are about *where* I am and *what* I am but not *who* I am.

God’s answer – I am the God of your fathers – suggests some fundamental propositions. First, identity runs through genealogy. It is a matter of who my parents were, who their parents were and so on. This is not always true. There are adopted children. There are children who make a conscious break from their parents. But for most of us, identity lies in uncovering the story of our ancestors, which, in the case of Jews, given the unparalleled dislocations of Jewish life, is almost always a tale of journeys, courage, suffering or escapes from suffering, and sheer endurance.

Second, the genealogy itself tells a story.

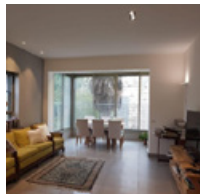


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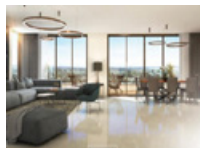
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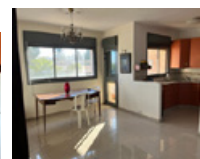
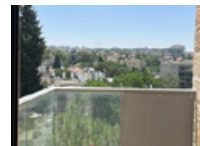
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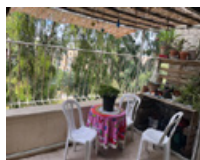


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Immediately after telling Moses to tell the people he had been sent by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God continued:

Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, “The Lord, the God of your fathers - the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. *And I have promised to bring you up* out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites - a land flowing with milk and honey.” (Ex. 3:16-17)

It was not simply that God was the God of their ancestors. He was also the God who made certain promises: that He would bring them from slavery to freedom, from exile to the Promised Land. The Israelites were part of a narrative extended over time. They were part of an unfinished story, and God was about to write the next chapter.

What is more, when God told Moses that He was the God of the Israelites’ ancestors, He added, “This is My eternal name, this is how I am to be recalled [*zichri*] from generation to generation.” God was here saying that He is *beyond* time – “This is My eternal name” – but when it comes to human understanding, He lives *within* time, “from generation to generation.” The way He does this is through the handing on of memory: “This is how I am to be recalled.” Identity is not just a matter of who my parents were. It is also a matter of *what they remembered and handed on to me*. Personal identity is shaped by individual memory. Group identity is formed by

collective memory.¹

All of this is by way of prelude to a remarkable law in today’s *parsha*. *It tells us that first-fruits were to be taken to “the place God chooses,” i.e., Jerusalem. They were to be handed to the priest, and each was to make the following declaration:*

“My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great, powerful and populous nation. The Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labour. Then we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our suffering, our harsh labour and our distress. The Lord then brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with great fearsomeness and with signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey. I am now bringing the first-fruits of the soil that You, Lord, have given me.” (Deut. 26:5-10)

We know this passage because, at least since Second Temple times it has been a central part of the Haggadah, the story we tell at the Seder table. But note that it was originally to be said on bringing first-fruits, which was not on Pesach. Usually it was done on Shavuot.

What makes this law remarkable is this: We would expect, when celebrating the soil and its produce, to speak of the God of nature. *But this text is not about nature.*

1. The classic works on group memory and identity are Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, University of Chicago Press, 1992, and Jacques le Goff, *History and Memory*, Columbia University Press, 1992.

It is about history. It is about a distant ancestor, a “wandering Aramean”, It is the story of our ancestors. It is a narrative explaining why I am here, and why the people to whom I belong is what it is and where it is. There was nothing remotely like this in the ancient world, and there is nothing quite like it today. As Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi said in his classic book *Zakhor*,² *Jews were the first people to see God in history, the first to see an overarching meaning in history, and the first to make memory a religious duty.*

That is why Jewish identity has proven to be the most tenacious the world has ever known: the only identity ever sustained by a minority dispersed throughout the world for two thousand years, one that eventually led Jews back to the land and state of Israel, turning Hebrew, the language of the Bible, into a living speech again after a lapse of many centuries in which it was used only for poetry and prayer. We are what we remember, and the first-fruits declaration was a way of ensuring that Jews would never forget.

In the past few years, a spate of books has appeared in the United States asking whether the American story is still being told, still being taught to children, still framing a story that speaks to all its citizens, reminding successive generations of the battles that had to be fought for there to be a “new birth of freedom”, and the virtues needed for liberty to be

2. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*. University of Washington Press, 1982. See also Lionel Kochan, *The Jew and His History*, London, Macmillan, 1977.

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sustained.³ The sense of crisis in each of these works is palpable, and though the authors come from very different positions in the political spectrum, their thesis is roughly the same: If you forget the story, you will lose your identity. There is such a thing as a national equivalent of Alzheimer's. Who we are depends on what we remember, and in the case of the contemporary West, a failure of collective memory poses a real and present danger to the future of liberty.

Jews have told the story of who we are for longer and more devotedly than any other people on the face of the earth. That is what makes Jewish identity so rich and resonant. In an age in which computer and smartphone memories have grown so fast, from kilobytes to megabytes to gigabytes, while human memories have become so foreshortened, there is an important Jewish message to humanity as a whole. You can't delegate memory to machines. You have to renew it regularly and teach it to the next generation. Winston Churchill said: "The longer you can look back, the further you can see forward."⁴ Or to put it slightly differently: Those who tell the story of their past have already begun to build their children's future.

Around the Shabbat Table:

Why is story-telling important?

3. Among the most important of these are Charles Murray, *Coming Apart*, Crown, 2013; Robert Putnam, *Our Kids*, Simon and Shuster, 2015; Os Guinness, *A Free People's Suicide*, IVP, 2012; Eric Metaxas, *If You Can Keep It*, Viking, 2016; and Yuval Levin, *The Fractured Republic*, Basic Books, 2016.

4. Chris Wrigley, *Winston Churchill: a biographical companion*, Santa Barbara, 2002, xxiv.

How do you know the Jewish story? Who told it to you?

In which ways does the Torah seek to ensure that the Jewish story is never forgotten? ■

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.



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This haftarah, the 60th perek of Sefer Yishayahu, is one of complete *nechama*, a chapter of total comfort and consolation, including the following promises:

1. Israel will bask in Hashem's divine light.
2. Those of the nation who remained in the Diaspora will return
3. Outsiders will also be drawn to the divine light and will come.
4. All those who arrive will praise Hashem and bring their wealth with them.
5. Justice and Integrity will rule in the land.
6. The future generations will be filled with the righteous in whom G-d will take pride.

Interestingly, we find the first visible, concrete steps of the geulah to be the return of the nation Israel, her "sons and daughters from afar", in such an assemblage, that, upon witnessing it, you will have two reactions: "אז תירא ונהרת", first, you will be "astonished" and even "startled" and then "ויפחד ורחב לבבך", your hearts will be "frightened and broadened". And, although different parshanim suggest various definitions to the term "pachad" (because, after all, it seems rather counter-intuitive to have one's heart broadened yet frightened), I prefer to understand the word in its most obvious meaning of frightened. And I do so, perhaps because,

as opposed to those outstanding scholars, I have the benefit of hindsight.

When I read these inspiring words of Yishayahu, I cannot regard them as a prophecy that would yet be realized. When I read of a flood of immigrants that would cause "astonishment" and "fright" or of an unimaginable influx of Jews from the Diaspora that would return to the Land of Israel....I read HISTORY!!! I imagine the story of the early chalutzim who came from Russia and Eastern Europe to farm the Land and bring it back to life; I remember the experiences of those who came in the "second aliya" (1904-1914) and joined the agricultural "revolution" and that also included immigrants from Yemen and adults with families who settled in-and helped create- the urban areas. And, when hearing this haftarah, should I not think of the "illegal" arrivals to the shores of "Palestine" who sacrificed everything to kiss the holy ground of a place they had only dreamed of and could only yearn for?

Did this not "startle" the world?

Did it not "worry" the British and "frighten" the Arabs?

And did it not also "frighten" the early leaders of the nascent State of Israel who wondered how a population of 600,000, a not-yet developed country struggling for economic survival...how could they *ever* manage to absorb an influx of immigrants

that numbered twice the amount of residents who lived the State? Yes, ופחד ורחב, “לכבך”, their hearts were both “frightened and broadened”, frightened by the task at hand yet broadened with the love of their people and with the generosity of heart to successfully meet the (seemingly) impossible challenge!

This is why I strongly believe that Yishayahu hoped to let us know that the hearts could be both frightened as well as broadened.

I also see the navi's description of Israel's massive return to her homeland as a clear reference to our recent history. Allow me to explain: Throughout the Tanach's depiction of Israel's return we usually find G-d “bringing” us back to our land, and “gathering” us from the four corners of the earth. But in our haftarah, Yishayahu does not speak of Hashem BRINGING the nation back but of a nation being DRAWN back by the light that would shine upon them. In other words, this first step of the redemption will not be effected by a divine decision to reverse His laws of nature but by a people's desire to reverse their common history!

Although, I admit, these are my thoughts upon studying this haftarah reading, I hope that some of you might share the same thoughts and, if enough of us do, perhaps we can find a common ground upon which we can all build a future together. ■

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Recognizing Our Blessings

In Parshat Ki Tavo the Torah lists several blessings and curses that will befall upon the Jewish nation depending on whether or not the nation adheres to the Torah and abides by the mitzvot. As an introduction to the list of brachot the Torah states:

וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהַשִּׁיגָךְ... (דברים כח:א)

The simple translation of the pasuk is: *“And all these blessings will come upon you and **reach you** (והשיגך) .”* It would have made more sense to have the pasuk portrayed in a different order. First והשיגך – כל הברכות – the blessings should reach you and then- they will come upon you ובאו אליך . How are we to understand the meaning of the word והשיגך ?

APPRECIATING OUR BLESSINGS

The Netziv derives a valuable lesson from his interpretation of the word והשיגך . Typically, people seek blessings elsewhere and engage in performing “*segulot*”. We often notice what others have and what we lack and pray that we be blessed with the same good fortune. The Netziv suggests that we should not judge our status based on the achievements or assets of others. As the statement goes *“the grass is always greener on the other side.”* Rather, we

ought to recognize the blessings that were bestowed upon us. It is with respect to those blessings that we need to **reach out and recognize**. והשיגך refers to the blessings that God granted to us- that we need to appreciate.

TREASURES ARE IN OUR HOME

Rav Simcha Bunim told a story, that people who visited Krakow likely heard. There was a man named Rav Issac who lived in Krakow. He was a poor individual. He had a recurring dream that a treasure was buried under a bridge in Prague. After several nights of contemplating how to react to this recurring dream, Rav Issac decided to go to the bridge in Prague and dig for the treasure. When he arrived at the location of the bridge in Prague, there were officers guarding the bridge around the clock. He tried approaching the bridge at all hours of the day and night but was unable to dig under the bridge due to the presence of the guards. One day an officer approached Rav Issac and inquired as to why he visited the bridge on a daily basis. Rav Issac disclosed to the officer that he had a dream that a treasure was buried under the bridge. The officer laughed and informed Rav Issac that he too had a similar recurring dream, that a Jewish man by the name of Rav Issac had a treasure buried under the oven in his home in Krakow. Do you know how many Jews in Prague have the name Issac? It would

be silly to take such a dream seriously. What am I to do, dig under the ovens of all Issac's in Krakow?

Upon hearing this Rav Issac packed his bags and returned home to Prague. Upon arriving in his home he began digging under his oven and uncovered a valuable treasure. Part of the funds he dedicated to building a shul, which still

stands in Prague today and is called the Issac Shul. This highlights how often the most valuable treasures we have are right under our nose in our own home! We just need to recognize and appreciate our blessings – והשגך.

May we be blessed in the coming year and truly appreciate all the blessings that we receive. ■

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10:15AM Coffee and Refreshments

10:30AM Sefer Yonah with **Mrs. Leah Feinberg**

11:20AM A Bite of Tefilla - Sandwiches and Yamim Noraim Davening Insights with
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THURSDAY SEPT. 7, 9:15AM-1:00PM



9:15AM Words of Introduction
Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski

9:25AM Iyov, Avraham and the
Satan: The Nature of Nisayon
Mrs. Shani Taragin

10:15AM Who is the Satan in
Sefer Iyov and elsewhere
in Tanach?

Mrs. Pearl Borow

11:00AM Brunch

11:30AM איוב או איוב?
Mrs. Yael Dworkin

12:15PM The Connection
between Iyov and Rosh Hashana
Dr. Chana Tannenbaum

- ◆ 40NIS
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INSPIRATIONAL TORAH LEARNING AT OU ISRAEL

SUN, SEPT 3

9:15 AM

Journey Through the Siddur
Rabbi David Walk
(Resumes Sept 10)

10:20 AM

Mishnah with Rambam's
commentary
Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler

11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:
**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

***L'AYLA CLASSES
ARE FOR WOMEN ONLY**

MON, SEPT 4

9:15 AM

Sefer Kohelet (L'Ayla)
Rebbetzin Pearl Borow

10:30 AM

The Thought of Rav Kook
on Eretz Yisrael: A study of
the sefer Eretz Chefetz
Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

11:45 AM

Novel Parsha Nuances
Rabbi Avi Herzog

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver
Program **Rabbi Elyada
Goldwicht** (The Bais)

SPECIAL EVENTS

7:00PM

Mother/Daughter
Rosh HaShana Limud
and Craft @ JClay
Studio (L'Ayla)

8:00PM

Next Gen Elul
Midrasha (Women
20's-40's)

TUE, SEPT 5

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Shira Smiles
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Yosef Goldin

9:30AM

Minchat Chinuch
Rabbi Breitowitz

12:15PM

Jewish History:
Struggle for Survival
Dr. Deborah Polster

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

7:30PM

(The Bais) Safrus (Men)
Rabbi Tzvi Mauner

8:00PM

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi Machlis**

SPECIAL EVENTS

9:15AM-1:00PM

L'Ayla Morning
11:00AM

The Bais- Modiin Kollel-
Rabbi Sam Shor

Schedule Subject to change, please check website for updates
ouisrael.org/events/

WED, SEPT 6

9:00 AM

Medina and Halacha

Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

10:15 AM

Contemporary Halachic
Issues

Rabbi Anthony Manning

11:30 AM

Ani Maamin-But Do You
Know if it's Really True?

**Rabbi Yitzchak
Feigenbaum**

12:30 PM

Lunch and Learn

Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:00 PM

Halachic Controversies

Rabbi Aschi Dick (The Bais)

SPECIAL EVENT

8:00PM

Next Gen Elul
Midrasha- Rosh
HaShana Limud and
Crafts @ JClay Studio-
(Women 20's-40's)

THURS, SEPT 7

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-Mesechta –
Bava Basra

Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

SPECIAL EVENT

9:15AM-1:00PM

Sefer Iyov Yom Iyun
for Women



VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

(Zoom Only Classes):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88363420460>

Password: ouisrael

Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon

Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

Rebbetzin Shatz

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

Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua

Wed. 8:30PM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>

Password 18

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Shabbat Shuva, Parshat Haazinu

8 Tishrei 5784, September 23rd

Yeshurun Central Synagogue, 44 King George Street

Shacharit 8.15am followed by a light Kiddush. Drasha 11.00am

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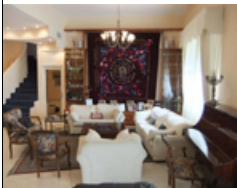


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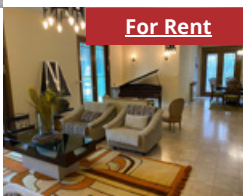


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8:00pm at the OU Israel Center**

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The Pomegranate #1

We customarily eat pomegranate seeds on Rosh Hashana, and say: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוקיננו ואלוקי אבותינו שנהיה מלאים מצוות כרימון. "May it be G-d's will that we be full of good deeds like a pomegranate." Some even use the pomegranate to say *she-hechyanu* on the second night.

Let's take a look at the pomegranate.

The pomegranate tree (*Punica granatum*) ranges from three to seven meters high. It blooms at the beginning of the summer, and its fruits ripen in the fall (September – January). Indeed, one of the reasons that the pomegranate is customarily used for *shehechyanu* is that its first fruits generally ripen around Rosh Hashana. The fruit's Latin name is *Pomum granatum*, meaning "seedy apple," from where the word "pomegranate" is derived. Its circumference can reach 10 cm. Hand grenades, *rimonim* in Hebrew, are named after the fruit since their explosion is

reminiscent of the burst of its many seeds.

At the edge of its red (or yellow) husk, is its calyx or crown (*netz*), which is the remnant of the blossom. In fact, the blossoming stage is called *henetz* (*Shir HaShirim* 7:13).



The pomegranate is unique inasmuch as it contains hundreds of edible seeds.

The origin of the pomegranate seems to be from the south Caspian Sea (Iran), and it was domesticated and imported to the Mediterranean some 5,000 years ago (the time of the book of *Bereishit*).

Pomegranate remains were discovered in excavations in Gezer (dated to 3,000 BCE), Jericho, Arad, and other areas.

The pomegranate has a long shelf life (more than a month without refrigeration), which makes it relatively easy to transport. Its rich taste and many medicinal qualities made it a widespread and sought-after fruit in antiquity. Today, the tree is also planted for ornamental purposes.

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Pomegranates as an index in Halacha

A broken vessel no longer is subject to the laws of ritual purity—*tuma* and *tahara*. The index for the size of a perforation that voids the vessel is the circumference of a pomegranate (Mishnah *Keilim* 17:1; *Shabbat* 95b). Perhaps since this was the largest fruit prevalent in the times of the Mishnah and Talmud. In practice, we are stringent that the size is less than a square *tefach* (Shulchan Aruch HaRav, *Dinei Tikunei HaMikveh*).

More next week B"H. ■

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Entering & Exiting

Although *parashat Ki Tavo* is known for the terrible curses enumerated therein, it also lists many beautiful *brachot* that are promised to those who follow Hashem's commandments. "*Baruch ata be'voecha u'Baruch ata be'tzeitecha* – Blessed will you be when you come and blessed will you be when you go." (*Devarim* 28:6) Obviously, we must explore what this means. What is the "coming" and "going" alluding to here? Further, shouldn't the order be reversed, don't we first leave and then come back?

The *Yalkut Shimoni* explains that one should leave this world as one who has come into this world, i.e., without sin. This refers to a *tzadik*, whose coming into this world is regarded as a blessing, in contrast to those about whom the Gemara states that it would have been better had they not been created. This blessing serves as a reminder to us right before Rosh Hashanah, a clarion call to work on ensuring that our existence is one that brings blessing to the world through the observance of mitzvot and Torah living.

Another interpretation offered by the *Chida* is that one whose child follows in

the path of Torah modeled by the parent continues the parent's legacy, thus, it is as if the parent never dies even after he physically passes from this world. One who is alive is referred to as a "*holech*," someone who is constantly moving forward, accumulating more Torah and mitzvot. One who leaves this world is called an "*omed*," one who stands still, unable to accrue more merit. However, one who teaches his child Torah has a share in the child's achievements and continues to gain merit from the Torah and mitzvot the child observes. Hence, we can understand this blessing to mean just as one who comes into this world gains blessing for performing mitzvot, one who leaves this world with children who follow the Torah way, is continually blessed. This directs us to examine our priorities, to focus and stay aligned with what is ultimately valuable in this world.

A third interpretation is found in *Midrash Devarim Rabbah*. One will be blessed in their "coming and going," referring to their business ventures. This is like what Dovid Hamelech prays, "*Hashem yishmor tzeitecha u'voecha mei'ata ve'ad olam* - Hashem will guard your departure and your arrival from now until forever." Yet the order here is reversed, first "your departure" and then "your arrival." The Tosher Rebbe *ztz'l*, in *Avodat Avodah* explains that

our sustenance all comes from Hashem. Working for a living is a punishment effected from the sin of *Adam Harishon*. It is a way to purify ourselves from the consequences of the sin. Simultaneously, however, one must realize that it is not our efforts that bring in the money, everything is from Hashem. Thus, the Midrash teaches that when we “come in” from our business dealings, the money had already been decided when we left to do our business! Our “coming and going” is merely technical with no bearing on the outcome. When we grasp this, we will realize that it is more prudent to spend time on spiritual values instead of focusing on schemes to further our material gains. Let us take this message to heart as we prepare for the new year more spiritually attuned and aware. ■

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RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Executive Director, Camp HASC

Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

Speak to Hashem

Rav Yitzchak Zilber, zt'l, legendary champion of Russian Jewry, was a humble *talmid chacham* and teacher whose incredible self sacrifice and dedication inspired and strengthened generations of Jews. Having been imprisoned in gulags of the former Soviet Union, he escaped to Tashkent and later arrived in Eretz Yisrael, where he continued his efforts in teaching Torah around the clock. Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt'l, referred to him as “one of the *Lamed Vav Tzadikim*”, one of the hidden righteous people whose presence supports the entire world. Thousands of Russian *olim* to the Holy Land sought his counsel and Torah instruction.

One of Rav Zilber's early students shared an anecdote and memory of the first time he went to the *Kotel haMaaravi* to daven. He felt incredibly privileged to walk among a group of new immigrants accompanied by their *rav*, after years of yearning to make *aliyah* and live in Eretz Yisrael; he had finally made it!

When they first saw the Holy Wall, they shed a tear of awe, and then, kissing the holy stones, they felt the sweetness of homecoming. When a *Mincha minyan*

commenced, they happily joined. But within a few seconds, instead of feeling inspired and connected, the student began to feel unsettled and frustrated, and tense in his stomach. “This is my first time here,” he whispered to his Rav during the chazan's repetition. “And everyone around me is davening beautifully, with all their hearts, but I have no idea how to join them! Everything is moving so fast and I can barely even read Hebrew!”

Rav Yitzchok placed his arm around his student's shoulder, and spoke into his ear: “I hear, I hear! There isn't much I can do for you other than this....” The rav turned his body around to face the Kotel, and continued: “Whatever is in your heart — joy, pain, confusion, heart-brokenness, feelings of distance — tell Him about it! Speak to Hashem! Tell the *Ribbono Shel Olam* your story, in your own words, at your own pace.”

Our *sedra* contains the *pesukim* recited when bringing *bikurim*, first fruits, to the Beis haMikdash. One is to stand before Hashem in gratitude and tell Him the story of our journey that brought one to this moment. One describes the beginning of our people, our exile and redemption from Mitzrayim; one recounts the long and difficult road to “the Land flowing with milk and honey”, and to Yerushalayim. This recital is a ‘*vidui*’ of sorts, a

‘confession’ and acknowledgement of the past, and symbolically presenting to Hashem everything in one’s mind and heart. Through reflecting on the story, one is to appreciate the process, including the challenges, complaints and hardships along the way. This moving section of our *parshah* is included as part of the Hagga-dah liturgy, forming an essential element of Seder Night: “My father was a fugitive Aramean....”

Finally, one acknowledges the ‘fruits’ of his labor, effort and faith, and recognizes that everything really comes from Hashem:

וְשִׂמְחָתְךָ בְּכָל־הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּ לָךְ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ
וּלְבֵיתְךָ

“You shall rejoice with all the good *that Hashem has given you* and your household”

(26:11).

Honoring the travails of exile, struggle and process as part of our redemption story enhances the sweetness of our deliverance and the abundance we have been given. And presenting to Hashem our personal spiritual narrative in such a beautiful way cultivates a deeper sense of connection and closeness to the *Ribbono shel Olam*. Even our exiles and challenges were for the good; we finally made it!

Later on, our *sedra* lists the numerous blessings promised as a reward for following Hashem’s will and living a life of Torah. Among them:

בְּרוּךְ טַנָּאךְ וּמִשְׁאָרְךָ

Blessed will be your *tana*, ‘basket’, and your kneading bowl (28:5)

While visiting the holy *tzion* of Reb

Shayaleh, zy’a, in Kerestir, Hungary, my wife and I had a wonderful conversation over coffee and *kokosh* cake with Rav Buxbaum, the generous inn-keeper and *mashgiach*. During this *shmues*, he shared the following teaching in the name of the *tzadik* Rebbe Mordechai of Nadvorna.

Every day we bring all sorts of *taanot*, complaints, before Hashem. Some of them we bring out into the open and present them to Him in a *tana*, ‘basket’. Other complaints we hold inside, leaving them unspoken, kneading them over and over, tying knots inside the ‘kneading bowl’ of our stomach. Thus, the Torah blesses us: בְּרוּךְ טַנָּאךְ - ‘May your *ta’anut* be blessed and resolved through presenting them to Me so beautifully and openly. And may וּמִשְׁאָרְךָ, even the lumps of dough, the challenges that you are still laboring on in your inner ‘kneading bowl’ be blessed and smoothed out — by turning to me and speaking to Me about them!”

Let us take the opportunities we have to turn to Hashem and confess our gratitude and our gripes — and share with Him everything that is on our mind, in our heart and even deep down in our stomach. And may be blessed to arrive in Yerushalayim with the fruits of our labor to rejoice in all the good Hashem has granted us! ■

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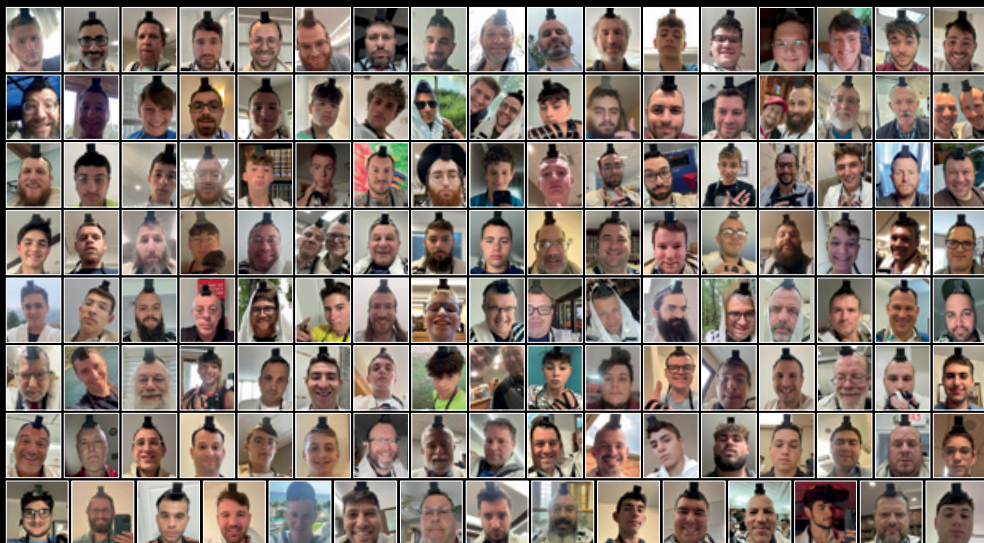


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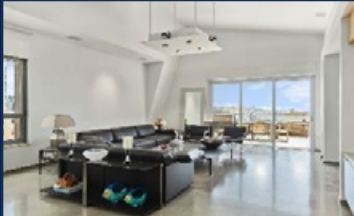
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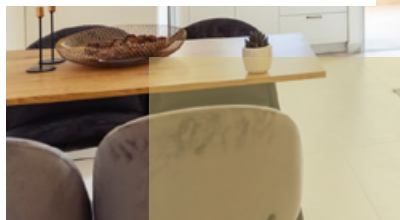
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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Each week as I prepare this column, I often reflect back on previous messages or fundamental teachings we have shared in earlier years, and then either prepare an article that is totally unrelated to ideas we may have explored in the past, or alternatively build upon and expand upon those earlier teachings.

This week, I looked back upon the message we shared last year, and given the recent passing of our beloved teacher **Rabbi Dr. Sholom Gold ztvk'l**, I feel moved to share that message again for all of us to both honor Rabbi Gold's incredible legacy, as well as to continue to be moved by his insights and inspiration.

Around this time last year, I had the *zechut* to sit and visit with *Moreinu V'Rabbeinu*, Rabbi Dr. Sholom Gold ztvk'l, the beloved Dean of OU Israel's Avrom Silver Jerusalem College for Adults. As always, time spent with this giant of Jewish life, left me inspired and feeling blessed. Blessed to have a role model and teacher like Rabbi Gold ztvk'l whose love of *Torah*, *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael* was exuded with every fiber of his being; and blessed to know that I have been fortunate to follow in his footsteps, to build our family here in *Artzeinu HaKedosha* and contribute in our own unique way in building Jewish Life here in *Eretz Yisrael*.

My discussion with Rabbi Gold, as typically happened when we sat together,

returned to this very great blessing, of the building of Jewish Life here in the Land of Israel. Rabbi Gold reminded me of an idea he has shared with me on numerous occasions in the past.

It is often stated in the name of the great sage **HaRav Moshe Feinstein ztvk'l**, that in his esteemed opinion, the *mitzvah* of *Aliya* to live in Israel in our time, is a *mitzvah kiyumit*- an optional *mitzvah*, a *mitzvah* where one certainly receives great through the fulfillment of the *mitzvah*, but nonetheless is not necessarily compulsory. Rabbi Gold confided in me that for many years he struggled to understand this ruling of *Rav Moshe*, and then one day he finally came to this conclusion. Rav Moshe zt'l, was teaching us that a Jew should **truly want** to make *aliya*, not feel compelled to live in Israel, but rather should want to live here, **should be happy and excited to build their life here in this sacred land**.

Our *Sedra* opens with the familiar words:

V'haya Ki Tavo El Haaretz-And it shall be when you arrive upon the Land.

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*, in his comments on this verse explains. *Vhaya-Lashon Simcha*. Our arrival to the Land of Israel is something to celebrate and rejoice over!

One of the great religious personalities of the pre-state *Yishuv* and early years

of *Medinat Yisrael*, was the **Ohalei Yaakov** of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, zt'l, the **Admor of Husiyatin zy'a**. The Rebbe of *Husiyatin*, was fortunate to make *aliya* from Poland, just ahead of the Nazi onslaught, settling in Tel Aviv in 1938, where he lived until his passing in 1954. Within the Rebbe's beautiful teachings we not only find depth and inspiration, but are often given a glimpse of this very challenging period in Jewish History.

The *Ohalei Yaakov* shared a powerful message on this *Shabbat of Parshat Ki Tavo* in 1952, The Rebbe points to this insight of the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*:

Vhaya-Lashon Simcha...

When we look at the reality and spiritual circumstances here in Eretz Yisrael today (in 1952), one can't help but ask-how are we to rejoice? Yes, indeed we have merited to receive the gift of Medinat Yisrael, and for the beginning of the ingathering of the Exiles, but how can we rejoice when we look at the lack of spirituality which seems rampant among us. I do not wish to pass judgment, Chas V'Shalom, rather our way is always to find merit and see the good. There are three reasons for the spiritual malaise which is so worrisome and a cause for deep concern. 1. A portion of our people have received a poor education 2. A portion of our people live in difficult conditions and circumstances, abject poverty 3. The Shoah which nearly decimated our people, and left so many broken physically and despondent emotionally and spiritually, we have yet to recover.

However, there is no room for despair! The Torah has already promised us that indeed the Jewish People will return to the

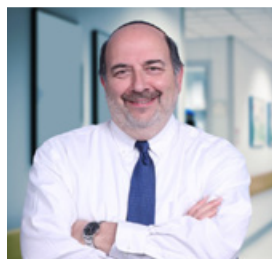
ways of Hakadosh Baruch Hu-V'Shavta Ad Hashem Elokecha.

This Spiritual Renewal will not come from America, or from England or from any other place, except for here in Eretz Yisrael. The Spiritual Renewal of Am Yisrael will indeed come forth from this Center of Jewish Life we are building now here in Eretz Yisrael...."

The Rebbe had the capacity to contextualize the challenges of Jewish Life during the difficult formative years of *Medinat Yisrael*, and the vision to see the fledgling state being built in the Land of Israel, as a Center of Jewish Life, which would serve as a catalyst for strengthening Jewish identity and commitment.

Baruch Hashem, in the more than seventy years since the Rebbe shared this powerful message, the growth of Torah learning and Jewish commitment, and ritual observance has indeed grown exponentially. *Yehi Ratzon*, may we indeed merit to celebrate the continued spiritual transformation taking root here in our sacred Land, and may we experience in the days ahead the redemption and transformation of the entire world, which will flow forth from *Artzeinu HaKedosha....* ■

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However, there is a second, less dramatic process of viduy, unrelated to teshuvah. During Pesach of the 4th and 7th year of a 7-year shemittah cycle, viduy ma’asrot is performed, essentially conducting inventory of the agricultural gifts which we delivered to Kohanim and Levi’im over the past three-year cycle. This viduy doesn’t confess sins but certifies our successful provision of charity. It reminds us that tzedakah isn’t merely altruistic but obligatory. Every three years we must personally account for our Torah-obligated charities.

This “inventory” viduy concludes with a tefillah for national prosperity and for the welfare of the Land of Israel. This post-viduy prayer is prefaced with a very intriguing phrase. The term השקיפה loosely translates into a request that Hashem “gaze” down upon us from Heaven and deliver the expected berachot.

Oddly, this phrase isn’t prefaced with any introduction. Typical tefillot are introduced with a preamble of humility. Expressing

our dependence upon Hashem, extolling His glory, or pleading that He accept our flawed tefillot all demonstrate humility before prayer commences. Without any preamble of humility tefillah becomes ego-centric and disrespectful of Hashem.

Strangely, the term השקיפה launches our post-viduy tefillah without any preface. Without any introduction this tefillah sounds more like a demand than a request. What right do we have to lodge a demand of Hashem?

A DIFFERENT VOICE

Evidently, in the aftermath of our tzedakah, tefillah takes on a different complexion. The basic “package” of matanot, or charity to Kohanim and Levi’im, exceeds 20% of our overall agricultural haul. Beyond these specific gifts, we also donated sizable portions of meat from both ritual korbanot as well as from non-ritual meat. First-born animals or *bechor*, first fruits or *bikurim*, and gifts of shorn wool or *resihit hagez* round out an extensive list of charities to the Kohanim, in total no small percentage of our “earnings”.

The viduy ceremony celebrates our philanthropy and our selflessness. Having successfully completed a three-year cycle

of altruism we earn the right to speak with Hashem differently. Having performed His duties, we can now ask him to serve our needs.

As Rashi comments, by employing the term השקיפה we effectively claim to Hashem “

עשינו מה שגזרת עלינו, עשה אתה מה שעליך

לעשות

We have fulfilled your duties, now You “should” perform yours. Through our devotion to mitzvot, we have earned the right to assert השקיפה, without any preamble.

Specifically, regarding the mitzvah of tzedakah, we are allowed, and even encouraged to be more frontal, and even more transactional with Hashem. Typically, we don’t condition mitzvah performance upon divine reciprocity. We perform mitzvot, as the mishna exhorts “without expectation of reward”. Yet, the gemara allows us to condition our charity upon Hashem providing reward:

האומר סלע זו לצדקה בשביל שיחי בני ובשביל

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A person may donate contingent upon Hashem healing a family member. In the context of viduy ma’aser, after delivering tzedakah, over a three-year interval, we merit the right to be more frontal in lodging expectations of Hashem. Past performance changes the tonality of tefillah... especially when we are davening for Am Yisrael, and not for our own personal needs.

CHASSIDUT AND TEFILLAH

Traditionally, tefillah was characterized by humility and subservience. The Shulchan Aruch encourages a tefillah posture similar to a “slave standing before



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a master”, with hands clenched together; other opinions instruct the polite folding of arms behind our backs. Either way, clasping hands or folding arms demonstrates submissiveness.

Chassidut radically altered tefillah posture and tefillah tonality. Stressing our unbreakable bond with Hashem and our shatterproof love of Him, Chassidut envisioned tefillah as an intimate encounter and a conversation. Hands were no longer tightly folded in obedience but thrust to Heaven, outstretched and flaying, speaking with Hashem and lodging frontal “requests”.

Reb Levi’s Famous “Trick” A well-known story about Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev exemplifies this newfound voice of tefillah. One year, toward the end of Ne’ilah, Reb Levi, the chazan, abruptly

halted the tefillah. Frozen in silence, he stood quietly, even as the sun was quickly setting on Yom Kippur. Finally, as the day was about to conclude, he hastily blurted out the final beracha of Ne'ilah.

When questioned after Yom Kippur about his odd behavior, he explained that he had detected that his prayers were spurned in Heaven. There was no purpose in offering [which would just glance off the gates of shomayim.

Desperate for a solution, he recalled a trick he and his siblings had played upon their mother. She stored her candies in a locked closet, distributing them to her children, sparingly, for good behavior. Little Reb Levi and his siblings would manipulate her for extra candy by hurriedly blurring a beracha. She was left with no choice but to offer them candy, else the beracha would have been uttered in vain.

Faced with this predicament Reb Levi reproduced his childhood ruse, this time with Hashem. Quickly blurring the final beracha of Ne'ilah he wanted to "coerce" Hashem to forgive us, so that the beracha asking for forgiveness would not be in vain. Essentially, he "manipulated" Hashem with a boyhood trick. You have

to feel very close with Hashem to play that trick. So close that you realize that Hashem actually desires that trick. Chassidim felt that intimacy and that confidence.

MODERN TEFILLAH

Living toward the end of history we must also find that voice. Time has passed since we were evicted from Yerushalayim. During that time, we have been through so much. History challenged us like no other, and we stood tall, firmly preserving Hashem's presence in a tortured world, at great cost.

Toward the tail-end of history we faced two mammoth challenges. We suffered the greatest genocide in history and pulled ourselves out of that nightmare to rebuild a rich and robust Jewish world. A few years after that horror we were tasked with resettling our Homeland against a ferocious international wave of opposition. We have so much to be proud of.

Like our ancestors after viduy ma'aser, we too have earned the right to daven in a more frontal manner. We, like them, ask Hashem, unabashedly, to look down from Heaven upon His children and bless them and their newly recovered Homeland.

השקפה !! ■



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The Clock is Ticking

The Haftorah is punctuated with a well-known phrase describing the advent of Mashiach, בְּעֵתָהּ אֶחָשְׁנָה, *in its appointed time, I will hasten it*. Chazal observe that these terms seem to be contradictory - either Mashiach will appear at the prescribed time or he will arrive earlier than expected. How is it possible to be on time and early at the same time. I am reminded of the story told about the person who arrives at an interview early. Proud of his timeliness, he comments to his prospective boss how he came early. The boss, a German Jew, responds sharply, "Being early is not on time." So what does the posuk mean?

The classic explanation given in the Gemara Sanhedrin 98a, is that if the Jewish people have enough merits, Hashem will hasten the coming of Moshiach; but if they do not, Moshiach will arrive at its set time. Rav Pam z"tl observed in his Sefer on Haftorot that in the Kaddish prayer, the expression, בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, *swiftly and soon*, seems redundant. Why the double wording? He suggested that in addition to our request that Mashiach come swiftly, we ask that all events unfold in an expeditious manner. The advent of an event

doesn't necessarily mean a quick timeline. As many of us have experienced, the beginning of a construction project rarely informs the completion date. When we recite Kaddish, we daven that the redemption should arrive quickly and the actual process unfolds quickly.

Rav Pam shared how Rav Elchonon Waserman, hy"d quoted the Chofetz Chaim z"tl saying that "from current events, it is evident that the Geulah cannot be far off. Events that in the past took many decades to unfold, now occur with rapid speed". He referred to World War I and the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Rav Pam adds the fall of Communism to the list. As we watch the breakneck speed at which world events are unfolding, we pray that Hashem have mercy on His world and bring the redemption, בְּעֵתָהּ אֶחָשְׁנָה. ■

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RABBI AARON

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Editor, Torah Tidbits

Natural Teshuva in the Land

The return (teshuva) to Israelite nature, which throbs in the arousal to national renaissance and its hopes - only it will bring the complete Return (teshuva) tied to the particular wisdom of the Living God, the supernal root of the Torah in all its plenitude, written and oral, of the law transcribed and transmitted and of every precious trait.” (Eretz Chefetz 6:3) (Naor translation)

In what way does the mitzvah of teshuva have a singular nature in the Land of Israel?

RETURN TO OUR NATURAL STATE

The Hebrew word *Teva* (nature) is a word that Rav Kook uniquely employs

when characterizing the process of *teshuva* (see *Orot Hateshuva* 6:2 and 17:4). Rav Kook proposes that a Jew’s *return* is just that - an organic return to one’s true essence; a return to a way of life that aligns with our innate yearnings, ethical sensitivities and true aspirations.

Among the many appellations utilized by the Torah to describe the Land of Israel are the following two words: ‘*menucha*’ (tranquility) and ‘*nachala*’ (inheritance). Both of these terms are found in a single verse (Devarim 12:9). The Abarbanel comments on these words that only when settled in the Promised Land did the Israelites find tranquility from their long and arduous journey (*menucha*). Only in Israel did they find their inheritance (*nachala*) - namely the mitzvot.

The exilic experience of almost two thousand years has been saturated with staggering hardships and suffering. More often than not the fact that we lived outside the



**RAV KOOK ARGUES THAT
THIS IS NOT ONLY TRUE ON A
PERSONAL LEVEL BUT ON A
NATIONAL LEVEL AS WELL**

Land of Israel meant that the observance of mitzvot came with immense challenges.

Menuchat Hanefesh - a feeling of calm, stability and balance are needed for a healthy state of mind and to pursue an uplifting path of *teshuva*. From this perspective Eretz Yisrael, it can be argued, is the prime location for a spiritual setting that is ideal for achieving this lofty objective of personal improvement.

TESHUVA: ASPIRING FOR GREATNESS

An all-important aspect of *teshuva* according to Rav Kook is that *teshuva* should be understood not merely as the way we correct certain faults and transgressions. Rather *teshuva* is a means by which one designs a new course

toward achieving greatness. Thus, *Teshuva* requires harnessing all of our strengths, talents, and abilities in order to be our best selves.

Rav Kook argues that this is not only true on a personal level but on a national level as well. Bearing this in mind, many of the magnificent goals for our nation are only obtainable when we are situated in the Land. For example: building a society based on the principles of the Torah, attaining the highest degree of closeness with our Creator, and attaining national unity - all necessitate the nation's residence in the Land of Israel. From this perspective, national *teshuva* that addresses our communal aspirations is profoundly impaired when we are scattered outside the Land throughout the nations. This is why Rav Kook mightily declares: "The renaissance of the nation of Israel constitutes the foundation of the building of the greatest *teshuva*." (*Orot HaTeshuva* 17:1). ■



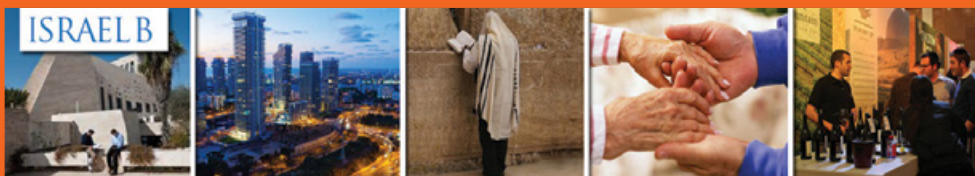
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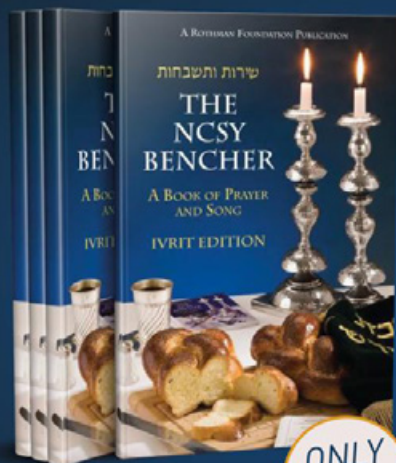


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RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

Relying on the Midwife

Last time we discussed the need for and part of the halachic basis for supervision in the contemporary fertility clinic and laboratory.

WHY DO WE NEED SUPERVISION FOR FERTILITY TREATMENTS?

Since we want to be assured that the child born is actually the child of these parents.

BUT WE DO NOT CHECK EVERY SINGLE CHILD BORN TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE THE CHILD OF THE DECLARED PARENTS?

There we have a halachic principle that we can assume that a married couple's children are theirs. Even though there are cases of infidelity, the Gemara states a halachic determination that the husband is always considered the father. However, in the case of fertility treatments we cannot make such a claim, since there is another factor involved. The embryo was created ex-vivo, outside of the body, by the medical professionals in the laboratory. We cannot employ this principle that the husband must be that father, and must assume that it is possible that a mistake could happen, necessitating the use of external halachic supervision.

WHO CAN BE A HALACHIC SUPERVISOR?

On a halachic level that depends on how

we view supervision in a halachic context. Some suggest that supervision is basically a witnessing program that proves the validity and integrity of the genetic material. The supervisor acts as the representative of Am Yisrael to ensure the identity of the child. This is similar to a conversion that is observed by kosher witnesses on behalf of the Jewish people. If this is the case, then the supervisor must be a kosher witness, which means they must be an adult Jewish man.

However, the Gemara (Kiddushin 78a) brings a case in which there was doubt as to the identity of children who were delivered and placed together, similar to a modern neonatal unit. The children were not identified prior to being placed in the same vicinity and now there is some confusion as to who delivered which baby. The Gemara writes that the midwife is trusted to declare 'this child is a cohen and this child is a levi.' We see that even though the Sages were particularly strict regarding Jewish lineage, they relied on the information supplied by the midwife. We can deduce that a woman can serve as a "witness" in such a case. This is the basis for employing women as supervisors.

The women are carefully chosen and trained to fulfill the function of a supervisor.

More on this next time. ■

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The Chazan's Pre-Birkat Kohanim Practice

לעילוי נשמת
יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

Question: In *chutz la'aretz*, I was taught that the *chazan* says the whole *Elokeinu Veilokei Avotainu* prayer quietly except for calling out the word “*kohanim*.” In Israel, someone else says “*kohanim*.” Does the *chazan* still recite the whole prayer quietly? What is the logic of the two practices?

Answer: The main point of the prayer of *Elokeinu Veilokei Avotainu* (=EVA) is to beseech Hashem for the benefits of the *berachot* that constitute *Birkat Kohanim* in lieu of the *kohanim* carrying out their *mitzva* (Rav Amram Gaon, cited in the Tur, Orach Chayim 127). Although EVA is apparently a post-Talmudic institution (see Tosafot, Berachot 34a), it is accepted that this is not a *hefsek* in *chazarat hashatz*. Realize that *Birkat Kohanim* is supposed to be incorporated in *chazarat hashatz*, with the *gemara* (Megilla 18a) explaining its appropriateness at that exact juncture. The *chazan* is expected to recite the *berachot*'s words to prompt the *kohanim*, and that too is not a *hefsek* (Rashi, Berachot 34a; Rambam, Tefilla 14:8). Similarly, the *Birkat Kohanim* stand-in is appropriate for the *chazan*. Tosafot (Berachot 34a) also infers

from the *mishna* (ad loc.) that were it not for concern that he might confuse himself, the *chazan* could have answered *amen* to the *Birkat Kohanim*.

The disagreement begins in regard to the *chazan*'s involvement when **there is** *Birkat Kohanim*. Rabbeinu Tam (cited by Tosafot, *ibid.*; Rosh, Berachot 5:17) posits that despite the fact that leading *Birkat Kohanim* is not a *hefsek* for the *chazan* and that someone needs to call the *kohanim*, a *gabbai* should call them instead of the *chazan* (note that in the *gemara* and other early sources, the word *chazan* is what we call a *gabbai*).

The Rosh (*ibid.*) cites the argument of the Ri that the objection to the *chazan* calling the *kohanim* may have disappeared once the prayer of EVA was instituted. That is because now the *chazan* can use the recitation of the word “*kohanim*” within the text of EVA to call them. The Tur (OC 128) and others report that the Maharam MeiRutenberg used to do this, and that he said all of EVA silently except for “*kohanim*.” Perhaps when only that word is said out loud, it is more discernable as a call to the *kohanim* in addition to part of a prayer. (When someone other than the *chazan* prompts, he immediately says that one word, so that the Maharam's system slightly delays

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.



the beginning of *Birkat Kohanim*). On the other hand, others report (see Hagahot Maimoniot Tefilla 14:7) that the Maharam changed his practice, and as *chazan*, no longer recited *EVA* or called out to the *kohanim*.

Concerning practical Halacha, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 128:8), following the Rambam (ibid.), has the *chazan* calling out *Kohanim* without *EVA*, and this is the Sephardi *minhag* (Yalkut Yosef, OC 127:2 and 128:35). The Rama (ad loc.) cites as the *minhag* the earlier practice of the Maharam, that the *chazan* says *EVA* quietly, except for “*kohanim*” out loud. This is the *minhag* that you grew up with in *chutz la'aretz*, where it is still prevalent for Ashkenazim. The Gra (Ma'aseh Rav 168) follows Rabbeinu Tam – a *gabbai* should call out *kohanim*, whereas the *chazan* just recites the *Birkat Kohanim* itself before the *kohanim*. As not infrequently happens, the *minhag* of the Gra became the *minhag* of the Ashkenazim of Eretz Yisrael.

It is theoretically possible to posit that even according to the *minhag* that a *gabbai* calls out *kohanim*, the *chazan* still says *EVA* quietly. One can even argue that this has an advantage in making the *chazan's* word-by-word prompting of *Birkat Kohanim* less of a *hefsek*, as it is incorporated into the text of *EVA*. However, since the consensus is that in the time of Chazal, before the prayer of *EVA* was used at all, the *chazan* led the *kohanim* in *Birkat Kohanim*, it

must not be a problem of *hefsek* at all. Such a practice does not fit in with any of the three main *minhagim*. (Perhaps, some *chazanim*, especially those who are used to the *minhag* of *chutz la'aretz*, say all of *EVA* quietly before *Birkat Kohanim*. However, this is a mistaken practice, albeit, not a critical one.) ■

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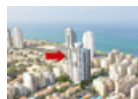
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Asher Goren," the sign proclaims and then, in smaller print, "May you merit good health and pleasure from your progeny as you continue to make the Torah great and glorious." (Note: Shas, written with a shin and a samech, is an acronym for shisha sedarim or "six orders" or categories of the Mishnah, along with their

Gemara commentary, which are known collectively as Talmud. There are a total of 2,711 two-sided pages of the Talmud.)

This celebration was held in honor of two residents of Kfar Maimon, a religious moshav in southern Israel. Asher is an 84 year old Holocaust survivor from Hungary. He lived through two death marches

in the snow, immigrated to Israel at the age of 8, and was among the founders of Kfar Maimon.

David is 91, born into the sixth generation of a family that had dwelled in the Land of

Israel for more than a century. He was born in Jerusalem, fought in the religious unit of the Lehi underground prior to the founding of the State, studied in the Merkaz HaRav Yeshiva, and worked for many years doing research associated with mineral extraction at the Dead Sea Works company.

The two friends have been studying together

every day for 42 years and are completing the Talmud for the sixth time.

In this week's Torah portion, we learn how each individual can connect their personal story to that of the nation by bringing their first fruits to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Look at the faces of these two friends and you can read in them the amazing story



of us all: the triumph of both body and soul during a lifetime of perseverance, humility, continuous building and lasting friendship. And, to cap it all off -- 42 years of a daily meeting with the sages of the Talmud. ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrahi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by Globes newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.

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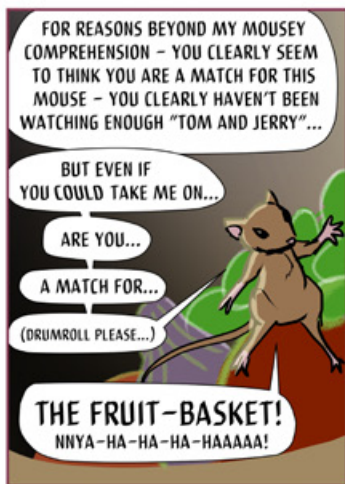
11:00 Coffee & Cake

11:15 Gemara Shiur: Masechet Sukkah

Rabbi Shimshon Nadel is Rav of Kehilat Zichron Yosef in Har Nof, Rosh Kollel at the Sinai Kollel, and lecturer at the OU Israel Center.

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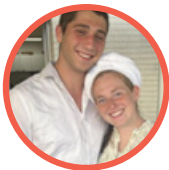




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Living Inside Hashem's Gift

This parsha is filled with many subjects of which the most dramatic of them all is the תוכחה. Why does the Torah speak in such length and depth of all the קללות and summarizes the brachot in just a couple of pesukim. Is it so much easier for God to bring curses upon us than blessings?

I would like to offer 2 answers to this question. First is the Land of Israel's personality. A couple of times in the torah we find the phrase "אז תקיא הארץ את יושביה" - "The Land will throw up its residents. "

Israel is the Holy Land. It is on a level where it cannot tolerate nonsense. It is uncomfortable with people who choose 'חילול ה' and there for it brings out these curses on its residents that do not behave properly.

There is another way to look at things. The Land of Israel is God's gift to us. As long as we are living here we are residents of God's gift, and that is a constant bracha. The reason there are more curses than blessings is because bracha is

the natural state.

We are very excited for the position of directing the ChashModiin chapter this coming year. Many people go into these positions thinking, what can I do to change these kids? Our method this year will not be to come in and try to change people. We want to listen and learn from one another.

We are excited not only to enrich our teens but to gain so much from them.

We will always be there for the teens. Whatever they need we will try to provide them with.

Together we will seek God's blessing in every corner, it's always there!

Looking forward to a fantastic year!



Menashe Lopez

Ganei Modiin - 12th Grade

The Value of Gratitude

Our parashah speaks about the mitzvah of Bikurim; that you should take the first of every fruit of the ground of your Land to be put in a basket and presented before the kohen of those days. This shows gratitude towards Hashem to His eternal role as the guide of Jewish history.

This mitzvah helps one keep humble. One of the main reasons for such action

is to instill in us the character trait of *Hakaras Hatov*. Acknowledging and expressing gratitude.

We have to apply in ourselves those two things in order to have true appreciation towards those who favor us always like our parents, and with that attribute we also can complete the mitzvah of *kivud av va'eim*.

True appreciation, however, is expressed only when one announces clearly, "I benefited from your giving." There is no such thing as "he knows I appreciate it" when it comes to *hakaras hatov*. Once we open our eyes to the kind things friends or family do for us on a daily basis and truly appreciate it is when we become closer to fully appreciating Hashem and all He does for us in every living moment. ■

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