

ב"ה  
**Torah  
Tidbits**

ISSUE 1532



OU  
ישראל

9 SEPTEMBER 2023 • כ"ג אלול תשפ"ג

פרשת נצבים-וילך

PARSHAT NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH

AVOT CHAPTER 5-6



Selichos: Whistle While You Work  
Rabbi Judah Mischel  
Page 50



Don't Be Caught Off Guard  
Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman  
Page 62

In memory of my parents Yitzchak & Chana Heller z"l  
Dedicated by their daughter Dvorah Gorman

וחיית ורבית וברכך ה' אלקיך בארץ  
דברים ל:ט"ז

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT TIMES PARSHAT NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH  
CANDLES 6:19PM • EARLIEST 5:36PM • HAVDALA 7:30PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:11PM



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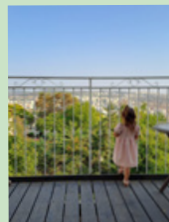
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## THIS WEEK'S COVER IMAGE!

### Photographed by Gina Kirsch

I made Aliyah in 1990 and live in Bet Shemesh. Baruch Hashem we founded Israel's First Safety Center dedicated to reducing the terrible number of preventable accidents in Israel, especially those occurring in and around the home. The photo shows a young girl enjoying a beautiful view of Bet Shemesh from a safe mirpeset.

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## HELPFUL REMINDERS



The Ashkenazi community begins to recite Selichot this motzei Shabbat. Many have the custom to recite Selichot at chatzot (12:37am).

The custom is not to recite Mevarchim HaChodesh the Shabbat before Rosh HaShana

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



	NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH			ROSH HASHANA NIGHT 1	
	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA	CANDLES	EARLY
Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	6:19	5:36	7:30	6:10	5:28
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	6:37	5:38	7:33	6:27	5:31
Beit Shemesh / RBS	6:37	5:37	7:31	6:28	5:29
Alon Shvut	6:35	5:36	7:31	6:25	5:29
Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	6:36	5:38	7:32	6:27	5:30
Modiin / Chashmonaim	6:35	5:37	7:31	6:26	5:29
Netanya	6:36	5:38	7:32	6:27	5:30
Be'er Sheva	6:36	5:37	7:32	6:27	5:30
Rehovot	6:36	5:38	7:32	6:27	5:30
Petach Tikva	6:19	5:37	7:32	6:10	5:30
Ginot Shomron	6:35	5:37	7:31	6:26	5:29
Haifa / Zichron	6:26	5:37	7:32	6:16	5:30
Gush Shiloh	6:34	5:36	7:30	6:25	5:28
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	6:36	5:38	7:33	6:27	5:30
Givat Zeev	6:38	5:36	7:31	6:29	5:28
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	6:35	5:36	7:31	6:25	5:29
Ashkelon	6:37	5:39	7:33	6:28	5:31
Yad Binyamin	6:36	5:38	7:32	6:27	5:30
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	6:29	5:35	7:31	6:19	5:27
Golan	6:33	5:35	7:30	6:24	5:27
Nahariya/Maalot	6:35	5:37	7:32	6:25	5:29
Afula	6:34	5:36	7:31	6:25	5:28

**Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 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 27**

\* For all Rosh Hashana times see next week's Torah Tidbits



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## JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat  
Sept 6 - 16 / 20 Elul - 1 Tishrei**

Earliest Tallit and Tefilin **5:26 - 5:32**  
Sunrise **6:17 - 6:23**  
Sof Zman Kriat Shema **9:27 - 9:28**  
Magen Avraham **8:50 - 8:52**  
Sof Zman Tefila **10:30**  
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)  
Chatzot (Halachic Noon) **12:37 - 12:33**  
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) **1:09 - 1:04**  
Plag Mincha **5:38 - 5:27**  
Sunset (Including Elevation) **7:01 - 6:48**



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

**RABBI AVI BERMAN**  
Executive Director, OU Israel

*"Rabbi Berman, I don't know how else to say it. I'm jealous of my kids. They get to learn Torah for hours every day but for me that's simply not the case. Between minyan, breakfast prep, carpool, work, running home in time for homework, dinner and bedtime with the kids, then finally using the quiet night hours to prepare for the coming day, I simply do not have time to learn. But we're heading into the Yamim Noraim and I'm feeling anxious. How can I find time to learn?"*

Each year I look forward to participating in *Avot u'Banim* programming with my kids, whether it is organized by our shul or my children's schools. I find it particularly meaningful when participating in events leading up to *Yamim Noraim* for two reasons. First, I am delighted by the opportunity to learn with each child individually for a few hours and attend the various *shiurim* their teachers have prepared. Second, and perhaps more relevant to the majority of Torah Tidbits readers, in the weeks leading up to the *Yamim Noraim* I feel an added sense of urgency to dedicate more time to learning and connecting with Hashem each day.

Of course, for those who are fortunate to

learn every day in programs such as *Daf Yomi*, which just reached 100 years since its founding, there is tremendous merit in learning every day. However, I've come to appreciate that the pace of life can interfere with daily learning and have tried to come up with creative ways to bring Torah learning to the masses. Five years ago OU

Israel launched Torah Yerushalayim and held the event at the Ramada Jerusalem Hotel in the weeks leading up to the *Yamim Noraim*.

Past speakers included Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Rabbi Shalom Rosner, Rav Judah Mischel, Mrs. Raphaella Tabak, Charlie Harary, Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rebbitzein Tziporah Gottlieb (Heller), Sivan Rahav Meir, Rebbitzen

Shira Smiles, and countless others who shared their words of Torah with those gathered. From its first year running, Torah Yerushalayim was a success. At last year's event, following two years of virtual events during Covid, 2,200 participants joined us in person to share in the experience.

With the growing crowds, we recognized the importance of dedicating a set day in which people can come from around the



country to learn Torah together leading up to *Rosh HaShana*. We also appreciated those who traveled from far to join events in previous years and decided to make the event more accessible to people around the country. I am therefore thrilled to share that this year we are launching a new format and bringing Torah Yerushalayim on the road! This year's event will include some additional changes which I hope prove meaningful:

### **TORAH YERUSHALAYIM**

Torah Yerushalayim is being moved from the Ramada Jerusalem Hotel to Beit Knesset Nitzanim, led by Rav Shai Finkelstein, in Baka. Partnering with the Nitzanim community has already been a wonderful experience, and I look forward to joining locals and travelers during the event which will take place on Tuesday, September 12 from 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM. Thank you to OU Israel President Stuart Hershkowitz for all of his efforts on this program.

### **TORAH MODIIN**

For participants who prefer an evening event, we worked together with our esteemed OU Israel board members Daniella Hellerstein and Jeremy Lustman to launch Torah Modiin. The event will be held at Kehilat Shaarei Yonah Menachem (KYSM), led by Rav Shlomo Sobol, on Wednesday, September 20 from 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM.

*Shiurim* in both locations feature a mix of dynamic speakers. I am hopeful that this year's programming will provide an opportunity for those looking to dedicate a few hours toward Torah learning in the weeks leading up to *Rosh HaShana* and will find

the experience motivational. I encourage you all to mark off your calendars and enjoy the thoughtful programming that has been created, which will soon be made available.

To recount the efforts that went into creating Torah Yerushalayim and Torah Modiin would be nearly impossible. I am deeply grateful for the dedication of OU Israel staff members, as well as the Nitzanim and KYSM community representatives, who have worked tirelessly to create stimulating programming. Moreover, I am proud to share that the OU Israel team has dedicated itself to adding a new community to partner with every year going forward!

These events would not be possible without the support of the Fund family who dedicate this annual program in loving memory of their beloved parents David & Norma Fund z"l. The Fund families dedicate themselves to building Torah and Jewish life in Israel and around the world. I had the great *zechut* to have known both David and Norma and remain inspired by their efforts to create *kashrut* in the United States as well as Torah infrastructures to ensure the continuity of *yiddishkeit*. Please visit [www.ouisrael.org/elultishrei](http://www.ouisrael.org/elultishrei) to see the full Torah Yerushalayim and

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Torah Modiin schedules and to register. I will be at both events and am eager to see you all there. In the meantime, I wish you all a meaningful *selichot* experience which begins this coming *motzei* Shabbat. As we focus our efforts in the coming days to refine ourselves and recommit ourselves to Torah and *avodat HaShem*, I hope the events we have planned will serve as meaningful catalysts as we strive to reach new heights in the coming year together.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman  
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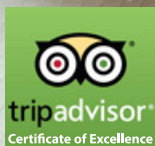
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## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER

OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



# The Choices We Make, The Life We Live

*Bechira*, free choice, is a core dimension of our humanity and a foundation of our belief system. As Rambam articulated repeatedly (see *Hilchos Teshuva* Chapter 5, *Shemona Perakim* Chapter 8), if we are not free to choose our course of action there is no meaning to and no accountability for *Mitzvot*. It is because we are free to choose our path in life that we must work to identify and follow the mission and actions that Hashem seeks from us, as we read in our Parsha (30:19), *u'vacharta vachaim*, “choose life.” Rabbeinu Yonah in his classic *Shaarei Teshuva* (3:17) understood this verse as dictating a mitzvah to properly exercise our free choice, and notes that the Torah presents its highest values – such as

choosing life, studying Torah, and emulating Hashem in our refinement of character - as positive *Mitzvot*.

In describing Choice as a mitzvah, there is an implication that we can live life without making choices. This idea was elaborated upon by Rav Eliyahu Dessler in his oft-quoted thesis regarding what he called *nekudat habechirah*, the Choice Point, where he noted that much of the time we are not making active choices but rather living on established patterns that we, our parents, or our social circle established for us by choices made long before. Each of us has good things that have become built into our routine that we do without even thinking. It is only at the Choice Point that we have the opportunity to move the line of scrimmage, shifting our life's pattern by making a choice to move things forward, to take our lives and assumed behaviors to the next level.

It is in this dynamic space of Choice that life really happens. It is there where we live today as today, not as a simple replay of yesterday.

Every morning, we make two *brachot* before we recite the *Shema*. The first notes Hashem's creation of the routine of nature as seen in the cycling of day and night, sun and moon. The second *bracha* recalls when Hashem interrupted that routine by exercising His *bechira*, His free choice, choosing the Jewish people from all the nations, *habocher b'amo Yisrael b'ahava*. That choice

May the Torah learned  
from this issue בעילוי נשמת  
our much missed father,  
grandfather and great-grandfather

**BENJAMIN SPIGELMAN z"l**  
בן-ציון בן נחום דוב ויהודית ז"ל

on his 37<sup>th</sup> *yahrzeit* - כא אלול

*Schorer, Spigelman and Sheinfeld families*



was made – as noted in the *bracha* that follows the *Shema* – by the disruption of nature and routine through the miracles of the Exodus. Indeed, Pesach is the time when Hashem made a choice that completely changed the direction of our lives.

Rosh Hashana, on the other hand, is the anniversary of when Hashem created the routine of nature, and when He looks **to us** to defy our nature and routine and make change by our own choices. This is the season where we reflect and consider our future direction, shifting that Choice Point in our own lives and in how we will define our field of service and accomplishment.

It is our task during this precious time to make those choices that will ensure that we live today as today, not as a replay of yesterday, even as we envision and build a far better tomorrow, moving things forward for ourselves and for *Klal Yisrael*. ■

May the Torah learned  
from this issue of Torah Tidbits  
לעילוי נשמת  
and in loving memory of  
our dear parents


**VICTOR COHEN z"l**  
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Interested in bringing your family to our next Hebrew-on-the-Go event? See our ads in Torah Tidbits and follow us on Instagram @theouisrael

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## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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### PARSHAT NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH

The Torah ends with 4 very short parshiot. The last parsha of the Torah is read on Simchat Torah. After our double parsha, we have only the short parsha of Ha'azinu. So, we are virtually at the end of the Torah.

Let's frame our parsha in the context of the book of Devarim. Moshe has taken us from past, to present, to future. Moshe is standing on the banks of the Jordan, knowing he will not be with the people in their entry to the Land. The entire book of Devarim is Moshe's instructions to the people. He begins with the immediate fears and concerns of the people; how will we be successful in conquering the Land? He reviews the past; lessons to be learned, errors to be avoided, successes to remember. You will be successful. He then paints a picture of the society of ethical monotheism to be created in the Land. And the national institutions of legislature, judiciary and executive. He has gone from the past, to immediate present, to imminent future. Then last week he pivoted to the distant future; the exile that will result inevitably from disloyalty. Though not yet in the Land, Moshe gives a chilling

description of exile from the Land.

And in our parsha, he looks into the even more distant future; the end of the exile and the return to the Land. Hopeful. Optimistic. He has gone from assurance, to dread and back to confidence. And has taken care to articulate to the people, before he takes leave of them, his profound belief in their ultimate ability to return. That in the deepest recesses of their heart is their desire to connect to their G-d. Moshe believes in us.

Although this double parsha has but 70 verses, the emotional impact is hard to match.



#### 1ST ALIYA (DEVARIM 29:9 - 28)

**The Brit of Arvot Moav.** All the people are gathered, men, women, children, water carriers and woodchoppers to enter the covenant; that G-d will be our G-d and we will be His people. As was said to the Avot. This covenant is with you here today and those not here. Should there be amongst you those chasing idols, rationalizing that they are free to follow their hearts; the consequence of the special bond of this covenant is that your disloyalty, your chasing idol worship will be met with Divine wrath. The destruction of this Land because of your unfaithfulness will be so profound people will look at it and be shocked by its utter desolation. They will recognize that your disloyalty resulted in this desolation and in your

Mazal Tov to  
**Mike Harris and family** on the marriage  
of his daughter **Shoshana**



being tossed out of this Land.

The covenant is simple. You. And me. You, G-d will be my G-d. And we will be Your people. It is crucially important to reduce the Torah to this simple, though profound, bond. Sure, there are lots of mitzvot. Some we'll get right. Some we'll mess up with. But, after all the detailed mitzvot, it is really You and me. The Jew lives a life walking with the Creator. We are bound together. That bond expresses itself in mitzvot. Certainly. But, Moshe says, it is the walk with the Creator that is our lot in life. A privileged lot indeed.



### 2ND ALIYA (30:1 - 6)

When you are cast out of the Land to the 4 corners of the earth, you will take to heart your fate – and return to G-d. He will return to you, returning to you to gather you from the far-flung places. Even if you are at the ends of the earth, He will gather you and take you from there, to bring you back to this Land.

This is the most beautiful paragraph in the entire Torah. It is so good it is split in the middle, to savor it. It is called Parshat HaTeshuva, the section of Return. The word “return” appears 7 times. We to Him. He to us. We take a step; He steps to us. But our first return is described as “we take it to heart”. Heart murmurings are the beginning of teshuva. And He is our cardiologist, He knows our murmurings, as faint as they may be. Once He senses those murmurings, He empowers us, Gives us the strength, the will to build on our deepest pining. He dances with us, but waits for us to take the first step. Then He gives us more strength and more. Just take that step.

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### 3RD ALIYA (30:7 - 14)

And He will implant in you love of Him. And you will return to Him. And He will be thrilled with you because your return is with sincerity, a full heart. For this mitzvah is not sublime, as if needing one to ascend the heavens or cross the ocean to retrieve it. Rather it is very close; on your lips and in your heart.

Moshe uses words of affection. Love, love of Hashem. Heart, all your heart. Moshe does not want to be only the teacher of halacha. He wants to be the teacher of our inner life as well. We need tutelage in not only *what to do*, but also in *how to feel*. Shake off your inhibitions. Let Him in, with love, with the deepest feelings of your heart, every day. The language is noticeably more emotive than the rest of the Torah. Moshe, as he is departing as leader, and departing from this world desperately wants to convey his deepest feelings and to reach our deepest emotions.

And it is not in heaven. The “it” may be understood to be referring to the entire Torah. As if to say, “I know the Torah looks daunting; but it is not, it is the real you.” Or it could be referring to Teshuva. As if to say, “Change looks daunting; but it is

not, it is the real you.” Moshe is expressing his faith in us. That deep down, everyone has a connection to G-d and to the Jewish people. That is exactly what this verse says; we don’t need to adjust, to adapt to a belief in G-d. We need to be sensitive to, to plumb our real selves, to dig deep and discover ourselves. It is close: on our lips and in our heart.



### 4TH ALIYA (30:15 - 31:6)

Life and good, death and evil lie before you. Life is a consequence of loyalty to the mitzvot. Destruction awaits lack of loyalty. Heaven and earth stand witness: life and death, blessing and curse lie before you. Choose life. Moshe goes. And speaks to the entire people. I am 120 years old. I will not bring you into the Land; G-d will lead you. And Yehoshua will lead you. G-d will do for you as He did with Sichon and Og. Be strong and firm, do not be afraid or worried; G-d will be with you. He will not let go of you or leave you.

These words are the last of Moshe’s long speech. He will move on to speak of transition of leadership. But these last words are like a tincture, a dilution. After all is said and done, the stakes of this grand venture of mitzvot are nothing short of life and death. And with these words, Moshe prepares to take leave of the people. Nothing more to say. Choose life.



### 5TH ALIYA (31:7 - 13)

Moshe called Yehoshua, and in front of the entire people charged him to be strong and of good courage. For G-d will be with you; He will not abandon you, so be not afraid. And Moshe wrote the Torah and gave it to the bearers

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from this issue of Torah Tidbits  
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of the Aron. **Hakhel:** Every 7 years, during Sukkot, when all Israel gathers, read this Torah, so all will learn to have awe and observe the Torah.

Moshe encourages Yehoshua a lot – be *chazak*, strong, and *amat*, mighty. Don't be afraid. Moshe is addressing Yehoshua's fears. For although there is a promise to the Jewish people, who knows if I, Yehoshua, am deserving to be their leader. Maybe I am unworthy. That is the healthy humility that every leader should display. Who am I to lead this great nation?

And the mitzvah of Hakhel continues Moshe's transition of leadership. He is taking leave. Yehoshua is being invested. Why stick in the mitzvah of Hakhel, of reading and teaching the people to fear G-d? Perhaps, and this is conjecture, the mitzvah of Hakhel is not only to teach the *people* but to teach the *King*. The *King* is to read the Torah in front of the people. Perhaps this is the Torah's version of the 7-year itch. Leaders, businesses, institutions often move in 7-year cycles. After 7 years, take stock. Where are you? Where are you going? Are you on track? Moshe is instructing Yehoshua. You are to lead the people. But as a servant of G-d. Lots will happen as a leader that may make you overly confident, haughty, maybe fearful, pessimistic. Every 7 years, take the Torah and read it;

take stock, publicly. You are the King; but not the King of Kings. You are His servant, serving His people.



#### 6TH ALIYA (31:14 - 19)

G-d calls Moshe and Yehoshua.

A cloud appears. G-d says: this people will seek idols and abandon my covenant. I will leave them. I will hide my Face from them and they will feel I have abandoned them. I will surely Hide Myself from them. Write this song. Teach them this, so it shall be testimony for them.

This aliya turns rough. This is now not Moshe speaking, but G-d speaking to Moshe and Yehoshua. The Jews will rebel. And Hashem will withdraw, will leave the Jews subject to whatever calamities befall them. The greatest theological mystery is contained in this one verse: "I will hide My Face from you." Chilling. And it is repeated: I will surely hide My Face. The greatest theological challenge, posed in our time by the unfathomable tragedy of the Holocaust, must grapple with this Divine eclipse – Hiding His Face. When and why does He Hide His Face? The Torah states it but does not explain it. And while Jewish history is replete with tragedies, seemingly moments of this Divine eclipse, at least in our time we are warmed by the opposite: we who have returned to His Land are warmed by the Shining of His Face upon us.



#### 7TH ALIYA (31:20 - 30)

I will bring the people to the Land, but they will respond to

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their success with rebellion. Let this song be at the ready for when this occurs. Moshe wrote the song, teaching it to the people. He charged Yehoshua again to be strong.

Moshe commanded the Leviim to place the Torah on the side of the Aron, as a permanent testimony. For, I know this people and they are stubborn and cantankerous. Gather all the leaders so I can charge them, for I am sure that following my death, there will be disloyalty. And Moshe spoke the words of the song to the people.

Moshe is generous to Yehoshua. As if to say, “when things turn ugly, don’t take the blame. All you can do is lead. Whether the people follow or whether they rebel is not of your doing. Be strong.” Generosity to the next leader, doing all to help them succeed is the sign of a leader who leads not for his own ego, fearing the next guy will be better than him, but is the sign of a leader who leads as a servant of the people, only wanting their success.

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## YESHAYAHU 61:10 - 63:9

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This week’s *haftorah* is the seventh and final installment of a series of seven “*Haftarot* of Consolation.” The prophet begins on a high note, describing the great joy that we will experience with the Final Redemption, comparing it to the joy of a newly married couple.

Yeshayahu then declares his refusal to passively await the Redemption: “For Zion’s sake I will not remain silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be still, until her righteousness emerges like shining light...” He implores the stones of Yerushalayim not to be silent, day or night, until G-d restores

Jerusalem and establishes it in glory.

The Haftorah then recounts Hashem’s oath to eventually redeem Zion, when the Jews will praise G-d in Yerushalayim. The haftorah also contains a description of the punishment Hashem will mete out to Edom and the enemies of Israel.

Yeshayahu concludes with the famous statement:

*“In all [Israel’s] afflictions, He, too, is afflicted, and the angel of His presence redeemed them...”*

Like a loving father who shares the pain of his child, G-d, too, shares the pain of His people, and awaits Redemption along with them. ■



### STATS

#### Nitzavim

51st of the 54 sedras; 8th of 11 in Devarim.

Written on 87 lines in a Torah (rank: 52).

4 Parshiyot; 1 open, 3 closed 40 p’sukim - ranks 53 (10th in Devarim).

657 words - ranks 51 (8th in Devarim).

2575 letters - ranks 51 (8th in Devarim).

#### Vayeilech

52nd of the 54 sedras; 9th of 11 Devarim.

Written on 72 lines in a Torah (rank: 53).

3 Parshiyot; 2 open, 1 closed.

30 p’sukim - ranks 54th (11th in Devarim).

553 words - ranks 53rd (10th in Devarim).

2123 letters - ranks 53rd (10th in Devarim).

Shortest sedra in number of pesukim; longest pesukim in the whole Torah.



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"And Moshe went and spoke...I can no longer go out and come in." (31:1-2)

The pasuk refrains from telling us where Moshe went. The verse says "he went" but where to?

The Ibn Ezra (1089-1167) explains logically that Moshe went to each tribe telling personally that he would be passing away soon and to help give support to Yehoshua as the new leader.

The Kli Yakar (1550-1619 Prague) adds depth to this idea. Moshe was concerned that people would think he had been "retired" by others due to his old age and losing mental balance. He therefore marched personally throughout the camp to demonstrate that he still remains with his physical and mental capabilities. The only reason for his departure was the Divine decree by G-d.

Shabbat Shalom

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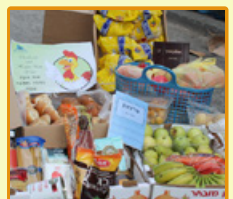


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IN THE PARSHA

## “This Season’s *Leitmotif*: Return!”

We have all been brought up to believe in the importance of progress. For the past several centuries, the goal of philosophy, religion, culture, and certainly science has been to develop ideas and practices which advance humankind beyond its present state.

Poets have acclaimed the superiority of progress; one of them, Robert Browning, put it this way:

“Progress, man’s distinctive mark alone,  
Not God’s, and not the beasts’: God  
is, they are;

Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be.”

Browning is certainly not the only person who enthusiastically endorsed progress to the point of seeing it as the hallmark of humanity, and as that which sets him apart from and above the animal world, and even distinguishes him from the Almighty Himself.

So forceful has been the emphasis upon progress that any attempt to return to past ideas and methods is almost universally criticized as backward and primitive, and, at the very least, old-fashioned. The antonym for progress, regress, is a word with strong negative connotations. No one wants to be seen as a regressive.

At this time of the year, just before Rosh

Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, the theme of progress is definitely in the air. We all hope to progress to a better year, to a year of growth and development. Indeed, many synagogues conclude the old year and begin a new one with the refrain, “May this year and its curses be gone, and may a new year with its blessings begin!”

No one seems to wish that the coming year be one of status quo. Certainly, very few hope for a return to the past.

And yet, it is precisely “return” that our Torah promulgates, especially at this time of year.

This week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Nitza-vim*, contains the following passage (*Deuteronomy* 30:1-10). I provide a literal translation of some of the verbs, in accordance with their Hebrew root:

“When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse...And you take them to heart [literally, and you *return* them to your heart]...And you will *return* to the Lord your God, and you and your children will heed His command...Then the Lord your God will *return* your captivity...He will *return* you from all the nations...You will *return* and again heed the voice of Lord...For the Lord will *return* to delight in your well-being...Once you



return to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul.”

In the space of just several verses, the word “return” appears, in one form or another, at least seven times! It was in the writings of the great Nechama Leibowitz that I first learned the importance of a word that appears repetitiously in the course of a single text. We are to think, she wrote, of such a term as a *leitvort*, a leading word, a word which gives us a clue and leads us to the deeper meaning of the text at hand.

Even my limited familiarity with the German language was sufficient for me to draw the comparison between *leitvort*, a word that identifies the theme of an entire passage, and the word *leitmotif*, which is a thought or melody that pervades a literary work or a musical composition.

The ten days that begin on Rosh Hashanah and conclude on Yom Kippur are known as the *Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*, which is usually translated as The Ten Days of Repentance. But *teshuvah* does not really mean repentance, and it certainly does not mean penitence, as it is frequently rendered. Rather, it means return.

The *leitmotif* of this entire season is the Torah’s call for us to engage in profound introspection and to return to a place which we have lost, forgotten, or abandoned. It is not progress that is demanded of us during the next several weeks; it is, oddly enough, regress.

It can legitimately be asked, return to what? I would like to provide an answer or two to that question, inspired by the book that I find so personally meaningful at this time of year. It is *The Lights of Teshuvah*, by

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook.

Rav Kook emphasizes that over the course of time, we each develop as individuals, and in that process isolate and alienate ourselves from others, from our families, from the people of Israel. To return means to return from our self-centeredness to the collective, from the *prat*, or single unit, to the *klal*, or all-encompassing group. There can be no *teshuvah* unless the person reconnects with larger components of society. We all, in our heart of hearts, know the ways in which he has cut himself off from significant people in his life, and each of us knows how to reconnect to those individuals.

My experience as a psychotherapist has taught me that there is another destination to which it would pay for us to return. I speak of our childhood. As we mature and develop in life, we grow in many positive directions. But we also move away from our innocence, from our childish enthusiasm, from the hope and sense of potential that characterizes the young, but which older individuals eschew cynically.

People find it very rewarding to, if only in their imaginations, return to their youth and recapture some of the positive qualities that they left behind as they made their adult choices.

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on her 9th Yahrzeit - 28 Elul**

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Finally, we all need to return the Almighty, to His Torah, and to His Land.

No matter how intense our worship of Him during the past year was, we can return to Him for an even stronger connection.

No matter how studiously we explored His Torah, we can return to even deeper levels of its impenetrable depth.

No matter how loyal our faithfulness to the land of Israel was, we can return to even greater loyalty and more courageous faith.

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לעילוי נשמות

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# To Renew Our Days

The moment had come. Moses was about to die. He had seen his sister Miriam and brother Aaron predeceased him. He had prayed to God – not to live forever, not even to live longer, but simply, “Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan” (Deut. 3:25). Let me complete the journey. Let me reach the destination. But God said no:

“That is enough,” the Lord said. “Do not speak to me anymore about this matter.” (Deut. 3:26)

God, who had acceded to almost every other prayer Moses prayed, refused him this.<sup>1</sup>

1. There is an important lesson here: It is the prayers we pray for others, and others pray for us, that are answered; not always those we pray for ourselves. That is why when we pray for the healing of the sick or the comfort of the mourners we do so specifically “in the midst of others” who are ill or bereaved. As Judah Halevi pointed out in *The Kuzari*, the interests of individuals may conflict with one another, which is why we pray communally, seeking the collective good.

What then did Moses do on these last days of his life? He issued two instructions, the last of the 613 commands, that were to have significant consequences for the future of Judaism and the Jewish people. The first is known as *Hakhel*, the command that the king should summon the people to gather during Succot following the seventh, *Shemittah* year:

“At the end of every seven years, in the year for cancelling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place He will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. Assemble the people - men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns - so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.” (Deut. 31:10-13)

There is no specific reference to this command in the later books of Tanach, but there are accounts of very similar gatherings: covenant renewal ceremonies, in which the king or his equivalent



assembled the nation, reading from the Torah or reminding the people of their history, and calling on them to reaffirm the terms of their destiny as a people in covenant with God.

That, in fact, is what Moses had been doing for the last month of his life. The book of Deuteronomy as a whole is a restatement of the covenant, almost forty years and one generation after the original covenant at Mount Sinai. There is another example in the last chapter of the book of Joshua (see chapter 24 of the book of Joshua), once Joshua had fulfilled his mandate as Moses' successor, bringing the people across the Jordan, leading them in their battles, and settling the land.

Another occurred many centuries later in the reign of King Josiah. His grandfather, Menasseh, who reigned for fifty-five years, was one of the worst of Judah's kings, introducing various forms of idolatry, including child sacrifice. Josiah sought to return the nation to its faith, ordering among other things the cleansing and repair of the Temple. It was in the course of this restoration that a copy of the Torah was discovered,<sup>2</sup> sealed in a hiding place, to prevent it being destroyed during the many decades in which idolatry flourished and the Torah was almost forgotten. The king, deeply affected by this discovery, convened a *Hakhel*-type national assembly:

"Then the king called together all the

2. This is Radak and Ralbag's understanding of the event. Abarbanel finds it difficult to believe that there were no other copies of the Torah preserved even during the idolatrous periods of the nation's history, and suggests that what was discovered sealed in the Temple was Moses' own Torah, written by his hand.

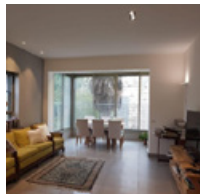


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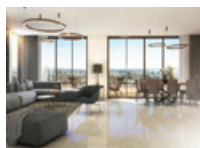
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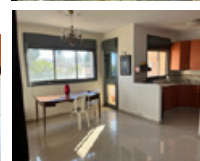
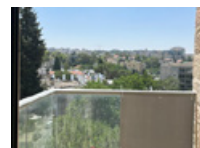
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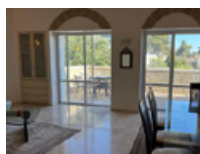
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elders of Judah and Jerusalem. He went up to the Temple of the Lord with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets - all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the Lord. The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord - to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes, and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the Covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the Covenant.” (2 Kings 23:1-3)

The most famous *Hakhel*-type ceremony was the national gathering convened by Ezra and Nehemiah after the second wave of returnees from Babylon (Neh. 8-10). Standing on a platform by one of the gates to the Temple, Ezra read the Torah to the assembly, having positioned Levites throughout the crowd so that they could explain to the people what was being said. The ceremony that began on Rosh Hashanah, culminated after Succot when the people collectively “bound themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the Lord our Lord” (Neh. 10:29).

The other command – the last Moses gave the people – was contained in the words: “Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites,” understood by rabbinic tradition to be the command to write, or at least take part in writing, a

Sefer Torah. Why specifically these two commands, at this time?

Something profound was being transacted here. Recall that God had seemed brusque in His dismissal of Moses’ request to be allowed to cross the Jordan. “That is enough ... Do not speak to me anymore about this matter.” Is this the Torah and this its reward? Is this how God repaid the greatest of the prophets? Surely not.

In these last two commands God was teaching Moses, and through him Jews throughout the ages, what immortality is – on earth, not just in heaven. We are mortal because we are physical, and no physical organism lives forever. We grow up, we grow old, we grow frail, we die. But we are not only physical. We are also spiritual. In these last two commands, we are taught what it is to be part of a spirit that has not died in four thousand years and will not die so long as there is a sun, moon, and stars.<sup>3</sup>

God showed Moses, and through him us, how to become part of a civilisation that never grows old. It stays young because it repeatedly renews itself. The last two commands of the Torah are about renewal: first collective, then individual.

*Hakhel*, the covenant renewal ceremony every seven years, ensured that the nation would regularly rededicate itself to its mission. I have often argued that there is one place in the world where this covenant renewal ceremony still takes place: the United States of America.

The concept of covenant played a decisive role in European politics in the

---

3. See Jeremiah 31.

sixteenth and seventeenth century, especially in Calvin's Geneva and in Scotland, Holland, and England. Its longest-lasting impact, though, was on America, where it was taken by the early Puritan settlers and remains part of its political culture even today. Almost every Presidential Inaugural Address – every four years since 1789 – has been, explicitly or implicitly, a covenant renewal ceremony, a contemporary form of *Hakhel*. In 1987, speaking at the bicentennial celebration of the American Constitution, President Ronald Reagan described the constitution as a kind of “covenant we’ve made not only with ourselves but with all of mankind... It’s a human covenant; yes, and beyond that, a covenant with the Supreme Being to whom our founding fathers did constantly appeal for assistance.” America’s duty, he said, is “to constantly renew their covenant with humanity... to complete the work begun 200 years ago, that grand noble work that is America’s particular calling – the triumph of human freedom, the triumph of human freedom under God.”

If *Hakhel* is national renewal, the command that we should each take part in the writing of a new Sefer Torah is personal renewal. It was Moses’ way of saying to all future generations: It is not enough for you to say, I received the Torah from my parents (or grandparents or great-grandparents). You have to take it and make it new in every generation.

One of the most striking features of Jewish life is that from Israel to Palo Alto, Jews are among the world’s most enthusiastic users of information technology and have contributed disproportionately to its

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development (Google, Facebook, Waze). But we still write the Torah exactly as it was done thousands of years ago – by hand, with a quill, on a parchment scroll. This is not a paradox; it is a profound truth. People who carry their past with them, can build the future without fear.

Renewal is one of the hardest of human undertakings. Some years ago, I sat with the man who was about to become Prime Minister of Britain. In the course of our conversation he said, “What I most pray for is that when we get there (he meant, 10 Downing Street), I never forget why I wanted to get there.” I suspect he had in mind the famous words of Harold Macmillan, British Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963, who, when asked what he most feared in politics, replied, “Events, dear boy, events.”

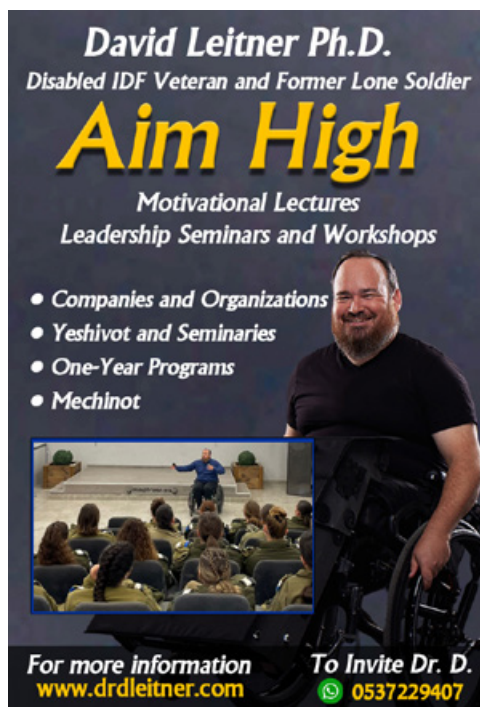
Things happen. We are blown by passing winds, caught up in problems not of our making, and we drift. When that happens, whether to individuals, institutions, or nations, we grow old. We forget who we are and why. Eventually we are overtaken by people (or organisations or cultures) that are younger, hungrier, or more driven than us.

The only way to stay young, hungry, and driven is through periodic renewal, reminding ourselves of where we came from, where we are going, and why. To what ideals are we committed? What journey are we called on to continue? Of what story are we a part?

How precisely timed, therefore, and how beautiful, that at the very moment when the greatest of prophets faced his own mortality, that God should give him, and

us, the secret of immortality – not just in heaven but down here on earth. For when we keep to the terms of the covenant, and making it new again in our lives, we live on in those who come after us, whether through our children or our disciples or those we have helped or influenced. We “renew our days as of old” (Lamentations 5:21). Moses died, but what he taught and what he sought lives on. ■

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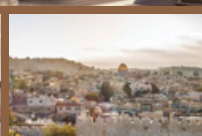
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**“Sos Asis BaShem”!!** The glorious cry of Knesset Yisrael (the body politic) to the nation (or, the nation to Jerusalem) urging them to rejoice over Hashem’s soon-to-be redemption, is understood both as “I shall rejoice intensely *with* Hashem” as well as “*in* Hashem” – and both are correct! Israel will rejoice **IN** Hashem, that is, **THROUGH** His redemption and deliverance of His people and **WITH** Hashem, who will join His children in their joy and their celebration. This joyful exclamation is a most fitting opening to the last of seven haftarat of consolation, expressing Israel’s full acceptance of – and faith in – G-d’s comforting promises.

Yet, as powerful and as emotional as our haftarah’s initial words are, it is important to realize that they are not found in the *beginning* of the 61st chapter of Sefer Yishayahu but in the final verses. Given the passionate expression of joy spoken by the long-suffering nation, we might expect the collective cry to precede the chapter describing the glorious future that awaits Israel. The fact that it does not, begs us to study the earlier p’sukim in that perek – those *not* included in the haftarah – in order to learn what it was that had the nation respond with such overwhelming joy expressed in these rapturous words. Upon doing so, we find these earlier p’sukim replete with Divine promises regarding the years to come – as earlier chapters are as well. But unique to these

promises is that they stand in clear contrast to the prophecies of doom and disaster. Yishayahu opens his address by clarifying the purpose of his latest message:

He begins his prophetic message by telling the people: “G-d has anointed me...to bind the brokenhearted”, and then starts to enumerate missions upon which Hashem had sent him, including:

- “proclaiming freedom for the captives...”
- “releasing the imprisoned from bondage...”
- “comforting all who grieve....”
- “and bringing “splendor in place of ashes to all mourners of Zion.”

As in the many earlier prophecies of comfort, the navi continues describing the future glory, success and fame that awaits the nation – but now he also gives assurances to the nation that G-d would “remove the shame” that years of suffering and exile had caused them. Additionally, Yishayahu assures them: “brit olam echrot lahem”, that Hashem would seal a “new”, eternal covenant with Israel, creating a new relationship to repair the one that Israel had abused and ignored. I would propose that it was these promises that struck the hearts of the humbled nation, and bring Knesset Yisrael to burst forth in their cry of **“Sos Asis BaShem!”**, to rejoice intensely in/with G-d.

Given this “prequel” to this haftarah,

we can better appreciate the message that follows in the haftarah itself. After sharing Hashem's promises with the people, the navi makes his own promise as well: "L'ma'an Tziyon lo echeshch..." "I (too) will not remain silent for the sake of Tziyon!" Yishayahu promises the nation that **he** would pray to G-d for the welfare of Yerushalayim and continues by presenting a most remarkable challenge to the people. Just take a look at the 6th and 7th verses of the 62nd perek – read those words that, I'm sure, are well-known to many: "Al chomotayich, Yerushalayim, hifkadti shomrim.." – the navi tells us that guards have been appointed over the walls of Yerushalayim all day and night. But who appointed these guards? And who are the "guards"? And what was their job?

How beautifully does Rav Yigal Ariel explain that it was Yishayahu himself, he

who pledged that he would not remain silent for Tziyon, it is HE who appointed the guards; the "guards" included all of those who mourned for Jerusalem (Ibn Ezra, Radak); their mission was "al domi lachem" – not to remain silent – as the prophet promised HE wouldn't – "Ad shey'chonen v'ad sheyasim et Yerushalayim tehilla ba'aretz" – until G-d establishes and makes Yerushalayim a source of praise in the world!

REMARKABLE!! Yishayahu charges us all to continue praying to G-d for Yerushalayim.

- Don't be silent!!!
- Don't be passive!!
- Don't leave G-d alone;
- Keep "bothering" Him!!!

This is precisely what the navi promised to do himself.

That is precisely what the psalmist meant when he penned "Im eshcachech Yerushalayim...."

And this is precisely what we should keep in mind each time we ask Hashem "Uv'nai Yerushalayim, or "HaMachazir shecinato l'Tziyon".

We are fulfilling the charge that Yishayahu set before us

....and we are doing G-d's will. ■

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# Hidden and Revealed

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עַד־עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת  
(דברים כט:כח)

*The **hidden** things belong to Hashem, Elokeinu, but the **revealed** things apply to us and to our children forever: that we must fulfill all the words of this Torah.* (Devarim 29:28).

In the pasuk alluded to above, it is not readily apparent as to what items are **hidden and belonging to God** as juxtaposed with **revealed items applicable to mankind**. Rabbeinu Behaye cites five explanations from Rishonim, including his own suggestion.

## **RASHI - ARVUT - JOINT RESPONSIBILITY**

Rashi understands the pasuk as referring to the responsibility of each individual towards others. This is better known as the principle of ערבות (*arvut*). This explanation is consistent with the end of the pasuk that relates to fulfilling the precepts of the Torah. לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה. Similar to a guarantor (literal translation), each individual is responsible for the actions of a fellow Jew. Rashi distinguishes that we are only responsible for actions of others performed in public. Transgressions that another commits in private, of which

only God is aware, (הנסתרות), will not be attributed to others, and in connection with those “hidden” actions, others will not be accountable.

## **RAMBAN - INADVERTANT VS DELIBERATE TRANSGRESSIONS**

The Ramban interprets the term “hidden” as referring to transgressions that one commits but is unaware that such actions are prohibited. With respect to those inadvertent transgressions of which God alone is aware, the transgressor will not be held fully responsible. However, with respect to the transgressions that one commits, being fully aware of his or her actions (בידון), one will indeed be held accountable.

## **IBN EZRA - PRIVATE VS PUBLIC IDOLATRY**

The Ibn Ezra suggests that the term “hidden” refers to one who engages in idolatry in private, and will be punished by God. However, if one worships idolatry in public, then לנו ולבנו – it is the nation’s duty to deal with that individual as prescribed in the Torah. This is consistent with the previous verses that provide the fact that worshipping idolatry will lead to the destruction of the people and the land of Israel.

וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם  
אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּם וְלֹא חָלַק לָהֶם: וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף ה'   
בְּאַרְץ הַהוּא לְהַבְיֵא עָלֶיהָ אֶת־כָּל־הַקְּלָלָה הַכְּתוּבָה  
בַּסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה (דברים כט: כה-כו)

*For they went and served other deities, prostrating themselves to them deities which they had not known, and which He*



*had not apportioned to them. And Hashem's fury raged against that land, bringing upon it the entire curse written in this book.* (Devarim 29: 25-26).

### **RAMBAM – DUTY TO FULFILL MITZVOT EVEN IF REASON IS HIDDEN**

The Rambam identifies the term “hidden” as referring to the reasons for the mitzvot. We may not comprehend the reasons behind each command (טעמי) (המצוות). That may be hidden from us. נסתרות. However, our duty is to fulfill the mitzvot irrespective of our understanding of the underlying reason for each mitzva, which God may not have revealed to us. לנו ולבנינו.. לעשות את כל דברי התורה.

### **RABBEINU BEHAYE**

Rabbeinu Behaye connects our pasuk to what precedes it. As mentioned above, the previous pesukim dealt with our punishment for not fulfilling the mitzvot. We will be sent into exile. Rabbeinu Behaye understands the term “hidden” to refer to the galut (exile). We do not know how long we will be destined to reside in exile. Only God knows when our exile will end. Once we are redeemed however, we will continue to abide by the Torah. The Torah is infinite and will be applicable even in the times of the Moshiach. That is what is meant by לנו ולבנינו.. לעשות את כל דברי התורה. Even after the end of days, we will continue to abide by the Torah.

Chazal tell us that there are פנים שבעים (several different ways to interpret the Torah). We cited five different explanations of the same pasuk, all included

in the perush of Rabbeinu Behaye on the pasuk referenced above. As Rosh Hashana approaches, may we be able to further strengthen our connection to Torah and mitzvot and the bond of *arvut* that exists between all members of Am Yisrael! May we all be blessed with a Shana Tova and כתיבה וחתימה טובה. ■



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Yoni thanks Hashem for having 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 crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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WED | SEP. 20 | 5 TISHREI

יום רביעי 20.9 | ה' תשרי

18:00-22:00



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# TORAH



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TUES | SEP. 12 | 26 ELUL

יום שלישי 12.9 | כ"ו אלול

9:30-16:00

**DYNAMIC  
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Mrs. Leah  
Feinberg



Rabbi Shai  
Finkelstein



Rabbi Anthony  
Manning



Rabbi Judah  
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Shabbat Shuva, Parshat Haazinu

8 Tishrei 5784, September 23rd

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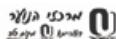
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SUN, SEPT 10

**9:15 AM**

Journey Through the Siddur  
**Rabbi David Walk**

**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 11

**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**  
(Resumes Sept 18th)

**8:30 PM**

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

## SPECIAL EVENT

**8:00PM**

Next Gen Elul Midrasha  
(Women 20's - 40's)  
**Rabbi David Katz and  
Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**

TUE, SEPT 12



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**7:30PM**

(The Bais) Safrus (Men)  
**Rabbi Tzvi Mauner**

**8:00PM**

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WED, SEPT 13

**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  
(Women 20's - 40's)  
Pack Rosh HaShana  
packages for needy  
families @ Pantry Packers

THURS, SEPT 14

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua

**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua

**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
(Resumes Oct 19th)

**11:30 AM**

Unlocking the Messages  
of Chazal

**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**  
(Resumes Sept 21st)

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –  
Bava Basra

**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**



### 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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### Monday, August 28 - Rebbetzin Pearl Borow's Shiur

was sponsored by Stephen & Nadine Cohen  
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### Tuesday, September 5th - Rebbetzin Shira Smiles Shiur

was sponsored by the Frist family in loving memory of  
Elisheva Frist z"l on her first yahrzeit  
לעילוי נשמת אלישבע סימא בת זלמן זל

### Tuesday Morning, September, 5th

was sponsored for a full and complete refuah shleima for  
Miriam Yittle bat Rochel

### All learning on Monday, September, 11th

is sponsored by Yacov & Rina Kaufman, in loving memory  
of Yacov's father Shimon ben Yisrael Eliezer z"l  
and Rina's brother Pesach Yehuda ben Pinchas HaLevi hy"d,  
whose Yahrzeit's are on 23 Elul

### Monday, September, 11th - Rebbetzin Pearl Borow's Shiur

is sponsored in memory of Vicky Rimmel  
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By her family in Neve Tzuf

### Rabbi Shai Finkelstein's Shiur

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### Rabbi Adler's Shiur

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### Sunday, August 20th - Full Day of Learning

was sponsored by the Friedman Family in loving memory  
of Raizel bat Osher a"h on her shloshim

### Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum's Shiur Wednesday, August 23rd

is sponsored by Avigail Barzilay in loving memory  
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### Rabbi Goldscheider's Shiur

has been sponsored for the 2023 Academic Year  
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### Rabbi Breitowitz's Tuesday Shiur - Minchat Chinuch

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### Rabbi Goldin's Shiur

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### Rabbi Manning's Shiur

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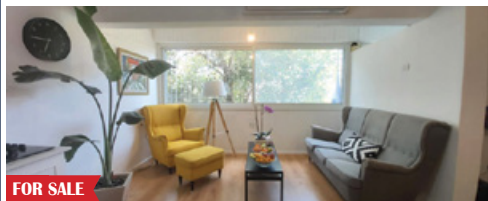


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# The Pomegranate #2

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE IN TANACH AND CHAZAL

The pomegranate is one of the seven species, and appears in a few places throughout Tanach.

In antiquity, the pomegranate was eaten raw or preserved, and juice and wine were prepared from its seeds. The Gemara (*Shabbat* 144b) states that people from the house of Menashya bar Menachem would regularly juice pomegranates. *Shabbat* 115a states that it is permitted to remove pomegranate seeds in the late afternoon of Yom Kippur when it occurs on a weekday, to save time at the end of the fast.

## AS THE NAME OF A PLACE AND PESON

In contrast to other trees from the seven species, many settlements bore the name of the fruit *rimon*: Ein Rimon was a city in the portion of Shimon (*Yehoshua* 19:7), today identified as Hurvat Rimon, located south of Kibbutz Lahav. Gat Rimon in Dan's portion (*Yehoshua* 19:45) was a Levite city. Today, Moshav Gat Rimon, near Petach

Tivka, bears its name.

Shaul sat “beneath the *rimon* at Migron” (*I Shmuel* 14:2); this probably does not refer to a pomegranate tree, which does not offer much shade. This is the name of

a place Rimon, identified with the village Ramon, located southeast of Ofra, where archeological findings dating back to the First Temple times were discovered. The Jewish settlement Rimonim is located nearby.

There is also the mention of a person in Tanach bearing the name of the fruit: Rechav and Ba'anah, sons of Rimmon of Be'erot

(*II Shmuel* 4:2).

## POMEGRANATES AND BEAUTY

It seems that pomegranates are seen as a manifestation of beauty because of its symmetry, red luster, and many shiny seeds. It is also the largest fruit of the Seven Species. Its symmetrical crown also magnifies its beauty.

Rabbi Yochanan's beauty is compared to that of a pomegranate (*Bava Metzia* 84a): "One who wishes to see something



resembling the beauty of Rabbi Yochanan should bring a shiny silver goblet ... and fill it with red pomegranate seeds ... and position it between the sunlight and shade. That luster is a semblance of Rabbi Yochanan's beauty."

The Gemara (*Sukkah* 31a), in regard to the etrog which is called *peri eitz hadar*, says that if someone lacks an etrog it is forbidden to take a pomegranate in its place. From here we see that a pomegranate was also viewed as a magnificent fruit. ■

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## Special Song

The last of the 613 mitzvot is found at the end of *parashat Vayelech*. “*Ve’ata kitvu lachem et hashira hazot ve’lamdah et Beni Yisrael sima be’fihem* – So now, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the Children of Israel, place it in their mouth.” (*Devarim 31:19*) The Talmud (*Nedarim 38a*) teaches that this is a mandate to write one’s own *sefer* Torah. It is curious that the Torah is referred to here as a song. This begs the question – Perhaps the command is to only write the song, not the whole Torah? And if this is a commandment to write a *sefer* Torah, why are we not told explicitly to write a Torah, but to write this song?

The Rambam notes that since it is forbidden to write sections of the Torah, the mitzvah is clearly to write the entire Torah, including this song. The Beit Yosef explains that since the *Shira* was sung at the end of the five Books of the Torah it is understood that one should write the entire Torah up until the very end.

Rav Shach, *z”l* in *Bezot Ani Boteach* explains beautifully that the Torah is the song of our lives. Both on an individual level, as well as on a collective one. We are all faced with numerous challenges and difficulties that make it very difficult to continuously sing a song to Hashem. However,

Torah is the one song that is eternal. The Torah gives us strength to persevere, to continue to believe and to continue to sing. Song reflects the emotion one feels as he understands the cherished value of life and the joy of living. *Dovid Hamelech* encapsulates this so beautifully when he says, “*Chesed u’mishpat ashira* – Of kindness and justice do I sing.” (*Tehillim 101:1*) Whether we experience the beneficence or the judgement of the *Ribono shel Olam*, we can continuously be in a state of song. One who lives a Torah-directed life understands that all Hashem does is for the good, and specifically for our personal good, to become the best version of ourselves. Therefore, if we live with complete dedication to Torah, whatever the situation, we can live with the capacity to sing to Hashem unceasingly.

Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* offers an additional profound insight. The Gemara (*Chagigah 12b*) teaches that Hashem extends graciousness during the day to one who learns Torah at night. This is based on the verse, “*Yomam yetzaveh Hashem chasdo* – In the day, Hashem will command His lovingkindness,” because “*u’balayla shiro imi* – even by night His song is with me” (*Tehillim 42:9*). There are some songs that are sung **to** Hashem, like *Shirat Hayam*, “*Ashira LaHashem* – I will sing to Hashem.” However, there are other songs that are sung **with** Hashem, “*imi*,” this is the song of the Torah. When



we study Torah, we are “singing” with Hashem! Rav Yerucham Levovitz would often marvel how the Rambam, in his explanation on the Mishnah, begins by stating, “*Amar Hashem Yitbarach*,” instead of the classic, “It is written in the Torah.” Torah is interactive, it is constant give and take between us and Hashem. What could be more inspiring than singing “with Hashem” every time we are involved in learning Torah! It is truly the most breath-taking experience. ■

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RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Executive Director, Camp HASC

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

# Selichos: Whistle While You Work

The Holy Ba'al Shem Tov once praised a man who would smile, sing joyously and clap while reciting the serious *Viduy* prayer. The local townsfolk were fed up with this man's bizarre behavior, and asked the Baal Shem Tov to convince him to stop. When the tzadik approached the man and inquired into the reason for his strange custom, the simple Jew explained:

"I am a servant of the King, and I have been charged with a *tafkid*, a job. On Yom Kippur, my orders are to clean the filth from the gutters of the royal palace and scrape away the layers of dirt from the King's courtyard. While usually such work is unpleasant, working in the royal palace is the greatest privilege. How fortunate I am to be in the service of the King! I'm so excited to do His Will, whatever He wants of me. What a blessing it is just to serve the King!"

After meeting this special Jew, the Baal Shem Tov related that the man's *kavanos*, intentions, were indeed lofty and praiseworthy.

In the context of preparing for Yom Kippur and entering the *avodah* of teshuvah, Rambam frames our act of *vidui* as "the

height of forgiveness" (*Hilchos Teshuvah*, 2:7). We are charged with the joyous *avodah* of *teshuvah*, and the privilege to be cleansed before Hashem. However, it may not always seem joyous. "Cleaning the gutters", and getting down into the nitty-gritty of the details of our wrongdoings in order to confess them, verbalizing our mistakes line by line (or even singing them) may seem strange and uncomfortable. It may be unpleasant to suggest that we may have committed the full spectrum of shortcomings in our Divine service and relationships with those whom we love: "We have robbed...we have falsely accused...we have misled others...."

Often we carry the heavy burden of our mistakes and can feel weighed down by the pain of guilt, remorse and regret for our wrongdoings and failures. We might at times feel oppressed by the possibility that we have not been forgiven, that *vidui* didn't produce the "heights of forgiveness" for us. It may even appear as if the negative terminology of *vidui* presents a challenge or an obstacle to *teshuvah*.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook, zy'a, addresses this kind of collateral damage that can result, especially when one

who has developed spiritual sensitivity, *yiras Shamayim* and a fear of wrongdoing, recognizes that he or she may have done something to disappoint their Creator. Knowing that we are infinitely indebted to Hashem, and constantly responsible before Him, makes the awareness of a shortcoming terribly painful. As HaRav Kook writes, in this case we shouldn't just passively wait for Hashem to remove the pain and impose upon us a sense of being forgiven: האדם הכואב תמיד על עוונותיו ועוונות העולם, צריך הוא תמיד למחול ולסלוח לעצמו ולעולם כולו, ובוזה הוא ממשיך סליחה ואור חסד על ההויה כולה, ומשמח את המקום ומשמח את הבריות. ובתחילה צריך למחול לעצמו, ואחר כך הוא ממשיך מחילה כללית על הכל, וכל הקרוב קרוב קודם, על ענפי שרשיו, מצד הנשמה, ועל משפחתו, אוהביו, דורו, אומתו, עולמו, וכל העולמים. ובוזה הוא יסוד עולם בדרגא עילאה...ומתגלה כל הטוב הגנוז בכל...

One who grieves constantly for his sins and the sins of the world *must constantly forgive and absolve himself and the whole world*. In doing so, he draws forgiveness and a light of loving-kindness onto all of being, and brings joy to God and to His creatures.

*He must first forgive himself*, and afterward cast a broad forgiveness over all, the nearest to him first, on the branches of the roots of the soul, and on his family, his loved ones, his generation, and his world, and all worlds...and thus is revealed all the good that is hidden away in everything... (*Shemonah Kevatzim*, II:150)

Forgiving ourselves and letting go of immobilizing guilt might sound like a difficult maneuver, as well. However if we meditate on the words of the *Vidui* text, we

will see deeper meaning in the repeated phrase, על חטא שחטאנו לפניך, “(Forgive us) for the sin that we committed *lefanecha*, ‘in front of You...’”

*Lefanecha* can also mean ‘in Your Presence’, as we sing on Friday Nights, “*Pnei Shabbos*, the Shabbos presence, let us receive....” If we recognize that we are always in the compassionate, royal Presence of Hashem even when we violate His will and command, something in us can shift. If in moments of shame and failure we are nonetheless *lefanecha*, it means we still have the *zechus* of working in the Royal Palace, in the service of the King. Then, despite our mistakes, we will appreciate *Selichos* not only as an *avoda* of seriousness, but as one of *simchah*, as well. We can see this *avodah* as a gift, an opportunity to be cleansed and uplifted by Hashem, and to improve our service to the King.

May we be blessed to taste the heights of purity and joy in complete *teshuvah*, and may we merit to fulfill the will of the *Ribono shel Olam* with love and with song! ■


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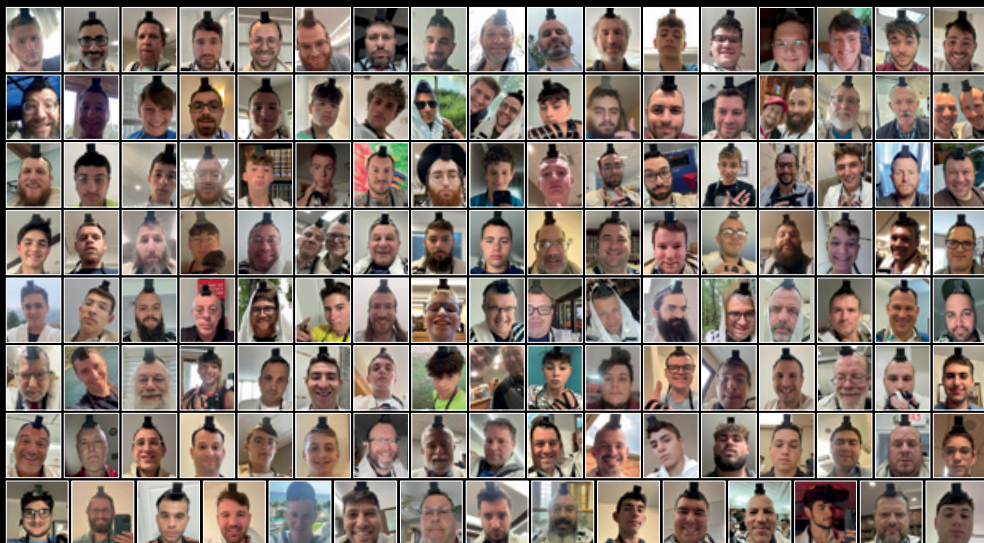
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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

**BY RABBI SAM SHOR**

Program Director, OU Israel Center

This coming *Motzei Shabbat*, we *Ashkenazim* begin to recite *Selichot* in preparation for *Rosh HaShana* and the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva* (our *Sefardic* brethren have been reciting *Selichot* throughout this entire month of *Elul*). Traditionally this period of *Selichot* is filled with a real sense of community, of belonging to something bigger than ourselves, as we gather together to recite *Selichot* as a *tzibur*. Unfortunately, it seems that aspect of the *Selichot* experience will be absent this year. I'd like to focus on one short passage that we will recite many times during this period as part of the daily *Selichot*.

***V'Zacharti et Briti Yaakov, V'Af et Briti Yitzchak, V'Af et Briti Avraham Ezkor, V'Haaretz Ezkor*** - And I will remember my covenant with Yaakov, and also my covenant with Yitzchak, and also my covenant with Avraham, I will remember, and the Land I shall remember...

There are numerous questions to be asked about this verse. Why are the *Avot* listed in reverse chronology? What does it mean that Hashem will remember the covenant with each of the *Avot*? What does it mean that Hashem will remember the Land of Israel?

**Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlap, zt'l**, one of the *talmidei muvhakim* of **Rav Kook zt'l**, offers a beautiful explanation of our verse (*Sefer Mei Marom-chelek Nimukei Hamikraot*), both it's reverse chronology,

and the reference to Hashem remembering the Land.

*If Am Yisrael merits to personify the values of Yaakov Avinu, who represents the coming together of the legacies of all three generations of our illustrious Avot and Imahot, then they certainly will be deserving of redemption....*

*Even if we don't fully live up to this level represented by Yaakov Avinu, but simply exhibit the character trait of mesirut nefesh-personified by Yitzchak Avinu, the willingness to risk everything to sanctify Hashem, and for the sake of Am Yisrael, we will also be recalled and deserving of redemption.*

*And if this character trait is not found among us, but we still personify the values of kindness and compassion for our fellow human beings, emulating the ways of Avraham Avinu, then this too will be recalled, and we will be worthy of redemption.*

*And even if, chas v'shalom, none of these important character traits are present, and the only merit that we possess is that we have returned to live in the Land, and revive the ruins and build once again on our illustrious history, even if that is seemingly the only merit we possess, for this reason alone Hashem will bestow upon us His compassion and allow us to return to Him, and His Torah HaKedosha - **V'Haaretz Ezkor**.*

As we prepare to recite these words each day throughout the *Selichot* period,



may we be reminded of the many merits we each possess, the many fine character traits we have learned from the illustrious generations who came before us, and gain strength in reflecting on the past century of incredible growth and transformation for *Am Yisrael, here in Eretz Yisrael - V'Haaretz Ezkor*. May we indeed merit through each of these treasured legacies to continue to receive Hashem's unending compassion, and may we merit to finally experience the *Geula Shleima*, we have been waiting for, for far too long....*Ketiva V'Chatima Tova*. ■

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## Real Life Rescues

### First Responders Reunite With Boy They Saved During A House Fire

Three weeks ago, a 6-year-old boy was seriously injured in a residential fire at his home in Petah Tikva. An intensive care team from United Hatzalah, led by volunteer physician Dr. Dvir Bar On, responded to the emergency.

Upon arrival at the scene of the fire, medical and rescue teams were informed that a young child was trapped inside the burning apartment. After the boy was extricated from the building in serious condition by firefighters, the intensive care crew provided life-saving treatment, before transferring the child to the hospital.

Last week, the doctor and EMTs involved in his rescue met with the child, who has since fully recovered and returned home. The boy's parents told them: "Your presence was a manifestation of Divine Providence... Thank you for saving our son's life."

Volunteer physician Dr. Bar On and EMTs Shlomo Koritz, Elhanan Witztum, Yehudit Naizov, and Yonatan Cohen, told the boy: "We performed life-saving treatments on you, and we are so glad to see you back in your house alive and well."

The family gave the EMTs a certificate of appreciation in recognition of their dedication and efforts.





# The Historical Voice of Selichot

Elul moments provide a platform for the illustrious days of Tishrei, when we stand in awe and judgement before Hashem. Numerous Elul halachot and minhagim create an ambience of heightened religious awareness. During the first Elul in history, Moshe remained atop Har Sinai for forty days, in fervent prayer, putting the finishing touches upon the second luchot, while securing our forgiveness. Each year since, we all climb our own “Elul mountains” searching for expanded religious consciousness.

One of the most powerful Elul minhagim is the selichot experience. The disruption of our sleep schedule, coupled with devout prayers create a mood of solemnity and soulful gravitas.

In addition to rearranging our schedules, selichot also reposition our location. In a famous phrase, Dovid Hamelech captures our collective yearning to never leave the house of Hashem:

**שְׁבִי בֵּית ה' כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי**

Not all of us are able to forever remain in the house of Hashem, as the demands of this world draw us elsewhere. However, during this solemn month, when our thoughts turn to eternity, we tightly cling to

Hashem and to His house.

Thousands of years ago we spent much of Tishrei in the environs of Yerushalayim and the Mikdash. Absent our Mikdash, we simulate this assembly by augmenting our presence in batei Knesset and batei midrash. Selichot prayers launch a month-long vigil in Hashem's home.

### TWO DIFFERENT VOICES

Selichot are constructed upon the core tefillah of מִידוּת הַרְחֵמֵם or the list of 13 traits of divine mercy. The gemara claims that this list was first articulated by Hashem Himself, as He “personally” demonstrated this supreme form of tefillah to Moshe Rabeinu. Additionally, He assured Moshe that these divine traits would never be completely ignored, but would always elicit a divine response. Essentially, the 13 traits of divine mercy is the only tefillah segment coined by Hashem Himself. During these 40 days we recite this prayer over 100 times, depending upon different minhagim. The 13 middot dominate selichot and imbue them with a voice which desperately pleads for divine pity. Lost in our own futility and failure, we look to Hashem for forgiveness.

## A DIFFERENT VOICE

Though the divinely authored list of the 13 traits of mercy provides the foundation of selichot, throughout history, numerous piyutim or elegies were added to this core. Overwhelmingly, these elegiac poems describe our long suffering through our extended exile. To a limited extent these piyyutim voice remorse for sin, sincere confession, and desire for forgiveness. However, primarily, they portray the sadness of Jewish suffering.

The excruciating tone of these dirges is understandable as they were composed during a very gloomy era of our history. Though some of the earlier piyyutim of Ashkenazic selichot were written in the 9th century, and some of the later ones were composed in the 17th century, the majority were written between the 11th and 13th century in Western Europe. The medieval authors of these piyutim bore the violent brunt of crusader hostility, constant inquisitions and expulsions, uncontrollable blood libels, forced baptisms and brutal pogroms. In these piyyutim they vented their pain while looking to Hashem for salvation. These piyyutim are ‘period pieces’ conveying desperation, tragedy, but also endless hope and faith. The dark world was crashing around them, but their faith remained unbroken. These piyyutim are spectacularly defiant in the face of unimaginable monstrosities.

Gradually, the art of piyut faded, newer ones weren’t written, and these medieval piyyutim became institutionalized in our selichot. Our selichot are therefore suffused with Jewish suffering and with our legacy of faith and less with the classic

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themes of teshuva and remorse for sin.

## BARGAINING WITH HASHEM

This second voice of selichot, sounding the suffering of Jewish history plays a crucial role in our tefillot. When facing personal religious failure we feel sadness, frustration, guilt, and mortification. All these humbling emotions, hopefully, inspire us to resolute commitment for future improvement.

During this painful process of self-examination, we also bargain with Hashem. We look for some excuse, any excuse, to, at least partially absolve our colossal failures. Rabbi Avraham Danzig, the 18th century Polish author of the classic halachik sefer known as Chaye Adam also composed the earnest confessional known as tefillah zakah which is recited as Yom Kippur commences. Toward the middle of this

melancholy viduy and acknowledgement of past religious breakdowns we plead with Hashem to consider our daily struggles when judging us. Part of our religious failure is due to the constant pressure of daily life. We don't invoke these struggles to completely exonerate ourselves of responsibility, but we do ask Hashem to factor these and other personal struggles into His evaluation of our behavior. Similarly, by mentioning past Jewish suffering in selichot we expect Hashem to exercise partial clemency.

### SHLIACH TZIBBUR

Though we hope that Hashem considers past Jewish suffering in our personal judgement, we certainly hope that He factors it in when judging our people at large.

Our selichot are patterned after the original encounter between Moshe and Hashem. The gemara portrays Hashem as donning a tallit and praying as a shliach tzibbur. Though we are strongly averse to applying any physical references to Hashem, this image underscores that, when reciting the 13 middos, we are all, like Him, meant to serve as a shliach tzibbur, even if we aren't, officially, the chazan. During this period, we are all expected to pray for others.

There are so many Jews who depend upon us to be their shliach tzibbur. So many Jews are severed and disconnected from Judaism and will not experience the power and the glory of these great days. So many will casually attend services without sensing the grandeur and the majesty of standing in the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We can't pray only for ourselves, when so many Jews need us to daven for them. They need a shliach tzibbur to intercede on their behalf.

### IDENTIFICATION

However, to daven for someone you must first identify with them and feel compassion for them. Noach fell silent for 120 years without uttering even one tefillah because he couldn't feel compassion for a sinful generation which had degenerated into moral chaos. By contrast, Avraham opened his humble heart to the outlaws of Sedom and fought valiantly for their survival. To daven for Jews who can't properly daven for themselves we first must identify with them.

However, so many have abandoned our traditions. Sadly, many have even abandoned faith in Hashem and in Jewish legacy. Painfully, many stand opposed to



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our great historical project of rebuilding our homeland. But these are the Jews who need our prayers most. How can we identify with Jews who have wandered so far, in order to genuinely daven for them?

Our selichot about Jewish suffering remind us that so many Jews walked out because of the immense pressures of history. Centuries of unbearable hatred and painful discrimination took a heavy toll on our people. Unfortunately, when Western civilization opened its doors to us in the 19th century, many gladly accepted the invitation, exchanging their faith for admission into general society. When pogroms continued unabated and the nightmare of the Holocaust ripped us apart, so many gave up hope.

We, Baruch Hashem remained faithful, and we are all miracles. But think upon Jews who did leave with mercy, not disdain. Read the selichot, imagine the darkness and the terror, and mourn for those who turned away in horror. We are heroes but they aren't villains. Our ancestors were strong while theirs couldn't summon that courage. Let the second voice of selichot preserve our belief in every Jew and empower us to daven for those who haven't yet found their voice. ■

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## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR.  
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# Don't Be Caught Off Guard

על־חומתֶיךָ יְרוּשָׁלַם הִפְקַדְתִּי שֹׁמְרִים כָּל־הַיּוֹם  
וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה תִּמְדוּ לֹא יִחַשּׁוּ הַמְּזֻכְרִים אֶת־ה' אֶל־  
דְּמִי לָכֶם

*Upon your walls, Yerushalayim, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night, constantly, they must never be quiet; those that remind Hashem, do not keep quiet!*

The Navi declares, “On your walls, Yerushalayim, I have set watchmen that will never be silent by day or by night.” Who are these appointed watchmen guarding the walls of Yerushalayim? The Radak suggests that these watchmen are the mourners of Zion who daven for the restoration of Yerushalayim day and night. These watchmen, unlike sentry guards who take turns in their shift, take no rest or breaks. Day and night, day in and day out, וְכָל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה, their constant and consistent presence maintains guard over our precious Yerushalayim. Despite generations of distance from the holy city, the guards have never reneged on their duty maintaining their role from afar.

And what are the words recited on their watch? It is the prayers which reverberate in the spiritual and physical sphere, words recited through the generations. The watchmen plead for rebuilding of Yerushalayim and the restoration of the House of David as they recite the words of Shemoneh Esrei thrice-daily. In the Birkat HaMazon, the

watchmen request Hashem’s mercy in the restoration of the monarchy of the House of David and rebuilding the holy city of Yerushalayim. The Navi Yeshayahu beseeches the Jewish people, the watchmen of each generation to not be silent - אֶל־דְּמִי לָכֶם - to continue praying for Yerushalayim.

But does Hashem need to be “reminded” to bring the Geulah asks Rav Schwab. He responds poignantly that it is not Hashem that needs to be reminded but rather we need the constant reminder. During the night watch, in times of despair and tragedy, it is natural to cry out to Hashem for redemption. It is during the day’s watch, when the watchmen have a clear perspective and confidence in their ability to maintain safe guard, that prayers may lag. It is specifically then that the Navi reminds us that our *tefillot* will bring the redemption and we must continue to pray.

Like the dutiful watchmen of each generation, we cry out to Hashem day and night to remember His city, His people and His world. We pray for the day of redemption, as stated in our Haftorah,

לִמְעַן צִיּוֹן לֹא אֶחְשֶׁה וְלִמְעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא אֶשְׁקוּט  
עַד־יֵצֵא כְנֶגֶה צְדָקָה וְיִשׁוּעָתָה כָּל־פֶּיֶד יִבְעָר

For the sake of Tzion, I will not keep quiet and for the sake of Yerushalayim, I will not be silent until its righteousness shines brightly, and its salvation burns like a torch. ■

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# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL SHABBOS

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI  
Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



## וזכיני לגדל בנים ובני בנים

When I first got married, my Shabbos candle lighting experience started out as a pretty straightforward mitzvah. Quickly strike a match, light two candles, make the bracha, and the mitzvah was done. But over the years, this mitzvah has taken on a life of its own. Not only do my candles usher in the Shabbos, but they symbolize a special time to daven for my children. As my family has grown, כ"ה, so has the amount of candles that I light<sup>1</sup>, and so now my weekly Shabbos candle lighting is even more involved than a 'Chanukiyah-on-the-last-day-of Chanukah' experience.

A couple of weeks ago, as I lit the 8th candle, my ten-year-old son stood there staring at me and finally asked – "That one's for me, right?" And he was right. Over time, I've developed my own little routine. First, I light the two big candles – one for me and one for my husband. I need to allow my own light to ignite, in order to be there for my husband. And then I move on to the other nine, trying to transfer over as much *koach* and bracha as I can to each child.

When I finish 'lighting everyone' and

making the bracha, I recite the famous *yehi ratzon*, asking ותשלים בתינו ותשכן "Hashem, שכינתך בינינו וזכיני לגדל בנים....", help us to always have peace in our home so that your Shechina can rest here, and in turn, we can be successful in our parenting and be able to bring up our children to be עובדי ה'. And then I sing the famous song of וזכיני and I have a chance to give 'quality Tefilla time' to each and every one of my children. I sing the song and request from Hashem that my children be אוהבי ה' (be full of love for Hashem) יראי אלוקים (G-d Fearing), that they should be דבקים בה' (clinging to Hashem) and מאירים את העולם (they should light up the world with all of their Torah learning and good deeds and their service of Hashem). My gaze shifts from candle to candle, from child to child, as I focus on the challenges they are going through and the requests that I have for them. I finish my routine with a few other special Tefillot about raising children.

I can feel the special power inherent in these moments; there's something almost palpable in the air. Where does this *koach* come from and why is there such a widespread minhag to daven for our children after candle lighting?

**Rabbenu Bechaye** (Shemot 19:3) writes that since lighting Shabbat candles is a mitzvah incumbent mainly on women, the time of lighting is an auspicious one

1. Based on the Minhag to light an additional candle for each child brought down by the Likutei Maharich



for women to daven (as Tefilla is heard more during the time of doing a *Eitzvah*). There are many things that women can and should daven for during this time, but the Chinuch of our children is especially apropos.

האישה הטובה היא סיבה לתורה, שהיא יכולה להמשיך את בנה לבית המדרש

He writes that women are really the ones responsible for instilling their children with love of Hashem and His Torah during the formative years. They are often the ones to get their kids ready for school in the morning and it's their compassion and encouragement that motivate them in their Torah learning and spiritual growth. He writes that since Torah is compared to light, it only makes sense that while lighting the Shabbos candles, women should seize the opportunity to daven for their children to cling to the light of the Torah. In fact, it says in **Gemara Shabbat 23b** - "האי מאן דרגיל בשרגי - הויין ליה בנים תלמידי" - "One who is careful regarding the candles will have children who are Talmidei Chachamim."

Often, we might feel that our Tefillot for our children go unanswered but the following story illustrates how our Tefillot are never in vain.

*Rav Baruch Heimann is a well-respected Baal Teshuva and Talmid Chacham who lives in Yerushalayim. A few years ago, he explained how he merited to grow so much in his Avodat Hashem. He explained that his grandfather, Zalman Aran, was the Minister of Education during the earliest years of the state of Israel and was a very close associate and confidant of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion. Rabbi Heimann explained that*

*though his grandparents were completely secular, the one tradition they held on to was that his grandmother always lit the Shabbos candles. She knew this was a special time to pray for one's children and so she would daven that her children grow up to be like the most respected man she knew....David Ben Gurion. One day, Ben Gurion met with the Chazon Ish to discuss the draft law. He was so impressed by the Chazon Ish that he shared his impressions with his friend Zalman Aran and concluded that the 'Chazon Ish is more like an angel than a human being'. Zalman repeated everything he had heard to his wife. The next Shabbos, when Mrs. Aran lit her candles, she thought to herself - If Ben Gurion has so much respect for the Chazon Ish, I might as well daven that my children grow up to be like the Chazon Ish. And so she did, week after week. Rabbi Heimann explained that it was in the merit of his grandmother's Tefilla that he and many of her other grandchildren were zocheh to become Baalei Teshuva.*

The **Gemara (Berachot 32b)** says - כל המאריך בתפלתו אין תפלתו חוזרת ריקם that no tefilla recited will ever return empty-handed; it will always have some effect even if it's not until much later. May we all be zocheh to see how the Tefillot we say by the Shabbos candles impact on our children and grandchildren for many years to come. ■

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**RABBI AARON**

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Editor, Torah Tidbits

# Building the Land: A Collaborative Effort

*Every member of the Jewish people must know that engaging only in the secular aspects of the revival of the nation contributes to only one facet, and his service is not yet a complete undertaking until he also assists and enhances the religious renewal as an all encompassing national construct.*

*Similarly, it must be known to every member of the people of Israel, one who builds the sacred underpinnings of the nation, as long as he does not assist and bolster the mundane aspects of the nation, such a person[’s efforts] lacks the fullness of character of the sacred service that is required.*

*The more we recognize this collaboration, then [the result will be that] the traits of the nation will attain their fullness of character - with the joy of heart of all who await the salvation of Israel from Zion, with truth and righteousness. (Eretz Chefetz 6:6)*

Rav Kook expressed in this passage the essential need for collaboration between the religious sector together with those Jews engaged predominantly in the

physical building of the Land. Achieving harmony begins with both sides seeing the important role each sector plays in the process of the blossoming of the nation.

Indeed, Rav Kook laid out this vision in an address that he delivered when he first settled in the Land of Israel in 1904. It was



only months after Rav Kook moved to Jaffa, Israel that the eminent founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, passed away, on July 3, 1904.

His words not only addressed the death of Herzl but contextualized the new Zionist movement in philosophical/theological terms. Rav Kook makes use of a lesser known tradition

that the Messiah of Yosef precedes the Messiah of David. Yosef stands for material redemption, as Yosef was the provider for Israel. Yosef stands for the Jew of Egypt, where he spent the majority of his life in a secular setting. It was there that Israel ran the risk of being ‘swallowed up’ by that world. David, on the other hand, stands for the spiritual, Torah-inspired redemption

- which will not, however, be effective if it is physically weak. The physical well being of Yosef is vital and must be recognized as such. Our long exile enabled us to keep the spiritual values of Judaism with Torah learning and observance; there was no opportunity for our physical development as a nation.

There can be no final redemption, Rav Kook suggests, without the harmony of the body and soul of the Jewish people. Both camps must be willing to value one another.

Rav Kook's remarkable eulogy gives his view of Herzl as having the stature of a precursor to the Messianic redemption. Peppered with many intricate quotations from the Torah, the Talmud and Zohar in support of his views, Rav Kook couches his eulogy of the secular founder of Zionism, Herzl, in the presentations of two Messiahs and the redemption that all Jews can hope for.

Rav Kook in his concluding words of his eulogy for Herzl cites a perplexing passage from the Talmud in which two great sages state that they prefer to be no longer living when the Messiah arrives. Their reasoning is that there will be so much suffering leading to that momentous occasion that they would rather avoid it entirely. Rabbi Yosef disagrees: "Let the Messiah come, and I will be privileged to sit in the shadow of a donkey's excrement." Apparently he means to say that he is willing to undergo all the pain and disgrace associated with his arrival.

Rav Kook suggested another interpretation. The first set of rabbis mentioned in the passage symbolized the type of rabbis who are detested by those who are

rebellious to the Torah. They abhorred the lack of spirituality and their degeneration of Torah values and mitzvot. Nevertheless, Rabbi Yosef was confident that eventually all the negative manifestations would surrender to the light of Torah. In the midst of the darkness, the shadow of *chamor*, materialism and physicality, a little light will appear which dispels much darkness. Rav Kook's concluding words powerfully sum up his entire presentation: "The prerequisite for the generation of Messiah is the ability to utilize all forces, even the most coarse, for the sake of good and the singular sanctity with which Israel was crowned." ■



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# The Profile of a Supervisor

Last time we explained the need for halachic supervision in fertility treatment and the halachic rationale for employing women as supervisors.

## **HOW DO YOU SELECT YOUR SUPERVISORS?**

The clinics generally work at hours that may be inconvenient for many people, such as early morning, Friday afternoon, Purim, Chol Hamoed etc. The women must be willing and able to work at such hours. Therefore, it is not a job for women with young children. The women must live in reasonably close proximity to the laboratories and be able to get to work without being caught in traffic. A supervisor cannot call up and say that she will be late since the traffic is heavy. The treatment must be performed at the set time, as there are patients who are waiting to be treated next.

The laboratories are usually quite small and the embryologists work under great pressure and with great precision. The supervisor must be able to work under such conditions, being able to observe all that is going on throughout the procedure, without being intrusive or upsetting the workflow. The embryologists cannot work if someone is talking with them, asking

them questions, or disturbing their work. The supervisor must be able to be present without interrupting the embryologist, while respecting their work.

## **MUST THE SUPERVISOR HAVE A SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND?**

The truth is that we prefer someone with no science background at all. The reason is that the supervisor's job is to observe the process and ensure that there was no human error. She does not have to understand the science of the procedure, or comment on the efficacy of one procedure versus another. Neither should she compare one clinic to another, and share information, such as "But in another hospital, they do it this way..." Sometimes, a person with a scientific training will be concerned with the science of the treatment, and this will both adversely affect her ability to simply observe, and may disturb the embryologist who cannot answer all her questions and explain why and what she is doing.

While some people will argue with this approach, it is born out of our many years of experience with numerous different clinics and many supervisors worldwide.

We must, of course, train the supervisors in the relevant medical procedures. Otherwise, they are incapable of supervising the treatments.

More on this next time. ■

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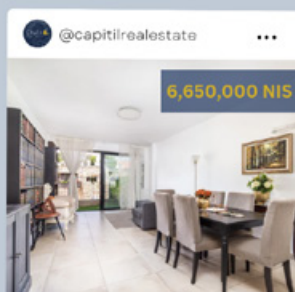


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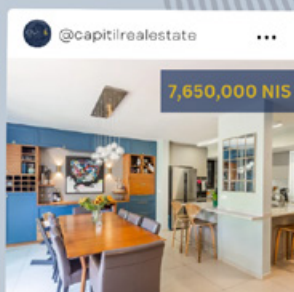
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## Shehecheyanu on Winning a Court Case

לעילוי נשמת  
יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

**Question:** As a lawyer, it is clear to me that a client who wins a court case should recite *Shehecheyanu*, and one who loses should recite *Dayan Ha'emet*. After all, a court victory is truly good news and involves much more money than a suit! Am I correct?

**Answer:** There are different types of triggers for *Shehecheyanu*: cyclical *mitzvot*, holidays, and fruit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 225); acquisitions of significant objects (ibid. 223); finding out good news (mainly, ibid. 222). In your question, you use the latter two interchangeably; we will separate them.

The parameters of acquiring a house or “important” clothing or furniture are quite defined, and when they are met, one does not need to be overjoyed for *Shehecheyanu* to be called for (it applies even when one pays top dollar). We do not say *Dayan Ha'emet* when such items are lost or broken. A court award rarely meets the classic parameters.

Because good news (ibid. 222:1) and bad news (ibid. 2) are very broad, the *beracha* trigger must elicit strong feelings. Most types of *Shehecheyanu*, according to most, are not obligations, but are voluntary and

recommended when applicable (see Rama, OC 223:1; Mishna Berura 223:7). In cases where it is unclear whether they are warranted, most *poskim* (see Mishna Berura 223:12) apply *safek berachot l'hakel* (refrain when in doubt); some say it does not apply to such a subjective *beracha* when one feels the urge to recite it (see Tzitz Eliezer XIV:67). The above may explain what the Mishna Berura reports – most people do not make *berachot* over good and bad news. (The *minhag* is that one recites *Dayan Ha'emet* as a full *beracha* only for the death of a close relative – see Mishna Berura 223:8).

One could solve *beracha l'vatula* questions by combining it with a *Shehecheyanu* on clothing (Shulchan Aruch, OC 600:2) or by omitting Hashem's Name. However, people have the right and maybe should (see Mishna Berura ibid.) make the *berachot* according to the opinions that when there is true happiness from good news (and sadness from bad), one makes a full *beracha*. This can include a variety of significant financial events (see Mishna Berura 222:1). However, your clients should be consistent. Take a real estate agent who does not make *Shehecheyanu* when he makes a sale. Should he recite it only when his fee was questioned, and he wins the same amount



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.



of money in adjudication?! In fact, as a *dayan*, I see several reasons why a ruling in adjudication should not bring on *Shehecheyanu* or *Dayan Ha'emet*.

Many rule not to recite *Shehecheyanu* on a fruit that was grown in a forbidden manner (see Yabia Omer V, OC 19) – that is not supposed to make you happy. Adjudication at times includes *aveirot*, e.g., going to a secular court; lying or misrepresentation; improperly insulting one's "opponent." If one thereby received money he did not deserve, there should not be a *beracha*. If one lost the case, he should usually assume he deserved to lose, in which case *Dayan Ha'emet* is not appropriate, as he did not really lose anything.

In cases where one side is clearly right, the ruling reveals the obvious; it is likely different from the Mishna Berura's (ibid.) retrieving property from a thief. If both sides have strong logic, making the ruling significant, one could factor in that his good fortune is at the expense of another, who is now upset (compare to the Ra'avya, Shabbat 289, who says not to make *Shehecheyanu* at a *brit* because of the baby's pain).

There are other complications. In many cases, rulings include elements of winning and losing for both sides. Also, timing is not simple, considering that one: receives a ruling, there is time for appeal, and receiving payment can be a process (see Aruch Hashulchan, OC 223:4 on not making

*Shehecheyanu* at a wedding).

I have not seen classical *poskim* suggest these *berachot* for adjudication, and the *minhag* is not to do so. Finding a different way to thank Hashem, and contemplating how to be a most moral litigant or not be one at all, may be wiser than solving a halachic doubt by including a new suit. ■

## Having a dispute?



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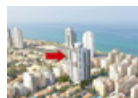
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# Dreaming Big with Jews in the Persian Gulf

Last Friday afternoon I was at home in Jerusalem for a Zoom encounter. I had been invited to speak at a Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony of the Association of Gulf Jewish communities. I was amazed to discover an organization that brings together the Jewish communities of Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Wow.

Someone led the singing of Lecha Dodi and Yedid Nefesh and everyone joined in. The weekly Torah portion was read and translated. I was requested to speak on the subject of Rosh Hashanah and I stated that this meeting was proof that we need to dream big as we approach the new year.

Who would have imagined just a few years ago that with a single click on a computer keyboard we could make such an instant, quality video connection between any two places on earth? Indeed, technology keeps leaping ahead at an accelerated pace, way beyond our wildest dreams.

And who would have thought that Houda Nonoo would become the first Jewish ambassador of any Arab country, and Bahrain's first female ambassador to the United States, as well as a diplomatic representative to Canada, Mexico, and Brazil? She spoke of belonging to a fascinating, if

tiny, ancient Jewish community. Others spoke of identifying proudly as Jews in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Just as we saw big dreams come true in the areas of technology and diplomacy, I remarked, so too can big dreams materialize in our personal lives. Rosh Hashanah is an opportunity to update our list of dreams and strengthen our resolve to act on them. We are accustomed to hearing bleak predictions, to lowering our expectations, to inviting dark, self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet this Zoom exchange with Jews in Arab countries offered proof that dreams we never could have dreamed do come true in the best possible way.

So what are our dreams for 5784? ■

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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# Selichot

In Beit Knesset  
Beit Yisrael

**Saturday Night  
September 9<sup>th</sup> 2023  
10:00 PM**

**First Selichot  
Services led by  
The Solomon  
Brothers**

**Introductory words  
on Teshuva from  
Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael in Yemin Moshe  
**Rechov Pele Yoetz 2, Yemin Moshe**  
Selichot during the week will start at 6:00AM

# THE Y FILES

(\*YERUSHALAYIM)

Theme:  
ISRAEL

by  
Netanel Epstein  
www.netbatsps.com

Dear Mr. Codshow, sir  
As this jolly brilliant year draws to its inevitable close,  
I would like to impart upon you a few choice, heartfelt  
words...

OH YES...?

As the boss of this television network, and indeed,  
of yours truly, I would just like to say, you are  
truly a Rosh-Pina!

EXCUSE ME?!

Ah, I imagine you've  
just exclaimed  
"excuse me",  
possibly presuming that  
this was more tongue-in-  
cheek disrespect  
on my part...

but, please,  
before sir goes  
KABOOM -  
keep reading...

Now, I know "Rosh-Pina" literally  
translates as "Corner-Head", but for  
once I had no intention of insulting you!

...not... not that I ever DO intend to  
insult you! Ha-ha! of course not!  
it's just that I sometimes find myself...  
erm... somewhat tickled by your more...  
erm... comical reactions to certain  
scenarios...

ones that you probably don't actually  
think of as comical at all,  
now that I think of it...

oh dear... this isn't going the way I  
meant it to...  
when you're in a hole - stop digging...

sorry, sorry, sir, I was writing that  
to myself not you, sir! erm...

...where was I?

ROSH PINA, WAS IT?

Ah yes, Rosh Pina!  
Founded in 1882 in the  
Galilee, it was one of the  
first Zionist Settlements,  
and still going strong today!



that's my way of saying...  
I know I cause you quite a  
lot of unintentional  
aggravation, but...  
I really do look up to you...

Like Rosh Pina, you  
bravely pioneered this  
Kiddush-Hashem-  
inspiring Network,  
against all odds, and...  
you really are the  
cornerstone  
for all us workers...



thanks for your faith  
in me, giving me this  
job. May your fate this  
ROSH Hashana be as  
prosperous and long-  
standing as ROSH Pina.  
Love, Bentzi.

I... MY GOODNESS! I'M... I'M  
ACTUALLY TOUCHED! NEVER  
THOUGHT HE WAS CAPABLE  
OF SUCH... SENTIMENTS...



p.s. Fun fact - did you  
know that from a  
certain angle your kippa  
does actually create  
the illusion of you having  
a 90-degree corner  
on the back of your  
head??  
probably shouldn't have  
written that... SORRY!

Dear Mrs. Shabbat Codshow,  
I hope you don't think it improper that I write to  
you directly. On this Erev Rosh Hashana, I just  
wanted to say I apologise for all the grey hairs  
I've given your husband over the past year.  
I have no doubt that a powerful man like him  
can only be who he is thanks to the firm support  
of his loyal wife...



...who stands by his side, as rock-solid as  
"Lot's Wife" (an impressive salt-rock formation  
on Har Sdom, indentified by geo-archeologists).  
Sorry for the rather morbid example, it's the  
only location in Israel I could think of as an  
appropriate way of wishing you...

...Shana Tova and  
all the very best.

and thank you.

Bentzi Yerushalmi.



OH MY!



Dear Mr Har Codshow  
I'd like to say it was a pleasure making  
your acquaintance that time you came  
to inspect our show... but unfortunately,  
I can't, as that would be blatant lying.  
Still, I respect you for schlepping  
out to help your brother - like  
Achiezer (founded 1952 by Yemenite  
Olim, on the outskirts of Lod)



I suppose I have a lot to learn from you  
about how to make an effort for  
brotherly ties. May G-d Bless you for that.

Shana  
Tova!  
Bentzi  
Yerushalmi,  
I come  
in peace.



DANG...

Dear Miss Zroa,  
I know that your presence on my filming  
sets doesn't always bring out the best  
in me... I can be a pain and a nark and  
a goof, but... in a way... it's because I  
feel there's already a responsible adult  
on site. That's you. So I allow  
myself to be a bit... childish... sorry...



Don't let me get to you. You're like  
Moshav Zeru'a (founded 1953, near  
Netivot) - strong, resilient, full of  
Torah, and have great potential!  
Shana tova. Mr Yerushalmi, to you!

Harel, sonny boy,  
Sorry I don't always have  
the capability to address  
your questions quite at  
the rate at which you fire  
them - but that's not to  
say I don't admire your  
thirst for knowledge and  
inquisitiveness. Keep it up!

BUT WHAT DOES  
IT SAY?



Shana tova, my Chubby little  
boy (or Ben-Shemen, founded  
1952 near Modiin, got a nice  
forest nearby).  
Love,  
Dad.

Shlomitzi, my darling little  
pirhana fish,  
Just so you know, under  
all that show of me being  
terrified of you - I am secretly  
proud of you, and do, at  
times, see you as a real  
Daughter of Charm (Bat-  
Chen, founded 1967, in the  
Cheffer Valley, near Netanya)...



...although admittedly it's  
mostly when you're sleeping.  
Shana Tova, and all my love,  
Daddy.

Batzi, the love of my life...  
Thank you for the endless  
patience you miraculously seem  
to have for my mess-ups.  
You're a true Daughter of G-d  
who reminds me always who I  
can truly be and what's right  
(as in Mazkeret Batya - founded  
1887 by the Baron Rothchilde,  
named after his mother, and  
famous for keeping Shmitta in  
impossible conditions...)



Hope to be a better husband to  
you this year. Shana tova,  
darling. Bentzi.

Zerubavel,  
you great bushy-headed  
sleeping-bag!  
I know you can't read,  
but here's wishing you  
a new year that'll truly  
bring out the Lion within  
you (or... "Lavi" - lovely  
Kibbutz. Great for shul  
furniture!)



Kid...  
I...



...OH, FOR GOODNESS  
SAKES, GIMME A HUG!!!



RIGHT... WELL, ANYONE  
ELSE YOU WANT TO BLESS  
AT THIS OPPORTUNITY?  
OR HAVE YOU RUN OUT OF HOLY  
LOCATIONS?



OH, NO,  
ONE MORE - SHANA TOVA  
TO ALL OF... WELL...

**ISRAEL!**

(FOUNDED IN 1948 IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST BY...)



## TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



**ADELE NEMIROV**  
**BEIT SHEMESH**  
**CHAPTER DIRECTOR**

### HOLY, HOLIER, HOLIEST

Let me ask you a question: if you were to choose the person who would lead the Jews into the Land of Israel, would it be Yehoshua or Moshe? Seemingly, the ideal way to enter Israel, the birthright of the Jewish people and the holiest place on earth, would be with the greatest prophet that the Jews ever had, who spoke to G-d like a man speaks to his fellow and taught us the Torah. However, that's not the case, and it begs the question: why?

In case you see this as Moshe's decision, there are many sources to the contrary. The Midrash Rabba on Parshat Ve'Etchanan, for example, explains that the unusual choice of Ve'Etchanan as prayer hints to the fact that Moshe prayed 515 times to enter into Israel. It's true that Moshe made mistakes in his leadership, but it's easy to argue that those mistakes didn't warrant G-d's choice to remove Moshe as the leader right before one of the greatest moments in Jewish history.

G-d wouldn't give us a second-rate leader to bring the Jews to Israel, so Yehoshua must have been the best option. But, the Gemara teaches us that Moshe was like

the sun and Yehoshua was like the moon, reflecting the light of Moshe instead of creating his own light. Was this not a downgrade or a weakening of leadership?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that, while Moshe's leadership would have been miraculous, having Yehoshua as a leader accomplished something much deeper. Chassidic thought teaches that the ultimate purpose of our existence in this world is to create a "Dira b'Tachtonim", a dwelling place for G-d in the messiness, physicality, and imperfection of this world. Rather than the wondrous and miraculous leadership of Moshe, G-d preferred the humanity of the leadership of Yehoshua. Though it took more effort, failed battles, and political and religious complexity, it brought G-dliness further down into this world, advancing that ultimate purpose.

Every element of life can be challenging, messy, unideal, and deeply human. May we always remember that holiness and G-dliness comes in those moments.



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### YES WE CAN

Parshat Nitzavim-Vayeilech is always read before and in preparation for Rosh Hashona.

With the beginning of the new Jewish year everyone strives to improve their Midos and try their best to fulfill the potential they were given.

Every year we set goals for ourselves that we try to accomplish throughout the year. Although we try our best to fulfill them, in a moment of weakness we often give up on ourselves.

You may ask yourself, are we setting goals that we know we can't reach?

But the real answer is no, we are not. The problem is that Yetzer Harah tries to make us believe that our goal is too big and far reaching to accomplish.

It's the exact same with our aspiration to learn Torah and do more and more Mitzvot. We want to, but the Yetzer gets us to believe that it's too much for us to handle.

This is exactly what Moshe prepared us for in this Parsha

”כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנוכי מצוך היום לא נפלאת היא ממך ולא רחוקה היא, לא בשמים היא... ולא מעבר לים היא”

Meaning it feels far because the Yetzer Hara causes the goal you had set for yourself to feel impossible to accomplish.

It's neither in the sky nor beyond the sea. You don't need to wait for anything or anyone. Don't let yourself think that your goals and ambitions are far for you to accomplish.

That's why Moshe closes with the words  
”כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאוד”

Believe in yourself and you'll be able to accomplish anything you want to do.

Shabbat shalom! ■



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