

# Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1427 JULY 10<sup>TH</sup> '21 א' אב תשפ"א

פרשת מטות - מסעי

PARSHAT MATOT MASEI - ROSH CHODESH  
PIRKEI AVOT 2

ב"ה  
40<sup>Over</sup>  
Years  
OU  
ישראל



## SPECIAL ARTICLE:

Preparing for  
Motzei Shabbat  
Tisha Be'Av

Rabbi Daniel Mann  
Dayan, Eretz Hemdah  
page 50



The Excitement  
Continues To Build  
Around Our New  
Weekly Comic!

Check out this week's  
adventure! page 46

והורשתם את-  
הארץ וישבתם בה  
כי לכם נתתי את-  
הארץ לרשת אותה

במדבר פרק ל"ג, פסוק נ"ג

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT MATOT - MASEI

Candles 7:12PM • Earliest 6:19PM • Havdala 8:29PM • Rabbeinu Tam 9:05PM

# This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

**Photo By:** Howie Mischel

My wife and I made aliyah in August 2009, fulfilling a long time dream to live in Medinat Yisrael. We moved to the beautiful city of Modiin which is bordered on one side by the Emek Ayalon, where this picture was taken. Having studied urban planning in graduate school, I was very drawn to Modiin because a professor in my school, Moshe Safdie, was responsible for developing the city's master plan. But the most meaningful thing of all is that this picture was snapped in front of my daughter's home in Mevo Horon, a yishuv which lies directly across the valley from our Modiin neighborhood. To me, this picture is a constant reminder of the fulfillment of a dream-- the future story of our family will be written in our beautiful homeland. And the icing on the cake is that in one more month, the last of our children and his family will be completing their aliyah!

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Asher Manning // Emily Kaufman



## KIDDUSH LEVANA:

Earliest Kiddush Levana 3 Days after Molad 5 Av/Tues. night July 13

7 Days After Molad 10 Av/ Sun. night July 18

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana Until.. 14 Av, Thurs. July 22, All night



# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat  
July 7- 17 / 27 Tamuz - 8 Av**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>4:41 - 4:48</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:40 - 5:46</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:12 - 9:15</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:28 - 8:32</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:22 - 10:25</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:44 - 12:45</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:19 - 1:20</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>6:19 - 6:17</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:53 - 7:49</b>

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CANDLES	EARLIEST	MATOT - MASEI	HAVDALA	DEVARIM
<b>7:12</b>	6:19	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	<b>8:29</b>	Candles 7:10 Earliest 6:17 Havdala 8:26
<b>7:29</b>	6:21	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	<b>8:31</b>	7:27 6:20 8:28
<b>7:31</b>	6:20	Beit Shemesh / RBS	<b>8:30</b>	7:28 6:18 8:27
<b>7:27</b>	6:20	Gush Etzion	<b>8:29</b>	7:25 6:18 8:26
<b>7:29</b>	6:22	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	<b>8:32</b>	7:27 6:20 8:29
<b>7:28</b>	6:20	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	<b>8:31</b>	7:26 6:19 8:28
<b>7:30</b>	6:22	Netanya	<b>8:33</b>	7:27 6:20 8:29
<b>7:28</b>	6:20	Be'er Sheva	<b>8:30</b>	7:25 6:18 8:27
<b>7:29</b>	6:21	Rehovot	<b>8:31</b>	7:27 6:20 8:28
<b>7:12</b>	6:21	Petach Tikva	<b>8:32</b>	7:10 6:20 8:29
<b>7:28</b>	6:21	Ginot Shomron	<b>8:31</b>	7:26 6:19 8:28
<b>7:21</b>	6:22	Haifa / Zichron	<b>8:34</b>	7:18 6:21 8:30
<b>7:27</b>	6:20	Gush Shiloh	<b>8:30</b>	7:25 6:18 8:27
<b>7:30</b>	6:22	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	<b>8:32</b>	7:27 6:20 8:29
<b>7:27</b>	6:20	Giv'at Ze'ev	<b>8:30</b>	7:25 6:18 8:27
<b>7:27</b>	6:19	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>8:29</b>	7:25 6:18 8:26
<b>7:29</b>	6:22	Ashkelon	<b>8:32</b>	7:27 6:20 8:29
<b>7:29</b>	6:21	Yad Binyamin	<b>8:31</b>	7:26 6:19 8:28
<b>7:24</b>	6:20	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	<b>8:32</b>	7:22 6:19 8:29
<b>7:28</b>	6:20	Golan	<b>8:31</b>	7:25 6:18 8:28
<b>Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 9:05 PM • next week - 9:02pm</b>				

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

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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



**RABBI AVI BERMAN**

Executive Director, OU Israel



The OU started in North America in 1898 in order to service the needs of the growing Orthodox community there. (Don't worry, this isn't a boring history lesson.) Established as the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of North America, the OU provided resources and programming for shuls. As needs arose, the OU started numerous programs and gained expertise in teen programming through NCSY as well as its reputation as the gold standard of Kashrut.

True to its directive of providing much needed resources for the Jewish community, 41 years ago the leadership of the OU decided that it needed a presence in Israel. From a Hashkafic perspective, Israel is the future of the Jewish people and strong Jewish organizations need a presence here. From a perspective of filling needs within the community, there was a need to service and inspire the English-speaking community in Israel.

After establishing a presence in Israel and serving the adult population, the OU leadership decided to build upon its success working with youth and teenagers through NCSY in North America. 21 years ago they started NCSY-style programming for youth here in Israel. This included our OU Israel Youth Centers, the Pearl & Harold Jacobs Zula Outreach Center, and NESTO (which

has undergone changes and is now operating as our very popular NCSY Israel).

As a child, I remember OU Israel's expanding presence - hearing about adult programming, Torah Tidbits, NESTO, the Zula opening, and more. When I joined the OU 20 years ago (I started in the month of Av), I recall feeling incredibly privileged to join an organization with such impact and reach. My first position was with Vancouver NCSY. After two years of serving as Vancouver City Director I was appointed to be the Northwest Regional Director of NCSY servicing Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alberta, and even a few kids from Alaska. When my family finished our Shlichut there, I was blessed to have been offered the job of running OU Israel, where I have had the tremendous zechut of working for the past 15 years.

One of the greatest assets of the OU is its leadership - both lay and professional. In Israel, Zvi Sand (President, OU Israel) and Esther Williams (OU Israel Chair) provide me with constant passion, support, and ideas. When sitting and meeting with Zvi and Esther, we are constantly brainstorming and thinking creatively about how to better serve the spiritual needs of the English population in Israel. (As always, I would love to hear your ideas and feedback as well). Every week, I also have multiple Zoom/phone meetings with OU NY, and



their guidance and support enable my incredible team to accomplish all that they do.

Yet, we all know that phone and even Zoom are no replacement for in-person interactions. Last week, Rabbi Moshe Hauer (Executive Vice President, OU), Moish Bane (President, OU) and a small delegation of others from the OU leadership team came to Israel. We were B"H busy with meetings from early morning until late at night. We met with the Ministry of Diaspora, Chief Rabbis, Members of Knesset, and other government officers and Israeli leaders with the goal of enhancing collaboration and increasing the OU's reach and impact in Israel. It is always incredible to see the love and passion that the OU leadership has for Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael.

Whenever I am asked to choose restaurants in Israel, I recommend and take people to the OU Kosher restaurants we have in Yerushalayim - Skyline Restaurant at the Jerusalem Gardens Hotel and Papagaio. So of course these are the places that I took the OU leadership to eat. I must give them both a shout-out. Not only do I believe in supporting OU establishments, but the food and service at both were 5-star. Whether you are looking for a delicious meal or recommendation for a special occasion, I highly recommend you enjoy their food and ambiance.



Avi,  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
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# MATOT - MASEI



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



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



### 1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Bamidbar 30:2-31:12)

Vows: A commitment must be kept. A young woman's vow may

be nullified by her father on the day it is taken; if not nullified, it need be observed. A married woman's vow may be nullified by her husband; if not nullified, it need be observed. Conduct a battle of retribution on Midian, after which Moshe shall die. 1,000 soldiers per tribe are led by Pinchas, accompanied by the holy vessels and trumpets. The leaders of Midian are killed, the cities destroyed. All the booty is brought to Moshe and Elazar at the plains of Moav, opposite Jericho.

The ability of a father or husband to nullify a vow doesn't sit so well with modern

sensitivities. However, in times past, and not so distant times past, men bore much greater responsibility for the decisions of their family members than now. But as I have pointed out many times, what is left unsaid is equally as important. There is no one to nullify the vows of the man. (though there is a mechanism in halacha to do so, men have less ways out than these women). The men are held to their word more vigorously. We are marching to the Land of Israel. Then we will settle there. All will need to take on communal commitments. What I say, I must do. My word is my word; you can count on me. While the march to the Land continues, we are thinking of the day after, the settling of the Land and the building of society. We are pivoting from the march *to* the Land, to the life *in* the Land. That society needs to be built on the reliability of one's word.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (31:13-54) Moshe is angry that the women have been spared, as they were the snares

in the illicit affairs of Baal Peor. He orders their death. Elazar teaches to pass the Midianite utensils through fire and through water before use (kashering and immersing). The vast booty is divided. The soldiers receive half, the people half. The soldiers shall give 1/500<sup>th</sup> of their booty to the Kohanim; the people 1/50<sup>th</sup> to the Leviim. The booty was: 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys and 32,000 young people. The tithes were given. The leaders of the war approach Moshe: no soldier fell in the battle. We shall give all the gold and silver booty as an atonement; it numbered 16,750 shekel.



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The booty is divided equally between the soldiers and the rest of the population. There were 1,000 soldiers per tribe, 12,000 in total. The census last week yielded a total population of 601,000. That's not fair: 12,000 soldiers get the same as 589,000? Lesson learned: Jewish society values its soldiers, expressing profound appreciation to them with rewards for their service. The benefits that our modern Israeli society grants to soldiers who serve our country are rooted in our Torah. And while a tithe does go to the Kohanim and Leviim, those providing spiritual strength, it is miniscule compared to that given to the soldiers. The Kohanim receive 1/500<sup>th</sup> of the soldiers half. The Leviim 1/50<sup>th</sup> of the general population's half. We appreciate the contribution of the religious leaders while appreciating more the contribution of the soldiers.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya** (32:1-19) The tribes of Reuven and Gad have extensive flocks, while the region just conquered has lush grazing Land. They requested of Moshe to settle in this spot. Moshe asked rhetorically: your brothers go to war and you sit here? You will demoralize the people as did the spies into not wanting to enter the Land. You saw G-d's reaction in not allowing that generation to enter the Land. The tribes of Reuven and Gad offered to house their flocks and families in place while joining the rest of the people in the battles in the Land.

The war with Midian yielded a vast booty of animals. The Bnei Reuven and Gad figure "if this Land could yield such success, why not stay here?" Makes perfect sense. After all, this is economically secure and stable.

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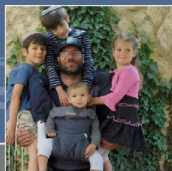
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It is not the same as the spies. The spies were fearful of taking the Land; which in essence was a repudiation of G-d's promise to champion our settling the Land. These people are merely comfortable in chutz laaretz. The grass is greener on this side; why venture to the other, the unknown? They don't question whether the Land can be taken; they question why give up the good life. Sound familiar?



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya** (32:20-33:49) Moshe agreed to the offer of the tribes of Reuven and Gad: they would join the battle for the Land and upon its conclusion would return to the east bank of the Jordan. Moshe informed Yehoshua and Elazar of this, instructing them to ensure that all that was agreed upon be fulfilled. The Lands of Og and Sichon were divided amongst Gad and Reuven, while the region of Gilad was given to half of the tribe of Menashe. (Parshat Masei) Moshe recorded all the travels until here, listing them all in great detail. When they arrived at Hor Hahar, Aharon died at age 123 on the first of the fifth month (1 Av). The travels concluded at the plains of Moav opposite Jericho.

The acquiescence to the request of the tribes of Reuven and Gad is surprising. Why allow them to stay outside of the Land of Israel, settling in the Lands of Og and Sichon? Now this may sound harsh, but, the Land that has been conquered is being unequivocally claimed as ours. These are the Lands of Sichon and Og. They fought the Jewish people. National justice demands that their opposition not go unnoticed. Were all the Jews to have entered the

Land, this area would be resettled by the adversary. So too with the war with Midian. The national effort at seduction cannot be left unopposed. The Jewish people are conveying a message of what we can call a Newtonian law of national justice; every opposition to us, will be met with an opposition to you.



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya** (33:50-34:15) On the banks of the Jordan, the people are commanded to take the Land of Israel and settle in it for it is given to you. You must supplant the people of the Land for if not, they will be a thorn in your side; and inevitably, what I am commanding of you to supplant them, will be done by them to you. The borders of the Land: in the south from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, the western border is the Mediterranean Sea north into Lebanon, the North into Syria, the east along the Jordan.

The delineation of the borders of the Land is tricky because some of the landmarks it describes are not familiar to us. Nonetheless it is clear that the southern border does not extend all the way down to Eilat. The northern border extends well into Lebanon of today. And the eastern border includes much of Syria of today. With the impending Shmitta year in Israel, determining the southern border is helpful, for any produce grown south of that border will not be bound by the laws of Shmitta.



**6<sup>th</sup> aliya** (34:16-35:8) The leaders of the tribes shall apportion the Land. The Leviim shall be given cities amongst the tribes. Each city shall



have open area and grazing area surrounding it, 2,000 amot in total area outside the city. The Leviim may settle in the cities of refuge or in 48 designated cities. These cities are provided by the tribes, according to the size of the tribe and their allotted area.

The description of the open and grazing area around the city is one of the ecological passages of the Torah. Green lung around the city. 2,000 amot is about a kilometer. As the cities were small (no need for wide roads for cars in the ancient world), this amounts to a healthy greenbelt around the city.



7<sup>th</sup> **aliya** (35:9-35:13) Cities of Refuge are to be allocated, 3 on the west side of the Jordan, 3 on the east. One who kills accidentally may flee there. It is not accidental but rather murder if one attacks with a lethal weapon, or the assault is premeditated. The murderer shall be put to death; he may not flee to these cities. The relatives of the daughters of Zelophchad pointed out to Moshe that their family inheritance will be damaged. For the daughters will marry men of another tribe; so the integrity of their family allotment will be damaged. It will not even return in Yovel, for it will begin with another tribe. Moshe instructed that these women marry men from their family so as to maintain the integrity of the family allotment.

In the description of the cities of refuge, any illusion that the Jewish society in the Land will be perfect is dispelled. There will be murders. And earlier in this parsha, we fought a battle due to the failing of sexual





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	STATS		
	Matot	Mas'ei	M&M
of 54 sedras	42nd	43rd	–
of 10 in Bamidbar	9th	10th	–
lines in a Torah	190	189	379
rank	29th	30th	1st
Parshiyot	9	8	17
P'tuchot	4	6	10
S'tumot	5	2	7
P'sukim	112	132	244
rank (Torah/Bam.)	24/7	12/5	1/1
Words	1484	1461	2945
rank	29/6	32/7	1/1
Letters	5652	5773	11425
rank	30/7	28/6	1/1
<b>Mitzvot</b>	2	6	8
positive	1	2	3
prohibitions	1	4	5

impropriety with the women of Midian. And earlier in the Torah, the Golden Calf and idol worship. So there you have it: the Jews of the desert have covered the big 3, idolatry, adultery and murder. We aren't, nor do we have illusions that we will be a perfect society. But, with that full knowledge, G-d is promising us that we will enter the Land imminently. Some Jews will err, will sin, will fail. But not the Jewish people. The covenant with the people endures. Rocky at times, but enduring. The book of Bamidbar ends on the banks of the Jordan, poised to enter the Land.

## HAFTORAH

### YIRMIYAHU 2:4 –28; 3:4.

This week's *haftorah* is the second of a series of three "*haftarot* of affliction."

Yirmiyahu transmits Hashem's message to the Jewish people in strong tones - including the leadership, for their abandonment of Hashem. He reminds them of the kindness Hashem did for them, taking them out of Egypt and leading them through the desert and settling them in the Promised Land, yet they repaid kindness with disloyalty.

Hashem asks them to view the actions of their neighboring nations, the Kittites and Kedarites: "And see whether there was any such thing, whether a nation exchanged a god, although they are not gods. Yet My nation exchanged their glory for what does not avail."

The haftorah ends on an encouraging note, assuring the people that if they return to Hashem with sincerity, they will be restored to their full glory. ■

## A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES  
Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

There is a famous Rashi in the week's Parsha, which seems eternal and worthy to be mentioned. The tribes of Reuven and Gad turned to Moshe to acquire the lands on the Eastern side of the Jordan. They stipulated that they accepted upon themselves the responsibility to enter the land of Canaan armed to fight with the rest of the tribes, first, before returning to their portions. They even conditioned that they would leave their sheep and families secured on the Eastern side, as they would fight with Israel in conquering the Western part.

(32:16) "And they came near to him and said: Sheepfolds we will build for our cattle here and cities for our little ones." "Gidrot Tzon nivneh l'mikneinu ...V'aarim l'tapeinu"

This seems a very fair request on the part of the two and a half tribes. All Moshe needed was to accept or not accept their proposal.

Yet, Moshe answers them in reverse to what they requested.

He said to the (24:24) "Build you cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep"

Why the different order? Was it simply a mistake in syntax?

Rashi quoting the Tanchuma says that it was intentional. Moshe taught them correct priorities in life. First, take care of your families and only then secure your possessions. Moshe, aware of their incorrect perspective of things, leaves them with an important message. The children are more important than we are; they are our future!

Perhaps this was the mistaken perception of the generation of the wilderness, to think of themselves first. Moshe's legacy is to concern ourselves about the future generation first- they ensure our survival.

Shabbat Shalom ■



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# THE PERSON

# IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

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## Honesty and Integrity

Every so often, I come across a sentence of another person's writing which expresses one of my own thoughts in a language far superior to my own. Over the years, I have contemplated and written about the concepts of "honesty" and "integrity" and the difference between the two.

But never was I able to articulate their precise definitions and the difference between them as cogently and as concisely as in the following passage from Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*: "Integrity includes but goes beyond honesty. Honesty is...*conforming our words to reality*. Integrity is *conforming reality to our words*—in other words, keeping promises and fulfilling expectations. This requires an

integrated character, a oneness, primarily with self but also with life."

Honesty for Covey, and I for one heartily agree, is the virtue of describing reality exactly as it is, of telling the truth. In this day and age, when there is so much confusion as to whether or not there even is such a thing as truth, it is refreshing to see the place of honesty restored to the list of important human virtues.

For Judaism, truth, *emet*, is more than just a virtue. It is one of the three fundamental principles, along with justice and peace, upon which the world stands. In the words of the Talmud, "The signature of the Holy one, blessed be He, is truth."

So rare is the man of truth that legend has the aged Diogenes searching for him with lanterns. But as rare as the trait of honesty is, the trait of integrity is even more difficult to find.

Integrity is the ability not only to say what you mean, but to mean what you say. Following Covey, it is the quality of conforming one's actions to one's words, of reliably following through on one's commitment. It is more than the ability to make things happen. It is making your own promises happen!

This week's double Torah portion, *Matot-Masei*, opens with a lengthy and

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intricate discussion of the concepts of “the vow.” Biblical teachings insist that the words we express must be taken very seriously; indeed, we are taught that our words are sacred. Once a person, man or woman, young or old, simpleton or scholar, utters a commitment, he or she is duty-bound to honor that commitment. “*Motza sefatecha tishmor ve’asita*. That which your lips express must be honored and performed.”


As helpful as is Covey’s succinct definition of “integrity,” it is also deceptively simple. There is so much more that we need to know about integrity. And about “honesty,” for that matter.

For one thing, honesty and integrity are not just descriptors of individual persons’ characters. Rather, they are social values, which ideally should define the essence of human communities and entire societies. From a Jewish perspective, “honesty” and “integrity” cannot be restricted to individual paragons of virtue, saints and holy men, but must become universal cultural norms.

This is why the laws of vows, unlike all the other laws of the Torah, are explicitly given to *rashei hamatot*, the chieftains of the tribes. It is to emphasize that the sanctity of speech is not just a goal for a few spiritually-gifted individuals. It must be enunciated as one of the essential mores of the entire tribe.

The Talmud relates the story of an immortal community, a legendary village that knew not death. This was because no one there ever lied. This idyllic existence came to an abrupt end, however, when a





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young person, eager to protect the privacy of his parent, told an inquiring visitor that his parent was not home. A harmless and well-intentioned remark, common to us all. A white lie, perhaps, but a lie nevertheless, and one which ruined forever the eternal life of that fabled village.

Yet another lesson about keeping our word is taught in the opening verses of this week's Torah portion (*Numbers* 30:1-17). Sometimes, we overextend ourselves and make promises that we cannot possibly keep. In moments of extreme urgency, or sublime inspiration, we are wont to express commitments that are beyond our capacity to fulfill.

Can a vow thus expressed be annulled? The Torah, ever practical, answers "yes!" and describes some of the procedures designed to release a person from his or her vows. The Talmud, in an entire tractate devoted to this topic, specifies the circumstances and conditions under which such a release can be obtained.

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## We ask that the Almighty release us from these impossible and often no longer relevant commitments

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Most well-known among the "ceremonies" releasing us from our personal vows and promises is the *Kol Nidrei* prayer which ushers in our most hallowed day, Yom Kippur. Not really a prayer in the ordinary sense, *Kol Nidrei* is a statement in which we declare our past vows null and void. This

custom is experienced by many as strange and as an offense to the value of integrity. But I personally have always found that it reinforces the role of integrity in my life and in the lives of all of us who live in the "real world."

During the entire year, you and I make many commitments and resolutions. With the noblest of motives, we promise things to our loved ones, verbally establish objectives to improve the world around us, or simply vow to lose weight, stop smoking, or start exercising.

As the year wears on, situations change, priorities shift, and we ourselves become different. At least one time each year, on Yom Kippur, we realize how unrealistic we were and that we erred in our assessment of what we could accomplish. And so, we ask that the Almighty release us from these impossible and often no longer relevant commitments, and begin with Divine help a new slate, hoping that the next time we make a promise, it will be one that we will be able to keep.

Judaism teaches us the primary importance of keeping our word. But it does not lose sight of our human frailties and limitations and recognizes that often it is not moral failure that explains our lack of integrity, but simple human weakness, hopefully rare and surely forgiven by God.

Integrity is a cherished value for the society at large. The acknowledgement of human limitations in maintaining integrity must be accepted. These are two important and timely lessons from this week's Torah portion. ■





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# COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
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## Conflict Resolution

One of the hardest tasks of any leader – from Prime Ministers to parents – is conflict resolution. Yet it is also the most vital. Where there is leadership, there is long-term cohesiveness within the group, whatever the short-term problems. Where there is a lack of leadership – where leaders lack authority, grace, generosity of spirit and the ability to respect positions other than their own – then there is divisiveness, rancour, back-biting, resentment, internal politics and a lack of trust. True leaders are the people who put the interests of the group above those of any subsection of the group. They care for, and inspire others to care for, the common good.

That is why an episode in parshat Matot is of the highest consequence. It arose like

this: The Israelites were on the last stage of their journey to the Promised Land. They were now situated on the east bank of the Jordan, within sight of their destination. Two of the tribes, Reuben and Gad, who had large herds and flocks of cattle, felt that the land upon which they were now encamped was ideal for their purposes. It was good grazing country. So they approached Moses and asked for permission to stay there rather than take up their share in the land of Israel. They said: "If we have found favour in your eyes, let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan." (Num. 32:5)

Moses was instantly alert to the risks. These two tribes were putting their own interests above those of the nation as a whole. They would be seen as abandoning their people at the very time they were needed most. There was a war – in fact a series of wars – to be fought if the Israelites were to inherit the Promised Land. As Moses put it to the tribes: "Should your fellow Israelites go to war while you sit here? Why do you discourage the Israelites from crossing over into the land the Lord has given them?" (32:6-7). The proposal was potentially disastrous.

Moses reminded the men of Reuben and Gad what had happened in the incident of the spies. The spies demoralised the people, ten of them saying that they could not conquer the land. The inhabitants were too strong. The cities were impregnable. The result of that one moment was to condemn an entire generation to die in the wilderness and to delay the eventual conquest by forty years. "And here you are, a brood of sinners, standing in the place of your fathers and making the Lord even more angry with Israel. If you turn away from following Him, He will again leave all this people in the wilderness, and you will be the cause of their destruction." (Num. 32:14-15) Moses was blunt, honest and confrontational.

What then follows is a model illustration of positive negotiation and conflict resolution. The Reubenites and Gadites recognise the claims of the people as a whole and the justice of Moses' concerns. They propose a compromise: Let us make provisions for our cattle and our families, they say, and the men will then accompany the other tribes across the Jordan. They will fight alongside them. They will even go ahead of them. They will not return to their cattle and families until all the battles have been fought, the land has been conquered, and the other tribes have received their inheritance. Essentially they invoke what would later become a principle of Jewish law: *zeh*

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*neheneh vezeh lo chaser*, meaning, an act is permissible if “one side gains and the other side does not lose.”<sup>1</sup> We will gain, say the two tribes, by having land which is good for our cattle, but the nation as a whole will not lose because we will still be a part of the people, a presence in the army, we will even be on the front line, and we will stay there until the war has been won.

Moses recognises the fact that they have met his objections. He restates their position to make sure he and they have understood the proposal and they are ready to stand by it. He extracts from them agreement to a *tenai kaful*, a double condition, both positive and negative: If we do this, these will be the consequences, but if we fail to do this, those will be the consequences. He asks that they affirm their commitment. The two tribes agree. Conflict has been averted. The Reubenites and Gadites achieve what they want but the interests of the other tribes and of the nation as a whole have been secured. It is a masterclass in negotiation.

The extent to which Moses’ concerns were justified became apparent many years later. The Reubenites and Gadites did

indeed fulfil their promise in the days of Joshua. The rest of the tribes conquered and settled Israel while they (together with half the tribe of Manashe) established their presence in Transjordan. Despite this, within a brief space of time there was almost civil war.

Chapter 22 of the Book of Joshua describes how, after returning to their families and settling their land, the Reubenites and Gadites built “an altar to the Lord” on the east side of the Jordan. Seeing this as an act of secession, the rest of the Israelites prepared to do battle against them. Joshua, in a striking act of diplomacy, sent Pinchas, the former zealot, now man of peace, to negotiate. He warned them of the terrible consequences of what they had done by, in effect, creating a religious centre outside the land of Israel. It would split the nation in two.

The Reubenites and Gadites made it clear that this was not their intention at all. To the contrary, they themselves were worried that in the future, the rest of the Israelites would see them living across the Jordan and conclude that they no longer wanted to be part of the nation. That is why they had built the altar, not to offer sacrifices,

1 Bava Kamma 20b.

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not as a rival to the nation's Sanctuary, but merely as a symbol and a sign to future generations that they too were Israelites. Pinchas and the rest of the delegation were satisfied with this answer, and once again civil war was averted.

The negotiation between Moses and the two tribes in our parsha follows closely the principles arrived at by the Harvard Negotiation Project, set out by Roger Fisher and William Ury in their classic text, *Getting to Yes*.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, they came to the conclusion that a successful negotiation must involve four processes:

*Separate the people from the problem.* There are all sorts of personal tensions in any negotiation. It is essential that these be cleared away first so that the problem can be addressed objectively.

*Focus on interests, not positions.* It is easy for any conflict to turn into a zero-sum game: if I win, you lose. If you win, I lose. That is what

happens when you focus on positions and the question becomes, "Who wins?" By focusing not on positions but on interests, the question becomes, "Is there a way of achieving what each of us wants?"

*Invent options for mutual gain.* This is the idea expressed halachically as *zeh neheneh vezeh neheneh*, "Both sides benefit." This comes about because the two sides usually have different objectives, neither of which excludes the other.

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<sup>2</sup> Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, Random House Business, 2011.

*Insist on objective criteria.* Make sure that both sides agree in advance to the use of objective, impartial criteria to judge whether what has been agreed has been achieved. Otherwise, despite all apparent agreement, the dispute will continue, both sides insisting that the other has not done what was promised.

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Moses does all four. First he separates the people from the problem by making it clear to the Reubenites and Gadites that the issue has nothing to do with who they are, and everything to do with the Israelites' experience in the past, specifically the episode of the spies. Regardless of who the ten negative spies were and which tribes they came from, everyone suffered. No one gained. The problem is not about this tribe or that but about the nation as a whole.

Second, he focused on interests, not positions. The two tribes have an interest in the fate of the nation as a whole. If they put their personal interests first, God will become angry and the entire people will be punished, the Reubenites and Gadites among them. It is striking how this negotiation contrasts so strongly to the dispute with Korach and his followers. There, the whole argument was about positions, not interests – about who was entitled to be a leader. The result was collective tragedy.

Third, the Reubenites and Gadites then invent an option for mutual gain. If you allow us to make temporary provisions for our cattle and children, they say, we will not only fight in the army. We will be its advance guard. We will benefit, knowing that our request has been granted. The nation will benefit by our willingness to take on the most demanding military task.

Fourth, there was an agreement on objective criteria. The Reubenites and Gadites would not return to the east bank of the Jordan until all the other tribes were safely settled in their territories. And so it happened, as narrated in the book of Joshua:

Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasse and said to them, “You have done all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. For a long time now—to this very day—you have not deserted your fellow Israelites but have carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you. Now that the Lord your God has given them rest as He promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan. (Joshua 22:1-4)

This was, in short, a model negotiation, a sign of hope after the many destructive conflicts in the book of Bamidbar, as well as a standing alternative to the many later conflicts in Jewish history that had such appalling outcomes.

Note that Moses succeeds not because he is weak, not because he is willing to compromise on the integrity of the nation as a whole, not because he uses honeyed words and diplomatic evasions, but because he is honest, principled, and focused on the common good. We all face conflicts in our lives. This is how to resolve them. ■

*Covenant and Conversation 5781 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z”l. These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt”l are part of the ‘Covenant & Conversation’ series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on [www.rabbisacks.org](http://www.rabbisacks.org).*



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## PROBING

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

## THE PROPHETS

This week's haftarah, the second of the "t'lat d'pur'anuta," three haftarot of punishment that precede Tish'a B'av, is taken from the second and third chapters of Yirmiyahu, a direct continuation of the prophecy that we read last week. This, the first prophecy that the *navi* addresses to Israel, accuses the people of being disloyal to G-d. By turning to the false gods of other nations, Israel abandoned their faith in the one G-d and worse, they exchanged the worship of the One true G-d with the veneration of deities that were false and powerless. Additionally, Yirmiyahu accuses the wayward nation of being even worse than the idolatrous nations who remained faithful to their gods – even though they have proven to be ineffectual. The *navi* then argues that it was this faithlessness that led the people to be ungrateful, for when one doesn't believe that Hashem is THE One, THE only, THE all-powerful, he will fail to recognize Him as the source of all blessing, and therefore, deserving of all thanks.

Ironically, Israel was led onto this wayward path as a result of the brachot, the gifts and blessings that Hashem had showered upon them. Their G-d given successes led them to believe that they were a privileged nation, protected by their powerful Divinity, whose Temple and Holy Presence stood in their midst. And, for that reason, they were convinced that Hashem would never allow His Temple to be destroyed! Even while under the Babylonian siege the Jerusalemites chose to heed the words of the false prophets rather than look into their own actions and repair their ways. And this is why the prophet cries out to them: "How can you claim: 'We have not sinned?' Look at your path in the valley (perhaps referring to Gei Ben Hinnom, where they practiced Molech worship of child sacrifice) and see what you have done!!" And it was exactly this false belief that brought their downfall.

The Rambam opens his laws of teshuva by detailing the steps leading to a successful



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act of repentance with 'HaKarat Hachet', a recognition of the sin, the misdeed, the corruption. Without realizing that one has sinned against G-d there cannot be regret or remorse and therefore there cannot be teshuva or penitence and, as a result, there can be no forgiveness and no atonement. The inability – or refusal – of Israel to recognize her sin, her blindness to the corruption in her midst and her rebelliousness toward G-d made forgiveness impossible. It is for that reason that, tragically, Yirmiyahu's words remained unheeded. Israel failed to realize that she is only a "privileged" nation when she accepts her divine responsibilities and she is only "chosen" in order to carry out G-d's mission for her.

As we stand in the midst of the "three weeks", as the fast of Tish'a B'av, quickly approaches, our haftarah reminds us to recognize where we have fallen short of G-d's expectations and where we need to repair our behavior. Our return to Hashem is not limited to acts of prayer but must include acts of kindness. If we will look into ourselves and begin to accept our guilt perhaps then we would fulfill G-d's wish that is expressed at the end of the haftarah: "Oh, if you would but once again call me 'My Father, Master of my youth.' " ■

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# RABBI SHALOM

## ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh  
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org  
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

# Today is Aharon's Yahrzeit

וַיַּעַל אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־הָר הָהָר עַל־פִּי ה' וַיָּמָת שָׁם בַּשָּׁנָה  
הָאַרְבָּעִים לְצֵאת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָחִמִּישִׁי  
בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ. (במדבר לג:לח)

*Aharon HaKohen ascended Hor HaHar at Hashem's bidding and died there, on the first day of the fifth month in the fortieth year of Bnai Yisrael's exodus from Egypt. (Bamidbar 33:38)*

There is only one person's yahrzeit recorded in the Torah and that is the date of Aharon Hakohen's death. It happens to be today! Rosh Hodesh Av.

Although the date of Aharon's death is recorded in Masai after the various journeys are delineated, we are initially

informed of Aharon's death in Parshas Hukas. Immediately following the disclosure of Aharon's departure, the other nations felt it was an opportune time to attack Bnai Yisrael.

וַיִּשְׁמָע הַכְּנַעֲנִי מֶלֶךְ־עַרְדֹּיִשׁ בְּנֹגֵב כִּי בָא יִשְׂרָאֵל דֶּרֶךְ  
הָאֲתָרִים וַיִּלָּחֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשָּׂבֵן מִמֶּנּוּ שָׂבִי. (במדבר  
כא:א).

*The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the south, heard that Israel had come by the route of the spies, and he waged war against Israel and took from them a captive. (Bamidbar 21:1).*

What made the other nations perceive Am Yisrael as being so vulnerable immediately following the death of Aharon?

Furthermore, the gemara informs us (Ta'anit 9a) that the *Mann* was provided to Am Yisrael in the merit of Moshe, the Be'er was in the merit of Miriam and the *Ananei Hakavod* in the merit of Aharon. How are the Ananei Hakavod most relevant to Aharon?

One of the *yesodos* of Am Yisrael is the midda of Arvus – unity. Am Yisrael is referred to as one body. When we received the Torah, we were united as one – as is stated ויחן שם ישראל - in the singular, to highlight the unification we experienced at that moment. Aharon was known as an "ohev shalom v'rodef shalom" (Avos 1:12)– always seeking to restore peace among the people.

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When we are unified, no other nation can harm us. It is as if a spiritual armor protects us. Yet, when we are divided, we are vulnerable and at the mercy of our enemies. The Mishkan Betzallel suggests that once Aharon perished, the other nations hypothesized that in his absence there would be inner conflicts and they would be able to be victorious over Am Yisrael.

Perhaps the *Ananei Hakavod* were provided in the merit of Aharon, as they symbolize the unification of Am Yisrael. They encircled and protected the people as a unit. That personified Aharon, an individual who always sought to unify the nation.

It is no coincidence that Aharon's death is on Rosh Chodesh Av, the month in which both the Batei Mikdash were destroyed, due to *sinas chinum*. When we act as an '*am mefuzar umefurad*' (a nation that is split) then we fall before our enemies. On Aharon's *Yahrzeit* may we recall Aharon's glue that bound the nation together, as the seamless cloud that protected our nation in the desert. May we seek to emulate Aharon's love, respect, care and concern for every member of Klal Yisrael so that we can be zoche to experience a *geula shlema* during our lifetime. ■

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## A Startling Request

**A**t first glance, the request of Reuven, Gad and part of the tribe of Menashe seemed quite reasonable. They had many flocks of sheep and cattle, and the Transjordan territory had great areas of pasture, so it was a logical choice for their inheritance. Yet how could they justify this petition if it meant not entering the Promised land? Let us explore their mindset, where they erred, and why Moshe Rabbeinu was disappointed by their appeal.

Rav Dessler in *Michtav MeEliyahu* explains that these tribes understood that every element, feature and living thing is put in this world to serve Hashem. Through raising their flocks of sheep, they would elevate the sparks of the Divine in the world and draw down holiness. In no way did these tribes

disparage the land, they simply felt they could achieve their purpose in a different region. Indeed, Moshe Rabbeinu, who was aware of their mission, was not upset by their request, rather he was concerned that the other tribes would become disheartened and lose their momentum in moving forward to Eretz Yisrael. Chazal note that Hashem intended to give these tribes this land. Their misstep was asking for it impetuously. They were therefore punished and sent into exile many years before the rest of the ten tribes.

Rav Nebenzal in his *Sichot* on the *parashah* draws a powerful lesson from the tribes' attitude. They appreciated their holy mission vis a vis their sheep, however, they gave less consideration to the 'owners of the sheep.' They failed to reflect on what would be best for their own children, to ensure they would be raised in the best conditions for their spiritual well-being. This is a challenge we often face; what to prioritize when we have two important responsibilities. For example, when one comes late to a wedding, does one spend time eating the leftover food from the smorgasbord, arguing that it is part of the *seudat mitzvah* or does one go directly to the *chuppah* to greet the *Shechniah* hovering over the new young couple? Sometimes people invest a lot of money in beautifying a shul building yet neglect to gather the necessary funds to





support the teachers who will give shiurim and spread Torah in that very building. These tribes had exalted spiritual values; nonetheless they overlooked their main spiritual focus.

The importance of spiritual priorities is further seen at the end of the *parashah*. Rav Nebenzal notices that the Torah makes a point to tell us the new names the tribes gave to the places that they captured. In changing the names, the people were infusing these places with holiness. We ought to realize how many times we call a city by its name and what that simple act achieves. In referring to a place by its Jewish name, its spiritual essence comes to the fore and eradicates the previous idolatrous influence. Truly a powerful increase of *kevod shamayim*. ■

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## Next Stop... ?

The *gaon* Rav Yehonoson Eibshitz, zt'l, was a *darshan* (Torah commentator) *dayan* (halachic judge) and one of the most accomplished Torah personalities of the Eighteenth Century. A prolific author who published extensive writings on Chumash, halacha and kabbalah, he also served in leadership positions of Metz, Prague and the “Three Communities” of Altona, Hamburg, and Wandsbek.

One day while on his way to the Beis Medrash, Rav Yehonoson passed a local government official who was accompanied by a couple high ranking police officers. The official had a cordial relationship with the Rav and was aware of his influence and respectful of his spiritual standing. However, to the policemen, the Rav was just another ‘Jewish rabbi’. After exchanging pleasantries, the official casually inquired as to where Rav Yehonasan was going. “I don’t know, I’m not sure,” he admitted.

In front of his peers, the official began to feel uncomfortable. “Rabbi, this is a straightforward question, would you just

tell me please where are you going?” Again, Rav Yehonasan answered, “I do not know where I am going.” The official grew more self-conscious and frustrated — the police officers were surely thinking that the Rav was suspicious and even mocking him. After repeated inquiries, at his wit’s end, the official threw up his hands and told the officers to take Rav Yehonasan to jail. There, the noble sage spent the night among common criminals.

Early the next morning, the official appeared at the door of Rav Yehonasan’s cell. Sighing deeply, he expressed his confusion and remorse. “Rabbi, we have known each other for years. I don’t understand! I know you to be an honest, wise and upstanding person; I’m certain that you were not involved in illegal activity. Why would you make a laughingstock out of me in front of my officers and have yourself sent to jail, rather than just telling me where you were going?”

Rav Yehonasan smiled. “Yesterday morning I set out to spend the day studying in my usual spot in the synagogue. But, my friend, don’t you see? I wasn’t going there — I ended up in this jail cell instead. Had you asked me where I was *intending* to go, and *hoped* to go, I would have gladly told you that. But as to where I am actually going, only God knows... Apparently He had other plans for me!”

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
לְעִבְרָתָם...

וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל־פִּי ה'...

“These are the journeys of the children of Israel who left the land of Egypt in their legions... Moshe recorded their starting points for their journeys according to the word of Hashem....” (33:1-2)

In addition to recording each of the locations we traveled through, the Torah enumerated the forty-two encampments at which they stopped during the four decades in *midbar Sinai* while on our path from Egypt to the Holy Land. Over the course of this week's sedra, the Torah repeats the refrain, “They journeyed from... and they camped at...” While the Torah has already described these travels in Sefer Shemos and earlier in Bamidbar, this week they are reviewed in order, once again.

Rashi understands the repetition of the resting spots that have already been documented as a meaningful lesson and message of *chizuk* for Klal Yisrael. While the consequence of the *Cheit haMeraglim* was a decree that we would have to travel in the wilderness for forty years, our journeys there were not without *menucha*, rest. Each location is therefore mentioned in

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order to להודיע חסדיו של מקום, ‘to inform us of God’s kindness’ in granting us respite in between journeys, even while the decree was playing out.

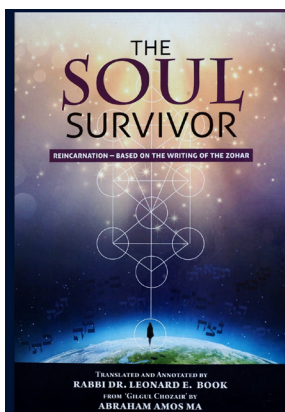
In this way, each of the encampments were not merely layovers and rest stops along the highway. Each encampment served as an end unto itself; it provided an opportunity to pause, reflect and consider Hashem’s *hashgacha*, the Divine guidance which directed us on our circuitous journeys. The Lubavitcher Rebbe referred to these starting and stopping points along our *masa’os* as national stepping-stones in the larger journey of the Jewish People toward self actualization. This is why the stops themselves are referred to as ‘journeys’: they were inherently meaningful steps in our communal process.

To further explain the repetition of the locations and stops along our journey, Rashi shares a moving *derasha* in the name of Rebbi Tanchuma: “It is analogous to a king whose son became sick, so he took him to a far away place to have him healed. On

the way back, the father began citing all the stages of their journey, saying to him, “This is where we sat, there we were cold, there you had a headache...”

Reaching the end of Sefer Bamidbar, now that Am Yisrael have almost completed the *tikun* of travelling through the Desert and are preparing to enter Eretz Yisrael, we look back at each place we had camped and at all that we had experienced. With the hindsight and reflection provided by *menuchah*, we are able to catch a glimpse of how each challenge and hardship was an essential part of our process.

And so it goes on our journey through life. We have hopes, plans, direction and intentions. Our *sedra* reminds us that “life happens” and we don’t really know where we are going to end up today. We are often redirected, forced to pivot and reroute our travels in this world. Yet every movement is punctuated with Divine kindness, and moments to reflect on the wisdom of our ever-present Guide.



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May we merit to see that it is specifically through perceived ‘interruptions’ and twists in our path that our truly intended destination is revealed. Above all, in all of our unplanned journeys and stopping places, may we sense Hashem’s constant presence, care and love. ■





## Best Listings in and around Jerusalem

### Efrat

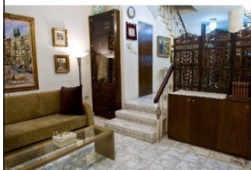


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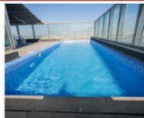
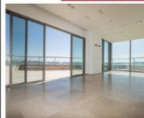
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Pirkei Avot

**11:30 AM**

**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

Mishlei: Wisdom for Life  
(L'Ayla)

**2:00 PM**

**Rabbi Jeffrey**

**Bienenfeld** Men's Gemara

Chabura S,T,TH

<https://zoom.us/j/887981820>

**4:30 PM**

**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

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**10:30 AM**

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

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**11:45 AM**

**Rabbi Shmuel Herschler**

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Hirsch, Rav Kook and Rav  
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**4:30PM**

**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**7:00 PM**

**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

Parshat HaShavua

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**9:00 PM**

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**9:00 AM**

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Minchat Chinuch

**9:15 AM**

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**Rabbi Yossi Goldin**

Parshat HaShavua

**2:00 PM**

**Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld**

**5:00 PM**

**Mrs. Sylvie Schatz**

Chazal: Insights Into  
Our Times (L'Ayla)

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**WED, JULY 14**

**9:00 AM**

**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**  
Halacha and Medina

**10:15 AM**

**Rabbi Anthony Manning**  
Contemporary Issues in  
Halacha and Hashkafa

**11:30 AM**

**Rabbi Shlomo Kimche**  
Great Jewish Thinkers

**4:30PM**

**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**7:00 PM**

**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
Halacha <https://zoom.us/j/709706986>

**8:30 PM**

**Rav Meir Goldwicht**  
(Hebrew) <https://zoom.us/j/2244321902> Parshat  
Hashavua Passcode: 18

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**THURS, JULY 15**

**10:15 AM**

**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
Parshat HaShavua

**11:30 AM**

**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**  
Unlocking the Messages  
of Chazal

**2:00 PM**

**Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld**

**4:30PM**

**Rabbi Hillel Ruvell**

**8:00 PM**

**Rabbi Ari Kahn**  
Parshat HaShavua  
<https://zoom.us/j/2624570009>  
(Zoom only)

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## DEAR FRIENDS,

As most of you are aware, we had originally planned to discontinue Zoom for our summer semester of morning classes, in an effort to encourage more of our community members to join us once again in-person. We have received much fair input from many individuals, that given the current circumstances and continued uncertainty regarding Covid regulations, it would be their preference to continue to be able to participate in shiurim virtually via Zoom. As such, **we have decided to continue offering a Zoom option for on-going shiurim for the months of July and August.** As many of our regular teachers may be taking summer vacations, we will try our best to offer guest shiurim for many of those time slots when our faculty might be away.

We will continue to offer the option of either joining us on-site for shiurim, or to view the stream of the shiurim via zoom. Those who wish to renew their zoom class passes may do so by clicking here: [ouisrael.org/classpass](http://ouisrael.org/classpass) or you can continue to register for one-time classes at [ouisrael.org/classes](http://ouisrael.org/classes). We are happy to continue to offer two ways for our OU Israel Family to continue to enjoy our inspirational shiurim and programs.



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Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski

**9:15 -10:15** Eicha, Kinot and the Psychology of Mourning Rabbi Alan Haber

**10:15 – 11:15** Brunch Inspiration with Mrs. Aliza Pilichowski

**11:15 – 12:10** Tisha B'Av and Aveilut: The Difference Between Public and Private Mourning  
Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

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## Geulas Yisrael Jews Who Oppose the State of Israel

**A**fter thousands of years being dispersed across many cultures and across different continents we have finally returned home. Despite the myriad differences which divide the Jewish people, our beloved State of Israel deeply unites Jews across the ideological spectrum. So many have returned home and so many others courageously support our national project of homecoming. It is therefore frustrating to encounter Jews who are severely disaffected and even alienated by the State of Israel. Debating particular policies is legitimate and valuable; however, many Jews stridently contest our State, exhibit public opposition, and sometimes, even cooperate with our sworn enemies. Processing this strange resistance in Jews can

be very puzzling and even infuriating.

It is simple-minded to just dismiss these opponents as self-loathing or self-hating Jews: “what type of proud Jew could possibly be opposed to the Jewish state?”. To be sure, there are Jews who revile their Jewish identity and despise any Jewish symbols. However, in all honesty, many Jewish opponents of Israel are proud Jews who struggle to reconcile their Jewish identity with their perception of Israel and its policies. Understanding their narrative and why we differ can help us better sharpen our own basic Jewish values.

Our historical calling is meant to inspire humanity toward moral and religious values. At the core of our message to humanity are the values of morality, ethics and social justice. To many Jews, the Zionist ethos greatly imperils this Jewish agenda. How can Jews exemplify morality when our State doesn’t appear to offer equality to its inhabitants? How can we stand for justice and compassion when our State is being restored upon disputed Lands? How can we sound universal messages when the spiritual ambitions we harbor for the State challenge democratic norms? For some, these contradictions create unsolvable tensions between their Jewish identity and their support for the State of Israel.

Where and how do WE differ? Don’t we

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also believe in morality, ethics and social justice? Why do we believe that our settlement of this Land is consistent with the Jewish message of morality? We “differ” in at least two crucial issues: the Divine authorship of our mission and our view of history.

### **Divinely-Crafted Mission**

Indeed, Jews possess a historical mission and indeed that mission includes the spread of moral values. However, our mission is Divinely-crafted and delivered, not one which merely evolved over the passage of history. The ultimate barometer of morality is Divine will and not popular opinion or current moral trends. Often, we must uphold values or pursue agendas which differ from common moral conventions but are based upon absolute and eternal Divine will.

Our Divine-crafted mission isn't just ideological but geographical. We are meant to disseminate these important moral messages from our national platform in Israel; our moral voice isn't meant to reverberate in a historical vacuum. Our tragic absence from Israel for close to 2000 years severed our historical mission from our Divinely-designed platform. Without efforts to return to Israel, our agenda of disseminating moral guidance is, at best, limited.

### **Messianic History**

It is frustrating to live in a world which doesn't recognize our broader religious mission and, even worse, which is extremely antagonistic to our efforts to resettle Israel. We are routinely depicted

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as an imperialist regime imposing an iron-fisted occupation upon innocent victims. How can an 'apartheid' state opposed by so many, possibly contribute to a historical agenda of morality and compassion?

It all depends on how you view history. If history is evolutionary and open-ended, current enlightened voices condemning Israel are convincing and compelling. The current historical culture casts our return to Israel as immoral and if current views are definitive, then indeed, settling this Land against international opposition is immoral and antithetical to our Jewish mission.

However, religious Jews are all Messianists, who view history differently - as predetermined and cyclical - careening back to an earlier time and to a different set of conditions. Our current historical reality - though impressive- is fundamentally "broken". We currently inhabit a world in which our efforts to re-establish Jewish nationhood and reassert our moral voice appears hypocritical and imperialistic. One day these perspectives will change. One day the world will be Divinely re-aligned and even our fiercest enemies will thank us for the values

we stand for, and the G-d we continue to represent in this very hostile world. Sadly, many who view the State of Israel as an immoral enterprise, seem trapped in our current historical reality with little or limited Messianic horizons.

As a West Bank "settler" I struggle with this dualism on a daily basis: I believe in an overarching "Messianic" recalibration of our world and I take active measures to advance that reality. I believe that a Messianic overhaul will advance humanity and that my "settler" efforts are universally beneficial. Most of the world, however, still doesn't view me that way. While living under the current situation, I attempt- to the best of my capabilities and without surrendering my historical vision- to be respectful to all inhabitants of this Land and to operate within legal, moral, and practical means.

It is important to accurately assess anti-Israel sentiment among deeply proud Jews, who are unable to reconcile their sense of Jewish mission with the current struggle to resettle our Land. By understanding their qualms, we can better appreciate our differences and better reinforce our own values. ■

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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

This *Shabbat* we read the *Parshiot* of *Matot -Masei*, as well as commemorate *Rosh Chodesh Av*. These *parshiot* frequently occur on the *Shabbat* either immediately preceding *Rosh Chodesh Av* or as is the case this year, on *Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*Parshat Maasei* recalls for a second time the passing of *Aharon HaKohen*, and tells us that the date of his passing is *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*And Aharon died there, during the fortieth year after Bnai Yisrael went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fifth month on the first of the month.*

So, we must ask, why does the *Torah* specify the exact date of *Aharon's* passing, a detail that is not elaborated upon for any of the *Avot* or *Imahot*, or for *Moshe Rabbeinu*? Why is the date of *Aharon's* passing mentioned here in this second account, and not in the earlier account of his passing which

we read of a few weeks ago in *Parshat Chukat*? Why is the date of his passing specified now, in the midst of describing the journeys of the Jewish people in the wilderness?

*Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Horowitz*, the *Patiker Rav zy'a*, suggests that there is an eternal message to be gleaned from the date of *Aharon's* passing being both revealed during the verses which describe the extended wanderings of the Jewish People in the wilderness, as well as the actual date of *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*Aharon*, as we know, represents the ultimate *Ish Shalom*, the great peace-maker and unifier of the Jewish People. The Jewish People, as we know, will experience an extended reality of wandering that will occur following the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, which of course we commemorate, during the nine days, beginning with *Rosh Chodesh Av*. As we begin these days of reflection of the destruction and absence of the *Beit HaMikdash*, we also recall the life and legacy of *Aharon HaKohein*, whose legacy we must work to emulate, which will form the foundation to re-building the *Beit HaMikdash*.

*Yehi Ratzon*, that as we recall the date that *Aharon HaKohein* left this world, that indeed we merit to emulate his ways, to love one another, to come together in unity and harmony, and to usher in an era of tranquility with the *Binyan Beit HaMikdash*. ■

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## DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center  
mpersoff@ou.org

# Unsteady Steps to the Holy Land

Parshat Mase'ei describes Bnei Yisrael's journeys before entering the Land – which brings us to the perennial question as to why so few Diaspora Jews today are making aliyah. Let us put aside arguments related to family commitments, work constraints, and health reasons. What about the rest or, at least, those professing to be orthodox and practicing Jews?

So, people do not want to leave their comfort zones. They might add that because of the gross levels of assimilation in the Diaspora, they must stay behind and save Jewry from itself. Or they protest: "Who will lobby for Israel, if not us, loyal Jews in the Golah?" Some might even add that Israel broke her oaths not to go up [to the Land] and not to rebel against the nations of the world, "so how can I be part of that?"<sup>1</sup>

We shall not enter into polemics but suffice it to say that our Parsha is very precise in adjuring us to "drive out [VEHO-RASHEM] the inhabitants of the land and dwell therein – for unto you have I given this land to possess it" (Bemidbar 33: 50-53).

1 cf. *Ketubot* 111a and Wikipedia article, "The Three Oaths," for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

How will our Diaspora friends relate to that divine command, which the Ramban incorporated into the 613 mitzvot?

How will those in the Galut interpret the Talmudic statement that those who dwell outside of Eretz Yisrael can be considered as having no God (ibid, 110b)? How do they reconcile living outside of Israel when, clearly, they can fulfill the Mitzvot more totally in Israel?

How do Jewish Diaspora residents interpret the first "Rashi" in the Torah that reports how we should respond to the nations when they claim we stole the Land? – For we are to tell the nations how Hashem granted the territory to seven peoples and later apportioned Eretz Yisrael to His Chosen people. Even the skeptical "spies" sent by Moshe were instructed: "Go – and possess it!" (Devarim 1:21).

So, wherever we find ourselves, let us recall the Song of the Sea in which we declare:

"In Your kindness, You guided these people whom You redeemed/

You led [us] with Your might to Your holy abode." (Shemot 15:17)

Finally, let us mean what we say when we recite daily: "Blessed are You, Hashem, who ingathers the dispersed of His people, Israel." ■

Shabbat Shalom!

*Menachem Persoff*

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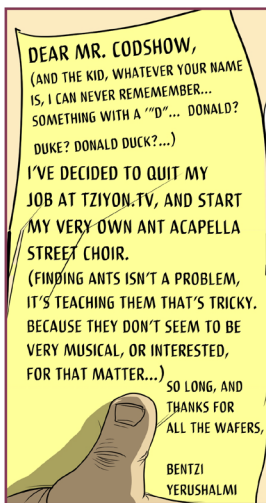
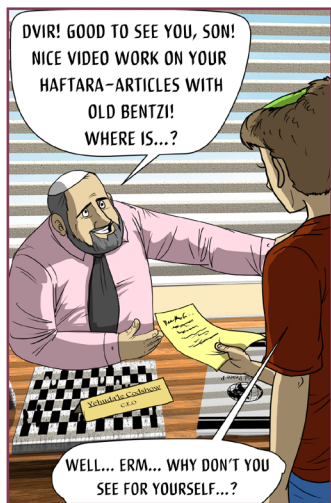
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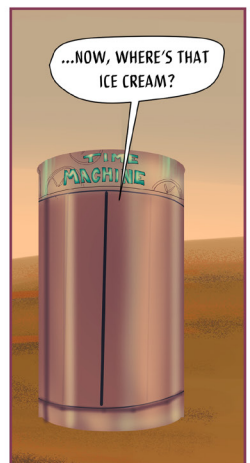
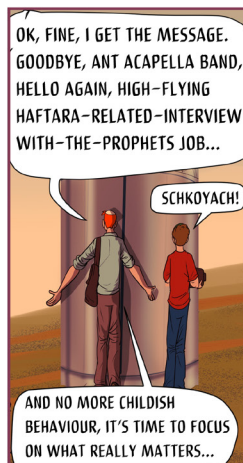
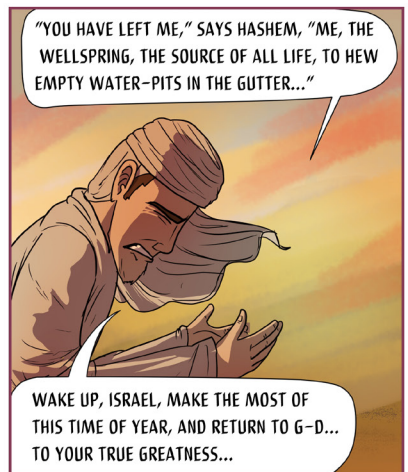
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**RABBI AARON**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

# At The Heart Of *Kriat* *HaTorah*

What is the source for the institution of *Kriat HaTorah*, the public Torah reading?

Its origin is to be found in an intriguing episode. In parshat *Beshalach* the Torah records that after encountering the Divine at the Red Sea through epic miracles, the Jewish people wandered three days “without water.” Although the literal reading refers to a lack of water to drink, the Sages of the Talmud sensed another layer of meaning. Three days had elapsed since their previous contact with God. This detachment had impaired their spiritual wellbeing.

At that time, according to the Talmud, Moshe in response to the nation’s spiritual malaise instituted *Kriat HaTorah* on Mondays, Thursdays, and Shabbat to ensure that three days would never elapse without a connection with the word of God. (*Bava Kamma* 82a)

It is noteworthy to find the original source for institutionalizing the public reading of the Torah from a pre-Sinai stage. It was

already apparent at that early stage in our history that experiencing the word of God regularly was essential.

However, this is only the first layer in understanding the significance of standardizing Torah reading. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt”l developed a powerful theory regarding another essential component of *Kriat Hatorah*. Namely, the Torah reading corresponds to conjuring up in our hearts and minds the experience of *Matan Torah* and Sinai.

The following incident reported in the Talmud serves as a basic source for the Rav’s contention. The Yerushalmi (*Megillah perek* 4) cites an episode in which Rav Shmuel bar Rav Yitzchak visits a shul and witnesses a *kriat HaTorah* in which the reader is “leaning on a post” (or perhaps the table). He is perturbed that he is reading the Torah in such a posture. He claims that “this posture is forbidden; just as it was delivered at Sinai in a manner which instigated fear and trembling, so must it be rendered in public in a manner which evinces awe.”

This vignette supports the Rambam’s position that one must stand for the reading of the Torah (*Hilchot Tefillah* 12:6). *Kriat HaTorah*, the Rav claimed, is not merely the collective or communal recital of Torah texts. Instead, it *reenacts* the pivotal moment at Mount Sinai during which God’s

word was revealed to the Jewish people.

The Rav argued that this notion is not only articulated in the Talmud but there is actually a compelling mitzvah mandated in the Torah that evinces the Sinai experience. Our public reading of the Torah stems from a concrete source - the practice of *Hakhel*. Take note of the Rambam's descriptions of the once-in-seven year public reading:

*"Even converts (who may not understand the actual meaning of the Torah) are obligated to listen with fear and awe as though it were the actual day in which the Torah was delivered...each person should envision himself as if just now commanded by God Himself" (Hilchot Chagiga 3:6).*

The Rambam views *hakhel's* reading of the Torah as an attempt to recreate the experience at Mount Sinai. The association is captured in the very name of the mitzvah - *hakhel* - which invokes the great assembly that characterized Mount Sinai. Additionally, the Torah actually demands the presence at *hakhel* of every man, woman and child, even though the latter may not be formally obligated to study Torah, since their presence assures the presence of a sweeping and all encompassing assembly that echoes Mount Sinai. The formal weekly reading of Torah today has its underpinnings in the *hakhel* reading and therefore the motif of recreating the Sinai experience is an essential component.

The obligation to conjure up the experience at Sinai devolves upon every Jew. It is rooted in an even more fundamental source. The Torah charges us with a lofty task which the Talmud expresses in the following way:

[It is written] "You shall make them known to your children and grandchildren," and following that it is written: "The day that you stood before Hashem your God at Chorev." Just as at Chorev, there was dread and awe, trembling and fear, so too here [in respect to the teaching and studying of Torah] it must be done with dread and awe, trembling and fear (*Berachot* 22a).

The Ramban, in contrast to the Rambam, counts the mitzvah of recalling the experience at Sinai as an independent mitzvah. The Rav alludes to the possibility that our formal reading of the Torah affords us with the opportunity to fulfill this dictum to evoke the memory of Mount Sinai whenever the Torah is formally read. (And From There You Shall Seek, p.140).

This idea may also explain why *kriat HaTorah* (the formal Torah reading) was inserted within the context of prayer. If it was purely an engagement in Torah learning it should have been placed following prayer. The fact that it is placed within the prayer service points to the notion that reading the Torah is a facet of *avodah shebalev*, it is to be experiential and should conjure up sentiments of standing *lifnei Hashem*, in the presence of God. (*Derashot Harav* p.220) ■

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# The Transition From Shabbat Into Tisha B'Av

**Question:** Could you please explain how to handle the transition from Shabbat into Tisha B'Av (when it falls on *Motzaei Shabbat*) regarding *se'uda shlishit*, *Havdala*, and changing clothes?

**Answer:** *Se'uda shlishit*: The *baraita*, quoted in Ta'anit 29a says that one may eat as extravagant a meal as he wants on Shabbat even if Tisha B'Av falls on that day or the next. The Tur (Orach Chayim 552) cites customs that one is allowed and would do best to curtail the Shabbat meal. This is especially so at *se'uda shlishit*, which is, in effect, the *se'uda hamafseket*. However, these considerations are countered by the need to avoid displaying mourning on Shabbat. Therefore, there are no real restrictions, even at *se'uda shlishit* (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 552:10). However, the mood should somewhat reflect the coming of Tisha B'Av, as long as it does not bring on clearly noticeable changes (Mishna Berura

552:23). One important halachic requirement is that one must finish eating before sunset (Rama ad loc.).

*Havdala*: One says *Havdala* in *Shemoneh Esrei*. *Havdala* over a cup of wine is done after Tisha B'Av (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 556:1). Despite these facts, if one forgot to mention *Havdala* in *Shemoneh Esrei*, he does not repeat *Shemoneh Esrei*. Rather, the declaration of *HaMavdil*, which enables one to do actions that are forbidden on Shabbat, suffices (Mishna Berura 556:2). Unlike *Havdala* during the Nine Days, where we try to give the wine to a child rather than an adult (Rama, Orach Chayim 551:10), after Tisha B'Av, an adult can freely drink the *Havdala* wine (Mishna Berura 556:3). The *beracha* on *besamim* is not recited this week because it is always recited only on *Motzaei Shabbat*, and on Tisha B'Av it is not appropriate because it is supposed to serve as a pleasure that revives the soul.

The *beracha* on the fire is specific to *Motzaei Shabbat*, is not a pleasure, and does not require a cup. Therefore, the *minhag* is to recite it in *shul* toward the end of *davening*,

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before the reading of Eicha (*Mishna Berura* 556:1). There are those who say that a woman should, in general, avoid making *Havdala*. This is because of the doubt whether a woman is obligated in the *beracha* on the fire, which is not directly related to Shabbat and thus is a regular time-related *mitzva*, from which women are exempt (*Bi'ur Halacha* 296:8). Therefore, if one's wife will not be in *shul* at the time of the *beracha*, it is better for the husband not to fulfill the *mitzva* at that time, but to make the *beracha* on the fire at a time that his wife can hear it (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 62:(98)).

**Taking off shoes:** As we mentioned, one may not do a noticeable act of mourning before Shabbat is over. While finishing to eat before sunset or refraining from washing need not be noticeable, taking off shoes is. There are two *minhagim* as to when to take them off: 1) One waits until after Shabbat is out, says *HaMavdil*, and then changes clothes and goes to *shul*. One can do so a little earlier than the regular time listed for Shabbat being out, which is usually delayed a little bit beyond nightfall to allow for a significant adding on to Shabbat at its end. The exact time is not clear and depends on the latitude of one's location. It is advisable to start *Ma'ariv* a little late in order to allow those who take this approach to make it to *shul*

(Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata 62:40; Torat HaMo'adim 9:1). (If the rabbi has ruled that everyone should take the following approach, all should conform, and there is no need for such a delay). 2) One takes off his shoes after *Barchu* of *Ma'ariv*. One who takes the second approach should bring non-leather footwear and *Eicha/Kinot* books to shul before Shabbat to avoid the problem of *hachana* (preparations for after Shabbat). However, if one uses these *sefarim* somewhat in *shul* before Shabbat is out, he can bring them with him on Shabbat (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata *ibid.* 41). ■

*Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact [info@eretzhemdah.org](mailto:info@eretzhemdah.org) to join.*

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# A Short Guide For Gardening During Shemitah

It is forbidden to plant and seed during Shemitah.

Watering (irrigation) is permitted during Shemitah, but only at the level necessary for proper upkeep of the vegetation. The best is to reduce the amount of irrigation in comparison to regular years or increase the intervals between irrigating times.

Fertilization must be done before Shemitah, thus we recommend the use of slow-release fertilizers before Shemitah begins.

Weeds and weeding: Permitted when there is concern that weeds will take over the garden's plants, or when there is concern that pests will find refuge in the weeds. We recommend the use of anti-sprouting agents or lawn weed killers. You can also get rid of weeds with a motorized scythe. You may not till or turn the soil.

Pruning bushes and hedges – when the hedge is full, it is permitted to prune it to

retain its existing shape. However, it is forbidden to prune hedges with gaps and ragged edges in order to “fill in” the gaps or cause the hedge to grow better.

Designing and pruning trees – This should be done before or after Shemitah. It can be done during Shemitah only when there is a dangerous obstacle or hazard close to the sidewalk, the road, or electrical wires and pruning the trees can prevent accidents.

Mowing the grass – It is permitted to mow a full lawn as usual. However, it is forbidden to mow a lawn that has “bald spots” in order to fill in those spots.

Activities that are not related to agriculture or gardening, are permitted. Some examples: paving roads and walkways and building supporting walls. However, garden soil may not be used to fill in supporting walls (for example). ■

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## Having Children, Or Not

Last week we started looking at the Nachmani case in which a separated couple, Ruth and Daniel Nachmani, fought in the courts for the custody and use of their frozen fertilized eggs.

To recap, the Nachmanis were unable to have a child and decided to undergo fertility treatment using a gestational carrier. Ruth and Daniel underwent fertility treatment and created fertilized eggs that were frozen in a clinic in order to be implanted in the surrogate carrier. Some time after this, before they had the chance to use these eggs Daniel left Ruth and went to live with another woman who had a child together and so did not need to use the frozen eggs. Ruth was left alone and saw no reason that she would not use the eggs. She applied to the hospital to release the fertilized eggs into her possession for the purpose of the surrogate procedure, but Daniel opposed this.

The hospital refused to release the fertilized eggs since they could not make the legal and ethical decision as to who possessed ownership of the eggs. This led to a long and complex legal battle in which various courts debated the question of the ownership of the eggs and the permissibility

to use them. The District Court agreed to produce an order against the hospital that would force them to release the fertilized eggs to be used by Ruth and the gestational carrier. But Daniel appealed the judgment of the District Court to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court overturned the District Court's decision, and so the hospital were under no obligation to release the fertilized eggs, that remained frozen and unusable. But the battle did not end there, and Ruth petitioned the Supreme Court to reconsider the matter and hold a further hearing.

While the first decision of the Supreme Court had been made by five judges, the second hearing was with a wider forum of eleven judges. They debated the previous decision and a majority reached the decision to overturn the previous ruling and permit Ruth Nachmani to use the eggs. The late Judge Tzvi Tal sat on the hearing and came to the decision that she could use the eggs. One of his justifications was the Jewish value of having children, if Daniel's position was upheld then the eggs would never become life. The only chance that they had to become life was to use them. In his words "Furthermore, Jewish heritage, which is one of the fundamental principles of the Israeli legal system, considers having children an important value, whereas not having children is not considered a value at all." ■



# Real Life Rescues



## From Arterial Blood Flows and CPRs to having 8 Children, this EMS couple does it all

40-year-old Malachi and 38-year-old Shlomit Sha'er are a married couple living in Rehovot. Shlomit, who works as a teacher, and Malachi, who works as a government official, are also United Hatzalah volunteer EMTs. Despite having eight kids, the couple of EMTs volunteer around the clock, rushing out to emergencies even on the weekends.

"I took an EMT course four years ago when I was inspired by my friends who were EMTs," said Malachi. "I saw the life-saving work that they were doing and decided that I wanted to be able to save a life too. Four years and a few kids later, my wife is now my partner in life and my partner in EMS."

About a month ago, Malachi was alerted to an emergency that had occurred in the kibbutz of Givat Brenner. A villager working on home repairs lost control of his circular saw and sliced his hand open. Malachi, who was nearby, sped to Givat Brenner aboard his ambucycle, reaching the location, and was the first responder at the scene. The 40-year-old man was suffering massive arterial blood loss. Malachi quickly applied a field tourniquet to stop the lethal hemorrhaging. He carefully bandaged the man's hand and continued to stabilize him until the ambulance arrived. The patient was then taken to the Kaplan Medical Center for an emergency procedure.

Malachi added: "As an EMT, it is most important to get to the scene of the emergency in a short amount of time. We EMTs call this "the golden hour", the most crucial time for emergency medical treatment. Not long ago when I was responding to an emergency, there were other EMTs present and the patient was stable when another emergency occurred a block away. I ran on foot to the next emergency where a 30-year-old collapsed in his home. I treated him and a few days ago went to visit him in the hospital. He had made a full recovery and was even walking on his own."



"When I was on maternity leave after my seventh child, my husband informed me of an EMT course that was taking place in Rehovot," added Shlomit. "I was always inspired by my husband and how he was so dedicated to saving the life of a stranger. I myself was always worried for my family and my children, and what I would do in the situation of an emergency. Becoming an EMT is learning life-saving information that as a mother, I think is crucial."

Shlomit later joined the course that her husband suggested, and completed it a few months later. She received her certificate during her third trimester of pregnancy. Shlomit responded to a medical emergency and even performed CPR during her training while in her third trimester of pregnancy. The CPR was successful, saving the patient's life.

Shlomit added: "We get asked all the time how our kids handle all of the emergency calls we respond to. I simply tell them that it has become part of our family dynamic. My eldest daughter is 14-years-old and she even assists us when we are on our way out to respond to an emergency. That's because we show our kids the importance of saving a life, and maybe one day, all of our kids will become EMTs and save lives too."



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BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

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## רפאנו ה' ונרפא

**T**his past year was a true eye-opener for us all. It was quite possibly the first time that we not only davened for individuals to be healed, but for the world as a whole to be cured. Suddenly the Bracha of רפאנו took on an additional level of meaning. The bracha of רפאנו has the capacity to serve simultaneously as a request for our own personal healing, as a Tefilla for specific individuals to be cured, and as a hope for the community or world as a whole to rid itself of a pandemic. Let us examine the words inside.

רפאנו - *Heal us*

Why do we ask Hashem to heal us, when often we are davening for others and we ourselves are not in fact sick! The **Gemara Berachot 12b** explains that when we daven for someone else, we need to feel their pain. We have to try and imagine how sick they must feel and the pain they must be going through.

ה' - *Hashem*

Why do we have to emphasize that Hashem

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should heal us? Who else are we davening to?? The Sefer ואבית תהילה explains as follows. It says in **Gemara Avoda Zara 55a** that when a person becomes sick, Hashem decrees exactly when and how (i.e., through which doctor, using what treatments, etc.) he will be healed. However, when we daven, we have the power to remove that decree and to make that sickness be cured early. Once the decree is removed, the person will be healed directly by Hashem and we don't need to wait for the specific treatment or doctor that was pre-ordained to heal him.

ונרפא - *And we will be healed*

Why do we add ונרפא, *and we will be healed*? Obviously if Hashem heals us, we will be healed! The שיח יצחק explains that this is the difference between a human doctor and Hashem. When a human doctor tries to heal a patient, he will often prescribe a medicine that takes away the pain. But that is really just a “band aid” – he has not actually cured the person from his illness. But when Hashem personally “cures” us, He does it 100%, He gets to the root of the disease and we are in fact cured completely from the disease. This is the type of Refuah we are asking for.

הושיענו ונושעה - *Save us and we will be saved*

זקן אהרון explains that we live in a world

of *hester panim*, where Hashem's hand is hidden beneath nature. Therefore, even though it is Hashem who is healing and saving us, we also need to put in the *hishtadlut*, to go through the efforts of finding the right doctor, choosing the right medical procedure etc. It often seems that though we daven הושיענו, that Hashem should save us, in the end, ונשועה, we were saved, by other natural means. It is imperative that we look beneath the surface and realize כי תהלתנו אתה, that it's all truly because of Hashem.

כי תהלתנו אתה - *For You are our glory*

When our bodies are healthy and everything is working properly, we often take what we have for granted. But when there is a problem, that's when we start to finally appreciate all that we had until that point. Two years ago, I suddenly lost hearing in one of my ears. For two months I walked around in a blur, unable to hear in one ear. Suddenly, I longed for the days when my ears had worked properly, I appreciated what a miracle it was to be able to hear normally. (BH my hearing came back after that period!) The ילקוט קטן explains that often, only when we become ill do we start to appreciate the smooth functioning of all of our bodily systems. And so we say to Hashem, please heal us because we've already learned the lesson you wanted to teach us, we finally have recognized that תהלתנו אתה, everything comes from you and



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we need to make sure to appreciate all of the intricacy involved in all of Your creations. We are now ready to be healed as we have sufficiently learned and internalized what You wanted us to learn.

*כי קל מלך רופא - Because you are G-d, King and Doctor*

The *sefer Yalkut Sutan* explains that Hashem has a “Kingdom of Medicine”, He has an endless medicine cabinet. Human doctors are limited – even if they can find a way to cure someone, they don’t have a plethora of options. They can only use whatever medications or procedures they have at their disposal. But Hashem has no bounds. He can always make up a new cure, there is no limit on ways that He can find to heal someone.

*רופא נאמן ורחמן אתה - A loyal and merciful doctor*

The *sefer Birkot Shomer* explains that a doctor needs to have 2 characteristics in order to be a good doctor: *רופא נאמן* – He has to be a knowledgeable doctor who is an expert in the medical field and can be relied on in terms of his medical prowess. *רחמן* - He needs to truly care about his patient and want to put in the effort to really help him.

If he has one without the other, there is a big piece missing. Hashem is the perfect combination of both – He is the biggest “expert in medicine” and He cares the most about us, so we know we can rely on Him, especially because as we mentioned before He has an entire Medicine Kingdom at His disposal.

*ברוך אתה ה' רופא חולי עמו ישראל - Blessed are your Hashem who heals the sick of His nation Israel*

The **Shulchan Aruch** (O.C. 119) brings down the minhag to insert a Tefilla in the bracha of *רפאונו* for a specific relative or friend who is sick. But even though we often might have someone specific in mind when we recite this Tefilla, we conclude with the fact that Hashem heals all of the Jewish people as a whole. We don’t leave our prayers at the personal level, we bring them to the communal level. **Rashi** (Gemara Shabbos 12b) explains when we daven as part of the *כלל*, the community, our Tefillot are much stronger as we have a larger amount of *זכויות* (merits) to rely on.

May we continue to daven together on both an individual and communal level for all those who are sick and may Hashem grant a Refuah to all! ■

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## A Diary of Life

“These are the journeys of the Children of Israel. Moshe wrote their goings forth according to their journeys at the command of Hashem, and these were their journeys according to their goings forth.” (Bamidbar 33:1-2)

Parshat Masai begins with a review of the 42 encampments that Israel made in their 40 year journey through the Wilderness. Rashi notes that this is an illustration of the kindness of Hashem that, although it would seem that they were constantly on the move, never had any rest, this is not the case. Except for the first year when there were 14 encampments and the 40<sup>th</sup> year when there were 8, in the intervening 38 years, there were only 20 stops, including one stop at Kadesh which lasted for 19 years. See Rashi to Devarim 1:46.

The Or Hachaim says that Hashem told Moshe that beginning with the Exodus from Egypt, he was to keep a written record of all encampments as they occurred. These notations accumulated until Israel reached the 42<sup>nd</sup> stop, the Plains of Moav, where Moshe organized the list into the 48 verses that now follow. Included in this list are the incidences that took place at some of these encampments where the people

saw the Hand of Hashem which took care of their every need and desire.

From this remark of the Or Hachaim that Moshe kept a diary of the four decades spent in the Wilderness, Rav Pam explains that we can extrapolate the practical insight for life.

Every person is a recipient of Hashem's kindness many different ways. There are periods of great joy and accomplishments, and there are periods of travail and worry which are often resolved through the hidden Hand of Hashem. This happens to each person as an individual and to a family or a community as a group. Unfortunately, with the passage of time many of these illustrations of the Kindness of Hashem are only vaguely remembered, or even totally forgotten.

One way of fulfilling the command of “Remember the days of yore, understand the years of generation after generation” (Devarim 32:7), is to follow the lead of Moshe and record as they happen “one's own encampments” in the journey through life.

Like the verses mentioned here in Parshat Masai, they will become a permanent written record of the goodness of Hashem in one's own life as well as that of his family and community. ■

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## Family First?

*“Judaism is rooted in the love of family” –  
Moses Hess – 1862*

Sefer Bamidbar ends with a curiously cryptic story.

The elders of the tribe of Yosef are worried about Tzelofchad’s daughters (who’s story appears first in Parashat Pinchas) who are set to inherit their father’s portion in the tribal lands. If they marry outside their Shevet their lands will pass to their children, who take after their husbands’ tribe, and thus will be lost to the Shevet of Yosef. A solution was found – Tzelofchad’s five daughters must find themselves a husband from within their own tribe – and thus they did.

It is not immediately clear why this is the final note that Sefer Bamidbar wishes to end on as it seems to be quite a mundane question of tribal territorial politics.

And yet, hidden in this story is a very deep message regarding the sacrificial

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nature of family.

By definition family demands sacrifice. Relationships and the forthcoming children demand a huge investment of time, attention, sleep, money, love and in essence are the primary drain on one’s physical and emotional resources. And yet, there is nothing more worthy of one’s efforts than family.

A very disturbing statistic that I came across states that as of 2021 – 57% of households in the US are childless. The birth rate in the US and in nearly all other western countries is at an all time low. Family as a value is losing its shine and more and more people are choosing to opt out of a familial lifestyle.

In an age of individualism – self-sacrifice is counter-cultural.

Nonetheless, self-focused ideology is antithetical to Jewish moral values and I think the very final episode of Sefer Bamidbar comes to drive that concept home.

Tzelofchad’s daughters show us the priority of family above self-interest. For the sake of tribal continuity and familial values, these five strong women sacrificed whatever romantic relationships they may have had, in order to build a better future for their children. They showed us the way by putting family first.





## Emily Kaufman 12th Grade, Efrat

Parshiot Mattot - Massei always falls between the fasts of the 17th day of Tamuz and Tishah B'Av. The Lubavitcher Rebbe discusses in Likkutei Sichot the reason why these Parshiot are always read between these two significant dates in Jewish history. The message embedded here is the concept of destruction in order to rebuild again in a stronger and better way.

We don't always understand the master plan that Hashem has for us. Just as a child does not see the ultimate goal and lesson behind his father's sometimes harsh discipline, so too we must look to Hashem's actions, even though they may seem difficult to comprehend, and accept it as faith. We need to see the kindness of Hashem even though it may be through a catastrophe of destruction. We should all strive to see our history and the way the world runs through the eyes of Hashem. Having complete faith that there is a plan and it must be good.

We have all experienced a rough past year. Covid-19 has changed our lives in so many ways. People became sick and

many perished including holy and righteous people. Schools had to rethink in creative ways how to educate us and likewise in NCSY, many events were not able to take place and friends were not able to meet up. We could live in despair and ask why Hashem did this to us? Or, we could proclaim "destruction in order to rebuild". Perhaps now we can improve by honoring our parents and grandparents, loving and respecting our friends, and appreciating the world we are given to serve Hashem through faith and complete devotion.

Perhaps the words of Ben El Tavory of in the song titled "הכל לטובה" say it best:

"לא תמיד קל, לא תמיד טוב, אבל זה תמיד גורם לי לחשוב,  
יום עובר וצרה חולפת כי לכל עצב יש גם סוף"

May we be Zoche to see the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash bigger and better and the coming of Mashiach soon in our days. ■

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