

# Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1461 MAR 26<sup>TH</sup> '22 כ"ג אדר ב' תשפ"ב

פרשת שמיני

PARSHAT SHEMINI - SHABBAT MEVARCHIM  
PARSHAT PARAH

ב"ה

OU  
ישראל



## The Road to "Jewishness"

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

Faculty, OU Israel  
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation  
Ahavath Torah, Englewood NJ  
page 18



## A Peek Into the Life of a Great Man

Sivan Rahav Meir  
Torah Tidbits Contributor  
page 61



ואת־השפן  
כי־מעלה גרה הוא

ויקרא פרק י"א, פסוק ה'

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT SHEMINI

Candles 6:18PM • Havdala 7:31PM • Rabbeinu Tam 8:12PM

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*This week's  
Torah Tidbits  
cover image!*

A rock hyrax, the "shafan" of parshat Shemini, at the Biblical Museum of Natural History in Har Tuv, near Beit Shemesh. [www.BMNH.org.il](http://www.BMNH.org.il)  
Special thanks to Rabbi Dr. Natan Slifkin for sharing this photo from his museum!

### HELPFUL REMINDERS: SHABBAT MEVARCHIM



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Rosh Chodesh Nisan is on Shabbat April 2



Note: We move the clock ahead one hour at 2 am on Friday March 25



We read from two Sifrei Torah this Shabbat. The regular parsha and parshat Parah (Chukat, Bamidbar 19:1).

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat  
March 23 - Apr 2 / 20 Adar Bet - 1 Nisan

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	4:49 - 5:35
Sunrise	5:39 - 6:27
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:42 - 9:35
Magen Avraham	8:06 - 8:58
Sof Zman Tefila	9:43 - 10:37
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:46 - 12:43
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	12:16 - 1:14
Plag Mincha	4:35 - 5:40
Sunset (Including Elevation)	5:57 - 7:03

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CANDLES	SHEMINI	HAVDALA	TAZRIA	
			Candles	Havdala
6:18	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:31	6:23	7:36
6:36	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	7:34	6:40	7:39
6:37	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:32	6:41	7:37
6:34	Gush Etzion	7:32	6:38	7:37
6:35	Raanana / Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	7:33	6:40	7:38
6:34	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:32	6:39	7:37
6:35	Netanya	7:33	6:40	7:38
6:35	Be'er Sheva	7:33	6:40	7:38
6:35	Rehovot	7:33	6:40	7:38
6:18	Petach Tikva	7:33	6:23	7:38
6:34	Ginot Shomron	7:32	6:39	7:37
6:25	Haifa / Zichron	7:33	6:30	7:38
6:33	Gush Shiloh	7:31	6:38	7:36
6:35	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:33	6:40	7:38
6:34	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:32	6:38	7:37
6:34	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:32	6:38	7:37
6:36	Ashkelon	7:34	6:41	7:39
6:35	Yad Binyamin	7:33	6:40	7:38
6:28	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:31	6:33	7:36
6:32	Golan	7:30	6:37	7:36

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:12PM • next week - 8:16pm**

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



There are experiences that can leave a Roshem on a person for the duration of their lifetime. As Am Yisrael ended Shushan Purim and prepared to enter Shabbat, we did so with broken hearts upon hearing of the passing of Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt"l, a Torah giant of our generation. For the 750,000 Jews who attended the levaya on Sunday, I know the experience will stay with us for many years to come.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky cared about Torah above all else, and lived his life with the sole purpose of serving the Borei Olam. Over the years, those who had the zechut to meet Rav Kanievsky in his home saw how Torah was truly at the center of his life, and lived with the utmost simplicity. Born in Pinsk, Rav Kanievsky came to Israel during the early 1930s and raised a family of six children with his wife, Rebbitzin Batsheva Kanievsky zt"l, in a one-and-a-half bedroom apartment in Bnei Brak. The apartment was filled with sefarim from wall to wall, and furnished to the bare minimum. Torah was all that mattered.

Upon hearing the news of his passing I knew I needed to go to the levaya with my sons for two reasons. The first is the tremendous zechut we would have of K'vod Ha'Torah, fulfilling the mitzvah of being *melaveh the guf* of one of the greatest Torah giants of our time to his final resting place. Second, Klal Yisrael had a levaya to go to, and

I just could not miss an opportunity to join my brethren in this tremendous mitzvah.

On Sunday morning, I took three of my boys - Shlomo, Eliyashiv and Dvir - to witness this historic moment. It was Shlomo who reminded me of the experience we had when attending Rav Shalom Yosef Eliyashiv's levaya together, just ten years ago. Although he was 12 at the time, Shlomo remembered the experience with clarity. After all, very few people on this earth receive such an honor where hundreds of thousands of people gather to escort them to their final resting place, and I once again felt how important it is to allow our children to experience these pivotal moments. You never know what will resonate and ultimately shape their future.

I am sure by now everyone has seen photos and videos of the throngs of people who spent their Sunday fulfilling the mitzvah of *l'vayat haMet*, and it was truly remarkable for me and my kids to stand beside 750,000 brothers and sisters as we mourned the loss of Rav Kanievsky. But there are two aspects of the experience that I found particularly meaningful, both of which exemplify how powerful we become as a nation when we follow in the path that Rav Kanievsky set for us - holding Torah values above all else.

I'll start with recognition and appreciation for the people of Bnei Brak and Givat Shmuel who exemplified Hachnasas Orchim to a degree that is rarely seen. Living in Israel, we have all experienced the frustrations of

road closures, demonstrations and mass gatherings that have impeded our ability to get to work, bring our children to school or run errands. And yet, with 750,000 Jews filling the streets of their neighborhood, the residents of Bnei Brak and Givat Shmuel welcomed us with open arms.

Walking from Highway 4 to the main area where we ultimately stood to pay our respects, we passed homes and buildings with signs offering food, drinks and a bathroom to those passing by. Shuls had welcome signs that encouraged visitors to rest, refresh, and gather some koach before continuing on with our day, and even extending an invitation to join them in the Beit Midrash. People walked through the masses handing out tissues, water, snacks, offering to anyone in need. Mi K'amcha Yisrael? We are so fortunate to be a part of this incredible nation.

Another element of the levaya stood out to all those who were there. Rav Chaim was very clearly part of the Charedi world. But as I stopped periodically to look at those around me - people who spent hours to get to the levaya and had a long afternoon ahead of them before they finally got home - you would not believe the variety of Jews who united in escorting Rav Kanievsky to the Beit HaKvarot.

The truth is, I could quite literally fill up pages of this week's Torah Tidbits describing every type of Jew that attended the levaya.

And even if I did fill those pages, words would only limit how powerful the experience was for those who attended. I saw secular Jews standing with their children. Dati Leumi families and Yeshivot. Every type of Chassid you can imagine. Litvish Yeshivahs. Secular schools. Bnei Akiva. Ariel. Ezra. I saw black hats, Shtreimels, big Kippot Srugot, small Kippot Srugot, velvet Yarmulkes. I saw people with long Peyot, short Peyot and no Payot. Students from every type of Israeli school spanning day schools, high schools and college were in attendance, as well as Anglo seminary and Yeshiva programs. It was beautiful to see how Torah brought us all together.

My sons and I, like so many people, walked away from Rav Chaim Kanievsky's levaya, deeply moved by the legacy he left behind. Rav Kanievsky put Torah above all else. And this past Sunday, Jews from all backgrounds united as one to pay our respects to a true Gadol BaTorah. May we be zoche to follow in Rav Kanievsky's footsteps, continuing to allow the Torah to be the foundational links that connect Klal Yisrael to one another - in Israel and around the world.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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



## **Orthodox Union Mourns the Passing of HaRav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l**

With profound sadness, the Orthodox Union joins the entire Jewish community in mourning the passing of Moreinu HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, zt”l, at the age of 94. Fondly known to one and all as “Rav Chaim,” he was revered as the Gadol haDor (outstanding Torah scholar of the generation) and was the preeminent leader of the Haredi community in both Israel and the diaspora.

Rav Chaim served as both a model and a guide. His diligence and consistency in Torah study was legendary, resulting in a stunningly encyclopedic knowledge of the vast corpus of Torah literature. He lived very simply and – despite the premium he placed on using every available moment for Torah study – generously opened his home and gave of his time to the thousands who would seek his Halachic rulings, his counsel, his prayers, his blessings, or simply a word of encouragement and the opportunity to meet him.

Despite his apparent preference for anonymity, the esteem accorded Rav Chaim was such that his approval and blessing was a prerequisite for proceeding on any meaningful undertaking in the Haredi community. We are all in mourning as the world has lost a unique “gadol beTorah,” a giant of Torah scholarship and a model of piety, humility, and kindness. Rav Chaim’s outstanding example will continue to inspire all of us to aspire to greater heights in the service of G-d, the study of Torah, and the care and kindness we extend to each other.

Yehi zichro baruch. May his memory be a blessing.

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# SHEMINI



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



### Rabbi Reuven Tradburks Director of RCA Israel Region



**1<sup>st</sup> Aliya (Vayikra 9:1-16)** On the eighth day of the inauguration of Aharon and the Kohanim, Moshe gathers the people. He instructs Aharon to offer a chatat and an olah. The people are also to bring a chatat, olah, shlamim and mincha. For today, G-d will appear. Aharon offers his offerings. He offers the people's offerings. The offerings are brought exactly as instructed.

This eighth day is the long anticipated moment. G-d's presence is to appear in the Mishkan. The path to this moment has taken 7 parshiot. The instructions were given to build the Mishkan. Then it was built. The instructions were given for the Kohanim's garments. And they were made.

May the Torah learned in this  
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Instructions were given to inaugurate the Kohanim. And in last week's parsha the 7-day inauguration was completed. The preparations are all completed.

On this, the 8<sup>th</sup> day, Moshe passes the baton to Aharon. During the 7-day inauguration, Moshe acted as the Kohen Gadol. Not today. Today, the day after the 7-day inauguration, Aharon is now the Kohen Gadol. And the Kohanim step into their role.

Moshe tells them that the offerings they are to bring today will invite G-d's presence.

At the end of Sefer Shemot, when the building of the Mishkan was completed, G-d's presence filled the building.

But His Presence is only half the story. The Mishkan is not a place for He Alone. It is a place of rendezvous: He. And us. He appeared upon completion of the building. As if to take the first step. Like a dance couple. Someone is the lead. He is the lead. As He has been in the entire Torah til this point. He has been the lead: Creation, Avraham, Egypt, Sinai, Mishkan. It is all G-d's reach for man.

Until here. Moshe tells Aharon and the people: now, it is our turn to meet Him. Aharon has been inaugurated as the one to represent the entire Jewish people in our approach to G-d. He and the Kohanim will act as our representatives in bringing the offerings that express our desire to approach Him.



**2<sup>nd</sup> Aliya (9:17-23)** Aharon offers the mincha and the shlamim. All the details are performed as commanded. The portion Aharon is to receive is waved as commanded. Upon conclusion of all the offerings, Aharon blesses the people and descends from the

offerings. Moshe and Aharon enter the Tent of Meeting, blessing the people upon exiting. The Glory of G-d appears to the people.

All the types of offerings have been brought by Aharon: chatat, olah, mincha, shlamim. The moment of rendezvous of the Divine, of responding to the approach of man is about to occur. Aharon blesses the people with Birkat Kohanim. Well, we call Birkat Kohanim a blessing, but it is really a prayer, a hope: *May G-d bless you and keep you. May He shine his face upon you ....*

Aharon blesses the people with the hope that their aspiration for G-d's rendezvous be realized. Man can approach G-d, do all that is required; but His response is never dictated by us. All we can do is our part. And then wait for His response.

Moshe and Aharon bless the people: May the pleasure of G-d be upon you. May the Shechina dwell on your efforts.

The Kavod Hashem, the Glory of G-d appeared to the people. Their approach and their prayers were granted with a rendezvous with the Divine. Truly a peak, sublime moment of the entire Torah. Man's approach to G-d is answered with His Presence.



**3<sup>rd</sup> Aliya (9:24-10:11)** A fire descended from G-d and consumed the offerings on the

altar. The people saw, sang out and fell on their faces. Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aharon, took incense, though not commanded, and burnt it before G-d. A fire consumed them and they died. Moshe told Aharon that this is what G-d said: With those close to Me I am sanctified. Aharon was silent. After removing the bodies,

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Moshe told the other sons of Aharon to not mourn or leave the Mikdash; the Jewish people will mourn. Moshe commanded the Kohanim to not consume wine when serving in the Mikdash, so that they can distinguish holy and profane and to teach the people.

The people are ecstatic with the Presence of G-d. But the ecstasy is shattered by the death of Nadav and Avihu in bringing incense not commanded.

There is much rich commentary on the terrible drama of this story. Ecstasy and death. The simple flow of the narrative seems to rest on how man is to approach G-d. The Mishkan is the place of intimate approach to G-d, the meeting of man and G-d in His home. But the approach of finite man to infinite G-d is fraught with mystery. And hubris. How can finite man dare to think he can approach the Infinite? It is absurd to even imagine that we could possibly know what would bring Divine favor. We can do so only because – well, because He told us how. G-d invited us, instructed us how to approach Him. And we do so only with great humility, acknowledging that we are approaching Him only by His invitation.

We have had 7 parshiot of detailed instructions and detailed compliance with those instructions culminating in this moment of the successful rendezvous of man and G-d. The intent of these details – is clearly to impress upon us our inadequacy. We are incapable of fathoming how to approach G-d. He, though, reaches for us, with detailed instructions as to how to approach Him.

It is in this context, after a long, extended narrative of detailed instructions and

detailed compliance that the spontaneous desire of Nadav and Avihu to approach G-d with their unauthorized incense must be seen. After all that, you just decide to jump, in a spirit of ecstasy, to approach G-d? Incredible. Shocking.



**4<sup>th</sup> Aliya (10:12-15)** Moshe instructs Aharon and his remaining sons, Elazar and Itamar,

to consume the parts of the offerings that were brought today that they were entitled to. They need to consume the mincha matza and the meat of the breast in the holy grounds.

Moshe proceeds with the momentous day of the appearance of G-d's glory, proceeding with the details of the offerings.



**5<sup>th</sup> Aliya (10:16-20)** Moshe inquired about the meat of the chatat but it had been burned,

not consumed. He was upset: why did you not consume these in the holy place as commanded? Aharon responded: On a day that this occurred, should we offer the offerings and eat them? Is that proper in G-d's eyes? Moshe heard and agreed.

Moshe is upset that the offerings had not been consumed by Aharon and his other sons. Aharon, struck speechless by the death of his 2 sons, now challenges Moshe. Does our role as Divine servants eliminate our human feelings of tragedy? Is a holy person angelic – or holy while remaining a person? Am I not entitled to mourn at least today?

This brief, very brief, confrontation expresses a universal theme of the holy man. Do we accept our humanity, our emotions, our desires, our complexity even in our holiest religious leaders? Or do

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we expect of them superhuman, angelic behavior? Religions of the world come down differently on this question. Aharon sets the Jewish view, agreed to by Moshe. The holiest person we have, the Kohen Gadol, cries like anyone else on the death of his children. However holy he is, he is also a person with legitimate feelings. Holy men are holy, but men they remain.



**6<sup>th</sup> Aliya (11:1-32)** Of **land animals**, you may eat those with split hooves and that chew

their cud. Those with only one such sign shall not be eaten: camel, hyrax, hare and pig. **Aquatic beings** that have fins and scales may be eaten. Predator **birds** may not be eaten. **Insects** may not be eaten with the exception of certain grasshoppers. Touching the carcass of certain dead animals renders a person Tameh, impure.

The laws of kashrut begin a series of laws related to man's uniqueness: animal-like but with a soul. The Torah specifically legislates those activities that we share with animals: food, procreation, illness, death. And those activities that distinguish us from animals: social behavior, communication, self-control. In instructing us what we may eat and what we may not, we are taking the activity that we share with animals, eating, and exercising control. We are not animals, driven without limit by the need for food. We control what we eat, how we prepare it.



**7<sup>th</sup> Aliya (11:33-47)** The contraction of Tumah from contact with animals requires immer-

sion in a mikveh. You shall be holy because I, G-d, am holy. I brought you out of Egypt to be My people and to be holy, as I am. You

are to distinguish between pure and impure and between living things that may be eaten and those that may not.

We are instructed to imitate G-d's holiness. In what way are we to imitate Him? In Creation he separated, *mavdil*; so too we exercise discernment. We distinguish between that which we consume; and that which we don't. Discernment, self control, structure, in particular in those activities we share with animals are what make us holy, imitating His holiness.

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## PARSHAT PARAH (BAMIDBAR 19:1-22)

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The purification process of the red heifer is required for those in contact with the dead. Since we all need to bring a Korban Pesach, we all need to be in a state of purity. And although contact with the dead is a mitzvah, it does render one impure. This parsha is a part of the theme that appears in our seder – we sigh with the awareness that our Pesach Seder pales in comparison with a Seder featuring the *korban pesach*. We don't have it – but we can read about it. Hence, we read about the elaborate purity process in preparation for the great day of bringing the Pesach offering.

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## HAFTORAH FOR PARSHAT PARAH YECHEZKEL 36:16-36

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This week we read a special *haftorah* which follows the theme of this week's additional Torah portion of *Parshat Parah* which speaks of the power of the 'Red Heifer' to purify.

We find in the *haftorah* the mention of “purifying waters” that are sprinkled upon the people of Israel with the coming of the Mashiach.

Hashem will take the people of Israel out of exile, not necessarily as a response to their meritorious deeds or acts of *teshuva*, but as a result of Hashem’s commitment to return them to their borders. Hashem will bring the Israelites back to the Holy Land and purify them with the waters of the Red Heifer. The people of Israel will then feel ashamed of their misdeeds and this reality will bring about a process of purification. Hashem will bestow prosperity and bounty upon the Land.

The following passage is one of the most memorable in the *haftorah* which describes an elevated and comforting vision of Eretz Yisrael: “This Land that was desolate has become like the Garden of Eden, and the cities that were destroyed and desolate and pulled down have become settled as fortified cities.” ■

## STATS

26th of 54 sedras; 3rd of 10 in Vayikra  
 157.2 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 42nd  
 6 Parshiyot, 3 open, 3 closed  
 91 p’sukim - ranks 41st (4th in Vayikra)  
 1238 words - 41st (5th in Vayikra)  
 4670 letters - 41st (5th in Vayikra)

## MITZVOT

17 mitzvot; 6 positive; 11 prohibitions

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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

## Aging Grace

We all applaud when an old man runs in the marathon. We expect that his physical powers diminished long ago, and when he proves otherwise, we celebrate for him.

We are impressed when an old woman professor can still give an extemporaneous lecture, drawing upon her memory of things she learned long ago. We expect that her mental powers have considerably weakened, and are pleasantly surprised when she proves otherwise.

We all know something about the natural course of aging, and the toll it takes upon our bodies and minds.

But we are much less familiar with the social impact of the process of aging. We know less about the effects upon the older person of the reaction he or she evokes from other people. What others think of us is important at every stage of life, and older persons are no different from the rest of us in their need for respect,

admiration, and approval from others in their social circle.

I was a long way from old age myself when a revered mentor explained to me how he realized that, at least in the eyes of others, he was getting old. “I find that people give me honor and respect, but not power. They seem to be listening carefully to what I say, but they do not really hear my words, and they never heed them.”

It is no wonder that the great novelist Hermann Hesse wrote the following in a letter to a friend:

Growing old is not just a winding down and withering - like every phase of life it has its own values, its own magic, its own wisdom, its own grief, and in times of a fairly flourishing culture, people have rightly shown age a certain respect, which nowadays is somewhat lacking in youth. We shall not hold that against youth. But we shall not let them talk us into thinking that age is worth nothing.

The most that Hesse experienced from others as he grew old was “a certain respect.” He insistently protested against the all-to-common belief that “age is worth nothing.”

There is a phrase in this week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Shemini* (*Leviticus* 9:1-11:17) that the rabbis of the Midrash refuse to pass by without comment. The very first verse of this *parsha* reads, “And it came to pass on the eighth day that

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on the untimely passing of

**Yigal z”l**

beloved son, brother, husband,  
father, grandfather

ממקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Moses called out to Aaron and to his sons and to the elders of Israel.”

Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, a second-century Talmudic sage who was famed and revered for his mystical insights, is impressed by the role that the elders of the community, men of great age, play, not only in this verse, but throughout the Torah. He comments:

We find that the Holy One Blessed be He bestowed the honor upon the elderly very frequently.

At the burning bush: “Go and gather the elders of Israel;”

In Egypt: “And you and the elders of Israel shall approach...;”

At Sinai: “Go up to the Lord, you...and seventy of the elders of Israel;”

In the desert, “Gather unto me seventy men from among the elders of Israel;”

At the tent of meeting, “Moses called upon...the elders of Israel;”

And in the messianic future the Holy One will again bestow honor upon the elderly, as it is written (*Isaiah 24:23*), “The moon will be embarrassed and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of Hosts will Himself reign upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, and His elders will be granted honor.” (*Midrash Rabbah Leviticus 11:8*)

Rabbi Simon ben Yochai is emphasizing something which is fundamental to Judaism. Not only are the elderly granted kavod or respect, they also must be taken seriously. They represent an indispensable resource for the community and its

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The important role of age in our history has its roots in its very beginning. The Talmud (*Bava Metzia* 87a) makes a remark which many have found strange. “Before Abraham age did not exist.” This does not mean that there were no old people before Father Abraham, nor does it mean that people got older but did not show signs of age.

One of my revered teachers, Rabbi Nisan Telushkin of blessed memory, whom I knew in his advanced old age, explains this passage as follows. Until Abraham, the world was materialistic and the primary activities were the practical ones that allowed for physical survival. At that time, age was no advantage at all. Quite the contrary, what was necessary was the vigor and energy of youth.

When Abraham came on the scene, things changed. He successfully introduced the spiritual dimension to mankind. In this realm the skills of youth were no longer the only skills necessary. To the extent that mankind became more spiritual, the skills of age became more and more important. Thus, of course age existed before Abraham. But with his arrival on the scene, the

advantages of age began to become recognized as crucial. Before Abraham, age was simply not a vital and necessary part of the human community. He was the first “old man,” because he was the first person of age to be revered as an integral and essential part of the leadership of the human community.

It has been said that contemporary Western civilization can be characterized as a youth culture. Judaism objects to such a culture. It insists that there is a role for the elders, and it is not just a marginal role. This lesson is so basic to our faith that it can be traced back to our very beginnings in the life of Abraham.

It is so basic that the elderly are placed front and center in the Torah’s account of our national beginnings, as Rabbi Simon ben Yochai pointed out in the Midrashic passage cited above.

It is so basic that it deserves to be reiterated again and again. It is why I chose this theme for Shemini, which is read close to the beginning of spring. If, in spring, a young man’s fancy turns to love, then, in spring, an older man’s fancy turns to wisdom and accomplishment. ■

## A SHORT VORT

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

“And Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them.” (9:22)

וישא אהרן את ידיו אל העם ויברכם

In the parsha Aaron blessed the people of Israel immediately upon finishing the service of the offering.

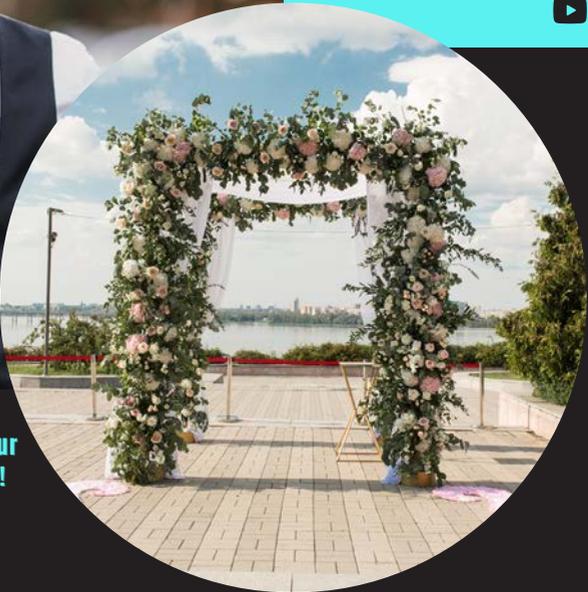
Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch asks what is the connection between these two acts? Furthermore, the word used for hands is spelled without a “yud” – ידו.

He suggests that the priestly blessing is not a separate deed in and of itself. The blessing is ineffective if performed alone. Only when offerings are brought by the people of Israel as a unit then does the Priestly Benediction take effect. In addition, no power was invested in the hands of the Kohanim. “His hands”, in the verse, are missing the letter “yud” to signify that the blessing is coming directly from G-d, not from the Kohen.

Shabbat Shalom

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MIDEI CHODESH

BY RABBI SHMUEL GOLDIN

Faculty, OU Israel

B'CHODSHO

Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Ahavath Torah, Englewood NJ

# The Road to "Jewishness"

The Month of Nissan is soon upon us... and, with its arrival, we look forward to the yearly story of our nation's birth.

To mark the occasion, I'd ask you to consider the first step of someone who wants to join Jewish nation; the halachically-mandated entry point for a potential convert. For I believe that the convert's first step has much to teach us about our own journey.

In the Tractate of Yevamot, the Babylonian Talmud declares:

"[If a prospective] proselyte comes to convert in the present era, we say to him: 'What did you perceive that prompted you to come? Do you not know that Israel (i.e., the Jewish people) is, in this day, afflicted,

oppressed, downtrodden and harassed- and that hardships are frequently visited upon them?'

If the individual responds: 'I know, and I am not even worthy [to share in their hardships], we accept him immediately [as a potential convert worthy of education]."

Only after this interchange has taken place, continues the Talmud, do we begin to teach the candidate about the enormous responsibilities inherent in the halachic code.

What prompts the scholars of the Talmud to suggest this particular response to a potential convert?

Why begin the encounter with discouragement? And, why this particular dissuasion, focusing on the historical travails of the Jewish people?

Before addressing these questions, we should correct a widespread misconception concerning the Jewish attitude towards conversion.

*Jewish tradition does not view conversion to Judaism negatively.*

In fact, the opposite is true. Righteous converts are meant to be held in high esteem.

Three times daily, we recite in the weekday amida: "Upon the righteous, the pious, the elders of your people the house of Israel, the remnant of their scholars, *the righteous converts*, and upon us, may your compassion be aroused..." Clearly, this blessing places the convert in rarefied company,

With great sadness  
we inform you of the passing  
of our beloved husband, father,  
grandfather, and great-grandfather  
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ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.  
May he be a meilitz yosher for all of  
us and for Klal Yisrael.  
*Gilda Hochbaum and daughters  
Rivka Reena Maltz, Chana Tova Scharlat,  
and Ziona Greenwald*

indicating the respect deserved by someone who is a “Jew by choice.”

Our initial hesitancy towards a potential convert is not a reflection of a negative bias towards conversion, but stems instead from two important facts:

*Judaism does not maintain that you must be Jewish to be righteous.*

Properly understood, Judaism is the most tolerant of religions. Unlike other faith traditions, Judaism accepts the existence of different paths towards God. The very existence within halacha of the seven Noachide laws; seven basic, moral principles incumbent upon the nations of the world; is proof of this truth.

Our response to the potential convert is thus designed to give aspirants pause.

*You need not take this step; we counsel the individual. While we are deeply confident in the meaningfulness of our tradition and law, it may not be right for you. And, from our perspective, that is just fine. For we believe that you can be righteous while remaining outside of our faith tradition.*

*Judaism demands seriousness of intent from a potential convert.*

Conversion to Judaism is far from a pro forma process. If one wishes to become Jewish, he/she must accept the obligations that such joining entails.

We initially discourage the potential convert in order to underscore the seriousness of the step about to be taken.

Our questions, however, are now deepened. Why does the Talmud mandate discouragement based on the persecution of the Jewish People? Given the reasons for our hesitancy, wouldn't it make more sense to instead stress the daunting halachic



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obligations the convert will be required to accept?

Upon consideration, the rabbinic rationale for the convert's first steps towards "Jewishness" becomes clear. *The convert's journey is meant to mirror our own.*

The Jewish Nation was born through two distinct, yet interrelated, events. Obvious proof of this fact lies in the calendar journey before us.

*Pesach precedes Shavuot...The Exodus precedes Revelation.*

Before an individual could arrive at Sinai, he/she had to be willing to first leave Egypt, to throw his/her lot in with a fledgling nation traveling into the unknown. This was far from an easy step. The Rabbis, in fact, maintain that only one-sixth of the Jewish people actually left Egypt at the time of the Exodus. *The narrative before us is not a fairy tale, the Rabbis declare. Leaving "the known" for the "unknown," even when the reality you know is oppressive bondage, requires faith and courage.*

*The first step towards Jewishness, we inform the potential convert, is the first step our ancestors took centuries ago...conscious affiliation with the Jewish people. Only if you are willing to be part of this people, in good times and bad, only if you are willing to share in its sorrows as well as its victories, can you begin your journey towards becoming a Jew.*

A personal experience underscores the wisdom of the sages....

A number of years ago, during my first rabbinic tenure in Potomac, Maryland, I taught a young woman in preparation for her possible conversion. While she seemed sincere enough, something just didn't sit

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right. Try as I might, however, I could not put my finger on the problem. Something was awry, but I couldn't tell what...

Suddenly, one evening, she called me on the phone in tears.

After almost five decades, her words remain as clear to me as if they were spoken yesterday.

"I just saw a television program on the Holocaust," she said, "I could never become part of a people that the world could do that to."

And with this realization, she broke off her pursuit of a conversion.

It was then, early on in my rabbinic career, that I realized the wisdom of the rabbis in their approach to conversion. The first step towards Jewishness is affiliation with the Jewish people. *To become a Jew, the convert must be someone who would rather be "part of a people that the world could do that to" than "part of a world that could do that to a people."*

At this time of the year, we renew our affiliation with our people and its destiny. We look back across the centuries and we realize that our first steps out of Egypt launched a people's story in which we can take deserved pride. Against all odds, we have not only survived but have preserved a wondrous heritage and presented a moral code towards which the entire world can aspire. Battered and bruised, but with our heads held high, we are proud to be part of HaShem's chosen nation, a people with a record that can indeed serve as a "light unto the nations." ■

Rabbi Goldin is the author of the OU Press volumes "Unlocking the Torah Text," and "Unlocking the Haggada."

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Dedicated by  
Dr. Robert Sreter DDS., M.S.

## Fire: Holy and Unholy

The shock is immense. For several weeks and many chapters – the longest prelude in the Torah – we have read of the preparations for the moment at which God would bring His Presence to rest in the midst of the people. Five *parshiyot* (Terumah, Tetzaveh, Ki Tissa, Vayakhel and Pekudei) describe the instructions for building the Sanctuary. Two further *parshiyot* (Vayikra,

Tzav) detail the sacrificial offerings to be brought there. All is now ready. For seven days the Priests (Aaron and his sons) have been consecrated into office. Now comes the eighth day when the service of the *Mishkan* will begin.

The entire people have played their part in constructing what will become the visible home of the Divine Presence on Earth. With a simple, moving verse the drama reaches its climax:

“Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting and when they came out, they blessed the people. God’s glory was then revealed to all the people.” (Lev. 9:23)

Just as we think the narrative has reached closure, a terrifying scene takes place:

Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, took their censers, put fire into them and added incense; and they offered unauthorised fire before God, which He had not instructed them to offer. Fire came forth from before God, and it consumed them so that they died before God. Moses then said to Aaron: “This is what God spoke of when He said: Among those who approach Me, I will show Myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured.” (Lev. 10:1-3)

Celebration turned to tragedy with the death of Aaron’s two eldest sons. The Sages and commentators offer many

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explanations. Nadav and Avihu died because: they entered the holy of holies;<sup>1</sup> they were not wearing the requisite clothes;<sup>2</sup> they took fire from the kitchen, not the altar;<sup>3</sup> they did not consult Moses and Aaron;<sup>4</sup> nor did they consult one another.<sup>5</sup> According to some they were guilty of hubris. They were impatient to assume leadership roles themselves;<sup>6</sup> and they did not marry, considering themselves above such things.<sup>7</sup> Yet others see their deaths as delayed punishment for an earlier sin, when, at Mount Sinai they “ate and drank” in the Presence of God (Ex. 24:9-11).

These interpretations represent close readings of the four places in the Torah which Nadav and Avihu’s death is mentioned (Lev. 10:2, Lev. 16:1, Num. 3:4, Num. 26:61), as well as the reference to their presence on Mount Sinai. Each is a profound meditation on the dangers

1 *Midrash Tanchuma (Buber), parshat Acharei Mot 7.*

2 *Leviticus Rabbah 20:9.*

3 *Midrash Tanchuma, ad loc.*

4 *Yalkut Shimoni, I:524.*

5 *Midrash Tanchuma, ad loc.*

6 *Aggadah (Buber), Vayikra 10.*

7 *Leviticus Rabbah 20:10.*

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of over-enthusiasm in the religious life. However, the simplest explanation is the one explicit in the Torah itself. Nadav and Avihu died because they offered unauthorised, literally “strange,” fire, meaning “that which was not commanded.” To understand the significance of this, we must go back to first principles and remind ourselves of the meaning of *kadosh*, “holy”, and thus of the *Mikdash* as the home of the holy.

The holy is that segment of time and space God has reserved for His Presence. *Creation involves concealment*. The word *olam*, universe, is semantically linked to the word *ne’elam*, “hidden”. To give humankind some of His own creative powers – the use of language to think, communicate, understand, imagine alternative futures and choose between them – God must do more than create *Homo sapiens*. He must efface Himself (what the Kabbalists called *tzimtzum*) to create space for human action. No single act more profoundly indicates the love and generosity implicit in creation. God as we encounter Him in the Torah is like a parent who knows they must hold back, let go, refrain from intervening, if their children are to become responsible and mature.

But there is a limit. To efface Himself entirely would be equivalent to abandoning

the world, deserting His own children. That, God may not and will not do. How then does God leave a trace of His Presence on Earth?

The biblical answer is not philosophical. A philosophical answer (I am thinking here of the mainstream of Western philosophy, beginning in antiquity with Plato, in modernity with Descartes) would be one that applies universally – i.e., at all times, in all places. But there is no answer that applies to all times and places. *That is why philosophy cannot and never will understand the apparent contradiction between Divine creation and human freewill, or between Divine Presence and the empirical world in which we reflect, choose and act.*

Jewish thought is counter-philosophical. It insists that truths are embodied precisely in particular times and places. There are holy times (the seventh day, seventh month, seventh year, and the end of seven septennial cycles, the jubilee). There are holy people (the Children of Israel as a whole; within them, the Levi’im, and within them the Kohanim). And there is holy space (eventually, Israel; within that, Jerusalem; within that the Temple; in the desert, they were the *Mishkan*, the Holy, and the Holy of Holies).

The holy is that point of time and space in which the Presence of God is encountered

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by *tzimtzum* – self-renunciation – on the part of mankind. *Just as God makes space for man by an act of self-limitation, so man makes space for God by an act of self-limitation.* The holy is where God is experienced as absolute Presence. Not accidentally but essentially, this can only take place through the total renunciation of human will and initiative. That is not because God does not value human will and initiative. To the contrary: God has empowered mankind to use them to become His “partners in the work of creation”.

However, to be true to God’s purposes, there must be times and places at which humanity experiences the reality of the Divine. Those times and places require absolute obedience. The most fundamental mistake – the mistake of Nadav and Avihu – is to take the powers that belong to man’s encounter with the world, and apply them to man’s encounter with the Divine. Had Nadav and Avihu used their own initiative to fight evil and injustice they would have been heroes. Because they used their own initiative in the arena of the holy, they erred. They asserted their own presence in the absolute Presence of God. That is a contradiction in terms. That is why they died.

We err if we think of God as capricious, jealous, angry: a myth spread by early Christianity in an attempt to define itself as the religion of love, superseding the cruel/harsh/retributive God of the “Old Testament”. When the Torah itself uses such language it “speaks in the language of

  
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Mazal Tov to

Binyamin & Nancy Chernofsky

and family on the birth of a grandson



humanity” (Brachot 31a) – that is to say, in terms people will understand.

In truth, Tanach is a love story through and through – the passionate love of the Creator for His creatures that survives all the disappointments and betrayals of human history. God needs us to encounter Him, not because He needs mankind but because we need Him. If civilisation is to be guided by love, justice, and respect for the integrity of creation, there must be moments in which we leave the “I” behind and encounter the fullness of being in all its glory.

That is the function of the holy – the point at which “I am” is silent in the overwhelming presence of “There is”. That is what Nadav and Avihu forgot – that to enter holy space or time requires ontological humility, the total renunciation of human initiative and desire.

The significance of this fact cannot be over-estimated. When we confuse God’s will with our will, we turn the holy – the source of life – into something unholy and a source of death. The classic example of this is “holy war,” jihad, crusade – investing imperialism (the desire to rule over other people) with the cloak of sanctity as if conquest and forced conversion were God’s

will.

The story of Nadav and Avihu reminds us yet again of the warning first spelled out in the days of Cain and Abel. *The first act of worship led to the first murder.* Like nuclear fission, worship generates power, which can be benign but can also be profoundly dangerous.

The episode of Nadav and Avihu is written in three kinds of fire. First there is the fire from Heaven:

Fire came forth from before God and consumed the burnt offering. (Lev. 9:24)

This was the fire of favour, consummating the service of the Sanctuary. Then came the “unauthorised fire” offered by the two sons.

Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorised fire before God, which He had not instructed them [to offer]. (Lev. 10:1)

Then there was the counter-fire from Heaven:

Fire came forth from before God, and it consumed them so that they died before God. (Lev. 10:2)

The message is simple and intensely serious: Religion is not what the European Enlightenment thought it would become: mute, marginal and mild. It is fire – and like fire, it warms but it also burns. And we are the guardians of the flame. ■

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## PROBING

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Faculty, OU Israel Center

## THE PROPHETS

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As we listen to the prophetic words of the navi Yechezkel we are rightfully puzzled as to why this 36<sup>th</sup> perek of his sefer was chosen as the haftarah for this week. We are puzzled not because of the seeming lack of connection to the Shabbat for, indeed, the subject matter of retaining a level of purity in our daily lives is certainly germane to the theme found in the special maftir. Rather, our discomfort might be based upon the simple wonder as to why, in these weeks leading up to Chag HaPesach, a time of joy and celebration, did our Rabbis choose to read a chapter that opens with such harsh and severe expressions. “Israel has defiled their land!”, “I’ve poured my wrath upon them”, “I have scattered them among the nations and there they have profaned My name” – these messages of reproach, seem unfitting for this time of year.

Of course, as we continue reading the navi’s vision, we are comforted by Hashem’s promise to return Israel to her land so as to prevent her Chillul Hashem among the nations, but I would submit that, given the fact that we recite this haftarah during the pre-Pesach season, our Rabbis could have simply begun Yechezkel’s words with the promise of a shining future rather than including the difficult six-versed introduction as they did.

In perusing through the meforshim to reveal some different approaches in

understanding these psukim, I came across a unique explanation of Rav S.R. Hirsch. Rav Hirsch refers to this perek as a “glorious chapter” that proclaims the “complete freedom of will in moral matters”. He explains that Yechezkel taught the nation that it is possible to reach the heights of purity from the deepest depths of moral defilement. The importance of these troubling verses of introduction is to let once-sinful people realize what they can yet achieve despite where they had once been. Their mission of becoming a “mamlechet Kohanim”, a kingdom of kohanim who serve G-d, was still attainable! The navi uses their “defiled” past, a past that is then followed by the promise of a glorious future, as encouragement to those who felt that they had lost Hashem’s grace and could never repair the sins – the defilement - of the past, such people must be uplifted by the prophesied future and the knowledge the past need not hold them back. Rather, as Rav Hirsch expounds, Israel, as a nation and as individuals, has the “complete freedom of will in moral matters” to change their forgettable past to the prophesied future.

Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, Rav Hirsch insists that the prophet’s descriptions of Hashem’s retributions for Israel’s sins were not to be understood as punishments, per se, but rather as painful tools meant to bring the Jew back to his



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Torah, back to his G-d. Much as a parent with a child, the painful exile and ongoing persecutions are not proof of Hashem's abandonment of His chosen people but as proof that He still cares and desires their return.

When our haftarah is seen in this light we can well understand how fitting it is to be read before Pesach. The holiday of past redemption and future geulah, past enslavement and future freedom, past defilement in the 49 levels of tum'ah to the future taharah of Temple worship, fits in well to our haftarah reading this week.

It is no wonder why the Ashkenazic min-hag adds the two final psukim that speak of the once-desolate cities filled with people, filled on the festivals – a clear reminder of the coming Chag of Pesach! ■

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# Declaration of Impurity Requires an Understanding of the Past, Present and Future

The Torah describes **three** animals that have one of the signs of being kosher – they chew their cud but are lacking the other kosher characteristics. (Vayikra 11: 4-6)

When referring to a camel the Torah states: ופרסה אינו מפריס, its hoof **is** not split, in the **present** tense. With respect to the shafan (hyrax), the Torah uses the phrase: ופרסה לא יפריס, its hoof **will** not split, in the **future** tense. While describing the arneves (hare) the Torah dictates: ופרסה לא הפריסה, its hoof **has** not been split, in the **past** tense. Each of these three phrases ends with a common statement of טמא הוא לכם – it is *tamei* (impure) to you. Why does the Torah utilize three different tenses when citing similar characteristics in these non-kosher animals?

Rav Yisrael Salanter derives a beautiful lesson from the different tenses used in these *pesukim*. The Torah is cautioning us that before we judge another individual as being “*tamei*” or transgressing, one has to

understand their past, present and future. If one is not familiar with everything about the subject or object that he is about to criticize, don’t be so quick to rule that it is *tamei*.

Rav Frand in his sefer *The Power of a Vort*, cites a story very much on point. There was a married couple that survived the Holocaust and the husband, after observing all the horrors, dropped all religious observance. The wife was able to retain her faith despite the tragedy and pleaded with her husband to join her in shul each Shabbos. Her husband refused. After weeks of arguing, the wife begged her husband to just sit in the back of the shul and read a newspaper to appease her, to which he agreed. For years he would come to shul and read a newspaper cover to cover during davening.

Most people witnessing such a scene would likely think to themselves: “what nerve, he comes to shul to read a paper! Not once did he open a siddur or even wear

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a tallis. Such disrespect. He should just stay home to read his paper.” To the credit of the congregants of this shul, not only didn't they chastise him, they befriended him. They invited him to kiddush and sincerely greeted him each week. Within a few years he started davening daily at the shul and eventually became the president!

Plenty of people would have been quick to pronounce “*tamei hu lachem*” with respect to this individual, not realizing that he was not reading the paper as a sign of defiance but rather to please his wife despite his own disgruntled view of religion after all he had experienced during the war.

This is why the Torah stresses “*mafris, yaf-  
ris, hifrisa.*” We can never declare anyone or anything to be *tamei* until we fully comprehend its past, present and future. ■



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## Perfected Purity

The long-awaited day had finally arrived; the eighth day of *miluim*, the day the Mishkan was consecrated and set up. Moshe Rabbeinu tells his brother Aharon HaCohen, “approach the altar;” (*Vayikra 9:7*) to perform the sacrifices. Chazal teach us that Moshe Rabbeinu had to coax his brother since Aharon was reticent to do the service. What was Aharon’s fear? Chazal explain that the altar reminded Aharon of the golden calf, and he felt embarrassed and unworthy of this exalted position. It was therefore necessary for Moshe Rabbeinu to reassure Aharon that it was specifically because of his humility that he was chosen for this job. Let us see some lessons that we can extract from this curious exchange.

The Ramban notes that Aharon’s involvement in the sin of the golden calf was the

only sin that Aharon had ever really committed. Because it was so embedded in his mind, the altar took the form of a calf. Aharon was then filled with shame and felt undeserving to serve Hashem. Moshe Rabbeinu assured him that Hashem had not only forgiven his sin, but it is this quality of *busha*, shame and remorse, that allows one to receive forgiveness.

Rav Yehudah Leib Chasman learns a powerful lesson from this passage. Aharon’s sin in this affair was negligible, yet he was filled with such remorse that it was difficult for him to offer his sacrifices. We on the other hand, sin with intent and passion all the time. Where is our shame and trepidation to approach Hashem in our tefillot that take the place of sacrifices? Should we not also be filled with fear that the sins we have done may hinder our tefillot from ascending Above? Rav Chasman advises to take inspiration from a tight rope walker, whose every move is weighed with focus and determination. Likewise, we need to



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live with the awareness of *shiviti Hashem lenegdi tamid*; consistent consciousness of living in Hashem's Presence. Thus, one will be keenly aware when he has sinned and what he needs to do to rectify his actions.

Rav Zaidel Epstein in *Sefer He'arot* adds a further dimension. Cognizance of closeness to Hashem enables one who sins to return to Hashem in a state of *teshuvah*. As in a spiral, one's reconnection with Hashem reaches higher level and is filled with *simchah*. When one sins yet realizes that Hashem is so close, he is buoyed and encouraged to invest even more in the relationship.

*Parashat Parah* encapsulates this dynamic. Although we don't have a *Parah Adumah* today, reading the portion generates purity and a spirit of *teshuvah* within us. This Shabbat we can feel rejuvenated with a spiritual cleanliness and allow this to inspire us to higher levels of closeness to Hashem. ■

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# Full Immersion

The *heilige* Ribnitzer Rebbe, Reb Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz, zy’a, was an extraordinary tzadik and a legendary baal avodah, whose sacrifice for Yidishkeit and holiness engulfed all the different places he lived — Russia, Romania, Eretz Yisrael, Los Angeles and Monsey — bringing down blessings for petitioners across the globe. Describing the Ribnitzer’s righteousness, Reb Shlomo Freifeld, zt’l, Rosh Yeshivah of Shor Yoshuv, said meeting him was like meeting a tzadik from the days of the Baal Shem Tov.

The Ribnitzer was known for his other worldly ascetic ways, fasting often and dedicated with *mesirus nefesh* to taharah, ritual purity. One Motzai Shabbos while on a mid-winter trip to Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe expressed his desire to *toivel*, to immerse in the mikvah. However, he was suffering from a bad cold, it was raining and late at night, and the nearest mikvah was a considerable distance away. Acknowledging the physical circumstances, yet determined to attain the highest levels of purity, he instructed the small group of chassidim accompanying him to stand together, hold hands and form a tight circle. He then entered the human ring and proceeded to crouch down then

rise up several times, ‘immersing himself’ in their midst. The Rebbe finally recited the words *Mikveh Yisrael Hashem* (*Mishnah Yoma*, 8:9), literally “The hope of Israel is Hashem,” and interpreted in different ways, including “Hashem longs for His children,” “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu* purifies Yisrael,” and *Mikveh Yisrael*, “a mikveh of Yidden”....

Having immersed in the luminous pool of pure Jewish souls, the Ribnitzer was joyous, and ready to continue on his way.

Our sedra addresses an array of elements required to live a life of holiness, including the uplifting and restorative power of a mikvah. The name and opening of our sedra refers to the consecration of the Mishkan — itself an experience representing *tikun* and spiritual rejuvenation:

*Vayehi bayom ha-shemini...*, “On the eighth day” following seven days of inauguration of the Mishkan, Aharon haKohein and his sons begin to offer Korbanos, and the Shechinah, the Divine Presence dwelled in the Sanctuary....

וַיבֹּא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּצְאוּ וַיִּבְרְכוּ אֶת-הָעָם וַיְהִי כְבוֹד ה' אֵל כָּל הַיּוֹם:

And Moshe and Aharon went into the Ohel Moed, then came out and blessed the people, and the Glory of Hashem appeared to the Nation.(9:23)

Rashi expands on the particular blessings they offered on this most special occasion:

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ויצאו ויברכו את העם: אמרו ויהי נועם ה' אליקינו עלינו, — “May the pleasantness of Hashem be upon us; may it be God’s will that the Shechinah rest on the work of your hands...”

Rashi explains that throughout all seven days of the *milu'im*, the ceremonial investitures of the Mishkan, Moshe performed the *avodah*, effortfully erecting and then dismantling the structure daily. During that week, continues Rashi, the Divine Presence was not revealed. The painful lack of the *Shechinah's* presence was ‘humiliating’, and the Jews cried out to Moshe:

כל הטורח שטרחנו, שתשרה שכינה בינינו ונדע שנתכפר לנו עון העגל

“All the efforts we have taken were so that the Shechinah should dwell among us, so that we would know that we have been forgiven for the sin of the Golden Calf!”

Following the shameful episode of *Cheit haEigel*, a perceptual ‘distance’ and a state of ‘impurity’ had come between the People the Holy One, Blessed is He. Moshe led the nation in *teshuvah* and ascended to the upper worlds to petition Hashem in prayer. Midrash (*Pesikta Rabbasi*, 14) tells us that there, Moshe found the Ribbono shel Olam ‘learning’ the *parsha* of the *Parah Adumah: Zos chukas haTorah*, “This is the law of the Torah which transcends logic...” Acknowledging Moshe, Hashem said, *Eini osek elah b'taharasan shel Yisrael*, “My only job is dealing with the purification of Israel.” The completion of the Mishkan signaled the



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### Machon Dvir

Jerusalem  
Raanaana NEW  
Beit Shemesh

02-625-2527  
[www.machondvir.org](http://www.machondvir.org)

Machon Dvir is an English-speaking Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) practice, treating adults and older adolescents with a focus on gap year and university students.

Machon Dvir's team are among the leading DBT professionals in Israel, offering individual therapy, DBT skills groups and medication management for treatment of borderline personality disorder, complex PTSD, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and OCD.



### CITY CENTER, Saidoff

Spacious 135 SQM apartment, 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, balcony, Shabbat elevator, parking, storage, pool, gym, 24/7 guard, and more! **Asking NIS 5,750,000**

### OLD KATAMON, Bilu

Spacious 3 bedroom apartment with a 60 SQM registered garden, 2 full bathrooms, renovated interior, high ceilings, storage/home office. **NIS 3,800,000**

### ARNONA, Gershon Avner

Upgraded 120 SQM, 5 spacious rooms, 3 full baths, large living room area, balconies, 2 parking spots, storage, Shabbat elevator. **NIS 2,890,000**

### HOLYLAND, Avraham Perrera

Beautifully designed 100 SQM, 3 large bedrooms, full dining room & living room area, Sh. elevator, 2 parking spots, storage, stunning views. **NIS 2,950,000**

### Garden Apartment Near Baka

102 SQM, 4 rooms, 230 SQM private garden, 2 bathrooms, storage, underground parking, underfloor heating, central air. **Contact for information.**

### QUADRA, Mekor Chaim

In the beautiful Quadra Complex with a pool, gym, Sh. elevator, underground parking & storage. Spacious 165 SQM apt, 5 rooms, 3 baths, succah balcony, and more! **Contact us for more information!**

### ARNONA, Near USA Embassy

Renovated 119 SQM apartment, 5 rooms, 11 sqm balcony, 1st floor, Shabbat elevator, 2 parking spots, storage. **Asking: NIS 3,800,000**

Efrat

### RENT: Rimon Private Cottage

Renovated 107 SQM, 3.5 rooms, parking, large front & back yard, bright, fully accessible. **Asking: 5,300 NIS**



next stage of our peoplehood, the formal and public expression that our collective *teshuvah* had been accepted.

The day of the consecration of the Mishkan “was as joyous to the Ribbono Shel Olam as the day on which heaven and earth were created” (*Megillah*, 10b). It was a day when the *K’vod Hashem*, the honor and glory of God, was once again expressed in a revealed way through the Nation of Israel. The Divine Presence had ‘returned’, and ‘entered’ the Mishkan of Yisrael, ‘immersing’ as it were, in their midst — ‘In the *mikveh Yisrael: Hashem.*’ And then the Ribono shel Olam was joyous and ready to ‘continue on His way’.

There is no greater purifying force, no other way to ensure blessing or to reveal the Shechinah, than Jews coming together in *teshuvah*. On this “Parshas Parah”, may we draw down the purifying power of *Mikveh Yisrael*, and together, celebrate the consecration of the Temple!

אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אֲשַׁרְיָכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל.

לִפְנֵי מִי אַתֶּם מְטַהְרִין וּמִי מְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם?

אביכם שבשמיים שנאמר, זרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם.

ואומר מקוה ישראל ה

מה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים אף הקדוש ברוך הוא מטהר את יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Rabbi Akiva said: How fortunate are you, Israel; before Whom are you purified, and Who purifies you? It is your Father in Heaven, as it is stated: “And I will sprinkle purifying water upon you, and you shall be purified” (*Yechezkel*, 36:25). And it says: “The mikveh of Israel is Hashem” (*Yirmiyahu*, 17:13). Just as a ritual bath purifies the impure, so too, the Holy One, Blessed be He, purifies Israel. ■



Mental Health

Minute

By: Hadas Schroeder  
Rahamim | Written  
with Abigail Steinhart

קו לנוער  
KAV L'NOAR  
Education - Intervention - Support



## **Helping children rebuild after two years of upheaval**

Most of us know that Covid-19 has impacted mental health worldwide. We've read statistics about soaring rates of depression and anxiety. We've struggled ourselves to cope with juggling caring and professional responsibilities throughout continual uncertainty and disruption. And yet, when children display social or behavioral distress, many parents somehow find themselves forgetting all about the pandemic.

When dealing with a negative and overwhelming situation which they have no control over, it's common for people to mentally 'check out.' Putting the stress to one side and not thinking about it can be a defense mechanism that is genuinely helpful; it enables them to carry on functioning, at least in the short term. But that disassociation can also make a person blind to its effect on their lives, and distort a parent's understanding of their child's behavior.

Truly understanding why a child's difficult behavior 'makes sense' is a crucial first step. It removes much of the shame, alienation, and false assumptions about how everyone else is managing, and gives the parent more of the sense of security they need to be able to help their child move forward.

Not all children will have reacted in the same way to the pandemic. But late childhood features particularly intense brain development, and at that age, missing prolonged periods of school and the chance to focus on learning social rules and norms can have a real impact. When pre-teens aren't given the opportunity to carry on developing their skills, whether in math, gymnastics, or friendship-building, they can fall behind and then lose interest altogether. It is natural for these children to show signs of distress, to drop out of activities, to feel burnt out and disengaged from the world.

When parents acknowledge what their child has lost, they can take the steps needed to help them rebuild. They can use mindfulness to help their child feel grounded, create safe opportunities to practice social skills, and ask teachers to give extra attention to particular areas. In some cases, therapy can be enormously helpful.

At the new Merchav L'Noar clinic in central Jerusalem, therapists pinpoint the areas that each young client needs to work on, in full cooperation with their parents. They use a variety of games, role play, and problem-solving techniques to help them reframe and cope more easily with challenging situations. The kuptot cholim fully support these efforts and cover the cost of the sessions.

The brains of children and adolescents are constantly growing and remodeling. Post-Covid, with the right attention and support from parents, teachers, and in some cases, from therapists, young people will be able to get back on their academic, social, behavioral, and developmental tracks. But to do that, first we need to truly recognize just how big a deal this pandemic has really been for so many of our children.

*Hadas Schroeder Rahamim is a clinical and educational psychologist and the clinical supervisor of Kav L'Noar and Merchav L'Noar, a clinic run in partnership with the Lamerchav Institute.*

OU Israel's The Bais in Memory of Mrs. Charlotte Brachfeld a'h presents:

# A NIGHT TO PREPARE FOR THE SEDER



THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 7:45PM

- ▶ Inspirational Hagada Insights shared by **Rabbi Sam Shor**
- ▶ Delicious meat sandwich bar
- ▶ 30 NIS -pre -registration required
- ▶ Open to Men of all ages!

RSVP:

[www.ouisrael.org/events/menseder2022/](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/menseder2022/)



22 KEREN HAYESOD, YERUSHALAYIM | 02-560-9110 | WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG

## ROSH CHODESH NISAN LEARNING FOR WOMEN PESACH SEMINAR

Thursday March 31, Adar 28, 9:15AM – 1:00PM



In loving memory of Mrs. Linda Pruwer-Brachfeld a'h

מרת חיה סאשא בת ר' יוסף הלל

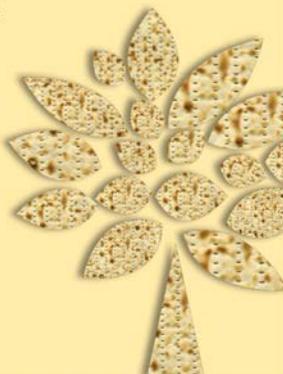
**9:15AM** Introduction  
**Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**

**9:25AM** Shir HaShirim :  
Revisiting Redemption  
**Mrs. Shani Taragin**

**10:15AM** The Night that Unites: The  
Seder's Unique Learning and Teaching  
Experience **Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

**11:05AM** From Mitzrayim to the Ukraine:  
The Eternal Faith of the Jewish Woman  
A Personal Account by  
**Rebbetzin Miriam Moskovitz,**  
Chabad Shlucha of Kharkov

**12:10PM** Practical Pesach Kashrut Guide  
**Rabbi Yissaschar Dov Krakowski**  
OU Israel Kashrut



40NIS



Brunch  
Provided



Please note that this is an  
on-site event

22 KEREN HAYESOD ST., YERUSHALAYIM | REGISTER ONLINE AT: [WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG/EVENTS/NISAN2022](http://WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG/EVENTS/NISAN2022)

OU Israel L'Ayla and Beit Knesset Musar Avicha present:  
*Women's Beit Midrash in Maaleh  
Adumim – Pesach Leil Iygun*



**WEDNESDAY APRIL 6, NISAN 5**

**7:45pm** Registration and Refreshments

**8:00pm** Making Seder of the Seder

**Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski,**

OU Israel Director of Community Programming

**8:30pm** Practical Pesach Kashrut

**Rabbi Ezra Friedman,**

Rav Beit Knesset,

Director of the OU Israel Gustave & Carol Jacobs Center for Kashrut Education

**9:00pm** Special Guest Speaker: **Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**

Sensitivity and Faith: Pesach's Underlying Messages

**25 NIS Pre-Registration (by April 4) / 30 NIS At the door**



MUSAR AVICHA 5 HATZILTZAL | REGISTRATION: [WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG/MA9](http://WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG/MA9)



OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Beit Midrash presents:

*Halacha and Hashkafa behind the  
Mitzvat of the Pesach Seder*



Two-Part series with **Rabbanit Shani Taragin**

**SUNDAYS, MARCH 27 & APRIL 3, 8:00PM**

**Price:**

25nis per class, 40nis for the series

**Register at:**

[www.ouisrael.org/events/pesachbm](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/pesachbm)

Zoom option available.



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# Warm Up This Winter with Inspirational Torah

Winter Term Begins Sun. Jan 9. | Class Passes may be renewed for the Winter

SUN, MAR 27

**9:15 AM**

Tefila: Journey through the Siddur

**Rabbi David Walk**

**10:20 AM**

Likutei Halachot: Discover the Deeper Meaning in Halacha

**Rabbi Azarya Berzon**

**11:30 AM**

Shivat Tzion in Tanach: Daniel, Ezra, Nechemia

**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**



Hot Soup available throughout the morning

## SPECIAL EVENT

**8:00 PM**

Halacha & Hashkafa of Pesach Seder with **Rabbanit Shani Taragin (L'Ayla)**

MON, MAR 28

**9:15 AM**

Divrei HaYamim (L'Ayla)  
**Rebbetzin Pearl Borow**

**10:30 AM**

The Thought of Rav Soloveitchik **Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

**11:45 AM**

Halacha and Agada in Contemporary Society  
**Rabbi Shmuel Herschler**

Tea & Coffee Available



**8:30 PM**

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

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

TUE, MAR 29

**9:15 AM**

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)  
**Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**

**9:30AM**

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

**10:30 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

**12:15 PM**

Jewish History  
**Dr. Deborah Polster**

**7:30 PM**

Safrut Course (The Bais)  
Will resume in May



**THE BAIS CLASSES AND PROGRAMS ARE FOR MEN ONLY**

Classes will be run according to Ministry of Health guidelines

**PAY AT THE DOOR FOR ON-SITE CLASSES**

To join via Zoom, Register for class pass or individual classes at: [ouisrael.org/classes](https://ouisrael.org/classes)

# Learning at OU Israel

Register for the next term by visiting: [ouisrael.org/classpass/](https://ouisrael.org/classpass/)



For registration help, call \*3263

WED, MAR 30

**9:00 AM**

Medina and Halacha  
**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**

**10:15 AM**

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

**11:30 AM**

Great Jewish Thinkers  
**Rabbi Alan Kimche**

Tea & Coffee  
Available



**8:30 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick**  
(The Bais)

THURS, MAR 31

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**9:15 AM**

**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
(Will speak as part of the  
Rosh Chodesh seminar)

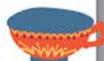
**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

**11:30 AM**

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

Hot Soup available  
throughout the morning



**SPECIAL EVENT**

**9:15AM-1:00PM**

Rosh Chodesh Nisan  
Women's Seminar (L'Ayla)

**7:45PM**

A Night to Prepare for  
the Seder (for Men) with  
**Rabbi Sam Shor**  
(The Bais)



**VIRTUAL SCHEDULE**

(Zoom Only Classes):  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88363420460>  
Password: OU Israel

**Rabbi Bienenfeld**

Talmud for Men-Sun, Tues  
and Thurs, 2:00PM

**Rabbi Taub**

Parsha, 7:00PM Mon  
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

**Rebbetzin Shatz**

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

**Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua  
Wed. 8:30PM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>  
Password 18

**Schedule Subject to change, please check website for updates**  
[ouisrael.org/events/](https://ouisrael.org/events/)



# CHESED4U

Chesed4U volunteers assist Olim and Anglo residents with simple errands, companionship, visits, calls and with translating Hebrew documents.

Call \*3263  
Sun-Thurs  
9:00am-  
11:00am

**Rae Walker Jerusalem Homebound Initiative** provides home visits and calls for Jerusalem's elderly.

**Yad Tziporah Hotline** volunteers are available to assist or direct inquiries, and to offer emotional support and resources for olim and anglo residents.

**"Olam Chesed Yiboneh- The World is Built Through Kindness"**

OU ISRAEL CENTER | 22 KEREN HAYESOD, YERUSHALAYIM | 02-560-9110



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Camp Dror for Boys & Girls\*  
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Price : 6800nis

Camp Dror Fagin Leadership Program  
entering 10th - 11th grades  
Price: 7600nis

*\*Boys & Girls are on separate campuses*



Dates:  
July 11 - July 28

[www.campdror.com](http://www.campdror.com)  
050-202-2085

Early bird rate ends  
February 17, 2022



Join OU Israel L'Ayla for a

# Pre-Pesach Evening of Inspiration & Fun!

**SUNDAY APRIL 3, 7:15PM**

- ◆ **Glass-Etching Workshop** - Create your own unique etched glass Kiddush cup/ כוס של אליהו to be used at your seder
- ◆ **Pesach Mini-Shiurim:**
  - The Message of the ארבע כוסות:
  - Rabbanit Shani Taragin**
  - Practical Guide to Kashering your Kitchen for Pesach:
  - Rabbi Ezra Friedman** (OU Israel Kashrut)
- ◆ **Dinner will be served**

Register at [www.ouisrael.org/events/glassetching](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/glassetching)

20nis



Geared for single women ages 18-30

**OU ISRAEL CENTER 22 Keren HaYesod St., Jerusalem | 02-5609110**



## Coffee & Conversation for Senior Women

**TUESDAYS, 3:00 PM**

OU Israel invites senior women to join us for a weekly social hour

Belinda's Cafe (Mehadrin), 9 Diskin St., 2nd Floor

Organized by OU Israel Volunteer **Erika Braun**  
22 nis minimum purchase (coffee and pastry)

Questions? Contact OU Israel Volunteer Coordinator Chana Spivack, 050-229-4951

**OU ISRAEL CENTER | WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG**



## Linking our Lives2gether

for active single Olim, ages 60-75

Post Covid Events will sometimes be on Zoom and others will be in person events-to be added to our email list for upcoming events.

Please contact:

**Chana Spivack**  
[cspivack@ouisrael.org](mailto:cspivack@ouisrael.org)  
or [050-229-4951](tel:050-229-4951)

**WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG**





## See Yerushalayim with a new perspective

Fascinating walking tour of Rechavia with Tour Guide  
**Rabbi Kalman Flaks**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 3:00PM**



Depart from in front of the Prima Kings Hotel,  
Ramban Street

Tour will include a special opportunity to recite  
Birkat Haillanot L'chvod Chodesh Nissan!

**50 NIS pp**

To register:

<https://www.ouisrael.org/events/rechaviatour2022>

OU ISRAEL CENTER 22 Keren HaYesod St., Jerusalem | 02-5609110



The Women's Performance Community of Jerusalem & OU Israel,  
the team that created *Count the Stars* (2016) and *Hidden: The Secret Jews of Spain* (2018),  
present the epic historical musical



# WHISPER FREEDOM

The Soviet Jewry Struggle



By Women · For Women

Charity proceeds to OU Israel's project for teens-at-risk

**ROAD SHOW!**

SUN Apr. 3  
ב' בניסן

**BEIT HA'AM – בית העם**  
48 Ya'akov Street, **REHOVOT**

במועד

רחמים מלול  
ראש העיר

אמיתי כהן

סגן ראש העיר ויו"ר רשת חיות



כתובית  
בעברית  
Субтитры  
на русском  
языке

**Performance at 7:30 PM**

(Doors open at 7:00 PM)\*

\*Entry in accordance with current  
government health regulations

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For more info:

052-421-3600

wpc.jerusalem

@gmail.com



# OU Israel KIDS' KOLLEL Presents: FAMILY TRIP TO THE MATZAH FACTORY!

**SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 3:00PM**

- ◆ Visit the world's biggest Matzah factory
- ◆ Make your own Matzah (for kids)
- ◆ Recite ברכת האילנות in an Etrog Orchard
- ◆ Watch an exciting audio-visual Pesach presentation
- ◆ Visit and donate Pesach food products to a very special store created to help Ukrainian refugees.

Meeting Point: Kfar Chabad

Register at [www.ouisrael.org/events/matzafactory](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/matzafactory)



**Cost:**  
**25nis per person**

OU ISRAEL CENTER

WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG

## **DOROT** - The OU Women's Intergenerational Choir Director Hadassah Jacob

**Monday Evenings 7:00 - 9:00pm**



### **רפואה שלמה ...**

- Miriam Tovah Chaya bat Chanah Elisheva Rivka
- Martha bat Masha
- AFS
- Avraham ben Baila Hinda
- שלמה בן אסתר
- יהונתן בן מחלה
- נפתלי הרץ בן סינה רייזל

## **GET FIT WHILE YOU SIT:**

### **Exercise for ladies**

Join us on Sundays 12:45-1:30pm  
at the OU Israel Center  
Sura Faecher 0504153239

## **PRI HADASH**

**WOMEN'S WRITING WORKSHOP  
AT THE OU ISRAEL CENTER**

**Monday mornings 10:30-12:30**

For more details, call Ruth 02-628-7359  
or Judy 054-569-0410  
(Entrance with GREEN PASS)

## **Knitting Club with Verna Gartner**

**Tuesday afternoons 1:30-3:30**

in the OU Israel Center Library

For more details call 02-585-6806






**Social Network  
for singles 75+**

If you are interested in being part of this new dynamic group offering friendship, intellectual stimulation and exploring new areas of interest all via Zoom in the comfort of your own home.

Please contact **Chana Spivack**  
[csпивack@ouisrael.org](mailto:csпивack@ouisrael.org)  
**050-229-4951**  
 Help with Zoom is available



[WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG](http://WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG)



**SPONSOR A  
SHIUR**

Sponsor a Shiur to support the ongoing Torah learning at the OU Israel Center visit:  
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 or email [csпивack@ouisrael.org](mailto:csпивack@ouisrael.org)  
 050-2294951

single shiur 180nis  
 morning 360nis  
 or full day 500nis



[WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG](http://WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG)



## CONFUSED ABOUT KASHRUT IN ISRAEL?

Want to know what to buy in the supermarket?  
 What about Mehadrin? and of course Shemita...  
 We're here to help you sort it out...  
 Read our new OU Israel Kashrut Guide or  
 Ask a Question At:

<https://www.ouisrael.org/kashrut/>



THE OU ISRAEL CENTER PROUDLY PRESENTS  
**THE OU ISRAEL INTERGENERATIONAL WOMEN'S CHOIR**

## **THE DOROT CHOIR**

**under the direction of Hadassah Jacob**

Enjoy an exhilarating and inspiring evening as the  
acclaimed Dorot Choir celebrates

*"Am Yisrael Chai!"*

at the OU Israel Center, 22 Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem  
Monday, May 30th - 8:00pm

To reserve a place please call 02 560 9110  
or register online at: [www. Ouisrael/events/dorot 2022](http://www.Ouisrael/events/dorot2022)

**OU Members 30 NIS / Non-members 35 NIS**

**Previous Dorot performances sold out quickly.**

**Please reserve your place now.**





# Sugar on Pesach

Various raw foods which do not have any kashrut concerns year-round may require special supervision for Pesach. The reason being that the prohibition of chametz on Pesach is much more stringent than other kashrut laws. This stringency can be understood in the context of the halacha of nullification (*bitul*). Within the general parameters of kashrut, an inadvertent mixture of kosher and non-kosher food, in which the forbidden food measures less than a sixtieth of the entire mixture, still remains permissible for consumption. However, chametz on Pesach does not follow this principle. Based on *Gemara Pesachim* 30:a, almost all authorities rule that any mixture of chametz during Pesach is not nullified, even if the chametz constitutes only one part per thousand of the mixture. Early authorities give different reasons for this stringency (see *Rosh* on *Avoda Zara* 5:30; *Rambam, Chametz Umatza* 1:5). This article addresses the kashrut of sugar for Pesach based on the production process.

## Production of sugar

Processed sugar, also known as sucrose, is derived from one of two plants: sugar cane or sugar beets. Grown in moist,

tropical climates, sugar cane is a bamboo-like grass which reaches heights of 10-20 feet. Sugar beets, on the other hand, are cultivated in temperate climates, and look somewhat like giant turnips. The refining methods for the two types are similar, with one difference: sugar beets are processed in a single sugar factory, while sugar cane is processed in two facilities- a sugar mill followed by a sugar refinery.

The milling and refining process of both types of sugar has approximately nine stages, which include affination, melting, carbonization and granulation. Normally during this process, no other additives or ingredients are added, except for two enzymes: dextranase and alpha amylase. Dextranase breaks down the starches found in the green part of the plant, preventing them from clogging the production machines. Alpha amylase is used to break down starches and increase the sugar yield. Both of these enzymes can be manufactured from wheat or wheat-based products, which presents a serious potential kashrut issue as will be explained.

## Ma'amid on Pesach

The *Rema* (447:4) writes that in certain cases, chametz that was nullified before Pesach (meaning it was less than one sixtieth of a mixture) can be eaten on Pesach. However, in a case where the chametz is a *d'var hama'amid* i.e. an essential component in



sustaining or creating the food (some also say that a catalyst is a *d'var hama'amid*), *poskim* rule that even before Pesach the chametz is not *batel* (nullified) and is prohibited for consumption during Pesach (see *Taz* 442:4). An example is cheese that was fermented with wheat products. Even if such cheese was produced before Pesach and the wheat was less than a sixtieth of the cheese, it is still prohibited on Pesach since the wheat-based fermenting agent is a *d'var hama'amid*.

### Sugar enzymes

It has recently come to the attention of the OU that the enzymes dextranase and alpha amylase, used in the production of granulated sugar to help remove starch and increase sugar yield, can be made from wheat. Although these enzymes are used in very small amounts, it must be considered whether they are a *d'var hama'amid*, which would render the sugar unsuitable for Pesach certification (see *Mishna Berura* 442:26). Some maintain that the enzymes are so minute and eventually evaporate, leading to no such concern. On the other hand, depending on the production process, enzymes may remain and can serve an integral part of the sugar production. Because of this uncertainty, OU policy requires any *Kasher L'Pesach* sugar to utilize special Kosher for Passover enzymes. Consequently, sugar processed using non-Pesach enzymes are

not eligible to bear the OU-P symbol. In Israel, where sugar (and products containing it) might have been processed using these chametz-based enzymes, we recommend checking for a proper Pesach certification on all sugar.

It should be noted that only granulated sugar has this concern. powdered or confectioner's sugar, which comes from ground cane sugar mixed with starch to prevent it from caking, is not produced with these enzymes. Typically, the starch from powdered sugar is derived from corn, and is therefore *kitniyot*. (Pesach certification would still be required to ensure that potato starch is used instead of kitniyot.)

Although the OU has changed its policy regarding sugar to a more stringent opinion based on this uncertainty, this doubt does **not** extend to the halachic status of *chametz she'avar alav hapesach* (chametz that was owned by a Jew during Pesach and must be discarded). Thus, sugar that may have been processed with chametz enzymes is permissible for use immediately after Pesach, even if it was owned by a Jew during Pesach (*Sha'ar Hatziun* 442:49). ■

## Kashrut Questions in Israel?

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Our Sedra contains the challenging account of the passing of Nadav and Avihu, two sons of Aharon, who ambitiously brought an offering unto Hashem, which they were not instructed to bring, and subsequently are struck down by fire, and pass away.

ויקחו בני־אֶהֱרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אִישׁ מִחַתְתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ בָהֶן אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂימוּ עָלֶיהָ קִטְרֹת וַיִּקְרְבוּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם: וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי ה': וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֶהֱרֹן הוּא אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' לֵאמֹר בְּקִרְבֵי אֲקֹדֵשׁ וְנִעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָעָם אֲכַבֵּד וַיִּדַם אֶהֱרֹן:

*And Aharon's sons Nadav and Avihu each took his fire pan, placed fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before Hashem a foreign fire, which had not been instructed to them. And fire came forth from Hashem and consumed them; thus they died before Hashem. Then Moshe said to Aharon, "This is what Hashem said: Through those who are close to Me, I shall be sanctified and gain glory before all the people." And Aharon was silent...*

How should we begin to understand Moshe Rabbeinu's words to his brother, words which at first glance seem lacking any sentiment of compassion or comfort. How are we to understand Aharon's reaction to Moshe's words? Was Aharon's silence, and lack of crying out in anguish, simply the result of shock, or is there a deeper message to be learned from Aharon's reaction to the loss of his two sons? What is the significance of Hashem's words-B'krovai Ekadeish-Through those who

*are close to me, I shall be sanctified?*

According to the **Rashbam**, the words וידום אהרן, and Aharon was silent are to be understood as a powerful expression of utter faith. Upon hearing that his sons were taken because they were close to Hashem-Bekrovai Ekadeish, Aharon remained silent, he did not express any sadness, he did not weep and did not perform any aspects of mourning. The knowledge that their passing somehow connoted that they were considered by Hashem to be close, and that their passing was somehow meant to sanctify Hashem's name, was seemingly enough for Aharon to refrain from any expression of sadness.

I recently read a powerful story told by the great rabbinic personality **Rav Ephraim Oshry zt'l**, known for his remarkable halachic responsa- *Teshuvot Mimaamakim- Responsa from the Depths*. Rav Oshry, who survived the Kovno ghetto, and settled on the Lower East Side in New York City, where he served as *Mara D'Atra* of *Beis Medrash HaGadol*, became renowned for his responsa both in the midst of the Holocaust, as well as in the years immediately following the Holocaust, answering countless difficult halachic issues with insight and sensitivity. Rav Oshry shared this poignant story about his wife's illustrious grandfather, **HaRav Asher Greensweig, Hy'd, zy'a**.

**Harav Asher Zelig Greensweig, Hy" d, zy'a**, was the *Mara D'Atra* of the Romanian

town of Dalha, who became known by the name of his *sefer*, *Beit Asher*. He was a devoted *talmid* of the *Yetev Lev*, *Harav Yekutiel Yehudah Teitelbaum*, *zy" a*. *Rav Asher* always kept a special *bekeshe* with him at all times, which he hoped to quickly don to greet at any moment, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. When he and the Jews of Dahla were awaiting deportation to Auschwitz, the Rav emerged wearing his '*Moshiach Bekeshe*'. As his family and community looked on and wept, the *Tzadik Rav Asher*, turned to them and said: "*Now is not a time for sadness or to weep. Each and every mitzva much be fulfilled b'simcha, even the mitzva of giving one's life al Kiddush Hashem...*"

*Aharon's* silence is not to be misinterpreted as lacking emotion for the loss of his two sons. Rather, it must be seen as an acknowledgment of the *ratzon Hashem*, and opportunity that even in this tragic circumstance, *Aharon* finds the strength to move forward and to continue to be *Mikadeish Sheim Shamayim*, through his sacred work in the *Mishkan* on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may we be blessed to serve *Hashem* at all times *b'simcha*, and may we merit to sanctify *Hashem's* name only through our actions and accomplishments, and not through tragedy and sadness. ■

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**RABBI AARON**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

# Rabbi Soloveitchik on Confronting Challenges

Personal misfortune and suffering can be devastating and even traumatic. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik teaches that Judaism does not hide from relating to this reality in all its rawness:

“Judaism, with its realistic approach to man and his place in the world, understood that evil could not be blurred or camouflaged, and that any attempt to downplay the extent of the contradiction, and fragmentation to be found in reality will neither endow man with tranquility, nor enable him to grasp the existential mystery...whoever wishes to delude himself by diverting his attention from the deep fissure in reality, by romanticizing human existence, is naught but a fool and a fantasm.” (Kol Dodi Dofek, Ktav Publishing House 1992, p. 53)

Sharing a personal reflection, the Rav described a time in his life when he faced

serious health issues. His feelings of fear of loneliness were substantial. “When the blow strikes, the first question which pops up upon the lips of the sufferer is: Why me? Why should I be different from others? Why was I selected to explore the valley of sorrow? A feeling of envy fills out the heart of the afflicted. He envies everybody, pauper and prince, young and old. They were spared, while I was picked out.”

“When I eulogized my uncle, Rav Velvel Soloveitchik, *zt”l*, in the auditorium of Yeshiva University while knowing of my affliction, one nagging thought assailed my mind. All these thousands of people are healthy and expect to live a long and happy life, whereas I am not certain that I will be able to accompany my daughter to the wedding canopy. While these thoughts are passing through one’s mind with the speed of lightning, one feels forsaken, forlorn and lonely. I am different; I have met with a strange destiny. No one else is like me.” (Out of the Whirlwind p.133)

The Rav brilliantly illustrated where the Torah conveys this distressing notion. It appears during the dramatic episode of Avraham and the *Akeida*. When the Sages determined the reading for Rosh Hashanah,

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they included not only the section of the *Akeida* but also a seemingly unconnected passage that follows. At first glance it seems out of place. That paragraph is simply a description of Avraham's family and their progeny. The Rav submitted that this passage is to be read as an extension of the crucible of the *Akeida*. Avraham saw the success and happiness among his extended family and agonized with the questions, "Why not me?" Why was I singled out to suffer?" (*Dovev Meisharim*, Berzon p.106)

How then does Judaism propose one respond when faced with suffering and trauma?

In a letter Rabbi Soloveitchik wrote to Dr. Dan Vogel, then Dean of Stern College for Women, he offers a succinct and powerful answer:

"As long the human mind is unable to embrace creation in its entirety and to gain an insight into the very essence and purposeness of being as such, it would not succeed in its attempt to resolve the dilemma of evil...Therefore, Judaism has recommended that the metaphysical inquiry be replaced by the halachic ethical gesture. Man should not ask why evil? He should rather ask the question: "What am I supposed to do if confronted with evil; how should I behave vis-'a-vis evil. The latter is a powerful challenge to man and it is the duty of man to meet this challenge boldly and courageously."

In other words, the philosophical answers to why there is suffering can never be fully answered. They will always leave one wanting. Yet, the Rav posits that the halacha has an approach that gives suffering purpose and meaning. To sum up



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the halachic response to suffering the Rav concludes: “In a word, instead of philosophizing about the nature of evil within the framework of theodicy, Judaism wants man to fight it relentlessly and to convert into a constructive force.” (Community, Covenant and Commitment, pp. 331-332).

The Rav’s theme of not giving up in the face of suffering loss is captured in the following exquisite teaching:

The Talmud tells the story of Moshe Rabbeinu at the top of Mount Sinai witnessing the Almighty writing a Torah scroll. Moshe understood the importance of each word and each letter, however, he asked: “What is the need for the *kotzim* on top of the letters”? The Almighty responded by saying that one day in the future a great man will emerge by the name of Akiva ben Yosef and on every *kotz* and *kotz* he will build mountains and mountains of Halacha. (Menachot 29b)

Rabbi Soloveitchik offered an explanation of this passage. Rabbi Akiva lived through one of the most traumatic and devastating periods in Jewish history. The Beit Hamikdash was destroyed. The people of Israel were sent into exile. The Roman persecutions were horrifying. Rabbi Akiva himself was tortured and

murdered (Berachot 61).

Rabbi Akiva had lost 24,000 students (Yevamot 62). But with only five students he began to rebuild. The Rav said: “With every *kotz*, every thorn, every needle, every sharp pain, Rabbi Akiva built mountains of Torah learning. He continued to build the Torah institutions and strengthen the nation of Israel. He never gave up. (Rabbi YY Jacobson, Facebook video in Hebrew)

The Rav is teaching that the Jew remains relentlessly optimistic and full of faith which can be seen in this inspiring anecdote: Rabbi Elan Adler served as one of the trusted *shameshim* to the Rav, spending time with him in the afternoon’s in his apartment at Yeshiva University. On one occasion he asked the Rav to explain to him a puzzling passage in the Talmud which states that on the day of judgment when a Jew will stand before the heavenly court a list of questions will be asked to assess one’s commitment during their lifetime. Rabbi Adler said to the Rav, “I understand what it means to be asked if I conducted business in an honest way, or if I fixed time for learning etc. All of these have a quantifiable measure that can be determined. But how does one gauge “awaiting the redemption?” How does one properly fulfill this injunction?” The Rav thought for a moment and said, “It is very simple. When things are going badly for someone, when a person is facing challenging times, does he look up or does he look down? One who lives their life with hopefulness and enduring optimism, “looking up,” has fulfilled this most noble directive.” (Heard directly from my chaver, Rabbi Elan Adler) ■



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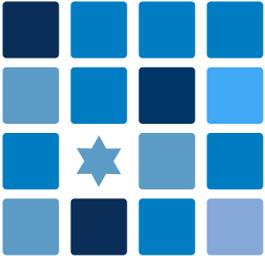
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# Parshat Parah: The Triumph of the Illogical

Parshat Parah begins with the iconic phrase of חוקת התורה. The term חוקה refers to any seminal or foundational concept. For example, the Torah introduces the laws of korban pesach with the phrase חוקת הפסח, since this korban lies at the foundation of Jewish identity. Likewise, parah adumah is similarly “foundational” as it addresses the impurity of death. Any mitzvah which helps us navigate death is seminal.

Additionally, the term חקה refers to a mitzvah which is irrational. Parah adumah is the prototype חוק since its logic remains impenetrable. Both Moshe and Shlomo failed to decipher the inner logic of this mysterious practice. No human logic can rationalize why burnt ashes of a pure red cow, mixed with water, removes the halachik impurity of death. Not only is parah adumah illogical, it is also an enigma. Those who administer the process of removing tumah, themselves become ritually impure. Parah adumah is a dual “chok” – it is both foundational and completely irrational.

Irrational religion strains the human imagination. Naturally, our imaginations migrate to those experiences we understand and from which, we easily draw meaning. Adhering to irrational mitzvot demands piety and conviction. In his comments to the first verse of ‘parshat parah’ in Chukat, Rashi comments that the Satan derides this and other irrational mitzvot. Every religious person hears this “inner voice” of the Satan which questions the function of illogical rituals.

We never question the meaning of rational mitzvot. It is obvious that without charity, respect for law and admiration for elders, society will crumble. Mitzvot of chagim strengthen our collective historical memory. Moral laws such as the violations of murder, theft and false testimony uphold the oral integrity of society.

By contrast, irrational religious rituals are often perplexing and demand faith and conviction. Knowing that we obey a higher Will provides the courage to perform the irrational. If anything, adherence to illogical mitzvot often feels more reverent and subservient. Obedience based on divine logic rather than human intuition creates greater passion and piety. We all hear the gnawing inner voice of Satan which questions the validity of irrational mitzvot.

After mentioning the derisive voice of Satan, Rashi describes a second voice- the voice of nations who disparage Jewish

religion and ritual. This mocking voice is less obvious. Judaism has been mocked for centuries, but the scorn has taken on very different forms. It isn't a constant shrill but a cacophony of ridicule which changes throughout history.

In the early stages of Jewish religious history, it is unlikely that parah adumah attracted distinctive ridicule. Most of the world was mired in the dark world of ancient paganism, witchcraft and black magic. Illogic dominated this chaotic world of fear and uncertainty. Though Jewish rituals weren't mocked, a different part of Jewish religion was challenged- the bold notion that one G-d was solely responsible for creating our vast world. This concept was incomprehensible to the pagan mind and elicited disbelief. The world felt too diverse and too dichotomous to be attributed to one G-d, and to an invisible non-physical one at that. We weren't mocked for a particular ritual but rather for our brazen theological revolution.

**The mocking will soon end.  
The modern State of Israel is  
slowly turning jeers into cheers**

Centuries later, the Roman empire transitioned humanity from paganism to monotheism. An empire which initially spoke of an army of mythological gods, ultimately converted to monotheism. Despite this transition, Jews still faced ridicule, as we appeared to be on the losing side of history. Evicted from Yerushalayim and persistently subjugated, we were cast as a cursed people. As Christianity and Islam



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quickly spread, Jews wandered the globe, downtrodden and occupying the margins of society. We were derided as the “formerly chosen people” who had forfeited its favored status and had been replaced by other races and other religions. Our denial of the “modern prophets” doomed us to perfidy. We weren’t just mocked, we were despised.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the world shifted away from mystery and toward reason. Science unveiled a world of order, predictability and ratiōn. Knowledge and reason replaced ritual. The notion of rational mitzvot still resonated, but the world of ritual and of irrational mitzvot was derided as ancient and outdated. Sadly, for the first time in history the mocking affected the Jewish imagination as many Jews abandoned their fidelity to classic halacha and ritual. The disdain of modern culture for the irrational was too much for many Jews to bear. Facing centuries of derision, many Jews surrendered.

Ironically, in the post-modern era, we face a different form of mockery. The good news is that Judaism is no longer being disproportionately scoffed at. The bad news is that, in our world of individualism and “identitylessness”, religion in general, is

being disparaged. A religious university student once complained to me: “I wish my teachers and fellow students would mock Judaism. Instead, they mock all religion and any article of faith. It is all cast as outdated, tribal and irrelevant.” In this environment it is even harder to maintain steadfast religious conviction.

The mocking will soon end. The modern State of Israel is slowly turning jeers into cheers. Across the Jewish world, hope and faith are being renewed. It may not yet express itself religiously, but, one day it will. Jewish pride in the state of Israel foreshadows a revival of revitalized religious desire.

The international world remains divided into two. The mockers are increasing the volume of their ridicule by assailing the moral integrity of Israel and through their constant negative caricatures of Jews. On the bright side, much of the world no longer ridicules but admires. They admire both how we have survived and the state we are fashioning.

One day everyone will gather in Yerushalayim. It will be loud. But the noise won’t be a cacophony of ridicule but a symphony of song. Loud clapping and universal admiration. It will then be quiet and peaceful. No more mocking. ■



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## A Peek Into the Life of a Great Man

This is one of the stories that I heard about Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, zt”l:

Rabbi Yehoshua Hartman wrote the authoritative commentary on the writings of the Maharal of Prague. In one of his books, the Maharal writes that the revival of the dead will begin in Ma’arat HaMachpelah (Cave of the Patriarchs) in Hebron. Rabbi Hartman did not find the origin of this idea in any of our sources. He asked Torah scholars, searched in all the many repositories of Torah wisdom, but ultimately had to write in a footnote that he found no substantiation for this idea among our sages.

After a while, he met Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky in the street and asked him this question: “The Maharal writes that our sages say that the revival of the dead will begin in the Machpelah Cave. Where is that written?”

And then something astonishing happened. Rabbi Kanievsky continued walking with him, while murmuring to himself and leaving Rabbi Hartman in silent awe: “In the Babylonian Talmud . . . not there. In the Jerusalem Talmud . . . not there. In the

Halachic Midrashim . . . no. In the Aggadic Midrashim . . . no.”

In front of his very eyes, Rabbi Hartman saw Rabbi Kanievsky review the

entire Torah in his head, in several seconds, like a human Google. His brain scanned the complete library of Torah literature in rapid fashion, demonstrating masterful proficiency and a phenomenal memory. Finally Rabbi Kanievsky arrived at the requested source: “The holy Zohar . . . yes.” He directed a stunned Rabbi Hartman to the specific place in the Zohar where, in fact, the source of the Maharal’s statement was to be found.

Rabbi Kanievsky was called “a walking Torah scroll” since, in his 94 years, he reached rare levels of Torah love and devotion in showing us how far a human being can go. All of us remember what is most important to us. And what was most important to him was Torah.

While it is unlikely that we will reach his level, it is still possible to take upon ourselves some of his diligence and dedication to Torah study for the sake of his soul’s ascent. ■





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BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

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In our Parsha, the stage is set for the consecration of the Mishkan. And Aharon and his sons, after seven days of waiting for their inauguration, are now ready to perform their sacrificial rites in the Mishkan.

The Torah records that on the eighth day, Moshe summoned Aharon and his sons – and the elders of Israel – and commanded Aharon to prepare his Sin and Olah offerings, respectively. And then:- *“To Bnei Yisrael, you shall speak as follows...”* (Vayikra 9:3).

Chazal note that this verse does not specify who exactly was supposed to speak to the people about the upcoming offerings preceding the appearance of Hashem’s glory.

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Ramban offers an intriguing insight into the possibilities:

The honor was bestowed on Aharon to enhance his lowered prestige in the aftermath of the Golden Calf;

Moshe indicated that Aharon and those assembled collectively convey the commandments to the people concerning a plethora of sacrifices. As such, all the leaders would have equal standing in the mission; and Moshe instructed Aharon and the elders independently about what specific tasks each individual would undertake.

Clearly, in his commentary, Ramban displayed a royal sensibility to public office because whatever option we might consider operative, we have before us “Course 101” in Leadership.

First, Moshe does not draw attention to himself; rather, he empowers his nervous brother to undertake his elevated role in the Mishkan. (Moreover, he further establishes that Aharon’s preeminent position was not based on nepotism.)

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Second, the elders, who have no immediate stake in the sacrificial service, are not left out. On the contrary, they are brought into the inauguration ceremony. They are not only observers but also willing, active players.

Third, everyone present has a particular task and role in transmitting Hashem's word to the people. The Kohanim and the elders are evidently very successful because, although not bidden to do so, the people throng forward to witness the upcoming awesome event.

Aha! If only our leaders today could imbibe but a few of the Torah's leadership lessons, how content would be both their partners and society at large. ■

Shabbat Shalom!

*Menachem Persoff*

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*Dear OU parenting,  
How do I get my 15 year old son  
to speak more than two words to  
me? - R.A.*



Dear R.A.

As parents we want to know what's going on in our children's daily lives. As they grow, however, they may choose to be very selective about what they share. Again, this is a show of their developing independence. Although we can't force our children to talk or share with us, we can provide an atmosphere in the house which encourages communication. This means being open, ready to listen, not judgmental, and avoiding intrusive questions which tend to shut down conversations.

Regarding communication, a teen may choose to communicate on their own terms meaning at a certain time of day, usually very late at night. Then you have the choice

to be available when they are open to communicating. They also may be better at communicating over text. They have more control over when and what they want to answer.

You can also focus on developing other aspects of your relationship to create that closeness.

Two main ways to do this is by giving your teenager time and food! Yes, bonding over food works wonders. This means setting aside time to go out to eat with your child. The point is to develop the relationship, enjoy time together and eat. This does not have to be a time when you ask your child a million questions. Spending time together provides a natural setting to bond and share.

In addition to sparse conversation, many teens retreat their room for hours. If your son tends to spend many hours in his room, you can prepare food that your child likes and put it outside his bedroom door and tell him you made him a little surprise. For example, if your child loves a fresh salad, you can prepare him a salad. I'm not referring to treats or presents, although there's no problem with an occasional treat. These little "surprises" go a long way and make the child feel like he's being seen and connected to without having to engage in conversation.

A final suggestion is to try to enter his world- take time to take interest in what

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interests him. If it's a computer game or sports team, ask how the game works or about the players on the team. Again, it's a good way to connect and provides other topics you can discuss.

If your child is really shutting down all conversation, your child may be struggling with something or in emotional distress. It may be something he isn't comfortable sharing and is trying to navigate on his own, or there could be an issue with the parent/child relationship that needs to be addressed. Aside from being available to talk and taking interest, you may want to ask your son directly if there's something he's struggling with and reassure him that you are there to help him in any way.

Although it can be very frustrating when a teenager doesn't talk, it's better to accept his manner of communication right now rather than fight it. If he's not being actively disrespectful, try developing some other parts of your relationship and get to know him in other ways. Be'hatzlacha! ■

Michal Silverstein has a MS in educational psychology and counseling. She facilitates parenting workshops in and around Jerusalem and maintains a private practice.

Feel free to send in any parenting questions you may have to [parenting@ouisrael.org](mailto:parenting@ouisrael.org) (Details will be changed to preserve anonymity).

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ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, COME HERE, LET ME UNTANGLE YOU...

OH, THANK YOU, KID! I KNEW YOU HAD A SOFT SPOT FOR ME, UNDER ALL THAT SARCASM...!



ERM...WELL, I'M... UH... I'M DOING IT FOR MY OWN "NAME", BECAUSE IT... MAKES ME LOOK BAD THAT YOU LOOK SO BAD...

THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY...



AND, SAYS THE ALMIGHTY, I SHALL POUR UPON YOU PURE WATERS, AND YOU SHALL BE CLEANSED OF ALL YOUR IMPURITIES...

COME ON, LET'S GET THIS GUNK OFF YOU...



...AND I SHALL REMOVE THE HEART OF STONE FROM WITHIN YOU AND INSTALL A NEW HEART OF FLESH, OF FEELING, OF GENUINE EMOTION, OF A RENEWED PASSION TO RETURN TO ME...

WELL, I FEEL GREAT NOW! LIKE I'VE BEEN TO THE WIZARD OF OZ FOR A NEW HEART, A NEW BRAIN...

WELL, GOODNESS YOU COULD CERTAINLY DO WITH ONE... NOW, LET'S JUST GET YOU HOME, DOROTHY...



...AND OUR PARTNERSHIP WILL BE RENEWED, THESE BARREN HILLS WILL BURST INTO BLOOM, LIKE THE GARDEN OF EDEN...

WELL, WE CAN REBOOT OUR PARTNERSHIP AS WELL, CAN'T WE, KID? AND FROM NOW ON, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, I'M THROUGH WITH DRAGGING YOU INTO EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS...



AARGH!

THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY



# FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

RAV DANIEL MANN



## Raffle on Shabbat

**Question:** May one hold a raffle on Shabbat?

**Answer:** The *mishna* (Shabbat 148b) allows using a lottery on Shabbat to give out food servings to household members, as long as it is not to give the “winners” bigger pieces than the “losers.” The *gemara* (ibid. 149a) permits lotteries only within the household because others are assumed to care about their portion’s size, raising problems of measuring/weighing. The *gemara* continues that regarding different sized pieces, a lottery is forbidden even during the week because of *kubiya* (gambling). Some add Shabbat concerns of *shitrei hedyodot* (mundane documents) and that one might write (Sefer Hachayim [Kluger] 326:6). The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 322:6) codifies the *gemara*, mentioning the concerns of measuring and gambling.

We will not explain here why we assume that lotteries/raffles are not a problem of gambling (see our column, Vayeishev

5782). We note that the *gemara*’s case is not brought as an example of *mesachek b’kubiya* in Choshen Mishpat. Yet, it is still relevant here, because this *kubiya*-like behavior is considered a form of monetary deal making, which is itself a reason for a Shabbat prohibition (see Maharil, Shabbat 32; Rama, OC 338:5; Mishna Berura 322:22). We also will not deal with the issue of giving presents on Shabbat because of the prohibition of acquisitions (see Mishna Berura 323:1). This is quite solvable (see ibid. 306:33; Living the Halachic Process II, C-17).

Based on the classical sources, it appears that almost all lotteries/raffles are forbidden on Shabbat (as Shemirat Shabbat K’hilchata 16:47 writes). On the other hand, many youth groups, held under religious auspices on Shabbat, regularly raffle off prizes. We try to justify practices of observant Jews, especially well-intentioned ones done by knowledgeable people. We will look for leniency both on the basis of less reason to forbid and based on need for leniency.

Can we claim that the prizes given out are not the type that are measured, thereby removing a major problem? The *poskim*

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



(see Magen Avraham below) assume that the prohibition applies even to things that are not measured (see Avnei Yashfei III:42). Can we argue that youth groups are like families, where people do not make an issue of what they received? That claim is overly optimistic from practical and halachic perspectives. Even within the household, most *Rishonim* only permit a lottery of same-sized portions (see Beit Yosef, OC 322). It may also not apply to cases where the prize provider is giving his own property, in a way that he may do what he wants (Mishna Berura 322:22); this is usually not the case at youth groups.

The Magen Avraham (322:9) permits a lottery to determine who will get an *aliya*. His source is the lotteries held in the *Beit Hamikdash* on Shabbat and/or Yom Kippur. Most say this leniency requires a combination of both the fact that no object is being given out and that it is a matter of *mitzva* (Shvut Yaakov III:24; Kt'zot Hashulchan 146:32; Shevet Halevi IX:78). Some permit

non-object lotteries even without a *mitzva* (Be'ur Halacha to 322:6). The Magen Avraham does not allow a lottery just on the basis of *mitzva* (e.g., as one can claim for religious youth groups). Whereas we find allowances for business-like activity for *mitzva* needs in auctioning off *aliyot* with the proceeds going to the *shul* or giving presents for *mitzva* purposes (see Magen Avraham 306:15), that is not the case for raffling off objects.

We are not prepared to declare as clearly forbidden something that is done in religious contexts and many *rabbanim* allow to occur (see also Shevet Halevi *ibid.* stopping short of outright forbidding it). However, we have failed to find a way to justify it. There are some alternatives. Contemporary *poskim* are known to disagree on whether one may give out raffle tickets on Shabbat and have a drawing after Shabbat (although it is unclear why the tickets are not *muktzeh* if it is forbidden to do the drawing on Shabbat). Raffling off *mitzva* honors would seem fine. ■

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# Should We Hire Religious Gardeners During The Shemitah Year?

Many Israelis have a yard or garden that is tended to by a gardener. This is true for private home gardens and for apartment buildings that have an entrance to the building with bushes, flowers, ornamental trees, and sometimes even roses.

If you live in a building, find out if the gardener hired by the head of the Home Owners' Association (HOA) follows the laws of *shemitah* when tending to the garden. This is because the land is yours and the gardener works as your agent, paid by your money. Non-Jewish gardeners may not perform forbidden agricultural work in land owned by a Jew. Even if some of the residents of the building are not Jewish, the garden is still shared, so *shemitah* laws must be observed.

Pamphlet for gardeners, published by Torah VeHa'aretz Institute

Religious residents should try to convince the head of the HOA to instruct the gardener to observe *shemitah* laws. Torah VeHa'aretz Institute published a detailed guide for gardeners on the laws of *shemitah* and held courses for *shemitah*-observant gardeners. Technically, it is possible to hire

a non-religious or non-Jewish gardener or one who is not versed in *shemitah* laws and explain what is permitted and forbidden to do in the garden. Practically, though, this is often complicated and it is highly recommended to instead hire a gardener who studied the topic thoroughly and is personally committed to *shemitah* observance. While farmers have solutions of *heter mechirah*, *otzar beit din*, and the option of receiving support from Keren Hashvi'it, this is not true for gardeners. For this reason, too, it is best to hire a religious gardener and support him during the *shemitah* year. ■

- **List of gardeners (Hebrew) who completed the course by the Torah VeHa'aretz Institute:** <https://www.toraland.org.il/88258>
- **Laws of shemitah for gardeners in Hebrew:** <https://www.toraland.org.il/shmita-גן-המטיב-המטיב/>  
**In English:** <https://en.toraland.org.il/beit-midrash/articles/shemitah/shemitah-in-the-garden/professional-guide-preparing-ornamental-gardens-for-the-shemitah-year/>

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### Asher Manning Gush Chapter Director **The Jewish Holy Grail**

Is a cemetery a holy place?

The answer is yes and no at the same time. Most people misunderstand the concept of holiness, and as such misuse the term 'holy place'. If you mean 'a place that must be revered, treated with respect and solemn seriousness' then yes - a cemetery is such a place. Judaism is very careful with the dignity and honor of the dead - "Kvod HaMet". But Kedusha - 'holiness' - is a wholly different thing. To be Kadosh is - to strive to overcome mortality. Our Parasha holds the secret of Kedusha - "Imitatio Dei" - we strive to be like G-d. "יהייתם קדושים כי קדוש אני"

Death is an integral part of mortal life. Kedusha is embracing the part of us that is immortal - our divine soul. A Cohen has to be Kadosh, as such he cannot come in contact with a dead body. If one is 'Tameh Met' you cannot eat Kodashim or enter the Beit HaMikdash. As a "Mamlechet Cohanim v'Goy Kadosh" we can overcome death. Jews can and will die, but the Jewish nation always survives - "Am Yisrael Chai". To return to our question: a cemetery is the exact opposite of a holy place. Our bodies will one day return to the ground, but our souls yearn for the highest of heavens - 'Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh!'.



### Yaakov Lubetski 10th Grade, Efrat **The Fire Within**

One of the stories we read about this week is that

of Nadav and Avihu. Nadav and Avihu were killed after inappropriately bringing incense into the Mishkan. There are various views as to why they were killed. Rashi quoting Rabbi Yishmael proposes that the reason they were killed was because they entered the Mishkan in a state of intoxication. Why did Nadav and Avihu make this mistake??

Rav Yehuda Leib Ginsburg in his sefer Yalkut Yehuda explains that Rabbi Yishmael believes that the pasuk refers to their offering as an "eish zara" or a "foreign fire" to tell us about Nadav and Avihu's motives. Nadav and Avihu sought to serve God. They wanted to create within themselves a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and ecstasy. They viewed drinking wine as a drug that would engender these passionate feelings. This was an "eish zara" - a false joy that has no place in the mishkan.

While it is important to be passionate about serving God, it must be authentic and come from within us. ■

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After making Aliyah in High School with his family, Etan learned in Yeshivat Shavei Chevron and served for 4 years in the IDF in Elite Operational Intelligence Units.

Etan was the Bnei Akiva Shaliach in Toronto for 2 years

with his wife Nili. He has 3 kids: Ilan, Rotem, and Noam. Etan is the founder and director of Mechinat Ruach Hanegev, a gap-year program for North American and English speaking Israeli post high school boys located in the Negev that strives to cultivate a new generation of strong and inspired religious Zionists.



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*more info on the following page*

# Real Life Rescues



## The Stuffed Animals My Children Gave To **Ukrainian Refugees** At The Moldovan Border

By: Raphael Poch

I landed in Chisinau early this morning, as part of United Hatzalah's 3rd wave of volunteer medical personnel who came to offer medical and humanitarian aid to Ukrainian refugees crossing the border. After receiving a hot meal in Irish Pub which the organization commandeered and converted into an industrial kitchen and cafeteria (serving more than 6,000 kosher meals per day to volunteers and refugees in the city and refugee camps nearby) I headed to bed, together with the other 28 volunteers who were on my flight.

We woke up early in the morning and were divided into work teams for the day. One team staffed the field hospital that was set up in the heart of Kishinev near the Agudath Yisrael synagogue under the leadership of Rabbi Pinchas Saltzman, another went to various hotels and other locations in the city where refugees have taken refuge.

I was assigned to a team that headed to the Palanca border crossing in the south of the country where we greeted nearly a thousand refugees who crossed the border into Moldova. I brought with me from Israel three shopping bags filled with stuffed animals that my own children, one aged 5 and one aged 2-and-a-half, gave me to bring to the children here who lost everything when they left their home behind. The idea was my wife's, and my children went along with it. They didn't quite understand who the stuffed animals and toys were for when we explained it, but we explained that the toys were going to help others who didn't have any toys and that I would bring them to children to make them happy. My sons helped us gather up the stuffed animals that they no longer use and gave them to me with a smile and a hug. I packed the stuffed animals into my suitcase and brought them with me to Moldova. They took up half of my suitcase. Three shopping bags worth of space.

As our team was heading out this morning to the border crossing I packed the three bags into the van, and I saw another volunteer do the same. Chezy Rosenbaum, our team leader for the day, also brought with him stuffed animals and toys that his children no longer played with. We looked at each other and smiled.

At the crossing itself, we provided humanitarian aid to those in need of some food, a smile, gloves, blankets, hand-warmers, or even a hug. In a few cases, we assisted disabled refugees to cross the border. We worked together with border personnel and local law enforcement to make sure that everyone who crossed had what they needed and were able to board special shuttles that would take them to their first stop, a refugee camp set up a few kilometers away from the border, where the refugees could recuperate from their journey through war-torn Ukraine to the border, before deciding where they wished to head inside the country.

But before they left, as the mothers walked past us with their young children in tow, we handed them a stuffed animal. Some of the children had been so frightened by the journey that they were glued to their mothers' legs. When we offered them the toy, they looked reassuringly at their mothers, and once they received permission they released a hand and took the toy. Sometimes that small gesture allowed the children to open up and let go, reasserting a sense of playfulness where only fear existed before. For a short moment, they became children again. Some of the mothers appreciated the act of kindness so much that they broke down and cried, letting out all of the emotion that had been pent up over the course of their journey, a journey that has not yet ended. We cried too.

As I write this, we are bringing six refugees, including a mother and young child, back with us to Chisinau from the border. Our minibus, which came to the border with ten volunteers and six empty seats, is now full, we will help these people continue their journey, even flying some of them to Israel tomorrow on our rescue flight as part of Operation Orange Wings. The child is carrying an old-new stuffed animal, and my heart is full."



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