

ב"ה

Torah Tidbits

OU
ISRAEL

ISSUE 1480 AUG 13TH '22 ט"ז אב תשפ"ב

פרשת ואתחנן

PARSHAT VA'ETCHANAN - SHABBAT NACHAMU
AVOT CHAPTER 5

שמור את־
יום השבת
לקדשו
דברים ה'י"ב



Consuming Shemittah Produce
Rabbi Ezra Friedman
Director, The Gustave & Carol Jacobs Center
for Kashrut Education
page 36



**How to Live Outside
The Land of Israel**
Rabbi Moshe Taragin
Ram, Yeshivat Har Etzion
page 40

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT VA'ETCHANAN
CANDLES 6:50PM • EARLIEST 6:02PM • HAVDALA 8:04PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:42PM

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Lior Cohen // Eliezer Kupietzky



This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo By: Denis Elkoubi

I am a Sephardic Jew of Algerian and Turkish origin. I am married to a British woman, we are both children of Holocaust survivors. We made Aliyah 8 years ago to Netanya and we belong to YINN (Young Israel of North Netanya).

Where: Here is a picture of the Ten Commandments from my synagogue in Paris: The Hispano Portuguese synagogue of rue Buffault, one of the most beautiful synagogues of Paris where I went all my life. Being in the 9th arrondissement, where many tourists stay, we used to welcome many Jews from all over the world. I'm sure many readers will recognize it.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



CANDLES	EARLIEST	VA'ETCHANAN	HAVDALA	EKEV		
				Candles	Earliest	Havdala
6:50	6:02	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	8:04	6:43	5:56	7:56
7:08	6:04	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	8:06	7:00	5:58	7:58
7:09	6:03	Beit Shemesh / RBS	8:05	7:01	5:57	7:57
7:06	6:02	Gush Etzion	8:04	6:58	5:56	7:56
7:07	6:04	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	8:06	7:00	5:58	7:58
7:06	6:03	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	8:05	6:59	5:57	7:57
7:08	6:04	Netanya	8:07	7:00	5:58	7:58
7:06	6:03	Be'er Sheva	8:05	6:59	5:57	7:57
7:07	6:04	Rehovot	8:06	7:00	5:58	7:58
6:50	6:04	Petach Tikva	8:06	6:43	5:58	7:58
7:07	6:03	Ginot Shomron	8:05	6:59	5:57	7:57
6:58	6:04	Haifa / Zichron	8:07	6:50	5:58	7:59
7:06	6:02	Gush Shiloh	8:04	6:58	5:56	7:56
7:08	6:04	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:06	7:00	5:58	7:58
7:06	6:03	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:04	6:58	5:56	7:56
7:06	6:02	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	8:04	6:58	5:56	7:56
7:08	6:05	Ashkelon	8:06	7:01	5:59	7:58
7:07	6:04	Yad Binyamin	8:06	7:00	5:58	7:58
7:01	6:02	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	8:05	6:54	5:56	7:57
7:05	6:02	Golan	8:04	6:58	5:56	7:56

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:42 PM • next week - 8:35 pm

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



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OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat

Aug. 10 - 20 / 13-23 Av

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:06- 5:14
Sunrise	6:01-6:07
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:22 - 9:24
Magen Avraham	8:42-8:46
Sof Zman Tefila	10:29 - 10:30
<small>(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)</small>	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:44-12:42
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:18-1:15
Plag Mincha	6:03-5:55
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:32-7:22

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



It is easy to get “swept-up” with post-*Tisha B’Av* activities when the fast ends – shaving, laundry, listening to music and enjoying meat again, but I would be remiss not to talk about the transformative experience myself and thousands of others had at the Kotel at the end of *Tisha B’Av*. For over 25 years, NCSY Kollel has brought their teens to the Kotel to spend the final hours of the fast in heartfelt songs and *Tefilot*. (You can view the recording of the livestream here: kollel.ncsy.org/live-stream/). This is always a powerful experience, but it had added meaning this year as our siren apps kept going off. While we poured our hearts out to *Hashem* in song and prayer, we thought of our brothers and sisters in Gush Dan and Southern Israel who were rushing to their safe rooms and shelters.

Let me paint a picture for you: Due to construction taking place at the Kotel plaza, there was less room to sit which made it more crowded and close-knit. Hundreds of American teens from Kollel and other NCSY Summer Programs are squeezed together – some sitting on the floor, others standing in a circle with their arms around one another. Heads of NCSY and Kollel are in the middle, including Rabbi Micah Greenland, David Cutler, Elliot Tanzman, Rabbi Moshe Benovitz, Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky, Rabbi Tanchum Cohen, and others. Mayor of Yerushalayim Moshe Lion

joins the group in the middle of the circle as he has done in past years, popular Israeli singer Yonatan Razel hears the group and makes his way over to participate in the beautiful singing. Hundreds of Jews of all backgrounds gravitate towards this powerful experience – Jews from all over the world, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, black hats, Kippot Serugot, and not-yet frum. A record amount of people. It is so packed there is not even room for a fly to join. Singing and swaying, eyes closed tight in fervent prayer.

Together, gazing upon the ruins of *churban Bayit Sheni* (the destruction of the Second Temple) we sang:
"אם אֶשְׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי. תִּדְבַּק לְשׁוֹנֵי לֶחְמֵי אֵם
לֹא אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ, אֵם לֹא אֶעֱלֶה אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עַל רֹאשׁ שְׂמֹתַי:"

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I set not Jerusalem above my foremost joy.”

These words always feel particularly powerful in the final hours of *Tisha B’Av* and in previous years, this song is typically sung repeatedly until the end of the fast. But not this year. For as the singing continued to reach new heights, our phones continued to vibrate with each new Code Red alert. As *Am Yisrael* sat before *Har HaBayit* (the Temple Mount) *davening* for our redemption, our brethren were under fire, gathering in bomb shelters around the country while brave men and women were sent to the front lines to defend our

precious Land and holy people.

As the rocket sirens continued and our fears for the safety of our brothers and sisters rose to the fore, we sang two additional songs over and over:

”אָני מאַמין בַּאַמּוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּבִיאַת
הַמְשִׁיחַ אָני מאַמִּין וְאִךָ
עַל פִּי שְׂחִיתְמָהֶמָּה עִם כָּל זֶה אֶחְכֶּה לוֹ
אֶחְכֶּה לוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂחִיבוֹא”

“I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming.”

Emunah (faith) has carried our humble nation through thousands of years of persecution that we have - and continue to - endure. As we gazed upon the ruins of the second *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple) while our nation once again faced peril, this song gave us a renewed sense of comfort and hope.

Finally, weak and tired but uplifted, we ended the fast with one final song:

”אֶחְיֶה כָּל בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַנְּתוּנִים בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָה, הַעוֹמְדִים
בֵּין גְּזִים וּבֵין בְּיַבְשָׁה, הַמְקוּמִים יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם, וְיוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה
לְרוֹחָה, וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹרָה, וּמִשֶּׁעֶבֶד לְגֵאֻלָּה, הַשְׂתַּאֵם בְּעֲגָלָה
וּבְזִמּוֹ קָרִיב.”

“As for our brothers, the whole house of Israel, who are given over to trouble or captivity, whether they abide on the sea or on the dry land: May the All-present have mercy upon them, and bring them forth from trouble to enlargement, from darkness to light, and from subjection to redemption, now



speedily and at a near time.”

Recognizing the power of where we sat and the responsibility we had toward our fellow Jew, we poured out our hearts to the Almighty to keep our brothers and sisters safe and return home, while committing to do our part in treating one another with more love, respect and understanding.

After the songs, we joined together for *Maariv* followed by a powerful *Havdala* with over 1,000 people. While we appreciated and thanked Hashem for the State of Israel, the IDF, and the ability to come and *Daven* at the Kotel, we recognized that we are not complete. We still yearn for the safety of our brothers

and sisters in Israel and around the world, and we beseech Hashem for Mashiach and the third *Beit HaMikdash*. May the power of our *tefillot* (prayers) storm the Heavens and bring the *Geulah Sheleima* (complete redemption) speedily so we may be *Zoche* to spend next *Tisha B'Av* celebrating together in the *Beit HaMikdash*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

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

VA'ETCHANAN



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Director of
RCA Israel Region



1st aliya (3:23-4:4) I beseeched G-d to allow me to enter the Land. He refused: ascend the mountain, gaze at the Land that you will not enter. Charge Yehoshua, for he will lead the people. Now, Yisrael Shema, listen to the commandments so you will remain in the Land. You saw what occurred with Baal Peor: those who followed Baal Peor were punished while those who did not, survived.

In this aliya, Moshe's speech pivots. In Parshat Devarim he spoke of the march to the Land: the hiccup of 40 years because of the spies, the resumed march and its victories over Sichon and Og. The march to the Land was the topic. This first part of this aliya should really be in last week's parsha. I too want to enter the Land, but



The OU Israel Family sends its heartfelt condolences to Jerry & Esther Williams (OU Israel, Chair) and family on the passing of his father **Moshe Williams z"l**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

G-d refused, allowing me only a glimpse. Then the next theme in Moshe's speech begins: life in the Land. Perhaps G-d's refusal to allow Moshe into the Land is the perfect preamble to the discussion of life in the Land. Know this: living in the Land is a gift, a Divine gift. He gives. And He takes. You have no claim on this gift. I know from experience. Live so that you deserve it.



2nd aliya (4:5-40) Keep the mitzvot, for they are wise. The nations will look at the mitzvot and say: what a wise people. And who has a G-d as close as ours is to us? Or who has noble laws as our Torah? Remember the day at Sinai, the mountain on fire and the darkness of the cloud. The Voice emanated but there was no form. Make no images. I taught you the mitzvot; keep them, for they are the covenant G-d commanded from you. Your children will make images and be exiled, flung to the ends of the earth, serving idols there. They will return to G-d, seeking Him with all their heart. He will not forget His covenant. Is there another people who has heard G-d's voice amidst fire? Or another one Who took His people with wonders from amidst another? Know and take to heart that there is none other than G-d.

Moshe emphasizes 2 unique things we enjoy: our G-d and our Torah. Other nations recognize this. The implied message here is: why go running to other gods and other religions when yours is so profound that the other nations recognize it. If they see our religion as profound, we too ought to.



3rd aliya (4:41-49) Moshe separated 3 cities of refuge for those who kill accidentally on the east side of the Jordan. Moshe taught these

laws on the east side of the Jordan in the lands already conquered. These conquered lands extend from the Dead Sea all the way to Mt. Hermon.

Moshe's choosing 3 cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan, is his confirmation of the right of Bnei Gad, Bnei Reuven and half of Menashe to dwell there. Rav Yoel Bin Nun contends that this vast area over the Jordan becomes part of the promised Land. Moshe was told in the 1st aliya to ascend the mountain and look west, north, south and east. Well, looking east would be away from the Land of Israel. Why look there? Hence, he maintains that the defeat of Sichon and Og was the beginning of the conquering of the Land and that those lands became part of Eretz Yisrael. Moshe looks east because that land is also part of Eretz Yisrael. Moshe himself *does* participate in at least the beginning of the conquest of the Land of Israel.



4th aliya (5:1-18) Mt. Sinai.

Moshe called the people: Shema Yisrael to the commandments for our G-d made a covenant at Sinai. He made it with you, face to face amidst fire. I communicated it because you were afraid. And He said: I am G-d who took you out of Egypt. Do not make images. Or take My name in vain. Guard Shabbat as a day of rest to remember that you were slaves in Egypt. Honor your father and mother. Do not murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet.

Moshe describes the giving of the Torah at Sinai. In doing so, he emphasizes the brit, the covenant. It is this covenant that animates the entire rest of the book. There are 2 covenants: the brit made with Avraham to give his children the Land. And the brit

made at Sinai, which is mitzvot that we are to keep. The first brit, to give us the Land, came with no particular expectations. Not so the second brit. And that is what Moshe is now emphasizing. Don't stop at brit 1: it is bound to brit 2. The giving of the Land is bound up with the mitzvot. Not that it is contingent on it. It sounds from Breishit that the promise of the Land is without expectations. But the *success* in the Land is bound up with brit 2, the mitzvot. The promise of the Land never wanes; *success* in the Land can. Moshe introduces this theme here, at the outset of his long speech to the people; and it is this theme that will resonate through the entire rest of his speech.



5th aliya (5:19-6:3) When you heard these words amidst the fire and the cloud you were

afraid. You approached and said: now we know man can hear G-d's voice but we are afraid we will die. Moshe, you hear from Him, not us. G-d agreed and said to me: you stand with Me and I will tell you all the commandments to keep in the Land.

The word Shema appears 8 times in the first 7 verses of this aliya. The people heard the Voice at Sinai but were afraid. So Moshe, you hear it for us. And G-d heard their suggestion and said it was good. Fine, Moshe will hear G-d's voice. But, who hears is not the issue. The issue is who hears. I mean, who hears the voice with his ear; that can be Moshe. That's fine. But who hears, I mean, hears, gets it, understands it, accepts it; that is you. Hence the last verse in the aliya, 8 verses later comes back to Shema: Shemata Yisrael, you heard Israel and hence, keep the mitzvot. There is hearing and there is hearing. Moshe is your hearing aid to hear; but you are the ones who need to hear.



6th aliya (6:4-25) The Shema. Shema Yisrael, G-d is one. You shall love G-d, and have that in

your heart constantly; teaching of it to your children, speaking of it, at all times and in all places. Be bound with love of G-d; let it guide you and your home. When you come into the Land, you will find things that you did not build: large and good cities, homes full of wonderful things, cisterns, vineyards, olive groves. But be careful to not forget G-d. Fear Him, serve Him. Do what is moral and good in His eyes and He will do good for you. When your children ask you about all these commandments, tell them: we were slaves in Egypt, G-d took us out to give us this Land. These command-

SHLOSHIM for our beloved friend

MIRIAM ESRIS a"h

Sunday, August 14

י"ז מנחם אב תשפ"ב

Aliya LaKever, Har Menuchot

2:45pm promptly

(meet on street in front of Beit Haahesped)

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ments are to cultivate awe of Him and bring us merit, to preserve us in this Land.

While we love the first line of the Shema, it is the second that is the emphasis of the paragraph. Love of G-d. All your heart, all your soul, all your might. We are used to saying this line so we become numb to its power. Moshe is speaking to the people: pour yourself into this. Let it go. Put all you've got in this. No inhibitions. Love of G-d is to animate all of your life: bubbling over to your children, percolating in you in your travels, your actions, your thoughts, your home. Wow. Little wonder that this paragraph is the heart of our daily tefila. We need to be G-d obsessed. Moshe is plain as day here: love G-d with all your heart, soul and might. All in.



7th **aliya (7:1-11)** When you come into the Land, conquer the seven nations. Do not make

any covenant with them. Do not marry them, for that will lead to idol worship. You are G-d's holy people. Not because you are numerous but because He loved you and made a covenant with you. Know: He keeps His covenant. You too keep the mitzvot.

Alex Israel makes a trenchant comment (in a shiur on the Virtual Beit Midrash). There are 2 distinct types of idol worship. In the 10 Commandments we are told not to make images. In other words,

WE REMEMBER
18th of Menachem Av
 (Monday, August 15) is the anniversary
 of the **1929 Chevron Massacre**
 in which **67 Jews** were killed
 including **24 Chevron Yeshiva students**
ה' יקום דמם

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even if you believe in G-d, but you want an image, don't do it. Right G-d, but no representation. Here we are told to be wary of serving other gods. Wrong gods. This is the allure of a group belonging. Marry a woman, join her faith group, enjoy the fellowship, camaraderie, belonging that a faith community brings. There are a lot of wonderful and satisfying elements to any faith community. But. That is a complete violation of your unique relationship with G-d (in addition to the folly of these gods). It is not the mind that attracts you; it is the community that comes with the wife. Marrying the non-Jew begins the process of idol worship. Hence, avoid intermarriage.

HAFTORAH

YESHAYAHU 40:1-26

This week's *haftorah* is the first of a series of seven "Haftarot of Consolation." These seven *haftarot* start on the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

This section of Yeshayahu begins with G-d's conveying to the prophet: "Console, O console My people . . . Announce

to Jerusalem that her period of exile has been fulfilled and that her sins have been forgiven."

Yeshayahu's prophecy describes some of the remarkable events that will unfold with the onset of the messianic era. These include: the return of the exiles to Yerushalayim, the revelation of Hashem's glory, and the rewards and retribution that will then be meted out to the nations of the world.

The navi then goes on to comfort the people, describing G-d's power and might, and reassuring them of His care for His people. ■



STATS

45th of 54 sedras; 2nd of 11 in D'varim
Written on 249 lines in a Torah, rank: 7
21 parshiyot; 5 open, 16 closed, 7th (tied with Ki Tavo)
122 p'sukim - rank: 17 (2nd in D'varim) same as Vayak'hel & Ki Tavo - but larger
1878 words; rank: 10th (2nd in D'varim)
7343 letters; rank: 10th (2nd in D'varim)

Va'etchanan's p'sukim are longer than average, hence the jump in rank from 17th for p'sukim to 10th for words



MITZVOT

12 of 613 mitzvot: 8 pos., 4 prohibitions and many more that are counted elsewhere - this is so for several sedras, but it really shows for Va'etchanan (e.g. Aseret HaDibrot in Yitro has 14 mitzvot, repeated here but not counted here)

A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

ואהבת את ה' אלוהיך בכל לבבך (ויה):

"And you shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart" (6:5)

Many ask, how can we be commanded to "love", which is part of human nature, and one cannot force someone to change his nature?

Rashi emphasizes the importance of this point by saying that "one cannot compare him who acts out of love to him who acts from fear".

The Sefat Emet (Rabbi Yehuda Leib Alter -Third Admor of Gur 1847-1905) answers that the fact that G-d commands us to "love" Him implies that it is within our human nature to love our Creator and no need to request something beyond nature or our ability. Now we can understand the command of "love the L-rd" which is to awaken our inner capability, found within each and every one of us, to "love" G-d, our Creator.

Shabbat Shalom

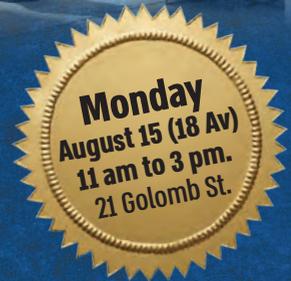
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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

“Religion is Good for You”

“Religion is good for you.” “A religious person is a mentally healthy person.” Statements such as these could not have been made when I was a graduate student in psychology back in the 1960s. Quite the contrary. The prevalent belief in the mental health profession then was that religion was a neurosis, and that religious people needed to abandon their irrational beliefs.

Things have changed since then. Scientific research has proven, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that religion can have a positive effect upon a person’s mental attitude, and that a person’s religious beliefs can enhance not only his mental health, but even his physical well-being.

Books are now being published with titles such as *Handbook of Religion and Health*, and *Faith and Health: Psychological Perspectives*. Mental health professionals are now being encouraged to assess the religiosity and spirituality of their patients, and to use a patient’s religious beliefs and behavior as part of the therapeutic process.

These findings are of great importance to practitioners of all the world’s religions. They certainly have relevance for the Jewish people. Thus, one recent article in a professional journal asks, in its very title, “Are

religious beliefs relevant to mental health among Jews?” The article concludes with this resoundingly affirmative declaration: “Beliefs about God’s benevolence are related to mental health among Orthodox Jews; specifically, higher levels of belief predicted lower levels of depression and anxiety.”

The part of me that is a licensed psychologist celebrates these findings. But the part of me that is an ordained rabbi questions whether the fact that religion can be a positive factor in one’s mental health finds support in traditional Jewish sources and, furthermore, whether it is appropriate to practice religion just because of its beneficial effects upon one’s health. I have long pondered these questions and have found a significant amount of material that helps answer them. One example is found in this week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Va’etchanan* (*Deuteronomy* 3:23-7:11).

Close to the beginning of the *parsha*, we read, “And now, O Israel, give heed to the laws and rules that I am instructing you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. (*Deuteronomy* 4:1).”

Classical Jewish commentators have been



puzzled by the use of the phrase, “to live.” Similar phrases emphasizing “to live” and “choose life” abound in biblical texts. One commentator, Abraham ibn Ezra, puts it this way: “Surely our verse could have read ‘...so that you may enter and occupy the land...’ minus the phrase ‘live to.’” His answer is a startling, indeed frightening, one. He suggests that those who do not “give heed to the laws and rules” are equivalent to idolaters, worshipers of the Pe’or, and they will not be allowed to live, but will be annihilated.

As far as I can tell, ibn Ezra’s explanation remained unchallenged for many centuries. In the late 19th century, however, it was forcefully challenged by none other than Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Berlin, the head of the Volozhin Yeshiva, more popularly known as the Netziv, in his masterful commentary, *Haamek Davar*.

Netziv begins by insisting that ibn Ezra’s approach is untenable. He calls it “a wonder;” that is, something that makes no sense to him. First of all, he argues, can we equate all who do not observe the Torah’s laws and rules with worshipers of a pagan idol, Pe’or? With this argument, Rabbi Berlin once again demonstrates the tolerant attitude toward unobservant Jews which characterized his many decades of Jewish community leadership.

He goes on to further ask, “Are all idol worshipers in fact annihilated?” He therefore rejects Ibn Ezra’s commentary, and takes an entirely different approach. His approach is based upon his contention, supported throughout his prolific writings, that the meaning of the word “life” in the Bible often means not just remaining alive biologically, but something close to what we might call *joie d’vivre*, the joy of living. As he puts it,

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“The implication of the word ‘life’ is that of a full life, a happy and meaningful life, replete with the delight one experiences with the achievement of spiritual wholeness.”

The Netziv enunciates a general principle: Religious emotions enhance and intensify life. Just as intellectual achievements and experiences of prestige and honor stimulate the life force of all human beings, so too do worship and expressions of faith nourish the life force within us. Hence, the person who deprives himself of the opportunities to experience spirituality is denying himself a healthier existence. He is not fully alive, and in a certain sense, he is dead. As our Sages taught, “The wicked, even in their lifetimes, are considered dead.”

Rabbi Berlin is saying that our religious experiences invest us with a tangible and genuine, which in more modern terminology is called “improved,” mental health. This takes the observance of the Torah’s laws and rules beyond the theological sphere into the realm of psychology. There is psychological benefit to religious belief and to religious behavior.

“In our verse, Moses is telling us that heeding the Torah’s laws and rules can bring about a fuller measure of life,” concludes Rabbi Berlin. “This is the meaning of

the Mishnah in the second chapter of *Avot* which declares that ‘he who increases Torah increases his life.’ *Marbeh Torah marbeh chaim*. This does not mean that he lives longer than others, or that his allotted life span is extended. Rather, it means that he expands the emotional repertoire of his soul and can thereby live a much more pleasant life...Thus, we say in our Sabbath liturgy that those who taste the Sabbath earn ‘life.’ They literally feel a psychic joy during the Sabbath day.”

We can take away from the Netziv’s interpretation a lesson which is so necessary in contemporary times: Religion is not psychically harmful, as many are convinced. It has pragmatic value, not just metaphysical value. Religious faith, observance of ritual, and authentic spiritual experiences can help us cope with the emotional problems of living.

Yes, there are more idealistic reasons for adhering to Judaism. But we are taught that it is sometimes acceptable to follow the Torah for ulterior motives, because those motives will ultimately become transformed into far purer motives. *Mitoch shelo lishmah ba lishmah*.

Our faith can help us deal with anxiety and depression; it can enable us to better cope with the challenges and stressors which are unavoidable nowadays. These might not be the best reasons for adopting a religious lifestyle, but they certainly provide a place to start.

Religion is good for you! ■

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Grandmother & Great Grandmother

Anna Beer a”h

חנה טובה בת יעקב וסימה מרים ע”ה
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from this issue be in her merit

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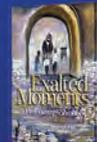
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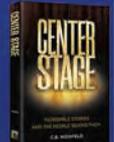
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The Right and the Good

Buried among the epic passages in Va'etchanan – among them the Shema and the Ten Commandments – is a brief passage with large implications for the moral life in Judaism. Here it is together with the preceding verse:

Be very vigilant to keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and the testimonies and decrees with which He has charged you. *Do what is right and what is good in the Lord's eyes*, so that it may go well with you, and you may go in and take possession of the good land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give you. (Deut. 6:17-18)

The difficulty is obvious. The preceding verse makes reference to commandments, testimonies, and decrees. This, on the face of it, is the whole of Judaism as far as conduct is concerned. What then is meant by the phrase

“the right and the good” that is not already included within the previous verse?

Rashi says it refers to “compromise (that is, not strictly insisting on your rights) and action within or beyond the letter of the law (*lifnim mi-shurat ha-din*).” The law, as it were, lays down a minimum threshold: this we must do. But the moral life aspires to more than simply doing what we must.¹ The people who most impress us with their goodness and rightness are not merely people who keep the law. The saints and heroes of the moral life go beyond. They do more than they are commanded. They go the extra mile. That, according to Rashi, is what the Torah means by “the right and the good.”

Ramban, while citing Rashi and agreeing with him, goes on to say something slightly different:

At first Moses said that you are to keep His statutes and his testimonies which He commanded you, and now he is stating that

1 See Lon Fuller, *The Morality of Law* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), and Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's much reprinted article, “Does Jewish Tradition Recognize an Ethic Independent of the Halakhah?” in *Modern Jewish Ethics*, ed. Marvin Fox (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975), pp. 62–88.

even where He has not commanded you, give thought as well to do what is good and right in his eyes, for He loves the good and the right.

Now this is a great principle, for it is impossible to mention in the Torah all aspects of man's conduct with his neighbours and friends, all his various transactions and the ordinances of all societies and countries. But since He mentioned many of them, such as, "You shall not go around as a talebearer," "You shall not take vengeance nor bear a grudge," "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbour," "You shall not curse the deaf," "You shall rise before the hoary head," and the like, He went on to state in a general way that in all matters one should do what is good and right, including even compromise and going beyond the strict requirement of the law... Thus one should behave in every sphere of activity, until he is worthy of being called "good and upright."

Ramban is going beyond Rashi's point, that the right and the good refer to a higher standard than the law strictly requires. It seems as if Ramban is telling us that there are aspects of the moral life that are not caught by the concept of law at all. That is what he means by saying "It is impossible to mention in the Torah all aspects of man's conduct with his neighbours and friends."

Law is about universals, principles that apply in all places and times: Do not murder. Do not rob. Do not steal. Do not lie. Yet there are important features of the moral life that are not universal at all. They have to do with specific circumstances and the way we respond to them. What is it to be a good husband or wife, a good parent, a good teacher, a good friend? What is it to be a great leader,

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or follower, or member of a team? When is it right to praise, and when is it appropriate to say, “You could have done better”? There are aspects of the moral life that cannot be reduced to rules of conduct, because what matters is not only what we do, but the way in which we do it: with humility or gentleness or sensitivity or tact.

Morality is about persons, and no two persons are alike. When Moses asked God to appoint his successor, he began his request with the words, “Lord, God of the spirit of all flesh.” (Numbers 27:16) On this the Rabbis commented: what Moses was saying was that each person is different, so he asked God to appoint a leader who would relate to each individual as an individual, knowing that what is helpful to one person may be harmful to another.² This ability to judge the right response to the right person at the right time is a feature not only of leadership, but of human goodness in general.

Rashi begins his commentary to Bereishit with the question: If the Torah is a book of law, why does it not start with the first law given to the people of Israel as a whole, which does not appear until Exodus 12? Why does it include the narratives about Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the patriarchs and matriarchs and their children? Rashi gives an answer that has nothing to do with morality – he says it has to do with the Jewish people’s right to their land. But the

2 *Sifre Zuta, Midrash Tanhuma and Rashi to Numbers ad loc.*

Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin; 1816-1893) writes that the stories of Genesis are there to teach us how the patriarchs were upright in their dealings, even with people who were strangers and idolaters. That, he says, is why Genesis is called by the Sages “the book of the upright.”³

Morality is not just a set of rules, even a code as elaborate as the 613 commands and their rabbinic extensions. It is also about the way we respond to people as individuals. The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is at least in part about what went wrong in their relationship when the man referred to his wife as *Ishah*, ‘woman,’ a generic description, a type. Only when he gave her a proper name, *Chavah*, Eve, did he relate to her as an individual in her individuality, and only then did God make “garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.” (Gen. 3:21)

This too is the difference between the God of Aristotle and the God of Abraham. Aristotle thought that God knew only universals not particulars. This is the God of science, of the Enlightenment, of Spinoza. The God of Abraham is the God who relates to us in our singularity, in what makes us different from others as well as what makes us the same.

This ultimately is the difference between the two great principles of Judaic ethics: justice and love. Justice is universal. It treats all people alike, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, making no distinctions on the basis of colour or class. But love is particular. A parent loves their children for what makes them each unique. The moral life is a combination of both. That is why it cannot

3 *Ha-amek Davar to Genesis, Introduction.*



be reduced solely to universal laws. That is what the Torah means when it speaks of “the right and the good” over and above the commandments, statutes, and testimonies.

A good teacher knows what to say to a struggling student who, through great effort, has done better than expected, and to a gifted student who has come top of the class but is still performing below their potential. A good employer knows when to praise and when to challenge. We all need to know when to insist on justice and when to exercise forgiveness. The people who have had a decisive influence on our lives are almost always those we feel understand us in our singularity. We were not, for them, a mere face in the crowd. That is why, though morality involves universal rules and cannot exist without them, it also involves interactions that cannot be reduced to rules.

Rabbi Israel of Rizhin (1796-1850) once asked a student how many sections there were in the Shulchan Aruch. The student replied, “Four.” “What,” asked the Rizhiner, “do you know about the fifth section?” “But there is no fifth section,” said the student. “There is,” said the Rizhiner. “It says: always treat a person like a mensch.”

The fifth section of the code of law is the conduct that cannot be reduced to law. That is what it takes to do the right and the good. ■

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With the haftarah of “Nachamu” we begin the “Shiv’a D’n’chemta,” the post-Tish’a B’av readings of consolation that lead up to Shabbat Shuva, the Shabbat before Yom Kippur. Each one of these haftarot is taken from the Sefer Yishayahu and are aimed to lift us from the depths of depression and rejection to the heights of joy and acceptance. This journey of seven weeks is meant to be a time to repair our relationship with G-d that was, seemingly, torn asunder by the Galut, so that we would be prepared for the season of Teshuva.

Tosafot (Megilla 31b) points out that these selections are arranged in ascending order, i.e., that each haftarah progresses in its comforting words to the prophecies of the previous one.

In the opening words Hashem calls to the prophets: “Nachamu, Nachamu Ami”, “[Go and] comfort My people,” which certainly appears to be a most powerful message to the post-churban generation. In what way, we might wonder, is this selection any less comforting than those messages that would follow? Let us consider:

The Temple lay in ruins.

The population was driven into exile.

And thousands of Jews were killed.

So the prophet calls for us to be comforted

because.....G-d has completed the punishment since you have already suffered twice as much as you deserved (“ki lak’cha miyad Hashem kiflayim bechol chatotecha”).

Is this comforting? The Jews may have been relieved to learn that the punishments had ceased - but would that have been a “soothing comfort” for them?

Furthermore, the haftarah focuses upon G-d’s power and His ability to punish-but says nothing about His willingness to forgive! The perek also speaks of G-d’s might and His ability to change nature-but does not speak of Israel’s future redemption. And, whereas the other prophecies of comfort depict G-d’s relationship with us as that of a father to his child or even husband to his wife, this haftarah speaks in terms of a Ruler to his nation, an Almighty Power who judges the people – lacking the warmth and caring of a relationship the nation so desperately needed! In but one verse alone does the navi paint the picture of G-d as a compassionate shepherd gathering His sheep and holding the wandering lamb in His bosom, portraying a warmer and more intimate connection between Hashem and His nation.

Perhaps this is why Tosafot regarded this prophecy as the least comforting of the seven. And, if so, then how, indeed, were they to be comforted?

I suggest that Israel was comforted by Yishayahu’s message because they, and future generations, for 2,500 years, firmly believed in the words of the prophet that they WOULD

Mazal Tov to

Gershon & Debbie Markowitz and family
on the birth of a grandson



have a future.

After the horrors of the churban and throughout the torment and torture of the Diaspora and incomparable pain they suffered, in was only logical for them to believe that they were doomed; that they had NO future. The simple promise they found in the words of this haftarah gave them the strength and inspiration to go on.

They survived because they knew that they would survive.

And we, more than past generations, can see these prophecies come to life. We see the fruition of those promises that our ancestors could only pray would come true.

Yes, we have survived and, therefore, can confidently declare to our nation:

“Nachamu, Nachamu Ami,” - we all can now be comforted, for Yishayahu’s prophecy has been realized. ■

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Nachamu, Nachamu Ami

This Shabbat is known as Shabbat Nachamu – named after the haftorah that we read “*nachamu, nachamu ami*”. It serves as a *nechama* – to comfort us following Tisha B’av and our mourning of the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. We will share two thoughts on “nachamu”, one connected to the parsha and the other to the haftorah.

Parsha

We remain in exile and the Beit HaMikdash has not been rebuilt, so what type of comfort or relief do we experience? Perhaps we can find the source of this *nechama* (comfort) in the Parsha.

Chazal tell us that “Va’etchanan” refers to Moshe Rabbeinu’s prayers begging to be able to enter Eretz Yisrael. Hashem denies Moshe’s repeated requests, but He does enable Moshe to **see** the land.

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for you shall not cross this Jordan. (Devarim 3:27).

The Sefat Emet offers an explanation with respect to how Parshat Va’etchanan provides us with a tool from which to obtain comfort while in exile. Moshe being granted the ability to “**see**” the land was not just with respect to viewing it on a superficial, physical realm, but rather to be able to internalize and connect with the *kedusah* of Eretz Yisrael. Moshe was granted the ability to connect to the holiness present in the land of Israel while remaining on its perimeter. This is something that Moshe transmitted to future generations that are not privileged to enter within the borders of Israel. From a distance they are able to connect to the *kedusha* of Eretz Yisrael through *tefillah*. We face the land of Israel when praying and when in Israel we face the *kodesh Kodashim*.

Parshat Va’etchanan is always read following 9 B’av, to highlight that just as Moshe was granted the ability to connect with Eretz Yisrael from a distance, irrespective of our presence in *galut* (exile) we can connect to the holiness of the land of Israel via our prayers.

Haftorah

An important lesson can be derived from the haftorah as well. Why is it that we use the double language of “*nachamu, nachamu*”? Chazal suggest that since our transgression is recorded in this fashion חטא חטא (אימה ירושלים) – with the word “*chet*”

(transgression), repeated twice, so too our conciliation is offered twice.

Rav Yaakov Neiman (Darchei Mussar) offers the following suggestion. The Torah was given to Am Yisrael, but it was not only for their benefit. Am Yisrael have an obligation to serve as an “ohr L’goyim” -a light unto the nations. As is state תורה תצא מציורן – *From Zion shall the Torah come forth* (Yeshayahu 2:3). Through our actions and moral and ethical behavior we are to positively influence the world.

That is why the word *nechama* is repeated. To be comforted we need to correct our ways- to act respectfully to one another to counter the *sinat chinam* that led to the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. Our behavior however, does not only have an impact on our immediate community. It has an effect on the other nations of the world. One *nechama* for Am Yisrael and another for the rest of the world.

In particular, during vacation season when we travel, we have to keep in mind that by wearing a kippa, we are an ambassador of the Jewish nation. With it comes the responsibility to act in a way that sanctifies God’s name שמים שמים. May we be able to live up to that challenge and to be a conduit for the fulfillment of the double *nechama*! ■

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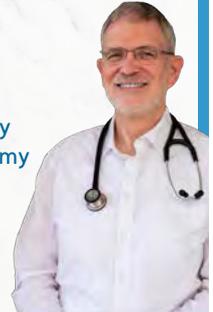
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Saying Specifications

The beauty of studying Torah is amazing, the depth and breadth rooted in each word is staggering. In our *parashah*, the first *passuk* opens with the words of Moshe Rabbeinu, “*Va’etchanan el Hashem ba-eit hahi lemor-I pleaded with G-d at that time saying...*” The word “*lemor*” seems extraneous here. It is not obvious that **saying** is implicit in **pleading**?

Generally, we understand that when the word “*lemor*” is used, as in, “*vayedaber Hashem el Moshe lemor – and Hashem spoke to Moshe saying...*,” it is a directive to Moshe Rabbeinu to report back to Hashem what the people said. In this case, where he is speaking to Hashem, *chazal* explain that Moshe Rabbeinu was asking Hashem **to say**, i.e., to say His response, to let him know whether his request was accepted or not.

Indeed, throughout Tanach, when we

find the word “*lemor*”, as is “*Vayedaber... lemor...-and he said...saying...*”, it is an extra expression of speech and comes to convey a deeper message. We see one such example when Yosef Hatzadik is wandering in the field looking for his brothers (*Bereisheet 37:15*). He meets a man, “*vayishaleihu ha’ish lemor mah tivakesh – and the man asked him, saying, what are you looking for?*” Well, if the man was asking, clearly, he was saying! The Kotzker Rebbe teaches a profound moral lesson from this extra word. The man, (Rashi suggests that this was the angel Gavriel), was teaching Yosef Hatzadik **to always say**, “what are you looking for.” As a person wanders through life, he must ask himself at key intervals, “What is my goal? Where am I headed?” He then will find a place of *yishuv ha’das*.

The *midrash* learns another lesson from this word. Moshe Rabbeinu is **saying** something to all of us. He is teaching future generations to implore Hashem for salvation when they are stuck in times of despair. Even in the direst situations, one should never give

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up hope. We can always turn to Hashem as Moshe did, as salvation can come in the blink of an eye.

We learn another aspect of *tefilah* here, says the *Panim Yafot*. Moshe Rabbeinu was modeling a fundamental element of davening to Hashem. “*And I implored Hashem...saying*”, as if to ask Hashem, “help me with what I need to say, open my mouth so I can express my plea!” Truly, we follow Moshe Rabbeinu’s lesson every day before we commence our *shemoneh esrei*. We ask Hashem to “open our lips” so we can speak Hashem’s praise.

The *Me’am Loez* learns an additional lesson about the power of *tefilah* from the words “*ba-eit hahi* - at that time.” Moshe Rabbeinu is sharing a critique with the people. The previous *perek* ends with apportioning land for Reuven and Gad, as one who is carrying out his last will would do. Then it describes the appointment of Yehoshua as the new leader. All these events should have awakened the people to make them realize that Moshe’s passing was imminent. Knowing this, they should have davened for Moshe to be the leader who would enter the land with them. He is telling them that they should have davened for him, as the power of communal *tefilah* is formidable. However, when Moshe Rabbeinu saw that the people were not davening, he realized that he had no option but to daven for himself. We can apply this to our own experiences. When we see someone suffering, we cannot only encourage them to daven, we must join them in heartfelt *tefilah* as well. ■

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

Nachamu

Rebbe Moshe Yechiel Epstein, zy'a, was a *masmid* and brilliant Torah scholar who authored the 20 volume encyclopedic work on Jewish thought, *Sefer Aish Dos*, as well as the Torah commentary *Be'er Moshe*. Reb Moshe Yechiel relocated from Poland to New York in mid 1920's, while his relatives who remained in Europe were all murdered in the Holocaust. He lived on the Lower East Side and then the Bronx for some time before moving to Eretz Yisrael. There, as the sole surviving remnant of his grandfather's Chasidic dynasty, Reb Moshe Yechiel was asked to take up the mantle of leadership, and became known as the Ozherov Rebbe.

The great author and teacher Rav Yechiel Spero relates:

Long-time Menahel of Yeshiva Ketana of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, Rav Asher Sabo, once shared a memory from his youth. As a child of Holocaust survivors, little Asher became

accustomed to his parents' nightmares; often, in the middle of the night, they would cry out in pain, reliving the horrors they had experienced during the Shoah. He remembers being three years old, waking up frightened and shaken. His father would rush to him, gather him in his arms and lovingly carry him to the window.

The Sabos lived in New York City, in the same housing development as Rebbe Moshe Yechiel. In the darkness, a light shone from the apartment just across the way, where the Rebbe sat learning Torah and writing seforim throughout the night. Asher's father would point toward the dining room window of the Rebbe, where they could see him deeply immersed in his *avodah*, and rocking back and forth. *Kuk vi der Rebbe learnt*, "Look how the Rebbe is learning!" his father would tell him, warmly. In the loving embrace of his father, Asher was comforted and stabilized by focusing on the serene, holy form of the *tzadik* immersed in the eternal words of Torah...

"Shabbos Nachamu" is named after this week's haftarah from the prophecies of Yeshayahu. In it, Hashem instructs the Navi to deliver a message of consolation and comfort and herald a new era of hope and *tikun*: forgiveness for Am Yisrael, the beginning of restoration for the holy city, and the approach of a future redemption.

קול אמר קרא וְאמר מה אקרא כִּלְהַבֵּשׁר הַחַיִּיר וְכִלְהַחַסְדִּיר
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A voice says, "Proclaim!" and it says, "What shall I proclaim?"

"All flesh is grass, and all its kindness is like the blossom of the field;

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The grass shall dry out, the blossom shall wilt, for a wind from Hashem has blown upon it; behold the people is grass.

יֵבֶשׁ חֲצִיר נֶבֶל צִיץ וְדָבַר אֱלֹקֵינוּ יִקוּם לְעוֹלָם:

The grass shall dry out, the blossom shall wilt, but the word of Hashem shall last forever." (*Yeshaya*, 40:6-8)

The question of the Prophet Yeshayahu, "What shall I proclaim," demands that we take pause and consider the purpose of our lives, what is essential to us. "What does my lifestyle, my choices, my mode of existence, proclaim about me? Do my choices reflect an awareness that "the grass shall dry out, the blossom shall wilt," that everything in this



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world is temporal and fleeting? Am I living with eternal values?

Rav Yisroel Belsky, zt'l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, shares an insight. Following the tragedy of *Churban Bayis* and the transient experience of exile, the Navi is reminding us that everything physical in this world has an expiration date; there is no structure, building or institution that will stand the test of time. It is only דְּבַר הַאֱלֹהִים, "the word of Hashem", the eternal *Torah haKedoshah*, that has any lasting power. The more we strive to attach and immerse ourselves in learning and living with Torah, the more this truth of this prophecy is 'proclaimed' and amplified in the world.

On Shabbos Nachamu we are invited to join the prophet's proclamation and ask of ourselves and our fellow Jews, קָהָ אֶקְרָא, "What shall I proclaim?" "What does my life

stand for, fleeting appearances or eternal realities? In the face of the spiritual chaos, confusion and horrors of our generation, and the unstable, shifting sands of today's cultural and political scenes, our timeless moral standards could seem to be washed away. Yet Hashem's promise and guarantee that we will be sheltered and redeemed finds expression in our eternal bond with Torah.

May we awaken from the nightmare of *galus*, and be healed from our collective trauma, in our Heavenly Father's comforting embrace. May we focus on the soothing, stabilizing promise of our holy Torah: a bright future awaits us! *Nachamu Nachamu Ami...*

לֹאִי תוֹרַתְךָ שְׂעֻשְׁתִּי אֶז אֲבַדְתִּי בְּעַנְיִי

"Were not Your Torah my occupation, then I would have perished in my affliction." (Tehillim, 119:92) ■



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10:15AM Themes and Messages
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Mrs. Leah Feinberg

11:00AM Brunch

11:30AM Shiva D'Nechemta (The
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SUN, AUG 14

9:15 AM

Journey Through the Siddur

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10:20 AM

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**Rabbi Azarya
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11:30 AM

Shivat Tzion in Tanach:
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2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-
Sanhedrin Perek 4

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MON, AUG 15

9:15 AM

**Rebbetzin
Pearl Borow**

Divrei HaYamim (L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

Reconciling the Two
Meraglim Stories

Rabbi Avi Herzog
Rabbi Goldscheider
(Resumes Aug 22)

11:45 AM

Halacha and Agada in
Contemporary Society

**Rabbi Shmuel
Herschler**

8:30 PM

Semichat Chaver Program

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

TUE, AUG 16

9:15 AM

Rebbetzin Smiles

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

9:30AM

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

10:30AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Yossi Goldin

2:00 pm

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin
Perek 4

Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

7:30 PM

Safrut Course (The Bais)
Rabbi Tzvi Mauner

8:00pm

Sefer Shmuel
Rabbi Mordechai Machlis

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9:15AM-1:00PM

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WED, AUG 17

9:00 AM

Medina and Halacha
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

10:15 AM

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

11:30 AM

Great Jewish Thinkers
Rabbi Alan Kimche
(Resumes in Fall)

12:30 PM- Trailblazing
the Text of Tanach-
Lunch and Learn
Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:30 PM

Halachic Controversies
Rabbi Aschi Dick
(The Bais)

THURS, AUG 18

9:00 AM

Parshat HaShavua
Rabbi Ari Kahn

10:15 am

Parshat HaShavua
**Rabbi Baruch
Taub**

11:30 AM

Unlocking the Messages
of Chazal
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

2:00 PM

Men's Talmud-Sanhedrin
Perek 4
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld



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Rabbi Taub

Parsha, 7:00PM
MonHalacha, 7:00PM Wed

Rebbetzin Shatz

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

Rabbi Goldwicht

Parshat HaShavua
Wed. 8:30PM
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Consuming *Shemita* Produce

Early authorities debate whether there is a positive mitzvah or perhaps even an obligation to consume *shemita* produce. *Tashbet*”z (Mitzvah 67) and *Mahari*”t *Elgazi* (*Hilchot Chalah* 2:13-14) rule clearly that there is a positive mitzvah to consume *shemita* produce based on the words of the *Ramban* (*Shichichat Ha’asin* 3). The *Chazon Ish* (14:10) and *Seridei Eish* (2:90), however, disagree and bring different proofs that there is no such mitzvah or obligation. The *Chazon Ish* clarifies that the positive requirement is to make *shemita* produce available to the public. As such, there is only a negative transgression to dispose of or damage *shemita* produce, but with no positive obligation to consume it.

The opinion of *Torat Ha’Aretz*

Regarding the dispute whether there is a mitzvah or not to consume *shemita* produce, there is a third opinion recorded in *Torat Ha’Aretz*. Rav Moshe Klires, former Rabbi of Teveria writes in his book *Torat Ha’Aretz* (8:28) that there is no positive obligation *per se* to eat *shemita* produce, but if one decides to eat such produce, he has performed a mitzvah. In other words,

the Torah does not require an individual to actively search out *shemita* produce to eat. However, one must not ignore the holiness of *shemita* produce on a halachic level. In addition, we most certainly fulfill *Hashem*’s will by consuming *shemita* produce from this Holy year.

Ruling and practical applications

The majority of contemporary authorities, including Rav Chaim Kanievsky (*Derech Emuna* 5:2) and Rav Ben-Tzion Abba Shaul (*Ohr L’tzion* 2:1) rule like the *Chazon Ish* that there is no actual obligation to consume *shemita* produce. Moreover, *poskim* develop numerous halachic applications from this dispute.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 116:5) rules that one should not eat from food that was stored under one’s bed. The *Shach* (116:4) adds that even if the food was covered one should not eat it. However, regarding food that is a mitzvah to consume, such as matzah on the first night of Pesach, some say there is no concern eating food that was stored under one’s bed. Since according to halacha there is no obligation to consume *shemita* produce, then one should be stringent and not eat *shemita* fruit that was stored under a bed (see *Sdeh Mordechai* p.442).

Certain authorities questioned whether one may use *shemita* wine for any mitzvah such as kiddush or *arba kosot* on Pesach (see Responsa *Har Tzvi* OH 2:68). This is based on the *Gemara* in *Masechet*



Pesachim (102:b) where our Sages ruled that one may not use the same cup of wine for both *birkat hamazon* and *kiddush* since we don't perform more than one mitzvah on one object. Thus, if consuming *shemita* wine is a mitzvah, one may derive that one should not drink it for kiddush as two *mitzvot* would be performed with the same object. However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Shulchan Shlomo p.188) rules that it is permitted to use *shemita* wine for *kiddush*, *Havdalah* and the four cups of wine. He explains that the ruling regarding multiple *mitzvot* only applies when doing two different actions to fulfill two *mitzvot*. Regarding *shemita* wine for *kiddush* there is only one action – drinking. Thus, according to all opinions one may use *shemita* wine for *mitzvot* like *kiddush*.

The *Gemara* in *Brachot* (41:a) describes a dispute between *Rebi Yehuda* and *Chachamim* regarding the precedence of *brachot* with certain foods. *Shulchan Aruch* (OH 211:1-2) and *Mishnah Berura* (*Sha'ar Hatzion* 8) rule that if one has different types of fruit in front of him, fruit of the seven species (grapes, dates, olives, figs) take precedence over other fruit in regards to reciting a bracha and consumption. The question arises when someone has

the seven species, as well as other fruit (not of the seven species) that has *kedushat shevi'it*; which has precedence regarding the bracha? It would seem that according to the opinion that there is a positive mitzvah to consume *shemita* produce surely those fruits should be eaten first. However, according to those who maintain there is no mitzvah, there should be no difference between *shemita* fruit and regular fruit regarding precedence for the seven species. Rav Yehuda Amichai and Rav Dov Lior both explicitly write this practical application from the dispute, and rule that seven species have precedence over *shemita* fruit (*Emunat Itecha* p.45-48).

In Summary:

- According to most *poskim* there is no positive obligation to consume *shemita* produce.
- One may use *shemita* wine for *kiddush*, *havdalah* and the four cups of wine on seder night.
- For those who follow that tradition, one should not consume *shemita* produce that was stored under a bed
- When saying a *bracha* over several fruits, one should eat from the seven species first, even if there are other types of fruits that have *kedushat shevi'it*. ■



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Parshat *Va'etchanan* contains within it the bestowance of the second set of *luchot* of the *Aseret HaDibrot*. The first of the *Aseret HaDibrot*, of course instructs each of us:

Anochi HaShem Elokecha Asher Hotzeitcha M'Eretz Mitzrayim, M'Beit Avadaim - I am Hashem your G-d, who took you forth from the land of Egypt and the House of Servitude...

Many of our *meforshim* have asked why is it that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* chose to emphasize and describe Himself as the one who has redeemed the Jewish People from Egyptian Servitude, and not as the Creator of all existence? Why specifically is the redemption from slavery in Egypt the aspect of *Hashem's hashgacha* which is emphasized in the opening verse of the *Aseret HaDibrot*?

The Kedushat Levi, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, zy'a, explains that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* chose to emphasize that the *Torah HaKedosha* is given to *Am Yisrael* specifically after they have been redeemed from Egypt. *Hashem* chose to reiterate that had *Am Yisrael* been offered the *Torah* while still enslaved in Egypt, their acceptance of the *Torah* might have

been from a sense of feeling compelled to do so, that perhaps their departure from Egypt was somehow pre-conditioned upon their acceptance of the *Torah*. By bestowing the *Torah* now, after our departure from Egypt, and by emphasizing this fact in the first of the *Aseret HaDibrot*, *Hashem* intended to empower *Am Yisrael* to accept the *Torah* with love, as a sign of the love that *Hashem* feels toward *Am Yisrael*, and that we in turn feel toward *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

Hashem first took us forth from Egypt, explains *Reb Levi Yitzchak*, so that we could leave behind the mentality of the House of Servitude, in order to receive the *Torah* as a sign of the loving dynamic between the *Ribono Shel Olam* and the Jewish People. It is precisely this fundamental idea, explains the *Kedushat Levi*, that is introduced here in the first of the *Aseret HaDibrot*, to serve as an eternal reminder that indeed *Hashem* has given *Am Yisrael* the gift of the *Torah HaKedosha*, like a parent lovingly bestows gifts to each of their children.

Yehi Ratzon, may each of us internalize this beautiful message encrypted in the first of the *Aseret HaDibrot*. ■

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GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Etzion

How to Live Outside the Land of Israel

No human being who ever lived deserved entry into the Land of Israel more than Moshe. Decades earlier, he had stoked the imagination of dejected slaves by depicting a faraway promised Land. He endured forty maddening years of constant whining and shocking cowardice, watching an ungrateful nation spurn a divine invitation to the future. Watching his flock slowly decrease over four decades, he never abandoned hope of one day reaching his Land of hope and dreams. No one in history deserved passage to Israel more than he did, but, tragically, his dream was about to end.

In a heart-rending scene, this legendary leader ascends a mountain precipice to lovingly survey a territory which would forever

remain a “Land beyond reach”. Condemned by a crushing divine sentence, Moshe was buried in a nondescript mountain tomb, while his successor, Yehoshua, piloted our epic passage into the Land of history.

Facing this devastating punishment, Moshe petitions furiously for clemency. By one account, he bid five hundred prayers for reconsideration. The anatomy of our *shmoneh esrei* is structured upon the template of Moshe’s frantic prayers. The image of this great man, standing atop the cliffs of Moab, merely hoping to caress the stones of Israel, is one of the most heartrending scenes in Jewish history. No human is exempt from accountability before God, even the greatest to ever live.

A Final Argument

Moshe presents one final compelling argument. Throughout the desert years, he tirelessly hauled the bones of Yosef. During our frenzied departure from Egypt, the newly-emancipated slaves were too pre-occupied collecting Egyptian wealth to attend to Yosef’s



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casket. No one had the “bandwidth” to fulfill an ancient promise to a grandfather none had ever personally met. On that busy day of liberation, despite his massive workload, Moshe personally retrieved Yosef’s coffin. Moreover, during the forty-year desert odyssey, he personally towed this coffin, rather than delegating its maintenance to a porter. Despite the potential complications of becoming halachically impure, Moshe kept the bones of Yosef “on his person”, or, at very least, in his immediate vicinity.

Here lies Moshe’s final “prayer strategy”. Yosef’s bones were designated to be buried in Shechem, the city personally awarded his tribe by Ya’akov. Moshe begs for entry into Israel as the “pall bearer” of Yosef’s coffin. Even if he isn’t personally deserving, shouldn’t he be granted passage into Israel to bury the remains of Yosef which he had so lovingly supervised? If Yosef enters, why shouldn’t Moshe?

Identifying with Israel

Hashem’s rejection of this last-ditch plea is both striking and harsh. Though Yosef’s bones can pass, Moshe cannot. Yosef can enter since he “accredited” Israel or, as the midrash writes, הוודה בארצו. Moshe is blocked because his life wasn’t “Israel-calibrated” to the same degree as Yosef’s was. Though neither Yosef

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nor Moshe actually inhabited the Land -in Yosef's case he was absent from the Land his entire adult life- their relationship with the Land was vastly different. Neither settled the Land, but Yosef lived with greater Israel consciousness than Moshe did. For this reason, he entered, and Moshe did not.

At some point, both Moshe and Yosef faced similar questions about their Jewish or Israeli identity. Yosef, when falsely accused of crimes against his master's wife reports: "I was grabbed from the "house of the Jews" " accentuating that, though he is currently imprisoned in Egypt, his true alliances lie elsewhere. By contrast, Moshe is introduced to Yitro by his rescued daughters as an "Egyptian man". He doesn't dispute this designation, but accedes to being labeled as an Egyptian. Following Yosef's example, he should have insisted that, though his culture, language and dress appeared Egyptian, he belonged elsewhere – in the Land of the Jews. His deafening silence at this misidentification reflects diminished identification with Israel, disqualifying him from entry during his life and, even from burial after his death.

Living Israel from Afar

This contrast between Yosef's profound identification with Israel and Moshe's lesser devotion, provides an important model for the modern era. The doors of history have suddenly swung open, offering the long dreamed-for opportunity of a national return home. Yet, life is complex and many Jews, genuinely yearning for life in Israel, are wedged into situations comparable to Yosef and Moshe's condition. Each of these pioneers of history longed to be in Israel, but each played pivotal historical roles outside

the boundaries of our Homeland.

Geographical resettlement to Israel sometimes lies beyond our reach and beyond our best, but limited, human abilities. Though actual emigration to Israel may not always be attainable, emotional identification with Israel lies squarely within the reach of each Jewish imagination. Not every Jew merits treading upon the stones and sand which Yehuda Halevi sang about, however, every Jew possesses the ability to "belong" to their Homeland, even from afar.

Attitude and Actions

Affiliation with Israel from afar must be achieved both "attitudinally" as well as through active engagement. A Jew must embrace his current situation and advance whichever community they currently inhabit. Dreaming of a "different place" shouldn't dislodge a Jew from opportunities in, and responsibilities to their current locale. Though accepting a current "reality" is heroic, distilling that reality as "ideal" is historically myopic. It takes great emotional maturity to excel within a current "situation", while still acknowledging that condition as imperfect. Jews are always tasked with this "dual processing" regardless of where they live. Even Jews in Israel, embedded in their Homeland, are charged with appreciating our renewed State, while acknowledging the gap between our impressive achievements, and the more comprehensive but still elusive Messianic ideal. Likewise, a Jew who resides beyond Israel's borders must bifurcate: accept and improve current "homes", while passionately yearning for our ultimate Homeland.

Israel affiliation requires more than just longing for a more ideal life in Israel.

It demands that every Jew engage in the affairs and events of Israel, its culture and its struggle. Without question, it is 'easier' to identify with Israel during a national crisis, but sometimes, awareness and engagement in pedestrian day-to-day Israeli experience fashions a more natural and more holistic identification with our Land. Sensitivity to the "world of Israel" binds identity to that "other place", where we may not live, but to which we certainly belong.

It is deeply symbolic that, like Yosef, so many who never fully resided in Israel enjoy the benefit of burial in our country. If Jews aim to replicate Yosef after death, they should certainly aspire to reproduce his life of "Israel awareness". Some of us are afforded the privilege to live *in* Israel, while every Jew across the globe must endeavor to *live* Israel. ■

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Making Changes to Shabbat Clock on Shabbat

Question: May one make changes on Shabbat (and which ones?) to the settings on a Shabbat clock that is connected to electrical appliances?

Answer: The use of Shabbat clocks, even without making changes, used to be debated (see Yabia Omer III, Orach Chayim 18; Igrot Moshe, OC IV:60), but according to the consensus that we may, the question of how is important.

It is forbidden to adjust the clock so that it will change the on/off status of the connected appliance sooner than if it is left alone (Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (=SSK) 13:25). According to some (including Igrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah III:47.4) this is a full violation of Shabbat. Explanations include that it is because the Shabbat clock is built to operate appliances in this way or that the nature of some *melachot* makes them apply even for delayed or indirect results (see Orchos Shabbat 29:(25)). However, the consensus is that, considering mainly that nothing of note happens when the change is made, it is considered *gerama* (indirect causation) (Chazon

Ish, OC 38:2; SSK 13:(91)). The difference is not only in the severity of the violation (*gerama* is not even a full Rabbinic prohibition), but in the possibility of leniency in certain cases of need (*ibid.*) and other matters.

What if the adjustment delays the next electrical change? The Chazon Ish (*ibid.*) says that any adjustment to the settings violates the *melacha* of building. We do not commonly accept that approach even regarding connecting circuits, certainly here where there is no immediate change and this is normal use of a Shabbat clock (SSK 13:(88)). Igrot Moshe (*ibid.*) says that this too is a full *melacha* violation of what the appliance does. Rav S.Z. Auerbach (article in Hama'ayan (Pressburg), Elul 5714, p. 10) says that this clearly is not even *gerama* but merely delaying a change from occurring as soon as it would have. This is not obvious because one can view it not as a delay but of bypassing one opportunity for a change, to set up a new act of change sometime later. SSK (13:(90), as I understand it) deflects this by arguing that since cancelling the earlier change sets up the later change without new activation for the later time, this is only considered delaying the already planned change.

This leniency is less obvious regarding delaying the appliance's shutting off because one could argue that this is like adding wood to a fire (making it burn longer). SSK (*ibid.*) prefers comparing it to the permitted closing

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of a door to prevent wind from blowing out the flame. This is a logical perspective, especially if we view the home electricity flow as, effectively, a constant (unlike adding new wood).

The least problematic adjustment is to have the present state continue indefinitely. If it is on, it will not go off and vice versa. Yet, even that case must deal with the issue of *muktzeh*. After all, much of what the dials and prongs are used for is forbidden on Shabbat. Orchot Shabbat (29:(29)) says that it depends on the previous questions. If a lot of the usages on Shabbat are permitted (or even permitted in case of great need – SSK 23:(68)), it is not *muktzeh*. But Igrot Moshe (perhaps because he is *machmir* in most cases) and the Tzitz Eliezer (I:20:9) consider the Shabbat clock's parts as *muktzeh*. Why this makes it forbidden to move is unclear – if a Shabbat clock is a regular *kli shemelachto l'issur*, it should be permitted to move it in a useful manner. Perhaps in those days electric devices were more expensive and therefore *muktzeh machamat chisaron kis (=mmck)*, which is unlikely to be true today. Moving the prongs using a utensil might be permitted even for *mmck* (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 311:8) if moving to use the *muktzeh* is not considered acting for the *muktzeh* (Magen Avraham 279:9; see Orchot Shabbat 19:244).

In short, it is absolutely permitted to make the Shabbat clock not change the appliance

from its present state, at least if he adjusts it indirectly. Delaying the change in state is permitted according to most, and according to them, *muktzeh* is also apparently not a problem. ■

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RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Rav Soloveitchik on Rav Kook: A Story

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik would often discuss the distinct role of rabbis and teachers in Jewish life. In one particular talk he emphasized that in order to be an effective rabbi and teacher of Torah, it is essential that the student see the rabbi's 'religious tremor.' He elaborated on this notion by bemoaning the fact that in contemporary Jewish life the common layman often fails to encounter rabbinic personalities "who are swept off their feet by the storm of spirituality."

To elucidate his message Rav shared an unforgettable story that transpired during his only trip to Israel, in the summer of 1935. As part of his itinerary he made a visit to the *Kinneret* kibbutz in the north of the country. The Rav reminisced: "It was a very hot summer day. I was warmly welcomed to this well known socialist kibbutz. They were known for adhering closely to the principles of communism. When I arrived that morning the workers were hard at work in the orange groves.

They wished to offer me something to eat. They brought me fresh grapes that had recently been picked. I refused to eat the grapes knowing that they required the

tithing of *terumot* and *maasrot*. Undoubtedly these strictures were not being observed in a secular, anti-religious setting.

They asked me why I would not eat the grapes. I proceeded to explain to them that fruit grown in the Land of Israel is not kosher unless it has rabbinic supervision; there are complex and precise precepts regarding tithing and only then are fruits and vegetables acceptable for consumption. Those that had offered me the grapes responded: "No, dear rabbi, you don't understand, these grapes are kosher! A representative of the rabbinate comes regularly to our kibbutz to oversee this procedure. We strictly follow all the guidelines. We can assure you that even our kitchen is kosher."

I was bewildered. "How could it be?" said the Rav, "Why would this kibbutz maintain these restrictions?"

The members of the kibbutz shared the following incident that took place only a few years prior to the Rav's visit.

"Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook visited our kibbutz for Shabbat. He arrived on Friday afternoon. He brought with him *challot* and a bottle of wine for Shabbat. He knew that he would not be able to partake in the meals prepared in the kibbutz kitchen so he brought the basic food needed for his Shabbat meals.

He joined the members of the kibbutz in the dining room which was completely *treif*. Everyone around him was eating *treif* food.

He found a place at the same table with members of the *kibbutz*. He then recited the *kiddush* over the wine. He washed his hands and pronounced the blessing of *hamotzi* over the challah. He ate a modest meal. He then benched. During the meal and after, all around him, people were not observing the Shabbat; lights were turned on and turned off in his presence.

Rav Kook asked the residents if a group of men would like to gather for a minyan to pray on Shabbat morning. There was no interest, so Rav Kook davened himself.

The members of the kibbutz went out into the fields and worked Saturday morning. They assembled again in the dining room for lunch. Rav Kook once again sat down with them. He recited *kiddush*, washed his hands for *hamotzi*, and ate. The remainder of the afternoon the members of the kibbutz engaged in their regular activity: sewing, cooking etc. Rav Kook did not utter a word.

As night fell on the kibbutz, Rav Kook quietly made *havdalah* for himself. Later that night the members of the kibbutz gathered together, as they did weekly at this time, for communal singing and dancing. Rav Kook joined them. He even participated in a dance with the men. As the night drew to a close they inched closer together around Rav Kook. With his warmth and open heart he shared stories about his childhood, his



upbringing and about his parents.

No words of disapproval or criticism passed his lips at that time or at any moment over Shabbat.

As the sun rose on Sunday morning, Rav Kook prepared to depart. He packed his wagon for the journey ahead. As he readied

to say farewell, he was touched to see many kibbutzniks who gathered around him to say goodbye. Rav Kook gazed at the group and said these few words, “*Shalom, le’hitraot, ve’le’echol beyachad seudah echad*,” “Farewell and I hope that we will soon sit at a meal together.”

The next day all the dishes on the kibbutz were thrown out and the kitchen was made to be kosher. Rav Kook’s kindness and compassion had won over their hearts.

Rabbi Soloveitchik concluded telling this story by asking the following question: “What unique power did Rav Kook possess so that he was able to make such a powerful impression on others?” “I would answer simply,” said the Rav. “It was the power of his personality. He was intensely in love with Judaism. As the Rambam says, “One is to be in love with Judaism the same way a man is passionately in love with a woman.” (Rav Soloveitchik Recalls Rav Kook, YouTube, Jeffrey Woolf) ■

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Shema Yisrael: A Roadmap for Life

In this week's Parsha, we come across the first paragraph of the Shema. "Shema Yisrael" has become the clarion call of every believing Jew from time immemorial. But what must we "hear," internalize, understand and actualize?

In essence, these words that we utter twice (if not three or four times) daily draw us into recognizing the basic tenets of our Jewish faith.

We are to express our belief in what Rabbi Elie Munk describes as the Absolute Prime Spirit that incorporates the concept of Unity – "the unity of love and justice, spirit and matter, freedom and necessity, of the Infinite and the multitude of finite forces."

The Almighty appears to us as Hashem, the merciful father, and Elokim, the omnipotent majestic Master of Judgement. However, when we recite the Shema, we are to embody the notion that everything stems entirely from One Source, including the contradictions of joy and pain, life and death.

With that central motif in mind, we can better appreciate the directive to serve Hashem with every fiber of our being – heart, soul, and bodily assets. By so doing,

suggests Rav Munk, we lead a moral life that permeates all the diverse phases of our lives and being. Moreover, to the extent that we achieve that goal, our personalities will be forever integrated and harmonious.

Notably, there is a sequence to the application of these noble sentiments embedded in the three paragraphs of the Shema. First, through recognition and knowledge of the infinite God, love arises that expresses awareness that Hashem is the Source of all our blessings – dependent, of course, on our reciprocating His Chesed.

Then, we must continually review Hashem's teachings with our offspring and students. We are to surround ourselves with symbols awakening us to Hashem's Presence. And we are to observe God's commandments and appraise the path to follow so that we might better fulfill His will in this world.

The three paragraphs are addressed to the individual, the society, and the nation, reminding us that our responsibilities incorporate these three different but critically connected domains. Ultimately, whether as individuals or as a nation, our mission is to "be holy unto your God."

May we be worthy of living up to these ideals, applying all our faculties in the service of Hashem at all times and in every circumstance.

Shabbat Shalom. ■

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Dear OU Parenting,

When I go to a simcha I always see other families whose kids seem so much more put together, happy and on the right track. I love my kids and have a great family but what can I do with these feelings of jealousy? A.S.

**Michal Silverstein, MS****Dear A.S.,**

This is a great question which takes a lot of courage to ask. Throughout our childhood, we grow and learn through interactions with our peers and environment. Our peers are our point of reference. Are we smart? popular? Are we good at sports? By asking ourselves these questions we get to know who we are and form our identities. We grow within the context of our environment.

As we get older, we make our own decisions and build our own lives. Although the comparing doesn't stop, it no longer serves us. So, what can we do with these feelings of jealousy? First, recognize and acknowledge the feelings. Many people tend to justify their feelings or mask them which prevents growth. Once you acknowledge the feelings of disappointment it's important to accept the child that you have right now instead of the child that you want. It's important to see the child for who he is.

Feelings of guilt and anger will not change your child, but motivation and connection can!

Think about what you saw in the other family/ child that you wish you had. Maybe there's an aspect of the relationship that you wish you had. Let this be an opportunity to be inspired and take your relationship to the next level. Ask yourself how do I want to see my child or my relationship with my child and how could I get there? What are the steps that need to be taken to get there? As always, when you want a change to happen, parents must take the first step. Parents must set the tone to move in a new direction. You can say something like "I'd like us to be closer" and suggest taking steps to get there such as making time to do some fun activities together. You may wish your child had healthier habits or was more connected religiously. Whatever the lack is, think about ways to make the change. You can also think together with your child of ways to achieve this goal.

Something else to keep in mind is that you never know what happens behind closed doors. In other words, many times looks can be deceiving. Kids can act and look one way in public but can be challenging at home. Going down that road of comparisons can breed more animosity not only towards others but to your own family.

Although we live in a time of abundant information on parenting and growth, it's

still confusing. Parenting, one of the most important jobs we have, can be stressful and lead to insecurity and self-doubt. You are in good company! According to the Talmud, one is allowed to be jealous of another's Torah learning as a source of motivation and inspiration. In the same vein I suggest looking toward others for inspiration which can be your ticket to growth and change.

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 (Details will be changed to preserve anonymity).

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Damage To Trees And Fruit That Were Declared Hefker

Question

A few days ago I unlocked the gate, left a pair of cutters on the table, and announced to all the neighbors that the grapes are *hefker* and ready for picking. Now I see that someone accidentally cut a main branch. In light of this, can I try to repair the cut branch by rejoining both halves and wrapping tape around them?



Irreversible damage to the cane.
Photo: Dr. Yonah Alexandre Bronstein
Answer

After consulting with our agronomist, it will not help to tie together the branches

(called canes). It is possible, however, to spread antifungal cream to prevent the penetration of fungi. In any case, try to salvage as many grapes as you can from the surrounding area.

Yishar koach that you observe the *mitzvah* of *shemita* in the most *mehudar* way possible, and allow people to enter your yard and harvest on their own. **I want to call on anyone going into the yards of others to be exceedingly careful when harvesting to avoid harming their neighbors trees and vines. Only the fruits are ownerless, not the trees,** and no one has permission to damage the trees or vines during harvest. Such instances cause people to be concerned about keeping the *mitzvot* of *shemita* in their purest fashion. ■

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THAT'S VERY SWEET OF YOU, KID, TO TRYING TO CHEER ME UP, BUT EVEN ENCOURAGING ME TO THINK ABOUT MY GAMING CONSOLE WON'T HELP ME HERE...

NOT AS IN GAMING CONSOLE, DUDE, AS IN CONSOLATION...



YES, IT'S DEVASTATING. SO MUCH SO THAT QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY, PEOPLE FEEL THERE'LL NEVER BE ANY RECOVERY FROM THIS.

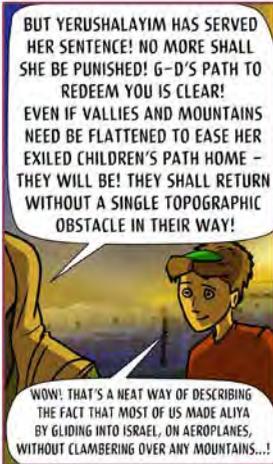
THE GREAT "WORLD POWERS" OF THE NATIONS RULE EVERYWHERE AND TRAMPLE ALL OVER US CEASELESSLY - HOW COULD THERE POSSIBLY BE HOPE?



YEAH, THAT TOO, KID... YOUR VOICE SOUNDS FUNNY, BY THE WAY, IS IT BREAKING WITH EMOTION, TOO...?

IT'S NOT ME, DUDE, IT'S YISHAYAHU...!

SURE YOU ARE, KID, AND I'M PRINCESS DIANA...



BUT YERUSHALAYIM HAS SERVED HER SENTENCE! NO MORE SHALL SHE BE PUNISHED! G-D'S PATH TO REDEEM YOU IS CLEAR! EVEN IF VALLIES AND MOUNTAINS NEED BE FLATTENED TO EASE HER EXILED CHILDREN'S PATH HOME - THEY WILL BE! THEY SHALL RETURN WITHOUT A SINGLE TOPOGRAPHIC OBSTACLE IN THEIR WAY!

WOW! THAT'S A NEAT WAY OF DESCRIBING THE FACT THAT MOST OF US MADE ALIYA BY GLIDING INTO ISRAEL, ON AEROPLANES, WITHOUT CLAMBERING OVER ANY MOUNTAINS...!



THAT'S... THAT'S ENCOURAGING, KID, GO ON...

IT'S NOT ME, IT'S...

AND WHEN IT COMES - IT'LL BE WITH PRIDE AND GLORY! NO MORE SLINKING AROUND IN THE SHADOWS IN FEAR -

GO ON, CLIMB THE HIGHEST MOUNTAINS AND RAISE YOUR VOICES! SHOUT OUT FOR ALL TO HEAR: "THIS IS YOUR REDEMPTION, YERUSHALAYIM!"



BUT... BUT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY! THE... OPPOSING "WORLD POWERS"...? THEY'LL NEVER ALLOW...

HA! DID THEY CREATE HEAVEN AND EARTH?! DID THEY ADVISE G-D HOW TO FASHION THE WORLD?! THIS IS G-D WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! WHO COULD POSSIBLY STAND IN HIS WAY?!



Y'KNOW WHAT, KID? YOU'RE ALRIGHT, YOU ARE! I KNOW I GO ON A LOT ABOUT HOW YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A SOUR-FACED SCHOOL-PUP, WHO HAS THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF A PICKLED PIRANHA...

DUDE! CUT! QUIT WHILE YOU'RE...

BUT - MAN - YOU DO KNOW HOW TO SAY SOME GOOD STUFF EVERY NOW AND THEN...



WELL, I THINK I'VE GOT MY HOPE AND POWER OF SPEECH BACK, THANKS TO...!

ERM... HI.

WAIT A MINUTE... ... IF YOU'RE OVER THERE, THEN WHO...?



OH, THE SHAME! I... I'M SPEECHLESS!!

HERE WE GO AGAIN...

CONSOLE, CONSOLE, MY PEOPLE...



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Lior Cohen Raanana Chapter Director **The Power of Mortality**

As we move further into the last book of the Torah, we have a spotlight on Moshe Rabeinu. To Jews and non-Jews alike the name Moshe or Moses is easily recognizable, and most will know that he is the one responsible for leading the Israelites in the desert and ascending to heaven in order to receive the tablets (luchot) with the 10 commandments. Stories like these, along with others, give reason to the greatness of Moshe. This praise and reverence are well deserved, yet all of this might make us believe that these accomplishments are feats of superhuman traits which people like Moshe along with others described in the Torah, possessed. If our patriarchs, matriarchs, Moshe, and others, are more than human, can we as mortals reach their level?

Va'etchanan opens with a very human story where Moshe pleads with God to allow him entrance into Israel. We are taught by our sages that this prayer was repeated over 500 times and yet Moshe was told that he will leave the nation



and the world without stepping foot in the Land. In the Talmud (Shabbat 88b) we are told of an event which went on in heaven where Moshe debated with angels as to why humans should have the Torah because of their imperfections. Not only did Moshe win this debate but the angels had no response. While this is just one of the unfathomable stories told of Moshe, we still are able to see his human side in stories throughout the Torah.

In no way should the “more human” stories take away from the greatness of Moshe’s name. These perspectives should instead add to our perception. Moshe reached these heights not by starting on a level already higher than everyone else, rather he was a human who had to work to achieve greatness just like the rest of us. He shared the handicaps of humanity but did not let them stop him from working to be the best he could. We must realize that the same is true for ourselves. If we push ourselves and enlighten ourselves with the values in the Torah then we too can reach great heights.



Eliezer Kupietzky 12th Grade (Graduate), Raanana

Our parsha starts off with Moshe begging G-d for forgiveness to let him into the land: ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההיא לאמר. As we know there is a big emphasis in Judaism on Chazara B'tshuva, our ability to ask

for forgiveness and repent. G-d is very forgiving and wants us to always repent for our sins even if we are about to die. So why in Moshe's case where he sinned only one time in his whole life, does G-d not forgive him and denies him the chance to enter the Land of Israel?

To further understand this, we need to understand the real sin that Moshe committed. The Meforshim say that Moshe's real sin was not about ignoring G-d's command to speak with the rock, as G-d forgave him for that. It was his act of yelling at the Israelites and expecting more from them instead of trying to reason with them and use the opportunity to teach them.

As Bna'i Yisrael are entering the land, they no longer need a leader who is a bridge between them and G-d. They now need a leader who is with them and can be with them during their adjustment to the Land and the new laws. Moshe was a great leader in Egypt and in the desert because he was able to talk to G-d and be the bridge between the people and the Almighty. As the people now move to live in the Land, perhaps Moshe's methods and skills are no longer required as G-d is taking a less visible role (for example, no longer performing גלויים). The Israelites now need

a hands-on leader like Yehoshua whom they can better relate to; who is on a level closer to them unlike Moshe who was able to talk to G-d on demand.

We learn a lesson from the thought above regarding how important it is for us to understand how to relate to one another. We need to reason with each other before yelling and fighting. This is particularly relevant as we just passed Tish'a b'av where we commemorate the destruction of the Temple that was caused by שנאת חיים. Our hope is we have learned this lesson and may we all strive to understand one another. Shabbat Shalom ■

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