

# Torah Tidbits

כ"ט אייר תשפ"ג 23' 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 1516 ISSUE

**פרשת במדבר**

PARSHAT BAMIDBAR - SHABBAT MEVARCHIM  
AVOT CHAPTER 6

OU  
ישראל

**וידבר ה'  
אל-משה  
במדבר סיני  
במדבר א:א**



**Who Moves First?**  
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin  
Faculty, OU Israel  
Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Ahavath Torah, NJ  
page 18



**Parenting Our Adult-Children**  
OU Israel Parenting Column  
Dr. Ethan Eisen  
page 72

**YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT BAMIDBAR**

**CANDLES 6:56PM • EARLIEST 6:05PM • HAVDALA 8:13PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:50PM**



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## HELPFUL REMINDERS

### *Shabbat Mevarchim*



מולד חודש סיון היה בליל שבת קודש חמישים ושנים דקות וארבעה עשר חלקים אחרי שנים בבקר  
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Rosh Chodesh Sivan is on Sunday May 21

### *Kiddush Levana*



Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad **4 Sivan/Tues. night May 23**

7 Days After Molad **8 Sivan/ Sat. night May 27**

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until **15 Sivan/ Sat. night June 3 until 9:52 pm**

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	EARLY	BAMIDBAR	HAVDALA	NASO		
				Candles	Early	Havdala
6:56	6:05	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	8:13	7:01	6:08	8:18
7:13	6:07	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	8:15	7:17	6:11	8:20
7:14	6:06	Beit Shemesh / RBS	8:14	7:19	6:09	8:19
7:11	6:05	Gush Etzion	8:13	7:16	6:09	8:18
7:13	6:07	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	8:16	7:18	6:11	8:21
7:12	6:06	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	8:14	7:17	6:10	8:19
7:14	6:07	Netanya	8:16	7:18	6:11	8:21
7:12	6:06	Be'er Sheva	8:14	7:16	6:09	8:19
7:13	6:07	Rehovot	8:15	7:17	6:10	8:20
6:56	6:07	Petach Tikva	8:15	7:01	6:10	8:21
7:12	6:06	Ginot Shomron	8:12	7:17	6:10	8:20
7:04	6:08	Haifa / Zichron	8:17	7:09	6:11	8:22
7:11	6:05	Gush Shiloh	8:14	7:16	6:09	8:19
7:13	6:07	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:16	7:18	6:11	8:21
7:16	6:05	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:14	7:20	6:09	8:19
7:11	6:05	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	8:13	7:15	6:09	8:18
7:13	6:07	Ashkelon	8:16	7:18	6:11	8:21
7:13	6:06	Yad Binyamin	8:15	7:17	6:10	8:20
7:08	6:05	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	8:15	7:13	6:09	8:21
7:11	6:05	Golan	8:14	7:16	6:09	8:19

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:50PM** • next week - 8:54pm

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

**Daf Yomi this Shabbat: Gittin 4**



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## JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat**  
**May 17-27 / 26 Iyar - 7 Sivan**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>4:45 - 4:38</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:42 - 5:37</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:08 - 9:06</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:27 - 8:24</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:17 - 10:16</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:35 - 12:36</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:10 - 1:11</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>6:03 - 6:08</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:35 - 7:41</b>



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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

**RABBI AVI BERMAN**

Executive Director, OU Israel



When you ask the average visitor what sites they've seen in Israel, they'll likely reference a list that includes the *Kotel*, *Masada*, *Ir David*, *Kever Rachel* and perhaps even *Mearat HaMachpela*. Local Israelis will likely echo these sites and add their hometowns, areas they were stationed during their national service, and national hiking trails. Although these sites tell a story of our national history, I find there is something lacking in the breadth of experiences people have in Israel.

Simply walking through the streets of *Eretz Yisrael* can provide us with unique experiences. Whether it be experiencing the culture of the area, noticing the religious practices of the community, or the spices which hint to the origins of the residents. While many of us might feel acquainted with neighborhoods *Yerushalayim*, *Bnei Brak*, *Tel Aviv-Yafo*, *Be'er Sheva*, *Netanya* and *Rishon LeZion*, there is so much more we can uncover - especially from areas that serve as home

to low-income families.

I have been *zoche* to spend time in neighborhoods like *Dimona's Yosef Tal*, *Sderot's Nir Am*, *Ofakim's Mishor Hagefen*, and *Kiryat Gat's Shechunat HaTmarim*. Many of these areas are home to families who originate from countries in the Middle East and made *aliyah* over 60 years ago. These neighborhoods, which are off the beaten track, are often associated with low socioeconomic populations that typically suffer from a cycle of poverty.

It is in these very areas that I encounter

people who embody what *hakarot hatov* means. Despite hardships, families in these areas raise their children with tremendous gratitude for what they have - from the clothing they are given, to the education they are provided, to the privilege to call this Holy Land home.

I look for opportunities to bring visitors to these cities for two reasons - first they see a side

of Israel that is most likely unfamiliar to them. They also are given the opportunity to see OU Israel's Jack E. Gindi Oraita Youth Centers in action.

The Jack E. Gindi Oraita Program inspires youth in Israel's periphery to become the



OU EVP Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph with kids  
in our Kiryat Gat Youth Center

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next generation of young leaders. With programs geared toward Israeli pre-teens and teens from 6th grade through high school and beyond. The club supports youth who are exposed to street culture. It provides them with a safe place and a stepping stone towards independent living. Oraita clubs are run by counselors who are mentors and role models. For many participants, Oraita is the only place they can turn to for emotional support and guidance through the transition into adulthood. They help youth construct a positive self-identity, create and improve various life-skills, enabling their participation in Israeli society and ensuring their upward socio-economic mobility.

Teens who have experienced this program are given the tools to break the cycles of poverty in their communities, hone skill sets that can help them gain financial stability, regain their footing in school and embark on healthier journeys that position them to contribute to the needs of their families and broader citizens of the State of Israel.

The past few weeks have been fraught with worry for the welfare of *Am Yisrael*



The OU Israel family extends deepfelt condolences to Mrs. Chana Greenblatt and family on the passing of her husband

**Rabbi Matis Greenblatt z"l**

literary editor emeritus  
and founding editor of Jewish Action

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living in *Eretz Yisrael*. By the time you read this week's Torah Tidbits I hope our beautiful Homeland is at peace. It was during the last few weeks that I was reminded how impactful encounters with these communities can be. As missiles fell around the country, I was bombarded with messages from people who joined me on visits to these neighborhoods, asking about the welfare of the families they met.

*"Avi, how is Moshe and his family doing?"*

*"Avi, I'm calling to find out how Ma'ayan is doing with the rockets... Please tell me she's okay and send her our love."*

*"Avi, my Tzeva Adom app keeps alerting me to rockets in Sderot. Is the Cohen family doing alright? Anything we can do to help?"*

One person texted me saying that with the rockets hitting the South of Israel, they changed their phone's background to a photo they took in *Dimona* during one of our visits, as a reminder of who it is he must daven for. He told me he would only change his background once the war ceases.

Times of tragedy and fear unify *Am Yisrael* regardless of political, religious or socioeconomic differences. I have no doubt that the *tefillot* of *Klal Yisrael* from around the world have protected us from

the thousands of missiles that have been aimed at our brethren. We must not forget to show *hakarat hatov* to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for our safety, the *Kipat Barzel* (Iron Dome) for its protection and to our brave soldiers for remaining vigilant in safeguarding our home.

On the theme of *HaKarat HaTov*, I know I will have a lot to say in next week's Torah Tidbits following our *Yom Yerushalayim Tefila Chagigit* taking place on the *Tayelet* on *erev Shabbat*. In advance, I thank all those who plan to join the event, lending your voices to making our *tefila* complete. May we continue to unite with one another and feel the presence of *HaShem*.

If you would like to join OU Israel on one of our trips to see communities around the country and find ways to support the needs of those in need, please be in touch. You can also find a schedule of OU Israel's upcoming *tiyulim* on our website [www.ouisrael.org](http://www.ouisrael.org).

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)

לעילוי נשמות

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Baer** ז"ל

on his fifteenth *yahrzeit* - 2 Iyar  
and

**Rebbetzin Hannah Baer** א"ה

on her second *yahrzeit* - 29 Iyar

צדקתם עומדת לעד

May the Torah learning this week  
be in loving memory of our mother

**Ann Silverberg** א"ה

חנה בת חיים ע"ה

on her 21st *Yartzheit* - 25 Iyar

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## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

# More Than Turning a Page

Another spring season, another round of hostilities and missile storms unsettling the lives of millions of our brothers and sisters in Israel.

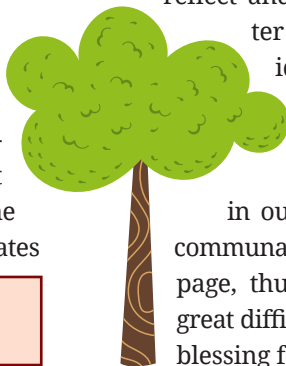
The Talmud notes that there are two sections in the Torah known as *tochacha*, each containing a litany of dire warnings. Both are read at significant points in the calendar, one – *Parshas Ki Savo* – shortly before Rosh Hashana, and the other – *Parshas Bechukosai* – shortly before Shavuot. The placement in the calendar implies the hope – expressed beautifully in the Talmud – that *תכלה שנה וקללותיה תחל שנה וברכותיה*, may the old year end with its curses and the new year begin with its blessings. The Talmud itself notes how Rosh Hashana is obviously a new year, while Shavuot serves more modestly as the new year for trees.

Beyond the trees, Shavuot has a fundamental similarity to Rosh Hashana. The task of the high holiday season is *Teshuva*, which has as a central component *kabbalah al ha'asid*, a commitment to fulfill G-d's will more completely in the future. Shavuot similarly commemorates

the moment when the Jewish people made the ultimate *kabbalah al ha'asid*, undertaking to fulfill all of Hashem's commandments by accepting the Torah.

This common theme of Rosh Hashana and Shavuot highlights the critical ingredient in producing a genuine turning point. A new year is not just about turning a page in the calendar. That would certainly not be meaningful enough to allow us to end and move on from the difficult chapter of the preceding year. Renewal – a truly new and different year – comes with reflection, commitment, and change that can be stimulated by even the virtual experience of reading of the difficulties chronicled in the Torah. We can likewise use the voice of current events, of real life, as a contributing factor to such reflection and to true commitment and change.

As we move towards Shavuot with all the difficult experiences of this past year, month, and week, let us take a chance to reflect and to commit, to do better and to be better, to identify the gems and the perspective that these challenges have granted us – whether in our personal, familial, or communal lives – and truly turn a page, thus closing a chapter of great difficulty and gaining a new blessing for a new year. ■



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- מתן שיעור ומידע לעובדים בתחומי פרט שונים
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- תכנית תוכנית רב שנתית של צרכי משאבי אנוש - הדרכה, פיתוח ארגוני, רווחה
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### דרישות:

- ניסיון של 5 שנים לפחות בתפקיד מנהל/ת משאבי אנוש בארגון המונה למעלה ממאה עובדים - חובה
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- ניסיון מוכח בעבודה מול ועדי עובדים, הסתדרות עובדים - יתרון
- ידע רב בדיני עבודה
- הכרות עם מערכות משאבי אנוש ומערכות שכר ממוחשבות
- יכולת לעבוד בשיתוף פעולה, כמו גם באופן עצמאי, כולל יכולת מוכחת ליצירת שותפויות חזקות עם בעלי עניין
- יכולת קליטה מהירה
- יכולת עבודה בתנאי לחץ
- תודעת שירות גבוהה
- יחסי אנוש ותקשורת בינאישית גבוהה - חובה
- יכולת ביטוי גבוהה - בכתב ובע"פ
- כושר שיווק, אסטרטגיות - חובה
- יכולת גבוהה לביצוע מסי משמעות במקביל - חובה
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# BAMIDBAR



## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



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



### **1st aliya (Bamidbar 1:1-19)**

On Rosh Chodesh Iyar of the second year since leaving Egypt, Moshe and Aharon are to take a census of all men over the age of 20. The leaders of each tribe are to assist. These leaders are named. Moshe, Aharon and the leaders gather the people who establish to which tribe each person belongs.

Sefer Bamidbar is the march to the Land of Israel. The Promise of the Land was made to Avraham. And Yitzchak. And Yaa-kov. And to Moshe at the burning bush. Moshe was told at the burning bush that G-d would take the people out of Egypt because of the promise He made. To give them the Land of Israel. That has been the goal from the time of Avraham.

Now we know that it is going to take 40 years to get there. But we need to read the Torah trying hard to stay in real time as the story unfolds. And as the story is unfolding,

we are marching to the Land, maybe a month away.

Bamidbar is the dawn of the march to the Land. But the march itself, the imminent establishment of a Jewish nation in the Land, well, sometimes the dream is easier than the reality. What type of society? Can we truly conquer the Land? What are we to encounter there? Uncertainty. Concern. Skepticism.

The census of the people addresses these unspoken concerns. It conveys a crucial message.

You are to settle the Land. But Jewish society in the Jewish nation is not merely a political enterprise. It is overlaid with an intimate connection to Me. I, G-d says, will dwell in Your midst. Settling the Land is to live near Me, proximate to Me. The census and description of travel is this very message: you are a great nation with the Shechina as its center.



### **2nd aliya (1:20-54)**

The census, by tribe, of all men over the age of 20, the age of army service is presented. The tribe of Reuven: 46,500. Shimon: 59,300. Gad: 46,500. Yehuda: 74,600. Yissachar: 54,400. Zevulun: 57,400. Ephraim: 40,500. Menashe: 32,200. Bin-yamin: 35,400. Dan: 62,700. Asher: 41,500. Naftali: 53,400. The total of this census done by Moshe and Aharon and the 12 leaders of the tribes was 603,550. However, the tribe of Levi is not included. They are to safeguard the Mishkan: camping around the Mishkan, transporting it, dismantling and assembling it. The tribes camp in distinct groups, while the Leviim encamp around the Mishkan.

This is the accountants parsha. Lots of

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numbers. While there were 12 sons of Yaakov, Levi is not a part of this census. That leaves 11 tribes. There is no tribe of Yosef; his 2 sons, Ephraim and Menashe take their place alongside their uncles as full tribes. Hence, 12 tribes even without Levi.

While this book is called Bamidbar, in the desert, in English it is called Numbers. Apt. Somewhat. But I like the Talmud's appellation: Pekudim. Pekudim can have a double meaning: numbers. Or function, task. As in modern Hebrew, Pakid, the person with the designated job. The count and the numbers is preparation for the armed march into Israel. All have a role to play.

But the accountants will notice that the tribes vary significantly in size. They all started out at the same time, sons of Yaakov. This is a hint at the prominent theme of differences. The tribes are different in name. In size. Later we will see, in encampment. While marching to the same destination, the Jewish people will always enjoy variation. Managing the variation is one of the themes of this book.



**3rd aliya (2:1-34)** The tribes are to camp in a designated manner. For each of the tribes the name of their Nasi, the number of their tribe and the place in the formation is given. On the east side, the front, is Yehuda, Yissachar and Zevulun. Their combined number is 186,400. On the south side is Reuven, Shimon and Gad. Their combined number is 151,450. The Ohel Moed, surrounded by Levi, both camps and travels in the middle. On the west side is Ephraim, Menashe and Binyamin. Their combined number is 108,100. On the north side is Dan, Asher and Naftali. Their combined

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number is 157,600. The total count of the army age men is 603,550 without the tribe of Levi.

The people travel and camp with the Mishkan in their midst. Physically and metaphorically. We travel our history with G-d in our midst. While the distinct feeling you get in the detailed description of where each tribe encamped is the feeling of an army encampment, there is another layer of meaning. Yes, regimented. Specific. Detailed. Organized. But an army for which purpose? To fight the anticipated foes in the Land of Israel? Or to be the army of Hashem? A fighting army with its G-d in its midst? Or both?



**4th aliya (3:1-13)** Aharon's sons' names were Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar.

Nadav and Avihu died without children. Elazar and Itamar serve as Kohanim with Aharon. Take the Leviim: they are to serve Aharon. The Leviim are responsible for the Mishkan: to support the Kohanim and the people, to facilitate the running of the Mishkan. The Leviim shall take the place of the first-born, who became obligated to me when saved in Egypt.

There are 2 groups mentioned here: Kohanim and Leviim. The lineage of the Kohanim is given. It just doesn't take much room. Because Aharon is a Kohen and his sons. But he only has 2. So the entire lineage of the Kohanim is 3 people. The Leviim, on the other hand, are an entire tribe,

descendants of Levi, son of Yaakov. Their lineage, at quite some length, is given in the next aliya.



**5th aliya (3:14-39)** Count the tribe of Levi by households, from 1 month and older: the households of Gershon, Kehat and Merari, the sons of Levi. The sons of Gershon, Kehat and Merari are listed. Gershon's family, from a month and above, is 7,500. They camp to the west of the Mishkan. Their task was to transport and be responsible for the curtains and coverings. Kehat numbered 8,600, camping to the south. They were responsible for the vessels: Aron, Menorah, Table, altars. Merari numbered 6,200, camping to the north. Responsible for the structure of the Mishkan; the walls, supports and beams. The total of the tribe of Levi is 22,000. On the front side, the east of the Mishkan, Moshe and Aharon and families camped.

The encampment around the Mishkan had 2 layers. The Leviim were in close, on 3 of the 4 sides of the Mishkan. The 4th side, the leading side, had Moshe and Aharon. The entire 12 tribes were farther removed on all 4 sides.

The 3 sons of Levi were family groups; Gershon, Kehat and Merari. They had full responsibility for the Mishkan. Their tasks fell in categories. Gershon; textiles. Kehat; furniture. Merari; building. Gershon took care of the curtains and coverings. Kehat, the important main vessels of the Mishkan. And Merari the structure of the building.



**6th aliya (3:40-51)** Count all the firstborn of the age of a month and above. The Leviim are to replace the firstborn. There were 273 more

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firstborn than Leviim; these were redeemed.

The previous aliya, continuing here, assumes that the firstborn will be dedicated public servants because they were spared in the plague of the firstborn. This is a theme of reciprocity: God says, I saved you, you serve Me. The showering of good upon us demands reciprocity – we become indebted to G-d. The notion that the firstborn shall be the public servants has great appeal; every home becomes infused with public service by virtue of the firstborn dedicated to holy work. But, as appealing as that is, it is not implemented. The firstborn are switched off for the Leviim. Perhaps because it would be an inequitable burden. The poor families rely on their firstborn to work, to be the first to contribute to the family wellbeing. The replacement of the firstborn by the Leviim may be recognition of the inequity that would inevitably result in requiring the firstborn of every family to leave their home for public service.



**7th aliya (4:1-20)** Take from Kehat all men from the age of 30 to 50 to do their work of the

holy of holies. But since Kehat was to carry the vessels of the Mishkan, Aharon and his sons covered each vessel, to prevent Kehat from touching them. The Aron was covered by: the parochet (curtain), then leather, then techelet covering. The shulchan: techelet, then the extra utensils, then red, then the tachash skin. Menorah: techelet, then tachash. Incense altar: techelet, then tachash. Outer altar: purple, then tachash. In this way, calamity will not befall Kehat in transporting the holy things.

There are 3 different age surveys. The



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tribes are surveyed to count all males above 20. For army service. The Leviim were surveyed to count all males above 1 month. For they assume Levi status pretty much from birth. And here, the Leviim who will actually do public service are those from age 30-50. Though their service in our parsha is to transport the Mishkan, their service in the Temple will be as musicians. Later the Torah will say the Leviim begin public service at age 25. The Talmud resolves this: it takes 5 years of training, from 25-30. Then they can play the music in the Temple or sing. 5 years of musical training; the music of the Temple must have been quite sophisticated. ■

## HAFTARAH

### 1 SHMUEL 20: 18-42

Today's *haftarah* is read on a Shabbat that is immediately followed by Rosh Chodesh. Indeed, the reading opens with the words, "Yonatan said, 'Tomorrow is the [first of the] new month.'"

The story is one of loyalty and devotion. David and Yonatan are dear friends.

Yonatan's father, King Shaul, despises David, fearing that he will depose him from the throne. Sensing danger, Yonatan told David to hide in the field rather than attend Shaul's Rosh Chodesh feast. Yonatan then attended the feast and gauged the king's mood. Realizing that Shaul was determined to kill David, Jonathan went out to the field, shot three arrows and called to his assistant, "The arrow is beyond you," a predetermined signal to his friend that it was not safe to return to the king's palace.

Before parting, the two friends kissed and wept, and swore to maintain their mutual affection for generations to come. ■



## STATS

34th sedra of 54; first of 10 in Bamidbar  
Written on 263 lines, ranks 3rd  
30 parshiyot; 23 open, 7 closed, 4th  
159 p'sukim - rank 3 (3rd in Bamidbar)  
1823 words - rank 13 (4th in Bamidbar)  
7393 letters - rank 9 (3rd in Bamidbar)



## MITZVOT

None of Taryag in Bamidbar - it is the largest of the 17 sedras without mitzvot

## A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES

Rav, BeIt Knesset BeIt Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

מטה זבולון... (ז:ב)

"The tribe of Zevulun..." (2:9)

Each tribe is mentioned together with its population and the name of its prince.

Yet, by all other tribes, the Torah begins, "AND as for the tribe of ..... Why, specifically by Zevulun, is there an exception to this rule? Why by the tribe of Zevulun does the text omit the letter "Vav" and simply begin "The tribe of Zevulun..."?

The Baal Haturim (Rabbi Yaakov Ben Asher 1269-1343) answers that the tribe of Zevulun was known as businessmen who supported the tribe of Yissachar in their pursuit of Torah study. The Torah seems to be emphasizing that the tribe of Zevulun were not considered secondary to Yissachar. Rather, by omitting the letter "Vav", we are being taught that Zevulun were an independent entity within Israel and not dependent upon their connection or relationship to any other tribe. Shabbat Shalom



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# MIDEI CHODESH B'CHODSHO

BY RABBI SHMUEL GOLDIN

Faculty, OU Israel

Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Ahavath  
Torah, Englewood NJ

## Who Moves First?

On Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the Israelites arrive at the Wilderness of Sinai, as the stage is set for Revelation, the event that will launch the Jewish Nation's mission to the world.

The Torah testifies that on the next day, the second day of Sivan...

*"Moshe ascended to God, and HaShem called to him from the mountain saying:"*

How strange! The text seems to "have it backwards!"

One would assume that God's call to Moshe would precede this great leader's ascent of the mountain.

Why is the order reversed? Why does the Torah specifically indicate that Moshe climbs Mount Sinai before HaShem commands him to do so?

And, once Moshe ascends the mountain, why is it still necessary for God to "call to him?"

In the face of these obvious questions, a number of classical commentators,

including the Ibn Ezra and the Bechor Shor, maintain that the order of events in the text is not to be understood as first appears. These scholars argue that the phrase "and HaShem called to him from the mountain" actually informs us that HaShem had already called to Moshe before he ascended. Absent that divine summons, Moshe "would never have ascended without permission."<sup>1</sup>

The Ramban emphatically disagrees. Mirroring a timetable postulated by Rabbi Akiva centuries earlier,<sup>2</sup> this scholar argues that the cloud of HaShem's presence descends upon Mount Sinai on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, simultaneous with the arrival of the Israelites. The cloud remains in place throughout the process of revelation.

Moshe ascends the mountain on the next day, but only up to the edge of the cloud. God then "calls to Moshe" from the cloud, delivering a series of powerful messages that follow.<sup>3</sup>

For his part, Rav Ovadia

Even Moshe,  
the Sforno explains,  
had to prepare  
himself for a  
rendezvous with  
God. The prevalent  
expectation that,  
upon entering a  
synagogue or  
house of study,  
spirituality can be  
achieved at will  
is unreasonable

1 Shmot 19:3 Ibn Ezra; Bechor Shor

2 Talmud Bavli Yoma 4a-b

3 Ramban Shmot 19:3

Sforno, sees the text as underscoring the dramatic difference between the actions of the Israelites and the actions of Moshe upon their joint arrival at Sinai.

“The Israelites turned their attention to the business of encampment and its needs,” the Sforno relates, “and Moshe ascended and prepared himself for prophecy.”<sup>4</sup>

While not directly addressing our questions, the Sforno does seem to view Moshe’s ascent as self-motivated, without a prior invitation from HaShem.

The terse description offered by the Sforno highlights the often-lonely journey of the communal leader dedicated to the welfare of his “flock.” While the Israelites busy themselves with the shared task of setting up their camp, Moshe separates himself, and begins his solitary journey up Mount Sinai.

Also emphasized in the Sforno’s comments is the role that mental preparation plays in the pursuit of spirituality. Even Moshe, the Sforno explains, had to prepare himself for a rendezvous with God. The prevalent expectation that, upon entering a synagogue or house of study, spirituality can be achieved at will is unreasonable. The quest for spirituality is hard work.

4 Sforno, Shmot 19:3

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Reflecting this truth, the Mishna relates, “The early generations of pious men would wait one hour [before prayer, during which time they would focus their minds] and then pray, in order to properly direct their hearts towards their father in heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

A final, global approach to our questions can be suggested by considering an over-all pattern in the Torah text. *Repeatedly, at pivotal moments in Moshe’s life, initiative is taken, with striking results.*

To cite a few examples:

Moshe’s birth is heralded by an enigmatic statement describing his parents (re)union: *Vayeilech ish mi’beit Levi, va’yikach et bat Levi* “And a man went from the House of Levi and he took a daughter of Levi.

Moshe’s journey to leadership is launched when, leaving the safety of Pharaoh’s home, “...he went out to his brethren and witnessed their burdens...”

Shepherding his father-in-law’s flocks, Moshe notices the burning bush and determines, “I will turn aside now to look upon this great sight...”

God begins to speak to Moshe from the bush, only after noting “that he (Moshe) had turned aside to see...”

Descending Mount Sinai with the first set of stone tablets, Moshe witnesses the Israelites’ worship of the Golden Calf and shatters the tablets at the foot of the Mountain. The Talmud maintains that God subsequently congratulates Moshe for taking this dramatic step of his own volition.<sup>6</sup>

Moshe repeatedly steps forward to pray on behalf of the Israelites when they are

threatened by God with punishment.

The last day of Moshe’s life features the enigmatic phrase *Va’yeylech Moshe* “And Moshe went...” without a clearly defined objective.

Moshe’s life thus comes full circle from *Va’yeylech ish*, heralding his birth; to *Va’yeylech Moshe*, foreshadowing his death.

In a life enclosed by the term *Va’yeylech*, “and he went,” Moshe rises again and again to action without being bidden to do so.

Is it any surprise, therefore, that upon arriving at the foot of Mount Sinai, this great leader might ascend the mountain without waiting to be asked?

And, could it be that *HaShem deliberately waits to speak to Moshe-until after Moshe ascends the mountain of his own accord?*

If so, the overall message repeatedly emerging from the text is clear...

How different would our world be, had Moshe not exited Pharaoh’s palace to witness the suffering of his brothers? Where would we be today, if Moshe had not turned aside to view the burning bush? Would the Israelites ever have moved past the sin of the golden calf, if Moshe had not shattered the Tablets?

And... would we still be waiting at the foot of Sinai for the word of God, had Moshe not ascended the Mountain of his own accord?

Using Moshe’s life as the paradigm, the Torah conveys an overarching lesson, once again, as Revelation begins: *God waits for us to take the first step, and then responds to our initiative.* ■

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

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5 Mishna Berachot 5:1

6 Talmud Bavli Shabbat 87a



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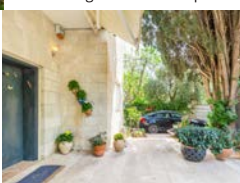
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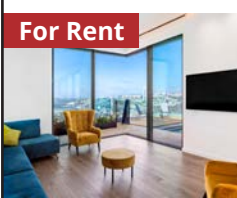


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THE PERSON

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IN THE PARSHA

## An Ode to the Desert

We were exhausted, burned out. We felt that we needed a break.

There were just two of us: me and my study partner, Yisrael. We were both not quite twenty years old, students in the post high school program in our yeshiva, committed to a morning and an afternoon session of intensive Talmud study from Sunday to Thursday every week.

Besides our yeshiva program, we were both enrolled in a local college, taking advanced secular courses two evenings a week. The end of the spring college semester was drawing near. Final exams were looming, and term papers were soon due.

Also looming was the festival of Shavuot, which we were expected to spend at the yeshiva. There, the festival was not all about feasting. Quite the contrary. We were to remain awake the entire first night of the holiday, engaged in Talmud study. After early morning prayers and a light meal, we had an opportunity to rest but then spent a significant portion of the second night and

day of the holiday participating in a rigorous oral examination administered by the dean of the yeshiva.

So, we felt that our need for a break was legitimate. But we were at a loss to determine what would constitute an appropriate break for two exhausted yeshiva *bachurim*.

Predictably, we chose an activity which we would find relatively relaxing but not compromise the “yeshiva *bachur*” image with which we both identified. We decided to spend a day off, browsing the Jewish bookstores which then dotted the Lower East Side of Manhattan where our yeshiva was located.

It was in one of those bookstores that we met a man who was to influence us to this very day. I should say that we did not actually meet that man but rather were introduced to his writings. His name was Rabbi Yosef Lipowitz, of blessed memory.

The nature of the bookstores of long ago was such that the storekeeper was more than just a salesperson. In the case of the bookstore of which I speak, the salesperson was a woman, a Mrs. Rabinowitz as I recall, who was familiar with every book on the vast shelves and an exquisite connoisseur of her customers and their varied interests. It is no wonder that soon after we entered the store, she approached us with a small volume in her hand, a warm smile, and this greeting: “Have I got a book for you!”

Keep in mind, dear reader, that during



the approaching festival of Shavuot, a biblical text is read in the synagogue, and it is a text that resembles a delightful short story much more than a somber religious treatise. I refer, of course, to the Book of Ruth.

The book that Mrs. Rabinowitz held before us, in Hebrew, was a commentary on the Book of Ruth entitled *Nachlas Yosef*, by Rabbi Yosef Lipowitz. A superficial perusal of the opening paragraphs of the book was “like cool water upon an exhausted soul.” It combined profound erudition and sound guidance with soothing poetry. Both Yisrael and I were immediately taken by the book and its author. Right then and there, I vowed to find out more about the author and his writings and use them as a well-spring from which to fetch “cool water” whenever my soul felt exhausted.

Permit me to recommend an adaptation of this commentary on Ruth by Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky, entitled *Seed of Redemption*, and Rabbi Hillel Goldberg’s *Between Berlin and Slobodka: Jewish Transitional Figures from Eastern Europe*, which contains an excellent biography of Rabbi Lipowitz.

In order to exemplify Rabbi Lipowitz’ ability to assist exhausted souls to refresh themselves, allow me to share with you a sample of his reflections on this week’s Torah portion, *Bamidbar* (Numbers 1:1-4:20).

*Bamidbar*, Hebrew for “in the desert,” is not just the title of this week’s *parsha*. It is the title of the entire Book of Numbers, the *Chumash Bamidbar*. The setting of the entire narrative that we will be reading for the next many weeks is the *midbar*, the desert.

The desert, of course, is a dry, barren,



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sandy region, naturally incapable of supporting almost any plant or animal life. What a fitting symbol for the story we will begin to read this *Shabbat*. And what an apt metaphor for an exhausted soul.

In his book, Rabbi Lipowitz proceeds to forcefully demonstrate that it is precisely the desert that is most receptive to beneficial influence. He quotes the beautiful phrase in King Solomon's Song of Songs which reads: "Who is this rising from the wilderness like plumes of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense more fragrant than all the merchant's powders?" (Song of Songs 3:6), upon which the Midrash comments, "All lofty matters rise from the desert. Torah rises from the desert. The Tabernacle rose from the desert. Sanhedrin rose from the desert. Prophecy rose from the desert." Later rabbinic sources add that Moses, too, rose from the desert where he tended to Yitro's flocks.

Consistent with the approaching holiday of Shavuot commemorating *Matan Torah*, the Almighty's greatest gift to His people, is the startling fact that it was the arid environment of the desert that He chose as the site for His great gift.

Rabbi Lipowitz draws upon a fascinating Midrashic parable to drive home his point. It reads, "Where was the Lord finally welcomed with praise? In the desert! Thus, we read, 'If only I were granted a wayfarer's lodging in the desert...' (Jeremiah 9:1). Imagine a nobleman entering a province that is thriving and attempting to become its king. The inhabitants would reject him. Imagine that he enters another thriving province attempting the same. Its inhabitants would also reject him. Then, suppose

he enters a third province, one that is desolate and in ruins. They would accept him with open hands in the hope that he could benefit them. The nobleman would then proclaim this as the best of all provinces. Here I can build myself a palace in which to dwell." (*Bamidbar Rabba*, 1:2)

Rabbi Lipowitz finds in this, and other sources, a lesson about human nature. People who are complacent, self-satisfied, and comfortable with themselves are rarely open to input from others. They have what they need. Why should they bother to open themselves to the Divine? On the other hand, those who are weary and anxious are open to input from the Lord. Indeed, they search for Him.

Teachings such as these abound in all the available writings of Rabbi Lipowitz. They help us understand so much about our tradition. They are especially helpful to those of us who feel spiritually exhausted.

His teachings were especially helpful to two young students who, many decades ago, were introduced to them. Back then, they encouraged us to see our anxieties as prods to draw upon inner resources, inner "waters" to quench our thirst. They helped us not to merely cope with the challenges we faced, but to relish them as motivators. Moreover, they allowed us to enjoy the festival of that Shavuot in the yeshiva so long ago. And above all, these teachings, and those of similarly gifted and inspired mentors, persist in guiding us to this very day. ■

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## The Sound of Silence

Bamidbar is usually read on the Shabbat before Shavuot. So the Sages connected the two. Shavuot is the time of the giving of the Torah. *Bamidbar* means, "in the desert". What then is the connection between the desert and the Torah, the wilderness and God's word?

The Sages gave several interpretations. According to the Mechilta, the Torah was given publicly, openly, and in a place no one owns because had it been given in the Land of Israel, Jews would have said to the nations of the world, "You have no share in it." Instead, whoever wants to come and accept it, let them come and accept it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mechilta, Yitro, Bachodesh, 1.*

Another explanation: Had the Torah been given in Israel the nations of the world would have had an excuse for not accepting it. This follows the rabbinic tradition that, before God gave the Torah to the Israelites, He offered it to all the other nations and each found a reason to decline.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another: Just as the wilderness is free – it costs nothing to enter – so the Torah is free. It is God's gift to us.<sup>3</sup>

But there is another, more spiritual reason. The desert is a place of silence. There is nothing visually to distract you, and there is no ambient noise to muffle sound. To be sure, when the Israelites received the Torah, there was thunder and lightning and the sound of a shofar. The earth felt as if it were shaking at its foundations. But in a later age, when the Prophet Elijah stood at the same mountain after his confrontation with the

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



prophets of Baal, he encountered God not in the whirlwind or the fire or the earthquake but in the *kol demamah dakah*, the still, small voice, literally “the sound of a slender silence” (1 Kings 19:9-12).” I define this as *the sound you can only hear if you are listening*. In the silence of the *midbar*, the desert, you can hear the *Medaber*, the Speaker, and the *medubar*, that which is spoken. To hear the voice of God you need a listening silence in the soul.

Many years ago British television produced a documentary series, *The Long Search*, on the world’s great religions.<sup>4</sup> When it came to Judaism, the presenter Ronald Eyre seemed surprised by its blooming, buzzing confusion, especially the loud, argumentative voices in the *beit midrash*, the house of study. Remarking on this to

4 BBC television, first shown 1977.



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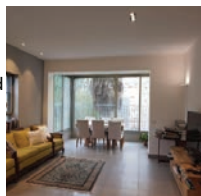


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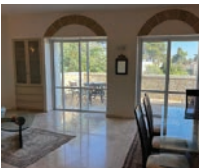
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Elie Wiesel, he asked, “Is there such a thing as a *silence* in Judaism?” Wiesel replied: “Judaism is full of silences ... but *we don’t talk about them.*”

Judaism is a very verbal culture, a religion of holy words. Through words, God created the universe: “And God said, Let there be ... and there was.” According to the Targum, it is our ability to speak that makes us human. It translates the phrase, “and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7) as “and man became a *speaking* soul.” Words create. Words communicate. Our relationships are shaped, for good or bad, by language. Much of Judaism is about the power of words to make or break worlds.

So silence in Tanach often has a negative connotation. “Aaron was silent,” says the Torah, after the death of his two sons Nadav and Avihu (Lev. 10:3). “The dead do not praise you,” says Psalm 115, “nor do those who go down to the silence [of the grave].” When Job’s friends came to comfort him after the loss of his children and other afflictions, “Then they sat down with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, yet no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.” (Job 2:13).

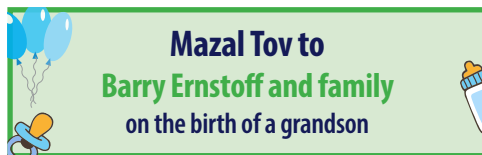
But not all silence is sad. Psalms tells us that “to You, silence is praise” (Ps. 65:2). If we are truly in awe at the greatness of God, the vastness of the universe and the almost infinite extent of time, our deepest emotions will indeed lie too deep for words. We will experience silent communion.

The Sages valued silence. They called it “a fence to wisdom” (Mishna Avot 3:13). If words are worth a coin, silence is worth two (Megilla 18a). R. Shimon ben Gamliel said, “All my days I have grown up among the wise, and I have found nothing better than silence.” (Mishna Avot 1:17).

The service of the Priests in the Temple was accompanied by silence. The Levites sang in the courtyard, but the Priests – unlike their counterparts in other ancient religions – neither sang nor spoke while offering the sacrifices. One scholar, Israel Knohl, has accordingly spoken of “the silence of the sanctuary.” The Zohar (2a) speaks of silence as the medium in which both the Sanctuary above and the Sanctuary below are made.

There were also Jews who cultivated silence as a spiritual discipline. Bratslav Hassidim meditate in the fields. There are Jews who practise *ta’anit dibbur*, a “fast of words”. Our most profound prayer, the private saying of the Amidah, is called *tefillah be-lachash*, the “silent prayer”. It is based on the precedent of Hannah, praying for a child. “She spoke in her heart. Her lips moved but her voice was not heard” (1 Sam. 1:13).

God hears our silent cry. In the agonising tale of how Sarah told Abraham to send Hagar and her son away, the Torah tells us that when their water ran out and the young Ishmael was at the point of dying, Hagar cried, yet God heard “the voice of the child”





(Gen. 21:16-17). Earlier when the angels came to visit Abraham and told him that Sarah would have a child, Sarah laughed inwardly, that is, silently, yet she was heard by God (Gen. 18:12-13). God hears our thoughts even when they are not expressed in speech.

The silence that counts, in Judaism, is thus a listening silence – and listening is the supreme religious art. Listening means making space for others to speak and be heard. As I point out in my commentary to the Siddur,<sup>5</sup> there is no English word that remotely equals the Hebrew verb *sh-m-a* in its wide range of senses: to listen, to hear, to pay attention, to understand, to internalise and to respond in deed.

This was one of the key elements in the Sinai covenant, when the Israelites, having already said twice, “All that God says, we will do,” then said, “All that God says, we will do and we will hear [*ve-nishma*]” (Ex. 24:7). It is the *nishma* – listening, hearing, heeding, responding – that is the key religious act.

Thus Judaism is not only a religion of doing-and-speaking; it is also a religion of listening. Faith is *the ability to hear the music beneath the noise*. There is the silent music of the spheres, about which Psalm 19 speaks:

The heavens declare the glory of God  
The skies proclaim the work of His hands.  
Day to day they pour forth speech, Night to

<sup>5</sup> Koren Shalem Siddur.

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night they communicate knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words, Their voice is not heard. Yet their music carries throughout the earth.

There is the voice of history that was heard by the prophets. And there is the commanding voice of Sinai that continues to speak to us across the abyss of time. I sometimes think that people in the modern age have found the concept of “Torah from Heaven” problematic, not because of some new archaeological discovery but because we have lost the habit of listening to the sound of transcendence, a voice beyond the merely human.

It is fascinating that despite his often-fractured relationship with Judaism, Sigmund Freud created in psychoanalysis a deeply Jewish form of healing. He himself called it the “speaking cure,” but it is in fact a *listening* cure. Almost all effective forms of psychotherapy involve deep listening.

Is there enough listening in the Jewish world today? Do we, in marriage, really listen to our spouses? Do we as parents truly listen to our children? Do we, as leaders, hear the unspoken fears of those we seek to lead? Do we internalise the sense of hurt

of the people who feel excluded from the community? Can we really claim to be listening to the voice of God if we fail to listen to the voices of our fellow humans?

In his poem, ‘In memory of W B Yeats,’ W H Auden wrote:

In the deserts of the heart Let the healing fountain start.

From time to time we need to step back from the noise and hubbub of the social world and create in our hearts the stillness of the desert where, within the silence, we can hear the *kol demamah dakah*, the still, small voice of God, telling us we are loved, we are heard, we are embraced by God’s everlasting arms, we are not alone.<sup>6</sup> ■

6 For more on the theme of listening, see parshat Bereishit, “The Art of Listening,” and parshat Eikev, “The Spirituality of Listening.”

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



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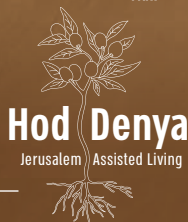
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“VaYomer lo Yehonatan ‘**Machar Chodesh**’...”

The opening words of this week's haftarah, now a commonly used phrase for Shabbat Erev Rosh Chodesh, are actually only the middle of a conversation between David and Yehonatan - his dear friend and brother-in-law. The story encapsulated in the haftarah (Shmuel A 20: 18-42) is one that is familiar to most of us, as this selection is commonly read two or three times a year.

To quickly recap the story, David, fearing that his father-in-law, King Shaul, had plans to kill him, arranges a signal with Yehonatan to inform David whether or not he could safely return to the palace. While David remained hiding in the field, Yehonatan went back to the palace in time for the Rosh Chodesh repast. When the King expressed his anger at David's absence on the second day and accused David of being a rebel, in effect, condemning him to death, Yehonatan returns to his friend and, using the agreed upon signal, warns him to flee for his life.

The story is simple enough. But, as is true of so many haftarot, much can be learned by scanning the psukim that precede the haftarah itself. We should ask, therefore, what was the conversation between David and Yonatan that led to the plan that would be carried out of the morrow, Rosh Chodesh?

But, before we do so, we should, perhaps, consider the future actions of David and wonder why, despite Sha'uls numerous attempts to kill him and despite the many opportunities available to him, David refuses to harm his pursuer. David certainly had reason to do so. One is permitted –perhaps even commanded - to save himself from one who tries to kill him, even by taking his pursuer's life! Given that truth, why does David avoid killing Sha'ul, even prohibiting his officers from doing so? Why?

That is why we must read the verses (starting from pasuk 14) that precede the haftarah itself. There we reveal a remarkable covenant/oath that is made between the two heroes. Yonatan agrees to uncover whether or not his father (Sha'ul) plans to harm David and promises that he would divulge the truth to his friend. After asserting his belief that David would succeed in his struggles against his opponents (“...when Hashem destroys all of David's enemies...”), David takes an oath *never to harm Yonatan or to destroy his royal family* (...“nor remove your kindness from my family forever.”

The story of David HaMelech begins in the 16th perek of Sefer Shmuel but the haftarah of “Machar Chodesh” is the only

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יהושע חיים בן חיה לאה



one taken from the final 16 chapters of the book. And that is unfortunate. For the result of that fact is that those who rely on the haftarah chant alone do not get to know the real story of David. How fortunate we are, then, that this episode is read often enough to allow us to get a “sense” of this remarkable personality.

So we shall repeat the questions we asked before-but his time with the knowledge of the answer:

Why does David refuse to kill Sha’ul who pursued him?

Why does he prohibit his officers from doing so - even in order to save his own life??

Why does he not attempt to remove Sha’ul’s son from the throne of Israel once he was crowned?

Why does he put to death those who assassinated Sha’ul’s son?

Because he made an oath to his friend. And we can now better understand and appreciate the greatness of the man.

And, when we do, and see the model he set for generations, we also realize why.....

“David, Melech Yisrael, Chai V’Kayam”

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# Symbolism Of Sand

וְהָיָה מִסְפָּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִמָּד לֹא יִסָּפֵר  
(הושע ב:א)...

*And the number of Bnei Yisrael shall be as the sand of the sea, which shall neither be measured nor counted ... (Hoshea 2:1).*

In the Haftorah that is usually read with Parshat Bamidbar, the opening pasuk compares the amount of people that comprise Am Yisrael to the sand by the sea, which cannot be measured or counted.

## Symbolism of Sand

Earlier in the Torah, when Hashem instructs Avraham that his offspring will be plentiful – at times they are compared to sand and at times they are compared to the dirt of the earth (וְהָיָה זֶרַע כְּעֶפֶר הָאָרֶץ). What is the difference between these two comparisons?

The Meshech Chochma explains as follows. When Bnei Yisrael are united, they are like dirt that sticks together and one cannot distinguish between its particles. When Avraham sought to spread monotheism, he sought to do so as עַם – to unify everyone to believe in one God.

However, Yaakov realized that in order to maintain our religion, we need to create a separation. Sand separates the sea from the land. As the waves hit the sand on the shore, they recede back to the ocean. To prevent outside influences and assimilation, certain

boundaries are required, and that is symbolized by the sand that serves as a barrier between the sea and the shore.

## Separate But Together

The language used in the pasuk seems a bit odd. The pasuk begins with a statement with respect to the “number” of Bnei Yisrael and then ends – that it cannot be measured. Why infer that there is a number when you know it cannot be measured or counted? In fact, the comparison to sand is also problematic as the amount of sand cannot be measured by man, but it is finite and can be measured by God.

The Chatam Sofer explains that it is impossible for one individual to fulfill all of the mitzvot. There are some mitzvot that may not be applicable to every individual. By applying the principal of *arevut* עֲרֻבָּה – that each individual acts on behalf of another, enables the nation as a whole to fulfill all of the mitzvot. That is the comparison to sand. When each individual is distinct, yet fulfills their obligation, only then is the nation considered as one and is therefore not countable (because it is like one). That is the goal – for each individual to achieve their potential, acting on behalf of the nation, so that we are one people.

As we celebrate Shavuot, we should be reminded of the unity we experienced when we gathered at Har Sinai בְּלֵב אֶחָד אחד. May we continue to reach personal spiritual heights while maintaining our respect and concern for others to ensure our continued unity. ■



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## Levi'im Leverage

Throughout history, Shevet Levi has held a unique role. In *Parashat Bamidbar* we see this manifested dramatically. Whereas the rest of the nation was counted from the age of twenty until sixty, the *Levi'im* were counted from the age of one month. What is the significance of this difference and particularly, what is the significance of being counted at such a young age?

Rav Gamliel Rabinovich asserts that the birth of every Levite increases the level of *kedushah* in the world. This *kedushah* consequently affects all Jews learning and upholding Torah.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, in *Darash Moshe*, explains that really every Jew should be counted from birth as a potential servant of Hashem. However, since one can't know that the infant's parents will dedicate the time and effort to ensure success in this endeavor, we wait until twenty years of age when the child has matured and truly commits himself to his *avodat Hashem*. However, the tribe of Levi, which was suffused with holiness and holy service, has

an implicit assurance that already from birth, their children will be dedicated *ovdei Hashem*, and thus can be counted as part of the *klal* from thirty days of age. Rav Moshe adds that a family who is committed to Torah living can understand the following statement made at a *brit milah*, "just as the child has entered the covenant, so too will he take part in Torah, marriage, and good deeds," as not only a blessing to be fulfilled, but as a statement of commitment to embark on a life defined by Torah.

The Tribe of Levi showed their dedication to Hashem and zeal to uphold His Will at a time when the majority of the nation succumbed to the sin of the Golden Calf. They took up arms without hesitation against all those who sinned, regardless of familial ties. This total dedication to Hashem, explains Rav Schwab, creates an environment in which children will develop a sense of complete allegiance to the *ratzon Hashem*. Such *chinuch* creates a life of sanctity and spiritual focus, truly the mark of

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those that bear the title “*Shomer mishmeret haKodesh* – Guardians of the holy watch.”

Rav Nissin Alpert adds that the members of Shevet Levi are born with intrinsic holiness. *Levi'im* raised their children with the attitude of developing this specialness, notes Rav Shternbach. They are therefore considered guardians of holiness even from the tender age of one month. Indeed, we can apply this notion to all those who raise their children with wholehearted devotion to the *ratzon Hashem*. They are considered to be guardians of holiness too.

We can learn from Moshe Rabbeinu how to guide our children from a young age towards a life of holiness. When carrying out the census, Moshe Rabbeinu stood at the door of each tent, rather than have the children come outside to be counted. Rav Kasba in *Vayomer L'Yehudah* sees a powerful model here. To raise children with holiness, one must create an environment of holiness, safeguarding and protecting our families from influences that may negatively affect us. Infusing our homes with wholesomeness and sanctity, keeping our values sacred, will instill the faithfulness and dedication to guard our spiritual mission in this world. ■

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**9:15AM** The Top 10: A Look at the Aseret HaDibrot **Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**

**9:25AM** 'אנוכי' – Let's Talk Emunah  
**Rabbi David Aaron**

**10:15AM** כיבוד אב ואם – The Ageless Mitzvah of Respecting Parents and a Special Tribute to our Mother, Mrs. Linda Pruwer-Brachfeld a"h  
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**11:05AM** Yahrtzeit Brunch

**11:25AM** ללא תרצה: End-of-Life Issues  
**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

**12:10PM** ללא תחמוד: The Prohibition of Jealousy- Parameters, Preventatives and Prescriptions  
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**12:30AM** The Duality of Shabbat: Zachor V'Shamor  
**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**



**1:30AM** One People, One Heart  
**Rabbi Sam Shor**



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Journey Through the Siddur  
**Rabbi David Walk**

**10:20 AM**

Mishnah with Rambam's  
commentary **Rabbi Dr.  
Aaron Adler**

**11:30 AM**

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

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

## SPECIAL EVENTS

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

Rosh Chodesh Sivan  
Seminar (L'Ayla)

**6:00PM**

Stones with Soul  
JCHAT- Old City  
Twilight Walk for Young  
Professionals

MON, MAY 22

**9:15 AM**

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

**10:30 AM**

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

**11:45 AM**

Novel Parsha Nuances  
**Rabbi Avi Herzog**  
(Resumes May 29)

**8:30 PM**

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

TUE, MAY 23

**9:15 AM**

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

**9:30AM** Minchat Chinuch  
**Rabbi Breitowitz**

**12:15 PM**

Jewish National Revival  
**Dr. Deborah Polster**

**2:00 PM** Men's Talmud  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

**7:30PM** (The Bais) Safrus  
(Men) **Rabbi Tzvi Mauner**

**8:00PM**

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi Machlis**

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**10:00AM**-Safrut 101

-Rabbi Tzvi Mauner @  
Men's English Kollel Boker  
in Modiin (The Bais)

**4:00PM** Hebrew on the  
Go-Cheesecake Workshop  
for Young Olim Families

**8:00PM** Next Gen/L'Ayla  
Women's Pre- Shavuot  
Ice Cream and Shiur  
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WED, MAY 24

**9:00 AM**

Torah and Technology

**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**

(new course)

(Resumes May 31)

**10:15 AM**

Contemporary

Halachic Issues

**Rabbi Anthony Manning**

**11:30 AM**

Ani Maamin- But Do You

Know if it's Really True?

**Rabbi Yitzhak**

**Feigenbaum** (new course)

**12:30 PM** Lunch and Learn

**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

Bagels/Spreads 30NIS

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**8:00 PM**

Halachic Controversies

**Rabbi Aschi Dick**

(The Bais) New start time

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THURS, MAY 25

## EREV CHAG SHAVUOT

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JCHAT Shavuot Night

Seuda for Young

Professionals

**10:45PM-3:45AM**

All Night Learning-Rabbis

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Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

**Rebbetzin Shatz**

(L'Ayla)-Insights of

Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

**Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua

Wed. 8:30PM

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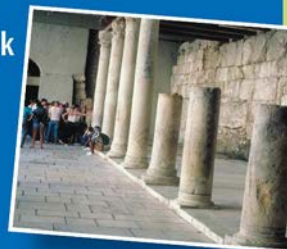
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**Wednesday, May 17th** - all shiurim were sponsored in memory of Chaim Moshe ben David (Henry M Bochner) - Yahrzeit was 20 Iyar

**Thursday, May 18th** - All learning today is in memory of לעילוי נשמת יצחק יוסף בן יהושע מנחם מנדל ז"ל Irving J. Abramowitz z"l

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## Connected

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

A group of young men once visited the Ribnitzer at his home in Boro Park. One of them, Yechiel Reich, stepped forward and introduced himself. The Ribnitzer looked up and exclaimed, "Ah. *Shalom Aleichem!* Now you I know already; we are bound up together for a long time." Yechiel was taken aback, certain that he'd never met the Rebbe before. "Really?" he stammered.

"You've been to Kever Shmuel haNavi, no? From there I know you." The young man looked confused, but the Ribnitzer repeated: "Once you went to daven by Shmuel haNavi. That's where we know each other."

On the car ride home, Yechiel turned to his friends who were asking about the mysterious interchange. "I feel bad saying this, but the Rebbe is mistaken! I was at Kever

Shmuel haNavi only once, more than a decade ago when I was a *bachur* learning at the Tchebiner Yeshivah in Yerushalayim. A whole *chevreh* of us went to daven... and I'm telling you, there is no way that the Rebbe was there!"

Late that night Yechiel lay awake, haunted by the experience. He tried to recreate that *tiyul* to Kever Shmuel in his mind, going over as many details as he could remember. Finally, with a sudden jolt, he sat up and cried "What?!" A subconscious memory had surfaced, but it seemed too unbelievable to be true. He leapt up, ran to his bookshelf, and his hands soon found a worn *Sefer Tehillim* which he had originally acquired second-hand, and had not used in many years. On the inside cover, he saw the text of the *Hareini Mekasher*, a short declaration of *kavanah* intoned before davening: "I hereby bind myself to all the true *tzadikim* of this generation...." Next to this sentence, someone had handwritten the phrase "...*U-b'frat* ('and specifically') to the Tzadik of Ribnitz, Rebbe Chaim Zanvil Ben Moshe v'Yitta Tzipporah..."

Shaking his head in wonder, Yechiel recalled that he had spontaneously read that *Hareini Mekasher* before reciting Tehillim at Kever Shmuel haNavi. Now, with a laugh, he held the *sefer* to his heart and repeated the sentence over and over, as if reuniting with an old friend.



.....

This weekend marks the 28th of Iyar, today known as “Yom Yerushalayim”, the day in which we celebrate the reunification of the Holy City in the aftermath of the miraculous victory of the Six Day War. For centuries before the war, the 28th of Iyar had already been recognized as the *hillula* or ‘yahrtzeit’ of Shmuel haNavi, and was marked as a day of pilgrimage to his resting place on a high hill overlooking Yerushalayim.

One of my teachers, the noted author Rav Ari Kahn, Rabbi of the Mishkan Etrog community of Givat Ze’ev, is widely respected for his creativity and originality in Torah commentary. In his sefer *Emanations*, he provides historical background and context of the Jewish holidays through the prism of the Rabbinic perspective. Relevant to Yom



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Yerushalayim, he underlines the important bond between Shmuel haNavi and David haMelech.

Shmuel haNavi was the *rebbe* and mentor of King David and the one who anointed him and guided his development in his role. Together, they sought to begin the process of *binyan haMikdash*, laying the spiritual framework of building the Temple in Yerushalayim. And as one, they prophetically identified the Divinely intended location for the Beis haMikdash (*Zevachim*, 54b). The *minhag* to ascend to the resting place of Shmuel haNavi expresses yearning for the Divine inspiration, human friendship and closeness with Hashem that Navi Shmuel and King David manifested in their days.

Every time we open our hearts in prayer, we turn our face to Yerushalayim. Connecting to the *Ir haKodesh*, the Holy City, is at the core of our *tefillah*. Chazal were very specific in formulating the *nusach* of the Amidah prayer and order of its *brachos*; as a unit, they form a spiritual narrative, an unfolding of our collective destiny with Yerushalayim, as follows:

על הצדיקים...

A blessing for the *tzadikim*, sages, rebbes

and guides of our People... Hashem is their support and trust and will clearly answer their prayers for *Klal Yisrael*. Thus we place our lot with them; we bind ourselves to them in our prayer....

ולירושלים עירך...

As a result of our unified prayer, the Shechinah will return to full revelation in and through Yerushalayim; the Temple will be rebuilt and the throne of David reestablished there....

את צמח דוד...

Then the shoot of David will spring forth, with the brilliant rays of Complete Redemption spreading throughout the world.

Today, the 28th of Iyar continues to be a day of prayer, pilgrimage and yearning for holiness and Redemption. As our ancestors did for countless generations, we have the right and the privilege to ascend to Yerushalayim and celebrate our deep connection and *hiskashrus* to the *tzadikim*, to Hashem, to His holy city — and to each other. Indeed, as we discover how we are bound to each other, unified and interwoven, may we sing the prophetic words of the Psalmist:

ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחברה לה יחדו:

Yerushalayim! She is built as a city bound together in oneness!

(*Tehillim*, 122:3) ■



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# Introduction to *Bishul Akum*

## The prohibition

According to Biblical law, food that is completely kosher and cooked by a non-Jew is permitted. However, our Sages decreed that such food, even when cooked in kosher utensils, is prohibited for consumption. This prohibition is known as *bishul akum*. In the coming weeks we will discuss the parameters of this rabbinic prohibition, including the reasons behind the decree, when it applies, and the practical halacha for modern industrial kashrut.

Food is a very connecting element in every society. That is the basis behind the decree of *bishul akum*. Our Sages were very concerned about close relationships with non-Jews since intermarriage is a very severe transgression. The prohibition effectively limits Jews and gentiles dining with each other, although there is no specific prohibition against dining with a non-Jew *per se*. (See *Rashi* on *Avodah Zara* 31:b.) Forbidding the non-Jew's cooking would be enough to create an emotional distance such that families wouldn't marry into each other.

*Rabbeinu Tam* (*Tosfot Avodah Zara* 38:a) and *Rambam* (*Ma'achalot Asurot* 17:9)

maintain that the decree is based on this issue of closeness to non-Jews that could lead to intermarriage; this is the opinion of most early authorities. However, *Rashi* and others attribute a different reasoning to the prohibition of *bishul akum*, which is that non-Jews might mix non-kosher ingredients into the kosher food. In future articles we will discuss whether the parameters of *bishul akum* are based on both of these reasons or just one. However, it is clear from numerous sources that the danger of intermarriage is the main reason behind the prohibition (See *Torat Habayit* 3:7).

## The decree is binding regardless of the reason

Since the transgression of intermarriage was the primary concern behind our Sages' decree, their goal was to powerfully discourage the possibility of developing emotional connections to non-Jews that could lead to intermarriage either in that generation or the next. Accordingly, early authorities discuss whether the prohibition of *bishul akum* still applies even in situations where intermarriage is not technically possible. For example, *Rashba*, in his responsa (1:248), examines the case of food cooked by a priest. Being that Catholic priests do not marry nor do they have children with whom to intermarry, is it permitted to eat food cooked by a priest even though the reason for *bishul akum* seemingly does not apply to





him? *Rashba* answers that we have a rule regarding rabbinic decrees: even when the reason does not apply, the prohibition still stands. This is a necessary element in every rabbinic prohibition. Otherwise, *Rashba* explains, people could rationalize and find reasons why any decree should not apply in their particular situation. Accordingly, *Rashba* concludes that even food cooked by a Catholic priest has the prohibition of *bishul akum*. A similar ruling is made by *Ramban* (*Avodah Zara* 35:a) regarding non-Jewish royalty who, because of their stature, are prohibited from marrying Jews. He maintains that the fact that the non-Jews are royalty is irrelevant, and that the decree of *bishul akum* stands regardless of the reason behind it. *Taz* (YD 112:1), *Shach* (YD 112:4) and *Pri Megadim* (YD 112:1) cite these rulings as axioms of the laws of *bishul akum*.

### Other examples

Later authorities discuss similar cases where the logic behind *bishul akum* may not apply. Responsa *Shevet Kehati* (6:273) rules that even food cooked by a non-Jewish child is considered *bishul akum*, despite the fact that the chances of marriage seem remote. The same is true for food cooked in a faraway country where Jews cannot travel – *bishul akum* still applies.

### In summary:

Our Sages prohibited food cooked by

gentiles, even if the ingredients and utensils are kosher.

The reason cited by most authorities is the risk of intermarriage.

Even in cases with virtually no risk of intermarriage, the food is still prohibited, including non-Jewish royalty, priests, young children, and non-Jews from distant lands. ■

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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

This Friday, *Erev Shabbat* we will celebrate the 56th anniversary of *Ichud Yerushalayim*-the reunification of Jerusalem, the miraculous military victory of the 1967 Six Day War. For nineteen years, the joy that had permeated the Jewish people with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was tempered by the somber, humbling reality that the city of Jerusalem remained divided, the ancient city, the Western Wall, and the Temple Mount under Jordanian sovereignty. That all changed with the dramatic events of June 7, 1967.

Shortly after Lt. General Motta Gur's thrilling announcement, '*Har Habayit B'yadeinu, Har Habayit B'yadeinu!*' 'The Temple Mount is in our hands, the Temple Mount is in our hands', the students of the *Beit Aharon Yeshiva*, the yeshiva of the *Slonimer Chasidim* in *Meah Shearim*, were huddled together in the bomb-shelter in the basement of the yeshiva complex, where they were addressed by their illustrious *Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Shalom Noach Brazovsky, zy'a*, who years later would succeed his father-in law to serve

as the *Slonimer Rebbe*.

Below are a few short excerpts from the *Rebbe's* inspirational message to the Yeshiva's students on that momentous day:

*...We are obligated to recognize and give thanks for the miracles that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has brought upon us during these days, miraculous revelations not experienced for tens of generations, and it is forbidden to ignore these great gifts from Hashem...*

*...Even those removed from our tradition, and **anyone with a brain in their head**, must acknowledge that these great events cannot be comprehended by the laws of nature....*

*...The return to Jewish control of both the Kotel HaMaaravi and the other sacred places- Kever Rachel and Maarat HaMachpela, in the miraculously swift six-day war, leave us in awe of these great miraculous events which G-d has revealed to us, and we must give thanks to the Ribono Shel Olam....*

*...At this great moment, when G-d has returned to us the place where our Temple stood, we must sing praises.....*

The *Rebbe's* words help us to appreciate the significance of this incredible commemoration of *Yom Yerushalayim*. It was evident to see the *Yad Hashem*, the proverbial "hand of G-d" in the height of the events, and even in the days and

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months immediately following the events of June 7, 1967. But today, even as we are still longing for the day when indeed we'll witness the complete ingathering of the Exiles and enter into that era of eternal peace, we must not turn a blind eye to the many incredible gifts that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* bestows upon us each and every day.

After 2,000 years of exile, each of us is free to visit, live, study and pray in the ancient city of *Yerushalayim*.

May the great gift that is *Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh*, the united eternal capital of the Jewish People, ever serve as an inspiration for each of us to appreciate all of *Hashem's* gifts, and help us to see the subtle hidden miracles we experience each and every day....

**Yom Yerushalayim Sameach** ■

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# Geulah and Tefillah

Twice daily, we recite a constitution of Jewish belief which has been incorporated into *keriyat shema*. This religious charter combines three sections of the Torah, each of which summarizes a different seminal foundation of Jewish belief.

The first paragraph outlines basic theological tenets: the exclusivity of Hashem, His indivisibility and His selection of our people. He is the universal “echad” but is also “Elokeinu”, our G-d, who selected us as His chosen nation. The ensuing pasuk demands that we, somehow, translate our belief in Him into a love for him: **ואהבת את ה' אלוהיך**. Though we can't describe Him, we are passionately devoted to Him. Our words and thoughts can't capture Him, but our hearts are drawn to Him. This remarkable combination of pure monotheism, coupled with loving dedication has been the historical and religious trademark of our people. This religious blend is our gift to humanity and, one day, they will fully appreciate it.

The second paragraph of Shema transforms religious belief into ritual behavior. Accepting divine authority without bearing the yoke of mitzvot is vacant. Religion is not just about belief, but about actions, not just thinking, but doing. Hashem's

will innervates every nook and cranny of human experience, anchoring every moment to divine experience.

The third and final section of Shema, excerpted from parshat Shelach references yetziat Mitzrayim: **אני ה' אלוהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים**. Hashem didn't merely create our world, winding it as a clock to run on its own internal gears. He daily supervises and interacts with His world, as was first demonstrated by his dramatic intervention in Egypt, when He altered Nature, history, science, politics, and human psychology. The final paragraph of Shema showcases Hashem's imminence in, and contact with, our world.

Shema blends emunah, mitzvot and hasgachah. Faith, observance and Providence: the three legs of our religious table.

### Elaborating Redemption

Following the final section of Shema which mentioned redemption, Chazal introduced additional tefillot and berachot to expound upon our first redemption from Egypt. Shacharit contains one additional redemptive blessing, which concludes with the phrase of **גאול ישראל**, while *Arvit* includes two additional berachot of geulah, one concluding with the identical phrase of **גאול ישראל**, with the second blessing closing with a more generic phrase of **שומר עמו לעד**, acknowledging Hashem's general protective care. Despite minor differences, Shacharit and Arvit each display the same



“redemptive embroidery” stitched onto the final section of Shema. The berachot of geulah embellish the brief mention of geulah contained in the third section of Shema.

### Redemption and Tefillah

At this stage, having recited Shema and having subsequently pondered redemption, we immediately begin *shmoneh esrei* prayers. This alignment between redemptive memories and actual tefillah is referred to as *סומך גאולה לתפילה*. Extolling the importance of this juxtaposition between geulah and tefillah, the gemara guarantees entry into the next world for those who merge these two features. To assure contiguity, halacha forbids any interruption between the geulah section and the ensuing beginning of *shmoneh esrei*.

Explaining the significance of this juxtaposition, many claim that the blessings of geulah function as a *preface* to prayer. Without prior mention of redemption, prayer would be impolite and even offensive. Without redemptive context, prayer is self-interested, and egotistical. It is embarrassing to stand in the presence of Hashem and selfishly “rifle off” a battery of personal petitions and greedy requests. When framed by redemptive memories, however, prayers are more dignified and more honorable. Redemption casts our personal lives as part of the broader national journey which we traverse along with Hashem. Redemptive consciousness lends our personal lives historical resonance, and casts our personal requests within a wider partnership with Hashem. The juxtaposition of prayer and geulah “redeems” prayer from its pettiness and confers it with historical gravitas and grandeur. Geulah is a vital



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*preface* to tefillah.

### **Redemptive Duties**

By contrast, Rabeinu Yonah, a 13th century colleague and student of the Ramban, asserted that this twinning of geulah and prayer doesn't ennoble prayer, but *enhances* geulah. Redemptive memory is incomplete without subsequent prayer. Geulah doesn't *preface* tefillah, tefillah is a necessary *suffix* to redemptive memory. Having recalled redemption, our prayer reminds us of our resulting duties.

### **Redemptive Duty**

Redemption isn't merely a privilege but a historical mandate. We are not redeemed for comfort or luxury, but for mission and historical calling. Without redemptive duty, geulah becomes self-indulgent. Redemption only liberates us from human constraints so we can better serve Hashem. The initial Exodus from Egypt unchained us from human tyranny, enabling our embrace of divine command. Likewise, our final redemption will emancipate us from historical and cultural oppression, heighten religious consciousness and empower us to better recognize Hashem. Without an upgrade in religious commitment, redemption remains hollow.

As it is predicated upon religious commitment and upon hierarchy, prayer is the perfect supplement to redemption. The gemara in Ta'anit derives the obligation of prayer from the phrase *לעבדו בכל לבבם* which demands an emotional "service of the heart". Prayer assumes dependence on Hashem and implies hierarchy and divine authority. It acknowledges human frailty while affirming divine majesty. The profile of "eved Hashem" is latent within

redemption, but is magnified by prayer.

### **Ritual or Mission?**

Ideally, geulah intensifies our commitment to Hashem, which, in turn, yields greater Torah study and stricter adherence to mitzvot. Thankfully, in the wake of our return to Israel, there has been a dramatic surge of both. Even if this phenomenal improvement in avodat Hashem can't be directly traced to life in Israel, it is still, unquestionably, generated by the start of our redemption. Torah and geulah are always related, even though that link may not be apparent to the untrained eye.

Even when not expressed through ritual commitment or Torah study, post-redemptive commitment to Hashem is expressed by dedication to Jewish history and to Jewish peoplehood. A life of mission to the Jewish people is also a fulfillment of post-redemptive duties.

### **When Were You Born?**

Human beings are intentionally implanted into specific stages of history. Had we been born 100 years ago, we would have fled Nazi persecution, rather than enjoyed the radiance of redemption. Having been born into our era, we are haunted by a lingering existential question: Why did Hashem place us in a redemptive era? Why were we chosen above previous generations? We will never know the answers to those questions, but we must shoulder the burdens and duties of redemption. Geulah isn't a free ride, but a historical calling. Prayer symbolizes the consequence and duty of redemption and is therefore a fitting sequel to geulah.

Redemptive privilege and redemptive duty walk hand in hand. Privilege and duty

always do. Taking the first without bearing the latter is greedy and immoral.

### Redemptive Faith

Tefillah enunciates a second crucial take-away of redemption. Watching Hashem descend into our world and reorder it for Jewish destiny should bolster faith. At the Yam Suf, Hashem quieted a roaring ocean, igniting our faith and rousing our poetic imaginations. We chanted Az Yashir and prophesized about the Land of Israel and the house of G-d: וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְה' וּבְמִשְׁחָה עַבְדּוֹ

Prayer presupposes emunah and faith. We trust that Hashem listens and compassionately responds to our prayers. We don't always understand the answer, but our prayers don't go unheeded. By supplementing our geulah with tefillah, we reinforce our Emunah, a faith which redemption both supplies, and demands of us.

Throughout our exile, enduring a darkened world with a veiled presence of Hashem, we tenaciously maintained our faith. During this period our emunah was forged in suffering and in blood. History has now turned bolstering us with the faith of redemption and of Jewish triumph. Having lived through the initial stages of Hashem's master plan we have been armored with faith. It is our redemptive duty to maintain strong faith even as the twists and turns of redemption swerve their way to the finish line of history.

Redemptive joy and redemptive responsibility walk hand in hand. ■

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## Tikkun Leil Shavuot

### In Yemin Moshe

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**May 25, 2023**

**11:00 p.m**

**Professor Paul B. Fenton**

Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Université Paris-Sorbonne

**"What Can We Learn About Moses from Muslim Commentators"**

**11:45 p.m**

**Rav Avishai Tzuria אבישי צוריה**

ראש ישיבת עטרת כהנים Rosh Yeshivat Ateret Kohanim

**"דומה בדדום- בתלמוד"**

**12:30 a.m**

**R' Elimelech Yaacoby**

**"The Blasphemer in the Pardes"**

**1:00 a.m**

**Rav Chanoch Yeres**

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael

**"The Fifth Commandment – Perspective Throughout the Generations"**

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**RABBI AARON**

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

# Sanctity Spreads From the Temple Mount

*Due to the fact that the sanctity of the Beit Hamikdash spreads out in the Land of Israel - as stated in Tosafot, chapter 'Kodesh Kodashim' (Talmud Z'vachim 60b), [where it is argued] that the essential holiness of the Land of Israel stems from the holiness of the Beit Hamikdash - therefore the holiness of thought is revealed in all of Eretz Yisrael; and even in our day as well when there is a small remnant of this (holiness), because the holiness [of the Beit Hamikdash] remains even when it lies in ruin. (Eretz Chefetz 4:3)*

Rav Kook accentuates the holiness which emanates from the place where the Beit Hamikdash stood. From there it spreads throughout the Land.

It has been suggested that it is inaccurate to call Israel "The Holy Land" - 'holy' connotes only one measure of holiness. In truth the Land of Israel contains a double measure. First, there is the inherent sanctity embedded in the Land and in addition there is the holiness that extends throughout the

Land from *makom hamikdash*.

Rabbi Soloveitchik highlighted this notion based on a Mishnah which spells out the degrees of holiness that permeate in the Land of Israel (*Mishna Keilim* 1:6): "There are ten levels of holiness found in the Land." The mishnah begins by listing three mitzvot that reflect its holiness: The *Omer* offering brought from barley that grows in Israel, the loaves of bread offered on Shavuot which are made from the wheat of the Land, and the first fruit, *Bikkurim*, taken from the seven species of Israel.

The Rav asked: Why does the Mishnah delineate only three examples of holiness? Surely these are not the only laws that pertain to the unique status of holiness in the Land. Why are other examples, such as *maaser*, *terumah*, and *challah*, not included here?

He offered a penetrating answer: The mishnah is focused on the distinct *kedusha* which emanates from the *makom hamikdash* ('the place of the Temple'). This explains why the mishnah also delineates the ten regions of holiness. Areas which are in closer proximity to the Temple hold a more intensive degree of holiness. The areas of the Temple itself have a more

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potent *kedusha*. From that very spot *kedusha* spreads through the Land - but does not extend past the borders of Israel.

In contrast to the *kedusha* that emanates from the Makom Hamikdash, there is holiness embedded in the Land itself. This manifestation of *kedusha* is found in the soil of the Land and relates to the laws of *shemittah*, *maaser*, *terumah* and others.

In sum, the halacha actually identifies a double measure of *kedusha* that is manifest in the Land of Israel.

### Identifying the Holiness of Jerusalem

The most important single object in Jerusalem was the Ark, the *Aron Kodesh*, containing the tablets and the original Torah. This stood in the Holy of Holies on an outcrop of bedrock known as the *Even Shetiya*, literally, the Foundation Stone. The Talmud states that it is called

the "Foundation Stone" because it was the foundation of the universe. As the Talmud explains, this is because it was the very first point at which God began the act of creation (Tosefta, Yoma 2:12, Yoma 54b). (See The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology 2, p.81)

The Rambam also asserts the historical and spiritual significance of the place of the Temple. It should be noted that he codified this in the Mishneh Torah:

"It is universally accepted that the place that David and Solomon built the Altar... is the location where Abraham built the Altar on which he prepared Isaac for sacrifice. Noah built [the altar] on that location when he left the ark. It was also [the place] of the Altar on which Cain and Abel brought sacrifices. [Similarly], Adam, the first man, offered a sacrifice there and was created at that very spot.." (Beit



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### God's Presence Never Left Jerusalem

Even though the Altar and the Temple no longer stand in Jerusalem, the place retains its holiness. The holiness of Jerusalem pertains to God's presence, which can never be nullified, as stated by the Rambam (*Hilchot Beit Habechira* 6:16). For this reason, even today, it is forbidden to enter the place where the Beit HaMikdash originally stood.

### The Location of the Holy Ark Today

The Rambam begins the fourth chapter of *Hilchot Beit HaBechira* with the following statement:

"There was stone in the western partition of the Holy of Holies on which the ark was placed. Before it, [were placed] the vial of manna and Aharon's staff. When Shlomo constructed the Beit [Hamikdash], knowing that it would ultimately be destroyed, he constructed a place for the ark to be entombed below [the Holy of Holies] in a deep maze-like vaults. King Yoshiyahu commanded that the ark be entombed in the chamber which Shlomo had built" (*Beit Habechira* 4:1).

### Joy In the Ever-present Holiness

The Talmud (*Taanit* 30b) states: "All who mourn for Jerusalem merits and sees its joy." The *Chatam Sofer* (*Chiddushei Chatam Sofer*, Bava Batra 60b) asks why does the Talmud say that one sees its joy in the present tense? It should be phrased, "If one mourns for Jerusalem he will one day see - in the future- its joy." Rav Yitzchak Mirsky answers that Yerushalayim is always full of life. Its holiness is eternal. To some degree one who is aware of the Temple and its loss is also aware that the holiness of that place remains intact and can never be

extinguished. In that sense the joy is experienced deeply even in the present (*Hegryonei Halacha* Vol. 2, p. 233-234).

Rabbi Yaakov Emden, in his Siddur, comments on the phrase we say in Birkat Hamazon: "Have mercy, Hashem our Lord, on Jerusalem Your city...and on the great and holy house...". He points out that it is puzzling to use the term have mercy on something that no longer is in existence. This prayer is not a prayer for its return, it simply is a prayer for mercy on the Holy City and its Temple. Rabbi Emden answers that although the outer physical structure is no longer present, the sanctity of the *Makom HaMikdash* continues to endure. We therefore petition for God's mercy to experience the *Shechina* in all its glory. (Siddur Beit Yaakov, p.121) (Quoted in *Hegryonei Halacha*, Mirsky, p. 234) ■

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## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR.  
ADINA SHMIDMAN



# True Love

As Sunday is Rosh Chodesh, we read the special Haftorah of Machar Chodesh on Shabbos. Why do we read this Haftorah in place of the Haftorah for Parshat Baminder? The words “Machar Chodesh” *tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh* are found in this Perek in Sefer Shmuel, but there appears to be a deeper connection between Erev Rosh Chodesh and this text.

In the beginning of Sefer Bereishit, the Midrash shares that when the great luminaries were first created, they were equal in size. When the moon complained that two kings couldn't use one crown, Hashem's reaction was to make the moon smaller. Was this a childish squabble? And was Hashem's reaction meant as a punishment? In order to understand the Midrash, we need to appreciate what the moon was really saying.

The moon was asking a fundamental question - why is it that the world was created with competition and with struggle. Even today, we see this struggle and vying for dominance - nations, communities and people struggle in so many ways. The moon asked why, why is this competition necessary?

Hashem's answer to the moon was not a punishment, as the moon was not jealous. The moon was trying to find a world

without struggle and competition, but Hashem's answer was that the world needs healthy struggle, drive and motivation to further development and growth. His message to the moon was to make itself smaller. Competing forces can get along - the sun and the moon can work together if one becomes smaller and makes space for the other. Healthy interactions are predicated on each party being able to recognize, listen and respect each other's thoughts and ideas and make room for the other.

To the naked eye, the moon appears to wax and wane through the month. It is on Erev Rosh Chodesh that the moon is invisible and gives the whole stage to the sun, demonstrating that there is potential for a world free of struggle and interpersonal agitation. Competing forces can work together and beings can respect boundaries and live harmoniously.

The human example that exemplifies this relationship of interpersonal harmony and lack of competition is Dovid and Yonatan.



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Yonaton, who was heir to his father's throne was willing to cede his position to Dovid and give up the most prized position, the kingship. In Pirkei Avot, 5:19, the example given for true love is Dovid and Yonaton, Ahava Sheino Teluya B'Davar, *a love that was not dependent on any outside force or object.*

The Haftorah reminds us that we can and should make space for others and that the world CAN be free of strife, unhealthy competition and dominance. How reassuring that man can build relationships of mutual respect and perfect harmony. May we merit that day speedily in our days. ■

Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman is the founding director of the Orthodox Union Women's Initiative and the rebbetzin of the Lower Merion Synagogue in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

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## Planting a Fruit Tree He May Uproot

**Question:** We want to plant a fruit tree in our yard, but if we can work it out, we will expand our house and will need to uproot the tree. Is it alright to plant it in these circumstances?

**Answer:** The Torah forbids cutting down fruit trees (Devarim 20:19). This is the strictest application of the concept not to be destructive (see Rambam, Melachim 6:8). The *gemara* and *poskim* identify “non-destructive” cases where it is permitted to cut them down.

The *gemara* grants permission in the following cases: 1. The tree no longer produces a *kav* (a relatively small amount) of fruit (Bava Kama 91b-92a). 2. It is worth more for wood than for fruit (see Rashi, ad loc.). 3. It is significantly damaging a more valuable tree (see Tosafot ad loc.). 4. It is damaging another’s property (Bava Batra 26a).

The Rosh (Bava Kama 8:15) learns from the above that one may cut down a tree if needed to use its location, which the

Taz (Yoreh Deah 116:6) applies to building a home. Most *poskim* say this includes expanding a home, assuming the addition is more valuable than the tree (see Yabia Omer V, YD 12).

Your case might seem to be clearly fine. If it will be permitted to cut down the tree, but you want to plant it because of the good chance you will not build, why shouldn’t you? One possible issue is that not all agree how far to extend the Talmudic leniencies (see discussion, *ibid.*). Therefore, there is reason to avoid a situation that might be forbidden. However, leniency regarding house expansion is accepted enough for this not to be a major impediment.

The more intriguing hesitation is based on the possibility that the prohibition of cutting down fruit trees extends beyond halachic norms. Regarding the need-based leniencies (#2-#4 above), one can ask whether in cases of net gain, the cutting down is permitted because it is not considered a destructive act at all (see Rambam

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Melachim 6:8), as is correct regarding other cases of *bal tashchit*. The alternative is that cutting down a fruit tree is always regrettable, just that the Torah allowed it when “necessary.” If so, there is reason to avoid the situation wherein justified leniency is necessary. (Parallel concepts include *bitul issur l’chatchila* and *mechaven melachto b’moed* – further analysis is beyond our scope.)

The latter approach is strengthened by the opinions (see discussion in Etz Hasadeh 10:1) that even when one is halachically permitted to cut down a tree, it can cause bad fortune (see Pesachim 50b) or even danger (see Bava Kama 91b). This prompted some *poskim* to say that even when there is a serious need to cut down the tree, one would be wise to have a non-Jew, to whom the prohibition does not apply, do it (see Shut Chatam Sofer, YD 102). Therefore, even if, as seems to be the case, we do not have the basis to prohibit setting up a situation where one might have valid cause to cut down the tree, we cannot say confidently that it is wise to do so.

It will not help to cut down the tree before it has the “minimum amount” of fruit for

the prohibition, because that amount is a sign of lack of long-time feasibility for old trees (see Rambam, *ibid.* 9), not for young trees that are expected to be fruitful. However, there are further grounds for leniency based on the opinions that the prohibition does not apply to a tree planted with intention to cut it down (see Etz Hasadeh 8:7).

An idea to mitigate the situation is to plant the tree in a way that it can be effectively transplanted, as many permit or consider it an added reason for leniency (She’eilat Yaavetz I:78). If you do so in a non-permeable encasing, it might be considered not planted, so that perhaps moving it will be easier and even without halachic consequence (Chazon Ish, Dinei Orla 32). Consider, though, that transferring it to the ground may restart the years of *orla* (*ibid.*).

In summary, assuming the lack of serious need to plant the tree right away, there is logic to wait for more clarity whether you will build. However, we would not say it is forbidden to plant the tree; we also suggested mitigating steps. ■



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# The Bikkurim Festival at Agricultural Settlements in the Early Zionist Period #1

In 5684 (1924), the *kibbutzim* in the Jezreel Valley celebrated what they called the *Bikkurim* Festival. They placed a different, new emphasis on *Shavuot*—in place of the traditional holiday celebrated throughout the generations with a focus on the giving of the Torah, Torah learning throughout the night, and, of course, eating dairy foods and cheese-cake. The farmers saw their agricultural work in the Land of Israel as imbued with deep historical significance, viewing it as a renewal of the bond between the Jewish people and their land following the long years of exile. This ceremony was very symbolic, focusing on the values of the agricultural settlements of the time—values that greatly differed and even flew in the face of traditional Jewish values. Over the years, many additional *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* joined in the celebration of this festival.

Such festivals took place on *Shavuot* itself or on the *Shabbat* preceding *Shavuot* (their day off) and received the enthusiastic support of national institutions, the Zionist Administrations, and JNF-KKL. Rabbis began to relate to these festivities in 5687 (1927), the third year of their existence, due to their public nature

and the advertisements of the festivities. The main focus of these rabbis was the desecration of *Shabbat* and *Shavuot* in the Jewish people's national homeland, sanctioned by its national institutions. Chief Rabbis Yaakov Meir and Avraham Yitzchak Kook, as well as other rabbis, tried to persuade the celebrants to hold their festivities on weekdays preceding or following *Shavuot*, with partial success.

## **Additional halachic problems with the ceremony**

Besides the desecration of *Shabbat* and *Shavuot*, related questions arose with respect to the content of the ceremony, namely the consecration of the *bikkurim*, the first fruits. If the festival is specifically called the "*Bikkurim* Festival" and involves placing fruits from the seven species in baskets and calling the fruit *bikkurim*," does this constitute consecrating the fruit as *bikkurim* (is this a prohibition when not performed correctly)? Furthermore, once designated as *bikkurim*, are these fruits now forbidden for eating and benefit, as were *bikkurim* in Temple times? In 5687, Rabbi Kook wrote a detailed response on this topic (*Mishpat Kohen* 57). More next week. ■





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# A Colorful Unity

Recent months have seen division, discontent and strife here in the State of Israel. The city of Jerusalem - literally the 'city of Peace' - has been the site of conflict; plagued with protests and demonstrations.

*But is there room for diversity in Judaism? A multiplicity of voices? Pluralism?*

The Torah describes the encampments of the Tribes of Israel in the Wilderness. The camp was divided into four formations, each containing three tribes. Every tribe had its own banner or flag, representing its unique quality: "The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his banner according to the insignias of their father's household" (*Bamidbar* 2:2). In fact, the Midrash describes in great detail the colors and symbols of each flag (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 2:7).

But banners and flags and symbols can be divisive.

According to Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky, this is precisely why the tribes are instructed to create flags *after* the inauguration of the *Mishkan*. The *Mishkan* was a unifying force: A central location where Jews of every stripe and color can join together in the service of Hashem.

There is room in our tradition for

different symbols and banners – for diversity – so long as we can join together under one larger tent.

Interestingly, the Torah commands that the *Mishkan* to be covered with the skin of the *Tachash*, a symbol of diversity. The Talmud (*Shabbat* 28a-28b) describes this elusive creature: It only existed during the days of Moshe, it was a kosher animal, had a coat of many colors and a single horn on its forehead. Rashi, in his comments to *Shemot* 25:5, writes: "It was a type of animal that existed only at that time. It had many colors, therefore Targum renders it *Sus-gona* for it rejoices (*sus*) and prides itself with its many colors (*gevanim*)."

The *Mishkan* - the focal point of Jewish worship - is covered with the skin of an animal that rejoices in its many colors. Like a majestic tapestry, the Jewish people join together in the service of Hashem in the *Mishkan*, and celebrate their diversity.

We are indeed a diverse community. It is our challenge, but it is also our strength. This is the unique quality of the Jewish People. It is part of our fiber; the very fabric of who we are.

This week we celebrate Yom Yerushalayim. We express our gratitude for the gift that Hashem gave us during those six miraculous days in June, 1967. And just like the *Mishkan*, Jerusalem is a unifying force. The Psalmist writes: "The built up Jerusalem is a city that fosters togetherness. For there

the tribes ascended, the tribes of Hashem, as a testimony of Israel to give thanks to the name of the Lord” (*Psalm 122*). It is here that all of Israel would ascend to the Holy Temple to serve Hashem together. Jerusalem was “not divided among the Tribes” (*Yoma 12a*). Each and every Tribe had a place. Each could call it home.

But by its very nature, Jerusalem is also a diverse city. Even a brief visit to the Kotel Plaza attests to this. One, trying to pray, is barraged by the sounds of competing Minyanim: Sephardic chanting, Chassidic shouting, Carlebach singing. Each group expresses their devotion to Hashem through the voice of their unique liturgical tradition. And what appears to be a dissonant cacophony is in reality one glorious symphony.

Jerusalem, much like the banners and

flags of *Bamidbar*, represents a colorful unity. It is a city of diversity and togetherness all at once. And that’s the way it should be. ■

Rabbi Shimshon HaKohen Nadel lives and teaches in Jerusalem, where he serves as Mara D'atra of Har Nof's Kehilat Zichron Yosef and Rosh Kollel of the Sinai Kollel and Chovevei Zion's Kollel Boker.

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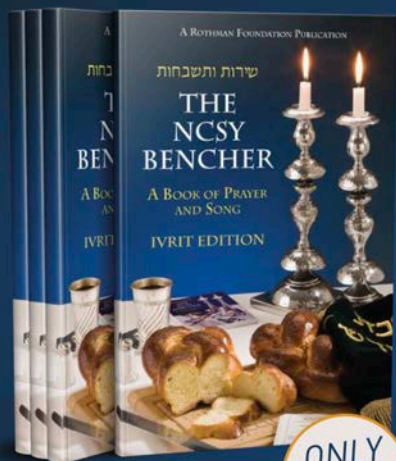


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**Dr. Ethan Eisen, PhD**

## Parenting Our Adult-Children

As parents, we often think that as time goes on, our acquired experience ought to make parenting simpler. But what many parents find is that as their child gets older, the challenges of parenting become more complex. One aspect of this complexity that many parents raise is the shifting relationship with their child as the child grows through adolescence into early adulthood. During this time, the child is clearly going through an array of transitions, both externally and internally. As a result, the relationship between the child and his parents is changing, and parents may struggle as they navigate this shift.

Most parents understand that for a younger child, instruction, guidance, and oversight are intrinsic to their roles as parents. Parents also know that just because they utter “*Baruch she’petarani*” that does not mean the end of their responsibilities toward their child. However, most parents recognize that at a certain point, their child becomes an adult, and as such, he is now responsible for himself and his own decisions. Ideally, the child and his parents form what we might call an “adult relationship.” The challenge that

many parents face is figuring out how to successfully adapt their relationship with a younger child into an adult relationship with an adult child.

One reason this transition period is confusing is that the duration of the shift to adulthood, for many people, is not uniform and may stretch over many years. The traditional Western value, even if it was never reality for many people, is that a person turns 18 and becomes fully responsible for himself. He starts to earn some money, lives on his own, pays his own way, and looks to get married, all in fairly short order. All of these lifecycle milestones would indicate that the child has become an adult.

But in today’s world, and especially in *frum* communities, the markers of adulthood are far less clear. Young adults are typically not able to pay their own way, due to some combination of advanced Torah study, attending college or university, and a higher cost of living. There is also an emphasis on marriage, such that young men and women marry and have children years before they are able to financially support their young family. This complicated reality can make it difficult to figure out the contours of an adult relationship between parents and their child.

The slow march toward independence means that there are not clear demarcations for where the child exists in his



development into adulthood. Emotionally, the child has likely developed his own way of thinking, and has a sense of which choices are best for him in life. However, in many other ways, he lacks the knowledge, experience, or material resources to bring his ideas to fruition. The young adult remains dependent on his parents, which leads to complications in their relationships. He wants to be independent, he has the emotional capacity for independence, he may head a household with his own children—and yet, he remains dependent on his parents for basic needs. How can parents navigate this complex and ambiguous situation so that they end up with a positive, supportive, and meaningful relationship with their adult child?

Of course, each relationship is different, and there is no single answer for how to achieve the desired outcome. But I'd like to suggest one idea that may be helpful to consider.

As a parent, you can assess in which of life's domains your child seems independent, and in which he still requires your help. As he gets older, you will likely observe that he is increasingly capable of independence and does not require your intervention to be successful, with few aspects of life benefiting from your direct intervention. In my experience, conflict often arises when parents act or communicate in a way that suggests that because the adult child is dependent on them in one domain, they view him as dependent in other domains of life. This blurring of lines is often well-intentioned—parents only want what is best for their child; however,

failure to recognize and respect the child's independence can interfere with developing the relationship that both the parents and child are looking for.

This is just one of many aspects of this question to consider, but it can be a useful start. The more that parents can understand and honor their child's emerging independence, the more honest, respectful, and collaborative the relationship can be, which is the goal of most parents and children alike. ■

Dr. Ethan Eisen, PhD is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist (Israel and U.S.) offering Evidence-Based Solutions for Individuals and Couples

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



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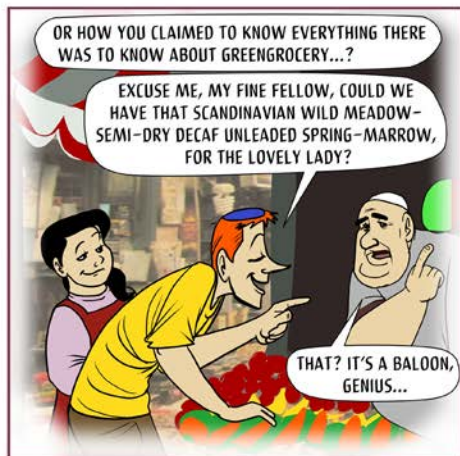

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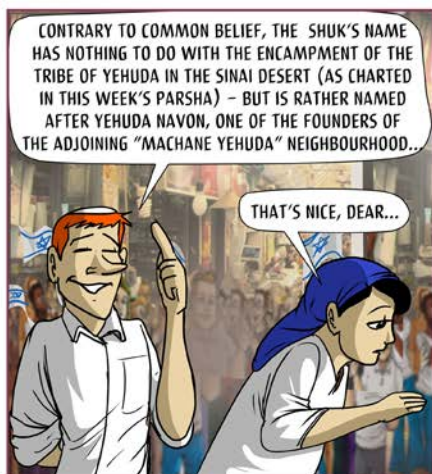
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## Aaron Shalman JLIC Givat Shmuel From: Riverdale, NY

In this week's parsha, we read, "And Hashem spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert, in the Tabernacle (אוהל מועד) on the first day of the second month..." (Bamidbar 1:1). The *Noam Elimelech*, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk explains this pasuk is suggesting to man how to best behave. "In the Sinai Desert"- just like the Torah was given at Har Sinai, Hashem chose this mountain from all other mountains, not because of height or beauty, which had neither of these attributes, but because it was the smallest and humblest among all the mountains- so too man should be "greatly subdued in one's own eyes"- meaning that man should be humble and stay away from pride.

But such thoughts could cause someone to always be in a state of depression and be sad which is an obstacle in the ways

of worshipping Hashem. As it says in the Gemara, "**the Shechinah rests [upon man] neither in indolence nor in gloom** nor in frivolity nor in levity" (Pesachim 117a).

Therefore, when man is in a situation of "Sinai Desert", he must not forget to also be "in the Tabernacle (אוהל מועד)", that is to feel like he is in the state of mind of the joy of the season (מועד)- to be in the happiness of the *Chag*! One should not forget to be happy, otherwise he will be in a state of depression which will create an obstacle in worshipping Hashem.

If man should ask himself, "Since I have sinned so much, how could I be happy? How can I repent?", and on this thought the Torah says, "on the first day of the second month" - man must do *teshuva* with joy in spite of everything and say to himself, "From today onwards I will uplift myself from my old ways and start afresh. I'm reborn".

If he does so- he is no longer the same person he was even a second before, rather new and clean, and now rejoices full heartedly. The *Noam Elimelech* comments on this, "This is called a renewal that will be renewed as a new creature". And that is what the Torah means when it says, "first day (of **renewal**) of the second month"- because man is renewed (**reborn**) twice: on the day he is born, and the day he repents and is absolved of all his sins.

We must always be reminded that even if

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man sins- he should not feel despair, rather repent with happiness!

May we all learn to be in the mindset of change and become reborn in time for the Chag! ■

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**Ian Schwartz**  
Gush Etzion  
Chapter Director  
**Come Together**

We live in a time where unfortunately there is a lot of machloket within Am Yisrael. There are many huge and fundamental disagreements about what Medinat Yisrael is meant to be.

Sometimes it seems scary and unpredictable when we see the news of the massive protests going on in the streets and people throwing around words like “civil war”. It seems like achdut is very far from the reality that we live in. However, we have to ask, what is the true nature of achdut? Does this mean that everyone is supposed to agree about everything?

In our parsha we learn about the different flags and arrangements of the various tribes of Am Yisrael. Every tribe had their own flag, symbol, and expertise. 12 uniquely different groups made up the Jewish people. Reuven Jews are different from Shimon Jews, and Dan Jews are different from Binyamin Jews. Each with their own culture and lineage. Nevertheless all of the tribes are part of the Jewish people.

Hashem created the Jewish people to be diverse, this isn't something to fear but rather something to celebrate. Rav Kook writes that the word שלום is often misunderstood to mean peace, however that is not

the true essence of שלום. True שלום means completeness, when all sides despite their differences learn to work together.

One side does not have to change itself for the other, rather each must learn to appreciate the other, together this creates the beautiful tapestry of Am Yisrael. For each of us we should look to find the good in our friends and family, instead of feeling distance because of our differences. We can use it as a way to appreciate the other.

Developing this type of achdut is the only way we can properly receive the Torah this coming Shavuot, as Rashi says כאיש אחד בלבד, one person with one heart.

Shabbat Shalom



**Koby Erdfarb**  
11th Grade, Efrat  
**Count Me In**

*Parshat Bamidbar* begins with Hashem commanding Moshe to count *Am Yisroel*. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks asks, why does Hashem want *Am Yisroel* counted? Hashem doesn't know how many people there are?

In addition, counting people can be seen as devaluing the importance and uniqueness of each individual by saying that they are all interchangeable or unimportant. When an inmate is put into jail one of the first things that is done is that they are given an inmate number. This lesson was never clearer than in Auschwitz when the Nazi's

numbered the Jews as they arrived. You are no longer a person with a name, just a number. Yet, we know that Hashem values each and every Jewish *neshama*. So how do we reconcile these two competing ideas?

If you look carefully at the psukim, when Hashem commands Moshe to count the Jewish people, he tells him to count them while “lifting up their heads.” This unique language dictates that every Jew should feel proud to be counted among Hashem’s children. It instills in them the confidence that each and every one of them can contribute to society through their own unique gifts and talents. When Hashem told Moshe to count the Jews, he wasn’t devaluing them, rather the opposite, he was showing them how unique and important each and every one of them are to him.

Our lesson is to realize that even though we may have varying levels of observance or different political views, every Jew is important and has what to offer Am Yisrael and the world as a whole. As chag Shavuot approaches we need to internalize this lesson and celebrate receiving the Torah as we did at Har Sinai. K’Ish Echod Belev Echad, a united Jewish people and know that Hashem loves us.

Shabbat shalom ■

## Arthur Samuels, DPM



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## Real Life Rescues

### Amid Rocket Barrage Towards the City, Rishon LeZion Man Saved From Cardiac Arrest

Last Friday, amid the rocket barrages aimed at Israel from Gaza, a man in his 50s collapsed in a shopping center near Rishon LeZion having suffered a spontaneous cardiac arrest. After bystanders began screaming for help, staff members from a clinic inside the shopping center arrived at the scene and called emergency services for backup.

United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Daniel Tubiana had just finished responding to another emergency when he was alerted to the incident by the shopping center. He immediately headed to the mall on his ambucycle and found the staff from the clinic performing CPR on the patient, with a defibrillator attached. He joined in the resuscitation efforts, performing chest compressions and providing assisted ventilation to the patient. After several minutes of intense work, which included three electric shocks administered by the AED, the patient regained full consciousness.

“It was an amazing feeling,” recounted Daniel. Just an hour earlier, I arrived at the scene of another cardiac arrest after the patient’s pulse was restored. Now I responded to a second incident in which a person also suffered a cardiac arrest, and this time I had the privilege of saving a life. For me, this was very powerful, more so than regular rescues particularly given the current security context.”

Despite the tense situation in Rishon LeZion due to multiple rocket attacks against the city, Tubiana remained calm and focused during the incident.

“Indeed, I felt a sense of urgency due to the situation,” Tubiana said. “But I was determined to do my job and help those in need.”



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