

# ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1525

OU  
ישראל

22 JULY 2023 • ד' אב תשפ"ג

פרשת דברים

PARSHAT DEVARIM

AVOT CHAPTER 3 • SHABBAT CHAZON



Devarim/Chazon: Questions  
Rabbi Judah Mischel  
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איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם ומשאכם וריבכם  
דברים א:י"ב

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT TIMES PARSHAT DEVARIM

CANDLES 7:08PM • EARLIEST 6:16PM • HAVDALA 8:24PM • RABBEINU TAM 9:00PM



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## THIS WEEK'S COVER IMAGE!



### Painted by Aviva Dworkin

"We made aliyah 7 years ago to Kiryat Moshe (on our daughter's 2nd birthday). At an OU Next Gen event we were privileged to hear from Tzipora Pilz about her experience living on the Mnt of Olives. She shared with us so many interesting details about the Beit HaMikdash that I just felt I had to paint it myself. It was a way for me to feel as though I built the third Beit HaMikdash, and it gives me a sense of hope and encouragement that we have the ability to see the third Beit HaMikdash built in our days, may it be soon. Amen!"

## HELPFUL REMINDERS



**The Fast of Tisha Be'Av begins at sundown on Wednesday July 26, 7:45pm and concludes on Thursday at 8:09pm (Jerusalem time)**

Please see pages 72-75 for the laws and customs of Tisha B'Av



**Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad: 5 Av/Sat. night July 22**

**7 Days After Molad: 8 Av/ Tues. night July 25**

**Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 15 Av, Tues. Aug. 1, until 11:22 pm**

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



	DEVARIM			VA'ETCHANAN		
	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA
Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:08	6:16	8:24	7:03	6:13	8:19
Aza area (Netivot, S'derot et al)	7:25	6:18	8:26	7:20	6:15	8:21
Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:26	6:17	8:25	7:22	6:14	8:20
Alon Shvut	7:23	6:16	8:24	7:19	6:13	8:19
Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	7:25	6:18	8:26	7:21	6:15	8:21
Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:24	6:17	8:25	7:19	6:14	8:20
Netanya	7:25	6:19	8:27	7:21	6:15	8:22
Be'er Sheva	7:23	6:17	8:24	7:19	6:14	8:19
Rehovot	7:25	6:18	8:26	7:20	6:15	8:21
Petach Tikva	7:08	6:18	8:26	7:03	6:15	8:21
Ginot Shomron	7:24	6:17	8:25	7:20	6:14	8:20
Haifa / Zichron	7:16	6:19	8:28	7:12	6:15	8:22
Gush Shiloh	7:23	6:16	8:24	7:19	6:13	8:19
Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:25	6:18	8:26	7:21	6:15	8:21
Giv'at Ze'ev	7:27	6:16	8:24	7:23	6:13	8:19
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:23	6:16	8:24	7:18	6:13	8:19
Ashkelon	7:25	6:19	8:26	7:21	6:15	8:21
Yad Binyamin	7:24	6:18	8:25	7:20	6:14	8:20
Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:20	6:17	8:26	7:15	6:13	8:21
Golan	7:23	6:16	8:25	7:19	6:13	8:20
Nahariya/Ma'alot	7:25	6:19	8:28	7:21	6:15	8:22

**Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 9:00PM • Next Week - 8:56PM**

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;  
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

**Daf Yomi this Shabbat: Gittin 67**



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## JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat**

**July 19 - 29 / 1 - 11 Av**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin **4:48 - 4:56**

Sunrise **5:46 - 5:53**

Sof Zman Kriat Shema **9:16 - 9:19**

Magen Avraham **8:33 - 8:37**

Sof Zman Tefila **10:25 - 10:27**

(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)

Chatzot (Halachic Noon) **12:45**

Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) **1:20**

Plag Mincha **6:17 - 6:12**

Sunset (Including Elevation) **7:49 - 7:43**



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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

Due to the passing of our beloved Rav Sholom Gold *zt"l*, I delayed the article I had planned to share last week in order to pay tribute to the life he led. The following idea is therefore one week late, but I hope you find its message to be meaningful and relevant nonetheless.

I had the *zechut* of attending *hesder* at Yeshivat Shilo. The *hesder* program is a 5 year program, 1.5 years in Yeshiva, 1.5 years in the army, followed by another 2 years in Yeshiva. One of the unique aspects of the *hesder* program is that the vast majority of young men enrolled in *hesder* enlist in combat units. Once, a few classmates asked for permission to attend an event taking place during *seder*.

My first year rabbi responded by saying, "Is this something that you would be allowed to leave your post if you were on duty in the army? Is this event worth giving up on Torah learning and risking the protection of the IDF while you stop learning? If the answer to those two questions is 'yes,' then you can go." The lesson he left us with was clear and it is one I have not forgotten.

In this week's *parsha*, 37 days before Moshe's passing, he reviews the Torah, beginning with the commandment of studying and observing *mitzvot*.

"וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל... שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶת-הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת-הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי דֹבֵר  
בְּאָזְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם וְלִמְדֶתֶם אֹתָם וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם  
לַעֲשֹׂתָם"

*Moshe summoned all of Am Yisrael and said to them: Hear, O Israel, the laws and rules that I proclaim to you this day! Study them and observe them faithfully!*

Just a few *p'sukim* later, he emphasizes the importance of taking care of our lives:

"וְנִשְׁמְרֶתֶם מְאֹד לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם..."

*"For your own sake, therefore, be most careful..."* I find these two *mitzvot* to be particularly relevant for those living in *Eretz Yisrael* where we are surrounded by enemies.

However, we are assured of our security, as David HaMelech says in *Tehillim*,

"...אִם-ה' לֹא יִשְׁמַר-עִיר שְׁוֹא שָׁקֵד שׁוּמֵר,"

*"Unless HaShem watches over the city, the watchman keeps vigil in vain."* We are blessed with a world-leading and moral *Tzahal*, and time and time again our soldiers are put in danger. Whether it be on a typical day of guard duty, patrols, during specific missions or in times of war, we are constantly reminded of our fragility.

Every time the IDF faces a known enemy and prepares for battle, I feel deeply grateful for the two gifts we are given through which we can channel our anxieties and fears into meaningful action for the protection of the IDF - *tefillah* and *limud* Torah. Without them, I would feel helpless.

In 1981, Operation Opera took place during which Israel attacked Iraq's nuclear reactor. It was a complicated 3 hour mission set to begin at 1:00 pm. Before the operation began, Prime Minister Menachem Begin



sent his personal advisor Yechiel Kadishai to Rav Schach zt”l for a *bracha* that all should go well. To their surprise, Rav Schach told them to delay the mission until 4:00 pm when the *bachurim* would return from their break to the *Beit Midrash* and could learn in the *zechut* of the mission’s success. Ultimately the mission was successful.

Two weeks ago, at the start of the two-day operation in Jenin, Sivan Rahav-Meir interrupted her regular programming to share a personal story. On the screen she shared a photo of a *toranut* schedule, written down in pencil by students from *Yeshivat Maale Adumim*, a Yeshiva I went to after school when I was in 7th and 8th grade. Upon learning about the upcoming mission, for which some of their classmates were called up to serve, the students gathered together to create a schedule of learning in the merit of the soldiers entering enemy territory.

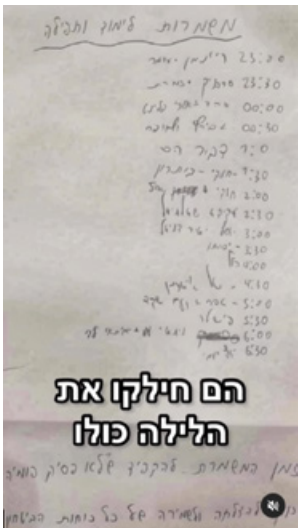


Photo shared by Sivan Rahav-Meir of the schedule of Torah learning set to take place to protect the soldiers of the mission

Their schedule accounted for every 30 minutes. Sivan shared this story to remind viewers of the power of our *tefilah* and Torah learning in times of danger, urging her audience to join in the effort and do their part. Soon after, another video was shared of the address given by an IDF *rav* to the soldiers who were about to enter Jenin. He quoted *psukim* from *Tanach* that depicted the victory we would have with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* protecting us when conquering *Eretz Yisrael* and facing our enemies.



Rav in the IDF addressing the unit preparing to enter Jenin

Watching both videos I felt a tremendous boost of *chizuk* and a renewed sense of purpose, as I raised my eyes to the *Borei Olam* and *davened* for the safety of our boys and girls. I also dedicated my learning for the day to the protection of the many IDF troops who were sent into the area.

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Moreover, the clips I watched on repeat and sent around to my friends and family, reminded me of the *zechut* we have to live in a country where we have soldiers - those on the front lines in the IDF and those learning Torah - who are protecting Am Yisrael around the clock. I believe the *tefillot* and endless hours of learning dedicated to the safety of the soldiers, as well as the grueling training the IDF soldiers endured in their commitment to protecting Am Yisrael, gave them the *chizuk* and *siyata Dishmaya* they needed to be successful.

Tragically, as the IDF began to withdraw from the Jenin area, Sgt. First Class David Yehudah Yitzchak hy"d, from Beit El, was killed at just 23 years old. David Yehudah went to Yashlatz (ישראל"צ - ישיבת high school with one of my boys. The loss of his life is devastating for those who had the *zechut* to know him and the stories that have been shared since his passing have been humbling to say the least.

Just one day later, Am Yisrael suffered yet another tragedy with the death of Sgt. Major Shilo Amir hy"d from Givati, who was killed by a terrorist after stopping a suspicious car driving near homes in Kedumim. Shilo was buried next to David Yehudah Yitzchak on Har Herzl on *erev Shabbat* at the age of 22.

This week's *parsha* reminds us of the role each and every one of us plays in ensuring the safety of Am Yisrael. Bringing this idea

to life, I received a letter from a woman who shared an idea in which all students learning in *yeshivot* are given the name of a specific soldier to learn for that day. She felt that in doing so, soldiers could gain *chizuk* knowing the protection they have surrounding them that day, while those learning can feel an added sense of purpose.

May we see the impact of our *tefillot* and merit to see Moshe Rabbeinu's words from this week's *parsha* come to life:

וַיֵּרְאוּ כָל-עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ כִּי שָׁם ה' נִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ  
וַיֵּרְאוּ מִמֶּךָ

*And all the peoples of the earth shall see that uniform HaShem's name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you.*

As we enter the week of *Tisha B'Av*, where we see what happened to the Jewish people when we didn't have an army to defend us, it is another reminder to thank *HaShem* for the IDF which operates around the clock risking their lives to defend us.

I *daven* the Yitzhak and Amir families continue to find comfort during this difficult time and wish a *refuah shleima* for all those recovering from the recent wave of attacks on Klal Yisrael throughout the country.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring *Shabbat*,



Rabbi Avi Berman

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FROM THE DESK OF  
RABBI MOSHE HAUER

OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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# The Greatest and Most Recurring Obstacle to Redemption

We always read Parshat Devarim on the Shabbos preceding Tisha B'Av. This is obviously fitting as the Parsha begins by discussing the apparently imminent entry of the Jewish people into Eretz Yisrael and how that was subsequently suspended by the sin of the spies, an event that occurred on Tisha B'Av and is the template for our exile and mourning. Yet significantly, these two sections are interrupted by a discussion of the empaneling of many tiers of courts and judges. That discussion begins with the keyword "Eicha", a word firmly associated with our exile, and Moshe uses it to exclaim, "How can I alone bear your troubles, burdens, and quarrels?!"

Sforno (1:12) explains the order of the presentation, and his words are simple and poignant:

*"Moshe recalled this here so that they would remember their sins. For despite Moshe having told them that they would take over the land of Canaan without even having to fight for it, something that would be vastly beneficial and dignifying far beyond anything their property or other matters could have afforded them in the*

*desert, this did not stop them from engaging in quarrelsome behavior and undermining their interpersonal relationships in the process. Due to this interminable quarreling, Moshe even had to appoint a large number of judges over the individuals, requiring every 10 people to have at least one such judge. This could only have been due to a negative disposition."*

The Torah is presenting to us here the greatest obstacle in our path towards redemption. Just as our forefathers first entered the Galut as a result of the strife surrounding the sale of Yosef as a slave, and just as the Talmud explains our current exile by pointing to the strife and spite - the *sinat chinam* - that brought about the destruction of the Second Temple, these verses tell essentially the same story, explaining how our original march to redemption stopped in its tracks because of our chronic quarrels.

We need not say anything more. Our arguments bring on every kind of difficulty. Our friendship and peacefulness pave the path to Geulah. It is a clear choice and it is time we made it. ■



A day of study on  
**Ahavat Chinam**  
in Be'it Tovei Ha'ir



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So how did she do it?



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**24.7.23**

**6 AV 5783**

**9:00-20:30**

**9:00|**

**Gathering  
& Refreshments**

**9:45|**

**Opening Session -  
Rabbi Shapira &  
Rabbi Ullman**

**10:00-20:00|**

**Lectures**

**20:00|**

**Wrap up**



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## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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### PARSHAT DEVARIM

The book of Devarim is Moshe's soliloquy in the last weeks of his life. A rather long soliloquy, the better part of 28 chapters. He has a lot to say. He will not enter the Land of Israel. The Jewish people will. He has transferred leadership successfully; Aharon's successor is Elazar, Moshe's successor is Yehoshua.

We have seen parting words before: Yaakov in Parshat Vayechi charged his sons. But not for 28 chapters. Yaakov's was one chapter of 33 verses.

The English name for the book is Deuteronomy; the Midrash calls it Mishneh Torah. Both mean 2 – the second version of the Torah, or the repetition of the Torah. But those names are misleading. Moshe does not review the *entire* Torah. He relates only *some* stories, reviewing with the people *some* of what has occurred earlier in the Torah. But he leaves out much more than he reviews. He does not mention any of the book of Breishit. Nor any of the story in Egypt; nothing of the slavery. Or the plagues. Or the splitting of the Sea. Or of the instructions for the Mishkan. Or most of the book of Vayikra relating to Tuma and Tahara and Offerings. So, the review is not of the Torah; the review is of *some*, selected stories and laws of the Torah. We are compelled to ask why Moshe chose these stories as we encounter

them; and not others. And the order is not at all as they occurred; he changes the order. What's he getting at? What's driving Moshe? And as a last point of introduction. The language of Devarim is different. It is emotional. There is a lot of concern, of worry, of fear. Concern of failure, challenges that will be unmet, or met with failure. There is love: love of G-d for us and love of us for Him. Lots of zeal and passion; many emphatic forms. Moshe, in this departing speech, is sharing a lot of himself in a most revelatory fashion to the people from whom he is imminently departing.



#### 1ST ALIYA (DEVARIM 1:1-10)

Moshe related the events of the journey, the 11-day journey from Chorev to Kadesh Barnea. On 1 Shevat, year 40, Moshe related to the people all that G-d had instructed him about them. This was after the defeats of Sichon and Og, on the banks of the Jordan. He related: G-d instructed us to travel from Sinai and to take the Land of Israel, the Land promised to the forefathers. And I said: these people are now so numerous that I cannot bear them alone.

It took 40 years to go an 11-day journey. That is not very good mileage. Moshe begins his parting words with a description of the journey to the Land of Israel. Not with the story of the Exodus. Not even with the story of the giving of the Torah. His emphasis is the journey to the Land. The

people are about to enter the Land; they are preoccupied with that. Moshe meets them where they are, addressing their immediate concerns. He'll get to speaking about Sinai and about religious belief and about religious challenges. But right now, let's address the issue at hand: entering the Land.



### 2ND ALIYA (1:11 - 21)

I said then: Let's choose wise people to lead you. You agreed that this was a good idea. Wise leaders were appointed over thousands, hundreds, tens and officers of enforcement as well. I charged the judges saying: listen and rule fairly without bias. I commanded you in all the things you are to do. We traveled the desert to the Mount of the Emori, Kadesh Barnea. There I said: let's go without fear and take the Land.

It is curious that the first story Moshe feels a need to review is the appointing of the various upper court and lower court judges. After all, it doesn't seem to have anything to do with the march to the Land. In fact, there are other stories that do occur as part of the march, like the complaints for water that are simply skipped. Why mention the appointment of judges? Perhaps Moshe is addressing the unspoken concern of the people; how in the world are we going to manage without the leadership of Moshe? We will not prevail in the battles without him. Moshe, subtly tempers his indispensability. I can't do it all. I couldn't do it all then; I needed help from the beginning. And now too. I am dispensable. You will be fine without me.



### 3RD ALIYA (1:22 - 38)

You approached me to send spies to scout out the Land. I

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thought that was a good idea, choosing the leaders of the tribes for the task. They toured and returned with fruits of the Land exclaiming: The Land G-d is giving us is good. But you refused to go and rebelled against G-d saying: these have damaged our resolve telling us of the large people and the fortified cities. I insisted that G-d will fight the battle as He has done until now. But you did not trust in G-d Who has been guiding you by cloud and fire. You were told that all who do not believe they can enter the Land, will not enter the Land. And I too was told I would not enter; Yeshoshua will lead the people into the Land.

Moshe is creating a bond with the people: I asked you for judges and you thought my idea a good one. You asked me for spies and I thought your idea a good one. The differences in how Moshe relates this famous story of the spies and how the Torah itself described it is rich material for discussion. One of numerous differences is the role of the spies in this account: it's missing. Little is said of the spies. In Bamidbar it sounds like their bad report started a cascade of fear. Here, Moshe places the guilt on the people: based on the report of the spies, but clearly at the feet of the people. Perhaps Moshe is deliberately shifting emphasis from leaders to followers. You need good leaders: but you also need to be good followers. Blame for all national

failures cannot be laid at the feet of the leaders. The people need to also bear full responsibility for their decisions. And here the decision of the people was to rebel against G-d.



#### 4TH ALIYA (1:39 - 2:1)

Upon hearing that you would not enter the Land, you regretted your sin. You said: let us go to the Land. But you were warned that G-d would not be with you in this and the Emori chased you away like bees to the region of Seir. We dwelt in Kadesh and Har Seir for a long time.

When we follow the Divine plan, we will succeed. When we venture off on our own, devoid of Divine support, then we will be chased away like bees. Our success in taking the Land is due to our Divine partner.



#### 5TH ALIYA (2:2 - 30)

It was time to travel northward. Do not confront the descendants of your brother Esav who dwell in Seir. Circle their Land; pay for the food and water that you need from them. In addition, do not confront Moav for it is the rightful possession of the descendants of Lot. Past the land of Moav is Amon; do not confront Amon for it too is the rightful possession of the descendants of Lot. The region north of the Arnon is the land of Sichon and Og; those lands I have given to you. I offered to Sichon to pass through his land, but he refused; G-d made him stubborn so that we could take his land.

This description of our family ties with Esav and Lot is surprising; don't engage in war with Esav's descendants nor Lot's descendants. They are relatives. And we are to give regard to those relatives.



Yaakov's brother Esav settled in Seir. He deserves brotherly deference and hence leave him alone. Moav and Amon are nations from Lot, Avraham's nephew. Leave them alone as well; they are your relatives. Brothers, even when pursuing entirely different legacies, remain brothers nonetheless.



#### 6TH ALIYA (2:31 - 3:14)

G-d told us to take the lands of Sichon in war. The lands were conquered up to the Gilad. Og confronted us in the region toward the Bashan and he too was conquered. Their lands were given to Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Menashe.

These confrontations with Sichon and Og are the last stories in the book of Bamidbar, not too long ago. Moshe relates these stories right at the beginning of his long speech, even though if he were reviewing our history chronologically, they would have to wait 25 chapters. He does so to begin his long speech with success and with encouragement. He will want to warn the people, chastise them, tell them of their future failures; but that can all wait. Start with encouragement.



#### 7TH ALIYA (3:15 - 22)

The lands on the east of the Jordan including the Gilad and the lands from the Kineret to the Dead Sea were settled by Reuven and Gad and half of Menashe. I instructed these tribes to join the battle for the Land of Israel and then to return to their lands.

This is a very large patch of land: on the east side of the Jordan from the Dead Sea all the way up to the Hermon has been conquered and will be settled by the Jewish

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people. These early victories and Moshe's repetition of their stories allows Moshe to begin his long directives to the people on a high note, an optimistic one. The description until here is how we got to where we are. Now he will focus on the much more crucial directives: how to live in the Land.

## HAFTORAH YESHAYAHU 1:1-27

This week's *haftorah* is the third of a series of three "*haftarot* of affliction." Yeshayahu conveys to the Jewish people of a G-dly vision he experienced, chastising the residents of Judah and Jerusalem for having rebelled against G-d. He criticized them for repeating their errors and not engaging in *teshuvah*. "*Woe to a sinful nation, a people heavy with iniquity, evildoing seed, corrupt children. They forsook G-d; they provoked the Holy One of Israel.*" The navi employs harsh words by comparing the Jewish leaders to the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Yeshayahu then speaks gentler words, encouraging the people to repent sincerely and to perform acts of justice and *chesed* towards the needy, orphans and widows, and promising them the best of the land

in return for their obedience. "*If your sins prove to be like crimson, they will become white as snow; if they prove to be as red as crimson dye, they shall become as wool.*" The *haftorah* concludes with an uplifting promise that G-d will one day reestablish Israel's judges and leaders, when "*Zion shall be redeemed through justice and her penitents through righteousness.*"

The first word of the *haftorah* is "*Chazon*" ("The vision [of Isaiah]"). The Shabbat when this *haftorah* is read, the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av, is thus called "Shabbat Chazon," the "Shabbat of the Vision." ■

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[Adam Sana]

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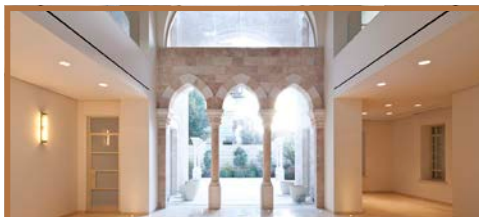
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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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## STATS

44th of the 54 sedras;

1st of 11 in D'varim.

Written on 196.5 lines (rank: 26th).

5 parshiyot; 1 open, 4 closed.

105 p'sukim - ranks 32, 6th in D'varim tied with Chayei Sara, but larger.

1548 words - ranks 26th, 6th in D'varim.

5972 letters - ranks 24, 5th in D'varim tied with Vayeishev, but smaller.

Jump in rankings from p'sukim to words & letters due to relatively long p'sukim.



## MITZVOT

**2 mitzvot - both prohibitions**

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Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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"And the rest of Gilad, and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, did I give to the half tribe of Menashe." (3:13)

How did Moshe divide up the land of Israel that such a colossal area went to half the tribe of Menashe, while the whole tribes of Gad and Reuven received smaller portions?

Furthermore, the half tribe of Menashe received their portion without prior stipulations or conditions as did Gad and Reuven?

Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (1816-1893 Volozhin) in his epic work the "Haemek Davar" explains that Moshe felt that the strength of the Torah would be weaker in the Eastern side of the Jordan River. Moshe ensured the spiritual legacy by encouraging the settlement of the area with Torah dignitaries. He did so by offering an excessive inheritance to entice part of Menashe so they would agree to settle there and bolster the preservation of the Torah.

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And then there is an autobiography.

Our biography is the way others see us. Our autobiography is the way we see ourselves.

Typically, there are sharp differences between the two. Others see us from their own perspectives. Some biographers can be boldly objective, confronting us with facts about ourselves which we did not see, and perhaps do not want to see. Other biographers have their own agendas and interpret our lives to fit their perceptions, frequently distorting the facts and the meaning of our lives in the process.

Similarly, in the accounts of our lives that we ourselves write, there are two broad possibilities. We can disclose all of our lives’ details accurately, hiding nothing. Or our autobiographies can be gross distortions of our life stories, intentionally falsified or unconsciously mistaken.

Whomever we think we are, we are well-advised to be aware of how others see us. This week in the synagogue, we read the Torah portion of *Devarim* and thus begin an entirely new book, the fifth of the five *chumashim*: the Book of *Devarim*, or *Deuteronomy*. The book we begin this

Shabbat differs fundamentally from the preceding four, so much so that the rabbis call it *Mishneh Torah*, a “Second” Torah, a review of much that came before.

For me, there has always been something else that distinguished *Devarim* and made it astoundingly different, not only from the other Books of Moses, but from every other book in the entire Bible. It is an autobiography!

Whereas the other biblical books are invariably written in the third person, *Deuteronomy* is written, or more correctly spoken, by Moses in the first person. Moses speaks to us in his own voice.

Repetitively, until this week, we have read, “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying...” This week, we will read again and again, “And the Lord spoke to *me*...”

We will read not, “And the Lord commanded...,” but, “And *I* commanded...” The attentive reader of these texts cannot help but be astonished by this remarkable shift.

This transition into the first person gives us the opportunity to relate to Moses directly, to hear his personal take on all that we have been reading about until this point.

This week, we will hear Moses complain

about the pressures of leadership in his own voice. We will overhear him exclaim, “How can I alone bear your bothersome, burdensome, and petty squabbles?” And we will eavesdrop upon him as he transcends his resentments and profusely blesses the people.

And next week, again in his very own words, he will tell us of his enthusiasm for the Land of Israel, and of how desperately he petitions the Almighty to allow him entrance into the Land. And he will intimately disclose to us his disappointment when his prayers are rebuffed.

As we proceed through the parade of self-disclosures of this book, we will learn more and more about Moses the person. He will not hide his faults from us, he will tell us his versions of events, and he will select the *mitzvot* which he deems important to introduce or to review.

*Devarim* is the window into the mind and heart of Moshe Rabbeinu, Moses our teacher, the single most important personality in Jewish history.

This week’s Torah portion contains the opening chapter of what may very well be the world’s oldest autobiography. Like every good autobiography should, it instructs the student, interests the reader, and inspires us all.

It is instructive, for it teaches us how to be honest with ourselves. Moses is humble, but he knows who he is. His self-image does not change in response to the hostility of his detractors, nor does his head swell because of the flattery of those who adulate him. He never loses sight of his mission and task, no matter what is going on in his psyche.

Reading it is a privilege because it is a

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rare example of a leader who allows us to peek into his inner life and who shares with us his doubts, fears, and hopes.

But more than a privilege, *Devarim* is a challenge and an inspiration. We are challenged by the awareness that, in many ways, we are no different from Moses. We too have our frustrations, limitations, and unanswered prayers, and we too have the ability to cope, to overcome, and to graciously accept failure and disappointment.

Finally, it is an inspiration to read of a leader who candidly and openly shares his innermost thoughts and emotions for all to know, and for all time. An inspiration surely for all who wish to learn, to strive, to hope, and to persevere.

Have I convinced you that I was correct in the title I selected for this essay, “*Devarim: A Sublime Autobiography?*” ■



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# To 120: Growing Old, Staying Young

On 27 March 2012, to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the Queen, an ancient ceremony took place at Buckingham Palace. A number of institutions presented Loyal Addresses to the Queen, thanking her for her service to the nation. Among them was the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Its then President, Vivian Wineman, included in his speech the traditional Jewish blessing on such occasions. He wished her well “until a hundred and twenty.”

The Queen was amused and looked quizzically at Prince Philip. Neither of them had heard the expression before. Later the Prince asked what it meant, and we explained. A hundred and twenty is stated as the outer limit of a normal human lifetime in Genesis 6:3. The number is especially associated with Moses, about whom the Torah says:

“Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were undimmed and his strength undiminished.” (Deut. 34:7)

Together with Abraham, a man of very different personality and circumstance, Moses is a model of how to age well. With the growth of human longevity, this has become a significant and challenging issue for many of us. How do you grow old yet stay young?

The most sustained research into this topic is the Grant Study, begun in 1938, which has tracked the lives of 268 Harvard students for almost eighty years, seeking to understand what characteristics – from personality type to intelligence to health, habits, and relationships – contribute to human flourishing. For more than thirty years, the project was directed by George Vaillant, whose books *Aging Well* and *Triumphs of Experience* have explored this fascinating territory.<sup>1</sup>

Among the many dimensions of successful aging, Vaillant identifies two that are

1. George Vaillant, *Aging Well*, Little, Brown, 2003; *Triumphs of Experience*, Harvard University Press, 2012.



particularly relevant in the case of Moses. The first is what he calls *generativity*,<sup>2</sup> namely taking care of the next generation. He quotes John Kotre who defines it as “to invest one’s substance in forms of life and work that will outlive the self.”<sup>3</sup> In middle or later life, when we have established a career, a reputation, and a set of relationships, we can either stagnate or decide to give back to others: to community, society, and the next generation. Generativity is often marked by undertaking new projects, often voluntary ones, or by learning new skills. Its marks are openness and care.

The other relevant dimension is what Vaillant calls *keeper of the meaning*. By this he means the wisdom that comes with age, something that is often more valued by traditional societies than modern or post-modern ones. The “elders” mentioned in Tanach are people valued for their experience. “Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you,” says the Torah (Deut. 32:7). “Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?” says the book of Job (12:12).

Being a keeper of the meaning means handing on the values of the past to the future. Age brings the reflection and detachment that allows us to stand back and not be swept along by the mood of the moment or passing fashion or the madness of the crowd. We need that wisdom,

2. The concept of generativity is drawn from the work of Erik Erikson, who saw it – and its opposite, stagnation – as one of one of the eight developmental stages of life.

3. John Kotre, *Outliving the Self: Generativity and the Interpretation of Lives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 10.

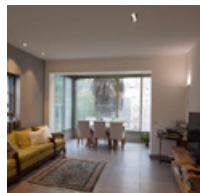


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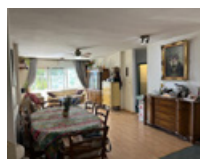


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especially in an age as fast-paced as ours where huge success can come to people still quite young. Examine the careers of recent iconic figures like Bill Gates, Larry Page, Sergey Brin, and Mark Zuckerberg, and you will discover that at a certain point they turned to older mentors who helped steer them through the white-water rapids of their success. *Asseh lecha rav*, “Acquire for yourself a teacher” (Avot 1:6, 16) remains essential advice.

What is striking about the book of Devarim, set entirely in the last month of Moses’ life, is how it shows the aged but still passionate and driven leader, turning to the twin tasks of generativity and keeper of the meaning.

It would have been easy for him to retire into an inner world of reminiscence, recalling the achievements of an extraor-

who led an entire people from slavery to freedom and to the brink of the Promised Land. Alternatively he could have brooded on his failures, above all the fact that he would never physically enter the land to which he had spent forty years leading the nation. There are people – we have all surely met them – who are haunted by the sense that they have not won the recognition they deserved or achieved the success of which they dreamed when they were young.

Moses did neither of those things. Instead in his last days he turned his attention to the next generation and embarked on a new role. No longer Moses the liberator and lawgiver, he took on the task for which he has become known to tradition: *Moshe Rabbeinu*, “Moses our teacher.” It was, in some ways, his greatest achievement.

He told the young Israelites who they were, where they had come from and what their destiny was. He gave them laws, and did so in a new way. No longer was the emphasis on the Divine encounter, as it had been in Vayikra, or on sacrifices as it was in Bamidbar, but rather on the laws in their social context. He spoke about justice, and care for the poor, and consideration for employees, and love for the stranger. He set out the fundamentals of Jewish faith in a more systematic way than in any other book of Tanach. He told them of God’s love for their ancestors, and urged them to reciprocate that love with all their heart, soul, and might. He renewed the covenant, reminding the people of the blessings they would enjoy if they kept faith with God, and the curses that would befall them if they did not. He taught them the great song



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responsibilities of freedom.

It is all too easy to abandon your ideals when you see how hard it is to change even the smallest part of the world, but when you do you become cynical, disillusioned, disheartened. That is a kind of spiritual death. The people who don't, who never give up, who "do not go gentle into that good night,"<sup>4</sup> who still see a world of possibilities around them and encourage and empower those who come after them, keep their spiritual energy intact.

There are people who do their best work young. Felix Mendelssohn wrote the *Octet* at the age of 16, and the *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream* a year later, the greatest pieces of music ever written by one so young. Orson Welles had already

4. The first line of Dylan Thomas' poem of that title.



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achieved greatness in theatre and radio when he made *Citizen Kane*, one of the most transformative films in the history of cinema, at the age of 26.

But there were many others who kept getting better the older they became. Mozart and Beethoven were both child prodigies, yet they wrote their greatest music in the last years of their life. Claude Monet painted his shimmering landscapes of water lilies in his garden in Giverny in his eighties. Verdi wrote *Falstaff* at the age of 85. Benjamin Franklin invented the bifocal lens at age 78. The architect Frank Lloyd Wright completed designs for the Guggenheim Museum at 92. Michelangelo, Titian, Matisse, and Picasso all remained creative into their ninth decade. Judith Kerr who came to Britain when Hitler came to power in 1933 and wrote the

children's classic *The Tiger who came to Tea*, recently won her first literary award at the age of 93. David Galenson in his *Old Masters and Young Geniuses* argues that those who are conceptual innovators do their best work young, while experimental innovators, who learn by trial and error, get better with age.<sup>5</sup>

There is something moving about seeing Moses, at almost 120, looking forward as well as back, sharing his wisdom with the young, teaching us that while the body may age, the spirit can stay young *ad me'ah ve'esrim*, until 120, if we keep our ideals, give back to the community, and share our wisdom with those who will come after us, inspiring them to continue what we could not complete. ■

5. David Galenson, *Old Masters and Young Geniuses*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

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This pre-Tisha B'av reading, the last of the three *haftarot* of punishment (*t'lat d'pur'anuta*), begins by describing the punishments that would befall Israel and continues with a forceful condemnation of the sinful people. Although this *haftara* is taken from the opening chapter of Sefer Yish'ayahu most rabbinic authorities agree that it is not the prophet's earliest vision – something that is reserved for the prophecy found in the sixth chapter, where Yish'ayahu receives his charge from G-d to undertake the responsibility of being a *navi*.

It is curious, therefore, why the ancient editors chose this specific vision to open the entire Sefer Yishayahu – the longest book in all of the *nevi'im acharonim* (latter prophets), rather than the prophet's first message to the nation. To better understand why this was done, we turn to the text itself to uncover the prophet's primary theme that would have impacted the ancients in choosing it as the opening message to Israel.

Although his book is filled with criticisms over the nation's widespread idolatry and faithlessness to G-d, Yishayahu does not focus on that at all in this opening *perek*. Likewise, although he does denounce Israel's sacrificial rite, repeating how G-d rejects their offerings and even refers to them as being “wearisome” [*“nil'eiti n'so”*] and, worse, “abominable” to God [*“to'eva”*], he does not see that ritual service as being

“sinful”, only that they are regarded as meaningless. Rather, the one precise sin upon which the *navi* focuses, the one sin that sets the tone for the first chapter and, in turn the entire sefer, is INjustice and Corruption.

Yes, it is true that Hashem has rejected the people sacrifices, He is “weary” of them, “disgusted” (!) by them, “burdened” by them, and even turns a deaf ear to their prayers, calling them “worthless”. But WHY does Hashem reject their *korbanot*? WHY are their prayers worthless? The prophet is quite clear. The city of Jerusalem was once “*mile'ati mishpat*,” filled with justice, “*tzedek yalin bah*,” righteousness dwelled within her-but now, murderers do! Justice and Righteousness, “*tzedek*” and “*mishpat*,” were no longer pursued and this failure, Yishayahu declares, has G-d turn His back to them. It was not how the people treated Hashem or how they worshipped Him - as improper as that was – it was the way they treated each other that would bring destruction upon the nation!

THIS was the message that ancient scholars chose to begin Yishayahu's book of condemnation and consolation. It is the message of this *perek* that had to echo in the ears of that generation and all future generations. And the final *p'sukim* make our path to repair and return very clear. Yishayahu completes his message by explaining what Hakadosh Baruch Hu demands: “*Dirshu mishpat*,” seek justice,

he cries, “*Ishru chamotz*” support the victim, “*Rivu almana*,” and fight for the widow. This call for social justice fills the words of Yish’ayahu and every prophet who followed. It is an essential challenge to the descendants of Abraham who was himself chosen “*l’ma’an asher yetzaveh et banav*,....” so that he will charge his descendants, “*v’shamru derech HASHEM*,” to keep G-d’s ways, “*la’asot t’zdaka umishpat*,” and practice **justice and righteousness**.

The prophet calls out to his generation and ours as well to repair our relationship with others, our treatment of our fellows, our care for the unfortunate so that we will see the fruition of the *haftara*’s final words: “*tziyon b’mishpat tipadeh, v’shaveha btz’daka*.” Tziyon will be redeemed through **justice** and those who return to her-through **righteousness**! ■

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# Effective Criticism

Sefer Devarim opens with a listing of certain locations through which Am Yisrael traveled during their 40 year journey in the desert. Hazal decipher that each of the locations mentioned highlights a particular transgression that transpired at that site. There is however one location that is unfamiliar. **Di-Zahav** is not previously mentioned in the Torah, nor is it referenced elsewhere in Tanach. Where is this place?

The literal meaning of Di-Zahav is “enough gold”. Some interpret this to refer to the sin of the **golden** calf. Why then is it referenced as **enough** gold? The Gemara (Berachot 32a) suggests as follows:

וְדִי זָהָב מֵאִי וְדִי זָהָב אֲמַרְי דְּבִי ר' יְנָאי כִּךְ אָמַר  
מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי הַקֶּב"ה רְבוּנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם בִּשְׁבִיל כֶּסֶף  
וְזָהָב שֶׁהִשְׁפַּעַת לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַד שֶׁאָמְרוּ דִּי הוּא  
גֶּרֶם שֶׁעָשׂוּ אֶת הָעֵגֶל

**“And Di Zahav”** (Devarim 1:1). This is an entry in a list of places where Moses had spoken to Israel. As there was no place encountered by that name, it is interpreted as an allusion to another matter. We must clarify: **What is the meaning of and Di Zahav? The Sages of the school of Rabbi Yannai said that Moshe said the following before the Holy One, Blessed be He, to atone for Israel after the sin of the Golden Calf: Master of the Universe, because of the gold and silver that you**

**lavished upon Israel during the exodus from Egypt until they said enough [dai]; it was this wealth that caused Israel to make the Golden Calf.**

The gemara seems to re-read the term **Di-Zahav** as referencing Moshe’s defense of Am Yisrael. The people sinned because You, God, provided them with gold when they left Egypt. If they were not gifted with gold, they would not have had the means to build the golden calf.

The previous words in the pasuk reference transgressions and serve as rebuke, and suddenly at the end of the pasuk the gemara suggests that Moshe is defending the people? Why this sudden shift?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Z”L (*Judaism’s Life Changes Ideas*) provides an insightful explanation. Throughout Sefer Devarim Moshe is relentless in his criticism of the people. *“From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against God.... You have been rebellious against God ever since I have known you”* (Devarim, 9:7, 24).

Criticism is easy to deliver but difficult to bear. Often people deflect criticism rather than accept it. They could have felt – *“Moshe is blaming us? He was in charge and should blame himself”*. For criticism to be accepted the recipient has to believe, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the one delivering the criticism sincerely seeks the best for them. The critique is for the benefit of the recipient, so that they can improve upon themselves.



Here the Torah relays Moshe's defense of the nation after their transgression of the golden calf to highlight that Moshe always had their best interest in mind. He challenged God on the nation's behalf. Understanding that Moshe went to bat for them, led the people to trust that Moshe's criticism was sincere, and his intention was not merely to mock, but to seek to empower and make them better individuals.

At times we may feel it appropriate to criticize a child, spouse or acquaintance. For it to be effective the manner in which the critique is delivered is crucial. For it to be accepted, the recipient of the criticism must be certain that the intention is not to belittle them. As Moshe portrayed to the people, the one providing the criticism has to clearly do so out of concern for the well being of the other. May we internalize this lesson so we can effectively deliver critique when appropriate. ■



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# Declaring Distance

It is a most curious aspect that on Tisha B'av, the saddest day of the year, we do not recite *Tachanun*, the penitential prayer traditionally said morning and afternoon following the daily *amidah*. “*Kara alai mo’ed* – [Hashem] has called an assembly against me.” (*Eichah* 1:15) Our sages extrapolate from the word “*mo’ed*” that Tisha B'av is referred to as a **festival** and therefore ruled for *Tachanun* not to be included in the *tefilah* of that day. How are we to understand this? In what way is Tisha B'av considered a *mo’ed*, a special day associated with celebration?

Rav Wolbe in *Alei Shor* quotes his Rebbe, Rav Yerucham Levovitz, sharing a very profound insight. He explains that most holidays are meant to celebrate **closeness**. The *shalosh regalim*, for example, were designated times when the Jews would ascend to the Beit Hamikdash en masse and feel Hashem's Presence. Even today, these *chagim* create a bond of connection to Hashem, His Torah and His people. However, there is also a concept of a festival that celebrates **distance**. The worst state for Jew is one in which he considers himself close when in actuality he is negligibly far. As the expression, based on

*Sotah* 22b, goes, “one does the act of Zimri, and desires the reward of Pinchas.” Often, we see complacency setting in and people consider themselves very religious, when indeed they have a lot more growing and changing to do. One must make an honest accounting to evaluate if he is truly close, or really very far. Tisha B'av is a time when we can exercise that introspection and authenticity. It is a time to realize that the Beit Hamikdash within us is in shambles. It is a time to admit that we are very ‘far’ from the expectations that Hashem has of us; a time to embrace our shortcomings so that we can begin to rebuild from a place of truthfulness, from inside out.

*Yirmiyahu Hanavi* castigates his generation for sinning with idolatry and a host of other sins. Yet, he declares that their ultimate judgement will come because they said, “*ki nikeiti ... lo chatati* – I am innocent...I have not sinned!” (*Yirmiyahu* 2:35) The inability to recognize one's true state is the greatest tragedy of all. Tisha B'av is a time to assess our priorities and how much time and effort we invest in the things we value. Yes, it is a holiday highlighting distance, a *mo’ed*, an appointed time to connect with the parts of us that need to be brought closer.

“*Kol rodfehah hisigu'hah ben hametzarim*.” The plain meaning is, “all her pursuers overtook her between the straits.” (*Eichah* 1:3) However, Chasidic masters

explain the verse as, “all who are **rodef Kah**,” all who pursue **Hashem** during this time will succeed in finding a true connection. The laws of mourning enable us to avoid the distractions of life so we can focus on that which is meaningful and important. The *Mussar* giants explain that Tisha B'av has a similar spiritual value to *Ne'ilah* on Yom Kippur. We immerse ourselves in a frank assessment of our spiritual level; we yearn and envision how we can improve. With this approach we are undoubtedly taking part in the process of rebuilding the Beit Hamikdash, globally and personally. ■

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**9:15 AM**

Journey Through the Siddur  
**Rabbi David Walk**

**10:20 AM**

Mishnah with Rambam's  
commentary  
**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**  
(Resumes Aug. 27)

**10:30 AM**

Special Pre- Tisha B'Av  
Shiur- Faith within the  
Flames - **Rabbi Sam  
Shor**

**11:30 AM**

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

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

MON, JULY 24

**9:15 AM**

Sefer Kohelet (L'Ayla)  
**Rebbetzin Pearl Borow**

**10:30 AM**

The Thought of Rav Kook  
on Eretz Yisrael: A study of  
the sefer Eretz Chefetz  
**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**  
(Resumes Aug. 14)

**11:45 AM**

Novel Parsha Nuances  
**Rabbi Avi Herzog**

**8:30 PM**

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

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TUE, JULY 25

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**  
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)  
(Resumes Aug. 15)

**10:30 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Yosef Goldin**

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

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

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

**8:00PM**

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi Machlis**

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**7:00PM**

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WED, JULY 26

**9:00 AM**

Teachings of Rav Sholom Gold  
zt'l on Jerusalem and Israel  
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**10:15 AM**

Contemporary Halachic  
Issues  
**Rabbi Anthony Manning**

**11:30 AM**

Ani Maamin-But Do You  
Know if it's Really True?  
**Rabbi Yitzchak  
Feigenbaum**

**12:30 PM** Lunch and Learn

**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**8:00 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick** (The Bais)  
(Resumes Aug 2)

THURS, JULY 27

**TISHA B'AV**

**8:30 AM**

Shacharit

**9:30 AM**

Light Emerges From  
Darkness. Explanatory  
Kinot Program with  
**HaRav Azarya Berzon**

**1:20pm**

Mincha

**6:00 pm**

Turning the Page- Lessons  
from Tisha B'Av-  
**Dr. David Luchins-**  
Followed by Maariv



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**Rabbi Taub**

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

**Rebbetzin Shatz**

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

**Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua  
Wed. 8:30PM  
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# Devarim/Chazon: Questions

Rav Yehoshua Yogel zt'l, was born in Lodz, Poland, and was a student of the famed Lithuanian yeshivah in Kletzk, where he studied with the great Rav Aharon Kotler. After his *aliyah* in 1936, Rav Yogel learned at Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav and played a formidable role in rebuilding Torah in the Land of Israel after the war. While active in Mizrachi, a Religious Zionist movement, he maintained close relationships with both the Chazon Ish and Rav Shach, the latter an old yeshiva-mate who considered Rav Yogel a 'dear friend'.

Rav Yogel was part of a unique *chaburah* of great teachers and builders during the most turbulent and transitional times in modern Jewish history. One of Rav Yogel's mentors was the accomplished gaon, Rav Zvi Yehuda Meltzer, a disciple of the Alter of Novardok and eldest son of the Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rav of Pardes Chana and

Rav Meltzer's son in law, Rav Yehuda Amital, zt'l was a unique *talmid chacham*, visionary and builder of Torah as well. After his family was killed in Auschwitz, Rav Amital came to Eretz Yisrael, fought in the Haganah and was the founding Rosh Yeshiva of Har Etzion (a.k.a "the Gush"). Respected for his penetrating genius and fierce independence, Rav Amital was beloved as a humble *gadol b'Yisrael* and deeply caring and dedicated rebbi.

In Pardes Chana, Rav Yogel and Rav Amital worked together at "HaMidrashiya", one of the first yeshivah high schools with a dual curriculum of Torah and secular studies. In those days a great debate raged in the world of academia and Biblical criticism regarding the alleged multiple authorship of *Sefer Yeshayahu*. The traditional response was to not even entertain questions aimed at undermining the singular authorship and Divine source of the *Navi*.

One day, a passionate student challenged Rav Amital and asked him such a question directly. Much to the student's surprise, Rav Amital answered simply that he did not know. The frank honesty of the response diffused the conversation — and disappointed Rav Yogel. "How could you say that you don't know the answer?!"





Rav Amital replied: “Do you think this *shmendrik* is really bothered by the integrity of the Book of Yeshayahu? He’s looking for an excuse to stop wearing tefillin and keeping the mitzvot! With my answer, I wanted to show that I, despite not knowing how to answer every question, continue to put on tefillin every day.”

Our *sedra*, Parshas Devarim, is always read on the Shabbos immediately preceding Tishah B'av. In Sefer Devarim, also called *Mishneh Torah*, “The Review of the Torah”, Moshe Rabbeinu begins to review the triumphs and travails (mainly travails) of Am Yisrael in the Midbar. At one point, I recalls telling Am Yisrael:

אֵיכָה אֶשָּׂא לְבַדִּי טְרַחְתְּכֶם וּמִשְׁאָכְכֶם וְרִיבְכֶם:  
*“Eichah, ‘how’ can I bear your trouble, your burden, and your strife all by myself?” (1:12)*

In Jewish consciousness and language, *Eichah* is a plea, a desperate cry, from deep within — a question and lament, demanding “How? How could this be! How can this continue?” In a precious *minhag Yisrael*, the *baal korei* publicly chanting the Torah emphasizes the connection of this *pasuk* with the essence of Tisha B’Av, by *leyning* it with the mournful melody of *Megillas Eichah*. This fleeting hint at lamentation awakens our hearts to reflect on the unimaginable devastation and loss, suffering, death and exile experienced with and symbolized by the *Churban*, the destruction.

Midrash (*Eichah Rabbah*, 1:1) lists three examples of prophets who used the term *eichah*: Moshe Rabbeinu, Yeshayahu, and Yirmiyahu. Each employed the word to

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express different stages and experiences throughout our history.

On Tisha b'Av we join the *Navi Yirmiyahu* in his plea of *eichah*, asking, crying out in confusion, passionate sorrow and pain: 'How can this go on?! How can Klal Yisrael continue to exist in this state of *churban*?' The Megillah begins with the question and challenge: '*Eichah!* How can it be that the City, which was so full of life, now sits alone?'

A broken hearted cry of *Eichah* to Hashem can actually be heard as a form of prayer. Not every question has an answer, but not every question is asking for an 'answer'. The openness of uncertainty, not knowing and questioning itself reveals the presence of deeper faith — in fact the essence of belief. Cognitive and spiritual dissonance can only appear on a backdrop of resonance. The destruction of Hashem's City bothers us because deep down we know it is an Eternal City. The paradox is almost too much for our human mind and heart to bear: "How can this be?!"

.....

*Zohar HaKadosh (Bereishis, 29a)* directs our attention to the first time the word *איכה* appears in Torah. Following the tragic error of *Adam haRishon* eating from *Eitz haDaas*, he is filled with shame and 'hides', seeking to escape the repercussions of his actions. Before Adam and Chavah face banishment from Gan Eden, the root experience of all exiles, Hashem calls out to Adam, seeking him out to take responsibility: *איכה*, *Ayekah*, "Where are you?" In Hebrew, '*ayekah*' has the same spelling as '*eichah*'.

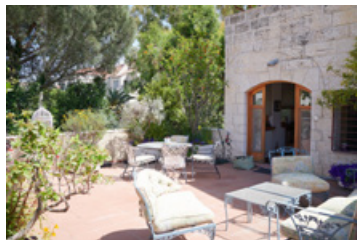
If we look outward and seek answers or explanations for our suffering, Hashem may not give us a direct answer. He may, instead, redirect our focus inward, demanding that we ask ourselves 'Where am I? What responsibility do *I* bear for the continued exile of Knesses Yisrael from her eternal homeland?'

Some questions and challenges addressed to our Creator might always remain unanswerable. If Mashiach has not come before this Tisha b'Av, God forbid, perhaps instead of focusing only on the unanswerable questions around our inexplicable exile, we ought to shift our emphasis inward, and ask ourselves the pointed, yet faithful, question: *Ayekah?* "Where am I in all this — and what must I do to change it?" ■



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# How Did We Do It?

As we approach the end of our long galus, Tisha B'av takes on new features. As in the past, we mourn our historical suffering, our destroyed Mikdash and our lost sovereignty. At our advanced stage of history though, Tisha B'av also invites us to look back at Jewish exile, explore its mysteries and appreciate its victories.

Our survival over the past two thousand years is the greatest anthropological miracle in the history of Mankind. How did we pull off this miracle? What tools did Hashem empower us with to outlast this historical struggle?

### OUR "SECRET" LANGUAGE

We may not have possessed a common language of "communication" but we did possess a common language of practice and of culture, called Torah sheba'al peh. As Torah she-bichtav was intended for a broader audience, Moshe Rabeinu translated it into 70 languages, assuring its universal access.

By contrast, Torah she'ba'al peh was never intended for a broader international audience, but was designed solely for Jewish consumption. For this reason, it was initially crafted as an oral tradition, available only to "insiders" who were privy

to the internal "conversation". At various stages of history, as our capacity to retain this oral tradition diminished, parts of Torah sheba'al peh were committed to text. To preserve its insularity, though, Torah sheba'al peh was written in conversationalist style, replicating the ancient discussions of the beis medrash. Without direct exposure to this internal discourse, outsiders are still unlikely to access the full sweep of Torah sheba'al peh. Torah sheba'al peh—both in practice and in study—was crafted as the private domain of our people—the marriage of the divine word to the Jewish imagination.

Given its exclusivity, Torah sheba'l peh, became our secret language throughout our winding exile. Though we were dispersed across the world, we still shared a common national language. Wherever a Jew landed he immediately shared the common vocabulary of halacha, such as mikveh, shabbat, tefillah, and kashrus. Beyond the practice of halacha, the study of Torah sheba'al peh functioned as a common "intellectual" language. Common Talmudic discourse united a Jew in Iraq with a Jew in Iberia, a Jew in Egypt with a Jew in England, and a Jew in America with one in White Russia.

### STUBBORNNESS

In the Kuzari, Rebbe Yehuda Halevi claims that our nation was selected by Hashem because of two national

tendencies. Firstly, we possess an uncanny ability to process supernatural information, such as Torah and prophecy. Secondly, we are a very stubborn people, unwilling to listen to others or bend in the face of adversity.

This determined obstinacy often hampered us. Shockingly, after witnessing miracles in Egypt, the splitting of the sea and the delivery of Torah we still rebelled against Hashem and against Moshe's authority. Additionally, during the First Mikdash period we literally stood at the doorstep of the Messianic era, yet, we foolishly betrayed our loyalty to Hashem, marrying foreign gods and aligning with foreign empires. Still too stubborn for our own good.

During the first 1300 years of Jewish history our stiff-necked stubbornness repeatedly sabotaged us. However, once we entered our dark galus, everything changed. Our national shortcoming became our forte. Facing a hostile world, we refused to abandon our ancient faith and our ancient traditions. Witnessing newfangled religions distort our Torah and ascend to the forefront of the historical stage we were not dispirited, and we clung to our faith in the divine voice we alone heard at Sinai.

And, our stubbornness prepared us for one final epic act of heroism. Having recovered from the Holocaust, the greatest horror to ever plague humanity, we were immediately tasked with returning to our Homeland and rebuilding it in the face of unending hostility and international disapproval. מי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ. עם קשה עורף.

Hashem was wise to select us and our stiff necks.

## **THE NETWORK**

Sadly, Jewish business acumen has always led to antisemitic stereotypes and venomous narratives about Jews controlling the financial sector. Yet, it is undeniable that we display uncommon business expertise.

Our success stems, in part, from our study of Torah. Until modern times the literacy rates of the "people of the book" far outpaced the literacy rates of the general population. We were perfectly suited for drawing up contracts, managing money and collecting taxes.

More importantly, we enjoyed a built-in network of Jews across the world. Bonded by fate and united through common practice, we always viewed ourselves as one large family.

Business success requires networks of trust. These webs of contacts help businesses access suppliers and clients. Our natural human networks catapulted us to success in business. Ironically, host empires faced annoying dilemmas: often despising the Jews, many empires conceded the Jewish impact upon their economic success. Despite their deep-seated hatred for us, we were often tolerated because of the value we added to the economy. Despite the fact that we were separated by oceans and continents, we still remained one happy, and sometimes unhappy, Jewish family.

## **MARTYRDOM**

None of this would have been effective had we not displayed the courage to protect Hashem's presence even when asked



to pay the ultimate price of our own lives. Jews do not have a death wish. We hope to live long healthy lives representing Hashem's will in our world. However, when Hashem's presence is contested, we have repeatedly sacrificed our lives on behalf of His name.

Jewish Martyrdom did not evolve in a vacuum. At two crucial junctures of Jewish history it was implanted into our national consciousness. At the dawn of Jewish history, Avraham and Yitzchak first created the mold of martyrdom. Willing to sacrifice everything to obey the inscrutable divine will, they created a national template.

Thousands of years later, on the eve of our long exile, Rebbe Akiva and the ten martyrs went to their death in defense of Hashem's presence. As he recited shema, Rebbe Akiva set in motion two thousand years of heroic Jewish martyrdom. Without our willingness to deliver our lives on behalf of Hashem the last two thousand years would have turned out very differently.

We are almost at the finish-line of history. On Tisha B'av we look back in triumph at the miracle of Jewish history. This is how we did it. ■

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## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR.  
ADINA SHMIDMAN



YESHAYAHU 1:1 - 1:27

# A Celestial Partnership: Exploring the Transcendent Dialogues of Our Prophets

Towards the beginning of the Haftorah, the Navi Yeshayahu summons heaven and earth. He cries out, שְׁמַעְיָ שְׁמַיִם, וְהִאֲזִינִי אֶרֶץ, *listen Heaven and pay close attention Earth*. The imagery that Yeshayahu employs is particularly noteworthy because Moshe Rabbeinu at the very end of his life also calls to Heaven and Earth. However, when Moshe addresses Heaven, he ask Heaven to pay close attention and when he speaks to Earth, he ask Earth to listen - הֲאִזְינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע אֶרֶץ - אֲמַרְיִכִּי. Many commentators discuss why Yeshayahu switches the verbs Moshe Rabbeinu uses when talking to Heaven and Earth. Radak suggests that Moshe, having spent forty days on two different occasions up in Heaven, is closer to Heaven and therefore it is natural for him to ask Heaven to pay close attention and for the Earth to merely listen. By contrast, Yeshayahu is naturally closer to Earth and asks the Earth to pay attention and Heaven to listen.

Perhaps an additional perspective as to why Yeshayahu flips the expressions that Moshe uses focuses not on Moshe

and Yeshayahu but rather on the nature of the messages that these great men seek to deliver. Moshe wants Heaven and Earth to bear witness to the eternal truth of Hashem and the Torah. He wants Klal Yisrael, on the cusp of their entry to the Land of Israel preparing to assume an agrarian way of life, to constantly look heavenward and not be consumed with earthly matters. Therefore, Moshe stresses the role of Heaven. Yeshayahu seeks to admonish the people who are absorbed with Earthly issues in a sinful way. He therefore implores the Earth to hearken to his message. The very same Earth they are consumed with is going to hold them responsible for their deeds.

We strive today to bridge Heaven and Earth in an effort to draw closer to Hashem. Not only are we to study the words of the Torah which come from Heaven but to live it here on Earth. In this way, we will bring redemption to our world. ■

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

This Shabbat is known as *Shabbat Chazon* - the Shabbat of Vision. Most associate that this Shabbat is called *Shabbat Chazon* because of the *Haftorah* we recite from the first chapter of *Sefer Yeshayahu*, of *Yeshayahu's* Vision of the *Churban* of *Yerushalayim*. However, these days leading up to *Tisha B'Av* are not simply a time for us to reflect on the past, and the pain and loss of the *Batei HaMikdash*, and the subsequent lengthy exile of the Jewish People, but also an opportunity for us to begin to perceive and envision a better tomorrow.

***The Aish Kodesh, the Rebbe Piascetzna of zy'a***, suggests that though we associate the message of this *Haftorah* to be *Yeshayahu's* vision of the *churban*, giving us perspective and context to enable us to reflect on the tragic events that led to our exile, the *Haftorah* concludes with the verse: *Tzion B'Mishpat Tipadeh, V'Shaveha BiTzdaka-Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and those that return to her with righteousness...* The Rebbe, as he does in so many of his powerful teachings, is reminding us that even when the Jewish people are besieged with pain and suffering, we must hold steadfast to the belief that *Yishuat Hashem K'Heref Ayin* - that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, can bring salvation with the blink of an eye! Even when our circumstances seem bleak, and it is beyond our capability to perceive from our limited human perspective how it might be

possible, a Jew must always believe that indeed *Yishuat Hashem K'Heref Ayin*.

***The Kedushat Levi, Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev zy'a***, suggested another slightly different interpretation of the significance of this *Shabbat Chazon*, this Shabbat of vision. On this Shabbat, explained *Reb Levi Yitzchak*, each and every one of us is shown a vision of the Third *Beit HaMikdash*. Hashem allows our souls a glimpse of a world of complete peace, a world which is empowered through the knowledge and awareness of the Divine presence, a world that has begun to see and actualize our innate potential for greatness and *kedusha*.

*Yehi Ratzon*, as we read the prophetic words of *Yeshayahu* on this *Shabbat Chazon*, may we indeed be moved to recall all the tragic events that led to our exile, but simultaneously be inspired to envision that better tomorrow that is within our reach, and to do everything in our capability to move the world closer to that better tomorrow. ■

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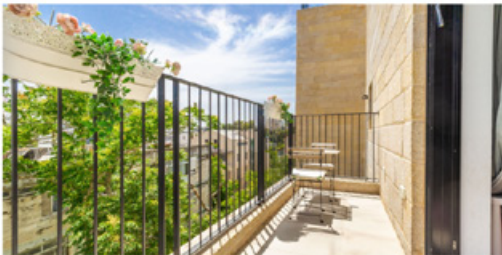
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# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL SHABBOS

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



## L'Kavod Shabbos Kodesh

*My brother-in-law, Yosef Newman z"l, passed away from cancer a few months ago at the young age of 38. Yosef was an extremely special person and one of his trademark customs was that he used to make sure to taste the Shabbos food every Friday and proclaim with great excitement, "l'kavod Shabbos kodesh". (In honor of the Shabbos).*

What is the origin of this special custom?

The **Mechilta** (Shemot 20:7) explains that one way to fulfill the command "זכור" (remember the Shabbos) is as follows - שאם יתמנה לך מנה יפה - every time you're out shopping and you come across some sort of delicacy, you should buy it and save it for Shabbos. **Gemara Beitza** 16a relates how Shammai used to follow this approach. The Gemara writes that it was well known that all of Shammai's days, he used to 'eat for the honor of Shabbos'. What does this mean? If he would find a choice animal, he would say: This is for Shabbat. If he subsequently found another one better than it, he would set aside the second for Shabbat and eat the first. In this way, he was constantly making sure that he had the very best food set aside for Shabbos and in this way, he was "constantly eating for the honor of Shabbos".

The **Shulchan Aruch HaRav** (OC 55:6) expands on this idea and says that throughout the week, when you buy something for Shabbos, you should always have in mind that it is *l'kavod Shabbos Kodesh*. He explains that this refers not only to buying food, but all types of preparation that one does for Shabbos. The **Piskei Teshuvot** (OC 250:1) writes that a person should think in his head, or preferably say out loud- *l'kavod Shabbos* - before he does *anything* to prepare for Shabbos. This would also include cleaning the house, taking a shower, and getting dressed. He writes that by doing so *דבר על אותו שבת*, we will actually enable the Kedusha of Shabbat to take effect on it.

The list of things that we do every Erev Shabbos to prepare for Shabbos is limitless. The story below illustrates that even holding a baby can be considered *l'kavod Shabbos*.

**Rabbi Elazar Shach z"l** (Rosh Yeshiva of Ponovitch Yeshiva) was once on the run in war-ravaged Europe, and he was a guest in someone's home. He was learning in a room on Friday afternoon while the family was preparing for Shabbos. He heard the baby crying in the bedroom. He went into the room, took the baby out of the crib, and placed the



infant into a stroller. The mother was puzzled by the long quiet spell from her cranky infant and went in to check. She found Rabbi Shach, with his Gemara in his right hand, moving the stroller back and forth with his left while murmuring “*lichvod Shabbos kodesh*, in honor of the holy Shabbos.” He explained, “I am a guest and have no involvement in the Shabbos preparations. This is the least I can do to alleviate some of your pressure.” (Rav David Sutton, “Preparing for Shabbos – It is My Honor!”)

Let us all try to get into the habit of noticing and recognizing all the things we do for the honor of Shabbos. We should walk around with a smile on our faces realizing the *zchut* we have to devote the day to preparing for the holy Shabbos. The more we prepare and anticipate the Shabbos on both a mental and physical level, the more we will truly taste Shabbos. Noting out loud (or at least in our heads) that everything we are doing is helping us prepare for Shabbos, will ultimately cause us to truly look forward to Shabbos and to appreciate Shabbos on a new level. ■

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*I apologize for misquoting the title of Rabbi Hillel Goldberg's book on Shabbat. The correct title is “Countdown to Shabbos”, OU Press. ~ Rebbetzin Zemira Ozarowski*

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Editor, Torah Tidbits

# Returning to the Land Is Teshuva

*The awakening of the desire of the nation in general to return its Land, to its nature, to its spirit, to its character - truly, this striving contains within itself the light of repentance. Actually, the truth is expressed with absolute clarity in the expression of the Torah: "Thou wilt **return toward** the Lord, thy God," (Devarim 30:2) "When thou shalt **return unto** the Lord, thy God" (Devarim 30:10). This repentance is an inner repentance, but it is concealed with many obstructing veils, and no form of obstacle or hindrance to perfection possesses the power to hinder the supreme light from shedding its splendor upon us. (Eretz Chefetz 5:9)*

A powerful passage regarding *teshuva* is found in the closing chapters of the Torah. It is referred to as the *Parsha of Teshuva*. Strikingly, in this short section the verb *shuv*, return, is repeated in one form or another seven times. Here the Torah repeatedly references *teshuva*, "return" in the same paragraph and sometimes in the same verse, in two different contexts: There is "return" as repentance (from sin), and "return" that relates to our ultimate return to the Land of Israel from exile. Let

us endeavor to clarify how, in this passage (Devarim 30:1-8), the two ideas of repentance and return are conflated and indeed merged together, notwithstanding that they are not identical.

## INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL TESHUVA

The first approach to understanding the close connection between repentance and the Land of Israel is to recognize two types of *teshuva* - the repentance of the individual and the repentance of the nation; the latter is closely connected with a return to Israel.

Individual *teshuva* consists of prayer, confession, charity, and making peace with one another. This kind of repentance is limited to some degree because it focuses mainly on the individual. But we cannot get very far by ourselves, nor can we carry out God's will as individuals. For that we need national repentance. Jews returning to the Land *en masse* represents not only a handful of people interested in making change but a movement.

These verses towards the end of Torah contain the story of not only personal change but sea change in the Jewish people's convictions and goals.

## FEELING CLOSENESS WITH THE SHECHINA IS TESHUVA

Another perspective in understanding the relationship between *teshuva* and the Land of Israel is to recognize that repentance, by definition, is partial or

incomplete outside the Land of Israel. At the heart of *teshuva* is the acknowledgment of a Higher Power - we have sinned *before You*. And it is in the Land of Israel where that Higher Power is most felt, where the *Shechina* is most dominant, most palpable. And what is *teshuva* but the return of the *Shechina* to our lives?

Notably the Rambam uses this precise term (actually twice) in his memorable description of a Jew's return: "Repentance is great because it draws a person closer to the Divine presence (*Shechina*)... just last night, the sinner was estranged from God...he calls out and is ignored, he does mitzvot and they are thrown back in his face ...And today, he cleaves to the Divine Presence (*Shechina*)."

(Hilchot Teshuva 7:6-7)

## LAND OF ISRAEL AND TESHUVA EQUAL TO ALL MITZVOT

Rabbi Steven Pruzansky in an article in which he analyzes *teshuva's* relation to the Land of Israel (Repentance for Life, p. 567) spotlights a fascinating parallel: both mitzvot are not codified as obligatory mitzvot. It has been famously noted that the Rambam omits living in the Land as a mitzvah and also does not count *teshuva* as a stand

alone mitzvah. A penetrating answer has been suggested by the commentators - *teshuva* and the Land of Israel are categorized as *Mitzvot Kollelet* - all encompassing mitzvot. They are not a single obligation, rather they are bound to all six hundred and thirteen.

To put it another way, both *teshuva* and the Land of Israel are not counted because they are *beyond* the mitzvot; they are innate. *Teshuva* is a state, it is the human condition, it is part of our very nature to return, to be pulled back to God (see Orot Hateshuva 5:6, 15:9) In a similar vein the Jew is drawn back to the Land, almost magically. One example, in the late 1800's, why should anyone have ascended to the Land of Israel, an Ottoman backwater filled with swamps and a sparse local population? If their sole objective was to flee persecution, they could have left for a more welcoming venue, as many others did. Why did that small minority go to Israel? Rav Kook maintained that this was due to the arousal of the *chefetz penimi*, the inner desire of the Jewish people. They acted out of sincerity and idealism, which Rav Kook considered a form of *teshuva*.



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## TESHUVA AND ERETZ YISRAEL: BOTH ARE “RETURNS”

The word *teshuva* literally means ‘return.’ Rav Kook emphasized in his Orot HaTeshuva that the idea of return is particularly concerned with a return to oneself; to one’s true aspiration, ideals and dreams. The concept of Eretz Yisrael underscores that exalted vision of the Jewish people gathering from the four corners of the earth and returning to their home to actualize their true potential and inner yearnings.

In one of Rav Kook’s most memorable insights he wonderfully portrays the return of the Jews to the Land like a cloud or like a dove returning to its dovecote. The prophet Yeshayahu said: “Who are these who fly like a cloud, like doves to their cotes? (60:8). This refers to the two types of Jews who will return to the Land. The first type, said Rav Kook, will be like clouds - they are forced back by strong winds, often in stormy times and dark circumstances. But this is far from the ideal. The second type are those that are returning home. They naturally, instinctively, know where their place is and make their way to their habitat and most pleasant abode. (An Angel Among Men, Raz- Lichtman, p. 265). ■

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## Real Life Rescues

### Woman Suffers Cardiac Arrest on a Bus, Saved by Nearby EMTs

**Kiryat Malachi** - On Sunday just after 12:00 p.m., a woman in her 50s was riding on a bus when she suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. Worried for her safety, her fellow passengers alerted the bus driver who pulled over on the side of the road and called emergency services for help.

United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Michael Tzvika was resting at his home in Kiryat Malachi after a long night’s work when his emergency alert application on his phone began to chime. Michael grabbed the phone, saw that the emergency was taking place at the Achva interchange on Highway 40 nearby, and rushed over. Arriving just a few minutes later, Michael was the first medical responder at the scene and, seeing that the woman was not breathing and had no pulse, began performing CPR together with an IDF medical officer who had seen the commotion and also come over to assist.

Together, the two emergency medical personnel performed CPR on the woman for five minutes until a paramedic arrived at the scene and was able to administer some medication. The team worked together for another few minutes before successfully restoring the woman’s pulse not even ten minutes after Michael initiated CPR.

“This was my second successful CPR,” exclaimed Michael a newly minted EMT with the organization. “It was an incredible feeling to be able to save a life. These are moments that I will never forget.”

Michael explained that it was for instances such as these that he became an EMT in the first place. “I work as an event coordinator and producer. I am often at different celebratory events and I see a lot of medical emergencies take place right before my eyes. Often they happen quickly and response times are not so fast. This is why I decided to become an EMT to be able to respond when medical emergencies happen in my vicinity. I am very happy that I was able to help this woman today, and I’m incredibly grateful that I was part of the reason that she will have another chance at life.”







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לעילוי נשמת  
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## Stopping a Charitable Hora'at Keva

**QUESTION:** A friend wants to cancel a *hora'at keva* (direct debit) to a charitable organization. He asked me to find out if he may do so or if he is bound by it.

**ANSWER:** Many factors impact this question, so it is difficult to rule on all sets of circumstances. After mapping out the factors, your friend may be able to see if his question is already answered or whether he needs to provide additional details.

Our initial focus is on the impact of the commitment's charitable context. (A *hora'at keva* (=hokv) to give a gift to a not needy person would not normally be binding – discussion is beyond our scope.) Oral commitments to donate to the *Beit Hamikdash* (Kiddushin 28b) or to *tzedaka* (Rosh Hashana 6a) are binding, and *Rishonim* disagree whether this is only for verbalizations or even for a clear intention to give *tzedaka*. The Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 212:8) apparently says it is not binding, and the Rama (Yoreh Deah 258:13) rules that it is. Some say there must be a basic oral commitment, in

which case intent can determine its extent (Pitchei Teshuva ad loc. 15). While there is a *machloket* whether, according to the lenient opinion, writing is as effective as speech (Kol Nidrei 61:22), writing a check or a *hokv* may lack the right formulation to count (ibid.). On the other hand, perhaps besides writing the *hokv*, your friend also made an oral commitment. Therefore, there may or may not have been the building block of a binding commitment.

The above applies to a *hokv* for a set number of charges. However, for an open-ended one, since few people would **commit** to a totally open-ended period of payment, the intent is usually to give until he stops it, which he can then do. The rule that one cannot take back that which he gave to a *gabbai tzedaka* (Arachin 6a) does not apply to a *hokv* for future payment.

The reason for a change of heart can make a difference. If one feels the organization deceived him (it might be difficult to ascertain), that at times could nullify the *tzedaka* commitment. If your friend's ability to donate deteriorated over time, this could be grounds for undoing the commitment with *sh'eila* (a form of *hatarat nedarim*) (see Kol Nidrei 9:7).

Another important question is what will happen with the "saved" money. There is a *machloket* whether one is allowed to switch the recipient from one *ani* to another; the matter is more lenient

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



regarding an undefined group of recipients (Tzedaka U'mishpat 9:1). It is not clear how to view many contemporary *tzedaka* organizations (ibid. (4)).

A fine NPO which is not dedicated to *tzedaka* (i.e., the poor) but for other *mitzvot* purposes, likely lacks certain privileges of *tzedaka*. There is a *machloket* whether the latter can be taken from *ma'aser kesafim* (see Rama, YD 249:1 and Shach ad loc.), although the *minhag* is clearly to allow it. In our context, it is possible that, for a *mitzva* organization, the level of obligation based on an oral commitment and certainly based on a thought, as well as the ability to change the recipient from one organization to another parallel one, is not as it is for one of *tzedaka*.

If *hokv* draws from a *tzedaka* account rather than your friend's regular account, then your friend was not acting as a donor but as the *gabbai* of a *tzedaka* fund, who has latitude in the matter without concern for *neder* (Tzedaka U'mishpat 9:(3))). As a step to combine with other reasons for leniency, while we do not usually allow people to get out of the promise of *tzedaka* with *sh'eila*, it may be okay in some of the discussed borderline cases.

Even with room for leniency about **binding** commitment, regarding proper behavior, there are often moral expectations to keep one's word even in non-*tzedaka* contexts and in the absence of a binding

*kinyan* (see Bava Metzia 49a). Therefore, in many of these cases, even when one is not fully obligated, he should still try to keep his word, including by not ending a *hokv* before its time, without very good reason (see Pri Yitzchak I:51).

If you give more details, we can give a more precise answer. ■

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# Working in Vineyards in Israel and Abroad – Kilei HaKerem#2

Rambam (5:3) writes that the Sages forbid *kilei hakerem* abroad. He explains (5:4):

"Why did [the Sages] forbid planting mixed species in a vineyard (*kilei hakerem*) in the Diaspora, but not mixed species in a field (*kilei zeraim*)? Because [the prohibition against] mixed species in a vineyard is more severe. For if they were to be sown in the Land of Israel, it would be forbidden to benefit from them. Since it is forbidden to benefit from them in the Land of Israel, it is forbidden to sow them in the Diaspora."

However, the details of the prohibition are more lenient abroad, as the The Shulchan Aruch and especially the Remah YD \$296:69 write:

"And although it is permissible to sow the vegetable on the side of the vineyard abroad, the same vegetable sown may not be eaten. Ramah: There are those who say that since it is permissible to sow a vegetable in close proximity to grapevines outside the Land of Israel, it is permissible to eat those vegetable as well. And we need not be concerned except in places where there is a concern that two types of vegetables or two types of grains were sown together with a grape pip by hand. For this reason, it is customary to be lenient with vegetables found sown in vineyards because it is not common that they were sown in a prohibited fashion."

Answers for the questions we asked previously:

In the Land of Israel, it is forbidden to work in a vineyard that has *kilei hakerem*, and even if there is only one species in the vineyard (and even in a Gentile's vineyard), it is forbidden to work in it, and only uprooting is permitted.

Abroad, it is forbidden to work even in a Gentile's vineyard if there are two types of vegetables or grains sown together with



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a grape pip in a handful. However, it is permissible (for *Ashkenazim*) to work in a vineyard if only one vegetable or grain was sown with a gape pip, or if two spices were sown but after the trees and not at the same time, or if the crops sprouted on their own (thus not being sown in a handful). Under such circumstances, it would be permissible for *ashkenzim* (but not for *sefaradim*) to eat the produce.

To see the full answer with all sources, see : <https://en.toraland.org.il/beit-midrash/articles/kilaim/working-in-vineyards-in-israel-and-abroad-kilei-hakerem/> ■

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# Improving Our Parent-Child Relationships

“Do what I say, not what I do” is a sentiment that parents try to avoid. They understand that if they really want their child to follow their guidance, they cannot be acting in the opposite way, at least not in front of the child. But try as they might, parents will almost certainly express some form of this idea to their child. In most instances, this is not such a terrible thing—as the child gets older, she will be able to recognize that her parents are people as well, and that her parents want her to be the best person she can be, even if they fall short themselves sometimes. Nevertheless, it is worth considering how parents can close the gap between their expectations for their child and their own practices.

One challenge that parents commonly identify is that their child is too reactive, gets upset over small things, or can't let go of minor inconveniences. It is understandable that a parent would be concerned, as such a child may struggle in school or with social interactions. Of course, a variety of internal and external factors may contribute to these types of challenges, and if this concern presents itself regularly, parents may consult with the teachers and/or a mental health professional to see if

any additional support or interventions may be needed.

The focus here is on one aspect that parents may be able to influence more directly, namely their own reaction to daily events. For example, imagine an elementary-school age child returns home grumpy after a difficult day at school. It doesn't take long before she is snappy with her younger brother, and when he annoys her, things escalate quickly. You walk into this scene where a physical confrontation between the siblings is on the verge of erupting.

Some parents may be able to handle that situation in a level-headed kind of way, and any expression of anger is deliberate and calculated. But in many cases, the parent himself will immediately raise his voice and become upset with the kids. As he's separating them, he may be likely yelling at the kids to be nice to each other, to stop picking fights, and to go do something useful (or at least peaceful). He may even mutter under his breath, but loud enough for the kids to hear, something about how ridiculous it is that the kids can't get along for five minutes without a major fight breaking out. The parent may then walk out of the room, upset and on edge from

frustration about this very familiar spat between the kids.

When we take a step back from this scenario, we can see that, in some ways, the child's edginess is not much different than her father's. The issue here is that the father, an adult, is expecting his daughter be better at regulating her emotions or reactions than he is at regulating his own. It seems unlikely, then, that this interaction trains her to handle future challenges any better than she did earlier in the day.

So what can a parent do? It starts with taking time to mindfully reflect and self-assess about what level of maturity he is expecting from his daughter, and whether he is matching those expectations himself. A subsequent step is learning what would help him display the type of reactions that he would like to see from his daughter.

Taking this kind of approach can benefit

parents in several ways. First, he may gain insights about what has worked for his own growth, so that he can share these insights with his child. Second, when the parent changes his patterns, the child sees and can imitate the preferred behaviors modeled for her. And third, and perhaps most importantly in terms of the relationship with the child, the parent develops and can express patience, understanding, and compassion for the child, as he recognizes that he shares similar struggles to his child. A child who feels this from a parent will also likely have an easier time handling difficulties outside the home.

Many factors play a role in our child's successes and challenges, and we cannot control all of them. But if we try to make improvements in the areas that are within our reach, our children will likely reap rewards from those efforts as well. ■

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Rescue teams put out the huge fires only after a lot of fire damage was incurred by caravans, equipment and food. Damage was first estimated at over 300,000 shekels. "We turn to our friends in Israel and abroad to help us through this

crisis. Please give what you can so we can get back to doing what we do best – feeding those that are hungry! Help us get food to those who need it most in Israel," stated Aryeh Lurie.



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**Rabbi Dr. Aharon Rakeffet** shlita is an illustrious teacher of Torah in Jerusalem serving for decades as a rebbe in Yeshiva University's Gruss Kollel and an eminent author of Jewish works of Torah. Rabbi Rakeffet has recently penned an important article in which he formulates a unique position concerning religious Zionism based on the teaching of his rebbe, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt"l. We are honored to offer a snapshot of this article here in the pages of OU's Torah Tidbits and invite our readership to avail themselves of the full article at [www.TorahTidbits.com](http://www.TorahTidbits.com) in this edition of Parshat Devarim. The content of this article has deep significance at this time as we approach Tisha Be'Av and pray for the rebuilding of the Beit Hamikdash and the return of all of the Children of Israel to the Land of Israel.

Divine Providence truly shone upon Theodore Herzl. Exactly fifty years after the first Zionist Congress in 1897, the United Nations recommended Partition in 1947. To the surprise of all, even the Soviet delegate, Andrei Gromyko, expressed his government's support for the right of the Jews to establish their own state in Palestine. Exactly as Herzl, predicted: "In Basle I created the Jewish State." This reality created a significant and far-reaching quandary for Torah Jewry. How could Divine blessing accrue through the efforts of an assimilated Jew? The State of Israel would become the foundation for Jewish survival after the Holocaust. A state that was created as a result of the vision and activities of Theodore Herzl. Perhaps this reality can be comprehended on the basis of an insightful Midrash regarding Moshe Rabbenu. One of

the thirteen principles of the Jewish faith as delineated by Maimonides is the belief in the unique greatness of Moses our Teacher.

Many declare at the conclusion of their daily prayers:

I believe with complete faith that the prophecy of Moses our Teacher, peace be to him, was true and that he was the father of the prophets — those who preceded him and those who followed him.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, Moshe Rabbenu was raised in alien environments and not among the Jewish people. At first, he was in the Court of Pharaoh. At an early age, he had to depart to Midian. The Midrash accentuates this aspect of his life and relates that at the age of twelve, Moshe Rabbenu was uprooted from his father's house. The Midrash explains that Moshe Rabbenu's message of redemption would have been dismissed if he was merely another member of the Jewish community. Because Moshe Rabbenu emerged from an elevated and noble background, the Children of Israel consented to his message. They did not dismiss him as simply restating traditional Jewish concepts.<sup>2</sup>

1. Translation of Siddur Avodat HaLev of the Rabbinical Council of America, Nusach Ashkenaz (First Edition, 2018), p. 207.

2. The Midrash is recounted in *Shemot Rabbah*, 5:2. It does not appear in all editions of the *Shemot Rabbah*. It appears in Israeli versions such as that of Machon Ha-Midrash Ha-Mevuar, 1990 and Vagshal Publishing, 2001. This Midrash is cited by the Ramban to Exodus 3:18.



This Midrash was stressed by Rabbi Isaac Stollman in his expository analysis of these efficacious results of Herzl's outlook. Rabbi Stollman was a graduate of the Radin, Slo-bodka, and Novardok yeshivot. He immigrated to the United States in 1924 and

became a prominent spiritual leader in Detroit, Michigan. In his *Minchat Yitzchak* on Shemot,<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Stollman declared:

When we recount the early history of the Zionist movement, we notice that many of the early leaders were totally European. They knew very little about their nation and its core outlooks. These pacesetters were uprooted from their Jewish roots at an early age like Moshe Rabbenu. They spent many of their most fruitful years in alien atmospheres. Yet they were among the first to be roused by the Zionist vision of redemption and rebirth. Is this not the expression of Divine intervention in the Jewish saga!? Among these pioneers, there were individuals who rejected religion and sanctity. Their bodies were never adorned by tefillin. They were apparent candidates for assimilation and withdrawal from Jewish identity. Yet the Zionist movement inspired them to return to their brethren and homeland. They were among the first to defend the honor of their people

3. Rabbi Isaac Stollman published four volumes on the Pentateuch entitled *Minchat Yitzchak*. The citation of this Midrash and its analysis appears in Vol. 2 (Shemot), p. 53. The first edition of Shemot was published in 1941 and was reprinted in 1979 when Rabbi Stollman resided in Jerusalem. The *Minchat Yitzchak* volumes have an approbation from the Rav. The Rav's letter of blessing was published at the start of the Devarim section (in Volume 4). This volume was first published in 1956 and reprinted in 1979. What follows is a translation of the original Hebrew text.

and to aspire to rebuild our homeland. Is this not an incredible phenomenon in our generation!?

The Jewish State was instrumental in revitalizing Jewish identity and commitment after the Holocaust. Since it was more than solely a religious perception, it was not rejected by the alienated Jewish common people. Divine sanction has accompanied the State of Israel and it has engendered the renaissance of the Jewish nation. ■

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*This is an excerpt from a larger essay.  
To read it in full visit [www.torahtidbits.com](http://www.torahtidbits.com).*

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# SHABBAT CHAZON & TISHA B'AV REVIEW

## Laws & Customs

### SHABBAT CHAZON

The Shabbat before Tisha b'Av is known as Shabbat Chazon. The name derives from the Haftara which is read for Parshat Devarim, the first chapter of Yeshayahu.

Cleaning the house and other preparations for Shabbat are as usual.

Although we do not eat meat during the Nine Days (except for Shabbat), one may taste (without swallowing) food being cooked for Shabbat to determine its flavor-needs.

Many authorities permit bathing and dressing for Shabbat as one would usually do for any other Shabbat. (This is common practice in Israel.) Others impose some restrictions of the Nine Days, such as washing only with less pleasant water (temperature-wise), and not bathing the entire body at one time.

Suggestion: Those who usually take baths should opt for a shower on Erev Shabbat Chazon.

One may cut his/her fingernails on Erev Shabbat Chazon - only during the week in which 9Av falls, is it forbidden.

One may wear fresh garments for Shabbat, but not new ones. Some say that they should be put on only right before Shabbat.

Many shuls sing L'cha Dodi to the tune of "Eli Tzion" from Tisha b'Av morning kinot. Some frown upon this custom as a public display of mourning on Shabbat. Nonetheless, it is a common custom.

**It is permissible to drink wine and eat**

**meat once a person has taken in Shabbat, even if it is before sunset.**

Many shuls read the pasuk beginning with the word "Eicha" (D'varim 1:12) to the tune of Eicha.

The Haftara for Shabbat Chazon is mostly read with the Eicha melody. The rabbi of the shul or a prominent member of the congregation is usually honored with Maftir.

Shabbat meals are as usual, including meat and wine. The custom of not eating meat or drinking wine during the Nine Days does not apply to Shabbat - part of "no public display of mourning on Shabbat". One may have meat and wine at all meals on Shabbat, even if this is more than he would usually do. If one is eating meat at the Third Meal, and the meal extends into the night, he still may continue to eat meat. Some disagree and hold that one should stop eating meat at nightfall, even if one hasn't ended his Shabbat.

**It will serve us well to think of meat & wine on Shabbat Chazon, not only in the negative (no public display of mourning, therefore...), but also in a positive way. Shabbat is called "a foretaste of the World to Come". Shabbat Chazon allows us a glimpse into the (hopefully near) future when the prophecy of Zacharia will come to be and Tisha b'Av and its three satellite fasts will become joyous days. We might look at Shabbat as a down payment from G-d, so to speak, on His promise for the future.**



*This is an educational tool; actual halachic questions should be put to a Rav. This is especially true of circumstances that are out of the ordinary.*



**HAVDALA:** Some say that since Havdala of Shabbat Chazon is said after Shabbat is over, then one should not drink wine, since wine is forbidden during the Nine Days (except for Shabbat). One would then choose a beverage for Havdala that is known as CHAMAR MEDINA, a drink of some importance in our society. Check with your local Orthodox Rabbi for the approved drinks list.

The other opinion holds that THE proper beverage for Havdala is WINE (except in cases of "great need", such as, there is no wine or you are allergic to it). If you use wine and there is a child present at Havdala who is old enough to understand the concept of Brachot but too young to understand mourning the CHURBAN, then he/she should drink the wine of Havdala. (Too young and no real understanding of brachot does not absolve the Havdala maker from drinking. Old enough to mourn the loss of the Mikdash, then he/she also shouldn't be drinking wine during the Nine Days.) If not, the one saying Havdala should drink the wine. Some say that he should not finish the whole cup, but suffice with a ROV R'VI'IT. Others say the whole cup so that the after-bracha can be said.

#### SHAVUA SHECHAL BO

The week in which Tisha b'Av falls has stricter rules than the first part of the Nine Days - e.g. those who shave during the Three Weeks and even after Rosh Chodesh Av, should at least not shave during SHAVU'A

SHECHAL BO. As mentioned earlier, cutting one's nails is not permitted. Psychologically, one should be "aware" of the increase in mournful practice and feelings (even if it does not show in practice as different).

#### EREV TISHA B'AV

Some authorities forbid regular Torah learning in the afternoon of Erev 9Av, permitting only those topics which are permitted on Tisha b'Av itself. There is a strict opinion that one should not eat regular meals in the afternoon - only SEUDA HAMAFSEKET. Realistically, this opinion is too difficult for most people to follow, and, in fact, it is not followed. The usual practice is to eat a regular meal in the late afternoon, followed by Mincha (if that works out), and then to have the special pre-fast "meal", shortly before the onset of the fast.

Seuda HaMafseket traditionally consists of bread (or pita) and a hard boiled egg, and water. Some dip the egg and/or bread in ash.

Officially, there are many rules concerning what may and may not be eaten at this pre-fast meal. Since most people will have recently eaten a "regular" supper, it is most common to have SEUDA HAMAFSEKET with just bread, egg, and water.

This is a mourner's meal, appropriate for pre-9Av. It should be eaten alone, to avoid benching mezuza. Some sit on the floor or low seat for this meal. The meal is eaten and the Birkat HaMazon is said with a heavy heart, realizing the enormity of the

Churban. Many have the custom to recite AL NAHAROT BAVEL for this meal, even if they don't say it on a regular basis as the alternative to SHIR HAMAALOT. As is true throughout 9Av, it is very important that one's thoughts be on the mournful and serious nature of the day, while one is eating this meager pre-fast meal.

### LEIL TISHA B'AV

The prohibitions of Tisha b'Av should begin a few minutes before sunset. **For Jerusalem this year, we should stop eating, drinking, etc. a few minutes before 7:45pm.**

Maariv is recited in a low, mournful tone. Then Megilat Eicha is read while people sit on the ground or on low stools. It is customary to reduce the lighting in shul and remove the curtain of the Ark and the covers of the Amud and Shulchan.

When Eicha is read from parchment, as it is in some shuls in Jerusalem, the bracha AL MIKRA MEGILA is recited (but not Shehecheyanu).

Following Eicha some kinot (poems of lament) are chanted.

### 3 ASPECTS OF 9AV LAWS...

[1] The prohibitions of Yom Kippur-like fasts: **(a)** no eating or drinking, **(b)** no washing except for finger tips for ritual washing and the washing of actual dirtied areas of the body, **(c)** no cosmetics or lotions (medications and unscented deodorant are permitted), **(d)** no wearing of leather shoes, including shoes or sneakers with tops or soles of leather, **(e)** no marital relations;

[2] practices related to mourning, such as no Torah-learning (except for sad themes such as the books of Eicha and Iyov, certain parts of other books of Tanach, the laws of Tisha b'Av, the laws of mourning, etc.);

no exchange of social greetings (mazal-tov is permitted, however), sitting on the ground; and

[3] a reduction of luxuries and comfort, such as making sleeping conditions less comfortable.

### TISHA B'AV DAY

In the morning, one should wash only the fingers (and eyes, with one's wet fingertips).

Shacharit: Talit & T'filin are not worn. No Birkat Kohanim. Davening is regular but subdued. We omit the bracha OTER YISRAEL B'TIF'ARA, as this is considered a reference to T'filin, the crown of glory of the Jew. The bracha will be said at Mincha when one does put on T'filin. [GR"A's minhag is also to skip SHE'ASA LIKOL TZORKI in the morning brachot, which alludes to having good shoes. This bracha is said after the fast, when one puts on leather shoes.]

On the other hand, we don't say Avinu Malkeinu, Tachanun, Lamnatzei'ach, or Slichot, any and all of which we might expect on a fast day. Tisha b'Av is referred to as a MO'ED and will IY"H be a festival when the Beit HaMikdash is rebuilt. As a sign of our confidence in this promise of the Geula, we treat Tisha b'Av now as a festival in these token ways. Rav Soloveitchik has a very different explanation based on SATAM T'FILATI (Eicha 3:8) so we reduce, not increase our prayer.

Special 9Av Torah reading (from-Va'etchanan) and Haftara (from Yirmiyahu, read mostly with the Eicha tune) are followed by Kinot which should ideally continue until halachic noon (approx. 12:45pm). Some read Eicha in the morning.

Thinking about Churban Beit HaMikdash - and other tragedies associated with 9Av

- is essential, whether one is fasting or not.

Therefore, one should refrain from that which would cause the mind to wander from the day's thoughts.

**AFTERNOON:** Although most restrictions continue throughout the day, a few are relaxed at mincha-time. The Parochet is returned to the Ark, lighting in shul is restored, talit and t'filin are worn, Kohanim bless the People, and sitting on regular chairs is permitted. This, in essence, almost transforms Tisha b'Av into a "regular" fast day and allows us to reflect on the consolation of the prophecies of the Geula and the Building of the 3rd Beit HaMikdash.

Torah and Haftara readings for Mincha are like other fast-days. The passages of NACHEIM and ANEINU are inserted into the Jerusalem bracha and Sh'ma Koleinu respectively. Omitting either, one does not go back. However, Nacheim can be said within R'TZEI (without the closing bracha of V'liyerushalayim) and either/both can be said before YIHUY L'RATZON at the end of the Amida.

#### **MOTZA'EI TISHA B'AV**

**The fast ends approx. 8:09pm (some say 8:20pm).** Maariv is regular. One should try to wash his whole hands ritually (if possible) for Maariv, since it had not been "properly" done in the morning.

Some say Kiddush L'vana right after Tisha b'Av (preferably after breaking the fast - bring a light snack with you to Maariv). Others will have said KL during the previous week (based on Minhag Yerushalayim). Others will wait for Motza'ei Shabbat Nachamu.

The 10th of Av is the day that most of the Beit HaMikdash burned. Because it started burning on the 9th, and because

of other events associated with the 9th, Chazal fixed the fast day on the 9th. But the restrictions of the 9 Days continue beyond the fast. **Restrictions apply until halachic noon of the 10th of Av, 12:45pm this year.** This applies to not eating meat and drinking wine, listening to joyous music, bathing, laundry, etc. Marital relations are forbidden on the eve of the 10th of Av, unless it is the "mikve" night. There are other special circumstances - ask a Rav.

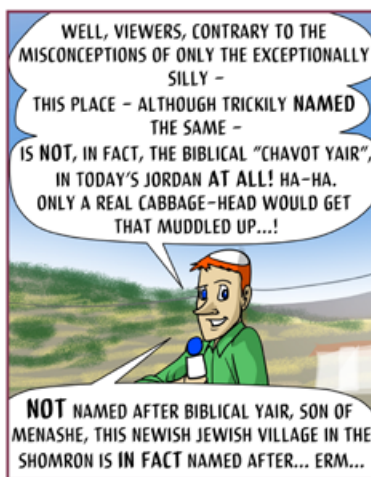
Because 10 Av is Erev Shabbat this year, laundry and shaving and other preparations for Shabbat may be done from the morning. Some say, even Thursday night, if necessary.

**PONDER THIS...** Several events in Jewish history are associated with 9Av. Major expulsions of Jews from different countries began on 9Av, or were decreed on 9Av, or are in some way linked to 9Av. Some massacres are associated with 9Av. We must view them in an appropriate perspective. Simply put, the troubles we have suffered throughout the many centuries of exile are directly related to the exile itself and the causes of it. Pogroms, Crusades, the Holocaust, all spanned the entire calendar. Yet these events still have a 9Av context. It is therefore appropriate to include in one's thoughts of the day - and activities, such as reading, videos, etc. Holocaust material, and the like.

**May our T'shuva, fasting, and prayers - and our love of Torah, Am Yisrael, and Eretz Yisrael, combine with our pro-active, positive steps towards spreading that love and Torah observance to our fellow Jews... all combine to hasten the Geula Sh'leima. May we merit the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, במהרה בימינו, אמן.**





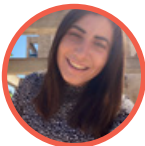




## TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



**Lauren Shore**  
**Beit Shemesh**  
**Madricha**

### The Inner Strength to be a Leader

Here, Moshe tells the Jewish people extra details of the events that occurred since they were freed from Egypt. When speaking about the agreement to let spies go into the Land of Israel, he says:

"The idea was good in my eyes..."

The mission of the spies was clearly one of the most devastating events in Jewish history, yet Moshe still had the courage to say "the idea was good in my eyes."

As destructive as it was, Moshe being the great leader that he was, said to everyone that "the idea was good in my eyes."

We tend to see leaders today who back away from their words when the results turn out differently than believed. This isn't leadership. Leadership is about being honest and having the trust of those who follow you.

The real reason why people choose to rewrite history when everything goes wrong is because they don't want to look foolish in front of others. They believe that admitting that they made a mistake makes them look foolish. It doesn't. In fact it's actually the opposite. This is because

taking responsibility will make us feel great and that we are doing something right. Since people always learn and grow from their mistakes, we can actually GAIN self-esteem if we mess up because we know it will only make us BETTER people in the end.

Mishlei Chapter 24 says "For a righteous man can fall seven times and rise, but the wicked shall stumble upon evil." The most righteous people in the world are the ones who have fallen repeatedly and yet no matter what stand back up and continue to grow instead of walking away.

So, the next time you do something that was the wrong position to have taken, make a statement about who you are. Instead of walking away by acting like nothing just happened, announce that while initially "the idea was good in my eyes," based upon new information you now see things differently. You will not only gain the credibility, trust, and admiration of others, but you will also gain enormous self-esteem in the process. We are all capable of being a leader, we just have to look inside to see everything we are capable of doing!



**Joseph Friedman**  
**Modi'in**  
**12th Grade**  
**(Graduate),**

## **Faith in Judgment**

In this week's parsha we start the book of devarim. This book is composed of Moshe's speech to bnei yisrael before entering Israel in order to prepare them for the journey that awaits them in the years to come with Yehoshua as their leader. As we know, Moshe wanted so desperately to be the one to lead bnei yisrael into Israel and accompany them throughout the years that await them. Moshe was disallowed to enter eretz yisrael because he disobeyed Hashem's orders to speak to the rock for water and instead hit it with his staff. Hashem punished him for this as he didn't listen to a simple instruction and thought he knew better himself. Moshe immediately realized his mistake but it could not undo his actions and he had to deal with them. Moshe prayed to Hashem asking for forgiveness a total of 515 times. Hashem then told him not to ask forgiveness one more time as he would have to forgive

him and that isn't what Hashem wanted. Hashem wanted the Jewish people to see how Moshe had made a mistake and would be punished for it as everyone looked up to Moshe and viewed him as the perfect role model. Hashem wanted the nation to know that even Moshe, the purest of people, could make mistakes. This was to show them that if they learn from them as well as accept the consequences to their actions, they would be able to go on their journey without Moshe since this was the final lesson for Moshe to teach them. In our modern times, we as the Jewish nation can reflect on this and see how Hashem's Torah is here to guide us. We are able to do most things right and it is okay to make mistakes as long as we admit to our faults and learn from them. Furthermore, we need to take our imperfections and embrace them to better who we are and we will be able to strive and serve our purpose in this world. ■

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☞ In this week's Parshat Devarim, we read: "Behold, I have set the land before you: **Go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.**" We'll be happy to help you fulfil this commandment



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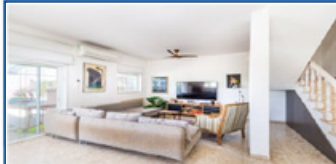


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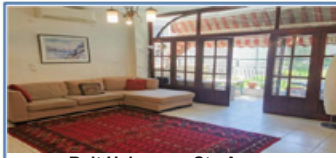


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