

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1628

ב"ה

SEPT. 6TH 2025 • י"ג אלול תשפ"ה

פרשת כי תצא
PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

PIRKEI AVOT 1 & 2



Probing the Prophets
Rabbi Nachman Winkler
Page 16



School Days
Michal Silverstein
Page 72



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לֹא-תִזְרַע כְּרֶמֶךְ כְּלָאִים דְּבָרִים כ"ב:ט'

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT KI TEITZEI ZMANIM

CANDLES 6:22 PM • EARLY 5:38 PM • HAVDALA 7:34 PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:13 PM



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Table of Contents

| | |
|----|---|
| 04 | Dear Torah Tidbits Family Rabbi Avi Berman |
| 08 | Building A Postive Jewish Identity Rabbi Moshe Hauer |
| 12 | Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary Rabbi Reuven Tradburks |
| 16 | Probing the Prophets Rabbi Nachman Winkler |
| 20 | Letting Go of Hate Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l |
| 26 | Recalling Our Faith While in Egypt Rabbi Shalom Rosner |
| 28 | Mitzvah Mindset Rebbetzin Shira Smiles |
| 30 | Foe & Friend Rabbi Judah Mischel |
| 36 | Understanding Kosher Ingredients: Group One and Group Two Rabbi Ezra Friedman |
| 38 | Simchat Shmuel Rabbi Sam Shor |
| 40 | Schedule OU Israel |
| 50 | Ki Teitzei: Am Yisrael as a <i>Ben Sorer U'Moreh</i> Rabbi Moshe Taragin |
| 56 | A Match Made in Heaven Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider |

| | |
|----|--|
| 60 | After a Breakup: Helping the Heart Get Ready Again Aleeza Ben Shalom - Shagririm Balev |
| 64 | Remembering Rabbi Wein zt"l Rabbi Joel Kenigsberg |
| 68 | Friendship, Community & Redemption Mrs. Leah Feinberg |
| 72 | School Days Michal Silverstein, MS |
| 76 | Torah 4 Teens by Teens Yafit Atlas // Zvi Fisher |

To view **Rabbi Daniel Mann's** and **Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman's** Divrei Torah please see:
www.TorahTidbits.com > Individual Articles



**We continue to pray for the safe
return of all of the hostages.**



DAY 698

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

 **Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until: 14 Elul/ Motzei Shabbat Sept. 6**



COVER IMAGE From Menashe and Menucha Walsh

We recently moved here in Efrat (Hagefen area) from Hashmonaim where we made aliyah in 2006 from Sedgley Park Manchester with our now grown up daughters. The picture is taken in the entrance to our apartment which has a trellis which holds an old vine. The grapes on the vine in our home in Efrat remind us of God's covenant blessing, as promised in the Land of Israel—a land of vines and abundance (Deuteronomy 8:8), a place where each family may dwell in peace under its vine and fig tree (Micah 4:4), and where the home itself becomes a sign of fruitfulness, like the fruitful vine within the house (Psalm 128:3).

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat
Sept 3 - 13 / 10 - 20 Elul**

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Earliest Tallit and Tefillin | 5:24-5:31 |
| Sunrise | 6:16-6:22 |
| Sof Zman Kriat Shema | 9:27-9:28 |
| Magen Avraham | 8:49-8:51 |
| Sof Zman Tefila | 10:30 |
| (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya) | |
| Chatzot (Halachic Noon) | 12:38-12:34 |
| Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha) | 1:10-1:05 |
| Plag Mincha | 5:40-5:29 |
| Sunset (Including Elevation) | 7:04-6:51 |



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| | KI TEITZEI | | | KI TAVO | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Candles | Early | Havdala | Candles | Early | Havdala |
| Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim | 6:22 | 5:38 | 7:34 | 6:12 | 5:31 | 7:24 |
| Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al) | 6:40 | 5:41 | 7:36 | 6:31 | 5:33 | 7:27 |
| Beit Shemesh/RBS | 6:41 | 5:39 | 7:35 | 6:32 | 5:32 | 7:25 |
| Gush Etzion | 6:38 | 5:39 | 7:34 | 6:29 | 5:31 | 7:25 |
| Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba | 6:39 | 5:40 | 7:36 | 6:30 | 5:32 | 7:26 |
| Modiin/Chashmonaim | 6:38 | 5:40 | 7:35 | 6:29 | 5:32 | 7:25 |
| Netanya | 6:39 | 5:40 | 7:36 | 6:30 | 5:33 | 7:26 |
| Be'er Sheva | 6:39 | 5:40 | 7:35 | 6:30 | 5:32 | 7:26 |
| Rehovot | 6:39 | 5:40 | 7:36 | 6:30 | 5:33 | 7:26 |
| Petach Tikva | 6:22 | 5:40 | 7:35 | 6:12 | 5:32 | 7:26 |
| Ginot Shomron | 6:38 | 5:39 | 7:35 | 6:29 | 5:32 | 7:25 |
| Haifa / Zichron | 6:29 | 5:40 | 7:36 | 6:20 | 5:32 | 7:26 |
| Gush Shiloh | 6:37 | 5:38 | 7:34 | 6:28 | 5:31 | 7:24 |
| Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel | 6:39 | 5:41 | 7:36 | 6:30 | 5:33 | 7:26 |
| Givat Zeev | 6:42 | 5:39 | 7:34 | 6:33 | 5:31 | 7:25 |
| Chevron / Kiryat Arba | 6:38 | 5:39 | 7:34 | 6:29 | 5:31 | 7:25 |
| Ashkelon | 6:40 | 5:41 | 7:36 | 6:31 | 5:34 | 7:27 |
| Yad Binyamin | 6:39 | 5:40 | 7:35 | 6:30 | 5:33 | 7:26 |
| Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden | 6:31 | 5:38 | 7:34 | 6:22 | 5:30 | 7:24 |
| Golan | 6:36 | 5:38 | 7:33 | 6:27 | 5:30 | 7:24 |
| Nahariya/Maolot | 6:38 | 5:40 | 7:36 | 6:29 | 5:32 | 7:26 |
| Afula | 6:38 | 5:39 | 7:34 | 6:28 | 5:31 | 7:25 |

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Ki Teitzei 8:13 PM • Ki Tavo 8:04 PM

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: Horayos 5



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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The first time I heard about NCSY Shabbatons, I wasn't sure I fully understood what they were. It was the fall of 2001 when my then-boss at NCSY, Rabbi Steve Burg, described to me how the Shabbatons worked, and in particular, this incredible moment called *Havdalah*. To be honest, *Havdalah* had never been especially meaningful to me until then. It was simply what you did when you came home from *shul* on *Motzei Shabbat*: you made *Havdalah* and moved on. But when Rabbi Burg explained that it could last an hour, filled with singing and dancing, I remember thinking, how

good could it really be?

In December of 2001, my family and I joined our first regional Shabbaton in Los Angeles with 56 Vancouver NCSYers, and that *Havdalah* changed me forever. The room was dark. A huge *Havdalah* candle, made in Tzfat, was held high by the regional board on stage. A full band, alongside Rabbi Danny Lamm and Mikey Butler z"l, played uplifting music that filled the room with energy and spirit.

The songs began with the traditional *Hiney Kel Yeshuati*. Then, at a certain point, the music slowed and voices alone carried the moment. With the boys on one side and the girls on the other, everyone swayed together, singing from the heart. I looked around and thought to myself, "This is such a beautiful way to end Shabbat." From that very week until today, our family has made *Havdalah* last 10 to 15 minutes. We sit together, bless one another for the coming week, sing, and try to make *Havdalah* an experience that eases us out of Shabbat with meaning rather than rushing through it. That night at the Shabbaton transformed our family practice.

There was another moment during that same *Havdalah* that struck me even more deeply. At one point the music shifted from soft, reflective singing into fast-paced, passionate dancing. The song was "Ratzah" by Dedi Graucher z"l. It began slowly, almost plaintively: "*Ratzah HaKadosh Baruch Hu lezakot et Yisrael*," Hashem wants to give merit to the Jewish people. Over and over

The OU Israel family wishes
Mazel Tov to
Abigail Lerer & Eyden Zimbalist
on their wedding
this past Monday, September 1st

Mazel Tov to parents:
Sarah & Daniel Lerer
and Hili & Jonathan Zimbalist
and to the grandparents:
Chani & Norman Schmutter,
Deborah & Solomon Lerer,
Betsy & Stuart Zimbalist
and Ilana & Eric Love

Mazel tov to great-grandmother
Eva Laub Kunstler

we sang those words. Then came the turning point, when the pace quickened: “*Lefikach, hirsch lahem Torah u’mitzvot!*” Hashem gave us many mitzvot out of His love, to give us the opportunity to come closer to Him.

I looked around the room and saw hundreds of young people dancing with passion, singing about Hashem’s love and His gift of mitzvot. I was overwhelmed. Afterwards, I asked some of them if they understood the words. Many did, and even those who didn’t sang with all their heart. That image has stayed with me vividly ever since.

These memories come back to me this week as our family, *b’ezrat Hashem*, celebrates the bar mitzvah of our youngest son, Mordechai. He will be reading *Parshat Ki Teitzei*, the parsha with the most mitzvot in the entire Torah. My prayer to Hashem is that the love He shows us through the gift of His mitzvot will continue to be reflected in all of our children. I look forward to standing beside Mordechai Tzemach as he reads all 74 mitzvot in this week’s parsha, and to reflecting on the eternal goals Hashem has set for us.

Let us pray that the passion our youth show when singing and dancing—whether they fully understand the words or not—will carry over into all aspects of their lives. May that same passion inspire them in their *davening*, in their acts of *chesed*, in their service in the army, and in their commitment to defend and uplift the Jewish people. Thank



God, we can already see a generation filled with passion, filled with light, and filled with greatness. May that passion bring us, *b’ezrat Hashem*, to *Mashiach Tzidkeinu*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to Rabbi Avi Berman.

Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel



Mazal Tov to
Richard & Brondie Levine
and family on the Bar Mitzvah
of their grandson



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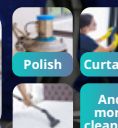
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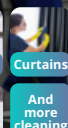
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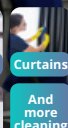
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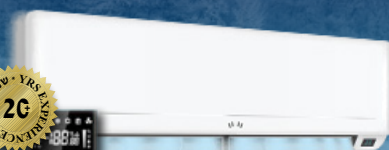
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OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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Enhancing Jewish Life

Building A Positive Jewish Identity

Memory is identity. This was expressed beautifully by Rabbi Sacks z”l in his Hag-gadah commentary:

“There is a profound difference between history and memory. History is *his* story – an event that happened sometime else to someone else. Memory is *my* story – something that happened to me and is part of who I am. History is information. Memory, by contrast, is part of identity. I can study the history of other peoples, cultures, and civilizations. They deepen my knowledge and broaden my horizons. But they do not make a claim on me. They are the past as part. Memory

is the past as present, as it lives on in me. Without memory there can be no identity.”

The Rebbe of Slonim, author of *Nesivos Shalom*, similarly wrote (Kuntres Haharuga Al’echa)

“The essence of a Jew is not transient, limited to the time he spends on this earth, rather the Jew’s existence is eternal, embracing the past, the present, and the future... The connection we forge to the eternity inherent in our Jewish soul and to the world of Klal Yisrael is accomplished through the *Zechirot*, the core elements that comprise our national memory. When a Jew remembers Sinai, the Exodus, or the perpetual threat personified by *Amalek*, etc., this binds him to both his own eternal soul and to the world of Klal Yisrael, and the more we connect to that eternity the more we are nourished by it.”

Of the six critical elements of memory mandated by the Torah, the *Sheish Zechirot*, Parshat Ki Teitzei contains two, *Amalek* (25:17) and *Miriam* (24:9). Remembering the perpetual threat of *Amalek* is sadly core to our Jewish identity and perspective as we can never afford complacency relative to the ongoing threats to our body and spirit that are our harsh reality in each and every

**May the Torah learned in this issue
be in the merit and memory of
our dear Mother, Grandmother
and Great Grandmother,
an Auschwitz survivor:**

Rebbetzin Devorah

Hilsenrath a”h

רבנית דבורה בת

ר' ברוך מרדכי ע"ה

ד' אלול

**Chaya & Azriel Heuman
Baruch & Sima Hilsenrath
Rochelle & Phil Goldschmiedt
Aviva & Michael Rappaport**

generation, *b'chol dor vador* . But why is the same true of the memory of Miriam's leprosy that resulted from her speaking critically of Moshe? While we have come to understand the terrible damage caused by harmful speech and recognize the Mitzvah value of *Shemirat Halashon* (guarded speech), in what way does this memory and vigilance constitute a critical part of our identity?

Magen Avraham (OC 60:1) cites a fascinating passage from the Kabbalistic teachings (Shaar Hakavanot) of Rav Yitzchak Luria, the *Arizal*, where he suggests that we should explicitly recall each of those six core elements of memory around our recitation of the *Shema* every morning. With regard to remembering Miriam, he suggested that when we say "*v'keiravtanu l'Shimcha hagadol selah b'emet l'hodot lecha*," speaking of Hashem bringing us close to Him, "so that we can be grateful to (Him)", it is then that we should recall what happened to Miriam, as "we were created to be grateful rather than to speak negatively."

The opposite of slander is not silence but effusive positivity and gratitude. **A mindset of gratitude as opposed to one of cynicism is indeed a matter of identity.** There is no greater identifier than our name, and we are all named Jews, *Yehudim*, meaning – grateful people. That colors how we look at each other, at life, and at G-d.

It is not only historical events and experiences that forge identity. Fundamentally, our identity will be both a result and an expression of our attitude and perspective. Being grateful and positive must define who we are. ■

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RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

זכור את אשר לך עמלק (כה"יז)
תמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח (כה"יט)

"Remember what Amalek did to you" (25:17)

"You shall blot out the remembrance from under heaven, you shall not forget." (25:19)

Why the need for the repetition, "remember" and then "shall not forget"? Is there a difference between remembering and not forgetting?

Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman 1194-1270) explains, quoting the Sifra, that "not forgetting" refers to one's heart while "remember" is by verbal utterance. This is why we read in public this section on Shabbat Zachor, hinting at the need to hear Megillat Eshter being read. We must not forget in our hearts what Amalek did to us until we eradicate his remembrance from under the heavens. This is a message for the generations.

Similarly, the same phrase "remember" is used in the story of Miriam's slander of Moshe (24:9). One might have thought it would be better to downplay this incident and mention it less. However, the Torah instructs us to discuss this slander in public and reveals that the warning of speaking slander is "placed in their mouths" (31:19). This is to clarify to all the seriousness of speaking slander and to avoid it.

Shabbat Shalom



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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PARSHAT KI TEITZEI

The parsha contains 74 mitzvot, the most of any parsha in our Torah. It is the last of the 3 parshiot of mitzvot that are the middle section of Sefer Devarim.

In Parshiot Re'eh and Shoftim we were introduced to our Jewish National society; an ethical monotheistic society. Laws of avoiding idol worship, the centrality of what would be Jerusalem, laws of generosity, of sharing with others. And of Nation building; Judges, Kings and war.

Our parsha is personal, not national. A Jew is not only a part of a nation. He is a person living the day-to-day life of people; living a life of holiness, fidelity to G-d, treating people with generosity and dignity, helping each

other, living a moral life.

Ki Teitzei is a sister parsha to Kedoshim. Many of the marvelous, unique moral imperatives of our Torah, those principles that became foundational in the moral development of the world are found here. Perhaps to communicate that while we are part of a great nation and ought to give altruistically to nation building, our national pride and place ought not to muscle out the need to be good people, overwhelming our personal lives in the large project of our Jewish Nation. No. We at heart live personal holy lives, believing in One G-d and believing in the Image of G-d of each person. Living elevated and noble lives. The 74 mitzvot of our parsha communicate that rarefied life.



1ST ALIYA (DEVARIM 21:10-21)

Captive Woman: One may not marry a woman captured in war until 30 days have elapsed and the passion subsided. **First born:** The rights of the first born to a double portion shall not be diverted to the first born of a more favored wife. **Ben Sorer Umoreh:** a boy entering adulthood who is brazen and gluttonous shall be judged on the fear of future more egregious behaviour.

The soldier is able to marry the non-Jewish woman captured in war; but only after a month of seeing her daily in an unkempt manner. As if to say – slowww downnn. This slowed down permission to marry the non-Jewish woman in war has a powerful implied ethic: women are not spoils of war.

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As we know all too well, oh so tragically and painfully, war is accompanied by rape and pillage of women. It is an expression of power, of victory. Women are the spoils of war.

Not in the Jewish army. The permission granted to marry this non-Jewish woman after a month screams out the far more basic war ethic: war should never ever be seen by the Jewish army as license for abuse of women.

But this first mitzvah of the parsha seems to belong in last week's parsha. At the end of Shoftim there were a number of mitzvot related to war: the special Kohen who motivates the troops in war, the war exemptions, try peace first, do not destroy fruit trees in war. Would it not have made more sense to include this mitzvah of the special procedure of marrying a foreign woman in war in last week's parsha that was speaking of war?

Last week's parsha was national institutions. This week's parsha is personal piety. This mitzvah is an expression of personal piety, piety demanded even of the soldier. It belongs in our parsha of piety.



2ND ALIYA (21:22-22:7)

Burial: Do not allow the body of one sentenced to death to be hung.

He is to be buried immediately. **Returning Lost Property:** Don't look away from lost property; return it to its owner. Help up an overly **burdened animal** who has buckled; don't look away. Do not **cross dress**. Send a mother bird away before taking the eggs or chicks.

There is an important ethical principle expressed in the mitzvah of burying the one put to death. A person sentenced to death has committed the most serious of

sins. Nonetheless, human beings never lose the right to dignity. Even the sinner, the one sentenced to death, is a human being; their body is not to be left hanging, but to be buried immediately. Human beings may sully their dignity by terrible crimes deserving of death; but they never forfeit their essential human dignity.

A further implied ethic is contained in the return of lost property. Laws of property, Torts, are to protect: property law regulates that I not damage your property. But Jewish ethics mandates that we go much further; I need to jump to help your property. There can be no innocent bystanders; we need to jump to save the lives of others and the property of others.



3RD ALIYA (22:8-23:7)

Build a **fence on your roof** to prevent accidents. **Do not: plant** vines and grain together, **plow** with ox and mules together, **wear** wool and linen **together**. A man shall not: **slander** a new bride claiming her not to be a virgin, nor commit **adultery** with a married woman, nor with a betrothed bride, nor **rape** a single woman. One may **not marry** a mamzer, nor

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In this aliya we have mitzvot about the most basic of daily life: our homes, our fields or livelihood, our clothes and our relationships with our partners. Each one of these regulates the basic aspects of our lives.

In this lies a sweeping principle of our Torah. We live mundane lives. Homes, livelihood, clothes, and relationships. All these things take on meaning when regulated by mitzvot. The Torah doesn't deal only with the holy, with G-d, with prayer and service. It gets right into our lives, pushes its way into our homes, kitchens, bedrooms.

Rav Soloveitchik called this redemption, or geula; man's mundane life is redeemed from vulgarity and emptiness by mitzvot. Suddenly, the trite and trivial, the banal life we live becomes meaningful, an expression of loyalty to our Creator and His love of us by commanding us. Nary a moment is devoid of some mitzvah or other, transforming our lives into lush, full and meaningful moments. A redeemed existence.



4TH ALIYA (23:8-23:24)

One **may marry** one from Edom or Egypt. **Military encampments** shall be treated with a degree of **cleanliness**; bathroom facilities shall be outside the camp. Since G-d's presence goes with you, your camp has holiness. **Shelter** a runaway slave. Do not engage in **prostitution**, nor accept its gains as offerings. Do not exact **loan interest**. **Do** that which you **vow**; do not delay its fulfilment.

The charging of interest on a loan is not permitted. This is a Torah legislated type of welfare. When a person is in trouble and needs a loan, he is vulnerable to loan sharking. If he needs money and is desperate,

what better recipe for milking him for all he is worth. The Torah forbids preying on misfortune. Find another way to profit; not on the backs of the misfortunate.



5TH ALIYA (23:25-24:4)

Harvesters may eat grapes or grains while harvesting.

Divorce: Divorce need be done through a bill of divorce (a Get). If the woman marries another man, she may subsequently not return to remarry the first husband.

Allowing the worker to eat that which he is harvesting is the introduction of employer ethics. Being an employer comes with responsibility; people's lives are in our hands. Allowing the worker to consume what he is harvesting is merely an example of sensitivity to the feelings of employees. Worker's rights have their basis in these verses.

Divorce is accomplished through a Get, or a document of divorce. While the creation of a marriage is called kiddushin and has holiness, this holy union may be dissolved through divorce. While we view marriage as holy, it is holiness in the difficult realm of human interactions, which sometimes sour. The Torah's permission to dissolve a marriage is an expression of the recognition of the complexity of life. While marriage is holy, allegiance to the marriage does not require one to live a life of misery.



6TH ALIYA (24:5-13)

First year marriage: Do not go to war in the first year of marriage: bring joy to the new bride. **Kidnaping** is a capital offense. Remember Miriam's **Tzaraat** and keep its laws. **Collateral** may be taken, but only with the owner's cooperation. If the owner needs this collateral, return it to him nightly.

Kidnapping, the taking of hostages, is a capital offense punishable by the death penalty. Knowing how we so value life, we become vulnerable to evil, cynical, and perverse manipulation; the kidnapping of innocent people, demanding ransom or who knows what. The Torah's view is expressed in the punishment; this is a capital offense. Amongst the worst of ethical violations.



7TH ALIYA (24:14-25:16)

Do not withhold **wages**: workers are to be paid before the end of the day. Do not **pervert justice** of the foreigner or widow. When **harvesting** grain, olives or grapes, leave the dropped produce for the needy. No more than 40 **lashes** shall ever be given. **Yibum**: a brother shall marry the childless widow of his brother and hence maintain his name. Maintain only **accurate weights** and measures. Remember what **Amalek** did to you in attacking the weak when you left Egypt. Erase any memory of him.

In one aliya we have mitzvot of wages, of justice, of kindness, of lashes, of levirate marriage, of honesty in business and of Amalek. The lack of a clear pattern to these mitzvot is itself instructive. Perhaps Moshe is deliberately moving from generosity to justice to business to war. He wants to cover mitzvot in all aspects of our life. Our lives include homes and relationships and work and war and honesty and justice and paying our workers....and on and on. In all aspects of our lives we have mitzvot; ways to do things nobly and with holiness.

It is this richness of behavior in our personal life that is truly the necessary ingredient of nation building. The Jewish nation will be built on ethical monotheism, on national institutions that are kept in check; but ultimately a great nation is built in the homes

and in the private lives of its citizens. Our great nation is built on the quiet greatness of its people.

HAFTORAH YESHAYAHU 54

This week's *haftorah* is the fifth of a series of seven "*Haftarot* of Consolation." The navi, Yeshayahu, compares the city of Jerusalem to a barren woman devoid of children. Hashem enjoins her to rejoice, for the time will arrive when the Jewish nation will return and repopulate the Holy City. The prophet promises the Jewish people that Hashem has not forsaken them. Although at times Hashem hides His countenance He will certainly gather them from the *galut* with great mercy.

"For like the waters of Noach shall this be for Me: As I have sworn never again to pass the waters of Noach over the earth, so have I sworn not to be wrathful with you or rebuke you." ■



STATS

49th of the 54 sedras; 6th of 11 in Devarim.

Written on 212.8 lines; ranks 21st.

44 Parshiyot; 2 open, 42 closed; rank: 1.

110 pesukim; ranks 28th (5th in Devarim).

1582 words; ranks 23rd (5th in Devarim).

5856 letters; ranks 26th (6th in Devarim).



MITZVOT

74 mitzvot - 27 positive, 47 prohibitions; Ki Teitzei has the most mitzvot (both positive and prohibitions) in the Torah.

רבואה שלמה
Nachum Ben Lana



PROBING THE PROPHETS

BY RABBI NACHMAN (NEIL) WINKLER
FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

“Roni akara”-“Sing out, O barren one,” “pitzchi v’tzahali”-“burst forth in song and be jubilant”! These clarion calls to Israel with which the navi Yishayahu opens our haftarah this week, are truly, unique cries. Consider: Throughout these post-Tish’a B’av haftarot of consolation, we have read a number of the prophet’s visions that describe a glorious future for the grieving nation. We listened to the chants and the praises toward our powerful G-d Who could, and would, bring about the promised miracles of victories over Israel’s powerful enemies. And we have also heard soothing words of solace urging the people to allow Yishayahu’s prophecies to comfort them, as G-d reassures them that their punishment and suffering would soon be removed.

However, never before had we heard such a call for the nation to rejoice over the news,

In last week’s haftarah (chapter 52) we read of the prophet’s call for the **Holy City** to rise from the ashes of her destruction and to the ruins of **Jerusalem** to rejoice - but there was no such call for the **people** to do the same.

Over the past weeks, we have heard the navi’s predictions of a miraculous rebirth of the produce in the Land of Israel that would consequently lead to great joy and gladness there (chapter 51, haftarah of Ekev).

But never before had we heard the prophet’s call for the **nation herself** to rejoice.

In attempting to understand why this haftarah begins with a declaration that Israel rejoice, perhaps we should begin by recalling that Chazal see these seven haftarot of consolation as steps toward return; the nevuot therein include sequential steps of increasing comfort, and these steps, would ultimately, lead us closer to HaKadosh Baruch Hu inspiring us to repair our relationship with G-d and, thereby, preparing Israel to stand before Him on the Yamim Nora’im. This successful “journey through the haftarot” is meant to help an oft- suffering generation move closer to her Creator and open the doors to teshuva and to Hashem’s atonement.

But what did our Rabbis see in **this** haftarah specifically that had them regard her words as reflecting a higher level of consolation than the earlier prophetic messages? Or, simply: What inspired Yishayahu himself, for the first time, to cry out to the nation “Roni”, “Rejoice!”.

The answer might be found in the latter part of this chapter 54, (a section is read for the haftarah of parashat R’ei), in which G-d proclaims His everlasting love for ALL of Israel, both the righteous and the not-yet-righteous. Indeed, the verses that immediately

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follow the closing of the haftarah of parashat Re'i, contain the haftarah for a fast day, "Dirshu Hashem **b'himtz'o**" which calls for Israel to seek out Hashem and abandon their wayward ways. Is it any wonder, then, that Chazal tell us that "**bhimatz'o**" - the time when G-d is especially close to us and can be reached more readily - is actually right now, the days of Elul and the Yamim Nora'im!

These days are not simply days of comfort and regret-they are days of rejoicing as well, "Roni". For the knowledge that G-d loves ALL of Israel and has granted us a special time to call out to Him and be comforted, forgiven... and, of course, to rejoice! ■

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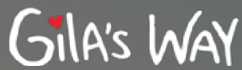
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לעילוי נשמת
HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Ariele zt"l

לעילוי נשמות

פנחס בן יעקב אשר וגולדה בת ישראל דוד איז ע"ה ועזריאל בן אריה לייב ומעניה בת יצחק שרטר ע"ה

Letting Go of Hate

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness . . . (*Martin Luther King*)

I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain. (*James Arthur Baldwin*)

There is a verse in Ki Teitzei that is momentous in its implications. It is easy to miss, appearing as it does in the midst of a series of miscellaneous laws about inheritance, rebellious sons, overlaid oxen, marriage

violations and escaping slaves. Without any special emphasis or preamble, Moses delivers a command so counterintuitive that we must read it twice to make sure we have heard it correctly:

Do not hate an Edomite, because he is your brother. Do not hate an Egyptian, *because you were a stranger in his land*. (Deut. 23:8)

What does this mean in its biblical context? The Egyptians of Moses' day had enslaved the Israelites, "embittered their lives", subjected them to a ruthless regime of hard labour and forced them to eat the bread of affliction. They had embarked on a programme of attempted genocide, Pharaoh commanding his people to throw "every male [Israelite] child born, into the river" (Ex. 1:22).

Now, forty years later, Moses speaks as if none of this had happened, as if the Israelites owed the Egyptians a debt of gratitude for their hospitality. Yet he and the people were where they were only because they were escaping from Egyptian persecution. Nor did he want the people to forget it. To the contrary, he told them to recite the story of the Exodus every year, as we still do on Passover, re-enacting it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread so that the memory would be passed on to all future generations. If you

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want to preserve freedom, he implies, never forget what it feels like to lose it. Yet here, on the banks of the Jordan, addressing the next generation, he tells the people, “Do not hate an Egyptian”. What is going on in this verse?

To be free, you have to let go of hate. That is what Moses is saying. If they continued to hate their erstwhile enemies, Moses would have taken the Israelites out of Egypt, but he would not have taken Egypt out of the Israelites. Mentally, they would still be there, slaves to the past. They would still be in chains, not of metal but of the mind – and chains of the mind are the most constricting of all.

You cannot create a free society on the basis of hate. Resentment, rage, humiliation, a sense of injustice, the desire to restore honour by inflicting injury on your former persecutors – these are conditions of a profound lack of freedom. You must live *with* the past, implies Moses, but not *in* the past. Those who are held captive by anger against their former persecutors are captive still. Those who let their enemies define who they are, have not yet achieved liberty.

The Mosaic books refer time and again to the Exodus and the imperative of memory: “you shall remember that you were slaves in Egypt”. Yet never is this invoked as a reason for hatred, retaliation or revenge. It always appears as part of the logic of the just and compassionate society the Israelites are commanded to create: the alternative order, the antithesis of Egypt. The implicit message is: Limit slavery, at least as far as your own people is concerned. Don’t subject them to hard labour. Give them rest and freedom every seventh day. Release them every seventh year. Recognise them as *like you*, not ontologically inferior. No one is born to be



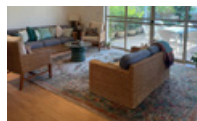
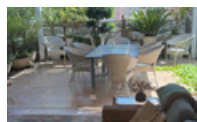
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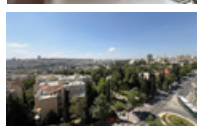
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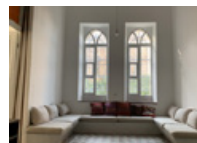


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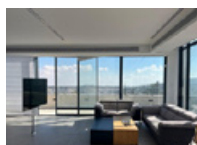


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Give generously to the poor. Let them eat from the leftovers of the harvest. Leave them a corner of the field. Share your blessings with others. Don't deprive people of their livelihood. The entire structure of biblical law is rooted in the experience of slavery in Egypt, as if to say: you know in your heart what it feels like to be the victim of persecution, therefore do not persecute others.

Biblical ethics is based on repeated acts of role-reversal, using memory as a moral force. In the books of Shemot and Devarim, we are commanded to use memory not to preserve hate but to conquer it by recalling what it feels like to be its victim. "Remember" – not to *live* in the past but to *prevent a repetition* of the past.

Only thus can we understand an otherwise inexplicable detail in the Exodus story itself. In Moses' first encounter with God at the Burning Bush, he is charged with the mission of bringing the people out to freedom. God adds a strange rider:

I will make the Egyptians favourably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbour and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which

you will put on your sons and daughters. (Ex. 3:21-22)

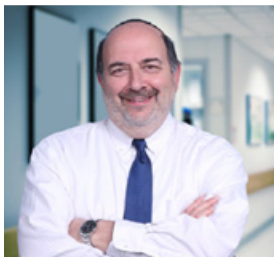
The point is twice repeated in later chapters (Ex. 11:2, Ex. 12:35). Yet it runs utterly against the grain of biblical narrative. From Genesis (14:23) to the book of Esther (9:10, 9:15, 9:16) taking booty, spoil, plunder from enemies is frowned on. In the case of idolaters, it is strictly forbidden: their property is *cherem*, taboo, to be destroyed, not possessed (Deut. 7:25; 13:16).

When, in the days of Joshua, Achan took spoil from the ruins of Jericho, the whole nation was punished. Besides which, what happened to the gold? The Israelites eventually used it to make the Golden Calf. Why then was it important – commanded – that on this one occasion the Israelites should ask for gifts from the Egyptians? The Torah itself provides the answer in a later law of Deuteronomy about the release of slaves:

If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. When you release him, *do not send him away empty-handed*. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. (Deut. 15:12-15)

Slavery needs "narrative closure". To acquire freedom, a slave must be able to leave behind feelings of antagonism to his former master. He must not depart laden with a sense of grievance or anger, humiliation or slight. Were he to do so, he would have been released but not liberated. Physically free, mentally he would still be a slave. The insistence on parting gifts represents the Bible's

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psychological insight into the lingering injury of servitude. There must be an act of generosity on the part of the master if the slave is to leave without ill-will. Slavery leaves a scar on the soul that must be healed.

When God told Moses to tell the Israelites to take parting gifts from the Egyptians, it is as if He were saying: Yes, the Egyptians enslaved you, but that is about to become the past. Precisely because I want you to remember the past, it is essential that you do so without hate or desire for revenge. What you are to recall is the pain of being a slave, not the anger you feel towards your slave-masters. There must be an act of symbolic closure. This cannot be justice in the fullest sense of the word: such justice is a chimera, and the desire for it insatiable and self-destructive. There is no way of restoring the dead to life, or of recovering the lost years of liberty denied. But neither can a people deny the past, deleting it from the database of memory. If they try to do so it will eventually come back – Freud’s “return of the repressed” – and claim a terrible price in the form of high-minded, altruistic vengeance. Therefore the former slave-owner must give the former slave a gift, acknowledging him as a free human being who has contributed, albeit without choice, to his welfare. This is not a squaring of accounts. It is, rather, a minimal form of restitution, of what today is called “restorative justice”.

Hatred and liberty cannot coexist. A free people does not hate its former enemies; if it does, it is not yet ready for freedom. To create a non-persecuting society out of people who have been persecuted, you have to break the chains of the past; rob memory of its sting; sublimate pain into constructive energy and the determination to build a different future.

Freedom involves the abandonment of hate, because hate is the abdication of freedom. It is the projection of our conflicts onto an external force whom we can then blame, but only at the cost of denying responsibility. That was Moses’ message to those who were about to enter the Promised Land: that a free society can be built only by people who accept the responsibility of freedom, subjects who refuse to see themselves as objects, people who define themselves by love of God, not hatred of the other. “Do not hate an Egyptian, because you were strangers in his land,” said Moses, meaning: To be free, you have to let go of hate. ■

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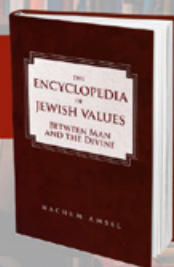
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Recalling Our Faith While in Egypt

The Torah dictates in no less than four distinct locations, using the same exact phrase, that we are to recall that we were slaves in Egypt. Two of these pesukim appear in this week's parsha. Why is it so important to repeat this statement and is there any connection between the different iterations?

In Parshat Ki Teitzei (Devarim 24:17-18) with respect to the manner in which to behave to a

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on his 40th yahrzeit

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Missed every day by his children,
grandchildren and great-grandchildren
together with his wider family
and his many friends
whose lives he touched

widow and orphan the Torah states:

לֹא תִטֶּה מִשְׁפַּט גֵּר יְתוֹם וְלֹא תִחַבֵּל בְּגֵד אִלְמָנָה.
וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּמִצְרַיִם.....

Later in the Parsha (Devarim 24: 21-22), with respect to charity to be given to widows and orphans the Torah states:

כִּי תִבְצֹר כְּרֶמֶךָ לֹא תַעֲזוֹל אַחֲרָיָהּ לְגֵר לִיתוֹם
וְלִאִלְמָנָה יְהִיָּה. וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם...

In Parshat Ve'etchanan (Devarim 5: 14-15) in connection with Shabbat the Torah dictates:
יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-
מְלָאכָה אֹתָהּ וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ.....לִמְעַן
יָנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ כָּמוֹךָ. וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם....

Lastly, in Parshat Re'eh (Devarim 15-14-15), in connection with setting a servant free, we are instructed not to let him go empty-handed (הענקת):

הַעֲנִיק תַעֲנִיק לוֹ מִצֶּאֱנָה וּמִגֶּרֶךָ וּמִיִּקְבָּה אֲשֶׁר
בִּרְכָּה ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ תִתֶּן-לוֹ. וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם.

Rabbi Schwab (Maayan Bet Hashoeva) offers an insightful explanation as to the connection between these four statements. When we recall what transpired in Egypt, the intention is not just to remember the bitterness and back-breaking labor that we experienced. The midrashim shed light on the fact that we never gave up hope. Women would encourage their husbands to continue to procreate irrespective of Pharaoh's decree to throw all male babies into the Nile. We were able to get one day off - on Shabbat (Shemot Raba 1:24) pursuant to Moshe's request. When we recall the enslavement in Egypt, we are also to recall

the **positive attitude** that many had and the ability to **accept the challenges** with love and faith (יסורים מאהבה).

The four pesukim highlighted above deal with widows and orphans, a newly freed servant and Shabbat. It is specifically in these areas that we need to offer our encouragement. Having experienced poverty and helplessness in Mitzrayim, we ought to reach out to those in need. Just as we had faith that Hashem would redeem us in Mitzrayim, so too we must assist and strengthen the underprivileged. They too should enjoy some rest and peacefulness, as we experienced on Shabbat in Mitzrayim.

Perhaps that is why when we eat the *maror* at the Seder we mix it with the *haroset*. To recall that all was not strictly bitter in Egypt- but rather it was bittersweet! Through faith and belief in Hashem, we were able to persevere, lift ourselves up and merit the redemption. **When we recall our experience in Egypt we should recollect not just the enslavement, but the faith and courage that facilitated survival.**

As we experience challenges on a personal and national level, may we be able to recognize the hand of God in the many miracles that we are witnessing, strengthen our *emunah* and *bitachon* and merit a *geula shelema bemihera b'yamenu!* ■



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Mitzvah Mindset

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of Hashem; even the tenth generation shall never enter the assembly of Hashem.” (*Devarim 23:4*)

The Torah forbids members of these nations from marrying into the Jewish people, as they did not greet the Jews with water and bread when they left Egypt and moreover, they hired Bilam to curse the Jewish people. What is puzzling here is that the Torah was given in its entirety at Har Sinai, yet these particular events had not even occurred!

The *Beis Halevi* offers a fundamental approach to the way we relate Torah and mitzvot. Truth be told, all mitzvot are Divine in origin and are beyond our mortal comprehension. As Hashem’s chosen nation, we are obligated to fulfill His Will for no other reason than that He commanded it. Thus, we are forbidden to include Ammonites and Moavites irrespective of the reason. However, the Torah **does** record a reason so as to emphasize the negative qualities these nations exhibited. In doing so, we are cautioned to act differently, adhering to the values and morals set out by Torah law and spirit. In effect, Hashem caused the Ammonites and Moavites to behave this way, so we have

a clear definition between us. Living Torah positively impacts our nature and forms our identity.

Rav Lopian zt”l in *Lev Eliyahu* expounds on this idea. Hashem created the world for the sake of Torah, and not the opposite. We are not warned against theft because people tend to steal. Rather, since Hashem wanted to give us the opportunity to learn Torah and keep His mitzvot, He created within us a desire to steal.

When viewing the Torah and indeed, the entire world in this light, we are led to reassess our conventional paradigms. At the beginning of the *parashah*, Rav Gedalya Schorr zt”l notes in *Ohr Gedalyahu*, that wherever we go we encounter opportunities to do mitzvot. Often, we look at mitzvot as something that we happen to do, or something we need to do to get on with our day. Instead, we must try to view mitzvot as the essence of our lives. The *Zohar Hakadosh* defines mitzvot as 613 mediums through which we can connect with Hashem. Although we do ascribe reasons for mitzvot to make them more understandable and relatable, we cannot forget that it is the mitzvah itself that we are after.

When we understand this dynamic, we will search out opportunities to do mitzvot, as they are the purpose and intention of creation. Connecting with the Will of Hashem and accessing the core of creation is the greatest reason to do a mitzvah. ■



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Foe & Friend

Beloved Israeli author, Shmuel Yosef "Shai" Agnon wrote extensively on themes and topics revolving around his Jewish identity, relationship to Torah and love for Yiddishkeit. His subjects and work capture the authentic, *heimish* nuances of the European *shtetl* culture, while dealing with the tension between traditional Jewish life and values in the modern world. Ultimately, these gifts earned him the Nobel Prize for literature.

Penned in 1941 from his home in Talpiot, Yerushalayim, מאויב לאוהב, *From Foe to Friend*, is a short story that explores the human struggle to tame nature and establish a home in the Land of Israel, specifically in the Holy City. The story follows a narrator's attempts to build a house on a hill despite the destructive force of the wind, which is personified as a powerful enemy. Through this allegory, Agnon examines themes of

resilience, the relationship between humanity and nature, and the challenges of settling in a new land while yearning for rootedness, permanence, and a basic sense of security.

The powerful winds that once dominated the open areas around Jerusalem are portrayed as a "king" and his "ministers", constantly blowing down anything in their path. Despite the wind's destructive power, the narrator is determined to build a house on a hill. He attempts all sorts of different methods that fail to withstand the wind's force, until he finally adapts by building a more resilient structure that respects the wind's strength rather than trying to defeat it. It brings a sense of peace and *shleimus* when he accepts the challenges and reality of his struggle.

This tale is an allegory of the eternal longing of the Jewish people to dwell securely in our homeland. As the protagonist struggles to tame the wind so that he can build his home, the Jewish People continuously struggle to overcome adversity and adversaries, and root themselves in their true home.

כִּי־תֵצֵא לְמִלְחָמָה עַל־אֹיְבֶיךָ...

"When you go out to war against your enemies..." (Devarim 21:10)

The harshness of the Land of Israel — its dryness, thorns, and resistance — appears at first as an enemy to the pioneer. But over time, the protagonist sees that the Land was never the enemy. The real battle was actually with internal reactions to his own mindset, his lack of patience and his inherited fears of exile. The enemy, it turns out, was how he

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viewed the Land. Through this awakening, the imaginary “foe” becomes a friend, and peace and wholeness descend.

This process reflects a powerful teaching of the Talmidei haBaal Shem Tov: the *yetzer ha-ra* is our greatest teacher, concealed in a disguise of enmity and negativity.

The difference in spelling between אויב, ‘enemy’ and אהוב, ‘friend’, is the inclusion of the letter *yud* or the letter *hei*. *Yud*, as the smallest letter, represents concealment. It is a symbol of *chochmah*, the most elusive form of divine insight. *Hei*, on the other hand, is like a *yud* that has spread out laterally and vertically, revealing itself fully. *Hei* is a symbol of *binah*, understanding. When we truly reveal and understand the divine intent concealed in our ‘enemy’, the *yetzer ha-ra*, we can see through its disguise. We can convert its *yud* into a *hei*, and destructive behavior into friendly, beneficial action. This is how to approach an internal enemy; an external enemy can be an entirely different matter....

And yet, the Baal Shem Tov also reveals that our external challenges and adversaries are in some ways reflections of our own inner states.

In the wake of the ‘globalized intifada’, the worldwide tidal wave of Jew hatred and the extended war we have lived through in Eretz Yisrael, we have been witness to ‘strong winds’ that threaten our national home and safety. The sense of rootedness and stability we yearn for is further shaken by moral confusion and dangerous *sinas chinam*. Most devastatingly, fallen, failed leaders devoid of Torah values and a healthy Jewish identity have poisoned our national wells, to the point of making reprehensible comments vilifying our precious *chayalim* and seeking to undermine traditional Jewish values. Whether acting through former

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prime ministers, heads of our military and judges, it often seems our national *yetzer ha-ra* is out of control and we are behaving as our worst enemy. However, this is where we need to seek the concealed *Yud* and find the *nikudah tovah* in even the self-destructive or insensitive actions of our brethren. Sometimes it is merely misguided *hashkafa* and philosophical differences that are at play, and behind their appearances, the people are actually friends and family, not enemies.

Agnon wrote his short story against the painful backdrop of the unfolding Shoah in Eastern Europe as well as his experience of

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his home being ransacked by jihadists years earlier, during the pogroms of *Tarpat* (1929) which had swept across Eretz Yisrael. These facts underscore the message that our ongoing struggle with our jihadist neighbors, and our ongoing efforts to secure our homeland, must be built on the foundations of inner work, *achdus* and love for our fellow Jews. When we rectify our yetzer and love others unconditionally, the behavior of those ‘others’ will shift toward positivity on their own. When we “go out to war”, we need to go inside to make *tikunim*.

As part of the *kriyas haTorah* on Mondays and Thursdays, many congregations add a number of tefillos, a series of requests beginning with *Yehi Ratzon*, “May it be Your will....” As the *aron kodesh* is opened, and the community gathers close to the Torah in reverence and respect, there is an ‘*eis ratzon*’, auspicious opportunity to daven and ask for compassion and blessings from the Ribbono shel Olam. The last tefillah, a request on behalf of our Nation, “*Acheinu Kol Beis Yisrael*,” does not begin with “*Yehi ratzon*”, however. The Sar Shalom of Belz tells us this is because there is no greater ‘*eis ratzon*’ than when Jews gather together and daven for one another. There isn’t even any reason to ask that it be an auspicious time, for the *eis ratzon*

is already manifest in the fact that we are standing together, in *achdus*, focused on our inner growth and upon loving one another.

Preparing for a new year, we are instructed to ‘go out’ to battle our enemy, knowing that our means of victory is in making *teshuvah*, converting our yetzer ha-ra and negative *midos* into allies - and B’ezrat Hashem, loving friends. ■

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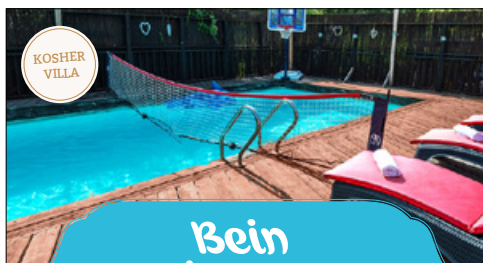
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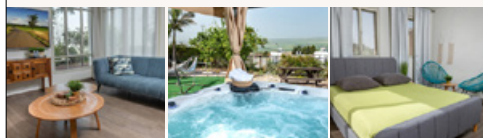
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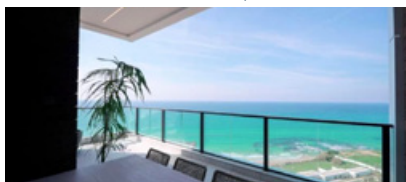
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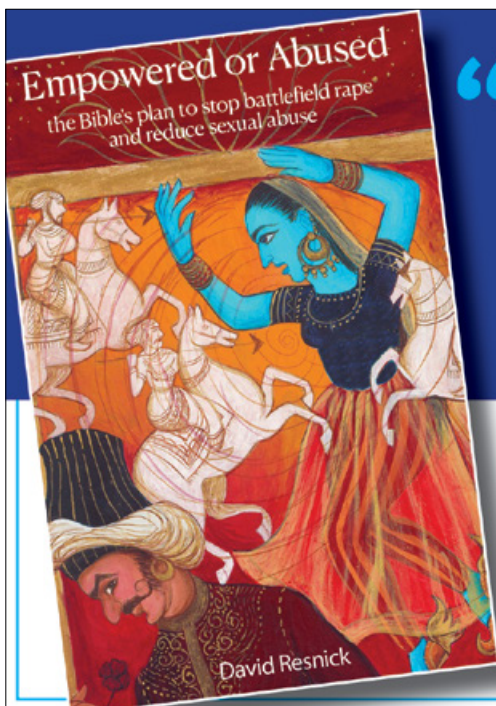


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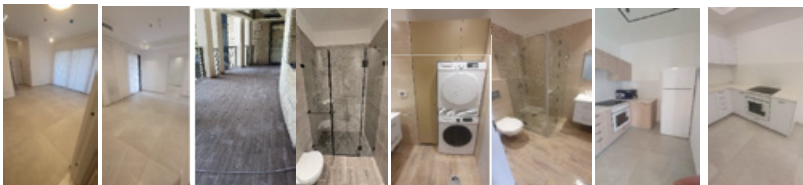


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Understanding Kosher Ingredients: Group One and Group Two

As mentioned in previous articles, kosher ingredients are the cornerstone of kosher certification. Since ingredients are sourced globally, extracted in various ways, and processed differently, extensive knowledge is required to determine whether a given ingredient is kosher-compatible. To help navigate this complexity, the OU has developed a system that categorizes ingredients into six numeric groups, ranging from 1 to 6. The lower the number, the less sensitive the ingredient is from a kosher perspective, giving companies and food-service providers greater flexibility in sourcing.

GROUP ONE: UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTABLE INGREDIENTS

Group One represents the most innocuous ingredients used worldwide. These materials can typically be sourced from any manufacturer, regardless of location, and are universally considered kosher-compatible. Once registered and approved, these ingredients may be used freely in OU-certified facilities.

Group One impacts not only kosher certification processes but also Jewish travelers worldwide. It includes products that can be purchased and consumed even without

formal kosher certification—though this is a sensitive subject that depends on various factors. A future article will explore this topic further, especially regarding kosher consumption in regions where certified products are less available.

Examples of Group One ingredients include:

- Salt
- Sugar
- Pure ground coffee
- Raw nuts
- Group One also includes certain chemical additives such as:
 - Titanium dioxide
 - Sodium bicarbonate
 - Malic Acid

While Group One may seem like a straightforward category, OU Kosher's rabbinical board constantly updates and reviews the status of these ingredients to ensure the assessments remain accurate. Thanks to a global network of hundreds of supervisors, OU Kosher can provide reliable information on the kosher compatibility of these ingredients.

It's important to note that Passover (Pesach)



introduces additional stringencies. Some ingredients that are Group One for year-round use may require thorough research and reevaluation for Passover. A dedicated team at OU Kosher handles Pesach-related ingredient issues in detail each year.

GROUP TWO:

COUNTRY-DEPENDENT INGREDIENTS

Group Two is similar to Group One in terms of flexibility, but with one key distinction: the country of origin. While the ingredient itself may be inherently kosher, the manufacturing practices in certain countries can raise concerns.

The OU operates in over 100 countries and understands the nuances of regional production standards. For example, vinegar (chemically known as acetic acid) can be produced from various sugar sources through a double fermentation process. In many countries, it's made from inexpensive vegetable starches or regular sugar. However, in some regions—particularly in Europe—it may be produced from

wine, which introduces significant kosher concerns.

Thus, vinegar made in one country may be permitted, while the same product from another country may be entirely non-kosher.

This distinction is what separates Group One from Group Two: seemingly simple ingredients may be kosher-compatible when sourced from specific countries but problematic from others due to cross-contamination or ingredient sensitivity.

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: OLIVE OIL

In Spain, olive oil production is tightly regulated, making virgin and other types of olive oil generally acceptable (and sometimes even suitable for Passover—though one should consult the OU Kosher Hotline for confirmation).

In contrast, countries like China may lack these regulations, and olive oil may be processed or refined in non-kosher facilities.

Therefore, olive oil is a classic Group Two ingredient—kosher status depends heavily on the country of origin. ■



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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,
OU ISRAEL

Our *sedra* this week, *Parshat Ki Teitzei* includes the instruction to build a fence or railing around the rooftops of our home: *ki tivneh bayit chadash, v'asita maakeh legagecha*.

The mitzvah to affix a railing on the roofs of our homes seems like a very straightforward safety instruction. However, if this mitzvah is indeed solely about safety, why does the verse specify- *ki tivneh bayit chadash*- when you build a **new** home- shouldn't this mitzvah apply under all circumstances?

Furthermore, why specifically on the roof, what about other areas of potential danger, for example a steep ravine on our property, or a swimming pool, etc? Might there be more to this instruction than simple safety considerations?

The Chasidic Masters point out that *Parshat Ki Teitzei* is always read in *Chodesh Elul*. During these days of *Elul*, we are preparing ourselves for *Rosh HaShana*. **Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye, the Toldot Yaakov Yosef zy'a**, explains that if we wish to rebuild ourselves, to prepare for the new year emotionally, it begins with safeguarding our proverbial personal rooftops-clearing our minds of any inappropriate thoughts, and getting to the proper head space for that new beginning. We must build a proverbial fence around our minds, to only let in that which is appropriate, and protect against outside influence.

The *Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a*, suggests that this interpretation offered by the *Toldot Yaakov Yosef*, is indeed the level

of protection we need to seek as we begin to build for the new year.

Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, zy'a further elaborates and suggests that all the spiritual work and growth we seek to accomplish during these days of *Elul* and subsequent days of the *Chagei Tishrei*, need to be the impetus for sustained spiritual growth for the entire year. Each year as one year draws to a close and we transition into the proverbial *bayit chadash*- new home of the coming year, we need to hold tight, to build a railing or protective fence around the growth we have hopefully achieved during these days of *Elul* and *Tishrei*, so that we may sustain this growth throughout the coming year.

The **Oheiv Yisrael, the Apter Rebbe zy'a** extends this idea even further. Each person is responsible to safeguard themselves spiritually, but also should feel a sense of obligation to ensure that others will be protected from potential spiritual challenges and pitfalls. By creating boundaries and safeguards we can assist our fellow Jew from stumbling.

Yehi Ratzon, may each of us be blessed to both ascend and grow spiritually in the days ahead, to assist one another in sustaining that spiritual growth, and to hold strong to that growth in the year ahead. ■



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SUNDAY SEPT 7

7:30 PM

Men's Advanced Safrut
(The Bais) **Rabbi Tzvi Maurer**
7 Hartum Street, 2nd Floor
(Will Resume after the Chagim)



*The schedule is subject to change
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MONDAY SEPT 8

8:30 PM

The Bais (for Men) - **Semichat
Chaver Program Rav Elyada
Goldwicht@ Bet Knesset
Ohel Yitzchak**, Keren Hayesod St.



OU Israel | Women's Division
2 Radak St., Rechavia

6:00PM-10:00PM

ATID Midrasha
(women in their 20's)

7:00PM-9:00PM

Dorot Choir Session with
Hadassah Jacob

7:15PM-9:45PM

Yamim Noraim Leil Iyun

**TUESDAY
SEPT 9**

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COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN BAKAA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Nitzanim, 3 Asher Street, Bakaa

9:20 AM

Understanding Tefila

Rabbi Yossi Goldin

(will resume in this time slot
on Sept. 9)

10:15 AM

Rambam: Letters and Introductions

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

11:25 AM

Pshat in the Parsha

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

12:20 PM

Unpacking the Messages
of Chazal

Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

TORAH TUESDAYS WITH THE WOMEN'S DIVISION

Classes @ Beit Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St. Rechavia

9:15AM

Torah Tapestries

Parsha Shiur

Mrs. Shira Smiles

10:15AM

Living with

Emunah

Mrs. Raquel

Kirszenbaum



MODIIN-THE BAIS

Men's Programs in Modiin Yeshivat Hesder Meir Harel,
Emek Beit Shean 53, Modiin

10:00AM -2:00PM

Weekly Kollel Boker -Instructors include
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Rabbi David Fine,

Rabbi Ian Shaffer,

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This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning with OU Israel

WEDNESDAY SEPT 10

COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN RECHAVIA

@ Bet Knesset HaNassi,
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

9:15AM

Holy Poetry

Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler

10:20 AM

Contemporary Issues in Halacha
and Hashkafa

Rabbi Anthony Manning

11:25 AM

Mussar and Self Improvement:
A study of Rav Kook's sefer "Midot
HaRaya"

Rabbi Goldscheider

12:30PM

Jews in the Middle Ages: External
Threats and Internal Development
Dr. Deborah Polster

THURSDAY SEPT 11

COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN ARNONA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon, 11
Rechov Leib Yaffe, Arnona

9:15 AM

Parshat HaShavua **Rabbi Ari Kahn**

10:30AM

Modern Masters

Rabbi Sam Shor

(Rabbi Baruch Taub will resume after
the chagim)

11:20AM

AMTrailblazing the Text of TaNach

Rabbi Neil Winkler

8:00 PM

Halachic Controversies. (the Bais)

Rabbi Aschi Dick @ Bet Knesset

Ohel Yitzchak, Keren Hayesod Street

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Rabbanit Shayna
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MON. SEP. 29 | 7 TISHREI | 7 - 10 PM

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Full schedule & Registration: <http://torahmodiin25.ouisrael.org/>



Location: Kehilat Shaarei Yonah Menachem, 13 Efraim St., Buchman, Modiin

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6:10 PM

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Atara Starr

6:55 PM

Dinner

7:25 PM

Insights into the Machzor

Rabbi Eli Wagner

8:15 PM

Rav Soloveitchik on Teshuva

Miriam Tannenbaum

9:00 PM

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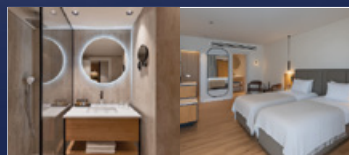
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Ki Teitzei: Am Yisrael as a Ben Sorer U'Moreh

The story of the *ben sorer u'moreh* is vivid and unsettling. A wayward youth buys meat and wine, indulging in small excesses, only to be punished harshly and sentenced to death. Chazal note the stark contrast between his minor actions and the severity of his punishment. They explain that the Torah is not exacting retribution for his current crime, but judges him *al sheim sofo*—for the trajectory of his life as it is likely to unfold. It is deemed preferable to end this potentially criminal path before it fully manifests.

The story seems so harsh that Chazal say it likely never occurred. The halachic

requirements for prosecuting a *ben sorer u'moreh* were so exacting that cases were almost never brought to court. Though the halachot exist, they were rarely applied in practice. The *ben sorer u'moreh* section functions less as history and more as a moral lesson. It teaches about parental responsibility and the challenges of adolescent rebellion, showing how destructive tendencies sometimes must be addressed early, before they escalate into graver misdeeds.

The image of a *ben sorer u'moreh* was so evocative that Yirmiyahu chose it to describe Jewish disloyalty. Most Nevi'im employ a different metaphor—an unfaithful wife—to depict Israel's betrayal of Hashem and His covenant. Hoshea (Perek 1 and Perek 4) and Yechezkel (Perek 16 and Perek 23) compare us to an unfaithful woman. Even Yirmiyahu adopts this powerful and painful image to convey religious and moral failure. Yet in one striking pasuk in Perek 5, Yirmiyahu chooses the metaphor of a *ben sorer u'moreh* to characterize Jewish rebellion:

(כג) וְלָעַם הַזֶּה הָיָה לֵב סוֹרֵר וּמוֹרָה סָרוּ וַיִּלְכְּנוּ

"But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone."

By casting our rebellions in the image of a *ben sorer u'moreh*, Yirmiyahu offers a nuanced perspective on our relationship with Hashem during moments of faltering. We are depicted not as an unfaithful woman, but as a *ben sorer u'moreh*: a people struggling to grow, assert independence, and find our path



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while remaining bound to Hashem.

THE RARE DOUBLE REBELLION

The actual *ben sorer u'moreh* is described as one who rebels against both mother and father, and both parents must bring the child to Beit Din. Halachically, if the mother is not alive, the child cannot be classified as a *ben sorer u'moreh*—one of the many parameters regulating the law's application. In Eichah Rabbah, Petichta 24, the Midrash extends this idea to Jewish history: for Israel to be called a *ben sorer u'moreh*, the nation must rebel against both Father and Mother. Extending the metaphor, the Midrash portrays Hashem as our Father and the Torah as our Mother. Only by turning away from both Hashem and Torah can a people be considered a *ben sorer u'moreh*.

During the First Mikdash, we behaved like a *ben sorer u'moreh*, abandoning both our Father and Mother. We violated fundamental mitzvot, and our moral hypocrisy hollowed out our relationship with Hashem. In that era, we were indeed worthy of the severe title of a *ben sorer u'moreh*.

Throughout much of Jewish history, however, we did not warrant that nefarious title. At times we have strayed from our Father—Hashem—or from our Mother—the Torah—but rarely from both. Sometimes we have meticulously observed Torah law, yet our broader moral behavior, cultural assimilation, or historical commitments strained our relationship with Hashem. At other times, we have faltered in halachic practice while maintaining a steadfast connection to our Father through faith and belief, even if not fully expressed in strict adherence to halacha.

We are considered a *ben sorer u'moreh*, truly rebellious, only when both Torah and

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Hashem are forsaken. Despite the trials and changes of Jewish history, we have rarely warranted such a designation. Ironically, by castigating his generation as behaving like a *ben sorer u'moreh*, Yirmiyahu was reminding future generations not to self-indict. It takes more than weakened halachic observance or a strained relationship with Hashem to be a *ben sorer u'moreh*. True rebellion requires turning away from both Father and Mother—and in our history, that double rebellion has been exceedingly rare.

TESTING BOUNDARIES AND INDEPENDENCE

The image of a *ben sorer u'moreh* introduces a second layer of nuance to the story of Jewish religious weakness. An unfaithful woman is driven by one of two forces. In some cases, her actions stem from lust and passion; in others, from a failure of loyalty, a lack of commitment, or sheer fickleness. Both are serious moral failings, and by comparing the Jewish people to an unfaithful wife, our Nevi'im cast Israel's betrayals in starkly severe terms.

By contrast, a *ben sorer u'moreh* is driven by very different forces. As a young boy grows into a man, he naturally begins to form his own identity and assert his independence. This process of developing autonomy

is essential to growing up. Yet it also makes submission to authority—whether social norms, parental guidance, or communal expectations—more challenging. He disobeys his parents and consumes meat and wine in ways deemed socially inappropriate, not out of lust or indulgence, but because he cannot be constrained by external forces that limit his independence. He is not disloyal, nor driven by appetite or sensuality; he is exploring the boundaries of his selfhood and testing the limits of autonomy inherent in human growth.

The literal term *sorer u'moreh* captures this dynamic. *Sorer* means to veer—he seeks his own path in life, diverging from the routes laid out for him. *Moreh*, according to Rashi, indicates that he does not heed external moral guidance but instead evaluates ethical

decisions for himself. In other words, he is discovering independence, forging his own way, and developing his moral conscience. While his actions may sometimes take questionable forms, the underlying drive is a natural part of this stage of growth.

COURAGE AND SUBMISSION

By framing Jewish rebellion as a *ben sorer u'moreh* rather than an unfaithful wife, Yirmiyahu softens the portrayal of our nation's betrayals. As we settled Israel, we sought to define our own identity. In the desert, we were entirely dependent on heavenly bread and desert-sprung water. Entering the Land of Israel, we pursued a national identity of our own. The conditions were harsh, and it required immense strength and determination to confront the militant peoples of the Land.

In this context, fully accepting *malchut shamayim*, heaven, while building our inner fortitude and communal strength was no simple task. Essentially, we were adolescents seeking to understand ourselves, learning to navigate independence while submitting to divine authority. The image of a *ben sorer u'moreh*, though a severe rebuke, allows Yirmiyahu to frame our failures in a more nuanced and compassionate way: we were not irredeemably unfaithful, but struggling with the natural and universal challenge of forming a strong identity while embracing the sovereignty of heaven.

In many ways, this narrative is resurfacing in the modern State of Israel. To settle and defend the Land requires steadfast will and resolute courage. The original generation demonstrated their bravery by draining swamps, repelling attacks, and enduring the arduous early stages of Israeli history.

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Our generation, too, is proving its inner faith and strength. Yet under such conditions, fully submitting to external authority is not always simple. Strong, self-sufficient people naturally find it more difficult to accept outside control. Israel demands strength, and not everyone is able to balance the fortitude required to thrive in the Land with the capacity to embrace the full codes of Torah and halacha. Sometimes we are not unfaithful or disloyal—we are simply a nation growing up under harsh conditions, striving to balance inner strength and independence with submission to Torah and divine authority. Framing the Jewish experience in terms of a *ben sorer u'moreh* allows us to view our struggles and our relationship with Hashem in a more measured and compassionate light.

THE CHILD REMAINS

Finally, the image of a *ben sorer u'moreh* reminds us that even in our rebellion, we remain Hashem's children. Parshat Ki Teitzei also describes the consequences of an unfaithful wife: she is sent away from her husband. In fact, the parsha immediately preceding *ben sorer u'moreh* deals with a man who has two wives, and implies that at some stage the less beloved wife will be discharged from the household. One might expect a similar fate for the wayward son: that he, too, should be sent away, cast out like an unfaithful wife. Yet this is not an option. A child is always a child. The fates of parents and children are inextricably linked.

As the Torah writes, “וְתִפְּשׁוּ בֶן אֲבִיו וְאִמּוֹ”—though this refers literally to bringing him to Beit Din, it carries a metaphorical resonance: parents must hold on to him firmly. He is not sent away. Even if the case were to reach Beit Din, parents would rarely, if ever, agree to



sacrifice their child over moral failings. The requirement for parents to bring their child to Beit Din ensures that the *ben sorer u'moreh* remains, rendering the story ultimately a cautionary tale rather than a historical reality.

The Gemara in Kiddushin (36a) cites Rabbi Meir:

רבי מאיר אומר: בין כך ובין כך אתם קרוים בנים, שנאמר: בנים סכלים המה, ואומר: בנים לא אמן בם, ואומר: זרע מרעים בנים משחיתים, ואומר: והיה במקום אשר יאמר להם לא עמי אתם יאמר להם בני אל חי.

"Rabbi Meir says: In either case, you are still called children, as it is written: 'They are foolish children [but still children].'"

By referring to us as a *ben sorer u'moreh*, Yirmiyahu offers a deeply compassionate perspective on Jewish failure. Though the image may sound harsh and castigating, it pulses with Ahavat Yisrael: no matter how far we stray or how rebellious we behave, a child can never be severed from the parent. Even in our failings, our bond with Hashem—as our Father—remains unbroken. ■



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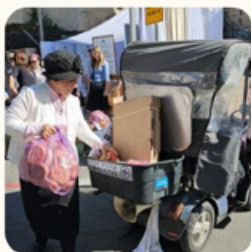
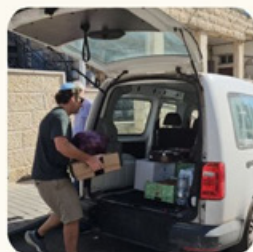


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RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

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A Match Made in Heaven

In his final days as leader of the nation, Moshe continued disseminating the Divine law and guiding his people. It may come as a surprise that it is at this stage that Moshe communicated the laws of divorce.

Interestingly, the relationship between the Jewish people and God has been described in terms of a number of human relationships, however inadequate those portrayals may be. One of those is the human bond of marriage, and its potential severability through divorce.

The covenant at Sinai is often viewed by the Sages as a marriage, with the Torah as the marital contract.¹ The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, observed that we refer to God commanding us the mitzvot in our blessings with the term *kideshanu*. On the face of it, the word means “sanctified us,” but on a deeper level it evokes the bond of *kidushin*, betrothal. When men wrap tefillin around their arm and fingers, they utter the words of the prophet Hoshea: “I have betrothed you to Me forever” (Hosea 2:20). The Jewish people are wed to God.

Can this marriage ever be terminated? The Talmud raises this very question:

Ten elders came and sat before [the prophet Yechezkel]. He said to them, “Repent!”

They said to him, “Does the master who sells his servant or the man who divorces his wife have any claim to them?”

The Holy One said to him, “Go tell them, ‘Where is your mother’s bill of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which creditor have I sold you? It is for your sins that you have been sold and for your iniquities that your mother was sent away’” (Isaiah 50:1).²

In other words, God might have separated from the Jewish people on account of their sins, but He did not do so completely or irrevocably. The proof is that we have no writ of divorce.

At times, it can feel like we have been divorced. Exilic existence has forced us into subjugation and into living under the thumb of foreigners. The Lubavitcher Rebbe observed, however, that these nations are only God’s messengers. The very first mishnah in *Gitin*, the tractate dedicated to divorce law, tells us, “One who brings a get from beyond the sea must declare, ‘It was written in my presence and signed in my presence.’”³ The foreign powers that have defeated the Jewish people and ruled over her in exile are only God’s messengers, and they have brought no get. As agents, they

1. The following remarks are based on *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, *Ki Tetze* 2, 143–151.

2. *Sanhedrin* 105a.

3. Mishnah, *Gitin*, 1:1.

possess no real power and cannot effectuate a divorce between the Jewish people and God on their own. The bill of divorce has never been, and will never be, delivered.

This reality is reflected in the words of this week's *parashah*. "If a man married a woman... and he wrote her a bill of divorce (*sefer keritut*) (Deuteronomy 24:1). The Rebbe pointed out that *keritut* denotes absolute separation and sundering. The word *sefer*, however, calls to mind the *sefer Torah*, the Torah scroll "given to create peace in the world."⁴ Halachah thickens this association by requiring that the get be written according to some of the rules for a *sefer Torah*, with ruled lines and length exceeding width.⁵ Unlike the Torah scroll, it must be written on a single sheet, but this too supports the idea of unity and wholeness. Why, then, does the Torah use a phrase that appears to be a contradiction in terms?

On the human plane, it instructs that the natural state of affairs between Jews is one of harmony. Holy matrimony sanctifies and deepens that connection. *Gitin* devotes its opening lengthy discussion to an unusual case, in which a get is being brought from abroad, rather than to the main body of relevant law. Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nasi organized the material this way, the Rebbe suggested, to signal that divorce has its origins in a "foreign place"—it does not come to us naturally. Although it is sometimes unavoidable and necessary, the existential bond remains in place.

Similarly, the metaphysical matrimony of God and the Jewish people is based on an

inextinguishable love. The exile we suffer under may conceal that love, but it continues to burn all the same. The Lubavitcher Rebbe boldly claimed that keeping our faith while scattered across the globe in hostile conditions actually reflects a more profound love. Even when the relationship seems severely strained, so much so that one might mistake the outward separation for divorce, neither husband nor wife have given up on it. Perhaps *Kidushin*, the tractate about marriage, follows *Gitin* as an adumbration of God's plan. *Gitin* is the spiritual exile that feels like divorce, and when God redeems us, the everlasting love represented by *Kidushin* will be manifest to all.

It is no accident that we learn about the laws of divorce at this time of year. The Rebbe observed that *Parashat Ki Tetze* is always read during the seven weeks of consolation following Tisha be-Av. Although the Temple is no more, the words *sefer keritut* remind us that God has not forsaken us. The flame of love yet burns. In addition, only our own unity and boundless love for one another will bring Him back in full glory to rebuild and inhabit His abode on earth once more. ■



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4. *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Megilah va-Chanukah*, 4:14.

5. *Shulchan Aruch, Even ha-Ezer*, 125:11–13.

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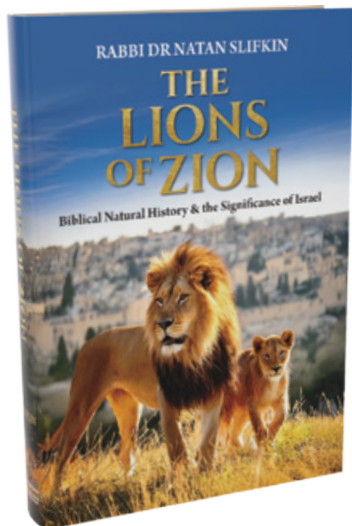


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After a Breakup: Helping the Heart Get Ready Again

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Ora asks:

My candidate recently ended a long relationship. He told me he's ready to move on and hear new suggestions, but I'm not so sure. Each time I suggest someone, he finds vague reasons to reject the idea. It feels like he's just looking for excuses to say no.

How can I really help him?

Aleeza answers:

When someone comes out of a long relationship, even if they say they're ready, the heart often needs more time than the mind admits. Ending something significant leaves a space that doesn't fill instantly. And sometimes, the fear of being hurt again shows up as a quick rejection.

First, let's validate: he's not wrong for feeling hesitant. This is how Hashem created the world when we lose something meaningful, we need a process of healing. The question is not just "Is he ready to date?" but "Is he ready to open his heart again?" Those are very different things.

So how can you help? Gently. With patience. Instead of only suggesting matches, invite him to reflect on what he learned from his last relationship. Ask: *What worked well? What would you like to build differently next time?* This helps shift his focus from "what I don't want" to "what I truly want to create."

You can also remind him: dating is not about finding someone perfect, it's about finding someone who is perfectly imperfect for you. If he's using small flaws as reasons to reject, that may be fear of making the same mistake twice so he's ruling out people

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who may remind him of what didn't work previously.

After making three suggestions and receiving three no's, let him know that you don't have any other relevant suggestions at this time. Let him know you've made thoughtful solid suggestions and you believe they have potential. Pause your suggestions and give him a moment to reflect. An endless supply of match suggestions will just prove you're throwing spaghetti at the wall rather than making targeted suggestions.

May Hashem bless him with clarity, healing, and the courage to say yes when the right person comes along. And may you be blessed with spot on suggestions.

Aleeza ■

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SPECIAL GUEST ARTICLE



Remembering Rabbi Wein zt”l

Two weeks have passed since we received the bitter news of Rabbi Berel Wein zt”l’s passing, and I still struggle to comprehend that he is no longer with us.


Over the past three years I have had the distinct privilege of serving as Rav of Beit Knesset Hanassi, alongside Rabbi Wein, who graciously stepped into the role of Senior Rabbi when I joined the community. Before accepting this position I had never met him in person, though like so many, I had long admired him from afar. He was a legend in the Jewish world - his books and audio lectures known in every corner of the globe. But meeting the man himself was an experience of an entirely different order.

I vividly recall my trial Shabbat at the shul, when delivering a Gemara shiur before Shacharit - and there, sitting quietly

at the back, was Rabbi Wein. Once I became the rabbi, it was always daunting to speak in his presence, yet he listened with the same attentiveness and respect as though he had never heard the material before. Afterwards, he would offer a warm comment that conveyed to the entire audience that my words carried weight.

What struck me most was his warmth and humility. For a man of his stature, it could not have been easy to relinquish the pulpit to a young rabbi more than fifty years his junior. Yet if he felt any discomfort, he never showed it. On the contrary - he treated me as an equal colleague from the very first moment. If a congregant approached with a halachic question, he would direct them to me. When the gabbai asked who should receive a special aliyah or honor, he pointed my way. Before the first night of Selichot, when the shul would be awaiting words of chizzuk from its rabbi, he simply turned to me and said: “*You’re the Rav - you do it.*”

Some of my most cherished memories of Rabbi Wein are not from his words, but from his simple gestures. After I delivered a drasha on Shabbat morning, he would often catch my eye, nod approvingly, and give a discreet thumbs-up. He knew exactly


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how much that meant. In his final months, when he was rarely able to attend shul during the week, he would take my hand on Motzaei Shabbat, wish me *Shavua Tov*, and hold on tight for a moment - as if to say, “*You’re doing a great job. Keep it up.*” Occasionally he would articulate it, but the silent encouragement of that handshake said it all. I will miss it terribly.

For several weeks before his passing, Rabbi Wein was absent from shul due to his declining health. But walking in this past Shabbat and seeing his seat now permanently empty, was especially painful. As I took my seat, alongside where he would sit, I began to tear up.

Chazal teach us that even the “casual conversation” of Torah scholars carries meaning. With Rabbi Wein, there was hardly any casual talk at all; every word was measured, every phrase imbued with decades of Torah insight and life wisdom. I treasure the Friday nights I accompanied him on the walk home from shul. I remember once as we passed two women on the street, one whispered in awe to the other: “*Was that Rabbi Wein?*” Yes, it was. A giant in our midst who graced our community, our streets and our lives. And I had the privilege to walk beside him.

Rabbi Wein leaves behind a void that can never truly be filled. But we will do our utmost to remember him by living our lives in the light of his teachings: to recognize our place in the great sweep of Jewish destiny, to draw on the wisdom of the past in order to shape the future, and to hold fast - in faith and conviction, as he was so fond of reminding us - that “*it will yet be good.*”

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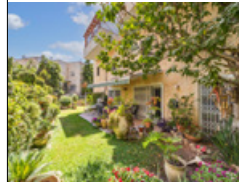
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Friendship, Community & Redemption

Hazal said of the friends of Iyov: או חברה או מיתותא - כחברי דאיוב או מיתותא - Either a person has friends like the friends of Iyov, or death.¹ What was it about the friends of Iyov that qualified them as the ultimate paradigm of friendship? After all, not only do they seem to have failed in their mission of comforting Iyov, in the final event they are even accused of incriminating him! How could such friends serve as a model for us to emulate, friends without whom death would be preferable to life?

The teaching of Hazal cited above comes at the conclusion of a discussion regarding the arrival of Iyov's friends to comfort him. The friends are described in the text as arriving jointly to console him, even though each had left from his own home in a location remote from the others. While today arranging such a meeting is as simple as sending a quick text message, in biblical times this was no small feat. The gemara explains that the friends had a system whereby they could remain aware of any change in the welfare of the others; some say they each had a crown on which the faces of the three others were engraved, and any change in their well-being was reflected in the face of the affected one, while others suggest

that each had three trees, each representing one of the friends, and if one withered they knew who was suffering. At any such sign, the friends gathered to offer support to the afflicted one. Thus Iyov's friends were able to assemble and arrive together to console him.

The Maharal explains the two opinions of the Sages to indicate that the bond among these four friends was all-encompassing. The suggestion of the crown reflects a bond that supersedes the physical realm, while the suggestion of the trees represents that the friends were united in the natural world, by the earth in which they were planted.² This friendship, which existed in both the upper and lower realms, is the type of friendship we can't live without - peers who not only sympathize but empathize, and are willing to drop everything at a moment's notice to be physically, intellectually and emotionally present in one's time of need.

The midrash teaches that in consequence of their willingness to drop everything to comfort Iyov in his state of mourning, Iyov's friends were spared from the places in *Gehinom* that had been designated for them, merited to have *Ruach HaKodesh* rest upon them

1. Bava Batra 16b

2. Chiddushei Aggadot Bava Batra 16b

and to have their names commemorated in Tanach.³ Rav Chaim Shmulevitz explains that the quality of bearing the burden of someone else's suffering as Iyov's friends did is an especially worthy character trait, one that is shared by none other than Mashiach himself. The gemara relates that Mashiach is to be found among those suffering from disease, doing all within his power to ease their pain. The Redeemer of the Jewish people must identify with their suffering.⁴

Although the friends of Iyov were not able to comfort him with their philosophical arguments, they remained present and shared his pain. At the climax of the sefer, Hashem commanded the friends to offer an 'Olah to atone for their erroneous arguments, and asserted that Iyov would pray on their behalf, despite their having wronged him. Rav Soloveitchik sees this prayer as evidence of the change wrought upon Iyov by his suffering - at the outset, Iyov's concern was only for his own family, reflected in the 'Olah offering he brought to atone for his children. Through his experiences, Iyov learned to rise above his individual concerns and identify with the pain and anguish of the community, to look outward and experience a sense of true communion with those in need. We, who pray in the plural form, learn from Iyov's transformation.⁵

May we merit to have and to be friends such as the friends of Iyov, and hasten the coming of Mashiach as we identify and show solidarity with the suffering of those in our community, offering our heartfelt prayers

on their behalf in this season of repentance, prayer and charity. ■

Mrs. Leah Feinberg is a master educator who taught at the SKA High School for Girls in Hewlett for twenty-one years, also serving as Tanach Department chairperson and New Teacher Mentor. Leah is currently on the faculty of the OU Israel Center and has taught in all three cycles of the OU Women's Initiative Nach Yomi program

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School Days

When getting a child ready for the school year, there are various checklists. It's a transition, and it takes a while for both parents and kids to acclimate to the new school year routine.

It's a good idea to get your child/children on board with back to school preparations. Ask them to make a list of specific items they may want or need and decide together what is relevant. As kids get older they can buy some of their own school supplies, which will encourage them to take on some of the responsibility. The practical or logistical preparation may seem overwhelming especially when there are many school age children at home. Once you've purchased the books, school supplies and new accessories, enlist the help of your child/ older children to help get the backpacks ready and books and notebooks covered and labelled. Allow your child to really be part of

the process. It can be a fun family activity for siblings to help each other.

Implementing a routine is important on school nights. Having kids on a consistent sleep/wake schedule is essential for them to be well rested. It will allow them to be present and focused during a long day of learning.

Another important aspect to consider is mealtime. In the summer kids tend to snack and eat whenever they want as schedules are more flexible. When school time arrives, it's really important to have healthy well rounded meals planned as well as healthy snacks available for school and after school. Kids generally come home after a long day, tired and worn out so it's good to have cut fruits or vegetables at the ready or anything else with some nutritional value! Some kids may even want a meal when they get home.

Technology has a strong influence on children. As your child enters the new school year you should decide how much screen time is allowed on a school night and on the weekend. You should have parent apps or filters in place to reinforce what was agreed upon. It's preferable for your child to be off of any device an hour before bedtime and not to have screens in bed.

Finally, it's important to have conversations with your kids regarding how they're feeling about the upcoming school year. Make time to connect, ask what they're looking forward to. If there's something they're worried about, concerned about? What can make it easier for them?

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It's important to give space for the unknown and doubts as school begins. And for them to know there's an address for them to express their feelings and emotions. Project confidence in your child and in their ability to navigate this new step!

If you're having a hard time getting into routine, your child missed the bus, or the food wasn't ready when they got home, give yourself some grace. It takes time to switch into school mode.

Be'hatzlacha ■

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

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

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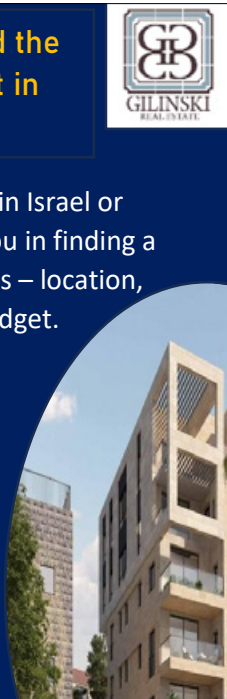
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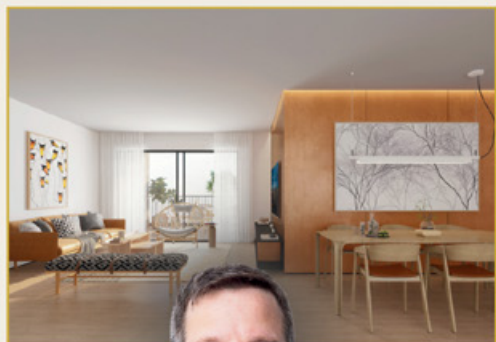
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Amidst all the mitzvot outlined in this week's parsha, we encounter one that appears almost too intuitive to require mention:

"When you build a new house, you shall make a fence for your roof, so that you do not bring bloodguilt on your house if a fallen one falls from it." (Devarim 22:8)

Isn't it logical that one should not create a situation in which someone could easily fall? If no word or even letter in the Torah is irrelevant or misplaced, why do we need to be told such an obvious idea?

The Slonimer Rebbe teaches that this week's parsha is always read in the month of Elul to teach us something vital as we prepare ourselves for the upcoming Chaggim. Elul is an introspective time in which we set goals for ourselves, reflect on the past year, and evaluate how we can reach our fullest potential in the coming one. Oftentimes, the list of goals and character traits we wish to improve spans

pages, moving from one lofty aspiration to another. While this influx of inspiration is an important part of growth, these goals are not always tangible, and setbacks are inevitable.

This is precisely why, when we look more closely at the pasuk, we are struck by the phrasing: "If a fallen one falls from it." The Slonimer Rebbe points out that this indicates a fall is inevitable, since they are already a "fallen one." During growth, we might find ourselves building a "new house," a new version of ourselves so far removed from where we presently are that we rise too quickly. Without a "fence" to safeguard us, we inevitably fall.

Anyone who has experienced such a setback on their path to growth might even ask, "If the fallen one will fall anyway, why even try?" This is precisely why this pasuk must be mentioned during Elul. Lofty goals are beautiful, but they can also be elusive. This Elul, as we set personal goals, we should make them attainable and establish safeguards against the inevitable return of old habits. With this approach, instead of stumbling, we can keep moving forward, step by step, toward lasting growth.

Shabbat Shalom.



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In this week's parsha, Parshat Ki Teitzei, we encounter many mitzvot; in fact, it's the parsha with the most mitzvot in the Torah. One mitzvah that seems minor is **Shiluach**

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HaKen-sending away the mother bird before taking her young.

What's surprising is that the Torah promises a reward for this mitzvah: longevity. There is only one other mitzvah for which the Torah explicitly mentions a reward: **Kibbud Av Va'Em**-honoring one's parents. At first glance, these mitzvot seem completely different. As the Gemara in Kiddushin teaches, Kibbud Av Va'Em is a tremendously difficult and demanding mitzvah, while Shiluach HaKen is relatively easy. So why do they share the same reward?

The answer lies in their unexpected nature. Many mitzvot are planned and prepared for in advance, but Kibbud Av Va'Em and Shiluach HaKen often appear spontaneously. A person may be walking down the road and suddenly see a bird's nest, or suddenly face a situation requiring immediate respect and care for a parent.

The month of Elul is a time to prepare our hearts for Rosh Hashanah. Just as we examine our deeds and refine our intentions this month, these mitzvot teach us to respond to life's unexpected opportunities with care, respect, and joy. They test our sensitivity, spontaneity, and love of Hashem. By fulfilling them wholeheartedly, we not only merit their reward but also strengthen our daily commitment to Torah and mitzvot. ■

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