

ב"ה  
**Torah**  
**Tidbits**

ISSUE 1662

UNITED  
WE STAND

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ישראל

י"ד סיון תשפ"ו - MAY 30<sup>TH</sup> 2026

BEHA'ALOTCHA  
בהעלתך

AVOT 2

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**What's the Backstory?**  
Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman  
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וענן ה' עליהם במדבר י:ל"ד

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT BEHA'ALOTCHA ZMANIM

CANDLES 7:02 PM • EARLY 6:10 PM • HAVDALA 8:21 PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:56 PM

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Torah Tidbits is proud to share a photo each week on the cover from our readers!  
It is an honor to showcase the immense talent from across the country.

Send us your best photos and give us the opportunity to highlight your story.



Everyone is invited to submit!  
(amateurs and professionals alike)  
Please email to [aarong@ouisrael.org](mailto:aarong@ouisrael.org)



## COVER PHOTO Photographed by Arnie Rotter

I made aliya 6.5 years ago. I live in the German Colony. The picture was taken in the stunning setting of Migdal David with its historic buildings and silhouettes. I was there for a beautiful ceremony honoring people of special achievement of Yerushalayim (יקרי ירושלים) and there was a fabulous sound and light show on the walls of the buildings. My wife and I were privileged to attend an elementary school graduation at the same site for our grandchildren who attend Mamad Harova. So in summary, it is a great venue emphasizing continuity with the past, achievements in the present while using modern lighting effects.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

 Last opportunity to say Kiddush Levana: 15 Sivan/ Sat. night May 30

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat  
May 27 - June 6 | 11 - 21 Sivan

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>4:38-4:34</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:36-5:33</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:06-9:05</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:23-8:22</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:16</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:36-12:37</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:11-1:13</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>6:09-6:13</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:41-7:42</b>



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	BEHA'ALOTCHA			SHELACH		
	Candles	Early	Havdala	Candles	Early	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	<b>7:02</b>	6:10	<b>8:21</b>	7:06	6:13	8:25
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	<b>7:19</b>	6:12	<b>8:22</b>	7:23	6:15	8:26
Beit Shemesh/RBS	<b>7:21</b>	6:11	<b>8:21</b>	7:25	6:14	8:26
Gush Etzion	<b>7:18</b>	6:10	<b>8:21</b>	7:21	6:14	8:25
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	<b>7:20</b>	6:12	<b>8:23</b>	7:24	6:16	8:27
Modiin/Chashmonaim	<b>7:19</b>	6:11	<b>8:22</b>	7:22	6:15	8:26
Netanya	<b>7:20</b>	6:13	<b>8:24</b>	7:24	6:16	8:28
Be'er Sheva	<b>7:18</b>	6:11	<b>8:21</b>	7:22	6:14	8:25
Rehovot	<b>7:19</b>	6:12	<b>8:23</b>	7:23	6:15	8:27
Petach Tikva	<b>7:02</b>	6:12	<b>8:23</b>	7:06	6:15	8:27
Ginot Shomron	<b>7:19</b>	6:11	<b>8:22</b>	7:23	6:15	8:26
Haifa / Zichron	<b>7:11</b>	6:13	<b>8:25</b>	7:15	6:16	8:29
Gush Shiloh	<b>7:18</b>	6:10	<b>8:21</b>	7:22	6:14	8:25
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	<b>7:20</b>	6:12	<b>8:23</b>	7:24	6:16	8:27
Givat Ze'ev	<b>7:22</b>	6:10	<b>8:21</b>	7:26	6:14	8:25
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>7:17</b>	6:10	<b>8:20</b>	7:21	6:13	8:24
Ashkelon	<b>7:20</b>	6:13	<b>8:23</b>	7:24	6:16	8:27
Yad Binyamin	<b>7:19</b>	6:12	<b>8:22</b>	7:23	6:15	8:26
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	<b>7:14</b>	6:11	<b>8:23</b>	7:18	6:15	8:27
Golan	<b>7:18</b>	6:10	<b>8:22</b>	7:22	6:14	8:26
Nahariya/Maalot	<b>7:10</b>	6:13	<b>8:25</b>	7:14	6:16	8:29
Afula	<b>7:19</b>	6:11	<b>8:23</b>	7:23	6:15	8:27

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Beha'alotcha - 8:56 PM • Shelach - 8:59 PM

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

**Daf Yomi: Chulin 30**



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN  
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Twenty-five years ago, my wife and I went on *shlichut* to Vancouver, British Columbia, together with our three sons at the time, in order to run NCSY in the Pacific Northwest. We met an incredible community, full of giving, full of Jewish pride, full of caring for one another. We were there to work primarily with teens, but through these teens we met their parents and families, and of course we met so many wonderful people as part of the wider community. The fact that so many teenagers wanted to spend Shabbat with us, to come for a meal and enjoy my wife's delicious food, created a bond between us and that community that has lasted to this very day.

For the past twenty-five years, I have made it a priority to stay in touch with those

teenagers. Wherever I go around the world, I try to visit them, call them for their birthdays, and follow up with them. The best part is seeing their progress. I have been so privileged to watch them earn their degrees, start careers, get married, have children, and become incredible individuals. It is truly something extremely special.

This past week, right before Shavuot, I was deeply moved to see two of these former NCSY teens reach a very special moment. The first is Tammi. Tammi moved with her family from South Africa to Vancouver, and she and her brother Jesse were integral members of NCSY. I was there for Jesse's bar mitzvah. I was there to see Tammi grow in her connection to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, taking upon herself Shabbat, kashrut, and more and more of a life built around Torah. Tammi was very involved in NCSY and even received the NCSYer of the Year award. After spending her gap year in Israel, Tammi earned a scholarship to Touro, where she attended, & continued growing in both her professional and Torah life.

Then Tammi, *baruch Hashem*, made aliyah. She ended up dating a young man named Max, who had grown up in Los Angeles and who had also connected to Torah through NCSY. He came to Israel, studied at Or Etzion under Rav Chaim Druckman zt"l, served in the IDF as a combat soldier, and afterwards went to Machon Lev to earn his degree. He and Tammi got married and built a beautiful family. We have a tradition that Tammi and Max and their four children come to our house every Sukkot, and it is such a blessing

**In loving memory of  
our parents, grandparents  
and great-grandparents**

**Elaine Zimmerman a"h**

**עלקה ג'אנה**

**בת חיים שלום הכהן ע"ה**

**נפטרה ט"ז סיון תשע"ג**

**On her 31<sup>st</sup> yahrzeit**

**Dr Charles Cohen z"l**

**ישעיה יצחק**

**בן מנדל אריה הלוי ז"ל**

**נפטר י"ד סיון תשע"ו**

**On his 10<sup>th</sup> yahrzeit**

*The Zimmerman family  
Nof Ayalon, Kerem Reim,  
Jerusalem, Nairobi*

to see how they each contribute to life here in Israel. Max works in high-tech at Mobileye, just a few blocks from the OU Israel office in Har Hotzvim, and Tammi has been working at OurCrowd, a venture investing platform.

Tammi's cousin, who back then went by Ricki, came to Vancouver for Jesse's bar mitzvah just a few weeks before heading to Israel for the year. I remember sitting down and talking to him at length about the year ahead. But I never expected the phone call I received after he finished his year at Yeshivat Har Etzion. He called to thank me, telling me that the advice I had given him really helped him make the most of his time in yeshiva, and that he had decided to stay for a second year. After his second year, he returned to Australia to complete his degree in accounting, and ultimately finished his studies back in Israel. *Baruch Hashem*, he married Shelley, who had made aliyah from England, and today Shmuel, as Ricki is now known, and Shelley live in Harish with their four children and are pillars of the Anglo community there.

About seven and a half years ago, both Max, with the support of Tammi, and Shmuel, with the support of Shelley, decided to start participating in a program that had begun right here at the OU. The Semichat Chaver Program was the brainchild of Rav Elyada Goldwicht, who came to my office nearly nine years ago with an idea. He wanted to create a program that would enable *baalebatim* who felt like they constantly had to call a rabbi for every halachic question, to come and learn halacha in an organized way, topic by topic, and ultimately receive a certificate recognizing what they had accomplished.

Rabbi Goldwicht started his first *shiur* at the OU Israel Center on Rechov Keren Hayesod in Rechavia. I remember standing at the first



*siyum*. It was inside the Seymour J. Abrams Jerusalem World Center OU hall downstairs, with a small group of a few dozen men who came together with their wives and children to celebrate having taken a tough *bechina* on the halachot they had learned. And I remember seeing Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg zt"l, together with Rav Shlomo Amar *shlita*, who was then the Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel and former of Rishon LeTzion, both come to the OU building to give the *teudot* to those participants who had excelled. It was extraordinary.

Little could I have imagined how far this program would go. Little could I have imagined that participants would take vacation days in order to prepare for the tests. Little could I have imagined the impact it would

לעילוי נשמת  
**Nechama (Nancy) Gaerman a"h**  
**נעמא לאה בת משה ע"ה**  
**On her second yarhzeit, 12 Sivan**

**She loved learning Torah  
 and supporting Torah learning**

**Forever in our hearts**

**May we be zoche  
 to follow in her footsteps**

***Families Bokow,  
 Gaerman and Harel***

have on the family structure, as proud fathers hang up their certificates in their homes and show their children how much Torah means to them. Today, approximately 300 locations around the world are learning the exact same material every single week in five different languages (Hebrew, English, Spanish, Russian and French), with amazing rabbis teaching that material to over 6, 000 *baalebatim* across the Jewish world.

I got to watch Max and Shmuel receive one *teudah*, then another, then another. And then, two days before Shavuot this year, as we were all preparing for *kabbalat haTorah*, I got to see something truly incredible. Rav Hershel Schachter *shlita* and Rav Shlomo Amar *shlita* sat on the dais and called up twenty-nine *baalebatim* in a room of over a thousand people. These thousand attendees were the Israeli participants and their families, representing the 6, 000 participants worldwide, all gathering to celebrate this incredible moment of receiving Semichat Chaver. But these twenty-nine were called up to receive a certificate that has

been all but lost from the Jewish people for decades, the title of *Chaver*.

The title *Chaver* goes back a long way. David HaMel-ech says of himself in Tehilim (119:63), “I am a friend (*Chaver*) to all who fear You.” The Rambam defines a *chaver* as one who is knowledgeable in Torah. The Maharil writes that a *chaver* is not only someone who works for his *parnasah* but who dedicates real time to Torah. And the Chat-am Sofer encouraged people to earn this title as a way to

motivate continuous growth in learning. Seeing Rav Hershel Schachter, Rav Shlomo Amar, and Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl *shlita*, three giants of our generation, sign these certificates, reviving a title that means these men will now be called to the Torah not just as *Ploni ben Ploni* but as *HaChaver Ploni ben Ploni*, was deeply moving. It demonstrates how they are investing their lives, their time, and their families in growing in Torah.

It is with tremendous admiration that I look at the spouses of these participants. Tammi and Shelley, and the spouses of the other 6,



000-plus participants, give their husbands the time, an evening a week, give them the quiet space in the house to review, and encourage them to bring the halachot they learned to the Shabbos table and discuss how to deal with different halachic questions together as a family. The certificate was given to these individual men, but the true recognition should go to the families that stood behind them.

It was an incredible evening. Avraham Fried sang. Families came with tremendous pride. There was a dinner reception beforehand. And the theme of the evening was "Chaverim Kol Yisrael." I looked at the flyer and saw a soldier standing with a *sefer*, a *chassid* standing with a *sefer*, and a simple Jew, a *baal habayit*, standing with a *sefer*. All of them are looking at the same Torah, all saying that this Torah connects us all. One is thinking about the *eruv* in his neighborhood, one about the *eruv* in his yeshiva, and one about the *eruv* on his army base. They are the same halachot that guide us no matter where we are when Shabbos comes.

The fact that we, as one nation, are able, *baruch Hashem*, to connect through Torah; people I might agree with *hashkafically* or might not, makes no difference. When it comes to Torah, we are all able to sit around the same table, the same *shiur*, and learn together, no matter what language we speak. I cannot recommend enough how much I encourage each and every one of us to find

the closest Semichat Chaver *shiur* and start dedicating an evening or a morning a week to learning halacha. It is done in a fun, uplifting, dynamic way, and it truly changes lives, changes families, changes the *chinuch* of children. And *b'ezrat Hashem*, we will continue showing *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* how much we are one nation. With all the politics and arguments, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* can look and say, *chaverim kol Yisrael*. We are all able to sit in one room together, celebrate the achievements of Torah, and *b'ezrat Hashem*, no matter where we are in the world, no matter what language we speak, continue learning His Torah and growing our families in the beautiful Jewish way, toward the building of the Beit HaMikdash *binhera b'yameinu*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



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

**Shabbat afternoon  
Parshat HaShavua Shiur  
Given by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres  
At Beit Kneset Ohel Yitzchak  
Rehov Washington at 5:30pm**

**May the Torah learned  
from this issue of Torah Tidbits  
be in loving memory of and לע"נ**

**David Sova ז"ל  
and Rachel Sova א"ה**

**דוד בן יצחק ז"ל  
& רחל בת ליון ע"ה  
on their Yahrzeits  
ט' סיון & ט"ז סיון  
respectively**

**Dearly missed  
and always in the thoughts  
of their children, grandchildren  
and great-grandchildren**



# OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

## Intergenerational Learning Across the Globe

The OU Israel Kids' Kollel brings Torah learning to life for children ages 9–14 through dynamic, interactive, and family-centered programming that inspires curiosity, connection, and meaningful engagement.

The most recent initiative included vibrant Shavuot source sheets filled with creative activities

and discussion prompts for parent-child learning at home and in shuls across the country. Published in Torah Tidbits and the OU's popular weekly "Shabbat Shalom" newsletter, these handy materials reached families around the world!

Another recent

highlight was a special intergenerational pre-Pesach Zoom program that united grandparents, parents, and children across oceans and time zones for shared learning, laughter, and connection. Through guided family breakout rooms, families who otherwise would not have spent Pesach together were able to create lasting memories while strengthening their connection to Torah and to one another. By blending creativity, meaningful Torah content, and family engagement, Kids' Kollel is helping build a new generation of inspired young Jewish learners!

Each week we will share one of OU Israel's impactful programs helping English speaking *olim* with their *klita* and impacting Israeli society.



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## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS  
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### BEHA'ALOTCHA

Parshat Beha'alotcha is one of the richest of the parshiot of the Torah. In it the preparation to march to the Land is completed; off we go, the march begins. It is the pivot from the sublime to the practical, from the ideal to the real, from theory to practice. It has more complaints than any other parsha – and all packed into the last 2 aliyas. There is complaining, disappointment, pettiness, disputes, frustrations. It is communal life in Technicolor.

And that is its profundity. You see, if we were to stop the Torah here, we would imagine Jewish life to be a fairytale: G-d promised the Land, sweeps us out of slavery, gives us the Torah, wants to dwell in our midst, creates a place of rendezvous of man and G-d, gives us days to meet with Him, and instructs us in choreographed detail how to march in life with Him. Beautiful.

Then we would look at our lives – disagreements, divided, distant, chaotic – where is He, where is the order, the choreography, the Mikdash? We could feel that the Torah is

untethered to reality, a fairytale, of living with G-d in a way we are unfamiliar. That it does not address real life.

But then there is Beha'alotcha and the rest of Bamidbar. As if G-d says: I have shown you the ideal. And I know full well your complexities. I expect some of you to be dissatisfied, bored, jealous, resentful. Skeptical, cautious, weak. Man is complicated. I, G-d says, know that perfectly well: I made you that way.

Your job as a people is to figure out a way to live reaching for the ideal while living all the complexity that man is: all the differences, the divisions, the struggles, the talents, the weaknesses and the aspirations.

Beha'alotcha assures us that the ideal is to aspire to, while the real is to manage.



#### 1ST ALIYA (BAMIDBAR 8:1-14)

Aharon is instructed to light the Menorah. The instructions concerning how the Leviim are to be purified and inaugurated through immersion and offerings are given. In so doing the Leviim are to be separated to be Mine.

These are the last verses of communal, national preparation to march to the Land. The leviim are to serve the kohanim.



#### 2ND ALIYA (8:15-26)

The leviim are to replace the first-born who are Mine after the plague of the first-born. The leviim are to assist the kohanim in maintaining the sanctity of the Mikdash. They are inaugurated and purified. They are to serve from ages 25-50, but not to do the offerings.

Just as for the kohanim and for the leaders,

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the ceremony of inauguration impresses on the Leviim that their special status is not mere privilege; it is service of the people, and service of G-d. A sense of entitlement or of privilege is the poison of communal leadership; a sense of service, its elixir.



### 3RD ALIYA (9:1-14)

Moshe instructs the people to do the Pesach in the first month of the second year. They do so, though some are unable due to their Tuma impurity. They query Moshe as to why they should be denied bringing the Pesach due to contact with the dead. Moshe defers to what G-d will tell him. He is instructed: all who are unable to do the Pesach in its proper time, due to Tuma or being distant from the Mikdash, may do it in the second month.

The chronology in the book of Bamidbar isn't smooth. We are in the second year since the Exodus. The book began on the 1st day of month 2. This story here of Pesach is the 14th of month 1. The leader's offerings in last week's parsha were the first days of month 1.

Moving around the events is deliberate. We want to begin the book with order and preparation of the leaders for the march to the Land. And now we want to move to a story of the Pesach where the leader, Moshe no less, is stumped.

The story of the offerings of the leaders was a wonderful display of what leadership need be; leaders are servants of G-d, not self-serving. So too the bringing of the Pesach. We are all, all of us, servants of G-d, not self-serving.

But the inquiry to Moshe from those who are impure stumps him and is dramatic foreshadowing. Even though everything has fallen into place perfectly – the camp is set, the Mishkan in the middle, the leaders altruistic, the people dedicated – but get ready.

Because life does not always go as expected; in fact, rarely does it go as expected. Be prepared for the unexpected. Because things unexpected are, well, to be expected. All the planning in the world cannot avoid the expected unexpected of life. Even the holiest, most self-effacing leader will not have all the answers all the time. He'll get stumped once in a while.

And that is a powerful lesson to all leaders; infallibility is fallacy. And certainty too. Be prepared for uncertainty, like how to accommodate the impure and their Pesach. Expect that things are going to happen that you just didn't expect. And you won't have all the answers.



### 4TH ALIYA (9:15-10:10)

The cloud descended on the Mishkan by day; by night it appeared as a fire. When it lifted, the people traveled; where it settled, the people settled. It could remain in place for a long time or just overnight, or a few days or a month. The people encamped and traveled by Divine signal. Moshe was instructed to make 2 silver trumpets. When both were sounded, the people were to gather; when just 1, the leaders would gather. A teruah would signal to travel; tekiah, to gather. In wartime, sound a teruah; on holidays and joyful occasions, sound a tekiah.

This aliya poetically describes Jewish travel: guided by the Divine, while called by the trumpets. It is the Divine-human partnership. He calls; we call (through the trumpets). So, while guided by G-d, it is we who manage the people. And that foreshadows all that is to come; the messy business of managing people.



### 5TH ALIYA (10:11-34)

On the 20th of the 2nd month the cloud lifted; the people traveled

from the desert of Sinai to the desert of Paran. The camp traveled just as had been instructed; each tribe in its designated position. Moshe asked his father-in-law Chovev (Yitro) to travel with them, for his insight would be valuable. He demurred, returning to his land. They traveled for 3 days.

The march to the Land of Israel begins. And juxtaposed is a dialogue between Moshe and his father-in-law Yitro. Moshe knows his own strengths and weaknesses. Moshe knows how to communicate with G-d; it's dealing with the people that he needs help with. And Yitro came to his aid way back in designing a court system.

Yitro is the master in managing the people. Yitro is just what we need now. Moshe desperately wants Yitro's guidance in managing the inevitable, the expected unexpected. Moshe knows the challenges of life that await him, urging Yitro to be his advisor.



#### 6TH ALIYA (10:35-11:29)

Moshe would pray upon travel: G-d, disperse Your enemies. And upon rest: Return the myriads. The people complained, angering both G-d and Moshe, a fire burning on the camp's edge. They called to Moshe, Moshe prayed and the fire abated. A group amongst them cried for meat, recalling the fish and produce they ate freely of in Egypt: We are parched with just this Manna. G-d and Moshe were angry. Moshe complained: am I to hold them like a baby? Where am I to find meat to feed them all? I cannot bear them alone. G-d responded: gather 70 elders. I will give them some of your spirit and they will assist you. And I will provide meat. G-d's spirit flowed to the 70 elders; Eldad and Medad continued to prophecy.

Here begins the rest of the book of Bamidbar: 3 challenges or failures in one aliya.

The first complaint comes fast; and we aren't even told what they are complaining about. Because life will never be satisfying to everyone. The second complaint, the complaint for meat, is the dissatisfaction of the Manna. It is boredom. We want the spice of life; pleasure, color and variety. Of course, their desire for the good life in Egypt is an obvious distortion of reality: is the grass of Egypt really greener, was Egypt truly so pleasant? G-d will provide the meat.

And Moshe himself complains; I am not cut out for cuddling them like infants. Moshe is told that his prophecy will spill over to the 70 elders. But even that goes awry, as Eldad and Medad want to bask in the radiance of that prophecy.

Perhaps the clumping of these complaints together is to convey that dissatisfaction will come in all shapes and sizes. All of human history is the story of struggles. Human greatness inheres in how to manage the struggles; quash them with tyranny and violence, denigrate the protagonist, or manage them with ethics, trying to preserve human dignity.



#### 7TH ALIYA (11:30-12:16)

A wind brought quail, covering the earth. The place was called Kivrot Hataava. Miriam and Aharon spoke ill of Moshe's wife; Moshe was the humblest of all people. G-d spoke to Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, calling to Aharon and Miriam. I speak to you in dreams: not so to Moshe. He, I speak face to face. Miriam became leprous. Moshe prayed for her healing.

The complaints continue, this time from an unexpected source; Aharon and Miriam. This challenge is brief but powerful.

The challenges, conflicts, and disagreements that arise in life are not to be seen

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as pettiness and weakness alone. Even the greatest of the great of our people can have disagreements with our leaders. That is a crucial perspective on all the challenges to come; human beings will never be free of disagreement or challenge. It is not just lust for meat. It is even the holiest of the holy who legitimately, but here incorrectly, question our most holy of leaders.

## HAFTORAH: ZECHARIAH 2:14 - 4:7

The highlight of the haftorah describes the beautiful golden Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash. This parallels the Menorah mentioned at the opening of the parsha, which was lit daily by Aharon, the Kohen Gadol.

The vision comes to Zechariah prior to the building of the second Beit Hamikdash. We are able to get a sense from the wording in this passage of the great joy that will prevail with God's presence returning to Jerusalem.

The Almighty also speaks of the great reward that will be given to Yehoshua, the first Kohen Gadol to serve in the second Beit Hamikdash, if he and his descendants follow the directives of the Torah. The ultimate reward is, "Behold! I will bring My servant, the Shoot," an allusion to Mashiach, the Shoot of David.

The prophet then describes the actual

seven-branched Menorah that he is able to discern in a prophecy. Its deeper meaning is to be understood in the following way: "Not by military force and not by physical strength, but by My Spirit..." The light of the Menorah represents the power of the Mashiach to fulfill his task and bring goodness and light to the world. ■



## STATS

36<sup>th</sup> of the 54 sedras; 3<sup>rd</sup> of 10 in Bamidbar.

Written on 240 lines, ranks 10.

16 Parshiyot; 11 open, 5 closed.

One of the parshiyot (a Stuma) is separated from the parshiyot before and after it by more than blank space (as is usual) - namely, backwards NUNS. Consequently, it is the "loneliest", most isolated of all parshiyot in the Torah.

136 pesukim, ranks 11<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> in Bamidbar.

1840 words, ranks 12<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> in Bamidbar.

7055 letters, ranks 12<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> in Bamidbar.



## MITZVOT

5 mitzvot; 3 positives, 2 prohibitions.

To illustrate the "lopsided" distribution of mitzvot in the Torah, Beha'alotcha has more mitzvot than 28 other sedras, and fewer mitzvot than 25 sedras. Only 5 mitzvot and it's in the top half.



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ויהי בנסוע הארן ויאמר משה (י:לה)  
 “And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moshe said...” (10:35)  
 Why is there an inverted letter “nun” before and after this Pasuk?  
 Rashi explains that G-d made these signs (inverted “nuns”) to inform us that this text is not in its proper place. (Talmud Shabbat 115b) It is here to make an interruption between one evil story and another one.  
 The Tiferet Yonatan (Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschutz 1690-1764) explains that the message of the inverted “nun” is to realize that any momentary fall of the pride of the Jewish nation will not be permanent.  
 The letter “nun” usually represents defeat and failure of the people of Israel. The letter “nun” begins the Pasuk “Naflah” –“The maiden Yisrael is fallen, she shall not rise anymore. That is why in the Psalm of Ashrei, (145) King David omits the verse that begins with the letter “nun”. (Brachot 5b)  
 By being written in the **inverted** fashion, the message is to never lose hope. We should seek out and appreciate the moments of triumph to carry us over until the coming of the full redemption to the Jewish people. - Shabbat Shalom

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## THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB  
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### “A Second Chance”

I was in a total fog during my first year in high school. I am convinced that my experience then was not unique. I entered a strange school, much larger than the one I had attended previously, and was not given the benefit of any orientation to the new environment. I did not know what to expect, and I was not informed about what was expected of me.

I struggled academically and socially. But I knew one thing, and that was that I liked to write, and I sought to learn how to do so.

Toward the end of the year, I learned that there was a special track in the English department for those who were interested in writing. The track was called “Journalism for Sophomores” and was open to those who did well in their freshman English courses. But, as I said, I was in a fog that freshman year and was merely passing freshman English.

Nevertheless, I applied for entry into the journalism class. I was turned down. But I persisted and made it my business to arrange for an interview with Mr. Joe Brown, the instructor for the journalism class, and also the advisor for the student newspaper.

I will never forget Mr. Brown, because he was impressed by my perseverance and gave me a second chance explaining that many freshmen often become overwhelmed by the novelty of their new environment and

don't always excel to their full potential. He would allow me into the elite journalism class with the condition that I would prove myself by doing extra essays, and doing them well, during the first six weeks of the semester.

I fulfilled his conditions and spent not one, but three years in the special journalism section under his tutelage. I enjoyed it, learned a great deal, became one of the editors of the prize-winning student newspaper, and was elected editor-in-chief of the senior yearbook. To this day, every time I put a pencil to paper or fingers to a computer keyboard, I think of Joe Brown.

In this week's Torah portion, *Parshat Beha'alotcha*, we read of a group of people who, like me, were unable to fulfill their responsibilities the first time around. In their case, it was the *mitzvah* of bringing the Passover offering on the 14th day of the month of Nisan, which they failed to do. For them, it was not the strangeness of a new school that prevented them from doing the *mitzvah* properly. Rather it was because “...they were unclean, having come into contact with a dead body, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day.” (*Numbers* 9:6)

They could easily have taken the approach of shrugging their shoulders and saying something like, “We tried our best, but circumstances were such that we were unable to perform the Passover sacrifice. We have a good excuse, so let's move on.”

But that was not their reaction. Instead, “...they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day.” They wanted, nay demanded, a second chance.

“Unclean though we are by reason of a corpse, why must we be debarred from presenting the Lord’s offering at its set time with the rest of the Israelites?” (*Numbers 9:7*) They persisted and insisted upon having the same benefits of the rest of the people, those who did not suffer the set of circumstances that denied this particular group of men this type of privilege.

Most fascinating is the fact that Moses did not know what to tell them. As far as I can tell, this is the first time in the Bible, and quite possibly the first time in the history of the human race, that a group of people asked for a second chance. Moses was unaware of a precedent for the privilege that this group was requesting.

So Moses, having the kind of access that none of us has today to the Divine, said to them, “Stand by, and let me hear what instructions the Lord gives about you.” (*Numbers 9:8*)

The Lord gave them a second chance. He told Moses that forevermore in the history of the Jewish people, when individuals are faced with circumstances that prevent them from bringing the Passover offering in its proper time, “they shall offer it in the second month...” God, in His infinite mercy, gave a second chance, a kind of a do-over session, to a group of people who could have easily given up, but who did not want to be left out and therefore persevered in their search for a spiritual privilege.

There is so much to be learned from this story. Although we cannot play God, we can certainly emulate Him and give others a second chance. We need not strictly enforce all of our rules but can recognize that there are circumstances in the lives of men that prevent them from doing the right thing the first time around and who, therefore, require a little “slack.”

But the great lesson for me in the story is the value of perseverance, of not taking no for an answer but continuing to knock upon the doors of opportunity. These men who were “unclean because of their contact with a corpse” are among the heroes (in their case, unnamed heroes) of the entire biblical narrative. Had they not persevered, we would never have learned of the Almighty’s provision of a *Pesach Sheni*, an opportunity to compensate for the excusable failure to do it right the first time.

So I learned much from Mr. Joseph Brown about how an empathic teacher can bring out the best in a confused youngster. But I also learned, very early in my own life, about the value of persistence.

‘Tis a lesson you should heed,

Try, try again.

If at first you don’t succeed,

Try, try again.

I am tempted at this point to hold a contest and offer a prize to the reader who can identify the source of that famous quote. But I will forego that temptation and tell you that it was first published in *A Teacher’s Manual*, by early 19th century educator Thomas H. Palmer.

Or in the words of another relative unknown, William Ward:

Four steps to achievement:

plan purposefully, prepare prayerfully,

proceed positively, pursue persistently.

Or, finally, in the words of the famous Goethe:

In the realm of ideas everything depends on enthusiasm;

in the real world, all rests on perseverance. ■



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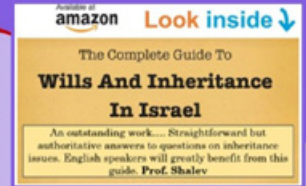


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## Moses' Challenge

It was the worst crisis in Moses' life. Incited by the 'mixed multitude', the Israelites complain about the food:

'If only we had meat to eat. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost - also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna.' (Num. 11:4-6)

It was an appalling show of ingratitude, but not the first time the Israelites had behaved this way. Three earlier episodes are recorded in the book of Exodus (chapters 15-17) immediately after the crossing of the Red Sea. First at Marah they complained that the water was

bitter. Then, in more aggressive terms, they protested at the lack of food ('If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death'). Later, at Refidim, they grumbled at the absence of water, prompting Moses to say to God, 'What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!'

The episode in this week's Torah portion - at the place that became known as *Kivrot Hata-avah* - was not, then, the first such challenge Moses had faced, but the fourth. Yet Moses' reaction this time is nothing less than complete despair:

'Why have You treated Your servant so badly?' asked Moshe of the Lord. 'Why have I found so little favour in Your sight that You lay all the burden of this people upon me? Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who gave birth to them all, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse-maid carries a baby,' to the land that You swore to their fathers? Where am I to get meat to give all this people when they come wailing to me, "Give us meat to eat"? I cannot bear all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You treat me, kill me now, if I find any favour in Your sight, and let me not

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see my own misery.' (Num. 11:11-15)

It is an extraordinary outburst. Moses prays to die. He is not the last prophet of Israel to do so. Elijah, Jeremiah and Jonah did likewise - making us realise that even the greatest can have their moments of despair. Yet the case of Moses is particularly puzzling. He had faced, and overcome, such difficulties before. Each time, God had answered the people's requests. He had sent water, and manna, and quails. Moses knew this. Why then did the fourth outburst of the people ('If only we had meat to eat') induce in this, the strongest of men, what seems nothing less than a complete breakdown?

Equally strange is God's reaction:

'Gather for Me seventy of Israel's elders, whom you know to be the people's elders and officers, and bring them to the Tent of Meeting. Let them stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and place it upon them; they will share the burden of the people with you, and you will not have to bear it alone. (Num. 11:16-17)

To be sure, this is a response to Moses' complaint, 'I cannot carry all these people by myself.' Yet both complaint and response are puzzling. In what way would the appointment of elders address the internal crisis Moses was undergoing? Did he need them to help him find meat? Clearly not. Either it would appear by a miracle or it would not appear at all. Did he need them to share the burdens of leadership? The answer is again, No. Already, not long before, on the advice of his father-in-law Yitro, he had created an infrastructure of delegation. Yitro had said this:

'What you are doing is not good. You will be worn away, and this people along with you. It is too heavy a burden for you. You cannot



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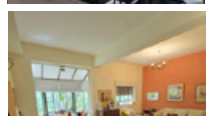
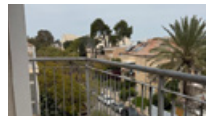
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carry it alone. Now listen to me, let me advise you; and may God be with you. You speak for the people before God, and bring their concerns to Him. And you must acquaint them with His precepts and laws, and make known to them the path they are to walk and the way they must act. You, as well, must seek out among the people capable men – God-fearing, trustworthy men, who despise corruption; and appoint them over the people as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.’ (Ex. 18:18-21)

Moses acted on the suggestion. He therefore already had assistants, deputies, a leadership team. In what way would this new appointment of seventy elders make a difference?

Besides which, why the emphasis in God’s reply on spirit: ‘I will take of the spirit that is on you and put the spirit on them’? In what way did the elders need to become prophets

in order to help Moses? Being a prophet does not help someone in carrying out administrative or other burdens of leadership. It helps only in knowing what guidance to give the people - and for this, one prophet, Moses, is sufficient. To put it more precisely, either the seventy elders would deliver the same message as Moses or they would not. If they did, they would be superfluous. If they did not, they would undermine his authority (precisely what Joshua feared in Num. 11:28.)

Aware of the multiple difficulties in the text, Ramban offers the following interpretation:

Moses thought that if they had many leaders, they would appease their wrath by speaking to their hearts when the people started complaining. Or it is possible that when the elders prophesied, and the spirit was on them, the people would know that the elders were established as prophets and would not all gather against Moses but would ask for their desires from them as well.

Both suggestions are insightful, but neither is without difficulty. The first - that the elders would become peacemakers among the people - did not call for a new leadership cadre. Moses already had the heads of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. The second - that their presence would diffuse the people’s anger by giving them many people, not one, to complain to - is equally hard to understand. We recall that when the people had one other person to turn to with their concerns (Aaron), this led to the making of the Golden Calf. Why did God not ‘take of the spirit’ that was on Moses and place it on Aaron at that time? It would have prevented the single greatest catastrophe in the wilderness years? Besides which, we do not find that the seventy elders actually did anything at *Kivrot Hataavah*. The text even says, “When the spirit rested on

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them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again.”<sup>1</sup> How then did this once-and-never-to-be-repeated flow of the prophetic spirit make a difference? The more we reflect on the passage, the more the difficulties multiply.

Yet something happened. Moses’ despair disappeared. His attitude was transformed. Immediately thereafter, it is as if a new Moses stands before us, untroubled by even the most serious challenges to his leadership. When two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, prophesy not in the Tent of Meeting but in the camp, Joshua senses a threat to Moses’ authority and says, ‘Moses, my lord, stop them!’ Moses replies, with surpassing generosity of spirit, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them.’ In the next chapter, when his own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, start complaining about him, he does nothing: ‘Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.’ Indeed, when God became angry at Miriam, Moses prayed on her behalf. The despair has gone. The crisis has passed. These two challenges were far more serious than the request of the people for meat, yet Moses meets them with confidence and equanimity. Something has taken place between him and God and he has been transformed. What was it?

To understand the sequence of events we must first place them in their historical context. Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein, in his insightful book on Moses’ leadership, *Tzitz veTzon* (Alon Shvut, 5762) notes that there is a marked change of tone between the book of Exodus and the book of Numbers. The complaints do

1. This is the plain sense of Num. 11:25 according to most commentators, though the Targum reads it differently.

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not change, but God's and Moses' responses do. In Exodus, God does not get angry with the people, or if He does, Moses' prayers are able to turn away wrath. In Numbers, the response - sometimes God's, sometimes Moses - are more unforgiving. What has changed?

R. Lichtenstein - correctly in my view - suggests that the early volatility of the people is forgivable. To be sure, they should have had faith in God, but they had never been faced with the Red Sea, or the desert, or lack of food and water before. Their greatest offence - making the Golden Calf - leads to a long pause in the narrative, essentially from Exodus chapter 25 to Numbers chapter 11. During this period, in response to Moses' prayer for forgiveness, God instructs the people to build a Tabernacle which will ensure His constant presence among them.

Much of the second half of Exodus, the entire book of Leviticus, and the first ten chapters of Numbers are dedicated to the details of the Sanctuary, the service that was to take place there, and the reconstitution of Israel as a holy nation camped, tribe by tribe, around it. The whole of this sequence of 53 chapters, all of which is set in the desert at Sinai, is a kind of meta-historical moment, a break in the journey of the Israelites from place to place. Time and space stand still. Between the twin events of the Giving of the Torah and the construction of the Tabernacle, the Israelites are turned from an undisciplined mass of fugitive slaves into a nation whose constitution is the Torah, whose sovereign is God alone, and at whose centre (physically and metaphysically) is the Sanctuary (the Mishkan), the visible sign of God's Presence. The Israelites are no longer what they were before they came to Sinai. They are now "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Hence Moses' despair when they grumbled about the food. They had done so before. But they were different before. They had not yet gone through the transformative experiences that shaped them as a nation. What caused Moses' spirit to break was the fact that, no sooner had they left the Sinai desert to begin the journey again, they reverted to their old habits of complaint as if nothing had changed. If the revelation at Sinai, the experience of Divine anger at the Golden Calf, and the long labour of building the Tabernacle had not changed them, what would or could? Moses' despair is all too intelligible. For the first time since his mission began, he could see defeat staring him in the face. Nothing - or so it seemed - not miracles, deliverances, revelations, or creative labour, could change this people from a nation that focused on food into one that grasped the significance of the unique ethical-spiritual destiny to which they had been called. Perhaps God, from the perspective of eternity, could see some ray of hope in the future. Moses, as a human being, could not. 'I would rather die, he utters, 'than spend the rest of my life labouring in vain.'

We now reach the point of speculation. I may be wrong (and the Netziv puts it another way in his introduction to *Haamek Davar*, section 5) but I interpret the sequence of events as follows:

There can come a time in the life of any truly transformative leader when the sun of hope is eclipsed by the clouds of doubt - not about God, but about people, above all about oneself. Am I really making a difference? Am I deceiving myself when I think I can change the world? I have tried, I have given the very best of my energies and inspiration, yet nothing seems to alter the depressing reality of human frailty and lack of vision. I have given

the people the word of God Himself, yet they still complain, still they think only about the discomforts of today, not the vast possibilities of tomorrow. Such despair (*lehavdil*, Winston Churchill, who suffered from it, called it the 'black dog') can occur to the very greatest (to repeat, not only Moses but also Elijah, Jeremiah, and Jonah prayed to die). Moses was the very greatest. Therefore God gave him the greatest gift of all - one that no one else has ever been given.

*God let Moses see the influence he had on others.* For a brief moment God took 'the spirit that is on you and put it on them' so that Moses could see the difference he had made to one group, the seventy elders. Moses needed nothing more. He did not need their help. He did not need them to continue to prophesy. All he needed was a transparent glimpse of how his spirit had communicated itself to them. Then he knew he had made a difference. Little could he have known that he - who encountered almost nothing from the Israelites in his lifetime but complaints, challenges, and rebellions - would have so decisive an influence that the people of Israel 3, 300 years later would still be studying and living by the words he transmitted; that he had helped forge an identity that would prove more tenacious than any other in the history of humankind; that in the full perspective of hindsight he would prove to have been the greatest leader that ever lived. He did not know these things; he did not need to know these things. All he needed was to see that seventy elders had internalised his spirit and made his message their own. Then he knew that his life was not in vain. He had disciples. His vision was not his alone. He had planted it in others. Others, too, would continue his work after his lifetime. That was enough for

him, as it must be for us. Once Moses knew this, he could face any challenge with equanimity (except, many years later, at Kadesh, but that is another story).

Understood thus, there is a message in Moses' crisis for all of us (that, surely, is why it is recounted in the Torah). I remember when my late father z"l died and we - my mother and brothers - were sitting *shiva*. Time and again people would come and tell us of kindnesses he had done for them, in some cases more than 50 years before. I have since discovered that many people who have sat *shiva* have had similar experiences. How moving, I thought, and at the same time how sad, that my father z"l was not there to hear their words. What comfort it would have brought him to know that despite the many hardships he faced, the good he did was not forgotten. And how tragic that we so often keep our sense of gratitude to ourselves, saying it aloud only when the person to whom we feel indebted has left this life, and we are comforting his or her mourners.

Perhaps that just is the human condition. We never really know how much we have given others - how much the kind word, the thoughtful deed, the comforting gesture, changes lives and is never forgotten. In this respect, if in no other, we are like Moses. He too was human; he had no privileged access into other people's minds; without a miracle, he could not have known the influence he had on those closest to him. All the evidence seemed to suggest otherwise. The people, even after all God and he had done for them, were still ungrateful, querulous, quick to criticise and complain. But that was on the surface. For a moment God gave him a glimpse of what was beneath the surface. He showed him how Moses' spirit had entered others

and lifted them, however briefly, to the level of prophetic vision.

God did this for no other person - not then, not now. But if it was enough for Moses, it is enough for us. The good we do lives after us. It is the greatest thing that does. We may leave a legacy of wealth, power, even fame, but these are questionable benefits and sometimes harm rather than help those we leave them to. What we leave to others is a trace of our influence for good. We may never see it, but it is there. That is the greatest blessing of leadership. It alone is the antidote to despair, the solid ground of hope. ■

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

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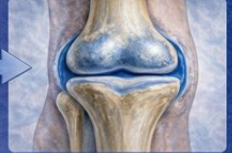
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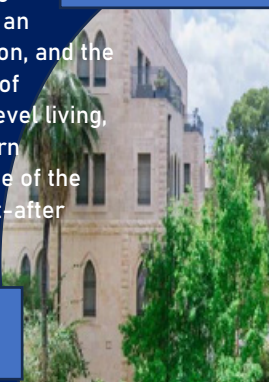


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## PROBING THE PROPHETS

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# The Message of the Menorah

This week's *haftarah* is one that is quite familiar to us as it is read twice each year—on Shabbat Chanuka as well as on this Shabbat, Parashat B'ha'alotecha. The common thread that connects the two Shabbatot is the navi Zecharya's vision of the menorah, the symbol of Chanukah and the opening parshia of B'ha'alotecha.

Understanding the prophet's call to the nation to rejoice over the impending return of Hashem's shechina, divine presence, that will once again dwell in their midst, is a source of disagreement among the meforshim. Most see this as a prediction of the imminent construction of Bayit Sheni, the Second Temple, and Hashem's reassuring message that He supports their undertaking. Zecharya, a navi who prophesied during the early Second Temple era, encouraged the people to rebuild the destroyed Beit HaMikdash, focusing primarily on the need to retain a level of sanctity they had failed to keep during the First Temple. This message was similar to that of his contemporary,

the prophet Chaggai, who also reassured the people that Hashem would be pleased with the construction of the new Temple. Each navi, however, emphasized a different element necessary for the project. Chaggai urged the nation to take practical steps and begin the construction while Zecharya focused upon the spiritual change that would be necessary to keep Hashem's presence dwelling within Israel.

The 15th century commentator, Don Yitzchak Abarbanel, differs with most of the parshanim and sees the vision of Zecharya as one that was not meant to describe the events that awaited the prophet's generation but, rather, one that was describing the final redemption in the future. Indeed, he suggests, the prophet was telling the people that Hashem's call for them to rejoice was based upon the fact that the final redemption would not be as the past ones for, once redeemed, Israel would never again be exiled (an understandable explanation from one who was exiled himself three separate times!).


The Abarbanel remains consistent in his approach when, in the third pasuk of the haftarah, the navi states: "v'nachal Hashem et Yehuda chelko al admat hakodesh...", a statement explained by most meforshim as meaning that Hashem will take Yehuda as His heritage. But Don Yitzchak Abarbanel explains this phrase as a promise, no, a guarantee for the future that "Hashem will grant Yehuda his

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portion in His Holy Land...” It was this commentary that moved me to write this article. The Abarbanel, a remarkable leader of the Jewish community in Spain, a man who chose to join his people into exile from in 1492 and wandered to Naples then to Messina and then to Corfu and from there to Monopoli and finally to Venice, the exceptional Rav knew all too well what it means to be exiled. And he shared with us it means to be redeemed. Redemption for the Jews has come, he predicts, when Yehuda will once again be granted independence, a return to “his portion”, in the Holy Land.

I imagine that Don Yitzchak Abarbanel looks down upon us today with a smile on his lips and a tear in his eyes. His peirush has been realized. His people have been given back their portion. Never to be exiled as he was, nor be forced to wander, as he did.

The message of the menorah has been realized. It was not with an army or military strength that the holy people returned to their holy land. It was with the holy spirit that that dwelled within them, generation after generation, reminding them of the dream that Zecharya left with them.

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# Leadership: Power or Influence?

Toward the end of *Parashat Beha'alotcha*, the Torah describes a remarkable moment in the development of spiritual leadership within the Jewish people. Moshe Rabbeinu gathers seventy elders and the Divine spirit rests upon them. Included in this group are Eldad and Meidad who begin to prophesize in the camp. A young man runs to inform Moshe, and Yehoshua, Moshe's devoted disciple, reacts with alarm. Fearing a challenge to Moshe's unique authority, he urges: "*My master Moshe, restrain them!*"<sup>1</sup>

Moshe's response, however, is astonishing. Rather than perceiving their prophecy as a threat, he answers with generous vision:

*"Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all of Hashem's people were prophets, that Hashem would place His spirit upon them!"*<sup>2</sup>

Moshe dreams not of exclusivity but of expansion. In his ideal world, prophecy would not be the privilege of a few but the spiritual potential of all. Yet only a few *parashiyot* later, in *Parashat Korach*, a seemingly similar claim provokes the opposite reaction. Korach confronts Moshe and Aaron with the declaration: "*The entire congregation,*

*all of them, are holy.*"<sup>3</sup> Here, Moshe does not welcome the sentiment. Instead, he recognizes it as rebellion. The confrontation escalates dramatically, culminating in divine judgment when the earth opens and swallows the rebels.

The contrast is striking. When Eldad and Meidad prophesize, Moshe celebrates it. When Korach claims equality, Moshe opposes it forcefully. Why the difference?

## POWER AND INFLUENCE

A profound explanation is offered by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks,<sup>4</sup> who draws a distinction between **power** and **influence**.

At first glance, the two appear similar. The person with the most power often seems to have the most influence, while those with little authority appear to wield little impact. Yet Rabbi Sacks explains that the two operate according to entirely different principles.

## POWER DIVIDES

Power is finite. If a leader holds the authority to make every decision and then shares that authority with someone else, his own power diminishes. The more power is distributed, the less remains concentrated in any one individual. Power therefore functions as a zero-sum game: one person's gain is another's loss.

Korach sought precisely this type of authority. His challenge was not about spiritual inspiration; it was about who held the reins of leadership. By claiming that "the entire congregation is holy" he was effectively claiming

1. Bamidbar 11:28

2. Bamidbar 11:29

3. Bamidbar 16:3

4. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Lessons in Leadership* p. 193-197

equality and demanding a share in Moshe's governing authority. Moshe understood that such a demand threatened the structure necessary for communal stability. Leadership based on power cannot be endlessly divided without collapsing into chaos.

### INFLUENCE MULTIPLIES

Influence works in the opposite manner. When a teacher inspires students, and those students go on to inspire others, the teacher's influence does not diminish, it expands. The more influence is shared, the greater its reach becomes. Influence therefore operates as a multiplication, not a division.

This is why Moshe rejoiced when Eldad and Meidad prophesized. Their prophecy did not compete with his leadership but extended it. The Divine spirit that rested upon Moshe was now radiating outward through others. What Yehoshua saw as a threat, Moshe saw as a triumph.

### TWO MODELS OF LEADERSHIP

The Torah presents two fundamentally different models of leadership.

#### **Korach represents leadership as power.**

Leadership becomes a struggle over status, authority, and control. When power is the goal, leadership becomes competitive and confrontational.

#### **Moshe represents leadership as influence.**

Leadership becomes the ability to inspire others to grow, to think, to teach, and to elevate those around them.

Judaism consistently expresses deep ambivalence about leadership defined primarily by power. Kingship itself is surrounded by caution in the Torah. By contrast, the tradition places extraordinary emphasis on prophets, teachers, and sages. These figures' authority rests not on coercion but on inspiration.

Indeed, throughout Jewish history the most

enduring leaders have rarely been those with the greatest formal authority. Rather, they were those whose words, ideas, and spirit transformed others. Their leadership was measured not by the power they possessed, but by the influence they generated.

The Torah's vision of leadership challenges us to reconsider what it means to make an impact in the world. Many people believe influence requires position, title, or authority. The Torah teaches the opposite. The most powerful force in Jewish life has never been political power but spiritual influence. True leadership is exemplified by the ability to illuminate minds, inspire hearts, and awaken greatness in others.

Every parent who shapes a child's character, every teacher who ignites curiosity, every friend who strengthens another's faith participates in the same sacred chain of influence that began with Moshe Rabbeinu. This type of influence, unlike power, has no limits. When we share wisdom, encouragement, and faith, we multiply rather than diminish. One inspired person inspires another, and the light continues to spread.

Moshe's dream was not that a few should lead while others follow. His dream was that an entire nation should become a source of prophecy, inspiration, and moral vision. *"Would that all of Hashem's people were prophets."*<sup>5</sup>

That dream remains the calling of the Jewish people. May we seek to build a community not of competing power, but of expanding influence, where every individual becomes a source of light for others, and where the spirit of Torah flows outward, illuminating the world. ■

---

5. Bamidbar 11:29

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## Lofty Levels

As we read the *parashah*, it is striking to note the pace at which *Am Yisrael* descends from their exalted level of the Har Sinai experience, to crying out and expressing such a base desire for meat. How are we to understand this abrupt shift? As we explore the answer, we will discover a fundamental perspective in learning Chumash, as well as a key mindset for positive spiritual growth.

Rav Bloch *zt"l* in *Shiurei Da'at* shares a story that, although not found in a written source, is known to be of reliable origin. Rav Chaim Volozhiner *zt"l* was asked if he thought that had his rebbe, the Vilna Gaon, would have been an Amora had he lived in the times of the Amoraim. Rav Chaim responded, "Had the Gra lived a thousand more years he would not have even reached the heels of an Amora, perhaps, he would have reached the level of the *Ramban*." If the Gra, a spiritual Torah giant, would not have been on the level of an Amora, we cannot even comprehend the lofty level

of the generation that stood at Har Sinai!

Rav Broide *zt"l* in *San Derech* remarks that Hashem treats the actions of biblical personalities as if with a magnifying glass, enlarging each behavior and thought to the highest proportions. Hashem holds righteous people to a higher standard and enacts consequences swiftly. Thus, chapter 11 begins, "*Vayehi ha'am ke'mitonenim ra be'aznei Hashem* - The nation was as complainers and it was evil in the ears of Hashem." (*Bamidbar 11:1*) Rashi understands "the nation" as the wicked ones among the people. The Midrash in the *Yalkut* adds that these people did not even sin a complete sin; the verse tells us they were "like complainers"! Rav Broide explains that this group was only a small segment of the population, yet they were being judged by an exacting standard.

Rav Yehudah Leib Chasman *zt"l* in *Ohr Yahel* addresses the continuation of the story, where we see not only the "nation" (i.e. the wicked among them) crying out to Hashem, but also Bnei Yisrael, who were considered the righteous ones among the people. Learning from the juxtaposition between the laws of the Sotah woman and the Nazirite, Chazal teach that one who sees a person in a degraded state, must enact precautions to prevent their own downfall. Even the most righteous person may experience a spiritual decline and can be drawn to the baser parts of this world.

This section teaches us that if people who were on such an exalted level can cry out for mortal pleasures, we too must be careful to protect ourselves from unholy influences. ■

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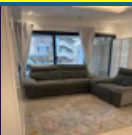
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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR  
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,  
OU ISRAEL

Our *sedra* this week, *Parshat Behaalotcha*, includes the instruction to fashion the *chatzotzrot*- two silver trumpets that should be used to assemble together the entire nation as they are sounded. The *chatzotzrot* are to be sounded should we need to wage war, and for other occasions of significance that the entire nation must be alerted to and made aware of.

The verse tells us: *Uvyom Simchatchem, UvMoadechem, Uvroshei Chodsheichem, Utkatem bachatzotzrot.... On the day of your joy, and on your festivals and at the beginning of each month you shall sound the trumpets....*

**Reb Dov Ber, the maggid of Mezeritch zy'a** pondered why Moshe was instructed to craft *chatzotzrot* to gather the community, and not simply to sound a *shofar*? *The Rebbe explained that Moshe Rabbeinu was half in this world where he was born, and half in the heavens like the malachim. The word Chatzotzrot- comprised of letters which make up the words chatzi tzurot, Moshe needed to channel both sides, both halves of his leadership*

*capability to bring the community together. His humble relatable, human nature, and his spiritually ascendant capability. The chatzotzrot represent this synthesis of the kochot of Moshe Rabbeinu in bringing the kahal together.*

Additionally, our commentators are puzzled by the apparent redundancy in the opening of our verse-the days of our joy, and our festivals

and *Rosh Chodesh*. The *Moadim*, festivals are generally associated to be days of *simcha*, there is an actual *mitzva* of *v'samachta b'chagecha-* to rejoice on the festivals. So what is our verse referring to when it mentions *uvyom simchatchem-* the day of your joy?

There is a beautiful *midrash* in the *Sifrei* which suggests that *uvyom simchatchem* is referring to

*Shabbat-* that even though there is no specific *mitzva* to rejoice on *Shabbat*, one certainly should feel happiness on *Shabbat*.

The **Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a**, further elaborates that *uvyom simchatchem* is referring to *Shabbat*, because *Shabbat* represents the proverbial wedding day between *Hashem* and *Am Yisrael*. The joy we inherently feel on *Shabbat*, represents this idea of *Shabbat* as a day when *Am Yisrael* experiences and feels *Hashem's* imminent presence, a day where we experience the joy of feeling close to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

The **Ibn Ezra** offers a different take on our *pasuk*. The *Ibn Ezra* suggests that the words *uvyom simchatchem-* represent an instruction to sound the *chatzotzrot* upon those joyous



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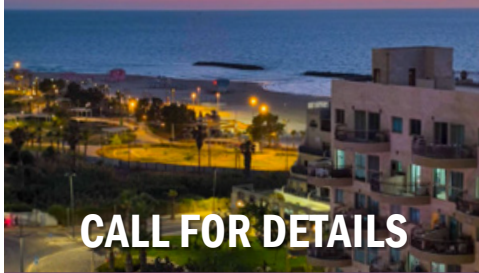
occasions when the Jewish People have merited to return to *Eretz Yisrael* from a foreign land, or whenever the Jewish People have experienced salvation through overcoming an oppressive enemy ruler and to establish days of joy to give thanks and recall this miraculous salvation as in the days of *Purim*.

**Rav Shlomo Aviner, shlita** in his *Sefer Tal Chermon*, points to this *Ibn Ezra* to make the case that there is an absolute obligation to establish such commemorations, to gather as a community to express our *Hakarat HaTov* and acknowledge that experience of salvation. *Rav Aviner*, points to this *Ibn Ezra*, as a precedent for the establishment of both *Yom HaAtzmaut* and *Yom Yerushalayim*, two modern day commemorations of communal salvation.

As we are all very much aware, these past many months have been filled with many traumatic days of uncertainty, sadness and pain. *Yehi Ratzon*, may we soon experience once again, as a nation, moments of great joy and happiness, and may we soon merit to sound both the silver trumpets and the Great *Shofar* as we greet *Mashiach Tzidkaynu*.... ■

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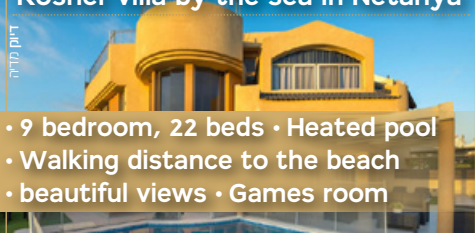
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**SUNDAY  
MAY 31**

\*The schedule is subject  
to change



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**9:20 AM**

Understanding Tefila

**Rabbi Yossi Goldin**

**11:25 AM**

P'shat in the Parsha

**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

**10:10 AM**

Rambam: Letters & Introductions

**Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz**

**12:20 PM**

Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**

## TORAH TUESDAYS WITH THE WOMEN'S DIVISION

Classes @ Beit Kneset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St. Rechavia

**9:15AM**

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JUNE 3**

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24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

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Holy Poetry

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**

**10:20AM**

Contemporary Issues  
in Halacha and Hashkafa

**Rabbi Anthony Mannin**

**11:25 AM**

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

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### **PLEASE NOTE:**

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JUNE 4**

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Community Beit Midrash Program  
@ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon,  
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Parshat HaShavua **Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:30AM**

Modern Masters  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

**11:25 AM**

Trailblazing the Text of Tanach  
**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**12:20 P.M**

Modern Masters **Rabbi Sam Shor**

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MON. MAY 18<sup>TH</sup>

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### RABBI MANNING'S SHIUR

WED. MAY 27<sup>TH</sup>

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### RABBI BREITOWITZ'S SHIUR

Dedicated anonymously **Lilui Nishmat Rochel Chana bat Harav Shimon a" h**

### SHAVUOT NIGHT LEARNING FOR ATID BAKA

Dedicated by **Lea Freidman** in memory of her mother, **Fradel Baila bas Yehuda Eliezer a" h**, and her sister **Alte Mindel bas Moshe Dovid a" h**

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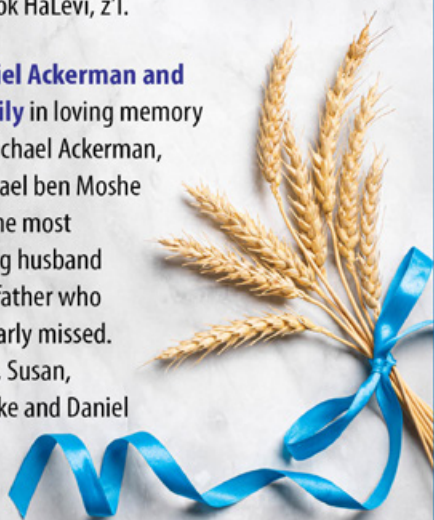
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# From the Heart

Rav Dovid Trenk, zt'l, legendary educator, mentor and talmid chacham, was a *gadol* in *chinuch* and a passionate *eved Hashem*. As the founding rosh yeshivah of Moreshes Yehoshua in Lakewood, Rav Trenk took responsibility for the financial wellbeing of the program. Upon moving into the community and opening the new yeshiva, he launched the initiative to dedicate a Sefer Torah as fundraiser for the new yeshivah.

A few days into the campaign, Rav Trenk called a devoted *talmid* and friend who was heavily involved in this fundraising initiative. The fellow was in the middle of his workday, unable to answer the phone at the moment, and made a mental note to call his Rebbi back as soon as he could. A short while later, Rav Trenk arrived at his home and urgently knocked at the door. "I'm sorry to barge in unannounced; I know you are in the middle of work, but this is an emergency, it can't wait..."

"What is it Rebbi, is everything alright?" he replied, startled, "What can I do?"

Rav Trenk handed his talmid an envelope from the Sefer Torah campaign that had arrived that morning. The donor sent a check dedicating the *pasuk* of Moshe's prayer for the *refuah* on behalf of his sister Miriam: ל-א-ל-ה-נא רפא נא לה, "I beseech you Hashem, please

heal her!"

Having just moved to the neighborhood, Rav Trenk did not yet recognize some of the names or addresses of the local residents who had donated. "Clearly, whoever purchased this specific *pasuk* needs a *refuah*. It probably means they purchased it as a *segulah* for themselves, or a family member or friend. There is no doubt that they need support and *chizuk*! Please help me find out who this person is, so I can visit them... I need to know who it is so I can daven!"

.....

וַיִּצְעַק מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה'... א-ל-נא רפא נא לה

Moshe cried out to the Hashem, saying, "I beseech you, God, please heal her." (12:13)

The Chozeh of Lublin, zy'a, tells us the "וַיִּצְעַק", the 'crying out' of Moshe Rabbeinu, expressed his uncertainty of how to approach Hashem in prayer. He knew his sister was in need, afflicted with *tzara'as*, and he was crying out for the right way and the right words to help her.

Our sages (*Berachos*, 34a) relate two parallel incidents involving students of Rebbi Eliezer. In the first instance, the *shaliach tzibur* leading the congregation in prayer was מְאִירָהּ יוֹתֵר, מְדַאֵי, "excessive in prolonging the davening". The *chevreh* were getting frustrated and complained about the '*shleppiness*' of the tefillah. Rebbi Eliezer pushed back at them: "There is no limit to the duration of a prayer. Is he prolonging his davening any more than Moshe Rabbeinu did when he beseeched Hashem for forty days and nights (after *Cheit haEgel*, the sin of Golden Calf)?"

In the second anecdote, another student of Rebbi Eliezer was leading *tefillah* and was *מְקַצֵּר יוֹתֵר מִדֵּא*, “excessively shortening the davening”. His fellow students criticized him for being too brief. Rebbi Eliezer again countered them: ‘None abbreviated their prayer more than Moshe Rabbeinu, who said, ל-א” נָא רַפָּא נָא לָהּ”.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook, zy’a, in *Ein Eyah*, explains that *tefillah* verbalizes and reflects what is within the soul. There are certain expressions or movements of *tefillah* that require sustained effort over time to accomplish the intended goal and outcome. Following the embarrassing and tragic episode of the *Eigel*, forty days and nights of *selichos* prayers were necessary to achieve forgiveness for the Nation. The communal betrayal and lack of responsibility taken for the sin demanded prolonged inner work and prayer to awaken Am Yisrael to *teshuvah*.

On the other hand, there are times where a very concise *tefillah* is sufficient, and even preferred. In the case of the *tzadekes* Miriam, who had recognized and admitted her mistake, the process of restoring her physical and spiritual health required but a short, simple prayer. As our sages say, אחד המרבה ואחד אחד המעט, ובלבד שיכוין את לבו לשמים “There is no difference between one who does more and one who does less, as long as one’s heart is directed to Heaven” (Mishnah, *Menachos*, 13:11). There are times to be long-winded and מאריך, and there are other times where it is preferable to be מקצר, times when less is more.

Perhaps a lesson to be drawn from our *sedra* is the impact that a direct and natural, urgent prayer from the heart can

have. May we spare no effort in calling out to Hashem on behalf of our sisters and brothers, and whether we daven long or short, may our prayers be answered for the good! ■

.....  
*Excerpt from Baderech: Along the Path of the Torah*, forthcoming (Mosaica Press, Elul 5786)

**Rav Judah Mischel** is executive director of Camp HASC, the Hebrew Academy for Special Children. He is the founder of Tzama Nafshi and the author of the “Baderech” series. Rav Judah lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife Ora and their family.

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# Dairy Bread in a Unique Shape

Our Sages decreed that one should not bake dairy bread, meaning bread made with dairy ingredients such as milk or butter mixed into the dough. Since dairy bread often appears identical to pareve bread, there is concern that it may inadvertently be eaten together with meat. Because bread commonly accompanies meals, *Chazal* viewed this as a significant concern.

Although Our Sages prohibited both the production and consumption of dairy bread, they also outlined certain exceptions under which dairy bread may be permitted.

## THE SOURCE

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (36:b) states that when one makes dairy bread “*Ke’ein Tura*”, the bread may be baked and consumed. Early authorities dispute the meaning of this phrase.

*Rashi* explains that “*Ke’ein Tura*” refers to making only a small quantity of dairy bread. Since the bread will be consumed quickly, there is less concern that it will mistakenly be eaten with meat.

The *Rif* and *Rambam* understand the phrase differently. They explain that “*Ke’ein Tura*” refers to the shape of the bread. According to their opinion, dairy bread made in a unique

or distinctive form serves as a reminder that the bread is dairy and should not be eaten with meat. In halachic terminology, this reminder is known as a *heker* (a recognizable sign).

The practical difference between these opinions is significant. According to *Rashi*, only a small quantity of dairy bread may be produced regardless of its shape. According to the *Rif* and *Rambam*, even a large quantity may be made provided that the bread has a clearly distinctive appearance.

The *Beit Yosef* (YD 97) cites *Shaarei Dura*, who explains that these opinions are not necessarily disputing one another. Rather, each identifies a different method of preventing confusion between dairy and pareve bread. The *Shulchan Aruch* accepts this approach, and later authorities rule that either safeguard—a small quantity or a distinctive shape—is sufficient to permit dairy bread.

## THE REQUIREMENT

### OF A DISTINCTIVE SHAPE

The *Rashba* writes that the distinguishing feature of dairy bread must be highly noticeable—so noticeable that an observer would naturally ask about its unusual appearance. Accordingly, a minor color variation or small topping is insufficient. The entire loaf must possess a significant and recognizable difference.

This understanding is consistent with the words of the *Rambam*. In addition, the literal translation of “*Ke’ein Tura*” is “like the eye of an ox,” implying that the bread must appear substantially different from ordinary bread.



## COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION OF DAIRY BREAD

The *Mahari't* (Responsa 2:18) writes that since the identifying feature must be obvious, the allowance granted by *Chazal* was intended primarily for private households or local bakers—not for mass commercial production.

*Mahari't* therefore rules that a bakery may not produce dairy bread even if it has a unique shape. Guests or unfamiliar consumers may not understand the significance of the shape and may assume that this is simply the bakery's standard style of bread, leading to accidental consumption of meat.

The *Pri Chadash* (YD 97:1) and *Chochmat Adam* (50:3) rule in accordance with the *Mahari't* and prohibit the public sale or distribution of specially shaped dairy bread.

The *Aruch Hashulchan* (97:8) and *Yad Yehuda* (97:7) largely agree with the *Mahari't*. However, they maintain that if it is commonly understood within a particular community that a certain shape indicates the bread is dairy, then mass production and sale would be permitted.

OU Kosher certifies numerous industrial and retail baked goods worldwide. OU Kosher follows the stricter opinion and does not certify dairy breads, even in cases where certain breads—such as brioche—are commonly known to contain dairy ingredients.

Consumers should be aware that some kosher certification agencies, both in Israel and elsewhere, do certify dairy breads based on the more lenient opinions or by relying on labels or stickers as identifying signs.

Individuals should consult their Rav regarding whether to purchase such products.

## DESSERTS, PASTRIES, AND SWEET PRODUCTS

*Mahari't* (Ibid) further explains that the decree applies specifically to breads commonly eaten as part of a meal. Bread-like products generally eaten as desserts are not included in the decree.

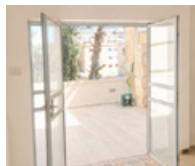
*Mahari't* specifically discusses bread like pastries filled with dairy sweets and explains that since these items are not normally eaten together with meat, there is no concern. According to this approach, such products were never included in the original decree regarding dairy bread and may therefore be mass-produced and sold even when they resemble ordinary baked goods.

Based on the rulings of *Mahari't* and other authorities, many pastries and sweet baked products are entirely unrelated to the prohibition of dairy bread and may be baked and sold without concern.

Donuts, cupcakes, cookies, and similar products are generally considered dessert items and are not commonly eaten together

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with meat meals. Therefore, there is no prohibition against making them dairy. Accordingly, one may bake dairy cakes, cupcakes, and even dairy *sufganiyot*. Such products are certified by **OU Kosher** with an OUD symbol.

Certain kashrut organizations in Israel require bakeries to notify consumers that donuts are dairy so that they are not eaten within six hours of consuming meat. While there is no formal halachic requirement for such labeling—since *Chazal* never enacted a decree regarding eating dairy pastries after meat—these organizations consider it an important safeguard due to widespread confusion between dairy and pareve pastries. Some certifications use identifying marks such as lines of powdered sugar or other visible indicators.

#### VISIBLE CHEESE OR MEAT FILLINGS

*Poskim* (see *Kaf Hachaim* 97:10) rule that when cheese or meat is clearly visible in a baked product, the visible filling itself serves as a *heker* (recognizable sign), and no additional distinction is necessary.

This is also evident from the ruling of the *Rema* (YD 97:1), who states that meat pies do not require a special shape because the meat filling is apparent.

Based on this principle, products such as pizza, cheesecake, deli rolls, and meat-loaf are permitted, since the dairy or meat

component is generally visible to the consumer.

#### BOUREKAS AND COMMON PRACTICE IN ISRAEL

In Israel, it is customary to make cheese bourekas in a triangular shape to distinguish them from pareve or meat bourekas. This is because the filling is concealed, like potato or meat-filled bourekas, unlike cakes or donuts where the dairy nature of the product is generally obvious (see Responsa *Vedarashata Vechakarta* YD 5:33).

There is discussion among the *Poskim* regarding whether homemade dairy or meat bourekas must also be formed in distinctive shapes to prevent them from being mistakenly eaten during the wrong meal.

In the coming weeks, we will continue to explore additional halachic issues related to the production and certification of dairy products. ■

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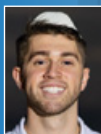
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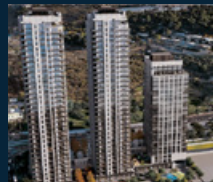
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## GEULAS YISRAEL

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This article was originally composed for Parshat Naso and reflects on the gifts of the Nesi'im. Its central theme - the need to balance eternal values with immediate needs - continues to resonate in Parshat Beha'alotcha, as we struggled on our desert journey toward Eretz Yisrael.

# Balancing Eternity and the Moment

Everything was set. The Mishkan had been inaugurated. The camp had been carefully arranged, each shevet assigned its flag, its color, and its place within the encampment. Clear boundaries demarcated the different sectors of the Jewish encampment. We stood ready to march toward Eretz Yisrael, to enter the promised land and establish the kingdom of Hashem.

The Leviim had replaced the firstborn and

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were entrusted, among other responsibilities, with protecting the sanctity of the Mishkan and guarding its boundaries, ensuring that the unauthorized would not cross beyond them.

Before proceeding, the Torah records the gifts brought by the head of each tribe, or the Nesi'im. These gifts were likely delivered much earlier in the timeline, during the events of Parshat Shemini, which correspond to Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the inauguration of the Mishkan. Yet the Torah chooses to record these gifts only later, in Parshat Naso.

### DIVERSITY WITHIN CONFORMITY

The gifts are striking in their similarity. Each nasi delivered the exact same collection of gifts: korbanot, utensils that would serve as klei sharet, and wagons drawn by bulls. Chazal explain that although the gifts were physically identical, each nasi invested them with a different vision, seeing within them an allusion to the future destiny and character of his own shevet.

For this reason, and to stress that identical actions can carry profoundly different meanings, the Torah records each gift separately rather than summarizing them collectively. Though externally identical, the offerings reflected different intentions and different spiritual worlds.

The gifts of the Nesi'im are then a paradigm for diversity, especially within a religious world that demands conformity. We all daven with the same words, composed thousands of years ago by the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah. Yet no two tefillot are identical, each is shaped by different emotions, hopes, fears, and

experiences. Likewise, we all perform the same mitzvot, but ideally those mitzvot are animated by deeply personal intentions and inner worlds. Shared ritual should not erase spiritual individuality.

But the gifts of the Nesi'im symbolized more than individuality within conformity. They also reflected the balance between enduring impact and immediate utility.

### ETERNAL GIFTS

The korbanot the Nesi'im offered were timeless. This was the inauguration of the Mishkan, and it was only fitting to launch the site of korbanot with special offerings. By bringing korbanot during that first week of inauguration, the Nesi'im established the Mishkan's central identity. From that moment onward, korbanot became the enduring rhythm of the Mishkan and later of the Mikdash.

Similarly, the plates, cups, and ladles they donated initially served a practical purpose. The ke'arot and mizrakim carried flour offerings, while the ladles held ketoret gifts. Yet even after those inaugural offerings had been brought, the vessels themselves were incorporated into the Mishkan as klei sharet. Presumably, these original utensils delivered by the Nesi'im continued to serve throughout the history of the Mishkan and perhaps even later in the Mikdash built by Shlomo Hamel-ech. Like the korbanot, these vessels became part of the enduring life of the Mishkan and later the Mikdash.

### WAGONS FOR THE JOURNEY

The third component of the Nesi'im's gifts were the wagons. These wagons, drawn by bulls, were given to the Leviim to help transport the massive structure of the Mishkan from location to location throughout the desert journey. Unlike the korbanot and the klei

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sharet, these wagons were purely functional. They addressed an immediate logistical need, one that would eventually disappear.

Presumably, once the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael, these wagons were no longer necessary. Certainly, once the Mishkan reached Shiloh, where it stood for 369 years, the wagons no longer served any purpose. Eventually they were discarded. These wagons served only a temporary function. They served an important role during the journey through the desert, but not beyond it.

By combining these different elements within their package of gifts, the Nesi'im symbolized the dual importance of both long-term and short-term needs. Public servants such as Nesi'im are responsible not only for eternal values, but also for immediate and practical concerns.

We must first learn to distinguish between transience and eternity. The gravest sins

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occur when we lose sight of eternity because of the pressures of the moment. We surrender to temporary fears, desires, or pressures without sufficiently considering the impact those choices have upon our eternal neshamah.

Even when we do not sin, we often blur the distinction between the world of netzach and the world of transience. I still remember the best advice I received as a college student struggling under the dual curriculum of Yeshiva University, unsure how to budget my time between Torah study and the computer science courses required for my degree. An older student told me: "Always remember the difference between chaye olam and chaye sha'ah."

This adage served me well throughout college, helping me focus upon my Torah studies even under academic pressures. My classes, important as they were, belonged to the world of chaye sha'ah. They were necessary for the profession I imagined pursuing at that stage of life. But my Torah study belonged to the world of netzach, shaping a neshamah whose significance would long outlast the practical value of any degree.

Sometimes we overinvest in a world of transience, in accomplishments that quickly fade and are replaced, while neglecting the quieter investments which endure eternally.

Just the same, we sometimes trivialize the transient and fleeting precisely because it is not permanent. We naturally prefer investing in things that endure rather than in things that quickly pass. People of long-term vision can sometimes dismiss short-term needs, so captivated are they by sweeping and lasting ideals. Yet temporary needs are still real needs. A wagon which serves only for a brief desert journey may not possess the permanence of a korban or a kli sharet,


but without it the Mishkan remains frozen in place.

The Nesi'im assigned importance to both. They brought gifts that would last eternally, such as the korbanot and the klei sharet, but they also contributed wagons whose value was entirely temporary.


Not every meaningful contribution must endure forever. Some acts are important precisely because they answer the needs of a particular moment. The wagons did not survive into the era of Shiloh or the Mikdash, but without them the Mishkan could not move forward through the desert. ■




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# HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA  
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## What's the Backstory?

The Haftorah opens with a striking and almost unexpected call: רְנֵי וְשִׂמְחֵי בַת צִיּוֹן, Sing and rejoice, daughter of Zion. But to fully appreciate these words, it is important to know the backstory. The penultimate pasuk preceding the Haftorah contains Hashem's warning to the nations who persecuted the Jewish people during exile: כִּי הִנְגַע בְּכֶם נֹגַע: כִּי הִנְגַע בְּצִיּוֹן, Whoever touches you touches the pupil of His eye. Only after this declaration does the Navi turn to Zion and say: "Now sing."

The Malbim explains that the joy of this opening emerges specifically after the reassurance that Hashem never stopped watching over His people. The nations may have believed that exile meant abandonment. Jewish suffering may have appeared to be evidence of Divine distance. But Zechariah insists otherwise. Every wound was seen, every humiliation registered, every tear mattered. And therefore: רְנֵי וְשִׂמְחֵי, Sing and rejoice.

The imagery of כִּי הִנְגַע בְּצִיּוֹן is itself deeply powerful. The pupil of the eye is among the most delicate and protected parts of the human body. Instinctively, a person shields it from harm. The Navi teaches that this is how Hashem relates to His people. Harm done to Israel is not distant to Him; it is personal.

And at the same time, joy does not emerge in a vacuum. It emerges from the realization that even in periods of concealment, there is always Divine attentiveness beneath the surface.

The Navi then continues with an even greater promise: כִּי הִנְנִי בָא וְשִׁכְנֵתִי בְתוֹכְךָ, For behold, I am coming, and I will dwell among you. The Malbim explains that this refers to the future redemption, when the Shechinah will once again rest openly among the Jewish people. During exile, Hashem's presence may feel hidden, fragmented, difficult to perceive. In the future, that relationship will no longer require interpretation. It will be clear.

Perhaps this is one of the deepest forms of consolation. Redemption is not simply the promise that pain will end. It is the realization that even during the pain, we were never alone. So often people carry burdens quietly. Struggles are hidden beneath routine, smiles, and responsibility. There are moments when individuals wonder whether anyone truly sees what they are carrying. Zechariah reminds us that the Jewish people are never unseen. Even in exile, even in concealment, Hashem watches over His people with the protectiveness one has for the "pupil of His eye."

Perhaps that is why the Haftorah begins not with rebuke, but with song. Because sometimes the ability to sing again begins with knowing that all along, Hashem was listening. ■

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# Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot 2:18 The Spiritual Significance of the *Shema*

**“Rav Shimon says: Be scrupulous with reciting the Shema and prayer...”  
(Avot 2:18)**

The basic understanding of the above teaching is that this is a warning to be punctual in reading the *Shema* and praying at the proper time (*Rashi*). However, let us examine another layer of meaning regarding the *Shema* exquisitely articulated by Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook.

In thinking about the significance of the *Shema*, it is worthwhile noting that the very first subject addressed in the Talmud is the law and meaning of its recitation. Indeed, the *Shema* is seen as fundamental in that it represents a Jew’s declaration in belief in one God.



Rav Abraham Isaac Kook zt”l

Strikingly, Rav Kook, in his opening comment in his work *Ain Aya* (*Berachot* 1:1), draws our attention to another critical dimension of the *Shema* which is often overlooked. The first Mishna (*Berachot* 1:1) delineates the time that the evening *Shema* must be recited. Instead of simply saying “nightfall”, the Mishna says that it is the time that the Priests enter to eat their Terumah. Why then does the Mishna associate the *Shema* recited at night with the *kohanim* privately eating their sacred food?

Rav Kook suggested that the night is symbolic of the exilic experience of the Jew. The Jew scattered to the four corners of the world is characterized by feelings of vulnerability and danger. In these hostile settings we as a people faced an immense threat to our physical and spiritual well-being. Thus we have been forced to focus on protecting ourselves in order to withstand the turbulent waves which have threatened our very survival. Thus we have acted as “priests,” privately observing the rituals and holding fast to the Torah in a frightening and contentious situation. The nighttime *Shema* is symbolic of declaring our faith internally and privately to our people in order to bolster our faith and

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commitment to God.

However, at a time of *geula* (redemption), when the stature of Israel will be elevated, the *Shema* recited in the morning contains a very different theme and message. Namely, it is a message of the oneness of God that will ultimately be heard by all the nations. The nations of the world will recognize that the light of Israel is indeed the guiding light for all mankind. (*Berachot Ain Aya* 1:1)

At first glance Rav Kook's novel interpretation of the recitation of the *Shema* appears to reflect his unique emphasis on the universalistic ideal, often highlighted in his thought. However, we need only to turn to Rashi's commentary on the verse in the Torah to discover that Rashi himself elucidated the verse of the *Shema* as a prayer for a universal recognition of God and his kingship. The following is a citation of Rashi's explanation on the Torah verse of the *Shema*: 'Hashem who is our God now, but not the god of the other nations, He is destined to be the "One God,"...as it says, "On that day, Hashem will be One and His name One" (*Zecharia* 14:9).

Rashi is plainly suggesting that the intent that a Jew should elicit when reciting this all-important verse is to envision a day that not only will the Jew know the oneness of God but all mankind will share in this essential belief.

### PRAYING NEAR A WINDOW

The Talmud (*Berachot* 34a) teaches that one should pray in a room that has windows: "Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, 'A person should pray only in a house .that has windows, as the *pasuk* says, "And there were windows opened in the upper floor facing Yerushalayim"' (*Daniel* 6:11).

What is the importance of praying in a place with windows? Some commentators

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have suggested that the window open to the sky will inspire the one praying to be aware of the heavens above and more readily feel God's presence. Rav Kook offered his own novel perspective and suggested the window signifies the notion that the one praying be concerned with the greater world in which he lives. Prayer is not meant to isolate or separate a person from society. Quite the contrary. Prayer is supposed to give the person even greater energy, drive and fortitude to share the values and wisdom of the Torah with all humanity and to impact the world with the light of God's goodness.

This is why a person should pray in a house where there are windows, so that the ability to look outside reminds of his obligation to the world in which he lives.

Rav Kook takes note of one more detail which must not be overlooked in the talmudic teaching above. Praying where there are windows is not sufficient. Rather, they must face Yerushalayim, as the verse emphasizes: "facing Yerushalayim," We can only change the world when the Jews message is grounded in the values and ideals that emanate from the holy city of Yerushalayim. In other words, by committing ourselves to a deep faithfulness to the mitzvot and halacha we then radiate our illumination and wisdom to the world and work towards achieving perfection for

all mankind.

### RAV KOOK'S PERSONAL PRACTICE

Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop, Rav Kook's eminent student, recalled the way that his master, Rav Kook, recited the Shema when they prayed in the Yeshiva. When reaching the *Shema*, Rav Kook would elongate the first line of the *Shema* to such an extent that the rest of the students praying had finished the entire recitation of *Shema* while Rav Kook still had not finished the opening line. Rav Charlop once asked his master why he elongated the opening line of the *Shema* to such a degree. Rav Kook answered in the following way: "I will not move on from the sentence of the *Shema* until I have implanted faith in God in every member of *Am Yisrael*." (*Haggadah Ayalet Hashachar*, Yitzchak Dadon, pp. 171-172)

One lesson to be gleaned from the above beautiful vignette is that the reciting of the *Shema* was not seen by Rav Kook as merely serving as a personal acceptance of God's sovereignty but a truth that must be lovingly diffused among all the Jewish people.

In addition to the Jewish people embracing a deep faith in God, the message of God's oneness, kingship and compassion must also be disseminated to all mankind. This is emblematic of the messianic vision of the Jewish people and is to be in the consciousness of the Jew's mind. Indeed, a Jew steadfastly articulates this exalted vision at the conclusion of all the three prayers of the day (in the *Aleinu* prayer): "On that day, Hashem will be One and His name One" (*Zecharia* 14:9). ■



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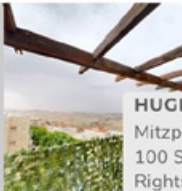
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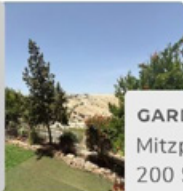
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**Answer:** There are two questions – about returning and about protecting the objects. They are, though, quite related.


In the past (Living the Halachic Process, V, I-6), we have brought the question that


*Acharonim* have discussed – whether it is enough for one to inform the owner that his item is available by you, or whether you must actively return it. Regarding the *mitzva* to return that which he stole, it suffices to tell the victim that he can come get his object (Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 367:1). It is unclear whether this is the standard *halacha* regarding *mitzvot* of returning or a special dispensation to promote *teshuva* (see Shach ad loc. 2). There are different possible ways to read the *p'sukim* (Devarim 22:1-3) in this regard. The more accepted approach is that informing suffices (Pitchei Choshen, Aveida 7:(2)).


Along with the obligation to return, there is an obligation to protect the object until you have succeeded to return it (see Devarim 22:2 and Shulchan Aruch, CM 267:17). If informing him counts as returning, it should also remove the requirement to guard them (see Torat Ha'veida (Tzabari) 12:11). The main point is that at this point, the item is no longer lost, and therefore its welfare is the owner's responsibility.


This is in line with the Rama's opinion (CM 261:4) on *aveida mida'at* (one who knowingly leaves his object in a precarious situation). Even though he holds that this does not make the object *hefker* (ownerless), the finder does not have to care for it. Also, one could argue that your yard is not considered a precarious place, as you would not take someone's property. However, it is still likely in a precarious position regarding protection from the elements.


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Nevertheless, in this case, it does not appear clear that all of the items' owners are aware where their object is. Sometimes the owner did not know the object "flew" over a fence. Especially if we can assume that for example, parents own the family's balls, if a child kicks the ball over the fence and does not tell them, from the owners' perspective, it is an *aveida*. Another scenario is that they originally knew where the item is but procrastinated about getting it until they forgot its whereabouts. Once they forget, it is an *aveida* (see Bava Metzia 25b).

The *gemara* (ibid. 26b) says that the positive *mitzva* begins from the time the finder takes the object. Could it be that if the things are where they fell, you have no obligation? Halachically, in many ways, things that are in one's property are as if they are in his hand (ibid. 10b). The Ra'avad (Aveida 7:14) says that the fact that the lost item is in the finder's property creates an obligation of *hashavat aveida* (in his context, it prevents the finder from claiming it after the owner's subsequent *yeiush*). Even Haezel (ad loc.) clarifies that this obligation without moving the object begins

only from the time the property owner knows it is in his domain. But from that point, which you are already at, the obligation exists until the loser receives it or finds out about it and can get it.

Therefore, we suggest the following. Be in touch with the neighbors who could own things in your yard. Come to an agreement about their expectations of you. If they all agree, you can leave them where they are, or set them aside in a convenient place for them to claim. Only if (common these days) the people trust each other not to take that which is not theirs (Bava Metzia 27b), we have modern arrangements to more easily share with a group of people what is missing so they can come and claim their lost items. ■

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לעילוי נשמת  
מאיר יצחק בן יוסף אליהו הכהן ז"ל

## Can People Change?

### Rachel asks:

My friend has an on again off again relationship. Now the guy is back and promises that this time it's different and he's ready to marry her. Should she trust him?

### Aleeza answers:

"People change" is one of the most hopeful thoughts in the world.

It's also one of the most dangerous when someone wants love so badly that they stop looking at reality.

So should your friend trust him?

Maybe.

But not because he came back with a speech. And definitely not because he suddenly says he's "ready."

The real question is: what changed between the last breakup and now?

Because relationships don't magically heal during silence. Time alone doesn't create maturity. Missing someone isn't the same thing as being capable of building a healthy marriage with them.

On-again off-again relationships usually happen for a reason. One person can't commit. Someone keeps pulling away. There's instability, confusion, inconsistency, emotional highs and lows. And after enough cycles, people stop dating from clarity and start dating from memory. They remember the chemistry, the hope, the potential, the good moments... and slowly forget how painful the uncertainty actually felt.

The problem is that "this time is different" only matters if something is actually different.

Did he go to therapy? Did he work on the issue that caused the breakup? Did he suddenly develop emotional availability, communication skills, accountability, consistency? Or did he just get lonely? This is what she needs to figure out.

I would tell your friend not to focus on his words right now. Focus on patterns. Patterns tell the true story more than promises do.

And I'd also ask her something important: When he left before, what happened to her emotionally? Did she become anxious, insecure, obsessed, unable to trust herself? Because even if he now wants marriage, she has to ask whether this relationship brings out the healthiest version of her.

A relationship preparing for marriage should feel increasingly stable, not constantly resurrected from emotional wreckage.

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Now, to be fair, some couples genuinely do break up, grow separately, reconnect later, and build beautiful marriages. It happens. But usually the difference is obvious. There's humility. Ownership. Changed behavior. A deeper emotional maturity. Not just urgency because someone fears losing the other person.

I'd encourage her not to rush because he suddenly sounds certain. Real readiness can survive healthy pacing. If he truly wants marriage, he should be willing to rebuild her trust again slowly and consistently instead of demanding instant belief.

Love is not proven by coming back.

Love is proven by staying steady once you do.

May your friend have the wisdom to see clearly, and the patience to see if this is now the right time and the right one.

Blessings, Aleeza ■

♥

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# TORAH 4 TEENS

## BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



**EZRA SILTON**  
MODIIN CHAPTER DIRECTOR



**BIDI BERNSTEIN**  
10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE, MODIIN ILLIT

### THE PROCESS OF ACHIEVING OUR GOALS IN LIFE

In our parsha, we are told that עם ישראל would follow Hashem's sign on their travels through the Midbar: "על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו". Sometimes בני ישראל would stay for a while, Rashi tells us a year or more, and sometimes they would not stay even a full day.

Although we no longer have ענני הכבוד guiding us, there is still a powerful lesson here. Am Yisrael is on a long journey toward the final goal: reaching Eretz Yisrael. Similarly, in each of our lives, we pass through different stations on the way to our destination. We must listen to ourselves and let Hashem guide us, knowing when to stay and when to move on. That "gut feeling" we experience is really Hashem's guidance.

The same applies on a national level. We must turn to Hashem and seek His guidance regarding where to dwell and where to keep moving. But unlike in the Midbar, we must make those decisions ourselves in order to bring the Mashiach and the Geula.

### LIGHTING UP EVERY JEW

In Parashat Beha'alotcha, the Torah says: "When you light the lamps." Rashi teaches that Aharon had to hold the fire to the wick until the flame could burn on its own.

There is a beautiful lesson here: when you help another Jew, one moment of inspiration is not enough. You need to stay with him and support him until he is strong enough to keep going by himself.

This was what made Aharon so special. He did not just give people a quick spark, he gave them a real, lasting light that stayed with them.

There is also another idea here: the Menorah was made from one single piece of gold, showing us that all Jews are one. When you help another Jew grow, you do not lose any of your own light. Everyone simply shines more.

That is the power of a true Jew: to light up the people around him, so that even when he is gone, the light keeps going. ■

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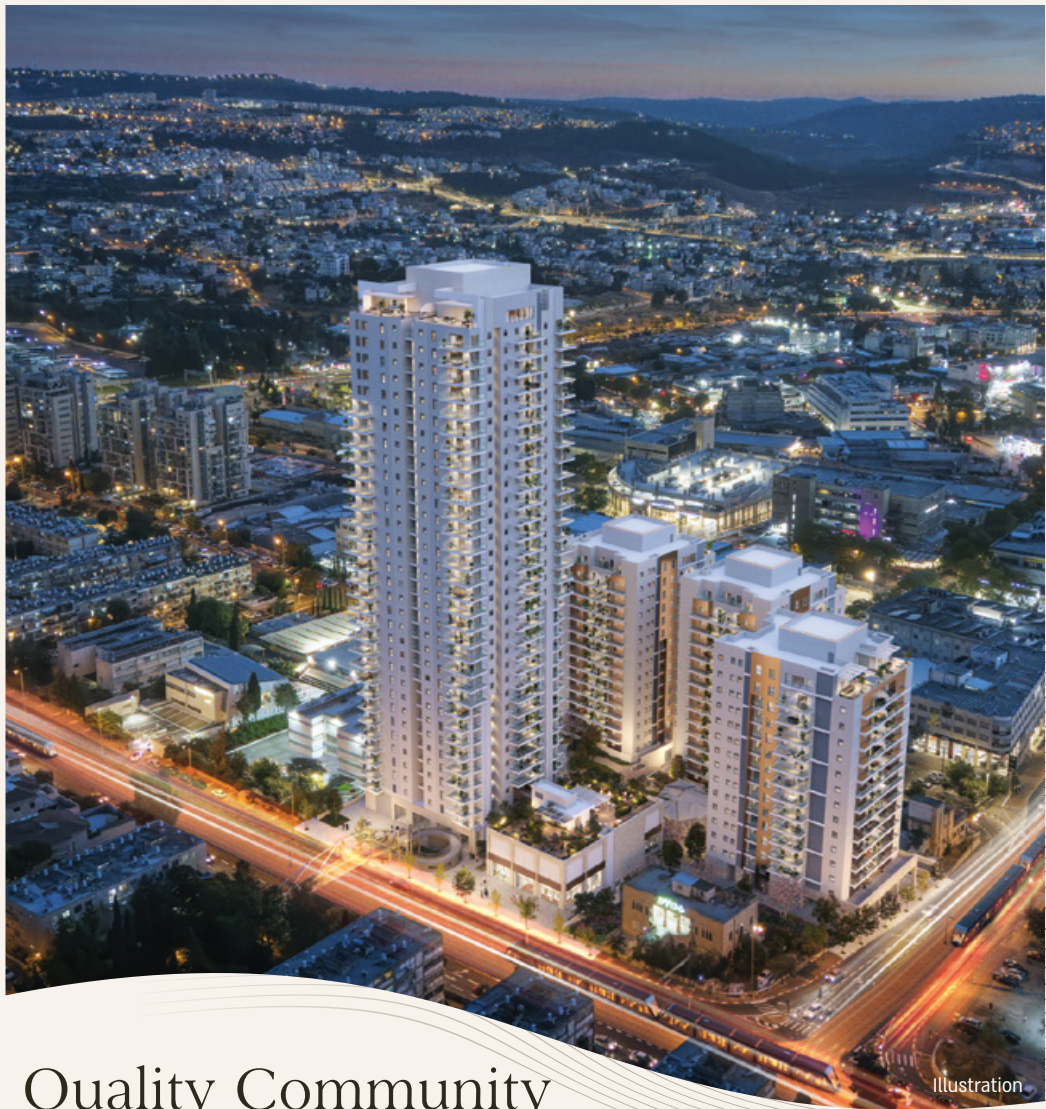
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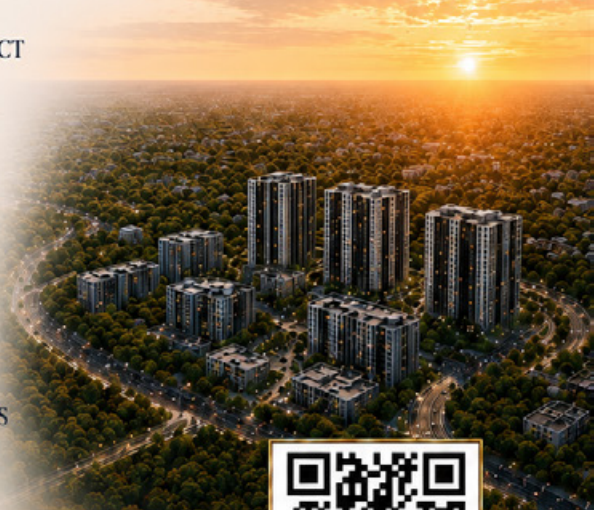
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