

# Torah Tidbits

ב"ה

ISSUE 1668

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ישראל

כ"ו תמוז תשפ"ו - JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> 2026

MATOT-MASEI  
מטות - מסעי

AVOT 2 | MEVARCHIM | CHAZAK

**The Resilience of Hope**  
Rabbi Shmuel Goldin  
Page 20



**Huldah: Prophecy of  
Consequence and Continuity**  
Mrs. Leah Feinberg Page 70



This issue of Torah Tidbits is sponsored in honor of  
our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Aliyah – Avraham & Ester Silvers

אני ה' שכן בתוך בני ישראל  
במדבר ל"ה:ל"ד

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT MATOT-MASEI ZMANIM

CANDLES 7:11 PM • EARLY 6:19 PM • HAVDALA 8:29 PM • RABBEINU TAM 9:04 PM

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## COVER PHOTO Photographed by Rachelli Prawer

I took this gorgeous photo at sunset and wanted to share it with the readers of Torah Tidbits. I made aliya 9 years ago from Melbourne, Australia and live in Neve Daniel. This photo was taken at sunset on a walking trail next to Neve Daniel called Derech Efraim, which is dedicated to a local fallen soldier, Ephraim Jackman z"l.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

 **Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av is on Wednesday July 15th**

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# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



### JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat  
July 8-18 | 23 Tammuz - 4 Av

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>4:41-4:48</b>
Sunrise	<b>5:40-5:46</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:12-9:15</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:29-8:33</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:23-10:25</b>
<small>(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)</small>	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:44-12:45</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:19-1:20</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>6:19-6:16</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:52-7:49</b>



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	MATOT-MASEI			DEVARIM		
	Candles	Early	Havdala	Candles	Early	Havdala
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	<b>7:11</b>	6:19	<b>8:29</b>	7:09	6:17	8:26
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	<b>7:29</b>	6:21	<b>8:31</b>	7:26	6:20	8:28
Beit Shemesh/RBS	<b>7:30</b>	6:20	<b>8:30</b>	7:28	6:18	8:27
Gush Etzion	<b>7:27</b>	6:19	<b>8:29</b>	7:25	6:18	8:26
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	<b>7:29</b>	6:21	<b>8:32</b>	7:27	6:20	8:29
Modiin/Chashmonaim	<b>7:28</b>	6:20	<b>8:30</b>	7:26	6:19	8:27
Netanya	<b>7:30</b>	6:22	<b>8:32</b>	7:27	6:20	8:29
Be'er Sheva	<b>7:27</b>	6:20	<b>8:29</b>	7:25	6:18	8:26
Rehovot	<b>7:29</b>	6:21	<b>8:31</b>	7:26	6:19	8:28
Petach Tikva	<b>7:11</b>	6:21	<b>8:31</b>	7:09	6:19	8:28
Ginot Shomron	<b>7:28</b>	6:20	<b>8:31</b>	7:26	6:19	8:28
Haifa / Zichron	<b>7:20</b>	6:22	<b>8:33</b>	7:18	6:20	8:30
Gush Shiloh	<b>7:27</b>	6:19	<b>8:30</b>	7:25	6:18	8:26
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	<b>7:29</b>	6:22	<b>8:32</b>	7:27	6:20	8:29
Givat Zeev	<b>7:32</b>	6:19	<b>8:30</b>	7:29	6:18	8:26
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	<b>7:27</b>	6:19	<b>8:29</b>	7:24	6:18	8:26
Ashkelon	<b>7:29</b>	6:22	<b>8:31</b>	7:27	6:20	8:28
Yad Binyamin	<b>7:29</b>	6:21	<b>8:31</b>	7:26	6:19	8:28
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	<b>7:23</b>	6:20	<b>8:32</b>	7:20	6:18	8:28
Golan	<b>7:28</b>	6:19	<b>8:30</b>	7:25	6:18	8:27
Nahariya/Maalot	<b>7:20</b>	6:22	<b>8:33</b>	7:17	6:20	8:30
Afula	<b>7:29</b>	6:21	<b>8:31</b>	7:26	6:19	8:28

Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem): Matot-Masei - 9:04 PM • Devarim - 9:02 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 72**



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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

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There is an idea in parental philosophy that I think about a lot. A child rarely remembers the lectures and speeches from their parents and teachers. When they grow up, what they remember is the moments. They remember the time a parent stopped everything to help a stranger, when a parent rushed because they wanted to be on time for a Torah event, when they ran across the street to return a lost object to someone. These moments stay with us so much more and help form our values as adults.

I was reminded of this again this past Friday, just a few hours before Shabbat. Our son Shlomo, who lives in Elon Moreh, was driving to us for Shabbat when he called to say he was approaching Sha'ar Binyamin, the junction between the *yishuvim* of Kochav Ya'akov and Adam. My son Meir was standing next to me, and the moment he heard where Shlomo was, he said, "Wait, he's right near there? There's someone who needs his help."

A number of my children volunteer for Yedidim, the incredible organization that comes to the aid of stranded drivers across the country. They were inspired by my brother Moe, one of its senior volunteers. Through the Yedidim app, Meir saw that a woman was stranded near the town of Hizma, alone in an electric car that had run out of battery less than three hours before Shabbat. Shlomo drives an electric car himself and had the equipment to share some of his charge, so when Meir asked if he could stop, he answered without hesitation, "Of course."

Transferring charge from one car to

another is slow, but Shlomo pulled over with his young daughter, connected the two cars, and fed the woman just enough battery to reach the nearest charger a few minutes away. He followed behind to make sure she made it, and when her battery gave out again on the uphill climb, he stopped and charged her a second time, until she had enough to reach the supercharger and drive into Yerushalayim before Shabbat. Shlomo and his daughter reached our home only about twenty minutes before candle lighting.

And yet the most meaningful part of the story for me came when my two-year-old granddaughter, Naama, walked through our door. Before she had even showered for Shabbat, she looked up and announced, "*Azarti la'isha hazot*," which means, "I helped that woman." Not "we helped her." I helped her. At two years old, she had already made that act of *chesed* her own.

That is precisely how *chinuch* works. My children knew their beds were made, the food was ready, and the house was clean. They knew that *chesed* is a supreme value in our home. They knew that it was more than fine to arrive so close to Shabbat in order to help someone else. This knowledge is part of who they are and what they stand for. And standing on the side of the road for an hour, charging a stranger's car with a smile, is the lesson they passed down to their own children. I know what my own parents' *chesed* did for me, and what my in-laws' *chesed* did for my wife. That is why I say that we do not shape our children by telling them what to

do. We shape them by showing them. Every chance we get to do that builds them into the people they become.

This week we read Parshat Matot-Masei. In most years the two *parshiot* are joined together, and Masei tends to receive less attention than Matot. I assume it's because Parshat Matot is read every single year, so a *dvar Torah* for that *parsha* will always be relevant, while Masei stands on its own only like 30% of the time. That's why when you open the OU All Parsha app, or watch *parsha shiurim* on our YouTube channel (@OUIsraelShiurim), or anywhere else, the vast majority of speakers are going to talk about Matot. There's also the fact that Masei can seem somewhat dry: a line-by-line accounting of Bnei Yisrael's stops in the desert.

Yet, I believe that that is actually the beauty of Parshat Masei. We know that the Torah never wastes a word. If *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* records for *Klal Yisrael* in the Torah every stop they made on the journey out of Egypt toward the Land of Israel, then clearly, we are meant to learn something from it. Perhaps it's the importance of the journey itself that the Torah is relating to.

That brought me back to Shlomo and Naama at the side of the road. I know that even if Naama grows up and doesn't remember that exact story, there is no doubt it will help shape her into the person she will become. When people ask why basic training in the IDF must be so long, I believe the answer is the lesson of Masei. Just as every stop in the desert was crucial to building *Klal Yisrael* into the nation that could enter *Eretz Yisrael*, every stage our soldiers pass through is building them into who they need to become, giving of themselves with their whole heart and their



whole *neshama*.

That is how we win. We have tremendous *siyata dishmaya*, divine help, but we are also tasked to put in our *hishtadlut*, personal effort. Each step our soldiers take is a chance for growth to become better people, better soldiers, better Jews.

Everything *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gives us works the same way, whether or not we understand it. Some stages are joyful and others painful, but every one is meant to build us into better people and carry us forward. As I write these words, almost three years into the war, when so many have lost loved ones or are caring for the wounded, I see how these journeys are turning us into a community that cares more and gives more. I look at this generation doing such extraordinary *mitzvot* and find myself thinking that my children are far stronger than I am. And I find solace in that.

It is a *masa*, a journey, one that is still unfolding and that will lead us, *be'ezrat Hashem*, to a far brighter future very soon, and to the rebuilding of the third Beit HaMikdash, *bimheira biyameinu*.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Avi Berman'.

Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel



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# ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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## MATOT-MASEI



### 1ST ALIYA (BAMIDBAR 30:2-31:12)

Vows: A commitment must be kept. A young woman's vow may be nullified by her father on the day it is taken; if not nullified, it need be observed. A married woman's vow may be nullified by her husband; if not nullified, it need be observed. Conduct a battle of retribution on Midian, after which Moshe shall die. 1,000 soldiers per tribe are led by Pinchas accompanied by the holy vessels and trumpets. The leaders of Midian are killed, the cities destroyed. All the booty is brought to Moshe and Elazar at the plains of Moav opposite Jericho.

The book of Bamidbar is preoccupied with the march to the Land of Israel, albeit in fits and starts. But interspersed are various mitzvot. The timing and placement of these mitzvot invites explanation.

Why is the narrative of the march

interrupted here with the mitzva of honoring vows and how vows may be voided? What has just happened and what is about to happen which prompts placing the subject of vows right here?

It could be following on the tails of Bilaam. Look at how powerful words are; his curse would have damaged us. Similarly, there is power in *our* words to obligate us. Be careful with words.

Additionally, this foreshadows what is about to happen in this parsha. The tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menashe want to remain on the east bank of the Jordan. Moshe requires them to join in the battle for the Land and only afterwards to return to their families and possessions on the east bank. They give their word.

Is their word sufficient? After all it is only their word. People lie and exaggerate. Therefore, the Torah demands of us to keep our word. And once having done so, Moshe too can rely on the word of these tribes. We may doubt the word of man; but the Torah does not. In the eyes of the Torah, a promise is a promise. And can be relied upon.



### 2ND ALIYA (31:13-54)

Moshe is angry that the women have been spared, as they were the snares in the illicit affairs of Baal Peor. He orders their death. Elazar teaches to pass the Midianite utensils through fire and through water before use (kashering and immersing). The vast booty is divided. The soldiers receive half, the people half. The soldiers shall give 1/500th of their booty to the kohanim; the

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**מרדכי נחמן ומרים** ע"ה  
**SHANA ARANOWSKY**  
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 יהי זכרה ברוך  
*Weiner, Miller, Saar*  
*& Solomont families*

people 1/50th to the Leviim. The booty was: 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys and 32,000 young people. The tithes were given. The leaders of the war approach Moshe: no soldier fell in the battle. We shall give all the gold and silver booty as an atonement; it numbered 16,750 shekel.

The detail of the booty and its division must be for a reason, for some lesson. The booty is divided equally between the soldiers and the rest of the population. There were 1,000 soldiers per tribe, 12,000 in total. The census last week yielded a total population of 601,000. That's not fair: 12,000 soldiers get the same as 589,000? The soldier is getting 50 times the share of the non-soldiers. What a powerful statement: we value the soldiers so much we reward them with a 50 fold share of the booty. This expresses the profound appreciation we have for our soldiers. The benefits that our modern Israeli society grants to soldiers who serve our country is rooted in our Torah. And while a tithe does go to the Kohanim and Leviim who provide spiritual strength, it is miniscule compared to that given to the soldiers. The Kohanim receive 1/500th of the soldier's half. The Leviim 1/50th of the general population's half. We appreciate the contribution of the religious leaders while appreciating more the contribution of the soldiers.



### 3RD ALIYA (32:1-19)

The tribes of Reuven and Gad have extensive flocks, while the region just conquered has lush grazing land. They requested of Moshe to settle in this spot. Moshe asked rhetorically: your brothers go to war and you sit here? You will demoralize the people as did the spies into not wanting to enter the land. You saw G-d's reaction in not allowing that generation to enter the Land. The tribes of Reuven and Gad offered to house their

flocks and families in place while joining the rest of the people in the battles in the Land.

The war with Midian yielded a vast booty of animals. The Bnei Reuven and Gad figure "if this Land could yield such success, why not stay here?" Makes perfect sense. After all, this is economically secure and stable. It is not the same as the spies. The spies were fearful of taking the Land; which in essence was a repudiation of G-d's promise to champion our settling the Land. These people are merely comfortable in chutz laaretz. The grass is greener on this side; why venture to the other, the unknown? They don't question whether the land can be taken; they question why give up the good life.



### 4TH ALIYA (32:20-33:49)

Moshe agreed to the offer of the tribes of Reuven and Gad: they would join the battle for the Land and upon its conclusion would return to the east bank of the Jordan. Moshe informed Yehoshua and Elazar of this, instructing them to ensure that all that was agreed upon be fulfilled. The lands of Og and Sichon were divided amongst Gad and Reuven, while the region of Gilad was given to half of the tribe of Menashe. (Parshat Masei) Moshe recorded all the travels until here, listing them all in great detail including that upon arrival at Hor Hahar Aharon died at age 123 on the first of the fifth month (1 Av). The travels concluded at the plains of Moav opposite Jericho.

The acquiescence to the request of the tribes of Reuven and Gad is surprising. Why allow them to stay outside of the Land of Israel, settling in the lands of Og and Sichon?

It could be that the Jewish people are conveying a message of what could be called a Newtonian law of national justice; every opposition to us, will be met with an opposition to you. Sichon and Og fought the Jewish people.

And were conquered. These lands now can unequivocally be claimed as ours. Justice for nations demands that opposition not be easily forgiven. Were all the Jews to have entered the land, this area would be resettled by the adversary. And that would be unjust. So too with the war with Midian. The national effort at seduction cannot be left unopposed. And so, the offer to settle these lands is accepted by Moshe.



#### 5TH ALIYA (33:50-34:15)

On the banks of the Jordan, the people are commanded: take the Land of Israel and settle it for it is given to you. You must supplant the people of the Land for if not, they will be a thorn in your side; and inevitably, what I am commanding of you to supplant them, will be done by them to you. The borders of the Land: in the south from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, the western border is the Mediterranean Sea north into Lebanon, the North into Syria, the east along the Jordan.

The delineation of the borders of the Land is tricky because some of the landmarks it describes are not familiar to us. Nonetheless it is clear that the southern border does not extend all the way down to Eilat. The northern border extends well into Lebanon of today. And the eastern border includes much of Syria of today.



#### 6TH ALIYA (34:16-35:8)

The leaders of the tribes shall apportion the Land. The Leviim shall be given cities amongst the tribes. Each city shall have open area and grazing area surrounding it, 2,000 amot in total area outside the city. The Leviim may settle in the cities of refuge or in 48 designated cities. These cities are provided by the tribes, according to the size of the tribe and their allotted area.

The description of the open and grazing area around the city is one of the ecological

passages of the Torah. Green lung around the city. 2,000 amot is about a kilometer. As the cities were small (no need for wide roads for cars in the ancient world), this amounts to a healthy greenbelt around the city.



#### 7TH ALIYA (35:9-35:13)

Cities of Refuge are to be allocated, 3 on the west side of the Jordan, 3 on the east. One who kills accidentally may flee there. It is not accidental but rather murder if one attacks with a lethal weapon, or the assault is premeditated. The murderer shall be put to death; he may not flee to these cities. The relatives of the daughters of Zelophchad pointed out to Moshe that their family inheritance will be damaged. For the daughters will marry men of another tribe; the integrity of their family allotment will be damaged. It will not even return in Yovel, for it will begin with another tribe. Moshe instructed that these women marry men from their family so as to maintain the integrity of the family allotment.

In the description of the cities of refuge, any illusion that the Jewish society in the Land will be perfect is dispelled. There will be murders; accidental and pre-meditated. And earlier in this parsha, we fought a battle due to the failing of sexual impropriety with the women of Midian. And earlier in the Torah, the Golden Calf and idol worship.

So there you have it: the Jews of the desert have covered the big 3, idolatry, adultery and murder. We aren't, nor do we have illusions that we will be a perfect society. But, with that full knowledge, G-d is promising us that we will enter the Land imminently. Some Jews will err, will sin, will fail. But not the Jewish people. The covenant with the people endures. Rocky at times, but enduring.

The book of Bamidbar ends on the banks of the Jordan, poised to enter the Land. ■

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# "The Kiss of Hope"

Would you ever imagine that our holy Sages had a lot to say about a kiss? Would we not assume that kisses would be judged unworthy of their consideration?

But such is not the case. They had much to say about kisses.

The significance of the kiss was brought home to me recently when I came across a street sign advertising a film. It read, "Is not a kiss the very signature of love?" Indeed it is, so much so that the kiss plays a role in the spiritual realm. Thus, the *Song of Songs*, the biblical book which is traditionally interpreted as a description of the passionate love affair between God and His people, begins with the phrase, "Let Him give me of the kisses of His mouth."

The Midrash (*Genesis Rabbah* 70:12) distinguishes between three significant types of kisses. One is the "kiss of greatness," which is

exemplified by the prophet Samuel's kissing Saul when he anointed him king. Another is the "kiss of special occasions"—Aaron's kissing Moses upon their reunion. The third kiss is the "kiss of separation," the kiss given at the moment we take leave from one another. It is the "kiss of departure".

This third kiss comes with mixed feelings. On the one hand, we are bidding farewell to a beloved friend and are saddened to say goodbye. On the other hand, we are leaving for a reason—to encounter a new friend or a new opportunity. This is a tearful kiss, but it is also a kiss of anticipation, a kiss of hope, a kiss which signifies the beginning of a new journey.

In the second of this week's two Torah portions, *Matot* and *Masei* (*Numbers* 30:2-36:13), we read of no less than fifty such journeys. The Torah describes the long and arduous procession of the people of Israel as they left Egypt and marched toward the Promised Land. They stopped at fifty stations along the way.

We can assume that after they settled into one station, they had some reluctance to leave a familiar place, a place of shelter, and to plunge ahead into the unknown. But we can also imagine the joyous emotions they experienced, knowing that they were taking another step toward their desired destination.

This is the way of all journeys. Moreover, it is the very essence of life itself. We settle into one place, to one role, to one stage of life. It becomes familiar to us, and we feel comfortable there. Moving on to a new place, a new role, a new stage of life, feels threatening. Often we are tempted to remain in that place,

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to continue to live in the status quo. We don't want to kiss this familiar station goodbye.

On the other hand, we often find this old place tiring, boring. We no longer feel the challenges we felt when we first came to this station, to this point in our lives. We relish the opportunity to move on, in spite of the uncertainty that lies ahead. We look forward to the novelty of a new place, a new role, a new stage of life.

There is a contemporary poet whose works I admire. Here is how he puts it:

I envy those  
who live in two places  
New York, say, and London...  
There is always the anticipation  
of the change, the chance that what is wrong  
is the result of where you are. I have  
always loved both the freshness of  
arriving and the relief of leaving. With  
two homes every move would be a  
homecoming.  
I am not even considering the weather, hot  
Or cold, dry or wet: I am talking about hope.  
(Gerald Locklin, *Where We Are*).

It is no secret that many of us find the first fifty or so verses of *Parshat Masei* repetitive and dry. "These were the marches of the Israelites who started out from the land of Egypt...Their marches, by starting points, were as follows: They set out from Rameses... And encamped at Succoth. They set out from Succoth and encamped at Etham...They set out from Etham and turned about toward Pi Hahiroth, which faces Baal Zephon, and they encamped before Migdol...They set out from the hills of Abarim and encamped at the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan near Jericho..."

Of what possible interest can this long list of stations in the wilderness be to the average reader? What can he possibly learn from

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these verses?

Commentators throughout the ages have struggled with these very questions and have offered various approaches to answering them. I would like to advance an original approach, a metaphorical one. We suggest that just as the Israelites embarked upon a journey when they left Egypt, so do we all embark upon a journey the moment we are born. This journey entails many stations along the way before it is completed. Each station is necessary for the individual's development, but no one station can be permanent.

Psychologists discuss the concept of "developmental tasks." Each stage of life has its developmental task. The infant must learn to crawl, but his failure to move on from the crawling stage to the walking stage is a symptom of pathology. The two- or three-year-old who has mastered the human need to become attached to his parents must soon proceed

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to the next stage and learn to separate from them.

While all this is true at the physical level, it is also true of intellectual development. The ten-year-old who is still reading the books he read when he was five has a stunted intellect. But so does the fifty-year-old who has not transcended the literary interests he had when he was twenty.

The need to progress from station to station is especially true when it comes to spirituality. It has been said, correctly, that children are naturally spiritual. But childlike spirituality cannot slake the spiritual thirst of the adolescent. And the adult whose spirituality has not progressed beyond adolescence is a spiritual cripple. The inner resources that serve the adolescent well are of no help in coping with the challenges of adulthood.

And so it goes from stage to stage until the end of life.

Rabbi Judah ben Tema put it this way: “Five years old is the age to begin studying Scripture; ten for Mishnah; thirteen for the obligation of the commandments; fifteen for the study of Talmud; eighteen for marriage; twenty for seeking a livelihood; thirty for full strength; forty for understanding; fifty for giving counsel; sixty for old age; seventy for ripe old age; eighty for exceptional strength; and ninety for a bent back; at one hundred, one is as if he were dead and had left and gone from the world.” (*Avot* 5:25)

Fifty stations were necessary for the Israelites to reach the Promised Land. At least as many are required of all of us if we are to reach our God-given potential as mature human beings. As we journey from station to station in our lives, we need to learn to kiss the kiss of departure, which is also the kiss of hope. ■

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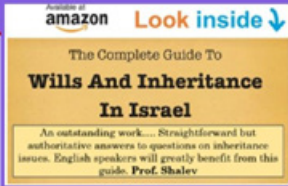
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# The Resilience of Hope

The rabbis issue a strikingly strange ruling concerning the prayer services of Tisha B'Av.

The solemn prayer of Tachanun, they declare, a prayer omitted on joyous occasions throughout the year, is to be omitted on the mournful occasion of Tisha B'Av, as well.

By way of explanation for this ruling, the authorities cite a passage from Megillat Eicha in which the prophet Yirmiyahu refers to the day of the Temple's destruction as a *mo'ed*, "an appointed time."

As the term *mo'ed* is generally associated with celebratory occasions, the rabbis argue, Tisha B'Av must possess an element of "celebration," as well. Tachanun is, therefore, to be omitted.

Astonishingly, the reason cited by the rabbis for their decision to omit Tachanun on Tisha B'Av seems to totally ignore the context of Yirmiyahu's declaration.

The prophet declares: "The Lord, in my midst, has rejected all my heroes; *He has proclaimed a mo'ed*, an appointed time, against

me to crush my young men..."

Clearly, the "appointed time" referred to by the prophet is a moment of distress and grief, the antithesis of a celebratory moment. How, then, can the rabbis cite Yirmiyahu's declaration as the source for the omission of the somber prayer of Tachanun on Tisha B'Av?

Is our tradition so arbitrary that the simple use of one discordant word in an overwhelmingly mournful context is powerful enough to inject a festive note into the saddest day of the Jewish year?

Perhaps because of the difficulties surrounding the usually suggested source for Tachanun's omission on Tisha B'Av, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik offers an alternate explanation for the phenomenon.

Citing a Talmudic passage that underscores the unique power of the Tachanun prayer Rabbi Soloveitchik suggests that our omission of Tachanun on Tisha B'Av reflects an awareness of the *diminished efficacy of prayer on this day*. As the Talmud testifies, "From the time the Temple was destroyed, the gates of prayer were closed."

For this reason, Rabbi Soloveitchik notes, the passage "May our prayers and supplications be accepted" is also omitted from the Tisha B'Av recitation of the Kaddish prayer.

Our prayers must always be responsive to changes in the world around us (e.g., the season of the year, a specific calendar occasion, a personal event). In the case of Tisha B'Av,

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therefore, our prayers must mirror the character of a day on which the power of prayer is sorely limited.

From time immemorial, Tisha B'Av has been a day reserved for tragedy, a time when our prayers have "not been answered" to our apparent benefit. To be complete, Rabbi Soloveitchik maintains, even our prayers themselves must reflect this tragic fact, thereby increasing the sadness of the day.

Numerous other authorities, however, counterintuitively suggest that the very tragedies associated with Tisha B'Av can give rise to a hope of eventual rejoicing. It is this hope, they maintain, woven into the very fabric of the day, that powers the omission of tachanun.

To illustrate this point, allow me to turn to one of my favorite sermon/lecture topics...

I have often observed that unfortunately, in our day, many parents do not want to parent. Eager for their children's love and acceptance, they set out, consciously or unconsciously, to be their children's friends.

These parents eschew disciplinary actions, fail to set limits, automatically take their children's side in disputes with authority, and often perform tasks for their children that the children were meant to perform themselves.

*Our children have enough friends. What they really need are parents...*

If we truly love our children, we will be strong enough to discipline them when appropriate, wise enough to let them stumble and fall, and tough enough to insist that they fulfill the responsibilities that are theirs.

Tisha B'Av is proof that, thank God, God is not an "absentee parent."

The very fact that Hashem has visited challenge after challenge upon us on one specific date of the calendar year is clear evidence of His continued presence in our lives. That

involvement is, in and of itself, a source of solace.

As a loving parent would, God insists that we reap the results of past failures, in order that we may learn the necessary correctives for the future. In doing so, He challenges us to ultimately turn Tisha B'Av into the *mo'ed* that it is meant to be.

The omission of Tachanun on Tisha B'Av thus carries a message that is, at once, both hopeful and challenging. *The final character of this day is in our hands.* ■

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

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## The Danger of Suspicion

It is a fascinating story, and from it comes one of the great principles of Judaism. Two of the tribes, Reuben and Gad, see that the land east of the Jordan is ideally suited as pasture for their large herds and flocks of livestock. They approach Moses and ask for permission to settle there, rather than crossing the Jordan. Moses is initially furious at their request. It is, he says, bound to demoralise the rest of the people ("Shall your fellow countrymen go to war while you sit here?"). Had they learned nothing from the sin of the spies who, by de-motivating others through their behaviour, condemned an entire generation to forty years of wandering in the desert?

The Reubenites and Gadites take the point. They explain that they have no wish to exempt themselves from the struggles of their fellow Israelites. They are fully prepared to

accompany them into the Promised Land and fight alongside them. "We will not return to our homes until every Israelite has received his inheritance." Moses makes them take a public pledge to this effect and grants their request on condition that they fulfil their word. "When the land is then conquered before God you may then return, *free of any obligation before God and Israel* and this land will be yours as your permanent property before God."

The italicised phrase - literally *you will be innocent before God and Israel* - became in the course of time an ethical axiom of Judaism. It is not enough to do what is right in the eyes of God. One must also act in such a way as to be seen to have done right in the eyes of one's fellow man. One must be above suspicion. That is the rule of *veheyitem neki'im*, "You shall be innocent in the eyes of God and Israel."

How did this translate itself into Jewish law and life? The Mishnah in Shekalim speaks of the three periods in the year when appropriations were made from the collective donations stored in the Temple treasury. The Mishnah states that "The person who made the appropriation did not enter the chamber wearing a bordered cloak or shoes or tefillin or an amulet, so that if he subsequently became poor, people would not say that he became poor because he committed an offence in the



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chamber, and so that if he became rich people would not say that he did so by misappropriating contributions in the chamber - for we must be free of blame in the eyes of people just as we must be free of blame before God, as it is said, 'You shall be innocent in the eyes of God and Israel.'

Similarly the Tosefta states: "When one went in to take up the offering of the chamber, they would search him when he went in and when he came out, and they continue chatting with him from the time he goes in until the time he comes out."

Not only must there be no wrongdoing when coins are taken from the Temple treasury; there must be no suspicion of wrongdoing. Hence the person who gathered the money should not wear any item of clothing in which coins could be hidden. He was to be searched before and afterwards, and even engaged in conversation so that he would not be tempted to secrete some of the money in his mouth.

Two rabbinic teachings from the Second Temple period speak of families famous for their role in Temple life and the lengths they went to place themselves beyond suspicion. The Garmu family were experts in preparing the showbread. It was said of them that "their memory was held in high esteem because fine bread was never found in their children's homes, in case people might say, they feed from the preparation of the showbread." Likewise the Avtinas family were skilled in making the incense used in the Temple. They too were held in high regard because "Never did a bride of their family go forth perfumed, and when they married a woman from elsewhere, they stipulated that she was not to go out perfumed, in case people should say, They perfume themselves from the preparation of the Temple incense."



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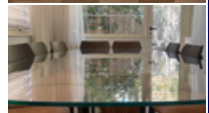
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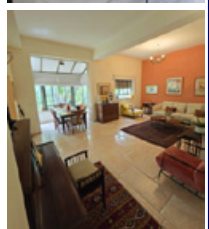
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The general principle is stated in the Talmud Yerushalmi:

R. Samuel bar Nachman said in the name of Rabbi Jonathan: In the Mosaic books, the Prophets and the Writings, we find that a person must discharge his obligations before men just as he must discharge them before God. Where in the Mosaic books? In the verse, 'You shall be innocent in the eyes of God and Israel.' Where in the prophets? In 'God, the Lord God, He knows and Israel too shall know.' Where in the Writings? In the verse, 'You shall find grace and good favour in the eyes of God and men.' Gamliel Zoga asked R. Yose bar Avun, Which verse says it most clearly? He replied, 'You shall be innocent in the eyes of God and Israel.'"

This concern became the basis of two halakhic principles. The first is known as *aschashad*, "suspicion", namely that certain acts, permitted in themselves, are forbidden on the grounds that performing them may lead others to suspect one of doing something forbidden. Thus, for example, R. Shimon bar Yochai held that one of the reasons why the Torah prescribes that *peah* [the corner of the field left unharvested for the poor] should be left at the end of harvesting was because of suspicion. If the owner of the field had set aside an unharvested corner at the beginning or middle, the poor would come and take what is theirs before the end of harvesting, and a passer-by might think that no corner had been set aside at all. Likewise the rabbis ordained that if a house has two doors on different sides, Chanukah candles should be lit at both so that a passer-by, seeing one door but not the other, should not think that the owner of the house had failed to fulfil the command.

A closely related halachic principle is the idea known as *marit ha-ayin*, "appearances". Thus for example, before milk substitutes

became common, it was forbidden to drink milk-like liquids (made, for example, from almonds) together with meat on the grounds that people might think it was milk itself. Similarly it is forbidden on Shabbat to hang out garments that had become wet (for example, by falling into water) to dry, in case people think that one has washed them on Shabbat. In general one is not allowed to perform actions which, permitted in themselves, lend themselves to misinterpretation.

The connection or contrast between these two principles is a matter of some debate in rabbinic literature. There are those who see *chashad* and *marit ha-ayin* as very similar, perhaps even two names for the same thing. Others however see them as different, even opposites. *Chashad* represents the possibility that people might think you have done something forbidden and thus think badly of you. *Marit ha-ayin* concerns cases where people, knowing that you are not the sort of person to do something forbidden, draw the mistaken conclusion that because you are doing X, Y is permitted, because X is easily mistaken for Y. Thus, to take one of the cases mentioned above, people seeing you hanging out clothes to dry on Shabbat might conclude that doing laundry is permitted, which it is not.

This concern for appearances is, on the face of it, strange. Surely what matters is what God thinks of us, not what people think of us. The Talmud tells us of a moving encounter between the dying Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai and his disciples:

They said to him: Master, bless us. He said to them: May it be God's will that the fear of heaven should be as important to you as the fear of [the opinions of] human beings. They said: Is that all? He said: Would that you were able to attain this

[level of spirituality]. You can see [how difficult it is] because when someone wants to commit a sin, he says, I hope no one will see me [thus placing his fear of human beings above the fear of God who sees all].

What is more, it is forbidden to suspect people of wrongdoing. The rabbis said, "One who suspects the innocent is [punished by being] bodily afflicted" and "One should always judge a person in the scale of merits." Why then, if the onus is on the observer not to judge harshly, should we - the observed - be charged with the duty of acting above suspicion?

The answer is that we are not allowed to rely on the fact that others will judge us charitably, even though they should. Rashi makes a sobering comment on the life of Moses:

If he left his tent early, people would say that he had had a row with his wife. If he left late, they would say, He is devising evil plots against us. (Rashi's commentary on Deut. 1:12)

Even Moses, who devoted his life with total selflessness to the people of Israel, was not able to avoid their suspicion. R. Moses Sofer goes so far as to say that he was troubled throughout his lifetime by the challenge of the command, 'You shall be innocent in the eyes of God and Israel,' adding that it was far easier to fulfil the first half of the command than the second (in the eyes of Israel!). Indeed he wondered if it was possible for anyone to fulfil it in its entirety. Perhaps, he said, this is what Ecclesiastes meant when he said, "There is not a righteous man on earth who only does what is right and never sins" (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Yet there is a profound idea embedded in the concept of *veheyitem neki'im*, 'You shall be innocent.' The Talmudic sage Rava was scathing of those who stood in the presence of a Torah scroll but not in the presence of a Torah sage. To be a Jew is to be summoned

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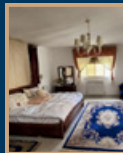


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to become a living *Sefer Torah*. People learn how to behave not only from the books they study but also - perhaps more so - from the people they meet. Jewish educators speak of 'text-people' as well as 'text-books,' meaning that we need living role models as well as formal instruction. For that reason, Rabbi Akiva used to follow Rabbi Yehoshua to see how he conducted himself in private, saying 'This too is part of Torah, and I need to learn.' The twin principles of *chashad* and *marit ha-ayin* mean that we should act in such a way as to be held as a role-model (by being above suspicion - the rule of *chashad*) and that, just as a book of instructions should be unambiguous, so should our conduct (by not laying itself open to misinterpretation - the idea of *marit ha-ayin*). People should be able to observe the way we behave and learn from us how a Jew should live.

The fact that these rules apply to every Jew, not just to great Sages, is eloquent testimony to the spiritual egalitarianism of the halachah. Each of us is bidden to become a role-model. The fact, too, that these rules exist despite the fact that we are commanded not to suspect others of wrongdoing, tells us something else about Judaism, namely that it is a system of duties, not just of rights. We are not allowed to say, when we have acted in a way conducive to suspicion, 'I have done nothing wrong; to the contrary, the other person, by harbouring doubts about me, is in the wrong.' To be sure, he is. But that does not relieve us of the responsibility to conduct our lives in a way that is above suspicion. Each of us must play our part in constructing a society of mutual respect.

This brings us back to where we began with the request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad to settle the land east of the Jordan. Moses, we recall, granted their request on condition

that they first joined the other tribes in their battles. They did so. Years later, Joshua summoned them and told them that they had fulfilled their promise and were now entitled to return to the place where they had built their homes (Joshua 22).

However, by a profound historical irony, suspicion was aroused again, this time for a quite different reason, namely that they had built an altar in their territory. The other tribes suspected that they were breaking faith with the God of Israel by constructing their own place of worship. Israel was on the brink of civil war. The suspicion was unfounded. The Reubenites and Gadites explained that the altar they had built was not intended to be a place of worship, but rather a sign that they too were part of the Israelite nation - a safeguard against the possibility that one day, generations later, the tribes living in Israel proper (west of the Jordan) would declare the Reubenites and Gadites to be foreigners since they lived on the other side of the river:

That is why we said, 'Let us get ready and build an altar - but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices. On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at the Sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, "You have no share in the Lord." And we said, "If they ever say this to us or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord's altar which our fathers built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.'

Civil war was averted, but only just.

Suspicion is a pervasive feature of social life and it is intensely destructive. Judaism - a central project of which is the construction

of a gracious society built on justice, compassion, mutual responsibility and trust - confronts the problem from both directions. On the one hand it commands us not to harbour suspicions but to judge people generously, giving them the benefit of the doubt. On the other, it bids each of us to act in a way that is above suspicion, keeping [as the rabbis put it] “far from unseemly conduct, from whatever resembles it, and from what may merely appear to resemble it.”

Being innocent before God is one thing; being innocent before one’s fellow human beings is another, and far more difficult. Yet that is the challenge - not because we seek their approval (that is what is known as pandering) but because we are summoned to be role-models, exemplars, living embodiments of Torah, and because we are called on to be a unifying, not a divisive, presence in Jewish life. As the Chatam Sofer said, we will not always succeed. Despite our best endeavours, others may still accuse us (as they accused Moses) of things of which we are utterly innocent. Yet we must do our best by being charitable in our judgement of others and scrupulous in the way we conduct ourselves. ■

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# A Prophet of Hope

The haftarah we read this week is a selection chosen from the second perek of Sefer Yirmiyahu, and a direct continuation of the navi's message that we read in last week's haftarah. However, in this second perek of Sefer Yirmiyahu, the prophet is no longer conversing with Hashem but, rather, is delivering a harsh message directly to the people themselves, thereby, beginning the mission upon

which G-d had sent him. Picking up on the theme he opened in the last perek, Yirmiyahu condemns the nation for their ingratitude toward Boreh Ha'Olan. In order to accentuate the extent of Israel's sin, the navi reviews the kindnesses Hashem had done for them over the many years. Among them the exodus from Egypt, the wonders G-d had wrought for them during their sojourn in the desert and His gift of a bountiful and fruitful land.

The prophet contrasts G-d's faithfulness to Israel with Israel's faithlessness to G-d. The nation's sins were not limited simply to their disregard of Hashem's will but, even worse, their abandonment of His worship. By turning to other powers, Israel proved that they found G-d's gifts and His wonders were insufficient for them and, by seeking alternatives to G-d, they indicated that they regarded the Al-mighty as not All Mighty. It is for this reason that Yirmiyahu charges his generation that the behavior of Hashem's chosen nation was even more corrupt than the other nations who, sadly, remained faithful to their false gods.

Nonetheless, the navi tempers his harsh words by suggesting that Israel's infidelity to Hashem was less a result of rebelliousness and more one of confusion and error. Pointing to the leadership of the nation, Yirmiyahu charged them as being guilty of leading the people astray. He criticizes the kohanim who did not search for G-d, the scholars who did not seek to understand Hashem's ways, the leaders who openly rebelled against G-d and the (false) prophets who prophesied in the name Ba'al.

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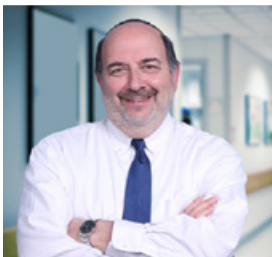
Given this reality of unethical and immoral behavior of these role models, G-d admits that the nation should not shoulder the entire guilt for their sins. Therefore, He tells Israel: “Od ariv it’chem,” “I will yet contend with you” - the implication being that G-d would not yet punish the people but would “contend,” argue, debate with the hope of convincing the nation to return and avoid punishment. And this, indeed, was the very mission of Yimiyahu. He was not only the “prophet of doom” that we often think him to be, but also the “prophet of hope.” This would illuminate G-d’s words to Yirmiyahu in the last perek where the prophet is told that his job would be “to uproot and smash” but also “to build and to plant.”

G-d sends prophets to try and bring His children back to Him. Declaring a message of hope to a sinful nation, (as Yirmiyahu did when the enemy had already built ramparts up to the wall of Yerushalayim!) is an essential part of the prophet’s mission. Hashem desires return and not ruin.

And it was that message of hope that helped us survive the centuries of ruin until we could finally return home. ■

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# Leaving Mitzrayim Again and Again

Parashat Masei lists the 42 journeys of Bnei Yisrael. At first glance, it seems repetitive: “They traveled... they encamped... they traveled...” Why record every stop?

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## NOT ONE EXODUS — BUT MANY

The Torah links all the journeys to *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Why? Because leaving Egypt was not a one-time event. Each journey was another step away from *Mitzrayim*. Not geographically, but spiritually.

“וַיֵּצֵאוּ... וַיֵּצֵאוּ”

## LEAVING AND BECOMING

The Torah repeatedly states both departure and arrival:

- They left somewhere
- They arrived somewhere new

This teaches us that growth is not just about

where one is headed, it is also about one is leaving behind.

## A DYNAMIC LIFE

Life is never static. We are always either moving forward or slipping backward. As we have said on several occasions, life is like going up a downward escalator. If you are not ascending, you are descending. There is no standing still with respect to *ruchniyut* (*spirituality*). One has to continue to strive and work on themselves to achieve constant growth. Every stage of life is a journey, both moving away from what we were and toward what we can become.

## TO AND FROM

*Yetziat Mitzrayim* did not end at the sea. It continues in every decision we make, with every challenge we face and in each step that we take forward. Each time we grow, we leave behind another layer of limitation. As the word *mitzrayim* has as its root – *meitzar*, which means limitations. Each time we move forward, we break a glass ceiling and come closer to who we were meant to become. ■

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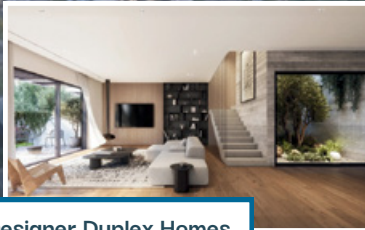
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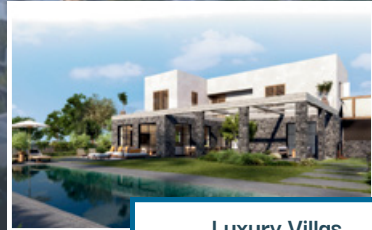
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## REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES

FACULTY, OU ISRAEL CENTER

# Surviving the Galut

“*Ve’et malchei Midyan hargu al chaleleihem ... ve’et Bilam ben Be’or hargu be’charev* — And they killed the Midianite kings upon their slain... and Bilam the son of Beor they slew with the sword.” (*Bamidbar* 31:8) Why is it important to know how Bilam was killed? How is that relevant to us?

Rashi expounds: Bilam exchanged the accepted mode of warfare, i.e. the sword, with the power of speech to curse the Jewish people. Likewise here, *Am Yisrael* exchanged their traditional mode of combat, i.e. tefillah, and killed Bilam by sword. Indeed, earlier in the *parashah* we find that the Midrash teaches that each tribe sent three thousand men to fight against Midyan. One thousand men went to battle, one thousand men kept watch over their possessions, and one thousand men prayed for salvation. The Chafetz Chaim *zt”l* sees a powerful lesson here; our

**main** arsenal lies in our power of speech. A Jew has the power to facilitate spiritual realities with words of *kedushah*. How careful one must be to use this awesome gift properly, and of course, assiduously avoid words of *lashon hara* and *rechilus*, evil, harmful speech.

Targum Yonatan describes the unusual circumstances of Bilam’s death. When Bilam saw that Pinchas was chasing him, he used sorcery to fly in the air. Following suit, Pinchas uttered the ineffable Name of Hashem and pursued Bilam in the air. As Pinchas drew his sword, Bilam pleaded with him, saying if he’s spared, he would never again harm *Am Yisrael*. To which Pinchas replied, “You are Lavan who tried to destroy Yaakov and you plotted against the Jews in Egypt. You continued your evil campaign and instigated Amalek against us and conspired with Balak to curse us. Finally, you caused further harm by suggesting to Balak the horrible scheme of Ba’al Pe’or in which 24,000 of our people died.” Pinchas then wielded his sword and killed Bilam. Rav Salamon in *Matnat Chaim* understands this exchange as a description of Jewish history. Throughout the centuries, the face of our enemy may have changed, yet their goal is always the same—to destroy and eradicate our people. Rav Solomon strongly believes that it is important to minimize any antagonism by staying under the radar. If we are careful not to arouse the jealousy of those around us, the age-old hatred will hopefully stay quiet.

“*Rav lechem sov et hahar hazeh penu lachem tzafona*—You have circled this mountain long

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enough; turn northward.” (*Devarim* 2:3) The *Kli Yakar* echoes our idea in his interpretation of this verse. The Jews will wander for many years around Edom, in the diaspora. The directive is to turn “*tzafonah*,” which can mean “to hide,” as on Seder night we have “*tzafun*,” hiding the afikomen. The *Kli Yakar* teaches that if a Jew finds success in the *galut*, he should keep it private and not flaunt it. Esav, he continues, still holds bitterness about losing the brachot to Yaakov, the gentiles believe that all the goodness in this world still belong to them. The *Kli Yakar* therefore cautions against inciting jealousy.

This message rings true for us all. Throughout the world, antisemitism has reached new proportions. Let us remember that Bilam lived under many guises but with one evil focus. Until the final *geulah*, if we need to be in the *galut*, we can protect ourselves with a two-pronged approach. Let us be careful how

we publicize our wealth and status and let us increase the use of our greatest weapon—heartfelt, sincere tefillah for the safety and redemption of all Jews, wherever we are. ■



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LEARNING

## This Week's Inspiration

**SUNDAY  
JULY 12**

**7:30 PM**

Safrut Shimush course (advanced)  
with **Rabbi Tzvi Maurer**  
OU Israel, 7 Hartom,  
Jerusalem

**SPECIAL EVENT:**

Mother Daughter  
Pre Tisha Bav Program  
across multiple cities

**MONDAY  
JULY 13**

**7:00 PM**

Dorot Choir with **Hadassah Jacob**  
@ Diskin 1 St.

**8:30 PM**

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



#THEOUISTRAEL

**TUESDAY  
JULY 14**

OU Israel is supported by the Jewish  
Federation of Broward County



## COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN BAKAA

Classes @ Bet Knesset Nitzanim, 3 Asher Street, Bakaa

**9:20 AM**

From Text to Tachlis

**Rabbi Jeremy Perlow**

**11:25 AM**

Modern Masters

**Rabbi Sam Shor**

**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 Knesset HaNassi, 24 Ussishkin St. Rechavia

**9:15 AM**

Torah Tapestries with

**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

**Last Class! Resumes Sept.1**

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Women's Division



## MODIIN-THE BAIS

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

**10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

Weekly Kollel Boker-

Instructors include

**Rabbi David Fine**

**Rabbi Ian Shaffer**

**Rabbi Aschi Dick**

**Rabbi Avi Herzog**

**1:00 PM - NEW!!!**

Modiin Lunch and Learn with **Rabbi Aschi Dick**

Masamerica Offices, 28 Dam HaMacabbiim St,

3rd Floor, Shiur followed by mincha at 1:45pm

# This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning with OU Israel

**WEDNESDAY  
JULY 15**

## **COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN RECHAVIA**

@ Bet Knesset HaNassi,  
24 Ussishkin St., Rechavia

**9:15 AM**

Holy Poetry

**Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler**

**10:20 AM**

Contemporary Issues  
in Halacha and Hashkafa

**Rabbi Anthony Manning**

**11:25 AM**

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

**Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**

**12:30 PM**

Rav Aharon Soloveichik  
on the Nine Days and Tisha B'Av  
**Dr. David Luchins**

### **SPECIAL EVENT:**

**9:30 AM - 12:45 PM**

Women's Division Summer  
Program in the Old City

*\*The schedule is subject  
to change*



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information related to OU  
Israel classes and programs,  
including last minute schedule  
changes and updates, by  
scanning the QR Code.

THE BAIS CLASSES & PROGRAMS ARE  
FOR MEN ONLY

**THURSDAY  
JULY 16**

## **COMMUNITY BEIT MIDRASH IN ARNONA**

Community Beit Midrash Program  
@ Bet Knesset Shai Agnon, Corner  
of Leib Yaffe and Siegfried Moses St.

**9:15 AM**

Parshat HaShavua **Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:30 AM**

Parshat Hashavua **Rabbi Baruch Taub**

**11:25 AM**

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

## **BET KNESSET OHEL YITZCHAK**

@ **Keren Hayesod Street**

**8:00 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
(the Bais) **Rabbi Aschi Dick**

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

Please note that this will  
be the final week of the  
Community Beit Midrash  
program before the summer  
break. Classes will resume  
in early September iyH.  
Wishing everyone an  
enjoyable summer!

## PROGRAM SPONSORS

To sponsor a shiur contact **Josh Churney**  
054-281-4604 or to donate online:  
<https://www.ouisrael.org/donate/ou-israel-center/>

### **RABBI SHAI FINKELSTEIN TUE. SHIUR**

Sponsored for the 2025 - 2026  
academic year by the  
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**Mel & Sylvia David z"l**  
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**וטויבא רבקה, ז"ל**  
**צביה חיה בת אריה לב וחווה אידל, ז"ל**

### **RABBI ADLER'S WED. SHIUR**

Sponsored for the 2025-2026  
academic year  
by the **Frist family** in memory of  
their beloved daughter and sister  
**Elisheva Frist z"l**  
**אלישבע סימא בת זלמן ז"ל**

### **RABBI ASCHI DICK'S MODIIN SHIURIM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

Dedicated by  
**Rabbi Steven & Kim Ettinger**  
in loving memory of their parents  
**Rabbi Zvi & Jean Ettinger** and  
**Herbert & Leonore Shulman,**  
zichronam livracha

### **RABBI ARI KAHN'S SHIUR**

Sponsored for the 2025-2026  
academic year by  
**Rabbi Michael and Jeri Laxmeter**  
for the refuah shleimah  
of their granddaughter  
**Avigayil Sara bat Shaina Ahrona**

### **RABBI YOSSI GOLDIN'S SHIUR**

Sponsored by  
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### **RABBI MANNING'S WED. SHIUR**

Sponsored for the 2026  
academic year לעילוי נשמת  
**ברנה בת ברנדית ע"ה וזליג בן קלמן זייל**

### **RABBI TAUB'S WEEKLY THUR. PARSHA SHIUR**

Sponsored by  
**The Jewish Legacy Foundation**

### **SHIRA SMILES' SHIUR**

Dedicated for the year in memory of  
**Elhanan Efrim Ben Abraham z"l**  
by **Robyn Pocker**

### **RABBI BREITOWITZ'S SHIUR**

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

### **THE WED. MORNING BEIT MIDRASH PROGRAM IN RECHAVIA**

Dedicated for the  
2026 academic year l'ilui nishmat:  
**Daniel ben David z"l,**  
**Limud bat Avraham Strauss a"h,**  
**Mordechai ben Moshe z"l,** and  
**Reizel bat Yosef Meir Marcus a"h,**  
zichronam livracha, parents of  
**Judy & Menachem Marcus**

### **RABBI GOLDSCHIEDER'S WED. SHIUR**

Sponsored for the 2026  
academic year לעילוי נשמת  
**מרים בת אברהם ע"ה**  
**ושם טוב בן שלמה ז"ל**

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Sunday, July 19 | 5 Av | 7-10 PM | Kehilat Shirat David, Efrat

## An Evening of Torah, Inspiration & Community in Preparation for Tisha B'Av

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**Info/Registration:**  
[torahefrat26.ouisrael.org](http://torahefrat26.ouisrael.org)

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Women's  
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OU ISRAEL



## ROSH CHODESH. AV Women's Seminar in Beit Shemesh

Echoes of the Mikdash: From Ruin to Redemption



**BASYA TEITELBAUM**  
Words of Introduction



**RAV DORON PEREZ**  
Eicha:  
What Are You  
Mourning About?



**ESTHER WACHSTOCK**  
Dialectical Mikdash:  
Movements Inward  
and Outward in Tanach



**MIMI FUCHS**  
Prophets and Losses:  
Moshe and Yirmiyahu



📅 Wednesday, July 15  
9:15 am - 1:00 pm

📍 Beit Midrash Torani Leumi  
5 Reuven Street

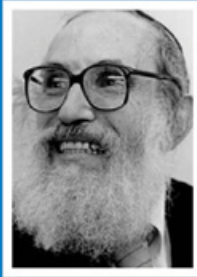
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Yocheved Kornfeld

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OU ISRAEL PRESENTS

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With **Dr. David Luchins**  
Wednesday July 15, 12:30 PM

Mincha will follow this special Guest lecture

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in loving memory of Vivian's mother  
Ita bat Chaim Leib Osdoby a"h*

**BEIT KNESSET HANASSI, 24 USSISHKIN ST., RECHAVIA**



זה השער לה'  
**BEIT SHEMESH WOMEN'S TRIP**  
**EXPLORING THE GATES OF HAR HABAYIT**

With Rav Ari Waxman

**Monday, July 20**  
**8:45 AM-2:30 PM approx.**

As we approach Tisha B'Av, join us in deepening our connection with the Beit HaMikdash as we learn about Yerushalayim, then and now, and explore the gates to Har HaBayit.

See the gate that the Paratrooper Brigade entered in 1967  
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Visit additional gates to Har HaBayit (Sha'ar HaTzon, Sha'ar HaBarzel, Sha'ar HaShalsholet)

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Women's Division

# MOTHER-DAUGHTER PRE-TISHA B'AV EVENT

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Mother-Daughter  
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Mini-Shiur

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Competition

3 Weeks  
Art Project

- Chashmonaim (Rimon Shul) - Sunday July 12
- Yerushalayim (Baka Matnas) - Sunday July 12
- Beit Shemesh (Menorat Hamaor) - Monday July 13
- Carmei Gat (Carmei Zion) - Tuesday July 14
- Efrat (Kehillat Shirat David) - Part of Torah Efrat - Sunday July 19

ALL EVENTS  
RUN FROM  
7:00-9:30PM



HAVE YOUR COMMUNITY JOIN!

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[www.ouisrael.org/events/md-tishabav](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/md-tishabav)



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## ROSH CHODESH AV

Women's Seminar in Yerushalayim

**Echoes of the Mikdash: From Ruin to Redemption**



**ARIELA DAVIS**

Grounded in Galut;  
Focused on Geula



**RABBI MENACHEM NISSEL**

Yerushalayim  
In Our Hearts



**ESTHER WACHSTOCK**

Dialectical Mikdash:  
Movements Inward  
and Outward in Tanach



**RAV DORON PEREZ**

Eicha:  
What Are You  
Mourning About?

**NOTE THE  
DATE!**



Thursday, July 16 (ב' אב)  
9:15 am - 1:00 pm



Beit Knesset Hanassi  
Ussishkin 24



50 NIS  
Includes brunch

Register at: [ouisrael.org/events/av2026](http://ouisrael.org/events/av2026)



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Beyond the Churban:

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Kehillat Menorat Hamaor  
Nachal Maor 6



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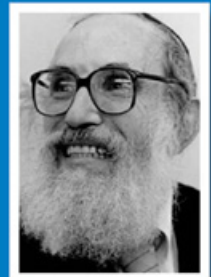
# TISHA B'AV

with Dr. David Luchins

THURSDAY, JULY 23

Join Dr. David Luchins for his annual NCSY style explanatory Kinot presentation based on the teaching of Rav Ahron Soloveichik

Shacharit 8:30 AM, followed by Kinot



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## Word is Bond

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zt'l, beloved Rosh Yeshiva of Torah VoDaas and one of the *Gedolei haDor*, was respected for his wisdom, sensitivity and *yashrus*, unwavering commitment to honesty and truth. When he was 90 years old, during his last visit to Eretz Yisrael, relatives were surprised to see the Rav taking off his tefillin at the end of davening and then putting on tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam (today worn mostly by Chasidim and Kabbalists in addition to the 'standard' tefillin of Rashi).

R' Yaakov's family members knew that it had never been his custom to wear Rabbeinu Tam tefillin, and wondered aloud why the Rosh Yeshiva was doing so now. "You see," he said, "about fifty years ago, Reb Shraga Feivel (Mendlowitz, zy'a, the founder of Torah VoDaas) encouraged me to add the donning of



Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l

Rabbeinu Tam tefillin, and to strengthen his case, he mentioned that the Chofetz Chaim had also added this practice in his later years. During the conversation, I told Reb Shraga Feivel, 'The Chofetz Chaim started donning Rabbeinu Tam tefillin when he turned 90... when I reach 90 I'll put them on.' That was a

long time ago... 50 years. But since I gave my word to Reb Shraga Feivel, on my 90th birthday I started putting them on."

Our double *sedra* begins with the parsha of *Nedarim*, 'Vows', referring to a voluntary verbal declaration of an intention to make an additional offering to Hashem. This declaration not only expresses a

desire to do something 'more' to draw close to Hashem, but creates an obligation to perform that action:

*"Ish ki yidor neder*, if a person makes a vow to Hashem or makes an oath to prohibit himself something that the Torah permits, *lo yachel devar*, he may not violate his word, *k'chol hayotzei m'piv, yaaseh* — and whatever has come out of his mouth he must do" (30:3).

Rashi clarifies: through speech, we have the opportunity to draw down *kedushah*, holiness, to illuminate and sanctify... *Lo yachel devar* — our words shouldn't be *chulin*, mundane... *Lo yechaleil devar* — we must not profane our words, nor treat our words as being 'unholy'.

Through our speech we are empowered to create new realities. We have the ability *le'esor*

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issar, to make an object or activity which is permitted into one that is forbidden. We can also elevate a mundane act into a holy act.

From the phrase in our pasuk, *k'chol hayotzei m'piv, yaaseh* — “and whatever has come out of his mouth he must do,” Chazal deduced that there is both a *mitzvas aseh*, a ‘positive commandment’ to fulfill what one has said, and a ‘negative commandment’ to not desecrate one’s word.

In *Yiddishkeit* the power of speech is paramount. The legally binding power of *nedarim* is considered so strong that many have the practice of saying *b’li neder*, ‘without a promise’, after stating their intention to do something. This is to ensure that if, in the event of unforeseen circumstances one is not able to fulfill their pledge, one’s words did not constitute a *halachic* vow.

This week marks Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, and the loss of our Temple and exile is at the forefront of our thoughts and practice. The Sefas Emes, Rebbe Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter of Gur zy”a points out that the *semichas haparshios*, the juxtaposition of the end of the previous parshah and the beginning of our parshah, is significant. The previous parshah (Pinchas) concludes with a discussion of the *Korbanos*, the sacrificial offerings and libations of the Yamim Tovim, and our parshah begins with the *sugyah*, the

topic, of *nedarim*. This is to show that a Jew’s speech, when reciting the Torah’s verses of the *Korbanos* in prayer has the power to bring *re’ach nicho’ach*, “a pleasing fragrance” to the Creator, even in times when the Temple is destroyed.

Indeed, our words of Torah and tefillah are the highest manifestation of elevated speech: *K’chu imachem devarim, v’shuvu el Hashem...* “take words with you and return to Hashem... *v’neshalma parim sefaseinu...* “and let us render for bulls, the offering of our lips” (Hoshea, 14:3).

May we be *zoche* to honor our commitments and fulfill all that we pronounce, and to believe in the power of our words and prayers. And may Hashem fulfill His promise that the Beis haMikdash be rebuilt, speedily in our days.

.....  
*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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**Atara Starr**

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Yehoshua's Questionable Treaties

**R' Adv. Yardena (Cope) Bondenheimer**

When Jewish Law meets the Law of the State of Israel: The Right to Privacy & the Nachmani Case

## Monday July 13

**Rabbanit Miriam White**

Brit Bein Habitarim: A Map of Jewish History

**Dr. Tanya White**

The Wizard of Oz & the Biblical Revolution of Covenant

**Sepha Kirshblum**

Choosing Covenant Over Kingship: The Love of David & Yonatan I

## Wednesday July 15

**Rav Johnny Solomon**

Obligation & Agency in Halakhic Decision-Making

**Rabbanit Dr. Adina Sternberg**

King, God & People - A Threefold Covenant III - The King & the People - A Complex Relationship

**Sepha Kirshblum**

Choosing Covenant Over Kingship: The Love of David & Yonatan II

## Thursday July 16

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR  
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES,  
OU ISRAEL

This *Shabbat* we bless the new month of *Chodesh Av*, or as our tradition refers to this month, the month of *Menachem Av*.

**Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, zy'a**, wrote that in addition to the tragedies that have befallen *Am Yisrael* during these three weeks, that there are actually two great events which are said to occur during these days. Rav Wolfson suggests that it is on the 17th of *Tamuz*, when *Boaz* marries *Rut*, hence setting into motion the birth of *David Hamelech*, from whom *Mashiach* will be descended. So too, our tradition teaches us that *Mashiach* will be born on *Tisha B'Av*. Rav Wolfson, suggests therefore, that these three weeks are in their essence days of great joy and anticipation. However those great lights of hope, have been covered over and clouded by the darkness and tragedies which have subsequently come to be associated with these days. The work of these three weeks is to strive to uncover those great lights. In the words of the great **Reb Tzadok HaCohain M'Lublin zy'a**, "*Ein Lecha Shum Or Mitgaleh, eleh mitoch hachoshech hekdome lo- no light can be revealed, unless it emerges from the darkness which precedes it...*" (*Resisei Laila 24*).

Similarly, **HaRav Shlomo Aviner shlita**

**teaches** that if we look out at the world we live in and we see dark images and painful shadows, we must not forget that a shadow is merely a reflection of light, that is waiting to be fully revealed.

The second of our two *parshiyot* this week,

*Parshat Maasei* recalls for a second time the passing of *Aharon HaKohen*, and tells us that the date of his passing is *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*And Aharon died there, during the fortieth year after Bnai Yisrael went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fifth month on the first of the month.*



Rav Shlomo Aviner

So, we must ask, why does

the *Torah* specify the exact date of *Aharon's* passing, a detail that is not elaborated upon for any of the *Avot* or *Imahot*, or for *Moshe Rabbeinu*? Why is the date of *Aharon's* passing mentioned here in this second account, and not in the earlier account of his passing which we read of a few weeks ago in *Parshat Chukat*? Why is the date of his passing specified now, in the midst of describing the journeys of the Jewish people in the wilderness?

**Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Horowitz, the Patiker Rav zy'a**, suggests that there is an eternal message to be gleaned from the date of *Aharon's* passing being both revealed during the verses which describe the extended wanderings of the Jewish People in the wilderness, as well as the actual date of *Rosh Chodesh Av*.

*Aharon*, as we know, represents the ultimate *Ish Shalom*, the great peace-maker and

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unifier of the Jewish People. The Jewish People, as we know, will experience an extended reality of wandering that will occur following the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, which of course we commemorate, during the nine days, beginning with *Rosh Chodesh Av*. As we begin these days of reflection of the destruction and absence of the *Beit HaMikdash*, we also recall the life and legacy of *Aharon HaKohen*, whose legacy we must work to emulate, which will form the foundation to re-building the *Beit HaMikdash*.

The work of these three weeks is the work of repairing the world, one kind deed, one friendship, one *mitzva*, one *tefila* at a time.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may we be blessed to use these days wisely, to do much good, to reveal, uncover and bring forth those great lights of hope, consolation, and promise, and merit to transform our sorrow to celebration. *Chodesh Tov*. ■



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# GEULAS YISRAEL

RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN  
RAM YESHIVAT HAR ETZION  
MAGGID SHIUR ALL PARSHA AND ALL DAF, OU.ORG

## Emotional Solidarity, Even Without Ideological Agreement

After forty tumultuous years of leadership in the desert, Moshe finally enjoyed a measure of well-earned peace. The eastern campaign had concluded successfully, and Midian had been brought to justice. The people had been counted and organized into tribes and families, and the process for allocating the Land of Israel had been put in place. A potential crisis had been averted, as five women who feared they would be excluded from inheriting Israel were granted their rightful share. Most importantly, Moshe's successor had been appointed, assuring a smooth transition of leadership.

Out of nowhere, a potential crisis emerges. Two tribes, soon joined by half of a third, approach Moshe with a request to settle the recently conquered east bank of the Jordan. Its rich pastureland was ideally suited for their cattle and flocks.

At first, Moshe is seized by traumatic memories of thirty-eight years earlier. He fears this is a sequel to the sin of the meraglim. Once again, standing at the threshold of history, we are shrinking from our destiny. He fears that the retreat of these tribes will spread quickly through the nation, leading the people once again to reject the Promised Land and turn away from the covenant with Hashem. Reliving those dark days, he accuses them of following in the footsteps of the earlier rebels.

In response, the tribes assure Moshe that they have no intention of abandoning the Land of Israel. They pledge to fight alongside their fellow Jews until the Land is conquered and every tribe has received its inheritance. Moshe is reassured by their guarantees and formalizes their commitment in a binding agreement. The intricate laws of *tenai*, the ability to create halachic transactions contingent upon specified conditions, are derived from this agreement between Moshe and the tribes of Gad and Reuven. Any condition that is not formulated in the manner of the *tenai* of Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven is not legally valid.

### An Unexpected Request

However, there was an additional clause to this agreement. These tribes were expected to remain long after the fighting ended. They pledged:

לא נשוב אל בתינו עד התנחל בני ישראל איש נחלתו

They would not return home until every tribe had received its nachalah. That commitment kept them away for another seven years. It took seven years to conquer the Land and another seven to divide it among the tribes. Only after every tribe had received its inheritance did the two and a half tribes return to their wives and families on the east bank of the Jordan.

Their presence during the first seven years was militarily indispensable. We were fighting on thirty-one fronts and needed every available soldier. It would have been unthinkable for such a large segment of the population to remain safely at home while their fellow Jews fought for the future of the Land of Israel.

Their remaining in Israel for the next seven years, however, served no military purpose. It served a social one. The allocation of this Land, which had been promised four hundred years earlier, was a defining moment in Jewish history. Imagine being handed a portion of Eretz Yisrael and realizing that you were fulfilling an ancient promise. Those years shaped the identity of the other nine-and-a-half tribes. Had these tribes been absent, they would gradually have drifted away from the mainstream. They remained so that, from the very beginning, they would share not only our battles but our destiny.

Unfortunately, despite their best intentions, they gradually drifted apart. After returning to their homes on the east bank of the Jordan, they feared that they would eventually be forgotten by the rest of the nation. They worried that, over time, an emotional and cultural divide would emerge. Presumably with noble intentions, they erected an altar on the east bank. This monument would remind future

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generations on both sides of the river that, despite living apart, they remained an integral part of the Jewish people.

Unfortunately, physical distance and the misunderstandings that often grow from limited contact caused their actions to be misread.

Their altar aroused deep suspicion, and our nation prepared for war. Before taking up arms, however, a delegation led by Pinchas was sent to clarify the intentions of the tribes on the east bank. Once it became clear that the altar had been built for noble purposes, the crisis was averted and peace was restored. Yet, despite the reconciliation, the two communities had already begun to grow apart. They viewed events through different lenses, developed different narratives, and nearly allowed those differences to erupt into violence.

### ACROSS THE RIVER

It seems we are facing a similar challenge in modern Israel. We are deeply engaged in a religious debate over who is obligated to serve in the Israeli army. The positions are well established, and each side believes it is faithfully carrying out the will of Hashem. I have little to add to this machloket l'shem Shamayim that has not already been said. My own position is probably evident and can be inferred from the community to which I belong.

There is, however, a related issue that

receives far less attention. It deserves to be addressed even if the larger question of Charedi non-conscription remains unresolved.

We have lived through loss, pain, tears, disrupted family life, hardship, sleepless nights, and anxiety. Those carrying the burden of this war have become deeply invested in its outcome and in the fate of our people. That personal investment is itself part of our *avodat Hashem* and part of our *achrayut* to the Jewish people. When Am Yisrael suffers, we have a responsibility to stand alongside them.

I imagine that many Charedim who do not serve genuinely want to feel part of this struggle. I also imagine that many have made sincere efforts to share in what the rest of the country has been experiencing. Yet the emotional gap between those who are immersed in this war and those who are not seems wider than ever.

I believe the first step toward any solution is for all of us to find a shared emotional language. Many of those carrying the burden of this war feel that their sacrifice is neither fully seen nor fully appreciated by those who have chosen not to serve. Hurtful statements by extremists, who do not represent the mainstream Charedi community, only deepen that sense of alienation.

Much of this is unintentional. If you live on

the east bank of the Jordan, no matter how much you want to identify with those across the river, it is difficult to experience events in the same way. If you are not personally involved in the war effort, and neither are your family or friends, your emotional world will inevitably be different. It is this emotional divide that we must begin to bridge, even if the larger question of Charedi enlistment remains unresolved.

I don't have obvious solutions, but identifying the problem and separating it from the broader debate over conscription is an important first step. So too is fostering greater communication and making a genuine effort to understand the other side. The crisis between the two-and-a-half tribes and the rest of Israel was averted only because we chose to talk before we shot. They sought understanding before resorting to violence.

### THE FEAST OF SHUSHAN

The talmidim of Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai once asked him why the Jews of Persia faced the threat of Haman and his plan for Jewish genocide. Rather than answering, he turned the question back to them. They suggested that it was a punishment for participating in the feast of Achashverosh. Chazal state unequivocally that the food served at the banquet was strictly kosher. If so, what was so wrong with attending the feast?

The problem was not where they lived. It was the emotional disconnect. By then, Jews had already returned to Eretz Yisrael and laid the foundations of the second Beit Hamikdash. They were struggling to rebuild the Land while facing fierce opposition and violence. The Jews of Persia may have been justified in remaining where they were, at least for the time being. But there was no justification for celebrating one hundred and

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eighty days of lavish feasting while their fellow Jews struggled to rebuild Jewish history and restore a land that would one day belong to their shared descendants.

Not every Jew will make the same choice about where to live or how to express their avodat Hashem. Yet emotional disengagement, especially during a period of crisis that will shape Jewish history for generations, is a different matter.

Long before we resolve our disagreements, we must learn to share one another's burdens. Emotional solidarity cannot wait for ideological agreement. ■



Rabbi Moshe Taragin's latest sefer entitled: **Reclaiming Redemption, Vol. II: Faith, Identity, Peoplehood, and the Storms of War**, is available at: [mtaraginbooks.com](http://mtaraginbooks.com).

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## Forty Years Later: Hearing the Shofar HaGadol

*By Avraham & Ester Silvers in honor of their 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Aliyah*

This summer, Ester and I will celebrate forty years since making aliyah. Over the years, people have often asked us the same question:

“Why did you leave Phoenix?”

It was a fair question. We had family, friends, a comfortable life, and a promising future. Why leave it all behind? My answer was always simple. We did it for our children.

We wanted them to grow up in a stronger Jewish community, celebrate the chagim with the entire country, and feel connected to the land and the story of the Jewish people. Our yearning began during a family vacation in Israel. We spent a Shabbat with friends in Dolev, a struggling, young, pioneering community in the hills of Binyamin. The roads were rough, the infrastructure limited, and life was far from comfortable.

However, something happened to us that Shabbat. Ester and I looked at each other and we both felt it almost immediately. This could be our home. There was no dramatic moment and no heavenly voice, simply a feeling that we belonged here. The landscape, the people, and the sense of building something new in the Land of Israel touched something deep inside us. And we made a decision, that despite war and terror, we have never regretted it.

Forty years later, we know it was the right decision. Our children are grown, married,

and are raising families in the Land of Israel. Each has chosen a different path of service and contribution, but all are helping shape the society we dreamed of joining forty years ago.

Yet our family is only part of the story. When we arrived in Israel, we were looking for a home. What we found was a community, a family. Over the years, Shilo became the place we celebrate simchat, share losses, and participate in the rebuilding of Jewish life in the heartland of our ancestral homeland.

Aliyah was not only about where we would live. It was also about what we would build. While I developed a business that serves our community, Ester writes stories, articles, and books, inspired in part by the many classes she attended at the Israel Center. They reflect the Jewish values and love of this land that first drew us here.

I have often wondered why we came while so many of our friends remained behind. and asked Rav Shmuel Eliyahu that question. “Why me? What made me different?” His answer: “You heard the Shofar HaGadol.”

The prophet Yeshayahu speaks of a day when a great shofar will sound and the Jewish people will gather from the corners of the earth. Somehow, forty years ago, Ester and I heard that call, and we never looked back, only forward as Jewish history is something we live and help shape. ■

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# Rav Kook on Pirkei Avot (2:15): The Bite of the Fox and the Sting of the Scorpion

“Warm yourself opposite the fire of the Sages, and be cautious not to be burned by their coals. For their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion...”  
(Avot 2:15)

What is the symbolic meaning of the two metaphors of a fox’s bite and a scorpion’s sting?

Rav Kook suggested that the fox and the scorpion bite in two different manners:

A fox will choose whom and when to bite. For example, when the fox feels threatened or perhaps is hungry and attacks its prey, it will bite. A scorpion, on the other hand, stings indiscriminately. It simply bites as a natural instinct or in response to stimuli.

In a similar way, the stinging rebuke of a sage can come in two forms. A sage will

assess a situation and resolve to offer words of reproof. Alternatively, the sage may respond to a situation as a natural or visceral reaction. In the latter scenario, the sage is immediately aroused to admonish.

Rav Kook applied his unique interpretation of the Mishnah to a striking episode in which one of the great Talmudic sages rebuked two students. One received the “rebuke of the fox”; the other received the “rebuke of the scorpion.”

The following is what occurred. Two students were sitting at a meal together with their Rebbe, Bar Kappara. Two dishes were brought to the table: cooked cabbage, and cooked plums and pullets. One of the students quickly recited the blessing. He mistakenly made the blessing first on the item of food over which the blessing should have been recited later. The fellow student sitting next to him ridiculed him for making this mistake. Bar Kappara became angry with both of them. He told the first student that he should have paused to ask the rabbi which item to recite the blessing over first. The sage was also angry with the other student for berating his friend. This is why Bar Kappara offered both of his students words of *mussar*, rebuke, for their ill-advised actions. (Berachot 39a)

Rav Kook suggested that Bar Kappara’s expression of disapproval toward his students

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came in two forms. First, the sage's consternation toward the student who recited the blessing out of order stemmed from his determination that the student's lack of caution in carrying out the halacha required a forceful admonition. This was a teachable moment not to be overlooked. However, when the sage witnessed his student callously ridiculing his friend, this immediately elicited within him the need to respond with criticism. Seeing his student act uncaring toward his companion caused the sage instant pain, prompting an instinctive reaction of reproof. (Ain Aya, Berachot, vol. 2, chapter 5, #23, p. 179)

### THE BENEFITS OF REBUKE

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avot (6:6) enumerates forty-eight characteristics that are found among those who successfully attain wisdom and thus live noble Jewish lives. One of these characteristics is a person who *ohav et hatochachot*, a lover of rebuke. Rav Chaim of Volozhin takes note of the fact that the term employed in the Mishnah—*tochachot* (rebuke)—is in the plural: “Tochachot is the plural and means ‘rebukes.’” Rav Chaim Volozhin writes: “He should love to hear rebuke - and to rebuke others.” (Ruach Chaim 6:6).

Rav Chaim Volozhin is teaching that a person should have an open heart and mind toward receiving rebuke. One who sincerely desires to grow as a Jew will be inclined to hear from his colleagues and friends how to improve and what needs to be rectified. Conversely, a person who cares for others does not simply allow a friend or companion to pursue a path that is less than optimal or

perhaps even hazardous. Offering constructive criticism and helping to guide a friend should be pursued lovingly. Thus, “loving rebuke” is true both for the one who receives reproof as well as for the one who offers sound spiritual advice in order to help others.

### A REBUKE, ONLY AFTER THE SHABBAT DINNER

The following incident highlights the beautiful way Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook chose



Rav Abraham Isaac Kook zt"l

to give *tochacha*. Once, on a Shabbat night, a group of young men from a prominent Jerusalem yeshiva congregated in front of Rav Kook's home in the center of the city. When the Rav concluded the Shabbat evening prayers, he sent his attendant to find out what the young men wanted. The young men began to explain that Shabbat desecration was taking place at that very moment,

as a Jew had opened his café and begun serving customers on King George Street.

They therefore requested that the Chief Rabbi accompany them to the café in order to protest the Shabbat desecration. The attendant then relayed the message to the Rav. The Rav heard this and remained silent; he then insisted that his family gather around

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the table and begin the Shabbat meal. The eager group of about ten to fifteen young men outside began yelling that they now understood that Rav Kook did not really care about the spiritual situation in the holy city of Jerusalem.

Once the young men had dispersed, the Rav told his attendant to come with him to the café. The attendant then inquired, “Why does the Rav wish to go there?” The Rav replied, “What does that mean? A Jew is desecrating the Shabbat in the heart of the holy city of Jerusalem, the King’s palace, and I should not go and rebuke him and try to convince him to stop?!”

The bewildered attendant then asked the Rav, “If the Rav felt that it was necessary to rebuke this individual, why did the Rav not accompany the group of yeshiva boys that were here earlier? Why did the Rav give them an opportunity to tell everyone that Rav Kook does not care about religious life in Jerusalem?” The wise Rav answered, “Indeed, I did wish to go along with them. However, I then thought that if we all go together, this would transform the cafe owner from being merely a ‘Shabbat desecrator’ to a ‘public Shabbat desecrator’ since we would have been more than ten Jews together, which is a much more severe transgression of the laws of Shabbat.

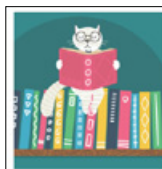
It is for this reason that I did not wish to go until now!”

The Rav then went and rebuked the café owner pleasantly, in the true manner of the Torah. (Halacha Yomit, *The Mitzvah Of Rebuking One’s Fellow Nowadays*, Rav Ovadia Yosef, website).

In his fierce love for his fellow Jew and Am Yisrael, Rav Kook was determined to find a way to bring his brothers and sisters closer to Torah observance. The way of a *talmid chacham*, and of every Jew for that matter, also requires that one not shirk the responsibility of offering helpful criticism and sincerely engaging in the Torah command of *tochacha*. Encouraging our brethren to do what is right and showing them a path that is beneficial for them is an expression of the utmost concern and love for our fellow Jew. ■



Rabbi Goldscheider’s most recent OU Press Publication, “Torah United” on the weekly Parsha, can be ordered directly from Rabbi Goldscheider at [aarong@ouisrael.org](mailto:aarong@ouisrael.org) at a special price for Torah Tidbits readers.



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# Huldah: Prophecy of Consequence and Continuity

For a couple of weeks following the Nach Yomi cycle having reached the division of the kingdom of Israel, almost everyone I encountered greeted me with a variation of the same theme: "I guess it's all downhill from here..." In the perakim we are currently studying, we find that there are two exceptions to the otherwise uninterrupted deterioration of the spiritual state of Israel - the reigns of Hizkiyahu and Yoshiyahu. Yoshiyahu initiated a cleansing and purification of the Beit Hamikdash from the defilement perpetrated by his father and grandfather, Menashe and Ammon. During the process, a Sefer Torah was found, prompting the king to consult with Huldah, one of the seven Neviot whose words were included in Tanach.

Hazal explain that this Sefer Torah was the very one written by Moshe Rabbeinu before his death, and that upon its discovery in the Beit HaMikdash no matter to what section it was unrolled, the verse from the rebuke in Sefer Devarim appeared: "I will exile you and your king to a foreign nation..." (Devarim 28:36). The gemara questions why, if Yirmiyahu was alive at that time, Yoshiyahu sent a delegation to Huldah for advice rather than to Yirmiyahu. Two answers are offered: First, "נשים רחמניות הן" - women are more merciful than men, and second, Yirmiyahu was

not available at the time, for he had gone in search of the ten tribes exiled by Assyria.

The Maharsha questions the assertion that Yoshiyahu sent to Huldah because women are merciful. Is it possible to suggest that Huldah would alter the essence of a prophecy dictated to her by Hashem in order to make it more merciful? Certainly the prophecy would be the same regardless of whether the Navi was male or female! The consequences of sin are not dependent upon the messenger who delivers news of the punishment! Rather, suggests Maharsha, Yoshiyahu understood from the outset that the prophet would relay bad news. The delegation to Huldah reflected the hope that as a woman, she would be moved to tears and prayer by the message she would be compelled to deliver, and that her prayers would be answered.

Mishbetzot Zahav cites a teaching of the Maggid of Mezeritch that while it would indeed be unthinkable for Huldah to change the message she was given, what would differ between her and Yirmiyahu would be the tone in which it would be relayed. We know that sometimes the difference in the "tune" (trop) to which a word is read can alter its meaning. Yoshiyahu hoped that the "niggun" with which Huldah would relay the prophecy would somehow mitigate its catastrophic implications.





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## When Someone Pushes Your Buttons

There is a beautiful idea that has accompanied me for years: the people around us are often mirrors. Not because they are exactly like us, and not because everything they do reflects something we do ourselves, but because the places where we react most intensely usually reveal something that already exists within us.

Think about how often we explain our reactions this way: "I can't stand stingy people because I'm such a generous person." "Rudeness drives me crazy because I always try to be polite." On the surface it sounds logical. But if that were really true, then the kinder, more generous, and more considerate a person became, the more irritated they would spend their life. Every flaw they encountered would infuriate them. Yet we all know people whose goodness seems to make them calmer, not angrier.

Very often, what hurts us is not the behavior itself, but the wound it touches.

Take someone who grew up in a home filled with criticism. One child may become highly critical of everyone around them,

while another may become the ultimate people-pleaser, constantly trying to avoid disapproval. Outwardly they look like complete opposites. Inwardly, however, they may share the very same wound: the fear that they are not worthy simply as they are.

That is why two people can witness the exact same behavior and respond so differently. One barely notices it, while the other feels deeply hurt. The difference is not necessarily in the behavior. It is in the place inside that was awakened.

This is especially relevant in dating, where it is so easy to dismiss someone with the words, "They're just not for me." Sometimes that is absolutely true. Not every uncomfortable feeling is a sign to continue a relationship. But sometimes, before we walk away, it is worth asking a different question. Instead of only asking, "What's wrong with them?" perhaps we can also ask, "Why did this affect me so deeply? What is it touching inside me?"

The same is true for those of us privileged to help others find their match. If we want to guide people with wisdom and compassion, we first have to know ourselves. It can also give us a completely different perspective when a suggestion we are convinced is "perfect" is turned down over something that seems so minor to us. We naturally think, "Why are they making such a big deal out of this?" But what if the issue isn't the trait itself? What if it is pressing against one of the deepest wounds they carry? We don't always know another person's inner world, and what looks insignificant from the outside can feel

enormous to someone whose heart has been shaped by different experiences. The more aware we are of our own wounds, the less likely we are to project them onto others or mistake them for objective truth.

Shlomo HaMelech teaches us, כמים הפנים כמים - "As water reflects a face back to a face, so one heart reflects another." Sometimes Hashem sends another person into our lives not only to challenge us, but to hand us a mirror.

During these Three Weeks, when we are called to repair the fractures that led to destruction and to increase Ahavat Chinam, perhaps one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves and those around us is the courage to look into that mirror. Not to blame ourselves, but to heal. Because the more we heal the places that ache within us, the more room we create for understanding, compassion, and ultimately, for deeper and healthier relationships. ■

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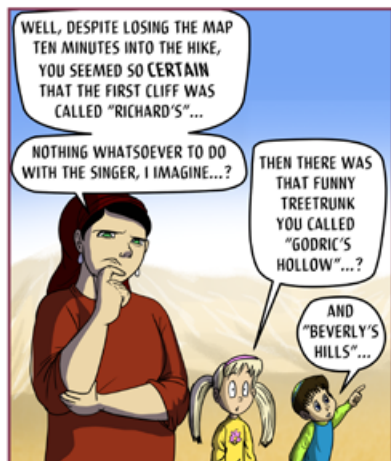
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13:40-14:40   מנחה וארוחת צהריים					
<b>R David Fohrman, Dr. Tanya White and Gil Slovik</b> From Torah u'Madda to Torah & Media: Learning in the Age of Reels. Moderator: R Scott Kahn	<b>הרב אהרן כהן ועדי ואיתן מלט</b> אל הארץ הטובה - החוות החדשות	<b>ציפי חוטובלי</b> חזית נוספת: המלחמה על ההסברה	<b>אסי צובל מארח את הרב דב זינגר</b> 'תפילה לעני כי יעטוף' - על תפילה בימי מיצר	<b>הרב תמיר גרנות</b> על שפת הברית	<b>הרב חיים סבתו והרב חיים וולפסון</b> שבילים חדשים בין בית המדרש לשדה הקרב. שיחה בין שני ראשי ישיבה
<b>Eric Goldstein and Shomit Mali</b> Israel & American Jewry: Partnership, Responsibility, and the Road Ahead. Moderator: Shlomo Ben Zvi	<b>רחל אטון ועפרה לקט</b> 'קומי רני בליה' - עולמות של רוח ותקווה	<b>עמית סגל</b> המצביעים הסרוגים יכריעו את הבחירות? על (חלק מ)הרעיונות שמניעים את הפוליטיקה	<b>אורית מרק אטינגר ואילית נחמיאס ורבין</b> זהויות במחלוקת: שיח אחריות	<b>הרב יצחק שוראקי</b> מי אחראי לרווחה? מצדקה לקופת המדינה	<b>הרב יעקב מרן</b> 'ביום שניתנו הרוגי ביתר לקבורה'
<b>Sophie Lerer, Elitzur Gitler and Reuven Taub</b> The Future They're Building: Young Leaders Shaping Israel. Moderator: Shira Kahn	<b>אל"מ אבנר כהן והרב צחי להמן</b> משורה לתקומה - משימת חיים, אישית ולאומית	<b>אסף ליברמן והרב חיים נבון</b> מאמינים בישראל: החברה הישראלית והאמונה הדתית	<b>עמרי פלד מארח את יעקב אסף</b> זהות יהודית מתחדשת ומחפשת מקום	<b>רות יאיר נוסבאום</b> חיים לצד חורבן- שבר ואופטימיות בחסידות	<b>הרב יגאל שרלו</b> 'אלו ואלו' בימים של הכרעה

תקווה ונאמץ

18:40-20:15

מושב סיכום הכנס: לכבוד גילוי הרוח והתקווה במדינת ישראל.

התועדות עם הרב יאיר רוד ואורחים מיוחדים ומעוררי השראה מתחומי הנתחון, הלכלכה, העלייה וההברה.

הובלה וקואליציה היוצרי יאיר כהן



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4

Bedrooms



3.5

Bathrooms



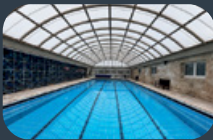
2

Garage Space

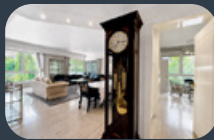


1

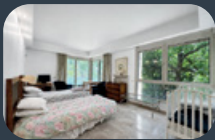
Swimming Pool



SWIMMINGPOOL



SWIMMINGPOOL



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33,729	3,997,000	11.5	118.5	4.5
36,845	4,882,000	13.5	132.5	5
33,017	5,745,000	19.5	174	6



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