

# ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1560



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כ"ז אדר ב' תשפ"ד • APR. 6 2024

פרשת שמני - PARSHAT SHMINI

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM  
PARASHAT HACHODESH

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החדש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון  
הוא לכם לחדשי השנה שמות י"ב ב'

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT PARSHAT SHMINI

CANDLES 6:25 PM • EARLY 5:43 PM • HAVDALA 7:40 PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:19 PM



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## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

🌙  
The Shabbat before the month of Nisan, Parashat Hachodesh is read which is an account of the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish people as a nation.

🗓️  
מולד חודש ניסן יהיה בליל שלישי חמישים ושבע דקות ושבעה חלקים אחרי עשר בלילה ראש חודש ניסן יהיה ביום שלישי הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה  
Rosh Chodesh Nisan is on Tuesday April 9

🌳  
See page 47 for the special bracha of Birkat Ha-Ilanot recited in Nisan

## THIS WEEK'S COVER PHOTO

The cover photo appears on a new book entitled, The Wind's Promise by Batsheva Sadan. The author was kind enough to share the photo with Torah Tidbits which symbolizes the spring time of Pesach which is highlighted in this Shabbat's special Torah reading. Rabbi Aharon Rakeffet of the Gruss Kollel will be discussing this book's significance on April 8th at Y.U.'s campus in Jerusalem and the story of one of the first American gap year programs which opened the door to the flourishing anglo Torah study programs in Israel today.



# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



# OTHER Z'MANIM



	SHMINI			TAZRIA		
	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA	CANDLES	EARLY	HAVDALA
Yerushalayim/Maale Adumim	6:25	5:43	7:40	6:30	5:46	7:45
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	6:43	5:45	7:42	6:48	5:48	7:47
Beit Shemesh/RBS	6:44	5:43	7:40	6:49	5:46	7:46
Alon Shvut	6:41	5:43	7:40	6:46	5:46	7:45
Raanana/Tel Mond/Herzliya/K.Saba	6:43	5:44	7:41	6:48	5:48	7:47
Modiin/Chashmonaim	6:42	5:43	7:41	6:47	5:47	7:46
Netanya	6:43	5:44	7:42	6:48	5:48	7:47
Be'er Sheva	6:42	5:44	7:41	6:47	5:47	7:46
Rehovot	6:43	5:44	7:41	6:48	5:48	7:47
Petach Tikva	6:25	5:44	7:41	6:30	5:47	7:47
Ginot Shomron	6:42	5:43	7:41	6:47	5:47	7:46
Haifa / Zichron	6:33	5:44	7:42	6:38	5:48	7:47
Gush Shiloh	6:41	5:42	7:40	6:46	5:46	7:45
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	6:43	5:44	7:42	6:48	5:48	7:47
Givat Zeev	6:45	5:42	7:40	6:50	5:46	7:45
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	6:41	5:43	7:40	6:46	5:46	7:45
Ashkelon	6:44	5:45	7:42	6:48	5:48	7:47
Yad Binyamin	6:43	5:44	7:41	6:47	5:47	7:46
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	6:35	5:42	7:40	6:40	5:45	7:45
Golan	6:40	5:41	7:39	6:45	5:45	7:44
Nahariya/Maalot	6:42	5:44	7:41	6:47	5:47	7:47
Afula	6:41	5:43	7:40	6:46	5:46	7:46

**Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 8:19 PM • Next Week - 8:24 PM**

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

**Daf Yomi: Bava Metzia 38**

## JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wednesday - Shabbat  
April 3 - 13 / 24 Adar Bet - 5 Nisan**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	<b>5:33 - 5:20</b>
Sunrise	<b>6:25 - 6:12</b>
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	<b>9:33 - 9:26</b>
Magen Avraham	<b>8:57 - 8:48</b>
Sof Zman Tefila	<b>10:36 - 10:30</b>
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	<b>12:42 - 12:39</b>
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	<b>1:14 - 1:12</b>
Plag Mincha	<b>5:41 - 5:46</b>
Sunset (Including Elevation)	<b>7:04 - 7:11</b>



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Editor Emeritus: Phil Chernofsky  
Editor: Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider | aarong@ouisrael.org  
Advertising: Ita Rochel | 02-5609125 or ttads@ouisrael.org  
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## DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
aberman@ouisrael.org

This Purim was one of the most incredible Purims I've ever had. It began early in the day with my family and I davening and listening to *Megillah* so that we could jump on a chartered bus to head up to Teveriya. With us were thirty yeshiva guys from Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav, who gave up their own Purim celebrations to come with us up north at 8:30 am. My brother and his family joined as did my mother-in-law and Nina Broder, our dedicated OU Israel social media director. Driving alongside us was the OU Israel Teen Center's northern regional director, Refael Salab, his wife Avital, and their kids. Several other OU staff members would be meeting us when we'd arrive in Teveriya. We all had one goal in mind: to make sure that Purim would be meaningful and impactful for those we would meet there.

Our first stop was at the Leonardo Plaza in Teveriya. This hotel is full of evacuees from across northern Israel. We ran an amazing Purim carnival for the children from this hotel and the other hotels in the area. While the children jumped on bouncy houses, ate cotton candy and popcorn, got their faces painted,

and played games, I was able to observe how these Merkaz HaRav boys, the OU Israel staff members, and my own family, were all dancing together. They brought *simcha* to every single one of the people here, some of whom have had a hard time smiling lately.

As the carnival wound down, we went inside to hand out Purim costumes, many of which were donated by our generous brothers and sisters overseas. The families couldn't simply go to their costume bins at home and pull out their costumes. Parents were moved and excited to put on costumes with their children. We then put on a Purim *seudah* for all of the hotel. The wonderful Merkaz HaRav boys brought musical instruments and got everyone up and dancing and super excited.

What really impacted me was when I walked into the lunchroom at the hotel before the festivities began, and I sat down with a middle-aged man named Dima who was sitting there with his mother, who must have been over 80, and his wife. Dima told me how he felt that no one cared about him. This was truly painful to hear. I felt the tears in his heart and gave him a hug. I told him that everything that we were doing today was to show that we do care and many Jews from around the world who donated money for this event care. Before leaving, Dima gave me a hug. He said, "Avi, I can no longer say nobody cares about us."

Dima has been on my mind ever since that day. I encourage you all, when you're making your Pesach plans, to think about Dima with

In loving memory of

**Clarence Horwitz z"l**

**כתריאל בן יוסף ז"ל**

**כ"ט אדר**

*Henry z"l & Frieda Horwitz*

*His grandchildren*

*and great-grandchildren*

me. Try to create ways to show Dima and all those displaced from their homes that they matter, are in our thoughts, and are loved.

Soon after Purim, we received the news that Senator Joseph Lieberman ז"ל passed away. When I was working in NCSY in North America, people would always talk about how if we need an amazing positive role model for our youth, someone to come and speak and inspire to leadership, the person at the top of that list would be Joe Lieberman. It was always impactful when he came to OU events, in particular NCSY *onegs* where the inspiration he would give the teenagers was priceless.

I have lost count of the amount of times I've given out Joe Lieberman's book on Shabbat, published by OU Press. The book is incredible, talking about how he would keep Shabbat as an Orthodox Jew, even when being the only one ever to run for vice president of the United States and being a high-ranked senator in the Senate. It's a book that has inspired so many to not only keep Shabbat, but to make it meaningful.

There's one story I want to make sure to tell over. Several years ago, my son came home from school and asked me, "Abba, have you ever heard of someone in America called Lieberman?" I told him I've met a few Liebermans. Who was he talking about? He said, "I don't know, but he's famous." It hit me that he was talking about Joe Lieberman. When he confirmed, I told him that I actually did know him, why do you ask? He responded, "He's my friend's grandfather!" He told me that his friend's family made *aliyah* and now he went to school with him. It happens to be that the mother, Joe Lieberman's daughter, now



works for OU Israel, doing very important work. It's a small world.

About a year ago, I walked into father-son learning at the school. I walked into the packed *Beit Midrash*, and my son turns to me and says, "Abba, do you see him?" There I see Senator Joe Lieberman sitting with two of his grandsons learning Torah. He could be anywhere, but he was just sitting unassumingly in the back of a *Beit Midrash* with his grandchildren and a *sefer* open at his table. This, to me, symbolizes what a real role model is. It's a person who understands that family is more important than any Senate meeting or job requirement.

It had a huge impact on me. Earlier that day, I had to cancel an important meeting because I realized that if I attended it, I would not make



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to OU Israel board member  
Yonatan & Michal Frankel  
on the birth of their son  
Mazal Tov to  
the proud grandparents  
Mark & Judy Frankel  
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it for my son's *Avot uBanim*. Even then, I was late, but I remember asking myself whether it was worth canceling the meeting or not. Maybe, I thought, I should just tell my son I can't come learn with him because I'm caught up at work, but he is more important than the meeting. The doubts immediately dissipated when I saw Joe Lieberman sitting and learning there, someone who was clearly much busier than I was. Seeing him, I knew that I had made the right decision, just like he did.

I'm sure we will hear many people talk about the impact Joe Lieberman had on the world and the Jewish People. But the greatest thing he did was simply be true to himself, his religious beliefs, and he brought up a family, passing the *mesorah* to his Jewish grandchildren.

May he in *shamayim*, and his wife, may she live and be well, continue to *shep nachat* from their children and grandchildren. Thank you, Joe, for being a leader for the Jewish People. We hope to be able to continue to walk in your footsteps.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,

  
Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel  
aberman@ouisrael.org

May the Torah learned in this issue of Torah Tidbits be לעיני our beloved husband/father/grandfather/great grandfather

**Rabbi Yitzchak Pechman z"l**

**הרב יצחק בן דוב ז"ל**  
on his eighth Yahrzeit - ב' ניסן

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## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER

OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



# A Return to Innocence

Sefer Vayikra is when we tend to find creative ways to discuss anything but the parsha. During this period between Purim and Pesach, when the Torah readings address the obscure details of the animal sacrifices and other ritual issues, we may choose to avoid the arcane and place the focus of our Torah study and insights on the rich and attractive festivals at hand. But perhaps we should take a moment to consider why the traditional Torah reading calendar guides *Klal Yisrael* to study these matters at this important time.

Traditionally, there is a specific population that is directed to study the book of *Vayikra*, little children who are beginning to study Torah. As the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7:3) explains: “Children are pure and offerings are pure. Let the pure engage with the pure.” The *korbanot* (offerings) are reserved for the Temple, an environment defined by its rigorous maintenance of purity and therefore

most suited – in theory if not in practice – to be dominated and occupied by the purity and innocence of children. This is reflected in the cherubic images of children that were ubiquitous in the Temple, woven into the curtain walls and roofs and sculpted atop and around the holy ark (*Shemos* 25:18, 26:1, 26:31, *Melachim I* 6:23-32). Those cherubs – *kruvim* – were similarly positioned as guardians of the pathway into the original sanctuary of the Garden of Eden (*Bereishis* 3:24), a place of perfect innocence and purity from which we were banished when we lost our innocence. Just as *Gan Eden* was a place where Adam and Eve could walk unclothed innocently and unself-consciously, the Holy of Holies contained the image of the male and female *kruvim* locked in an innocent and unself-conscious embrace (*Yoma* 54a-b). All of this indicates that we are to relate the minutiae of ritual purity characteristic of *Vayikra* to a broad and rich context of moral purity.

Which brings us to Pesach. This festival’s focus on the minutiae of *chametz* removal and the personal purity required in days of old reflects the broad and rich context of the moral freedom that Pesach celebrates. The pre-Pesach season is launched by the reading of *Parshat Parah*, instructing us regarding the attainment of perfect ritual purity, while the festival itself is a celebration of freedom from the lustful Egyptian environment to a position of moral purity. Egyptian immorality had been front and center to our challenging

Dedicated L'iluy Nishmat

הרב יצחק זלמן בורוויק ז"ל

**Rabbi Irwin Borvick z"l**

Whose second *yahrzeit* is on  
26 Adar Bet

*Judy Borvick and family*

experience there, beginning with Sarah's salvation from Pharaoh's clutches by a show of divine strength, to Yosef saving himself from Potiphar's wife's clutches by a demonstration of superhuman self-control. Ramban (Bereishis 12:10) went so far as to see Pharaoh's original scheme of throwing the males into the river while preserving the females as a national scheme of the Egyptians to claim the Jewish women as their own. It is for this reason that the *brit milah*, the symbol of Jewish morality, is a foundational component of both the law and the narrative of the Pesach redemption. And it is in this context that Pesach is the time we publicly and unself-consciously read *Shir HaShirim*, the Song of Songs that the Egyptians would read in a very different way than we do, as we see it as our Sages did, as our biblical and literary Holy of Holies (Yadayim 3:5).

When all of us open the book of Vayikra during these days leading to Pesach it is because this is the season when all of us strive to return to the childish innocence that is essential to our leaving Egypt behind. This is the season when all of us must play the role of *tinokot shel beit*

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*rabban*, pure and virtuous school children.

Our current need for a return to moral purity is very clear. We are living in a time and place where our innocence is under constant assault, where news and entertainment blend to attempt to force upon us a constant stream of the antithesis of virtue. We need to escape from those messages. We need to open *Sefer Vayikra*. "Let the pure engage with the pure." ■

May the Torah learned from this Torah Tidbits be לעילוי נשמת

הענדלא בת מאיר ומערלה ז"ל

**HENNY HIRSCH Z'L**

on her 10th yartzeit

Rosh Chodesh Nissan - April 9th

אשת חייל מי ימצא... ויהללוה בשערים מעשיה

You are missed by us all,  
Your daughter, grandchildren  
great-grandchildren, and friends



# OU... BEYOND KASHRUT

## Yachad Gives Back



Yachad Israel, launched in 2012 after decades of success in North America, is dedicated to enriching the lives of Olim with disabilities and their families. One of the many ways Yachad staff empower their Yachad participants is by providing opportunities for them to do Chesed. In addition to giving back to the community, Yachad's Chesed programming is designed to enhance self-esteem and teach life skills.

Since October 7th, the Chesed is focused on helping those directly impacted by the war. Recent activities include Tzitzit tying, packages for displaced children in evacuee hotels, letters to parents of Chayalim who were killed in battle, making Tzedaka boxes with the Mishaberach for soldiers to raise money for Tzahal, candy platters for Milluim families, and much more. Before each activity, the Yachad participants discuss why they are doing it and learn relevant information and skills, and they have a follow-up discussion afterwards in order to maximize the experience.

Each week we share one of OU Israel's impactful programs helping English-speaking Olim with their Klita and impacting Israeli society.



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# ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

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## PARSHAT SHMINI



### 1ST ALIYA (VAYIKRA 9:1-16)

On the eighth day of the inauguration of Aharon and the Kohanim, Moshe gathers the people. He instructs Aharon to offer a chatat and an olah. The people are also to bring a chatat, olah, shlamim and mincha. For today, G-d will appear. Aharon offers his offerings. He offers the people's offerings. The offerings are brought exactly as instructed.

This eighth day is the long-anticipated moment. G-d's presence is to appear in the Mishkan. The path to this moment has taken 7 parshiot. The instructions were given to build the Mishkan. Then it was built. The instructions were given for the Kohanim's garments. And they were made. Instructions were given to inaugurate the Kohanim. And in last week's parsha the 7-day inauguration was completed. The preparations are all completed.

On this, the 8th day, Moshe passes the baton to Aharon. During the 7-day inauguration, Moshe acted as the Kohen Gadol. Not today. Today, the day after the 7-day inauguration, Aharon is now the Kohen Gadol. And the Kohanim step into their role.

Moshe tells them that the offerings they are to bring today will invite G-d's presence. In fact, he tells them this 2 times.

At the end of Sefer Shemot, when the building of the Mishkan was completed, G-d's

presence filled the building. But His Presence then was on His initiative. He instructed us in the Mishkan as a place for Him to dwell. Now, this is our initiative. It is our service of Him. We are trying to invite His Presence.



### 2ND ALIYA (9:17-23)

Aharon offers the mincha and the shlamim. All the details are performed as commanded. The portion Aharon is to receive is waved as commanded. Upon conclusion of all the offerings, Aharon blesses the people and descends from the offerings. Moshe and Aharon enter the Tent of Meeting, blessing the people upon exiting. The Glory of G-d appears to the people.

All the types of offerings have been brought by Aharon: chatat, olah, mincha, shlamim. The moment of rendezvous of the Divine, of responding to the approach of man is about to occur. Aharon blesses the people with Birkat Kohanim. Well, we call Birkat Kohanim a blessing, but it is really a prayer, a hope: *May G-d bless you and keep you. May He shine his face upon you ....*

Aharon blesses the people with the hope that their aspiration for G-d's rendezvous will be realized. Man can approach G-d, do all that is required; but His response is never dictated by us. All we can do is our part. And then wait for His response.

Moshe and Aharon bless the people: *May the pleasure of G-d be upon you. May the Shechina dwell on your efforts.*

The Kavod Hashem, the Glory of G-d appeared to the people. Their approach and

their prayers were granted with a rendezvous with the Divine. Truly a peak, sublime moment of the entire Torah. Man's approach to G-d is answered with His Presence.



### 3RD ALIYA (9:24-10:11)

A fire descended from G-d and consumed the offerings on the altar. The people saw, sang out and fell on their faces. Nadav and Avihu, sons of Aharon, took incense, though not commanded, and burnt it before G-d. A fire consumed them and they died. Moshe told Aharon that this is what G-d said: With those close to Me I am sanctified. Aharon was silent. After removing the bodies, Moshe told the other sons of Aharon to not mourn or leave the Mikdash; the Jewish people will mourn. Moshe commanded the Kohanim to not consume wine when serving in the Mikdash, so that they can distinguish holy and profane and to teach the people.

The people are ecstatic with the Presence of G-d. But the ecstasy is shattered by the death of Nadav and Avihu in bringing incense not commanded.

There is much rich commentary on the terrible drama of this story. Ecstasy and death. The simple flow of the narrative seems to rest on how man is to approach G-d. The Mishkan is the place of intimate approach to G-d, the meeting of man and G-d in His home. But the approach of finite man to infinite G-d is fraught with mystery. And hubris. How can a finite man dare to think he can approach the Infinite? It is absurd to even imagine that we could possibly know what would bring Divine favor. We can do so only because – well, because He told us how. G-d invited us, instructed us how to approach Him. And we do so only with great humility,

acknowledging that we are approaching Him only by His invitation.

We have had 7 parshiot of detailed instructions and detailed compliance with those instructions culminating in this moment of the successful rendezvous of man and G-d. The intent of these details – is clearly to impress upon us our inadequacy. We are incapable of fathoming how to approach G-d. He, though, reaches for us, with detailed instructions as to how to approach Him.

It is in this context, after a long, extended narrative of detailed instructions and detailed compliance that the spontaneous desire of Nadav and Avihu to approach G-d with their unauthorized incense must be seen. After all that? You just decide to jump, in a spirit of ecstasy, to approach G-d? Incredible. Shocking.



### 4TH ALIYA (10:12-15)

Moshe instructs Aharon and his remaining sons, Elazar and Itamar, to consume the parts of the offerings that were brought today that they were entitled to. They need to consume the mincha matza and the meat of the breast in the holy grounds.

Moshe proceeds with the momentous day of the appearance of G-d's glory, proceeding with the details of the offerings. As if to say, service of G-d need continue regardless of your personal tragedy.



### 5TH ALIYA (10:16-20)

Moshe inquired about the meat of the chatat but it had been burned, not consumed. He was upset: why did you not consume these in the holy place as commanded? Aharon responded: On a day that this occurred, should we offer the offerings and eat them? Is that proper in G-d's eyes? Moshe heard and agreed.

Moshe is upset that the offerings had not been consumed by Aharon and his other sons. Aharon, struck speechless by the death of his 2 sons, now challenges Moshe. Does our role as Divine servants eliminate our human feelings of tragedy? Is a holy person untethered to normal human emotion? Am I angelic or a holy man with normal feelings, shattered by the death of 2 sons? Am I not entitled to mourn at least today?

This brief, very brief, confrontation expresses a universal theme of the holy man. Does holiness untether our humanity, our emotions, our desires, our hold on this world? Does the religious leader, the holy man, float above normal human feelings of grief? Does he continue serving G-d sublimating the pain he is suffering?

Religions of the world come down differently on this question. Moshe thought Aharon should rise above his despair. But Aharon objects. And Moshe agrees with him. The holiest person we have, the Kohen Gadol, cries like anyone else on the death of his children. Normal service does not continue as if nothing happened. However holy the holy man is, he is also a person with legitimate feelings. Holy men are holy, but men they remain.



#### 6TH ALIYA (11:1-32)

Of **land animals**, you may eat those with split hooves and those that chew their cud. Those with only one such sign shall not be eaten: camel, hyrax, hare and pig. **Aquatic beings** that have fins and scales may be eaten. Predator **birds** may not be eaten. **Insects** may not be eaten with the exception of certain grasshoppers. Touching the carcass of certain dead animals renders a person Tameh, impure.

The laws of kashrut begin a series of laws

related to man's uniqueness: animal-like but with a soul. The Torah specifically legislates those activities that we share with animals: food, procreation, illness, death. In instructing us what we may eat and what we may not, we are taking the activity that we share with animals, eating, and expressing: We are not animals, driven without limit by the need for food. We control what we eat, how we prepare it. Man may be animal-like, but an animal he is not.



#### 7TH ALIYA (11:33-47)

The contraction of Tumah from contact with animals requires immersion in a mikveh. You shall be holy because I, G-d, am holy. I brought you out of Egypt to be My people and to be holy, as I am. You are to distinguish between pure and impure and between living things that may be eaten and those that may not.

We are instructed to imitate G-d's holiness. In what way are we to imitate Him? In Creation he separated, *mavdil*; so too we exercise discernment. We distinguish between that which we consume; and that which we don't. Discernment, self control, structure, in particular in those activities we share with animals are what make us holy, imitating His holiness.

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## PARSHAT HACHODESH EXODUS 12:1-20

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This is the 4th of the special maftir and haftorahs leading to Pesach. In it the mitzvot of Pesach are outlined, including chametz and matza and the laws of the Pesach offering. The Pesach offering is unique in a number of ways. It is brought late in the day, after the afternoon daily offering. It is obligatory but not as a consequence of something like sin or leprosy. Everyone must bring it. And it is not

brought on the holiday of Pesach but before it begins. It could be seen as a type of catechism – a reaffirmation by each person, every year, of our individual part in the national mission. It is an affirmation offering, like the Shema is an affirmation prayer. In the Shema we affirm our belief in G-d. The Pesach offering is our affirmation of our place in the wonderful history of the Jewish people. Renewed every year by every person.

## HAFTORAH SHABBAT HACHODESH YEchezkel 45:16-46:18

This Shabbat the reading of the *haftorah* relates to the Pesach offering that will be brought during the time of Mashiaich. This theme is an extension of the *HaChodesh* Torah reading in which Moshe commands the children of Israel to make arrangements to bring the Paschal lamb.

The haftorah describes the remarkable vision of Yechezkel in which he sees the third Holy Temple. The passage opens with a description of the various *karbanot* that will be offered in the inauguration and then it mentions the special Pesach offering.

This haftorah is meant to help prepare and inspire us as we move closer to the holiday of Pesach. But even more so, the haftorah reminds us to set our vision on a celebration of Pesach that will include the Pesach offering and in a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

May that day come soon! ■



### STATS

26th of 54 sedras; 3rd of 10 in Vayikra.  
157.2 lines in a Sefer Torah, rank: 42nd.  
6 Parshiyot, 3 open, 3 closed.  
91 pesukim - ranks 41st (4th in Vayikra).  
1238 words - 41st (5th in Vayikra).  
4670 letters - 41st (5th in Vayikra).



### MITZVOT

17 mitzvot; 6 positive; 11 prohibitions.

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## A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES  
Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

ואת החזיר כי מפריס פרסה הוא ושסע שסע פרסה והוא גרה לא יגר טמא הוא לכם (יא:ז)

"And the swine, because he has a parted hoof and is cloven-footed, but does not chew its cud, he is unclean to you." (11:7)  
There is a Midrash quoted by the Or Hachaim (Rabbi Chaim ben Atar 1696-1743, Morocco- Jerusalem) that in the Days of the Mashiaich it will be permitted to eat from the meat of the swine. It is learned from the very name "chazir" - pig which should be read "yachzor" - it will return to be eaten by us.

Does the Or Hachaim deduce from here that the law of the Torah will one day be changed?

The Or Hachaim rather feels that the character of the swine will change and begin to chew its cud with a four-chambered stomach, thereby allowing it to be eaten and categorized as Kosher.

This is the meaning of the pasuk, "because he has a parted hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew its cud." This pasuk implies that when the very character of this animal will change and will begin to chew its cud, then it would lose its un-kosher status and become edible.

- Shabbat Shalom



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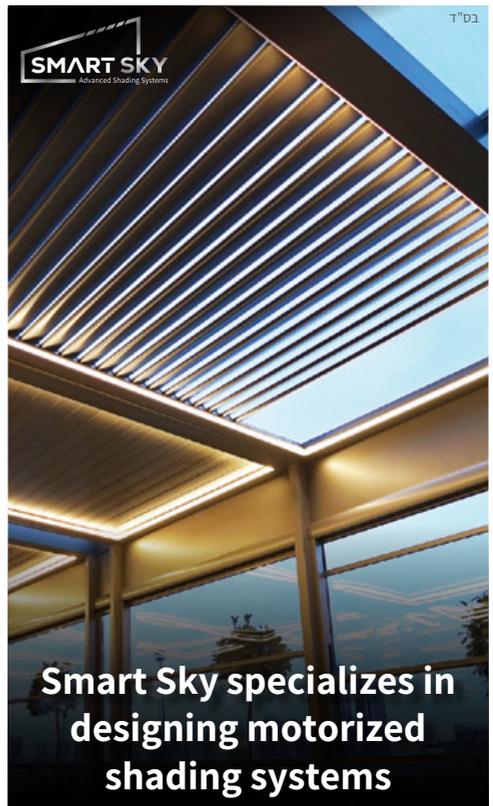


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## THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB  
OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, EMERITUS

# And Aaron Was Silent

He was an old man, and in many ways came from a very different world than I. And yet he taught me more than anyone else ever did. One of the things he taught me was that no one suffers as much as a parent who loses a child.

He delivered this lesson to me on a wintry day more than fifty years ago. He was my grandfather, my father's father, and the family had just broken the news to him that his youngest grandchild, my baby cousin, had died. It was a sudden death, totally unexpected, and everyone was distraught. Grandpa too took the news very hard.

He then did something which surprised everyone present. He rose to leave the room, beckoning to me—his oldest grandchild, then fourteen—to accompany him. We both entered a small adjoining room in which there were a few sacred books, including a siddur. He opened the siddur, read from it for several moments, and then looked up to me, and tearfully whispered:

“There is nothing worse in the world than the death of one's own child. A parent never recovers from such a blow. May the merciful God protect us all from such a fate.”

I will never forget those words. I remember them verbatim even today. And a lifetime of experience in the vocation of counseling has confirmed the truth of these words over and over again.

In this week's Torah portion, *Parshat Shemini*, we read of just such a tragedy. On a bright and sunny spring day, somewhere in the Sinai wilderness, the Tabernacle is being inaugurated. It is an awesome spiritual experience in which “a divine fire descends from on high, in which all the people sing in unison, and fall upon their faces.”

It is the moment of a peak experience, for all the people, but especially for Aaron, the High Priest.

At that very moment, his two elder sons, Nadav and Avihu, step forward and commit a sacrilegious act which dispels the mood, and ruins the entire experience. Commentators differ widely as to exactly what was the sin of these two sons of Aaron. Scripture just says that “they offered God a strange fire, something He did not command of them.”

God's wrath was expressed instantly. “A fire descended from before Him and consumed them, and they died in the presence of God.”

A parent, a father, lost a child. Not just one, but two. Not through a long and debilitating illness but suddenly, unexpectedly. And not in any ordinary set of circumstances, but in the context of an act of sacred worship.

What is Aaron's reaction? Does he moan and groan and rend his clothing? Does he scream out in grief? Or does he vent his anger against the God who took his boys from him?

None of the above. “*Vayidom Aharon*.” Aaron is silent. The silence of shock? Perhaps. The silence of acceptance of fate? Perhaps. Or, perhaps, the silence which results when the range and depth of one's emotions are too overwhelming to express in words. But silence.

If the sage words that my grandfather shared with me in my early adolescence are true, and I have every reason to believe that they are, Aaron remained silent about his grief for the rest of his life. Had he used the words of his ancestor Jacob, he could have said “I will go down to the grave in my agony.”

Soon after this episode in which my grandfather shared his wisdom with me I had the occasion to read a book which taught me a bit more about a grieving parent. It is quite possible that it was precisely during the winter of my cousin’s death that I was assigned the book *Death Be Not Proud* by John Gunther in my English Literature class.

I somehow doubt that this book is still on the required reading lists of many tenth-graders today. But if it is not on those lists I certainly recommend that it be read, and particularly by teenagers who are learning their first lessons about life and its tragic disappointments.

In the book, the author describes his own son, who was taken from him by a vicious disease. He describes his son positively, but realistically. And he rages against the disease, and in some way, the Divine being who took his son from him. He insists to Death itself that it be not proud about its victory over its victim, his dear child.

It has been decades since I have read Gunther’s book, and it could very well be that I do not remember it with complete accuracy. But I do recall the poignancy and the power with which the author conveyed the full range of his painful emotions. And I will never forget those passages in which he insists that he will never recover from his loss and that the wounds of a parent’s grief for his child can never heal.

Many are the lessons which students of Bible and Talmud have derived from the sad narrative contained in this week’s Torah portion. But there is at least one lesson which every empathic

reader will surely learn as he or she attends to the opening verses of *Leviticus 10*.

It is the lesson contained in the mystery of Aaron’s reaction when his sons are consumed by a heavenly fire. For within the deafening silence of “*Vayidom Aharon*” are the depths of the terror which every parent dreads, and some parents have suffered. The dread of bereavement, of the loss of one’s child.

As always, in contemplating darkness, light stands out in contrast. Reflection upon death leads to an appreciation of life. The story of the death of Aaron’s children should, if nothing else, enable us to appreciate all the more those of our children who are alive and well.

As we embark upon this new pre-Passover spring season, with all the springtime symbols in the way of life and renewal, let us celebrate and appreciate all of our own offspring, may they live and be well. ■



# COVENANT & CONVERSATION

THOUGHTS ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"l

FORMER CHIEF RABBI OF THE UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

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לעילוי נשמות

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## Spontaneity: Good or Bad?

Shemini tells the tragic story of how the great inauguration of the Tabernacle, a day about which the Sages said that God rejoiced as much as He had at the creation of the universe, was overshadowed by the death of two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu:

"Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorised fire before the Lord, which [God] had not instructed them [to offer]. Fire came out from the Presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord". *Lev. 10:1-2*

Many explanations were given by the Sages and later commentators as to what Nadav and Avihu's sin actually was. But the simplest answer, given by the Torah itself here and elsewhere (Num. 3:4, 26:61), is that they

acted on their own initiative. They did what they had not been commanded. They acted spontaneously, perhaps out of sheer enthusiasm in the mood of the moment, offering "unauthorised fire". Evidently it is dangerous to act spontaneously in matters of the spirit.

But is it? Moses acted spontaneously in far more fraught circumstances when he shattered the Tablets of Stone upon seeing the Israelites cavorting around the Golden Calf. The tablets – hewn and engraved by God Himself – were perhaps the holiest objects there have ever been. Yet Moses was not punished for his act. The Sages said that though he acted of his own accord without first consulting God, God assented to this act. Rashi refers to this moment in his very last comment on the Torah, whose last verse (Deut. 34:12) speaks about "all the strong hand, and all the great awe, which Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel":

לעיני כל ישראל: שנשאו לבו לשבור הלוחות לעיניהם, שנאמר (לעיל ט, יז) ואשברם לעיניכם, והסכימה דעת הקב"ה לדעתו, שנאמר (שמות לד, א) אשר שברת, ישר כחך ששברת

This refers to when Moses] took the liberty of shattering the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, "I shattered them before your eyes." The Holy One, Blessed be He, consented to his



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opinion, as it is said, “which you shattered” - ‘More power to you for shattering them!’

Why then was spontaneity wrong for Nadav and Avihu yet right for Moshe Rabbeinu? The answer is that Nadav and Avihu were Kohanim, Priests. Moses was a Navi, a Prophet. These are two different forms of religious leadership. They involve different tasks, different sensibilities, indeed different approaches to time itself.

The Kohen serves God in a way that never changes over time (except, of course, when the Temple was destroyed and its service, presided over by the Kohanim, came to an end). The Prophet serves God in a way that is constantly changing over time. When people are too at ease, the Prophet warns of forthcoming catastrophe. When they suffer catastrophe and are in the depths of despair, the Prophet brings consolation and hope.

The words said by the Kohen are always the same. The priestly blessing uses the same words today as it did in the days of Moses and Aaron. But the words used by a Prophet are never the same. As it is noted:

“No two Prophets use the same style.”  
*Sanhedrin 89a*

So for a Prophet spontaneity is of the essence. But for the Kohen engaged in Divine service it is completely out of place.

Why the difference? After all, the Priest and the Prophet were serving the same God. The Torah uses a kind of device we have only recently re-invented in a somewhat different form. Stereophonic sound – sound coming from two different speakers – was developed in the 1930s to give the impression of audible perspective. In the 1950s 3D film was developed to do for sight what stereo had done for sound. From the work



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of Pierre Broca in the 1860s to today, using MRI and PET scans, neuroscientists have striven to understand how our bicameral brain allows us to respond more intelligently to our environment than would otherwise have been possible. Twin perspectives are needed fully to experience reality.

The twin perspectives of the Priest and Prophet correspond to the twin perspectives on creation represented, respectively, by Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 (spoken in the priestly voice, with an emphasis on order, structure, divisions and boundaries), and Genesis 2:4 – 3:24 (spoken in the prophetic voice, with an emphasis on the nuances and dynamics of interpersonal relationships).

Now let us consider one other area in which there was an ongoing argument between structure and spontaneity, namely *tefillah*, prayer, specifically the Amidah.

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We know that after the destruction of the Temple, Rabban Gamliel and his court at Yavneh established a standard text for the weekday Amidah, comprising eighteen or later nineteen blessings in a precise order (Mishnah Brachot 4:3).

Not everyone, however, agreed. Rabbi Joshua held that individuals could say an abridged form of the Amidah. According to some interpretations, Rabbi Eliezer was opposed to a fixed text altogether and held that one should, each day, say something new (Yerushalmi Brachot 4).

It seems that this disagreement is precisely parallel to another one about the source of the daily prayers:

It has been stated: R. Jose, son of R. Hanina said: The prayers were instituted by the Patriarchs. R. Joshua b. Levi says: The prayers were instituted to replace the daily sacrifices. *Brachot 26b*

According to R. Jose, son of R. Hanina, Shacharit was established by Abraham, Minchah by Isaac, and Maariv by Jacob. According to R. Joshua b. Levi, Shacharit corresponds to the daily morning sacrifice, and Minchah to the afternoon sacrifice. On the face of it, the disagreement has no practical consequences, but in fact it does.

If the prayers were instituted by the patriarchs, then their origin is prophetic. If they were established to replace the sacrifices, then their provenance is priestly. Priests were forbidden to act spontaneously, but Prophets did so as a matter of course. Someone who saw prayer as priestly would, like Rabban Gamliel, emphasise the importance of a precise text. One who saw it as prophetic would, like Rabbi Eliezer as understood by the Talmud Yerushalmi, value spontaneity

and each day try to say something new.

Tradition eventually resolved the matter in a most remarkable way. We say each Amidah twice, once privately and silently in the tradition of the Prophets, then a second time publicly and collectively by the *shaliach tzibbur*, the “reader’s repetition”, in the tradition of a Priest offering a sacrifice at the Temple. (It is easy to understand why there is no reader’s repetition in the Maariv service: there was no sacrifice at night-time). During the silent Amidah we are permitted to add extra words of our own. During the repetition we are not. That is because Prophets acted spontaneously, but Priests did not.

The tragedy of Nadav and Avihu is that they made the mistake of acting like Prophets when they were, in fact, Priests. But we have inherited both traditions, and wisely so, for without structure, Judaism would have no continuity, but without spontaneity it would have no fresh life. The challenge is to maintain the balance without ever confusing the place of each. ■

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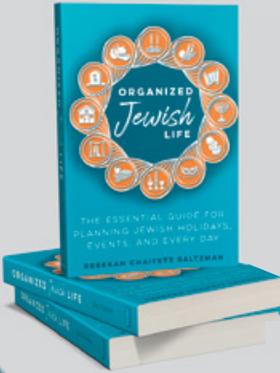
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# A Future That Can Begin Today

The Tana'im in our Mishna established this Shabbat's special maftir reading from Parashat Bo, in order to remind the congregation that the time to offer the paschal sacrifice, was quickly approaching. The selection from the 12th perek of Shmot, describes the laws of the first Korban Pesach, including Hashem's unique instructions regarding the very first paschal

offering that was offered in Egypt itself. For the same reason, Chazal's choice for this week's haftarah also speaks of the unique laws that would apply to the future paschal offerings that would take place in the third Temple during the Messianic era. Many of the laws quoted do not coincide with the laws of the Torah, causing some consternation among the rabbinic scholars. Yet, as the Radak, suggests, and, as we have explained in earlier columns, the new era that would be heralded by the arrival of Mashiach ben David, would bring with it different laws, more demanding observances, in order to create a higher level of spirituality and purity among the people.

Fittingly, the opening verses of the haftarah, tell of the special sacrifice that would be offered on "the first day of the first month", Rosh Chodesh Nisan, and whose blood would be spread on the doorposts of the Sanctuary. Clearly, such a ritual reflects the procedure that Moshe gave to B'nai Yisra'el in Egypt, as they too spread the blood of the Paschal Offering upon doorposts (of the Israelite homes) the evening before their exodus to freedom. Furthermore, when the haftarah reading continues, we learn of how the navi Yechezkel details the future seven-day holiday during which matzot would be eaten, another mitzvah that is included in our Maftir reading as well.

However, we would be mistaken were we to see these interesting contrasts and

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comparisons between the original offering and the yet-to-be sacrifices of the future, simply as reminders of Chag HaPesach. It might well have been the purpose of Chazal to teach us that Pesach is to be understood as more than a reenactment of the past exodus. It must also be seen as the promise of our future redemption.

There is, however, another important lesson woven within the words of Yechezkel Hanavi. It is a subtle, and yet most crucial, lesson that we are expected to learn and pass on. In the verses preceding the haftarah itself, Yechezkel admonishes the leaders of Judea, telling them that no longer would they use their power to enrich themselves at the expense of the common people. Rather, they must fulfill their true purpose as leaders in Israel: to pursue justice and righteousness by having “honest scales and weights”, by guaranteeing equal and true coinage and, by doing so, removing the lawlessness and corruption that had filled the land.

Ultimately, the future redemption brought by Mashiach ben David would not be only one demanding the purity of Mikdash or that of a close adherence to mitzvot. Rather, Hahsem’s demand will be to build a society dedicated to the purity of action and of deed, a world based upon relationships of ben Adam laMakom as well as those that shape our dealings ben Adam l’chavero.

It is a future we look forward to...and one we can start building today as well. ■

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The above referenced Midrash draws an analogy between the creation of the world and the inauguration of the Mishkan. This analogy is based on the use of the same term "ויהי" (Vayehi) that appears in both instances. This word ויהי appears throughout the Torah, why does the Midrash specifically correlate creation with the Mikdash?

## CREATION AND THE MISHKAN

Rav Blumensweig, the Rosh Yeshiva in Yerucham, in his Sefer - והתהלכת בתוכם - offers an intriguing explanation. Creation was the beginning of a process which was completed with the inauguration of the Mishkan. The purpose of creation was to connect the upper and lower worlds and the Mishkan completes that task. It is a place in which we establish a place on this earth for God to dwell.

## SPACE FOR MAN VS SPACE FOR GOD

Although there are similarities between creation and the Mishkan, in a certain respect they are opposites. God is everywhere. In order to enable other items and beings to exist in the world, as Kabbalah suggests – there was an act of צמצום – God in a way

contracted himself to make **space for man** and other creations. The Mishkan is a place that we sanctify and designate as a **space for God** to dwell in our midst.

## RELATED TRANSGRESSIONS

It is interesting to note that at the completion of both events, creation of the world and the inauguration of the Mishkan catastrophes ensue. At the end of creation, Adam and Chava are overtaken by their desires to partake in the delicacies of the forbidden fruit and transgress. At the conclusion of the inauguration of the Mishkan, Nadav and Avihu are overtaken by the spiritual experience and offer a sacrifice that was not part of the scheduled and desired offering of the day. Due to their spiritual high they disconnected from the physical world and acted in a manner that they felt would enable them to get closer to God.

## EXTREME BEHAVIOR

Creation led man to feel independent and able to satiate his desires. The Mishkan was infused with kedusha and led man to strive for closeness to Hashem. Both Adam and Chava as well as Nadav and Avihu went to extremes. Adam and Chava leaning to physical pleasures, and Nadav and Avihu seeking spiritual heights.

Perhaps the lesson to be derived from

both failures is to avoid extremes. One is to establish the proper balance between physical and spiritual pursuits. Too much emphasis on either can lead to tragic results. Later in the parsha the Torah distinguishes between kosher and non-kosher animals. Between *tahor* and *tamei* animals. We need to be able to distinguish between these two worlds. Such a distinction teaches us that there are boundaries we need to maintain in all aspects of our life.

May we be able to constantly evaluate our priorities and maintain the **proper balance** between our physical and spiritual endeavors. ■

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## Mindful Motions

“*Ki ani Hashem ham’aleh etchem mei’eretz Mitzrayim li’hiyot lachem le’Elokim v’hiyitem kedoshim ki kadosh ani* – I am G-d, and I brought you out of Egypt to be your G-d. Therefore, since I am holy, you must [also] remain holy.” (*Vayikra 11:45*) Rashi elucidates; Hashem took us out of Egypt so that we would accept His commandments. This sounds simple, yet it lends powerful insight and meaningful direction as to our purpose.

In the introduction to his sefer *Ba’alei Hanefesh*, the *Ra’avid* writes that a person must know he has a Creator who has dominion over him and has given him specific laws to guide his behavior. There are laws concerning marriage, agriculture, business, and dress; it is all encompassing. Rav Scheinerman in *Ohel Moshe* adds that the key is to live with awareness, to be fully cognizant and realize that mitzvot suffuse every area of life. The Saba of Kelm would comment that one can go through the motions of doing many mitzvot, yet without any thought or connection, he will remain a simple person. In contrast, Rav Abramsky *z”l* described the Brisker Rav *z”l* as one who’s every move was based on the *Shulchan Aruch*. He stood because the *Shulchan Aruch* said to stand, he spoke how and when the *Shulchan* directed. Every action was

guided by the particular service of Hashem at any given moment. Our challenge is to live thoughtfully and mindfully, recognizing every mitzvah opportunity as it is presented. Thus, we will continue to grow and deepen our relationship with Hashem.

One of the purposes of the Egyptian enslavement was to prepare *Am Yisrael* to serve Hashem unconditionally, to understand and cultivate what it means to be completely devoted to the will of a master. As such, the *Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh* explains the words of our verse, “*li’hiyot lachem le’Elokim*” to mean that we must take the “you,” the aspects of our physical selves, and dedicate everything to live with intention, “*shiviti Hashem lenegdi tamid.*”

*Mesilat Yesharim* teaches us that the *yetzer hara* schemes to make us so busy and distracted that we have no time to contemplate our actions and connect more deeply. In allowing the *yetzer hara* to do this, we create our own enslavement. Once we realize this, we can take steps to extricate ourselves from this self-imposed bondage to perform mitzvot with more focus and desire to build an authentic connection. Hashem liberated us from Egypt because He wants this relationship. Let us be present and invest in the relationship the way it deserves. ■



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RABBI JUDAH

MISCHEL

Executive Director, Camp HASC  
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of*  
*Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

## Parshas HaChodesh: Ascend Anew

Reb Mendel Futerfas was a legendary *mashpiah*, known for his incredible self-sacrifice and resilience in the face of Soviet persecution. With incredible resolve and inner strength, Reb Mendel maintained his faith and sense of self throughout 14 years of brutal incarceration and exile in Siberia. One of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's most loyal and dedicated soldiers, Reb Mendel earned the compliment "a *real* chasid".

At a farbrengen, Reb Mendel spoke of an *alter* Lubavitcher chasid named Reb Yeshayah Shapiro, who had a major impact on his own personal development. Reb Yeshayah was known as an *oveid*, a "servant of Hashem", a serious person whose service of God was exceptionally intense. His weekday Shemoneh Esrei could last more than two hours. Reb Mendel once asked Reb Yeshaya how he was able to *halt kup* and stay focused for such an extended amount of time. Reb Yeshayah answered that many years earlier, as a young man, he struggled with maintaining his *kavanah* during davening, and went to consult with the Rebbe Maharash, zy'a.

When Yeshayah told the Rebbe that he felt that his prayers lacked vitality and focus and

that he did not know how to keep his mind on the davening, the Rebbe grabbed the young man by the lapels of his jacket, pulled them to the side, pointed at his heart, and said "Oyyy! Shayalah! רחמנא לבא בעי! Hashem, the Compassionate One, desires the heart!" The Rebbe Maharash began to cry, "Oy! A *Yiddishe heartz*, a Jewish heart! The heart... the heart!" Reb Yeshayah told Reb Mendel, "For more than fifty years, ever since the Rebbe tore open my coat — and my heart — I have felt inspired anew each day... and haven't stopped davening."

In preparation for the upcoming month of Nissan, this Shabbos we are reading Parshas HaChodesh. In addition to the foundational mitzvah of establishing and keeping the Jewish calendar, we address different aspects of *Aliyah l'Regel*, our pilgrimages and ascents to the Beis haMikdash throughout the year:   
הבא דרך שער צפון להשתחוות יצא דרך שער  
נגב והבא דרך שער נגב יצא דרך שער צפונה לא  
ישׁוב דרך השער אשר באה בו כִּי נכחו יצא

Whoever enters by the northern gate to bow low shall leave by the southern gate, and whoever enters by the southern gate shall leave by the northern gate. He shall not go back through the gate by which he came in, but shall go out by the opposite. (*Yechezkel*, 46:9)

The *pasuk* seems to be over-complicating what seems to be a simple and clear logistical directive: the route used as entry and exit to the Temple should be opposite each other, as

Rashi confirms: כִּי נִכְחוּ יָצָא — “He leaves from the opposite way that he entered.”

Rav Yaakov Bender, *shlit'a*, beloved rosh yeshivah of Darchei Torah in New York, reveals a teachable moment, and an important foundational value in *Avodas Hashem* based on the seemingly extraneous wordiness of Yechezkel haNavi’s instructions.

Like Reb Yeshaya, one of the great challenges many of us face in *Avodas Hashem* is the habituation of halachic observance and service of God. When we become accustomed to consistent fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos, there is a danger of falling into perfunctory routine, going through motions until our observance becomes an automatic, thoughtless, rote activity.

Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk railed against this ossification of spiritual life, demanding renewal, freshness and a constant, deliberate choice to serve HaKadosh Baruch Hu with consciousness, insight and sincerity. If one davened today only because he davened yesterday, he is worse than a scoundrel.

This, the great Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva and author of *Sichos Mussar*, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, says is the intent underlying the prophet’s instructions. If you ‘entered through the north’, go out a different way; If one’s arrival is via the southern gate, find a new way to continue onward toward your destination. Don’t fall into habitual performance; take a different route, change things up, refresh your *kavanah*.

Rebbe Eliezer ben Arach was considered by many to be the greatest Sage of his generation, a *maayan misgaber*, an ever-flowing spring of inspiration (*Avos*, 2:8). A string of events led Rebbe Eliezer to a far away land where he

was separated from his friends and students. Isolated and alone, his brilliance and Torah mastery faded. Upon his return to the Beis Medrash of Yavneh, Rebbe Eliezer was called to the Torah and honored with the aliyah of *Parshas haChodesh*. Instead of reading הַחֲדָשׁ לָכֵם, “Consecrate the new month,” he mistakenly read the verse as הַחֲרָשׁ הִיָּה לָכֵם, ‘Their heart was dulled.’ (*Shabbos*, 147b)

The promise of great leadership and impact turned into disappointment. His forgetfulness was understood as a Heavenly repercussion of detaching from the dynamism, newness, purity and vitality that he cultivated within a *chaburah* which challenged him and encouraged him to grow and ascend to higher and higher levels.

May the arrival of Shabbos haChodesh help us transform and enliven any dullness of the heart. On this Rosh Chodesh, “the new year of months”, may we generate a *rosh chadash*, a ‘new mind’, consciousness and clarity of kavanah. As we leave the old year may it be from a higher gate, and higher state, than the one which we entered last Nissan. And from there may we stay *baderech aliyah*, on a path of ascent, as the Gemara (*Pesachim*, 19b) says, דָּרַךְ טְהוּרִין — עליה, “If vessels were found on a path ascending (from a mikvah, they are considered) *tahor*, pure, free from stagnant energy. May we overcome all spiritual stagnancy and dullness by renewing our commitment to choose new, higher entrances into the world of holy growth and Divine service. ■



# This Week's Inspirational Torah Learning v

**SUNDAY**  
**APR. 7**

**2:00PM**

Men's Gemara Chabura  
Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

**SPECIAL EVENT:**

**8:00PM**

NextGen Pre-Pesach  
Evening -Women ages  
20's-40's

**MONDAY**  
**APR. 8**

**All classes are**  
**@ OU Israel Center**

**9:15 AM**

The Different Shades and  
Colors of Prayer  
Rabbi Dr. Aaron Adler

**10:20 AM**

Am Yisrael At War  
Rabbi Anthony Manning

**11:25 AM**

Deepening Our Eternal  
Relationship with Eretz  
Yisrael-Timely Teachings  
from the Wisdom of  
Rav Kook  
Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider

**12:15 PM**

Israel's Continuing  
Struggle for Survival  
Dr. Deborah Polster

**7:00PM**

L'Ayla  
Dorot Women's Choir  
Director, Hadassah Jacob  
052-384 7230

**8:30 PM**

The Bais  
Semichat Chaver Program  
Rabbi Elyada Goldwicht

**TUESDAY**  
**APR. 9**

**Torah Tuesdays in**  
**Bakaa-Classes**  
**@ Kehilat Nitzanim,**  
**3 Asher Street**

**9:15 AM**

Pirkei Avot In Depth  
Rabbi Moshe Snow  
(NEW CLASS SERIES)

**10:15 AM**

Minchat Chinuch-Meaning  
in Mitzvot Rabbi Yitzchak  
Breitowitz

**11:15 AM**

Sefer Breisheet Chumash  
B'Iyun Rabbi Yossi Goldin

**12:15 PM**

Unlocking the Eternal  
Wisdom of Chazal  
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

**9:150AM-1:00PM**

Rosh Chodesh Nisan  
Seminar/Hagada Shel  
Pesach (L'Ayla)

**Missed a CLASS?** View shiur recordings at: [ouisrael.org/video-library/](https://ouisrael.org/video-library/)

# with OU Israel



**TUESDAY**  
**APR. 9**

**L'Ayla Women's Day  
of Learning**  
@ OU Israel Center

**9:15 AM**  
Mrs. Shira Smiles  
**Torah Tapestries**

**10:20 AM**  
Mrs. Leah Feinberg  
**From Yosef's Coat to  
Mordechai's Sackcloth:  
Understanding Clothing  
in Tanach**

**11:10 AM**  
Brunch Break  
Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski  
**Towards Meaningful  
Tefilla**

**12:00 PM**  
Mrs. Shani Taragin  
**Delving into the  
Halachot of Shabbat**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**APR. 10**

**Evening Classes**  
@ OU Israel Center

**8:30 PM**  
The Bais (For Men)  
War Time Halachic  
Dilemmas Rabbi Aschi Dick

**SPECIAL EVENT:**  
**7:00PM**  
Nation-Wide- L'Ayla  
Mother/Daughter Event

**THURSDAY**  
**APR. 11**

**All classes are**  
@ OU Israel Center

**9:30 AM**  
Parshat HaShavua  
Rabbi Ari Kahn

**10:45 AM**  
Iron Sword-Perspective for  
Today from Parshat HaShavua  
Rabbi Baruch Taub

**12:00 PM**  
**Lunch and Learn** Rabbi Neil  
Winkler. 40 NIS per person

**2:00 PM**  
Men's Gemara Chabura Rabbi  
Jeff Bienenfeld

**SPECIAL EVENT:**  
**7:00PM**  
Men's Seder prep  
(The Bais) with Rabbi  
Sam Shor



**VIRTUAL SCHEDULE**  
(Zoom Only Classes):

**Rabbi Baruch Taub**  
Parsha, 7:00pm Mon  
Halacha, 7:00pm Wed  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88363420460>  
Password: ouisrael

**Rebbetzin Shatz**  
L'Ayla-Insights of Chazal  
Tues., 5:00PM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85177782268>  
Password: ouisrael

**Rabbi Goldwicht**  
Parshat HaShavua  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>  
Password: 18

\*LAYLA CLASSES ARE  
FOR WOMEN ONLY

THE BAIS CLASSES &  
PROGRAMS ARE FOR  
MEN ONLY



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# ROSH CHODESH SEMINAR FOR WOMEN

In loving memory of Mrs. Linda Pruwer-Brachfeld a"h  
מרת חיה סאשא בת ר' יוסף הלל

**TUESDAY APRIL 9, NISAN 1, 9:15AM - 1:00PM**



- 9:15AM** Introduction  
**Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**
- 9:20AM** Haggadah Highlights  
**Mrs. Shira Smiles**
- 10:20AM** Practical Pesach Kashrut  
**Rabbi Yissachar Dov Krakowski, OU Israel Kashrut**

- 11:10AM** Personal Story of Redemption  
and Connection to Hashem  
**Mrs. Michali Caplan**

- 12:10PM** Seder Night:  
Soar Like an Eagle  
**Rabbi Aba Wagensberg**



**Cost:**  
40nis



**Brunch will be served**



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22 KEREN HAYESOD ST., YERUSHALAYIM | 02-560-9110 | REGISTER AT - [WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG/EVENTS/NISAN2024](http://WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG/EVENTS/NISAN2024)

OU Israel's The Bais in Memory of Mrs. Charlotte Brachfeld a"h

## GETTING IT RIGHT ON THE SEDER NIGHT

with Rabbi Sam Shor

**THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 7:00PM-9:00PM**

- ▶ Enjoy a Men's Night Out and explore inspirational ideas to share at your Seder!
- ▶ Delicious BBQ buffet
- ▶ Open to Men of all ages!
- ▶ 99 NIS pre-registration/ 120 NIS at the door

RSVP: <https://www.ouisrael.org/events/mens-seder-prep-24/>

OU Israel Center, 22 Keren HaYesod



The Bais



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Join Hebrew on the Go for a

# Kids' Matzah Baking Experience

at the OU Israel Center!

**SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 3:00 PM**

Come prepare for Pesach by participating in an interactive Pesach storytelling experience and by making your very own Matzah!

\*Matzot are not kosher for Pesach

Register at

[www.ouisrael.org/events/kidspesach2024](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/kidspesach2024)



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## PRE- PESACH LIMUD

**SUNDAY APRIL 14**



**10:30 AM** Pesach: The Night That Unites **Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider**, Editor, OU Israel, Torah Tidbits



**11:45AM** Celebrating Pesach with the Ramban **Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**, Executive Vice President Emeritus, Orthodox Union

Limited Seating- Tickets available:

<https://www.ouisrael.org/events/pre-pesach-limud/>

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MOTHER-DAUGHTER

# Pre-Pesach Event

WEDNESDAY APRIL 10, 7:00PM-9:00PM



All girls aged 9-12 and their mothers are invited to join us for an evening of learning and art in preparation for Pesach!

Events will take place simultaneously in:

**\*Yerushalayim \* Modiin**

**\* Efrat \* Beit Shemesh**

40nis per mother-daughter pair

For more details and to register:

[www.ouisrael.org/events/Pesach2024-md](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/Pesach2024-md)



OU ISRAEL CENTER

WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG

02-5609100



Join OU Israel NextGen for a  
*Pre-Pesach Evening  
of Inspiration and Fun!*

SUNDAY APRIL 7, 8:15PM

- ◆ Glass-Etching Workshop - Create your own unique etched glass Kiddush cup/ כוס של/ to be used at your seder
- ◆ Haggadah Highlights with **RABANIT SHANI TARAGIN**

Register at

[www.ouisrael.org/events/nextgen-glassetching](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/nextgen-glassetching)



Geared for  
women in  
their 20's-40s

25nis

OU ISRAEL CENTER 22 Keren HaYesod St., Jerusalem

02-5609110



# Pre Pesach Wine Tasting & Charoset Making

OU Israel "Kulanu" Active singles 50's-60's

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 7:00PM-9:30PM**

Together we will make and sample different types of Charoset, sip some fine wine, share words of Torah and enjoy each others company

**RSVP**

[www.ouisrael.org/events/kulanu-pre-pesach-event/](http://www.ouisrael.org/events/kulanu-pre-pesach-event/)

**OU Israel Center, 22 KerenHaYesod,  
Questions Call Chana 050-229-4951**

**65 NIS**



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## Practice your conversational Hebrew!

**April 4, 11:00am-13:00pm**

**May 2, 11:00am-13:00pm**

**April 11, 11:00am-13:00pm**

**May 9, 11:00am-13:00pm**

Join student volunteers from Inbar Middle School visiting us at the OU Center for our very own ulpan experience. Practice everyday conversations and correspondence, as well as playing card and board games, in Hebrew. All levels welcome!

**Call Chana Spivack to register 050-229-4951**

The Inbar School is a pioneering ,secular, girls-only middle and high school, whose curriculum includes one day a week of apprenticeship and volunteering in the community. Shira Sacks, Inbar School English teacher and coordinator of the Olim Volunteering Track will oversee this program.



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## Be'er Tziporah a"h - Bottled Water Gemach



Walking down King George St. in Jerusalem and want a cold bottle of water?

Come help yourself to a bottle at  
52 King George.

In loving memory of Yoni's wife  
**Tziporah a"h**, a true Eishes Chayil, always full of chessed, kindness and laughter, and brought life and strength to so many people, that she touched! She was like Aron, who loved peace and pursued peace.



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

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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Rabbi Yisroel Goldberg email

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**הודו לה' כי טוב**

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Chana Spivack - 050-229-4951 or donate online:  
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### THURSDAY, MARCH 28TH - RABBI TAUB'S SHIUR

was sponsored by Gittie Edery in memory of her brother  
משה יעקב בן אברהם הלוי ז"ל

### TUESDAY, APRIL 2ND - RABBI MOSHE SNOW'S PIRKEI AVOT SHIUR

was sponsored by Manny Ruchelsman  
יחד בת יעקב דוד ע"ה

### TUESDAY, APRIL 2ND - REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES SHIUR

was sponsored by Naomi & Peter Neustadter - with great Joy on the occasion of their granddaughter, Eden Gabriel Goldstein's Bat Mitzvah

#### RABBI SNOW'S SHIUR

is generously sponsored for this academic year by Scott & Linda Haniford.

#### RABBI SHAI FINKELSTEIN'S SHIUR

Sponsored for this academic year by the  
Sondhelm and Wertenteil families in memory of Mel David z"l  
מנחם אברהם מאיר וטויבא רבקה ז"ל

#### RABBI ADLER'S SHIUR

Sponsored for this academic year by the Frist family  
in memory of their beloved daughter and sister  
Elisheva Frist a"h - ע"ה זלמן בת זלמן

#### RABBI GOLDSCHIEDER'S SHIUR

Sponsored for this academic year נשמרת  
לעילוי בשמרת ע"ה ושם טוב בן שלמה ז"ל

#### REBBETZIN SHIRA SMILES SHIUR

Sponsored for this academic year by  
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רייזל בת יוסף מאיר ומרדכי בן משה מרקוס ז"ל  
לימוד בת אברהם ודניאל בן דוד שטראוס ז"ל

### RABBI BREITOWITZ'S TUESDAY SHIUR - MINCHAT CHINUCH

Sponsored for this academic year by Rabbi Refoel & Sharon Auman  
in memory of their parents Edith & Reiner Auman z"l  
יונה בן צדוק ז"ל ואסתר ע"ה בת רפאל הי"ד  
and their son Rabbi Shmuel Elyahu Auman z"l  
הרב שמואל אליהו ז"ל בן הרב רפאל נ"י

#### RABBI GOLDIN'S SHIUR

Sponsored for this academic year by Dr. & Mrs. Menachem Marcus  
in memory of beloved aunts Irma Haas a"h and Hilde Myer a"h

#### RABBI MANNING'S SHIUR

Sponsored for this academic year נשמרת  
לעילוי בשמרת ע"ה וזלמן בן קלמן ז"ל

### RABBI TAUB'S WEEKLY THURSDAY PARSHAT HASHAVUA SHIUR

Sponsored by The Jewish Legacy Foundation

## רפואה שלמה

Yosef Ezriel ben Chaya Michal  
Chana bat Bruriah

Ben Zion Simcha Mendel Ben Chana Rachel  
Feyge Sara bas Chaya Peshe  
Nechama Charna bat Feigel

Leah Naomi bat Tova  
Pesach ben Sarah Frieda

אברהם יהושע בן פרל באהדגא  
לב אייזיק בן אולגה  
יהונתן בן מחלה

## PLEASE NOTE DEADLINES FOR ADVERTISING THROUGH PESACH & YOM HAATZMAUT

Shabbat, April 12-13 (Tazria) » Sun., April 7

Shabbat, April 19-20 (Shabbat Hagadol, Pesach, Acharei) » Thur., April 11

Shabbat, May 10-11 (Kedoshim) » Sun., May 5

Shabbat, May 17-18 (Emor) » Thur. AM, May 9

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FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
**MRS. JEN AIRLEY**  
SPECIAL SICHA FROM  
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**THE SOLOMON BROTHERS & YEHUDA OF MOSHAV BAND**  
**AND MUCH MORE!**



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## Birkat Ha-Ilanot

When one sees blossoming fruit trees for the first time during the month of Nisan, one should say this blessing:

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך  
העולם שלא חסר בעולמו  
כלום וברא בו בריות טובות  
ואילנות טובות להנות בהם  
בני אדם.

This blessing is said just once a year—the first time that one sees it.



**Resumes Tuesday, May 21**

### PRI HADASH

**WOMEN'S WRITING WORKSHOP**  
**AT THE OU ISRAEL CENTER**

**Monday mornings 10.30-12.30**

For more details, call Ruth 02-628-7359  
or Judy 054-569-0410




**GET FIT WHILE YOU SIT:**  
**Exercise for ladies**  
Sundays 12:30-1:15pm  
at the OU Israel Center  
Sura Faecher 0504153239

**Tzitzit tying at the OU Israel Center**  
with Ruti - no experience needed

Mondays at 1:30pm  
and Wednesdays at 12:00pm





# Bishul Akum: Maids and Soldiers

The issue of *bishul akum* in relation to non-Jewish employees is complex. Our Sages decreed the prohibition of *bishul akum* (kosher food cooked by a non-Jew) as a way of distancing Jews from non-Jews. If we were to enforce the decree only based on its reasoning, we might expect an exception for an employer-employee relationship; after all, the elements of social mingling and risk of subsequent intermarriage seem far less relevant in such a situation. However, as with all of their decrees meant to safeguard the Jewish People and the Torah, our Sages did not allow individuals to decide how and when to uphold their decree. Rather, they enacted these prohibitions “across the board” even if their underlying reasoning does not always apply to each case.

Rabbinic authorities over the centuries have discussed possible limitations of *bishul akum*, with some early authorities ruling that non-Jewish slaves are not part of the decree (see *Beit Yosef* YD 113). The overwhelming consensus is to be stringent, based on the fact that many authorities disagree with that ruling (see *Kashruth HaShulchan* 3, p.93) and because the halachic status of a slave has since been abolished for hundreds of years (*Pri Chadash* 113:9).

## HOUSEKEEPERS AND MAIDS

It is common in many Jewish homes, in Israel and around the world, to hire non-Jewish help for cooking and cleaning. *Rema* (YD 113:4) allows food cooked by non-Jewish maids or housekeepers, seemingly because there is some type of compulsion. He also cites the factors that this cooking takes place in a Jewish home **and** most likely a Jewish member of the household will change the temperature of the heat source. It is clear from *Rema* that if all three conditions are met, one may *a priori* hire a non-Jewish housekeeper to cook for the household. An additional reason to be lenient is because the housekeeper is an employee and the nature of the relationship is not likely to cause unacceptable mingling (see *Shach* YD 113:7).

## THE MODERN RULING

Although this ruling seems logical, many later authorities refute the arguments and explain that this is irrelevant for modern times. There was a previous custom amongst Ashkenazi Jewry to permit non-Jewish maids to cook. However, this was based upon the fact that the coal ovens in their time required stoking to maintain the oven’s heat in order to cook food properly. In such a reality, it was common for members of the household to stoke the coals as they walked by the oven. According to *Rema* and Ashkenazi custom, stoking the fire is sufficient to mitigate the decree of *bishul akum*, even if a non-Jew is performing the entire cooking process. Nowadays, however, we no longer use coal ovens that require stoking. Electric and gas



stoves do not need constant supervision, and it is not common for members of the household to adjust the fire. Based on the changes in modern cooking, later authorities maintain that *Rema's* leniency is inapplicable (*Kovetz Beit Halevi* 5754, p.34; *Responsa Shevet Kehati* 6:280).

Another rebuttal mentioned by *poskim* is the employee status of housekeepers in modern times. In the time of *Rema*, the status of maids was much more compulsory; they were under contract, were very restricted, and often worked under tough conditions. In the modern era, housekeepers and maids can come and go as they please. There is no obligation to work a certain amount of time, and no binding conditions that prevent any type of freedom of employment. Since *Rema* assumed a minimal compulsory status for the non-Jewish household help, these later *poskim* insist that his lenient ruling is inapplicable in today's reality. (*Levush Oz* 113:10; *Sha'arei Deah* 113:2)

### NON-JEWISH SOLDIERS

A modern application of *Rema's* ruling might be non-Jewish soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces. Although the IDF has a very high level of kashrut supervision, the situation is often more complicated in smaller army outposts. In a case where a non-Jewish soldier cooked kosher food and a Jew was not involved in the cooking process, there might be room to be lenient based on *Rema's* ruling. Soldiers in the army are under compulsory service, they cannot leave at will, and all of their duties are imposed upon them. The

army is also certainly a predominantly Jewish army, commanded by the Jewish senior staff and Jewish government, and thus perhaps parallel to *Rema's* requirement for cooking within a Jewish home. As such, perhaps there is room to be lenient in a case where a non-Jew cooked kosher food in an outpost. Nevertheless, this leniency even for soldiers is not so clear-cut, and one should consult with a competent halachic authority.

### IN SUMMARY:

- Hundreds of years ago, it was common to hire non-Jewish help to cook and it was not considered *bishul akum*.
- In modern times there is no room to permit non-Jewish housekeepers or maids to cook without Jewish participation.
- It might be possible to be lenient if a non-Jewish soldier cooked in the army for Jews. A halachic authority should be consulted. ■

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# SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Our *Sedra* contains the challenging account of the passing of *Nadav and Avihu*, two sons of *Aharon*, who ambitiously brought an offering unto *Hashem*, which they were not instructed to bring, and subsequently are struck down by fire, and pass away.

וַיִּקְחוּ בְנֵי־אַהֲרֹן נֹדֶב וְאַבִּיהוּא אִישׁ מִחַתְתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ בָּהֶן אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂמוּ עָלֶיהָ קֶטֶרֶת וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם: וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי ה': וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן הוּא אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' | לֵאמֹר בְּקִרְבִּי אֶקְדֹּשׁ וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָעַם אֶכְבֹּד וַיִּדַם אַהֲרֹן:

*And Aharon's sons Nadav and Avihu each took his fire pan, placed fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before Hashem a foreign fire, which had not been instructed to them. And fire came forth from Hashem and consumed them; thus they died before Hashem. Then Moshe said to Aharon, "This is what Hashem said: Through those who are close to Me, I shall be sanctified and gain glory before all the people." And Aharon was silent...*

How do we begin to understand *Moshe Rabbeinu's* words to his brother, words which at first glance seem lacking any sentiment of compassion or comfort. How are we to understand *Aharon's* reaction to *Moshe's* words? Was *Aharon's* silence, and lack of crying out in anguish, simply the result of shock, or is there a deeper message to be learned from *Aharon's* reaction to the loss of his two sons? What is the significance of *Hashem's* words-*B'krovai Ekadeish-Through those who are close to me, I shall be sanctified?*

According to the **Rashbam**, the words

וידום אהרן, *and Aharon was silent*, are to be understood as a powerful expression of utter faith. Upon hearing that his sons were taken because they were close to *Hashem-Bekrovai Ekadeish*, *Aharon* remained silent, he did not express any sadness, he did not weep and did not perform any aspects of mourning. The knowledge that their passing somehow connoted that they were considered by *Hashem* to be close, and that their passing was somehow meant to sanctify *Hashem's* name, was seemingly enough for *Aharon* to refrain from any expression of sadness.

During these past many difficult months, there have been many instances of incredible courage, and incredible faith, of *Kiddush Hashem* in the shadow of much darkness and sadness. I recently re-read a powerful story told by the great rabbinic personality **Rav Ephraim Oshry zt'l**, known for his remarkable halachic responsa- *Teshuvot Mimaamakim*- Responsa from the Depths. Rav Oshry, who survived the Kovno ghetto, and settled on the Lower East Side in New York City, where he served as *Mara D'Atra* of *Beis Medrash HaGadol*, became renowned for his responsa both in the midst of the Holocaust, as well as in the years immediately following the Holocaust, answering countless difficult halachic issues with insight and sensitivity. *Rav Oshry* shared this poignant story about his wife's illustrious grandfather, **HaRav Asher Greensweig, Hy'd, zy'a**.

**Harav Asher Zelig Greensweig, Hy"d, zy'a**, was the *Mara D'Atra* of the Romanian

town of Dalha, who became known by the name of his *sefer*, *Beit Asher*. He was a devoted *talmid* of the *Yetev Lev*, *Harav Yekutiel Yehudah Teitelbaum, zy"á*. *Rav Asher* always kept a special *bekeshe* with him at all times, which he hoped to quickly don to greet at any moment, *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. When he and the Jews of Dalha were awaiting deportation to Auschwitz, the *Rav* emerged wearing his '*Moshiach Bekeshe*'. As his family and community looked on and wept, the *Tzadik Rav Asher*, turned to them and said: "*Now is not a time for sadness or to weep. Each and every mitzva much be fulfilled b'simcha, even the mitzva of giving one's life al Kiddush Hashem...*"

*Aharon's* silence is not to be misinterpreted as lacking emotion for the loss of his two sons. Rather, it must be seen as an acknowledgment of the *ratzon Hashem*, and that even in this tragic circumstance, *Aharon* finds the strength to move forward and to continue to be *Mikadeish Sheim Shamayim*, through his sacred work in the *Mishkan* on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may we be blessed to serve *Hashem* at all times *b'simcha*, and may we merit to sanctify *Hashem's* name only through our actions and accomplishments, and not through tragedy and sadness. ■

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## GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN  
Ram, Yeshivat Har Etzion

# The Power and the Glory.. of Life in Israel

The long-awaited day had finally arrived. After collecting building materials, weaving priestly clothing, and crafting the various components of the Mishkan, the grand project of building a house for Hashem was completed. Evidently, our prayers for forgiveness after the *egel* fiasco were accepted. Hashem agreed to settle His presence in a wooden and gold-plated house which we had fashioned. The great love between Hashem and His chosen people had survived the horrific *egel* debacle.

Until the fire descended from heaven however, no one was certain that Hashem also desired our *korbanot*. Perhaps He had forgiven us, but only half-way. Perhaps He was willing to visit our Mishkan but not prepared to accept our sacrifices. Once the heavenly fire descended and consumed the *korbanot* it became evident that our relationship with Hashem had undergone a full restart.

Suddenly, tragedy struck. Two children of Aharon deviated from Mishkan protocol, and a second more ominous fire descended from heaven, this time incinerating Nadav and Avihu. A day which had been slated for celebration and vindication transformed into a dark and sorrowful day of tragedy. Our national excitement was washed away in grief and misery.

What was so terrible about the sin of

Aharon's two sons? What possible crime warranted such severe divine retribution, especially on this triumphant day. Given the blissful occasion, perhaps Aharon's children should have been pardoned or at least should have received clemency. What were they guilty of?

### TOO COMFORTABLE?

There are differing accounts as to the exact nature of their sin. From the Torah's description it appears that Nadav and Avihu offered a personal blend of *ketoret* which hadn't been authorized or, as the Torah refers to it, an *אֵשׁ זרה*. Certainly, unlicensed *ketoret* is an offense, but why did it elicit such a harsh repercussion?

Chazal assumed that there were additional crimes, aside from the unsanctioned *ketoret*. According to one version Aharon's sons entered the Mishkan while slightly inebriated. Even a minimal amount of intoxication is forbidden when entering the Mishkan. A different opinion in Chazal suggests that the "additional" crime of Aharon's two sons was their hastiness in issuing a halachic ruling in the presence of Moshe Rabeinu. Instead of deferring to a higher authority, they usurped Moshe's title, and for this impudence they were punished.

These three crimes – unauthorized *ketoret*, inebriation, and usurping Moshe's authority share one common denominator: none of

them is sinister or wicked. They can all be considered misdemeanors or minor offenses, especially given the “spirit of the day”. It was reasonable to assume that a day this festive, would invite special korbanot, in addition to the standard fare. It was reasonable to imagine that moderate drinking could enhance the liveliness and joviality of the religious celebration. It was reasonable to assume that, on this day, hierarchies could be temporarily suspended, and that younger Torah scholars could enthusiastically “cut the line” and answer Torah questions. The opening day of the Mishkan was a once-in-history event and slight deviations should be tolerated, or at least, shouldn’t be “excessively” punished. The crimes of Nadav and Avihu, even if taken together, seem mild and don’t appear to justify the severe punishment they suffered.

### EDUCATIONAL, NOT PUNITIVE

Evidently, their death wasn’t just a punishment, but also was a lesson. On a day when humans could, potentially, feel *too close* to Hashem, when a human-crafted edifice began to lodge the infinite Divine presence, Hashem’s unknowability and unfathomability could, potentially be compromised. On this day of celebration, the distance between Hashem and Man had to be accentuated. When standing in the presence of “the Other” you don’t freelance, you don’t drink, and you certainly don’t break protocol.

The death of Nadav and Avihu wasn’t solely punitive, it was also instructive, teaching us a lesson about proper boundaries between Hashem and Man. As Moshe Rabeinu instructs Aharon after the tragedy: בקרובי אקדש

The tragic deaths of Nadav and Avihu strengthened Hashem’s kedusha, reaffirmed His transcendence and reinforced



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His incomprehensibility.

Had these sins occurred *somewhere else* they would not have warranted such a harsh response. Had these deviances occurred *on a different day*, perhaps the heavenly response would not have been so radical. Since, however, these misdemeanors occurred on a day on which Hashem’s transcendence may have been diminished and, additionally, the crimes occurred in the presence of Hashem in the Mishkan, they could not be overlooked.

Such is the steep price of standing before Hashem. The closer you live to Him the more delicate the relationship, the greater care must be taken, and the less margin of error exists.

Hundreds of years later the same harsh lesson was handed down a second time. During the early stages of Dovid Hamelech’s reign, after a twenty-year sojourn outside of

Yerushalayim, the Aron Hakodesh was joyously paraded back to the capital city. During the jubilant procession the Aron slipped from the wagon. Attempting to prevent it from falling, one of the caretakers named “Uzza” illegally clutched it with his bare hands. Uzza made an honest and innocent mistake, assuming that the Aron regulations could be violated to prevent it from falling. He was immediately killed and, once again, the gala day of celebration turned sorrowful. Like the two sons of Aharon, Uzza’s crimes didn’t warrant such stern punishment. Once again, the fatal outcome was educational and not merely punitive. The festive parade of the Aron threatened to diminish the distance between Hashem and the revelers. Too much giddiness and too much merriment may have diminished reverence and gravitas. On this day, even a slight miscue, such as touching the Aron Hakodesh elicited a severe response. Living in close precincts to Hashem leaves little margin for error.

### THE GLORY AND THE FEAR

Living close to Hashem is frightening but also glorious. Sadly, some are so gripped with terror and fear of consequences that they cannot perceive the grandeur of living Hashem’s presence. Because he was petrified of the potential consequences of this lifestyle, Esav bartered his rights to the first born. As he himself announced

הנה אנכי הולך למות ולמה זה לי בכורה

Chazal infer that Esav was concerned that a life in the Mikdash would be deadly. One minor slip-up and the consequences would be dire. Paralyzed by fear, Esav could not appreciate the glory of a life of mission. He couldn’t see beyond the consequences and appreciate the splendor. Life before Hashem

sometimes comes at a steep price, but that life is meaningful and momentous.

### CRISIS IN ISRAEL

Over the past few months, we have all discovered the steep price of living closer to Hashem. We don’t know why this dreadful tragedy struck our people and our Land, but we do know that, along with the privilege of living in Israel comes a massive responsibility to live up to the standards of a life before Hashem. For thousands of years, we didn’t live in Hashem’s direct presence and our margin for error was greater. Now that we are back in His presence our relationship is more delicate and our mistakes more critical. We are starting to appreciate the grave responsibility of living in the Land of Hashem. We certainly don’t know what caused this tragedy, but we realize that, in Israel, our relationship is more fragile and the impact of our behavior more fateful.

Some view this price as too steep and prefer to live outside of Israel and far away from the awesome responsibilities and consequences of this privilege. That is an “Esav” attitude. We finally have the opportunity to live near Hashem and we dare not shrink in fear. Esav was obsessed with dread, we are enchanted by the glory.

We have all suffered through tragedy, anxiety, and sadness over the past few months. However, every Israeli will concede that this period has been the most meaningful six months of their lives. Every Israeli will acknowledge that, despite the hardships, they can’t imagine living elsewhere during this period. Living before Hashem in His Land makes our everyday lives meaningful, purposeful, and historically resonant. We hope

we never again have to pay the price for that privilege. But let's not forget the privilege and let's not forget the glory. ■

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# HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

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## Gateways to Growth

PARSHAT HACHODESH  
YEchezkel 45

וּבָּאוּ עִם־הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי ה' בַּמּוֹעֲדִים הֵבִיא הָאֱדוּמִי  
שַׁעַר צָפוֹן לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת יֵצֵא דָרְךְ־שַׁעַר נֶגֶב וְהֵבִיא  
דָרְךְ־שַׁעַר נֶגֶב יֵצֵא דָרְךְ־שַׁעַר צָפוֹנָה לֹא יָשׁוּב דָרְךְ  
הַשַּׁעַר אֲשֶׁר־בָּא בוֹ כִּי נָכְחוּ יֵצֵאוּ [יֵצֵא]:

*On the fixed occasions, when the common people come before Hashem, whoever enters by the north gate to bow shall leave by the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate shall leave by the north gate. They shall not go back through the gate by which they came in, but shall go out by the opposite one.*

The pasuk from Ezekiel 45:16 outlines a specific protocol for those entering and exiting the Beit HaMikdash. It describes a practice where individuals entering through one gate must exit through the opposite gate. What was the purpose of walking in this unique path rather than using the same route? This seemingly straightforward instruction carries deeper significance, inviting reflection on the nature of routine and mindfulness in our lives.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz explains that this practice serves as a reminder of the tendency to become complacent amidst repetitive actions. By altering the path of entry and exit, individuals are prompted to engage with each moment consciously, fostering a sense

of awareness and gratitude for the blessings present in everyday life.

In contemplating the wisdom behind this practice, it becomes apparent that routines can often dull our appreciation for the nuances of existence. The monotony of daily life may obscure the beauty and opportunities that surround us. Through the intentional deviation from the familiar, we are urged to approach each experience with renewed vigor and attentiveness. By embracing change and actively seeking mindfulness, we unlock the potential for growth and discovery in our lives.

As we navigate through times of hardship and transition, such as the aftermath of significant events like October 7th, it is natural to feel stagnated and overwhelmed. The disruption of routines and the weight of loss may cast a shadow over our ability to move forward. Yet, within these moments lies an opportunity for introspection and renewal. Just as individuals in the passage are directed to exit through a different gate, we too can choose to navigate life's challenges with resilience and adaptability.

Ultimately, the lesson from Ezekiel's passage transcends its historical context, offering timeless wisdom for navigating the ebb and flow of existence. It reminds us that life's journey is not meant to be traversed passively but rather embraced with intention and mindfulness. By embracing change, cultivating gratitude, and remaining open to new experiences, we unlock the transformative power of each moment, paving the way for personal growth and fulfillment. ■

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## RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

EDITOR, TORAH TIDBITS  
RAV, THE JERUSALEM SHUL - BAKA, JERUSALEM

# Be Bold

For seven days, the inauguration of the *Mishkan* has been celebrated. Now, finally, on the eighth day, Aharon is to assume his honored position as *kohen gadol*, high priest of his people. At the very moment he is about to ascend the altar for the very first time, according to the Midrash, Aharon stops in his tracks, so Moshe turns to him and says, “Approach the altar” (Leviticus 9:7).<sup>1</sup> What causes Aharon to freeze up?

The Ravad surmised that as Aharon readied himself to ascend the altar, its corner protuberances reminded him of animal horns, and the associative workings of the mind brought him back to the terrible sin of the golden calf, which he had a hand in producing.<sup>2</sup> The sin must have weighed heavily on him. A century or so later, Rabbi Yitzchak b. Yehudah ha-Levi in his *Pane’ach Raza* recorded a hint to this in the Torah itself. He observed that the letter *kuf* that begins Moshe’s command to Aharon of “approach” (קָרַב), is topped with *tagin*, the scribal flourish

of crownlets. This is the only place in the Torah that a *kuf* is so crowned. These represent the horns that stood out in Aharon’s thoughts, reminding him of the calf and, by extension, of his sin.<sup>3</sup> According to these medieval authorities, Aharon was paralyzed by self-doubt and could not move until Moshe ordered him to carry on.

Perhaps Aharon’s state of mind dictated the kind of sacrifice to be brought. He was



commanded to offer a very specific calf, an *egel ben bakar* (Leviticus 9:2). Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explained that according to the Talmud this was a two-year-old calf—neither an *egel*, a baby calf in its first year, nor a *par*, a three-year-old bull. In this intermediate stage, the animal is in the process of maturing but is not quite there yet.<sup>4</sup> One can

suggest that it was crucial at this juncture, as Aharon was transitioning into a full-time servant of God, that he sacrifice an animal that was, in one respect, neither here nor there. He had to be all in and offer up any misgivings to God.

In his path breaking *Orot ha-Teshuvah*, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook detailed the emotional and psychological aspects of sin and the process of repentance. To repent requires recalling past misdeeds

1. *Torat Kohanim, Milu'im, Shemini*, 1:8, cited by Rashi on Leviticus 9:7.

2. Ravad’s commentary on *Torat Kohanim* is cited by Ramban on Leviticus 9:7.

3. *Pane’ach Raza* on Leviticus 9:7.

4. Rabbi Hirsch on Leviticus 9:2.

and resolving not to repeat them. Although remembering our unfortunate missteps can be demoralizing, “despair itself should encourage a person not to fear and to repent from every sin, full of tranquility and spiritual courage.”<sup>5</sup> As we saw with Aharon, however, this is not always possible. Sometimes an egregious or shameful sin hovers around us like an albatross, and we cannot make any progress. For such cases, Rav Kook offered an alternative path:

כְּאִשֶּׁר בָּאוֹת לוֹ מִחֻשְׁבוֹת שֶׁל יְרָאָה וְשֶׁל תְּשׁוּבָה  
בְּדֶרֶךְ עֲצוֹן יִסִּיחַ דַּעְתּוֹ מֵהֶם עַד שֶׁתִּתְכַוֵּן  
מִחֻשְׁבוֹתָיו, וְיִקְבֹּל עָלָיו כָּל הַתְּכַן שֶׁל קִדְשָׁהּ וְשֶׁל  
יְרֵאת שְׁמַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ חֲדוּדָה וְשִׂמְחָה.

When thoughts of fear and repentance arise out of sadness, one should avert his attention from them until he can gain hold of his consciousness, and accept on himself the entire complement of holiness and fear of Heaven with delight and happiness.<sup>6</sup>

If a person will be overwhelmed by sadness, anxiety, or despair, it is better to turn joy and positivity into the emotional vehicle for repentance.

Returning to *Parashat Shemini*, in the words of the Ramban, Moshe said to his brother: “Be bold so that you are not so despondent; God has already forgiven you.”<sup>7</sup> Moshe communicates to us that we need to move forward and not tread water, otherwise we will be spiritually lost.

Rav Kook emphasized that we must never allow ourselves to be overpowered by disheartening feelings of regret. On the contrary, we need to overpower such sentiments with bold optimism, wholesome

5. *Orot ha-Teshuvah*, 8:15.

6. *Ibid.*, 14:11.

7. Ramban on Leviticus 9:7.

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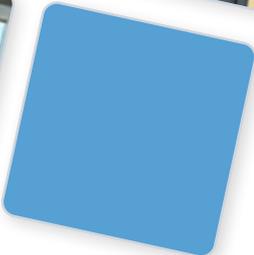
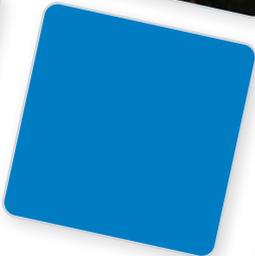
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self-confidence, and robust courage. Ultimately, Aharon did just that. He stepped up to the altar, offered blessings, and brought God’s presence upon himself and the entire nation. The key to his success lay in Moshe’s encouragement: “Be bold.” ■

**Rabbi Goldscheider** is the author of the newly published book ‘Torah United’ (OU Press), featuring divrei Torah on the weekly parasha from Rav Kook, Rabbi Solovetichik, and the Chassidic Masters.



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## Moral Culpability for Unintentional Actions on Shabbat

לעילוי נשמת  
יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלצמן ז"ל

**Question:** My coordination, balance, and eyesight have deteriorated. Despite my best efforts, not infrequently on Shabbat I bump into and move *muktzeh* items in my small apartment. Are my accidental movements of *muktzeh* violations of Shabbat? If they are, I wonder about the following sad scene. A person who passionately kept Shabbat all his life suffers a fatal heart attack on Shabbat and, in the process, falls and breaks something. Was his last action a desecration of Shabbat?

**Answer:** We wish you good and improved health and suggest contemplating happier things. Regarding these questions, *halacha* is totally “on your side” for several reasons. We take the opportunity to investigate various categories of unintentional “violations” in general terms.

Even if one purposely moves a *muktzeh* object with parts of the body people do not usually use to move things (i.e., everything but the hands), most say that the standard (Rabbinic) prohibitions of *muktzeh*, such as moving something to protect it, do not apply (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 311:8; Mishna Berura 311:30). Although some are stringent if one directly moves

*muktzeh* with any part of the body, especially for no good reason (see Chazon Ish, OC 47:12; Dirshu 311:33), all agree there is no problem if one incidentally moves it as he walks (Chazon Ish *ibid.*).

Let us now imagine one accidentally banging into something that activates a Shabbat violation. Did he mistakenly violate Shabbat? The most severe category of unintentional Shabbat violation is *shogeg* – one intends to, for example, light a candle, just that he forgot it was Shabbat or that lighting a candle is forbidden on Shabbat. This person requires the atonement of a *korban chatot* (sometimes multiple *korbanot* – see Rambam, Shegagot 7:2-4).

A significantly lower level of blame exists regarding cases of *mitasek* – a person who did not intend to do the forbidden action/result. This comes in different forms. A) He did not mean to do the action that ended up; B) He intended to do the action to an object in a manner that would have been permitted. *Mitasek* is exempt from a *korban* in various prohibitions, except those involving physical enjoyment (Kritot 19b). There is an additional level of exemption for Shabbat (*melechet machashevet* – one planned to do the *mela-cha*, but it came out differently than planned (Rambam, Shabbat 1:9)).

Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Shut I:8) posits that there is a qualitative difference between the exemption of *mitasek* for Shabbat as opposed to other non-enjoyment prohibitions. Regarding the latter, there is a violation, just that it is insufficient to obligate a *korban*. One ramification is that if one is aware that his friend is about to violate one of these *aveirot* as a *mitasek*, he must act to stop the violation. However, a *mitasek* does not violate Shabbat and a friend does not have to stop him (at least from the fundamental, Torah-level perspective). The Oneg Yom Tov (20) assumes that even a *mitasek* of Shabbat is considered violating Shabbat and needs to be told to stop. Some level of regret also explains the *halacha* that one should check his pockets before Shabbat to make sure he does not have *muktzeh* and/or will not carry in a place that does not have an *eiruv* (Shabbat 12a).

The above, though, is likely when one has some idea of what he is doing, even if not all the details. After all, if one is planning to do permitted *action A* and knows that

unintended *forbidden result B* might possibly occur, he may do *action A* because of “*davar she’eino mitkaven*.” It cannot be that after acting with permission, if it came out that *result B* occurred, that he needs to have regrets for what he did, given that the rabbis knew it was likely and still permitted it (see He’arot of Rav Elyashiv, Ketubot 5b). Since we would definitely let a wobbly person walk in a crowded room, we will not say he violated Shabbat by banging into something.

In the sad case of the heart attack, it is not even considered that he did an action. When someone falls down, it is gravity that is acting **upon him** (see Tosafot, Sanhedrin 74b). ■

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# Swords of Iron War Responsa #1: Separating Terumot & Ma'aserot With an Abridged Text

## Question:

I am in active duty without access to a phone or siddur and I want to separate *terumot* and *ma'aserot* from fruit I received. Am I allowed to use the abridged text?

## Answer:

The Chazon Ish writes (*Demay* 15:6) that someone who is on the road and does not have access to the written text and is not knowledgeable with the procedure for separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot* should set aside a bit more than 1% of the produce. Then they should say that the separations should all apply just as it is written properly in the text in one's possession, and this is effective. Many *Acharonim* cite this ruling.

The Chazon Ish supports his innovation with proof from the laws of testimony, *Sanhedrin* 60a: if witnesses come to testify and one says a full testimony, the second can subsequently affirm, "I [testify] likewise."

This testimony is valid for civil law (*dinei mamonot*) and capital law (*dinei nefashot*) and is considered as if the full content of the testimony was stated. He extends this concept to *terumot* and *ma'aserot*; the full text is available in a siddur, so one may say that the formula will apply as written there.

Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (*Har Tzvi Zera'im* 1:48), however, completely rejects the Chazon Ish's suggestion. He argues that the act of saying the formula for the separation of *terumot* and *ma'aserot* inherently creates a designation – both prohibitive and financial. It follows, therefore, that a clear and explicit statement is crucial for the separation to prove effective. A designation cannot be established without saying the full text of the separation. This is in contrast to the laws of testimony, where one witness can state the full testimony and another witness can rely on it. Thus, Rabbi Frank maintains that separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot* employing the Chazon Ish's solution is not acceptable even *bedi'avad*.

## PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

- It is best to learn the text to understand the procedure for separating *terumot*

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and *ma'aserot*. Guidelines are available on our website: [en.toraland.org.il](http://en.toraland.org.il).

- *Lechatchilah*, say the full text.
- In extenuating circumstances, when one does not have access to the text – such as soldiers in Gaza, set aside a little more than 1% and say “the separations should apply as written in my siddur at home.” Also say that the *ma'aser sheni* sanctity is transferred to a designated coin at home. Note that for the duration of the war, Torah VeHa'aretz Institute provides free membership to soldiers to Beit Ha'otzar our *ma'aser* fund and designate coins on their behalf for this purpose.
- Torah VeHa'aretz Institute published a pocket-sized edition of the separation formula. It can be distributed by brigade rabbis to religious soldiers for them to stick it in their vests. ■

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# Supporting Injured Soldiers

Many thousands of parents around Israel are confronted with a new reality that their child, returning from war, has suffered an injury. In some cases, the injuries can be healed through rehabilitation, while other injuries are permanent and require long-term medical care. Some injuries may cause relatively minimal changes in the soldier's day-to-day life, while other injuries lead to far-reaching limitations. Much can be written about this topic, and for this brief column, I want to mention aspects of this challenge on three different levels: individual, family, and communal.

On the individual level, the injured soldier may experience a wide range of emotions, and he may move between these emotions in ways that can be unexpected and surprising even to him. At times, the injured soldier may feel determined and hopeful as he pushes forward through his recovery and rehabilitation. During these times, he may be able to approach the adversity with humor. At other times, he may experience grief and despair over the loss of some aspects of the life he imagined for himself and the challenges that he's facing, or over chronic pain associated with the injury. These feelings often come with irritability or anger, and this change in mood can be disorienting for both the soldier and his loved ones. While

these difficult feelings are not unusual, it often can be helpful to have a consultation with a professional who can help assess whether there are concerns that require greater attention.

As mentioned, a soldier's recovery from injury often happens within a family system, which both affects and is affected by this process. Practically, the soldier may require any number of accommodations in support of his recovery, and navigating these adjustments presents challenges similar to any kind of change in the family. Families might need to shift their schedules as family members are called upon to accompany the soldier to medical appointments. Tasks historically performed by the injured soldier are now delegated to other people. Families also may need to make physical changes to the layout or structure of the home to accommodate the soldiers' new physical limitations. Family activities, such as trips or Shabbos plans, may be changed or curtailed.

From an emotional or psychological perspective, these adjustments can be challenging for the soldier and the family. Many soldiers express feeling frustrated, even guilty, about the additional support they require from their family. For the families, in addition to the determination and

purpose that they feel in supporting their injured loved one, many experience grief, exhaustion, and burnout as they adjust to life's new realities. They may feel guilty that they struggle with the changes in their household and schedule. Old family conflicts can also resurface as they negotiate the best way to share new responsibilities in the home.

Ultimately, families want to get to a place where they have a shared sense of acceptance, patience, and validation, although achieving this goal is, of course, much easier said than done. In my experience, families are most successful in navigating these changes when they commit time periodically to discussing the progress, commit to doing so in a nonjudgmental and validating way, and allow all relevant parties to share their perspectives. The complexity of family relationships means that achieving the desired cohesion may not happen on its own, so prioritizing maintaining strong family cohesion is an important ingredient to success.

From a community perspective, there are both short term needs, and longer term considerations, and as many people have attested, communities around Israel and beyond have mobilized to help those

in need. Most immediately, coordinating with the family to help with daily tasks like carpools, cooking, and laundry, can be invaluable to families who are in the adjustment phase. Communities can also look for additional ways to make public spaces and activities more accessible to people with disabilities. In the longer term, taking steps to ensure that both the injured soldiers and their families are appreciated, included in communal activities, and receive support when needed, may require appointing individuals or a committee who are dedicated to this role.

People have tremendous capacity for resilience if given the right support, and this holds true for our injured soldiers. Let us pray that Hashem helps us, as a nation, remain diligent in supporting our injured soldiers and their families through their recovery and rehabilitation. ■

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# Experiencing Pesach for the First Time at Age 30

He did not agree to be photographed, but allowed me to photograph the booklet he held in his hand. It was a booklet that introduced Judaism to children.

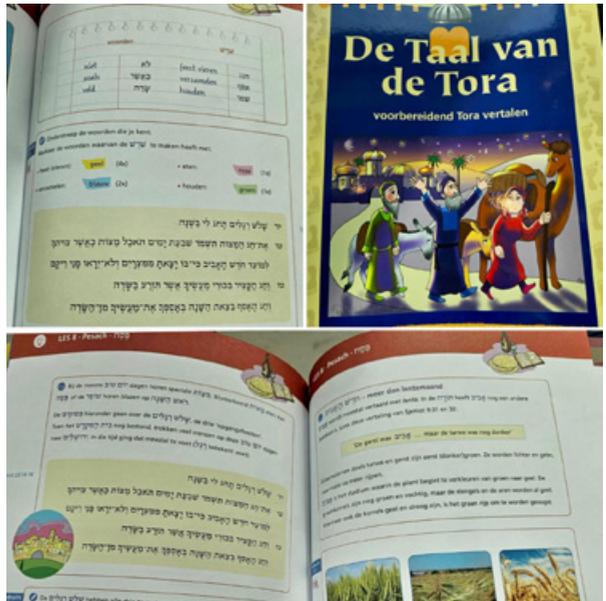
He approached me at the end of my lecture and introduced himself: 30 years old, an accountant from Amsterdam who was attending the “Go Jewish” Shabbat gathering that had been organized for young Jewish men and women from throughout Europe.

Since the horrible massacre on Simchat Torah, he decided that he wanted to study Judaism. He had to start somewhere and so, without embarrassment, he was learning from this booklet. He is now reading the chapter on Passover and is learning the meaning of three basic words: pesach, matzah, and maror. He wants to fully understand the Haggadah and all of us would do well to emulate the enthusiasm with which he is preparing for the Seder.

I photographed several pages from his booklet to illustrate its appeal to children and others at a beginners’ level. I told him that he was following in the footsteps of one of our greatest

sages, Rabbi Akiva, who began to learn Torah at the age of 40. Like a child, Rabbi Akiva had to start with the letter aleph, followed by the letter bet and so on, until he reached the highest level of Torah scholarship.

And I wondered how many other surprising developments may be occurring in the world today without our noticing them, and how many other individuals may be undergoing a transformation similar to what has happened to this young man. On Simchat Torah, a 30-year-old



Dutch accountant knew nothing about his heritage and his people and suddenly now, on the holiday of Passover, he will be privileged, for the first time, to experience leaving slavery for freedom. ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrahi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by Globes newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.

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# Real Life Rescues



## Thank you, God, for Giving me the Privilege of Saving a Life

On a recent Monday morning, Sarit Badani, a nurse midwife at Sheba Tel-HaShomer Medical Center and an active United Hatzalah volunteer, went for a short walk near her house in Moshav Achiezer, located in central Israel. Moments after returning to her house, she received an alert on her communications device regarding a man who had lost consciousness just four houses down the street. Badani immediately ran to her car, where she keeps her medical kit, and arrived at the scene in under 90 seconds.

Finding the man sitting on a chair, Badani began checking for vitals and found that the patient was not breathing and had no pulse. She immediately reported back to dispatch, as United Hatzalah EMTs Yisrael Avraham and Nissim Daus, who arrived at the scene shortly after her, moved the man to the floor. The responders initiated CPR and attached a defibrillator.

Badani and the team performed chest compressions and administered assisted ventilations to the patient. After a while, an intensive care ambulance crew arrived at the scene. The paramedic attached a heart monitor and administered medication to the patient. After about ten minutes of extreme effort, the man's pulse was restored. He was then transported to the hospital for further care.

"As a nurse midwife, I am used to performing CPR on infants, but it's rarer for me to do it on adults," recounted Badani after the incident. "I came back home afterward and said to myself 'Woah, I had the privilege to be first at the scene, shortly after the incident began, which is such a critical moment'. I later heard that the doctors told the patient that, if not for the quick intervention of first responders, he would have had brain damage at the very least. I still have goosebumps; thank you, God, for giving me the privilege of saving a life."



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# YACHAD



**Torah Tidbits is proud to now share a monthly dvar Torah from OU Israel's Yachad program. It is an honor to share insights from Yachad members and their madrichim who will present their unique perspectives on the parshat hashavua.**

**This D'var Torah is a summary of a *chavrutah* between **Dovid Oratz**, Yachad Jerusalem Chapter Director and **Naftali Stubin**, an active Yachad participant from Afulah. Together they studied a teaching from Rabbi Yissocher Frand.**

This week's parsha contains a detailed list of the kosher and non-kosher animals in the Torah. The two signs of kosher animals are split hooves and that they chew their cud. The Torah goes through a detailed list of animals that possess only one of the two kosher signs. The *shafan*, or hyrax, is not kosher because it does not have split hooves, even though it does chew its cud. The same is true with the arnevet, rabbit, and gamal, camel. The Torah also lists the *chazir*, pig, which has split hooves, but does not chew its cud. The Midrash points out that for these four animals listed, the Torah goes out of its way to first mention the kosher sign and only after mention the sign that renders it NOT kosher.

We know that the Torah doesn't waste a single word, so why does the Torah take the time to even mention the irrelevant

kosher signs? Why doesn't the Torah get straight to the point and tell us that the animal is not kosher?

The Midrash points out that even when the Torah tells us that these animals are not kosher, it starts off by stating a praiseworthy characteristic. While an animal is not allowed to be eaten, the Torah makes a special effort to share a positive description first.

The message of the Midrash is clear; If Hashem sees fit to go out of the way to find something good to say, even when talking about an impure animal, how much more so must we strive to make every effort to find positive things to say about other people or situations before offering any negative assessment. This is not simply optimism and positivity, but an instruction from Hashem to elevate our speech and thoughts, recognizing the inherent value in all of Hashem's creations and the *kedusha* in the world.

Yachad embodies this principle. We champion the strengths and abilities of each individual, fostering environments rich in respect, love, and appreciation. Our goal is to create healthy positive social environments. By highlighting the good, we cultivate a community where every member can thrive. In doing so, we mirror Hashem's practice of focusing on the positive, paving the way for a world where the light of every soul is acknowledged and celebrated. ■

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