

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shabbos Shorts

April 24 - 25, 2020 - 1 Iyar 5780 - Parshas Tazria/Metzora/Rosh Chodesh

Light Candles by 7:36 - Havdalah 8:39

ב' ז'

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by Ted & Nechama Goodman & family with tremendous Hakarat Hatov to Rabbi Rosenbaum, great neighbors--dear friends--who WERE and are here for us, the Chevra Kaddisha who carry out their work with sensitivity & dedication, our shul YISE & the Kemp Mill Kehilla. We appreciate you all!

Mazal Tov

- Melanie & Sandy Karlin** on the birth of identical twin grandsons born to their children, Danya & Benji Karlin of Washington, DC. Mazal Tov to grandparents Sharon & Shlomo Lerner of Sharon, MA, and to great-grandparents **Dolores & Len Schwartz**. Mazal Tov to the aunts, uncles and cousins, **Sarah & Matthew Karlin** and family and Shayna & Raphael Karlin and family.
- Vivian & Arnie Kirshenbaum** on becoming great-grandparents to a great-granddaughter, Charna Bracha, born to Isabella & Akiva Garfinkel of Lincolnwood, Illinois. Mazal Tov to grandparents, uncles, aunts, and the extended family.
- Dina & Mark Livingston** and family on the birth of a boy. Virtual Shalom Zachor will take place Motzei Shabbos, April 25, at 9:30 PM, and the virtual Bris will be on Monday, April 27, at 9:30 AM. Zoom details: Meeting ID: 646 626 8300, Password: 04 20 2020

Condolences

- Avi West** on the passing of his father, Dr. Raymond West, Yerachmiel ben Avraham Aryeh v'Sara Etyl. The funeral took place on Thursday. Quarantine Shiva at home through Wednesday April 29. Avi may be contacted during Shiva by phone at 301-649-3581. The family requests calls only from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM and 2:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

COVID-19 Updates

- All public activities at YISE are cancelled, including Minyanim, Youth Groups, Shiurim and special events.
- The Shul office is still open, but hours may vary.
- Please continue to be vigilant regarding matters of personal hygiene as previously advised. If you are unwell, please do not enter the Shul or other public places. We urge you to adhere to all medical advice you may receive regarding self-quarantine.

Let us Daven to Hashem to keep all of us in good health and to return our lives to normal as soon as possible. In protecting each other as we navigate this unfolding situation, may we grow stronger as individuals and as a community.

Shabbos Schedule

Note that Davening times are listed for reference so that people may Daven at the same time as others. There are no Minyanim at YISE at this time.

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 7:36, and not before Plag, 6:29
- Mincha: Ashkenazi: 6:10, 6:40, 7:40 Sephardi: 7:00 Nusach Sefard: 7:00
If you Daven Kabbalos Shabbos/Maariv prior to Shkia (7:54 PM), it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag (6:29 PM).

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: Ashkenazi: 7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15 Youth: 9:15
Sephardi: 7:45 Nusach Sefard: 7:00
- Mincha:
Ashkenazi: 2:30, 5:00, 7:25 Sephardi: 7:25 Nusach Sefard: 7:25
- Shabbos ends: 8:39

Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list, go to <https://wp.yise.org/remote-learning-schedule/>

- Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-minute Shiur on the Parsha. Sunday 9:00 AM/Monday through Friday 8:30 AM - Zoom A
- Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday, 7:30 PM - Zoom A. *Tuesday, April 28, 7:00 PM.*
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A.**
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays, 6:00 AM, **Zoom A.**
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, **Zoom A.**
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Chumash Shiur for Women, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, **Zoom A.**
- Rabbi Silver's** Parsha Shiur for men & women, a mix of Halacha and Aggada. Tuesdays at 7:30 PM. For more details, contact rbsilver@yise.org **Zoom B.**
- GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM
 - Unraveling the Navi with Rabbi Hillel Shaps, **Zoom C.**
- GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM. For more info, contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, hshaps@gwckollel.org 347-869-9361.
 - For Men & Women - **Zoom D:**
 - Mondays: Rabbi E. Gayer - A to Z of Jewish Living
 - Tuesdays: Rabbi Winter - Torah Topics
 - Wednesdays: Rabbi Grossman - Reading Responsa
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Grossman - Parshas Hashavua
 - For Women - **Zoom E:**
 - Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Tehillim: An in-depth analysis
 - Tuesdays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Bereishis in-Depth
- Semichat Chaver Program**, Tuesdays at 9:00 PM with Rabbi Silver. For more information, please contact Rabbi Binyamin Silver: rbsilver@yise.org or Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@gwckollel.org - **Zoom A.**
- The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiur on Daily Halachos for men & women, Tuesdays 9:15 AM, **Zoom F.**

Connection Details:

For Zoom, go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID and password:

- Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019
- Zoom B: ID: 784 431 8176
- Zoom C: ID: 349 754 2180
- Zoom D: ID: 746 455 2195
- Zoom E: ID: 601 853 4021
- Zoom F: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613

Commemoration of the Tenth Yahrzeit of Rav Gedaliah Anemer, ZT"L

Sunday April 26, 2020 - 11:00 AM

Zoom ID: 416 963 9000, phone 301-715-8592, password 492019

Reflections on the impact of Rav Anemer on our community and our lives.

Panelists: David Hornestay, Barbara Price, Debbie Katz, Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg. Moderated by Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

YISE Programs and Listings

We welcome new members who were voted in at the last Board meeting: Adina & Zach Neumann.

Membership Directory Updates - Last month we mailed out a sheet to each current member showing current information. If you have not sent in the form and may have misplaced it while doing Pesach clean-up, send a note to directory@yise.org and a copy will be emailed to you. Please send updates to directory@yise.org by Thursday, April 30.

Camp Shomrai 2020 is open for registration! Programs for campers entering 2-year-old preschool through 9th grade. Camp Dates: Monday, June 29 - Thursday, August 13. Register online at <https://campshomrai.campapplications.com> For more information contact Sarah Dollman at camp@yise.org

Shomrai Preschool 2020-2021 - Online registration is now open for children ages 2 to 5 years old with customizable extended care options from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Visit preschool.yise.org or email preschool@yise.org for more information or to schedule a tour. Ask about our special, deeply reduced tuition for incoming 2-year-olds!

Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill is a part of YISE's Chesed Committee. The program helps members undergoing serious medical crises. We are always looking for volunteers to help. To be a part of this program by helping with meals, visitation, shopping, childcare, etc., contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, mskarlin@gmail.com or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, mfriedman2@yahoo.com

The Rachel Bassan Horwitz Fund is used for medical needs in our area, elsewhere in the US, and in Israel. In order to continue this much-needed medical fund, your financial help is needed! Tax deductible contributions may be made payable to: YISE Charity SPECIAL Fund, c/o Norma Burdett, 11720 Lovejoy St., Silver Spring, MD 20902. Earmark: Bassan Fund. For more info: Norma Burdett, 301-593-5964 or Pearl Bassan, 301-649-3137.

Shiurim from Rabbi Gedaliah Anemer, ZT"ל, are available at <http://audio.yise.org>

Chametz After Pesach 2020

- Chametz may be purchased from all Capitol K establishments and caterers.
- Chametz may be purchased from the following national stores: Aldi, BJ's, Costco, CVS, Food Lion, Harris Teeter, Kmart, Lidl, Petco, PetSmart, Rite Aid, Royal Farms, Save-A-Lot, Sam's Club, Shoppers Food and Pharmacy, Trader Joe's, Walgreens, Walmart, Wegmans, Whole Foods Market, Winn-Dixie
- Chametz may be purchased from the following stores in our community: H Mart, MOM's Organic Market, ShopRite of White Oak
- Chametz may only be purchased from Snider's beginning four weeks after Pesach, May 15.

Due to possible Chametz distributed by a Jewish company, if one has the option of purchasing Chametz from other stores, it is commendable to not purchase Chametz from Giant, Safeway or Target until four weeks after Pesach, May 15. Due to a potential limited supply of food due to COVID-19, this would not be the year to be stringent on this matter if not feasible.

Community Programs & Listings

A Time for Unity - Special Sunday Evening Lecture Series - As we look forward to Shavuot - the Season of the Giving of our Torah - let us come together and find inspiration in the words of the Torah. Chabad of Silver Spring will be hosting distinguished rabbis again this year during the weeks between Pesach and Shavuot. This week's speaker: Rabbi Michoel Frank of Ohr HaTorah, Sunday, April 26, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM. Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/99088655463?pwd=RGEzNDdWWURVMGJEYmxVUW13d0p5dz09>

Dr. Fred Dziadek Lift A Friend (LAF) Initiative - Presented by the Golden Network. Win 1 of 5 \$50 Amazon gift cards. 1 - Call someone 65+ that would appreciate a call, 2 - Enter the drawing via email to info@goldennetwork.org with name/address/phone and recipient's city/state. 3 - Bonus ticket if recipient lives in Montgomery County, MD. One entry per person, April 24 - May 6. Ages 6+ may participate. Children should be supervised and entries must be submitted by an adult.

Remote Night Shiurim from YGW - Sunday 8:30 PM - 9:15 PM, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate; Monday/Wednesday 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky; Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold. Register at https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1715843153121/WN_n6jNGqUpTpCN6ikCabUutA

Daf Yomi Shiur currently meets online via a WebEx video conference. There is still room for a few more participants. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at lifschitz@slslaw.com to be added to the invite list. Sunday 7:00 AM, Monday - Thursday 9:00 PM, Friday 5:45 PM.

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, April 29, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. See what Toastmasters is all about and find out how you can become a more confident communicator. Contact Manasseh Katz at vpm@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password 3671.

Partners in Tefillah matches people with others in need of similar assistance from Hashem. The feedback we have received so far has been amazing. You, too, can Daven for someone else in the community and have them Daven for you. May Hashem answer all your prayers. Please visit www.yadylehuda.org/partners-in-tefillah to learn more and to sign up.

Community Helping Community: Yad Yehuda's COVID-19 Crisis Relief - During this crisis, previously financially stable households in our community are already experiencing financial challenges. Yad Yehuda is receiving many more assistance requests than usual. Community financial donations are critical now. Please make an additional donation to Yad Yehuda today to help us address this unforeseen need at www.yadylehuda.org/donate. A COVID-19 Telephone Assistance Hotline is now available at 301-494-1010, Sunday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Friday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. When you call, one of our dedicated Yad Yehuda volunteers will answer questions and help connect you with resources in the Jewish community and the area at large. If the volunteer is unable to answer your issue or question, they will, IY"H, ensure that someone gets back to you in a timely manner. Our friendly volunteers are there to help and will do so with the utmost discretion and privacy. Please visit www.yadylehuda.org/covid19 for additional and updated information.

Daily Halacha Program from Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold - Receive one every day in your inbox. Visit dvarhalacha.com and click "Sign Up."

Kemp Mill Village is providing friendly phone calls and limited deliveries during the pandemic. Call 1-833-KMV-20902 to request service or to volunteer. See kempmillvillage.org for more information.

Silver Spring Gemachim - For a complete list: www.gemachexchange.com

| The Week Ahead | Sunday April 26 | Monday April 27 | Tuesday April 28 | Wednesday, April 29 Yom Haatzmaut | Thursday April 30 | Friday May 1 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| No Minyan will take place at YISE next week. You are encouraged to Daven at home at your regular Minyan time. | | | | | | |
| Mincha was scheduled for April 26 - 30 at 7:45 PM (Ashkenazi)/7:40 PM (Sephardi). | | | | | | |
| Halachic Times: Earliest Talis and Tefillin: 5:19 AM, Latest Krias Shma: 9:36 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:41 PM | | | | | | |

Upcoming Events

Sunday, April 26 10th Yahrzeit of Rav Anemer, 11:00 AM

Next Shabbos

May 1 - 2, 2020 - 8 Iyar 5780

Parshas Acharei Mos/Kedoshim

Light Candles: Friday by 7:43 Havdalah: 8:47

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday April 29 at 12:00 Noon

Submit items for the Shabbos Shorts to: announce@yise.org

Office Phone: 301-593-4465 Office Fax: 301-593-2330

Eruv line: 301-593-5561

E-Mail: office@yise.org Website: www.yise.org

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Friday - 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Sammy Franco - President

Rabbi Binyamin Silver - Asst. Rabbi

Simi Franco - Office Manager

Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Volume 26, Issue 26

Shabbat Parashat Tazria - Metzora

Shabbat Shalom

5780 - B”H

Covenant and Conversation: R. Jonathan Sacks

Words That Heal - At the risk of disclosing a spoiler, I would like to begin this week's Covenant & Conversation by discussing the 2019 film *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*. Tom Hanks plays the beloved American children's television producer/presenter Mister Rogers, a legendary figure to several generations of young Americans, famous for his musical invitation, "Won't You Be My Neighbor?"

What makes the film unusual is that it is an unabashed celebration of the power of human goodness to heal broken hearts. Today such straightforward moral messages tend to be confined to children's films (some of them, as it happens, works of genius). Such is the power and subtlety of the film, however, that one is not tempted to dismiss it as simplistic or naïve.

The plot is based on a true story. A magazine had decided to run a series of short profiles around the theme of heroes. It assigned one of its most gifted journalists to write the vignette about Fred Rogers. The journalist was, however, a troubled soul. He had a badly broken relationship with his father. The two had physically fought at his sister's wedding. The father sought reconciliation, but the journalist refused even to see him.

The jagged edges of his character showed in his journalism. Everything he wrote had a critical undercurrent as if he relished destroying the images of the people he had come to portray. Given his reputation, he wondered why the children's television star had agreed to be interviewed by him. Had Rogers not read any of his writings? Did he not know the obvious risk that the profile would be negative, perhaps devastatingly so? It turned out that not only had Rogers read every article of his that he could get hold of; he was also the only figure who had agreed to be interviewed by him. All the other "heroes" had turned him down.

The journalist goes to meet Rogers, first sitting through the production of an episode of his show, complete with puppets, toy trains and a miniature townscape. It is a moment ripe for big-city cynicism. Yet Rogers, when they meet and talk, defies any conventional stereotype. He turns the questions away from himself and toward the journalist. Almost immediately sensing the core of unhappiness within him, he then turns every negative question into a positive affirmation, and exudes the calmness and quiet, the listening silence, that allows and encourages the journalist to talk about himself.

It is a remarkable experience to watch as Hanks' gentleness, immovable even under pressure, slowly allows the journalist – who had, after all, merely come to write a 400 word profile – to acknowledge his own failings vis-à-vis his father and to give him the emotional strength to forgive him and be reconciled to him in the limited time before he died. Here is a fragment of their conversation that will give you a feel for the tone of the relationship:

Journalist: You love people like me.

Fred Rogers: What are people like you? I've never met anyone like you in my entire life.

Journalist: Broken people.

Fred Rogers: I don't think you are broken. I know you are a man of conviction. A person who knows the difference between what is wrong and what is right. Try to remember that your relationship with

your father also helped to shape those parts. He helped you become what you are.

Note how in a few brief sentences, Rogers helps reframe the journalist's self-image, as well as his relationship with his father. The very argumentativeness that led him to fight with his father was something he owed to his father. The film reflects the true story of when the real Fred Rogers met the journalist Tom Junod. Junod, like his character 'Lloyd Vogel' in the film, came to mock but stayed to be inspired. He said about the experience, "What is grace? I'm not certain; all I know is that my heart felt like a spike, and then, in that room, it opened and felt like an umbrella." The film is, as one reviewer put it, "a perfectly pitched and played ode to goodness."

The point of this long introduction is that the film is a rare and compelling illustration of the power of speech to heal or harm. This, according to the Sages, is what Tazria and Metzora are about. *Tsara'at*, the skin condition whose diagnosis and purification form the heart of the *parshiyot*, was a punishment for lashon hara, evil speech, and the word *metzora*, for one suffering from the condition, was, they said, an abridgment of the phrase *motzi shem ra*, one who speaks slander. The key prooftext they brought was the case of Miriam who spoke badly about Moses, and was struck with *tsara'at* as a result (Num. 12). Moses alludes to this incident many years later, urging the Israelites to take it to heart: "Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam along the way after you came out of Egypt".

Judaism is, I have argued, a religion of words and silences, speaking and listening, communicating and attending. God created the universe by words – "And He said ... and there was" – and we create the social universe by words, by the promises with which we bind ourselves to meet our obligations to others. God's revelation at Sinai was of words – "You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a Voice". Every other ancient religion had its monuments of brick and stone; Jews, exiled, had only words, the Torah they carried with them wherever they went. The supreme mitzvah in Judaism is *Shema Yisrael*, "Listen, Israel." For God is invisible and we make no icons. We can't see God; we can't smell God; we can't touch God; we can't taste God. All we can do is listen in the hope of hearing God. In Judaism, listening is high religious art.

Or it should be. What Tom Hanks shows us in his portrayal of Fred Rogers is a man who is capable of attending to other people, listening to them, talking gently to them in a way that is powerfully affirming without for a moment being bland or assuming that all is well with the world or with them. The reason this is both interesting and important is that it is hard to know how to listen to God if we do not know how to listen to other people. And how can we expect God to listen to us if we are incapable of listening to others?

This entire issue of speech and its impact on people has become massively amplified by the spread of smartphones and social media and their impact, especially on young people and on the entire tone of the public conversation. Online abuse is the plague of our age. It has happened because of the ease and impersonality of communication. It gives rise to what has been called the disinhibition effect: people feel freer to be cruel and crude than they would be in

a face-to-face situation. When you are in the physical presence of someone, it is hard to forget that the other is a living, breathing human being just as you are, with feelings like yours and vulnerabilities like yours. But when you are not, all the poison within you can leak out, with sometimes devastating effects. The number of teenage suicides and attempted suicides has doubled in the past ten years, and most attribute the rise to effects of social media. Rarely have the laws of *lashon hara* been more timely or necessary.

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood offers a fascinating commentary on an ancient debate in Judaism, one discussed by Maimonides in the sixth of his Eight Chapters, as to which is greater, the chassid, the saint, the person who is naturally good, or ha-moshel be-nafsho, one who is not naturally saintly at all but who practices self-restraint and suppresses the negative elements in their character. It is precisely this question, whose answer is not obvious, that gives the film its edge.

The Rabbis said some severe things about *lashon hara*. It is worse than the three cardinal sins – idolatry, adultery, and bloodshed – combined. It kills three people: the one who speaks it, the one of whom it is spoken, and the one who receives it. Joseph received the hatred of his brothers because he spoke negatively about some of them. The generation that left Egypt was denied the chance of entering the land because they spoke badly about it. One who speaks it is said to be like an atheist.

I believe we need the laws of *lashon hara* now more than almost ever before. Social media is awash with hate. The language of politics has become ad hominem and vile. We seem to have forgotten the messages that *Tazria* and *Metzora* teach: that evil speech is a plague. It destroys relationships, rides roughshod over people's feelings, debases the public square, turns politics into a jousting match between competing egos and defiles all that is sacred about our common life. It need not be like this.

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood shows how good speech can heal where evil speech harms.

Parsha and Purpose: Rabbi Kenneth Brander

The Lonely Man of Faith: Comfort and Guidance from Rav Soloveitchik in the Age of Corona

Twenty-seven years ago, one of the towering figures of modern Jewish history was taken from us: Rabbi Yosef Dov haLevi Soloveitchik – "the Rav".

In the early 1960's, Rabbi Soloveitchik composed an important article, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, which is so relevant to us in our time.

Rabbi Soloveitchik composed this article against the following backdrop: he was feeling the fragility of life – he was suffering from cancer. As he said, "I suddenly ceased to be immortal; I became a mortal being."

It was also at a time in which he was privileged to be asked, after the passing of Rabbi Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog, to consider being the next Israeli Chief Rabbi; the only person living outside of the State of Israel who was asked to think about being a candidate for the Chief Rabbi of Medinat Yisrael.

It was on the backdrop of the Cold War, where President Kennedy announced, in May of 1961, that

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he would put a man on the moon before the end of the decade.

During that time, during all of these events, the Rav developed and published the ideas that are found in *The Lonely Man of Faith*.

He elaborates in *The Lonely Man of Faith* on the first two chapters of Bereshit (Genesis), focusing on the alleged contradiction between the two stories of creation:

In Chapter One, Adam and Chava are created at the same time: Zachar u'Nekeva Bara Otam. They are given the mandate, mil'u et ha'aretz, to fill the land, ve'chivshu'ha, to have dominion over it. And in that chapter, God the Creator, haKadosh Baruch Hu, is called Elokim – the God of Strength.

In Chapter Two, Adam and Chava are not created simultaneously, but rather as an extension of one another. And the creation of Adam and Chava in the second chapter, in Perek Bet, is much more intimate. Vayitzar Ado'shem Elokim et haAdam: God crafts Adam from the earth of the ground, Vayipach be'apav nishmat chayim – and He breathes life into him. Chava is created as an extension of Adam in this chapter, and the name of God that is used is Yud-K-Vav-K: the God of Intimacy.

Adam and Chava are not co-workers, but rather, they are an extension of one another. They are soulmates, part of a covenantal community.

And the responsibility of Adam and Chava in Chapter Two is le'avda u'le'shamra: they are to watch over the world, not conquer it; they are to reflect on the world, get to know it, and because they get to know the world, they have the privilege of naming the world's creatures.

Rabbi Soloveitchik explained that there is not actually a conflict between these two chapters, but rather they represent two paradigms of human existence. Our existence oscillates between these two paradigms, and together they comprise the human experience.

So relevant in our day and age. Adam One is responsible for conquering the world, and today we call on that Adam One to harness all of our intellect, all of our compassion as majestic men and women, to find a cure, heal the sick, feed the unemployed.

We're so privileged to be able to say thank you to all the healthcare workers who are indeed acting as Adam One, making a difference to defeat COVID-19, and we cannot shrink from that responsibility.

But at the same time that we're Adam One, we're also feeling very fragile, very uncertain and very alone.

Nonetheless, that loneliness should not allow us to feel depressed. In that loneliness, yes, we find fragility, but in that fragility we can also find God. We can search for that relationship. As accomplished as Adam One is, it's not the whole story. Kevodo Malei Olam: God's presence is all over the world; but sometimes, in times like this, Ayei Makom Kevodo: we search for Him.

And in those moments of being fragile – hard to explain from an intellectual perspective, but I think we've all felt it – in those moments of feeling alone, we can feel God's hand on our frail shoulder.

The paradigm of Adam Two is a relationship that helps us build the spiritual antibodies we need to defeat this disease at a time when we feel so fragile.

This essay of Rabbi Soloveitchik's, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, serves as a deeply-needed road map to help give us guidance at a time in which we feel that the world is spinning beyond our control and comprehension.

It is a message that is as clear today as it was over 50 years ago, when the words were first written.

May Rabbi Soloveitchik, and may all of our efforts, be a Melitz Yosher, as we pray for the speedily-to-

be-returned days of happiness and health, for all humanity.

The State of Israel and God's Secular Messengers
One of the questions that has been asked often in this generation is, Can the State of Israel really be the beginning of the Jewish People's final redemption? After all, how can God's work begin and be developed through people like Ben Gurion, who was not an observant Jew? Can it be that a non-observant Jew could be the leader of such a movement, of such a revolution, of such a Ma'aseh HaShem – an miraculous act of God?

This question is important this time of year because this Shabbat we usher in the new month of Iyyar. On the 5th of Iyyar, we celebrate Yom haAtzma'ut. The day prior, we mourn all of the soldiers who've given their lives al kiddush haShem, for the establishment and for maintaining the State of Israel. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, said, if somebody wants to pray by the grave of a righteous person, they don't need to travel to Tzefat or to Hevron; they can simply go to Har Herzl military cemetery and pray by any of the graves of the young people who gave their lives al kiddush haShem.

Iyyar is also the month in which we celebrate the reunification of Jerusalem, on the 28th. Can all of these miracles have been initiated by a group of individuals who were not formally observant?

This week's Torah portion answers that question for us. It focuses on the metzora, the leper; someone who is removed from the camp because he or she is involved in idle gossip.

And the Haftara for Parshat Metzora, (if it were not Rosh Chodesh, as it is this year) is the story about Gehazi and his three children. They were the assistants to Elisha, the prophet of their time, until they sold him out. And yet, we are told in the Haftara that these spiritual lepers, these individuals who embarrassed the spiritual leader of the Jewish People and created a chillul haShem, were the individuals who brought salvation and redemption to the Jewish People in the northern kingdom, when the Shomron was besieged. And they report the miracle that has happened to the Jewish People to save them from certain death.

Rav Aharon Soloveitchik wrote in an article that if you want to understand the fact that anyone who is motivated to save the Jewish People can be God's shaliach, can be God's messenger, it's in the Haftara of this week's Torah portion. Gehazi, who was a spiritual leper – much worse than any of the leaders that helped bring the redemption – people who may not have been formally observant, but were totally committed to the Jewish People.

The Haftara that reminds us that anyone can be the shaliach of HaKadosh Baruch Hu; anyone can be God's messenger.

We are not here to question who God uses as His emissaries to bring the redemption, but we must have Hakarat haTov, we must celebrate what HaKadosh Baruch Hu has done in this generation.

"Even ma'asu haBonim hayta leRosh Pina" – the brick that was viewed by the nations of the world as something to be destroyed, ignored; the stone that was to be outcast, the Jewish People, has become a centerpiece of the world – started by people like Ben Gurion.

Rav Chaim Ben Atar, the Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh, tells us in Sefer Vayikra that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is going to look for the final redemption to come from the tzaddikim, from the righteous, but they will be preoccupied with other things, so HaKadosh Baruch Hu will turn to other Jews, who may not be as formally observant, and they will help bring the redemption.

It is up to us, all Jews, all people, to celebrate the gift of the State of Israel, and for us to recognize that even in these challenging times, we need to

Likutei Divrei Torah

recognize the miracles that God has given us in this generation.

Chag Atzma'ut Sameach! Enjoy the holiday of Yom haAtzma'ut, perhaps in a muted way, just with our family. Let us remember those who have given their lives in order to allow all Jews around the world to understand the freedom that comes with Medinat Yisrael.

Torah.Org: Dvar Torah /Excerpt/

Avelut during the 'Omer The Omer

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

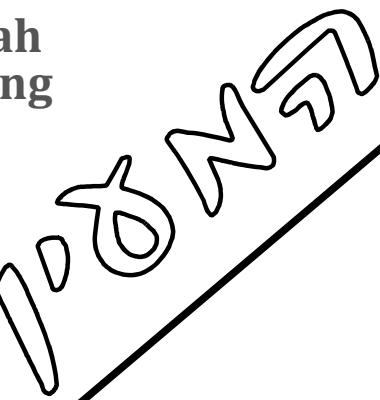
"And you shall count for yourselves, from the day after Shabbat, from the day your bring the 'Omer which is lifted up, seven perfect weeks." With this command, Hashem directed us to reckon 49 days from the barley offering on the 2nd day of Pesach until the wheat offering on Shavuot. This period, which we are a bit more than halfway through at this point, generally brings up different associations – it is a period when we practice a limited form of mourning, abstaining from weddings, festive parties, shaving/haircutting and a variety of other practices which vary from group to group within Am Yisrael. This mourning, which, for some, is practiced throughout the entire period and, for others, lasts from either Pesach until Lag ba'Omer or from 1 Iyyar until just before Shavuot, is of mysterious provenance. I would like to explore a few of the approaches taken by the classic commentators and codes to solving this mystery.

Conventional wisdom holds that the mourning during this period is in commemoration of the death (or massacre – as per the epistle of R. Sherira Gaon) of thousands of R. Akiva's students, as recorded in BT Yevamot 62a. According to a later tradition, the period during which they all died was between Pesach and Shavuot. However, there are several difficulties with this explanation. First of all, where do we ever find mourning practices taken on in commemoration of the loss of human life? We mourn those close relatives at the time of death and for up to 12 months thereafter – but there is no precedent for an annual mourning rite in commemoration of death – even of thousands. In addition, considering that the Peri Etz Hayyim, the first source we have that identifies Lag ba'Omer as the (celebrated!) anniversary of R. Shimon bar Yohai's passing, supports his contention by noting that bar Yohai was a student of R. Akiva and his students died during this period. It is inherently contradictory to mourn the passing of some of R. Akiva's students while rejoicing on the anniversary of the death of one of them – during the same period. An additional problem arises when we note that in none of the sources that relate the story of the death of R. Akiva's students is there any mention of mourning practices undertaken in response...

I'd like to share one final approach, taken by R. Zerahiah haLevi (1135- 1186, Geronda) in his Sefer haMa'aor (end of Pesahim). He was not addressing practices of mourning, rather the observation that we do not recite the festive "Shehechyanu" when first counting the 'Omer. His response is that every time that we count the 'Omer, we are reminded of the destruction of the Mikdash, since we are counting from an offering that we were not able to bring, due to the Hurban. As such, he maintains that the period has a "built-in" mourning, having nothing to do with the unlucky nature of the days or the death of R. Akiva's students. It is, if you will, a parallel to the 3 weeks of mourning we practice in the summer to commemorate the destruction of our Mikdash.

In sum, the practice of not marrying during this period dates back at least a thousand years...but the reason for this practice is not known with certainty and, over the years, our sages have offered a range of explanations, each of which gives us a unique insight into the season.

The Torah Spring



ת"ס ז

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This week's *Parashot* teach the laws of *Tzara'at* and describe the process of purification from that condition. Regarding this, R' Zvi Yehuda Kook z"l (1891-1982; *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Merkaz Harav*) teaches:

The Torah necessarily encompasses man's entire existence. Certainly the Torah relates to a normal, healthy person. The first part of the Book of *Vayikra* describes lofty spiritual levels--the sacrifices and the dedication of the *Mishkan*. But, the Torah is meant to direct a person, and the life of a typical person includes times when he is not elevated. In *Parashot Tazria* and *Metzora* we meet the Jew when he is in an unhealthy state; specifically, when he is spiritually unhealthy.

The unique aspect of the human being is his power of speech. Thus, on the verse (*Bereishit* 2:7), "And G-d blew into his nostrils the soul of life, and man became a living being," *Onkelos* comments, "He became a speaking spirit." Man's speech reveals his thoughts. Man has within him a special soul, and that soul's power reveals itself through speech. Also, man is a social creature, which is made possible by speech.

But, speech is a terrifying and horrible thing when used impurely. This is why *Chazal* speak so strongly of the evils of *Lashon Ha'ra*. When one corrupts the power of speech, he corrupts the essence of the human being.

Chief among all illnesses are those which come from unhealthy speech. All other faults stem from there. When man is worthy, he radiates the light of Torah on his surroundings. When he is unworthy, there will (G-d forbid) be *Tzara'at* in his house. (*Ha'Torah Ha'go'ellet* Vol. II p.134)

Elsewhere in the Torah . . .

Rabbah bar Machsaya said that Rav Chama bar Guria said that [the sage] Rav said: One who gives a gift to his fellow is obligated to inform him, as it is written (*Shmot* 31:13), ["You shall speak to *Bnei Yisrael*, saying, 'However, you must observe My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations,] to know that I am Hashem, Who makes you holy'." Hashem said to Moshe, "I have a good gift in My treasure house. Its name is *Shabbat*, and I wish to give it to *Yisrael*. Go tell them!"

[The *Gemara* continues:] But did not Rav Chama bar Chanina say, "If one gives a gift to his fellow, he does not need to inform him"? There is no contradiction. One [the latter] is speaking of when it will come to light anyway; one [the former] is speaking of when it will not come to light."

[The *Gemara* concludes:] But, *Shabbat* will come to light! [Perhaps the *Gemara* means that *Bnei Yisrael* will see that the day is different when no *Mahn* falls.] Nevertheless, its reward will not come to light.

(*Shabbat* 10b)

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) asks: All *Mitzvot* have rewards! Why does the *Gemara* single out *Shabbat*?

He explains: It is true that the *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 39b) says: "There is not a single *Mitzvah* on which *Techiyat Ha'meitim* / the Resurrection of the Dead does not hang." Every *Mitzvah* brings a person to *Olam Ha'ba* / the World-to-Come. However, Moshe was not required to specifically inform *Bnei Yisrael* of that reward, because the reward merely follows from the *Mitzvah*; the reward is not the essence of the *Mitzvah* and, therefore, was not the "gift" that Hashem was giving when He gave the *Mitzvah*.

Shabbat is unique in that *Shabbat* is *Olam Ha'ba*. The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 57b) says, "*Shabbat* is a microcosm of the World-to-Come." Also (*Rosh Hashanah* 31a), "[*Olam Ha'ba* is] a day which is entirely *Shabbat*." When Hashem gave the *Mitzvah* of *Shabbat*, He gave the gift of *Olam Ha'ba*. That connection is not obvious; rather, the true nature of the gift that is *Shabbat* is hidden in Hashem's treasure house. Therefore, *Bnei Yisrael* needed to be informed of the gift they were receiving.

(*Chiddushei Aggadot*)

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- Continued from facing page -

R' Horowitz continues: A person who feels sick is more likely to follow a regimen of medications than a person who is told that he is sick, but who has no symptoms. The same thing is true of a person who feels that his soul is unhealthy; he is more susceptible to being healed than someone who is at peace with his spiritual level.

Perhaps, writes R' Horowitz in light of the foregoing, Rabbi Alexandri used to circulate around Tzippori dispensing *Mussar* and *Tochachah* / rebuke to the townspeople for speaking *Lashon Ha'ra* and otherwise misusing the power of speech. But, he noticed that it was having no or little effect. Therefore, he tried a new tactic: he acted like a peddler who was selling the elixir of life. He convinced people that he had something they wanted, and they became more open to his teachings. After all, who does not want the elixir of life?

How did Rabbi Alexandri come to the realization that he needed to change tactics? It was from the words of King David in *Tehilim*: "Who is the man who desires life? . . . Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit." Why did King David include the question, "Who is the man who desires life"? He could have just told us: "Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit." But, King David was teaching the above lesson. He was instructing that before you lecture people about misusing the gift of speech, make them feel like they are lacking something (*i.e.*, the chance for long life) and that you can give them what they desire.

R' Horowitz explains further: Rabbi Yannai had been bothered by the same question: Why did King David start with a question? After meeting "the peddler," Rabbi Alexandri, Rabbi Yannai understood the verse for the first time.

R' Horowitz concludes: In our verse, too, there seem to be superfluous words – "This shall be the law of the *Metzora* . . ." The Torah could leave out those words and just tell what the law of the *Metzora* is, *i.e.*, what *Korbanot* he must bring to achieve atonement. But, the Torah wants us to question: Why are these words here? What do they teach? They are here, says the *Midrash*, to make us focus on the word "*Metzora*," so we discover that it is a contraction of "*Motzi Shem Ra*" / one who speaks *Lashon Ha'ra* and gives other people a bad name. In this way, because we questioned, we will realize on our own, and we will remember, how terrible are the consequences of misusing one's gift of speech.

(*Lakachat Mussar*)

"Be careful with a light *Mitzvah* as with a weighty *Mitzvah*."

(*Avot ch.2*)

R' Chaim of Volozhin z"l (Belarus; 1749-1821) writes: Our Sages instruct us to perform a *Mitzvah She'lo L'shmah* / not with the correct intention if we cannot perform it *L'shmah* / with the correct intention. The former, writes R' Chaim, is what our *Mishnah* describes as a "light" *Mitzvah*, while the latter is described as a "weighty" *Mitzvah*. Be careful even with a "light" *Mitzvah*, for even its reward is very great.

(*Ruach Chaim*)

"This shall be the law of the *Metzora* . . ." (14:2)

Midrash Rabbah relates: A peddler circulated in the towns surrounding Tzippori proclaiming: "Who wants to buy the elixir of life?" [Tzippori was a major city in the Galilee during and after the Second Temple period.]

The Sage Rabbi Yannai met him and said, "Sell it to me!"

The peddler took out a Book of *Tehilim* and showed Rabbi Yannai the verses (34:13-14), "Who is the man who desires life? . . . Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit."

Rabbi Yannai said, "All my days, I did not know the simple meaning of this verse until this peddler arrived and informed me. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu warns *Yisrael*: 'This shall be the law of the *Metzora*' -- a contraction of '*Motzi Shem Ra*' / one who gives others a bad name." [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R' Yisrael Ze'ev Halevi Horowitz z"l (1778-1861; rabbi of Sátoraljaújhely ("Uhel"), Hungary; later settled in Teveryah, *Eretz Yisrael*) writes: A story very similar to this appears in the *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 19b), but there the person traveling between the towns is not described as a peddler; rather he is called Rabbi Alexandri. Why is Rabbi Alexandri described as a peddler? Moreover, what exactly did Rabbi Yannai learn from this encounter that he found so meaningful?

R' Horowitz explains: On *Pesach*, we engage in various activities -- for example, eating *Karpas*, covering and uncovering the *Matzah* -- in order to prompt children to ask questions. But why? Why do we not just lecture our children about the Exodus and the associated miracles?

The answer is that it is well known that a person retains information better when he is curious about it, when he has a desire to learn that information. The story of the Exodus is the foundation of our *Emunah* / faith in the G-d of the world; it is the basis for the entire Torah. The Torah wants us to teach the lessons of the Exodus to our children and it wants our children to retain those lessons. Therefore, we are commanded to transmit the lessons via questions and answers, prompting our children's curiosity and then satisfying their desire to know, so they remember.

R' Horowitz continues: The *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 84a) relates: The Sage Rabbi Elazar was sitting before the Sage Rabbi Yochanan. After each teaching that Rabbi Yochanan taught, Rabbi Elazar said, "I know a source that supports your teaching." Rabbi Yochanan became angry. "Don't you realize I already know I am correct?" he asked. "When [my student, the Sage Rabbi Shimon] the son of Lakish was alive, he would challenge each of my teachings with 24 questions, and I would give him 24 answers, and that way the teaching was clarified." [Until here from the *Gemara*.] This, too, demonstrates the value that our Sages placed on learning through questions and answers, writes R' Horowitz. – *Continued on facing page* –

ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.

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ON THE EVE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY (Central Bureau of Statistics 4/19/20)

Jews in Israel and worldwide: At the end of 2018, the number of Jews worldwide was 14.7 million. The Jewish population in the world today is close to that of 1925 (14.8 million).

In 1939, on the eve of World War II, the number of Jews in the world was 16.6 million, of which 449,000 were in Israel (3%).

In 1948, on the eve of the establishment of the state, the number of Jews worldwide was 11.5 million, of which 650,000 were in Israel (6%).

GANTZ: I PUT THE COUNTRY ABOVE MY OWN INTERESTS IN JOINING NETANYAHU GOVERNMENT (YNet 4/21/20)

Blue & White leader Benny Gantz said Israel's future is more important than that of its leader and as such he put Israel's interest above his own by joining a unity government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In his first comments since signing the agreement with Netanyahu on Monday night, the Blue & White leader said he felt compelled to bring Israel out of the political deadlock of the past year in order to tackle the immense challenges ahead.

"We are faced with the greatest crises to health, economy, and society in recent decades," he said.

The former military chief gave his televised address shortly after his erstwhile political partner Yair Lapid slammed him for going back on all of his election promises and allying with Netanyahu, who has been indicted for bribery, fraud and breach of trust.

"I want to start with an apology to all those who I convinced to vote for Gantz and Blue & White," Lapid said. "I didn't believe they would steal your vote and give it to Netanyahu, they would use your vote to form the fifth Netanyahu government. It's the worst act of fraud in our country's history."

"We chose to safeguard democracy and fight coronavirus and its consequences," Gantz said Tuesday night.

"We had to pull up our sleeves, leave our comfort zone of statements," he said, adding that it was better to be victorious against the coronavirus than on social media.

"Immediately after the government is sworn in, we will establish a coronavirus cabinet with the relevant ministers and professional experts," Gantz said.

He said adding the cabinet would meet the needs of the economy with full transparency.

"Along with our long-lasting security concerns, we must deal with the challenges to our health system, the education system, our agriculture and many other aspects of our society," he said.

"We must rebuild trust in government. Jews, Arabs, Druze, the secular and the religious, men and women, all want us to work together in their service."

Gantz said he was not happy with the new government's inflated size and hoped to reduce the number of positions. The new government will be the largest in the country's history, with at least 32 ministers and more than a dozen deputy ministers.

"I know Netanyahu would have also preferred a smaller and less costly government," Gantz said.

"I have made great sacrifices and I know the prime minister has as well," the Blue & white leader said. "We have managed to overcome our differences."

Gantz will serve as defense minister in the new government until October 2021, when he is supposed to take over as prime minister under the terms of the agreement with Netanyahu.

THIS IS WHAT NETANYAHU PROPOSED TO YAMINA (Arutz-7 4/22/20)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud negotiating team convened a video conference Wednesday evening with Yamina Chairman Defense Minister Naftali Bennett and his representative Tal Gan-Zvi.

According to Kan, during the meeting the Prime Minister offered the party the Housing portfolio for the whole term and the Foreign Affairs portfolio for the second half of it. In addition, the Jerusalem Affairs portfolio was offered to the party.

Though not stated explicitly in the discussion, Yamina was dissatisfied with the proposal and demands at least one other deputy minister and a significant committee head - possibly the Constitution Committee.

Party officials said the one with a firm stance against joining the Netanyahu-Gantz Unity Government is Transportation Minister and National Union Chair Bezalel Smotrich.

According to the officials, Smotrich argues that, from an ideological point of view, participation in the government may drag Yamina into support for moves that it opposes today - from both an economic and political point of view.

The two parties, Likud and Yamina, issued a joint statement at the end of the meeting saying, "The meeting was positive. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting would be scheduled."

PANEL IN LABOR APPROVES JOINING GOVERNMENT (JPost 4/22/20)

The Labor Party's executive committee approved entering the government on Wednesday night ahead of an unprecedented digital convention on Sunday that will make the final decision.

The executive committee is made of mostly of party chairman Amir Peretz's loyalists.

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Woodsburgh, NY Minyan
Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ
Young Israel of Brookline, MA
Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ
Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ
Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA
Young Israel of Holliswood, NY
Young Israel of Houston, TX
Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY
Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY
Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY
Young Israel of Sharon, MA

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Peretz and MK Itzik Shmuli are expected to speak in favor of joining at the convention and MK Merav Michaeli and former MK Michal Biran will speak against entering the coalition. Biran sent Labor's leadership a letter on Wednesday saying that the short notice for the convention was "political thievery."

Peretz said in radio interviews on Wednesday that if the convention decides against entering the government, he will accept the decision of the party. He called on Michaeli to make a similar vow.

"I want the Labor Party to return to the center of public service," Peretz said. "When the socioeconomic crisis is at its peak, I could not stand aside."

Michaeli said Labor members "should not buy the political spin" of Peretz.

"Entering Netanyahu's government would not change anything," she said. "All it would do is keep Netanyahu in power and expedite the destructive annexation of Judea and Samaria, which would endanger Israel's security. I will continue my struggle to save Labor from the extinction that my colleagues in the faction want to bring about."

Peretz indicated in an Army Radio interview that he, "would not oppose Gush Etzion being part of the State of Israel." Gush Etzion Regional Council Head Shlomo Ne'eman praised Peretz for the remarks, which were also made in the past by former Labor leader Isaac Herzog.

"We are pleased with the statement issued by the future minister and head of the Labor Party, Amir Peretz," Ne'eman said. "In our view, this is a valuable statement that recognizes that the communities of Judea and Samaria are an integral part of the State of Israel."

UNITY GOV'T SET TO COST ISRAEL OVER NIS 900 MILLION (YNet 4/22/20)

The unity government deal signed by Blue & White Chairman Benny Gantz and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week might have spared Israelis from an expensive fourth election cycle, but the taxpayer will still have to shell out for the overinflated coalition.

According to the numbers, the new government - set to be the biggest in the country's history - will cost the taxpayer more than NIS 900 million (\$254 million) over the next three years. A bill Israelis will have split during the time when the economic growth is expected to significantly stagnate due to the coronavirus outbreak.

According to the deal signed between Blue & White and Likud, 52 lawmakers are set to be given a position around the government table - 36 ministers and 16 deputy ministers.

For comparison, the country's last government had 21-23 ministers.

The cost for the new government is expected to be almost a billion shekels given the wide range of services granted to each minister and deputy minister.

A personal office and its employees, a salary, personal vehicle and driver, logistics and benefits (not including trips abroad and events), all add up to about NIS six million annually.

The annual cost of all the ministers adds up to about NIS 216 million (almost NIS 648 million over three years).

Each of the deputy minister's expenses adds up to about NIS three million each annually, bringing the total cost to about NIS 48 million, or about NIS 144 million over the span of three years.

Also according to the deal, ten new MKs are set to be sworn in to replace the ministers and deputy ministers who resigned their post as parliamentarians in order to focus on their governmental roles as part of the "Small Norwegian Law".

Each new MK will cost the state about NIS 1.5 million yearly, a total of about NIS 15 million over three years.

Another big cost will be the new official residence for the person who holds the role of the incumbent prime minister, in this case Benny Gantz, and this is before the operational costs of such a bloated cabinet - installation of bigger tables and security expenses for each member.

CLOUDED BY CORONAVIRUS, ISRAEL MARKS HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY (Israel Hayom 4/21/20)

The 2020 Holocaust Remembrance Day was an unusual one, as its events, which began on Monday evening, were shrouded with an eerie silence, forced on them by the public health directives concerning the coronavirus outbreak.

All major state ceremonies will be held as planned but will be devoid of an audience over coronavirus-related restrictions. Most cities, however, canceled their traditional ceremonies, in line with the Health Ministry's restrictions on public gatherings.

A two-minute siren wailed nationwide on Tuesday morning, honoring the victims. It was followed by the wreath-laying ceremony in Jerusalem, at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising monument, which was also held sans an audience.

The main ceremony at Yad Vashem, held on Monday evening, at the national Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, was prerecorded. The event was held in front of an empty Warsaw Ghetto Square, a far cry from the traditional ceremony attended by dignitaries and Holocaust survivors.

Only the master of ceremonies and artists who performed songs were present, while the keynote speakers sent video messages.

ISRAEL SEES INCREASE OF TRAFFIC AS MORE PEOPLE END SELF-QUARANTINE (YNet 4/22/20)

For the first time since restrictions were imposed last month to curb the spread of coronavirus, drivers reported traffic jams on Israel's roads with 75% of the normal volume of traffic.

The government announced the lifting of some restrictions on Sunday that included an increase of 15% in the workforce and the opening of some shops and businesses.

However, the number of cars on the road exceeded expectations with traffic increasing every day this week.

The National Transport Infrastructure Company, a government-owned company that maintains Israel's interurban roads, said that before the easing of restrictions, traffic volume was at 30% of the average.

Urban traffic was also on the rise, with parking apps reporting a 100% spike in users since the end of the Passover holiday.

PA WARNS AGAINST ANNEXATION IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA (Arutz-7 4/22/20)

Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas' bureau condemned on Tuesday what it called the "provocative" decision of the Israeli Attorney General ordering the expropriation of land in the Ibrahim Mosque (the Arabic name for the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron -ed.) belonging to the Islamic Waqf.

The announcement said that the plot of land is an integral part of the "occupied" Palestinian land, and the Israeli decision is intended to Judaize the site and be used as a plan for "settlements".

The Israeli decision was referred to as a "hostile move" and "part of the annexation policy" which may lead to the implementation of policies that cannot be controlled.

Abbas' bureau noted that the move is contrary to international law and emphasized the importance of taking significant steps should Israel annex territories belonging to the "State of Palestine".

In this context, the statement warned Israel against implementing the annexation policy in the Jordan Valley or any other region, saying such decisions would cause disaster and bring the region to the brink of falling into the abyss.

"The Palestinian response will be decisive and strong and will have dangerous consequences for the entire region," the statement said.

EXTREMIST HAREDIM IN BEIT SHEMESH DON YELLOW STARS TO PROTEST SYNAGOGUE BAN (The Times of Israel 4/22/20)

Hundreds of extremist, ultra-Orthodox residents of Beit Shemesh have held protests against the government's coronavirus restrictions that have kept synagogues and yeshiva study halls closed, with some even donning yellow Stars of David.

Footage and photos on social media of the protests held Monday showed several of the protesters wearing the badges reminiscent of Holocaust-era Jewish persecution. Others compared the Israeli government to the Soviet Union.

Video showed the large throng of protesters surrounding a vehicle that had attempted to cross through the path of the demonstration, denouncing the "campaign of religious persecution by the Bolshevik-Israeli government."

Police descended in large numbers on the town's Heftziba neighborhood where residents were blocking a main road and used riot-dispersal measures to break up the protests. Several of the demonstrators were detained as a result, according to Hebrew media reports.

This is not the first times since the start of the pandemic that radical Haredim have likened their treatment by Israeli authorities to the Nazi persecution of Jews. Footage from protests last month caught demonstrators wearing yellow stars and striped concentration camp uniforms in addition to calling police officers "Nazis."

There have been several, sometimes violent, demonstrations among Haredi communities against the coronavirus restrictions that saw synagogues, schools and yeshivas closed and prayer quorums banned. There has also been widespread anger after strict closures were imposed on the mainly ultra-Orthodox city of Beni Brak and Jerusalem neighborhoods, which were the worst affected by the virus.

Police have also been accused of using excessive force.

A clip of a police officer shoving a Haredi man to the ground in Mea Shearim Jerusalem began circulating in several prominent ultra-Orthodox WhatsApp groups Tuesday under the caption, "this is not Auschwitz, it is Mea Shearim." Under the latest guidelines Jerusalem and Beni Brak residents will now be under the same restrictions as the rest of the country, which keep them within 100 meters of their homes, with exceptions of purchasing food, supplies and going to work.

Outdoor prayers of up to 19 people are also allowed, with two meters between worshipers, wearing masks.

People are also allowed to go 500 meters beyond their own homes or workplaces for prayer. Men were also allowed to attend ritual baths under certain conditions.

However, synagogues and yeshivas, which were found to have been major sources of infection at the start of the crisis, are still closed.

As of Monday evening, Beit Shemesh — where over 50% of the roughly 120,000 residents are ultra-Orthodox — has had 319 confirmed coronavirus cases. Only Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, Tel Aviv and Elad have more COVID-19 carriers. Beit Shemesh has seen a 14.7% rise in confirmed cases in the past three days and a 51.2% increase during the past week.

The issue seems to be causing splits within the Haredi leadership too, who have largely followed government restrictions.

Ponovitz yeshiva head Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, who is arguably the most prominent leader of the Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox community in Bnei Brak with hundreds of thousands of followers, signed off on a letter Monday that was sent to the United Torah Judaism party-affiliated Yeted Ne'eman Haredi newspaper calling for yeshiva study halls to be re-opened, according to a Tuesday Channel 12 report.

However, under the direction of Rabbi Gershon Edelstein, who is Kanievsky's co-head at the Ponovitz yeshiva and also a prominent community leader in Bnei Brak, the paper chose not to publish the letter, the report said, calling the move an "unprecedented step" in the ultra-Orthodox world.

Last month, Kanievsky initially defied government calls to close yeshivas, only reversing his stance after two fateful weeks.

SEA OF GALILEE WATER LEVEL NOW EVEN CLOSER TO FULL CAPACITY (Israel Hayom 4/21/20)

The good news from Israel's largest freshwater lake continues. After reaching a 16-year record last week, the Sea of Galilee rose by another 0.2 inches on Tuesday, meaning that it is only about 5 inches short of being full.

If it reaches full capacity, the dam regulating its water flow to the Jordan River will be opened entirely. Officials don't expect this to happen before next winter unless some unusual weather event takes place.

The Sea of Galilee has benefited from an unusually rainy winter. About a month ago, the Water Authority reported that the water level was higher than it had been in 17 years, standing 49 cm (19 inches) short of the Upper Red Line.

This means that from March 23 to April 14, the lake rose by a foot.

SOCER TEAMS IN ISRAEL ALLOWED TO RETURN TO TRAINING (JPost 4/22/20)

Israel's Ministry of Health on Wednesday approved the Premier and National League teams to return to group training, the league administration announced. According to the statement released, "the professional soccer teams can return to hold contact-less training, with the pitch divided into two halves and in each of the halves the teams can train with 10 players, including the use of a ball, but without contact between the players."

Since mid-March all soccer activities had been suspended due to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic and, even for a couple of weeks prior to that, teams had been playing in empty stadiums with no fans.

Israel Professional Football Leagues chairman Erez Kalfon said: "I welcome the decision of the Ministry of Health to return to group training, first in a reduced format, which is the first stage in the return of the professional soccer teams to activity and eventually real games. I am encouraged by the decision made at this time, with our goal now being to resume training without any restriction in early May, which will prepare teams for resuming their respective professional leagues.

"I have said all along and I still declare that we will do our utmost to resume the games and end the football season on the field, with sportsmanship and not in any other way, as much as possible while conforming to the Ministry of Health guidelines," added Kalfon. "Beyond the tremendous sporting importance of ending the season on the pitch, the moral debt to the large fan bases and creating a cultural alternative for watching games, it is important to recognize that the soccer industry is a growth and employment engine for thousands of families in Israel whose income has been stopped and in need of unemployment money and other benefits from the government.

Kalfon made sure to emphasize that it is not just the teams and players that will benefit.

"In addition to the hundreds of professional players and teams in the team, there are hundreds of other families making a living from the soccer industry, ranging from photographers, production personnel, technicians, hair and make-up crews, team administrators, stadium workers, gardeners, concession personnel, food suppliers, clothing suppliers, security companies and more."

While the theme of Kalfon's announcement was joyous, he also stressed the need for safety amid the still rampant pandemic.

"I urge the players and teams taking part in training, please heed the Ministry of Health's safety instructions on the field and even more so off the field and avoid contacting other people beyond the team and your nuclear family to avoid possible contagion. The responsibility on your shoulders when it comes to resuming games is great and everyone has to behave in a mature and responsible fashion."

Notwithstanding Wednesday's news, there is still no indication of when actual soccer games may resume, and even when they do the extreme likelihood is that they will take place without fans in the stands for the foreseeable future, possibly even until a COVID-19 vaccine is found and widely distributed.

NEW UNITY GOVERNMENT ENDS 17 MONTHS OF POLITICAL STALEMATE AT LAST (Editorial, JPost 4/22/20)

An agreement between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White Party leader Benny Gantz has paved the way for a government after an unprecedented three elections and a year of instability in which budgets were not passed and Israelis suffered.

The agreement comes amid a pandemic in which more than one million Israelis are now out of work. The agreement also leaves much to be desired. It is cumbersome and controversial and likely paves the way for endless political jockeying that will serve the interests of a few politicians but leave Israeli citizens abandoned again.

Israelis should be happy that the 17 months of political stalemate are coming to an end and that finally, it seems, there will be a stable and functioning government in Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, this optimism is tempered. To function properly, this new government needs to act quickly to fix the economy and make clear the guidelines for dealing with the continued pandemic. It also must deal with security challenges stemming from Iran and from Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The government is a behemoth in size. Despite previous eras when Likud and its allies actually sought to have fewer ministers, now there will be an estimated 36 ministers and 16 deputy ministers.

This is basically a way for the parties to divide up the spoils so all their loyal lieutenants get a piece of the cake. For the vast majority of Israelis, wage stagnation, poverty, negative bank account balances and unaffordable housing are what awaits.

Despite the claims of Netanyahu that he cares for the average falafel stand owner, the reality of the political class in Israel was revealed during the lockdowns when the prime minister, the president and other government officials disobeyed their own guidelines, enjoying time with their families while regular citizens were locked at home unable to travel.

The more harsh the guidelines for us, the more those in government seemed to flout them.

The plethora of ministers will mean new faces in the Knesset as more members of the coalition get to fill out the seats left behind by the minister, according to a draft of the new "Norwegian Law" the Knesset plans to pass.

What these new members and ministers will have to confront in coming months is a Herculean task made more difficult by Netanyahu's attempt to avoid standing trial for his three criminal indictments.

Under the coalition agreement, Netanyahu will be able to veto the new attorney-general, the state's attorney and the police inspector-general. That gives him a hold over the legal aspects of the state.

Unlike in other democracies which have one official residence, Israel will now have two official residences for Netanyahu and Gantz over the next three years.

One of them will live in the official Prime Minister's Residence while serving as prime minister and the other in a new one while serving as deputy. This means paying twice for expenses, providing security, cars and staff.

Simply put, this means more expense for the state and the taxpayers at a time when many people are slipping below the poverty line and more than a million Israelis are still out of work due to the pandemic.

It is hard to shake the feeling when reading the agreement between Blue and White and Likud that it is about keeping Netanyahu and Gantz comfortable and in power more than it is about anything else.

Israel's democracy was harmed by the mockery the leading politicians have shown for it over the past 17 months that saw endless mudslinging, three election campaigns and the failure to pass a state budget.

We supported establishing a unity government and still believe that a stable government is what Israel needs. Governments are never perfect but they also should not purposely waste money.

The new government's most important job is to work to get the economy up and running again, and to make sure that as many people as possible are

back at work. Worrying about jobs for political cronies and additional official residences is not just wrong, it is a waste of money that Israel does not have.

BRIBERY SUSPECT NETANYAHU AND VOTE THIEF GANTZ FORM AN ALLIANCE OF SCOUNDRELS (Aluf Benn, Ha'aretz 4/22/20)

On Monday evening, Benny Gantz signed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's public acquittal. That is the bottom line of the coalition agreement between Kahol Lavan and Likud. In agreeing to serve as Netanyahu's appointed successor, Gantz made it clear to the public that he doesn't care about the prime minister's bribery indictment. He has no reservations, ethical or otherwise, about a political partnership with a man who has been charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust and who seeks to destroy Israeli democracy. This is a man whom Gantz himself held up before the March 2 election as the Israeli version of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

For Gantz, the image is reversed: Netanyahu's indictments aren't a problem; they're an opportunity. They give him a chance to qualify for the top post in 18 months or possibly sooner, in the event that Netanyahu resigns or falls ill. Gantz didn't enter politics to promote principles and values. Instead, he saw it as a track for promotion: from IDF private all the way to chief of staff, and now, as a civilian, to defense minister and prime minister.

That's what the coalition agreement promises, and he chose signing it with Netanyahu over a fourth general election during the coronavirus crisis. He concluded that even if there was only a slim chance that he would actually replace Netanyahu after 18 months, it was presumably greater than the likelihood of Kahol Lavan forming a government without Netanyahu.

Gantz must think that he caught Netanyahu at his weakest and got the deal of his dreams out of him: an inner cabinet with parity between Kahol Lavan and Likud, mutual veto power over any resolution, rotation of the prime minister without an additional Knesset vote, myriad cabinet positions and other top posts.

He's not obsessed about the composition of the Judicial Appointments Committee like the right-wingers are and he had no problem with trading in positions of legal power, giving them to Netanyahu in exchange for control of numerous Knesset committees. That is the essence of the deal: Netanyahu wants to avoid his trial, Gantz wants the trappings of power.

Gantz's election motto, "Israel before all else," should be changed to "Israel after all else." Instead of a recovery plan for a country in crisis, we got an agreement between two opportunists for divvying up the political spoils, from the Knesset committees to the next ambassador to Australia.

The core issues – from the economic crisis to the coronavirus pandemic to social problems and foreign relations – will be delegated to committees or legislative drafting teams. The emergency period will be extended by six months, and then it will be extended again and again, for the rulers' convenience.

The annexations in the West Bank, the heart of the right-wing bloc's ideology, was mentioned in passing, like a mine that Netanyahu placed in the agreement as an exit clause rather than a firm commitment. In any event, the timing and scope of the annexation will be tailored to suit the interests of U.S. President Donald Trump and his reelection campaign, not set in deliberations between representatives of Likud and Kahol Lavan.

Gantz's voters never imagined that they were casting their ballots to the rescue squad that would keep Netanyahu in power and sanction his corrupt actions and threats to democracy. But that was the choice Gantz made. It's not a romance, but rather an alliance of scoundrels, the bribery suspect and the vote thief, and their partnership will reflect this.

Each side will search for potential deserters in the opposing camp in a bid for a voting majority, each side will tweet and leak to the best of its ability against its partner/rival and each side will try to dissolve the agreement from an advantageous position. The rivalry between Netanyahu and Gantz did not end with the signing of the agreement, it only took on a new form.



Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington

Commemoration of the Tenth Yahrzeit of

Rav Gedaliah Anemer zt'l



**Sunday April 26, 2020
11:00 AM**

Zoom ID: 416 963 9000, phone 301-715-8592, password 492019

*Reflections on the impact of Rav Anemer on our community and
our lives*

Panelists:

David Hornestay
Barbara Price
Debbie Katz
Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

Moderated by Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum