

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shavuos Shorts ד"ר

May 28 - 30, 2020 - 6 - 7 Sivan 5780 - Shavuos

Light Candles by 8:07 - Havdalah 9:15

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by Tzivia Bramson and family on the 1st Yahrzeit of Rabbi Sam Bramson, Shmuel ben Noach Helman Halevi Z"l,
and by Esther & David Hornestay in commemoration of the 12th Yahrzeit of Esther's mother, Regina Berman, Rivka bas Dovid, on the second day of Shavuos.

Mazal Tov

- **Lynn & Stephen Deutsch** on the marriage of their son, Dovid, to Amanda Komsky, daughter of Sheila & Larry Komsky of Woodmere. Mazal Tov to his siblings, Daniel Deutsch, Eliot & Ilana Deutsch and family of Woodmere, and Jacob & Rivky Deutsch of Manhattan.
- **Sima & Richard Soskin** on the marriage of their son, Yonah, to Sarah Taber, daughter of Nechama & Howard Taber of West Hempstead, NY.
- **Sima & Richard Soskin** and Linda & Clive Shkedy of Houston, TX, on the birth of twin granddaughters, Adielle Yakira and Zahara Moriya, born to Eliana & Jesse Shkedy of Kew Gardens Hills, NY.
- **Sima & Richard Soskin** on Yonah's graduation from the Sy Syms School of Business, Yeshiva University, with a B.S. degree in Marketing.

Condolences

- **Rabbi Rapahel Malka** on the passing of his brother, Nehorai Malka. Shiva ended at the start of Shavuos.

Shavuos 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.

Remember to make an Eruv Tavshilin on Thursday.

Thursday Night:

- Light Candles by 8:07
- Mincha: 8:10
- Maariv: 9:13

Friday Morning:

- Earliest Talis: 4:43
- Netz Hachama: 5:46

For those who are able to stay up all night or get up early, the preferred time to Daven Shemone Esrai is 5:46. Particularly when one is not davening with a minyan, it would not be appropriate to begin Shmone Esrai any earlier than 5:46. You may Daven Shacharis up to 10:39. Shema should be said before 9:25. Akdamus need not be recited when davening by one's self.

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 8:08, and not before Plag, 6:54
- Mincha:

Ashkenazi: 6:35, 7:10, 8:10 Sephardi: 7:00 Nusach Sefard: 7:00

If you Daven Mizmor Shir leyom Hashabbos/Maariv before Shkia (8:26 PM), it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag (6:54 PM).

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: Ashkenazi: 7:00, 8:00, 8:45, 9:15 Youth: 9:15
Sephardi: 7:45 Nusach Sefard: 7:00

It is our custom to read Megillas Rus in shul. One is not obligated to do so when davening as an individual, though one may certainly do so if one desires. Yizkor may be recited, even when davening by one's self.

- Mincha:
Ashkenazi: 2:30, 5:00, 8:05 Sephardi: 8:05 Nusach Sefard: 8:05
- Shabbos/Shavuos ends: 9:15

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 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday, 7:30 PM - **Zoom A.**

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 and Women - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM

Unraveling the Navi with Rabbi Hillel Shaps, **Zoom C.**

Rabbi Tuvia Grauman - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sundays at 10:00 AM, **Zoom I.**

Rabbi Yonatan Zakem's Shiur for men & women, Pearls of Prayer, exploring the depth and meaning of our daily prayers. Sunday evenings, 7:30 PM, **Zoom H.**

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** (except as noted):

Mondays: Rabbi E. Gayer - A to Z of Jewish Living

Mondays: (for men only) Rabbi H. Shaps, On the Same Page Gemara, **Zoom C.**

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.**

Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's Shiur for Men and Women, Tuesdays, 1:30 PM - 2:15 PM, "A Second Look- Stories in the Torah from a Deeper Perspective", **Zoom G.**

Connection Details: Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID & password:

Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019

Zoom B: ID: 784 431 8176

Zoom C: ID: 349 754 2180, password GWCK

Zoom D: ID: 746 455 2195, password GWCK

Zoom E: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter

Zoom F: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613

Zoom G: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079

Zoom H: ID: 269 840 3648, password 8tCqF6

Zoom I: ID: 834 8407 1267, password RabbiHyatt

COVID-19 Updates

- Planning for Shul reopening has begun. Go to <https://wp.yise.org/planning-for-shul-reopening/> for more details.
 - 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.

Dvar Torah Dedications/Sponsor a Shiur

During this difficult time, we pray to Hashem that the day that we can all come together again in Tefillah and Torah study in good health arrives speedily. Until that point, YISE continues to offer a number of different remote learning options. These options are now available for sponsorship on an individual Shiur or a daily basis.

Our current inability to Daven with a Minyan and to say Kaddish is difficult and a challenge. However, sponsoring a Shiur or other Torah learning is a meaningful way to commemorate a Yahrzeit or honor a loved one. Sponsorships are also a great way to celebrate a Simcha or any other milestone, while helping YISE at a time when many of the Shul's other sources of revenue are not available.

1. The following individual Shiurim are available for sponsorship at \$18 (per day):

- Daily Morning (Sunday through Friday) Tehillim and Parsha Shiur
- Daily Evening (Sunday through Thursday) Tehillim and Halacha Shiur
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Sunday Morning Mussar Study Group for Women
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tuesday or Friday Morning Gemara Shiur for Men
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday Morning Nach Shiur
- Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday Night Chumash Shiur for Women
- Rabbi Silver's Tuesday Evening Parsha Shiur
- Rabbi Silver's Daily Chizuk Dose on WhatsApp
- Rabbi Grauman - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sunday Morning

2. Sponsorship of the Morning and Evening Tehillim and Parsha/Halacha Shiurim together is available for \$25.

3. The Pre-Shabbos Drasha video is available for sponsorship at \$54.

Please email office@yise.org to sponsor.

Thank you for your support.

Thank you to this past week's Shiurim sponsors:

Rabbi Rosenbaum's morning and evening Tehillim/Shiur

- **Ruthie & Bill Konick** in honor of our two Rabbeim and in honor of a Refuah for all of Klal Yisroel
- **Bobbi & Jules Meisler** in honor of Rabbi Rosenbaum and Rabbi Silver and to thank Rabbi Silver for coordinating the production and completion of the excellent YISE Shavuot Companion Booklet

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Nach Shiur

- **Marvin Konick** in honor of Rabbi Rosenbaum

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Women's Chumash Shiur

- **Hannah & Dr. Robert Klein** in memory of Hannah's mother Ruth Koplowitz, Rus bas Aharon HaCohen, Z"L

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Erev Shabbos Parsha Drasha

- **Bev Morris & Art Boyars** in honor of Simi and Sammy Franco
- **Arlene Groner** in memory of her paternal grandparents' Yahrzeits, Shmuel ben Avraham, Z"L, on the 10th of Sivan and Rachel bas Yaakov HaCohen, Z"L, on the 14th of Sivan



THE YISE MEANINGFUL TEFILAH PROJECT

NEW! Videos of the following classes are now available on YouTube (search Meaningful Tefilah Project) and soon on yise.org.

Practical Steps to More Meaningful Prayer, 3 videos, a workshop with Rabbi Rosenbaum, Rabbi Menachem Goldberger and members of the community

Ashrei/Pesukei D'Zimra, 3 sessions with Rabbi Rosenbaum

Better Kavanah, with Rabbi Hirsh Chinn

Going Deep: The Meaning of the Amidah, 6 sessions with Rabbi Rosenbaum

Going Deep: The Meaning of the Shema, 3 sessions, with Rabbi Rosenbaum

The Meaning of Hallel, 3 sessions with Rabbi Rosenbaum

A Deep Dive into Hallel, 3 sessions with Mrs. Sharon Freundel

Selichos Explained, with Rabbi Rosenbaum and Marty Jacobs

Tefilah: Your Personal Stairway to Heaven, 3 sessions with Mrs. Sharon Freundel

Pre-Selichos Drasha: L'David Ori, with Mrs. Sharon Freundel

Yom Kippur Viduy, with Rabbi Rosenbaum

Be a Better Ba'al Tefilah, 8 sessions with Rabbi Ozzie Burnham covering Shabbat and Yom Tov davening, plus introductory session with Rabbi Rosenbaum

Escape your Personal Prison Through Prayer, with Rabbi Yosef Mendelevich

Audio versions of many of these classes, plus additional classes, are also available at yise.org:

Click on the "LEARN/Shiurim" button, then click "Tefilla"

To support further classes by the Meaningful Tefilah Project, please email stuartrosenthal@yise.org or send contributions to the shul office marked for "Meaningful Tefilah."

Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Volume 26

Shavuot Issue

5780 - B"H

Sponsored by Arlene Pianko Groner
in memory of her grandparents, Sam and Ruth Pianko, z"l,
whose yahrzeits are on Sivan 10 and 14, respectively

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Thought for the Day: Lifting others, we ourselves are lifted - This is Mental Health Awareness Week, and its theme this year is kindness. Next week is the Jewish festival of Shavuot, Pentecost, when we read the biblical book of Ruth, whose theme is kindness. These two things coming together during this time of isolation made me see the book with new eyes and realise what a contemporary text it is though it tells of events more than 3000 years ago.

It begins with a couple and their two sons forced to leave home because of famine. They go to a foreign country where their two sons marry local women. Then tragedy strikes. All three men die. The woman, whose name is Naomi, is left a childless widow, the most vulnerable of all positions in the ancient world because there was no one to look after you.

She goes back home but is so changed that her former neighbours hardly recognise her. Can this be Naomi? They ask. Don't call me Naomi, she replies – the word means pleasant. Call me Mara, bitter.

That is how the book begins: with bereavement, isolation and depression. Yet it ends in joy. Naomi now has a grandson. Her daughter-in-law Ruth and relative Boaz have married and had a child. This is no mere child. In the last line of the book, we discover that he is the grandfather of David, Israel's greatest king and author of much of the book of Psalms.

What transforms Naomi's life from bitterness to happiness is described by the Hebrew word *chessed*. When, in the early 1530s, William Tyndale was translating the Bible into English for the first time, he realised that there was no English equivalent for *chessed*, so he invented one, the word *lovingkindness*. Two people's lovingkindness, Ruth and Boaz, rescued Naomi from depression and gave her back her joy. That is the power of *chessed*, love as deed.

One of the enduring memories of the coronavirus period will be the extraordinary acts of kindness it evoked, from friends, neighbours, and strangers, those who helped us, kept in touch with us, or simply smiled at us. When fate was cruel to us, we were kind to one another. Human goodness emerged when we needed it most. And Mental Health Awareness Week reminds us that some need it more than most.

Kindness redeems fate from tragedy and the wonderful thing is that it doesn't matter whether we are the giver or the recipient. Lifting others, we ourselves are lifted.

A Life of Vertical & Horizontal Responsibility: Shavuot During the Coronavirus Pandemic -

What I wanted to do with this shiur is to talk about the Coronavirus. Because Torah gets very interesting when you relate them to the things that are constantly changing. Now, as the Chief Rabbi has already said, the Coronavirus pandemic has enforced a situation that seems to be exactly the opposite of the situation at Mount Sinai. We have three indications of that in the Torah, pretty explicitly. Number one, the famous line at the beginning of

Chapter 19 of Shemot, just before the Giving of the Torah, where it says "vayichan-sham Yisrael negged hahar." The Torah uses the singular form: "and Israel encamped (in the singular) there opposite the mountain". The famous words of Chazal, echoed by Rashi "k'ish echad b'lev echad", explain that the singular form of the verb is used because they encamped together as though they were "One person with one mind". That enormous sense of unity.

The second, a pretty explicit statement of this, is when Moshe Rabbeinu proposes to the people what God is proposing. "Vaya'anu chol-ha'am yachdav." "And all the people answered together and said, 'All that God has said we will do.'" The "yachad" (unity) there is explicitly in the verse, in verse eight of this chapter. And then after the revelation, in chapter 24, when Moshe Rabbeinu repeats the terms of the Torah, "vaya'anu kol-ha'am kol echad". "All the people answered with one voice." Now, these are pretty unique statements of unity, and all three of them are about the giving of the Torah. What we have here are three statements of people coming together. The question is, where do we find the opposite of isolation, of tragedy, of bad things happening, with people being left alone? And the answer is that we find this in Megillat Ruth, in the Megillah that we read on Shavuot, of the story of Ruth. Let's just remind ourselves at how that story begins.

It begins with five hammer blows of tragedy. First of all, the first verse tells us, Vayehi bimei s'hot hashoftim... And it came to pass, at the time when the Judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. Now, a famine in those days was pretty much as severe as an epidemic in our time. Because without freezers and fridges and supermarkets, a famine was a life-threatening condition. So, the first hammer blow there is a famine. Secondly, a man from Bet Lechem, together with his wife and two sons, went to live in the country of Moab. Now, here we have a double tragedy. There's a famine, specifically in Bet-Lechem in Israel. Bet-Lechem means the House of Bread. Of all places where you would not wish to have a famine, Bethlehem is that.

Then the man goes, but does not go the way Avraham went, to Egypt, or to Gerar, he goes to Moab. Moab was Israel's enemy. Here is a family forced out of their own land, out of their own home, to go to the country of their enemies. Then comes the next blow. Elimelech, this man himself, Naomi's husband, dies and she is left a widow. Then comes the fourth blow. Her two sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Moabite women were not exactly welcome in Israel, because the Moabites, as we have said, were Israel's enemies. (Of course, in the end, one of them turns out to be an exceptional human being.) That is the fourth tragedy. And then comes the fifth tragedy, that Machlon and Chilyon, Naomi's two sons, died also. Now you have Naomi left a childless widow and her two daughters-in-law also left as childless widows. Three childless widows, and you cannot get more vulnerable than that in biblical society because they had absolutely no one to support them.

We then read of how Naomi hears that there's again food available in her own land and she decides to go back. Her two daughters-in-law initially accompany her. She says, "Please, don't. There's nothing for you here. I can't give you any more children. Go back and get married." Of course Orpah

does go back. Ruth refuses and goes with her. She then returns to Israel. People of the town, the people she knew not that long ago, come and they look at her and they say, "Can this be Naomi? She has been so shattered by tragedy." The people hardly recognise her. And then she replies, "Don't call me Naomi (i.e. pleasant one), call me Mara, (i.e. bitter one), because God has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord brought me back empty. The Lord has afflicted me. The Almighty has brought misfortune on me." That is point number one. We now have a point of contact with a very tragic episode which left three women exceptionally vulnerable. And one in particular, Naomi, completely isolated, completely devastated.

Then we move to the end of the Megillah. At the end of the Megillah we know what has happened. Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi, has taken Ruth as a wife, and repurchased the family properties. They now have a child, a son, and all the women of the town come and surround them and say, "Praise be to the Lord who has not left you without a guardian redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel." Everyone is rejoicing with Naomi, who now has a grandchild. Boaz has a wife and a child. Ruth has a husband and a child. The ultimate blessing, the final coup de theatre at the end of the Megillah, is that the child that they have called Oved is the grandfather of David Hamelech, the greatest King of Israel. We have a situation in which in the space of four chapters, our story has moved from isolation and devastation to one of rejoicing, and, indeed, a kind of renewal of life for all concerned.

The second question is: what brings about this change? The answer is very interesting. There is a Midrash Rabbah that says "Amar Rabbi Zeira", "Rabbi Zeira said", "Megillah Zu", "this scroll," "ein ba lo tuma velo taharah, velo issur velo heiter. "It contains no laws of any consequence. Not pure, impure, permitted, forbidden." "Velamar nichtavah?"

"Why was it written?" "Lelamedechah kamah s'char tov legomli chassidim" "To teach how great is the reward of those who do acts of kindness."

The story of Ruth is the supreme story of kindness in Tanach. The word itself appears three times in the megillah. But most importantly, it is Ruth's kindness in staying with Naomi despite all of Naomi's protestations, and Boaz' kindness in really realising what it would take to redeem this family from tragedy. Those two acts of kindness are the reason why the story that begins in tragedy ends in joy. That is the power of *chessed*, to redeem tragedy and bring joy where there was sadness and hope where there was despair.

Obviously the question that we ask ourselves is why Ruth is read on Shavuot. There's no obvious connection between Ruth and Shavuot. The two standard explanations are that, number one, it has to do with the time of the year. Ruth is set bimei k'tzir cheitim, at the time of the wheat harvest. And Shavuot takes place at the time of the wheat harvest. Or, number two, that Ruth became a convert.

"Where you go, I go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your God will be my God. Your people will be my people." And the Israelites, as it were, became converts at Mount Sinai because the essence of

By the Friedman and Klahr families
on the occasion of the eighth yahrzeit of
their father, grandfather, and great grandfather,
Dr. Carl Klahr, a"h,
(Nosson Karpel ben Shmuel Zanvil Tzvi),
on the fifth of Sivan

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conversion is kabbalat hamitzvot, acceptance of the commands, and that's what the Israelites did at Sinai. Maybe it has to do with time of the year, or maybe it has to do with Ruth's conversion.

However, I want to suggest to a different answer. An answer put forward by none other than Moses Maimonides in *The Guide For the Perplexed*. The *Guide For the Perplexed* is the greatest work of Jewish philosophy, and it's a big work. It consists of three books, and it's a very lengthy work. Right at the end, (book three has 54 chapters, and right at the end in chapter 53 of book three) in the penultimate chapter, the Rambam devotes one third of that chapter to defining what is chessed, what is loving kindness? The Rambam says chessed means doing good for people in a way that they have no claim on you. It's not justice, it's not tzedakah, it's chessed. You have no claim, but nonetheless, we do good to somebody that is chessed, going beyond anything the law requires.

In chapter 54, we begin to understand why the Rambam has taken all this time to tell us the meaning of chessed. In book four, chapter 54, the closing chapter of the *Guide*, he quotes Jeremiah, who says, "Koh amar Hashem", Thus says God, "Al yithalle chacham bechochmato...", "Let the wise not boast of his wisdom, nor the strong hero of his strength, or the rich person of his wealth." "Ki im bezot yithalle hamithalle". But only boast of this, "haskel veyado'a oti." "Think hard, meditate hard, and know Me." "Ki Ani Hashem." "That I am God." This is a very Rambam sort of idea, that the highest thing in life is to develop an intellectual understanding of God.

But Jeremiah doesn't stop there. He goes on and says, "Haskel veyado'a oti, ki Ani Hashem oseh chessed mishpat utzedakah ba'aretz". "I" says God, "do loving-kindness, justice and righteousness on earth." "Ki v'eileh chafatzti n'oom Hashem". Because these are what I desire, says God." The Rambam says, (to paraphrase), "I may have been giving you the impression that the most important thing in life is to intellectually understand what God is. But actually, the most important thing in life is to do acts of loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness." It is the kind of people we become and the kind of virtues we embody, that are what the Torah are all about. And since Ruth is the Book of chessed in Tanach, maybe that is why we read it on Shavuot. Because the Rambam tells us that the whole purpose of Torah culminates in this ability to do acts of loving-kindness to other people. Thus far, the Rambam.

However, I want to suggest something else as well and take it just a little bit further. We know what happened at Mount Sinai. The Israelites made a covenant with God. He would be their God and they would be His people. But at key moments in Tanach, critical moments, we find another phrase altogether. Listen very carefully. Here is Moshe Rabbeinu, here is Moses, speaking in the Book of Devarim. "Veyadata ki Hashem Elokecha hu haElokim Hakel hane'eman shomer habrit ve'hachessed", "You shall know that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God, who keeps" "Habrit ve'hachessed", "the covenant and the loving-kindness". He says it again a few verses later. "Vehaya eikev tish'me'un et hamishpatim ha'eleh ushmartem ve'asitem otam v'shamar Hashem Elokecha lecha et habrit v'et hachessed". "God will keep the covenant and the loving kindness.". When King Solomon dedicated the Temple, he uttered the following prayer. "Hashem Elokei Yisrael, ein kemocha Elokim bashamayim mima'al ve'al ha'aretz mitachat...", "There is no one like you, God, in the heavens above or the earth below." "shomer habrit ve'hachessed", "keeping the covenant and the loving-kindness".

And likewise, Nehemiah, when he renews the covenant as the people come back from Babylon. He says, "Hakel hagadol hagibor v'hanora", "The great, mighty, and awesome God." "shomer habrit ve'hachessed". "He who keeps the covenant and the loving-kindness."

That's a really puzzling phrase, "shomer habrit ve'hachessed", the covenant and the loving-kindness. If you look, for instance, at the Jewish Publication Society translation, they just translate 'covenant'. Because the chessed is included in the covenant. If you look at the New International version, which is a very good non-Jewish translation, habrit ve'hachessed is translated as, "The covenant of love." But of course it doesn't mean that, it means "covenant and love." Everyone had a problem in understanding what else God does for the Jewish people other than make a covenant with them on Shavuot, at Mount Sinai. But if you think about it, the answer's really quite simple. A covenant is what sociologists and anthropologists call reciprocal altruism. You do this for me. I will do this for you. "You serve Me," says God, "and I will protect you." Covenant is always reciprocal and neutral. But that is terribly vulnerable, because what happens if we don't keep the covenant? The covenant is then rendered null and void.

The covenant is not enough. And that's what Moses was saying, that's what King Solomon was saying, that is what Nehemiah was saying. God does not just make a covenant with us. He has a relationship of chessed with us. An unconditional love, which is translated into deeds of kindness to us. The covenant is conditional, but chessed is unconditional. That is exactly what the Rambam meant when it said chessed means doing something for somebody who has no claim on us. There's nothing reciprocal.

And maybe ultimately that is what the Book of Ruth is there to show us. The Book of Ruth is the Book of chessed. We received a covenant at Mount Sinai, but we also received something much more long-lasting and profound, which is God's unconditional love. And that's what the book is telling us, that God has love for us, the way Ruth had for Naomi and Boaz had for Ruth. Acts of loving-kindness all define our relationship with God. And as the Book of Ruth shows, they should be what define our relationship with one another.

Coming back to where we are in the Coronavirus crisis, the short answer is that just as in the Book of Ruth, tragedy and loneliness and isolation are healed by acts of loving-kindness, so have the isolation of so many of us been healed by acts of loving-kindness, acts of neighbourliness, people being in touch, helping us, getting things for us, phoning us up, connecting us by Zoom, showing that they care about us. Those acts of kindness have humanised and lightened our want. Chessed has a redemptive quality, that it transforms tragedy into some form of celebration and despair into some powerful form of hope. Let what Ruth did for Naomi and Boaz did for Ruth be with us in the months ahead, as we try and help those who have been so terribly isolated these last weeks and months. And may we remember that, as well as giving us a covenant at Mount Sinai, God gave us a bond of love that is unbreakable. He will never abandon us, let us never abandon Him.

OTS Dvar Torah

The Chain of Torah transmission and its implications today - Tzivia Kusminsky

The festival of Shavuot has several names, among them "The feast of the receipt of the Torah", given that on that day, after the exodus from Egypt, Israel received this important compendium of laws, morals and history.

Likutei Divrei Torah

In *Masechet Avot* it is written: "Moses received Torah from Sinai and gave it over to Joshua. Joshua gave it over to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets gave it over to the Men of the Great Assembly. They [the Men of the Great Assembly] would always say these three things: Be cautious in judgement. Establish many pupils. And make a safety fence around the Torah."

From this first Mishnah, we can learn various principles regarding the giving of the Torah, its form of transmission and the values that it contains.

First of all: what does it mean that Moshe received the Torah "from Sinai", should not it say "in Sinai"? The Maharal of Prague explains that since it is impossible to receive the Torah from Hashem directly, as the relationship between the infinite and the finite does not allow it, we had to receive it from Sinai.

The concept "Sinai" means: "product of the spiritual level in which Moshe was". The Midrash tells us that Mount Sinai was chosen because of its low height, teaching us the importance of humility – as is written about Moshe, that he was a very "humble man".

Question: Who wrote this sentence? Answer: Moshe

Question: If Moshe wrote that he is very humble, he probably was not so humble, otherwise he would not have written that. Answer: Humility means to recognize what I am, what are my faculties and my virtues, and at the same time to understand that in front of my creator I am null.

The meaning of Moshe receiving the Torah "from Sinai" is that Moshe deserved to receive the Torah because he reached such a level of humility.

Likewise, the Mishnah tells us that Moshe received Torah from Sinai, and not "The Torah". What is the difference? "The Torah", which talks about the order of the world, the place that everything has in the divine intelligence and more, has not yet been received. Moshe, on the other hand, received the part of the Torah that we can understand...

Joshua in turn, gave it to the elders – a second decline – and the elders in turn gave it to the prophets. The prophets gave it – last decline – to the Men of the Great Assembly. So the version of the Torah received is the "third version".

This point represents the decline of the generations. The farther we move away from the source, from the receipt of the Torah, the more we need to "lower" its level so that we can understand it.

Despite the decline of the generations, our sages call us "the dwarf on the giant", meaning that although we are far away from that glorious day at Mount Sinai, we have gained all the wisdom and merits of the generations above. We can see things from a broader point of view, and this gives us a certain advantage over our ancestors.

Finally, the Mishnah says that the Men of the Great Assembly choose to transmit to us (from them because from them we finally "received" the Torah): "Be cautious in judgement. Establish many pupils. And make a safety fence around the Torah."

This message, moral in its base, closes the circle. Moshe, the leader of the Jewish people, receives Torah and transmits it to Joshua, and with this, the transmission from generation to generation begins. This transmission is the source of the survival of the Jewish People and as such, the key for the message of Hashem to continue being spread in this world.

Likewise, in order to continue to remain united as a people, it is important to take into account all the people of Israel, in all their facets and ideologies. This is why our wise men teach us to be moderate, so as not to alienate anyone from our ranks and to establish many students, in order to reach everyone... [Excerpted]

R' Avraham Abele Gombiner z"l (author of the important *Halachic* work "*Magen Avraham*"; Poland, died 1682) asks: Why do we say in our prayers on the sixth of *Sivan*, "The time of the Giving of our Torah," when, in fact, the Torah was given on the seventh of *Sivan*?

R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l (1867-1928; Hungarian rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva*) answers: In *Halachah*, "day follows the night." For example, *Shabbat* begins at sunset and consists of a night followed by a day, not the other way around. Moreover, according to *Halachah*, the "daylight" portion of the day begins at dawn. Thus, for example, one can, if necessary, perform the *Mitzvah* of *Lulav* or read *Megillat Esther* beginning at dawn.

However, before the Torah was given, *Bnei Yisrael* were not "Jewish" and were not bound by *Halachah*. For them, the night followed the day, and the day began at sunrise, not dawn.

We read (*Shmot* 19:16), "On the third day when it was morning," *Hashem* came to give the Torah. When did this occur? After dawn, but before sunrise, on the seventh day of *Sivan*. Thus, for *Bnei Yisrael*, it was still the sixth day of *Sivan*, R' Gruenwald explains.

R' Gruenwald adds: Our Sages say that we stay up all night on the night of *Shavuot* because Moshe needed to awaken our ancestors to receive the Torah. How is it conceivable that they "slept-in" when it was time to receive the Torah? Just yesterday, they had said, "*Na'aseh Ve'nishmah*" / "We will do and we will hear." The answer is that, as explained above, it was not yet time, according to *Bnei Yisrael's* calendar, for the Torah to be given. (*Keren L'David Al Mo'adim* p.577)

"Our Father, the merciful Father, who acts mercifully, have mercy upon us, instill in our hearts to understand and to elucidate, to listen, learn, teach, safeguard, perform, and fulfill all the words of Your Torah's teaching with love. Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah, attach our hearts to Your commandments, and unify our hearts to love and fear Your Name, and may we not feel inner shame for all eternity."

(*Birkat Ahavah Rabbah*, the blessing before *Shema*)

R' Binyamin Yehoshua Zilber z"l (1916-2008; an influential *Halachic* authority in Israel) writes: Performing *Mitzvot* and clinging to *Mitzvot* are two separate concepts. In the blessing of *Ahavah Rabbah*, we pray about both: first, about performing the *Mitzvot*, then about clinging to them. Specifically, we pray:

- "Instill in our hearts to understand and to elucidate": First, remove the "blockage" and the foolishness from our hearts.
- "To listen": Next, remove the stubbornness that prevents us from listening to parents and teachers.
- "To learn, to teach" -- for an ignoramus cannot fear sin.
- "To safeguard, to perform . . .": Help us to observe the entire Torah, both the negative commandments ("to safeguard") and the affirmative commandments ("to perform").
- "Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah:" Help us to find the light in the Torah, not just to know what it says, but to know G-d's ways and His Will. (This is necessary because the Torah merely tells us the minimum that is expected of us. Beyond that, we need to understand where it is meant to lead us.)
- Finally, "Attach our hearts to Your commandments, and unify our hearts to love and fear Your Name": Help us to cling to Your *Mitzvot* so that we love You deep inside, not just through external actions.

In *Shemoneh Esrei* on *Shabbat* [and *Yom Tov*], continues R' Zilber, we elaborate on this prayer: "Gladden us with Your salvation, and purify our heart to serve You sincerely. And grant us a heritage . . ." Help us to cling to Your Torah *and Mitzvot*, as long as we do our share first. Then, make this purity of heart our permanent inheritance.

(*She'eilot U'teshuvot Az Nidberu* 14:24)

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“Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Every day, a *Bat Kol* / Heavenly voice emanates from *Har Chorev*, proclaiming and saying, ‘Woe to them, to the people, because of their insult to the Torah.’ For whomever does not occupy himself with the Torah is called, ‘Rebuked’.” (Avot Ch.6)

R’ Chaim of Valozhyn z”l (Belarus; 1749-1821) writes: The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 89b) states that Har Sinai has five names. One of them is “*Har Chorev*,” because from there “*Chorvah*” / “destruction” descended on the idolaters who refused to accept the Torah. Also, “destruction” descends on the Jewish People, G-d forbid, if we do not observe the Torah.

R’ Chaim continues: In our time, many people leave the Torah, claiming that they are too busy earning a living to study and observe the Torah. However, that was the argument of the gentiles who refused to accept the Torah: “I earn my living by murdering!” “I earn my living by stealing!” We, in contrast, said in unison, “*Na’aseh Ve’nishmah*” / “We will do and we will listen” -- no questions asked! It follows, writes R’ Chaim, that we accepted the Torah unconditionally, even if it seems to impinge on our livelihoods.

(*Ruach Chaim*)

A related thought from the same work:

“Ten miracles occurred for our ancestors in the *Bet Hamikdash*: ... The rains did not extinguish the fire on the altar.” (Avot Ch.5)

R’ Chaim of Valozhyn writes: This miracle is meant to teach us that a person should never give in to forces that try to distract him from serving *Hashem*, just as the fire on the altar never “let” the rain interrupt it from performing its duty. In particular, “rain” alludes to sustenance, while Torah is referred to as “fire” (see *Devarim* 33:2; *Yirmiyah* 23:29). If a person concentrates when he studies Torah, distractions will not succeed in interrupting him.

Of course, continues R’ Chaim, earning a living is not only necessary -- it is a *Mitzvah* to support one’s children (see *Ketubot* 50a). Nevertheless, one must make sure that he earns his living consistent with his Torah obligations, especially the obligation to be honest and the obligation to make time for Torah study.

Another related thought:

R’ Yosef Yozel Horowitz z”l (1847-1919; the *Alter* of Novardok) writes: Many mistakenly think that Torah study “steals” their lives. They base this on the *Gemara’s* teaching (*Berachot* 63b): “The Torah can only be acquired by one who kills himself over it.” They do not understand that the *Gemara* is not referring to sustaining a lifestyle of deprivation. Rather, the *Gemara* is teaching the degree of commitment that a person must be willing to make. Afterwards, however, “Its ways are ways of pleasantness” (*Mishlei* 3:17).

(*Madregat Ha’adam: Ma’amar Chesbon Ha’tzeddek* Ch.9)

“You shall make the festival of *Shavuot* for *Hashem*, your *Elokim* ...

“You shall rejoice before *Hashem*, your *Elokim* -- you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, the Levite who is in your cities, the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow who are among you -- in the place that *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, will choose to rest His Name.

“You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall guard and perform these decrees.” (Devarim 16:10-12 – from the Torah reading for the second day of *Shavuot*)

R’ Nosson Lewin z”l (1857-1926; rabbi of Rzeszów, Poland) writes: In connection with *Pesach*, we speak of the “Four Expressions of Redemption,” and we drink four cups of wine to recall them. In connection with *Shavuot*, also, we find four expressions in the verses above. They are:

- “ועשית” / “You shall make the festival of *Shavuot*”;
- “ושמחת” / “You shall rejoice before *Hashem*”;
- “וזכרת” / “You shall remember”; and
- “ושמרת” / “You shall guard.”

Granted, we do not drink four cups of wine to recall these expressions. Nevertheless, writes R’ Lewin, they do teach us important principles.

“ועשית” / “You shall make [literally, ‘do’] the festival of *Shavuot*”: There are those who claim that it is not necessary to perform *Mitzvot*; it is sufficient to be a Jew in one’s heart. That is not the Torah’s perspective. Rather, *Mitzvot* are meant to be “done.” Of course, our thoughts are important too. Indeed, a complete *Mitzvah* consists of an action -- the *Mitzvah’s* “body,” so-to-speak -- and a thought -- the *Mitzvah’s* “soul.” The reason G-d put us in a physical world, however, is to perform physical actions.

“ושמחת” / “You shall rejoice before *Hashem*”: The emphasis here is on “before *Hashem*.” Unlike frivolity, joy “before *Hashem*” includes a measure of trepidation, as we read (*Tehilim* 2:11), “Rejoice with trembling.” How is this joy expressed? The verse answers: By sharing our joy with those who are in need, “the Levite who is in your cities, the proselyte, the orphan, and the widow who are among you.”

“וזכרת” / “You shall remember”: The foundation of our faith is remembrance; specifically, remembering the miracles and acts of kindness that *Hashem* has performed for our ancestors and for us. This remembrance leads to thanksgiving. How do we express our gratitude? By keeping the *Mitzvot* in their minutest details. Indeed, that is all *Hashem* asks of us.

“ושמרת” / “You shall guard”: Be on guard not to do anything against G-d’s Will. Remember! Actions that hurt other people are also contrary to His Will. (Bet Nadiv p.99)

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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BENNETT: WE WANT MAXIMUM AREAS WITH MINIMUM ARABS (Arutz-7 5/27/20)

Former Defense Minister and Yamina chairman Naftali Bennett held a press conference Wednesday afternoon in which he addressed several of the issues on the national agenda.

Addressing the trial of Prime Minister Netanyahu, Bennett said: "We stand behind everything we have said in the past. I wish the prime minister success, no one wants to see a prime minister convicted of bribery."

Bennett stated that Yamina has not formed an alliance with the other parties in the opposition, "but where there are tactical moves to promote our values - obviously we will do that. Netanyahu did not want us in the government, and that's his prerogative."

Referring to the Trump Administration's peace plan, Bennett said: "We are familiar with the draft map for sovereignty. It can be a disaster or it can be great. The map, as it is now, is not good for Israel, and includes a quarter of a million Palestinians. We want maximum areas with a minimum number of Arabs. If the map is good, we will support it."

DID US PRESSURE CAUSE CHINA TO LOSE A CONSTRUCTION BID IN ISRAEL? (Israel Hayom 5/26/20)

Not two years after the government decided to increase Israel's water desalination capacity, Israel's IDE Technologies and Bank Leumi have been selected to construct a new facility in the Soreq industrial zone. Some believe that American pressure kept Israel from choosing any of the Chinese companies that submitted bids, arguing that price is not the only factor in the decision-making process.

Two weeks ago, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in Israel for an urgent visit. During the few hours he spent in Israel, he met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Prime Minister-designate Benny Gantz. Aside from defense and security issues, Pompeo hinted at American reservations about China's growing involvement in Israel, such as the construction of the Tel Aviv light rail system.

In an interview to Israel Hayom prior to his arrival, Pompeo criticized the Chinese for their handling of the coronavirus crisis. However, both sides deny that this had anything to do with the bid for the desalination plant.

IDE submitted a bid that priced a cube of desalinated water at 1.45 shekels (40 US cents), which is lower than the current lowest price per cube of desalinated water. That reduced price would save the Israeli economy some NIS 3.3 billion (\$940 million) while the plant is active. The Soreq 2 plant, which has the capacity to produce 200 million cubic meters of desalinated water per year, is expected to be the largest facility of its kind in the world and increase Israel's desalination capacity by 35%.

An interministerial committee on water desalination in the Treasury announced the winning bid on Tuesday.

Finance Minister Israel Katz said, "I congratulate the committee and the accountant general on their quick, professional work. The new desalination facility will increase the amount of water available and save a huge amount on water costs."

IN MEMORY OF NECHAMA RIVLIN (JPost 5/27/20)

This week, President Reuven Rivlin and his family marked the first anniversary, according to the Hebrew calendar, of the death in June of last year of his wife, Nechama, from complications following a lung transplant. The first anniversary of her death according to the Gregorian calendar will be

next week.

Just before Shavuot each year, Nechama Rivlin would distribute cheesecakes to soldiers at the roadblocks around Jerusalem.

In her memory, the president decided to continue the tradition, and on Monday of this week, armed with cheesecakes and cold lemonade, visited the Military Police of the Erez Brigade at its roadblock. He told them that this was his wife's way of expressing gratitude for what they were doing and showing them that she loved them.

MOSSAD REVEALS FULL EXTENT OF ITS MASSIVE CORONAVIRUS GEAR HAUL (YNet 5/26/20)

The Mossad intelligence agency obtained hundreds of millions of protective gear and thousands of medical devices as part of a concerted effort to combat coronavirus, said an internal report obtained by Ynet on Tuesday.

Mossad chief Yossi Cohen, who oversaw the operation, on Tuesday was to officially pass the authority over the coronavirus control center to the Health Ministry, in special ceremony.

As part of the global bidding war that erupted following the COVID-19 outbreak, Cohen was forced to utilize his personal connections with various nations around the world, including countries that have no diplomatic ties with Israel, to attain the lifesaving gear.

According to media reports, some of the equipment arrived from unnamed countries in the Persian Gulf.

Over the past few days, Mossad's command has begun the process of transferring the task of handling and purchasing the equipment to the Health Ministry in order to free up its operations in case a second virus wave hits the country.

According to the report, the amount of medical gear and equipment obtained

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since the start of the outbreak includes: 2.5 million protective goggles, with a further 5.5 million still to arrive; some 80 million surgical face masks, with a further 142 million still to arrive; 1.3 million of N-95 type face masks, with a further 14 million still to arrive; 180 million elastic gloves; over 30 tons of disinfectants and at least 1,300 ventilators, with another 4,700 expected to arrive between June and October.

A further 3,500 Israeli-made ventilators will be provided to the Health Ministry by July.

In total, Israel's hospitals are expected to receive close to 10,000 ventilators by October.

In addition, the report mentions four million protective vests and over two million coronavirus test kits, most of which arrived from China and South Korea.

The report points to deliveries of 47 different types of medications, including anesthetics as well as insulin.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked Cohen and the Mossad during a meeting between the two on Sunday, saying "you have done something extraordinary."

"The results speak for themselves," said Netanyahu. "As we transfer the operations to the Health Ministry, we don't know what the future holds. We must take advantage of the experience we have gained if it will be needed again. In the name of the citizens of Israel and me, I thank you for your excellent work."

TEMPLE MOUNT COMPOUND TO REOPEN AS CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS EASED (Israel Hayom 5/28/20)

The Temple Mount compound in Jerusalem will reopen Sunday after a two-month closure due to the CoVID-19 coronavirus, a senior official said Wednesday, as cited by the AFP.

"All the doors of the Al-Aqsa mosque will be opened at dawn on Sunday," Sheikh Omar al-Kiswani, the mosque's director, told the agency.

The details are yet to be hammered out, including whether the mosque and the Dome of the Rock shrine will be opened, or if the public will only be allowed into the courtyard, where the faithful also pray.

Some Palestinian activists are reportedly calling for the compound to be opened earlier, in time for Friday's prayers.

The compound, located in the Old City of Jerusalem, saw the first restrictions imposed on March 15, when the Islamic religious authority (Waqf) moved to shutter the buildings it is comprised of, only allowing prayers in open spaces.

A week later, it was shut off completely.

Religious sites in Jerusalem began to reopen in recent days as the reported number of new cases declined, but the Al-Aqsa mosque compound remained shut during the Eid al-Fitr festival that began on March 24 for most Muslims and marks the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

In addition, Israeli outlet Arutz 7 reported that Jews - although not permitted to pray on the Temple Mount - will once again be granted access to the site, possibly as early as Sunday.

Scuffles broke out between Israeli police and Palestinians on the first day of Eid as worshippers tried to break through barriers to enter the compound.

ISRAEL'S SCHOOL YEAR TO DRAG ON UNTIL AUGUST DUE TO VIRUS HALT (YNet 5/27/20)

The school year of Israeli children will drag on at least until the start of August due to the coronavirus epidemic that prompted the closure of all educational institutions.

According to an outline presented by the government on Tuesday, children in grades one through four will have classes until July 13, while students enrolled in summer schools will study at least until August 6.

Children in kindergartens as well as those in first and second grade will have after school activities until August 6 as well.

The outline represents a victory for the Secretary-General of the Teachers'

Union Yaffa Ben-David, who demanded the teachers receive full pay for the days they worked remotely during the lockdown and opposed the Finance Ministry's proposal to shorten the summer vacation for middle and high school students by at least nine days.

In the meantime, while some educational institutions throughout the country have already reopened, more and more coronavirus cases continue to emerge within the education system, forcing students and school staff to enter self-quarantine.

In some cases, the authorities had to shut down the facilities altogether.

Some 57 children from first through fourth grade and six members of staff at the Zofit School in the Drom HaSharon Regional Council went into self-isolation on Wednesday after being exposed to two students who recently tested positive for coronavirus.

The two students appear to be brothers who contracted COVID-19 from a family member.

On Tuesday, an assistant in a daycare center in northern Tel Aviv was diagnosed with the virus, prompting the officials to order some of the daycare's children to enter to self-isolation along with their parents.

The Health Ministry has since ordered for the daycare be closed until next Friday.

"It's pretty stressful," said a mother of one of the girls who attends the daycare. "I asked if [coronavirus] tests will be conducted for us and they said tests are done only done for those who show symptoms," she added.

"I don't know what to do, because from what I've read, children don't always develop symptoms. Now the whole family is in isolation because there is no way to isolate a two-year-old toddler alone. I hope everything will be fine."

Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv Tzipi Brand, who is also in charge of city's pre-schools, said, "It was clear that reopening of the education system, would increase the exposure of children and their parents to virus."

"On the other hand, the cost of not opening the economy was also clear."

At the Navon School in Rehovot, another teacher was diagnosed with the virus, making her the fourth person to be diagnosed with COVID-19 among the school's staff.

The teacher's 22 students were all ordered to enter isolation as per the recommendation of the Health Ministry. The students will be in isolation until Thursday, as it will then be two weeks from the last contact they had with the teacher.

They will undergo coronavirus tests on Wednesday to see whether any of them contracted the virus.

Two second graders from the school were also diagnosed with the virus.

JERUSALEM HIGH SCHOOL CLOSED AFTER STUDENTS CONTRACT COVID-19 (Arutz-7 5/28/20)

Three students from the Gimnasia High School in Jerusalem tested positive for the coronavirus on Wednesday.

Accordingly, the Jerusalem Municipality and the Ministry of Education have decided that from next week, the school will return to the format of distance learning.

The municipality is working in full cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Magen David Adom and will test all the educational staff starting on Thursday.

Starting on Wednesday, restaurants, bars and pubs in Israel became fully operational, as did swimming pools and tourist attractions.

The operation of these places was permitted subject to physical distancing, wearing masks and adhering to hygiene rules, signage, marking queues.

However, there is still a restriction on seating in fast food complexes in malls.

ISRAELI SOCCER SEASON SET TO KICK OFF AGAIN (JPost 5/27/20)

Israel soccer is back and ready to go this Saturday night as the Championship Playoffs get under way.

Originally scheduled for mid-March, the coronavirus caused a two-and-a-half-

month delay in the campaign, but with the league obtaining permission from the Ministry of Health it will now run from May 30 until the beginning of July.

There will be a number of new rules and regulations that the league and teams need to abide by, which are similar to those instituted in the recent continuation of the German Bundesliga. Anyone entering the stadium will need to have their temperature taken and anyone registering over 38 degrees won't be permitted to enter the facility.

In addition, each person will need to be wearing a mask and there will need to be distance kept between players on the bench as well as coaches and other team staff.

Gameplay will change slightly as squads will be expanded to 20 players from 18, and five substitutions will be allowed instead of three during the length of the match.

At this stage, fans will not be permitted to attend the games, however, that may change over the course of the month.

Chairman of the League Administration Erez Halfon spoke about the desire to get the league back up and running and the importance of following a strict code in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines to ensure that the games resume without a hitch.

"The minute we were allowed to bring the league back we worked together with the Ministry of Health and instituted a set of regulations that would mean that games could take place without fans," said Halfon. "Many don't know this, but there are many, many people who work behind the scenes in order for a soccer game to be brought to the fans, whether they are in the stadium or at home. That includes management and logistics teams, technicians, media and many more. We needed to work with the ministry in order for all of this to happen.

"Anyone who will be in or around the stadium during a game understands that they have a huge responsibility and I ask that everyone follow the Ministry of Health's regulations so that we can continue to bring the games back. We are also continuing the conversation about allowing fans back into the stadiums in a safe and appropriate way. We are all waiting with excitement for the games this Saturday night."

In related news, Bloomfield Stadium is employing an innovative disinfectant developed for the Israel Defense Force by the Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) in Ness Ziona.

The disinfection process is being carried out in cooperation with Tera Novel. The product was developed for the IDF for biological warfare and can be used to completely disinfect dry and wet surfaces against viruses, bacteria, germs, and some fungi, including anthrax and the coronavirus.

The active ingredient in the disinfectant adheres to the surface of the area being cleaned and continues to disinfect for a prolonged period, killing and repelling 100% of bacteria and contaminants.

Prior to using the disinfectant at Bloomfield Stadium, a successful trial was conducted in 54 locations. Following the great success, health and religious ministries are exploring the possibility of using innovative technology in all the mikvahs and synagogues in Israel.

Among other things, the dressing rooms, showers and seats at Bloomfield Stadium were all cleaned.

"We congratulate the Tel Aviv Municipality for the decision to use the innovative disinfectant technology developed at the IIBR," said Tera Novel CEO Keren-Cohen Hazon. "This is a breakthrough in the environmental war against the coronavirus and in fact against every virus or pollutant. The antiseptic provides maximum protection while fully killing the virus and can be used on vertical and horizontal wet surfaces, making it ideal for mikvahs, baths, swimming pools, sports facilities and, in fact, for any institution that requires thorough disinfection."

AN OPEN LETTER TO GABI ASHKENAZI (Nadav Tamir, JPost 5/24/20)

Honorable Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi,

I know you are scheduled to move on to the Defense Ministry in 18 months,

but I think you would have far greater influence and significantly more impact in serving the state from your Foreign Ministry perch.

Despite its undeniable standing as a sustainable regional power, Israel continues to conduct itself like a state battling for survival. While the state's key challenges lie in the field of diplomacy and soft power, its politicians present them through a military prism, even as security experts caution that military might cannot solve Israel's fundamental problems.

Israel has been the strongest power in the region and one of the strongest in the world for years. You and your colleagues in the defense establishment are responsible for that remarkable achievement that turned the burning embers of the Holocaust into a Jewish regional power in a relatively short time in historical perspective.

Nonetheless, as the Americans found out in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, even the strongest military in the world lacks solutions to modern challenges. The IDF, which enjoys its strongest advantage ever over our enemies, cannot achieve a decisive victory, because that term no longer applies in the modern battlefield.

Whether in terms of relations with our enemies or the ability to translate our military might into a better life for our people, the solutions all lie in the diplomatic arena. Diplomacy also plays a decisive role for Israel's export-oriented economy, which owes its international standing to its innovative capacity. With most challenges becoming increasingly global – pandemics, climate change, curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – the response can be found only in the diplomatic arena, not in military arsenals.

Nonetheless, from its infancy, successive Israeli prime ministers have weakened the Foreign Ministry for various reasons, some political (from the days of David Ben-Gurion's clashes with Moshe Sharett and up to the present), others stemming from our survival complex. We have always opted to look for answers in the wrong place. In recent years, the situation has deteriorated. The Foreign Ministry has sustained deep budget cuts, with many of its tasks outsourced to other ministries and its unique expertise in the international arena excluded from the decision-making process on core issues of diplomacy.

While cabinet meetings always include presentations and assessments by military officers, who often also propose solutions, the Foreign Ministry is largely absent, and its professional opinions are not heard.

The explanation for this phenomenon is also to be found in the Foreign Ministry itself, which has grown accustomed to staying out of issues that touch on politics, although every core issue obviously has a political bearing, and often vice versa. Foreign Ministry staff have come to believe that their role is limited to conveying to the world decisions made by other people in other ministries. Rather than having significant impact on decision-making, the Foreign Ministry has positioned itself as an agency dedicated to public diplomacy and logistics abroad.

You served as its chief of staff when the IDF adopted a courageous professional stance against an Israeli attack on Iran, which had a decisive effect on the prime minister's decision. On the other hand, it is hard to think of a position taken by the Foreign Ministry that differed from that of decision-makers, simply because the ministry preferred to wait for diplomatic instructions rather than contribute to shaping them.

Diplomats, like military officers, are obviously bound by the decisions of the elected echelon, but their job is also to represent their professional stand with determination and to ensure that their familiarity with the global arena is taken into consideration.

As for substance, the following are the issues of the highest priority.

- The Foreign Ministry's most important role is to advance the peace agreements with our neighbors, and in that context, the most urgent priority is to ensure that in the window of time between July and November, no unilateral moves are made that irrevocably exclude a future arrangement based on the two-state principle. The two-state solution is essential to Israel's

preservation as the democratic nation state of the Jewish people, as well as to our strategic relations with Jordan, Egypt and the pro-Western, anti-jihadist axis in the Middle East.

Unilateral moves would also undermine the lifesaving security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and its ability to administer the lives of millions of Palestinians, whose lives we have no interest in running.

It is also vital that we maintain the potential for bilateral and regional channels to an accommodation with the Palestinians rather than having these issues dealt with by the International Criminal Court and various BDS arenas.

- Bipartisanship has constituted the basis for Israel's special standing with successive US administrations, Congress and public opinion. In recent years, Israel is being perceived as affiliated with the Republican Party, dealing a fatal blow to the special relationship with the world's leading power. The loss of bipartisan support also severely undermines our ties with US Jewry, our most important Diaspora community, the majority of which backs the Democrats and steers clear of Israel.

- The vast majority of world Jewry, and especially in North America, is gradually distancing itself from Israel, put off by the state's growing tendency toward segregation, extremism, and its reluctance to accept the different streams of Judaism, their needs, views and concerns. Israel's political establishment tends to prefer ties with Christian Evangelists and Orthodox Jews and to treat liberal Jewish communities that make up the vast majority of US Jewry as irrelevant at best and as non-Jews at worst.

This poses an immediate and present danger to the cohesion of the Jewish people, its links with the State of Israel and to a large extent the security of the state, which also relies on the solidarity of Diaspora Jewry with Israel.

- Government policy of recent years distances the State of Israel from the Zionist vision of a model, egalitarian society that protects the rights of minorities and empowers the disadvantaged.

These values are the foundation on which Israel's innate alliance with liberal democratic states rests. However, the erosion of this foundation is generating growing aloofness on the part of democratic, liberal nations toward Israel.

The government clearly prefers alliances with states led by dictators, nationalists and racists, among them some with antisemitic pasts and/or current antisemitic leanings. This process directly endangers the Jewish communities in those countries, where minority rights are crucial for the Jews, both morally and strategically.

In summing up, I urge you to treat the foreign minister's role as an unusual opportunity to influence Israel's future significantly, to make a difference as a politician and to make your mark on history. Your success is our success, and the sooner you achieve it, the better.

NETANYAHU'S ALLIES KNOW ANNEXATION WILL NOT HAPPEN (Akiva Eldar, Ha'aretz 5/27/20)

Just as the American president outdoes himself in rashness and stupidity by touting the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine as a magic medication for the coronavirus, in Israel his fictitious "peace plan" is being touted as a magic formula to solve the Israeli-Arab conflict. Kahol Lavan leaders Benny Gantz and Gabi Ashkenazi both hailed it during their takeover ceremonies at the Defense Ministry and Foreign Ministry respectively. Gantz pledged to work towards implementation of "all aspects of the Trump administration peace plan". Ashkenazi for his part dubbed the plan "a historic opportunity to shape Israel's future for decades to come."

These two retired IDF chiefs of staff are no dummies. They know that "the plan" isn't worth the paper that was wasted on writing and analyzing it. They are just the barbed wire that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will have to step on while retreating from the trouble of the annexation law to the bad old creeping annexation. The signs that the "Trump plan" is, as they say in Arabic, kalam fadi, empty talk, are glaring. You needn't be a lieutenant general to know that no Palestinian leader would ever sign off on a map that

looks like Swiss cheese. It's hard to believe that two generals with such extensive experience in controlling the Palestinian people would think for a second that any of their leaders would accept "Bantustans" that don't even control the air above them and agree to call this a state.

They therefore composed, along with Netanyahu, the section of the coalition agreement saying that applying Israeli sovereignty to areas in the West Bank is contingent on maintaining regional stability and extant peace agreements, and on seeking future peace agreements. Any reasonable person would realize that unilateral annexation of the Jordan Valley will contribute to regional stability and to current and future peace agreements like regional war contributes to stability and peace.

Another booby-trap on the road to annexation lies in the "plan" itself. In exchange for the territories that Israel annexes in the West Bank, it will be required to give the Palestinians territories under Israeli sovereignty, along the Green Line border and the Halutza dunes. Netanyahu himself said in February that the Trump administration will only recognize the annexation after "the entire process is completed." The "process" includes precise mapping by an American-Israeli team (without Palestinians) of the territory due to change hands. "We don't want to imperil it," Netanyahu declared. "We are working in a responsible manner." What could be more responsible than his decision to appoint the newly minted Minister of Settlement Affairs Tzipi Hotovely as a member of the mapping team? She will certainly ensure that the work is thorough, however long it takes. This well-known peace activist will be pleased to be the first Israeli whose signature appears on a map that marks out which parts of the Holy Land will be handed over to the goyim.

Minister Rafi Peretz, a fellow member of the messianic camp who moved from Gush Katif to Moshav Naveh in the Halutza dunes, proclaimed that "Halutza and the communities in this stunning section of the country are part of Israel – and so they will remain." This wandering Jew who roams from one political home to another needn't worry. He can devote his full attention to the affairs of his new ministry (which one is it again?). A Basic Law passed by the Knesset in 2014 in order to thwart future territorial exchange states that "Relinquishing part of Israel's sovereign territory requires a special majority of 80 members of Knesset or a national referendum."

"When such a fateful decision is on the table, if we ever reach that point, it must be taken to the people," Prime Minister Netanyahu said before the vote.

"This is the only thing that can preserve the internal peace within our nation."

"Internal peace" refers to the status quo on the issue of permanent borders and determining the status of the occupied population, in addition to creating facts on the ground by means of de facto annexation that will thwart a final status accord, and transferring responsibility for civil affairs to Palestinian self-administration. The copyright on this patent belongs to Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Professor Arye Naor, the cabinet secretary for the first Likud government, revealed that in internal discussions in the early 1980s, Begin said that at the end of the five-year transition period stipulated in the Camp David accord, "we'll propose applying the state's law, jurisdiction and administration over all the territory of the Land of Israel and they ("the Arabs of the Land of Israel," as he put it) will say – Absolutely not." "What happens in that kind of situation?" Begin asked, and then immediately gave the answer: "Status quo." The status quo, he explained, is autonomy. "And thus the autonomy that is established for a transition period could go on for a very, very long interim period."

The "transition period" has already lasted 40 years. And over the years, creeping annexation evolved into galloping occupation. When Begin revealed his vision, the total number of settlers was about 12,000. Today close to 430,000 Jews live in the West Bank. The term "autonomy" was just replaced by the term "Palestinian Authority" – an entity that has been safeguarding the apartheid policy for more than a quarter century. So who needs the headache of applying sovereignty? Is anything really hindering us from further dispossessing the Palestinians and undercutting the possibility of a two-state solution? Why get into the whole mess of annexation?



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Path to Mashiach

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

Megillas Rus (The Book of Ruth), read on Shavuos, tells the story of Rus, a Moavite princess who converts to Judaism and ultimately becomes the great-grandmother of Dovid Hamelech (King David). After fleeing Israel because of famine, Avimelech, his wife, Naomi, and their two sons settle in the Land of Moav. After the untimely deaths of Avimelech and his sons, Naomi is left alone with just her two Moavite daughters-in-law, Rus and Orpah. Ready to return to Israel, Naomi is able to convince Orpah to remain behind, but Rus cleaves to Naomi and travels to Israel with her. Hungry and broke, Rus finds herself collecting charity in the field of Boaz, who takes notice and treats her with extra kindness. After overcoming a number of obstacles, Rus and Boaz marry and have a son, Oved. Oved will have a son named, Yishai, and Yishai will have Dovid, King of Israel.

The Nachlas Yosef asks a pointed question. Why did the Navi (prophet) feel the need to publicize that Dovid came from Rus? Additionally, the Torah considers the nation of Moav to have such low ethical standards that their males are not permitted to marry Jews even after conversion. By recording this story for posterity and reading it annually on Shavuos, we are simply reminding ourselves that there was nobody in Israel more fitting to produce the line of kingship in Israel than Rus the Moavite. Why is that necessary?

The Nachlas Yosef answers that the Navi is teaching us what is truly important. There is one thing upon which all hope for the world rests: Chessed – acts of kindness. With great sacrifice, Rus accompanies Naomi back to Israel and helps support her. With great sacrifice, Rus agrees to marry Boaz, an older man about which Boaz declares, “your latest act of kindness is greater than the first.” (3:10) Boaz, in turn, treats Rus and Naomi with tremendous generosity. His agreeing to marry a Moavite convert, despite the associated stigma, shows great humility and sacrifice, particularly considering his wealth and position as a Torah leader. Such a union, steeped in acts of kindness and generosity, can produce a king of Israel and eventually the Mashiach.

The lesson of Megillas Rus is that the path to Mashiach is through acts of chessed. Not necessarily massive deeds that turn the world upside-down, but small personal acts of chessed. When each individual acts kindly towards their fellow, putting the needs of others before their own, then the entire world can be transformed. This was the path to producing the dynasty of the House of Dovid and this same path can, with G-d’s help, bring about the coming of Moshiach Ben Dovid speedily in our days.

Wishing you a Good Yom Tov and a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Four times a year the world is judged. 1) On Pesach - regarding grain 2) On Shavuos - regarding the fruit of the tree 3) On Rosh Hashana - Mankind is judged 4) On Sukkos - regarding the water. (Rosh Hashana 1:2)

Ezra set up the reading of the Torah to read the curses in Sefer Devarim before Rosh Hashana and the curses in Sefer Vayikra before Shavuos. Why? Abayei answered - so that the year and its curses should end. We understand how the curses in Sefer Devarim accomplish this because it is read before Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgment. However, why is Shavuos considered to be a new year? Because on Shavuos we are judged regarding fruit of the tree. (Megilla 31b)

Pesach and Sukkos are also Days of Judgment. Since Pesach is also the beginning of a new year, Ezra could also have set up that the curses in the Torah should be read before Pesach. Why didn't he do that?

Parsha Riddle

Where is the boundlessness of the Torah hinted to in Akdomus (read on Shavuos morning)?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How was it possible to have more than a year between one Shavuos and the next one - even without a leap year?

Answer: Before there was a set calendar, Shavuos could be on the 5th, 6th or 7th of Sivan (since Shavuos is on the 50th day of the Omer, not on a set date on the calendar). If one year Shavuos was on the 5th, the following year it could have been on the 7th, which is two days longer than a year since the preceding Shavuos.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In Megilas Rus (4:7), it is recorded that: "Formerly, this was done in cases of redemption and exchange transactions to validate any matter: One would draw off his shoe (na'alo), and give it to the other. This was the process of ratification in Israel." The above translation (by ArtScroll) of "na'alo" as "his shoe" follows the usual meaning of na'al, but some maintain that the word here means "his glove." (Targum here; Bechor Shor Shemos 3:5)

While many have understood this verse as referring to the chalitzah ceremony described in parashas Ki-Seitzei (Antiquities of the Jews; cf. Abarbanel Devarim 25:5), this interpretation has almost no adherents within the rabbinic tradition, which understands it as a form of kinyan (a formal action that halachically ratifies a transaction) called chalipin or kinyan sudar, and includes a debate over who gave his shoe to whom (unlike with chalitzah, where the Biblical text is explicit that it is the woman who removes the man's shoe):

The verse is interpreted: "Redemption"; that is a sale. ... "Substitution"; that is the transaction of exchange. ...

With regard to the phrase "To confirm all matters; a man drew off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor," the baraita asks: Who gave the shoe to whom? Boaz gave his shoe to the redeemer, the closest relative of Elimelech, who had the right of first refusal to the land that Naomi, Elimelech's widow, was planning to sell. The redeemer was transferring that right to the land to Boaz, who was acquiring it by means of his shoe. Rabbi Yehuda says: The redeemer gave his shoe to Boaz. (Bava Metzia 47a).

The halachah follows the former view.

Since the chalipin ceremony is described only in Rus but not in the Pentateuch, there is considerable dispute over whether it is a Biblical law or a rabbinic institution (see S'dei Chemed volume 2 pp. 406-07).

One notable exception to the traditional rabbinic consensus that the ceremony described here has nothing to do with chalitzah is Chizkuni, who explains ("according to the plain meaning of the text") that the chalitzah ceremony itself is really a form of chalipin, having to do with the transfer of the inheritance of the dead brother (perhaps a ratification of its relinquishment by the brother who is declining to perform yibum, since he would otherwise become his brother's sole heir)!

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. We are "fence" days.
2. On us all may shave.
3. On us all purified themselves.
4. Get ready for the Torah.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am weeks.
2. I am milky way.
3. You sleep less on me.
4. I am after seven sevens.

Last Week's Answers

- #1 The Tribe of Levi** (Landless, Countless, King's Legion, Eigelless.)
#2 Aharon's sons (Am I a student? Am I a child? Children of Moshe? We were four.)

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to **WIN a Claw Machine Arcade Game**



Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers. **Answer as many as you can. Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!**

The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

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