

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shabbos Shorts ^{ת"ס}

January 8 - 9, 2021 - 25 Teves 5781 - Parshas Shemos/Mevorchim Hachodesh
Light Candles by 4:45 - Havdalah 5:48

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week in honor of Rachel Pinchot, in appreciation of her gracious assistance in beautifying the shul, by a friend of YISE.

Mazal Tov

- **Joelle & Bill Zimbalist** on the birth of their great-granddaughter, Talia, born to parents Nechama & Yaakov Wolff, of Kerem B'Yavneh. Grandparents are Sara & Simmy Zimbalist of Beit Shemesh.
- **Debby & Rabbi Barry Greengart** on the birth of a granddaughter, born to parents Batya & Chaim Preiser of Baltimore. Mazal Tov to all of the siblings and the entire extended family.

Shabbos Schedule

Limited Minyanim are now taking place at YISE under Montgomery County's Phase 2 guidelines. All Minyanim require advance registration and confirmation. If you are interested in attending Minyanim and have not already registered, please go to <https://www.yise.org/minyan> If you are registered for a Minyan and are unable to attend at that time, please do not go to a different Minyan. If you have any questions, please contact minyan@yise.org

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 4:45
 - Mincha: 4:50, 4:45 (Sephardi)
- If you Daven Kabbalos Shabbos prior to Shkia (5:03 PM), it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag (4:03 PM).

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:20, 9:00, 9:30, 8:30 (Sephardi)
- One may say the entire text of the blessing of Birkas Hachodesh even when alone. Rosh Chodesh Shevat is on Thursday.
- The Molad will be Wednesday evening, 35 minutes and 3 Chalakim after 5, Jerusalem time.
- Mincha: 2:30, 4:00, 4:00 (Sephardi)
 - Shabbos ends/Maariv: 5:48

COVID-19 Updates

- **Outdoor Minyan** - If you are interested in a Shabbos morning outdoor Minyan without a tent, subject to weather conditions, please email Ari Elias-Bachrach at outdoor@yise.org
 - Advance registration for Minyanim is **required** and space is limited. Go to <https://www.yise.org/minyan> to register. If you have changes to your original registration form, please send an email to minyan@yise.org with details.
 - The Shul office is still open, but hours may vary.
- 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.

Camp Shomrai

Camp Shomrai is back for another fun-filled summer with programming for children in preschool through ninth grade! Camp runs from July 5th through August 13th. For more information or to register online, visit our website at <https://Campshomrai.org>

Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list and updated times, 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 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** Women's Navi Shiur, now studying Sefer Yehoshua, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, **Zoom A**.
 - **GWCK Sunday Kollel ~~Brunch~~ and Learn for Men and Women** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM
 - Unraveling the Navi with Rabbi Hillel Shaps, **Zoom B**.
 - **Rabbi Tuvia Grauman** - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sundays at 10:00 AM, **Zoom F**.
 - **Rabbi Yonatan Zakem's** Shiur for men & women, Pearls of Prayer, exploring the depth and meaning of our daily prayers. Sunday evenings, Sundays at 7:30 PM, **Zoom I**.
 - **GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM (except as noted). For more info. contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, hshaps@gwckollel.org 347-869-9361.
 - For Men & Women - **Zoom C** (except as noted):
 - Mondays: (for men only) Rabbi H. Shaps, On the Same Page Gemara, **Zoom B**.
 - Tuesdays: Rabbi Winter - Torah Topics
 - Wednesdays: Rabbi Grossman - Reading Responsa
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Grossman - Parshas Hashavua, 9:00 PM
 - For Women - **Zoom D**:
 - Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Parsha Journeys
 - Tuesdays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Bereishis in-Depth
 - **Semichat Chaver Program**, Tuesdays at 9:00 PM with Rabbi Hillel Shaps. For more information, please contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@gwckollel.org
 - **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiur on Daily Halachos for men & women, Tuesdays 9:15 AM, **Zoom E**.
 - **Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's** Shiur for Men and Women, Tuesdays, 1:30 PM, "A Second Look-Stories in the Torah from a Deeper Perspective", **Zoom H**.
 - **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning Maseches Gittin on Wednesday evenings, 8:00 PM, **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: 349 754 2180, password GWCK
Zoom C: ID: 746 455 2195, password GWCK
Zoom D: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter
Zoom E: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613
Zoom F: ID: 978 8156 7874, password RabbiHyatt
Zoom G: ID: 539 496 3506, password ygwarz
Zoom H: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079
Zoom I: ID: 269 840 3648, password online Pearls, phone 621690

YISE Programs and Listings

Registration for Shomrai Preschool 2021-2022 is now open! We are excited to be offering a Torah-rich, child-centered program for children entering 2 year-old Nursery - 4 year-old Pre-K. School day runs from 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM. Extended care options available from 7:30 AM -8:30 AM and 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM. Register early for maximum savings! Visit our website for tuition rates and online registration at <https://preschool.yise.org/registration> For more information about the program email Sarah Dollman at director@yise.org

Grocery Drive for Holy Cross Hospital - YISE is happy to join with the other Shuls in the area in providing much-needed food for Holy Cross Hospital employees in need, and will be making its contributions in the month of January. See the attached flyer or go to <https://wp.yise.org/grocery> for details on donating through PayPal, or directly with non-perishable items. It is important that we support those hospital employees in their time of need, when they are the ones who often provide for us in our times of need.

UPDATE: Learning to live with COVID-19 - Motzei Shabbos, January 23, 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM on Zoom - Meeting ID: 878 2795 1873, password 699427. Organized by Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington and YISE. See flyer for details.

“Challenges and Opportunities of Raising a Jewish Child in Our Times” with Rabbi Rosenbaum. Presented by YISE Youth on Sunday January 24, at 8:00 PM on **Zoom A** For parents of preschool and early elementary school children.

Ask The Rabbi! Come join our new virtual, interactive monthly program featuring different Halachos of Shabbos! This month's topic: Borer (selecting) on Shabbos and Yom Tov. How am I supposed to separate the food I want from other foods on Shabbos? Is it really true that borer applies to cleaning up a board game? Tuesday, January 26, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM on Zoom A. The first 45 minutes are for Shailos submitted in advance and the last 15 minutes are for Q & A. Send in your questions related to Borer to: AskTheRabbi@yise.org by Sunday, January 24. For more information or to submit questions by phone, contact Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517 or mfriedman2@yahoo.com To sponsor the Shiur, contact office@yise.org

Come Join Rabbi Koss's Monthly Jewish History class - now on Zoom! Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington and the YISE Chesed Committee: Rabbi Koss will be speaking on a topic in Jewish history, Monday, February 1, from 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM on **Zoom A**. For more information, contact Miriam Friedman at mfriedman2@yahoo.com

Go Social! Want to reconnect with Shul friends you lost touch with these past COVID-19 months? We're missing our Shul buddies as well! YISE's Social Committee wants your energy to help lead new (Zoom interactive, of course) programs. Sahra Ginsburg sahra@ginsburg.cc Sharon Shimoff sharonshimoff@gmail.com and Max Rudmann max.rudmann1@gmail.com are waiting to hear from you.

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"l, are available at <http://audio.yise.org>

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 limited ability 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.

- 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~~ Navi Shiur for Women
 - Rabbi Grauman - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sunday Morning
- Sponsorship of the Morning and Evening Tehillim and Parsha/Halacha Shiurim together is available for \$25.
- 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 Tehillim/Parsha and Halacha Shiur

- **Steve Kalin** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of אליהו בן אריהו.
- **The Konick Family** in honor of Shirley Sperling's birthday.

Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur

- **David Jaray** for a Refuah Sheleimah for Rabbi Hyatt and in honor of Rabbi Grauman and all those who attend the Shiur.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Erev Shabbos Parsha Drasha

- **Rebbetzin Dr. Miriam & Rabbi Binyamin Marwick** in honor of Rabbi Marwick's parents, Judy & Dr. David Marwick.

Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!

Looking for a way to celebrate someone's upcoming birthday or anniversary? For an \$18 donation, you can include the name (birthday) or names (anniversary) in this section of the Shabbos Shorts. Please send the following information to office@yise.org: Sponsor name, birthday or anniversary date, name (birthday) or names (anniversary). The birthday or anniversary will be listed in the Shabbos Shorts based on the date of the event.

YISE Youth Announcements

Dor L'Dor - Motzei Shabbos, January 9, 7:15 PM. Parsha, pizza, prizes and more - but this year virtual! This week's Dor L'Dor is generously sponsored by Debi and Max Rudmann in memory of his father, Ernest Rudmann, on the occasion of his upcoming Yahrzeit. May the Neshama of Ezra Ben Menachem Hanina have an Aliyah and lots of Zechus for all of the Torah learning done at Dor L'Dor. Debi and Max also want to dedicate the learning for the Refuah Shleimah of our community's Cholim. "See" you at Dor L'Dor! If you have any questions or would like to sponsor, please contact Michael Shmoff at mshmoff@yise.org See flyer for details.

Game Night - Motzei Shabbos, January 16, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM on Zoom A. For ages 7 - 18. RSVP to bkugler@yise.org by January 12. See flyer for details.

Community Programs & Listings

Yoga - Relax Your Mind and Body - Join Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington and registered yoga teacher Amy Morrison for an introductory class, for women only. Sunday, January 10, 9:30 AM on Zoom. Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZl0f-qpjksGNY7sSk4VhDO_XbL9w3Si7j6

The Silent Struggle: Increasing Our Awareness of and Sensitivity to Infertility, Pregnancy Loss and Mikvah - Tuesday, January 12, 8:00 PM on Zoom, for women only. A panel discussion sponsored by the Robin Niman Mikvah Education Fund, a project of the Mikvah Emunah Society. Speakers include Aimee Baron, MD, Rebbetzin Elisheva Levitt, Rebbetzin Rachie Reingold, and moderator Karen Wasserstein, PsyD.

Franco Foundation End-of-year Appeal - COVID-19 has increased financial insecurity by families and individuals in our community. Since it was launched 23 years ago, the Franco Foundation has been helping, in communities across the Greater Washington region, hundreds of individuals and families in very tight circumstances, unemployed, facing eviction, or otherwise unable to make ends meet. 100 percent of your donation goes to those in need. Please send your donations to The Franco Foundation, 613 Bromley Street, Silver Spring, MD 20902 or use PayPal to thefrancofoundation@gmail.com

Yad Yehuda - Unfortunately, many individuals and families across the Greater Washington Jewish community are facing the twin challenges of financial and food insecurity. The scope of this need has grown exponentially during the current COVID-19 crisis. We receive new requests for assistance each week. With the help of Hashem, Yad Yehuda answers these requests through our Emergency Financial Assistance and Tomchei Shabbos Programs and through The Capital Kosher Pantry. Please consider making a contribution by visiting www.yadyehuda.org/donate

The Yad Yehuda Clothing Exchange will be open to all members of the community this Sunday, January 10, 10:00 AM - 12 Noon. We have a lot of coats for all sizes! This is your opportunity to shop, at no cost, for beautiful, modest clothing in our well-equipped showroom. Shoppers must be in good health, not have been in contact with someone who tested positive for Covid, wear masks and maintain social distancing. As we cannot accommodate walk-ins at this time, please schedule an appointment at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fhBnGaalIgwEUT4rDFUwdVKGz1_U9CeOYD-f_A10iY/edit For questions or to schedule an appointment on another day: ncarmel@yadyehuda.org

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, January 13, 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 vppr@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password: 3671

Penetrating Thoughts and Practical Perspectives - Thoughts on life, Torah and Middos. Based on Michtav M'Eliyahu, from Rav Eliyahu Dessler, Z"L. Mondays, 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM, with Rabbi Yitzchak Scher. Zoom - Meeting ID: 736 4190 7086, Passcode: torah. Presented by YGW Kollel Zichron Amram. For more information, contact Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate at 404-273-3392.

What Happened at Sinai: An exploration of the Sinai Revelation and the Ten Commandments - Wednesdays, 8:00 PM on Zoom. Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps. Join any time! No cost. Zoom info and registration at linksgw.org/classes

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@srlslaw.com to be added to the invite list. Sunday 8:30 AM, Monday - Thursday 9:00 PM.

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 January 10 | Monday January 11 | Tuesday January 12 | Wednesday January 13 | Thursday - January 14 Rosh Chodesh | Friday January 15 |
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Limited Minyanim will take place at YISE next week, **advance registration and confirmation required**. You are encouraged to Daven at home at the same time as a Minyan at YISE. Shacharis: Sunday 6:30 AM/7:30 AM/8:45 AM;

Monday through Friday 6:30 AM/7:00 AM/8:45 AM. Mincha/Maariv: Sunday - Thursday: 5:00 PM.

Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 6:02 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 6:30 AM, Latest Netz: 7:27 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:51 AM, Earliest Mincha: 12:49 PM, Earliest Shkia: 5:05 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim: 5:55 PM

Next Shabbos

January 15 - 16, 2021 - 3 Shevat 5781

Parshas Vaera

Light Candles: 4:52

Havdalah: 5:55

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday, January 13 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 through Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Friday - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Yale Ginsburg - President

Simi Franco - Office Manager

A Quick Thought on the Parsha from Rabbi Rosenbaum

Shemos 5781: Humility with Confidence

Video at <https://wp.yise.org/shabbos>

So Moshe רבינו is shepherding his flock and Hashem reveals himself to him in this remarkable image of the burning bush. And Hashem tells him it is your job to take the Jewish people out of מצרים, out of Egypt and Moshe רבינו objects vociferously. The Medrash says it was weeks that Moshe רבינו went back and forth with Hashem. G-d tells you to do something, someone as great as Moshe, and you push back? What does that even mean?

So I think there is a really powerful lesson in the exchange between Moshe and Hashem. If you look closely at the points that Moshe makes regarding why he shouldn't be the leader, they're all logical points. He talks about the fact that who am I? How could I be the one to speak to פרעה and take the Jews out of Egypt? It's a good question. He talks about the fact that why should anyone believe me? I'll show up and tell the Jews that I'm the redeemer. Right, I mean why should they believe you? He tells G-d that I don't speak well. How in the world will I be the leader if I can't even give a good talk and it is hard for people to understand me etc.

Those are all excellent points. And at its core, what Moshe is really expressing at that moment, is Moshe is expressing his humility. I think it is important to reflect on this. We think humility is just always saying oh gosh who am I, I am nothing. That is not what humility is. Moshe רבינו is known, of course, as the humblest of men. Humility is being honest, assessing the situation how I would assess it if it was someone else and not me. So many other people G-d would have come to them and said you're the one, wow I am great, I am amazing. G-d- has chosen me. I knew I was a great person. That is a remarkably inflated self- perspective. Moshe רבינו can have מלך מלכי הוא reveal himself to him and he still says but I know I am a flawed person. I know I am not great. What human being is great? I know I don't speak well. Let me think about this for a second, why should anyone even believe me? These are all wonderful questions that we would all feel comfortable posing if it was someone else, but if it was yourself we would allow our inflated egos to take over.

There is one point that Moshe makes that Hashem rejects outright, all the other points Hashem gives answers. This actually says in the פסוק that Hashem becomes angry at Moshe, that is when Moshe says, שלח נא ביד תשלח, which is understood in different ways but on the basic level it means just send someone else and **that** is unacceptable. That is not humility. That is misplaced humility. Humility is I understand my flaws I know I am not really a great person whatever I am good at, whatever I am better at is than other people is because G-d gave me the ability. But the moment humility gets to I am just not going to accept my mission in life, I am not going to accept my role in life, that is misapplied humility and at that moment G-d becomes angry at Moshe. Something worthy to think about. Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah Presents

DOR L'DOR

ONLINE!

Family Chevrusah-Style Learning - The Same Usual Motzei Shabbos Fun, but This Year Virtual!

- **Delicious Pizza - delivered to homes within Kemp Mill for children ages Pre-K - 6th grade**
- **Interactive online discussions**
- **Raffle of exciting prizes**

5781 Motzei Shabbos Times:

November 7 — 7:00 pm

November 14 — 7:00 pm

December 5 — 7:00 pm

December 19 — 7:00 pm

January 9 — 7:15 pm

January 30 — 7:30 pm

February 6 — 7:30 pm

February 20 — 7:45 pm

March 6 — 8:00pm

Register your family at
<https://yise.org/dorldor>

Must register your children prior to
each event by that Friday at 10am

To sponsor this program, please
contact Michael Shimoff at
mshimoff@yise.org



UPDATE: Learning to live with COVID-19

We will be treating COVID-19 for some time as we continue to fight this pandemic during the implementation of vaccines. Data and experience gained since the outbreak of the disease are improving measures taken to prevent, diagnose, and treat it at different stages. A panel of experts will discuss

- **The main signs of COVID-19 and the various tests used to identify and treat it**
- **Changes in treatments over the past 10 months and what lays ahead**
- **How children are affected by the virus and how they spread it**
- **What researchers are discovering about early markers of COVID-19 and its after-effects**

Speakers:

- Ronald Reisler, MD/MPH, *infectious diseases, clinical research, Davis Defense Group*
- Yosefta Hefter, MD, *pediatrician, Pediatric Infectious Diseases Fellow at Children's National Hospital*
- Evan Fisher, MD, *internist/nephrologist, Wright-Patterson AFB*

Saturday, January 23, 2021
8:15 to 9:15 p.m.

Zoom ID: 878 2795 1873

Password: 699427

Dial-in-number: +1 301 715 8592

Organized by Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington and Young Israel Shomrai Emunah; co-sponsored by Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring Jewish Center, Kehilas Ohr Hatorah of Silver Spring, South East Hebrew Congregation, and Chabad of Silver Spring.





YISE GROCERY DRIVE

**to benefit Holy Cross Hospital
employees in need**

Donate to YISE via PayPal at

<https://wp.yise.org/grocery>

and/or

**Drop off shelf-stable food donations (no glass
containers) at the Ginsburg home (11700 Fulham Street)
by Sunday, January 24.**

All food appreciated, but the most-needed items include:

Pasta * Pasta sauce * Rice * Beans * Canned soups * Cereal

Questions? Email social@yise.org



Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Sponsored by Naomi Baum and Saul Newman
in commemoration of the yahrzeits of Saul's parents,
Jeremy Uhry Newman, z"l (Yirmiyahu Uri ben Arye Yisrael)
and Ann Buchen Newman, z"l (Chana Fradel bat Yitzhak Chaim HaLevi)
and Naomi's father, Isaac Baum, z"l (Yaakov Yitzhak ben Elimelech)

By Buddy and Sarah Stern in memory of Buddy's father,
Emanuel J. Stern, a"h (Menachem Yehoshua ben Yitzhak Shraga)

Volume 27, Issue 13

Shabbat Parashat Shemot

5781 - B"H

Covenant & Conversation: R. Jonathan Sacks, z"l

Women as Leaders - This week's parsha could be entitled "The Birth of a Leader." We see Moses, adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, growing up as a prince of Egypt. We see him as a young man, for the first time realising the implications of his true identity. He is, and knows he is, a member of an enslaved and suffering people: "Growing up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people".

He intervenes – he acts: the mark of a true leader. We see him intervene three times, twice in Egypt, once in Midian, to rescue victims of violence. We then witness the great scene at the Burning Bush where God summons him to lead his people to freedom. Moses hesitates four times until God becomes angry and Moses knows he has no other choice. This is a classic account of the genesis of a hero.

But this is only the surface tale. The Torah is a deep and subtle book, and it does not always deliver its message on the surface. Just beneath is another far more remarkable story, not about a hero but about six heroines, six courageous women without whom there would not have been a Moses.

First is Yocheved, wife of Amram and mother of the three people who were to become the great leaders of the Israelites: Miriam, Aaron and Moses himself. It was Yocheved who, at the height of Egyptian persecution, had the courage to have a child, hide him for three months, and then devise a plan to give him a chance of being rescued. We know all too little of Yocheved. In her first appearance in the Torah she is unnamed. Yet, reading the narrative, we are left in no doubt about her bravery and resourcefulness. Not by accident did her children all become leaders.

The second was Miriam, Yocheved's daughter and Moses' elder sister. It was she who kept watch over the child as the small ark floated down the river, and it was she who approached Pharaoh's daughter with the suggestion that he be nursed among his own people. The biblical text paints a portrait of the young Miriam as a figure of unusual fearlessness and presence of mind. Rabbinic tradition goes further. In a remarkable Midrash, we read of how, upon hearing of the decree that every male Israelite baby would be drowned in the river, Amram led the Israelites in divorcing their wives so that there would be no more children. He had logic on his side. Could it be right to bring children into the world if there were a fifty per cent chance that they would be killed at birth? Yet his young daughter Miriam, so the tradition goes, remonstrated with him and persuaded him to change his mind. "Your decree," she said, "is worse than Pharaoh's. His affects only the boys; yours affects all. His deprives children of life in this world; yours will deprive them of life even in the World to Come." Amram relented, and as a result, Moses was born. The implication is clear: Miriam had more faith than her father.

Third and fourth were the two midwives, Shifrah and Puah, who frustrated Pharaoh's first attempt at genocide. Ordered to kill the male Israelite children at birth, they "feared God and did not do what the

king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live". Summoned and accused of disobedience, they outwitted Pharaoh by constructing an ingenious cover story: the Hebrew women, they said, are vigorous and give birth before we arrive. They escaped punishment and saved many lives.

The significance of this story is that it is the first recorded instance of one of Judaism's greatest contributions to civilisation: the idea that there are moral limits to power. There are instructions that should not be obeyed. There are crimes against humanity that cannot be excused by the claim that "I was only obeying orders." This concept, generally known as "civil disobedience", is usually attributed to the nineteenth century American writer Henry David Thoreau, and entered international consciousness after the Holocaust and the Nuremberg trials. Its true origin, though, lies thousands of years earlier in the actions of two women, Shifra and Puah. Through their understated courage they earned a high place among the moral heroes of history, teaching us the primacy of conscience over conformity, the law of justice over the law of the land.

The fifth is Tziporah, Moses' wife. The daughter of a Midianite priest, she was nonetheless determined to accompany Moses on his mission to Egypt, despite the fact that she had no reason to risk her life on such a hazardous venture. In a deeply enigmatic passage, we see it was she who saved Moses' life by performing a circumcision on their son (Ex. 4:24-26). The impression we gain of her is a figure of monumental determination who, at a crucial moment, had a better sense than Moses himself of what God requires.

I have saved until last the most intriguing of them all: Pharaoh's daughter. It was she who had the courage to rescue an Israelite child and bring him up as her own in the very palace where her father was plotting the destruction of the Israelite people. Could we imagine a daughter of Hitler, or Eichmann, or Stalin, doing the same? There is something at once heroic and gracious about this lightly sketched figure, the woman who gave Moses his name.

Who was she? The Torah does not mention her name. However the First Book of Chronicles references a daughter of Pharaoh, named Bitya, and it was she whom the Sages identified as the woman who saved Moses. The name Bitya (sometimes rendered as Batya) means "the daughter of God". From this, the Sages drew one of their most striking lessons: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: "Moses was not your son, yet you called him your son. You are not My daughter, but I shall call you My daughter."

They added that she was one of the few people (tradition enumerates nine) who were so righteous that they entered paradise in their lifetime.

So, on the surface, the parsha of Shemot is about the initiation into leadership of one remarkable man, but just beneath the surface is a counter-narrative of six extraordinary women without whom there would not have been a Moses. They belong to a long tradition of strong women throughout Jewish history, from Deborah, Hannah, Ruth and Esther in the Bible to more modern religious figures like Sarah

Schenirer and Nechama Leibowitz to more secular figures like Anne Frank, Hannah Senesh and Golda Meir.

How then, if women emerge so powerfully as leaders, were they excluded in Jewish law from certain leadership roles? If we look carefully we will see that women were historically excluded from two areas. One was the "crown of priesthood", which went to Aaron and his sons. The other was the "crown of kingship", which went to David and his sons. These were two roles built on the principle of dynastic succession. From the third crown – the "crown of Torah" – however, women were not excluded. There were Prophetesses, not just Prophets. The Sages enumerated seven of them. There have been great women Torah scholars always, from the Mishnaic period (Beruriah, Ima Shalom) until today.

At stake is a more general distinction. Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron in his Responsa, *Binyan Av*, differentiates between formal or official authority (*samchut*) and actual leadership (*hanhagah*). There are figures who hold positions of authority – prime ministers, presidents, CEOs – who may not be leaders at all. They may have the power to force people to do what they say, but they have no followers. They excite no admiration. They inspire no emulation. And there may be leaders who hold no official position at all but who are turned to for advice and are held up as role models. They have no power but great influence. Israel's Prophets belonged to this category. So, often, did the *gedolei Yisrael*, the great Sages of each generation. Neither Rashi nor Rambam held any official position (some scholars say that Rambam was chief rabbi of Egypt but most hold that he was not, though his descendants were). Wherever leadership depends on personal qualities – what Max Weber called "charismatic authority" – and not on office or title, there is no distinction between women and men.

Yocheved, Miriam, Shifra, Puah, Tziporah and Batya were leaders not because of any official position they held (in the case of Batya she was a leader despite her official title as a princess of Egypt). They were leaders because they had courage and conscience. They refused to be intimidated by power or defeated by circumstance. They were the real heroes of the Exodus. Their courage is still a source of inspiration today.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

The Book of Exodus begins the story of the people of Israel, the nation that developed from the household, or the family, of Jacob. Many are the differences between the Book of Genesis and the Book of Exodus, but perhaps the greatest change lies in the "personality" (as it were) of God Himself.

Genesis, the book of creation, refers to God at first as Elohim, the sum total of all the powers of the Universe, who created the heavens, the earth and all of their accoutrements. And this God of the creation, actually the God Who was there before creation and

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Who brought creation into being, works very much alone: God creates, God speaks, God calls forth.

Very different is the God of the Exodus; at the opening of this book, God defines Himself as Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, "I will be what I will be," the essence of being into the future, the God of history. In effect, God is saying that He will be, He will effectuate, He will bring about freedom and redemption, but in an indefinite time that cannot be revealed to Moses.

Why not? Because God now has partners. Firstly His Israelite covenantal partners from the Covenant Between the Pieces of Abraham; secondly, the nations roundabout and especially the powerful Egypt; and the leaders of Israel, especially Moses, and Moses's brother Aaron and sister Miriam.

You see, if Genesis is the book of creation, Exodus is the book of history and history is an ongoing process between God and His Chosen Nation, between God and the nations of the world; God will effectuate, but only together with the cooperation of His partners.

For the remainder of the Pentateuch, Moses will be the strong towering figure, from servitude to freedom to revelation, to wandering in the desert, to our entry into Israel. And strangely enough, he is introduced in our biblical portion with no personalized mention of pedigree: "A certain man of the House of Levi went and married a Levite woman; the woman conceived and bore a son... and she hid him for three months."

Why are Moses's parents anonymous? Perhaps because it really doesn't matter who your parents are: It matters who you are. Perhaps because we shall learn that he had a second mother who nurtured him, who saved his life from the baby-slaying Egyptians, who named him her son (Moses, in ancient Egyptian, means "son") and brought him up in Pharaoh's palace—perhaps to teach us that only someone who came from the "outside" could free himself of the slave mentality and emancipate the Hebrew slaves. Or perhaps to teach us that although the Egyptians enslaved us, it was also an Egyptian woman who endangered her life to save a Hebrew child.

It is only in Chapter 6 that we learn the names of Moses's biological parents, and trace his pedigree from his parents Amram and Jochebed all the way back to the Children of Jacob; and this study of his roots comes just at the time that he is about to confront Pharaoh for the first time and begin his mission to free the Hebrew slaves. Nevertheless, the Bible tells us nothing at all about Moses's parents, their characters or their activities; we are only informed their names.

To be sure, we will learn much from the Bible about the almost superhuman achievements of Moses, who was not only a great political liberator but who also "spoke to God face to face" (as it were) and revealed God's Torah laws for all posterity. We will also come to know his remarkable siblings, Aaron and Miriam. But we cannot help but be curious about the two individuals who bore and to a great extent raised the three greatest leaders in Jewish history. I may not know much about the parents of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, but I do know volumes about the grandparents of these three extraordinary people. Just imagine the circumcision ceremony which was made for Moses' father and the simhat bat for Moses's mother, rituals which must have occurred in fearful secrecy during a period of slavery and persecution.

The history of the children of Israel seems to be ending almost before it began, in the hellholes of Pithom and Raamses, in the turpitude of debasement and oppression.

Nevertheless one set of parents choose to name their son Amram, "exalted nation," and the other set

of parents choose to name their daughter Jochebed, "glory to God." These grandparents had apparently been nourished on the Covenant Between the Pieces, upon the familial prophecy of "offspring who will be strangers in a land not theirs, who will be enslaved and oppressed, but... in the end will go free with great wealth", and will return to the land of their fathers.

And these grandparents apparently inspired their grandchildren with faith in the exalted status of their nation, a nation that will eventually bring the blessing of freedom and morality to all the families of the earth and with the ability to give glory to God in the darkest of times because they knew that eventually His great light would shine upon all of humanity. Yes, I may not know much about Moses' parents, but by the names they bestowed upon their children I know volumes about Moses' grandparents!

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Spiritual Time Management - The two old men couldn't have been more different from each other. Yet they both taught me the identical life lesson.

The first, a cagey old Irishman, was one of my mentors in the postgraduate psychotherapy training program in which I was enrolled many years ago. He wrote quite a few books in his day, but they are all out of print now and nearly forgotten, like so many other wise writings.

The other was an aged Rabbi, several of whose Yiddish discourses I was privileged to hear in person. He was but moderately famous in his lifetime, but is much more well-known nowadays because of the popularity of his posthumously published writings.

The lesson was about the importance of time management. Neither of these two elderly gentlemen used that term, which is of relatively recent coinage. Yet their words, while far fewer than the words of the numerous contemporary popular books on the subject of time management, made a lifelong impression upon me.

It was long after my encounter with these elderly gentlemen that I first realized that their lesson was implicit in a verse in Parashat Shemot.

The Irishman, Dr. Hugh Mullan, was a master psychotherapist with fifty years of experience. A group of us gathered in his office every Tuesday evening. We went there not only for his wisdom, but for the warm and comfortable furnishings and splendid view of Washington, D.C.

Dr. Mullan was an existentialist philosopher. He was heavily influenced by his encounters with Martin Buber, and because of this, he felt a special affinity to me, thinking that since Buber and I were both Jewish, we must have had much in common. He wasn't aware that my Judaism was very different from Buber's, but I wasn't about to disabuse him of his assumption.

He was a diligent and persistent teacher and, true to his philosophical perspective, doggedly encouraged us to appreciate the human core of the patients we were treating. He was convinced that he had a foolproof method of comprehending that human core. "Tell me how the patient uses his time, how he organizes his daily schedule, and I will tell you the secret foundation of his soul."

Dr. Mullan firmly believed that you knew all you needed to know about a person if you knew how he used his time. Or, as he put it, "if he used his time, and how he used it." He would then make his lesson more personal, and would ask, carefully making eye contact with each of us, "How do you busy yourself?"

In the summer following that postgraduate course, I took advantage of the rare opportunity of hearing the ethical discourses, the mussar shmuessen, of the revered Rabbi Elya Lopian. He too spoke of the

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fundamental importance of one's use of time, and he too, though he did not even know the term, was quite an existentialist.

He began his remarks quietly, almost in a whisper. Gradually his voice reached its crescendo, and when it did he uttered the words I will never forget: "Der velt sagt," he said in Yiddish, "the world says that time is money. But I say time is life!" I was a young man then, but not too young to appreciate the profound meaningfulness of that simple statement. Time is life.

He went on to say that we all allow ourselves to become busy, and busyness detracts from life.

It was quite a few years later that it dawned upon me that the Irish psychiatrist and the Jewish spiritual guide were preceded in their teaching by the 18th century ethicist and mystic, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, known by the initials of his name as the Ramchal. Furthermore, the Ramchal was preceded in antiquity by none other than the Pharaoh himself.

In the second chapter of his widely studied ethical treatise, Mesillat Yesharim, Path of the Upright, Ramchal writes of the tactics of the yetzer, the personification of the evil urge which is buried within each of us:

"A man who goes through life without taking the time to consider his ways is like a blind man who walks along the edge of a river... This is, in fact, one of the cunning artifices of the evil yetzer, who always imposes upon men such strenuous tasks that they have no time left to note wither they are drifting. For he knows that, if they would pay the least attention to their conduct, they would change their ways instantly..."

"This ingenuity is somewhat like that of Pharaoh, who commanded, 'Let the heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein, and let them not regard lying words'. For Pharaoh's purpose was not only to prevent the Israelites from having any leisure to make plans or take counsel against him, but by subjecting them to unceasing toil, to deprive them also of the opportunity to reflect."

To become so busy and have no time to reflect, no time to really live, is bondage. Ramchal's insight into Pharaoh's scheme epitomizes the essential nature of our years of exile in Egypt. To have no time, that is slavery.

How prescient were the words of Rav Elya Lopian. Time is life. And how germane is his teaching for contemporary man, who despite the "time-saving" technological devices which surround him is even busier than those who came before him. Contemporary man has no time for himself, certainly no quality time, and thus no life.

Time is life. Millennia ago, an Egyptian tyrant knew this secret. Centuries ago, an Italian Jewish mystic was keenly aware of it. Decades ago, I learned it from a Gentile existentialist psychiatrist and a gentle and pious rabbi. It is the secret of spiritual time management, and it is the secret of life. Would that we would learn it today.

Aish.Com: Dvar Torah based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

Why was it necessary for Moses to grow up in Pharaoh's court? Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz commented that we see here a powerful lesson on the importance of learning and habit in the development of a person and in preparing him for greatness. Even someone with the inherent greatness of Moshe needed a total environmental learning experience of royalty to integrate the personality necessary to be a great leader. The attribute of dynamic leadership is not easy to acquire. One needs much effort and many learning experiences to obtain this attribute... This allowed him to take any action necessary to do what was right. [Excerpt]

In this week's *Parashah*, we read that Yaakov and his family descended to Egypt, they became slaves, and *Hashem* commanded Moshe to go to Pharaoh and obtain their freedom. Almost in passing, we learn that Moshe rescued Yitro's daughters from oppressors at a well, Yitro took Moshe into his home, and Moshe married one of Yitro's daughters.

In fact, R' Chaim Friedlander z"l (1923-1986; *Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva) notes, our Sages derive an important lesson about performing *Chessed* / kindness from Moshe's encounter with Yitro. Approximately four centuries after that event, when King Shaul was about to go to war against Amalek, he sent a message to Yitro's descendants (*Shmuel I* 15:6), "Go, withdraw, descend from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them--for you performed kindness with all of *Bnei Yisrael* when they went up from Egypt." Say our Sages: Yitro performed kindness for Moshe only in the hope that Moshe would marry one of his daughters (see *Rashi* to *Shmot* 2:20). Nevertheless, Yitro's act was considered *Chessed*--not a minor *Chessed*, but one in whose merit King Shaul said 400 years later, "You performed kindness with all of *Bnei Yisrael*."

Indeed, so far does *Chessed* go that one must feel indebted even to inanimate objects from which he benefits. Thus, says the *Gemara* (*Bava Kamma* 92b), "Do not throw a clump of earth into a well from which you drank." (*Siftei Chaim: Mo'adim* Vol. III, p.151).

Tefilah

This year, we will iy"H devote this space to discussing various aspects of our prayers. This week, we begin to examine the structure of our daily prayers.

R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes: There is a *Mitzvat Asei* / affirmative commandment to pray every day. . . The number of prayers is not from the Torah, and neither is the text of the prayers. According to Torah law, there is no fixed time for prayer. . .

The obligation imposed by this *Mitzvah* is as follows: A person should pray to and beseech *Hashem* every day. Each person according to his ability should state *Hashem's* praises, then ask for whatever he needs in a beseeching manner, and then give praise and thanks to *Hashem* for the goodness He bestowed upon him.

When the Jewish People were exiled by the wicked Nevuchadnezar [who destroyed the First Temple] and they assimilated among the Persians, Greeks, and other nations, and had children in the lands of those nations, those children's speech was a combination of many languages, and they could not formulate clear prayers in *Lashon Ha'kodesh* / Hebrew, using their own words. When Ezra and his *Bet Din* saw this, they established the *Shemoneh Esrei*. [*"Shemoneh Esrei"* literally means "eighteen." This prayer actually consists of 19 blessings because one was added later.] The first three blessings give praise to *Hashem*, the last three give thanks, and the middle blessings request the main categories of things that every person needs. (*Hilchot Tefilah* 1:1-2, 4)

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“During those many days, it happened that the king of Egypt died, and *Bnei Yisrael* groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to *Elokim*.” (2:23)

R' Yitzchak Arieli *z"l* (see facing page) observes: Even “their outcry because of the work went up to *Elokim*.” A Jew’s sigh or groan always makes an impression Above, even when it is not consciously directed toward G-d. Why? King David explains (*Tehilim* 130:1): “From the depths, I called out to You *Hashem*.” Deep within his heart, a Jew is always calling to *Hashem*.
(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha'geulah* p.61)



“Moshe and Aharon went and gathered all the elders of *Bnei Yisrael*. Aharon spoke all the words that *Hashem* had spoken to Moshe, and he performed the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed, and they heard that *Hashem* had remembered *Bnei Yisrael* and that He saw their affliction, and they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. Afterwards, Moshe and Aharon came and said to Pharaoh . . .” (4:29-5:1)

R' Simcha Zissel Ziv *z"l* (1824-1898; the *Alter* of Kelm) asks: Why did Moshe gather the elders and the people before going to Pharaoh? Should he not have reversed the order so he could tell them, “I already went to Pharaoh”? Consider: Pharaoh was a powerful king, and Moshe had a death sentence hanging over him (see 2:15)! Would *Bnei Yisrael* not have been inspired to hear that Moshe had barged into Pharaoh’s palace uninvited, demanded, “Let my people go!” and lived to tell about it?!

The *Alter* answers: Without the merit of *Emunah* / faith, *Bnei Yisrael* would have been undeserving of redemption, and Moshe would not have experienced the miracles that accompanied him to his meetings with Pharaoh. The order had to be: “The people believed . . . Afterwards, Moshe and Aharon came and said to Pharaoh.” (*Chochmah U'mussar* No. 3)

R' Shmuel Yaakov Borenstein *z"l* (1946-2017; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Kiryat Melech in Bnei Brak, Israel) adds: In light of the above, we can understand why some commentaries interpret the statement in the *Pesach Haggadah*, “‘With wonders’: This refers to the blood,” as referring to the sign that Moshe performed in front of *Bnei Yisrael* (in our verse), not to the plague of blood. When Moshe changed water to blood in the sight of *Bnei Yisrael*, it was not merely a sign to convince them that he was G-d’s messenger. Rather, it was essential to the redemption, for it strengthened their *Emunah*, without which Moshe could not have approached Pharaoh in the first place.
(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Zot L'Yaakov* p.135)

“The Egyptians enslaved *Bnei Yisrael* with *Fehrach* (פֶּרַח) / crushing harshness.” (1:13)

Our Sages interpret “*Fehrach*” as a contraction of the two words, “*Feh Rach*” (“פֶּרַח רַךְ”) (literally, “a soft mouth”), hinting that, at first, the Egyptians gently persuaded *Bnei Yisrael* to work for them until, gradually, they enslaved *Bnei Yisrael*.

R' Yitzchak Arieli *z"l* (1896-1974; *Mashgiach* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav; author of *Enayim La'mishpat*) comments: It is the Jewish People’s experience that “soft words” from an enemy inevitably lead to “crushing harshness.”
(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Shirat Ha'geulah* p.72)

“Pharaoh commanded his entire people, saying, ‘Every son that will be born -- into the River you shall throw him!’” (1:22)

Rashi z"l explains: On the day Moshe was born, Pharaoh’s astrologers told him, “*Bnei Yisrael*’s redeemer was born today, . . . but we see through astrology that his downfall will be through water.” Therefore, Pharaoh decreed that every boy born that day be thrown into the Nile. In fact, the astrologers were foreseeing Moshe’s death as a consequence of hitting the rock to bring forth water, but they did not understand what they were seeing. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R' Yehuda Cahn *shlita* (Baltimore, MD) writes: One aspect of the conflict between *Bnei Yisrael* and the Egyptians centered on whether or not G-d created and controls time. Here, and again shortly before the Exodus (*Shmot* 10:10), Pharaoh invokes astrology, the idea that history is controlled by the stars, meaning that time is a force independent of G-d. And, when Moshe first demands that Pharaoh free *Bnei Yisrael*, Pharaoh replies (5:2), “Who is *Hashem* that I should heed His voice?” The four-letter Name of *Hashem* (“Y-K-V-K”) represents the idea that G-d “Was, Is, and Will Be” (see *Shulchan Aruch O.C.* 5:1), *i.e.*, *Hashem* is above time, for He created time. Pharaoh denied that concept, as Aristotle would centuries later.

R' Cahn continues: In *Parashat Bo* (11:4), when Moshe informs Pharaoh of the impending plague on the firstborn, Moshe says that it will occur at “approximately midnight.” *Rashi* explains that Moshe did not say, “exactly at midnight,” as G-d had told Moshe, lest the Egyptians miscalculate the time and deny the Divine nature of the plague. At first glance, this is hard to understand, writes R' Cahn: Why would the Egyptians deny the truth if they saw all of the firstborn die, but it appeared to occur a minute earlier or later than foretold? In light of the above, we can understand: The Egyptians claimed that *Hashem* has no control over time. Thus, had the promised event not occurred at precisely the predicted moment, it would have reinforced the Egyptians’ mistaken belief.

(*The Tov Lehodoth Haggadah* p.170)

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CHANNEL 12 POLL (Ha'aretz 1/6/21)

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CENTRIST BLUE & WHITE SAID MULLING ELECTION ALLIANCE WITH FAR-RIGHT YAMINA (YNet 1/6/21)

Representatives for Defense Minister Benny Gantz's centrist Blue & White party and Naftali Bennett's far-right Yamina reportedly met to discuss a possible alliance in the upcoming March elections.

No party members were present at the meeting. Parties have until February 4 to submit their final lists of party candidates for the vote.

Blue & White has taken a decidedly more right-wing tone following the resignations of nine MKs and ministers from the party, most from the more left-wing faction.

Party officials have argued that given this new tone, Blue & White should examine an alliance with Yamina, on condition that pro-settlement head of the far-right Tkuma faction, Betzael Smotrich, is not part of the agreement.

Last week, former justice minister Avi Nissenkorn said he resigned from Blue & White because of contacts between Gantz and Yamina. He has since joined Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai's new party, The Israelis.

Members of Gantz's inner circle said that the defense minister could prove "the deciding factor" in the elections and that he is "working to prevent a radical right-wing government of either [former Likud minister] Gideon Sa'ar or Bennett with [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu."

Yamina, for its part, sees the remaining members of Blue & White as more aligned with the religious-Zionist side of the political map and could prove a good fit for the party, referring to MKs such as Chilli Tropper, Michael Biton, Orit Farkash-HaCohen and Pnina Tamano-Shata.

The biggest advantage Yamina could achieve from a joint running with Blue & White is campaign funding, which is calculated according to the number of Knesset seats each party has. Blue & White, which currently has 13 seats, received nearly NIS 20 million in campaign funding even though polls show it may not even pass the threshold of 3.25% of the overall vote.

FORMER MOSSAD HEAD YATOM FORMS VETERANS PARTY (JPost 1/6/21)

Former Mossad chief and Labor MK Danny Yatom announced the formation of a new pensioners party called the Israeli Veterans Party on Wednesday.

At a press conference in Tel Aviv's Beit Sokolow Journalist House, Yatom said he hopes to repeat the success of the Gil (Age) Pensioners Party established by the late Mossad legend Rafi Eitan that won seven seats in the

2006 election. In an interview with The Jerusalem Post, Yatom said he believes he will succeed in crossing the 3.25% electoral threshold because the coronavirus has changed the priorities of his potential voters.

"We will pass the threshold because we are an authentic party," Yatom said. "People will vote for us because the coronavirus caused health and economic crises that forced them to deal with their own survival."

Yatom said 56% of Israelis have no pension, so they are forced to live on a NIS 2,000 elderly stipend that begins at 67 for men and 62 for women. His party wants to raise the stipend to the NIS 5,300 minimum wage. He warned that 20% of elderly Israelis live below the poverty level and at least 160 have died from the coronavirus, alone, to be discovered only days after their deaths.

"That is fitting only for a third world country," he said.

The Veterans Party list will include right-wing and left-wing candidates, including ethics Prof. Asa Kasher, retired journalists Pe'er-li Shahar and Haim Zisovich, former WIZO world president Prof. Rivka Lazovsky, former Kadima MK Rachel Adato and economist Shlomo Maoz. Trenton, New Jersey-born basketball star Tal Brody, who once ran for Knesset with the Likud, turned down a place on the list.

Asked why an elderly Knesset candidate like 76-year-old Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai cannot be relied on to help seniors, the 75-year-old Yatom said Huldai wants to be prime minister, so he will not have time to deal with issues other than security and diplomacy. Yatom said helping the elderly may end up being 20th on Huldai's platform, not first as on his.

"I formed the Israeli Veterans Party to deal with socioeconomic issues and not the security and diplomatic issues I dealt with over many years," he said.

"I see the rifts inside Israeli society. The greatest danger to Israel right now is from inside, not outside, so we must unite and focus on helping the senior citizens who contributed to the state, built and developed it, but now have a feeling they have been forgotten and no one is paying attention to them."

Yatom said his party's goal is to hold the balance of power between political

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| Cong. Anshe Sholom, New Rochelle, NY | Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring, MD |
| Cong. Beth Aaron, Teaneck, NJ | Mizrachi Shul, Johannesburg, SA |
| Cong. Beth Shalom, Monroe Twp, NJ | North Shore Hebrew Academy HS, NY |
| Cong. Bnai Yeshurun, Teaneck, NJ | Suburban Torah Center, Livingston, NJ |
| Cong. Brothers of Israel, Long Branch, NJ | Temple Emanuel of Pascack Valley, NJ |
| Cong. Etz Ahaim, Highland Park, NJ | The Learning Shul, Columbia, SC |
| Cong. Ohav Emeth, Highland Park, NJ | Torah Academy of Bergen County, NJ |
| Cong. Ohr Torah, Edison, NJ | Woodsburgh, NY Minyan |
| Cong. Rinat Yisrael, Teaneck, NJ | Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ |
| Cong. Shomrei Torah, Fair Lawn, NJ | Young Israel of Brookline, MA |
| Cong. Sons of Israel, Allentown, PA | Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ |
| Cong. Zichron Mordechai, Teaneck, NJ | Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ |
| Cong. Zichron R. M. Feinstein, Brooklyn, NY | Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA |
| Delray Orthodox Synagogue, Delray Beach, FL | Young Israel of Holliswood, NY |
| East Denver Orthodox Synagogue, CO | Young Israel of Houston, TX |
| Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Mill Basin, NY | Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY |
| Harvard University Library | Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY |
| Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, NY | Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY |
| Hillel at Baruch College | Young Israel of Sharon, MA |

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blocs. But he ruled out joining a government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"You can't abandon values," Yatom said. "I would sit with any party, including the Likud led by someone else. But someone indicted cannot receive a mandate from the president to form a government."

ISRAEL SECRETLY DELIVERED VACCINES TO THE PA (Arutz-7 1/7/21)

Israel secretly delivered dozens of COVID-19 vaccines to the Palestinian Authority, Kan 11 News revealed on Wednesday.

The channel's Palestinian Arab affairs correspondent, Gal Berger, revealed that according to the agreement between the parties, the vaccines were delivered earlier this week following a request by the PA and are meant to assist in special humanitarian cases.

At present, no vaccines have been used at all. PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas himself has not yet been vaccinated.

At the same time, the Palestinian Arabs have made an official request to Israel to receive a large shipment of vaccines for the general population. The application is being examined.

The PA says it expects to receive at least two million vaccines in the next two months. PA officials announced last month that they expect to receive four million coronavirus vaccines from Russia.

More recently, a senior PA health official announced that the PA was in touch with the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as several international companies which produce vaccines, and asked for a speedy delivery.

CONCERN AS VIRUS RAGES IN ISRAEL'S YESHIVAS AFTER HANUKKAH (YNet 1/3/21)

The Health Ministry has expressed concern over an outbreak of coronavirus cases in religious educational institutions, two weeks after the Hanukkah holiday.

In an internal memo seen by Ynet on Saturday, the ministry reports hundreds of Haredi students in some of the large yeshivas have recently been diagnosed with COVID-19.

The memo notes these institutions have lost control over the outbreak and no longer quarantine students in separate areas, allowing many of them to continue their studies with the rest of the student body.

The memo notes that since mid-October, nearly 900 students have been identified as having the virus, most of them in the past two weeks as they returned from celebrating the Hanukkah holiday with their families.

Two of the more well-known yeshivas - the Hebron Yeshiva and the Kol Yaakov Yeshiva both located in Jerusalem - were until recently seen as meticulously observing health mitigation regulations. Now both are experiencing outbreaks with dozens of sick students.

The Hebron Yeshiva is reported to have closed its quarantine area after people isolated there said their basic needs were not being met.

After the removal of the sick students to government-run coronavirus hotels was delayed, students were allowed to attend communal studies and roam freely throughout the yeshiva.

Some of the healthy students at the Hebron Yeshiva have chosen to keep away due to fears of contagion, the Health Ministry memo said.

The father of one such student told Ynet that the past few weeks have seen a complete reversal in the yeshiva's policy on the virus.

According to the ministry, there are at least 60 Hebron Yeshiva students with COVID-19, although many more are estimated to have been infected - including some who have failed to report their condition to the authorities.

"It began when sick students returned to school and did not get tested despite being instructed to do so," the father said.

"Other students did not observe the separation into small groups and when they tested positive, remained in the yeshiva and did not isolate," he said.

When more positive test results arrived over the weekend, the yeshiva did nothing, the father said.

"My son remained in his room with two face masks on," he told Ynet. "He told me that he managed to avoid being infected for nearly a year and with

vaccination within sight, he did not want to get sick now."

He said that no one in authority was willing to speak to the parents and the situation seemed to be out of control.

A Health Ministry official said that yeshiva leaders refused to cooperate with the ministry.

"The fact that a third of [all yeshiva] students have already contracted COVID-19 is proof that mitigation measures were being ignored even before the recent outbreak," the official said, adding that the ministry should rethink its policy towards those institutions.

"We've not seen such a breakdown of all regulations since the start of the pandemic," the official said.

"The leaders of these yeshivas initially cooperated with the ministry not because they were concerned of a virus outbreak but because they thought that would keep their institutions opened and said they were willing even to finance the cost of providing quarantine for students. But after they were given the permission to keep their doors open, they dropped any pretense of following the rules," he said.

The Hebron Yeshiva declined to comment and the Health Ministry's coordinator for yeshivas said that a delay in receiving the results of tests had caused some of the difficulties in enforcing the health regulations.

BUILDING BRIDGES: 2020 PROVES SUCCESSFUL FOR ISRAEL-EUROPE RELATIONS (Israel Hayom 1/6/21)

The past year has been relatively successful in terms of the relationship between Israel and European countries, a survey presented by Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi and the Israeli ambassadors to Europe reveals.

The minister and the ambassadors met Monday to summarize 2020 and set objectives for 2021.

The accomplishments noted in 2020 included the ratification of the Open Skies agreement between Israel and the European Union and progress in including Israel in Horizon Europe, an ambitious EU research and innovation framework slated to run between 2021 and 2027.

Other notable achievements saw Germany, Austria, Estonia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and the Czech Republic designate Hezbollah, Iran's regional proxy, as a terrorist group, and an increase in the support lent to Israel at the UN by European members-states.

A dozen European foreign ministers visited Israel during 2020 despite the global pandemic, and several countries adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism, including Sweden, previously considered particularly hostile towards Israel.

"For Europe, the Palestinian cause remains the most important this, and thus there has been no change," a senior Foreign Ministry official said.

He said that there has been a shift in this aspect as Europeans changed their response to the Abraham Accords.

"They originally had a cold reaction to the peace agreements. It took a while for them to understand that from their point of view, nothing negative has happened, that the agreements will not lead to the neglect of the Palestinian cause. However, they still do not call these "peace deals," but rather "normalizations," the official said.

Ashkenazi said that the Israel-Europe relations will be the number one priority in 2021. He noted that in 2020 he spoke with all European foreign ministers and met with most of them at the EU meeting that an Israeli foreign minister was invited to for the first time.

Deputy Director-General for European Affairs Anna Azari added that in the first half of 2020 when the possibility of Israel asserting sovereignty over part of Judea and Samaria was on the horizon, "there was fear of a catastrophe" between Israel and Europe.

However, the moment the annexation plans were canceled, there was an immediate shift and feeling that the dialogue with Europe has changed substantially.

IS ISRAEL A PFIZER TEST SUBJECT? (Arutz-7 1/6/21)

Ynet reports former Prime Minister Ehud Barak suggested that Pfizer and

other drug manufacturers are using the Israeli population as a test subject, and that Israel has willingly made itself available for this purpose.

According to Barak, it is not thanks to Prime Minister Netanyahu that Israel procured so many doses of vaccine while larger nations wait. Rather, "Pfizer found the perfect location for its pilot program in Israel," claimed Barak.

The former prime minister stated that Israel's state-sponsored health insurers have decades of health and vaccination records on almost all Israelis. So if someone in a high-risk group is given the vaccine and then dies, it is much easier to identify a background disease or condition as the cause of death.

"This data is a treasure trove for Pfizer. With this data, Pfizer can show that it vaccinated an entire high-risk population in a country with no deaths wholly attributable to the vaccine," Barak said.

According to Barak, "Managing the COVID-19 crisis was a failure. A failure of management, of leadership and of personal example."

He referred to the vaccination campaign and said: "All in all, this is a welcome thing and I want to congratulate all those involved in the work - the HMOs, Pfizer representatives, and the Prime Minister. But, don't be confused. Netanyahu didn't bring the vaccines, but Pfizer found the right place for their pilot: Kupot Holim."

Barak explained: "There are health funds here that hold data 40 years back on all vaccinated people in my age group. Two-thirds of this age group are in the data. There's no such thing anywhere in the world. It's a huge asset to Pfizer, because it lets them show that when someone dies after being vaccinated - and people my age tend to die more often - he didn't die because of the vaccine, but as a result of some background illness.

"These data are a treasure, which is why Pfizer, with deliberate intent, put Israel first to receive the vaccine. Not because of Netanyahu's talks with the CEO.

"Pfizer can show that they have taken an almost complete country, and vaccinated the entire risk layer. Anyone who dies later can be checked whether it had a connection to the vaccine or a background illness."

Former IDF Medicine Corps head and current Public Health Experts Chairman Prof. Hagai Levine tweeted a similar admission: "It's natural that the most vulnerable populations aren't participating in the experiment. This says nothing about the nature of the experiment.

"It is also another demonstration of the vital need to assess vaccine efficacy in living conditions on a large scale, including regarding preventing mortality."

GEOLOGISTS SOLVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MYSTERY ABOUT EARLY FARMERS IN ISRAEL (Ha'aretz 1/6/21)

Sometimes archaeological evidence may be quite clear, but the story it tells can be mystifying. One such conundrum has been archaeological evidence of relatively intense hilltop farming thousands of years ago in the relatively arid Jerusalem area, the Judean lowlands and northern West Bank. The Iron Age and Byzantine farmers cultivated the chalky, hilly land mostly by terracing. Meanwhile in the abundantly rainy Galilee in Israel's north, there is no evidence of terracing. The area was just as densely populated but the people seem to have eschewed exploiting the hills, only cultivating crops at low level. It seemed counterintuitive to find the evidence of heavier farming in the drier lands of Jerusalem and Samaria than in the lovely Galilee.

Now a new study by geologists may have explained why. It boils down to proximity to the Negev and the loess soil on its surface, which blew as far as Jerusalem and Samaria but not further north, suggest Dr. Rivka Amit and Dr. Onn Crouvi of the Geological Survey and Prof. Yehouda Enzel of Hebrew University's Hermann Institute of Earth Sciences in the journal *Geology*.

The geological team hadn't set out to resolve this archaeological riddle. They had been wondering what the Negev was like before the loess surface developed, and to resolve the conundrum of where the loess had originated.

Loess is basically sediment, a mix of sand, clay and silt, loosely cemented by minerals. This mix, which is coarser than just sand, coats the surface of most of the northern and central Negev. Elsewhere in the world, loess is usually formed by the advance and retreat of glaciers: These juggernaut rivers of ice erode rocks into sand and silt. This cannot apply to the loess in the Negev,

however, if only because its loess is relatively young, a mere 200,000 years old and Israel was not glaciated at that time. Nor could the loess have been blown in from the Sahara or Arabia because the wind can't carry particles so big that far.

To resolve the question of the source of the loess, the geologists analysed dust on hilltops throughout Israel. The heights are the only place where dust settles from the atmosphere before mixing with other substances or being affected by contact with streams, for example.

"Dust storms from distant places such as the Sahara can carry in fine grains that are less than 10 microns in size," says Amit. But the loess grains are 20 to 60 microns in size. Moreover, analysis shows the loess particles are mostly quartz, not chalky. It bears adding that most of the surface rock in Israel is chalky, certainly in central Israel, because in distant prehistory, this area was under the sea.

Ergo the loess had to have come from a source closer than the Sahara and completely unrelated to glaciation, and the only source in reasonable proximity is erosion of sand dunes in the Negev itself and the Sinai, under more violent climatic conditions than we're used to. Strong winds in the region during the Upper Pleistocene caused the grains to collide and disintegrate into the silt from which loess is born.

As it formed, the loess also moved. The wind blew the particles dozens of kilometers away, where they settled, as far away as central Israel and Samaria but the wind wasn't strong enough to blow the loess particles further north.

And thus Israel's southern regions have thicker loess than the north, which is where farming comes in. The loess is hardly loam, but it's better for cultivation than the soil resulting from erosion of chalky rock, which doesn't hold water well.

To find support for their theory, the researchers looked at the island of Crete, which has no source of sand; anything soil on the mountaintops was dust transported by the wind, Amit explained. And what they found is that the soil in mountainous areas of Crete was similar to the hilltops in the Galilee.

So they did resolve their original riddle which is what the Negev looked like before the loess: similar to the arid landscape that characterizes Mediterranean islands.

Thus, soil in Israel has two sources. One source is dust carried thousands of kilometers from the Sahara or Arabia: tiny particles that are capable of creating no more than thin soil. The second is coarser particles of loess that can only be travel dozens of kilometers.

Central and southern Israel got both. The coarser loess particles created relatively dense, aerated soil that retains water better. The farther north one goes, and the farther from the Negev, the smaller the particles and the thinner the soil gets, particularly in the hills.

The researchers also cautiously postulate that it's possible that proximity to deserts is part of the more general explanation for the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East, where agriculture and animal husbandry are believed to have begun some 12,000 years ago.

It bears noting that loess is not a boon for farmers. It is not rich in nutrients and needs augmentation. To cultivate the Negev, which they did for hundreds of years, the Byzantines built giant dovecotes in their fields, thus killing two birds with one stone: the bird poo fertilized the crops, enabling them to not only subsist but to export wine and olive oil; and the birds could also be eaten and sacrificed to the gods.

One way or another, it appears that these geological conditions are what encouraged agriculture to thrive on the hills of ancient Judea and Samaria, as well-established by archaeology, while the Galileans had lovely rain but had to settle for growing food in the soil in the valleys. As Amit puts it: "Without the desert loess, it's reasonable to assume that we wouldn't have been the land of milk and honey."

HUGE DEFENSE DEAL WITH GREECE NOT ONLY ABOUT SECURITY EQUIPMENT (Herb Keinon, JPost 1/6/21)

In the early 2000s, as Israel was facing severe water shortages, all kinds of

ideas were raised to help solve the problem, the most creative being to import water from Turkey.

And in early 2004, after negotiations that lasted for some four years, Jerusalem and Ankara – in the very early days of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's reign – signed a deal for Israel to import a billion cubic meters of water from Turkey's Manavgat River.

Among the methods suggested for transporting the water were: linking giant rubber balloons together and towing them to Ashkelon, pumping water into converted oil tankers, or building a pipeline.

Even though importing the water was much more expensive than other options on the table – such as desalination – then prime minister Ariel Sharon told his cabinet that this arrangement would cement the important strategic ties that had developed with Turkey. Then finance minister Benjamin Netanyahu voted against the plan, citing its expense.

In the end the deal did not materialize and the relationship with Turkey did not outlast the decade. But a key principle behind the proposal lived on: the more intertwined Israel's relationship is with its friends, the better.

That principle was in evidence this week when Israel and Greece announced they would sign a 20-year defense agreement worth almost \$1.7 billion that includes an Israeli flight school for the Hellenic Air Force and 10 M-346 trainer aircraft.

Brig.-Gen. (ret.) Yair Kulas, the director of the Defense Ministry's International Defense Cooperation Directorate, was right when he said that "this is not just a defense export agreement, but rather a partnership for at least 20 years." In other words, this deal adds another layer to the already flourishing Israeli-Greek relationship and almost institutionalizes those ties.

And though it is doubtful that this was its primary goal, the deal also sends a message to Greece's adversary Turkey – which has been signaling its interest recently in restoring more healthy relations with Israel – that regardless of how Turkish-Israeli relations may develop, the Israeli-Greek alliance, in fact the Israeli-Greek-Cypriot alliance, is here to stay.

When Erdogan questioned the foundations of the relationship soon after his election in 2002, and then sent it into a tailspin with the Mavi Marmara flotilla in 2010, Israel lost a key ally in the region.

But rather than mourning the loss, Jerusalem quickly began developing strong ties with Turkey's historic adversaries: Greece and Cyprus for starters, and also the Balkan countries, Bulgaria and Romania.

While Israel may have lost considerable yardage in the fallout with Turkey, it was able to retrieve much ground by developing stronger relations with those countries, especially with Greece and Cyprus. An anti-Turkish axis also started to coalesce in the eastern Mediterranean, including Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Egypt. And another key country in this axis, even though it does not sit on the Mediterranean, is the United Arab Emirates.

Israel's ties with Greece began to take off in 2010, even before the Mavi Marmara incident, as Greece – facing an unprecedented debt crisis – was looking for friends. A chance meeting in Moscow between Netanyahu and then Greek prime minister George Papandreou led to the first visit shortly thereafter by a Greek premier to Israel in three decades, followed three weeks later by a reciprocal visit from Netanyahu, the first ever by an Israeli premier to Greece, a country which into the early 2000s was considered among the most hostile in the EU.

If a key impetus to the Israeli-Greek rapprochement began with the Greek financial crisis, it was turbo-charged by the Mavi Marmara incident. This did two things, it sent Israel in search of new friends in the region, and dispelled Greek suspicions that Israel was too close to Turkey. And the relationship took off, with Greece supplying firefighters to battle the Carmel forest fire in December 2010, and Netanyahu using his connections to lobby for financial support for Greece.

One of the things lost following downgraded ties with Turkey was the ability of the IAF to train in Turkish airspace. Instead, Israeli pilots started flying practice missions over Greece.

What is most significant is that relations have survived three government changes in Athens. Papandreou was a center-left prime minister, succeeded

by Alexis Tsipras who was further to his left, who was in turn replaced by Kyriakos Mitsotakis from the center-Right.

While one strong anchor to the relationship is a planned pipeline to deliver Israeli and Cypriot natural gas through Greece to Italy and further north into Europe, this latest deal is important because it adds another dimension to the relationship. If for any number of reasons the pipeline plan does not get off the ground, it is important that the relationship has other pillars on which to anchor relations as it faces potential storms down the road.

ISRAEL NEEDS A PROPER POLITICAL CENTER (Ben-Dror Yemini, YNet 12/31/20)

Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai successfully passed his baptism of fire into Israeli national politics on Tuesday when he announced his new party, named The Israelis, alongside with his new partner Avi Nissenkorn - who quit both his former party Blue & White and his position as justice minister. It is yet to be determined whether the former justice minister will be an asset or an embuggerance.

Earlier that same evening, Defense Minister Benny Gantz announced his continued leadership of Blue & White in what was an honest but also very sad press conference. His party cannot be saved.

With less than three months to the March 23 elections, Israel's political center - including the center-right and the center-left - have yet to formulate a real alternative to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The right-wing has three strong parties in the running: Netanyahu's Likud, Gideon Sa'ar's New Hope and Naftali Bennett's Yamina. Also in the mix are the satellite ultra-Orthodox parties of Shas and United Torah Judaism.

But the center and center-left remain beaten down and divided.

Israel's political center always overflowed with parties. They are always for the rule of law, for strengthening the democracy that they say is always in danger. They always present a new hope for the public and for unity, and are always pro-free market while keeping social services strong.

But do they have a plan to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or reworking the status quo with the Haredi when it comes to religion and state or military service? No.

On Tuesday we watched the man who stands at the head of the biggest party and biggest Knesset bloc sink as a replacement ran on to take his spot center stage.

It is actually unclear how Huldai's ideology differs from that of Gantz or even the left-wing Meretz party.

No matter how hard you try, you will find no nuance, certainly none that justifies a split within the camp that might jeopardize its continued existence.

The problem with the political center is that no one has been able to fill the shoes of slain prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

This mad dash to find a political home between Likud and Meretz is the best thing to ever happen to the right-wing, which the polls show is only growing stronger.

In about 80 days, Israel could become the first nation in the world to declare victory in its battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

Netanyahu is more than capable of translating this into votes and the anti-Netanyahu camp's celebrations are premature.

The thing the political center also lacks is bravery. Every one of its leaders will say there is a problem with Israel's justice system behind closed doors, but in the open, they all trot out the same mantra of "ensuring the stability of the rule of law" and "helping democracy."

They know that no one on the Palestinian side is waiting for Israel to return to the negotiating table, but again, none of them has the guts to say it out loud.

They know that there needs to be a thorough and in-depth proposal for anything to change on that front, but they are too cowardly to take the risk.

The political center does not need any more slogans. It needs to present Israel with a true Jewish democratic alternative to what the right-wing is pushing, namely kowtowing to the ultra-Orthodox and leading the country down the path to a binational state.

They have less than three months to do it. Let's hope they can pull it off.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Beyond Our Reach is Within Our Reach

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

She saw the basket among the reeds, and sent *amasa* – her maidservant to get it. (2:5)

No longer able to hide her baby from the Egyptians, Yocheved, Moshe's mother, places him in a basket in the Nile River. A short while later, the daughter of Pharaoh, who has come to bathe in the Nile, spots the floating basket and, intrigued, sends forth "*amasa*" to get it. The Talmud (Sota 12b) cites two interpretations for the word *amasa*. First, it refers to "her maidservant," and second, it means "her hand." According to this second interpretation, the Talmud explains, the Torah utilized the word *ama*, rather than the word *yad*, to teach that her arm extended beyond its normal length to reach the basket. This is alluded to as the word *ama* also means cubit, a measure of length.

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelewitz explains that the Talmud did not mean to suggest that her arm miraculously extended and then returned to normal. Rather, the Talmud is teaching us an essential lesson about human potential. If we fully invest ourselves and put in our best effort to accomplish something – even if it seems to be beyond our capabilities, G-d will ensure that we have what it takes to succeed. Pharaoh's daughter sensed that it was important for her to see what was contained in that basket. Despite the distance and the apparent impossibility of reaching the basket, she nevertheless tried, extending herself as much as she was able. At that point, G-d helped her accomplish her task and she suddenly found the basket in her hand.

At times we think that our hopes and dreams are beyond our reach or we face challenges and obstacles in life that seem insurmountable. But, G-d has blessed us all with talents and strengths that we don't even realize we possess. Sometimes, all it takes is for us to try a little harder – reach a little further and soon, with G-d's help, we'll be clutching those dreams in our hands.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

On the way to their lodging place, Hashem encountered Moshe and sought to kill him. (4, 24)

Rav Yose taught, "G-d forbid to say that Moshe did not care about Bris Milah. He was faced with a dilemma. Should he perform the bris before he went to Egypt and then take the child with him? – But the infant would be in danger for the first three days after the Bris... (Rashi)

The halacha that danger to a life exempts a person from performing a mitzvah (Yoma 85b) was only given at Matan Torah. If so, why would Moshe think that he would be exempt because of danger? (R'eim)

Granted, that without the special verse, one would be obligated to sacrifice his life to perform a mitzva. However, how can one be obligated to perform a mitzva at the expense of another person's life?

Parsha Riddle

Where do we find that wood ate something?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How old was Esav when he died?

Answer: 147

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Shemos*, Hashem orders Moshe to take the Jewish people out of Egypt, but Moshe repeatedly declines. The Ramban explains that Moshe's reluctance was due to his extreme humility. There are several other examples in Tanach of men chosen by Hashem to lead who initially decline due to humility: Gideon, who responded (*Shoftim* 6:15) "Behold my thousand is the most impoverished of Manasseh, and I am the youngest of my father's house," Shaul, who (*Shmuel* 1 10:22) "[hid] among the baggage," and Yirmiyahu, who protested (*Yirmiyahu* 1:6) "Alas, my L-rd Hashem / Elokim, see, I do not know how to speak, for I am just a youth!"

The Talmud (*Menachos* 109b) relates that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Perahya said:

Initially, in response to **anyone who would say to me: Ascend to the position of Nasi, I would tie him up and place him in front of a lion** out of anger for his suggestion. **Now** that I have become the *Nasi*, in response to **anyone who tells me to leave the position, I would throw a kettle [kumkum] of boiling water at him** out of anger at his suggestion.

The Rivash (#271) understands this to have normative implications: although it is appropriate for scholars to decline invitations to assume positions of authority, once they are appointed to them, they refuse to relinquish them. Thus, a position of communal authority may not be taken away from one who has been appointed to it. The Rema codifies this view, although he prefaces it by the ruling that if the custom is that appointments are made to a limited term, or that the community retains the power to choose whomever it wants for the position, then this is the community's prerogative. (*Shulchan Aruch* 245:22)

In general, positions of authority are inherited by the holder's heirs as long as they are qualified for the position. (Rambam *Hilchos Melachim* 1:7) There is considerable debate over whether this extends to positions of Torah and religious leadership, with some authorities maintaining that it does not since it is crucial for such positions to be filled by the most qualified candidate available (see *Shut. Maharashdam YD #85; Asarah Maamaros, Maamar Chikur Din* 2:19; *Shut. Avnei Nezer YD #312*).

**PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH**

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I pushed.
2. I swallowed.
3. I was copper.
4. I was a sign.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am the first.
2. This week I am quintuple.
3. I am one.
4. I am a thousand.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Reasons Yaakov did not want to be buried in Egypt (Lice, Rolling, Avoda Zara, Techiyas Hameisim.)

#2 The arrangement of the Shevatim (I was for the funeral, I was for encampment, I was flagged, Surround the center.)

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

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!**

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Thursday, Jan 14 at 12:00pm

Online: <https://zoom.us/j/7464552195> Password: GWCK Dial-in number: 301-715-8592 Meeting ID: 746 455 2195

