

# Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shavuos Shorts <sup>ת"ס</sup>

May 14 - 15, 2021 - 4 Sivan 5781 - Bamidbar, Light Candles by 7:55 - Havdalah 9:00  
May 16 - 18, 2021 - 6 - 7 Sivan 5781 - Shavuos, Light Candles by 7:57 - Havdalah 9:04

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by Tzivia Bramson and family in commemoration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Yahrzeit of Rabbi Samuel Bramson, Z"l.  
and by Vivian & Arnie Kirshenbaum in commemoration of the 11th Yahrzeit of Vivian's father, Rabbi Abraham Morgenstern, Avraham Binyomin ben Menachem Mendel.

## Mazal Tov

- **Alan Broder**, professor of Computer Science at Yeshiva University, upon his receipt this week of the "Professor of the Year" award, selected by the student body of Stern College for Women.
- **Arline & Dr. Irving Katz** and Lorraine & Rabbi Sam Vogel of Teaneck, NJ, on the birth of a great-granddaughter, and to **Sharona & Shlomo Katz** and Deborah & Shlomo Fink of Scranton, PA, on the birth of a granddaughter, born to their children Michal & Moshe Katz of Olney, MD.
- **Susan & Rabbi Saul Koss** on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Hadassah Gittel, to Devorah & Chezky Guttmann of New York, (R' Simmy and Miriam Z"l Guttman of Milwaukee grandparents).

## Condolences

- **David Mazel** on the passing of his mother, Irene Mazel. The funeral took place on Monday in Norfolk, VA. David is observing Shiva through Sunday morning. David may be reached during Shiva at 240-606-0708.
- **Shirlee Franco** on the passing of her father, Maurice Grazi. Shiva was completed before Shabbos.

## Shabbos and Shavuos 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 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](mailto:minyan@yise.org)

### Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 7:55
  - Mincha: 6:25, 7:55, 7:50 (Sephardi)
- If you Daven Kabbalas Shabbos prior to Shkia (8:13 PM), it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag (6:44 PM).

### Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00, 9:00, 9:30, 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Mincha: 2:30, 5:00, 7:50, 7:50 (Sephardi)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 9:00

The flowers for Shavuos in the Belonofsky Sanctuary are donated by **Karen & Howie Schulman** in memory of **David Kramer, Dovid Tovia ben HaRav Yechiel Michael HaLevi**, on his 19<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit, 1<sup>st</sup> day of Shavuos.

### Sunday Night:

- Light Candles by 7:57
- Mincha: 8:00
- Kiddush after: 9:01

### Monday:

- Shacharis: 5:20, 7:00, 9:00, 9:30, 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Mincha: 8:00
- Light Candles/Kiddush after: 9:02

### Tuesday:

- Shacharis: 7:00, 9:00, 9:30, 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Mincha: 8:00
- Yom Tov ends/Maariv: 9:04

## Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list and 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/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday 8:30 AM - **Zoom A**.
  - **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Wednesday/Thursday 7:00 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, **Zoom I**, will resume May 23.
  - **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](mailto: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**, will resume May 24.
      - Tuesdays: Rabbi Winter - Torah Topics, will resume May 25.
      - Wednesdays: Rabbi Grossman - Reading Responsa
      - Thursdays: Rabbi Grossman - Parshas Hashavua, 9:00 PM.
    - For Women - **Zoom D**, will resume May 24.
      - 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](mailto:hshaps@gwckollel.org) Registration required at [gwckollel.org/scp](http://gwckollel.org/scp) will resume May 24.
  - **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiur on Daily Halachos for men & women, Tuesdays 9:15 AM, **Zoom E**, will resume May 25.
  - **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**, will resume May 25.
  - **Rabbi Moshe Arzuon's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning Maseches Kiddushin on Wednesday evenings, 7:00 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 Learn  
Zoom C: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn  
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 ygarwarz  
Zoom H: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079  
Zoom I: ID: 269 840 3648, password online Pearls, phone 621690

## YISE Youth Announcements

**Shavuos CandyLand** - First day of Shavuos, Monday, May 17, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM. Ages 2-12. For details and to download map go to: <https://wlp.yise.org/shavuos-candyland> *See flyer for details.*

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

## 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](mailto:outdoor@yise.org)
- **Minyan Changes** - We are making changes to the Minyan schedule to accommodate as many members as possible. Watch your email for details and make sure to check your email every Friday morning to get your personalized Minyan schedule for the following week. We will have two Zman Minyanim but no Plag Minyan on Shavuos nights. There will be a Netz Minyan on the first day of Shavuos if there is sufficient interest.
- 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, please send an email to [minyan@yise.org](mailto: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.

## 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](mailto: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.

## 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.

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 Navi Shiur for Women
  - 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](mailto:office@yise.org) to sponsor. Thank you for your support.

## Thank you to this past week's Shiurim sponsors:

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim/Parsha/Halacha Shiur

- **Judy & David Marwick** in memory of Mrs. Bella Glatstein, Bella bat Tzvi, whose Yahrzeit is 28 Iyar.
- **Debbie & Jeff Weinstein & family** for the Yahrzeits of Sophia Kravatz (Simcha bas Dovid), Aaron Levine (Aron ben Baruch Eliezer HaLevi) and Hannelore Weinstein (Hannah bas Mordechai).

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's Nach Shiur

- Refuah Sheleimah to Chana bas Rosa
- **Rosalyn Bramson** in honor of her mother's Yahrzeit, Estelle Handelman, Esther bat Rephael Tzvi, Z"l, on Rosh Chodesh Sivan.

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's Mussar Shiur

- Refuah Shleimah to Chana bas Rosa
- **Scott & Shari Hillman** in memory of Shari's father, Herbert Romerstein, Chanan ben Pesach, whose 8<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit was on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Iyar.

### Elaine & Robert Leichter

### Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur

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

### Rabbi Rosenbaum's Erev Shabbos Drasha

- **Debbie & Jeff Weinstein & family** in honor of Lily's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday
- **Adrian Magendzo & Denise Behar** - We will be moving to NY after Shavuot and we would like to thank everyone from the community for all the love, Chesed and friendship we received during the seven years we spent in Kemp Mill. We felt immediately as part of the community even though we were coming from Chile with language barriers and knowing absolutely no one. We still have fresh memories of such a welcoming environment. We, as a family, have a great Hakaras Hatov for each and every one. We want to especially thank Rabbi Rosenbaum and his family for their affection and for being so welcoming from the first day. We also want to thank the Gabaim and staff members of YISE who do a tremendous job. We are leaving with mixed feelings. On one hand, we are doing it because we want to be close to our sons and grandchildren but on the other hand, we are leaving a most beautiful community, great friends, and a wonderful Rabbi. For this reason, we do not want to say goodbye but rather, "we'll see you soon." To everyone, when you go to NY, you have a home, just as we felt when we came to the Shomrai Emunah community.

## YISE Programs and Listings

**Shavuos Hospitality** - Baruch Hashem, the CDC's latest guidance opens the door for more shared meals, under certain circumstances. The YISE Hospitality Committee would like to help match up guests with hosts for Shavuos meals, taking vaccination status and the CDC's guidelines into account. If you would like to host people at your Shavuos meals, please visit [wp.yise.org/shavuos-host](http://wp.yise.org/shavuos-host). To sign up to be a guest, please visit [wp.yise.org/shavuos-guest](http://wp.yise.org/shavuos-guest). There is more information on the sign-up forms and on the "FAQ" list at [wp.yise.org/shavuos-hospitality](http://wp.yise.org/shavuos-hospitality). If you have any further questions, please contact us at [hospitality@yise.org](mailto:hospitality@yise.org) P.S.: Stay tuned for news about year-round Shabbos meals. *See flyer for details.*

**Shiurim on Shavuos Afternoon:** First Day - Rabbi Rosenbaum will give a Shiur for men and women, "The Remarkable Adaptability of our Torah to any Circumstance: COVID-19 Shaalos." Second Day - Rebbetzin Rosenbaum will give a Shiur for women, "Compelled to Commit? Shavuos and the Foundations of Faith." Both Shiurim will meet at 5:00 PM in the Social Hall. Seating is limited, Please register with [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org) by Friday, May 14. *See flyer for details.*

**Hamizrachi Magazines** and printed **Shavuot To-Go** - Limited quantity available. If you are interested in getting one, please email [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org). Online Shavuot To-Go available at <https://www.yutorah.org/togo/shavuot>

**Annual Congregational Meeting** - The meeting for election of YISE officers and trustees will take place on Tuesday, May 25 at 7:30 PM on **Zoom A**.

**YISE Regular Board Meeting** will take place on Tuesday, May 25, at 9:00 PM on Zoom. For more information, contact [secretary@yise.org](mailto:secretary@yise.org)

**Memorial Day Program: "I didn't know there were Jews in the military"** - Monday, May 31, 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM on **Zoom A**. You won't want to miss this program. Learn about members of our community. Questions? Contact [social@yise.org](mailto:social@yise.org) for more information.

**Update: Being Social.** In the past few months, YISE's Social Committee has organized a range of programs to bring us together virtually - Trivia Night, Painting, a Purim Shpiel... We have also expressed our thanks to the Holy Cross Hospital health workers and treated the Wheaton Rescue Squad to a special dinner. Want to help? Please contact [social@yise.org](mailto:social@yise.org)

**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](mailto:director@yise.org) *See flyer for details.*

**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, [mkskarlin@gmail.com](mailto:mkskarlin@gmail.com) or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, [mfriedman2@yahoo.com](mailto: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>

## Community Programs & Listings

**Saw You At Sinai Free Memberships** - [SawYouAtSinai.com](http://SawYouAtSinai.com) is sponsoring an unlimited number of free 2 month gold memberships during June and July 2021 to anyone who has not already tried this successful matchmaking initiative. To obtain the offer, sign up at [SawYouAtSinai.com](http://SawYouAtSinai.com) and enter the marketing code YISE on the initial member registration page. This offer has been generously sponsored by an anonymous donor in memory of the precious Neshamos who were lost in Meron.

**Capital Kosher Pantry Summer Collection** - Please donate non-perishable items. Specially needed: canned pineapple, graham cracker crusts, olives, olive oil, Wacky Mac, yeast. Always needed: paper napkins, paper towels, tissues & toilet paper. You can buy items at your local store & place them in a Capital Kosher Pantry donation bin at Shalom, Moti's and area Shuls, or buy online & ship directly to us! Go to: [www.yadvehuda.org/kosher-pantry](http://www.yadvehuda.org/kosher-pantry) for more information.

**Yad Yehuda Donation Policy Update** - Many unsolicited items are being dropped off at Yad Yehuda's office. We incur costs to dispose of those items. Please do not drop off: clothing/shoes/coats, household and baby items, electronics, books, Judaica/sheimos. Donations of non-perishable food for the Capital Kosher Pantry are welcomed and appreciated.

**Kemp Mill Toastmasters** - Wednesday, May 19, 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](mailto:vppr@kempmilltoastmasters.com) for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password: 3671

**Newly married? Growing family? Just need a budget check-up?** Izun is a community resource that provides free and confidential coaching to help you examine your budget and achieve financial stability. Email us at [barbara@getizun.org](mailto:barbara@getizun.org)

**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](http://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](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/1715843153121/WN_n6jNGqUpTpcN6ikCabUutA)

**Daf Yomi Shiur** currently meets online via a WebEx video conference. There is still room for a few more participants. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at [lifschitz@slslaw.com](mailto:lifschitz@slslaw.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](http://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](http://kempmillvillage.org) for more information.

**Silver Spring Gemachim** - For a complete list: [www.gemachexchange.com](http://www.gemachexchange.com)

<b>The Week Ahead</b>	<b>Sunday May 16</b>	<b>Monday, May 17 Shavuos</b>	<b>Tuesday, May 18 Shavuos</b>	<b>Wednesday May 19</b>	<b>Thursday May 20</b>	<b>Friday May 21</b>
Limited Minyanim will take place at YISE next week, <b>advance registration and confirmation required</b> . 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; /Wednesday/Friday 6:15 AM/6:55 AM/8:45 AM; Thursday 6:15 AM/6:45 AM/8:45 AM; Mincha/Maariv: Wednesday/Thursday: 8:05 PM.						
<b>Halachic Times:</b> Latest Alos Hashachar 4:19 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 4:54 AM, Latest Netz: 5:55 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:27 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:42 PM, Earliest Shkia: 8:15 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim: 9:08 PM						

### Next Shabbos

May 21 - 22, 2021 - 11 Sivan 5781

Parshas Nasso

Light Candles: 8:01

Havdalah: 9:08

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday, May 19 at 12:00 Noon

Submit items for the Shabbos Shorts to: [announce@yise.org](mailto:announce@yise.org)

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

Eruv line: 301-593-5561 E-Mail: [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org) Website: [www.yise.org](http://www.yise.org)

Office Hours: Closed Monday/Tuesday

Wednesday/Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Friday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Yale Ginsburg - President

Simi Franco - Office Manager

## YISE Shavuos Gift Bag Sponsors

### Matan Torah

#### Anonymous

**Adam & Iris Bashein** - Adam Bashein, Realtor

**Eva & Isaac Moses**

**Elissa Weisblatt** in honor of the 20<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit of her father, Irving Weisblatt, יצחק בן חיים ז"ל, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Iyar

### Platinum Sponsors

**The Branda Family** wishing everyone a Chag Sameach!

**Naomi & Ori Carmel**

**Lynn, Stephen & Dani Deutsch** in memory of Katie & Sol Schenker, beloved grandparents

**Nancy & Bruce James**

**Debbie & Marc Katz**

**Carol & Tuvia Lazar**

### Gold Sponsors

**Joey Franco**

**Simi & Sammy Franco**

**Raph Ginsburg**

Chag sameach from **Scott & Shari Hillman**

**Marsha & Yitz Kasdan** in honor of all our children, their spouses, our grandchildren (and spouse) and great-grandchild

**Marilyn & Judah Lifschitz**

**Eva & Nissy Moskowitz**

**Debi & Max Rudmann**

**Debra & Arthur Sapper** in memory of Debra's father's Yahrzeit, Moshe ben Elazar HaCohen

**Karen & Howie Schulman** in memory of David Kramer, Dovid Tovia ben HaRav Yechiel Michael, HaLevi on his 19<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit (1<sup>st</sup> day of Shavuos)

**Simon Family**

**Sue & Ray White**

### Silver Sponsors

**Chana & Paul Berner**

**Marilyn & Morris Edeson**

**Debbie & Jacob Frenkel** to commemorate the Shloshim of those who died in Meron

**Faith Ginsburg**

**Yale & Sahra Ginsburg** - "Daniel, Mazal Tov on your graduating from YU. We are so proud of what you have accomplished, and what we are sure you will accomplish in the future."

**Bayla & Jeremy Goodman**

**Melanie & Sandy Karlin**

**Vivian & Arnie Kirshenbaum** in honor of the graduation of their grandchildren, Bryna Bokor (Kindergarten, Arie Crown Hebrew Day School, Skokie, Illinois), Sam Bokor (Nursery, Arie Crown Hebrew Day School, Skokie, Illinois), Sarah Rosenblum (12<sup>th</sup> grade, Ida Crown Jewish Academy, Skokie, Illinois), Shayna Slatkin (Bais Yaakov High School)

**Susan & Rabbi Saul Koss**

**Bobbi & Jules Meisler**

**Bev Morris & Art Boyars**

**Judy & Louis Morris** in memory of Louis' mother, Esther Beila bas Shlomo Yoseph z"l

**Debbie Rogal**

**Judy & Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum** in honor of Rabbi Dovid & Mrs. Atara Rosenbaum

**Sheridan & Melvin Sassoon**

**Rita & Kheder Shukur**

**Sara Silver** wishes everyone a Chag Sameach

**Judy & David Stern** to thank all those who helped them in times of need

**Joan & Don Walter** in memory of Vivian & Aaron Walter & Ruth Ziegler

### Bronze Sponsors

#### Anonymous

**Esther & Alan Baldinger**

**Cindy, Joel & Ilana Bauman**

**Debi & Aryeh Furst**

**Rabbi & Mrs. Greengart**

**Rosalie Handwerger**

**Esther & David Hornestay** in memory of Esther's mother, Regina Berman, Rivka bas Dovid a"h whose Yahrzeit is the second day of Shavuos

**Linda & Michael Kaiser**

**Danit & Ari Kanal** wish their daughter Naava a very happy 10<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Chana & Yonah Kupferstein**

**Judy & David Marwick**

**Lois & Sid Meyers**

**Marion & Bernie Muller**

**Chani & Jay Parness**

**Zipporah & Jason Rosenblatt**

**Gloria & Arnie Sherman**

**Sima & Richard Soskin** in memory of Estelle Rosen z"l, Sima Soskin's mother

**Judy & Mitch Taragin & Family**

**Phyllis, George & Avi Teitelbaum**

**Mindy & Shmuel Tolchinsky** on the 6<sup>th</sup> Yahrzeit of Shmuel's mother, Shirley Tolchinsky, Sarah Rivka bat Zeev z"l on the 21<sup>st</sup> of Sivan

### Greetings

**Jacqueline & Rabbi Haim Arzouan**

**Eva & Ben Bazian & Family**

**The Broth Family**

**Norma Burdett**

**Burstyn & Schachter Family**

**Milton Cahn**

**Rysel & Ethan Cohen**

**Rochelle Dimont**

**Esther Edeson & Family**

**Ellen & Irv Haber**

**Kelsey Family** in honor of Nathan's graduation from Penn

**Ellen & Larry Korb** wishing everyone a Happy Shavuos

**Elaine & Robert Leichter**

**Dr. David Lerner**

**The Vintage Lerner's**

**Nancy Perez**

**Barbara Price**

**Carol & Lionel Rabin**

**Florence & Larry Radkowsky**

**Atara & Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum**

**Diana & Dr. Leonard Ruchelman** in memory of Diana's father, Fred Hoffberger, Shlomo Yakov ben Yosef z"l's Yahrzeit

**Jane & Louis Shotkin**

**Joyce & Nino Dworsky-Srou**

**Hochberg/Symes family** in honor of Ari Elias-Bachrach for all his hard work initiating, schlepping, constructing and running the outdoor Minyan.

**Gila & Rabbi Myron Wakschlag**

**Judy & Howard Wasserman** in honor of their daughter-in-law Miriam's graduation with a Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy

**Kitty Wertheimer**

# A Quick Thought on the Parsha from Rabbi Rosenbaum

## Shavuos 5781:

### The Yom Tov of 'Can'

The following is kindly transcribed by a congregant from the video at

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

For many of us *Shavuos* is a difficult holiday to get excited about. When we compare it to some of the other *Yom Tovim*, it doesn't feel the same. *Pesach*, it's an amazing story, liberation from slavery, chosen people. It's a great feeling there. *Sukkos*, miraculous existence in the desert, G-d always looks out for us. *Shavuos*, the scene at *Har Sinai* is a really interesting thing to think about, it's amazing to imagine it, but the bottom line is *Shavuos* is about keeping the *Torah*, accepting the *Torah*. Let's put it this way, *Shavuos* is more or less about remembering that we have got to keep the rules. At least that is how it feels.

I would just like to share with you one very brief thought that hopefully can generate a greater sense of excitement for us on this very special holiday that is coming. That is, think about it from the perspective of the Jewish people as they were coming close to *Har Sinai*. It had really been a matter of weeks since they were slaves in Egypt. They were certainly excited about this concept of receiving the *Torah*. They really did not understand what it meant, what it would entail. That is the beauty of *נעשה ונשמע* that they said they will do it and they will understand later. Presumably they had a significant amount of doubt, certainly excitement but also doubt. Could they handle it? Could they understand it? Would it be for them? And then of course according to many opinions, they heard the first two of the commandments directly from *Hashem*, and though it was too much for them, in a sense they were given a picture, a piece, of what *Moshe Rabeinu's* experience was going to be like for the rest of the *Torah*. And they were the first to say they couldn't handle it. They came to *Moshe* and said we can't handle it.

But just think about that idea, that at the end of the day they had an experience, that objectively one would've assumed they had no business experiencing. And they did it. And they could. And maybe that's the most significant takeaway from the *Shavuos* holiday. Yes, *Shavuos* is about the *Torah* and yes the *Torah* is about rules. But *Shavuos* is also about the Jewish people rising to the occasion. The Jewish people understanding and seeing that they had the capacity to connect to the *Torah* in a way that they wouldn't have imagined. And by the way, the famous *Medrash* that all of our *neshamos*, all of our souls were there at the giving of the *Torah*, means that if we are exposed to a *Torah* idea and it touches something deep within us, what we are really doing is we are re-accessing that remarkable connection that our *neshamos*, our souls, also experienced at *Har Sinai*. So maybe if we just need to hold on to one small picture of something, to maybe connect us more emotionally to the holiday of *Shavuos*, I would suggest that we think of *Shavuos* as the holiday that represents the fact that we can. The fact that we can reach great heights. That we have the ability within us. The more we think about that particularly over the *Yom Tov* the more it has the ability to truly uplift and inspire.

Have a wonderful *Shabbos* and a wonderful *Yom Tov*!

*Share your Shavuos  
meals!*

*The YISE Hospitality  
Committee is matching up  
hosts and guests,  
following CDC safety  
guidelines.*

*More info: [wp.yise.org/shavuos-hospitality](http://wp.yise.org/shavuos-hospitality)*

*Hosts: [wp.yise.org/shavuos-host](http://wp.yise.org/shavuos-host)*

*Guests: [wp.yise.org/shavuos-guest](http://wp.yise.org/shavuos-guest)*

*Questions? [hospitality@yise.org](mailto:hospitality@yise.org)*

*PS: Stay tuned for news about year-round  
Shabbos meals.*



YISE PRESENTS

# Shavuos Day Learning

1st Day of Shavuos

A shiur for men and women

## Rabbi Rosenbaum

"The Remarkable  
Adaptability of our Torah  
to any Circumstance:  
COVID-19 Shaalos"

Monday, May 17  
YISE Social Hall  
5:00PM

2nd Day of Shavuos

A shiur for women

## Rebbetzin Rosenbaum

"Compelled to Commit?  
Shavuos and the Foundations of Faith"

Tuesday, May 18 5:00PM  
YISE Social Hall

Seating is limited:  
Please register at [office@yise.org](mailto:office@yise.org)  
Masking and social distancing observed



Join YISE Youth for

# Shavuos CandyLand

First Day of Shavuos  
Monday, May 17th

**NOTE TIME CHANGE: 3-4:30pm**

Start your adventure at YISE to receive your colorful adventure map!  
Escort your children to collect sweet treats and answer fun holiday questions at each station throughout the neighborhood!

AGES 2-12



In case of inclement weather, event update will be announced on Sunday, May 16.



# SUMMER

## 2021

**JULY 5 - AUGUST 13**

### **Preschool** *Division*



**ENTERING  
2N-K**

**Torah-Based,  
Safe and Nurturing**  
Known for excellent staff,  
profound commitment to  
safety and a creative and  
joyous attitude towards  
learning and discovery!

*Daily Specials*

### **Elementary** *Division*



**ENTERING  
1<sup>ST</sup>-6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**Separate Programs for  
Boys and Girls**  
Swim  
Sports  
Learning  
Specialized Crafts  
Dance

### **Teen** *Division*



**BOYS ENTERING  
7<sup>TH</sup>-9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Weekly Trips  
Swim  
Sports  
Learning  
Woodworking

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit our website: [www.campshomrai.org](http://www.campshomrai.org)  
or Email: [camp@yise.org](mailto:camp@yise.org)

**REGISTER ONLINE**

<https://shomrai.campintouch.com/ui/forms/application/camper/App>

Local licensed, child-centered Preschool  
**FOR CHILDREN 2-5 YEARS OLD**



**shomrai**  
P R E S C H O O L



Play-based, supportive learning  
environment that promotes exploration  
and builds foundational skills

**Warm, dedicated and experienced teachers**

**Customizable extended care  
options from 7:30 AM- 6:00 PM**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**



Visit our website  
[preschool.yise.org](http://preschool.yise.org)



Or Email  
[preschool@yise.org](mailto:preschool@yise.org)

*Parashat Bemidbar* is nearly always read on the *Shabbat* preceding *Shavuot*, the holiday of the Giving of the Torah. R' Yosef Zvi Viener z"l (1936-2012; rabbi of Gan Yavneh and Nes Ziona, Israel) offers the following lesson that we can learn from this juxtaposition:

At first glance, *Parashat Bemidbar* is nothing more than a census. However, there is a very significant event in our *Parashah*: the tribe of *Levi* is designated to serve in the *Mishkan / Bet Hamikdash*. Originally, that task was supposed to go to the *Bechorim / firstborn*, but that privilege was stripped from them because they served the Golden Calf. In our *Parashah*, the *Bechorim* are redeemed, and the *Levi'im* take their places.

The role of the *Levi'im* is more than just serving in the *Mishkan / Mikdash*, R' Viener continues. We read about the tribe of *Levi* (*Devarim* 33:10), "They shall teach Your ordinances to *Yaakov* and Your Torah to *Yisrael*." The original plan was that every household would include a "priest" and teacher in the person of the *Bechor*. When the *Bechorim* proved unworthy, that task was transferred to the *Levi'im*. Either way, we learn that it is not sufficient for each individual to accept, study, and fulfill the Torah; building a Torah-based society also requires that there be a "teacher class." In exchange for filling that role, the *Levi'im* were promised *Ma'asrot / tithes*. Thus, giving tithes is not charity; it is payment for a service. In short, R' Viener concludes, the message of the juxtaposition of our *Parashah* to *Shavuot* is that building a Torah-based society requires that there be a "teacher class," and that every person willingly finance it. (*Da'at Tushi'ah*)

## Tefilah

This year, we will *iy"H* devote this space to discussing various aspects of our prayers. This week, we continue discussing the thirteen types of prayer identified by the *Midrash Rabbah* and *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni*.

R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Yadler z"l (1843-1917; Yerushalayim) offers the following definitions for the various types of prayers:

- "Shav'ah" (שועה) (*Shmot* 2:23)
- "Tze'akah" (צעקה) (*ibid*)
- "Ne'akah" (נאקה) (*Shmot* 2:24).

All three of these refer to a person's cries when he is being mistreated by other people [as *Bnei Yisrael* were in Egypt]. "**Shav'ah**" is a cry emitted when the victim is able to think clearly, a cry that comes out in the form of a proper prayer. "**Tze'akah**" is a person's cry of bitterness when he cannot think clearly. Both of these are responses to physical or financial pain. "**Ne'akah**" is a person's response to emotional pain. Such a "cry" is not necessarily audible, but *Hashem* hears it anyway.

- "Rinah" (רנה) (*Yirmiyah* 7:16)
- "Pegi'ah" (פגיעה) (*ibid*).

"**Rinah**" is praise of *Hashem* that precedes one's requests. Why do we praise *Hashem* before making requests? R' Yadler explains: A person could have his requests answered for one of two reasons: Either because he deserves to be answered, or because the one from whom he is making the request loves to do kindness and wants to fulfill the requests of others. We praise *Hashem* before we make requests to acknowledge that we do not deserve to be answered, and that our hope of being answered is based on His generosity.

"**Pegi'ah**" is praying again and again until *Hashem* "cannot" turn the petitioner away. Also, it refers to praying for another person, such that *Hashem* answers in the merit of the one praying, rather than in the merit of the one being prayed for. (*Tiferet Tziyon Al Midrash Rabbah*)

- To be continued -

### Hamaayan / The Torah Spring

10815 Meadowhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901 / 301-593-2272

Send e-mail to: [TheTorahSpring@gmail.com](mailto:TheTorahSpring@gmail.com)

Back issues at: [www.TheTorahSpring.org](http://www.TheTorahSpring.org)

Donations to *Hamaayan* are tax deductible.



## Shavuot

There is a dispute between two Sages of the *Mishnah*, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Yehoshua holds that *Yom Tov* should be “half for *Hashem*,” *i.e.*, praying and studying Torah, and “half for you,” *i.e.*, eating, etc. Rabbi Eliezer holds that one may choose either “all for *Hashem*” or “all for you.” The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 68b) states, however: “Everyone agrees that *Shavuot* requires something ‘for you,’ because that is when the Torah was given.” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R’ Yaakov Moshe Kulefsky *z”l* (1925-2000; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshiva Ner Israel in Baltimore) writes: To the contrary, we would have thought that, on the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah, one should be an ascetic, abstaining from all worldly pleasures!

He explains: R’ Moshe ben Maimon *z”l* (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes (*Hil. De’ot* 3:1-3): One might say, “Since jealousy, desire, honor, and the like are the wrong path and they destroy a person, I will distance myself from them as far as possible.” Such a person would not eat meat, drink wine, get married, or live in a nice house. No! *Rambam* writes. That, too, is the wrong path; moreover, it is forbidden, and one who follows it is called a sinner. The same is true of fasting excessively. Rather, one must intend all of his thoughts and his deeds to be for the sake of *Hashem*. When he sits, stands, speaks, eats, drinks, etc., he should not think solely of his own pleasure; rather, he should eat and drink to be healthy, etc. In that way, everything he does will be in the service of *Hashem*. About this King Shlomo wrote (*Mishlei* 3:6), “In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will straighten your paths.” [Until here from *Rambam*] R’ Yosef Karo *z”l* (1488-1575; Greece and Eretz Yisrael; author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and other works) comments: A person who lives in this way is called “Holy.”

R’ Kulefsky continues: We learn from here that “holiness” is not synonymous with complete separation from worldly pleasures. To the contrary, the latter is sinful. Holiness means enjoying worldly pleasures, but for the sake of Heaven.

This, explains R’ Kulefsky, is why *Shavuot*, the day the Torah was given, is not a day of asceticism or deprivation. The possibility of elevating worldly pleasures and making them something spiritual exists only because we received the Torah. The Torah elevates us and makes it possible for us to live for the sake of Heaven.

This, also, concludes R’ Kulefsky, is why a special *Korban* was brought in the Temple on *Shavuot* consisting of *Chametz*. Leavened bread, which is “puffed up,” is the symbol of haughtiness. On *Shavuot*, when we received the Torah, with which we can mend bad character traits, we do not fear *Chametz* and what it represents. (*Inyanei Pesach V’Shavuot* p.120)

**“Take a census [literally, ‘Count the head’] of the entire assembly of *Bnei Yisrael* according to their families, according to their fathers’ household, by the number of the names, every male according to their head count.” (1:2)**

R’ Reuven Halevi Horowitz *z”l* (rabbi of Zarnowicz, Poland; died 1828) writes that, at first glance, this verse seems unnecessarily wordy. He explains:

We read in this week’s *Haftarah* (*Hoshea* 2:1), “The number of *Bnei Yisrael* shall be like the sand of the sea, which can neither be measured nor counted.” The *Gemara* (*Yoma* 22b) asks: Does this verse not contradict itself? First it says that the number of *Bnei Yisrael* shall be like the sand of the sea, implying that they have a number; then it says that they cannot be measured nor counted. The *Gemara* answers, “One is when they do the will of G-d, the other is when they do not do the will of G-d.”

R’ Horowitz continues: Why is it bad for the Jewish People to be counted? The reason is that the root of holiness is unity. Counting people highlights their separateness, not their unity, and therefore is harmful. This, as well, is why the *Gemara* (*Ta’anit* 8b) states that blessing rests only on things which are hidden from the eye, *i.e.*, things which have not been counted.

Nevertheless, when we do the will of G-d, we can be counted. When we are righteous, we return toward the level of Adam before his sin. Adam had within him all of our souls. Thus, he epitomizes unity, which, as noted, is the source of holiness. When we are on that level, counting us does not harm us.

This concludes R’ Horowitz, explains the wordiness of our verse. “Count the head of the entire assembly”--start from the fact that, at our beginning, we are one. Then work downward: “Of *Bnei Yisrael*”--the sons of Yaakov, *i.e.*, the twelve tribes; “according to their families”--their large extended family groups; “according to their fathers’ household”--the nuclear family; etc. If each is connected back to its source, which reflects unity, then it is safe to count *Bnei Yisrael*. (*Duda’im Ba’sadeh*)

**“These are the offspring of Aharon and Moshe on the day *Hashem* spoke with Moshe at Har Sinai.” (3:1)**

In fact, the verses that follow mention only the sons of Aharon, not those of Moshe! Also, what is meant by “on the day *Hashem* spoke with Moshe”?

R’ Chaim ben Attar *z”l* (1696-1743; Morocco, Italy and Eretz Yisrael) explains: Aharon’s sons were destined to die because Aharon made the Golden Calf. Two did die, but Moshe’s prayer saved the other two. Thus, they are considered Moshe’s offspring as well. When, and in what merit, did Moshe pray for them? “On the day”--and because--“*Hashem* spoke with Moshe at Har Sinai.” (*Ohr Ha’Chaim*)

# 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.

Issue 1259 • May 14, 2021 • 3 Sivan 5781

## ISRAEL RULES OUT CEASEFIRE AFTER HAMAS SEEKS INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION (Israel Hayom 5/12/21)

Israel on Wednesday ruled out mediated talks with Hamas and other Gaza-based terror groups, which are apparently seeking a truce to end the latest deadly escalation, unnamed Israeli officials told local media.

Egypt, which shares a border with the Gaza Strip, has often served as a broker between Israel and the Islamist leaders of the Gaza Strip, who were reportedly prepared to agree a ceasefire after massive IDF strikes against terrorist infrastructure and high-ranking operatives in Hamas.

The officials stressed that Israel was intent on eradicating the terror networks responsible for the latest escalation of violence, and was unwilling to settle for another temporary détente.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz issued a statement to similar effect. "Israel is not preparing for a ceasefire. There is currently no end date for the operation. Only when we achieve complete quiet can we talk about calm," Gantz said. "We will not listen to moral preaching from any organization or institution regarding our right and duty to protect the citizens of Israel."

The most intense hostilities since 2014 have killed at least 48 people in Gaza, including 14 children, three Palestinians in the West Bank, and five Israelis since Monday.

## CHEVRON TEMPORARILY SHUTS DOWN TAMAR NATURAL GAS PLATFORM IN WAKE OF UNREST (Arutz-7 5/12/21)

Chevron has shut down the Tamar natural gas platform off the coast of Israel following the rockets fired from Gaza and Israeli air strikes in response.

The closure on Wednesday of Tamar comes at the request of the Israeli energy ministry, Chevron said in a statement.

"In accordance with instructions received from the Ministry of Energy, we have shut in and depressurized the Tamar platform," a Chevron spokesperson said in a comment emailed to S&P Global Platts.

"Chevron's top priority is the safety of our personnel, our facilities, and the environment of the communities in which we operate."

Chevron is monitoring the situation closely. The energy corporation said it is focused on ensuring the continuation of a "safe and reliable supply of gas" for the Israeli domestic market and regional customers.

The temporary closure of Tamar will not impact Chevron's larger Leviathan gas field. The Tamar platform is closer to Gaza while Leviathan is further north, close to Haifa's port.

"We are continuing to supply customers from Leviathan and are working with customers and the relevant regulatory bodies to ensure that gas supplies continue in a safe and reliable manner," said the spokesperson.

Gas from the Tamar platform travels through a pipeline to an onshore terminal located in Ashdod. From there it flows to the domestic market through the INGL national gas pipeline.

## U.S. AIRLINES CANCEL FLIGHTS TO TEL AVIV AMID ESCALATING CONFLICT (YNet 5/12/21)

United Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and American Airlines have canceled flights between the United States and Tel Aviv, according to data by flight tracker FlightAware, amid an escalating conflict in Israel.

Israel said it killed 16 members of the Hamas armed wing in Gaza in a barrage on Wednesday and Palestinian militants rained rockets into Israel in one of their most intense hostilities in years.

United Airlines said it had canceled flights from Chicago and Newark to Tel Aviv on May 11 and flights from San Francisco and Newark on May 12.

"We have issued a travel waiver to allow customers to adjust their travel through May 25 and will continue to monitor the situation," a United spokeswoman said.

A spokesman for Delta, which flies to Tel Aviv from New York's John F. Kennedy International (JFK) airport, said it has issued a travel waiver for flights between May 11 and 13 and has "no determination about resumption at this juncture".

El Al Israel Airlines said earlier on Wednesday it stood ready to operate extra flights as required "to keep Israel's skies open". This could include special flights to repatriate Israelis stranded "in locations from which it is not possible to return home," it said in a statement.

Israel on Monday briefly halted takeoffs from its main Ben Gurion Airport and diverted incoming flights after a Hamas rocket barrage on the Tel Aviv area. The country has a smaller airport in the south, called Ramon, designed to serve as a stop-gap should wartime threats force longer closures of Ben Gurion.

## ATTEMPTED LYNCHING AND SMASHED STORES AS JEWISH-ARAB CLASHES SPREAD ACROSS ISRAEL (Ha'aretz 5/13/21)

Clashes between Arabs and Jews have spilled over, on Wednesday night, to additional Israeli cities, as violence resumed for the third consecutive day.

In the northern mixed Arab-Jewish city of Acre, five Israeli Arabs have attacked a 30-year-old Jewish man, who was seriously wounded and was evacuated to hospital. Before the incident, police instructed Arab shop owners to shut them in advance of the expected arrival of a group of right-wing extremists. Moreover, police have arrested overnight Wednesday a 25-year-old Acre resident who allegedly has shot toward police officers in the scene.

In the mixed Arab-Jewish city of in Lod, the violence resumed on Wednesday when several Jewish Israelis approached the mourning tent of Moussa Hassouna, who was shot and killed by a Jewish man during riots in the city

We are proud to be distributed by these institutions, though they do not necessarily support or condone any of the material published:

Anshei Chesed Cong., Boynton Beach, FL	Hillel at Brandeis University
Anshe Emuna Cong. Delray Beach, FL	Hillel at California State University - Long Beach
Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies	Hillel at Columbia University
Boca Raton Synagogue, FL	Hillel at Johns Hopkins University
Carmel School, Hong Kong	Hillel at University of Maryland
Cong. Agudath Achim, Bradley Beach, NJ	Hillel at Yale University
Cong. Ahavas Achim, Highland Park, NJ	Hillel High School, Deal NJ
Cong. Ahavath Achim, Fairfield, CT	Jewish Center of Teaneck, NJ
Cong. Anshe Shalom, Jamaica Estates, NY	Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi, Cedarhurst, NY
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
East Hill Synagogue, Englewood, NJ	Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY
Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Mill Basin, NY	Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY
Harvard University Library	Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY
Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, NY	Young Israel of Sharon, MA
Hillel at Baruch College	YI Shomrai Emunah, Silver Spring, MD

We encourage our readers to subscribe to our sources on the internet. For more information or to subscribe by e-mail, reach us at [murray.sragow@gmail.com](mailto:murray.sragow@gmail.com)

on Monday. Mutual stone-throwing commenced, and police responded by firing stun grenades to disperse both crowds. At least 20 people were arrested. Police also clashed with far-right Jewish extremists in the city.

A Jewish man was shot and suffered moderate-to-serious wounds, as well as two other Jews who suffered moderate stabbing wounds. In addition, a 42-year-old Arab resident of Lod checked into one of the city's hospitals with moderate gunshot wounds.

Earlier, some 200-300 right-wing activists have been trying to make their way to the Ramat Eshkol neighborhood of Lod, and were pursued by police. From the surrounding windows, residents are hurling rocks at the activists.

Earlier on Wednesday, Israel Police announced the nighttime curfew in the mixed Arab-Jewish city following protests that spilled into attacks and violent clashes between Jews and Arabs on Tuesday night.

The curfew, which was set to go into effect from 8 P.M. until Thursday at 4 A.M., restricts all residents to their homes and bars the entry of non-residents.

Police beefed up forces in the city after a state of emergency was declared. In a statement, police said the unusual measures are meant to "maintain the safety and security of Lod residents and safeguard their property."

Earlier on Wednesday, President Reuven Rivlin harshly condemned Tuesday's "pogrom" and riots "by an Arab mob," and was critical of what he called "the silence of Arab leaders" in Israel on the events.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the incidents are reminiscent of "sights from our people's past, and we cannot accept that." During a visit in the northern city of Acre, where businesses were torched the night before, he vowed to "stop anarchy" and "bring back sovereignty to Israel's cities with an iron fist if necessary."

#### **ISRAELI JEW IN SERIOUS CONDITION AFTER BEATINGS BY ARAB MOB AMID NATIONWIDE RIOTS (YNet 5/12/21)**

A Jewish Israeli man was left seriously wounded on Wednesday evening after an attempted lynching by an Arab mob in northern Israel as racially motivated attacks erupted across the country.

The riots erupted in Haifa, Tiberias, Jaffa, Lod and Acre, where a man in his 30s was beaten with sticks and rocks by a group of Arab men. He was taken to Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya for treatment and his condition is described as serious.

In Bat Yam, a group of Jewish nationalists staged a massive riot and had planned to enter Jaffa in order to clash with the local Arab population before being stopped by police.

Footage from the incident, shows the groups shouting, "Death to Arabs" and smashing windows of shops owned by Arabs, including a branch of the popular Victory ice cream parlor. An Arab man was also attacked by the mob with batons. His condition is described as moderate.

In Haifa, a driver who was attacked by rioters, accidentally ran over a pedestrian and moderately wounded him. The wounded man, a 27-year-old resident of the city, was evacuated by Magen David Adom paramedics to Rambam Hospital in the city. The driver, in his 20s, was arrested and taken for questioning.

On Wednesday, a Jewish Israeli man was shot wounded in the city during riots of Arab mob in the city. He was evacuated to Shamir Medical Center.

Since the start of the riots in Lod, one person has been killed and many others wounded. Cars were set on fire and stores and businesses were vandalized.

"Tonight I call on all the residents of the city to obey the instructions given by the law and the police and stay home so that we can calm the situation in the city and begin the processes of treatment and restoration of order," said Lod Mayor Yair Revivo.

Shortly after the announcement about the curfew, rioting in the city resumed. Police forces at the scene arrested one suspect with a weapon in his hand. At least 20 people have been arrested in Lod thus far.

Meanwhile, more than a dozen council members from the mixed cities of Lod, Acre, Haifa, Tel Aviv-Yafo and Ramla, published a joint statement,

calling for calm in mixed cities.

"We, Jews and Arabs, members and members of the councils in the mixed cities of Israel, call on the mayors involved, our partners in the city councils and the entire public to do everything in their power to enable protests by members of minority groups, avoid violence and dialogue."

#### **PROGRESS IN COALITION TALKS BY THE 'BLOC FOR CHANGE' (Arutz-7 5/12/21)**

Significant progress has been made in coalition negotiations among parties in the "bloc for change."

Most of the progress has been in negotiations between Yesh Atid, Labor, and Meretz, News 12 reported.

At the same time, Yamina is hoping to renew negotiations and sign on the formation of a government led by Yamina's chief, MK Naftali Bennett, and with the support of MK Mansour Abbas' United Arab List (Ra'am), after tensions die down.

Abbas on Monday put the brakes on contacts with both Yesh Atid and Yamina, following an escalation in the Israel-Gaza conflict.

On Tuesday, Bennett was asked if in light of the recent violence perpetrated by Arabs against Jews, he would agree to sit in a coalition together with MKs from the United Arab List. He did not respond to the query.

#### **BENNETT TO NETANYAHU: DON'T STOP UNTIL HAMAS PAYS HEAVY PRICE (JPost 5/12/21)**

Former defense minister Naftali Bennett called upon Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday to reject international offers to mediate a ceasefire.

Bennett encouraged Netanyahu to take stronger action against Hamas, even though escalation could prevent the Yamina leader from forming a government.

"The government should not end the current round in the Gaza Strip until Hamas pays a heavy price," he said.

Bennett also called upon the Public Security Ministry and the police to do more to protect citizens in mixed Jewish-Arab towns suffering from vandalism and violence.

"The Likud went from being a ruling party to a party that is failing to run the country and is leading us negligently from blunder to disaster," Bennett said.

"Yamina will give full support to any step to restore security without regard to politics; this is the time to unite and win."

Religious Zionist Party leader Bezalel Smotrich said it was crazy that the escalation did not stop Bennett from negotiating to form a government with "terror supporters" – a reference to the Ra'am (United Arab List) Party led by MK Mansour Abbas.

Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid said it was right to continue coalition talks, because the events of the past week proved that Netanyahu needs to be replaced.

"I have no intention of stopping the democratic process of forming a new government for [the sake of] Hamas," Lapid said. "It would be a prize for terror, and the time has come for Israel to stop giving prizes to terror."

Lapid said that what Israel has endured "is a product of Netanyahu's neglect and lack of vision."

"If an Islamic terrorist organization is not afraid to fire missiles at the towns and communities around Gaza, at Jerusalem and at Tel Aviv – and Arab rioters are not afraid to burn synagogues in Lod – then there is no deterrence and no government that can be trusted," he said. "That needs to change – and now."

"Israel more than ever needs a unity government that will enable us to face the challenges together," the Yesh Atid head said.

Lapid spoke with President Reuven Rivlin Wednesday afternoon about the ongoing security and political situation, updating him on efforts to form a government.

At Bennett's request, Lapid persuaded Abbas to speak favorably about forming a government despite the escalation, in an interview with KAN

Radio's Arabic station.

"When the fires are extinguished, there is no option other than returning to political contacts to form a government," Abbas said. "We have a real opportunity to fill an important role in Israeli politics for our society."

### **RACE BEGINS TO SUCCEED ISAAC HERZOG AT JEWISH AGENCY** (JPost 5/12/21)

Jewish Agency chairman Isaac Herzog has not yet declared his candidacy in the June 2 presidential election, but because he is considered the front-runner in that race, speculation has already begun over who could succeed him in the top post in the Jewish world.

Soon after Herzog would be elected president, a 10-member selection committee would be chosen by the Agency's Board of Governors. The support of nine of the 10 members would be needed for approval, followed by the confirmation of the full board.

The selection committee would be led by World Zionist Organization chairman Yaakov Hagoel and include four more WZO members, among them representatives of the Reform and Conservative movements. There would also be two representatives of Keren Hayesod and three of the Jewish Federations of North America, including Board of Governors chairman Michael Siegal.

Possible candidates whose names have been raised by members of the board of governors include Yesh Atid MK Elazar Stern, Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz, former New York Consul-General Dani Dayan, former ambassadors to the United Nations Ron Prosor and Danny Danon, former MKs Nachman Shai and Michal Cotler-Wunsh, Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahum and Maj.-Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin, who retired from his post as executive director of the Institute for National Security Studies on May 1.

The name of former ambassador to the US Ron Dermer has also been raised, but he essentially took himself out of the running with critical comments about American Jews that he delivered on Sunday at the Makor Rishon newspaper's conference on Israel-Diaspora relations.

Dermer said Israel should prioritize the "passionate and unequivocal" support of evangelical Christians over that of US Jews, who, he said, are "disproportionately among our critics."

### **ISRAELI RESEARCHERS REVEAL HOW COVID 'OUTSMARTS' IMMUNE SYSTEM** (Israel Hayom 5/12/21)

Severe symptoms of COVID-19, leading often to death, are thought to result from the patient's own acute immune response rather than from damage inflicted directly by the virus. Immense research efforts are invested in figuring out how the virus manages to mount an effective invasion while throwing the immune system off course.

A new study, published today in *Nature*, reveals a multipronged strategy that the virus employs to ensure its quick and efficient replication, while avoiding detection by the immune system. The joint labor of the research groups of Dr. Noam Stern-Ginossar at the Weizmann Institute of Science and Dr. Nir Paran and Dr. Tomer Israely of the Israel Institute for Biological, Chemical and Environmental Sciences, this study focused on understanding the molecular mechanisms at work during infection by SARS-CoV-2 at the cellular level.

During an infection, our cells are normally able to recognize that they're being invaded and quickly dispatch signaling molecules, which alert the immune system of the attack. With SARS-CoV-2 it was apparent early on that something was not working quite right – not only is the immune response delayed, enabling the virus to quickly replicate, unhindered, but once this response does occur it's often so severe that instead of fighting the virus it causes damage to its human host.

"Most of the research that has addressed this issue so far concentrated on specific viral proteins and characterized their functions. Yet not enough is known today about what is actually going on in the infected cells themselves," says Stern-Ginossar, of the Molecular Genetics Department. "So we infected cells with the virus and proceeded to assess how infection

affects important biochemical processes in the cell, such as gene expression and protein synthesis."

When cells are infected by viruses, they start expressing a series of specific anti-viral genes – some act as first-line defenders and meet the virus head on in the cell itself, while others are secreted to the cell's environment, alerting neighboring cells and recruiting the immune system to combat the invader. At this point, both the cell and the virus race to the ribosomes, the cell's protein synthesis factories, which the virus itself lacks. What ensues is a battle between the two over this precious resource.

The new study has elucidated how SARS-CoV-2 gains the upper hand in this battle: It is able to quickly, in a matter of hours, take over the cell's protein-making machinery and at the same time to neutralize the cell's anti-viral signaling, both internal and external, delaying and muddling the immune response.

The researchers showed that the virus is able to hack the cell's hardware, taking over its protein-synthesis machinery, by relying on three separate, yet complementary, tactics. The first tactic the virus uses is to reduce the cell's capacity for translating genes into proteins, meaning that less proteins are synthesized overall. The second tactic is that it actively degrades the cell's messenger RNAs (mRNA) – the molecules that carry instructions for making proteins from the DNA to the ribosomes – while its own mRNA transcripts remain protected. Finally, the study revealed that the virus is also able to prevent the export of mRNAs from the cell's nucleus, where they are synthesized, to the cell's main chamber, where they normally serve as the template for protein synthesis.

### **BIDEN FAILED THE ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN ROCKET AND RIOT TEST** (Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman, JPost 5/12/21)

The policies of the Biden administration have inadvertently contributed to the lethal round of hostilities in Israel and Gaza, some Israeli analysts claimed on Wednesday.

The escalation "is a test and [US President Joe Biden] has failed," said Prof. Eytan Gilboa, an expert on US policy in the Middle East at Bar-Ilan University.

Biden's mistakes, he said, began before the first rocket was fired.

Back in February, Biden lifted the designation of the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen as a global terrorist organization. Analysts said that the president believed the move would reduce violence in Yemen and against Saudi Arabia, but it has produced the opposite result.

"If you are a terrorist organization, and you don't do anything and sanctions are lifted against you, this means you can do whatever you want," Gilboa said. "Other terrorist organizations in the Middle East, like Hamas, look at this and say, 'This is what the US is doing? Very good. We can exploit it.'"

In April, Biden announced that America would restore some \$235 million in aid to the Palestinians that had been withdrawn by former President Donald Trump. About two-thirds of the money is being given to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which Trump cut off in 2018 because of its ties to terrorism.

"Hamas and Islamic Jihad were looking and saying to themselves that if the US restored this aid unconditionally, then we can do whatever we want," Gilboa explained.

Finally, that same month, the US lifted sanctions on International Criminal Court prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, also without any conditions.

"The ICC decided to investigate Israel for alleged war crimes in Gaza," the professor said. "Bensouda is supposed to leave office by June 15 and the Biden administration did not even say to her that it would [only] lift the sanctions providing she did not investigate Israel but [would] leave that to her successor."

Amid the violence, the administration has likewise shown a lack of understanding of the situation, including falsely equating Israel with Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

"We urge de-escalation on all sides," State Department Spokesperson Ned

Price said on Tuesday, failing to mention Hamas or Islamic Jihad as terrorist organizations targeting civilians.

Price further stressed that “we welcome the steps the Israeli government has taken in recent days aimed at avoiding provocations, including the decision to avoid confrontations during the Jerusalem Day commemoration and the delay in the decision regarding the Sheikh Jarrah evictions.”

But the real estate feud in Jerusalem, Gilboa said, has little to do with the violence, and mentioning it seems misplaced once rockets were raining down.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been inciting violence and terrorism for weeks inside Israel and the Palestinian territories, and specifically on the Temple Mount, in response to a decision by the Palestinian Authority to cancel the elections that Hamas hoped to win. Their goal is to take over the West Bank and turn it into another Gaza, Gilboa said.

“The US is strengthening terrorist organizations who are against peace,” he said.

But not everyone agrees.

His colleague, Prof. Jonathan Rynhold, director of the Argov Institute for the Study of Israel and the Jewish People at Bar-Ilan, said that “the American position is very secondary as a factor” in the escalation. He said he would not have expected the Trump administration to do anything more other than “rhetorically being stronger in their support for Israel – and I don’t think that would have had any impact on the dynamic.”

America’s friendship does bolster Israel in difficult times, however.

Biden has given the vibe that he at best has “ambiguous feelings toward the current Israeli government, which might influence his overall attitude toward Israel,” according to Prof. Boaz Ganor, head of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya.

Ganor said that with two-thirds of the Israeli population running to bomb shelters for cover – vying to protect their children and the elderly – Israelis across the political spectrum should expect a different attitude from the American administration.

“This unprecedented situation is far from ending and this is the time that Biden’s friendship is being checked,” Gilboa said. “The American administration’s attitude, for the time being, is quite disappointing.”

### **ISRAEL'S DIMINISHED DETERRENCE AND POLITICAL TURMOIL ARE RECIPE FOR DISASTER (Ron Ben-Yishai, YNet 5/12/21)**

Hamas has been “surprising” Israel again and again since Monday evening, which should worry everyone. The massive salvos of rocket at Tel Aviv on Tuesday night and early Wednesday are a direct continuation of the terror group’s rocket strikes on the Jerusalem area on Monday.

These attacks show that Israel’s deterrence against Gaza has become virtually nonexistent, an issue that demands immediate attention and that could give Iran and its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah ideas.

These ideas would be far more deadly than anything Israel has witnessed so far from Hamas.

The rocket fire on the center of the country made it clear that Israel had underestimated Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s capabilities, which they have been building since the end of the 2014 Gaza War.

The IDF, the politicians and even the media have a tendency to play down the terror groups’ abilities to launch heavy ordnances at long range. And all three were caught off guard Tuesday.

Even more worrying was the precision of the rockets. When these types of missiles were launched in the past, sometimes reaching as far as Hadera, they were vastly inaccurate - with most either landing in the sea or exploding mid-air.

The rockets fired Tuesday were not only heavily armed, but accurate to a degree Israel had never imagined.

There may be some within the military and intelligence community who will claim that the IDF was fully aware of these capabilities. Even if they are right, it is far from the image presented to Israeli citizens in recent years.

The decision-makers assessed that Gaza militants were still at a rather primitive stage of rocket development, opting instead to focus on other armaments such as drones.

Those assessments were shown to be entirely erroneous on Tuesday night, and the public should have been prepared, at least mentally, for the reality. Even though casualties from the attacks have been “relatively” low, Hamas and Islamic Jihad scored a serious victory in the game of psychological warfare against Israel.

Another concept held tightly by the IDF and the politicians that has been shattered in recent days was that as the economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza improved, Hamas would be more willing to reach a long-term settlement with Israel.

The logic behind this was the notion that Hamas was worried it might lose control over Gaza if the wellbeing of its citizens continued to deteriorate.

Using this logic, Israel allowed Qatari money to flow into the enclave, ignoring any provocation on part of Hamas and even starting to believe fantastical stories of lightning setting off rockets fired at the south.

As clashes between Palestinians and police in Jerusalem during Ramadan began to be more and more ferocious, Israel did all it could to get the Qatari money and the benefits flowing into Gaza.

But Hamas had already set its sights on the fighting in Jerusalem.

Israel’s leaders refused to accept that their concept was falling apart until rockets flew at Tel Aviv, making it abundantly clear that the wellbeing of Gaza does not deter the political and jihadist ambitions of Hamas and their allies.

One can only hope that Israel will now adopt a more practical and strategic plan for the Palestinian issue in general and Gaza in particular.

Another surprise that caught Israel unawares was the rioting in the Arab sector.

These protests were not manned by a few dozen hotheads, but by a violent and criminal mass, while those in power – the same ones that did nothing to put out the fires at al-Aqsa – again did not so much as wave a finger.

Another lesson our leaders learned is that the violence in Israel’s Arab communities does not stay in the Arab communities, but spreads to other areas as well.

Arab troublemakers as usual blame police, the settlers and the far right, but never themselves.

The police are also guilty of a series of missteps in the recent violence and their forces are spread thin because of it, leaving them unable to deploy in full force at the scene of the riots.

Far-right Jews did not hesitate to provoke in Jerusalem, but they are not the main culprits in the events in Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and throughout the Arab sector.

There was a direct initiative by Israeli Arabs to light the flames and then later feel no shame in declaring themselves the victims.

The events of late Tuesday in Lod and Ramle, where Israeli Arabs fired at police, as well as the security forces’ decision to break into the Temple Mount, show that the violence and hot tempers could drag this country into an all-out race war.

The state might need to take drastic actions like getting the military involved to calm the flames. Clashes between rioters and police will never end well and only cause further anger.

Finally, we must ask ourselves: what is the common thread for all these uncomfortable surprises we have witnessed over the past few days?

The answer is twofold: Continually growing religious animosity between Muslims and Jews and Israel’s lack of proper governance.

The country’s leaders for over more than two years solely focused on themselves and their power, neglecting the Palestinian issue and the growing rise of violence in the Arab sector.

For two years, our government was unwilling to tackle these problems and now everything is blowing up in their faces.

Israel needs proper leadership, with police and the army doing everything in their power to reestablish their deterrence in the face of multiple threats.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

# SHABBOS DELIGHTS

## TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

### **1 am (Half) Asleep, But My Heart is Awake**

**Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct**

For many people, the centerpiece of the holiday of *Shavuos* is the widespread custom to stay up the entire night learning *Torah*. Yet, one may wonder whether it would not be more productive to get a good night's sleep and spend the following day engaged in *Torah* study instead. The reason we maintain the custom, despite its obvious drawback, is simple, yet instructive. *Chazal* tell us that when the day arrived for the Jewish people to receive the *Torah*, they went to sleep the night before and woke up late to meet *Hashem* and receive the *Torah*. Therefore, to correct this mistake, we stay up the entire night learning. In other words, it is not the quantity or even quality of *Torah* learning that makes *Shavuos* night special. Rather, it is the enthusiasm and love of *Torah* that we demonstrate that makes the holiday so special.

*Shavuos* night *Torah* learning has a certain charm that inspires us to learn with energy, excitement, and love. But learning *Torah* in this way is too precious to be relegated to one night a year. May we all use *Shavuos* to infuse ourselves with a love of *Torah* and carry that love with us throughout the entire year.

**Wishing you a Good Shabbos and a Good Yomtov!**

## SPONSOR

To sponsor an issue of *Shabbos Delights* please contact [info@gwckollel.org](mailto:info@gwckollel.org).

## TABLE TALK

### Point to Ponder

***These are the children of Aharon and Moshe on the day Hashem spoke with Moshe on Har Sinai. (3, 1)***

*The verse only enumerates the children of Aaron, yet they are also called the children of 'Moshe.' This teaches that whoever teaches Torah to the child of his friend, it is as if he has given birth to him. (Rashi)*

This verse references the revelation at Har Sinai before the Torah was given. What type of Torah was being taught by Moshe which resulted in the children of Aharon being called the children of 'Moshe'?

### Parsha Riddle

***Which date of the calendar is set as the date for Shavuos?***

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

***Which halacha applies to a Shul with a stone floor and does not apply to a Shul with a tile floor?***

***Answer: One is not allowed to bow on the stone floor of a shul, whereas on a non-stone floor one may bow (although customs vary).***

## HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

### HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Bamidbar*, Hashem commands Moshe to conduct a census of the Jewish people. In general, counting Jews is prohibited: as we recently learned in *Daf Yomi (Yoma 22b)* "it is prohibited to count Jews, even for the purposes of a *mitzvah*," and counting is only permitted when done indirectly, via the submissions of some sort of token, which are then counted. Rashi indeed understands that the census in our *parashah* was conducted via the contribution of *shekalim*, as described in *parashas Ki Sisa* (despite the fact that in his view [*Shemos* 30:16], the census in our *parashah* was distinct from the one discussed there and in *parashas Pekudei*).

The *Kli Yakar*, on the other hand, notes that "many commentators" disagree with Rashi and understand that this census did not utilize *shekalim*. He proposes that the problem of direct counting has to do with the evil eye, and thus only applies to a count where the result is unknown in advance and will be a surprise, as was the case with the first count, since a mere seventy Jews had descended to Egypt, where they had been subject to terrible oppression and genocide, and yet at the time of the count they numbered 600,000 excluding women and children, as opposed to later counts, where the general magnitude of the Jewish population was known in advance.

R. Ovadia Yosef (*Shut. Yabia Omer* 10 CM 2) invokes this idea in justification of the censuses conducted by the modern Israeli government, since there as well the approximate size of the population is known in advance, and the census is merely in order to obtain more precise figures. As another justification, he notes the suggestion of *Ralbag* that the census in our *parashah* avoided the problem of direct counting by being conducted via the submission of written lists of names, which were then counted. Although the *Chasam Sofer* maintains that even counting via writing is prohibited (see *Shut. Kesav Sofer* YD 106), R. Ovadia invokes *Ralbag's* position (also held by R. Yisrael of Shklov, the author of the *Pe'as ha-Shulchan*) as an additional basis for leniency with regard to modern censuses conducted via written submissions.

PRESENTED BY  
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

## KIDS KORNER

### Who Am I?

#### #1 WHO AM I?

1. We came from the third.
2. We are not Native Americans.
3. We were flagged.
4. A baker's dozen.

#### #2 WHO AM I?

1. I resembled a barrel.
2. I was humble.
3. I hint to hatred.
4. I was a place of healing.

#### Last Week's Answers

**#1 Toil (in Torah)** (For me only we get reward, Fortunate is the man who does me, For me, man is born, If you walk with my chukim.)

**#2 Shemittah** (I forgive, I am the seventh, I am for rest, Open for all!)

## KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

**Greater Washington Community Kollel wishes all of its friends, supporters, participants, and the entire community, a good Yom Tov!**

# Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah  
via the Internet

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

Volume 27, Issue 30

Shabbat Parashat Bemidbar [Shavuot Issue Attached]

5781 B"H

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

### Leading a Nation of Individuals

The book of Bamidbar begins with a census of the Israelites. That is why this book is known in English as Numbers. This raises a number of questions: what is the significance of this act of counting? And why here at the beginning of the book? Besides which, there have already been two previous censuses of the people and this is the third within the space of a single year. Surely one would have been sufficient. Additionally, does counting have anything to do with leadership?

The place to begin is to note what appears to be a contradiction. On the one hand, Rashi says that the acts of counting in the Torah are gestures of love on the part of God:

Because they (the Children of Israel) are dear to Him, God counts them often. He counted them when they were about to leave Egypt. He counted them after the Golden Calf to establish how many were left. And now that He was about to cause His Presence to rest on them (with the inauguration of the Sanctuary), He counted them again.

When God initiates a census of the Israelites, it is to show that He loves them.

On the other hand, the Torah is explicit in saying that taking a census of the nation is fraught with risk:

Then God said to Moses, "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each must give to God a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them."

When, centuries later, King David counted the people, there was Divine anger and seventy thousand people died. How can this be, if counting is an expression of love?

The answer lies in the phrase the Torah uses to describe the act of counting: *se'u et rosh*, literally, "lift the head." This is a strange, circumlocutory expression. Biblical Hebrew contains many verbs meaning "to count": *limnot*, *lifkod*, *lispor*, *lachshov*. Why does the Torah not use these simple words for the census, choosing instead the roundabout expression, "lift the heads" of the people?

The short answer is this: In any census, count or roll-call there is a tendency to focus on the total – the crowd, the multitude, the mass. Here is a nation of sixty million people, or a company with one hundred thousand employees, or a sports crowd of sixty thousand. Any total tends to value the group or nation as a whole. The larger the total, the stronger the army, the more popular the team, and the more successful the company.

Counting devalues the individual and tends to make him or her replaceable. If one soldier dies in battle, another will take their place. If one person leaves the organisation, someone else can be hired to do their job.

Notoriously, too, crowds have the effect of tending to make the individual lose their independent

judgment and follow what others are doing. We call this "herd behaviour," and it sometimes leads to collective madness. In 1841 Charles Mackay published his classic study, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, which tells of the South Sea Bubble that cost thousands of people their money in the 1720s, and the tulip mania in Holland when entire fortunes were spent on single tulip bulbs. The Great Crashes of 1929 and 2008 had the same crowd psychology.

Another great work, Gustav Le Bon's *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895) showed how crowds exercise a "magnetic influence" that transmutes the behaviour of individuals into a collective "group mind." As he put it, "An individual in a crowd is a grain of sand amid other grains of sand, which the wind stirs up at will." People in a crowd become anonymous. Their conscience is silenced. They lose a sense of personal responsibility.

Crowds are peculiarly prone to regressive behaviour, primitive reactions and instinctual behaviour. They are easily led by figures who are demagogues, playing on people's fears and their sense of victimhood. Such leaders, Le Bon noted, are "especially recruited from the ranks of those morbidly nervous excitable half-deranged persons who are bordering on madness," a remarkable anticipation of Hitler. It is no accident that Le Bon's work was published in France at a time of rising antisemitism and the Dreyfus trial.

Hence the significance of one remarkable feature of Judaism: its principled insistence – like no other civilisation before – on the dignity and integrity of the individual. We believe that every human being was created in the image and likeness of God. The Sages said that every life is like an entire universe. Maimonides wrote that each of us should see ourselves as if our next act could change the fate of the world. Every dissenting view is carefully recorded in the Mishnah, even if the law is otherwise. Every verse of the Torah is capable, said the Sages, of seventy interpretations. No voice, no view, is silenced. Judaism never allows us to lose our individuality in the mass.

There is a wonderful blessing mentioned in the Talmud to be said on seeing six hundred thousand Israelites together in one place. It is: "Blessed are You, Lord... who discerns secrets." The Talmud explains that every person is different. We each have different attributes. We all think our own thoughts. Only God can enter the minds of each of us and know what we are thinking, and this is what the blessing refers to. In other words, even in a massive crowd where, to human eyes, faces blur into a mass, God still relates to us as individuals, not as members of a crowd.

That is the meaning of the phrase, "lift the head," used in the context of a census. God tells Moses that there is a danger, when counting a nation, that each individual will feel insignificant. "What am I? What difference can I make? I am only one of millions, a mere wave in the ocean, a grain of sand on the sea-shore, dust on the surface of infinity."

Against that, God tells Moses to lift people's heads by showing that they each count; they matter as individuals. Indeed in Jewish law a *davar she-be-minyan*, something that is counted, sold individually rather than by weight, is never nullified even in a mixture of a thousand or a million others. In

Judaism, taking a census must always be done in such a way as to signal that we are valued as individuals. We each have unique gifts. There is a contribution only I can bring. To lift someone's head means to show them favour, to recognise them. It is a gesture of love.

There is, however, all the difference in the world between individuality and individualism. Individuality means that I am a unique and valued member of a team. Individualism means that I am not a team player at all. I am interested in myself alone, not the group. Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam gave this a famous name, noting that more people than ever in the United States are going ten-pin bowling, but fewer than ever are joining bowling teams. He called this phenomenon "Bowling alone." MIT professor Sherry Turkle calls our age of Twitter, Facebook, and electronic rather than face-to-face friendships, "Alone together." Judaism values individuality, not individualism. As Hillel said, "If I am only for myself, what am I?"

All this has implications for Jewish leadership. We are not in the business of counting numbers. The Jewish people always was small and yet achieved great things. Judaism has a profound mistrust of demagogic leaders who manipulate the emotions of crowds. Moses at the Burning Bush spoke of his inability to be eloquent. "I am not a man of words". He thought this was a deficiency in a leader. In fact, it was the opposite. Moses did not sway people by his oratory. Rather, he lifted them by his teaching.

A Jewish leader has to respect individuals. They must "lift their heads." If you seek to lead, however small or large the group you lead, you must always communicate the value you place on everyone, including those others exclude: the widow, the orphan and the stranger. You must never attempt to sway a crowd by appealing to the primitive emotions of fear or hate. You must never ride roughshod over the opinions of others.

It is hard to lead a nation of individuals, but this is the most challenging, empowering, inspiring leadership of all.

### Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"...by their families, by their parents' houses." Early in the book of Numbers the Torah records the first census in the history of the Jewish people: "Count the heads of the entire witness community of the children of Israel, by their families, by their parents' houses". Certainly a census is a momentous event – not only as a profile of a nation's most important natural resource – its people – but also as a means of enhancing each national with a sense of pride in his newly acquired significance as a member of an important nation.

At the end of the day, when all the counts of the various tribes were added up, the total number of those twenty years and above was 603,550 (Numbers 1:46). The census tells us – in more ways than one – that each person counts. Again and again we encounter the phrase in connection with the census: "by their families [le'mishpehotam], by their parents' houses [le'veit avotam]."

This particular term is repeated with each of the tribes and families, except for two instances wherein

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

To sponsor an issue of Likutei Divrei Torah:  
Call Saadia Greenberg 301-649-7350  
or email: [sgreenberg@jhu.edu](mailto:sgreenberg@jhu.edu)  
<http://torah.saadia.info>

the phrase is inverted – in the case of the Levites, as well as the sons of Gershon. In these two instances, instead of the order of being “by their families” and “by their parents’ houses” we find “by their parents house and by their families” (Numbers 3:15).

In contrast, Levi’s other sons, Kehat and Merari numbers in a manner similar to the presentation of the rest of the tribes – first by their “families” and only afterwards by their “fathers’ houses.” Why should there be such a reversal in phraseology in the case of Levi and the children of Gershon?

In our last commentary, we rendered the phrase “lemishpehotam” to mean “by the family of their tribal forebears,” and “leleit avotam” to mean “by their immediate parental names,” in accordance with the interpretation of Rashi. However, the earlier Aramaic translation of these phrases, Targum Onkelos, which is generally placed alongside of the biblical text as a demonstration of its authoritative position, render “lemishpehotam” as “lezarayaton” – “by their seed, by their children.”

Thus the usual formulation, found no less than seventeen times in our passage, is rendered to mean that each individual is numbered by their children and by their parents’ house. The message of the Targum is clear: an individual is to be counted first by whom he or she has produced – by his or her children – and only afterwards and secondarily do we pay attention to his or her forebears, to the yihus which comes from one’s parents and the parental forebears; perhaps Targum would include the tribal background as well in “leleit avotam.”

From the perspective of this definition, we can also readily understand the reversal of the phrase regarding the tribe of Levi. Ordinarily individuals are defined first by whom and what they have produced – their children first. However, a kohen (priest) or Levite serves in the Temple and performs special ritual duties not by virtue of merit but only by virtue of ancestry: I am a kohen only because my father was a kohen. Hence in accordance with this reality, the Bible insists that their census is “by their parents’ house and by their children” – the parents coming first!

And in addition to special ritual functions, the care and maintenance of the Sanctuary (during the years of wandering in the desert) was divided among the three scions of the house of Levi. The duty of Gershon, as described in the previous portion, focused on the curtains, the hangings, the various coverings inside the Tabernacle. According to the midrash, this was the easiest job in the Sanctuary. It is therefore assumed that the children of Gershon were satisfied to rest on their laurels; they remained in essence Levites, dependent on their “parent’s house” for their status and function.

In contrast, the children of Kehat were in charge of the much heavier items, such as the Menora and the Ark. In Bamidbar Rabba (5:1), we read the following description: “When the Jews were traveling, two sparks of flame came out from the two poles of the Ark of the Tablets of Law.” The Kehatites volunteered to put their lives on the line and risk the fire in order to bear the Holy Ark. And their brothers the Merarites learned from their example, volunteering to transport the heaviest wood and metals. These children of Levi were anxious to be their own people, to establish their own yihus. As a result, the Torah counts them in accord with “their children and their parents’ house” – themselves and their children coming first!

What we’ve gathered from the overview is that a seemingly slight difference in word order may reveal a world of attitude and psychology. When each of us is counted and assessed when the Almighty conducts His census, the most important criterion in our judgment will not be who our parents were, but who and what we and our children have developed into.

All too often, the descendant has descended too far down! And when we ponder the question of “Who is a Jew?” as we so often do within the context of necessity for conversion and the “right of return,” it is important to note that at least from a sociological (rather than a halakhic) perspective, a Jew is defined more by his children than by his parents; indeed, I would argue that sociologically speaking, a Jew is he or she who has Jewish grandchildren!

Postscript - The Maggid of Mezritch (eighteenth century, Ukraine) was a great disciple of the Ba’al Shem Tov, and heir to his leadership of the Hasidic movement. It is told that when the Maggid was still a child, a fire broke out in his family home. Although the family was rescued from the flames, his mother was weeping hysterically. When he asked her why she was so upset at the loss of mere physical objects, the mother explained that she was crying for the loss – not of the home or its furniture – but of the record of their family pedigree, which had been destroyed in the flames. This record had traced back their familial roots to King David himself! “You don’t have to cry over that,” said the young Maggid, comforting his mother. “I will begin a new record of our family pedigree; from me will begin a new yihus. Subsequent generations will trace their lineage back to me.”

### **The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb** **Transitions and Destinations**

I’ve been thinking a lot lately about transitions and destinations. Perhaps this is because of my childhood memories. Back then, at precisely this time of year, my friends and I relished the approach of the end of the school year and the beginning of summer vacation. For us, school was merely a seemingly endless passage toward our longed-for destination, the “lazy, hazy” days of summer.

Or, there might be a much more recent basis to my current preoccupation with transitions and destinations. Since this past Pesach, when we celebrated our freedom from slavery, we have counted the days until Matan Torah, the “giving of the Torah,” on Shavuot. Counting aloud each day, day by day and week by week, instilled in me a sense of going through a transition, a passage of seven weeks, leading to an ultimate destination.

That transitions and destinations are part of life is obvious. What is less obvious, but more fascinating, is that one person’s destination is often another person’s transition, and vice versa. How well do I remember my first days of employment after my years of graduate school. I experienced those years of toil as a necessary transition to the beginning of my career as a psychologist. My first day at work was the beginning of my destination.

It was on that day that I met a gentleman who was to become a close colleague over the ensuing several years. His name was George Jones, and while I was to be in charge of a small group of school psychologists, he headed a similarly small group of school social workers.

Soon after we first met, we discovered that we had much in common and so no longer confined our conversations to our professional tasks. We discussed our different religions, our family backgrounds, and our hopes and dreams.

We learned much from each other during those conversations. But most of all, we learned just how different our hopes and dreams were. For me, at that time in my life, my role as a trained mental health professional was my destination. It was what I had worked for and what I then anticipated would be my life’s work.

For George, on the other hand, his profession was but a transitional role towards his ultimate destination. Although both of us were exactly 30 years old at the time, his dream was retirement. Yes,

## Likutei Divrei Torah

he knew that his destination was 20 or 25 years away, but he spoke about it almost daily, describing the property he bought on the Chesapeake Bay and the boat he would soon be able to afford. The job that was my destination was, for him, but a passage to a different destination entirely.

With this week’s Torah portion, Parshat Bamidbar, we begin a new Chumash, the fourth volume of the Pentateuch. Each of the five volumes of the Chumash is unique. My contention is that this fourth volume is unique in the following manner: It begins as a description of a transition, a passage, from the Exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Sinai through a desert wilderness but towards the Promised Land, the land of milk and honey. But it soon becomes apparent that this desert wilderness will become a destination and, for many, a tragically final destination.

This book, which begins as a parade, a joyous and relatively brief journey to the Promised Land, is soon transformed into a book portraying an era of strife, rebellion, war, betrayal, and disillusionment, enduring for nearly forty years!

Transition, or destination? Was it Yogi Berra who said that it is hard to make predictions, especially about the future? Truth to tell, and we must face the truth, it is difficult to think of a moment in history at which there was greater uncertainty than at this moment.

In a certain sense, the distinction between transitions and destinations is an existential one. That is, the question can be asked, “Is our life in this world our final destination, or is it a transition, a prelude, into another world, another mode of existence?”

The answer to this question was proclaimed long ago by the Rabbis of the Mishnah: “Rabbi Jacob said: this world is like an antechamber before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the antechamber so that you may enter the banquet hall.”

Our very lives, according to Rabbi Jacob, are but transitions into another destination, the World to Come. A very sobering teaching, indeed!

But our Rabbis inform us of something even more shocking. Even the World to Come is not a final destination. Even for the righteous, that celestial world is but a passage to a loftier destination.

“Said Rabbi Chiya bar Ashi in the name of Rav: Talmidei Chachamim [pious wise men] have no rest, neither in this world nor in the World to Come, as it is written, ‘They will go from strength to strength, and appear before the Almighty in Zion (Psalms 84:80).’”

One is tempted to assume that it is only the righteous who progress ever upward and know no final destination. But surely the wicked, whose destination is Gehenna, have reached “the end of the line.”

The Rabbis are quick to assure us, however, that even Gehenna is not the end of the line: “The sentence of the wicked to Gehenna is for but 12 months.”

Even Gehenna itself is but a transition, hopefully to a higher and nobler destination.

In conclusion, permit me to turn my attention to a happier topic. With this week’s Person in the Parasha column, I celebrate the first publication of this weekly series of columns, for Parashat Bamidbar, 2009. At that time, I had just concluded my tenure as Executive Vice President of the Orthodox Union, which, until then, had been my “destination.”

I began a new transition in my life which has thankfully continued until now. I already have some tentative notions as to the theme of “transitions and destinations” as it is to be found in this fascinating new book of the Chumash that I hope to share with you, with the help of the Almighty, in the weeks to come.

## Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah via the Internet

Volume 27

Shavuos Issue

5781 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

**Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin**

The Scroll of Ruth contains one of the most idyllic stories in the Bible, a tale of "autumnal love" between a widow (Ruth) and a widower (Boaz), within the backdrop of diaspora inter-marriage, conversion to Judaism, and the agricultural life in ancient Israel. The Rabbinic Sages ordained that we read this Scroll on Shavuos, the Festival of Weeks, the anniversary of the Torah Revelation at Sinai and the celebration of the first fruits brought to the Temple in Jerusalem. And since Shavuos is the climatic zenith of Passover, the development of a newly-freed group of slaves in the Sinai desert into a Torah-imbued nation firmly ensconced in their own homeland of Israel, the reasons for this special reading are many: Boaz and Ruth are the great-grandparents of David, the Psalm-singing military hero who united the tribes of Israel and first envisioned the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, Ruth the Moabite is Jew-by-choice whose commitment to Torah Judaism makes her worthy of being the great grand-mother of the prototype of the eventual Messiah-King, and the last three chapters of the story takes place between the beginning of the barley harvest (just before Passover) and the very end of the wheat harvest (not long after Shavuos). I would wish to ask three questions on the Scroll of Ruth, the answer to which I believe will provide an extra dimension of our understanding as to why we read this particular Scroll on Shavuos, the festival which serves as harbinger to redemption.

Firstly, from a narrative perspective: the first chapter spans the ten years the family of Naomi is in Moab, and the last three chapters describe the happenings of the three month period between the barley and wheat harvests. Why did the author give so much text space to such a small span of times?

Secondly, the midrash (Ruth Rabbah) tells us that Ruth and Naomi arrive in Bethlehem at the precise time of the funeral of Boaz's wife, and that Boaz died immediately after he impregnated Ruth; that is how the Rabbinic Sages account for the fact that Boaz is not mentioned in the last verses of the Scroll, which specifically deal with the birth of Oved, son to Boaz and Ruth as well as father to Jesse. Why do the Sages see fit to sandwich these joyous verses recounting such a significant love story between two seemingly tragic deaths – without the text itself mentioning those deaths explicitly or even hinting at a mournful mood? And finally, can we possibly glean from between the lines of the Scroll what precisely occurred between Boaz and Ruth during the night they spent together on the threshing floor. What did her mother-in-law Naomi suggest that she do – and what did she do in actuality?

If Shavuos is truly the Festival of Redemption – and redemption links humanity to the Eternal G-d of all eternity – the period which is eternally Sabbath – then the Scroll of Ruth must deal with the eternal

rather than the temporal. Israel is the eternal homeland of the Jewish people – and any diaspora experience can only be temporal at best and destructive at worst. The first chapter opens with a famine in Israel, and an important personage (Elimelech) who leaves Bethlehem (literally the house of bread) with his wife and sons to seek "greener pastures" in the idolatrous Moab. As happened with Father Abraham, Diaspora proved far more dangerous (Genesis 12:10-20), the two sons, Mahlon (lit. sickness) and Kilion (lit. destruction) marry Hittite wives – and since the children follow the religion of the mother, the Israelite line of Elimelech and Naomi – seems to have ended! The father and his sons all die in Moab – their earlier spiritual demise expressing itself physically; fortunately one daughter-in-law clings to her mother-in-law Naomi, converts to Judaism ("Where you will go" – to Israel – "there shall I go, where you will lodge, there shall I lodge," – maintaining the same sexual purity as you – "Your people shall be my people, your God my God"), and returns to Bethlehem. Only now – in Israel – can eternal history begin, and so the next three chapters, and the next three months, are far more significant than the previous ten years, which had almost destroyed the family line.

The midrash tells us that Boaz's wife has died just as Naomi and Ruth return – and that Boaz will die three months later. But death in itself is not tragic for Judaism: after all, every individual must die sooner or later. The only relevant question is to what extent the individual, when alive, participates in Jewish eternity. Naomi sends Ruth to glean the forgotten grain and harvest the produce in the corner of the field – agricultural provision which the Torah provides for the poor Israelites. Divine Providence sent Ruth to Boaz's field – and Boaz was a Kinsman of Elimelech. Boaz seems to be attracted to this comely proselyte – stranger and gives her his protection. Naomi understands that participation in Jewish eternity means having a child with Jewish parentage in Israel; she therefore instructs Ruth to wash and anoint herself, dress in special finery, visit the place on the threshing floor where Boaz will be spending the night at the height of the harvest season, and lie down at his feet. She also warns Ruth not to reveal who she is. In effect, she is suggesting that Ruth tempt Boaz as Tamar had tempted Boaz's forbear Judah generations earlier – and at least enter Jewish history by bearing his child.

Ruth senses that Boaz loves her – and so she holds out for higher stakes than a mere "one night stand." She tells him exactly who she is, and she asks that he "redeem" her by marriage and by restoring to her Elimelech's previously sold homestead in Israel. Ruth understands that true eternity means bearing a child on your own piece of land in Israel – not in the sly, but as a respected wife and householder. Boaz complies, and Oved, the grandfather of King David, is born. Ruth's commitment to Torah – the land of Torah, the laws of Torah, the loving-kindness of Torah, the modesty of Torah – catapults this convert into the center stage of Jewish eternity.

And this for a very important reason. According to the Midrash of R. Yishmael, the reason the Torah was given at Mt. Sinai – a desert galut – and not on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem, is because had the Torah

been given in Israel the Jews may have thought that the Gentiles have no place in Torah. The truth is the very opposite: Rav Shimon ben Elazar maintains that in the future (Days of the Messiah) the Gentiles will all convert, and Maimonides, at the very conclusion of his Mishneh Torah, rules that at the End of the Days "everyone will return to the true religion", which for him was certainly Judaism. The truth is that to a partial extent the issue is in dispute between two Prophets, Isaiah (chapter 2) maintaining that all the nations will rush to our Jerusalem Temple, declaring "Let us learn from the Jewish ways, let us walk in the Jewish paths, for from Zion will go forth Torah and the word of God from Jerusalem" (to the entire world), while the Prophet Micha quotes Isaiah's words almost verbatim, and then concluding, "each nation will walk in the Name of its (individual) god and we will walk in the name of the Living Lord our God forever" – ethical absolutism (in accordance with the Torah demands of ethical absolutism – compassionate righteousness, moral justice, universal peace) and ritual pluralism!

I am ready to accept either view, and according to everyone at least the Biblical ethic will reign supreme. And the truth is that God initially blessed Abraham with becoming a great nation through whom all the families of the earth will be blessed with peace and security – the Gentiles will certainly adopt our ethical outlook!

This is the vision of Shavuos and this is why we read about the righteous proselyte Ruth on Shavuos!

**The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**

**A Message for the Entire Team**

All beginning students of Torah face this obstacle: in their original, the primary texts of our Jewish tradition have no punctuation. There are neither commas nor periods in the Torah scroll, the Sefer Torah. There are no question marks, nor are there indications of where one paragraph ends and another begins in standard editions of the Talmud.

In recent years, publishers have included vowels and punctuation marks in the new editions of almost all basic Jewish texts. This innovation has facilitated the ability to study Torah unimpeded by the necessity to puzzle over the various quandaries with which students of previous generations had to cope.

However, before these innovations and throughout our history, there have been numerous disagreements as to how the unpunctuated texts should be read. Let me provide one example of such a text from the Torah portion which we will read in the synagogue on the first day of the upcoming festival of Shavuos. The text is to be found in the book of Exodus/ Shemot 19:5-6. Unpunctuated, and translated literally, it reads as follows:

And now if you listen will listen in My voice and keep My covenant and you will be for Me a treasure among all the nations for Mine is all the land and you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy people...

Many commentators struggle with the above verses. Permit me to introduce you to one of them. His name was Rabbi Naphtali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin,

To sponsor an issue of Likutei Divrei Torah:  
Call Saadia Greenberg 301-649-7350  
or email: [sgreenberg@jhu.edu](mailto:sgreenberg@jhu.edu)  
<http://torah.saadia.info>

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

and he lived in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was the dean, or Rosh Yeshiva, of the “mother of all yeshivos,” in the town of Volozhin in Lithuania. He is known as the Netziv, based upon the initials of his name. He wrote prolifically and gave daily lectures on each week’s Torah portion. Those lectures formed the basis of his profound and extremely insightful five-volume commentary, entitled Haamek Davar.

As one becomes familiar with his work, one begins to realize that the author uses certain basic themes, again and again, to resolve a wide variety of textual problems. One of these themes is the distinction between passages directed to an exclusive audience, versus passages which are addressed to all of the Jewish people, and occasionally to all mankind.

To put it bluntly, some messages are for the spiritual superstars, and others are for the entire team.

The Netziv suggests that our text can be punctuated in two different ways: one with a message for the elite, and another with a message for us all. In this column, I will confine myself to the message for the broader group and leave the message for the aristocracy to those willing to consult the Haamek Davar on their own.

Here is the Netziv’s suggested punctuation, with his interjected interpretive remarks, as addressed to the group he calls the hamon am, the “masses,” or as I prefer, the “entire team,” all who stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah.

And now if you listen well in My voice, and keep My covenant, then, and only then, will you be My treasure, among all nations, for people of all lands are Mine. You are qualified to serve as My kingdom of priests/servants, you are qualified to be a holy people...

The Netziv proceeds to elaborate upon the message: “From this moment forward, you must ‘listen to My voice.’ That is, you must ponder Torah and attempt to understand it precisely. ‘Listen in,’ rather than merely ‘listen to.’ This is a precondition for My divine support of your national interests, your political agenda, matters of war and peace.

“Then, you must ‘keep My covenant’, the covenant I made with Abraham regarding sacrificial worship, the Avodah, in the Holy Temple. This is a precondition for My divine sustenance, providing you with a fertile land, with abundant food and nourishment.

“But note,” continues the Netziv, “that reference is only made to Torah and Avodah, to Torah study and ritual observance! What about gemilut chesed? What about interpersonal relationships, charity, kindness, generosity, tolerance, compassion? I, the Almighty, expect those behaviors of all human beings, not just of you! Remember Sodom, totally destroyed because it neglected the poor and needy. Furthermore, I know that chesed/compassion comes naturally to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I need not stipulate that it is a precondition for My divine rewards.

“Beyond those two essentials, Torah and Avodah, without which there is no nation of Israel, you may elevate yourself yet higher by becoming exemplary in your relationships with others, by acting nobly in your dealings with others. But, when it comes to human relationships, much depends upon the special circumstances of time and place. In those matters, you must strive to discern My will, you must attempt to determine what the Almighty expects of you. For that, you must be a mamlechet kohanim, a ‘kingdom of priests.’

“And then, you must be a goy kadosh, ‘a holy people.’ You must be able to determine for yourselves what makes for holiness in new and unfamiliar contexts which are not explicitly regulated in My Torah. You must ask what I, the

Almighty, would want you to do in unprecedented and unanticipated new circumstances, which you are sure to encounter in your national and personal futures.”

What a powerful message these words have for us as we enter Z’man Matan Torateinu, the Festival of Shavuot, when we not only commemorate the Almighty’s revelation upon Mount Sinai, but when we relive it.

The Netziv reminds us of the fundamental requirements that we have as a people and as individuals: Torah study and ritual observance. He reminds us that we have responsibilities, not just as Jews, but as members of the human society. He urges us to go beyond those universal responsibilities and to excel morally and ethically.

I write these words in the midst of a terrible plague, a pandemic. We all find ourselves surrounded by uncertainty and confronted with difficult decisions at every turn.

It helps us to realize that a wise man, living more than a century ago, forewarned us that we will encounter drastically unpredictable dilemmas for which we must strive to ascertain the Almighty’s will by living our lives as His “kingdom of priests, a holy people.” [excerpted]

---

#### **OTS Dvar Torah: Is Rut Really a Role Model? By Rabbanit Dena Freundlich [Excerpted]**

---

The Question - About a year ago, a Midreshet Lindenbaum alumna (Sarah Cabot, ML 5778) posed a thought-provoking question to me over WhatsApp about the character of Rut. Her query unsettled me because it hit on a troubling issue which I didn’t know how to make sense of in a way that would satisfy her or myself. Sarah wrote that Rut left her feeling confused. She is extolled for her extreme acts of chesed and self-sacrifice, abandoning her home to cling to her penniless, bereft mother-in-law, selflessly devoting herself to provide sustenance for both of them, and humbly doing anything that might vouchsafe for them a secure future. However, as Sarah wrote to me, it seems as though Rut “is so committed to helping Naomi that her own identity is erased, and to me at least it seems to be contrary to the type of person that we’re supposed to strive to be.” In other words, Sarah was asking, Is Rut really a role model? Is she the type of character we should put on a pedestal for ourselves, our daughters, and our students to strive to emulate? Chesed, generosity, self-sacrifice, devotion, and commitment are all laudatory traits, but Rut seems to take them to extremes, perhaps even unhealthy extremes. The most disturbing scene in her short, 4-chapter scroll, is when Naomi bids her to wash and beautify herself, surreptitiously slip into Boaz’s threshing floor at night, lie down next to him, and submit herself to whatever Boaz will instruct her to do. Surely, Naomi and Rut must have desperately hoped and prayed for the fortunate ending that in fact transpires, but both of them must have been aware that the provocative scene could easily have ended very differently. Do we seek to become the types of people who would so lose our own sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth that we would meekly acquiesce to be a pawn in such a plot, as Rut does with her response “כל אשר תאמר אעשה” – whatever you say, I will do?

Following are several approaches to this question.

Approach #1: Rut is more self-effacing than we ought to be, yet she remains a role model

The first approach accepts that in fact Rut has self-effacing qualities that are more extreme than what we should aspire to ourselves; this does not, however, detract from her standing as a heroine and role model. How so? Sarah, the student who proposed the question initially, herself suggested that the Megilla opens by highlighting its historical

## Likutei Divrei Torah

context – “ויהי בימי שפט השפטים” (and it was when the Judges judged) – indicating that this is a critical nugget of information. The era of the Judges was a disastrous one for the Jewish people, steeped in repetitive cycles of idol worship and then oppression by other nations in punishment for their abandonment of God. It was an era marked by selfishness, insularity, and a lack of concern for anyone outside of oneself. In such a time period, there could not have been a more perfect heroine or role model than Rut.

Perhaps Rut demonstrates to us that the Rambam’s prescription for correcting an individual’s character traits is equally applicable on the national level. As a nation, Bnei Yisrael during Rut’s time were falling prey to excessive selfishness; Rut emerged on the scene and modeled unreserved self-sacrifice that was precisely what was needed as a corrective measure. Rut’s contemporaries trampled on others’ identities in order to assert their own; Rut muted her own identity in order to restore Naomi’s. The people in Rut’s time needed to behave selflessly not merely in appropriate amounts but to Rut-esque excessive degrees precisely to serve as an antidote to their self-centeredness, and help them eventually achieve the “proper middle path.”

Approach #2: Rut is a role model of trust and faith

A second approach was suggested to me by a wise mother-in-law, who pointed out that Rut is not blindly heeding the instructions of just anyone; the disturbing command to seek out Boaz in the middle of the night has been issued by none other than Naomi, whom Rut has learned to trust deeply and unconditionally through many years of living, breathing, eating, sleeping, suffering, and surviving side-by-side. From all these experiences, Rut has developed unwavering faith and confidence both in Naomi’s goodness and in her utter devotion to Rut’s well-being. Within the context of this relationship, Rut’s blind obedience to Naomi’s plan is transformed from troubling docility to a praiseworthy act of trust and faith. A trusted, beloved parent asking us to embark on a questionable mission or to perform an arduous favor is entirely different than a random stranger requesting the identical thing.

This point resonated deeply with me. Yet, I was still somewhat unsettled, largely because of recent alarming incidents in which trusted figures, including Rabbinic ones, have manipulated and abused unsuspecting congregants. Did I really want to convey the message to my students that they should unquestioningly agree to anything a trusted figure in their life asks of them?

A fascinating twist emerges from noting the specific time that Chazal selected for the reading of Megillat Rut, the holiday of Shavuot. Numerous commentators have pondered the connection between the two. Perhaps the key lies in the fact that it was at Har Sinai that Am Yisrael declared, “נעשה ונשמע!” – we will do and we will hear, placing submission to God’s will prior to, and not predicated upon, understanding it. Perhaps Rut and Naomi’s relationship is meant to be a metaphor for our relationship with God. Just as Rut had developed unwavering trust in Naomi, leading her to ultimately submit to whatever Naomi would suggest, so too had Am Yisrael acquired steadfast faith in God over the course of the Plagues, the Exodus, and the Splitting of the Sea, culminating in their declaration of absolute commitment to His commandments at Har Sinai. No human being deserves the kind of blind trust that Rut places in Naomi, but God does. On the holiday of Shavuot when we relive our acceptance of God and His Torah, Rut is the perfect heroine. Her traits of faith, obedience, and submission are precisely the ones to emulate in the realm of our relationship with our Creator.

Approach #3: Rut is not as self-effacing as she appears - Rut is a much stronger, more proactive character than she appears at first glance. First, it is Rut's own decision, and her decision alone, to cling so determinedly to Naomi. In fact, Naomi repeatedly attempts to dissuade her, yet Rut tenaciously holds fast.

More significantly, a neighbor of mine, Micah Gimpel, suggested that Rut may not be as passive and docile as she appears. When Naomi describes the plan, she essentially instructs Rut to be merely a puppet. Rut ought to be silent and await Boaz's instructions. But that is not what Rut does! She continues speaking, and seizes the opportunity to voice her own hope, nay her own demand: "וּפְרַשְׁתָּ" – "כַּנְפֵךְ עַל אַמְתְּךָ כִּי גּוֹאֵל אֶהְיֶה" – spread your wing over your maidservant for you are a redeemer. Rather than silently, passively await Boaz's response to discovering a woman at his feet as Naomi had instructed her, Rut veers from the script and takes matters into her own hands, demanding that Boaz do something to protect her and secure her future. This is Rut's moment of transformation. Precisely at the moment when she might appear weakest and most submissive is exactly the moment when she charts her own future and directs the course of how it will play out. Remarkably, Boaz endorses Rut's newfound bold, assertive voice by declaring "בְּרוּכָה" – "אֵת לְה' בְּתִי" – blessed are you to Hashem, my daughter. He then completes the role reversal by declaring that he will do all that Rut says – "כָּל אֲשֶׁר לֵךְ" – "תֹּאמְרֵי אֵעֲשֶׂה לָךְ", a remarkable turnaround from Naomi's plan in which Rut was supposed to do all that Boaz instructed. Even more striking is that these words echo almost verbatim the very language with which Rut initially expressed her submission to Naomi's plan – "כָּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמְרֵי אֵעֲשֶׂה". The fact that Boaz now employs the identical phraseology to affirm his submission to Rut underscores the stunning reversals that have taken place between the lines of this brilliant Megilla.

Conclusion - A close read indicates that Rut is in truth a much more assertive character than she appears. Whichever approach resonates most with you, I hope you feel as I do – that delving into the character of Rut has enriched and deepened my appreciation of her, her Megilla, and the myriad lessons hidden within its four chapters.

#### **Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org**

#### **Rabbi Yakov Haber: Thoughts on Shavuos, Corona and Coronation**

The world is, with the help of G-d and His kindness, possibly at the cusp of healing - at least for now - from the greatest epidemic that has hit humanity for decades although the danger lurks of a second breakout. To be sure, the world is no stranger to tragedies of epic proportions: war, famine, disease, massacres and myriad "natural" disasters. The Jewish people especially have been victims of targeted persecution because of their religion or race throughout the ages. But a world-wide crisis of this proportion on so many planes certainly requires much reflection. Many prominent Rabbinic figures both here in Eretz Yisrael and in chutz la'aretz have voiced their suggestions as to what particular areas of avodas Hashem require improvement and which are the areas concerning which the Creator of the world and Giver of the Torah is sending us messages to improve. The Tochacha of parashas B'chukosai is read before Shavuos since this holiday is also considered a Rosh Hashana, a day on which we not only celebrate the momentous event of the giving of the Torah but is also meant as a day on which to reflect on an individual and communal level as to how well we are committed to the covenant of Sinai. It is in light of this perspective that I add these humble words well aware of the fact that מִי אֵנִי וְמִה

אני כלפי רבותי החשובים שלי"א וכל שכן לומר דברי מוסר לרבים.

[R. Shimon b. Yochai taught,] "This is analogous to one who was punishing his son, and [the son] did not know why he was being beaten. After he beat him, he said to him, 'Go do what I commanded you to do for many days already and you didn't pay any attention to [it] [me].' So too all the thousands who fell [during a plague] in the days of David only fell because they did not demand the building of the mikdash. ... If even regarding the [generation] who never had a Beis Hamikdash in their time and it was not destroyed in their time, this happened to them and they were punished for not demanding it, we, in whose time it was destroyed, and we do not sufficiently mourn over it, and we do not request mercy [for its rebuilding] all the more so! Therefore the original pious ones instituted that we should pray three times a day and instituted in the amida, 'Please, Merciful One with Your abundant mercy, restore Your Presence to Zion and the sacrificial order to Jerusalem.' And they also instituted the building of Jerusalem as a separate blessing in the amida and in birchas hamazon.

R. Shimon b. Yochai taught ... "They [a large segment of the Jewish people] ultimately will despise the Kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of the house of David and the Beis Hamikdash ... in the days of Rechav'am (Yorovam) ... Said R. Simon b. Menasia, "Israel will not see a sign of redemption (blessing) ever unless they return and request all three. This is indicated by the verse, "Afterward the Children of Israel will return and seek out Hashem, their G-d" - this refers to the Kingdom of Heaven - "and David their king" - this refers to the kingdom of the house of David - "and they shall tremble for Hashem and His goodness (in the End of Days)" - this refers to the building of the Beis Hamikdash.

The aforementioned midrashic teachings underscore the centrality of longing for geula bringing in its wake the recognition of malchus Hashem over the entire world, the restoration of the Davidic dynasty, one which represents the kingdom of Torah in this world, and the mikdash, the house serving as a place manifesting the Divine Presence specifically among G-d's beloved people whose fame and centrality affects the entire world. The first midrash underscores the connection of a plague, or national pandemic, to an insufficient yearning for mikdash.

The State of Israel has had, in an unprecedented turn of events, had several inconclusive elections recently. A "unity" government was formed with the prime minister currently on trial for a variety of charges placing even the current government in Israel in a tenuous state of stability. In addition, almost worldwide, shuls and batei midrash were shuttered for several months. Even outdoor prayer was banned by many governments for a time and even where allowed was prohibited by various Rabbinic authorities. Here in Israel shuls were reopened after months of closure, subject to strict rules to avoid further spread of disease. I humbly submit that there are perhaps two crucial messages inherent in these two seemingly unrelated events.

The current State of Israel has been the subject of much hashkafic and halachic analysis. Mori v'Rabi Rav Hershel Schachter shlita has often presented his view that its existence is a partial fulfillment of the mitzvah of appointing a Jewish king, namely a Jewish government. The ideal government would be malchus beis Dovid, but even one not matching this criterion also is included in this commandment. His view is agreed upon by many. Other Rabbinic authorities vociferously debate this characterization. But all agree that from a Torah perspective, it is certainly not the ideal model of government both

## Likutei Divrei Torah

because it is not malchus beis Dovid and - notwithstanding all of the positive religiously significant developments which were fostered by it - because it was not founded from the perspective of Torah fulfillment. As people committed to Torah values, whereas we are certainly bound to be loyal to governmental authorities and, in at least the worldview in which many maintain we greatly value all that the State of Israel has accomplished for the Jewish people, we certainly long for the Ribono shel olam to restore the ideal form of Jewish government. Perhaps a message inherent in the recent uncertainty regarding the State is meant to awaken us to more fully to long for the ideal Jewish malchus which we pray for every day. Granted that we value and thank Hashem for the great gift of Medinat Yisrael, but we view it as a "transitional government", one preparing the way for the ideal malchus. I believe this message is all the more important for those who value the Medina so greatly. Do we sufficiently long for the ideal Torah government of the Davidic dynasty?

Our shuls and batei midrash are referred to as midkeshei me'at, mini-temples granted as a Divine gift wherein Hashem yisborach promises to rest His Shechina even during the long exile. But here too, the ideal, glorious resting place for the Divine presence is the "b'bayis hagadol v'hakadosh hazeh", not just the mikdash me'at. Perhaps the events of these past few months whereby our shuls were closed to us are meant as a sign for us to redouble our efforts in praying for the mikdash hagadol in the amida, in birchas hamazon as mentioned by the above midrash and in our personal prayers. The prayer of ya'aleh v'yavo as well as the Mussaf prayer to be recited b'ezras Hashem multiple times on the upcoming holiday of Shavuos also contain these same themes.

A ruling stated in the Talmud Yerushalmi - actually relevant during the past year - is most informative. If a congregation does not have a sefer Torah, should they read the Torah reading that week from a chumash? The Yerushalmi rules in the negative since if they would do so, there would be no motivation to acquire a real sefer Torah. Even though we follow the view that we should read from a chumash without blessings so that in some manner we hear the Torah reading even though not in an ideal fashion, the Yerushalmi's message of not being comfortable with a non-ideal situation is most important and sheds light on the themes discussed above.

Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l beautifully describes the urgency of taking advantage of the ten days of repentance with an impactful mashal I believe very relevant to the current situation as well. A king's son rebelled against him, and he was exiled from the palace. Wandering aimlessly through the forest, the prince fell into a pit. Helpless, in need of food and medical care, he desperately screamed out "Help! Help!" Sure enough, the king's entourage, making its way near the forest, heard the cries for help. Hearing his beloved son's voice, the king quickly rushed to the edge of the pit and asked, "My dear son, how can I help you?" The son answered, "Father, Your Majesty, I need food! I need doctors!" The king quickly lowered in tons of food and commanded doctors to jump into the pit to heal his son. The king asked, "Is there anything else you need?" The son replied, "No, that's all." The king bid his son farewell saying, "Maybe next time we pass by, you'll ask for something else..." So too, explains Rav Pincus, we often solely focus on our personal needs: continued health, healing, sustenance, family etc. But we have to member to fervently, with a sense of urgency, ask our Father, the King, to "take us out of the pit!", to take us out of exile, to restore His Kingdom in the world and his Holy Temple!