

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

October 22 - 23, 2021 - 17 Marcheshvan 5782 - Vayeira

Light Candles by 6:01 - Havdalah 6:59

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by Faith, Yale & Sahra, and Raph Ginsburg to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Gil Ginsburg, Gershon Yosef Ben Yisroel Moshe, whose Yahrzeit is today, the 17th of Marcheshvan; and by Debi & Max Rudmann to mark the third Yahrzeit of Nati (the Cowboy) Charles, Natan Ben Zev HaKohen, on the 18th of Marcheshvan.

Mazal Tov

- **Florence Avigan** on the birth of a great-grandson to Belah & Moshe Barzel. Mazal Tov to great aunt and uncle **Karen & Howie Schulman** and to the entire family.
- **Bev Morris & Art Boyars** on the birth of a grandson to their children, Michal & Jack Boyars of Silver Spring. Mazal Tov to big sisters Talia and Hannah, and to Aunt Dova, Uncle Yanky, and cousin Carl of Kemp Mill.
- **Tzivia Bramson** on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Bracha, daughter of Esti & Eli Potash and granddaughter of Libby Waidenbaum.
- **Tzivia Bramson** on the birth of a great-grandson, Yitzchak, to Devorah & Yaakov Ryp. Mazal Tov also to grandparents Renee & Mayer Weinstein.
- **Keren & Ira Rabin** on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Tzvi. Mazal Tov to grandparents **Carol & Lionel Rabin** and aunt & uncle **Joseph & Esther Rabin**.
- **Gloria & Arnie Sherman** on the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter, Kira Koplow, daughter of Tovah & Michael Koplow of Potomac, MD. Mazal Tov to her siblings, Zachary and Eliana, and to all of the aunts, uncles, and cousins.
- **Helene Zeltser** on the engagement of her grandson, Sam Berman, son of Dr. Lori Zeltser & Len Berman, to Alexandra Schreiber of New York.

Condolences

- **Jack Spiro** on the passing of his sister, Mae Smith. Jack is observing Shiva through Sunday morning at 11212 Healy Street.

Shabbos Schedule

Minyan locations are listed as B = Belonofsky Sanctuary,

S = Social Hall. All Sephardi Minyanim take place in the Beit Medrash.

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 6:01
- Mincha: 6:05 (B), 5:55 (Sephardi)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi), 9:15 (Teen Minyan - 1101 North Belgrade Road)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 6:00 (B), 5:55 (Sephardi)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 6:59

Divrei Torah:

- 8:45 Main Minyan Rabbi Postelnek
- 9:15 Rabbi Rosenbaum
- Shiur after Mincha Rabbi Rosenbaum

Kiddush Sponsors:

- 8:45 and 9:15 Kiddush in a Bag is sponsored by **Faith, Yale & Sahra**, and **Raph Ginsburg** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Gil Ginsburg, Gershon Yosef Ben Yisroel Moshe, Z"l, whose Yahrzeit is today, the 17th of Marcheshvan; and by **The Berner Family** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Paul's father, Chaim Shalom Ben Tzvi, Z"l.

COVID-19 Updates

- The YISE Board has mandated that everyone who is medically eligible for an FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccine must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 in order to enter the Shul building, effective November 1.
 - Masks are required for ALL people in the YISE Arcola building, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, with the exception of children under the age of 2.
 - There are no social distancing requirements in the YISE building. There are no in-person Kiddushes at this time.
 - 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.

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. Monday through Friday 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday 7:30 PM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays, 6:00 AM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, now learning Mishlei, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Women's Navi Shiur, now learning Sefer Shmuel, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, **Zoom A**.
 - **GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM, **Zoom F**.
 - Rabbi Hillel Shaps - Unraveling the Navi: Melachim Aleph
 - **Rabbi Tuvia Grauman** - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sundays at 10:00 AM, **Zoom C**.
 - **GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM. For more information, contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, hshaps@gwckollel.org 347-869-9361.
 - For Men:
 - Mondays: Rabbi Hillel Shaps - On the Same Page Gemara - in person (Social Hall) and on **Zoom F**.
 - Wednesdays: Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - Reading Responsa - **Zoom D**.
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Avraham Sussman - Yesodei Hatorah Gemara Skills Building - **Zoom H**.
 - For Women, **Zoom I**
 - Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Parsha Journeys
 - Tuesdays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Sefer Bereishis
 - **SCP (Semichat Chaver Program)** - Tuesdays at 8:45 PM. A new semester began on October 19. Join the fastest growing Halacha learning program in the world! Now back in person at YISE. Register at gwckollel.org/scp See flyer for details.
 - **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiurim for men & women, Monday - Parasha, Tuesday - Halachos, 8:45 AM, **Zoom B**.
 - **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 E**.
 - **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning Maseches Bava Kama 7th perek Merubah. Wednesday evenings, 8:00 PM, **Zoom G**.
- Connection Details:** Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID & password:
- Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019
Zoom B: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613
Zoom C: ID: 978 8156 7874, password RabbiHyatt
Zoom D: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn
Zoom E: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079
Zoom F: ID: 349 754 2180, password Learn
Zoom G: ID: 539 496 3506, password ygwazr
Zoom H: ID: 803 356 4156, password Learn
Zoom I: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter

YISE Programs and Listings

The Laws and Lessons of Shemitta - Sundays at 8:15 PM on **Zoom A**. Join us in learning about Shemitta in a 4-part series with Rabbi Rosenbaum and Rabbi Postelnek, October 24, October 31 and November 14. Recording of first Shiur online at <https://wp.yise.org/shemitta> See flyer for details.

Meet Our New Village: Join us on Sunday, October 24, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, for refreshments and information at the outdoor tent of Kemp Mill Synagogue to learn about Silver Spring Village, the nonprofit that helps older residents remain safely in their homes and to be engaged in their communities as they age. Village members tend to be over 50, while volunteer opportunities are available for adults of any age. Meet representatives from the Village, learn about its many services (rides, household tasks, errands, tech support, storm buddies and more), and sign up to volunteer or to enjoy a free trial membership to experience all the Village has to offer. Community meeting co-sponsored by YISE and KMS. For more information, email stuart@thebeaconnewspapers.com or contact Silver Spring Village at 240-833-5580 or info@silverspringvillage.org See flyer for details.

Ask the Rabbi - Come join our virtual, interactive monthly program featuring different Halachic topics. This month's topic: Brachos. Tuesday, October 26, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM on **Zoom A**. The first 45 minutes are for Shailos submitted in advance and the last 15 minutes are for Q & A. Send in your questions to: AskTheRabbi@yise.org by Sunday, October 24. For more information or to submit questions anonymously, contact Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517 or mfriedman2@yahoo.com To sponsor the Shiur, contact office@yise.org See flyer for details.

The Last Selection: A Child's Journey Through the Holocaust with Mrs. Golda Kalib - Monday, November 8, 7:30 PM on **Zoom A**. Presented by YISE and KMS in commemoration of Kristallnacht. See flyer for details.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim and Parsha Shiur - Videos of past Shiurim are now available at <https://wp.yise.org/parsha>

Kiddush in a Bag! While we are not yet back to regular in-Shul Kiddushes, we are happy to now offer Kiddush in a Bag for the 8:45 and 9:15 Minyanim. To sponsor the Kiddush in a Bag, contact Simi Franco at simi@yise.org

Volunteers Are Needed to help assemble Kiddush in a Bag weekly. If you can help please contact Simi Franco at simi@yise.org or 301-593-4465 x403

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

Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill is a part of YISE's Chessed 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 or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, mfriedman2@yahoo.com

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

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

Dvar Torah Dedications/Sponsor a Shiur

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

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 (Monday 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 8:45 and 9:15 Shabbos Drashas are both available for sponsorship at \$54 each.

Please email office@yise.org to sponsor. Thank you for your support.

Thank you to the Shiurim sponsors for this Past Week:

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 Tehillim/Parsha/Halacha Shiur

- **Jacob & Dr. Debra Frenkel** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Jacob's mother, Shulamis Bas Reb Mordechai HaLevi, on the 16th of Marcheshvan.
- **Zak Family** in honor of the Yahrzeit of Mrs. Elsie Zak, Aliza Basya bas Dov, Z"l.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Gemara Shiur

- **Debi & Max Rudmann** mark the third Yahrzeit of Nati (the Cowboy) Charles, Natan Ben Zev HaKohen, on the 18th of Marcheshvan.

Rabbi Rosenbaum Shabbos Drasha

- **Bev Morris & Art Boyars** in appreciation of Simi Franco and Sue White's help in preparing the October 16 Main Minyan Kiddush-to-Go.
- **Charlotte Hanau and Family** to commemorate the sixth Yahrzeit of their husband and father, Fred Hanau, Mordechai Ben Reuvan, Z"l.
- **Tsipi & Jerry Hawk** in commemoration of Jerry's father's Yahrzeit, Tzvi Elazar ben Harav Yeshaya, Z"l.
- **Cheryl & Dr. Ken Jacobson** in honor of the Shloshim of Ken's mother, Gail Jacobson, Golda Rivka bat Menachem Mendel HaLevi, Z"l.
- **Esther & Seth Kaplan** in memory of Seth's grandmother, Sylvia Wendroff Kaplan, who fled from Belarus in the early 1920s and was a devoted mother to her two sons & grandmother to her four grandchildren. Without formal education, she encouraged her children and grandchildren to pursue education and PhDs, etc.

Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!

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

YISE Youth Announcements

Shabbos Groups will take place this Shabbos, October 23, from 10:00 AM until Shul ends, indoors. Masks required indoors for age 2+. Age 18-36 months (Mommy and me) will be located in the toddler room off the Lower Lobby. Ages 2-5 years (drop off) will meet in the room behind the balcony. Ages 6-9 years will meet at Shomrai and walk over to the Yeshiva. For more information, contact Michal Merkin, YISE Youth groups coordinator, at mmerkin@yise.org

A Bikur Cholim Arts Experience with Mrs. Marilyn Fine on Sunday, November 7, at 1:00 PM in the Social Hall. Come create a very special jigsaw puzzle for a child who is ill. For grades 2-5. Admission Charge: A contribution of any amount to Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington. **Snack to go! See flyer for details.**

Community Programs & Listings

Eruv Appeal 2021 - Silver Spring Eruv Association's 2021 Annual Appeal for funds to support operation of the White Oak-Northwood-Kemp Mill Eruv is happening now. Requested donation is \$54 per household; larger or smaller gratefully accepted. Three ways to donate: PayPal to SilverSpringEruv@gmail.com or at www.yise.org/eruv; Venmo to @SilverSpringEruv; by check payable to SSEA, mailed to 707 Lambertson Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Details and more info are in the postal appeal or can be found at www.yise.org/eruv

Taharas Hamishpacha Refresher Course - 6 week online course offered by the Robin Niman Mikvah Education Fund beginning the first week in November, taught by Mrs. Chayie Chinn. Registration will be available beginning Monday, October 25, on www.mikvahemunah.com

The Capital Closet of Yad Yehuda (formerly the Clothing Exchange) has available hours for all members of the community to shop at no cost on Sunday, October 31, from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM, at 1910 University Blvd. West. This is an opportunity for everyone to come and shop for beautiful, Tzanua clothing in our well-equipped showroom. Everyone must be in good health and not have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. If you have any questions please contact ncarmel@yadyehuda.org

Parsha Explorations with Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - Presented by the Greater Washington Community Kollel and Kemp Mill Synagogue, Sunday evenings, 7:30 PM at KMS and on Zoom, Meeting ID: 655 813 1022, Passcode: 365636. For men and women.

TGN Program: Siddur Class - In-Depth Analysis of the Birkat Hamazon with Mrs. Esther Dziadek, Wednesday mornings, 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, on Zoom B. For more information call 301-732-1773 or email director@goldennnetwork.org

In Their Footsteps: Life Lessons From Our Patriarchs and Matriarchs - Wednesdays, 8:00 PM on Zoom F. Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps. Series began October 13. Register at <https://linksgw.org/classes>

Navigating the Dating Experience - The Shidduch Spot of Greater Washington presents a series of talks to enhance the dating journey, featuring Rachel Burnham, Shidduch Dating Coach for Marriage-Minded Singles. October 27, December 8 and January 5 on Zoom, Meeting ID: 776 143 4208, password 613613. Each session starts at 8:30 PM.

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, October 27, 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 secretary@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password: 3671

Help our Senior Neighbors - What if you had to give up your car keys and depend on someone else to get you where you needed to go? This is happening to more and more of our senior neighbors. Consider volunteering with the Senior Connection to drive seniors to medical appointments, shopping, etc. Training and liability coverage are provided, and you can set your own volunteering schedule. COVID-19 precautions are followed for the health of drivers and riders. Contact volunteer@seniorconnectionmc.org, call 301-962-0820 or visit www.seniorconnectionmc.org for more info.

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. Go to <https://getizun.org> or email us at barbara@getizun.org

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

Daf Yomi Shiur currently meets online via a WebEx video conference. There is still room for a few more participants. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at lifschitz@srlslaw.com to be added to the invite list. Sunday 8:30 AM, Monday - Thursday 9:00 PM.

Daily Halacha Program from Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold - Receive one every day in your inbox. Visit dvarhalacha.com and click "Sign Up." **Silver Spring Gemachim** - For a complete list: www.gemachexchange.com

The Week Ahead		Sunday October 24	Monday October 25	Tuesday October 26	Wednesday October 27	Thursday October 28	Friday October 29
Shacharis	Ashkenazi	6:30, 7:30, 8:45	6:30, 6:45, 8:45	6:30, 6:55, 8:45	6:30, 6:55, 8:45	6:30, 6:45, 8:45	6:30, 6:55, 8:45
	Sephardi	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30
Mincha / Maariv	Ashkenazi	6:00	6:00	6:00	6:00	6:00	See Shabbos schedule
	Sephardi	5:55	5:55	5:55	5:55	5:55	

Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 6:13 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 6:40 AM, Latest Netz: 7:34 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 10:09 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:23 PM, Earliest Shkia: 6:09 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim: 6:58 PM

Next Shabbos

October 29 - 30, 2021 - 24 Marcheshvan 5782
Parshas Chayei Sarah

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 5:52
- Mincha: 5:55 (B), 5:45 (Sephardi)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 5:50 (B), 5:45 (Sephardi)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 6:51

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday, October 27 at 12 Noon

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

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

Eruv line: 301-593-5561 E-Mail: office@yise.org

Website: www.yise.org

Office Hours:

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

Friday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Yale Ginsburg - President

Rabbi Yosef Postelnek - Asst. Rabbi

Simi Franco - Office Manager

A Quick Thought on the Parsha from Rabbi Postelnek

Vayeira 5782:

I Believe from Afar

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

Early this week, the mother of some very close family friends of ours passed away. She was affectionately called Nanu and she was a Holocaust survivor. She lost her entire family to the Nazis y"sh, Nanu was the only one to survive the fires of Auschwitz.

Whenever we would go over to visit or eat meals by this family, Nanu always wanted us to sing a particular song. Take the next few minutes to think and guess... what was that song?

We all know there are Nisyonos, tests, in life that we cannot even begin to fathom. Trials and tribulations that go well beyond the comprehension of the human mind, besides for those who were there. The Akeida is certainly one such Nisayon. Hashem asked Avraham to do the impossible, to commit an act that was completely contrary to his nature and against the very essence of a parent. What's more, Hashem's command was in direct contradiction to His earlier promise to Avraham: כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע – that Yitzchak would carry on his legacy and bear progeny (Beraishis 21:12)!

What's most perplexing is many commentaries clarify there was never actually a contradiction, for Hashem never commanded Avraham to slaughter Yitzchak, rather he was commanded: העלהו - raise him / place him - on the altar. Yes, hindsight is 20/20, but could Avraham really not understand the difference? How did Avraham miss this seemingly obvious difference!?

Rav Wolfson (in his sefer Emunas Itecha) explains: בשעת הנסיון אין התירוצים עולים על דעת אדם – at the time of a test, a person has no answers. When a person experiences prolonged or even sudden confusion, darkness, and pain, his heart is often sealed and his mind blocked. It's very likely he feels little joy or connection to spirituality. At such a time in one's life, there are no answers.

Indeed, as Avraham neared Har HaMoriyah where he was to "offer" Yitzchak, the Pasuk (22:4) describes: וירא את המקום מרחוק – he saw the place from a distance. Rav Wolfson suggests an alternative homiletic reading: He saw HaMakom, Hashem, from afar. That is to say, at this point Avraham felt very distant from Hashem. He couldn't understand how Hashem was ignoring His previous promise by directing him to slaughter his son. Nothing made any sense.

Yet, even in this place of confusion and foginess, Avraham trudged forward. וישכם בבוקר – he got up early; ויחפש את המורה – he got his "car" ready; ויקם – and he got up to go to work.

One of the biggest praises that we can give to Avraham is that despite his lack of clarity and despite all the questions, he continued to follow Hashem's directives and האמין בה' - he *believed* in Hashem.

So what was the song that Nanu always asked us to sing? ... באמונה שלימה... אני מאמין... – "I believe, I believe with complete faith..." No matter what happens, I believe.

We cannot – *dare not* - compare our lives to those who experienced Geheinom on earth, but we *may* learn. That much we can do. When we experience times of lack of clarity or hard, painful moments in life, it's normal to feel uninspired and distant. In times like these, there are often no answers for our hearts and minds are closed. But we can take Chizuk, strength, and mutter to ourselves אני מאמין אני מאמין... I don't understand and I have no clue what's happening, but I *believe* in Hashem and I can serve Hashem even "מרחוק", from afar, in a place in life where I feel disconnected and uninspired.

Like Avraham, it means getting up in the morning to daven, picking up a siddur even if we don't want to pray. It means driving to our jobs, tools or bags in hand, with questions and thoughts racing through our minds. It means taking our children's hands and leading them with patience even when we feel like we are unraveling at the seams.

Iy"sh there'll come days and times in each of our lives when we have more clarity and some of the hurt subsides. And Hashem will be praising us, like he did Avraham, for all those difficult moments in life when even so we were מאמין and served Him to the best of our abilities.

Have an amazing Shabbos!



- 4 groups:
1. 18-36 months (mommy/daddy & me)
 2. 2-5 (drop off)
 3. 6-9 girls
 4. 6-9 boys



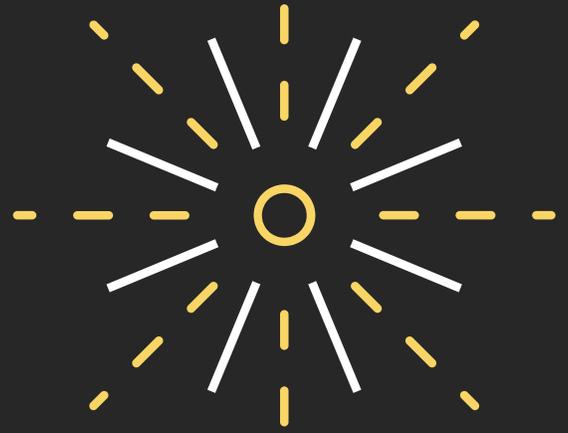
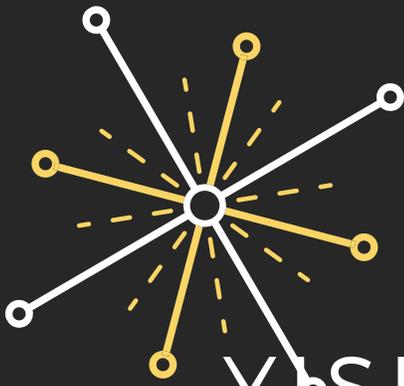
October 23
10:00-shul ends

Indoors

Masks required
(2+)

Snacks to go



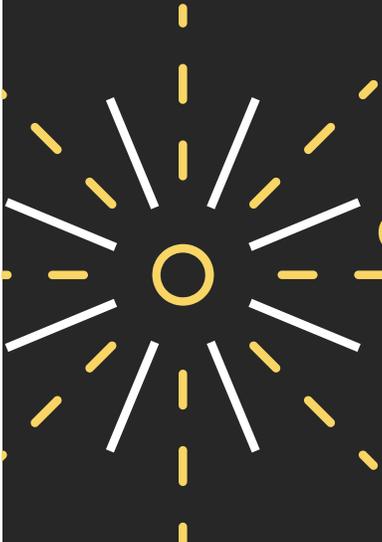
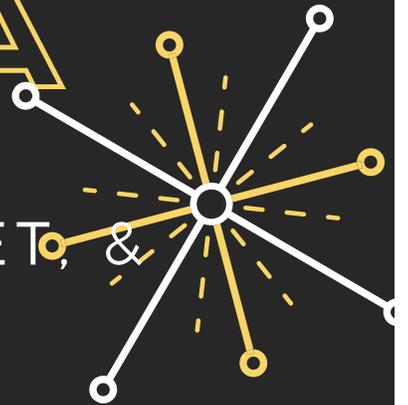


YIPSE TEEN MINYAN

BOYS

MELAVA
MALKA

PIZZA, MEET & GREET, &
SOCIALIZING



OCTOBER 23RD • 8:45 PM •
1108 NORTH BELGRADE

KEMP MILL VILLAGE
&
SILVER SPRING VILLAGE

Meet Our New Village!



*Sunday, October 24, 2—4pm
Kemp Mill Synagogue (outdoor tent) 11910 Kemp Mill Rd
co-sponsored by YISE and KMS*

Join us for refreshments and information about Kemp Mill Village's merger into Silver Spring Village, the nonprofit that helps older residents remain safely in their homes and neighborhoods of choice and be engaged in their communities as they age.

Learn how you, your family and your neighbors can benefit from the Village's many services (rides, household tasks, errands, tech coaching, storm buddies, and more).

Explore the Village's 600+ social, educational, cultural and recreational activities with a no-risk three-month trial membership.

If you're 18 or older, discover how you can make a difference right in your own neighborhood by volunteering on a schedule that's convenient for you!

THIS SHEMITTA YEAR OF 5782

JOIN US IN LEARNING THE LAWS AND LESSONS OF SHEMITTA

A 4-Part Series by
Rabbi Rosenbaum and Rabbi Postelnek

SUNDAYS ON ZOOM AT 8:15PM



Zoom A - Meeting ID: 416 963 9000 Password: 492019

Oct. 17

Resting the Land:
Exploring the Ideas and
Mitzvos of Shemitta

Rabbi Postelnek

Oct. 31

You Sold *What*: Shemitta
in the Diaspora Made
Practical

Rabbi Rosenbaum

Oct. 24

Sacred Fruits: The Laws
of Shemitta Produce

Rabbi Postelnek

Nov. 14

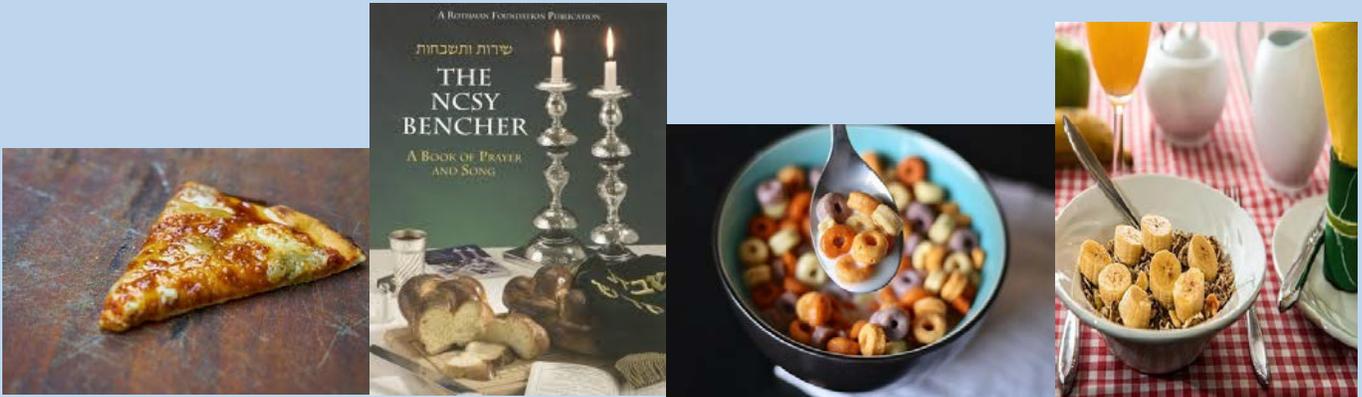
Money Matters: Pruzbul
and Nullification of Debts

Rabbi Postelnek

ASK the RABBI

Come join our virtual, monthly interactive program featuring different Halachic topics!

Topic: *Brachos*



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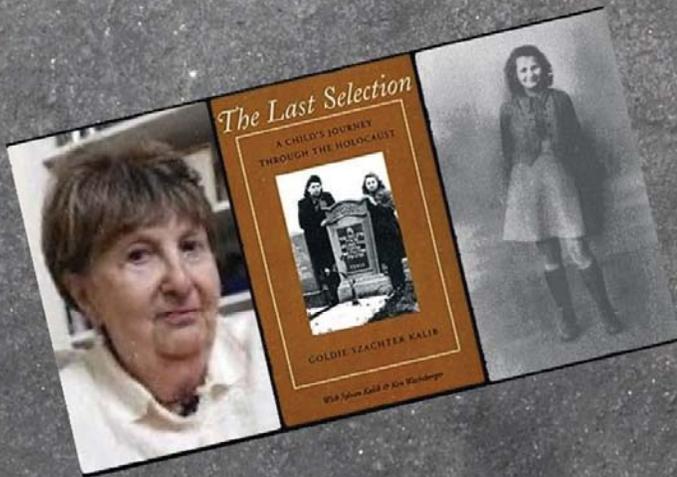
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*On Kristallnacht, November 9-10, 1938, Nazis in Germany, Austria and Sudetenland torched synagogues, vandalized Jewish homes and businesses and killed close to 100 Jews.



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via the Internet

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on his yahrzeit, 21 Cheshvan,
by Arlene Pianko Groner and family

Volume 28, Issue 4

Shabbat Parashat Vayera

5782 - B"H

Covenant & Conversation: R. Jonathan Sacks

The Binding of Isaac - "Take your son, your only son, the one you love—Isaac—and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Thus begins one of the most famous episodes in the Torah, but also one of the most morally problematic. The conventional reading of this passage is that Abraham was being asked to show that his love for God was supreme. He would show this by being willing to sacrifice the son for whom he had spent a lifetime waiting.

Why did God need to "test" Abraham, given that He knows the human heart better than we know it ourselves? Maimonides answers that God did not need Abraham to prove his love for Him. Rather the test was meant to establish for all time how far the fear and love of God must go.

On this principle there was little argument. The story is about the awe and love of God. Kierkegaard wrote about it and made the point that ethics is universal. It consists of general rules. But the love of God is particular. It is an I-Thou personal relationship. What Abraham underwent during the trial was, says Kierkegaard, a "teleological suspension of the ethical," that is, a willingness to let the I-Thou love of God overrule the universal principles that bind humans to one another.

Rav Soloveitchik explained the Binding of Isaac episode in terms of his own well-known characterisation of the religious life as a dialectic between victory and defeat, majesty and humility, man-the-creative-master and man-the-obedient-servant. There are times when "God tells man to withdraw from whatever man desires the most." We must experience defeat as well as victory. Thus the Binding of Isaac was not a once-only episode but rather a paradigm for the religious life as a whole. Wherever we have passionate desire – eating, drinking, physical relationship – there the Torah places limits on the satisfaction of desire. Precisely because we pride ourselves on the power of reason, the Torah includes *chukim*, statutes, that are impenetrable to reason.

These are the conventional readings and they represent the mainstream of tradition. However, since there are "seventy faces to the Torah," I want to argue for a different interpretation. The reason I do so is that one test of the validity of an interpretation is whether it coheres with the rest of the Torah, Tanach, and Judaism as a whole. There are four problems with the conventional reading:

We know from Tanach and independent evidence that the willingness to offer up your child as a sacrifice was not rare in the ancient world. It was commonplace. Tanach mentions that Mesha, King of Moab, did so. So did Yiftah, the least admirable leader in the book of Judges. Two of Tanach's most wicked Kings, Ahaz and Manasse, introduced the practice into Judah, for which they were condemned. There is archeological evidence – the bones of thousands of young children – that child sacrifice was widespread in Carthage and other Phoenician sites. It was a pagan practice.

Child sacrifice is regarded with horror throughout Tanach. Micah asks rhetorically, "Shall I give my firstborn for my sin, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?", and replies, "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk

humbly with your God." How could Abraham serve as a role model if what he was prepared to do is what his descendants were commanded not to do?

Specifically, Abraham was chosen to be a role model as a parent. God says of him, "For I have chosen him so that he will instruct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just." How could he serve as a model father if he was willing to sacrifice his child? To the contrary, he should have said to God: "If you want me to prove to You how much I love You, then take me as a sacrifice, not my child."

As Jews – indeed as humans – we must reject Kierkegaard's principle of the "teleological suspension of the ethical." This is an idea that gives carte blanche to religious fanatics to commit crimes in the name of God. It is the logic of the Inquisition and the suicide bomber. It is not the logic of Judaism rightly understood. God does not ask us to be unethical. We may not always understand ethics from God's perspective but we believe that "He is the Rock, His works are perfect; all His ways are just".

To understand the Binding of Isaac we have to realise that much of the Torah, Genesis in particular, is a polemic against worldviews the Torah considers pagan, inhuman and wrong. One institution to which Genesis is opposed is the ancient family as described by Fustel de Coulanges and recently restated by Larry Siedentop in *Inventing the Individual*.

Before the emergence of the first cities and civilisations, the fundamental social and religious unit was the family. As Coulanges puts it, in ancient times there was an intrinsic connection between three things: the domestic religion, the family and the right of property. Each family had its own gods, among them the spirits of dead ancestors, from whom it sought protection and to whom it offered sacrifices. The authority of the head of the family, the *paterfamilias*, was absolute. He had power of life and death over his wife and children. Authority invariably passed, on the death of the father, to his firstborn son. Meanwhile, as long as the father lived, children had the status of property rather than persons in their own right. This idea persisted even beyond the biblical era in the Roman law principle of *patria potestas*.

The Torah is opposed to every element of this worldview. As anthropologist Mary Douglas notes, one of the most striking features of the Torah is that it includes no sacrifices to dead ancestors. Seeking the spirits of the dead is explicitly forbidden.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that in the early narratives, succession does not pass to the firstborn: not to Ishmael but Isaac, not to Esau but Jacob, not to the tribe of Reuben but to Levi (priesthood) and Judah (kingship), not to Aaron but to Moses.

The principle to which the entire story of Isaac, from birth to binding, is opposed is the idea that a child is the property of the father. First, Isaac's birth is miraculous. Sarah is already post-menopausal when she conceives. In this respect the Isaac story is parallel to that of the birth of Samuel to Hannah who, like Sarah, also is unable naturally to conceive. That is why, when Samuel is born Hannah says, "I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of Him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." This passage is the key to understanding the message from heaven telling Abraham to stop: "Now I know

that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son" (the statement appears twice, in Gen. 22:12 and 16). The test was not whether Abraham would sacrifice his son but whether he would give him over to God.

The same principle recurs in the book of Exodus. First, Moses' survival is semi-miraculous since he was born at a time when Pharaoh had decreed that every male Israelite child should be killed. Secondly, during the tenth plague when every firstborn Egyptian child died, the Israelite firstborn were miraculously saved. "Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to Me, whether human or animal." The firstborns were originally designated to serve God as Priests, but they lost this role after the sin of the Golden Calf. Nonetheless, a memory of this original role still persists in the ceremony of *Pidyon HaBen*, redemption of a firstborn son.

What God was doing when He asked Abraham to offer up his son was not requesting a child sacrifice but something quite different. He wanted Abraham to renounce ownership of his son. He wanted to establish as a non-negotiable principle of Jewish law that children are not the property of their parents.

That is why three of the four patriarchs found themselves unable to conceive other than by a miracle. The Torah wants us to know that the children they bore were the children of God rather than the natural outcome of a biological process. Eventually, the entire nation of Israel would be called the children of God. A related idea is conveyed by the fact that God chose as His spokesperson Moses, who was "not a man of words" He was a stammerer. Moses became God's spokesman because people knew that the words he spoke were not his own but those placed in his mouth by God.

The clearest evidence for this interpretation is given at the birth of the very first human child. When she first gives birth, Eve says: "With the help of the Lord I have acquired [kaniti] a man." That child, whose name comes from the verb "to acquire," was Cain, who became the first murderer. If you seek to own your children, your children may rebel into violence.

If the analysis of Fustel de Coulanges and Larry Siedentop is correct, it follows that something fundamental was at stake. As long as parents believed they owned their children, the concept of the individual could not yet be born. The fundamental unit was the family. The Torah represents the birth of the individual as the central figure in the moral life. Because children – all children – belong to God, parenthood is not ownership but guardianship. As soon as they reach the age of maturity (traditionally, twelve for girls, thirteen for boys) children become independent moral agents with their own dignity and freedom. Sigmund Freud famously had something to say about this too. He held that a fundamental driver of human identity is the Oedipus Complex, the conflict between fathers and sons as exemplified in Aeschylus' tragedy. By creating moral space between fathers and sons, Judaism offers a non-tragic resolution to this tension. If Freud had taken his psychology from the Torah rather than from

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Greek myth, he might have arrived at a more hopeful view of the human condition.

Why then did God say to Abraham about Isaac: "Offer him up as a burnt offering"? So as to make clear to all future generations that the reason Jews condemn child sacrifice is not because they lack the courage to do so. Abraham is the proof that they do not lack the courage. The reason they do not do so is because God is the God of life, not death. In Judaism, as the laws of purity and the rite of the Red Heifer show, death is not sacred. Death defiles.

The Torah is revolutionary not only in relation to society but also in relation to the family. To be sure, the Torah's revolution was not fully completed in the course of the biblical age. Slavery had not yet been abolished. The rights of women had not yet been fully actualized. But the birth of the individual – the integrity of each of us as a moral agent in our own right – was one of the great moral revolutions in history.

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Dystopia: I never thought that I would begin a discussion of the weekly Torah portion by referring to a person who was canonized as a saint by the Catholic Church. Never, that is, until I sat down to write this week's column.

The person is Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), the great jurist and counselor to the notorious King Henry VIII, who was beheaded because of his insistence that the Catholic Church was his supreme religious authority, and not King Henry.

I have long admired Sir Thomas because of his courage and also because of his wisdom. One example of the latter is the following quotation, which remains one of my all-time favorites: "The ordinary arts we practice every day at home are of more importance to the soul than their simplicity might suggest."

Although those words of wisdom could themselves serve as the basis for an essay, it is another one of More's contributions to the world's culture that prompts me to begin this column by mentioning him. More earned a prominent place in the history of world literature because of his classic work, *Utopia*. In this work, More imagines the ideal society, one that is perfectly just and fair. Indeed, More coined the word "utopia," which has become part of our everyday parlance.

Centuries after More's martyrdom, at least two of his countrymen found it necessary to seek a word which would signify a perfectly evil society. They searched for an antonym to "utopia." In the early 19th century, Jeremy Bentham introduced the word "cacotopia," defining it as a nightmare society in which morals mean nothing. Bentham's follower, the philosopher John Stuart Mill, preferred the term "dystopia." It is Mills' term that has prevailed as the antonym of choice for "utopia." Subsequent philosophers have found it ironic that this nightmare world often results from attempts to create an ideal society.

This week's Torah portion, Parshat Vayera (tells the story of what was the world's first "dystopia," Sodom. We first encounter this "nightmare society" in last week's parsha, Parshat Lech Lecha. There, we read of Lot's decision to leave his Uncle Abram's company and "pitch his tents near Sodom." Immediately, the Torah interjects: "Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked and sinful against the Lord." The careful reader of this phrase wonders, "What exactly did they do to deserve such a malignant biblical review? What behaviors were so wicked and sinful?"

The rabbinic commentators, from the Talmud and Midrash down to our very own times, expand upon this description of Sodom and fill in some of the details for us. Rashi briefly summarizes some of the

Talmud's views: "They were wicked with their bodies, sinful with their material possessions, and were intentionally rebellious against God." They violated sexual mores, were unethical in their business dealings, and based their behavior upon a corrupt theology.

The great medieval commentator, Rabbenu Bachya ben Asher, elaborates even further by referring to a passage in the Book of Ezekiel that provides us with some further background as to the nature of Sodom. The passage reads: "Behold, this was the sin of your sister Sodom: arrogance! She and her daughters had plenty of bread and untroubled tranquility; yet she did not support the poor and the needy. In their haughtiness, they committed abominations before Me; and so I removed them, as you saw." The prophet informs us that Sodom was an affluent society which could easily have been charitable to others; yet they enacted laws against charity. They were untroubled, at peace because of their military power, yet they isolated themselves from less fortunate neighboring societies. They committed moral abominations.

Rabbenu Bachya continues, "Although the Torah had not yet been revealed, simple human reason demands charitable deeds and moral behavior. It is despicable that one human would stand idly by as another human suffers from hunger. How can one who has been blessed with bountiful wealth not alleviate another person's poverty? How much more despicable is he who ignores one of his own people, one who dwells within his own community."

Our Sages assert that Sodom and her three cohort cities that were denied a place in the World to Come. It was not because they were a lawless society that they deserved this extreme punishment. Quite the contrary—they had an elaborate legal and judicial system. But their laws were based upon intolerance, selfishness, and cruelty. Our Sages tell us that their laws were enforced by means of the most sadistic tortures imaginable.

Abraham's *weltanschauung* was the polar opposite of Sodom's. Is it not astounding, then, that he pleaded with the Almighty for Sodom's salvation? After all, if the antonym for utopia is dystopia, then Abrahamism is the antonym for Sodomism. Yet Abraham prayed for Sodom!

Commentators throughout the ages have sought to understand why Abraham supposed that there might be fifty, or even ten, righteous men in such a thoroughly corrupt society. One approach to this problem is attributed to Rabbi Isaiah Jungreis, author of the work *Chazon Yeshayahu*, a profound and original thinker whose life was snuffed out by the Nazis in 1944.

He argues that, paradoxically, the comprehensiveness and totality of Sodom's evil was precisely what Abraham used in its defense. He puts these words into Abraham's mouth: "Almighty Lord! Is it not conceivable that there are indeed fifty individuals in Sodom who recognize the cruel and evil nature of their society but who cannot protest, because their own lives would then be in danger? Surely these well-intentioned but impotent individuals deserve to be considered righteous individuals in whose merit all of Sodom should be saved!"

Rabbi Jungreis suggests that the Almighty's responded as follows: "Yes, dear Abraham. He who opposes evil but does not protest because he fears for his own life is a righteous person. But there were not fifty, nor even ten, individuals in all of Sodom with troubled consciences. It was not the coercive nature of their environment that prevented them from speaking out. It was their evil and sinful behavior."

I am not qualified to debate Rabbi Jungreis, a keen student of biblical texts and a *kadosh*, a martyr, of the Holocaust. I concur with his hypothesis

Likutei Divrei Torah

regarding Abraham's argument. Abraham may very well have argued that those who fail to protest in order to protect their own lives should be considered righteous men.

But I take issue with his conjecture regarding the Almighty's response. I find the following Divine response more likely: "Abraham, dear Abraham! A person who finds himself in an evil society must voice protest, whatever the cost, if he is to be considered righteous. There may very well have been ten, or fifty, or perhaps even more, residents of Sodom who were aware that theirs was a morally corrupt environment. Arguably, those men should not be considered evil. But there is no way that they can be considered righteous. A righteous person speaks out courageously against the evil that surrounds him. Trust me, Abraham, had anyone in Sodom broken the conspiracy of silence which allowed evil to persist, I, the Lord Almighty would have hastened to assist him in his cause."

It was not only Sodom's evil that God could not tolerate. It was also the silence in the face of that evil. And that silence ultimately excluded all of Sodom from the World to Come.

Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

The greatest leaders, just like great parents and teachers are all defined by one thing... Parents only teach their children one lesson. What is it? Parshat Vayera commences, "Vayera elav Hashem," – "Hashem appeared to Avraham," immediately after his circumcision and it was in this vision that Avraham saw three strangers coming towards him.

Chazal, our sages, teach: "Mikan shemidat Hashem levaker cholim." – "From here we learn that one of the ways of the Almighty is to visit the sick."

Hashem is obviously the ultimate leader. He's the Melech Malchei haMelachim, the Supreme King of Kings and He wants us to know that a crucial ingredient of outstanding leadership is setting an example to others. Policies are important, instructions are crucial, but there's nothing more important than doing the right thing and leading the way. It's not only what you say that counts. It's also what you do.

Similarly in *VeZot Habracha* after we read about the sad passing of Moshe Rabbeinu, the Torah tells us, "Vayikbor otoh bagai." – "And He buried him in the valley," and no one has ever discovered the burial place of Moshe.

"Vayikbor," – "He buried him," – Who served as the *chevra kadisha*? According to tradition, it was none other than the Almighty himself setting an example to us for all time of how important it is for us to relate with respect to the remains of the deceased. So from Hashem we learn how important it is for leaders to do the right thing.

And we have a fine example of this in *Vayera*. The Parsha immortalises Avraham Avinu and it does so through revealing to us details of the *Akeida*, when Avraham took his son Yitzchak, listened to the word of Hashem and nearly sacrificed him on an altar.

Of course Avraham changed the world, transforming lives from that time onwards through teaching people a new way of morality, ethics and spirituality, and his legacy lasts to this day. But ultimately Avraham is remembered because of what he did – the *Akeida*. Together with the nine other trials, this proved that he was the real thing. He was a sincere leader. He didn't only say what was right – he always did what was right, setting that prime example for others.

So from Avraham Avinu, indeed from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, we learn the crucially important lesson of inspiring and leading others. Teachers only teach one class, Rabbis only deliver one sermon and parents only teach one lesson to their children and that is: the lives that they live.

Among the events in this week's *Parashah*, we read that Avraham prayed that *Hashem* not destroy S'dom and its sister cities. As the Torah relates, Avraham's prayer was unsuccessful. Later in the *Parashah*, we read that Lot asked that S'dom's sister city, Tzo'ar, not be destroyed, and he was answered. Why was Lot's prayer successful, while the prayer of the world's greatest *Tzaddik*, Avraham, was not?

R' Noach Weinberg z"l (1930-2009; founder and *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Aish HaTorah*) explains: When one prays, he gets no more than what he asked for. Avraham asked that S'dom be saved if ten righteous people lived there. Since there were not ten such people, Avraham's prayer was not answered. Lot, in contrast, asked that Tzo'ar be saved because it was one year newer than S'dom, so its sins were fewer (see *Rashi* to 19:20). Since that was true, Lot was answered.

R' Weinberg continues: Why didn't Avraham pray as Lot did, if his goal was to save lives? Because, R' Weinberg answers, another important principle of prayer is that one needs to believe what he is saying. Avraham believed that there was hope for S'dom if there were ten *Tzaddikim* there; therefore, he prayed on that basis. The mere fact that Tzo'ar was one year newer than S'dom was not meaningful in Avraham's mind, so he could not base his prayer on that difference.

This, concludes R' Weinberg, explains why we pray every day in *Shemoneh Esrei* for the coming of *Mashiach*, even though great *Tzaddikim* before us did not succeed in bringing him. Because each succeeding generation is more degenerate than its predecessors and needs *Mashiach* more, we may be capable of praying with a yearning that our forebears could not muster. (48 *Derachim L'Torah* p.164)

Bitachon

This year--a *Shemittah* year--we will *iy"H* devote this space to discussing the related subject of *Bitachon* / placing one's trust in *Hashem*.

This week, we begin to discuss what it means to "have *Bitachon*." *Iy"H*, future issues will elaborate on the ideas summarized here.

R' Nosson Yehuda Leib Mintzberg z"l (1943-2018; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Yerushalayim and Bet Shemesh, Israel) writes: On the most basic level, *Bitachon* means knowing that *Hashem* alone is the King and the Director of the world; therefore, one should trust only in Him and should rely on Him to operate the world.

R' Mintzberg writes further: When one delves deeper, one finds three basic approaches to defining *Bitachon*. He summarizes:

- R' Avraham ben Ha'Rambam z"l (son of Maimonides; Egypt; 1186-1237; author of *Ha'maspik L'ovdei Hashem*) and R' Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz z"l (1878-1953; Bnei Brak, Israel; the "*Chazon Ish*"; major *Halachic* authority and author of *Emunah U'vitachon*) understand *Bitachon* as an outgrowth of the *Mitzvah* of *Emunah* / belief in G-d. Abstract belief is not enough. Rather, one's *Emunah* must impact his daily life, so that every decision he makes reflects his *Emunah*. One who has this understanding views every good thing that happens to him as a gift from *Hashem*, and he gives thanks. Conversely, he views every bad thing that happens to him as a rebuke, and he seeks to come closer to *Hashem* in response.
- Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pekudah z"l (Spain; early 11th century; author of *Chovot Ha'levavot*) understands *Bitachon* as focusing on *Hashem's* goodness, and believing that one can count on Him. A person with *Bitachon* not only believes that *Hashem* is in charge, he believes that *Hashem* cares about him personally and will never forsake him.

- Continued in box inside -

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From the Haftarah . . .

“She came and told the man of Elokim, and he said, ‘Go sell the oil and pay your creditors, and you and your sons will live on the remainder’.” (Melachim II 4:7)

R’ Shlomo Kluger z”l (1785-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) explains: Our Sages teach that one should not derive benefit from a miracle, lest that enjoyment be deducted from his reward in the World to Come (see *Rashi, Ta’anit* 24a). Therefore, after the unnamed woman in our *Haftarah* miraculously filled all of the available jugs with oil from her one small container, she came to the prophet Elisha and asked, “Now what do I do with all this oil that I obtained miraculously?” Elisha answered her: First, pay your creditors. Paying creditors is a *Mitzvah* and, therefore, is not considered “having enjoyment” from the miracle. (This was especially true since the debts she was paying were her late husband’s debts, not her own.) Thereafter, Elisha continued, you and your sons may live on the remainder, which will be insignificant compared to the amount you spent on the *Mitzvah*.
(*Chochmat Ha’Torah: Shema Shlomo* p.655)

“Elisha came into the house and behold! -- the lad was dead, laid out on his bed. He entered and shut the door behind them both, and prayed to Hashem . . . and the lad opened his eyes.” (Melachim II 4:32-35)

R’ Daniel Movshovitz z”l Hy”d (1880-1941; a leading figure in the Kelm branch of the *Mussar* movement) teaches: Our *Haftarah* teaches the extent of the obligation of *Hakarot Ha’tov* / feeling and expressing gratitude. This lad’s mother had offered Elisha hospitality whenever he traveled past her home. She even set aside a room for him with a bed, table, and lamp. How did Elisha express his gratitude? Not only did he thank her, and not only did he discern that the woman was childless and bless her and her husband that they would have a son, he even returned to perform *Techiyat Ha’meytim* / to revive the child after the boy had died!

(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Kelm* p.112)

- Continued from back page -

- Rabbeinu Yonah Gerondi z”l (Spain; died 1263; author of *Sha’arei Teshuvah*) understands *Bitachon* as a very high level of *Yir’at Shamayim* / awe of Heaven, such that a person recognizes beyond a doubt that he can never lose out by obeying the Torah and can never gain by transgressing the Torah.

R’ Mintzberg notes that these three understandings of *Bitachon* are not mutually exclusive.
(*Ben Melech: Bitachon* p.3 & 13-18)

“And so it was when Elokim destroyed the cities of the plain that Elokim remembered Avraham; so He sent Lot from amidst the upheaval when He overturned the cities in which Lot had lived.” (19:29)

Rashi z”l writes: What bearing does G-d’s remembering Avraham have upon the rescue of Lot? *Hashem* “remembered” that Lot knew that Sarah was Avraham’s wife--yet, when Lot heard Avraham say in Egypt that Sarah was his sister, Lot did not betray Avraham, because he sympathized with him. For this reason, G-d had mercy on Lot. [Until here from *Rashi*]

R’ David Halevi Bamberger *shlita* (Manchester, England) observes: Lot literally risked his life for the *Mitzvah* of taking in guests, but that did not give him sufficient merit to be saved. Only Lot’s silence in Egypt saved him, which teaches us the incredible merit of guarding one’s tongue.

(*Nachalei Devash Al Ha’sofer Chafetz Chaim* p.3)



“Avraham said, ‘Because I said, “There is but no fear of Elokim in this place and they will slay me because of my wife’.” (20:11)

R’ Yerachmiel Shulman z”l Hy”d (*Menahel Ruchani* of the Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva in Pinsk, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) comments: Gerar was a civilized society. However, without fear of G-d, even descending into outright murder is not farfetched.

(*Peninei Ha’chochmah* 1:23)

A related thought:

R’ Yosef Yozel Horowitz z”l (1847-1919; the *Alter* of Novardok) writes: With fear of G-d, one can make unbiased judgments. Without fear of G-d, one’s ability to weigh choices and alternatives is corrupted by biases.

(*Madregat Ha’adam: Ma’amar Yir’ah Va’ahavah* ch.10)



“So Avraham woke up early in the morning . . .” (22:3)

Our Sages teach that, when *Bnei Yisrael* stood at the *Yam Suf*, the guardian angel of Egypt argued before *Hashem*: “Why do these--*Bnei Yisrael*--deserve to be saved more than these--the Egyptians? These are idolators and these are idolators!” The *Zohar* relates that *Hashem* answered the angel that *Bnei Yisrael* were being saved in the merit of Avraham.

One would imagine, observes R’ Moshe Zuriel *shlita* (Bnei Brak, Israel; former *Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Sha’alvim), that *Hashem* was referring to Avraham’s act in picking up the knife in preparation for offering Yitzchak as a sacrifice. No! Rather, the *Zohar* teaches that it was in the merit of Avraham’s waking up early to do a *Mitzvah*!

(*Kuntreis Shuvu Aili Va’ashuvah Aleichem* p.77)

ISRAEL REPORT

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

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ISRAEL'S COALITION CRISIS: RA'AM REBELLION THREATENS STATE BUDGET (JPost 10/19/21)

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's governing coalition faced a new threat on Tuesday from the Ra'am (United Arab List) Party.

Ra'am MK Waleed Taha, who chairs the Knesset Interior Committee, canceled all its meetings for this week, which was set to legislate part of the economic arrangements bill that accompanies the state budget. He said he would not convene the committee because the coalition is not advancing a bill that would enable Arab and Bedouin homes built illegally to be connected to electricity.

"Part of the coalition is making it difficult to advance the electricity bill, which would enable hooking up to electricity tens of thousands of homes built without permits because local authorities did not bother with proper planning for decades," Taha said.

The budget and the arrangements bill must be passed into law by November 14 to prevent the government from falling and initiating early elections.

Taha also said he would not vote with the coalition in the Knesset plenum.

SA'AR SUBMITS ANTI-NETANYAHU BILL (Arutz-7 10/19/21)

Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister Gideon Sa'ar this evening (Tuesday) published the memorandum of law amending the Basic Law of Government, and preventing the imposition of the role of forming a government on a criminal defendant.

Under the proposal, a Knesset member who is under indictment would not be eligible to form a government if he was charged with an offense punishable by more than three years in prison.

However, the chairman of the Central Election Commission will be able to allow the imposition of the mandate on that Knesset member if he determines that under the specific circumstances of the case the offense is not overly disgraceful.

Therefore, an MK who is indicted for an offense punishable by three years or more in prison, and with which he is considered disgraced - will not be able to accept the job of forming a government from the president, and will not be included in a proposal to trust a new government.

The law will only apply from the 25th Knesset and onward. The details of the memorandum were compiled following a series of discussions that have taken place in recent weeks at the Justice Ministry. The memorandum was distributed for 21 days for public comment.

Minister Sa'ar said: "It is our duty to establish better regime arrangements for the future, which fortify Israel's values as a Jewish and democratic state. We have a duty to prevent the recurrence of the situation that the State of Israel experienced until recently."

The Likud party said in response: "Gideon Sa'ar, who is scratching the bottom of the electoral threshold in all polls, proposes an Iranian-style anti-democratic law that seeks to disqualify those who receive 35 seats in polls and has the support of millions of citizens as their prime minister."

ISRAELI AIR FORCE'S MULTINATIONAL BLUE FLAG DRILL TAKES OFF IN NEGEV (YNet 10/17/21)

The Israeli Air Force's (IAF) international Blue Flag training exercise took off in southern Israel on Sunday with air forces of seven other nations taking part in the wargame, the largest and most advanced aerial exercise ever held in Israel.

The exercise, taking place in the Negev Desert, is set to last for two weeks and end on October 28.

Launched in 2013, the Blue Flag is held every two years to strengthen cooperation between the participant countries.

The air forces of Germany, Italy, Britain, France, India, Greece and the U.S. sent teams to take part in the drill.

The IAF's Sufa F-16I squadrons, led by the 115th "Flying Dragon" aggressor squadron will play the role of the "red" enemy force. A Yahalom Patriot battery will also join the enemy simulation force.

This year's drills will focus on the integration of fourth and fifth-generation aircraft, including the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II, in complex operational scenarios.

For the first time, the international teams will conduct a joint honorary flyover through Israel's skies.

Maj. Gen. Amikam Norkin, commander of the IAF, will lead the flyover in a Baz F-15 alongside an Israeli "Adir" F-35I.

"We are living in a very complicated region, and the threats to the State of Israel from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Iran are only increasing," said Norkin.

"Holding an international exercise in this current reality, while continuing our public and covert operational activities on all fronts, is of utmost strategic importance and has an extensive impact over the Israeli Air Force, the IDF, and the State of Israel."

Lt.-Gen. Ingo Gerhartz, Commander of the German Air Force, will fly alongside them in the "Eagle Star" Eurofighter, which has been specially painted with the Israeli and German flags.

ISRAELI ARMY WANTS LASER INTERCEPTORS OPERATIONAL BY 2022 (Ha'aretz 10/19/21)

The Israeli army is urging Israel's defense manufacturers to make a laser-based missile defense system operational by next year due to recent

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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

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disagreements with the U.S. Democratic Party over Iron Dome funding.

During the past two months, military officials have asked the companies involved in the project to raise it as a priority, with the goal of delivering the first operational system early next year and deploying it near the border with the Gaza Strip by mid-2022. The system, which the Israel Air Force will operate, is intended to integrate laser beam technology into the Iron Dome, which has been operating since 2011.

Each laser interception will cost a fraction of the 170,000 shekels (nearly \$53,000) for each firing of the Iron Dome—with more than one interceptor often needed for each incoming rocket.

Three additional systems are to be delivered by 2024. According to current plans, all four are to be deployed in southern Israel.

The missile-based Iron Dome is expected to remain operational for many years to come, but the high volume of rockets fired into Israel during the May war with Gaza led defense officials to conclude that its high unit costs could, in the future, affect the duration of fighting and the IDF's options.

Even though the U.S. House of Representatives approved \$1 billion in funding for Iron Dome interceptors by a vote of 420-9, Israeli defense officials recognize that the dependence on U.S. funding for the system is only expected to become more challenging over time. Especially when the funding was postponed last month due to a split within the Democratic Party. The Senate must still pass the allocation with a vote that is yet to be scheduled.

A test of the new system that was scheduled for the second half of the month was pushed back a few weeks based on recommendations from the field, mainly to eliminate dangers to the operators.

Currently, the new systems will be used to protect communities adjacent to the border fence, with the aim of intercepting rockets while they are still in Gazan airspace. Once the laser systems are fully deployed, the existing Iron Dome systems will be redeployed at a greater distance from these communities, to provide a response to longer-range rockets.

FOR FIRST TIME IN DECADE, ISRAEL ALLOWS PA TO REGISTER PALESTINIANS IN WEST BANK (YNet 10/19/21)

For the first time in a decade, Israel on Tuesday allowed the Palestinian Authority to register some 4,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank without a status, as residents.

At least 1,200 of them have never been issued a Palestinian identity card for various reasons, including those who had entered the PA, got married there and stayed without registering in an orderly manner. Others are Palestinian residents who had gone abroad before the signing of the Oslo Accords and their identity cards were revoked once they came back.

In addition, Israel approved the registry of 2,800 Gazans living in the West Bank, who had fled the Strip before the takeover of Hamas and who have never gone abroad or returned to the coastal enclave.

Those Palestinians are currently registered as residents of the Gaza Strip even though they have not lived there for many years. The measure will allow them to change the registration of their address to the West Bank.

The final decision on the matter was made by Defense Minister Benny Gantz as part of his policy to promote civilian and economic development in the West Bank.

Earlier on Tuesday, Coordinator of Government Operations in the Occupied Territories Maj. Gen. Rassan Aliyan informed Palestinian representatives that the Palestinian Population Registry's request has been officially approved.

In recent years, the PA has pressured Israel into allowing stateless persons to be included in its population registry. The last time Israel approved similar changes was a decade ago, when a comparable move was approved by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

MINISTER KAHANA INVITES EMIRATI COUNTERPART TO CAVE OF PATRIARCHS IN HEBRON (Arutz-7 10/15/21)

The Minister of Religious Affairs, Matan Kahana, met on Thursday at Expo 2020 in Dubai with his Emirati counterpart, Minister of Tolerance, Sheikh

Nahyan bin Mubarak.

The two discussed the ties between the countries and possible collaborations as well as the connection between the Emirati government and the Jewish communities in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Minister Kahana was pleased to be updated on the progress of the Avraham Center project where a mosque, synagogue and a church will be built to be a center for tolerance between religions, and thanked Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak for the help he provides to the Jewish community in the Emirates.

Minister Kahana invited Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak to visit the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

"In this week's Torah portion, we will read about Abraham our father, the father of both of our nations. On this occasion I would like to invite you to Israel. I will be happy to host you in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, the tomb of our ancestor Abraham."

RIGHT FUMES AFTER GANTZ GRANTS PALESTINIANS PERMANENT RESIDENCY IN WEST BANK (Israel Hayom 10/19/21)

Right-wing lawmakers expressed outrage Tuesday after the Defense Ministry allowed the Palestinian Authority to register 1,200 undocumented Palestinians living in the West Bank as residents. The move comes after a recent meeting between PA President Mahmoud Abbas and Defense Minister Benny Gantz.

The 1,200 individuals will now be able to receive Palestinian passports. In addition, another 2,800 residents – who moved to the West Bank from the Gaza Strip before Hamas took over in 2007 – will be able to change their addresses.

Under the Oslo Accords, the Israeli government must approve permanent residency requests for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and any change in the Palestinian population registry, including change of residence.

The ministry stressed that all applications were approved on humanitarian grounds and that each applicant was thoroughly vetted. It further stressed that every applicant had been residing in the West Bank for an extended period of time.

Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak approved 35,000 such applications during his time in office. The move sparked outrage among right-wing circles, with some saying this was tantamount to granting the Palestinians a "right of return."

The latest move drew the ire of Knesset members as well.

"Gantz's gesture to the Palestinians only confirms my claim that he is adhering to extreme left-wing voices," Likud MK Miki Zohar tweeted. "Abbas is satisfied, but what about Israelis?"

Religious Zionist Party leader Bezalel Smotrich said: "This government is irresponsible and puts the future of the State of Israel at risk."

TWO SETTLERS ARRESTED ON SUSPICION OF ATTACKING ISRAELI SOLDIERS IN WEST BANK (Ha'aretz 10/17/21)

Police arrested two settlers Sunday on suspicion of attacking an Israeli military officer and a soldier with tear gas near an illegal West Bank outpost last week.

According to the military, the incident occurred after the soldier and officer, along with representatives of the Ramallah District Coordination and Liaison Office, arrived at the Adi Ad outpost after receiving reports of an attack against Palestinians.

The reports said, according to an eyewitness, that settlers had set fire to and vandalized Palestinian harvest.

Arik Ascherman, a left-wing activist who was present at the scene, said that the liaison officer had arrived to speak to the Palestinian farmer who had witnessed the arson. Ascherman said that about 10 settlers arrived at the scene and began shouting at the officer: "How did you bring him to our home." The Palestinian who was speaking with the soldiers was also sprayed with tear gas, Ascherman said.

Israeli military chief Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi vehemently condemned the violence against security forces by Israeli nationals in the West Bank.

"Criminal offenses against IDF soldiers by civilians is intolerable and requires that justice be served swiftly and severely. I support the soldiers' important work in maintaining security," Kochavi said.

The Israeli rights group Yesh Din said on Friday that a Palestinian family had been attacked by about 40 settlers while harvesting olives in the West Bank village of Yasuf.

The assailants hurled stones at the family and pepper-sprayed one of the women, who said the attackers also stole items including her ID card, Yesh Din said in a statement.

INDIA, ISRAEL HOPE TO SIGN FREE TRADE DEAL BY MID-2022 (Israel Hayom 10/19/21)

India and Israel agreed to resume talks on a free trade agreement from November, with the aim of signing a deal by mid-2022, both countries said on Monday.

Ties between the two countries have grown closer in the seven years since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been in power, and a number of strategic, military and technology partnerships have been formed during that time.

Free trade talks were announced after Foreign Minister Yair Lapid and India's Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met in Jerusalem, where they also agreed on mutual recognition of vaccination certificates and expanded cooperation in water and agriculture, the countries said in a statement.

"We are continuing with our policy of connections, and we have seen in India a very important ally for many years. India also brings with her new opportunities for cooperation," Lapid said.

Total merchandise trade between the two countries stood at \$4.67 billion by the end of last financial year ending in March 2021, according to data from India's trade ministry.

While in Jerusalem, Jaishankar visited the Jerusalem Forest and took part in a KKL-JNF ceremony that unveiled a sign that had been erected by an Indian delegation to Israel that planted trees there in 1960.

Jaishankar and his wife took two stones from the forest as souvenirs. Jaishankar said he would keep one stone in his home in New Delhi and would return the second stone the next time he visited Israel.

KKL-JNF Chief Development Officer Ronnie Vinnikov said, "At this time, when the world is once again facing a growing threat, the KKL-JNF sees India as a critical partner in the battle against climate change, and hopes to cooperate with it through technological initiatives to save our future generations.

"Our talents, our solutions, and our minds are at your service," Vinnikov said.

THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YITZHAK RABIN TAUGHT US (Liran Friedmann, YNet 10/18/21)

For me personally, the most profound and enlightening statement former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ever made about Israel is that it "must fight terror as if there is no peace, and make peace as if there is no terror."

In his characteristically laconic way, the war hero and tragic victim of radical politics gave our nation a guiding principle by which to follow.

Israel, however, finds itself sandwiched between a corrupt Palestinian Authority administration in Ramallah — masquerading as representatives of the Palestinian people — and the theocratic extremist regime of Hamas, sitting on endless stockpiles of guns, rockets, explosives and bodies to throw into the fray.

The aftershock of Rabin's assassination and the subsequent collapse of peace talks between the Jewish state and the Palestinians have put Israeli leaders on the defensive, unwilling to accept even the smallest overture or possibility that one day, God forbid, both parties might sit together in the same room and talk about anything other than security issues.

So now that peace is no longer an option, fighting terror is the only thing that matters.

But Rabin understood something very fundamental about the two sides of this conflict — without peace, there is only terror. If both sides do not show any willingness to talk, the radicals would rise up and take control.

Both Israel and the Palestinians have decided that the dangerous and bloody status quo is good enough for them.

Israel continues to occupy the West Bank and blockade the Gaza Strip because there presently seems to be no other way to maintain security, while Fatah enjoys international recognition for perpetuating the suffering of its people and Hamas draws the sword of Jihad and death.

I personally do not have any hope for peace in the foreseeable future, to the point where I believe my children will also face the same reality.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a decrepit and corrupt autocrat, has lost all credibility he had left to speak for the Palestinians, while the Israeli political echelon remains decisively conservative and recoils at the mere thought of renewing peace talks.

And don't even get me started on Hamas.

But what we can learn from Rabin is readopting a dynamic that was abandoned the moment that bullet hit him on the night of November 5, 1995, in Tel Aviv.

I truly believe that both sides want to live in peace and comfort. That religious and nationalist issues do not really bother them when all of us are only trying to get by and feed our families.

Israel cannot ignore the fact that its continued presence in the West Bank and its blockade of the Gaza Strip jeopardize the wellbeing of millions of Palestinians. The policy of divide and conquer has done nothing but build up extremist groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Ramallah, meanwhile, must realize that if it does not do its part in dousing radical ardor, either by force or through genuine political and social reforms, Israel will remain unwilling to take part in any potential peace process.

We must look back at those optimistic days of the early 1990s and think about how we can go back there.

The Palestinians will not get to resettle all of the land and Israel will not be able to keep its settlements. That is a basic fact that will become reality sooner or later.

It will happen either through force or through peace, and I think both sides would prefer the latter.

DROPPING BIBLE STUDIES IS HIGHLY PROBLEMATIC (Mordechai Cogan, JPost 10/19/21)

The Talmudic maxim: "He who desires to acquire knowledge should turn to the south" (Baba Batra 25b) no longer rings true, at least not concerning the study of the Bible. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev has closed its Department of Bible, as of this new academic year. Because there was no formal announcement by the university of this closure, I found it hard to believe the rumor that at the institution that proudly bears the name of the person who personified the centrality of the Bible in our lives perhaps more than any other public figure in the history of the State of Israel, Bible would no longer be taught. Therefore, I checked the course catalog on the university website and I discovered that it was true: Bible studies had been deleted from the Student Handbook for 5782.

For me personally, the closing of the Department of Bible is especially sad. Almost a jubilee ago, in September 1972, on the completion of my doctorate, I arrived in Beersheba and the University of the Negev (later to become Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), together with the handful of other lecturers who had been mobilized to establish the Faculty of Humanities. Two years later, I was asked to undertake responsibility for biblical studies, and, for the next decade, I served as chairman of the Department of Bible. In those years, classes were full to overflowing with students who came from all parts of the Negev, eager to study humanities, and especially Bible and the history of Israel in the biblical period.

But this high watermark of the 70s and 80s was followed by an extended low tide, and like many other areas of humanistic study, a large drop in student registration hit the Department of Bible. Even at the Hebrew University of

Jerusalem to where I moved in the early 90s, classes emptied out. Indeed, all of Israel's universities wrestled with a similar crisis: David and Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah no longer interested the hi-tech generation. There are many reasons for this sea change and this is not the place to discourse on the decline of the interest in the study of the Bible, but the solutions that other institutions found for this problem are pertinent.

Take, for example, Tel Aviv University. Several decades ago the university decided to combine its small Department of Bible with other fields of study that were on the verge of closure in a new unit: Hebrew Culture; in this way, the Bible was saved from the sword. Of interest, is that two years ago, the Department of Bible was resuscitated in Tel Aviv as an independent department. A different combination was created at the University of Haifa so that today the Bible is studied together with the History of Israel (that includes the biblical period). It is clear that these two institutions understood that the study of the Bible, the foundation stone of Israel's culture, cannot be forfeited under any circumstances.

David Ben-Gurion put it this way: "In all the wanderings of the Jewish Diaspora over hundreds of years, the Book of Books accompanied it, including the good tidings of redemption and the return to Zion, the tidings of the flowering of the desert and the ingathering of the exiles... But not only did the Jewish people derive knowledge of their past and hope for their future from the Book of Books. The Bible bequeathed to our people, and through it to all humanity... sublime humane values, the value of human brotherhood, the values of justice and righteousness, truth and kindness, the equality of nations and peace that are the essence of prophetic teaching and the morality of Judaism" (David Ben-Gurion, *Iyyunim baTanakh* [Tel Aviv 1976], p. 221).

The decision of the administration of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev to close the Department of Bible was taken in the back rooms in blatant disregard for accepted academic procedures, without consultation with the Department of Bible and the Assembly of the Faculty of Humanities. Keeping it under wraps until now points to its problematic nature. Perhaps those who decided on this move thought that in this manner they could minimize the embarrassment brought on the university by their decision – forfeiting national and universal cultural treasures inherent in "the eternal Book of Books" that the Jewish people gave to the world (as proclaimed in Israel's Declaration of Independence). The decision to close the Department of Bible resembles the behavior of thieves in the night; public discussion in the light of day will hopefully expose its wrongheadedness and open a window for correction.

ISRAEL'S THIRD OPTION FOR DEALING WITH IRAN (Dmitry Shumsky, Ha'aretz 10/20/21)

Benny Morris asserted in a recent article that Israel has two options – both of which he admitted are awful – for dealing with Iran's nuclear threat. Either it destroys Iran's nuclear facilities, which might well result in war with both Iran and its satellites, or it reconciles itself to a nuclear Iran, to living in its shadow and the risk of nuclear attack.

But there's also a third option that he ignored – seeking a peace agreement between Israel and Iran, regardless of whether or not the latter becomes a nuclear power.

The options Morris listed and analyzed are both realistic ones that are clearly apparent in the existing political reality. The third option, peace with Iran, is an imaginary, unrealistic and utopian one. Nevertheless, Israel doesn't have the privilege of ignoring this option.

First, any nation that wants to live – including nations fully or partially surrounded by enemies – ought to bear in mind not only conflict scenarios, but also a diplomatic horizon for forging peace with its enemies at some point in the future. Second, ever since the beginning of modern Zionism, Zionist policy has been characterized not just by a keen sense for the current reality, but also by elements of utopian thought, to strive tirelessly to change the existing reality.

This unique Zionist combination of a realistic approach and a utopian one, which Prof. Yosef Gorny, an expert on Zionism, termed "utopian realism," is completely absent from both Prof. Morris' analysis and Israel's policies on the Iranian threat.

One of the unique characteristics of historical Zionism was its ability to turn what seemed like a utopian vision at any given historical moment into a reality. Indeed, what seems on the surface to be a utopia detached from current reality often reflects a deep, hidden undercurrent in that reality that will someday surface and become relevant once circumstances change. The ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel may prove to be a salient example of this.

On the surface, the mutual hostility between Israel and Iran is a yawning chasm impossible to bridge. But when you look deeper, it's clear that this hostility stems more from the rational world of interests and geopolitical power struggles than it does from religious zealotry or ideology.

With the U.S. leaning toward Iran nuke talks, Israel needs a contingency plan 'Death by a thousand cuts': The U.S.-Israeli strategy if Iran nuke deal goes unsigned

Even though Shi'ite rulers frequently embittered the lives of their Jewish minorities over the course of history, the direct and primary cause of Iran's hatred of Israel nowadays isn't Shi'ite theology, but the fact that Israel is America's most loyal ally in the region. The United States is Iran's sworn enemy, and it earned that title honestly through its incessant meddling in Iran's domestic affairs during the second half of the previous century. Consequently, if relations between America and Iran someday take a positive turn, this might also favorably affect Iran's relations with Israel.

Obviously, any scenario involving reconciliation between Iran and the "great Satan," as America is deemed by the ayatollahs' regime, is a utopian vision. Therefore, the option of a peace agreement between Iran and the "little Satan," as the ayatollahs term Israel, lies strictly in the realm of imagination.

Nevertheless, the mere realization that the relationship between Iran and Israel depends on a factor that is fundamentally rational and might change – Iran's geopolitical interests regarding America, which, like any set of interests, has a tendency to change over time – could contribute in the long run to promoting a future language of reconciliation between Israel and Iran.

This is so because the insight that our enemy, just like us, is driven by rational cost-benefit calculations could challenge demonization of this enemy. And challenging the demonization of the enemy is a basic condition for someday making it possible to reach a peace agreement with it.

In contrast, Israel's current way of talking about Iran, which was clearly reflected in Morris' article, is rife with sweeping demonization and ultimatums, to the point of absurdly depicting Iran – a very cautious country that tends to work against its enemies indirectly, through its proxies – as a country that would be willing to commit suicide in order to attack Israel with nuclear weapons.

This demonization is unnecessary for two reasons. First, it ignores the concrete factors driving Iran's hostility toward Israel, and could therefore impair Israel's judgment and its ability to assess the nature and dimensions of the Iranian threat matter-of-factly and judiciously. Second, this demonization – which is an almost perfect reflection of Iran's language of "big Satan" and "little Satan" with regard to America and Israel – contributes to the region's continued slide toward an all-out war, without even attempting to open a dialogue of reconciliation.

Clearly, Israel must weigh both of the gloomy options Morris proposed in his article with all due seriousness and continue preparing for a possible military conflict with Iran. But at the same time, Israel should stop its demonizing babble about Iran and, in the spirit of historical Zionism's utopian realism, challenge its primary enemy with the language of peace.

Surprisingly enough, it's not inconceivable that there are actually members of the Iranian establishment who, in their heart of hearts, are waiting to extend a hand to Israel in peace and longing for reconciliation between these two ancient peoples of Mideastern civilization.



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SHABBOS DELIGHTS

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IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

That Little Extra Push

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

“And Lot pressed them exceedingly, and they turned to him” (Genesis 19:3)

In Parshas Vayeira, Hashem sends angels to Sedom in order to extract Lot and his family and then destroy the city for its many sins. Upon entering Sedom, the angels are immediately noticed by Lot who, believing them to be human travelers, offers to provide them food and shelter for the night. The angels politely refuse Lot's offer, prompting Lot to continue to press them until they accept his invitation. Interestingly, these same angels visited Avraham earlier in the Parsha and upon receiving a similar invitation from him, they accepted right away. Why did they initially refuse Lot's offer?

The Ramban explains that the angels' intent was to generate more merit for Lot by causing him to put in extra effort to host them and fulfill the mitzvah of hosting guests. Perhaps Lot, who was not especially righteous, required extra merit in order to be worthy of being saved from the destruction of Sedom and this was his opportunity to gain that merit.

At times we may feel that we want to do the right thing but that other matters get in the way. Indeed, there are many anecdotes where people resolve to improve a character trait or their performance of a particular mitzvah and are suddenly faced with new challenges with regard to that very mitzvah or trait. But this is no reason to give up or lose hope. On the contrary, we see from our Parsha that these very challenges may be precisely what we need in order to ultimately be successful and attain the blessing that Hashem desires to bestow upon us. When faced with these challenges, let us remember that it may just be that little extra effort that Hashem is looking for.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

So Sarah said to Avraham, "Drive out this maidservant with her son, for the son of the maidservant will not inherit with my son, Yitzchak." The matter greatly distressed Avraham regarding his son. (21, 11)

According to the Midrash, Yishmael had been serving idols and trying to kill Yitzchak. Why would Avraham be interested in allowing Yishmael to stay? Why would the matter of Yishmael distress Avraham more than the issues that Yishmael threatened Yitzchak with?

Was a monetary issue being disputed that prompted Sarah to say, "He will not inherit?" If not, which inheritance was being spoken about?

Parsha Riddle

How old was Yishmael when he was sent away from Avraham's house? How old was Yitzchak at the time of the Akeida?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Why do we say "Adon Olam" at the beginning of Shacharis?
Answer: Since Avraham established the mitzva of davening Shacharis and he was the first to refer to G-d as "Adon/Master," we therefore introduce Shacharis with this tefilla. (Siddur Shaar Harachamim) When the Vilna Gaon saw this explanation, he exclaimed that this siddur would be worthy to be printed for this explanation alone!

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayeira* (21:17), the Torah relates that as Yishmael lay dying of thirst, an angel of Hashem told his mother "Fear not, for Hashem has heeded the cry of the youth **in his present state (*ba-asher hu sham*)**." The Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b) derives from this verse the principle that **"A man is judged only according to his deeds at the time** of his judgment, and not according to his future deeds." *Bereishis Rabbah* (#53) elaborates that the ministering angels had argued against saving Yishmael's life: "You are producing a well for a man who in the future will kill Your children by thirst?!" but Hashem replied that insofar as even the angels conceded that Yishmael is currently righteous, "I only judge a man according to his current status." (Rashi explains that the reference to Yishmael's killing the Jews by thirst is to a diabolical incident that occurred during Nebuchadnezzar's exile of the Jews from Israel.)

An apparently contradictory principle is articulated by the Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 8:5) and Beraisa (*ibid.* 72a), in explanation of the death penalty prescribed by the Torah for the rebellious son (*ben sorer u-moreh*): despite the fact that so far he has only committed petty infractions, he is nevertheless "sentenced on account of his ultimate end (*nidon al sheim sofo*)," since we foresee that ultimately, "he will go out to the crossroads and rob people."

Our sages offer various reconciliations of the principles of *ba-asher hu sham* and *nidon al sheim sofo*: some explain that the rebellious son has already begun to walk down the path of his ultimate sin (*Chizkuni* here, *Mizrachi* to *Devarim* 21:18); others distinguish between the Heavenly Court, which limits its judgment to the current situation, and humans, who take the projected future into account (*Moshav Zekeinim* here, *Gur Aryeh* to *Devarim* *ibid.*).

A remarkable invocation of the precedent that the rebellious son is *nidon al sheim sofo* is made by R. Moshe of Zurich in justification of the killing of (Jewish) children (by Jews) during the Crusades out of concern that were they to live, they would assimilate among the Christians, "and it is better that they die innocent and not die guilty." (*ha-Semak mi-Zurich* [Jerusalem 5741] vol. 1 p. 58)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I ?

1. I was from Sedom.
2. I looked.
3. I am high in sodium.
4. I am a pillar, though I don't hold up anything.

#2 WHO AM I ?

1. We were triple for Avraham.
2. We come Friday night.
3. We visited Lot.
4. We were on a ladder.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Nes/Nisayon (I could be a banner, I could even be a miracle, I am unwanted, I raise you.)

#2 Bris Milah (I for the eighth, I am a Korban Pesach requirement, I am a sign, I am a seal.)

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