

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shabbos Shorts ת"סב

January 6 - 7, 2023 - 14 Teves 5783 - Parshas Vayechi
Light Candles by 4:42 - Havdalah 5:46

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by **grateful parents/grandparents** as a thank you to the talented and dedicated administrators and staff of the Young Israel Shomrai Emunah's Preschool for caring and educating our children and grandchildren over the past 60 years and by **Mindy & Shmuel Tolchinsky** in honor of **Josh Katz**, a true Ba'al Chesed.

Mazal Tov

- **Dr. Caroline & Mr. Eric Namrow** on the engagement of their daughter, Dalya, to Nati Jacoby, son of Elana & Zev Jacoby of Miami Beach, Florida. Mazal Tov also to siblings Shevi & Jacob, Kira & Zev, Chani, and Yossi.
- **Karen & Howie Schulman** on the marriage of their granddaughter Rochel Kramer, daughter of Miri & Rabbi Daniel Kramer, to Menachem Eizenstat, son of **Jessica & Jay Eizenstat**. Mazal Tov also to great-grandmother **Florence Binstock Avigan**, grandparents Marcia Meth, Risa Gold and Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat and all of the siblings, aunts, uncles & cousins.

Condolences

- **Michael Gabai** on the passing of his mother, Natalie Gabai. Shiva is being observed at 605 Winona Court through Tuesday morning. Shacharit Sunday, Monday and Tuesday - 7:30 AM, Mincha/Maariv Sunday and Monday - 4:40 PM. The family requests no visitors 12 Noon - 1:00 PM, 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM or after 8:00 PM. Sign up for Siyum Mishnayot at <https://www.lzechernishmas.com/signup.php?id=11044>
- **Sheldon Klein** on the passing of his step-sister, Donna Pearlman, Sarah Raizel Bat Yosef Hacoheh. Shiva is being observed in Detroit. Sheldon may be reached during Shiva at 202-321-6404.
- **Greg Snyder** on the passing of his father, Jerry Snyder. Shiva is being observed at 1103 North Belgrade Road through Monday morning. Shacharis Sunday - 7:30 AM, Monday - 6:45 AM, Mincha/Maariv Sunday - 4:40PM. The family requests no visitors 12 Noon - 1:30 PM, 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM or after 9:00 PM. Sign up for Siyum Mishnayot at <https://hadranalach.com/2612>

Shabbos Schedule

Minyan locations are B = Belonofsky Sanctuary, S = Social Hall, LBM = Large Beis Medrash, SBM = Small Beis Medrash, H = The House

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 4:42
- Mincha: 4:45 (B), 4:40 (Sefhardi, LBM)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sefhardi, LBM), 9:15 (Teen, H)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 4:25 (B), 4:20 (Sefhardi, LBM)
- Shabbos ends: 5:46

Divrei Torah/Shiurim:

- 8:45 Main Minyan Rabbi Rosenbaum
YISE is participating in the national program sponsored by NASCK of shuls discussing end of life matters this Shabbos. Rabbi Rosenbaum will speak at the 8:45 minyan about The Jewish Perspective on End of Life Decisions.
- 9:15 Minyan Rabbi Postelnek
- Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman
- Pre-9:15 Minyan Chabura Rabbi Postelnek

Kiddush Sponsors:

- The Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by the Hashkamah Minyan Group.
- The Shul Kiddush is sponsored by the **Grauman & Berner Families** in celebration of their special anniversaries and by the **Edeson & Stern Families** on the 4th Yahrzeit, 19 Teves, of their beloved husband, father, grandfather and brother, Jacob S. Edeson, Yaakov Shlomo Ben Yosef Nossan, Z"l.
- The Shalosh Seudos is sponsored by **Esther & David Hornestay** in memory of David's father, Abraham Hornestay, Avraham Aryeh Ben Chaim Shlomo Hakohen, Z"l, and by Violet Battat and family in honor of the 7th Yahrzeit of her grandfather, Reuben Ben Tifaha.

Health Policy

- People experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or other transmissible illnesses should not attend prayer, learning, social or other events at the Shul.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please follow CDC guidelines before returning to Shul.

YISE Youth Announcements

Teen Minyan - The Teen Minyan, led by Rabbi Moshe Holzer, meets at 9:15 AM every Shabbos in The House next to the Shul. Kiddush is served after Davening.

Shabbos Groups this Shabbos, January 7, from 10:00 AM until Shul ends. Age 18-36 months (Mommy & me) in the toddler room off the Lower Lobby. Ages 2-5 years (drop off) in the room behind the balcony. Ages 6-9 years will meet at Shomrai and walk to the Yeshiva. For more information, contact Debbie Katz at dkatz@yise.org

Shabbos Group for 5th and 6th Grade Girls will gather in the front yard of The House next to the Shul promptly at 10 am and go inside together. *See flyer for details.*

Junior Congregation for boys in grades 4 - 6 with Jay Marcus. Meet in the Lower Lobby at 9:55 and walk to the Yeshiva at 10:00. *See flyer for details.*

Dor L'Dor - The Family Chevrusah-style Learning in a fun environment! The next session will take place Motzei Shabbos, January 14, 7:15 PM in the Social Hall. Please email mshimoff@yise.org if you would like to sponsor. *See flyer for details.*

YISE Programs and Listings

Pre-9:15 Minyan Chabura - A weekly Chabura on the Parsha, now learning the Kedushas Levi. Delve into the deeper dimensions of the Parsha and Holidays by learning the Kedushas Levi's weekly insights. Begins at 8:55 AM Shabbos morning. This week's Shiur will be led by Rabbi Postelnek. *See flyer for details.*

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur - Following the Hashkamah Minyan, learning Maseches Sanhedrin, in the Small Beis Medrash. This week's Shiur will be led by Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman.

Pedestrian Safety Class - Thursday, January 12, 7:00 PM in the Social Hall. MCPD Officer Eli Dunham will present a class for the Kemp Mill Community on tools and tips to keep you and your families safe as you walk through our neighborhood. *See flyer for details.*

Special Guest Scholar on Friday evening, January 13, 8:00 PM in the Belonofsky Sanctuary. Rabbi Yitzhak Etshalom, renowned Los Angeles-based educator, author of "Between the Lines of the Bible: Recapturing the Full Meaning of Biblical Text" and an upcoming commentary on Sefer Amos, will speak on "Unraveling the Mystery of Moshe's Encounters at the Lodge." Light refreshments to follow Shiur.

An Evening of Pizza and Friends: Join YISE Young Professionals to make your own pizza at Ben Yehuda Pizza on Sunday, January 29, 8:00 PM. \$17 person/\$30 couple. For more information go to www.yise.org/pizza *See flyer for details.*

Save the Date! GWCK Shabbaton at YISE, Shabbos Parshas Yisro, February 10 - 11. Watch your email for details.

Save the Date for the 2023 YISE Gala Banquet - Sunday, February 26. Honoring Stuart & Judy Rosenthal, Josh & Sara Katz, and the 2023 high school graduating seniors who have served our congregation's youth.

Monthly Shalosh Seudos - First Shabbos of each month. To sponsor, contact Simi Franco at 301-593-4465, ext. 103, or office@yise.org Volunteers are needed to set up and clean up. Contact Ethan Cohen at ecohen@yise.org to be part of the rotation. *See flyer for details.*

Thank you to the Shiurim Sponsors for this Past Week:

Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur

- **David Jaray** in memory of Rabbi Hyatt, Z"l, and in honor of Rabbi Grauman and all those who attend his Shiur and in memory of parents, Avraham Ben Tzvi HaLevi & Ada Bas Menachem Aryeh, Z"l, and Rabbi Hillel & Mrs. Myrna Klavan, Z"l.

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur

- **David Jaray and Chani & Jay Parness** in honor of Rabbi Grossman and all those who attend his Shiur.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Nach Shiur

- **Harriet & Ron Sheinson** in memory of Harriet's mother, Clara Krasnow, Krendal Elka bas Binyamin Halevi, Z"l.

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.

Dvar Torah Dedications/Sponsor a Shiur

YISE continues to offer a number of different in-person and virtual 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.

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
- Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur, Shabbos 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.

YISE Programs and Listings (continued)

Ask the Rabbi - Come join our virtual, interactive monthly program featuring different Halachic topics! This month's topic: Toveling and Kashering utensils, will take place on Tuesday, January 31, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM on **Zoom A**. The first 45 minutes is for Shailos submitted in advance and the last 15 minutes is for Q&A. Send in your questions to: AskTheRabbi@yise.org by Sunday, January 29. For more info. and to submit questions by phone or anonymously, contact Miriam Friedman at 301-754-1517 or mfriedman2@yahoo.com. To sponsor the program, contact the YISE office. *See flyer for details.*

Kiddush Volunteers Needed from ALL Minyanim to help set up and clean up for Kiddushes on Shabbos morning. Times vary. Let us know when you are available. Contact Barbara Price at 301-332-8181.

Online YISE Cholim List - Go to <https://wp.yise.org/cholim> to add a name to the list. The list is used at the 8:45 Minyan on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbos. For questions about Mi Sheberach guidelines, contact Rabbi Rosenbaum. For other questions, contact Seth Katz at sethkatz@yise.org

Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill, a part of YISE's Chesed Committee, provides assistance to families undergoing medical crises. For information, please contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, mskarlin@gmail.com or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, mfriedman2@yahoo.com

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

Weekday Shiurim

Options for in-person and 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**, will not meet on Monday, January 9.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday, 7:30 PM, **Zoom A**, will not meet on Sunday, January 8.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**, will resume on Sunday, January 29.
 - **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 breakfast, 9:45 AM. Shiurim:
 - Illuminating Inquiries in Halacha - Rabbi Yitzchak Mandel
 - Judaism 102: Fundamentals for the Experienced Jew - Rabbi Hillel Shaps
 - Navigating Navi: Sefer Yehoshua - Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman
 - Parsha Perspectives: An Exploration of Engaging Parsha Topics - Rabbi Menachem Winter
 - **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 info., contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, hshaps@gwckollel.org 347-869-9361.
 - For Men:
 - Mondays: Rabbi Hillel Shaps - On the Same Page Gemara.
 - Wednesdays: Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - Reading Responsa - **Zoom E**.
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Avraham Sussman - Yesodei Hatorah Gemara Skills Building - **Zoom F**.
 - For Women:
 - Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Parsha Journeys - **Zoom D**.
 - **SCP (Semichas Chaver Program)** - Tuesdays at 8:45 PM at YISE. Join the fastest growing Halacha learning program in the world! Register online at <https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/scp> *See flyer for details.*
 - **Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's** Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, Sunday through Friday, 6:35 AM - 7:20 AM, in the Franco Beit Midrash.
 - **Chavrusa Learning** - Monday nights in the Social Hall, 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM. For more information, contact Rabbi Levy at 240-423-8810.
 - **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiurim for men & women, Mondays at 8:45 AM, studying Parshas Hashavua, **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", in-person in the Small Beis Medrash and on **Zoom G**.
 - **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning Maseches Bava Metzia, Daf 3a. Wednesday evenings at 8:00 PM on **Zoom H**.
- Connection Details:** Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 or 929-205-6099 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: 833 3477 1595, password RabbiHyatt
Zoom D: ID: 601 853 4021, passcode Winter (phone 667362)
Zoom E: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn
Zoom F: ID: 803 356 4156, password Learn
Zoom G: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079
Zoom H: ID: 849 3898 4989, passcode 161699



Pre-9:15 Minyan Chaburah

KEDUSHAS LEVI

on the Weekly Parsha and Chagim

8:55am Shabbos Mornings
Beginning Parshas Chayei Sara, Nov. 19

YISE Social Hall

Given by Rabbi Postelnek
& Rabbi Rosenbaum



To All 5th & 6th
Grade Girls....

You are cordially invited to join an

EXCITING NEW SHABBOS GROUP

Created Just For You



Every Shabbos Morning
In The YISE House (next to Shul)

10:00-11:15

Starting September 10th





YISE Youth presents:

JUNIOR CONGREGATION



For 4th-6th grade boys! Led by our very own Youth Director, Jay Marcus!

We will meet in the lower lobby at 9:55 and walk over to the Yeshiva promptly at 10.

REVOLUTIONIZE

YOUR TORAH LEARNING!

NEW SEMESTER
BEGINS NOV 1

NEW TOPIC:
הלכות נדה
The Laws of
Taharas
Hamishpacha



SEMICHAS CHAVER PROGRAM

JOIN OVER 2500 PARTICIPANTS WORLDWIDE!

Gain practical knowledge of halacha in an energetic and engaging atmosphere!

Receive a SCP Certificate of Achievement, signed by Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, HaRav Hershel Schachter, and Harav Avigdor Neventzal after successfully passing a written exam at the end of each semester.



Presented
by



Rabbi
Hillel
Shaps

TUESDAYS @ 8:45PM Register at:
at YISE, 1132 Arcola Ave. thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/scp



PRESENTED BY
GREATER WASHINGTON
COMMUNITY KOLLEL &
YOUNG ISRAEL
SHOMRAI EMUNAH



ORTHODOX
UNION
תורה
ומצוות
Enhancing Jewish Life



Semichas Chaver Program: Founded by Rav Elyada Goldwicht

MEN'S
PROGRAMMING

For more information,
please contact:
Rabbi Hillel Shaps,
hshaps@gwckollel.org

Pedestrian Safety Class



Learn the ways to safely navigate as a pedestrian. Get tools and tips to keep you and your families safe as you walk through our neighborhood.

The class will be given by **Montgomery County Police Department officer Eli Dunham**, expert in pedestrian safety, and one of YISE's Shabbos officers.

When: Thursday, January 12, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Where: YISE Social Hall
1132 Arcola Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20902.
Parking available near Ben Yehuda Pizza.

Who: The entire Kemp Mill Community

Sponsored by:

Chabad of Silver Spring, Kehillas Ohr HaTorah, Kemp Mill Civic Association, Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring Jewish Center, Yeshiva of Greater Washington - Tiferes Gedaliah and Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington.

YISE YOUTH PRESENTS

Door L'Dor

**FAMILY
LEARNING
2022-23**

**SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2022
7:00 PM**

**SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2022
7:00 PM**

**SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER 2022
7:00 PM**

**SATURDAY 31 DECEMBER 2022
7:00 PM**

**SATURDAY 14 JANUARY 2023
7:15 PM**

**SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 2023
7:30 PM**

**SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2023
7:45 PM**

**SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2023
8:00 PM**

**SATURDAY 11 MARCH 2023
8:00 PM**



Please email mshimoff@yise.org
if you would like to sponsor

Join YISE Young Professionals for

an evening of

Pizza

and friends

Location: Ben Yehuda Pizza

Date: Jan 29 @ 8pm

Cost: \$30/couple \$17/person

Limited Space

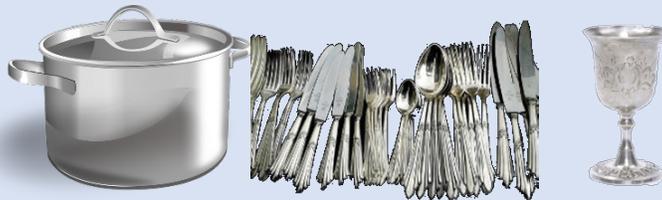
RSVP YISE.ORG/PIZZA



ASK the RABBI

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

Topic: *Toveling and Kashering / Immersing and Purging Utensils*



The first 45 minutes are for Shailos submitted in advance and the last 15 are for Q & A.

- | |
|--|
| ▪ Can I Tovel dishes for someone else? |
| ▪ How should I handle an electric appliance with regard to Toveling? |
| ▪ Can I Kasher a china plate that hasn't been used in 10 years? |
| ▪ How do I Kasher a very large pot? |

Send in your questions about Chanukah to Toveling and Kashering / Immersing and Purging Utensils to: AskTheRabbi@yise.org by Sunday, January 29.

When: Tuesday, January 31, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Where: Zoom - Meeting ID: 416-963-9000, Passcode: 492019

For more information and to submit questions by phone or anonymously, contact:

Miriam Friedman at 301-754-1517 or mfriedman2@yahoo.com

To sponsor the program, please contact the YISE office.



Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington

Monthly Shalosh Seudos / Seudah Shlishit

First Shabbos of every month

Upcoming Dates:

December 3, 2022

January 7, 2023

February 4, 2023

March 4, 2023

Full sponsorships start at \$350

To sponsor, please contact the Shul Office at office@yise.org
or 301-593-4465, ext.103

You may also contribute to the new
Shalosh Seudos Group

These funds go toward supporting the Shalosh Seudos
meal when a full sponsor is not available

To join the **Shalosh Seudos Group**, please contact the Shul Office at
office@yise.org or 301-593-4465, ext. 103

Volunteers are also needed to assist with setup and cleanup
Please contact Ethan Cohen at ecohen@yise.org to volunteer

We look forward to seeing you at YISE!

Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Sponsored by Saadia & Lily Greenberg
and Bryna & Paul Epstein of Rechovot, Israel,
on the occasion of the yearzeit of Bryna and Saadia's father,
Rabbi Meyer Greenberg, z"l (Harav Meir ben Aharon Mordechai Halevi)

Volume 29, Issue 12

Shabbat Parashat Vayechi

5783 - B"H

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

Family, Faith and Freedom - If you want to understand what a book is about, look carefully at how it ends. Genesis ends with three deeply significant scenes.

First, Jacob blesses his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasheh. This is the blessing that Jewish parents use on Friday night to bless their sons. My predecessor Lord Jakobovits used to ask, why this blessing of all the blessings in the Torah? He gave a beautiful reply. He said, all the others are from fathers to sons – and between fathers and sons there can be tension. Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasheh is the only instance in the Torah of a grandparent blessing a grandchild. And between grandparents and grandchildren there is no tension, only pure love.

Second, Jacob blesses his twelve sons. There is discernible tension here. His blessings to his eldest three sons, Reuven, Shimon, and Levi, read more like curses than blessings. Yet the fact is that he is blessing all twelve together in the same room at the same time. We have not seen this before. There is no record of Abraham blessing either Ishmael or Isaac. Isaac blesses Esau and Jacob separately. The mere fact that Jacob is able to gather his sons together is unprecedented, and important. In the next chapter – the first of Exodus – the Israelites are, for the first time, described as a people. It is hard to see how they could live together as a people if they could not live together as a family.

Third, after the death of Jacob, the brothers asked Joseph to forgive them, which he does. He had also done so earlier. Evidently, the brothers harbour the suspicion that he was merely biding his time until their father died, as Esau at one point resolved to do. Sons do not take revenge within the family while the father is alive – that seems to have been the principle in those days. Joseph speaks directly to their fears and puts them at rest. "You intended to harm me but God intended it for good," he says.

The Torah is telling us an unexpected message here: the family is prior to all else, to the land, the nation, politics, economics, the pursuit of power and the accumulation of wealth. From an external point of view, the impressive story is that Joseph reached the heights of power in Egypt, the Egyptians themselves mourned the death of his father Jacob and accompanied the family on their way to bury him, so that the Canaanites, seeing the entourage said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning" (Gen. 50:11). But that is externality. When we turn the page and begin the book of Exodus, we discover that the position of the Israelites in Egypt was very vulnerable indeed, and all the power Joseph had centralised in the hands of Pharaoh would eventually be used against them.

Genesis is not about power. It is about families. Because that is where life together begins.

The Torah does not imply that there is anything easy about making and sustaining a family. The patriarchs and matriarchs – Sarah, Rebecca and

Rachel especially – know the agony of infertility. They know what it is to wait in hope and wait again.

Sibling rivalry is a repeated theme of the book. The Psalm tells us "how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together." It might have added, "and how rare." Almost at the beginning of the human story, Cain kills Abel. There are tensions between Sarah and Hagar that lead to Hagar and Ishmael being sent away. There is rivalry between Jacob and Esau, and between Joseph and his brothers, in both cases coming close to murder.

Yet there is no diminution of the significance of the family. To the contrary, it is the main vehicle of blessing. Children figure as central to God's blessing no less than the gift of the land. It is as if the Torah were telling us, with great honesty, that yes, families are challenging. The relationship between husband and wife, and between parent and child, is rarely straightforward. But we have to work at it. There is no guarantee that we will always get it right. It is by no means clear that the parents in Genesis always got it right. But this is our most human institution.

The family is where love brings new life into the world. That in itself makes it the most spiritual of all institutions. It is also where we have our most important and lasting moral education. To quote Harvard political scientist, the late James Q. Wilson, the family is "an arena in which conflicts occur and must be managed." People within the family "love and quarrel, share and sulk, please and disappoint." Families, he says, "are the world in which we shape and manage our emotions."

The Torah guides us through areas that have been identified in the 20th century as the most important arenas of conflict. Freud saw the Oedipus complex – the desire to create space for yourself by removing your father – as one of the primary drivers of human emotion. Rene Girard saw sibling rivalry as a, perhaps the, source of human violence.

I have argued that the story of the Binding of Isaac is directed precisely at the Oedipus complex. God does not want Abraham to kill Isaac. He wants him to relinquish ownership of Isaac. He wants to abolish one of the most widespread beliefs of the ancient world, known in Roman law as the principle of *Patria potestas*, that parents own their children. Once this has gone, and children become legal personalities in their own right, then much of the force of the Oedipus complex is removed. Children have space to be themselves.

I have argued also that the story of Jacob's wrestling match with the angel is directed against the source of sibling rivalry, namely mimetic desire, the desire to have what your brother has because he has it. Jacob becomes Israel when he ceases wanting to be Esau and instead stands tall as himself.

So Genesis is not a hymn to the virtue of families. It is a candid, honest, fully worked-through account of what it is to confront some of the main problems within families, even the best.

Genesis ends on these three important resolutions: first, that grandparents are part of the family and their blessing is important. Second, Jacob shows it is possible to bless all your children, even if you have a fractured relationship with some of them. Third, Joseph shows it is possible to forgive your siblings even if they have done you great harm.

One of my most vivid memories from my early days as a student was listening to the BBC Reith Lectures in 1967. The Reith lectures are the BBC's

most prestigious broadcast series: the first to deliver them was Bertrand Russell in 1948. In 1967 the lecturer was the Cambridge Professor of Anthropology, Edmund Leach. I had the privilege of delivering these lectures in 1990.

Leach called his lectures *A Runaway World?*, and in his third lecture he delivered a sentence that made me sit up and take notice. "Far from being the basis of the good society, the family, with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets, is the source of all our discontents." It was an important sign that the family was about to be dethroned, in favour of sexual liberation and self-expression. Rarely has so important an institution been abandoned so thoroughly and so lightly.

In the decades that followed, in many parts of society, cohabitation replaced marriage. Fewer people were getting married, they were getting married later, and more were getting divorced. At one point, 50% of marriages in America and Britain were ending in divorce. And 50% of children were being born outside marriage. The current figure for Britain is 42%.

The consequences have been widespread and devastating. To take one example, the birth rate in Europe today is far below replacement rate. A fertility rate of 2.1 (the average number of children born per woman of the population) is necessary for a stable population. No country in Europe has that rate. In Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece, it is down to 1.3. The overall average is 1.6. Europe is maintaining its population only by immigration on an unprecedented scale. This is the death of Europe as we knew it.

Meanwhile in the United States, a significant part of the population is living in neighbourhoods with few intact families, disadvantaged children, damaged neighbourhoods, poor schools, few social facilities, and a desperate shortage of hope. This, for sections of America, is the end of the American dream.

People who look to the state, politics and power, to deliver the good, the beautiful and the true – the Hellenistic tradition – tend to regard the family and all it presupposes in terms of fidelity and responsibility as a distraction. But for people who understand not just the importance of politics but also its limitations and dangers, relationships between husband and wife, parent and child, grandparent and grandchildren, and siblings, are the most important basis of freedom. That is an insight that runs all the way through Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, summed up in his statement that "as long as family feeling was kept alive, the opponent of oppression was never alone."

James Q. Wilson put it beautifully: "We learn to cope with the people of this world because we learn to cope with the members of our family. Those who flee the family flee the world; bereft of the former's affection, tutelage, and challenges, they are unprepared for the latter's tests, judgements, and demands."

That, surprisingly, is what Genesis is about. Not about the creation of the world, which occupies only one chapter, but about how to handle family conflict. As soon as Abraham's descendants can create strong

By Rene and Rami Isser
in loving memory of Rene's grandfather,
Yehudah Ben Gedaliah David, a"h,
(12th of Tevet)
and Rene's father, Chaim Ben Yehudah, a"h
(17th of Tevet)

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families, they can move from Genesis to Exodus and their birth as a nation.

I believe that family is the birthplace of freedom. Caring for one another, we learn to care for the common good.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

In a most uplifting and inspiring deathbed scene, grandfather Jacob/Israel peacefully takes leave of this world by blessing, evaluating and prophesying about every one of his sons, delineating the tribe that will emanate from each and establishing the National Republic of tribes that will emerge from all of them together.

The petty rivalries have been laid aside, the sturm und drang of exiles, wars, famines and inter-sibling savagery unto death have seemingly been forgotten; a divided family torn asunder by jealousies and ambitions is turning into a nascent nation, united—if only during this brief period—by their aged Patriarch, whose last words are presenting the blueprint for the Divine destiny set aside for the purveyors of the Abrahamic blessing, that all the families on earth will be blessed with peace because of this unique nation.

For those of us who have been carefully following the adventures of this remarkable family, fraught with intrigue but always propelled onward by a Divine Spirit of “compassionate righteousness and moral justice,” there is one jarring note in Grandfather Israel’s will and testament of prophetic blessing: In each previous generation, the elder and the more aggressive son was rejected in favor of his younger and gentler brother (Isaac trumps Ishmael, Jacob trumps Esau) and in this latter instance, Rebekah demonstrates to Isaac, albeit by deception, that Jacob, if necessity warrants it, has the wherewithal to utilize the hands of Esau to get what is rightfully his. Hence Isaac eventually rejects Esau and gives both the physical double portion of the blessings and the more spiritual Messianic birthright to Jacob.

As I have written in a previous commentary, the Malbin explains that Isaac had originally intended to split the inheritance, giving the more material blessings to the more aggressive and materialistically oriented son, Esau, who would know how to train and equip an army, how to navigate the stock market and how to initiate start-up hi-tech projects, as it were, and to give the more spiritual, Messianic birthright legacy to the wholehearted, tent-dwelling Jacob, who could more naturally deal with that mission of Israel, to teach morality and peacefulness to all the nations of the earth.

Rebekah argued that in order for Torah ethics and spirituality to be enabled to “conquer” the world, if God was indeed to be enthroned on earth, then Torah would require a protective army and a strong financial base to make this a real possibility. And when Rebekah proved her point by “coating” Jacob with the external garb and might of Esau, Rebekah won the day and both blessings and birthright went to Jacob.

Now that it’s Jacob’s turn to bestow material blessings and Messianic birthright, I would have thought that he, of all people, based on his own experience, would have given both gifts to the same favored and beloved wise son of his old age, to the son of his most beloved Rachel, to Joseph. But no, Jacob does what his father Isaac had thought to do initially: He creates a division between the physical blessings and the spiritual birthright. He bequeaths the blessings of heavenly rain and earthly produce, innumerable seed and a double tribal portion of land, and even the mighty bow of vanquishing warfare upon the financially adept Grand Vizier, Joseph and he awards dominion over the family, the majestic and spiritual birthright of King Messiah, the recipient of fraternal fealty as well as peaceful

homage from the ingathering of all of the nations, to the ba’al teshuva (penitent) Judah. Why does Jacob revert to the concept of Isaac rather than to that of Rebekah, the mother who so adored him? You will remember that the victory of Rebekah over Isaac may have been short-lived. Jacob was plagued by his deception of his father until his dying day. Almost from the moment he left his father’s house for Laban-land, his mother’s brother substituted his elder daughter for her younger sister under the marriage canopy with the prescient words, “It is not the practice in our place to give the younger before the elder,” and not only his ten sons but even his beloved Joseph deceived him—the ten brothers with the bloody coat and Joseph with his garb of Grand Vizier.

Jacob understands only too well that the bearer of the righteous legacy of Abraham dare not descend into deception; and so only when he succeeds in disgorging the Esau from within himself, the unfortunate result of twenty-two years with Laban, will he be empowered with the name Yisra-El, purveyor of the God of righteousness (Yashar-El).

Moreover, when the head of a family must decide upon who is to be the real continuator of his legacy, he must choose the individual child who most represents the major ideals and goals to which the family is dedicated.

However, when one is about to form a nation, a consortium of twelve (or thirteen) tribes which will comprise the peoplehood of Israel, the goal becomes “e pluribus unum,” a united vision which emerges from joining together multiple strengths and different ideas; not a conformity but rather a cultural pluralism which combines together and unites behind a commitment to the ideal of morality and peace.

In such a situation, no brother is to be rejected unless he will do damage to the ultimate vision; there is room for many leaders, each with his particular gift and emphasis, as long as they all stand behind a God who demands compassionate righteousness and moral justice. Since acceptance of the eventual goal depends upon the ability of Israel and the nations of the world to repent, to return to God in Heaven, on both counts, Grandfather Jacob/Israel chose Judah, the consummate ba’al teshuva and the unifier of the family, to receive the prized legacy of Messianic leadership.

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

No Two Snowflakes Are Alike - Having lived on the eastern seaboard of the United States for most of my life, I know the havoc wrought by a severe snowstorm. Nevertheless, I am also very aware of the beauty of such snowstorms and especially by the beauty of each single snowflake.

The snowflake, held under a magnifying glass, is an exquisitely intricate and beautiful creation. Furthermore, every snowflake is unique. No two snowflakes are alike.

The uniqueness of each snowflake is but one example of an amazing fact, which is true of the entire natural world. No two blades of grass are identical, no two leaves are exactly the same, and every individual member of every animal species is unique in some way.

This is true of human beings as well. None of us has the same fingerprint, and no matter how closely one of us might resemble another, we are different from the other in some respect.

The Talmud recognizes this when it comments that “just as no two faces are alike, so too, no two personalities are alike.” We are different from each other physically, psychologically, intellectually, spiritually, and in every other way.

Any person who has parented several children knows that each child is different from the get-go. Mothers tell me that even while still pregnant with

Likutei Divrei Torah

their children, they were aware of the potential differences that unfolded later in life.

Woe to the teacher who treats all of his students alike. The so-called cookie cutter method of education is doomed to failure. Each of us has different learning styles and differing intellectual strengths and weaknesses. The secret of successful pedagogy lies in the recognition of individual differences, and in the ability of the teacher to be flexible enough to adapt his or her lessons to each individual and his or her learning needs.

In this week’s Torah portion, Vayechi, we find that our patriarch Jacob was well aware of this secret.

Jacob blesses the two sons of Joseph, and later proceeds to bless each one of his sons, the twelve tribes. Reading these blessings, we cannot help but notice how each one is fundamentally different and seems tailor-made to the character traits and emotional makeup of each tribe.

Jacob blesses one son with power and dominion; another with agricultural wealth. One is compared to a lion, one to a wolf, and yet another to a serpent.

Jacob knows his children and knows how diverse and heterogeneous his family is. He knows how to bless them with the particular resources that they will need as they march forward, with varying talents and dispositions, into their historical roles.

The Bible underscores this when it summarizes the entire episode of the blessings with the following words: “All these were the tribes of Israel, twelve in number, and this is what their father said to them as he bade them farewell, addressing to each a blessing appropriate to him.” To each a different blessing, to each his own parting word.

The fact that each of us is uniquely gifted is a basic component of the thought of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the Chief Rabbi of the Land of Israel, who passed away more than 70 years ago, but whose written legacy keeps him very much alive.

Rav Kook insists that the very purpose of education is to help each person discover his or her own individuality, to learn what he or she can do best. Self-discovery, for Rav Kook, is the essence of the educational endeavor.

Rav Kook, besides being an educator, was also a mystic. From his mystical perspective, he views the world as being a unified whole, to which every individual is necessary, because each individual contributes something utterly unique to the cosmos.

Each snowflake is different from the other because the beauty of each snowflake is equally essential to nature’s beauty.

Each human being is unique because the contribution of every one of us is absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of humanity’s ultimate mission.

Like Jacob’s children, we all are uniquely blessed. Appreciating our uniqueness as that of every one of our fellow men is an essential component of Jewish spirituality.

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

Shimon, Levi and the Zealous Brotherly Bond - Rabbi Benji Myers - ... Yaakov’s words are both a mission statement and a challenge. In our daily interactions, we must be careful to speak of actions rather than people. We must be careful to keep things in perspective and ask constantly whether our actions will enhance or diminish God’s name in the world. Above all, we must be like brothers, displaying a keen sense of awareness for the vulnerable, downtrodden and persecuted, and helping them where we can while not losing sight of who we are – שמות פרק יט, ו. “מְמַלְכֵת כְּהִנָּם וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ” – “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” [Excerpt]

Last week's *Parashah* ended, "*Va'yeishev Yisrael* / [the family of] Yisrael settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen. They acquired property in it, and they were fruitful and multiplied greatly." The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 106a) quotes the Sage, Rabbi Yochanan, who says: "Wherever it says '*Va'yeishev*,' pain follows. Thus, we read at the beginning of our *Parashah*, 'The time approached for Yisrael (*i.e.*, Yaakov) to die.'" [Until here from the *Gemara*. Additional examples of "*Va'yeishev*" being followed by pain are discussed below.]

R' Yitzchak Menachem Weinberg *shlita* (*Tolna Rebbe* in Yerushalayim) asks: Why should "*Va'yeishev*," settling in comfortably, lead to pain? Moreover, is it right to describe Yaakov's approaching death as "painful"? Everyone dies eventually, and Yaakov was a very old man!

The *Tolna Rebbe* explains: "Settling in" implies a lack of action or initiative. At the beginning of *Parashat Va'yeishev*, we read, "*Va'yeishev* Yaakov / Yaakov settled in the land where his father sojourned, in the land of Canaan. These are the chronicles of Yaakov: Yosef was seventeen . . ." *Rashi z"l* comments about the flow of the verses: "Yaakov wished to live at ease, but trouble in connection with Yosef suddenly came upon him." Yaakov thought that he could take a break from spiritual growth, so *Hashem* taught him in a painful way, says *Rashi*, that the time to sit at ease is in the World-to-Come; this world is for constant growth. (This "*Va'yeishev*" is another example cited by Rabbi Yochanan in the above *Gemara*.)

- Continued inside -

Shabbat

This year, we have been discussing *Shabbat* in this space. This week, we introduce the topic again, from a new source, to remind ourselves what we hope to gain through this effort.

R' Eliyahu E. Dessler *shlita* (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak; not to be confused with his cousin and namesake, the *Michtav M'Eliyahu*) writes: We know that *Shabbat* is a "great and holy day," as we say in *Birkat Ha'mazon*. More than that, however, we must know that, on *Shabbat*, every single person has the potential to rise to great heights.

Of course, this cannot come about without investment on our part. Attaining these spiritual heights requires making ourselves into receptacles to receive what *Shabbat* offers.

For some reason, R' Dessler continues, even those who spend a substantial amount of time preparing for the festivals--studying the laws of *Teshuvah* or *Megillat Esther* or the *Pesach Haggadah*, for example--spend little or no time preparing for *Shabbat*. The fact that *Shabbat* comes every week tends to lessen its specialness in our minds.

Let us stop a moment and think, suggests R' Dessler.

- Aside from studying *Shabbat's* many laws, which certainly is our first obligation, have we ever asked ourselves: What exactly does the Torah want from me when it tells me to refrain from work on *Shabbat*?
- Have we ever asked ourselves whether we are satisfied with *Shabbat*-observance habits we have developed since childhood, or whether more is expected of us?
- Do we know what tools we have with which to invest in *Shabbat*?
- Do we really know how different *Shabbat* is from other days?

These are some of the questions we must examine.

(*Sha'arei Ha'zemanim: Shabbat* p.5)

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“He blessed Yosef and he said, ‘The Elokim before Whom my forefathers Avraham and Yitzchak walked--Elokim Who shepherds me from my inception until this day. May the angel who redeems me from all evil bless the lads ...’ (48:15-16)

Midrash Rabbah comments: “Just as redemption involves *Pela'im* / wonders, so receiving sustenance involves *Pela'im*.”

R' Bezalel Ashkenazi z"l (1520-1594; Chief Rabbi of Egypt; author of the *Talmud* commentary, *Shitah Mekubetzet*) asks: Why did the *Midrash* use the word “*Pela'im*” / “wonders” instead of saying that it is a “*Nes*” / “miracle”? He answers: Just as the redemption from Egypt involved many miracles, as we say in the *Pesach Haggadah* (“*Kamah ma'alot tovot la'Makom aleinu...*”), so it is with our sustenance, though it may seem to come naturally. We read (*Tehilim* 147:8-9), “[G-d,] Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes mountains sprout with grass. He is the One gives to an animal its food, to young ravens that cry out.” It is a miracle that clouds appear in the sky. But, not all clouds produce rain, so rain, too, is a miracle. And, not all rain helps crops grow (“makes the mountains sprout with grass”)--another miracle. If there are not enough crops for both animals and humans, there will be competition, but--another miracle--He gives animals their food. He even feeds the helpless baby ravens, a fifth miracle. So many wonders! R' Ashkenazi adds: Those who earn their living through trades, rather than farming, also can find multiple wonders in their sustenance. (*Derashot Rabbi Bezalel*)



“Shimon and Levi are comrades, their weaponry is a stolen craft. Into their conspiracy, may my soul not enter! . . . For in their rage they murdered people . . . Accursed is their rage for it is intense, and their wrath for it is harsh ...” (49:5-7)

“For in their rage they murdered people,” refers to the killing of the people of Shechem, about which Yaakov Avinu says, “Accursed is their rage for it is intense, and their wrath for it is harsh.” And, yet, *Midrash Rabbah* relates that the flag of the tribe of Shimon portrayed the city of Shechem! How can this be?

R' Uri Weisblum *shlita* (*Mashiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Nachalat Ha'levi'im in Haifa, Israel) explains: Yaakov criticized Shimon and Levi because he felt they acted irresponsibly and endangered his entire family (see *Bereishit* 34:30). Nevertheless, Shimon and Levi's underlying motivation, their willingness to sacrifice their lives for their sister's and their family's honor, was pure and holy.

During 40 years of traveling in the desert, the image of the city of Shechem waved over the camp of Shimon to remind that tribe's members never to lose their *Mesirut Nefesh* / the willingness to give their lives for holy causes. At the same time, they also needed to remember that there are limitations on, and a time and place for, *Mesirut Nefesh*. That was Yaakov's message to Shimon (and Levi). (*He'arat Ha'derech* p.157-158)

– *Continued from front page* –

R' Chaim ben Attar z"l (1696-1743; Morocco, Italy and *Eretz Yisrael*) notes that people--even Torah scholars--generally lose some of their sharpness as they approach their day of death. Thus, Yaakov was able to sense now that his end was nearing. Says the *Tolna Rebbe*: When Rabbi Yochanan connects the verse, “The time approached for Yisrael (*i.e.*, Yaakov) to die,” with “*Va'yeishev Yisrael*,” he is explaining why Yaakov's end approached at a much younger age than that of his father, Yitzchak, or his grandfather, Avraham--who lived 180 and 175 years, respectively. As he had upon settling in *Eretz Yisrael* at the beginning of *Parashat Va'yeishev*, Yaakov thought when he settled in Egypt that he had completed his spiritual growth and he was permitted to relax. In so thinking, Rabbi Yochanan is teaching us, Yaakov erred. Indeed, by believing that he had finished growing, Yaakov hastened his own death--a painful outcome. (Thus, the questions with which we began are answered.)

Another “*Va'yeishev* cited by Rabbi Yochanan: We read (*Melachim I* 5:5), “*Va'yeishev*” / Yehuda and Yisrael dwelt in security, each man under his grapevine and under his fig tree, from Dan to Be'er Sheva, all the days of [King] Shlomo.” But, we read later (*Melachim I* 11:14), “*Hashem* then stirred up an antagonist against Shlomo--Haddad the Edomite . . .” Then, regarding the time of *Mashiach*, we read (*Michah* 4:4), “They will sit, each man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none will make them afraid.” In the era of *Mashiach*, such relaxation will be appropriate, explains the *Tolna Rebbe*. However, when the Jewish People mistakenly thought that they had completed their spiritual growth during Shlomo's reign, *Hashem* had to remind them, in a painful way, that it was not so. As long as we are alive and in this world, our spiritual work is never done.

The *Tolna Rebbe* adds: It is fitting that Rabbi Yochanan, of all the Sages, teaches us this lesson. The *Gemara* (*Bava Metzia* 84a) relates that when Rabbi Yochanan's student and study partner, Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish (“Reish Lakish”), passed away, Rabbi Yochanan was despondent. Seeing this, Rabbi Yochanan's colleagues assigned the sage Rabbi Elazar ben Pedat to study with him. However, this arrangement only upset Rabbi Yochanan more. He said, “Reish Lakish would challenge every thing I said from 24 different sources, while Rabbi Elazar cites support for everything I say from 24 different sources.” The *Tolna Rebbe* explains: Rabbi Yochanan did not feel that he was growing from learning with a study partner who agreed with everything he said. Without a study partner who challenged him and forced him to think harder, Rabbi Yochanan saw no point in living. Indeed, he soon passed away.

The *Tolna Rebbe* concludes: May it be *Hashem's* will that we merit to continue growing all of our lives, with no interruptions. [Note: This does not mean that vacations or breaks for relaxation are improper--if they are in the service of further growth. Rather, Rabbi Yochanan is teaching that a person should never think that his spiritual growth is complete and he has no more work to do.] (*Heimah Yenachamuni* p.167)

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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U.S. EMBASSY DUBS BEN-GVIR'S TEMPLE MOUNT VISIT 'UNACCEPTABLE' (YNet 1/3/23)

The U.S. Embassy in Israel on Tuesday condemned the visit by far-right minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

"Ambassador Nides has been very clear on the issue of preserving the status quo in Jerusalem's holy sites. Actions that prevent that are unacceptable," the embassy said in a statement.

The strong message was delivered early on Tuesday, before the White House or State Department could weigh in on the visit.

But, in his congratulatory message to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu upon the formation of his new government, President Joe Biden said the U.S. remained in full support of the two-state solution and that the administration would oppose anything that would endanger it.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a similar statement to incoming Foreign Minister Eli Cohen when the two spoke on Monday.

Since the makeup of Netanyahu's coalition became clear after the November ballot, U.S. officials have voiced their concern that the extremists in the government could compromise the cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem and that the strong alliance between the nations was based on mutual values, among other considerations.

"We will gauge the government by the policies and procedures, rather than individual personalities," Blinken said during the J Street conference in Washington last month.

Ben-Gvir intended to enter the mosque compound on Monday, but following a meeting with the prime minister, said he would postpone his visit.

Netanyahu claimed that he never told Ben-Gvir to refrain from the visit, and only asked that it be coordinated with security agencies.

The visit was condemned by the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, among others.

Turkey was the latest Muslim state to issue a condemnation. "We are concerned by the provocative act of Israeli Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir towards Al-Aqsa Mosque under the protection of Israeli police and we condemn it," the Turkish foreign ministry said in a statement.

"We call on Israel to act responsibly to prevent such provocations that will violate the status and sanctity of holy places in Jerusalem and escalate tension in the region," it said.

France and Britain also issued condemnations.

HAREDI LAWMAKER BLASTS BEN-GVIR OVER TEMPLE MOUNT VISIT (Arutz-7 1/4/23)

A senior haredi lawmaker on Wednesday condemned the National Security Minister's visit to the Temple Mount a day earlier, claiming the visit "caused only damage." MK Moshe Gafni, chief of the non-Hasidic Degel HaTorah faction within the United Torah Judaism party, claimed that under Jewish law, it is forbidden to visit any part of the Temple Mount.

"My position – and I said this to Minister Ben-Gvir this morning – is that it is forbidden under Jewish law to visit the Temple Mount," Gafni tweeted Wednesday morning.

"For generations, the great rabbis from all the communities and movements prohibited this, saying it is worthy of karet," or spiritual extirpation.

"I hope that Minister Ben-Gvir pays attention to this, because this caused only damage, with no benefit whatsoever."

Earlier on Wednesday, the Yated Ne'eman newspaper, which is affiliated with Degel HaTorah, castigated Ben-Gvir over his Temple Mount visit, calling it an "unnecessary and dangerous provocation."

"The Arab world and countries of the world are not, of course, protesting over the issues related to Jewish law when a yarmulke-wearing Jew goes into a place that the great rabbis of recent generations... have said is forbidden, under the greatest prohibition that exists in Jewish law."

The article went on to accuse Ben-Gvir of "playing into the hands" of terrorist groups including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who "use these pointless actions...to convince many Palestinians that 'the Jew' is going to remove Al Aqsa from its place."

Ben-Gvir's visit to the Mount Tuesday took place without incident, but drew condemnations from Arab countries, and criticism from the US State Department and the British consulate in Jerusalem.

HAMAS RETALIATION FOR BEN-GVIR'S AL-AQSA VISIT 'WILL BE THE LAST WAR,' FAR-RIGHT MK VOWS (Ha'aretz 1/3/23)

Far-right lawmaker Zvika Fogel said that should Hamas retaliate over National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's Temple Mount visit on Tuesday, Israel would "respond as I think we should, and yes it would be worth it because this will be the last war and after that we can sit and raise doves and all the other beautiful birds that exist."

The Otzma Yehudit lawmaker's statement follows the visit of far-right Ben-Gvir to the Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa compound on Tuesday morning, which drew threats from Hamas of "explosive violence." It was Ben-Gvir's first stop at the contested Jerusalem holy site since he assumed office last week.

Ben-Gvir stated both during and after the election that he wanted to bring about changes to the religious status quo on the Temple Mount to enable Jews to pray there. On the eve of the election, he stated that he would demand that Netanyahu introduce "equal rights for Jews" on the mountain.

Amid threats from Hamas that such a visit "would lead to an explosion," the

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firebrand lawmaker had reportedly agreed with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to delay the visit to the compound.

But a statement from Ben-Gvir declared that "Our government will not submit to Hamas threats. The Temple Mount is the most important place for the people of Israel, and we maintain freedom of movement for Muslims and Christians, but Jews will also go up to the mount."

The police reported that the minister held a situation assessment with them on Monday evening, at the end of which it was decided to allow his visit to the site "in coordination with the political echelons." According to the police, the visit to the compound ended "without any unusual incidents."

Ben-Gvir declared "that times have changed" following his visit, vowing that the Temple Mount "is open to all."

ISRAEL'S FM COHEN SPEAKS WITH RUSSIAN COUNTERPART LAVROV (i24NEWS, 1/3/23)

Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen's held a conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Tuesday, a day after Israel's new minister said he would do so.

Lavrov called Cohen to congratulate him on his inauguration, according to a statement. The ministers discussed a series of bilateral and regional issues and Cohen referred extensively to the Jewish community in Russia and ex-Soviet expatriates in Israel and their importance to relations between the countries. This is the first such call between the two countries since the start of the invasion.

On Monday, Cohen said that the new Israeli government would "talk less in public" when it comes to Ukraine and continue humanitarian aid to the country during the ongoing war.

During his inaugural speech, he also announced his intentions to speak with Lavrov, prompting backlash from several Israeli partners.

U.S. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham - a vocal supporter of the Jewish state - criticized Cohen's intentions in a tweet saying, "the idea that Israel should speak less about Russia's criminal invasion of Ukraine is a bit unnerving."

"I hope Mr. Cohen understands that when he speaks to Russia's Lavrov, he's speaking to a representative of a war criminal regime that commits war crimes on an industrial scale every day."

According to reports, Kyiv's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba wanted to speak to Cohen before he spoke with Lavrov. It's unclear how this will impact the relationship between Ukraine and Israel.

JUSTICE MINISTER INTRODUCES PLAN TO CURTAIL POWER OF JUDICIARY (Israel Hayom 1/5/23)

Newly appointed Justice Minister Yariv Levin announced a series of controversial reforms Wednesday, including the so-called "derogation clause" that allows Knesset members a vote to override the decisions of Israel's High Court of Justice.

The reforms also propose limiting the authority of the High Court, transferring control over the judicial selection committee to the government and curtailing the authority of government legal advisers.

After his victory in the November elections, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to power last week, heading what analysts call the most right-wing government in the country's history. One of its agendas is to reform the judicial system.

The reforms presented by Levin – if adopted – would boost the power of the elected officials over the courts.

"There are judges, but there is also a parliament and a government," he said with regard to the move. "Democracy is in danger when we vote in the ballot box but each time officials that were not elected decide for us."

The key reform proposed would allow the Knesset to annul a decision of the High Court with a simple majority vote. As Israel does not have a constitution, the Supreme Court currently has the authority to repeal laws it considers discriminatory. Officials in the new government claim the judiciary holds too much power, which is why they seek to pass the "derogation

clause" that would allow them to reinstate laws overturned by the courts.

"A law passed by parliament can no longer be struck down by a judge," Levin said. "It is up to the elected government to decide the laws."

Levin was harshly criticized for the proposed plan, with the opposition claiming it conveniently coincided with the expected debate at the High Court over the appointment of Shas leader Aryeh Deri a minister despite a previous tax fraud conviction.

Opposition Leader Yair Lapid denounced the reforms, saying on Twitter that it "endangers the entire legal system of the State of Israel."

ISRAELI PROFESSOR HONORED BY TURKEY'S ERDOGAN (YNet 1/3/23)

For the very first time, the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA) has awarded an Israeli professor an honorary commendation in a ceremony attended by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

TUBA's annual awards ceremony celebrates academic achievements pertaining to Turkey by researchers the world over. This year, the social sciences award was given to Prof. Amnon Cohen of the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for his trailblazing research about the Land of Israel and Jerusalem under Ottoman rule.

Prof. Cohen, 86, has extensively studied the Jews of the Land of Israel under the rule of the Ottomans — an empire spanning from Southeast Europe through Western Asia and North Africa that ruled over the Holy Land between the 14th and early 20th centuries.

The award's governing committee said: "Prof. Cohen's research created several books about control of Israel for 400 years. He was a deserving candidate due to his many years of excellence in a field that looks far beyond Ottoman control of Istanbul, Antalya and the Balkans."

Prof. Cohen embarked on his academic path at the Hebrew University back in the 1950s. He gave lectures all across the globe and served as head of the university's Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. His books have been translated into multiple languages. His other accolades include the prestigious 2007 Israel Prize, the state's highest cultural honor.

President Erdogan hailed Prof. Cohen without mentioning bilateral ties with Israel. "The ceremony in Erdogan's palace was very impressive," said Prof. Cohen. "He awarded me with honorary membership in the Turkish Academy of Sciences and a medal showing the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages. I extended an invitation to him to come visit our university in Jerusalem and he was enthusiastic about it."

Israeli Ambassador to Turkey Irit Lillian said: "This award emphasizes cooperation between Israel and Turkey. The connection between both countries' civil societies is of unique significance in fields of medicine, academia and social sciences. The award given to Prof. Cohen is a clear indication of Turkish appreciation of the achievements of Israeli academia."

ISRAEL MUST LIMIT 'NON-JEWISH' IMMIGRATION, NEW ALIYAH MINISTER SAYS (Ha'aretz 1/2/23)

Complaining that the majority of new arrivals from Russia and Ukraine are not Jewish according to halakha, or Jewish religious law, newly-appointed Aliyah and Integration Minister Ofir Sofer declared on Sunday that Israel must take steps to limit non-Jewish immigration.

During an interview with national broadcaster Kan, Sofer asserted that the Law of Return needed to be amended, although he preferred "to find a way without legislation," because some 40,000 out of 55,000 new immigrants from Russia and Ukraine are not halakhically Jewish.

"The gap needs to be reduced," he stated.

According to the Jewish Agency, 37,364 new immigrants arrived in Israel from Russia – along with 14,680 from Ukraine – in 2022. Immigration from both countries has risen precipitously in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year.

Concerned that too many immigrants in recent years are not considered Jewish according to halakha, the religious parties allied with Prime Minister

Netanyahu have demanded that the law be changed so that only individuals with at least one Jewish parent would be eligible for aliyah.

As such, they have called for the cancelation of the law's "grandchild clause," which governs eligibility for aliyah and Israeli citizenship. Under the current Law of Return, an individual with at least one Jewish grandparent is eligible to immigrate to Israel and receive automatic citizenship.

Last month, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich declared in a radio interview that the current immigration policy was "one of the biggest threats to Israeli demography, to the country's Jewish identity and assimilation."

"This is a social and Jewish time bomb that must be dealt with. We insist on it and will continue to insist on it," Smotrich told ultra-Orthodox radio station Kol Barama.

His comments seemed to be a response to then Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu's efforts to downplay the possibility of changing the law. Speaking with NBC's Chuck Todd, Netanyahu stated that while the issue would lead to what he called "a big debate," he has "pretty firm views" and "I doubt we'll have any changes."

However, despite his comments, coalition agreements signed by Netanyahu's Likud Party contain clauses requiring the new government to draft legislative amendments to the Law of Return.

In 2019, Israel announced that Jewish immigrants to Israel were outnumbered by non-Jewish immigrants for the first time, releasing figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics showing that 17,700 of the 32,600 migrants who moved to Israel in 2018 came under the Law of Return but were listed as "having no religion."

Such immigrants, hailing largely from the former Soviet Union and Baltic states, count Jewish ancestry but are ineligible to marry as Jews, for example, under the state-controlled rabbinic court system.

According to CBS statistics published by the Ynet news site this November, 72 percent of immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union in 2020 were not Jewish.

All told, there are already more than 400,000 people, mostly from the former Soviet Union, living in Israel who are not considered Jewish by the Chief Rabbinate. For the past several years, immigration from the former Soviet Union has again been on the rise, edging out France and other Western European nations as the source for the largest number of new immigrants.

ISRAEL'S DIASPORA MINISTRY TO BE RENAMED FOR FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM (JPost 1/2/23)

The Diaspora Affairs Ministry will change its name to Diaspora Affairs and Combat Antisemitism Ministry, incoming Minister Amichai Chikli said on Monday during his incoming ceremony at the ministry.

"We managed to unite various departments dealing with antisemitism and the fight against the delegitimization of Israel under one roof," he said. Chikli also called out to organizations and individuals who have initiatives to fight delegitimization of Israel "to continue," and that he and the ministry will "do everything we can to help."

Chikli added that he is "aware of the concerns in the Jewish communities in the world," regarding the new government and that "I believe that reality will prove that most of the concerns will be false."

"It is our duty to act so that every Jewish community is interested in Jewish education," he continued. Chikli added that during his visits to the US he saw "how many Jewish families are unable to pay for private Jewish schools." The minister also said that he hopes the "heads of the organizations of the civil society can be a multiplier force that increases the activity of this office."

Outgoing minister Nachman Shai said that the Diaspora Affairs Ministry "is different from other government offices," since it "isn't concerned with the here and now, rather the future of the Jewish people. It's strategic and multifaceted." He said of the ministry.

Shai added that therefore, "designated ministers are not fighting for [this ministry], since politics are built on immediate gratifications and immediate successes."

Shai said that on his first day as minister he met with three of the senior

rabbis of the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox movements in the US and that his message was that "everyone [all streams] is equal in our eyes. It was a big change to diaspora Jews and it is being threatened again." He said that as minister, "we opened a new page in Israel-Diaspora relations." He concluded by stating that "I encouraged dialogue between the Jewish communities and Israel. I believe that some should express their opinion even if they differ from ours."

IN FIRST, 11 FEMALE SOLDIERS PRE-SELECTED FOR ISRAELI ARMY'S 669 UNIT (i24NEWS 1/3/23)

In a historic decision, Israel's Army Chief of Staff indicated in May 2022 the opening of the 669 and Yahalom units to female recruits

Israel's army on Tuesday announced that its first recruitment of female soldiers joined the 669 search-and-rescue unit, and that selection for the Yahalom engineering unit would take place in April and November.

A total of 130 female soldiers will be integrated into the Yahalom unit and the Airborne Combat Rescue and Evacuation Unit 669.

In a statement, Israel's army laid out two ways that soldiers could be integrated into the Yahalom unit.

The first path will concern candidates deemed suitable on the basis of personal data who will then be subject to selection after physical exercises. Young women who are not selected to join this unit will be assigned to other combat posts within the army.

The second path concerns soldiers who have undergone pilot training and already meet the required physiological criteria. They will then have the opportunity to take an additional exam to join the unit.

Israel's army also indicated in its press release that 11 candidates had so far been deemed suitable to join the tactical rescue unit 669, after examination of their physical abilities and approval of the medical authorities. Another pre-selection day should take place this week, which will involve physical tests.

TOURISM TO ISRAEL MAKING A COMEBACK? (Arutz-7 1/4/23)

Since the spread of COVID-19 in Israel and subsequent lockdowns, the country has lost billions of shekels in revenue with harsh restrictions placed on tourists wishing to enter the Jewish State. 2022, however, saw a dramatic rebound as 2.675 million tourists entered Israel compared to just 397,000 arrivals in 2021 and 831,000 in 2020.

The skies over Israel were officially re-opened to the entry of tourists only in March of 2022 and all restrictions were lifted only about three months later in May.

Revenue from the tourism industry in 2022 was still about 41% lower than the record posted in 2019, with an estimated NIS 13.5 billion compared to an impressive NIS 23 billion before the virus exploded across the world stage.

The Ministry of Tourism points out that several factors must be taken into account when considering the relatively slow rate of recovery over the past year: the fact that Israel re-opened its doors later than similar destinations in the Middle East and Europe, coupled with this lapse in time having a stronger effect on tourists planning their trips ahead of the flight date.

As a result, Israel's rate of recovery from the crisis is slightly lower than the global average, which stands at about 36% compared to 2019.

HAREDI RABBI SLAMS SMOTRICH FOR REDUCING SODA TAX (JPost 1/4/23)

Noted ultra-Orthodox Rabbi and Sephardic halachic authority Ben-Zion Mutzafi came out strongly on Wednesday against Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich's plan to reduce taxes on soft drinks.

"These fools," he said. "This donkey is lowering the tax on sugary drinks. Moron. Our country is number one in diabetic amputations. Over 10% of the population."

Mutzafi's claims are only slightly exaggerated. As of 2019, 6.5% of Israel's population had a diabetes diagnosis, according to the Israel Health Ministry. What is more, data from 2019 (which is currently the most up-to-date data publicly available) shows Israel leading the countries in the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in terms of lower limb amputations due to diabetes.

The consumption of high-sugar foods and subsequent development of Type-2 Diabetes is an issue that disproportionally affects the ultra-Orthodox population in Israel. Israel's Health Ministry in December 2021 revealed that ultra-Orthodox youth are 150% more likely to develop diabetes compared to their non-ultra-Orthodox counterparts, according to data from the Israeli Center for Disease Control.

The ultra-Orthodox population also purchases high-sugar food and drink at a much higher rate than the rest of the country.

"Among the ultra-Orthodox public, habits of the consumption of sweetened beverages, along with the consumption of sweets and snacks, is instilled as a "girsu deyanuta" (childhood teachings) starting from a young age, mostly in the form of rewards and reinforcement in the family setting, in preschools and in schools, and later in life in the various educational settings, in yeshivas, in kollels, on Sabbaths and holidays and also, alas, in memorial services," wrote the Health Ministry.

Mutzafi is one of the heads of the Bnei Zion yeshiva in Jerusalem, which was originally founded in Baghdad, Iraq by his father Rabbi Salman Mutzafi.

ISRAEL'S OFRA HAZA MAKES ROLLING STONE'S TOP 200 SINGERS OF ALL TIME LIST (Israel Hayom 1/3/23)

The late Israeli singer Ofra Haza has been named one of the best singers of all time by Rolling Stone magazine.

"Inspired by her Yemeni-Jewish ancestry, Haza combined traditional vocal conventions with modern technique to create something that felt at once ancient and ahead of its time," Rolling Stone said of the iconic singer.

Born in Tel Aviv to Yemenite Jewish parents who immigrated to Israel, Haza was the youngest of nine children. She grew up in the Hatikva Quarter of Tel Aviv, then an impoverished neighborhood. At age 12, Haza joined a local theater troupe, and then became Israel's foremost pop star at 19 with a successful career in the 1980s and '90s. News articles have affectionately nicknamed her "the Madonna of the Middle East."

"We are so proud to see the late Israeli singer Ofra Haza make this Rolling Stone list! Her voice was one-of-a-kind, and she was a true Israeli icon," the Embassy of Israel to the US posted on Twitter.

Rolling Stone praised Haza for some of her critically acclaimed albums such as 1984's "Shirei Teiman," 1988's "Shaday" and 1992's "Kirya." Haza's songs have also been part of the film soundtracks of "Colors" (1988), "Dick Tracy" (1990), "Wild Orchid" (1990), "Queen Margot" (1994) and "The Prince of Egypt" (1998). In 2000, the beloved singer died of AIDS at age 42.

Haza is one of only two singers on the Rolling Stone list to originate from the Middle East, the other being Umm Kulthum of Egypt. The top three slots on the magazine's prestigious list were granted to Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston and Sam Cooke.

TEMPLE MOUNT AS JEWISH SITE IS ABSENT FROM ISRAEL PUBLIC AWARENESS DUE TO POLITICS, MEDIA (Ron Schleifer, JPost 1/5/23)

King Abdullah of Jordan has announced that his country is ready for a confrontation if there is any change in the status quo in the holy places.

This statement highlights even more Israel's lack of governance in the holiest place for the Jewish People, the Temple Mount, and even more than that, the lack of interest that the majority of the Israeli public and media have in the Temple Mount.

The average Israeli citizen celebrates the Jewish holidays faithfully, circumcises his male children and makes a bar mitzvah for them and on the other hand, is not so aware of how central the Temple Mount is in Judaism.

This Jewish site is absent from the Israeli public's awareness due to political and media-related reasons. The Temple Mount is considered a dangerous place, a center of fanaticism and a trouble spot and therefore it is preferable to stay away from it. The best thing to do is not to relate to it at all, if possible. The reasons often quoted are religious, ideological and political, and they have been around for a long time.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, it was very difficult for Judaism to adapt itself to religious life without a temple and now it finds it hard to rid itself of the traditions that have been formed since then. The Zionist ideology was ruled by the socialist movements for whom religion was no more than an opiate for the masses. The fear of the reaction of the Muslim world concludes this list of concerns.

The mass media form our view of reality. The role of media outlets and journalists, as a professional community that mediates and structures reality, is decisive. The media frame an event and then determine the way the public will relate to it: important and interesting or not relevant as a news item.

Why, therefore, do Israeli media ignore the place where the Temple once stood? One can see that the media's disregard is due to two factors: The topic of the Temple Mount is considered to be outmoded, unfashionable and reactionary, leading to such tragedies as religious wars, and the fear that if Jews do anything on the Temple Mount, the entire Muslim world will unite against little Israel.

These two factors have joined together to cause the media establishment to ignore the lack of sovereignty of Israel on the Temple Mount and where there is a vacuum, someone always steps in to fill it. The vacuum of the Israeli sovereignty on the Temple Mount has led to a slow process that has created a Jordanian enclave in the holy place and since no one speaks about it, there is also much ignorance regarding it.

IF YOU ask the security forces guarding the holy place physically about the history embedded in its stones, you will see that history lessons were not the highest priority when it came to the training course for those serving in the holiest place for the Jewish people.

The journalists who mediate reality to the public are mostly Western, secular and liberal-oriented. The profile of most of the media people in Israel shows that they usually don't have any connection to religion and its symbols. They consider these as being only a source of trouble and power struggles. It is, therefore, easy for them to adopt the political claim that the Temple Mount – the place where the Temple once stood – is a pain in the neck and that it is better not to touch it.

One hears reports regarding the Temple Mount only in the context of confrontations and violence. On the other side, the Muslim world's strategy regarding controlling the Temple Mount is to achieve that aim gradually, step by step. That is how they eat away at Israeli sovereignty there since the Six-Day War when Israel conquered the area. The Wakf became responsible for the Temple Mount mainly because of the lack of interest of the then-defense minister Moshe Dayan in controlling the Temple Mount spiritually and practically.

Since then, every time there is some interest in Israel in the Temple Mount, even on a minor level, we immediately hear threats on the part of the Wakf that a billion Muslims throughout the world are standing ready to attack Israel. The state then beats a hasty retreat, leading to a situation where the Temple Mount is a de facto ex-territory in the heart of Israel.

Itamar Ben-Gvir's excursions onto the Mount are also presented in an extreme context: he is depicted as a troublemaker who will bring upon us war with all Muslims. It remains to be seen whether Ben-Gvir, who already visited the mount as national security minister on Tuesday, will bring about an essential change in the attitude of the old-time Israeli judicial, political and security establishments toward the situation on the Temple Mount, resulting in significant ramifications.

One may expect that the atmosphere of change that the new minister is bringing with him will be able to reverse the gradual Jordanian and Wakf erosion and initiate more of an Israeli imprint on setting the rules, such as ending the time limitations on the presence of Jews on the Mount, opening more gates to Jews wishing to enter there beyond the present Maghariba (Moors') Gate and allowing Jews to pray in the holy shrine, which has largely been prevented until now.

Maybe then the Israeli media will stop falling into the trap of the psychological warfare of the Jordanian Wakf, which tries to limit Israeli sovereignty in the holy place and succeeds in doing so, with no objections being voiced.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel

SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT" L

To Come Together

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

"Gather and I will tell you... gather and listen sons of Yaakov..." (49:1-2)

Parshas Vayechi features some of the Torah's more cryptic verses. First, Yaakov commands his sons to gather around to hear what the future has in store for them. Rather than telling them the future, however, he abruptly pivots to giving them their blessings instead, without ever returning to his original plan.

The Malbim explains that Yaakov actually did accomplish his original goal. Chazal tell us that Hashem removed His *Shechina*, His Divine presence, from Yaakov, thereby making Yaakov unable to reveal the future to them. While he was unable to reveal what the future held, he was nevertheless able to tell his sons how to deal with the future. When Yaakov commanded his sons to "gather and listen sons of Yaakov," he was advising his sons as to the means to merit redemption and end all of history's difficult suffering. Yaakov was telling them – and us – that the key to solving all of our future problems is to gather together as sons of Yaakov.

Chazal famously tell us that the underlying cause behind the exile in which we currently find ourselves is the insidious sin of *Sinas Chinam* – baseless hatred. Our father Yaakov implores us in this week's Parsha to come together, to love and respect each other, such that the Jewish Nation may be healthy and strong and, G-d willing, merit the ultimate redemption.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Yaakov lived in Egypt for seventeen years... (47: 28)

Why is there no space in the Sefer Torah between this parsha and the previous parsha? Because when Yaakov died, the hearts and eyes of Bnei Yisrael were sealed because of their servitude in Egypt. (Rashi)

The servitude did not begin until all of Yaakov's children died. (Shemos Rabba 1:8).

If the servitude did not start for many years after Yaakov died, how did the servitude cause the hearts and eyes of Bnei Yisrael to be sealed when Yaakov died?

Parsha Riddle

The scepter shall not pass from Yehuda... (49:10)

When in Jewish history was this instruction violated?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Who was the first of Yaakov's descendants to go down to Egypt?

Answer: Osnas bas Dina (Pirkei D'Rabi Eliezer Ch. 38)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayechi*, the Torah relates that when Yaakov was about to die, he said to his sons "Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days (*acharis ha-yamim*)." While some commentaries understand the phrase *acharis ha-yamim* to refer to the period following his descendants' entry to the Promised Land, our Sages (as reflected by ArtScroll's translation given above) understand it to refer to the "*keitz*" ("End") - the final redemption of Israel from exile. Various midrashim explain that Yaakov had indeed intended to reveal the date of the *keitz* to his descendants, but was prevented from doing so by Hashem, for unspecified reasons.

Elsewhere, the Sages cursed those "who calculate the end of days," explaining that "they would say once the end of days that they calculated arrived and the Messiah did not come, that he will no longer come at all." (*Sanhedrin* 97b)

The Ramban provides an alternative reason for the Sages' imprecation against those "who calculate the end of days," in the course of his justifications of his own speculations on the *keitz*. He notes the fact, already acknowledged by the Talmud itself, that several great Sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud had attempted to unravel the mystery of the *keitz* but had erred in their interpretations, and he explains that this was due to the Divine Will that the *keitz* remain hidden. The reason for this is that in that earlier era, the *keitz* was still far ahead in the future and the Exile would still extend for a lengthy duration. This is also why the Sages opposed the calculation of the *keitz*, since public awareness of the date would have been demoralizing.

The Ramban accordingly concludes that in his time, when the *keitz* was indubitably nearer than it was in the era of the Sages, and perhaps even relatively close, this concern no longer applies, and it is therefore legitimate to attempt to decipher the mystery of the *keitz*. As to the Talmudic concern that a failure of the Messiah to come by the predicted time would cause people to lose faith in his coming, this does not apply to his conjectures, which were not confident, authoritative assertions but mere tentative, speculative suggestions (*Sefer ha-Geulah sha'ar* 4).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was said to grandchildren.
2. I am said at night.
3. Some sing me.
4. I am angelic.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I gave my birthright to Yosef.
2. I gave the priesthood to Levi.
3. I gave the kingship to Yehuda.
4. I personify repentance.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Yocheved (I wasn't listed but I was counted, I was conceived in Canaan, I was born in the gate, My son was the leader.)

#2 Yehuda (I guaranteed my brother, Royalty comes from me, I founded the Yeshiva, I bear Hashem's name.)

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Shabbos Parsha Yisro – Feb. 10-11**

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