

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shabbos Shorts

May 21 - 22, 2021 - 11 Sivan 5781 - Nasso, Light Candles by 8:01 - Havdalah 9:08

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by Manasseh Katz and Seth Katz and their families on the Shloshim of Howard Katz, Henoch ben Zindel, Z"L, in thanks to Rabbi Rosenbaum, YISE and the entire community for Shiva meals, visits, cards, donations and expressions of sympathy and by the Franco Family in memory of Maurice Grazi, father of Shirlee Franco and David Sporn, brother of Karen Franco.

Mazal Tov

- **Esther & David Hornestay** on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Ahava Sophia, to Ayelet & Benji Kaufman. Mazal Tov also to the grandparents Shari & Rabbi Stuart Klammer of Ramat Bet Shemesh.
- **Arleeta & Rabbi Dr. Ivan Lerner** and Joan Pinchus on the graduation of their granddaughter, Rena Lerner Mozorosky, from Brooklyn Law School. Rena is the daughter of Alyson & Rabbi Daniel Lerner of Baltimore.

Condolences

- **Eileen Goldschmidt** on the passing of her mother, Manya Weisman. The funeral and Shiva took place before Shavuot.
- **Sharona Katz** on the passing of her mother, Lorraine Vogel, Liba Devorah bas Aharon Shimon. The funeral took place on Thursday. Shiva information will be sent when available.
- **Donna Lawrence** on the passing of her father, Herbert Yudenfriend. The funeral and Shiva took place before Shavuot.
- **David Lerner** on the passing of his father, Herbert J. Lerner. The funeral took place on Friday. David is observing Shiva in New York through Thursday morning. Zoom visits Sunday through Wednesday from 12 Noon to 1:00 PM at <https://ramaz.zoom.us/j/97165087300?pwd=ZExlZW5YcW55ZTVlWjUzL28raUxhUT09> or David may be reached during Shiva at 212-932-0953 or 917-251-5270.

Shabbos Schedule

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

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 8:01
- Mincha: 6:30, 8:05, 8:00 (Sephardi)
- If you Daven Kabbalas Shabbos prior to Shkia (8:19 PM), it is preferable to Daven Mincha prior to Plag (6:49 PM).

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00, 9:00, 9:30, 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Mincha: 2:30, 5:00, 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 9:08

YISE Youth Announcements

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

Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list and times, go to: <https://wp.yise.org/remote-learning-schedule/>

- **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-minute Shiur on the Parsha. Sunday through Friday 8:30 AM - **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday 7:00 PM - **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays, 6:00 AM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, **Zoom A**.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Women's Navi Shiur, now studying Sefer Yehoshua, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, **Zoom A**.
 - **GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men and Women** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM.
 - Unraveling the Navi with Rabbi Hillel Shaps, **Zoom B**.
 - **Rabbi Tuvia Grauman** - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sundays at 10:00 AM, **Zoom F**.
 - **Rabbi Yonatan Zakem's** Shiur for men & women, Pearls of Prayer, exploring the depth and meaning of our daily prayers. Sunday evenings, **Zoom I**.
 - **GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM (except as noted). For more info. contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, hshaps@gwckollel.org 347-869-9361.
 - For Men & Women - **Zoom C** (except as noted):
 - Mondays: (for men only) Rabbi H. Shaps, On the Same Page Gemara, **Zoom B**.
 - Tuesdays: Rabbi Winter - Torah Topics
 - Wednesdays: Rabbi Grossman - Reading Responsa
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Grossman - Parshas Hashavua, 9:00 PM.
 - For Women - **Zoom D**
 - Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Parsha Journeys
 - Tuesdays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Bereishis in-Depth
 - **Semichat Chaver Program**, Tuesdays at 9:00 PM with Rabbi Hillel Shaps. For more information, please contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@gwckollel.org Registration required at gwckollel.org/scp
 - **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiur on Daily Halachos for men & women, Tuesdays 9:15 AM, **Zoom E**.
 - **Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's** Shiur for Men and Women, Tuesdays, 1:30 PM, "A Second Look - Stories in the Torah from a Deeper Perspective", **Zoom H**.
 - **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning Maseches Kiddushin on Wednesday evenings, 7:00 PM, **Zoom G**.
- Connection Details:** Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID & password:
- Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019
 Zoom B: ID: 349 754 2180, password Learn
 Zoom C: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn
 Zoom D: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter
 Zoom E: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613
 Zoom F: ID: 978 8156 7874, password RabbiHyatt
 Zoom G: ID: 539 496 3506, password ygwartz
 Zoom H: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079
 Zoom I: ID: 269 840 3648, password online Pearls, phone 621690

COVID-19 Updates

- **Outdoor Minyan** - This Shabbos, May 22, is the last planned outdoor Minyan.
 - **Minyan Changes** - We are making changes to the Minyan schedule to accommodate as many members as possible. Watch your email for details about major changes coming soon to Minyanim based on changes in Montgomery County COVID-19 regulations.
 - The Shul office is still open, but hours may vary.
- Let us Daven to Hashem to keep all of us in good health and to return our lives to normal as soon as possible. In protecting each other as we navigate this unfolding situation, may we grow stronger as individuals and as a community.

Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!

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

Dvar Torah Dedications/Sponsor a Shiur

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

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

1. The following individual Shiurim are available for sponsorship at \$18 (per day):
 - Daily Morning (Sunday through Friday) Tehillim and Parsha Shiur
 - Daily Evening (Sunday through Thursday) Tehillim and Halacha Shiur
 - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Sunday Morning Mussar Study Group for Women
 - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tuesday or Friday Morning Gemara Shiur for Men
 - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday Morning Nach Shiur
 - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Wednesday Night Navi Shiur for Women
 - Rabbi Grauman - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sunday Morning
2. Sponsorship of the Morning and Evening Tehillim and Parsha/Halacha Shiurim together is available for \$25.
3. The Pre-Shabbos Drasha video is available for sponsorship at \$54.

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

Thank you to this past week's Shiurim sponsors:

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim/Parsha/Halacha Shiur

- **Debbie Rogal and Jay Rogal** in memory of Jay's mother and Debbie's grandmother, Belle Rogal, whose Yahrzeit is on Shabbos, 11 Sivan.

Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur

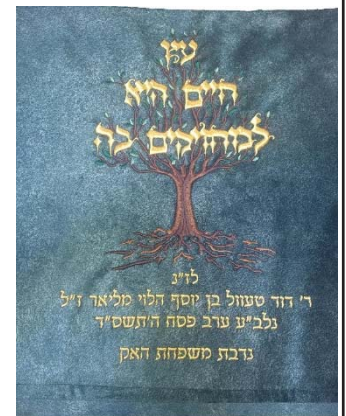
- **David Jaray** in honor of a Refuah Sheleimah to Rabbi Hyatt and in honor of Rabbi Grauman and all those who attend his Shiur.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Erev Shabbos Drasha

- **Lee & Craig Oppenheim** on the Yahrzeit of Craig's father, Yaacov ben Hershal, on the 11th of Sivan and Lee's mother, Chana Razel bat Avraham Ha'levi, on the 16th of Sivan.

Beautifying Our Shul - Yom Tov Paroches

Thanks to a generous donation from the Hawk family, YISE now has a special Paroches, Bima cover and Torah cover for use on the Sholosh Regolim in the Belonofsky Sanctuary, first used this week for Shavuot.



YISE Programs and Listings

Annual Congregational Meeting - The meeting for election of YISE officers and trustees will take place on Tuesday, May 25 at 7:30 PM on **Zoom A**. **YISE Regular Board Meeting** will take place on Tuesday, May 25, at 9:00 PM on Zoom. For more information, contact secretary@yise.org

Memorial Day Program: "I didn't know there were Jews in the military" - Monday, May 31, 11:00 AM -12:15 PM on **Zoom A**. You won't want to miss this program. Questions? Contact social@yise.org for more information. *See flyer for details.*

Come Join Rabbi Koss's Monthly Jewish History class on Zoom! Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington and the YISE Chesed Committee: Rabbi Koss will be speaking on a topic in Jewish history, Monday, June 7, from 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM on **Zoom A**. For more information, contact Miriam Friedman at mfriedman2@yahoo.com

Upcoming YISE Parenting Lecture: Picky Eaters YISE Youth Committee parenting lecture series presents "Picky Eaters Demystified! Addressing feeding difficulties in young children" with Rebecca Begtrup Broniatowski, D.O, M.P.H., Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Children's National Medical Center. The lecture has been postponed. Updated details will be sent out when available.

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

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

Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill is a part of YISE's Chesed Committee. The program helps members undergoing serious medical crises. We are always looking for volunteers to help. To be a part of this program by helping with meals, visitation, shopping, childcare, etc., contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, mskarlin@gmail.com or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, mfriedman2@yahoo.com

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

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

Community Programs & Listings

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

Women's Institute of Torah Seminary & College - Earn college credits online this summer at WITS (formerly Maalot). Zoom open house June 9. Classes begin June 20. For more info. call 410-358-3144 or email info@wits.edu or go to www.wits.edu/summer21

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

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

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, May 26, 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 vprr@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password: 3671

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

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

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

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

Daily Halacha Program from Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold - Receive one every day in your inbox. Visit dvarhalacha.com and click "Sign Up."

Kemp Mill Village is providing friendly phone calls and limited deliveries during the pandemic. Call 1-833-KMV-20902 to request service or to volunteer. See kempmillvillage.org for more information.

Silver Spring Gemachim - For a complete list: www.gemachexchange.com

The Week Ahead

Sunday
May 23

Monday
May 24

Tuesday
May 25

Wednesday
May 26

Thursday
May 27

Friday
May 28

Limited Minyanim will take place at YISE next week, **advance registration and confirmation required**. You are encouraged to Daven at home at the same time as a Minyan at YISE. Shacharis: Sunday 6:30 AM/7:30 AM/8:45 AM; Monday/Thursday 6:15 AM/6:45 AM/8:45 AM; Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday 6:15 AM/6:55 AM/8:45 AM; Mincha/Maariv: Sunday through Thursday: 8:10 PM.

Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 4:11 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 4:47 AM, Latest Netz: 5:49 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:25 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:43 PM, Earliest Shkia: 8:21 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim: 9:14 PM

Next Shabbos

May 28 - 29, 2021 - 18 Sivan 5781
Parshas Behaaloscha
Light Candles: 8:07
Havdalah: 9:14

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday, May 26 at 12:00 Noon

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

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

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

Office Hours: Monday/Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Closed Wednesday,
Friday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Yale Ginsburg - President

Simi Franco - Office Manager

A Quick Thought on the Parsha from Rabbi Rosenbaum

Nasso 5781:

What's Driving You?

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

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

We read in this week's *Parsha* of the unfortunate episode of a husband being suspicious that his wife is being unfaithful and the concept of the *Sota* where a husband brings his wife to the *Beis Hamikdash* to ascertain whether or not she has indeed been unfaithful. It's very interesting, one of the first *Pesukim* of the section talks about a *רוח קנאה*, a spirit. *קנאה* is an interesting word, *קנאה* can be translated as zealotry or *קנאה* can be translated as jealousy. And the *Torah* says the husband has a spirit of *קנאה* and he warns his wife and indeed she had been unfaithful, or the husband has a spirit of *קנאה* and he warns his wife and she wasn't unfaithful. What does the word *קנאה* mean here?

The *Seforno* has such a simple *P'shat* but it is a powerful thing to think about. The *Seforno* says the word *קנאה* means two different things in the *Pasuk*. When the husband's concerns are valid, the spirit of *קנאה* is a spirit of purity, looking out for the honor of G-d, that he feels that something wrong has happened and like *Pinchas* there is a language used where he acted with *קנאה*, standing up for what is right. And when it turns out that his suspicions are not validated, the *Seforno* explains his spirit of *קנאה* is a spirit of *Shtush*, a spirit of foolishness.

So this is a very interesting thing to think about, that you could have two people, or even one person in two different circumstances, doing and saying the same thing with very different motivations. The same words, in more or less the same context, could be driven by a spirit of purity or driven by a spirit of foolishness. The only one who really knows is G-d and ourselves, and that is something so powerful to think about. It's so easy to justify our actions by saying so and so does it, so and so does it. It could be so and so does it and it is right when they do it. It could be that our motivations are in a very different place. It's an interesting thing to think about.

Have a wonderful *Shabbos*!

DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE JEWS IN THE US MILITARY?

A PANEL DISCUSSION

Jews have served our country's armed services since the Revolutionary War.

Did you ever wonder what it's like to serve as an observant Jew?

Members of our community, in various branches of the US military, will discuss what drew them to join, some of the challenges and opportunities experienced, and much more

MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021

ZOOM: 416 963 9000

11:00AM - VIRTUALLY

PASSWORD: 492019

Learn about members of our community

Scott Schlesinger (Air Force, retired)

Eric Kinzbrunner (Navy)

Jared Fusia (Air National Guard)

Hector Mariscal (Army National Guard)

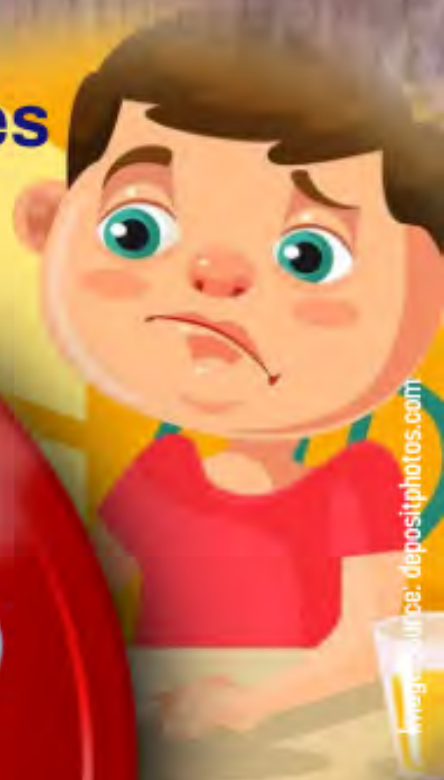
Eri Kjeldergaard (Army)

Daniel Selig (Army)

Questions? Contact social@yise.org



YISE Youth Committee Parenting Lecture Series



Add **Additional Difficulties**
in Young Children

Presented by
Rebecca Begtrup Broniatowski, D.O., M.P.H
Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Children's National Medical Center

ZOOM ID 416 963 9000 PW 492019



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Visit our website: www.campshomrai.org
or Email: camp@yise.org

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Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Volume 27, Issue 31

Shabbat Parashat Naso

Shabbat Shalom

5781 - B"H

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

The Politics of Envy - Few things in the Torah are more revolutionary than its conception of leadership.

Ancient societies were hierarchical. The masses were poor and prone to hunger and disease. They were usually illiterate. They were exploited by rulers as a means to wealth and power rather than treated as people with individual rights – a concept born only in the seventeenth century. At times they formed a *corvée*, a vast conscripted labour force, often used to construct monumental buildings intended to glorify kings. At others they were dragooned into the army to further the ruler's imperial designs.

Rulers often had absolute power of life and death over their subjects. Not only were kings and pharaohs heads of state; they also held the highest religious rank, as they were considered children of the gods or even demigods themselves. Their power had nothing to do with the consent of the governed. It was seen as written into the fabric of the universe. Just as the sun ruled the sky and the lion ruled the animal realm, so kings ruled their populations. That was how things were in nature, and nature itself was sacrosanct.

The Torah is a sustained polemic against this way of seeing things. Not just kings but all of us, regardless of colour, culture, class or creed, are in the image and likeness of God. In the Torah, God summons His special people, Israel, to take the first steps towards what might eventually become a truly egalitarian society – or to put it more precisely, a society in which dignity, *kavod*, does not depend on power or wealth or an accident of birth.

Hence the concept, which we will explore more fully in parshat Korach, of leadership as service. The highest title accorded to Moses in the Torah is that of *eved Hashem*, "a servant of God". His highest praise is that he was "very humble, more so than anyone else on earth". To lead is to serve. Greatness is humility. As the book of Proverbs puts it, "A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honour".

The Torah points us in the direction of an ideal world, but it does not assume that we have reached it yet or even that we are within striking distance. The people Moses led, like many of us today, were still prone to fixate on ambition, aspiration, vanity, and self-indulgence. They still had the human desire for honour and status. And Moses had to recognise that fact. It would be a major source of conflict in the months and years ahead. It is one of the primary themes of the book of Bamidbar.

Of whom were the Israelites jealous? Most of them did not aspire to be Moses. He was, after all, the man who spoke to God and to whom God spoke. He performed miracles, brought plagues against the Egyptians, divided the Red Sea, and gave the people water from a rock and manna from heaven. Few would have had the hubris to believe they could do any of these things.

But they did have reason to resent the fact that religious leadership seemed to be confined to only one tribe, Levi, and one family within that tribe, the Kohanim, male descendants of Aaron. Now that the Tabernacle was to be consecrated and the people were about to begin the second half of their journey, from Sinai to the Promised Land, there was a real risk of envy and animosity.

That is a constant throughout history. We desire, said Shakespeare, "this man's gift and that man's

scope." Aeschylus said, "It is in the character of very few men to honour without envy a friend who has prospered." Goethe warned that although "hatred is active, and envy passive dislike; there is but one step from envy to hate." Jews should know this in their very bones. We have often been envied, and all too frequently has that envy turned to hate, with tragic consequences.

Leaders need to be aware of the perils of envy, especially within the people they lead. This is one of the unifying themes of the long and apparently disconnected parsha of Naso. In it we see Moses confronting three potential sources of envy. The first lay within the tribe of Levi. Its members had reason to resent the fact that priesthood had gone to just one man and his descendants: Aaron, Moses' brother.

The second had to do with individuals who were neither of the tribe of Levi nor of the family of Aaron but who felt that they had the right to be holy in the sense of having a special, intense relationship with God in the way that the priests had. The third had to do with the leadership of the other tribes who might have felt left out of the service of the Tabernacle. We see Moses dealing sequentially with all these potential dangers.

First, he gives each Levitical clan a special role in carrying the vessels, furnishings, and framework of the Tabernacle whenever the people journeyed from place to place. The most sacred objects were to be carried by the clan of Kohath. The Gershonites were to carry the cloths, coverings, and drapes. The Merarites were to carry the planks, bars, posts, and sockets that made up the Tabernacle's framework. Each clan was, in other words, to have a special role and place in the solemn procession as the house of God was carried through the desert.

Next, Moses deals with individuals who aspire to a higher level of holiness. This, it seems, is the underlying logic of the Nazirite, the individual who vows to set himself apart for the Lord. He was not to drink wine or any other grape product; he was not to have his hair cut; and he was not to defile himself through contact with the dead. Becoming a Nazirite was, it seems, a way of temporarily assuming the kind of set-apartness associated with the priesthood, a voluntary extra degree of holiness.

Lastly, Moses turns to the leadership of the tribes. The highly repetitive chapter 7 of our parsha itemises the offerings of each of the tribes on the occasion of the dedication of the altar. Their offerings were identical, and the Torah could have abbreviated its account by describing the gifts brought by one tribe and stating that each of the other tribes did likewise. Yet the sheer repetition has the effect of emphasising the fact that each tribe had its moment of glory. Each, by giving to the house of God, acquired its own share of honour.

These episodes are not the whole of Naso but they consist of enough of it to signal a principle that every leader and every group needs to take seriously. Even when people accept, in theory, the equal dignity of all, and even when they see leadership as service, the old dysfunctional passions die hard. People still resent the success of others. They still feel that honour has gone to others when it should have gone to them. Rabbi Elazar HaKappar said: "Envy, lust and the pursuit of honour drive a person out of the world."

The fact that these are destructive emotions does not stop some people – perhaps most of us – feeling

them from time to time, and nothing does more to put at risk the harmony of the group. That is one reason why a leader must be humble. They should feel none of these things. But a leader must also be aware that not everyone is humble. Every Moses has a Korach, every Julius Caesar a Cassius, every Duncan a Macbeth, every Othello an Iago. In many groups there is a potential troublemaker driven by a sense of injury to their self-esteem. These are often a leader's deadliest enemies and they can do great damage to the group.

There is no way of eliminating the danger entirely, but Moses in this week's parsha tells us how to behave. Honour everyone equally. Pay special attention to potentially disaffected groups. Make each feel valued. Give everyone a moment in the limelight if only in a ceremonial way. Set a personal example of humility. Make it clear to all that leadership is service, not a form of status. Find ways in which those with a particular passion can express it, and ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute.

There is no failsafe way to avoid the politics of envy but there are ways of minimising it, and our parsha is an object lesson in how to do so.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

What is the real meaning of love? And why is it that the Priest-Kohanim, the ministers of the Holy Temple and Torah teachers of the nation, must administer their priestly benediction "with love"? What has "love" to do with their specific leadership role?

In our Biblical portion, the Almighty tells Moses to command Aaron (the High Priest-Kohen) and his sons, "... So shall you bless the children of Israel: Say to them, 'May the Lord bless you and keep you; May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; May the Lord lift His face towards (forgive) you and grant you peace'. And they shall place My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them".

This priestly benediction was a regular part of the daily Temple service. To this very day, here in Israel, every morning during the repetition of the Amidah, the descendants of Aaron bestow this blessing upon the congregation. Prior to blessing the congregation, the Priest-Kohanim recite the following benediction; "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aaron, and commanded us to bestow a blessing upon His nation Israel with love". What is the significance of these last two words, "with love"? And if the Priest-Kohen does not feel love in his heart for every member of the congregation, does this disqualify his blessing?

A Midrash asks why the command to bless Israel is prefaced by the words "say to them". It answers that this teaches that the Cantor, the representative of the congregation who repeats the Amidah for all the congregants, must say each word of the benediction, which is then repeated word by word by the Priest-Kohen.

Rashi points out that the Hebrew *Amor* (say) is vocalized with a *Kametz*, as in *Zachor*: Remember the Sabbath day, Remember the day you came out of (Egypt). This implies an active form of the verb, as in

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remembering the Sabbath by our weekly repetition of the Divine primordial week of creation in which we too actively work for six days and creatively rest on the Sabbath, or in our re-experiencing the Egyptian servitude and exodus on the seder night. Apparently, the Kohen-priest must “actively” bless. Rashi adds that the Hebrew amor is spelled in the longest and fullest form possible, in order to teach us that the Priest-Kohen “must not bestow his blessing hastily but rather with intense concentration and with a full, loving heart”. There is even a French, Hassidic interpretation of the word which claims that the Hebrew amor is akin to the French amour, meaning with love!

Our God is a God of unconditional love, both before and after we sin, thus, the very opening of the Ten Commandments, God’s introduction to His Revelation of His laws, is “I am the Lord who took you out of the Land of Egypt, the House of bondage”. The Almighty is telling His nation that by taking them out of difficult straits of Egyptian slavery, He removed our pain thus demonstrating His love for us! It is almost as if he is explaining that His right to command them is based upon His having demonstrated His love for them.

A religious wedding ceremony is fundamentally a ritual acceptance of the mutual responsibilities of husband and wife. The marriage document, or Ketubah, is all about the groom’s financial obligations to his bride. And yet, our Talmudic Sages teach us that the young couple must love each other in order to get married, that the over-arching basis for every wedding ceremony is “You shall love your friend like yourself”. The nuptial blessings refer to bride and groom as “loving and beloved friends”. Our Sages are telling us that there can be no real love without the assumption of responsibility; when I declare my love for you, I must take a certain degree of responsibility for easing your life and sharing your challenges.

The Hassidic Rebbe, Reb Zushia told of how inspired he was by a marvelous conversation he overheard between two drunks at an inn. “I love you, Igor”, said one drunkard to the other. “You don’t love me”, said his friend. “I do love you,” protested the first. “You don’t love me,” insisted Igor. “How do you know that I don’t love you?” shouted the first in exasperation. “Because you can’t tell me what hurts me,” answered Igor. “If you can’t tell me what hurts me, you can’t try to make it better. And if you don’t try to make it better, you certainly don’t love me.”

Love and responsibility are inextricably intertwined. Indeed, the very Hebrew word *ahavah* is based on the Aramaic word for giving. The Kohen-Priest who is a Jewish teacher and a Jewish leader, simultaneously functions as the agent of the Almighty and of the nation. He must take responsibility for his nation, he must attempt to “brand” them with God’s name, with God’s love, and with God’s justice. He must communicate with his nation, symbolized by the cantor or *shaliah tzibbur*, he must know what hurts his nation and what his nation needs, and then he must actively try to assuage that pain while raising the nation closer to the realm of the Divine. In short, he must love his people and take responsibility for them, as the benediction before the blessing explains so very well!

Post Script: The Sages of the Talmud ordained that at the time of the priestly benediction, the congregation should think of their dreams – individual and corporate – crying out “Master of the Universe, I am yours and my dreams are yours...” The Hebrew word *dream*, *halom*, has the same letters as *hamal*, love, compassion, as well as *laham*, fight, struggle, wage war. Dreams which continue to engage us when we are awake are dreams of love

and passion, such as the return to Zion which was “as in a dream”. Dreams, as loves, are the beginning of responsibility, a responsibility which often means struggle and even war. Kohen-Teachers must love their student-congregants and take responsibility for them teaching them likewise to take responsibility for each other and for the dream. Only then will our dreams and God’s dreams be one dream: the perfection of the world, Tikkun Olam.

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb Distinctly Different - The term is one that I first heard back in high school. There are times that I find it helpful, and there are times I find myself resistant to using it. The term is “Judeo-Christian.”

This term was first used in the early-19th century to refer to the fact that the roots of the religion of Christianity are to be found in the Jewish religion and culture. Much later the term came to be used as it is commonly used nowadays; namely, as a way of referring to the mores, beliefs, and ethical norms which our religion has in common with Christianity.

Long before my career in the rabbinate, I was acquainted with Christians and fascinated by both the differences and similarities between our faiths and our lifestyles. I may have shared with readers of this column my family’s exposure to a devout Irish Catholic family. When my siblings and I were quite young, we spent our summers in a cottage in Rockaway Beach that was owned by an elderly Catholic couple. We became familiar with their entire family.

Much more recently, I have represented the Orthodox Union in a regular forum in which leaders of the Jewish community meet with their counterparts in the Catholic community to work on various social issues in which we have common interests. Following the guidelines of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik regarding interreligious dialogue, we carefully avoid discussing theological matters, and confine our discussions to ways in which we can cooperate in achieving various shared goals.

Often, we encounter striking similarities in the problems that we face; for example, difficulties in funding our respective parochial schools. Then, we speak the same language. But quite frequently, we discover that even when we use the same terminology, we are referring to very different experiences. In a recent such forum, for example, the Catholic group, having read so much about the “Charedim” and their involvement in Israeli politics, asked me to define for them just who the Charedim were. I tried my best to do so, but they remained confounded as how a group of fervently pious believers in the literal meaning of the Bible could be anti-Zionist in their politics.

Just as the Catholic group had difficulty understanding such Jewish phenomena, so the members of our Jewish group found some Christian religious concepts practices alien, and even unacceptable. Thus, in one of our conversations, one of the Catholic clergymen wished aloud that he could retreat from the pressures of contemporary society and spend the rest of his years in a monastery. I was just one of our group who immediately protested that for us Jews there were no monasteries, and that we did not see the monastic life as a positive religious alternative.

The response of members of the Catholic group to that remark finally bring us to Parshat Naso. “How can you not view monasticism positively? After all, the practice has biblical roots, in the Hebrew Bible,” they insisted. They were referring to the following verses in this week’s parsha: “The Lord spoke to Moses, saying...If anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a Nazirite’s vow, to set himself apart for the Lord, he shall abstain from wine...He may not eat anything that is obtained from the grape vine... No

Likutei Divrei Torah

razor shall touch his head...He shall not go in where there is a dead person”.

Of course, any one of the Jewish members of the group could easily have referred to the numerous opinions, already recorded in the Talmud, as to the non-desirability of the practice of nezirut. There are certainly forceful statements against taking the Nazirite vow, and even those who consider it a sin.

But I found myself taking a different tack in this discussion. “It is wrong to equate the Nazir with the monk” I said. “Granted, the Nazir must be guided by certain very stringent prohibitions. But he does not absent himself from society. He is neither a hermit, nor a member of some ascetic sect. This is very different from one who undertakes monastic vows, as I understand them.”

One of my companions rallied to my side after reaching for a volume of the set of encyclopedias, which was in easy reach in the library where the meeting was taking place. He read out this definition of “monasticism.” “It is an institutionalized religious practice whose members live by a rule that requires works that goes beyond those of the laity... The monastic is commonly celibate and universally ascetic, and separates himself from society either by living as a hermit or by joining a community of others who profess similar intentions.”

Another simply consulted his dictionary which stated: “The word ‘monasticism’ is derived from the Greek *monachos*, which means ‘living alone.’”

Our Jewish group, which consisted of several diverse individuals who regularly disagree vociferously with each other, were united in our response to the Catholic gentlemen on that day. The Nazirite was not a monk.

The interreligious group did not persist in this particular discussion. Afterwards, however, some of us from the Jewish group continued our discussion over coffee. We were struck by the fact that three individuals are understood by our tradition as having been Nazirites, or at least partial Nazirites. They include the heroic warrior Samson, the prophet Samuel, and Absalom, the son of David who rebelled against his father. No question about it: these men were not celibate, quite the contrary, they played active roles in the life of the Jewish people, albeit each in very different ways.

The distinct difference between our Torah’s concept of the Nazirite and the Christian concept of the monastic is best expressed by Maimonides: “Lest a person mislead himself into thinking that since envy, lust, and vainglory are such negatives, I will therefore separate myself from them; forcefully distance myself from them to the extreme; eat no meat and drink no wine; practice celibacy; shun a finely furnished home; desist from wearing attractive clothing, and instead don sackcloth and coarse wool, and similar such ascetic practices. Let him be aware that this is the manner of Gentile priests!”

“Let me make clear that a person who pursues such a path is a sinner. Even the Nazirite, who merely refrains from products of the vine, requires atonement. How much more so the one who deprives himself of the many pleasures of life, which are not prohibited by the Torah. He is simply misguided.”

The Nazirite, in Maimonides’ view, is not the paradigm of holiness. The truly holy man must not refrain from living a normal family life, must share in the joys and woes of his friends and neighbors, and must exercise the leadership skills with which he has been uniquely blessed.

It is doubtful that one can practically be a Nazirite nowadays. But the lessons of this week’s Torah portion are clear: one may not separate oneself from family and community.

In this regard, the Jewish norm and the Christian norm are distinctly different. [Excerpted]

נאסו

With 176 verses, *Naso* is the longest single *Parashah* in the Torah. R' Yitzchak Meir Rotenberg-Alter z"l (1799-1866; first *Gerrer Rebbe*, known as the "*Chiddushei Ha'Rim*") observes that the *Midrash Rabbah* on this week's *Parashah* is significantly longer than on any other *Parashah*. Also, the *Zohar* on this week's *Parashah*, while not the longest, contains some of the most noteworthy sections (known as the "*Idra Rabbah*").

The *Chiddushei Ha'Rim* explains: *Parashat Naso* is nearly always read on the *Shabbat* after *Shavuot*. Every year, on *Shavuot*, *Hashem*, in His goodness, renews the Giving of the Torah for the coming year. This renewal enables us to plumb the depths of the Torah, as recorded in the *Midrash*, and to see the light of the Torah, as reflected in the *Zohar*. (The *Chiddushei Ha'Rim* notes that the *Zohar* frequently uses the expression "*Ta chazi*" / "Come and see," in contrast to the *Talmud Bavli*'s "*Ta shema*" / "Come and hear.")

The *Chiddushei Ha'Rim* continues: Referring to the Torah's "light," we say in the blessing before *Kri'at Shema*, "Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah." However, our intention is not to derive personal benefit from that "light." Rather, we continue, "Attach our hearts to Your *Mitzvot*." (*Sefer Ha'zechut*)

R' Tzaddok Hakohen Rabinowitz z"l (1823-1900; *Chassidic Rebbe* in Lublin, Poland) adds: *Parashat Naso* includes "*Birkat Kohanim*" / the blessing the *Kohanim* give to the Jewish People. When one gives a blessing, he gives what is at the root of his soul. The *Kohanim* are meant to be the teachers of the nation; thus, their blessing leads to increased Torah study, as reflected in a longer *Midrash* and a very deep section of the *Zohar*. (*Pri Tzaddik: Naso 7*)

Tefilah

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

R' Yitzchak Ze'ev Yadler z"l (1843-1917; Yerushalayim) offers the following definitions for the sixth and seventh types of prayers. (The first through fifth types were discussed last week.)

- "*Bitzur*" (ביצור) (*Tehilim* 18:7)
- "*Keri'ah*" (קריאה) (*ibid*)

The cited verse states: "*Batzar* / In my distress *Ekra* / I will call to *Hashem*, I will cry out to my *Elokim*. From His temple, He will hear my voice; my cry to Him will reach His ears." R' Yadler writes: The Name "*Hashem*" refers to G-d's Attribute of Mercy. Thus, our verse refers to someone who calls out to *Hashem* when he is in distress, but does so with a recognition that his distress is a reflection of *Hashem's* mercy; for example, because it atones for that person's sins.

R' Yadler continues: The other form of prayer referred to here is prayer that recognizes that the *Shechinah* is, so-to-speak, "suffering" with us. [This refers to the fact that G-d wants to be good to us, but we "frustrate" Him by not deserving His goodness.] The person referred to in our verse prays to "my *Elokim*," i.e., he has a personal relationship which causes him to put G-d's "feelings" first. [R' Yadler does not explain which of these forms of prayer is "*Bitzur*" and which is "*Keri'ah*."]

(*Tiferet Tziyon Al Midrash Rabbah*)

R' Chaim Tিরer z"l (1760-1818; rabbi of Czernowitz) writes: In connection with the prayer called "*Keri'ah*," we read (*Tehilim* 20:10), "The King will answer us on the day we call ('*Kor'enu*')." This may be understood in light of the statement of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa (*Berachot* 34b), "If my prayer flows smoothly, I know it has been accepted." Often, we pray for things that are in the distant future. Nevertheless, we sometimes can know on the day that we call whether we have been answered, i.e., if our prayer flows smoothly.

(*Sha'ar Ha'Tefilah* VI ch.1)

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“The Kohen shall inscribe these curses on a scroll and erase it into the bitter waters.” (6:23)

The *Gemara* (*Sukkah* 53a-b) relates: When King David excavated for the foundations of the *Bet Hamikdash*, he reached the water table and displaced a shard of pottery on which *Hashem’s* Name was engraved and which had been there since the time of Creation. Immediately, the waters rose and threatened to flood the world. King David asked: “Does anyone know whether it is permissible to write *Hashem’s* Name and throw it into the water?” An advisor named Achitophel knew, but he did not answer, because he was angry that King David had not appointed him to a position of honor. King David then pronounced a curse on anyone who knew but did not speak up. Hearing that, Achitophel responded, “If *Hashem’s* Name may be erased to bring about peace between a husband and wife [referring to our verse], it certainly may be erased to save the entire world!” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Rashi z”l writes that King David also knew this *Halachah*, but he did not want to issue a *Halachic* ruling in the presence of his “teacher,” Achitophel. R’ Yerachmiel Shulman z”l *Hy”d* (*Menahel Ruchani* of the *Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva* in Pinsk, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) observes: The *Mishnah* (*Avot* ch.6) says that King David learned only two things from Achitophel; nevertheless, King David honored Achitophel as if the latter were his teacher. As such, R’ Shulman writes, the above *Gemara* is teaching us the extent to which a person can be influenced by jealousy and a desire for honor, on the one hand, and by *Mussar* / working on refining one’s character, on the other hand.

He explains: The waters were rising from the excavation, and they were threatening to destroy the world. Nevertheless, Achitophel would not come to King David’s aid until he was threatened by King David’s curse. At the same time, King David would not cross the bounds of proper behavior by ruling in the presence of his teacher, even a minor teacher, even to save the world! [Generally, saving lives supersedes nearly all *Mitzvot*, but not if the same goal can be accomplished without transgressing, as was the case here.]

Logic would dictate that the flood should have been stopped as quickly as possible. However, writes R’ Shulman, man’s natural instinct to seek honor and to be jealous is stronger than logic; thus, Achitophel did not respond at first. Likewise, the demands of character refinement go beyond what man’s logic dictates; thus, King David refrained from saving the world in order not to rule in the presence of his teacher. The practical lesson for us is that we cannot rely on our own intellects to determine the demands of character refinement. (*Peninei Ha’shlaimut*: Introduction p.4-5)

“This is the work of the families of Gershon--to work and to carry.” (4:24)

R’ Moshe Sofer z”l (1762–1839; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Pressburg, Hungary) writes that the names of Levi’s three sons--Gershon, Kehat, and Merari--allude to different periods in Jewish history. “Gershon” alludes to the period of exile, since the root of that name (גרש) means to expel.

As such, writes R’ Moshe Gruenwald z”l (1853-1910; rabbi of, and *Rosh Yeshiva* in, Huszt, Hungary), our verse can be understood as follows: The task of a Jew in exile is to “work”--serve *Hashem*--and “carry”--be patient. Even when we see that the nations are successful and their cities are built up, while the Jewish People are downtrodden and the cities of *Eretz Yisrael* are in ruins, we should not question G-d’s ways. (*Arugas Ha’bosem*)

“They shall confess the sin that they committed; he shall make restitution for his guilt in its principal amount and add its fifth to it, and give it to the one to whom he is indebted.” (5:7)

Our verse speaks of a thief who repents and pays back what he stole (“He shall make restitution . . .”). Why, then, is the first part of the verse in the plural form (“They shall confess the sin that they committed”)?

R’ Chaim Zaichyk z”l (1906-1989; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Bet Yosef-Novardok in Buchach, Poland; later in Israel) explains: How does a person succumb to the temptation to steal? Sometimes, it is because his business failed due to unfair competition, leaving him no obvious way to provide for his family except by stealing. Other times, it is because his wife and family members make him feel like an inadequate provider, leading him to steal so his family can keep up with the Joneses. Or, perhaps his business was struggling, and no one stepped forward to fulfill the *Mitzvah* (*Vayikra* 25:35): “If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him--proselyte or resident--so that he can live with you.” In short, R’ Zaichyk writes, only one person is the actual thief, and he is the one who has to pay restitution. Nevertheless, there may be many people who need to confess an indirect part in this sin. Therefore, our verse says, “They shall confess . . .”

R’ Zaichyk adds: A precedent for this explanation is found in the *Mitzvah* of *Eglah Arufah*. When a murder victim is found on the highway, the elders of the nearest city must proclaim (*Devarim* 21:7), “Our hands have not spilled this blood . . .” The *Gemara* (*Sotah* 45b) asks: Would I have thought that the elders did spill this blood? Rather, the Torah is teaching that the elders are at fault because they failed to ensure that the traveler had provisions, which may have led him to attempt to steal and to be killed in that attempt. (*Ohr Chadash*)

ISRAEL REPORT

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IDF HAS DESTROYED ARCH-TERRORIST MOHAMMED DEIF'S MAGNUM OPUS (Israel Hayom 5/16/21)

Through perfectly executed misdirection, IDF air forces destroyed – in less than an hour – Hamas' underground network of tunnels, known in Gaza as the "Metro." The IDF employed unusually heavy firepower that included combined, synchronized bombings by 160 aircraft and IDF artillery.

It is still unclear how many terrorists were killed in the "Metro" bombing, but apart from eliminating terrorist operatives and attacking terrorist infrastructure, the offensive is a major moral blow to Hamas' military wing and its leader – Mohammed Deif. The Metro was effectively his life's work, and since Operative Protective Edge in 2014, over \$1 billion and massive manpower has been invested in it. All that has now been for nothing.

Hamas spearheaded the Metro project in conjunction with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other terrorist factions in Gaza. It is a snarl of tunnels dug on the outskirts of eastern Gaza City and the northern part of the Gaza Strip. The purpose of the network was to enable Hamas and PIJ terrorists to stop a ground incursion by IDF forces, as well as to allow those operatives freedom of movement without being tracked and targeted from the air.

In spite of the unceasing rocket fire on southern Israel and Hamas' ability to withstand IAF strikes, we can definitely say that Hamas, the PIJ, and other Palestinian terrorist organizations in Gaza have sustained enormous blows both above and below ground in this past week of fighting. Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar has watched his work in recent years to address civilian issues through Egyptian-brokered talks with Israel go up in smoke during Operation Guardian of the Walls, as well as seeing Hamas' underground tunnel network – the jewel in its crown – be destroyed in under an hour.

ARMY THWARTS HAMAS UNDERWATER DRONE ATTACK ON ISRAELI SHIPS (Ha'aretz 5/17/21)

The Israeli military thwarted an attack by a Hamas cell that intended to use a remote-controlled submarine to disable Israel Navy ships.

The Israel Defense Forces said Hamas militants were killed and their submarine was destroyed in the attack. "The submarine that was attacked was launched from the shore in Gaza," the IDF Spokesperson's Unit said. "It went a few meters deep and was directed at a target, which could have been an Israeli beach or Israel Navy boats."

All of the world's navies now use unmanned drones that operate above and below the surface of the water. Popular with hobbyists, requiring little training or maintenance and relatively inexpensive, at a few thousand dollars each or less, they are also accessible to terror organizations. Most are relatively simple to use. Some are capable of navigating to defined targets using GPS, while others operate by remote control.

Hamas modifies these drones in their workshops to accommodate an explosive payload of up to 30 kilograms. The damage that an explosion of this size can do next to an Israel Navy boat or close to an Israeli beach is limited, but it could give Hamas the "victory photo" experts say the organization needs. The main target for Hamas is the Israel Navy or Israel's offshore natural gas platforms.

On Sunday, operations of the Tamar offshore platform were curtailed in the wake of reports that Hamas had attempted to strike the facility, located off of Israel's southern coast. Military officials said the platform is adequately protected by missile boats and defense systems.

Since the military operation began last week, Israeli warships have been deployed to prevent a Hamas naval commando infiltration into Israel – a primary goal for Hamas. Hamas aspires to carry out a raid like during the

Gaza war in the summer of 2014, when naval commandos landed on the shore near Kibbutz of Zikim and attacked a tank and military outpost. That is the purpose of the Hamas naval program, though the Israel Navy has successfully prevented repeats of the 2014 raid.

ISRAEL SHOWED US 'SMOKING GUN' ON HAMAS IN AP OFFICE TOWER, OFFICIALS SAY (JPost 5/17/21)

Israel shared intelligence with the US showing how Hamas operated inside the same building with the Associated Press and Al-Jazeera in Gaza, officials in Jerusalem said on Sunday.

Officials in more than one government office confirmed that US President Joe Biden's phone call to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday was, in part, about the bombing of the building, and that Israel showed Biden and American officials the intelligence behind the action.

"We showed them the smoking gun proving Hamas worked out of that building," a senior diplomatic source said. "I understand they found the explanation satisfactory."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed the source's remark, when asked about The Jerusalem Post's reporting in an interview with US TV show Face the Nation. "We share all the intelligence with our American friends," he said. "The intelligence we had is about an intelligence office for [Hamas] housed in that building that plots and organizes terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians. It is a perfectly legit target."

The US was the only country to inquire about the IDF strike on the building, which the military said housed Hamas military intelligence offices, as well as AP and Al Jazeera, other news outlets, and other offices and apartments.

"From an analysis the Foreign Ministry did [on Sunday], 80% of the 90 countries we spoke to in recent days released official statements supporting Israel's right to defend itself. They aren't calling to stop the operation," a ministry source said.

ASHKENAZI ALSO spoke to over 30 foreign ministers around the world.

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"We're still in a positive place when it comes to our legitimacy to act," the Foreign Ministry source added. "There is very clear support for the Israeli stance that the terrorism crossed a line."

The IAF struck the 12-story tower in Gaza on Saturday, giving a warning an hour in advance.

"The building housed the offices of civilian media, which the terrorist organization Hamas hides behind and uses as human shields," the IDF said in a statement. "The terror organization Hamas deliberately places its military assets in the heart of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. Prior to the attack, the IDF warned the civilians who were in the building and gave them sufficient time to evacuate."

After Operation Protective Edge in 2014, former AP reporter Matti Friedman wrote in The Atlantic: "Hamas understood that reporters could be intimidated when necessary and that they would not report the intimidation... The AP staff in Gaza City would witness a rocket launch right beside their office, endangering reporters and other civilians nearby – and the AP wouldn't report it, not even in AP articles about Israeli claims that Hamas was launching rockets from residential areas."

In light of the attack on the building in Gaza, Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his "unwavering support" to Associated Press president and CEO Garry Pruitt on Saturday, noting the "indispensability of their reporting in conflict zones."

The AP and Al Jazeera condemned the airstrike in strong terms.

Pruitt called the strike "an incredibly disturbing development." He said a dozen AP journalists and freelancers had been in the building, but were evacuated in time.

"We are shocked and horrified that the Israeli military would target and destroy the building housing AP's bureau and other news organizations in Gaza," he said. "The world will know less about what is happening in Gaza because of what happened today."

The acting director-general of the Qatar-based Al Jazeera Media Network, Dr. Mostefa Souag, called the strike "barbaric" and said Israel should be held accountable.

"The aim of this heinous crime is to silence the media and to hide the untold carnage and suffering of the people of Gaza," he said in a statement.

The spokesman for the IDF's International Media Branch, Lt.-Col. Jonathan Conricus, rejected the notion that Israel was seeking to silence the media. "That is totally false – the media is not the target," he told Reuters.

EU FOREIGN MINISTERS TO ARRIVE IN ISRAEL IN SHOW OF SOLIDARITY (YNet 5/19/21)

The foreign ministers of Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia will arrive in Israel on Thursday in a show of solidarity and support of the Jewish state.

The three diplomats were invited by Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi. Their visit to Israel comes off the heels of Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias's visit to the country earlier in the week.

Additional visits by other foreign dignitaries are expected next week, as part of Israel's effort to strengthen its legitimacy during the current round of fighting against Gaza's terrorist factions.

The diplomats will meet with Ashkenazi and will travel to a crash site of a Hamas rocket to witness the destruction first hand. Later, they are expected to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Maas himself is also slated to meet with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh in Ramallah.

"The foreign ministers' visit to Israel is a demonstration of solidarity and support for Israel's right to defend itself following Hamas' rocket fire," Ashkenazi said.

"This is further proof of the broad support and legitimacy Israel receives from foreign countries during these days of fighting. This is thanks to the diplomatic and political effort led by Israeli ambassadors around the world and the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem."

In a speech to the German parliament Tuesday, Maas said that Hamas was

the one that deliberately led to the escalation in the Middle East with dire consequences. Maas also ruled out talking to Hamas.

"After the events of recent days there is no reason to talk directly with Hamas," said Maas. "Those are terrorist attacks that are being carried out by Hamas in Israel and which in my view completely rule out talking without intermediaries, directly to Hamas."

Maas also proposed a three-stage plan to end the conflict: a ceasefire, an immediate halt to rocket fire and an armistice agreement, and the resumption of talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The top German diplomat voiced his support for a 40 million euros (\$48.86 million) aid plan, meant to ramp up humanitarian aid for civilians in Gaza.

ARAB WOMAN RECEIVES LIFE-SAVING KIDNEY FROM JEWISH ISRAELI KILLED IN LOD RIOTS (JPost 5/19/21)

A 58-year-old Arab Christian woman got a new lease on life this week when she received a kidney transplant from 56-year-old Yigal Yehoshua, who died on Monday six days after being hit in the head with a brick during the Lod riots.

The transplant was conducted at Hadassah-University Hospital in Ein Kerem, where Randa Aweis of Jerusalem's Talpiot neighborhood had been undergoing treatment for kidney disease for nine years.

On Wednesday, Aweis spoke to Yehoshua's wife and thanked her for the "noble deed."

"We are like family now," Aweis, a mother of six, said.

Yehoshua was attacked while on his way home from a nearby religious event. The rioters torched several synagogues and vandalized several vehicles.

Instead of responding to Yehoshua's murder with anger, his family chose to give love and life. His organs were donated to people across the country: his lungs to a 69-year-old man, his liver to a 22-year-old woman, one kidney to Aweis and the second to 67-year-old Itzik Hodera.

MONKEY AT RAMAT GAN SAFARI SUSTAINS SHRAPNEL HIT (Israel Hayom 5/16/21)

A black macaque monkey at the Ramat Gan Safari was injured Saturday by shrapnel from a rocket that was fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip and intercepted by Israel's air defenses.

The safari veterinarians did not immediately realize what had caused the injury. Only after performing several X-rays did they realize the monkey had been hit by shrapnel.

The safari reported that the animal underwent surgery, the shrapnel was removed, and that the monkey was awake and under observation, with caretakers keeping close watch over her.

Rocket shrapnel also caused damage to the monkey area of the safari. Keepers stepped out of bomb shelters to move the monkeys into protected areas where they would be safe.

TWO DEAD, OVER 100 HURT AS SYNAGOGUE STAND COLLAPSES NEAR JERUSALEM (YNet 5/16/21)

Two people were killed and over a hundred more hurt Sunday evening after a stand collapsed during a mass prayer service at a makeshift synagogue in the town of Givat Zeev northwest of Jerusalem.

First responders were called to the Carlin Synagogue in the settlement where hundreds of people were reportedly present at the time of the collapse. The two victims are a 12-year-old boy and a 40-year-old man. According to Magen David Adom, 167 people were taken to various hospitals, including five casualties in serious and critical conditions and another 10 in moderate condition.

Helicopters and IDF forces were launched to help evacuate casualties to hospitals.

The bleacher that collapsed in the synagogue was apparently a temporary structure constructed for the celebrations of the holiday of Shavuot.

Givat Zeev Regional Council Head Yossi Avrahami said that the council

warned about holding the event at the makeshift synagogue since it did not hold up to safety standards.

"The council appealed to all relevant authorities and alerted on this issue. We closed [the venue] with signs saying that the site here is dangerous and from the council's point of view, it was not possible to enter and hold the event here," Avrahami said. "Police said they were not liable for the event. We've got it written down."

Jerusalem District Police Commander Doron Turgeman said that police had launched a detailed letter defining the terms and conditions under which the event could take place. He added that arrests may be made in the wake of the event due to negligence.

The investigation of the event has been placed under a week-long gag order.

ISAAC HERZOG OR MIRIAM PERETZ: PRESIDENTIAL RACE OPENS (Arutz-7 5/20/21)

The deadline to apply for candidacy for the 11th President of the State of Israel ended at midnight on Wednesday.

The two candidates who obtained the required number of signatures from Knesset members are the chairman of the Jewish Agency and former Minister Isaac Herzog and Israel Prize laureate Miriam Peretz.

The voting by secret ballot will be held in the Knesset plenum on June 2, in 14 days. If no candidate succeeds in obtaining 61 votes in the first round, a second round of voting will take place and the candidate will be elected by a regular majority.

The Yamina and Religious Zionist factions divided their signatures between Peretz and Herzog. The haredi parties are expected to support Herzog. The Likud and New Hope announced that their MKs would be given "freedom of voting."

Herzog and Peretz both announced their candidacies for the upcoming presidential election earlier on Wednesday.

Herzog, who previously led the Labor party and served in the Knesset for 15 years, is the son of Chaim Herzog, Israel's sixth president, who served from 1983 to 1993.

In announcing his run Wednesday morning, Herzog cited both his work as a lawmaker and his family history.

For his presidential run, Herzog has taken an unpaid leave of absence from the Jewish Agency.

Former MK Yehuda Glick had been expected to run for the Presidency as well but he announced that he was withdrawing from the race just a few hours before the deadline.

"Dear and beloved friends, as always, there is a director for the big screenplay who directs things best. I wanted to bring new energies of good to the presidency and I could not do so," he wrote in a statement.

He added that he "wishes great success to all the candidates, with His help I will bless you and try to continue to work for enlightenment, the multiplicity of the best in the world and for the strengthening of the various populations."

WHY NETANYAHU IS IN NO RUSH TO LISTEN TO BIDEN ON GAZA (Amos Harel, Ha'aretz 5/20/21)

Wednesday, the tenth day of the Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip, saw two dramatic developments. First, four rockets were fired from Lebanon at Acre and the Haifa Bay communities. Immediately after that, the White House released an official statement about the content of a phone conversation, the fourth since the beginning of the operation, between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This time, Biden ratcheted up the tone and told Netanyahu that he expected significant de-escalation that same day. These events seem to be bringing us closer to the end of the operation, but the potential for destruction has not yet been exhausted.

The rockets from the north were apparently fired by Palestinian organizations. In 2014, it was already reported that Hamas sought to establish a terror network in the refugee camps in southern Lebanon, from which it could launch rockets, and develop a secondary front against Israel in case of a clash in the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of the operation there

have been three rocket salvos from Lebanon and one from Syria. The Haifa Bay towns are the farthest and most reverberating target so far, although the salvos ended with no injuries. Such firing probably would not take place without at least the silent consent of Hezbollah. Israel's first response, artillery fire, indicates that it does not want to ramp up tension in the north.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu has a more urgent interest to respond to – the almost unprecedented demand by Biden for Israel to hold its fire. The prime minister did not hear language like that from Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump. In fact, it seems like the harshest demand from Israel by an American administration since the demand by then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, after Israel was accused of killing civilians in Kafr Kana. Rice's demand ended with a two-day humanitarian cease-fire, after which Israel and Hezbollah fought each other for two more weeks. This time, Biden wants a complete cessation.

Netanyahu has a number of reasons not to respond immediately to Biden. The military activity against Hamas has so far resulted in limited achievements, without a decisive conclusion in Israel's favor; it is difficult for Netanyahu to appear to have knuckled under to American pressure, because he will be attacked from the right wing for being weak; and the end of the operation, with a feeling that once again Netanyahu has failed to deliver the full security goods that he promised, still leaves a slight chance for his rival, MK Yair Lapid, to put together a coalition before his mandate runs out on June 2. And yet, the obvious move is to accede to Biden and try to improve the level of trust in their relationship.

After the phone call with Biden, and after visiting the IDF General Staff headquarters in the Kirya in Tel Aviv, the prime minister said: "I especially appreciate the support of U.S. President Joe Biden for the State of Israel's right to self-defense." Netanyahu added that he was determined to continue the operation until quiet is restored, and in fact ignored Biden's demand.

But there is apparently a limit to how much he can shrug off such pressures from a country that provides Israel with enormous diplomatic support as well as military assistance to the tune of \$3.8 billion a year. It is not inconceivable that the American decision to act harshly toward Netanyahu publicly is a kind of dress rehearsal for the bigger performance, Israel's expected opposition to the American return to the nuclear agreement with Iran.

Until the Israeli response becomes clear, Hamas will continue to try to score psychological points against Israel. The many salvos fired from the north indicate its ability to trouble Israel on other fronts, and joins the extensive outbreak of violence within the Green Line, the clashes in Jerusalem and increasing attempts at terror attacks in the West Bank. If a cease-fire agreement does come about, Hamas will probably want, as in the past, to end the battle with a powerful rocket attack that it will call its final victory move. Israel, for its part, could increase its bombardments against Hamas and Islamic Jihad targets.

Egyptian Intelligence Minister General Abbas Kamel's people are the main figures working on a cease-fire. The United Nations is also involved, but the contribution of Qatar is apparently marginal. The previous agreements, after Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012, and Operation Protective Edge in 2014 were not particularly detailed and for the most part were not fully implemented. Israel's basic goal will be to restore quiet. After that, it will see whether it can translate the operational price it imposed on Hamas into harsher demands to limit local weapons production in the Gaza Strip. Israel will want to monitor mainly the entry into the Strip of dual-use materials that could be used to manufacture weapons.

The current atmosphere, in which we seem to be in the final days of the operation, increases the number of feints that each side is using to try to deceive the other. This is also happening domestically, with the political and military echelons each preoccupied with maintaining their image and each seeking to distance themselves from responsibility for ending the operation.

On Tuesday night a somewhat strange report came out on television that the Israel Defense Forces wanted to continue the operation because it believed there was a chance to assassinate the head of the Hamas military wing, Mohammed Deif. First of all, everyone knows (including Hamas) that Israel is

aiming for Deif and the Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, Yahya Sinwar. Secondly, if indeed the chances of striking Deif improve, why should the IDF announce it in the media?

Netanyahu surpassed himself when, in a meeting with 70 foreign diplomats he said Israel did not rule out a ground incursion in Gaza. However, it doesn't appear that any actual preparations were made for a ground operation inside Gaza. The current operation focuses on long distance aerial and ground fire, all from a distance.

In case of a serious decline in the situation, such a scenario cannot be ruled out, but it is clear that all officials with power in Israel want to avoid this. Moreover, this time, as opposed to previous operations in Gaza, not even the politicians are demanding the occupation of the Gaza Strip.

Therefore, Netanyahu's statement is not only part of games of psychological warfare against Hamas, it is also a maneuver against the General Staff. The prime minister is signaling that from his perspective the option of a ground operation is on the table. If that does not come about (and it probably won't), from his point of view that already will be someone else's responsibility. People with long memories will certainly remember the leak of the secret presentation the IDF showed the cabinet at the end of the 2014 Gaza war, shortly before the cease-fire went into effect. At that time, a military prediction was reported that the occupation of Gaza would cost hundreds of lives – and somehow, the person who leaked the presentation was never found.

Against the backdrop of a sense by the military and the political echelons that the current operation has fully exhausted itself, there is hope in the public that we will not be dragged into a long, bloody Operation Protective Edge 2 in the Gaza Strip. But a new risk must be taken into account. In light of the many clashes in the West Bank and the weakening of the Palestinian Authority, might we not go spiral into a third intifada in the territories?

TEMPLE MOUNT, SHEIKH JARRAH ONLY SMOKE SCREENS FOR HAMAS'S REAL INCENTIVE (Neville Teller, JPost 5/17/21)

Despite what much of the world's media report, police action on the Temple Mount and the Sheikh Jarrah affair are not prime causes of the conflict between Hamas and Israel. They are a convenient and long-awaited smoke screen behind which deeper incentives hide.

Prime among them is the violent opposition to the Abraham Accords within the loose Islamist alliance of Iran, Turkey, Hamas and Hezbollah. Sensible and pragmatic working relations between Muslim states and Israel, the aspiration behind the accords, are the diametric opposite of what hardline Islamists want.

As the agreements were announced Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed outrage and threatened to cut diplomatic ties with the Emirates. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei denounced the accords as a "humiliation" for Muslim nations. Since then, the Islamist axis has calculated that the best way to shatter, or at least shake, Israel's newly forged relationships with Gulf states and Morocco would be to renew the Hamas-Israel conflict, making sure the precipitating cause was connected to sensitive Muslim interests.

An equally important precipitating factor in the current conflict is the determined effort by leaders of Hamas and its Islamist backers to seize control of the Palestinian cause, to become the undisputed champions of Palestinianism. This they regard as a vital step toward their ultimate aim – the destruction of Israel. All the evidence suggest that the barrage of rockets fired at Israel's heartlands is part of a long-standing campaign to wrest the leadership of the Palestinian people from Fatah.

All that the Palestinian terrorists, together with their Islamist backers, had been waiting for was an excuse, or a series of excuses, to provoke a fresh confrontation. Fomenting provocation on the Temple Mount and indignation over the Sheikh Jarrah affair provided the convenient smokescreen.

As part of their campaign to wreck the accords, Turkey and Iran, as well as other Islamist-supporting governments like Qatar, are keen that Hamas, committed to the destruction of Israel, becomes the dominant voice in Palestinian politics in place of Mahmoud Abbas, the current, and largely

ineffectual, Palestinian leader. Turkish and Iranian leaders had been hoping that Hamas would emerge victorious in the Palestinian elections, which were due to be held on May 22.

Under intense pressure from the US and world opinion to restore some degree of democratic credibility to the Palestinian Authority, which last held parliamentary and presidential elections back in June 2005, Abbas announced that polling would take place in May and July 2021.

However he was only too well aware that the outcome of free and fair elections under neutral observation would probably result in an even greater Hamas victory than occurred in 2006. That probability would not have escaped Israeli attention either. When the question arose of arrangements for eligible Palestinian residents of east Jerusalem to vote, Israel, to quote the Jerome Kern song, "didn't say yes, and she didn't say no," Abbas seized on the issue, and canceled the elections.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, grasping the opportunity to parade himself as the Palestinian people's defender, urged Abbas to defy Israel and go ahead with the polls. Hamas further strengthened its position in Palestinian eyes over the Temple Mount issue. Demanding that Israel remove the police there by a given deadline, Hamas launched rockets against Jerusalem when its ultimatum went unheeded.

The barrage of missiles it subsequently rained down on Israel, while testing the Iron Dome to the limit, was intended to consolidate the status of Hamas as the Palestinians' champion. But the conflict is as much a battle for control of the Palestinian cause as it is an opportunity to attack Israel.

For months Israeli security officials have warned that Hamas has been building stockpiles of missiles in Gaza in anticipation of renewed hostilities. The most sophisticated, manufactured locally, are based on medium-range Iranian systems, enabling Hamas to strike targets in major Israeli population centers and even as far as Eilat.

This latest upsurge in Palestinian-Israeli violence is also due in no small measure to the obscure messages emanating from Washington about the US administration's stance on the Middle East. President Joe Biden certainly wants an end to the conflict, but he has been anything but clear about where he stands on the achievement of his predecessor, Donald Trump, in fostering Arab-Israeli peace.

Biden has so far shown little interest in maintaining the momentum of the Abraham Accords. On the contrary, he has shown considerable enthusiasm for reopening dialogue with Iran and reviving the controversial nuclear deal. The Abraham Accords are founded in part on a common Arab-Israeli desire to counter Iranian attempts to dominate the Middle East and overthrow both Sunni states and Israel.

Biden's present position gives comfort to Israel's enemies. Middle East players interested in peace rather than eternal conflict need a display of strong US leadership, unequivocally opposed both to violence and to those states that foster it in pursuit of long-term goals of their own. Is Biden prepared to provide this?

These are the factors that have come together to provide the fuel for the current conflagration. A desire to attack Israel in pursuit of a long-term aim of overthrowing the state is certainly among them, although by itself it is usually insufficient to spark conflict.

On this occasion it is strengthened by Islamist opposition to the recent Arab-Israeli reconciliation in the Abraham Accords, by the opportunity to seize control of the Palestinian cause from a clearly weakened PA leader, by the frustration of Hamas's political ambitions because of the cancellation of the Palestinian elections, by ambiguous signals from the Biden administration tied to its desire to reopen the nuclear deal, and by convenient opportunities to whip up Palestinian anger provided by Israeli attempts to control protests on the Temple Mount and Sheikh Jarrah.

In addition, the Islamist axis has gained two unsought-for bonuses: the Arab-Jewish riots in Lod and elsewhere between extremist hotheads, and the collapse of the possibility of Ra'am (United Arab List) joining a coalition.

Can diplomacy and reason succeed in damping down the flames before they burst into all-out war?



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

The Crown of Freedom

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

For the entire duration of his *nezirus* (abstinence), he shall not eat any product of the grape vine...no razor shall pass over his head... he shall not come into contact with the dead... for the *nezer* (crown) of his G-d is upon his head.

Parshas Naso enumerates the laws pertaining to a *nazir*. A *nazir* is a person who takes a vow to abstain from consuming any grape products such as wine, from shaving or cutting his or her hair, and from coming in contact with a dead body, even a family member. The Torah describes the *nazir* as one who has the *nezer* (crown) of his G-d on his head – an apparent reference to the outgrowth of hair that results from his vow.

The Ibn Ezra notes the similarity between the word *nazir* and *nezer* and suggests that, in addition to merely being two words that sound alike, the word *nazir* may actually be derived from the word *nezer* meaning crown. The Ibn Ezra explains that in truth, all people, to some extent, are slaves to their desires. Only someone who has freed themselves from these desires is truly a king or queen – truly a free person.

The *nazir* is someone who has recognized a need to act drastically to overcome his or her base instincts by making a vow of *nezirus*. Now in full control of his or her actions, the *nazir* is adorned with the crown of freedom.

Our Sages offer us an alternative path to reigning in our desires when they teach us (Avos 6:2), "Only one who studies Torah is truly free." So long as we give in to our base desires for honor, wealth or physical pleasure, we are not truly free. Through the study of Torah, we have the opportunity to perfect our character and outlook, thereby freeing ourselves to make the right choices in life.

How fortunate are we to have been given such a gift!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Speak to Aharon and his sons saying, "So shall you bless Bnei Yisrael..." (6, 23)

Rav Yosi said, "I never went against the words of my friends. I know I am not a Kohen. But if my friends would tell me to go give Birchas Kohanim, I would go." (Shabbos 118b)

Rav Yosi did not know the prohibition for a non-kohen to give Birchas Kohanim. (Tosafos)

A non-kohen who gives Birchas Kohanim transgresses a positive command, as the verse says, 'Speak to Aharon and his sons...'. (Kesubos 24b)

It seems to be a clear transgression for a non-kohen to give the Birchas Kohanim. How could Rav Yosi not have known about it?

Parsha Riddle

Speak to Aharon and his sons saying, "So shall you bless Bnei Yisrael..." (6, 23)

How do these words impact the way we give blessings to our children Friday night?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which date of the calendar is set as the date for Shavuot?

Answer: There is no set date on the calendar for Shavuot. It is always 50 days after the omer begins.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Naso contains the laws of the Nazir, who takes a vow to abstain from wine (among other things). We have previously discussed the conflicting Talmudic approaches toward such abstemiousness: some sages (*Bava Kama* 91b), noting that (in certain circumstances) the Nazir brings a sin-offering, maintain that needlessly depriving oneself of innocent pleasure is sinful, whereas others (*Taanis* 11a-b) consider such conduct holy (and perhaps pious). We mentioned that the Tosafists harmonize the two approaches, explaining that at least in certain exigent circumstances, a vow of Nezirus may be appropriate, but it nevertheless remains problematic and retains an aspect of sinfulness.

This provocative idea, that a course of action can be simultaneously correct and yet contain a problematic, even sinful, aspect, has parallels elsewhere in Jewish thought:

- The Talmud (*Yoma* 18b-19b) relates the elders of the court would swear the High Priest to fealty to the Rabbinic tradition in the performance of the Temple service on Yom Kippur, an unfortunate necessity since the High Priests were suspected of harboring sectarian sympathies. Subsequent to administering the oath, however, they would weep, due the possibility that they had suspected an innocent man – despite the fact that such suspicions were clearly necessary and prudent.
- The Talmud (*Bava Basra* 16a) explains that when Penina goaded and provoked Chana regarding her childlessness (*Shmuel* 1 1:6), her intentions were "for the sake of Heaven," in order to cause her to pray for children. Nevertheless, there is a *midrash* (*Midrash Shmuel* 5:10) that explains that Penina was punished for her hurtful conduct by the death of almost all her children! R. Chaim Shmuelevitz (*Sichos Mussar* #76) explains that although Penina was "absolutely righteous," and undoubtedly found it extremely painful to hurt Chana, she was nevertheless punished, since "One who hurts another, regardless of his intention, is like one who sticks his hand into a burning oven, and good intentions cannot affect the outcome at all. The danger involved in a sin against one's fellow man is like a natural reality, exactly like a fire that burns due to the laws of nature." Apparently, although Penina acted perfectly correctly, she still suffered dire consequences for hurting Chana. (But see *Ani le-Dodi ve-Dodi Li* (R. Nebenzahl) pp. 180-82 for an alternate, more traditional interpretation of R. Shmuelevitz's words.)

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I'm for inauguration.
2. Duplicates.
3. In lieu of donations.
4. I am for Chanuka.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I'm called for my platform.
2. Take cover.
3. With love.
4. I am three.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Shevatim/Tribes (We came from the third, We are not Native Americans, We were flagged, A baker's dozen.)

#2 Har Sinai (I resembled a barrel, I was humble, I hint to hatred, I was a place of healing.)

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