

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

August 13 - 14, 2021 - 6 Elul 5781 - Shoftim

Light Candles by 7:47 - Havdalah 8:47

Please join us in welcoming our new Assistant Rabbi, **Rabbi Yosef Postelnek**. We so look forward to learning from him and getting to know him, **Rebbetzin Aliza**, and their children Shlomo and Tehillah, and wish them all much happiness and success in our community.

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored this week by **Monica and Ezra Friedman** in honor of Dr. Marc S. Katz and the staff of Kindness Animal Hospital for the years of dedicated care provided our cat, Cameron, and the sensitivity with which we were treated in her final days.

Mazal Tov

- **Leah & Yehoshua Scheininger** on the birth of a boy. The Shalom Zachor will take place tonight at 9:30 PM at their home, 906 Lamberton Drive.
- **Gila & Rabbi Myron Wakschlag** on the birth of a grandson, Yisroel Chanina, born to parents Alana & Efraim Wakschlag of Chicago. Mazal Tov to Savta Raba **Judith Halpern**, and to Yisroel Chanina's aunts, uncles and cousins.

Condolences

- **Joseph Gamson** on the passing of his father, Robert Gamson. Shiva is being observed at 2708 Summerson Road, Baltimore, MD 21209, through Wednesday morning. Visitors are requested Sunday, Monday and Tuesday 12 Noon - 2:00 PM and 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM. Masks are required and please attend Shiva only if you are fully vaccinated.

Shabbos Schedule

Minyan locations are listed as B = Belonofsky Sanctuary, S = Social Hall. All Sephardi Minyanim take place in the Beit Medrash.

Friday Night:

- Light Candles by 7:47, and not before 6:39
- Mincha: 6:50 (B), 7:50 (B), 7:15 (Sephardi)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 5:00 (B), 7:45 (B), 7:40 (Sephardi)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 8:47

Divrei Torah:

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

Kiddush Sponsors:

- 8:45 and 9:15 Kiddush in a Bag sponsored by members of the community in honor of our new Assistant Rabbi, Rabbi, Yosef Postelnek, and in welcome to Rabbi Yosef & Rebbetzin Aliza Postelnek and their children Shlomo and Tehillah, wishing them much happiness and success in our community:

YISE Youth Announcements

Shabbos Groups will take place this week from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM, indoors. Masks required indoors for age 3+. Age 18-35 months will be located in the toddler room off the Lower Lobby. Ages 3-5 years will meet in the room behind the balcony. Ages 6-9 years will meet at Shomrai and walk over to the Yeshiva. For more information, contact Michal Merkin, YISE Youth groups coordinator, at mmerkin@yise.org See flyer for details.

COVID-19 Updates

- Masks are required for ALL people in the YISE Arcola building, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, with the exception of children under the age of 3.
- There are no social distancing requirements in the YISE building. There are no in-person Kiddushes at this time.
- The Shul office is still open, but hours may vary.

Let us Daven to Hashem to keep all of us in good health and to return our lives to normal as soon as possible. In protecting each other as we navigate this unfolding situation, may we grow stronger as individuals and as a community.

Weekday Shiurim

Options for remote learning are listed below. For the latest list and times, go to:

<https://wp.vise.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, will resume August 22.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday 7:00 PM, will resume August 22.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, will resume August 22.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays, 6:00 AM, will resume August 24.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, now learning Megillas Eichah, will resume August 25.
 - **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Women's Navi Shiur, now studying Sefer Yehoshua, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, will resume August 25.
 - **GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men and Women** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM, on break for the summer.
 - **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.
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Grossman - Parshas Hashavua, 9:00 PM, **Zoom D**.
 - All other classes are on break for the summer.
 - **Semichat Chaver Program**, Tuesdays at 9:00 PM with Rabbi Hillel Shaps, now taking place in person in the Social Hall. 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 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", will resume in the fall.
 - **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning Maseches Kiddushin on Wednesday evenings, 7:00 PM, will resume in August.
- Connection Details:** Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID & password:
Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019
Zoom B: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613
Zoom C: ID: 978 8156 7874, password RabbiHyatt
Zoom D: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn

YISE Programs and Listings

Rabbi Rosenbaum will be on vacation from Sunday, August 15 through Friday, August 20. Individuals with halachic questions can contact Rabbi Postelnek at 571-340-0227 or rypostelnek@yise.org. Those wanting to contact Rabbi Rosenbaum about pressing matters should contact the shul office and a staff member will notify Rabbi Rosenbaum.

Understanding the 13 Attributes of Mercy - A 3-part series with Rabbi Postelnek, August 15, 22 and 29 at 8:45 PM on **Zoom A**. *See flyer for details.*

Order Lulavim and Esrogim from YISE - YISE is working this year with Josh Breistein to bring you the finest quality Arba Minim sets. Aleph \$80, Beis \$65, Gimmel \$55, Chinuch \$36. Order deadline: Friday, September 3. Pickup will be on Sunday, September 19, 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM. Due to COVID-19 concerns, individual selection of Esrogim will not be possible. Order online at www.yise.org/lulav *See flyer for details.*

High Holiday Babysitting - YISE is pleased to offer High Holiday babysitting on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Details at <https://wp.yise.org/babysitting> Space is limited - first-come, first-serve. If you have questions, please contact Michal Merkin at mmerkin@yise.org.

Ask the Rabbi - Come join our virtual, interactive monthly program featuring Halachos of Shabbos and holidays! This month's topic: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkos. Tuesday, August 24, 8:30 PM - 9:30 PM on **Zoom A**. The first 45 minutes are for Shailos submitted in advance and the last 15 minutes are for Q & A. Send in your questions about Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkos to: AskTheRabbi@yise.org by Sunday, August 22. For more information or to submit questions anonymously, contact Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517 or mfriedman2@yahoo.com. To sponsor the Shiur, contact office@yise.org *See flyer for details.*

Let's cook (virtually) with Chef Yehuda Malka - Learn how to prepare tasty and healthy Yom Tov dishes and expand your culinary skills on Sunday, August 22, 7:30 PM. *See flyer for menu and other details.*

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

Update: Being Social - In the past few months, YISE's Social Committee has organized a range of programs to bring us together virtually, including: Jews (in our community) discussing their service in the US military, Trivia Nights, Painting with Talya, Purim Shpiel, Chagim goody bags ... We have also expressed our thanks to the Holy Cross Hospital health workers, and treated the Wheaton Rescue Squad to a special dinner. As we come together again, we would like your ideas and help in organizing fun, interactive, and safe activities. 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.*

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.

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 Shabbos Drasha 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

- Yitzchak & Chana Esther Gedalowitz in memory of Marilyn Gorlin, Yitzchak's Tante.

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 Shabbos Drasha

- Susan & Bob Levi in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Bob's Bar Mitzvah
- Douglas & Michelle Shelling in memory of Michelle's beloved mother, Greta Weiner, Golda Rochel bas Dovid, Z"L.

YISE Programs and Listings (continued)

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

The Yad Yehuda Clothing Exchange has available hours for all members of the community to shop at no cost the next three Sundays, August 15, 22 & 29, from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM at 1910 University Blvd. West. This is an opportunity for people to come and shop for beautiful, Tzanua clothing in our well-equipped showroom. Everyone must be in good health and not have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. If you have any questions please contact: ncarmel@yadyehuda.org

Open Beit Midrash for Women - Chavrusa style learning for women on Sunday nights at KMS, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM in the upstairs Beit Midrash. Questions? Contact Ellie Guberman at ellieguberman@gmail.com

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

Rosh Hashanah Shofar Blowing 5782/2021 - Do you, or someone you know, need to have the shofar blown this Rosh Hashanah because you can't get to Shul? To arrange for a Shofar blower to visit you at home in Kemp Mill, please call or text Aron Trombka at 301-385-9348 or email atrombka@gmail.com. We are also working with neighborhood shuls to possibly schedule a number of outdoor Shofar blowings in the neighborhood. We will monitor government health regulations and the effect of COVID-19 on the Kemp Mill community and will announce more details before Rosh Hashanah. Contact Aron Trombka if you are interested in volunteering to blow shofar at homes in the Kemp Mill community or at Holy Cross Hospital, if the hospital will allow visitors.

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, August 18, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. See what Toastmasters is all about and find out how you can become a more confident communicator. Contact Manasseh Katz at secretary@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more info. Zoom meeting ID: 986 546 841, password: 3671

Yad Yehuda School Supplies Drive - Yad Yehuda is requesting school supply donations. Our fellow community members benefit so much from your donations. All supplies needed but we especially would like donations of new, high quality backpacks! Please donate funds at yadyehuda.org/donate

Drop off supplies in Kemp Mill at 1212 North Belgrade Road or 11613 Fulham Street. If you have any questions contact: ncarmel@yadyehuda.org

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

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

Fundamentals of Prayer - Wednesdays, 8:00 PM on Zoom. Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps. Join any time! No cost. Zoom info and registration at linksgw.org/classes

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

Daf Yomi Shiur currently meets online via a WebEx video conference. There is still room for a few more participants. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at lifschitz@sllslaw.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 August 15	Monday August 16	Tuesday August 17	Wednesday August 18	Thursday August 19	Friday August 20
Shacharis	Ashkenazi	6:30, 7:30, 8:45	6:15, 6:45, 8:45	6:15, 6:55, 8:45	6:15, 6:55, 8:45	6:15, 6:45, 8:45	6:15, 6:55, 8:45
	Sephardi	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30
Mincha / Maariv	Ashkenazi	7:45	7:45	7:45	7:45	7:45	See Shabbos schedule
	Sephardi	6:50 *	6:50	6:50 *	6:50 *	6:50 *	
* Sephardi Selichot 6:50 followed by Mincha at approximately 7:40							
Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 5:01 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 5:32 AM, Latest Netz: 6:28 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:47 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:47 PM, Earliest Shkia: 7:54 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim: 8:46 PM							

Next Shabbos

August 20 - 21, 2021 - 13 Elul 5781

Parshas Ki Seitzei

Light Candles: 7:37

Havdalah: 8:37

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline: Wednesday, August 18 at 12 Noon

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

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

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

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM;

Friday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Yale Ginsburg - President

Rabbi Yosef Postelnek - Asst. Rabbi

Simi Franco - Office Manager

A Quick Thought on the Parsha from Rabbi Rosenbaum

Shoftim 5781:

Treat Yourself

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

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

The first *Pasuk* of this week's *Parsha* is an instruction for *Moshe* to the Jewish people to appoint judges and officers. But the specific word choice is an interesting thing to think about. It says in the *Pasuk* שפטים ושוטרים תתן לך בכל שעריך, literally translated "you should give to yourself judges and officers." Rav Moshe Feinstein points out that the usage of the verb of giving is appropriate when talking about appointments, but you wouldn't say give to you, you would say you should give someone as a judge, meaning you should appoint them as a judge.

But what is meant by the phrasing you should give the judge to you, you should give the officer to you? There's different answers to this question but Rav Feinstein suggests that there is important message being alluded to here. Which is, it might feel like the appointment of a judge is only going to create limitations on a person. If I do something wrong, they're going to catch me. And even if I never do anything wrong or even if whatever they have to do to me is appropriate, maybe it's not going to be difficult for me or painful for me, but it doesn't sound exciting to appoint judges. It sounds like appointment of judges is a functional thing. But Rav Moshe Feinstein points out that if there are people of unique piety, unique morality, appointed to leadership positions within a community, we'll all have the opportunity to learn from these individuals, and it's very significant to understand that that's a gift to every member of the community.

And I think as we're in the month of *Elul* and we're hopefully thinking more about who we are or where we're going, that that point is a very important thing to reflect upon. We all meet people in our lives, maybe even just one person in our life, who we can really look up to, who we really feel that we can learn from. It can be so many different people. It could be a teacher that we once had, it could be a relative that we respect a great deal, there's many, many different possibilities. But to not have anybody in our lives who we can just look at them and we could say to ourselves, if they're doing it, it must be right. Or if we have our own quandary, to pick up a phone and be able to talk to them about it. If we don't have anybody like that in our lives, we're really selling ourselves short. This is the time of year that we're trying to think about how to be better people. Being a better person has a lot to do with making the right decisions and rising to the occasion. But it also has to do with putting ourselves in positions to succeed. And this concept of having someone in our life that we can look up to is, I think, a very significant concept.

Have a good *Shabbos*!



- 4 Groups:**
- 1. Ages 18-36 months**
 - 2. Ages 3-5**
 - 3. Ages 6-9 Boys**
 - 4. Ages 6-9 Girls**



**August
14th!
10:00-
11:00am**

Indoors

**Masks required
(3+)**

Snacks to go



Peering Past the Rock...



Understanding the 13 Attributes of Mercy

A 3 Part Series with Rabbi Postelnek

- **What ARE the 13 Attributes of Mercy? Back to the Beginning**

Sunday Aug. 15th - 8:45 pm

- **13 Magic Words or a Charge to Change?**

Sunday Aug. 22nd - 8:45 pm

- **Invoking the 13 Attributes and Reciting Selichos; Practical Halacha**

Sunday Aug. 29th - 8:45 pm



Join via Zoom

Meeting ID: 416 963 9000 Password: 492019



Order your Lulavim & Esrogim from YISE and help support the Shul!

YISE is working this year with Josh Breitstein to bring you the finest quality Arba Minim sets. Complete details and order form at: www.yise.org/lulav

Aleph	\$ 80
Beis	\$ 65
Gimmel	\$ 55
Chinuch	\$ 36

Order deadline: Friday, September 3

Due to COVID-19 concerns, individual selection of Esrogim will not be possible.

Pickup will be on Sunday, September 19, 10:00am - 8:00pm.

Payment at pickup - check payable to Josh Breitstein, or cash.

ASK the RABBI

Come join our virtual, monthly interactive program featuring different Halachos of Shabbos and Holidays!

Topic: **Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos**



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

- How many shofar blasts do I need to hear to fulfill the mitzvah?
- How do I drive to shul for Kol Nidrei if I need to light the candles first?
- What do I need to eat and drink in the sukkah?

Send in your questions about Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos to: AskTheRabbi@vise.org by Sunday, August 22.

When: Tuesday, August 24, 8:30 PM – 9:30 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

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WITH A ZOOM COOKING DEMO



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GLAZED HEIRLOOM CARROTS
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PLUS: HOW TO BREAK DOWN AND DEBONE A
CHICKEN FOR SOUP

SUNDAY AUGUST 22 | 7:30PM

RSVP BY THURSDAY, AUGUST 19 TO SOCIAL@YISE.ORG
TO RECEIVE RECIPES AND INGREDIENTS
IN ADVANCE OF THE PROGRAM
ALL ARE WELCOME WITH OR WITHOUT RSVP



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via the Internet

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(Golda Rochel bas Dovid)
on the occasion of her yahrzeit, 6 Elul

Volume 27, Issue 43

Shabbat Parashat Shoftim

5781 - B"H

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

Learning and Leadership: The parsha of Shoftim is the classic source of the three types of leadership in Judaism, called by the Sages the "three crowns": of priesthood, kingship and Torah. This is the first statement in history of the principle, set out in the eighteenth century by Montesquieu in *L'Esprit des Lois* (The Spirit of Laws), and later made fundamental to the American constitution, of "the separation of powers."

Power, in the human arena, is to be divided and distributed, not concentrated in a single person or office. In biblical Israel, there were Kings, Priests and Prophets. Kings had secular or governmental power. Priests were the leaders in the religious domain, presiding over the service in the Temple and other rites, and giving rulings on matters to do with holiness and purity. Prophets were mandated by God to be critical of the corruptions of power and to recall the people to their religious vocation whenever they drifted from it.

Our parsha deals with all three roles. Undoubtedly, though, the most attention-catching is the section on Kings, for many reasons. First, this is the only command in the Torah to carry with it the explanation that this is what other people do: "When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, 'Let us set a King over us like all the nations around us...'" Normally, in the Torah, the Israelites are commanded to be different. The fact that this command is an exception was enough to signal to commentators throughout the ages that there is a certain ambivalence about the idea of monarchy altogether.

Second, the passage is strikingly negative. It tells us what a King must not do, rather than what he should do. He should not "acquire great numbers of horses," or "take many wives" or "accumulate large amounts of silver and gold". These are the temptations of power, and as we know from the rest of Tanach, even the greatest – King Solomon himself – was vulnerable to them.

Third, consistent with the fundamental Judaic idea that leadership is service, not dominion or power or status or superiority, the King is commanded to be humble: he must constantly read the Torah "so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God ... and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites". It is not easy to be humble when everyone is bowing down before you and when you have the power of life and death over your subjects.

Hence the extreme variation among the commentators as to whether monarchy is a good institution or a dangerous one. Maimonides holds that the appointment of a king is an obligation, Ibn Ezra that it is a permission, Abarbanel that it is a concession, and Rabbenu Bachya that it is a punishment – an interpretation known, as it happens, to John Milton at one of the most volatile (and anti-monarchical) periods of English history.

There is, though, one positive and exceptionally important dimension of royalty. The King is commanded to study constantly: "...and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his

descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

Later, in the book that bears his name, Moses' successor Joshua is commanded in very similar terms: Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Leaders learn. That is the principle at stake here. Yes, they have advisors, elders, counsellors, an inner court of Sages and literati. And yes, biblical Kings had Prophets – Samuel to Saul, Nathan to David, Isaiah to Hezekiah and so on – to bring them the word of the Lord. But those on whom the destiny of the nation turns may not delegate away the task of thinking, reading, studying and remembering. They are not entitled to say: I have affairs of state to worry about, so I have no time for books. Leaders must be scholars, Bnei Torah, "Children of the Book," if they are to direct and lead the people of the Book.

The great statesmen of modern times understood this, at least in secular terms. William Gladstone, four times Prime Minister of Britain, had a library of 32,000 books. We know – because he made a note in his diary every time he finished reading a book – that he read 22,000 of them. Assuming he did so over the course of eighty years (he lived to be 88), this meant that he read on average 275 books a year, or more than five each week for a lifetime. He also wrote many books on a wide variety of topics from politics to religion to Greek literature, and his scholarship was often impressive. For example he was, according to Guy Deutscher in *Through the Language Glass*, the first person to realise that the ancient Greeks did not have a sense of colour and that Homer's famous phrase, "the wine-dark sea" referred to texture rather than colour.

Visit David Ben Gurion's house in Tel Aviv and you will see that, while the ground floor is spartan to the point of austerity, the first floor is a single vast library of papers, periodicals and 20,000 books. He had another 4,000 or so in Sede Boker. Like Gladstone, Ben Gurion was a voracious reader as well as a prolific author. Benjamin Disraeli was a best-selling novelist before he entered politics. Winston Churchill wrote almost 50 books and won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Reading and writing are what separate the statesman from the mere politician.

The two greatest Kings of early Israel, David and Solomon, were both authors, David of Psalms, Solomon (according to tradition) of *The Song of Songs*, *Proverbs* and *Kohelet/Ecclesiastes*. The key biblical word associated with Kings is *chochmah*, "wisdom." Solomon in particular was known for his wisdom: When all Israel heard the verdict the King had given, they held the King in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt ... From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the Kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

When the Queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon... she was overwhelmed. She said to the King, 'The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw

with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told to me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard...' The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

We should note that *chochmah*, wisdom, means something slightly different from Torah, which is more commonly associated with Priests and Prophets than Kings. *Chochmah* includes worldly wisdom, which is a human universal rather a special heritage of Jews and Judaism. A Midrash states "If someone says to you, 'There is wisdom among the nations of the world,' believe it. If they say, 'There is Torah among the nations of the world,' do not believe it." Broadly speaking, in contemporary terms *chochmah* refers to the sciences and humanities – to whatever allows us to see the universe as the work of God and the human person as the image of God. Torah is the specific moral and spiritual heritage of Israel.

The case of Solomon is particularly poignant because, for all his wisdom, he was not able to avoid the three temptations set out in our parsha: he did acquire great numbers of horses, he did take many wives and he did accumulate great wealth. Wisdom without Torah is not enough to save a leader from the corruptions of power.

Though few of us are destined to be Kings, Presidents or Prime Ministers, there is a general principle at stake. Leaders learn. They read. They study. They take time to familiarise themselves with the world of ideas. Only thus do they gain the perspective to be able to see further and clearer than others. To be a Jewish leader means spending time to study both Torah and *chochmah*: *chochmah* to understand the world as it is, Torah to understand the world as it ought to be.

Leaders should never stop learning. That is how they grow and teach others to grow with them.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"When a matter shall arise for you too wondrous for judgment, whether it be capital, civil, or ritual, you shall go up to the judge of those times, and according to the law which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment which they shall tell you to do, do not stray neither from the right nor the left of the word that they declare to you".

In an era when strict interpretations of Jewish Law are in vogue, and when Orthodox rabbis who render decisions with a broader perspective face withering personal and professional attacks, we would do well to revisit the concepts of freedom of thought and the right of dissent within the realm of Jewish Law. Is there, in fact, room within the Jewish legal system for individual freedom and conscientious objection to majority opinions?

For guidance, let us look at the model of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. To what extent did the sages of that august legal body admit pluralism into the halls of their debates? In truth, the Sanhedrin always encouraged dissenting opinions, even beginning their judicial inquiry with the views of the youngest and least learned, to encourage everyone to state his opinion without being intimidated by the views of more senior colleagues.

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But there are limits to this pluralistic spirit. For instance, a member of Sanhedrin must not oppose the authority of the judicial majority. One who does is categorized as a rebellious elder (zaken mamreh), and his offense is considered a capital crime, assuming that he proactively attempts to influence others to defy the court in practice.

However, the law of the “rebellious elder” is shaded with subtleties. The aforementioned passage in the Talmud points out that one is not condemned as a zaken mamreh if the disagreement is limited to verbal preaching against the decision, while accepting the ruling in practice. Furthermore, not only does one who disagrees have a right to do so, he is obligated to explain the reasons for his disagreement. After all, if he is correct, he may eventually convince others to see things his way.

What happens, however, if the dissenter is a “conscientious objector”? Fascinatingly, the first mishna in Tractate Horayot forbids a scholar from performing an act that the Sanhedrin permitted but which he believed was prohibited, noting that if a recognized scholar knows that a decision of the Sanhedrin is incorrect, but he nevertheless acts in accordance with the majority, he has committed a transgression and must bring a sacrifice! In other words, not only may he go against the majority, but failure to do so is a sin that requires ritual atonement.

Our sages add, “One might think that even if they tell you that right is left and that left is right, you must nevertheless listen to them? It is for this reason that the Torah specifies [do not stray from] right and left, in order that you may understand that only when they tell you about the right this is right and the left that is left, then must you listen to them”.

These sources clearly guide the sage to follow his conscience when he is firmly convinced of the correctness of his position. If he ignores his own knowledge as to what constitutes a correct practice, his transgression in following the incorrect view of the Sanhedrin obligates him to bring a sacrifice. [An important exception to this rule of freedom of dissent is the calendar, since nothing ensures the unity of the Jewish people and threatens our fragmentation more than the calendar. In that regard, there must be unanimity.]

Support for the Sage’s right to dissent is further found in Tractate Eduyot [5:6], where we read that the sage Akavya ben Mahalalel disagreed with the majority opinion on four issues. He was offered the coveted position of Av Beit Din, second-in-command of the Sanhedrin, but only on condition that he change his mind on his dissenting opinion. Akavya’s response was that he would rather be called a fool all his days and not be considered wicked before God for even one moment for having sacrificed his vision of truth for the lure of high rabbinic office.

The mishna goes on to record one view that maintains that Akavya was excommunicated and that when he died the court threw stones upon his coffin. However Rabbi Yehuda vehemently disagrees: “Heaven forbid that Akavya would have been excommunicated, for the courtyard of the Holy Temple was never closed in the face of a Jew as great in wisdom and in fear of sin as Akavya ben Mahalalel.”

Rabbi Yehuda names a different sage whom the court excommunicated and whose coffin was pelted with stones. The conclusion of this mishna courageously affirms the right of conscience of an individual scholar granting accolades to Akavya for refusing to bend to the will of the majority.

Perhaps the confusion between Akavya and the other figure is the mishna’s subtle way of stating that going against the majority demands a price. Many will not understand what you are doing; your coffin

may be pelted with stones. But in the end, your name will be cleared and your courage will be praised. As long as wisdom, reverence for God, and fear of sin motivate your decisions, you dare not mute your individual conscience when you enter the courtyard of the Holy Temple of Jewish law.

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Tree-like - I love metaphors. An apt metaphor can help stimulate boundless creativity and can lead to a deeper and richer understanding of the concept being studied.

Take, for example, the metaphor of a tree as representing a human being. We find this metaphor in this week’s Torah portion, Shoftim, in the following verse: “When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it, to seize it; do not destroy its tree, by swinging an ax against it; for from it you will eat, and you shall not cut it down; because man is a tree of the field, to come against you in a siege.”

I am aware that there are alternative translations of the phrase under consideration, and that some render it as a question, “Is a tree of the field like a man?” But the literal meaning of the phrase is declarative. Man is like a tree of the field.

How? Let us count the ways. For starters, King David himself in the very first chapter of Psalms compares the righteous person to a tree. “He is like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades, and whatever he does prospers.” Of all the metaphors available to the psalmist to paint the picture of the good man, the tree is the one he finds most fitting.

The rabbis also use the metaphor of the tree to capture the essence of one aspect of humanity. Thus, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah would say, “He whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, to what can he be compared? To a tree whose branches are many but whose roots are few, so that any wind can come and uproot it and turn it over on its face... But he whose deeds exceed his wisdom, to what can he be compared? To a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are many, so that even if all the winds of the worlds beset him, they cannot move him from his place...”

The righteous person is like a tree beside a stream. The ethical man of action who puts his wisdom into practice has deep roots which give him confidence and security.

There are so many other ways in which we resemble the tree. The tree regenerates, and the wind carries its seeds to great distances. So too, mankind is perpetuated over the generations, and sometimes our descendants take root in corners of the earth that are far removed from us.

When I close my eyes and try to imagine the tree, two different images compete for my mind’s attention. One is the tree standing alone in the field, with long and drooping overhanging branches, providing shade for those who sit under it. So too, I can imagine human beings in my own life and in the history of humanity who stood apart and were misunderstood, yet provided physical or spiritual shelter to so many others.

The other image I have is of one tree, not alone, but together with many others constituting an impenetrable and mysterious forest. And so too, human beings band together into social groups which contain their own idiosyncrasies, which seem impenetrable to the outsider.

There is a lesson in the metaphor of the tree for that most important human process: education. This lesson is so well-expressed in the lines of the poet, Alexander Pope: “‘Tis education forms the common mind: Just as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclin’d.”

Trees left to their own devices grow wildly. Proper cultivation can direct their growth positively and

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productively. So too, humans benefit from proper “bending,” discipline and training.

And then there is the sad, but ultimate, connection between the tree and the human being. Trees wither, and trees die. They are subject to the forces of nature: fire, wind, deterioration and decay. Yes, we know of trees that have endured for centuries, but even those lengthy life spans eventually come to an end.

I would like to end this brief contemplation of the many analogies between mankind and the trees with a passage from the ancient Greek poet, Aristophanes, which is so reminiscent of more than one passage in our High Holiday liturgy:

“Mankind, fleet of life, like tree leaves, weak creatures of clay,

unsubstantial as shadows, wingless, ephemeral, wretched, mortal and dreamlike.”

But there is a happier connection between people and trees, and that is through the Torah, which is itself compared to a tree, the tree of life; “eitz chaim hi.”

Indeed, “Man is like the tree of the field,” withering or able to thrive, depending on one’s own life circumstances.

Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Where is there a mitzvah to wash your hands of something? It appears at the end of parashat Shoftim, and it’s a disturbing scenario: A corpse is out in the open and it’s obvious that this person has been murdered. But the identity of the victim is not known and nobody has a clue what happened. So the Torah tells us that the elders and the judges come out – and they measure the distance from the corpse to each of the settlements in that area. Once they have determined which is the closest town or city to the corpse, then the elders of that place must then take the life of a heifer – hence the process is called ‘eglah arufah’ (a decapitated calf). Then the Torah tells us that they must wash their hands over the deceased. This is the Biblical origin of the saying, to wash one’s hands of something. And then they declare “yadeinu lo shafchu et hadam hazeh” – our hands have not spilled this blood. They are washing their hands of it – they are saying ‘we are guiltless.’

However, they are engaged in the process as an act of atonement. The message here is that this person probably walked through their town on the previous evening. Nobody noticed this person. Nobody brought them into their homes. Nobody showed them kindness – and now this person is dead.

Rav Aaron Lichtenstein zt”l gave a beautiful insight on the passage of ‘eglah arufah’. He pointed out that the passage immediately preceding it in parashat Shoftim is about going out to war, and the passage immediately after is ‘ki tizei la’milchama’. It’s the beginning of the following sedrah – when you go out to war! ‘Eglah arufah’ is sandwiched between them. And the message is that, when you go out to fight a battle in order to save your country or to save the lives of your people, you might be forced to take the lives of many enemies, and there is a danger that the value of life could become diminished in your eyes. That must never affect your overall outlook on life. From ‘eglah arufah’ we learn that every single life is precious. Even the life of somebody you’ve never met – a total stranger. Even if you don’t know how that person passed away – you need to feel culpable – somehow or other you should have been there for the sake of that person.

And if we need to relate to total strangers in that way, then how much more so should we reach out with love and care – and value the life of members of our families, members of our communities and our society. Certainly from parashat Shoftim we learn, that when it comes to all human life, that is not something to wash your hands of.

R' Yeshayah Halevi Horowitz z"l (the *Shelah Hakadosh*; rabbi of Prague and Yerushalayim; died 1630) writes: This *Parashah* contains 41 *Mitzvot*, which may be divided into six categories, paralleling the six pillars on which the world stands (*Pirkei Avot* ch.1): *Torah* study, *Avodah* / the Temple service, *Chessed* / kindness, *Din* / Justice, *Emet* / Truth, and *Shalom* / Peace. He elaborates:

The *Parashah* opens with the pillar of *Din* (16:18): "Judges and officers you shall appoint in all your cities . . ." Also included are the *Mitzvot* to obey the *Sanhedrin* and to punish a *Zaken Mamrei* / a rebellious elder, i.e., a member of the *Sanhedrin* who continues to propound his own minority opinion after he has been outvoted by his colleagues. The *Mitzvah* to appoint a king falls within this category, as well.

The pillar of *Emet* includes the prohibitions against witchcraft and divination, as well as the *Mitzvah* to not listen to a false prophets. Instead, we are commanded to listen to true prophets.

The pillar of *Shalom* applies even in war, as we read (20:10), "When you draw near to a city to wage war against it, you shall call out to it for peace." The commandment to completely eradicate the Canaanite nations also brings peace, for eliminating those who anger *Hashem* brings tranquility to the world.

[R' Horowitz continues, showing where the other three pillars are found in the *Parashah* as well.] (*Sh'nei Luchot Ha'brit*)

Tefilah

This year, we will *iy"H* devote this space to discussing various aspects of our prayers. This week, we continue discussing the different types of prayer identified in Midrashim.

R' Shimshon Dovid Pincus z"l (rabbi of Ofakim, Israel; died 2001) writes: "**Pilul**" (פלל) is the root of "*L'hitpalel*," the verb for prayer in general. In the Torah, this verb appears in two other contexts: "Judgment," as in (*Shmot* 21:22), "He shall pay it *B'filim* / by order of judges," and "connection," as in (*Bereishit* 30:8--spoken by Rachel), "*Naftulei* / Sacred schemes have I maneuvered to equal my sister," which *Rashi* z"l interprets to mean: "I have been joined to my sister to merit the privilege of having children."

R' Pincus elaborates: It requires little explanation why all forms of prayer would be referred to as "connection." The essence of prayer is connecting one's thoughts and feelings to G-d.

R' Pincus continues: One can develop a connection with *Hashem* through prayer in two ways. One is by speaking directly to Him at any time. The second is during the recitation of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Our Sages refer to reciting *Shemoneh Esrei* as "standing before the King." This is not just a feeling; it is a literal reality. When we begin *Shemoneh Esrei*, *Hashem* "makes Himself available" to listen to us. This is an immense kindness on His part, but it obligates us to take advantage of the opportunity and make the effort to connect with Him. This, in turn, requires *Emunah* / faith that He really is listening and that He desires our prayers.

How is prayer like "judgment"? R' Pincus explains: The goal of judgment is truth. Prayer is an exercise in acknowledging the truth--specifically, that the only Being that is "true"--in the sense that He is necessary and unchanging--is *Hashem*. (In a philosophical sense, our own existence is not "true," because we are not necessary; *Hashem* can exist without us. In contrast, *Hashem* is "true" because without Him there would be no existence.) When one reflects on this "truth," he recognizes his own obligation to praise *Hashem*. Next, he recognizes the truth that he is a small and insignificant creature that is entirely dependent on *Hashem*, yet *Hashem* performs unbelievable kindness for him from the moment he is born until the moment he leaves this world. (*She'arim B'tefilah* p.102)

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“Is the tree of the field a man that it should be besieged by you? (20:19)

[Though this verse is a rhetorical question, implying that a tree is not a man--therefore, you should not destroy it in battle--the prophets (as in *Yirmiyah* 17:6), the *Mishnah* (*Avot* ch.3), and works of *Drush* / homiletics and *Mussar* / character improvement contain many lessons that are based on equating people and trees.]

R' Yitzchak Arama z"l (Spain; died 1494) writes: Fruit trees have many parts, each with its own purpose and character. There is the trunk, which is planted in the earth and close to it. Then there are the branches that extend this way and that way into the air. Lastly, there is the fruit.

Likewise, a person has a “trunk”--the physical body that “ties” him to the earth and is the seat of his physical powers, his character, and his nature, and with which he performs all of his actions, including *Mitzvot*. Then there are the intellectual wisdoms that send forth feelers (branches) in this direction and that direction, investigating all that exists. Lastly, there is the fruit, which is recognition of G-d and true *Emunah* / belief in Him.

Pirkei Avot (ch.3) teaches: If one's wisdom is greater than his actions, he is like a tree whose branches are heavier than its trunk--a strong wind will uproot it and blow it over. R' Arama explains: Having a solid foundation does not guarantee that one will attain wisdom or *Emunah*. However, the *Mishnah* is teaching, without a solid foundation, it is impossible to climb to greatness.

There are several reasons for this, R' Arama continues: If one's character is flawed, it will usually distract him from attaining wisdom, and, certainly, *Emunah*. Also, if one cannot perfect that which comes easily, almost from habit, how can he perfect that which takes hard work?

However, R' Arama concludes, the above is true only under the “natural order.” In contrast, the nation that received the Torah at *Har Sinai* is like an upside down tree, whose roots and trunk are in the Heaven. Thus, a Jewish child is taught *Emunah* (i.e., to recite “*Shema Yisrael*”) as soon as he can speak (*Sukkah* 42a). A Jew's *Emunah* is not the end result of his development and his intellectual investigations; rather, it is the beginning, from which intellectual accomplishment, character development, and *Mitzvot* follow. Only with this world view can certain incidents in *Tanach* be understood, writes R' Arama--for example, Avraham taking his son Yitzchak to offer him as a sacrifice, or Yaakov forcing Esav to sell his birthright when he was starving. From the perspective of human reason, these acts seem cruel. Likewise, though “compassion” is viewed by both G-d and man as one of the highest virtues, King Shaul lost his throne precisely because he showed compassion to Amalek--a result that shocks man and cannot be understood except through the prism of the Torah. (Akeidat Yitzchak: Bereishit 27)

R' Avraham Dov Auerbach z"l (Chief Rabbi of Teveryah, Israel, who passed away this week) writes: The *Gemara* (*Yoma* 22b) teaches that King Shaul hesitated to destroy Amalek because he understood the Torah to demand compassion. Logically, he was correct, but the Torah decrees otherwise. Our Sages teach that one who is compassionate to cruel people will, ultimately, be cruel when compassion is in order. On the other hand, one who follows the Torah will be protected by the *Mitzvah* he has performed. (Pitchei Avraham)

“When you come to the Land that Hashem, your Elokim, gives you, . . . and you will say, ‘I will set a king over myself, like all the nations that are around me.’ You shall surely set over yourself a king whom Hashem, your Elokim, shall choose . . .” (17:14-15)

Many commentaries ask: From these verses, it seems that there is a *Mitzvah* to appoint a king over *Yisrael*. Indeed, the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 20b) states this explicitly. Yet, when the Jewish People asked the prophet Shmuel to give them a king, he responded (*Shmuel I* 10:19), “Today you have rejected your *Elokim* who delivered you from all your troubles and calamities, and you said to Him, ‘Set up a king over us!’”

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; first *Ashkenazic* Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*) explains: The Jewish People have both spiritual and material needs, and they require leadership that addresses both areas. In addition to Torah scholars, a great nation such as the Jewish People requires everything that makes a society function: scientists, tradesmen, craftsmen, etc. This brings honor to the Creator, for He is the one who gives man the intelligence to understand and build the world around him.

The question arises, R' Kook continues: Should the Jewish People have only one leader, or should they have two leaders--one to be responsible for their spiritual needs and a second to address their material needs?

He answers: Were *Hashem* revealed in the world as is meant to be, man would understand that everything in the world exists because of *Hashem's* Will and solely to serve Him. Then, man would not view his material needs as antagonistic to, or competing with, the Torah, nor as something that needs to be subjugated to man's spiritual life. Rather, in the ideal world, we would recognize that both are one, for nothing exists except His Will. Our physical needs would be full participants in our spiritual lives. In that scenario, we would have only one leader--like Moshe Rabbeinu, who cared for both the spiritual and the physical needs of the nation.

Unfortunately, R' Kook continues, we are not on that level, nor will we be again until the arrival of *Mashiach*. The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 94a) teaches that *Hashem* wanted to make King Chizkiyah *Mashiach*, but He did not, because Chizkiyah did not sing *Hashem's* praises at the downfall of the Assyrian king Sancherev. R' Kook explains: Chizkiyah did not view this physical victory as worthy of spiritual song, and, this failure to see the physical and the spiritual as one disqualified him from being *Mashiach*.

[The Torah's idea of a king is one like *Mashiach*, who will teach that all aspects of Creation exist for the service of *Hashem*, there being no conflict between the physical and the spiritual. In contrast, when the Jewish People asked for a king, they were looking only for a military leader, someone to direct their material lives. That was what angered Shmuel.]

(Otzrot Ha'Rayah II p.179)

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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ISRAELI AMBASSADOR URGES DISMISSAL OF ANTI-SEMITIC UNRWA STAFF (Arutz-7 8/12/21)

Israel's Ambassador to the United States and the United Nations Gilad Erdan on Wednesday sent a letter to the Under-Secretary-General of the UN and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA Philippe Lazzarini calling for the immediate dismissal of UNRWA teachers who have engaged in anti-Semitic actions, explaining that training teachers to hide their anti-Semitic views online does not remedy the situation.

Ambassador Erdan's letter was written as a follow-up to Commissioner-General Lazzarini, after Lazzarini had informed Erdan in writing that UNRWA had "... invested immense efforts in training its personnel to promote their understanding of neutrality."

Ambassador Erdan wrote, "If your agency is, indeed, committed to a 'zero-tolerance policy for hatred including anti-Semitism', as you yourself write, then the answer to these acts of hatred and incitement should be immediate dismissal, not merely participation in a tolerance or diversity workshop. As you saw, the UN Watch report...included very troubling examples of teacher impropriety, including a teacher that quoted Hitler in a positive light. Such behaviors go well beyond poor judgment by educators that 'neutrality training' can remedy."

At the end of the letter, Ambassador Erdan wrote, "Given the troublesome history of UNRWA textbooks and teaching materials having included violent and anti-Semitic content that your organization has pledged to remove, I expect more from you than mere 'retraining'. Teachers that teach violence, hatred and anti-Semitism have no place in a UNRWA classroom, or any classroom for that matter, and should be fired at once."

Last week, a UN Watch report revealed that more than 100 of UNRWA's educators and staff have publicly promoted anti-Semitism and violence on social media, and that on numerous occasions the agency has failed to dismiss teachers who incited such hate.

Following the publication of the UN Watch report, Erdan sent letters of complaint to the Secretary-General of the UN and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and demanded they take action.

UNRWA subsequently announced that it would launch a probe into the contents of the UN Watch report.

ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER LAPID INAUGURATES DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN MOROCCO (Ha'aretz 8/12/21)

Israel's foreign minister on Thursday inaugurated the country's diplomatic representation in Morocco, a symbol of the normalization of the relations between the two nations.

Yair Lapid's two-day visit is the first to the country by an Israeli minister since 2003. It comes less than a year after Israel and Morocco reached a deal to establish formal ties under the U.S.-brokered "Abraham Accords."

The Abraham Accords were struck last year with four Arab states: the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco.

They shook up the region by upending the long-held belief that Israel could not normalize relations with the broader Arab world without progress in resolving its decades-old conflict with the Palestinians. The Palestinians have rejected the agreements.

As part of the deal to establish formal ties with Israel, the United States agreed to recognize Morocco's claim over the long-disputed Western Sahara region, though the Biden administration has said it will review that decision. Morocco's 1975 annexation of Western Sahara is not recognized by the United Nations.

ISRAEL AND SAUDI ARABIA ARE COOPERATING ON IRAN, MINISTER SAYS (YNet 8/10/21)

Minister for Regional Cooperation Issawi Freij (Meretz) revealed that there are contacts with Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, on the matter of Iran.

In an interview on the Alhurra channel, part of the U.S. Public Middle East Broadcasting Network on Monday, Freij said the threats by Iran were not only a problem for Israel or the Saudis and required a global response.

Israel and Saudi Arabia do not have diplomatic relations but there have been signs of warming ties in recent years. Last year Israeli airlines were granted permission to use Saudi airspace en route to the UAE after Israel and several Gulf states signed normalization agreements.

Freij said that his personal dream as a Muslim was to go on pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia without having to travel through a third country in order to do so. Israeli Muslims often travel via Jordan on their way to Mecca.

"I am convinced we will see such an opportunity soon," he said.

Freij said that there are serious discussions on all levels of government with the UAE in the wake of last year's diplomatic agreement with the Gulf state, including mutual visits and steps to advance bilateral projects.

"We are working on a number of projects and have already seen some taking shape, including in the medical field. We are certain there will be more cooperation for the benefit of both Emirati and Israeli society," he said.

Freij said relations with neighboring Jordan had suffered from a crisis of trust in the past decade but after Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's reported recent visit to Amman, steps were taken to solve the problem.

Israel and Jordan were set to cooperate on economy, renewable energy and water projects, the minister said, and added that Israel would build a water desalinization plant that would assist Jordan's water supply.

"We will be making an important decision in the coming weeks that will have important implications for our relations with our Jordanian brothers," he said.

Freij said the residents of the Gaza Strip were suffering and that his ministry

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Cong. Agudath Achim, Bradley Beach, NJ
Cong. Ahavas Achim, Highland Park, NJ
Cong. Ahavath Achim, Fairfield, CT
Cong. Anshe Shalom, Jamaica Estates, NY
Cong. Anshe Sholom, New Rochelle, NY
Cong. Beth Aaron, Teaneck, NJ
Cong. Beth Shalom, Monroe Twp, NJ
Cong. Bnai Yeshurun, Teaneck, NJ
Cong. Brothers of Israel, Long Branch, NJ
Cong. Etz Ahaim, Highland Park, NJ
Cong. Ohav Emeth, Highland Park, NJ
Cong. Ohr Torah, Edison, NJ
Cong. Rinat Yisrael, Teaneck, NJ
Cong. Shomrei Torah, Fair Lawn, NJ
Cong. Sons of Israel, Allentown, PA
Cong. Zichron Mordechai, Teaneck, NJ
Cong. Zichron R. M. Feinstein, Brooklyn, NY
Delray Orthodox Synagogue, Delray Beach, FL
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue, CO
East Hill Synagogue, Englewood, NJ
Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Mill Basin, NY
Harvard University Library
Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, NY
Hillel at Baruch College

Hillel at Brandeis University
Hillel at California State University - Long Beach
Hillel at Columbia University
Hillel at Johns Hopkins University
Hillel at University of Maryland
Hillel at Yale University
Hillel High School, Deal NJ
Jewish Center of Teaneck, NJ
Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi, Cedarhurst, NY
Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring, MD
Mizrachi Shul, Johannesburg, SA
North Shore Hebrew Academy HS, NY
Suburban Torah Center, Livingston, NJ
Temple Emanuel of Pascack Valley, NJ
The Learning Shul, Columbia, SC
Torah Academy of Bergen County, NJ
Woodsburgh, NY Minyan
Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ
Young Israel of Brookline, MA
Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ
Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ
Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA
Young Israel of Holliswood, NY
Young Israel of Houston, TX
Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY
Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY
Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY
Young Israel of Sharon, MA
YI Shomrai Emunah, Silver Spring, MD

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was working to assist them.

One of the ways to do so is by putting into action the Paris Protocol, the part of the Oslo Accords that deals with economic development.

The agreement outlines the economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority including the establishment of a Joint Economic Committee, the establishment of import/export duties, monetary and financial duties, taxation, local production, labor regulation, agricultural production, industry, tourism and insurance.

"Israeli-Palestinian relations have been frozen for the past 10-12 years, under the government of former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu," he said.

"That is why I have been working to bring about meetings of ministers from both sides, in order to find solutions for an array of problems," he said.

TEMPLE MOUNT BRIDGE TENDER APPLICANTS REQUIRED TO PROMISE SECRECY – REPORT (JPost 8/12/21)

A tender for the renovation of the bridge to the Mughrabi Gate through which Jews enter the Temple Mount requires applicants to sign a non-disclosure agreement to not publish any details about the tender, including the fact that the tender exists, Yediot Aharonot reported on Thursday.

According to the report, contractors toured the site last month and the main renovation work involves replacing the wood of the bridge. The Western Wall Heritage Foundation told Yediot Aharonot that they are operating according to the instructions of the Prime Minister's Office.

In June, an expert engineer for the Western Wall Heritage Foundation warned that the Mughrabi Bridge is in immediate danger of collapse.

The wood of the bridge will not afford safe use for an extended period, wrote the engineer in a document, advising that the bridge be replaced "without delay" with a steel bridge in order to avoid constant maintenance and protect the bridge against fire.

The engineer stressed that the wood is extremely dry and cracked and that past attempts to treat the wood had failed, according to Channel 13.

Previous attempts to build a new bridge at the site failed in 2011 and in 2014, after pressure by the Jordanian government. The wood bridge has served as a "temporary" replacement for a damaged stone ramp since 2003. Multiple warnings concerning the bridge's condition have been issued in the past decade.

Palestinian media expressed outrage in June after the report on the bridge was published, claiming that the Jerusalem municipality had announced that it intended to build a new bridge to the Mughrabi Gate. The Jerusalem Municipality has still not publicly announced any plans to take any such action.

Fakhri Abu Diab, a Palestinian activist from the Silwan neighborhood of east Jerusalem, told the Palestinian Safa news in June that the municipality planned to construct the bridge after the warning issued by the engineer.

Abu Diab claimed that the planned bridge would be as wide as five meters and about 70 meters long. The activist added that excavations would need to be conducted in order to build the new bridge, warning that this could cause damage to the Western Wall.

The Palestinian report claimed that building such a bridge would change the reality and character of the site and "Judaize" it, calling it a "dangerous precedent, a systematic attack on the Islamic endowment, and a blatant interference in the affairs of the Islamic Endowment Department in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque."

In July, Likud MK Miri Regev warned that urgent construction work must be carried out on Mughrabi Bridge.

"It is forbidden to wait another moment with the demolition of the bridge and the construction of an appropriate replacement," she said. "The writing is on the wall, and the blood [of the victims] will be on the hands of all those who [did not act] and remained silent."

The bridge poses a safety hazard for those who use it and for those who pray at the designated women's section of the Western Wall because it passes over their heads, Regev said.

BENNETT ISN'T MOVING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S JERUSALEM RESIDENCE FOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS (Ha'aretz 8/12/21)

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett doesn't plan to move to the official Jerusalem residence for at least another six months, the state told the High Court of Justice, in response to a petition by the premier's neighbors in Ra'anana regarding demonstrations held near their homes.

The Jerusalem residence is expected to undergo major renovations lasting at least six months, the state said.

Bennett does not intend on moving to the official residence on Balfour Street and the renovations will be done "for security and maintenance reasons," the state said in its response, noting that Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's family frequently complained about its dilapidated condition.

In response to numerous demonstrations held near Bennett's private home in Ra'anana, his neighbors petitioned the High Court of Justice asking that the police clamp down on the demonstrations, or in the alternative, that they be allowed to take place near the official residence only.

On the heels of the protests, the police issued guidelines and restrictions aimed at minimizing disruption to the neighbors' way of life, and have limited the frequency of protests to a certain number of times per week and to certain hours only.

In its response to the suit, the state seeks to keep in place the police framework whereby protests are only allowed a few hundred meters from Bennett's home, saying this is "reasonable, proportionate and appropriately balances freedom of expression and the right to protest with the need to preserve public order."

The filings reveal that at the largest of the demonstrations held near Bennett's house on Tsifman Street in Ra'anana about 300 people were in attendance.

"According to the police's impression, so far the demonstrations have been conducted according to the framework and the demonstrators are following the police's instructions. Usually, between 50 to 90 people participate in the protests... when the police are of the opinion that the noise is unreasonable, they ask the protesters to lower the volume of the amplification and the impression of the police officials on the ground is that the protesters so far have generally agreed to this request," said the government in its response.

In response to the petitioners' claims that police horse manure was not collected at the end of the demonstrations, creating an additional nuisance, the government admitted to such, characterizing it as "an accident and certainly not a result of the policy," and added that the matter is being handled by the relevant authorities.

AMAZON BRINGING BACK FREE SHIPPING TO ISRAEL FOR ORDERS OVER \$65 (JPost 8/12/21)

Israeli shoppers rejoice. Global shopping giant Amazon has resumed free shipping to Israel. As of Thursday morning, purchases over \$65 are eligible for free shipping to Israel.

Only certain items are eligible for free shipping, which are clearly marked on the site. No guidance has been provided as to how long the promotion will last.

Israelis have waited a year and a half for this moment. When Amazon began offering free shipping to Israel for orders above \$49 in November 2019, it set off nothing less than a consumer revolution overnight. Because Amazon was able to sell thousands of products more inexpensively than local stores, Israelis began buying almost everything online, including clothing, electronics, food and even toilet paper.

However, that all ended abruptly in March 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic wreaked havoc on global shipping channels and forced Amazon to cancel the benefit.

Deliveries to Israel were canceled completely during the early days of the pandemic. Later last summer, sales to Israel were restored, but with longer and more expensive shipping options. Shipping times to Israel have now returned closer to pre-pandemic levels.

Shopping online is a favorite pastime for Israelis, and it has long been common for olim (immigrants to Israel) to order online and have the packages sent to a relative abroad to be picked up or delivered on an upcoming visit. For many Israelis, free delivery to their homes in Israel represents an international level of luxury.

Israelis are avid shoppers on international shopping sites like Ali Express and Next, but the quality and variety of international products on Amazon is generally considered superior.

The \$65 threshold for free shipping is intentional. Currently in Israel, deliveries from overseas under \$75 are exempt from customs charges. Keeping the size of an order between \$65 and \$75 in order to avoid fees requires shoppers to exercise a certain level of attention and savvy that Amazon has likely taken into account. The previous threshold of \$49 gave shoppers more room to make a sport of dodging fees.

Facebook groups dedicated to shopping on Amazon were already abuzz Thursday with people sharing advice about which deals ship to Israel and tips on reaching the \$65 minimum.

The return of free shipping "was unexpected, but was certainly appreciated by the community," said Avi Parshan, who runs a group called The Best Deals in Israel. He called the raising of the minimum order price "bittersweet." Israel's Economy Ministry recently proposed that Israel's \$75 VAT exemption on imports should be canceled, as it creates a competitive disadvantage for local retailers who are required to pay VAT from the first shekel. However, if such a measure is ever adopted, it would likely be years away, and would be contingent on Israel developing a simple payment mechanism for consumers and suppliers to pay customs charges, according to the Economy Ministry document.

WORLD ABUZZ OVER ISRAEL'S ROBOTIC BEEHIVES (Israel Hayom 8/12/21)

The buzz of the bees drowned out the hum of the robotic arm, which worked with an efficiency no human beekeeper could match.

One after another the machine scanned stacks of honeycombs that together could house up to two million bees – inspecting them for disease, monitoring for pesticides and reporting in real-time any hazards that threatened the colony.

The next-generation hive was developed by Israeli startup Beewise, which says that this kind of around-the-clock care is what is needed to minimize the risk of colonies collapsing.

There has been a drastic fall in bee numbers around the world, largely due to intensive agriculture, the use of pesticides, pests and climate change.

Companies have been pursuing different technologies to try to slow down mass colony collapse, like placing sensors on traditional wooden beehives, or methods to cope with the loss of bees, like artificial pollination.

At roughly the size of a cargo trailer, Beewise's hive houses 24 colonies. Inside, it is equipped with a robotic arm that slides between honeycombs, computer vision and cameras. Color-coded openings on the sides allow bees to come and go.

"Anything a beekeeper would do the robotic mechanism can mimic and do it more effectively without ever getting tired, without going on vacation and without complaining," said CEO Saar Safra.

This includes harvesting honey, applying medicine and combining or splitting hives.

Beewise has already raised \$40 million of funding from private investors and over 100 of its systems are in use in Israel and the United States.

ISRAELI GIRL FINDS ANCIENT COIN DURING SCAVENGER HUNT AT TALMUD-ERA VILLAGE (Israel Hayom 8/11/21)

A scavenger hunt at a Talmud-era village in northern Israel took a surprising turn on Tuesday when an Israeli girl found a 1,500-year-old bronze coin.

The girl and her family were visiting the Korazim archeological park, near the Sea of Galilee, The Times of Israel reported.

During the game, the girl found the coin on the ground.

According to Korazim Park director Dekel Segev, the coin dates to the Talmudic period, between the fourth and fifth centuries CE. The park's website quotes Segev explaining that Korazim is a Jewish village some 2,000 years old, which reached its heights during the time of the Mishnah and Talmud.

According to Dekel, what makes Korazim special is not only its wealth of archaeological artifacts, but how intact it is. Korazim is one of the only sites in Israel that shows visitors an ancient Jewish farming community that boasts a synagogue, homes, a mikveh, olive oil presses, and a wine press.

In addition to refurbishing walking paths and creating the scavenger hunt activity, the park also offers curious visitors a chance to get their hands dirty by digging with a professional archaeologist in a program it calls "Digging Through Time."

Segev praised the girl for immediately handing the coin over to the park authorities.

"The young girl and her family showed good citizenship and brought us the coin because it is a national treasure," he said. "The piece will be forwarded to the Israel Antiquities Authority for further research and preservation."

DISENTANGLING ANTISEMITISM FROM POLITICAL CRITICISM OF ISRAEL (Dan Diker, JPost 8/10/21)

International confusion over political criticism and antisemitism has devalued the former and exacerbated the latter. Clarifying and contextualizing the difference between these two contrasting terms may help "defog" the clouded view on the increasingly disingenuous, deceptive discourse on Israel.

One approach to understanding this intellectual and moral morass lies in an understanding of what Prof. Bernard Lewis, one of the greatest authorities on Islam and the Near East, had coined the "new political antisemitism." In his groundbreaking commentary in the December 2005 edition of the American Scholar, Lewis noted that religious and racial antisemitism has given way to an ideological hatred of the Jewish collective, an expression of "cosmic evil" that has defied territorial compromise between Palestinians and Israelis.

Professor Lewis urged his readers to understand that the modern metastasizing hatred of Israel is rooted in part in the masquerading of antisemitism as political critique. This intellectual and moral chaos embodies the thesis of the 2020 compendium, Israelophobia and the West, that this writer co-authored and compiled over the course of a year's research into the masking of political antisemitism as legitimate criticism of Israel. Antisemitism masked as policy critique in Western circles has given voice to and exacerbated the ideological assault against the existence of Israel as the democratic nation state of the Jewish people.

The tendency of international institutions, especially the UN and its agencies, to pass off antisemitic statements as political critique has been concisely articulated by Alan Baker, Israel's former ambassador to Canada and previous longtime legal adviser to Israel's Foreign Ministry. Baker wrote in Israelophobia and the West:

"The extent of negative generalization and vilification through the use of internationally recognized 'buzz words' consistently targeting only Israel, the Jewish state, to the exclusion of any other state or people, very easily transposes itself into delegitimizing propaganda against the Jewish people. For example, the deliberate and easy use of empty or inaccurate expressions, such as 'OPT' Occupied Palestinian Territories, lacking legal or factual basis, serves as a popular engine to influence the public, the media, international fora, and nongovernmental and international organizations."

Alan Dershowitz, professor emeritus of Harvard Law School, has noted that antisemitism against Israel embodies critics' confusion between what Israel does as policy, and what they accuse Israel of being – an "apartheid" or "Nazi" white supremacist regime.

Bernard Lewis writes in the American Scholar, "This is where the third phase of antisemitism arises, which for want of a better term we might call political-cum-ideological Judeophobia. Race? Oh no, we wouldn't have anything to do with that. Religious prejudice? Oh no, we're far beyond that. This is political

and ideological, and it provides a socially and intellectually acceptable modern disguise for sentiments that go back some 2,000 years.”

The late historian Robert Wistrich, a leading global expert on antisemitism, identified its modern expression in hatred of Israel, by demonstrating parallel forms, including the widespread sale of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in the Arab world and its adoption of Soviet anti-Israel propaganda. In fact, modern political antisemitism has deep roots in 20th-century Soviet disinformation, uses its terms, and mixes its accusations between Jews, Israel and Zionism interchangeably, as Natan Sharansky, former Soviet prisoner of Zion, who served as Israel's deputy prime minister, has explained. Defining political antisemitism

Lewis's explanation of the ideological hatred of Israel, which he had coined political antisemitism in early 2005, has since been formalized by the 2016 International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism, whose definitional principles were also adopted by the US State Department and Department of Defense. While published five years ago and adopted by nearly every state in the EU, the IHRA definition appears to have been overlooked or willfully ignored by many in the international diplomatic and political echelons.

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism includes the following elements:

- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the State of Israel.

These guidelines that define political antisemitism against the Jewish sovereign collective, demonstrate that many of Israel's harshest critics, including the UN, EU institutions and the politicized International Criminal Court, engage in antisemitic rhetoric masked as mere policy criticism. Antisemitism expert Fiamma Nirenstein, former deputy president of the Italian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, emphasized this current trend in her July 2021 policy monograph, “Double Message Double Standard.” Nirenstein noted that institutional antisemitism rests on three pillars: “Nazification” of Israel – claiming the Jews do to the Palestinians what the Nazis did to the Jews; “denial of sovereignty” – manifested in the term “illegal occupation,” thereby criminalizing Jewish territorial claims; and finally, the negation of the Iranian regime threat to annihilate Israel.

The Oxford English dictionary defines criticism as the “act of making fair, careful judgement about the good and bad qualities of something.” It follows that, in contrast to the hatred-filled name calling characterized by political antisemitism, political criticism rests on a clear set of underlying principles that define the term and its application. This consistent blueprint requires us to recognize and explicate the clear intellectual and moral differences between political antisemitism and legitimate criticism of Israel.

Simply stated, political criticism excludes hyperbole, name calling, and eliminationist phrasing. As opposed to the anti-Israel slander that has become de rigueur in the public discourse, legitimate political critique would include the presentation of facts, stripped of political exaggeration, and framed in principles of even-handed assessment and well-reasoned legal, historical, security and diplomatic context. Professor Asa Kasher, IDF ethicist and recipient of the Israel Prize, has outlined an additional set of criteria defining legitimate political critique. He suggested that a negative assessment constitutes a legitimate criticism when it is properly reasoned and based on principles, data, analyses and forecasts, with the objective of reaching a sound evaluation.

A contextualized and nuanced discussion of political criticism would compare and contrast Israel's territorial disputes to those of other countries. For example, Turkey and Northern Cyprus, China and Tibet, India and Kashmir, Georgia and South Ossetia, Russia and Crimea, and Morocco and Western Sahara all constitute territorial disputes. However, the UN, ICC, ICJ and other

states do not mobilize hyperbolic language or collectively launch accusations of apartheid, genocide or ethnic cleansing, even when factually appropriate. Similarly, the international community does not call for the dismantling of Turkey, Russia, China, Georgia, Morocco or India as sovereign countries. None of these parties has been subjected to the eliminationist language used to single out Israel for destruction.

In one example of an antisemitic approach to Israel, its activists have deemed Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights, West Bank and parts of Jerusalem examples of racist, ethnic cleansing and apartheid. Yet these “buzz words” ignore the critical legal assessment required to determine their international status. This would require the careful consideration of opposing views on Israel's housing policy east of the 1949 armistice lines.

The accepted critical view was established in 1978 by Herb Hansell, then US State Department Legal Advisor under the Carter Administration. Hansell's negative legal opinion rested on the claim that Israeli settlements east of the 1949 armistice lines, (1967 Green Line) violated the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. A legitimate critical policy discussion would need to consider Hansell's legal opinion against opposing legal assessments of other jurists, such as all Israeli government legal advisers since 1968, and internationally renowned professors of law including Julius Stone, Elihu Lauterpacht, Eugene V. Rostow – former US undersecretary of state and dean of Yale Law School, and Arthur Goldberg, former UN ambassador and US Supreme Court justice – and Arthur Goldberg, former UN ambassador and US Supreme Court justice.

This legal examination would also need to consider the recent legal determination of US State Department jurists under former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of the Trump administration. Pompeo's legal experts concurred with the above-mentioned legal authorities that Hansell's longstanding legal determination is mistaken and that Israeli settlements “are not per se illegal.” Regardless of one's position, this form of balanced and rational policy debate constitutes legitimate critical dialogue.

The importance of well-reasoned objective and contextual debate underscores its current lack of seriousness in the public discourse in the United States. Unprecedented antisemitic aspersions have appeared to have overtaken reasoned policy critique even in the House of Representatives. Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York have libeled Israel as a racist, apartheid state. In one hyperbolic accusation during the May 2021 conflict opposite the Iran-backed Hamas, Omar equated the United States and Israel with the Taliban and Hamas as perpetrators of “atrocities.”

Notably, these fictional and facetious statements have been empowered by political organizations such as Human Rights Watch, led by some progressive and other radical political activists masquerading as human rights experts, whose recent fictitious and even fantastical report accusing Israel of apartheid was refuted by leading scholars and respective policy institutes including Professor Gerald Steinberg and NGO Monitor, Professors Avi Bell and Eugene Kontorovich and Kohelet Policy Forum, and Ambassador Dr. Dore Gold and the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Omar and HRW's absurd accusations are not made to affect policy. Instead, slanders and libels of Israel charging apartheid, genocide and ethnic cleansing sensationalize and shock in order to mobilize, among other direct actions, mass protest movements such as those led by self-declared radical activists Marc Lamont Hill, Linda Sarsour and the leadership of Black Lives Matter, who have called for dismantling and eliminating the State of Israel.

Clearly, Israel should be judged by the same principles and standards as other nations to prevent the current international obsession of defaming, delegitimizing, dehumanizing, demonizing and denying Israel's existence and its citizens' collective rights, as former Canadian Justice Minister Professor Irwin Cotler has argued.

Respectful civil discourse on Israel including well-reasoned contextualized, balanced and rationally considered policy debate must now be embraced as the new universal moral standard in the international diplomatic, media and public dialogue.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

The Lengths We Must Go To

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

In Parshas Shoftim, the Torah instructs us that when a Jewish army prepares for battle, any soldier who had recently built a house, but not yet dwelled in it, planted a vineyard, but not yet had an opportunity to benefit from it, or betrothed a woman, but not yet married her, was instructed to return home from the battlefield. Additionally, the Torah continues (20:8), one who was "fearful and soft at heart" also was directed to leave in order to prevent him from damaging the morale and confidence of the other soldiers. Rashi cites two opinions from the Mishna (Sotah 44a) as to what kind of fear is referred to in the verse. According to Rabbi Akiva, it refers simply to fear of combat, while according to Rabbi Yosei Hagelili, it refers to a person who is afraid he may fall in battle as a result of the sins he has transgressed. The Mishna expounds on this opinion and explains that the primary reason the Torah instructs the previously listed categories of people to return from battle as well was to provide cover and avoid embarrassing those departing because of their sins. With so many different reasons for exemption, nobody would know if a person was leaving over fear of their sins or for some other reason.

This explanation also seems to provide a solution to an obvious question. If a person recently built a house, planted a vineyard, or betrothed a woman, why was it necessary for him to show up to the battlefield in the first place and then leave? Why not simply stay home? The answer might be that they needed to come to the battlefield specifically in order to depart at the same time as those leaving for fear of their sins, to provide cover and avoid any embarrassment for anyone.

Rav Yoseph Leib Nenedick, a prominent Mussar leader in pre-war Europe, related that you see from here how far one must go to avoid embarrassing another. The Torah includes an entirely "extra" set of laws and requires extraordinary effort in order to spare another person from embarrassment, and even from being embarrassed over his sins. We as well must go to great lengths to not only avoid shaming or embarrassing others, but even to save them from embarrassment, even when we don't necessarily agree with their behavior.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

Or who will come with his fellow into the forest... (19:5)

Rebbi Yehuda says, a blind person who kills someone accidentally does not go into exile. The reason is since the verse says "without seeing" and a blind person never sees (Makos 9a).

Rebbi Yehuda says, a blind person is exempt from all the mitzvos of the Torah (Kiddushin 31a).

If a blind person is exempt from the mitzvos anyway, he would not be obligated to go into exile either. So why does Rebbi Yehuda need a special inference to teach that?

Where in the Parsha is there a source for the obligation to escort a guest who leaves your home?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When is one permitted to eat the cheilev fats of a cow?

Answer: If a cow was slaughtered and there was a baby inside, the cheilev fats of the baby may be eaten.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Parashas Shoftim contains two similar sounding admonitions regarding witness testimony: "By the testimony of two witnesses or three witnesses shall the condemned person be put to death; **he shall not be put to death by the testimony of a single witness.**" (17:6) and "**A single witness shall not stand up against any man** for any iniquity or for any error, regarding any sin that he may commit; by the testimony of two witnesses or by the testimony of three witnesses shall a matter be confirmed." (19:15)

The latter admonition is indeed generally understood in the sense of the above translation (by ArtScroll); Rambam (*Sefer ha-Mitzvos lo sa'aseh* #288) and *Sefer ha-Chinuch* (#523) count it as one of the 613 commandments, to refrain from imposing punishment upon, or extracting money from, a defendant based on the testimony of a single witness. The former admonition, however, is interpreted differently in various Midrashic, Talmudic, and medieval sources:

- The Talmud (*Makkos* 6b) interprets it as a rule against "disjointed testimony," in which each of the witnesses saw the incident independent of the other, in capital cases. Ramban considers this another of the 613 commandments (*Hasagos to Sefer ha-Mitzvos*, negative commandments forgotten by Rambam, #9).

- Rambam (*ibid.* #291) also considers this to be another of the 613 commandments – but following *Sifrei*, he understands it in yet another way, as a reiteration of a prohibition first stated in *parashas Masei* (35:30): "Whoever smites a person, according to the testimony of witnesses shall one kill the killer, **but a single witness shall not testify against a person regarding death.**" According to the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 33b-34a), this is a prohibition against a witness in a capital case making arguments for or against the accused, beyond his actual testimony. The *halachah* follows the view that this extends even to an argument for acquittal, since a witness subsequent to testifying against the accused may acquire an interest in his acquittal: he may regret his testimony (and may even fear being [ostensibly?] shown to have perjured himself via the mechanism of *hezamah*), and since a witness is barred from recanting his testimony, he may attempt to forestall a conviction by improperly advocating on behalf of the accused.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I totaled forty-two.
2. Three on each side.
3. I saved.
4. Do not leave.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am on request.
2. Fear me.
3. I carry a Torah.
4. I must be Jewish.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Har Grizim (I am for blessings, I am not greasy, I am across the river, I am toward the west)

#2 Avoda Zara/Idols (Destroy me, I contaminate you, Strange work, I am the second of the ten.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Regular Kollel classes are now on summer break and will resume, be"YH, on August 22.

Stay tuned for exciting new classes and programs coming soon!

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