

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shabbos Shorts ד"ר

July 28 - 29, 2023 - 11 Av 5783 - Parashas Vaeschanan/Shabbos Nachamu

Light Candles by 8:05, not before 6:54 - Havdalah 9:08

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by **Art Boyars** in honor of his wife, **Beverly Morris**.

The YISE Communications Committee hopes you are enjoying the shorter Shabbos Shorts! Have a comment or suggestion? Please send us your feedback at communications@yise.org

Shabbos Schedule

Minyan locations:

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

Friday Night:

- Mincha: 6:35 (Plag, S), 7:05 (B), 8:05 (B), 7:15 (Sephardi, LBM)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 5:00 (B), 7:45 (B), 7:55 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Shalosh Seudos: 8:10 (S)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 9:08

Divrei Torah/Shiurim

- 8:45 Main Minyan (B) Rabbi Rosenbaum
- 9:15 Minyan (S) Rabbi Postelnek
- Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur (SBM) Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman
- Kedushas Levi Chabura - 8:55 (S) Rabbi Postelnek
- Shiur before Mincha - 7:00 (B) Rabbi Rosenbaum

Kiddush/Shalosh Seudos Sponsors

- The Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by the **Kelsey Family** in gratitude to Hashem for His many blessings and by the **Zak Family** with gratitude to Rabbi & Rebbetzin Rosenbaum and YISE for their kindness and friendship during our time in the community.
- The Shul Kiddush is sponsored by **Sara & Josh Katz** in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of their son Arik.
- The Shalosh Seudos is sponsored by **Cheryl & Richie Broth** in honor of the Aufruf and upcoming wedding of their son Binyamin to Kayla Goldstein of Bergenfield, NJ, and by **Sara & Josh Katz** in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of their son Arik.

Mazal Tov

- **Rachel & Michael Harris** on the engagement of their daughter Gila to Avi Zagelbaum, son of Suri & Yechiel Zagelbaum. Mazal Tov to the extended Harris and Zagelbaum families.
- **Debbie & Marc Katz** on the birth of a grandson, Ilan Avigdor, born to Chaviva & Benjy Katz of St. Louis, Missouri. Mazal Tov to big brother Adir and to Debbie & Rabbi Shmuel Kay, **Josh & Sara Katz**, Rafi Katz, Nechama & Ezra Katz as well as the many aunts, uncles and cousins on both sides.
- Arik Katz on his Bar Mitzvah. Mazal Tov to his parents, **Sara & Josh Katz**, brother Zachary, grandparents **Debbie & Marc Katz** and Linda & Steve Katz, and to the extended Katz, Katz, and Katzman families.
- **Judy & Zevi Mehlman** on the upcoming wedding of their daughter Devorah to Wade Melnick. Mazal Tov to Wade's parents, Amelia & Warren Melnick, and to grandparents Jack Mehlman and Bernard Alexander, and to the entire Mehlman family.

YISE Youth Announcements

Shabbos Groups this Shabbos, July 29, from 10:00 AM until Shul ends.

- **Toddler Group** (under 3 with a parent) - in the Toddler Room in the Lower Lobby
- **Kinder Group** (3 to 5) - upstairs in the room behind the balcony
- **Boys ages 6 - 9 & Girls ages 6 - 9** - in The House.
- **5th and 6th grade girls** - In The House
- **Jr. Congregation** for 4th to 6th grade boys - in The House

Looking forward to seeing your children on Shabbos! For more information, contact Sharon Shimoff at sshimoff@yise.org

Popsicles in the Park - Shabbos afternoons, July 29, August 5 and August 19. Meet at 4:30 PM at the Kemp Mill Urban Park to hear a Dvar Torah geared towards our youngest members, socialize and enjoy a refreshing popsicle! *See flyer for details.*

Teen Minyan - The Teen Minyan, led by Rabbi Moshe Holzer, *will resume in the fall.*

Boys Shiur - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Shabbos afternoon shiur for 5th and 6th grade boys, *will resume in the fall.*

Shul Announcements

- **Motzei Shabbos Nachamu Melaveh Malka for Men** - July 29, 10:00 PM at The House. Join Rabbi Postelnek and friends for live music, pizza and Divrei Torah. *See flyer for details.*
- **The Laws of Lashon Hara in the Modern World** - A new series given by Rabbi Rosenbaum and Rabbi Postelnek. Gain familiarity with the laws and Hashkafos of Lashon Hara through practical examples and cases from daily life! Monday, July 31, one hour before Mincha in the Belonofsky Sanctuary and on **Zoom A**. Past Shiurim are online at <https://wp.yise.org/lashon-hara> *See flyer for details.*
- **Limud On Our Lawn** - a YISE monthly summer learning project on front lawns and backyards in our community. The next program will take place on August 12, at 6:00 PM at the home of Rabbi Alex and Blima Maged, 812 Kersey Road. Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman will speak on "Rav Shmuel Ben Hofni Gaon: An Early Rationalist Talmudist." *See flyer for details.*
- **The YISE Membership Directory** is being updated. An email was sent to all members for whom we have an email address. If you have misplaced it, please send an email to directory@yise.org and a copy will be sent to you shortly. Thank you for your cooperation.
- **Ask the Rabbi** - Come join our virtual, interactive monthly program featuring different Halachic topics! This month's topic, Building and "Living" in a Sukkah, will take place on Tuesday, September, 5 from 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM on **Zoom A**. For more information, contact Miriam Friedman at mfriedman2@yahoo.com or 301-754-1517. To sponsor the program, contact the YISE office. *See flyer for details.*
- **Mazal Tov on the Birth of Your Son or Daughter!** YISE can help organize meals. Contact Miriam Levson at 901-481-7133 or miriamlevson@gmail.com or Rose Blynn at 410-522-8624 or rab411@gmail.com Send announcement details to announce@yise.org
- **Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary!** Want to celebrate a Birthday or Anniversary? Please email office@yise.org for details. Thank you for your support.
- **Shalosh Seudos** - To sponsor, contact Simi Franco at 301-593-4465, ext. 103, or office@yise.org Volunteers are needed to set up and clean up. Contact Ethan Cohen at ecohen@yise.org to be part of the rotation.
- **Online YISE Cholim List** - Go to <https://wp.yise.org/cholim> to add a name to the list. The list is used at the 8:45 Minyan on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbos. For questions about Mi Sheberach guidelines, contact Rabbi Rosenbaum. For other questions, contact Seth Katz at sethkatz@yise.org
- **Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill**, a part of YISE's Chesed Committee, provides assistance to families undergoing medical crises. If you do not have a Helping Hands account, or if you have any questions, please contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, mskarlin@gmail.com or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, mfriedman2@yahoo.com
- **Shiurim from Rabbi Gedaliah Anemer, ZT"l**, are available at <https://audio.yise.org>

Thank you to the Shabbos Shiurim Sponsors for this Past Week:

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur - David Jaray in honor of Rabbi Grossman and all those who attend his Shiur.

Want to sponsor a Shabbos or weekday Shiur? Please email office@yise.org for details. Thank you for your support.

The Week Ahead		Sunday July 30	Monday July 31	Tuesday August 1	Wed., August 2 Tu B'Av	Thursday August 3	Friday August 4
Shacharis	Ashkenazi (S, B, B)	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 (LBM)	8:00	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30
Mincha / Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)	8:05	8:05	8:05	8:05	8:05	See Shabbos schedule
	Sephardi (LBM)	7:55	7:55	7:55	7:55	7:55	
Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 4:40 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 5:13 AM, Latest Netz: 6:13 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:40 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:50 PM, Earliest Shkia: 8:15 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim 9:07 PM							

Next Shabbos

August 4 - 5, 2023 - 18 Av 5783

Parashas Eikev

Light Candles by 7:58, not before 6:48 - Havdalah 9:00

Friday Night:

- Mincha: 6:30 (Plag, S), 7:00 (B), 8:00 (B), 7:15 (Sephardi, LBM)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 5:00 (B), 7:40 (B), 7:50 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 9:00

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline:

Wednesday, August 2, 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 Email: office@yise.org

Website: www.yise.org

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Rabbi Yosef Postelnek - Assistant Rabbi

Josh Seidemann - President

Simi Franco - Office Manager

Josh Breistein - Facility Manager

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah

Weekday and Community Announcements

ד'תשפ"ג

July 28 - 29, 2023 - 11 Av 5783 - Parashas Vaeschanan/Shabbos Nachamu

Upcoming Community Programs & Listings

The Capital Closet will be open to this community this Sunday, July 30, from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM. Come peruse our beautiful, curated selection of clothing for women, men, and children, as well as Torah School uniforms! Our new address is 9601 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901. The Closet entrance is in the back of the building up a full flight of stairs. There is no charge for items in The Capital Closet, but financial donations to Yad Yehuda are always appreciated. We are unable to accept clothing donations at this time; thank you for your understanding. Please feel to reach out with any questions or for more information to: ncarmel@yadyehuda.org

Yad Yehuda's Annual School Supplies Drive is under way. Items needed include scotch tape, pencil sharpeners, mechanical pencils, markers, colored pencils, glue, paper, spiral notebooks, binders, rulers, scissors, highlighters and insulated lunch boxes. Donation boxes at 1212 North Belgrade Road and 9601 Colesville Road. Financial donations online at <https://yadyehuda.org/donate>

Hachnosas Sefer Torah - The community is invited to join the Savir family for a Hachnosas Sefer Torah commemorating the 10th Yahrzeit of Mr. Etan Savir. Join us on Sunday, July 30, from 10:00 AM - 12 Noon at the YGW Boys' Campus, 1216 Arcola Avenue. This Torah will be donated to Misaskim of Greater Washington, which assists mourners during the week of Shiva. The Savirs request donations to Misaskim in Etan's memory at: <http://www.misaskimgw.org/donate>

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, August 2, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM, on Zoom. See what Toastmasters is all about and find out how you can become a more confident communicator. Contact Manasseh Katz at vpe@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more information. Zoom Meeting ID: 986 546 841, Passcode: 3671

Dirshu - Join Kollel Dirshu of Silver Spring as we begin Maseches Bava Basra on Monday, August 7, at YGW. Daily morning shiur by Rabbi Eli Reingold at 5:45 AM and evening shiur by Ranon Cortell and Pinchas Werner at 9:00 PM. Chavrusas also available during these times. For more info. and to join our program, contact Hirsh Komarow (301) 681-1646 or komarowh@gmail.com

Lisa Landy Memorial Fund - Lisa devoted the better part of the last three decades teaching pre-schoolers in Jewish schools in the Washington, DC area. Lisa was a staunch advocate of the Reggio Emilia teaching approach, which encourages students to direct their own learning and fosters their independent thinking and self-confidence. The Lisa Landy Memorial Fund was established to train teachers in local Jewish schools in the Reggio method. To make a tax-deductible donation or for more information, contact Eli Landy at 301-401-9475 or eli_landy@hotmail.com

Please help our community complete these Siyumim:

- Mishnayos for the 1st Yahrzeit of **Natalie Gabai**, Nechama Naomi Bat Leib, December 21, 9 Tevet - <https://www.lzechernishmas.com/signup.php?id=11044>
- Mishnayos for the 1st Yahrzeit of **Jerry Snyder**, Yehoshua Ben Binyamin, December 21, 9 Tevet - <https://hadranalach.com/2612>
- Tanach for the 1st Yahrzeit of **Marion Baras**, Miriam Bas Menachem, January 1, 20 Tevet - <https://hadranalach.com/2626>

Recurring Community Programs & Listings

Join the Buddy Network - Do you live alone and want a buddy? Do you want to volunteer to be a buddy? Have a buddy check in during extreme weather or power outages. Make sure you have the basic necessities when you can't get out. Register at <https://goldennetwork.org/buddynetwork> For more information: call 301-732-1773 or email director@goldennetwork.org

Rays of Wisdom - Life Lessons From Pirkei Avos - Greater Washington Community Kollel invites women of the community to a weekday morning text-based Chaburah led by Mrs. Channah Cohen. Mondays at 10:00 AM at the home of Mrs. Aviva Werner, 815 Lambertson Drive. For more information, email channahandjeff@gmail.com or call 773-219-5397.

Pirkei Avos: Ethics for Everyday Living - presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps on Zoom. Wednesdays, 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM. For Zoom info and registration go to <https://linksgw.org/classes>

Zoom Shiurim with Rabbi Levy - Monday through Friday on Zoom, Meeting ID: 636 563 5989. Alshich - 9:20 AM - 10:15 AM. Gemara Ribit 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM. Hilchot Lashon Hara 12:45 PM - 1:45 PM.

YGW Kollel Zichron Amram Machshava - Probing Jewish Thought Through the Works of Rav Yitzchak Hutner, ZT"l, with Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold, Rosh Kollel, Sundays at 8:00 PM on Zoom, Meeting ID: 825 0731 6850, Passcode: 1216613. For more information, contact Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate at mblate@yeshiva.edu

TGN Program: Siddur Class - In-Depth Analysis of the Siddur with Mrs. Esther Dziadek, Wednesday mornings, 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM, on **Zoom B**. For more information, call 301-732-1773 or email director@goldennetwork.org

Recurring Community Programs & Listings (continued)

Newly married? Growing family? Just need a budget check-up? IZUN is a community resource that provides free and confidential coaching to help you examine your budget and achieve financial stability. Go to <https://getizun.org> or email us at barbara@getizun.org

Daf Yomi Shiur currently meets at the YGW Boys' Campus. Weekdays also online via a WebEx video conference. Anyone interested may email Judd Lifschitz at lifschitz@slslaw.com to be added to the invite list. Sunday 8:30 AM, Monday - Thursday 8:45 PM. Shabbos 1-1/2 hours before the latest YISE Mincha.

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

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

Weekday Shiurim

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

<https://wp.yise.org/remote-learning-schedule/>

- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), Sundays at 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**, *will not take place on Sunday, July 30.*
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim, followed by a 15-minute Halacha Shiur. Sunday through Thursday, 6:30 PM, **Zoom A**, *will not take place on Sunday, July 30, or on Tuesday, August 1.*
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-minute Shiur on the Parsha. Monday through Friday, 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**, *will not take place on Monday, July 31.*
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Gemara Shiur for Men, Tuesdays and Fridays, 6:00 AM, **Zoom A**.
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Nach Shiur, Wednesdays at 11:00 AM, now learning Sefer Iyov, **Zoom A**.
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum's** Women's Navi Shiur, now learning Sefer Shmuel, Wednesdays at 8:00 PM, **Zoom A**.
- **GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch and Learn for Men** - Sunday mornings, 9:30 AM breakfast, 9:45 AM. Shiurim, *will resume in the fall.*
- **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. *CLAS will resume in the fall.*
- **SCP (Semichas Chaver Program)** - Tuesdays at 8:45 PM at YISE. Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps. New Semester began Tuesday, May 2. Register at <https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/scp> For more information please contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@gwckollel.org
- **Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's** Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, Sunday 7:35 AM - 8:22 AM, Monday through Friday, 6:35 AM - 7:22 AM, in the Franco Beit Midrash.
- **Chavrusa Learning** - Monday nights in the Social Hall, 8:30 PM - 9:30 PM. For more information, contact Rabbi Levy at 240-423-8810.
- **The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's** Shiurim for men & women, Mondays at 8:45 AM, studying Parashas Hashavua, **Zoom B**.
- **Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's** Shiur for Men and Women, Tuesdays, 1:30 PM, "A Second Look - Stories in the Torah from a Deeper Perspective", in-person in the Small Beis Medrash and on **Zoom G**. *This Shiur is on hiatus.*
- **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning the 7th Perek of Maseches Bava Metzia. Wednesday evenings, *summer schedule to be determined*, on **Zoom H**.

Connection Details: Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> and enter the meeting ID, or call 301-715-8592 or 929-205-6099 and enter the meeting ID & password:

Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019

Zoom B: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613

Zoom C: ID: 833 3477 1595, password RabbiHyatt

Zoom G: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079

Zoom H: ID: 849 3898 4989, passcode 161699

Thank you to the Weekday Shiurim Sponsors for this Past Week:

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

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim/Parsha/Halacha

Nancy Karkowsky and Family to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Dr. Avi Karkowsky, Avraham Mordechai Ben Yaakov HaLevi, whose Yahrzeit was on the 14th of Tammuz.

Want to sponsor a Shabbos or weekday Shiur? Please email office@yise.org for details. Thank you for your support.

BS"D

Young Israel
Shomrai Emunah
Youth Committee
invites you to

Popsicles in the Park

Come enjoy a
Dvar Torah & a
summery treat!

SHABBOS AFTERNOONS

JULY 15TH & 29TH

AUGUST 5TH & 19TH

4:30PM

Kemp Mill
Urban Park



WILL BE RESCHEDULED IN THE EVENT OF RAIN
EMAIL [SSHIMOFF@YISE.ORG](mailto:sshimoff@yise.org) FOR MORE INFO OR TO SPONSOR



YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH

נחמו נחמו עמי!

MOTZEI SHABBOS NACHAMU

MELAVEH MALKA

For Men

July 29 - 10:00 pm

At The House

1128 Arcola Ave. Next door to YISE

"Bridging the Gap"

As we move from mourning to joy,
join Rabbi Postelnek and friends for a
Melaveh Malka with live music, pizza
and Divrei Torah!

To sponsor visit yise.org/melavehmalka

BREAKING *NEW SERIES*

HEY SIRI ... WHAT  I SAY?

THE LAWS OF LASHON HARA in the MODERN WORLD

ZOOM

Meeting ID
416 963 9000

Password
492019

Mondays in the Belonofsky Sanctuary & Zoom
1 hour before Mincha

7:20 PM

July 10

When Information Goes Public:
News Reports, Consumer Reviews
& Social Media

Rabbi Postelnek

7:20 PM

July 17

The Ethics of Therapy, Venting
to Family & Breaches of
Confidentiality

Rabbi Postelnek

7:15 PM

July 24

Resolution & Remuneration: Is
there Teshuva for Lashon Hara?

Rabbi Postelnek

7:05 PM

July 31

Shidduch and Professional
Inquiries

Rabbi Rosenbaum



Young Israel Shomrai Emunah
1132 ARCOLA AVE, SILVER SPRING, MD 20902



YISE Adult Education
Committee Presents

Limud on Our Lawn

A Monthly Outdoor Exploration
of Different Torah Luminaries
Through the Ages at YISE
Members' Homes

Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman:
Rav Shmuel Ben Hofni Gaon:
An Early Rationalist Talmudist.

August 12 at 6:00 PM

Hosted by:
Rabbi Alex and Blima Maged
812 Kersey Road



ASK the RABBI

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

Topic: Building and "Living" in a Sukkah



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

▪ What is the correct way to build a canvas sukkah?
▪ What if a tree covers part or all of your sukkah?
▪ How does the meal on the first night of Sukkos differ from the others?

Send in your questions about Building and "Living" in a Sukkah to:
AskTheRabbi@yise.org by Sunday, September 3.

When: Tuesday, September 5, 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Where: Go to <https://zoom.us/join/> or call 301-715-8592 and enter the meeting ID & password: Meeting ID: 416 963 9000 & Password: 492019

For more information and to submit questions by phone or anonymously, contact Miriam Friedman at 301-754-1517 or mfriedman2@yahoo.com

To sponsor the program, please contact the YISE office.

Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Shabbat Shalom

Volume 29, Issue 39

Shabbat Parashat Vaetchanan

5783 - B"H

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

The Right and the Good - Among the epic passages in Va'etchanan – among them the Shema and the Ten Commandments – is a passage with large implications for the moral life in Judaism. Here it is together with the preceding verse: Be very vigilant to keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and the testimonies and decrees with which He has charged you. Do what is right and what is good in the Lord's eyes, so that it may go well with you, and you may go in and take possession of the good land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give you.

The difficulty is obvious. The preceding verse makes reference to commandments, testimonies, and decrees. This, on the face of it, is the whole of Judaism as far as conduct is concerned. What then is meant by the phrase "the right and the good" that is not already included within the previous verse?

Rashi says it refers to "compromise (that is, not strictly insisting on your rights) and action within or beyond the letter of the law (lifnim mi-shurat ha-din)." The law, as it were, lays down a minimum threshold: this we must do. But the moral life aspires to more than simply doing what we must. The people who most impress us with their goodness and rightness are not merely people who keep the law. The saints and heroes of the moral life go beyond. They do more than they are commanded. They go the extra mile. That, according to Rashi, is what the Torah means by "the right and the good."

Ramban, while citing Rashi and agreeing with him, goes on to say something slightly different: At first Moses said that you are to keep His statutes and his testimonies which He commanded you, and now he is stating that even where He has not commanded you, give thought as well to do what is good and right in his eyes, for He loves the good and the right.

Now this is a great principle, for it is impossible to mention in the Torah all aspects of man's conduct with his neighbours and friends, all his various transactions and the ordinances of all societies and countries. But since He mentioned many of them, such as, "You shall not go around as a talebearer," "You shall not take vengeance nor bear a grudge," "You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbour," "You shall not curse the deaf," "You shall rise before the hoary head," and the like, He went on to state in a general way that in all matters one should do what is good and right, including even compromise and going beyond the strict requirement of the law... Thus one should behave in every sphere of activity, until he is worthy of being called "good and upright."

Ramban is going beyond Rashi's point, that the right and the good refer to a higher standard than the law strictly requires. It seems as if Ramban is telling us that there are aspects of the moral life that are not caught by the concept of law at all. That is what he means by saying "It is impossible to mention in the Torah all aspects of man's conduct with his neighbours and friends."

Law is about universals, principles that apply in all places and times: Do not murder. Do not rob. Do not steal. Do not lie. Yet there are important features of the moral life that are not universal at all. They have to do with specific circumstances and the way we respond to them. What is it to be a good husband or wife, a good parent, a good teacher, a good friend? What is it to be a great leader, or follower, or member of a team? When is it right to praise, and

when is it appropriate to say, "You could have done better"? There are aspects of the moral life that cannot be reduced to rules of conduct, because what matters is not only what we do, but the way in which we do it: with humility or gentleness or sensitivity or tact.

Morality is about persons, and no two persons are alike. When Moses asked God to appoint his successor, he began his request with the words, "Lord, God of the spirit of all flesh." On this the Rabbis commented: what Moses was saying was that each person is different, so he asked God to appoint a leader who would relate to each individual as an individual, knowing that what is helpful to one person may be harmful to another. This ability to judge the right response to the right person at the right time is a feature not only of leadership, but of human goodness in general.

Rashi begins his commentary to Bereishit with the question: If the Torah is a book of law, why does it not start with the first law given to the people of Israel as a whole, which does not appear until Exodus 12? Why does it include the narratives about Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the patriarchs and matriarchs and their children? Rashi gives an answer that has nothing to do with morality – he says it has to do with the Jewish people's right to their land. But the Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin; 1816-1893) writes that the stories of Genesis are there to teach us how the patriarchs were upright in their dealings, even with people who were strangers and idolaters. That, he says, is why Genesis is called by the Sages "the book of the upright."

Morality is not just a set of rules, even a code as elaborate as the 613 commands and their rabbinic extensions. It is also about the way we respond to people as individuals. The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is at least in part about what went wrong in their relationship when the man referred to his wife as Ishah, 'woman,' a generic description, a type. Only when he gave her a proper name, Chavah, Eve, did he relate to her as an individual in her individuality, and only then did God make "garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them."

This too is the difference between the God of Aristotle and the God of Abraham. Aristotle thought that God knew only universals not particulars. This is the God of science, of the Enlightenment, of Spinoza. The God of Abraham is the God who relates to us in our singularity, in what makes us different from others as well as what makes us the same.

This ultimately is the difference between the two great principles of Judaic ethics: justice and love. Justice is universal. It treats all people alike, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, making no distinctions on the basis of colour or class. But love is particular. A parent loves their children for what makes them each unique. The moral life is a combination of both. That is why it cannot be reduced solely to universal laws. That is what the Torah means when it speaks of "the right and the good" over and above the commandments, statutes, and testimonies.

A good teacher knows what to say to a struggling student who, through great effort, has done better than expected, and to a gifted student who has come top of the class but is still performing below their potential. A good employer knows when to praise

and when to challenge. We all need to know when to insist on justice and when to exercise forgiveness. The people who have had a decisive influence on our lives are almost always those we feel understood us in our singularity. We were not, for them, a mere face in the crowd. That is why, though morality involves universal rules and cannot exist without them, it also involves interactions that cannot be reduced to rules.

Rabbi Israel of Rizhin (1796-1850) once asked a student how many sections there were in the Shulchan Aruch. The student replied, "Four." "What," asked the Rizhiner, "do you know about the fifth section?" "But there is no fifth section," said the student. "There is," said the Rizhiner. "It says: always treat a person like a mensch."

The fifth section of the code of law is the conduct that cannot be reduced to law. That is what it takes to do the right and the good.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"Comfort you, comfort you, My People" The Shabbat after Tisha B'Av is known as the Shabbat of Comfort, a phrase taken from the first verse of the prophetic reading from Isaiah. Additionally, a most fascinating festival day – one which is unfortunately not very well known – falls just about one week after the bleak fast for the destruction of both of our Holy Temples. An analysis of this festival, known as Tu B'Av, "the 15th day of Av," will reveal a striking similarity between it and the Shabbat of Comfort.

The conclusion of the last Mishna of tractate Ta'anit teaches as follows: "Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said, 'There were no greater festive days in Israel than the fifteenth day of Av and Yom Kippur, when the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in borrowed white dresses so as not to embarrass those who didn't have their own. They would go out and dance in the vineyards. What would they say? 'Young man, lift up your eyes and see whom you wish to choose for yourselves. Do not cast forth your eyes after beauty, but cast forth your eyes after family. 'False is grace and vanity is beauty; a woman who fears the Lord is the one to be praised'; and the Scriptures further states, 'Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her deeds praise her in the gates.'"

The Talmud then cites the Tosefta, which provides a more descriptive picture: "The beautiful ones among them, what would they say? 'Cast forth your eyes after beauty, for woman was only created for beauty.' The ones with good pedigree, what would they say? 'Cast forth your eyes after family, because woman was only created for children.' The plain ones, what would they say? 'Take your wares for the sake of heaven, as long as your adorn us with gold (and then even the plain-looking women will appear to be beautiful).'"

Apparently, the 15th day of Av was a kind of Sadie Hawkins day, when the women would entice the men to marry them; and each woman would emphasize her particular quality: beauty, family or "for the sake of heaven." And, as the Mishna concludes, it is chiefly the attributes of fear of God and performance of good deeds which truly count in assessing the proper wife.

The Talmud adds, "It is clear why Yom Kippur is a Festival, since it brings forgiveness and absolution,

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since it is the day when God gave the second tablets [as a sign of His forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf]; but what is the reason for the joy of the 15th Av?" The Talmud then gives seven possible reasons, from the suggestion that on that day members of the tribes were permitted to marry one another; to the opinion that on 15 Av, the desert generation stopped dying; to the astronomical fact that from that day on, the sun begins to lose its strength and the days begin to be shorter.

Permit me to add another possible reason, one which would also explain the unique manner in which we are to celebrate the 15th of Av.

It would be logical to assume that as Jews witnessed Jewish sovereignty going up in flames and God's very throne smoldering, they tore their garments and sat on the ground, sitting shiva not only for the lost lives, but also for the disappearing dream of at-hand redemption.

If the seven-day mourning period began on 9 Av, it must have concluded on 15 Av, the seventh day, about which our sages rule that "partial mourning on that day is accounted as if one had mourned the complete day." Hence, they rose from their shiva on 15 Av, Tu B'Av.

It was precisely on the day that their shiva concluded that our Sages ordained the merriment of Tu B'Av. This parallels the joy when the High Priest emerged unscathed from the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur; a sign that Israel had indeed been forgiven! The Holy Temple may be burning to the ground, but the Jewish nation remains alive and God's commitment to His eternal covenant remains intact, as is clear from this week's reading, which we also read on Tisha B'Av.

As the Midrash teaches, God exacted punishment from the wood and stones of a physical edifice, albeit a holy one, but He demonstrated His ultimate forgiveness by keeping His nation alive and His covenant operational. This is why and how 9 Av will one day be a day of great celebration.

God ordains Tu B'Av as a day of weddings; Judaism sees every wedding ritual as a ringing confirmation of the future of the Jewish people, as a personal commitment to continue the nation and the faith because "there will yet be heard on the streets of Judea and in the great plazas of Jerusalem, sounds of gladness and sounds of rejoicing, sounds of grooms and sounds of brides".

Not only has our generation not been disappointed, but it is presently rejoicing in Israel's rebirth. God has not forsaken us, and is even allowing us a glimpse of redemption!

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb
Answering Unanswered Prayers - Did you ever really pray for something you wanted? I mean, really fervently, desperately, pray hard for something that was vitally important to you?

If you did, and I think we all pray this way at moments of urgency, you violated an anonymous piece of wisdom: "Be careful what you pray for, because you just might get it."

I have not been able to determine who said that. But I know clearly what he meant. In my own life, I have had more than one occasion to look back at answered prayers, which achieved what turned out to be very trivial objectives. And I have certainly been disappointed in prayer, only to learn that in the long run, I was much better off without the benefits of whatever I prayed for so earnestly.

We think we know what is good for us, we think we know what we need, but we really don't. Often, we are much better for having certain prayers rebuffed, and we frequently discover that the things we thought were important are not important at all.

In the Torah portion that we read in the synagogue this week, Parshat Va'etchanan, Moses confides to us how he powerfully beseeched the Almighty,

begging Him to reverse His decision to frustrate Moses' greatest dream, that he be permitted to enter the Promised Land. Moses uses a synonym for prayer, *chanaan*, which connotes imploring, pleading for the undeserved favor, *matnat chinam*.

But Moses is denied his dream. His petition is torn up in his face. His is the archetypal unanswered prayer.

Joel Cohen, in his book *Moses, a Memoir*, puts these poignant words in the mouth of Moses:

"I lowered my knees and begged Him once again. I could muster no tears this time... I needed badly to reach and walk about the land He promised to Abraham for us, so long ago... My work is incomplete. My prophecy has achieved no reality for me in my lifetime... There will be no future for me. My staff, the instrumentality of miracles against His enemies, is powerless against His will."

Beautifully put, by this author of a book I recommend to you all.

What are we to learn from the story of the unanswered prayer of the humblest, but greatest, of men? Many things, in my opinion.

We learn that the gates of prayer are not always open. In the words of the Midrash, they are sometimes open but sometimes closed. And we are not to rely upon them exclusively. Rather, we are to do our own part to achieve our objectives in mundane ways.

Judaism insists upon a balance between faith in the divine and the exercise of practical human effort. It acknowledges that while there must be *bitachon*, trust in the Lord, there must also be *hishtadlut*, old-fashioned hard work on our part. As the rabbis have it, never rely upon miracles.

We can never allow prayer to become a substitute for our doing all we can do. We must not simply expect the Almighty to achieve Jewish sovereignty for us, but must do our parts politically and militarily. We cannot expect manna from heaven, but must earn our livelihoods by dint of the sweat of our brow. And when we are ill, yes, we must pray, but we must also diligently seek out competent medical assistance.

There are other lessons, to be sure, to be learned from the unanswered prayer of Moses. His grave remains a secret, so that it not become a shrine and that he not be idolized or heaven forbid, deified. For another important lesson about prayer from the Jewish perspective, is that we pray to the One Above only, and not to saints and holy men, be they alive or be they dead. Cemeteries are not synagogues.

By not granting Moses his request, the Master of the Universe was in effect telling him that he did all that he could, and that no more is expected of him. Humans are expected to do all they can, and not necessarily to accomplish everything.

"It is not necessary for you to complete the task, but neither are you exempt from doing all that you can."

Moses is being told, "You did all you could, even if you did not achieve all of your personal ambitions." No human is complete, no man is perfect.

And then there is a final lesson, one that we learn from the very fact that Moses persisted in his prayer, although he knew well that his request would be spurned. He modeled the importance of hope, even in the face of impossible odds.

Jewish history contains a long list of Moses-like figures, whose vision it was to enter the Holy Land. They include men like the Gaon Elijah of Vilna, who longed to spend the last years of his life in Eretz Yisrael. And closer to our time, the great sage Yisrael Meir Kagan, the Chofetz Chaim, prayed and carefully planned to live out his life in Israel.

Ironically, they, like Moses, had their dreams frustrated by the Hand of Providence. Like Moses, they were ready to try almost anything to realize their ambitions. And like Moses, who was told that he would not enter the land but his disciple Joshua

Likutei Divrei Torah

would, various leaders of Jewish history, however reluctantly, took comfort in the fact that their disciples realized their dream in their stead.

This is possibly the most important lesson of all. When our prayers go unanswered for ourselves, they may yet be answered for our children and grandchildren.

Unanswered prayers are mysteriously answered, in inscrutable and unpredictable ways.

R. Nachum Amsel Encyclopedia of Jewish Values

Judaism and Sports [Excerpt] - God commands Jews to "guard their bodies". Although there are many explanations for this phrase, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (Netziv) explains, as do later Rabbinic authorities, that there is a specific Mitzvah-commandment to keep one's body in maximum health, to serve God better. This includes participation in sports. In the 21st century, many people enjoy and spend much time playing and watching sports and working out in health clubs. What does Judaism say about this? There is no clear statement in sources about how Judaism regards sports. The fact that sports were never condemned at all in any of these volumes seems to indicate that they were tolerated and maybe even approved of (as was seen in the act of foot racing in the Temple). Sports can also be used as a means to exercise the body. And improving the health of the body is a religious act, one of the 613 Torah commandments, to protect one's body from harm.

Maimonides stressed the importance of keeping the body healthy. He states that a healthy body is what God demands of human beings, and Jews cannot fulfill the precepts of the Creator or come to fully know Him unless their bodies are healthy. Maimonides further writes that as long as a person exercises and is not too bloated from overeating, that person will not fall ill, and the body will remain strong. If a person remains sedentary, even if he or she eats properly, that individual will experience pain regularly throughout life. Maimonides even enumerates examples of physical exercises to be practiced, including playing ball.. He goes on to say that some view these sports as foolishness, but Torah scholars see them as means to achieve the true goals of Jewish life... 1903, the Chafetz Chaim gave a talk to his students in which he also stressed maintaining the balance between the spiritual and physical aspects of Judaism, but in the reverse. He said that his students should not spend too much time learning Torah while ignoring their bodies. It is important to make sure that the health of the body remains strong, and a person does not become ill. He advised walking at night and swimming in the river. He also warned the students not to be tempted to learn so much Torah that they ignore the needs of their bodies because, in the end, they could become ill and be unable to learn Torah properly, and so lose even more time from learning Torah.

Sports as Entertainment - The normative Jewish view of sports for entertainment purposes seems to be discouraged or even forbidden... Nevertheless, in the 21st century, when a sports spectator need not attend a live event in person, there are many noted Rabbis today who are also sports enthusiasts and spectators. If sports are used as a small, needed, diversion from Torah learning, and it is put in the proper perspective, both in terms of time spent and priorities of life, then many Rabbis have allowed Jews to watch sporting events today. Some Rabbis give a Torah class at halftime during a Superbowl party. In many stadiums today, one can attend a Minyan-Quorum of Jews praying the afternoon prayer (football- half time) or evening prayer (baseball, during the 7th inning stretch), with kosher food sold in many ballparks.

שבת

ואתחנן

In this week's *Parashah*, we read (for the second time) of the giving of the *Aseret Ha'dibrot* / Ten Commandments. The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 31a) relates: When *Hashem* said, "I am *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery," the nations said, "He is concerned with His honor." When he said, "You shall not recognize the gods of others in My Presence," they said again, "He is concerned with His honor." This continued until He said, "Honor your father and your mother." Then, the nations acknowledged the legitimacy of the earlier commandments. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R' Nosson Lewin z"l (1857-1926; rabbi of Rzeszów, Poland) asks: Could anyone really think that *Hashem* needs respect from the puny creature--man--that He created? Of course not! Rather, R' Lewin explains, this is a parable meant to teach us a lesson--that *Hashem* did not give us the Torah only to tell us what our obligations are to Him. Instead, He is also teaching us a way of life that will make organized society and the existence of nations possible.

This way of life, writes R' Lewin, begins with honoring parents. Even those nations that could not fathom the great spiritual heights to which a person can rise when he believes in "I am *Hashem*, your *Elokim*" and "You shall not recognize the gods of others" could acknowledge the benefits of the Torah's laws between man and his fellow--the first of which is the *Mitzvah* to honor parents. (*Petach Ha'bayit* to *She'eilot U'teshuvot Bet Yitzchak: Choshen Mishpat*)

Shabbat

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 118b) teaches: If only the Jewish People would observe two *Shabbatot* in accordance with law, they would be redeemed immediately, as it is written (*Yeshayah* 56:4, 7-8--in the *Haftarah* for Fast Day afternoons), "For so says *Hashem* to the barren ones who observe My Sabbaths, . . . 'I shall bring them to My holy mountain, and I shall gladden them in My house of prayer . . . ' The words of *Hashem Elokim*, Who gathers in the dispersed of *Yisrael* . . ." [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Why will observing two *Shabbatot* bring about the redemption?

R' Yehuda Loewe z"l (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) explains: *Shabbat* is unique among the days, and *Yisrael* / the Jewish People is unique among the nations. Thus, *Shabbat* was given to *Yisrael* alone, and not to any other nation. *Shabbat* is elevated above all other days. If we would observe *Shabbat*, we would be elevated with it and we would be redeemed.

Also, *Maharal* writes, *Shabbat* is the "completion" of the Jewish People. When a person is burdened with physical toil and unable to find rest, he is incomplete. On *Shabbat*, however, a Jew can be complete. This is the idea of the "*Neshamah Yeteirah*" / "extra soul" that a Jew receives on *Shabbat*. And, when we are "complete," we are ready to be redeemed.

Why, then, is it necessary to observe two *Shabbatot* to achieve redemption? *Maharal* explains: In exile, the Jewish People are subdued by the nations. Observing one *Shabbat* is sufficient to elevate us out of that lowly state, but a second *Shabbat* must be observed to raise us to the lofty level where we are ready to be redeemed. (*Chiddushei Aggadot*)

R' Tzaddok Hakohen Rabinowitz z"l (1823-1900; *Chassidic Rebbe* in Lublin, Poland) writes: *Shabbat* is sanctified directly by *Hashem*. By observing a first *Shabbat*, we would bask in its G-d-given holiness. This would, in turn, give us the tools to sanctify the following workweek. Having sanctified the workweek, we could then sanctify the next *Shabbat* through our own efforts. With that, we would attain the pinnacle of holiness, which would free us from the *Yetzer Ha'ra* and from all forms of subjugation in this world that are inimical to true "rest."

(*Pri Tzaddik: Kedushat Shabbat* 2:6)

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“You shall love Hashem, your Elokim, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources.” (6:5)

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 61b) relates: The hour when the Romans took Rabbi Akiva out to be killed was the time to recite *Kri’at Shema*. As they were torturing him, he was accepting the yoke of Heaven upon himself [*i.e.*, he was reciting *Shema Yisrael*]. His students asked him, “Even this [you accept without complaints]?” Rabbi Akiva answered, “All my life I was pained by the words, ‘With all your soul’--which our Sages interpret, ‘Even if He takes your soul.’ I said, ‘When will I have the opportunity to fulfill this commandment?’ Now that I have the opportunity, should I not take it?” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R’ Yosef Yozel Horowitz z”l (1847-1919; the *Alter* of Novardok) writes: Rabbi Akiva was prepared to give everything, even his life, for Hashem because he recognized how much Hashem had given him. This is not true of most people, as the *Gemara* (*Niddah* 31a) teaches: “The beneficiary of a miracle does not recognize that a miracle was done for him.” Most of the time, we are unaware when we are in danger, whether physical or spiritual; therefore, we do not recognize that we are saved.

We read (*Mishlei* 6:23), “For a *Mitzvah* is a lamp and the Torah is light, and *Mussar* / reproving discipline is the way of life.” The *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* explains by way of a parable: A man walking in the darkness of night must worry about thorns and thistles, wild animals, and thieves, and he does not know which way to go. When he reaches a crossroads, he is saved [Until here from the *Midrash*]. The *Alter* quotes R’ Eliyahu z”l (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*), who writes: Our material world can cause a person spiritual harm in three ways--it can keep him so busy that he has no time for spiritual pursuits, it can place prohibited temptations in front of him, and it can distract him from finding the true path to character perfection. As long as he is far from Torah, he is in danger of erring, as the *Midrash* says. But, when he reaches the crossroads, *i.e.*, when *Mussar* puts him on the correct path, then he will be saved from spiritual ills. Until then, however, he does not even realize the danger he was in.

Similarly, with regard to physical dangers: The *Gemara* (*Arachin* 16b) teaches, “What is considered suffering [that can atone for a person’s sins]? Reaching into one’s pocket to retrieve three coins and coming up with only two.” If a person did not experience seemingly trivial inconveniences like this, he would never even know he was being judged for his sins, and he would not know that he was being saved from a worse fate.

(*Madreigat Ha’adam: Ma’amar Yir’ah Ve’ahavah* ch. 17)

“Honor your father and your mother . . .” (5:16)

We read (*Mishlei* 1:8), “Hear, my child, the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother.” On this, a *Midrash* comments: Do not forsake the discipline you were given at Sinai regarding honoring your parents. [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R’ Eliyahu Hakohen z”l (1640-1729; Izmir, Turkey; prolific author) explains: Honoring parents is a common sense *Mitzvah*. Nevertheless, the *Midrash* is teaching, do not honor your parents because doing so makes sense to you. Rather, do it solely because that is what Hashem commanded us at Sinai.

(*Midrash Talipot: Anaf Av Va’em*)

“Who will make it that this heart of theirs will continue to fear Me and observe all My commandments all the days . . . ?” (5:26)

The *Gemara* (*Avodah Zarah* 5a) relates: Moshe said to *Bnei Yisrael*, “Ingrates the children of ingrates! When Hashem said, “‘Who will make it . . . ?’ you should have responded, “You should make it so!” [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R’ Daniel Haymann *shlita* (Tel Zion, Israel) writes: Granted that *Bnei Yisrael* should have responded thus, but why does Moshe call them “ingrates”? He cites three explanations from earlier commentaries:

First, *Bnei Yisrael* did not respond, “You should make it so” because they did not want to feel indebted to Hashem; they did not want to owe Him gratitude.

Second, *Bnei Yisrael* did not make this request of Hashem because they failed to recognize and be grateful for all of the goodness He had done for them until that point. This was reflected in their failure to ask for more goodness.

Third, *Bnei Yisrael* did not view it as being a good thing if Hashem would implant fear of Heaven in them. They were considered ungrateful for not appreciating that potential gift.

R’ Haymann notes that there is a novelty in the third answer. We might have thought that not recognizing the beauty of a gift is simply foolishness. No! say the commentaries. That failure originates from a character flaw.

(*Hakarat Ha’tov Ke’halachah* p.26)

“If your child asks you tomorrow, saying, ‘What are the testimonies and decrees and ordinances that Hashem, our Elokim, commanded you?’” (6:20)

In the *Pesach Haggadah*, this question is attributed to the wise son. What distinguishes him from the wicked son, who also asks why we perform *Mitzvot*? R’ Gedaliah Silverstone z”l (1871-1944; rabbi in Belfast, Ireland and Washington, D.C.) explains: The wise son asks “tomorrow,” *i.e.*, he performs the *Mitzvot* as he is taught, whether he understands them or not. Not so the wicked son; he demands to know now, before he agrees to perform the *Mitzvah*, what the purpose of the *Mitzvah* is.

(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Korban Pesach* [2nd ed.] p.24)

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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CHANNEL 13 POLL (JPost 7/25/23)

Party	Current Knesset	4/28	7/25
Likud	32	23	25
Yesh Atid	24	17	17
National Unity	12	28	30
Shas	11	10	10
Religious Zionist	8	6	5
UTJ	7	7	7
Otzma Yehudit	6	4	5
Yisrael Beiteinu	6	6	6
Ra'am	5	5	6
Hadash/Ta'al	5	6	5
Labor	4	4	0
Meretz	0	4	4

KNESSET APPROVES FIRST PHASE OF JUDICIAL REFORM (YNet 7/24/23)

The Knesset on Monday afternoon approved changes to the reasonableness standard, passing the bill with a majority of 64 Knesset members.

As the bill passed its second and third Knesset readings, opposition MKs yelled, "shame!" and "destruction!"

The reasonableness standard bill is an amendment to Basic Law: The Judiciary, and limits the ability of the court to rule against the validity of elected official's decisions that in a justice's subjective opinion are beyond the scope of what a reasonable authority would undertake. The reasonable standard had no legal basis in Israeli law but the bill to limit it is to be part of a Basic Law. It passed its first Knesset reading earlier this month, and is now being prepared for its second and third Knesset readings.

Ministers Bezalel Smotrich (Religious Zionism) and Yoav Gallant (Likud) pushed for a last-minute compromise, despite the harsh opposition by ministers Yariv Levin (Likud) and Itamar Ben Gvir (Otzma Yehudit). The two also pushed to delay the legislation for judicial appointments for a period of more than six months.

The Prime Minister weighed the suggestion and even stepped out to discuss it with a number of ministers, in an attempt to soften the legislation. The President's Residence was also involved in the negotiations.

The attempts to reach a compromise between the coalition and the opposition continued until the last moment, but opposition leader MK Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) announced that negotiations had failed.

PRESIDENT HERZOG: 'AT THIS MOMENT OF PAIN - AVOID VIOLENCE AND IRREPARABLE STEPS' (Arutz-7 7/26/23)

My sisters and brothers.

As we stand on the eve of Tisha B'Av – when we remember our national destruction - I want to appeal to you from the bottom of my heart.

We are in the midst of extremely difficult times. I see the pictures and hear the voices, in the streets, in the Knesset, and on social media. I see many Israelis, who care so deeply, who are so dedicated, who are filled with immense pain, frustration, and deep and real anxiety over what is happening – and what is yet to happen. I see clearly and listen closely, and those heartfelt feelings are truly heart-rending.

In all honesty, over the past few days, I, too, have woken up with a deep feeling of frustration and a heavy sense of crisis. I am also in a turmoil of emotions. I am also hurting, and I am also angry.

In recent months I have warned about this moment. I begged for them to

listen, to reach out, and for responsibility. I spoke about two camps in Israel standing opposite each other, about the potential for violence, about the polarization that will tear us apart, about the social, economic, and security damage, and about our enemies from far and near, who rub their hands with glee and hatch plots against us. Today there is no doubt - the challenge is greater than ever.

These are indeed difficult moments, but with all the pain, frustration, and the maelstrom of emotions, I am more determined than ever and not ready to give up and lose hope. Even if there is the slightest chance, my team and I will continue and work in every possible way to break down barriers and build bridges. There is no more important task and no higher mission for me - as President and as a citizen - than healing and reuniting the people and safeguarding the State of Israel and our democracy.

Just a week ago, I stated before the United States Congress that I believe in the strength of Israeli democracy and pledged to protect and preserve it at all costs. I stand behind every word and insist that democracy is deeply embedded in the Israeli DNA.

As I have emphasized before, greater – even if not sole – responsibility to find solutions that will benefit the state and society as a whole will always be with those who have the power and the reins of government in their hands. This is how democracy works. I expect to see very soon the words of reassurance turn into actions and the messages of reaching out reflected in a tangible and binding work plan. We must all understand the challenge and the fateful consequences.

At this difficult time, when so much is at stake, I appeal to everyone – the elected representatives and officials, leaders of public opinion, the media, and the entire Israeli public in all its beautiful diversity and with its multitude of beliefs and opinions – and I plead: even at this moment of heightened

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Cong. Ohav Emeth, Highland Park, NJ	Woodsburgh, NY Minyan
Cong. Ohr Torah, Edison, NJ	Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ
Cong. Rinat Yisrael, Teaneck, NJ	Young Israel of Brookline, MA
Cong. Shomrei Torah, Fair Lawn, NJ	Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ
Cong. Sons of Israel, Allentown, PA	Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ
Cong. Zichron Mordechai, Teaneck, NJ	Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA
Cong. Zichron R. M. Feinstein, Brooklyn, NY	Young Israel of Holliswood, NY
Delray Orthodox Synagogue, Delray Beach, FL	Young Israel of Houston, TX
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue, CO	Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY
East Hill Synagogue, Englewood, NJ	Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY
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pain, we must maintain the boundaries of debate and avoid violence and irreparable steps. We must imagine our common lives here together, in forty, fifty, and a hundred years, and how each action will impact our children and grandchildren and the bridges between us.

I call our brothers and sisters in all units of the IDF reserves and volunteers – patriots to their cores, those who love the people and the country, and I say: I love you profoundly, and I admire your dedication, sacrifice, and deeply felt pain and concern. You are truly the best of the best. But at the same time, I am anxious the security of Israel would be harmed by the very threat not to volunteer or report for service, and even more so by their implementation. Please consider every move again and again. I trust you to keep the State of Israel stable and safe. After all, it has always been and forever will be the home of all of us, your home, your children's, and your families' home too.

We are on the eve of Tisha B'av, and the echoes of history are crying out: it is the time for restraint, it is the time for responsibility, it is the time to vigilantly guard the supreme commandment there can be no civil war. I believe in us. I believe that by working together, we can turn Tisha B'Av – with our own hands and in the spirit of the words of the prophet – into a day of comfort. If only we fulfill what is written at the end of his prophecy: "to love peace and truth".

MOODY'S SAYS 'EARLIER CONCERNS' FOR ISRAEL MATERIALIZING AFTER KEY JUDICIAL OVERHAUL LAW PASSES (Ha'aretz 7/25/23)

Moody's credit rating agency released a special report on Israel on Tuesday after Morgan Stanley cut the country's credit rating, stating that "some of our earlier concerns regarding the proposed reforms' impact on Israel's economy" are emerging.

In April, Moody's credit agency announced that it was downgrading the outlook for the country's credit rating as the government pushed forward with its judicial upheaval.

Tuesday's report added that "there is significant risk that political and social tensions over the issue will continue, with negative consequences for Israel's economy and security situation."

The report went on to explain that Moody's believes "the wide-ranging nature of the government's proposals could materially weaken the judiciary's independence and disrupt effective checks and balances between the various branches of government, which are important aspects of strong institutions.

Earlier, Morgan Stanley cut Israel sovereign credit to a "dislike stance," saying that "Markets are now likely to extrapolate the future policy path."

"We see increased uncertainty about the economic outlook in the coming months and risks becoming skewed to our adverse scenario," Morgan Stanley's analysts said in a research note.

Netanyahu and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich denied claims that the country's economy is fragile in a joint statement, terming them a "momentary reaction," and claiming that "once the dust settles, it will be clear that Israel's economy is very strong."

IN FIRST, DIPLOMATIC-SECURITY CABINET TO DISCUSS IMPACT OF JUDICIAL REFORM ON IDF (Israel Hayom 7/26/23)

The Diplomatic-Security Cabinet's pre-scheduled meeting in August will deal with the impact of the judicial reform protest on the military's combat worthiness, sources say.

Although the date is according to a pre-determined schedule, having this become part of the agenda has only now been confirmed by the sources familiar with the matter, who claim that this will be the first time that the ministers will be fully briefed about the threats of damage to the army's competence due to the recent announcements by thousands of reservists that they would no longer arrive for service if called up in the wake of the passage of the first bill in the contested judicial reform.

In addition to this, the ministerial forum will get a briefing from Defense Minister Gallant on the extent of this trend and the damage to the reserves and wartime readiness. The discussion is set to take place on August 6, and

according to ministers, they intend to seek a clear position from the IDF on how this will be handled.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has avoided convening the cabinet in recent weeks because of potential leaks. But now, since the discussion is scheduled to take place, the ministers will for the first time receive detailed explanations and not just one-on-one briefings.

Knesset lawmakers have also shown concern over the damage to the army's fitness for war. As a result, Gallant will appear in a closed-door hearing to brief MKs on the matter. Political sources claim that so far no official briefings have been held on the issue before the members of the Knesset or the ministers due to the lack of sufficient information.

The main concern is damage to the Israeli Air Force, while the other units in the IDF believe that the scope of the refusals is not will harm competence. In addition, a security source told Israel Hayom that "even now it is not expected that Israel's military capabilities will be harmed in operations against Gaza or Jenin if required, but only in the event of a wide-scale war."

THOUSANDS OF DOCTORS CONSIDERING JOBS OUTSIDE ISRAEL AFTER KNESSET VOTE (YNet 7/26/23)

The Director General of the Health Ministry, Moshe Bar Siman-Tov on Wednesday held a Zoom meeting with senior physicians to discuss the intentions of many doctors to leave Israel and find work elsewhere amid the government's legislative push to overhaul the judiciary.

After nearly one-third of doctors joined a WhatsApp group to consider relocating abroad, ScienceAbroad, a non-profit that has been working to bring people in the science and medicine professions to Israel, initiated the call and sounded the alarm.

"When I first entered the WhatsApp group there were 30 doctors in it but since there has been a tsunami of over 2,000 who say they are considering emigrating. Including senior physicians, residents and interns," Professor Rivka Karmi, ScienceAbroad chairman said. "I admit I am physically shaken. Nothing prepared me for such a possibility that I find even more dangerous than the refusal of pilots to volunteer to serve. Even if most ultimately stay, this is a very problematic process. These people are exhausted and feel like their protest has failed," she said.

Bar Siman-Tov said he was still trying to grasp the situation and understands the strong emotions. "We all live in the same space and these feelings are understood," he said. "We all know we have no other country and no other health system which is representative of our people and is an example of how we can live together," he said.

"I really don't think anyone of has the privilege to give up on the country," he said adding that the code of ethics of Israel's health system is to work according to the values of justice, equality and mutual assistance.

"Don't give up on us," he said. "Stay take part in articulating the rules by which we will act. The health minister has been advised about our meeting and we are committed to making sure you will be able to make the right calls and prevent an impact on our system. I implore you. We must keep up our commitment to the Israeli public," he said.

In the WhatsApp group doctors shared information about contacts with other countries and where the Israeli license to practice medicine is accepted. "It's shocking," said Professor Dina Ben-Yehuda, head of hematology at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. "I saw in the group doctors I studies and specialized with me. The pain is great and to me, this is more a cry for help and a protest. I want to hug each of them and am sorry that they are feeling this way," she said adding that Israel is already suffering from a shortage of physicians and by 2026 will have the least number of doctors per capita than any other developed nation. "I see people from all political persuasions in the group," she said.

"People fear for their personal and professional lives," 30-year-old Tomer Rosenberg, a Medical student told Ynet in an interview. "I am afraid to go home in my scrubs because I've already been abused by people on the train. They say we are "rich and privileged," he said adding that such encounters although not daily, were increasing.

SECULAR ISRAELIS FAST ON TISHA BE'AV IN PROTEST OF JUDICIAL REFORM (JPost 7/26/23)

In Israel, a land rich with ancient narratives and diverse cultures, a new trend is unfolding. Amid the timeless stones and cherished landscapes, secular Israelis are uniting in a surprising and profound manner.

This year, in a departure from their usual religious detachment, they're observing Tisha Be'av – a historic day of mourning – through fasting.

This act isn't just a reflection of shared heritage; it's a collective protest against the government's recent, contentious judicial reform.

At the heart of this grassroots movement is Mirik Snir, an accomplished children's book author. While she regularly fasts on Yom Kippur, her decision to also fast on Tisha Be'av this year was fueled by her growing discontentment with the current right-wing and religious government's policies.

By adapting her personal act of fasting to Tisha Be'av, Snir ignited a nationwide protest against the debated reform, in an act of unity.

To Snir, and the many who have since joined her cause, fasting isn't a mere tradition. It's an evocative form of protest, a unifying prayer, and a powerful symbol of unity. The recently passed law of the judicial reform has reignited concerns about the potential erosion of Israel's long-standing democratic values and civil liberties. By fasting, secular Israelis are finding a poignant way to articulate their shared concerns and fears.

Throughout the country, tents have emerged as places of gathering, reflection, and discussion. These sanctuaries, some overlooking historic sites, serve as focal points, helping participants channel their sentiments into a cohesive prayer for their nation's future. Understanding the potential of digital age connectivity, Snir initiated a WhatsApp group to amplify her cause. Her invitation was clear and inclusive: "We, a diverse group from all backgrounds, invite every Israeli – religious, secular, Right, Left, center – to join this fast on Tisha Be'av, using it as a shared protest against looming threats." The group quickly became a hub for sharing thoughts, coordinating events, and solidifying the movement's momentum.

Historically, Tisha Be'av is a day of reflection, marking the destruction of both the First and Second Temples – tragedies accentuated by internal discord among the Jewish people. For many secular Israelis, the act of fasting this year is not just a nod to history. It's an urgent, contemporary call for unity and understanding, especially when faced with divisive policies and reforms.

The nation's digital platforms are resonating with testimonials and shared sentiments by a random group of Israelis. Orli Bach's heartfelt Facebook post reads, "For the first time, I will fast on Tisha Be'av. It's an internal call I can't ignore. In time, its meaning will crystallize for me." In a similar vein, Roby Schweitzer shared his unexpected connection to this observance, stating, "Despite being secular, today I feel deeply connected to this historic day, all thanks to the current leadership."

This emerging trend paints a picture of a society undergoing transformation. It shows secular Israelis aligning, perhaps temporarily, with their religious counterparts. This shared fasting sends a powerful message: preserving Israel's democratic essence is not the sole responsibility of one group; it's a collective endeavor.

DISCUSSION OF 'SETTLER VIOLENCE' CANCELED AFTER BEN-GVIR REFUSES TO PARTICIPATE (Arutz-7 7/26/23)

Defense Minister Yoab Gallant canceled a meeting on the issue of 'settler violence in Judea and Samaria' after National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir refused to send any representatives to the discussion.

Gallant's office told Israel National News - Arutz Sheva that the meeting has been postponed and that no new date has yet been set.

Officials in the coalition expressed bewilderment at the very idea of holding such a discussion while Israel is dealing with an increase in terrorism from the Palestinian Authority and wondered what is the urgency of dealing with "settler violence" instead of Arab terrorism.

Sources close to Ben-Gvir said that he "will not be a partner in Gallant's demonization of the settlers in Judea and Samaria. A discussion about settler

violence is not acceptable to Minister Ben-Gvir and he will not allow it to happen."

Last week, it was reported that in preparation for the debate, Gallant asked the National Security Minister to send as his representative the commander of the Judea and Samaria District of the Police, Superintendent Uzi Levy.

Ben-Gvir informed the Defense Minister that he refuses to send Levy to the hearing. People close to Ben-Gvir stated that holding a discussion on the issue at a time when a wave of terrorism continues is "excessive and disproportionate."

"It cannot be that in discussions on Arab terrorism, Gallant sends a representative with the rank of major, while Gallant requests [that Ben-Gvir] send an officer with the rank of sergeant major to the discussion, which was all done due to pressure from the left," they said.

On the other hand, Ben Gvir suggested to Minister Gallant's representatives that he would send his chief of staff Chanamel Dorfman to the discussion. As of now, there has been no response from Gallant's staff to the offer.

The Defense Minister's Office responded: "The claim that the aforementioned discussion will take place on 'settler violence' is a complete lie. This is a discussion about the ways the security system can deal with acts of nationalist crime. We are sorry that Minister Ben-Gvir is harming the efforts to eradicate extreme violence in Judea and Samaria."

DO YOUNG ISRAELIS WANT TO STAY IN ISRAEL? NEW SURVEY HAS RESULTS (Israel Hayom 7/23/23)

A new survey conducted among young Israelis shows that 42% believe their generation is "unlucky" and that their future is less bright than their parents. The survey also shows that 52% believe there is discrimination in Israel based on ethnicity and place of residence. Another statistic shows that 54% say they would emigrate if they could, while 62% feel alone in dealing with their future.

The most troubling issue involves the erosion in the sense of belonging to the state in recent months: While the 2022 Democracy Index showed that 66% of Israelis between 18-24 (as well as 65% of those between 25-44) would prefer to stay in Israel even if they had the opportunity to move to a different country, in the new survey this figure stood only at 54%.

Among Haredim, 91% say they would prefer to stay in Israel, while among non-Haredi Jews, that figure drops to 44%. Among Israeli Arabs, that figure stands at 32%.

When asked to say what their three overarching objectives are among 12 that were presented to them, some 47% said "economic well-being and a high lifestyle", some 45% said chose "building a family" and 40% said "economic security that will grant me livelihood and enough money for old age." Only 5.8% chose "working toward political and social change."

Some 42% of young Israelis believe they are part of an "unlucky" generation and think their lives will not be as good as their parents' future was. Among non-Haredi Jews, 47% say their generation is unlucky, with only 33% saying they believe their future is brighter than their parents. Among young Arab respondents, some 34% said they are part of an unlucky generation, but 52% said their future is brighter than their parents'.

Some 52% of Israelis believe that their chances of realizing their professional goals are determined firstly by their place of residence, their ethnic background and their family's financial means. Only 48% say that their personal aptitude, knowledge and skills are the most important.

Some 62% said that the state has not provided them with a safety net and has left them to their own devices in pursuing their future goals. This stood at 69% for women, 55% of men, 49% of Arabs, and 43% of Haredim. Almost half of respondents said they felt they could not trust the state to give them what they need to meet the challenges of the future, and women and non-Haredi Jews comprise more than half of this group.

According to Rashi Foundation, the "results of the survey show that the disparity between the haves and have-nots has only increased and that if we are to grant a real equal opportunity to everyone, we must have widespread engagement to effect real change when it comes to trust in institutions and

we must bolster infrastructure and incentivize various remedies, such as professional training for the job market and more."

According to The Gandy Foundation, the survey shows that "most young Israelis think they are alone in facing the big challenges in the greater complex reality; more than 60% of them feel the state does not provide with a safety net and that they have to take care of themselves by themselves. The study is a wake-up call for all those who engage in youth outreach."

THREE ULTRA-RARE VULTURE CHICKS TAKE WING IN ISRAEL (Ha'aretz 7/24/23)

He flies! After hatching in February, a baby Israeli griffon vulture famed in certain Facebook circles has taken wing. He (or she) was almost immediately followed by a second baby griffon vulture from a nearby nest. Then, perhaps in envious emulation of the other chicks, and despite being two weeks younger, a third vulture chick precociously made the great leap into the skies. All this action took place in mid-July under the watchful eye of the 24/7 Israeli Raptor Nest Cam, which monitors the birds' lives and development. Though now able to aviate, the juveniles will continue to be nurtured by their parents for some time to come, say experts at the Israel Nature and Parks Authority.

The first was laid to father T99 and mother J35 in February. He or she had been preparing for the exciting event for about a fortnight, a period marked by restiveness and flight training (flapping). On the morning of July 13, they hopped from the nest and flew, followed a few hours later by the child of A40 and E76, says Dr. Gilad Friedman, director of the raptor cam project.

No, the airborne baby doesn't have a name yet. Vultures only get names – if T99, et cetera, is a name – when they get trapped and tagged, he explains.

The launch of the three young vultures was hailed by conservationists. Griffon vultures are critically endangered throughout the Middle East, partly because of generally onerous conditions including their nests being buzzed by fighter jets, but mainly because of poisoning by farmers who put out poisoned bait to kill predators targeting their flocks, such as the Israeli wolf and hyena. The vultures also eat the poisoned meat or even the dead predators, and are themselves killed.

Of course, putting out poisoned bait for predators is illegal, but it still goes on – a lot. This nefarious practice alone has brought vultures in Israel and the environs to the brink of extinction. Only a few dozen pairs cling on in the Judean Desert and Negev, and a handful of pairs in northern Israel, including by the biblical ruins of Gamla. If they hadn't been cared for by the parks authority, says Friedman, including being fed untainted meat, they'd be entirely gone.

The griffon vulture's potential population recovery is slow because the vulture, which unlike humans is genuinely monogamous, only lays one egg at a time per couple. The parents also invest heavily in their single chick. From egg to hatchling on the wing can take almost a year. In short, they breed very slowly. Thus, the flight of the three babies was cause for celebration.

Friedman cannot say how big Israel's vulture population is, but thinks it's between 160 to 200 individual birds, who have created 40 nesting couples. Asked if the small number of vultures won't doom the species due to genetic bottleneck, Friedman explains that not all the Israeli vultures are kissing cousins: some are local but some flew in from abroad. There are more robust populations in Spain and France thanks to action by the governments there, he adds.

The threats the young vultures face are legion, not least the heat as climate change slams into the Middle East. "Injuries and fractures due to poor flying, exhaustion and hunger due to lack of experience in reaching the feeding areas are not rare [in baby vultures]," Friedman says.

At the end of the day, the road to saving the Israeli griffon vulture remains long and hard. The griffon's main nesting area in the south is the cliffs of Hatsinim nature reserve. But even there, in recent years no less than 30 of the vultures were killed, mostly by poisoning, and about half the nests fail, meaning no baby ensues. "That's why every one that takes flight is significant to the population," says Zehava Segal, an ecologist with the parks authority in the Negev. And now there are three more.

THE DAY ISRAEL WAS TORN APART (Arye Erlich, YNet 7/26/23)

On Wednesday we will sit on low stools in dimly lit synagogues and read the Book of Lamentations, and we will remember the profound tragedies that befell our people during two devastating historical events.

And the day the Knesset passed legislation canceling the Supreme Court's ability to invoke the reasonableness clause will be remembered among the people who returned to Zion as a warning sign.

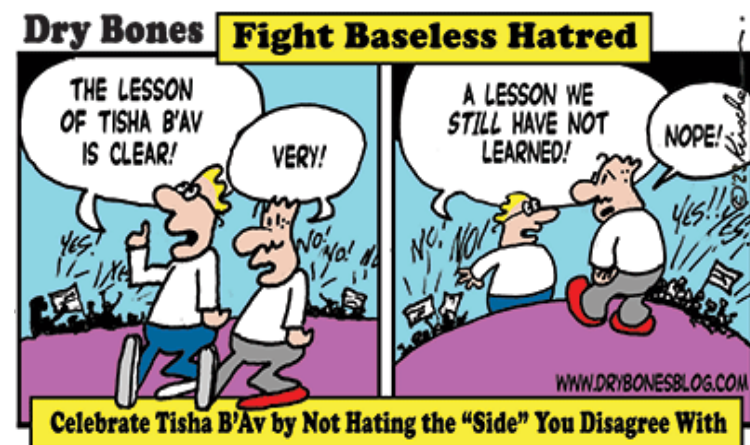
History has a tendency to repeat itself in cruel times. The most tragic events in Jewish history coincide with days of mourning for the destruction of the temples. The withdrawal from Gush Katif, with its traumatic memories, is observed on the eve of Tisha B'Av. Likewise, the passing of the reasonableness law occurred around Tisha B'Av. This tragic timing provokes somber reflections on the lessons we have never learned. It reminds us of the legacy of hatred toward others, which continues to divide us even as we mark the destruction of the Second Temple. It highlights our incapacity to listen to one another, to understand each other's pain, to come to each other's aid, and to find a place of compassion in our hearts for one another's anguish.

As someone who is part of the right-wing, I do not see a disaster in repealing the use of the reasonableness standard, but I do see a terrible tragedy in the reality that has unfolded as a result. The day when the Kingdom of Israel was de facto divided into two halves – one laughing and one crying – brought to my consciousness everything I have learned over the years about the rift between the people and its consequences, about destruction and its motivations.

In stories about the destruction of the Jewish sages, you can find the peripheral triggers that led to the great catastrophe: arguments over a chicken coop, disputes over a rooster and a hen, and a quarrel at a wedding where an uninvited guest was expelled. And when I saw the chaos on the streets and witnessed with weary eyes a hit-and-run in Ra'anana, a car crash with children on the road in Giv'at Shmuel, shots fired into the air at the entrance of a kibbutz, and the mutual taunting cries in the streets, I was filled with dread from history repeating itself.

As a Haredi Jew, I know that the Third Temple has not yet been built in its full sense, and therefore I still hope for its realization. However, the national home in which we live, the Israeli society of which we are all part, is experiencing a worrisome process of accelerated destruction. A glimmer of optimism lies in the very ability that might still remain within us – to look into our neighbor's eyes, free ourselves from preconceptions and listen; to use the last threads from the torn fabric to sew together a new creation.

In the depths of this social abyss, maturity and responsibility are required from all sides. The side that prevailed by passing a law despite opposition and the side that succeeded in extracting a harsh price tag like no other. Now, instead of foolish celebrations on one side and desperate marches on the other, I wish that all of us would find the courage to take responsibility for what is left of this place. The time has come to calm down, to reconnect, to unite once again. On the eve of Tisha B'Av in the year 5783, now is the time.





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

And you shall keep [them] and do [them], for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these *chukim* (statutes) and say, "This great nation is a wise and understanding people." (4:6)

There are several different terms that the Torah uses to categorize the *mitzvos* (commandments). For example, there are *mishpatim* – laws which even if the Torah had not written them, it would have been logical to enact them – like the prohibitions of murder, stealing, and idolatry (Talmud Yoma 67b). There are also *chukim* – laws which we don't clearly understand the reasons for – like the prohibitions against consuming pork or wearing *shaatnez* (wool and linen garments). *Chukim*, our Sages teach us, will at times entice people of other nations to question our practices and sometimes even taunt us (See Rashi Bereishis 26:5 and Bamidbar 19:2). Our Parsha, however, appears to predict a very different kind of reaction from the other nations. "That is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the peoples, who will hear all these *chukim* (statutes) and say, 'Only this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Apparently, when the nations hear of our *chukim*, they are expected to react with praise at the brilliance of the Jewish nation, not by challenging and taunting. How are we to reconcile these two conflicting perspectives?

The Ran (Derashos Haran 9) explains that the reaction described by the Sages is the initial reaction of the nations upon hearing of our *chukim* – challenge and ridicule. The verse in this week's Parsha, however, is assuring us that the ridicule will quickly turn to admiration. "For what great nation is there," the very next verse continues, "that has a god so near to them, as Hashem our G-d is whenever we call on him?" It is after witnessing the special connection the Jewish people have with Hashem, that the nations' taunting will transform to praise at the wisdom of the Torah's *chukim*. They will reason that it certainly can't be the logical statutes that create that special bond as they too have many of the same statutes yet don't have the same bond. It must be the *chukim* that engender our special relationship with Hashem.

Rav Reuven Feinstein *shlita* once shared an additional cause for the transformation of perspectives amongst the nations: *a Jew conducting himself or herself in the way of the Torah*. When the nations of the world see Jews behaving with dignity and respect, they will conclude that although the laws of the Torah do not make sense to them, their impact is undeniable. A system of laws that produces people of such elevated character is surely sourced in great wisdom.

The *mitzvos* of the Torah are much more than a system of laws; they are a path to perfection and intimate connection to Hashem. We should merit to appreciate the great opportunity to perform Hashem's *mitzvos* and become the people about whom the other nations say, "This great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your possessions (6:5).

When the Romans were taking Rebbi Akiva to be killed, it was time to recite Krias Shema. While they combed his back with iron combs, he accepted the Yoke of Heaven (by reciting Shema). His students asked him, "Our master, must one endure so much?" Rebbi Akiva responded, "All my life I yearned to fulfill the command of the verse, 'with all your soul,' which means that even while one's life is being taken from him, he must accept upon himself Hashem's yoke. Now that it has come to my hand, I should not fulfill it?" (Brachos 61b)

Since the mitzvah of Krias Shema needs one's kavana / intent, and the mitzvah of giving up one's life for Hashem needs intent, how could Rebbi Akiva have intent on fulfilling these two mitzvos simultaneously?

Parsha Riddle

Besides for the gematria of "Va'eschanan," how do we know that Moshe davened 515 prayers to be permitted to enter Eretz Yisroel?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

When Moshiach comes, which three Yomim Tovim will we celebrate?

Answer: Chanukah, Purim and Tisha B'Av

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In parashas Va'eschanan (4:9-10), Hashem commands:

Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life ... the day that you stood before Hashem, your G-d, at Horeb, when Hashem said to me, "Gather the people to Me and I shall let them hear My words ..."

The Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos* (chapter 3) understands this as an exhortation not to forget the Torah that one has learned:

Whoever forgets anything of his Torah learning, Scripture considers it as if he bears guilt for his soul, for it is said "Only beware ..." Does this apply even if [he forgot because] his studies were too difficult for him? [This is not so, for] Scripture says, "and lest you remove them ..." Thus, one does not bear guilt for his soul unless he sits [idly] and [through lack of concentration and review] removes them from his consciousness.

The Rambam (*Rotzeach* 11:4), however, interprets the verse as referring to **physical** danger:

[I]t is a positive mitzvah to remove any obstacle that could pose a danger to life, and to be very careful regarding these matters, as it states: "Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul."

This interpretation of the verse is actually mentioned in the Talmud – although it is attributed there to a presumably non-Jewish "officer," and not to the sages of the Talmud themselves (*Berachos* 32b).

The *Noda be-Yehudah* (2:YD:10) cites another verse from parashas Va'eschanan (4:15) as constituting a prohibition against self-endangerment:

But you shall greatly beware for your souls, for you did not see any likeness on the day Hashem spoke to you at Horeb, from the midst of the fire.

The *Noda be-Yehudah* accordingly forbids recreational hunting on the grounds of the activity's dangerousness:

For all those who are involved in this must enter forests and take great risks, in a place of bands of wild beasts, and the Torah states: "But you shall greatly beware for your souls" ...

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I equal 611.
2. I equal all.
3. I am black, yet blue print.
4. Pass me on.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. Three times a day.
2. You cover for me.
3. Twelve said me to their elder.
4. I am listen.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Half of the Tribe of Menashe (I didn't get what I asked for, I am a half, I am on the other side, I am an add on.)

#2 Devarim (I am the last, Almost one day, Words, After last week's.)

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