

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah - Shuvah Shorts ^{ח"ס}

September 22 - 23, 2023 - 8 Tishrei 5784 - Parashas Haazinu/Shabbos Shuvah

Light Candles by 6:47 - Havdalah 7:44

September 24 - 25, 2023 - 10 Tishrei 5784 - Yom Kippur

Light Candles by 6:44 - Havdalah 7:41

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored anonymously in gratitude to **Isaac Moses** for all of the endless hours he devoted to seating for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and by **Marc & Debbie Katz** to express their heartfelt appreciation to our wonderful community for the many Tefillos offered on behalf of their newborn granddaughter, Chaya Bracha. Your Tefillos were a tremendous source of comfort and strength and, Baruch Hashem, she is doing better.

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: 6:50 (B), 6:30 (Sephardi, LBM)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM), 9:15 (Teen, H)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 6:15 (B), 6:05 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Shabbos Shuvah Drasha (B): 6:40
- Shabbos ends/Maariv: 7:44

Divrei Torah/Shiurim

- Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur (SBM) Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman
- Kedushas Levi Chabura - 8:55 (S) Rabbi Postelnek
- Shabbos Shuvah Drasha (B) - 6:40 (B) Rabbi Rosenbaum

Yom Kippur Schedule

Sunday:

- Mincha: 3:00 (B, S), 3:00 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Kol Nidre: 6:45 (B, S), 6:40 (Sephardi, LBM)

Monday:

- Shacharis: 8:00 (B, S), 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Yizkor: No earlier than 10:45 (B, S)
- Mincha: 4:50 (B), 4:40 (S), 4:30 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Yom Kippur ends: 7:41

Mazal Tov

- **Barbara & Mel Ciment** on the recent marriage of their granddaughter Rebecca Shoshana Ciment, daughter of Aimee & Daniel Ciment of Engelwood, NJ, to Eitan Zwebner, son of Felicia Zwebner of Englewood, NJ, and Moshe Zwebner of Teaneck, NJ.
- **Lois & Sid Meyers** on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Zehava Golda Strauss. Mazal Tov to parents Yehudis & Shimon Strauss of Lakewood, NJ, and to grandparents Jessica & Rabbi Yekusiel Strauss of Fallsburg, NY.

Shul Announcements

- **Seating Assignments for Yom Kippur** were sent out by email on Tuesday night. Contact seats@yise.org with any questions, concerns, or last-minute reservations.

YISE Youth Announcements

Teen Minyan - The Teen Minyan, led by Rabbi Moshe Holzer, 9:25 in The House, followed by Kiddush.

Shabbos Groups this Shabbos, September 23, 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** meet in the Lower Lobby and walk to the Yeshiva.
- **5th and 6th grade girls** - meet in the Lower Lobby and walk to the Yeshiva.
- **Jr. Congregation** for 4th to 6th grade boys - in The House.

For more information, contact Sharon Shimoff at sshimoff@yise.org

Sukkah Hop - We are looking for a few more houses for our Shul Sukkah hop routes. Please email sshimoff@yise.org if you can help.

Childcare on Yom Kippur for those who registered, is on Monday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM and 4:45 PM - 7:45 PM. If you have not registered yet but are davening at YISE and are interested in babysitting for your child(ren), email sshimoff@yise.org
See flyers for Sukkos and Simchas Torah Youth events at YISE.

Shul Announcements (continued)

- **Lulavim & Esrogim** - Pickup at YISE on Wednesday, September 27, 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM in the Social Hall. If you have any questions about your order, contact Josh Breitstein at lulav@yise.org or 301-346-7838.
- **Help build the YISE Sukkah** - Volunteers are needed to help build the Shul Sukkah on Wednesday, September 27, at 4:45pm. The rain date is Thursday, September 28. Contact Stuart Cohen at 301-943-5153 with any questions.
- **Sukkos Hospitality** - If you have a Sukkah and can host guests, let us know the meals you are available to host and any other specifics or questions. If you are looking for a meal to join over Yom Tov, please also contact us. Email hospitality@yise.org or call or text 301-476-3237 by Friday, September 22. Thank you!
- **Simchas Torah Day Learning for Women** - Simchas Torah morning, Sunday, October 8, 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM with Mrs. Sharon Freundel and Mrs. Atara Rosenbaum. *See flyer for details.*
- **Coatroom Cleanup** - The coat racks in the upper lobby and the lower lobby coatroom have been reorganized. "Lost and Found" items have been moved to the coat rack by the washing stand in the upper lobby. Please claim and remove your items. We will dispose of unclaimed items in the next few weeks.
- **YISE Logo Contest** - Calling all graphic designers! YISE is looking for a logo to celebrate 75 years of YISE, 1951 - 2026, and 50 years in the Arcola building, 1974 - 2024. Send entries to communications@yise.org *See flyer for details.*
- **New Welcoming Committee!** If you would like to welcome a new person or family to your Shabbos table and the YISE community, email welcome@yise.org with the subject "happy to welcome" and we will contact you 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 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.
- **Seeking Shalosh Seudos Sponsors** for the next few months. Sponsorships start at \$375. To sponsor, contact Simi Franco at 301-593-4465, ext. 103, or office@yise.org or Ethan Cohen at ecohen@yise.org Contact Ethan Cohen to volunteer to set up and clean up. The following dates are not available due to the holidays: 9/30, and 10/7.
- **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 and by **Michael Hourwitz** in honor of Rabbi Grossman and all of the Talmidim who attend his shiur and in memory of Michael's family members in whose memory the learning has been dedicated.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Shabbos Shuvah Drasha - Marilyn & Judah Lifschitz, Mrs. Judy Rosenbaum & Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Judy's mother, Leah Mann, Rochel Leah Bas Harav Eliyahu Chaim, Z"L, whose Yahrzeit actually takes place on Shabbos Shuvah this year.

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

The Week Ahead		Sunday, Sept. 24 Erev Yom Kippur	Monday, Sept. 25 Yom Kippur	Tuesday September 26	Wednesday September 27	Thursday September 28	Friday September 29
Shacharis	Ashkenazi (S, B, B)	6:15, 7:15, 8:30	See Yom Kippur Schedule	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
Mincha / Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)	See Yom Kippur Schedule		6:45	6:45	6:45	See Sukkos schedule.
	Sephardi (LBM)			6:40	6:40	6:40	
Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 5:44 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 6:11 AM, Latest Netz: 7:04 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:58 AM, Earliest Mincha: 1:31 PM, Earliest Shkia: 6:52 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim 7:42 PM							

Sukkos - Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 2023 - 15 - 16 Tishrei 5784

Friday Night: Light candles: 6:36, Mincha: 6:40 (B), 6:25 (Sephardi, LBM)

Shabbos Day:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Mincha: 2:30 (B), 6:35 (B), 6:30 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Maariv: 7:05 (B)
- Light candles/Kiddush after: 7:33

Sunday:

- Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S), 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Mincha: 6:40 (B), 6:35 (Sephardi, LBM)
- Maariv/Yom Tov ends: 7:31

Next Shabbos Shorts Deadline:

Wednesday, September 27, at 12 Noon

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

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

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

Website: www.yise.org

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Rabbi Yosef Postelnik - Assistant Rabbi

Josh Seidemann - President

Simi Franco - Office Manager

Josh Breitstein - Facility Manager

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah

Weekday and Community Announcements

ד"ר

September 22 - 23, 2023 - 8 Tishrei 5784 - Parashas Haazinu

September 24 - 25, 2023 - 10 Tishrei 5784 - Yom Kippur

Upcoming Community Programs & Listings

Erev Yom Tov Mikvah for Men - The Mikvah Emunah Society of Greater Washington (MES) is pleased to offer use of the Wallerstein Mikvah in Kemp Mill to men, on Erev Yom Kippur. Volunteers are needed as well. Please see <https://mikvahemunah.com/men> for all of the info. Thank you!

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday, September 27, 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

Simchas Bais Hashoeiva - Monday, October 2, at the YGW Boys' Division, 1216 Arcola Avenue. Live music, Rita's truck, cotton candy. 8:30 PM dancing, 9:45 Divrei Torah from Rabbi Merkin, followed by Maariv.

Franco Foundation Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur Community Appeal - Make your tax-deductible donations via PayPal to thefrancofoundation@gmail.com Zelle 202-422-1021 or mail your check to The Franco Foundation, 613 Bromley Street, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Thank you!

Yad Yehuda Yomim Nora'im Appeal - Yad Yehuda expects to spend over \$120,000 to assist hundreds of individuals across our community from Rosh Hashanah to Sukkot. We will provide food, financial help, lulav/etrog sets, and more, in a dignified and confidential manner to ensure that our neighbors in need can enjoy the holidays free from financial strain. Please give generously! Donate online at www.yadyehuda.org/donate

Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington Elul Campaign - BCGW is here for you whether you have an urgent medical need or need long term help. Your gift translates into kosher food in our area's Bikur Cholim hospital kosher pantries and respite rooms in our area. Your support means that patients and families who are receiving medical treatments at NIH, area hospitals, and treatment centers can stay at the Bernard Creeger Bikur Cholim House. Your donation means borrowing necessary and otherwise expensive medical equipment, receiving free transportation to medical appointments, or accessing social support. Thanks to you BCGW provides emergency grants to help pay for medical, mental health and dental bills. Please donate at <https://causematch.com/bikurcholimgw>

Four Kabbalistic Secrets for Enduring Relationships in a Modern World - Join the Mikvah Emunah Society as we welcome renowned speaker Rivka Slonim to speak to the women of our community on Wednesday, October 18, at 8:00 PM at Chabad of Silver Spring. This event is part of the Robin Niman Mikvah Education Fund and is free to attend, but RSVPs are required and sponsorships are welcomed. For more details, visit <https://mikvahemunah.com> and click on "Events". Questions? Email gwmikvah@gmail.com

Dirshu - Join Kollel Dirshu of Silver Spring, now studying Maseches Bava Basra, 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 301-633-6262 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

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 info. 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 Lamberton 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.

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

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

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 resume on Sunday, October 22.*
- **Rabbi Rosenbaum** - Daily - one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-minute Shiur on the Parsha. Monday through Friday, 9:30 AM, **Zoom A**, *will not meet on Monday, September 25.*
- **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**, *will resume on Wednesday, October 11.*
- **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, *will resume on Sunday, October 15.*
- **Rabbi Tuvia Grauman** - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, Sundays at 10:00 AM, **Zoom C**.
- **GWCK presents CLAS (Community Learning at Shomrai)** - 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM. For more info., contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps, hshaps@gwckollel.org 347-869-9361.
 - For Men:
 - Mondays: Rabbi Hillel Shaps - On the Same Page Gemara, *will resume on Monday, October 16.*
 - Wednesdays: Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - Reading Responsa - **Zoom E**, *will resume on Wednesday, October 18.*
 - Thursdays: Rabbi Avraham Sussman - Yesodei Hatorah Gemara Skills Building - **Zoom F**.
 - For Women: Mondays: Mrs. Sara Malka Winter - Parsha Journeys - **Zoom D**, *will resume after Sukkos.*
- **SCP (Semichas Chaver Program)** - Tuesdays at 8:45 PM at YISE. Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps. Register at <https://thegreaterwashingtoncommunitykollel.com/scp> For more information please contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@gwckollel.org *New semester will begin after Sukkos, date to be announced.*
- **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, "Profits from the Prophets", in-person in the Small Beis Medrash and on **Zoom G**.
- **Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's** Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning the 7th Perek of Maseches Bava Metzia. Wednesday evenings, *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 D: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter (phone 667362)

Zoom E: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn

Zoom F: ID: 803 356 4156, password Learn

Zoom G: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079

Zoom H: ID: 849 3898 4989, password 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. and by **Michael Hourwitz** in honor of Rabbi Grossman and all of the Talmidim who attend his Shiur and in memory of Michael's family members in whose memory the learning has been dedicated.

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

YISE Youth Presents....

Shomrai Sukkah Hop 2023

Sunday, October 1st
2nd Day of Sukkos

Meet Promptly at 4:30 pm by the Shul's Sukkah



Lasts approximately 15 hours

Pre-School - 6th grade
all kids under 5 must be accompanied by an adult

For more information, Please email sshimoff@yise.org



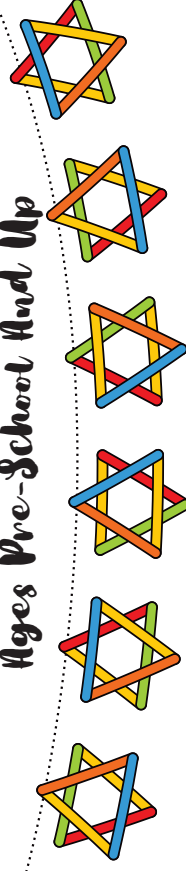
Come Help YISE Youth
Make Decorations For Our Shul's Sukkah

Sunday, September 24th

10 AM - 11:30 AM

Backyard of Shomrai House

Ages Pre-School And Up



For more information, please email sshimoff@yise.org

SSHIMOFF@YISE.ORG



YSE Sukkah

To RSVP, please email sshinmatt@yise.org



We need a graphic designer ASAP!

YISE needs you! We are looking for a special 75th anniversary logo to celebrate our big year! Please submit all entries to communications@yise.org by Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan (Oct. 16, 2023).

The winning design will be featured in upcoming shul announcements, flyers, websites, and more!

The winning designer will receive a gift card to a Capitol-K certified restaurant of their choice.



Did you know that YISE will also be celebrating 50 years at our Arcola location?

Sponsors needed for the

YISE

Gala Simchas Torah



Kiddushes



Please help sponsor the Kiddushes on Simchas Torah night, October 7, following Hakafos, and on Simchas Torah morning, October 8, following both the Hashkamah Minyan and the Main Minyan.

To sponsor, contact Simi Franco at office@yise.org or 301-593-4465 x103.

Suggested donation: \$36

Deadline: Wednesday, October 4

Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Sponsored by David and Sarah Maslow
on the occasion of the yahrzeit
of David's mother,
Tovah bas Nissan, a"h, 9 Tishrei

Volume 29, Issue 51

Shabbat Shuva - Parashat Haazinu (Yom Kippur Issue Attached!)

5784 - B"H

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

The Arc of the Moral Universe - In majestic language, Moses breaks into song, investing his final testament to the Israelites with all the power and passion at his command. He begins dramatically but gently, calling heaven and earth to witness what he is about to say, sounding ironically very much like "The quality of mercy is not strained", Portia's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Listen, heavens, and I will speak;
Let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
May my teaching pour down like rain
Let my speech fall like the dew;
Like gentle rain on tender plants,
Like showers upon the grasses.

But this is a mere prelude to the core message Moses wants to convey. It is the idea known as *tzidduk haDin*, vindicating God's justice. The way Moses puts it is this:

The Rock, His work is whole,
And all His ways are justice.
A God of faith who does no wrong,
Just is He, and upright.

This is a doctrine fundamental to Judaism and its understanding of evil and suffering in the world – a difficult but necessary doctrine. God is just. Why then do bad things happen?

Did He act ruinously? No, with His children lies the fault, A warped and twisted generation.

God requites good with good, evil with evil. When bad things happen to us it is because we have been guilty of doing bad things ourselves. The fault lies not in our stars but ourselves.

Moving into the prophetic mode, Moses foresees what he has already predicted, even before they have crossed the Jordan and entered the land. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy he has been warning of the danger that, in their land, once the hardships of the desert and the struggles of battle have been forgotten, the people will become comfortable and complacent. They will attribute their achievements to themselves and they will drift from their faith. When this happens they will bring disaster on themselves:

Yeshurun grew fat and kicked –
You became bloated, gross, coarse –
They abandoned God who made them
And rejected the Rock of their rescue...
You deserted the Rock that bore you;
You forgot the God who gave you birth.

This, the first use of the word Yeshurun in the Torah – from the root *yashar*, upright – is deliberately ironic. It underlines its prophecy that Israel, who once knew what it was to be upright, will be led astray by a combination of affluence, security and assimilation to the ways of its neighbours. It will betray the terms of the covenant, and when that happens it will find that God is no longer with it. It will discover that history is a ravaging wolf. Separated from the source of its strength, it will be overpowered by its enemies. All that the nation once

enjoyed will be lost. It is a stark and terrifying message.

Yet Moses is here bringing the Torah to a close with a theme that has been there from the beginning. God, Creator of the universe, made a world that is fundamentally good: the word that echoes seven times in the first chapter of Genesis. It is humans, granted freewill as God's image and likeness, who introduce evil into the world, and then suffer its consequences. Hence Moses' insistence that when trouble and tragedy appear, we should search for the cause within ourselves, and not blame God. God is upright and just. The defect is in us, His children.

This is perhaps the most difficult idea in the whole of Judaism. It is open to the simplest of objections, one that has sounded in almost every generation. If God is just, why do bad things happen to good people? This is the question asked not by sceptics and doubters, but by the very heroes of faith. We hear it in Abraham's plea, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" We hear it in Moses' challenge "Why have you done evil to this people?" It sounds again in Jeremiah: "Lord, you are always right when I dispute with You. Yet I must plead my case before You: Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why are evil people so happy?"

It is an argument that never ceased. It continued through the rabbinic literature. It was heard again in the *kinot*, the laments, prompted by the persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages. It sounds in the literature produced in the wake of the Spanish expulsion, and echoes still when we recall the Holocaust.

The Talmud says that of all the questions Moses asked God, this was the one to which God did not give an answer. The simplest, deepest interpretation is given in Psalm 92, "The song of the Sabbath day." Though "the wicked spring up like grass," they will eventually be destroyed. The righteous, by contrast, "flourish like a palm tree and grow tall like a cedar in Lebanon." Evil wins in the short term but never in the long. The wicked are like grass, the righteous like a tree. Grass grows overnight but it takes years for a tree to reach its full height. In the long run, tyrannies are defeated. Empires decline and fall. Goodness and rightness win the final battle. As Martin Luther King Jr. said in the spirit of the Psalm: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

It is a difficult belief, this commitment to seeing justice in history under the sovereignty of God. Yet consider the alternatives. They are three. The first option is to say that there is no meaning in history whatsoever. *Homo hominis lupus est*, "Man is wolf to man". As Thucydides said in the name of the Athenians: "The strong do as they want, the weak suffer what they must." History is a Darwinian struggle to survive, and justice is no more than the name given to the will of the stronger party.

The second, about which I write in my book *Not in God's Name*, is dualism, the idea that evil comes not from God but from an independent force: Satan, the Devil, the Antichrist, Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness, and the many other names given to the force that is not God but is opposed to Him and those who worship Him. This idea, which has surfaced in sectarian forms in each of the Abrahamic monotheisms, as well as in modern, secular totalitarianisms, is one of the most dangerous in all

of history. It divides humanity into the unshakeably good and the irredeemably evil, giving rise to a long history of bloodshed and barbarism of the kind we see being enacted today in many parts of the world in the name of holy war against the greater and lesser Satan. This is dualism, not monotheism, and the Sages, who called it *shtei reshuyot*, "two powers" or "domains", were right to reject it utterly.

The third, debated extensively in the rabbinic literature, is to say that justice ultimately exists in the world to come, in life after death. Yet though this is an essential element of Judaism, it is striking how relatively little Judaism had recourse to it, recognising that the central thrust of Tanach is on this world, and life before death. For it is here that we must work for justice, fairness, compassion, decency, the alleviation of poverty, and the perfection, as far as lies within our power, of society and our individual lives. Tanach almost never takes this option. God does not say to Jeremiah or Job that the answer to their question exists in heaven and they will see it as soon as they end their stay on earth. The passion for justice so characteristic of Judaism would dissipate entirely were this the only answer.

Difficult though Jewish faith is, it has had the effect throughout history of leading us to say: if bad things have happened, let us blame no one but ourselves, and let us labour to make them better. It was this that led Jews, time and again, to emerge from tragedy, shaken, scarred, limping like Jacob after his encounter with the angel, yet resolved to begin again, to rededicate ourselves to our mission and faith, to ascribe our achievements to God and our defeats to ourselves.

I believe that out of such humility, a momentous strength is born.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"Remember the days of yore, understand the years (shenot) of each generation." Are we commanded to study world history? Certainly, I would say, on the basis of the simple meaning of the verse cited at the head of this commentary in accordance with the commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

A proper study of history will reveal the consistent interplay between Israel and the nations of the world, the intellectual streams which influenced us – and in turn – which we influenced, and the hidden finger of God which guaranteed Jewish survival under the most difficult of conditions. And I would argue that the proper translation of the biblical verse cited above, as one may deduce from the biblical commentary of Rabbi Hirsch, is "understand the differences [shenot, not from 'shana – year,' but rather from 'shinui – difference, change'] of each generation."

It has aptly been said: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is mystery, today is a gift granted to us by God, and that is why it is called 'present.'" I would add that "today" is all that we really have to utilize, and we must utilize it well, with wisdom and with dispatch.

But we cannot treat "today" with proper understanding and circumspection unless we are sensitive to the forces of history which preceded it,

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in memory of Israel's father, William Rivkin, a"h,
(Refael Zev ben Yisrael)
whose yahrzeit is this Yom Kippur

especially to the changes in zeitgeist (the temper and spirit of the time), which makes “today” different from “yesterday,” and the new opportunities which may enable us to set the stage for a better tomorrow.

The truth is that God revealed Himself to Moses as the God of history. It is also true that in the Book of Genesis El Sha-ddai or Elo-him is revealed as the God of power and creation; however, when in the book of Exodus, Moses asks God for His name, the divine response is “Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh,” literally, “I shall be what I shall be.”

In effect, God is here introducing Himself first and foremost as the God of future tense, the God of history, the God of becoming, the God of future redemption (“Jehovah,” literally “He will bring about” redemption). This is very much in keeping with Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi’s Kuzari, who sees God as revealing Himself first and foremost in history, based upon the first of the Ten Commandments, “I am the Lord thy God, who took thee out of Egypt, the house of Bondage”.

And take note that this Name Ehyeh is very different from Maimonides’ emphasis on the God of power and creation, Elo-him; Indeed Maimonides even goes so far as to explain Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh to mean I am that I am, I am the God of being, I am the Ground of Being (Paul Tillich), I am the essence of creation (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Foundations of Torah 1:1), completely overlooking the fact that Ehyeh is literally a future verb, “I will be.” Hence both ideas are correct: God is the powerful God of Creation and God is also the Redeeming God of history.

And this name Ehyeh is not as definitive as is Elo-him, the God of creation. The God of creation “worked” (as it were) alone in creating the world; in contrast, the God of history is dependent upon the world scene first and foremost on Israel. For example, according to most interpreters, redemption was in the divine plan almost immediately after the Exodus, but the refusal of Israel to conquer the land delayed the process immeasurably. There will eventually be redemption, as all our prophets guarantee in God’s name, but since redemption requires Israel’s intervention, and the eventual cooperation of the entire world of nations, God must leave the “end of days” open-ended.

And so, the Bible after presenting the name Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh goes on to say, “So shall you [Moses] say to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent Me to you; this is My name forever, and this is My remembrance for all generations.’”

Note an interesting linguistic nuance: In Deuteronomy chapter 32, the text reads “dor vador,” understand the differences “of each generation” whereas in Exodus chapter three, we find “dor lador,” “this is My remembrance for all generations.” There are two names of God expressed in this passage in Exodus: the God of the patriarchs is the God of Jewish tradition from generation to generation – the God of eternal Torah and halakhic continuity, the God of the Shulhan Arukh, if you will; the God of history is the God of each generation, with that generation’s specific demands conditioned upon the historical situation of the specific time.

Hence Rabbi Shimon Schwab records in his memoirs how, as a studious bar mitzva youth, he decided to go to the Yeshiva in the city of Rodin because he was anxious to have contact with the Hafetz Hayim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, the gadol hador – the great luminary of the time, who lived in Rodin. The sage asked the youth if he was a Kohen-priest. When young Shimon answered in the negative, the Torah giant commiserated that when

the Messiah will come, only he – a Kohen – would be privileged to enter the sacred precincts of the Holy Temple. The reason for the priests’ elevated status is that their tribal ancestors answered positively to Moses’ call, “Whoever is with God, come to me.” Since young Shimon’s tribal ancestors did not heed that call, he would be excluded. The Hafetz Hayim concluded:

And, I do not say these words lightly in order to hurt you. I merely wish to prepare you: in every generation a Divine Voice calls out the particular summons, challenge, and opportunity of that generation. Do not repeat the mistake of your forbears. Listen for God’s voice in your generation, and make sure that you respond to God’s call!

Clearly the Divine Voice in our generation is calling out to us to come to Israel, to prepare for our palpable redemption, to world redemption.

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersch Weinreb

Do You Hear Voices? - Do you ever hear voices? I do, especially at this time of year. It is now the period of time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This ten-day period is known as the ten days of Teshuvah, or repentance. During this time Jews become more contemplative, more serious, and more given to internal dialogue.

It is a time for each of us to look within, and to give special attention to those inner voices which call upon us to correct past mistakes, to redress past offenses, and to resolve to do better in the year to come.

When I say, “I hear voices at this time of year,” I am referring, of course, to those inner voices.

There is another voice, which can be heard at this time of year, although not many of us are sufficiently spiritually sensitive to hear it. It is the voice of God.

For you see, the Talmud tells us that this ten day period is especially propitious for seeking out the divine and for hearing His voice. This is a time when God is to be found, when he is very near.

Chassidim use the following parable to explain this unusual theological phenomenon. Imagine, the parable goes, a king who spends most of his year isolated in his royal castle. It would be no wonder that he would wish to become more familiar with his people, and with what they were all about.

Imagine further, the parable continues, that he would decide to disguise himself in ordinary clothing and travel about the countryside, visiting the common folk and becoming acquainted with their lives, their problems, and especially what they really thought of their king.

And so the king, totally unidentifiable, wandered through the countryside and visited his constituency. The king was now close, extraordinarily close, to many of his countrymen. Few, if any, realized however, that it was the king who was wandering among them, and that he was accessible in a very unusual manner.

The Almighty himself now “wanders” among us, just as the king of the parable. During these ten days, the first ten days of the Jewish New Year, we have the opportunity to address Him in ways which were totally unavailable to us while He was in His royal castle, protected by guards and requiring appointments, usually impossible to obtain, often long in advance of when we needed them.

If we are aware of the presence of the Almighty in our midst, in this unique way, during this time of year, it is no wonder that we might just hear His divine voice.

And what would it say? What does the inner voice of our conscience say?

I think that these voices, divine or the better part of our human selves, have a threefold message; three messages that apply to every one of us, Jewish or non-Jewish, religious or otherwise.

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The first message that I hear from the voice is a protest against my tendency, our tendency, to want gratification now. There is something within us that can’t wait, that wants our pleasures now and our hopes realized immediately. But the inner spiritual voice, more clearly audible at this time of year, says, “Wait”. This spiritual voice stresses the need to postpone gratification, to work long and hard toward distant objectives, to set long-term goals and to work toward them ambitiously. This voice transcends the present and orients us towards the future with an attitude of optimism and hope.

The second message objects to the word “me”. It wants to counter the tendency we all have to be self-centered, to live a life based upon “me first”. This second component of our inner voice encourages us to be concerned with others. To realize, as the sainted Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin writes, that we are placed on this world not to fulfill our selfish needs, but to help others achieve their needs. The second message of the voice wishes to counter the culture of narcissism within which we find ourselves. It emphasizes charity, compassion, and social concern.

And the third message of the voice is such a simple one. It says, “Be happy”. It recognizes our tendency toward depression, sadness, and despair. And it encourages us to celebrate life with joy, to cultivate that most important of biblical emotions, simcha. How succinctly, but how stirringly, the spiritual genius Nachman of Braslav put it: “It is a great mitzvah to be b’simcha, to be happy... always!”

These are the voices that I hear when I listen carefully during this time of year. Perhaps these voices are divine in origin. More likely they are simply being expressed by a part of me that intuitively knows what is right and how I should guide my life in the coming year.

But one thing is for certain: These voices are not auditory hallucinations. They are not signs of madness or insanity. They are signs of clarity and expressions of valuable inner truths.

I am sure, dear reader, that you too can hear these voices if you but allow yourselves to listen.

Do listen. Follow the messages of this inner voice. And enjoy, each and every one of you, a happy and sweet, successful and peaceful New Year.

OTS Dvar Torah

“Great is this Song” – Yael Tawil [Excerpt]

During this month, we are quite naturally engaged in ongoing introspection, and we desire and hope for change. Quite often, people tend to occupy themselves with matters that are close to heart – the things that keep us up at night. Naturally, people tend to be less attentive to things that far removed from them, both physically and historically. Here, Moses teaches us that in every generation, we must hear and heed the words of this song. Only through the covenant of fate, one connected to the events of the past, can we truly ensure a covenant of purpose and our redemption.

Shirat Haazinu may also be alluding to the challenge of finding the right balance, on different levels: a balance between what will be heard and what will be said, a balance and connection between thoughts and actions, and a balance between the spiritual and the material, and heaven and Earth.

At the outset of this New Year, let us pray that it will be Hashem’s will that we will be able to connect heaven and Earth – to connect the spiritual and the material, the distant and the proximal, and our thoughts and heart-felt emotions with the deeds we perform.

“May the year and its curses end; and may the new year begin, along with its blessings.”

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Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash

The Integrity of Teshuva

Based on a shiur by Harav Aharon Lichtenstein

The term "integrity" has two possible meanings: the first denotes wholeness as opposed to fragmentation; the second has moral overtones, portraying a sense of honesty and total opposition to any form of falsehood. Our goal here will be to see if these two definitions can be interrelated in the context of teshuva (repentance). Can teshuva be both true and limited, genuine yet partial? Can fragmented teshuva be subjectively sincere? In other words, can one repent for violating one commandment and not for another, yet still believe that both are the word of God? On an objective level, can we speak of God accepting such repentance?

Our investigation begins in Devarim. There, Moshe tells the Jews: "And now, Yisrael, what does God ask from you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to love Him and to serve the Lord your God, with all your heart and all your soul; to keep the mitzvot of God and His ordinances that I am commanding you today, to be good for you."

The gemara notes that at the outset, it seems that Moshe is telling the Jews that God wants very little, "just" that they be God-fearing individuals. How can this be considered a minor request? To Moshe, however, it was a relatively easy level to attain, and the two verses taken together demonstrate how this it is to be accomplished. The first verse speaks of major religious values - fearing God, loving Him, walking in His ways. The second verse is more particular, describing various categories of commandments that the Jews are to perform. Together, these two elements are characteristic of the ideal of Avodat Hashem (service to God) that Moshe wished to pass to the Jews for posterity. We are asked to move along a dual axis: a grand majestic approach to service of God, paralleled by a detailed, somewhat mundane form of service that is rife with rituals and procedures.

The world of Halakha is both teleological and formal. It wants us to strive for the grand and the ultimate in deveikut ba-Shem (attaching oneself to God), yet it does so by commanding us to involve ourselves in the minutiae of daily life, seemingly far removed from the grandiose view that one would envision. In a similar sense, the first two paragraphs of the Shema express the themes of accepting the yoke of mitzvot and accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. While each theme is the focus of a separate paragraph, Rambam notes that they are actually two sides of the same coin, together comprising up the single obligation of reciting the Shema. They both lead to the ultimate goal of following and pursuing God and cleaving to Him.

Rambam's prime Biblical source for the mitzva of teshuva is the verse of "ve-hitvadu, and they will confess", a verse that comes in the context of the laws of one who steals from a convert (gezel ha-ger). The second source comes from the laws concerning

the Yom Kippur service - "for on this day you will be forgiven...". While this latter verse is often read as a promise, Rabbeinu Yona notes that it refers to a special mitzva of repentance on Yom Kippur.

There is a marked contrast between these two sources. In Bamidbar, the focus is on a very specific act that may be very limited in import - a person atones for one instance of thievery. On the other hand, in the verse in Vayikra, the word "tit'haru" (you will be purified) does not focus on any particular sin, and no verbal confession is mentioned in the verse. Unlike the vidui (confession) that we say nowadays in our prayers, the gemara in Yoma lists several suggested forms of vidui, all of which are general in nature. In marked contrast to the Bamidbar approach, the gemara seems to focus on a general acknowledgment of sin as a sufficient form of confession.

This contrast is reflected in the Rambam's writings as well. He begins his Hilkhos Teshuva by saying that when a person transgresses "one" of the mitzvot in the Torah, he then has to recite vidui and thus fulfills a positive commandment. This vidui that is said over transgressing a particular commandment is described by Rambam as itself being specific; one must name the sin he committed. However, in chapter two of Hilkhos Teshuva, Rambam speaks of teshuva and Yom Kippur, and there the focus is once again on the general - "Aval anachnu chatanu, But we have sinned." There is no mention of particulars, but rather a simple seeking out of God when He is near.

These two different approaches to teshuva address themselves to different aspects of sin. In any sinful act, one can speak of multiple facets: the misdeed itself; the fact that any sin constitutes a denial of God and His priorities; the impact on the self, as sin defiles an individual and renders him impure and dirty; the inherent rebellion against God and, as it were, against the Kingdom of Heaven; and the fracturing of the relationship between God and man. Taken as a whole, these five elements can be categorized under two rubrics: moral, focusing on the wrong as such, and religious, focusing on one's relationship to God.

Rambam notes that when God is described as "jealous" regarding those who worship idols, that description describes only God's relationship to the Jews, an idea that fits in with the imagery of God and the Jews as man and wife. This idea, however, can be extended beyond idolatry to the entire purview of religious experience. It can be applied to anything that ruptures the intimate relationship between man and God.

If sin is to be viewed as a multifaceted event, then it is logical to assume that teshuva is similarly multifaceted. There is teshuva that reasserts God's authority, and there is teshuva that responds to the contamination of the self. In one case, we are instructed to make up "to" God, and in the other, we are implored to make up "with" God - "ve-hitvadu" and "tit'haru."

Let us return now to our original dilemma. While the goal is obviously that we strive for total teshuva, there nevertheless exists the possibility of a partial and particular teshuva through "ve-hitvadu." We rule that one who is known to eat forbidden fat (mumar okhel chelev) may nevertheless bring a sin-offering if he eats blood, yet one who is known to

worship idols (mumar le-avoda zara) may not bring a sacrifice if he commits any other sin. In the former case, his habitual sin of eating fat is particular in nature, while in the latter case, the individual has damaged his relationship to God. Similarly, a person may repent for one instance of a sin while not repenting for a second instance of the same sin, unless he is such a repeat offender that his repentance is effectively a sham.

That is all good and well for "ve-hitvadu," the particular form of teshuva, but what are we to say about "tit'haru," the more general approach? Can one partially repair his relationship with God? Instinctively, it would seem not; either we are committed to Him or we are not. There are no middle-of-the-road approaches to be had.

However, there are qualifications in both directions. Rambam notes that, when a person is steeped in sin, God may throw that person's mitzvot back in his face. Any mitzva can come to be seen as an abomination. In the Yerushalmi, Ben-Azzai discusses, based on a verse in Kohelet, how one fly can ruin an entire jar of oil that is to be used for anointment purposes. In a similar sense, it can be suggested that a single sin can reach a level of severity that it offsets all of one's merits.

While these examples may be a bit extreme, we also must consider the reverse qualification. The holistic or systemic teshuva of "tit'haru" makes sense because one cannot be "tovel ve-sheret be-yado," one cannot purify himself while still holding the very object that is the cause of his defilement. Rav Soloveitchik noted, in the name of the Chavot Yair, that the last line of Yoma, comparing God's purification of the sinner to that of a mikveh (ritual bath), is not as enthusiastic as it is usually made out to be. The gemara first notes that Yom Kippur does not atone for sins committed between man and his fellow man. Then it concludes with Rabbi Akiva's statement of that the Jews are fortunate that they come to purify themselves before God Himself, and that He serves, as it were, as their mikveh. Why are these two lines juxtaposed? The Rav answered that when God purifies the Jews, he does so acting as a mikveh - one cannot purify himself partially. If one has not yet cleansed himself of his sins against his fellow man, then not even God Himself can purify that individual. It is either all or nothing when it comes to one's relationship to God.

The mishna states that a person who forgets part of what he has learned is held accountable for his life - a very harsh statement indeed. What is one to do if extenuating circumstances, as are extremely common in our lives, cause one to forget? To answer this problem, the mishna states that one is held accountable only if he actively uproots his learning from his heart. What does this mean? Rabbeinu Yona says that the failure to review adequately is included in the concept of uprooting what one has learned. Either way, the message is clear. One who forgets, even if due only to the conditions around him, yet is not bothered by that fact, is equivalent to one who uproots the Torah from his heart. To him, ignorance of a certain part of Torah is not a matter of major importance. Yet this

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harsh verdict does not apply to one who learns and wishes that he could do more, yet finds himself limited, despite his thirst for Torah and his concern for his spiritual development. His forgetfulness is not equivalent to uprooting.

The same is true when we speak about teshuva. If one aims for total teshuva, then, regardless of how slowly his teshuva progresses, he can feel confident that his teshuva will purify him of sin. However, if one repents in some respects, yet is unperturbed about his failure to do so in other areas, then his teshuva is sorely lacking. "Ve-hitvadu" without an eye towards "tit'haru" cannot work. Yet if the ultimate goal of total purification is kept in sight, then even a "partial" teshuva can be made to work, and can help an individual along the path to complete repentance. *[Adapted by Rav Aaron Ross].*

Mizrachi Dvar Torah: Rav Doron Perz

The Power of an Apology - There are few things more powerful than an apology to rebuild and rectify human relationships. The expression of genuine regret and remorse does so much to rebuild the sweetness of a ruptured relationship and a trust which has been lost.

For this reason, Rambam clearly states that the focus of teshuvah, repentance, has to be confession, vidui. It is remarkable that he doesn't focus on the act of teshuvah, rather on verbally confessing what we have done. Why is that? If a person has done something wrong and simply decides not to do it again, that's not enough. A relationship has been ruptured, and without a person genuinely expressing what they did wrong and their regret, the relationship cannot be rebuilt.

May we all merit to rebuild our relationship with Hashem, and to learn how important it is, in all our relationships, that it is not enough to only commit not to sin again, but to also express how much we have hurt someone else, how we are genuinely remorseful and make every effort to rebuild that ruptured relationship from a genuine place of regret and remorse.

Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel

Encyclopedia of Jewish Values [Excerpt]

Deeper Concepts of Yom Kippur - Yom Kippur is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, quite different from all other days. Nearly all waking hours are spent in the synagogue, food is forbidden, and other restrictions apply to this unique day.

A Day of Visiting Yourself - Someone once described Yom Kippur as a day that a person visits himself or herself. For most people, it is a visit that is done very infrequently. If we think about it, how much time does each person actually spend alone with himself or herself? Most people are so occupied with "life" – i.e., getting up, going to the synagogue, to work, spending time with family and friends, maybe doing some Jewish learning, etc., that they have no time be exclusively with themselves... The Hebrew word to pray is always used in the reflexive form, "*Lehitpalel*," which connotes "to judge oneself." Therefore, confessing on Yom Kippur is not merely admitting one's sins in front of God, but more importantly, confessing to oneself. "Who am I?" "What have I done or not done?" "Where can I improve?"... On Yom Kippur, Jews look in the mirror. They look at themselves. But there are two ways for an individual to look into the mirror. One person can look from a distance and say "Not too bad. We are rather good people. We obey most of the Torah's commandments, and we help out others many times. Compared to others, we are pretty great." That is what Yonah could have said, if he had compared himself to the non-Jews on his boat. But Yom Kippur is not a time for a cursory look in the mirror. It is a time for each person to look very closely and see everything, all the blemishes, all the potential good that is absent. Only then can a Jew

come to admit his or her shortcomings and begin the true process of judging oneself and confessing to oneself. That is the essence of the day.

The Person Who Tries to Do the Commandments – What is his Repentance?

There are many Jews who earnestly try to fulfill the commandments every day of the year. These are often the most serious people in the synagogue on Yom Kippur. But what are these Jews doing in the synagogue on this day? What could they have done that needs repentance? They try to keep all the Jewish laws and commandments throughout the year. They find time to learn Torah and help Jews in need. What could these people possibly need repentance for? Unfortunately, even Jews such as these often need to repent as much as or even more than those who do not perform all the commandments.

There is a Hebrew expression that is borrowed from the prophet Isaiah. The words in Hebrew are "*Mitzvot Anashim Melumada*," which is loosely translated as "rote human learning of commandments." The prophet speaks about those people who draw close to God with their mouths and lips, but distance themselves with their hearts because their fear of God is only by rote. In short, these people, and probably most Jews who perform many commandments each day, are only "going through the motions" of Judaism, without any real feeling and commitment. They lack a sense of passion in their relationship with God.

For many well-intentioned Jews, the heightened feeling often reached during the Jewish holidays shortly fades into rote observance, sort of a conditioned response to the Jewish way of life. The monotony of day in, day out Jewish living during the rest of the year causes many Jews to pray without feeling and perform the ritual commandments without any passion or thought.

This issue was not the only mentioned by the prophets. It is something that the Torah also spoke about, and the Rabbis chose to remind praying Jews by placing it in the daily prayers in one of the most basic prayers for all Jews – the Shema. In the second paragraph of the Shema prayer, Jews recite, "And these words, which I command you today, shall be in your heart." Why "today," when the actual commandment came 38 years before? Rashi and the Midrash answer that the commandments should never appear to a Jew as if they are old and unimportant, but rather as something new and exciting, as if they were received today. Rashi also comments on a different verse using the word "today" – that each day, the commandments should appear as if they are new. This is an important concept – i.e., that everything in Judaism should be felt as if it were given today for the first time – performed with the same freshness and excitement as it was the very first time each commandment was fulfilled. But why put this verse in the Shema of all places? And why is it so important to keep each Jewish action so fresh?

On the most basic level, we know that anything done for the first time is always more exciting. The first day of school, the first time a person drives a car, there is enthusiasm. It is great. It does not feel like an obligation, but the privilege that it should be. Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, suggested a deeper explanation. The obligation of a Jew to keep his or her Judaism "new" and fresh is based on the obligation to imitate God and be like Him. If an individual looks attentively at the world, there seems to be a constancy to it. There is predictability because it seems so repetitive. Every day the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The stars come out at the exact predictable moment. When one looks at nature, it is the same thing, day in, day out. But this, in reality, is all an illusion. Judaism believes

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that every day is a new beginning. The sun will rise in the east tomorrow, but only if God decides tonight that it should. Just because it has done so countless times before, does not signify or guarantee that it will happen again. If person throws something upwards, it falls to the ground because of gravity. But based on the words recited each day in the daily prayers (Blessing before the Shema in the morning prayers), the believing Jew understands that the laws of gravity are not necessarily "destined" to continue. Each day, God decides whether to renew or not to renew the Creation and the laws of nature, including the laws of gravity. If God did not want it to happen, it would not happen. Thus, God is a *Mechadesh-Creator Anew*. It may look the same but it is not.

The External Generation - The challenge of making everyday commandments, rituals, and actions meaningful is a greater challenge today than in any previous generation. The rote performance of Judaism is satisfied with externals. And today's generation, both in the Jewish and non-Jewish world, is all about externals. We live in an extremely shallow society, obsessed with labels, with wearing the correct clothes, where appearances mean everything. This emphasis affects non-Jews and Jews, even the most observant Jews. People have to be seen with the "right" people. Children have to go to the "right" school or Yeshiva, sometimes just for the label and brand of Judaism it represents.

We live in a time when there are few deeply held philosophical ideas. The most important value is that of pursuit of materialism and self-indulgence – i.e., the pursuit of pleasure. For the traditional Jew, his or her performance is also external, often devoid of deep roots, the essence of the commandment itself. This is the challenge for Jews who do perform the rituals and do try to fulfill the strict minutiae of Jewish law. Even for them, it is very often only a superficial fulfillment. What exactly is lacking? Some call it "passion," others call it *Kavannah*, that proper feeling, and some call it a lack of heart. But that is precisely what God desires most from Jews on Yom Kippur as well as all year long. The Talmud tells us that the one thing God wants from each Jew is his "heart." God truly wants the hearts of all Jews. The Almighty wants the performance of commandments, and customs, but only if they are done with heart, with feeling. This explains the story that follows in the Talmud.

Today's Generation is Missing the "Heart"

Previous generations of Jews had less Torah learning and Torah knowledge than many Jews today. But the previous generations of today's parents and grandparents had the "heart" that God desires, much more than this generation does. There are more Yeshivot today, more Torah learning taking place than ever before in any era of Jewish history. The typical Bar Mitzvah boy gets Tefillin today that are much more Kosher than those of the greatest Rabbis in pre-WWI I Europe. But they were holier. They were closer to God. Why? The answer is that they had heart. This is what must the focus on Yom Kippur, to break the pattern. It is the present generation to whom Isaiah referred in the source about rote performance of commandments: "This people comes before God and honors God with their lips and mouths, but their hearts are far from God."

Therefore, all the learning, all the observance is less meaningful to God than the passion, the heart, the feeling of making each commandment performed as if it was the very first time. As the traditional Jew spends time with himself or herself on Yom Kippur, it is these thoughts that should occupy one's mind, with a resolve to make each day in the future, a true new and fresh experience, every day of the year. *(Please note that many of these ideas were derived from lectures by Rabbi Yissachar Frand)*

Please watch for our Yom Kippur issue!

R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes: Every person can direct himself toward a good path and be a *Tzaddik* or direct himself toward a bad path and be a *Rasha*. This is the meaning of the verse (*Bereishit* 3:22), "Behold Man has become like the Unique One among us, knowing good and bad"--Man is the only creation that knows right from wrong and can choose freely among them. There is no other creature with that ability.

Rambam continues: Do not be influenced by the fools who make up the majority of the world, who say that *Hashem* decrees upon a person when he is formed whether he will be a *Tzaddik* or *Rasha*. It is not so! Rather, every person can be righteous like Moshe Rabbeinu or wicked like Yeravam (a king of *Yisrael* who, say our Sages, forfeited his share in the World-to-Come), merciful or cruel, generous or miserly, etc. No one can force a person to be one or the other, as the prophet Yirmiyah said (*Eichah* 3:38), "It is not from the mouth of the Most High that evil and good emanate." (*Mishneh Torah: Hil. Teshuvah*, ch.5)

R' Avraham Halevi Schorr *shlita* (Brooklyn, N.Y.) writes: The above statements are basic principles of our *Emunah* / faith. As such, many have wondered why *Rambam* placed them in the section of his work on the laws of *Teshuvah* rather than in the section entitled "Fundamentals of the Torah."

It appears, writes R' Schorr, that *Rambam* is speaking to each of us. Particularly in our era, when denial of Free Will is rampant, and we are told, instead, that people's behavior is pre-determined, it is crucial that we understand that it is we who make choices. Without that knowledge, we cannot regret our sins or admit that we have no excuses. That, in turn, would make *Teshuvah* impossible. (*Ha'lekach Ve'ha'libuv* 5771)

Shabbat Shuvah

This Shabbat takes its name from the first word of the Haftarah (*Hoshea* 14:2), "Shuvah" / "Return." Nevertheless, commentaries find other allusions in the name.

R' Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowitz z"l (rabbi and *chassidic rebbe* of Radomsko, Poland; died 1866) writes: The first *Shabbat* after *Rosh Hashanah* is called "*Shabbat Shuvah*" because it was the first day of Adam Ha'Rishon's repentance for eating from the *Etz Ha'da'at*. That sin was committed on *Rosh Hashanah*--Friday, the very day Adam was created--and *Shabbat* protected him from a harsher punishment. Thus, says a *Midrash*, Adam proclaimed (*Tehilim* 92:1, 5), "A psalm for the Sabbath day . . . For you have gladdened me, *Hashem*, with Your deeds; at the work of Your Hands I sing glad song." Adam rejoiced because he understood that the damage he had done though his sin would be repaired at some future time. This recognition came about on *Shabbat* because the Attribute of Justice is "sweetened" (*i.e.*, softened) on *Shabbat*. And, as an encouraging sign for Adam, our Sages say that light prevailed all of that first *Shabbat Shuvah*, even at night.

This is relevant to us, as well. All of our Divine service is directed at repairing the spiritual damage that Adam caused through his sin, the *Radomsker Rebbe* explains. The Patriarchs, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, began that process, but it is up to us to complete it [through our Torah study and *Mitzvot*]. Only when that task is completed will *Mashiach* come. This, the *Radomsker Rebbe* writes, is the meaning of the verse (*Chavakuk* 3:2), "*Hashem*--Your handiwork, during those years, give it life." Adam was the handiwork of *Hashem*. We, during all the ensuing years, work to breathe new life into the world Adam damaged. This is alluded to, as well, in the verse (*Vayikra* 18:5), "You shall observe My decrees and My laws, which *Adam* / man shall carry out and by which he shall live."

(*Tiferet Shlomo: Shabbat Shuvah*)

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(Elka bat Binyamin Tzvi a"h)

From the Haftarah . . .

"Whoever is wise will understand these [admonitions], a discerning person will know them; the ways of Hashem are Yesharim/just. Tzaddikim / the righteous shall walk in them, but Posh'im / intentional sinners will stumble on them." (Hoshea 14:10)

R' Eliyahu E. Dessler z"l (1892-1953; head of the Gateshead Kollel and *Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak) writes:

"The ways of Hashem" means "Hashem's acts to the extent that we are able to comprehend them." Everything we perceive in our surroundings, be it intellectual or sensory, is an agent of Hashem to teach us a lesson that can further our spiritual growth--a gift to us from Him that is meant to teach us a truth.

R' Dessler continues: Hashem's ways are "Yesharim" (literally, "straight"). When a person asks for directions to a destination and is told to "go straight," the implication is that there are no confusing crossroads where he could mistakenly take a wrong turn. Such are Hashem's ways.

"The righteous shall walk in them"--The righteous use all of the intellectual and sensory input they receive from the world as signposts that point them toward spiritual growth.

But if Hashem's ways are "straight," however, how is it possible to stumble on them, as our verse concludes?

R' Dessler answers: "Posh'im" are intentional sinners, those who, using their *Bechirah* / Free Will, make a conscious choice to depart from the "straight" road. They are given the same tools for living as are *Tzaddikim*, the very same "ways of Hashem" in which the righteous walk, but they "stumble" on them. They choose to learn false lessons, instead of true ones, from the intellectual and sensory input Hashem sends them.

In reality, R' Dessler writes, one cannot stumble on a "straight" path. Rather, the stumbling block of which our verse speaks is a person's choice to twist the messages Hashem sends him in order to justify sin.

Most people are neither *Tzaddikim* nor *Posh'im*, but *Beinonim* (i.e., in the middle). R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*) observes that spiritually, we are never stationary; a *Beinoni* is, at all times, either on an upward path or a downward one. Anyone who thinks he is standing still is gravely mistaken, R' Dessler writes. While a person generally senses when he is growing spiritually, he usually does not sense when he is slipping. In particular, he does not sense the conscious bad choices he makes because those choices have become habits. What a person "always does" begins to seem "permitted," R' Dessler explains. If we are honest, however, we would acknowledge that we are, in fact, *Posh'im* in many respects.

- Continued in box on facing page -

"Ask your father and he will relate it to you, your elders and they will tell you." (32:7)

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 23a) asks how we can recite the blessing, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light a *Chanukah* light," when *Chanukah* is a *Mitzvah* of rabbinic origin! Where did Hashem command us to light *Chanukah* lights?

The *Gemara* offers two answers: The Sage Rav Avia says that the commandment is found in the verse (*Devarim* 17:11), "You shall not deviate from the word that they [the Sages] will tell you." The Sage Rav Nachman says it is found in our verse, "Ask your father and he will relate it to you, and your elders and they will tell you." [Until here from the *Gemara*]

What is the basis for Rav Avia's and Rav Nachman's disagreement? Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi z"l ("Ran"; Spain; 1320-1376) explains: There is no dispute that the verse Rav Avia quotes is the source of the Sages' authority to enact decrees that distance us from sin. Thus, for example, our Sages added to the activities that are prohibited on *Shabbat* to make it less likely that we will transgress a Torah prohibition.

According to Rav Avia, this same authority allows the Sages to create completely new *Mitzvot*--for example, *Chanukah*. Rav Nachman, in contrast, understands that the verse, "You shall not deviate . . .," refers only to those rabbinic decrees that are designed to strengthen Torah commandments, not to rabbinic enactments that are unrelated to a Torah commandment. This, Rav Nachman would maintain (says the *Ran*) is apparent from the context of the verse, "You shall not deviate," for the passage begins (17:8), "If a matter of judgment [i.e., Torah law] is hidden from you." Thus, according to Rav Nachman, another verse (i.e., our verse) is needed to teach that the Sages can enact a new *Mitzvah*, such as *Chanukah*. (*Derashot Ha'Ran* 5b)

- Continued from facing page -

What practical steps can a person take to escape the status of *Poshe'a* (singular of *Posh'im*)? R' Dessler answers: One should multiply his good deeds before he is tested with a difficult choice. Indeed, this is what *Bnei Yisrael* were committing to do when they said, "*Na'aseh Ve'nishmah*" / "We will do, and [then] we will hear." If good deeds become second nature to a person (and, writes R' Dessler, he combines those deeds with the study of *Mussar*) then he will make a good choice when he is confronted with a situation where he must use his *Bechirah*.

This, R' Dessler concludes, is the reason for eating only *Pas Yisrael* / Jewish-baked bread during the Ten Days of Repentance. Even if we will not observe this stringency long term, we increase our meritorious acts during this week to accustom ourselves to making better choices.

(*Michtav M'Eliyahu: Elul-Rosh Hashanah* p.16)

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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NETANYAHU TELLS BIDEN 'WE CAN FORGE HISTORIC PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SAUDI ARABIA' (Israel Hayom 9/21/23)

US President Joe Biden said on Wednesday he would discuss democratic values with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu while the two men were meeting in New York on the sidelines of a United Nations meeting.

Biden, speaking while reporters were in the room as he met with the Israeli leader, said the two men would discuss a two-state solution for Palestinians.

This is the first meeting between the two since Netanyahu returned to power in late 2022. Biden has so far refused to host the Israeli leader in the White House and has come out against the proposed judicial reform that the government was pursuing.

During the photo-op, Netanyahu said Israel's commitment to democracy was certain. He also said that the two leaders could promote a "historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia," referring to the ongoing talks aimed at normalizing ties between Riyadh and Jerusalem as part of the series of regional deals between the Jewish state and its Arab neighbors, known as the Abraham Accords.

Biden reiterated his pledge that Iran will never have a nuclear bomb and said that his administration's commitment to Israel's security was "ironclad." The two went on to have a one-on-one meeting behind closed doors.

NETANYAHU LOOKING TO ALLOW SAUDI TO ENRICH URANIUM FOR NORMALIZATION (i24NEWS 9/21/23)

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed Israeli officials to cooperate with the U.S. toward allowing Saudi Arabia to enrich uranium, according to The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday.

In response to the publication, Israeli lawmakers called for an "urgent discussion" in the parliament's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. The request was led by Sharon Nir, an opposition member of the parliamentary group.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) had spoken to American media on Tuesday, indicating to Fox News that the normalization deal with Israel is serious, stating "we're going to work with whoever is there [in the Israeli government]."

According to the WSJ report, a central part of the deal was also being seriously considered by Netanyahu, despite Israeli opposition leaders being against concessions that included uranium enrichment in Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, security and nuclear officials from Israel were working secretly with the U.S. on the issue, according to the report citing both American and Israeli officials.

U.S. officials told WSJ that establishing an American uranium enrichment facility on Saudi territory was being considered, as well as other ideas.

"We saw eye to eye regarding the nuclear issue from the beginning - what we can't do, and what we probably can," an Israeli official also told WSJ, after a meeting between Netanyahu and U.S. President Joe Biden yesterday, adding Israel would request many "security measures" regarding any Saudi enrichment program.

The Saudi crown prince was also optimistic about the normalization efforts during an interview with Fox News, rejecting reports that Riyadh paused negotiations. Instead, he said "every day we get closer."

MBS also hailed the potential agreement as "the biggest historical deal since the end of the Cold War," but stated the negotiations with Israel depend on the Palestinian issue.

"If we have a breakthrough of reaching a deal that give the Palestinians their needs and make the region calm, we're going to work with whoever is there,"

MBS stated, referring to working with the Israeli government, particularly Netanyahu's right-wing coalition.

TURKEY SUPPORTS ISRAELI-SAUDI NORMALIZATION (Arutz-7 9/20/23)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country supports the recent attempts to normalize ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia, Middle East Eye reports.

According to the report, Erdogan made the comments during a closed-door briefing with analysts and journalists in New York on Monday.

"Turkey views the normalization attempts between the two countries positively," the Turkish President was quoted as having said in response to a question, according to two sources who were present at the meeting.

A Turkish source familiar with Ankara's thinking told MEE that Turkey is in favor of decreasing tensions in the region.

"Turkey's current support to normalization is just a continuation and reflection of this general policy," the source said. "The normalization could become a political leverage to push Israel to act smarter in the region."

Erdogan met Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. The Prime Minister's office said after the meeting that the two leaders discussed, among other things, the normalization efforts between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

A recent report indicated that the United States and Saudi Arabia have agreed on the broad outlines of a deal for Saudi Arabia to recognize Israel in exchange for concessions to the Palestinian Arabs.

As part of the process, The Wall Street Journal reported that Saudi Arabia is offering to resume financial support to the Palestinian Authority which it had frozen in 2021.

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Later, however, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters that while US, Israeli and Saudi leaders have put many of the elements of a pathway to normalization on the table, there is still work to do. Last week, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in an interview that normalization “cannot be a substitute for Israel and the Palestinians resolving their differences and having a much better future for Palestinians. And in our judgment, of course, that must – needs to involve a two-state solution.” He also added that “it’s also clear from what we hear from the Saudis that if this process is to move forward, the Palestinian piece is going to be very important, too.”

NETANYAHU ALMOST USED SOVIET-ERA MAP WITHOUT UKRAINE DURING ZELENSKY MEETING (Ha’aretz 9/20/23)

The Israeli consulate in New York nearly caused a diplomatic incident on Tuesday, presenting Benjamin Netanyahu’s staff with an outdated world map featuring the Soviet Union ahead of the prime minister’s meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Israel Hayom reported that officials from the Prime Minister’s Office asked the consulate to supply the map ahead of the two leaders’ first in-person meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting. Netanyahu is well known for using maps and illustrations to make points during presentations.

However, the 1960s-era map provided by the consulate did not feature an independent Ukraine, which was under communist occupation at the time. Ukraine is currently fighting a full-scale war against Russia, which invaded the Eastern European nation in February 2022.

The mistake was identified before the meeting, averting a potential gaffe.

GPS INTERFERENCE LEADS TO CHANGE IN LANDING ROUTE FOR TEL AVIV-BOUND PLANES (Israel Hayom 9/20/23)

Passenger planes headed to Ben-Gurion International Airport have recently had to take alternative routes due to a severe attack on Israel that prevents it from navigating aircraft using GPS, Israel Hayom has learned.

The alternate route – over Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria – is longer than the one that allows for landing over Tel Aviv directly at Ben-Gurion International Airport.

In recent months, Israel has been the target of incessant attacks by unknown elements, apparently from abroad, that interfere with GPS signals, almost completely preventing it from carrying out processes that allow planes to land along the standard routes.

For this reason, most of the landings are conducted through the alternative route, where landing is possible through an alternative source of approach guidance for aircraft called ILS, or instrument landing system.

Residents of the settlements, such as Modi’in Illit, Hashmonaim, Lapid, and Kfar Oranim, have issued complaints over the “unbearable” noise caused by passenger planes passing overhead at all times of the day.

It is in response to the complaints that the authorities revealed that the reason for the change in the route stemmed from an attack on Israel.

HERZOG RECEIVES CREDENTIALS OF 7 NEW AMBASSADORS TO ISRAEL (JPost 9/19/23)

President Isaac Herzog received the letters of credence of seven new ambassadors on Tuesday.

In most cases it was not only a matter of further cementing diplomatic connections between Israel and the home countries of the ambassadors, but of links between members of Herzog’s family and those countries.

He told Ivory Coast Ambassador Fe’ni Kouakou that as a child he had been in kindergarten and at school with the children of the person who was then the ambassador of the Ivory Coast.

Herzog related to Peru’s Ambassador Manuel Sousa Velazquez that all three of his sons had been to Peru, and loved it so much that they went again.

Kornelios Korneliou, the ambassador of Cyprus, was already aware of Herzog’s family connections with Cyprus. Herzog’s maternal grandfather,

Simcha Ambache, in 1930, together with partners, founded the famous Phasson Plantations.

Both Herzog and his wife, Michal, had previously met with British Ambassador Simon Walters at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth and again at the coronation of King Charles. Aside from that Herzog has strong family ties with Britain, where his paternal grandfather and one of his great-grandfathers were distinguished rabbis, and where his father had served as an officer in the British Army.

Both Herzog and Walters are the sons of intelligence officers. Another great grandfather had been chief rabbi of Paris, and some of his French relatives had been murdered in Auschwitz, Herzog told French Ambassador Frederic Journe. He also spoke of his warm friendship with President Emmanuel Macron, who had sent him greetings for the new year.

Herzog and Irish Ambassador Sonya McGuinness had met previously two weeks earlier, when she escorted Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin to a meeting with Herzog, but the Irish connection goes much deeper. His father and uncle were born in Ireland, and his paternal grandfather had been chief rabbi of Ireland before moving to British Mandate Palestine.

With Brazil, it wasn’t Herzog who personally had the connection, it was Michal, who spent some of her youth there from 1972 to 1975, the years in which her father, Col. Shaul Afek, served as a military attaché at the Israel embassy. Michal Herzog had been conferred with the Grand Cross Order of Rio Branco, which is Brazil’s highest civilian honor, and she wore it replete with medal and deep blue shoulder sash in the presence of Brazil’s Ambassador Frederico Meyer.

The president held individual meetings with each ambassador, and the various conversations covered a wide range of diverse topics that included aspects of the bilateral relationship that Israel has with each of the countries, plus a number of interesting anecdotes and personal issues on both sides.

In the evening, Herzog hosted the traditional pre-Yom Kippur shihot (penitential liturgies) with the participation of Rabbi Benny Lau, the founder of 629, the biblical study initiative.

FACING LEGAL CHALLENGES, ISRAELI ARMY TO ALLOW WOMEN TO SERVE IN ELITE SPECIAL FORCES UNITS (Ha’aretz 9/20/23)

The Israeli military announced on Tuesday that it will start a pilot program to incorporate female combat soldiers into Sayeret Matkal, perhaps the most elite special forces units in the Israel Defense Forces. The military notified the Supreme Court of its decision to try opening the unit to women, along with pilot programs for women combat driving teams and additional combat roles in the Armored Corps. These trials are set to begin in 2024.

The announcement coincides with a High Court of Justice battle on opening more elite IDF units to female soldiers. It began in 2020, when four young women filed a petition in the High Court of Justice demanding that women be permitted to join any IDF unit, including Sayeret Matkal, the Navy’s Shayetet 12 unit, and undercover counter-terrorism unit Duvdevan, as long as they meet the necessary requirements for these positions.

Wednesday will mark a development in the case: The military is to give the court its explanation as to why otherwise qualified women are barred from certain units, despite the Defense Service Law stating that women and men have equal rights in holding any military position, unless the nature of that position negates this.

Forum Dvorah, an organization that advances the integration of women in the national security decision-making process, is has been at the forefront of the court battle. The group welcomed the new IDF pilot programs, saying, “We are certain that the exceptional and highly motivated women who will integrate into these units will benefit them immensely,” but noted that the decision still does not open all roles to women, as the Defense Service Law requires.

“The news today relates mainly to Sayeret Matkal, but there are still many units and roles that are closed to young women who wish to become combat soldiers. This is how opportunities remain blocked off to women to get to senior roles in the military’s operational division and in the decision-making

process," the forum's statement continued.

There are currently two other pilot programs slated in the IDF to integrate women into different combat units: one for the air force's 669 search and rescue unit, and the other for the Engineering Corps' bomb disposal squad. Twelve women entered the bomb squad pilot earlier this year, and the Unit 669 will begin in November.

But due to the physical differences between the sexes, the medical corps set high physical standards for women seeking to join elite units. Consequently, the army said, women will only be accepted into Unit 669 if they weigh at least 78 kilograms (172 pounds) and are at least 1.66 meters tall (5'4"). This requirement does not exist for men who are trying out for these units, who may also experience difficulty in carrying heavy loads.

The IDF said in its announcement on Tuesday that the process of selecting female soldiers for these pilot programs will be identical to that of male soldiers: "Women will be able to try out for combat roles with no preconditions, just like men."

A TANK WITH AI: IDF UNVEILS NEW MERKAVA MARK V (YNet 9/19/23)

Some 20 years after the deployment of the Israel Defense Forces' Merkava Mark IV tanks, its next iteration, the Mark V Barak (Lightning) – which has been in development by the Defense Ministry for the last five years – recently finished a one-month trial run in a unit belonging to the IDF's Armored Corps. In the coming months, combat units in the Armored Corps will receive several more of these models, ahead of their first official deployment on Israel's northern border with Syria.

The new tank will be based on the previous Merkava platform but with significantly enhanced survivability and defensive capabilities. It will include features such as a windbreaker (anti-tank missile protection system), and will have the ability to detect and engage enemy threats, such as anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs), even before they are fired, allowing for rapid response and interception.

The tank will be crewed by four soldiers, with a loader responsible for tasks beyond simply loading ammunition, which remains a manual process, as is common in current tank designs. The loader will assist in target acquisition using new technologies that scan the battlefield through advanced sensors and cameras integrated into the tank, providing enhanced situational awareness.

"This will be the most advanced tank in the world, with a high-quality sensor system based on artificial intelligence for enemy detection and an intuitive and user-friendly interface for the crew, and deadly weapon systems," according to Brig. Gen. Oren Giber of the Defense Ministry. "We've created an unbreakable armored platform, with all of its software infrastructure designed for continuous improvement and upgrading in future versions."

Giber added that top-of-the-line camera setups on the tank will allow the tank's crew to navigate and fight in tight spaces safely, saying the new tank will become the land version of the F-35 fighter jet.

The Merkava Mark V's systems will feature an operational application store, allowing each crew member to specify their role and rank before launching an operation. Accordingly, the tank will adapt itself within seconds to meet the requirements and capabilities required by the different soldiers commanding it.

The IDF's Armored Corps explained that a pair of Merkava Mark V tanks would be able to perform tasks that previously required an entire company or platoon of armored vehicles. With its advanced connectivity capabilities, Barak tanks will provide real-time intelligence about targets while on the move, both for themselves and for nearby forces.

The tank's driver will have an advanced and intelligent navigation system, developed by the IDF's Intelligence Corps, resembling a more advanced version of the Waze application. It will provide the driver with safe and secure routes through enemy territory, avoiding exposure to ATGMs and traversing any type of terrain, including mountainous or urban areas.

The rest of the crew will operate the tank and its weapon systems through a 21-inch multi-touch screen, which will display real-time enemy locations and

IDF force positions.

"The tank crews will need to operate the tank slightly differently," explained Brig. Gen. Hisham Ibrahim, commander of the IDF's Armored Corps. "The tank's familiar 120mm cannon and ammunition will remain, and the Mark V's implementation will be gradual. It's no longer just a tank; this technology will become a fifth member in the tank's crew."

ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND ANCIENT STONEMASON'S WORKSHOP IN JERUSALEM OUTSKIRTS (Times of Israel 9/19/23)

Defense Ministry archaeologists announced they have discovered the remnants of quarries and a stonemason's shop on the outskirts of Jerusalem, during work to expand a highway in the West Bank.

The Civil Administration, an agency within the Defense Ministry in charge of civilian affairs in the West Bank, said that the site was from the Second Temple period and that the dig revealed "an entire production center" for stoneware alongside several quarries abutting each other.

The site, which an administration statement touted as "a historic and rare discovery," is located between the Adam settlement and Palestinian town of Hizma, where the unit's archaeology department uncovered a similar workshop for stoneware production around 30 decades ago.

Citing the presence of the two sites, the Civil Administration said the area once likely served as "the center for quarrying, production and distribution of stoneware" for Jerusalem and the surrounding area.

While the site was dated to the Second Temple period, from the 6th century BCE to 70 CE, no more specific estimates were provided on when it was in use.

The head of the Civil Administration's archaeology unit hailed the new discovery as "part of the treasures and culture of the area."

"It is a great honor to carry out these digs and to discover an ancient and rich world beneath the earth," Benny Har-Even said in the statement. "We can all know and get a glimpse of a life full of culture and prestige that that area knew for many generations."

PROTESTERS ACCOST RABBI IN TEL AVIV (Arutz-7 9/20/23)

Dozens of protesters came out last night (Tuesday) to demonstrate against a Torah lesson by Rabbi Yigal Levinstein, head of the Bnei David pre-military academy in Eli, at the Rosh Yehudi Jewish outreach center in Tel Aviv.

After protesters demonstrated and blocked Rabbi Levinstein's path, they chased after Rosh Yehudi's CEO, Yisrael Zeira.

MK Simcha Rothman responded: "As expected, the thugs who persecute and harass, curse and threaten, under the pretext of freedom of demonstration against elected officials, are now attacking religious people in the street. This is a blatant show of hatred towards anyone who is different to themselves, under the flag of democracy and equality."

Rothman added: "The silent support that those who attacked Yisrael Zeira and the Rosh Yehudi organization receive from law enforcement officials and members of the opposition is a disgrace."

MK Tally Gotliv (Likud) responded: "This is Kristallnacht played out by left-wing activists. This is the persecution of Jews just because of their Judaism, their faith, and their religion. This is what happened in Nazi Germany, and this is how left-wing activists have displayed auto-antisemitism. Whoever does not condemn the videos of this humiliating horror, from the left or the right, is part of the destruction of Judaism. History always repeats itself."

Members of the opposition also decried the attack. Matan Kahana (National Unity) stated: "I have a long-standing friendship with Rabbi Levinstein. Despite our differences of opinion, he has proven himself many times. He never supported or encouraged any violence. Freedom of expression is mainly tested against positions that are difficult for people to hear. It is terrible that we have reached a situation where a distinguished rabbi needs police protection because of his opinions. We all have to do what we can to calm down the heat. We are brothers."

On Wednesday morning, Rabbi Levinstein commented on the incident: "I came to Rosh Yehudi in Tel Aviv to show support for my friend Yisrael Zeira.

He gave up a comfortable life to come and live in Tel Aviv for the sole purpose of increasing love and strengthening Jewish identity. It seems that this has not prevented anyone who promotes liberalism from attacking him," said Rabbi Levinstein.

He added, "My goal in Tel Aviv, as in all I do, was to explain the processes we are enduring so that the entire Israeli population would understand how good people have fallen for incitement and progressive propaganda. How, in the name of peace, they have become so aggressive. And this is what I will continue to do."

Videos show dozens of protesters attacking Rabbi Levinstein while shouting and pushing him with flag sticks. The security around him barely prevented the mobs from harming him. In another video, police and security guards are seen physically pulling the Rabbi away from the protesters and quickly getting him into a car.

PROTEST AGAINST RABBI LEVINSTEIN IS JUSTIFIED - MERAV MICHAELI (JPost 9/20/23)

Attacking Rabbi Yigal Levinstein is justified, said Labor leader Merav Michaeli the day after the rabbi was extracted from a large protest against him by police.

"This is a man who fights against women in the public sphere in general and specifically women in the IDF," she said. "He fights against women's right to equal military service and for men's rights to serve in a space empty of women."

Michaeli went on to say that it was good his movement was restricted by protestors because usually, he "gets the freedom to fight against women, against the people's army model, against IDF resilience, and against the image of Israeli as a democratic Jewish state."

Opposition leader Yair Lapid also refused to condemn the incident.

"Let's start with condemning the awful things he said about the LGBTQ community, secular people, and every liberal citizen of the State of Israel," he said.

Rabbi Levinstein has spoken strongly against the LGBTQ community, even telling his students to "exterminate" same-sex tendencies "just like AIDS was exterminated."

He's also been vocal in the past against women serving in combat positions in the army, saying that women would need to be reinvented before they were able to handle combat and that women go into the IDF Jewish and come out non-Jewish.

TEL AVIV REAL ESTATE MARKET: NO LONGER A BUBBLE, BUT STILL OVERVALUED (i24NEWS 9/20/23)

Real estate prices in Tel Aviv tripled between 2002 and 2022, the highest growth rate among all the cities analyzed by UBS Global Real Estate Bubble Index 2023. However, the rise in mortgage rates "put an abrupt end to this boom."

Tel Aviv is now classified as "over-valued," according to the UBS paper, and Israel's economic hub was no longer in the red "bubble risk" category.

"Mortgage volume growth has more than halved since last year and real price growth was negative in the first half of 2023," the UBS statement said about Tel Aviv.

"This moderate easing of prices will likely continue as there are no signs of a demand rebound and unsold inventories have been piling up amid a full construction pipeline," it highlighted.

In general, UBS saw that "inflation and interest rates over the past years has led to a decline in imbalances," calling it "price corrections across the board."

And now, it stated, only Zurich and Tokyo remain in the bubble risk category. It should be noted that a skilled service worker still needs to work 13 years in order to afford a 650 square foot apartment near the city center. Compared to other cities, Tel Aviv was the fourth least affordable in terms of purchasing ability.

Rent in Tel Aviv continued to climb in 2022 and even surpassed the previous decade's measurement, rising 2.8 percent in the last year compared to 2.2

when measured over 10 years. Its sub-indices for Price/Rent indicated that it was still a red "bubble risk," although the Price/Income was a green "fair-valued."

"The housing price level in the city decoupled from the rental market and prices in the rest of the country. Household incomes could not keep up with prices, leading to stretched affordability," the UBS statement added.

BEYOND THE IRAN THREAT: WHAT KEEPS ISRAEL'S SECURITY CHIEFS UP AT NIGHT (Yossi Yehoshua, YNet 9/18/23)

Two urgent issues are currently on the mind of Israel's national security establishment, besides Iran's nuclear program: Escalation along the Gaza border with severe violence and renewed use of explosive devices in the area, which could shift the equation in dealing with Israel's security situation, specifically against terrorism in the West Bank.

Last week, two unusual events took place that indicated further escalation is afoot. The first is the planting of a powerful IED in Tel Aviv's Yarkon Park, the ultimate purpose of which is not yet clear at this stage. The second is Palestinian riots along the Gaza border, which led the IDF to carry out a drone strike on a Hamas post.

IEDs detonating within Israel are becoming a major concern for security officials. The investigation into the Yarkon Park blast is still ongoing. Shin Bet investigators are set to question two suspects, arrested near Ramle, on suspicion of planting the bomb. The focus of the interrogation will be to determine the intended objectives of the attack.

Were they tasked with planting the device, and if so, by whom? Was it a local initiative? Did the two suspects have any accomplices? The two suspects are holding Israeli identity cards and work in Israel regularly.

The presence of explosive devices within Israel highlights a change in the tactics of terrorism, transitioning from cold weapons to firearms and now to explosives. It also underscores Israel's strategic challenge at its borders.

Along the eastern border with Jordan, security forces routinely seize weapons and ammunition almost daily. Estimates suggest that numerous smuggling attempts go undetected.

For years, the eastern border was overlooked. However, over the past two years, the IDF, Shin Bet and police have ramped up intelligence gathering and anti-smuggling operations, leading to a rise in successful seizures of weapon caches. Despite these efforts, smuggling will persist until the border is completely secured, with Iran continuing to fuel and fund these attempts.

On the northern border, attempts to smuggle military equipment—primarily destined for crime gangs—also impact Israel's domestic security. The Shin Bet's swift identification and mobilization of a team to arrest the two suspects underscores the agency's deep involvement in the intersection between criminal activity and national security within Israel.

In Gaza, Hamas is trying to leverage its perceived success into a campaign pushing Palestinians to protest along the border. Hamas interprets Israel's domestic situation as a weakness and is trying to raise the stakes and push against Israeli policy.

Hamas wants further civilian concessions from Israel and believes that now is the time to get them, while simultaneously generating and disseminating fake news on social media about the situation on the Temple Mount and spreading fake videos about Palestinians being harmed by Israel.

In practice, the facts are entirely different. The Temple Mount was calm throughout the day, prayers proceeded as usual and efforts now focus on exposing disinformation which could potentially escalate the situation not only in Jerusalem but also in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. In such a case, Israel mustn't succumb to this pressure and placate Hamas, even if it involves Israel's interest in improving Gaza's economic situation.

If Hamas succeeds in drawing out concessions from Israel, it will continue to escalate tensions in the region and encourage other groups to follow suit. Hamas, compared to other adversaries, isn't a tough adversary, and Israel mustn't overestimate it but rather take the opportunity to strengthen its deterrence against Hamas.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Eyes On Our Nest

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

"Is He not your Father, your acquirer (*kanecha*)?" (32:6)

In the Song of *Haazinu*, Moshe questions how anyone could veer from G-d's path, demanding, "Is He not your Father and *kanecha*?" Rashi cites three different explanations for the word "*kanecha*." 1) the one who acquired you (from the word *kana* meaning acquire), 2) the one who nested you (from the word *kan* meaning nest), 3) the one who rectified you (from the word *takan*).

Rav Chaim Berlin suggested a fourth possible reading, also based on the word *kan*, meaning nest: "Is He not your Father and your Nest?" When he was the Chief Rabbi of Moscow in the late 1800's, Rav Berlin was once approached by a man requesting that the Rabbi come in secret to his house to perform a Bris Mila for his son. At that time, it was not forbidden to practice Judaism in Russia so Rav Berlin wondered about the need for secrecy. The man explained that he was completely assimilated and did not want anybody to know that he was Jewish. Rav Berlin inquired why someone who was embarrassed to be Jewish would go to such lengths to ensure that his son received a Bris Mila? The man's response was, "I don't want to shut the door on my son."

This encounter awakened Rav Berlin to a novel explanation of a verse in Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs) (1:15) where the Jewish people are praised that their "eyes are as doves." The Gemara (Bava Basra 24a), in discussing laws pertaining to returning lost birds, states that a young dove that is hopping away from its nest will continuously look back and not allow the nest to get out of sight. In describing the Jewish people with the expression that our "eyes are as doves" the verse is expressing the notion that even when a Jew moves away from his or her Nest – our Father in Heaven – he will not allow that Nest to get completely out of sight. He will always make sure to leave an opening so that he may return when he is ready. *Our eyes are like those of doves and G-d is our Nest.*

As Yom Kippur approaches, and we seek atonement, reconciliation, and closeness with G-d for ourselves and our families, we must also give thought to our Jewish brothers and sisters who have become distant from Him. We pray in our Amidah for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur that we should become an "*agudah achas* – a united group to perform Your will wholeheartedly." Let us *daven* for this with great intent and consider what actions we can take to help all of His doves return to their Nest.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos and a G'mar Chasimah Tovah!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Our Father, our King, wipe away and remove our willful sins and errors from your sight. (Avinu Malkeinu)

The term "willful sin" is a more severe form of sin than error. Why is "willful sin" mentioned first; it should be mentioned after "our errors?" Therefore, the correct wording should be "wipe away our errors and remove willful sins." (Mishna Berura)

During the Yom Kippur Mussaf we say: "Wipe away and remove our willful sins and errors from before Your eyes, as it says, **"I, and only I, am the One Who wipes away your willful sins for My sake and I shall not recall your errors."** (Yeshaya 43, 25)

In Mussaf, it is clear that we first mention willful sins and then errors. Why doesn't the Mishna Berura edit the text in Mussaf just as he did in Avinu Malkeinu?

Parsha Riddle

Where in Nach, in addition to Sefer Yonah, is Yonah mentioned?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

What is the greatest number of days (not including Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur) that Ashkenazim recite selichos in Elul and Tishrei in any year?

Answer: 14. 8 before Rosh Hashana and 6 after.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

The eponymous *haftarah* of *Shabbos Shuvah* begins: "Return, O Israel, to Hashem, your G-d, for you have stumbled through your iniquity." The *sine qua non* of sin that necessitates repentance is volition – the sinner deliberately chose to do wrong (*meizid*), or at least was not as careful to avoid wrong as he could have been (*shogeg*) – but there is no obligation of repentance for something beyond one's control (*ones*). Various *halachic* authorities articulate this fundamental principle that "Hashem does not hold an *ones* culpable (*ones Rachmana patrei*)" in a variety of contexts:

- The Maharam of Rothenburg rules a woman who was intimate with a man and subsequently discovered that she had been *niddah* at the time does not require atonement insofar as there had been no requirement for her to inspect herself at that particular time, since she is considered to have been an *ones* (Responsa Prague ed. #622).
- R. Meir Eisenstadt rules that one who ate from a bird that was subsequently discovered to be a *treifah* does not require atonement insofar as the particular type of *treifah* in question was not one for which there is a requirement to inspect, since he is considered an *ones* (*Panim Me'iros* 2:41).
- In a letter to a pious friend of his who had eaten on Yom Kippur in compliance with medical advice that it was necessary for him to do so in order to preserve his life, R. Yaakov Ettlinger firmly rejects the friend's contention that he required atonement: "Do I have to remind his eminence that atonement is only applicable to *shogeg* ... but *ones Rachmana patrei*, and this is true for even an ordinary *ones*, and *a fortiori* for such an *ones* that entails the *mitzvah* of *ve-nishmartem* [the commandment to avoid danger – see *Hatorah V'Hamitzvah* for this past *parashas Va'eschanan*] (*Binyan Tzion ha-Chadashos* 25).

In light of the above, the very first line of the "Al Cheit" section of the Yom Kippur *vidui*, in which we ask Hashem's forgiveness, pardon, and atonement "For the sin that we have sinned before You **under duress** and willingly," is perplexing; a discussion of this point is beyond the scope of this article (see *Siddur Beis Yaakov*; *Shut. Divrei Yisrael* 177; and the sources cited in R. Josh Flug, B'Onnes UV'Ratzon: What is True Duress?).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am made of bricks.
2. I am not a building.
3. I am a song.
4. I have no musical accompaniment.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I make you bang.
2. I am for the bad.
3. Hunch.
4. I am not a video, rather...

Last Week's Answers

#1 Simanim (I might have a black eye, My head might be cut off, I might be sweet, I won't be "beat.")

#2 Shana/Year (I have two beginnings, I am not 365, I am 12 or 13, I am not repeat.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Greater Washington Community Kollel wishes all of its friends, supporters, participants, and the entire community a meaningful Yom Kippur and a G'mar Chasimah Tovah!