

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH

SHABBOS SHORTS

Candle Lighting 8:12, not before 6:59 | Havdalah 9:16

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by **Hedy Bauman** to thank YISE and Kemp Mill for the friendships and the wonderful years she had here. She looks forward to seeing many people in Israel and by **Sheila Gaisin & Family** in commemoration of the 5th Yahrzeit of Dr. Allen Gaisin, A"H, Eliyahu Ben Menachem Mendel HaKohen, beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.



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YISE Supports Israel



Our thoughts and prayers are focused on Israel. Please see the back of this sheet for various things you can do to support Israel.

Mazal Tov

Tzivia Bramson on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Chana Weinstein, daughter of Shana & Binyamin Weinstein and granddaughter of Renee & Mayer Weinstein.

Esther Edeson & Family on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Chana Aliza. The proud parents are Miriam & Ian Edeson of Brooklyn, NY. The proud grandparents are Helene & Rabbi Nathan Edeson, of Brooklyn, NY. Proud great aunt and uncle are Raizel & Tommy and cousin, Dovid Levy Stern, of Brooklyn, NY.

Nancy Finkelstein on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Tzipora Gittel, born to Bracha & Meir Peikes of Kew Gardens Hills, NY. Grandparents are Rachel & Jonathan Peikes.

Condolences

Ido Dubrawsky on the passing of his father, Chagai Dubrawsky. The funeral will take place in Austin, TX on Sunday. Ido will observe Shiva at 500 Hermleigh Road from Monday morning through Friday afternoon. Shacharis Monday/Thursday: 6:45 AM, Tuesday: 6:30 AM, Wednesday/Friday: 7:00 AM. Mincha/Maariv Monday/Wednesday/Thursday: 8:15 PM, Tuesday 8:00 PM.

Kiddush Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by the **Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush Group**.

Shul Kiddush is sponsored by **Naomi & Rabbi Hillel Shaps** in honor of their daughter Rena.

Sephardic Minyan Kiddush is sponsored anonymously.

Shabbos Drasha, Shiur & Weekday Shiurim Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Shiur is sponsored by **David Jaray** in appreciation of Rabbi Grossman and all those who attend his shiur, and in memory of all those who have lost their lives in Israel. May Hashem bless Israel with complete and speedy victory and Brachos for the Israeli soldiers, hostages, students, and all of Israel.

Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur was sponsored by **David Jaray** in appreciation of Rabbi Grauman and all those who attend his shiur, and in memory of Rabbi Hyatt, A"H and to all of those who have lost their lives in Israel. May their Neshamas have an Aliyah. Refuah Shlema to all those that are wounded and ill, and to all of those that have been traumatized in Israel during these times.

8:45 Drasha is sponsored by **Rochelle Dimont, Michele Dimont & Family, Sahra & Yale Ginsburg & Family, and Yocheved & Jonathan Neuman & Family** to commemorate the Yahrzeit on 16 Tammuz of their beloved grandfather & great-grandfather R' Yechiel Shraga Feivish Ben Yitzchak HaLevi.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim and Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah Shiur was sponsored by **Rochelle Dimont, Michele Dimont & Family, Sahra & Yale Ginsburg & Family and Yocheved & Jonathan Neuman & Family** in memory of Chayim Dimont, Chayim ben HaRav Avraham Mordechai, A"H, beloved son, husband, father, brother and uncle whose Yahrzeit is 9 Tammuz.

The Lower Lobby coffee station is being sponsored by Roast Master **Robert Levine**.

Shabbos Schedule

Minyan Locations:

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

FRIDAY NIGHT:

Mincha/Maariv:

6:40 (Plag, S), 7:00 (B), 8:15 (B)
7:15 (Sephardi, LBM)

SHABBOS DAY:

Shacharis:

7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S),
8:00 (Sephardi, LBM)

Mincha:

2:30 (B), 5:00 (B), 8:10 (B),
8:05 (Sephardi, LBM)

Maariv: 9:16 (B)

DIVREI TORAH:

8:45 Minyan: (B)

Rabbi Rosenbaum

9:15 Minyan: (S)

Rabbi Postelnek

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur: (SBM)

Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Ohr HaChaim Chabura: 8:55 (S)

Rabbi Postelnek

Parsha Shiur before Mincha: 7:10 (B)

Rabbi Rosenbaum

Shiur between Mincha/Maariv:

Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

Youth Announcements

Teen Minyan - will resume at the end of the summer

Shabbos Groups - 10 AM until shul ends

- Toddler Group, under 2 with parent, Toddler Room
- Kinder Group, 2-5, upstairs behind the balcony
- Boys 6-9 & Girls 6-9 and 5th-6th Grade Girls, meet in lower lobby and walk to YGW

Popsicles in the Park - Shabbos, July 27 at 4:30 PM the Kemp Mill Urban Park. We will have another visit to lower Lamberton this summer so stay tuned!



JULY 2024 | 25 SIVAN - 25 TAMMUZ 5784

בס"ד

SHMA

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH
SHOMRAI MONTHLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shul Announcements

Tehillim Insights - Deepen your connection to Tehillim with short, meaningful messages from Rabbi Rosenbaum and Rabbi Postelnek. Recordings about all 150 Tehillim at: <https://wp.yise.org/tehillim>.

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? Email office@yise.org for details.

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

Upcoming Community Programs & Listings

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday nights, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. July 10, 24 in person in the YISE Social Hall. July 17, 31 on Zoom. Meeting ID: 986 546 841, Passcode: 3671. See what Toastmasters is all about and find out how you can become a more confident communicator. Contact Manasseh Katz at secretary@kempmilltoastmasters.com for more info.

The Golden Network: Lunch & Learn - "Gateway to Bitachon" with Rabbi Shmuel Leigh. Wednesday, July 17 at 11:45 AM at KMS. RSVP by July 14 to director@goldennetwork.org.

Evening of Inspiration with Varda and Eitan Morell - Thursday, July 25 at 8 PM in the Belonofsky Sanctuary. Varda and Eitan Morell will speak about their son Maoz, HY"D, who fell in battle in Gaza. They will share the inspirational story of his heroism in life and death in the context of three generations of Jewish survival and strength. [see flyer](#)

Let's bring Summer fun foods to the Capital Kosher Pantry! Your food donations will bring happiness to the community members who rely on the Capital Kosher Pantry and offset Yad Yehuda's costs. Please donate: ketchup, mustard, relish, potato chips, corn chips, salsa, baked beans, marshmallows, chocolate for s'mores, Fla-Vor-Ice freezer pops, snack packs of cookies, fruit roll-ups & taffies, & juice boxes. Place items in donation bins at Shalom Kosher, Moti's Market, YISE, KMS, SEHC, WSAT or deliver to: Capital Kosher Pantry, 9601 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901.

Recurring Community Programs and Listings

Friday Night Learning - As a Zechus for Acheinu Kol Beis Yisroel, there will be a 30 minute learning Seder in the Yeshiva before Mincha on Leil Shabbos, Friday nights. All the Bnei HaYeshiva and men of the community are encouraged to attend. No matter where you daven, come to the Yeshiva Beis Medrash before Mincha and increase the merits of Klal Yisroel.

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 9:30am at the home of Michelle Penn 816 Lamberton Dr.. For more information, email channahandjeff@gmail.com or call 773-219-5397.

Zoom Shiurim with Rabbi Levy - Monday through Friday on Zoom, Meeting ID: 636 563 5989. Alshich - 9:20 AM - 10:30 AM. Gemara Ribit 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM. Hilchot Lashon Hara 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM. Sunday Alshich 11:45 AM - 12:45 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

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

Women's Weekly Unity Gathering. Tehillim, divrei chizuk, and learning at the KMS Beit Midrash, Sundays, 8:00-9:15 PM. Women all around the Silver Spring community (and beyond) are called together to unite in Torah learning and tefillah. Every week, we will recite Tehillim and then a fabulous community leader will give us words of chizuk. Afterwards, everyone is invited to learn on their own or in a group. Open to girls and women of all ages. Contact Rachel Tor at rachelctor@gmail.com for more information.

Newly married? Growing family? Just need a budget check-up? IZUN is a community resource that provides free and confidential coaching to help you examine your budget and achieve financial stability. Email us at barbara@getizun.org or leave a phone message at 240-433-3944.

Daf Yomi Shiur currently meets at the YGW Boys' Campus. Weekdays also online via a WebEx video conference. Sunday 8:30 AM, Monday - Thursday 8:45 PM. Shabbos, 7:30 AM. Contact Judd Lifschitz at lifschitz@slslaw.com for more info.

Daily Halacha Program from Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold Receive one every day in your inbox. Sign up at dvarhalacha.com.

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

RABBI DOVID ROSENBAUM
RABBI YOSEF POSTELNEK - ASST RABBI
JOSH SEIDEMANN - PRESIDENTAUGUST DEADLINE: MONDAY, JULY 29, NOON
SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE SHMA TO: ANNOUNCE@YISE.ORG
WWW.YISE.ORG | 301-593-4465 | OFFICE@YISE.ORG

**July class updates for Rabbi Rosenbaum's Shiurim:*

Daily Parsha Shiur - Monday - Friday 15 minute parsha shiur on Zoom will now be held at 8:15 AM.

Sundays

7:05 AM - 7:50 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
9:30 AM - GWCK Sunday Kollel Brunch & Learn Four great Shiurim to choose from, in the **Social Hall**
9:30 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Mussar Study Group for Women (spiritual self-improvement), on **Zoom A**
10:00 AM - Rabbi Tuvia Grauman - Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur, on **Zoom C**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on the Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**

Mondays

6:35 AM - 7:22 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
8:15 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on the Parsha, on **Zoom A**
8:45 AM - The Golden Network Presents: Rabbi Barry Greengart's Shiur for men & women studying Parashas Hashavua, on **Zoom B**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**
9:00 - 10:00 PM Chavrusa Learning, in the **Social Hall**. For more info contact Rabbi Levy at 240-423-8810
8:45 PM SCP (Semichas Chaver Program) for more information contact Rabbi Hillel Shaps: hshaps@gwckollel.org

Tuesdays

5:55 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Gemara Shiur for Men, on **Zoom A**
6:35 AM - 7:22 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
8:15 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on the Parsha, on **Zoom A**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**
1:30 PM - Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's Shiur for Men and Women "Profits from the Prophets" now studying Sefer Shoftim, in-person, in the **Small Beis Medrash** and on **Zoom G**

Wednesdays

6:35 AM - 7:22 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
8:15 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on the Parsha, on **Zoom A**
9:00 AM - The Golden Network Presents: Mrs. Esther Dziadek's Siddur Class, on **Zoom B**
11:00 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Nach Shiur on **Zoom A**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**
8:00 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Women's Navi Shiur, now learning Sefer Melachim, on **Zoom A**
8:15 PM - 9:15 PM - CLAS Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - Reading Responsa for Men, on **Zoom E**
8:35 PM - Rabbi Moshe Arzouan's Advanced Gemara Shiur for Men, learning the third Perek of Maseches Bava Basrah, in the **Social Hall** and on **Zoom H**

Thursdays

6:35 AM - 7:22 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
8:15 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on the Parsha, on **Zoom A**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**
8:15 PM - 9:15 PM - CLAS Rabbi Avraham Sussman Yesodei Hatorah Gemara Skills Building for Men, on **Zoom F**
8:15 PM - 9:15 PM - CLAS Rabbi Hillel Shaps On the Same Page Gemara for Men, in the **Social Hall**

Fridays

5:55 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Gemara Shiur for Men, on **Zoom A**
6:35 AM - 7:22 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
8:15 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's one chapter of Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on the Parsha, on **Zoom A**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on Pirkei Avos with Rabenu Yonah as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**

*Class times and locations as of June 28.
Please check <https://wp.yise.org/about/classes/>
for updated info.*

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

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF INSPIRATION WITH

Varda and Eitan Morell

Varda and Eitan Morell will speak about their son Maoz, HY"D, who fell in battle in Gaza. They will share the inspirational story of his heroism in life and death in the context of three generations of Jewish survival and strength.



Thursday, July 25, 8:00 pm
Young Israel Shomrai Eemunah Belonofsky Sanctuary
(Mincha at 7:45, Maariv following the program)



השבוע המשנה the Around Year

A Women's Chabura
with Mrs. Channah Cohen



Sunday, July 28 - 8:30PM | YISE - Small Beis Medrash

**The Three Weeks
and Tisha B'Av**

*Is it Ever Too Late to Unify?
Lessons from History*

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REFRESHMENTS
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*Quick Torah
Thoughts With*

RABBI

ROSENBAUM

Join our WhatsApp Chat with Rabbi Rosenbaum for quick (5-minute) shiurim ranging from Mishna to Halacha to Mussar and more!

yise.org/quickthoughts



When Life Gives Us Lemons (or worse), How Do We Pray?

It's not always easy to say our daily prayers with the appropriate kavanah (intention). How can we channel life's challenges to help us focus and strengthen our relationship with Hashem?

With Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum
Sunday, August 4 - 11:00 am
YISE Belonofsky Sanctuary

Free and open to all
Followed by refreshments

The program will also be available virtually over Zoom: Zoom ID: 416-963-9000
Password: 492019. A video will be posted on the Meaningful Tefilah YouTube channel.
Presented by the Meaningful Tefilah Project of YISE. Sponsorships welcome at \$18+ through the shul office or at yise.org/donate (memo: Meaningful Tefilah).





Words of Inspiration

from

MRS. SIMA JACOBY

MRS. RUTHIE RIDER

Rosh Chodegh Av

Monday, August 5th

11:45am

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah

1132 Arcola Ave. Silver Spring, MD 20902

RSVP BY AUGUST 1ST

RSVP TO director@goldennetwork.org or 301.732.1773

DONATIONS APPRECIATED · SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Golden Network · PO box 10995 Silver Spring, MD 20901 · goldennetwork.org

CORPORATE SPONSORS



YISE ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE PRESENTS

Limud on the Lawn

A monthly exploration of different Torah luminaries through the ages at YISE members' homes. Light refreshments to be served.



AUGUST 24 - 5:45 PM

With Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

on Rabbeinu Yonah

Hosted by: Rabbi Roy & Judy Rosenbaum

Location: 806 Kersey Rd





Dedicate a Brick

Donate today for a brick to be engraved and placed on the **Cheryl Stern Community Kelim Mikvah** path.

Each line fits 20 characters; each single brick can contain a total of three lines, each double brick can contain a total of six lines.



[Visit yise.org/brick](http://visit.yise.org/brick) to place an order today!



Tree of Life at YISE

Order a leaf or rock today in honor of a friend, relative, simcha, or any other occasion!

Engraved Leaves: \$180

Maximum 4 lines. Recommended maximum 30 characters per line.

Engraved Rocks: \$720

Rocks: Maximum 8 lines. Recommended maximum 40 characters per line.

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- » Text size is dependent on the number of characters per line.
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Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Sponsored by the Lichy Family
in memory of beloved son and brother,
David Isaac Lichy, z"l

Volume 30, Issue 40

Shabbat Parashat Balak

5784 - B"H

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

What Makes God Laugh - There is an old saying that what makes God laugh is seeing our plans for the future. However, if Tanach is our guide, what makes God laugh is human delusions of grandeur. From the vantage point of heaven, the ultimate absurdity is when humans start thinking of themselves as godlike.

There are several pointed examples in the Torah. One whose full import has only recently become clear occurs in the story of the Tower of Babel. Men gather together in the plain of Shinar and decide to build a city and a tower "that will reach to heaven." We have archeological confirmation of this fact. Several Mesopotamian ziggurats, including the temple of Marduk in Babylon, have been found with inscriptions saying that they reach heaven.

The idea was that tall buildings – man-made mountains – allowed humans to climb to the dwelling place of the gods and thus communicate with them. The Mesopotamian city states were among the first places of civilisation, itself one of the turning points in the history of human life on earth. Before the birth of agriculture, the ancients lived in fear of nature: of predators, of other tribes and bands, and of the vicissitudes of heat and cold, drought and flood. Their fate depended on matters beyond their control.

Only with the spread of domesticated animals and agriculture did people gather in towns, then cities, then empires. A tipping point occurred in the balance of power between nature and culture. For the first time humans were not confined to adapting to their environment. They could adapt their environment to suit them. At this point they – especially the rulers – began to see themselves as gods, demigods, or people with the power to influence the gods.

The most conspicuous symbol of this was buildings on a monumental scale: the ziggurats of Babylon and other Mesopotamian cities, and the pyramids of Egypt. Built on the flat land of the Tigris-Euphrates valley and the Nile delta, they towered over their surroundings. The great pyramid of Giza, built even before the birth of Abraham, was so monumental that it remained the tallest man-made structure on earth for four thousand years.

The fact that these were artificial mountains built by human hands suggested to their builders that humans had acquired godlike powers. They had constructed a stairway to heaven. Hence the significance of the phrase in the Torah's account of the tower, "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built." This is God laughing. On earth, humans thought they had reached the sky, but to God the building was so infinitesimal, so microscopic that he had to come down even to see it. Only with the invention of flight do we now know how small the tallest building looks when you are looking down from a mere 30,000 feet.

To end their hubris God simply "confused their language". They no longer understood one another. The entire project was turned into French farce. We

can visualise the scene. A foreman calls for a brick and is handed a hammer. He tells a worker to go right and he turns left. The project foundered in a welter of incomprehension. Men thought they could climb to heaven but in the end they could not even understand what the person next to them was saying. The unfinished tower became a symbol of the inevitable failure of vaunting ambition. The builders achieved what they sought but not in the way they intended. They wanted to "make a name for themselves" and they succeeded, but instead of becoming a byword for man's ability to reach the sky, Babel became babble, an emblem of confusion. Hubris became nemesis.

The second example was Egypt during the early plagues. Moses and Aaron turned the water of the Nile into blood, and filled Egypt with frogs. We then read that the Egyptian magicians did likewise to show that they had the same power. So concerned were they to show that they could do what the Hebrews could do, that they entirely failed to realise that they were making things worse, not better. The real skill would have been to turn blood back into water, and make frogs not appear but disappear.

We hear the Divine laughter especially in the third plague: lice. For the first time, the magicians tried and failed to replicate the effect. Defeated, they turned to Pharaoh and said, "It is the finger of God." The humour comes when we remember that for the Egyptians the symbol of power was monumental architecture: pyramids, temples, palaces and statues on a massive scale. God showed them His power by way of the tiniest of insects, painful yet almost invisible to the eye. Again hubris became nemesis. When people think they are big, God shows them they are small – and vice versa. It is those who think themselves small – supremely so Moses, the humblest of men – who are truly great.

This explains the otherwise curious episode of Bilam's talking donkey. This is not a fanciful tale, nor simply a miracle. It arose because of the way the people of Moab and Midian thought of Bilam – and perhaps, by extension, the way he thought of himself. Balak the Moabite king, together with the leaders of the Midianites, sent a delegation to Bilam asking him to curse the Israelites: "Come now, curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me ... for I know that whom you bless is blessed, and whom you curse is cursed."

This is a pagan understanding of the holy man: the shaman, the magus, the wonder-worker, the person with access to supernatural powers. The Torah's view is precisely the opposite. It is God who blesses and curses, not human beings. "I will bless those who bless you and those who curse you I will curse," God said to Abraham. "They shall place my name on the children of Israel and I will bless them," he said about the priests. The idea that you can hire a holy man to curse someone essentially presupposes that God can be bribed.

The narrative is admittedly obscure. God tells Bilam not to go. Balak sends a second delegation with a more tempting offer. This time God tells Bilam to go with them but say only what he instructs him to say. The next morning Bilam sets out to go with the Moabites, but the text now states that God was "angry" with him for going. That is when the episode of the donkey takes place.

The donkey sees an angel barring the way. It turns aside into a field but Bilam hits it and forces it back

to the path. The angel is still barring the way and the donkey veers into a wall, crushing Bilam's foot. Bilam hits it again, but finally it lies down and refuses to move. That is when the donkey begins to speak. Bilam then looks up and sees the angel, who had been hitherto invisible to him.

Why did God first tell Bilam not to go, then that he should go, and then was angry when he went? Evidently God could read his mind and knew that Bilam did really want to curse the Israelites. We know this because later, after the attempt to curse the Israelites failed, Bilam succeeded in causing them harm, advising the Midianites to get their women to seduce the Israelite men, thus provoking the anger of God. Bilam was no friend of the Israelites.

But the story of the talking donkey is another instance of Divine laughter. Here was a man reputed to be a maestro of supernatural forces. People thought he had the power to bless or curse whomever he chose. God, the Torah tells us, is not like that at all. He had two messages, one for the Moabites and Midianites, another for Bilam himself.

He showed the Moabites and Midianites that Israel is not cursed but blessed. The more you attempt to curse them the more they will be blessed and you yourself will be cursed. That is as true today as it was then. There are movements throughout the world to curse the state and people of Israel. The greater the malice of Israel's enemies, the stronger Israel becomes, and the more disasters its enemies bring upon their own people.

God had a different message for Bilam himself, and it was very blunt. If you think you can control God, then, says God, I will show you that I can turn a donkey into a prophet and a prophet into a donkey. Your animal will see angels to which you yourself are blind. Bilam was forced to admit: How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the Lord has not denounced?

Hubris always eventually becomes nemesis. In a world in which rulers engaged in endless projects of self-aggrandisement, Israel alone produced a literature in which they attributed their successes to God and their failures to themselves. Far from making them weak, this made them extraordinarily strong.

So it is with us as individuals. I have mentioned before a beloved friend, no longer alive, about whom it was said that "he took God so seriously that he didn't need to take himself seriously at all." Pagan prophets like Bilam had not yet learned the lesson we must all one day learn: that what matters is not that God does what we want, but that we do what He wants. God laughs at those who think they have godlike powers. The opposite is true. The smaller we see ourselves, the greater we become.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"I see it but not now; I look at it, but it is not near. A star has stepped forth from Jacob and a scepter-bearer has risen from Israel; [Israel] will pierce and vanquish the nobles of Moab..."

The interaction of Jew and Gentile is a prominent theme in Judaism recurring throughout Jewish history, and, according to our prophets, a feature of the End of Days. What will the Jew-Gentile dynamic

By Moshe and Marci Wiesel
on the occasion of the 3rd yahrzeit
of Moshe's father, יוסף בערל בן משולם ע"ה, on 17 Tamuz.
And in honor of the recent marriages of their nephews
Akiva Brody to Zohar Ben Chamu,
and Matan Tobin to Adi Farkash

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be at that time, and what implications does that have for us in present times?

In Balak, we read of the vision of the gentile prophet, Bilaam, that Israel will eventually trounce its nemesis, Moab. Indeed, Ruth, a descendant of Moab, will eventually convert to Judaism, settle in Israel, and become the great-grandmother of King David, progenitor of the Messiah!

In the meantime, however, in an effort to short-circuit the Jews' long-term destiny by assimilating them into Moab now, Bilaam advises his Moabite benefactor to send Midianite women to seduce the Israelite men. In this, he partially succeeds, enticing many thousands to sin, including prominent Israelites such as Zimri ben Salou, a prince from the Tribe of Simeon.

I suggest that this sordid incident serves as a foil to the paradigm for Jewish-Gentile relations at the End of Days. Rabbi Avraham Azulay in his "Chesed L'Avraham" says that "Rabbi Akiba was the repair [tikkun] for Zimri ben Salou." What connection can there possibly be between the major architect of the Oral Law and the Simeonite prince who publicly fornicated with a gentile woman in front of Moses?!

Rashi records an incident towards the end of the life of Rabbi Akiba involving a Roman personage named Rufus. Rufus would often debate on matters of Torah with Akiba, though Akiba always bested him in argument. The Roman personage became embarrassed, and upon his return home, told his wife of his defeat.

She said to him, "I will tempt Rabbi Akiba and cause him to stumble! [Then you will not have to worry about him any longer.]" She was a very beautiful woman. She came before Rabbi Akiba and, [when they were alone] she revealed her [naked] thigh before him.

Rabbi Akiba spat, and laughed and wept. She said to him, "Why do you act in such a [strange] manner?" He said to her, "I will explain to you two out of my three activities. 'I spat, because you came from a fetid drop [of sperm, of which I had to remind myself, to prevent me from sinning with you]. 'I wept, because in the end your beauty will decay beneath the earth.'"

But why he laughed, he did not wish to tell her. Nevertheless, after she entreated him many times, he explained that it was because she would eventually convert to Judaism and would marry him. Whereupon she said to him, "And is there the possibility of repentance?" He said there was. And after her husband died, she converted, married Rabbi Akiba, and brought him great wealth.

Bilaam was sure that with the proper sexual blandishments, the Israelites could blend into the culture of Moab and Midian. Inter-marriage would create one humanity without Jews. Rabbi Akiba, on the other hand, believed in true messianism. Rabbi Akiba was a moral universalist who taught, "Beloved is the human being, for he was created in God's image".

Rabbi Akiba believed that the cardinal commandment of the Torah is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" – because every human being is like you; every human deserves to be free and all humanity are siblings because each emerged from the womb of the Divine Presence (Shekhina). He believed that eventually, every nation will merge with Israel and accept the Torah.

Rabbi Akiba himself came from a family of proselytes, and died with the universal watchword of our faith in world unity on his lips: "Hear, O Israel, [right now] the Lord is [accepted by us as] our God, [but eventually] He will be [accepted by all nations] as the One [God of unconditional love]."

This was the goal of universalist Akiba-ism, which will usher in the true messianic age, when "everyone will accept the yoke of God's kingship" when "nation will not lift up sword against nation and

humanity will not learn war anymore", and everyone will learn Torah and lovingkindness from the people of Israel.

The Person in the Parsha: R. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Who Was Your Teacher? - Except for the saints among us, we all boast. Sometimes we boast about our own natural endowments, our good looks, or our athletic prowess. Often we boast about our achievements, social or professional.

There is one type of boasting that seems to be unique to the traditional Jewish community. That is a boasting not about oneself, but rather about one's teachers, or rebbeim. Thus, you will find young people saying, "My rebbe is greater than yours!" Or, "I am a student of so-and-so, so you better respect me for that!"

For some of us, it sounds strange that a person would claim religious or intellectual superiority on the basis of the identity of his teacher. After all, the piety or wisdom of a teacher does not necessarily filter down to the disciple. Nevertheless, boasting about the greatness of one's master is fairly common in some of our circles.

My paternal grandfather, Reb Chaim Yitzchak Weinreb of blessed memory, was particularly perturbed about this phenomenon. As loyal readers of this column know, my zaide taught me many things. One lesson which he repeatedly emphasized was the importance of not falling prey to the tendency of boasting about whose student one was. He felt it was much more important to be able to claim that one was actually walking in the footsteps of the master, behaviorally emulating his virtues and accomplishments.

One of the prooftexts which he adduced to help drive this lesson home was a passage in the fifth chapter of Pirkei Avot, Ethics of the Fathers, which reads: "Whoever possesses these three traits is one of the disciples of our father Abraham; whoever possesses the three opposite traits is one of the disciples of the wicked Balaam. A generous eye, a modest demeanor and a humble soul are the traits of the disciples of our father Abraham. An evil eye, an arrogant demeanor and an insatiable soul are attributes of the disciples of the wicked Balaam. What is the difference between our father Abraham's disciples and those of the wicked Balaam? Our father Abraham's disciples enjoy this world and inherit the world to come... The wicked Balaam's disciples inherit Gehinnom and go down to the pit of destruction..."

My grandfather would expound upon the above text by saying: "Imagine that a person studied for years under some great Chassidic Rebbe, dressed like him, and imitated his every gesture. Or imagine the student who attended the lectures of some great yeshiva head and could actually repeat every word verbatim. But if that person or student was guilty of envy, of arrogance, or of selfishness, he would be categorized by our Sages not as a disciple of the great Rebbe or Talmudist, but as the disciple of the wicked Balaam."

He would continue to drive home his point by stressing the flip side of the teaching of Pirkei Avot: "On the other hand, imagine the person to whom circumstances denied the privilege of spending time with a great Chassidic Rebbe or the chance to study under the tutelage of a Talmudic giant. But if that person was generous, modest and humble, he could lay claim to the title 'disciple of our father Abraham'."

Balaam is the main character in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Balak. There is much to be gained from a careful study of Balaam's behavior. One major lesson is that a person can be wise and famous, internationally renowned, and endowed with mystical powers and the gift of prophecy, yet be done in by the flaws of his personal character.

Likutei Divrei Torah

I no longer remember whether or not I asked my grandfather the question that occurred to me long ago about this passage in Pirkei Avot. I remain puzzled by why our Sages choose not to compare Balaam with his contemporary and adversary Moses. Why do they instead choose to contrast him with Abraham, who lived centuries before Balaam?

I have come to believe that our Sages had good reason for preferring the Balaam/Abraham comparison. I suggest that our rabbis were fascinated by the many similarities between the two. They were both prophets, but prophets whose missions were not confined to the Jewish people. Balaam was designated as a prophet for all the nations of the world, and Abraham, although the biological father of the Jewish people, was also the av hamon goyim, the spiritual father of all of humanity.

Both Abraham and Balaam shared the unusual power of being able to bless others effectively. Of Abraham, it is written, "I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse him that curses you; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you." And Balak, king of Moab, is confident of Balaam's abilities: "For I know that he whom you bless is blessed indeed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

Furthermore, both Abraham and Balaam set off on long journeys, one to the binding of Isaac, and the other to nefariously undermine the people of Israel. Both wake up in the early morning to load their donkeys in preparation of their journeys. And each of them is accompanied upon his journey by two young servants.

The message seems clear. Two individuals who are similar to each other in so many ways can ultimately be so different that one's disciples "inherit the World to Come," whereas the disciples of the other "inherit Gehinnom and go down to the pit of destruction."

One fails to properly use his Divinely given blessings and, because of his "evil eye, arrogant demeanor and insatiable soul," becomes the archetype of perversion and treachery. The other cultivates "a generous eye, a modest demeanor and a humble soul" with such success that those of us who emulate him, even if we live millennia after his death, can lay claim to being his disciples.

The next time someone asks you, "Under whom did you study? Whose disciple are you," I hope that you can say that you are at least striving to become a disciple of Abraham.

Mizrachi Dvar Torah: Rav Doron Perez

Viewing the World in a Positive Light

What is the month of Tammuz all about? The Sefer Yetzirah says that it is about rectifying the sin of the sense of sight, of seeing things in a negative light. The entire month of Tammuz is when the Spies spent their time in the Land of Israel, from Rosh Chodesh Tammuz until Tisha B'Av. They were viewing and interpreting everything they saw in a negative light, so much so that they spoke about it so badly leading the Jewish people to not want to go into the Land.

Therefore, the Sefer Yetzirah says, this month is for rectifying that sin and to view the world in a positive light. The only way to prevent speaking bad about others is not to think badly about others. If we want to speak positively about others, we need to see them in a positive light.

Tisha B'Av was the negative expression of speaking badly about the land, because they saw – in Tammuz – the land in a negative light. Hence the rectification is for us to see our surroundings in a positive light, then we will speak positively.

May we use this period of Tammuz and Av to work on ourselves and see everything around us positively, because when we see the world through positive eyes, we will speak about everything positively, and see a world of blessing all around us.

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

באלק

Midrash Rabbah relates that Bil'am argued to G-d, "Would it not be more fitting for seventy nations to serve you than for only one nation (*Yisrael*) to serve you?" R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (1882-1951; rabbi of Yerushalayim's Sha'arei Chessed neighborhood and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Mercatz Harav) writes that Bil'am's grandfather Lavan similarly claimed that Yaakov Avinu was preventing *Hashem* from resting His *Shechinah* on the nations. While that conversation is not recorded explicitly in the Torah, it is a tradition that we refer to when we say in the *Pesach Haggadah*, "Lavan attempted to uproot everything," writes R' Charlap. (The statement that Lavan was Bil'am's grandfather is based on a *Midrash*.)

However, continues R' Charlap, both Lavan and Bil'am made a big mistake. In fact, only through the Jewish People can the nations eventually recognize *Hashem's* greatness. The truth of this is demonstrated by the history recorded in the Torah. Lavan "knew" G-d. G-d appeared to Lavan (*Bereishit* 31:24), and Lavan acknowledged and feared Him, saying to Yaakov (31:29), "The *Elokim* of your father addressed me last night." In contrast, Pharaoh said (*Shmot* 5:2), "Who is *Hashem* that I should heed His voice?" What changed in the few generations between Lavan, who recognized G-d, and Pharaoh, who did not? The Jewish People were enslaved. They became "a nation within a nation" (based on *Devarim* 4:34), invisible to mankind as a whole. The result was that *Hashem* was forgotten. (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mei Marom* p.37)

Shabbat

R' Nachman of Breslov z"l (1772-1810; Ukraine) writes in one of his discourses, "One must take great care to be joyous and in good spirits on *Shabbat*." Later in the same discourse he writes, "As a rule, one should act very joyous on the holy *Shabbat*, without demonstrating any sadness or worry. Rather, delight in *Hashem* with all manner of delights, whether food and drink or clothing, to the extent of a person's ability."

(*Likkutei Moharan* II, 17)

R' Erez Moshe Doron *shlita* (Israel) observes: There is a big difference between "being joyous," as R' Nachman instructs in the first excerpt above, and "acting joyous," as he instructs in the second excerpt. "Being joyous" is a state of being that comes from and touches one's inner essence, whereas "acting joyous" implies behaving in a way that a person is not feeling. This understanding is confirmed by R' Nachman's instruction to not demonstrate any sadness or worry, implying that the person does feel sadness and worry but he acts in honor of *Shabbat* as if he does not.

"Being joyous" is not easy, continues R' Doron. But, teaches R' Nachman, one can achieve this by "acting joyous." This is a three-step process, R' Doron explains based on the teaching above: First, do not demonstrate any sadness or worry--"sadness" over the past or "worry" over the future. Second, act very joyous on *Shabbat*, delighting in all manner of delights, whether food and drink or clothing. Then, one who does this will eventually experience true joy and good spirits on *Shabbat*.

In one of his famous parables, R' Nachman tells of a simple shoemaker who always praised the food that his wife served him, even if it was only bread and water. He also took great pride in the shoes he made, though he was not, in fact, a very good shoemaker. He would exclaim, "My dear wife! Look at these beautiful and wondrous shoes!"

– Continued in box inside –

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Harav Yechiel Shruga Feivish ben Yitzchak Halevi Tarshish a"h

"May my soul die the death of the upright . . ." (23:10)

Rashi z"l writes: "Amongst them." Commentaries explain: Bil'am was praying that he merit to die like the righteous among the Jewish People.

R' David Bliacher z"l *Hy"d* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva in Międzyrzec Podlaski, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) writes: This verse is a major reason why Bil'am's story is recorded in the Torah, for it teaches that even the most obstinate sinner can come around. He explains:

According to *Midrashim*, Bil'am was an advisor to Pharaoh, and he strongly advocated oppressing *Bnei Yisrael*. Even after witnessing the Ten Plagues, Bil'am did not reform; he still wanted to curse *Bnei Yisrael*. How is such obstinacy possible?! Similarly, Pharaoh's magicians said about the plague of lice (*Shmot* 8:15), "It is a finger of *Elokim*!" How does a person not recognize that a "finger" is attached to a "hand," and a "hand" is attached to a greater being--in this case, G-d? How did they not surrender immediately?

The answer, writes R' Bliacher, is that man is prone to err unless he makes a conscious effort to recognize the truth. For example, Pharaoh's magicians were able to replicate some of the plagues that Moshe brought about, but did they stop to ask themselves: Can we also terminate the plague as Moshe can? No, they did not! Why? Because only a person who makes a conscious effort to extricate himself from following the path of human nature will ever recognize the truth. And that, neither the magicians nor Bil'am made the effort to do.

It was to teach this lesson that *Hashem* dragged out the Exodus by bringing ten plagues. Surely one plague would have sufficed if *Hashem* had so willed! Nevertheless, *Hashem* wants to teach us this lesson about human nature, so He prolonged the process. It is for this same reason that the Torah relates in detail the obstinacy of Bil'am and the fact that, in the end, he did make the necessary effort to see the truth. (*Divrei Binah U'mussar* p.100)

- Continued from back page -

Once, his wife questioned this behavior, noting that other shoemakers' shoes sell for double what his sell for! He responded, "They produce what they produce and earn what they earn, and I produce what I produce and earn what I earn. Why should we speak of others? Are we lacking anything that we need?"

The shoemaker's wife's perspective may have been more realistic, observes R' Doron, but it could never bring happiness. In contrast, the shoemaker accepted his limitations and was truly happy. (Presumably, there was nothing practical that he could do to improve his situation.)

R' Doron concludes: It is not enough to think happy thoughts. Like the shoemaker in R' Nachman's parable, one must enunciate those thoughts and speak about the things that one has in his life that can him happy.

(*Malchut* p.33)

"Balak son of Zippor saw all that *Yisrael* had done to the *Emori*. Moav became very frightened of the People, because it was numerous (literally, 'because he was great') . . ." (22:2-3)

R' Yosef z"l (1601-1696; "*Darshan* of Posen") asks: Should not the verse say, "Because they were numerous"?

He explains: At the end of last week's *Parashah*, *Bnei Yisrael* fought and killed Og, king of Bashan. That is why Moav was afraid: it saw what *Yisrael* had done to the *Emori* and it was frightened because of *Yisrael*, because he--Og--was great, yet *Yisrael* had defeated him. (*Yad Yosef*)



"Behold! A people has come out of Egypt . . ." (22:5)

R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (see front page) writes: Cursed are the wicked nations who self-righteously condemn the Jewish People. When Balak said, "A people has come out of Egypt," he meant: The Jewish People must have left Egypt on their own, for G-d said they would be in a foreign land for 400 years, yet they were in Egypt for only 210 years. Therefore, said Balak, *Bnei Yisrael* are rebelling against G-d's Will, and surely He will agree to curse them.

R' Charlap continues: Bil'am meant the same thing when he said (23:19), "G-d is not a man that He should be deceitful, nor a human that He should relent. Would He say and not do, or speak and not uphold it?" Bil'am meant: If G-d said the *Bnei Yisrael* would be exiled for 400 years, surely He will enforce His word. Therefore, He surely will agree to curse *Bnei Yisrael*. (Our Sages offer several explanations for why *Bnei Yisrael* did not need to remain in Egypt for 400 years. One of them is that the count began from the birth of Yitzchak, for he too lived in a land where he was considered an intruder.)

Ultimately, however, Bil'am had to admit (23:22), "It is G-d Who brought them out of Egypt . . ." (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Mei Marom* p. 109)



"*Elokim* came to Bil'am at night and said to him, 'If the men came to summon you, arise and go with them . . .' *Elokim*'s wrath flared because he was going . . ." (22:20, 22)

R' Shlomo Alkabetz z"l (1505-1584; author of the Friday night hymn *Lecha Dodi*, among other works) asks: if *Hashem* told Bil'am to go, why was He angry?

He answers: In order for a prophet to prophecy, he must first meditate in solitude. *Hashem* told Bil'am, "Go with them." He did not want Bil'am to be alone. However, Bil'am did not obey; he went to meditate. Therefore, *Hashem*'s wrath flared because he was going, i.e., alone.

(*Perushei U'derushei R' Shlomo Alkabetz*)

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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HEZBOLLAH CLAIMS RECONNAISSANCE DRONE CAPTURES STRATEGIC SITES DEEP INTO ISRAEL (Israel Hayom 7/9/24)

Hezbollah released new footage on Tuesday, claiming that one of its surveillance drones successfully penetrated Israeli airspace and captured images of various strategic and sensitive locations.

The video, which includes alleged footage of military installations and critical infrastructure, has raised concerns about the group's intelligence-gathering capabilities and the potential security implications for Israel.

The footage supposedly obtained by one of its reconnaissance drones that entered Israeli territory. The video purportedly showcases several high-value targets, including an electric power station, Haifa's airport, a submarine dock at a naval port, intelligence facilities, military outposts in the Mount Hermon area, and various command centers.

This latest release comes approximately one month after a similar video was made public. In the new footage from Tuesday, Hezbollah asserts that it successfully documented IDF strategic assets, including troop assembly points and the positions of Iron Dome air defense batteries.

LIBERMAN: 'I SPOKE WITH BENNETT, WE WILL MEET AGAIN THIS WEEK' (Arutz-7 7/15/24)

The chairman of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, MK Avigdor Liberman, revealed at his party meeting this afternoon (Monday) that he is negotiating a joint run in the next elections with former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

"I spoke with Bennett two days ago and we are expected to meet again on Wednesday," Liberman said.

Earlier, at the Calcalist Conference, the chairman of Yisrael Beiteinu estimated that within a few months the Knesset would dissolve.

"The Prime Minister intends to dissolve the Knesset himself in November. So far, work on the state budget, which is supposed to be presented to the government in August, has not started," Liberman said.

"We are also seeing that the coalition is unable to progress, only last week they had to withdraw all the bills and change the agenda. Thanks to our persistent struggle in the opposition, we managed to stop the draft evasion law and the cushy jobs law. Therefore, one way or another, we will go to elections. This deep crisis is also a one-time opportunity to change and correct all the failures that have occurred since 1948. From establishing a constitution to mandatory core curriculum studies. The problem is that nothing is being managed, neither on the security level nor on the civil level. The State of Israel needs management," he added.

On the possibility of unifications on the right, he said, "What should guide all the players is how to get the maximum number of mandates. Sometimes in politics, contrary to mathematics, 2+2 can give 3 and can give 5. It is necessary to make a sane and responsible decision on how to proceed, whether by unifying everyone, or by having several lists. And to understand what will bring the maximum number of mandates to the same Zionist coalition. I hope that after the elections, the Likud party, without Netanyahu, will also be part of the coalition."

"The guiding principle that should be demanded from all candidates, is a commitment to establishing a broad Zionist coalition. Without it, we cannot fix anything, not the draft law, not the core curriculum studies, and not the establishment of a constitution. What is happening today is that the current government is funding the creation of an anti-Zionist majority in every way and with huge budgets. They are unable to touch any political budget of unnecessary ministries for tradition, heritage, and national tasks, all of which, of course, must be closed."

Liberman did not hide his desire to be the right-wing candidate for Prime Minister. "At this time, in terms of experience, organizational, managerial ability, and knowledge, I see myself as the most suitable candidate for Prime Minister. I hope we succeed in dissolving the Knesset before November. We need changes to unify Israeli society, and strengthen national resilience."

HOW OCTOBER 7 FOOTAGE HELPS THE IDF KILL NUKHBA TERRORISTS ONE BY ONE (JPost 7/17/24)

The IDF is working to target and eliminate the terrorists involved in the October 7 massacre who are still operating within the Gaza Strip.

In recent days, the IDF has struck dozens of these terrorists. On Wednesday, Palestinians reported nine victims from a strike carried out by an Israeli drone on a group near a school in the southern Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City. It is believed these were Hamas terrorists, some of whom participated in the October 7 massacre.

The Shin Bet and the IDF have mapped out the Hamas terrorists involved in the massacre. This mapping was made possible through the analysis of images, videos, and publications uploaded by Hamas members and Gaza civilians on the day of the massacre and at the start of the war, which showed the faces of the terrorists.

The Shin Bet and Military intelligence conducted an investigation and analysis of these images, compiling a list of the names of the terrorists along with their photographs. Another list was created through the interrogation of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad prisoners.

Once information about a terrorist's location is received, the Southern Command and the Shin Bet verify the target and the elimination is executed.

IDF spokesman Daniel Hagari addressed the issue this week in an interview

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with al-Arabia. He stated: "Yesterday, I heard Mohammad Nazzal [a senior Hamas member] on your broadcast - he is lying. Rafa Salama was killed. I confirm this to you. He and Deif were together. Hamas is hiding Deif's fate." Hagari added, "I'll reveal something else to you: Two weeks ago, we attacked other Hamas leaders in Gaza City, and Hamas is hiding what happened to them. Everyone who had a part in October 7, we will pursue them. Just as we did in Khan Yunis against Salama and Deif - we will do against everyone responsible for October 7."

OVER HALF OF HAMAS' MILITARY OPERATIVES STILL ALIVE, IDF REPORT ESTIMATES (YNet 7/16/24)

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit reported on Tuesday that nearly half of Hamas's 30,000-strong terrorist force and three unharmed battalions remain in Gaza and the terror group is likely still armed with long-range rockets and missiles that could reach Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

According to military data, of the 1,235 terrorists in Hamas's Shijaiyah Battalion before the war, only 435 remained after the ground operation in November and December, with a similar 60%-80% reduction in the battalion's munitions.

"IDF ground, air and naval forces have been operating in the Gaza Strip for 263 days in order to achieve the objectives of the war. The forces have eliminated and apprehended approximately 14,000 terrorists. Among the eliminated terrorists are six brigade commanders, over 20 battalion commanders, and approximately 150 company commanders," the IDF said in a statement.

"As a result of precise intelligence and operational efforts, half of the leadership of Hamas' military wing has been eliminated up until this stage of the war through a series of strikes and eliminations. The IDF continues its crucial mission to pursue the top leaders of the Hamas terrorist organization as part of the objective to dismantle the organization's capabilities."

The IDF added that cooperation between the Southern Command and Israeli Air Force had led to specific airstrikes against terror infrastructures and missile launch pads in Gaza throughout the war. "So far, the IDF has struck approximately 37,000 targets from the air within the Gaza Strip, and more than 25,000 terrorist infrastructure and launch sites."

"Additionally, the IDF focuses its efforts on locating terrorists who embed themselves and establish bases in sensitive sites across the Gaza Strip, including in hospitals, schools and humanitarian shelters. These areas are cynically exploited by terrorists who attempt to use them as hiding places and bases for terrorism. Strikes against this infrastructure are conducted in accordance with international law, with the purpose of preventing the restoration of terrorist organizations' capabilities," the statement added.

"The Intelligence Directorate and the Southern Command's intelligence system produce high-quality intelligence that supports the fighting forces operating in the Strip. This intelligence enables the execution of a series of initiated operations and targeted raids against terrorist infrastructure and operatives, based on precise intelligence indications," according to the IDF.

"The forces in the field are fighting both above and below ground. The Southern Command's engineering unit has created an action plan against Hamas' underground system and continues to map and thoroughly dismantle it. So far, the IDF has dismantled dozens of production sites and workshops, as well as offensive and strategic underground tunnel routes."

"Hamas is managing munitions and terrorists," the IDF also said in its statement. Additionally, most of Hamas' battalions have been severely affected by the ground operation and subsequent raids despite three Hamas battalions in the Strip yet to be engaged, including the battalion between southern Khan Younis and Rafah, as well as those in Deir al-Balah and Nuseirat.

The IDF added that "Hamas has resumed producing weapons, including kamikaze drones, and is reestablishing itself in shelters of displaced Gazans, which we frequently attack with precise raids. The number of Hamas mortar launches has decreased to what we knew in 2007."

Meanwhile, more details have come to light about the attempted elimination

of Hamas military wing commander Mohammed Deif last week. The strike was carried out with heavy bombs precisely at 10:29 a.m. "Military pressure allowed for this opportunity," the IDF said.

MILITARY INTELLIGENCE PROBE: HAMAS PLANNED OCTOBER 7 MASSACRE FOR 7 YEARS (Arutz-7 7/18/24)

The Military Intelligence Directorate is investigating internally how the most serious oversight in the history of the country occurred, leading to Hamas' October 7 massacre.

During the probe, details of which were published on Channel 12 News, there were contentious discussions in the Military Intelligence Directorate, some of which ended in the raising of voices. The investigation assessed that the planning of the October 7 massacre began seven or eight years in advance, and the Military Intelligence Directorate missed the preliminary signs.

The assumption in the Military Intelligence Directorate was that Hamas was deterred and the leader of the terrorist organization, Yahya Sinwar, was willing to reach an agreement and improve the economic situation of the residents of the Gaza Strip in order to establish his position.

The concept was that Sinwar could not and did not want to start a war with Israel. In addition, the interpretation that Hamas avoided participating in the two clashes prior to October 7 because it was planning a war, was ignored by the intelligence.

At the same time, the Military Intelligence Directorate said in the investigation that they do not know for sure how it will be possible to prevent incidents similar to October 7 in the future, and are holding discussions on how to prevent a similar event in the future.

The head of the Military Intelligence Directorate, Aharon Haliva, received the findings of the investigation.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said in response, "When the investigations are concluded, they will be presented in a transparent manner to the public."

IDF FINDS HAMAS REBUILDS MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN UNRWA HQ (YNet 7/15/24)

IDF forces operating in a compound used as the headquarters of UNRWA in Gaza, found Hamas had rebuilt its military capabilities in the six months since troops withdrew from the area. In the compound that was housing displaced civilians, the soldiers found workshops for the production of UAVs and other weapons, as well as rockets and explosives. Military commando units operated in the compound for the past week. Over the past week.

Situated between the Al-Sabra neighborhood and Tel al-Hawa in the northern part of the strip, the complex included a terrorist recruitment office and food warehouses. These warehouses, meant for humanitarian aid, were found storing rockets and explosive devices. Hamas-controlled food distribution lines were handing out vouchers to thousands of displaced Gazans daily.

Within the warehouse complex near the university, the fighters discovered large UAVs that Hamas had constructed over recent months. The area showed clear signs of military recovery. Hamas had placed military-grade explosive devices, built observation posts and a forward command post (FCP) for managing the complex.

The commanders involved in the operation reported encountering combined attacks that didn't strictly follow guerrilla warfare norms. These included a synchronized use of explosives with mortar fire and the deployment of snipers and anti-tank missile squads.

"Hamas still has squad, platoon, and company commanders, and it operates in a different manner—more guerrilla-like and less as a full military framework," an IDF spokesperson said. "This requires us to adapt and identify the advantages and disadvantages of this transformation. Hamas is trying to replenish its ranks, so we operate repeatedly in these areas based on precise intelligence that allows focused action. It will take time to destroy this enemy."

The New York Times published a report on Hamas' combat methods in

Gaza, which heavily rely on guerrilla tactics and blending into the civilian population. The investigation, based on the analysis of Hamas battle videos and interviews with both Hamas fighters and IDF soldiers, paints a picture of a systematic exploitation of civilians and civilian infrastructure for military purposes. The Times accused Hamas of perpetuating the conflict, destruction, death, and displacement of civilians in the strip.

According to the investigation, Hamas utilizes an extensive tunnel system stretching hundreds of kilometers, whose scale surprised IDF commanders. These tunnels facilitate the movement of fighters and weapons across the strip without exposing them to Israeli forces. Hamas also hides militants, tunnel entrances, and ammunition depots in residential homes, medical facilities, UN offices, and mosques, further blurring the lines between civilians and combatants, the New York Times wrote in its report.

SURGE IN HAREDIM JOINING NATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE SINCE OCTOBER 7 (YNet 7/15/24)

While efforts are being made in the security establishment to examine and adjust military service for ultra-Orthodox youth in preparation for sending thousands of conscription orders, there has been a significant increase in the recruitment of Haredi youth for national civil service, according to data presented at Sunday's Cabinet meeting.

According to the figures, since the beginning of the Iron Swords War, twice as many ultra-Orthodox youth have been drafted into national service than in the corresponding period last year. This year, 813 ultra-Orthodox volunteers joined national service compared to 492 last year. A total of 1,538 members of the ultra-Orthodox community serve in security agencies such as the Shin Bet, Mossad, Israel Prison Service, and the Israel Police, as well as in education, management and other positions.

Some 19,000 Israelis were serving in national civil service as of July 2024. Of these, 12,033 are from the general Jewish community, 5,356 are from the Arab and Druze sector and 1,938 are from special populations.

The presentation discussed the actions that the National Service system took with the outbreak of the war, among them the activation of an emergency regulation in which the Authority's director general has permission to give instructions regarding a change in the way service is performed if he deems it necessary to assist the citizens of the country and its residents. In light of the declaration of a special situation on the home front, the approval of Minister of Settlement and National Missions Orit Strook was given.

The activation of the emergency regulation section 20 made it possible to set specific standards for the needs of the home front in combat, including the needs of the evacuees, shifting national service volunteers to relevant positions to strengthen the home front, including assistance to the evacuees, bereaved families and reservists. In addition, the national needs were mapped in cooperation with the Home Front Command and budgetary allocations were made for evacuees at risk. The director general of the authority pointed out dramatic trends: In the past year, and especially since October 7, hundreds more volunteers joined national service than during the same periods in previous years.

During the cabinet meeting, reference was made to the civil service paths for ultra-Orthodox youth, with an emphasis on positions adapted to the ultra-Orthodox lifestyles, looking at the needs of the state, the needs of the national service volunteer and the needs of the employment market. The CEO stated that there is a need to create national planning on the issue of integrating the ultra-Orthodox into national service frameworks, with the IDF prioritizing civil service, expanding the routes and options to serve, as well as providing legitimacy from both the general public and the ultra-Orthodox public.

"Immediately after the Simchat Torah (October 7) massacre and the outbreak of the war, I instructed to change the activity in the National Civil Service so that our volunteers would give the maximum significant assistance to the war effort," Strook said. "I thank the Authority's CEO Reuven Pinsky for leading this effort in an optimal way, and salute our volunteers for their exemplary commitment. I am convinced that the service frameworks for the ultra-

Orthodox public built by us can be used both as a good model and as a basis for receiving thousands of ultra-Orthodox young people who will contribute through them to the state and its security, and we are prepared to expand them as much as is requested."

Director General of the National Service Authority, Reuven Pinsky, said: "Within the war effort, the National Civil Service was constantly involved in helping to strengthen national resilience on the civilian front. The volunteers of the National Civil Service provided an immediate response to the evacuee communities in the hotels, to the bereaved families, to the injured, in the security and rescue agencies, in the hospitals, in education and much more. Every 18-year-old man and woman should serve the country, and if they were exempted from military service, they should join the civilian national service. The State of Israel needs us today more than ever."

NETANYAHU ORDERED ISRAELI ARMY TO TURN OFF RECORDING OF MEETINGS AFTER OCTOBER 7 (Ha'aretz 7/16/24)

As soon as the war with Hamas began on October 7, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered that the army's recording system be turned off in the command center at army headquarters, which is where all security cabinet meetings and other defense-related meetings were being held in those days. The army complied with this order.

Normally, a recording system is in automatic operation and records everything that happens there. But Netanyahu insisted that security cabinet meetings and any other meetings he specified would be recorded or transcribed only by the Prime Minister's Office, not by the IDF.

The order was transmitted by Netanyahu's former military secretary, Maj. Gen. Avi Gil, to the two army officers responsible for the command center's operations – the head of the Operations Directorate and the head of the Operations Brigade.

On October 12, five days after the war began, Channel 13 television reported that the Prime Minister's Office had barred the IDF from recording the security cabinet meetings that were taking place at the time and asked IDF officers to leave any recording devices outside the room. It did so even though the IDF routinely records security cabinet meetings, to aid it in translating any decisions reached at these meetings into orders in the field.

A few weeks later, a security guard from the Prime Minister's Office even demanded that she be allowed to search the items brought in by IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi to make sure he wasn't carrying a recording device.

As soon as the security situation made this possible, Netanyahu moved all the security cabinet meetings to his Tel Aviv office, which is located in the same compound as army headquarters. A source in Netanyahu's circles said he preferred to have the meetings in a place he controlled rather than trusting the IDF not to record the meetings.

Last week, journalist Nadav Eyal reported that Avi Gil, the former military secretary, contacted Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara several months ago and warned her that Netanyahu's bureau had tried to alter protocols from meetings conducted during the war.

And in November, Gidi Weitz reported in Haaretz that Tzachi Braverman, Netanyahu's chief of staff, had asked the cabinet secretary's office to give him classified summaries of security cabinet meetings held by the previous government. In addition, Braverman asked the stenographers' pool in the Prime Minister's Office to give him full protocols of those meetings.

The Prime Minister's Office responded to the report, stating that "in accordance with government regulations, all government meetings and ministerial committees are recorded by the Prime Minister's Office stenographers only. The discussions of the security cabinet are also recorded by the PMO, even if they take place at military sites."

ONE IN FOUR ISRAELI JEWS WOULD LEAVE ISRAEL TO ANOTHER COUNTRY IF THEY COULD, NEW SURVEY FINDS (Ha'aretz 7/17/24)

One in four Israeli Jews and four in ten Arab Israelis would leave Israel and emigrate to another country, if given a practical opportunity to do so, according to a new survey, whose results reflect a steady distrust with

Israel's political and military leadership.

The July results from the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) monthly survey, published on Tuesday, paint a grim picture. The data was collected from both Jews and Arabs, in proportion to Israel's population divide, with questions divided into five broad categories - The first deals with the war and its repercussions, the second with trust in leadership, the third with Israel-U.S. relations, the fourth with the ultra-Orthodox conscription controversy, and the fifth with questions about Israel's future.

An overwhelming majority of Israeli citizens are very or somewhat concerned about Israel's current security situation, with a slightly larger percentage of Arab citizens (90 percent) indicating this level of concern over Jewish Israelis (84 percent). On the right, including the center-right, the tendency is to be "somewhat concerned," while those in the center and leaning left tend to be "very concerned."

Respondents were also asked to rate their confidence in Israel's ability to win the war on a scale between one and five, a question JPPI has been posed every month since the war began.

Overall, confidence has steadily declined as the months have gone by, but in July, there was a slight increase compared with May and June in the degree of confidence among Jewish Israelis that Israel will win the war. 41 percent rated their confidence of victory at four or five this month as compared to May and June's average of 40 percent. Among Arab Israelis in the most recent poll, 45 percent rated the likelihood of victory at the lower levels (one or two), while a quarter (26 percent) rated it at the higher levels (four or five). Results of the survey also reflect a shift in Israeli opinion with respect to Israel's conduct during wartime. Compared with an identical question from two years ago, there has been a significant change among Israel's Jewish population regarding the correct balance between a desire to behave morally in war, and the need to defend Israeli interests. Two years ago most of the public supported an emphasis on morality, balanced with concern for the state's interests (31 percent favored ethical behavior with exceptions, and 22 percent favored an equal balance), but today the weight has shifted toward an interest-based policy, with morality coming second (26 percent for interests only and 32 percent for interests with exceptions in cases of for serious moral violation).

Results of this question yielded major ideology-driven disparities, with the right showing a significant preference (48 percent) for conduct solely based on interests with no moral considerations, the center-right showing a clear preference (50 percent) for conduct based on interests but with exceptions, and the center and left giving greater priority to a balance or to an emphasis on morality.

Respondents were also asked about their trust in the government as a whole and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, specifically, whose approval ratings have been low through the nine months since October 7 and remained so in July. Only two percent of Arabs and 16 percent of Jews expressed a very high level of confidence in Netanyahu. Nine percent of Arab Israelis have fairly or very high confidence in the government in general, while among Jewish Israelis, 26 percent have fairly or very high confidence in the government. This is a slight slippage in both sectors from last month.

The survey then asked about emigration. Participants were asked how strongly they agree with the statement, "If I had a practical opportunity to emigrate, I would do so." A quarter of Jewish Israelis and four in ten Arab Israelis indicated they agreed. For Arab respondents, this result showed an increase compared to March, the last time the question was asked, but the sample is smaller, and it is too early to tell whether this constitutes a trend.

Among Jewish Israelis, there has been almost no change on the issue of emigration since March. The percentage of those agreeing with the statement on emigration is higher among secular Israelis who identify with the center and the left (center - 33 percent, center-left - 36 percent), and significantly lower among religious Israelis (four percent).

Finally, participants were asked about their level of optimism for the State of Israel. Among both Jewish and Arab Israelis, there has been a slight decline in optimism regarding Israel's future compared with the March survey, and a

rise (mainly among Arabs) in the percentage of those who are pessimistic about the future of the state. Within the population as a whole, a small majority of pessimists outweighs optimists (51 percent versus 47 percent).

LIBERMAN AND BENNETT MEET IN BID TO FORGE NEW RIGHT-WING BLOC, BUT WHO WOULD LEAD IT? (Shalom Yerushalmi, *Tol* 7/17/24)

The formation of a new right-wing bloc in opposition to the current government has been proving elusive, with questions lingering as to who would lead the potential conservative mega-party.

On Wednesday morning, Israeli journalists shared photos of former prime minister Naftali Bennett and Yisrael Beytenu chair Avigdor Liberman meeting over coffee in central Tel Aviv, credited to the latter's office.

A television poll last month found that more Israelis believe Bennett is better suited to be prime minister than long-serving incumbent Benjamin Netanyahu, in a head-to-head matchup.

Bennett has been out of office since announcing he was leaving politics following the 2022 collapse of his diverse coalition government, which a year earlier ousted Netanyahu from the premiership after 12 consecutive years in the post amid political turmoil that included four national elections in three years.

Bennett has recently hinted at making a comeback, as Netanyahu's grip on power appears increasingly shaky amid the ongoing war sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack and as his coalition is torn over contentious legislative proposals backed by his ultra-Orthodox allies.

Liberman, for his part, predicted on Monday that Netanyahu would dissolve the Knesset and call for fresh elections in November.

At this point, it looks like Bennett and Liberman will run on separate tickets, because neither is willing to give up the first place in any new right-wing bloc to the other.

"Liberman will not be anyone's number two," a source told the Times of Israel's Hebrew sister site, *Zman Israel*, on Tuesday. "He has been polling at 14 seats for six months, and maybe he will get more. None of the others bring such a jackpot. Bennett is always strong in the polls, but in practice, not much happens."

On Monday, Channel 12 news reported that former Mossad chief Yossi Cohen had decided not to enter politics, after months of speculation about whether he would form a new right-wing party ahead of the next election.

Cohen was said to have told his associates, "Bennett, Liberman and [Gideon] Sa'ar are not ready to enter the same room and talk."

The report speculated that Cohen had decided to hold off on his political ambitions as he was unlikely to be selected to lead a potential right-wing bloc over Bennett or Liberman.

Cohen's decision could also be connected to a notice he and four other individuals — including Netanyahu — received from a state commission of inquiry investigating the so-called submarine affair last month, warning that he may be negatively impacted by the probe's findings that his conduct had jeopardized national security.

The commission, formed under Bennett in 2022, has spent more than two years probing submarine and naval vessel purchases that occurred under a previous Netanyahu government.

Former Likud minister Sa'ar, on the other hand, appears to be willing to be number three on the right-wing bloc's leadership, having made it clear that he is open to making concessions.

"I do not want to say that I have already given up my ego. I am saying simply that if the goal is important, I will make personal concessions for the sake of unity," he said in May.

Elsewhere on the right, a recent poll found that National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, leader of the far-right Otzma Yehudit party, is the preferred candidate among supporters of the coalition parties to lead the right-wing bloc after Netanyahu is no longer in politics.

The Maariv survey found that 24 percent of respondents prefer Ben Gvir, followed by ex-Mossad chief Cohen (14%) and Bezalel Smotrich, head of the fellow far-right Religious Zionism party (11%).



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TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Open-mouthed and Closed-minded

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

"G-d opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Bilaam, 'What have I done to you that you have struck me these three times?'" (22:28)

Parshas Balak recounts Bilaam's attempt to curse the Jewish people and the many blessings and praises that he heaps upon them instead. Despite G-d's instruction not to try to curse the Jews, Bilaam travels to Moav in an attempt to do the bidding of Moav's king, Balak. On Bilaam's way there, his donkey sees an angel blocking the way and first, wanders off the road into a field, then rubs Bilaam's leg up against a wall, and finally crouches down unwilling to travel further – and each time receives a good whacking from Bilaam. Suddenly, G-d opens the mouth of the donkey, granting it the power of speech and it proceeds to lecture Bilaam over his conduct with it. Moments later, G-d opens Bilaam's eyes and reveals the presence of the angel obstructing their path.

It is axiomatic that G-d does not alter the course of nature for no reason. Why was it necessary for G-d to open the mouth of the donkey and miraculously grant it the power of speech? Would it not have sufficed to simply reveal the presence of the angel to Bilaam and he then would have recognized how he had mistreated his donkey?

The Sforno explains that the miracle of the talking donkey was intended to impart an important lesson to Bilaam so he would change his mind and return home. Bilaam had set out with the belief that even though it was against G-d's will that he curse the Jews, he could still do so if he pleased. The lesson he was supposed to take was that just as G-d can grant speech to something that was, until now, incapable of speech, so too He could take away or appropriate the power of speech of a talented orator like Bilaam.

Bilaam should have absorbed this message and made an about face – but he didn't. What prevented him from taking this lesson to heart? Perhaps Bilaam had simply gone too far down the path to turn back now. Having convinced himself of the validity of his plan and having already set out, he was too stubborn to hear the message that G-d was sending him and turn back.

This episode can be important for each of us to bear in mind. We too can become entrenched in a plan or in a position making it challenging to hear another perspective, no matter how sound it is. Bilaam's stubbornness can serve as reminder to remain open to fairly considering an alternative viewpoint.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

Who has counted the dust of Yaakov...? (23:10)

The numerous mitzvos that they fulfill on the dust, as not plowing with an ox and donkey, not planting klayim (cross breeding), the ash of the Parah Adumah (Red Heifer)... (Rashi)

What is special about the mitzvos that are related to dust and ash that Bilaam made reference to them?

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

Bilaam arose in the morning and saddled his she-donkey... (22:21)

Hashem said, "Wicked one, Avraham preceded you, as it says "And Avraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey." (Rashi)

Who else got his animals ready for riding, even though it should have been done by his servants?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which three mountains were not flattened by the Ananei HaKovod (Clouds of Glory)?

Answer: Har Sinai, Hor Ha'har and Har Nevo

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

Toward the beginning of *parashas Balak* (22:16-18), the Torah relates that in the course of Balak's efforts to cajole Bilaam to curse Israel for him, he assured him that "I shall honor you greatly, and everything that you say to me I shall do," to which Bilaam responded: "If Balak will give me his houseful of silver and gold, I cannot transgress the word of Hashem, my G-d, to do anything small or great." Toward the end of the *parashah* (24:10-13), the Torah relates that after Hashem had repeatedly caused Bilaam to bless rather than curse Israel, Balak angrily exclaimed to Bilaam: "To curse my enemies did I summon you, and behold! Hashem has withheld you from honor," to which Bilaam responded by reminding him of his earlier warning.

We have previously discussed (*Balak* 5779) the question of whether Bilaam was entitled to compensation in light of his failure to perform the service for which he had been hired; we discuss here the question of whether he would have been entitled to compensation had he actually succeeded in cursing Israel.

Modern law (at least in the U.S. and the U.K.) contains the principle of *ex turpi causa non oritur actio* ("action does not arise from a dishonorable cause"), also known as the "illegality defense": a legal claim cannot be based on an illegal action. According to most authorities, however, *halachah* has no such doctrine, and so if an employer hires an employee to perform a prohibited act and the employee proceeds to do so, the employee is entitled to the agreed upon compensation (*Nesivos ha-Mishpat siman* 9 s.k. 1). There is an opinion that this only extends to the employee not being required to **return** compensation that he has already received, but **ab initio**, the employer need not and should not **pay** compensation to the employee, due to the principle that "the sinner should not profit" from his crime (see Mishnah *Challah* 2:7, Bavli *Yevamos* 92b and *Gittin* 55b – *Ma'archei Lev* 113), but the more widely held view is that the employer is liable to the employee for the agreed upon compensation even *ab initio*, and that this claim will be enforced by the court (*Imrei Binah Dayanim* 17; *Teshuras Shai kama* 7; R. Lavi Uriel, *Teviah le-Hachazir Tashlumei Sechar Limmud*, S/N 2026).

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am Mashiach's ride.
2. I was also Avraham's.
3. I am like Yissachar.
4. I got hit three Yomim Tovim.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for a moment.
2. I am daily.
3. Bilaam knew me.
4. For a few days I wasn't.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Parah Adumah (Red Heifer) (I am one of ten, I am not a book, but I am red, For the wisest I am a mystery, I was a reward for honor.)

#2 Nachash (Serpent) (I was hurt for words, I hurt for words, My replica was the salvation, Adding a 'saf' makes me copper.)

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