

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH SHABBOS SHORTS

Candle Lighting 4:30 | Havdalah 5:34

The Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by friends and family to mark the first Yahrzeit of Rafael Hirsh ben Shlomo, Richard Weinstein, on the 22nd of Kislev.



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wp.yise.org/whatsapp

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 Tovs

Debby & Barry Greengart on the wedding of their grandson Yitzzy Markowitz, son of Chavi & Benjy Markowitz, to Rivka Benyowitz in Baltimore.

Marsha & Yitz Kasdan on the birth of a grandson to Fayge & Chaim Kasdan. Mazal Tov to big sisters Miri, Ryzee, and Frieda, grandparents Malky & Pinny Hikind, Marsha's mother Evelyn Elbogen, Aunt Shana & Uncle Hirschel and family, and all the other aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Ellyn Tanenberg on the engagement of her granddaughter, Aliza Sara Rosenbaum, to Aaron Cohen, son of Leah & Ari Cohen of Staten Island, NY. Mazal Tov to parents, Emily & Rabbi Dr. Elliott Rosenbaum of Jacksonville, FL. Mazal Tov to grandparents, Magda Rosenbaum and Jerry Rosenbaum.

Joelle & Bill Zimbalist on the birth of a great-grandson, Eliyahu Moshe Wolff, born to Nechama & Yaakov Wolff of Bnai Nitzarim. Mazal Tov to grandparents Sara & Simmy Zimbalist of Beit Shemesh.

Condolences

Adina & Josh Obstfeld on the passing of Adina's mother, Lidia Vereanu, A"H.

Kiddush Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by **Elaine & Robert Leichter** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Robert's father, Yitzchok ben Eliezer, Z"L.

Shul Kiddush is sponsored by **Richard Chaifetz** in memory of his mother Gertrude Chaifetz, Bluma Gitel bas Moshe Zelig, Z"L, on her 55th Yahrzeit.

The Sephardic Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by **Rabbi Yehoshua Levy** in memory of his father, Meir ben Miriam, Z"L.

Drasha, Shiurim & Coffee Station Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Shiur is sponsored by **David Jaray** in appreciation of **Rabbi Grossman** and in memory of all those who have lost their lives in Israel. May their Neshamas have an Aliyah.

Rabbi Hyatt's Gemara Shiur is sponsored by **David Jaray** in appreciation of **Rabbi Grauman** and in memory of Rabbi Hyatt, A"H. Refuah Shlema to all those that are wounded in Israel during these times and Brachos for the Israeli soldiers, hostages, and students.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Navi Shiur is sponsored by Gilla & Harold Saltzman wishing **Rabbi Rosenbaum** and all of Gila's classmates a very happy Chanukah, שמחה ואור.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Gemara Shiur is sponsored by **Naomi & Ori Carmel** as a Zechus for the Refuah Shlema of Shmuel ben Veera.

The Lower Lobby coffee station is sponsored by an anonymous Roast Master.

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:

4:30 (B,SBM), 4:20 (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), 4:10 (B), 4:25 (Sephardi, LBM)

Shalosh Seudos: 4:35 (S)

Maariv: 5:34 (B)

DIVREI TORAH:

8:45 Minyan:

Rabbi Rosenbaum

9:15 Minyan:

Rabbi Postelnek

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur: (SBM)

Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Sfas Emes Chabura: 8:55 (S)

Rabbi Postelnek

Speaker at Shalosh Seudos: 4:35 (S)

Elie Kligman

Alsheich between Mincha/Maariv: (LBM)

Rabbi Levy

Youth Announcements

Teen Minyan - 9:15 AM in The House, followed by Kiddush

Shabbos Groups - New format!

- Toddler Group, under 2 with parent, Toddler Room starting at 10 AM
- Kinder Group, 2-PreK, upstairs behind the balcony now beginning at 9:30 AM until the end of shul
- Boys K-4th & Girls K-Middle School meet in lower lobby at 10am. K-3rd girls and the boys groups at YGW, 4th and up girls in the The House. Pick-up 11:15 AM in the Lower Lobby.

Boys Shabbos Chaburah - 4th-6th grade boys between Mincha/Maariv with Rabbi Hillel Shaps in the Social Hall.

Dor L'Dor this Motzei Shabbos, December 21 at 7 PM.

High School Boys Laser Tag & Melave Malka this Motzei Shabbos, December 21, 8:45 PM at The House.

Middle School Girls Challah Bake - this Sunday, December 22, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM at YISE.

Mommy and Me Program is rescheduled to January 12.

Coming Up: Middle School Boys Chanukah Mesibah

YISE Supports Israel

YISE invites members with family on active IDF duty to share their profiles at announce@yise.org.

YISE maintains a community-wide Tehillim WhatsApp group. To join, visit chat.whatsapp.com/GdkM5n3uJx44h8xFbwBE10. To submit names of soldiers serving in the IDF for tefilot, please send the soldier's Hebrew name and his/her mother's Hebrew name to csimon@yise.org.

We pray that our soldiers will return soon to their peacetime roles, and in the interim ask our members to daven and undertake other zechuyos on behalf of these and other IDF personnel defending Israel and our people.

Tefilah We gather in the Belonofsky Sanctuary on Sunday evenings after Mincha/Maariv for 15 minutes of communal Tehillim. Additionally, Tehillim are recited at each daily and Shabbos minyan.

Shiur for Israel: Rabbi Rosenbaum leads a daily 15-minute Zoom of Tehillim recital and study of Sefer Hachinuch, Sunday through Friday at 12:30 PM on Zoom A.

Tzedaka A list of charitable organizations is available at: <https://www.yise.org/israel-charities>

As we engage our efforts through tefilah, tzedakah and political action, let us also beseech Hashem daily to bring safety to the citizens of Israel, success to its military, and clarity to its leadership.

Upcoming YISE Events

Weekend with Baseball Player Elie Kligman - this weekend, December 20 - 21, join us for the following events with Shomer Shabbos Division 1 NCAA baseball player, Elie Kligman: Friday Night Oneg at 8 PM at the home of Carol & Tuvia Lazar (708 Lamberton Drive), Shalosh Seudos at 4:35 PM in the Social Hall, and Motzei Shabbos interactive baseball clinics at Berman Hebrew Academy. Advance registration is required for the clinics, register at yise.org/kligman.

Men's Melaveh Malka - Join Rabbi Rosenbaum and Rabbi Postelnek this Motzei Shabbos for a Kislev Kumzitz with music, Divrei Torah and subs! December 21, 8:30 PM at the Postelnek home, 11600 Fillmore Drive. To sponsor, visit www.yise.org/mmm.

Chanukah Mesiba - Join us for delicious food, exciting activities, and fun for all ages - featuring a live magic show! Sunday, December 29, 2:30 - 5:00 PM, in the Social Hall. **All fees have been waived, please be our guest!** RSVPs are appreciated and sponsorships are welcome at www.yise.org/mesiba. [see flyer](#)

Trivia Night - January 11, 8:00 PM in the Social Hall. Pizza, drinks, coffee bar, and prizes! Come with a team of 5-8 people, or join a team that night! For ages 14+. RSVP at yise.org/trivia [see flyer](#)

Voice Notes of Inspiration - Join Rabbi Rosenbaum's Voice Notes of Inspiration Whatsapp group for daily thoughts on Chanukah from Sunday, December 22 through Friday, January 3. yise.org/vnoi.

Sfas Emes Chabura - A twenty-minute Chabura on the Parsha. Find deeper meaning in the Parsha and Chagim by learning the Sfas Emes's weekly insights. 8:55 AM Shabbos morning in the Social Hall.

Men's Night Seder Program - Learn with a Chavrusa, Chabura or on your own. Tuesdays & Thursdays in the Small Beis Medrash, 8:30-9:15 PM, Maariv to follow. Chabura option with Rabbi Postelnek, "From Iyun to Halacha: Real questions learned real well." Includes light snacks and Thursday night cholent! To sponsor, visit yise.org/nightseder.

Silver Spring Eruv Association Appeal - Please donate if you benefit from the Eruv. The requested donation is \$54 per household, but smaller and larger amounts are gratefully accepted. SSEA is a 501(c)(3) organization, and contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Donate through the PayPal Giving Fund to <https://www.paypal.com/US/fundraiser/charity/3945802> or mail a check to SSEA, 707 Lamberton Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Questions? Email SilverSpringEruv@gmail.com

Zoom Connection details in the SHMA and at <https://wp.yise.org/zoom>. Flyers are available at <https://wp.yise.org/flyers>

Lost and Found Notice - We want to keep our shared space clean, organized, and welcoming for everyone! Our coatrooms, shelves, and other public spaces will now be decluttered regularly, and a lost and found bin will be located in the lower lobby coat room. After 30 days, unclaimed items may be donated or disposed of at the discretion of the shul. Help us maintain a tidy environment by: checking the lost and found regularly, and claiming your items promptly. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding!

The Week Ahead		Sunday December 22 21 Kislev	Monday December 23 22 Kislev	Tuesday December 24 23 Kislev	Wednesday December 25 24 Kislev	Thursday December 26 25 Kislev Chanukah	Friday December 27 26 Kislev Chanukah	Next Shabbos December 27-28 2024 27 Kislev 5785 Mikeitz/Chanukah Mevorchim Hachodesh Candle lighting: 4:34 Havdalah: 5:38 Friday Night: Mincha/Maariv: 4:30 (B, SBM), 4:25 (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), 4:30 (B), 4:20 (Sephardi, LBM) Maariv: 5:38
Shacharis	Ashkenazi (S,B,B)	6:30 7:30 8:45	6:15 6:45 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	6:15 6:35 8:45	6:15 6:35 8:45	
	Sephardi (LBM)	8:00	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	
Mincha/ Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)	4:35	4:35	4:35	4:35	4:35		
	Sephardi (LBM)	4:25	4:25	4:25	4:25	4:25		
Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)		7:30	7:30		7:30		
Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 6:00 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 6:29 AM, Latest Netz: 7:27 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:45 AM, Earliest Mincha: 12:41 PM, Earliest Shkia: 4:49 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim 5:38 PM								
RABBI DOVID ROSENBAUM RABBI YOSEF POSTELNEK - ASST RABBI JOSH SEIDEMANN - PRESIDENT			NEXT SHABBOS SHORTS DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, NOON SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE SHABBOS SHORTS TO: ANNOUNCE@YISE.ORG WWW.YISE.ORG 301-593-4465 OFFICE@YISE.ORG					



DECEMBER 2024 | 30 MARCHESHVAN - 30 KISLEV 5785

בס"ד

SHMA

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH
SHOMRAI MONTHLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Shul Announcements

Voice Notes of Inspiration - Join Rabbi Rosenbaum's Voice Notes of Inspiration Whatsapp group for daily thoughts on Chanukah from Sunday, December 22 through January 3. [yise.org/vnoi](https://wp.yise.org/vnoi).

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

Camp Chaverim - Early Bird Registration is OPEN until December 1. Lock in your spot and get your Chaverim swag! <https://chaverimovernight.com/>

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday nights, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. December 4 and 18 in person in the YISE Social Hall. December 11 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.

Yad Yehuda's cold weather drives - Please help us collect cold-weather FOOD and ACCESSORIES to bring warmth to households that depend on our community's support. Please Donate: FOOD: soups, hot cocoa, tea bags, coffee K-cups, canned pumpkin, pineapple, cranberry sauce ACCESSORIES: NEW scarves, gloves, hats, socks, and girls' tights CHANUKAH: latke mixes, applesauce, olive oil, candles. Ship to or drop at: Yad Yehuda of Greater Washington, 9601 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901. Or drop off at any of our shul or kosher grocery store donation bins.

Mikvah Emunah Society Women's Panel - "Balancing Connections: Nurturing Ourselves, Family and Community" and evening of questions and answers with community Rebbetzins. Tuesday, December 10, 7:30 PM at Ohr HaTorah.

TGN Pre-Chanukah Lunch and Learn - The Menorah with two Shamashim with Rabbi Marvin Goldman—Wednesday, December 18, 12:15 PM, at KMS. RSVP by December 15 to director@goldennetwork.org.

BCGW's Meir L'Olam Hospital Pantry Program's Capital Campaign - Please support COMMUNITY KOSHER HOSPITAL PANTRIES located in seven area hospitals: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=E253226&id=53>

BCGW Senior Social Club Chanukah Party - Thursday, December 26 on Zoom at 2 PM. For more information contact: info@bikurcholimgw.org.

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.

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 9:30 AM 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.

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 - PRESIDENT

JANUARY DEADLINE: MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, NOON
SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE SHMA TO: ANNOUNCE@YISE.ORG
WWW.YISE.ORG | 301-593-4465 | OFFICE@YISE.ORG

***Rabbi Rosenbaum's daily 12:30 Tehillim/Sefer HaChinuch shiur - will not meet December 15 and 16**

Sundays

7:05 - 7:50 AM - Rabbi Yehoshua Levy's Gemara Shiur, Masechet Chulin, in the **Franco Beit Midrash**
9:30 AM - GWCK Sunday Kollel Learning 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 Sefer HaChinuch as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**

Mondays

6:35 - 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 Sefer HaChinuch as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**
8:00 - 9:00 PM Chavrusa Learning, in the Small Beis Medrash. For more info contact Rabbi Levy at 240-423-8810
8:45 PM SCP (Semichas Chaver Program) New semester begins Nov. 11 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 - 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 Sefer HaChinuch 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**
8:30 - 9:15 PM - Men's Night Seder, learn with a chavrusa, chabura, or on your own. Maariv to follow.

Wednesdays

6:35 - 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**
12:30 PM - Rabbi Rosenbaum Tehillim followed by a 15-min Shiur on Sefer HaChinuch 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 - 9:15 PM - CLAS Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman - Reading Responsa, on **Zoom E**
8:10 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 - 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 Sefer HaChinuch as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**
8:15 - 9:15 PM - CLAS Rabbi Avraham Sussman Yesodei Hatorah Gemara Skills Building for Men, on **Zoom F**
8:15 - 9:15 PM - CLAS Rabbi Hillel Shaps On the Same Page Gemara for Men, in the **Social Hall**
8:30 - 9:15 PM - Men's Night Seder, learn with a chavrusa, chabura, or on your own. Maariv to follow.

Fridays

5:55 AM - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Gemara Shiur for Men, on **Zoom A**
6:35 - 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 Sefer HaChinuch as a merit for Israel, on **Zoom A**

Class times and locations as of November 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



Weekend with Visiting Baseball Player, **Elie Kligman**

December 20-21

- **Friday, December 20, 8:00 PM: Oneg Shabbos,** at the home of Carol and Tuvia Lazar (708 Lambertson Drive)
 - **Shabbos, December 21, 4:35 PM: Shalosh Seudos,** at YISE Social Hall
 - **Motzei Shabbos, December 21: Interactive Baseball Clinics with Elie** at Berman Hebrew Academy*
 - 7 - 8 PM: Elementary School Boys and Girls (Grades 2 - 5)
 - 8:15 - 9:15 PM: Middle School Boys and Girls (Grades 6 - 8)
- *Spots are limited, advance registration required, **register at** yise.org/kligman



Elie was drafted by the Washington Nationals in the 2021 draft, becoming the first Major League Baseball draftee not to play on Shabbos. Elie opted to attend college before going pro, and is currently a Division 1 student-athlete at Sacramento State University. He is currently one of two observant Jewish baseball players in the NCAA, and has played for Team Israel and in the summer, West Coast League. Elie looks forward to joining us for a fun and exciting weekend!



MEN'S KISLEV KUMZITZ & Melaveh Malka

Join Rabbi Rosenbaum
& Rabbi Postelnek for

MUSIC

DIVREI TORAH

CHIZUK & HISORERUS

SUBS

**Motzei Shabbos
December 21
8:30PM**



Postelnek Home
11600 Fillmore Drive

To sponsor: yise.org/mmm

DOR L'DOR

At Young Israel Shomrai Emunah!

*A Family Chevrusah-style Learning in a fun environment
Delicious Pizza! Interactive Discussions! Weekly Raffles!*

5785 Motzei Shabbos Times:

November 9 — 7:00 pm
November 23 — 7:00 pm
December 7 — 7:00 pm
December 21 — 7:00 pm
January 4 — 7:00 pm
January 18 — 7:15 pm
February 1 — 7:15 pm
February 15 — 7:30 pm
March 1 — 8:00 pm

For program questions, contact Michael Shimoff at mshimoff@yise.org

YISE Arcola Social Hall

Sponsor opportunities:

Pillar \$500 | Sponsor \$360 | Supporter \$250 |
Chaver \$180 | Friend \$50

To sponsor this program, please contact the YISE office at: office@yise.org

YISE YOUTH PRESENTS

LASER-TAG &

MELAVE MALKA

FOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

SAT NIGHT
DECEMBER 21ST @
8:45PM

AT THE YISE HOUSE
1128 ARCOLA AVE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL [SSHIMOFF@YISE.ORG](mailto:sshimoff@yise.org)

YISE Youth Presents: Menorah Shaped Challah Bake



Open to Middle School Girls
(Grades 6th to 8th)

Sunday, December 22nd
5pm - 6:30pm
In the YISE Social Hall

For more info, email sshimoff@yise.org

YISE YOUTH Presents: A LEGO Menorah Building Contest!!!!



Open to all YISE members,
submit a picture of your
creation by Erev Shabbos
Chanukah to win a prize!



Submit pictures/ any questions to
sshimoff@yise.org



JOIN ————— YISE'S

MEN'S NIGHT SEDER

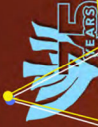
LEARN WITH A CHAVRUSA,
CHABURA OR ON YOUR OWN!

Tuesdays & Thursdays | Restarts **Nov. 5th!**
Small Beis Medrash | 8:30-9:15pm
 Maariv to follow

Light snacks. Thursday night cholent! To sponsor: yise.org/nightseder

FROM IYUN TO HALACHA:
 REAL QUESTIONS LEARNED REAL WELL
 with Rabbi Postelnek





UPDATED INFO!
LOOKING FORWARD
TO SEEING YOU!

YISE CHOCOLATE CHANUKAH MESIBA

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29
 2:30PM – 5:00PM
 YISE SOCIAL HALL

PASTA, ACTIVITIES AND FUN FOR ALL!
MAGIC SHOW AT 3:30PM!
 ENDING WITH MENORAH LIGHTING, SINGING & GELT

RSVP & SPONSOR @ YISE.ORG/MESBA

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Menorah sponsor	\$360
Flame sponsor	\$180
Candle sponsor	\$72

**FREE OF
CHARGE!**
 RSVP APPRECIATED

Child (3-10)	
Adult	
Family max.	



Voice Notes of Inspiration

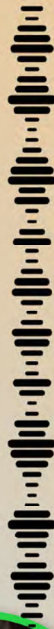
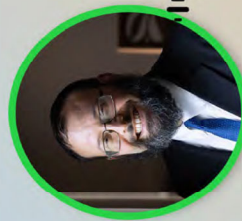
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Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Volume 31, Issue 9

Shabbat Parashat Vayeshev

5785 - B"H

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

Speech Therapy - From Vayeshev to the end of the book of Bereishit we read the story of Joseph and his brothers. From the very beginning we are plunged into a drama of sibling rivalry that seems destined to end in tragedy.

All the elements are there, and it begins with ominous parental favouritism. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. The Torah says this was because "he had been born to him in his old age." But we also know it was because Joseph was the first son of his beloved Rachel, who had been infertile for many years.

Jacob gave this favouritism a visible symbol, the richly ornamented robe or coat of many colours that he commissioned for him. The mere sight of this coat served as constant provocation to the brothers. In addition there were the bad reports Joseph brought to his father about his half-brothers, the children of the handmaids. And by the fourth verse of the parsha we read the following: "When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him, velo yachlu dabro le-shalom."

What is the meaning of this last phrase? Here are some of the standard translations:

They could not speak a kind word to him.

They could not speak peacefully to him.

They could not speak to him on friendly terms.

Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschutz, however, recognised that the Hebrew construction is strange. Literally it means, "they could not speak him to peace." What might this mean? Rabbi Eybeschutz refers us to the command in Vayikra: You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely reprimand your neighbour and not bear sin because of him.

This is how Maimonides interprets this command as it relates to interpersonal relations: When a person sins against another, the injured party should not hate the offender and keep silent . . . it is his duty to inform the offender and say to him, why did you do this to me? Why did you sin against me in this matter? . . . If the offender repents and pleads for forgiveness, he should be forgiven.

Rabbi Eybeschutz's point is simple. Had the brothers been able to speak to Joseph they might have told him of their anger at his talebearing, and of their distress at seeing the many-coloured coat. They might have spoken frankly about their sense of humiliation at the way their father favoured Rachel over their mother Leah, a favouritism that was now being carried through into a second generation. Joseph might have come to understand their feelings. It might have made him more modest or at least more thoughtful. But lo yachlu dabro le-shalom. They simply couldn't bring themselves to speak. As Nachmanides writes, on the command: You shall not hate your brother in your heart: "Those who hate tend to hide their hate in their heart."

We have here an instance of one of the Torah's great insights, that conversation is a form of conflict resolution, whereas the breakdown of speech is often a prelude to violent revenge.

The classic case is that of Absalom and Amnon, two half-brothers who were sons of King David. In a shocking episode, Amnon rapes Absalom's sister Tamar: Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate tunic that she wore; she put her hand to her head and went off, weeping as she went.

And Absalom, her brother, said to her, "Has your brother Amnon been with you? For now, my sister,

be silent; he is your brother. Do not take this affair to heart."

And Tamar remained, forlorn, in the house of her brother Absalom. When King David heard all about this affair, he was absolutely livid. And Absalom would not speak a word to Amnon, neither good nor bad, for Absalom despised Amnon for having violated Tamar, his sister.

Absalom maintained his silence for two years. Then he invited all of David's sons for a feast at the time of sheep-shearing, and ordered his servants to wait until Amnon was drunk and then kill him, which they did.

Hate grows in silence. It did with Absalom. It did with Joseph's brothers. Before the chapter ends, we see them plot to kill Joseph, then throw him into a pit, and then sell him into slavery. It is a terrible story and led directly to the Israelites' exile and slavery in Egypt.

The Talmud uses the phrase, ein sichah ela tefillah, which literally means, "Conversation is a form of prayer," because in opening ourselves up to the human other, we prepare ourselves for the act of opening ourselves up with the Divine Other, which is what prayer is: a conversation with God.

Conversation does not, in and of itself, resolve conflict. Two people who are open with one another may still have clashing desires or competing claims. They may simply not like one another. There is no law of predetermined harmony in the human domain. But conversation means that we recognise one another's humanity. At its best it allows us to engage in role reversal, seeing the world from the other's point of view. Think of how many real and intractable conflicts, whether in the personal or political domain, might be transformed if we could do that.

In the end Joseph and his brothers had to live through real trauma before they were able to recognise one another's humanity, and much of the rest of their story – the longest single narrative in the Torah – is about just that.

Judaism is about the God who cannot be seen, who can only be heard; about the God who created the universe with words and whose first act of kindness to the first human being was to teach him how to use words. Jews, even highly secular Jews, have often been preoccupied with language. Wittgenstein understood that philosophy is about language.

Levi Strauss saw cultures as forms of language. Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker pioneered study of the language instinct. George Steiner has written about translation and the limits of language.

The Sages were eloquent in speaking about the dangers of lashon hara, "evil speech," the power of language to fracture relationships and destroy trust and goodwill. But there is evil silence as well as evil speech. It is no accident that at the very beginning of the most fateful tale of sibling rivalry in Bereishit, the role – specifically the failure – of language is alluded to, in a way missed by virtually all translations. Joseph's brothers might have "spoken him to peace" had they been open, candid and willing to communicate. Speech broke down at the very point where it was needed most.

Words create; words reveal; words command; words redeem. Judaism is a religion of holy words. For words are the narrow bridge across the abyss between soul and soul, between two human beings, and between humanity and God.

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Language is the redemption of solitude, and the mender of broken relationships. However painful it is to speak about our hurt, it is more dangerous not to do so. Joseph and his brothers might have been reconciled early on in their lives, and thus spared themselves, their father, and their descendants, much grief. Revealing pain is the first step to healing pain. Speech is a path to peace.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Jews, Not Reuvs - "And Judah said unto his brethren: What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood?" A Jew's identity – at least as far as the word Jew itself is concerned – is related specifically to descendants from the tribe of Judah. The other ten tribes, led off into captivity, were lost to history. Thus, the vast majority of Jews in the world owe their very existence to one tribe, Judah. The others who survived come from the tribe of Levi; these are fewer in number, and they – the regular Levites and the more elevated sons of Aaron, the kohen-priests – ministered in the Holy Temple, and retained their special lineage to this very day.

The mere fact that a person can still call himself a Jew 3,500 years after Sinai and despite close to 2,000 years without our own homeland, is no small miracle. He/she is one of the rare ones, a delicate and miraculous survivor sustained and nurtured and kept alive despite exile, wars, pogroms, and assimilation. To understand what it is that allows a Jew to survive despite all the forces against him, we ought to turn to the founder of this particular line, Judah himself.

What special traits did he possess which were absent from his brothers? Apparently, father Jacob-Israel identified his uniqueness as well, having granted him – and not his first-born brother Reuven – the gift and birthright of messianic majesty: 'the scepter shall not depart from Judah... and unto him will gather the community of nations'. We still pray every day for a ruler in Jerusalem from the House of David – a descendant of Judah!

What serves to especially sharpen our query is the fact that – at the moment of truth, when an angry and jealous mob of brothers cast the hapless favorite son Joseph into a pit (according to the Midrash, filled with snakes and scorpions) – Reuven and Judah each react, with Reuven's words appearing to be the more courageous and edifying. It turns out that Reuven steps into his role as first-born and acts accordingly, as he attempts to abort the brothers' evil design: 'Let us not kill him... Shed no blood... Cast him into this pit... but lay no hand upon him...'. His plan, as the text seems to tell us and which Rashi confirms, is that Reuven's intention was to return to the pit afterwards and to personally restore Joseph to their father.

Reuven, however, never gets the chance to execute his possible rescue. The text records that Judah sights a caravan of Ishmaelite traders in the distance, and suggests to his brothers that there is no point to murdering Joseph when they could just as easily earn money from his sale: "What profit [mah betzah] is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh...."

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Judah's proposal is accepted, and Joseph joins the caravan as a slave in tow, the silver that his head brought now in the pockets of the brothers. We then read how Reuven returns, finds an empty pit, 'and rent his garments'. His despair is deep and painful: "The child is not and I, whither shall I go?" And now the others have no choice but to invent a story about animals having torn apart their brother Joseph – for how can they possibly admit to their father that they sold his beloved son into slavery?

If we compare the responses of Reuven and Judah, the heroic one seems to be the response of Reuven. He risks his brothers' wrath when he initially stops them from carrying out an act of murder, and devises an alternative plan which, albeit dangerous, might allow him to bring about a rescue.

Judah, on the other hand, is crass and commercial, turning it all into a question of profit. He speaks like an opportunist, a cool businessman. He sees a good deal, a group of traders in the distance and so convinces the brothers to get rid of their nemesis and enjoy a material advantage at the same time. In this light his concluding words "for he is our brother and our flesh" sound hypocritical. If Judah indeed harbored fraternal feelings for Joseph, how could he subject him to the abject slave conditions and to the thousand gods of Egypt?!

Nevertheless, Jacob chooses Judah as the recipient of the birthright, rejecting Reuven: "...unstable as water, you will no longer be first..." Thus our question is, why Judah, and not Reuven? Why are we called Jews and not Reuvs?

Let's examine Judah from two perspectives. One way of interpreting the text is that Judah was wrong by citing the profit motive, and had the blessings of Jacob been given the following week, Reuven, and not Judah, would probably have received the birthright. But Judah's life didn't end at the side of the pit. He continued to grow and evolve. He is the archetypal ba'al-teshuvah, the classic penitent. When he impregnates his daughter-in-law Tamar, we see the greatness of a person able to admit his mistake, despite the personal risk and shame involved in revealing his guilt. Indeed, he says publicly, "She is more righteous than I".

And when we follow Judah's development to the point when he offers himself as a slave to the Grand Vizier of Egypt in exchange for Benjamin's release into the arms of their aged father, we see just how far a distance Judah has travelled. Jacob's words regarding his fourth son, "...from the prey, my son, you have gone up..." confirms the ascent of Judah from jealous veniality to altruistic heroism. And perhaps it is just this ability to pick oneself off the ground and raise one's head up high, to redeem one's past, to recreate one's life, not to be victimized by fate but to rise above it, which made Judah the most worthy namesake for his Jewish descendants.

But there is also a second way to view Judah: perhaps he is not so much a penitent as practitioner, a shrewd realist who understands the art of compromise. As far as Judah is concerned, leaving Joseph inside the pit (especially if it was really filled with snakes and scorpions) was tantamount to leaving him to die a cruel death. When Judah saw the Ishmaelites in the distance, he seized the opportunity to save his brother.

In order to be heard by his angry and jealous brothers, he understood that he had to conceal his pure-hearted motivations under the guise of a profit-making venture. Although he realizes that sending Joseph off to Egypt poses an obvious danger, it is a paltry risk when compared to the certainty of death by starvation in the pit. Reuven may have had the best intentions for Joseph, but intentions alone are not enough. "Let us not kill him," Reuven declared, but his words fell on deaf ears. Judah, on the other hand, understood that his brothers had murder in their hearts and therefore he couched his plea in

accordance with the politicians' 'art of the possible'. It is for this reason that he used a word which would be likely to strike a responsive chord in his brothers' hearts: betzah – profit, money, cash. His goal was to do whatever it took to divert their passion for blood.

Since Judah was effective in his very first test of leadership, as an individual who was able to sway nine very angry men away from their intention to murder, it is Judah who becomes worthy of receiving the birthright from Jacob-Israel.

These opposite interpretations of Judah at the pit are echoed in a later Talmudic debate surrounding the attitude of our sages towards arbitration and compromise, using a cognate term for compromise – botzea – which is derived from betza (profit). R. Meir insists that it is forbidden to compromise or arbitrate, that the law must express absolute purity. Indeed, he who blesses the compromiser – Judah, who used the word betza – is to be scorned by God. Moreover, R. Eliezer asks: "If one stole a measure of wheat, ground and baked it and then performs the ritual act of separating the Challah, what blessing does he make?" And the answer he gives is that in such a situation the individual crass enough to make a blessing on stolen goods is to be scorned by God. And he, too, cites the aforementioned verse from the Psalms, giving it a slightly different twist: "the one who steals (botzea) and blesses is to be scorned by God".

Clearly, these sages are telling us that Judah's statements in our Torah portions are duplicitous, a comparison being made between his ignoble speech to his brothers and a man pronouncing a blessing over stolen cake. How can Judah have declared "he is our brother, our flesh" and then turn around and sell his 'brother' to the highest bidder! Judah the crook is attempting to whitewash his crime with a blessing! Whoever praises the one who said 'betzah – profit' is to be scorned by God!

But the final word in the Talmud is not given to this opinion. We go on to learn R. Judah b. Korcha's definitive statement, "Settlement by arbitration is a meritorious act... [mitzvah livtzoah]." Hence there is also a second way to view Judah's actions, from the lens of the sage who honors arbitration and compromise. This implies that Judah had to compromise in order to save Joseph's life, and so he must be praised for his wisdom. We even find halakhic decisors taking two views regarding the question of making a blessing over 'forbidden' food. Maimonides rules that whoever eats forbidden food should not make a blessing, neither before nor after the meal.

This ruling would be in line with the idea that a hypocrite should be scorned, that Jewish law must be followed in an absolute fashion. But the Ra'avad rules differently, distinguishing between a blessing made over a ritual performance (birkat hamitzva) and a blessing made because of the intrinsic pleasure one derives from a particular object (birkat hanehenin). The Ra'avad would agree that it is forbidden – and hypocritically foolish – to attempt to perform a ritual act for God with an object acquired by devious methods; the individual who makes the blessing of having performed God's commandment over such an object is in reality blaspheming God! He does not do a mitzvah but a mockery! But an individual who derives enjoyment from a cheeseburger, for example, ought at least thank the Almighty for his pleasure, even though Jewish law forbade him from eating the cheeseburger in the first place!

I remember how, many years ago, a fourteen-year-old girl at a youth seminar told me that she was the opposite of most Jews she knew: in those days many Jews kept kosher at home and ate non-kosher food on the outside (at least their dishes would go to heaven!). However, she ate only strictly kosher outside the home, but had to make certain

Likutei Divrei Torah

compromises when she ate at her parents, who were not willing to keep a kosher kitchen. I ruled that she ought to make the proper blessings even when eating at home, using the Ra'avad as an indisputable source for my decision. Today this young girl has grown into one of the most effective rebbeztzins in North America.

The truth is that you have to do the best you can, and a half a loaf is better than none. 'All or nothing' may be the ideal in a perfect world, but it hardly applies for us today. Why does Judah become the leader of the brothers and then the leading tribe of the nation? Penitence and compromise, the ability to rise after a fall and to realize that striving only for the absolute may well prevent one from being very good, albeit not quite perfect.

**Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's
Derashot Ledorot**

Afterwards - Straightening Out Jumbled

Priorities [Excerpt] - In the whole sordid story of the selling of Joseph, it is the oldest brother, Reuben, who comes out better than all the others. "And Reuben heard, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, 'let us not take his life.' And Reuben said unto them, 'shed not blood; cast him into this pit that is in this wilderness, but lay not hands upon him'--that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. Yet, Reuben's plan comes to naught. At the crucial moment, Reuben fails. When he is most needed, he is not there. For by the time he has returned to the pit in order to release Joseph, the brothers had already sold him into slavery.

Where was Reuben? Why wasn't he there in time to avoid the tragedy? The Rabbis give a number of answers, one of them somewhat surprising. Reuben was preoccupied with doing penance because of his previous sin of "changing the bed of his father"--in taking up the cudgels for his mother Leah, he offended his father Jacob by removing Jacob's bed from Bilhah's tent, into Leah's tent. He was so engrossed in his own spiritual rehabilitation--that he missed the opportunity to save Joseph.

Reuben meant well, but it came out all wrong. His priorities were jumbled. He failed to appreciate that life and survival come first, and only then can one attend to his own spiritual growth and religious development. Pikuah nefesh (saving a life) precedes teshuvah (repentance).

At the recent National Convention of the UO, the focus of debate was the problem whether or not the UOJCA should secede from the Synagogue Council of America, in which are represented both the rabbinic and lay organizations of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform groups. The point of view that I advocated was that we should stay in. But the secessionists too had a point, and they pressed their argument vigorously. Fortunately, the Convention decided that now is not the time for divisiveness..

When all the House of Israel is threatened, you do not go off in a corner yourself. When everyone else seems to be against you, you do not divide yourself against yourself. When Jews are in danger of being sold out; when supposed friends and allies and brothers stand by impassively; when "an evil beast has eaten him"--when the P.L.O. is acknowledged as a legitimate group in international forums--this is not a time to go away and brood over the spiritual problems worrying lest innocent Jews will confuse Conservative and Reform for Orthodox.

In Israel too the same principle of priorities must hold. Now is not the time for political bickering and interparty sniping. Now is not the time to insist upon the purity of the principles of each individual group. Now is the time for all factions to work together, and to postpone individual self-assertion and ideological pursuits. Would that the government be broadened to include all groups in a national coalition!... [1974]

וַיַּעֲשֶׂה

Our *Parashah* opens: "*Vayeishev* / Yaakov settled in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan." *Rashi z"l* comments: Yaakov wished to live in tranquility, but this trouble in connection with Yosef suddenly came upon him. When the righteous wish to live in tranquility, *Hashem* says of them, 'Are not the righteous satisfied with what is stored up for them in the World-to-Come that they wish to live in tranquility in this world too?'" [Until here from *Rashi*]

But why would *Hashem* object if Yaakov had lived in tranquility in this world also? R' Avraham Zuckerman z"l (1915-2013; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Bnei Akiva Kfar Ha'ro'eh and chairman of the network of Bnei Akiva *Yeshivot*) explains:

On the one hand, a person who lives in tranquility may have an easier time serving *Hashem* consistently. As we know, it is difficult for a person to keep up a regular schedule of studying Torah, praying with a *Minyan*, and performing *Mitzvot* when he is constantly on the move. On the other hand, a person who sits in one place will find it more difficult to impact others--which was the Patriarchs' mission. Moreover, if Yaakov remained in one place, he would not be asserting his right to *Eretz Yisrael* (compare *Bereishit* 13:17).

Also, perhaps, Yaakov was not allowed to rest because *Hashem* chose him from among the Patriarchs to be the one who would begin the exile in Egypt. Why? Because Yaakov had demonstrated while living with Lavan that, even in exile, he could raise a family that would be loyal to *Hashem*. "This trouble in connection with Yosef" (in *Rashi's* words) was the first step toward that exile. (*Luchot Aven*)

וַיַּעֲשֶׂה

Shabbat

Halachah states that in addition to the *Shabbat* candles that are lit in one's dining room, a person should have lights on in the other rooms of his house as well so that people will not "trip over a stick or a stone." R' Moshe Roth *shlita* (rabbi in Brooklyn, N.Y. and Meron, Israel) was asked how this applies in our times, when we have finished floors. He replied:

"From your question, it appears that you are taking 'tripping over a stick or stone' literally, which today is virtually unheard of because our floors are smooth and clean. However, the real concern is '*Shalom Bayit*.' This does not refer to harmony between husband and wife (the usual meaning of '*Shalom Bayit*'), but rather, that a person should feel calm, tranquil, and at rest. If it is dark in the house, a person does not have those feelings. (As for 'a stick or a stone,' that is a borrowed term, since, in the days of our Sages, floors were made of dirt and there definitely could have been sticks and stones on them. However, the sticks and stones are not what cause a lack of restfulness; it is the darkness itself that causes that feeling.")

He continues: "Another reason [for having lights throughout the house] is that doing so brings *Kavod* / honor to *Shabbat* and is part of the *Mitzvah* of '*Oneg Shabbat*' / delighting in the Sabbath. Even if a person feels at rest, it is preferable that there also be 'honor' and 'delight'..."

R' Roth concludes by explaining that this obligation of *Kavod* and *Oneg* explains why one can say the blessing upon lighting *Shabbat* candles even if there are already electric lights in the dining room--i.e., because the candles add 'honor' and 'delight' to the *Shabbat* [besides giving off light].

(*Mar Mi'dli* 10:1)

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 23b) teaches: "Rav Huna said: 'If one is meticulously careful in lighting candles, he will merit having sons who are Torah scholars.'" *Rashi z"l* explains: "This is based on the verse (*Mishlei* 6:23), 'For a *Mitzvah* is a candle and Torah is light'--through the *Mitzvot* of *Shabbat* and *Chanukah* candles comes the light of Torah."

Many people light *Shabbat* and *Chanukah* candles, observed R' Kalman Winter z"l (died 2012), yet relatively few have children who are Torah scholars! Why? Because Rav Huna's promise is addressed only to those parents who want their children to be Torah scholars!

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“As she was taken out, she sent word to her father-in-law . . . And she said, ‘Recognize, please, whose are this seal, this wrap, and this staff.’” (38:25)

Rashi z”l explains: “‘Recognize, please’--an expression of entreaty, meaning, “I beg of you to recognize your Creator and not to destroy three lives.” [Until here from *Rashi*. As for the reference to “three,” commentaries differ about whether she knew she was carrying twins, or whether the third live was Yehuda’s own.]

R’ Uri Weisblum *shlita* (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Nachalat Ha’levi’im in Haifa, Israel) elaborates: Rabbeinu Yonah Gerondi z”l (1210-1263; Spain) writes that the first essential component of *Teshuvah* is regret. A person should say to himself, “The Creator blew a life-giving soul into my nostrils and gave that soul wisdom and intelligence to recognize Him, to revere Him, and to rule over one’s body and its actions. Since I have done the opposite, what is my life worth?!” [Until here from R’ Yonah’s *Sha’arei Teshuvah* (1:10)]

R’ Weisblum continues: A person was given physical senses, such as sight, with which to recognize his friend. Similarly, a person’s soul, used properly, is the tool with which one can recognize *Hashem* and revere Him. The foundation of regret for a sin is acknowledging to oneself that he has not used his soul as intended and, therefore, he has not ruled over his body and its actions as he should. In this way, recognizing the Creator leads to changing one’s actions for the better, concludes R’ Weisblum.

(*He’arat Ha’derech: Mo’adim* p.2)

R’ Yaakov Solnick z”l (17th century; rabbi of Podhajce, Poland) offers another interpretation of Tamar’s message: “Recognize your Creator.” She was saying: Clearly, what you did was out of character for a righteous person such as yourself. Therefore, recognize the Hand of your Creator in this event, for what occurred could only have been the result of His decree, rather than your free choice. And, therefore, do not be ashamed to admit that the pledge I am holding is yours.

(*Nachalat Yaakov*)

“She caught hold of him by his garment . . . But he left his garment in her hand, and he fled, and went outside.” (39:12)

R’ Nachman of Breslov z”l (1772-1810; Ukraine) observes: The *Yetzer Ha’ra* grabs a person by his clothes--i.e., it causes him to worry about fashion or whether his clothing is fancy enough. In this way, a person is distracted from focusing on serving *Hashem*. But a G-d-fearing person does not allow himself to be trapped. He leaves his clothing in the hands of the *Yetzer Ha’ra* and he flees--i.e., he does not give any thought to his clothes. Instead, he serves *Hashem* with whatever he has in the best way that he can.

(*Sichot Ha’Ran* #100)

“Yaakov settled in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan.” (37:1)

R’ Eliyahu Ha’Tzarfati z”l (1715-1805; rabbi of Fes, Morocco) writes: The Torah is highlighting that Yaakov wished to live near his father Yitzchak so that he could learn from his good deeds and his Divine service. Yaakov also wished to remain in *Eretz Yisrael* because it is the Holy Land, whose very air bestows wisdom on a person and assists him in serving *Hashem* properly.

In pointing this out, the Torah is contrasting Yaakov with his brother Esav, about whom we read in last week’s *Parashah* (36:6, 8), “Esav took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household--his livestock and all his animals, and all the wealth he had acquired in the land of Canaan--and went to [another] land because of his brother Yaakov . . . So Esav settled on Mount Seir; Esav, he is Edom.” Esav distanced himself from his father and chose a land where he believed he would prosper financially. This, the Torah points out, had a negative impact on his descendants--as if the verse says. “He, Esav, was the father of the evil nation of Edom.” (*Eliyahu Zuta*)



“Then the Chamberlain of the Cupbearers recounted his dream to Yosef and said to him, ‘In my dream--behold! there was a grapevine in front of me.’” (40:9)

Midrash Rabbah comments: “A grapevine”--this refers to *Yisrael*. [Until here from the *Midrash*]

What does the cupbearer’s dream have to do with the Jewish People? asks R’ Yosef Konvitz z”l (1878-1944; rabbi in Newark, NJ; President of the Agudath HaRabonim of the United States and Canada). He answers:

Yosef sat in jail with two of Pharaoh’s chamberlains--one, the cupbearer, a good-natured person, and the other, the baker, a nasty person. Yosef interpreted their dreams, and his interpretations came true; the “good” cupbearer was restored to his position as Yosef had foretold. The cupbearer promised to remember Yosef, but, once he was out of prison, he forgot him.

Our Sages say, “Whatever happened to Yosef happened to Zion.” In our exile, explains R’ Konvitz, we are like a prisoner. Sometimes, we encounter noblemen and world leaders who likewise are in a bind, and they make all kinds of promises in order to gain our support. Once they no longer need us, however, they forget those promises. For example, R’ Konvitz writes, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to win Jewish support during World War I. Once that war was over, however, the government “forgot” its support for establishing a Jewish homeland and instead actively opposed and prevented Jewish immigration to *Eretz Yisrael*. Even the “good” officials, like the cupbearer, behave this way.

This, concludes R’ Konvitz, is what the *Midrash* is teaching us. In their time of need, the likes of the cupbearer think about *Yisrael*. But just as quickly, they forget.

(*Divrei Yosef*)

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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REPRESENTATIVE OF HOSTAGE FAMILIES ADDRESSES UN FOR 1ST TIME (i24News 12/18/24)

Michael Levy, the brother of hostage Or Levy, spoke to the UN Security Council on Wednesday as the body convened on the issue of captives still held by Gazan terrorists for the first time.

"For every day this Council fails to act, the message is clear: some lives are worth saving, and some are not," Levy said. "I refuse to believe this Council, which was created to uphold the highest ideals of humanity, would turn its back on those who need it the most. The Council has a chance to stand up to what's right. I'm asking you to prove that international law means something. Demand the release of all 100 lives."

More than 14 months after the October 7, the decision to hold the meeting came after increased pressure by the US and Israel. Levy was joined by Dr. Shira Efron of Israel Policy Forum.

Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon thanked Levy for his speech. Danon urged the council to act. "The time to act is now! The Middle East does not look the same - we continue to dismantle Hamas and eliminate any threat from them, Hezbollah is no longer the same cruel and dangerous organization that it was and the Assad regime has fallen," Danon said.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for the Council and the world - Prevent a nuclear Iran and define the Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization." He also addressed the Iranian people directly earlier, speaking in Farsi: "People of Iran, do not miss this rare historic opportunity. Take action! The people of Israel stand by your side!"

"We know the cost of freedom and the courage it demands," he said. "Your fight is not just for yourselves, but for the millions of lives the regime has destabilized and destroyed. In your hands lies the power to rebuild a land rich in history, culture and resilience."

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield also thanked Levy for his speech, "sharing your anguish, your frustration with this Council," she said.

"We must speak with one voice and demand that Hamas release the hostages they are holding, so that we can implement the deal on the table," she added.

SAUDI-ISRAELI PEACE WILL ONLY HAPPEN IF GAZA WAR ENDS (JPost 12/18/24)

Saudi Arabia will not normalize ties with Israel "unless it ends the war in Gaza," Saudi officials have informed associates of US President-elect Donald Trump, a person with knowledge about the matter told The Jerusalem Post on Tuesday evening.

In recent weeks, Saudi officials, headed by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, met people close to Trump, including Steve Witkoff, Trump's incoming special envoy to the Middle East.

Normalization between the countries could materialize only after the war in Gaza ends, the Saudi officials told Witkoff, according to the informed source. The Saudis are also demanding "some kind" of statement regarding a Palestinian state, the sources said. The statement does not have to include recognition of a Palestinian state; it can also be about an Israeli "pathway toward a Palestinian state," the source said.

A normalization agreement has been reached between Israel and Saudi Arabia, Haaretz reported earlier on Tuesday.

ISRAELI FIGHTER JETS STRIKE HOUTHİ MILITARY TARGETS IN YEMEN FOR THIRD TIME SINCE WAR BEGAN (Ha'aretz 12/19/24)

The IDF has confirmed that Israeli fighter jets launched a series of attacks

against "military targets belonging to the Houthi terrorist regime on the western coast and in inland Yemen."

This is the third time that Israel has launched direct strikes against the Houthis in Yemen since the outbreak of the war on October 7, 2023.

In a statement issued Thursday morning, the military said that the strikes were launched after Defense Minister Israel Katz approved the operation.

"The Houthi terrorist regime has repeatedly attacked the State of Israel, including by attacking Israeli territory using UAVs and surface-to-surface missiles," the military said in a statement. "Most of these projectiles were successfully intercepted."

The statement added that "the targets struck by the IDF were used by the Houthi forces for military purposes. The strikes degrade the Houthi terrorist regime, preventing it from exploiting the targets for military and terrorist purposes, including the smuggling of Iranian weapons to the region."

The strikes came less than two hours after a school and several cars were hit by shrapnel from an interceptor missile that had shot down a rocket fired from Yemen, leading to sirens across central Israel.

IDF FINDS, DESTROYS UNDERGROUND HEZBOLLAH COMMAND CENTER (Israel Hayom 12/18/24)

In a significant operational achievement, IDF engineering forces discovered and destroyed an elaborate underground Hezbollah command facility in southern Lebanon that had been used to direct attacks against Israeli communities in the Galilee region over the past year.

The facility, accessed through a tunnel network extending dozens of meters, contained sophisticated surveillance equipment, weapons systems, and military hardware used by Hezbollah to coordinate terrorist operations.

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East Hill Synagogue, Englewood, NJ	Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY
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Multiple weapons caches were discovered in the vicinity, including one hidden within a mosque, storing hundreds of explosive devices, firearms, grenades, and additional military equipment.

Following a thorough investigation by the IDF's elite Yahalom combat engineering unit, forces destroyed the command center and its underground access tunnel, while confiscating the entire weapons arsenal.

HAMAS: PRISONER DEPORTATIONS TO TURKEY, QATAR COULD BE INCLUDED IN 'IMMINENT' DEAL (JPost 12/18/24)

A hostage deal could be signed by the end of this week and could include the deportation of senior Palestinian security prisoners to Qatar and Turkey, various Arab media sites reported on Wednesday.

A report by Saudi news outlet Asharq Al-Awsat cited a Hamas official as stating that a deal was "imminent," with the main points having already been agreed upon.

According to Asharq Al-Awsat, in the first stage of the agreement, which is supposed to last some 45-60 days, Hamas would release some 30 hostages, both alive and deceased, in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

Saudi outlet Al-Hadath quoted sources saying that Hamas agreed to release sick, elderly, and female soldiers held hostage by the terror organization.

In addition, IDF troops would withdraw from cities within the Gaza Strip.

However, they would remain in the Philadelphi and Netazim corridors. These corridors run parallel to the border with Egypt and cut across central Gaza, respectively.

On Tuesday, officials with knowledge of the negotiations said that a hostage deal could be achieved in a month, with significant advances being made.

Such a remark was reiterated by a senior Hamas official, cited in the Saudi news outlet Asharq Al-Awsat. "We are closer than ever to reaching a prisoner exchange deal and a ceasefire, provided that Netanyahu does not obstruct the agreement," he reportedly said.

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS SECTOR RABBIS CALL FOR A HOSTAGE DEAL: 'A RELIGIOUS AND MORAL DUTY' (YNet 12/17/24)

Against the backdrop of ongoing negotiations for a hostage release deal, prominent rabbis from the national religious sector published a letter on Tuesday urging the government to make every effort to reach an agreement.

The rabbis, who are not affiliated with the Religious Zionism party but belong to the broader religious Zionist community, wrote: "We believe that at this time, after the heavy blows the IDF has dealt to terrorist organizations in the north and south – eliminating most of their leaders, and following the impressive operation in Syria, Israel stands in a position of significant strength. This position allows Israel to bear the painful costs necessary to bring home our brothers and sisters, who have endured unimaginable suffering for so long and whose lives are in increasing danger every day."

Among the signatories are Rabbi Baruch Gigi and Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein, heads of Yeshivat Har Etzion; Rabbi David Stav, chairman of the Tzohar Rabbinical Organization; Rabbi Yuval Cherlow, head of Yeshivat Orot Shaul; Rabbi Yehuda Gilad, head of Yeshivat Maale Gilboa; Rabbi Meir Nehorai, chairman of Beit Hillel; Rabbi Moshe Speter of Kibbutz Kfar Etzion; Rabbi Shmuel David, rabbi of Afula; and others.

In their letter, the rabbis emphasized that "the return of all the hostages, one of the war's declared objectives, is a religious and moral obligation. It is essential to end their unbearable suffering, ease the anguish of their families, and strengthen Israel's sense of social responsibility and mutual solidarity. Alongside our prayers for the hostages three times a day, we must take the necessary steps to turn those prayers into reality."

Nehorai told Ynet: "Three or four months ago, we would not have issued such a call. But now it seems the time is ripe for this move. We are not protesting against the government – we are strengthening and supporting it. I believe that such an operation to release the hostages would inspire national morale, heal divisions and create a unifying atmosphere that would give us the strength to continue the fight as needed."

Earlier this week, leading rabbis from the religious Zionist movement,

including several close to Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, toured Kibbutz Nir Oz and the site of the Nova music festival. The rabbis prayed, expressed solidarity with residents and stated: "We hope for the hostages' return and support the Israeli government in reaching an agreement to secure their release without compromising security or endangering other lives."

LIKUD SOURCES SAY NETANYAHU UNLIKELY TO FIRE BEN GVR FOR VOTING AGAINST STATE BUDGET (Times of Israel 12/17/24)

Likud sources tell Hebrew media that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is unlikely to fire far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, even though he took an almost unprecedented step and voted against the state budget.

Government regulations say that a minister who votes against his own government's budget can be viewed as having resigned. The budget must be passed by the end of March 2025 or the government will automatically fall, triggering early elections.

Ben Gvir's fellow Otzma Yehudit party members also voted against the first reading of the budget, which nevertheless passed 59-57.

They did not resign, and the Likud sources say that Netanyahu, who fears he could lose power, "will not be in a hurry to fire them."

Opposition leader Yair Lapid, whose father Tommy Lapid was fired as a minister by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for voting against the budget in 2004, says Netanyahu will not act because "he is a coward."

"My father knew he would be fired, because a government minister is forbidden from voting against the budget, unless the prime minister is weak and a coward, then it's okay," Lapid writes.

PM NETANYAHU INSTRUCTS IDF: PREPARE TO STAY AT SUMMIT OF MOUNT HERMON UNTIL END OF 2025 (Arutz-7 12/18/24)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed the IDF to prepare for an extended stay on the summit of Mount Hermon - at least until the end of 2025.

The reason for the lengthy stay is that it is expected that by then, the political-security situation in Syria will stabilize. It is estimated that by that time, it will be clear whether there is someone in Syria who will respect the 1974 peace agreement and be able to prevent terror activities against Israel.

On Tuesday, Netanyahu visited Mount Hermon with Defense Minister, Israel Katz, Chief of Staff, Herzi Halevi, Northern Command Head, Uri Gordin, and Shin Bet Director, Ronen Bar.

Netanyahu held a situational assessment on the site, reviewed the IDF's preparedness in the sector, and established guidelines for future deployment. During the situational assessment, Minister Katz emphasized that the IDF must quickly complete its entrenchment on the ground, including the construction of barricades and defense measures, as well as the regulation of soldiers' service conditions, in order to fully prepare for the possibility of a prolonged stay in the region.

Netanyahu said that the visit brought back memories for him. "I was here 53 years ago with my soldiers on a Sayeret Matkal patrol. The place hasn't changed, it's the same place, but its importance to Israel's security has only been reinforced in recent years, and especially in recent weeks with the dramatic events taking place here below us in Syria. We will determine the best arrangement that will ensure our security."

The Prime Minister added that the IDF would remain at the peak of Mount Hermon "until an arrangement is found that guarantees Israel's security."

IDF ESTABLISHES A RESERVE DIVISION FOR TROOPS AGED 38-58 TO BOLSTER BORDER DEFENSE (YNet 12/17/24)

The IDF announced the establishment of five new reserve brigades on Tuesday, known as the "David Brigades," to enhance defensive capabilities along Israel's borders in response to evolving operational needs and lessons learned from the ongoing war and the October 7 terror attack.

The brigades – Negev ("Negba"), Shephelah ("Yonatan"), Valleys ("Yizraeli"), Jerusalem ("Ari"), and Galilee-Golan – will be tasked with providing a rapid

defensive response to sudden events. Recruitment will be based on soldiers' residential areas, enabling a more immediate and effective initial response. The units will primarily consist of reserve soldiers aged 38-58, most of whom are volunteers with extensive experience gained during both their military service and civilian lives.

IDF Chief of the General Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi emphasized the need to expand the military's capabilities.

"In this war, we have learned that the IDF needs to be larger and broader to face difficult situations and prolonged wars," Halevi said. "Over these months, we are establishing new brigades of reservists comprised mostly of individuals who are already over the exemption age and have shown a willingness, recognizing the urgency of the moment, to step up and say we are returning to serve, returning to the reserves. Although we are not at the official age for reserve duty, we come with the right spirit and an understanding of the necessity."

Halevi highlighted the importance of easing the current strain on Israel's reserve forces, who have faced an unprecedented operational load. "When they carry out operational duties, we will be able to alleviate the burden on the reserves, which has been so heavy over the past year and three months. I must salute the reservists who have handled this burden with exceptional quality and great honor," he added.

Maj. Gen. (res.) Moti Baruch, the founder of the new brigades, underscored the need to adapt to the changing security environment.

"We all understand that the security reality has changed, and we must adapt accordingly. These are people who are ready to volunteer and play a central role in strengthening security, and we view this as a significant operational advantage," Baruch said.

The division will include approximately 15,000 infantry reservists, equipped with personal weapons, marksmen, grenade launchers, snipers and drone teams for reconnaissance and attack missions. The units will not operate armored vehicles but are designed for swift, flexible deployments.

Over the past nine months since the ambitious plan was launched, the IDF has managed to recruit around 3,000 soldiers, including 100 company commanders out of the 130 required. "We are struggling to meet recruitment targets," the IDF admitted.

"We are currently in contact with another 6,000 individuals who are in the process of enlisting, but there is a strong willingness among many people, even those in their 40s and 50s, to serve. Many recruits will be veterans of combat engineering and similar units."

Reservists in the new division will be on high alert and able to mobilize rapidly from their homes during emergencies. As a result, they will keep their personal weapons and uniforms at home, despite the associated risks of theft or safety incidents.

The IDF also plans for one of the division's battalions to be composed of Bedouin soldiers, featuring four combat companies from the Galilee and one company from the Negev.

To join the new division, soldiers must complete a thorough bureaucratic process, including providing a clean criminal record, documentation verifying their mental and physical health and other approvals.

The initiative reflects the IDF's shift toward bolstering defense capabilities and readiness amid changing security threats, relying on experienced reservists and volunteers committed to safeguarding the nation.

EVIDENCE SHOWS US KNEW ABOUT ISRAELI NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN 1960S (i24News 12/18/24)

The National Security Archive of the United States declassified a series of documents from the 1960s and 1970s on Tuesday, which pertained to the Israeli nuclear program and US conduct on the matter.

The release of documents is the first time written proof has shown that the US knew Israel was producing nuclear weapons in Dimona, which Israel has never publicly admitted.

An intelligence report dated to December 1960 clearly determines that Israel's nuclear project in Dimona is linked to weapon development.

Other documents revealed that in February 1967, a number of Israeli sources informed the US embassy that Israel "either has or is about to complete" a processing facility in Dimona, and that "the Dimona reactor has been operated at full capacity." The report said Israel was "six to eight weeks" away from manufacturing a bomb.

In early 1978, after the CIA mistakenly published an intelligence assessment confirming that Israel had produced nuclear weapons, then-Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin asked if it was true that Israel had such weapons. In his response, then-secretary of state Cyrus Vance assured Dobrynin that the United States "accept[s] [Israel's] assurances" that it does not have nuclear weapons, and "will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East."

From the beginning of the 1960s until the 1970s, the approach of the US government to Israel's nuclear weapons program changed significantly. During the 1960s, the Americans feared that Israel would use its nuclear reactor in Dimona to produce plutonium for a nuclear bomb. By 1969, documents point to a secret bilateral deal between former US president Richard Nixon and late prime minister Golda Meir, in which the White House "reconciled" with Israel's non-declared nuclear weapons status.

MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS BELIEVE COUNTRY'S OVERALL SITUATION IS 'VERY BAD', STUDY FINDS (Ha'aretz 12/17/24)

After a year of war, most Israelis have little trust in their state institutions, believe that democracy is in grave danger and characterize the country's overall situation as "bad" or "very bad," according to the Israeli Democracy Index 2024, the year-end survey by the Israel Democracy Institute.

The majority of respondents – 48.5 percent – characterized Israel's overall situation as "bad" or "very bad" in October. In May, that number reached nearly 60 percent – the highest share since 2003, during the second intifada. Only 19 percent of respondents in October said that the situation in the country is "good" or "very good."

The index notes that Jews have a more positive outlook on the country's situation. Twenty-two percent characterized it as "good" or "very good," compared to just 8 percent of Arabs. Sixty-seven percent of Arabs said the situation is "bad" or "very bad," compared to 45 percent of Jews.

When asked what the greatest internal existential threat to the State of Israel, 20 percent of Jews saw tensions between Jews and Arabs as the greatest internal existential threat to Israel, but most are concerned with the fallout of the Netanyahu-led government's attempts to curb the judiciary, which largely pitted Jewish Israelis against each other and inflamed tensions between the right and left.

A small majority (54 percent) of Jewish respondents also said in May that democratic rule in Israel is in grave danger, with three-quarters (77.5 percent) of the Arab population agreeing with this statement.

They also note that this year's responses saw a steep rise in the percentage who view Israel's most pressing social tension as between right and left, now at 48 percent.

As for public institutions, the Israeli military seems most trustworthy, with 77 percent of respondents saying in October that they trust it. That number had dipped in May to 69 percent, but the Israel Democracy experts attribute the recent rise to accomplishments in the north.

From there, the numbers drop. About 40 percent trust the Supreme Court, and 38 percent trust the president. The police have the trust of just 37 percent of respondents – the lowest of all the security forces, with the Mossad and Shin Bet enjoying the trust of the majority of those surveyed. Just about a quarter (26 percent) of respondents said they trust the media, and the executive and legislative branches are faring even worse.

Just 25 percent say they trust the government, 16 percent say they trust the Knesset and 10.5 percent say they trust political parties. These figures are similar to those from June 2023, showing that these sentiments predate the war.

When it comes to the greatest external threat facing the country, Jews and Arabs agree: A majority, 37 percent of Jews and 32 percent of Arabs, cited a full-scale multi-front war.

Respondents were also asked if they believe that citizens of Israel can always rely on the state to come to their aid in times of trouble. Just 32 percent – compared to 39 percent in 2022 and 46 percent in 2017 – said yes. But October 7 showed the importance of civil society groups, who mobilized instantly after the Hamas-led attack to provide the crucial response that the government did not. About two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) said that they strongly or somewhat agree that civil society organizations serve Israeli society better than state institutions do.

President Isaac Herzog responded to the report, saying that "The decline in public trust between Israeli citizens and state institutions, reflecting a trend that has become even more pronounced over the past year, deeply troubles me."

I believe that the erosion of public trust cannot be separated from the troubling," he continued, "and violent culture of confrontations and accusations of blame on social media and in the public sphere. All of these are interconnected with the upheaval we are experiencing as a society and as a country."

Despite this bleak outlook, Israelis are still devoted to their country. In October, 80 percent of Israelis said that they feel very much a part of the state of Israel and its problems. This includes a majority of Arab respondents – 59 percent. And where Israelis do not trust the state, they largely trust each other.

Eighty-one percent of the Jews surveyed and 62 percent of the Arabs said that their fellow Israelis can be relied upon in times of trouble. This increased from 68 percent and 39 percent respectively in 2022.

About two-thirds of Jews and Arabs alike agree that Israel is a good place to live, and about two-thirds of the public would prefer to remain in Israel, even if they were offered citizenship in a Western country.

"The sharp decline of public trust in government agencies and democratic institutions reflected in this year's Democracy Index should serve as a glaring warning signal," says the Israel Democracy Institute's president, Yohanan Plesner.

"It is an expression of the fact that many Israelis feel that their government is not working for them. Israelis see their leaders focusing more energy on ensuring the ultra-Orthodox don't have to serve in the military than on tackling the rising cost of living or addressing the plight of Israel's displaced populations."

They see that instead of building internal cohesion to confront our many enemies, our leaders are expending political capital on removing checks and balances, harassing competent civil servants and promoting cronies," he continued.

Plesner added that "The irresponsible weakening of institutions that have served as a source of Israel's strength and prosperity for decades is a dangerous phenomenon, especially in time of war. Our leaders have much work to do, and time is of the essence.

IF NETANYAHU TRULY WANTS TO RESHAPE THE MIDDLE EAST, HE NEEDS A QUIET HOME FRONT (Nahum Barnea, YNet 12/16/24)

These days, Netanyahu must feel like all his stars have aligned. Hezbollah is worn out, Assad is wandering lost in Moscow, the mullahs in Tehran are trembling with fear, Hamas is floundering in Gaza and all of Israel's enemies watch anxiously as Netanyahu's dear friend, Donald Trump, prepares to take office.

Amid a cascade of good fortune came an "extremely friendly, very warm and highly important" phone call with the president-elect. "We talked about the need to complete Israel's victory," Netanyahu proudly announced Sunday night.

For now, it's time to savor this moment. But soon enough, Netanyahu—and Trump—will have to make some tough choices about how to leverage this wave of luck.

The first choice: a hostage deal. It's far easier to long for a deal, pray for a deal, even mourn the lack of one, than to face the steep price of making it happen. The price tag includes releasing murderers, halting military operations and, perhaps most heartbreakingly, hearing the returning hostages recount how others could have been saved but weren't.

The second choice: Iran. The upheaval in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza, combined with the high hopes for the incoming U.S. administration, has created a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to strike Iran's nuclear facilities. Significant chunks of Iran's air defenses have been destroyed; flight paths to the target are clear; and most importantly, Iran's ability to launch a counterattack—from Lebanon, Syria or even Iran itself—has been dramatically reduced.

Back in 2011, Netanyahu threatened to attack Iran but ultimately balked. Later, he shifted the blame to Israel's security chiefs and the Obama administration. Now, the reins of power are firmly in his hands. Following the October 7 debacle, Israel's military and intelligence leadership have been severely weakened, and their dynamic with Netanyahu has fundamentally changed.

In Washington, the outgoing administration is busy tying up loose ends, while the incoming one is eager for some grand gesture to mark its arrival. A daring military strike to dismantle Iran's nuclear program would hand Netanyahu the total victory he craves.

The opportunity is real, but is it worth seizing?

Iran is a nuclear threshold state only because it has chosen to stop at the threshold—so far. Reports from around the world suggest it has already enriched enough material for several bombs. Its main challenges lie in weaponization—turning that material into usable warheads—and assembly—integrating all the components into a functional arsenal.

Could a military operation obliterate the entire project? That's far from certain. How would the Iranian regime respond? How would its allies in Russia, China and North Korea react? Would Trump back such a move, or might he cut his own deal with Iran behind Israel's back?

A leader contemplating a momentous military operation must first ensure stability on the home front. Sometimes, this means forming a broad coalition government, as Levi Eshkol did on the eve of the Six-Day War or as Netanyahu himself did after October 7. Other times, it means taking contentious issues off the table, as Netanyahu did when he paused the judicial reform legislative blitz during the war.

On Sunday night, he gathered coalition leaders to discuss firing the attorney general. Meanwhile, Justice Minister Yariv Levin announced plans to revive the judicial reform in full force. The only thing preventing the collapse of Israel's democratic system is the ultra-Orthodox insistence on their right to dodge military service. As long as there's no law cementing their draft exemption, Levin's constitutional onslaught lacks the majority it needs. Levin and Shas Party leader Aryeh Deri cancel each other out in a strange balancing act—proof, perhaps, that even chaos has its silver linings.

So here's the situation: either Netanyahu isn't truly interested in reshaping the Middle East—what grabs his attention isn't Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei but Gali Baharav-Miara—or he believes he can have it both ways: that fighter jets will still bomb Tehran even if the judicial system crumbles in Jerusalem, and that reservists will keep scouring Gaza for tunnels even if the government fumbles yet another hostage deal.

In Israel, military service refusal doesn't exist—at least not during wartime. All the threats of refusal—the most recent coming from former state attorney Moshe Lador—boomerang back onto those making them. When IDF calls, everyone shows up, sometimes even as volunteers.

The only effective way to slow the campaign to dismantle democracy is through the determined efforts of Justice Yitzhak Amit and his colleagues in the Supreme Court, as well as Gali Baharav-Miara and her team in the Justice Ministry. Their daily fight against every draconian law and corrupt maneuver must continue without hesitation and without surrender. The mission is clear: contribute to the war effort as if Simcha Rothman and Levin don't exist, and fight Rothman and Levin as if there is no war.



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Tranquility? Not In This World

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

After twenty-two turbulent years, which included being on the run from Eisav, trying to stay a step ahead of Lavan, and numerous other trials, Yaakov finally returned home hoping for a life of peace and tranquility. This, Rashi explains in one approach, is the meaning of the first words of our Parsha – “Vayeishev Yaakov – And Yaakov sat/dwelt” – meaning, he desired to sit and dwell in peace. Rashi goes on to explain that the ensuing distress in losing Yosef was actually a response to this hope for tranquility – “Is it not enough for the righteous that they should rest in the next world, but they seek rest in this world too?”

At first glance, the response to Yaakov’s desire for a tranquil life seems inappropriate. We can safely assume that Yaakov was not hoping for a quiet life so that he can spend his days “playing golf.” Of course, Yaakov was looking for peace of mind so that he could draw even closer to Hashem! Apparently, this world is simply not the place for rest and tranquility. Rest and tranquility are attributes of the next world. While we are here, we are meant to work hard, to accomplish, to become better.

A complete understanding of what is meant when it says that Yaakov wanted to rest is probably beyond us. The message, however, is clear. We are here to accomplish and to grow. Taking time to relax and recharge is a necessary ingredient to keep us going, but is not the objective of life. So, the next time that we find ourselves wondering when life will finally get easy, wondering when the challenges will finally stop, let us remember that the challenges and the opportunities for growth and self-actualization that they provide, are the very purpose of our existence.

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Point to Ponder

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

Yehuda said, "Take her (Tamar) out and let her be burned!" (38:24)

The Tanna Ephraim Maksha said in the name of Rav Meir, "She (Tamar) was the daughter of Shem who was a Kohen. The judges sentenced her to be put to death by burning, as is the sentence of a daughter of a Kohen who commits adultery. (Rashi)

Since Shem blessed Avraham before blessing Hashem, he lost the merit of having his descendants be Kohanim. This honor was given to the descendants of Avraham. (Nedarim 32b)

Since Shem's status as a Kohen was not transferred to his children, Tamar did not have the status of a daughter of a Kohen. If so, why should she be judged like a daughter of a Kohen?

At what point/points during the year does the Kesones Pasim (Yosef's striped coat) get mentioned during davening?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How does this parsha help us determine the age for Bar Mitzvah?

Answer: The verse (34:25) refers to Levi as an "ish," and he was 13, teaching us that a boy becomes a man at 13.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vayeishev* (38:6-11), the Torah relates:

Yehuda took a wife for Er, his firstborn; her name was Tamar. But Er, Yehuda's firstborn, was evil in the eyes of Hashem, and Hashem caused him to die. Then Yehuda said to Onan, "Consort with your brother's wife ..." But Onan (sinned as well) ... What he did was evil in the eyes of Hashem, and He caused him to die also.

Then Yehuda said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up" – for he thought, "Lest he also die like his brothers." ...

Rashi explains:

For he thought etc. — that is to say, he pushed her off with a straw (i.e., he put her off with a lame excuse) because he never intended to give her to him in marriage.

For he thought, Lest he also die. She is a woman of whom it may be presumed that the men she marries will always die young.

R. Yosef Bechor Shor and R. Eliyahu Mizrahi point out that the principle underlying this interpretation of Yehuda's position is found in the Talmud (*Yevamos* 64b):

If a woman **was married to her first husband and he died, to a second one and he also died, she may not get married to a third husband.** This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. **Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: She may get married to a third husband, but if he also dies, she may not get married to a fourth husband.**

The Talmud subsequently rules that the *halachah* follows the view of R. Yehuda HaNasi, and Rashi's explanation of Yehuda's stance accords with this normative position that a woman who has had two husbands die should not marry a third. (A detailed discussion of this *halachah* is unfortunately beyond the scope of this article.)

Ramban, however, rejects Rashi's understanding of Yehuda's stance:

Now I do not know why Yehuda ... (would not simply) tell her, "Go in peace from my house," and why should he mislead her when she is even forbidden to Shelah, just as the Rabbis have said concerning a married woman: "Twice establishes a presumption" ... It is also unreasonable to say that Yehuda did not hear about how his children sinned against G-d, thus causing Him to deliver them into the hands of their fate, while Tamar was guiltless in their death.

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I was caused by tranquility.
2. I was caused by dreams.
3. I was to Egypt.
4. I was a blessing in disguise.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I caused jealousy.
2. I was a proof of death.
3. I was a sign of love.
4. I was colorful.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Esav's 400 men (We were equal to the "double's" purchase, We caused division, We were the 'Red army,' We instilled fear.)

#2 Gid Hanashe (Displaced Sinew) (I am not a sin for you rather a..., I am a limping prohibition, I was an angelic grip, The sun was my remedy.)

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