

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH

SHABBOS SHORTS

Candle Lighting 5:02 | Havdalah 6:04

Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by **Shira Shmunis** and family, who would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the members of YISE/KMS/YGW/Berman for their support after the passing of her father, Menachem Mendel Alenick, A"H.



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Mazal Tavs

Violet Battat, Shlomo Bolts, and big brothers **Reuben** and **Boaz** on the birth of a baby girl.

Shulie Bergman on the birth of a granddaughter, Avigayil Malka, born to Duvie & Toba Bergman. Mazal Tov to great-grandmother **Tzivia Bramson**, grandmother Laurie Cohen, big sisters Aliza and Ahuva Liba, and all the aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Dr. Debra & Jacob Frenkel on the birth of a grandson, Yogev Azriel, to Dr. Tova & Chaim Frenkel of Atlanta, Georgia. Mazal Tov to sisters Adira and Sadie, to Uncles and Aunts- Menachem, Eliana & Yosef, Shoshana, Eliana, and cousin Shlomo.

Judy & Louis Morris on the marriage of their grandson, Reuven Dovid Lefkowitz to Tzipora Goldberg of Lakewood, New Jersey.

Condolences

Debi Furst and **Rabbi Yitzchok Brandriss** on the passing of their sister, Sarah Leah Bitton. Shiva is being observed in Israel until Monday morning. Debi can be contacted by WhatsApp at 301-346-3688. Yitzchok can be contacted by WhatsApp at 301-385-9870.

Kiddush Sponsors

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

Shul Kiddush is sponsored by the Shul Kiddush Group.

Sephardic Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by Asher in honor of the community תודה רבה לכולם על האיורח!

Drasha & Shiurim 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.

Shabbos Drasha Between Mincha/Maariv is sponsored by **Delia Weiss** and **Miriam & Steve Friedman** and family in loving memory of Dr. George Weiss, Z"L, Gedalya Chaim ben Avraham Moshe, on his upcoming 8th Yahrzeit.

YISE Family Shabbos Dinner - February 7 in the Social Hall. \$20/adult (ages 13 and up) and \$15/kid (2-12) with a family max of \$60. RSVP at yise.org/family-dinner. Sponsorships are available. Contact sshimoff@yise.org with questions. [see flyer](#)

The **February SHMA** (Shomrai Monthly Announcements) will be published Parashas Bo. Submit community events and shiurim updates for February by Monday, January 27 at NOON to: announce@yise.org

Shabbos Schedule

Minyan Locations:

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

FRIDAY NIGHT:

Mincha/Maariv:

5:05 (B,SBM), 4:50 (Sephardi, LBM)

SHABBOS DAY:

Shacharis:

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

Mincha:

2:30 (B), 5:00 (B), 4:50 (Sephardi, LBM)

Maariv: 6:04 (B)

DIVREI TORAH:

8:45 Minyan:

Rabbi Postelnek

9:15 Minyan:

Rabbi Rosenbaum

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur: (SBM)

Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Sfas Emes Chabura: 8:55 (S)

Rabbi Rosenbaum

Between Mincha/Maariv: (B)

Rabbi Matan Friedman

Alsheich between Mincha/Maariv: (LBM)

Rabbi Levy

Youth Announcements

No Teen Minyan this Shabbos.

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 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.

Coming Up:

Dor L'Dor - February 1

Middle School Girls Craft Activity - Motzei Shabbos, February 8.

WANT TO SPONSOR A SHABBOS OR WEEKDAY SHIUR? PLEASE EMAIL OFFICE@YISE.ORG

YISE Supports Israel

Our thoughts and prayers are focused on Israel.

YISE maintains a community-wide Tehillim WhatsApp group. To join, visit chat.whatsapp.com/GdkM5n3uJx44h8xFbwBEI0. 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

Voice Notes of Inspiration - Join Rabbi Rosenbaum's Voice Notes of Inspiration Whatsapp group for daily thoughts on Torah. yise.org/vnoi.

Sfas Emes Chabura - A 20-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/nightseeder.

Camp Shomrai Registration is Open! Register for Camp Shomrai summer 2025, for ages 2-15, June 23 - August 1. Early bird discount deadline, Sunday, January 26. For more information or to register, go to campshomrai.org.

Shomrai Preschool Registration is now open for the 2025-2026 school year. Play. Explore. Succeed! Licensed, child-centered preschool for children ages 2-5. Call 301-593-7365, email preschool@yise.org or visit our website at preschool.yise.org. [see flyer](#)

Men's Melaveh Malka: Join Rabbi Postelnek and Rabbi Rosenbaum for a Chodesh Shevat Melaveh Malka with music, Torah, chizuk and wings! Motzei Shabbos, February 1, 8:30 PM at the home of Craig and Rachelli Simon, 918 Kenbrook Court. To sponsor, visit www.yise.org/mmm. [see flyer](#)

Mikvah Emunah Society Banquet Dinner - Sunday, February 2, 6 PM at KMS, honoring Gila Wakschlag and Richie Broth. RSVP to Dr. Caroline Namrow (240) 687-1573 by Sunday, January 26.

Nusach Ha'Tefillah Chabura - Want to learn how to lead davening? Already a shliach tzibbur, but want to improve? Join Rabbi Postelnek and Yosef Lindell for a 4-week course learning Shabbos Shacharis. Sundays, February 2, 9, 16 and 23 at 8:45 PM in the YISE Social Hall. Text (571) 340-0227 to join the WhatsApp group for more information and to receive weekly recordings. [see flyer](#)

YISE and KMS Welcome Rav Meir Goldwicht - Shabbat, February 7-8. Programming includes: Friday Night Oneg, Shiur following the YISE Hashkamah Minyan, YISE Sephardi Minyan Drasha, short Drasha following the 8:45/9:15 YISE Minyanim in the Social Hall (youth groups will continue until the end of the Drasha), Women's Shiur, and Shiur between Mincha/Maariv at KMS. [see flyer](#)

Golden Network Lunch & Learn - Wednesday, February 12, 12:15 PM at YISE. History of the Siddur with Rabbi Moshe Walter, followed by a musical presentation. RSVP by February 9 to director@goldennetwork.org or 301-732-1773. Open to men and women. [see flyer](#)

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

The Week Ahead		Sunday January 26 26 Teves	Monday January 27 27 Teves	Tuesday January 28 28 Teves	Wednesday January 29 29 Teves	Thursday January 30 1 Shevat Rosh Chodesh	Friday January 31 2 Shevat	Next Shabbos January 31 - February 1, 2025 3 Shevat 5785 Bo Candle lighting: 5:10 Havdalah: 6:12 Friday Night: Mincha/Maariv: 5:10 (B, SBM), 5:05 (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), 5:05 (B), 5:00 (Sephardi, LBM) Maariv: 6:12
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 6:55 8:45	
	Sephardi (LBM)	8:00	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	
Mincha/ Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)	5:10	5:10	5:10	5:10	5:10		
	Sephardi (LBM)	5:00	5:00	5:00	5:00	5:00		
Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)		7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30		

Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 5:56 AM,

Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 6:24 AM, Latest Netz: 7:20 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:48 AM,

Earliest Mincha: 12:53 PM, Earliest Shkia: 5:22 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim 6:12 PM

RABBI DOVID ROSENBAUM
RABBI YOSEF POSTELNEK - ASST RABBI
JOSH SEIDEMANN - PRESIDENT

NEXT SHABBOS SHORTS DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, NOON
SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE SHABBOS SHORTS TO: ANNOUNCE@YISE.ORG
WWW.YISE.ORG | 301-593-4465 | OFFICE@YISE.ORG



JANUARY 2025 | 1 TEVES - 2 SHEVAT 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. 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>.
Mazal Tov on the Birth of Your Son or Daughter! YISE can help organize meals. Contact Miriam Levson at 901-481-7133 or miriamlevson@gmail.com or Rose Blynn at 410-522-8624 or rab411@gmail.com Send details to announce@yise.org
Happy Birthday! Happy Anniversary! Want to celebrate a birthday or anniversary? Email office@yise.org for details.
Online YISE Cholim List - Go to <https://wp.yise.org/cholim> to add a name to the list. The list is used at the 8:45 Minyan on Monday, Thursday, and Shabbos. For questions about Mi Sheberach guidelines, contact Rabbi Rosenbaum. For other questions, contact Seth Katz at sethkatz@yise.org.
Helping Hands Across Kemp Mill, a part of YISE's Chesed Committee, provides assistance to families undergoing medical crises. If you do not have a Helping Hands account, or if you have any questions, please contact: Melanie Karlin, 301-681-4740, mskarlin@gmail.com or Miriam Friedman, 301-754-1517, mfriedman2@yahoo.com

Upcoming Community Programs & Listings

Kemp Mill Toastmasters - Wednesday nights, 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM. January 8, 22 in person in the YISE Social Hall. January 15, 29 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.
Camp Shomrai Registration is Open! Register for Camp Shomrai summer 2025, for ages 2-15, June 23 - August 1. Early bird discount deadline, January 26. For more information or to register, go to campshomrai.org. [see flyer](#).
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. 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.
Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington + JCADA - Ensuring our relationships promote good mental health. Sunday, January 26 at 10:00 AM on Zoom. Registration link available on BCGW website under calendar tab bikurcholimgw.org.
Mikvah Membership - It's time to join or renew your membership to the Mikvah Emunah Society! Please visit mikvahemunah.com/membership/ in order to view the different payment options. The MES thanks you for your support to maintain and sustain its beautiful Mikvah!
Mikvah Emunah Society's Annual Banquet - Sunday, February 2 at 6:00 PM, at KMS. Honorees are Gila Wakschlag and Dr. Richie Broth. Visit <https://mikvahemunah.com/2024/12/15/mes-dinner/> to RSVP and place an ad in the journal.
TGN Lunch and Learn - "The Foot Bones Are Connected to Almost Everything" by Dr. Stuart Goldman: Wednesday, January 8, 12:15 PM at KMS. RSVP by January 5 (301)732-1773, director@goldennetwork.org.
Finding the Light with Orit Mark Ettinger - Join us as renowned speaker and media personality Orit Mark Ettinger shares insights and inspiration from Israel. Sunday, January 12 at 7:30 PM at Chabad of Silver Spring, 519 Lamberton Drive.

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

FEBRUARY DEADLINE: MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 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 Sunday, January 5 and Monday, January 13**

Rabbi Rosenbaum will not be giving classes from Friday, January 17 through Friday, January 24

Rabbi Yitzchak Scher's shiur on Tuesdays will not meet on January 7 or January 14

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 January 2. Please check <https://wp.yise.org/weekly-classes/> for updated info.

Connection Details

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

Zoom A: ID: 416 963 9000, password 492019

Zoom B: ID: 970 1398 4837, password 613

Zoom C: ID: 833 3477 1595, password RabbiHyatt

Zoom D: ID: 601 853 4021, password Winter (phone 667362)

Zoom E: ID: 746 455 2195, password Learn

Zoom F: ID: 803 356 4156, password Learn

Zoom G: ID: 713 7408 5130, password 045079

Zoom H: ID: 849 3898 4989, password 161699

JOIN ————— 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

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

DOR L'DOR

At Young Israel Shomrai Eemunah!

*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



YOUNG ISRAELI STUDENTS ENRICHING SOCIETY

CHODESH SHEVAT MEN'S MELAVEH MALKA



MOTZAEI SHABBOS
FEBRUARY 1
8:30PM



AT THE HOME OF
CRAIG & RACHELLI SIMON
918 KENBROOK COURT



JOIN

RABBI ROSENBAUM & RABBI POSTELNEK

FOR

MUSIC, TORAH,
CHIZUK AND WINGS!



YISE.ORG/MMM TO SPONSOR



YOUNG ISRAELI STUDENTS ENRICHING SOCIETY

NUSACH HA'TEFILLAH CHABURA

Learn to Lead. Lead to Inspire

Want to learn how to lead davening?
Already a shliach tzibbur, but want to improve?

JOIN US FOR A 4-WEEK COURSE
LEARNING SHABBOS SHACHARIS!

Led by Rabbi Yosef Postelnek and Yosef Lindell



Sundays 8:45PM - YISE Social Hall
February 2, 9, 16, and 23

Text (571) 340 0227 **TO JOIN THE WHATSAPP GROUP**

- ☒ Learn the Nusach
- ☒ Understand the Tefillah
- ☒ Tips, Tricks and Tunes
- ☒ Weekly Recordings






YISE Youth Presents

Our 2nd Annual

YISE Family Shabbos

DINNER

FRI	FEB 7	6:15 PM
		APPROX

A child-friendly community meal open to the whole shul



Cost:

\$20 Adult (Ages 13 & Up)

\$15 (Ages 2 - 12)

\$60 Family Max

Please RSVP to

www.yise.org/family-dinner






KMS & YISE WELCOME

RAV MEIR GOLDWICHT

SHABBAT, FEBRUARY 7-8

75 YEARS
YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMER KATZ

8:30 PM FRIDAY NIGHT ONEG

"THE SECRET, UNIQUENESS, AND ESSENCE OF TU B'SHVAT"

AT THE WEINBERG HOME, 710 HERMLEIGH ROAD

SHABBAT MORNING AT YISE

"THE SPIRITUAL RESPONSE TO OUR ENEMIES"

HEBREW AFTER HASHKAMA MINYAN | SEPHARDI MINYAN | AFTER 8:45/9:15 MINYAN
(YOUTH ROOM BEHIND BALCONY) | (LARGE BEIS MEDRASH) | (SOCIAL HALL)

4:00 PM WOMEN'S SHIUR

"RAISING HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN"

AT THE BRODER HOME, 11801 CLINTWOOD PLACE

BETWEEN MINCHA/MAARIV AT KMS

"THE SECRET OF PRAYER IN TIMES OF SADNESS AND HAPPINESS"



Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, a prominent Israeli scholar and educator, is the Joel and Maria Finkle Visiting Israeli Rosh Yeshiva and a rosh yeshiva at the Yeshiva Program/Mazer School of Talmudic Studies at Yeshiva University. He is also head rosh yeshiva at the Irving I. Stone Beit Midrash Program. Rabbi Goldwicht received semikha from the renowned rabbinic authorities Rabbi Zalman Nehemia Goldberg, former Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem HaRav HaGaon Betzalel Zolti and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. HaRav Rashi of Israel. Rabbi Goldwicht delivers Hebrew and English shiurim (lectures) extensively across the metropolitan area, throughout the United States and in Israel, including weekly evening shiurim in 5 New York area communities. He has delivered more than 1,000 inspiring shiurim every year to grateful audiences.



YISE Youth Presents

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Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Shabbat Shalom

Volume 31, Issue 14

Shabbat Parashat Vaera

5785 - B"H

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

The Birth of History - The parsha of Vaera begins with some fateful words. It would not be too much to say that they changed the course of history, because they changed the way people thought about history. In fact, they gave birth to the very idea of history. Listen to the words: God said to Moses, "I am Hashem. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as Kel Shakkai, but by My name 'Hashem' I did not make Myself fully known to them.

What exactly does this mean? As Rashi points out, it does not mean that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah did not know God by the name Hashem. To the contrary, God's first words to Abraham, "Leave your land, your birthplace and your father's house," were said using the name Hashem.

It even says, just a few verses later, Vayera Hashem el Avram: "Hashem appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.'" So God had appeared to Avram as Hashem. And in the very next verse it says that Avram built an altar and "He called on the name of Hashem". So Avram himself knew the name and had used it.

Yet it is clear from what God says to Moses that something new is about to happen, a Divine revelation of a kind that had never happened before, something that no one, not even the people closest to God, has yet seen. What was it?

The answer is that through Bereishit, God is the God of Creation, the God of nature, the aspect of God we call, with different nuances but the same overall sense, Elokim, or Kel Shakkai, or even Koneh shamayim va'aretz, Creator of heaven and earth.

Now, in a sense, that aspect of God was known to everyone in the ancient world. It's just that they did not see nature as the work of one God but of many: the god of the sun, the god of the rain, the goddesses of the sea and the earth, the vast pantheon of forces responsible for harvests, fertility, storms, droughts, and so on.

There were profound differences between the gods of polytheism and myth and the one God of Abraham, but they operated, as it were, in the same territory, the same ballpark.

The aspect of God that appears in the days of Moses and the Israelites is radically different, and it's only because we are so used to the story that we find it hard to see how radical it was.

For the first time in history God was about to get involved in history, not through natural disasters like the Flood, but by direct interaction with the people who shape history. God was about to appear as the force that shapes the destiny of nations. He was about to do something no one had ever heard of before: bring an entire nation from slavery and servitude, persuade them to follow Him into the desert, and eventually to the Promised Land, and there build a new kind of society, based not on power but on justice, welfare, respect for the dignity of the human person and on collective responsibility for the rule of law.

God was about to initiate a new kind of drama and a new concept of time. According to many of the world's greatest historians, Arnaldo Momigliano, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, J. H. Plumb, Eric Voegelin, and the anthropologist Mircea Eliade, this was the moment when history was born.

Until then, the basic human drama was struggling to maintain order against the ever-present threats of chaos, whether through natural disasters, foreign conquest, or internal power struggles. Success meant maintaining the status quo. In fact, religion in the ancient world was intensely conservative. It was about teaching people the inevitability of the status quo. Time was an arena in which nothing fundamentally changed.

And now God appears to Moses and tells him that something utterly new is about to occur, something the patriarchs knew about in theory but had never lived to see in practice. A new nation. A new kind of faith. A new kind of political order. A new type of society. God was about to enter history and set the West on a trajectory that no human beings had ever contemplated before.

Time was no longer going simply to be what Plato beautifully described as the moving image of eternity. It was going to become the stage on which God and humanity would journey together toward the day when all human beings – regardless of class, colour, creed, or culture – would achieve their full dignity as the image and likeness of God. Religion was about to become not a conservative force but an evolutionary and even revolutionary one.

Think about this: Long before the West, the Chinese had invented ink, paper, printing, porcelain manufacture, the compass, gunpowder, and many other technologies. But they failed to develop a scientific revolution, an industrial revolution, a market economy, and a free society. Why did they get so far and then stop? The historian Christopher Dawson argued that it was the religion of the West that made the difference. Alone among the civilisations of the world, Europe "has been continually shaken and transformed by an energy of spiritual unrest." He attributed this to the fact that "its religious ideal has not been the worship of timeless and changeless perfection but a spirit that strives to incorporate itself in humanity and to change the world."

To change the world. That is the key phrase. The idea that – together with God – we can change the world, that we can make history, not just be made by it, this idea was born when God told Moses that he and his contemporaries were about to see an aspect of God no one had ever seen before.

I still find that a spine-tingling moment when, each year, we read Vaera and recall the moment history was born, the moment God entered history and taught us for all time that slavery, oppression, injustice, are not written into the fabric of the cosmos, engraved into the human condition. Things can be different because we can be different, because God has shown us how.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Redemption as a Universal Call to Freedom -

"Therefore say to the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord. I shall take you out from under the sufferings of Egypt, I shall save you from their toil, I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm, I shall take you to Me for a nation, and I shall bring you to the land...'"

With these "four expressions of redemption" (in bold above), the book of Exodus emerges as the biblical book of redemption; indeed, the very Hebrew meaning of the name Moshe (Moses) literally means "the one who draws forth", the one who takes out, the one who frees from slavery within

the context of Egyptian enslavement of the Hebrews. And so, when the Mishna begins to describe the order of the annual Passover Seder, we find the imperative, "And no one may drink less than the prescribed four cups of wine, even if they must take from the community charity kitchen," with Rashi explaining the source: "Corresponding to the four languages of redemption regarding the exile of Egypt... in the portion of Va'era".

The famed halakhic authority and arbiter of the last century, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein of blessed memory, even initially requires four cups of wine rather than grape juice. This is because wine actually makes the individual feel "free" physiologically – and the four cups of wine at the Seder are not only for the sake of sanctity, memory and joy (as is the case with ordinary Kiddush on the Sabbath and usual festivals) but are also for the sake of freedom!

But what is the precise nature of the freedom that we are celebrating on Passover in general, and at the Seder in particular? Conventional traditional wisdom would maintain that it is the freedom of the Hebrews, the special relationship between God and Israel which caused the Almighty to step into history, as it were, and free the children of Israel from their servitude under Pharaoh. And it is from this perspective that the great universalist philosopher Maimonides is generally associated with the biblical book of Genesis – the book he most usually cites as his proof-texts for the views he offers in his Guide for the Perplexed – whereas the more nationalist philosopher Yehudah HaLevi is more closely identified with the biblical book of Exodus – the book most widely drawn upon in HaLevi's Kuzari.

However, I would insist that such a distinction does not do proper justice to the biblical message. Moses' mission, and God's miraculous freeing of the Hebrew slaves, was never meant for Israel alone. Indeed, if the Almighty had merely desired to redeem Israel because of His special relationship with them, He could have simply airlifted the Israelites from Egypt without having to upset all of nature with the ten cataclysmic and fantastic plagues, and then with the sensational splitting of the Yam Suf (Reed Sea). The Almighty was rather attempting to teach a crucial lesson to Pharaoh, and to all subsequent despotic and totalitarian rulers in world history: slavery is a rank evil. No human being has the power to lord it over another human being. Every human being is created in the divine image, and therefore every human being has the inalienable right to be free!

It is largely from this perspective that the book of Exodus emerges from, and is based upon, the book of Genesis. You will remember that the Sabbath day, the seventh day wherein all manner of physical work is forbidden and in which the human being has the ability to exercise his existential freedom under God, has two distinct but intertwined biblical significances: first, the Lord Creator because "in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the seas and everything which is in them, and rested on the Sabbath day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it"; and second, the Lord Redeemer: "You shall remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God

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took you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore did the Lord your God command you to make the Sabbath day.” Clearly, the second reason emanates from the first: the God who created every individual in His own divine image decries and abhors the enslavement of one human image of the divine over another human image of the divine. Every human being has the right to be free. Hence the second Decalogue includes the additional message of the Sabbath: “In order that your [gentile] manservant and your [gentile] maidservant may rest like you”.

A fascinating support to this universal message of the Exodus may be found in the Jerusalem Talmud, where the source for the four cups of freedom wine is not traced to the four expressions of redemption in the Torah portion of Va’era, but rather to the four instances of the word “goblet” in the dream of the butler that was interpreted by Joseph:

“In my dream, behold a vine was before me...and the goblet of Pharaoh was in my hand, and I took the grapes, and I squeezed them into the goblet of Pharaoh, and I gave the goblet into the hand of Pharaoh...And Joseph said, ‘In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you shall place the goblet of Pharaoh into his hand as you did before when you were his butler...’”

Now the butler is an Egyptian, who was arbitrarily and unfairly imprisoned by Pharaoh; his dream portends his freedom from enslavement by an unjust despot. I believe that the Jerusalem Talmud – in making this passage from the end of the book of Genesis the source for the four cups of freedom wine at the Passover Seder rather than the passage from Va’era – is emphasizing the universal message of freedom for all of humanity rather than merely parochial freedom for Israel. In the interdependent global village in which we now live, when the ideal of freedom and world peace is so cardinal, when life-preserving democracy is locked in battle against suicide-bombing, fundamentalist terrorists for world hegemony, this interpretation of the Exodus has never been so vital!

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm’s Derashot Ledorot

Sensitivity Training [Excerpt]- After the plague of locusts, Pharaoh calls Moses and Aaron in and in exasperation says to them, לכו וכוזו לאלקיכם בארץ, “Go and sacrifice to your God in the land.” He is anxious to rid himself of the plague, and in return he is willing to grant freedom of worship to the Israelites – but only on condition that they practice their religion and worship their God here, in Egypt, and not leave the country.

But Moses לא נכון לעשות כן כי תועבת מצרים נובה לה. His response is It is not right to do this, for we will be sacrificing אלקינו הן נובה את, the gods of Egypt to the Lord our God, and if we sacrifice the god of Egypt before their very eyes, will they not stone us?” Moses was concerned because the worship of the God of Israel included the sacrifice of animals, and animals were the idols of Egypt.

Now, one wonders why Moses was so frightened. Surely he could not have used the excuse of fear that the Egyptians would stone the Israelites as a reason for having to stay in Egypt. Pharaoh was a tyrant, an all-powerful despot, and he simply could have responded that he will command his troops to keep order and prevent the masses from stoning the Hebrews.

A very beautiful answer is offered by Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlop, of blessed memory. Moses, he says, was not afraid of stoning. Not at all. Indeed, the Aramaic translator, Onkelos, renders the end of our verse as: “הלא יימרן למרגנא: – “Will they not want to stone us?” In other words, Moses was not afraid that the Egyptians would attack him, but he simply did not want to outrage the Egyptians’ religious

sensibilities. His response to Pharaoh was לא נכון לעשות כן, “It is not right to do this.” He did not want to offend the Egyptians’ feelings that they would want to stone the Israelites. That is why he insisted that the Israelites would have to perform their worship outside of Egypt.

Consider the moral stature and ethical nobility of Moses. Here he was, leading a revolution against Pharaoh and his whole political system; undermining the entire culture of Egypt; undertaking, on behalf of monotheism, a broadside attack against the whole system of לענייהם – paganism and heathenism that had dominated Egypt since time immemorial. And yet before the very eyes of the Egyptians, he will not do anything to offend their deepest feelings!

So the Torah is teaching us a lesson of the utmost importance: that, except where the Halakhah clearly defines the *Mitzvah* as such, even the greatest commandment – such as the service of the Lord, נובה, may not be achieved at the expense of the anguish of others, even if that anguish is a result of beliefs which we know to be empty and foolish and false.

Within the Orthodox community we must learn this lesson in sensitivity training. We are often asked to be tolerant of our fellow Jews who are non-Orthodox. That is right – we certainly should. Where no diminution of our own belief or practice is concerned, insulting others and wounding their feelings is wrong. However, we must point out that true tolerance (which, as is well known, is a very poor word), true magnanimity of spirit, is not identical with a spineless lack of conviction. Too often, those who most boast about their tolerance are merely displaying a lack of concern or care. There are too many people who mistake lack of commitment for great tolerance, and empty head for an open mind.

When Moses, according to this interpretation, respected the feelings of the Egyptians, he did not fail to identify the gods of Egypt as תועבת מצרים, literally, “the abominations of Egypt!” To be sensitive to others does not mean to conceal or curb your own commitments.

So, without wavering or compromising our own principles, we must always understand and be sensitive to others. We must not yield on any significant or even insignificant Halakhah, we must not participate in non-Orthodox services, but never must we denigrate or offend others. But at least equally important is to be sensitive to those to the right of us. If we are asked to be patient with those who are less observant, so much more so with those who are more observant. It does not mean that we must agree with those who wish to impose upon us standards with which we do not agree, and which we do not believe are required by the Halakhah. But if others think that certain things are right, לענייהם, in their presence, we must respect them.

Such sensitivity is also needed in interreligious relationships, between Jews and non-Jews. Even as Moses was considerate of the Egyptians’ feelings, so must we be sensitive to Christians’ feelings. In dealing with Christian groups, especially Protestants, I have never insisted that they give up their evangelical functions, their missionizing. Unlike a number of my fellow Jews, I recognize that for many Christians this is an integral part of their faith. I do lay down certain conditions, namely, that their missions to Jews not be disguised as “dialogue”; that they not exploit, as they so often have, the poor and the sick and the ignorant; and that they keep hands off Israel, the first Jewish commonwealth in two thousand years which is still seeking its own soul. On the human level, and by this term I intend a moral statement exclusive of any religious content, I think that the whole idea of sending a mission to the Jews is horrendous. The sordid Christian record of two thousand years in dealing with Jews, and

Likutei Divrei Torah

especially Christian passivity and even complicity during the Holocaust, have forever after deprived Christians of whatever moral justification they may ever have had for proselytizing the Jews. Their greatest need is to send a mission to Christians, not to anyone else. Nevertheless, if a Christian feels that such proselytizing is a basic principle of his faith, and he is willing to do it honestly and honorably, I will not object to it, and I will try to understand him. Quite frankly, my sensitivity is in this case abetted by a practical consideration. That is, if a Christian genuinely believes in evangelical activity, and I deny it to him, then one of two things will happen, neither of which is good. Either he will go underground, and he will seek the same conversionary goals indirectly and subtly, in a manner which will make it impossible for us to successfully resist; or else he will

demand of us a *quid pro quo*, that we give up some basic element of our faith in turn. There are, unfortunately, some Jews who are willing to “negotiate” such deals, but these are people whose faith has long since evaporated, and we ought have nothing to do with them.

But sensitivity is a two-way street. And if we are to be sensitive to the Christians’ self-definition, they must be equally sensitive to us. That is why I frequently find myself exasperated in conversation with Protestants. I speak of people who are moral, cultured, and well-intentioned, and yet have difficulty appreciating the depth of Jewish feeling about the State of Israel and the significance of Eretz Yisrael in Judaism. They cannot empathize with the Jewish post-Holocaust condition and thus they are insensitive to our feeling about the State of Israel; and they look at Judaism with Christian eyes, and imagine that we must pattern our religion on theirs, and that is why they occasionally express such derisive comments as, “Why must you get involved in sacred real-estate?” But such misunderstanding simply will not do. Even if they do not agree to the policies of Israel, or policies of Jews in the Diaspora about Israel, certainly we ought to expect some sensitivity. Surely the Jewish “obsession” with Israel is no worse than the the abomination of Egypt, for which Moses demonstrated such delicate תועבת מצרים understanding.

But whatever complaints we may have against the Protestants, there is far less mitigation for the Catholic Church and its leader. For a while, the noises coming from the Vatican were appealing, and indicated a new orientation. But the longer this Pope stays in office, the less credible the Catholic openings to the Jews become. For the Pope to shed crocodile tears, as he did several years ago when Israel bombed Lebanon’s Beirut airport with no loss of life, but with damage only to hardware, and remain silent when Arabs kill Jews – men, women, and children; for the Pope to rush to condemn Israel’s recent raid into Lebanon and so haughtily to recommend that Israel deal with the PLO, and to maintain strict silence at the murderous provocations which resulted in these retaliations, namely, the attacks by the PLO within Israel – these are instance of insensitivity so crude, so callous, and so calculating as to tax credibility.

So we Jews learn from today’s Sidra a principle which must guide us in interreligious relations, in relations amongst Jews, and for ourselves in our relations in our own families and societies. לא נכון לעשות כן, it is not right to be insensitive.

And as a complementary principle, we must pray for that which is right and sensitive. In וירח נכון, “Create for me a pure heart, O God”, חדש the words of the Psalms, “לי אלקים בקרבי”, “renew within me”.

That is something worth praying for – that which is right, that which is sensitive. [1976]

Seven of the Ten Plagues are found in this week's *Parashah*. R' Meshulam Feish Segal Lowy z"l (1921-2015; the *Tosher Rebbe* in post-War Hungary and Montreal, Canada) writes: The ultimate purpose of all of the miracles connected with the Exodus is so that all of mankind will recognize that "there is Someone in charge in the palace" (a phrase borrowed from a *Midrash* regarding Avraham's discovery of *Hashem*) and that everything is run with *Hashgachah Peratit*, i.e., Divine interest and involvement in world events and attention to detail. Moshe delivers this message in *Hashem's* Name repeatedly in our *Parashah*: "So that you will know that there is none like *Hashem*, our *Elokim*" (8:6); "So that you will know that I am *Hashem* in the midst of the land" (8:18); "So that you shall know that there is none like Me in all the world" (9:14); and "So that My Name may be declared throughout the world" (9:16). We likewise say in our daily prayers (quoting *Nechemiah* 9:9-10): "You observed the suffering of our forefathers in Egypt . . . You imposed signs and wonders upon Pharaoh . . . and you made a great Name for Yourself, as clear as this very day."

The *Tosher Rebbe* continues: Acknowledging *Hashem's Hashgachah Peratit* is the ultimate purpose of all of our prayers, beginning with *Pesukei D'zimra* and continuing through the Blessings surrounding *Kri'at Shema*. Each day, upon repeating the same prayers, a person can attain a deeper understanding of *Hashem's* greatness, and a person's *Emunah* can be strengthened. Thus we read (*Tehilim* 150:2--also part of our daily prayers), "Praise Him according to His abundant greatness"--i.e., "Praise Him (*Hashem*) according to (one's own, ever-increasing appreciation of) His abundant greatness." (*Avodat Avodah*)

Shabbat

R' Yaakov ben Asher z"l (the "*Ba'al Ha'turim*"; Germany and Spain; 1269-1343) writes: Our custom is to say in *Musaf*, "*Tikanta Shabbat*, etc.," whose words are arranged in the order known as "*TaShRaK*" (תשרק--i.e., in reverse alphabetical order). This is meant to allude to the future redemption, about which we read (*Zechariah* 10:8), "*Eshrekah* (אשרקה) / I will whistle to them and gather them, for I have redeemed them."

(*Tur, Orach Chaim* 286)

R' Yosef Karo z"l (1488-1575; Greece and Eretz Yisrael; author of the *Shulchan Aruch* and other works) adds: We allude to the future redemption on *Shabbat* because that redemption will come about in the merit of *Shabbat*, as we read (*Yeshayah* 56:4, 7): "So says *Hashem* to the barren ones who observe My Sabbaths . . . I shall bring them to My holy mountain . . ." It is further written (*Yeshayah* 30:15), "In *Shuvah* and *Nachat* (both terms suggesting restfulness) you shall be redeemed."

R' Karo continues by showing how each series of four letters in reverse order alludes to a word or phrase related to the redemption. For example, *Nun-Mem-Lamed-Chaf* contains the word "*Melech*" / "king," as in the verse (*Zechariah* 14:9), "*Hashem* will be King over all the world--on that day *Hashem* will be One and His Name will be One." (*Bet Yosef*)

R' Zvi Yehuda Kook z"l (1891-1982; *Rosh Ha'yeshiva* of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Yerushalayim) explains further: Why should the redemption be alluded to by the alphabet in reverse? There are many people whose *Emunah* is weak because things seem to be backwards, i.e., the world is not operating in a way that makes sense to us. When *Hashem* redeems us, He will show us where He was in that seeming backward-ness.

(*Sichot Harav Zvi Yehuda: Devarim* p.436)

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"I will harden Pharaoh's heart and I will multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt." (7:3)

Many commentaries ask: If *Hashem* "hardened Pharaoh's heart," implying that He took away Pharaoh's free will so that Pharaoh could not have emancipated *Bnei Yisrael* even if he had wanted to, why did the Egyptians deserve these punishing plagues? Commentaries give various answers to this question.

R' Yaakov Moshe Hillel *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Ahavat Shalom in Yerushalayim) answers as follows, based on the *Zohar* and the teachings of R' Yitzchak Luria *z"l* ("*Arizal*"; 1534-1572): The great philosophers in ancient times--for example, Aristotle--achieved a very sophisticated understanding of G-d as "*Ein Sof*" / limitless and beyond our comprehension. Ironically, however, their understanding of G-d's greatness precluded them from acknowledging His *Hashgachah Peratit*, i.e., His interest and involvement in world events. Instead, they reasoned that He is too lofty to be involved in, or even aware of, such relatively puny matters as man's affairs. (This, explains R' Hillel is the significance of the *Chanukah* miracle, which demonstrates, contrary to Greek beliefs, that *Hashem* is, in fact, running the world with *Hashgachah Peratit*.)

Pharaoh, too, was a great philosopher, continues R' Hillel. Pharaoh acknowledged *Elokim*, who Pharaoh understood as the G-d who established the rules of nature and now lets the world run automatically. (Note that the *Gematriot* of "*Elokim*" and "*Ha'teva*" / "the nature" are equal.) But, writes R' Hillel, Pharaoh could not acknowledge *Hashem*, a G-d Who intervenes in nature with *Hashgachah Peratit*. (We know *Hashem* to be one and the same as *Elokim*. The different names of G-d merely represent different ways that we perceive Him.) Thus, when Moshe said (5:1), "So said *Hashem*, the *Elokim* of *Yisrael*, 'Send out My people'," Pharaoh responded (5:2), "Who is *Hashem* that I should heed His voice to send out *Yisrael*? I do not know *Hashem*, nor will I send out *Yisrael*!"

The idea of "*Hashem*" -- a G-d Who is *Ein Sof* but also can intervene in nature--was so antithetical to Pharaoh's world-view that just hearing the Name "*Hashem*" caused Pharaoh to become more entrenched in his position, thus hardening his heart, writes R' Hillel. The more *Hashem* proved through the plagues that He can intervene in world affairs, and the more times Moshe mentioned *Hashem's* Name, the more entrenched Pharaoh became. According to this understanding, concludes R' Hillel, *Hashem* never took away Pharaoh's free will; rather, our verse means: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart when I will multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt." It was *Hashem's* "signs and wonders" that caused Pharaoh's heart to be hardened. (*Ruach Ha'yam: Chanukah* p.221)

"Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them 'el' Bnei Yisrael and 'el' Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to take Bnei Yisrael out of the land of Egypt." (6:13)

Midrash Rabbah, cited by *Rashi z"l*, interprets "*el*" (על) to mean "concerning" or "regarding." *Rashi* writes: "Concerning *Bnei Yisrael*"--to deal with them in a gentle manner and to be patient with them. "Concerning Pharaoh, the king of Egypt"--that they should show him respect as they spoke. [Until here from *Rashi*]

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* interprets '*el*' to mean "to," and it asks: What commandment did Moshe give to *Bnei Yisrael* at this time? It answers: He commanded them regarding freeing Jewish slaves. [Until here from the *Yerushalmi*]

R' Yosef Rosen *z"l* (1858-1936; the "*Rogatchover Gaon*") writes: The *Yerushalmi* is teaching that the Exodus was conditioned on *Bnei Yisrael's* committing that, in the future, they would free their Jewish slaves after six years of servitude (see *Shmot* 21:2) or at the *Yovel* / Jubilee year (see *Vayikra* 25:10). If *Bnei Yisrael* would not fulfill that condition, they would be returned to the status of slaves.

Bnei Yisrael did not, in fact, live up to that condition, and they were punished, as we read in the Book of *Yirmiyah* (34:14; see *Rashi* there). Specifically, the booty that *Bnei Yisrael* received from Egypt at the time of the Exodus had the status of the gift that a master must give his slave when he goes free (see *Devarim* 15:13). Since *Bnei Yisrael* failed to fulfill the *Mitzvah* that was the condition upon which they were freed, they became obligated to become re-enslaved to the Egyptians in some sense. Therefore, relates the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 87b), the equivalent of the booty they received was recaptured by the king of Egypt in the days of King Rechavam, son of King Shlomo.

(*Tzofnat Pane'ach*)



"Entreat Hashem--there has been an overabundance of thunder of Elokim and hail." ...

"Moshe said to him, 'As for you and your servants, I know that you are not yet afraid of Hashem Elokim'." (9:28-30)

R' Pinchas Zalman Horowitz *z"l* (1832-1906; Krakow, Galicia) explains: The Name "*Hashem*" refers to G-d's Attribute of Mercy, while the Name "*Elokim*" refers to His Attribute of Justice. Pharaoh did not believe that one deity could have both attributes, so he said: Entreat *Hashem* and see if He can stop the thunder of *Elokim*."

Moshe replied: I will do that, but I know that you and your servants nevertheless will not believe that *Hashem* is *Elokim*. (*Ahavat Torah*)

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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IDF CHIEF HALEVI RESIGNS (Israel Hayom 1/21/25)

IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Herzl Halevi announced his resignation following the military's failures on Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack, in which over 1,200 Israelis – mostly civilians – were killed, and 250 were taken hostage.

"I notified the Defense Minister today (Tuesday) that in acknowledgment of my responsibility for the IDF's failure on Oct. 7 and at this juncture when the IDF has recorded significant achievements and is implementing a hostage release agreement, I am requesting to conclude my tenure on March 6, 2025," he wrote in an official statement. "During the remaining period, I will complete all investigations and reinforce the IDF's operational capabilities to meet security challenges," he added.

"Throughout the past four decades, protecting Israel's security has been the mission that defined my life," Halevi wrote. "On the morning of Oct. 7, the IDF under my command failed to fulfill its fundamental mission of protecting Israeli citizens. The State of Israel has endured a devastating and painful toll – in lives lost, in hostages taken, and in both physical and psychological trauma. Despite countless acts of valor from many – our security forces, IDF soldiers and commanders, and brave civilians – these heroic efforts could not prevent the catastrophic outcome. The weight of my responsibility for this terrible failure remains with me every day, every hour, and will continue to do so for the remainder of my life," he emphasized.

Lieutenant General Halevi assumed the role as the IDF's 23rd chief of staff in January 2023, following a career that included serving in crucial leadership positions such as director of Military Intelligence, commander of the Southern Command, and deputy chief of staff.

Major General Yaron Finkelman, commander of the Southern Command who took office in July 2023, has also announced the conclusion of his tenure. Finkelman stated in his resignation letter: "Guided by my conscience and the values I hold, I have made the decision to conclude my position as Southern Command commander and my service in the IDF. On Oct. 7, I failed to defend the western Negev and its beloved and heroic residents. This failure will remain etched within me for the rest of my life."

WHO WILL BE IDF'S NEW CHIEF? ISRAEL KATZ TO BEGIN SELECTION PROCESS SUNDAY (JPost 1/22/25)

Defense Minister Israel Katz intends to interview three candidates on Sunday to be the next IDF chief of staff, he said Wednesday.

After IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzl Halevi announced he would step down on March 6, it was expected that Katz would move quickly to select his replacement. Nevertheless, he threw a wrench into the works by adding dark-horse candidate Maj.-Gen. Tamir Yadai.

The Jerusalem Post and the other media outlets expected Defense Ministry Director-General Maj.-Gen. Eyal Zamir, who is a former deputy IDF chief of staff, and outgoing IDF Deputy Chief of Staff Maj.-Gen. Amir Baram to be on the shortlist of candidates.

Yadai previously served as OC Central Command, OC Home Front Command, and commanded several different divisions after spending most of his career in the Golan Brigade.

He is seen as a dark-horse candidate because, unlike Zamir and Baram, he has not been the deputy IDF chief of staff, nor has he commanded the Northern or Southern commands, which are considered to be the most important field command roles.

Having led Northern Command to a sensational victory over Hezbollah, Gordon was viewed as a top potential candidate. Nevertheless, Katz might have viewed him as being too close to Halevi.

Zamir and Baram are still considered to be the most likely choices, with Zamir being the lead candidate.

Being that Yadai is somewhat of an outsider with the fewest ties to Halevi, if he were chosen, it could signal a reshuffle of the top echelons of the IDF. That might facilitate Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's desire to water down opposition to some of his policies.

ISRAEL'S COALITION VOTES DOWN BILL TO FORM OCTOBER 7 STATE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (Ha'aretz 1/22/25)

Coalition lawmakers voted against establishing a state commission of inquiry into the events of October 7 on Wednesday.

The National Unity Party said in response that the coalition "harmed Israel's security, the bereaved families, and the hostages' families. The people of Israel will not forgive the coalition MKs. A state commission of inquiry into the greatest disaster in the country's history will be established."

Party leader MK Benny Gantz also said that the commission would be established, "if not by this Knesset, then by the next one."

The October Council called the Knesset vote "shameful and disgraceful," saying that the MKs who voted against it "desecrated the memory of the victims of October 7, and will bring another October 7 upon us."

They added, "Investigating the failure is not just an interest of the bereaved families, but of the entire country." It promised that it would continue to fight until a commission is formed.

In response to the vote, Keren Twig, the sister of Yiftah Dan Twig, who was murdered at the Nova festival, said that she did not understand "how MKs can look us, the bereaved families, in the eyes." She said, "My brother's death, and that of all the victims, will not be in vain."

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East Hill Synagogue, Englewood, NJ	Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY
Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Mill Basin, NY	Young Israel of Sharon, MA
Harvard University Library	Young Israel of Staten Island, NY
Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, NY	YI Shomrai Emunah, Silver Spring, MD

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Liad Baram, the father of Neta Baram, who was killed in the battle at the Nahal Oz base on October 7, 2023, said that the families were demanding answers. "MKs who promised us they would vote in favor – voted against [the bill]. They will feel the consequences of their actions."

HAMAS OFFICIAL: NETANYAHU CAVED DUE TO IDF REFUSAL TO CARRY OUT GOALS OF WAR (Arutz-7 1/22/25)

Bassem Naim, a member of the Hamas terror group's leadership, on Tuesday said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had "caved" to the terror group's demands for a ceasefire deal.

According to Naim, "Netanyahu caved to the opposition's (Hamas - ed.) conditions after its outstandingly strong standing in the Gaza Strip."

He added that the rounds of negotiations with Israel to reach the ceasefire were difficult, but Hamas invested in achieving its conditions at each round.

"The occupation's army's failure in the arena was one of the factors in Netanyahu's surrender in the ceasefire agreement," Naim added. "Netanyahu did not succeed in convincing his army to achieve his goals in the war against Gaza."

"The pressure on Netanyahu within Zionist society, because of his failure, was one of the factors in his surrendering to the opposition's conditions."

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY REPORTEDLY TO MANAGE GAZA'S RAFAH CROSSING UNDER UN SUPERVISION (YNet 1/22/25)

Following the visit of Mossad head Dedi Barnea and Shin Bet head Ronen Bar to Egypt, the London-based Arabic language Saudi newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat reported that an agreement had been reached on the control mechanism at the Rafah Crossing, which the IDF took over in May. According to a source in the joint cease-fire monitoring team, the talks also dealt with security arrangements on the Philadelphia Corridor, and not just the issue of the Rafah Crossing on the Gaza side.

"The parties reached an agreement regarding the management of the crossing on the Palestinian side. It was agreed that it would be managed by the Palestinian Authority, under international supervision and monitoring by the UN," claimed the same source, who spoke to the newspaper on condition of anonymity, noting that it had not yet been decided when the crossing would be returned to operation. In addition, according to the source, no agreement was reached regarding the Philadelphia Corridor.

The appendix to the cease-fire agreement, signed last week in Qatar, stated that Israel would now be required to work to reopen it, and that its forces would "redeploy around" the crossing based on maps to be agreed upon between the parties, without specifying whether there would be an actual withdrawal from there. The maps themselves, which depict the IDF's gradual withdrawal and redeployment of its forces during the cease-fire, have not yet been revealed.

Netanyahu has previously opposed the possibility of Palestinian Authority representatives activating the crossing, and the appendix did not specify exactly how it would be activated. "The crossing will be activated based on the discussions from August 2024 with Egypt," the appendix stated.

According to the Saudi report, the meetings that began in Cairo on Monday lasted until the early hours of Tuesday morning - and were attended by Barnea and Bar, as well as Egyptian intelligence chief Hassan Rashad, and a number of senior officials responsible for the Palestinian issue in Egyptian intelligence. "The remaining disputes are technical and logistical and they will be resolved," the source said.

Regarding the Philadelphia Corridor, the report claims, Israel has proposed implementing partial withdrawals from the axis, but Egypt insists on a full withdrawal. "Cairo wants to return to the situation that existed before the war," the source noted. "We also discussed in the meeting the possibility of changing the crossing agreement later. What has been determined now is temporary and concerns this stage only."

Israel did not commit to a full withdrawal from the corridor in the first phase of the deal and cease-fire, but only to a "reduction" of its presence. According to the appendix to the deal, the details of which were obtained last week, the

withdrawal from there is supposed to begin only on the last day of the first phase, day 42, when the last hostages of 33 hostages will be released as part of that phase.

However, since that agreement was signed, Israeli officials have insisted that there will be no actual withdrawal - and their statements cast doubt on the fact that the agreement stipulates that even if an agreement on Phase Two is not reached by the end of the first phase, the temporary cease-fire will continue as long as the negotiations continue - with the mediators, including the U.S., committed to guarantee this.

Last week, Palestinian Authority officials claimed in a conversation with Ynet that President-elect Donald Trump asked Ramallah to control the Gaza Strip's crossings, and "especially" the Rafah crossing, in coordination with Israel and Egypt.

HAIRCUT, NAILS, NEW IDS: RELEASED HOSTAGES BEGIN RECOVERY (Israel Hayom 1/21/25)

On their second day of freedom at Sheba Medical Center, three recently released hostages – Doron Steinbrecher, Emily Damari, and Romi Gonen – are undergoing an orchestrated reintegration process, beginning with the restoration of their official identities through new biometric documentation.

The Interior Ministry has established a mobile processing station within the hospital, where the three will have their photographs taken and fingerprints collected for new identification cards. This procedural milestone follows scheduled sessions with hairdressers and aestheticians, marking their transition back to civilian life.

Authorities have implemented comprehensive security protocols at the facility, maintaining a controlled environment where immediate family members – parents and siblings – are accommodated overnight. Access remains strictly limited, with conventional smartphones prohibited; only basic "kosher phones" without cameras are permitted within the complex.

Medical staff report that the released hostages, who shared their captivity experience, have maintained the close bonds formed during their ordeal. They occupy adjacent rooms in a secured wing of the facility, dividing their time between family visits and group interactions. Sleeping arrangements have been customized to individual preferences, with some choosing to have family members nearby while others opted for separate accommodations.

"They haven't yet grasped how much they've become symbols," a staff member observed after one of the young women appeared wearing a shirt her family had printed during their campaign for her release.

The facility maintains round-the-clock dining services under dietary supervision, accommodating specific requests that reflect the hostages' reacclimation to freedom. One notable request was for a special salad – a simple luxury unavailable during captivity. The women have also requested exchanges of their standard-issue sweatpants for more individualized, colorful clothing options.

As some of the former hostages begin cautiously reengaging with social media, the administration is already preparing for the next phase of releases, expected on Saturday. Sources indicate the next group of hostages will likely be transferred to a different medical facility.

The current rehabilitation program represents the initial phase of a broader reintegration strategy, balancing immediate medical and psychological needs with the gradual restoration of normal daily activities. Medical professionals emphasize the importance of this measured approach in ensuring successful long-term recovery.

MOVED DOZENS OF TIMES, KEPT IN DARKNESS: INSIDE ROMI, DORON AND EMILY'S CAPTIVITY (YNet 1/20/25)

Romi Gonen, 24, Emily Damari, 28, and Doron Steinbacher, 31, freed after 471 days in Hamas captivity, have begun recounting their experiences in Gaza while recovering in the hospital.

According to Channel 12 News, although none of the three were held alone, they were separated at various points and at times kept in underground facilities with little exposure to daylight.

The women said they were occasionally allowed access to television and radio, through which they saw their families and the public campaigning for their release. They learned that their families had survived the October 7 attacks in Israel. "We cooked for each other and looked after one another constantly," one said.

"I didn't think I would return. I was sure I would die in Gaza," one of the women shared, adding that they only learned of their impending release on the morning of their handover. "We were terrified during the transfer from the terrorists to the Red Cross because of the Gazan crowds," they recalled.

Despite intermittent provisions from Hamas, one of the hostages endured a medical procedure without anesthesia, underscoring the terrorist group's cruelty. Emily Damari recounted spending extended periods with Romi Gonen, during which they were repeatedly moved between locations, including both underground tunnels and residential apartments.

Emily, who lost two fingers to Hamas gunfire on October 7, revealed she also sustained a leg injury during captivity. Romi, trained as a medic, treated her wounds and provided vital care. The three women also disclosed they learned Arabic during their time in captivity.

The families of Emily, Romi and Doron gave their first public statements Monday evening following the women's release from Hamas captivity.

"472 days ago, we received Doron's harrowing recording. Those words brought us immense pain and relentless fear. That moment will forever be etched in our hearts, but today, Doron is home," said Doron's sister, Yamit Ashkenazi. "We are still processing and trying to cope. She is well, strong and brave, but the road to recovery is long. She is surrounded by the warmth and love of her family, friends and all of Israel."

Ashkenazi also expressed gratitude for the support they received throughout Doron's captivity. "Our community in Kibbutz Kfar Aza and Israeli society as a whole stood by us at every step of this long journey. You gave us strength and hope, and you were an inseparable part of her return home. Your embrace crossed borders. The journey to bring Doron back has ended, but her journey to recovery is just beginning. We, too, survived the massacre and have yet to begin our own process of healing."

Mandy, Emily's mother, said, "I'm happy to share that Emily is in good spirits and on the path to recovery. She is strong and determined." She thanked Israeli security forces, outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden, incoming President Donald Trump, the British government, volunteers who worked for Emily's release and the hospital staff caring for her.

"I have one request," Mandy continued. "Keep fighting for the 94 hostages who still need to come home. Too many families are still waiting for their loved ones. The hostages in Gaza must receive humanitarian aid while awaiting their release—they need food, water and medicine. Thank you again for your support."

Merav, Romi's mother, began her remarks by noting the number of cameras present compared to the days following the October 7 massacre. "This shows where the nation and the media stand—kudos to us," she said. Overcome with emotion, she added, "We are happy to say that Romi is now a former hostage. The reality we dreamed of has come true, and we are now a family of returnees."

Merav also honored Ben Shimony, who tried to rescue Romi in his car during the Nova music festival before being killed, along with Romi's friend Gaya Khalifa and Ofir Tzarfati, who were also murdered in the attack. She thanked the Israeli government and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for their "courage and moral decision to initiate this critical process of bringing our sons and daughters home."

Merav also expressed gratitude to the bereaved families, the families of the soldiers, U.S. President Trump and Qatar and Egypt for mediating the deal.

CAN A HOSTAGE MOTHER DRIVE ON SHABBAT TO REUNITE WITH FREED DAUGHTER? (JPost 1/23/25)

Prominent Orthodox Israeli Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein told the mother of a hostage that if her daughter was released on Shabbat, she should not drive to see her, Kikar Hashabbat reported on Wednesday.

Rabbi Zilberstein, a rabbi of Ramat Elchanan and a member of the Lithuanian Council, met with hostage families during Israel's multifront war to encourage them through faith, beginning the day after the October 7 Hamas massacre in 2023.

Now, as the next stages of the hostage release deal are expected to take place on Shabbat, the mother of a hostage who is expected to be released asked the rabbi if she would be allowed to break the laws of Shabbat to meet her daughter upon her release.

"She asked for instructions," Rabbi Zilberstein reportedly said, "how to behave with her daughter because her soul yearns to see her. She needs to be released on Shabbat. She asked, 'How will I face her, driving to her on Shabbat?'"

The rabbi told her that she should not drive and instead send a photo and a letter, telling her they'll meet after Shabbat.

"Then she asked me, 'And if I can't hold myself back, what should I do?' She asked, 'What will I do if I can't stand it.'"

According to the report, Rabbi Zilberstein then responded, "If the Holy One is so good and beneficent, a miracle against nature, your daughter remained alive, then we need to say thank you to the Holy One."

Despite his instructions, Kikar Hashabbat reported that Rabbi Zilberstein did not explicitly forbid her from traveling on Shabbat to see her daughter but told her that it would be "a great blessing" if she held herself back.

FREED HOSTAGE EMILY DAMARI'S WOUNDED HAND SWIFTLY BECOMES SYMBOL OF ISRAELI DEFIANCE (Times of Israel 1/22/25)

The mother of freed hostage Emily Damari on Tuesday posted a new photo of the two of them together following her daughter's return to Israel this week, showing Emily's hand unbandaged after she lost two fingers when shot by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023.

"Thank you to everyone in the UK and around the world who supported the campaign to bring Emily home, and for all your messages here on X. You are amazing and we love you all," tweeted the Surrey-born, London-raised Mandy Damari.

In some of the first pictures the family cleared for publication after her release, Emily, a dual Israeli-British citizen, was seen waving her bandaged left hand in a phone call to her relatives, in an image widely seen as emblemizing her courage and resilience.

The gunmen who burst into her home at Kibbutz Kfar Aza on October 7, 2023, shot her dog, she reportedly told her family and friends in her first conversations with them on Sunday evening, and she was hit, too, as she tried to comfort her dying pet.

In an Instagram post on Monday, the released hostage, 28, wrote that the outpouring of love and support had made her "heart burst with excitement."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you," she wrote. "I'm the happiest in the world just to be."

Emily's post was signed with the "rock on" emoji, in a nod to the gesture her hand now permanently makes, which has become a new Israeli icon.

Soon after the images were published, supporters added bandages to the "rock on" emoji, transforming Damari's injury into a symbol of defiance. Mandy Damari added the emoji to her handle on the social network X.

The most widely circulated version was made by Aviad Amergi, an Israeli sneaker artist, who posted it on Instagram along with the words, "A great small victory." His followers quickly requested that he turn it into a sticker for WhatsApp, the messaging platform that is massively popular in Israel, where it soon circulated widely.

Others adapted Damari's gesture as well. A drawing of Damari's hands demonstrating the Jewish priestly blessing circulated online, with words from the biblical benediction: "May God bless you and keep you." The drawing was attributed to Moshe Shapira, a Jerusalem artist and architect, whose son Aner was killed during the October 7 attack after saving the lives of others.

The Israeli soccer player Ohad Hazut made the sign with his hands after a win on Monday, writing on Instagram, "An important victory."

And at least one Israeli has even had the image etched onto his leg as a tattoo, according to a video shared by the pro-Israel influencer Hen Mazzig. Together, the symbol is emerging as a companion to "We Will Dance Again," the refrain adopted by survivors of the Nova music festival massacre, as a show of resilience for Israelis traumatized by the October 7 atrocities. It also joins the yellow ribbon, which has become a ubiquitous symbol of advocacy for the hostages.

"There are many symbols of victory, this is my symbol," tweeted the Israeli artist Nemo Shiff alongside several renditions of Damari's hand. "For me, it symbolizes survival and bravery against all odds."

Some — including Lihi Lapid, the writer who is the wife of Yair Lapid, the Israeli parliamentary opposition leader — have also noted that the configuration of Damari's remaining fingers is the same as the sign for "I love you" in American Sign Language.

Damari herself channeled both interpretations in her first Instagram post after returning to Israel. "Love, love, love," she posted, in a video visible to her friends and family but soon shared much more widely. "I have returned to my beloved life." She ended her post with the "rock on" emoji.

SURVIVOR OF NOVA FESTIVAL MASSACRE TO REPRESENT ISRAEL AT EUROVISION (Arutz-7 1/22/25)

Yuval Raphael, who survived the massacre at the Nova Festival in Re'im on October 7, 2023, on Wednesday evening won the final of the Keshet 12 reality competition "Hakokhav Haba" ("Rising Star") and will represent Israel in the Eurovision Song Contest, to be held in Basel, Switzerland in May.

Daniel Wais, a resident of Kibbutz Be'eri in southern Israel whose father was murdered on October 7 and whose mother was kidnapped and murdered, finished fourth.

Yuval Raphael responded to her victory, saying, "I cannot explain how excited and ready I am. Thank you for giving me this tremendous honor and trusting me to represent my people."

ALLIED SUPPORT: JERUSALEM & BAKU HELP EACH OTHER IN WASHINGTON & ANKARA (i24News 1/22/25)

US President Donald Trump's victory marks the beginning of rapid diplomatic liaisons between Baku and Washington through different Jewish and Israeli channels. A day after Trump's inauguration, the presidents of Israel and Azerbaijan met in Davos.

President Isaac Herzog arranged the meeting to discuss several issues with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, with whom he has long established friendly relations. According to the official summaries of the meeting, the sides discussed economic and trade collaboration, commending the work of the session. The meeting took place before the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Netanyahu to Washington to meet with President Trump.

Last month, the president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Michael Tuchin, and incoming president Bernie Kaminetsky visited Baku to meet with President Aliyev. They discussed the issue of strengthening relations between the US and Azerbaijan, the importance of which to Israel's security was underestimated by Biden's administration.

Two days later, Aliyev aide Hikmet Hajiyev arrived in Jerusalem to meet with President Herzog, Foreign Minister Gideon Saar, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, and other Israeli officials. After his return to Baku, Hajiyev reported to the Azerbaijani president and departed to Ankara. Turkish media claimed that he is playing a mediator role between Israel and Turkey regarding the situation in Syria.

Azerbaijan, being Israel's and Turkey's ally, has always worked to normalize Turkey-Israel relations and mediated during crises between them. It can be assumed with a high degree of probability that the January 21 statement of Nail Olpak, president of the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) — which dealt with Turkey's intention to resume trade with Israel if lasting peace is established in Gaza — was a result of the Azerbaijani effort.

Thus, it appears that Azerbaijan and Israel, who have been allies for 30 years, are exchanging favors and advocating for each other in Turkey and

the US. According to the recent research paper of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Azerbaijan's exceptional relationship with Israel serves as an example for other Muslim states. Moreover, Baku assisted in the efforts of President Trump in facilitating Israel's relations with Gulf states and moderate Muslim countries. Meetings in Baku between Israelis and senior figures from the Arab world were taking place years before they became official in Israel. Immediately after the signing of the Abraham Accords, Baku became one of the first venues for establishing contacts between Israeli and UAE diplomats.

IDF CHIEF'S RESIGNATION SETS STAGE FOR NETANYAHU PROBE, IGNITES POWER STRUGGLE IN ARMY (Ravit Hecht, Ha'aretz 1/22/25)

IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi's term was hampered by non-stop strife.

The fear that the 2023 judicial reform and the ensuing protests would completely dissolve the army was quickly replaced by the pain and fear brought on by the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. The war that followed has been the longest and most difficult in Israel's rather short history.

However, it would be dishonest to say that Halevi's tenure was solely derailed by force majeure.

The IDF fell short in every possible way on that terrible day. Halevi personally failed to assess the situation in Gaza a few hours before the invasion of the Gaza border communities. He also completely failed at the broader, strategic level to protect the border with the Gaza Strip. IDF Intelligence completely missed on Hamas' intentions to conduct such a large-scale offensive.

The results speak for themselves, and the Israeli army's terrible defeat, the scope of which is still hard to grasp, will accompany Halevi forever, as he himself wrote in his resignation letter.

The army's recovery and success in the war against Hezbollah in Lebanon are no small matters, but they pale against the terrible shadow of October 7.

In the past few days, petty warlord and Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has begun promoting a campaign to oust the "Progressive Chief of Staff." Smotrich wants to divert the Israeli right-wing's attention away from him staying in the coalition, even though he has vociferously opposed any cease-fire agreement with Hamas.

While Smotrich babbles on about how Halevi's resignation will assist in continuing the war in Gaza, Halevi's leave of absence, together with the IDF's Southern Command head, may indicate that the 15-month-long war in Gaza is actually over. The launch of Operation Iron Wall, yet another military campaign in the northern West Bank city of Jenin, supports this.

The operation might have been the catalyst for Halevi's resignation at this point in time, as the IDF chief watches how, yet again, political concerns propel the political echelon's decisions.

It is infuriating to see Halevi resign while the Israeli government, with the blood from October 7 still on its hands, remains standing. None of its members, beginning with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seem prepared to take responsibility for their negligence.

Meanwhile, the battle for control of the army is just beginning. It will be fought by those committed to democracy and preventing war crimes and those who seek to impose barbaric norms as policy, or to establish a messianic and vengeful military force, or both. This conflict will likely escalate with the next round of appointments of army generals.

Despite the Netanyahu government's efforts to dodge responsibility, the resignation of various senior army generals may actually accelerate the formation of a state commission of inquiry about the October 7 massacre.

This would signal the beginning of the end for those in power on October 7, with Netanyahu, who supported Hamas financially for years, standing at the helm. It is for good reason that Israeli president Isaac Herzog, who has faced harsh criticism due to his neutrality during the war, chose to reiterate the need for a state commission of inquiry in response to Halevi's resignation.

Even though it has become increasingly difficult to believe, the weary and lethargic Israeli public, whose voice is not heard in newspaper columns or on social media, is not bereft of a sense of morality and fairness.

Its demand for justice will also reach the government.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

It is an honor to present this week's Torah Minute from our archives. The following was penned by our founder, Rabbi Kalman Winter ZT"L.

In this week's Torah Portion of Va'eira, we read of the onset of the ten plagues. Pharaoh, in his great cruelty and haughtiness, refuses to come to terms with his fate and the fate of his nation. All the might and array of the plagues did nothing to impact and impart upon Pharaoh a change of heart and mind. However, with the seventh plague of hail stones raining down upon Egypt, destroying all cattle, plant life, and people that remained in the field, Pharaoh has a genuine, heartfelt moment of contrition and recognition of G-d. The verse in Chapter 9:27 states "This time I [Pharaoh] have sinned, G-d is the Righteous One and I and my people are the wicked ones." What a wondrous statement by Pharaoh, encompassing not only his own guilt, but G-d's justice and mercy. How are we to understand this change of heart amidst the utter destruction of all life in the field?

The great commentator, the Riva, explains that it lies in the fact that G-d had forewarned Pharaoh and his people to take in all their possessions from the field in advance of the. (Chapter 9:19) G-d had given the Egyptians an opportunity to protect themselves before the seventh plague and as a result, Pharaoh was moved in a very special way. Not by might, but by kindness. All the might of G-d did not move Pharaoh. Self-preservation did not achieve its objective. However, G-d's kindness, given to this ruler of consummate cruelty, was totally disarming.

We learn such a powerful and important lesson. We are far better served in reaching and influencing people with kindness than intimidation or other devices. If the stone heart of Pharaoh could be pierced by benevolence, how much more so ordinary people will be touched by kindness and good will.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

SPONSOR

This week's Shabbos Delights is sponsored l'iluy nishmas Yaakov ben Eliezer a"h (Poppa Jack), father of Dr. Leonard Ruchelman. His Yahrzeit will be on the 1st of Shevat.

TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

The seven-day period ended after Hashem struck the river. (7, 25)

The plagues lasted a quarter of a month. The other three quarters of the month, Moshe would forewarn and caution the Egyptians. (Rashi)

It seems from Rashi that all the plagues afflicted the Egyptians for seven days. However, it seems from the verses otherwise. The Plague of Pestilence (Dever) lasted only one day, as the verse says, "...the next day all the livestock of Mitzrayim (Egypt) perished." (9, 6) In addition, the Plague of the Death of the Firstborns lasted only for a moment - midnight.

Parsha Riddle

Why is the fifth cup of wine at the Seder called Kos Shel Eliyahu?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

"An Egyptian man saved us..." (2:19) How did this statement affect Moshe's burial?

Answer: Since when referred to as an "Egyptian man," Moshe did not admit that he was an "Ivri" – originating from the Land of Israel, he did not merit to be buried there. (Devarim Rabba 2:8)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Vaeira* (6:23), the Torah relates that "Aharon took Elisheva daughter of Amminadav, sister of Nachshon, as a wife." The Talmud (*Bava Basra* 110a) comments:

Rava says: One who marries a woman needs to first examine her brothers so that he will know in advance what character his children will have, **as it is stated: "Aharon took Elisheva daughter of Amminadav, sister of Nachshon." By inference from that which is stated: "The daughter of Amminadav," do I not know that she is the sister of Nachshon,** as Nachshon was the son of Amminadav? **What is the meaning when the verse states: "The sister of Nachshon"? From here one learns that one who marries a woman needs to examine her brothers.** The reason is as the Sages taught: **Most sons resemble the mother's brothers.**

The Rosh was asked about a man ("Reuven") who betrothed his daughter to the son of another man ("Shimon"), and the two men entered into an engagement contract with a financial penalty for breach. During the engagement period, another daughter of Reuven apostatized, and Shimon refused to proceed with the wedding due to the stain on the family (*pegam*). Reuven sued for the payment of the penalty for breach, and Shimon responded that he should not be liable for the penalty, since his commitment never anticipated his son marrying the sister of an apostate.

In a seminal ruling, the Rosh accepted Shimon's argument and ruled in his favor (*Shut. Ha-Rosh* 34:1). This ruling is generally accepted by later authorities, although many note the novelty of the ruling and accordingly limit its holding to at least some extent:

- The Bach maintains that only apostasy, which is infrequent and thus unanticipated, constitutes valid grounds for breach even absent a stipulation to that effect, as opposed to promiscuity, which is "very common" and thus requires explicit stipulation to be considered valid grounds for breach (*Shut. Ha-Bach yeshanos* 8).
- The Taz (*EH* 50 s.k. 8) does extend the holding of the Rosh to promiscuous activities, at least to the cases of a married woman who commits adultery and a woman who conceives a child out of wedlock (but seemingly not to that of a single woman who commits fornication – *Pis'chei Teshuvah* *ibid.* s.k. 5), but he limits the holding to cases of transgressions of a sister of the fiancée herself, as opposed to those of a sister of her mother.

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am not for beavers.
2. Don't confuse me with money.
3. I am life.
4. I killed the fish.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was one yet many.
2. We were baked in a pie.
3. I caused hitting.
4. It was hopping.

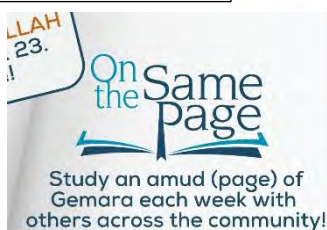
Last Week's Answers

#1 Burning Bush (I defied the laws of nature, Matan Torah and I have something in common, I was a thorny situation, Don't confuse me with a president or two.)

#2 Removing shoe/s (I was for the burning bush, I am for the Bais HaMikdash, I am for chalitzah, In Rus I am for acquisition.)

KOLLEL BULLETIN BOARD

Thursdays with GWCK



8:15pm at YISE (for men)



8:15pm on Zoom (for men)

THURSDAYS



8:30pm at SEHC (for men)

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