

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH

SHABBOS SHORTS

Candle Lighting 5:34 | Havdalah 6:34

Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by **Debi & Max Rudmann** honor of our new grandson, Natan Ezra, son of Ateret & Yosef Feldman



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Mazal Tavs

Nancy Finkelstein on the marriage of her grandson Sruly Peikes son of Rachel & Jonathon Peikes, of Kew Garden Hills, NY, to Kayla Mayerfeld, daughter of Debbi & Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld of Detroit.

Vivian & Arnie Kirshenbaum on the birth of a great-granddaughter, Emily Mae (Esther Malka) to Ally & Kevin Bokor. Mazal Tov to grandparents Shanie & Bill Bokor and the sisters, brothers, cousins and the entire family.

Daphne & David Price on the recent engagement of their daughter **Eyden** to Ayden Mehl, son of Sondra & Jared Mehl of Stamford, CT. Mazal Tov to sister Sarina and grandparents **Barbara Price** and Moshe Lazar and to the extended families.

Shoshana & Avi Rudack on the marriage of their son **Yehudah** to Tehilla Moskovitz. Mazal Tov to the siblings and the extended family.

Debi & Max Rudmann on the birth of Natan Ezra to their children, Ateret & Yosef Feldman. Mazal tov also to big sisters Dalia and Liora, grandparents Eli and Leah Feldman, and all the aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Naomi & Rabbi Hillel Shaps and family on **Esti's** Bas Mitzvah. Mazal Tov to grandparents, Marcie & Rabbi Yaakov Calm and Lauren & Rabbi Zischa Shaps, and to the great-grandparents, **Diana & Dr. Leonard Ruchelman**.

Condolences

Rachel & Michael Harris on the passing of their son, Dovid Harris.

Condolences to sisters Ayala (Isaac) Pearl, **Gila (Avi) Zagelbaum**, Rena Harris, and Esther Harris.

David Lisitza on the passing of his father Bernard Lisitza. David is observing Shiva at 617 Hyde Road from Motzei Shabbos through Tuesday morning. Mincha/Maariv Sunday and Monday at 5:35 PM.

Leah Snyder on the passing of her sister Geri Brown. Leah is observing Shiva at 1103 North Belgrade Road through Monday morning.

Kiddush & Shalosh Seudos Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by **Vivian & Arnie Kirshenbaum** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Arnie's father, David Kirshenbaum, Dovid ben Yechiel HaKohen, Z"L, on the 24th of Shevat and in honor of their great-grandchildren, Charna, Rena, Batsheva, Aiza, Yale, Zahava, Emily, Shalom, Noson, and Abie, and by **Lew Sosnowik** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of his father, Abraham Sosnowik, Avraham ben Michael, Z"L, on the 23rd of Shevat. **Shul Kiddush** is sponsored by **Naomi & Rabbi Hillel Shaps** in honor of **Esti's** Bas Mitzvah.

Sephardic Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by Sephardic Minyan in honor of Adir Haim for all that he has done and continues to do for the Sephardic Minyan.

Drasha & Shiurim Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara 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 and hostages.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim/Parsha Shiur and Tehillim/Sefer HaChinuch Shiur are sponsored by **Judy & Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Roy Rosenbaum's father, Rabbi Irving Rosenbaum, HaRav Tzvi Yosef ben David, Z"L.

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:

5:35 (B,SBM), 5:25 (Sephardi, LBM)

SHABBOS DAY:

Shacharis:

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

Mincha:

2:30 (B), 5:30 (B), 5:30 (Sephardi, LBM)

Maariv: 6:34 (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

Shiur between Mincha/Maariv: (B)

Rabbi Postelnek

Alsheich between Mincha/Maariv: (LBM)

Rabbi Levy

Youth Announcements

Teen Minyan - 9:15 AM (The House) Kiddush to follow **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. Pickup 11:15 AM in the Lower Lobby.

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

Toddler & Preschool Playdate - This Sunday, February 23, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM at The House.

Purim Costume Gemach Open - This Sunday, February 23, 2:00 - 5:00 PM at The House.

Coming up: Dor L'Dor - March 8 (note new date)

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

Bonei Olam Fundraising Event - This Sunday, February 23, 7 PM at KMS, featuring speakers **Rebbetzin Atara Rosenbaum** and former YISE Assistant Rebbetzin Estee Silver. More info at boneiolam.org/greaterwashington [see flyer](#)

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. Join for the last 2 sessions, February 23 and March 2 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](#)

Shabbos of Inspiration - GWCK at YISE, February 28 - March 1, register for the dinner, which includes free babysitting, at shabbaton.gwckollel.org. Dinner registration deadline, February 23. Oneg Shabbos following dinner, open to all. [see flyer](#)

Men's Melaveh Malka - Join Rabbi Postelnek and Rabbi Rosenbaum for a Chodesh Adar Melaveh Malka with music, Torah, and bbq! Motzei Shabbos, March 1, 8:30 PM at the home of R' Shmuel & Aviva Gabai, 1117 North Belgrade Road. To sponsor, visit www.yise.org/mmm. [see flyer](#)

Voice Notes of Inspiration - Join Rabbi Rosenbaum's daily WhatsApp group to get ready for Purim! Sunday, March 2 - Thursday March 13, join at yise.org/vnoi.

Ask the Rabbi - Tuesday, March 4, 8 - 9 PM on Zoom A with Rabbi Rosenbaum, "What Happens When Purim Falls Out on a Friday?" [See flyer](#) for more details.

Scholar-in-Residence Professor Naomi Grunhaus - Shabbos, March 7 - 8, Friday night Oneg, Post-mussaf Drasha, and between Mincha/Maariv in the Social Hall. [see flyer](#)

Maagal HaShana, Women's Chabura - Join Mrs. Channah Cohen to learn and prepare for Purim! Gain deeper insights by exploring the themes of Purim through interactive, engaging learning. Sunday, March 9, 8:30 PM in the Small Beis Medrash. [see flyer](#)

Purim Mesiba & Break-fast Meal - Energize your Purim with YISE's glow in the dark Purim Mesiba and break-fast meal (dairy)! Thursday March 13 in the Social Hall, following Megillah reading. To sponsor, visit yise.org/purimsponsor. [See flyer](#) for more details!

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

The March SHMA (Shomrai Monthly Announcements) will be published Parashas Terumah. Submit community events and shiurim updates for March by Monday, February 24 at NOON to: announce@yise.org

The Week Ahead		Sunday February 23 25 Shevat	Monday February 24 26 Shevat	Tuesday February 25 27 Shevat	Wednesday February 26 28 Shevat	Thursday February 27 29 Shevat	Friday February 28 30 Shevat Rosh Chodesh	<u>Next Shabbos</u> Feb. 28-March 1, 2025 1 Adar 5785 Parashas Terumah Rosh Chodesh/Shekalim Candle lighting: 5:42 Havdalah: 6:41 Friday Night: Mincha/Maariv: 5:45 (B, SBM), 5:35 (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), 5:40 (B), 5:40 (Sephardi, LBM) Maariv: 6:41
Shacharis	Ashkenazi (S,B,B)	6:30 7:30 8:45	6:15 6:45 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	6:15 6:45 8:45	6:15 6:35 8:45	
	Sephardi (LBM)	8:00	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	
Mincha/ Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)	5:40	5:40	5:40	5:40	5:40		
	Sephardi (LBM)	5:30	5:30	5:30	5:30	5:30		
Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)		7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30		
Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 5:29 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 5:56 AM, Latest Netz: 6:49 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:30 AM, Earliest Mincha: 12:52 PM, Earliest Shkia: 5:54 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim 6:41 PM								

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

NEXT SHABBOS SHORTS DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, NOON
SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE SHABBOS SHORTS TO: ANNOUNCE@YISE.ORG
WWW.YISE.ORG | 301-593-4465 | OFFICE@YISE.ORG



FEBRUARY 2025 | 3 SHEVAT - 30 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. International Speech Contest February 12 - cheer on your friends as they compete, light refreshments served. February 12 and 26 in person in the YISE Social Hall. February 5 and 19 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. For more information or to register, go to campshomrai.org. [see flyer](#).

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](#)

BCGW Purim Cards - Support patients and their loved ones this Purim by donating to BCGW and purchasing physical or digital Purim cards. Choose from a variety of options to make your celebration more meaningful and give comfort to people in our local community. Go to bikurcholimgw.org and click on the Purim cards tab. For more info contact rmyers@bikurcholimgw.org.

Cooking Workshop with Chanie Apfelbaum of Busy in Brooklyn - Tuesday, February 11, 7:30 PM at Chabad of Silver Spring.

The Golden Network (TGN) Lunch and Learn - Wednesday, February 12, 12:15 PM at YISE, "History of the Siddur" by 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](#)

Bonei Olam Fundraising Event - Sunday, February 23, 7 PM at KMS, more info at boneiolam.org/greaterwashington [see flyer](#)

Shabbos of Inspiration - Greater Washington Community Kollel at YISE, Shabbos February 28 - March 1, featuring guest Baal Tefillah Simcha Jacoby! Register for the Friday night dinner at shabbaton.gwckollel.org. [see flyer](#)

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
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SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE SHMA TO: ANNOUNCE@YISE.ORG
WWW.YISE.ORG | 301-593-4465 | OFFICE@YISE.ORG

***Rabbi Rosenbaum's Gemara Shiur will not meet Tuesday, February 4 and Tuesday, February 18**

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Parsha Shiur will not meet on Monday, February 17

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Sefer HaChinuch Shiur will not meet on Monday, February 17 and Sunday, February 23

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 Semichas Chaver Program (SCP) 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 30. 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

YISE Youth Presents

Toddler & Preschool Playdates

FOR MOMS & KIDS

**SUNDAY MORNINGS
MONTHLY AT THE
WISE HOUSE**

**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS!
New Dates:**

**February 9th & 23rd
10am to Noon**

**Featuring a special
music & movement teacher**

YISE House located at 1128 Arcola Ave

**For more information,
email sshimoff@yise.org**





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BONEI OLAM
GREATER
WASHINGTON

A Time to Plant

Planting and building
the future generations
OF GREATER WASHINGTON



Address by

REBBETZIN ESTEE SILVER
REBBETZIN YOUNG
ISRAEL LONGERBACH
FARMER & EDUCATOR
Vi Shomrai Emunah

February 23, 2025

7 PM

KEMP MILL SYNAGOGUE
11910 Kemp Mill Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20901

Address by

REBBETZIN ATARA ROSENBAUM
REBBETZIN, YI SHOMRAI
EMUNAH AND NOTED EDUCATOR

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Naomi Grunhaus is Associate Professor at Yeshiva University, where she teaches at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies and in the colleges. In addition to her book *The Challenge of Received Tradition: Dilemmas of Interpretation in Radak's Biblical Commentaries*, published by Oxford University Press in 2013, Dr. Grunhaus is co-editor of *From Scrolls to Traditions: A Festschrift Honoring Professor Lawrence H. Schiffman*, published in 2020 by E.J. Brill. She has authored scholarly articles, book reviews, and encyclopedia entries and is a frequent presenter at scholarly conferences. Her current research focuses on biblical interpretation in Hebrew linguistic works. Dr. Grunhaus received her PhD in Jewish Studies from New York University, MA and MS degrees from New York University, a BS from Brooklyn College, and a Hebrew Teacher's Diploma from Michlalah, Jerusalem College for Women.



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Volume 31, Issue 18

Shabbat Parashat Mishpatim

Shabbat Shalom

5785 - B"H

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

God's Nudge - First in Yitro there were the Aseret Hadibrot, the "Ten Utterances", the Ten Commandments, expressed as general principles. Now in Mishpatim come the details. Here is how they begin: If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything . . . But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.

There is an obvious question. Why begin here, with this law? There are 613 commandments. Why does Mishpatim – the first full law code in the Torah – begin where it does?

The answer is equally obvious. The Israelites have just endured slavery in Egypt. There must be a reason why this happened, for God knew it was going to happen. Evidently He intended it to happen. Centuries before, He had already told Abraham it would happen: As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the Lord said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country that is not their own, and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.

It seems that this was the necessary first experience of the Israelites as a nation. From the very start of the human story, the God of freedom sought the free worship of free human beings. But one after the other, people abused that freedom: first Adam and Eve, then Cain, then the generation of the Flood, then the builders of Babel.

God began again, this time not with all humanity, but with one man, one woman, one family who would become pioneers of freedom. Still, freedom is difficult. We each seek it for ourselves, but we deny it to others when their freedom conflicts with ours. So deeply is this true that within three generations of Abraham's children, Joseph's brothers were willing to sell him into slavery: a tragedy that did not end until Judah was prepared to forfeit his own freedom so that his brother Benjamin could go free.

It took the collective experience of the Israelites, their deep, intimate, personal, backbreaking, bitter experience of slavery – a memory they were commanded never to forget – to turn them into a people who would no longer turn their brothers and sisters into slaves, a people capable of constructing a free society, the hardest of all achievements in the human realm.

So it is no surprise that the first laws they were commanded after Sinai related to slavery. It would have been a surprise had they been about anything else. But now comes the real question. If God does not want slavery, if He regards it as an affront to the human condition, why did He not abolish it immediately? Why did He allow it to continue, albeit in a restricted and regulated way, as described in this week's parsha? Is it conceivable that God, who can produce water from a rock, manna from heaven, and turn sea into dry land, cannot call for this change to human behaviour? Are there areas where the All-Powerful is, so to speak, powerless?

In 2008 economist Richard Thaler and law professor Cass Sunstein published a fascinating book called *Nudge*. In it they addressed a fundamental

problem in the logic of freedom. On the one hand freedom depends on not over-legislating. It means creating space within which people have the right to choose for themselves.

On the other hand, we know that people will not always make the right choices. The old model on which classical economics was based, that left to themselves people will make rational choices, turns out not to be true. We are deeply irrational, a discovery to which several Jewish academics made major contributions. The psychologists Solomon Asch and Stanley Milgram showed how much we are influenced by the desire to conform, even when we know that other people have got it wrong. The Israeli economists, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, showed how even when making economic decisions we frequently miscalculate their effects and fail to recognise our motivations, a finding for which Kahneman won the Nobel Prize.

How then do you stop people doing harmful things without taking away their freedom? Thaler and Sunstein's answer is that there are oblique ways in which you can influence people. In a cafeteria, for example, you can put healthy food at eye level and junk food in a more inaccessible and less noticeable place. You can subtly adjust what they call people's "choice architecture."

That is exactly what God does in the case of slavery. He does not abolish it, but He so circumscribes it that He sets in motion a process that will foreseeably lead people to abandon it of their own accord, although it may take many centuries.

A Hebrew slave is to go free after six years. If the slave has grown so used to his condition that he wishes not to go free, then he is required to undergo a stigmatising ceremony, having his ear pierced, which thereafter remains as a visible sign of shame. Every Shabbat, slaves cannot be forced to work. All these stipulations have the effect of turning slavery from a lifelong fate into a temporary condition, and one that is perceived to be a humiliation rather than something written indelibly into the human script.

Why choose this way of doing things? Because people must freely choose to abolish slavery if they are to be free at all. It took the reign of terror after the French Revolution to show how wrong Rousseau was when he wrote in *The Social Contract* that, if necessary, people have to be forced to be free. That is a contradiction in terms, and it led, in the title of J. L. Talmon's great book on the thinking behind the French Revolution, to totalitarian democracy.

God can change nature, said Maimonides, but He cannot, or chooses not to, change human nature, precisely because Judaism is built on the principle of human freedom. So He could not abolish slavery overnight, but He could change our choice architecture, or in plain words, give us a nudge, signalling that slavery is wrong but that we must be the ones to abolish it, in our own time, through our own understanding. It took a very long time indeed, and in America, not without a civil war. But it happened.

There are some issues on which God gives us a nudge. The rest is up to us.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

What Takes Precedence – My Obligation to God or My Obligation to People? - "Now these are the laws which you shall set before them. If you buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing." Arriving

as it does immediately after the Ten Commandments, it is not surprising that Mishpatim begins with legal requirements of a society dedicated to morality and ethics, specifically, the relationship between employers and employees. Actually, these first laws of servitude coming after the Decalogue seem to be a natural expiation of the first of the Ten Commandments, "I am the Lord thy God who took you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage." It is as though the Bible is saying that from now on there are to be no more slaves among the Hebrews; in a brilliant silent revolution, the Bible utilizes the term "eved" (Hebrew for slave), but totally changes its definition, turning the eved into a hard worker for a limited portion of time, who does not act in a servile fashion and must be granted the same living conditions – in terms of lodging and food – as are enjoyed by his employer. One may even cite the primacy of the placement of these laws as proof of the importance of the commandments between human beings. However, a careful examination of the text reveals that Mishpatim is not exclusively dedicated to civil and criminal law.

We also find reference to laws between human and God: "You shall not curse God, nor curse a ruler of your people. You shall not delay offering the fullness of your harvest, and the out-flow of your presses."

Then after more ritual laws, the text returns to the laws within human society only to be followed once more with the ritual laws of Shabbat and festivals. Why this to and fro movement?

A strong argument can be made that although Torah law includes both the ritual and ethical, the Torah places priority not on the laws between human and God, but rather on the laws between human beings. We read in Vayera that after Abraham's circumcision he is graced by a vision of God. But then upon seeing three tired strangers in the distance, he abandons the Almighty, so to speak, to attend to the needs of his guests. The Talmud points to this incident as an underlying principle that it is of greater importance to be involved with hospitality – sensitivity in interpersonal relationships – than to greet the Divine Presence.

In his work *Hegyonot el Ami*, the former chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, argues that this principle is not just an Agadic hyperbole, but is a fundamental insight into the ideology of halakha. In ritual law there exists the notion of neutralization or nullification (*bitul*). Should a cupful of non-kosher chicken soup fall into a pot of kosher hot soup, one need not throw out the soup if the ratio of kosher to non-kosher is more than 60 to 1. The forbidden portion becomes nullified in the larger vat. When it comes to laws between human beings, however, there are no such leniencies. If, for example, the ten shekels which I pilfered become mixed into an account where I have six hundred legitimately gained shekels, I cannot invoke the 60:1 nullification concept as I do regarding pots on the stove.

Similarly, when it comes to questions of ritual in the Torah, we have the principle that a positive commandment can push aside a negative prohibition. For example, although it is forbidden to wear clothes woven from a mixture of linen and wool, the Torah

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nevertheless commands that the ritual fringes required on all four cornered linen garments should include a string of sky-blue wool. Here the positive commandment to wear tzitzit overrides the commandment forbidding a garment woven from wool and linen.

When it comes to laws between human beings and God, however, the same principle does not apply. Building a sukkah is a positive commandment, but if one steals the necessary wood for construction, we call this a mitzva achieved through sin and the sukkah is rendered invalid; no one suggests that the positive command to build a sukkah overrides the negative prohibition against stealing.

Finally, emotional intent and devotion (kavana) are an important part of ritual law. Without proper intent, ritual becomes a mechanical act, its value diminished. According to many authorities, such performance of a ritual is of no account whatsoever. Hence, Maimonides rules that if one recites the Shema, expressing each syllable aloud and emphasizing each of the necessary consonants, but does not have the internal commitment to accept the kingship of the divine, the entire recitation is of no religious significance whatsoever. It is as if the Shema had never been recited. However, proper intent is not required in laws between human beings because the deed itself is so important that any lack of inner intent cannot undermine the accomplishment of the act. Therefore, if one gives money to a poor person, even if one only did it in order to make an impression on one's companion, the mitzva is nevertheless valid.

The court system in ancient Israel likewise reflects the seriousness with which we deal with interpersonal relationships. Property litigations require three judges, and questions of life and death require twenty-three judges. To rule on ritual law, however, kosher or traif, all we need is a solitary judge. From this perspective, we may readily understand the mishna regarding Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Yom Kipper (automatically, or at least, when accompanied by repentance) forgives all transgressions between humans and God. But as far as the transgressions between people are concerned, only the wronged party has the right to grant forgiveness.

The sages were less worried about the realm of divine rituals than about the realm of human relationships. The strongest statement I know on this subject is boldly declared by our sages: "Does God really care if you slaughter an animal from the back or the front? The whole purpose of the commandments is to purify and to unite humanity."

Our midrash is not questioning the necessity of the detailed laws of slaughtering animals, which it certainly accepts; it is, however, making the rhetorical point as to who benefits from ritual commandments. God is not in need of purification or unity, but we human beings certainly are. That this is the purpose of the commandments, all of them, is one of the subtle messages of Mishpatim. On the surface some commandments may seem to be directed toward societal betterment and some directed toward divine connection, but common to all the commandments is their unifying and purifying principle. In the laws between human beings, whose objective nature is about bringing people closer together, this unifying principle is self-evident. Multiplied enough times, love thy neighbor as thyself translates into a golden age of peace for all mankind. But as we shall endeavor to show, the same message is to be found within the ritual laws as well.

The Shabbat, a ritual which takes over our lives every seventh day, and is the climactic event for which we prepare the other six days, is biblically ordained as both a reminder of God's creation of the

world as well as His redeeming us from Egypt. I have already explained the connection between these two events in my commentary on Va'era, if God is the creator of the world and we are all His creatures, no human has the right to enslave another. On this day of reverence for life, we cannot even pluck a blade of grass or pick fruit from a tree. Every creature of God has a right to be. We must recognize and respect every creature as a unique, separate and inviolate entity. Hence, the Shabbat, which seemingly comes to intensify our relationship to God, in reality strengthens our reverence for all life and our sensitivity towards all of existence, towards the whole of the universe. As Martin Buber magnificently taught, anyone who is incapable of saying Shabbat Shalom to a tree or to a dog simply doesn't understand the deepest meaning of the Shabbat.

Similarly, the laws of kashrut. After all, the Torah itself expresses the prohibition of mixing meat and milk with the compassionate command "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" and the necessity of salting and soaking meat to remove most of the blood because "the blood is the life".

Hence the to and fro movement throughout the portion of Mishpatim between the ethical and the ritual: They are intertwined, with the bottom line being compassion and sensitivity for all of God's creatures.

And this is precisely as it should and must be. When Moses made of God the request of requests, "Reveal to me your glory" [the secret of your ways], God responds: "The Lord, the Lord is a God of compassion and beneficence, long suffering, replete with loving-kindness and truth..."

Our sages teach us, "Just as God is compassionate, so must we humans be compassionate – because we are created in His image and we are commanded: 'You shall walk in His ways'".

Indeed, the very term "halakha" is most probably derived from the command of walking in God's ways. Hence every ritual, such as prayers and blessings, which brings me close to God must, at the same time, bring me closer to an emulation of His ways, make me become more compassionate and loving, more sensitive in my human relationships.

Conversely, if my behavior towards my fellow human helps me understand the part of God within every human being, then it is clear that the laws between humans will likewise bring me closer to God. Ultimately, these two dimensions are spokes on the same wheel, creating a magnificent human and cosmic unity. The commandments are there to help me see that godliness exists in every aspect of existence, and the goal of all the mitzvot is to create a more compassionate and sensitive human being to help bring about a world of peace and harmony. Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is One. Just as God is One, so the purpose of His Torah and His commandments are one: to make all of humanity – indeed all of creation – one, the one in the One.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frank

"If" It Is Not Really Your Money

Parshas Mishpatim introduces the prohibition against being an oppressive lender, and of taking or charging interest on loans: "Im (usually translated as "If") you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not lay interest upon him." The pasuk, as formulated, seems rather strange because there is a positive mitzvah to lend money to a fellow Jew in need. Yet the pasuk begins with the expression "Im kesef talveh..." which implies that if someone decides to lend money, then the following halachos apply. The Torah does not use this (apparently) optional word Im in connection with the mitzvah of tefillin or matzah or any other positive mitzvah. We would expect the Torah to state emphatically "You should

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lend money to (the needy in) your nation" and then go on to specify the halachos inherent in lender-borrower transactions.

The Mechilta already makes note of this question. The Tanna Rav Yishmael there says that the word Im here does not mean if, but rather it means when – when you lend money. But the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh wonders, why in fact did the Torah express the mitzvah to lend money in such a fashion?

The Ohr Hachaim explains it very interestingly. The "If" of "Im kesef talveh..." means If you see that you have more money than you need for yourself personally and you are wondering why it is that you have all this money and your needy friend does not have all that money, then you should realize that IT IS NOT YOUR MONEY! The surplus money you have is money that by right should go to the poor man, and it really belongs to he'ani EEMACH (It is really the poor person's money that happens to be deposited WITH YOU). In such a case, you should not be to him like a NOSHE (from the expression nesius) – don't lord it over him. It has nothing to do with your brains or your good luck. It is his money deposited by you, so you have no reason to lord it over him.

The Chassidische Rebbe, Rav Yakov Yosef m'Polna cites a Gemara in Bava Basra: If a person writes in his will that he is giving all his money to one son, that son is merely the executor of the estate (apotropus) for the other sons. Why on earth would a person give all his money to one of his sons, knowing full well that this will cause irreparable damage to the relationships between these brothers for the rest of their lives? So too, Rav Yakov Yosef explains, Hashem gave a considerable amount of money to certain of his children, but not so that they should consider all of that money to be theirs. They should view themselves as executors for distribution of the money to Hashem's "other children."

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's

Derashot Ledorot [Excerpt]

Enlightened Self-Interest - ...Let us turn to a Talmudic law enunciated as a commentary on one of the verses in this morning's Sidra. We read, as part of the Torah's civil legislation, "If you lend money to any of My people, even to the poor with you..." It is the verse which, in addition to the prohibition of usury, is the source of the commandment that we must lend our money to those in need. The Rabbis, troubled by the queer construction of the verse--"My people, the poor, with you"--deduced the following order of priority as to who shall be the beneficiary of our generosity in lending money:. If two people solicit your loan, and one is a fellow Jew and one a gentile, then all other things being equal, if you have sufficient to lend only one of them, the Jew takes precedence over the non-Jew. If the two people appearing before you are otherwise equal, but one is a poor man and one a rich man, the poor man comes first. If you are approached for a loan by a poor man who is a relative and a poor man who is a neighbor, the relative is to be preferred over the neighbor. If one of them is a poor man who lives in your town, and the second is a poor man who lives in another town, the poor man who is your neighbor takes precedence over the poor man from afar.

Note well that the Talmud does not bid us neglect the gentile, the non-relative, or the stranger. It does give us a list of priorities. What the Talmud is telling us is that a totally altruistic ethic, which does not recognize intimate human bonds and afflictions, is unnatural, and impractical--and hence, ultimately morally valueless. An ethic which does not consider and which affirms such human associations as nation, people, family, neighborhoods, is realistic and hence morally invaluable....

This week's *Parashah* introduces the Torah's *Mishpatim* / civil laws, saying: "And these are the ordinances that *Ta'sim* / you shall place before them." Based on similar wording, our Sages comment that the verse in *Iyov* (4:20), "They are ground down from morning to evening without '*Mei'sim*' / contemplation, they are lost forever," alludes to the Generation of the Flood, which was destroyed because it did not practice *Mishpatim*.

R' Yerachmiel Shulman z"l Hy"d (*Menahel Ruchani* of the Bet Yosef-Novardok Yeshiva in Pinsk, Poland; killed in the Holocaust) asks: Is that why that generation was destroyed? Our Sages teach that they were condemned because of widespread theft!

He explains: Our Sages say that *Bnei Yisrael* who stood at *Har Sinai* were on the level of Adam before his sin. If so, why was it necessary, or even appropriate, to command them not to murder, steal, commit adultery, or covet another's possessions?

R' Shulman answers: The "world's" understanding of these sins differs from the Torah's understanding of them. Thus we read (*Kohelet* 12:14), "For *Elokim* will judge every deed--even everything hidden--whether good or evil." Our Sages ask: Why does "good" need to be judged? They answer: This refers to one who gives a handout to a pauper in public, thereby causing him humiliation. In the eyes of the Torah, that, too, is murder! It is these subtle sins about which even *Bnei Yisrael* at *Har Sinai* needed to be commanded.

R' Shulman concludes: Our Sages teach the Generation of the Flood was condemned for theft--specifically, for stealing minute amounts of money. In the eyes of the world, that may not be stealing. But, the Torah's *Mishpatim* hold man to a higher standard. (*Peninei Ha'chochmah*)

Shabbat

Midrash Rabbah relates that Adam met Kayin after the latter had been judged for murdering his brother Hevel. Adam asked his son, "What was the outcome of your judgment?" Kayin answered, "I repented and G-d compromised with me." Hearing this, Adam became anguished and exclaimed, "The power of *Teshuvah* is so great and I did not know!" Immediately he said (*Tehilim* 92:1), "*Mizmor, shir l'yom ha'Shabbat*" / "A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day."

What is the connection between *Shabbat* and *Teshuvah*?

R' Yaakov Moshe Charlap z"l (1882-1951) explains: *Teshuvah* repairs the past, something that is possible only if there is a relationship between the past and the future. *Shabbat* is the proof that such a relationship does exist, for it is the contrast with the six days of work (the past) that reveals what is special about *Shabbat* (the future).

R' Charlap adds: A person sins only when he is in "weekday mode," i.e., a lower level of holiness. *Teshuvah*, on the other hand, is related to the enlightenment that *Shabbat* provides--i.e., recognition of the Creator's Oneness--through which one becomes sanctified to *Hashem*. When Adam heard that Kayin's *Teshuvah* had been accepted, he understood that a sin, no matter how great, cannot extinguish that light of *Shabbat*.

(*Mei Marom: Nimukei Mikra'ot, Bereishit* 4:16)

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“Hashem said to Moshe, ‘Ascend to Me to the mountain and remain there, and I shall give you the stone Tablets and the teaching and the commandment that I have written, to teach them’.” (24:12)

What is the significance of the fact that the *Luchot* were made of stone?

R’ Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z”l (1865-1935; *Ashkenazic* Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*) explains: “Those who would change the Torah pursuant to the wickedness of their beliefs” [in R’ Kook’s own words] say that only the spirit of the Torah is eternal. However, they claim, the deeds that result from that spirit must be modernized and brought up-to-date. In order to nullify such false assertions, *Hashem* gave the *Aseret Ha’dibrot*, which are a symbol of the covenant that includes the whole Torah, engraved in stone--a hard, unchanging material. This demonstrates that even the material manifestation of the Torah is unchanging. *(Ein Ayah: Berachot ch.1 no.17)*

“The glory of Hashem rested upon Har Sinai, and the cloud covered it for a six-day period. He called to Moshe on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud.” (24:16)

According to the opinion of Rabbi Yose Ha’Gelili in the *Gemara* (*Yoma* 3b), we learn from this verse that anyone who is entering the “precinct of the *Shechinah*” must prepare by separating himself from his everyday routine for six days. Thus, for example, the *Kohen Gadol* must leave his home and move into an apartment on the Temple Mount six days before *Yom Kippur*, as must the person designated to burn a *Parah Adumah* / red heifer six days before he performs that service.

Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi z”l (Spain; 1320-1376) asks: How can we learn these *Halachot* from this verse? Perhaps ascending to “meet” the *Shechinah* on *Har Sinai* is unique, but entering a place of lesser holiness--even the *Kohen Gadol* entering the Holy of Holies--does not require advance separation!

R’ Nissim answers: The *Gemara* understands that Moshe Rabbeinu was always ready to receive prophecy from *Hashem*; therefore, he did not need to prepare to ascend *Har Sinai*. It follows that the separation alluded to in our verse was not needed by Moshe himself; its only purpose was to serve as an example for future generations. Thus, we can learn from this verse that one entering the “precinct of the *Shechinah*” must prepare for six days.

But how does a physical human being, which Moshe was, attain the level of constant readiness for prophecy? The answer, writes R’ Nissim, is that it was a miracle, something that no human being can attain on his own. That is why the Torah is able to guarantee (*Devarim* 34:10), “Never again has there arisen in *Yisrael* a prophet like Moshe, whom *Hashem* had known face to face.” The verse is phrased in past tense, but the Torah is eternal. Thus, whenever someone reads this verse in the future, there still will never have been another prophet like Moshe. If attaining Moshe’s level were within a person’s capability, *Hashem* would not withhold that goodness from someone who takes the necessary steps to attain it! Therefore, the verse must be telling us that it is not possible for a person to attain that level through his own effort. *(Derashot Ha’Ran #4)*

“The choicest first fruit of your land shall you bring to the House of Hashem, your *Elokim*.” (23:19)

R’ Elya Meir Bloch z”l (1895-1955; founder and *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) comments: This is one of the fundamental principles of the Torah--whenever a person experiences joy, the first expression of that joy should be given to *Hashem*. This is the reason, as well, for the *mitzvah* of *Pidyon Ha’ben*. *(Peninei Da’at)*

“Behold! I am sending an angel before you to protect you on the way, and to bring you to the place that I have made ready. Beware of him--listen to his voice, do not rebel against him, for he will not forgive your willful sin--for My Name is within him.” (23:20-21)

R’ Aryeh Shapira *shlita* (Yerushalayim; author of many works based on the writings of *Ramchal* and the *Vilna Gaon* z”l) explains: The Torah is the blueprint for Creation, which means that even the existence of the angels is rooted in the laws of the Torah. Since an angel’s very existence is dependent on observance of the Torah, it follows that an angel cannot overlook or forgive a violation of the Torah.

Hashem, in contrast, can forgive sins, because it would be illogical if the “laws” of the world that He created for the purpose of doing good could restrict His ability to do that good. *(B’shimcha Esa Kapai p.9-10)*

“Moshe, Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, and seventy of the elders of *Yisrael* ascended. They saw the *Elokim* of *Yisrael*, and under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork, and it was like the essence of the heaven in purity. Against the great men of *Bnei Yisrael*, He did not stretch out His hand--they gazed at *Elokim*, and they ate and drank.” (24:9-11)

R’ Moshe ben Maimon z”l (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) writes: These “great men of *Bnei Yisrael*” attempted to perceive Divine secrets without preparing themselves properly. Specifically, one who wishes to understand such matters needs to have certain knowledge beforehand, and he also must purify his *Middot* / character traits. Because they did not prepare themselves properly, they mistook what they saw for something material, *i.e.*, “the likeness of sapphire brickwork.” And, they were punished. (According to *Rambam*, this was the reason for the early deaths of Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu).

In contrast, when *Hashem* first revealed Himself to Moshe (*Shmot* 3:6), “Moshe hid his face, for he was afraid to gaze toward *Elokim*.” The Torah (*Bemidbar* 12:8) tells us Moshe’s reward for this: “At the image of *Hashem* does he gaze.” *(Moreh Nevachim 1:5)*

ISRAEL REPORT

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Oded Lifshitz's Body Officially Identified in Israel After Being Returned by Hamas, His Family Says (Ha'aretz 2/20/25)

The family of Oded Lifshitz, whose body was released by Hamas on Thursday, said they received official notice that he has been identified.

"We received with deep sorrow the official and bitter news confirming the identification of our beloved Oded's body," the family said in a statement published by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, "503 agonizing days of uncertainty have come to an end. We had hoped and prayed so much for a different outcome."

"Now we can mourn the husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who has been missing from us since October 7. Our family's healing process will begin now and will not end until the last hostage is returned," they said.

Terrorist Muhammed Abu Warda Spotted at Hamas Ceremony in Gaza (JPost 2/20/25)

Palestinian terrorist Muhammed Abu Warda, who was released from Israeli jail in the current hostage-ceasefire deal, attended the Hamas ceremony in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Thursday, KAN news reported.

In addition to Abu Warda, other Palestinian security prisoners were reportedly seen in the audience of Hamas's ceremony ahead of the release of the four slain hostages Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir Bibas, as well as Oded Lifshitz. According to Israel's public broadcaster, Abu Warda was serving 48 life sentences for being involved in terror attacks in the 1990s, including two terror attacks on the number 18 bus that killed 44 people.

Israelis Line Streets to Honor Dead Hostages: 'It is a Sad Day, and There are Still Hostages in Hell' (YNet 2/20/25)

Dozens of residents of Kibbutz Nir Oz gathered Thursday ahead of the return of four deceased hostages: kibbutz members Oded Lifshitz, Shiri Bibas, and her children Kfir and Ariel. The residents wore stickers of broken hearts and stood for a moment of silence.

At the same time, hundreds gathered at Hostages Square in Tel Aviv, and even more hundreds lined the streets and waited for the convoy carrying the four hostages.

Renana Yaakov, whose sons Or and Yigal were freed in the first hostage deal, added, "People need to be reminded that, at every moment, there are people rotting in tunnels in Gaza. We know what the tunnel looks like, entire lives have passed while they're stuck there. One of my children was there and the thought that others still are doesn't let me rest."

She expressed anger at the "abandonment — that it took over 500 days to bring them back, and they returned in coffins. It could have been different. It's sad, frustrating, infuriating. But at the same time, there's relief, acceptance, even hope — because when deceased hostages are returned, it means we can bring back others so they can be laid to rest."

Emily Damari, who was freed after 471 days in Hamas captivity, posted an image in solidarity with the Bibas family.

Inbal and Itay Zeidenberg, also from Kibbutz Nir Oz, described the day as a "difficult, heartbreaking, and shattering day that highlights the scale of the abandonment. There's always hope, and many hostages still need to return. There are also deceased hostages held there and we're anxiously waiting for them."

"We have hope because so many people in this country stand with us and agree that human dignity, life, mutual responsibility and the state's duty to its citizens are what truly matter." Itay added, "Being part of this community means being prepared for devastating news every day, every minute."

Israelis came to support and encourage each other at Hostages' Square. Unlike the happy Saturdays, when giant screens show news broadcasts and the first photos of the hostages returning home, on Thursday morning the broadcasts went dark and instead showed photos of the hostages who are still in captivity and awaiting their release. Somber music played in the background, and there was soft singing and prayers led by young people from pre-military training schools.

In the center of the square, many flags were placed with the yellow symbol of the kidnapped. People stood and sat around them, some wearing clothes and accessories in the orange color that has become associated with the Bibas family, others wore pins in the shape of Oded Lifshitz's beloved cactus. Lee Tzadik, a resident of Ramat Gan, arrived at the square with orange balloons with the inscription: "We will not forget and we will not forgive."

Nitai Faust from Tze'elim, said: "Everyone is connected here. Families are connected, friends are the same. We studied at the same schools. And Yarden (Bibas) is from Tze'elim."

"The government ministers aren't here at all," Faust added. "So it's important for us to show that we're here with the hostages, both the living and the dead. It's clear that we need to recognize the victims of this atrocity. They're part of us. We are them."

Neta Geva from Ein HaBesor and Sarit Kani from Kibbutz Magen stressed: "There's no choice but to stand here. Oded was a friend. It's natural for us to come and say we're sorry. We feel we didn't scream enough, didn't do enough. This area is like one big family. Everyone knows everyone. Everyone is together and the absence is enormous. The anger is great — the neglect continues because not everyone is coming home."

Michal Bilia, whose brother-in-law Ariel Bilia was murdered on October 7

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while defending his family in Ofakim, also came out to the streets. "It was clear to us that we needed to escort the deceased with dignity," she said. "We wanted to show the families that we're with them in their hardest moments, and to show Hamas that against their ridiculous and cynical displays, we stand here with pride, with Israeli flags, proving that we're the complete opposite — that we honor our dead and don't give up on anyone."

KEITH SIEGEL'S DAUGHTER: DAD SURVIVED THANKS TO RECITING BLESSINGS AND SHEMA YISRAEL (Arutz-7 2/20/25)

Shir Siegel, daughter of Keith Siegel, one of the hostages recently freed from Hamas captivity, spoke in an interview with Yinon Magal on Channel 14 on Wednesday about her father's difficult ordeal while in captivity and the strength he found in his faith.

"Dad searched for his Jewish identity while in captivity, and he found it in small prayers. He started saying blessings over food, like 'Borei Minei Mezonot', which he had never said before, and 'Shema Yisrael', which he had never recited in his life," Shir shared.

She added, "He said that amidst all that hell, he wanted to remember that he was Jewish, that there was meaning to his people and to the place from which he came, and that strengthened him greatly."

The daughter also recounted, "After he returned, I asked him what he wanted us to do for our first Shabbat meal together. I imagined he'd want some dish he loves or a good challah. He replied, 'You know what I want most of all? A kippah and a Kiddush cup.'"

'IF PHASE TWO HAPPENS, WE WILL LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT,' RELIGIOUS ZIONISM LEADER SAYS (Maariv 2/20/25)

If phase two of the Gaza hostage release deal proceeds, the war will end, and the Religious Zionism party will leave the government, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset MK Moshe Solomon said in an interview with Radio North on Monday.

"So it won't proceed," he said.

"We understand that the government recognizes the magnitude of this moment, the extraordinary opportunity for a national right-wing government in light of the unprecedented opportunity we have with the US," he added.

"I expect [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] and cabinet to fulfil their commitment where we complete phase 1 of the deal and act with military force against the Hamas terror organization. I believe this is how we can bring back the hostages who are there. Currently, phase 1 has ended with everything that was promised, despite Hamas's violations."

Religious Zionism will not remain in the government if the war doesn't resume 42 days after phase two, he concluded.

Regarding the northern agreement, he added that the government must achieve the previously established war objectives on all borders.

"We'll pursue all means, including both fighting and various agreements, like the northern agreement, which we periodically see being violated, and Hezbollah's repeated attempts to return to the borders," he said.

"Therefore, when there are such violations and the new administration there doesn't change the reality, we will definitely return to fighting there and eliminate any capability to harm Israel's citizens' security, particularly northern residents, and the same goes for the south because Hamas is in critical condition and we must take advantage of the US administration change to complete the mission and we must not stop mid-fight."

Solomon addressed the issue of northern residents returning home, saying that as long as there was a threat along the border, no one could demand the residents' return.

"Maybe we won't reach the Litani River, but there will be between five to ten kilometers of military control, [and] then we can provide security for northern residents," he added.

"We're constantly focused on what we haven't achieved, but let's look at what we have achieved - Hezbollah is nothing like what it was a year and a half ago, not in its leadership, not in its military capabilities and service as an Iranian proxy - nothing is the same," he emphasized.

"So we should say that at this point in time, it's much better than it was a year and a half ago, and there's still a lot of work to do to conquer the north."

NETANYAHU PANNED AFTER 'SENIOR SOURCE' CLAIMS SECURITY CHIEFS BOTCHED HOSTAGE TALKS (Times of Israel 2/19/25)

A "senior source familiar with the details" released a statement on Wednesday claiming that the upcoming release of four dead hostages on Thursday and six living hostages on Saturday is a direct result of changes made to Israel's negotiating team.

The statement drew swift condemnation, from both unnamed sources in the security establishment and elected politicians, some of whom directly attributed the statement to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — who is known to make comments to the media on condition they are attributed this way.

On Tuesday it emerged that Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, a longtime confidant of Netanyahu, will lead talks on phase two of the hostage release-ceasefire deal with Hamas, rather than Mossad chief David Barnea, who has led previous rounds.

Phase two, per the original three-phase deal, would see Hamas return the remaining living hostages in exchange for a permanent end to the war.

Netanyahu pushed aside Barnea, as well as Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, and the military's hostage talks point man, Nitzan Alon. The security chiefs have long felt that a deal could and should have been reached earlier but that political considerations in Israel hampered those efforts.

According to the "senior source" statement on Wednesday, "The achievement of the agreement to release six of our living hostages in one fell swoop, alongside the return of four dead hostages tomorrow, is the result of the prime minister's decision to change the composition of the negotiating team."

"The new team changed the dynamic and led negotiations instead of concessions. It also stopped the practice of regular and biased briefings against the prime minister and the political echelon, which only caused Hamas to entrench its position and add demands," the statement said.

The assertion came into response from comments other members of the Israeli negotiating team earlier this week revealing that Hamas had been the side that initiated the proposal for an expedited release of the six hostages.

A senior Israeli official and a senior Arab diplomat confirmed this account to The Times of Israel.

A statement carried by Ynet and attributed to "senior officials in the security establishment" blasted the statement from the "senior official," saying: "The claim is not true. It's a disgrace, but it's not surprising."

"Everything that is happening in the deal was drawn up by the original negotiating team. The team, in advance, set up the possibility to shorten the releases at the end," the security officials said.

"There are two more releases, regardless: living hostages on Shabbat, and after that bodies. It's the same agreement. The one who wanted to move everything up was Hamas, who understands that Netanyahu doesn't want stage two, and wants to leverage the achievements of the first phase, quickly," they added.

Opposition Leader Yair Lapid also attacked the "cowardly statement and complete and utter lie" from the "senior official," saying in a statement, "The announcement from the Prime Minister's Office raises concerns about the stability of his judgment."

"This is a cowardly statement and also a complete and utter lie. Netanyahu continues to blame others for his failures, and continues to abuse the families of the hostages for political purposes," Lapid said.

"Everyone who works for [Netanyahu] should know that sooner or later they will be publicly sacrificed for half a headline," he charged.

"This is a matter of conscience and he's looking for credit. He should stop hiding behind anonymous briefings and make sure to bring all the hostages home," the opposition leader added.

National Unity Leader Benny Gantz wrote on X: "Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar is an upright security man, ethical and strong, who has contributed much to the

return of the hostages.

"He bears responsibility both for the disaster on October 7, as well as for the fighting and activities that came after, and I support him and back him, as well as all the heads of the security services who have taken part in the negotiations for the return of our hostages.

"When the prime minister attacks the heads of the security establishment time and time again, he is tearing us apart from the inside, and weakening us, amid turbulent days that require us to be as strong and united as possible in the face of our enemies," Gantz said.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum also issued a statement on Wednesday amid the fracas, declaring, "While officials are issuing statements against other officials, we, the families of the hostages, are losing our minds with worry for our loved ones.

"The fate of the hostages, the living and the fallen, is on the table, and those who are supposed to be turning the world upside down to secure it are having confrontations with each other.

"Stop this behavior immediately! We saw the exact same pictures you did. We heard the exact same testimonies from returnees that you did," the forum said.

The families demanded that by the time troops withdraw from the Gaza-Egypt border on Day 50 of the agreement, "it will be clear that by the Holiday of Freedom [i.e., Passover, on April 12] all the hostages will be released from Hamas hell in Gaza."

OCT. 7TH INVESTIGATION: TERRORISTS GOT LOST ON THE WAY TO NETIVOT, FOUND FESTIVAL SITE (Arutz-7 2/17/25)

An IDF investigation into the massacre at the Supernova festival near Re'im reveals that the Hamas force that attacked the festival had initially intended to attack Netivot, but got lost along the way.

Kan reports that the force was part of the Nuseirat Brigade and numbered between 100-120 terrorists, under battalion and company commanders.

They crossed the Gaza-Israel border in the second wave, at 7:30 AM, in 14 trucks and two motorcycles.

The terrorists were equipped with two heavy machine guns, three medium machine guns, anti-tank RPGs, and SA 7 launchers for air defense. In addition, each terrorist had personal weapons like Kalashnikovs and grenades.

Due to a navigational error, they missed their original target and moved eastward in Be'eri Forest, passed Kibbutz Beerli, and began traveling along Route 232. They reached the festival region at 8:10 but only encountered the festival itself at 9:00.

The terrorists left the festival area around 10:10 and moved northward. They encountered military forces and turned towards Be'eri. Those who abducted the party-goers immediately returned to Gaza. Those who attacked Be'eri were mostly killed in the ensuing battle.

In addition to the Nuseirat Brigade from Hamas, other non-organized terrorists also attacked the Supernova festival.

364 people were murdered at the festival, most of them young adults. 44 others were captured.

'500 DAYS OF THIS TORMENT': ISRAEL FASTS FOR HOSTAGES STILL IN GAZA (Israel Hayom 2/17/25)

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum launched a 500-minute fast marking the Gaza war's 500th day, as 73 Israeli hostages remain in Hamas captivity since Oct. 7, 2023. The fast, representing one minute for each day of captivity, aims to raise awareness of the hostages' ongoing ordeal. The protest began at 11:40 a.m. Israel time and will conclude at 8 p.m. with a rally at Tel Aviv's Hostages Square.

Displays were set up across Israel, from the southern Kibbutz Nir Oz – which saw 76 of its members kidnapped into Gaza – to Tel Aviv's beach. Nir Oz's community members set up a silent protest, featuring protesters chained and blindfolded, calling for the release of all hostages. In Tel Aviv, huge signs of the numbers 73 and 500 – representing the number of hostages in Gaza and

the days that have passed since Oct. 7 – were put up in front of the US Embassy.

"After 500 days of this torment, of this catastrophe we are going through, we've chosen to commemorate this day by fasting," Udi Goren, the cousin of hostage Tal Haimi who was murdered on Oct. 7 and kidnapped by Hamas, told Israel Hayom. "Fasting means that we're grieving. We are grieving that there are people who are going through this torture for 500 days straight. It's not only the hostages themselves but also the families of the hostages – both the living hostages and the deceased. We are inviting everybody in Israel to join us and stand with us in solidarity."

GOVERNMENT URGED TO RECOGNIZE AS ORPHANS THOSE WHO LOST SOLE LIVING PARENT ON OCT. 7 (Times of Israel 2/19/25)

Representatives of local government and communities close to the Gaza border called Sunday on Defense Minister Israel Katz to amend the law on benefits for casualties of hostile acts to include men and women who lost their sole living parent during the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023.

The state provides a variety of benefits for those whose family members are killed by hostile acts. As the law currently stands, anyone under 18 who loses both parents because of hostile acts qualifies for a monthly stipend of NIS 5,862.74 (\$1,650). That figure rises to NIS 10,193.54 (\$2,870) for anyone over 18.

According to National Insurance Service data, 115 people aged 2 to 60 suffered the loss of both their parents in Hamas's deadly rampage on October 7, 2023, in which some 1,200 people were killed and 251 abducted to the Gaza Strip. Of the 115 who lost both parents, 20 of them were under 18 years old.

According to the Atid LeOtef nonprofit, which was established after October 7, some 60 people from the kibbutzim of Be'eri, Kfar Aza, Nir Oz, Re'im, and Ein Hashlosha were orphaned as well, since their only parent was already a widow or widower before being murdered in the Hamas attack.

They approached Atid LeOtef for help, knowing that one of the organization's activists is Liora Ben Tsur, whose mother Marcelle Taljah was gunned down by a Hamas terrorist at Ein Hashlosha on October 7. Taljah, who lived near the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba, was visiting the kibbutz to help out with her grandchildren, as Liora had given birth to a new baby on October 6.

Last May, the Knesset approved a preliminary reading of an amendment proposed by lawmaker Yinon Azoulay to recognize cases such as Ben Tsur's. A letter Atid LeOtef sent to Katz on Sunday expressed fears that the bill would not advance without government support and asked for the defense minister's intervention.

Among the letter's signatories were the heads of the Eshkol and Sha'ar HaNegev regional authorities and the Ofakim city council.

ISRAEL'S US AMBASSADOR ON EGYPTIAN MILITARY BUILDUP: 'NOT TOLERABLE' (Israel Hayom 2/17/25)

Israel's ambassador to the US, Dr. Yechiel Leiter, has issued a stark warning about the growing military presence of the Egyptian army in the Sinai Peninsula, in violation of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, marking the first time an Israeli official has spoken out on the matter. In a recent briefing to Jewish organization leaders in the US, Leiter described the situation as "intolerable." Speaking to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Leiter stated, "This is an issue that will come up. Egypt is in a very serious violation of our peace agreement in the Sinai. This is an issue which is going to come to the fore, because this is not a tolerable situation."

The ambassador further warned, "There are bases being built, and they can only be used for offensive operations and offensive weapons. This is a clear violation. For a long time, this issue has been shoved to the side, but it continues. This is an issue that we are going to put on the table – very soon and very emphatically."

Leiter's remarks were made on January 28, just days after he took office and before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington two weeks ago.

Israel has so far refused to comment on Egypt's overall military buildup, particularly the deployment of large military forces in Sinai, which contradicts the security annex of the peace treaty. Security and diplomatic sources confirmed that over the years, Egypt has repeatedly moved forces into Sinai in violation of the agreement, only to request retroactive approval from Israel, permission that was consistently granted by Netanyahu.

Dr. Yagil Henkin, a military affairs expert who first warned about these troubling developments in 2018, explained, "This happened through a process of creeping annexation. First, they deployed forces, then they sought retroactive Israeli approval, which was always granted. Even after the operational need ended, the forces were never withdrawn."

Henkin added, "Sinai now has far more weaponry and ammunition than the peace agreement allows. It started with two battalions, and today there are tens of thousands of soldiers and dozens of tanks. Some are concentrated near Egyptian Rafah, while others are stationed near former ISIS strongholds in Sinai. The operational necessity to fight ISIS has passed, yet the forces remain. Additionally, Egypt has developed infrastructure, including bridges, roads, and large tunnels, enabling them to transfer entire divisions into Sinai within hours from the western side of the Suez Canal."

Members of the US Congress are aware of Egypt's violations and intend to bring the issue to the agenda. In an internal discussion among Republican lawmakers, a provision was raised stating, "Egypt is substantially violating the Camp David Accords through the deployment of forces and movement of tanks into Sinai. This poses a strategic threat to Israel's southern border, and specifically falls under US responsibility as the agreement's guarantor."

The agenda item also calls for a review of US economic assistance to Egypt in light of its military presence in Sinai. "American funding to Egypt must be reevaluated based on these agreements. Egypt must be presented with a timeline for withdrawing its forces from the peninsula," the policy proposal states.

DOZENS OF HASIDIM CLASH WITH IDF WHILE ATTEMPTING TO CROSS INTO LEBANON (YNet 2/19/25)

Dozens of ultra-Orthodox Jews clashed with IDF soldiers overnight Tuesday after they attempted to reach the tomb of Rabbi Ashi, a Jewish sage, located in Lebanese territory. Four were arrested after throwing stones at Israeli soldiers who arrived to disperse them. Two IDF soldiers were lightly injured during the clashes. The soldiers received medical treatment and were evacuated to a hospital.

Members of the Hassidic Breslov sect succeeded to cross into Lebanon last week near the tomb complex and were later returned to Israel. Some were detained for questioning.

"Upon the arrival of IDF troops at the site, several individuals in the group began disturbing the peace and even threw stones at the soldiers," the police said in statement. "Northern District officers arrived at the scene, and after coordinating with the military, arrested four suspects on suspicion of crossing the border and disturbing the peace. The rest of the group was returned to Israeli territory by the IDF and removed from the area."

The police said that they would consider requesting an extension of the detainees' remand at the Kiryat Shmona Magistrates' Court. They also emphasized that crossing into Lebanon was illegal and carries a prison sentence of up to four years.

The tomb of Rabbi Ashi, a key figure in the compiling the Babylonian Talmud and considered one of the greatest sages of the Talmudic era, has become a major destination for members of the Breslov sect, which seeks out and visits the graves of revered rabbis in Israel and abroad. These visits have occasionally led to security incidents.

The group entered the tomb site on Mount Senan, which straddles the Israeli-Lebanese border. Until Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, the entire complex was within Israeli territory. However, as this location was a point of dispute between the two countries, the border was redrawn through the site following a recommendation by UN envoy Terje Rød-Larsen.

Due to its proximity to the border, even the Israeli section of the site is now designated as a closed military zone.

According to Hasidic tradition, praying at the grave of a revered rabbi is believed to bring spiritual merit. Rabbi Natan, the foremost disciple of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, wrote in *Likutey Halakhot*: "The righteous are greater in death than in life. In death, they rectify the souls of Israel even more than in life. They subdue the forces of impurity that cling to fallen souls due to their sins, for the righteous overpower and nullify these forces more in death than in life."

HIDING THE COFFINS OF HOSTAGES FROM THE ISRAELI PUBLIC SERVES ONLY NETANYAHU (Anat Kamm, Ha'aretz 2/20/25)

The remains of four hostages – Shiri Bibas and her young sons Kfir and Ariel Bibas, and Oded Lifshitz, 84 – will be returned to Israel Thursday.

Together with the release February 1 of Yarden, Shiri's husband and the boys' father, this will bring to an end the agonizing journey of a family that became one of the best-known symbols of October 7. Regrettably, the stories of some of these symbols, such as Noa Argamani and the army spotters, did not end well by any measure.

The remains that will be handed over Thursday are the first that Hamas is returning under the hostage deal. When the military and the Shin Bet security service recovered the remains of hostages who were killed in captivity, these organizations controlled the media coverage (mainly its absence) of the event. None of us saw the body of Eden Yerushalmi weighing 36 kilograms (80 pounds) or the broken and tortured bodies of Avraham Munder, Haim Perry and Yoram Metzger – three Israeli pioneers whose lives should not have ended as theirs did.

This will be the first time that Hamas returns hostages' bodies and it's not far-fetched to think the terrorists will exploit the event for sadistic PR uses.

It is possible that most Israelis who will watch the return on Israeli television will not get to see this. Channel 12 News announced independently that it does not plan to broadcast the images and video distributed by Hamas and will decide what to air in coordination with the Hostages and Missing Families Forum. Kan 11, the main TV channel of Israel's public broadcaster, said in reply to a question from journalists that it would exercise discretion and sensitivity in determining what to show. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum said it has not yet decided what to show, adding that Channel 12 News has not coordinated with them.

The reasons for the reluctance to broadcast the handover are obvious: so as not to serve Hamas' propaganda efforts or cause unnecessary suffering to the families and viewers. The sweet faces of the redheaded Bibas boys and the torn, terror-stricken face of their mother at the moment of the family's abduction have entered all of our hearts. So long as there was no official confirmation of their fate, there was hope. (MK Benny Gantz hinted months ago that Israel knew that they were no longer alive, and perhaps we can take a little comfort in knowing that they probably didn't suffer long in captivity.) Yarden's hollow and tortured look when he returned to Israel expressed the deep rift that many feel in Israel and that may be enough no more should be added to his agony.

But alongside the understanding and the knowledge that Hamas' broadcasts – like the hostage videos in captivity and the filming of the massacre – will reach all of us and we should remember the bitter pictures of Shiri, Kfir and Ariel Bibas as the face of October 7.

They are the face of the government's abandonment of the kibbutzim's residents, the face of the military failure on that day to prevent their abduction or save them afterward, the face of the failure of the negotiations in the early days of the war and at every moment since. Their blood is on the hands of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his government and the defense establishment.

Despite the wishes of the media to save the Israeli public from the bitter sight of the two tiny coffins, it is important to show and explain the reality to the viewers: Someone is responsible for these caskets, and concealing them mainly serves him.



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TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

Lofty Laws

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Director

"When you lend money to My people, to the poor person *eemach* - amongst you, you shall not behave toward him as a creditor; you shall not impose interest upon him." (22:24)

Parshas Mishpatim contains many interpersonal *mitzvos* including numerous statutes that are necessary for maintaining a functional society. Lest one think, however, that the Torah's laws are comparable to those of any other society, the parsha opens with the words, "And these are the statutes..." Rashi notes that the Torah is drawing a connection between these statutes and the commandments in last week's parsha: "Just as the earlier ones come from Sinai, so too these come from Sinai." Even the laws that are logical to us and we might have enacted on our own are not simply a means of governing a society, but insofar as they come from Sinai and are a revelation of G-d's Will for the world, they are sacred and elevated.

Another difference between the statutes of the Torah and those established by human beings is the standard that the Torah sets for helping and supporting others. One example of this is the *mitzvah* to lend money. In no other society is a person obligated to lend money to someone in need and yet the Torah requires this of us. Furthermore, the Torah guides us in how to perform this *mitzvah* with utmost care and sensitivity. The Torah describes the poor person as *eemach* – amongst you. Rashi explains that this means that the lender should also view himself or herself as if they are poor. In order to do this *mitzvah* with the proper attitude and with the greatest generosity, we first have to imagine what the other person is going through. Only after we have put ourselves in their shoes will we be ready to support them with the most compassion and benevolence. The Ksav Sofer adds that "*eemach* – amongst you" or "with you" is teaching us that supporting the poor should be done without others present in order to minimize the person's embarrassment.

The Torah further commands us not to "behave toward him as a creditor." This prohibits a lender from applying pressure on a borrower who is struggling to repay the loan. The Gemara (Bava Metzia 75b) prohibits a lender from even walking past a borrower who is unable to pay back their loan, for fear of embarrassing them. Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch notes that in other societies, a borrower tries to avoid being seen by their creditor, but the Torah teaches that a creditor should avoid being seen by their borrower!

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

If a man shall uncover a - pit, or if a man shall dig a - pit and not cover it... the owner of the - pit shall make restitution... (21:33-34)

If a man uncovers a pit that had been covered - he is accountable. If one is liable when uncovering a pit, why does the Torah need to tell me one is responsible when digging a pit? This verse comes to include one who digs the final tefach in a pit - that person is the responsible party. (Rashi)

The Vilna Gaon asks, why is the first word *bor* (pit) written with a "vav" and the second time the word *bor* is written without a "vav"? Additionally, why does the Torah spell *bor* the third time with a "vav"?

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

An eye in place of an eye... (21, 24)

If he blinded his fellow man's eye, he gives him the value of his eye. (Rashi)

Where in the verse is there a hint to this halacha?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Where in this week's Parsha is the source to 'shuckel' while learning?

Answer: "The people saw and trembled." (20:14) Therefore we sway during Torah learning since the Torah was given with fear, terror, and shaking. (Ba'al ha-turim)

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Mishpatim* (23:1), the Torah commands: "Do not accept a false report, do not extend your hand with the wicked to be a venal witness." The meaning of the latter admonition is unclear; while some commentaries understand it as a prohibition against testifying falsely, on behalf of a wicked litigant or in combination with a wicked witness (see Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, and Bechor Shor), the Talmud understands it as a rule disqualifying the wicked or venal from testifying (*Sanhedrin* 27a).

The Rambam codifies this doctrine as follows:

The wicked are unacceptable as witnesses according to Scriptural Law, as it states: "do not extend your hand with the wicked to be a venal witness." The Oral Tradition interprets this as meaning: "Do not allow a wicked person to serve as a witness." ... (*Edus* 11:1-4)

One important exception to this disqualification is a sinner who does not understand or accept that his conduct is sinful. The Talmud states: There were **these gravediggers, who buried a person on the first day of the festival of Shavuot**, desecrating the Festival. **Rav Pappa excommunicated them and then disqualified them from bearing witness, and Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, deemed them fit to bear witness. Rav Pappa said to Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua: But aren't they wicked people**, as they violated a Torah prohibition? Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, answered him: **They assumed they were doing a mitzva**, as they were burying the dead. ... (*Sanhedrin* 26b)

R. Eliyahu Abergel maintains that a (cigarette) smoker should not be appointed as a witness to a marriage or divorce ceremony, since "a person who is aware of the grave harm that cigarettes cause and continues [smoking them], violates the commandment of the Torah [to be careful of one's health]." (*Techumin* 33 [5773])

It would seem, however, that even if we accept that smoking is unequivocally prohibited in light of our understanding of its harmfulness, to the extent that a smoker does not understand and acknowledge that what he is doing is wrong, he would not be disqualified from bearing witness, as per the Talmudic discussion of the gravediggers.

Indeed, R. Dr. Mordechai Halperin reports that R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach also ruled that smokers are disqualified from testifying, but acknowledged an exception for those who do not know "that they are violating the prohibition against murder (the punishment of which is in the hands of Heaven)."

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. Sometimes I am single.
2. For secret I am double.
3. Selling or slaughtering increases me.
4. I can even be five times.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am for a doubt.
2. I am better than chazaka.
3. For life I need two.
4. My rule only applies to movers.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Yisro (I am an in-law, I am in the Law, I saw a flaw, I advised on the law.)

#2 Shofar (I was from the binding, I will be for Moshiach, I am a blast, I cause trembling.)

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