

YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH

SHABBOS SHORTS

Candle Lighting 5:26 | Havdalah 6:27

Shabbos Shorts is sponsored by **Sara Silver** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of her father, Bud Silver, Yissocher Dov ben Meir, Z"L, and by **Delia Weiss** and **Miriam & Steve Friedman** and Family in loving memory of Dr. George Weiss, Gedalya Chaim ben Avraham Moshe, Z"L, on the occasion of his 8th Yahrzeit.



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Mazal Tavs

Leor & Avi Baldinger on the Bat Mitzvahs of their daughters **Temima and Ariella**. Mazal Tov also to their sister Nava, grandparents **Esther & Alan Baldinger** and Cori & Brett Oxman, and all of the aunts, uncles, and cousins that came from near and far to celebrate.

Shonny Kugler on the engagement of her granddaughter Nechama to Avrohom Moshe Sommers of Denver. Mazal Tov to parents Terumah & BenZion Kugler and the extended family.

Ahuva & Eli Landy on the birth of a granddaughter, Devorah Meital, born to Leora & Josh Finkelstein. Mazal Tov to big sister Meira Liba.

Kiddush & Shalosh Seudos Sponsors

Hashkamah Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by **Marilyn & Jonathan Fine** to commemorate the Yahrzeits of Marilyn's mother, Ruth Miriam Zitomer, Risha Miriam bat Tzvi Hirsch HaCohen, on the 26th of Cheshvan, and the Yahrzeit of Jonathan's mother, Ruth Coplon Fine, Rivka bas Zussman on the 11th of Shevat.

Shul Kiddush is sponsored by **Leor & Avi Baldinger** in honor of the Bat Mitzvahs of their daughters Temima and Ariella and by **Debbie & Marc Katz** in honor of their son Rafi's Aufruf.

Sephardic Minyan Kiddush is sponsored by **Simi Franco** in honor of her husband's birthday this past week.

Shalosh Seudos is sponsored by **Jorden Brinn** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of his late wife, Beverly D. Kolb, Bracha bat Yitzchak Hershel, on 14 Shevat, February 12, and by **Susan & Bob Levi** to commemorate the upcoming 5th Yahrzeit of Bob's father, Fred Levi, Baruch ben Meir HaLevi on 23 Shevat.

Drasha & Shiurim Sponsors

8:45 Minyan Drasha is sponsored by **Sara Silver** to commemorate the Yahrzeit of her father, Bud Silver, Yissocher Dov ben Meir, Z"L.

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 is sponsored by **Nancy Karkowsky** in the merit of a Refua Shlema for Malka Rivka bas Feiga Necha v' Avraham Mordechai HaLevi z'l and by **Debbie Rogal** in memory of her cousin, Judy Licht, on her Yahrzeit.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Tehillim/Sefer HaChinuch Shiur is sponsored by **Debbie Rogal** in memory of her cousin, Judy Licht, on her Yahrzeit.

Rabbi Rosenbaum's Navi Shiur is sponsored by **Debbie Rogal** in memory of her cousin, Judy Licht, on her Yahrzeit.

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:

5:30 (B,SBM), 5:15 (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), 5:10 (B), 5:20 (Sephardi, LBM)

Shalosh Seudos: 5:35 (S)

Maariv: 6:27 (B)

DIVREI TORAH:

8:45 Minyan:

Rabbi Rosenbaum

9:15 Minyan:

Rabbi Hillel Shaps

Hashkamah Minyan Gemara Shiur: (SBM)

Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman

Sfas Emes Chabura: 8:55 (S)

Rabbi Yehuda Shinensky

Alsheich between Mincha/Maariv: (LBM)

Rabbi Levy

Youth Announcements

Teen Minyan Boys Oneg - this Friday night, February 13, 9:00 PM at 912 Hyde Road.

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).

Dor L'Dor - this Motzei Shabbos, February 15 at 7:30 PM sponsored by **Marina & Gregory Shmunis**.

Coming up:

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

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/GdkM5n3uJx44h8xFbwBE10. To submit names of soldiers serving in the IDF for tefilot, please send the soldier's Hebrew name and his/her mother's Hebrew name to csimon@yise.org.

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

Tefilah We gather in the Belonofsky Sanctuary on Sunday evenings after Mincha/Maariv for 15 minutes of communal Tehillim.

Additionally, Tehillim are recited at each daily and Shabbos Minyan.

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

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

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

Dr. Zechariah Haber, HY"D, whose parents and grandparents were members of our community, fell in battle in Gaza on 6 Shevat last year. An interview with his mother, Miriam Segal Haber, is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiFb6SsNJdk. Learn more about his accomplishments as family man, Torah scholar, and scientist at www.zechariahhaber.com

Upcoming YISE Events

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 (note new date) 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](#)

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](https://www.yise.org/vnoi).

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/nightseider](https://www.yise.org/nightseider).

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](#)

Annual Jewish Book Sale - this Sunday, February 16 - Monday, February 17 at YISE, 9 AM - 7 PM. Many titles all at discounted prices.

The Golden Network (TGN) Lunch & Learn - Wednesday, February 19 (note new date) at 12:15 PM at YISE. "History of the Siddur" with Rabbi Moshe Walter, followed by a musical presentation. RSVP to director@goldennetwork.org or 301-732-1773. Open to men and women.

Bonei Olam Fundraising Event - 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](#)

Shabbos of Inspiration - GWCK at YISE, February 28 - March 1, register for the dinner at shabbaton.gwckollel.org [see flyer](#)

Ask the Rabbi - Tuesday, March 4, 8 - 9 PM on Zoom A with Rabbi Rosenbaum, "What Happens When Purim Falls Out on a Friday?"

Scholar-in-Residence Professor Naomi Grunhaus - Shabbos, March 7 - 8 [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 February 16 18 Shevat	Monday February 17 19 Shevat Presidents' Day	Tuesday February 18 20 Shevat	Wednesday February 19 21 Shevat	Thursday February 20 22 Shevat	Friday February 21 23 Shevat	<u>Next Shabbos</u> February 21-22, 2025 24 Shevat 5785 Parashas Mishpatim Candle lighting: 5:34 Havdalah: 6:34 Friday Night: Mincha/Maariv: 5:35 (B, SBM), 5:25 (Sephardi, LBM) Shabbos Day: Shacharis: 7:00 (B), 8:45 (B), 9:15 (S) 8:00 (Sephardi, LBM), 9:15 (Teen, H) Mincha: 2:30 (B), 5:30 (B), 5:40 (Sephardi, LBM) Maariv: 6:34
Shacharis	Ashkenazi (S,B,B)	6:30 7:30 8:45	6:30 7:30 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	6:15 6:45 8:45	6:15 6:55 8:45	
	Sephardi (LBM)	8:00	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	
Mincha/ Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)	5:35	5:35	5:35	5:35	5:35		
	Sephardi (LBM)	5:20	5:20	5:20	5:20	5:20		
Maariv	Ashkenazi (B)			7:30	7:30	7:30		
Halachic Times: Latest Alos Hashachar 5:38 AM, Earliest Talis and Tefilin: 6:05 AM, Latest Netz: 6:58 AM, Latest Krias Shema: 9:35 AM, Earliest Mincha: 12:53 PM, Earliest Shkia: 5:46 PM, Latest Tzeis Hacoachavim 6:34 PM								

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

NEXT SHABBOS SHORTS DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 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
JOSH SEIDEMANN - PRESIDENT

MARCH DEADLINE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24, NOON
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



DOR L'DOR

At Young Israel Shomrai Emunah!

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

5785 Motzei Shabbos Times:

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

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

YISE Arcola Social Hall

Sponsor opportunities:

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

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




YISE TEEN BOYS' SHABBOS

O'neg

**FEB. 14 -- PARSHAS YISRO
912 HYDE ROAD
9:00 PM**

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

YISE Youth Presents

Toddler & Preschool Playdates

FOR MOMS & KIDS

SUNDAY MORNINGS
MONTHLY AT THE
YISE 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



בני עולם
BONEI OLAM
GREATER
WASHINGTON

A Time to Plant

Planting and building
the future generations
OF GREATER WASHINGTON

February 23, 2025

7 PM KEMP MILL SYNAGOGUE
11910 Kemp Mill Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20902

Address by

REBBETZIN ESTEE SILVER

REBBETZIN YOUNG
ISRAEL LONG BEACH
Former Assistant Rebbetzin
of Shomrai Emunah

Address by

REBBETZIN ATARA ROSENBAUM

REBBETZIN YI SHOMRAI
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Dr. Nathan Fox
Mentoring Kids Leadership LLC

Chinese Auction!
WITH EXCITING PRIZES
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CATERING BY *including*
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CARVING STATION / SHAWARMA STATION
SALAD BAR / HOT POT STATION / DESSERT BUFFET

EVENT HOSTS

Joanna & Isaac Benporat
Bayla & Jeremy Goodman
Yafa & Binjamin Korf
Melissa & Chaim Lazarus
Aliza & Adam Mervis

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rabbi Mendel & Sara Blumengrad
Rabbi David & Sara Benporat
Rabbi Hersh & Chavie Chan
Rabbi Michael & Rivka Frank
Rabbi Shmuel & Ayelet Golan
Rabbi Ari & Malka Korshak
Rabbi Aliza & Shari Leman
Rabbi Yehonatan & Sherry
Rabbi Yosef & Aliza Postelsky

COUPLES

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Michael & Dana Weiden
Rabbi David & Sara Benporat
Michelle & Andrew Bernz
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boneiolam.org/greaterwashington

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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, 23 and March 2

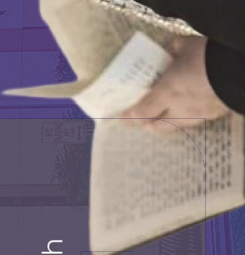
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Scholar-in-Residence Professor Naomi Grunhaus

Shabbos, March 7 - 8



- Friday Night Oneg (location TBD): Methodological Considerations in Parshanut: When Peshat Contradicts the Halakhah.
- After 8:45/9:15 AM Minyanim (Social Hall):
Condensing Hashem's Will into Short Sound Bites:
613 Mitzvos, or 11, or 6, or 3, or 2, or 1.
Youth groups will continue until the end of the Drasha.
- Between Mincha/Maariv (Social Hall): Why Good Things Happen to Bad People: Reflections on Divine Justice in Tanach and Beyond.

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 17

Shabbat Parashat Yitro

5785 - B"H

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

Deed and Creed - The parsha of Yitro records the revolutionary moment when God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, entered into a mutually binding agreement with a nation, the Children of Israel, an agreement we call a brit, a covenant.

Now, this is not the first Divine covenant in the Torah. God had already made one with Noah, and through him all of humanity, and He made another with Abraham, whose sign was circumcision. But those covenants were not fully reciprocal. God did not ask for Noah's agreement, nor did He wait for Abraham's assent.

Sinai was a different matter. For the first time, He wanted the covenant to be fully mutual, to be freely accepted. So we find that – both before and after the Revelation at Sinai – God commands Moses to make sure the people do actually agree.

The point is fundamental. God wants to rule by right, not might. The God who brought an enslaved people to liberty seeks the free worship of free human beings.

God does not act toward His creatures like a tyrant.

So at Sinai was born the principle that was, millennia later, described by Thomas Jefferson in the American Declaration of Independence, the idea that governors and governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed." God wanted the consent of the governed. That is why the Sinai Covenant was conditional on the people's agreement.

Admittedly, the Talmud questions how free the Israelites actually were, and it uses an astonishing image. It says that God suspended the mountain above their heads and said, "If you agree, well and good. If you don't, here will be your burial." That is another topic for another time. Suffice to say that there is no indication of this in the plain sense of the text itself.

What is interesting is the exact wording in which the Israelites signal their consent. To repeat: they do so three times, first before the Revelation, and then twice afterwards, in the parsha of Mishpatim.

Listen to the three verses. Before the Revelation:

All the people answered as one and said, 'All that God has spoken, we will do [na'aseh].'

Then afterward: Moses came and told the people all of God's words and all the laws. The people all responded with a single voice, 'We will do [na'aseh] every word that God has spoken.'

He took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. They replied, 'We will do [na'aseh] and we will hear [ve-nishma] all that God has declared.'

Note the subtle difference. In two cases the people say: all that God says, we will do. In the third, the double verb is used: na'aseh ve-nishma. "We will do and we will hear, (or obey, or hearken, or understand)." The word shema means 'to understand', as we see in the story of the Tower of Babel:

"Come, let us descend and confuse their speech, so that one person will not understand another's speech."

Now note that there is another difference between the three verses. In the first two cases there is a clear emphasis on the unity of the people. Both phrases are very striking. The first says: all the people

answered as one. The second says, The people all responded with a single voice. In a book that emphasises how fractious and fissiparous the people were, such declarations of unanimity are significant and rare. But the third verse, which mentions both doing and listening or understanding, contains no such statement. It simply says: They replied. There is no emphasis on unanimity or consensus.

What we have here is a biblical comment on one of the most striking features of all in Judaism: the difference between deed and creed, between asiyah and shemiyah, between doing and understanding.

Christians have theology. Jews have law. These are two very different approaches to the religious life. Judaism is about a community of action. It is about the way people interact in their dealings with one another. It is about bringing God into the shared spaces of our collective life. Just as we know God through what He does, so God asks us to bring Him into what we do. In the beginning, as Goethe put it, was the deed. That is why Judaism is a religion of law, because law is the architecture of behaviour.

When it comes, however, to belief, creed, doctrine, all the things that depend on shemiyah rather than asiyah, understanding rather than action: on this Judaism does not call for unanimity. Not because Judaism lacks beliefs. To the contrary, Judaism is what it is precisely because of our beliefs, most importantly the belief in monotheism, that there is, at least and at most, one God. The Torah tells us in Bereishit about creation, in Shemot about redemption, and in this week's parsha about revelation.

Judaism is a set of beliefs, but it is not a community based on unanimity about the way we understand and interpret those beliefs. It recognises that intellectually and temperamentally we are different. Judaism has had its rationalists and its mystics, its philosophers and its poets, its naturalists and its supernaturalists: Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva, Judah Halevi and Maimonides, the Vilna Gaon and the Baal Shem Tov. We seek unanimity in halachah, not in aggadah. Na'aseh, we act in the same way, but nishma, we understand each in our own way. That is the difference between the way we serve God, collectively, and the way we understand God, individually.

What is fascinating is that this well-known feature of Judaism is already signalled in the Torah: in the difference between the way it speaks about na'aseh, "as one," "with a single voice," and nishma, with no special collective consensus.

Our acts, our na'aseh, are public. Our thoughts, our nishma, are private. That is how we come to serve God together, yet relate to Him individually, in the uniqueness of our being.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Who is a Jew - "You have seen what I have done to Egypt... And now, if you will surely hearken to My voice and observe My covenant...then you will be for Me a kingdom of priest-teachers and a holy nation..."

In effect, the drama of the Exodus and its aftermath have transformed Israel from a family to a nation-religion, from Bet Yisrael to Am Yisrael. But how do we define the 'Am'? Are we a nation, are we a religion, or are we an amalgamation of both?

In truth, one of the most agonizing problems facing the Jewish people of Israel as well as the Diaspora,

an issue which can potentially tear us asunder and make a mockery of the Jewish Federation slogan "We are one," is "Who is a Jew." From a technical, legal perspective, this question expresses itself in the requirements for conversion, the ramifications of which impinge on who qualifies for automatic Israeli citizenship under the "Right of Return," an Israeli law that provides automatic citizenship for any "Jew" who desires to live there. This law was enacted as an obvious and proud reaction to the tragic situation in the 1930s and 1940s, when Jews were sent to the gas chambers because virtually no existing country would relax their immigration rules and allow the would-be refugees a haven from Nazi persecution. In a far broader way, however, the "Who is a Jew" controversy speaks volumes about "what is Judaism"; after all, the necessary criteria for entering our fellowship will pretty much define the cardinal principles of that fellowship.

The sages of the Talmud, as interpreted by Rabbi Yosef Karo's sixteenth-century code of Jewish Law, set down three criteria for male conversion, with the latter two forming the criteria for female conversion: circumcision, immersion in a mikva, and acceptance of the commandments.

The casting off of the foreskin connotes the removal of gentile-dom, the separation of the Jew from the licentious practices (especially in the sexual realm) which characterized the pagan world (interestingly enough, the sages saw women as "naturally circumcised.")

Ritual mikva immersion symbolizes rebirth – after all, the fetus is encompassed in fluid and birth is presaged by the "breaking" of the mother's "waters" – into a new family-nation. (A similar ritual was adopted by Christianity in the form of baptism.)

The acceptance of the commandments signals the entry into a religion, a faith community bound together by common adherence to a system of ritual, moral and ethical laws. With this understanding it becomes clear that we are a nation as well as a religion, a nation with a separate language, culture and homeland and a religion with a unique code of law defining our prayer rituals, feasts and fasts, lifecycle celebrations, and ethical behavior.

Fascinatingly enough, the Bible records just such a process of development, a "national conversion," as it were, in the Torah portions in the middle of the book of Exodus. In the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites separated themselves from the Egyptians, the Egyptian enslavement, the Egyptian concept of slavery as a societal norm, and the immoral Egyptian lifestyle. The Bible suggests that the Jews expressed this removal from "Egyptiandom" with circumcision, since the Paschal lamb sacrifice could only be eaten by males who were circumcised. The Midrash explains precisely when the circumcision took place. The Bible provides for the Israelite preparation for the Exodus, commanding each household to take a lamb on the tenth of Nisan, to guard the lamb until the fourteenth of Nisan, and then to sacrifice the lamb to God (their disavowal of Egyptian idolatry, since the lamb was one of the Egyptian gods) and place its blood on their doorposts. On the night of the fifteenth they were to

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eat the lamb – their first Seder – and then exit from Egypt.

Asks the Midrash: why take the lamb on the tenth and wait until the fourteenth to sacrifice it? The Midrash answers that the male Israelites were to have themselves circumcised, and by merit of the twofold blood of the sacrifice and the circumcision they would be found worthy by God to be freed from Egypt. Indeed, in Temple times, a convert was expected not only to have himself circumcised, but to bring a sacrificial offering as well.

The ritual immersion of the Israelites took place right before the revelation at Sinai, either when God commanded Moses to see that the people “be sanctified and their clothing be washed”), or when the Israelites jumped into the Reed Sea before it split (“and the children of Israel entered into the midst of the waters on the dry land...”).

And of course, the acceptance of the commandments came following the Decalogue and the subsequent legal code, but as a prerequisite to the confirmation of the eternal covenant between God and Israel: “... And the entire nation responded with one voice and declared, ‘All that the Lord has spoken, we shall do and we shall internalize’”. Indeed, prior to the formula of acceptance, the Bible not only recorded the Ten Commandments as well as the major civil and ritual laws, but also outlined the eventual borders of the Land of Israel which the Jews would occupy.

In effect, therefore, the Israelites were accepting both Jewish nationality and Jewish religion. We came to be bound together (‘am’ contains the same letters as the word ‘im’, which means “together”) by common genes, land and destiny as well as by a unifying system of laws, values and lifestyle.

Now, does this mean that a person can only convert to Judaism if he/she lives in our Jewish homeland and is observant of all of the commandments? Perhaps the book of Ruth suggests that this be the case, having Ruth say to Naomi, “Where you shall go [to your homeland Israel], there shall I go; your nation shall be my nation, your God [religion] shall be my God”. However, since the Babylonian expulsion of the Jews from Israel (586 BCE), a majority of Jews have lived in the Diaspora – even during the Second Commonwealth. Hence, the rabbis accepted even converts living in the Diaspora. And many religio-legal decisors have also ruled that although acceptance of commandments is a necessary prerequisite for conversion, there is no requirement to teach all of the 613 commandments with their respective rabbinic injunctions and enactments; indeed, the Talmud merely requires “several of the more stringent laws and several of the more lenient laws,” specifically mentioning the laws of the Sabbath, kashrut and tithing (charity to the poor).

There is nevertheless a general consensus amongst the rabbinic authorities that circumcision for males, and ritual immersion and a general acceptance of commandments for both males and females, are clear and absolute requirements for conversion. After all, becoming Jewish is not merely an acquisition of a new garment; it is a commitment which connotes sacrifice, a willingness to share a national destiny of yearning for Zion and perfecting the world (tikkun olam) and participating in a tradition of faith and habitual norms which have united Jews from Ethiopia, Yemen, Jerusalem, New York and Melbourne for 4,000 years. And it was these very requirements which the Israelites fulfilled at the very dawn of their history.

Mizrachi Dvar Torah

Timely in Teshuvah: By Rabbanit Shira Smiles

Am Yisrael continue their journey from Egypt through the Sinai desert. The Torah tells us that they left Refidim and came to Har Sinai. Yet we already

know the Jews were coming from Refidim. As we are aware, nothing is repetitive in Torah, what information is being added here? Rashi explains that just as Bnei Yisrael approached the area of Har Sinai in a state of teshuvah, likewise, when leaving Refidim the people were engaged in teshuvah. Rashi’s explanation leaves us a bit perplexed. If they already did teshuvah when leaving Refidim, why did they need to do teshuvah once again when coming to Har Sinai? Further, why is teshuvah at this juncture so crucial?

The Netziv in his commentary HaAmeik Davar, explains that preparation is fundamental when advancing in holiness. As the Jewish people were about to experience the most quintessential event of their lives, it was not sufficient to prepare themselves upon arriving at Har Sinai, the groundwork needed to be laid before that.

Rav Weissblum in He’arat Derech, notes that before doing any mitzvah, one should ask two important questions; first, “what am I about to do?” Second, “For whom am I about to do this?” These questions enable us to achieve the proper mindset and allow the mitzvah to be truly experienced, not simply be a series of meaningless motions. To the extent one prepares, one connects more deeply and fully.

Our frame of mind creates all the difference. The Gemara recounts the story of Rabbi Chiya’s extensive efforts to ensure that the Torah would not be forgotten among the people. Rabbi Chiya sowed flax seeds. He used the flax to make nets to trap deer, from the deer hides he made parchment on which he wrote the Torah scrolls. Rabbi Chiya was personally involved in the entire process to guarantee that the scrolls from which the Torah was to be taught would be infused with the proper intentions. It is said in the name of the Gra that if the members of a shul would be careful to focus their intentions in preparing the materials for the building and concentrate completely on the holy task of building the shul, then all the tefillot said in that shul would have perfect kavanah. The Gra notes that it is for this reason that many Tana’im and Amora’im would learn and teach outdoors under trees. They knew they could not ensure that the houses and buildings were built with the most perfect intentions and did not want less than impeccable energy to affect the purity of their learning.

The core element of teshuvah is being mindful and focused. Am Yisrael understood that to access the realm of kedushah they must immerse themselves in preparation. Teshuvah is not a one-time affair, we must be in a constant state of working and improving ourselves. Is it any wonder we have the beracha of teshuvah in our davening 3 times daily? This is the key to a life of kedushah; an awareness that this is the type of life we live.

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm’s

Derashot Ledorot [Excerpt]

The Strange Fate of The Fifth Commandment

Standing fifth in that eternal list of Ten Commandments, is the statement: KABEID ES AVICHA VE’ES IMECHA, “Honor thy father and thy mother.” This commandment is perhaps the most well-known of all. No child grows up without hearing those words brandished at him at one time or another. Even those who believe in little else accept this MITZVAH. And the Rabbis equated the honoring of parents to the honor one must accord G-d.

And yet, its fate has been a strange one. The history of this commandment has been one of oscillation or shifting from one extreme to another. In ancient Sodom, that hot-bed of wickedness, parents were regarded as surplus chattel, and when no longer able to do work, they were disposed of. A world reeking with such a Sodomite attitude had to hear and obey

Likutei Divrei Torah

“Honor thy Parents.” Centuries later, the situation was reversed. Parents became so important that children were neglected and maltreated. So much so, that the Rabbinic council at Usha some 1800 years ago had to pass a formal law requiring parents to support their children until they were at least 13 years old. Coming closer to our own times, we have had a similar swinging of the pendulum from one extreme to another. In the Victorian Era the father was the absolute and autocratic chief of the family. He was a ruthless dictator whose rule was uncontrolled and frequently inhumane..

In our own days, we have swung back to the other extreme. A new force has emerged in modern family life, completely replacing the parents as the central authorities of the family. The child has come into his own as the undisputed despot and pint-sized tyrant whose word is law, whose ever whim and wish is sacrosanct and whose authority rests on the New Bible of American Family Life, which is that new book child psychology and how to raise your baby without conflicts, complexes, neuroses or maladjustments. Raised with this mistaken attitude or deference and cringing on the part of his parents, the modern child can never really respect his elders. And our generation, therefore, must hear, as it never has heard before, the clear enunciation of the words “Honor thy father and mother.”

But the honoring of parents is no mere mechanical act. Far from being automatic and desiccated, it has a psychology of its own. It has a psychology of its own which is based on the moral tradition of Judaism, and which rejects at one and the same time the harshness and severity of a Victorian father, the cruelty of a Sodom attitude and the silly and ludicrous coddling of children as practiced by the modern mother who reads “psychology” books and does not begin to understand them. To the modern parent who, frightened by the dire threat of complexes and maladjustments, asks “why?” and “what does it mean?” of KIBUD AV VE’AIM, Judaism has a real answer...

Judaism tells us moderns that the reason for honoring parents is, simply, that they are the key to our lives and our futures. Judaism certainly does not object to the legitimate use of child-psychology in the raising of children. Quite the contrary, it always has preached moderation. But, as one educator recently pointed out, “the trouble with child psychology is that children just don’t understand psychology.” Or, as another wit said, “Parents who want to use child psychology on their children would do much better to apply the child-psychology book to them.” A generation which is not taught that the key to their future lies in their parents’ past can never hope to unlock the treasury of good-will and humility that is stored up in the human heart.

The way to making children realize where the key lies is not by uninterrupted coddling and shielding them from the realities of life. Parents must not expect that children can blossom into respectable adulthood in a natural and undirected way. No beautiful flower ever grew into full blossom without conscientious cultivation. The only plant that can grow “naturally,” without devoted guidance and intelligent cultivation, is a weed.

The fifth commandment has indeed had a strange fate. From era to era, the history of family life has seen a shift from the despotism of parents to the tyranny of children. Our Torah and our Sages have urged, throughout the ages, that we preserve the middle way, the way of intelligence, honor, and respect. The way of the Torah is the way of life which we must ultimately prevail if parents and children are to be bound by the mutual bonds of honor, esteem and love. “For her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths lead to peace.”

In this week's *Parashah*, the Torah is given. The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 146a) teaches that when *Bnei Yisrael* stood at *Har Sinai*, their "*Zuhamah*," the contamination implanted in mankind when Adam and Chava ate from the *Etz Ha'da'at*, departed from them. What was this *Zuhamah*?

R' Avraham Yoffen z"l (1887-1970; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Novardok Yeshiva in Bialystok, Poland; New York; and Yerushalayim) explains: Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pekudah z"l (Spain; early 11th century) writes in *Chovot Ha'levavot* (*Sha'ar Avodat Ha'Elokim* ch.5) that the Creator implanted in man's intellect the ability to recognize the virtue of truth and the disgracefulness of falsehood, the propensity to choose justice and avoid iniquity, and the desire to repay those who do good with good and with thanks. All human beings share these innate characteristics, writes R' Yoffen, and, naturally, man would never sin. However, Rabbeinu Bachya explains elsewhere (*Sha'ar Ha'perishut* ch.2), "The origin of all sins and the reason for all disgraceful behaviors is that desire overpowers the intellect." This, writes R' Yoffen, is a battle that all of mankind faces.

At *Har Sinai*, this contamination was removed from *Bnei Yisrael*, R' Yoffen writes. True, we still have to fight the *Yetzer Ha'ra*, but after the revelation of *Hashem* at *Har Sinai*, the Jewish People no longer resigned themselves to the status quo, in which the *Yetzer Ha'ra* had the upper-hand. This, writes R' Yoffen, is the source of the hidden spark that has revealed itself so many times in Jewish history even in people who seemingly had lost all connection with their roots. (*Ha'mussar Ve'ha'da'at*)

Shabbat

"Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it" (20:8)

R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l (*Rambam*; 1135-1204) writes: It is a *Mitzvat Aseh* / affirmative commandment to sanctify the *Shabbat* day with words of praise and sanctification. This requires recalling *Shabbat* when it arrives and when it departs - when it arrives, with *Kiddush*, and when it departs, with *Havdalah*."

(*Hil. Shabbat* 29:1)

R' Zvi Elimelech Shapira z"l (the *Bnei Yissaschar*; died 1841) writes: The Sages established the text of *Kiddush*, just as they established the text of all *Berachot*. According to Torah law, however, one would fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Kiddush* if he recited any praises of the sanctity of *Shabbat*. It follows that when one recites *Kiddush* over a cup of wine after praying (as we do), he is fulfilling only a Rabbinically-ordained *Mitzvah*, for he already fulfilled the Torah's *Mitzvah* of *Kiddush* by reciting the *Shabbat Shemoneh Esrei*, which speaks of the sanctity of *Shabbat*. [Note: The position presented here and its practical implications are discussed and debated by many *Halachic* authorities.]

R' Shapira continues: In the *Yom Tov Kiddush*, we say, before mentioning the Festival: "*Asher bachar banu*" / "Who has chosen us from every people." On *Shabbat*, in contrast, some versions of *Kiddush* do not mention the "chosen-ness" of the Jewish People at all, while other versions do say, "*Ki vano vacharta*" / "For You chose us and sanctified us from among all the nations," but only after *Shabbat* is mentioned. This is because *Shabbat* is sanctified from the time of Creation, before we were chosen as *Hashem's Segulah* / treasure (*Shmot* 19:5). Moreover, the *Mitzvah* of *Shabbat* was given to *Bnei Yisrael* (in last week's *Parashah*) before they were chosen (in this week's *Parashah*). The Festivals, in contrast, were sanctified only after the Jewish People became the chosen nation.

(*Derech Pikudecha: Mitzvat Aseh* 31)

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"You shall discern from among the entire people, men of *Chayil*/ accomplishment, G-d-fearing people, men of truth, people who despise money . . ." (18:21)

R' Pinchas Zalman Horowitz z"l (1832-1906; Krakow, Galicia) writes: The four traits listed here parallel the traits of the Patriarchs and Moshe himself. "Men of *Chayil*"--paralleling Avraham, who went to war (*Bereishit* 14:14). "G-d-fearing"--paralleling Yitzchak (see *Bereishit* 31:42). "Men of truth"--paralleling Yaakov (see *Michah* 7:20). "People who despise money"--paralleling Moshe (see *Bemidbar* 16:15). (*Ahavat Torah*)

"In the third month from the Exodus of *Bnei Yisrael* from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai . . ."

"And Moshe ascended to *Elokim* . . ." (19:1, 3)

R' Moshe Teitelbaum z"l (1759-1841; rabbi and *Chassidic Rebbe* in Újhely, Hungary) writes: *Bnei Yisrael* progressed in a short time from Egypt, which was known as the place of the 49 Gates of Impurity, to *Har Sinai*, where they would receive the Torah with great honor. This was possible because a *Tzaddik*--here Moshe Rabbeinu--has the ability to elevate a person who attaches himself to that *Tzaddik*. Usually, that occurs at the expense of the *Tzaddik*'s own short-term spiritual growth. Not so here; despite Moshe Rabbeinu's dedication to elevating *Bnei Yisrael* out of their impurity, Moshe himself "ascended to *Elokim*."

This, R' Teitelbaum adds, is a wonderful illustration of *Hashem*'s kindness. (*Yismach Moshe*)

"*Hashem* said to Moshe, 'Behold! I am coming to you in the thickness of the cloud, so that the people will hear as I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever'." (19:9)

Rabbeinu Nissim ben Reuven Gerondi z"l (Spain; 1320-1376) writes: *Hashem* is explaining Himself to Moshe. He elaborates:

When Moshe experienced prophecy, says the Torah (*Shmot* 33:11), "*Hashem* would speak to Moshe face to face, as a man would speak with his fellow." But at *Har Sinai*, *Hashem* wanted to speak directly to *Bnei Yisrael*, who were not suited to such a high level of prophecy. Something was needed to block or dim some of the "bright light" that would accompany *Hashem*'s revelation. Therefore, says the Torah (*Devarim* 4:11), "The mountain was burning with fire up to the heart of heaven, [amidst] darkness, cloud, and fog." The purpose of the "darkness, cloud, and fog," was to obscure the bright light of *Hashem*'s revelation. And, therefore, *Hashem* explained to Moshe, "I am coming to you in the thickness of the cloud"--not because of any limitation of yours, but "so that the people will hear as I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever." (*Derashot Ha'Ra'n* #11)

"Yitro, the minister of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard everything that *Elokim* did for Moshe and for *Yisrael*, His people--that *Hashem* had taken *Yisrael* out of Egypt." (18:1)

R' Yitzchak Klein z"l Hy"d (rabbi of Kosice, Slovakia; killed in the Holocaust) writes: Before Yitro recognized the Creator, he believed that there were two powers in the universe--one that did good and the other bad. Now, when he saw that the Plagues that struck Egypt were themselves the vehicle for *Bnei Yisrael*'s salvation, he understood that *Elokim*--the Divine Attribute of Justice--is one and the same as *Hashem*--the Divine Attribute of Mercy. (*Birkat Avraham*)

"Yitro, the father-in-law of Moshe took an *Olah*-offering and feast offerings for *Elokim*; and Aharon and all the elders of *Yisrael* came to eat bread with the father in-law of Moshe before *Elokim*." (18:12)

R' Yehoshua Heschel Singer z"l (1848-1925; rabbi in Buffalo, NY) asks: Should not the verse have said, "Yitro, the father-in-law of Moshe gave an *Olah*-offering . . ."?

He explains: The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 7b) teaches that if one gives a gift to an "important person" and the latter accepts the gift, it is viewed by *Halachah* as if the giver received something of value. Thus, writes R' Singer, when Yitro offered sacrifices and Aharon and the elders agreed to eat from them, Yitro "took" (i.e., received) something from them. (*Mishneh Zikaron*)

"Moshe said to his father-in law, 'Because the people come to me to seek *Elokim*. When they have a matter, one comes to me, and I judge between a man and his fellow, and I make known the decrees of *Elokim* and His teachings'." (18:15-16)

R' Eliyahu z"l (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*) writes: Moshe told Yitro that people come to him with three types of questions. Some have questions about *Avodat Hashem* / service of G-d (e.g., prayer) and *Mussar* / character improvement ("The people come to me to seek *Elokim*; When they have a matter, one comes to me"). Some have interpersonal issues ("I judge between a man and his fellow"). Lastly, some want to know the laws of the Torah and how to perform the *Mitzvot* ("I make known the decrees of *Elokim* and His teachings"). The first type of question, in particular, is something that only I (Moshe) can answer, for there are many correct paths and the advice I give a person is very individualized, for which I must communicate with *Hashem*, Who sees inside each person's heart.

Yitro replied with three arguments (18:18): "You will surely become worn out--you as well as this people that is with you"--i.e., you cannot judge every case alone, nor can every person wait his turn. "For this matter is too hard for you"--granted that you are uniquely suited to advise each person about his specific path in serving *Hashem*, but, nevertheless, it is too much for one person to do alone. Finally, "you will not be able to do it alone"--you cannot teach everyone the Torah's laws all by yourself. (*Aderet Eliyahu*, *Devarim* 1:12)

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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HAMAS GUNMEN SPREAD THROUGHOUT GAZA TO PREPARE FOR RESUMPTION OF WAR; IDF CALLS UP RESERVISTS (i24News 2/12/25)
i24NEWS' Arabic channel learned that Hamas deployed fighters throughout the Gaza Strip in preparation of resumed combat with the Israel Defense Forces. Reporter Dia Hassan said that the leadership had told operatives to stop using cell phones.

This comes after the terrorist group declared that it would postpone its release of Israeli hostages this weekend, citing Israeli "violations." In response, Israel's security cabinet on Tuesday demanded that Hamas release the hostages or else face intense fighting, following a similar demand by US President Donald Trump. The IDF has been placed on high alert, with leave time suspended in the Southern Command.

EGYPT THREATENS ISRAEL PEACE DEAL IF US AID STOPS (YNet 2/12/25)

The Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty may be invalid if U.S. President Donald Trump carries out his threats to end American aid to Egypt, diplomatic sources in Cairo were quoted as saying in an article to the Qatari Al Araby al-Jadeen newspaper on Tuesday.

The sources said the planned meeting in Washington between Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Trump has been suspended indefinitely amid the worse crisis in U.S.-Egypt relations in three decades and Cairo's rejection of Trump's plan to remove Palestinians from Gaza while he rebuilds the Strip and settle them in neighboring Arab countries.

U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks late Monday threatening to halt American aid to Egypt and Jordan if they refuse to accept Palestinian refugees, mark a turning point in the Palestinian issue, linking it to the longstanding relationships these countries have with the U.S.

In January, the Trump administration froze all international U.S. aid for 85 days for "review," but exempted Israel and Egypt due to the ongoing war.

Other sources told Saudi television network Al-Arabiya that "Egypt has decided to take precautions against any potential halt of U.S. aid and has prepared emergency plans to deal with U.S. pressure regarding the displacement issue."

Egypt, the third-largest recipient of U.S. aid after Israel and Jordan, would be heavily impacted if the aid is cut off. According to Al-Masry Al-Youm, U.S. aid to Egypt is estimated at \$2.1 billion, including \$815 million in economic aid, with the rest allocated for military aid. The outlet also noted that the U.S. has often used aid as leverage against Egypt.

The London-based Arab outlet Asharq Al-Awsat said in an article that Egypt's exemption from the aid freeze "was tied to its central role in Middle East security and the peace agreement with Israel." Experts cited by the paper affirmed that the exemption "would certainly be appreciated by Egyptian authorities, strengthening regional cooperation." However, these assumptions are now in question after Trump's recent remarks.

While Egypt and Israel were exempted from the freeze, U.S. aid to Jordan, which heavily relies on foreign aid, was suspended. U.S. assistance to Jordan, valued at \$1.4 billion, is crucial for the country's economy, funding development programs and maintaining stability.

Prior to the freeze, Jordan was expected to receive \$2.1 billion in U.S. aid by 2025. King Abdullah II of Jordan is scheduled to meet Trump in Washington later on Tuesday.

A few days after the announcement of the suspension of aid, King Abdullah visited Brussels, where he signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with the European Union. The agreement focuses on political,

security, economic, trade, investment and refugee issues and includes efforts to combat drug and arms smuggling into Jordan.

Jordan and the U.S. share a long-standing relationship based on mutual interests, including cooperation on Islamic terrorism and international security. Jordan is a key U.S. ally, with American troops stationed there and U.S. weapons stored in the country.

Around 3,000 American soldiers are based in Jordan, operating under a secret agreement allowing access to 12 key Jordanian military bases. Jordan, not a NATO member, also conducts joint military training with other countries, including Israel.

"There have been crises in the past, both between Israel and Jordan and between Jordan and the U.S.," Professor Ronen Yitzhak, head of the Middle East Studies department at the Western Galilee College and researcher at Tel Aviv University, said.

"After 1967, King Hussein claimed the U.S. was pro-Israel and didn't pressure Israel to withdraw from the West Bank, but relations always remained behind the scenes." Despite this, he stressed the strong anti-Western sentiment in Jordanian public opinion, which strongly supports Palestinians.

A recent Jordanian nationwide poll expressed support for King Abdullah's stance against "the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza." The king has backing from Arab states and popular support against Trump's plan.

"Jordan sometimes pursues an independent policy, and Abdullah is not an American puppet," Yitzhak added. "The relationship between Jordan and the U.S. is not as it once was. There have been past tensions, such as after the Gulf War. What's unclear now is Israel's silence, as it should understand the implications of weakening Jordan's government." Yitzhak said he found it

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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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hard to believe Trump's threat would lead to aid completely being cut off.

Both Egypt and Jordan have expressed opposition to the "expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza" due to concerns over displaced people crossing into their territories.

Egyptian officials said that "any displacement would end the Palestinian issue," while both Cairo and Amman have voiced support for a two-state solution and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

These countries view the issue as fundamental and economic threats are unlikely to change their position, but may lead to renewed preparations and alternative funding solutions. If Trump's threats are carried out, they could lead to new alliances in the region that may not favor Israel.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry told U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a recent visit that "Arab countries support the Palestinians and reject Trump's plan." He stressed the importance of rebuilding Gaza while Palestinians remain there.

MOROCCO SELECTS ELBIT SYSTEMS AS MAIN WEAPONS SUPPLIER (JPost 2/9/25)

Morocco has shifted to Israel's Elbit Systems as its main defense partner, signing a contract to purchase 36 Atmos 2000 self-propelled artillery systems, according to a Saturday report from the French newspaper La Tribune.

The decision follows growing tensions between the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces (FAR) and France's KNDS, Morocco's previous main weapons supplier. The dispute stems from repeated technical failures in the Caesar artillery systems, which Morocco ordered in 2020 and partially received in 2022.

According to the report, issues with the system surfaced shortly after the initial delivery.

"Morocco quickly complained to the French group about recurring problems with the artillery systems that were supplied," the article stated. Despite multiple complaints, KNDS's response was considered slow by Rabat, and some of the artillery systems remain non-operational.

With this new agreement, Israel has become Morocco's third-largest weapons supplier, accounting for 11% of its total arms imports, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The deal further strengthens Elbit Systems' footprint in Morocco and reinforces Israel's role as a strategic defense partner.

The Atmos 2000 system, mounted on a Czech-made 6x6 or 8x8 truck chassis, was chosen for its technical capabilities as well as its commercial benefits. It features a 155 mm cannon, a protected crew compartment for two to six personnel, and a firing range of over 40 km.

Additionally, it includes an integrated electronic system and an automatic loading mechanism aimed at decreasing the crew's workload.

This defense partnership underscores Morocco's ongoing adjustment of its military procurement strategy, emphasizing reliability and efficiency in its artillery systems.

'THESE WEREN'T TEARS OF JOY' (Ha'aretz 2/8/25)

The sun had barely risen when Kibbutz Be'eri members began preparations for the return of hostages Eli Sharabi and Ohad Ben Ami on Saturday morning. Cautious joy enveloped the kibbutz. After a year of turmoil, hostages from Be'eri were finally returning home alive.

"We don't know whether to rejoice or grieve," admitted one resident. "But every step is part of the healing process. We were evacuated to the hotel at the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, and from here, we can only rise."

At the kibbutz's printing house, signs with their images were printed, reading: "Our dear one, how good it is to have you home." The kibbutz pub began to fill with people. Flags were hung, signs were posted, and the bar was set up for the occasion. On the wooden tables, tablecloths and plates of snacks were placed, while beer bottles accumulated on the shelves. Everything was prepared for a celebration – one with mixed feelings.

A large tractor was placed next to the pub as a backdrop, with a yellow flag and signs of Ohad and Eli next to Israeli flags. The joy was cautious, but it was there, echoing in the clinking glasses, in the quiet hugs, and in the tears that couldn't be held back. Slowly, the pub filled up, with even evacuees from Kibbutz Hatzerim insisting on coming to witness these moments in the kibbutz.

Niv Alon, Eli's close friend, moved around restlessly, arranging signs and organizing drinks. The excitement was palpable, but each movement carried heavy emotion. At one point, Niv hung a new sign with Eli's name, next to one for his brother, Yossi Sharabi, who was killed in Hamas captivity. The sign for Yossi read, "Until the last hostage." The fact that Eli was returning, but without his family, which was killed on October 7, weighed heavily on the residents and seemed to dampen the joy.

The Be'eri community had endured many hardships over the past year, receiving news of the deaths of kibbutz members. This was the first time since the November 2023 deal that hostages were returning.

Gal Cohen, the kibbutz secretary, tried to explain the feelings: "Everything is overflowing. My mind is racing. The excitement is enormous, shivers through my body, but the thought of those still out there doesn't give me peace. We won't recover until everyone is back. We will see and hug those who return – and, unfortunately, bury some of them. But this is a full circle, and we must continue."

At 10:00 AM, all eyes were on the screen in the kibbutz pub. A short message appeared: "The Red Cross will arrive shortly to pick up the hostages." The air was charged. Slowly, the couches filled, beer bottles were taken out, and the kibbutz gathered.

The excitement was palpable. Time passed, but the message on the screen stayed the same, and the restlessness grew. "I can't wait anymore," said one resident. "They're talking and talking in the broadcast, but nothing interests me. I just want to see them. I didn't sleep all night, I just want to see them standing on their feet," she added.

The pub continued to fill, with two residents working diligently behind the bar, handing out full glasses one after another. Despite the early hour, most people already had a beer in hand. The excitement reached its peak – perhaps the earliest ever that so many drinks were served here. But the wait stretched on. On the screen, Hamas's propaganda began to play, and the kibbutz residents fidgeted in their seats.

"Come on," someone sighed. Some nervously bit their nails, others held their heads in their hands, struggling with the wait. Then it happened. Ohad Ben Ami appeared on the screen for the first time, followed by Eli Sharabi, gaunt and pale. Loud applause erupted – and for a brief moment it seemed joy would finally break through. But then, silence seeped in again.

"They're so thin," someone whispered.

Tears quickly followed. Faces froze. Shock took over. The joy evaporated, and worry filled the room. The sight of the two, fragile and exhausted, left everyone speechless.

Some covered their faces, others jumped up, holding their heads. Anxiety filled the space, and a heavy silence replaced the chatter of the pub. The tears that had come from joy turned in an instant to tears of deep concern. "It's so hard, on one hand, joy, but on the other, it's so painful to see them. It breaks the soul," said Yasmin Ra'anani.

Slowly, people began to disperse. The plan had been to celebrate, but it seemed not everyone felt joy – many were in shock. One resident stayed at the pub, head bowed, tears running down his face. A friend sat next to him, placing a comforting hand on his shoulder.

Outside, Avivit John, a kibbutz resident, sat on a bench. "These weren't tears of joy," she said. "It looked like they came from the world of the dead. We really wanted to rejoice, but it was a hard moment. I hope their appearance will be the turning point for everyone – from now on, they must come home."

Niv, Eli's friend, added: "The joy was very short, and in one moment it turned into sadness and anger when we saw Eli. Now we must all be strong to support him, and there's a long road ahead of us."

STUDY FINDS HAMAS STARVED HOSTAGES DESPITE AMPLE GAZA AID (Israel Hayom 2/12/25)

An Israeli study analyzing food quantities entering Gaza as humanitarian aid has found that sufficient amounts of diverse food with adequate caloric content were delivered during most months of the war. The food met most international humanitarian standards, despite complex challenges on the ground. This underscores that Gaza had no food shortage, highlighting that hostages are being deliberately starved.

The research, published in the scientific journal of the "Israel National Institute For Health Policy Research," examined aid volume from January 2024, approximately two months after the ground operation began, until July 2024. Senior officials from the Ministry of Health, Ben-Gurion University, Hebrew University, and the University of Haifa conducted the study. Additionally, researchers analyzed data from the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories regarding all food shipments transferred to Gaza through land crossings and airdrops.

The findings show that during the examined period, approximately 478,229 tons of food were transferred to Gaza, after adjusting for expected food loss. Consequently, each Gaza resident received an average supply of about 3,000 calories per day. Protein quantity stood at 98 grams daily (13% of total energy), fat consumption reached 61 grams daily (18% of total energy), and iron supply was 23 mg per day.

The study also found that food transferred to Gaza contained all nutritional components, except iron, in quantities exceeding the World Health Organization's standard for minimum food requirements for populations in crisis. Additionally, a consistent upward trend was observed in food quantities transferred to Gaza, except for a decrease in February compared to January.

However, researchers emphasize they lack reliable data regarding actual food accessibility to residents and its consumption on the ground. "The data shows that sufficient quantities of nutritious food were transferred to Gaza during most of the first half of 2024," the researchers noted. "However, increased cooperation between all involved parties is needed to overcome barriers and improve communication and information sharing."

The research provides a comprehensive snapshot of the food supply to Gaza during the examined period, emphasizing the importance of continued monitoring and assessment of the nutritional situation in the region. The findings may assist in better planning future humanitarian aid efforts.

Professor Ronit Endevelt, nutritionist at the University of Haifa School of Public Health and former director of the Ministry of Health's Nutrition Department, who co-authored the study, stated: "In most months when humanitarian aid was transferred, the quantity and quality of food entering was reasonable to good, meaning if the population didn't receive food, it's because distribution wasn't equitable by those controlling the territory, meaning Hamas."

"Claims echoing worldwide about insufficient food in Gaza are incorrect. Hamas had the ability to adequately feed the hostages yet consciously chose to starve them. This is beyond other shocking physical and mental torture, such as various restraints, lack of exposure to sunlight and daylight, inability to move – causing life-threatening malnutrition, damage to skeletal systems, immune system, hormonal system, and internal organs to the point of death risk."

"Israel, unlike other nations at war that don't feed the enemy, didn't prevent humanitarian aid to the civilian population," Endevelt emphasized. "Ultimately, Hamas seized control of much aid, profited from it, and thus accumulated funding for activities."

ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY REJECTS BID TO PUT IT IN CHARGE OF WEST BANK ANTIQUITIES (Times of Israel 2/12/25)

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) has rejected the idea of receiving responsibility for antiquities in the West Bank as proposed in a bill introduced by Likud MK Amit Halevi. As a result, Halevi has presented an amendment to

the bill to establish a new body under the authority of the Heritage Ministry to fulfill this purpose.

"The aim of this law is giving the State of Israel direct responsibility over the antiquities in the West Bank and creating the entity that will take care of it practically, in light of the concerns expressed by the Antiquities Authority," Halevi said during a meeting of the Knesset Education, Culture and Sports Committee on Tuesday.

"I would have been happy to task the Antiquities Authority with this responsibility, but in light of their opposition, this is the solution we found," he added.

The authority for managing archaeological sites and preserving relics in the West Bank currently resides with the archaeology unit in the Civil Administration, Israel's governing body in the territory, which is headed by a military office.

The bill presented by Halevi aimed to alter this arrangement and bring in the civilian IAA.

However, the IAA said in a statement to the committee that the proposed law "could cause significant damage to the academic ties of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the State of Israel with international bodies and damage its professional reputation."

The responsibility over the archaeological sites in the West Bank has been a hotly contested issue for decades.

According to the Civil Administration's Archaeology Unit website, the area contains over 2,600 archaeological sites spanning various historical periods and cultural influences, including Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and pre-biblical civilizations.

Some of the sites also happen to be among the most significant in Jewish history, such as the Qumran Caves, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, the capital of the Kingdom of Israel Sebastia, and Shiloh, the most important religious center before the Temple of Jerusalem was built, as well as several Hasmonean fortresses.

Many sites have been subject to constant looting, damage and neglect, as often denounced by right-wing organizations, as well as many archaeologists.

At the same time, Palestinians and Israeli human rights groups have repeatedly accused Israel of using archaeology as a political tool, often employed to seize land from the local Palestinian population or to disconnect them from universal cultural heritage.

During the committee meeting, IAA Chief Scientist Dr. Gideon Avni acknowledged the poor status of the antiquities in the West Bank due to neglect and damage. Still, he argued that transferring the responsibility for the sites to the IAA would not help because the Staff Officer for Archaeology is more effective than what the authority could be.

"The IAA has been working in cooperation with the Civil Administration's Archaeology Unit for years, and if the Staff Officer for Archaeology were under the IAA, his power would be diminished," Avni said.

Staff Officer for Archeology, Benny Har Even, also attended the meeting and warned that the bill could backfire.

"The most important thing is to protect our antiquities," he said. "We should discuss the powers that this directorate needs to be given so that it can perform the most important work in the most challenging region."

Har Even described the situation of the archaeological sites in the West Bank as "a terrorist attack against antiquities and Jewish history."

"The decision [regarding what to do] has to be made in full coordination with the IDF, which gives us the ability in the field to reach these antiquities without dangers," he noted. "I'm afraid we'll shoot ourselves in the foot."

The representatives of the Justice Ministry also expressed reservations about the bill, warning against possible claims of a de facto annexation that would raise alarm with the international community.

"The legislation is inconsistent with the long-standing policy of the State of Israel and presents sensitivities at the international level," said Natalie Assaf from the Justice Ministry. "To this day, Israel has chosen to manage the Judea and Samaria in this manner [through the Civil Administration], and

therefore, the bill can strengthen claims regarding annexation [of the West Bank].”

Halevi, however, was not deterred.

“The Israeli law on antiquities will be applied in Judea and Samaria, period,” he said, using the biblical name for the West Bank. “This is the position of the government, this is the position of the majority in the Knesset, and this is what will happen, I hope, during the current [Knesset] term.”

ATTORNEY GENERAL: DAYCARE SUBSIDIES FOR YESHIVA STUDENTS ENDS THIS MONTH (Arutz-7 2/11/25)

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara on Tuesday announced to Labor Ministry Director General Israel Uzan that beginning at the end of February 2025, daycare subsidies for haredim required to enlist will end.

The order, which is in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision, affects daycare subsidies for haredim who are required to enlist in the IDF and who are under the age of 27.

According to Baharav-Miara, haredim born before July 16, 1997, who received an exemption from military service before the previous Draft Law expired will continue to receive daycare subsidies even though they are enrolled in yeshiva.

Last July, the Supreme Court's decided that there is no legal framework to allow haredi yeshiva students an exemption from military service, and such individuals should face economic sanctions.

Last week, the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee published data showing that only 461 haredim out of the 3,000 who received draft orders in July 2024 showed up at the draft offices. Thus far, 1,242 arrest warrants were issued; another 1,212 arrest orders are expected to be issued in the near future.

WHY DID SENIOR SECURITY OFFICIALS FALSELY BELIEVE HAMAS WAS DETERRED? (Yisrael Medad, JPost 2/12/25)

Hamas, on October 7, 2023, sailed into Israel on a wave of perfect calm.

As a member of the Hamas Izzadin al-Qassam Brigades Military Council, Ezz al-Din al-Haddad, related, in an interview with Al Jazeera on January 24, “Our attack was meticulously coordinated.... At zero hour, our rocket salvos, drone and glider swarms, and naval units synchronized with thousands... who breached the separation barrier... [which] collapsed at the hands of engineering unit fighters....” The slaughter, destruction, and hostage-taking followed.

The front-line IDF troops facing the breaches, doubly reduced because of the Simchat Torah holiday and some other inexplicable reason, numbered perhaps 600 soldiers, most in pajamas. Only 12 tanks were available.

The thinking was Hamas was deterred. Even direct proof, provided by the field observation scouts for over a year that Hamas was planning something awful, was dismissed.

Tzachi Hanegbi, head of the National Security Council, on October 1, 2023, declared that Hamas was acting in a restrained manner and was indeed deterred. Having been in office for just nine months, obviously he was reflecting the consensus of the advice he received from army officers, even though he took full personal responsibility for the error.

Where to start seeking what went wrong? When did it go wrong, and who got it wrong?

Writing in the International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence last November, Ori Wertman and Christian Kaunert assert that the IDF Military Intelligence Directorate's failed conception caused them not to “perceive Hamas as an existential threat.” In essence, the IDF neither dealt with the potential threat nor planned for all possibilities.

The IDF did not “securitize” the Gaza front. Our armed forces were self-blinded a few kilometers from where the Philistines gouged out Samson's eyes in biblical times.

Prof. Efraim Karsh predates this development by three decades. In an article in Israel Affairs last October, he describes a post-Oslo process effect whereby the IDF's traditional battle order plan was “emasculated.”

Its combative offense ethos morphed into a preference for containment. Its striving for victory was downplayed to “avoid the need for preventive/preemptive measures.” The senior command played along with the politicians. The “disk” needed to be changed, they understood, and so they assumed the desired position.

For example, as reported in this newspaper on November 26, 2019, Gadi Eisenkot spoke at the Israel Democracy Institute and declared “Israel is not currently facing an existential threat.” What he did insist on, preferring a nonmilitary aspect of security, was that “the most important element of IDF's strength is the resilience and social cohesion within Israel.”

Perhaps the habit and custom of former senior IDF commanders to enter politics affects the last years of their service, at times deleterious to the country's defense requirements.

Karsh details how the IDF built itself to, foremost, promote the attainment of peace. Ultimately, this led to the steady reduction of the IDF's ground forces in favor of overwhelming reliance on airpower and sophisticated weaponry.

By 1995, based on an International Institute for Strategic Studies report, Karsh found that the IDF's inventory of main battle tanks had dropped from 4,488 to 4,095. But it did not stop there.

Six years later, when Ehud Barak finished his short term as prime minister and defense minister, the inventory dropped to 3,900. By the spring of 2013, it was reduced further to 2,442. There was a corresponding decrease, too, in the IDF's fighting formations: from 16 divisions in 1991 (six regular, 10 reserves) to 12 divisions (six regular, six reserves) in 2013.

A corresponding decrease in awareness and cognitive sensitivity to what was happening in Gaza seems to have been implanted in the intelligence units. Following the “Oslo disk change” pushed by political echelons and absorbed by the IDF, as well as the Qatar money policy, over the past decade or so, there was a reverse flow of influence.

The reports and briefings dulled ministers' abilities

The government ministers were being fed, in reports and briefings, the outlook that dulled their abilities to understand what really was happening. A closed circuit evolved that shut off all from acknowledging the reality.

Both the defense establishment and, subsequently, the political echelons began a dangerous tango. Following the ground forces depletion, an overdependence on air support appeared. In 2017, former Israel Air Force commander Maj.-Gen. Amir Eshel (ret.) stated at a security studies conclave that Israel's air power remains its most generic military force.

Israel's air force, he noted, has the “flexibility to deal with multiple fronts quickly and simultaneously,” adding, “speed still has a significance.” When threats appear, “the solution of air power... arrives within minutes to hours,” Eshel then stated. As we know, hours passed on Oct. 7 before any effective air support of jets or helicopters arrived.

IS IT possible Herzi Halevi, Aviv Kochavi, Eisenkot, Gabi Ashkenazi, and Benny Gantz, the General Staff chiefs since the Disengagement, did not prepare the army for the possibility of an invasion? Or that they were incapable of doing so?

Halevi, to recall, served as head of the Military Intelligence Directorate and the Southern Command just prior to his controversial appointment as IDF commander.

Moreover, Halvei oversaw the construction of the Gaza “smart” border fence, 6 meters high and 65 km. long, fitted with sophisticated sensors and remote-operated machine guns. He preferred an overdependence on things, technology, and a communications network system that collapsed within minutes. And he has been appointing new senior officers from among those who failed on Oct. 7.

It took Halevi almost three weeks to launch the counteroffensive. Could it be that he did not even expect the IDF would need to retake the Gaza Strip? Did the General Staff ever dedicate itself to planning for that possibility?

Franz-Stefan Gady, a fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, is convinced the IDF's “military tech fetish is a failed strategy” and “created an illusion of safety.” Where does this leave us in the post-Oct. 7 age?



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"L

“Smaller” Blessings

Presented by Rabbi Zacharia Schwartz, Kollel Adjunct

“And Yisro said, ‘Blessed is Hashem Who saved you from the hand of Egypt and the hand of Pharoah...’” (18:10)

The Midrash relates that when the Torah recounts how Yisro blessed Hashem for taking the Jewish people out of Egypt, it is by implication calling out the Jewish people for the fact that nobody amongst them blessed Hashem over this. This revelation is puzzling. After all, the Jewish people sang a deep and profound song of praise for the miraculous splitting of the sea. How then could it be that they did not express their thanks for being freed from their enslavement?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein explains that it is human nature to overlook “smaller” gifts in the face of larger ones. The Jewish people, he suggests, were so overwhelmed with appreciation for the splitting of the sea and the Divine revelation therein that they neglected to give thanks for the comparatively “minor” act of freeing them from slavery.

This facet of human nature has other manifestations as well. Sometimes we don’t notice the good things we have because we are focused on greater things, sometimes we don’t notice them because we have become used to them, and sometimes we simply... don’t notice them. We must learn to notice and appreciate all the good that we have. By focusing on all the good in our lives and appreciating those who gave it to us, we will live happier lives and deepen our relationships with our family, our friends, and of course, with Hashem.

Wishing you a Good Shabbos!

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Point to Ponder

Yisro, the minister of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that Hashem did to Moshe and B'nei Yisrael... (18:1)

What did Yisro hear that impacted upon him to convert? He heard about the splitting of the Yam Suf and the war with Amalek (Rashi).

The entire world heard about the miracles that Hashem did for B'nei Yisrael and still were not influenced to convert. What motivated Yisro to convert? In addition, why did the war with Amalek impact upon Yisro to convert? Shouldn't the victory over Amalek have been the inspiration for Yisro to convert?

TABLE TALK

Parsha Riddle

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

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

Which verse in this week's Parsha contains all the letters of the "Aleph Bais"?

Answer: Beshalach 16:16. One other verse in the Torah contains all the letter: Devarim 4:34

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In *parashas Yisro* (19:1-6), upon the arrival and encampment of the Children of Israel at the Wilderness of Sinai, Hashem instructs Moshe to inform them of His intention to give them the Torah: "So shall you say (*ko somar*) to the House of Jacob (*le-beis Yaakov*) and relate (*ve-sageid*) to the Children of Israel (*livnei Yisrael*) ..."

While several commentators explain that the phrases "say to the House of Jacob" and "relate to the Children of Israel" are simply repetitive formulations of the same idea, for psychological and literary effect, Rashi cites a famous midrashic interpretation that distinguishes between the two phrases: "To the House of Jacob" - This denotes the women — to them you shall speak in gentle language. "And relate to the Children (lit. 'the Sons') of Israel" - explain to the men the punishments and the details of the commandments in words that are as hard (distasteful) as wormwood (*gidin*).

This midrashic interpretation of the phrase *beis Yaakov* as referring to Jewish women is the basis of the choice of the name "Beis Yaakov" for the network of schools for Jewish girls that were established a century ago by Sarah Schenirer and her supporters and allies.

These schools were revolutionary, from both the perspective of tradition and custom – for millennia, Jews had not established schools for girls - as well as the perspective of normative *halachah*, which asserts that "the Sages commanded that a person should not teach his daughter Torah" (Rambam Talmud Torah 1:13, *Shulchan Aruch* YD 246:6). But despite the remarkable novelty and seemingly problematic nature of such schools, and the fact that their primary proponents and architects were a "simple" woman and her lay supporters (Frau Schenirer did obtain some degree of rabbinic approval for her project, but she also faced some rabbinic opposition, and even some of the support she received was apparently quite tepid), the movement was incredibly successful, to the extent that formal schooling for girls, something literally unheard of a mere century ago, is today nearly universal within Orthodox Judaism (although the breadth and depth of the curricula in such schools varies between communities).

One prominent opponent of the movement was R. Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam, the Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe, who insisted that girls may absolutely not be taught Torah via primary sources, although even he agreed that they may be taught practical *halachah* and religious faith via special works composed for women (*Divrei Yatziv* YD 139-40).

PRESENTED BY

RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am an in-law.
2. I am in the Law.
3. I saw a flaw.
4. I advised on the law.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I was from the binding.
2. I will be for Moshiach.
3. I am a blast.
4. I cause trembling.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Milchama/War (I am the opposite of raw, To avoid me, they detoured, I could be a mitzvah, My root is bread.)

#2 Amalek (Remember me, Forget me, I was for Purim, I am for doubt.)

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