



OUR BELOVED RABBI  
SOKAVA REBBE

# BET Journal

BRINGING EVERYONE TOGETHER

"E Pluribus Unum "  
Latin for "Out of  
Many, One" - Achdus



## בית מדרש אור חיים

1818 WEDDASH OHR CHAIM

### COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF RABBI AARON LANKRY  
18 FORSHAY ROAD, MONSEY, NEW YORK 10952



**SHIURIM FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITY**

**RABBI YY JACOBSON**  
WEEKLY CLASS

**SHABBOS**  
9:00 AM - CHASSIDUS  
AND  
SERMON BEFORE MUSAF  
20 FORSHAY RD  
OPEN FOR MEN & WOMEN

**SUNDAY**  
9:30 AM  
18 FORSHAY RD - TENT  
OPEN FOR MEN & WOMEN

**Separate Seating**

**EARLY BIRD**  
DAILY SHIUR  
MON - FRI 5:30 - 7:30AM

**TUESDAY**  
TUESDAY MORNING  
9:30 - 10:30 AM SHARP  
20 FORSHAY RD  
FOR WOMEN ONLY



OUR BELOVED RABBI  
SOKAVA REBBE

# Dear Kehilla,

BET Parasot Nasso

This week's Parasha is the largest one in the Torah, and its theme is a lesson on true unity. The Parasha begins by illustrating how all the Levites worked together in harmony; putting together and dismantling the Mishkan. The Torah goes into great detail discussing the number of people working together doing their specific job. Then the parsha relates about bringing the impure people to purity, followed by the subject of Sotah. Hashem, for the sake of unity and shalom bayit, allowed the desecration of His holy name. Because the events of Sotah can cause some people to be relaxed about their connection and unity with Hashem, the laws of Nazir is introduced to reconnect and strengthen our unity. Hashem then responds by giving us the blessings of the Kohanim, the blessing of peace that reinforces our harmony as a nation. The Mishkan is assembled resulting in incredible outcome that brings heaven and earth together. The Divine presence now has a man-made home where the entire nation joins to connect to Hashem and each other. The Bais Hamikdash is the place where even the nations of the world can come and unite with Hashem.

The last part of the Parsha however, does not seem to fit into the theme. The princes of the 12 tribes present gifts to the Mishkan and the Torah spends many posukim relating these gifts. Each gift is identical to the other yet the Torah repeats each and every one of them. The Torah, which never has even one extra word, seems to be redundant in the twelve repetitious pasukim. Why is this so important to know that the Torah repeats itself? How does this fit in with the main idea of unity from the rest of the Parasha? The separate gifts of the different tribes actually seem to connote diversity instead of unity. How do we understand this?

In Parshat Noach we learn of the great flood upon which the known world came to an end. This was due to the sins of man, mainly stealing. In the same Parasha we read about the rebellion of the generation of the Babylonian tower. Rashi states that the redeeming factor of that generation, which saved them from being destroyed, was that they were united. Harav Yochanan Zweig asks, if being united was their positive element, why introduce languages that would separate the people? The Rosh Yeshiva explains that when all people are identical it is not unity. When people are different yet they use their differences toward one goal and act together as one, this is true unity. Unity comes with a will to compromise ones position for the sake of unity.

Based on this understanding, I would suggest that the Torah is illustrating this lesson with the Nissi'im. Each tribe was totally different from one another and wanted to bring something special for the Mishkan. They each had their own approach of what to contribute. Never the less the goal was the same; to Honor Hashem. Remarkably, they all independently came to the same conclusion. This is why it was necessary for to Torah to extend itself and spell out each gift. Additionally, the Torah calculates the total gifts that were given. This too seems unnecessary as we can easily compute it ourselves. Yet, it is written to illustrate the true unity of the Nissi'im. The leaders of each tribe understood that using their unique talents and tools towards one goal is the ultimate model of harmony. The incredible, identical result is the proof.

May we master this exemplary ideal of unity and merit the abundance of blessing that comes along with it.

## SHUL SCHEDULE

Shabbos Parshas Naso



### SHABBOS ZMANIM

EARLY MINCHA ON Friday AFTERNOON at 1:35pm

SHABBOS NIGHT	Candle lighting	8:05pm	SHABBOS DAY	Shachris Vasikin	4:50am - DAF YOMI SHIUR	SHAB EVENING	Mincha & Daf Yomi	6:00pm
	Mincha Tent	7:00pm		Shachris	8:00 & 9:15am - Kiddush		Pirkei Avos	7:20pm
	Mincha 18 Forshay	7:30pm		Shachris Youth Minyan	9:15am - 18 Forshay		Mincha	1:45pm, 8:05pm
	Shkiya	8:23pm		Shachris Bais Chabad	10:00am - 20 Forshay		Shkiya	8:24pm
	Mincha Bais Chabad 20 Forshay	8:33pm		Pirchei - Bnos	2:00		Maariv	9:04 & 9:09pm

--- WEEKDAY MINYANIM ---

### SHACHRIS

20 minutes before Neitz (3) s 5:04 | M 5:04 | T 5:04 | W 5:03 | T 5:03 | F 5:03

6:15\* (1) 7:00 (1) 7:30 (3) 8:00 (1) 8:30 (2) 9:00 (1) 9:30 (2) 10:00 (1) 10:30 (2)

### MINCHA

1:30 PM - 20 Minutes After Shkiya - 50 Minutes After Shkia (1)

### MINCHA & MAARIV

12 Minutes Before Pelag (1) s 6:39 | M 6:39 | T 6:40 | W 6:40 | T 6:41

12 Minutes Before Shkia (1) s 8:12 | M 8:13 | T 8:14 | W 8:14 | T 8:15

### MAARIV

8:00 (1) 9:00, 9:30 (2) 9:45 (1) 10:00 (1) 10:30 (1) 11:00 (1) 12:45 (1)

### LOCATION DIRECTORY

(1) 18 FORSHAY DOWNSTAIRS

(2) 18 FORSHAY UPSTAIRS

(3) 20 FORSHAY UPSTAIRS

(4) 20 FORSHAY DOWNSTAIRS

(5) 18 FORSHAY TENT

\* NO SUNDAY MINYAN

JUNE 04 - 09

NEITZ IS 5:24 am - 5:23 am

PELAG IS 6:51 pm - 6:53 pm

SHKIA IS 8:24 pm - 8:28 pm

סוף זמן קריאת שמע  
MAGEN AVRAHAM  
8:34 AM - 8:34 AM  
GRA- BAAL HATANYA  
9:10 AM - 9:10 AM

# בית מדרש אור חיים

BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM

18 FORSHAY ROAD, MONSEY, NEW YORK 10952  
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF RABBI AARON LANKRY

## זמנים

שבועות תשע"ז



### EREV SHAVUOS, TUESDAY

MINCHA GEDOLA	1:35pm	18 ↓
Candle Lighting	8:03pm	
Shkiya	8:21pm	
MINCHA	8:13pm	18 ↓

### SHAVUOS DAY 1, WEDNESDAY

Dvar Torah followed by MAARIV	18 ↓
SHACHRIS	4:30am 20 ↑
Neitz Minyan	4:55am <sup>תש"ז</sup> 18 ↓
	9:15am 18 tent
	10:00am 20 ↑
MINCHA	1:45pm
	7:30pm
	8:15pm
Shkiya	8:22pm

### SHIURIM

Shavuos Night	See Separate Flyer
Daf Yomi	After 7:30 Mincha
Rabbi YY Jacobson	See Separate Flyer

### SHAVUOS DAY 2, MONDAY

MAARIV	9:10pm 18 ↓
Candle Lighting	Not Before 9:13pm
SHACHRIS Yizkor	4:55am 20 ↑
	9:15am 18 tent
	10:00am 20 ↑
MINCHA	5:15pm
	8:15pm
Shkiya	8:22pm
MAARIV	9:02pm
MAARIV II	Following Ne'ilas Hachag

### SHIURIM

Daf Yomi	After Mincha
Rabbi YY Jacobson	See Separate Flyer

Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim  
is pleased to announce that  
renowned speaker

# Harav Dovid Orlofsky

will be speaking in our Bais Medrash

## Why is Parshas Nasso So Long

Shabbos Afternoon  
Parshas Nasso - June 3  
6:45 PM



## My Letter In The Torah

The holy books tell us that there were 600,000 souls at Mattan Torah and that each one has a letter in the Torah. In fact, the Hebrew word Yisrael stands for 'yesh shishim ribo osiyos latorah' –there are 600,000 letters in the Torah. The deeper meaning of this phrase is that since the Torah epitomizes our soul, every one of us possesses a letter in the Torah that corresponds to our very essence.

In truth, according to our account there are only 304,850 letters in The Torah. Does this not contradict the above number of 600,000? The answer to this quandary is quite revealing. If we look closely at each letter we see that many of them are made up of a few letters. For example, the letter alef (א) has two yuds and a vav. This shows us that some letters comprise several different souls and should one part of the letter be missing or incorrectly written, the Torah (our soul) is considered faulty.

This teaches us is a profound lesson as we enter into a marriage with Hashem on the holiday of Shavuos. We cannot create a proper marriage contract with the Torah on our own. Only by committing to a binding relationship with each other are we able to properly connect with the Torah and Hashem.

This concept beautifully echoes another thought that I heard in the name of Rabbi Backs from Detroit who explained that the idea of the Jews being likened to the stars connects back to the beginning of creation. Chazal tells us in Maseches Chulin that Hashem formed the moon and He made it smaller than the sun. When the moon complained, Hashem appeased it by creating the stars that brighten up the moon's sphere. We learn from this that the creation of stars was for the sole purpose of making the moon feel better. If this is indeed the case, what a beautiful lesson it teaches us. We are likened to the stars because our very essence is to be part of each other and this is the quintessence of Hashem since we are all Chelek Eloka Mimaal.

May we have the space in our hearts and the courage to humble ourselves and may we join each other in receiving the Torah united together.

**Join Rabbi Coren on Shavuos**

1st night of Shavuos - Understanding Tikun Lail  
Shavuos 1 AM — 4 AM

2nd night of Shavuos - Maseches Tamid 1 AM — 4 AM

18 Forshay Rd. Rabbi Coren's Office (upstairs)

**גדולה הכנסת אורחים  
מהקבלת פני השכינה**

**Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim Hachnosas Orchim Project**

Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim is known far and wide for our exceptional warmth and hospitality

We would like to take this sentiment to the next level.

We are organizing a Hachnosas Orchim committee which will put into action the values our Shul represents.

While many people in our community open their homes on a regular basis to those seeking the security of a warm environment, we would like to do this on a more organized basis.

If you would like to be involved in this project, kindly email [bmocchessed@gmail.com](mailto:bmocchessed@gmail.com) and indicate if you would like to be involved as an organizer or host or both.

Erev Shabbos Plag MInyan for Mincha & Maariv  
**BLUEBERRY HILL AREA**  
Parshas Nasso  
Mincha 6:30 Plag: 6:50  
30 Dr Frank Rd. Entrance From Humbert

Just so you should know...

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**1 0 9 DAYS UNTIL UMAN**



## Goral / Lottery Part 2

Last week we discussed the premise that a goral works with divine assistance, the Chavos Yair brings down three cases of goral with interesting shailos in connection to it.

The Chavos Yair in Siman Samech Alef quoted in the Pischei Teshuva, Siman Kuf Ayin Heh, Seif Gimmel brings a case where there were twelve people together on Purim who were drunk. These people were going to raffle off a gold goblet. Each person contributed a specified amount of money to the pot in order to obtain a chance at winning the goblet. They each had their name written on a paper that was placed into a box. In another box there were eleven blank papers and one paper that said, "Mazel Tov!" The person to choose the "Mazel Tov!" paper would be the winner of the gold goblet. A child was asked to pick out one name at a time with a paper from the second box. On the second try the name picked matched up with the "Mazel Tov!" paper from the second box. A skeptic went and checked the rest of the tickets in the second box and discovered that instead of the box containing eleven empty papers and one "Mazel Tov!" there actually were two tickets with the words "Mazel Tov!" on it. The Chavos Yair paskened that the lottery is null and void since the first name to be picked has double the chances to win. The problem with this reasoning is based upon the Taz's premise we mentioned last week. The Taz states that anything that is "kavua" has a 50/50 chance; so it would stand to reason that there was a 50/50 chance for the first person to win. Why would it then be null and void? We could answer that in the terms of the lottery the winning ticket was only supposed to be written once; and since "Mazel Tov!" was written twice, the whole goral is considered invalid.

The Chavos Yair continues that based on his psak the lottery was done again and this time the sixth person's name was matched to the "Mazel Tov!" ticket. Someone else opened up all the other tickets and found that there were only eleven names in the box. One of the names had been omitted. The participants who had not won wanted to invalidate the goral; however, the winner claimed that they should leave it as is. To the other people whose names had been in the goral he addressed by saying that their chances had been greater to win, but they had actually not won. To the person whose name had been omitted he offered a sum of money as a consolation prize. The Chavos Yair said that the goral is in fact invalid and the whole lottery needs to be re-done. We find a case in Bava Basra, daf kuf vov, amud bais that discusses two brothers who divided an inheritance. A long lost brother from a far away land showed up after the division had been done. When a Rav was consulted he paskened that they were required to re-divide the inheritance among the three brothers. From this story we see that since the statistics change, the proceedings need to be re-done.

The Chavos Yair says that even in a case where one of the twelve people cheated and added a second ticket with his name on it and yet did not end up winning, the whole goral is invalidated. The bottom line is that a goral works with divine assistance and it will only work if it is done k'halacha.

We can see what is meant in the posuk "Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu ... naim... GORALAINU." Praised are we with our portion; when our goral is done in a sweet way. If the goral is done correctly, Hashem helps us with our portion!

### Learning according to your own level

There was a boy named Naftali who sat through his classes in yeshiva drawing little pictures while his rebbe taught. In fifth grade. Naftali was constantly getting into trouble: "Pay attention and stop doodling," his rebbe would scold.

But in sixth grade, Naftali's new rebbe stood close to his doodling student's desk and watched him draw. Amazingly, he was depicting in his drawings the exact concept the rebbe was teaching. This was the way Naftali's mind worked. This was how he was best able to absorb the lesson. Not only did the rebbe not scold his artistic student; he asked if he could borrow the notebook so that he could photocopy it for other students who might find the illustrations helpful.

King Solomon taught in Proverbs, "Teach each child according to his way..." A good teacher knows that different children learn differently.

This is, in fact, Hashem's own teaching technique which has been passed down through the ages. The Sages teach that when the Jewish people heard the Ten Commandments, each heard Hashem's words according to his own level of understanding. The message that imprinted itself upon each person was the same message, but it was transmitted in a way that exactly suited each person's learning style and level of understanding. To this day, Hashem's method sets the example for how Torah should be taught. If the student hasn't learned, then the teacher hasn't taught: "Each child according to his way."

### One Man, One Heart

The Torah relates that when the Jews arrived at Mount Sinai, they set up camp. The word used for encamping, however, is in the singular form, rather than the plural form that would normally be used for a group of people. Rashi explains that the singular form conveys a message – that the Jewish people were in a state of complete unity. They were "as one man with one heart," united in their desire to receive Hashem's Torah.

The unity of the Jewish people is a force of immense power. The times in our history when we were united have always brought us Divine favor and protection. Times of fragmentation and strife have always brought disaster. Most notably, the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile in which

we remain today are traced to the lack of unity that prevailed in that period and which, unfortunately, continues.

Obviously, however, people are all very different from each other and the tendency to see "different" as "wrong" is a very strong human trait. But as the Jews at Sinai proved, when everyone's eyes are lifted toward Heaven, their hearts are in the right place as well.

### Parshat Naso

(Numbers 4:21-7:89) continues where last week's Parsha left off, delineating the responsibilities and tasks of the three Levite families - Gershon and Merari this week, Kehas last week - and counting all of the Levites who were of age to serve in the Mishkan (Tabernacle). After Hashem commands Moshe to purify the camp so that it will be a worthy home for the Divine presence, the Torah describes the process to be carried out with a Sotah, a wife who was warned by her husband not to seclude herself with another man. She is taken to the Kohen (priest) in the Temple and, if she doesn't admit her guilt, given sacred bitter waters to drink which will lead to one of two results: The waters will either establish her innocence, removing any doubt from her husband's mind by blessing her with children, or the waters will prove her guilt through a miraculous, grotesque death. The Torah then describes the laws of the Nazir, a person who has voluntarily accepted upon himself to adopt a special state of holiness, usually for thirty days, by abstaining from eating or drinking any grape products, from taking a haircut, and from becoming contaminated through contact with a corpse. After relating the blessings by which the Kohanim (priests) will bless the people, the Torah portion concludes with a lengthy listing of the offerings brought by each of the twelve tribal leaders during the dedication of the Mishkan for regular use. Each prince makes a communal gift to help transport the Mishkan, as well as donating gifts of gold, silver, animal, and meal offerings.

### Haftarah Naso

The Torah portion of Naso introduces the concept of the Nazir, a person who takes a voluntary vow not to consume grape products (including wine) or cut his or her hair. The haftarah tells the story of the birth of Shimshon, the Bible's most famous Nazir.



# Capturing the Wall: The Story of Shavuot 1967

Aaron Hirsh

A brilliant flash shattered the darkness. The lonely climber saw in that blink of an eye that he was almost at the top of the peak, and around him a gorgeous valley spread with lakes reflecting the awesome mountain. And then it was dark again. Life flashes with those moments where everything is clear. So does Jewish history. I'd like to tell you about two of them.

As the taxi started driving I asked, "Can you please turn off the radio."

Usually you only see the back of the driver's head. This one turned around smiling: "Only if you sing to me," he answered in Hebrew.

"Simin Tov u Mazal Tov" I began happily.

"V siman tov u Mazal Tov," he joined in. Now he, my wife and I were all smiling.

I guess the song transported him back to a memory because he asked suddenly: "Have you ever heard about the liberation of the Western Wall in 1967?"

"Sure" I answered.

"I was there. I was a soldier in a unit fighting the Jordanians in the Old City. Our troop advanced into a section of the Old city. Although I had never been there before, and the Arabs had animals grazing and manure scattered between their houses and the ancient walls of the Old City, I seemed to recognize where I was. Suddenly I realized I was standing at the Western Wall.

I went to a school that was not religious. I remember we only had one textbook with anything religious in it. It had three religious pictures: the Tomb of Rachel, the Cave of Machpella where Avraham, Sara and the other forefathers are buried, and the Western Wall.

This was the picture of the place from my schoolbook. I was standing at the Western Wall. Suddenly I couldn't move. My entire body was tingling, and I became overwhelmed by the holiness of where I was. Over my head I felt the presence of the "Shechina" (the Presence of G-d which is said to always dwell at the Western Wall), and I became completely paralyzed.

Meanwhile the Jordanians were shooting at us from the building tops. So when my fellow soldier ran up to me he thought I had been shot. He started checking me for bullet wounds, but he found none. No blood was flowing. Finally he realized I was in shock. He started shaking me till I came to."

I could not believe the story I was hearing, but it got even better.

"Out of nowhere a Rabbi appeared. Rabbi Goren. We were soldiers ready for battle, but he was only a civilian. We ran to cover him. He was carrying a shofar, and was headed straight for the Wall.

As he reached the wall he said the Shehechyanu prayer, and then took his shofar and began to blow. Then I heard him radio: 'The Kotel Ma'arvi is in our

hands, I repeat the Kotel Ma'arvi is in our hands'."

As he told me his story I could not help but wonder why the Rabbi seemed to be more informed than the soldiers. How did he know to be there? Shouldn't the soldiers have been radioing that they had captured their target? I understood as he continued:

"We had no orders to capture the Kotel. We just ended up there."

As I heard his story it was as if it had been prophesized. It mirrored the words and events of the 3rd Jew to visit the place of the temple and his reaction over three thousand years earlier:

"Yaakov...encountered (bumped into) the place... and behold G-d was standing over him and He said: ...I will guard you wherever you go and I will return you to this soil...Yaakov ...said: "Surely G-d is in this place and I did not know! And he became frightened and said: "How awesome is this place!... this is the gate of Heaven." (Genesis 28 vs. 10-17)

"You heard of Yitzhak Rabin?" the driver then asked. I couldn't tell if he meant the question seriously. "He arrived next, and soon after him Moshe Dayan, and realized they'd captured the Kotel. Maybe you have seen two of the posters from that moment?" He asked pointing to his hair. "I am balding now, but I am in one of them, the one in the helmet," he told me, and I did recognize him.

I thought to myself that the patriotic textbooks that feature that picture probably wouldn't sequence the events in the order he was telling me.

"We bumped into the Kotel, and the Rabbi blew the shofar, and then the Generals showed up," but Yaakov, after whom we call ourselves Israel, is described by the Torah as "bumping into the place, and he is described as "the man of truth".

The beauty of the taxi driver's story was what he told me next. "It was summer time. After the liberation, first we invited all the yeshivas, and the rabbis to visit the Kotel. The next week was Shavuot, and we opened it for all of Israel to come and visit."

Even though the taxi driver was not wearing a kippa, he turned around and the words of a Gemara flowed from his mouth:

"If you weren't there to see the joy of the Simchat Beit HaShoeva (the water drawing festival in the temple on Sukkot) then you have never seen true happiness"

I nodded, waiting to hear what he'd tell me next.

"If you were not there to see the joy of the Jews coming back to the Kotel, then you have never experienced true happiness."

You could see that he had experienced true celebration, and that its joy was alive within him now as it was when he experienced it forty years earlier.

"People were bawling, embracing, falling to their feet. For six months after you could not get an

airplane ticket to Israel from abroad. Everyone was coming to see the Western Wall."

Every Shavuot in Jerusalem, a few hours before sunrise from distant hills from every edge of the city the deserted streets begin to fill with Jews until from every direction Jews of every kind stream towards one central point—the Western Wall. You can hear the roar of people moving – old men, kids, groups of teenage girls, yeshiva students with their rebbes, and voices singing. And then in a single moment-at sunrise, the moment at which G-d gave His beloved Jewish people his beloved torah, all these different Jews step into prayer, as one man with one heart, and all is silent. I wondered if that tradition started that Shavuot in 1967 with the story of our taxi driver.

As he spoke the rest of the ride home I was thinking about all the holy men who wept bitterly to merit to see the Kotel and died with their dream unfulfilled. I wondered what it was about him that he had been chosen. I remembered the story that I heard when showed the picture of the Kotel being liberated, the picture of our driver:

As soldiers ran to the Kotel, one of the non-religious soldiers who ran to the Wall saw the religious soldiers crying. He too began to cry.

The religious soldier looked at him surprised and asked:

"I know why I am crying, but why are you crying?" The nonreligious soldier answered back: "I am crying because I don't know what I am supposed to be crying about."

Interesting how the moment of the giving of the torah ripples through the millennia to re-emerge in the subconscious of every type of Jew, all leading their own separate lives, to again be like one man with one heart at the Kotel on Shavuot. We all have two identities-the person we identify with day to day and the picture of ourselves we see within the critical moments of life that flash with clarity. At those moments we know who we are.

The moment in the history of the Jewish people when we saw ourselves as Israel, one man with one heart, was at the giving of Torah. I did not have to ask the driver his name to know that he, for me and everyone else who has seen his picture, is Israel.

Perhaps out of all the people in the world, G-d had chosen a 19 year old boy from Haifa, our taxi driver, to redeem the Wall so that the flood of Jewish people could stream there again, in order to give us all a broader vision of who we are in essence. The Torah is for all of us. It is our heart, and connects us even when we see ourselves as very far from it.

Each one of us is like a lone climber through the darkness of exile struggling to cling to whatever Judaism we have left. The flash of light that puts us back in touch with our mission, and how close we are to achieving it was the light that flashed for our driver and the whole Jewish world in 1967. It is the lightning that lit up our souls with a sense of who we truly are-the light of the giving of the Torah.



Flowers are being sold everywhere. There are arrangements outside grocery stores, shuls and on random street corners. It's Shavuos and it's the season. If someone wanted to purchase a succah now, they would be hard pressed to find it. It's just not in season right now. Every Yom Tov brings its "gifts" that we can acquire quite easily if we just reach out and accept it. Once the Yom Tov passes though, it's not as easy to acquire, as the season has passed. Shavuos is Zman Matan Torahseinu, the greatest gift given to mankind ever and the time of receiving and "owning" the Torah. We need to just reach out and accept it with our minds and hearts (stomachs too, of course, as with any Jewish holiday!)

The heroine of Shavuos is Rus, as she exemplifies a person who reached out and acquired the Torah with no other ulterior motive other than her great love for it. Where did she get this love for Torah? It was not instilled in her; she came from a nation of idol worshippers, and her Jewish husband did not seem to be a great source of inspiration! Rus's life only rolled downhill when she married a Jew, she went from royalty to poverty and then widowhood. What did she experience that guided her down the path of Torah?

Naomi was known as "pleasant" because of her righteous deeds that were pleasant to both man and G-D. She had no desire to leave the land of Israel but did so because she felt it was proper to follow her husband. She suffered greatly from the moment they left Israel. She had been pregnant but miscarried in Moab. Then they lost their money followed by the death of her husband. Her sons began to assimilate and married Moabite woman. Finally, she suffers the death of her two sons who were childless and buries the future of her family as there was no one left to carry on the name. Naomi repents with all her heart, accepting her suffering with love. She rises immediately after shivah to return to Israel without a moments delay.

Rus was named as such, because "ra'asah- she saw" her mother in law's piety and clung to her. She watched Naomi, learnt from her ways and was moved by her. Rus was "pure as a dove" which is her name reversed "Rut-Tur" and she was in awe of Hashem and wary of sin. The name Rus is numerically equivalent to 606, seven numbers less than 613. She was not content to observe only the seven Noahide laws and accepted an additional 606, keeping the full 613 required of a full-fledged Jew. Although Naomi tries to dissuade her by warning her that life of a convert will be full of suffering, nevertheless Rus internalized that life without Torah is death.

Orpah did not see things in that way and so she "oref-turned her neck" and returned to her nation. Some authorities write that the kiss of a Tzadik awakens the soul of a pure person, but draws out the spark of holiness from an impure person. When Naomi kissed her daughter-in-laws they "raised their voices and wept." Orpah wept over her downfall, for she realized she lost her spark of holiness. Rus, however, wept for longing for Hashem as Naomi magnified her desire to cleave to Him and His Torah. That is why Naomi then tells Rus, "return after your sister in law" as she accepted Rus sincerity of faith and knew she would never return to the Moabite gods.

Though Naomi had a great effect on Rus and was her inspiration in choosing a life of Torah there had to be another element that influenced Rus to such a burning devotion. This decision, to choose the life of Torah occurred during the time of harvesting, the seven weeks from Pesach to Shavuos (the Omer). Perhaps the reason she had the capacity to find and accept the illuminating light of Torah was because it was the proper season; the auspicious time of Kabbalas Hatorah. This opportune time provided the ability and power for Rus to reach out and acquire the greatest gift, the gift of Torah.

We have entered this powerful passage of time; let us grasp the Torah with open hearts and illuminate our lives with its abundant blessings.

# MOTHER OF ROYALTY

BY DINA COOPERSMITH

Rus is the ancestor of King David, and consequently the matriarch of the Messianic line. Who is this woman, special enough to have an entire book in the Bible named for her, which we read on Shavuot, the epic day on which the Torah was given to the Jewish people? Rus must have a very important message to convey to us about what it means to be a Jew, to receive the Torah, and to merit royalty.

## Background Story

The story of Rus takes place in the time period of the Judges at a time of spiritual ups and downs in Jewish history.

“And it was in the days of the judgment of the Judges”: This refers to a generation that judged its own judges... [The Judge] would say, “Remove the toothpick from between your teeth,” and [the people] would answer, “Remove the beam from between your eyes.” (Talmud – Bava Batra 15b)

The 400-year span of the Judges began after the death of Yehoshua, who conquered and divided the Land of Israel, and ended with the establishment of the monarchy with King Shaul. This period was known for the serious deterioration of the spiritual state of the Jewish nation. Each time a Judge would arise to help restore order for a number of years, inevitably the nation would slip back into its old idolatrous habits and assimilate into the surrounding nations’ culture and behaviors, erasing their own unique identity meant to be a light unto the nations.

When we meet the characters surrounding Rus, the Land of Israel has been hit with a famine:

At that time God said: “My children are stubborn. To destroy them is impossible. To return them to Egypt is impossible. I cannot exchange them for another nation. What, then can I do? I must make them suffer and cleanse them with famine.” (Midrash – Rus Rabba, Intro. 1)

## The Leadership Fails

It seems that as soon as the Land of Israel was conquered, everyone ran to settle his own portion, work the land, plant vineyards and fields, establish gardens and farms, and in general amass material wealth and creature comforts. The leaders at that time, the heads of the judicial court, the Sanhedrin, were expected to take this opportunity to travel across the country from one border to another, teaching Torah ethics to the populace. The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 12 – Shoftim 68) describes a kind of mobile Beit Midrash that should have existed in those early years of settling the land, but did not. As a result, the nation became self-centered and selfish.

Then, when a famine hit, Elimelech from the tribe of Yehudah – a great and wealthy man with many acres of land and enough produce to feed the entire nation for years – Left Eretz Yisroel:

Elimelech was among the great scholars and patrons of the nation, and when the years of

famine came, he said: “Now all of Israel will come to my door, each with his box (to collect money).” He stood up and ran away from them. (Midrash – Rus Rabba 1:4)

Besides his lack of generosity, Elimelech severely disappointed everyone’s expectations, causing disheartenment and loss of hope among the people. He took his family and defected to Moav, where his two sons, Machlon and Kilyon, married Moabite women.

## Moav – The Self-Centered Nation

Elimelech and his family left the Jews of Israel in a state of famine and financial crisis. Their escape from responsibility came from a desire to save themselves and their possessions from the difficulties facing the nation. Their self-centeredness was indicative of the level of the Jewish people at that time, each concentrating on maintaining his own material wealth.

The decision to leave the Land of Israel and avoid helping out, led Elimelech’s family to deteriorate spiritually to the point where they intermarried with the Moabites:

The Torah ostensibly prohibits the Moabite nation from ever entering into the Jewish covenant:

They should not come into the congregation of God, neither Moabite nor Amonite, even the tenth generation should not enter into the congregation of God, forever, because they did not greet you with bread and water on the way when you left Egypt... (Deut. 23:4-5)

After the Jewish people left Egypt, they had to pass by the lands of Moav and Amon. These nations did not attack the passing straggling group of Jewish slaves as the Amalekites did. Yet they were expected to greet the Jews with food and drink, especially since Amon and Moav are descendants of Lot, who owed so much to his uncle Avraham for the care he showed him when they both started out in the land of Canaan. This Amon and Moav did not do, denying the refugees even the most common courtesy. Moav, then, is considered the epitome of self-centeredness and lack of generosity and kindness.

Significantly, Moav is the place where Elimelech and his family felt most comfortable settling. The similarity is striking: Moav avoided feeding the suffering Israelites, who were distant cousins, and Elimelech escaped from feeding his fellow Jews in their time of need. As if to complete the circle, Elimelech’s sons then marry Moabite girls!

Seemingly, this is the beginning of the end of this family. Elimelech dies, as do both his sons, and Naomi is left alone with her two non-Jewish daughters-in-law. And yet, at this very moment God opens a window of hope and a second chance. Somehow, out of this family, will eventually come Dovid Hamelech – and the Messiah from the house of David.

## Rus Returns to Judaism

Naomi, the lone remnant of an illustrious family, decides to leave Moav with its tragic memories and go back to the Land of Israel:

This entails tremendous courage, to go back – alone – to a country where she will have to face the family and friends she betrayed, to admit she was wrong and has suffered the loss of her husband and sons – and now to try rebuilding her life in a society that feels only animosity toward her.

At first, both daughters-in-law, Rus and Orpah, choose to leave their country with Naomi. This speaks volumes about Naomi’s character and about the relationship that existed between this lone Jewish family and the Moabite wives. These girls were both daughters of Eglon, the king of Moav. They left a house of royalty and the status of princesses to connect to this Jewish family, its values and its practices. And now they are willing to leave their homes, country and culture to go with Naomi to a place where they will be strangers and completely alone, with no husbands and no view of a future. They must have really loved Naomi who – over the ten years of marriage – must have instilled in them a spiritual value system and Jewish lifestyle to the point where they were willing to start anew with their old widowed mother-in-law.

Naomi tries to dissuade them from coming with her. Initially they refuse to be dissuaded, but as Naomi genuinely convinces them that her tragic life will only tie them down and limit their options for happiness and blessing, one of the daughters-in-law, Orpah, agrees to leave. Rus, however, is able to see beyond the logic of Naomi’s words, to the nuances of love and care.

Rus, like the matriarchs in the Torah, intuits the deeper meaning in Naomi’s words: Naomi really would be happy to go back with someone and not be completely alone. Her words were only meant as a necessary discouragement to one who wishes to convert to Judaism, to make sure their intentions are pure.

In seeing beyond the logic and surface, Rus exhibits the trait of binah, deeper understanding. She also expresses a deep caring and kindness – the complete opposite of her countrymen and of her husband’s family. She prepares to leave all of her own physical wealth and comforts behind to care for an aging lonely woman who isn’t even her family anymore, with only spiritual benefits to gain.

“Don’t push me to leave you and to go back, for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you sleep, I will sleep. Your nation is my nation, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. So will God do to me and so He will add (I swear) that only death will separate between us.” (Rus 1:16-17)

This is Rus’s famous statement, which the Midrash tells us is an announcement of her desire to convert to Judaism – no matter what. Naomi, sensing her sincerity, starts explaining to her the



# paradigm of humility and generosity

basics of Judaism. Being a princess in Moav, Rus was used to the kinds of entertainment that were not acceptable among Jewish people:

It is not the way of the daughters of Israel to go to theaters and circuses of idol worship, so Rus said: "Wherever you go, I will go." Naomi said to her: "My daughter, Jewish people live in a house with a mezuzah." Rus said: "Wherever you sleep, I will sleep." (Midrash – Rus Rabba 2:23)

Rus is making it clear to Naomi that she is perfectly ready to leave her old habits of leisure and meaningless entertainment, and adopt a more purposeful, spiritual life.

## Life In Beit Lechem

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Rus 601) says that the whole city had gathered together on the day Naomi returned to attend the funeral of the wife of Boaz, the leader and Judge of the generation. They see Naomi coming back widowed, impoverished, wearing tattered clothes and with a Moabite girl at her side. They are shocked and horrified.

Naomi and Rus settle back in Israel, which has slowly returned to a semblance of normalcy after a 10-year "depression." Though people had suffered due to their lack of consideration and care for others during the early years of settling the land, they have transformed themselves, returning to the path of generosity with the help of their Judge and leader, Boaz.

## Humility and Modesty

Naomi return destitute and without prospects.

Rus, a famous princess, who had married into the wealthiest Jewish family around, now offers her mother-in-law:

"I'll go out to the field and collect some sheaves of wheat." (Rus 2:2)

Rus doesn't go without obtaining permission from Naomi. She hopes to find someone who will allow her to take the leftover wheat that falls from the crops being collected. This is an obligatory charity that field owners must leave for the poor, but Rus knows she must still find someone kind and willing. She is humbly submitting to her new station in life, not expecting anything from this nation for which she gave up her past life, and not disappointed in their lack of care for her.

Once Rus goes out to the field, her behavior stands out as well:

All the women would bow and gather, while Rus would bend her knees to gather... All the women would flirt with the field workers, while Rus behaved modestly. All the women would take from among the rows of wheat, while Rus would only take from what was clearly ownerless. (Midrash – Rus Rabba 4:9)

Rus is focused on her goal, behaving as a "rose among thorns," not influenced by the loose behavior of the other gatherers. She also carefully observed the laws of leket (collection for the poor) so as not to accidentally take from the field owners what is not rightfully hers.

Divine guidance leads Rus to a field belonging to Boaz, Naomi's cousin, and the nephew of Naomi's deceased husband Elimelech. Although Boaz was the greatest sage of the generation and didn't normally come to his field, this day he came and noticed Rus's uniquely dignified and modest behavior.

"Who is this girl?" Boaz asks of the field workers. A field worker answers him with subtle criticism:

"She is a Moabite girl returning with Naomi from Moav, and she said: 'I will gather and collect the sheaves of wheat that fall behind the rows,' and she has been here gathering since the morning..." (Rus 2:6-7)

Don't you know her, the worker asks Boaz? Doesn't everyone in Beit Lechem know this story of the gentile girl who is now supporting her mother-in-law and being forced to gather the remnants of the crops as a poor woman?

Boaz may feel some pangs of guilt as he tries to compensate by being extra kind to Rus, but he still doesn't take any real responsibility for his relatives. He begs her to stay in his fields, and his workers are instructed to treat her kindly and give her drink from their own well water. He also addresses her with endearment, "my daughter," and tells her that for the wonderful kindness to her mother-in-law, she will be rewarded from God.

And yet, Boaz doesn't seem to get the message. He doesn't realize it is his mission to take these women into his care, to support them and make sure they are reaccepted into the community. The Torah itself commands a Jew to "love the convert" and to leave crops behind for the poor, so really Boaz wasn't even going beyond the call of duty for his relatives. Nor did he ask how Naomi was doing after ten years in Moav and about the fate of his uncle Elimelech and his cousins Machlon and Kilyon.

Rus doesn't have any better expectations. She, who started out a Moabite princess, now falls on her face and bows down in immense gratitude and appreciation for this small consideration and asks:

"Why have I found favor in your eyes, as I am a gentile?" (Rus 2:10)

She is so humble and modest that she doesn't even realize her "rights" in this situation. She is full of positivity and is able to see the good in others and in life.

## Moabite Converts?

When Machlon and Kilyon, Naomi's sons, married the Moabite princesses, there existed a distinct prohibition to accept a Moabite convert into the Jewish community. How then could Rus have converted and become a part, albeit not wholly accepted by society, of the Jewish people?

In the days of Boaz's leadership, the Sanhedrin (high court) revealed that the prohibition in the Torah regarding Moabite converts applied only to male Moabites and not to females. The reason was that in biblical times, only the males were expected to go out and greet travelers

(the Jewish refugees), and therefore they were faulted for not doing so. However, women who tended to stay at home could not be blamed for not proactively welcoming the passing nation with food and drink.

In Boaz's words of consolation to Rus, he alludes to the fact that she has, in fact, a future with the Jewish nation.

"G-d should pay your reward... from Whom you have come to take shelter under His wings..." (Rus 2:12)

And later, when she implies that she is a stranger and not even worthy of being one of Boaz's servants, he reassures her:

"G-d forbid, you are not one of the servants (ama'hot) but rather like one of the matriarchs (ima'hot)." (Midrash – Rus Rabba 5:5)

## Yibum – The Levirate Marriage

The mitzvah of yibum applies when a married man dies and leaves no children. The brother of the dead man (or the next closest relative, if there is no brother), has a special mitzvah to marry the widow. If they subsequently have children, the first son is considered to "fill the void" of the dead brother – inheriting his estate and his portion of land in the Land of Israel. He thus "redeems" the name and memory of the dead man, who otherwise would have no lasting remnant in this world.

Of course, there are ways to get out of this obligation and responsibility, if either the widow or relative are not so inclined, but it is considered a great kindness to the dead to go through with the marriage and the resulting redemption of the land. If the brother refuses to marry his sister-in-law, he then goes through an act of severing the bond, in which he is shamed for not keeping his brother's memory alive.

In this story, Rus is a widow of a Jewish man who has died and left no children. His brother and father have also died, so that the family, although they may own some land currently, will have no continuity and will lose the land when Naomi dies, unless a close relative marries Rus and fulfills the obligation of yibum.

Boaz seems to be the perfect choice for the performance of this mitzvah. He is a cousin, part of Elimelech's family. And yet he doesn't even seem to realize that he has a decision to make regarding Rus.

## Naomi's Plan of Redemption

Rus has been frequenting Boaz's fields for two months now, bringing home to Naomi the stray pieces of wheat, happy with her lot, not expecting any more. But Naomi, knowing the Torah laws, and concerned for the future of her widowed daughter-in-law, is waiting for something else – a sign, some news of Boaz's interest in Rus and her family. Naomi sees the greatness and the potential in Rus, and knows that she is destined to become an integral part of the Jewish nation in some way. After waiting, praying and hoping, Naomi decides to help matters along with a more proactive plan:

# THE AFTERMATH

Naomi said to her: "My daughter, I would like you to have a better future. Now, our relative, Boaz... is piling the wheat in the granary tonight. Wash and anoint yourself, dress up and go down to the granary. Don't show yourself until he is finished eating and drinking. And when he lies down, see where he goes to sleep and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." Rus replied: "Anything you tell me to do, I will do." (Rus 3:1-5)

Naomi suggests a rather audacious, even dangerous plan. It's the only choice, now that the harvesting season is over, and Rus will no longer be going out to the field. Though it is necessary, Naomi suggests it with fear and trepidation. What a risk to Rus's reputation as a modest Jewish girl! If anyone should see her, or if Boaz is repelled by her behavior, her chances of ever marrying would be greatly limited. However, Naomi knows Boaz's greatness and his descent from the royal family of Yehudah, and she secretly hopes he would fulfill his responsibility and agree to marry Rus. The situation only demands a little bit of effort.

Rus must have been shocked by this idea. She must have had countless questions and doubts, tormented by thoughts of discovery or rejection. And yet she answers simply, with faith in Naomi's Torah perspective: "Whatever you say, I will do."

## Rus Weds Boaz

Rus went down to the granary, with Naomi's promise that her merit will accompany her (Yalkut Shimoni 605). She wisely took clothes with her and changed into them only after her arrival (Midrash Lekach Tov). Although she complied with her mother-in-law's every word, she kept her wits about her and strategized the best way to go unnoticed.

Boaz wakes at midnight to discover a woman lying at his feet. His initial horror gives way to rationality as he asks for her identity. She answers: "I am Rus, your maidservant. Spread your wings over your maidservant, since you are a redeemer" (Rus 3:9). He immediately pulls himself together: "Blessed are you to God, my daughter."

Surprisingly, only now does Boaz realize that he should have initiated this union, and that his prior passivity had caused Rus torment and shame. He praises her for her willingness to confront him and to marry him only for the sake of the mitzvah of yibum and redemption of the land. He assures her: "You have done more kindness now, in not going after the young men, than your first kindness (to come with your mother-in-law to Israel)." Boaz then promised to make sure she would be taken care of.

Boaz asks Rus to stay through the night out of concern for her safety, even though he was risking his reputation.

Boaz walked Rus to the town at dawn, gave her a gift of grain and oats to bring to Naomi, and promised to be in touch as soon as he figured out if he is the closest relative with whom she can perform the mitzvah of yibum.

After a short process in court, where a closer relative absolves himself of the obligation to marry Rus Boaz publicly declares that he intends

to marry Rus and redeem their land as well.

Rus's voice is not heard in this last chapter of marriage and acceptance. Through her marriage to the great leader Boaz, she achieves credibility by virtue of the publicizing of the Jewish law that Moabite women can convert to Judaism, but not Moabite men.

The elders of the nation and Judges in the court respond with a special blessing:

"G-d should allow this woman who is entering your home to be like Rachel and Leah, who both built the house of Israel... And your home should be like the home of Peretz, whom Tamar bore to Yehuda, from the seed which God will give you with this girl." (Rus 4:11-12)

The ultimate praise for Rus is to be like Rachel and Leah, the matriarchs who built the nation of Israel through the birth and raising of the Twelve Tribes. Rus was to build the monarchy of Israel by marrying into the royal line, a descendant of Peretz, the son of Yehuda.

## Aftermath

Boaz married Rus and she became his wife... and G-d granted her a pregnancy and she bore a son" (Rus, 4:5-16). The same night in which Rus conceived, Boaz died. (Yalkut Shimoni 608)

Boaz, an 83-year-old man, fulfilled his purpose in this world by conceiving a child with Rus, and dies. She, on the other hand, becomes a widow again, this time of the leader of the generation, and pregnant.

Her suffering is not over, but she merits to have a child, raise him with Naomi, to see a future hope for her family and the continuity for Naomi's son's name. Rus, full of kindness and generosity, even seems to be marrying Boaz for the sake of others. Rus doesn't voice any opinions or comments until the end of the book recording her life:

The neighbors all named him, saying "Naomi has borne a son," and they called him "Oved"; he is the father of Yishai, the father of David. (Rus 4:17)

Rus and Naomi are now full-fledged members of the community, and the other women share in their newfound happiness. Even here, it is obvious that Rus has given the best years of her life to take care of Naomi, giving her a grandchild and seeing the family line continue.

But Rus's reward is still forthcoming. The text indicates the direct lineage of Dovid Hamelech: Rus's son Oved is the father of Yishai, the father of David. Rus deserves to become part of the Jewish royal family which will eventually produce the Messiah, and be an eternal light for the Jewish people and the world.

Rus herself lived a long, fruitful life, and even merited to see Shlomo Hamelech, her great-great grandchild ascend the throne:

And he put a throne next to his for the mother of the king (Kings I 2:19). Rabbi Eliezer said: "for the mother of royalty" – this is Rus. (Talmud – Bava Batra 91a)

## Rus and Monarchy

Since Moav is considered such a self-centered nation with bad character traits, how could it

be that King David and the royal line descended from this nation?

On the verse in Genesis 12:13, "And the nations of the world will be blessed through you," the Talmud interprets the word "blessed" to mean "grafted," which shares the same root:

God said to Avraham, "Two good graftings I have to graft in you: Rus the Moabite and Naama the Amonite (King Solomon's wife, and mother of the next king, Rechavam)." (Yevamot 63a)

These "graftings" from Amon and Moav are considered a key component in the fulfillment of Jewish destiny. Moav and Amon come from Avraham's nephew Lot – born from the incestuous union of Lot and his two daughters after the destruction of Sodom.

The main character trait of Lot was brazenness. We see how his daughters inherited this audacity for behaving in an inappropriate and unnatural manner for a cause they considered important.

However, boldness is a trait that is possible to be used for the right causes, "for the sake of Heaven." After going through a process of purification and refinement through the generations, finally being distilled in Rus's personality, the trait of "holy brazenness" is grafted into the foundations of a Jewish monarchy, through King David. As it is said (2-Chronicles 17:6), "And his heart [King David] was proud (arrogant) in the ways of God." It is necessary for a Jewish king to be forceful and bold when it comes to doing the will of God and ruling over the populace.

The concept of monarchy did not exist in Israel, and it was necessary to take it from Amon and Moav, since the "shell" of Moav is brazenness, as it says: "The pride of Moav is very arrogant" (Isaiah 16:6). King David's soul was trapped in the shell of Moav. Through Rus, and then to David, the concept of boldness from the shells and elevating it to holiness (i.e. being brazen for the sake of Heaven) was brought to the Jewish people. (Shem Mishmuel – Shavuot 5760)

## Rus and Shavuot

The book of Rus is read on Shavuot, the holiday celebrating the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. We, who were all present as a nation at Mount Sinai, who experienced the revelation of God and became Jews by nature of the overwhelming force of that revelation, have much to learn from Rus, who converted on her own and whose whole life was dedicated to doing good for others.

This megillah has no laws of purity or impurity, no transgressions and no mitzvot. It is just to teach how much reward comes to those who act with loving-kindness. (Midrash – Rus Rabba 2:14)

Why do we read the book of Rus on Shavuot? This Book is full of chesed (kindness) and the Torah is all chesed, as it says, "The Torah of chesed is on her lips," and [the Torah was] given on Shavuot. (Midrash Lekach Tov)

The holiday of Shavuot is also the birthday of Dovid Hamelech, as well as the day of his death. It is fitting to commemorate on this day his roots in a righteous ancestor who merited to be the Mother of Royalty.

בית מדרש אור חיים  
מרכז חינוכי  
תשע"ז



Shavuos Schedule  
תשע"ז

## סדר ליל שבועות

### All Night Learning B'Chavrusa

There will also be a Chabura learning a Shavuos-related sugya with a short shiur at 2:00-2:30am.  
(Mareh mekomos will be distributed.)

**New for this year!**  
**All Night Learning 2<sup>nd</sup> Night of Shavuos!**

שחרית ותיקין

Wishing the Khilla a  
גוט יום טוב!

**Rabbi Nachum Scheiner**  
will gladly set up chavrusas.

Please contact him at  
845-372-6618

or [Ohrchaimmonsey@gmail.com](mailto:Ohrchaimmonsey@gmail.com)

Refreshments ALL NIGHT!



### Shavuos Night Schedule

#### Youth Schedule

11:40PM- 12:00AM Avos U'bonim

12:00AM- 12:20AM Pirkei Avos

with *Rabbi Malin*

12:25AM-12:45 Story

with *Rabbi Lankry*

12:45AM-1:00AM Tehillim

with *Yossi Fried*

FOLLOWED BY ICES AND REFRESHMENTS

## JOKE OF THE WEEK



### TEN YEARS BAD LUCK

A funeral service is being held in a synagogue for a woman who has just passed away. At the end of the service the pallbearers are carrying the casket out, when they accidentally bump into a wall, jarring the casket.

They hear a faint moan. They open the casket and find that the woman is actually alive.

She lives for ten more years and then dies. A ceremony is again held at the same synagogue and at the end of the ceremony the pallbearers are again carrying the casket.

As they are walking out, the husband cries, "Watch out for the wall!"

the men asked the other, "Fred, how was the memory clinic you went to last month?"

"Outstanding," Fred replied. "They taught us all the latest psychological techniques - visualization, association - it made a huge difference for me."

"That's great! What was the name of the clinic?"

Fred went blank. He thought and thought, but couldn't remember. Then a smile broke across his face and he asked, "What do you call that red flower with the long stem and thorns?"

"You mean a rose?"

"Yes, that's it!" He turned to his wife. ". . . Rose, what was the name of that clinic?"

### A PASSENGER FROM CHELM

A Chelmer gets on a plane and goes up to first-class. The flight attendant tells him that he will have to move back; his ticket is not for first class. The Chelmer says, "I just left Chelm, and I'm going to California." The main flight attendant is brought in and explains that he will have to move. The Chelmer says, "I just left Chelm, and I'm going to California and I'm not moving anywhere"

The attendants tell the pilot. He comes in and looks the situation over. He leans over and whispers something to the Chelmer and he gets up immediately and moves out of first class. The attendants are flabbergasted, "What did you say to him?" "I just told him that this section of the plane doesn't go to California."

### CLINIC'S NAME

Two elderly couples were enjoying friendly conversation when one of

### STUDENT TALKING TO THE WISE MAN

"Sir, What is the secret of your success?"

"Two words"

"And, Sir, what are they?"

"Right decisions."

"And how do you make right decisions?"

"One word."

"And, What is that?"

"Experience."

"And how do you get Experience?"

"Two words"

"And, Sir, what are they?"

"Wrong decisions."

# Milchigs

## SOME REASONS FOR THE CUSTOM TO EAT MILCHIGS ON THE YOM TOV OF SHAVUOS

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



On the yom tov of Shavuos there is a well-known custom to eat milchigs. Whether you fulfill this custom with a small milchig kiddush or a five-course dairy meal, it is universally accepted to partake in some dairy on this yom tov.

There are many reasons given for this minhag and I would like to share some of the reasons that the poskim mention:

**1**)The Rama (495:3) suggests that just as we have two cooked foods on the seder plate to commemorate the korban pesach and korban chagigah, similarly on Shavuos we commemorate the sh'tei halechem, the 2 breads that were offered in the beis hamikdash. This is accomplished by having a dairy meal followed by meat, which requires one to remove the bread that was used with dairy and bring another loaf of bread for the meat meal. Consequently, one will need to have 2 different breads.

**2**)Since the torah is compared to the sweet taste of milk and honey (as the pasuk says, d'vash v'chalav tachas l'shoneich), we, therefore, partake in milk and sweet foods to instill in us this concept that the torah is sweet. (Mishna Berura 495:12)

**3**)The pasuk in the reading of Shavuos says, וּבְיוֹם הַבְּכוּרִים בְּהַקְרִיב, כִּם מִנַּחֵה חֲדָשָׁה לֵה' בַּשְּׁבַעַתִּיבָם, the first letter of the last 3 words reads חלב. (Sidur Yaavetz)

**4**)Another reason is given by the Ba'eir Heitev. The Midrash tells us that the angels were not willing to let go of the torah; they wanted it up in heaven. The angels were not deemed worthy of having the torah since they ate meat and milk in Avraham Avinu's house. Hence, the custom to eat milchigs and then fleishigs to demonstrate why we indeed merited receiving the torah.

**5**)The numerical value of the word cholov (חלב) is 40; corresponding to the 40 days that Moshe was in heaven to receive the torah. (Neziras Shimshon) This also has a deeper meaning. In contrast to the physical world that was created in 6 days, the Torah and the spiritual world took 40 days to create. (Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky in the name of the Alter of Slobodka)

**6**)The Mishna Berura (495:12) quotes another reason. Before the yidden received the torah they were permitted to partake of meat that did not have a proper shechita. Once they received the torah they had to implement all of the laws of sh'chita (i.e., using a kosher knife etc.), and keep all of the other rules and regulations of kashrus properly (e.g. salting, removing fats etc.) before being

able to eat fleishigs. In addition, all of their utensils were now treif and unfit for use. In the interim they had to subsist with eating dairy and we commemorate this by eating milchigs.

**7**)The Chidushei HaRim (the first Gerrer Rebbe) mentions yet another reason. It is well known that there are 365 negative commands in the Torah which correspond to the 365 days of the year. The mitzva of refraining from meat and milk together is corresponding to the day of Shavuos. Hence, on this very day, we eat milk and then meat, in accordance with the rules and regulations of this mitzvah.

**8**)The milchig meal is a siyum, celebrating the completion of the 7-week mitzvah of sefiras ha'omer. We do not have the conventional meat meal in order to emphasize that it is not just another yom tov meal. (Midrash Pinchas)

**9**)Moshe Rabeinu was born on 7 of Adar and was placed in the Nile River 3 months later, on 6 Sivan – the very day that was to become the day of Kabalas Hatorah. On that day he was taken out by Basya and taken to his mother to be nursed. We, therefore, partake of milchigs to commemorate the miracle of Moshe Rabeinu's survival.



# SHAVUOT AND THE GRATEFUL DEAD

How I first received the Torah, bedecked in torn jeans and a tattoo.

by **Batsheva Hirschman Frankel**

Here's the thing about Shavuot — we are celebrating the gift of the giving of the Torah to us, the Jewish people, on Mount Sinai. And since every single one of us, waiting at the bottom of the mountain with eager anticipation of this great gift, is unique, we all receive the Torah in the way we can best understand it. That's what I was explaining to my 7th grade Jewish studies class before inviting them to my third annual Shavuot dinner and late night learning session.

For four years, I was a Jewish studies teacher at a Los Angeles community day school (students are primarily from Reform and Conservative elementary feeder schools), where I started the tradition of inviting students over for a huge Shavuot feast that lasts until 11:45 p.m. The highlights of the evening include my various homemade cheesecakes (a traditional food on Shavuot) and the special guests I bring in to learn with us.

I accidentally started this tradition my first year at this school, when I was explaining to the class about the custom to stay up all night learning Torah on Shavuot as a *tikkun* (fixing) for the Jews who overslept the morning the Torah was given, instead of staying up all night with anticipation. I guess I made the all-night learning sound pretty cool, because when I jokingly asked if anyone wanted to join my friends and me, three students asked me if they could.

That first year, I had six current students, two former students from another school and about 18 friends. More friends showed up throughout the evening, and when the parents came to pick up their kids, they got caught up in the learning and stayed, too! Eventually, the kids and parents left and my friends and I went to our shul to learn with our teachers for the rest of the night. It was an unforgettable evening.

San Francisco 1995

As I explained all of this to my current class, a mysterious smile crept across my face, as I remembered the first time I celebrated Shavuot . . .

It was 1995, and although I was exploring making Jewish practice part of my life, I hadn't yet made a full commitment to Torah observance. At that time, I was working in the film industry in Los Angeles, never even thinking of becoming a teacher. And I could barely boil water let alone make cheesecake!

I was in San Francisco to see my favorite band, the Grateful Dead. And it was Shavuot.

Over that previous year, I had made some really great friends who were "Deadheads" too, but they were also Torah observant. They obviously weren't planning on being at the concerts, but they were heading to San Francisco that same weekend for Shavuot to learn with one of their favorite rabbis. They wanted me to come with them, but I was determined to see

The Dead. So they told me to stop by after the concert, didn't matter how late, they'd be up all night learning anyway, maybe I could do some learning with them.

After an awesome concert, I asked the friend I'd gone with if we could stop by the rabbi's to do some learning. Even though it was 2:30 in the morning, she agreed (after I told her that there might be some nice Jewish guys there!).

I was expecting that it would just be a few of my friends sitting around casually with the rabbi, but when we showed up in our jeans, t-shirts and with "dancing bears" temporarily tattooed on our cheeks, we were very embarrassed. The house was overflowing with people, most of whom I didn't know, dressed beautifully and immersed in the holy spirit of Yom Tov.

In a mortified state, we looked around and quickly headed for the sanctuary of the kitchen. Our sigh of relief turned to dismay when we noticed we were not alone in the kitchen. A young guy with a beard, black hat, Oy! The only "holy" thing about me was my jeans!

Just as we were about to leave not only the kitchen, but the whole experience, the man finished what he was doing and said, "Nu? What was the set list? Was it a Jerry or Bobby opener?"

My friend and I smiled the biggest smiles! We knew that he wasn't just asking what songs were played in the concert and

if Jerry Garcia or Bob Weir sang the first song. We understood in our hearts that he was telling us, "It is great that you have come to learn some Torah and that you shouldn't worry about how you're dressed." We felt better. After all, this holy-roller was a "Deadhead" too!

So we went into a smaller room with some of my women friends who had come up from L.A. and began to learn the most beautiful Torah. We heard what we needed to hear. We understood it the way we could and should, right at that moment.

Every year on Shavuot, I am at a different place with myself and in my relationship to God, and each "receiving" of the Torah seems to magically fit the place that I am at.

My annual Shavuot dinner with my students are always very special. I have a lot of current students, former students and friends over with cheesecake, lasagna and laughter. We go around the table and everyone speaks about why the Torah is important to them. I watch with a smile as my friends' expressions revealed their awe at my students' lovely, deep answers. And I realize that for every Jew, "receiving" Torah is the greatest gift of all.





# THERE IS NO HEBREW WORD FOR HISTORY

BY MALCOLM HOENLEIN

The question we must ask is why do we commemorate an event of 50 years ago, why is it important in a time and age when people want to forget? People have no patience for history. Young people don't want to know. They want everything done in 140 letters. They have no interest and no patience for history.

It is unique to Judaism that history is not about the past. It is about the future. We look back in order to look forward. All of our chagim, holidays, are not just meant to be ritual observances, they are meant to be experiential. We learn what our avos and imahos, our patriarchs and matriarchs, went through.

We understand things from them.

We learn lessons from them.

Churchill once said the further back you look the further ahead you will see. Our chazal, our Sages, said it a thousand years earlier. They taught us that we have to look back to learn the lessons, not to dwell on the tsaros, miseries, of the past but to prevent future generations from having to go through those tsaros.

So for us history is not what it is for the world.

It is zechira, remembrance. There is no Hebrew word for history. Zechira is a dynamic process, that we have to understand what led to things and what came out of them, not just what occurred at that moment.

We look back at fifty years ago to understand - why it happened - what are the lessons we can learn from it?

And it is never more important than now, when we see that UNESCO, in the United Nations, has voted overwhelmingly to declare that all the places that we hold sacred are only to be known by their Moslem names.

First they voted to hyphenate them:

The kotel is also Al Buraq's wall, named for Mohammed's horse, that supposedly went up after him - but Mohammed never visited Israel in his lifetime.

Kever Rochel, Rachel's Tomb, is now named for his chauffeur, his driver. The same for Mearat Hamachpela, the Cave of the Patriarchs, the same for the Temple Mount, Har Habayit, known as Haram al Sharif

You would think that with all the miseries the world is suffering, all the ones the Arab nations have - there are 12 or 13 of them at war right now - they all have external problems, internal problems, so why do they focus on us, why do they waste all this energy just to denigrate us?

They voted this year to drop all the names, to

deny 3000 years of Jewish history, forget all the scientific facts, all the historic facts.

Because they understand better than we do that if you take away our past, you take away our future. That if we don't understand where we came from, who we are, starting with Malchizedek and Abraham, and then looking at when Abraham came [to Jerusalem] for the binding of Isaac. He brought Eliezer and Ishmael with him, and he said to them, looking at the Temple Mount from afar:

"Look, what do you see?" And they said: "We see a wilderness."

And he said to his son Isaac: "What do you see?" and he said he sees a "holy place."

So Abraham said to Eliezer and Ishmael: "You stay here with the donkey because you see only what a donkey sees."

The question to us, to all of us and especially to our young people, is:

Do you see what the donkey sees or do you see the reality, the miracles that G-d blessed us with? If you look at every day, every shovel in the ground in the City of David, the Western Wall tunnels, every shovel in the ground for the Light Railroad, every shovel in the ground uncovers things of our past.

Each one brings the Tanach, the Bible, to life, validates everything in the Tanach, not one thing contradicts it, all of these discoveries, tens of thousands of things each year bring our past to life.

G-d is sending a clear message: They want to deny it? I will reaffirm it. I will show it to you. How? In a rock with a Temple menorah engraved in it, in a bell from a kohen's gown, I will show you all these signs.

You don't have bitachon, confidence, you don't have enough faith? You don't believe? Here it is in the bedrock of mountains!

Because G-d wants us to have the strength to stand up and tell the world: Never again.

Never again.

Nobody will ever take it away. It's ours forever.

Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook zt"l (the late iconic Zionist rabbinic leader, head of Merkaz Harav Yeshiva) put on his Sabbath clothing and went out after the signing of the San Remo Agreement acknowledging the rights of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, and the clowns and traitors in the street started harassing him and asking, why are you wearing Sabbath clothes, bigdei shabbos?

He said to them what our Sages said:

Kol hamisabel al yerushalayim zoche veroe et simchata - he who mourns for Jerusalem's [destruction] merits seeing its rejoicing

And he continued, saying to them that the obvious question is, why does it say "in its rejoicing"

Why doesn't it say that he who mourns its destruction merits seeing its reconstruction? its buildings?

And he explained to them that it is because every am haaretz, ignoramus, can see a building, but only those who were misabel, those who cared enough to mourn, will see the true rejoicing of Jerusalem.

I once asked a crowd of 10,000 non-Jews, which of them can name the biblical spies who came back with a negative report [about the Holy Land]. And 10000 people sat quiet

Then I asked them who can name the two who came back with a positive report - and ten thousand people got up from their chairs and yelled Caleb and Joshua over and over again!

And then I said to them: That's the lesson of history. Those who stand with Israel are remembered forever. Those who speak against Israel are written out of history and will not be remembered.

But the one precondition G-d said for every miracle that occurred to the Jewish people, and there was only one thing that was a precondition, is unity, achdut.

From when we stood at Mount Sinai as "one people with one heart," in the words of our Sages, to the time when Queen Esther told Mordecai to "gather all the Jews together" to fast for her success, lech knos et kol hayehudim.

It is in every miracle, in the rescue of Ethiopian jews, of Russian jews, of Syrian Jews - achdut is the one thing G-d demands of us and all of us have to work to see that this is the case.

We must stop destroying the Temple, the Beit Hamikdash! How soon it would have been built had we behaved differently!

Achdut is the one precondition and this is something we can do, each of us can contribute to it.

If we look back and learn the lessons of the past, then our children and grandchildren and their grandchildren will thank us for keeping their heritage, their morasha, safe for them -

Their heritage, morasha, the heritage of Israel, not just their inheritance, yerusha -

They will thank us for keeping it safe for them and for all generations to come.



**מתן תורה**

בעלי המוסר מרחיבים כדרכם, שבכדי להשיג השגות גדולות בעבודת ה' יתברך, צריך לקבל הכלים להשיגם והוה על ידי ההכנה להשגתם, שהרי שפחה ראתה בהתגלות ה' יתברך בקריעת ים סוף מה שגדול הנביאים כיחזקאל בן בוזי לא ראה ועדיין נשארה שפחה, שחסר היה הכלים להשיג גדול השגת האור וגלוי כבודו, ולכן בהתגלות ה' יתברך במתן תורה שצריך הכנה של ימי הספירה, לקנות קנין אחר קנין, ולייצר כיסופין ותשוקה עזה בספירה שמראים שמתקוקים למעמד הגדול הזה כמו שמרחיב בזה האור החיים הקדוש, שכן ידוע מהרמח"ל בדרך ה' שבזמן החגים יש גילויים גדולים עד למאוד שמתגלה, בבחינת אותו ההארה מאותו הזמן ממש, ויש לנקוט מה שאפשר להחזיק לנו שימשיך לנו במשך השנה בעבודתינו.

כי רבינו הגר' אהרן קוטלר זצוק"ל זיע"א במשנת ר' אהרן (ח"א עמ' לד') דהרי ידוע שיש מצוה ליזכור מעמד הר סיני ולא לישכוח, וא"כ יש להבין מ"ש זכירה זו שלא עושים כל מיני מעשים לזכור, כעין מה שיש ביציאת מצרים אתמהה? וכתב שם במתיקות לשונו דברים נפלאים, שיש חילוק, שביציאת מצרים נעשה ניסים ומופתים שלא נעשים שוב, ובכדי ליזכור אותם יש לעשות מעשים בכדי לזכורם, אבל מעמד הר סיני עדיין קיים אצלנו בכל פעם שלומדים תורה ממש, ולכן אין ציווי לעשות מעשה זכירה בעצם, וכך כתב במגילת אסתר בהשגת הרמב"ם בדברי רמב"ן בענין זכירת מעמד הר סיני, שכתב שמלמד לבנו בעצם אמונה כשמלמדו על מעמד הר סיני, והביאור בזה כפשוטו שבעצם על ידי לימודו בזה גופא משתייך למעמד הר סיני, ובכך נשתרש האמונה בבנו, והוה יסוד גדול ממש, שעל ידי שאדם עוסק בתורה אזי הוא בעצם כעומד בהר ומקבל אז באותו העת תורה מפיו של קובה ממש.

שניזכה לרוממות הזמן  
דוד יהודה פייירסטון



Shevuos- Where Do We Look for the Majesty?

The Stuchiner Rebbe Z"tzl was holding a Tisch- seated next to him was one of the Yakiri Yerushalayim of years past, Harav Yosef Lipshitz Z'Tzl. The Rebbe waxed poetic about one of his Zeide's, R' Moshe from Rozodov Z"tzl a remarkable Tzaddik from the previous generation.

Suddenly an elderly Jew voiced his wonderment.. "Yes, I remember him clearly- I was but 9 years old when the Rebbe visited our town on his way to the large city of Kulitz. We went out in Shabbos finery to greet him.. everyone- man, woman and child eagerly awaited his arrival.. I and all the young boys stood at the entrance to the town holding flaming torches and then the moment arrived- we looked up, raised our eyes...in the distance we saw clouds of dust rising in the air..

In a matter of minutes- the Rebbe arrived with his entourage, a regal carriage pulled by 4 beautiful horses. We had never seen horses like that.. Egyptian stallions.. befitting the majesty of the Rebbe himself..

"But the Rebbe's countenance.. how did he look? his Hadras Ponim..? The Stuchiner asked.. They say he resembled an angel on earth.."

"Yes, yes" said the man.." it's true, but those horses.. I will never forget them.. Where does one see such horses.?"

After another minute of back and forth.. the older man was forced to admit.. he didn't really remember what the Rebbe looked like.. but those horses, those horses... he would never forget..!

So too by Matan Torah.. When we gathered at the foot of Har Sinai.. the mountain was ablaze.. there was tremendous lightning and thunder such as the world had never seen or heard..! The mountain shook and Hashem spoke.."I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of Egypt.."

But the Zohar tells us- many saw the fire and heard the thunder and with it the long, drawn out Shofar blast..we even hear it to this day, but, fewer of us actually heard the words- "I am the L-rd your G-d.."

Human nature is that the physical trumps the spiritual.. And as such we human beings find it difficult to place overarching values on Ruchnius. But we must..

We cannot look at a Yomtov meal, a Shabbos

seudah and see only the fish, the delicious meats.. for if we do , we have then lost the forest for the tree's.

We cannot crave and desire the cheesecake or the lasagna as being what Shevuos is all about.. for we have then traded in Ruchnius for Gashmius.. and lost sight of what is truly lasting and important.

But there is a higher level- let's take a glimpse at the inner workings of our world and look at the physical in a more holistic fashion.

If we truly believe what we say in our prayers everyday- that Hashem fills this entire world with his greatness (Molei Kol HaAretz K'vodo).. then even the physical can become and even overtake the spiritual.

To this end, the Meor Enayim in Parshas Emor explains – Hashem, with great foresight places Himself in physical objects and activities, so that we may relate to Him on a deeper level..for he understands fully that we are human beings.

For example food and the act of eating can be spiritual if looked at in the right way.. taste represents Ruchnius.. for after we eat.. what is left of the food? Nothing of importance because we have mined the spiritual from it.. Make no mistake, the world of spirituality encompasses the enjoyment of the food we eat, the pleasures of this world , a beautiful Yomtov meal and the closeness that we enjoy with our families.

Everything in our physical world is a manifestation of Hashem – and everything, the Meor Enayim continues.. is Torah..but must be viewed as a way to connect with G-dliness not just a momentary fulfillment of our appetites .

Of course, The Torah we learn, our davening, the Zemirots at the Shabbos table- these are the pure Ruchnius elements in our world, but by no means do they have a monopoly on holiness.

This Shevuos we must aspire to look more deeply into the patterns of our lives and learn to value the spiritual.. but strive to elevate the physical and not run from it. Our Seforim tell us that this is the true purpose of the Yomtov- coming closer to our Creator in everything we do. And to realize that goal we must fully appreciate everything in G-ds world. Our religion is not one of asceticism and denial of pleasure. We must live with, love and enjoy all that Hashem has given us.

Good Shabbos and Good Yomtov!

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### *Participants*

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 Michael Bitton  
 Ari Davis  
 Mendy Dym  
 Mordy Eisenburg  
 Moshe Felsenburg  
 Chaim Fishoff  
 Shua Frank

Yitzchak Gawartin  
 Yehuda Grodko  
 Yehoshua Heber  
 Raphael Hess  
 Yehoshua Horowitz  
 Eliyahu Kaufman  
 Yoel Kivelevitz  
 Shragy Kohn

Yosef Landau  
 Moshe Langsam  
 Yoel Lichtstein  
 Dovid Liff  
 Elya Lopian  
 Yehuda Nektalov  
 Yossi Neuman  
 Yitzie Pariser

Menacham M Polter  
 Asher Sarfati  
 Asher Senderovic  
 Menachem Shapiro  
 Fred Shkeridge  
 Akiva Topper  
 Avi Weinberg  
 Shlomo Yablonsky

## ~Night Kollel~

8:15-9:45pm

**Currently Learning Hilchos Milah**

### *Participants*

Naftali Abikhzer  
 Avrohom Anteby  
 Tzvi Blech  
 Avromi Bochner  
 Ezra Bogopulsky  
 Lipa Brach  
 Mendel Brody  
 Shlomo Citronenbaum  
 Ari Davidson  
 Chaim Dovid Eichler  
 Shaya Eidelman  
 Yehoshua Farkas  
 Michael Fischer  
 Chaim Fishoff  
 Mordechai Fleischman  
 Shua Frank  
 Eli Garber

Tzvi Goldberg  
 Hillel Goldscheder  
 Motti Gross  
 Yonti Heitner  
 Leiby Hirsch  
 Barry Indig  
 Shlomo Yosef Jundef  
 Eliyahu Kaufman  
 Yaakov Kirschenbaum  
 Shmuly Klein  
 Aron B. Kohn  
 Yiddy Kohn  
 Leiby Kornfeld  
 Tzali Kulefsky  
 Yaakov Levin  
 Yoel Levin

Elya Lopian  
 Yanky Moddel  
 Yosef Moseson  
 Eli Neiman  
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 Yoel Pachman  
 Avrumi Rand  
 Avrumi Rand  
 Yaakov Resnick  
 Samuel Rosenberg  
 Meilech Rosenberger  
 Tzvi Rosenthal  
 Shuey Rothman  
 Yaakov Rothschild  
 Yehuda Rothschild  
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Yshay Safra  
 Yehuda Safran  
 Shaya Schapira  
 Chaim Y Scheiner  
 Moshe Schwebel  
 Yisrael Schwebel  
 Isaac Schwed  
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# THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS BURNED ON

By Rabbi M. Zelunka

We pulled up to the shul at exactly 4:11pm, August 14th, 2003. It's the most important day of my 26 years; I'm getting married. In keeping with Jewish tradition, I've been fasting all day. So when the wedding consultant came out of the shul and told me that we just lost ALL power, I was feeling a little nauseous and faint.

"Not to worry," I was told. "Everything was going to be fine," they said. "We're working on it."

Ok, fine. Why not just start getting dressed. How bad could a little power outage be? The whole block couldn't be left without power for hours. In the worst case, we could always move the party to a hall down the street.

Fifteen minutes turned into 30. Before I knew it, an hour had passed without a word. It was 15 minutes before people should start arriving and I was starting to get nervous. Just then, I got the news. It gave a new definition to the phrase "worst-case scenario."

There is no power, period. Not this block, not in all of Toronto, not in the whole northeast! The only way for this show to proceed as planned is to fly everyone to Seattle.

My mind started racing. I was frantically reviewing all the preparations made by Rachel, my bride, that were for naught. No generators, no lights, no ovens, microphones or speakers. We wouldn't have any singing or dancing. We wouldn't be able to serve any food. Heck, we wouldn't even be able to see our guests!!

Little did I know that all this would become the essential ingredients for the BEST night of our lives. And so the magic began. The candles were lit. And lit and lit. Little flickering lights everywhere you looked. The room was glowing and the atmosphere was beginning to take shape.

Next, we had to feed our guests. My mother joked with the caterer, "Do you have any barbecues?" Just like at camp, the chefs roll out about a dozen coal barbecues and started cooking. The smell of chicken and veggies begin to waft through the ceremony.

The chuppah was held outside so the rabbis had to amplify their voices, but it mainly stayed as planned. The Yichud room where I spent my first private moments with my wife, was very romantic; it too was illuminated with candlelight. Then the real party started. With great apprehension, my wife and I dashed into the large dining hall. It was pandemonium.

A few people were brandishing flashlights, waving them wildly and giving the room a disco vibe. Nobody could really see with whom or where they were dancing, but they were doing it enthusiastically nevertheless. It was incredible. There was no electricity that night, but it was electric.

Someone later remarked, "If you closed your eyes, it was like you were back in Jerusalem!" Behind the scenes, hundreds of selfless acts were taking place. The staff was working in the sweltering heat, barely able to see what they were doing. Members of the synagogue began dropping off flashlights and candles, asking if they could be of help. Other people were directing traffic and helping others in and out of the shul.

But the single deed that had the greatest effect on all of us was yet to come. The lead singer of the band placed a call to some of his friends. "Listen, we need serious backup," he said. "This bride and groom need your help!" And so they came. In droves. Some in T-shirts and sweatpants some rolled right out of bed. Just to help fellow Jews in need. They entered the hall in unison, singing to the rafters. People left their tables to join them. The night turned into an inspiring sing-along for young and old alike. What took place didn't hit us until the treacherous drive home that night. Once we pieced together what had transpired on our wedding night, the lesson for us became clear.

Life is not about the flowers or how the chairs are covered. It's not about how much money we spend or what we wear. Life is defined by the values that direct our actions. We had music – without music. It was the selfless and loving spirit of our wedding that we will remember forever. The sensitivity of our family and friends and the consideration shown by perfect strangers is overwhelming. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the best night of our lives.

# A MEETING MADE IN HEAVEN

By Debbie Garfinkel Diament

On a Thursday, Shlomo\* had been in and out of the hospital over the last few years. Among the most difficult times for him, was when he could not be home for Shabbat with his family. This time, however, he was told that he would go home that day. He just needed to wait for a portable oxygen tank to be brought to him.

The day dragged on, and yet the promised oxygen unit had not yet arrived. He was eventually informed that the unit would be available late that evening. It would be too late in the day for Shlomo, who tired easily now. They would wait until the morning, Erev Shabbat.

The next day, while Shlomo waited for his release, another family waited for help. A call had gone out to the emergency line. An ailing man of almost 90 had stopped breathing. CPR was applied by first responders. An ambulance team arrived. The old man's heart beat was restored, but he was in critical condition. They rushed the man to the hospital, accompanied by his wife and son, Pinchas.

Meanwhile, Shlomo was getting upset. There were more delays in regard to the arrival of his oxygen. The unit finally arrived at 2:00 pm. There was still time before Shabbat to drive home with his wife. In the end, it was not meant to be. No doctor could be found in time to sign a release for Shlomo. Once again, he would be spending Shabbat away from home.

Shlomo was trying to deal with his disappointment when a new patient was wheeled into his room. A curtain was closed around the bed of the new arrival. He was accompanied by his tearful wife and his son Pinchas.

Shlomo and Pinchas looked at each other in amazement. They had been neighbors for many years. Their families knew each other well. Pinchas told his friend how he had felt that he would need to be with someone he knew to help him and his mother through a very difficult Shabbat. Hashem granted him and his mother this chesed.

Shabbat was fast approaching. The old woman stood next to Shlomo's wife during a very emotional lighting of the Shabbat candles. As the old man lay unresponsive in his hospital bed, Pinchas found some grape juice and made kiddush for all of them. The two friends sang zemirot and shared divrei Torah. The two women sat quietly talking.

Early Shabbat morning, Shlomo and his wife took a short walk through the halls of the hospital. They were not gone long, but when they returned, Pinchas told them that his father had passed away. Once things settled down, the two friends went to the hospital shul. Later on, they also discussed some of the laws involved in aveilut in this case.

Meanwhile, Shlomo's wife wondered where the newly widowed woman was. She found her sitting in a corner, alone. She went over to her and put a comforting hand on the distraught woman's shoulder and sat down next to her. While Pinchas found comfort in his tefillot, his mother was comforted by sharing tears and memories with a very caring woman.

Shlomo no longer questioned why his discharge had been delayed. His meeting up with his friend that erev Shabbat was Yad Hashem at work.



**MILAH – DO IT YOURSELF**

I would like to wrap up the introductory shiur that I gave at the Night Kollel, on the mitzvah of Milah.

If a father knows how to do the milah, should he do it himself or is he allowed to ask someone else? The Rama (C”M 382) quotes the Rosh who states that if someone else grabs the mitzvah and does the milah on one’s child, he is required to pay 10 zehuvim, 10 gold coins, as we find in regards to similar cases, where someone steals an opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah. However, if he gave the honors to a mohel and someone else grabbed it away, he would not be required to pay, since the mitzvah was not going to be performed by the father. The Rosh explains that this is because once the father gave up his rights on the mitzvah, it is no longer “his” mitzvah; it is now a mitzvah that is incumbent on all Jews and no one – not even the mohel – has first rights to the mitzvah. The Shach (C”M 382:4) brings a proof from here that the mitzvah must be done by the father if he can do it himself; if he honors a mohel with the mitzvah, he has not fulfilled the mitzvah.

The Tevuos Shor (Y”D 28) takes issue with the Shach and maintains that one can, indeed, honor someone else with the mitzvah. This is based on the general rule of shlucho shel adam kimoso, an action performed by one’s emissary is equivalent to performing it oneself.

However, the Ketzos (C”M 382:2) counters that the Shach is, indeed, correct and according to the Rosh, and many other Rishonim, the concept of shlichus (an emissary) does not apply. He therefore affirms that a father who can perform the milah himself should definitely do so.

It is also worth mentioning that besides the aforementioned question if the concept of shlichus applies, there is another halachic aspect, which would make it preferable for one to perform the milah himself.

As we know, the rule of thumb is mitzvah bo yoser m’bishlucho, one is supposed to do a mitzvah himself, rather than through an emissary. At first glance, this would seem to be a requirement in regards to this scenario as well and one should do it himself.

However, the Yismach Moshe suggests that in the event that one is paying the emissary, it is equivalent to performing it oneself. This is based on the explanation of Rashi in Kiddushin 41a. Rashi explains that the reason for the preference of doing a mitzvah oneself, is that it is preferable to be physically involved, rather than sitting back and having others do the work. The Yismach Moshe proposes that

in the event one is paying the emissary, and using his hard-earned money, it is the equivalent of performing the mitzvah himself.

**COMMUNITY KOLLEL NEWS:**

In honor of the upcoming yom tov of Shavuos, there is a kuntres available on the topic of chalav akum. This is a compilation of articles that were written on the topics learned in the night kollel of Ohr Chaim, including: cholov yisrael; robotic milking; bishul akum in regards to milk; gevinas akum; and use of whey, butter, and dairy equipment.

I also added a small introduction listing some of the reasons for the custom of eating dairy on Shavuos. So, as you enjoy your dairy meals this yom tov, I hope you will enjoy the “dairy torah-thoughts.” I will be happy to hear any feedback on the written material.

As in previous years, I will once again be setting up chavrusos for Shavuos night, for the full night or part time. We will accommodate you with the best chavrusa for your needs. For those who would like, there will also be a track learning a fascinating Shavuos-related sugya, regarding the rules and regulations of Birchas Hatorah, with stimulating sources to look at, including a short shiur from myself at 2-2:30AM.

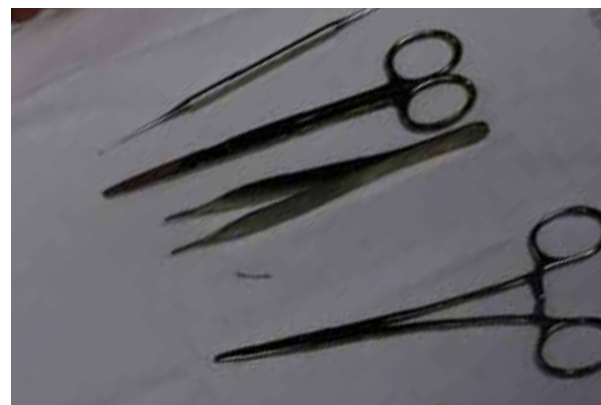
I gave a shiur this past Friday morning, on the topic of Birchas Hatorah and The Kollel Boker, in preparation for the upcoming yom tov, will be hearing words of inspiration from our esteemed Rabbi Lankry, on the topic of learning torah lishmah on Monday morning. Details to follow.

The Night Kollel had the opportunity to learn all about milah, “straight from Moses”, hosting a fascinating and captivating shiur, given by Rabbi Nison Mozes, son of the renowned Mohel, Rabbi Mordechai Mozes. Rabbi Mozes gave a vivid outline of milah, covering the entire gamut of milah, including diagrams and the various utensils used. Everyone gained tremendous clarity in the various parts of the mitzvah of milah, from the beginning to end, including milah, priah, and metzizah b’peh.

As always, the various shiurim are available on the shul’s website 18Forshay.com and can also be received by sending a request to Ohrchaim18@gmail.com.

Wishing you a Chag Sameiach & a wonderful Shabbos,

*Rabbi Nachum Scheiner*



**shiur on hilchos milach given last week at the night kollel by Rabbi Nison Mozes.**

בית מדרש אור חיים  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM



PRESENTS  
**SHADUOS**  
WITH  
**RABBI YY  
JACOBSON**

AT BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM  
18 FORSHAY RD MONSEY TENT

**TUESDAY**

May 30 - First Night of Yom Tov

**12:30PM - 2:00PM**

The Voice That Never Ends:  
Challenging  
Halachik Dilemmas In Israel

**2:15AM - 4:00AM**

The Chazon Ish, Sugihara,  
The International Dateline  
& The Lubavitcher Rebbe

**WEDNESDAY**

May 31 - First Day of Yom Tov

Mincha at 6:15 - 18 Forshay

**6:30PM - 8:00PM**

The Five Love  
Languages Of Judaism

**THURSDAY**

June 1 2Nd Day of Yom Tov

Mincha at 6:00 - 18 Forshay

**6:15PM - 7:30PM**

An Hour In The White  
House With Sebastian Gorka,  
Trump'S Advisor On Jihad

Both Days Of Yom Tov, Rabbi YY Will Give A Sermon During  
The Chabad Minyan. First Day Before Krias Hatorah. Second Day Before Yizkor.

**RABBI YY JACOBSON WILL BE HAVING A FARBRENGEN**  
in Bais Chabad (20 Forshay Rd. Upstairs) on the second day  
of Yom Tov after Mincha. Maariv will follow the Farbrengen

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