






וְכַתַּבְתָּ עַל-הָאֲבָנִים
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12 MIN. BEFORE SHKIA

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RABBI DANIEL COREN



Bikkurim and the Wonders of Hashem

The *Sifri* teaches that Bnei Yisrael merited entering Eretz Yisrael in the *zechus* of the mitzvah of *bikkurim*. The question is obvious: How could they have merited through a mitzvah that could only be performed once they were already in the Land? The *Shem MiShmuel* explains that it was not the performance of the mitzvah itself but the essence behind it — the *middah* of *hakaras hatov*. *Bikkurim* represent the Jew's deep appreciation of all that Hashem gives, and that *middah* is the true foundation for living in Eretz Yisrael.

The *Zohar* (quoted in *Chok L'Yisrael* on *Parshas Shoftim*) presents a cryptic teaching: If one wishes to understand why Dovid HaMelech did not marry Batsheva initially but only after she was first married to Uriah, one must first understand why the Canaanites lived in Eretz Yisrael before Bnei Yisrael. Perhaps the *Zohar* hints that there is a necessary prerequisite for living in Hashem's kingdom — the *middah* of *anavah*. As the *Chovos HaLevavos* writes in *Sha'ar HaKinyah*, true humility means recognizing that everything one has is a gift from Hashem. Only with this posture of humility and gratitude can one fully dwell in Hashem's presence.

The Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 10) writes that the very heart of *teshuvah* is *ahavas Hashem*. Rav Noach Weinberg *z"l* would often say that the litmus test of a successful Elul is: Are you in love with Hashem? The Rambam compares this love to the passionate love of a man for a woman, the model of *Shir HaShirim*. And in *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* (2:2), the Rambam explains that this love is cultivated by contemplating Hashem's creations, seeing the wisdom and wonder in the natural world, and through this, coming to love and fear Him.

Hashgachah brought me recently to the Galápagos Islands. For many, this is just an exotic vacation destination. But for me, it was an extraordinary opportunity to fulfill the Rambam's words. The very name of these islands calls to mind Charles Darwin and his theory of natural selection. But while his conclusions are debated and, in many respects, rejected even by honest scientists today, for us, the Galápagos are not a testimony to randomness but to *yad Hashem*.

The finches with their different beaks, the giant tortoises, the marine iguanas — all of them are not accidents, but part of the vast symphony of creation. They sing out *Mah rabu ma'asecha Hashem, kulam b'chochmah asisa!* And when one encounters such creations, there are special *brachos* to say, reminding us that these wonders are not meant to point us away from Hashem but rather, directly toward Him.

This is the *avodah* of Elul: to cultivate *hakaras hatov*, to live with *anavah*, and to awaken within ourselves passionate *ahavah* and *yirah*. By opening our eyes to Hashem's world, whether in the beis medrash or even on a distant island, we train ourselves to see His presence everywhere.

May we merit to enter the Yamim Nora'im with *simchah*, awe, and trepidation — and with hearts full of love fo

RABBI YISSACHAR FRAND



Candid Remarks Reveal True Sentiments

At the end of the *parsha*, Moshe summoned the Jewish people. He told them that they had witnessed all the miracles that Hashem had performed for them in Egypt and in the years since they left Egypt. Then, Moshe added the following, "Hashem did not give you a heart to know or eyes to see or ears to hear, until this day." [*Devarim* 29:3]

There is a very unique Rashi on the expression "until this day": "I have heard that the day on which Moshe gave the Torah scroll to the sons of Levi (as it is written, 'Moshe wrote this Torah, and he gave it to the *Kohanim*, the sons of Levi'), all Israel came before Moshe and said to him, 'Moshe, our master! We, too, stood at Sinai, and we accepted the Torah, and it was given to us. Why do you put the sons of your tribe in charge of it, so that one day, they may say to us, 'It was not given to you. It was given to us.'? Moshe rejoiced over the matter. Regarding this, he said to them, 'This day you have become a people to Hashem your G-d.' That is, this day, I have understood that you cleave to and desire the Omnipresent."

If we analyze this, it seems rather strange. The claim by the children of Israel that "It's not fair!" seems kind of childish. Why would this incident, of all incidents, prove to Moshe Rabbeinu that they were, in fact, dedicated in their service and loyalty to the Almighty?

Rav Baruch Mordechai Eizrachi makes an interesting observation on this Rashi. Sometimes, you can see what a person is all about by their petty arguments, by what bothers them. Even though the argument may be unjustified or even ridiculous, it is still a barometer of what really agitates them. It is very revealing if what bothered the Jewish people was, "Why should the Tribe of Levi get the only copy of the Torah? They are no bigger owners of it than we are!" Granted, the argument may seem tainted with jealousy or somewhat beneath their dignity, but it clearly says, "We want the Torah, too!"

You can detect the truth in the small, candid moments of life. When G-d descended on Mt. Sinai, and the whole world stopped while Israel responded, "We will do and we will hear" (*Na'aseh v'nishmah*), those are the big moments of life. "This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him" is a big moment. It goes without saying that everyone will join in the chorus of such great moments of history.

It is much more significant when people say, "We want the Torah, too!" in a candid and unrehearsed fashion, on a regular day, during the month of Adar. Then, Moshe Rabbeinu felt reassured that this was their true sentiment. Now, he was convinced that they truly wished to cling to the Ribbono Shel Olam. "This very day, you have become a people to Hashem your G-d."

SEMICHAS CHAVER SHIUR in R' Coren's office every Wednesday at 9:00 PM
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COUNTING DOWN UNTIL
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The graphic features a blue background with a white airplane silhouette flying across the sky. On the right, there is a photograph of the Uman Rebbe's Chofef HaMerkle building, a large stone structure with a sign in Hebrew that reads "היכל רבי נחמן מברסלב".



September 11 and the University Crisis

These were Moshe's instructions to the people in the book of Deuteronomy: "When your G-d brings you to the land, to possess it, you shall deliver the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal." Later in the Bible, Moshe is more specific. Six tribes were to ascend Mt. Gerizim, while another six tribes were to ascend Mt. Ebal.

The obvious question is: Why the need for two distinct mountains in order to proclaim the benefits of loyalty to the Torah ethic and the detriments resulting from abandoning the Torah? Why couldn't the entire ceremony be performed on one mountain? Even if all the Jews could not fit on a single mountain, why were blessings directed toward one mountain, while curses were directed to another?

The answer seems to be uniquely relevant to our age. With the vivid visualization of two distinct mountains separated by a valley, one of blessings, the other of curses, the Torah is attempting to convey the message that life can and should be divided into two distinct pathways: one path as a source of blessing and growth, the other as a source of curse and devastation. A very real gulf separates the moral life from the immoral life, and it ought not to be ob-

fuscated. With this clear designation of a mountain of blessings vs. a mountain of curses, the Bible is rejecting the notion that the true progressive personality is open to all kinds of people, all kinds of lifestyles, all ideologies, all choices. According to this modern-day ethos, the primary enemy is the person who cannot tolerate all forms of behavior, the individual who believes that some deeds are absolutely blessed, while others are absolutely cursed.

The University Failure

In the introduction to his book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, the late University of Chicago professor, Allan Bloom, argued that higher education in the U.S. has failed democracy and impoverished the souls of today's students. The great virtue of the day, he wrote, became the unshakable belief that all truth is relative and that no one idea or moral value is truer than any other.

A student's reaction to 9/11, expressed in the daily newspaper and in class the next day, pointed to the differences between our life circumstances and those of the perpetrators, suggesting that these differences had caused the previous day's events. "Noticeably absent," she wrote, "was a general outcry of indignation.

These reactions, and similar ones on other campuses, have made it apparent

that my generation is uncomfortable assessing, or even asking, whether a moral wrong has taken place. My generation may be culturally sensitive, but we hesitate to make moral judgments." This is a tragedy raging on American campuses across the country. The fact that so many otherwise intelligent university students cannot recognize some actions as objectively evil, despite differences in cultural standards and values, is not only philosophically problematic, but it is practically dangerous and suicidal. If we cannot define anything as evil, we cannot stand up to it. We then ensure its victory.

Three thousand two hundred years ago, the Torah taught us that some acts constitute blessings, while others constitute curses. They ought never to be equated. They ought to be distinguished not only conceptually, but also physically. They could never be associated together in one domain. An absolute, though narrow, gulf separates the two. Distinguishing good from bad is not an act of arrogance, peasantry, or a display of closed-mindedness. It is the only way to purge our beautiful world of militants who slaughter people who do not adhere to their beliefs.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

MONDAY & THURSDAY Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)
SHABBOS Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (20 Upstairs)
 PLEASE NOTE: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 AM, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 AM.

UFARATZTA RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ

Blessed Are You, Hashem, Who Is Gracious and Pardons Abundantly

We praise and bless Hashem "Chanun HAMARBEH lisloach - the gracious One, Who pardons abundantly."

By a human, if one person harms another and asks for a pardon, they are forgiven. But if they repeat the misdeed, it becomes very difficult to forgive them again, and certainly, a third and fourth time.

By Hashem, however, there is no difference between [asking forgiveness] once and a thousand times because forgiving comes from *Middas Harachamim*, the attribute of mercy. And His holy *middos* have no bounds and are not finite; they are infinite. And relative to *ein sof*, infinity, there is no difference whatsoever between a small number and a large one. Therefore, He

removes our sins [when we ask him, again and again] every year.

All the sins for which we confess in the *AI Chet* annually, though repeatedly violated, we again confess them on Yom Kippur in the coming year, and so on always. "Every year" does not necessarily imply a yearly pardon, for three times every day, we pronounce, "Blessed are You, HaShem, who is gracious and pardons abundantly." = *Tanya, Igeres HaTeshuvah Perek 11*

[When we say *AI Chet*, our intentions are not to violate them again, as explained further in this *perek* and will be printed in a future issue of the BET Journal.]

Chai Elul: *Yom Holedes* of the Baal Shem Tov, 5,458/1698, and the Baal HaTanya, 5,505/1745





Kapos Temarim: Does the Date Tree Have to Be Fruit-Bearing?

As we approach the Yom Tov of Sukkos, let us explore some of the rules and regulations of the lulav.

LULAV – BRANCHES OF A DATE TREE

When it comes to the esrog, the Gemara discusses at length how we know that the words of the Torah, “*pri eitv hadar*,” are a reference to the esrog. However, in regard to the lulav, there is no such discussion as to which tree a lulav is taken from. This is because it is clear from the expression used by the Torah, “*kapos temarim* – branches of a date tree,” which tree the Torah is referring to. The Gemara does point out that there are many stages in the development of the branches and discusses exactly which stage of the branch should be used.

IS IT NECESSARY TO USE BRANCHES OF A TREE THAT ACTUALLY HAS DATES?

The Gemara (*Menachos 27a*) tells us that two of the four species are fruit-bearing: the esrog, which is itself a fruit, and the lulav, which has dates. The other two – the *hadass* and the *aravah* – do not bear fruit.

Does this mean there must be dates on the tree, or is it just a type of tree that gives off dates? Can we use a lulav from an old tree that still grows lulav branches but can no longer give fruit, or trees in a cold climate that cannot bear fruit? In addition, Rashi (*Pesachim 56a*) points out that the date trees come as male and female, with only one of them having the ability to bear fruit.

This makes matters complicated since we cannot always be sure what type of tree the lulav branch came from.

REASONS TO ALLOW SUCH A TREE

1. CHASAM SOFER – THE TYPE OF TREE

The Chasam Sofer (*Sukkah 34b*) rules that even if fruits will never grow on these trees, the lulav can be used because the Torah is referring to the type of tree, not that it *needs* to actually bear fruit.

He proves this notion from the halacha of the *aravos*. The Torah uses the expression “*arvei nachal*,” which means willow branches that grow by a stream. Yet the Gemara tells us that any willow branches can be used, even if they grow in the desert, and they do not need to grow next to a stream. The Torah

is just describing the type of willow branches that should be taken: the ones that usually grow next to the water. As long as that type of willow branch is used, it is fine, even if it grows in the desert. The same should apply to the lulav. The Torah is telling us to use a branch of a date tree, but there is no need for it to actually bear fruit.

2. CHAZON ISH – A TREE THAT CAN BEAR FRUIT

The Chazon Ish (*Kilayim 2:18*) writes that it is acceptable for another reason. Since it can be grafted with another tree, it can be considered fruit bearing.

3. RABBEINU BECHAYA – THE TORAH INCLUDES THIS TREE

Rabbeinu Bechaya, seemingly addressing this question, writes that the word *temarim* is used in the plural, meaning a branch from date trees, which is to include even the female date trees that do not bear fruit. In other words, the Torah is explicitly allowing the use of all date trees, even the ones that are not fruit bearing.

4. RAV SHLOMO ZALMAN – TEMARIM IS A REFERENCE TO THE TREE

In *Halichos Shlomo (Dvar Halacha 10:15)*, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach writes that these lulavim are fine. He explains that if the word *temarim* would be referring to the fruit of the tree, the dates, we could claim that it would be necessary to have fruit growing on the tree. However, *temarim* in the Torah is not used to refer to the fruit. The fruits are called *devash* in the Torah – sweet, honey-like fruit. Since the word *temarim* is referring to the tree, it is unnecessary to have the actual dates growing on the tree. And the Gemara that calls the lulav “fruit bearing” is just a way of telling us to use a branch of this type of date tree, regardless of whether dates actually grow on the tree.

Thus, we have a whole list of *Acharonim* who allow a lulav from a tree that does not bear fruits. Interestingly, the *Tzafnas Paneach* understands that this question is, in fact, a *machlokes* in the *Yerushalmi* between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon.

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

Besides the many *poskim* mentioned, Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe 4:21:7*) also rules that a lulav from a non-fruit-bearing tree is halachically acceptable. Thus, the consensus of the *poskim* is that one is allowed to use a lulav, even if it comes from a tree that does not bear dates.

SHIUR SCHEDULE

KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara
Currently: מסכת יומא
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei
Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha
Currently : הלכות ניבוד אב ואם

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Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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Gan HaTorah GOING TO SHUL

והיה אם שמוע תשמע בקול ד' אלקיך לשמר לעשות את כל מצותיו
אשר אנכי מצוך היום

"It shall be that if you hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, to observe, to perform all of His commandments that I command you this day."

Devorim Rabbah on this *posuk* connects it to Hashem counting every footstep that a person takes when going to *shul*, as well as telling us about saying "אמן." What does this have to do with this *parsha*?

The Maharal says that when the Gemara and Midrash tell us that Hakadosh Boruch Hu counts each step that one takes when going to the *bais haknesses*, and thus one should go to the farther *shul* so that he takes more steps, this only applies to the mitzvah of going to shul, and not by any other mitzvah. The Maharal gives an example of the mitzvah of *sukkah* and says that there would be no reason to go to a farther *sukkah*, for one does not receive reward for his steps to do the mitzvah. Why is this so? There is a fundamental difference between *tefillah* and all other mitzvos. All mitzvos that one performs brings him closer to Hashem. However, it is not a direct cause and effect but works indirectly. The very essence of the mitzvah of *tefillah* is to communicate with Hakadosh Boruch Hu and to bring oneself closer to Him. We see this concept in many *halachos* of *tefillah*. For example, the *halachah* is that if one finished davening *Shemoneh Esrei* but did not take his three steps back yet, he is still considered as if he is standing in front of the King and is in middle of davening in regard to certain *halachos*. Although he finished his mitzvah of davening, he is still in front of Hashem. (פחד יצחק)

The purpose of this world is for us to prepare for the next world. In this world, our goal must be to come close to Hakadosh Boruch Hu. Every mitzvah that we perform brings us closer to Hakadosh Boruch Hu, though it does so indirectly. Following the *ratzon Hashem* and performing the mitzvah itself does move us closer, but the command is to perform that mitzvah. *Tefillah* is different. The mitzvah of *tefillah* is to speak to Hashem, to connect to Him. The actual command of *tefillah* is to come close to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. When we are *mispallel* to Hashem, we are speaking to Him. We are coming close to Him; we are directly connecting to Him.

The Maharal tells us that when one is "going to *shul*," that person is on a higher level than even one who is already close to Hashem. The motion, the movement forward, catapults one to a level of as if he is already close to Hashem, for that is the route he is going. Reciting "אמן" is not just saying a word, but it is a testament to our true belief. We are saying that we know and believe that there is a Hashem in the world Who controls every aspect of this world. That is why we are *mispallel* to Him, for He has the ability to do anything and everything. All of the *brochah* in this world comes to one who is close to Hashem.

May we be *zoche* to come close to Hashem during the days of *selichos* and *rachamim* and to have a *חתימה טובה*.



היום הזה ה' אלוֹקֵיךְ מִצֹּרַח לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וְשִׁמְרָתָם וְעִשִּׂיתָ אֹתָם בְּכָל לַבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ (כו, טז).

אמר הרה"ק רבי יואל מסאטמר זי"ע - המדקדק בפסוק יראה שלכאורה אין זה כתוב כסדר הנכון, דהיה צריך להיות כתוב "היום הזה ה' אלוֹקֵיךְ מִצֹּרַח לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַחֻקִּים וְאֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים" ורק אח"כ את המילה 'האלה', ולמה המילה 'האלה' כתובה בין 'החוקים' ל'המשפטים'?

אלא ענה והסביר: ידוע הטעם למה סדרו בעלי הטור-שולחן ערוך את החלק 'חושן משפט' לבסוף אחר שלושה החלקים הראשונים - 'אורח חיים', 'יורה דעה', 'אבן העזר', והלא בתורה סודר ענייני משפט תיקף אחר מתן תורה - יתרו, משפטים, בעוד שהרבה הלכות בענייני אבן העזר ושאר חלקי שו"ע לא נמצאו רק בספר דברים בסופה של התורה?

אלא ההסבר הוא, משום שאצל דיני ממונות מצינו ענין פשרה (ח"מ סימן י"ב), ומצוה לדיין לומר לבעלי הדין שמגיעים להתדיין אצלו, שכדאי להם לעשות פשרה ולא להגיע לדין ממש, וכל בית דין המרבה בזה הרי זה משובח. יוצא לנו מכך, שאם היו מסדרים את חלק חושן משפט בהתחלה, יטעו לומר שגם בשאר חלקי השו"ע שייך ענין פשרה, וע"כ סדרו לבסוף לומר שבשלושה החלקים הראשונים אסור לעשות שום פשרה לא יגרע ולא יוסיף, רק בענייני חושן משפט בדיני ממונות ושאר תביעות שבין אדם לחבירו, באלה מצוה לעשות פשרה, לוותר משלו מצד השלום. ובזה יובן היטב לשון הכתוב הנ"ל, וגם את המילה "האלה" שכתובה בין 'החוקים' לבין 'המשפטים', משום דידוע שאיפה שכתוב 'האלה' הכוונה לומר: אלה, לא פחות ולא יותר, (כמו שכתוב בפרשת יתרו "אלה הדברים אשר תדבר אל בני ישראל" - ומפרש רש"י "לא פחות ולא יותר")

וזוהו א"כ הסבר הפסוק: "היום הזה ה' אלוֹקֵיךְ מִצֹּרַח לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה" לגבי החוקים בשלושת חלקי שו"ע הראשונים צריכים שיהיה בבחינת "האלה" דווקא, לא פחות ולא יותר! "ואת המשפטים" – ענייני "חושן משפט", בהם לא כתוב האלה, כי שם יש לעשות פשרות....



Have You
Decided
Yet?

A Table Or A Seat?



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JUST COME IN AND TAKE A SEAT





As Good (or Bad) as Done

“...An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather...” (26:5)

Among the precepts that Bnei Yisroel must observe after conquering the Land of Israel is that of *bikkurim*, the first fruits. A landowner is required to bring a basket containing his first ripened fruits to the Beis Hamikdash, where he must present them to the *kohein*. After taking back his basket, the landowner recites a declaration of gratitude to Hashem for His continuous benevolence, which has ensured Jewish survival throughout history.

A key passage that represents a major part of the Pesach Haggadah service begins with the words “*Arami oveid avi*.” Following the interpretation of the *Ba'al Haggadah*, Rashi teaches that although the simple text translates as “An Aramean succeeded in destroying my father,” the incident that it is referring to is Lavan’s unsuccessful attempts to destroy Yaakov. Rashi explains that although Lavan was not successful, Hashem considers an idol worshipper’s intention to perform an evil act as if he actually accomplished it.

The prevailing theme of the *bikkurim* declaration is Bnei Yisroel expressing their gratitude to Hashem for the kindness He has bestowed upon us. Since we were saved from Lavan’s attempts to destroy us, the benefit we received was due to his lack of success. Why then do we express our gratitude couched in terms of his success? The fact that Hashem punished Lavan as if he were successful should have no bearing upon the manner in which we express our gratitude for being saved.

The Talmud teaches that a righteous person’s intention to perform a benevolent act is credited to him as if he actually performed the act. What is the justification for rewarding or punishing a person for an act they did not commit?

A person’s decision to commit a particular act does not guarantee that they will follow through with it. If, however, the act reflects the very essence of the person, their intention alone serves as a commitment and guarantee that they will accomplish what they set out to do. Once a person has wholeheartedly committed themselves to undertake an endeavor, virtually no force in

nature can thwart their resolve.

Consequently, if the person is unsuccessful, it must be due to Divine intervention. Therefore, the intent of a righteous individual to perform a good deed guarantees its performance, and even if circumstances beyond their control prevent them from fulfilling their commitment, Hashem considers the act to have been accomplished. Similarly, the resolve of the wicked to commit an evil act is so strong that it takes Divine intervention to thwart their plans. Therefore, they are punished for their intention as if they had accomplished the act.

When expressing our gratitude for being saved from Lavan, we are cognizant of the fact that if Lavan had made the decision to destroy Bnei Yisroel, nothing other than Hashem’s intervention could have prevented him from succeeding. The manner in which we indicate our acknowledgement of this fact, thereby stressing that we are even more indebted to Hashem for His kindness, is by referring to the incident as if it actually occurred.

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My Teacher for Life: The Love, Vision, and Legacy of Rabbi Berel Wein

Rabbi Berel Wein, zt”l, who passed away recently at the age of 91, was my *rebbe* and *rosh yeshivah* at Shaarei Torah High School in Monsey. But graduation never marked the end. Once you became one of his students, you always were.

Many of us first met him as children and teenagers, boys still discovering ourselves. Whether in his shul or his yeshivah, the relationships we formed with him were foundational. They did not fade with time; they matured. He taught us Jewish values when we were boys, and he continued to teach us how to live with Jewish values as men.

PART OF DIVINE STORY

Rabbi Wein imparted a clear worldview, speaking of Torah and history, character and responsibility, building and rebuilding. He showed us not only where we came from but where we stood in the arc of our people’s divine story.

That is why he named his life’s work the Destiny Foundation. For him, history was not something to be studied; it was to be lived. We weren’t spectators of Jewish

history; we were participants in its unfolding.

He gave us a sense of ownership over our past and an obligation toward the future.

THE POWER OF LOVE

Rabbi Wein’s influence did not only come from charisma or status. It came from love.

A close friend of mine did not want to attend his yeshivah. One day, his mother told him, without warning, that he had an appointment with Rabbi Wein. He went reluctantly.

Rabbi Wein looked him in the eye and said: “I understand you don’t want to come to our yeshivah.”

He nodded sheepishly.

Rabbi Wein responded, “You may find a yeshivah with better boys. You may find a yeshivah with better rabbis. You may even find a yeshivah with a better *rosh yeshivah*. But you will not find a yeshivah where you will be more loved.”

This is why so many of us, since his passing, have said, “It feels like we have lost a parent.”

GREATNESS WRAPPED IN HUMILITY

Rabbi Wein lived as he taught.

He lived more in one lifetime than most

could dream: community rabbi, *dayan*, *rosh yeshivah*, author of books, historian, intellectual, kashrut authority, lecturer, even lawyer and businessman. Yet he never saw these as titles. They were responsibilities. Gifts from G-d to be used for the Jewish People.

Rabbi Wein made greatness feel attainable because it was wrapped in humility, humanity, and genuine care.

Because he believed in us, we could believe in ourselves.

HIS FINAL WORD: POSITIVITY

Not long ago, I asked him what would become my final question: “Rebbi, what does the Jewish world need most today?”

His answer was a single word: “Positivity.”

That was not mere advice. It was his worldview. Rabbi Wein believed in the Jewish People and the Jewish future, not because it was easy, but because it was Divine destiny. And because he believed it was ours to shape.

Rabbi Wein reminded us that the chain of Sinai stretches into tomorrow, and it is ours to extend. Not as spectators of history, but as authors of its next chapter.

May his memory be for a blessing.



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Before It's
Gone

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JUST COME IN AND TAKE A SEAT

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אור חיים
בכל
מכל
כל
בית
תפלה
יקרא
לכל



Motzei Shabbos Selichos

First Night of Selichos
September 13 - כ"א אלול

Selichos Times	Location
10:00 PM	Tent א
10:30 PM	Tent ב
11:00 PM	Tent א
11:30 PM	Tent ב
12:00 AM	Tent א
12:30 AM	18 Main
12:50 AM (Chatzos)	Tent ב
1:00 AM Following Words of Inspiration by Rabbi Coren at 12:45 AM	Tent א
1:05 AM	18 Main
1:10 AM	Tent ד
1:20 AM	Tent ב
1:30 AM	18 Main
1:40 AM	Tent א
1:50 AM	Tent ב
2:00 AM	18 Main

Sunday Selichos

September 14 - כ"א אלול
20 minutes before each Shachris

Selichos	Location	Selichos	Location
5:00 AM Sephardi Selichot Vasikin	18 Main	7:40 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
5:46 AM Neitz 6:36 am	20 Upstairs	7:55 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
5:55 AM	Tent א	8:10 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
6:10 AM	Tent ג	8:25 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
6:25 AM	Tent ד	8:40 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
6:40 AM	אהל ראפאפרט	8:55 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
6:55 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל	9:10 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
7:10 AM	אהל ראפאפרט	9:25 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
7:10 AM Sephardi	Tent ה	9:40 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
7:25 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל	9:55 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל

Night Selichos until Erev Rosh Hashanah

Sunday Sept 14 - Motzei Shabbos Sept 20
כ"א אלול - כ"ז אלול

Tent א

Selichos

10:00 PM
10:30 PM
11:00 PM
11:30 PM
12:00 AM
12:30 AM
12:50 AM (Tent ב) Chatzos
1:00 AM
1:30 AM

Day Selichos until Erev Rosh Hashana

Monday Sept 15 - Sunday Sept 21
כ"ב אלול - כ"ח אלול

Selichos	Location	Selichos	Location
5:00 AM Sephardi Selichot Vasikin	18 Main	8:30 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
5:46 AM Neitz 6:36 AM	20 Upstairs	8:40 AM	אהל תומר
5:55 AM	Tent א	8:50 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
6:10 AM	Tent ג	9:00 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
6:25 AM	Tent ד	9:10 AM	אהל תומר
6:40 AM	אהל ראפאפרט	9:20 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
6:55 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל	9:30 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
7:10 AM	אהל ראפאפרט	9:40 AM	אהל תומר
7:15 AM Sephardi	Tent ה	9:50 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
7:25 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל	10:00 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
7:40 AM	אהל תומר	10:10 AM	אהל תומר
7:50 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל	10:20 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל
8:00 AM	אהל ראפאפרט	10:30 AM	אהל ראפאפרט
8:10 AM	אהל תומר	10:40 AM	אהל תומר
8:20 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל	10:50 AM	אהל אשר אנשיל



Siyum at Rabbi Stern's Daf Yomi Shiur



Siyum at Rabbi Stern's Daf Yomi Shiur



The Tosher Rebbe of Monsey speaking at Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim

RABBI NACHMAN WINKLER



In Its Time

V'af al pi sheyitmahme'ah – im kol zeh achakeh lo b'chol yom sheyavo.

This week's *haftarah*, the sixth of the seven *haftarot* of *nechama*, is the 60th *perek* of *Sefer Yishayahu*, a chapter that, from start to finish, is one of comfort and consolation. The selection opens with the cry “*Kumi Ori!*” calling upon Israel to “Arise and Shine” as Hashem, the source of eternal light, will illuminate them despite the darkness that surrounds them. The *navi* envisions a time when the gentile nations, inspired by Hashem's light, will turn to G-d, bringing sacrifices and wealth to serve Hashem and His nation. Together with that, Yishayahu promises a return of Israel from the Diaspora, with bountiful exiles filling the streets and bringing their riches and good fortune with them. No longer will Yerushalayim be forsaken and despised, says Yishayahu; instead, she will be a pride and joy for all future generations. The glorious prophecy closes with the vision of Zion, blessed now with the secure protection of the One above, Who will provide you with His eternal light and glory.

Comforting words, indeed.

But I find most interesting the very last words spoken by the *navi*: “*Ani Hashem, b'itah achishenah.*” - “I am Hashem; I shall hasten it in its time.” This statement has given rise to a number of rabbinic interpretations, the most well-known of which is found in the Talmud [*Sanhedrin* 98a], that G-d will hasten the *geulah* (“*achishena*”). But even if Israel is not deserving of that, the redemption will still come “in its time” (“*b'itah*”). I find a meaningful message to be found in these words, a message that we have experienced during this past century. The *navi* is promising that “*b'itah*,” when the time finally comes, “*achishena*.” G-d promises that He will have the events bringing the redemption come very quickly, over only a relatively short period of time. A truth about which we can testify.

Rav Yehuda Shavit z”l comments that the magnificent prophecies and promises that fill this *haftarah* could be best summarized as a fulfillment of the words we read in this week's *parasha* [*Devarim* 26: 18-19]: “Hashem has distinguished you today to be His treasured people...and to make you supreme above other nations...for praise, renown and splendor, and to be a holy people to Hashem...”

And the final words of Yishayahu speak loudly to us as well.

How remarkable to stand today and serve as witnesses to the truth of these words, both those from the Torah and those from the *navi*. We have seen the miracle of return to - and survival in - our land, in the face of cruel enemies. Some may believe that we are not deserving of redemption today. But the words of the prophet say differently.

Truly, Hashem's light shines upon us!

But what still remains is for us to become the holy nation that G-d desired for us – and from us. A nation of success and pride but also one of justice and kindness.

The words of the *navi* in today's *haftarah* gave much comfort to our people of the past generations and great encouragement for us today.

And the words of the Torah set forth the challenge that we face to truly earn the title of a “treasured nation.”

RABBI SHOLOM ROSNER



Just for Not Being Happy?

Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with happiness... (Devarim 28:47)

After citing several atrocities, the Torah provides a reason why these calamities will befall Am Yisrael: “Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with happiness and with gladness of heart.” Is it possible that we are punished so severely because we did not serve Hashem joyfully? If one fulfills all 613 mitzvos, but without a smile, is he deserving of such harsh punishment?

The *Shalheves Yosef* suggests as follows. Two individuals can perform the same act, yet it can be perceived totally differently. The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 31a) explains that one person might do seemingly great things for his parents but get punished for doing so, and someone else might seemingly disrespect his parents but obtain a great reward. The difference is in how they show honor to their parents. If it was done regretfully, with a sour face and a grunt, it is meaningless and not appreciated by the parent. However, if even the slightest act is performed with love, affection, and a bright smile, it is greatly appreciated. The same applies to how we serve Hashem. If we perform mitzvos out of obligation and without a feeling of excitement and happiness to worship Hashem, the performance of that mitzvah is meaningless. It is like a body without a soul (a *guf* without a *neschama*).

We must take great care in understanding and concentrating when performing mitzvos so that through our behavior, we can illustrate our appreciation of being able to fulfill the will of Hashem.

The *Torah Temima*, in his commentary, *Tosefes Bera-kha*, agrees that worshipping Hashem without joy cannot justify such harsh measures. He explains that the *passuk* means something else entirely. It's not, “You didn't serve Hashem joyfully,” but “You didn't serve Hashem – and were happy about it.” That was the transgression of the Jews in Persia during the story of Purim. The Jewish community participated in the feast of the king, where the vessels of the Bais Hamikdash were used, and they enjoyed themselves. The tragedies of the *tokhaha* came upon us not just because we succumbed to our desires and transgressed the precepts of the Torah, but because we enjoyed it and were happy that we violated the Torah. That is more troubling to Hashem. When we falter because it is difficult for us to refrain, and we feel bad about it, we are more easily forgiven. When we are proud of our violations of the Torah, the ramifications are severe.

Together, these two interpretations instruct us not to enjoy sin and to appreciate and fulfill each and every mitzvah with excitement. As the *Yamim Noraim* approach, it is a time to strengthen our connection to G-d. To enhance our *tefillos* and study of Torah, and to perform mitzvos and acts of *chessed* wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. To experience “*simchah gedolah lehiyot b'mitzvah tamid!*”



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Listening Is One of the Greatest Arts

There is a difference between *hearing* and *listening*, often concealed by the fact that the Hebrew verb *shema* means both. But they are very different. Hearing is passive, while listening is active. Hearing needs no special concentration, but listening does. It involves attention, focus, and openness to the other. One of the greatest gifts is finding someone who really listens to us. Sadly, it happens all too rarely. In conversation, we are often so focused on what we are going to say next that we don't really listen properly to what the other person is saying.

And so it is with prayer. Someone once defined prayer as *listening to G-d listening to us*.

Look at the stunningly beautiful lines of Tehillim 19 that we say on Shabbat mornings, telling us that "the heavens declare the glory of G-d; the skies proclaim the work of His hands," despite the fact that "There is no speech, there are no words." Creation sings a song to its Creator, which we might hear if we listen attentively enough. During the pandemic, when there was little noise from traffic and airplanes overhead, we could hear the birdsong and other sounds of nature more vividly than ever I remember.

Listening is a primary theme of Moshe's speeches in *Devarim*. The root *sh-m-a* appears no fewer than 92 times in the book, an astonishing number. *That is what I hope we gained from this distressing time of isolation: the ability to slow down our prayers and listen to them, letting their poetry penetrate more deeply than at other times.*

Communal prayer is more than an expression of community. It is also a builder of community. We are social, not solitary, beings. We long, most of us, for company. And even the wonders of all the social media options (TikTok, Twitter, Zoom, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.) cannot compensate for the loss of the real thing: face-to-face encounters.

But there is one gain to praying in isolation. *Tefillah b'tzibbur* involves going at the speed of the congregation. It is hard to slow the pace so as to be able to meditate at length on any of the prayers themselves – their meaning, music, rhythm, and structure. Prayer is essentially a kind of counterpoint between speaking and listening. But communal prayer often involves more speaking than listening. The lockdown meant that we could listen more to the poetry and passion of the prayers themselves. And prayer is about listening, not just speaking.

Rabbi Yaakov Leiner, whose reflections on listening started us on this journey, said that the tragic month of Av is a time when it is hard to see the presence of G-d. We lost two Temples. It seemed to many that G-d may have abandoned His people. But precisely when it is hard to see the Divine Presence, we can focus on *listening*.

I believe that listening is one of the greatest arts. It opens us to G-d, to our fellow humans, and to the beauties of nature. For me, prayer in isolation is a gift that allows me to slow the prayers so that I can listen to them speaking to me. Praying is as much about listening as speaking. And faith itself is the ability to hear the music beneath the noise.

Increasing Good is the Antidote to Evil

Parashat Ki Tavo begins by listing the steps we should take upon entering our homeland. We must acknowledge the good, give first fruits and tithes, provide for the leaders and teachers, and care for the less fortunate. After giving the tithes, we are commanded to make a speech, saying, 'I have given to the Levite, convert, orphan, and widow...I have not transgressed Your commandments and I have not forgotten [*lo shachachtij*] (*Deut. 26:13*). This is a strange command.

When else are we ever commanded to give a speech like this after the performance of a mitzvah, stating that we have performed it and that we haven't forgotten to perform it? Surely, if we are announcing that we have successfully performed a mitzvah, it is obvious that we didn't forget it.

Rashi explains that the phrase 'I have not forgotten' is actually referring to the requirement to make a blessing upon the separation of tithes. However, the question remains, as the blessing or lack thereof does not actually change the essence or efficacy of the mitzvah's performance. A possible answer is hinted at through the parallel with the final words of the previous *parasha*, 'Erase the memory of Amalek from beneath the heavens – do not forget [*lo tishkach*] (*Deut. 25:19*). Amalek represents absolute evil. It is a nation that preys upon the innocent and weak, and as such, is the antithesis of the Jewish vision of helping the needy and the vulnerable. With a negative perspective, it is extremely difficult to create a positive outcome.

The Torah juxtaposes the story of Amalek with the commandment of the tithes to show us that the only way to wipe out the abuse of the less fortunate is for the more fortunate to seek them out and act kindly. The society of Amalek worships power. The Torah, in contrast, constructs a society that cares for the powerless, the 'Levite, proselyte, orphan, and widow.' Rav Kook states, 'The purely righteous don't complain about wickedness; they increase righteousness. They don't complain about heresy; they increase faith. They don't complain about ignorance; they increase wisdom.'

When we encounter challenging situations in our lives, often, our first reaction is to complain and focus on the negative. This approach, however, can lead us to sink deeper into the problem itself. We become consumed by the issue, and this blurs our ability to deal with it objectively. With a negative perspective, it is extremely difficult to create a positive outcome. Our complaining leads us to become part of the problem rather than a part of its solution.

With all the problems facing our world today, we must realize that the remedy for the world's ills lies in transcending the bad by overcompensating with good, combating radical hatred with radical love. Darkness does not become diminished as a result of complaining about it or trying to cover it up, but rather through creating an abundance of light. And this message, as stated by the Torah, is so crucial that we should all be able to proudly declare: 'I have not forgotten!'

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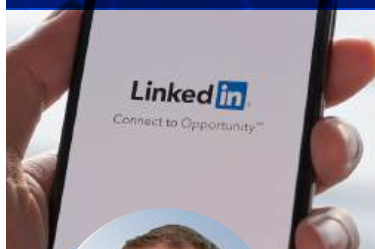
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LEAH SCHEINER
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Leah's Lifestyle offers individual and group based nutrition and weight loss coaching to women in the monsey area.

SHOSHANNAH BROMBACHER

A Coin

The chassidic master Rabbi Simchah Bunem of Pscycyscha (1767-1827) started out in life as a pharmacist, but later he became a *rebbe* (chassidic leader) and loved discussing Torah with his disciples.

One day he was talking about the snake that seduced Eve in the Garden of Eden. The Torah relates that G-d cursed the snake, "On your belly you shall crawl, and dust you shall eat, all the days of your life" (*Genesis* 3:14).

WOULDN'T IT BE CONVENIENT IF WE COULD LIVE ON DUST?

Rabbi Bunem pondered: "Is that such a terrible curse? Dust is everywhere, so the snake's table is always full, no matter where he goes. Now, look at the people in our *shtetl* and elsewhere. They earn their bread with difficulty, many families are poor, children go hungry, and some never know where their next meal will come from. How convenient it would be for us if we could live on dust!

"But life as a human being," explained the chassidic master, "means that we are constantly crying out to G-d for help: women in childbirth, hungry children, fathers without a job... So mankind has a connection, a very strong connection to G-d, which the snake does not have. It needs nothing, it asks for nothing. And that is truly a curse. But we, we are like children with our father. G-d is our father, the one to whom we turn countless times a day to provide for us and protect us..."

"A poor man is always aware of this blessing. The wealthy man, too, is so blessed, but it is a little more difficult for him to know this. The challenge of wealth is that one should always keep this in mind, and turn to G-d every day for help and guidance."

ZERA SHIMSHON

Retrieving Stolen Property

Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat from it. Your donkey will be stolen from you, and it will not be returned to you. Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and you will have no way to save them (28:31).

This *pasuk* is one of the many *pesukim* in this week's *parsha* that depict the punishments that will befall the Jewish people should they not keep the Torah. The Zera Shimshon points out that regarding each animal, the Torah changes its description of what will happen. The ox will be slaughtered in front of you, and you will not be able to eat it; the donkey will be stolen and not returned to you, and as for the sheep, you will have no way to save them. The Zera Shimshon explains these differences as additional nuances of each of these punishments in the following manner.

The Gemara (*Baba Kama* 79a) says that if someone steals an ox and slaughters it on the property of its original owner, as long as he did not remove it from the property, he is exempt. Therefore, the punishment that the Torah illustrates here is that the ox will be slaughtered in front of you - on your own property - and the offender will not be obligated to pay the required five times the value of the stolen and slaughtered ox. The owner may think that maybe he will at least be able to salvage some meat. But on this, the Torah says that he will not even have that.

Regarding the donkey, the Zera Shimshon explains the wording of the *pasuk* "Your donkey will be stolen from you, and it will not be returned to you" based on what the Gemara says (*Baba Kama* 94b), that when a robber comes to return an item he stole, Chazal are not happy with those who take the item back since it stops robbers from doing *teshuvah*. (See the *Gemara*.) Here, the *pasuk* is saying that the punishment mentioned is that even after the donkey is stolen, should the robber decide to do *teshuvah*, the donkey will not be returned to the owner, because, technically, the owner should not take it back.

Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and you will have no way to save them. The Zera Shimshon explains this based on the Mishna (*Baba Kama* 10:2) that if a garment is stolen from someone, and the robbers give him a different garment, he is allowed to keep it. Rav Ovadia Mi'Bartenura explains that this halachah is only relevant if the robbers were Jewish, but not if they were non-Jews. This is because if the robbers were Jewish, the original owner would give up hope, since in order to retrieve his stolen article, he would have to procure witnesses, which is not always possible. Therefore, the owner just gives up hope, and the new owner may now keep it. However, if the robbers were non-Jews, the original owner would not give up hope, since the non-Jewish court system often relies on an assessment of the situation without requiring witnesses. Therefore, the original owner does not give up hope, since he hopes he can retrieve his article.

With this, the Zera Shimshon explains the *pasuk* (...you will have no way to save them) to mean that even though the robbers will be non-Jews, and usually, one can get the stolen articles back in a non-Jewish court, still, the Torah here is saying that, regardless of this, you will not be able to retrieve them.

SHIUR
SCHEDULE

ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR
BY RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM BURGER
THURSDAY 8:15 PM - 9:15 PM (20 Upstairs)
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JOKES

Three robbers are on the run from the cops. They run down an alley and find three boxes and decide to hide in one each. The cops arrive at the first box, they kick it, and he shouts, "Woof woof!" The cops decide it must be dogs and move onto the next box. "Meow meow!" the next one exclaims. The cops shrug, thinking it is cats and move on to the next box. "POTATOES!" yells the last one.

A smug state highways employee stopped at a farm and talked with an old farmer. He told the farmer, "I need to inspect your farm for a possible new road." The old farmer said, "OK, but don't go in that field." The employee said, "I have the authority of the state government to go where I want. See this badge? I am allowed to go wherever I wish on farmland."

So, the old farmer went about his farm chores. Later, he heard loud screams and saw the state highways employee running for the fence. Close behind was the farmer's prize bull. The bull was madder than a nest full of hornets and was gaining on the employee at every step! The old farmer called out, "Show him your badge!"

I saw a notice outside a police station that read: MAN WANTED FOR ROBBERY. So, I went in and applied for the job.

A detective was questioning a burglary suspect. "Where were you between five and six?" the suspect asked. "In kindergarten!" he replied.

A policeman stops a lady and asks for her license. He says, "Lady, it says here that you should be wearing glasses."

The woman answers, "Well, I have contacts." The policeman replies, "I don't care who you know! You're getting a ticket!"

A state trooper pulls over a car and walks over to the driver. "Today's your lucky day," he says. "We have a program to promote seatbelt use. I pulled you over because you were wearing your seatbelt. You will receive a reward of \$5,000. So, what are you going to do with the money?"

The man thinks for a moment and answers, "I think the first thing I will do is go out and get a driver's license."

His wife in the front passenger seat screams out, "Oh for goodness sake, Officer, don't listen to him. He always talks nonsense when he's drunk."

The commotion wakes up their friend in the back seat. He sees the officer and screams at the couple, "I told you we wouldn't get far in a stolen car." And then there is a banging from the trunk, followed by a voice, "Ay amigos, did we cross the border yet?"

A police officer pulls over a woman for speeding.
Officer: License and registration, please.
Driver: It must be in here somewhere... (rummaging in her handbag)
Officer: Ma'am, I haven't got all day.
Driver: What does the license look like?
Officer: It's small & rectangular and has your picture on it.
Driver: Oh! Here it is! (Hands over her mirror to the officer)
Officer: If you would have told me in the beginning that you're a police officer...



Brought to you by Uncle Benjy, author of *Laughter is the Best Medicine: Kosher and Jewish Jokes for the Whole Family*, available on Amazon.

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Monsey



September 16
יום שלישי | 8:30 PM

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ב"ה

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Rabbi YY Jacobson שליט"א

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כ' אלול Motzei Shabbos
September 13, 2025

10:00 PM: Event begins

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Followed by Selichos
(Approx. 1:00 AM)

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