



Founded by Rabbi Yosef Oziel ZT"l

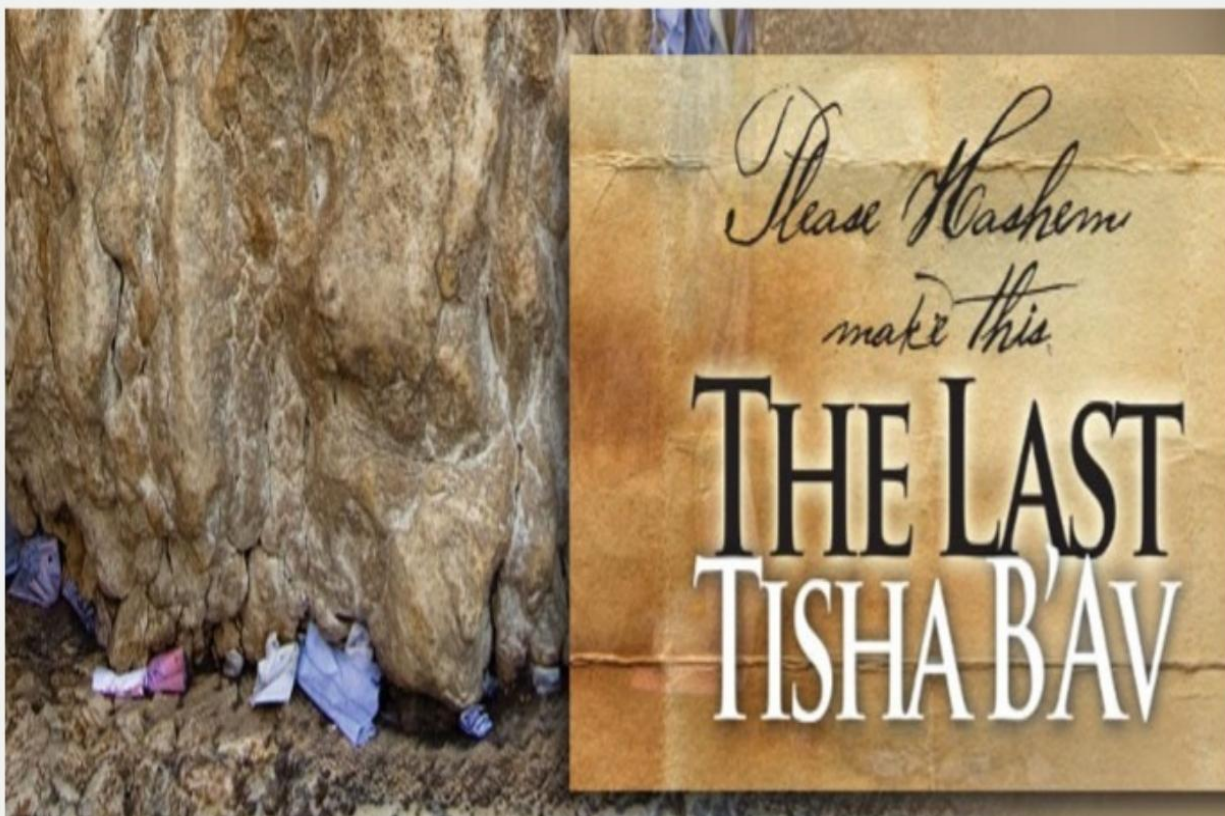
**FAST OF 9TH AV
THIS MOSAE SHABBAT**

9th of AV
Aug 6th 2022
CANDLE LIGHTING 7:45PM
SHABBAT ENDS 8:45PM

NEW

DEVARIM

PARASHAT



**BELIEVING THAT OUR
"LIMP" WILL HEAL**

**APPRECIATING WHAT
WE LOST**

**G-D'S ANSWER TO A
PERPLEXING QUESTION**

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THIS WEEK BULLETIN HAS BEEN KINDLY SPONSORED LEILOUEY NISHMAT

שלמה בן יעקב ז"ל



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General Hechal Shalom

SCHEDULE

בס"ד

זמני היום - חודש אב / תשפ"ב July to August 2022 Daily zmanim

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Daylight saving time																				
July / August 2022		לילה לרבינו תום R Tam's Nightfall		לילה Nightfall □	שקיעת החמה Sun set	הדלקת נרות Candle Lighting	פלג המנחה Flag Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	חצות Mid day	סוף זמן תפילה Latest Shachnis	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema		הנץ החמה Sun rise	זמן צאת ותפילין Earliest Talis	עלות השחר 72 דקות Dawn 72 Minutes		דף היומי Daf Yomi	אב תשפ"ב	
		במלכות 16.1°	במלכות 16.1°	במלכות 16.1°	במלכות 16.1°	18 דקות	ח"א ונעל חותיא	ח"א ונעל חותיא	-	חצות ח"א ונעל חותיא	ח"א ונעל חותיא	ח"א ונעל חותיא	ח"א ונעל חותיא	במלכות 16.1°	10.2 מעלות	במלכות 16.1°	במלכות 16.1°	במלכות 16.1°		
29	Fri	9:21	9:24	8:46	8:08	7:50	6:44	5:21	2:01	1:26	11:13	10:06	9:30	9:28	6:46	6:00	5:33	5:29	כג	ששי
30	Sat	9:20	9:24	8:45	8:07	[מסרת מסי]	6:44	5:20	2:01	1:26	11:13	10:06	9:30	9:28	6:46	6:01	5:33	5:30	כד	שבת
31	Sun	9:20	9:23	8:45	8:07		6:43	5:20	2:01	1:26	11:13	10:06	9:30	9:28	6:47	6:01	5:34	5:31	כה	ראשון
1	Mon	9:19	9:22	8:44	8:06		6:43	5:19	2:01	1:26	11:13	10:06	9:30	9:29	6:47	6:02	5:34	5:31	כו	שני
2	Tue	9:18	9:21	8:43	8:05		6:42	5:19	2:00	1:26	11:13	10:06	9:30	9:29	6:48	6:03	5:35	5:32	כז	שלישי
3	Wed	9:18	9:20	8:43	8:05		6:42	5:19	2:00	1:26	11:13	10:07	9:31	9:29	6:48	6:03	5:35	5:33	כח	רביעי
4	Thu	9:17	9:19	8:42	8:04		6:41	5:18	2:00	1:26	11:13	10:07	9:31	9:30	6:49	6:04	5:36	5:33	כט	חמישי
5	Fri	9:16	9:19	8:41	8:03	7:45	6:41	5:18	2:00	1:26	11:13	10:07	9:31	9:30	6:49	6:04	5:36	5:34	ל	ששי
6	Sat	9:16	9:18	8:40	8:03	[דברים]	6:40	5:17	2:00	1:26	11:13	10:07	9:31	9:30	6:50	6:05	5:37	5:35	לא	שבת
7	Sun	9:15	9:17	8:39	8:02	תשעה באב	6:39	5:17	2:00	1:26	11:13	10:07	9:31	9:30	6:50	6:05	5:37	5:35	לב	ראשון
8	Mon	9:14	9:16	8:39	8:01		6:39	5:16	1:59	1:25	11:14	10:08	9:32	9:31	6:51	6:06	5:38	5:36	לג	שני
9	Tue	9:14	9:15	8:38	8:01		6:38	5:16	1:59	1:25	11:14	10:08	9:32	9:31	6:51	6:07	5:38	5:37	לד	שלישי
10	Wed	9:13	9:14	8:37	8:00		6:38	5:15	1:59	1:25	11:14	10:08	9:32	9:31	6:52	6:07	5:39	5:37	לה	רביעי
11	Thu	9:12	9:13	8:36	7:59		6:37	5:15	1:59	1:25	11:14	10:08	9:32	9:31	6:52	6:08	5:39	5:38	לו	חמישי
12	Fri	9:11	9:12	8:35	7:58	7:40	6:36	5:14	1:59	1:25	11:14	10:08	9:32	9:32	6:53	6:08	5:40	5:39	לז	ששי
13	Sat	9:10	9:11	8:34	7:57	[ראתחן]	6:36	5:14	1:58	1:25	11:14	10:08	9:32	9:32	6:53	6:09	5:40	5:39	לח	שבת
14	Sun	9:09	9:10	8:33	7:56		6:35	5:13	1:58	1:24	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:32	6:54	6:09	5:41	5:40	לט	ראשון
15	Mon	9:09	9:09	8:32	7:56		6:34	5:13	1:58	1:24	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:32	6:54	6:10	5:41	5:40	מ	שני
16	Tue	9:08	9:08	8:32	7:55		6:33	5:12	1:58	1:24	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:33	6:54	6:11	5:41	5:41	מא	שלישי
17	Wed	9:07	9:07	8:31	7:54		6:33	5:11	1:57	1:24	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:33	6:55	6:11	5:42	5:42	מב	רביעי
18	Thu	9:06	9:06	8:30	7:53		6:32	5:11	1:57	1:24	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:33	6:55	6:12	5:42	5:42	מג	חמישי
19	Fri	9:05	9:05	8:29	7:52	7:34	6:31	5:10	1:57	1:23	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:33	6:56	6:12	5:43	5:43	מד	ששי
20	Sat	9:04	9:04	8:28	7:51	נעקם	6:30	5:09	1:56	1:23	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:33	6:56	6:13	5:43	5:44	מה	שבת
21	Sun	9:03	9:03	8:27	7:50		6:30	5:09	1:56	1:23	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:34	6:57	6:13	5:44	5:44	מו	ראשון
22	Mon	9:02	9:01	8:26	7:49		6:29	5:08	1:56	1:23	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:34	6:57	6:14	5:44	5:45	מז	שני
23	Tue	9:01	9:00	8:25	7:48		6:28	5:07	1:56	1:22	11:14	10:09	9:33	9:34	6:58	6:14	5:45	5:45	מח	שלישי
24	Wed	9:00	8:59	8:24	7:47		6:27	5:07	1:55	1:22	11:14	10:10	9:34	9:34	6:58	6:15	5:45	5:46	מט	רביעי
25	Thu	8:59	8:58	8:23	7:46		6:26	5:06	1:55	1:22	11:14	10:10	9:34	9:34	6:58	6:15	5:45	5:47	נ	חמישי
26	Fri	8:58	8:57	8:21	7:45	7:27	6:25	5:05	1:55	1:22	11:14	10:10	9:34	9:34	6:59	6:16	5:46	5:47	נא	ששי
27	Sat	8:57	8:56	8:20	7:44	[נאח]	6:25	5:05	1:54	1:21	11:14	10:10	9:34	9:34	6:59	6:16	5:46	5:48	נב	שבת

Shabbos (Aug 27) 8:16 AM + 5 מולד חורש אלוהי חלקים 5

Generate shul schedules automatically with a zmanim spreadsheet > <http://sheets.myzmanim.com>

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Shabbat Schedule

1st Minyan 6:15pm
Followed by Shir Hashirim,
KabbalatShabbat/Arvit
2nd Minyan Shir Hashirim 7:15pm
2nd Minyan Minha 7:30pm
Candle Lighting: 7:45pm
Shaharit Netz Minyan 5:50am
Shaharit: 8:45am
Zeman Keriat Shema 9:30am
2nd Zeman Keriat Shema 10:07am
Early Minha: 2:00pm
Minha: 5:45pm
Normal Seudat Shelishit at
Home
Fast Starts: 8:03pm
Shabbat Ends: 8:45pm
Rabbenu Tam 9:16pm

Tisha Beab this Mosae Shabbat & Sunday.

After Shabbat finishes say, "Baruch Hamvdil Ben Kodesh Lehol" & Change shoes & clothing.

Kinot, Arvit, & Megilat Echa 9:20pm

Shaharit Morning Tisha Beab at 9:00am

Hazot (Midday) is at 1:26pm

Chafetz Chaim Videos Times listed below

Minha at 7:15pm (Please Remember Tallit & Tefillin) Followed by Arvit and Birkat Halevana

Fast Ends: 8:39pm. Please Remember to do Havdalah before eating. Only Hagefen & Hamavdil. No Besamim or Meore Haesh.

*We have The Chafetz chaim Heritage Foundation
Videos as usual. We should see the Bet
Hamikdash speedily rebuilt in our days Amen.*

DONATION MENU

Avot Ubanim \$120, Kiddush \$350, Seudat Shelishit \$275, Weekly Bulletin \$150, Weekly Daf Yomi \$180, Daf Yomi Masechet \$2500, Yearly Daf Yomi \$5000, Weekly Breakfast \$150, Daily Learning \$180, Weekly Learning \$613, Monthly Rent \$3500, Monthly Learning \$2000, Children's Shabbat Program \$500, Weekly Safrut Program \$360. **Thanking you in advance for your generous support. Tizke Lemitzvot!**

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY

Shaharit 6:10am
Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:30am
Minha 6:25pm
Followed by Arvit

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Shaharit: 6:10am
Daf Yomi Recess
Shaharit #2 Hodu 8:00am
Minha/Arvit 6:25pm
Shiur in Spanish Recess
Shiurim Recess
Night Kollel Recess

Community Announcements

(It is *YOUR* Community, make the most of it!)

Miscellaneous Announcements:

- **This Week's There is no Congregational Kiddush & Seudat Shelishit. (No Kiddush)**
- **This Week's Breakfast** is is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Learning** has been **Kindly Sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Yosef Ayash in memory of his Dear Grandmother Simja Ayash z"l** the 9th of Av. Tihye Nishmata Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!
- **This Week's Avot Ubanim** has been **Kindly Sponsored by Dr. & Mrs. Jean Jacques Edderai in memory of his Dear Brother Meir Ben Awicha z"l**. Tihye Nishmato Tzerura Bitzror Hahayim Amen!
- We are trying to update our **Congregant's contact information**. We would like to start sending texts about different Events and Shiurim. We would also like to start emailing the weekly bulletin. **We would like to start a list of Nahalot/Azkaret/Yahrzeits**. We would also like to make a **Refuah Shelema** list. Please send your contact information to the Board at info@hechalshalom.org

Special Announcements

- We are pleased to announce that Ness 26 is part of the **Amazon Charity Program**, which would allow our community to collect 0.5% of all the orders made by any of you on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). In order to register you need to log on smile.amazon.com and select Ness 26, Inc as the Charitable Organization you want to support, and from then shop on smile.amazon.com instead of www.amazon.com. It won't cost anything more, and is an easy way to contribute to our budget needs.
- We would like to remind the Kahal & urge everyone to watch the **Chafetz Chaim Heritage Foundation Inspiring Videos** on this Tisha Beav. There will be a viewing in our Bet Hakenesset at **2:30 pm**. Please make a Minimul Donation to the Bet Hakenesset. If anyone would like to purchase the cd's to view it at home, please contact me.
- We are pleased to announce that we will also have a **Children's Video of the Chafetz Haim Heritage Foundation** in our Bet Hakenesset at **1:30 p.m.** Recomendated ages 7-13. Cost per child is \$5 and for family \$15. If there is great demand, we might be able to have another viewing if anyone is interested please let me know. Looking forward to seeing you there. Wishing everyone a meaningful and uplifting fast.

Donors Column

We Sincerely Thank you for your generous contributions this Week! We truly appreciate it! Hashem should Bless them with Health, Happiness, Parnasah Tova, Success, & All the Berachot of the Torah Amen!

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| • Mr. Mordechai Saban | • Mr. Meir Azeroual | • Mr. Eytan Guigui |
| • Dr. Rony Aquinin | • Mr. Yizhak Amram | <i>Avot Ubanim every Shabbat will</i> |
| • Mr. Eddy Levi | • Mr. Eli Cohen | <i>continue at 5:30pm followed by</i> |
| • Mr. Ronen Michael | • Mr. Bezazel Charlie Ness | <i>Children's program at 6:30pm with</i> |
| • Mrs. Jackie Maya | • Mr. Netanel Levi | <i><u>Rabbi Fried</u> & Mishnayot with <u>R'</u></i> |
| • Mr. Avi Ouknine | • Mr. Amichai Shoshan | <i><u>Ariel Cohen</u>. This week there will be</i> |
| • Mr. Daniel Hilu | • Dr. Max Nahon | <i>no Children's Program!</i> |

Refuah Shelema List

Men

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosefia, | • Isaac Ben Mesoda, |
| • Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo | • Haim Ben Marcelle, |
| • Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli, | • Yizhak Ben Simja |
| • Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana, | • Michael Ben Aliza, |
| • Mordechai Ben Miriam, | • Avraham Ben Leah |
| • Meir Raymond Ben Mathilde | • Menahem Ben Shira |
| • Aviv Ben Luba Miriam | • Moshe Ben Rahel |
| • Mordechai Ben Mercedes | • David Ben Freha Rina |
| • Yaacov Refael Ben Alegria | • R' Yosef Abraham |
| • Binyamin Simcha Ben Hilla | • Hacoheh Bar Hannah |
| • Yitzhak Ben Rahel | • David Eliyahu Ben |
| • David Mordechai Ben Camouna | Miriam |

Women

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Simja Bat Esther, | • Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda, |
| • Rachel Bat Sarah, | • Alegria Simha Bat Esther, |
| • Nina Bat Rachel, | • Naomie Bat Rarel Adda, |
| • Gitel Rina Bat Yael, | • Malka Bat Joyce Simja, |
| • Miriam Bat Sofy, | • Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit, |
| • Rahma Bat Simha | • Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy, |
| • Esther Bat Fortuna | • Abigail Haya Bat Esther |
| • Malka Bat Dina | • Madeleine Bat Esther |
| • Raizel Bat Miriam | • Nurit Jacqueline Bat Rahel |
| • Leah Bat Rivka | • Marcelle Mesoda Bat Alegria |
| • Sol Bat Perla | • Shira Yaffa Bat Sara |
| • Chana Bat Bilha | • Eva Bat Yael Khayat |
| • Yael Bat Rut | • Camouna Bat Fortuna |
| • Esther Bat Walli | • Ruth Nehama Bat Sara |

Happy Birthday To

- Mr. Mark Aquinin – Mon. Aug. 8th,
- Refael Nahon – Tue. Aug. 9th,
- Rivka Benhayoun – Wed. Aug. 10th,
- Eitan Tobul – Wed. Aug. 10th,
- Mrs. Sally Benhayoun – Thu. Aug. 11th,
- Marc Aquinin – Fri. Aug. 12th,
- Shirel Bendahan – Fri. Aug. 12th,
- Lisa Aquinin – Shab. Aug. 13th

Happy Anniversary To

- Laurent & Anais Becker - Aug 14th
- Daniel & Ester Benayoun- Aug 14th
- Irving & Renee Levine – Aug 16th
- Samuel Cohen Scali & Karine Esthere – Aug 17th
- Joseph & Sarah Maya – Aug 22nd
- David & Silvia Cohen – Aug 25th

Nahalot

- Simja Ayash z”l the 9th of Av
(Mother of Mr. Mordechai Ayash z”l)
- Mesoda Bat Esther Z”l the 10th of Av
(Mother of Mr. David Bitton Z”l)
- Esther Bat Rachel Z”l the 11th of Av
(Mother of Mr. Philippe Cohen)
- Abraham Bar Rachel Z”l the 13th of Av
(Father of Mr. David Bitton Z”l)
- Moshe Ben Simcha Z”l the 14th of Av
(Uncle of Dr. Jean Jacques Edderai)
- Estrella Bat Oro Z”l the 15th of Av
(Mother of Mr. Alberto Belecen)
- Yaacov Bar Simcha Z”l the 16th of Av
(Father of Mr. Alain Albergel)

Next Shabbatot:

- Zoui Bat Louli Z”l the 17th of Av (Mother of Eddy Levi)
- Mazal Benbeniste Bat Rivka z”l the 18th of Av
(Mother of Mrs. Lina Guenoun z”l)

בס"ד

Torah Teasers (AISH)

1. In this parsha, what location shares a name with a close relative of the matriarch Rivka?
2. Which three metals are alluded to in this parsha?
3. In what two contexts is the number 11 mentioned?
4. In what two contexts is the number 1,000 mentioned?
5. In this parsha, which foreign nation is referred to 11 times? Which foreign land is mentioned 12 times?
6. In this parsha, which nation is compared to an insect? Where else in the Torah are a group of people compared to insects?
7. Which person is mentioned in this parsha, for the first time since parshat Vayera? Who is mentioned for the first time since parshat Vayishlach?
8. Where is snow alluded to in this parsha?
9. What four places in this parsha does someone say, "Do not fear"?
10. What three places in the book of Genesis does Hashem tell someone, "Do not fear"?
11. Which seven names of the 24 books of the scriptures are found in this parsha?

Answers

- 1) One of the locations listed in Deut. 1:1 is Lavan, which is also the name of Rivka's brother (Genesis 24:29).
- 2) One of the locations mentioned in Deut. 1:1 is "Di Zahav," which means "gold" in Hebrew. The bed of Og is described as having been fashioned out of iron (Deut. 3:11). The Jews offer to buy food and water from surrounding nations with "kesef" - "silver" (Deut. 6:28).
- 3) The Jews are an 11-day journey from Chorev (Deut. 1:2). Moshe gives a speech which occurs in the 11th month of the year (Deut. 1:3).
- 4) Moshe blesses the Jews that Hashem should increase them "one thousand fold" (Deut. 1:11). Moshe describes how he needs assistance to lead the Jews, and appoints various judges, including "leaders of thousands" (Deut. 1:15).
- 5) The nation of Emori appears 11 times. The country of Bashan is mentioned 12 times.
- 6) The people of Emor are compared to bees, in the manner they attacked the Jews who attempted to enter the land of Canaan following the incident of the spies (Deut. 1:44). In parshat Shlach, the spies compare themselves to grasshoppers, in relation to the giants who lived in Canaan (Numbers 13:33).
- 7) Lot appears for the first time since parshat Vayera (Deut. 2:9). Esav is referenced multiple times in this parsha, for the first time since parshat Vayishlach (Deut. 2:4).
- 8) The verse states that the Emorites called Mount Chermon by the name "shenir" (Deut. 3:9). Rashi states that shenir means "snow" in Germanic and Canaanite languages. Interestingly, Mount Chermon today is covered with snow at its high elevation areas.
- 9) 1) Just prior to the sending of the spies, Moshe tells the Jews not to fear taking possession of the land of Israel (Deut. 1:21). 2) Hashem tells Moshe not to fear fighting Og, the king of Bashan (Deut. 3:2). 3) Moshe commands Yehoshua not to fear the kings in Canaan (Deut. 3:22). 4) When Moshe appoints judges, he tells them not to fear anyone (Deut. 1:16).
- 10) 1) In parshat Lech Lecha, Hashem tells Avraham not to fear since He will protect him and bless him (Genesis 15:1). 2) In parshat Toldot, Hashem encourages Yitzchak with the words, "Do not fear," after Yitzchak has several disputes with the Pelishtim over the wells (Genesis 26:24). 3) In parshat Vayigash, Hashem assures Yaakov on his way down to Egypt not to fear leaving Canaan (Genesis 46:3).
- 11) Devarim (Deut. 1:1), Numbers (Deut. 1:1), Echa (Deut. 1:12), Yehoshua (Deut. 1:38), Vayikra (Deut. 3:14), and Melachim (Deut. 3:21). Shneim Asar (Tre Asar) (Deut. 1:23, see Baba Batra 14b).



DAF YOMI SPONSORS

THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF THE DAF YOMI IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE KAMHAZI FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR FATHER SHELOMO BEN YAAKOV Z"L & FOR HATZLACHA OF THE WHOLE FAMILY

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HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.

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LEILUY NISHMAT אברהם בן גרסי-ה ז"ל, שלמה בן תמם ז"ל, אליהו בן רחל ז"ל, ותמם בת אורו ז"ל תנצב"ה

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.

THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY

THE BITTON FAMILY

LEILUY NISHMAT OF THEIR DEAR FATHER DAVID BEN MESSODA Z'L & FOR HATZLACHAT AM YISRAEL

HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE, AMEN.

WEEKLY INSPIRATION

Believing That Our "Limp" Will Heal

(Rabbi Eli Mansour from iTorah)

In Parashat Debarim, Moshe recounts several of Beneh Yisrael's experiences as they traveled through the desert, including the time when they prepared to journey along the border of Edom, the nation that descended from Esav, the brother of Yaakov Abinu. G-d commanded Beneh Yisrael not to initiate hostilities against Edom, because they were not entitled to Edom's territory "Ad Midrach Kaf Ragel" – literally, "even walking with your feet" (2:5). Meaning, Beneh Yisrael were not allowed even to peacefully pass through Edom's territory without the kingdom's permission.

Rashi brings an additional interpretation of this verse from the Midrash, which explains that one day, we will, in fact, take possession of the land of Edom. The phrase "Ad Midrach Kaf Ragel," the Midrash writes, means that Beneh Yisrael may not take over Edom until the time when G-d will "step with His feet," as it were. This refers to a prophecy of Zecharya (14:4) foreseeing the final redemption, when Hashem will "stand" upon Har Ha'zetim (the Mount of Olives) in Jerusalem, and take revenge from the enemy nations that oppressed the Jewish People. At that time, we will be entitled to take the land of Edom, the nation which destroyed the Second Temple and has committed numerous atrocities against Am Yisrael.

Additionally, this verse hearkens back to an earlier event – Yaakov Abinu's wrestle with the Satan, the angel representing Esav. As we read in Parashat Vayishlah (Bereshit 32:24-29), a mysterious attacker began fighting with Yaakov as he made his way back to Eretz Yisrael from Haran, and the Rabbis explain that this was the Satan. They wrestled throughout the night, and the Satan, unable to kill Yaakov, struck him in the thigh, dislodging the "Gid Ha'nasheh" (sciatic nerve), thus causing Yaakov to limp. In commemoration of this event, we refrain from eating this part of animals. The Hatam Sofer (Rav Moshe Sofer, Pressburg, 1762-1839) commented that the "Gid Ha'nasheh" is one of the body's 365 "Gidim" (sinews), which correspond to the 365 days of the year, and to the 365 Biblical prohibitions. Yaakov's confrontation with the angel, the Hatam Sofer

shows, occurred on Tisha B'Ab, such that the "Gid Ha'nasheh" – and the Biblical prohibition against partaking of this part of an animal – are associated with this day, the day when we commemorate our struggles against enemy nations. Just as the Satan dealt a serious blow to Yaakov, making him limp, our foes have succeeded in dealing many devastating blows, inflicting a great deal of pain and causing a great deal of anguish, which we mourn each year on Tisha B'Ab. However, just as the Satan ultimately failed in its attempt to kill Yaakov, and, moreover, Yaakov was eventually healed from his injury, our enemies likewise are incapable of eliminating us – and one day, our "limp" will be healed. G-d will exact retribution from the nations that oppressed us, and all our pain will be permanently healed.

This is the meaning of the verse which forbids waging war against Edom "Ad Midrach Kaf Ragel." There will come a time when our nation will be healed, when we will again "walk with our feet" steadily and confidently, without a limp. And at that time, the kingdom of Edom will meet its downfall and be punished for the unspeakable tragedies it has brought upon the Jewish People.

On Tisha B'Ab, we mourn for all the pain that "Edom" has inflicted upon our nation, for all our "limping," all the suffering we have endured at the hands of Esav. But at the same time, as we reflect upon Yaakov's wrestle with the angel which occurred on this day, we are reassured that we will one day be fully healed, with the arrival of Mashiah, who will come and cure our ailments, and bring us all to the rebuilt Bet Ha'mikdash, speedily and in our days, Amen.

Appreciating What We Lost

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

The Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572) taught that all the troubles we experience are due to the destruction of the Bet Ha'mikdash and our exile. That catastrophic event is the source of all our problems. The Mikdash served as a protective force that shielded us from harm, and thus its loss is the cause of all our problems.

This itself would be sufficient reason for us to cry over and mourn the Temple's destruction. All the suffering and anguish which Jews are experiencing are a direct result of this tragedy, and we continue to feel its effects each and every day.

But there is also another reason for us to cry and mourn.

The Midrash relates that when the Romans came to destroy the Temple, they wanted to first loot the building. Before entering, they decided to send in a Jewish traitor named Yosef Meshita to take something from the Bet Ha'mikdash, promising him that he could keep whatever he took. Yosef went inside the Temple and emerged carrying the beautiful Menorah. The Romans were impressed, but they said that such an elaborate article is not suitable for a private individual. They told him to go choose something else.

"Is it not enough that I angered my Creator once," Yosef said, "that you ask me to go again?" The Romans pressured him to go, but he refused. They threatened to kill him, but he still refused, adamant in his insistence not to anger G-d. Finally, the Romans tortured him to death.

Yosef Meshita, as mentioned, had been a traitor, who turned his back on his nation and joined the Romans. What suddenly changed? Why was he now wary about angering the Almighty? The commentators explain that he experienced the sanctity of the Bet Hamikdash. Once he just walked into the building and sensed G-d's presence, he was changed, he was inspired, and he could no longer bring himself to betray his Maker.

The Mikdash was a place of unmistakable spiritual power. Just being at the site filled one with awe and drew him closer to G-d. It was the Almighty's residence, and His residence among us brings blessing. This is another reason why we cry on Tisha B'Ab, lamenting the loss of this spiritual life source. The Vilna Gaon commented that he longed to meet even a simple person who lived at the time of the Mikdash. The simpletons in that age were on a higher level than the Vilna Gaon. They had access to the spiritual power of the Temple, which has since been taken away from us, denying us this precious opportunity for elevation and closeness to G-d.

But the most important reason why we must mourn the Temple's destruction is because of the "pain," as it were, that G-d Himself experiences. The Gemara teaches in Masechet Berachot that several times each night, G-d "roars like a lion" and expresses His anguish over the Temple's destruction. We are not the only ones in exile; G-d is in exile, as well, and in a sense, His exile is worse than ours. Even in exile, we have homes to live in,

whereas G-d does not have His home, so-to-speak. We might say that He's been "homeless" for nearly two millennia.

The story is told of a man who came to pray at the Kotel. A certain Sadik saw him praying, and asked him what he was praying for. He explained that he was praying because he needed a new house and did not have the money for it.

"Before praying for your home," the Sadik told him, "pray that G-d should have a home."

The great Sadikim truly empathize with the anguish of the Shechina which has no home. They pray Tikun Hasot each night, weeping bitterly over G-d's exile. They do not worry about their own troubles because they are too pained by G-d's troubles, as it were.

We, of course, are not on this level, and there is certainly nothing wrong with praying for our needs and praying for Mashiah so our problems will be solved. But it cannot end there. We must not think only about ourselves. We must pray for the redemption for G-d's sake, with the realization that G-d's honor is compromised as long as the Temple is in ruins and we are in exile. This exile is not only about us and our troubles; it is also, and primarily, about G-d and His "troubles." We long and pray for the day when the Temple will be restored, when this long period of "homelessness" will end, and all inhabitants of the earth will recognize and give praise to the one, true G-d of the universe.

Small Favors

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

I instructed your judges at that time, saying, "Listen among your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother or his litigant. You shall not show favoritism in judgment, small and great alike shall you hear..." (1:16)

Moshe Rabbenu recounts how he warned the then-newly appointed judges not to show any favoritism that might corrupt the results of a case over which they are presiding.

A recurring theme in the Torah is that personal considerations, especially in the form of bribes, will cause a judge to view one party more favorably than the other.

The Talmud (Ketubot 105b) teaches that bribes don't necessarily have to come in the form of

money. Even seemingly minor exchanges can affect the way a person sees things. The Talmud explains, for instance, that even saying nice things to a judge may be a form of bribery that will cloud his judgment.

The Talmud goes on to list several Amoraim who recused themselves from a case after accepting favors that we would hardly consider bribery.

The Amora Shmuel was having difficulty crossing a rickety footbridge. Someone reached out and helped him cross the bridge. Shmuel asked this man what had brought him to the bridge, and the man answered that he had a case scheduled in Shmuel's Bet din. Shmuel disqualified himself from judging the case out of concern that the favor he had received from this man would cause him to subconsciously want to see this man win the case and inadvertently skew the proceedings to make that happen.

Similarly, Ameimar was sitting in Bet din, and a feather flew onto his head. A fellow came over and removed the feather. When he told Ameimar that he was there to have his case heard, Ameimar disqualified himself from hearing the case.

Mar Ukva had an instance in which someone spat in front of him, and another person came and covered up the saliva. The second person had a case scheduled in which Mar Ukva was to be the judge, and Mar Ukva disqualified himself.

The final case listed in the Talmud is with Rav Shmuel bar Yose's sharecropper, who would normally deliver Rav Shmuel bar Yose's share of the produce every Friday. One week, the sharecropper had to be in town on Thursday for a monetary case, so he decided to deliver the produce a day early. Rav Shmuel bar Yose recused himself from adjudicating the case of the sharecropper lest he be affected by the favor of having his produce a day early.

Rav Pam wonders: Were these Amoraim so fickle that the slightest favor could influence their judgment? Can you imagine a dayan misjudging a case because someone helped him across the street or cleaned his hat? Shouldn't an Amora give himself more credit than to assume that he would be biased for such trivial reasons?

Rav Pam answers that this Gemara is not so much about judicial integrity or the corrosive nature of bribes as it is about the extent of hakarat hatov

(gratitude) we should have for those who do us favors.

These Amoraim weren't fickle; they took people's favors more seriously than we do. To us, such favors might be so insignificant that they don't even register on our radar screens. But people who have worked on appreciating what others do for them consider these "minor" kindnesses worthy of so much gratitude that it might skew their judgment.

Rav Pam goes on to show how many of the problems in society today stem from a lack of hakarat hatov.

Husbands take the daily "small" favors that wives do for them for granted, and wives take their husband's favors for granted. Everyone expects the other party to do the chores and errands they usually do because "it's his (or her) job."

If each spouse would take favors as seriously as these Amoraim did, said Rav Pam, we would have many more happy, stable marriages, in which everyone would feel that they are appreciated for all they do.

The same holds true for employer-employee relationships, and virtually all other relationships as well. If people would look at what the other party does for them instead of considering it a G-d-given right, they would get along much better.

Perhaps the most compelling example Rav Pam offers is the attitude people display toward yeshivot, Bait Yaakovs, and day schools. If alumni and parents would have the proper hakarat hatov toward the institutions that educated them or their children, they would give generous, ongoing gifts to those schools, and our mosdot wouldn't be in the sorry state of financial collapse they are in. But all too often, the attitude is, "I paid my tuition. I did my job. You did your job. Don't bother me anymore!"

And people who are truly makir tov don't appreciate only the good things that people do for them; they even feel a debt of gratitude to those who hurt them in a way that ultimately ended up helping them.

When Rav Kook was still in Europe, he would spend his summers on the Baltic seacoast in Latvia, along with many other European rabbanim.

The resort had a room set aside for davening. One evening, Rav Reuven Zelig Bengis had yahrtzeit, but there were only nine people in the improvised shul. One of the nine went outside to look for a tenth man, and found one nearby. Little did he realize that another man who had yahrtzeit had

gathered exactly ten people just outside their room, and that the man whom he had summoned into Rav Bengis's minyan was needed for the other minyan.

The person who organized the minyan outside stormed into the room and started yelling at Rav Bengis, heaping insults upon him.

Rav Kook was well known for his great love for every Jew, but this action was beyond the pale, even for Rav Kook. He walked over to the person who was berating Rav Bengis and slapped him across his face for insulting a talmid chacham.

This man grew so furious at Rav Kook that he decided to sue him in a secular court for assault. A commotion ensued. Several people asked Rav Kook to apologize so the matter would not go any further, but Rav Kook refused. "If it was for my own honor, I would apologize," he explained. "But Rav Bengis was shamed. I am not sorry that I slapped a person in order to defend the honor of a talmid chacham. Let him take me to court!"

A few days later, the fellow had a change of heart. He came into Rav Kook, apologized, and told him he was not going to take him to court.

For many years, it seemed that that was the end of the story.

Years later, however, Rav Kook visited the United States. He was approached by the very person whom he had slapped years earlier at the resort.

"I owe the Rav a great debt of gratitude," the man exclaimed, removing a gold watch from his pocket and presenting it to Rav Kook.

He explained that after Rav Kook had slapped him, life in Europe became unbearable for him. He became infamous for being the one who yelled at Rav Bengis and got slapped by Rav Kook. When he could no longer bear the shame, he decided to leave Europe and go to America where no one knew him. He struck it rich in America, eventually becoming a millionaire. He felt his good fortune was all the result of the slap from Rav Kook, and he wanted to give the Rav a gift to express his gratitude.

It is hard to feel gratitude for a slap in the face, be it literal or proverbial. But the least we can do is learn to be as appreciative as the Amoraim were toward those who do us favors.

And that level of hakarat hatov wasn't limited to the generation of the Talmud. The Chofetz Chaim, who

lived less than a century ago, was a Kohen and could not attend funerals. But when a woman who had once donated a window to his yeshivah in Radin passed away — and we are not talking about a designer stained-glass window — he followed the casket from a distance all the way to the cemetery in appreciation for her donation.

If we would appreciate the favors others do for us — however small they are — the world would be a far better place!

Don't Flaunt It

(Rabbi Frand)

The Kli Yakar lived during a time when the Jews enjoyed prosperity, and he did not approve of the way they dealt with it. He urged them to be more discreet, to keep a low profile and not draw attention to themselves with ostentatious lifestyles.

He supported his exhortation with a homiletic interpretation of Moshe's words to the Jewish people. "You have enough, circle the mountain, and turn to the north (tzafonah)." The word tzafonah can also be translated as "the hidden." In other words, you have enough material things. Now hide them! If you've got it, you don't have to flaunt it!

Eisav has a long memory, writes the Kli Yakar. Whenever he sees Yaakov prosper, he believes with all his heart that it is only because of the blessings that he believes Yaakov stole, the blessings that should have gone to Eisav.

Yaakov himself was already worried about this. When famine struck all of the Middle East, everyone was forced to run to Egypt, the only place where large stockpiles of food existed. It was the only way to avoid starvation.

Yaakov's pantry, however, was well stocked with food, and his family could have gone a long time without a trip to Egypt. Nonetheless, Yaakov sent them to buy food. "Lamah titra'u?" he said. "Why should you show off?" According to Rashi, Yaakov was concerned about the children of Eisav and Yishmael. Why should they see that you have plenty of food while they are starving? That would be a foolish thing to do.

Living in the United States, which is so liberal, so tolerant, we tend to forget this important lesson.

Regardless of how benign American society is, it is still exile. We still live among non-Jews, not all of whom share the full measure of tolerance which has made this country the superpower that it is today. We still need to watch our step. If we have been blessed with prosperity — money, real estate, nice homes, automobiles and clothing — there is no need to flaunt our wealth.

“Why do you show off?” said Yaakov. It is impolite. It is unwise. It is even dangerous.

G-d's Answer to a Perplexing Question

(Rabbi Zev Leff)

Who is the wise man that may understand this and who is he to whom the mouth of the L-rd has spoken that he may declare it? Why has the land perished, burnt up like a wilderness that none pass through? And the L-rd said, “Because they have forsaken my Torah, which I set before them, and have not obeyed My Voice, nor walked therein” (Yirmiyahu 9:11-12).

The question of why the *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed and the Land left desolate was posed to the Sages and the prophets (*Nedarim* 81a). None could explain until *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* Himself revealed that it was a result of having forsaken the Torah. The *Gemara* continues that the failure to listen to G-d's voice and walk in the Torah's ways refers to their failure to recite *bircat haTorah*.

Rabbeinu Yonah asks how this seemingly obvious fact — that the Torah was forsaken — could have eluded the Sages and prophets? To his question we can add others. The *Gemara* in *Yoma* says that the first *Bet Hamikdash* was destroyed because of immorality, murder and idolatry. Why, then, did Yirmiyahu mention only the failure to make a blessing over Torah study. Moreover, where did the Sages see in the verse itself that it refers to the failure to make a blessing rather than total abandonment of the Torah?

Rabbeinu Yonah answers that in fact the generation learned Torah constantly and fulfilled the *mitzvot*. That is why the Sages did not recognize that they have forsaken the Torah. But if so, how did they fall to such a level that they committed the three cardinal sins? Why didn't their Torah learning protect them? To this Hashem replied: their Torah learning was lacking, as seen from their neglect of the blessing over their learning.

Let us try to understand what dimension the blessing adds to Torah learning and how this deficiency is

hinted to in the verse itself. Yeshayahu (*Yeshayahu* 28:10) castigated the Jewish people for serving Hashem, “Command by command, line by line, a little here, and a little there.” His rebuke was based on their failure to integrate the observance of all the *mitzvot* into a unified service of G-d. Just as Hashem is One, so, too, is His will one. He has one all-encompassing request of man. As the verse says, “What does the L-rd your G-d ask of you other than that you fear Him?” (*Devarim* 10:12). What Hashem demands from us is a constant awareness of His presence and of our obligation to emulate Him and act according to His will. All the 613 *mitzvot* are in fact expressions of *emunah* in Hashem (see *Maharsha* to *Makkot* 23b).

Since we are human beings in a physical world, we cannot relate to G-d's will without it being broken down into segments that we can deal with individually. Imagine a globe of the world encased in a larger globe. In the outer globe, 613 small windows are cut, each window exposing a small portion of the surface of the enclosed globe. A composite picture from all the windows would yield a view of the globe within in. So, too, the individual *mitzvot* are merely partial manifestations of G-d's one, all-inclusive will. Each *mitzvah* is a window through which we glimpse a portion of that will.

Thus there is more to leading a Torah life than merely observing 613 rules. The ultimate goal is to understand the implications of each *mitzvah* in the context of the overall Divine will that must shape our personality, outlook, and actions. In addition to *shemiyah lekol Hashem* - listening to G-d's voice and obeying His commands - one must also have *shemiyah bekol Hashem* - listening into G-d's voice, an understanding of the implications and meaning of those *mitzvot* in their broader context. Observance of the Torah “*tzav letzav, kav lekav*,” i.e., rule by rule, without sensitivity to the aspects of Divine will revealed in each *mitzvah*, is inadequate.

Yaakov told Esav, “I lived with Lavan and kept all 613 *mitzvot* and didn't learn from his evil deeds.” Keeping the 613 *mitzvot* and not learning from Lavan's evil ways are two separate things. Only if one seeks G-d's will within the *mitzvot*, can he create a Torah *hashkafah*, a character and lifestyle that precludes being influenced by Lavan's evil ways.

That was the deficiency of the generation of the *Churban*. They kept the *mitzvot* and learned Torah, but did so perfunctorily.” ...Within their mouths and lips do they honor Me, but their hearts are far from Me, and their fear of Me is as a commandment of men learned by rote” (*Yeshayahu* 29:13).

Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz was once invited to be the guest of a certain individual for the Friday night *seudah*. Arriving home with his host, it was immediately obvious that the hostess had fallen asleep from an exhausting *erev Shabbos* and had failed to awaken on time to put the finishing touches to the table. Her embarrassed husband berated her for her failure to cover the *challos*. Reb Shraga Feivel thought to himself how absurd it was for the man to humiliate his wife for not having covered the *challot*—a *minhad* designed to keep the *challos* from being “embarrassed” during *Kiddush* and to teach us how sensitive we must be to another’s honor. The host, in his concern for the *minhag*, had completely ignored its implications.

Failure to see the *mitzvot* as an expression of the totality of G-d’s will, and not as just disjointed commands, leads to the distortion of *mitzvot* themselves. One year I received an urgent call just before Yom Kippur from a woman in my congregation. Her husband had been told by his doctor that he was suffering from a condition which could prove life-threatening if he fasted. Nevertheless he was determined to fast. I spoke to his doctor and consulted another observant doctor to confirm the diagnosis. There was no doubt that fasting would endanger his life.

I called in the man and explained to him that he must eat on Yom Kippur. He looked me straight in the eye and said, “Rabbi, you’re a young man and I’m about three times your age, well into my seventies. Since my bar mitzvah I have not eaten on Yom Kippur, and I do not intend to start now.” I replied that I could not force him to eat on Yom Kippur, but that as soon as he left my office, I would instruct the *gabbai* never to give him another honor in our *shul*. When he asked why he deserved such treatment for being strict with respect to Yom Kippur, I told him that we are prohibited from honoring idol worshipers.

“What idol worship am I guilty of?” he demanded to know. I explained, “Hashem, the G-d of Israel, has decreed that you must eat on Yom Kippur. If some other g-d has commanded you to fast, it is irrelevant to me if you call it Zeus, Kemosh or Yom Kippur — all idols are the same.”

The *Gemara* (*Yoma* 23a) describes how the Kohanim used to race up the ramp of the altar to determine who would perform the sacrificial service that day. Once, two *kohanim* were neck-to-neck, at which point one drew a knife and thrust it into his adversary’s heart. Distorting the *mitzvot* by losing sight of their context transformed the sacrifices into a cult, which led in turn to murder.

Hashem’s answer to Yirmiyahu revealed how people who studied and observed Torah could fall to the depths of immorality, murder and idolatry. “They forsook My Torah” — not the Torah, but My Torah. They failed to hear G-d’s will expressed in the Torah; — they failed to hear into My voice. And therefore they failed to walk in the ways of the Torah — they failed to make the Torah an all-encompassing guide.

All of this is symbolized by the failure to make a *berachah* prior to learning. The *berachah* begins, “*ashira kidishaynu b’mitzvoti*”— the purpose of the *mitzvot* is to sanctify us and to inspire us to holiness. The second *beracha* emphasizes that the purpose of Torah is to make us — those who know and emulate G-d’s character traits in order to develop a complete Torah personality. And the third *berachah* emphasizes, — that G-d has chosen us from the nations of the world and given us the responsibility to become a nation of *Kohanim* and a holy people. The *berachah* enjoins us not to merely hear the words, but to consider their implications.

For this reason we refer to an observant Jew as a *shomer Torah u’mitzvot*. At first glance, the reference to both Torah and *mitzvot* seems redundant. The intention is to emphasize that in addition to *mitzvot*, this person observes the Torah, the complete expression of G-d’s will.

The purpose of *Eretz Yisrael* is to provide the most conducive, holy environment in which to observe the *mitzvot* so that we can create a total Torah life for the Jewish people as a whole. But when the Jewish people observe *mitzvot* perfunctorily, without the intention to live a complete Torah life, then the need for the land is negated, and its physical destruction follows. That is the lesson Hashem revealed to Yirmiyahu.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No Expiration Date on Your Spouse’s Need for Respect and Appreciation

(Emuna Braverman @aish.com)

The older you get the more important it is to intensify your efforts to fulfill your spouse’s needs.

There is a story in the Book of Genesis that I always find beautiful and slightly puzzling. The Almighty

deliberately hides from Abraham the fact that his wife Sarah said he was old.

The thing is, he *was* old. Ninety-nine to be precise! Was Abraham so sensitive about his age? And by then, they had been married for over 70 years. Did he really need her to think of him as young, or conversely would he really be insulted to hear that she considered him old? I understand the lesson about sensitivity in marriage but is really still necessary at their advanced ages?

The Torah seems to be saying that the answer is yes.

Perhaps we should look at ourselves and our marriages and to continue to be sensitive in our relationships even as we too start getting older (although not quite 99!). It's a well-known idea that men crave respect. We might think that the need fades with time. Haven't they already achieved so much? Don't they already know how much we respect them? Haven't we been telling them for years? Do we really still need to demonstrate my respect?

The Torah seems to be suggesting yes. The need/desire to be respected by the one person in the world whose opinion really matters to you never fades. It may even intensify. Perhaps as our husbands' impact on the world fades, their need for respect grows, and we (and perhaps their children and grandchildren) may be the only external source of it.

Whatever the circumstances, it would be a mistake to think there is an expiration date on our husband's need for respect and our obligation to offer it.

Simultaneously, our desire to be loved and even admired physically doesn't seem to diminish with time. Even as the wrinkles encroach, even as our hair turns gray, even as our knees and backs and hips start to creak, we want to be told how beautiful we look (and we may even go to some desperate lengths to try to encourage that praise!). Like men, I suspect that our need for that admiration may increase proportionately to our aging process as opposed to decreasing.

When I first read that story in the Torah, I almost thought it was silly. I was young and being sensitive to aging seemed a long way in the distance. Now, after covering a significant portion of that distance (!), it looks very different. I applaud the need for sensitivity and recognize with new appreciation the importance of intensifying my respect and admiration for my husband, not to mention his need to intensify his appreciation in return!

Authority in Parenting

(By Rebbetzin Chana Heller)

Authority is not a four letter word. It's essential in raising healthy children, and in fostering their relationship with G-d.

Authority is a politically incorrect word for many of us, but it is alive and well in Judaism. In fact, everything in Judaism rests on the concept of authority -- the authority of G-d, the Torah, rabbis, courts of law, teachers and parents.

Authority is a good thing. Kids need it to grow up in a healthy way. They thrive on the fact that they have parents who are in charge, making rules and doling out consequences. Of course parents have to be loving and fair authoritative figures in order to create a healthy relationship, but kids want parents who are in control. No matter how much they try to run the show, children do not really want to be in charge. They know that they don't know enough and in order for them to feel safe, secure and loved they need parents who can confidently take charge.

Children see their parents as authority figures. From a child's perspective, parents are like G-d. They are omnipotent and omniscient. They care for us, feed and clothe us. They protect us from harm.

Lack of respect for authority makes many schools dangerous and fearsome places.

As an extension of this, children need teachers, principals and other authority figures to provide order and security in their world. So many children feel insecure going to school today. Bullies and weapon-toting kids seem to fear no one. Lack of respect for authority permeates many schools and makes them dangerous and fearsome places.

As a child matures, he realizes that his parents are not all-powerful or all-knowing. In fact, they are not at all what he first imagined them to be! If, however, the parents were successful at their task as parents, they have primed the child to be able to enter a relationship with G-d. The child understands the concept of authority. He has had the experience of submitting to his parents' authority and abiding by their rules. He has felt helpless without them for a significant period of his life. He recognized they had power to protect him and create order in his life. The child is now ready to take this experience to a higher level.

LEARNING ABOUT G-D THROUGH OUR PARENTS

The parent-child relationship exists to teach us about our relationship with G-d. The concept of G-Dis an abstract one, so G-D gives us an earthly parallel relationship that enables us to learn about who He is and how He relates to us. We learn about the possibility of unconditional love and compassion from our parents. We learn what it means to exist within a dependent relationship and to relate to authority figures who make rules for our benefit.

Human beings are the only living things created so dependent on their parents for such an extended period of time. G-D designed it this way so that we can understand the extent of our total dependence on Him.

When children honor their parents, it is considered as if they honored G-d.

Part of our role as parents is to transition our children from their initially immature concept of G-d-like parents to a mature relationship with G-DHimself. To this end, G-D gives parents authority that is akin to His own. In fact, our Sages say that when children honor their parents it is considered as if they honored G-DHimself (Talmud, Kiddushin 30 b).

It is not only children, therefore, who need authority. We all do. We all need to feel that we live in an ordered world with the right people in charge. The reason many of us feel so much anxiety is because we often feel we can't trust the people in charge. It is very painful to hear stories of policemen beating the innocent, government officials taking illegal campaign contributions and presidents lying under oath. We cannot feel safe and secure in a world where there is no authority to respect or trust.

We need a government that makes sensible laws that people follow. Imagine a world without law. Rabbi Chanina said, "Pray for the welfare of the government, because if people did not fear it, a person would swallow his fellow alive" (Pirkei Avos 3:2). Adherence to law and order is vital to our security and well-being.

G-D IS OUR ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

G-d, of course, is our ultimate authority. He is our one and only security. We know we cannot fully trust anyone else. Just as children need loving parents who make rules for their good, we need G-d. G-d's laws order our world. They let us know what is expected of us. We know what the limits are and that there are consequences to our behavior. We also know we are too limited in our intelligence to be running the world. We make our best effort to contribute to society and improve what we can but in the end we are glad G-Dis in charge.

One of the main tasks of a Jew is to accept the authority of G-d. Getting this concept is so critical to a Jew that we have a holiday which is devoted to internalizing this very idea. This holiday is Rosh Hashanah.

The main theme of Rosh Hashanah is the idea that G-Dis King. The word "*HaMelech*", the King, is found innumerable times in the Rosh Hashanah prayers. We accept that we are living in His universe and cannot take even one breath without His will. We accept that we have no existence independent of Him and His will.

On Rosh Hashanah we do something we never do the entire year in order drive this reality home. In the Musaf (additional) service we recite the Aleinu prayer and where it says, "we bend the knee," we actually prostrate ourselves fully on the ground. (More traditional synagogues do this. If you've never tried it, go to a synagogue this year that does it. I guarantee you an intense emotional experience!)

This bowing down is one of the highlights of my year. It is the one moment of the year that I feel fully in touch with reality. There is a G-d, He is in control, I owe everything to Him and am totally dependent. G-Dis my King. The rest of the year I float in and out of this consciousness, but for that moment it is crystal clear and I ask G-D for the ability to hang on to this experience. Authority is real and its name is G-d.

A CONSTANT STRUGGLE

G-D knows how difficult this concept is for us. Inasmuch as we want and need authority to make us feel secure and taken care of, we also want to run the show. The dual nature of man (call it the higher and lower selves or the *Yetzer Hatov*, the Good Inclination and the *Yetzer Harah*, the Evil Inclination) makes it difficult for us to accept authority. We see this in children as well as adults. It is human nature on the one hand to want to submit to G-D and on the other hand to want to be the one in charge, submitting to no one but ourselves and our own desires.

We're torn. We want to submit to G-D and we want to submit to no one but ourselves and our own desires.

It is a constant struggle. Submitting to G-d's authority is tough. Another tool a Jew has towards this end is saying the *Shema* prayer. It is our daily dose of proclaiming that G-Dis King and accepting His authority. A Jew starts his day with the *Shema* and says it again before he goes to sleep, saying it out loud day after day in order to internalize its message.

We parents have a major responsibility in determining our children's future relationship with G-d. How we use our authority will have a major impact on how

they relate to all authority figures and ultimately to G-d. We need to use our power wisely, by providing loving care, clear limits and fair consequences. We do harm by being neglectful and not providing a safe structure within which our children can grow. If our rules are arbitrary or we are on a power trip with our kids, the results could be disastrous.

Most parents are, of course, less than perfect and a few are downright abusive. Children of unfair, excessively authoritarian or abusive parents are very likely to have special challenges in learning to relate to G-D and accepting His authority. In fact, people who have trouble finding a relationship with G-D often attribute it to problems with their parents.

We need to work hard at making ourselves the type of people our children will be able to respect and want to listen to. We need to ask ourselves where we are falling short and how we can improve. We need to know that by being the most loving authority figures we can possibly be that we are opening doors for our children's spiritual growth.

DAILY HALACHOT

Habdala For One Who Needs to Eat When Tisha B'Ab is Observed on Sunday

(@itorah.org)

When the 9th of Ab falls on Shabbat as it does this year, the observance of Tisha B'Ab is delayed until after Shabbat. As such, Habdala is recited on Sunday night, at the conclusion of Tisha B'Ab, and not on Mosa'eh Shabbat. In this case, one who is required by doctor's orders to eat on Tisha B'Ab must recite Habdala before eating. Since eating is forbidden after Shabbat before one recites Habdala, those who need to eat on Tisha B'Ab which is observed on Sunday must first recite Habdala. According to many Halachic authorities, a person in this situation recites Habdala just before he needs to break the fast. If, for example, a person is able to fast until 9am on Sunday morning, then, according to this view, he recites Habdala at that time, when he needs to break his fast. According to this opinion, since the person does not need to eat on Mosa'eh Shabbat, there is no reason to recite Habdala then, and Habdala should be recited only when he needs to break his fast. Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, disagreed. He felt that if a person knows for certain when Tisha B'Ab begins that he will not be completing the fast, as his medical condition

does not allow him to fast for the entirety of Tisha B'Ab, then he should recite Habdala at its usual time, on Mosa'eh Shabbat. If it is definite that one will need to recite Habdala and eat at some point over the course of Tisha B'Ab, then he should recite Habdala on Mosa'eh Shabbat, as usual. However, if the individual is uncertain whether he will need to break the fast, as this depends on how he feels over the course of Tisha B'Ab, then he should not recite Habdala until he eats. Since there is a chance that he will complete the fast, he should not recite Habdala on Mosa'eh Shabbat, and should instead wait until he realizes he cannot complete the fast, and then recite Habdala when he needs to eat. If a person is able to complete the fast, but needs to drink water at some point during the day (as in the case of patients with kidney disorders), then he does not recite Habdala before drinking. Even on an ordinary Mosa'eh Shabbat, the Shulhan Aruch rules that it is permissible to drink water before Habdala. Accordingly, when Tisha B'Ab is observed on Sunday, those who need to drink on Tisha B'Ab do not need to first recite Habdala. One recites Habdala on Tisha B'Ab in this case only if he needs to eat. When one recites Habdala on Tisha B'Ab, he omits the festive verses which are normally recited as an introduction to Habdala, and also omits the Beracha over the Besamim. He begins with "Kosh Yeshuot Esa," and recites the Beracha over the wine and the Beracha of "Ha'mabdil."

Summary: When Tisha B'Ab begins on Mosa'eh Shabbat, Habdala is recited on Sunday night, at the conclusion of Tisha B'Ab. However, one who knows for certain when Tisha B'Ab begins that he will not be able to complete the fast, due to a medical condition, recites Habdala on Mosa'eh Shabbat, even if he will not need to eat until sometime the next day. If one is unsure whether or not he will be able to complete the fast, then he does not recite Habdala on Mosa'eh Shabbat, and if he needs to eat during Tisha B'Ab, he recites Habdala before eating. One who is able to complete the fast but needs to drink water does not recite Habdala before drinking. When one recites Habdala on Tisha B'Ab, he omits the festive verses which are normally recited as an introduction to Habdala, and also omits the Beracha over the Besamim.

KIDZ CORNER

INTERESTING MIDRASH

(from Torah Tots)

If the Hat Fits....

Moshe begins his five-week farewell speech to the *Bne Yisrael* by saying, "These are the words" (*Devarim* 1:1).

Rashi explains that because Moshe was delivering words of rebuke he expressed himself in a veiled manner and only mentions the negative incidents by allusion.

The *Malbim* (Rabbi *Meir Leibush Malbim*) once delivered a fiery sermon on *Shabbat* about the importance of *shmirat Shabbat* (not desecrating the *Shabbat*). The very next morning a prominent, wealthy member of the congregation burst into the home of the *Malbim*, livid with rage.

"What right do you have to insult me in public?" he yelled at the *Malbim*.

"Don't you know that embarrassing your fellow man in public is worse than all the desecration of *Shabbat* that goes on in the whole world? Don't you know I am one of the greatest philanthropists in the community and that a sizeable portion of your wages comes from my pocket?" He ranted on like this for some time.

Finally, when the *Malbim* was able to squeeze in a word edgewise, all he said was, "Your hat looks so good on you. Did you have it custom-made?"

The congregant looked quizzically at the *Malbim*, wondering why he responded with a comment that had nothing to do with the conversation.

Irritated, he replied, "No, I did not have it custom-made. Just like everyone else, I went into a hat store and tried on a few hats until I found the one that suited me and I bought it."

"If so," said the *Malbim*, "what do you want from me? On the previous *Shabbat* I spoke about the importance of *tzedaka* (charity), and I also had an irate visitor on Sunday, a wealthy member of our community who is very miserly."

"Believe me, I have no particular person in mind when I speak. Every week the people who fall short in the subject that I raise, come to me and complain that I embarrass them. I make different speeches on a variety of *mitzvot*, meaning to attack no one. Those who feel that the speech fits them, are like those who choose a hat from the rack that fits them perfectly."

Moshe spoke in a cloaked and indirect manner. No doubt those who realized that he mentioned their failing picked their "custom-made hat."

Kid'z Korner (Revach)

Tisha Beav End of Exile

(Adapted from *Mishle Yaakov*, pp. 396-397)

A government minister once suffered from an insolent and rebellious son named Jack. When Jack's behavior hit a new low, and he failed to show any signs of remorse, his father decided it was necessary to teach the young man a lesson. He banished Jack from his house.

And yet, Jack was still his son. The minister made sure to quietly support the young man. He would secretly send him money so that he shouldn't starve.

As the weeks and months passed by, the minister became more and more agitated. He missed his son. Still, he felt it would be wrong to write him and invite him back home. After all, Jack had behaved abominably, without any expression of regret or remorse. How could he rescind the punishment, when Jack had not indicated any desire to change? And yet he missed his son terribly, and was at a loss as to what to do.

A good friend understood what the minister was going through. "I agree," he told the minister, "that it would be a mistake to invite Jack to come back without any change on his part. But if you listen to my advice, your son will come back on his own volition, without inviting him home."

"How do you propose to accomplish that?"

"I know that your son is only getting by due to your financial support. Even though you do this quietly - perhaps even Jack doesn't realize where the money is coming from - but everyone knows that you are helping him out. Otherwise, how else could he be supporting himself?"

"As long as you keep sending him money, Jack will stay there, with his arrogance and insolence intact. But if you stop supporting him, he will have no choice. He will be forced to come back and ask for your forgiveness in order to be allowed back in your home."

Time to Return Home

At the time of the Temple's destruction, G-d decreed that, due to our failings, we needed to be exiled far away from our land. Nonetheless, our Father in heaven still loves us; and He continues to

support us, so that even in our dispersion among the nations, we should be able to survive.

But if we should see that this Heavenly support stops -- that G-d "hides His face" from us and no longer protects us -- then this is a sign that G-d dearly wants us to come home. As the Sages commented in *Berachot* 3a, "Woe to the Father Who needed to banish His children from His table!"

After all the wrong things we did, it is not G-d Who needs to appease *us*. But if G-d no longer supports and watches over us, if life in exile becomes unbearable -- then it is time for us to return home and ask for G-d's forgiveness.

This is what the Torah predicts: "When you are in distress, and all of these tragedies happen to you - - *then* you will return to the Eternal your G-d and obey Him" (Deut. 4:30).

Napoleon Bonaparte's Tisha B'Av Lesson

One Tisha B'Av as Napoleon was walking through the streets of Paris he heard bitter wailing coming from inside a building. When he walked in he saw a group of Jews sitting on the floor saying kinos and crying. He asked them, "Why are you crying." They answered that, "Jerusalem was overrun and the Temple destroyed." Napoleon thought for a minute and then told the Jews, "Do not to worry it is just an untrue rumor. I know for a fact that all is quiet in the Middle East."

The group then explained to him that they are mourning an event that took place 1600 years earlier. As astounded Napoleon replied, "If you are still crying 16 centuries later I have no doubt that one day your temple will be rebuilt."

Napoleon's comments give logical spin to the Gemara's statement "Kol Hamitabel Al Yerushalayim Zocheh V'Roeh B'Nechamata". He who mourns Yerushalayim will merit seeing it rebuilt. If the determination and connection are still there after the long bitter galus we will certainly merit building the Bet HaMikdash once again. However, warns the Gemara, if the 2000-year long river of tears runs dry, we will be cut off and can never navigate our way back home.

Those Who Joke On Tisha B'Av

Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning and the most somber day of the year. We sit on the floor and mourn the Bet HaMikdash. Yet we find people who not only don't seem to be too terribly deep in mourning yet even treat the day lightly and even joke around. How can we relate to these people?

Our attitude can be guided by a Mashal from Rav Binyamin Finkel. When a father dies young and you make a Shiva visit you may find distraught parents, a tearful widow, sad siblings, and shell shocked children. Yet while all this is going on inside the somber apartment, outside you may find a young child playing and laughing and having a good time, genuinely enjoying the days off with the whole family around and lots of attention.

Do you say to yourself, "well if he thinks his father's untimely passing is a big joke don't expect me to feel bad for him"? Of course not. This child has lost more than anyone inside crying. And what makes your eyes well up with tears is his childish naivety that doesn't even allow him to understand what he has lost. This child has lost his guiding light, the one who will raise him to be a man. He has lost the one who will provide for all his needs. He has lost his emotional pillar and now belongs to a fragile orphaned home instead of a steady and secure one.

We tend to relate to the Bet HaMikdash as a spiritual treasure and therefore those spiritually inclined take the day far more seriously than others. But the Bet HaMikdash was far more than a place to reach spiritual heights. With the presence of the Shechina down here on earth in the center of Yerushalayim, the world was a different world. The people were strong and beautiful, the produce was something we can't even imagine, even the worst weather was more glorious than any day we can dream of.

The Bet HaMikdash was the place where Heaven met earth. Just like we cannot fathom what Olam Haba is like, we cannot even imagine what life was like in the shadow of Hashem's palace. All the bracha in the world flowed through our Bet HaMikdash, and from there to the rest of the world. This gave Am Yisrael extreme superiority in ever facet of Ruchniyut and Gashmiyut.

The most hardened materialistic heart can relate to this as well. And if he laughs about the loss, and cares more about the measly pleasures he has earned, or focuses his mind planning his upcoming thrills, he is truly a sad case and deserves the pity reserved for a naive orphan.

Why Do We Fast On Tisha B'Av If It Burned Mostly On The 10th?

On the afternoon of the Tisha B'Av the Romans lit the Bet HaMikdash on fire. It burned that afternoon and the next day the tenth of Av. After the Churban

there was a debate if the fast day should be held on the ninth or the tenth of Av. It was decided that the ninth would be the day of Tisha B'Av.

This can be explained with the Medrash Yalkut Shimoni that says that when Hashem wanted to destroy the Bet HaMikdash he needed to remove His Shechina. If the Shechina was present in the Bet HaMikdash no human would be able to destroy it.

The significance of the Bet HaMikdash to us is not the unique architecture, the stones, or the utensils. The Bet HaMikdash is a place where we connect with Hashem. It is the single place on earth where the divine and the mundane meet in the physical world. The whole tragedy of the Churban is that that place no longer exists and that Hashem has gone away from us, taking both spiritual and material bracha with him.

Hashem removed His presence from the Bet HaMikdash before it was destroyed and only after that was the enemy able to ignite it. This is precisely the reason we fast on the 9th and not the 10th because the fast is for the loss of the Shechina which happened on the 9th. The 10th was ant climactic with the burning of an empty shell that was no longer Hashem's home.

Moreover, it was the first step of the Geula. It was "Soter Al Menat Livnot"; Just like when you purchase an old delapidated house the first step to rebuilding it is to tear down the old structure. On the 10th of Av, although excruciatingly painful to see our memories go down in flames, it was a first step towards the rebuilding of the third Bet HaMikdash Bimheira Biyamen Amen.

POUR LES FRANCOPHONES

Les Enfants que nous Mettons au Monde...

(Rav Yehonathan GEFEN - © Torah-Box)

« *Qu'Hachem, le D.ieu de vos pères, ajoute sur vous mille fois, comme vous, et qu'Il vous bénisse comme Il vous a parlé.* » (Dévarim 1,11)

D'après Rachi, les *Bné Israël* dirent à Moché : « Tu nous as accordé une bénédiction limitée [à 1000], alors qu'Hachem a déjà promis à Avraham que sa descendance serait comme la poussière de la terre, qui est innombrable. » Moché leur répondit qu'il

donnait, dans le verset précité, sa bénédiction personnelle, mais que celle faite par Hachem leur serait également accordée. Moché leur expliquait donc qu'il les avait bénis au mieux de ses capacités. Mais on ne comprend pas en quoi cette bénédiction supplémentaire fut bénéfique au peuple juif, s'il avait déjà reçu celle – illimitée – d'Hachem.

Le *'Hatam Sofer*^[1] précise que Moché testait les *Bné Israël*. Il voulait savoir pourquoi ils désiraient avoir des enfants. L'individu peut vouloir une progéniture, car elle lui sera utile (dans les travaux de la maison, pour aider à subvenir aux besoins de la famille, pour servir de compagnie et d'assistance dans son vieil âge, etc.). Mais il peut, par ailleurs, désirer mettre des enfants au monde, parce que chaque vie contient une étincelle divine, chaque nouvel être est crée *Bétsélem Élokim* (à l'image de D.) et constitue un cadeau inestimable de la part d'Hachem.

Ainsi, Moché mit le peuple juif à l'épreuve. Il le bénit en lui souhaitant une progéniture multipliée par mille. Si les Juifs désiraient avoir des enfants pour leur propre bénéfice, ils auraient estimé qu'une telle bénédiction suffisait – plus que cela aurait été inutile, voire une charge trop lourde. Mais ce n'est pas ce qu'ils souhaitaient, car ils demandèrent des enfants « trop nombreux pour être comptés ». Pourquoi voulaient-ils tant d'enfants ? Bien évidemment, ils ne cherchaient pas à satisfaire leurs besoins matériels ou émotionnels, mais visaient la bénédiction illimitée que chaque enfant mis au monde apporte. Ils se prouvèrent ainsi dignes de la bénédiction d'Hachem.

Plusieurs siècles plus tôt, ces attitudes contradictoires opposèrent Yaacov Avinou à son frère Essav. Ce dernier voulait profiter de ce monde tandis que Yaacov aspirait au monde futur. Quand celui-ci revint de son voyage en dehors d'*Erets Israël*, Essav vint à sa rencontre. Il remarqua immédiatement la famille nombreuse qui suivait Yaacov et lui demanda qui étaient ces personnes. Yaacov répondit qu'ils étaient les enfants qu'Hachem lui avait donnés.

Le *Pirké Dérabbi Éliézer*^[2] détaille ce dialogue entre Yaacov et Essav et nous révèle leur débat sous-jacent. Essav demandait à Yaacov pourquoi il avait tant d'enfants, car ceux-ci représentaient, à ses yeux, le monde matériel ; or Yaacov était censé hériter du monde futur uniquement. Sa question provenait donc de l'idée qu'il se faisait du rôle des enfants – ils sont là pour assister l'individu dans le *Olam Hazé*. Yaacov répondit qu'il ne partageait pas l'opinion de son frère à ce sujet – les enfants ont une âme, une étincelle divine, ils représentent une opportunité de se rapprocher d'Hachem, de transformer le *Olam Hazé* en mission spirituelle et de la mener à bien. En

revanche, Essav les considérait comme un moyen de profiter de la matérialité (les enfants sont là pour traire les vaches et participer aux nombreuses tâches ménagères qui doivent être quotidiennement remplies).

Les descendants de Yaacov et d'Essav – le peuple juif et le monde occidental – héritèrent de cette différence d'approches. Certes, de nombreux changements survenus dans le monde provoquent des distinctions encore plus drastiques à ce sujet. Tandis qu'à l'époque d'Essav, les enfants étaient considérés comme un avantage, comme une aide financière pour la famille, ceci n'est plus le cas de nos jours. Nous ne vivons plus dans une société agricole et au lieu de travailler pour subvenir aux besoins de la famille dès leur plus jeune âge, les enfants passent de nombreuses années à vivre pour eux-mêmes, et à coûter très cher à leurs parents. Ils sont donc considérés comme une lourde charge financière, sans compter le temps passé à s'occuper d'eux ainsi que les soucis qu'ils occasionnent. Il est certainement plus facile d'avoir peu d'enfants, ou de ne pas en avoir du tout. Quant à ceux qui estiment que les enfants sont de bonne compagnie, ils peuvent facilement satisfaire ce besoin avec des animaux domestiques, moins coûteux et moins tracassants. Ainsi, au fil du temps, le taux de natalité a considérablement diminué dans le monde occidental et continue à dégringoler – la plupart des familles ont deux enfants, au maximum, et il n'est pas rare de rencontrer des couples sans enfants, et ce, de leur plein gré.

Ceci contraste énormément avec la conception du judaïsme authentique. Un Juif pratiquant sait bien que les enfants ne sont pas mis au monde pour son profit, ni pour lui rendre la vie meilleure. Chaque enfant a une mission spirituelle, il a en lui une étincelle divine, et nous a été confié – pour être guidé, pour accomplir la volonté divine, et avoir une part au monde futur. Par conséquent, les familles nombreuses sont bien plus fréquentes dans le milieu pratiquant, bien qu'il soit plus « facile » de vivre avec moins d'enfants.[3]

On dirait pourtant que l'idéologie d'Essav à ce propos s'infiltre parfois chez les Juifs orthodoxes. Un parent oublie parfois l'objectif ultime de sa noble tâche et considère ses enfants comme une source de plaisir. Évidemment, il n'y a rien de mal à se réjouir des réussites de nos enfants, mais si telle est l'attitude générale, nous traverserons inévitablement des périodes difficiles, où les défis liés à l'éducation nous sembleront trop grands. D'ailleurs, Rav Noa'h Orlowek enseigne qu'il ne faut jamais s'imaginer que les enfants sont des « machines à Na'hat », censés nous combler de satisfaction. Non seulement cela

nous mènera forcément à certaines déceptions, mais cela va à l'encontre de l'approche prônée par Yaacov Avinou.

Puissions-nous tous mériter de nous inspirer de l'exemple de Yaacov, dans notre rôle de parents.

REFLEXION SEMANAL

El Maestro como Héroe

(Rav Jonathan Sacks)

Imagina el siguiente escenario. Tienes 119 años y 11 meses. Estas cerca del fin de tu vida. Tus esperanzas han recibido golpes devastadores. Dios te dijo que no entrarás a la tierra hacia la cual has conducido a tu pueblo durante cuarenta años. El pueblo al que guías te ha criticado una y otra vez. Tu hermana y tu hermano, con quienes compartías la carga del liderazgo, han fallecido. Y sabes que ninguno de tus hijos, Guershon y Eliezer, heredarán tu puesto. Tu vida parece estar llegando a un final trágico, sin llegar a destino, tus aspiraciones no se cumplieron. ¿Qué haces?

Podemos imaginar una gama de respuestas. Puedes hundirte en la tristeza, reflexionar sobre lo que hubiera podido pasar si el pasado hubiese tomado otra dirección. Puedes continuar suplicándole a Dios para que cambie de opinión y te deje cruzar el Jordán. Puedes retrotraerte a los recuerdos de los buenos momentos, cuando el pueblo entonó el cántico en el Mar Rojo, cuando aceptaron el pacto en el Monte Sinaí, cuando construyeron el Tabernáculo. Estas serían reacciones humanas normales. Pero Moshé no hizo nada de eso, y lo que hizo ayudó a cambiar el curso de la historia judía.

Durante un mes, Moshé reunió al pueblo al otro lado del Jordán y les habló. Esos discursos forman el material del libro de Deuteronomio. Son pláticas extraordinariamente amplias y cubren una historia del pasado, una serie de profecías y advertencias respecto al futuro, leyes, narraciones, un cántico y un grupo de bendiciones. Todo eso junto, constituye la visión más amplia y profunda de lo que es ser un pueblo sagrado, dedicado a Dios, que construye una sociedad que se erige como modelo a seguir para la humanidad respecto a cómo se debe combinar la libertad y el orden, la justicia y la compasión, la dignidad individual y la responsabilidad colectiva.

Sin embargo, por encima de lo que Moshé dijo durante el último mes de su vida, está lo que él hizo. Él cambió de carrera. Cambió su relación con el

pueblo. Moshé ya no era el liberador, quien entregó la ley, el que obraba milagros, el intermediario entre los israelitas y Dios, sino que se convirtió en la figura que sería conocida para la memoria judía como *Moshé Rabenu*, "Moshé, nuestro maestro". Así es como comienza el libro de Devarim: "Moshé comenzó a elucidar esta Torá" (Deuteronomio 1:5), usando el verbo *beer*, que no hemos encontrado en ese sentido hasta ahora en la Torá y que sólo aparece una vez más hacia el final de este libro: "Sobre las piedras escribirás todas las palabras de esta Torá, bien elucidadas" (Deuteronomio 27:8). Él quiso explicar, exponer, dejar claro. Él quiso que el pueblo entendiera que el judaísmo no es una religión de misterios inteligibles sólo para unos pocos, sino que es "una herencia para [toda] la congregación de laakov" (Deuteronomio 33:4), como dijo en su último discurso.

Durante el último mes de su vida, Moshé se convirtió en el máximo educador. En estas charlas, él hizo más que decirle al pueblo cuál era la ley. Él les explicó por qué la ley era esa. No hay nada arbitrario en ella. La ley es como es debido a la experiencia de esclavitud y persecución del pueblo en Egipto, que fue un tutorial respecto a por qué necesitamos libertad y una libertad regida por la ley. Una y otra vez, Moshé dijo: Deben hacer esto porque una vez fueron esclavos en Egipto. Deben *recordar* y nunca *olvidar* (dos verbos que aparecen repetidamente en el libro) de dónde vienen y cómo se sentían al estar en exilio, perseguidos e indefensos. En el musical "Hamilton" de Lin-Manuel Miranda, George Washington le dice a un joven y ardiente Alexander Hamilton: "Morir es fácil, joven. Lo difícil es vivir". En Deuteronomio, Moshé les dice a los israelitas que, en efecto, la esclavitud es fácil, lo difícil es la libertad.

A lo largo de Deuteronomio, Moshé llega a un nuevo nivel de autoridad y sabiduría. Por primera vez lo escuchamos hablar extensamente con su propia voz, y no simplemente transmitiendo las palabras que recibía de Dios. Su comprensión de la visión y los detalles es impecable. Él quiere que el pueblo entienda que las leyes que Dios les ha ordenado son para su bien, no en beneficio de Dios.

Todos los pueblos antiguos tenían dioses. Todos los pueblos antiguos tenían leyes. Pero sus leyes no venían de un dios, sino de un rey, un faraón o un gobernador, tal como el famoso código de ley Hamurabi. Los dioses del mundo antiguo eran vistos como una fuente de poder, no de justicia. Las leyes eran creadas por los hombres para poder mantener el orden social. Los israelitas eran diferentes. Sus leyes no eran creadas por sus reyes. La monarquía del antiguo Israel era singular al no otorgarle al rey

poderes legislativos. Sus leyes venían directamente de Dios, el Creador del universo y el Liberador de Su pueblo. De ahí la resonante declaración de Moshé: "Observen [estas leyes] cuidadosamente, porque eso mostrará su sabiduría y entendimiento a las naciones, las cuales oirán acerca de todos estos decretos y dirán: 'Por cierto esta nación es un pueblo sabio y entendido'" (Deuteronomio 4:6).

En este momento clave de su vida, Moshé entendió que aunque él no estuviera *físicamente* con el pueblo cuando entraran a la Tierra Prometida, él seguiría estando con ellos intelectual y emocionalmente si les daba las enseñanzas para que se las llevaran con ellos hacia el futuro. Moshé se convirtió en el pionero de lo que tal vez sea la mayor contribución del judaísmo al concepto del liderazgo: la idea del maestro como un héroe.

Los héroes son personas que demuestran tener coraje en el campo de batalla. Moshé sabía era que las batallas más importantes no son militares, sino espirituales, morales y culturales. Una victoria militar cambia de lugar las piezas sobre el tablero de la historia. Una victoria espiritual cambia vidas. Una victoria militar casi siempre dura un período breve. O que el enemigo vuelve a atacar o que aparece un nuevo oponente más peligroso. Pero las victorias espirituales, si la lección no se olvida, pueden durar eternamente. Incluso personas bastante comunes y corrientes, como por ejemplo Iftaj (Libro de los Jueces, capítulos 11-12) o Shimshon (capítulos 13-16) pueden ser héroes militares. Pero aquellos que le enseñan al pueblo a ver, sentir y actuar de forma diferente, quienes extienden los horizontes morales de la humanidad, son muy raros. Uno de ellos, Moshé, fue el más grandioso.

Él no sólo se convirtió en maestro en Deuteronomio. En palabras que quedaron grabadas desde entonces en los corazones judíos, él le dijo a todo el pueblo que debían convertirse en una nación de educadores:

Hazles conocer a tus hijos y a los hijos de tus hijos, cómo una vez estuvieron ante Hashem tu Dios en Joreb (Deuteronomio 4:9-10)

Cuando mañana tu hijo te pregunte: "¿Cuál es el significado de los testimonios, los decretos y las leyes que Hashem tu Dios te ha ordenado?", le dirás: "Fuimos esclavos del faraón en Egipto, pero Hashem nos sacó de Egipto con mano poderosa..." (Deuteronomio 6:20-21)

Enséñenselas a sus hijos, habla de ellas cuando te sientes en tu hogar y cuando viajes en el camino, cuando te acuestes y cuando te levantes" (Deuteronomio 11:19)

De hecho, los dos últimos mandamientos que Moshé les dio a los israelitas fueron explícitamente de naturaleza educativa: reunir a todo el pueblo el séptimo año para escuchar la lectura de la Torá, para recordarles su pacto con Dios (Deuteronomio 31:12-13) y, "Escriban para ustedes este canto y enséñalo a los Hijos de Israel" (Deuteronomio 31:19); lo que se entiende como la orden de que cada persona debe escribir para sí misma un rollo de la ley.

En Deuteronomio, entra un nuevo término al vocabulario bíblico: el verbo *l-m-d*, que significa aprender o enseñar. Este verbo no aparece ni una vez en Génesis, Éxodo, Levítico o Números. En Deuteronomio aparece diecisiete veces.

En todo el mundo antiguo no había nada similar a esta preocupación por la educación universal. Los judíos se convirtieron en el pueblo cuyos héroes eran maestros, cuyas ciudades eran escuelas y cuya pasión era el estudio y la vida de la mente.

La transformación de Moshé al final de su vida es una de las más inspiradoras en toda la historia de las religiones. De hecho, con ese acto él liberó su carrera de la tragedia. Se convirtió en líder no sólo para esa época sino para todas las épocas. Su cuerpo no acompañó a su pueblo cuando entraron a la Tierra, pero sus enseñanzas lo hicieron. Sus hijos no lo sucedieron, pero sí lo hicieron sus discípulos. Él puede haber sentido que no había cambiado a su pueblo durante su vida, pero en la perspectiva completa de la historia, los cambió más de lo que cualquier otro líder cambió a cualquier otro pueblo, convirtiéndolos en el pueblo del libro y la nación que no construyó zigurats o pirámides, sino escuelas y casas de estudio.

El poeta Shelley dijo: "Los poetas son los legisladores no reconocidos del mundo".(1) Sin embargo, no son los poetas sino los maestros quienes dan forma a la sociedad, transmitiendo el legado del pasado a aquellos que construyen el futuro. Esta idea sostuvo al judaísmo por más tiempo que a cualquier otra civilización, y todo comenzó con Moshé durante el último mes de su vida.

NAHALOT

Nahala of Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim zt"l Shabbat 9th of Av

Yitzhak Nissim (Hebrew: יצחק נסים; 1896 --- August 9, 1981) was a Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel. Nissim was born in Baghdad and immigrated to Israel in 1925. He studied under Rabbi Sadqa Hussein. In 1955 he

became Chief Sephardic Rabbi. As a gesture of goodwill, he visited some kibbutzim, which at that time were predominantly Ashkenazi and secular. He was also emphatic that the Bene Israel, who had been rejected as Jews by other rabbis, were Jewish.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI visited Israel but refused to visit the heads of other religions, insisting that they come visit him. In protest, Nissim boycotted this visit, insisting that he was willing to visit the Pope as long as there would be reciprocity if a chief rabbi came to Rome.

He was the father of Moshe Nissim and Meir Benayahu.

May the merit of Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim protect us all.
Amen

DAILY DOSE

Halachot & Minhagim of Tisha Beav

(Daily Halacha & Magen Avot)

Children Fasting

Rav Menahem Azarya Mi'Pano (Italy, 1548-1620), in one of his responsa (111), wrote that there is no value whatsoever in forcing children under the age of Misva obligation to fast on the fast days. To the contrary, one should ensure that children are properly fed on fast days. This is also the view of Hacham Ovadia Yosef, who ruled that even children aged 11 and 12 must eat on fast days, even if they want to fast. Hacham Ovadia noted that particularly regarding Tisha B'Ab (and the other fasts commemorating the events surrounding the Hurban), there is no purpose in training children to fast, as we fervently hope that the Mashiah will come and there will no longer be any obligation to fast. There is certainly no need to train our children in the Misva of fasting if we hope that they will never have to observe this Misva.

If a child insists on fasting, his parents may allow him to delay or skip his breakfast, but he should not be allowed to miss lunch. This is the ruling of Hacham Ovadia Yosef and of Rav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (Israel, 1910-1995).

Tefilla

On the eve of Tish'a beAb we remove the Parokhet haHekhal (the covering of the Aron haQodesh) from the synagogue, and we turn the cloth covering of the Sefer Tora that we will read from on Tish'a beAb, and they remain like this until midday of Tish'a beAb. Some also put a little ash on the Sefer Tora itself. The reason for all this is explained in the Rama where he brings the pasuq in Ekha (2:17) " 'Asa Ado-nai asher zamam, bisa' imrato" - "Hashem hath done that which He devised; He hath

performed His word." From this we also derive the custom of the Sefer Tora (to turn the cover inside out) and the midrash says on this pasuq that the destruction of the Bet haMiqdash is like HaQadosh Barukh Hu tearing the "cloth" of His Kingdom. See QS"A of Ribbi Toledano zs"l (p. 257); Kaf haHayim (Siman 559:19); Meqor Hayim (Pereq 205:1). The aspect of the ashes is brought down in Nahagu ha'Am (p. 114).

We have the custom at Shaharit and 'Arbit of Tish'a beAb that everyone sits on the ground for the entire tefilot and wears shoes of cloth or rubber, not leather. This is because just as a mourner is obligated to sit on the floor during his seven days of mourning, we too do the same. Also, this is learned from Ekha (2:1) "Hishlikh mishamayim eres tiferet Yisrael" - "He hath cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel" and (2:10) "Yeshebu la-ares yidemu, ziqné bat sion" - "They sit upon the ground, and keep silence, the elders of the daughter of Sion." See S"A (Siman 599:3) and Kaf haHayim (Siman 599:3).

In the morning berakhot of Tish'a beAb and Yom Kipur we skip the berakha "she'asa li kol sorki" because we are forbidden from wearing leather shoes on this day and this berakha makes reference to shoes. Hazal said that a person should sell all of his possessions in order to buy shoes to wear on his feet, rendering shoes a basic necessity; therefore, it is not right to say "she'asa li kol sorki" - "that He gave me all of my needs," since we are missing this most basic need; also there are reasons according to the Qabala to not say this berakha on Tish'a beAb. See Maran HaHida in *Qesher G-del* (Siman 5:19), Rbi David 'Obadia zs"l in *Nahagu Ha'am* p.114, QS"A p.296 by Ribbi Toledano zs"l

a) Pesuqé Dezimra

After "Hashem Melekh" before Barukh She-amar, the minhag is to say Tehilim 137 ('Al naharot Babel) (1). Some also say the piyut "Eftah pi lehodot" (2). Some say a different version of Barukh She-amar than that which is normally said throughout the year (3).

The minhag is to say "Ha'azinu" instead of "Az yashir Moshé" and to skip the paragraph beginning "Ki l'Ado-nai hamelukha". (4)

(1) See sidur *Kol Tehina*, published in Livorno.

(2) This was the minhag in Meknes.

(3) See sidur *Kol Tehina*.

(4) This is the minhag in nearly all Jewish communities; the reason for it is that it is inappropriate to sing the joyous Az Yashir Moshé on Tish'a BeAb - it is more fitting to say words of rebuke such as Ha'azinu. See *Tur* (O"H 559) and *Bet Yosef* there.

b) The 'Amida

The minhag is not to say "Sim Shalom" as usual, but rather " 'Osé hashalom...". See Abudarham and sidur

Kol Tehina. This was the custom of Rbi Shalom Messas zs"l.

c) Kedusha

Instead of "Naqdishakh," the minhag is to say the nusah beginning "Neqadesh et Shimkha...". This is actually the nusah that Ashkenazim recite year-round. See the *Abudarham* (p.256).

d) Birkat Kohanim

The minhag is NOT to do Birkat Kohanim at Shaharit nor at Minha on Tish'a Beab.

The reason for this is that Birkat Kohanim must be done with joy, and there is no joy on Tish'a BeAb. See Ribbi Refael Barukh Toledano zs"l (*Qisur Shulhan 'Arukh* 394), *Dibré Shalom veEmet* p. 96, *Kaf haHayim* 559:36, the source is from sefer Abudarham in *Seder Tefilat Hata'anot*. This minhag is in contrast to that of the Qabalists of Bet El Yeshiba, which is to say Birkat Kohanim on Tish'a BeAb.

f) The Reading of the Tora

Mare Haketav (the lifting of the Sefer Tora, and showing it to everyone) is not done, rather we place it directly on the table and start the berakhot of the Tora. (1)

Some are accustomed, however, to do "Hagbaha" like normal. (2)

The Tora is not read on the Teba, but rather on a table or on the back of one of the congregants. (3)

At this moment we say: "Nafela 'Ateret Roshenu" - "The Crown of Our Heads has Fallen" and we read the perasha of the day "Ki Tolid Banim" (from Perashat Vaethanan).

(1) See Ribbi Yosef Benaïm (*Noheg beHokhma*, p.145), *Mayim Hayim* p.225, and *Shemesh Umaghen* (Heleq 3, Siman 75). This is a rebuke for us because it says in the pasuq (Yirmiyahu 9:11) "Why has the land perished? (9:12) And Hashem said: Because they have forsaken My law."

(2) In the city of Meknes they are accustomed to do Hagbaha and say that if someone reads the Sefer Tora without doing Hagbaha he transgresses the pasuq "arur asher lo yaqim" - "Cursed is he who does not confirm (Yaqim literally means "raises") the words of this law by doing them."

(3) See *Masekhet Soferim* (18:7), *Abudarham* (p.256), *Bet Yosef* (O"H Siman 559), *Qobes Minhagim* (Heleq 2), and *Osgrot haMaghreb* (Tish'a beAb). This is in order to further illustrate the humiliated state of the Tora; and with this we ask Hashem to have mercy on us "if not for our sake then do it for the sake of Your Tora" since now it is in such a lowly state.

Some have the custom that the Kohen and Levi do not receive 'aliyot. (1)

Some have the minhag that each 'olé says the berakha "Barukh dayan ha-emet" before saying the berakha of the Tora instead of "Hashem 'Imakhem"; those who do this must say the berakha without shem umalkhut. (2)

The minhag is to translate the haftara "Asof Asifem" into Arabic [or Spanish], pasuq by pasuq, along with words of rebuke. (3)

(1) This was the minhag in Fes; see Ribí Yosef Benaim zs"l (*Noheg beHokhma*, p.145).

(2) See *Bet Yosef* (O"ח 559). This was the minhag of the Toshabim of Fes, Ribí Yosef Benaim zs"l (ibid.) because with this phrase we are justifying the judgment that we have been given (i.e. that the Bet haMiqdash was destroyed). Another reason for saying this is based on what is written (Debarim 32:4) in Parashat Ha'azinu "a G-d of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He".

(3) See *Keter Shem Tob* (Part 4, p.84) and *Arba'a Gebi'im*.

h) Kadish

Kadish Titqabal is not said at 'Arbit or Shaharit.

(1) The Kadish "dehu 'atid lehadeta" is said at the end of 'Arbit and at the end of the Kinot at Shaharit.

The reason for this is that part of the destruction of the Temple was that G-d refused to listen to the prayers of the Jewish people as long as they sinned.

Certain places have the minhag not to use the silver Tora yad/pointer when reading from it on Tish'a beAb, rather the reader uses his actual finger. The reason for using a "yad/pointer" for reading the Tora is to honour it since this way we do not come to even touch the parchment. But on Tish'a beAb we point with our fingers because this way we demonstrate once again that the honour of the Tora (on this day) is in a lowly state. See *Osgrot Hamaghreb* (Heleq 2).

During Shaharit of Tish'a beAb we have the minhag not to recite the Pitum Haqetoret nor 'Alenu Leshabeah at the conclusion of the Tefila (like we normally do) since 'Alenu is a song of praise and is not fitting for this day nor is reading about the qorbanot that ceased on this day. See the mahzorim and Kaf Hahayim (Siman 559:48).

After Shaharit we have the minhag to go to the cemetery and pray by the graves of our parents and o because on this day even the sadiqim are mourning the loss of Jerusalem and we plead with them to request mercy on behalf of Hashem. This also increases the theme of mourning the Bet Hamiqdash for the person. See *Osgrot Hamaghreb* (Tish'a Beab). The source of this minhag is the Rama (Siman 581:10).

The minhag is to add the "Nahem" prayer into the 'Amida only at Minha on Tish'a beAb, not at 'Arbit or Shaharit.

There is a difference of opinion among the Geonim (early medieval authorities) as to whether Nahem should be said at all the services on Tish'a BeAb or only at Minha. Rab 'Amram Gaon (see Seder Rab 'Amram Gaon) writes that it should be said at all the prayer services, while Rab Sa'adia Gaon (see Sidur of Rab Sa'adia Gaon) rules that it should be said only at Minha. The minhag follows Rab Sa'adia Gaon. The Bet Yosef explains the reason for Rab Sa'adia Gaon's ruling: that the Temple was set on fire at the end of the day on Tish'a BeAb, and therefore at that time it is appropriate to pray for the comforting and rebuilding of Jerusalem. This remained the minhag even after the Sefaradim accepted the Shulhan 'Arukh as their main source for halakha, because even though Maran rules there that one should say Nahem in every prayer service, he also says that his intent is not to discredit and change established minhagim.

Misc:

After 'Arbit of Tish'a beAb everyone sits on the floor and listens to the Talmid Hakham recount stories of the destruction of the Bet haMiqdash from the Gemara and Midrash. This is to firmly implant in our hearts what sins caused its destruction, and through this we will find our way back to Hashem (ie. we will do teshuba). See *Yahadut haMaghreb* p. 324, in the city of Fes, Ribí Yosef Benaim zs"l would go up to the roof of his house and elaborate on the matters of Tish'a beAb to the multitudes, and the whole Nation would cry over the Destruction.

We are accustomed on the night of Tish'a beAb to have very minimal light at home in order to increase the somber mood. This is according to what is written in Ekha (3:6) "bamahashakim hoshibani kemeté 'olam" - "He hath made me to dwell in dark places, as those that have been long dead," this is also done in the synagogue as we mentioned previously.

On the night of Tish'a beAb we sleep in an uncomfortable manner, some on a mattress placed on the floor and some have the custom to put a rock under their pillow. This is brought in the Maharil where he says that this is based on the Midrash on the pasuq (Bereshit 28:17) "En zé ki im bet Elo-him" - "This is none other than the house of G-d" where Ya'aqob Abinu a"h foresaw the destruction of the Temple and thus took a rock and put it under his head as an act of mourning; so too we do this act on the night of Tish'a beAb. See *QS"A* (p.256) by Ribí Toledano zs"l and *Qobes Minhagim* (Heleq 2).

We do not do any work on Tish'a beAb and there is a saying in Arabic: "Flous Ekha Umi Kamokha

ma fihoum siman berakha" - "Money [earned] on Tish'a beAb (Ekha) and on Purim (Mi Kamokha) do not have any blessing." See QS''A p.255 by Ribí Toledano zs''l, *Qobes Minhagim* (Tish'a beAb), and *Kaf haHayim* Siman 554:37.

It is worthwhile to note the halakhic opinion of the *Yalqut Yosef* (Mo'adim, Halakha 14, p. 581-2). He brings down the *Bet Yosef* who says that "in a place where it is the custom to work on Tish'a beAb, we work. In a place where the minhag is not to work we do not work. But the minhag of Jews in general is NOT to do any work throughout Tish'a beAb." The *Yalqut Yosef* then adds that if one is poor and does not have what to eat that night it is permissible for him to do work discretely, provided he does not get sustenance from *sedaqa*. There are those who permit working after *Hasot*. Work that will result in a financial loss if not done otherwise is permissible. Anyone who does work in a non-permissible manner on Tish'a beAb will not see *berakha* from it." Please consult your Ribí for a proper ruling on this matter as every person's situation is different.

It is forbidden to apply skin cream on Tisha B'Ab, except for the purpose of healing chapped, infected or scraped skin. Deodorant may be used on Tisha B'Ab, but perfume is forbidden.

One who must take pills on Tisha B'Ab may do so, and if he needs water to swallow the pill, he should first make the water bitter, such as by placing in it strong tea concentrate or the like

Immediately after 'Arbit of Mosa-é Tish'a beAb, we have the minhag to go out and do Birkat haLebana (the blessing over the moon) as a community in accordance with the ruling of Maran haHida. This is to demonstrate to the Nation of Israel that even though the Bet haMiqdash was destroyed, it will be rebuilt anew just as the moon is renewed every month. We also make reference to the eventual renewal and rejuvenation of the Jewish People ("She-af hem 'atidin lehithadesh kemotahh"). See the *Qisur Shulhan 'Arukh* p. 258 by Ribí Toledano zs''l.

Women had the minhag on the night of Tish'a beAb to gather at the entrances of houses and mourn the destruction of the Bet haMiqdash, the " 'Asara haRuge Malkhut" - "the Ten Martyrs," and Hanna and her seven sons who were brutally tortured and executed. Some do this at the entrance to the cemetery. See *Osrot Hamaghreb* (Heleq 2) and *Qobes Minhagim* (Heleq 2).

After *hasot* of Tish'a beAb, women have the minhag to tidy up the house and make all of the beds to "prepare" and show that we are "ready" for the

coming of Mashiah, since it is said that during Minha (after *Hasot*) of Tish'a beAb, Mashiah is born and is named Menahem. The reason for this is brought down in *Birké Yosef* (Siman 559:7) by Maran haHida who quotes the *Sefer haKavanot* of the Arizal who says that when Bené Yisrael saw that fire was set to the hekhal of the Bet Hamiqdash on Tish'a Beab, they recited the Mizmor of Tehilim which mentions that Hashem will pour out his wrath on wood and stone (the Temple). They became very happy because if Hashem did not do this then he would have taken out his anger on us and we would have been decimated, *has veshalom*. Therefore, this brought relief and comfort to the nation. Due to the reasons mentioned, we do not rebuke these women for making preparations for after Tish'a Beab on Tish'a Beab, especially since this minhag dates back to the ancient cities of Italy. See QS''A p. 258 by Ribí Toledano zs''l; *Kaf haHayim* (Siman 559:76).

It is known that Tish'a Beab will turn into a Yom Tob when Mashiah comes, so to strengthen our faith in this happening speedily in our days, women have the minhag to honor this Yom Tob to be by **baking cakes after *hasot* in order to break the fast with them.** See *Noheg beHokhma* p.247 by Ribí Yosef Benaim zs''l; *Shulhan 'Arukh* (Siman 559:10); and *Kaf haHayim* (Siman 559:77).

Tisha B'Av - The Ninth of Av

Overview and laws of the Jewish national day of mourning. (By: Rabbi Shruga Simmons Aish)

What Happened on the Ninth of Av?

On Tisha B'Av, five national calamities occurred:

1. During the time of Moses, Jews in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the 10 Spies, and the decree was issued forbidding them from entering the Land of Israel. (1312 BCE)
2. The First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar. 100,000 Jews were slaughtered and millions more exiled. (586 BCE)
3. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans, led by Titus. Some two million Jews died, and another one million were exiled. (70 CE)
4. The Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. The city of Betar – the Jews' last stand against the Romans – was captured and liquidated. Over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered. (135 CE)

5. The Temple area and its surroundings were plowed under by the Roman general Turnus Rufus. Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city – renamed Aelia Capitolina – and access was forbidden to Jews.

Other grave misfortunes throughout Jewish history occurred on the Ninth of Av, including:

1. The Spanish Inquisition culminated with the expulsion of Jews from Spain on Tisha B'Av in 1492.
2. World War One broke out on the eve of Tisha B'Av in 1914 when Germany declared war on Russia. German resentment from the war set the stage for the Holocaust.
3. On the eve of Tisha B'Av 1942, the mass deportation began of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto, en route to Treblinka.

Aspects of Mourning: The Afternoon Before Tisha B'Av

When the afternoon prior to Tisha B'Av occurs on Shabbat, there is no *Seudah Hamaf-seket* with eggs and ashes. Rather, the regular Shabbat "third meal" is eaten, albeit without guests and fanfare.

Restrictions on Tisha B'Av

Upon sundown, the laws of Tisha B'Av commence – consisting of the following expressions of mourning:

1. No eating or drinking until nightfall the following evening.

1. Pregnant and nursing women are also required to fast. If one suspects it could be harmful to the baby or mother, a rabbi should be consulted. When Tisha Beav is postponed to Sunday, one should consult the Rabbi for the laws.
2. A woman within 30 days after birth need not fast.
3. Others who are old, weak, or ill should consult with a rabbi. (MB 554:11)
4. Medicine may be taken on Tisha B'Av, preferably without water.
5. In case of great discomfort, the mouth may be rinsed with water. Great care should be taken not to swallow anything. (MB 567:11)

2. Other prohibitions include:

1. Any bathing or washing, except for removing specific dirt – e.g. gook in the eyes (OC 554:9, 11). (Upon rising in the

morning, before prayers, or after using the bathroom, one washes only the fingers. See OC 554:10, OC 613:3, MB 554:26)

2. Anointing oneself for pleasure. (Deodorant is permitted.)
 3. Having marital relations.
 4. Wearing leather shoes. (Leather belts may be worn.)(see: Laws of Shoes and Chairs)
 5. Learning Torah, since this is a joyful activity. It is permitted to learn texts relevant to Tisha B'Av and mourning – e.g. the Book of Lamentations, Book of Job, parts of Tractate Moed Katan, Gittin 56-58, Sanhedrin 104, Yerushalmi end of Ta'anit, and the Laws of Mourning. In-depth study should be avoided. (MB 554:4)
 3. Other mourning practices include:
 1. Sitting no higher than a foot off the ground. After midday, one may sit on a chair. (OC 559:3) (see: Laws of Shoes and Chairs)
 2. Not engaging in business or other distracting labors, unless it will result in a substantial loss. (OC 554:24)
- Refraining from greeting others or offering gifts. (OC 554:20)
3. Avoiding idle chatter or leisure activities.

Prayer on Tisha B'Av

1. Lights in the synagogue are dimmed, candles are lit, and the curtain is removed from the Ark. The cantor leads the prayers in a low, mournful voice. This reminds us of the Divine Presence which departed from the Holy Temple.
2. The Book of Echa (Lamentations), Jeremiah's poetic lament over the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple, is read both at night and during the day.
3. Following both the night and day service, special "Kinot" (elegies) are recited.
4. In the morning, the Torah portion of Deuteronomy 4:25-40 is read, containing the prophecy regarding Israel's future iniquity and exile. This is followed by the Haftarah from Jeremiah (8:13, 9:1-23) describing the desolation of Zion.
5. In the afternoon, Exodus 32:11-14 is read. This is followed by the Haftarah from Isaiah 55-56.

6. Since Tallit and Tefillin represent glory and decoration, they are not worn at Shacharit. Rather, they are worn at Mincha, as certain mourning restrictions are lifted.
7. Birkat Kohanim is said only at Mincha, not at Shacharit.
8. Prayers for comforting Zion and "Anenu" are inserted into the Amidah prayer at Mincha.
9. Shortly after the fast is broken, it is customary to say Birkat Halevana.

Longing for G-d

Tisha B'Av is an opportune time to recapture our intense drive to connect with our Creator.

(By: Emuna Braverman)

The Torah is replete with prohibitions against idol worship, in all its many potential iterations. On first read, that seems surprising. Are we really tempted to shave the sides of our face to palliate some G-d's temper? Does it really seem probable that statues of wood or stone have any real power? Idolatry, on the face of it, seems patently absurd. Yet, the Torah is full of admonitions against idolatry and lists serious consequences for individuals or communities who stray.

How can we understand this?

We are taught that, at one time, the drive for idol worship was as strong as all of our other body drives. It was a physical urge that raged within us; we needed to suppress or sublimate it. But the Jewish people kept failing the test. The drive was too powerful.

As the Talmud describes, our sages beseeched the Heavens. "Please remove this desire for idol worship from our nature." And the Almighty granted their wish. No longer was idolatry an internal physical desire. That urge disappeared. But there was a price to pay.

The flip side of the desire to worship idols is the intense desire for a relationship with the Almighty. That would have been the appropriate way to redirect the urge.

Now, instead, they are both gone – the powerful and overwhelming desire to worship idols along with the powerful and overwhelming desire to connect with our Creator.

Yes, we want a relationship with G-d. Yes, we know it's good. Yes, we know it's comforting. Yes, we know it's right and true. But do we long for it with a passion?

Tisha B'Av gives us a chance to understand and feel what we lost. It gives us a glimpse of life when the whole world yearned to be close to the Almighty. And it gives us a vision of the future. Tisha B'Av is an opportunity to understand what it means to passionately desire a relationship with the Almighty and to live with that reality.

It gives us a chance to recapture that intense desire to bond with our Creator. But it's no longer a gift. We have to work at it. Hard.

Tisha B'Av allows us to jump start that process. As we focus on what's lost, we can also visualize what could be – and therefore be motivated to bring that new world into existence.

Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning but it's also a time for hope. The Temple will be rebuilt. We just need to channel our drives into really wanting it.

Jewish Unity and the Key to Redemption

The Jewish People are handicapped if even one Jew has fallen away from our people.

(By: Rabbi Shraga Simmons)

Why was the First Temple destroyed? Because that generation transgressed the three cardinal sins: idol worship, sexual immorality, and murder.

Why was the Second Temple destroyed? Because of unwarranted hatred.

This shows how great is the punishment for unwarranted hatred. Because the generation of the three cardinal sins was redeemed after 70 years, yet for the generation of unwarranted hatred, its redemption has yet to come.

Talmud, Yoma 9

What does the existence of the Temple have to do with love and hatred between fellow Jews?

The Temple was the main conduit for the flow of G-dliness into this world. When we had the Temple, there was respect for G-d, for His Torah -- and for each other. There were no atheists, no doubt about G-d's existence. Every Jew acknowledged one G-d and understood the genius of His laws. The world was filled with awe of G-d and love of G-d.

As we began to lose that clarity, the flow of G-dliness became severed. The prophet Ezekiel (ch. 9) actually describes *seeing* G-d's presence withdraw from the Temple. With the loss of the Temple, G-d has become more concealed -- resulting in a world filled not with clarity but with spiritual confusion. It is no

coincidence that immediately following the destruction of the First Temple (circa 421 BCE), Greek and Roman philosophy (as well as Buddhism and Tao) rose to their peak. Similarly, Christianity began concurrently with the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE).

Back to the Garden

Today, the world is beset by jealousy, greed, theft, violence, lying, impatience, intolerance, deception and fraud. We are suspicious of our neighbors and cynical of our leaders. We are factionalized and worship different G-ds. Rather than cooperate, we compete. We are manipulative and seek advantage at the expense of others. It's dog-eat-dog and every man for himself. We withdraw into our homes behind a curtain of satellite dishes, internet, and take-out food. We shield ourselves from the harsh realities, and worst of all, we despair of the notion that things can be much better. We shrug our shoulders and lament, "That's just the way life is."

Judaism says: "No!" When Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, G-d assured us of a path back. Statesmen may speak of "peace in our time," but Isaiah said it best: "The lamb will lie down with the lion... and young children will play at the cobra's nest" (Isaiah 11:6).

"Shalom," the Hebrew word for "peace," comes from the root "shaleim," which means complete or whole. "Shalom," says the Talmud, is one of the Names of G-d, for His unity encompasses all. This "one-ness" is the primary theme of the Jewish

Pledge of Allegiance: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our G-d, the Lord is ONE!"

Just as the ecosystem works to perfection -- with trees breathing carbon dioxide and clouds carrying rain, so too we seek a world where all humanity works together in harmony. This is not to suggest that we should all act the same and ignore our differences. As the saying goes: "Two Jews, three opinions." But because we have differences doesn't mean we can't love and be committed to one another, learn together, and work together for Jewish survival.

One Person, One Heart

Realize that all Jews must be united in order for the nation to be redeemed. The verse (Exodus 19:2) says that the Jewish people camped at Mount Sinai. Rashi points out that the word for "camped" is written in the singular, to indicate that they were "like one person with one heart." Say the commentators: Jewish unity is a prerequisite for acceptance of the Torah.

Further, the Midrash says: If the Jewish people were lacking just one person from the 600,000 Jews at Mount Sinai, they would not have received the Torah.

Why is this? The kabbalists point out that just as 600,000 Jewish souls stood at Mount Sinai, so too there are 600,000 letters in the Torah (including the white spaces between letters). Because just as a Torah scroll is invalid if even a single letter is missing, so too the Jewish people are handicapped if even one Jew has fallen away from our people.

Each and every Jew is completely integral -- regardless of their beliefs or level of observance. In fact, one of the spices used in the incense at the Holy Temple was "galbanum," which has a foul aroma. The Talmud (Kritot 6b) derives from here that even the worst sinners are inextricably bound into the community of Israel.

Redemption Today

Rabbi Boruch Ber Leibowitz, one of the great rabbis of pre-war Europe, was quoted as saying: "When I will stand before the heavenly court, and they will ask me, 'What merit have you brought with you?' What shall I answer? Torah? Is my Torah knowledge worth enough to be mentioned? Fear of Heaven? Are my deeds worthy of that description? There is only one thing I could possibly claim -- that I loved every Jew with all my heart. Whenever I walk in the street and I see a Jew, one thought comes to me: A blessing on his head!"

The Sages teach that the Temple and all that it represents can be rebuilt at any moment. The Midrash says that the Third Temple has already been constructed in heaven, and merely awaits our preparations here on earth. In every generation, an individual exists with the capacity to be Moshiach. The Jewish people have returned to the Land of Israel and made it bloom once again. G-d is ready when we are. For as King David writes in Psalms 95:7: "(Redemption will come) today -- if you hearken to His voice."

Kamtza and Bar Kamtza

The story that destroyed the Holy Temple.

(By: Rabbi Shruga Simmons)

The Talmud (Gittin 56) tells of a man wanted to throw a party for all his friends, so he drew up a guest list and instructed his servant to send out the invitations. One of the men on the guest list was named "**Kamtza**," but the servant made a mistake and invited "**Bar Kamtza**" instead. Oops -- Bar Kamtza was actually a sworn enemy of the host!

When Bar Kamtza received his invitation, he was very grateful to think that the host had finally made amends. But when Bar Kamtza showed up at the

party, the host took one look and told his servant to immediately eject Bar Kamtza from the premises.

When asked to leave, Bar Kamtza said: "I understand the mistake. But it's embarrassing for me to leave the party. I'll gladly pay the cost of my meal if you'll allow me to stay."

The host would hear nothing of this, and reiterated his demand to have Bar Kamtza removed.

Bar Kamtza appealed again: "I'd even be willing to pay *half* the cost of the entire party, if only I'd be allowed to stay."

Again the request was denied. At which point, the distraught Bar Kamtza pleaded: "I'll pay for the *entire* party! Just please don't embarrass me in this way!"

The host, however, stuck to his guns and threw Bar Kamtza out. The rabbis had observed this exchange did not protest, and Bar Kamtza took this to mean that they approved of the host's behavior.

The Talmud reports that Bar Kamtza was so hurt and upset, that he went straight to the Roman authorities and gave slanderous reports of disloyal behavior among the Jews. This fueled the Romans' anger, and they proceeded to attack and destroy the Holy Temple.

Making the Repair

We might think the Second Temple was destroyed because of a combination of complex reasons, a series of events out of our control. Not so. It is simply due to the sin of unwarranted hatred between Jews.

When we desire the redemption of our people, the key is to focus on fixing what we have ruined. The way to repair this tragedy is through the opposite of its cause: Everyone must make a maximum effort to love every member of the Jewish people. (see Chafetz Chaim: *Maamar Ahavat Yisrael*, Chapter 5)

This is what we are lacking today, and this is what mourn on Tisha B'Av. Every time you get into a fight with someone and you don't work it out, think long and hard that you are personally responsible for holding back the redemption. And every time you love a Jew unconditionally, we bring it another step closer.

Tisha B'Av: The Pain of Distance

On the ninth day of Av, G-d teaches us just how painful it is when He isn't there.

(By: Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld)

"When [the month of] Av begins, we lessen our joy"
(Talmud Ta'anit 26b).

The month of Av commemorates the destruction of two Temples, as well as countless other tragedies throughout Jewish history. It is a time in which we lessen our joy.

The Talmud (ibid. 29b) illustrates this principle. How do we lessen our joy? If a Jew faces a lawsuit, he should delay it. His luck is bad this month; better to push it off.

It is a very curious example. If I were authoring the Talmud and wanted to illustrate lessening joy, I would have written, "Therefore, we do not celebrate weddings, go to concerts, go to the beach, etc." Why of all things does the Talmud mention court cases? Is winning in court somehow the Talmud's definition of "joy"?

Let us look at the origins of Tisha B'Av. The first Tisha B'Av occurred at the start of Jewish history, during the Jewish people's sojourn in the desert. Twelve spies are sent to scout out the Holy Land and bring back their report. They see giants dwelling in fortified cities. They return to report that the land is frightful and forbidding. It would be impossible to conquer it; there is no point even trying. The people lose heart and cry the entire night. That night was the night of Tisha B'Av.

G-d saw their tears and responded: "You cried tears of naught, and I will establish for you [on this day] tears for all generations" (Talmud Ta'anit 29a).

There is certainly much poetic justice in G-d's response. We cried without basis, so G-d will *give us* reason to cry. But I believe when we think about it we will see that there is a great deal of *actual* justice in G-d's words as well.

The sin of the spies really makes no sense. Why were the people so scared? Because of giants? Fortified cities? Didn't they just witness the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Sea? Weren't they subsisting daily on a well which followed them in the desert and manna which fell from heaven? Did they really not know what any small child is taught today – that G-d is all-powerful, that He can do anything? Were they really afraid that the Creator of heaven and earth could not fight against a bunch of giants that He Himself created?!

The answer to this revolves around one of man's great struggles in life. Of course the Jewish people knew that G-d is all-powerful. They saw this close up:

They were living right in His presence in the desert. But that was just it. Living so close to an omnipotent G-d is scary. He saw their every move; His Divine Presence was visibly before them in the Tabernacle. As much as G-d loves us and cares for us, being right in His presence is intimidating. How could we possibly disobey Him?

If the Jews were going to go it on their own, they didn't stand a chance.

But the Land of Israel would be different – or so the Israelites thought. They would no longer be living with a supernatural spring and manna falling from the heavens. They would have to till the soil and sow the earth, growing bread through the sweat of their brow. They would live “natural” lives, just a little bit more removed from G-d. And likewise, they would have to take arms to conquer the land. An all-powerful G-d *could* do anything of course. But the Holy Land was not going to be a place of open miracles, as the Exodus from Egypt. They would have to fight for the land and occupy it on their own. And they needed to spend spies, to determine how best they might conquer it.

But there was one problem. If the Jews were going to go it on their own, they didn't stand a chance. How in the world were the puny Israelites going to take arms against massive giants? And so they cried. They wanted to feel vulnerable, just a little

more distant from G-d. But if they were, they hadn't a whisper of a chance. They had much to cry about.

G-d responded to their tears: “You want to feel distant from Me – the vulnerability of being on your own in this world? Then I'll *give* you reason to cry. I will withdraw the Divine protection which is the lot of the faithful, and let you feel how painful life is. It was too intimidating having Me close up at all times? Then you'll get your wish! I'll remove My guiding Hand. And you will see just how painful and empty life will become.”

Thus, the month of Av is the one time of year in which we cannot just glibly say everything will work out for the best. We cannot be so sanguine that G-d will take perfect care of us. This is the one time in which G-d withdraws His Divine providence to let us experience the pain of distance from Him.

We can now understand the Talmud's illustration of lessening our joy: We should not go to court since the odds are not in our favor. Is that the primary definition of joy? Yes, it is. There is no greater joy than realizing G-d is with us, and that whether we recognize it or not, everything He does for us is for our best. This is the one time of the year in which G-d withdraws His Loving Divine providence from us. In order to show

us how much we need Him, G-d removes Himself from the picture just a little bit. You didn't want to be *too* close to Me? Then feel the distance. And you will recognize just how painful life without G-d can be.

The Talmud there continues as follows: “Just as when Av begins we lessen our joy, when Adar begins we increase our joy.” Adar is the month in which the holiday of Purim occurs. In the Purim story, G-d appeared to be hidden. There were no open miracles. But when the story closes and the salvation occurs, it was clear that even in His Hiddenness G-d was orchestrating events all along. If sadness is not seeing G-d in our lives, the ultimate joy is recognizing that even when G-d appears hidden, He is really there all along, caring for us behind the scenes. If we truly learn the lesson of Av and yearn to bridge the apparent distance between G-d and mankind, we will recognize that in His Concealment He was really there for us all along.

Tisha B'Av: Waking Up to a World without G-d's Presence

How to bring G-d's palpable presence back into our world. (By: Sara Yoheved Rigler)

I remember with perfect clarity the sensation of waking up on the morning of March 9, 1990. In those first few fuzzy moments of consciousness, I oriented myself to where I was – in the spare bedroom of my parents' New Jersey apartment, and what day it was – two days after my father's death. As soon as I realized that I had woken up into a world without my father, my heart plunged into a fathomless grief, like waking up into a nightmare that will never end.

The world without my father was not simply the same world minus one; it was a totally different world. This altered, diminished world lacked the stability and goodness that was my father. This world wobbled on its axis; its gravitational pull was heavier.

It took me a year to adapt to this new world, to learn to navigate its emotional byways. Now, more than fifteen years later, I've become proficient at maneuvering in this World-Without-My-Father, but it is not and will never be the same world in which he was so benevolently and lovingly present.

The destruction of the Temple was a loss as real and as searing as death.

The ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av – called Tisha B'Av – is to the Jewish people what March 9 was to me. We misrepresent the tragedy of the day by describing it as the destruction of the two Holy Temples, as if the catastrophe is the loss of a

building. The American people do not mourn on 9/11 because of the destruction of the Twin Towers; they mourn the thousands of lives lost in the conflagration. Contrast a person who mourns the absence of the majestic towers to the New York skyline with a person who mourns the loss of his/her parents caught on the 98th floor.

Tisha B'Av is more like a death than a destruction, because on that day the world changed irrevocably.

The world without the Holy Temple is not the same world minus one magnificent structure. The world without the Holy Temple is a totally different world. The Holy Temple was the mystical vortex between the higher, spiritual worlds and this gross, physical world. The Temple service was an elaborate mystical procedure that kept the aperture between the worlds open and functioning. The Divine Presence manifested itself in the Temple and through the Temple. When the Temple was destroyed, that palpable Divine Presence removed itself from our world. It was a loss as real and as searing as death.

My son was born into a world without my father. He will never know how the room lit up when my father entered, how secure and supported dozens of people felt because of the bedrock that was my father.

In the same way, we who were born into a world without the Divine Presence have never experienced the spiritual luminosity that radiated through the aperture of the Holy Temple. We live in a dimmer, coarser world, where physical reality seems like ultimate truth while spiritual reality seems like a vague phantasm. We navigate in the nightmare without even knowing we're in it.

Divine Immanence

In the first Holy Temple, ten miracles were constant for all to see. Among them were that no matter how the wind was blowing, the smoke from the altar always went straight up and that no matter how packed the crowds of people were, at the point of the service that required everyone to prostrate, there was always sufficient room. Anyone who visited the Temple could see these miracles, these deviations in the laws of physics, simply by entering the Temple precincts.

While the First Temple (and the Tabernacle before it) stood, prophecy (hearing the voice of G-d within oneself) was commonplace. The Talmud testifies that in ancient Israel, some 3,000,000 Jews were privy to the highest spiritual level possible. Schools of prophets abounded. So rampant was Divine revelation that the Talmud could assert that all Jews were either prophets or the children of prophets.

We are like amnesiacs who experience fleeting memories of a different life, but the grasping of it eludes us.

The immanence of the Divine Presence during Temple times did not mean that everyone chose spiritual elevation. Even when G-d is present, humans can – and did – choose to go against Him. The Talmud recounts the story of Yerovoam ben Navat, who, after the death of King Solomon, split the Kingdom, usurped the throne of the northern half, and set up two golden calves for worship. G-d appeared to Yerovoam and said, "Repent, and I and you and Ben Yishai [King David] will walk together in Paradise." Yerovoam had the gall to respond: "Who will go first?" When he heard that David would precede him, Yerovoam rejected the Divine offer. The most remarkable aspect of this conversation is that G-d appeared even to someone as wicked as Yerovoam. The Divine Presence during the Temple era was so pervasive and apparent that anyone who bothered to open his eyes could perceive it.

How different is the world we live in! When the Temple was destroyed, the dogged illusion of Divine absence settled over our world like a perpetual fog. In this world where Divine hiddenness has replaced Divine revelation, we grope for proofs of G-d's existence, like fish debating about the existence of water. We are relegated to "believing" when once we simply knew. We struggle, through prayer and meditation, to experience a momentary inkling of the Divine Presence when once we simply basked in it. We are like amnesiacs who experience vague and fleeting memories of a different life, a truer identity, but the actual grasping of it eludes us.

Tisha B'Av made orphans of us all.

Achieving The Impossible

In one essential way Tisha B'Av differs from death: the catastrophe is reversible. As Rabbi Avraham Isaac Kook declared: "The Temple was destroyed because of causeless hatred [among Jews]; it can be rebuilt only by causeless love."

"Causeless love" means loving every single Jew, no matter how much s/he differs in political or religious persuasion.

"Causeless love" means loving every single Jew, no matter how much s/he differs in political or religious persuasion. It means loving Jews at the other end of the ideological spectrum. It means abortion-rights activists loving Hasidic Jews and vice versa. It means Zionists loving anti-Zionists and post-Zionists and vice versa. It means Gush Katif settlers loving the security forces who are going to evict them from their homes and vice versa. Given that the Talmud

characterizes the Jews as "the most fractious of peoples" and the daily news corroborates that description, causeless love seems like an impossible achievement.

But if someone had told me on March 9, 1990, or any day thereafter, that I could bring my father back to life by doing X, is there anything, *anything*, I would not have done?

If we yearn enough to bring the Divine Presence back into our world, is there anything beyond our capacity to achieve it?

A few years ago I learned how to harness the seemingly impossible to the power of yearning, and fly. It was during the peak of the Arab war of terror against Israel. I had undertaken to visit terror victims in hospital and to distribute teddy bears on behalf of Kids for Kids. A couple days after a lethal bus bombing in Haifa, my 14-year-old daughter and I visited the Mt. Carmel hospital where most of the injured – teenagers on their way home from school – were hospitalized.

I had never been to that hospital before. Clutching my list of terror victims in one hand and my bulging bag of teddy bears in the other, I accidentally stumbled into the intensive care unit. I asked a nurse, "Where is Daniel K.?" She pointed to the bed beside me. Lying prone on the bed was a thin, unmoving figure. I grabbed my daughter's hand and quickly exited, but the specter of that boy, the only patient I had ever seen lying face-down, haunted me. In the waiting room, I sat with Daniel's desperate parents. They had made aliyah from Uzbekistan a few years before. They explained that 17-year-old Daniel's lungs had been punctured in the terror attack. The doctors were not hopeful.

I promised them I would pray for "Daniel Chai" (when a person's life is in danger, a name expressing life or recovery is often added), but it was clear to all of us that nothing less than a miracle would save the boy.

There is a spiritual law in Judaism called, "*mida k'neged mida*," measure for measure. This means that whatever humans do, G-d responds to them in kind. When we want G-d to go beyond the laws of nature, we must go beyond our own nature. Therefore, tapping into this spiritual law, I suggested to Daniel's mother that she take on a mitzvah she had not previously done to help save her son's life, and I left the hospital planning to do similarly.

When my children started to bicker in the car on the long ride home, I told them that they could contribute to saving Daniel's life by overcoming their urge to fight. To my amazement, they acted like angels all the way home.

The next day, I had an argument with my husband. I walked away from him feeling hurt and rejected. I fled to my room, wanting only to distance myself from him. As I sat on the edge of my bed, I rehearsed to myself everything I had learned about life's essential choice: choosing between estrangement and oneness. I knew that the higher road would be to reconcile with my husband, or at least be open to whatever conciliatory steps he took, but my whole nature wanted to withdraw. I sat there for some ten minutes warring with myself. I knew exactly what I should do, but was as incapable of doing it as a paraplegic trying to pole-vault. Suddenly I was startled to hear myself say out loud: "I can't do it."

I answered my own voice, "Can you do it for Daniel Chai? Can you do it for that boy's life?"

"Yes!" came my resounding reply. "To save Daniel's life, I can overcome my own nature."

When my husband came in a few minutes later, I battled my instinct to push him away, and lovingly accepted his apology. I felt like a heroine. I knew that I couldn't do it, but for Daniel's life, I did it.

[Postscript: Daniel's mother took on lighting Shabbat candles. Despite a dangerous infection that beset him that week, Daniel had a miraculous recovery.]

When I consider the prospect of all Jews truly loving each other, I hear the voice of realism saying, "We can't do it." Then I ask: Can we do it to bring the Divine Presence back into the world? Can we do it to dispel the choking fog of Divine absence? Can we do it to end all the national and personal catastrophes that ensue in a world where G-d is not evident?

To reverse the cataclysm of Tisha B'Av, is there anything we can't do?

Stopping Lashon Hara

A primer on how to raise our children to look at the positive and speak well about others.

(By: Sarah Chana Radcliffe, M.Ed., C.Psych.Assoc.)

Words Are Powerful

Speech -- the ability to convey ideas and feelings through words -- is unique to human beings. It can be a tremendous blessing, but it's also ripe for abuse.

The words our children choose to use in expressing themselves help create their personal window on the world.

Positive forms of expression can help our children grow into positive, optimistic people who view the

world around them with generous and hopeful eyes. Negative forms of expression, such as defamatory, mean-spirited speech, will cultivate in them a negative, cynical view of the world.

Speech That Is Evil

It's easy to fall prey to a destructive pattern of speaking badly about others and gossiping -- to the point where it becomes a recreational activity! In order to enjoy the many people in our lives, we have to stop verbalizing the negativity and focus on their positive virtues. This takes a lot of effort but is essential in raising happy children.

If we're always finding fault, we will naturally be dissatisfied, disappointed and displeased, and so will be our children.

Raising happy children requires us to impart to our offspring the ability to look at everything positively --situations, places and material objects. Most important of all is how they view people.

Torah calls "evil language" anything negative, even if it's true.

The Hebrew term for speaking badly of others is called *lashon hara*, literally "evil language." Interestingly, the Torah calls "evil language" anything negative, even if it's true. (Slander -- malicious, false information is called *motzi shem ra*, literally "giving another a bad name.")

In sharp contrast to the Western adage about sticks and stones not hurting, Judaism looks very gravely upon misuse of speech. Our tradition teaches that *lashon hara* can destroy many lives, even unintentionally, in one fell swoop:

the person speaking,
the person spoken about,
and the person spoken to.

Let's look at why.

The person speaking: Although you briefly become the center of attention when you dish out a juicy piece of gossip, in the long run people start mistrusting you. "Gee, I wonder what she says about me when I'm not around." People don't trust gossips and will avoid confiding in you. In the end, you're killing your own reputation. Furthermore, because you are misusing the gift of speech that G-d gave you, you are also lessened in His eyes.

The person spoken about: The person under discussion is, of course, being killed in everyone's eyes. Whether the information is true or false, it is

hard to take back defamatory words already spoken and undo the character assassination already committed. That person's reputation is forever blemished.

The person spoken to: Interestingly enough, this is the person who is the most culpable, even though s/he is seemingly the innocent one. All s/he did was listen! But the Talmud says that listening to *lashon hara* is even worse than speaking it; the person had the power to stop it and didn't. Now the transgression is complete.

Exceptions to the Rule

Of course, there are times we are all owed to speak share negative information about others; in fact, there are times it is an obligation to do so. For example - when a friend is about to be become financially involved with a person we know to be unethical, or seriously dating a person we know to be abusive or otherwise unsuitable. Or when a child has information that will prevent harm from occurring.

Common Fallacies

Beware of the excuses children and adults often use for speaking *lashon hara*:

"But it's true!" *Lashon hara* specifically refers to sharing derogatory information when it is true. Spreading vicious lies is far worse!

"If she were here I would say it to her face." Maybe you would, and maybe you wouldn't. In any case, it is still forbidden.

"Everyone knows about it." Does this justify you adding fuel to the fire? Even if it is on the front page of the newspaper, you are still forbidden to speak about it.

Parenting Tools

Teaching our children to avoid speaking *lashon hara* takes a concerted effort. Experiment with the following tools:

Teach by example. Showing children that it's a priority for you is perhaps the most important lesson. Don't let them hear your gossiping with your friends or relatives. Don't let them hear you laughing at other people's expense. Even better than "don't let them hear you" is not doing it -- whether they're in earshot or not.

Discuss the importance of avoiding lashon hara. Help your children identify what is and isn't proper speech. Talk about how improper speech

can hurt others and how it hurts the person speaking *lashon hara*. There are a number of excellent Jewish books that can help you.

Discourage "tattling." When your kids come to "tell on" someone, tell them you aren't interested in reports of someone else's bad behavior, but that you're available if they need help or advice.

Get in the habit of not using names. There's no need for you to know the names of problem students at school unless you'll have a direct role in addressing the issue. Focus the discussion on your child's feelings, worries and concerns. If he or she needs protection that requires your intervention, tell him or her that it is proper to tell you the name of the offending child.

Don't fall into the trap of casual lashon hara. At dinner and at other family times, bring books to the table to discuss or talk about current events. When you discuss what happened in each person's day, focus on what they learned that day and how they felt. Show your children that there are more interesting things to talk about than other people's poor behavior.

Give positive reinforcement. Be sure to commend your kids when they manage to tell you about school or neighborhood problems without mentioning who was involved. Let them know that you're proud of them - and that G-d is too.

Reminders! Tape a reminder to the telephone: "No Lashon Hara!" Put up signs on the fridge and in other prominent locations around the house.

Study it. Read a small section of the laws of *lashon hara* each day during dinner or at your Shabbat table. Encourage discussion and examples.

Tears on Tisha B'Av

It's a dynamic that transcends generations: Tisha B'Av and the future of Jerusalem are inextricably linked.

(By Rabbi Shraga Simmons Aish.com)

*If I forget you Jerusalem
May I forget my right hand
May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
If I ever don't think of you
If I don't raise up Jerusalem above my highest joy*

- Psalms 137:5,6

The first historic tragedy to occur on Tisha B'Av was when the Jews in the generation of Moses accepted the Spies' slanderous report, thereby squandering the chance to fulfill their destiny in Israel.

Upon realizing the gravity of their mistake, the people sat down to cry (Deut. 1:45). They realized that the land had been promised, but only their fears prevented them from going forward. At which point G-d responds: "Today you cried for nothing; in the future I'll give you a **real** reason to cry." (Talmud - Ta'anit 29a)

And we've been crying ever since. Both tears of sadness and tears of hope. The Western Wall in Jerusalem is also called the "Wailing Wall," because of all the Jewish tears Jews have shed there over the centuries.

During the 1900-year exile, Jews would travel to Jerusalem at great expense and danger, just to have the chance to pray at the Wall. There, they would pour their hearts out to G-d, beseeching him for Jewish redemption. They watered the Wall with their tears and melted the stones with their kisses.

GLASS OF TEARS

The following story is told about the Chatam Sofer, the great 19th century Hungarian rabbi:

One afternoon before Tisha B'Av, the Chatam Sofer, a great 19th century European sage, would neither study Torah nor write responsa. He simply closed himself in a room.

One of his disciples could not restrain his curiosity and quietly opened the door of the room. He saw the Chatam Sofer weeping bitterly over the destruction of the Temple, his tears falling into a glass in front of him.

At the meal before the fast, the Chatam Sofer drank from the tears collected in the glass, in fulfillment of the verse (Psalms 80:6): "You fed them with the bread of tears, and gave them tears to drink in great measure."

When the Jewish people were slaves in Egypt, the redemption did not come about until they cried out to G-d (see Exodus 3:7). So too, the future redemption will follow the same pattern: When the Jewish people cry out to the Almighty, He will hear their cry and redeem them.

Do we appreciate the loss of the Temple to the extent that it brings us to tears? This is precisely the level we strive to achieve on Tisha B'Av.

Hashem should speedily rebuild the Bet Hamikdash in our Days Amen!