



*Yom Kippur*  
*Tuesday Night*

6TH OF TISHRI  
OCT 1ST 2022  
CANDLE LIGHTING 6:57PM  
SHABBAT ENDS 7:57PM

בס"ט  
NEW

# VAYELECH

## PARASHAT



We are excited to announce that all upcoming information for the upcoming High Holidays Yamimam Noraim 5783 has been sent by email. Please check your email for more information. You may register your seats, fill out the Kapparot form, see our Schedule, purchase Petichat Hahechal Mitzvah etc.



**TRANSFORMING  
THE CURSE INTO A  
BLESSING**

**THE MOST URGENT  
TESHUBA THAT WE NEED  
TODAY**

**WRITE THIS "SONG"**

**SYNAGOGUE: 310 95TH STREET, SURFSIDE FL 33154**

**WEBSITE: HECHALSHALOM.ORG**

**EMAIL: HECHALSHALOMOROZIEL@GMAIL.COM**

**THIS WEEK BULLETIN HAS BEEN KINDLY SPONSORED LEILOUEY NISHMAT**

שלמה בן יעקב ז"ל



Join The Daily Halachot!



General Hechal Shalom

# SCHEDULE

בס"ד



Daily zmanim - September to October 2022 / תשפ"ג תשרי חודש - זמני היום - myzmanim.com™ USA > Florida > Miami Dade > Miami Beach > 33154 (MyZmanim Location ID: US33154)



Daylight saving time

September / October 2022	לילה לרבינו תם R' Tam's Nightfall	לילה Nightfall	שקיעת החמה Sun set	הדלקת נרות Candle Lighting	פג המנחה Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	חצות Mid day	תפילה Latest Shachris	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema	הנץ החמה Sun rise	זמן ציצית ותפילין Earliest Talis	עלות השחר 72 דקות Dawn 72 Minutes	דף היומי Daf Yomi	תשרי תשפ"ג		
26 Mon	8:25	8:21	7:47	7:12	5:57	4:42	1:42	1:11	11:11	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:11	6:30	5:58	6:02	שני פב
27 Tue	8:24	8:20	7:46	7:11	5:56	4:41	1:42	1:11	11:11	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:12	6:30	5:59	6:03	שלישי פג
28 Wed	8:23	8:19	7:45	7:10	5:55	4:40	1:41	1:10	11:11	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:12	6:30	5:59	6:03	רביעי פד
29 Thu	8:22	8:18	7:44	7:09	5:54	4:39	1:41	1:10	11:11	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:13	6:31	6:00	6:04	חמישי פה
30 Fri	8:21	8:16	7:43	7:08	6:50	5:53	1:41	1:10	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:13	6:31	6:00	6:04	ששי פו
1 Sha	8:19	8:15	7:42	7:06	5:52	4:38	1:40	1:09	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:13	6:32	6:00	6:04	שבת פז
2 Sun	8:18	8:14	7:41	7:05	5:51	4:37	1:40	1:09	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:14	6:32	6:01	6:05	ראשון פח
3 Mon	8:17	8:13	7:39	7:04	5:50	4:36	1:40	1:09	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:14	6:33	6:01	6:05	שני פט
4 Tue	8:16	8:12	7:38	7:03	6:45	5:49	1:39	1:08	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:15	6:33	6:02	6:06	שלישי צ
5 Wed	8:15	8:11	7:37	7:02	יום כיפור	5:48	1:39	1:08	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:15	6:33	6:02	6:06	רביעי צא
6 Thu	8:14	8:10	7:36	7:01	5:48	4:34	1:39	1:08	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:16	6:34	6:03	6:07	חמישי צב
7 Fri	8:13	8:09	7:35	7:00	6:42	5:47	1:39	1:08	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:16	6:34	6:03	6:07	ששי צג
8 Sha	8:12	8:08	7:34	6:59	האזינו	5:46	1:38	1:07	11:10	10:11	9:35	9:37	7:17	6:35	6:04	6:07	שבת צד
9 Sun	8:11	8:07	7:33	6:58	6:40	5:45	1:38	1:07	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:37	7:17	6:35	6:04	6:08	ראשון צה
10 Mon	8:10	8:06	7:32	6:57	סוכות	5:44	1:38	1:07	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:17	6:36	6:04	6:08	שני צו
11 Tue	8:09	8:05	7:31	6:56	סוכות	5:43	1:38	1:07	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:18	6:36	6:05	6:09	שלישי צז
12 Wed	8:08	8:04	7:30	6:55	חול המועד	5:42	1:37	1:06	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:18	6:37	6:05	6:09	רביעי צח
13 Thu	8:07	8:03	7:29	6:54	חול המועד	5:42	1:37	1:06	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:19	6:37	6:06	6:10	חמישי צט
14 Fri	8:06	8:02	7:29	6:53	6:35	5:41	1:37	1:06	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:19	6:37	6:06	6:10	ששי ק
15 Sha	8:05	8:01	7:28	6:52	שבת חוה"מ	5:40	1:37	1:06	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:20	6:38	6:07	6:11	שבת קא
16 Sun	8:04	8:01	7:27	6:51	6:33	5:39	1:36	1:05	11:10	10:12	9:36	9:38	7:20	6:38	6:07	6:11	ראשון קב
17 Mon	8:03	8:00	7:26	6:50	שמיני עצרת	5:38	1:36	1:05	11:10	10:13	9:37	9:38	7:21	6:39	6:08	6:12	שני קג
18 Tue	8:02	7:59	7:25	6:49	שמחת תורה	5:38	1:36	1:05	11:10	10:13	9:37	9:38	7:21	6:39	6:08	6:12	שלישי קד
19 Wed	8:02	7:58	7:24	6:49	אסרו חג	5:37	1:36	1:05	11:10	10:13	9:37	9:39	7:22	6:40	6:09	6:12	רביעי קה
20 Thu	8:01	7:57	7:23	6:48	5:36	4:25	1:36	1:05	11:10	10:13	9:37	9:39	7:23	6:40	6:10	6:13	חמישי קו
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22 Sha	7:59	7:56	7:22	6:46	בראשית	5:35	1:35	1:04	11:10	10:13	9:37	9:39	7:24	6:41	6:11	6:14	שבת קח
23 Sun	7:58	7:55	7:21	6:45	5:34	4:23	1:35	1:04	11:10	10:14	9:38	9:39	7:24	6:42	6:11	6:14	ראשון קט
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25 Tue	7:56	7:53	7:19	6:43	ראש חודש	5:33	1:35	1:04	11:11	10:14	9:38	9:40	7:25	6:43	6:12	6:15	שלישי קיא

Tuesday (Oct 25) 9:44 AM + 7 חלקים : מולד חודש חשוון; חלקים 7 + <http://air.myzmanim.com> Get in-flight zmanim for any flight worldwide >

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## Shabbat Schedule

Shir Hashirim	6:35pm
Minha	6:50pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat & Arvit	
Candle Lighting:	6:50pm
Shaharit Netz Minyan	6:15am
Shaharit:	8:45am
<b>NEW Teen Minyan</b>	<b>8:30am</b>
Zeman Keriat Shema	9:37am
2nd Zeman Keriat Shema	10:11am
Avot Ubanim	5:10pm
Children Programs:	5:45pm
Shiur	5:45pm
Minha:	6:30pm
Followed by Seudat Shelishit & Arvit	
Shabbat Ends:	7:50pm
Rabbenu Tam	8:18pm

*We would like to Thank everyone who opened up their hearts by supporting our Beautiful Kehila throughout Rosh Hashana. Your Continuous Support is greatly appreciated towards Yom Kippur. Tizku Leshanim Rabot Neimot Vetovot!*

*We are proud to announce a kids Selichot - Chazanut Shiur by Rabbi Ygal Ouaknin Thursday evenings!*

*Rabbi Fried will continue his Children programs Shabbat morning and Shabbat afternoons.*

*New Sponsorship opportunities available for Avot Ubanim & Children's programs!*

## 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

Selichot:	5:40am/7:45am
Shaharit	6:35am
Shaharit #2 Hodu	8:30am
Minha/Arvit	6:50pm

### Monday To Friday

Selichot:	5:40am
Shaharit:	6:35am
Daf Yomi	7:40am
Selichot 2 <sup>nd</sup> Minyan:	7:15am
Shaharit #2 Hodu	8:00am
Shiurim	6:15pm
Minha/Arvit	6:50pm
Night Kollel	7:30pm

# Community Announcements

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

## Miscellaneous Announcements:

- **This Week's Congregational Kiddush** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Seudat Shelishit Shelishit** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Breakfast** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Learning** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Daf Yomi** is still available for Sponsorship!
- **This Week's Avot Ubanim** is available for Sponsorship!
- 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/Azkarot/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](http://Amazon.com). In order to register you need to log on [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and select Ness 26, Inc as the Charitable Organization you want to support, and from then shop on [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) instead of [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). It won't cost anything more, and is an easy way to contribute to our budget needs.

## 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!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Avi Bitton</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Steve Azoulay</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Bruno Ackenine</b></li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Esther Farache</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Michael Dahan</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Jimmy Vaturi</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Julian Ohayon</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Maurice Bassal</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Joseph Ayache</b></li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Aileen Guenoun</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Arnaud Sitbon</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. David Shapiro</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Alberto Kamhazi</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Joseph Salonikio</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Benjamin Akkad</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Ariel Cohen</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Isaac Berdugo</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Yaniv Cohen</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Shai Cohen</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Jack Benoudiz</b></li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Miriam Benmergui</b></li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Renee Levine</b></li> <li>• <b>Mrs. Coty Rosenstock</b></li> <li>• <b>Mr. Yariv Tal</b></li> </ul> |
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*Avot Ubanim every Shabbat will continue at 5:10pm followed by Children's program at 5:45pm with Rabbi Fried & Mishnayot with R' Ariel Cohen.*

## Refuah Shelema List

### Men

### Women

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosefia,</li> <li>• Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo</li> <li>• Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli,</li> <li>• Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana,</li> <li>• Mordechai Ben Miriam,</li> <li>• Meir Raymond Ben Mathilde</li> <li>• Aviv Ben Luba Miriam</li> <li>• Mordechai Ben Mercedes</li> <li>• Yaacov Refael Ben Alegria</li> <li>• Binyamin Simcha Ben Hilla</li> <li>• Yosef Shalom Ben Devora Neima</li> <li>• David Mordechai Ben Camouna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isaac Ben Mesoda,</li> <li>• Haim Ben Marcelle,</li> <li>• Yizhak Ben Simja</li> <li>• Michael Ben Aliza,</li> <li>• Avraham Ben Leah</li> <li>• Menahem Ben Shira</li> <li>• Moshe Ben Rahel</li> <li>• David Ben Freha Rina</li> <li>• R' Yosef Abraham Hacoheh Bar Hannah</li> <li>• David Eliyahu Ben Miriam</li> <li>• Meir Ben Leah</li> <li>• Yitzhak Ben Rahel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simja Bat Esther,</li> <li>• Rachel Bat Sarah,</li> <li>• Nina Bat Rachel,</li> <li>• Gitel Rina Bat Yael,</li> <li>• Miriam Bat Sofy,</li> <li>• Rahma Bat Simha</li> <li>• Esther Bat Fortuna</li> <li>• Malka Bat Dina</li> <li>• Raizel Bat Miriam</li> <li>• Leah Bat Rivka</li> <li>• Sol Bat Perla</li> <li>• Chana Bat Bilha</li> <li>• Yael Bat Rut</li> <li>• Esther Bat Walli</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda,</li> <li>• Alegria Simha Bat Esther,</li> <li>• Naomie Bat Rarel Adda,</li> <li>• Malka Bat Joyce Simja,</li> <li>• Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit,</li> <li>• Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy,</li> <li>• Abigail Haya Bat Esther</li> <li>• Madeleine Bat Esther</li> <li>• Nurit Jacqueline Bat Rahel</li> <li>• Marcelle Mesoda Bat Alegria</li> <li>• Shira Yaffa Bat Sara</li> <li>• Eva Bat Yael Khayat</li> <li>• Camouna Bat Fortuna</li> <li>• Ruth Nehama Bat Sara</li> </ul>
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**Happy Birthday To**

- Mr. Philipe Cohen – Shabb. Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>,
- Samuel Taieb – Shabb. Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>,
- Yosef Nahon – Sun. Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>,
- Shelly Albergel – Tue. Oct 4<sup>th</sup>,
- Coty Benarroch – Wed. Oct 5<sup>th</sup>,
- Yonathan Guigui – Wed. Oct 5<sup>th</sup>,
- Michael Setboun – Wed. Oct 5<sup>th</sup>,
- Ronen Michael – Thu. Oct 6<sup>th</sup>,
- Anael Benmergui – Shabb. Oct 8<sup>th</sup>,
- Ilana Luna Benmergui – Shabb. Oct 8<sup>th</sup>,

**Happy Anniversary To**

- Nethaniel & Eti Perez – Oct 11<sup>th</sup>
- Michael & Sheri Benchetrit – Oct 14<sup>th</sup>
- Meyer & Luna Benayoun – Oct 17<sup>th</sup>

**Nahalot:**

- Yaacov Bengio Bar Abraham z”l the 6<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Father of Mr. Abraham Bengio)
- Sete Bat Sarah z”l the 7<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Aunt of Mr. Mose Benmergui)
- Simha Mamane Bat Esther Wokowits z”l the 12<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Sister of Mr. Habib Mamane)

**Next Shabbatot:**

- Meir Bouhadana Bar Donna Z”l the 13<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Father of Mr. Isaie Bouhadana)
- David Amsili Bar Moshe z”l the 19<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Father of Mrs. Rene Levine)
- Isaac Bendayan z”l the 20<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Father of Mrs. Evelyn Belecen)
- Simcha Bat Sara Benmergui z”l the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Tishri (Mother of Mr. Mose Benmergui)
- Machluf Ben Miryam z”l the 25<sup>th</sup> of Tishri (Father of Dr. Jean Jacques Edderai)

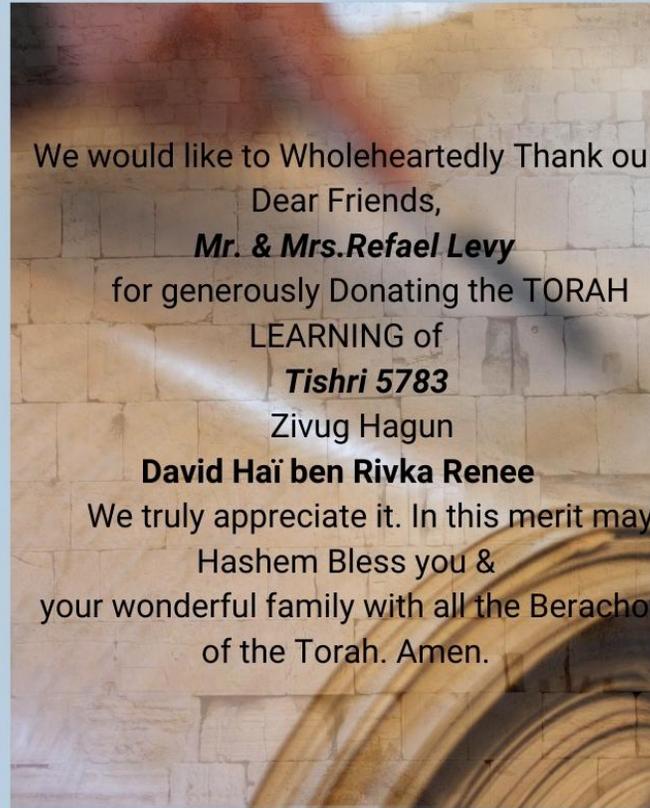
**Torah Teasers (AISH)**

1. What is unique about this parsha with regard to the annual Torah reading cycle in the synagogue?
2. In this parsha, Moshe passes away at the age of 120 years. Where from the Torah do we see an explicit verse that 120 years is an appropriate age to die?
3. What holiday is explicitly referred to in this parsha?
4. What two words found in this parsha are also names of parashiot in the book of Genesis?
5. To whom are the encouraging words "be strong and courageous" said in this parsha? (2 answers)
6. In this parsha, where do women and small children appear in the same verse? What 4 other places in the book of Deuteronomy are women and small children mentioned in the same verse?
7. What four items are described in this parsha as a "witness"?
8. Where in this parsha is an a fortiori argument (kal vechomer) mentioned? What 3 other places does this appear in the Torah?

**Answers**

- 1) Vayelech is the only parsha that can be read in its entirety twice in one year. This can happen if parshat Nitzavim and Vayelech are read on separate weeks, in which case Vayelech is read after Rosh Hashana. Then in the following year, if the parshat are read together, Vayelech is read before the Rosh Hashana - i.e. twice in one year.
- 2) In parshat Bereshit, Hashem explicitly states that the days of mankind should be 120 years (Genesis 6:3, according to the Ibn Ezra; see Rashi).
- 3) The festival of Sukkot is explicitly referred to as the time when the mitzvah of Hakhel takes place, following the Sabbatical year (Deut. 31:10).
- 4) The words "miketz" (Deut. 30:10) and "vayera" (31:15). are also names of parshat in the book of Genesis.
- 5) Moshe encourages the Jews to "be strong and courageous" in their war against the Canaanites (Deut. 31:6). Moshe also encourages Yehoshua to "be strong and courageous" in leading the Jews into the land (Deut. 31:23).
- 6) Regarding the command of Hakhel, women and children must come to Jerusalem to hear the king read the Torah (Deut. 31:12). Elsewhere in the book of Deuteronomy: (1-2) Twice in parshat Devarim when Moshe recalls the destruction and occupation of Cheshbon and Bashan, women and small children are mentioned together (Deut. 2:34, 3:6). (3) In parshat Shoftim, regarding the rules of conquering a city, the Jewish army may keep alive the women and small children (Deut. 20:14). (4) In parshat Nitzavim, Moshe lists groups of people who are "standing" before Hashem - including women and children (Deut. 29:10).
- 7) The parsha describes as a witness: (1) The song that Moshe will write in the next parsha (Deut. 31:19). (2) The Torah Scroll placed with the Holy Ark (Deut. 31:26). (3-4) Heaven and Earth (Deut. 31:28).
- 8) Moshe tells the Jews that "since you rebelled when I was alive, surely you will rebel after I die" (Deut. 31:27). Elsewhere in the Torah: (1) In parshat Vayigash, when the brothers are accused of stealing Joseph's silver goblet, they respond: "We brought back the money that we found in our sacks... so how could we have stolen from you silver or gold?" (Genesis 44:8). (2) In parshat Va'era, Moshe says to Hashem: "If the Jews did not listen to me, why would Pharaoh?" (Exodus 6:12). (3) In parshat Behaalosecha, Hashem tells Moshe: "If a father would spit in his daughter's face, she would be humiliated for 7 days; surely Miriam should be outside the camp for 7 days" (Numbers 12:14)

**RENT - TORAH LEARNIG - DAF YOMI**



We would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our  
 Dear Friends,  
**Mr. & Mrs. Refael Levy**  
 for generously Donating the TORAH  
 LEARNING of  
**Tishri 5783**  
 Zivug Hagun  
**David Haï ben Rivka Renee**  
 We truly appreciate it. In this merit may  
 Hashem Bless you &  
 your wonderful family with all the Berachot  
 of the Torah. Amen.



**We Would like to Wholeheartedly**  
**Thank our Dear Friends,**  
**Mr. & Mrs.**  
**Dan Arev**  
**For generously Donating the Rent of**  
**Tishri 5783**  
**In honor of Esty & Asher Jungreis :**  
 May Hashem bless them endlessly so  
 they can continue Avodat Hashem  
 bnachat.  
 And for an abundance of health, brachot,  
 & shmira for 33154.  
 We truly appreciate it.  
**In this Merit May Hashem Bless**  
**you & your Wonderful Family with all the**  
**Berachot in the Torah Amēn**

**DAF YOMI SPONSORS**

THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF THE DAF  
 YOMI  
 IS GENEROUSLY SDPONSORED BY  
**THE KAMHAZI  
 FAMILY**  
 IN MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR FATHER  
 SHELOMO BEN YAAKOV Z"L  
 & FOR HATZLACHA OF THE WHOLE  
 FAMILY.

THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI  
 IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY  
**THE PEREZ FAMILY**  
 REFUAH SHELEMA OF SHLOMO BEN  
 FRECHA & ABIGAIL BAT SARAH  
 & FOR BERACHA & HATZLACHA DEVORA  
 BAT SARAH, ALON BARUCH BEN  
 DEVORAH, EITAN HAIM BEN DEVORAH,  
 SHIREL SARAH SIMCHA BAT DEVORAH,  
 AARON LEV BEN DEVORAH, & DAVID  
 BEN ABIGAIL  
 HASHEM SHOULD BLESS THEM WITH  
 HEALTH, HAPPINESS, & LONG LIFE,  
 AMEN.



THIS YEAR'S LEARNING OF DAF YOMI  
 IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY  
**THE  
 AKKAD FAMILY**  
 LEILUY NISHMAT  
 אברהם בן גרסייה 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

### Transforming the Curse Into a Blessing

(Rabbi Eli Mansour from itorah.org)

Parashat Vayelech begins by informing us, "Moshe went and spoke all these words to all of Israel." The commentators address the question of where Moshe "went." Why did he have to "go" somewhere to speak to Beneh Yisrael? Wasn't he already speaking with them all this time?

Targum Yonatan Ben Uziel explains that Moshe went "Le'mashkan Bet Ulfana" – to the study hall. For some reason, specifically at this point, after completing his warnings to Beneh Yisrael about the consequences of breaching their covenant with G-d, Moshe went to the Bet Midrash to learn. Why?

Rav Shlomo Kluger (1785-1869) offers an answer by noting the Midrash's teaching that G-d began the Torah with the second letter of the alphabet, "Bet" ("Beresheet Bara..."), and not with the first letter, "Alef," because the letter "Alef" represents the word "Arur" ("curse"). Rather than open the Torah with the letter that begins the word "Arur," G-d chose instead the letter "Bet" – the first letter of the word "Baruch" ("blessed"). The Midrash continues by relating that the letter "Alef" protested its having been passed over in favor of "Bet." In response, G-d assured this letter that when He would give Beneh Yisrael the Torah, He would begin with the letter "Alef." And thus the text of the Ten Commandments pronounced at Mount Sinai begins with the word "Anochi," the first letter of which is "Alef."

The obvious question arises as to why the letter "Alef" could open the text of the Ten Commandments, but not the text of the Humash. Why did G-d not want to begin the Torah with a letter associated with "Arur," but He was prepared to begin the Ten Commandments with this letter?

Rav Kluger explained that Torah has the ability to transform curse into blessing. Therefore, before G-d gave us the Torah, He did want to give the letter "Alef" a position of prominence, but at the time of Matan Torah, when pronouncing the Ten Commandments, He specifically began with the letter "Alef," which is associated with curse, to

demonstrate that through Torah, we have the power to transform "Arur" into "Baruch."

Rav Kluger adds that this is why we refer to the study hall as a "Bet Midrash." It is where we bring "Beracha" – which begins with the letter "Bet" – through Torah learning, which has the effect of transforming curse into blessing.

For this reason, according to Targum Yonatan, Moshe went to the study hall at this point. After describing the dreadful curses which would befall the people, Heaven forbid, if they abandon G-d's laws, he went to learn and teach Torah – to demonstrate how the curses can be transformed into blessings. Targum Yonatan refers to the study hall as "Bet Ulfana" – alluding to the letter "Bet" and the letter "Alef" (the first letter of "Ulfana"). He went there to show us how we can transform "Alef" to "Bet," and change every curse into a blessing.

As we now begin the new year, let us recommit ourselves to the intensive study of Torah, thereby ensuring that if, Heaven forbid, any evil decrees had been issued, they would be transformed into wondrous blessings for us and all Am Yisrael.

### The Most Urgent Teshuba That We Need Today

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

During this period of the Aseret Yemeh Teshuba – the Ten Days of Repentance, from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur – the Yeser Ha'ra (evil inclination) is going to get clever. In a desperate attempt to sabotage our efforts to perform the kind of Teshuba we really need to perform, it will lure us to make worthwhile but relatively trivial changes in our behavior. This way, we will feel good about ourselves, content that we've made some progress – when in truth we've skirted the main issue, we've avoided the primary problem that we need to address.

In today's age and age, no issue must be addressed more urgently than the issue of screens, what our devices are doing to our lives. Teshuba in our generation does not begin with matters such as eating Yashan bread and being more stringent with Bishul Yisrael. These are worthwhile practices, but this must not be our priority. There is no question that the most urgent Teshuba that we need today relates to the problems caused by our addiction to our screens.

Many of my colleagues believe that because of the grave dangers posed by screens, we should simply ban them, and not use them at all. I do not share this view. There is so much benefit that can be gained from technology; I know students who have studied the entire Talmud with their devices, and I know students who have received Semicha (ordination) using their devices. Like cars, our devices can be immensely useful and valuable, but can also be extremely dangerous if they are not used properly. My view, therefore, is that devices, like cars, may be used, but only in a safe, responsible manner, to help ensure that they are an asset and not a liability.

I have compiled a list of seven different dangers posed by screens. Our Teshuba, I strongly believe, must begin by going through these seven dangers and firmly resolving to use our devices in a way that steers clear of all these dangers:

1) Most obviously, screens give us easy and constant access to images and videos that are strictly forbidden to be viewed. Looking at inappropriate material is forbidden by Torah law ("Ve'lo Taturu Ahareh Lebabchem Ve'ahareh Enechem" – Bamidbar 15:39). And scientists have found that viewing such material triggers the same chemical process in the brain as that triggered by drug use – which means that it is addictive. This is a grave spiritual danger. Using an unfiltered device is unacceptable, and those who find themselves addicted to such behavior should, as part of their Teshuba, consult with professionals, or seek the help of [guardyoureyes.com](http://guardyoureyes.com), a very valuable online platform dedicated to helping people struggling with addiction to inappropriate online content.

2) Screens consume a great deal of time. We are not brought into this world to play games, to watch videos, or to engage in mindless chatting. Hazzan Moshe Habousha, who for many years led the services in Hacham Ovadia Yosef's Minyan, said that Hacham Ovadia would break down on Yom Kippur when he recited the words, "Bitalnu Talmud Toratecha" – "We neglected the study of Your Torah." Nobody was more dedicated to the study of Torah of Hacham Ovadia. Yet, even he felt that he did not utilize all his time for study as he should have. Today, when we have so many Torah resources so easily accessible, there is no excuse for wasting time – and certainly not for wasting the amount of time that so many people waste on their devices.

3) Screens make it very difficult to concentrate. If we have to interrupt what we're doing every time we get a message or notification, we cannot focus. In some kollels, the students keep their phones on "airplane mode" throughout the study session in order to avoid distraction. This is one strategy we can employ to ensure that we can achieve all we are capable of achieving without being constantly distracted by our devices.

4) Screens can wreak havoc on family life. A woman was telling me about her struggles in marriage, and mentioned that she has to compete with another party for her husband's attention and affection. I assumed the worst – that there was a forbidden relationship – until she explained that the "other party" was her husband's iPad. This problem afflicts many marriages. And many families eat together without talking to one another, because they're all on their screens. We must not allow this to happen.

5) Screens are leading to the constant defilement of the Kedusha of the synagogue. People wonder why their prayers aren't answered – even though they spend parts of the prayer service on Google. When the Torah is being read, it is like we are standing at Mount Sinai hearing G-d pronounce the Ten Commandments. Would any of us imagine looking at our phones at that moment? We shouldn't be looking at our phones in the synagogue, either.

6) Our devices are making us shallow and empty. When we spend so much time looking at and sharing nonsense, we turn ourselves into clowns, instead of serious, mindful, conscientious people. How can we expect to live lives of depth, of meaning, of wisdom, of sophistication, when we indulge in utter nonsense? Of course, we are allowed to enjoy some laughs and amusement from time to time, but life is meant to be serious, not silly.

7) Screens are causing many people to waste huge amounts of money. The convenience of online shopping makes it too easy and tempting to buy and buy and buy. People shop online practically every day, purchasing products that they don't need. There is nothing wrong with shopping, even purchasing luxury items that enhance our lives, but shopping as a hobby is vain and wasteful.

These areas, I believe, are where we need to focus our Teshuba during this critical time of year. We must not allow our Yeser Ha'ra to distract us by

directing our attention onto less vital matters. Screens are the great challenge of our generation – and the Aseret Yemeh Teshuba is when we are to confront this challenge head-on, and do everything we can to protect ourselves and our families from the very real dangers that they pose.

## In Order To Give Reward To Those Who Brought The Children

(Rabbi Frand from Torah.org)

The Torah introduces the mitzvah of *Hakhel* in *Parashat Vayelech*. *Hakhel* is a national gathering held once every seven years in which all Jews – men, women, and children — come together to celebrate national unity and purpose: “Gather together the people – the men, and the women, and the small children, and your stranger who is in your cities – so that they will hear and so that they will learn and they shall fear Hashem your G-d and be careful to perform all the words of the Torah.” [Devarim 31:12].

The Talmud teaches [Chagiga 3a] an intriguing idea about *Hakhel*: “It was the week when it was the turn of Rav Elazar ben Azariah to give the lesson and the topic being discussed that day was the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel*. What did he expound? He expounded as follows: ‘Gather the nation, the men, the women and the children...’ We understand that the men came to learn and the women came to listen, but what purpose was there to bring the children? In order to give reward to those who brought them!”

The *Me HaShiloach* and other commentaries as well expound on this idea of “to give reward to those who brought them”. Is it just a question of getting reward for “*schlepping*” the kids? Perhaps for the same reward, the parents could have been commanded to carry along with them a sack of potatoes? It clearly means something more than that. The *Me HaShiloach* interprets “giving reward to those who brought them” to mean that exposing one’s children to the events of *Hakhel* is going to make an impression on the children and eventually the parents will reap the reward of having children who in their youth were impacted positively by the *Hakhel* ritual.

Imagine what a sight that was! The closest thing we have to *Hakhel* today also comes out approx. every 7 years – every seven and a half years to be exact – the *Siyum HaShas*. When my children were younger, I made a point of taking them. It is an amazing sight. Even if they are only out there in the concourse buying their kosher hot dogs, seeing tens of thousands of Jews together is impressive. It makes a lasting impression.

A person can ask himself afterwards “Was it worth it? I schlepped him, I took him out of school, I took him on the train, it cost me money. Was it worth it?” The Talmud teaches “to bring reward to those who bring them”. Exposing children to such a gathering DOES make an impression. In the long run, it will certainly be worth it! Eventually the parents will realize reward for these efforts.

I know someone who made his own *Siyum HaShas* (marking the personal completion of studying the entire Babylonian Talmud). I asked him why he made a *Siyum HaShas* and he told me “My father made a *Siyum HaShas* when I was a boy and I saw what a big deal it was! I said to myself then, ‘When I get older I want to do that also!’”

A parallel *Mechilta* in *Parashat Bo* quotes the same story as the Gemara in Chagiga with Rav Elazar ben Azarya, the mitzvah of *Hakhel*, and the explanation of why we bring the children — “in order to bring reward to those who bring them.” However, the *Mechilta* adds at the end, “Rav Yehoshua states ‘Happy is our Patriarch Avraham who can count Rav Elazar ben Azaryah as one of his descendants.’” Why, we might ask, is Rav Yehoshua singling out *Avraham Avinu* in this statement? Should not *Moshe Rabbeinu* have *nachat* from Rav Elazar ben Azarya? What about *Yakov Avinu*, *David HaMelech*, or *Shlomo HaMelech*? What is so special about *Avraham Avinu* and his connection to Rav Elazar ben Azaryah?

The answer is that the Almighty told us something about Avraham Avinu – why He chose him and why *Hashem* refers to as ‘Avraham the one I love’ [Yeshaya 41:8]. The *Chumash* provides the answer. It is no mystery. “For I have cherished him (*ki yeda’ativ*), because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, doing charity and justice...” [Bereshit 18:19]. The Ramban interprets *ki yeda’ativ* to mean, “For I have chosen him”. I have chosen him, the Almighty testifies, because I know that he will

give over the *mesorah* [tradition] to his children! Therefore, he is the first “patriarch”; he is the first ‘Av’. He knows how to preserve *Yiddishkeit* – he does it by commanding his children and household.

When Rav Elazar ben Azariah makes the same observation and teaches, “Why did the children come to *Hakhef*? It is to bring reward to those who bring them!” he is echoing the teaching of the Patriarch Avraham. This is exactly the tradition Avraham instituted in *Klal Yisrael*. Therefore “Happy are you *Avraham Avinu* to be able to count Rav Elazar ben Azarya as one of your descendants.”

## Write This “Song”

(Rabbi Frand)

I saw a beautiful observation in the *sefer HaKetav VeHakabalah*. The Torah teaches the very last of the six hundred and thirteen commandments in *Parashat Vayelech*: “So now, write this song (*haShirah hazot*) for yourselves, and teach it to the Children of Israel, place it in their mouth, so that this song shall be for Me a witness against the Children of Israel.” [Devarim 31:19]. From here we learn Biblical *Mitzvah* #613 – Writing a Sefer Torah.

*HaKetav VeHakabalah* was a master of the Hebrew language (*lashon haKodesh*). He asks – why was Torah called a ‘song’? If we were asked to draw up a list of ten words which might be used to describe or summarize the contents of Torah, ‘song’ would very likely not be on the list. Yet the *Mitzvah* to write the Torah is expressed here as “write this song”. Why?

*HaKetav VeHakabalah* writes the word *shir* [*shin-yod-resh*] (song) is related to the word *yashar* [*yod-shin-resh*] (straight). He explains “If you want music to be appealing, the musical notes need to follow one another in a perfectly arranged sequence to provide a harmonious melody.” Once music goes “off key,” it greatly bothers the listener. This is the essence of *shirah*: A flow, a precise sequencing of the components of the song – one note following another in carefully planned arrangement. When the notes are “off,” the song loses the its pleasantness.

If that is the case, it is obvious why the Torah is called *shirah*. The Torah is – as the prophet calls it “*Sefer haYashar*” [the Book of the Straight]. The

*pasuk* alludes to this: “...behold it is written in the *Sefer haYashar*...” [Yehoshua 10:13]. The Torah is a book of *yashrut* – of being straight.

The *Netziv* in his introduction to the Book of Bereshit writes that this book, in particular, is “the book of the *Yashar*” because it is the story of the Patriarchs who were straight and upright (*yesharim*). The *Netziv* writes that the nations did not know that Avraham kept the entire Torah (even *Eruve Tavshillin*) [per the teaching of Chazal], but they knew he was a “straight shooter”. They knew he was honest and upright.

The word that defines Torah is *Yashar* – to be straight, to be honest, no tricks, no deception. This is what the *Sefer HaYashar* represents. Unfortunately, we live in a time when this principle is observed in the breach rather than in actuality. We hear all too many times stories about people who are “less than *yasha*”. Very less than *yasha*! We all cringe when we hear these stories, every time one of these scandals rears its ugly head. That is not the way it is supposed to be.

A nephew of mine corrected a story I had heard involving Rav Aharon Soloveichik, *zichrono l’bracha*. Rav Aharon Soloveichik commuted by plane between Chicago and New York. He lived in Chicago, was a Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshivas Brisk there, and for a time served as a Rosh Yeshiva in Yeshiva University. He travelled regularly between the two cities. One time, his mother-in-law, who lived in New York, wanted to visit her daughter in Chicago, but she did not like to fly. So Rav Aharon Soloveichik accompanied her back from New York to Chicago on the train.

They came to the train station to purchase two tickets and the agent behind the counter said, “you’re in luck – today spouses go for free!” So Rav Aharon Soloveichik looked at the agent and said, this woman is not my spouse, she’s my mother-in-law! The agent responded, “We don’t look at marriage licenses.” Rav Aharon was insistent: “But she is not my wife. Let me see your supervisor!”

The dialog was repeated with the supervisor. Rav Soloveichik protested that they should not be eligible for the free ticket because she was not his wife. The supervisor told him, “Listen here, you look old enough that she looks like she’s your wife! What do you care?” “No. She’s not my wife. I want to pay for her.” This is *yashar*.

Rav Yakov Kamenetsky was a Rav in Toronto before he came to Torah VoDaat. One Purim, the

community in Toronto gave him a silver platter. A couple of days later, a congregant saw Rav Yakov in downtown Toronto at a pawnshop. It looked like he was trying to pawn the silver tray he had received earlier that week as a present from his congregation. The congregant went back to the other members of the shul and said "What kind of a Rabbi do we have here? We give him a present and he pawns it!" The President of the shul called in Rav Yakov and demanded an explanation. Rav Yakov told them that the Magen Avraham rules that the presents a Rav gets from his congregation for Purim and Pessach are to be considered as part of his salary. "If it is part of my salary, I have to report it on my taxes so I have to know how much it costs. I went to the pawn shop to find out the fair market value of the tray so I could accurately declare it." This is *yashrut*.

This is the *yashrut* of which the Semag writes [Positive Command #74] that when the Almighty finally comes and redeems us, the nations of the world will say "He acted correctly (*b'Din assa*) because they are honest people (*sh'hen anshe emet*). However, if the Jews will cheat, the nations will wonder "What is this that G-d has done? He chose for Himself thieves and cheaters!"

We daven the entire Rosh Hashana that we want *Mashiach*. We want G-d to rule over the entire world. There is a very simple formula for bringing *Mashiach*. We must first make ourselves into such people that the nations of the world will be able to say "Ah! Those Jews are so honest! The Almighty knew what He was doing by redeeming them!" — When that happens, *Moshaich* will come, may it be speedily in our time.

## **Yom Kippur - Confession and Redemption**

(Rabbi Zev Leff)

*Beset by many evils and troubles, they will say, "It is because Hashem is no longer with me that these evil things have befallen me." On that day I will utterly hide My face because of all the evil that they have done... (Devarim 31:17-18).*

Rambam says that this admission of guilt and regret is still not a full confession, and therefore Hashem continues to hide His face. But the hiding is different: no longer is it a hiding of Hashem's mercy, allowing evil to befall them, but rather a hiding of the ultimate redemption. That change in

Hashem's relationship contains a hint to their ultimate redemption when their repentance is complete.

To better understand this Rambam, we must first understand the function of verbal confession in the teshuvah process. Sefer Hachinuch (Mitzvah 363) offers two explanations of the benefit of verbal confession. First, verbalizing one's repentance creates the feeling of conversing with a second party, which, in turn, sensitizes a person to the reality of Hashem's presence, Hashem's awareness of his every deed, and the need to render an account before Hashem. The greater a person's awareness that his sin was one in Hashem's presence, with His full knowledge, the greater His shame and regret.

Secondly, verbal expression intensifies the process and leaves a more lasting effect.

In addition to regret over the past, teshuvah also requires a commitment not to repeat the sin again. That commitment must be so decisive, resolute, and firm that Hashem Himself can testify that at the moment of confession, the sinner does not contemplate ever committing that sin again. Just as a vow to do or not to do something in the future requires verbal expression, so, too, does the commitment not to repeat past sins.

Sefer Yereim specifies another dimension to verbal confession -- supplication for atonement. There must be a clear recognition of the seriousness of the damage caused by the sin, both in terms of the damage to one's soul and one's relationship to Hashem, and in terms of the effect on the world by closing the conduits of blessing. For this, one must entreat G-d to forgive, heal and repair the damage. Just as prayer and supplication must be verbalized to establish a feeling of communication, so, too must one's entreaty for atonement.

There is yet another aspect of confession that relates to the nature of sin itself. Sin, says the Maharal, is one neshamah of the Jew. It cannot blemish the neshamah itself. Rather it superimposes layers of impurity that separate one from his essence. Since the Jew's connection to Hashem is through that untainted essence, when he becomes distant from his essence, he also becomes estranged from Hashem.

Teshuvah, then, is the return of the Jew to his essence and the breakdown of the barriers that separate him from Hashem. Hashem does not leave the Jew when he sins; rather the Jew loses

contact with Hashem, Who still resides within the essence of his soul. As Chazal say on the verse, "I am asleep, but my heart is awake" (Shir HaShirim 5:2), my heart refers to Hashem. Though the Jew sleeps and loses consciousness of Hashem, Hashem still occupies his heart.

By articulating his sin in vidui, the Jew makes it something external to himself. Then he is able to detach those layers of sin that have accreted on his neshamah. Vidui itself becomes an act of purification. Thus, Targum Yonasan translates the word "purify" in the verse "Before Hashem should you purify yourself" (Vayikra 16:30), as "confess." The confession is itself the act of purification.

It is this last aspect of full vidui which is lacking in the confession, "Because G-d is not with me, all these misfortunes have befallen me." Although this statement expresses regret, recognition of the devastation resulting from sin, and even hints to a commitment to avoid this state in the future, it is still lacking. There is no recognition that it is not G-d Who has deserted us, but we who have become detached from ourselves and therefore from Hashem.

When a Jew feels Hashem has abandoned him, says Sforno, he gives up hope, since he thinks that it is G-d Who must first return. But in truth it is man who has strayed from his essence, and he can find G-d where he originally left Him. Teshuvah is thus literally redemption: "Return to Me for I have redeemed you" (Yeshayahu 44:22). One redeems his untainted essence from the layers of sin and impurity that encrust it.

As long as we fail to comprehend this aspect of redemption, G-d continues to hide the face of redemption from us. When we appreciate all the aspects of vidui, including that recognition that Hashem remains where He always was, waiting for us to strip away the barriers, we can look forward to both personal and national redemption.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Care Package to Heaven

(By Slovie Jungreis-Wolff @ Aish.com )

How to honor a parent who is no longer alive.

Sunday found me back again, besides my father's grave. It was my father's yahrzeit (date of death) and the custom is to return once more to the resting place of your loved one. As we stood, my mother, my sister, and I, an icy rain started to fall. Hard droplets began to pelt us. We did not budge. The words in our prayer books became wet and blurred, but we did not move. It felt as if the heavens were once again crying with us; feeling our painful loss.

Can it be that years go by and still the hurt is searing?

Beyond the pain, though, is this connection to a man who loved me absolutely for all my life. No matter how difficult his day, my father never lost his temper with me. I cannot recall his voice raised in sharp anger or in a fit of rage. When I was a little child, I felt as if he always tried to hear my words. He would tenderly call me *'sheyfalah,'* little dear, and sooth my little hurts. As I grew, there was this beautiful, beaming smile that carried me throughout my teenage years and beyond. When there was nothing left to say, his warm, bright eyes said it all. "Everything will be okay -- you are loved no matter what." No burden was too heavy, no hour too late, if it meant being there for one of us, his children. Years passed, and then it was his grandchildren who discovered the magic world of a Zaidy's absolute love.

Our life together brought moments that I still think about and cherish. I want to laugh with him again; share dreams with him again, talk to him again, and have my children hear my father's wisdom. I wish that my children and grandchildren could hear his soothing bedtime Shema before they go to sleep or treasure the simple moments he'd taught us to savor. They would feed challah to the ducks, color rainbows with scented markers, and giggle at life's wonders together.

I wish that I could once again hold his hand and walk with him to synagogue, prepare a delicious meal for him, or help him with his hat and coat. I would love to have a chance to honor my father even for just a moment. When I read the words of grown children who live with anger and resentment because of their parent's awful mistakes, I miss my father even more.

Even after death it is possible to maintain the lifelong connection.

If one has been blessed with a parent's love and then the parent passes from this earth, is it possible to still maintain the lifelong connection? Of course

we are all obligated to respect and honor our parents; it is one of the Ten Commandments. But how can I honor my father if he is not here?

### Higher and Higher

I recall a recent shivah visit that I made, to a student of mine who had lost her father. As I sat down, she told me that she had only one question.

"I loved my father so much, how can I still honor him now that he is gone?"

I explained to her that there are ways that we can not only honor our parents, but even help them, as they now enter the World to Come. Once a soul leaves this world there are no longer any opportunities for the soul to accomplish and do mitzvot. Our Sages teach us that the soul feels pained and remorse with the realization that it is too late to rectify any misdeeds or gain mitzvot and achieve goodness. Facing judgment, the soul cries out, "If only I would have the opportunity to correct my actions!"

We who remain in this world can do a great kindness and show honor once again to our parents. (Though

I am speaking about a parent; all these concepts apply to any loved one who has departed this world). Each time we do a mitzvah in the merit of the deceased, we help his soul rise higher and higher in the Heavens above.

Our mitzvot become our parents' lifeline as we link our good deeds to their soul and they now benefit from our actions. We can create the ultimate connection. It is as if we've sent a care package to Heaven.

### What Can I Do?

Our Sages have provided us with specific ways that we can help our loved ones gain merit in our daily lives. We can dedicate our actions for the soul through the following suggestions:

- Study Torah or ask a Torah scholar to dedicate his study to your parent's soul (during the week of shivah, others study Torah since mourners are not allowed to study Torah).
- Tzedakah: Give charity or donate a Torah scroll, prayer books, or holy books in the name of your loved one to an organization, synagogue, or school. It is a good idea to have the name of your parent (or relative) inscribed inside the book.

- Acts of Kindness: Whenever you do a *chessed*, a kind deed, keep in mind that you are doing this mitzvah as a merit for the soul of your parent. This creates a great impact, for just as you have accomplished kindness, the soul of the departed will now benefit from G-d's kindness in turn.

- Prayer: There is, of course, the holy Kaddish prayer that is said, during the first year (12 months) of mourning and on the *yahrzeit*. Kaddish proclaims our desire that the name of G-od be sanctified. When one suffers a loss and is then able to recite the Kaddish, he is publicly accepting G-d's decree. This is considered to be one of the most awesome mitzvot - *Kiddush Hashem*, the sanctification of G-d's name. The merit for the soul is real and great.

- Embrace a Mitzvah: Choose a mitzvah and 'put your signature on it'. It can be a mitzvah that your parent loved doing, or one that you would now like to take on. There are hundreds of mitzvot to consider; such as helping children with special needs, visiting the sick, driving patients to doctor appointments, offering your professional services to those who cannot afford them, cooking and baking for families under stress,

Saying blessings before and after you eat, keeping kosher, honoring Shabbat, praying each day, and avoiding gossip and shaming others.

- Light a *yahrzeit* (memorial) candle in honor of your parent's soul. Four times a year one lights a memorial candle, besides on the *yahrzeit* (date of passing) date itself. The holidays of Yom Kippur, Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, allow us the opportunity of *Yizkor*, remembrance. We light the candle at sundown and the flames burn for (more than) 24 hours. The flame of the candle symbolizes the human soul which is never extinguished. While lighting the candle, think about your loved one and say that "I am lighting this flame in the merit that my loved one's soul find peace and attain greater heights in the heavens above."

The date of the *yahrzeit* also gives us added opportunities to help the soul soar higher in heaven because *yahrzeit* is a day of judgment for the soul. It is a custom to gather together and have a meal, a *seudah*, where we speak about the fine character of our loved one. We tell personal stories that relay his goodness, kindness, and integrity. Visiting the grave, giving charity, and studying Torah are all additional ways for us to add to our 'care package to heaven'.

## An Invitation Above

When we completed our psalms, my sister opened her bag and took out a folded white paper.

This week, my sister's daughter will be getting married and my sister brought the wedding invitation to the cemetery. She gingerly put it on my father's resting place and covered the invitation with the small white pebbles that lay over his grave.

"*Abba*, please come to our wedding, and bring all our Zaydahs and Bubbies with you," she cried.

My mother then uttered her own personal invitation to my father, and to my Zaydah and Bubby who rest beside him. She sobbed to the souls in Yiddish, and pleaded for them to join us and grant us all their blessings. My sister placed invitations on their graves and whispered a private prayer. Our tears flowed freely and mixed with the rain that was falling.

It is a custom to invite the souls of your parents and grandparents to the wedding.

When there is a wedding below and a new Jewish home is being established, permission is given for the soul to attend the chuppah and rejoice with the bride and groom. It is a custom to invite the souls of your parents and grandparents to the wedding.

I recalled how 25 years ago, I was about to walk under my own chuppah, and my father turned to me for a moment.

"*Sheyfelah*," he said, "you are about to walk under the chuppah. You are starting a new life, building your own home. You never have to be afraid. All your holy Zaydies and Bubbies from the heavens above are here with you tonight. You are not walking alone. Never forget this moment."

My father then took my hand and together with my mother and all the precious souls from above, we walked down the aisle.

I await my niece's chuppah this week so that once again I have a moment with my precious father and all the holy souls from above.

## Three Ways to Make Yom Kippur Meaningful

(By Slovie Jungreis-Wolff)

How to embrace the opportunity of Yom Kippur and use it to truly change.

Here are three ways to tap into the transformational power of Yom Kippur.

### 1. Make yourself vulnerable.

Yom Kippur is a day unlike any other. The energy of the day is the power of *teshuvah* – returning to become the person you were created to be. One of the most painful moments a human being can have is the realization that "I've messed up my life. I haven't changed. The same things trigger me. I still lose it with the people I love. I haven't grown spiritually. What's my life about? Why am I here? What defines me?"

Think about it. After you strip away all the externals – your home, your favorite possessions, your bank account – who are you?

You have been given a personal mission to bring your unique magic into the world. Yom Kippur is the time to contemplate your life and honestly evaluate how much you are maximizing your potential.

On Yom Kippur you recite the prayer of *vidui*-confession. You stand humbled as you list a variety of behaviors for which you ask forgiveness. Many of your words enumerate transgressions you've done causing pain to others. You admit that you have lied. You have slandered. You have stolen – not only money, but people's time, their sense of inner peace, their pride. You have used our gift of speech to bring others down.

As you recite *vidui*, think about adding your own personal confessions for deeds done that you now regret.

If you genuinely want to actualize the day, begin by making yourself vulnerable. Try to come into the day by seeking forgiveness from those you have wounded. Especially the people in your life that you have taken for granted and so they are most convenient to hurt. No more blaming others for your shortcomings. It's not about your dysfunctional childhood, your high school cliques, your spouse, or your boss at work. It's about accepting responsibility for the type of person you have become. You create your destiny. You write the story of your life.

**Yom Kippur calls out: "Realize your purpose because there is only one of you in all of time."**

### 2. Make yourself holy.

This is the day to discover your soul. Within you is a Divine spark, a flicker of holiness. On Yom Kippur it is possible to ignite the fire within. Taste the

spiritual and let go of the physical. We do not eat or drink, wear leather shoes, wash, anoint ourselves with perfumes, or engage in physical intimacy. It is a custom to wear white. On this day, you are pure as the angels.

Yom Kippur is a day of miracles. Perhaps we have sullied our souls. There is a layer of grime and many spiritual stains that have dulled your inner light. But if you desire to begin anew, nothing can stand in your way.

On Yom Kippur you stand in prayer before G-od and speak intimately of your hopes, your fears, and your dreams. You strengthen your relationship with your Creator. You transform yourself into an ambassador of light and love in this world. You become spiritual through reflecting G-od's light. Every time you extend yourself and open your hearts to others, you become partners with G-od and become a sacred being.

**Yom Kippur calls out: "Take the holiness of the day with you throughout the year. Be a spiritual seeker. Reflect G-od's light and kindness in this world."**

### **3. Make yourself grow.**

To be alive means that you are constantly growing." Some people walk through life a a zombie state. It is not enough to pray not to die – you must also pray to live life to the max. How do you fill your days? How do you spend your time?

For Yom Kippur to matter, you need to realize that you are accountable for your days. There is a reason that so many are grappling with unease and anxiety. Instead of looking inward so many put their time into external projections. They spend hours comparing lives on Instagram, growing unhappier with their own lives and then wondering why.

Lacking growth, living with emptiness, they are left with a void inside that refuses to disappear.

You have the choice to connect to emptiness or meaning, transience or the transcendental. You have the ability to tap into timeless spiritual wisdom. Each week you can put aside the stress and savor the beauty of Shabbat. One smile, one good word can change another person's life. Judaism provides a path to transformation – yourself, your relationships, and the world you live in.

**Yom Kippur calls out: "Take a small step. Set a goal. Make a plan. How will you grow this year?"**

This Yom Kippur, leave behind the negativity, the fear, the lack of inspiration. See the opportunity of this awesome day. Discover the fire within your soul.

## **DAILY HALACHOT**

### **Yom Kippur: Lighting Candles**

(Daily Halacha)

The Halacha requires lighting candles in honor of Shabbat and Yom Tob with the appropriate Beracha. This is clearly codified in the Shulhan Aruch in Siman 263. However, Maran states that Yom Kippur is different and the custom is to light without a Beracha. This issue is rooted in a Machloket Rishonim (dispute between the early authorities) between the Mordechi and the Rosh. The Rosh holds that candles should be lit, as this prevents intimacy; one is not allowed to have relations in the light. On the other hand, the Mordechi maintains that lighting candles will enable the husband to gaze at his wife and become attracted to her, and therefore candles should not be lit. In Hilchot Yom Kippur (610), Maran cites only the opinion of the Rosh that one should light with a Beracha. This is the opinion of Ben Ish Hai and the Kaf HaHaim, as well as many other Poskim, including the Rema, Rabbi Zalman, Pri Megadim and Hayeh Adam. However, other Poskim, such as Rabbi Haim Palachi, the Peri Hadash and the Aruch Hashulhan hold that since there is a difference of opinion, Safek Berachot L'Hakel (a Beracha should not be recited in a case of a doubt) and therefore, one should not recite a Beracha when lighting. Hacham Ovadia overrules this claim, saying that where there is an established custom, the principle of Safek Berachot L'Hakel does not apply. Indeed most communities do have the custom and light with a Beracha. The custom of Halab was specifically not to make a Beracha on the candles of Yom Kippur. In fact, half the city of Aleppo did not even light candles on Yom Kippur, as testified by Hacham Yishak Zafrani in his Derech Ere"s, and Hacham Yishak Shehebar of Argentina. The Kol Ya'akob Weekday Siddur also records the custom of Halab as not to recite the Beracha. When Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, Maran rules that all opinions concur that candles are lit with a Beracha. Nevertheless, there is still a question with regard to the custom of Halab. Hacham Eliyahu Hamway wrote that even in such a case, a Beracha should not be recited because of Safek Berachot L'Hakel. Yet, after surveying the various authorities, it seems that the custom in America today is to light candles with a Beracha on Shabbat and Yom Kippur.

The beracha of Shehecheyanu is recited in Shul after Kol Nidre. It is not a Beracha on the Kol Nidre, but on the holy day itself. Therefore, if a woman attends Shul, she should recite it then. If not, she should recite it at home, either when lighting the candles or praying Arbit.

**SUMMARY** Most communities light candles for Yom Kippur with a Beracha. The custom of Halab is not to recite a Beracha, and some do not even light at all. However, when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, all agree that a Beracha is recited.

## KIDZ CORNER

### INTERESTING MIDRASH

(from Torah Tots)

#### **STANDING ROOM ONLY**

10 Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of seven years, at the time of the Sabbatical year, during the Sukkot festival,

11 When all Israel comes to appear before Hashem, your G-d, in the place that He will choose, you shall read this Torah before all Israel, in their ears,

12 Gather together the people - the men, the women, and the small children, and your stranger who is in your cities - so that they will hear and so that they will learn, and they shall fear Hashem, your G-d, and be careful to perform all the words of this Torah.

(Devarim, Deuteronomy 31: 10-12)

Moshe introduces one of the last commandments in the Torah, the *Mitzvah* of *Hakheil*, (literally - gathering) - the gathering of the entire Jewish people.

In *Vayikra*, Leviticus (25:1-7), we read about how *Eretz Yisrael* is governed by a seven-year agricultural cycle. During the seventh year, the *Shmita* (Sabbatical) year, no work may be done in the fields. The time that would otherwise be devoted to material concerns, are dedicated to *Torah* study and spiritual development.

At the conclusion of this period, the entire Jewish people assembled in *Yerushalayim*, (Jerusalem), "the place which Hashem chose," during the *Sukkot Yom Tov* (holiday). On the first day of *Chol Hamoed* (the Intermediate Days of the *Yom Tov*), the *Kohanim* (priests) urged the people to gather in the *Bet Hamikdash* (Holy Temple).

*Tosefta Sotah* (7:8) relates how *Hakheil* was announced by trumpet blasts:

"On that day, the *Kohanim* stood at all the closed and open places [of *Yerushalayim*] with golden shofars in their hands. They sounded the *shofars* repeatedly."

A high wooden platform was constructed in the *Ezrat Nashim* (Women's Courtyard - the outer courtyard of the *Bet Hamikdash*) upon which the king read selected inspirational portions of *Devarim*, (Deuteronomy)\* to the people. At the conclusion of the reading, he recited seven blessings\*\*, praising *Hashem* for causing His presence to dwell in *Eretz Yisrael*.

[\*The king read from the beginning of *Devarim* to the end of the first paragraph of the *Sh'ma* (6:9), the second paragraph of the *Sh'ma* (11:13-21), and 14:22 to 28:69. (*Talmud Sotah* 41a). These passages are all on the general subject of allegiance to *Hashem*, the covenant, and reward and punishment. As you can imagine, this was a deeply moving event for *Klal Yisrael*.]

[\*\*The seven blessings are: 1) *R'tzay* / Accept favorably... 2) *Modim Anachnu* / We bow... 3) *Ata B'Chartanu* / You chose us from all the nations... 4) A blessing for the continued existence of the *Bet Hamikdash*, ending *Hashochain B'Tzion* / He who dwells in Tzion 5) A blessing for the continuation of the kingship 6) A blessing that *Hashem* accept the service of the *Kohanim* favorably 7) The king's own *tefilla*, ending *Boruch Shomaya Tefilla* / Blessed be He who listens to prayers.]

During *Shmita*, the Sabbatical year, *Bnei Yisrael* had dedicated the major portion of their energies to *Torah* study. Then, from *Rosh Hashana* to *Sukkot*, they were preoccupied with the festive season and the service associated with it. After the *Sukkot* holiday, they returned to their homes and their worldly pursuits. The *Hakheil* gathering served as a climax for these efforts, and provided inspiration for the following years.

At the *Hakheil* gathering, the *Kohanim* brought the *Torah* scroll to the *Kohain Gadol* (High Priest), who presented it to the king as he stood. The participation of these two individuals conveyed an important lesson. There are three crowns: the crown of royalty, the crown of *Kehuna* (priesthood), and the crown of *Torah*. In the *Hakheil* experience, both the *Kohain Gadol* and the king demonstrate that the *Torah* is supreme, above the other crowns.

*Talmud Chagigah* (3a) relates:

"The Men" - Why did they come? "To learn."

"The Women" - Why did they come? "To hear."

"The Children" - Why did they come? "To give reward to those who brought them."

Intellectually, the people responded to the *Hakheil* experience in different ways, as indicated by this *Talmudic* passage. However, regardless of these

differences, the gathering left a powerful emotional impact on all the participants. In *Hilchot Chagigah* (3:7), the *Rambam* writes:

"[This experience] was ordained by the *Torah* to strengthen true faith. Each individual felt as if he was just commanded to observe it by *Hashem* [Himself]."

The *Torah* specifically obligates women to take part in this *Mitzvah*: Although women are generally exempt from performing *Mitzvot* associated with a specific time, an exception was made in this instance. The inspiring effect of *Hakheil* was necessary for women, too.

The commentaries note the importance of the children's participation.

*Tosafot* (*Chagigah* *ibid*) comments that the *mitzva* of *Hakheil* is the Biblical source for our bringing even young children to the Synagogue. (provided that they are not soiled and do not disturb the service).

*Minchah Gedolah* relates that children told each other:

"I remember when my father took me to *Yerushalayim*. We joined the huge crowd in the *Bet Hamikdash* and the king read the *Torah* to us."

Such an experience certainly motivated children to "learn to be in awe of *Hashem*."

At what age did the children participate in *Hakheil*? *Ramban* notes that infants were not required to participate. A child was not obligated to attend until he could understand and learn from the experience.

The *Maharsha* does not accept this view. He maintains that if it was physically possible for a child to participate, he was required to attend. Even if no cognitive impression would remain, the experience would subconsciously shape his character and spur him to greater *Torah* practice.

Both perspectives are relevant in educating our children, though one has generally prevailed. On one hand, *Sefer Chasidim* sternly warns against bringing children to the synagogue lest they disturb the worship of the adults. Nevertheless, it has always been customary to bring children to synagogue as soon as they are capable of maintaining decorum. The impressions created by these early experiences play a major role in the development of the child's Jewish commitment.

The *Talmud* relates that the mother of one of the *Mishnaic* Sages (*Rabbi Yehoshua*) used to bring his cradle to the study hall, so that he could absorb the sounds of *Torah* study from infancy. In modern times, it has become acknowledged that the time to inculcate values in children is from their earliest

youth, and especially by the example of parents and others who sincerely strive for the ideals they preach. Thus, for bringing their children to *Hakheil*, parents deserved to be rewarded, for they demonstrated that the *Torah* is precious to them.

The *Netivot* in his *sefer* on *Chumash*, *Nachalat Yaakov*, is puzzled by the *Talmud Chagigah*'s unusual answer - that the reason for bringing small children to the *Bet Hamikdash* for *Hakheil* is "To give reward to those who brought them."

He asks:

If all the adults must be in the *Bet Hamikdash* for the *mitzva* of *Hakheil*, where will all the children be? Should you leave them at home alone and unsupervised? *Hakheil* is not like the yearly *Purim* reading of *Megillat Esther*, where the mother and father can go to *shul* in two shifts so there is always someone to watch the children. There is only one reading of *Hakheil*, and everyone has to be there. So you have to bring the children anyway. Why is there such a great reward for doing something that we have to do anyway?

The *Nesivot* answers that the *Talmud* is telling us that when there is something you have to do anyway in order to fulfill a *mitzva*, that deed itself is a *mitzva*. Though bringing the children is necessary, *Hashem* is telling us that if we need to do it anyway, then it becomes an essential part of our own *Avodat Hashem*, and the *Torah* tells us that we will be rewarded for doing it.

Similarly, says the *Anaf Yosaif*, the *Talmud* cited above shows *Hashem*'s love for the Jewish people. *Hashem* converted the necessity into a "*mitzva*"; that is, if parents brought the children *l'shaim shamayim* - because He so commanded, they would gain extra reward.

Source: Meam Loez, The Torah Anthology

## Kid'z Korner (Revach)

### ***Rav Shimon Schwab - Why Did Yehoshua Rebuff Moshe Rabbenu And Keep It A Secret?***

On the day Moshe Rabbeinu was supposed to pass on from this world, he cried to Hashem and said, "Let Yehoshua take my leadership, but let me remain alive."

Hashem agreed and said, "Now go to Yehoshua and act like he does to you."

Moshe ran to Yehoshua's house and Yehoshua became frightened. "Rebbi, come with me," said Moshe. When they came to the Ohel Moed the

cloud of the Shechina descended on Yehoshua and Moshe was left outside. When the cloud lifted, Moshe asked Yehoshua to tell him what Hashem had said.

Yehoshua replied, "When Hashem appeared to you, did I know what you spoke about?"

Moshe screamed, "Let me die one thousand deaths and not have an ounce of jealousy." (Medrash Devarim Rabba 9:9)

Moshe preferred to die rather than be jealous, but why didn't Yehoshua want to tell Moshe what Hashem said? Rav Shimon Schwab answers with a Rashi in Vayeilech (31:7). Moshe told Yehoshua, "Ki Ata Tavo Et Ha'Am HaZeh," which the gGemara Sanhedrin (8a) explains that Moshe told Yehoshua to lead Bne Yisrael together with the Zikeinim. However, Hashem disagreed, as later in the parsha (31:23) Hashem told Yehoshua, "Ki Ata Tavi," meaning that you will lead alone and by force, as each generation can have only a single leader.

Rav Schwab says that Hashem told him this when he was in the Anan. Yehoshua did not want to repeat this to Moshe because he didn't want him to feel bad that Hashem gave him different instructions, and for Moshe's honor, he refused to tell him what Hashem said.

### **Meshech Chochma - A King in Front of the People**

The Meshech Chochma says that we know that a king is commanded not to be haughty, "LiVilti Rum Livavo." He must deal with every individual with love and compassion. However, this is only in private. Publicly he must show a tough exterior and may not be Mochel on his Kavod. We even see that Shaul Hamelech was punished for being too soft and compassionate.

There is a remez to this from the pasuk (VaYeilech 31:7) where Moshe called Yehoshua and said to him, "L'Einei Kol Yisrael Chazak V'Ematz." In a play on words the Meshech Chochma says, "Before the eyes of the people, that is when you must be strong and bold."

## **POUR LES FRANCOPHONES**

### **Investir dans L'éducation**

(Rav Yehonathan GEFEN - © Torah-Box)

« Assemble le peuple – les hommes, les femmes et les jeunes enfants et ton étranger qui est dans tes portes – afin qu'ils entendent et afin qu'ils apprennent et qu'ils craignent Hachem, votre D.ieu ; ils prendront garde de faire toutes les paroles de cette Torah. » (Dévarim 31,12)

Tous les sept ans, l'ensemble de la nation avait l'obligation de se rendre au *Beth Hamikdash* pour écouter le roi lire toute la Torah. La présence des tout petits enfants était aussi exigée, bien qu'ils fussent trop jeunes pour comprendre ce qui se passait et ce qui était lu. Rachi écrit que cette *Mitsva* avait pour but de récompenser ceux qui amenaient les bébés. Mais si l'on ne tirait aucun bénéfice à ce qu'ils soient présents, pourquoi méritait-on une récompense ?

Rav Yérou'ham Levovits explique quel était ce bénéfice. Bien que les petits enfants fussent trop jeunes pour saisir ce qui se passait, inconsciemment, ils étaient influencés par cet événement spirituel tellement important. Il le prouve par l'histoire de Rabbi Yéhochou'a ben 'Hanania. La *Michna* dans *Pirké Avot* raconte que Rabbi Yo'hanan ben Zakaï fit l'éloge de ses illustres disciples. À propos Rabbi Yéhochou'a ben 'Hanania, il déclara : « *Achré Yoladto* » — celle qui lui donna naissance est digne de louanges.[1]

La *Barténoura*, dans sa deuxième interprétation sur cette partie de la *Michna*, affirme que Rabbi Yo'hanan voulait faire l'éloge de la mère de Rabbi Yéhochou'a quant à sa façon de l'élever. Il rapporte le *Talmud Yérouchalmi*<sup>[2]</sup> relatant que durant sa grossesse, elle se rendait dans toutes les maisons d'étude de la ville et demandait aux érudits en Torah de prier pour que son bébé devienne un *Talmid 'Hakham*. De plus, dès le jour de sa naissance, elle ne retira jamais son berceau de la maison d'étude, afin que seuls des mots de Torah pénètrent dans ses oreilles. Quel effet positif cela peut-il avoir sur un bébé qui ne comprend pas un mot de ce qu'il entend ? Le *Kédouchat Tsion*<sup>[3]</sup> explique qu'en entendant la voix de la Torah, la sainteté de la Torah s'incrusta dans son âme même s'il n'en saisissait pas le sens. Cela fit une telle impression sur lui qu'il put, par la suite, devenir un érudit en Torah d'une telle envergure.

C'est ainsi que l'on peut expliquer le bénéfice d'amener les jeunes enfants à *Hakel* – le fait d'entendre la Torah et d'être dans un environnement imprégné de *Yirat Chamaïm* faisait grande impression sur l'âme de l'enfant et avait un bénéfice sur le long terme.

La *Mitsva* de *Hakel* nous enseigne également l'importance fondamentale du rôle des parents dans l'éducation de leur enfant, de lui donner une chance de devenir un grand érudit. Les parents devaient supporter la difficulté du long voyage avec leurs jeunes enfants jusqu'au *Beth Hamikdash*. Cette détermination, cette résolution à traverser cette épreuve pour s'assurer que l'enfant grandisse dans les conditions spirituelles optimales est essentielle tout au long de sa jeunesse. Il ne suffit pas de lui donner une éducation juive et de compter sur l'école pour donner inculquer les connaissances en Torah nécessaires. Il faut être prêt à fournir de grands efforts pour donner à l'enfant toutes les chances de grandir dans le domaine de la Torah.

On raconte l'histoire d'une femme qui vivait dans une extrême pauvreté en Europe. Elle avait à peine de quoi nourrir ses enfants, mais était déterminée à donner à son fils la meilleure éducation en Torah. À cette époque, les cours étaient particuliers, l'enseignement s'effectuait individuellement et non dans une classe de plusieurs élèves. Elle dépensa donc une grande partie de ses revenus pour l'éducation de son fils. Un jour, n'ayant plus de quoi payer le professeur, elle décida de faire un acte très spécial. Les hivers en Europe étaient particulièrement rudes et le seul moyen de chauffer la maison était le four. Elle vendit son four et souffrit du froid, pour pouvoir continuer à financer l'étude de son fils. Cet enfant devint par la suite le fameux *Ridbaz*, un grand érudit, et l'auteur d'un commentaire sur le *Talmud Yérouchalmi*. Lui-même racontait souvent son histoire, soulignant le mérite de sa mère dans son incroyable sagesse.

Cette *Messirout Néfech* nous dépasse, mais elle nous donne une idée de ce à quoi il faudrait aspirer pour éduquer nos enfants à la *Yirat Chamaïm* (crainte du Ciel) et pour que nos fils deviennent des *Talmidé 'Hakhamim*. Par exemple, la scolarité de nos enfants coûte peut-être plus cher quand ils sont placés dans des institutions conformes à l'esprit de Torah, mais si l'on réalise que leur *Avodat Hachem* (service divin) est plus importante que tout, il nous sera plus facile de payer ces sommes ; ce ne sera pas perçu comme un fardeau, mais comme un excellent investissement.

La *Mitsva* de *Hakel* nous enseigne la nécessité de faire de gros efforts et de consacrer beaucoup de temps pour nos enfants, dès leur naissance et tout au long de leur vie.

## REFLEXION SEMANAL

### El último Mandamiento de la Torá: El Corazón, el Hogar, el Texto

(Rav Jonathan Sacks @aish.com)

Hasta este momento, Moshé entregó a los israelitas 612 mandamientos. Pero todavía debía transmitir una instrucción más, la última de su vida, la mitzvá final de la Torá:

Ahora, pues, escriban para ustedes este canto y enséñalo a los hijos de Israel; ponlo en sus bocas, para que este canto sea testimonio para Mí frente a los hijos de Israel (Deuteronomio 31:19)

La tradición oral entendió que esto es un mandamiento respecto a que cada israelita debe tener parte en la escritura de un Séfer Torá. Así estableció la ley Maimónides:

Cada varón israelita debe escribir para sí mismo un rollo de la Torá, como está escrito: "Ahora, pues, escriban para ustedes este canto", lo que significa: "escriban para ustedes [una copia completa de] la Torá que contiene este canto", porque no escribimos pasajes aislados de la Torá [sino sólo un rollo completo]. Incluso si alguien hereda de sus padres un rollo de la Torá, de todos modos es una mitzvá escribir uno para él mismo, y quien lo hace es como si hubiera recibido [la Torá] en el Monte Sinaí. Quien no sabe cómo escribir un rollo, puede contratar [a un escriba] para que lo haga por él, y quien corrige incluso una letra es como si hubiera escrito todo el rollo (*Leyes de Tefilín, Mezuzá y Séfer Torá 7:1*)

Hay algo poético en que Moshé dejara esta ley para el final. Porque es como si estuviera diciéndole a la siguiente generación, y a todas las generaciones futuras: "No piensen que es suficiente con poder decir: 'Mis ancestros recibieron la Torá de Moshe'. Ustedes deben tomarla y renovarla en cada generación". Y eso fue lo que hicieron los judíos.

El Corán llama a los judíos "el pueblo del Libro". Este es un gran eufemismo. Todo el judaísmo es una extensa historia de amor entre un pueblo y un libro, entre los judíos y la Torá. Nunca hubo otro pueblo que amara y honrara más a un libro. Los judíos lo leyeron, lo estudiaron, lo discutieron y lo vivieron. Ante su presencia se ponen de pie como si fuera un rey. En Simjat Torá, bailan con él como si fuera una novia. Que D-íos no lo permita, pero si un Séfer Torá se cae, los judíos ayunan. Si un Séfer ya no está en

condiciones para ser usado, se lo entierra como si fuera un pariente que ha muerto.

Durante mil años escribieron comentarios en lo que conforma el resto del Tanaj (hubo mil años entre Moshé y Malaquías, el último de los profetas. En el último capítulo de los libros proféticos, Malaquías dice: "Recuerden la Torá de Mi siervo Moshé, los decretos y las leyes que le di en Joreb para todo Israel"). Luego, durante otros mil años, desde el último de los profetas hasta el cierre del Talmud de Babilonia, escribieron comentarios a los comentarios en la forma de documentos de la Ley Oral (Midrash, Mishná y Guemará. Entonces, durante otros mil años, desde los Gueonim hasta los Rishonim y los Ajaronim, escribieron comentarios a los comentarios, en forma de exégesis bíblicas, códigos de leyes y obras de filosofía- Hasta al era moderna, virtualmente todos los textos judíos eran directa o indirectamente un comentario a la Torá.

Durante cientos de generaciones fue más que un libro. Era una carta de amor de D-ios para el pueblo judío, el regalo de Su palabra, la promesa de su compromiso, el contrato de matrimonio entre el Cielo y el pueblo judío, el vínculo que D-ios nunca quebraría ni rescindiría. Era la historia del pueblo y su constitución como nación bajo el gobierno de D-ios. Cuando fueron exiliados de su tierra, se convirtió en la evidencia documental de la promesa del pasado y la esperanza del futuro. En una frase brillante, el poeta Heinrich Heine, llamó a la Torá "la patria portátil del judío". En las palabras de George Steiner, "el texto es el hogar; cada comentario un retorno".(1)

Diseminados, dispersos, sin tierra, sin poder, mientras un judío tenía la Torá, estaba en casa, sino físicamente, por lo menos espiritualmente. Hubo momentos en los que la Torá era todo lo que tenían. De aquí surge la expresión de uno de los poemas litúrgicos de *Neilá*, al concluir Iom Kipur: *Ein lanu shiur rak haTorá hazot* – No tenemos nada excepto esta Torá.

Ella era su mundo. De acuerdo con un Midrash, la Torá fue el plano de la Creación: "D-ios observó la Torá y creó el universo". De acuerdo con otra tradición, es un solo nombre místico de D-ios. Los Sabios dijeron que fue escrita con letras de fuego negro sobre fuego blanco. Rabí Iosi ben Kisma fue arrestado por los romanos por enseñar la Torá en público, y lo sentenciaron a muerte. Lo envolvieron en un rollo de la Torá y le prendieron fuego. Cuando moría, sus alumnos le preguntaron qué veía. Él les respondió: "Veo que el pergamino arde, pero las letras vuelan [regresando al Cielo]" (Avodá Zará 18a).

Los romanos pueden haber quemado los rollos, pero la Torá era indestructible.

Por lo tanto, es muy fuerte la idea de que al llegar Moshé al final de su vida y la Torá al fin de su narrativa, el imperativo final sea un mandato para continuar escribiendo y estudiando la Torá, enseñándola, "colocándola en la boca" para que la Torá no los abandone a ellos ni ellos la abandonen a ella. La palabra de D-ios vivirá en ellos, dándoles vida.

El Talmud cuenta una historia intrigante respecto al rey David, quien le pidió a D-ios que le dijera cuánto tiempo iba a vivir. D-ios le respondió que eso es algo que ningún mortal puede saber. Lo máximo que D-ios le reveló a David fue que moriría en Shabat. El Talmud dice que cada Shabat, la "boca [de David] no se alejaba del estudio" durante todo el día de Shabat.

Cuando llegó el momento en que David debía morir, enviaron al Ángel de la Muerte, pero al encontrar a David estudiando constantemente, no pudo llevárselo, ya que la Torá es una forma de vida eterna. Finalmente, el ángel se vio obligado a idear un plan. Él provocó un crujido en un árbol del jardín real. David subió a una escalera para ver qué hacía ese ruido. Entonces se rompió un peldaño de la escalera, David cayó y por un instante dejó de estudiar. En ese momento, murió. (Shabat 30a-b).

¿Qué nos enseña esta historia? En el nivel más simple, esta es la forma en que los Sabios imaginan al rey David, menos como un héroe militar y el más grande rey de Israel y más como un penitente y erudito de la Torá (prestemos atención que varios salmos, especialmente 1, 19 y 119, son poemas en alabanza al estudio de la Torá). Pero a un nivel más profundo, parece decir algo más. Aquí David simboliza al pueblo judío. Mientras el pueblo judío no deje de estudiar, no morirá. El equivalente nacional al Ángel de la Muerte, la ley de todas las naciones, por más grandes que sean, eventualmente decaen y caen, no se aplican a un pueblo que nunca deja de estudiar, que nunca olvida quiénes son y por qué lo son.

Por eso la Torá termina con el último mandamiento: seguir escribiendo y estudiando la Torá. Esto queda epitomizado en la bella costumbre de Simjat Torá, de pasar de inmediato del final de la Torá a su comienzo. La última palabra de la Torá es Israel, y la última letra es una *lamed*. La primer apalabra de la Torá es Bereshit, y la primera letra es *bet*. Una *lamed* con una *bet* forman la palabra *lev*, "corazón". Mientras el pueblo judío no deje de estudiar, el corazón judío nunca dejará de latir. Nunca hubo un pueblo que amara más a un libro. Nunca hubo un

libro que sostuviera a un pueblo por más tiempo ni que lo haya elevado más alto.

## NAHALOT

### Nahala of Rav Avraham Chalfon the 7<sup>th</sup> of Tishri

Rav Avraham Chalfon (1735-1819). Born in Tripoli, Libya. Actually, in those days, Libya did not exist - the region was comprised of three independent regions, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fazzan. He learned under several sages, most notably the Italian gadol, Rav Malachi ben Yaakov HaKohen, author of Yad Malachi, a sefer that discusses the methodology and rules of the Shas and poskim. Blessed with wealth from both his parents and his in-laws, Rav Avraham was able to devote himself to Torah his whole life. He was appointed sheikh (president) of Tripoli's kehillah, in 1778. By the time of Rav Avraham's birth, Ahmed Karamanli controlled much of modern Libya. Karamanli was a member of the Sultan's household guard, assassinated Tripoli's evil Ottoman governor in 1711, and installed himself as a semi-independent ruler in his stead. As a result, Tripoli became a Corsair (Barbary pirate) base.

## SHABBAT TESHUVA

### Teshuva & Torah Learning

(Rabbi Mansour)

The famous Haftara read on Shabbat Shuba – the Shabbat in between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur – comes from the Book of Hoshea, and begins with the prophet calling to the people, "Return, O Israel, unto Hashem your G-d, for you have stumbled through your sin" (14:2). Hoshea then instructs us how to embark on this road of repentance: "Kehu Imachem Debarim Ve'shubu El Hashem" – "Take with yourselves words, and return to G-d" (14:3).

Rav Aharon Kotler (1892-1962) explains that these "words" are the words of the Torah. In order to properly repent, one must devote time to the study of Torah.

In truth, this is stated explicitly in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, 935), which teaches: "If a person stumbled upon a sin for which he liable to death at the hands of G-d, what shall he do so he may live? He should involve himself in Torah. If he was accustomed to

reading one page, he should read two pages; to learn one chapter, he should learn two chapters." The Midrash tells us that one can avoid the repercussions of his wrongdoing by increasing the amount of time he spends learning Torah.

Why is Torah learning a crucial component of Teshuva? The Rambam famously lists the four elements that comprise the process of repentance – discontinuing the sinful behavior, remorse, confession, and committing not to repeat the sin in the future. All these stages are readily understandable, as they relate to the sin itself. But how does this additional component – Torah study – relate to the process of Teshuva?

The answer can be found in a well-known Mishna in Pirkeh Abot (3:6) which teaches that whenever somebody learns Torah, the Shechina (divine presence) is with him. Each and every time we open a Torah book, or listen to a Torah class, G-d is present. We are all very enthusiastic when we have the privilege of meeting with a famous Sadik for five minutes; but in truth, every time we learn Torah, we are together with G-d throughout the entire period we spend learning. He is right there with us each and every time we study Torah.

Sin creates distance between us and G-d. It severs the connection between us. We all become frazzled when we are somewhere without a Wi-Fi connection, or without cellphone reception. But losing our connection with G-d is much more serious. G-d is the source of all blessing and goodness in our lives; when we lose our connection to Him, we lose our connection to everything that we need and want. Teshuva literally means "return." As we cited earlier, Hoshea calls to us and pleads, "Return, O Israel, unto Hashem your G-d." Teshuva is the process of rebuilding our connection with Hashem after having severed that connection through our misconduct.

As we think about the way we need to grow and improve during this period of repentance, let us include as well as resolution to increase the amount of time we devote to Torah learning. Our efforts to "return" to G-d, to rebuild and enhance our connection with Him, must include a commitment to Torah learning, which brings Hashem into our lives and brings us closer to Him. Let us make Torah study an important part of our Teshuva process during this season, and we will, please G-d, be worthy of being inscribed in the Book of Life and of being blessed with a year of joy, success and prosperity, Amen.