

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SHEMINI - Haftarah: Shemuel II 6:1-19
Rosh Hodesh is Sunday and Monday
HAPPY BIRTHDAY LAUREN !!!

APRIL 17-18, 2015 29 NISAN 5775

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Lorraine Bat Victoria

For a text reminder to count the omer visit: <http://www.tizkor.com/sefira>

Our schedule going forward for the spring and summer

Friday nights – 7PM

Shabbat Morning – Class with Rabbi Aharon at 8AM and Shaharit Hodu at 8:30AM

Shabbat Afternoon – Class with Rav Aharon 2 hours before Shabbat Ends

Mincha 90 minutes before Shabbat Ends

Seudah Shelish at 60 minutes before Shabbat Ends

Birkat haMazon 15 minutes before Shabbat Ends

Arbit at 10 minutes before Shabbat Ends

Sunday evening – Mincha and Arbit at 20 minutes before sundown

Candle lighting Friday evening April 17 at 7:18 p.m. Mincha at 7:00, Shir HaShirim 6:45

SHABBAT: Morning Perasha Class with Rav Aharon at 8:00

SHAHARIT at 8:30AM – Shema this week 8:50

Sarina Amiel Gross is sponsoring the kiddush this Shabbat in memory of her husband, Menachem Avraham ben Nachman Moshe and her father, Leibel Eliezer ben Roland.

Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one.

Our weekly Kiddush will be subject to sponsorship. We would love to see the sponsorship board filled.

Dairy Kiddush sponsorship will be \$300, \$400 for Deluxe and \$ 500 for Super Deluxe

Meat Kiddush sponsorship will be \$400, \$600 for Deluxe and \$1000 for Super Deluxe

Seuda Shelishi at \$100 for the class each week. And Sunday and weekday breakfasts are \$100 ea

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer

Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/

Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at Sephardic April and May at 4:30 PM

Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 5:30

Class with Rav Aharon 6:15 PM - Mincha 6:50 PM

Seudah Shelish at 7:20 PM - Birkat haMazon 8:00PM

Arbit at 8:05 PM - Shabbat Ends at 8:18

DAILY MINYAN – Sunday Rosh Hodesh followed by breakfast 8:00AM

Monday Rosh Hodesh at 6:50, Thursday 6:55, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 7:00AM

SUNDAY MORNING After Tefilah and breakfast – The Blessing on the Tress at the Wagner Home

Krav Maga at 10AM

Sunday evening – Mincha and Arbit at 7:15 PM

MAY 8 – Friday Night –

Sheva Berachot Dinner at the Synagogue

in honor of Rina and Danny

\$20 per person

\$15 per child 12 and under

No charge for children 5 and under

Reservations and payment must be received by Sunday, May 3rd

RSVP to Rebecca 516-698-2863 or uft183@yahoo.com



Elianne

Rivka

David

Yehoshua

Moshe

Sarah

Yaacov

TRAGEDY HAS STRUCK OUR COMMUNITY

**We must not let this message be lost.
Please help perpetuate the neshamos of the 7 Sassoon
children lost in the tragic fire.**

In memory of the children, the family has established a special memorial fund that is dedicated to families struggling under the extreme financial burden with Yeshiva tuition. The Sassoon Children Memorial Education Fund has no overhead or expenses. 100% of your donation will help children continue to receive the best education, in memory of those lost.

Please donate generously today!

___ Sponsor one child for a Week \$180

___ Sponsor one child for a Month \$3,600

___ Sponsor one child for a Year \$12,000

Every dollar counts, every donation is appreciated.

**I want to help perpetuate the memories of the 7 children, charge my card
\$_____ now, or \$_____ per month.**

Credit Card Information Visa/MasterCard/American Express/Discover

Name:	Phone:	Credit Card Number:	Exp Date: __/__/__
-------	--------	---------------------	--------------------

Donate online: sassoonchildrenfund.com or call 866-580-4523.

The Sassoon Children Memorial Education Fund

is the only fund approved by the victims' family.

Please make checks payable/or send this form to:

**Sassoon Children Memorial Education Fund
c/o Rabbi David Ozeri, 2220 Ave L, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11210
or fax 212-239-4277**

Prominent community Rabbis will oversee the fund together with the Jemal family.

**Please continue to pray for the injured family members:
Gila bat Frances Tzipporah and Tzipporah bat Gila**

The 2015 World Zionist Congress – Ohavei Zion internal form
Please fill out and either fax to 212-289-2101 or email to ana.eliyahu@gmail.com

We cast our vote for slate #5 - Ohavei Zion World Sephardic Zionist Org. - www.wszo.org

Required Personal Information (Please print clearly)

First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____

Tel # _____ Email Address: _____

Gender: Male ___ Female ___ Age, are you under 30 years: Yes ___ No ___

Billing Address (Same as CC/Checking Acct):

Street _____ Apt # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Address (if different than Billing):

Street _____ Apt # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Registration Fee: \$10.00 or \$5.00 (Age 30 and below)

Card # _____ CVV _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____

Signature _____

Spouse and Children

1) First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____

Email Address: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Under 30 yrs old? Yes ___ No ___

2) First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____

Email Address: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Under 30 yrs old? Yes ___ No ___

3) First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____

Email Address: _____ Male ___ Female ___ Under 30 yrs old? Yes ___ No ___

Jerusalem Program

I declare that I accept the Jerusalem Program (below); I am Jewish; I will be at least 18 years of age by June 30, 2015; my permanent residence is in the United States; and I will not/did not vote in the March 2015 Israeli Knesset election.

Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, brought about the establishment of the State of Israel, and views a Jewish, Zionist, democratic and secure State of Israel to be the expression of the common responsibility of the Jewish people for its continuity and future.

The foundations of Zionism are:

1. The unity of the Jewish people, its bond to its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael, and the centrality of the State of Israel and Jerusalem, its capital, in the life of the nation.
2. Aliyah to Israel from all countries and the effective integration of all immigrants into Israeli Society.
3. Strengthening Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state and shaping it as an exemplary society with a unique moral and spiritual character, marked by mutual respect for the multi-faceted Jewish people, rooted in the vision of the prophets, striving for peace and contributing to the betterment of the world.
4. Ensuring the future and the distinctiveness of the Jewish people by furthering Jewish, Hebrew and Zionist education, fostering spiritual and cultural values and teaching Hebrew as the national language.
5. Nurturing mutual Jewish responsibility, defending the rights of Jews as individuals and as a nation, representing the national Zionist interests of the Jewish people, and struggling against all manifestations of anti-Semitism.
6. Settling the country as an expression of practical Zionism.

By checking this box, I certify that the above statement is true.

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please reply to
ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com
 Newsletter archives now at BenaiAsher.Org

**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue,
 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us!
 212-289-2100 – Mincha– The most important
 tefilah of the day –Give us 11 minutes and we'll
 give you the World To Come!**

Editors Notes

While our brothers in Israel have moved on to the double portion of Tazria Mesorah this week, we in exile will be reading the portion of Shemini, which translates into 8 for the 8th time. We first read it almost a month ago on Shabbat Hagadol prior to Passover during mincha, then again on Monday and Thursday. We read it for Mincha Shabbat on the 1st day of Pesach and the Shabbat at the end of Pesach. We read it this past Monday and Thursday and finally we will read it again in the morning of this Shabbat. Must be that someone up there wants us to pay attention to something. I'm not sure exactly what, but something.

We learn that this is 8th the day, During the first seven, Moses assembled and disassembled the Tabernacle. But things didn't seem to fit. Now if you buy a piece of furniture from Ikea and try following the instructions and assembling it once and it doesn't come together, you'll usually try again. Following a second unsuccessful attempt, you either hire the handyman to do it, bring the piece back or let it sit in the garage usually until you clean up one day and either start over or deposit it in the dumpster not remembering why you bought it in the first place. Moses must have been very frustrated. Did we follow the instructions? Did we make all the pieces correctly? Did we misinterpret? Yet he doesn't give up. As King Solomon writes: Though a righteous man falls seven times, he will get up.

On that 8th day Moses succeeds yet it is not Moses who becomes the high priest, it is Aaron his brother. Moses dresses his brother in the vestments of the Kohen Gadol and Aaron somewhat reluctant to accept the honor brings the sacrifices and blesses the people. His success is acknowledged as G-d rests his presence on the Mishkan. Aaron's joy that day must have been as great a joy that a man can experience. It is then that disaster strikes. His two eldest sons Nadav and Avihu bring a strange fire, possibly the ketoret when they were not asked to. They are consumed by fire. Not only does Aaron accept the tragedy and remain silent. But he continues on with his duty and that day. How?

Two weeks ago we sat at the Seder and read ... "Ma'aseh berabi Eliezer, verabi Yehoshua, verabi Elazar ben Azaryah, verabi Akiva, verabi Tarfon, shehayu mesubin bivnei brak, vehayu mesaprim biyitziat mitzrayim kol oto ha laylah ... It once happened that Rabbis Eliezer, Joshua, Elazar ben Azaryah, Akiva and Tarfon were reclining at the seder table in Bnei Brak. They spent the whole night discussing the Exodus." This is pretty much how we begin the discussion of the Exodus. Why? Who is the teacher here? The first one mentioned is the teacher, Rabbi Eliezer. If he is the teacher, why are they not at his home? Why are they in Benai Brak which is the home of Rabbi Akiva? Why are they not in Jerusalem? Why are they not with their families?

Compare the characters in the Hagadah to a story told in Makot: It happened that Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria, Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Akiva (many of the same people as in the Hagadah story) went up to Jerusalem. When they reached Mt. Scopus, they tore their garments. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox emerging from the place of the Holy of Holies. The others started weeping; Rabbi Akiva laughed.

Said they to him: "Why are you laughing?"

Said he to them: "Why are you weeping?"

Said they to him: "A place [so holy] that it is said of it, 'the stranger that approaches it shall die,'¹ and now foxes traverse it, and we shouldn't weep?"

Said he to them: "That is why I laugh. For it is written.... After quoting the text he continues,"As long as Uriah's prophecy had not been fulfilled (Foxes on the Temple Mount), I feared that Zechariah's prophecy may not be fulfilled either (The voice of joy and happiness will be heard). But now that Uriah's prophecy has been fulfilled, it is certain that Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled."

With these words they replied to him: "Akiva, you have consoled us! Akiva, you have consoled us!"

We suggested that the Hagadah story takes place in the year following the destruction and in the period following their group visit to the Temple mount where they weep over the destruction. When Passover comes, the rabbis are mournful that there will be no Pascal sacrifice because there is no temple. Where do they go? How do they continue? They need consolation and they need to be touched by that infectious attitude which tells them to rise up.

We are in the period of the Omer. Most of us equate the Omer with the period of mourning for the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva who died during the time

between Pesach and Shavuot. If we consider that Rabbi Akiva begins Yeshiva at age 40, he studies for 24 years and returns at age 64 with students. He builds a yeshiva over the next few decades and then witnesses his entire 24,000 students die in a period of a few weeks. Perhaps he is 90 and at that point how can he continue? How can he simply not retire to Miami Beach? Yet we learn that he rose from his mourning and found and taught five new students who were Judah bar Ilai, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Eleazar ben Shammua, Jose ben Halaftha and Shimon bar Yochai. Those five were the bridge connecting the rabbis of Temple times with Judaism in post Temple times. Rabbi Akiva is a symbol of going on; of rebirth..

This week we commemorated Yom Hoshuah. It is a day we remember the atrocities of the Nazis and their partners, but it is also a day we celebrate the survivors and their will to continue to live. I often think of Yitta Schwartz who died 5 years ago at the age of 93, she left behind 15 children, more than 200 grandchildren and so many great- and great-great-grandchildren that, by her family's count, she could claim perhaps 2,000 living descendants. During World War II, the Nazis sent Mrs. Schwartz, her husband, Joseph, and the six children they had at the time to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. She survived and her life was — "a thumb in the eye of the Nazis".

And finally a week after we commemorate Holocaust and the attempted annihilation of the Jewish people, we we celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut, the founding of the state of Israel where every Jew can state aloud Am Yisrael Chai.

The 8th day 8 is the day of the Brit Milah, it symbolizes going beyond nature The message of the portion, of the week, of the holiday and of the Omer is to always remember, no matter how low we fall, we can always rise to the greatest heights. The message from Moses and Aaron, from Rabbi Akiva and the survivors is to keep going forward and to never give up. Never say die! .

PS ... Yom HaShemini recalls Rosh Hodesh Nisan when joy combined with tragedy. This Sunday and Monday as we celebrate Rosh Hodesh Iyar, we will be reminded of last Rosh Hodesh and our communal loss. We commemorate the sheloshim of Elianne, Rivka, David, Yehoshua, Moshe, Sara and Yaakov. We pray that the family too be able to rise up and we see that out of such a tragedy they think not about themselves, but others. As I wrote last week....

In memory of their nieces and nephews, and with a prayer towards a refuah shelema for their sister Gilah Bat Frances and their niece Siporah bat Gilah, my dear friends, Elliott, Saul and Michael Jemal together with their extended effort would like to invite all of us to get involved in tackling a monumental problem - the tuition crisis.

Elliott writes: We are starting with our community! We are the test pilot. Anyone that can join and contribute and not let the message pass by will be zoche BH – Please see the attached flyer which has been running in many orthodox periodicals. Everyone is invited to help in any way possible. We are working with the schools in our community on making this a long term commitment. All funds will be allocated back to ALL our schools equally on a per student basis. The message is Ahava and respect of each other's children and schools and religious level of observance. May we see the end of all Tzarot. Besorot Tovot

So many of you asked, "What can I do"? So many asked, "Where can I donate to"? Realize that the Sassoon family is not asking for anything for themselves. They want to do what they can for others.

I was very moved when I heard Rabbi Yedid speak about the project last week and that each of us must do something. Rabbi Yedid suggested that if 5000 families each committed \$100 monthly to the fund, we would have \$6,000,000 in a year for the yeshivot. Chantelle and I are fully committed to be a part of this project and we will be one of those 5000, and we invite you to join as well.

Perhaps seeing that \$100 charge each month will be a steadfast reminder to us to do as Gabby Sassoon asked us, "to kiss, to hug and to love our own children".

The Sassoon Children Memorial Education Fund has no overhead or expenses. 100% of your donation will help children continue to receive the best education.

PSS At the same time with only a few days left, please consider voting and reaching out to others to vote for Ohavei Zion in the World Jewish Congress Elections. If you consider the thought that with only 35000 votes cast nationally to date, if we had 5000 families simply vote with four votes per family, that's 20,000 votes and we would have a major say in the distribution of hundreds of millions of dollars has been set aside for Jewish education in the Diaspora. If we really come together in the next three weeks it will mean that our Yeshivot might not get just 6

million, but possibly 60 million or more. It costs only \$10 to vote and still we are not convincing people.

As I have written again and again, with mounting scholarship requests, we long for assistance for our schools, our children and their parents. But help is there and we simply don't take it. Hundreds of millions of dollars has been set aside for Jewish education in the Diaspora. Because we don't step up and vote, that money is being directed by our reform and conservative neighbors to their schools, to their synagogues and to their programs. Isn't it time that we woke up and took our seat at the table? Vote in the World Zionist Organization's election.

Visit www.myvoteourisrael.com and cast a ballot for the slate of our World Sephardic Zionist Organization – Ohavei Zion. For our children's sake, help us cash in that lottery ticket. Spread this message and get everyone on your own lists to vote. For more information visit ohaveizion.com or contact Lana Eliyahu at lane.eliyahu@gmail.com. I have attached a form that you can use and either email back to Lana or fax to 212-289-2101. Its worth so much and takes so little!

Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading: Nathan I. Dweck

- Shenimi - Inauguration of the mishkan, Kashroot
1- 8th day of the inauguration of the mishkan. Aharon brings Korbanot for the first time.
2- Aharon brings korban mincha & shelamim and blesses Benei Israel
3- Hashem consumes the korbanot. Aharon's sons bring esh zara and die. Hashem tells Aharon and his remaining son's not to mourn and to continue the service.
4- Moshe tells Aharon and his sons to eat the mincha and shelamim offerings
5- Aharon and his sons don't eat the shelamim. Moshe is confused / angered as to why.
6- Laws of Kashroot (animals, birds, fish, flying insects). Laws of the dead animals that cause toomah.
7- Items that can become tameh. Laws of kashroot for creeping creatures. Reason for Kashroot.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

“These are the life forms that you may eat from among all the animals that are upon the earth.” (Vayikra 11:2) Rabbi Reuven Semah

It's interesting that after eight days of eating, this week's perashah, Shemini, discusses at great length the laws of forbidden foods. At the perashah's conclusion the Torah says, “For I am Hashem your G-d, you are to sanctify yourselves and be holy for I am holy.” Perhaps the Torah is telling us that with regard to food, it is not sufficient to avoid what is unkosher. Perhaps we are expected to refrain from placing undue emphasis on food.

Rabbi Shimon Finkelman quoted his mother. While she always sought to see the good in others (one of her sayings was “There is no such thing as a bad Jew”), she was troubled by our apparent obsession with foods of other nationalities. She would say, “Did you ever see a nonkosher restaurant advertise in a gentile neighborhood, ‘We sell kosher style gefilte fish and potato kugel’? No, they're not interested in our food. Why are we so interested in theirs?”

If we manage to separate wants from needs and we decide to make our list as short as possible, there are many needs that can't be brushed away. We need food, clothing, shelter, affection, relationships that mean something. None of these are illusory. Our needs are like a treadmill. We eat today and we just have to eat again tomorrow. You can't help but ask what Hashem had in mind when he forced us to get on the treadmill of wanting, a treadmill you can't get off until the day you die. The Hobot Halebabot tells us that “Hashem in His great wisdom is testing each soul. The test is through each person's needs.” It is so easy and so false, to think that life is about the unending effort to see that you have what you need. The truth is that life is about what you become as you make the efforts to silence the voice that says “I want! I need!”

R.T. Heler tells about the Ponevezher Rav, who lost everything that one can possibly lose, in the Holocaust. He started again from scratch with the firm belief that Hashem wanted him to begin an entirely new chapter in his life. His dream of the Ponevezh Yeshiva was perceived by outsiders as pure fantasy. He turned out to be a brilliant builder. Part of the story was his uncanny ability to charm potential donors into seeing things his way.

He was once on a fundraising trip to Miami. Another Rabbi, unknown to him, had also decided to try his luck in Florida, and happened to be at the same shul on Shabbat. The shul's Rabbi asked the Ponevezher Rav to speak first. His humor,

magnetism, and sincerity touched the hearts of everyone in the room. The other Rabbi decided that it was an impossible act to follow and the best thing would be to just move on to another city. Then the inconceivable happened so fast that he could barely take it in. The Ponevezher Rav ended his speech with an appeal for his fellow Rabbi's yeshiva. To the Ponevezher, Torah was Torah. It is a gift from the world's Master to His people. He surely needed the money for his yeshiva, but he also needed to be the person G-d created him to be.

He was exposed in his youth to really great Rabbis. They gave him the tools to become rather than just do. Raising money for his yeshiva was important. Being a servant of Hashem was even more important. He could get off the treadmill of wanting whenever he chose to.

Ask yourself two questions: "Can I get off?" and more importantly, "Do I want to?"

Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

On the opening day of the Mishkan, Moshe told his brother, Aharon, "Step up and do the Divine service, for this is why you were chosen." The Midrash tells us that Aharon was reluctant to come forward because he kept on visualizing the Golden Calf before him, and he thought it was a sign that he was not fully forgiven. Hashem reassured him that he was indeed forgiven, and he was the one picked to lead the service.

We learn from Aharon a wonderful trait. If a person does something wrong, don't be so sure it's forgotten so quickly. Generally, we tend to forgive ourselves much faster than we forgive others. When someone wrongs us we may hold a grudge or just remember it in our hearts, but if we do the same thing to others and we ask their forgiveness, we feel, "Let bygones be bygones." If we would realize that just as we don't forget so quickly, maybe others are the same way, we would be more hesitant before we do something wrong. And even if something did happen through us we would remember it longer, just like Aharon did, so that we would be more regretful, and this would lead to a complete reconciliation.

KOSHER SIGN

"But this is what you shall not eat from those that chew the cud or have split hooves; the camel, though it chews the cud, its hoof is not split – it is spiritually unclean for you." (Vayikra 11:4)

The Kli Yakar points out that the phrase "the camel, though it chews the cud" in the above verse is inappropriately placed. Since the verse tells us the reason why we cannot eat this animal, why does it begin by stating a reason that we can eat it – the verse should have said, "But this is what you shall not

eat from those that chew the cud or have split hooves; the camel, for its hoof is not split [even] though it chews the cud." Why is the camel's 'kosher sign' written first, or even at all?

The Kli Yakar answers that the phrase "it chews the cud" is actually not coming to explain its 'kosher sign,' rather the exact opposite. The fact that the camel chews the cud – its 'kosher sign' – is precisely what makes it even more teref, because pretending to be good when in fact you are not, is a terrible character trait, worse than someone wicked who at least openly acts wickedly. Therefore, the Kli Yakar explains that this sort of animal is worse to eat as it represents more of a danger to the Jewish people who may be tricked by its 'kosher sign.' (Short Vort)

ETHICS OF THE FATHERS

It is customary to study Pirkei Abot (Ethics of the Fathers) during the six weeks between Pesah and Shabuot, one chapter every Shabbat.

"Distance yourself from a bad neighbor, do not connect yourself with a rasha" (Abot 1:7)

What is a bad neighbor?

The Gemara (Berachot 8a) says that if one has a shul in his city and does not go there to pray, he is called "ra" – "wicked." Thus the Mishnah is cautioning that a person should distance himself from being labeled a "bad neighbor." Rather he should visit the shul to pray daily and participate regularly in the Torah classes there.

To speak in shul during the prayers is a great iniquity. According to the Zohar (Shemot 131b, see Igeret Hakodesh 24), one who does so has no share in the G-d of Israel. Thus, in addition to attending shul, "al tithaber larasha" – be careful next to whom you sit – i.e. do not sit next to one who chatters throughout the entire services.

There is a popular slogan, "If you must talk in shul, talk to Hashem." (Vedibarta Bam)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR Having Trust In The System

Parashat Shemini tells of the events that took place on the eighth and final day of the Mishkan's inauguration. It was on this day when Aharon, for the first time, functioned as the Kohen Gadol, offering special sacrifices in honor of the occasion.

The Sages teach that Aharon was initially hesitant to go forth and perform the sacred rituals in the Mishkan. He still had lingering doubts about whether he had truly been forgiven for his role in the sin of the golden calf. True, his intentions in that unfortunate incident were noble. Seeing that the people wanted a graven image, he instructed them to bring their gold

jewelry, incorrectly assuming that they would be hesitant to do so, and that in the meantime, Moshe would return and the crisis would end. Nevertheless, Aharon still felt some guilt over having fashioned the golden calf, and still considered himself unworthy of entering the Mishkan and serving God. Moshe therefore had to encourage Aharon and give him a slight “push” to proceed with the day’s rituals.

What might we learn from Aharon’s hesitation, and the extra “push” that he needed?

One Rabbi commented that Aharon’s ambivalence on this occasion is characteristic of a problem that many of us experience regarding the process of Teshuba (repentance). Very often, even after sincere repentance, we are plagued by guilt and find it difficult to move on. Even for a righteous Sadik like Aharon, the natural feelings of regret can cause lingering doubts in the system of repentance. Lingering questions such as “Can God really forgive me for what I have done?” and “Am I really worthy of forgiveness?” remain. Moshe’s encouragement and insistence that Aharon proceed with the sacrificial rituals should serve as an example to all of us to have faith and confidence in our own repentance. If we are truly sincere in our remorse, prayers and desire to improve, then we have nothing to fear. We must tell ourselves that yes, God very much wants us to “enter the Mishkan,” to serve Him with sincerity, despite our past mistakes. If our repentance is sincere, then we must move forward with confidence.

One might, however, question this conclusion in light of a verse in Tehillim (51:5), “Ve’hatati Negdi Tamid” – “My sin is in front of me, always.” Does this not imply that we should always be fearful of the consequences of our wrongdoing? Isn’t this proof that we must remain concerned and hesitant about the efficacy of our repentance?

In truth, this verse refers not to lingering doubts about the effectiveness of Teshuba, but rather to a commitment to remain constantly vigilant to avoid repeating the sin. Every sin results from a certain weakness or flaw. And part of the process of repentance is identifying that flaw and devising strategies to ensure that it will not cause us to stumble again. “Ve’hatati Negdi Tamid” means that we will always remember what led us to sin so we can avoid it going forward. It might mean, for example, that we will avoid the crowd that exerted pressure on us to transgress the Torah, or avoid inappropriate places that cause us to sin. But it does not mean that we will have lingering doubts about the effectiveness of our repentance. We, like Aharon,

must feel confident in the system and believe that God lovingly and mercifully accepts our Teshuba.

Why is it so hard for us to trust the system, and to confidently believe that our Teshuva is accepted?

One answer is that these doubts stem from our reluctance to forgive those who offend us. When somebody wrongs us, even if we outwardly forgive, we still harbor negative feelings; we are not prepared to allow the relationship to be fully restored. And this could make it difficult for us to believe that God has fully accepted our Teshuba. If we cannot completely forgive our peers, then we will doubt whether God can fully forgive us. Thus, one way to gain confidence in the system of repentance is to respond more favorably to those who “sin” against us. The more wholehearted we are in forgiving others, the more trust we will have in God’s willingness to forgive us, and thus the less burdened we will be by lingering feelings of guilt and anxiety.

Rabbi Wein

Due to the fact that the seventh day of Pesach this year falls on a Friday, the Torah reading of Shmini will occur on different dates in the Jewish world. Here in Israel it will be read immediately after the conclusion of the holiday of Pesach, which is only seven days in length. In the exile/diaspora the Shabbat immediately after the seventh day of Pesach is reckoned and observed as the eighth day of Pesach and therefore the Torah reading of Shmini is postponed until the next Shabbat.

Eventually the Torah readings of the land of Israel and of the exile/diaspora will be reconciled and become simultaneous once more. The observance of the extra day of Pesach, Succot and Shavuot is an ancient custom already recorded for us in the times of the Second Temple. It has been given halachic legitimacy and emphasis for the exile/diaspora by rabbinic literature and responsa ever since then.

Though the original reason given for its observance apparently no longer applies, the tradition and custom of our forefathers is binding upon the Jewish world till now. All of those groupings that tinkered with this and other Jewish customs and traditions over the ages have sooner or later diminished or even disappeared from the Jewish world. And those who abolished the eighth day of Pesach in the exile/diaspora eventually found themselves wanting even on the seventh day.

Jewish history is harsh and unbending when it comes to unnecessary, frivolous and temporarily politically

correct changes and compromises. So, to a great extent, Shmini shel Pesach – the extra eighth day of the holiday - has become a litmus test for Jewish survival and continuity in the exile/diaspora.

The Torah references this by emphasizing that the dedication of the Mishkan/Tabernacle took place on the eighth day. The eighth day represents the continuity and extension of the spirit and the lessons of the seven commemorative days that preceded it. One is charged with somehow feeling greater, more spiritual and more purposeful after the seven days of commemoration and dedication.

The eighth day is the measure of what we have gained over the seven days that preceded it. This is also true as far as holidays are concerned and is equally true with all momentous occasions in Jewish life. Living in the land of Israel has always been meaningful and challenging at the same time, and has a holiness and personality all its own. Every day in Israel is the eighth day.

The exile/diaspora does not have that quality or ability built within it. It requires a special eighth day in order to fortify the gains and attitudes that the seven days of the holiday granted. Judaism operates on a rational but yet mystical plane of events, commandments and customs. It allows no shortcuts and frowns upon foreign imports into its spirit and lifestyle.

All of this is represented in the dichotomy that it has created between the observance of the eighth day in the land of Israel and in the exile/diaspora. This important lesson should be incorporated into our observance of this Shabbat, whether it be here in Israel where it is the Torah reading of Shmini –the “real” eighth day, so to speak – or in the exile/diaspora where it is the eighth day of Pesach itself.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks
Fire: Holy and Unholy

The shock is immense. For several weeks and many chapters – the longest prelude in the Torah – we have read of the preparations for the moment at which God would bring His presence to rest in the midst of the people. Five parshiyot (Terumah, Tetzaveh, Ki Tissa, Vayakhel and Pekudei) describe the instructions for building the sanctuary. Two (Vayikra, Tzav) detail the sacrificial offerings to be brought there. All is now ready. For seven days the priests (Aaron and his sons) are consecrated into office. Now comes the eighth day when the service of the mishkan will begin.

The entire people have played their part in

constructing what will become the visible home of the Divine presence on earth. With a simple, moving verse the drama reaches its climax: “Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting and when they came out, they blessed the people. God’s glory was then revealed to all the people” (9: 23).

Just as we think the narrative has reached closure, a terrifying scene takes place:

Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, took their censers, put fire into them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before God, which He had not instructed them to offer. Fire came forth from before God, and it consumed them so that they died before God. Moses then said to Aaron: “This is what God spoke of when he said: Among those who approach Me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured.” (10:1-3)

Celebration turned to tragedy. The two eldest sons of Aaron die. The sages and commentators offer many explanations. Nadav and Avihu died because: they entered the holy of holies;[1] they were not wearing the requisite clothes;[2] they took fire from the kitchen, not the altar;[3] they did not consult Moses and Aaron;[4] nor did they consult one another. [5]According to some they were guilty of hubris. They were impatient to assume leadership roles themselves;[6] and they did not marry, considering themselves above such things.[7] Yet others see their deaths as delayed punishment for an earlier sin, when, at Mount Sinai they “ate and drank” in the presence of God (Ex. 24: 9-11).

These interpretations represent close readings of the four places in the Torah which Nadav and Avihu’s death is mentioned (Lev. 10:2, 16: 1, Num. 3: 4, 26: 61), as well as the reference to their presence on Mount Sinai. Each is a profound meditation on the dangers of over-enthusiasm in the religious life. However, the simplest explanation is the one explicit in the Torah itself. Nadav and Avihu died because they offered unauthorized, literally “strange,” fire, meaning “that which was not commanded.” To understand the significance of this we must go back to first principles and remind ourselves of the meaning of kadosh, “holy”, and thus of mikdash as the home of the holy.

The holy is that segment of time and space God has reserved for His presence. Creation involves concealment. The word olam, universe, is semantically linked to the word neelam, “hidden”. To give mankind some of His own creative powers – the use of language to think, communicate, understand, imagine alternative futures and choose between them

– God must do more than create homo sapiens. He must efface Himself (what the kabbalists called tzimtzum) to create space for human action. No single act more profoundly indicates the love and generosity implicit in creation. God as we encounter Him in the Torah is like a parent who knows He must hold back, let go, refrain from intervening, if his children are to become responsible and mature.

But there is a limit. To efface Himself entirely would be equivalent to abandoning the world, deserting his own children. That, God may not and will not do. How then does God leave a trace of his presence on earth?

The biblical answer is not philosophical. A philosophical answer (I am thinking here of the mainstream of Western philosophy, beginning in antiquity with Plato, in modernity with Descartes) would be one that applies universally – i.e. at all times, in all places. But there is no answer that applies to all times and places. That is why philosophy cannot and never will understand the apparent contradiction between divine creation and human freewill, or between divine presence and the empirical world in which we reflect, choose and act.

Jewish thought is counter-philosophical. It insists that truths are embodied precisely in particular times and places. There are holy times (the seventh day, seventh month, seventh year, and the end of seven septennial cycles, the jubilee). There are holy people (the children of Israel as a whole; within them, the Levi'im, and within them the Kohanim). And there is holy space (eventually, Israel; within that, Jerusalem; within that the Temple; in the desert, they were the mishkan, the holy, and the holy of holies).

The holy is that point of time and space in which the presence of God is encountered by tzimtzum – self-renunciation – on the part of mankind. Just as God makes space for man by an act of self-limitation, so man makes space for God by an act of self-limitation. The holy is where God is experienced as absolute presence. Not accidentally but essentially, this can only take place through the total renunciation of human will and initiative. That is not because God does not value human will and initiative. To the contrary: God has empowered mankind to use them to become His “partners in the work of creation”.

However, to be true to God's purposes, there must be times and places at which humanity experiences the reality of the divine. Those times and places require absolute obedience. The most fundamental mistake – the mistake of Nadav and Avihu – is to take the powers that belong to man's encounter with

the world, and apply them to man's encounter with the Divine. Had Nadav and Avihu used their own initiative to fight evil and injustice they would have been heroes. Because they used their own initiative in the arena of the holy, they erred. They asserted their own presence in the absolute presence of God. That is a contradiction in terms. That is why they died.

We err if we think of God as capricious, jealous, angry: a myth spread by early Christianity in an attempt to define itself as the religion of love, superseding the cruel/harsh/retributive God of the “Old Testament”. When the Torah itself uses such language it “speaks in the language of humanity”[8] – that is to say, in terms people will understand.

In truth, Tenakh is a love story through and through – the passionate love of the Creator for His creatures that survives all the disappointments and betrayals of human history. God needs us to encounter Him, not because He needs mankind but because we need Him. If civilization is to be guided by love, justice, and respect for the integrity of creation, there must be moments in which we leave the “I” behind and encounter the fullness of being in all its glory.

That is the function of the holy – the point at which “I am” is silent in the overwhelming presence of “There is”. That is what Nadav and Avihu forgot – that to enter holy space or time requires ontological humility, the total renunciation of human initiative and desire.

The significance of this fact cannot be over-estimated. When we confuse God's will with our will, we turn the holy – the source of life – into something unholy and a source of death. The classic example of this is “holy war,” jihad, Crusade – investing imperialism (the desire to rule over other people) with the cloak of sanctity as if conquest and forced conversion were God's will.

The story of Nadav and Avihu reminds us yet again of the warning first spelled out in the days of Cain and Abel. The first act of worship led to the first murder. Like nuclear fission, worship generates power, which can be benign but can also be profoundly dangerous.

The episode of Nadav and Avihu is written in three kinds of fire. First there is the fire from heaven:

Fire came forth from before God and consumed the burnt offering . . . (9: 24)

This was the fire of favour, consummating the service of the sanctuary. Then came the “unauthorized fire”

offered by the two sons.

Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before God, which He had not instructed them to offer. (10:1)

Then there was the counter-fire from heaven:

Fire came forth from before God, and it consumed them so that they died before God. (10:2)

The message is simple and intensely serious: Religion is not what the European Enlightenment thought it would become: mute, marginal and mild. It is fire – and like fire, it warms but it also burns. And we are the guardians of the flame.

[1] Midrash Tanhuma (Buber), Acharei Mot, 7.

[2] Vayikra Rabbah 20: 9.

[3] Midrash Tanhuma, ibid.

[4] Yalkut Shimoni, Shmini, 524.

[5] Midrash Tanhuma, ibid.

[6] Midrash Aggada (Buber), Vayikra 10.

[7] Vayikra Rabbah 20: 10.

[8] Berakhot 31a.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z"TL

The most basic idea of Passover is that Hashem took Us, His Nation, out of 210 years of bondage in Egypt. As the pasuk states "Asher hotzetecha me'erezt mitzrayim". However the pasuk continues "lehiyot lachem Lelokim", which means, in order that you will serve Me. From this we see clearly that Hashem took us out of slavery from Egypt in order to serve Him.

The primary lesson and yesod (foundation) which manifests itself on Pesach and on which our Torah is built is Gratitude, Hakarat Hatov. Recognizing and acknowledging all of the tremendous gifts of kindness that Hashem is bestowing upon us and our families. This underlying principle is realized right in the first of the Ten Commandments which was heard by our Nation directly from Hashem. "I am Hashem your G-d that took you forth from Egypt from the house of slaves."

The question is asked, why didn't Hashem introduce Himself as "the Creator of heaven and earth"? Because the Bnei Yisrael did not witness the Creation of the Universe. We did experience slavery and brutal treatment at the hands of the Egyptians for 210 years. The scars were still fresh on our backs and on our children.

It is for these reasons, and in order to teach us the great principle of feeling Gratitude to the Benefactor who has redeemed us, that Hashem connects the

time of the birth of our Nation and our redemption from Egypt to the First Commandment.

Hakarat Hatov, Gratitude, is at the root of all true service of Hashem. Just keep in mind that your body, your mind, your parents & children & wife, all of your possessions, the ability to make a living and your soul/life have all been given to you as a gift from Hashem. For the purpose of recognizing these special gifts, scrutinizing them as you would any diamond. Now you are ready to Thank Hashem every day for 120 years in many ways, the minimum being through observance of His Torah & Mitzvot.

Pesach (the Passing-Over) symbolizes the eternity of the loyal Jewish people whose progeny will continue until the end of days and whose souls are rewarded forever. Thus the miracle of the Pesach was not only for this occasion, but it teaches that Hashem will always cause the Destroyer to pass over His loyal ones in all generations.

The Pesach-offering symbolizes Israel's unflinching loyalty to Hashem and His Torah.

Chad Gadyah: The Am Yisroel is symbolized by that One Gedi. Hakadosh Baruch Hu has announced that there is an Am Echad. There is only one nation in the world. "Mi K'amcha Yisroel Goy Echad B'aretz", only one nation in the world. It's very important for us to think about that. Hakadosh Baruch Hu has announced, of all the nations, not only the nations! everything in the world, is nothing compared to the Am Yisroel. "Hen Lashem Elokecha Hashamayim U'shmei Hashamayim", Hashem owns the skies and the skies above the skies. All the world and all therein. But "Rak B'avotecha Chashak Hashem", only our forefathers did Hashem love. Now, Choshak is a special word like Chashukim, loops, we're attached, Hashem is attached to us, a permanent love, Choshak means attached to us, forever and ever.

Parts of this newsletter are courtesy of Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway. Permission is granted to redistribute, but please give proper attribution and copyright to the author and Project Genesis, and refer to learn@torah.org and <http://www.torah.org/>. Both the authors and Project Genesis reserve certain rights. For full information on copyrights, send email to copyrights@torah.org.

Shabbat Shalom From Cyberspace E Mail Edition is published each week since 1995 and is distributed to 18,000 readers. Our goal is to spread torah knowledge. Articles are downloaded from sites and from e-mail forwarded to us. We encourage you to reprint the newsletter and distribute it to co-workers, friends and family. You can retransmit copies by fax, mail or by hand. Be a part of the Mitzvah of spreading torah. It takes so little to make copies and distribute them. And with E Mail it just takes a click to send this along. To subscribe directly or have us send to a friend or family member Send a request to ShabbatShalomNewsletter@Gmail.com with your name, phone, fax and E-Mail Address