

## SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

### KEDOSHIM

April 26 2014 - 26 Nissan 5774

28 Nisan: (Sunday evening, April 27 to Monday, April 28): Yom HaShoah  
Rosh Chodesh Iyar is Wednesday & Thursday

DEDICATIONS: Refuah Shelemah for Chaya Esther Chava bat Sarah,  
Sarah bat Leah and Shulamit bat Faygeh Libah

### SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION

Please print copies as R' David is in Manhattan this Shabbat

Candle lighting this Friday evening is at 7:26 p.m. Shir Hashirim 6:40 Mincha at 7:00

SHABBAT Class at 8:30, Relevant Daily Halachot based upon the teaching of HaRav Ovadia Yosef  
Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:42AM

We will endeavor to keep it to the 7 aliyot, somech, samuch and maftir each week.

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

Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Pirkei Avot With Rav Aharon at 6:30 –

Mincha at 7:00 – Followed by Seudah Shelishi at 7:30

Birkat HaMazon at 8:10

Arbit at 8:15 - Shabbat Ends – 8:25

#### WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Men and Women are Invited

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai – Resumes this Monday night

Daily class with Rabbi Colish - Weekday 6:30 AM (ADDITIONAL NEW TIME Sunday Mornings 7:30)

Kaballah as a Guide to Spiritual Growth based upon the teachings of Likutei Moharan

Please note that Rabbi Colish will be away for Pesach

Birkat Ha'Ilanot - Don't miss this Once in a Year Opportunity

Holocaust Remembrance Rally

Sunday April 27th at 11:30 AM in front of the UN Iranian Mission

622 3rd Avenue & E 40th Street

"More than 6 Million Reasons to Show Up and Speak Out!"

For more information please email [hashoah.mail@gmail.com](mailto:hashoah.mail@gmail.com)

This Yom Hashoah Make a Kiddush Hashem in the World

Picture the many holocaust images of piles of shoes ....

Sunday April 27th at 5:30-7:00pm

Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach

161 Lafayette Boulevard, Long Beach, NY 11561

Please join Chantelle, Mikhayla and Mariyah Bibi as we decorate the shoes that will be distributed to the needy via Rodef Shalom, an organization dedicated to distributing shoes to kids all over the world.

BROOKLYN: Birkat ha'ilanot at the home of Ezra & Shifra Hanon – East 9<sup>th</sup> between R&S ( Corner of First COURT) The blessing on the Trees is a special Misva associated with raising Neshamot – the souls of those who have departed.

Here is a link to a list of trees throughout the USA  
<http://www.vosizneias.com/files/%27Birchas%20Hailan%27.pdf>

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**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame. Mincha at 4PM through October 30<sup>th</sup> – Please join us! 212-289-2100**

**B'H We will be in Manhattan at Safra this Shabbat giving a class in the morning and then again at Seuda Shelishi**

#### Editors Notes

Will the real Matza please stand up!  
 Many years ago we visited Eretz Bereshit or Genesis Land for the first time while in Israel. It is situated in the heart of the Judean desert, on the way to the Dead Sea. The visit attempts to allow one to experience life as it was in biblical times. Visitors to Genesis Land are greeted by an actor in the guise of Eliezer, Abraham's servant, and by a train of camels which lead us down to Abraham's tent. They offer a number of activities and the place is so pretty that one year Chantelle and our daughters, Aryana, Mikhayla and Mariyah spent the night on the top of the hill experiencing what I am told was an amazing sunrise.

One of the activities offered is the baking of desert flat bread. A fire is started in a small pit and then a taj or what appears to be an upside down wok is placed over the fire becoming very, very hot. We are given a bit of flour and water and quickly knead the dough. The dough is pressed into thin discs and tossed onto the taj. Moments later the dough is bubbling and done and the hot bread is lifted off the taj for everyone to enjoy. From the moment we mixed the dough to the time the bread was ready less than ten minutes passed. I explained to my children that this was in fact matza or unleavened bread. The following year my wife carried one of these huge iron woks home from Israel on a plane and we've often made bread over a gas fire. There is a huge difference when the dough is allowed to rise as compared to when the dough remains unleavened. One seems to have a pocket while the other remains flat. This is the difference between bread and matza.

Kedoshim Tihyu! This week's portion begins with the directive for the Children of Israel to be Kadosh. The word Kadosh can be translated as holy, sanctified or separate.

The Rishonim explain that being holy is accomplished through self-control. Rabbi Abittan would often explain that the misvot really all have a goal in teaching man self-control.

In thinking about the word relating to be separate or unique, there are many things that separate the Jewish people from the nations of the world. I believe one of them is in our questioning everything and anything. We are often referred to as the people of the book. One book is the Bible, but just as prominent is the Talmud consisting of 63 tractates and more than 6200 pages of questions. We are an infinitely curious people refusing to simply accept someone's word for almost anything. Life is a never ending quest for knowledge and understanding. And every answer leads to a question. ( see Rabbi Sacks' article for an incredible thought on asking questions and challenging conventional wisdom.)

Which brings me back to the unleavened bread we baked in eretz bereshit.

During the weeks before and then during Passover, I receive questions every day dealing with what one can or cannot buy. Its great that people understand that the world is not just black and white and they can ask. When I answer I strive not simply to give a yes or no, but to explain to the point where someone can say, "I understand". This week I received a call from a lady who was very upset. She had joined our communal Seder for one of the nights of Pesach and mentioned to her rabbi that we served soft matza. She was told that our soft matza was not good. She was so upset thinking that not only did she not fulfill her obligation on Pesach but that she ate chametz. I reassured her that neither was true, explained why she was better than fine and then asked for her rabbi's phone number. How many people out there believe that the thin shemurah matza that we eat today was what the Jews ate when they left Egypt? Too many! Too many of us believe that what we do today was what was always done. I wonder if they believe that at that first seder while still in Egypt along with the pascal lamb we at Manishevitz gefilte fish, borsht and macaroons?

The fact is that what we ate during our 210 years in Egypt and during our first Seder and for most Seders afterwards for the next 3000 years more closely resembled an unleavened thick pita bread than anything we call Matza today. Keep in mind that raised bread in the ancient world was eaten only by Egyptian aristocracy ( Greece doesn't have raised bread until the time of Alexander) and it's possible that one of the reasons we are commanded in Egypt not to eat that bread on the night of the tenth plague was in a way to separate ourselves from our Egyptian neighbors. During the Seder we combine matza, maror and haroset in a sandwich in remembrance of Hillel who 2000 years ago wrapped the meat from korban pesach in his soft matza together with romaine lettuce. Picture a shwarma in laffa and that's probably pretty close to what he ate.

Going back 500 years, the Tur quoting his father the Rosh writes that the custom in France and Germany is for the

three matzot used on the seder plate to be made from one isaron of flour. Even low estimates mean those matzot had to weigh at least a pound each. Compare that to present day matzot which weigh two ounces or so. So each French and German Matzah was the thickness of a whole box of present day Shemurah. Maran the Bet Yosef, Rav Yosef Karo author of the Shulchan Aruch advises that we shouldn't make Matza thicker than a tefah – that's about 3.5". The Rama commenting suggests we keep it to the thickness of a thumb meaning between a half and a whole inch. He writes in the Darchei Moshe that Matzot need to have enough dough so that everyone at the table can get their kazayit from that matza.

Moving into the 18th century, the Be'er He'Tev describes the "thin" Matza as being a half inch thick. In the 19th Century, the Chatam Sofer writes that he gave each person at the seder a kzayit from a whole matzah and a kzayit from the broken matza. And he writes to use thin. I guess thin is a very relative term. His thin could not have been too thin and was probably thicker than our thick. The Matza that we used from Rabbi David under the supervision of our dear friend Rabbi Murry Maslaton was probably a quarter inch and we figure each Matza contained about 5 to 6 ounces.

There are countless proofs that until 200 years ago, soft matza was the matza that everyone used. So where did the matza that we have become accustomed to buying come from?

Going back into recent history, most baking was done at home. Just as people baked their own bread, people baked their own Matza. And just as bread is baked fresh daily, Matza too was baked fresh daily throughout the holiday. But just as I, tempted as I am to buy Shemurah flour, set standing water and to kasher my taj to bake my own matza am afraid to do so keeping in mind that only a precious few minutes separate success from failure and the issur of chametz, baking Matza at home during Pesach became very uncommon. The risks and worries of inadvertently making Chamets, were just too great.

As Rabbi Rabi writes, this led to communal Matza baking, monitored by a rabbi. Manufacturing Matza like this throughout Passover was impractical, so it was all baked prior to Passover. This of course led to another problem. Such large volumes required that manufacturing begin many weeks before Passover. How was the Matza to be prevented from becoming moldy? The solution was dehydration; simply bake it dry, employing an age old method of preserving foods without refrigeration, like dried fruits. It was a compromise, but seen as being the best outcome, considering the circumstances.

I guess one might say eating the cracker like matza we have grown accustomed to is as real as calling a dehydrated apple slice a real apple.

Our thin matza in its present form presents its own problems. Ask yourself, what blessing do you make over a cracker made from flour and water? We make the blessing of boreh miney mezonot. In fact for many of us beginning

right after Pesach, that's the blessing we make on the same thin shemurah matzah used during the seder. Something to think about.

So next year you might want to try something different at your Seder, something that your ancestors ate. Its called Soft Matza!

Before telling someone who ate soft matza that they did something wrong, we should study the subject, because studying the subject is what we are all about. For those who wish to look further into the soft matza there is a wonderful article prepared by Rabbi Dr. Ari Z Zivotofsky and Dr. Ari Greenspan on line.

Hope you had a great Pesach.  
Shabbat Shalom, David Bibi

### **Lives and lies for Peace: High time for Israel to demand consequences of West** **By Caroline B. Glick**

It's hard not to admire Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's brazenness.

Two weeks ago, Abbas signed on to fifteen international agreements that among other things require the PA to respect human rights and punish war criminals.

And this week, he signed a unity deal with two genocidal terror groups all of whose leaders are war criminals. Every leader of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the two parties who signed the deal with the PLO are war criminals. Under the Geneva Conventions, which Abbas signed onto just a couple of weeks ago, he is required to put them on trial, for their war crimes.

Here it is worth noting that under the Geneva Conventions, every single rocket launch from Gaza into Israeli territory is a separate war crime.

Abbas was only able to sign the Geneva Conventions on the one hand, and the unity deal with terrorist war criminals on the other because he is utterly convinced that neither the US nor the European Union will hold him accountable for his actions. He is completely certain that neither the Americans nor the Europeans are serious about their professed commitments to upholding international law.

Abbas is sure that that for both the Obama administration and the EU, maintaining support for the PLO far outweighs any concern they have for abiding by the law of nations. He believes this because he has watched them make excuses for the PLO and its leaders for the past two decades.

When it comes to the Palestinians, the Western powers are always perfectly willing to throw out their allegiance to law — international law and their domestic statutes — to continue supporting the PLO in the name of a peace process, which by now, everyone understands is entirely fictional. Why do they do this?

They do it because the peace process gives them a way to ignore and wish away the pathologies of the Islamic and Arab world. The peace process is predicated on the notion that all those pathologies are Israel's fault. If Israel would just surrender Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to the Palestinians, then the Arabs writ large, and the Muslim world as a whole will cast aside their support for jihad and terrorism and everything will be fine.

At least that is how Abbas analyzes the situation.

And so far, the US has not disappointed him. The Obama administration's immediate response to Abbas's unity with terrorist war criminals deal involved pretending it didn't understand what had just happened.

In a press briefing on Wednesday, shortly after Hamas war criminal Ismail Haniyeh signed the deal with Fatah and Islamic Jihad, State Department Spokeswoman Jen Psaki acknowledged that the deal is bad for the peace process. But she wasn't willing to reach the inevitable conclusion. Rather, she averred, idiotically, "I think the ball, at this point, is in the Palestinians' court to answer questions to whether this reconciliation" meets the US's long-standing principles."

Two days before the unity deal, a reporter from Al-Monitor asked Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar if Hamas has given up terrorism.

Zahar responded, "Anyone who claims so must be drunk. How has Hamas abandoned the resistance [that is, terrorist] effort? What are the manifestations of it doing so? Where have we prevented the launching of rockets?"

No ambiguity whatsoever there.

And Abbas just signed a deal Hamas, and with Islamic Jihad, the official representative of the Iranian mullahs in the Palestinian war criminal line-up.

No ambiguity there, either.

If the US is willfully blind to who the Palestinians are, what they are doing, and what they stand for, the Europeans are so committed to the Palestinians that they actually invented an imaginary world where international law protects war criminals and castigates their Jewish victims as international outlaws.

In the EU's view, Hamas is an attractive organization. During a meeting with Abbas last October, Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign policy chief urged Abbas to sign a unity deal with Hamas. A statement from her office read that she views reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas "as an important element for the unity of a future Palestinian state and for reaching a two-state solution."

And while unity between terrorist factions is something that Ashton considers conducive to peace, in her view, Jewish presence in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria is tantamount to a war crime.

In a statement released by her office last week, after Baruch Mizrahi was murdered by Palestinian terrorists

while driving in his family car, with his wife and young children to a Passover Seder, Ashton gave no more than a perfunctory condemnation of the war crime.

Four fifths of her statement involved condemning Israel for respecting Jewish property rights and the rules of due process and international law in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

In the EU's imaginary world, being in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem while Jewish is a war crime. Murdering Jews is merely impolite.

The deal signed on Wednesday is the fourth unity deal Fatah has signed with Hamas. After the first one was signed in 2007, the so-called Middle East Quartet, which includes the US, the EU, the UN and Russia, issued three conditions for accepting the unity government: Hamas has to recognize Israel's right to exist, abjure terrorism, and accept the legitimacy of the previous agreements signed by the PLO with Israel.

As Zahar and every other Hamas leader has made clear repeatedly, these conditions will never be met. But regardless of how Hamas views them, in and of themselves the Quartet's conditions are deeply problematic. They themselves constitute a breach of international law.

The Quartet's conditions assert that if Hamas and Islamic Jihad agree to them, they will be accorded the same legitimacy as the PLO. In other words, the Quartet members have committed themselves to granting immunity from prosecution for war crimes to all Palestinian terrorists. Providing such immunity is arguably a breach of international law. And it exposes a profound and irrational dependence on the mythical peace process on the part of Western policymakers.

Reacting to this week's unity deal, Economy Minister Naftali Bennett said, "The agreement between Fatah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad brings the Middle East to a new diplomatic era. The Palestinian Authority turned into the largest terrorist organization in the world, twenty minutes from Tel Aviv."

And under international law, including the agreements that Abbas acceded to just two weeks ago, Bennett is absolutely right.

Apologists for Abbas note that this week's deal is as unlikely as all its predecessors to be implemented. But even if they are right this doesn't mean that Abbas's repeated practice of signing unity deals with war criminals should be cast aside as insignificant.

They expose the lie at the heart of the peace process. The time has come to call things by their names. Abbas is a terrorist and the PA is a terrorist organization.

In light of this incontrovertible fact, the time has come to treat the PA in accordance with international law.

Perhaps shocked by Abbas's behavior, perhaps overwhelmed by the serial failure of every one of its foreign

policies, the administration acknowledged that Israel can't be expected to negotiate with a government that doesn't accept its right to exist.

Administration officials even said that the US would have to revisit its relationship with the PA in light of the agreement with Hamas.

No doubt, the administration is convinced that it can revert to form and ignore reality once again the moment the smoke is cleared. But whatever its intentions, the administration's acknowledgement of Abbas's bad faith opens the door to action by both Israel and the US Congress.

The Israeli government and the US Congress should take the steps necessary to bring their national policies towards the Palestinians into accordance with the law of nations.

Not only must the government end all negotiations with the PA immediately. It must stop all financial transfers to the PA.

Israel must stop cooperating with PA security forces in Judea and Samaria.

It must end its support for US training of those forces and call for the US to end its mission to assist PA security forces.

Israel must end all VIP privileges for PA officials beginning with Abbas and extending to the last of his corrupt cronies.

Israel must begin arresting and prosecuting Palestinian officials who incite for the murder of Jews, and charge them with solicitation of murder.

The government should assist Israeli citizens in submitting war crimes complaints against Palestinian officials and the PA generally at international tribunals for their involvement in war crimes, including their incitement of genocide.

As for the US Congress, last week, with the passage into law of Senator Ted Cruz's bill banning terrorists from serving as UN ambassadors, the Congress showed that it is capable of acting to force the administration to uphold US anti-terror laws.

To this end, in accordance with those laws, Congress must act to immediately end US military support for Palestinian security services. The office of the US Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian territories which trains Palestinian military forces should be closed straightaway. Its personnel should be redeployed out of the area forthwith.

So too, given that the Palestinian Authority now inarguably meets the US definition of a foreign terrorist organization, the US must end all financial assistance to its operating budget. Also, in accordance with US law, the US banking system must be closed to PA entities. Foreign banks that do business with these entities should be barred from doing business with US banks.

Abbas is not interested in peace. The two-state model isn't about achieving peace. It is about blaming the victim of the absence of peace for the absence of peace.

Abbas knows his apologists, both in Israel, and most importantly in the US and Europe. He knows they will go to any length to defend him.

The Israeli Left does so because without the phony peace process, Justice Minister Tzipi Livni, the Labor Party and Meretz become political irrelevancies.

The administration and the EU defend Abbas and the phony peace process because they don't want to acknowledge the plain fact that Israel is the only stable ally they have in the Middle East and the stronger Israel is the more protected they are. Doing so contradicts their ideology.

So now Abbas is telling them that the deal is actually good for peace since it brings Hamas-controlled Gaza into the PLO and so reunifies the PA, which has been operating as two separate entities for seven years. And they may go along with it. They've been perfectly willing to embrace utter nonsense countless times over the years.

Only the Israeli government and Congress can stop them. And they must stop them.

These phony peaceniks' preference for Jew killers over international law comes with a prohibitive price tag. Jews are murdered, war criminals are embraced, and the rule of law is rent asunder.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: The beginning of Kedoshim states that, holiness is realized through keeping Shabbos, being in awe of one's father and mother, and the prohibition against idol worship. Laws of charity, honesty, and the paying of wages on time are also stated.

2nd and 3rd Aliyot: Showing deference in the administration of justice is forbidden. We have the responsibility to "properly reprimand" each other. The prohibition against wearing any mixture of wool and linen, cutting sideburns (Payot), tattooing, premarital sex, and the use of mediums or the occult are stated.

4th and 5th Aliyot: Proper and equal treatment for the Ger-convert, honesty in business, and the prohibition against worshipping the Molech are stated.

5th, 6th, and 7th Aliyot: remainder of Kedoshim states the specific punishments that Bait Din would administer for the fifteen prohibited sexual relationships listed at the end of Acharei Mos.

The very end of Kedoshim (20: 22-26) clearly explains the concept of holiness as the means for being separate from the other nations. Three basic formats of Kedusha-holiness exist: time, place, and person. Acharei Mos began by presenting the ultimate integration of the three in the

person of the Kohain Gadol entering the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. The end of Kedoshim states that Eretz Yisroel (place), the Bnai Yisroel (person), and time in general are intended to reflect the integration of G-dliness into the daily lives of individuals and nations. To the extent that we realize our mission as the "Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation" will be the degree to which we retain the right to dwell in the Land of Israel.

**Yechezkel (Ezekiel), 20:1-20**  
[www.haftorahman.com](http://www.haftorahman.com) - Reuben Ebrahimoff

The connection of the Haftorah to the Parsha: In the reading of the Parsha, Bnei Yisrael is admonished to keep all the Mitzvoth and in particular, to stop worshipping idols. They are also commanded to be diligent in their observance of the Shabbat. The Haftorah is thematically connected to the Parsha in the following way: It too accuses the Israelites of idol worshipping and desecrating the Shabbat. We are reminded that we are a nation that has the potential to be holy and that we aren't taking full advantage of that capability.

The storyline of this week's Haftorah: Four years before the destruction of the 1st Beit HaMikdash: the Holy Temple, and seven years after Ezekiel's exile to Babylon, on the 10th of the month of Av, the Elders approach Yechezkel requesting that he inquire of Hashem (G-d), as to their fate. Hashem responds negatively. He explains through his prophet Ezekiel that even in Egypt, Bnei Yisrael deserved to be destroyed because of their sins. Bnei Yisrael also deserved to be annihilated in the wilderness. The Haftorah concludes with a warning to the sons not to follow their fathers' bad ways.

Haftorahman's lesson of the week: We are a nation that has the potential to be holy! We need to separate ourselves from doing the wrong things that damage our souls and to increase doing good things that nurture our souls like coming close to Hashem by praying.

**RABBI ELI MANSOUR**

What Does "Holy" Mean?

Parashat Kedoshim begins with the command of "Kedoshim Tiheyu" – that we be "holy."

The term "holy" conjures up different associations among different people, the common denominator being that they have a hard time defining it. When people are asked to define the term "holy," they start waving their hands and speaking incoherently, or perhaps begin describing some pious person who they feel embodies the ideal of "holiness." But if the Torah commands us to be "holy," we need to do much better than that. If we are obligated to be "Kedoshim," it behooves us to have a clear idea of what this entails.

When a couple gets married, the groom declares to the bride before giving her the ring, "Hareh At Mekudeshet Li" – that she is "Mekudeshet." Literally, this word means "holy," but clearly the groom's intent is not to declare that his bride is now "holy" because she is marrying him. Rather, his

intent is to proclaim that she is set apart and designated for him. Until that moment, she is like other women in the world, but now she is designated for her groom, set apart and distinct from all other women.

Similarly, when a person wishes to consecrate an animal as a sacrifice, he declares, "Hareh Zeh Hekdesh" – "Behold, this [animal] is sacred." An animal cannot be "holy" in the conventional sense of the term. It follows its instincts and has no moral or spiritual conscience such that it could achieve "holiness" in the sense of piety and attachment to G-d. But this is not, technically speaking, what "holiness" really means. When a person proclaims, "Hareh Zeh Hekdesh," he means to say that the animal is now different and special. It is not the same as other animals. All other animals are ordinary, but this one is special, designated for the lofty purpose of being brought as an offering to the Almighty.

This is what "holiness" means. It means being different, distinct and special. It means being set apart for something beyond the norm, beyond what is ordinary for everything or everyone else.

On the basic level, then, "Kedoshim Tiheyu" means being different and distinct from other nations of the world. It means striving for and maintaining a moral standard that is discernibly higher than that of the rest of the world. "Kedoshim Tiheyu" requires that the Jewish people must stand out through their refined, moral conduct and their devotion to G-d's laws. It requires us not to feel satisfied with the standards that other nations find acceptable. We must be different and live on a fundamentally higher plane.

It might be tempting to follow the standards and norms of our society, to enjoy the convenience of doing what the others around us are doing. But the command of "Kedoshim Tiheyu" obligates us to strive for more, to ensure that we stand out through our moral standards, that people notice how we are different and live on a higher plane. This is the true meaning of "holiness." Acting as others do is not sufficient. We are to be "Kedoshim" – noticeably distinct and special, so that we bring honor and glory to G-d.

**Rabbi Wein**  
**SEEING ISRAEL**

Since I have spent the past two weeks outside of Israel I have come to the conclusion that the only way to truly see and appreciate Israel is by stepping away from it a little bit, so to speak – to see it from afar. Those of us who are blessed to live in Israel, many times on a regular daily basis gain a very myopic view of the country, its struggles and accomplishments. The rabbis in their usual incisive and pithy way phrased it as follows: "Those to whom miracles occur are unable to recognize the miracles that befall them."

The nature of human beings is to concentrate on the details and not see the larger picture in historical or societal perspective. Midrash points out to us that one of the great

facets of the personality of our father Abraham was that “he saw the place from afar.”

Up close, Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount, is not too impressive. It certainly is not the Matterhorn or Mount Everest. Yet, like its sister mountain, Sinai, it is the mountain as far as civilization and human progress is concerned. From afar and in historical perspective it towers over all other hills and peaks.

Well, it is not only Mount Moriah that must be seen in perspective but it is the land and state of Israel also that must be seen in perspective. Up close it is a country surrounded by hostility and sometimes violence with serious economic, social, religious and diplomatic problems and shortcomings. But viewed overall, from a distance and with perspective, it is the miracle of the ages shining before our befuddled eyes.

The struggle of the Jewish communities in the Jewish diaspora to somehow survive and remain Jewish is a monumental one. Even in the safe and secure strongholds of Torah life, in Orthodox neighborhoods, this struggle is omnipresent and challenging. In spite of all of the noise, furor and turmoil surrounding the social issues – and they are social issues, not religious ones – of religious Jewry in Israel, the difficulties and challenges to a religious lifestyle in Israel are infinitely less than they are anywhere else on earth.

Except, that when one is living in Israel and engaged in the daily unceasing problems of life generally and Jewish life particularly one has no basis of comparison nor any true sense of proportion and perspective. There is a lot of extreme rhetoric scattered about on all sides and emanating from all of the different groupings that constitute the diversity of Israeli society.

Since our memory of the past has been distorted, if not even erased by the Holocaust and by the uprooting of Sephardic Jewry, we have no true basis for comparing what Jewish life really was like a century ago and what it is like today. We cannot see ourselves from afar and thus “the holy cloud over the mountain” is not visible to us. The prophet therefore describes us as “a people walking in darkness.”

One of the current crazes engendered by our far-too-smart-phones is taking a photograph of one’s self at some type of event - a “selfie.” What we need today is a good “selfie” of all of us Jews regarding the land and state of Israel.

When one visits an art museum – and there are some amongst us that actually do such a thing – one should not view the masterpieces from too close a distance. If one stands too near to the work of art, only scattered gobs of paint smeared on cloth canvas will be visible. By stepping back a little and then viewing the painting, only then is the genius of the artist’s talent and inspiration revealed before our eyes. Though the artist painted the picture from up close, that artist intended his or her work to be viewed and appreciated from afar.

The Talmud boldly states that “there is no artist as is our God.” He also apparently wants us to view His works from afar, from a perspective, with historical accuracy, wonder and appreciation. I think that is certainly the case and crux of the matter regarding the land and state of Israel and its reestablishment as the Jewish nation-state and homeland.

A greater emphasis on perspective, historical and religious, is certainly one area of our educational systems that can and should be improved upon. Honest analysis, accurate facts, less fantasy and fictitious storytelling and a greater concentration on the whole rather than the disparate parts of Jewish and Israeli society would help calm the stormy waters of controversy in the Jewish world.

### Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Followership

There is a fascinating sequence of commands in the great “holiness code” with which our parsha begins, that sheds light on the nature not just of leadership in Judaism but also of followership. Here is the command in context:

Do not hate your brother in your heart. Reprove [or reason with] your neighbour frankly so you will not bear sin because of him. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord. (Lev. 19: 17-18)

There are two completely different ways of understanding the italicized words. Maimonides brings them both as legally binding.[1] Nahmanides includes them both in his commentary to the Torah.[2]

The first is to read the command in terms of interpersonal relations. Someone, you believe, has done you harm. In such a case, says the Torah, do not remain in a state of silent resentment. Do not give way to hate, do not bear a grudge, and do not take revenge. Instead, reprove him, reason with him, tell him what you believe he has done and how you feel it has harmed you. He may apologise and seek to make amends. Even if he does not, at least you have made your feelings known to him. That in itself is cathartic. It will help you to avoid nursing a grievance.

The second interpretation, though, sees the command in impersonal terms. It has nothing to do you being harmed. It refers to someone you see acting wrongly, committing a sin or a crime. You may not be the victim. You may be just an observer. The command tells us not to be content with passing a negative judgment on his behaviour (i.e. with “hating him in your heart”). You must get involved. You should remonstrate with him, pointing out in as gentle and constructive a way as you can, that what he is doing is against the law, civil or moral. If you stay silent and do nothing, you will become complicit in his guilt (i.e. “bear sin because of him”) because you saw him do wrong and you did nothing to protest.

This second interpretation is possible only because of Judaism’s fundamental principle that kol Yisrael arevin zeh ba-zeh, “All Jews are sureties [i.e. responsible] for one another.” However, the Talmud makes a fascinating

observation about the scope of the command:

One of the rabbis said to Raba: [The Torah says] *hokheach tokhiach*, meaning “you shall reprove your neighbour repeatedly” [because the verb is doubled, implying more than once]. Might this mean *hokheach*, reprove him once, and *tokhiach*, a second time? No, he replied, the word *hokheach* means, even a hundred times. Why then does it add the word *tokhiach*? Had there been only a single verb I would have known that the law applies to a master reproving his disciple. How do we know that it applies even to a disciple reproving his master? From the phrase, *hokheach tokhiach*, implying, under all circumstances.[3]

This is significant because it establishes a principle of critical followership. So far in these essays we have been looking at the role of the leader in Judaism. But what about that of the follower? On the face of it the duty of the follower is to follow, and that of the disciple to learn. After all, Judaism commands almost unlimited respect for teachers. “Let reverence for your teacher be as great as your reverence for heaven,” said the sages. Despite this the Talmud understands the Torah to be commanding us to remonstrate even with our teacher or leader should we see him or her doing something wrong.

Supposing a leader commands you to do something you know to be forbidden in Jewish law. Should you obey? The answer is a categorical No. The Talmud puts this in the form of a rhetorical question: “Faced with a choice between obeying the master [God] or the disciple [a human leader], whom should you obey?”[4] The answer is obvious. Obey God. Here in Jewish law is the logic of civil disobedience, the idea that we have a duty to disobey an immoral order.

Then there is the great Jewish idea of active questioning and “argument for the sake of heaven.” Parents are obliged, and teachers encouraged, to train students to ask questions. Traditional Jewish learning is designed to make teacher and disciple alike aware of the fact that more than one view is possible on any question of Jewish law and multiple interpretations (the traditional number is seventy) of any biblical verse. Judaism is unique in that virtually all of its canonical texts – Midrash, Mishnah and Gemara – are anthologies of arguments (Rabbi X said this, Rabbi Y said that) or are surrounded by multiple commentaries each with its own perspective.

The very act of learning in rabbinic Judaism is conceived as active debate, a kind of gladiatorial contest of the mind: “Even a teacher and disciple, even a father and son, when they sit to study Torah together become enemies to one another. But they do not move from there until they have become beloved to one another.”[5] Hence the Talmudic saying, “Much wisdom I have learned from my teacher, more from my colleagues but most from my students.”[6] Therefore despite the reverence we owe our teachers, we owe them also our best efforts at questioning and challenging their ideas. This is essential to the rabbinical ideal of learning as a collaborative pursuit of truth.

The idea of critical followership gave rise in Judaism to the

world’s first social critics, the prophets, mandated by God to speak truth to power and to summon even kings to the bar of justice and right conduct. That is what Samuel did to Saul, Elijah to Ahab and Isaiah to Hezekiah. None did so more effectively than the prophet Nathan when, with immense skill, he got King David to appreciate the enormity of his sin in sleeping with another man’s wife. David immediately recognised his wrong and said *chatati*, “I have sinned.”[7]

Exceptional though the prophets of Israel were, even their achievement takes second place to one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of religion, namely that God himself chooses as His most beloved disciples the very people who are willing to challenge heaven itself. Abraham says, “Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?” Moses says, “Why have you done evil to this people?” Jeremiah and Habakkuk challenge God on the apparent injustices of history. Job, who argues with God, is eventually vindicated by God, while his comforters, who defended God, are deemed by God to have been in the wrong. In short, God Himself chooses active, critical followers rather than those who silently obey.

Hence the unusual conclusion that in Judaism followership is as active and demanding as leadership. We can put this more strongly: leaders and followers do not sit on opposite sides of the table. They are on the same side, the side of justice and compassion and the common good. No one is above criticism, and no one too junior to administer it, if done with due grace and humility. A disciple may criticise his teacher; a child may challenge a parent; a prophet may challenge a king; and all of us, simply by bearing the name Israel, are summoned to wrestle with God and our fellow humans in the name of the right and the good.

Uncritical followership and habits of silent obedience give rise to the corruptions of power, or sometimes simply to avoidable catastrophes. For example, a series of fatal accidents occurred between 1970 and 1999 to planes belonging to Korean Air. One in particular, Korean Air Flight 8509 in December 1999, led to a review that suggested that Korean culture, with its tendency toward autocratic leadership and deferential followership, may have been responsible for the first officer not warning the pilot that he was off-course.

John F. Kennedy assembled one of the most talented group of advisors ever to serve an American President, yet in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 committed one of the most foolish mistakes. Subsequently, one of the members of the group, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., attributed the error to the fact that the atmosphere within the group was so convivial that no one wanted to disturb it by pointing out the folly of the proposal.[8]

Groupthink and conformism are perennial dangers within any closely-knit group, as a series of famous experiments by Solomon Asch, Stanley Milgram, Philip Zimbardo and others have shown. Which is why, in Cass Sunstein’s phrase, “societies need dissent.” My favourite example is one given by James Surowiecki in *The Wisdom of Crowds*. He tells the story of how an American naturalist, William



Beebe, came across a strange sight in the Guyana jungle. A group of army ants was moving in a huge circle. The ants went round and round in the same circle for two days until most of them dropped dead. The reason is that when a group of army ants is separated from their colony, they obey a simple rule: follow the ant in front of you.[9] The trouble is that if the ant in front of you is lost, so will you be.

Surowiecki's argument is that we need dissenting voices, people who challenge the conventional wisdom, resist the fashionable consensus and disturb the intellectual peace. "Follow the person in front of you" is as dangerous to humans as it is to army ants. To stand apart and be willing to question where the leader is going is the task of the critical follower. Great leadership happens when there is strong and independently minded followership. Hence, when it comes to constructive criticism, a disciple may challenge a teacher and a prophet reprimand a king. See email version for footnotes ....

**AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL  
"You shall be holy for I Hashem Your G-d am holy".  
19:2**

Fundamentally this means: 'Think as I Think'. The most important part of the personality is the mind. Therefore we can most effectively emulate the holiness of Hashem by means of emulating His thoughts. Everything in the Torah is an example of Hashem's thoughts, as He wishes us to think. Therefore we study His words in order to acquire (what He shows us to be) His attitudes.

He regards Man as "the image of G-d" (Beresheet 1:27), and we should train our minds to think likewise. He considers the people of Israel as His sons (Devarim 14:1), and we must gain that same attitude. He desires kindness (Shemot 36:6; Michah 7:18) and so should we. He hates immorality (Sanhedrin 93A), and so should we. He considers His world as "Very Good" (Beresheet 1:31), and so should we.

R' Miller writes in 'Praise My Soul', re 'Ata Kadosh', Kadosh means Perfect

So, what am I thanking Hashem for?

3 thoughts:

1. for being able to serve You.

I am elevated by being known for serving the Greatest One. Eved Hashem.

2. You are my model to emulate. 13 Attributes/Midot.

3. I am creating my Olam Haba by thinking how Perfect/Great You are.

Adapted from "A Kingdom of Cohanim" by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT'L

**A Prayer for Yom HaShoah – composed by the Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks**

Today, on Yom HaShoah, we remember the victims of the greatest crime of man against man – the young, the old,

the innocent, the million and a half children, starved, shot, given lethal injections, gassed, burned and turned to ash, because they were deemed guilty of the crime of being different.

We remember what happens when hate takes hold of the human heart and turns it to stone; what happens when victims cry for help and there is no one listening; what happens when humanity fails to recognise that those who are not in our image are none the less in God's image.

We remember and pay tribute to the survivors, who bore witness to what happened, and to the victims, so that robbed of their lives, they would not be robbed also of their deaths.

We remember and give thanks for the righteous of the nations who saved lives, often at risk of their own, teaching us how in the darkest night we can light a candle of hope.

Today, on Yom HaShoah, we call on You, Almighty God, to help us hear Your voice that says in every generation:

Do not murder.

Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbour.

Do not oppress the stranger.

We know that whilst we do not have the ability to change the past, we can change the future.

We know that whilst we cannot bring the dead back to life, we can ensure their memories live on and that their deaths were not in vain.

And so, on this Yom HaShoah, we commit ourselves to one simple act: Yizkor, Remember.

May the souls of the victims be bound in the bond of everlasting life. Amen.