

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE DEBARIM

AUGUST 1-2, 2014

6 AB 5774

The Fast of Tish'ah B'Ab will begin on Monday night, August 4 and end on Tuesday night, August 5.

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Rachel bat Renee - Shelly Sutton A"H – Our condolences to her children and her siblings including our dear friends Joe and Sam Cohen
And in memory of Shelley Lippman, sister of our friend, Dr. Jeremy Chess

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION

**Sarina, Kathy and Ariella
Will be having a breakfast on Friday in memory of
Their Uncle Bobby - Ephraim Dovid ben Naftali Meir**

Candle lighting Friday evening 7:52 p.m. Shir Hashirim 7:15 Mincha at 7:30 SHARP

**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 8:33 AM
We will endeavor to keep it to the 7 aliyot, somech, samuch and maftir each week.**

**Kiddush this Shabbat is sponsored by
Leon Bijou in memory of his parents Sallee amd Joe Bijou A'H And
Dr Robert and Linda Glaser in honor of the marriage of their children Judith and Jonathan Soniker**

**Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one
Anyone wishing to do a Dairy Kiddush with hot food must speak with Rabbi Colish in advance.**

**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!**

**Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach from 5:30 to 6:30
We are doing this program with the Bach and the program will be held at
The Sephardic Congregation for the latter part of the summer.**

**Pirkei Avot with Rav Aharon at 6:30
Mincha at 7:10 – Followed by Seudah Shelishi at 7:40
Seudah Shelishi Class
Birkat HaMazon at 8:35 Arbit at 8:40 - Shabbat Ends – 8:51**

**WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE
Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00**

**WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Men and Women are Invited
Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai 7:30**

**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**

**Thursday Nights 8:30-9:30 Virtual* Class facilitated by Rabbi Yosef Colish.
Practical Laws of Shabbat for Sephardim**

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Translation of a letter I received from a Rabbi in Yerushalayim, in which he tells over what he heard from his brother in law when one of our soldiers came in to his yeshivah while on leave from active duty in Gaza.

A soldier came back on leave from Gaza and told about one of the Hamas soldiers they caught. He was asked: If you guys have so many tunnels you have dug, why did you wait so long to use them? We now have discovered that you have tunnels that are 25 meters beneath ground surface, some of them reaching from Gaza all the way to Bersheva. What were you waiting for?

Hamas answered:

For 8 years we have been digging these tunnels. We were waiting for the right time. We decided that that day was going to be your Rosh Hashanah, this year, 2014. It's a 2 day holiday. Most of your soldiers are off duty. We were going to send 20-30 armed terrorists into each tunnel in order to kidnap as many Jews as we could, especially women and children. We would then spread them out throughout Gaza, ensuring that Israel would not be able to bomb us for fear of hurting their own people. We would then take over the whole country. Eight years we were preparing for this, and this would have started in less than 2 months on your Rosh Hashanah. Now that this is happening, our whole plan is ruined.

This is what he told our soldiers.

The implications of this are staggering. Such an evil plan. Eight years. And yet, in the wake of the kidnapping and subsequent killing of our 3 boys, this whole war started. We can now understand that it was all from Above, in order to divert a far greater catastrophe

Editors Notes

I returned from the Yeshiva tonight at about 10:15 and instead of coming into the front door, I walked around the back marveling at the number of stars in the moonless sky. I sat on the back porch overlooking the beach and the ocean and noticed what looked like a shooting star streak across the horizon. I sat amidst around at the spot lights aimed at the shore, brightly lit buildings along the Rockaway beach shore and enormous freight ships aglow lining up to enter New York harbor. "If this sky with all its ambient light allowed me an image of so many stars, I wonder what my son Moses is seeing as he sleeps under the sky on a hill in the Galil tonight"

I thought about the words at the beginning of the book of Devarim which we read this week where Moses states, "Hashem your G-d has increased you, and behold you are today like the stars of heaven for a multitude". And I wondered why does he compare the people to the stars which one cannot count? After all we know the people numbered 600,000 men fit to serve in the army and about three million in total. And I thought we are compared to the stars because when we rise to a level above the stars, we rise to a level where our spiritual number and strength cannot be counted. My heart breaks for Moses who in the previous verse states, "I alone cannot bear you". And I hear him hinting to the people, "You are about to enter the land and when you are combined, when you are as one, anything is possible, Miracles will happen if you are unified and ask. Perhaps I alone cannot convince Hashem to allow me to go into the land, but if you all get together, if you all pray together, then the power of your prayers would be unstoppable. You are above fate. You are above decree. You are above the stars. Your strength cannot even be fathomed. Please pray for me."

Unfortunately they don't get the hint. There is apparently no man of understanding as we see when comparing verses 13 and 15 where Moses at first lists among the qualities required of leaders; wise, understanding and well known. He settles for wise and well known. The people don't realize their own power. They don't realize that as a group they can annul any decree. They fail and Moses will be left behind. The nation could have saved their leader who gave them his all, yet they did not understand their own strength.

"En Mazal LeYisrael". The children of Israel have the power at times to rise above the stars and fate. We are a part of a world above nature. We are a part of a world of miracles. It may appear that we are subject to the laws of nature, but within that nature wonders

are hidden. And we cannot forget that nor take those wonders for granted. This power requires faith and trust in G-d. Not to say that we shouldn't put forth our best hishtadlut, our best human effort. But we cannot forget that behind it all is G-d. The key is to be Boteach BaHashem - to have trust in G-d.

A picture created by my rabbi many years ago remains etched in my mind. Rabbi Abittan, z'sl explained that during the celebration following the capturing of Jerusalem and Har Habayit in 1967, the Messiah mounted his donkey and was slowly riding towards the city. The geulah after 2000 years was finally here. Jerusalem was conquered. The temple mount would be cleared and the third temple would arise for all. And as the Mashiach made his way toward the celebration he saw the people unfurl a huge banner. And the words slowly became clear, Yisrael – Israel, Boteach – puts it's trust – Bah – in but when that last word became visible, the rabbi explained, the Messiah turned his donkey around and rode off to await another day. What was the problem we asked? Surely the verse concluded with the word Hashem, for who else would Israel put its complete trust into? No the rabbi explained. The banner read Yisrael Boteach BaSahal, Israel puts its trust into ... the army!

Just as the army represents our hishtadlut and human effort, we pray that Hashem strengthen the army with Heavenly assistance. Every endeavor requires Heavenly assistance.

A number of officials in Israel have been vocal in cautioning people against an over reliance on the Iron Dome. Too many people have become so comfortable and put so much trust into the technology that they fail to heed the alarms beckoning them to seek shelter.

The rabbis have been saying again and again that the Iron Dome is the hishtadlut, the human effort, but every effort requires a spiritual force. The Iron Dome needs a spiritual dome to make sure it is working properly.

Last last week, a report was released with a detailed analysis of the Iron Dome. The study carried out by scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and Ploughshares Fund.

"Ted Postol, a physicist at the university and an expert in missiles and missile defenses, has found evidence that only about 5 percent of Iron Dome engagements result in the targeted rocket being

destroyed or even sufficiently damaged to disable its explosive warhead. In the other 95 percent of cases, the interceptor either misses entirely or just lightly damages the enemy munition, allowing the rocket's intact warhead to continue arcing toward the ground."

It has been reported that, "Postol based his conclusion on a careful analysis of amateur videos and photos of Iron Dome interceptions over the past three years. He admitted that most of his data is from a previous round of fighting in 2012. 'The data we have collected so far [for 2014], however, indicate the performance of Iron Dome has not markedly improved,' Postol wrote on the website of the nonprofit Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists."

When it comes to analyzing the effectiveness of missile defenses, Philip Coyle, who ran weapons testing at the Pentagon under the Clinton administration, told MIT's Technology Review, Postol's is "the best work that anybody has done outside the bowels of the Pentagon."

Other military analysts support his findings, though the Israeli government dismisses them, as it does the Postol study. An Israeli spokesman told the BBC, "The system saves lives."

One article mentioned that, "It should go without saying that guiding a missile to strike a particular spot on another missile is a very, very difficult achievement. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency likens rocket-on-rocket interceptions to "hitting a bullet with a bullet."

Approximately 2600 rockets have been fired as of Monday and the IDF states that of those they attempted to knock out with the Iron Dome missile-defense system, they have an overall success rate of 86 percent.

Commenting on the report, a post in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists notes that, "In theory, Iron Dome could possibly intercept these Gaza-made, homegrown, short-range, unguided rockets, due to the Gaza rockets' low speeds. The flight time of a Gaza rocket with a range of about 15 miles is about 1,350 mph." An iron dome missile probably travels at more than twice that speed allowing it to overtake and destroy.

Whether the Israeli government is exaggerating the success rate of Iron Dome is debatable. At the same time we see that 2600 rockets could have done incredible damage and led to huge losses and many deaths. If it's not Iron Dome, then what is it?

Postol states, "Israel's low casualty rate from Hamas rockets is largely attributable to the country's well-developed early-warning and quick-sheltering system for citizens under imminent rocket attack." Military radars and infrared sensors detect rocket launches the instant they happen. Air-raid sirens alert civilians to head for underground bunkers.

Iron Dome, Postol added, "appears to have had no measurable effect on improving the chances of Israelis escaping injury or death from Hamas artillery rocket attacks in Israel."

It all sounds a bit strange to me. Perhaps Mr. Postol, if Iron Dome were set up in some country other than Israel, then perhaps it would have no measurable effect on improving the chances of their citizens escaping injury or death from artillery rocket attacks. But in Israel it seems to work.

Perhaps Mr. Postol, unscientific as it sounds, there is a second dimension to an Israeli Iron Dome. Perhaps Mr. Postol, that dimension is a spiritual one. Perhaps Mr. Postol, the unity and the prayers of the Jewish nation when threatened by her enemies combine to boost the populace to a place above the stars. Perhaps Mr. Postol there is more to Iron Dome than meets the eye.

Moses told us something 3400 years ago that is as true today as it was then. "You are today like the stars of heaven." Let us not forget that. Let us help each other. Let us work together. Let us pray together and do misvot together. Let's proclaim our faith and trust in Hashem and let us together give Iron Dome the spiritual energy it needs to protect the residents of the land of Israel.

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

The following two stories relate to what we wrote above are from our friend Daniel Keren who posted them in this weeks issue of Shabbos Stories for Parshas Devorim 5774

A True, Amazing Story from The Iron Dome in Israel By Ohad Shaked

On Sunday, I received a call from A, one of the officers operating the Iron Dome system. He had been a student of mine about six years ago. I was happy to hear from him.

"Where is somewhere I can learn Torah in Ramat Gan?" he asked me. I was surprised at the question, because he was completely remote from

Torah observance. "I'm going to be released from the army in a few months, and I want to start learning in a Yeshiva. I saw Hashem with my own eyes!" he declared..

"What happened," I asked.

"A missile was fired from Gaza. One of the features of the Iron Dome system is its capability to pinpoint where a missile is going to fall, within a radius of 200 meters. This missile was headed for a central area, in the Azrieli Towers vicinity, either in the actual square or on the train tracks. Either way, hundreds of lives were in danger!□

"We fired an interceptive missile, which missed. The second missile missed too, and then the third. That is highly unusual. Until today, there were only two such occurrences. I was shocked.

"We had about four more seconds before it would be too late to intercept the missile. We alerted the emergency services, Mada, police, and fire department, to head for the scene. We already activated the mass terror attack alert."□

He was talking quickly, with me listening breathlessly.

"Suddenly, with no alert from the Iron Dome system (which usually computes and predicts wind factor and direction), a strong wind from the east blew the missile southward, into the sea.

"We were all in shock. I jumped up and yelled, 'There is a G-d!!! There is a G-d!!! There is a G-d!!!'□

"I saw this miracle with my eyes. I didn't hear about it. No one told me about it. I saw the Hand of Hashem knocking the missile into the sea!

"This was obviously not publicized due to security regulations (which is why the date and time are not reported here), but it is enough to note the miracles that we do clearly see with our own eyes in the populated areas to understand that there is a G-d," he said.

"I ran over to the religious soldiers, and asked them for tefillin to put on. I committed to begin keeping Shabbos, and it was the best Shabbos I ever experienced,"□he said. I was completely moved, and a tear escaped from my eye."

"How fortunate you are," I told him, "to have seen this and understand that it is from Hashem."□ Reprinted from an email sent by Mr. Harvey Tannenbaum.

Linking Battlefield And Yeshiva From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

This happened last week.

Rabbi Yekutiel (Kuty) Medovnik teaches at the Machon Technology□ (Technical Institute) of Tsfat, a school for older yeshiva students where they study Torah topics in the morning and the rest of the day study those subjects which will qualify them for a

career in technology. A man living in the South district of Tsfat whom Kutty had befriended and influenced to increase in mitzvah observance telephoned him to inform him that he had been summoned for miluim (reserve duty) and would be leaving soon for the Gaza war front. As an officer, he felt concerned and responsible for the soldiers in his unit and asked that the boys in Kutty's yeshiva should pray for them and study extra Torah for them.

Kutty agreed immediately, of course, and asked the officer to supply the Jewish name and mother's name of each of the boys in his unit (about 30). Armed with this information, he then posted the list on the yeshiva bulletin board and asked the students in his classes (about 30) to each sign next to one of the names and keep that soldier in mind in their prayers and dedicate to them the merit of their Torah study.* All the yeshiva students were excited to do so.

A few days later the reserve officer called Rabbi Kutty Medovnik again. He was upset and frantic. One of his soldiers had just incurred a life-threatening wound from a fragment of a bomb that had pierced his skull. Please, the Yeshiva boys should pray and study more and harder for this endangered young soldier!

Kutty made the announcement in the Yeshiva to the entire student body, and then went to check his list of names. When he went to speak privately to the boy who signed next to this particular soldier's name, he found out that this very morning, unusually, the student had slept late, and thereby had missed the morning minyan and first study session!

The boy was momentarily paralyzed with grief and guilt. But grief and guilt never helped anybody. He leapt into action. He took upon himself the responsibility of organizing extra Torah study and Psalm-reciting sessions throughout the day, and exhorted his fellow students to do so with extra feeling and concentration. Every two hours he called the hospital to check the status of his injured soldier.

Finally, later that day, they received word received word that the soldier was out of danger. In the evening, the soldier's parents called to thank the yeshiva staff and student body and to request that the boys continue the special prayers and Torah study on behalf of their son, because clearly it was having a beneficial effect.

Source: My son, Yehuda, and other friends and acquaintances of Kutty Medovnik who heard the story directly from him.

Editor's note: This pairing arrangement is the norm in Yeshivas in Israel. Sometimes it is on a yeshiva to military division basis, rather than individual student to individual soldier, and more often it is initiated by

the students, although in the above case it was requested by the soldiers. This particular war seems to have tugged extra hard on soul strings, and perhaps the widespread use of internet and cellphone technology plays a part, for now we see these individual pairings springing up everywhere, not just in yeshivas in Israel but abroad also, and for that matter not just with yeshiva students but with lay people too. Anyone who is interested to join in and help to spiritually protect our dedicated young heroes can receive an IDF combat soldier name via //shmiraproject.com.

Why do people hate Israel? by Dennis Prager We live in a bad world.

There is nothing new about that. The world has been pretty bad since its inception. That's why God destroyed it and started all over again (with little to show for the new experiment, one might add). From a moral perspective, look at the world since 2000.

North Korea remains an entire country that is essentially a large concentration camp.

Tibet, one of mankind's oldest cultures, continues to be occupied and destroyed by China.

Somalia no longer exists as a country. It is an anarchic state in which the cruelest and strongest (usually one in the same) prevail.

In Congo, between 1998 and 2003, about 5.5 million people were killed — nearly the same as the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust.

In Syria, about 150,000 people have been killed in the last three years, and millions have been rendered homeless.

In Iraq, there is a mass murder from terror bombings almost every week.

In Mexico, since 2006, approximately 120,000 people have been killed in the country's drug wars.

Iran, a genocide-advocating theocratic dictatorship, is very near having the capacity to make nuclear weapons.

Christian communities in the Middle East are wiped out; Christians in Nigeria are routinely massacred.

Of course, the 20th century was even bloodier, but we are only in the 15th year of the 21st century.

Nevertheless, showing how awful the world is for so many of its inhabitants is not my point. My point is that, despite all this evil and suffering, the world has concentrated its attention overwhelmingly on the alleged evils of one country: Israel.

What makes this so worthy of note is that Israel is among the most humane and free countries on the planet. Moreover, it is the only country in the world that is threatened with annihilation.

This is the only time in history when people in free countries have sided with a police state against a free

state. One cannot name any time in modern history — the only time in history when there have been free societies — when, in a war between a free state and a police state, the free state was deemed the aggressor. That's because it never happened before Israel and its enemies.

The question, of course, is why?

Why, during a time when a Kenyan mall is blown up, Islamic terrorists massacre Christians in Nigeria and thousands more die in Syria, is the world preoccupied with 600-some Palestinians killed as a direct result of their firing thousands of missiles in order to kill as many Israelis as possible?

Why has obsession with Israel been the case since its inception, and especially since 1967?

It can't be occupation. China occupies Tibet, and it merits virtually no attention from the world. And Pakistan's creation, coming at the same time as Israel's, led to millions of Muslim (and Hindu) refugees. Yet, that country, too, merits no attention. There are only two explanations for this moral anomaly.

One is the nearly worldwide embrace of leftist thought and values. According to this way of thinking, Westerners are almost always wrong when they fight Third World countries or groups; and the weaker party, especially if non-Western, is almost always deemed the victim when fighting a stronger, especially Western, group or country. Leftism has replaced "good and evil" with "rich and poor," "strong and weak," and "Western (or white) and non-Western (or non-white)." Israel is rich, strong and Western; the Palestinians are poor, weak and non-Western.

The only other possible explanation is that Israel is Jewish.

There is no other rational explanation because the fixation with, and the hatred of, Israel are not rational. Israel is a particularly decent country. It is tiny — about the size of New Jersey and smaller than El Salvador; and while there are more than 50 Muslim countries, there is only one Jewish one. She should be admired and supported, not hated to the extent that there are dozens of countries whose populations would like to see Israel annihilated — again, a unique phenomenon. No other country in the world is targeted for extermination.

As hard as it is for modern, rational and irreligious people to accept, Israel's Jewishness is a primary reason for the hatred of it.

Ironically, this fact — just as with the fixation on the Jew before Israel's existence — confirms for this observer the divine role the Jew plays in history. Few Jews are aware of their role, and even fewer want it. But, other than the influence of the left, there is no other explanation for all the animosity toward Israel.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st and 2nd Aliyot: Moshe recounts the history of the 40 years from after the 2nd Luchos, until the request by the people to send the Spies. (Pasuk 12 is read to the tune of Eicha - Lamentations) He notes the establishment of the Sanhedrin and the Judicial system.

3rd and 4th Aliyot: The incident of the Meraglim - Spies and its terrible punishment is related. Remember, the sin of the Spies and the decree for that generation to die out in the desert occurred today, on Tisha B'Av 2449, 3266 years ago.

5th and 6th Aliyot: Moshe jumps 38 years during which the decree of the 40 years was carried out and focuses on Israel's encounter with the nations of: Eisav, Moav, and Ammon. The battles with Sichon and Og and the acquisition of Trans-Jordan are retold.

7th Aliya: Trans-Jordan is given to the 2 1/2 tribes, and Yehoshua is encouraged to view these victories as a promise of future success in taking Land.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is urging the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to investigate the death of at least 160 Palestinian children who were used by Hamas to build their terror tunnels.

"Hamas officials openly admitted that children were used to help build their terror tunnels and that at least 160 Palestinian kids died during so-called work accidents," charged Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a leading Jewish human rights NGO. An article published this week in Tablet, cites a 2012 article in the Institute for Palestine Studies by Nicolas Pelham. In it he wrote:

"A similarly cavalier approach to child labor and tunnel fatalities damaged the movement's [i.e., Hamas] standing with human-rights groups, despite government assurances dating back to 2008 that it was considering curbs. During a police patrol that the author was permitted to accompany in December 2011, nothing was done to impede the use of children in the tunnels, where, much as in Victorian coal mines, they are prized for their nimble bodies. At least 160 children have been killed in the tunnels, according to Hamas officials. Safety controls on imports appear similarly lax, although the TAC insists that a sixteen-man contingent carries out sporadic spot-checks." According to Pelham, Hamas' "Tunnel Affairs Commission" continued to stonewall any

complaints about the lethal exploitation of child labor ever since 2008.

"Isn't there a single member of the UNHRC, whether the US, Germany, UK, or France to stand up and demand accountability for Hamas' barbarities, at least when the victims are Palestinian children? And where is the multitude of NGOs devoted to protecting children? Will they ever raise the target of their moral outrage at anyone in the Middle East other than Israel?"

"Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised by anything Hamas does. What else to expect from a regime that brainwashes children as young as three with genocidal propaganda using Mickey Mouse characters to convert them to the cult of suicide bombers; that has rewarded the voters in Gaza who put them in power, by using their constituents as human shields?"

"Still, a UN investigation could at least restore a degree of dignity to these Palestinian children who were robbed of their life by their leaders.

Perhaps the international community will begin to hold these terrorist leaders accountable for their crimes against humanity," Cooper concluded.

FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

**"The vision of Yeshayahu son of Amos which he saw concerning Yehudah and Yerushalayim."
(Yeshayahu 1:1)**

Parashat Debarim is read on the Shabbat before Tish'ah B'Ab known as Shabbat Hazon, because its haftarah begins with the words "Hazon Yeshayahu," the vision of Yeshayahu. It's a time we contemplate the meaning of Tish'ah B'Ab. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev has a special interpretation of the words Shabbat Hazon. We as humans are restricted by time, but Hashem isn't. The third Bet Hamikdash and all of its glory is in front of Hashem now. Hashem is just waiting for the right time to bring it down. Shabbat Hazon means the Shabbat of vision in which Hashem gives a vision to our souls to see this splendor and perhaps we will be inspired to bring it down to earth so we can see it in reality.

Rabbi Y. Spero continues and quotes a parable that is brought by Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to explain this. Once there was a king who wanted to give his child a beautiful garment, so he hired the best tailor to sew a suit for him. After a few weeks, it was finally ready. The child was so proud to wear the smart suit, which fit him so well and made him look so handsome. After a while, he started to run around, not being careful with his valuable suit, and it

was torn. When the father saw the damaged garment, although he was disappointed, he still wanted his child to have a fine suit of clothes, so he purchased another suit for him, with the hope that this time he would take better care of it.

However, before long the young prince began to climb trees while wearing this suit, and a short while later, it too was ripped. This time the father realized that he could not just give him another suit to wear. If he wanted his son to really take pride in the garment and to care for it properly, he would have to make him prove that he was worthy of it.

Thus, he asked the tailor to sew an even nicer suit than the previous two. But he did not give it to his child right away. Instead, he kept it in a closet. He would show it to his child every once in a while and the king would tell his son that he would give it to him only when he was able to care for it. Although the child wanted the suit very badly, he also wanted to continue to play and run and climb and do things that the other children did.

One year when the king showed the suit to his son, the boy decided that he was ready to become more responsible and not continue his childish ways, so he could finally wear the magnificent suit.

The Al-mighty gave us two suits: two Batei Hamikdash, but we tore them: we destroyed both of them with our carelessness. He is ready to give us a third suit, but we have to show that we are ready to wear it and not ruin it as we did to the other two. So every year on Shabbat Hazon, explains Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, Hashem reveals an image of the third and final Bet Hamikdash to our neshamah, even while we are still suffering in exile. This is done with the hope that this year we will decide once and for all that we want to improve our ways so that we can wear the suit and take pleasure in the third Bet Hamikdash. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

RABBI ELI MANSOUR Appreciating What We Lost

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rabbi Wein FECKLESSNESS AND UNWISDOM

In Winston Churchill's epic six-volume memoir of the Second World War, in the first volume entitled "The Gathering Storm," he wrote of the British foreign policy of the 1930s as follows: "[The later disaster was caused by] the English-speaking peoples, [who] through their unwisdom, carelessness and good nature, allowed the wicked to rearm."

A good nature is a necessity for personal life and domestic harmony. It is however a disastrous national policy. This is especially true when a nation realizes that it is surrounded by bitter and fanatical enemies who publicly proclaim their intention to destroy it.

There are many reasons and causes for the current Gaza war. But certainly one of those reasons is the good nature of Israel and its governments. The stubborn refusal to recognize the realities that we face, the inability to admit that past policies may have been terribly mistaken, combined with a generous sprinkling of unwisdom, carelessness and good

nature have certainly allowed our wicked foes to rearm and threaten our very existence.

Is it possible that the great Israeli intelligence system was completely unaware of the tens of tunnels being dug from Gaza to Israel? It is most probable that the governments of Israel were aware that these tunnels were being dug but our good nature and carelessness prevented our taking any strong preventive measures. Of course it is the good nature of the rest of the world – in reality, its hypocrisy and latent enmity to Jews and the Jewish state – that colored our vision and restrained our actions. Nevertheless, we have certainly been guilty of, carelessness and a surfeit of good nature.

Surveying the crisis points in the world that we inhabit, one cannot be amazed at the naïve capacity of Europe and the United States in reacting to mortal dangers that will eventually reach them as well. Putin aggressively kills, annexes and blusters, all the while the West clucks and dithers and finally does nothing. Putin is certainly not impressed by Obama warning him that he is “on the wrong side of history.”

And Hamas does not at all care about the fact that it is responsible for the deaths of so many innocents and thereby illustrates for us its almost genetic lack of good nature. The United Nations’ Human Rights Commission, shamed and debased by its previous Goldstone Report, continues on its merry way of finding Israel as the guilty party committing “war crimes” in Gaza. The makeup of the commission itself is a roster of the worst human rights abusers in the world. But in our un-wisdom and good nature we participate in its deliberations and give it a credence that it certainly does not deserve.

Iran continues to enrich its store of uranium and build its bomb while the West continues to negotiate. Somehow the world always thinks that if one continues to feed the tiger it will refrain from biting and clawing its victims. Somehow one would hope that by now the necessary lessons have been learned and that we realize that this is not how to be dealing with the tiger. But “unwisdom” and good nature always seem to win out temporarily until the mortal danger is brought home face-to-face. Then it is much more expensive and costly to deal with the foe. But the foe must eventually be dealt with.

There is no easy discernible solution to the situation that we currently find ourselves in. Crying over spilled milk rarely helps and the rehashing and criticism of past errors is also usually not constructive in the midst of a war. But one lesson can be learned – a lesson that is necessary for the pursuit and success

of the current war itself. And that lesson is that we should restrain our good nature somewhat so that we do not fall into the trap of unwisdom and carelessness.

The people of Israel have already absorbed thousands of rockets, rioting by Palestinians, worldwide protests that always border on violent anti-Semitism, the fecklessness of Western leaders and the biased reporting of much of the world media. We have withstood all of this because we must do so or otherwise, God forbid, perish.

It is difficult to imagine what our fate would be if we were not so strong and resolute in the face of such evil and violence. Being strong and resolute many times does not allow us to be expansive or expressive of our innate good nature. Well then so be it, for the choices and options are starkly clear. We shall not allow our good nature to create for us the climate of carelessness and “unwisdom” quoted from Churchill in the opening quote of this essay. Eventually our good nature will win out, but only when it is reciprocated by the good nature of others as well.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Leader as Teacher

It was one of the great moments of personal transformation, and it changed not only Moses but our very conception of leadership itself.

By the end of the book of Bamidbar, Moses' career as a leader seemed to have come to its end. He had appointed his successor, Joshua, and it would be he, not Moses, who would lead the people across the Jordan into the promised land. Moses seemed to have achieved everything he was destined to achieve. For him there would be no more battles to fight, no more miracles to perform, no more prayers to make on behalf of the people.

It is what Moses did next that bears the mark of greatness. For the last month of his life he assembled the people and delivered the series of addresses we know as the book of Devarim, literally “words.” In them he reviewed the people’s past and foresaw their future. He gave them laws, some he had given them before but in a different form, others that were new and that he had waited to announce until the people were about to enter the land. Linking all these details of law and history into a single overarching vision, he taught the people to see themselves as an am kadosh, a holy people, the only people whose sovereign and lawgiver was God himself.

If someone who knew nothing about Judaism and the Jewish people were to ask you for a single book that would explain them both – who Jews are and why they do what they do – the best answer would be Devarim. No other book so encapsulates and dramatises all the key elements of Judaism as a faith and way of life.

In a much-watched TED lecture, and a book with the same name,[1] Simon Sinek says that the transformative leaders are those who ‘Start with Why.’ More poetically, Antoine de Saint-Exupery said, “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up people together to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.”

In Devarim, Moses gave the people their Why. They are God’s people, the nation on whom He has set his love, the people He rescued from slavery and gave, in the form of the commandments, the constitution of liberty. They may be small but they are unique. They are the people who, in themselves, testify to something beyond themselves. They are the people whose fate will defy the normal laws of history. Other nations, says Moses, will recognise the miraculous nature of the Jewish story – and so, from Blaise Pascal to Nikolai Berdyaev and beyond, they did

In the last month of his life Moses ceased to be the liberator, the miracle-worker and redeemer, and became instead Moshe Rabbenu, “Moses, our teacher.” He was the first instance in history of a leadership type in which Jews have excelled: the leader-as- teacher.

Moses surely knew that some of his greatest achievements would not last forever. The people he had rescued would one day suffer exile and persecution again. The next time, though, they would not have a Moses to do miracles. So he planted a vision in their minds, hope in their hearts, a discipline in their deeds and a strength in their souls that would never fade. When leaders become educators they change lives.

In a powerful essay, ‘Who is fit to lead the Jewish people?’ Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik contrasted the Jewish attitude to kings and teachers as leadership types.[2] The Torah places severe limits on the power of kings. They must not multiply gold, or wives, or horses. A king is commanded “not to consider himself better than his fellow Israelites nor turn from the law to the right or to the left” (Deut. 17: 20).

A king was only to be appointed at the request of the people. According to Ibn Ezra, the appointment of a

king was a permission, not an obligation. Abrabanel held that it was a concession to human frailty. Rabbenu Bachya regarded the existence of a king as a punishment, not a reward.[3] In short, Judaism is at best ambivalent about monarchy, that is to say, about leadership-as-power.

On the other hand, its regard for teachers is almost unlimited. “Let the fear of your teacher be as the fear of heaven,” says the Talmud.[4] Respect and reverence for your teacher should be greater even than respect and reverence for your parents, rules Rambam, because parents bring you into this world, while teachers give you entrance to the world to come.[5]

When someone exercises power over us, he or she diminishes us, but when someone teaches us, he or she helps us grow. That is why Judaism, with its acute concern for human dignity, favours leadership-as-education over leadership-as-power. And it began with Moses, at the end of his life.

For twenty-two years, as a Chief Rabbi, I have carried with me the following quotation from one of the greatest leaders of the Zionist movement, Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. Although he was a secular Jew, he was enough of a historian and Bible scholar to understand this dimension of leadership, and said so in eloquent words:

Whether you hold humble office in a municipality or in a small union or high office in a national government, the principles are the same: you must know what you want to achieve, be certain of your aims, and have these goals constantly in mind. You must fix your priorities. You must educate your party, and must educate the wider public. You must have confidence in your people – often greater than they have in themselves, for the true political leader knows instinctively the measure of man’s capacities and can rouse him to exert them in times of crisis. You must know when to fight your political opponents, and when to mark time. You must never compromise on matters of principle. You must always be conscious of the element of timing, and this demands a constant awareness of what is going on around you – in your region if you are a local leader, in your country and in the world if you are a national leader. And since the world never stops for a moment, and the pattern of power changes its elements like the movement of a kaleidoscope, you must constantly reassess chosen policies towards the achievement of your aims. A political leader must spend a lot of time thinking. And he must spend a lot of time educating the public, and educating them anew.[6]

The poet Shelley once said that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” Whether this is true or false, I do not know, but this I know: that there is all the difference between giving people what they want and teaching them what to want.

Teachers are the unacknowledged builders of the future, and if a leader seeks to make lasting change, he or she must follow in the footsteps of Moses and become an educator. The leader-as-teacher, using influence not power, spiritual and intellectual authority rather coercive force, was one the greatest contributions Judaism ever made to the moral horizons of humankind and it can be seen most clearly in the Book of Devarim, when Moses for the last month of his life summoned the next generation and taught them laws and lessons that would survive, and inspire, as long as there are human beings on earth.

[1] The lecture can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qp0HIF3SfI4>. The book is: Simon Sinek, Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action, Portfolio, 2011.

[2] Reflections of the Rav, Abraham R. Besdin, World Zionist Organisation, 1979, 127-139.

[3] In their commentaries to Deut. 17: 15. Rabbenu Bachya's point is that the people should in principle have needed no other king than God himself. In support of his view he quotes Hosea: “They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval” (8: 4); and “So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away” (13: 11).

[4] Pesachim 108b.

[5] Hilkhos Talmud Torah 5: 1.

[6] Ben Gurion Looks Back in Talks with Moshe Pearlman, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York, 1965, 52. I owe this quotation to Jonathan (now Lord) Kestenbaum, Executive Director of the Office of the Chief Rabbi, 1991-1996.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL AHAVAT YISRAEL: “And I shall bless those that bless you” (12:3)

From the very beginning Hakadosh Baruch Hu decreed: “va'avarecha mevarachecha” – I will give berachot to all those who bless Am Yisrael. The Talmud (Hullin 49A) states that this promise extends also to the descendants of Abraham Abinu. Therefore, the first thing for us to understand is how great is our duty to bless the Jewish nation.

When you come to the last beracha in the Amida, you put all you have into it as you pray for Am Yisrael you say, “Establish peace, goodness and blessing, life, grace and kindness, and compassion over us and over all of Israel Your nation.” This beracha is so important because it is a mitzvah in the Torah to bless Am Yisrael.

When you walk down a Jewish street and every house has a big mezuzah on the door, say a beracha for the people who live in those houses. Say aloud that everyone in those homes should be well for many happy years. They should all have a comfortable livelihood, pleasure and satisfaction from their children, fine matches for their children, only semahot/happy occasions in their houses, nothing but joy. And Hashem will say: I'm listening, and I shower my blessings on you.

When you gain this attribute of constantly blessing Jews you will: receive blessings from Hashem, and fulfill a mitzvah from the Torah, and emulate Hashem who “Loves His Jewish nation” (Daily Prayers), and you will cause yourself to increase your own love of your Jewish brothers which is another mitzvah of loving your fellow Jew, Ahavat Yisrael.

May we thereby gain the merit to see the rebuilding of The Bet Hamikdash soon.

Daily Prayer: “I hereby accept upon myself the Positive Commandment to: “Love my fellow Jew as I love myself.” And I hereby Love every one of the Bene Yisrael as I love myself and all I possess.”

Adapted from “The Beginning” by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT'L

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