

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

KI TABO

AUGUST 23-24, 2013

18 ELUL 5773

DEDICATION: In memory of Avraham Ben Leah – Alan Grossman A'H who was niftar this week and in memory of Yosef ben Ovadiah Bibi 19 Elul
Refuah shelemah Chayah Bat Esther
And with birthday wishes for Abraham Jay Jerome

Candles: 7:25 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:20 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:48 AM.
Tefilah will be preceded by a class at 8:30AM on Hilchot Shabbat with a Sephardic twist.

This weeks kiddush by

11:00 - 12:00 Orah's will be here with our Shabbat Morning Kids Program upstairs in the Rabbi's study. Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks and more . . . And Leah Colish will be babysitting down in the playroom
Children's Shabbat Afternoon Oneg, Age's 6 and up (Under age 6 is welcome with an adult) 6:00 - 7:00
We kindly request all parents to pick-up their children or supervise them once Mincha commences

5:30 - Shabbat Afternoon Oneg with Rabbi Yosef and Leah; Treats, Stories, Basketball, Hula-hoop, Parsha Quiz, Tefillot, Raffles and Fun! Supervised play during Seudat Shelishit.
5:30: Ladies Torah Class at the Lemberger's 1 East Olive.

Pirkey Avot with Rabbi Aharon 6:00, Minha: 6:45 PM –
Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:15 with David
Seudah Shelishi in memory of Yosef Ben Ovadiah and Avraham Ben Leah
Evening Service (Arbith): 8:15 PM - Shabbat Ends: 8:25PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Selichot Sunday at 7:15 and Monday through Friday at 6:15
Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)
Daily Hebrew language class follows afterward in the Rabbi's Study

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Daily 6:00 AM class – Honest Business Practices

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – 7PM
Rabbi Yenay drives back and forth from Lakewood, 2 hours each way.
If you want to continue this class, please show him your support and be there at 7PM sharp.
Men and Women are invited.

Tuesday night at 8PM
At the home of Chantelle and David Bibi
1233 Beech Street in Atlantic Beach

Rosh Hashana is a week from Wednesday night
Please see schedule attached and please see Honors to bid for
Please do what you can and ask outside people who may want to help us to buy something
You all should have received statements including membership bills
If you have questions, please speak to Hal or Ely

BOARD MEETING FOR ALL TRUSTEES and ANYONE WHO WANTS TO HELP

Sunday morning at 9AM - August 25th

All board members should attend with any members available who can assist with fund raising for the Holidays

We must discuss plans for the high Holidays and going forward into 5774.
We need everyones help.

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

Editors Notes

Yawning is contagious. One doesn't even need to see a person yawn. Hearing someone yawn or even reading about yawning can cause the same reaction. I hope that while reading this article, won't get you yawning, but I may be too late. Yawning like much human behavior is infectious. We see someone else do something, we empathize and then in some way we mimic the behavior.

This week's portion opens with the bringing of the first fruits. The farmer is commanded to take the first of his harvest from the seven species and place them in a basket, place the basket – of gold or silver if he is wealthy and of straw if he is not - on his shoulder and trek across the country to Jerusalem and the Temple. On the journey, meeting up with other farmers and passing through the towns, there is singing and dancing. When the farmer arrives in the city, the people close their shops and come out to celebrate with him. There he approaches the Kohen hands him the bounty and declares in a loud voice recalling our history, our slavery and our exodus from Egypt. He continues recounting that G-d gave us the land and in appreciation he is bringing these fruits. Why this huge public display for a basket full of grapes? Why not simply send them by Fedex or Moshe's fruit truck to the Kohen? Why the trip? Why the singing? Why close the shops? Why the formal declaration? Why must it be declared aloud? Why the pageantry?

Many reasons are brought, but I believe one reason should center on the fact that the bringing of Bikurim is an act of appreciation and when we see one person saying thank you, it becomes easier for the rest of us to say thank you. And it's a lesson to all of that no matter what we do; our actions affect those around us either in a positive or negative way.

This Shabbat Rabbi Michael Haber brought the example of a coward at the battlefield. One person who is overwhelmingly afraid can destroy the morale

of his troop and easily turn potential victory into defeat.

In contrast he asked us to recall October 6, 1965, when Dodger pitcher Sandy Koufax decided not to play in the first game of the World Series against the Minnesota Twins because it was Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.

"By refusing to pitch that day, Koufax became inextricably linked with the American Jewish experience," author Jane Leavy wrote in Sandy Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy. "He was the New Patriarch: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sandy."

"The Dodgers lost that game 8-2. Don Drysdale, who started in Koufax's place, gave up seven runs in the first three innings. It is rumored that when Dodger manager Walter Alston headed out to the mound to take Drysdale out of the game he said, "I know, Skip. Right now you wish I was Jewish, too."

"The rest of the story is that Koufax returned to start three of the remaining six games and was named the Series MVP after pitching a shutout in the deciding Game 7.

"By all rights, the greatness of a pitcher should in his pitching, not in his "not-pitching." But go tell that to history. Not-pitching is Koufax's legacy. To wit, in May of 2010, at a White House event honoring Jewish Heritage Month, President Obama quipped, "Sandy and I have a few things in common. We are both lefties. He can't pitch on Yom Kippur. I can't pitch."

"Koufax, who wasn't particularly observant, had no clue that his decision would carry so much weight".

But it did. He inspired a generation of Jewish Americans to begin to take pride in being a Jew as opposed to hiding it. The actions of one can have far reaching influence.

Sometimes we have no idea how our actions will be viewed or affect others. Rabbi Abittan, z'sl would tell the story of a wealthy Jewish philanthropist from Texas. This generous individual contributed to the building of Hospitals, college libraries, and museums but had very little connection with Judaism. In his senior years he took a VIP trip with the UJA to Israel.

One of the planned stops for the UJA tour was the Kotel or the Western Wall. The bus pulled into the VIP area on the concourse and the man departed. He approached the wall taking a cardboard Yalmaka

from the box. And he came close to the stones, he saw people all around him in prayer and the thought occurred to him that he had no idea what to say. Next to him was a haredi Jew in the midst of Tefilah. The wealthy man just watched as this pious Jew seemingly poured out his heart in silence. The philanthropist wanted to talk to him, but close to an hour passed and this Jew neither looked up to the left nor the right, so engrossed was he in his prayers.

The tour guide came to find the Texan. It was time to leave and get to the next stop. And so he boarded the bus regretting both his inability to speak to the man about prayer and then thinking that perhaps this man was in need of something and he could of helped, but didn't.

The image of this devoted Jew in prayer remained with the Texan for the rest of the trip. It was almost haunting. What devotion, what focus, what must it feel like to communicate with G-d? He just wanted to do something for this man, but he would never know his name?

Back in Texas, he continued to think, "What can I do?"

He visited with an Orthodox Rabbi and decided he could repay the man by helping others to learn. He decided to build a kollel in Austin, Texas. And that's just what he did.

Rabbi Abittan would tell me, imagine the Zechut of this Hasid who was praying at the Wall. All the Torah learned, all the Torah taught, all the misvot and chesed that come out of this kollel in Austin. Imagine after 120 years, Rabbi Abittan would say, this religious Jew who may have never wandered beyond Jerusalem, who knows nothing of America, least about a city in Northern Texas.

The angels will show him all the reward for his own learning and misvot and then they will show him a huge palace as a reward for the kollel in Austin and all the misvot generated through that kollel. The angel will explain that this is the merit for everything that he did to create and establish the Kollel in Austin.

And this chasid, this pious but simple Jew will ask, "Austin?, Voos is Austin?" What is Austin?

The Rabbi would tell me that we have the unique ability to affect and change the world even when we don't even realize we are doing anything. This Jew came to pray one day and unaware of his influence changed a city.

What dominoes will our actions strike and what dominoes will those strike? Who is the wise man, he who sees the results of his actions? As we approach Rosh Hashana, it's something to think about.

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

PS ... Last week we were discussing Test Tube Meat and its halachic ramifications. I received many different articles discussing the subject. Food for thought from Rabbi Dr. Samuel Lebens is a fellow at the Centre for Philosophy of Religion at the University of Notre Dame.

In order to keep the price of meat down and quantities of production up, farmers have developed methods for mass producing meat that are both cruel to animals and harmful to the environment. The method is known as factory farming.

Each full-grown chicken in a factory farm, where the majority of chickens are raised, has as little as six-tenths of a square foot of space. Because of the crowding, they often become aggressive and sometimes eat each other. Farmers deal with this by engaging in the painful practice of debeaking. Furthermore, due to genetic manipulation, 90 percent of broiler chickens have trouble walking – they've been packed so full of meat, they can barely stand up.

The mass production of meat also takes a toll on our environment. According to the USDA, animals in the U.S. meat industry produce 61 million tons of waste each year, which amounts to five tons for every U.S. citizen. "The pollution from animal waste causes respiratory problems, skin infections, nausea, depression and even death for people who live near factory farms," it says, adding, "Livestock waste has been linked to six miscarriages in women living near a hog factory in Indiana."

According to a recent study, chickens need to consume 2 kilograms of grain to produce 1 kilogram of meat. For beef cattle, the ratio is 10 to 1, which means we're literally starving the earth by the beef we produce – shoving 10 kilograms of grain into just 1 kilogram of meat.

That beautiful South American beef, where the cows seemingly have so much freedom to roam, only causes greater problems for the environment. Cows take up a lot of space, and South American farmers create that space by burning down rainforests.

According to the same study, "Tropical deforestation is responsible for about 15 percent of the world's global warming emissions and adversely affects the planet's biodiversity. The expansion of meat

production, especially beef, has been a major driver of deforestation over the last 20 years, responsible for about 45 percent of the heat-trapping gases produced by deforestation ... Cows produce extensive amounts of methane during the digestive process, a potent heat-trapping gas that exits the cow from both ends and causes about 23 times as much global warming per molecule as carbon dioxide.

Large amounts of manure are also a leading cause of water pollution," which in turn kills billions of fish.

If the Torah took on factory farming

I love meat. I eat meat, as long as it's kosher. But, when God allowed us to rear animals, kill them and eat them, I'm not sure that this was what He had in mind! The Torah commands us to minimize animal discomfort, and commands us to take care of the environment. So, it seems that the Torah would have a lot to say against factory farming.

The greatest American halakhic authority of the last generation, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, didn't need to argue that inhumane farming made meat unkosher. It was forbidden for other reasons, and thus he forbade veal that was kept supple by growing it in a box, and the force feeding of geese, forbidding us to buy that meat; not because it was unkosher, but because it was in violation of other Jewish laws (Igros Moshe, Even HaEzer vol. 4 responsa 92 part II). But these visionary rulings were specific to veal and foie gras, and have yet to be applied in practice to factory farmed meat across the board.

Just recently, scientists in Holland produced a hamburger from stem cells taken in a biopsy from a calf. Mark Post, one of the researchers involved in the project, estimates that from one biopsy like this, you'd eventually be able to produce 175 million quarter-pounders. Such a feat would normally require 440,000 cows. The ethical and environmental benefits in producing meat this way are immediately obvious. Rabbi Dr Shmuly Yanklowitz summed it up by saying, "In addition to the massive potential for eliminating a huge amount of animal suffering, it seems the cultured meat may use around 99 percent less land, 96 percent less water, 45 percent less energy, and produce 96 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions than conventional meat."

But - as is often the case with new technology - the issue of stem cell meat raises a fascinating array of halakhic questions. Jewish law hasn't had any truly authoritative legislators since the last Sanhedrin in the year 358. Instead, it evolves through successive layers of judicial (i.e. rabbinic) interpretation. So, we must interpret this ancient body of law in order to see what it would say about the production of cultured meat.

Given that it's initially produced from an animal, Rabbi Menachem Genak argues that the animal will have to be kosher, and it will have to have been

slaughtered in an appropriate fashion. But, like gelatine, once it has undergone so many processes and transformations, it may well lose its halakhic status as meat, and, like gelatine, may be classified as parve (available to eat alongside milk). This possibility has already excited many with the prospect of kosher cheeseburgers.

If for the general market stem cell meat is produced from a living animal, would this infringe the Noahide law, which even non-Jews are biblically mandated to keep, against eating the limb of a living animal? Was that law enacted to avoid cruelty to animals? If so, how can this cultured meat be considered an infringement - it's much kinder than killing it! Is a small biopsy considered a limb? Is the burger that emanates from such a biopsy considered a limb? If the law isn't merely against cruelty to animals, what is it against?

There are stories of miraculous meat in the Talmud (tractate Sanhedrin 59b, 65b). Sometimes this meat fell straight down from heaven, and sometimes it seems to have been miraculously created by people. The great Rabbi Yeshayah Halevi Horowitz (1565-1630) argued that this meat wouldn't need slaughter, and could even be eaten limb from limb whilst the animal is alive, for normal laws simply don't apply to it (Shalah Parshas Vayeishev). Perhaps the same could be said of meat created not by rabbis but by scientists. Perhaps it wouldn't need slaughter after all, neither for Jews nor for non-Jews. Perhaps this could even be the route to kosher pork! These issues will be resolved by halakhists much greater than me. As far as I'm concerned, we're standing on the precipice of interesting times: times in which the kosher meat industry might finally fall in line with the ethics of the Bible; and times in which the ancient legal system of the rabbis shows its vitality as we apply it to new situations in imaginative ways.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

Following the last two Parshios that focused on Justice and the value of individual rights, Moshe directed the nation's attention to the realities of what it meant to live in Eretz Yisroel.

Our behaviors, as well as natural law, are subject to the word of G-d and interface with each other in the most intimate example of cause and effect. As the Chosen People, our lifestyle should manifest the ever-present mastery of the Creator over mankind and the realization of the connection between our adherence of Mitzvot and the laws of nature. This is most apparent in Eretz Yisroel. As Moshe told the Bnai Yisroel in Parshas Ekev, (11:12) "It is therefore a land constantly under Hashem's scrutiny..." As clearly as the rain and dew fall, the land reflects G-d's

presence. Keeping the mitzvos of the Torah proclaims in word and deed G-d's mastery over man and results in nature serving man as her accepted master. By ignoring or opposing the Torah we deny G-d's mastery over man; and in turn, nature opposes man's attempts at mastery over the natural world.

During the 40 years of the desert, the Jews were being prepared to accept the reality of Hashem's mastery and the responsibility of keeping His mitzvos. Now, in Parshas Ki Savo, as they were poised to cross the Yarden and assume their intended place as "... highest of all the nations on earth." (28:1) Moshe commanded a number of declarations and ceremonies. These ceremonies would underscore the cause and effect relationship that exists between adherence to Torah, the laws of nature, and the divine responsiveness of the land.

1st & 2nd Aliyot: The Parsha begins with the Mitzvot of the first fruits and the completion of the Tithing cycles. Both are accompanied by special declarations of Hashem's mastery over the land, and man's responsibility to keep the commandments of Hashem.

4th & 5th Aliyot: Moshe presents a statement of allegiance between Hashem and His People. We are to keep the Torah and Hashem guarantees us praise, fame and glory as the "highest of all the nations". (26:19) Upon crossing the Yarden, the Nation will publicly declare its acceptance of Hashem's covenant by: inscribing the Torah upon twelve stones; erecting them as a monument; and the ceremony of blessings and curses that is to take place between the opposing mountains, Grizim and Ayval.

6th Aliya: Commonly known as the Tochacha the admonitions and punishments. It describes the consequences that will befall the Jewish people if they ignore Hashem's Torah and his providence. The custom is for the Reader to read this Aliya more quickly and quietly than the rest of the Parsha.

7th Aliya: The Parsha concludes with the beginning of Moshe's final discourse. He starts by recounting the miraculous nature of the past 40 years and its clear indication of Hashem's ever present protection, past and future.

Haftorah: Isaiah 60:1-22 - This week's Haftorah of Consolation refocuses us on the messianic vision of a nation and world united behind a single goal and purpose.

"Lift up your eyes round about... they are all gathered together... (60:4) Your gates will be continually

open... so that men may bring to you the wealth of nations, with their kings led in procession. (60:11) Violence will no longer be heard in your land... but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise". (60:18)

As in the times of Yishayuhu, we too are in need of consolation. "Your people will all be righteous; they will possess the land forever... (60:21) May we soon be comforted!

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"Hashem shall open for you his storehouse of goodness, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in its time." (Debarim 28:12)

This week we learn that Hashem has a storehouse. For we are told in the verse stated above that if we observe the misvot, Hashem will open His storehouse of goodness in order to bring the rain in its time. What's in Hashem's storehouse? It says in the Gemara (Berachot 33b) that Hashem has nothing but our fear of Hashem. Usually someone puts in his treasury something that he gathers from somewhere else, but what is there in the world that Hashem doesn't have that He likes to put in His treasury? The only thing that He doesn't have is our fear of Him. Our Sages say, "Everything is in the hands of Hashem except for the fear of Heaven." All that transpires to a person, whether he is rich or poor, wise or foolish, is not a matter of choice or free will, but is preordained by Hashem. But regarding whether a man will be righteous or evil, he is given free will. Since fear and awe of Hashem is the only thing not dictated by Hashem, it is what He chose to keep in his treasure house.

Our Sages teach us that there is a special key for rain, and Hashem doesn't give that key to any messenger or angel. Why not? Because the pasuk above says that it's from Hashem's treasure house of fear of Hashem that He chooses to "provide rain for the land in its time." Since the contents of this treasure house are so beloved in the eyes of Hashem, He chooses not to give the keys to a messenger.

Today, people think that if someone receives the right education and works hard enough, he or she is guaranteed to be financially successful. However when it comes to spiritual ideals, people look around and declare that while they may respect the aspirations of others. "I am just not cut out for it myself." Really, the opposite is true.

Wealth or poverty is predestined at birth, though it can be influenced through prayer and good deeds. While we are obligated to try our best, neither

hard work nor the right education is the source of wealth.

The only things really in our hands are the choices we make in spiritual matters. Unlike our financial security, our level of observance is up to us to decide, and this – more than anything else – is what we really should be focusing on and working on.

Ironically, it turns out that rain, which represents our livelihood (parnasah) has its true source in Hashem's treasure house. So if we merit to contribute our own portion of fear of Hashem to that treasury, Hashem opens that treasury and provides rain, or on our terms livelihood, to us. So it's not really our efforts but it's our level of religiosity that provides livelihood. May Hashem provide us all with our needs, Amen. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, with joy" (Debarim 28:47)

The Torah lists a long string of misfortunes that may befall the Jewish people (G-d forbid). Indeed, some of the events mentioned in these curses are very tragic and have happened to our nation throughout history. The reason given for this harsh conduct by Hashem against us is that we did not serve Hashem with happiness.

The Ari z"l gives this verse a twist and learns it in a novel fashion. The reason for these curses is that when we did not serve Hashem, we did it with happiness, which means that when we were doing sins, we did them with a good feeling rather than with regret and remorse.

This has to teach us that not only our actions count but even our attitudes while doing these actions. If we end up doing something wrong, we have to feel badly even while doing it so that it's not considered as if we did the wrong thing with happiness. One of the methods of following this advice is by doing misvot with happiness. If we feel good when doing the right thing, even if we sometimes fall and do the wrong thing it will not be with joy but with reluctance and hopefully regret. That way we will tend to increase those things which we associate with happiness, which are the misvot, and stay away from those things which we are doing without happiness! Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Now or Never

Buying new computer equipment or any electronic device is a matter of timing. When contemplating a major purchase of a product that you don't know much about, a good approach is to request help from someone familiar with the subject. This "expert" may be a computer geek, a phone

freak, an audiophile, or someone who spends hours reading about and "shopping" the product you are interested in acquiring. By asking someone who knows, you minimize your chances of making a wrong choice in the over-abundant, complex consumer market.

But asking someone who "knows" also presents a pitfall. The expert is not only aware of what is currently in the stores, but is also up to date on the newer, faster, and more feature-packed model that will hit the market very soon. The novice is then apt to decide to wait – and wait – and wait! Why? Because there is always another improvement that will soon be introduced. "Why should I buy the current model when the new one offers so much more?" is the reasoning that holds off many a final decision.

This "wait for the new one" syndrome is habit forming. A person who puts off one decision and then another is eventually transformed from a decisive person who gets things done, to one who is indecisive and accomplishes very little.

When you have the opportunity to finalize a decision and act on it, yet a reason to procrastinate arises, remember: "If not now, when?" (Pirkei Abot 1:14). A moment of decisiveness will help you become a "now" person who gets things done, rather than a "never" person who is always waiting for tomorrow, when the "new model" will come out. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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In Devarim, Perek 28, Pesukim 45-47, the Torah tells us what it is that brings down the curses that are written in Parashat Ki Tavoh. And the Pesukim say that the reasons why these curses would come upon a person and pursue a person is because the person did not serve G-d with joy. So here, you can see the importance of serving G-d and fulfilling the Mitzvot with happiness, with joy.

The Rabbi from Kutzk (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern 1787-1859) is perplexed and questions how the Torah could be so demanding to tell us that if we do not serve G-d with joy then all the curses will come upon us. So one must be on a very high level of spirituality to serve G-d with happiness. But, it is unrealistic for everyone to reach such a level. So he asks why is the Torah requiring such a great level on regular people.

The Rabbi of Kutzk answers by saying that the pasuk might mean something different. Reading with a

different punctuation, brings about an entirely different understanding. The explanation discerned says that curses are brought down to those people who are joyful when they do not serve G-d. Such an attitude can not be forgiven. It is unforgivable when one defies the Divine will with an attitude of happiness. Now, of course the Torah recognizes man's fallibility and provides him with the ability to make Teshuva (atonement) which is an opportunity to rectify his sins, however Teshuva requires remorse. Teshuva requires that somebody is truly contrite about his derelict behavior. However, if a person is defiant of the Torah will, and it does not bother him and he does it with happiness, then this is an attitude that's will bring on all the curses.

This is something that's attainable by all Jews. Although everyone has sins, we should all at least be bothered that we have committed the sins. At least we should be uncomfortable that we have these sins, and we shouldn't be happy or joyful or complacent that we did wrong. It is a crime according to the Torah if it doesn't bother us at all that we committed a sin.

This time of year, a few weeks before the high holidays, it's a good time to reflect on our bad deeds and more importantly that it should bother us in order to push us to make the proper amends through Teshuva.

Rabbi Wein

This summer, as usual, Destiny Foundation conducted its annual weekend retreat at Kibbutz Lavi in the Lower Galilee section of Israel. Being the city dweller that I currently am, I must admit that I rarely leave Jerusalem and thus do not get to see and appreciate the natural beauty and wonders of our wondrous country. But the journey to and from Jerusalem-Lavi-Jerusalem (and by different routes) afforded me the opportunity to again witness the innate natural beauty of Israel.

The Land of Israel is basically a land of desert and rocky ground. And that is what it appeared to be for many centuries of neglect and barrenness. As recently as the beginning of the twentieth century visitors always commented upon the country's desolation, poverty and drabness.

Yet today, from the northern and parts of the central Negev to the northern and eastern reaches of Israel's current borders, the country is green, forested and verdant. This was accomplished by intensive, even sacrificial human labor and the ability to distribute

water plentifully and efficiently to all parts of the country.

Developing and exploiting the country's national aquifers, drawing on the waters of Lake Kinneret and building major desalination plants have all combined to make our country a green place. Waste sewage water has been purified and supplied for agricultural purposes. It is estimated that when the two new desalination plants now nearing completion will be fully operational in 2014, an astounding seventy percent of Israel's drinking water will come from desalination methods. What a strategic blessing this will be!

God promised us a land that flows with milk and honey and all sorts of bounty and blessings. Israeli agricultural products, machinery, know-how and crop production efficiency help feed millions of people worldwide on a daily basis, as well as naturally supplying our country's basic food needs.

Jews have returned to their agricultural roots (no pun intended but compliments nevertheless will be graciously accepted) and are expert vintners and producers of olive oil, exotic cheeses and every imaginable fruit and vegetable. Flowers of every conceivable color, shadings and hue dot our country's landscape and appear regularly on our tables and in our homes.

I have no recollection that as a child I ever saw flowers in our home or for that matter in any of the homes of my friends. Even on Shavuot the synagogues of my youth boasted no flowers on their premises. That may have been because of the cost of purchasing flowers in a much less affluent society than today's Jewish world, or of the lack of an Eastern European flower friendly mentality or for other reasons. But, there is no question that flowers help dispel a feeling of drabness and ordinariness.

Israel has created itself as a major flowers producer and exporter. The flowers of Israel confirm the feeling of natural beauty that one feels when viewing the landscape of the country today. Our little country is not only booming, it is blooming as well.

Yet there is a beauty to the Land of Israel that cannot be seen physically but must somehow be experienced internally and spiritually. The Talmud poses for us the question: "Why are the hot springs of Israel located in Tiberias and not in Jerusalem?" Why does Jerusalem not contain any natural wonders – no rivers or lakes or sunsets over the sea?

The lack of any natural wonders in the Holy City is puzzling. After all, Judaism always preached the necessity of visiting Jerusalem so why was it not made to be physically wondrous and naturally inviting. The Talmud answers that Jerusalem's beauty is so rare and holy, so naturally spiritual and eternal that physical and natural phenomena would prove distracting and perhaps even demeaning to the true essence of its beauty and grandeur.

Jerusalem has to be appreciated not only with one's eyes and physical senses but also with one's soul. The same is true of the Land of Israel generally. Even though the country is outstandingly beautiful in every physical and natural sense, its true beauty exists in the soul of the beholder. There is so much history and purpose hidden in every inch of the land that to deal only with the surface and the obvious really does a disservice to the country. Perhaps that is what is meant in our daily prayers when we hope "for a new light to shine on Zion." The new light should emanate from our souls and hearts so that we may be privileged to see Israel the beautiful in all of its splendor.

Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth

Ki Tavo begins with the ceremony of bringing firstfruits to the Temple. The Mishnah (Bikkurim 3) gives a detailed account of what happened:

Those that were near to Jerusalem brought fresh figs and grapes, and those that were far away brought dried figs and raisins. Before them went the ox, its horns overlaid with gold, and with a wreath of olive leaves on its head.

The flute was played before them until they came near Jerusalem. When they were near to Jerusalem, they sent messengers before them and bedecked their first fruits. The rulers and the prefects and the treasurers of the Temple went forth to meet them. According to the honour due to them that came in, they used to go forth. All the craftsmen in Jerusalem used to rise up the for them and greet them, saying, "Brothers, men of such-and-such a place, you are welcome."

The flute was played before them until they reached the Temple Mount. When they reached the Temple Mount, even King Agrippa would take his basket on his shoulder and enter in as far as the Temple Court . . .

It was a magnificent ceremony. In historical context, however, its most significant aspect was the declaration each individual had to make:

"My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous . . . Then the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders." (Deut. 26: 5-10)

This passage is well-known. It became the text expounded as part of the Haggadah on seder night on Pesach. Its familiarity, though, should not blind us to its revolutionary character. Listening to these words, we are in the presence of one of the greatest revolutions in the history of thought.

The ancients saw the gods in nature, never more so than in thinking about the harvest and all that accompanied it. Nature does not change. Natural time is cyclical – the seasons of the year, the revolution of the planets, the cycle of birth, death and new life. When the ancients thought about the past, it was not the historical but a mythical/metaphysical/cosmological past – the primeval time-before-time when the world was formed out of the struggle between the elements.

That is precisely what did not happen in ancient Israel. It might have been otherwise. Had Judaism been a different kind of religion, the people bringing firstfruits might have recited a song of praise to G-d as the author of creation and sustainer of life. We find several such songs in the Book of Psalms:

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make music to our God on the harp.
He covers the sky with clouds;
he supplies the earth with rain
and makes grass grow on the hills.
and bread that sustains his heart. (Ps. 147: 7-8)

The significance of the firstfruits declaration is that it is not about nature but about history: a thumbnail sketch of the sequence of events from the days of the patriarchs to the exodus and then conquest of the land. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi gave the best analysis of the intellectual transformation this involved:

It was ancient Israel that first assigned a decisive significance to history and thus forged a new world-view . . . Suddenly, as it were, the crucial encounter between man and the divine shifted away from the realm of nature and the cosmos to the plane of history, conceived now in terms of divine challenge

and human response . . . Rituals and festivals in ancient Israel are themselves no longer primarily repetitions of mythic archetypes meant to annihilate historical time. Where they evoke the past, it is not the primeval but the historical past, in which the great and critical moments of Israel's history were fulfilled . . . Only in Israel and nowhere else is the injunction to remember felt as a religious imperative to an entire people. (Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory, p.8-9)

This history was not academic, the province of scholars or a literary elite. It belonged to everyone. The declaration was recited by everyone. Knowing the story of one's people was an essential part of citizenship in the community of faith. Not only that, but it was also said in the first person: "My father . . . Then the Lord brought us out of Egypt . . . He brought us to this place". It is this internalization of history that led the rabbis to say: "In each generation, every person should see himself as if he personally came out of Egypt" (Mishnah Pesachim 10: 5). This is history transformed into memory.

To be a Jew is to be part of a story that extends across forty centuries and almost every land on the face of the earth. As Isaiah Berlin put it:

All Jews who are at all conscious of their identity as Jews are steeped in history. They have longer memories, they are aware of a longer continuity as a community than any other which has survived . . . Whatever other factors may have entered into the unique amalgam which, if not always Jews themselves, at any rate the rest of the world instantly recognizes as the Jewish people, historical consciousness – sense of continuity with the past – is among the most powerful. (Against the Current, p. 252)

Despite Judaism's emphasis on the individual, it has a distinctive sense of what an individual is. We are not alone. There is no sense in Judaism of the atomic individual – the self in and for itself – we encounter in Western philosophy from Hobbes onwards. Instead, our identity is bound up horizontally with other individuals: our parents, spouse, children, neighbours, members of the community, fellow citizens, fellow Jews. We are also joined vertically to those who came before us, whose story we make our own. To be a Jew is to be a link in the chain of the generations, a character in a drama that began long before we were born and will continue long after our death.

Memory is essential to identity – so Judaism insists. We did not come from nowhere; nor does our story

end with us. We are leaves on an ancient tree, chapters in a long and still-being-written story, a letter in the scroll of the book of the people of the Book.

There is something momentous about this historical sense. It reflects the fact – itself one of the great themes of the Bible – that it takes time for human beings to learn, to grow, to rise beyond our often dysfunctional and destructive instincts, to reach moral and spiritual maturity and create a society of dignity and generosity. That is why the covenant is extended over time and why – according to the sages – the only adequate guarantors of the covenant at Mount Sinai were the children yet to be born.

That is as near as we get to immortality on earth: to know that we are the guardians of the hopes of our ancestors, and the trustees of the covenant for the sake of the future. That is what happened in Temple times when people brought their firstfruits to Jerusalem and, instead of celebrating nature, celebrated the history of their people from the days when "My father was a wandering Aramean" to the present. As Moses said in some of his last words to posterity:

Remember the days of old;
consider the generations long past.
Ask your father and he will tell you,
your elders, and they will explain to you. (Deut. 32: 7)

To be a Jew is to know that the history of our people lives on in us.

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 5774 – AND HONORS TO PURCHASE IN ADVANCE

Wednesday September 4, 2013

Ereb Rosh Hashana.

Selihot 6:15 AM - Shahrit and Hatara 7:00 AM

Candle Lighting 7:06 PM - Minha and Arbit 7:00 PM

Thursday September 5th – First Day Rosh Hashana

Shahrit 8:00 AM

Minha followed by Tashlich 6:00 PM

Friday September 6th – Second Day Rosh Hashana

Shahrit 8:00 AM

Minha 7:00 PM followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Arbit

Saturday September 6th – Shabbat Teshuba Perasha “Ha’Azinu”

Shahrit 9:00 AM

Minha 6:15 followed by Seudah Shelishi and a class

Arbit 7:50 – Havdalah and Shabbat Ends at 8:00

“Hatara”- the nullifying of one’s vows and oaths for the past year will be recited after Arbit.

All men and women are urged to attend.

ASERET YEMEY TESHUBAH

Sunday September 7th – Fast of Gedalyah

Fast Begins 5:05 AM

Selihot 7:15 AM - Shahrit 8:00 AM

Minha with Sefer Torah 6:45 PM

Arbit 7:20 PM - Fast ends 7:40 PM

DAILY

Selihot 6:15 AM Shahrit 7:00

YOM KIPPUR

Friday September 13 – Ereb Yom Kippur

Selihot 6:00 AM / Shahrit 7:00 AM

Minha (with Tefillin) 2:00 PM

Yom Kippur Candle Lighting 6:50 PM

Fast Begins 6:50 PM

Kal Nidre Services followed by Arbit 6:55 PM

Saturday September 14 – Yom Kippur

Shahrit 8:00 AM / Musaf 12:30 PM / Minha 4:15 PM

Ne’ilah Services 6:15 PM / Arbit 7:40 PM

Prayer Times are approximate and may change

Fast Ends - Habdala 7:50 PM

Birkat Halebana – Blessing on the Moon

SELECTED HONORS TO PURCHASE IN ADVANCE

Please help us by reserving an honor

To date all honors have been purchased on behalf of others

Even if you will not be with us, please purchase for a friend

We would love to presell Rosh Hashana this year

Parnasa of Eve of Rosh Hashana Day – The prayer for financial success - \$2600

1st Day Rosh Hashana

Opening the Ark on Rosh Hashana - \$1800

Carrying The Torah \$ 1500

Carrying The Second Torah \$ 1300

Carry the Haftara Case Bought \$500

Rimonim for all the Torah's \$300

Raise the Torah Hagbah \$ 800

Gelila Wrap the Torah \$ 300

Mashlim with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one \$ 1500

Haftara with Kaddish \$ 1800

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Day \$2600

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Mincha \$ 1800

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana evening service \$1800

2nd Day Rosh Hashana

Opening the Ark on Rosh Hashana - \$ 1800

Carrying The Torah \$ 1500

Carrying The Second Torah \$ 1300

Carry the Haftara Case Bought \$500

Rimonim for all the Torah's \$300

Raise the Torah Hagbah \$ 800

Gelila Wrap the Torah \$ 300

Mashlim with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one \$ 1500

Haftara with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one \$ 1500

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Day – The prayer for financial success \$2600

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Mincha – The prayer for financial success \$1800

Yom Kippur – Selected Honors

Open the Ark for Kal Nidre – \$1800

Sefer Kal Nidre \$5200

Each of the additional Torahs brought out with Sefer Kal Nidre 2-12 @ \$ 1000 ea

All the Rimonim for all the Torahs \$ 1000

Parnasa of evening service – \$2600

Opening the Ark on Yom Kippur - \$ 1800

Carrying The Torah \$ 1500

Carrying The Second Torah \$ 1300

Carry the Haftara Case \$500

Rimonim for all the Torah's \$500

Raise the Torah Hagbah \$ 800

Gelila Wrap the Torah \$ 300

Mashlim with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one \$ 1500

Haftara Yom Kippur Day \$1800

Parnasa Yom Kippur 2600

Opening the Ark Mincha on Yom Kippur - \$ 1800

Carrying The Torah \$ 1500

Carry the Haftara Case \$500

Rimonim for all the Torah's \$200

Raise the Torah Hagbah \$ 400

Gelila Wrap the Torah \$ 200

Maftir Yona 2600

Parnasa Yom Kippor Mincha \$ 1800

Opening Ark Neila –\$3000

Congregation Sha'ar HaShamayim—Benai Asher—In memory of Rabbi Asher Abittan Z"SL

The Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach, Inc.

P.O. Box 567 · Long Beach, New York 11561 · (516) 431-3847

Established in 1943

Located at 161 Lafayette Boulevard at the Corner of West Penn

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August 21, 2013 — 17 Elul 5773

Dear Members and Friends:

Rosh Hashana 5774 begins two weeks from tonight. We begin by thanking all for everything you have done to help us do everything we have done. Hurricane Sandy made this the most challenging year financially that we have known, yet with the help of so many of you, we took the tragedy of Sandy and made it an opportunity to do Chesed and help those around us. All of us were affected and we still are affected. But we must do our best now to turn our efforts towards supporting our Synagogue.

We are preparing for the high holidays, which is also our time of membership renewal. Last year we again had at times Baruch Hashem a full house with standing room only. We need a more accurate idea of who will be with us to avoid seating problems. We would also like to set aside additional seats for unmarried children under 22 of family members this year and reduced the cost from \$175 to \$101. Please have your children over 22 purchase single memberships.

We look forward to a beautiful holiday with Rabbi Meyer Abittan, Rabbi Chaim Abittan, Dr Abie Abittan and Mr. Shaya Abittan who will be joined by Rabbi Colish . Rosh Hashana begins at Sundown on Wednesday, September 4th. Yom Kippur begins Friday evening September 13th.

Our current dues are noted below and have been set to partially cover expenses and budget needs. Most Synagogues charge much higher dues—typically three to four times what we charge. We always appreciate anything extra you can place in your envelope. This year has been particularly difficult for many families. Your support helps to ensure that no one in our synagogue family will be turned away because of financial hardship. Our current schedule of membership dues is as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Membership Type and Description. Includes Family Membership (\$575), Single Membership (\$375), Single Child of a Member (\$101), and Non-member Seat (\$475).

You should have received a current statement which includes membership dated August 1. If you have any questions, please speak with Ely Altarac at (516) 432-8197. Please send in the balances and your dues. On behalf of the Officers, the Trustees and the Sisterhood, we wish to thank all of you who have generously contributed to supporting our Synagogue over the past years. In so doing, we each take our places behind the founders of our congregation, following in their footsteps and merit. May the coming year be filled with blessings, health, happiness and prosperity for all of us.

Tisku LeShanim Rabot VeTobot

Please reserve _____ seats in the men's section of the synagogue and _____ seats in the women's section of the synagogue for us for the 5774 High Holy Day services. Enclosed please find our check for membership dues [check below]

Form with fields for Family Membership (\$575), Single Membership (\$375), Single Dependant Child (\$101), Non-Member Seat (\$475), and Name: _____ Please Print

(Please send this form or your statement with payment to the Congregation at P.O. Box 567 Long Beach, New York 11561)