

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

SHOFTIM

AUGUST 25, 2012

7 ELUL 5772

DEDICATIONS : In memory of Florence Bibi Deutsch – Farha Bat Esther
 Our Condolences to my cousins, Randy and Jeffrey, ChiChi Adjmi and Shelly Antebi
 To my dad, Joe Bibi and his siblings: Moe, Ikey, and Jack, Evelyn Tawil, Charlotte Zeitunie, and Rita Pollisky
 The family is sitting at: 10 Roosevelt Ave. Deal, NJ 07724 Until the morning of August 30.

**And in memory of Eli Martin Kaplan (Eliyahu Mordechai Hacoen), a"h,
 beloved father of our frineds Wendy Friend and Elana Oved**

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Editors Notes

I ran into some people last night and they asked when the newsletter is going out. Although it was my intent to get it out on Thursday morning – having worked on it Wednesday night, things don't always go as planned. As of this morning I thought we would skip this week – I haven't skipped in quite a while, but my daughter Mikhayla in Israel told me that even if people across the Atlantic get it after Shabbat starts, it still makes good reading on Saturday night. So here goes with my apologies in advance.

Very early Thursday morning, my aunt Florence – my dad's sister – passed away. The misvah as we call a funeral took place Thursday morning in Deal. Along with Rabbi Eli Mansour, I was asked to speak. Afterwards, I was asked for my notes. We began on Monday the custom of saying Selichot. The central

prayer in the Selichot is the Yag Midot (Those on the South Shore of Long Island are invited to join us the next three Tuesday nights at 9PM as we explore the different aspects of this prayer from carious views). The Yag Midot – or the 13 attributes – were taught to Moses by Hashem following the incident of the Golden Calf. G-d – so to say – wrapped himself in a Talet and showed Moshe how the Chazan and the congregation should say this tefilah – this prayer and with these words, “kel rachum vechanun ...”, they would be forgiven.

Everyone asks how. Are these words magical? Is saying them enough to change things? And the rabbis tell us it's not so simple. We call Hashem merciful and kind, filled with grace, forgiving and benevolent. And we beg that he looks at us through these eyes. But to truly make the words work, we must emulate Hashem and we must be as we want Hashem to be. We must be merciful and kind, filled with grace, forgiving and benevolent.

Rabbi Abittan z'sl taught that Hashem's behavior toward us is reflective of our behavior towards others. If we act with kindness towards others, G-d acts with kindness towards us.

My aunt Flo, every day of her life, lived it with these qualities. She lived each day as a kind, gracious, benevolent, merciful,

forgiving, caring and benevolent human being. Whatever she could do for others, she did.

The rabbi often repeated that children don't do what they are told, they do what they see. We may think we can dictate, but in the end children duplicate what they saw their parents do. And we see this in my cousins, Randy, Jeffrey, Elaine and Shelly – all who did and do what she did. I have rarely seen a family so devoted to Chesed – real acts of kindness. I could tell stories, we could write books of the things they have done.

We live in world where too many of us simply pay lip service. “Anything I can do?”, “Let me know if you need something”, “Call me if I can help”. Too many of us use these words, but do we really mean it? When we get the call at 2AM, how will we respond?

The Rabbi would tell the following to elaborate. At a party meeting, a Communist party officer is drilling a local worker. He asks him: “Comrade, if you had two houses, would you give one to the Communist Party?”

The worker responds “Yes, definitely, comrade, I would give one of my houses to the party!”

Then he asks “Comrade, if you had two cars, would you give one to the party?” Again, the worker says, “Yes, I would give one of my cars to the party!”

Finally, the officer asks, "If you had two shirts, would you give one to the party?"

There is no response.

The officer asks again in a louder voice, "If you had two shirts, would you give one to the party?"

Finally with hesitation the worker responds, no?

So the officer asks "You would give a house, you would give a car, but you won't give one of your shirts to the party? Why not?"

The worker says: "Because I HAVE two shirts!"

When it comes to my cousins though, if they only had one shirt and you needed it. They would take it off their backs to give it to one in need. One shirt ... and they would give it to you. And all of you here today now this is true. I heard from someone here today that one of my cousins literally on an occasion took their own shirt off and giving it to them. They hold back nothing. And where did they learn this? From their mother, the nifeteret Farha bat Esther.

The Sefer Chovot HaLevavot, Duties of the Heart – in the chapter on Faith and Trust tells us that a method in understanding how much Hashem cares for us is to look at the relationship between a child and a mother. A mother is always there, she nourishes, she defends, she cares, she loves and she protects her child. The child need not ask for anything, a mother's care is automatic. All the more so with G-d to us our children.

From our perspective, my aunt had a very difficult life. As Rabbi Mansour mentioned, she was widowed at the young age of 36

with four small children forced to go to work and become in essence father and mother to them. She fought and overcame cancer and in recent years she lost her sight. Yet she had this faith and trust. She always had a smile, a positive word and she never complained.

Countless jokes are told of the pair of stereotypical Jewish grandmothers each vying to complain to the other over whose life has more troubles. Oy this and Oy that! Yet Aunt Flo was not stereotypical in any sense of the word. She saw life through the paradigm of goodness.

Even her troubles were received with love.

The Talmud in Berachot states that "one must bless Hashem for bad in the same way that he blesses Hashem for good". We can try to accept that which comes our way... but how can we bless for bad the same way that we bless for good!? This question was asked by Reb Shmelke of Nicklesburg to the Maggid of Mezrich,

The Maggid replied to him "If you wish to find the answer to your question, go to the Bet Midrash and there you will find my student, Reb Zushia. From him you will learn the meaning of this teaching."

Reb Zushia, it was known, was a man terribly beset with every kind of trouble and affliction. He was poverty stricken and chronically ill. When Reb Shmelke asked Reb Zushia how we can bless Hashem for bad things the same way we bless Him for good, he replied "I can't understand why the Rebbe should have sent you too me. Only someone who has had to endure hardship and affliction could possibly give you an answer, and, Baruch Hashem,

everything in my life is good! How am I supposed to teach you how a person can accept bad things with happiness, with simcha?"

This is a story about perspective and every Rabbi has told it, but the truth is, we don't need to go back centuries to Rav Zushia for the answer, for this is the answer my aunt Flo not only gave, it's the answer she lived.

When my cousin told her mother how badly she felt having seen her mother go through such trials and tribulations in her life, my aunt responded, "What are you talking about? I've had the most blessed and beautiful life. I've had the gift of wonderful children, amazing grandchildren and a loving and supportive family."

No matter what happened, she was always thankful; she never complained!

The last few years, she lived without her sight. But in fact she was able through her other senses to see as well as the rest of us. When we visited her, she would take our hands, hear our voices and speak with us knowing exactly who we were. She would accompany her daughter Shelly to her store and my sister told me people would come to the store, sometimes, not to shop, but to see and hear from aunt Flo. My sister told me how when one walked in, Flo would tell you how beautiful you looked. She would talk to people and make them feel good. How many of us have this quality to always bring joy to others?

She was a flame that could light other people's flames knowing it would never diminish her and her ability to give that flame to anyone who needed it.

The Talmud tells us that someone ill suffering from yisurim, especially sitting in the hospital has the right to complain. Yet even there when anyone came to visit, one never heard a complaint. One only hears blessings and praise. Not only didn't she complain, it was always about you. She worried and cared about you, about others, even about your pets. She was a living model of kindness.

The rabbis tell us that when we get to Shamayim, the first question asked is, "were you honest in business"? All of us involved in any form of sales whether selling a product or ourselves, realize that there's always the fine line between a good salesman and a fib. Sometimes under the pressure of the moment we resort into what we call justified exaggeration – but usually its plain old lying. My cousin Ruby Jack who worked with her for years in Malsons told me that my aunt Flo had the unique quality of being a great salesperson and meticulously honest. It's so difficult to be both, yet she was both.

Let me close with this. We approach Rosh Hashana and the rabbis tell us that Hashem judges both the living and the dead each year. Now we can all understand how one could judge the living year after year for their actions in that year. But after one passes, one is judged for their lifetime of deeds. Why continual judgment? What changes?

And we learn that we are judged in the future based on the future results of our present actions. We call this, the cause and effect factor. What future effect will my present actions cause?

When we come to a house of mourning, we are asked to say tefilot, say tehilim, give sedakah,

make berachot, all le-iluy to raise up the soul of the departed. Our actions, in essence, caused by the departed bring a raising up of that departed soul.

Among the goyim, many people send flowers after one has departed. Among some Jews, people send food. We often see the relatives issue a statement, in lieu of flowers, please make a contribution to ... Let me suggest this, In lieu of flowers, in lieu of food (which aside from the first meal we should not send as those in mourning should not be sent gifts), let each of us in this month of Elul, make a commitment to make one change, one small change for the better in memory of the departed.

This should be especially so for the children, grandchildren, siblings, nephews and nieces. When we come to do something we shouldn't, let us ask what would Aunt Flo think? When we are hesitant in doing something positive, let us ask what would Aunt Flo do?

In Shelly's store there is a special chair that aunt Flo sat in. Shelly told her mother that no one would be allowed to sit there, but Flo said that everyone should sit there and not to fear as her presence would always be with them.

How does one maintain a connection with those that leave this world? By doing what they would have wanted us to do, by living the life they lived as an example. As long as we do that, we keep a part of them that's within us alive forever.

Tehi Nafsha Serurah BeSrur
HaChayim

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

The rights of the terrorist.

The PC Insanity Surrounding the Nidal Hasan Trial

By Arnold Ahlert

<http://www.JewishWorldReview.com> | One could be forgiven for thinking that political correctness is only one step away from complete insanity. Last Friday, a military appeals court halted the murder case against Maj. Nidal Hasan indefinitely. Why? Because Hasan refuses to shave a beard he grew beginning in June to express his allegiance to Islamo-fascism. According to CNN, U.S. Army Col. Gregory Gross, the military judge presiding over the case, "had previously held that Hassan's beard disrupts the court proceedings and held him in contempt of court five times, the Army said in a news release." The case is on hold in order to "sort out issues" surrounding the judge's threat to have Hasan forcibly shaved.

Let me tell what this case is not about. It's not about trying an alleged mass murderer in a timely manner, for killing 13 people and wounding another 32. We already know that the PC-infested swamp of the Obama administration's Defense Department has referred to this atrocity as "workplace violence," as opposed to the Islamic terrorist attack it truly was. That in and of itself is a flirtation with insanity, one that allows for such a definition despite the reality that Hasan was shouting Allahu Akhbar! as he executed one person after another.

Equally insane was what Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey was apparently most concerned about shortly after the shooting. After noting that "what happened

at Fort Hood was a tragedy," Casey contended "it would be an even greater tragedy if our diversity becomes a casualty here." Got that? Compare the tragedy of 13 people killed and 32 wounded against the potential tragedy of a less diverse military, and diversity wins. Best news here? Casey has retired.

Unfortunately, Col. Gregory Gross has not. And he is apparently going to let Hasan's beard become a far bigger issue than it has to be. Is the beard a violation of Army regulations? Absolutely. But so is mass murder and attempted mass murder. Gross's fallback position is that Hasan's beard is a disruption and he wants to avoid any such disruptions during the trial. Closing the trial to anyone, including the media, not directly involved in the case?

Apparently not part of the PC playbook. Gross is hardly alone in the swamp. Prosecutors claim Hasan grew the beard so trial witnesses would have a hard time identifying him--even as they have said they doubt religion is his motive, because he was clean-shaven at the time of the shootings. That would be clean-shaven and shouting Allahu Akhbar, yet the prosecutors have chosen to ignore this inconvenient reality.

Crazier still? The defense attorneys have said Hasan won't shave because the beard represents an expression of his faith, which the prosecuting attorneys insist wasn't part of his motive. "He does not wish to die without a beard as he believes not having a beard is a sin," one of Hasan's attorneys wrote in his appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. Because of the beard issue, that's where this case is headed: an

appeals court will determine if Hasan can be forcibly shaved.

Now let me tell what this case is about. It's about delay, delay, delay, until we are past the election in November. It's about an Obama administration that doesn't want any timely reminders being put in front of an American public about its willingness to view Islamic terrorism through a PC lens so thick that reality becomes the first casualty. The last thing this president needs during the next few months is a high profile trial during which all of the PC-inspired blindness that allowed Hasan to maintain his commission, even as he was becoming more and more radicalized, to be exposed. That includes the numerous email exchanges between Hasan and radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki intercepted by American intelligence agencies, who then proceeded to do nothing. That would be the same Anwar al-Awlaki who was executed by a predator drone, despite the fact that he was an American citizen, because the Obama administration concluded his Islamo-fascist worldview represented a mortal threat to our nation.

In short, there is absolutely nothing about trying Nidal Hasan that accrues to the interest of this president or his administration--including that fact that Obama managed to wait almost two minutes during the middle of a press conference before mentioning the shooting. Higher on his priority list? A "shout out" to audience members who attended the Tribal Nations Conference hosted by the Interior Department, and a pitch about the need to pass Obamacare.

It doesn't get any more PC--or ideologically bankrupt--than that.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st and 2nd Aliyot: Moshe details the most important characteristics of a Judge: the ability to remain objective and the strength to refuse bribery. The singular focus of the Shofet must be to carry out the will of G-d as detailed in the Halacha. Nothing must deter him in carrying out his mission of justice.

Idolrous practices must be eradicated and punished. Idol worship represents the greatest perversion of justice by replacing divine justice with human failings and desires.

The Sanhedrin is our direct link with divine intent, and as stated in Pasuk 17:11, we view the rulings and interpretations of the Supreme Court as G-dly directives.

Our Monarch must be selected for his unyielding commitment to G-d, Torah, and the people. This is why he must write his own Sefer Torah and carry it with him at all times. He must be first and foremost a Shofet, a Judge.

3rd and 4th Aliyot: Moshe again addressed the place of the tribe of Levi, reemphasizing the care and attention due to them by the rest of the nation. They are our teachers. Without their instruction we will neither understand or be able to properly apply justice.

5th Aliya: For justice to exist, it must be accepted as a divine ruling. Only G-d's justice can be trusted to take into account all variables and possibilities. Moshe instructed his nation regarding the true Navi - prophet and the false prophet. No other forms of divination can be used to ascertain G-d's justice, and all false prophets and methods of divination must be destroyed. The

value of human life is determined by our system of justice, and Moshe reviewed the laws of the unintentional killing in contrast with the intentional murder.

6th, and 7th Aliyot: The end of Parshas Shoftim discusses both proper and false witnesses, as well as the Torah's approach to warfare. It may be that the judicial quality of a nation can be ultimately assessed by its behavior during war, more so than during times of peace.

The Parsha concludes with the unique mitzvah of the Eglah Arufa and the process through which the community takes responsibility for the unsolved murders. This ceremony, which reflects the priceless value of life, might be the most eloquent expression of G-d's judicial system.

G-d, speaking through

Yishayuhu 51:12 -52:12 the Navi, contrasts the situation of Israel while in exile to the way things will be at the time of Her redemption. In many ways it continues the Parsha's theme of justice. "...Behold I took from you the cup of weakness... and I will place it into the hand of those who cause you to wander..." (51:22-23) Ultimately, Israel will be returned to the Land and our oppressors will be punished.

In the last section of the Haftorah (52:7-9) the Navi prophesies the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi who will herald the arrival of Mashiach and the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. "How beautiful are the feet of the herald on the mountains announcing peace, heralding good tidings, announcing salvation..."

Our soon to be announced redemption is the greatest consolation that G-d could offer his children.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"You shall be wholesome [in your faith] in Hashem." (Debarim 18:13)

What does it mean to have wholesome faith in Hashem? Rashi explains: Walk with Him with wholeheartedness, trust in what He has in store for you. Do not delve into the future, but rather whatever comes upon you accept with wholeheartedness, and then you will be with Him, and of His portion. Rashi tells us at first that we should have complete faith and trust in Hashem. But, then he finalizes his words by saying you will be with Him. What does that mean? Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi explains that Rashi (based on the Sieri) is telling us that there is a misvah and there is a reward. One who doesn't try to find out the future and trusts Hashem will be rewarded in a way that Hashem will be with that person and help him. Perhaps even in extraordinary ways, as the next true story relates (by Rabbi Ephraim Nisenbaum).

There was a pious couple who lived in a little village in Lithuania with their ten children. While pregnant with one of the younger children, the woman's doctor perceived a serious problem with the baby and recommended she terminate the pregnancy.

The woman's faith in Hashem was strong and she refused to listen to the doctors. Eventually she bore a healthy baby boy.

During the Holocaust, eight of the children perished, and only one daughter and a son survived. The son, who would carry on the family's name, was the same child the mother refused to abort.

The child grew to become Rav Elazar Shach, one of the leading Torah authorities in our

generation. Rav Shach would often comment that a person must always maintain faith in Hashem and leave the results to Him. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Justice, justice shall you pursue." (Debarim 16:20)

We know that every word in the Torah is important, and teaches us a lesson. If so, why does the Torah repeat the word "sedek" - justice? Isn't it sufficient to say 'pursue justice'?"

One of the commentaries learned from here a very important lesson. We have to read the pasuk as if it says "pursue justice with justice." That means that it's not enough to have the ultimate goal of justice. We must achieve these goals using justifiable means. The ends do not justify the means. Just like it is obvious to all that we cannot steal money and "kosher" it by giving it to charity, so too with other misvot. When we are involved in our prayers in shul, we shouldn't be disturbing others by praying too loudly or talking to our friends. We shouldn't be promoting peace with some people by hurting others in the process. In every area of serving G-d we would do well to learn the lesson: Pursue justice using means of justice. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Knock on the Door King Shelomo, in Shir Hashirim, describes a man knocking on the door of his beloved as she sleeps in her bed, begging her to open the door for him because his head "is filled with dew" (5:2). This description symbolizes the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. God seeks to have a close relationship with us like a young man courting a young woman. And He goes so far as to "knock on our door,"

waking us up and inspiring us to return to Him.

But why does Shir Hashirim describe God as “filled with dew”? What is the significance of dew in the context of Hashem coming to inspire us and bring us back?

An important difference exists between rain and dew. Rain is formed by the evaporation of water on the earth. The vapor rises to the heavens and then returns to the earth in the form of rain; in other words, rain actually originates from the earth. As such, rain is symbolic of the phenomenon described in the Zohar as “Hit’oreruta De’le’tata” – the awakening from down below. When we take the initiative of performing Misvot, we “awaken” blessing from the heavens. Our initiative is like the water’s evaporation, as our good deeds ascend to the heavens and then return to us in the form of divine blessing. Dew, by contrast, originates from the heavens, not from the earth. And thus dew symbolizes “Hit’oreruta De’le’ela,” the inspiration initiated from above. Sometimes, when we “sleep,” when we feel uninspired and are lax in our Torah observance, when we become too preoccupied with the daily rigors of life to give time and attention to God, He comes and knocks on our door. He comes to wake us up from our lethargy and draw us closer to Him. This could be in the form of a Torah class that we are invited to attend, an insight that we happen to hear, or some event, conversation or thought that opens our minds and reminds us of our religious duties. This is “dew,” the inspiration that originates from the heavens, from God, and not from us.

And this is the phenomenon described in Shir Hashirim. While we are “sleeping,” when we are uninterested in or distracted from Torah, God comes to knock on

our door. “My head is filled with dew” – He comes out of His own initiative, without our being deserving of it. In Shir Hashirim, God comes to us, while we sleep, and tries to wake us up.

The numerical value of the Hebrew word “Tal” (dew) is 39, which corresponds to the thirty-nine days from Rosh Hodesh Elul through Yom Kippur (29 days of Elul, and the first ten days of Tishri). This is the period of “dew,” when God comes to “wake us up” from our spiritual slumber.

How fortunate we are that God comes to bring us back. A king or government gives its citizens one chance, maybe two chances, but not much more than that. God, however, gives us as many chances as we need. Just as dew descends from the heavens each and every night, without exception, similarly, God is willing to come and inspire us regardless of our past, regardless of how many times we have sinned and how many mistakes we have made.

Imagine the Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel calls us on the phone to ask if he could stay with us for Shabbat. Would we refuse the invitation? Would we tell him, “Sorry, I’m busy that weekend” or “I don’t have time for guests”? Of course not; we would never refuse such a great honor. During Elul, God Himself is making this phone call. He wants to enter our lives and our souls. How can we turn Him away? Even if now we are “asleep,” shouldn’t we “wake up” and let Him in?

May we all hear the Elul “knock,” and may we all answer the door. This is a precious opportunity that none of us can afford to forfeit. Let us let God into our lives, and we will then enjoy His unlimited blessings and be granted a year of health, happiness and success, Amen.

Rabbi Wein

This week’s parsha emphasizes, albeit in an indirect fashion, the litigious nature of human society and the requirement for the appointment of judges to decide disputes and for police to enforce those decisions. A perfect world needs no judges or courts, police or bailiffs. Our very imperfect world cannot reasonably hope to function and exist in their absence. Law and order are the requirements for a commercially and civilly successful society.

As such, judges and courts are the necessary check to prevent chaos and anarchy. But the Torah points out that there must always be necessary restraint on the powers of the courts and the police as well. And that check to judicial power is called justice and righteousness, as these concepts are defined and detailed by the Torah law and its traditions.

There is a special burden imposed by the Torah upon the judicial process, to somehow achieve not simply legally correct decisions, but a broader obligation to accomplish a sense of righteousness and justice in its general society. And the courts are bidden to be pursuers of justice and righteousness and not to satisfy themselves with seemingly correct legal conclusions, which narrowly construed, unfortunately can many times somehow lead to injustice and tragedy.

There are many examples in the history of the Jewish people where judicial and even rabbinic decisions, seemingly legally correct, led to terrible disputes and tragedies simply because the general public did not feel that justice was done in the matter. Without the palpable presence of justice and righteousness being present in our court system, we

become a very divisive and spiritually sterile society.

Jewish tradition encourages compromise over hard and fast judicial decision. In fact, many great Jewish figures of the past and present, though personally involved in the world and practice of commerce, have prided themselves as never having been involved in any dispute that was submitted to a court of law or to a rabbinic tribunal.

The emotional and monetary costs of pursuing a matter of contention in a judicial manner are telling and long lasting. This is especially true when a family or partnership dispute is involved. Those scars are never completely healed. When I attended law school many decades ago we were taught to abide by an adage attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "A poor settlement is still better than a good lawsuit."

Disputes disturb our sense of ego and therefore we feel that we must prevail, sometimes at enormous personal cost. We become captivated by the sense of our legal rights and lose sight that justice, righteousness and inner harmony can be better served by realizing that less is more and that legal victories are many times more pyrrhic than real. The prophet Yeshayahu calls to those that "pursue righteousness and justice" for they are the ones who truly seek "to find Godliness in their lives."

We need judges, courts, and police in all human societies. Nevertheless, the wise person will regard them as matters of last resort and not as the prime solution to the frictions and problems of everyday life.

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

Greatness is Humility

There is a fascinating detail in the passage about the king in this week's parsha. The text says that "When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he must write for himself a copy of this Torah on a scroll before the levitical priests" (Deut. 17: 18). He must "read it all the days of his life" so that he will be God-fearing and never break Torah law. But there is another reason also: so that he will "not begin to feel superior to his brethren" (Kaplan translation), "so that his heart be not haughty over his brothers" (Robert Alter). The king had to have humility. The highest in the land should not feel himself to be the highest in the land.

This is hugely significant in terms of the Jewish understanding of political leadership. There are other commands directed to the king. He must not accumulate horses so as not to establish trading links with Egypt. He should not have too many wives for "they will lead his heart astray." He should not accumulate wealth. These were all standing temptations to a king. As we know and as the sages pointed out, it was these three prohibitions that Solomon, wisest of men, broke, marking the beginning of the long slow slide into corruption that marked much of the history of the monarchy in ancient Israel. It led, after his death, to the division of the kingdom.

But these were symptoms, not the cause. The cause was the feeling on the part of the king that, since he is above the people he is above the law. As the rabbis said (Sanhedrin 21b), Solomon

justified his breach of these prohibitions by saying: the only reason that a king may not accumulate wives is that they will lead his heart astray, so I will marry many wives and not let my heart be led astray. And since the only reason not to have many horses is not to establish links with Egypt, I will have many horses but not do business with Egypt. In both cases he fell into the trap of which the Torah had warned. Solomon's wives did lead his heart astray (1 Kings 11: 3), and his horses were imported from Egypt (1 Kings 10: 28-29). The arrogance of power is its downfall. Hubris leads to nemesis.

Hence the Torah's insistence on humility, not as a mere nicety, a good thing to have, but as essential to the role. The king was to be treated with the highest honour. In Jewish law, only a king may not renounce the honour due to his role. A parent may do so, so may a rav, so may even a nasi, but not a king (Kiddushin 32a-b). Yet there is to be a complete contrast between the external trappings of the king and his inward emotions. Maimonides is eloquent on the subject:

Just as the Torah grants him [the king] great honour and obliges everyone to revere him, so it commands him to be lowly and empty at heart, as it says: 'My heart is empty within me' (Ps. 109:22). Nor should he treat Israel with overbearing haughtiness, for it says, "so that his heart be not haughty over his brothers" (Deut. 17: 20). He should be gracious and merciful to the small and the great, involving himself in their good and welfare. He should protect the honour of even the humblest of men. When he speaks to the people as a community, he should speak

gently, as it says, "Listen my brothers and my people...." (1 Chronicles 28:2), and similarly, "If today you will be a servant to these people..." (1 Kings 12:7). He should always conduct himself with great humility. There was none greater than Moses, our teacher. Yet he said: "What are we? Your complaints are not against us" (Ex. 16:8). He should bear the nation's difficulties, burdens, complaints and anger as a nurse carries an infant. (Maimonides, Laws of Kings 2: 6)

The model is Moses, described in the Torah as "very humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth" (Num. 12: 3). "Humble" here does not mean diffident, meek, self-abasing, timid, bashful, demure or lacking in self-confidence. Moses was none of these. It means honouring others and regarding them as important, no less important than you are. It does not mean holding yourself low; it means holding other people high. It means roughly what Ben Zoma meant when he said (Avot 4: 1), "Who is honoured? One who honours others." This led to one of the great rabbinic teachings, contained in the siddur and said on Motsei Shabbat:

Rabbi Jochanan said, Wherever you find the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, there you find His humility. This is written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the Writings. It is written in the Torah: "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awe-inspiring God, who shows no favoritism and accepts no bribe." Immediately afterwards it is written, "He upholds the cause of the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing" ... (Megillah 31a)

God cares for all regardless of rank, and so must we, even a king, especially a king. Greatness is humility.

In the context of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth the Second, there is a story worth telling. It happened in St James Palace on 27 January 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Punctuality, said Louis XVIII of France, is the politeness of kings. Royalty arrives on time and leaves on time. So it is with the Queen, but not on this occasion. When the time came for her to leave, she stayed. And stayed. One of her attendants said he had never known her to linger so long after her scheduled departure time.

She was meeting a group of Holocaust survivors. She gave each survivor – it was a large group – her focussed, unhurried attention. She stood with each until they had finished telling their personal story. One after another, the survivors were coming to me in a kind of trance, saying, "Sixty years ago I did not know whether I would be alive tomorrow, and here I am today talking to the Queen." It brought a kind of blessed closure into deeply lacerated lives. Sixty years earlier they had been treated, in Germany, Austria, Poland, in fact in most of Europe, as subhuman, yet now the Queen was treating them as if each were a visiting Head of State. That was humility: not holding yourself low but holding others high. And where you find humility, there you find greatness.

It is a lesson for each of us. R. Shlomo of Karlin said, Der grester yester hora is az mir fargest az mi is ein ben melekh, "The greatest source of sin is to forget we are children of the king." We say Avinu malkenu, "Our father, our

king." It follows that we are all members of a royal family and must act as if we are. And the mark of royalty is humility.

The real honour is not the honour we receive but the honour we give.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

Ten Aspects of Shabbat

1. Hashem created the world from nothing and is in full control.

Everything is in the world because He wishes it to be.

2. A double portion of Mann (food from Heaven) fell for Shabbat (Bitachon).

The 2 halot that we have at every Shabbat meal to remind us that the Jew

who is loyal to Hashem's mitzvoth will not lose out by keeping them.

The Mann is the demonstration of Bitachon, showing that Hashem is in control.

3. Shabbat is the time to give thanks to Hashem.

We sing on the Shabbat day, "Tov Lehodot laShem." It is Good to give thanks to Hashem.

4. "Zecher leyetzat Mitzrayim" "to remind us of the Exodus from Egypt"

Shabbat commemorates the creation of Am Yisrael.

"Beni uben Benei Yisrael ot hi le'olam" Shabbat is a sign of a covenant between Hashem and us.

Think: who are you? – a goy kadosh, a holy nation chosen by Hashem

5. "Be'Shabbat nitenah Torah le'Yisrael", The Torah was given on Shabbat.

Shabbat is the glorious opportunity to accomplish something in the knowledge of the great gift

Hashem gave us-The Torah.

6. Shabbat is "Me'en Olam Haba", A preparation and a picture of Olam Haba which will strengthen our

Emunah.

As you sit at your Shabbat table enjoying the delicacies of Shabbat, think about Olam Haba.

7. Hashem rested on Shabbat, "Ki bo shabat vayinafash".

And He wants that your donkey and ox shall rest.

Hashem rested, and He wants us to do the same, so that we should emulate Him.

Shabbat teaches us that Hashem desires Kindliness.

8. Oneg Shabbat – "Anyone who causes joy to himself on Shabbat, he is going to get an estate in Olam Haba that has no bounds."

Shabbat is a day to enjoy in order to know how great is Hashem's kindness to us.

And so, we have to concentrate on enjoying Shabbat in every way.

9. "The words of the Hachamim are more beloved to Hashem than the wine of the Torah itself."

The Sages added a number of decrees to our shemirat Shabbat.

Keeping 'takanot' Hachamim shows real Yirat Shamyim by demonstrating that we keep the fences built around His laws.

!0. "Hashem blessed the Sabbath day"

The Jew has vacation with pay, one sixth of his life. Includes Shabbat & Holidays.

We can use this time to be with our families, talk to our children, associate with relatives

& friends, attend the synagogue for prayers and learning Torah and to hear the Rabbi speak.

11. To gain "Da'at". The most important thing in life is to gain True Knowledge.

EYE ON THE FUTURE

The tourists meandered through the winding streets of the open-air bazaar, eyeing the gaudy displays, fingering the exotic trinkets, happily searching for bargain souvenirs.

At the end of a narrow street they spied a doorway that read: "Psychic – Palms Read – Your Future Revealed."

"Come on, let's give it a try!" begged the woman, tugging at her reluctant husband's sleeve.

"Don't be silly," retorted the man, pulling away from his wife's grip. "Places like this are for fools who want to throw away their money. No one can predict the future!"

It is true that the age of prophecy has long since passed, and people can no longer predict the future with any certainty. However, we human beings have the unique ability to determine, with a reasonable degree of accuracy, the consequences of our actions.

In Abot (2:9), it is mentioned that the great Sage, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai, asked his students to determine what is the best type of attitude or the best character trait, that one can have. The answer of Rabbi Shimon is interesting: One who considers the future!

Sometimes our first reaction is the best choice, and sometimes it is the worst. Sometimes a short-term gain is worth the long-term cost, and at other times it is not. Delaying instant gratification may yield great happiness in the future, while suffering short-term pain may yield pleasure and comfort later on. The crucial step is to weigh the possibilities before acting in order to "play the odds" for the best result.

We may not be able to use prophecy to foretell the future, but we can certainly use our intelligence to anticipate the

results of our deeds. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

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