

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

KI TESSE

SEPTEMBER 1, 2012

14 ELUL 5772

DEDICATIONS : In memory of George Benson, Gedalya Shlomo Ben Baruch Tzvi z"l whose yartzeit is this Shabbat, Elul 14. George took being a candyman to a different level. His favorite saying was 'Sweets to the Sweet'.

And in memory of Aunt Rebecca Maslaton Bibi whose "mishmar" is today 12 Elul as we write the newsletter
If you missed Shabbat Zachor, you have a chance to make it up this Shabbat.

Friday Night: Candles: 7:11 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:55 AM

11:00 - 12:00 Shabbat Morning Kids Program for girls ages 4-8 - Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks and more . . .

KIDDUSH THIS WEEK BY: Karen and Allen Cohn in honor of their anniversary And

by Barbara Levy in memory of her father, Leo Freiser – Chaim Leib And in memory of her brother in law, Shimon Levy

4:30 - 5:00 Learn to Read from the Torah with Rabbi Yosef - nusach Yerushalmi - Men and Boys of all ages invited.

5:00 until Arvit - Shabbat Afternoon Kids Program with Rabbi Yosef and Riki Waldman; Ice Cream, Tanach Stories, Basketball, Hoolahoop, Parsha Quiz, 613 Mitzva Memory Contest, Shabbat Charades and our weekly Raffles

Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Aharon at 5:45 PM –followed by Minha: 6:30 PM –

Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:10 – with David –

Evening Service (Arbith): 8:05 PM - Shabbat Ends: 8:10PM

Weekday Tefilla Schedule – WE NEED HELP WITH DAILY MINYAN WE NEED YOU TO COME FOR SELICHOT!

NEW MINCHA AND ARBIT SUNDAY – 7:10 PM

Selichot – 7:20AM on SUNDAY AND THIS MONDAY LABOR DAY 6:15AM Thursdays, 6:20 All other days

Weekday Torah Class Schedule

LABOR DAY Monday Night Class with Rabbi Yanai – 7PM Monday night , preceded my Mincha and followed by Arvit

Tuesday Night 7:45- Gitta J. Neufeld, Director of Education at The Allegra Franco School of Educational Leadership who was so well received on Tisha BeAv when teaching Megilat Eicha will be teaching the book of Jonah over four Tuesdays beginning August 21st. Continuing on the 28th and the September 4 and 11 at 7:45. Men and Women are invited. Please give us feed back. Link to second class and handout.

[http://torahcentral.com/YUTorah/lecture.php?781263/Mrs. Gitta J. Neufeld/Yona II](http://torahcentral.com/YUTorah/lecture.php?781263/Mrs._Gitta_J._Neufeld/Yona_II)

Tuesday Night 9pm Exploring the Yag Midot – The 13 attributes

Wednesday night, 7:30-8:30 pm - Spiritual & Personal Growth with Rabbi Yaakov Siegel.. Men & Women are invited.

Registration is underway for the continuation of our Kosher Kitchen Class series with Rabbi Yosef. Classes will resume in September. Details to follow . . .

Community Events

We are planning a community wide Men's Softball Event for Sunday evening September 9th 7-9pm at the Rec. Spread the word and contact Rabbi Yosef or Sam Shetret for more details.

Volley Ball with Daniel Wagner – This Sunday morning at the beach at 10AM

Cub Scout Registration is under way! If you'd like to sign up or know somebody who might, please contact Rabbi Yosef.

Registration is underway for Fall Sunday Funday Hoolahoop in for girls ages 5 and up in the Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach. Sunday mornings from 10:00-11:00

please reply to
ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com

Take a peek into Kosher Culinary Arts School in Jerusalem with my daughter Mikhayla who is going through a rigorous 6 month program. bitemebymik.blogspot.com –

Happy birthday Mikhayla!

Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue at 59th Street, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100. We need you!

Editors Notes

I was asked to speak again at my aunts Areyat on Tuesday afternoon. (An Areyat is a memorial service where Tehilim is read and speeches are given towards the end of the Shiva period). I was reluctant as I spoke at the funeral and I thought it much more important for her grandchildren to speak. Luckily were able to convince Ruby Antebi and his brother Elliot to speak and everyone was touched by the words from their hearts.. Rabbi Malka too spoke. With a few moments left before Minha – the afternoon prayer – I offered the following. It's a thought that should touch all of us in some way. And it is really based on a conversation I had with my wife Chantelle on appreciating where we come from and honoring our past by doing in the present and preparing for our future. Its apropos towards this week's portion where we see the importance of building the proper home with the right partner and raising those children with correct values.

A mother is the glue that binds her family together. She is the sun which by its force of gravity keeps her planets – her family – in orbit around her. She is a

vessel which finds room to contain all our dreams, all our hopes, all of our failures and all of our triumphs. She completes the electric circuit which energizes the family. With the mother present all the bulbs on the chandelier have a chance to shine.

My aunt Florence dedicated her life to completing the circuit for her own family. Together with her husband Phillip, she assembled a frame. But left alone at 36, she persevered against the odds and remained dedicated to building the most beautiful chandelier she could. She draped it with the prettiest crystals; crystal with myriad facets. And each of the four initial arms was lit with just the right bulb.

After all as a Bibi she knew something about designing and building chandeliers. She was brought up with knowledge of dressing them and lighting them. And with G-d's help, the lights of her chandelier, her children and grandchildren continue to bring light to all those around them. Witness the thousands of people, yes thousands, who came to pay their respects with an outpouring of love and affection this week.

I am one of those people afraid of electricity. Although I saw my dad connect fixtures many times to a power source, the thought of doing the same brings tremendous trepidation. "It's simple", he tells me. To which I answer, "It's simpler to dial the electrician".

My fear is of a short circuit, a shock or worse yet, of being electrocuted. I imagine myself as one of those cartoon characters sticking his finger into the socket and changing colors as the electricity runs through his body causing his hair to stand on end.

Well at least whatever hair I have left!

I was asked this week why after a loss, one sits Shiva and is ordered to remove their shoes, sit on the floor, refrain from doing business, and stay away from parties.

The Simple answer is – Because that's the Halacha. But we can better understand based on our example of the electric circuit. When Florence passed away, there was a break in the circuit, a line cut and thus a live flowing wire. We all know that in a storm when the cable is cut, we steer clear. The repairmen come dressed in protective gear, rubber gloves, and rubber boots. When dealing with a live cord, we stay grounded. And thus after a loss, we are in a dangerous period where the typical flow of life has been disrupted. We remove our shoes, we sit on the floor, we lay low. We avoid major decisions; we keep out of the public eye. We wait for the repair.

Hashem, slowly but surely, repairs the circuit. This is the way of the world. And the circuit can be repaired because only the physical connection was broken. A person has been lost to us physically. The spiritual connection remains always. As we say, your mother is with you always. Her spirit remains a part of your life.

My dad mentioned that during the Shiva, we always learn things we never knew.

Let me tell you something you might have never known. Many of us here are related in some way to the family or if not as Rabbi Malka mentioned, probably have some relative who at some point worked for them. So often I meet people who tell me, "You know my first job was for Bibi". And as

we mentioned, for the last century, the Bibi's were known to be in the lighting business.

But things might have been different. You see, Reuben Bibi was actually in medical school at the American University in Beirut. I guess his plan was to break out of the Artisan Field of his father and become a doctor. Imagine, medicine might have become the new family business. But in 1911, when our great grandfather Joseph Bibi got word that the Turks were about to draft the Jewish boys from the university, he arranged for a boat in the harbor. Our grandfather Reuben, a member of the swim team, did his usual training laps that morning through the harbor, but snuck away onto the boat which brought him north to Tripoli and from there, they returned to France and eventually decided to try out The States.

It could not have been easy in those days for Reuben and his father Joseph, alone in the States to remain faithful to their religion, but they were. Sometimes I think that Grandpa Reuben, Uncle Dave and our cousin Isadore Dayan decided to expand into the lighting business because they knew that America was spiritually dark and needed light. As a doctor grandpa could have healed the body, but they must have realized a responsibility to bring light to the soul. Through their business, they gave anyone who needed a job, a place to work. Their charity work took a great part of their day but was never set aside. They devoted themselves to study and to the spreading of Torah which was felt throughout the world. That's what they did. They brought a physical and spiritual light to everyone they met.

And this is our legacy whether we are the cousins still in the lighting

business or if we've taken other parts of their business, or if we've gone into new fields. No matter what we must be in the spiritual lighting business, bringing a divine aura, that special light that preceded the sun, that light of creation that uplifts everyone around us.

I heard from someone sitting this week, that they'll feel bad when they get up because being together with family is such an incredible feeling.

We are all bound together. Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh LaZeh. All of Israel are bound to each other. We are supposed to be bound in a single circuit and only then can we be. "The light onto the nations". Only then can we bring back the original light hidden in creation. Only then can we be the chandelier for mankind.

All of us here are part of an extended family and as long as we are like my aunt was, as long as we are there for each other, as long as we are supportive of each other, we continue that chain.

A bit more history. Our great grandfather Joseph was married to Farha, that's who aunt Flo was named for. She was named for her grandmother. And her grandmother was from the Bakaal family. My father told me of a tradition that just as the Dayan family traces themselves through the exilarch to King David, the same goes for the Bakaal family. And in my travels others have verified this.

That means when you hear a story about Yehudah standing up to his brother Joseph, you are reading about your great grandfather. On Pesach when you recount Nachshon stepping into the sea and it finally splitting because of his complete faith, you are not reading about some

guy, you are reading about your ancestor. On Shavuot the story of Ruth and Boaz is the story of your grandparents. Kind David is not just some historical figure. You share his blood, his genes and a part of his soul. What a tremendous responsibility. Your mother was Farha Bat Esther She was their daughter; the daughter of Kings. She was the link that connected you to them. She was part of a chain that goes back thousands of years.

You know that grandpa Ruby and his father Joseph settled in San Francisco when they came to the states. But as some point Joseph Bibi told his son, it was time to find a wife. And he couldn't take a chance in San Francisco, because even though they were Talmid Chamimim, scholars and pious men, Joseph knew that for his son to keep the chain strong, he needed a Jewish wife from a virtuous family as the foundation. Were there no women in San Francisco? Were there no Jews in San Francisco? There may have been, but they weren't enough.

They travelled back east and found a young lady in a store on the boardwalk in Atlantic City and her name was Esther Mizrahi. It is actually the Mizrahi family from Damascus who bound the Bibi family to Ahi Ezer.

We are all connected. We are all parts of the chain. If one of us breaks the chain, we are all affected. When someone passes away the circuit is only temporarily broken, but it's not permanently damaged. When someone though goes out and on his own breaks the chain, there is everlasting damage.

Together we make up the chandelier, some of us are parts of the frame, some are parts of the canopy, some of us represent the arms, and some are the cups,

some are the prisms and some are crystals, we are the candles and we are the bulbs. We need to be there for each other. We need to support each other and we need to make sure the circuit isn't broken.

Florence taught us that against all odds you can build a beautiful chandelier – when you put the effort in that chandelier can light up the world. This is the beauty of her children and her grandchildren who as we mentioned could fill books with stories of their acts of kindness. She taught us too that for the bulb to work, the circuit must be complete and that takes each and every one of us. If we lose anyone we break the circuit, we lose the light. This is the test of our generation in America, This is the test our grandparents understood and one we cannot forget. Anyone lost bring terrible damage.

We have a remarkable history. With that comes tremendous responsibility. My aunt is up there in Shamayim and she has joined her husband, her parents and our ancestors. Their zechut, their merit brings us blessings and energizes us.

This week of Shiva connects the family to each other and connects each of us to our history. We suffer a loss, but Hashem reminds us that we have each other. The light may flicker off for a moment because the circuit is temporarily broken but the light can be strong again. To accomplish that and make a strong light is up to us. We must take what our aunt, what your mother and your grandmother gave us and we must build upon that frame, adding arms and jewels. We must commit ourselves to the chain and to the circuit.

And B"H if we do what we must, then we in our generation we will fulfill our destiny. We will be that light the prophets promised. We will be the light that the world has been waiting for, We will change the world.

Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

PS ... My son Moses was reading Elie Wiesel's first book, Night this week. As I had it on my Ipad, I too am re-reading it. If you haven't read it, you should and if you have, the words this week of former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau will echo in your ears. Commenting on the circumcision ban passed in Cologne, he asked with noted cynicism, "**Since when do Germans care about a Jewish baby's cry?**" If you don't know Rabbi Lau's story, take the time to read ***Out of the Depths: The Story of a Child of Buchenwald Who Returned Home at Last***. Also see Halacha Yomit on Teshubah and the rest of our regular columns.

Former chief rabbi denounces Germany's circumcision ban, refers to Holocaust as he notes: Jewish children's lives were meaningless as German people stood by in silence Kobi Nahshoni – YNET News

Jewish groups increased pressure on the German government Wednesday to speed up the passage of new legislation protecting the practice of ritual circumcision after a doctor filed a complaint with prosecutors accusing a rabbi of causing a child bodily harm.

A debate in Germany over the Jewish and Muslim practice of ritual circumcision started after a regional court in Cologne ruled in June that the practice amounted

to causing criminal bodily harm to a child.

It calmed after the German government pledged to draft new legislation protecting the practice, but flared again this week after a doctor filed the latest complaint with prosecutors in the southern city of Hof.

German Justice Ministry spokeswoman Anne Zimmermann told reporters Wednesday that a draft law should be ready by the fall. "We take this request very seriously, of course, and will submit a draft as soon as possible, but also examine all aspects with due diligence," she said.

Earlier in the week, Israel's Chief Rabbi Yonah Metzger met with German government officials in Berlin in efforts to find a solution to the crisis.

According to Die Welt newspaper, Metzger said that a proper 'brit milah' (circumcision) does not cause suffering: "We give the infant a drop of sweet wine and then he falls asleep," he said, adding that in the rare case of complications, doctors and not mohels are usually to blame.

Meanwhile, former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau denounced the Germans for their opposition to circumcisions. "It is an amazing thing (to see) German speakers discover they are sensitive to a baby's cry...I did not experience this in my childhood," he noted with open cynicism.

The Jewish child's life was meaningless to the Germans in his time, Rabbi Lau added, "to be treaded upon by every Gestapo (officer's) boots and the German people cooperated or watched from the sidelines."

In an interview with 'Kol Chai' radio the rabbi added: "We do not need a license from them (Germans) to live as Jews. If this is the state of affairs we have no reason to be there (Germany). Perhaps it is all for the best and the Jews who are there will understand that they don't belong there."

The rabbi also attacked the proposal by which German doctors would train Jewish mohels. "This is anti-Semitism," he claimed, adding: "Our mohels have vast experience. Rabbi Goldberg (the rabbi currently being sued in Germany) circumcised over 3,000 children, he says without fault."

The Laws of Teshuva (Repentance) from HALACHA YOMIT

The month of Elul is the month of mercy and forgiveness and everyone, including men and women, are obligated to scrutinize their actions as much as possible during these days and to repent before Hashem. When we come before Hashem to be judged on Rosh Hashanah, He will be filled with mercy for us and will grant us a good and blessed new year. It is improper for any intelligent person to delay doing Teshuva, as the Sefer Mesillat Yesharim writes that only ignoramuses delay doing Teshuva. Maran Harav Ovadia Yosef Shlit"a writes in the name of the holy Ari z"l that it is especially worthy to concentrate on the "Blessing of Repentance" in the Amida prayer ("Hashivenu", the fifth blessing of the Amida) during these days and to pray for those who have strayed from Hashem's path, especially if they are one's relatives, for these days are especially auspicious for

repentance as Hashem's hands are wide open to accept all those who repent.

The Rambam writes (in the beginning of his Hilchot Teshuva) that if one transgresses any of the Torah's commandments either knowingly or unknowingly, when he repents, he must confess his sin before Hashem, as the verse states, "If a man or woman shall perform any sin etc. they shall confess the sin which they have committed" which refers to actually confessing one's sin verbally. This confession is actually a positive Torah commandment. How should one confess? One must say, "Please Hashem, I have sinned, transgressed, and have committed iniquities before you and I now regret and am ashamed of my actions and I shall never again do this (meaning that one must accept upon himself never to commit this sin again)." This is the primary aspect of the confession. The more one confesses and speaks lengthily in this manner, the more praiseworthy he is.

This was indeed the practice when the Bet Hamikdash stood when a sinner would bring a "Chatat" or "Asham" offering to atone for his sin, he would confess his sin on his offering, for if one does not repent for his sin, he will not achieve atonement even if he brings one-thousand offerings to Hashem. Confession is an integral part of the Teshuva process and one who has not confessed his sin has not fulfilled the Mitzvah of Teshuva.

Nowadays when the Bet Hamikdash unfortunately lies in ruins and we have no Mizbe'ach (altar) to offer our sacrifices on, all we have left is Teshuva. Indeed, one who repents fully shall not be reminded at all of his sins on the Day of Reckoning.

Another provision of the Mitzvah of Teshuva is that the repentant individual must accept upon himself never to return to his sin again, for instance, if one transgresses a negative Torah commandment, such as Shabbat desecration or if one ate foods requiring checking for worms without checking or if a woman was lax about the modesty of her clothing and the like, one must whole-heartedly accept upon himself never to repeat the sin. Similarly, if one has transgressed a positive Torah commandment, such as one who has not recited Kiddush on Shabbat or if one did not adequately honor his parents and the like, one must accept upon himself to perform these Mitzvot properly from now on. However, if one says "I shall sin and I shall repent, I shall sin again and repent again," he will never be afforded the opportunity to repent.

One must likewise feel remorse for the sins he has committed by realizing the wickedness of his actions and how much he has angered his Creator Who bestows so much good upon him. However, if one does not regret his deeds, even if he forsakes the sin completely and never performs it again and even if he has confessed his sin, he has not fulfilled the Mitzvah of Teshuva and he remains unforgiven for his sin.

Based on the above, there are three primary aspects of Teshuva: Verbally confessing one's sin, accepting upon one's self never again to commit these sins, and truly feeling remorse for the sin in one's heart. If one does all of these things, he has fulfilled the Mitzvah of Teshuva and is beloved by his Creator. About such a person did Rabbi Akiva exclaim: "Praiseworthy are you Israel! Before Whom are you

becoming purified and Who is purifying you? Your Father in Heaven! As the verse states, 'The Mikveh (hope) of Israel is Hashem'- just as a Mikveh purifies the impure, so does Hashem purify the Jewish nation."

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

In the course of history mankind's most ignoble times have been during war and conflict. It is almost as if we suspend our humanity and regress to our lowest common denominator; that of the wild beast. Murder, rape, and plunder accompany the soldier as he is given license to destroy that which should be most precious. It confirms, as the Torah teaches, that all morals and values rest upon the sanctity of human life. Devalue the pricelessness of life, and you undermine the foundation upon which all values and morals rest. The private domain of person and property then becomes subject to the unleashed amorality of the human animal.

Following the instructions at the end of last weeks Parsha as to how the Jew is to wage war, Moshe, in Parshas Ki Seitsei, presented 74 Mitzvos which highlight the value that the Torah places on the private domain of person and property.

1st Aliya: In an illuminating sequence of emotional and legal circumstances, Moshe forewarned us of the moral and familial dangers of warfare. A soldier brings home a non-Jewish female captive. Disregarding rational and obvious differences, he marries her, has his 1st son with her, and eventually resents the discord he has fostered upon himself, his "captive wife", and his extended family. Attempting to deny his

responsibility in the "resentment turned to hatred" breaking apart his family, he attempts to deny his 1st born son's rights. This is illegal.

This can Produce the "Rebellious Son"; a child who does not value the private rights of person or property and will eventually be executed for his crimes against society. It's a tragedy that begs us to consider the long range consequences of our actions before giving legal license to the wild beast within each of us.

2nd Aliya: The laws regarding: hanging and burial; returning lost articles; the fallen animal; transvestitism; and the birds nest are detailed.

3rd Aliya: The laws regarding: guard rails; mixed agriculture; forbidden combinations; Tzitzit; the defamed wife; if the accusations against the wife are true; the penalty for adultery; the rape of a betrothed or unmarried girl; the prohibition against marrying a father's wife; the Mamzer; and the prohibition against marrying an Ammonite or Moabite are detailed.

4th Aliya: The laws regarding: marriage to Edomites or Egyptians; the sanctity of the army camp; sheltering run away slaves; prostitution; deducted interest; and keeping vows are commanded.

5th and 6th Aliyot: The laws regarding: workers eating while they harvest; divorce and remarriage; military exemptions for a new husband; taking a millstone as security for a loan; the punishment for kidnapping; leprosy; general laws regarding security for loans, are detailed.

7th Aliya: The laws regarding paying wages on time; the testimony of close relatives;

concern for the widowed and orphaned; forgotten sheaves of grain; leftover fruit from the harvest; Malkos - flogging; the childless sister-in-law; the assailant and the wife who comes to the rescue; honest weights and measures; and remembering Amalek are commanded.

The Haftorah for this week's Parsha, Ki Sietzei, was taken from chapter 54 in Yishayuhu. It describes Israel as afflicted barren, and inconsolable in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction. The Navi assured the People that Hashem's kindness and love for them is ever present, protecting and sustaining them at all times.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"You must raise it [the fallen load] with him [the owner]." (Debarim 22:4)

Our parashah states: "You shall not see the donkey of your brother or his ox falling on the road and hide yourself from them; you shall surely stand them up with him." This verse refers to an animal that has fallen, to a burden that has fallen from it, and to an animal that has fallen with its burden still on it. The Torah adds the word "with him". Rashi explains that if the owner helps you, you must work with him to lift the animal and burden. But, if he just sits by and says, "Whereas this is your misvah, if you wish to unload the animal you may do so," and does not assist you, you are not responsible.

The Hafess Hayim (quoted in Torah Ladaat) said that the same is true in spiritual matters. If a person wants Divine assistance to be able to study and observe Torah, he must at least make an effort on his own to

do them. If a person asks Hashem "Veha'areb na Hashem Elokenu et dibreiToratecha befinu," sweeten the words of Your Torah in my mouth, and "Veha'er enenu beToratecha," enlighten our eyes to Your Torah, (which are prayers to truly enjoy and understand the Torah) and immediately leaves for work or to take care of personal affairs, how can he expect Hashem to aid him? One must first exhibit a true interest in learning Torah and only then will he merit Divine help.

This is a common question: "How do I get to feel the great enjoyment of Torah study?" The answer now is twofold. Pray for it and do it and it will come. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Our son is rebellious; he does not heed our voice." (Debarim 21:20)

Although the conditions necessary to punish a wayward and rebellious son with the appropriate punishment are difficult to come by, and indeed some say it never happened, we can learn some important lessons from this perashah. The Torah says that the parents say, "This is our son and he doesn't listen to our voice," emphasizing that the parents are united in their upbringing of their child and in the ultimate punishment. Then, they are entitled to bring him to bet din, since they have done the best they could, the fault being the son's.

This teaches us how important it is for both parents to be together in raising a child. If he hears two voices, rather than "our voice," he will get mixed messages and will quickly learn to manipulate one against the other to get his own way. Many times, parents might not agree on a certain point regarding their child,

be it about permissiveness or about punishment, etc. They should discuss it between themselves first and come out with one voice to the child. Then, even if the child knows it's really the wish of one parent and not the other, he sees a unified front and won't be able to "divide and conquer." This is a well known rule which we may be very aware of, but if we take the time and energy to implement it on a regular basis, we will see more success in raising fine children. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
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Misvot and the Potato Chip Syndrome

One of many Misvot discussed in Parashat Ki-Teseh is the famous Misva of "Shilu'ah Ha'ken," sending away a mother bird before taking eggs from the nest. This Misva is followed by the Misva of "Ma'akeh," the obligation to place a parapet around one's roof for safety: "If you build a new house, you shall construct a parapet for your roof" (22:8). The Midrash explains the juxtaposition between these two topics, teaching that the second is the reward for the first. Meaning, the reward for faithfully fulfilling the Misva of Shilu'ah Ha'ken is a new house, which necessitates the construction of a parapet. The Torah then proceeds to discuss several laws relating to farming, such as the prohibition against sowing two types of seeds together. This, too, the Midrash

comments, is a reward. For fulfilling the Misva of "Ma'akeh," one is rewarded with a field which allows him to observe the Torah's agricultural laws. Then, the Torah introduces the Misva of Sisit, the obligation to affix strings to the corners of one's garment. Once again, the Midrash teaches that this is a reward. If one observes the Torah's farming laws, then he is given the ability to obtain new, fine garments and fulfill the Misva of Sisit.

The point the Midrash is making is that one Misva leads to another. The reward for Shilu'ah Ha'ken is not simply a house – because a house that is not used for a higher purpose is not a reward – but rather the ability to perform Misvot with the house. And then, one is rewarded with a field, which provides opportunities for even more Misvot. And then one purchases new garments, and is able to do additional Misvot. Each Misva we perform ends up facilitating another one. And that Misva then brings us to yet another. We might say that Misvot are like potato chips. As we all know too well, it is impossible to eat just one potato chip. When we eat one, we then need another. And then another. Misvot work the same way. Once we perform a Misva, we will soon find ourselves involved in another one. A person's friend drags him to a Torah class, and he finds it gratifying, and also makes some new friends. Soon enough, he is attending more classes and community functions, helping out friends, volunteering for community functions, and so on.

Why is this so? How does one Misva lead to another?

Our Rabbis teach us that every time we do a Misva, we create an angel. That angel looks to "repay" us for bringing him into existence by advocating on our behalf that

we should have the ability to perform additional Misvot. This is the secret to the concept of "Misva Goreret Misva," that one Misva leads to another. Each angel we create by performing Misvot works to ensure that we will be able to perform more Misvot.

People involved in outreach, in trying to bring Jews back to religious observance, know this concept very well. Attempting to persuade somebody to drastically change his or her lifestyle is not likely to succeed. But what can and does work is encouraging somebody to perform one Misva, such as to observe one Shabbat, to participate in one Hesed project, or to attend one Shiur. The power of that Misva will naturally lead to yet another, which will then lead to another, and so on. It is that initial step which triggers the process of developing a full-fledged Torah commitment.

We must realize, however, that the converse is also true. Just as one Misva facilitates another, one sin facilitates another. When we commit a sin, we create an angel that seeks to lead us toward yet another sin. There's no such thing as transgressing just once, as breaking the rules only temporarily and then immediately getting back on track. This is not how it works. If we violate the Torah once, we bring ourselves dramatically closer to another violation. And then to another. The "potato chip syndrome" is true regarding sins just as it is regarding Misvot.

We must never underestimate the power and significance of any action. A positive act will lead us along the path of more Misvot, while a negative act will lead us along the opposite path. Let us therefore always choose wisely, and put ourselves on the road of

Misva performance, one Misva at a time, and we will then be rewarded with even more Misvot, and then some more, throughout our lives.

Rabbi Wein

The idea of the necessity of a fence on one's roof and exposed staircases and high landings is a very logical and realistic one. The Torah itself advances this simple reasoning by stating that otherwise one may fall from that exposed area with painful if not tragic consequences. However halacha and practicality indicate that not everyone is obligated in this mitzvah and that there are physical instances where such a fence is impossible to construct or is even unnecessary.

Nevertheless, the moral imperative that drives the mitzvah seems to be omnipresent and always operative. A house, a home, a family always needs to be protected, both physically and morally. Just as negligence in failing to erect a fence around one's exposed roof is a cause for monetary and even criminal liability, so too negligence in failing to construct the moral fence to protect our home and family from the ravages of a rather depraved society is seen to be a serious transgression.

In raising children, as well as in governing society generally, there can be no doubt that fences have to be fashioned and protected. The rub always is as to how many fences and where they are to be placed and how high the actual fence should be. When it comes to the issue of the physical fences around our rooftops, halacha answers all of these questions for us. But when the issue is regarding the moral fence that we must construct for our family and

ourselves, there we find minimal guidance.

Just as every physical fence must be constructed to conform to the dimensions of the roof it protects – a circular fence will not completely protect a rectangular roof – so too there is no one-size-fits-all moral fence that is appropriate for every home and family. Tragically, in today's Jewish world, there are many homes that have no moral fence at all protecting the house and family.

Everyone is allowed, if not even encouraged, to live a life without limits, restraints or moral discipline. And at the other end of the spectrum of Jewish society there are homes where the fence has been constructed too high and is too constrictive as to impede and prevent healthy individual development and constructive discovery and innovation. It is therefore obvious that knowing where, when and how to create this moral fence that will safeguard the Jewish home is the main challenge of parenting and family dynamics.

The Torah in this week's parsha speaks of ben sorer u'moreh – a rebellious, undisciplined youth – who will grow to be a very destructive force in society. Such a child in most cases represents the failure in the family in erecting and enforcing the proper moral fence in the house. That negligence of safeguarding the home spiritually, emotionally and morally will invariably come back to haunt that family and all society generally.

There are no magical ways to build these necessary fences. Every family and home is different and unique and there is only the common necessity for all families to erect the proper and fitting fences within their home and

family. Patience, wisdom, restraint and prayer are key ingredients in accomplishing this vital task.

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

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness . . . (Martin Luther King)

I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain. (James Arthur Baldwin)

There is a verse in Ki Tetsei momentous in its implications. It is easy to miss, appearing as it does in the midst of a series of miscellaneous laws about inheritance, rebellious sons, overladen oxen, marriage violations and escaping slaves. Without any special emphasis or preamble, Moses delivers a command so counterintuitive that it that we have to read it twice to make sure we have heard it correctly:

Do not hate an Edomite, because he is your brother.
Do not hate an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land. (Deut. 23: 8)

What does this mean in its biblical context? The Egyptians of Moses' day had enslaved the Israelites, "embittered their lives", subjected them to a ruthless regime of hard labour and forced them to eat the bread of affliction. They had embarked on a programme of attempted genocide, Pharaoh commanding his people to throw

"every male [Israelite] child born, into the river" (Ex. 1: 22).

Now, forty years later, Moses speaks as if none of this had happened, as if the Israelites owed the Egyptians a debt of gratitude for their hospitality. Yet he and the people were where they were only because they were escaping from Egyptian persecution. Nor did he want the people to forget it. To the contrary, he told them to recite the story of the exodus every year, as we still do on Passover, re-enacting it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread so that the memory would be passed on to all future generations. If you want to preserve freedom, he implies, never forget what it feels like to lose it. Yet here, on the banks of the Jordan, addressing the next generation, he tells the people, "Do not hate an Egyptian". What is going on in this verse?

To be free, you have to let go of hate. That is what Moses is saying. If they continued to hate their erstwhile enemies, Moses would have taken the Israelites out of Egypt, but he would not have taken Egypt out of the Israelites. Mentally, they would still be there, slaves to the past. They would still be in chains, not of metal but of the mind – and chains of the mind are the most constricting of all.

You cannot create a free society on the basis of hate. Resentment, rage, humiliation, a sense of injustice, the desire to restore honour by inflicting injury on your former persecutors – these are conditions of a profound lack of freedom. You must live with the past, implies Moses, but not in the past. Those who are held captive by anger against their former persecutors are captive still. Those who let their enemies define who they are, have not yet achieved liberty.

The Mosaic books refer time and again to the exodus and the imperative of memory: "you shall remember that you were slaves in Egypt". Yet never is this invoked as a reason for hatred, retaliation or revenge. Always it appears as part of the logic of the just and compassionate society the Israelites are commanded to create: the alternative order, the antithesis of Egypt. The implicit message is: Limit slavery, at least as far as your own people is concerned. Don't subject them to hard labour. Give them rest and freedom every seventh day. Release them every seventh year. Recognise them as like you, not ontologically inferior. No one is born to be a slave.

Give generously to the poor. Let them eat from the leftovers of the harvest. Leave them a corner of the field. Share your blessings with others. Don't deprive people of their livelihood. The entire structure of biblical law is rooted in the experience of slavery in Egypt, as if to say: you know in your heart what it feels like to be the victim of persecution, therefore do not persecute others.

Biblical ethics is based on repeated acts of role-reversal, using memory as a moral force. In Exodus and Deuteronomy, we are commanded to use memory not to preserve hate but to conquer it by recalling what it feels like to be its victim. "Remember" – not to live in the past but to prevent a repetition of the past.

Only thus can we understand an otherwise inexplicable detail in the Exodus story itself. In Moses' first encounter with God at the burning bush, he is charged with the mission of bringing the people out to freedom. God adds a strange rider:

I will make the Egyptians favourably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbour and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. (Ex. 3: 21-22)

The point is twice repeated in later chapters (11: 2, 12: 35). Yet it runs utterly against the grain of biblical narrative. From Genesis (14: 23) to the book of Esther (9: 10, 15, 16) taking booty, spoil, plunder from enemies is frowned on. In the case of idolaters it is strictly forbidden: their property is cherem, taboo, to be destroyed, not possessed (Deut. 7: 25; 13: 16). When, in the days of Joshua, Achan took spoil from the ruins of Jericho, the whole nation was punished. Besides which, what happened to the gold? The Israelites eventually used it to make the Golden Calf. Why then was it important – commanded – that on this one occasion the Israelites should ask for gifts from the Egyptians?

The Torah itself provides the answer in a later law of Deuteronomy about the release of slaves:

If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. When you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. (Deut. 15: 12-15)

Slavery needs “narrative closure”. To acquire freedom, a slave must

be able to leave without feelings of antagonism to his former master. He must not depart laden with a sense of grievance or anger, humiliation or slight. Were he to do so, he would have been released but not liberated. Physically free, mentally he would still be a slave. The insistence on parting gifts represents the Bible’s psychological insight into the lingering injury of servitude. There must be an act of generosity on the part of the master if the slave is to leave without ill-will. Slavery leaves a scar on the soul that must be healed.

When God told Moses to tell the Israelites to take parting gifts from the Egyptians, it is as if He were saying: Yes, the Egyptians enslaved you, but that is about to become the past. Precisely because I want you to remember the past, it is essential that you do so without hate or desire for revenge. What you are to recall is the pain of being a slave, not the anger you feel towards your slave-masters. There must be an act of symbolic closure. This cannot be justice in the fullest sense of the word: such justice is a chimera, and the desire for it insatiable and self-destructive. There is no way of restoring the dead to life, or of recovering the lost years of liberty denied. But neither can a people deny the past, deleting it from the database of memory. If they try to do so it will eventually come back – Freud’s “return of the repressed” – and claim a terrible price in the form of high-minded, altruistic vengeance. Therefore the former slave-owner must give the former slave a gift, acknowledging him as a free human being who has contributed, albeit without choice, to his welfare. This is not a squaring of accounts. It is, rather, a minimal form of restitution, of what today is called “restorative justice”.

Hatred and liberty cannot coexist. A free people does not hate its former enemies; if it does, it is not yet ready for freedom. To create a non-persecuting society out of people who have been persecuted, you have to break the chains of the past; rob memory of its sting; sublimate pain into constructive energy and the determination to build a different future.

Freedom involves the abandonment of hate, because hate is the abdication of freedom. It is the projection of our conflicts onto an external force whom we can then blame, but only at the cost of denying responsibility. That was Moses’ message to those who were about to enter the promised land: that a free society can be built only by people who accept the responsibility of freedom, subjects who refuse to see themselves as objects, people who define themselves by love of God, not hatred of the other.

“Do not hate an Egyptian, because you were strangers in his land,” said Moses, meaning: To be free, you have to let go of hate.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

“This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he does not hearken to our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.” (21:20)

Three stages of deterioration are enumerated: (1) First: Rebelliousness, (2) failure to be instructed and (3) pursuit of unnecessary diversions. In some measure, we see a parallel to the behavior of Esav, in contrast to his brother Jacob who “sat in tents” and “he hearkened to his father’s and mother’s voice” (Bereshit 25:27, 28:7). Esav did not gain the satisfaction of

accomplishment of wisdom; "he was a man of the field" (ibid. 25:27), and therefore to fill the vacuum in his soul, he spent his youth in hunting. His family was wealthy, and there was no lack of mutton and beef; but he needed additional diversions, and he ate venison.

Because the rebellious son does not listen to his parents (in the early days, all instruction was in the home), he cannot fill the vacuum of his soul and he therefore seeks superfluous food and drink as substitutes.

And therefore, because the nations feel the emptiness in their lives, they therefore seek the diversions of war, gladiators, drama, sports, romance, dancing, involvement with women, fiction books, travel, politics and all other ways of wasting their lives; whereas the children of Jacob spend their spare time in the Torah-Study. Their youth do not engage in promiscuity or drinking or narcotics or criminal mischief, for they enjoy the satisfaction of righteous living.

Thought from R' Miller ZT"L
Why is Shiluach Hakan/Chasing the mother bird limited to Birds?
If you chase away the mother Deer, Cow, Duck, Chicken...there is no Mitzvah from Hashem.

Since Birds bring Joy to humanity through their Singing (which is spiritual & touches the Soul), even only through instinct & not free choice, Hashem still give the Birds reward by designating them for this Mitzvah in the Torah, whereby we get Long Life. (what a reward!)

Hakarat Hatob/Appreciation shown by Hashem to Birds, even though He programmed them to Sing. How much more will Hashem give Us when we bring

Happiness to people with our free will!!

Quoted from "Fortunate Nation" by R' Miller

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