

## SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

YITRO

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 6:1-13

FEBRUARY 7, 2015 18 SHEBAT 5775

DEDICATIONS: Eliyahu Ben Esther 21 Shebat

Happy Anniversary Victor and Sheri, Happy Birthday Monique

Candle lighting Friday evening February 6 at 5:00 p.m. Mincha at 5:00

SHABBAT: Perasha class with Rabbi David at 8:30AM this week  
Shaharit - Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:53AM

Kiddush Sponsored by Maurice and Allison Borenstein  
In honor of their children's birthdays – Happy Birthday Mollie and Joseph

Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one  
Early Mincha after Kiddush - Begin at 12:20 and Amidah after 12:35

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer  
Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach all February at 3:00 PM  
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:00

Shabbat Ends at 6:00 - Return for Arbit at 6:15

RETURN FOR MOVIE NIGHT AT 7:00 PM

Bring your friends for pizza, fun, raffles and prizes for the winners of our weekly 613 mitzvot contests!

REMAINING DATES: 02/07/15, 02/21/15, 03/07/15

Sunday morning class with Sam Yusupov at 9AM  
Krav Maga at 10AM

### WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

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

Beneath the Helmet will be shown on Feb 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM  
Lido Beach Synagogue

**Beneath the Helmet: From High School to the Home Front** is a coming-of-age story which follows the journey of five Israeli high school graduates who are drafted into the army to defend their country. At the age of 18, away from their homes, families and friends these young individuals undergo a demanding, inspiring journey, revealing the core of who they are and who they want to be.

From the creators of the PBS-featured documentary film **Israel Inside: How a Small Nation Makes a Big Difference**, **Beneath the Helmet** illustrates how these young men and women are defending not only their homes, but also the values of peace, equality, opportunity, democracy, religious tolerance and women's rights. The lessons they learn along the way are lessons that can be appreciated, understood and internalized

March 7th - Young Israel of Long Beach 120 Long Beach Blvd in Long Beach will be having our ever-expanding annual wine event on Saturday evening, March 7th starting at 8pm, Tickets are \$20 per single and \$35 per couple



# MAKE YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

## Vote for *Unity* Vote for *Community* Vote for *Tradition*

**Ohavei Zion - The World Sephardic Zionist Organization** was established four years ago at the request of Maran Harav Ovadiah Yosef Z'L and has qualified as an official new slate. Now, for the first time Ohavei Zion is running for the 37th World Zionist Congress.

Ohavei Zion was established so that the Traditional Sephardic community will have a voice and an influence on the direction of Jewish education within our communities and throughout the world. This will enable us to provide funding for programs in support of Jewish Education and Identity, Zionism and the support of the State of Israel as the Jewish Homeland.

We, as Sephardim must chart our future within the Jewish People in our unique way based on our Torah Tradition, values and inclusiveness. For too long we have been silent. The time has come to take responsibility to share the beauty of our Sephardic Heritage with our Jewish brethren and to allow our voice to be heard.

Ohavei Zion is comprised of a list of delegates from all segments of the Jewish People representing our various and unique communities across the United States with the support of our Sages, Rabbis and leaders.

**The success of our organization will depend strongly on you, the voter. This is our chance to be represented by members of our own communities. Ohavei Zion is a party by our people for our people. It is time we take our place at the table.**

For more information you can find us here:

Web: [www.wszo.org](http://www.wszo.org)

Email us: [WorldSephardicZionistOrg@gmail.com](mailto:WorldSephardicZionistOrg@gmail.com)

Facebook: World Sephardic Zionist Organization - Ohavei Zion

Twitter: [@ohavei\\_zion](https://twitter.com/ohavei_zion)

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please reply to  
[ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com)  
 Newsletter archives now at [BenaiAsher.Org](http://BenaiAsher.Org)

Follow us on twitter @BenaiAsher for a daily dose of Torah,  
 Israel or something of interest

**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue,  
 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us!  
 212-289-2100 – Mincha and Arbit – Give us 22  
 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!**

### Editors Notes

On Tuesday we commuted the hazkara for my dad, Joseph R. Bibi, a'h. I am deeply grateful to all who attended and most especially who Rabbi Eli Mansour who came to pay his respects and not to speak, but who did speak so eloquently as he always does and told of his very long relationship with my dad. And also to Yigal Bibi, who came in from Israel and spoke. Twenty five years ago, my dad came back from Israel after having met Yigal, the former mayor of Tiberius, a member of the Israeli Knesset and a close confidant of both Rav Mordechai Eliyahu z'sl and Rav Ovadia Yosef z'sl, and told us we in fact had relatives in Israel. I am now working closely with Yigal and other members of the community to establish a presence for us at the World Zionist Congress.

It's hard to believe that it was a year ago Tu Bishvat that we said farewell to our dad. They tell us that time heels, but honestly there is still a hole near my heart and I am sure it will always be there. It's a strange 1st yearzeit. You see this past year was a Jewish leap year and we are 13 lunar months from last Tu Bishvat so our mourning period in essence ended a month ago when we had a small Hazkara. Going forward I imagine we will commemorate and fast on the 14th and then celebrate our dad's life going into Tu Bishvat so I thought to relate some lessons that we as a family and a community can learn from my dad centered around trees.

There is a verse in Devarim which compares man to a tree - Ki HaAdam Etz HaSadeh - . A tree produces fruits which in turn cause other fruit-producing trees to grow. Our father understood that in this world one cannot be satisfied simply to grow on his own, to be an island for one's self alone. We must produce fruits with seeds for new trees and new fruits. We must exert positive influence upon friends, acquaintances, and anyone we happen to meet-that they, too, produce "fruits." That was our dad. Everyone he met was affected by him for the positive. He saw within everyone their Selem Elokim and he brought forward that image of G-d within each of us.

The prophet Yechezkel proclaims ... And you, the mountains of Israel, will produce your branches, and you will bear your fruit ... It is incumbent upon each of us to follow his example and fulfill this prophecy . That the branches or the shoots of our father will remain like our father. Each of us bears the responsibility to blossom and cause a chain-reaction of self-perpetuating fruits of Torah and mitzvot in ourselves and in others.

Upon creating man, G-d blesses him as it states .... Peru UrVu - Be fruitful and multiply. About a dozen years ago, I heard Rabbi Mansour (who was there to confirm) explain that there is a thought where the Rabbis suggest that the word UrVu means to direct or aim. Our father was very clear on the need to direct and guide

A child is like an arrow and the archer must aim the bow before he releases the arrow. Imagine how foolish one looks who releases the arrow without properly aiming and then twists and turns hoping his body English will somehow cause the arrow to strike its target. Once released all the body English in the world will not help.

One can recognize an expert archer from amateur often by the touch. An amateur might be heavy handed exerting too much force. Reacting, he adjusts and then applies too little strength, falling very short. An expert on the other hand has a very light and delicate touch which masks his power. This is the touch that properly guides the arrow or the child.

He also recognizes exterior forces. The wind, the humidity and the temperature all affect that arrow. Each arrow has its own peculiarities based on the length and weight of the shaft, the design of the fletching and the type of arrow head and point.

King Solomon teaches us in Proverbs – Chanoch HaNaar – Train the child according to his individual path. Rashi Explains: According to what you teach a child and train him in matters, either for good or bad, even when he grows old, he will not turn away from it.

My mother may Hashem bless her with health and happiness almost always blames a parent for the shortcomings of the child. I always thought she was just being kind and perhaps somewhat Freudian in thinking. But I realize that King Solomon is telling is that the arrow is in the hands of the parents to properly form and direct.

The word Chanoch in this verse is spelled Chet Nun Chaf and is missing the Vav. Why is it written Chaser

or incomplete? It's to teach us that every child is different. Every child lacks something but no two lack the same and we need to raise each child according to their own needs. My father often said about the four of us, that no two of us are the same.

In addition to his own gentle way, our dad was a master with tools. When he realized his own bow might not properly do the trick, he would employ the assistance of others orchestrating and working behind the scenes in our best interest.

The tree represents the balance within nature. Last week we read of the children of Israel arriving at Marah where the waters were bitter. Hashem shows Moshe a tree and that tree sweetens the water. It's interesting in our own world where pollutants are a major concern, where we worry about global warming; the potential savior is the tree. It's the tree which can help clean and neutralize the environment.

My brother Ruby told a story he heard from a member of the Shaare Zion Committee back in the old days. Our father was Vice President there for many years there. And in the days of the two factions there would be wild arguments, but when Joe Bibi walked in, everything would calm down. He sweetened the bitter waters. He listened to people. He reframed their thoughts. Then he listened to others reframing their thoughts. He showed where they were similar and then endeavored to bring the two together. Perhaps he married my mother, a bat Kohen, because he personified the traits of the disciples of Aaron – OHEV SHALOM VE RODEF SHALOM – Loving peace and chasing peace.

At the same time he was always willing to stand for what's right and unyielding in his demand for justice – yet always sweetening that justice with a dose of kindness insisting one go beyond the letter of the law when others needed it.

My father would explain that although water flows down in nature, the tree shows that the opposite is possible. It's the leaves drawn to the sun which pull the water up against gravity from the roots through the trunk into the branches. He would explain that sometime one must go against one's nature. One must find the strength to reverse gravity lifting ourselves and all those around us. Just as the branches are drawn to the sky and the sun, we can reach for the stars and grasp them.

Let me close with a story that my siblings and many of my nieces and nephews will definitely relate to. One of the things we can do on Tu Bishvat is look at and appreciate nature and the miracle of nature, the

miracle of trees and of fruits and the benevolence of Hashem who provides it all. My dad would explain that in each fruit, there was a different lesson.

I asked them to picture themselves sitting with our father / grandfather, perhaps on the porch on a spring day. We might be sitting next to him or maybe we were really little and sitting on his lap. In his hand is an Orange. We can see the orange in his giant but gentle hands and the sparkle of his masonic ring. With his other hand, he has a curved knife and he starts to remove the peel. He had a way of perfectly cutting away the peel in a cylindrical motion so that it came off in one long piece. You sat there in anticipation of the sweet and satisfying fruit.

He would explain the miracle of the skin and how it protected the fruit. He would describe Hashem's color code system telling us when the fruit was perfectly ripe to eat. And then he would continue his lesson explaining that in life we would often find shells covering, hiding or baring us from our goal. We would need to take the time to examine how to remove that shell and how to get to that fruit without damaging the fruit inside. Our world is a world where the good in many is often hidden. Figure out how to get through a person's shell and one figures out how to get to the sweetness of that person.

Then he would pick up a peach. As he would slice and hand us piece after piece, he would recall sitting with his own grandfather who did the same for him and take us back into time, to a simpler world which we became a part of moving through the generations. I can still taste the sweetness of the fruit.

And then he would come to the pit and explain that just as some people had a cover, others might appear to be sweet but hid a hard pit inside. We needed to be careful not to judge a book by its cover either for the bad or the good. But even that pit if handled correctly could be planted and benefit all of us by becoming a tree yielding much fruit.

And then there were others, he explained cutting a seedless grape in half and handing it to us. No shell to worry about and no pit to worry about. I guess that was my dad, good through and through. He was an integral part of our lives and we will miss him every day,

Tehi Nafsho Serurah VeSror HaChaim

Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

### **My Evening with Sarah and Bibi By Naomi Ragen**

When I was invited to join the Prime Minister at his home in Jerusalem, along with other members of the English-speaking community in Israel, I expected to find myself in a large auditorium in which I would need binoculars to see

Benjamin Netanyahu. To my surprise, the room was an outdoor space that could accommodate no more than fifty, with chairs arranged in an intimate circle, with a small table in the front.

The Prime Minister entered and to everyone's complete astonishment, he went around the room, warmly shaking everyone's hands, nodding to those he had met before. While he started out behind the small table, he soon had two armchairs brought in and joined the circle. The mystery of armchair number two was solved when to our surprise his wife Sarah joined him, smiling graciously.

I was surprised at how small she was. Dressed casually in a smart outfit of black pants, a checked top, and a black sweater, she looked tired, which is no wonder considering that she has been put through the wringer in what must be the lowest political campaign tactics I have ever witnessed in Israel.

What haven't they accused her of? Bringing back bottles to the grocery and keeping the deposit (right, like with a full time job as a child psychologist, and the First Lady of Israel, she's got time for that....) making her staff come

back at midnight to wish her goodnight, and many more "crimes" of that ilk. This stuff has been going on for years. While people are always ready to believe the worst, even the most gullible of Israeli voters is beginning to smell a

rat. If you can't talk about your agenda, and your track record, and your achievements, and your ideas, attack the most vulnerable of targets, a wife and mother whose only crime is being the wife of the country's leader. If you hurt her, you hurt him.

Unfortunately, that's only too true. But the real losers are us.

With the head of the free world AWOL for the last six and a half years bowing to the Saudis, making an ass of himself in Cairo, and destroying America's economy while he plays golf, Benjamin Netanyahu has been heroically cast as the worldleader standing up to the world-shattering dangers of a nuclear Iran. Anything that hurts and weakens him, hurts and

weakens the firmest wall of resistance to the Kool Aid being dished out to the masses regarding an "agreement" with Iran to halt its rush towards becoming a nuclear-industrial power that threatens every single, man, woman and child on Planet Earth.

While he was at the end of a long day by the time he joined us, Prime Minister Netanyahu began his talk with vigor and determination. "We are witnessing the collapse of the Middle East as we know it," he told us. "Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen are gone." Iran, on the rise, has already taken over parts of Yemen and is supplying arms to Lebanon. "In ten to twelve years, Iran will be a nuclear industrial power, and the greatest threat to the future of our world."

Seventy years ago, he reminded us, we didn't have the ability to speak out. Now we have a country, a government, an army. We have the ability to make ourselves heard. It would be an everlasting crime not to raise our voices against this existential threat which is "a mortal threat to our survival." I am, he said with particular passion, "firmly committed to preventing it." The negotiations with Iran, even if successful, will still allow Iran its stockpile of enriched uranium. With all the negotiations, Iran hasn't budged. The only progress, has been the West abandoning its opposition and moving towards Iran's stance.

In answer to a question about negotiations with the Palestinians, he said with refreshing clarity that "any land handed over to the Palestinians has been given over to militant Islamist. "We saw it with Lebanon, we saw it with Gaza." The upcoming Israeli elections are vital. "If you want me as Prime Minister, you must vote for the Likud. A vote for any other party, is a vote for the Left."

This is true. Without a sweeping majority for his party, Netanyahu will not be able to form a government that will stand up against the failed policies of Leftists, responsible for numerous disasters in the last decade which saw us and our children blown up in buses, hotels, and bar mitzvahs. The delusional architects of "Oslo," and its "land for peace" idea that has been discredited again and again and again.

Pitted against the usual range of Leftists like Herzog and the self-promoting, do-nothing Livni -- whose only notable decision was the disastrous push to end the war against Hezbollah too early leaving them armed and dangerous to kill another day-- it is hard to argue that it is vital that the Likud win big.

This is a hard pill for many. I myself don't agree with all Likud policies. But as Mr. Netanyahu pointed out, as far as social programs are concerned, there is only money to improve the quality of life for Israeli citizens if we have a strong economy. He was instrumental in guiding Israel to an enviable economic status, with an unemployment rate the West can only dream about. He really has led the country away from disastrous socialist policies of previous Labor governments, to a thriving entrepreneurial "start-up nation" that is being studied and envied all over the world.

Israel has benefited. There are roads being built everywhere to make it possible for Israelis to live up north and down south and still be able to commute to work. He fought to free up public land for more housing, and to move army bases and army industries from the center of the country to the Negev to free up space for residential housing.

As I listened to him speak, I felt so humbled, and sad really, that Benjamin Netanyahu, who has had to defy the most hostile American administration ever, a frothing United Nations filled with backwater terror-lovers and barbarians, a world-wide insurgence of lethal anti-Semitism, must also deal with a local population inexplicably swayed again and again by used car salesmen politicians hawking their disproven and broken down Leftist policies with a coat of fresh paint. Zionist Coalition? Who are they kidding? They won't agree to call Israel a Jewish State!

He's flying to Washington to talk to Congress. He flew to France to march against terrorism and encourage French Jews to make Aliyah. He presided over a terrible war against Gaza with success.

What else do we want the man to do?

I wanted to stand up and tell him to ignore his critics, that millions of people all over the world are proud that he is going to speak to Congress, to plead Israel's case—the world's case!-- to force Iran, the most dangerous terrorist state since Nazi Germany, to give up its rush towards nuclear weapons. I wanted to tell him that the Israelis I know are appalled by the personal attacks made against him and his wife during this election campaign, the attempts to paint them as money-grubbing and living high on the hog (you should see the area of the Prime Minister's official residence I saw: plastic curtains, plastic chairs, old woodwork...Turning it into a "palace" with public

funds? Pul-leese.) We don't believe a word, and if anything, we are going to vote Likud to spit in their faces. It's called "backlash."

The meeting ended with shocking informality. A woman from Zichron Yaakov got up and told the Prime Minister much of what I was too shy to say. To my astonishment, I could see the eyes of Sarah and Benjamin Netanyahu moisten at the warm words. He put his arm around his wife and hugged her.

It was so special, and yet so normal, being in that room, watching our Prime Minister in his penny loafers and off the rack suit, his grey hair greyer than I remember it. He is was and is my hero. I will vote Likud and so should everyone else who wants to protect Israel's children and her future.

### **How Long Before Democrats Lose the Jewish Vote To a Pro-Israel GOP?**

**By SETH LIPSKY, From the New York Post |**

How long can it last that the Republicans are the party that's more supportive of Israel but the Democrats are the ones that get the Jewish vote? Could it be that President Obama is upending the old alliance?

It's for a reason that I pose those as questions. The landscape is littered with newsmen who've erroneously predicted that we're at the end of the era when the Jewish vote goes automatically to the Democrats.

Yet it's hard to deny that there's "a real crisis going on," as Senator McCain put it on the Cable News Network over the weekend. What will happen if Prime Minister Netanyahu shows up to address a joint meeting of Congress and the Democrats boycott? "I don't know" is the answer Nancy Pelosi gave over the weekend to the question of whether most House Democrats would attend Mr. Netanyahu's speech. The ex-speaker went on to sneer that if the Israeli premier wants to get his message through, he could go on TV.

Mrs. Pelosi has also been carping about alleged violations of protocol by the current Speaker, John Boehner, in failing to consult with the White House — or her, the House minority leader — in arranging for Bibi's speech.

That strikes me as malarkey. As I wrote in this space last week, Congress has the standing to invite Mr. Netanyahu (or any other foreign leader) under half a dozen or more independent powers granted to Congress and enumerated in the Constitution. All this pettifogging might mean something were it taking place in a vacuum. But the Democrats are

changing. When they nominated Mr. Obama for a second term, they tried to abandon the pro-Jerusalem plank that had long been in their platform. When party leaders discovered this, they tried to bring Jerusalem back, only to be blocked by a voice vote. Delegates actually booed from the floor. It was only by ignoring the chorus of nays on the third attempt that the chairman declared the measure passed.

Democrats like to point out that, even after that debacle, Mr. Obama won the Jewish vote by a large margin. This Jewish voting pattern is such an anomaly that the neoconservative sage Norman Podhoretz wrote a book called "Why Are Jews Liberals?"

He concluded that secularism has replaced the truths of religion with what he called the "Torah of liberalism." He could find no signs that this would change soon, but expressed the hope that there would eventually be an end of delusions.

Mr. Podhoretz's book came out in 2009. In 2012, the share of the Jewish vote that went for the GOP soared to 30%, up by more than a third from 2008. If it keeps moving in that direction at that clip, the old alignment could soon be history.

Certainly it's hard to think of a moment quite like that to which Mr. Obama has brought us. It's not, after all, just the Jewish Republicans that he is alienating. He has actually accused members of his own party of kowtowing to political donors.

This happened the other day, when the president vented about the distrust in Congress of his negotiations with Iran. According to The New York Times, Senator Menendez, a Democrat of New Jersey, stood up and told the president to his face that he took personal offense.

No wonder. Mr. Menendez is the real deal, an old-style pro-Israel Democrat. He's just lost his position as chairman of Foreign Relations because the voters reacted against Obama-ism and tossed the Democrats out of the majority in the Senate.

This is a point to mark about the current flap. Mr. Obama wants everyone to think this is a fight between himself and Netanyahu. The more important fight is between Congress — Republicans and the Democratic Party's pro-Israel camp — and a renegade president.

He wants to negotiate with the Iranian mullahs without so much as a howdy-doo to the Congress. He resents Senate oversight, even when it's led by a fellow Democrat. He wants Congress to trust him and the mullahs and not even listen to Mr. Netanyahu. The left is trying to palm off the idea that Mr. Netanyahu is destroying the bipartisan basis of America's support for the Jewish state. It turns out to be Mr. Obama that's doing the deed. We'll know

whether he's succeeding by watching who shows up for Mr. Netanyahu's speech.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Yisro brings Moshe's wife and two sons to join him in the desert. In 18:10, Yisro proclaims his belief in Hashem (G-d) and identifies His manifest justice as the primary motive for his belief and conversion.

2nd & 3rd Aliyot: Yisro observes Moshe's daily schedule as chief administrator, judge, and teacher. He advises his son-in-law to delegate some responsibilities to a hierarchy of worthy judges and administrators. This would allow Moshe to focus his attention on those issues that demand his specific attention. Moshe listens to Yisro's advice.

4th Aliya: This begins the preparation for Revelation. It is the 1st day of Sivan, and the Bnai Yisroel have been in the desert for 43 days. Moshe is told by Hashem to explain to the nation that they are a "kingdom of priests..."

5th Aliya: Moshe tells the nation of G-d's expectations and they respond, "all that Hashem will command we will do." Moshe is further instructed to tell the people to prepare themselves by immersing themselves and their clothing in a Mikveh, and to remain apart from their spouses for 3 days. Mt. Sinai is to be fenced off so that no person or animal could ascend the mountain until the shofar sounded the conclusion of Revelation. On the 3rd day, Revelation began with lightning, thunder, the sounding of a Shofar, and Mt. Sinai completely engulfed in clouds, smoke, and fire. Moshe led the nation to assemble at the foot of a trembling Mt. Sinai.

6th Aliya: Hashem summoned Moshe to ascend the mountain and instructed him to re-emphasize the prohibition against anyone ascending the mountain during Revelation. Moshe descends and discharges G-d's wishes. With Moshe standing among the people at the foot of the mountain, Hashem spoke the Ten Commandments to the entire people.

7th Aliya: This last Aliya describes the reaction of the nation to Revelation. In 20:19, the Pasuk factually states that the Bnai Yisroel (Jewish Nation) collectively heard G-d speak. It is among the most fundamentally important statements in the entire Torah. The Parsha concludes with the three commandments regarding the Mizbeach (Altar).

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

**“And I carried you on the wings of eagles.”  
(Shemot 19:4)**

Before Hashem gave the Jewish people the Torah He spoke about the Exodus from Egypt. Hashem said that He carried us out on wings of eagles. Rashi explains: “This refers to the day that Israel came to Raamses, where the nation had gathered for the Exodus from Egypt. For Israel was scattered throughout the land of Goshen and in a very short time, when they were about to travel and depart, they were all gathered to Raamses.” So in order to ease their departure Hashem Himself gathered them up quickly in Raamses.

Rabbi David Kaplan tells a heartwarming story of another carrier of people. As the Saltzmans exited the Gutnick wedding Hall in Jerusalem, a man standing a few feet away gestured towards them and simultaneously pointed to a van. “Where do you need to get to?” he asked. “It’s okay. We’re taking a bus,” Mr. Saltzman said.

“Don’t worry. I don’t charge. I’m not a cab, but maybe I can give you a lift. Where are you headed?” “We’re going to Ramot.”

“Great. That’s in my direction. Get in.” The seven Saltzmans clambered in and settled in the seats, noticing another family of three already in the van. “I’m just dropping them off in Givat Shaul and then we’ll head up to Ramot.”

The Saltzmans figured the man lived in Ramot and were very appreciative of the way he went out of his way to find someone to give a ride to. Only when they were getting out in front of their home did they realize there was something out of the ordinary going on. As they thanked the driver, they asked him where he lived. “In Ezrat Torah,” he answered.

“So why did you take us so far out of your way? We thought you lived here.”

The man smiled. “Each night I hang around the Gutnick Hall, because I know people are coming out of weddings late and public transportation is not great at that hour. An entire enjoyable evening can be ruined by the hassle of trying to get home. So I drive people home from the weddings and then come back looking for more. Hopefully, it’ll be a merit for me and my family.”

This story really gives us a lift. It’s another reminder of how it’s so true that hesed is one of the things about which our Sages say there is no limit. A person who truly wants to do hesed will find a way to do it. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

**"Do not bear Hashem's name (in an oath)"  
(Shemot 20:7)**

One of the Ten Commandments is to not swear falsely or in vain. To swear falsely is self understood, but to swear in vain means to proclaim a fact which is obvious such as swearing that a book is a book, or anything similar to that. The Gemara tells us that the earth trembled when this prohibition was uttered because using Hashem's name in vain is truly a terrible thing with dire consequences. This should make us be careful whenever we mention Hashem's name in any situation. In addition, this should make us hesitate to swear in any manner, even without using Hashem's name, but all the more so when mentioning the Holy Name. Many times people say "I swear to G-d" in order to make a point - this is not something to take lightly. We must watch our mouths and get into the habit of saying "Beli Neder" ("Without an oath") even when not mentioning "I swear".

Here is a short list of what is considered an oath:

- 1) By G-d, this is so-and-so.
- 2) G-d is my witness that I did or did not do this.
- 3) By my life that such and such happened or didn't happen.
- 4) I should be cursed if this isn't true, etc.

We see from here that even without using the word 'oath' or 'swear', we could be obligating ourselves in a very heavy way. We must also be careful from saying “I am going to do this misvah (such as giving charity, going to shul, etc.)” without saying “Beli Neder” because it’s also considered binding. Also, if we do certain practices three times it may be considered as a vow, so we should say “Beli Neder.” Let us attempt to be on guard and not swear in any which way or form. If one has a doubt, contact a Rabbi to see if he may need Hatarah. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

**RABBI ELI MANSOUR**

**Visit [DailyHalacha.com](http://DailyHalacha.com), [DailyGemara.com](http://DailyGemara.com),  
[MishnaBerura.com](http://MishnaBerura.com), [LearnTorah.com](http://LearnTorah.com)  
Correcting the Flaw of Fraternal Strife**

Parashat Yitro begins by describing the arrival of Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, at Beneh Yisrael's camp in the wilderness. Moshe greets Yitro, who brings sacrificial offerings to God. Later, Yitro expresses his disapproval at the way Moshe single-handedly tended to the people's questions, and advises Moshe to appoint a judicial network to help him.

This narrative raises many questions. Yitro had been the priest of Midyan, the chief idolater of that nation. Why did the Torah devote so much attention to him and his arrival in Beneh Yisrael's camp? Furthermore, why did Yitro feel qualified to give



advice to Moshe Rabbenu, and, even more troubling, why did Moshe accept his advice?

We might also ask the general question of why Yitro was worthy of having a Parasha named after him in the Torah. Was he so significant a figure that he deserved this distinction? And, not only did he receive a Parasha in his name, but this is the most important Parasha – the Parasha that tells of the event of Matan Torah – the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai!

The Arizal (Rabbi Yishak Luria, 1534-1572) commented that Yitro's soul contained a part of the soul of a person who lived much earlier – Kayin. Recall from Parashat Bereshit that Kayin felt jealous of his brother, Hebel, because God had accepted Hebel's offering and not his. Kayin's jealousy reached the point where he killed his brother for no other reason than envy. The Midrash explains that before Kayin slew Hebel, the two brothers engaged in a philosophical debate. Kayin, seeing that God disapproved of his sacrifice but accepted Hebel's, concluded that "there is no judgment and there is no judge." Hebel, however, insisted that the world is fairly judged by God.

The Arizal commented that Kayin's soul required a "Tikun" ("rectification"), and for this purpose it returned within the soul of a number of later figures, including Yitro. Moshe, the Arizal claimed, contained within him the soul of Hebel, Kayin's slain brother. This explains why it was important for Moshe to marry Yitro's daughter; the union between Yitro and Moshe signified the "Tikun" of Kayin's hostility toward Hebel. (In fact, according to the Midrash, Kayin and Hebel had fought over one of their sisters, whom both desired to marry. The Arizal explained that Sipora, Moshe's wife, had the soul of that sister, and thus by allowing Moshe to marry Sipora, Yitro helped correct the sin of Kayin, who resented his brother's claim to that sister.)

This process of "Tikun" continues in Parashat Yitro, when Yitro comes to bring offerings to God. Kayin's offering was rejected because he had brought flax – a cheap material that was inappropriate for an offering to God. Yitro now corrects this mistake by bringing proper sacrifices in the wilderness. Additionally, Yitro establishes Beneh Yisrael's judicial system – rectifying his mistake of denying the existence of judgment in the world. Finally, Yitro makes his suggestion to Moshe out of concern for him, warning that the overbearing schedule would kill Moshe. Kayin had killed Hebel; now, Kayin's soul, through Yitro, works to save Moshe – who contained the soul of Hebel.

This explains why the Parasha that describes Matan Torah is named after Yitro. Correcting the flaw of fraternal strife and hatred was a precondition for Beneh Yisrael's receiving the Torah. The soul of Kayin had to be redeemed through Yitro's arrival before God could reveal Himself to Beneh Yisrael to give them the Torah. Once this flaw was corrected, and the stain of the first instance of hatred and strife was removed from mankind, God descended upon Mount Sinai to give His Torah to Beneh Yisrael.

### **Rabbi Wein NEVER AGAIN**

I am well aware that there is no use beating a dead horse and that the subject of the Holocaust is already in the minds of most of the world's population, truly a dead horse. Last week the United Nations and over fifty countries commemorated the seventieth anniversary of the expulsion of the Germans from the Auschwitz death camp in Poland. This commemoration was marked by the usual plethora of high-sounding words and empty pledges regarding the fact that this type of genocide against Jews should never again be allowed.

However, to my ancient and hoary ears it all sounded hollow and almost meaningless in face of the actual realities and facts that comprise the current state of world affairs. This anniversary, occurring so many decades after the event, took place with the presence of the backdrop of most of Europe engaged in its favorite hobby of anti-Semitism and blaming all of its evils on the Jews.

Throughout Europe, from Berlin to Paris to London, in Madrid, Rome and Athens, the cry of "Death to the Jews" can be heard often and loud. It is difficult to believe in "never again" when so many millions are shouting "let us do it again." Anti-Semitism is apparently an incurable disease that has rotted the soul of Europe for almost two millennia.

Europe has never learned the lesson of the disaster that anti-Semitism brings upon it. It will take more than formal commemorations, museums, monuments and reassuring speeches to eradicate the scourge that has infested so much of the civilized world. Therefore the outlook for "never again" is fairly bleak.

In a powerful article written by Charles Krauthammer in the Washington Post last week, he pointed out that the Islamic terrorists made an error in attacking the offices of Charlie Hebo. Had they contented themselves simply with killing Jews in the Paris kosher supermarket there would have been no

demonstrations of millions of people in the streets of Paris objecting to the Islamic terrorist atrocities.

No world leaders would have left their comfortable offices to march against terror if only Jews were the victims of that terror. Jewish children were slaughtered in Toulouse a few years ago and the world hardly noticed. Jews were killed in Brussels and after the usual official clucking of regret, everything went back to its previous state. Jews in Antwerp are very nervous walking on the streets of the city where they have lived as citizens for many centuries.

The Belgian government, like almost all of its counterparts in Europe, trumpets the cause of the Palestinians and condemns Israel at every opportunity. Overwhelmed with the flood of Moslem immigrants into its countries, and unable to cope with radicalization of so many of them, Europe has surrendered itself to institutional, diplomatic and economic anti-Semitism.

There were no mass demonstrations against Auschwitz while it was occurring. The Jewish world then in denial and fear of the canard of "dual loyalty" remained mostly publicly silent while its brothers and sisters were being systematically annihilated. Sadly, it is apparent that there will be no mass demonstrations against new forms of Auschwitz if God forbid it repeats itself again. So the Jewish people and especially the state of Israel find themselves in a very difficult, problematic and dangerous situation.

In effect, the only defense against anti-Semitism today is the strength of the state of Israel and yet we are constantly reminded by the world's media and diplomats that such a defense is unseemly and in fact somehow counterproductive to Jewish interests. In the woolly world that George Orwell foresaw and that we live in, this type of reasoning is constantly advanced and fostered. So currently "never again" is humbug!"

Iran is currently at war with Israel and the Jewish people worldwide. It uses its surrogates – Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, etc. – to wage constant war against Israel and its citizens and Jews everywhere, from Argentina to Mumbai. It is driving steadily and speedily towards achieving its goal of having nuclear weapons and the means to deliver those awesome weapons anywhere in the world.

It openly threatens Israel with extinction. While the West and the United States dithers and puts its hopes in negotiations that, even if successful, will not

guarantee that Iran will be devoid of nuclear weapons, Israel and the Jewish world finds itself at war with itself. The elections in Israel could not occur at a worse time than now and tragically are being conducted in a very disheartening and shameful manner.

No matter who wins, we have already lost. Once again, the Lord has painted us into a very narrow corner. We must do all in our power to extricate ourselves from the siege that surrounds us and from the inner malaise that so weakens us. A realistic view of the true situation in which we find ourselves can serve as the beginning of policies that will enable us to say with some confidence "never again."

### **Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Structure of the Good Society**

In the House of Lords there is a special chamber used, among other things, as the place where new peers are robed before their introduction into the House. When my predecessor Lord Jakobovits was introduced, the official robing him commented that he was the first rabbi to be honoured in the Upper House. Lord Jakobovits replied, "No, I am the second." "Who was the first?" asked the surprised official. Lord Jakobovits pointed to the large mural that decorates the chamber and gave it its name. It is known as the Moses Room because of the painting that dominates the room. It shows Moses bringing the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai. So Moses was the first rabbi to adorn the House of Lords.

The Ten Commandments that appear in this week's parsha have long held a special place not only in Judaism but also within the broader configuration of values we call the Judeo-Christian ethic. In the United States they were often to be found adorning American law courts, though their presence has been challenged, in some states successfully, on the grounds that they breach the first amendment and the separation of church and state. They remain the supreme expression of the higher law to which all human law is bound.

Within Judaism too they held a special place. In Second Temple times they were recited in the daily prayers as part of the Shema, which then had four paragraphs rather than three.[1] It was only when sectarians began to claim that only these and not the other 603 commands came directly from God that the recitation was brought to an end.[2]

The text retained its hold on the Jewish mind none the less. Even though it was removed from daily

communal prayers, it was preserved in the prayer book as a private meditation to be said after the formal service has been concluded. In most congregations, people stand when they are read as part of the Torah reading, despite the fact that Maimonides explicitly ruled against it.[3]

Yet their uniqueness is not straightforward. As moral principles, they were mostly not new. Almost all societies have had laws against murder, robbery and false testimony. There is some originality in the fact that they are apodictic, that is, simple statements of "You shall not," as opposed to the casuistic form, "If ... then." But they are only ten among a much larger body of 613 commandments. Nor are they even described by the Torah itself as "ten commandments." The Torah calls them the *aseret ha-devarim*, that is, "ten utterances." Hence the Greek translation, Decalogue, meaning, "ten words."

What makes them special is that they are simple and easy to memorise. That is because in Judaism, law is not intended for judges alone. The covenant at Sinai, in keeping with the profound egalitarianism at the heart of Torah, was made not as other covenants were in the ancient world, between kings. The Sinai covenant was made by God with the entire people. Hence the need for a simple statement of basic principles that everyone can remember and recite.

More than this, they establish for all time the parameters – the corporate culture, we could almost call it – of Jewish existence. To understand how, it is worth reflecting on their basic structure. There was a fundamental disagreement between Maimonides and Nahmanides on the status of the first sentence: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." Maimonides, in line with the Talmud, held that this is in itself a command: to believe in God. Nahmanides held that it was not a command at all. It was a prologue or preamble to the commands.[4] Modern research on ancient Near Eastern covenant formulae tends to support Nahmanides.

The other fundamental question is how to divide them. Most depictions of the Ten Commandments divide them into two, because of the "two tablets of stone" on which they were engraved. Roughly speaking, the first five are about the relationship between humans and God, the second five about the relationship between humans themselves. There is, however, another way of thinking about numerical structures in the Torah.

The seven days of creation, for example, are structured as two sets of three followed by an all-

embracing seventh. During the first three days God separated domains: light and dark, upper and lower waters, and sea and dry land. During the second three days He filled each with the appropriate objects and life forms: sun and moon, birds and fish, animals and man. The seventh day was set apart from the others as holy.

Likewise the ten plagues consist of three cycles of three followed by a stand-alone tenth. In each cycle of three, the first two were forewarned while the third struck without warning. In the first of each series, Pharaoh was warned in the morning, in the second Moses was told to "come in before pharaoh" in the palace, and so on. The tenth plague, unlike the rest, was announced at the very outset (Ex. 4: 23). It was less a plague than a punishment.

Similarly it seems to me that the commandments are structured in three groups of three, with a tenth that is set apart from the rest. Thus understood, we can see how they form the basic structure, the depth grammar, of Israel as a society bound by covenant to God as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

The first three – No other gods besides Me, no graven images, and no taking of God's name in vain – define the Jewish people as "one nation under God." God is our ultimate sovereign. Therefore all other earthly rule is subject to the overarching imperatives linking Israel to God. Divine sovereignty transcends all other loyalties (No other gods besides Me). God is a living force, not an abstract power (No graven images). And sovereignty presupposes reverence (Do not take My name in vain).

The first three commands, through which the people declare their obedience and loyalty to God above all else, establish the single most important principle of a free society, namely the moral limits of power. Without this, the danger even in democracy is the tyranny of the majority, against which the best defence against it is the sovereignty of God.

The second three commands – the Sabbath, honouring parents, and the prohibition of murder – are all about the principle of the createdness of life. They establish limits to the idea of autonomy, namely that we are free to do whatever we like so long as it does not harm others. Shabbat is the day dedicated to seeing God as creator and the universe as His creation. Hence, one day in seven, all human hierarchies are suspended and everyone, master, slave, employer, employee, even domestic animals, are free.

Honouring parents acknowledges our human

createdness. It tells us that not everything that matters is the result of our choice, chief of which is the fact that we exist at all. Other people's choices matter, not just our own. "Thou shall not murder" restates the central principle of the universal Noahide covenant that murder is not just a crime against man but a sin against God in whose image we are. So commands 4 to 7 form the basic jurisprudential principles of Jewish life. They tell us to remember where we came from if we are to be mindful of how to live.

The third three – against adultery, theft and bearing false witness – establish the basic institutions on which society depends. Marriage is sacred because it is the human bond closest in approximation to the covenant between us and God. Not only is marriage the human institution par excellence that depends on loyalty and fidelity. It is also the matrix of a free society. Alexis de Tocqueville put it best: "As long as family feeling is kept alive, the opponent of oppression is never alone."<sup>[5]</sup>

The prohibition against theft establishes the integrity of property. Whereas Jefferson defined as inalienable rights those of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," John Locke, closer in spirit to the Hebrew Bible, saw them as "life, liberty and property." Tyrants abuse the property rights of the people, and the assault of slavery against human dignity is that it deprives me of the ownership of the wealth I create.

The prohibition of false testimony is the precondition of justice. A just society needs more than a structure of laws, courts and enforcement agencies. As Judge Learned Hand said, "Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it." There is no freedom without justice, but there is no justice without each of us accepting individual and collective responsibility for "telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

Finally comes the stand-alone prohibition against envying your neighbour's house, wife, slave, maid, ox, donkey, or anything else belonging to him or her. This seems odd if we think of the "ten words" as commands, but not if we think of them as the basic principles of a free society. The greatest challenge of any society is how to contain the universal, inevitable phenomenon of envy: the desire to have what belongs to someone else. Envy lies at the heart of violence.<sup>[6]</sup> It was envy that led Cain to murder Abel, made Abraham and Isaac fear for their life because they were married to beautiful women, led Joseph's brothers to hate him and sell him into slavery. It is

envy that leads to adultery, theft and false testimony, and it was envy of their neighbours that led the Israelites time and again to abandon God in favour of the pagan practices of the time.

Envy is the failure to understand the principle of creation as set out in Genesis 1, that everything has its place in the scheme of things. Each of us has our own task and our own blessings, and we are each loved and cherished by God. Live by these truths and there is order. Abandon them and there is chaos. Nothing is more pointless and destructive than to let someone else's happiness diminish your own, which is what envy is and does. The antidote to envy is, as Ben Zoma famously said, "to rejoice in what we have" and not to worry about what we don't yet have. Consumer societies are built on the creation and intensification of envy, which is why they lead to people having more and enjoying it less.

Thirty-three centuries after they were first given, the Ten Commandments remain the simplest, shortest guide to creation and maintenance of a good society. Many alternatives have been tried, and most have ended in tears. The wise aphorism remains true: When all else fails, read the instructions.

[1] Mishnah Tamid 5:1, Berakhot 12a.

[2] We do not know who the sectarians were: they may have included early Christians. The argument was that only these were directly heard by the Israelites from God. The others were heard only through Moses.

[3] Maimonides, Responsa, Blau Edition, Jerusalem, 1960, no. 263.

[4] Maimonides, Sefer ha-Mitzvot, positive command 1; Nahmanides, Glosses ad loc.

[5] Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vintage, 1954, vol. 1, 340.

[6] The best book on the subject is, Helmut Schoeck, Envy; a Theory of Social Behaviour. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969

### **AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z"TL "You shall not murder." (20:13)**

This command is an essential corollary of the First Dictum "I am Hashem." "He that shed the blood of man, by man his blood must be shed, for G-d made man in His image" (Beresheet 9:6). Included in this Dictum is the duty of rescuing a fellowman's life, and also the necessity to guard ones own life in safety and in health. Thus RMBM includes these matters under one heading: "Laws of Murder and of Guarding Life" in which he deals also with the law of Maakeh (unstable ladder) and similar admonitions of safety.

"You shall not kill" even unintentionally. The entire tractate of Makot is here included. And especially today all rules of traffic safety for drivers and pedestrians are certainly intended by this

Commandment. The precautions against fire in the home and in public institutions, and the building codes for prevention of fire or collapse, are without question included in this Dictum of Hashem. Parents are here admonished by Hashem to protect children from open windows, burning candles and stove fires and from contracting avoidable illness.

When a husband or wife afflicts a mate so seriously that illness and death are caused, this Commandment has been transgressed. Killing by embarrassment or by depriving of a livelihood is another form of bloodshed. Suicide is also hereby forbidden.

Thus "You shall not kill" Includes: You shall not cause death, or premature death, by neglecting your health or your safety; or by endangering the health or safety of others. One who shortens his own life or his fellowman's life is a transgressor of this Dictum. Even killing a dying man is included here because even one minute of life is sacred.

Therefore when one wastes his life without purpose, or even part of his life, it is a form of transgression of the intent of this Commandment.

Quoted from "A NATION IS BORN" by Rabbi Miller ZT'L

Parts of this newsletter are courtesy of Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway. Permission is granted to redistribute, but please give proper attribution and copyright to the author and Project Genesis, and refer to [learn@torah.org](mailto:learn@torah.org) and <http://www.torah.org/> . Both the authors and Project Genesis reserve certain rights. For full information on copyrights, send email to [copyrights@torah.org](mailto:copyrights@torah.org).

Shabbat Shalom From Cyberspace E Mail Edition is published each week since 1995 and is distributed to 18,000 readers. Our goal is to spread torah knowledge. Articles are downloaded from sites and from e-mail forwarded to us. We encourage you to reprint the newsletter and distribute it to co-workers, friends and family. You can retransmit copies by fax, mail or by hand. Be a part of the Mitzvah of spreading torah. It takes so little to make copies and distribute them. And with E Mail it just takes a click to send this along. To subscribe directly or have us send to a friend or family member Send a request to [ShabbatShalomNewsletter@Gmail.com](mailto:ShabbatShalomNewsletter@Gmail.com) with your name, phone, fax and E-Mail Address