

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

DEBARIM

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 1: 1-27

JULY 13, 2013

6 AB 5773

The Fast of Tish'ah B'Ab will begin on Monday night, July 15 and end on Tuesday night, July 16.

DEDICATIONS: For refuah shelemah – Yosef Ben Esther and Rita Bat Esther

Candles: 8:08 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM – Please say Shemah at home by 8:25AM

This week's Kiddush is jointly sponsored by ... Ida Abittan , Kathy Amiel, Serena Amiel, Patty & Jack Azzizo, Karen and Alan Coh, Gabrielle & David Frieden, Robert Krauss, Tina & Uri Lemberger, Hinda & Robert Mizrahi, Roni & Sam Shetrit, Helen Tennenbaum, Penny & Hal Waldman

We need sponsors for the Kiddush. Please dedicate one in memory of or in honor of a loved one or a friend.

11:00 - 12:00 Orah's will be here with our Shabbat Morning Kids Program upstairs in the Rabbi's study. Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks and more . . . And Leah Colish will be babysitting down in the playroom

6:30 - Shabbat Afternoon Oneg with Rabbi Yosef and Leah; Treats, Stories, Basketball, Hula-hoop, Parsha Quiz, Tefillot, Raffles and Fun! Supervised play during Seudat Shelishit.

5:30: Ladies Torah Class at the Lemberger's 1 East Olive.

Pirkei Avot with Rav Aharon: 6:45 Minha: 7:25 PM –

Seudah Shelishi and a Class 8:00 – with David

Evening Service (Arbith): 9:00 PM - Shabbat Ends: 9:07 PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Daily 6:30 AM class – Honest Business Practices

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – 7PM – CHANGED TO WEDNESDAY NIGHT THIS WEEK AT 7PM

SEE TISHA BE'AV LAWS AND SCHEDULE ATTACHED WITHIN THE NEWSLETTER PAGES 2,3

Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach

Benai Asher - 9th of Ab 5773

Schedule and Laws

Laws of Tish'a B'Ab: Anniversary of the Destruction of the 1st and 2nd Temples

This year the fast of the 9th of Ab falls on Tuesday July 16th, 2013.

Seuda Mafseket: For the last meal prior to the beginning of the fast, one sits on the floor or on a low chair and eats a meal consisting of bread and an item that symbolizes mourning, such as a hard-boiled egg or lentils. One sits alone on the floor for this meal. Even if three men are in the same room, they do not recite zimmun before Birkat Hamazon. One should be careful to brush their teeth and rinse out their mouth before the fast begins.

The fast begins Monday night July 15 at 8:24 pm.

One must abstain from the following activities beginning at 8:24pm.

1. *Eating and Drinking*
2. *Showering*
3. *Using perfumes or ointments for pleasure*
4. *Marital relations*
5. *Wearing leather shoes*
6. *Learning Torah (it is customary to study "Eikha" (Lamentations), the book of Job and topics dealing with the destruction of the Temple instead)*

The following people are not obligated to fast:

1. *Boys under 13, girls under 12 (they may fast a few hours if they understand the reason for the fast).*
2. *Nursing women*
3. *Persons who are sick*

Those not fasting, should however not indulge in food. Smoking is permitted, but is not recommended.

Washing of hands permitted only for the following purposes:

1. *Morning "Netilat Yadaim" upon waking up.*
2. *Before every prayer*
3. *If they are clearly very dirty*

4. *After using the restroom*
5. *Washing hands is to the knuckle only unless the dirt extends beyond.*

- *Washing dishes or food for cooking is permitted*
- *Upon waking, one may wash their eyes*
- *One may not rinse or brush teeth*
- *If a person is in great discomfort he/she may rinse their mouth with a little water - being careful not to swallow any*
- *Working is permitted but is not recommended*
- *Taking a pleasure trip is forbidden*

- *One may not greet a friend in the usual manner, but one may say "Tizke Be'nehemat Sion" and the other replies "Tizke Be'binyana"*

The fast ends Tuesday night July 16 at 9:00 pm.

- *After the fast is over most restrictions are immediately permissible, though it is still forbidden to listen to music, eat meat and drink wine until sundown on the Tenth of Ab (the day following Tish'a B'Ab – Wednesday July 17th).*

May G-D, as he promised through the Prophets, turn these days of sadness and mourning into days of happiness and rejoicing.

תזכו לראות בנחמת ציון ובבנינה

Monday, July 15 – Ereb Tish'a B'Ab

Shahrit.....	6:55am
Minha.....	6:30pm
Seuda Mafseket	following
Fast Begins.....	8:24pm
Begin Wearing Non-Leather Shoes.....	8:24pm
Arbit.....	8:45pm

Tuesday, July 16 – Fast of Tish'a B'Ab

Shahrit	6:55am
Minha.....	7:50pm
Arbit.....	8:45pm
End of Fast.....	9:00pm
Break the Fast.....	following

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

Editors Notes

My niece and nephew, Adele and Eddie Esses have been living in some strange places on Eddie's path to practicing medicine. Last summer was spent in Champaign, Illinois. I looked on a map and Champaign seems to be located in the middle of nowhere about equidistant to Chicago, St Louis, Louisville and Indianapolis. I guess it might be the heart of the Midwest. And if you're searching for any Jewish life in the middle of nowhere, you search for a Chabad House.

Eddie writes, The Chabad there took excellent care of us. The work that the Rabbi does there is amazing both with the college students and the growing local community. Led by Chabad, the community recently completed the building of women's mikveh, but until they pay the rest of the bill, people can't begin using it. They need to make a payment of \$25,000 and someone has offered to put up matching funds of \$12,500 as long as the Chabad raises the other \$12,500 by Monday July 15. They are almost there! They're currently only about \$1500 dollars short.

Part of the conditions for their funding is that the mikveh be used appropriately according to Halacha. Eddie lived in Champaign for two months and verifies this rabbi is really a special person including being, "the warmest rabbi I've met".

As we approach Tisha BeAv, when we mourn the Temple's destruction over Sinat Chinam – baseless hatred, let us show Ahavat Chinam – true love between us and make some small donation to the project. Enable women who have already committed to it, to start using a mikveh!

To donate you could visit www.jewishillini.org and click on "donate" along the left side of the page. Or click on the link below:

https://jewishilliniorg.clohosting.org/templates/articlecc_o_cdo/aid/136617/jewish/Donation-Form/lang/en

Make sure to specify that it is for the mikveh.

The following story has been told since 2006, but my friend Phil Rosen posted it and for those who never hear it, its important to hear.

LEICA AND THE JEWS

The Leica is the pioneer 35mm camera. It is a German product - precise, minimalist, and utterly efficient.

Behind its worldwide acceptance as a creative tool was a family-owned, socially oriented firm that, during the Nazi era, acted with uncommon grace, generosity and modesty. E. Leitz Inc., designer and manufacturer of Germany's most famous photographic product, saved its Jews.

And Ernst Leitz II, the steely-eyed Protestant patriarch who headed the closely held firm as the Holocaust loomed across Europe, acted in such a way as to earn the title, "the photography industry's Schindler."

As soon as Adolf Hitler was named chancellor of Germany in 1933, Ernst Leitz II began receiving frantic calls from Jewish associates, asking for his help in getting them and their families out of the country. As Christians, Leitz and his family were immune to Nazi Germany's Nuremberg laws, which restricted the movement of Jews and limited their professional activities.

To help his Jewish workers and colleagues, Leitz quietly established what has become known among historians of the Holocaust as "the Leica Freedom Train," a covert means of allowing Jews to leave Germany in the guise of Leitz employees being assigned overseas.

Employees, retailers, family members, even friends of family members were "assigned" to Leitz sales offices in France, Britain, Hong Kong and the United States, Leitz's activities intensified after the Kristallnacht of November 1938, during which synagogues and Jewish shops were burned across Germany.

Before long, German "employees" were disembarking from the ocean liner Bremen at a New York pier and making their way to the Manhattan office of Leitz Inc., where executives quickly found them jobs in the photographic industry.

Each new arrival had around his or her neck the symbol of freedom - a new Leica camera.

The refugees were paid a stipend until they could find work. Out of this migration came designers, repair technicians, salespeople, marketers and writers for the photographic press.

Keeping the story quiet The "Leica Freedom Train" was at its height in 1938 and early 1939, delivering groups of refugees to New York every few weeks. Then, with the invasion of Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, Germany closed its borders.

By that time, hundreds of endangered Jews had escaped to America, thanks to the Leitzes' efforts. How did Ernst Leitz II and his staff get away with it?

Leitz, Inc. was an internationally recognized brand that reflected credit on the newly resurgent Reich. The company produced cameras, range-finders and other optical systems for the German military. Also, the Nazi government desperately needed hard currency from abroad, and Leitz's single biggest market for optical goods was the United States.

Even so, members of the Leitz family and firm suffered for their good works. A top executive, Alfred Turk, was jailed for working to help Jews and freed only after the payment of a large bribe.

Leitz's daughter, Elsie Kuhn-Leitz, was imprisoned by the Gestapo after she was caught at the border, helping Jewish women cross into Switzerland. She eventually was freed but endured rough treatment in the course of questioning. She also fell under suspicion when she attempted to improve the living conditions of 700 to 800 Ukrainian slave laborers, all of them women, who had been assigned to work in the plant during the 1940s. (After the war, Kuhn-Leitz received numerous honors for her humanitarian efforts, among them the Officer d'honneur des Palms Academic from France in 1965 and the Aristide Briand Medal from the European Academy in the 1970s.)

Why has no one told this story until now? According to the late Norman Lipton, a freelance writer and editor, the Leitz family wanted no publicity for its heroic efforts. Only after the last member of the Leitz family was dead did the "Leica Freedom Train" finally come to light.

It is now the subject of a book, "The Greatest Invention of the Leitz Family: The Leica Freedom Train," by Frank Dabba Smith, a California-born Rabbi currently living in England.

Thank you for reading the above, and if you feel inclined as I did to pass it along to others, please do so. It only takes a few minutes.

Memories of the righteous should live on.

Mourning the Mikdash



In all of our offices, for my entire life, there has always been one painting on the wall. It is the painting of a fine, distinguished and handsome man, my great grandfather Joseph A Bibi. I guess all our related family companies find their American

origins in him, so it's fitting that his image graces the wall. What I never noticed until I walked by my dad's desk and checked the Yahrzeit (or as I was corrected by Dr. Stevan Dweck of California, I should as a Sephardic Jew be using the term Mishmar) list a few moments ago was that my great grandfather passed away in 1927. I always imagined that my father who bears his grandfather's name had a relationship with the man, but I am not sure how much of a relationship they had in 2 ½ years. I do know that Joseph A Bibi was a world renowned Artisan who traveled the globe more than a century ago. He was a talmid hacham who studied the sodot of the Torah and as the patriarch of the family, who sacrificed so much and helped design his community, we owe him much. But when the 19th of Elul comes around each year, aside from giving a class in his memory and saying a hashkava or memorial prayer, I don't really mourn his passing. The picture makes me think of him more than any of my other great grandparents and the stories I heard give me a connection, but it's just a long distance connection. The Rabbis have a concept for this, it's called aveylut yeshana – "old" mourning.

Chas VeShalom – heaven forbid – when someone passes away and a relative mourns for them, we call this "new" mourning or aveylut chadasha. In halacha – Jewish Law – the closer one is to the tragedy the greater the level of mourning because we feel it. That person was here yesterday and now that person is

gone. It's tangible. It's emotional. We have someone to mourn.

Hashem has created us so that over time following the loss of a loved one, we get over our mourning. We learn this from our forefather Yaakov's mourning for his son Joseph. Our Rabbis teach us that we can only begin to forget someone, and start to feel relief from the pain of mourning, after the person dies. Yaakov continued to mourn his son Joseph, for a full 22 years, because Yosef his son, was not dead.

When referring to the Churban – the destruction of the Temple – the Rabbis again use the term, "old" mourning. The fact is that the churban is difficult to relate to. The vast majority of us cannot begin to conceptualize the significance of the loss. We cannot imagine the enormous quantity of animals being slaughtered, cut and burned on the alter as smoke rose up. Even those who have gone through Daf Yomi and have at least briefly reviewed the Talmud cannot understand the Ketoret or incense offering. The fact is that the entire chapter of Jewish Law relating to the Temple is relatively unknown.

How does one mourn for that which one finds difficult to imagine? I see my great grandfather's picture every day. I knew who he was, where he was born, where he lived, what he did and how it relates to me and still I acknowledge his passing, but without tears.

How are we to cry over a building?

Clearly, a mourner is sad because he has experienced a loss. In order for one to mourn the loss of the Bet haMikdash, one must realize what has been lost and how it relates to him individually, to the Jews as a nation and to the entire world.

And although the Gemarah in Sukkah writes, "one who has not seen the Bet HaMikdash has never seen a majestic building", we are certainly not mourning the loss of a building, per se. In fact one of the reasons Hashem burned the stones of the Mikdash was to teach us that it's not about the cover, it's about what the cover encases and represents.

Pirkei Avot teaches that ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Bet HaMikdash:

1. No woman miscarried from the smell of sacrificial meat.
2. Sacrificial meat never spoiled.
3. No flies were present where they sacrificed animals.
4. The Kohen Gadol never had an emission on Yom Kippur.

5. The fire on the Alter was never extinguished by rain.
6. The pillar of smoke was never moved by the wind.
7. The Omer, the Two Breads and Lechem HaPanim (left in the Sanctuary for a week at a time, and eaten on the following Shabbat) were never found to be invalid.
8. The people would stand crowded but have room to bow down.
9. Snakes and scorpions never hurt people in Jerusalem.
10. No one ever said to his friend that there is no place for me to stay in Jerusalem.

Why are these so important? I believe that they show us that the Bet HaMikdash was the place where the Jew encountered Hashem. Imagine walking towards Jerusalem and seeing the Temple on the mount in the distance, knowing it was windy but seeing a column of smoke go straight without wavering. Then stepping into the gates and witnessing people from all walks of life looking to connect. Each of the miracles brought Hashem to life. Imagine being packed in and then seeing there was room for everyone to lay down. You were in a place beyond the constraints of time and space. Each miracle experienced, made Hashem's presence real. They say that the time spent in Hashem's house was one of heightened consciousness to the point that we encountered Him just by being there.

If you could meet anyone in history, who would that be? Choose anyone and I have a better choice, G-d! So we mourn the disconnection from Hashem.

And I think part of the problem is that so many of us only mourn the event once a year. We don't take to heart, "If I forget thee Jerusalem". It's a song and a statement before breaking a glass and celebrating. We don't feel ourselves break with that glass. We need to think of Jerusalem and mourn the loss each time we pray the Amidah in the blessings of Boneh Yerushalayim and Masmiach Keren Yeshuah. We need to feel a bit of pain every time we see the Kotel with a golden dome behind it. We need to say Tikun Chasot reading the words, "remember Hashem what we had ... our inheritance has passed to strangers, our house to foreigners ... we are orphans ... why do you abandon us ..." And if not Tikun Chasot at some point in the day, stop and try to imagine what we had and what we lost and what we want.

Sadly too many of us who call for Mashiach would probably tell him upon his arrival, "wait we need to take care of things, give us some notice and come back when we are ready". We ignore the threats of

our enemies which should prompt us to recall that we want and need Mashiach,

We must remind ourselves daily because by nature we forget.

Rabbi Abittan's z'sl teacher, Rav Soloveitchik explained that a mourner is enjoined from crying too much for his relative because, as the Rambam writes death is part of the natural course of events in this world. But the destruction of the Bet HaMikdash was an unnatural event. The Temple was much more than a physical structure. It symbolized the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. It was the focal point of spirituality in the world. When we mourn the loss of the Mikdash, we are not crying for the wood and the stones. We mourn the fact that we no longer see Hashem's presence as clearly in the world and that our relationship with Him is strained. We long for the day when the Jewish people will reunite with Hashem and feel his closeness once again. In other words, we hope for the day when the world will return to its natural state. That is why we are obligated to cry on Tisha B'Av (and commanded to remember our loss every day) and there is no limit to our mourning because the loss of the Bet HaMikdash is a reality we can never come to terms with.

Think about that, "the loss of the Bet HaMikdash is a reality we can never come to terms with".

We know that people are born and people die. We know we had ancestors, some we met, some we heard of and some who are both nameless and without story to us. We remember those we can, we respect them and mourn their loss.

But the loss of the Temple is not a loss of a building or even a relative. It's the loss of a connection. It's the loss of clarity. It's the loss of reality.

May we all merit to properly mourn the Bet HaMikdash each and every day and especially on Tisha BeAv and therefore be present to rejoice in its rebuilding. Shabbat Shalom, David Bibi

Egypt's Coup ... and Ours **By Dennis Prager**

<http://www.JewishWorldReview.com> | Here is what Shadi Hamid of the Brookings Institution had to say about Egypt's coup in a New York Times op-ed:

"Now supporters of the Brotherhood will ask, with good reason, whether democracy still has anything to offer them."

As much as I loathe the Muslim Brotherhood and the whole Islamist enterprise, it is difficult to imagine any other response among Islamists than this: Our votes don't count.

They were voted into office; many Egyptians and the army didn't like the results, so the vote was overthrown.

With some important differences — and not all of them to the credit of the United States — the Supreme Court of the United States, colluding judges and the Democratic Party of California did the same thing to the voters of California.

First, in March 2000, the voters of California, by the lopsided percentile margin of 61-38, voted to enact a statute that restricted marriage to one man and one woman. Eight years later, in May 2008, the California Supreme Court struck it down on the grounds that it violated the state constitution.

Having had their vote overturned by the California Supreme Court because Proposition 22 allegedly violated the California Constitution, the citizens of California later that year voted to amend the California Constitution. It would include these 14 words: "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

Known as Proposition 8, it, too, passed in liberal California — by a margin of 52-47.

Immediately challenged by pro-same-sex marriage groups, the California Supreme Court actually upheld the vote. Even a California Supreme Court had no choice but to vote that way since, in effect, it was being asked to vote on whether the California Constitution was constitutional in California.

But the left in America knows that all it needs to do in order to overturn a vote it opposes is to find a left-wing judge or court.

So, the left went to a federal court and found the perfect judge, a gay leftist, former U.S. District Chief Judge Vaughn Walker. On August 4, 2010, Walker overturned Proposition 8, asserting, among other personal opinions, that the amendment to the California Constitution "violated the Equal Protection Clause [of the U.S. Constitution] because there is no rational basis for limiting the designation of 'marriage' to opposite-sex couples." (Italics added.)

All of Western civilization for all its history had been irrational in defining marriage as a man-woman institution. So believed one man, and he used that

view to overturn — for a second time in eight years — the vote of a substantial majority of Californians.

Walker's ruling was, of course, upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the most left-wing circuit court in the country. Like Walker and most other leftwing justices, the Ninth Circuit rules according to their ideology, not according to the law and certainly not according to the will of voters.

The left uses left-wing judges and courts to achieve its ends. They uphold votes that support the left, and overturn those that don't.

But it gets worse.

The left-wing governor and attorney general of California chose not to defend Proposition 8 before the Supreme Court, though it was their legal duty to do so. "Social justice" is the supreme left-wing value; honor and integrity are redefined to mean that which promotes social justice, as the left defines the term.

Consequently, there was no one with legal standing to defend the vote of a substantial majority of Californians before the Supreme Court. And so, the Supreme Court ruled that since no one but the State of California had the legal standing to defend the voters of California, neither the Supreme Court nor the Ninth District Court of Appeals could rule on Judge Walker's decision. And so one leftist judge's ruling was allowed to remain in force.

As a result, another vote was overturned and the most important social institution was radically redefined. It was all done by a left-wing judge, a left-wing governor of California and four left-wing justices plus one swing vote on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In America we don't need the army to overthrow elections. We have left-wing judges to do that

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

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

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

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

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

The Shabbos preceding Tisha B'Av receives its name, "Chazon", from the opening verse of the Haftorah. Starting with the words "Chazon Yishayahu - A vision of Isaiah", we fearfully hear the echo of the Prophet as he decries Israel's betrayal of G-d. (1:11-15) Boundless selfishness, greed, misuse of power by those in authority, and oppression of the defenseless widow and orphan is why the Navi characterizes the people as "the lords of Sodom and the people of Gemorah." (1:10)

Hearing Yishayahu's indictment of the people, one would think that the end was near. In truth, Yishayahu began to prophesies in 3142 (619 b.c.e.) and the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed in 3338 (423 b.c.e); 196 years before the end! Clearly, the Navi's intent was to effect change in hope of averting the destruction. If so, our reason for mourning on Tisha B'Av must be better defined.

"The Jew does not mourn that thousands of years ago the Temple was destroyed, but that it had to be destroyed. Not over the destruction, but over the causes of its destruction". (S.R.Hirsch)

If only the people would have heeded the cry of the Navi! If only they could have foreseen with the clarity of a prophet's vision what it means for G-d to "draw back his protecting hand" (1:25) from Israel! Shabbas Chazon transports us back in time. We stand in the shadow of the Beis Hamikdash. We hear the word of G-d as the Navi beseeches His children to do Teshuva. Will we listen? Would we listen?

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"All her pursuers overtook her in narrow straits." (Eichah 1:3)

We will be reading Eichah while sitting on the floor on Monday night, the night of Tish'ah B'Ab. These are days of deep mourning. We mourn the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash. We weep over a host of personal tragedies afflicting so many individuals in our community. But simultaneously

these are days that provide opportunities for spiritual growth – to cleave to Hashem. At first glance it seems that these two concepts, mourning and spiritual growth, are incompatible. But, in reality, this is exactly the time for growing. The pasuk from Eichah above says all of her (the Jews) pursuers overtook her. The simple meaning of the verse is that the three week mourning period (ben hamesarim) is a time when our enemies catch up with us. But there is a hidden hint: Whoever is determined to make Hashem His King and “pursue” a close relationship with Him can succeed even more in the three weeks than during the rest of the year.

This can be explained in a parable. When the king sits in his palace, all are awed by him and certainly not just anyone can enter his private domain. However, when the king is outside his palace walking in the streets and the marketplace, then he is accessible to all and he listens to the requests of all who call out to him. During the three weeks, the palace of the King was destroyed; He is more reachable than ever.

Tish'ah B'Ab is an opportune time for prayer, especially while sitting on the floor mourning. In order for something to grow, a kernel must be placed into the ground. Only after the seed has rotted and deteriorated does the miraculous growth of a new sprout occur. On Tish'ah B'Ab we reach our “lowest” point and sit on the ground, yet it is from here that we reach the point of new spiritual life and growth.

In the book Barchi Nafshi Rabbi Y. Zilberstein tells this powerful story of prayer. In the summer of 2007, after 15 years of marriage, a childless B'nei Brak couple decided to get divorced. Shortly after the divorce, they learned that they were expecting a child. It would have been easily rectifiable through remarriage, since they had no conflict, if the man hadn't been a Kohen. He is prohibited from marrying a divorcee!

Shattered, the Kohen went to Rav Chaim Kanievsky. The Rabbi said he didn't see any solution, and advised him to consult his father-in-law, Rav Elyashiv zt"l. Rav Elyashiv heard the pitiful tale and was visibly moved. He told the Kohen there is no way for a Kohen to remarry his former wife. “The thing I can tell you is to go to the Kotel and pray.”

He went straight to the Kotel and prayed his heart out to Hashem, crying uncontrollably. Suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. A young Rabbi inquired what was the problem. The Kohen poured out his heart. The Rabbi asked him, “Do you have a father?” The puzzled Kohen answered that he is in an old age home in the States. He is very old and doesn't really communicate. “If you ask me, travel to America and tell your father the whole story,” the stranger told him and walked away. The Kohen decided that since Rav Elyashiv told him to go to the

Kotel and he met this stranger there, he would go. After the long trip to his father's nursing home, they told him he hadn't spoken for months. With tears in his eyes, he told his father his troubles. Suddenly, with tremendous effort, the father spoke! He said, he never told him this, but he wasn't his biological son and the son is not a Kohen at all!

The power of prayer when all hope is lost!
Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Fashionably Late

Some people pride themselves on arriving at a meeting or social function within the parameters of what is called “fashionably late.” Pride and ego are obviously involved. “If I demonstrate that I can arrive when I want to arrive rather than at the appointed or invitation time, then I show others that I am the one who is vital to the success of the event or the meeting.”

People who keep others waiting are not demonstrating stature; they are acting selfishly. Rude behavior sometimes stems from a lack of consideration for another's time. The tardy individual is actually saying, “Your time is not as important as mine.”

A great Rabbi held communal prayers daily in his home. Some days only the minimum ten men came to complete the minyan. One day, exactly ten men were present, but one of them had a problem. He approached the sage with his query.

I have agreed to meet someone at 4:30 p.m. If I stay here to maintain the minyan, then I will be late by perhaps ten or fifteen minutes. What should I do? Should I stay or leave?”

The Rabbi answered without hesitation. “You must leave at once. If you are not where you said you would be when you said you would be there, that is sheker (lying). Not only that, but you are also causing mental stress to another – which is also forbidden. Don't delay on our behalf. Go to your meeting.”

When you are taking your sweet time while someone is expecting your imminent arrival, change gears and pick up the pace. It only takes a spurt to change from being fashionably late to politely prompt. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
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Completing the Divine Name

The Hachamim were very particular in the way they scheduled the weekly Torah readings, ensuring that each week's reading would be relevant to that season. There is always some connection – either

obvious or subtle – between the weekly Parasha and the time of year when it is read.

Each and every year, we begin the Book of Devarim on the Shabbat before Tisha B'Ab, during the period of mourning for the destruction of the Bet Ha'mikdash. Undoubtedly, some connection exists between this transition from Bamdibar to Debarim, and the period of mourning for the Temple.

Our Sages teach us that while we are in exile, the Name of G-d is not complete. The final verse of Tehillim states, "Kol Ha'neshama Tehalel Y-H" (literally, "Every soul shall praise G-d"). The word "Neshama" is related to the word "Shama," which means "desolate," and it thus alludes to our period of exile, when the Mikdash lay in ruins. The verse tells us that during this period of "Neshama," of destruction and desolation, "Tehalel Y-H" – we can only praise "Y-H," the first two letters of the divine Name of "Y-H-V-H." In the times of Mashiah, the final two letters – "Vav" and "Heh" – will be added to the "Yod" and "Heh" to complete the divine Name. This is what we pray for in the Kaddish prayer, when we say, "Yeheh Shemeh Rabba." The word "Shemeh" means "Shem Y-H," and we pray that this Name shall be made "Rabba" – great, or complete, with the arrival of our final redemption.

In truth, the divine Name has five letters, not four. The Sages teach us that the letter "Yod," with which this Name begins, is written in the Torah scroll with a decorative "crown," which may be perceived as an independent letter. And thus the divine Name of "Y-H-V-H" may be viewed as a five-letter Name. These five letters correspond to the five books of the Torah. Bereshit corresponds to the "crown" of the "Yod"; Shemot parallels the letter "Yod" itself; Vayikra represents the first "Heh"; Bamidbar symbolizes the "Vav"; and the final book, Debarim, is associated with the fifth and final letter, the second "Heh."

The reading of Sefer Debarim, then, expresses our hopes for the completion of the divine Name. This book represents the final letter of Y-H-V-H, and thus symbolizes our longing for the Messianic Era, when G-d's Name will be complete, when Y-H will be transformed into Y-H-V-H.

Moshe Rabbenu himself alludes to this concept in the beginning of Parashat Debarim, when he recalls how close Beneh Yisrael were to the Land of Israel, noting, "Ahad Assar Yom Me'Horeb...Ad Kadash" ("It is a mere eleven-day journey from Horeb [Sinai]...until Kadash"). The deeper meaning of this verse is that the path from "Horeb" – referring to the state of "Hurban" ("destruction") – to "Kadash" –

referring to Kedusha, the period of Mashiah – is through the number 11, the combined numerical value of the "Vav" (6) and "Heh" (5). We achieve redemption by bringing these two letters back to "Y-H" to form the complete Name of Hashem.

This is why we always begin the Book of Debarim at this time, when we mourn the destruction of the Mikdash, as it expresses our fervent hope for the end of the exile and the arrival of Mashiah, which will occur with the completion of the divine Name, symbolized by the reading of the Book of Debarim.

How do we bring back these two letters in order to achieve our final redemption?

The "Vav" is represented by the six books of the Mishna, and the "Heh" symbolizes the five books of the Humash. And thus the way we restore the missing letters is through our Torah study, by devoting time to learning the holy words of the Humash and the Talmud. This is the way we "rescue" the missing letters of "Vav" and "Heh" and bring them back to combine with the half-Name of Y-H, thereby bringing Mashiah and our final redemption, speedily and in our days, Amen.

Rabbi Wein

The nine days of mourning for Jerusalem's fall and the destruction of the Temples are upon us. This Shabat, which always precedes Tisha B'Av itself, takes its name from the haftarah of the prophet Yeshayahu read in the synagogue. The words of the prophet condemn the social ills of his times and society – governmental corruption, economic unfairness and a lack of legal and social justice. But these are the problems that have plagued all human societies from time immemorial. And they are omnipresent in our current world and national society today as well.

So, at first glance, one could conclude that the prophet is making impossible demands, since human behavior and social interactions can never eliminate these issues fully. And we are all well aware that the Torah never demands the impossible from its human subjects. So what is the point of the prophet's criticism and harsh judgments? What is it that he really demands from us fallible mortal creatures?

I feel that he demands of us that we at least realize and recognize the shortcomings in our society. We may not be able to correct them all completely, but we should know that they exist. We should never allow apathy the ability to overwhelm our better

instincts and arrest our never-ending quest for an improved social structure.

The prophet demands that we remain relentless in trying to improve the social conditions of the world we live in even if we know at the outset that complete success is beyond our human capabilities. By accepting our societal deficiencies without a murmur of regret or complaint we become complicit in our own eventual destruction.

The Chafetz Chaim is reputed to have said that what motivated him to write his monumental work about the evils of slander and evil speech was that he noticed that people who had engaged in such speech no longer exuded a sigh of regret over their words. Evil speech had become societally acceptable and there was no sense of shame or embarrassment present about engaging in that type of behavior.

Shame is a great weapon for good and when it disappears from society, when brazen self-interest and greed is somehow legitimized, then the prophet warns us of impending doom. Politicians disgraced by their previous behavior openly vie again for public office as though having served one's time in jail or being forced to resign from public office wipes their slate clean permanently.

A society that knows no shame, whose leaders never recognize the moral turpitude of their past behavior, dooms itself to the ills of favoritism, corruption and unfairness that will plague its existence. The prophet demands of us that even if we are unable to correct all ills and right all wrongs we should at least be ashamed that such ills and wrongs exist within our society.

That recognition and sense of shame that accompanies it serves as the basis for possible necessary improvement in social attitudes and societal behavior. Then the prophet's optimistic prediction "Zion shall be redeemed through justice and those who return to it will also find redemption through righteousness" will yet be fully fulfilled

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

Tzedek: Justice and Compassion

As Moses begins his great closing addresses to the next generation, he turns to a subject that dominates the last of the Mosaic books, namely justice:

I instructed your judges at that time as follows: "Listen to your fellow men, and decide justly [tzedek] between each man and his brother or a stranger. You shall not be partial in judgment. Listen to great and small alike. Fear no one, for judgment belongs to God. Any matter that is too difficult for you, bring to me and I will hear it."

Tzedek, "justice", is a key word in the book of Devarim – most famously in the verse:

Justice, justice you shall pursue, so that you may thrive and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (16: 20)

The distribution of the word tzedek and its derivate tzedakah in the Five Books of Moses is anything but random. It is overwhelmingly concentrated on the first and last books, Genesis (where it appears 16 times) and Deuteronomy (18 times). In Exodus it occurs only four times and in Leviticus five. All but one of these are concentrated in two chapters: Exodus 23 (where 3 of the 4 occurrences are in two verses, 23: 7-8) and Leviticus 19 (where all 5 incidences are in chapter 19). In Numbers, the word does not appear at all.

This distribution is one of many indications that the Chumash (the Five Books of Moses) is constructed as a chiasmus – a literary unit of the form ABCBA. The structure is this:

A: Genesis – the prehistory of Israel (the distant past)
B: Exodus — the journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai
C: Leviticus – the code of holiness
B: Numbers — the journey from Mount Sinai to the banks of the Jordan
A: Deuteronomy – the post-history of Israel (the distant future)

The leitmotiv of tzedek/tzedakah appears at the key points of this structure – the two outer books of Genesis and Deuteronomy, and the central chapter of the work as a whole, Leviticus 19. Clearly the word is a dominant theme of the Mosaic books as a whole.

What does it mean? Tzedek/tzedakah is almost impossible to translate, because of its many shadings of meaning: justice, charity, righteousness, integrity, equity, fairness and innocence. It certainly means more than strictly legal justice, for which the Bible uses words like mishpat and din. One example illustrates the point:

If a man is poor, you may not go to sleep holding his security. Return it to him at sun-down, so that he will be able to sleep in his garment and bless you. To you

it will be reckoned as tzedakah before the Lord your God. (Deut. 24: 12-13)

Tzedakah cannot mean legal justice in this verse. It speaks of a situation in which a poor person has only a single cloak or covering, which he has handed over to the lender as security against a loan. The lender has a legal right to keep the cloak until the loan has been repaid. However, acting on the basis of this right is simply not the right thing to do. It ignores the human situation of the poor person, who has nothing else with which to keep warm on a cold night. The point becomes even clearer when we examine the parallel passage in Exodus 22, which states:

If you take your neighbour's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate. (Ex. 22: 25-26)

The same situation which in Deuteronomy is described as tzedakah, in Exodus is termed compassion or grace (chanun). The late Aryeh Kaplan translated tzedakah in Deut. 24 as "charitable merit". It is best rendered as "the right and decent thing to do" or "justice tempered by compassion".

In Judaism, justice - tzedek as opposed to mishpat - must be tempered by compassion. Hence the terrible, tragic irony of Portia's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*: The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea . . .

Shakespeare is here expressing the medieval stereotype of Christian mercy (Portia) as against Jewish justice (Shylock). He entirely fails to realize – how could he, given the prevailing culture – that "justice" and "mercy" are not opposites in Hebrew but

are bonded together in a single word, tzedek or tzedakah. To add to the irony, the very language and imagery of Portia's speech ("It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven") is taken from Deuteronomy:

May my teaching drop as the rain,
my speech distill as the dew,
like gentle rain upon the tender grass,
and like showers upon the herb . . .
The Rock, his work is perfect,
for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
just and upright is he. (Deut. 32: 2-4)

The false contrast between Jew and Christian in *The Merchant of Venice* is eloquent testimony to the cruel misrepresentation of Judaism in Christian theology until recent times.

Why then is justice so central to Judaism? Because it is impartial. Law as envisaged by the Torah makes no distinction between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, home born or stranger. Equality before the law is the translation into human terms of equality before God. Time and again the Torah insists that justice is not a human artefact: "Fear no one, for judgment belongs to God." Because it belongs to God, it must never be compromised – by fear, bribery, or favouritism. It is an inescapable duty, an inalienable right.

Judaism is a religion of love: You shall love the Lord your God; you shall love your neighbour as yourself; you shall love the stranger. But it is also a religion of justice, for without justice, love corrupts (who would not bend the rules, if he could, to favour those he loves?). It is also a religion of compassion, for without compassion law itself can generate inequity. Justice plus compassion equals tzedek, the first precondition of a decent society.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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