

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE EKEB

JULY 27, 2013 20 AB 5773

**DEDICATIONS: Mazal Tov to the Chatan and Kallah, Danny and Sandy Wagner**  
We welcome Rabbi Dr. Chaim Abittan to join us this Shabbat  
Rabbi Dr Mayer Abittan will be with us B'H next week

**Candles: 7:58 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:30 PM – We've moved the time to 7:30 as we've been waiting for guys to show up each week. Please show up by 7:30 sharp so we can have a minyan together.**

**Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:34 AM.**  
Tefilah will be preceded by a class at 8:30AM on Hilchot Shabbat with a Sephardic twist.  
Kiddush this week sponsored jointly  
By Mr and Mrs Danny Wagner in honor of their wedding - join us for the Sheva Berachot  
And by Mr and Mrs Jack Azizo in memory of Jack's sister Lena Azizo Cymbrowitz

**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: 6:30 Minha: 7:15 PM –**  
**Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:50 with Rabbi Dr. Chaim Abittan**  
**Evening Service (Arbith): 8:50 PM - Shabbat Ends: 8:57PM**

## 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**

**Rabbi Yenay has agreed to continue the class. Last week only Albert, Boris and Gregory were there at the start with a few joining later.,and the three will be away for the next few weeks. Rabbi Yenay drives back and forth from Lakewood, 2 hours each way. If you want to continue this class, please show him your support and be there at 7PM sharp.**

**TUESDAY NIGHT: Return of the class by the Beach .... Come at 8, we start at 8:15 sharp**  
**1233 Beech Street, The Waterclub House #11 – Chantelle and David Bibi**

**We are five weeks away from the High Holidays**  
**Please pay your outstanding bills**  
**Its crucial at this time that we have your support**  
**If you need help with your statement please speak with Hal or Ely**

**We are looking forward to receiving a plan for the garden in the**  
**Front of the Synagogue**

**We apologize for the eye sore – a temporary fence went up this week paid for by the sponsors.**  
**The contractor knows he may need to remove all or part of it.**

**The plan is for the board to meet next Sunday morning at 9AM with the sponsors to review a plan and then move forward.**

**The Nassau County Police Department received several reports of a telephone scam threatening family members and asking for money. In all instances a male caller states that a family member was involved in an auto accident and insists the victim needs to send money (usually through Western Union) to save or help the family member. This information is being provided to residents to make them aware of this ongoing telephone scam and urging them to report any similar incidents to the Nassau County Police Department. If you believe you may have been a victim of this scam, please call 911 immediately. Do not send money if a caller requires that you send money "right now!" Never wire money to someone you don't know well; once your money has been paid at the other end, you will not get it back.**

**We want to wish a Mazal Tov and Mabrook to the Bulow Family who welcome their newest member, a baby girl born to Sahra and Eliyahu in Detroit Tuesday morning. Mother and baby are both doing well, b"H. As Aliza writes, "May this time of year and it's shift in tides from sorrow to consolation, bring all of us a refreshing energy to help us create a new start for the new year." May we share many, many semachot together.**

**Mazal Tov to the Chiger Family on the upcoming wedding of Elliot to Chana**

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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

### We'll Leave The Light On For You

As you've already read, my daughter Mikhayla is Cusco Peru and is being hosted by the local Chabad. My nephew Eddie Esses on his path to practicing medicine spent two months last summer taking a course in Champaign, Illinois and was hosted by the local Chabad. When Lauren and Jonah visited Thailand, traveling through Bangkok, Phuket and Koh Samui, there was always a Chabad to host them and feed them. As Americans, we may think that wherever in the world we travel we have an American Embassy to turn to for help, but they can often do little or nothing for us. The reality is that as Jews we have an even greater network of embassies throughout the world ready, willing and wanting to be there for us. These are the Chabad Houses. And regardless of any differences in philosophy or outlook, Chabad has touched each and every one of us in unimaginable ways.

Banim Atem LeHashem Elokeychem - You are children of the L-rd, your G-d. And for some reason whether as a blessing or as a curse, Hashem has sent his children to wander throughout the world. Even those who have returned home to the Holy Land have a travel bug and often tour the most remote places. Why? As the Kabbalists explain it, there are holy sparks scattered throughout the world and as we travel it's four corners we have an opportunity through our deeds and actions to gather those sparks. In each place we find ourselves, there is something spiritual for us to accomplish. It's good to know that when we're sent on the road, we have an embassy to turn to for assistance.

Efraim Halevi is a lawyer and an Israeli intelligence expert. He was the ninth director of Mossad and the 4th head of the Israeli National Security Council. Wikipedia notes that Halevy was born in London to an established Orthodox Jewish family. He emigrated to Israel in 1948. He attended Ma'aleh, a religious high school in Jerusalem, and later, graduated (with commendation) in law from the Hebrew University of

Jerusalem.. In 1961, he began his work in the Mossad and for the next 28 years, headed three different branches throughout. In 1996, he became the Israeli ambassador to the European Union in Brussels. In March 1998, he became the director of Mossad following the resignation of Danny Yatom. Halevy served as the envoy and confidant of five Prime Ministers: Yitzhak Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon. Daniel Keren, who puts out a weekly newsletter called Shabbos Stories posted an article by Efraim Halevy entitled, What the Mossad Didn't Know where Halevy writes (I've edited it for brevity), "The first Lebanon War in 1982 was a unique war, during which the Israel Defense Forces reached Beirut and conquered it, causing the expulsion of the Palestinian forces from Lebanon. PLO chairman Yasser Arafat and his men went to Tunisia and established their command there. At that time, there was a small community of about five thousand Jews in Tunisia. After analyzing the facts, we in the Mossad came to the conclusion that, as a result these events, the Jews of Tunisia were in greater danger than before, and we felt that the time had come to evacuate this community to Israel.

"... We began to work with the Jews in Tunisia. We sent people there to convince them to leave. But very quickly we encountered a problem. We identified an authority that was telling the Jews not to leave Tunisia. This was not a local authority, not the Tunisian government. It was the community rabbi! His name was Rabbi Nisson Pinson, and he was encouraging the Jews to stay in Tunisia.

"...We quickly understood that Rabbi Pinson's authority flowed from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the leader of the Chabad movement, of which Rabbi Pinson was a part, and we reached the determination that we needed to see the Rebbe to explain the situation to him, so that he'd understand and encourage the Jews to leave.

"...Now, my interaction with Chabad goes back many years. I served in the Israeli embassy in Washington from 1970 to 1974. In the context of my service there, I visited New York many times together with my wife and children. I visited the Rebbe's court and was present at his farbrengens. The consul general of Israel, Naftali Lavi, arranged a meeting with the Rebbe for me. I flew in from Israel and I arrived at the Chabad Headquarters for my appointment, which was scheduled for one or two o'clock in the morning. "...Finally, I was called inside and I met with the Rebbe. The two of us were alone. To the best of my recollection, the meeting lasted about two hours. It began with a discussion of the situation of Tunisian Jewry. And the Rebbe immediately told me that he was the one who gave the directive not to leave. He

had his own intelligence-gathering network with various sources, including the U.S. government. "He had checked his information and had come to the conclusion that there was no special danger to the Jews of Tunisia, so he had directed them not to leave. He said, "I believe we must sustain, to the extent possible, every Jewish community around the world. I recognize the role of the State of Israel—I personally support aliyah, and I've instructed certain families to make aliyah, but we mustn't just eliminate a Jewish community."

"I explained to the Rebbe why we in Israel saw the situation differently. But, in the end, we remained with our different opinions—he was convinced that the Jews were in no special danger, and I that they were.

In our conversation it was apparent that he had a tremendous knowledge in the area of intelligence and intelligence-gathering. And his connections were vast. He had connections with the White House and the State Department. He had connections in other places in the world with the powers that be. It was obvious that here was a man of the larger world, not of a small chassidic court. He was also a man with a vision—a big vision—and he did not abandon that vision even for a moment. And his vision was expressed not only in theory, but also in action—sending his emissaries all over the world to serve the Jewish nation.

"There is no doubt that in many places in the world Chabad emissaries play a very important role in the continued existence of the Jewish people, and in the continued existence of the Jewish nation as a whole. When I served as Israel's ambassador to the European Union in Brussels, I met the emissaries of Chabad who worked there. And I also met those in Riga and in Sydney. And I believe that if Chabad did not exist, the situation of the continuity of the Jewish nation would be much worse. This tremendous contribution that Chabad is making—no other movement in the world gives such a contribution to our people. And in my eyes, this is a great blessing."

This past Sunday Thomas Friedman wrote in the NY Times about the founders of AirBNB, a company whose app puts together travelers with places to stay arranging for about 200,000 or so visits a night. The company started by renting out air mattresses in their apartment in San Francisco during a computer show when the hotel rooms around town were booked and the two couldn't pay their rent. This led to matching people who needed a place to stay with hosts that would house them (for a fee). AirBNB is a unique idea that is now being copied by the founders who are joining people who need a ride with people willing to give it. And undoubtedly will expand through other industries.

But the Rebbe thought of it first. He knew there were people who needed a place to stop, a place to pray, a place to eat, a place to rest and a place to call home even for a day. These are the Chabad houses. I am sure everyone of you has your Chabad story and I look forward to hearing them.

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

**PS ... Here's a great story Daniel posted last week in the same issue of Shabbos Stories: It Happened in Greece! By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton After that ... I wanted to write about Helen Thomas, the longtime White House correspondent. Thinking about this wicked woman, one understands why everything we read in the newspaper is skewed. Personal feelings come out between the lines and cloud everything. Jonah Goldberg does a nice job in the article that follows.**

**And then in contrast with Ms Thomas, Dror Eydar writes a beautiful tale of Kaddish on the banks of the Pechora River and Menachem Begin. A great deal to read this week. Hope its not too much.**

A few years ago Greece was not a good place to be. Angry, violent mobs with grievances to the government set to the streets, destroyed property, set fires, rioted and battled the police and bedlam reigned.

Vacationers shunned the place, trips, hotel reservations and plane tickets were cancelled but for Rabbi Yoel Kaplan, the Chabad Representative in Sloniki Greece it was just another major challenge.

Rabbi Kaplan thrived on the unusual. His home, like all the hundreds of Chabad Houses throughout the world, was open to the public 24/7 with the hope of helping Jews, Judaism and, thereby, the entire world. And that required expecting the unexpected.

In the days of the rioting there was nothing to do, it was impossible to leave his house. And even weeks after the rioting ceased signs of vandalism were everywhere and tension filled the air but the Rabbi tried to resume his normal activities.

It wasn't easy; there were no tourists, Jews included, and after all the violence it seemed wise for him to just stay indoors for a few more weeks but he had a job to do... maybe there was even one Jew out there and then there were some things that were pressing .... like going to the post office to get his mail which was a daily necessity.

But even such a seemingly simple task was fraught with danger. The post office was located in a

part of downtown that was a youth hangout and had been hit the hardest by violence.

There were days that he took side roads to get there and used the back entrance, which meant a serious detour and time loss, just to avoid trouble.

But one day he was running late and forgot to worry for trouble. He headed straight for the post office but as he neared his goal he began to regret it. A group of about ten mean-looking fellows, some of them with tattooed arms, punk hairdos and other bizarre and frightening decorations were staring at him with hatred in their eyes. His full beard, black hat, long black coat and entire Jewish demeanor were like a red flag before a maddened bull and he was a sitting duck for their frustrations.

He should have turned back, taken an alternate route and avoided them but something told him to just keep walking. From afar he heard the curses they directed at him first in Greek then, because they knew he spoke English, in English; all of them anti-Semitic.

He had experienced Greek anti-Semitism before. Usually he just ignored it but for some reason this time he glanced up, raised one hand and, as he got closer, said in as friendly a tone as possible "Hello, good morning!"

"Someone talking to you?!" the biggest of them replied sarcastically as the others got ready for some action.

Suddenly the Rabbi realized something. Just like Abraham, the first Jew, some 4,000 years earlier was alone in his quest to bring meaning into a hostile world, but trusted G-d to protect him (therefore we pray to 'The Shield of Abraham') so this same 'G-d of Abraham' would protect him now.

He smiled and said, "Maybe you weren't talking to me... but you certainly are talking about my people."

"That's right Jew!" The young man replied with burning venom laced with terms not fit to print, "About your cursed nation of thieves, liars and cheaters we certainly were talking. And we'll keep talking until you are exterminated etc."

The smile did not depart from Rabbi Kaplan's face as he calmly replied, "You look like intelligent people. You have no reason to hate me or any other Jew. In fact, if you knew the truth I'm sure you wouldn't treat any of us badly."

This was too much for the 'leader'. He was livid with anger as he made a fist, held it before the Rabbi's face and said, "I'm an experienced boxer. Unless you want to taste a few of these you'd better get away as fast and far as possible and don't come back!"

Rabbi Kaplan realized that things were about to get out of hand, so he calmly turned to the others,

blessed them warmly with a good day and good news and continued on to the post office.

But after he finished his business there and left the building something told him not to take a detour back home, rather to return the same way he came... through the crowd. After all, he was only here to do good; the same G-d of Abraham that protected him on his way here would protect him on his way back.

But this time when he passed the group something unexpected happened, they were quiet. He again blessed them with a good day and all of them answered "Same to you."

He continued walking and the 'boxer' that had threatened him previously approached him and stuck out his hand. "I want to apologize for what we said before. We thought about it and decided that you are right. We really know nothing about the Jews. Must be that we were affected by the media or what people say."

The Rabbi shook his hand, smiled and said. "Apology accepted. The fact is you should never judge anyone before knowing them and for sure you shouldn't hate anyone just because of their opinions. Here" Said Rabbi Kaplan as he took a calling card from his wallet and handed it to the 'boxer', "if you ever want to talk over a cup of coffee ... on me!"

If the Rabbi had doubts about talking to these people in the first place all of them melted away. Finally he would have a chance to dispel some of the hatred in the streets and maybe convince some of those fellows to live better lives.

A few days later he got a phone call. "Hey Rabbi, my name is Alexandros remember me? I'm the fellow you gave your card to the other day. You know, the boxer. Were you serious about that cup of coffee? If so, I'm right outside your house."

Rabbi Kaplan was pleasantly surprised and in just moments he was introducing Alexandros to his wife and children. But then they sat down and the conversation began. His visitor had good questions and was a great listener but eventually, at the third or fourth cup of coffee, when the topic of 'Who is a Jew' came up and the Rabbi explained that only someone with a Jewish mother, or genuinely converts to Judaism, is considered a Jew, Alexandros got serious and began making interesting calculations. "Mother? What about Father? What about grandmother? What about grandfather's mother? What about grandmother's mother?"

He thought about it for a few seconds and announced that his maternal grandmother once told him that she had once been .....Jewish.

Indeed, she had even been observant but in the war, after her husband and children were taken and murdered by the invading Germans she ran and hid in the mountains for several years and figuring

that all the Jews had been killed and she would be too if anyone found out, when she returned to civilization, she married a gentile and began going to church.

Shortly thereafter she gave birth to a baby girl who grew up and married a religious Greek Orthodox man and their first child was..... Alexandros!

Alex was Jewish.

He even took the Rabbi to visit his aged grandmother where she verified the story and even agreed to put a Mezuzah on her home.

Suddenly Alex transformed from one who knew nothing about Jews ..... to being one. He even agreed to put on Tefillin for the first time in his life and every day thereafter.

### The Real Helen Thomas by Jonah Goldberg

In the movie "Animal House," the Deltas are put on trial for their antics. When offered a chance to defend themselves, the best argument the fraternity's president can come up with is, "But sir, Delta Tau Chi has a long tradition of existence to its members and to the community at large."

The line came to mind as I read through the obituaries for Helen Thomas, the longtime White House correspondent for UPI and, for a decade, a left-wing columnist for the Hearst newspapers.

Thomas did help break down the barriers to women in the D.C. press corps. "Helen Thomas made it possible for all of us who followed," NBC's Andrea Mitchell wrote on Twitter. Obviously, it's an exaggeration to suggest that women wouldn't have made so many worthwhile gains in journalism were it not for Thomas. But she was the first female member of a lot of clubs, and that counts for something. So it was no surprise that the encomiums poured forth in response to the news. From President Obama, the Gridiron Club, the White House Correspondents Association, Hamas. Hamas was less interested in Thomas' role as a path-breaking feminist icon than the fact that, at a 2010 White House Jewish heritage event, she growled into a camera that the Jews should "get the hell out" of Israel (or "Palestine" in her telling) and go back to Poland, Germany and America. That statement, cheered by Hezbollah at the time, was too much for Hearst, which quickly ushered her off to retirement, where she cultivated her status as a truth-teller martyred by the Zionists who control everything in America.

In most obituaries this incident comes out of the blue, often chalked up to the fact her parents were Lebanese immigrants (an odd slap at Lebanese-Americans). There's no mention that her hatred of

Israel -- and supporters of Israel -- was a constant for most of her career.

Indeed, if you go back and look at many of her famously tough questions of U.S. presidents and press secretaries with that in mind, what seems to many as skepticism about U.S. foreign policy is better understood as special pleading for Israel's enemies. "Thank GOD for Hezbollah," Thomas told a CNN cameraman in 2002, according to the Washington Post. Israel, she added, was responsible for "99 percent of all this terrorism." Her first question of President Obama referred to members of al Qaeda and the Taliban as "so-called terrorists."

Ironically, her views on Israel made the woman who knocked down doors quite eager to lock them behind her. It was widely rumored -- and reported by Slate magazine -- that she kept pro-Israel New York Times columnist Bill Safire out of the Gridiron Club for years until he turned 70. When Slate asked her about this, she replied, "I don't think I'll talk to you anymore," and hung up.

Thomas spent much of her career as the "epitome of a wire service stenographer," then-New Republic writer Jonathan Chait wrote in 2006. Contrary to myth of the dogged journalist, she wrote mostly puff pieces -- about Democratic presidents. She only became a left-wing icon when, as a columnist, she started ranting at the George W. Bush White House. Indeed, NPR's media correspondent, David Folkenflik, observed in his obituary that Thomas "put a premium on shoe-leather reporting out of view." He fails to mention any stories Thomas actually broke. The New York Times managed to identify a scoop: Her reports of her phone conversations with Martha Mitchell, the emotionally disturbed wife of Watergate-era Attorney General John Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell had a habit -- owing in part to her reported alcoholism -- of getting drunk and telephoning whoever would listen to her rants. Most reporters stopped exploiting Mitchell once it became clear how ill the woman was. Not Thomas. She happily transcribed the calls, even reporting how Mitchell's young daughter was begging her mother to get off the phone with Thomas. "Don't talk to her, she's no friend."

Still, as time went by, the awards poured in as Thomas became a Washington institution, with cameos in Hollywood movies and even "The Simpsons." But the "odd thing about her awards and citations," Chait noted, "is that they almost never mention any specific contributions she has made to journalism save for being female and, well, old." Or as journalist Andrew Ferguson once put it, "Everybody admires Helen, though nobody can tell you why."

The best answer I can come up with: She had a long tradition of existence.

### Kaddish on the banks of the Pechora River

Menachem Begin was 28 years old when he was deported to a "re-education camp" on the banks of the Pechora River in northwest Russia. He tells of that episode in his moving memoir, "White Nights: The Story of a Prisoner in Russia."

Life in the camp was cruel beyond bearing. The prisoners were put to work laying railroad tracks and suffered illness, hunger, torture, the erasure of their humanity and the loss of hope. Under Stalin's regime, the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, imposed a reign of terror, which the best thinkers of Europe's elite justified in countless ways. Begin was one of the pioneers who portrayed the Soviet regime as it truly was. He had an excellent memory.

One of the prisoners was a prominent Jew named Garin, who had been deputy editor-in-chief of Pravda, the Communist Party official newspaper, and a leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party. In the prime of their lives, he and his wife, a scientist ("She is not Jewish, but what does that matter?") were imprisoned for supporting Trotskyist ideas. Interrogated for over four years, he was almost tortured to death and attempted suicide twice. He was finally sentenced to eight years in the Pechora labor camp.

By that time he was a broken man, forced to do backbreaking physical labor even though he suffered from a heart condition and a constant fever. At first he was hostile toward Begin, who had been sent to the camp for his Zionist activity as the head of the Betar movement in Poland and later in Vilnius. Even in the Pechora labor camp, Garin never lost his faith in communism. To him, Zionism and anti-Semitism were two sides of the same coin: "an expression of an archaic, racist and nationalistic legal system." It was axiomatic, to him, that "Zionism was an agent of imperialism."

When one of the prisoners said he did not care if the Germans reached them because he had "nothing to lose," Garin lashed out at him. "I am also a prisoner. I am suffering too," he said. "But my suffering has not driven me out of my mind. I desire the victory of the Soviet Union. Fascism is a deadly danger to all humanity. If the Soviet Union should fall, all the accomplishments of the revolution will be nullified. Have you forgotten how many kindnesses the motherland has done you? And now, when it is in danger, would you betray it?"

2. On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union. In late July the Soviets, in shock over their defeat, signed an agreement with the exiled Polish government establishing a Polish military force under General Wladislaw Anders, who was imprisoned in Moscow at the time. Polish prisoners were released, but the release order was never given

in Pechora. Instead, roughly 800 prisoners were crammed so tightly into the hold of a small cargo vessel that they could not stand or sit, but only lie down. For close to three weeks they sailed northward "to build a new world."

Most of the prisoners on board were hardened criminals. Only a few were political prisoners. Back in the camp, the criminals, known as the Urki, had been in control. Below the deck of the vessel, they abandoned all traces of restraint. It was "a regime of criminals who had no limits, who had absolute power." The Urki spent their time abusing the weaker prisoners until they died. That was how the "slave ship," as Begin called it, became a symbol of the sinking civilization of Europe, which was also ruled at the time by a regime of criminals who knew no restraint.

"In this place of foul odor and darkness," Begin wrote, "of torture and abuse, of threats and terror, the soul of Garin, who had fallen from the heights of power into the kingdom of the Urki in the hold of the slave ship, reached the ultimate point of crisis." His spirit was tormented by years of interrogation, torture, and suicide attempts. He, who had denied his Jewishness, suffered to hear himself called "Zhid," in hatred, "under Soviet skies." "And this tormented soul, whose entire world of dreams and aspirations had collapsed under the blows of reality," could not withstand the test of the slave ship.

3. One day during that hellish voyage, Garin woke Begin up. "Do you remember the song 'Lashuv' [return]?" he whispered, speaking in Yiddish for the first time. Begin did not understand, since Garin spoke the word with an Ashkenazi inflection, with the accent on the first syllable and the vowels pronounced slightly differently, rendering the word as "lo-shuv" rather than the modern Hebrew "la-shuv." "That's the song the Zionists in Odessa sang when I was a boy," Garin told Begin. "Do you know it?" "Do you mean 'Hatikvah' [The Hope, later Israel's national anthem]?" Begin asked. "Maybe," Garin answered. "I remember only the word lashuv." "That's 'Hatikvah,'" Begin said, and quoted: "'Lashuv le-eret avoteinu' -- to return to the land of our fathers." They were referring to the original version of "Hatikvah," the poem "Tikvatenu," written by Naphtali Herz Imber. The refrain of that version is: "Our hope is not yet lost/The ancient hope/To return to the land of our fathers/The city where David encamped." Garin asked Begin to sing it. "I'm not going to make it out of here alive," he said. "I'm done for. You're still healthy. Maybe you'll make it. Maybe one day you'll find my children. Tell them about their father. Tell them I thought of them always. But now, I ask you, please, sing me 'Lashuv.'"

And there, in the ship's hold, in that hell on the water, in the kingdom of the Urki, at the bottom of European

civilization even as it sank, Begin and his fellow Jewish inmates sang Hatikvah. Garin listened silently to the lyrics. The Urki awoke. "What are they singing, the Zhids?" they asked, then said mockingly: "They're praying to their God for help." The song went on: "Hear, O my brothers in the lands of exile ... To return to the land of our fathers." The Urki were right, Begin wrote. "This was no song. It was a prayer."

"I felt as though I was reciting the 'vidui,' the deathbed confession, with a Jewish man who, like one who had been taken captive as a child, had grazed in foreign pastures, and when he was about to die, after many torments, returned to his people and his faith."

A communist from his youth, a stranger to the Jewish people and a persecutor of Zionists, Garin had done everything in his power to ensure that "Hatikvah," the hope of return to Zion, would never come true. Instead, he had worked with all his might for the other "hope," that of communism. And what had the revolution, for which he had almost died, done for him? It had branded him a traitor and an enemy of humanity, taken his family from him and thrown him to prison in disgrace.

But at the moment of truth, after having crossed the sea of suffering, what was it that the former deputy editor-in-chief of Pravda, the secretary-general of the Ukrainian Communist Party, remembered? "Lashuv el erez avoteinu" -- return to the land of our fathers. That was his consolation.

Who was lying there next to Garin? A young man whose Zionist activity had almost cost him his life, whose fate was supposed to be identical to that of his fellow inmate. But 36 years later, that young man would be sworn in as the prime minister of the independent Jewish state. Two men, each with a different fate but a single aim: "To return to the land of our fathers." History has its own ways of teaching us humility.

4. We arrived at the banks of the Pechora River last week, at noon on one of the days of the Hebrew month of Av, an Israeli delegation led by the heads of the Menachem Begin Heritage Center, together with Begin's daughter, Hassia. Begin's birthday centenary is this coming Saturday, the Sabbath after the fast of Tisha B'Av that is known as "Shabbat Nahamu" (the Sabbath of Consolation), the word that begins the reading from the Prophets for which it is named -- "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God" (Isaiah 40:1). Begin was named Menachem, "he who consoles," after this very Sabbath of Consolation, on which he was born.

A day earlier, Begin's memoirs were words on a page. On the banks of the Pechora River, they arose, clothed in reality. At the end of the memorial ceremony, I came forward to recite the Kaddish, the prayer of praise recited in memory of the departed.

My father died four months ago, and here his memory mingled with that of the young man in the hold of the ship who became a national leader and whose Zionist dream led my own parents here. Before I recited the Kaddish, I told the story of Garin and Begin in the ship's hold on the Pechora River, which had witnessed, for the first time since its waters began to flow, the prayer of Jews to return to the land of their fathers. Like Jonah in the belly of the whale, those Jews had cried out from the depths of hell, praying to reach safe haven together with the remnant of their people.

But it was not only for Begin and my father Shmuel that I asked to recite the Kaddish. I said it also for Garin, a son of our people whom history swept far from us. In a peculiar twist of historical irony, Garin received a monument together with other Jews like him in Begin's memoir, and now we, the readers, also remember him through Begin's words.

And then, I recited the Kaddish. Never in its history did the Pechora River hear a Kaddish like it.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliyah: Moshe details the general rewards for following the Torah, and encourages the nation to have complete confidence in Hashem's protection. Moshe forewarns them of the dangers in being overly confident and commands them in the Mitzvah of Birkas Hamazon (8:10).

2nd Aliyah: Moshe warns them regarding the pitfalls of prosperity and idolatry, and exhorts them to remain humble in the face of their guaranteed victories. G-d is the one who deserves the credit!

3rd Aliyah: In order to illustrate his point, Moshe reviews the incident of the Golden Calf. He explains why G-d, being a G-d of Justice, will grant the Bnai Yisroel a victory over the inhabitants of Canaan. Not because the Jews are deserving, but because the Seven Nations deserve to be punished for their own evil actions. The actions of the Bnai Yisroel during the 40 years, such as the Golden Calf, should have resulted in the Jews' destruction. It was three factors which kept them alive and well so that they could inherit the land.

1. Hashem's promise to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.
2. The Chillul Hashem-- desecration of G-d's name-- that would have occurred among the other nations who would question G-d's ability to protect His nation.
3. Moshe's begging for Hashem's forgiveness.

4th Aliyah: Moshe finishes the story of the Golden Calf by retelling the giving of the Second Luchos.

5th Aliyah: Moshe poses the famous rhetorical question of, "What does G-d want... follow His ways..." and describes other instances of Hashem's demanding justice.

6th Aliyah: Moshe describes the nature of Eretz Yisroel as demanding and responsive to our following the Torah. The second Parsha of Shema is recorded.

7th Aliya: Moshe promises the nation total victory if they listen to the Mitzvos and follow the ways of the Hashem.

Isaiah 49:14 - 51:3 - In this week's Haftorah, Yishayuhu the Navi evokes a powerful image that is consistent with this week's Parsha. He describes our relationship with Hashem as a mother who can not possibly abandon or forget her children. Nothing that we will do, or that might occur, can result in Hashem being divorced from His People. In fact, even though G-d seemingly "hides His face" from us and allows other nations to dominate and oppress us, they will ultimately have to answer to Him.

Parents who appropriately punish their children are doing G-d's work and are rewarded for their expressions of love and caring. However, the "punishing nations" have never accepted their position as the extended hand of a loving G-d chastising and punishing His chosen people. Therefore, they will be punished, rather than rewarded.

The imagery is intended to focus us on the emotional and unbreakable bond that exists between us and Hashem. It is no different than a mother who must cope with the child who ignores and disobeys her. However, in spite of the hurt and the responsibility to punish, the parent is incapable of separating herself from the love and concern she feels for her child, even more so at the time of punishment! It is therefore incumbent upon the child, not the mother, to recognize the parents' ever present love, and embrace, rather than shun, the relationship.

In the end, recognizing that Hashem has never and will never abandoned us, especially at the times of our greatest trials and tragedies, will reawaken our love for Hashem and bring comfort to the nation and Eretz Yisroel.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you the manna." (Debarim 8:3)

A great Sephardic Sage, Rabbi Soleiman Mani zt"l, asks the pointed question (quoted in Hameir): Why did Hashem first make the Israelites hunger before He brought down the manna from Heaven? He answers with a story of a Sage, who was left completely penniless on Friday. He had absolutely nothing to eat for Shabbat. He told his wife, "I don't see any possibility to obtain food for Shabbat, so I will go to the shul and study Torah." And so he did.

Only a few minutes passed and a messenger was sent to him from his house to come home. A gentleman had come to the house in need of a special document that he needed the Rabbi to write. The Rabbi wrote up the document. The man paid the Rabbi a huge sum, and went away. The Rabbi went and purchased all the food needed for Shabbat. When the Rabbi returned home he noticed that the gentleman forgot to take the document. On Sunday, the man returned and told the Rabbi he can tear it up, and he was surprised at himself, because if he would have been thinking clearly, it would have been obvious that he didn't need the document.

After he left the Rabbi turned to his wife and said the whole episode was amazing, because he obviously was sent by Hashem to help us. "But," the wife responded and asked, "If Hashem was so concerned for us that we didn't have food for Shabbat, why did He leave us without a penny and make us have to go through all of that worry?" The Rabbi answered, "If we had all of our Shabbat needs in the first place, we would not have seen the Hand of Hashem helping us so clearly, and we wouldn't have thanked Him enough."

That is why Hashem first made the Jews hungry in the desert, and only after that gave them the manna. In order to teach us that we do not live on bread, but through the word of Hashem. It's a lesson in life for us all. Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Reuven Semah

**"And you will remember that it is Hashem who gives you the strength to do this great deed."**

**(Debarim 8:18)** Whenever a person accomplishes anything, he may be tempted to think that he was responsible for his success, so the Torah tells us that it is Hashem who gave you the strength to succeed. The Targum adds a very important word to the verse. He says, "You shall remember that it is Hashem Who gives you the idea which leads you to succeed."



This teaches us an amazing lesson. Even the idea itself which sets off an entire chain reaction, and ultimately leads to accomplishments is from Hashem. How many times are we in a tough situation looking for answers when all of a sudden, an idea "pops into our head" which gives us a way out? Every time a person thinks of something to do or remembers something important, he should thank Hashem for the idea itself for it is He who gives us the thought with which to succeed. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### CLEAR FOCUS

Cameras are great. Each year, new developments put more sophisticated equipment into our amateur-photographer hands. Video equipment is now digital, self-focusing, red-eye-reducing, small, and light. The mega-pixel and special effects features of digital cameras keep improving at a mind-boggling pace. It's enough to spoil a person.

But while cameras are expanding our vistas and focusing themselves to picture-perfect clarity, our lives are becoming more complicated and less focused with every passing day. We get so busy with a myriad of details – some important and others, ridiculous – that we, unlike our pocket-size cameras, cannot focus. We don't aim straight at the goal we were put here to achieve. We don't have time to think about spiritual perfection and performance of misvot.

The Mesillat Yesharim (chapter 1) states, "Achieving perfection in the service of Hashem is dependent on a person's recognition of just what his duty is in this world and the goal towards which he should direct his vision and aspirations in all of his endeavors throughout his lifetime." In other words, in order to hit the bull's eye, you must focus on the target.

When things start to pile up, move too fast, and make your head spin – stop! Take a step back, leave the battlefield, have a cold drink, read a cute e-mail message, take a walk around the block – and focus! Realize that you do have a goal and a purpose in life that is much greater than all the things that are overpowering you. This pause will not only save you from drowning; it will give you a clear picture of where to go to find success. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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[MishnaBerura.com](http://MishnaBerura.com), [LearnTorah.com](http://LearnTorah.com)  
The Little Things That Aren't So Little

The opening section of Parashat Ekeb describes the prosperity and good fortune that are promised to Beneh Yisrael if they obey Hashem's commands.

However, the Sages inferred from the second word in this Parasha – the word for which it is named, "Ekeb" – that these blessings are earned by observing a particular kind of Misva. The phrase "Ekeb Tishme'un" literally means, "as a result of obeying." But the word "Ekeb" also means "heel," and as Rashi comments, it is used here to allude to those Misvot which people customarily "tread upon with their heel." In other words, we earn these blessings only if we ensure to observe the Misvot that are commonly ignored and overlooked. We are not necessarily deserving of these rewards for observing the "popular" Misvot, such as Shabbat and Kashrut, vitally important as these Misvot undoubtedly are. We earn these blessings only if we are careful to fulfill the "unpopular" Misvot that people tend to neglect.

To which Misvot does this refer? Which Misvot are the ones that people "trample" on? I believe that the Sages refer here to our obligations and responsibilities to our fellowman, to the simple, basic acts of consideration and concern for the people around us. When we read Tehillim, or when we attend a Torah class, we feel "holy," we experience an uplifting feeling that gives us a deep sense of satisfaction, knowing that we did something important. Generally, however, this is not the case with simple acts of goodness. Extending a friendly greeting to a new face in the synagogue does not give us the same "high" as an impassioned prayer. Offering a neighbor a lift to the store does not get us excited. And therefore, too often, otherwise religiously observant people "trample" upon these Misvot. Since these and similar simple acts of courtesy do not give us a "holy" feeling, we easily forget how vitally important they are to Torah observance, and so we neglect them.

Of course, I am not saying that the prayers, study and ritualistic elements of Torah life are less important. The Ten Commandments were written on two equal-sized tablets, one presenting our basic obligations to G-d, and the other our basic obligations to our fellowman. Both are equally important, and we must never prioritize one over the other. There is, however, a tendency among many observant Jews to neglect their basic duties to their fellowman, which is due to the tendency to associate "holiness" and "spirituality" specifically with our responsibilities to Hashem. In order to earn the beautiful blessings described here in Parashat Ekeb, we need to ensure not to neglect these "little things," which the Torah reminds us are not "little" at all.

Rav Eliyahu Lopian (1876-1970) told that he once received a generous donation for his yeshiva from a man who was not religiously observant, but exuded

genuine love and affection for Hachamim. The Rabbi asked the man why he experienced such strong feelings for Rabbis, if he was not even observant. The man explained that when he was a young man, he had no interest whatsoever in studying Torah, but his father insisted that he travel to Radin and apply for admission to the yeshiva of the renowned Hafetz Haim. The boy, reluctantly, made the trip to Radin and was tested by the great Sage. Much to the youngster's delight, he failed his exam, and was denied admission into the yeshiva. Afterward, the boy told the Hafetz Haim that he had no train home until the following day, and thus he wanted to sleep over in the yeshiva that night. The Hafetz Haim replied that the yeshiva did not offer hospitality to those who were not students, but he graciously invited the boy to stay in his home. The boy felt very honored to receive such an invitation, and he spent the night at the Hafetz Haim's home.

Late that night, the Hafetz Haim walked into the boy's room, assuming he was asleep. The boy heard the great Sage whisper, "Oh my, it's way too cold in here." He promptly removed his overcoat and placed it on top of his guest to keep him warm during the cold night.

"Even now, 50 years later," the man said to Rav Lopian, "I can still feel the warmth of the Hafetz Haim's coat."

The Hafetz Haim did many very important things in his life, starting with the composition of seminal Torah works, such as the Mishna Berura and his work on the laws of Lashon Ha'ra. But what affected this young man was not the Hafetz Haim's brilliant scholarship or inspirational prayer, but rather the simple act of giving him his coat so he could keep warm.

We should certainly aspire to greatness, but we must never forget about "goodness." The word "Ekeb" reminds us that often the most significant Mitzvos we do are the "little things," the simple everyday acts of courtesy and consideration to the people around us.

### **Rabbi Wein**

One of the impossible tasks in human life is undoing the past. Perhaps even more tragic, and even unfair, is judging the past by current norms and standards. Yet no matter what we attempt, the past always rises up to bite us. Since all of us make mistakes in our lifetimes, the past is always a danger to us. In the scheme of things we are always remembered for our past failings rather than for our enormous later accomplishments.

The Talmud warns about this human habit for it forbids us to remind a convert to Judaism of one's pagan origins or one who has repented of one's original sins. But the nature of people is never that generous, especially in a world of aggressive, investigative reporting, Wikileaks mindset and mostly unsubstantiated scandal mongering. The past is always the present in current society.

Sometimes the sins and indiscretions of the past, the mistakes and errors of judgment are so important and monumental that they are never capable of being forgotten or erased. We find in the Bible that Menasheh, the king of Judah, was an idolater and promoted idolatry as the state religion of Judah during the first seventeen years of his reign. The Talmud records for us that he even executed his own grandfather the prophet Yeshayahu in his zealotry to eradicate Judaism.

Yet we are also taught that he repented of his actions and policies and that for the last thirty-three years of his rule he observed Jewish practice and reintroduced Torah law as the basis of societal life in Judah. Nevertheless, in spite of scattered references in Talmud, Midrash and prayer, which attempt to rehabilitate his historical reputation, his past always resurfaces to gain him general condemnation in Jewish thought and writings. We can never apparently truly undo the past.

If this be the case then one can legitimately ask: "Of what value is repentance?" The answer to that question is complicated and many times confusingly vague and unsatisfying. It is the subject of philosophic writings and thought by the great scholars and thinkers of Judaism throughout the ages.

Suffice it here to say that the gist of the matter is that on a personal level, true and sincere repentance erases the sins of the past and may even somehow be deemed meritorious to the individual, but the consequences – public, national, affecting the lives of others and future generations – generated by those past sins can never be completely eradicated or erased.

Menasheh's repentance on a personal level is accepted by Heaven and he may have achieved his own redemption, but the acts of idolatry that he initiated were of such an influential nature that they cannot be undone and ignored and thus the verdict of history still finds him guilty.

The pornographer may repent of one's writings and productions but the influence that those writings and productions have upon others and society generally is never undone. The murderer may truly regret one's deed but the victim remains dead, with all of the consequences that that implies. It is a permanent stain on the fabric of society incapable of being completely removed. And similarly a person's actions and influence for good or for better always lives on even after one's passing from this life.

A professor of mine in law school once taught us that all lawyers, entrepreneurs and professionals make at least one great mistake in their careers. He then declared: "Fortunate is the person that makes that mistake early in one's career. Doomed is the one who makes it at the end of one's active career and/or public life, for then that person will unfairly always be remembered thereafter not for one's lifetime accomplishments but rather for that late mistake and error of judgment."

This is also a truism of human nature. People prefer to remember the negative and sensational about others over the positive and less newsworthy good that they accomplished. There are numerous examples of this tendency in our current society. Decades of great public service are swallowed up by the current revelations of past errors of judgment and passivity.

The past is always prejudicially judged by the current standards of behavior and probity. Generations far removed from worshipping stone and wooden idols certainly cannot understand how clever and intelligent people in previous generations blindly did so. Thus it is not only the future that is inscrutable; it is the past as well. We should therefore always be wary of our past. It will not go away.

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

A sequence of verses in this week's sedra gave rise to a beautiful Talmudic passage – one that has found a place in the siddur. It is among the readings we say after the Evening Service on Saturday night as Shabbat comes to an end. Here is the text on which it is based:

"For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awe-inspiring God, who shows no favoritism and accepts no bribe. He upholds the cause of the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing."  
(Deut. 10: 17-18)

The juxtaposition of the two verses – the first about God's supremacy, the second about His care for the low and lonely – could not be more striking. The Power of powers cares for the powerless. The infinitely great shows concern for the small. The Being at the heart of being listens to those at the margins: the orphan, the widow, the stranger, the poor, the outcast, the neglected. On this idea, the third century teacher Rabbi Yochanan built the following homily (Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 31a):

Rabbi Yochanan said, Wherever you find the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, there you find His humility. This is written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the Writings. It is written in the Torah: "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awe-inspiring God, who shows no favoritism and accepts no bribe." Immediately afterwards it is written, "He upholds the cause of the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing." It is repeated in the Prophets, as it says: "So says the High and Exalted One, who lives for ever and whose name is Holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with the contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite." It is stated a third time in the Writings: "Sing to God, make music for His name, extol Him who rides the clouds – God is His name – and exult before Him." Immediately afterwards it is written: "Father of the fatherless and judge of widows, is God in His holy habitation."

It is this passage that found its way into the (Ashkenazi) service at the end of Shabbat. Its presence there is to remind that that, as the day of rest ends and we return to our weekday concerns, we should not be so caught up in our own interests that we forget others less favourably situated. To care only for ourselves and those immediately dependant on us is not "the way of God".

One of the more unusual aspects of being a Chief Rabbi is that one comes to know people one otherwise might not. These were three moments that made a deep impression on me.

From time to time Elaine and I give dinner parties for people within, and also outside, the Jewish community. Usually, at the end, the guests thank the hosts. Only once, though, did a guest not only thank us but also asked to be allowed to go into the kitchen to thank those who had made and served the meal. It was a fine act of sensitivity. No less interesting was who it was who did so. It was John Major, a British Prime Minister. Greatness is humility.

The oldest synagogue in Britain is Bevis Marks, in the heart of the City of London. Built in 1701, it was the first purpose-built synagogue in London, created by the Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were the first to return to England (or practice their Judaism in public: some had been marranos) after Oliver Cromwell gave permission in 1656 for Jews to return after their expulsion by Edward I in 1290.

Modelled on the Great Synagogue in Amsterdam, it has stayed almost unchanged ever since. Only the addition of electric lights has marked the passing of time – and even so, on special occasions, services are candle-lit as they were in those early days.

For the tercentenary service in 2001, Prince Charles came to the synagogue. There he met members of the community as well as leaders of Anglo-Jewry. What was impressive is that he spent as much time talking to the young men and women who were doing security duty as he did to the great and good of British Jewry. For security reasons, people volunteer to stand guard at communal events – part of the work of one of our finest organizations, the Community Security Trust. Often, people walk past them, hardly noticing their presence. But Prince Charles did notice them, and made them feel as important as anyone else on that glittering occasion. Greatness is humility.

Sarah Levene (not her real name) died tragically young. She and her husband had been blessed by God with great success. They were wealthy; but they did not spend their money on themselves. They gave tzedakah on a massive scale – within and beyond the Jewish community, in Britain, Israel and elsewhere. They were among the greatest philanthropists of our time.

When she died, among those who felt most bereaved were the waiters and waitresses of a well-known hotel in Israel where they often stayed. It transpired that she had come to know all of them – where they came from, what their family situation was, the difficulties they were going through, the problems they faced. She remembered not only their names but also the names of their spouses and children. Whenever any of them needed help, she made sure it came, quietly, unobtrusively. It was a habit she had wherever she went.

After her death I discovered how she and her husband came to be married. He was older than she was, a friend of her parents. She had some weeks free in the summer before the start of the academic year, and Mr Levene (not his real name) gave her a holiday job. One evening after work they were about

to join her parents for a meal. In the street they passed a beggar. Mr Levene, punctilious about the mitzvah of tzedakah, reached into his pocket and gave the man a coin. As they were walking on, Sarah asked him to lend her some money – a fairly large sum, which she promised she would repay at the end of the week when he paid her wages.

He did so. She then ran back to the beggar and gave him the money. “Why did you do that?” he asked, “I had already given him some money”. “What you gave him”, she said, “was enough to help him for today but not enough to make a difference to his life.”

At the end of the week, Mr Levene gave her her wages. She handed him back most of the money, to repay him for the sum he had lent her. “I will accept the money,” he told her, “because I do not want to rob you of your mitzvah.” But – as he himself told me after her death, “It was then that I decided to ask her to marry me – because her heart was bigger than mine.”

Throughout their marriage they spent as much time and energy on giving their money to charitable causes as they did on earning it. They were responsible for many of the most outstanding educational, medical and environmental projects of our time. I have had the privilege of knowing other philanthropists – but none who knew the names of the children of the waiters at the hotel where they stayed; none who cared more for those others hardly noticed or who gave help more quietly, more effectively, more humanly. Greatness is humility.

This idea – counter-intuitive, unexpected, life-changing – is one of the great contributions of the Torah to Western civilization and it is set out in the words of our sedra, when Moses told the people about the “God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awe-inspiring God” whose greatness lay not just in the fact that He was Creator of the universe and shaper of history, but that “He upholds the cause of the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.” Those who do this are the true men and women of God.