

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

BEHA'ALOTECHA

JUNE 9, 2012

19 SIVAN 5772

DEDICATIONS: Congratulations to Sam and Lorraine on your wedding
A refuah shelemah for Sander Hilel Ben Rifka Yenta and Yisroel Refoel ben Sara Nesha
Mabrook and Mazal Tov to Esther Dwek on her engagement to Eli Yasdy

Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach Schedule and Announcements

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

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM

Please say Shemah at home by 8:15 AM

Soul Schmoozing Shabbat Mornings 11:30 AM for teenage girls with Leah Colish.

Derasha this week by Baruch Abittan who will be visiting with Michal

Kiddush this week sponsored by the Tennenbaum family in honor of Mrs. Helen Tennenbaum's birthday. Abal 120!

Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Aharon at 6:40 PM –

Childrens program at 6:40 with Rabbi Colish followed by Minha: 7:20 PM

Seudah Shelishi and a Class 8:00 – With David Wouldn't you complain if all you got was ice cream to eat, morning, noon and night, 7 days a week and 365 years away. Even if you had your choice of flavors, wouldn't you want more?

Evening Service (Arbith): 9:00 PM - Shabbat Ends: 9:08PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00,

It seems Sunday, when almost everyone is around is the hardest day to get ten to come on time
Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Kosher Kitchen at 9:30

6:30 AM class – Shelah Hakadosh on the Perasha

Men's Halacha Class Tuesday Nights 8:30-10:30:

Basar BeChalav – With Michael and David

Hebrew Reading Crash Course Starting Monday June 18th in the Study 8-9 PM and continuing Monday Nights throughout the Summer. Beginner and intermediate levels welcome!

Ladies Shabbat Class at the home of Tina Lemberger – each Shabbat at 5:30

Kiddush Celebrating Dan and Daniella Kahen – Shabbat Shelach LeCha – Next Shabbat, June 16th - Sponsors include: Mr. and Mrs. Jack Azizo, Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Mizrahi, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Yusupov, Mr. David Pinto, Mr. Ronen Yadgarov, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Yadgarov. Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Levi, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Yusupov- \$100, Mr. and Mrs. Greg Safaniev, Mr. and Mrs. Steward Austin- \$100, George and Sofia Davydov- \$100, Mr. and Mrs. Leon Sutton. To participate as a sponsor, please speak with Albert Yusupov We look forward to Aliza and Ephraim Bulow visiting with us that Shabbat – Shelach Lecha – 26th of Sivan as well.

Sunday Fun Day Hool a Hoop

Daniel Wagner will be running a volleyball club every Sunday morning on the beach for kid Starts next Sunday 17th. 9:30 - 11:30. ages 6-18. All summer long. Speak to Yosef or Dan to sign up. Free Great adventure trip will be on the 25th of June. Speak to Yosef or Sam to signup, sponsor or to volunteer

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Editors Notes

Last night, my nephew Sammy Jemal and his bride Lorraine Franco were married. It was a tremendous honor for me to stand on the stage with Rabbi Saul Kassin, Rabbi Shlomo Lankry, Rabbi Yehuda Azancot, Rabbi Shimon Cohen, Rabbi Mansur from Israel, Rabbi Shmuel Choueka, Rabbi Yonatan Biggs and the other dignitaries and speak to the Chatan and Kalah.

For me it was a bit emotional, and as I mentioned, although I speak almost every week and have spoken at many weddings, this wedding was very different for me. So in lieu of my article this week, here is the text of what I said last night.

You see Sammy is, as my nieces often reminded me, my first nephew and we have had a very special relationship. I remember back to the summers when Sammy was a very young boy. My friends and I would go to the early minyan each Shabbat and afterwards get together for Kiddush and breakfast, rotating houses. It was just the boys, with one special little boy Sammy. We would take Sammy everywhere, to play ball, to the beach, to the rides.

And our special relationship continued. For years each Wednesday night, Sam, his brother Joseph, their cousins, Jonah, Joe, Ezra, my brothers Ruby and Vic and some friends

would gather at our office to learn with their grandfather and have dinner together. To see the three generations each week sitting together for a class was heartwarming. And it was my great pleasure for the last month to again have Sam come up to our offices each week, where he sat and studied with his uncle Victor.

So you can all understand my personal joy tonight. But let me begin by saying, Sam, Ashreycha. You are so Fortunate to have found such an incredible girl as Lorraine

Today we find ourselves between the portions of Naso which we read last week when you went up to the Torah and Behaalotecha, which we will read B'H on Shabbat and when you will again go up to the Torah by Safra – Lorraine you have to wake him up for first Minyan – which also happens to be your Bar Mitzvah perasha, and I find between these two parshiot, a common theme which so perfectly relates to our chattan and kallah, our bride and groom.

Naso et Rosh, and this translates as, raise up the head, which we read last week.

And this Shabbat, we begin with the words, Behaalotecha et HaNerot. When you raise the candles. The rabbis explain that we could have used the verb to light or lehadlik but instead we use LeHaalot – to raise up. As we did to begin last weeks portion.

And this concept of raising up expressed last week and this week, is so perfect as it relates to our bride and groom. I stand in front of two special people who have a unique ability.

Wherever they go, whomever they meet, that person feels elevated because of you. Sammy and Lorraine, I have seen how you not only raise a person's

head or his physical body. But just like Aharon raises the flame, you two also raise the spark within people, you raise their souls.

This is a special gift. For years I have seen how Sammy lives his life and its always about everyone else. He worries about others, he cares for others, he thinks about others, always setting himself aside.

And in the last few months I have seen this in Lorraine. She is a spark who ignites and brings life to others. They say that the special merit of Aharon HaKohen was that each day he lit the Menorah, he did it with the excitement of it being the first day. What a gift to greet each day with enthusiasm and eagerness. This is how Lorraine faces each day, with excitement and with warmth and with thoughts of what can she do to make this world a better place.

I heard amazing stories about this young girl. She has this sixth sense and a natural instinct. When she sees someone hurt, Lorraine goes into overdrive, into control mode. She who willingly steps into the scene, takes the injured persons hand, looks into their eyes and physically and spiritually brings them back, keeps them here and calm until the situation changes or more help can come.

You both have these incredible qualities. You lack any aspect of selfishness. You are empathic. Your hearts are open and focused on others. And where did you learn these qualities?

Lorraine, you have been blessed with special parents. Your father Jack, is a baal chesed beseter. And I only discovered this by accident. He is a man who quietly changes people's lives through

his kindness. He gives others the opportunity to learn and to give. He plants seeds and see trees blossom and give fruits. He understands his purpose. He understands his responsibilities and he makes a difference.

And your mother Laurie, who I have known forever. She is who you are. Let's face it, it's all about our mothers. It's the effort, the sweat, and the tears of our mothers that become infused within us and make us who we are.

And what a Beracha you have in your Grandparents, Murray and Florence Dweck, builders of our community, may Hashem bless them to continue their efforts on behalf of kelal yisrael in Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Chasadim. And Ralph and Lorraine Franco who exude the quality of Chen – of grace – beloved by all. To your grandfather, its all about devotion to faith and family. I have a special relationship with your grandmother Lorraine. When she walked into Beth Torah on Shabbat with your grandfather, she turned to me with a huge smile and reminded me, "David, now we're related". Her warmth goes right through you.

And Sammy, you have been blessed to have such special parents. My dear sister Ellen, with whom I share an indescribable bond. She is a person who makes a difference in this world. She is a spearhead of the community, always there when needed.

And your dad, he is an incredible example to all of us. My brother in law Isaac may be quiet but his spirituality, his wisdom, his generosity and his strength are boundless. As Rebbe Akiva teaches us, "The fence that protects wisdom is silence".

And of my own parents Adele and Joe Bibi, Hashem Yishmeram. Your grandmother's strength and wisdom is our backbone. And your grandfather, we get an inkling of what it means in this Perasha when Hashem notes Moshe's humility when you see as his grandson, a man who has done and continues to do so much yet remains so humble. A man who truly runs from honor and refuses to allow honor to catch him.

And finally Sam your grandparents, Sam – Shemuel and Molly Mazal Jemal – They are not here in body, but they are here in spirit. I remember what special people they were and how my teacher, your uncle AJ would send me to your grandmother who treated me as her own grandson.

And what's remarkable is you are Sam – Shemuel named after your grandfather and can it be coincidence that Lorraine, your Hebrew name is Mazal and your middle name is Molly. Wiggy no? I was thinking that you Lorraine are Sammy's Mazal. His fortune, his luck, But we cant forget as my dad tells us, mazal is an acronym for Makom – Being in the right place, Zeman – Being there at the right time and LaSot – taking action. It can be the right place and the right time, but its up to us to take action.

I was considering that Mazal has a numerical value of 77. Lucky number. And then I realized that Shemuel less the Shin is also 77. And 77 is Ohz – strength. (For those that asked afterward the Shin at 300 equals Ruach Elokim but I left that out). But even stranger is that when we combine your two names we get 454 and 454 is symbolic of three words – three words which tell us why we are here tonight to seal this marriage in love and holiness.

454 is Chotem which means Seal, VeAhavtem which means to love each other and Kedoshim or Holiness. Remember that you are strength as long as you are sealed together in love and Kedusha.

And finally, let me close with a Blessing. We read last week the Birkat Kohanim which we will bless you with it in a few moments. People run to kabalists and holy men writing checks for blessings and forget if we show up for minyan each morning, Hashem himself promises to bless us through the Kohanim at no charge. Can we compare a blessing from Hashem himself to one of Flesh and Blood

And this week we read Kum Amonai VeYafusu Oyvechacha – Arise Hashem and disperse our enemies. The Zohar tells us of the enormous value of this blessing to protect us from any troubles.

The secret my dear Lorraine and Sammy, is to always place hashem in front of you. We join you tonight as Ish and Isha, the man brings the Yud, the woman brings the Heh. The Yud and the Heh represent Hashem. May it be Hashems will, that you be bound always in Love and Kedusha and May hashem always clear the path before you, Amen!

Shabbat Shalom
David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Aharon is instructed to light the Menorah, and the Menorah's construction is reviewed. Moshe is commanded to inaugurate the Leviyim into the service of the Mishkan.

2nd Aliya: The Leviyim are inaugurated into Temple service.

Their term of service was from age 25 to age 50.

3rd Aliya: The Bnai Yisroel keep their second Pesach since leaving Egypt. The laws of Pesach Shaynie - the makeup Pesach (one month after Pesach) are taught for those who were unable to bring the Pascal Lamb at the appropriate time.

4th Aliya: The movement of the Pillar of Clouds as the indicators of when to set or break the camp is identified. In addition to the Pillar of Clouds, Moshe is commanded to make two silver trumpets that would be used to herald the traveling of the encampment, or the movement of troops during war.

5th Aliya: The description of the nation's travels from the desert of Sinai is recorded. Moshe approaches Yisro, who refuses his offer to join them in Eretz Yisroel.

6th Aliya: The two verses of "When the Ark went forth" are stated, and then things begin to unravel. The main body of this Aliya describes the nation's complaints against the physical conditions of their dwelling in the desert. The Manna is described in contrast to the nation's desire for "real food". Moshe expresses his frustrations as leader, and Hashem promises to send quail to satisfy the people's desire for meat. Moshe is instructed to appoint a Sanhedrin to help him govern and teach the nation. The 70 Elders are divinely confirmed, and Eldad and Maydad prophesies the transition of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua.

7th Aliya: The quail descend upon the camp in such quantity that each person collected 1000 lb. of meat. Aharon and Miriam speak Lashon Harah about Moshe,

resulting in Hashem confirming Moshe as His preeminent servant and prophet. Miriam is afflicted with Tzaraat.

Zecharya 2:14 - This week's Haftorah records the prophesies of Zechariya to Yehoshua the Kohain Gadol. In 3390 - 371 b.c.e, Zerubavel along with Yehoshua led 40,00 Jews back to Israel. They began building the 2nd Bais Hamikdash only to be stopped when Cyrus withdrew his permission. In this prophesy, Zechariya showed Yehoshua that he could be worthy of effecting forgiveness for the Bnai Yisroel, in spite of his own short-comings. He was shown a vision of the Menorah (the obvious connection to our Parsha) representing the eventual purity of the Jews, and their acceptance by the other nations.

The less obvious connection to our Parsha may be the concept of Teshuva and its relationship to the fulfillment of our mission. Just as the generation of the Exodus struggled with who they were in contrast with who they should have been, so too, in the building of the second Bais Hamikdash and the second Jewish commonwealth, Zerubavel and Yehoshua struggled with the realities of who they were in contrast to their undertaking of resurrecting the soul of their People

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

The rabble that was among them cultivated a craving." (Bemidbar 11:4)

As we know, the Jewish people, upon leaving Egypt, were accompanied by many Egyptians who wanted to be part of our nation. As time went on in their traveling in the desert with us, they began to weaken and complain. At this time they

complained that they wanted meat. Their complaining attitude spread to the rest of Israel until they all wept that they wanted meat. Rashi says that they actually had the cattle to slaughter and eat, but they were merely finding a pretext to complain.

The key words here are "hit'avu ta'avah" which means they goaded themselves on to desires. It was not a longing which awoke in them by external causes, but one which they gladly provoked by themselves. They wanted to have desires which they didn't already have. They weren't satisfied to be satisfied; they wanted a craving.

The Hafess Hayim explains that there is nothing intrinsically evil in man. Every desire that one has is placed in man for a good purpose. For instance, King Solomon in Kohelet says (5:9), "One who loves money will never be satisfied with enough money." We know what this means, but why did Hashem give man such a lust? The answer is that that lust is awakened in us when it comes to the misvot of the Torah, which is the real money. Once we have a desire for misvot it becomes an appetite that cannot be satisfied.

What can be the possible benefit of craving to have a craving? How can it be used for good? The answer is that it is used for the study of Torah. When a student begins his in-depth study of Torah he really doesn't have that craving for Torah study. However, once he reaches the point that he feels the sweetness of Torah he cannot have enough of it and he has a real craving. But, one who did not yet reach that point wishes he had that craving so he craves for that craving. If so, ultimately he will actually have that strong

desire that we all want. We actually pray to crave for it every morning when we say in the morning berachot, ????????, please make the Torah sweet for us.

How sad it is today that this gift is misused by society that craves for physical cravings they don't naturally have. People like to experiment; how about channeling man's cravings for what it was created for? Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"[The Jewish nation] traveled from the mountain of Hashem" (Bemidbar 10:33)

The Midrash tells us that this was one of the instances where the Jewish people did something wrong, and indeed the Torah interrupts the narrative with "Vayhi binso'a ha'aron" (which doesn't belong there) in order to separate between the wrongdoings. What was wrong with them traveling from the mountain of Hashem? Actually, they only traveled when given the signal by G-d, so if it was time to travel, why should it be a sin?

The Rabbis tell us that they traveled like children leaving school, in a hurry and anxious to leave their place of learning. For children to run out when the bell rings, that is expected of them. But when adults, who just learned Torah from Hashem for one year at Mount Sinai, also rush to get away, that was a sign that it wasn't becoming internalized. If we look at Torah as a chore or as burdensome, it will not have its effect of enriching our lives the way it should. We should remember this whenever we finish praying or learning. Sometimes, before the hazan is finished, the majority of the shul is almost outside "like children leaving school." Let's allow the

Torah and Tefillah to enrich us so that it will always be a pleasure. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

THREE HUNDRED WORDS

A friend of mine recently underwent surgery to remove a polyp from his vocal cords. The recovery period started with complete silence – no talking and no whispering – for a period of five days. During the next stage of recovery, the patient was required to limit his speech to three hundred words per day.

Every time my friend needed to communicate, he had to stop and decide whether it was really worth using up the words it would take to get his idea across to the other person. Can you imagine walking around all day with a "word counter" – calculating total words spent against total words remaining?

The Zohar teaches that people are granted a certain number of words to speak whenever they choose during their lifetime. When the words run out, so does life. Someone who seeks long life should limit overall speech. Furthermore, in Tehillim

(34:13), King David states, "Who is the man who wants life, who loves days to see good? – Guard your tongue from evil!"

If you find yourself about to indulge in "small talk," count those words before they leave your mouth. Consider whether or not you want to "spend" them. It is a discipline that will take time to develop, but it will add years to your life. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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When is it Good to be Greedy? The first verses of Parashat Behaalotecha speak about the Misva of the Menorah, the lighting of the candles in the Mishkan, a Misva that was assigned to Aharon. Rashi, citing the Midrash, explains why this Misva appears specifically here, in this context, immediately following the account of the special gifts brought by the Nesi'im (tribal leaders) in honor of the Mishkan's inauguration. Aharon, the Midrash comments, felt dismayed over the fact that he had not participated in these gifts. The Nesi'im of all the tribes brought these offerings to the Mishkan – except Aharon, the leader of the tribe of Levi. His exclusion from this celebration caused Aharon great distress, and God therefore sought to encourage him by reminding him of the privilege he is given to light the Menorah each day. He should not be distressed by his exclusion from the Nesi'im's gifts, God told him, because he had the special honor of kindling the Menorah.

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe Nahmanides, 1194-1270) raised several questions concerning Rashi's comments, including the question of why Aharon would feel distressed over not participating with the Nesi'im. Throughout the seven days preceding the Mishkan's inauguration, Aharon and his sons brought special sacrifices in the Mishkan as part of their consecration as Kohanim. Moreover, as Kohen Gadol, Aharon enjoyed numerous special privileges, including the exclusive right to enter the Kodesh Ha'kodashim – the inner sanctum of the Mishkan – on Yom Kippur. Why would he feel distressed because he did not

take part in the Nesi'im's offering? He had so many unique privileges – why would this exclusion trouble him?

Rav Yerucham Levovitz of Yeshivat Mir (1873-1936) explained that Aharon's distress is characteristic of the Sadikim. They are always desperately seeking more opportunities for Misvot. Righteous people are never complacent, they're never satisfied with what they've accomplished. Like a greedy businessman who continues to look for more deals even after he's made a fortune, the Sadikim are greedy – always looking for more Misvot to perform. They passionately pursue each and every Misva opportunity like a precious asset that they absolutely must have. Aharon was distressed over a lost opportunity for a Missva, because he understood, like all Sadikim understand, just how valuable each and every Misva is.

Rav Yerucham brought other examples of this "greed" for Misvot. Moshe Rabbenu had the most impressive "resume" of anybody who ever lived. He spent forty days without eating or drinking, receiving the Torah directly from Hashem; he led Beneh Yisrael out of Egypt and through the sea, and received direct prophecy from God on many occasions. And yet, when God informed him that he would die without entering Eretz Yisrael, he recited 515 prayers begging for permission to enter the land. The Gemara explains that he desperately wanted to enter Eretz Yisrael so he could observe the Misvot that can be performed only there. As much as he had accomplished, it wasn't enough. He was greedy; he craved even more Misvot.

Another example is the famous story of Rabbi Akiba, who was

tortured to death by the Romans for teaching Torah. As the executioner combed his skin off his body, Rabbi Akiba told his students that he had longed for this moment – for the opportunity to fulfill the Misva of surrendering one's life for God's honor. Rabbi Akiba taught Torah to thousands of students – but this wasn't enough. He still felt a desire to fulfill more Misvot.

It is told that a young man once saw the Hafetz Haim walking around anxiously outside on a cold, windy, snowy night. He later found out that the Hafetz Haim had not yet had a chance to recite Birkat Ha'lebana that month due to inclement weather, and he was anxiously awaiting the opportunity to see the moon so he could recite the Beracha. This is how passionate he was about grabbing opportunities for Misvot.

The lesson we can take from these examples is never to relax and rest on our laurels. No matter how much we grow and accomplish, there is so much more that we can still do. We, too, should be "greedy," always be searching for more Misvot to perform, for more opportunities to grow and to help others. This is the legacy that we have received from Aharon Ha'kohen, Moshe Rabbenu, Rabbi Akiba, and many other Sadikim, and the legacy which we must strive to follow.

Rabbi Wein

The Torah instructs Aharon and through him all of his successors, the High Priests of Israel that when lighting the great menorah one should make certain that the six outside lamps should all face into the center lamp. There are various opinions amongst the commentators as to how this was to be accomplished. The wicks were bent inwards or perhaps the lamps themselves were tilted

towards the middle lamp - or it could have been that this was only one of the recurring miracles that defined the Mishkan and later the Temple in Jerusalem. These are just some of the ideas advanced to explain how this matter was in fact accomplished.

Be all of this as it may have been, the greater question obviously is what lesson is the Torah imparting to us by this instruction that the outside lamps should face the middle lamp. I think that the idea that the Torah wishes us to internalize is that the light of the holy menorah requires focus.

We know that in the physical world the more intense and concentrated the focus of the light, the greater is its ability illuminate and reveal. Diffused light creates mood and atmosphere but it does not really show what lies before us. The light of the menorah is symbolic of Torah in Jewish life. Torah, its study, support and observance, requires focus and concentration. It cannot serve its true purpose in our lives when it exists amongst us only in a diffused and generalized sense.

Our rabbis taught us what the focus of Jewish life is and should be: Torah, Godly service, human kindness and consideration for others. Other causes are only to be granted diffused light and they, by themselves, will not serve to erase the darkness of our existence and society. Every human life, every family, even every educational and commercial enterprise requires focus and concentration in order to be successful and productive.

We all have priorities in our lives. These priorities become the plans, actions and ideas that we focus our attention, talents and resources upon. Judaism demands that we focus upon love

and study of Torah and its observances. We should concentrate upon our daily conversation, so too speak – our prayer services – with our Creator.

We are required to serve God and do His bidding. And that requires effort, sacrifice and devotion. It is perhaps the most challenging area of our religious life - and demands total focus and concentration And kindness towards others certainly requires focus. In theory, in a world of diffused light, we all subscribe to the notions of good behavior, social responsibility and charitable ideals. However when we are faced with the individual test of performing a specific human kindness to a specific human being we oftentimes shirk that responsibility.

Our focus is not present and thus we are prevented, not out of malice but simply out of lack of concentration and devotion, from performing the necessary act of kindness that lies before us. Thus the lesson of the menorah is one of focus – the focus that will allow the light of spirit and Godliness to light our way through our lives.

Rabbi's Corner: Rabbi Elie Abadie, M.D.

Mark Twain said "Any so-called material thing that you want is merely a symbol; you want it not for itself, but because it will content your spirit only for the moment".

We read in last week's Perashat Naso, 72 verses describing the material gifts the Chieftains of Tribes brought for the inauguration of the Altar in the Mishkan. Each one contributed exactly the same; gold, silver, bulls, sheep, and goats in multiple amounts. Indeed, it brought contentment for the moment.

This week's Perashat Behaalotekha, begins by describing the instructions to Aharon HaKohen to light the Menorah and elevate each of its flames. The Midrash, quoted by the Commentator Rashi, questions the juxtaposition of The Chieftains of Tribes' gifts with the lighting of the Menorah. The response given describes a dialogue between Aharon and the A-mighty. As Aharon saw that the Chieftains of Tribes were bringing so many items and participating in the inauguration, he felt left out and unable to bring his own contribution. G-d told Aharon not to be distressed, since his portion is even greater than theirs. Unlike the Chieftains of Tribes, where their contribution is only one time and temporary, his would be lighting the Menorah daily and by doing so he will have the privilege to illuminate the Mishkan; and later on his descendants will illuminate the Bet HaMikdash for generations to come. This reassured and comforted Aharon.

Why should the responsibility of lighting the Menorah bring reassurance and comfort to Aharon? Unlike the gifts of the Chieftains of Tribes which were given only once, lighting the Menorah is a daily activity, and its significance is far reaching.

Our Sages tell us that the light of the Menorah is representative of the Torah. The flames represent the souls of the People of Israel. Aharon and his descendants were made responsible in educating and imparting the Torah to the Israelites so they could illuminate the world; as it is said of the Jewish People being "Or LaGoyim – Light unto the Nations".

Indeed, the work of Aharon was far reaching, long lasting and with great significance. Consequently,

Aharon and his descendants' teaching of the Torah and caring for the souls of the Jewish People have been transferred to the Rabbis, Sages and all those who involve themselves in Jewish Education ever since the destruction of the Bet HaMikdash. They are the ones who maintain the light of Jewish Souls and the Values of Torah, thus illuminating the world.

This past week, I participated in a Rabbinic Cabinet conference which discussed several population studies. It was demonstrated that with the lack of good Jewish Education and Torah Studies, Jewish identity will be lost and the flame of Jewish Souls will be extinguished. Abundant gold or silver gifts could never replace that. Strengthening Jewish Education and Torah Studies is a responsibility we all share; this will truly content our spirit not only for the moment but for eternity.

Ricky Cohen

Supersized Leadership
...Government is, or ought to be instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation or community; of all the various forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety... Virginia Bill of Rights, July 1776, article 3

Our Honorable Mayor Michael Bloomberg is someone I've admired for the past 10 years. I think he is extremely intelligent, has great vision, is courageous, and is not simply a successful businessman and a great politician but is something more: A true leader. I believe he demonstrated his unique qualities again this past week. I want to suggest three points of reference to possibly glean a better understanding of the Mayor's

supersize initiative and establish an opinion about it.

First: Leadership.

There have been different types of leadership throughout human history. There have been kings and dictators, presidents and prime ministers, military and religious rulers. There have been leaders who served at the behest of their people, and there have been those who ignored any efforts at consensual leadership, but in every case it's understood that the role of a leader is to help impact the behavior of those he/she leads based on what he believes to be most beneficial. All of those in leadership positions, whether it be the leader of a family, the leader of a classroom, or the leader of a city, are obligated and mandated to grow and build the men and women they serve. In Hebrew, the term for leader is "manhig". This term is built from the word "hanhaga" which means behavior. There is no greater responsibility of someone in power, particularly one in power by the consensus of the people, to attempt to modify the behavior of those he serves in a way that he believes is for the better. Once a leader is chosen by consensus he must act as a leader – something that doesn't always garner consensus.

Second: Community and Responsibility.

Membership in a community, whether it be the community that is defined as a family, the community that is defined as a town, or one that is a large city or a nation, means that you share a responsibility with each of the other community members for the ongoing betterment of the community and the betterment of each other. A community that fails to recognize its responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of its members has failed itself, and has abandoned that which

endowed it with a moral reason for being. So am I my brother's keeper?

Most certainly. And he is mine. That responsibility is not theoretical nor is it transient; it perpetuates and continually endows the community with new reasons for being.

Third: Ask the Right Question.

There is the famous biblical commandment that declares: "One shouldn't place a stumbling block in the path of a blind man". The intent is not simply to protect the blind man, rather it is to safeguard anyone from becoming the victim of something he/she didn't have a fair chance to protect himself against. So the real question that should be asked here is not: "Is it acceptable that the government is trying to intervene to modify our behavior?" Rather that question should be: "Where was the government for the last 2 decades while millions of Americans were damaging their health – victims of ad campaigns and sales people that encouraged us to get a lot more for less?" The question shouldn't be: "How dare he attempt this now?" The question should be: "How dare it happen in the first place?"

We have become accustomed to politics rather than leadership, and to the absence of the sense of community responsibility rather than moving the communal responsibility paradigm from protection to prevention. Intelligent intervention is the responsibility of our leaders - and each of us.

I believe we should be standing and toasting (with small sized drinks) our supersized leader. Oh and by the way, having been spared a serious head injury in a bicycle accident, I'm a big believer in bicycle helmets as well.

**Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United
Hebrew Congregations
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Is a Leader a Nursing Father?

It was the emotional low of Moses' life. After the drama at Sinai, the revelation, the golden calf, the forgiveness, the building of the Tabernacle and the book-length codes of purity and holiness, all the people can think about is food. "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (Num. 11: 5-6). It was enough to make anyone despair, even a Moses.

But the words he speaks are shattering. He says to God:

"Why have you brought this trouble on Your servant? What have I done to displease You that You put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land You promised on oath to their ancestors? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in Your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin." (Num. 11: 11-15)

These words deserve the closest attention. Inevitably our attention focuses on the last remark, Moses' wish to die. But actually this is not the most interesting

part of his speech. Moses was not the only Jewish leader to pray to die. So did Elijah. So did Jeremiah. So did Jonah. Leadership is difficult; leadership of the Jewish people almost impossible. That is an old story and not an uplifting one.

The real interest lies elsewhere, when Moses says: "Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?" But God never used those words. He never remotely implied such a thing. God asked Moses to lead but He did not tell him how to lead. He told Moses what to do, but He did not discuss his leadership style.

The man who gave Moses his first tutorial in leadership was his father-in-law Jethro, who warned him of the risk of the very burn-out he is now experiencing. "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Ex. 18: 17-18). He then told him to delegate and share his burden with a team of leaders, much as God is about to do in our parsha.

Interestingly, Moses' burn-out occurs immediately after we read, at the end of the previous chapter, of Jethro's departure. Something very similar happens later in parshat Chukkat (Num. 20). First we read of the death of Miriam. Then immediately there follows the scene at Merivah when the people ask for water and Moses loses his temper and strikes the rock, the act that costs him the chance to lead the people across the Jordan into the promised land. It seems that in their different ways, Jethro and Miriam were essential emotional supports for Moses. When they were there, he coped. When they were not, he lost his poise. Leaders need soul-mates, people

who lift their spirits and give them the strength to carry on. No one can lead alone.

But to return to Moses' speech to God, the Torah may be hinting here that the way Moses conceived the role of leader was itself part of the problem. "Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?" This is the language of the leader-as-parent, the "great man" theory of leadership.

Building on, and going beyond, the theories of Gustave le Bon and the "group mind," Sigmund Freud argued that crowds become dangerous when a certain kind of leader comes to power.[1] Such a leader, often highly charismatic, resolves the tensions within the group by seeming to promise solutions to all their problems. He is strong. He is persuasive. He is clear. He offers a simple analysis of why the people are suffering. He identifies enemies, focuses energies, and makes the people feel whole, complete, part of something great. "Leave it to me," he seems to say. "All you have to do is follow and obey."

Moses never was that kind of leader. He said of himself, "I am not a man of words." He was not particularly close to the people. Aaron was. Perhaps Miriam was also. Caleb had the power to calm the people, at least temporarily. Moses had neither the gift nor the desire to sway crowds, resolve complexity, attract a mass following or win popularity. That was not the kind of leader the Israelites needed, which is why God chose Moses, not a man seeking power but one with a burning sense of justice and a passion for liberty.

Moses, though, seems to have felt that the leader must do it all: he must be the people's father, mother and nurse-maid. He must be the doer, the problem-solver, omniscient and omniscient. If something needs to be done it is for the leader – turning to God and asking for His help – to do it.

The trouble is that if the leader is a parent, then the followers remain children. They are totally dependent on him. They do not develop skills of their own. They do not acquire a sense of responsibility or the self-confidence that comes from exercising it. So when Moses is not there – he has been up the mountain for a long time and we do not know what has happened to him – the people panic and make a golden calf. Which is why God tells Moses to gather a team of seventy leaders to share the burden with him. Don't even try to do it all yourself.

The "great man" theory of leadership haunts Jewish history like a recurring nightmare. In the days of Samuel the people believe all their problems will be solved if they appoint a king "like all the other nations." In vain, Samuel warns them that this will only make their problems worse. Saul looks the part, handsome, upright, "a head taller than anyone else" (1 Sam. 9), but he lacks strength of character. David commits adultery. Solomon, blessed with wisdom, is seduced by his wives into folly. The kingdom splits. Only a few subsequent kings are equal to the moral and spiritual challenge of combining faith in God with a politics of realism and civic virtue.

During the Second Temple period, the success of the Maccabees was dramatic but short-lived. The Hasmonean kings themselves became Hellenised. The office of High

Priest became politicised. No one could contain the growing rifts within the nation. Having defeated the Greeks, the nation fell to the Romans. Sixty years later Rabbi Akiva identified Bar Kochba as another "great man" in the mould of Judah the Maccabee, and the result was the worst tragedy in Jewish history until the Holocaust.

Judaism is about diffused responsibility, making each individual count, building cohesive teams on the basis of a shared vision, educating people to their full potential, and valuing honest argument and the dignity of dissent. That is the kind of culture the rabbis inculcated during the centuries of dispersion. It is how the pioneers built the land and state of Israel in modern times. It is the vision Moses articulated in the last month of his life in the book of Devarim.

This calls for leaders who inspire others with their vision, delegating, empowering, guiding, encouraging and making space. That is what God was hinting to Moses when he told him to take seventy elders and let them stand with him in the tent of meeting, and "I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them" (Num. 11: 16-17). God was telling Moses that great leaders do not create followers; they create leaders. They share their inspiration. They give of their spirit to others. They do not see the people they lead as children who need a father-mother-nursemaid, but as adults who need to be educated to take individual and collective responsibility for their own future.

People become what their leader gives them the space to become. When that space is large, they grow into greatness.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"Why should we be held back from offering the offering of Hashem". (9:7)

In this episode, Hashem teaches a principle. Even when a man is absolved from any obligation to perform a Mitzvah, yet he should desire the opportunity to be obligated.

These men had not been able to participate in the Pesach sacrifice, since they were ritually unclean. Therefore they were blameless, according to the principle "The Torah absolves in unavoidable circumstances" (Baba Kama 28B).

But it is not sufficient to be absolved, for the loss of the Positive achievement is in itself the cause of intense regret in the minds of the Righteous. Because of the merit of these righteous men who longed for opportunities to be obligated in Mitzvot, Hashem contrived that the subject of the Pesach Sheni be revealed at their instigation. Otherwise, had they not inquired, Hashem would have taught the laws of the Second Pesach-Offering to Moshe together with the laws of the First Pesach-Offering (Shemot 12) without their inquiry.

Similarly, the poor man that has no money should regret the loss of opportunity to perform the Mitzvah of charity to the poor. Jews in exile should regret the loss of the Mitzvot of Terumah and Maaser. Today we regret that "We are not able to go up and to do our obligations in Your chosen House (Bet Hamikdash) (Mussaf Yom Tob).

In a certain sense, the failure to perform a Mitzvah is more regrettable than the sin of performing a transgression. "There is no peril as great as this

peril" (Mesilat Yesharim 7), when the loss of a Mitzvah is imminent. By proper Repentance, a sin may be forgiven by Hashem, but a lost opportunity to perform a Mitzvah is "That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is lacking cannot be counted in" (Kohelet 1:15, Hagigah 9B).

In Gehinnom the sinner is cleansed of the stains of his iniquities after a period of chastisement, and then he goes to enjoy the reward for his Mitzvot in Eternal happiness. Thus the punishment for some sins is limited, but the payment for Mitzvot is unlimited and eternal. Gehinnom can help clean sins, however it is not able to help make up for not seizing the lifelong opportunities to do Mitzvot.

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