

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

VAYAKHEL-PEKUDEI/PARAH

MARCH 17, 2012 23 ADAR 5772

Happy Birthday Aryana

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

**WE ARE PLANNING TWO COMMUNAL SEDERS. INTERESTING IN JOINING, HELPING, DONATING – PLEASE CONTACT SAME SHETRIT, DAVID BIBI OR RABBI COLISH .... DETAILS TO FOLLOW!**

## FRIDAY NIGHT

- Mincha at 6:45 – Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Arbit (Candle Lighting: 6:45)

## SHABBAT SCHEDULE

- Shahrith: 9:00 followed by Kidush ( Please say Shema by 9:23 AM)  
Mazal Tov to Yuval and Tamar Hiltzig on the birth of a baby boy. The Brit Milah will follow Musaf in our Synagogue with Kiddush. Mazal Tov to the grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Elliot Rose and Mr. And Mrs. Eli Hiltzig
- New Shabbat morning program with Leah Colish for teens and preteen girls. Instead of snoozing, do some SOULSCHMOOZING. Shabbat mornings 11:00 AM in the Social hall.
- Shabbat Morning Children's Program continues this week with Orah Burstyn from 11:00 – 12:00 in the Rabbi's Study upstairs. Snacks, Stories, Prayers and Games. Ages 4-7. Supervised play from 10:45 - 11:00.
- Pirkei Avot With Reb Aharon at 5:30
- Throughout the Spring and Summer, during the Pirkei Avot Class, there will be a simultaneous Torah Class for the boys of the Shabbat Shacharit Club with Rabbi Colish. Delicious ice cream for all participants.
- Mincha 6:05 Sharp
- Seudah Shelishi with a class at 6:40
- Arbit at 7:40pm followed by Havdalah – Shabbat ends at 7:45pm
- Movie Night is over for the season.

## WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

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

## WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

- "Mystical Torah Insights" 9:00 – 9:30 Sunday Mornings with breakfast with David Bibi or Rabbi Colish
- Kosher Kitchen Series 9:30AM – Led by Rabbi Colish –
- 6:30 AM class – new topic. "The Revealed Zohar on the Weekly Parasha"
- Men's Halacha Class Tuesday Nights 8:30-10:30: Basar BeChalav –
- "Sephardic Women's Prayer" Tuesday nights. This week in the Synagogue @ 8PM with Rabbi Colish. - deep insights, simple translations and a how to guide.

Remember Sunday is funday where you will create your own besamim box. Project cost is \$5 per box and it will be at 10:45 - 11: 45 am at the Synagogue.

Pre pesach shabbat dinner from Wok Tov at the shul on March 30, 2012. Please reply to Penny at zerizah@aol.com. Fee \$18 for 12 years and up; \$10 for 6-11 years old; and free for 5 years old and under. If you can help with table setup, cleanup or food warming or table food prep, please let Penny know your help will be greatly appreciated.

Congratulations to our recent winners of the Shabbat Shacharit Club Moshe Shetrit and Ari Waldman!

Kids: Win a free trip to Great Adventure in June

Points will be given for:

1. Memorizing parts of the weekday and Shabbat Amidah (boys and girls)
2. Reading from the Torah (boys)
3. Leading parts of the prayer service (boys)
4. Arriving on time for SoulShmoozing (girls)
5. Assisting the group leader in the Shabbat Morning Children's Program (girls)
6. Arriving on time for the Shabbat Afternoon Shabbat Tefilah Club Class (boys)

please reply to  
[ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com)

**DEDICATIONS: By Stuart Benson in memory of his mother, Rhoda Benson, Rachel Bat Eliyahu z"l, whose yarzeit was this week, 19 Adar Bet.**

### Editors Notes

We began learning the laws of Pesach on Sunday, beginning with Shabbat Parah, Shabbat HaChodesh, the month of Nisan and Shabbat HaGadol. So this week, my mind has been preoccupied with Passover, but not just about the laws and regulations, it's been preoccupied with thoughts of the many people who only a few years ago were doing fine, but who are today feeling the pain and extreme pressure of economic changes. Years ago, Rabbi Abittan, z'sl and I searched for poor to distribute money to on Purim, today we have lists with blacked out names of families the Rebbetzin needs to assist on Purim and again on Pesach. We say at the Seder, "all who are hungry let them come and eat". If we say it loud, if we open our doors, sadly, our houses will fill up quickly.

At the same time, we are all under tremendous pressure with people literally begging us to contribute on behalf of the many worthy causes.

Discussing reincarnation with Rabbi Abittan, there was a story we came across from the Karliner Chasidim. The version below is mentioned by Martin Buber in *Tales of the Hasidim*

Rabbi Aharon, who was known as the Karliner Rebbe, died young. Reb Shlomo, who was his closest disciple and destined to become his successor, did not want the

position of Rebbe. Why not? Because Reb Shlomo and Rabbi Aharon had once been fellow students who sat together as equals at the house of their teacher, the Great Maggid of Mezeritch. So it did not seem right to Shlomo now, that he should take his elder friend's place as Rebbe of Karlin. Besides, Reb Shlomo had seen how the people flocked to a Rebbe day and night, so that he had no privacy or peace.

"I don't want such fame and responsibility," Shlomo said. "I just want to lead a private life as an ordinary Jew."

So the Karliner Hasidim were left without a Rebbe. That is, until the night when Rabbi Aharon himself appeared to Reb Shlomo in a dream and said, "Shlomo, my friend and dearest student, if you will take on the yoke of leadership, you will be granted the power of seeing all the wanderings of souls in their various incarnations."

Reb Shlomo could not resist the great temptation of this offer. To be able to read the past lives of all souls! Still in the dream, he gave Rabbi Aharon his word that he would assume the succession and become the next Karliner Rebbe.

As it was promised in the dream, so it became in the waking world. The next morning when Reb Shlomo awoke, he was able to see the destinies of all human beings on earth. He knew their past lives, their present accomplishments, and all the repairs they needed to make for their souls. It was indeed an awesome spiritual gift!

That very same day, a messenger brought Reb Sholom a *kvittel* -- a written prayer request -- along with a great sum of money as a donation. The sender was a

prosperous merchant, whom we shall call Mr. Geltman. He lay dying and wanted the Rebbe to make a miracle and save his life.

No sooner had Reb Shlomo read the kvittel from Mr. Geltman, than a second messenger arrived with another prayer request, this time from the woman who supervised the homeless shelter near the edge of town. She had come on behalf of a pregnant woman, whom we shall call Mrs. Bettler, who was staying at the shelter. Mrs. Bettler had been laboring in childbirth for several days, but was unable to deliver her child. The midwife could do nothing for her. Could the Rebbe help?

With his newly-acquired mystical insight, Reb Shlomo immediately saw that the soul of the dying Mr. Geltman was destined to be re-born into the body of Mrs. Bettler's unborn child. Alas, the poor child could not be born until the rich man had died!

"So be it," sighed the new Rebbe. "May the will of God be done." Within moments, word of the rich man's death and the beggar child's birth arrived, one upon the heels of the other.

The next day, Reb Shlomo also heard through the grapevine that there was no firewood left at the homeless shelter, and the young mother and her newborn son were in danger of freezing to death. So Reb Shlomo took some of the donation money that Mr. Geltman had sent and used it to buy more firewood. "It really is the boy's own money after all," he said to himself. "So he deserves to benefit from it." Not long after that, he gave the rest of the money to Mrs. Bettler, to be used for the boy's care.

When the boy and his mother were strong enough to travel, they went on their way with the other beggars, going from town to

town. Six years later, the Bettlers happened to be passing through Karlin again. At the homeless shelter they heard that one of the sons of the deceased Mr. Geltman would be celebrating his son's bar mitzvah. As was the custom, the poor were all invited to the feast. So Mrs. Bettler and her son went along with the others.

As soon as they arrived at the Geltman house, the six-year-old boy's whole manner began to change completely. He took on an air of importance, and refused to sit at the pauper's table with the rest of the beggars. In a loud, arrogant voice, he demanded to be seated at the head of the guest table in a place of honor. The child made such a great disturbance that Reb Shlomo stepped in and said, "Let's just humor the boy, so we can continue the celebration in peace."

But the rabbi knew there was more to it, because he had recognized the boy as the reincarnated soul of Mr. Geltman. "He is really the master of the house, and those are his sons," thought Reb Shlomo to himself. "All he is doing is asking for his due."

When the meal was served, the same thing happened; the Bettler boy refused to take the plain foods offered to the poor, and insisted upon getting the best cuts of meat and the choicest morsels from the head table. Once again, Reb Shlomo said, "Let him have his way, so he doesn't disturb the feast."

But the other guests were getting upset with the boy. How dare he, a mere beggar's son, insult the Geltman brothers like that? So they asked his mother, "Does your son always behave like this?"

"Why no," replied Mrs. Bettler, as puzzled as they were. "He's always been such a good boy, very quiet and well-mannered. He's never done anything like this before -- I just don't know what's gotten into him!"

At the end of the feast, after Reb Shlomo had already gone home, the Geltman brothers distributed money among the poor, as was the custom. When the Bettler boy's turn came, he looked disdainfully at the small coins and shouted, "How dare you offer me coppers!?! Bring me gold from the treasure chest!"

By now, the Geltman brothers had had enough of his insolence, and Reb Shlomo was not there to intervene. So the Geltmans told their servants to throw him out of the house. And they did.

When Rabbi Shlomo later learned how the Geltman brothers had unknowingly mistreated their reincarnated father, he was deeply saddened. He could not bear the thought of spending his life watching such tragic scenes, so he begged heaven to take away his miraculous powers.

The story is told as a warning. We often hope for great powers. But great powers usually come with a great price.

My question at the time though was, "but what did Mr. Geltman do or not do that led to his reincarnation as the poor orphan"? I hypothesized to Rabbi Abittan, that perhaps his own stinginess as Mr. Geltman led to him experiencing its price the next time around. The Rabbi warned me not to focus on such things, but I found after learning more about gilgulim and reincarnation that questions like this could become haunting. And thus, the question of helping those in need as best as we can, looms large.

On Sunday as were learning, we spoke about the many families in town who were looking for an invitation for the Seders. Some families with single parents and others just plain single, some who would have nothing more than the Maxwell Hagadah (still put out by Waldbaums) and some who would probably just skip it. I was pained and this "being the rabbi" thing made me feel that it was my problem.

Normally we go to Florida for Passover. Having my wife and children with my parents, having my siblings with their children and grandchildren and singing and celebrating together is one of the highlights of the year. And we fully intended to go, but a couple of weeks ago we reconsidered noting that we would all be flying back and forth in the middle holiday and in essence we would spend only a few days there. When we decided that it was still worthwhile to go, the caterer said there was no more room for us at the seder and there were 40 ahead of our eight on the wait list. Imagine the thought of being told by a caterer that we couldn't come to our family's Seder? It was crazy, but he was right. There was nothing anyone could do. And so we must believe that this too was for the best.

And as I sat there Sunday I realized what the best might be. What if together with others in the Synagogue, we made a Seder and invited a hundred people – many of whom really needed a place to go. Could it be done? Could we bring meaning to Pesach to those who found little meaning?

We just celebrated a Shabbat with one hundred people, some who had never before experienced Shabbat and it was amazing. It was amazing for those for whom Shabbat was a

part of their lives too. Why couldn't we do the same for the Seder? So that's the plan. I am sure that I will get support from the local families because it will take lots of work. But I know that our little community always comes through because of the efforts of so many who make our Synagogue more like a family than a group of congregants.

But I am also turning to you, out in Cyberspace. I rarely do. But I think we'll need help this year. There are so many families in need.

I want to give each of you an opportunity – and it's really an opportunity - to sponsor a person for one night, or two nights, to sponsor a family for the seders or to provide funds to our maot chitim fund, helping a family get by for the full week of Passover. I know people are writing, calling and asking you for money every day, but if you send me, \$52, \$101, \$180, \$501, \$1001 or whatever amount you can, we will be your messenger and I assure you your money will make a difference to someone this Passover with nothing going to overhead. And when you begin the seder and open the door and announce to the world, "all who are hungry, come and eat", you will know that in a little town someone who would have been hungry is going to get to eat. You will smile and those on the table will ask why and you can tell them that this holiday you are so many more than those at your table, for all of us will be with you.

And after Passover when I write about it, you'll experience it again. You'll know that wherever you were during the Seders, you were also with us. Like I said, it's really an opportunity that will make you feel great. ( And I need a few of you who can write those big checks to step up).

Please make your checks out to The Sephardic Congregation Passover Fund, and send your donations to The Sephardic Congregation - P.O. Box 567 • Long Beach, New York 11561. You can also email me an amount with your name, credit card number and expiration. Do it now and thanks.

Tizkeh LeMisvot and Shabbat Shalom,

David Bibi

**With Iran so prominent in the news, please take a look at the following translation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Speech at the Knesset on Wednesday March 14<sup>th</sup>**

Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here for hours, listening and enjoying myself. It is just like the reception at Aipac. MK Wilf was there, as well as MK Dalia Itzik and Minister Yossi Peled. I missed this place, the praise, the compliments, the manners, and above all, Israeli understatement. In short, I missed you.

I am not being sarcastic when I say this. I appreciate the purpose for this meeting, hearing specific problems which allows me, at the very least, to try to address various problems bothering us in a practical manner. However, before I begin, I would like to thank the residents in the South and the heads of local authorities there, the IDF commanders and soldiers and the Israel Security Agency.

It is said that the job of Prime Minister of Israel is one of the most complex ones in the world. I can tell you from experience: there is truth to this statement, but even during difficult hours, there are moments that give one small comfort and warm the heart. This was the case this week when I

met with the Iron Dome soldiers, men and women who are protecting all our homes.

By the way, in the age of missiles this statement is very accurate. They are protecting our homes. There were soldiers there who were from the area, from Ashdod, but also from the Galilee. They are protecting all our homes. I felt the same way when I met with the residents of the South and their heads of the local authorities. They are an important component in our national resilience. Therefore, I am certain that I speak for all the members of Knesset when I say that I salute them all. They certainly deserve it.

I would like to clarify that there is no such thing as hermetic defense and there never will be. The combination of offensive readiness, defensive readiness and national resilience is a winning combination and we must nurture it.

I would like to say something to my colleagues, the Ministers and members of Knesset. During my recent visit to Washington, I set two goals: the first goal was to clarify that Israel has the right to defend itself by itself against any danger. The second goal was to raise the threat of Iran's nuclear armament to the top of the international community's list of priorities.

With regard to the first goal, the recognition of Israel's right to defend itself – there are those for whom this right seems self-evident. However, we had a previous Prime Minister, important and wise – Menachem Begin – who said that sometimes it is important to restate that which is self-evident. So I decided to do that, forcefully. Israel has the right to defend itself and, if necessary, to

realize that right. This position was positively received in the United States, I would even say in the most profound way.

This position has earned absolute support from the American people. It has earned resounding approval in the Congress. I heard it from the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Democratic leadership, the Republican leadership – from everyone. And it has also earned official recognition from the White House.

President Obama told me very explicitly during my visit, and I quote, "Israel must have the ability to defend itself, by itself, against any threat". He also added, "Israel has the sovereign right to make its own decisions with regard to its security".

I appreciate the President's statements, and I appreciate the deep and staunch alliance we have with the United States of America. As I said in Washington, in light of what is occurring in our region, in the Middle East and even beyond, this alliance between Israel and the US is prominent. However, there is something even more prominent and that is our right, our duty, to be the masters of our own fate.

Israel has never left its fate in the hands of others, not even in the hands of our best friends. This is the supreme duty I am charged with as Prime Minister of Israel. It is the supreme duty all Prime Ministers of Israel are charged with. It was this duty that David Ben-Gurion upheld when he declared the establishment of the country in 1948.

The American then-Secretary of State, the legendary George Marshall – and I say legendary because he was a World War Two hero – asked Ben-Gurion to

wait. He said that there was time. However, Ben-Gurion did not wait, he decided to declare the establishment of the country. Prime Minister Levy Eshkol also upheld this duty during the waiting period in 1967, when the stranglehold around Israel grew tighter. On the eve of the Six Day War, he sent Abba Eban to the White House to ask the United States to fulfill the written commitment they gave Israel when it withdrew from the Sinai in 1956 and open the Straits of Tiran. President Johnson asked Abba Eban to wait. He was told that it was not the time. More than that, they told him, "If you act alone – you will stay alone". However, Eshkol upheld his duty and he acted.

Finally, in 1981, that same duty guided Menachem Begin as he faced the question of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. He was well aware of the international criticism that would come, including, by the way, from our friend, the United States and President Reagan. He knew there would be such criticism if we acted to destroy the Iraqi reactor. However, he did his duty and acted. Let me tell you, my friends, with time it became clear that our relations with the United States not only were not harmed, they grew even stronger.

We would prefer that Iran abandon its nuclear program peacefully. Everyone prefers this, and of course, so do I. However, the duty I am charged with is to defend Israel's independent ability to defend itself against any challenge.

I presented the example I just gave you to my hosts in Washington, and I believe that the first goal I set, to strengthen the recognition of Israel's right to defend itself – I think that goal was achieved.

The second goal of my visit, to raise Iran's nuclear armament to the top of the international community's list of priorities – I believe that goal was also achieved. I would like to clarify to you that this is not the result of one visit. I have been acting to this end, together with my colleagues here, methodically for over 15 years. I have always believed that an Iran armed with nuclear weapons would pose an existential threat to Israel and a serious threat to the well-being and security of the entire world. I warned against this threat even when it was not popular to do so, and even when it was unacceptable – when many leaders in Israel and around the world preferred to ignore Iran's nuclear program and its repercussions.

There were those who believed, and probably still believe, that an agreement with the Palestinians is the solution, that it would lead to a solution of the Iranian problem. As if an agreement with Mahmoud Abbas would stop the centrifuges. Let's make a deal and the centrifuges will stop spinning. Whoever wants to believe this can do so, but he is simply burying his head in the sand.

There are many reasons to come to an agreement with the Palestinians: because we want peace; because we want calm; because I do not want a binational state. However, thinking that an agreement with Abbas will stop Iran and its satellite states – this is a dangerous illusion. I must admit that some people excel at illusions.

I had just returned from Washington, and I heard several members of Knesset and others say, "It is very good that you raised the issue of a nuclear Iran

to the top of the international community's list of priorities. But look – it is the Palestinian issue that is exploding in our faces".

Understand, the dominant factor that motivates these events in Gaza is not the Palestinian issue. The dominant factor that motivates these events in Gaza is Iran.

Gaza equals Iran.

Where do the missiles come from? From Iran.

Where does the money come from? From Iran.

Who trains the terrorists? Iran.

Who builds the infrastructure? Iran.

I have said this many times: who gives the orders? Iran.

Gaza is a forward operating base for Iran.

I heard some people say that a third- or fourth-rate terrorist organization is acting against a million citizens in the State of Israel. That is not true. Iran is operating against us.

I hope that if not all, at least most members here and the public understand that the terrorist organizations in Gaza – Hamas and Jihad, as well as Hezbollah in Lebanon – are taking shelter under an Iranian umbrella.

Now imagine what will happen if that umbrella becomes nuclear. Imagine that behind these terrorist organizations stands a country that calls for our destruction and it is armed with nuclear weapons.

Are you ready for this? I am not ready for this! And any responsible leader understands

that we cannot let this happen – because of nuclear terror and the nuclear threat, but also because of the strengthening of conventional terror and the firing of missiles at us.

A Prime Minister of Israel cannot entrust the ability to act against this threat to others.

I know there are people who claim that I am terrifying people. I heard those same people say exactly the same thing when my colleagues and I warned them against the Disengagement, when we said that Gaza would become an enormous terrorist base – they said I was terrifying people then as well. I resigned from the government because I was not prepared to be a part of that Disengagement. When I said they would fire missiles from Gaza on Ashkelon, Beer-Sheva and Ashdod, they said we were sowing panic. They said a unilateral withdrawal would lead to a breakthrough in peace. Well, where is that breakthrough? What peace?

We dragged the entire country into the mud, and we are dealing with a situation that was created as a result of the Disengagement. We, unlike other people, are dealing responsibly and with discretion with this problem, and we will eventually resolve it, just as we are resolving the other problems we inherited. We will resolve them too.

They brought Iran into Gaza – we will remove Iran from Gaza. We did not bring Iran into Gaza – you brought Iran into Gaza!

Wherever we withdrew, Iran entered. We withdrew from Lebanon, Iran came in. We withdrew from Gaza, Iran came in. Some people suggest that we act in a similar manner in Judea and Samaria. Iran will come in

there too. I cannot believe that there is anyone, despite your yelling, despite your objections and opposition, who does not understand that we cannot repeat this same mistake a third time.

I believe that perhaps all of you, with certain isolated exceptions, understand that we cannot repeat this mistake. If we come to an agreement with the Palestinians, we must ensure that our security foundations are sound and that Iran cannot enter the territory. We also know that when we warned that this would happen in Gaza and that a unilateral withdrawal would lead to this exact result, some people ignored those warnings, and today we know the results. We also know that we cannot agree to this for long.

Our enemies must know that, at the end of the day, Israel will not accept an Iranian base in Gaza. Sooner or later, Iran's terror base in Gaza will be uprooted.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: The Parsha begins with the Mitzvah of Shabbos and the penalty for her transgression. Note that Pasuk 35:5 is classic proof of the Oral Law. Those who deny the Oral Law must explain the literal translation of this verse to prohibit having any burning flame on Shabbos. This would forbid the use of lights, heat, and even Shabbos candles! It is the Oral Law which teaches us that the G-d's prohibition was directed at lighting a fire, not having a fire. Moshe asked the Bnai Yisroel to donate the time, talents, and materials for the construction of the Mishkan. The Bnai Yisroel responded with unbridled enthusiasm.

2nd Aliya: Talents and materials were donated and Betzallel and Oholiav were appointed as chief architects and artists. The response to Moshe's appeal was so great that Moshe had to command the people to stop their donations! (see, miracles do happen!) The outer coverings of the Mishkan and the inner tapestries are detailed. The beams of the Mishkan, the Aron Hakodesh, and the Shulchan - Table are described.

3rd & 4th Aliyot: The Menorah and the inner Golden Altar are described. The outer ramped Altar, the Washstand, and the Mishkan's surrounding enclosure are detailed. Pekudei begins with an accounting of the materials used in the construction of the Mishkan. (gold = 4,386.5 lb./ silver = 15,088.75 lb./ copper = 10,620 lb.)

5th & 6th Aliyot: The Kohein Gadol's breastplate and vest are described. The remaining garments of the Kohein Gadol and the other Kohanim are detailed, and Moshe inspects the completed Mishkan. Moshe certifies that the entire project followed the exact details of Hashem's instructions. Moshe blesses the workers.

7th Aliya: On the 1st day of Nissan, 2449, the Mishkan was assembled. After every vessel was properly in place, the presence of Hashem, the Shechina, descended in a cloud and filled the Mishkan.

This week, in addition to the regular Parsha, we read the section known as Parah. The additional sections of Shekalim, Zachor, Parah, and Chodesh are read prior to Pesach for both commemorative and practical reasons. Shekalim, the first additional section, dealt with the 1/2 Shekel and the public

sacrifices. The reading of the second section, Zachor, facilitated our fulfillment of the Mitzvah to remember the evil of Amalek. The two sections of Parah and Chodesh are directed toward our preparations for Pesach.

On Parshas Parah, we read the section found in the beginning of Parshas Chukas known as Parah. This section discusses the necessary steps that had to be followed to remove the impurity which caused by having had contact with a dead person. This process involved a seven day period during which the impure - Tameh person underwent a process involving the ashes of the Red Heifer. The process was facilitated by a Kohen, and had to take place in Yerushalayim.

The status of being Tameh restricted a person from entering into the Temple compound and / or participating in certain select activities. Although these restrictions are less applicable today because we do not have the Bais Hamikdash; nevertheless, it is incumbent upon all people, male and female, to keep these laws to the degree that they do apply.

In the time of the Bais Hamikdash it was required of every male adult to visit the Bais Hamikdash and offer a sacrifice a minimum of three times a year: Pesach, Shevout, and Succoth. However, it was even more important to be there on Erev Pesach to sacrifice the Korban Pesach - Pascal Lamb. Anyone who happened to be Tameh, from having had contact with a dead body, would have to undergo the process of the Parah Adumah - the Red Heifer, to remove the status of Tameh and be allowed to bring his Pascal Lamb to the Bais Hamikdash.

The Talmud tells us that the furthest point in Israel from Yerushalayim was a two weeks travel. If so, a person who was Tameh living two weeks travel away would require a minimum of three weeks to arrive in Yerushalayim with sufficient time to go through the one week process of the Red Heifer and be able to offer his Korban Pesach. Therefore, Chazal ordained the reading of Parah on the week before the reading of Chodesh as a public reminder to those who are Tameh that they must immediately arrange to get to Yerushalayim so that they can purify themselves in time to bring the Korban Pesach.

Yechezkel 36:16 - This week's Haftorah reflects the reading of Parshas Parah. Yechezkel, the prophet, berated the people for their defection away from G-d. Their behavior defiled Eretz Yisroel rendering them unfit to remain within her boundaries. Therefore, the Jews had to be exiled from their land and dispersed among the nations. The exile and the consequent suffering while in exile would serve as a process purification process for the nation. In essence, the exile would be a national Parah Adumah - Red Heifer.

Central to the theme of the Haftorah is the fact that Hashem ultimately redeems the nation, "for His own sake." While in exile the Jews are able to spread the word of G-d and teach His existence to the other nations. However, exile will also take its toll on the Jews. The Jews interaction with other nations will result in furthering the very defection which caused G-d to first punish the nation.

Among the mysteries of the Parah Adumah is the fact that the Kohen who administers the ashes

becomes impure while the recipient of the ashes becomes pure. In essence this is the experience of the Jew in exile. The Jews have brought knowledge and understanding of G-d to the nations wherein which they were exiled, while at the same time suffering terrible persecution and assimilation through their association with the non-Jewish world. The nations have become pure while the Jews have become impure.

In the end G-d will redeem the nation and gather them in from the four- corners of the earth, "for His own sake." The time will come when the purpose of the Jew in exile will have been fulfilled. Then, there will be no further reason for the Jew to remain among the other nations and G-d will renew His covenant with the Bnai Yisroel and return them to Eretz Yisroel.

### **EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN**

**Rabbi Reuven Semah**

**“You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on Shabbat day.” (Shemot 35:3)**

A true story is told (quoted from the book Alenu Leshabeah) about an Israeli couple who lived many years on a secular kibbutz in Israel. As years went by they felt a certain emptiness in their lives. They realized that the lack of religion was the cause of this feeling. Slowly they returned to the Torah true way of life. They also decided to move to Meah Shearim in Jerusalem. This amazing couple continued to grow until the husband became a completely committed Jew. The wife also became very religious. There was only one thing that held her back from complete observance. She had a strong smoking habit. This habit was so strong that when Shabbat came around she couldn't stop. She

actually smoked on Shabbat. As a matter of fact, the most unusual part of this habit was that it was only on Shabbat that she couldn't stop; she had no trouble the rest of the week. Everyone tried to get her to stop to no avail. When Shabbat began she had an uncontrollable need to smoke.

Eventually the people that were trying to help her went to Rabbi Elyashiv (may Hashem grant him refuah shelema) to ask his advice. He told them to check out her mother and grandmother and even before them to make sure that they were all Jewish.

After a short time it was revealed that her grandmother was not Jewish! This translates to mean that our smoker was not Jewish. They immediately went to the Rabbi to tell him the news. His reaction was amazing. He said, "Look and see how much mercy Hashem has! We are talking about a woman who wants to do the will of Hashem. However, Hashem knows that she isn't Jewish (apparently the woman herself didn't know). A non-Jew is forbidden to observe the Shabbat and is punished with death. But, since she wanted so much to come close to the Jewish people, in Heaven they had to prevent her from committing the sin of observing the Shabbat. So Hashem gave her an uncontrollable urge to smoke, which prevented her from observing Shabbat. Plus, this led to us finding out that she wasn't Jewish and needed to be converted! So I recommend to do the conversion and you will see that the urge will end." And so it was!

### **Rabbi Shmuel Choueka**

When Moshe Rabenu called upon everyone to donate to the Mishkan, the women stepped forward and offered their copper

mirrors which they used to preen themselves. Moshe was understandingly reluctant to accept such a type of donation, whereupon Hashem told him to accept them because they are very beloved in His Eyes (Hashem's). These mirrors were used to make the women pretty in the eyes of their husbands when they were all downtrodden in the mud pits of Egypt, and through these mirrors, the Jewish people multiplied to become the nation of Hashem.

Interestingly, these copper ornaments were used to make the Kiyor, the washbasin which the Kohanim used to wash themselves before the Holy Service. Also, the water which was used to make a suspected adulterer's drink came from this basin. The lesson to be learned is that since these mirrors promoted love and loyalty between husband and wife, the waters found in this Kiyor would also guarantee that if a woman is free of sin, she would be found innocent and return to her husband. When someone does an act of love and devotion, anything which comes from that act will have those same characteristics. We should realize that nothing is forgotten by Hashem, and if someone does a kindness or a good deed with true feelings, this will only bring goodness and blessing to himself and others.

### **Raymond Beyda - UPHILL BATTLE**

"I don't know if I could take this much longer." Ephraim complained, "It seems like every time I try to attend class I have a conflicting appointment at work. If I plan to learn in the morning before I leave the synagogue, a buyer calls up and requests an early-morning appointment. If I plan to get home early and attend an evening class, someone will



call up and request a late day or evening meeting and I'm forced to cancel my class." "You probably never considered why Hashem gave the Torah to his people on a mountain", Zevulun replied. "I certainly did", Ephraim objected, "Hashem chose Mount Sinai, because it was a low mountain to teach us that in order to learn his holy book, one must first acquire the trait of humility." "If that is the only reason", his friend answered softly, "then he should have given it in a plain or even a valley. Hashem wanted to teach that growth in spirituality is not a smooth road. One has to expect difficulties; there will always be mountains in the way." The modern world we live in is one of convenience. We yearn for things to be instant and simple. We have easy open cans, cruise control driving, and wireless voice controlled dialing. Marketing specialists always raise the simplicity and ease-of-use of their client's product. They know all too well that everyone wants things to be simple. People who trained for sports will tell you that pushing beyond the limits of one's capabilities is what moves the bar further up and makes what was once difficult easier to achieve in the future. That is the way, Hashem has planned our spiritual growth as well. A person must expect difficulties and must overcome them. There are no smooth roads and no easy rides in the path to success. Be prepared for difficulty, and you'll be more suited to overcome them. **CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE** During the course of a day most people conduct themselves without much thought or evaluation of what they are doing. however, at the time one is praying a person should at least feel that he is standing before Hashem and speaking to Him. [miPikudecha Etbonan, p. 111]

**RABBI ELI MANSOUR**  
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**Show the Kids**

The Torah in Parashat Vayakhel relates how Beneh Yisrael responded enthusiastically to Moshe's call for donations to the Mishkan. The people generously donated all the materials that were needed for the Mishkan's construction, which included precious metals, animal skins, wool, dyes, and much more. The Torah writes, "Every man and woman whose heart stirred them to bring [materials] for all the work that God commanded through Moshe to be done – Beneh Yisrael brought a donation to God" (35:29).

Many commentators have noted that this verse appears, at first glance, redundant. It seems unnecessary for the Torah to inform us that all the people who were inspired to bring donations indeed brought donations. Isn't this obvious? What purpose was there for the Torah to make such a self-evident statement?

Many different interpretations have been offered to explain the meaning and intent of this verse. The Hid"ra (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1807) suggested that the Torah refers to the people's faithful fulfillment of their pledges. As we unfortunately know all too well, people often feel inspired when they hear an appeal and make a generous pledge, but later have second thoughts and renege on their commitments. Many of our institutions are owed enormous sums of money in unpaid pledges. This is a most unfortunate reality, and is also very frightening, in light of our Sages' stern warnings of the potential consequences, Heaven

forbid, of failing to fulfill vows. The Torah here emphasizes that "every man and woman whose heart stirred them" – who felt inspired and made a commitment to donate – "brought a donation to God." They not only pledged, but they also fulfilled those pledges in full.

Another approach is to explain the verse as referring to the children. The Torah tells us that the people who made donations toward the Mishkan "Hebi'u Beneh Yisrael" – they brought the children, the youngsters, to watch. They didn't leave the children at home and tell them to wait there while they went out. Rather, they took the children along to get them involved and to have them personally witness what was happening.

The most important aspect of parenting is modeling desired behavior. We send our children to school for twelve years and speak to them about Misvot, but these will not be effective unless we set a personal example for our children to follow. It is thus crucially important to make sure that our children see us perform Misvot. If a mother is baking in the kitchen, for example, it is worthwhile for her to call her daughter to the kitchen when she separates Halla. Seeing the Misva performed has a much stronger impact than just hearing about it. If we want our children to embrace our Torah values and lifestyle, then we must show them how it's done. Just as Beneh Yisrael brought their children to see them donate their precious possessions to the Mishkan, we, too, must make a proactive effort to involve our children in the Misvot that we do, setting for them an inspiring example that they will hopefully follow for the rest of their lives – and that they will set for their own children, and so on, for all generations.

### Rabbi Wein Accountability

The book of Shemot concludes with a key message for Jews – accountability. The Torah records for us how the Mishkan was actually built and then it records for us a detailed accounting of how the donations for its building were actually spent and accounted for. The Torah holds Bezalel and Ahaliav accountable for their talents and industry. Their actual efforts and final accomplishments are compared to the original plans for the Mishkan as detailed to us in parshiyot Trumah and Tetzaveh.

The praise for the architects, supervisors and builders of the Mishkan is that they did not deviate from the original plans and fulfilled their tasks completely and enthusiastically – with a full heart and great commitment. They fulfilled their obligation of accountability to God and man.

There can be no greater accomplishment for a human being than fulfilling that obligation of accountability. It disciplines our minds and our behavior and creates a responsible and secure society. Much of the Jewish world today says openly or subliminally: "Don't count on me." People do not want to commit themselves to marriage, to ideals, to the Torah or the Jewish people. They do not want to engage with the test of accountability so they avoid the issue completely.

The Jewish future cannot be built on people who do not wish to be held accountable for the use of their lives, their talents and their material blessings. That is really the most important message that these parshiyot impart to us. And make no mistake about it, Judaism holds all human beings accountable in an exact fashion.

The Torah also holds Moshe accountable for the materials that were collected in order to construct the Mishkan. Every item that was donated has to be accounted for. The story is told about a bookkeeper for a certain company that was unable to balance the books of the company. He was off by five dollars. So he simply left a five dollar bill in the ledger and went home. That type of accounting is not acceptable when it comes to dealing with public funds.

Moshe feels compelled to account for every piece of silver donated to the construction of the Mishkan. And when he finds the books don't balance, he is terror stricken until he remembers that the missing amount of silver was used to manufacture the hooks that held the curtains of the Mishkan upright and taut. Only then is he relieved and his leadership role is again justified and secure.

A leader, more than the average person or simple citizen, is held to the highest possible standard of fiscal and moral accountability. The Bible records for us how the kings of Judah and Israel were continually reminded and often chastised by the prophets of their times for failing this test of responsible accountability. The Torah states the matter succinctly: "And you shall be found innocent and blameless before God and Israel."

The Torah demands accountability and is loath to accept excuses. A generation that does not feel itself accountable to the Jewish past and to the Jewish future fails miserably in its role as being the conduit of Jewish life and holiness

### Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Parsha Parables

### A Little Bit More

Mazel Tov! After a magnanimous show of unity, men and women of all the shevatim opened their hearts, minds, talents and purses to complete the Mishkan, the Tabernacle, in the desert. In the next two Torah parshiyos (Torah portions), the Torah summarizes the accomplishment by detailing the work that was done by Betzalel and the devoted artisans and craftsmen.

Moshe declares the success of the campaign and the generosity of the donors by announcing, that "the work (and contributions) had been enough for all the work, to do it -- and there was extra" (Exodus 36:7). Not only was there enough for the completion of the task - there was extra.

But many commentaries are concerned about Moshe's seemingly strange expression of completion. "There was enough, and there was extra." After all, if there was enough, then there was not extra. And if there was extra then it should not be called enough!

Further, what is the difference if there was extra or not?

The Story: In the whY I Matter Parsha sheet by the Young Israel of Midwood Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld, I saw the following story about one of the great sefardic chachamim of our generation, R' Ben Zion Abba Shail, z"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Porat Yosef in Yerushalayim.

When R' Ben Zion was about 20 years old, and learning at Yeshivat Porat Yosef, one of the leading American sages, R' Eliezer Silver, came to the Yeshiva in the company of a wealthy American who was investigating which yeshiva was most worthy of his sizable donation. R' Ben Zion was chosen as the student to be

tested by R' Silver who asked the young scholar a question in the obscure area of Taharot (laws of ritual purity). When R' Ben Zion gave his answer, R' Silver said that he had asked the same question 40 years earlier to R' Meir Simcha Hakohen of Dvinsk (author of Ohr Sameach and Meshech Chochmah) and had received the same answer. R' Ben Zion later told R' Attiah that he had a second answer to the question as well, but since the first answer sufficed to secure the donation, offering a second answer might have been considered showing-off.

The Message: I was curious as to why R' Benzion actually related that he had an extra answer, even though he did not offer it. Isn't that showing off as well?

Maybe the answer lies within these verses.

Magnanimous giving is not only in the fulfillment of the request, but in the way it is fulfilled. The noble manner in which something is prepared - in a way that there is always more, or with a desire to give even more, is an indicator of the significance of the actual gift that was eventually given.

When one has the ability, the desire and preparedness to give not only what he is asked, but to even give more, then we know that the original gift is not a begrudged offering, it is as special as if more was actually given.

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

The Torah in Parshat Vayakhel, which describes the making of the Mishkan, goes out of its way to emphasize the role women

played in it: The men accompanied the women, and those who wanted to make a donation brought bracelets, earrings, finger rings, and body ornaments, all made of gold. (35: 22)

Every skilled woman put her hand to spinning, and they [all] brought the spun yarn of sky-blue wool, dark red wool, crimson wool and fine linen. Highly skilled women volunteers also spun the goats' wool. (35: 25-26).

Every man and woman among the Israelites who felt an urge to give something for all the work that God had ordered through Moses, brought a donation for God. (35: 29)

Indeed the emphasis is even greater than it seems in translation, because of the unusual locution in verse 22, Vayavo-u ha-anashim al hanashim, which implies that the women came to make their donations first, and the men merely followed their lead (Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Rabbenu Bachye).

This is all the more striking since the Torah implies that the women refused to contribute to the making of the Golden Calf (see the commentaries to Ex. 32: 2). The women had a sense of judgment in the religious life – what is true worship, and what false – that the men lacked.

Kli Yakar (R. Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, 1550 –1619) makes the further point that since the Tabernacle was an atonement for the Golden Calf, the women had no need to contribute at all, since it was the men not the women who needed atonement. None the less, women gave, and did so before the men.

Most moving, though, by far is the cryptic verse: He [Betzalel] made the copper washstand and its

copper base out of the mirrors of the dedicated women [ha-tzove'ot] who congregated at the entrance of the Communion Tent. [Ex. 38: 8]

The sages (in Midrash Tanhuma) told a story about this. This is how Rashi tells it: Israelite women owned mirrors, which they would look into when they adorned themselves. Even these [mirrors] they did not hold back from bringing as a contribution toward the Mishkan, but Moses rejected them because they were made for temptation [i.e., to inspire lustful thoughts]. The Holy One, blessed is He, said to him, "Accept [them], for these are more precious to Me than anything because through them the women set up many legions [i.e., through the children they gave birth to] in Egypt." When their husbands were weary from back-breaking labour, they [the women] would go and bring them food and drink and give them to eat. Then they [the women] would take the mirrors and each one would see herself with her husband in the mirror, and she would seduce him with words, saying, "I am more beautiful than you." And in this way they aroused their husbands' desire and would be intimate with them, conceiving and giving birth there, as it is said: "Under the apple tree I aroused you" (Song 8:5). This is [the meaning of] what is *בְּמִרְאֵת הַצְּבָאוֹת* [lit., the mirrors of those who set up legions]. From these [the mirrors], the washstand was made.

The story is this. The Egyptians sought not merely to enslave, but also to put an end to, the people of Israel. One way of doing so was to kill all male children. Another was simply to interrupt normal family life. The people, both men and women, were labouring all day. At night, says the Midrash, they were forbidden to return home. They slept where

they worked. The intention was to destroy both privacy and sexual desire, so that the Israelites would have no more children.

The women realised this, and decided to frustrate Pharaoh's plan. They used mirrors to make themselves attractive to their husbands. The result was that intimate relations resumed. The women conceived and had children (the "legions" referred to in the word *tzove'ot*). Only because of this was there a new generation of Jewish children. The women, by their faith, courage and ingenuity, secured Jewish survival.

The Midrash continues that when Moses commanded the Israelites to bring offerings to make the tabernacle, some brought gold, some silver, some bronze, some jewels. But many of the women had nothing of value to contribute except the mirrors they had brought with them from Egypt. These they brought to Moses, who recoiled in disgust. What, he thought, have these cheap objects, used by women to make themselves look attractive, to do with the sanctuary and the sacred? God rebuked Moses for daring to think this way, and ordered him to accept them.

The story is powerful in itself. It tells us, as do so many other midrashim, that without the faith of women, Jews and Judaism would never have survived. But it also tells us something absolutely fundamental to the Jewish understanding of love in the religious life.

In his impressive recent book *Love: A History* (2011) the philosopher Simon May writes: "If love in the Western world has a founding text, that text is Hebrew." Judaism sees love as supremely physical and spiritual. That is the meaning of "You shall

love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might" (Deut. 6: 5). This is not the language of meditation or contemplation, philosophical or mystical. It is the language of passion.

Even the normally cerebral Maimonides writes this about the love of God: What is the love of God that is befitting? It is to love God with a great and exceeding love, so strong that one's soul shall be knit up with the love of God, such that it is continually enraptured by it, like a lovesick individual whose mind is never free from passion for a particular woman and is enraptured by her at all times ... Even intenser should be the love of God in the hearts of those who love Him. They should be enraptured by this love at all times. (Laws of Repentance, 10:5)

This is the love we find in passages like Psalm 63: 2, "My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Only because the sages thought about love this way, did they take it for granted that *The Song of Songs* – an extremely sensual series of love poems – was about the love between God and Israel. Rabbi Akiva called it "the holy of holies" of religious poetry.

It was Christianity, under the influence of classical Greece, that drew a distinction between eros (love as intense physical desire) and agape (a calm, detached love of humanity-in-general and things-in-general) and declared the second, not the first, to be religious. It was this self-same Greek influence that led Christianity to read the story of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit as a story of sinful sexual desire – an interpretation that should have no place whatsoever in Judaism.

Simon May speaks about the love of God in Judaism as being characterized by "intense devotion; absolute trust; fear of his power and presence; and rapturous, if often questioning, absorption in his will ... Its moods are a combination of the piety of a vassal, the intimacy of friends, the fidelity of spouses, the dependence of a child, the passion of lovers ..." He later adds, "The widespread belief that the Hebrew Bible is all about vengeance and 'an eye for an eye,' while the Gospels supposedly invent love as an unconditional and universal value, must therefore count as one of the most extraordinary misunderstandings in all of Western history."

The Midrash dramatizes this contrast between eros and agape as an argument between God and Moses. Moses believes that closeness to God is about celibacy and purity. God teaches him otherwise, that passionate love, when offered as a gift to God, is the most precious love of all. This is the love we read about in *Shir ha-Shirim*. It is the love we hear in *Yedid Nefesh*,<sup>[1]</sup> the daring song we sing at the beginning and toward the end of Shabbat. When the women offered God the mirrors through which they aroused their husbands' love in the dark days of Egypt, God told Moses, "These are more precious to Me than anything else." The women understood, better than the men, what it means to love God "with all your heart and all your soul and all your might."