

## SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

### EMOR

MAY 3, 2014

3 IYAR 5774

**DEDICATIONS:** Happy 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday Moses  
Monday is Yom HaZikaron and Tuesday is Yom HaAtzmaut

Mazal Tov to Bobby and Hindy on the birth of a grandson  
Jacob Hudson

## SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

Candle lighting this Friday evening is at 7:33 p.m. Shir Hashirim 6:40 Mincha at 7:00

SHABBAT Class at 8:30, Relevant Daily Halachot based upon the teaching of HaRav Ovadia Yosef  
Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:36AM

We will endeavor to keep it to the 7 aliyot, somech, samuch and maftir each week.

This week's Kiddush is given in memory of Sarah bat Mordechai z"l, Louis Glass z"l and Mitchell Gross z"l by  
Kathy and Sarina Amiel

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30

Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom/ Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Pirkei Avot With Rav Aharon at 6:30 –

Mincha at 7:00 – Followed by Seudah Shelishi at 7:30  
Seudah Shlishi sponsored by Sam and Roni Shetrit and Eli Sacharow  
to commemorate the 19th yahrzeit of their father Dr. Lennie Sacharow.

Class with David

"Do not let the misvah of Omer be trivial in your eyes, for through this misvah Avraham merited to inherit the  
Land of Canaan." Trying to understand the misvah of Omer !

Birkat HaMazon at 8:15  
Arbit at 8:20 - Shabbat Ends – 8:33

### WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

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

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Men and Women are Invited  
Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai

Daily class with Rabbi Colish - Weekday 6:30 AM (ADDITIONAL NEW TIME Sunday Mornings 7:30)  
Kaballah as a Guide to Spiritual Growth based upon the teachings of Likutei Moharan  
Please note that Rabbi Colish will be away for Pesach

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**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame. Mincha at 4PM through October 30<sup>th</sup> – Please join us! 212-289-2100**

**I'll be in Denver next week B'H -**

### Editors Notes

#### There is no greater sin; there is no greater Misvah

On the way back from Synagogue on Shabbat morning I was speaking with two of my cousins about the misconception that it's OK to cheat a gentile. We were discussing a case of receiving the wrong change and if a person was required to fess up. It seemed that a friend was told that it was OK to walk away with the wrong change.

I explained that regardless of whether one will call the act theft, there is a much greater concept involved. In this week's portion, the Torah directs us not to desecrate the Name of G-d, and in the very same verse it commands us to sanctify G-d's Name. Rabbi Abittan z'sl would state that this desecration - as the Rambam writes on the one hand, is indeed the most grievous sin of all, for which one can earn atonement only in the next world while the sanctification, the greatest misvah one could do.

Directly relating to the question at hand, a story is told by Rabbi Yonason Rosenblum of when Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky z'sl became the rabbi of Tzitevian in Lithuania. A congregant approached him explaining that the postmaster had mistakenly given him change for a hundred lit note instead of for the ten lit note he had actually given him. Rav Yaakov advised the man to return the money.

Several weeks later, Rav Yaakov was in the post office and this time the postmaster gave him more stamps than he paid for. The smile on the postmaster's face as he handed Rav Yaakov his stamps alerted him that the postmaster was deliberately testing him to see whether the other Jew had simply been an honest fool or had been acting according to the dictates of the new rabbi. Rav Yaakov was delighted that he had been presented

with such an opportunity for Kiddush Hashem and instantly returned the stamps. Years later, he learned that the postmaster had been one of the few locals who had been willing to hide Jews in his cellar. Rav Yaakov was convinced that such displays of honesty had been a major factor in that decision and as such he felt that this was a mitzvah to publicize.

As I write this we have just commemorated Yom HaShoah and I am reminded of the miraculous story of Rav Chaim Kreisworth, z'sl who was the chief rabbi of Antwerp for many years.

The Rabbi was caught by the Germans in the street after curfew. The commanding officer pulled out his gun to kill him then reconsidered not wanting to dirty the clean street with Jewish blood. He ordered a soldier to take the Rabbi into a building and shoot him there. As Rav Kreisworth was being taken to be killed he asked *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* to save him and his prayers were heard and, in response to his entreaties, the Nazi soldier turned to him and said, "I really don't want to kill you, but what can I do"? The Rabbi suggested that the soldier count to three, shoot into the air and then he would run away. No one would be the wiser. As the Rabbi turned to run, the soldier grabbed him by the collar and told him to wait one minute. "You are a Jewish scholar and I want you to guarantee that I will live through this war and not only me, but my mother and my sister as well." The Rabbi said that he could not guarantee, but he would pray for him. The soldier wrote the names out for the Rabbi and allowed the Rabbi to escape and he made his way to Eres Yisrael. .

The Rabbi survived the war and after the war wanted to know what came of that soldier. He found the man's home and knocked on the door. An old woman peaked out the door and thinking he was a Nazi hunter slammed the door in his face. The Rabbi went around the side and held the note with the names that the soldier had given him. A minute later out came Franz. The two men embraced. The soldier told the Rabbi that he thought of him every day of the war and he knew that he, his mother and sister survived only through the merit of the Rabbi's prayers.

There is in this story, something missing. There is the question of what set the foundation in this German soldier's heart to both allow the rabbi to live and believe that the prayers of the rabbi would be welcomed in Heaven. Undoubtedly, a Kiddush Hashem that he had witnessed or heard about years prior.

Although the classic definition of a Kiddush Hashem or Chillul Hashem according to Rambam relates to one's willingness to give up his or her life in specific

situation, the question is often asked how we fulfill this obligation in our world today.

Walking along 63<sup>rd</sup> Street on Shabbat I recalled that our neighbors knew we were Jewish whether we advertised it or not. And that our actions are never judged singularly. In our neighbor's mind we are judged collectively. "This is what a Jew does!"

How much more so when we are identified as observant Jews? If you could read the thoughts of the guy you cut off or mistreated, you would hear. . "This is what learning Torah does to a person? These are the actions of people who claim to be religious?"

Rabbi Mansour tells the story of a gentile who lived next door to a synagogue and once entered the sanctuary during the morning services. After apologizing for the interruption, he politely asked that the person who parked his car in front of his driveway move the car so he can take his wife to the doctor. The person who had parked the car by his driveway arrogantly insisted that he first finish the prayer service and only then move the car.

What misplaced righteousness? I imagine if I was there, I would have immediately removed my tefilin, taken the man's key and escorted the neighbor out apologizing profusely for man's behavior.

What's scary though is that depending on where I was praying I might be lauded by my effort after returning or chastised from the zealots that I interrupted my tefilot to G-d to move a car. That second thought is neither fantasy nor remote. It's real. Too many of our friends and family lose sense of priorities. Even writing this I can just imagine the feedback from those who will say that it's my sense of priorities which is skewed.

Let me let Rabbi Mansour words conclude: We are currently in the middle of the period of Sefirat Ha'omer, during which we observe a number of practices of mourning for the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. Two great sages, the Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) and the Chafetz Chayim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, Lithuania, 1835-1933), explain that the students were not punished for the sin of disrespect. Rather, they were punished for the Chilul Hashem that resulted from their behavior. People saw how they shouted and spoke offensively to one another, and walked away with the mistaken impression that this is what Torah learning does to a person.

Numerous Rabbis have commented that nowadays, every observant Jew is like a rabbi, in that he sets an example through his daily conduct. Non-observant

Jews and gentiles look to us as examples of all Orthodox Jewry; they see our behavior as representative of the values and teachings of traditional Judaism. It therefore behooves us to exercise extreme care in how we conduct ourselves, to ensure that we create a Kiddush Hashem, rather than, Heaven forbid, cause the Name of G-d to be desecrated.

Shabbat Shalom  
David Bibi

**Meet the Poster Child for 'White Privilege' –  
Then Have Your Mind Blown  
by Jennifer Kabbany –  
Associate Editor on April 29, 2014  
(Thanks to Phil Rosen for forwarding)**

He's 20, he's white, and he's a freshman at Princeton University.

According to the ethnic and feminist studies college students and professors who frequently and vehemently complain that this country is steeped in racism and sexism and is only fair and just and equal for white, heterosexual males – he is the poster child for so-called "White Privilege."

His name is Tal Fortgang, and just eight months into his Ivy League experience, he's been told on numerous occasions to "check his privilege" – a phrase that has taken social media social justice campaigning by storm.

It is meant to remind white, heterosexual males that they have it so good because they're white, heterosexual males. They haven't faced tough times, they don't know what it's like to be judged by the color of their skin.

Oh, but they do.

Those sick of being labeled are the very same ones doing it to others, and Tal Fortgang has a powerful message for them:

There is a phrase that floats around college campuses, Princeton being no exception, that threatens to strike down opinions without regard for their merits, but rather solely on the basis of the person that voiced them. "Check your privilege," the saying goes, and I have been reprimanded by it several times this year. The phrase, handed down by my moral superiors, descends recklessly, like an Obama-sanctioned drone, and aims laser-like at my pinkish-peach complexion, my maleness, and the nerve I displayed in offering an opinion rooted in a personal Weltanschauung. "Check your privilege," they tell me in a command that teeters between an imposition to actually explore how I got where I am,

and a reminder that I ought to feel personally apologetic because white males seem to pull most of the strings in the world.

I do not accuse those who “check” me and my perspective of overt racism, although the phrase, which assumes that simply because I belong to a certain ethnic group I should be judged collectively with it, toes that line. But I do condemn them for diminishing everything I have personally accomplished, all the hard work I have done in my life, and for ascribing all the fruit I reap not to the seeds I sow but to some invisible patron saint of white maleness who places it out for me before I even arrive. Furthermore, I condemn them for casting the equal protection clause, indeed the very idea of a meritocracy, as a myth, and for declaring that we are all governed by invisible forces (some would call them “stigmas” or “societal norms”), that our nation runs on racist and sexist conspiracies. Forget “you didn’t build that;” check your privilege and realize that nothing you have accomplished is real.

But they can’t be telling me that everything I’ve done with my life can be credited to the racist patriarchy holding my hand throughout my years of education and eventually guiding me into Princeton. Even that is too extreme. So to find out what they are saying, I decided to take their advice. I actually went and checked the origins of my privileged existence, to empathize with those whose underdog stories I can’t possibly comprehend. I have unearthed some examples of the privilege with which my family was blessed, and now I think I better understand those who assure me that skin color allowed my family and I to flourish today.

Perhaps it’s the privilege my grandfather and his brother had to flee their home as teenagers when the Nazis invaded Poland, leaving their mother and five younger siblings behind, running and running until they reached a Displaced Persons camp in Siberia, where they would do years of hard labor in the bitter cold until World War II ended. Maybe it was the privilege my grandfather had of taking on the local Rabbi’s work in that DP camp, telling him that the spiritual leader shouldn’t do hard work, but should save his energy to pass Jewish tradition along to those who might survive. Perhaps it was the privilege my great-grandmother and those five great-aunts and uncles I never knew had of being shot into an open grave outside their hometown. Maybe that’s my privilege.

Or maybe it’s the privilege my grandmother had of spending weeks upon weeks on a death march through Polish forests in subzero temperatures, one

of just a handful to survive, only to be put in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp where she would have died but for the Allied forces who liberated her and helped her regain her health when her weight dwindled to barely 80 pounds.

Perhaps my privilege is that those two resilient individuals came to America with no money and no English, obtained citizenship, learned the language and met each other; that my grandfather started a humble wicker basket business with nothing but long hours, an idea, and an iron will—to paraphrase the man I never met: “I escaped Hitler. Some business troubles are going to ruin me?” Maybe my privilege is that they worked hard enough to raise four children, and to send them to Jewish day school and eventually City College.

Perhaps it was my privilege that my own father worked hard enough in City College to earn a spot at a top graduate school, got a good job, and for 25 years got up well before the crack of dawn, sacrificing precious time he wanted to spend with those he valued most—his wife and kids—to earn that living. I can say with certainty there was no legacy involved in any of his accomplishments. The wicker business just isn’t that influential. Now would you say that we’ve been really privileged? That our success has been gift-wrapped?

That’s the problem with calling someone out for the “privilege” which you assume has defined their narrative. You don’t know what their struggles have been, what they may have gone through to be where they are. Assuming they’ve benefitted from “power systems” or other conspiratorial imaginary institutions denies them credit for all they’ve done, things of which you may not even conceive. You don’t know whose father died defending your freedom. You don’t know whose mother escaped oppression. You don’t know who conquered their demons, or may still conquering them now.

The truth is, though, that I have been exceptionally privileged in my life, albeit not in the way any detractors would have it.

It has been my distinct privilege that my grandparents came to America. First, that there was a place at all that would take them from the ruins of Europe. And second, that such a place was one where they could legally enter, learn the language, and acclimate to a society that ultimately allowed them to flourish. It was their privilege to come to a country that grants equal protection under the law to its citizens, that cares not about religion or race, but the content of your character.

It was my privilege that my grandfather was blessed with resolve and an entrepreneurial spirit, and that he was lucky enough to come to the place where he could realize the dream of giving his children a better life than he had.

But far more important for me than his attributes was the legacy he sought to pass along, which forms the basis of what detractors call my "privilege," but which actually should be praised as one of altruism and self-sacrifice. Those who came before us suffered for the sake of giving us a better life. When we similarly sacrifice for our descendents by caring for the planet, it's called "environmentalism," and is applauded. But when we do it by passing along property and a set of values, it's called "privilege." (And when we do it by raising questions about our crippling national debt, we're called Tea Party radicals.) Such sacrifice of any form shouldn't be scorned, but admired.

My exploration did yield some results. I recognize that it was my parents' privilege and now my own that there is such a thing as an American dream which is attainable even for a penniless Jewish immigrant.

I am privileged that values like faith and education were passed along to me. My grandparents played an active role in my parents' education, and some of my earliest memories included learning the Hebrew alphabet with my Dad. It's been made clear to me that education begins in the home, and the importance of parents' involvement with their kids' education—from mathematics to morality—cannot be overstated. It's not a matter of white or black, male or female or any other division which we seek, but a matter of the values we pass along, the legacy we leave, that perpetuates "privilege." And there's nothing wrong with that.

Behind every success, large or small, there is a story, and it isn't always told by sex or skin color. My appearance certainly doesn't tell the whole story, and to assume that it does and that I should apologize for it is insulting. While I haven't done everything for myself up to this point in my life, someone sacrificed themselves so that I can lead a better life. But that is a legacy I am proud of.

I have checked my privilege. And I apologize for nothing.

Tal Fortgang is a freshman from New Rochelle, NY. His column originally appeared in The Princeton Tory on April 2 and had been reprinted with permission in its entirety.

## **We Will Not Be Threatened How Secretary Kerry's "apartheid" warning set back the cause of peace. By DANNY DANON**

Since initiating the latest round of peace talks between our government and the Palestinians nine months ago, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has voiced a number of particularly troubling statements. Most recently, he indicated in a private event that the failure of the peace talks would quickly lead toward Israel becoming an "apartheid state." While we can accept the secretary's latest expression of regret for comparing the democratic state of Israel with one of the darkest regimes in modern history, the fact is that this was not a solitary incident.

Time and again, Secretary Kerry's erroneous declarations have come dangerously close to suggesting moral equivalency between Israel and its adversaries. They call into question his administration's ability to act as an honest broker in our region.

Last July, just three months after the negotiations began, Kerry gave a joint interview to Israeli and Palestinian television channels with the aim of increasing public support for his efforts. When asked by the Israeli reporter why these talks are so vital, the secretary failed to detail what the fruits of a real peace might be for the Israeli people. Nor did he recount the numerous efforts and overtures successive Israeli governments have made toward this end over the years. Instead he bleakly replied with a question of his own, asking, "Does Israel want a third intifada?"

By insinuating that if we do not give in to every Palestinian demand to ensure a successful end to the talks, we would return to the era of suicide bombers murdering hundreds of civilians in Israeli city centers, the secretary basically asked the state of Israel to negotiate with a loaded gun to our heads.

Then, in February, while addressing a conference in Munich, Kerry issued another veiled threat at Israel. This time he informed his audience, "the risks are very high for Israel. People are talking about boycott. That will intensify in the case of failure." Once again, instead of laying out a clear vision for why the talks he has invested so much time and effort in are in Israel's interest, Kerry attempted to scare the Israeli public into capitulation. His attempts were viewed here in Israel as a not-so-cryptic message that the United States would no longer retain its steadfast rejection of any boycotts against Israel if our government did not ensure that the talks would end to the U.S. administration's liking.

But this week's warning from Secretary Kerry was especially troubling. Speaking to an audience in Washington, he informed them that a failure to establish a 23rd Arab state alongside the world's only Jewish state would result in "an apartheid state with second-class citizens." This comment, made behind closed doors, was made public as we in Israel were marking the solemn day when we remember the more than six million victims of our people murdered in the Holocaust last century in Europe. To suggest that the Jewish people would ever establish an apartheid regime was particularly hurtful.

Equally hurtful was the implied double standard. Although the administration has from time to time chided the Palestinians for "unhelpful" steps, those comments have not come close to the pointed criticism that has been leveled at our government. This policy of sharing the blame for the collapse of the peace talks, which from the outset was deemed by most independent experts as a long-shot attempt at best, has created the illusion of parity between the two sides. The secretary's comments make it seem that Israel's decisions to issue housing tenders, or to exhaustively debate whether to release convicted murders who would have very likely received the death penalty in U.S. courts, were just as damaging to the peace process as the "unity" pact that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has now signed with Hamas, a virulently anti-Semitic terrorist organization.

What makes Kerry's comments so much more disappointing is that they are simply not true. The absence of serious negotiations and a real hope for peace over the past decade has simply not resulted in increased violence. In fact, during Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's second administration (beginning in 2009), we have seen the lowest amount of terrorist activity since Israel returned to its historic heartland of Judea and Samaria in 1967. It was during this same period, when peace was not on the horizon by any measure, that Israel's reputation as the "start-up nation" was forged and our economy continued to exceed expectation at a time of worldwide recession. The world's businesses and academic elites are not boycotting Israel despite the absence of a two-state solution; they're buying our products and engaging with our ideas in ever-greater numbers.

Finally, "apartheid" is probably the last word any fair observer could use to describe Israeli society. All citizens of Israel, including the more than 20 percent of the population who are non-Jews, enjoy the same democratic freedoms as well as full human and civil rights. Minorities in Israel participate in our vigorous

democracy, are elected to parliament, have served as ministers and preside at all levels of our judicial system, including the Supreme Court. Even the Palestinians of Judea and Samira enjoy full autonomy via the Palestinian Authority.

This stands in stark contrast to the rest of the Middle East, where Christian minorities are persecuted and women and homosexuals routinely oppressed. This includes, of course, Hamas-controlled Gaza.

There is no doubt that Secretary Kerry has strongly supported Israel throughout his three decades in public service. This is why he, like other true friends and allies of Israel, need to understand that we will never sign diplomatic agreements endangering our security and reneging on the rights to our historic homeland as a result of international pressure or threats. For more than 2,000 years, we have ended all our prayers with a call for peace, and Israel continues to do all within its power to achieve this lofty goal. The world, however, should not view this yearning as a weakness that can be exploited for the sake of scoring points or claiming a hollow foreign-policy victory.

#### **Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:**

1st Aliya: Specific restrictions for Kohanim and the Kohain Gadol pertaining to marriages, sexuality, and mourning.

2nd Aliya: Laws pertaining to physical blemishes of the Kohanim and who can and can not eat from the priestly gifts.

3rd Aliya: Laws defining what constitutes an acceptable and unacceptable blemish on an animal designated to be a Korban.

4th Aliya: The establishment of Shabbos, Pesach, the Omer, the counting of the Omer and Shavuoth.

5th Aliya: The establishment of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

6th Aliya: The establishment of Sukkoth.

7th Aliya: Laws of the Ner Tamid, the Showbread, the incident with the Blasphemer, and the penalties for Blasphemy.

This week's Haftorah is among the prophecies of Yechezkel 44:15 describing the third Bais Hamikdash. Yechezkel's prophesized after the destruction of the first Bais Hamikdash in the year 3352-410 b.c.e.

In the Haftorah, Yechezkel instructed the Kohanim in their unique laws. It relates to this week's Parsha which also details many of the laws imposed specifically on the Kohanim.

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

**“You shall count for yourselves from the day after Shabbat, seven complete weeks.” (Vayikra 23:15)**

During the Pesah holiday in our shul we had a class on the halachot of counting the Omer. One interesting question that we discussed was, what if a man must undergo surgery and the surgeon says between the surgery and recovery he will probably be unconscious and will not be able to count the Omer that day. Should he count with a berachah up until the surgery knowing he will miss a day? With that question, one member of our congregation asked, what if someone is terminally ill; can he count with a berachah since he might pass away during the Omer?

These questions can be answered with the following story told over by Rabbi Ephraim Nissenbaum. Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberman of Bnei Brak was once approached by a man who was deathly ill. The man wanted to know if he could recite the berachah on the counting of the Omer, knowing full well that he would not live to complete counting the whole seven week cycle.

Rav Zilberman told him a parable about a child who wanted a piece of candy, but his parents refused to give it to him. The child recited the blessing and the parents were forced to give the child the candy to prevent the blessing from being invalid.

Similarly, the man should recite the blessing upon the counting and perhaps Hashem would allow him to complete the counting. Indeed, he recited the daily blessing and died shortly after Shabuot, finishing the whole seven weeks. A person must always think positively.

So to answer both questions we can say, let him count with a berachah and perhaps Hashem will allow the surgery and the recovery to be finished more quickly, which will allow him to count without missing a day, and the terminal patient perhaps will live the entire seven weeks. Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

**"A man who will blaspheme his G-d...and a man, if he strikes any human life...and a man who strikes an animal" (Vayikra 24:15-18)**

The Torah describes someone who blasphemed the Holy Name of Hashem and his ultimate punishment of being put to death. What strikes us as highly unusual is the fact that right after that, the Torah teaches us the "regular" laws of hitting another person or even causing damage to someone else's animal. What does this have to do with blasphemy? One would assume that to curse the Name of G-d would involve someone totally demented or evil enough to stoop to the lowest level. The Torah, however, is teaching us that there is a progression for everything. If one person starts off by damaging someone's animal, he may go to injure his friend personally. If left unchecked, a person can deteriorate so rapidly that under the right circumstances, he may even blaspheme the Name of Hashem. The Gemara tells us that when the Rabbis wanted to know who stole a silver cup, one of the masters noticed someone drying his hands on the sleeve of someone else and deduced that this was the culprit, which indeed he was.

Everything we do affects us and if not corrected will lead us to another level, lower than the one we started on. On the other hand, a good act which we do will also lead us to do even better things, as it says, "A misvah leads to a misvah and a sin leads to a sin." Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### Rabbi Wein

The month of April has always been conspicuous for the uncertainty of its weather. But now that we are safely ensconced in the month of May, the regularity of warmth for the next many months has been established. In spite of all of the hype concerning global warming (now currently called climate change since there is no data confirming that we are actually warmer than we were decades ago) weather overall is pretty predictable.

Summers are hot and winters are cold. Of course the degree of hot and cold vary slightly from day to day but overall there is not that much deviation. The Torah in its description of nature states that winter and summer, cold and heat are constants that are not subject to major variation and change. There is a reason why in Israel one can safely book an outdoor venue for a wedding or other celebration in the summer months and not be overly concerned about clouds or rain.

The prophet Shmuel invoked rain in Israel during the summer months as being a miraculous sign from Heaven. Nevertheless, in spite of all of the above truisms, we are all aware that on a daily basis there are possible changes in weather that can and do

always occur. In the certainty of the overall consistency of weather and nature, there always is a tinge of uncertainty about the immediate tomorrow. It never rains in the summer in the Middle East except that somehow and sometimes it may just do so. Welcome to the vagaries of our existence in this world!

Life is a challenge of balancing the uncertainties of the immediate tomorrow with the predicted consistencies of human and natural events. The return of the Jewish people to national sovereignty in its ancient homeland in the Land of Israel was a predicted and believed certainty in Jewish life, even during the long millennia of the Jewish exile and dispersion. The immediate tomorrow was unknown and even filled with dread and apprehension. But the greater tomorrow of Jewish rebirth and revival was always certain.

It was the fulfillment of the no-rain summer in the Land of Israel, even if somehow we were experiencing drenching showers. The ability to see past the immediate, changeable and always challenging tomorrow, to view the overall, long-range prediction of the Divinely promised future, was the greatest source of Jewish resilience and national strength.

It is no exaggeration to state that it was and is the key to Jewish survival over all of the many past centuries. The weather we are currently experiencing may indeed be changeable, foreboding, perilous and uncertain in nature but there was and is no doubt that summer brings forth sunshine and warmth.

In the words of the prophets of Israel, this metaphor of light and warmth, sunshine and brightness, is repeated over and over again in describing the redemption of Israel from exile, and physical and spiritual ruin. Tomorrow may be dark and wet but blue skies are always on the way.

One of the strangest of all diplomatic phenomena in modern events is the fact that over decades, successive governments of the State of Israel – Left, Center and Right, it makes no difference – have valiantly and consistently striven to give away large sections of the Land of Israel to those who vow our destruction and somehow have been unable to do so. Apparently there is no one around that wants to take us up on our offer, no matter how wildly magnanimous that offer may be.

The immediate forecast for tomorrow is an unwavering no to any offer proposed. This may be because this offer is completely inconsistent with the

overall weather forecast for a bright and warm summer for the Jewish people and its land. Anything short of our own dismantling of our state and community and moving out of the Middle East – and I am certain that there will be those types of naysayers amongst us that would actually consider such a policy wise and in our best interests – will be met with obfuscation, sham negotiations and ultimate refusal.

Apparently Heaven does not want to see such a solution to our contest implemented. It is therefore our task to deal with this reality of an immediately cloudy tomorrow followed by a sun-drenched bright overall future. Perhaps we can be fitted with mental and emotional spectacles that will enable us to see near and far at the same time. If so, we certainly will be better equipped than ever to deal with the weather ahead of us.

### **Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Be Not Afraid of Greatness**

Embedded in this week's parsha are two of the most fundamental commands of Judaism – commands that touch on the very nature of Jewish identity.

Do not desecrate My holy name. I must be sanctified among the Israelites. I am the Lord, who made you holy and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord.' (Leviticus 22: 32)

The two commands are respectively the prohibition against desecrating God's name, Chillul Hashem, and the positive corollary, Kiddush Hashem, that we are commanded to sanctify God's name. What are these commands and what do they mean?

First we have to understand the concept of "name" as it applies to God. a name is how we are known to others. God's "name" is therefore His standing in the world. Do people acknowledge Him, respect Him, honour Him?

The commands of Kiddush Hashem and Chillul Hashem locate that responsibility in the conduct and fate of the Jewish people. This is what Isaiah meant when he said: "You are my witnesses, says God, that I am God" (Isaiah 43: 10).

The God of Israel is the God of all humanity. He created the universe and life itself. He made all of us – Jew and non Jew alike – in His image. He cares for all of us: "His tender mercies are on all his works" (Psalm 145: 9).

Yet the God of Israel is radically unlike the gods in which the ancients believed, and the reality in which



today's scientific atheists believe. He is not identical with nature. He created nature. He is not identical with the physical universe. He transcends the universe. He is not capable of being mapped by science: observed, measured, quantified. He is not that kind of thing at all. How then is He known?

The radical claim of Torah is that He is known, not exclusively but primarily, through Jewish history and through the ways Jews live. As Moses says at the end of his life:

Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? (Deut. 4: 32-34)

Thirty-three centuries ago, Moses already knew that Jewish history was and would continue to be unique. No other nation has survived such trials. The revelation of God to Israel was unique. No other religion is built on a direct revelation of God to an entire people as happened at Mount Sinai. Therefore God – the God of revelation and redemption – is known to the world through Israel. In ourselves we are testimony to something beyond ourselves. We are God's ambassadors to the world.

Therefore when we behave in such a way as to evoke admiration for Judaism as a faith and a way of life, that is a Kiddush Hashem, a sanctification of God's name. When we do the opposite – when we betray that faith and way of life, causing people to have contempt for the God of Israel – that is a Chillul Hashem, a desecration of God's name.

That is what Amos means when he says:

They trample on the heads of the poor as on the dust of the ground, and deny justice to the oppressed ... so desecrate My holy name. (Amos 2: 7)

When Jews behave badly, unethically, unjustly, they create a Chillul Hashem. People say, I cannot respect a religion, or a God, that inspire people to behave in such a way. The same applies on a larger, more international scale. The prophet who never tired of pointing this out was Ezekiel, the man who went

into exile to Babylon after the destruction of the First Temple. This is what he hears from God:

I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, "These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land." (Ezekiel 36: 19)

When Jews are defeated and sent into exile, it is not only a tragedy for them. It is a tragedy for God. He feels like a parent would feel when he sees a child of his disgraced and sent to prison. He feels a sense of shame and worse than that, of inexplicable failure. "How is it that, despite all I did for him, I could not save my child from himself?" When Jews are faithful to their mission, when they live and lead and inspire as Jews, then God's name is exalted. That is what Isaiah means when he says, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isaiah 49: 3).

That is the logic of Kiddush Hashem and Chillul Hashem. The fate of God's "name" in the world is dependent on us and how we behave. No nation has ever been given a greater or more fateful responsibility. And it means that we each have a share in this task.

When a Jew, especially a religious Jew, behaves badly – acts unethically in business, or is guilty of sexual abuse, or utters a racist remark, or acts with contempt for others – it reflects badly on all Jews and on Judaism itself. And when a Jew, especially a religious Jew, acts well – develops a reputation for acting honourably in business, or caring for victims of abuse, or showing conspicuous generosity of spirit – not only does it reflect well on Jews. It increases the respect people have for religion in general, and thus for God.

This is how Maimonides puts it in his law code, speaking of Kiddush Hashem:

If a person has been scrupulous in his conduct, gentle in his conversation, pleasant toward his fellow creatures, affable in manner when receiving, not retorting even when affronted, but showing courtesy to all, even to those who treat him with disdain, conducting his business affairs with integrity ... And doing more than his duty in all things, while avoiding extremes and exaggerations – such a person has sanctified God.[1]

Rabbi Norman Lamm tells the amusing story of Mendel the waiter. When the news came through to a

cruise liner about the daring Israeli raid on Entebbe in 1976, the passengers wanted to pay tribute, in some way, to Israel and the Jewish people. A search was made to see if there was a Jewish member of the crew. Only one could be found: Mendel the waiter. So, at a solemn ceremony, the captain on behalf of the passengers offered his congratulations to Mendel who suddenly found himself elected de facto as the ambassador of the Jewish people. We are all, like it or not, ambassadors of the Jewish people, and how we live, behave and treat others reflects not only on us as individuals but on Jewry as a whole, and thus on Judaism and the God of Israel.

"Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon 'em," wrote Shakespeare in Twelfth Night. Throughout history Jews have had greatness thrust upon them. As the late Milton Himmelfarb wrote: "The number of Jews in the world is smaller than a small statistical error in the Chinese census. Yet we remain bigger than our numbers. Big things seem to happen around us and to us." [2]

God trusted us enough to make us His ambassadors to an often faithless, brutal world. The choice is ours. Will our lives be a Kiddush Hashem, or God forbid, the opposite? To have done something, even one act in a lifetime, to make someone grateful that there is a God in heaven who inspires people to do good on earth, is perhaps the greatest achievement to which anyone can aspire. Shakespeare rightly defined the challenge: Be not afraid of greatness.

[1] Maimonides, Hilchot Yesodei ha-Torah, 5: 11.

[2] Milton Himmelfarb, Jews and Gentiles, Encounter Books, 2007, 141.

## AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z"TL

"Derech erez precedes the acquisition of Torah"

We traditionally study the Mishnayot of Perke Abot, The Ethics of the Fathers, during the weeks between Pesach and Shavuot. These Mishnayot are especially selected because of the instruction/mussar of our great Sages, through the practice of which we can perfect our character in order to be prepared to accept Hashem's Torah.

This is one way to understand why Sefer Beresheet, which includes only 3 Mitzvot, preceded Sefer Shemot, which includes the giving of the Torah. Sefer Beresheet is known as Sefer Derech Eretz. Through

the many episodes which Hashem relates to us, we can see clear examples of Good & Evil, Kindliness, Honesty, Loyalty, Respect, Reward & Punishment, Power of Prayer, Prophecy, Inspiration, Family, Plan & Purpose, Hashem, Self Control... Beresheet is filled with models of good character in order for us to follow them to be prepared to be able to accept the Torah. "Shammai said: Make your Torah study fixed, say little and do much, and receive everyone with a pleasant countenance." (Abot 1:15)

Rabbi Miller ZT"l would often teach this Mishna and stress the many benefits we can achieve by the constant proper practice of Shammai's maxim with which he lived. Firstly, we observe the general idea of greeting every person with a friendly face. The Mishna literally lists three different steps to take in order to refine this holy practice.

1) "Sever", means with expression 2) "Panim", with a full face 3) "Yafot", a pleasant face

Now, we are ready to greet people as Hashem wants us to. With an expression on your face, showing you are happy to see him (not with a non-expression 'like the bottom of a frying pan'). With your full/whole face, not with half a face or the back of your neck. And with a pleasant Smile.

Once a day give a person a full smile. Just as Hashem shines on us, we should smile on others. Smile because Ha-Shem wants you to, even if you really don't want to. When we encourage others through giving them a hearty greeting with a smile that includes emotions of love and caring with the G-dly countenance of our Faces, we are giving life and hope to them as well as good health and happiness.

When you smile have intentions that you are doing it for the purpose of coming closer to Hashem.

*Monday Evening,  
Show Your Support for Israel!*

**COMMUNAL YOM HAZIKARON  
& YOM HAATZMAUT PROGRAM**

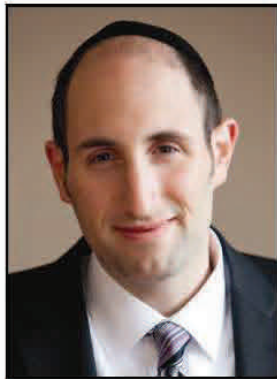
**Monday May 5, 2014**

7:15 PM Mincha

7:30 PM **Yom Hazikaron Program**

Followed by the **Yom Haatzmaut Program**

**Guest Speaker**



**RABBI MEIR SOLOVEICHIK**

Director, Zahava and Moshael Straus Center  
for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University

**“What Menachem Begin  
Taught Me about Zionism”**

**Introductory remarks by Phil Rosen**

This Communal Yom Hazikaron / Yom Haatzmaut Program is co-sponsored by  **Yeshiva University** and Anshai Chesed, Bais Tefilah, Cong. Beth Shalom, Beis Haknesses of N. Woodmere, Cong. Beis Ephraim Yitzchok, Irving Place Minyan, Ohr Torah, Young Israel of Far Rockaway, Young Israel of Hewlett, Young Israel of Lawrence - Cedarhurst, Young Israel of North Woodmere, Young Israel of Woodmere, Shaarei Tefilah, White Shul

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