

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

BEHA'ALOTECHA

Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7

MAY 24-25, 2013

16 SIVAN 5773

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Daniel (Doni) Moshe Bulow

Candles: 7:55 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:20 AM

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

Kiddush sponsored in memory of Daniel (Doni) Moshe Bulow

5:30 - Mincha Shabbat Afternoon Oneg with Rabbi Yosef and Leah; Treats, Stories, Basketball, Hula-hoop, Parsha Quiz, Tefillot, Raffles and Fun! Supervised play during Seudat Shelishit.

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

Class - Rav Aharon on Pirkey Avot 6:30, Minha: 7:15 PM –

Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:45 – with Rabbi David

Evening Service (Arbith): 8:45 PM - Shabbat Ends: 8:55PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

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

Monday Memorial Day 8:00AM

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Daily 6:30 AM class – Honest Business Practices

CHANGE THIS WEEK: Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – 7PM on WEDNESDAY night

LADIES: Wednesday Night 8PM with Esther Wein at The Grill Home

Financial Peace University – Tuesday at 8PM

Save the Date! Six Flags Great Adventure

Don't miss out on our Annual Summer 2013 Sephardic Youth Trip!

Fun for a day, Memories for a lifetime.

Our tentative dates are either June 24th or June 25th.

We are looking for more adult chaperones and potential drivers.

We need Sponsors – We are hoping to raise \$1800 to supplement the costs

Sisterhood? Any of you?

Last year, this was an It was an awesome bonding experience and kids had a blast.

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Editors Notes

I was walking through the international contemporary furniture fair at the Javitz Center on Sunday morning when I noticed a number of messages on my phone. I stepped out towards the front where the reception might be better and started listening to the messages. A moment later the phone rang again. My friend Ephraim Bulow who had moved to Denver with his family was on the phone and in between broken breaths he told me that his 19 year old son Doni had passed away suddenly. It was simply the worst day he could imagine. I remembered his son, a beautiful boy who grew up in our Synagogue and had his Brit Milah there. What could one say? I prayed that Hashem would give him, his wife Aliza and their family the strength to get through this. He asked me to mention his son in the newsletter. In the moments afterward I returned and received calls from others flying out there or wanting to call, simply asking what could they say?

Contemplating what Ephraim and Aliza were going through overwhelmed my thoughts. I sat down that night to prepare my article for the Jewish Voice. I thought of another friend who twenty years ago lost a young child in an accident and his eventual reaction and response to that tragedy. I thought about going down into the netherworld of depression. And then about rising from that abyss to heights one could never have contemplated reaching. I thought about Ephraim and I thought about what I could write in memory of his son. What message in this week's portion could help? I began by reading through the portion twice. And then next day wrote and submitted the following for print.

Second Chances & A Light at the Window

I knew a man who went through a terrible and bitter divorce. He battled for years. There were no winners. There were only losers. The bitterness of battle entered his bones. And a decade later it remains with its cohorts, anger, depression, jealousy and rage.

The darkness consumed him and spread to those around him. I never saw him smile again.

I knew a man who was very wealthy. He had everything that money could buy. Homes, cars, boats and all the trappings were his. He enjoyed every day of his life. And then one day, it all disappeared. The business, the money, the homes, and the toys were all gone. But the man realized there was more to life. He could have sunk into the misery of despair, but he didn't. He didn't stop working. He didn't stop trying. Every day was a gift. Every day was an opportunity as long as the sun rose for him. I never saw him frown. I never saw him complain. And although he lived out his days without much, he was happy with what he had. His smile remained day in and day out and reflected in those he touched.

I knew a man who lost his young child in a sudden accident. He told me that it was a time so terrible that one could not even imagine the nightmare. He thought he would never recover. How could he? But within the darkness, he decided to light a match. The match became a light bulb and the light bulb a beacon. Through this child's death, he rose up and decided to make a difference. And with his family, they touched thousands of lives in their acts of kindness. Not only did he smile again, but he brought countless smiles to countless people.

This week we read the portion of Behaalotecha and within the words of the Torah one finds a message of a world where one can wallow in his own depression and complaints, or a world of second chances, of raising the spirit and of clearing the darkness away. The choice is ours.

Towards the end of the portion we read: They cried out, "who will feed us meat? We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for free" along with the watermelon, cucumbers and scallions. "And now our souls are dried, all we see is the manna." How quickly does one forget one's past struggles, the slavery, the killing of their children, the bricks, the hard labor and lack of freedom? How quickly does one forget the miracles of life, the exodus, the splitting of the sea, the revelation at Sinai, the well, the manna and the clouds? With a lack of appreciation, one quickly falls down the slippery slide into sadness, depression and darkness. Complaining is just the first of the symptoms.

Contrast this with the concept of Pesach Sheni which we read about this week. At the start of the second year in the desert, some of Benai Yisrael cannot bring the korban Pesach because they are ritually impure due to contact with corpses. They don't want

to miss out on bringing the offering, and ask Moses for a second chance. G-d informs Moshe that they can wait a month, and bring the korban on the 14th of Iyyar. Too many people who see an opportunity slide away or who fail at something in their lives are overcome by that failure. They often believe that a missed chance will never come again. They see the window close and believe it will never open again; rarely realizing that their own belief is what keeps the window shut, and rarely trying to open it themselves. One must never forget that very few people who are successful are successful without having failed. King Solomon teaches us that, "a righteous man can fall seven times and rise, but the wicked shall stumble upon evil." These people, who come to Moses, refuse to simply stand by and see opportunity slip by. It's so important to remember that more than I want a second chance; G-d wants me to succeed.

The message is loudest at the outset of the portion where Aaron is commanded to light the Menorah. The verb used is not to kindle the fire, but to raise up the flame. And this commandment comes each day to that Aaron who resides within each of us, the priest, the pursuer of peace, the cheerleader. That voice must remind us to raise the flame and raise our spirits. Rabbi Uriel Vigler writes, "A flame is among the most intriguing phenomena in this world. Its incessant flickering grants it a mysterious quality that can only be defined as a frantic bid to return to its source. The wick of the candle is the flames only deterrent of its goal, ensuring it remains down below, where it belongs. But the flame constantly struggles against this force, desiring to cleave to its source and become nullified within it. Traditionally, the soul of man is compared to a glittering flame: "ki ner hashem nishmat adam" the Talmud tell us. The similarity is seen in the soul's inherent desire to connect with G-d, to cleave to its source above, thus transcending this material world, while at the same time wishing to remain inside a physical body."

We must be like the flame, always rising up. The Hebrew word ner – candle or flame – is made of two letters, a nun and a resh. It cannot be a coincidence that the physical item we choose to represent the soul uses the two letters that represent the soul. Our lowest level of soul is the Nefesh or life force, the next is the Ruach or spirit and finally the Neshama or higher soul using a Nun, Resh, Nun.

The thought is echoed in Aaron's raising of each Levite. Again he is raising us, but more that, we use the word tenufah which in Hebrew can also allude to momentum. We must keep rising, we must keep going forward. We must never stop. When we stop,

we don't simply stay where we are. We fall backwards.

The dark side's greatest power is simply in being the dark side. Intimidating that there is nowhere to go, its tools are sadness and depression. We pray three times each day that G-d should remove from us yagon – sadness and anacha – depression, but in those words allude to the forces of the dark side whose success lies in our own gloom from which we fail to rise. This is our greatest enemy, an enemy which attacks from within.

"So it was, whenever the ark set out, Moses would say, Arise, O Lord, may Your enemies be scattered and may those who hate You flee from You." Again words from this week's portion; words we repeat each time we open the ark to take out the Torah. Ki Ner Misvah VeTorah Ohr - For a misvah is a candle, and the Torah is light.

When one reveals light darkness is forced away.

Life is filled with failure. We all fail time and again. And failure often leads to sadness and depression. But there is where we have the choice. We can wallow in the bitterness and the bitterness will take over our very existence. Or we can appreciate each day as the opportunity it is and set aside the sadness and get up. We can add to the darkness or become a source of light to the world. We can frown or we can smile. We can bring sadness or we can bring joy. Hashem gives us a second chance and a third and a fourth. The door is never closed. More than we want the light, He wants to give us the light.

So when you find yourself falling into that pit of darkness, catch yourself. Yes, it's difficult. And no doubt, you think you'll never make it out of this mess. But ask for His help. Lift yourself. Find that inner strength. Reach into your immortal soul. G-d promises, if we simply crack open the window a bit, he will lift it open for us completely. Become a phoenix.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi David Bibi

MONTY HALL

For over 30 years, starting in the early 1960s, Monty Hall hosted "Let's Make a Deal," one of the most popular game shows in television history. He was not only the show's impresario, he created and produced it, and today, at 91, he is still involved with its creative evolution.

But while Hall has fond memories of the thousands of "deals" he made on his show, when I met him for lunch the other day at the Hillcrest Country Club, he had other deals in mind.

In particular, he told me about a deal he made more than 75 years ago with a Jewish man named Max Freed.

Hall had dropped out of college after his first year because he couldn't afford to continue. He was living with his family in Winnipeg, a city of long winters in western Canada that attracted many Jews from Ukraine. The Hall clan spent many years struggling financially and living in close quarters.

Max Freed, on the other hand, was anything but struggling. He was a 29-year-old playboy with a thriving clothing company who wore fancy suits and had a reputation around town for living the good life.

One fateful day, Freed bumped into Hall's father, a kosher butcher, and asked him: "Was that your boy I saw yesterday washing the floors of a warehouse?" The father responded that yes, that was his son.

"Well," Freed said, "tell him to come by my office tomorrow."

When Hall showed up the next day, Freed made him an offer. If Hall returned to college, Freed would pay for all his schooling expenses, but with three conditions.

One, Hall's grades had to be B-plus or higher. Two, Freed wanted a monthly report on his progress. And three, Hall had to promise that one day he'd do the same for another kid. (Freed also asked him to keep the deal confidential, a request Hall gladly ignored nearly 75 years later at our lunch.)

Hall, with the support of his family, jumped at the deal, so Freed asked him to get back to him with a budget.

As Freed reviewed the budget, which included tuition and living expenses, he noticed that Hall had put in only 25 cents for lunch. "Don't you want a drink with your lunch?" he asked. "Go ahead and add 5 cents for a Coke, and throw in something for haircuts, too."

Once they agreed on the budget, Hall promptly resumed his studies at the University of Manitoba. For the next three years, Hall thrived. He was the first Jewish student to become president of the student body, a prestigious position. He had excellent grades and reported regularly to Freed, who kept a close eye on his progress.

Hall's accomplishments, however, were not enough to get him into medical school, so after graduation he moved to Toronto and began a career in radio broadcasting.

Hall had a restless personality and was always on the lookout for new opportunities. He moved to the United States and began working in television, creating and producing shows. His big break came when he sold "Let's Make a Deal" to a major network.

As Hall became one of the best-known names in television, Max Freed was becoming very proud of his "investment." The two always kept in touch, becoming so close that Freed's son once said to Hall: "I think he loves you more than he loves me!"

But it wasn't just Hall's fame and success that made Freed proud — it was also his charitable work. Hall went way beyond his original promise to help another kid get an education. In fact, he became one of America's most celebrated fundraisers, helping charities of all stripes raise more than \$1 billion.

In the charity world today, Hall is known as the man who doesn't say no.

A few years ago, Hall heard from a doctor that Freed, by then 99, was nearing the end. He took the first flight to Winnipeg to be near him.

When Hall got to his bedside, he moved his face "nose to nose" with Freed, who was now "mostly blind and mostly deaf." They talked and reminisced for about 20 minutes.

Finally, putting his mouth close to his friend's ear, Hall said to the man who had picked him up 75 years earlier while he was washing floors in Winnipeg: "Max, you gave me a life."

Max Freed, the former playboy who invested in that little Jewish boy he hardly knew, replied, in a barely audible voice: "No, Monty, you gave *me* a life."

The Feminist Story the Media Missed at the Kotel Jonathan Rosenblum / Jerusalem Post

That the Women of the Wall's (WoW) monthly visits to the Western Wall will provoke insults, spitting, and sometimes worse from a group of haredim at the Western Wall is old news. But there was another story last Friday that the media either missed or botched entirely: the thousands of Jewish women and girls who filled the area directly in front of the Kotel and almost to the back wall of the Kotel plaza, completely dwarfing the group of one hundred or so women associated with WoW. (The figure of 400 to 500 WoW given by some media outlets is patent nonsense.)

When I arrived at the Kotel a little past 7:00 a.m., there were about 25 (not 2,000 as reported by Ha'aretz) young haredi men standing on the upper level at the far north of the Kotel Plaza shouting and ruining the prayers for all those on the men's side who had come to pray on Rosh Hodesh. (I had already heard on the radio that police had arrested one haredi man.) What surprised me, however, was that the most prominent video camera remained exclusively focused on this small group among the many thousands then at the Kotel.

The media showed absolutely no interest in the thousands upon thousands of seminary girls and older women praying on the women's side and not raising their voices above a quiet whisper. Yet that sight brought tears to my admittedly biased eyes. There is a special purity about seminary girls found no place else in the world today.

And this group was special in another respect: It included women and girls across the national religious-haredi spectrum. The leading rabbis of the national religious world had publicly given their support for the national religious seminaries to participate as well. The Kotel thus united the leading rabbis of both the national religious and haredi world. Somehow the media managed to mangle the presence of the thousands of girls, lumping them together with the male hooligans -- often in a single sentence (as in this paper's front-page story on Sunday) -- as part of a single haredi protest. Yet Rabbi Aharon Leib Steinman had explicitly conditioned his permission for seminary girls to attend on there being absolutely no violence. Yosi Deutsch, a haredi member of the Jerusalem municipality, lamented in a radio interview that the boys at the Kotel were ruining the message, which was to juxtapose traditional women's prayer with the attention-seeking of WoW.

THAT MESSAGE WAS formulated by two friends living in the Jerusalem suburb of Kochav Yaakov -- Ronit Peskin and Leah Aharoni. Over the three weeks leading up to Rosh Hodesh Sivan, they

created WomenfortheWall, employed their considerable skills in social media to publicize their initiative, were interviewed dozens of times by both the local and international media, and took on the WoW agenda in numerous blogs at the Times of Israel. But for their initiative, there would have been no organized women's prayer gathering last Friday morning.

They are true heirs of Sarah Schenirer, the unmarried Cracow seamstress, who founded the Bais Yaakov movement, the most influential movement in the haredi world in the 20th century. Without the approval of the Chofetz Chaim and the Gerrer Rebbe, the Bais Yaakov movement would never have grown as it did. But without Sarah Schenirer it would never have come into existence, and she led the movement. Neither Peskin nor Aharoni are mainstream haredi. Peskin, 25, home schools her three young children, teaches women how to forage for edible food growing wild, and runs a website called Penniless Parenting, on how to keep down the family food budget, which receives 60-70,000 hits worldwide a month.

In response to the boast of WoW founder Susan Aranoff that WoW seeks to liberate haredi women so that they can "function religiously . . . without the 'help' of men," Peskin describes her religious journey from her modern Orthodox upbringing in Cleveland to "quasi-chareidi" -- i.e., strict in halachic observance, a cross between "Litvak" and Chassidic," accepting of people from different backgrounds, and open to the outside world -- including a rebellious teenage period of no observance in between. Her religious search forced her to become financially independent at 17. Of her current life, she writes, "It was a path I chose, and fought lots of obstacles to get there. I don't live this way because I haven't witnessed alternatives. I've witnessed them and rejected them, and made the choice to live as I do because I find it the most meaningful type of life for me. Implying that I'm doing what I do merely because I'm subjugated by men is insulting to me, insulting my intelligence, insulting to the men I love, and insulting to the entire population of Chareidi women. . . . I don't need you to rescue me. . . ."

Aharoni is firmly in the national religious camp, and makes her living as a business consultant helping "female business owners create more income doing work they love." She too traveled a long religious path from her native Soviet Union -- a path that started in a Reform Temple and included a period of time in the congregation of Rabbi Avi Weiss, a leading figure in Orthodox feminism. She finds "the epitome of misogyny," in WoW's "rejection of the feminine Jewish experience." "There is nothing more demeaning to women than positioning the male experience as the only one worth living and setting up women for an ongoing

game of catch-up. . . . I have liberated myself from the need to predicate my identity on becoming 'one of the boys.'

Peskin points out that WoW's mission statement does not mention G-d once. WoW supporters speak of the Kotel as a wedge issue for liberal Judaism in Israel (Rabbi Eliana Yolcut in Ha'aretz); tell the BBC that Israel is no "Club Med for the Jewish soul," convince non-Orthodox Jews that they are hated in Israel and not allowed to worship freely, even though they can pray as they want, almost any place they want, including just south on the Western Wall at Robinson's Arch, as Conservative and Reform groups already do; and call for the Kotel to be declared a national monument, with the mechitza to be removed between 9:00 a.m and 3:00 p.m. (Anat Hoffman in the St. Petersburg Sun Sentinel). The omission of G-d is no surprise. For Anat Hoffman, the Rosa Parks of WoW, the Kotel has no sanctity and the return of the Temple and its "sacrificial cult" is a repugnant thought. The Kotel is just the best place to attract attention.

If G-d were the addressee of WoW's prayers, Aharoni points out, there is the tunnel on the women's side just opposite the Holy of Holies, where no paraphernalia is needed to be heard by The One Above. A group of Jewish women has come there to recite Tehillim on behalf of the entire Jewish people in the small hours of the morning every single night since 1967. They come not to "liberate religion; they come to liberate themselves. At the wall, they polish the lenses and attain clarity of purpose."

Those women know that just as marriage does not thrive in a glass house service of G-d is not for TV cameras.

In a post after Rosh Hodesh, entitled "Why Guys are Thugs . . ." Ronit Peskin speculated that those who attacked WoW suffer from a low self-esteem. To compensate, they need attention and an illusion of control. In that at least, the haredi thugs and the WoW have something in common.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

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

2nd Aliya: The Leviyim are inaugurated into Temple service. Their term of service was from age 25 to age 50.

3rd Aliya: The Bnai Yisroel keep their second Pesach since leaving Egypt. The laws of Pesach Shaynie - the make-up Pesach (one month after Pesach) are

taught for those who were unable to bring the Pascal Lamb at the appropriate time.

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

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

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

7th Aliya: The quail descend upon the camp in such quantity that each person collected 1000 lb. of meat. Aharon and Miriam speak Lashon Harah about Moshe, resulting in Hashem confirming Moshe as His preeminent servant and prophet. Miriam is afflicted with Tzaraat.

Haftorahman Zechariah 2:14-17, 3:1-10, 4:1-7

1) The connection of the Haftorah to the Parsha: The Parsha opens with a discussion of the daily Menorah (candelabrum) lighting in the Mishkan (Tabernacle) and Temple. The Haftorah speaks of the vision of the Menorah and an Angel's prophetic interpretation of that vision.

2) The Story line of this week's Haftorah: The Haftorah begins as Bnei Yisroel ~ The Israelites are returning from the 70 year Babylonian / Persian exile. They are returning from the land of Persia to build the second Bais HaMikdash or Holy Temple, their holiest of sites. Bnei Yisroel leaves Persia with a sense of euphoria and they come upon the location of their Holy Temple and all they see is rubble and ruin. Zechariah dispels the gloom from his disheartened brethren by shouting, "Rani V'simchi Bat Zion" – Sing and be glad daughter of (Mount) Zion, Jerusalem, we are returning home." Zechariah is telling Bnei Yisroel

to rejoice, that the Holy Temple will be rebuilt and restored to its former glory. They should celebrate because they will once again stand in the presence of Hashem and this is an opportunity that many did not receive. He goes on to say that the Nations of the world will join the ingathering and celebrations.

The second part of the Haftorah discusses how Satan was accusing Yehoshua, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) of not rearing his children in the proper Torah manner (two of his sons intermarried). The angel of Hashem comes to Yehoshua's defense and refutes the allegations. The angel then goes on to encourage Yehoshua to remain steadfast in his service to Hashem. The Angel speaks of a stone with Sheva Aynayim or 7 eyes. There are many Kabbalistic explanations of this stone. One of them is that a "building stone" has 6 sides, or six physical dimensions and the 7th is the Non Physical, spiritual dimension. This stone will be used to rebuild the 2nd Bait HaMikdash (Holy Temple). The Haftorah continues to explain about Zechariah's prophecy concerning the Menorah. The Prophet Zechariah sees an olive tree draped over a Menorah and begs to learn its interpretation from the angel. He is answered that only through Hashem's spirit would the people be saved, not through army might.

3) The Prophet Zechariah's Biography: His name means "Hashem remembered". Zechariah ben Ido was a Kohen. His prophecies took place around 520 B.C.E., approximately 2500 years ago. He is the 11th of the 12 prophets in the Book of Trei Assar, and Zechariah wrote his own book, which is 14 chapters long. He lived in the time of the return from Babylon and Persia. He was a member of the men of the Anshai Kneset Hagedolah (great assembly). He lived in Jerusalem and was buried in the Kidron Valley. Zechariah hid the temple treasures, so that the holy vessels would not be used by nonbelievers. His peers were Zerubavel, the governor of Jerusalem, Yehoshua the Kohen Gadol, Mordechai, Nechemia, Ezra, Chaggai, and Yonah. Shortly after Zechariah's time, prophecy departed from Israel.

4) Haftorahman's Lesson of the week: LO BECHAYIL, V'LO BEKIACH, KI IM BERUCHI. Zechariah's vision explains to us that it is not with our individual power that our successes come from, but with the spirit of Hashem. During this week of the miracle of Chanukah, let us remember that the degree which we connect ourselves to Hashem via the Torah, our own personal lights will shine brighter to the rest of the world.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"When you go to wage war in your land against an enemy who suppresses you, you shall blow the trumpets...and on a day of your gladness." (Bemidbar 10:9-10)

Our perashah has the misvah of the trumpets. The trumpets were made of silver and were to be used on two occasions. One is when the Israelites had to go to war, the trumpets must be sounded. The purpose is, "and you shall be recalled before Hashem, your G-d and you shall be saved from your foes." The second purpose is on a day of happy occasions you shall sound the trumpets together with your offerings. Rabbi Frand asks that there seems to be a paradox here. In the first verse the trumpets seem to be akin to an air-raid siren, alerting the people of an impending attack. But if that is true, then we should not be sounding those trumpets on joyous occasions. And if these trumpets are musical instruments to be used on joyous occasions, such as festivals, then why are we sounding them at a time of war? What is the true nature of the trumpets?

The explanation is based on the Rambam. The point of the trumpet blasts during the war is to remind the people that the trouble is coming from Hashem for a reason. In today's world it's telling you that a war in Israel is not due to frustrations of the Palestinians, and not because of the oil-rich Arabs. If the enemy is attacking it's because Hashem is sending a message to do teshubah.

But human nature is such that when things are going wrong a person thinks, why is G-d doing this to me? When things are going well, however, he thinks, aah, my business acumen is paying off. The Torah therefore commands us to sound the very same trumpets on joyous occasions to remind us that just as Hashem is behind difficult times, He is also the source for all good that comes our way. In fact, if we are careful to remember when things are going well that all is from Hashem and to thank Him for it, we can forestall the need for bad events; we won't need reminders in the form of harsh events.

I think that if Wall Street would blow the trumpets every time the market goes up, it would not go down! Today we have two economic theories. The conservatives hold let capitalism take care of itself. The liberals say we have to pump money into the slumping economy. I think there is a third way – to attribute success to Hashem and it will continue to succeed. If our community lavishly thanks Hashem

with sincerity we will have great prosperity. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"And the Jewish people were like complainers." (Bemidbar 11:1)

Whenever the Torah tells us about the shortcomings of the earlier generations, we must keep in mind that they were much greater than we could even imagine, and as such, much more was expected from them. We may never compare ourselves to them; we can only learn from events in their lives and apply it to our own level.

Having said this, we read in the perashah how the Jewish people were punished back to back by fire and by plague. They asked for meat in an incorrect way, and this led to their suffering greatly through the very meat they asked for. The amazing thing, which is very instructive, is that the whole chapter begins with the words, "And the Jewish people were like complainers." The Rabbis point out that they really didn't start to complain, yet by taking on an attitude of whining and groaning, even in a very subtle manner, they brought out all the terrible misfortunes. We see from here how important a positive attitude is, and how a nagging attitude can be detrimental. Even when one doesn't actually complain, yet talks in a bitter manner, this can bring out the negative in people and lead to a host of problems. Let's think positively and talk in an upbeat way, focusing on the good rather than the negative. You'll be amazed at the results! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Imagine that we all live on a ladder.

In every area of life, there are those who stand higher up on the ladder and others who stand on a lower rung. Whatever your financial position, some people have more and others have less. When it comes to wisdom, there are some who are wiser than you and others who are not. Some are taller, some shorter; some fatter, some thinner; some have larger or fancier homes, some don't own homes at all. There are so many qualities and possessions a person may have or lack, and these come in so many different degrees.

What is important about the ladder is not what rung you occupy, but that you know that there will always be some people higher than you and some who are lower.

When you have the upper hand, when you occupy a position of authority over others – whether employees or co-workers, children or student – you should know clearly that your position gives you

power. They know it, and so should you. You don't need to insult or yell at subordinates. Unfortunately, it too often happens that those with strong personalities and authoritative positions, who would be listened to even if they whispered, feel that they must raise their voices and overpower others.

Shelomo Hamelech said that a person reacts to another like a reflection in a pool of water (Mishlei 27:19). In other words, one person's heart communicates feelings to another. If you value and respect another, you can communicate that feeling without speaking.

When you are about to lose your temper with those who have less than you do, think of the ladder. You are the one on the higher rung, which means you don't have to exert your authority – others are already aware of it. Make them feel great in the knowledge that you, their superior, have treated them with respect. Being more well off than another doesn't mean you should not respect those "lower" than you – if you demand respect you may or may not get it. If you show respect you will get it back. It doesn't take more than a brief pause, but remember – respect yields respect. One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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Maintaining Enthusiasm for Misvot

Parashat Behaalotecha begins with the Misva of the Menorah, which was kindled by the Kohen each afternoon in the Bet Hamikdash. The Torah outlines the basic requirements of this Misva, and then concludes, "Va'ya'as Ken Aharon" – "Aharon did so." Meaning, Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, complied with this command and kindled the Menorah as he was commanded.

Rashi, commenting on this verse, writes that the Torah here gives praise to Aharon "She'lo Shina" – because he did not deviate from G-d's command. This is the meaning of "Va'ya'as Ken Aharon" – that Aharon is praiseworthy for doing as he was told and not deviating from G-d's instructions.

The question naturally arises as to why Aharon was deserving of special praise for complying with this command. If we were given an explicit command from Hashem, wouldn't we eagerly abide? Moreover, Aharon was not just given a command, but also blessed with a special privilege, of being the first one to ever kindle the Menorah in the Mishkan. Is it not obvious that he would do as he was told? Why does

he deserve special praise for fulfilling the command of the Menorah?

To answer this question, we might observe the way a Bar Mitzva boy approaches the Misva of Tefillin after his Bar Mitzva. When he puts them on for the first time, he is overjoyed and takes special pride in his new pair of Tefillin. He lovingly places the box on his arm, recites the Beracha and wraps the strap. Gradually, however, the excitement wanes, and just a year or so later, he puts on his Tefillin thoughtlessly, hardly even thinking about the fact that he is fulfilling a Biblical command. This is what naturally happens when we grow accustomed to something. The initial excitement and enthusiasm gradually diminishes, and we perform the action perfunctorily, without much feeling or emotion.

The Sages cited by Rashi praise Aharon "She'lo Shina," which literally means, "because he did not change." The enthusiasm with which he kindled the Menorah the first time remained throughout the years. Each and every time he performed the Misva, he did it with the same excitement and awe with which he had kindled the lamps the first time.

How we do follow Aharon's example? How can we retain some level of excitement and enthusiasm for the actions we perform each and every day, such as prayer, Berachot, Sisit and Tefillin?

The answer is that we must recognize what a privilege each and every Misva is. Imagine if we were asked to do a certain favor for the President of the United States every week. Wouldn't we relish the opportunity? Wouldn't we approach it with vigor and excitement, and carefully attend to every detail? And wouldn't we do the favor even if we felt tired or a bit under the weather? After all, when presented with such a privilege, who would let a little lethargy or the flu get in the way?

Hashem is far more powerful and important than the President, than any head of state or person on earth. Each day, He graciously gives us the privilege of serving Him, speaking with Him, and doing what He wants. The more we recognize what a precious opportunity each Misva is, the greater excitement and enthusiasm we will invest in our Misvot, and the more meaningful and fulfilling they will be.

Rabbi Wein FAILURES

History has recorded for us great powers, ideas, faiths and societies that though apparently successful for periods of time, even long centuries, have turned eventually into monumental failures. The twentieth century was witness to the immense failure of fascism and of communism as examples of promised social panaceas that eventually collapsed due to false ideals and dogmatic ineptitude.

Even when failures are evident for all to see, the true believers never give up in their support of false gods. It is one of the perverse traits of human nature, never to admit error no matter how evident and apparent it may be. Here in Israel this is exemplified by the obvious and complete failure of the Oslo peace process, which over the past twenty years has brought only grief and death to all parties concerned.

Yet, its adherents continue to defend and attempt to prolong it as though it really would be able to achieve peace and solve the difficult situation that Israel has always found itself enmeshed in. It is difficult to admit failure and our president is not likely to return his Nobel Prize and say that he was wrong – in many cases dead wrong.

But failures eventually exact their toll and history does not allow them to be ignored forever. Just look at the economic problems that plague Europe directly and the world generally because of the incipient built-in disarray of the Euro zone currency arrangement. Cyprus and Greece are able to bring down France and even Germany. But no one is admitting failure as of yet.

The dominant social and political force in nineteenth and early twentieth century Western society was nationalism and imperialism. Every nation had to prove its greatness and safeguard its place in the sun even at the expense of other nations and cultures. War was an acceptable means of achieving this.

Nation building was all the rage and Bismarck's forced unification of Germany under Prussian domination would bring about the catastrophes of World War I and World War II. This failed god of nationalism brought, in post-World War II society, a new god of internationalism, self-determination and the mantra of human rights. Anti-colonialism reigned supreme, leaving many failed states scattered over the world's continents.

Secular Zionism, which was the Jewish version of nineteenth and twentieth century European nationalism, also suffers from the failure of nationalism or of internationalism, to appreciably help the suffering millions of humankind. Hence the post-Zionist trend so popular today in many sections of the Jewish world.

It is no longer fashionable to engage in nation building. And certainly patriotism and loyalty are not to be enshrined any longer as virtuous traits. A Zionism that excluded God and Jewish tradition and practice from its agenda was doomed to eventual failure from the outset. The revitalization of Torah study and practice in today's Israel is the guarantee that this failed nationalism will not bring the state to failure. Following secularism and internationalism at all costs will only prove the failure of those ideals when applied to Israel and the Jewish people.

All of the above failures concerned themselves with societies and ideas that basically turned their backs on religious faith. However, the religious world certainly has its share of failures as well. The record of both Christianity and Islam in achieving a better world is pretty dismal. The steady decline of the Christian faith and its influence in much of the world – especially in Europe – is remarkable. Yet instead of really looking after its own house, Christianity still expends a great deal of wealth and energy in attempting to convert others to its faith.

In our own neighborhood here in Jerusalem a missionary center is being built in order to convert Jews. One would have thought that by now, over two millennia, the failure of that effort would have convinced these Christian groups to concentrate their wealth and efforts on more noble and beneficial projects – as some Christian groups in fact have, over the past decades.

And Islam today has been taken over by jihadists and terrorists and represents a very negative image to the world generally. Without the moderation of tolerance and universality that is represented in Torah Judaism, the failures of these two offsprings of Judaism are historically certain. But as we all know, admission of failure in matters of faith and religion are almost never proffered.

Within our own religious world the dogmatic pursuit of failed policies – not halacha, but policies – is persistently pursued. Why should we think that policies that failed to rally Jews to Torah over the past centuries will somehow be successful now? Failure should beget humility and review. Let us hope that this will occur in all areas of life and societies.

Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth
LEADERSHIP BEYOND DESPAIR

Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, is remarkable for the extreme realism with which it portrays human character. Its heroes are not superhuman. Its non-heroes are not archetypal villains. The best have failings; the worst often have saving virtues. I know of no other religious literature quite like it.

This makes it very difficult to use biblical narrative to teach a simple, black-and-white approach to ethics. And that – argued R. Zvi Hirsch Chajes (Mevo ha-Aggadot) – is why rabbinic midrash often systematically re-interprets the narrative so that the good become all-good and the bad all-bad. For sound educational reasons, Midrash paints the moral life in terms of black and white.

Yet the plain sense remains (“A biblical passage never loses its plain interpretation”, Shabbat 63a), and it is important that we do not lose sight of it. It is as if monotheism brought into being at the same time a profound humanism. God in the Hebrew Bible is nothing like the gods of myth. They were half-human, half-divine. The result was that in the epic literature of pagan cultures, human heroes were seen as almost like gods: semi-divine.

In stark contrast, monotheism creates a total distinction between God and humanity. If God is wholly God, then human beings can be seen as wholly human – subtle, complex mixtures of strength and weakness. We identify with the heroes of the Bible because, despite their greatness, they never cease to be human, nor do they aspire to be anything else. Hence the phenomenon of which the sedra of Beha'alotecha provides a shattering example: the vulnerability of some of the greatest religious leaders of all time, to depression and despair.

The context is familiar enough. The Israelites are complaining about their food: “The rabble among them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, ‘If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!’”(Num 11: 4-6)

This is not a new story. We have heard it before (see for example Exodus 16). Yet on this occasion, Moses experiences what one can only call a breakdown:

He asked the Lord, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? . . . I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You are going to treat me, put me to death right now—if I have found favour in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin." (Num. 11: 11-15)

Moses prays for death! Nor is he the only person in Tanakh to do so. There are at least three others. There is Elijah, when after his successful confrontation with the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel, Queen Jezebel issues a warrant that he be killed:

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." (I Kings 19: 3-4)

There is Jonah, after God had forgiven the inhabitants of Nineveh:

Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord, "O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah 4: 1-3)

And there is Jeremiah, after the people fail to heed his message and publicly humiliate him:

"O Lord, You enticed me, and I was enticed; You overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me . . . The word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long . . . Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed! Cursed be the man who brought my father the news, made him very glad, saying, "A child is born to you—a son!" . . . Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?" (Jeremiah 20: 7-18)

Lehavdil elef havdalot: no comparison is intended between the religious heroes of Tanakh and political heroes of the modern world. They are different types, living in different ages, functioning in different spheres. Yet we find a similar phenomenon in one of

the great figures of the twentieth century, Winston Churchill. Throughout much of his life he was prone to periods of acute depression. He called it "the black dog". He told his daughter, "I have achieved a great deal to achieve nothing in the end". He told a friend that "he prays every day for death". In 1944 he told his doctor, Lord Moran, that he kept himself from standing close to a train platform or overlooking the side of a ship because he might be tempted to commit suicide: "A second's desperation would end everything" (these quotes are taken from Anthony Storr, Churchill's Black Dog).

Why are the greatest so often haunted by a sense of failure? Storr, in the book mentioned above, offers some compelling psychological insights. But at the simplest level we see certain common features, at least among the biblical prophets: a passionate drive to change the world, combined with a deep sense of personal inadequacy. Moses says, "Who am I . . . that I should lead the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3: 11). Jeremiah says: "I cannot speak: I am only a child" (Jer. 1: 6). Jonah tries to flee from his mission. The very sense of responsibility that leads a prophet to heed the call of God can lead him to blame himself when the people around him do not heed the same call.

Yet it is that same inner voice that ultimately holds the cure. The prophet does not believe in himself: he believes in God. He does not undertake to lead because he sees himself as a leader, but because he sees a task to be done and no one else willing to do it. His greatness lies not within himself but beyond himself: in his sense of being summoned to a task that must be done however inadequate he knows himself to be.

Despair can be part of leadership itself. For when the prophet sees himself reviled, rebuked, criticized; when his words fall on stony ground; when he sees people listening to what they want to hear, not what they need to hear – that is when the last layers of self are burned away, leaving only the task, the mission, the call. When that happens, a new greatness is born. It now no longer matters that the prophet is unpopular and unheeded. All that matters is the work and the One who has summoned him to it. That is when the prophet arrives at the truth stated by Rabbi Tarfon: "It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to stand aside from it" (Avot 2: 16).

Again without seeking to equate the sacred and the secular, I end with some words spoken by Theodore Roosevelt (in a speech to students at the Sorbonne, Paris, 23 April 1910), which sum up both the

challenge and the consolation of leadership in cadences of timeless eloquence:

It is not the critic who counts, Not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, Or where the doer of deeds could actually have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, Whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, Who strives valiantly, Who errs and comes short again and again – Because there is no effort without error and shortcomings – But who does actually strive to do the deed, Who knows great enthusiasm, great devotion, Who spends himself in a worthy cause, Who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement And who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly – So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls Who know neither victory nor defeat.

Leadership in a noble cause can bring despair. But it also is the cure.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

“And Hashem said to Moses: Gather to me seventy men of the Elders of Israel that you know that they are the Elders of the people and its magistrates” (11:16)

The question arises: how did this answer Moshe’s entreaty? Moshe had said “From where should I have meat to give to all this people?” (11:13). How could the choice of seventy elders solve this question?

Another question may be asked: Why the redundancy in Hashem’s words: “The elders of Israel that you know that they are the elders of the people?” Also: at first they are called “the elders of Israel”, and now they are called “the elders of the people.”

But we must first understand that in reality the people lacked nothing. “Hashem is good to everyone” (Tehillim 145:9) “but most men are like the blind, and fail to recognize His kindness (Chovot Halevavot, Bechinah preface). This failure to enjoy the kindness of Hashem is induced by habit, and also by the constant striving to gain more, and also by the fact that there are always some inconveniences in men’s lives which stimulate dissatisfaction. The remedy for this universal lack of happiness is not achieved by supplying additional pleasures, as some of the people had demanded (11: 4-5).

In order to be happy, men must learn to recognize how fortunate they are in every detail. This therefore requires the study of each detail until one learns to enjoy it, and after the study of many details, the sum

of all them adds up to a total of happiness. Thus when a man enjoys his eyesight properly, and he appreciates his sane mind, and he relishes his daily bread, and he understands the blessings of a cup of water, and he realizes the pleasures and benefits of sound sleep every night, and he sees the advantages of peace and of law and order, and he perceives the privileges of a roof over his head, and when the benefits of each article of his clothing and of each utensil of his home are properly studied: these and countless additional details create a chorus of joy and praise to Hashem.

But this study, as valuable as it is, is not available to the ordinary mind. Therefore the multitude needs instruction by sage teachers that are willing to donate their time for this purpose of opening the eyes of men to recognize the happiness of their lot. Moshe, as great a teacher as he was, was unable single-handedly to undertake this task. The seventy elders were chosen for this purpose. To assist them in this function, Hashem sent upon them the spirit of Prophecy.

These seventy were “elders of Israel” in the sense of sagacity in understanding the Torah, but they were chosen also because they were known as “elders of the people” that had experience in dealing with the matters of personal relations of the people and were therefore capable of dealing with every level of the people. It is probable that these 70 elders spoke first to the best disciples, in addition to their lectures to the people in general. Such disciples could train others, until the Awareness of Hashem’s kindness would universally be recognized by the entire multitude. Quoted from “Journey Into Greatness” by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT’L

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