

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

Sukkot – Hoshanah Rabbah – Simhat Torah

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 – 20 Tishrei 5773

DEDICATION : In memory of my uncle Phillip Deutsch whose Yahrzeit, Hoshana Rabah

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JONAH

## THE SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

Friday Night: Candles: 6:11 PM - Minha/Arbith: 6:10 PM

NEW! Shabbat Mornings 8:30AM Laws of Shabbat for Sephardim with Rabbi Yosef Colish  
Shabbat Shaharit at 9AM – Please say Shemah

11:00 - 12:00 Shabbat Morning Kids Program for girls ages 4-8 - Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks  
and more . . . Simultaneous Babysitting downstairs with Leah Colish ages 2-4.

Shabbat Afternoon Kids Program 4:30PM until Havdala Ice Cream Party, Tanach Stories, Basketball  
Lineup, Children's Devar Torah, Hoolahoop, Parsha Quiz, 613 Mitzva Memory Contest, Shabbat  
Charades, Supervised Play and our weekly Raffles! with Rabbi Colish and Riki Waldman

Minha: 5:30 PM followed by Seudah Shelishi and a Class 6:15 – Class with Rav Aharon  
Evening Service (Arbith): 7:05 PM - Shabbat Ends:7:10PM

Abridged Tikun Lel Hoshana Rabbah from 9PM til 11PM. Assuming we have enough guys  
committed (we'll take a poll on Shabbat or text Rabbi Colish at 516-589-6102 confirming you will be  
there), we will then return 6:30AM Sharp Sunday morning for Netz – sunrise is 6:58AM when we will  
say the Amidah followed by special tefilot for Hoshana Rabba. An amazing breakfast at 8AM, given  
by Kathy Amiel in memory of Yehudah ben Mordechai, Leon Amiel z"l.

Please keep in mind that Hoshana Rabba is according to the Zohar, the day our verdict is delivered  
and can be changed. It is almost on the level of Yom Kippur and our tefilot reflect that. I recall fondly  
staying up all night with Rabbi Abittan and then getting yelled out when Shaya and I went out to  
look at our shadows in the moon. In order to accommodate requests, we have moved the Tikun up  
to 9PM and will end by 11 so you all can get back at 6:30. Make the effort on this very special day.

Shemini Aseret begins Sunday Night October 7  
Candle Lighting 6:08 – Mincha 6:10 Followed by arbit

Monday October 8 Shemini Aseret – Shaharit 9AM  
Monday evening – Minha at 5:30 followed by Hakafot at 6:00PM and Arbit at 7:00PM

Tuesday October 9 morning – Simcha Torah – Shahrit at 8AM (please come early) followed by  
Hakafot and then a special Kiddush given by the sisterhood in honor of the Chatanim .... Chattan  
Torah – Rabbi Aharon Siegel and Chatan Bereshit – Mr. Herman Ovadia

Tuesday evening – Minha at 6:10 followed by Arbit – Holidat ends 7:05PM

Wednesday morning back to regular schedule 6:30AM Laws of Berahot with Rabbi Yosef Colish  
Followed by Shaharit at 7AM

please reply to  
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## EDITORS NOTES

On Sunday I got sick with what I discovered on Wednesday morning when I made it to the doctor were strep and a bad upper respiratory infection. I apologize to those who invited me to their sukkah for the holiday that I simply couldn't make it. Especially to the Menachems and the Magders who I know I disappointed.

On Sunday evening as my wife was preparing to light candles, it really hit me. I quickly said Mincha then fell fast asleep until the family returned at about 10:30. I was able to get up, say arbit and then sit with them in the sukkah where I said Kiddush, had a small pita and said Birkat haMazon. We had guests coming Monday for lunch as well as for dinner and I was thankfully able to join them. But the next few days were a time of in and out of bed.

Sitting there alone, especially on Sukkot, one has time to think and more than anything to contemplate on what to be thankful for. When one really thinks about it, the list goes on and on.

I was appreciative of being able to call the doctor on Wednesday morning, knowing full well that he

had been closed for two days and was probably backed up and being told as always that I could come in right away. I am appreciative of Dr Howard Rosenfeld, the resident five towns internist who not only makes himself available, but gives the time to do a thorough job. After visiting the doctor, any doctor, these days I shudder when I see the insurance company statement of what they are actually being paid. We need to be appreciative of our doctors who go well beyond the call of duty in caring for us.

I was appreciative of being able to work remotely, sitting at my computer at home as if I was sitting at my desk in the office and going through my tasks and messages. Its not the same as being in the office but getting half one's work done is better than doing none of it at all.

I was appreciate of E-Mishnah, a site that allowed me on Wednesday and Thursday, to pull up Mesechet Sukkot and study it in the Sukkah (at least when it wasn't raining).

More than anything though, I think the holidays make us appreciate our families. Our wives and daughters who work so hard in the kitchen and our kids who beautify the sukkah.

Rabbi Abittan would tell of a man who would sit and count his money when he got depressed and that would make him happy. But much better than that is to think about each of our kids and what we have to be appreciative of.

As I kept retreating to bed, my youngest, Mariyah was so worried about me. She simply wanted me to be happy. I explained to her that on Sukkot we have a special misvah to be happy the entire

time and if for a second I was worried that I wasn't being happy, I simply imagined her smiling face and it made me happy again. Moses, my 14 year old, was concerned when I told him I wasn't coming to the Synagogue on Monday morning. I half-jokingly asked him to give the sermon in my place. Tell them the Agnon etrog story I suggested. And found out later that he did just that and it went really well. As I lay up Tuesday night Mikhayla in Jerusalem and six hours ahead, was sending me images from the Kotel where the entire plaza was filled with people for Birkat Kohanim. In the middle of the night, I had time to email Aryana some thoughts on the holiday as she was preparing her classes for the day in Ramaz where she is teaching and where I have heard from teachers and administrators that she is already making a recognized impact. And having Jonah in the office is comforting. Tomorrow Jonah turns 25. Scary when I think about it. I often calculate the time we have been doing the newsletter to Jonah's age. We started when he was 7 so we're now heading into 19 years. And in that past year or so, Jonah has for the most part at work, become my boss!

And this is apropos for the times we are in. As I wrote some years back, the Rabbis tell us that in the times of Mashiach, instead of the children learning from their parents, the parents will follow the lead of their children.

Here is a great story worth telling over again and again .... Once a non-observant family sent their daughter to a religious kindergarten because it was very close to their home. They decided that it was preferable to send the child to a kindergarten nearby, even though it happened to be religious, rather than send her to

a distant one which was more suited to their secular lifestyle.

One Friday, the child came home following her Shabbat party in class that day and announced, "My teacher said that tonight you have to light Shabbos candles."

The mother became angry and said, "In this house we do not light candles, and that is final!"

But the little girl persisted, saying, "But my teacher said you have to!"

"Leave me alone," replied the mother. "I refuse to light candles!"

The girl would not give in, and told her mother, "If you won't light Shabbos candles, then I will."

At this, the mother walked away and told her daughter to stop with her nonsense.

Nevertheless the girl refused to listen, and went by herself to the local grocery store down the block to buy candles. Not aware that Shabbos candles are sold in a box, the child asked for two candles. The grocer, knowing that her parents were not observant, said to himself, "Why is she asking for candles? They don't light Shabbos candles. Why would they want to light two candles? They must have a yearzeit in the family." And so he gave the girl two yearzeit candles.

The girl went home, closed the door of her room, and lit both candles. Suddenly her mother came into the room and saw the two yearzeit candles burning. "What is this?" she asked in astonishment.

"You did not want to light," explained the child, "so I decided to light for you. One for you and one for Daddy."

The mother knew what a yearzeit candle represented, and when she heard that her daughter had lit one for her and one for her husband, she shuddered in fear. Somehow she sensed that something of deep significance was happening. The next day she went to the synagogue to pray. From then on she began to light Shabbos candles every week, and gradually the whole family became observant. (SHE'AL AVICHA VEYAGEDCHA II, p. 135)

I remember having different thoughts when I heard the story. Children shouldn't play with matches and children should listen to their parents. Rabbi Yisrael Pesach Feinhandler comments on the story, "The little girl was persistent in not listening to her mother. Although in this story the results were positive, ordinarily a child's resistance leads to deep conflict. Parents must learn how to handle such situations constructively".

I have often heard it said that they give people tests to allow them to drive an automobile, they test one to permit the person to work as a mechanic on an automobile, they even test a person and require the person to go through a course to work in a restaurant serving food, but to have a baby requires no training and no test. There isn't even a guide book.

On Tuesday, we celebrate Simcha Torah when we begin the Torah anew. We should keep in mind that there is a guide book, not only to raising children but on every aspect of life. It was given to us as a nation more than 3000 years ago. All new beginnings allow us to recommit. As we begin, let us remember as my mother always reminds me that today is the first day of the rest of our lives. Let us commit to studying the guide book!

( Taken from what I wrote in 2008) Finally I was studying the commentary of the Shelah on the Perasha this week and then saw a fascinating article brought by Rabbi Frand entitled, "Parents Love Children More Than Children Love Parents". Its another of those things my mother always told me especially after I had my own kids and told my mother that it was only after becoming a parent that I finally appreciated my own parents. I guess my mother had lots of sage advice. I wonder if this was one of the things that, "Papa (her father David Gindi) used to say". As its 3:40AM as I am typing this, I guess we'll have to wait until the sun comes out to find out!

The Shalo"h haKadosh writes that a person should give as much as he can afford to his daughters so that they might be able to marry a Torah scholar. But, he writes, "I am not in favor of the practice I see that when a wealthy person gets old, he distributes all his money amongst his children, assuming that they will take care of him." He categorizes this latter practice as a major mistake. A person should not give his money to his children, necessitating him to ask them for money when he is old. One cannot rely on children for support – even if their wealth comes from their parents!

The Shalo"h haKadosh explains that the nature is that fathers love sons and fathers love daughters. However, it is also nature that the parental love to their children is greater than the reciprocal love of children to their parents. Why is that?

The Shalo"h haKadosh explains that every personality trait that exists in creation is inherited from Adam. However, Adam had no parents. Therefore, Adam never exhibited the emotion of loving his

parents. He did, however, develop an emotional love for his children. Hence, this love transferred down to all his descendants — even though they did have parents — their love of children was greater than their love of parents.

The Shalo"h haKadosh concludes by citing the whimsical quip that one father lovingly provides for 10 children but 10 children cannot support one father.

Makes you think, huh?

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameyach,

David Bibi

### **Beating the Branches By Rabbi Yisroel Miller**

The Torah does not provide explicit reasons for every mitzvah (commandment) and, especially for the negative commandments, we do not have definitive explanations why the Torah prohibits wearing mixtures of wool and linen, eating meat with milk, etc. But for positive commandments, Biblical or Rabbinic, most of us can give at least some explanation for mitzvot like shofar, succah, matzah, mezuzah, and candles on Chanukah.

A notable exception occurs on Hoshana Rabbah, the last day of Succot, when we beat the hoshanot -- the cluster of five willow branches -- on the ground. It is a mitzvah act whose reason is not found in the Torah, writings of the prophets, or Talmud, and it is a mitzvah act whose significance most Jews know absolutely nothing about.

If hoshanot was a mitzvah written in the Torah, we would simply accept that God did not reveal the

reason for His Divine command. But hoshanot is not a Biblical commandment. It is a practice begun by the prophets well over 2,000 years ago, and a custom the prophets encouraged us to follow.

If the prophets encouraged a new mitzvah act, and a most unusual act (ask anyone who sees willow branches for the first time), they surely gave some explanation of what it means. But the meaning is not mentioned in most sources, indicating that the meaning is either a secret, or else that to them it was self-evident, even if it is obscure to us.

What we do know, is that on Hoshana Rabbah we take branches of hoshanot, also known as aravot, similar to the willow branches we shake with the palm branch during the festival of Succot. We strike the hoshanot on the ground, and we then cast them aside, traditionally on top of Holy Ark in the synagogue, which is an odd place to recycle discarded branches.

A reason for all this is found in the text Eliyahu Zuta, where it is explained that beating the hoshanot and causing the leaves to fall away symbolizes "the falling away of the sparks of Divine Judgment; and we cast it away as an end to the Days of Judgment." What does that mean? How do hoshanot --willow branches-- symbolize Divine Judgment? And how do we have the chutzpah to throw Divine judgment away?

The four species of plants used to celebrate the Succot festival are symbolic of the various Jews comprising the Jewish people: etrog/citron (which has both taste and aroma), lulav/palm branch (taste in the date fruit it produces, but no aroma), hadassim/myrtle (aroma only) and aravot/willow

(neither taste nor aroma) -- symbolize different types of Jews who possess Torah learning (taste) and good deeds (aroma), one or the other, or nothing at all. All kinds of Jews make up the one Jewish nation, so all four species are united in the mitzvah commonly known as waving the lulav and etrog.

It is a well-known tradition that God judges us on Rosh Hashanah, and His judgment is sealed on Yom Kippur. The verdict, though, is still subject to appeal or modification during Succot until Hoshana Rabbah (the last day of Succot), which is the final day to ask, "Hosha Na," Please save, and it is the day Divine judgment for the year takes effect.

On Hoshana Rabbah, the final judgment day, we set aside the four species of plants, and we pick up the cluster of aravot -- willow branches; no taste, no aroma. It is a symbolic prayer, as if to say: "God, some Jews have learning and good deeds, but I? I confess that I can boast of neither. I am just a willow branch without taste or scent."

And we call these willow branches by the name "hoshanot" ("please save us"), because admitting the truth -- that we are not righteous, that we have nothing to boast about -- is the first step to be able to face God and ask him, "Hosha Na," Please save us.

Then we take these hoshanot, humble branches representing ourselves, and we beat them. The symbolism is clear: "God, yes, we are undeserving. But have we not suffered so much? National tragedy, personal tragedy, physical pain, emotional pain -- does this not make us deserving of Your compassion?"

The masters of Kabbalah tell us to strike the branches not on a bench or chair but on the ground. We are saying that we have been humbled, and we admit how low we have potentially fallen. And then we take our branches, and we cast them aside, we throw them away. This is an integral part of the mitzvah, to signal an end to the Days of Divine Judgment.

That means: After humbling ourselves, after admitting our faults and failings; after admitting that we potentially deserve nothing and our only poor merit is our suffering; we then take all those emotions, and we set them aside. Because, if Rosh Hoshana, Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah are properly lived, they are a deeply moving, cathartic experience. And once it's over, it must be placed aside, to allow us to move on.

The text Shaarei Ha'avodah teaches that one who wishes to repent must make a new start, as if he possessed no merit and no transgressions. No transgressions we understand, but why no merit?

The answer is: Although our mitzvot are on permanent record in Heaven and not forgotten by God, we, if we hope to overcome our failures, must in our thoughts free ourselves from the past. We cannot allow ourselves to be tied down by what is gone. We go through Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succot and Hoshana Rabbah. But there is a limit how much time to focus on being under the gun of Divine judgment; so we remove the leaves, and we cast the branches aside.

Some people keep a mental diary of every grievance, every real or imagined wrong that was ever committed against them. They will tell you the terrible things Mr. So-

and-so did 40 years ago; and though So-and-so has long ago forgotten or even passed on, these people continue to eat themselves alive with their bitterness.

Others, often the best and most sensitive hearts, do the same thing with feelings of guilt. It takes courage to admit your mistakes, to admit to God and to yourself that you did wrong and that you are undeserving. But if you do admit, if you are saddened and humbled, then take the good from the experience, cast the rest aside, put it out of your mind and go on. It is difficult enough to face the challenges of the present; we do not need the extra weight of a painful past.

Part of the program for recovering alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) is to write down lists of their fears, regrets, failings and people to whom they need to make amends. It is an experience in facing the truth about oneself, a process that may take many months and fill large notebooks (non-alcoholics could try it, too). The recovering alcoholic then sits down for a few hours with a sympathetic listener to share the information in his or her notes, unloading the secret pain and fear by admitting it to another person. (A.A. calls this "The Fifth Step." Proverbs advises, "If there is worry in a man's heart, let him speak it out.")

Many A.A. members choose Catholic priests for their listeners, but one day I received a call from one of them who said: "I was planning to do my Fifth Step with a priest at the local monastery, but since I'm Jewish, I'd prefer a rabbi. Could you spare a space of about three hours next week?" Of course I could not spare three hours, and of course I said yes and did it anyway. At the end of the session, I told him: "You

shared so much pain and you wonder, will the pain of the past ever disappear? Perhaps not. But you don't need to destroy the pain of the past. Instead, why not just leave it here, in this room?

"You brought the negative things out into the light, you had the courage to face them. Now, why not throw your notes into the wastebasket next to this desk? Why not take all those negative feelings, and leave them here? And then, wherever you are, when thoughts of pain, fear and guilt return, you can say: I don't need to hide from the pain, and I don't need to pretend it doesn't exist. It does exist, in the past, in a room and in a notebook cast away in a wastebasket. It has its proper place; now let me go on to mine."

I pray for my friend (that's how I think of him, though I don't know his name and have not seen him since) that he should be blessed with success in his recovery. But I wish I had told him that, instead of my wastebasket, there is a better place for his pain. To make a new start, besides, or perhaps instead of, sharing with me, he could share his thoughts with God; beating the branches on the ground, asking "Hosha Na" -- please help me -- and then casting the branches above the Holy Ark. God can hold the pain for him, and my friend can then go on to face the day at peace with himself and the world. As can I. And you

### **RABBI ELI MANSOUR The Misva of Arabot on Hoshana Rabba**

There is a Minhag (custom) established by the prophets to take Arabot and bang them on the ground on hoshana Rabba. The custom is to take five Arabot, tie them together, and bang them five times on the ground, without

reciting a Beracha. (Since this practice is only a Minhag, it does not warrant the recitation of a Beracha. This Halacha is known by the expression, “Habit Habit Ve’lo Berich.”)

The reason for this custom relates to the comment of the Midrash that the leaves of the Araba symbolize the lips. Specifically, the Arabot represent the lips of the Satan, and we bang them on the ground in order to silence the Satan so he does not prosecute against us. hoshana Rabba is the day when our final judgment is sealed, and we therefore seek to silence the Satan in an effort to guarantee a favorable judgment. Furthermore, the Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572) instructed that one should have in mind while banging the Arabot that the five beatings should correspond to the five letters in the Hebrew alphabet that appear only at the end of words (the final Kaf, the final Mem, the final Nun, the final Feh, and the final Sadi). These letters signify the Geburot – the harsh judgments in the world – and we bang the Arabot on the ground to express our desire to eliminate these judgments. The custom of the Arabot also commemorates the practice that was observed in the Bet Hamikdash to walk around the altar with an Araba on each day of Succot, and seven times on hoshana Rabba. We commemorate this ritual by using Arabot on the day of hoshana Rabba.

The Arabot should not be held together with the Lulab, and one should not use for this Misva the Arabot that had been used with the Lulab. If, however, no other Arabot are available, then one may use the Arabot from the Lulab. It is customary to recite an introductory “Le’shem Yihud” prayer before banging the Arabot. In some versions, the text

mistakenly refers to this custom with the term “Yesod Nebi'im”; the text should actually read, “Minhag Nebi'im.”

The Rama Mi’Pano (Rav Menahem Azarya de Fano, Italy, 1548-1620) ruled that one should not bind the five Arabot together, but others, including the Hida (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1807), in Birkeh Yosef, disputed this ruling, and the accepted practice is to tie the five branches together with a rubber band.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) writes that one should bang the Arabot directly on the ground, and not on stone or pavement. There are mystical concepts associated with beating the Arabot directly on the ground, and this is indeed the proper practice.

All five branches should be at least three Tefachim – or 10-11 inches – long, just like the Arabot in the Lulab. The Arabot must also be fresh, and not withered. Strictly speaking, it suffices for only part of the branch to be fresh, but as noted by Rav Hai Gaon (969-1038), it is proper to try to ensure that the entire branch is fresh, especially given the availability of fresh Arabot.

The Rama (Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1525-1572) writes that one should first wave the Arabot before banging them on the ground. Many people do not follow this custom, but it is advisable to wave the Arabot to satisfy this view.

The Ben Ish Hai cites the ruling of the Bikureh Yaakob that one should forcefully bang the Arabot so that the leaves will fall off the branches. However, the Ben Ish Hai disputes this view, noting that the Araba branches must remain suitable for the Misva throughout

the banging, and therefore the leaves should remain on the branches.

When necessary, one may use Arabot that had already been used for this Misva, as long as the majority of the leaves are still on the branches.

Women are exempt from this Misva, as it falls under the category of “Misva Aseh She’ha’zman Gerama” (Mitsvot that apply only at specific times, from which women are generally exempt).

It is customary in Jerusalem to return inside to the synagogue after banging the Araba, open the Hechal, and recite the entire text of Nishmat, until the concluding Beracha of “Baruch Mehulal Be’tishbahot” (without Hashem’s Name). The congregation then says a special declaration expressing their intent to recite Nishmat the next year on hoshana Rabba, as well.

### Parasha Summary for Shabbat Hol Ha’moed

The reading for Shabbat that occurs in the middle of Succot is from Exodus 33:12-34:26. The reading begins with a ‘negotiation’ between Moshe and God. Moshe requests a higher-level revelation and deeper understanding of God, and God ‘compromises’ and allows Moshe to understand his attributes (we read this daily in the prayers; El, Rahum, Hanun etc). God also explains however that it is not possible for a physical being to fully grasp a non-physical being such as God (possibly because our physical senses only interpret physical inputs).

In the next passage, Hashem tells Moshe to fashion a new set of tablets (Moshe broke the first ones that Hashem had

fashioned) and Hashem will 'write' the Ten Commandments on them. The reading concludes with laws we must follow in our new environment in the Promised Land. As there are other nations living there, we are reminded to keep our own customs and ideals and make sure we set separations between our children and their children so that they will not becoming romantically engaged, leading to marrying girls or boys from the non-Jewish inhabitants as this would lead to a break down of our nation as they have different ideals and way of life.

### Rabbi Wein

The holy Torah concludes with the blessings of Moshe to the people of Israel before his passing from the world. Though the point has been made before, a number of times in these parsha articles, it bears repetition – the blessing to each of the tribes is different in detail and purpose. Contrary to much current belief and practice in religious Jewish society, there is no one-size-fits-all blessing and assignment in life to all Jews.

Rather Moshe, to whom the task of nation building was assigned by Heaven, looks to construct a whole nation, multi-faceted and productive, holy and complementary, one to another. If everyone is to be Zevulun then what will be of Torah study and knowledge amongst Israel? But if everyone is Yissachar then again Torah will fail to survive within Jewish society.

King Solomon advised us wisely that every child is to be educated according to the individual talents, predispositions and abilities of that particular child. When home schooling was the vogue of Jewish education in biblical times, such an individualized

educational program was more possible and attainable. With the introduction of universal and institutionalized schooling the task of individualized education, to meet every student's particular situation, became nearly impossible to achieve.

The system was built to create Yissachar and those that dropped out and became Zevulun were, to a certain extent, disrespected in the Jewish scholarly community. Though certainly Yissachar was to be respected, honored and supported, many generations lost sight that it was only through Zevulun that Yissachar could exist in the Jewish world. The two tribes were meant to complement each other, not to compete and denigrate one another.

It is striking to note how careful Moshe is to identify each tribe's nature and strengths. Moshe is the one person who forged the different tribes into one whole nation. He did so by granting each tribe its different due, by recognizing that all are necessary in this process of nation building.

The rabbis carried this idea farther when they identified the four species of plant life that form the commandment on Succot, as being representative of the basic groupings that have always formed Jewish life and society. All four groupings of plant life are necessary for the fulfillment of the commandment. All four groupings of Jews are also necessary to form a vital and healthy Jewish society.

The striking variety of people and ideas that have always characterized Jewish society throughout the ages was recognized and extolled by Moshe through his individualized blessings to Israel before his passing from this world. At times Jewish society appears to be

riven and chaotic and we all long for the elusive "Jewish unity" that we all pay lip service to.

But what we really should mean is not Jewish conformity but Jewish loyalty, which is a far different matter. There is an old Eastern European, Jewish/Yiddish ballad that states this matter clearly and succinctly: "Whatever we are, we are but we are all Jews!" The blessings of Moshe as they appear in our concluding parsha of the Torah should help guide us to this important conclusion.

### HALACHA YOMIT The Laws of Mentioning "Mashiv Ha'Ruach"

We begin reciting "Mashiv Ha'Ruach U'Morid Ha'Gesheim" in the Mussaf prayer of Simchat Torah (outside of Israel from shemini Atzeret). This recitation does not constitute a request or plea for rain; rather, it is merely meant as praise to Hashem and is therefore dubbed, "Powers of Rain." The actual request for dew and rain can be found in the ninth blessing of the Amidah prayer referred to as the "Blessing of the Years" (Barech Aleinu). There are several halachic differences between mentioning the "Powers of Rain" in the second blessing of the Amidah prayer entitled, "Ata Gibor," and the actual request for dew and rain in the ninth blessing. Firstly, whereas we begin mentioning the "Powers of Rain" from Mussaf of shemini Atzeret, we do not actually request dew and rain until the night of the Seventh of Marcheshvan (outside of Israel from the night of the Fifth of December), as we shall discuss in following Halachot.

The Gemara (Berachot 33a) states that we mention the "Powers of Rain" in the "Ata Gibor" blessing for this blessing deals with the Resurrection of the

Dead and since rainfall is tantamount to The Resurrection, our Sages thus established this sentence to be mentioned in the blessing dealing with The Resurrection. Our Sages established the actual request for rain in the “Blessing of the Years,” for this is a blessing regarding one’s livelihood, and rainfall is a matter of sustenance for the entire world.

The Sephardic custom, which is followed by some Ashkenazi communities as well, is to recite “Morid Ha’Tal” in the “Ata Gibor” blessing during the summer months. Accordingly, if one forgets to recite “Mashiv Ha’Ruach” and instead recites “Morid Ha’Tal” and he has already concluded the “Mechayeh Ha’Metim” blessing, he would not go back. However, if one mentioned neither “Mashiv Ha’Ruach” or “Morid Ha’Tal” (which is indeed customary among several Ashkenazi communities during the summer months), if one has not yet begun the “Ata Kadosh” blessing, one should recite “Mashiv Ha’Ruach U’Morid Ha’Geshem” between the “Mechayeh Ha’Metim” and “Ata Kadosh” blessings and then just continue his prayer as usual. If, however, one has already begun the “Ata Kadosh” blessing and only then realizes his mistake, he must begin his Amidah prayer anew.

### **Romney by two touchdowns By Charles Krauthammer**

It was the biggest rout since Agincourt. If you insist, since the Carter-Reagan debate. With a remarkable display of confidence, knowledge and nerve, Mitt Romney won the first 2012 debate going away.

Romney didn’t just demonstrate authoritative command of a myriad of domestic issues. He

was nervy about it, taking the president on frontally, not just relentlessly attacking, but answering every charge leveled against him — with a three-point rebuttal.

And he pulled off a tactical coup by coming right out of the box to undo millions of dollars’ worth of negative ads that painted him, personally, as Gordon Gekko — rapacious vulture capitalist who doesn’t just lay off steelworkers but kills their wives — and, politically, as intent on raising taxes on the middle class while lowering them for the rich.

The Romney campaign had let these ads go largely unanswered. But a “kill Romney” strategy can only work until people get to see Romney themselves. On Wednesday night, they did. Regarding the character assassination, all Romney really had to do was walk out with no horns on his head. Confident, smiling and nonthreatening, he didn’t look like a man who enjoys killing the wives of laid-off steelworkers.

Not a very high bar, I admit. But remember: It’s President Obama who set the bar. And succeeded. Romney suffers from unprecedentedly high negatives (50 percent), the highest unfavorability rating at this late date for any challenger in the past three decades.

As to the policy, Romney finally got to explain to the 60 million Americans watching that he intends to lower taxes across the board, particularly for the middle class. As for the rich, he got to explain the difference between lowering tax rates and reducing tax payments. He repeated at least twice that the rich would continue to pay the same percentage of the tax burden,

while lower rates would spur economic growth.

His success in doing this against a flummoxed Obama does more than rally the conservative base. It may affect waverers — disappointed 2008 Obama supporters waiting for a reason to jump. They watch Romney in this debate and ask: Is this the clueless, selfish, out-of-touch guy we’ve been hearing about from the ads and from the mainstream media?

And then they see Obama — detached, meandering, unsure. Can this be the hip, cool, in-control guy his acolytes and the media have been telling us about?

Obama was undone on Wednesday in part by his dismissive arrogance. You could see him thinking annoyedly: “Why do I have to be onstage with this clod, when I’ve gone toe-to-toe with Putin?” (And lost every round, I’d say. But that’s not how Obama sees it.)

Obama never even pulled out his best weapon, the 47 percent. Not once. That’s called sitting on a lead, lazily and smugly. I wager he mentions it in the next debate, more than once — and likely in his kickoff. On the other hand, Obama just isn’t that good. Not without a teleprompter. He’s not even that good at news conferences — a venue in which he’s still in charge, choosing among questioners and controlling the timing of his own answers. By the end of the debate, Obama looked small, uncertain. It was Romney who had the presidential look.

Reelection campaigns after a failed presidential term — so failed that Obama barely even bothers to make the case,

preferring to blame everything on his predecessor — hinge almost entirely on whether the challenger can meet the threshold of acceptability. Romney crossed the threshold Wednesday night.

Reagan won his election (Carter was actually ahead at the time) when he defused his caricature as some wild, extreme, warmongering cowboy. In his debate with Carter, he was affable, avuncular and reasonable. That's why with a single aw-shucks line, "There you go again," the election was over.

Romney had to show something a little different: That he is not the clumsy, out-of-touch plutocrat that the paid Obama ads and the unpaid media have portrayed him to be. He did, decisively.

That's why MSNBC is on suicide watch. Why the polls show that, by a margin of at least two to one, voters overwhelmingly gave the debate to Romney. And he won big in an unusual way. This could be the only presidential debate ever won so definitively in the absence of some obvious and ruinous gaffe, like Gerald Ford's "there is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe."

Romney by two touchdowns.

**How -- and why -- Ahmadinejad and Netanyahu became equals**  
By Clifford D. May

A veteran news reporter, foreign correspondent and editor for the New York Times and Newsweek makes sense of the absurd

JewishWorldReview.com | Iran or Israel: Which is more deserving of censure? On the one hand, as the French news agency Agence France-Presse reported last week, Iranian president Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad is calling Israel "a cancerous tumor" that, he threatened, will "soon be excised." He added: "The nations of the region will soon finish off the usurper Zionists. . . . With the grace of God and help of the nations, in the new Middle East there will be no trace of the Americans and Zionists."

On the other hand, the AFP article goes on to say: "Israel has been employing its own invective against Iran and its leaders, invoking the image of Hitler and the Nazis on the eve of World War II and accusing Tehran of being bent on Israeli genocide."

So let's place these statements on the scale. Dehumanizing Israelis, likening them to a disease, vowing to exterminate them . . . well, that does sound a tad extreme. But the Israeli response . . . well, it is pretty darn insulting! And really, what is the basis for the Israeli charge?

Could it have anything to do with the fact that Ahmadinejad's words are identical to those used by Nazi propagandists? For example, in 1941 Hitler ordered the excising of what he called "the Jewish cancer" from Germany. After that came the murder of six million European Jews — genocide. Ahmadinejad also accused "Zionists" of having started World War I and World War II — just as Hitler blamed the Jews for these conflicts even as his troops were raping Czechoslovakia. Still, does that justify drawing a comparison between Iranian Islamists and German Nazis?

Logically, of course it does, but in AFP's eyes, no. How to explain this departure from reality and morality? Several possibilities come to mind.

It could be that AFP reporters and editors are simply ignorant — that

they have no idea what the Nazis said, believed, or did. I'm sure these journalists attended good schools (not everyone uses a word like "invective"), but perhaps they majored in 17th-century French literature and know nothing of modern history. The one lesson they have learned: It's gauche, a faux pas, to call someone a Nazi, or to compare someone with Hitler — even when such a comparison is justified.

A second possibility: Multiculturalism requires moral equivalence — which means no Third World society can ever be described as in any way inferior to any Western society. So if Iranians are to be criticized for threatening to kill Israelis, then Israelis must be criticized for something.

A third explanation: To acknowledge that Iran's rulers are akin to Nazis and are threatening genocide carries disagreeable policy implications. Among other things, it suggests that Iran's rulers should, at all costs, be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons. But anyone who says that risks being labeled a warmonger, a neoconservative, or something equally unfashionable.

There is this possibility, too: The AFP article expresses anti-Israelism and, perhaps, also, the most ancient and durable of biases. Don't get me wrong: Not everyone who criticizes Israel is a Jew-hater. Not everyone who hates Israel is a Jew-hater. But all Jew-haters do criticize and hate Israel.

Revolutionary Islamists are candid in this regard. Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, Iran's Lebanese-based terrorist organization, has said: "If we searched the entire world for a person more cowardly, despicable, weak and feeble in

psyche, mind, ideology, and religion, we would not find anyone like the Jew. Notice I do not say the Israeli.” Nasrallah also has said that if all Jews gather in Israel, “it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide.”

One final point that the good folks at AFP ought to understand: Any serious concept of free speech includes the right to insult and offend — to “employ invective.” But for leaders of a nation to incite genocide is a crime under international law — the same international law so beloved of the major media when they think it has application to Israel (or the United States).

The well-known international human-rights lawyer Irwin Cotler, a former Canadian minister of justice and attorney general, has been making a strenuous effort to remind Western leaders that there is a Genocide Convention that they have an obligation — legal, moral, and strategic — to enforce.

“The Iranian regime’s criminal incitement has been persistent, pervasive, and pernicious,” Cotler recently wrote. “In particular, this genocidal incitement has intensified and escalated in 2012, with the website of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei declaring that there is religious ‘justification to kill all the Jews and annihilate Israel, and Iran must take the helm.’”

Despite that, Cotler points out, “not one State Party to the Genocide Convention has undertaken any of its mandated responsibilities to prevent and punish such incitement — an appalling example of the international community as bystander — reminding us also that genocide occurred not only because of cultures of hate, but because of crimes of indifference.”

Cotler’s words have so far fallen on deaf ears. True, the U.S. and some European nations have imposed painful economic sanctions on Iran. But inciting genocide is not among the reasons given. And on August 26, representatives of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement will be welcomed in Tehran. The new president of the NAM? Iran.

Some bold AFP reporter should ask the diplomats from those 120 nations if they are concerned about Iran’s genocidal incitement, troubled that the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism may soon possess nuclear weapons, or distressed by Iran’s support of the Assad regime’s barbarism in Syria and its bloody repression of peaceful protestors inside Iran. Or are they more upset by Israelis “employing invective” in an attempt to call attention to these realities? These questions answer themselves. In that sense, Agence France-Presse is simply following the herd.

#### AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

“Rejoice you righteous in Hashem, and give thanks & praise to His Holy name” (Tehillim) How can we rejoice “In Hashem”? By rejoicing, in all the things that Hashem is giving us. Remind yourself that they are from Hashem.

When you sit to eat, rejoice in the knowledge that Hashem is giving you pleasure. It is a pleasure to eat!

Hashem makes food taste good. He gives you the food and it tastes good. It is His will that we enjoy the food.

As soon as you see and smell the food your stomach juices flow. Hashem wants you to be happy!

It is a Mitzvah to enjoy the food. Just think that Hashem is giving it to you.

It is a Mitzvah to get pleasure from all the gifts of life including air, sleep, food, water, sunlight... Just add the intention “that Hashem gave it to me”.

If you thank Hashem in this world and enjoy His gifts then you will acquire this world and the next world.

Turn that pleasure into a Mitzvah by focusing on the fact that Hashem is giving you that great gift. Train yourself to say, “Thank You Hashem!” It can transform your everyday acts into millions of Mitzvot.

“A good heart (mind) is at an everlasting feast” (Mishle 15:15) Happiness is not the result of possessions and pleasures, for the rich are not more happy than the poor. All happiness is in the mind. He who possesses an understanding of the Goodness of the world, rejoices always and in every circumstance. Life is full of intense pleasures which are available to all men, but almost all men fail to appreciate them because of improper mental attitudes. Thus the development of the mind is actually equivalent to the acquisition of riches.