

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE NISABIM-VAYELECH/

SEPTEMBER 20, 2014

25 ELUL 5774

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

Dear Benai Asher,

With less than one week until Rosh Hashanah, the pace of activity picks up with lots to do. It is a time to take a spiritual accounting, review the machzor, compile a list of goals for the coming year, reconnect with friends and family, and so much more. It is also a time to **enable others** to celebrate the High Holidays joyously. We can give tzedakah to support those in need by contributing to the Sephardic Congregation Chesed Fund, at <http://www.benaiasher.org/donate-online/>, and enter Chesed Funds in the subject line. We can also reach out to inspire more people to meaningfully celebrate the holiday. Here are three very important ways to make this happen:

- 1) **Hospitality:** If you have room at your table **to host guests** for any of the upcoming holiday meals, please let us know. At the same time, if you would like **to be hosted** for one of the upcoming holiday meals, please let us know that, too, so that we can match guests with hosts.
- 2) If you are able to **blow shofar** for those unable to make it to services, or for patients in neighborhood senior centers and nursing homes, please let us know.
- 3) **Encourage attendance at our Learners High Holiday Service.** This year I hope to do something new and host a learner's service on both days of Rosh Hashana at 9AM until about 10AM. Many people have complained in the past that they either don't follow the prayers or because they were never taught find themselves lost as to meaning and goal in Rosh Hashana. We hope that during this hour we can have a mini service with explanation. At that point those attending can join the regular service for the Torah reading and Shofar Blowing.

There are so many people in the community who will appreciate this service. Please share the information about the service with someone who would appreciate it. Even with mimosas at the Allegria, there are many Jews in Long Beach who would enjoy becoming a part of our family if we only invite them and make the experience something they can enjoy.

Let us make the most of the last week of the Jewish year and do what we can to share the beauty of the High Holidays with many more of our Jewish brothers and sisters. As we gather in our homes and in synagogue to greet the New Year, let us do so having done all that we can to make this Rosh Hashanah as meaningful and uplifting as possible for our families, our community, and all those seeking a warm and inspiring holiday.

Tizku LeShanim Rabot

May we all be blessed and written for a year of health happiness, peace and prosperity,

David Bibi

PS ... We are hoping to have some child sitting available on both days of Rosh Hashana from 10AM to 1PM and again for Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur. If you have children who need to be watched, please give us their names and ages and we will endeavor to have people with us to help.

PSS... Our intent is to begin regular tefilah at 8AM each morning of Rosh Hashana and get to the Amidah by 9AM. Torah reading will be at about 10AM and we will try to limit each day's olim to five plus two plus maftir. Musaf and Shofar at 11AM and we want to get out way before 1PM. Please keep these times in mind. They only work if everything is sold in advance, so please help us out.

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DEDICATIONS: Mazal Tov! Rabbi Gidon and Dassy Lemberger had a baby boy!
Mazal Tov to the Grandparents Tina and Uri Lemberger.

SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE TO FOLLOW

Candle lighting Friday evening 6:39 p.m. Shir Hashirim 6:25 Mincha at 6:40

SHABBAT Class at 8:30, Relevant Daily Halachot based upon the teaching of HaRav Ovadia Yosef Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 9:03 AM

Kiddush has no sponsor

Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one

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

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

Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach

Pirkei Avot with Rav Aharon at 5:30

Mincha at 6:00 – Followed by Seudah Shelishi at 6:30

Seudah Shelishi Class with R' Aharon

Birkat HaMazon at 7:25 Arbit at 7:30 - Shabbat Ends – 7:39

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Selichot 6:15AM and on Sunday at 7:15AM

Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon at 6:55, Tues, Weds at 7:00

We have been having a great Sunday morning class with Sam Yusupov 9AM

Looking for Breakfast sponsors

No class this Sunday

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE - Men and Women are Invited

MONDAY Night – Mincha at 6:45PM - Class with Rabba Yenai 7:00 –

Daily morning class with Rabbi Colish – Will continue after the holidays

LOOKING FORWARD

Selichot Thank You Breakfast – Sunday morning October 5th at 9AM – All are invited

In appreciation of Dr Bellehsen, Dr Kahn, Rabbi Wagner and Rabbi Colish and all those who participated and made selichot possible each day. Please join us each morning through Yom Kippur for Selichot.

Pizza In The Hut!!! - Sunday, October 5 - 11:00AM -1:00PM - Draw, hang and put your own creative talents into a great mitzvah! Come and help decorate the Succah! Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach (Corner of Lafayette and Penn)

Simchat Beit HaShoava - Sunday Oct 12th at 7:30PM - Chol HaMoed. Together with our friends from JCAB at The Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach. The program will be led by Rabbi Sammy Intrator - formerly the Rabbi of the Carlebach Shul in NYC. Lots of singing, dancing and Divrei Torah.

MEMBERS ONLY MEETING – Sunday September 26th at 9:00 AM

**Please send in your membership forms
And please participate with the sale of honors**

ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com
 Newsletter archives now at BenaiAsher.Org

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

Editors Notes- Will you accept your commission?

Most mornings I am out of bed and my day begins by the time the clock strikes five. Often though, I wake up at four. Sometimes I can fall back asleep for that extra hour. Other times I can't and it's during that time that my mind wanders. Rabbi Abittan zs'l told us that during those times and the minutes before we fall asleep at night, we should review what we learned, what we are going to learn or Torah questions we have. When I remember to do that, I picture myself sitting with the Rabbi and discussing the points that run through my mind. . Placing the rabbi in this daydream helps me to focus better. And still the concentration roams and the backgrounds vary. I always place us in the Synagogue to start; He in his seat and me in mine, right next to him. Sometimes though we are transported to a courtyard in the old city of Jerusalem where I see the rabbi with a piping hot cup of mint tea and at other times we are driving in a car through various places. I try to focus on the conversation.

In the good old days I waited till Thursday to work on my weekly article. This gave me a number of days where I could progress through the Perasha to think about what I might write and what classes I might prepare. These days my article must be ready by Monday evening or at latest Tuesday morning and so beginning on Saturday night almost immediately after giving a Seuda Shelishi class on that Shabbats portion I'm am already thinking about the coming weeks portion. After spending Shabbat delving into the Perasha, a big part of me wants to stay with that portion for another day or so and to consider the points reviewed allowing me to delve further into them. It's part of adding onto the Shabbat and hanging out with a good friend and wanting to spend a few more minutes together.

I suspect I am not alone. Almost invariably whenever I hear a rabbi give a thought on Sunday relating to the weekly portion it's almost always about the portion we just read. I wonder about those rabbis who

write their articles or sermons weeks in advance. In my mind, we haven't got there yet. How do they do it?

So this Sunday morning, I woke up at four and began my conversation with the Rabbi. My mind certainly wanted to stay with Ki Tavo. I just spoke at Seuda Shelishi and we discussed a message in this portion that relates to our preparation for Rosh Hashana. And so I asked the Rabbi in my daydream, what is the Rosh Hashana message in this week's portion.

I reviewed in my mind the first verse: Atem Nisavim HaYom - You are standing here today. And then Rabbi Abittan asked me, David, in English one translates nisavim as standing, but isn't the Hebrew word for standing Omed? Why does Moshe chose this unique term? What's the difference between Nisav and Omed. Figure that out and you'll get your message. And then being that's it was Sunday and things started a bit later, I fell back asleep for another couple of hours.

I arrived at the synagogue and the rabbi's (really my own) question remained burning inside me. I saw a well-known scholar who was visiting from Jerusalem and put the question to him. Later that morning I drove from Manhattan to Brooklyn for a Torah dedication and saw another Rabbi and put the question to him. On the way from Brooklyn towards home, I called another talmid Haham and put the question to him. And then as I passed the toll going into Atlantic Beach, the bridge was just coming up. I stopped my car and got out for the few minutes it would take for the boats to pass below and enjoy the view. I saw someone doing the same, said hello and asked if he minded if I put the question to him. All the answers were good but none of them seemed to satisfy my soul.

When I got to the house, I began looking at some of the mefarshim and then I looked through my old notes and came upon something based on one of Rabbi Abittan's favorites, that of his countryman, Rabbi Hayyim ben Moshe ibn Attar also known as the Or ha-Hayyim.

There is a concept in Judaism called Arevut – The Talmud explains that along with one's own obligation to keep misvot, each Jew has a responsibility to be concerned about other Jews' observance of misvot – and we can expand that to each Jew being responsible for every other – As the Rabbis teach - kol Yisrael arevim zeh la-zeh "All Jews are responsible for one another".

Rav Baruch Gigi writes, This responsibility ("arevut") began, according to the Mekhilta, even before the

giving of the Torah. In the verse "Israel encamped opposite the mountain," the Torah uses the singular verb ("va-yichan"). .. When they all stood on Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, they were joyfully united together with 'one heart' to accept upon themselves the yoke of Heaven. Furthermore, they committed themselves to mutual responsibility – in Hebrew, the word is memashkenim - literally, they put down security for each other, like a guarantor of a loan.

We can all understand the concept of when a person wants to take a loan and he does not have sufficient credit or collateral, in order to get the loan approved, he is required to bring in guarantors. These guarantors are Arevim.

Rabbi Abittan would stress that when looking at words, we should examine their root and how the words are used. The root of Arevim is Arev or Erev which we use for evening. The time when day and night mix together. In essence we are joining one entity with another. Thus in guaranteeing a loan the person taking the loan and the one guaranteeing the loan become joined where each is responsible for the loan. Sometimes banks will require more than one guarantor so that each becomes responsible individually and collectively. And the more guarantors to share the burden, the more likely one is to volunteer to cosign. When everyone knows that the entire group is all for one and one for all, one becomes more inclined to join that group and sacrifice for it.

The verses read: You are all standing this day before the L-rd, your G-d, the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel, your young children, your women, and your convert who is within your camp both your woodcutters and your water drawers, that you may enter the covenant of the L-rd, your G-d,

With that in mind and following Rabbi Abittan's advice, I decided to look at the root of Nisav and where it is used. In Hebrew the same root form the word Nesiv or commissioner and the uniqueness of the concept as it relates to collectively accepting the covenant. A commissioner is appointed to a job and is given authority in order to protect and defend and be responsibility to the community and to other people.

And the first time the word is used in the Torah is when Eliezer the servant of Abraham is standing by the well awaiting Rebecca and fulfilling his commission to find a wife for Isaac.

Going back to the verses, let's revise the translation a bit. Atem Nisavim HaYom, You are all being appointed here today (to be responsible for one another). This responsibility begins with the leaders of the nation and the leaders of the tribes and then the officers all the way to the wood cutter and water drawer. Each of you is appointed and must be responsible for everyone around you.

The Rabbis equate the term HaYom with Rosh Hashana.

So perhaps the message we can walk away with is that if we want to be successful on Rosh Hashana, if we want to be judged favorably then we need to be Nisavim. We need to accept the appointment and commission to be responsible for each other. For when we become Arevim, we become guarantors for each other, than Hashem will act as our guarantor and wipe out our debts.

For homework think about the term, "those here today and those not here" and ask yourself, "way of all trades the water drawer and wood cutter".

May you all be blessed with a year of health and happiness, peace and prosperity.

Shabbat Shalom,
David Bibi

Of Politicians and Moral Courage Caroline Glick - The Jerusalem Post

Leaders are not elected. Politicians are elected. Their election in turn provides politicians with the opportunity to become leaders.

You don't become a leader by telling people what they want to hear, although doing so certainly helps to you get elected. A politician becomes a leader by telling people what they don't want to hear.

If they are lucky, politicians will never have to become leaders. They will serve in times of peace and plenty, when it's possible to pretend away the hard facts of the human condition. And they can leave office beloved for letting people believe that the world is the Elysian Fields.

Certainly this has been the case for many American politicians since the end of World War II.

This is not the case today. In our times, evil rears its ugly head with greater power and frequency than it has in at least a generation. As Americans learned 13 years ago this week, evil ignored is evil empowered.

Yet fighting evil and protecting the good is not a simple matter. Evil has many handmaidens.

Those who hide it away enable it. Those who justify it enable it. Those who ignore it enable it.

To fight evil effectively, a leader must possess the moral wisdom to recognize that evil can only be rooted out when the environment that cultivates it is discredited and so transformed. To discredit and transform that environment, a leader must have the moral courage to stand not only against evildoers, but against their far less controversial facilitators.

In other words, the foundations of true leadership are moral clarity and courage.

On Wednesday two American elected leaders gave speeches. In one, a leader emerged. In the other, a politician gave a speech.

The first speech was given by Texas Senator Ted Cruz.

On Wednesday evening, Cruz gave the keynote address at the inaugural dinner of an organization that calls itself In Defense of Christians. The purpose of the new organization is supposed to be advocacy on behalf of oppressed Christian communities in the Middle East.

Ahead of the dinner, The Washington Free Beacon website questioned Cruz's decision to address the group. Several Christian leaders from Lebanon and Syria also scheduled to address the forum had records of public support for Syrian dictator Bashar Assad, and Hezbollah, and had made egregiously anti-Semitic statements.

For instance, Church of Antioch Patriarch Gregory III Laham blamed jihadist attacks on Iraqi Christians on a "Zionist conspiracy against Islam" aimed at making Muslims look bad.

Probably the organization's leaders assumed that Cruz would give their group bipartisan credibility and never considered he might challenge their anti-Jewish prejudices. No American politician in recent memory has made an issue of the rampant Jew-hatred among Middle Eastern Christians. Probably they figured that he'd make an impassioned speech about the plight of Christians under the jackboot of Islamic State, enjoy warm applause, leave the hall and clear the path for other speakers to blame the Jews.

Cruz did not follow the script. Instead he used the opportunity to tell his audience hard truths.

In a statement released by his office, Cruz summarized the events of the evening.

"I told the attendees that those who hate Israel also hate America... that those who hate Jews also hate Christians. And that anyone who hates Israel and the Jewish people is not following the teachings of Christ.

"I went on to tell the crowd that Christians in the Middle East have no better friend than Israel. That Christians can practice their faith free of persecution in Israel. And that ISIS [Islamic State], al-Qaida, Hamas and Hezbollah, along with their state sponsors in Syria and Iran, are all part of the same cancer, murdering Christians and Jews alike. Hate is hate, and murder is murder."

For his decision not to take the low road, Cruz was subjected to angry boos and heckling from the audience, whose members angrily rejected his remarks.

"After just a few minutes, I had no choice," Cruz said. "I told them that if you will not stand with Israel, if you will not stand with the Jews, then I will not stand with you. And then I walked off the stage."

Cruz's action was an act of moral leadership.

He stood before his audience of fellow Christians and told his co-religionists that their hatred of Jews and Israel is un-Christian. He told them as well that their bigotry blinds them to their own plight and makes them reject their greatest ally in securing their future in the Middle East.

Cruz's strategy for fighting Islamic oppression of Christians involves uniting all those oppressed and attacked by jihadists. In all honesty, it is the only policy that has a chance in the long term of securing the future of the Christians of the Middle East.

For Cruz to reach this conclusion, he first had to possess the moral clarity to recognize that Christian Jew-hatred is a major obstacle to securing the future of the Middle East's Christians.

In other words his strategic vision is anchored in moral courage.

The same evening that Cruz was booed off the stage by an audience of anti-Semitic Christians, US President Obama gave a speech to the general audience where he set out his rationale for fighting

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and his strategy for doing so.

In some ways, it is unfair to compare Obama's speech to Cruz's. Cruz addressed a narrow constituency and Obama gave his speech to all Americans, and indeed to the entire world.

A more apt comparison would be between Cruz's speech to the pro-terror Christians and Obama's speech to an audience that included Muslim Brotherhood leaders in Cairo in 2009.

Indeed, the chief reason that Cruz's speech was an act of leadership, and Obama's was the address of a politician, is that Obama's speech reflected his remarks in Cairo and his subsequent speeches to Muslim audiences and about Islam throughout the intervening years.

Neither during his speech in Cairo nor in subsequent remarks has Obama ever called out the world's Muslims for their bigotry against Jews, Christians and others. Neither during his speech in Cairo nor in subsequent addresses has Obama spoken out against Islamic terrorism or the jihadist world view that stands at the foundation of Islamic terrorism.

Rather, throughout his presidency Obama has denied the existence of the jihad, its ideology and the fact that it is a force shaping events throughout the world.

Wednesday's speech was no exception.

At the outset of his remarks, Obama insisted that Islamic State, or (ISIL as he calls it), "is not 'Islamic.'"

Obama may be right, and he may be wrong. That's for Muslims to determine.

But whatever the truth is about Islam and jihad, the fact is that hundreds of millions of Muslims believe that Islamic State and other jihadist groups and regimes, of both the Shi'ite and Sunni variety, are accurate expressions of Islam. This is why thousands of Muslims from Europe and the US are flocking to Iraq and Syria to join Islamic State.

Obama's policies for contending with Islamic jihadists are a natural extension of his refusal to speak hard truths to Muslims or speak truthfully about Islamic terrorism and jihadism. His whitewashing of jihadist Islam on Wednesday night similarly was reflected in the strategy he set out for fighting Islamic State.

As Fred and Kim Kagan noted in *The Weekly Standard*, Obama's decision to use counterterror strategies for fighting Islamic State is a recipe for failure. What Obama referred to as "a terrorist organization," is actually an insurgency that fights battles against standing armies and wins.

Counterterror operations cannot work against such a force.

So, too, Obama's asserted that his strategy for fighting Islamic State has been tried and succeeded in Somalia and Yemen. Yet by all accounts, jihadist forces in both countries are not only undefeated, they are becoming stronger.

Obama's strategy involves joining US air power with anti-Islamic State forces on the ground in Iraq and Syria. Yet aside from the Kurds, all the forces on the ground in both countries are deeply problematic.

Just hours before Obama's speech, the leadership of Syria's "moderate" rebel forces was decapitated in an explosion. And for all their moderation, the leaders were part of an anti-Assad coalition that included Islamic State.

Although he is an Alawite, Bashar Assad and his forces are members of the Shi'ite jihadist coalition led by Iran that includes Hezbollah.

These forces are more dangerous than Islamic State. Yet US air strikes against Islamic State will redound to their direct benefit.

Obama's refusal to acknowledge the existence of jihad – of both the Sunni and Shi'ite variety – makes it impossible for him to devise a realistic strategy for defeating jihadists. He rightly defines Islamic State as an enemy of the US, but because he denies the existence of jihad, he is incapable of putting Islamic State in its proper strategic context. Among the many forces fighting on the ground in Iraq and Syria today, you have two jihadist forces – one Shi'ite and one Sunni – that are fighting each other. Both are enemies of America and its allies.

To be sure, Islamic State must be confronted and defeated – just as Iran, Hezbollah, al-Qaida, Hamas and Boko Haram need to be defeated.

Defeating only one group empowers others, and so you keep ending up where you started.

Yet rather than understand that while jihadist forces may oppose one another, the threat they pose to the free world is indivisible, as Obama focuses on Islamic

State, he is enabling Iran to expand its power in Iraq and Syria, and to complete its nuclear weapons program.

Last week the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran continues to hide key information about its nuclear program from the UN nuclear watchdog, despite its agreement last November to provide the IAEA with full transparency.

The Iranians continue to bar IAEA inspectors from the suspected military nuclear installation at Parchin. Negotiations on a nuclear accord between the US and its partners and Iran are going nowhere. According to Western diplomatic sources, the failure to reach an accord owes entirely to Iran's refusal to compromise on any substantive nuclear issues.

While Iran refuses to provide transparency to the IAEA, its guiding strategy is clear to the naked eye. It is prolonging negotiations to buy time to complete its nuclear program.

However, Obama, who insists that Islamic State "terrorists are unique in their brutality," refuses to see the true picture.

The truth revealed on Wednesday night is that Obama cannot lead a successful war against the forces of Islamic jihad that threaten humanity. He cannot do so because he rejects the moral clarity required to confront the danger.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

NISAVIM - 1st & 2nd Aliyot: Moshe presented the entire nation with the basis for our covenant with G-d. Starting with the promise to the forefathers and stretching across 500 years of history, our relationship with G-d had been substantiated through miracle after miracle. Yet, future generations might deny their personal obligation to continue the relationship and its attendant responsibilities. Therefore; Moshe made it absolutely clear that each generation is obligated to educate their children and train them to accept the covenant with G-d. Subsequent generation should not be able to excuse their responsibilities for Torah and Mitzvos due to ignorance.

3rd Aliya: The next excuse Moshe confronted was the modernization of Torah. In every generation there are those who see Torah as archaic and outdated. "Only by grafting new ideas and practices to the stale practices of Torah will Judaism continue to exist and flourish." This excuse for changing Torah's eternal

truths will result in the compromise of Torah observance, our land, and our people.

4th & 5th Aliyot: As history will tragically prove, Moshe's warnings would be ignored. Subsequent generations would wonder about the destruction and desolation and, in their search for answers, return to the uncompromised truths and practices of their forefathers.

6th Aliya: As a generation of Baalei Teshuva find their way back, many will be overwhelmed by the seemingly inaccessibility of Torah knowledge. Moshe reassures us that Torah is accessible to all those who truly desire it. Ignorance and a lack of opportunity for learning should never be an excuse.

7th Aliya: Finally, Moshe presented the bottom line. Endowed with free will we must choose properly. In the end, we are responsible for what happens.

VAYELECH - 1st & 2nd Aliyot: Moshe emphasized Hashem's continued presence and protection, even though, Moshe himself would not be with them any longer. Ever since assuming the leadership of Israel, Moshe had the conflicting job of fostering the nation's dependency upon Hashem while de-emphasizing their dependency upon him as a leader and provider. Now, as he prepared his final good-bye, it was clear that by day's end, with Moshe's death, the nation would have no other choice but to reassess their dependency on Moshe and direct their attention to Hashem.

However this was far more complex than it seemed. True, Moshe's death would be a definitive "cutting of the apron strings"; but, living in the Land by the laws of nature rather than miracles would de-emphasize G-d's overt role in all aspects of their lives.

3rd & 4th Aliyot: By writing the entire text of the Torah, entrusting it into the care of the Kohanim, and explaining the unique mitzvah of Hakhel, Moshe hoped that the people would retain the perspective of their dependency upon Hashem. The Kohanim represented the continued presence of "G-d in the midst of the camp". As teachers and role models, they kept an otherwise dispersed and decentralized nation focused on their national and individual missions.

Once every 7 years, the entire nation gathered in the Bais Hamikdash in a recreation of the giving of the Torah. This national expression of devotion would serve as an essential reminder that adherence to the Torah is the reason why the nation occupied and retained the Land.

5th, 6th & 7th Aliyot: Moshe and Yehoshua were summoned to the Ohel Moed and told the harsh future of their charges. In spite of all the warnings, the people would sin and lose sight of their dependency upon Hashem. They would be punished, and instead of accepting responsibility for the consequences that their neglect of G-d's commandments caused, they would have the chutzpah to blame G-d's absence and neglect for the calamities and disasters that had befallen them.(31:17) It would then be the very words of this "Song" which would testify to the reality of their defection from Hashem and the inevitable consequences which occurred, as forewarned in this Torah.

Yehoshua was encouraged to be strong and courageous and lead the nation with the same devotion that Moshe had. The Torah, written by Moshe himself, was then placed in the Ark as proof of the conditions by which the Jewish

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

“Return wayward sons, I will heal you from your waywardness.” (Yirmiyahu 3:22)

The High Holidays are fast approaching. How should we view our relationship to Hashem?

Once a button became loose on the Rabbinic jacket of the Hatam Sofer and he gave it to his daughter to mend. When she handed it back to him, he told her that she wasn't the one who had sewn on the button. The daughter's face turned red and she admitted that she had asked the maid to do it. When she asked him how he knew, the Hatam Sofer showed her that there was also a tear in the corner of the jacket. He knew that if she had affixed the button, she would have seen the rip and would have lovingly fixed it as well. When he saw that the rip was not mended he understood that the sewing was done by someone who was instructed to do so, but who felt no love in doing so.

Based on this story Rabbi D. Staum quotes Rabbi G. Rabinowitz, that on Rosh Hashanah we declare that we stand ready to be judged: "If like sons...or if like servants" (מידבעכ מא מינבכ מא). The truth is that Hashem judges us depending on how we serve Him. If we approach serving Hashem as a son serving his father with love, going beyond the letter of the law, then Hashem will in turn judge us as sons. But if we serve Him as servants, merely fulfilling the letter of the law, then He will judge us as devoted servants, but not as sons. Happy Holiday & Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Gemara tells a story. There was once a drought in Israel which was causing a tremendous famine. R' Eliezer, the great leader of that generation ordered fasting and special prayers with twenty-four blessings, but they weren't answered. R' Akiba then got up and said "Abinu Malkenu, Our Father our King, please have mercy on us," and rain came down. The students began to whisper, "How come the great R' Eliezer wasn't answered and R' Akiba, who was his student, was answered?" A voice came down from Heaven and said, "Do not think the student is greater than the Rabbi, rather the student overcomes his character traits which merited this miracle."

R' Salanter asks the obvious question: Doesn't this mean that R' Akiba is still greater, since he overcomes his character traits? He answers that R' Eliezer came from very noble stock and therefore his personality was very refined from birth. His character traits were all positive. R' Akiba, however, whose ancestry had converted in it, had to overcome personality traits which he inherited. He had to perfect himself by overcoming his nature. Therefore, he merited to have miracles that Hashem also "overcame his nature" (so to speak) and allowed rain to come, even if not deserved.

We see here the power of overcoming one personality trait. If we refrain from responding when insulted, or hold back our anger when provoked, we can bring about miracles since we controlled our nature. We have experienced a difficult year and we all want to see Divine mercy and compassion. If we exhibit these very same traits then Hashem changes His nature and will bring us a year of health, happiness and prosperity. Tizku Leshanim Rabot! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

ONE MORE CHANCE

If we were to receive a distinguished guest in our home, there is no doubt that we would go all out to welcome him and show him respect. We would prepare the finest meals for him and offer him the best accommodations. If the guest were to stay in our home for an extended period of time, though, we probably would not maintain that level of service throughout the duration of the visit. Then, when the time came for the guest to leave us, we would again prepare for him a lavish meal and send him on his way with honor.

This, Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian teaches, is the way we should view the last Shabbat of the year. We may have neglected to give the Shabbat the honor it deserves throughout the year, but this Shabbat is like a guest who has been with us all year and is now preparing to depart. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to give greater honor to this particular Shabbat.

How do we show more honor to the Shabbat? Of course, this means that we must be extra careful with the prohibitions of the day. Any "leniencies" we have allowed ourselves during the year should be put aside, at least for this day. We must also pray the tefillot of Shabbat with greater concentration, to understand and think about the meanings of the words which we are saying to Hashem.

We should also be sure to enjoy the meals of Shabbat for the express purpose of giving honor to the day. If a person stuffs himself to the point where he is too tired to sit down with a sefer and study Torah, then he didn't show respect to the Shabbat - he simply honored himself.

It is known that a person in the last moments of his life can do complete teshubah and be forgiven for a lifetime of sins. In an instant, he can repair all the damage he has done to his soul over the many years of his life. The same holds true regarding the last Shabbat of the year and regarding the last day of the year. If a person acts in the proper way, dedicating himself to the study of Torah and the performance of misvot he can salvage the entire year and merit great blessings for the new year. (Lekah Tob)

MAKE ME A FEW COPIES

The boss listened patiently as one of his department managers outlined a new business plan which, the loyal employee predicted, would produce bottom-line profits for the company. "I've put it all down on a single sheet of paper for you to review," said the manager proudly, as he handed the summary to his employer. After a few moments, the boss handed the document back to his ingenious worker and said, "I like it. Make me a few copies to distribute at our afternoon meeting. I'd like some of the other managers to come up with similar ideas."

If you are satisfied with something, you want more of that same thing: 'Pass me another piece of cake.'... "I think I'll go back and buy these shoes in brown also. They are so comfortable."... "I love my car so much that I am going to get another from the same dealer for my wife." And so on.

Although most people complain, to some extent, about life's minor details – finances, the location of their homes, the lack of certain creature comforts – they feel that the way they live is basically fine, and it is what they want for their children. Most people want more of what they have for their children, not different from what they have.

In order to transmit your life philosophy, religious feelings, and cultural mores to your children, you must live an exemplary life. Telling them what you want them to be, and lecturing them on how you would like them to behave, usually falls on deaf ears.

But living how you would like them to live usually provides them with a script for life, which they can easily follow.

Hashem gave us a great deal of time with our children. Other creatures mature much more quickly and become independent from their parents at a very young age. Minutes after birth, a horse starts to run around on its own. Days after hatching, many birds are ready to leave the nest. Humans, however, spend approximately twenty years at home before venturing out into the world on their own. Some explain that Hashem's plan is to give parents enough time to show their children the right way to behave in a variety of life situations.

When you have the opportunity to communicate with your offspring, don't preach. Do as you would like them to do rather than say what you would like them to do. It only takes a minute to communicate, and Hashem gave us many minutes to convey our values to our children. Use every minute before they are ready to strike out on their own, and you will produce "clear copies" of your ideals for the next generation. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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**Parashat Nisavim- Exposure to Wrong Behavior-
 Its More Dangerous Than You Think**

In Parashat Nisavim we read Moshe's final exhortation to Beneh Yisrael before his death. In this address to the people, Moshe expresses his concern that some members of the nation may resort to idolatrous worship, and he warns them of the catastrophic consequences of this sin of idolatry.

The question immediately arises as to why such a warning was necessary. The Sages refer to the generation of the wilderness, the generation which was led by Moshe Rabbenu, as "Dor De'a" – the "Generation of Knowledge." This generation was the wisest and most knowledgeable generation since the beginning of time. They grew up eating the Manna, the bread sent down each morning from the heavens. They ate at God's table, so-to-speak, each and every day. They were surrounded by the miraculous clouds of glory; they entire existence was supernatural. What's more, they spent the entire day learning Torah from Moshe Rabbenu. These people were far removed from the vanities of the world. After all, what vanities were accessible to them in the barren, desolate wilderness? They lived an entirely spiritual existence, with God's presence palpably in their midst, drawing wisdom directly from Moshe Rabbenu, the greatest of all prophets.

And yet, just before his death, Moshe warned them...not to worship idols!

Imagine a Rabbi who is invited to speak to the fifty leading Torah sages in the world. They are all assembled in a room, and this Rabbi is asked to speak. He gets up and declares, "My dear colleagues, I want to urge all of you not to worship Buddha!"

During generation of the wilderness, most of Beneh Yisrael were on or near the level of prophets. They were greater than today's leading Sadikim. Why was Moshe concerned that they would worship idols?

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe Nachmanides, Spain, 13th century), in his commentary to this Parasha, explains that Beneh Yisrael were at risk because they were exposed to idolatry. As Moshe Rabbenu says to the people in introducing his warning, "For you know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we journeyed among the gentiles whom you passed through, and you saw their despicable and repugnant things, the wood, stone, silver and gold that is with them..." (29:15-16). During their stay in Egypt, and then during their sojourn in the wilderness which brought them near foreign nations, Beneh Yisrael saw idolatry. They were exposed to it. And exposure to sin is dangerous, far more dangerous than we tend to think. Once we see it, even if it initially seems "despicable and repugnant," as Moshe described, we become desensitized, and we may eventually adopt an accepting attitude toward it.

The Torah in the Book of Bereshit (26:35) tells us of Esav's marriage to idolatrous women, and the anguish this caused his parents, Yishak and Ribka. Some commentators noted that it appears from the Torah's formulation that Esav's marriage caused more grief to Yishak than to Ribka. Ribka had grown up in the home of idolaters, and was therefore accustomed to it, to one extent or another. This exposure to pagan worship as a child made her less sensitive to it, and thus she did not react to her son's marriage with the same revulsion as Yishak did.

Esav got married at the age of forty – over half a century after Ribka left her family and married Yishak. And yet, her exposure to idolatry as a young child still had an impact. Even after many decades of living together with the Sadik, Yishak, the effects of her childhood influences were not completely abolished.

As great as Beneh Yisrael were at the time of Moshe's death, he still had reason to fear. They had seen idol worship with their own eyes, and this could

very easily lead them to accept it and, ultimately, embrace a pagan lifestyle.

Moshe's warning to Beneh Yisrael is thus a stern warning to us about the pernicious effects of exposure to sinful behavior. Many people take a cavalier attitude to the inappropriate material seen on television, assuming, wrongly, that it's just entertainment and will not affect them or their children. Nothing can be further from the truth. Seeing sinful behavior – as is prominently broadcast on the television, internet and other media – can have a disastrous effect upon a person, particularly on children, but even on adults. What we see has an impact, desensitizing us and gradually altering our values and sense of right and wrong.

In particular, I find it baffling that parents give their children computers with internet access in their rooms. What are the parents thinking? It is no secret that the internet contains vast amounts of repulsive material. Do these parents not care what their children are exposed to? How could they be oblivious to the dangers lurking on the internet?

Obviously, we cannot live in a hermetically sealed bubble. We need to be aware of what's going on around us in the world, and we should be knowledgeable of the news. But we must use discretion in determining what we allow ourselves and our children to be exposed to. And, we must ensure to place ourselves under positive influences, joining Torah classes and groups that perform Mivot, so that these influences will neutralize the negative influences that are so pervasive. This will ensure that we and our children will grow and develop spiritually in spite of the sinful influences that abound, and succeed in our efforts to draw ever closer to our Father in heaven.

Rabbi Wein A RETURN TO THE SABBATH

During this period of reflective thought, there is one issue that, in my opinion, stands out. And that is the issue of Sabbath observance within the Jewish world. The rabbis of the Talmud placed the Sabbath at the forefront of all the commandments, and essentially as the lodestone of Jewish identity. Sabbath observance brought with it personal trust and cooperation in all social and religious matters in Jewish life.

During the last two centuries of Jewish history, first in Eastern Europe and later in the United States and the

West, the Sabbath slipped away from the grasp of millions of Jews. There were many reasons for this occurrence – financial, the dislocation of immigration and new countries of residence, ignorance of the Jewish story, the allure of a militantly secular society that apparently was the wave of the future, etc.

But the bottom line was that the absence of the Sabbath led inexorably to assimilation, intermarriage and the loss of Jewish identity, self-worth and family structure. Saturday became Tuesday for most American and Western Jews. Instead of a day of rest, family bonding and physical, mental and spiritual renewal, it became a day of shopping and carpools. The Sabbath disappeared completely from the lives and schedules of most American Jews.

The great synagogues, especially of the non-Orthodox, remained largely empty on the Sabbath as Jews preferred the golf course to prayer and study. Even the desperate measure of officially allowing Jews to drive to the synagogue on the Sabbath failed to save the synagogues and certainly contributed to the death knell of the Sabbath. The disappearance of the Sabbath, as the single most unifying feature of Jewish society, resulted in a fractured, confused and spiritually empty Jewish community.

In Israel, though Sabbath observance is certainly not universal, Sabbath recognition is. Saturday is the official day of rest in the country, most commercial enterprises do not operate on that day, and Friday night family dinners remain a custom embedded in Israeli life. A noticeable return to Jewish observance and values has occurred in Israeli life over the last number of decades. The trend towards tradition is noticeable almost everywhere in the country.

There are various reasons for this change in attitude but one of the main, driving forces for this societal trend is the realization that in order for Israel to survive and continue to prosper it must have a unifying basis to hold it together. Throughout Jewish history, the Sabbath has served as that unifier for Jewish society. As the often-quoted aphorism has it: "More than the Jews kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept and preserved the Jews."

Scattered throughout the world, subject to prejudice and persecution, the universal observance of the Sabbath united Jews the world over and gave them the physical and spiritual strength to survive and prevail. Here in Israel, this realization of the power of the Sabbath and of its value in protecting and promoting a message of positive Judaism and of a better world has sparked a revival. More and more Israelis are keeping the Sabbath and making it an

integral part of general Jewish society here. We still have a long way to go in restoring the Sabbath to its proper place of honor and observance, but the trend to do so is clear and unmistakable.

Last year, under the initiative of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, South African Jewry observed and commemorated a Sabbath that embraced all of South African Jewry. The experience was electrifying. It rekindled a long dormant spark of Jewish memory, tradition and spirituality within tens of thousands of Jews. It gave them a sense of unity and belonging. By restoring the Sabbath in their lives – even just one Sabbath – it served as a recommitment to Jewish identity and community.

This South African Sabbath project is now being replicated in many communities throughout the United States, Western and Eastern Europe and even here in Israel. All Jews should participate in one fashion or another in this noble and historic endeavor. Hosts and guests, Jews from all walks of life and differing value systems, have the opportunity to join together to unite the Jewish people. It is an opportunity to bring much-needed serenity, hope, optimism, a sense of history, tradition and family bonding to our generation – a generation that so needs these blessings on a regular basis.

The Sabbath is recognized in Jewish tradition as being a gift from God Himself, so to speak, to Israel and through Israel to the world at large. Our greatest accomplishment in this coming new year of goodness and blessing will be the strengthening of the Sabbath commitment amongst all Jews.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Consensus vs. Command?

What do you say to your successor? What advice do you give him or her? Vayelech is the place to look for the answer, because it is here that Moses finally handed the reins over to Joshua, and he and God both give him a blessing for the future. But they gave different blessings.

Listen to them and they sound almost the same. Moses says "Be strong and of good courage, for you will come [tavo] with this people into the land" (Deut. 31: 7). God says, "Be strong and of good courage, for you will bring [tavi] the Israelites into the land" (31: 23). Tavo or tavi, "come with" or "bring." The words sound and seem similar. But the difference as understood by the sages was total.

Here is how Rashi puts it:

Moses said to Joshua, "Make sure that the elders of the generation are with you. Always act according to their opinion and advice." However, the Holy One blessed be He said to Joshua, "For you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them" – meaning, "Bring them even against their will. It all depends on you. If necessary, take a stick and beat them over the head. There is only one leader for a generation, not two."

These are the two extremes of leadership: consensus or command. Moses advised Joshua to pursue a policy of consultation and conciliation. What he was saying in effect was, "You don't need to follow the people. You are the leader, not they. But you do need to work with the elders. They too are leaders. They constitute, in effect, your team. They need to feel that they are part of the decision making process. They will not expect you always to agree with them. Often they will not agree with one another. But they do need to feel consulted."

"If they sense that you are not interested in their opinions, if the impression they have of you is of a person determined to do things his way regardless of everyone else because you know better, they will attempt to sabotage you. They will do you harm. They may not succeed. You may survive. But you will be injured. You will limp. Your standing among the people will be diminished. They will say, how can we respect one who is not respected by the elders?"

"I speak from experience. The Korach rebellion was serious. It was not just Korach; it was also the Reubenites, and other leaders from the various tribes. And though the rebellion was cut short in the most dramatic way possible, we were all diminished and nothing was quite the same ever again. So: make sure that the elders of the generation are with you. If they are, you will succeed."

God, according to the sages, took the opposite approach. "The time has come to leave the wilderness, cross the Jordan, conquer the land and build the kind of society that honours the human beings I made in my image instead of enslaving and exploiting them. Don't look for consensus. You will never find it. People's interests are different. Their perspectives are not the same. Politics is an arena of conflict. I did not want it to be that way, but having given humanity the gift of freedom, I cannot take it back and impose my will by force. So you must show the people the way."

"Lead from the front. Be clear. Be consistent. Be strong. The last person who gave the people what they wanted was Aaron and what they wanted was a

golden calf. That was nearly the end of the Jewish people. Consensus, in politics or business or even in pursuit of truth, is not leadership but the abdication of leadership. I chose you to be Moses' successor because I believe in you. Therefore, believe in yourself. Tell the people what they must do, and tell them why."

"Be respectful of them. By all means listen to them. But at the end of the day the responsibility is yours. Leaders lead. They do not follow. And believe me, though they may criticize you now they will eventually admire you. People want their leaders to know the way, go the way and show the way. They want them to be decisive. Always treat people with the utmost courtesy and respect. But if they do not behave toward you as you do toward them, if they oppose and try to frustrate what you are doing, there may be no choice but to take a stick and hit them on the head. There is only one leader in a generation. If everyone is empowered, there is no music, only noise; no achievement, only an endless committee meeting at which everyone speaks and no one listens."

Those were, then and now, the two great options. But notice something odd. The person urging consensus is Moses. But Moses never acted by consensus. This is the man who almost had to drag the people out of Egypt, through the sea, and across a howling desert, the man who did things of his own initiative without even asking God.

This is the man who broke the tablets of stone hewn and engraved by God himself. When did Moses ever lead by consensus? To be sure he had seventy elders, princes of tribes, and a devolved structure of administration with heads of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens, but though they helped him, they did not advise him nor did he seek their advice. What suddenly turned Moses into a peace-nik, a lead-by-consensus man?

That is one problem. The other is the advice given by God himself: lead from the front, even against their will. But that is not how God acted, as understood by the sages. This is what they said on the words immediately prior to the creation of humanity, "Let us make man in our image":

Let us make man: From here we learn the humility of the Holy One, blessed be He. Since man was created in the likeness of the angels, and they would envy him, He consulted them ...

Even though they [the angels] did not assist Him in His creation, and there is an opportunity for the

heretics to rebel (to misconstrue the plural as a basis for their heresies), Scripture did not hesitate to teach proper conduct and the trait of humility, that a great person should consult with and receive permission from a smaller one.

The sages, puzzled by the plural, "Let us make man," interpreted it to mean that God consulted with the angels. Despite the fact that the use of the word "us" was dangerous – it could be read as compromising the pure monotheism of Judaism – nonetheless the principle of consultation is so important that the Torah takes the risk of being open to misinterpretation. God consults, according to the sages. "God does not act tyrannically toward His creatures."

To be sure, the sages said that at Sinai God suspended the mountain above the Israelites and said, "If you say No, this will be your grave." But this is not the plain sense of the verse. To the contrary, before he gave the Torah to Israel he commanded Moses to explain to the people what was being proposed (Ex. 19: 4-6). And it was only when the people – "all the people together" (19: 8) "with one voice" (24: 3) – that the covenant was made. That is the biblical basis for the idea, in the American Declaration of Independence, that governments gain their authority from "the consent of the governed." The very act of giving humans freedom means that God never forces us against our will. As Eisenhower once said, "Hitting people over the head is not leadership: it is assault." So why was God here, as it were, speaking out of character?

The answer, it seems to me, is this: Both God and Moses wanted Joshua to know that true leadership cannot be a one-sided affair, be it the pursuit of consensus or command-and-control. It must be a deft balance of both. They wanted Joshua to hear this in the most striking way, so each said what they were least expected to say.

Moses, whom everyone associated with strong, decisive leadership, in effect told Joshua, "Don't forget to strive for consensus. Your task is not what mine was. I had to take people out of slavery. You have to lead them into a land of freedom. Freedom means taking people seriously. The leadership of a free people involves listening, respecting and striving for consensus wherever possible."

God, who gave humans their freedom and never imposed himself on people against their will, said, "Joshua, I am God; you are not. I have to respect people's freedom. I have to let them go the way they are determined to go, even if it is wrong and self-destructive. But you are a human among humans

and it is your task to show them the way that leads to justice, compassion and the good society. If the people do not agree with you, you have to teach them, persuade them, but ultimately you have to lead them, because if everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes, that is not freedom but chaos."

In short, leadership is not simple. It is complex because it involves people and people are complex. You have to listen, and you have to lead. You have to strive for consensus but ultimately, if there is none, you must take the risk of deciding. Had they waited for consensus Lincoln would never have ended slavery, Roosevelt and Churchill would never have led the free world to victory, and David ben Gurion would never have proclaimed the State of Israel.

It is not the job of leaders to give people what they want. It is the job of leaders to teach people what they ought to want. But at the same time they must involve people in the decision-making process. Key figures and constituencies must feel that they were consulted. Collaborative, consultative, listening leadership is essential in a free society. Otherwise, there is autocracy tempered by assassination.

Leaders must be teachers but also learners. They must be visionaries and yet have time for the details. They must push people but never too far, too fast, or they will fail. They must speak to the better angels of our nature, teaching us to love not hate, forgive not seek revenge. They must always prefer the peaceful solution to the one that involves taking a stick and hitting people on the head, even though they are prepared to do so if there is no alternative. Leaders must be capable of more than one style of leadership. Otherwise, as Abraham Maslow said, "Those who only have a hammer treat every problem as if it were a nail."

Considering the effort, energy, stress and pain, why anyone should seek to be a leader would remain a mystery, were it not for this luminous truth: that there is no better way to flood life with meaning than to have lifted others and helped them to a greatness they never knew they had; to have together with others righted some of the wrongs of this injured earth and its creatures; to have acted rather than waited for others to act, and to have brought others with you, for the greatest leader on earth or in heaven cannot lead alone.

These are what make leadership the greatest privilege by which any of us can be blessed. As Moses said to Joshua, "Happy are you to have merited leading the children of God." The crown of leadership is invisible yet you know who is wearing it

and who not. It is there, in front of you, waiting for you to put it on. Wear it with pride and may all you do be blessed.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

Preparing For Yom Hadeen/Rosh Hashana

The main Avoda of the Judgement Day is focusing on "Hashem Melech", The King. That Hashem created the universe & He runs it all. He is the only one that has any power & only He can do anything for us.

EMUNAH is what we are working on gaining clarity for Rosh Hashana.

Rambam: "I am Hashem your G-d"(10 Commandments"), this is the Mitzvah to gain Awareness & Belief in Hashem.

This is most fundamental & supersedes even admitting our sins (which we don't do today) in front of the Heavenly court.

The great Purpose in life, to constantly improve, is something that Hashem is urging us and weighing.

"Hashem imparts wisdom to the wise person" (not the jester) because He sees that this wise person will make the best use of this gift. So, we want to put ourselves in this position for the Great Day of Judgment, Yom Hadeen.

"Asher Bara Elokim Laasot", "...That Hashem created to do".

The words 'to do' seem superfluous since it was already stated that "Hashem rested from all of the work that He did".

R' Miller explains that the words "to do" come to teach us the great purpose of life, to be a doer, to make something out of ourselves through constant improvement.

Hashem, our Father, Avinu Malkenu, is waiting on Rosh Hashana to hear our commitment to improve. We can say, "Hashem, we are going to utilize the coming year to love & fear Hashem.

To do everything to serve Hashem.
I am going to make something out of myself".

When Hashem hears our commitment for the New Year, He says: "My child, I see that you are committing to improvement, I commit to giving you another year of life and blessing".

"Hashem imparts wisdom to the wise".

Step 1 to Teshuvah: Realizing how much Hashem has done for you.

Step 2: Thanking Him

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