

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE**HAAZINU/SUCCOT**

Haftarah: Shemuel II 22:1-51
SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2015 13 TISHREI 5776

Lulav and Etrog will be left for those who purchased on Sunday afternoon
Those who have not paid should please do so before they take possession

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Phillip Deutsch

Minha & Arbit 6:29 PM -Candle Lighting 6:29 PM
Going Forward Mincha will be at candle lighting on Friday evenings
Friends – We need assistance and a commitment for Friday evenings

Shabbat

Class with Rav Aharon 8:00 AM – Latest Shema 9:05
Shahrit 8:30 AM, Torah 9:45 and Musaf at 10:30

Kiddush this Shabbat sponsored by the Congregation
In Honor of Dr. David Bellehsen
And in appreciation of him leading us for 40 days of Selichot

Kiddush First Day Sukkot by the Sutton Family in memory of Leon's mother - Adele bat Avraham.
Second Day Sukkot by Raphael Yadgarov Family
Please assist by sponsoring a Kiddush
No other Kiddushim are sponsored going forward

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer
Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

Children's program at Bach at 5:00PM –
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 5:00

Class with Rav Aharon at 5:15PM
Minha 5:45 PM - Seudat Shelishit 6:15 PM in memory of David ben Sarina
Rabbi David is scheduled to give the class
Birkat HaMazon 7:10 PM Arbit 7:15 PM – Shabbat Ends at 7:28

SUNDAY MORNING Shaharit at 8AM
Candle Lighting: 6:26PM
Mincha – 6:25

Monday morning 8:00 AM class with Rav Aharon, 8:30 Shaharit
Mincha 6:15PM followed by Arbit
Candles if lit, after 7:25

Tuesday morning 8:00 AM class with Rav Aharon, 8:30 Shaharit
Mincha 6:15 PM followed by Arbit
Yom Tov Ends at 7:22

Wednesday, Thursday and Fridat – 6:55AM Hol Hamoed
We do not wear Tefilin

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 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us!
 212-289-2100 – Mincha– The most important
 tefilah of the day –Give us 11 minutes and we'll
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Editors Notes

Yesterday morning we were discussing the conclusion of this week's portion with Hashem telling Moshe to go up to Har Nebo to see the land of Israel and that Moses will die on this mountain. The rabbis tell us that when Moshe saw his brother Aaron die, he longed for his own death to be like Aaron's. Most explain that when Aaron died, he died by a Heavenly Kiss where his soul was drawn by the Shechina. Unlike almost everyone else in history, death was not preceded by illness. We know that Moses at his final day was still able to leap tall buildings in a single bound and could see perfectly without the help of glasses or Lasik surgery.

I suggested that perhaps there was something else that Moses longed for. When Aaron prepared to die, his son stood before him and Aaron saw the priestly mantle pass from father to son. What an amazing feeling for a father to see his son following in his footsteps. We know that Moses begged Hashem that his own sons might take the leadership position from him. And although Moses' student Yehoshua, was like a son to Moses, he still wasn't his child.

The question was raised: So what happened to Moshe's children? And I explained, but rather than type from scratch, let me post the words of Rabbi Yaacov Haber:

There is an interesting story told in the Book of Judges, Chapter 17. Someone by the name of Michiyahu founded an idolatrous cult. He had an idol and built a temple for this purpose. He sought someone with leadership qualities, charisma and spirituality to lead his group. After a long search he met Yehonatan ben Gershon ben Menashe, of the House of Levi. Michiyahu offered him the job of High Priest of his new religion. Yehonatan agreed. Who was Yehonatan ben Gershon ben Menashe of the House of Levi? His grandfather could not have been Menashe, the well-known villain, for he had not been born yet.

According to the Gemara (Bava Batra 109) "Menashe" is really a disguised form of "Moshe". Yehonatan was the grandson of Moshe Rabeinu!

How is it possible. Rabbi Haber brings the answer based on the Gemarah. But as I was explaining this, a thought struck me.

We see in life sometimes that no matter what a parent does in trying to raise their child in the right way, no matter the effort, no matter the books, things don't always work out that way. We see parents who mourn after losing a child who goes off the path or a child he does worse. Parents often blame themselves and with each passing day their grief and guilt grows. But sometimes they did everything right. Perhaps the fact that Moses himself, the greatest of prophets, the holiest of men, if he too could have children who go off the path than maybe there are times when there is nothing one can do. Rabbi Abittan would say that this is why we must pray; pray that G-d will guide us and pray that He will lead our children to the proper path. We all find ourselves in situations where we try to comfort a parent, keep this in mind.

Rabbi haber continues: What did Moshe do to deserve such a grandson? The Midrash explains that after working as a shepherd for Yitro, the high priest of Midian, Moshe sought his permission to marry his daughter Tzipora. Yitro agreed, with the stipulation that Moshe agree that their firstborn son would be dedicated to serve as a high priest in the Midianite religion. Yitro wanted to make sure he would have a successor. He told Moshe that the rest of his children, Moshe could bring up as he saw fit, but the firstborn he wanted for himself.

Moshe agreed! He calculated that by the time his firstborn son would be old enough to serve as a priest, he (Moshe) would have converted Yitro to Judaism, and Yitro would no longer hold him to his undertaking. He rationalized that if Tzipora were to marry someone else, then not just Gershon, but all of Tziporah's children, would become pagans. He justified his action on the grounds that Tzipora was his, and he didn't have the right to push her away.

Moshe's promise haunted him for years. He named his first born Gershon because, as he put it, "I was a stranger in a strange land." I wasn't my own man. I couldn't make my own decisions; I was a guest – a stranger. He didn't circumcise Gershon because that would have been a violation of his agreement with Yitro. Even when an angel almost killed Moshe, his wife Tzipora, who never promised anything, was the one who actually circumcised Gershon.

As it turned out, Moshe's calculations proved correct, so that his eldest son Gershon was indeed saved from idol-worship. But somehow in heaven the story did not end there. Moshe had made a promise, and

promises have their long term effects. Moshe's son was spared, but later, down the line, his grandson became a priest.

What exactly was Moshe's sin here? As Shakespeare writes, "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose." From our Midrash we learn that even the greatest prophet of all times, the supreme tzadik, the humblest of all men, can come to terms with idolatry for his purpose!

The end does not justify the means. G-d is more concerned with what we do than what will eventually come out of our deeds. Our world is limited to the decisions we make and the actions we take. What will happen in the end is G-d's business. The first step towards corruption is when the end is used to justify the means. When one rationalizes one's decisions for the sake of a greater good, truth becomes unimportant and integrity vanishes.

Why Republican presidential candidates support Israel - A few points Ann Coulter might want to consider By Clifford D. May

Dear Ann,

So last week during the GOP debate, hundreds of thousands of people read your tweets lambasting four of the candidates – Gov. Chris Christie, former Gov. Mike Huckabee and Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz -- for expressing their strong support for Israel. Based not just on what you said but also on how you said it (e.g. "How many BLANK Jews do these people think there are in the United States?") quite a few of those readers have now concluded that you're anti-Semitic.

Let me sum up, in one paragraph, what I think I know about anti-Semitism: It's as old as the Judean Hills. It morphs but never dies. It's a derangement syndrome. It can afflict those on either side of the political spectrum. Those afflicted cannot be reasoned out of it because they weren't reasoned into it.

Look, I'm not jumping to the conclusion that any of this applies to you. I get that you're as much an entertainer as a pundit and that being provocative is part of your shtick. That said, would you ever tweet about "BLANK blacks" or "BLANK Hispanics"?

OK, let's put all that aside and focus on what you now say you intended: to charge that the candidates were declaring their unshakeable support for Israel only to pander to American Jews. Will you bear with me while I raise a few points that challenge your conclusion?

"No better friend, no worse enemy" – that ancient motto, I would argue, describes how the world should regard the United States. But President Obama has spent years attempting to conciliate America's enemies while demonstrating disdain for America's allies. Remember the bust of Churchill he removed from the White House? Remember the missile shield for Poland and the Czech Republic he canceled? The Kurds have been asking for weapons as good as those being used by their enemies (who also are our enemies) but Mr. Obama has refused.

And, most recently and significantly, he concluded a deal that will facilitate the flow of billions of dollars and sophisticated arms to the Islamic Republic of Iran -- a terrorist-sponsoring regime dedicated to a global revolution against American power, a regime responsible for killing and maiming thousands of Americans over the past 36 years, a regime that controls four Arab capitals and has vowed to annihilate Israel.

Mr. Obama claims his deal will block Iran's path to nuclear weapons. He seems to believe it will inspire a more moderate mood in Tehran. Polls show most Americans are unconvinced as is a majority in both houses of Congress.

Perhaps you figure Iran's rulers want nukes only to use against Israel and, unfortunate as that would be, it's an Israeli problem, not an American problem. What, then, do you make of their efforts to build ICBMs? They don't need ICBMs to mass-murder Israelis. They need ICBMs to deliver nukes to targets on other continents. Like the one you and I live on.

Those who call themselves "jihadis" – Shia and Sunni alike – are right about one thing: Israel is the Middle East's lone outpost of Judeo-Christian values. Israelis believe in democracy, freedom, pluralism, tolerance, human rights and minority rights. About 17% of Israel's citizens are Muslims. They enjoy rights not available to Muslims in any Muslim-majority lands.

And at a time when ancient Christian communities are being slaughtered in – and eradicated from – many of those Muslim lands, Christians in the Jewish state are safe and free. Their numbers are growing. Their holy places are protected. This would not be the case were the jihadis to drive Israel's "f---ing Jews" into the sea. You get that, don't you? When jihadis vow to defeat "Crusaders and Zionists," it is Christians and Jews they are talking about. They refer to America as the "Great Satan" and Israel as the "Little Satan." Their struggle is both ideological and kinetic and it is the most significant of this

century. Israelis are on the front lines. Front-line troops deserve support, don't you think?

Years ago, Secretary of State Alexander Haig put it slightly differently. He called Israel "the largest American aircraft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk, does not carry even one American soldier, and is located in a critical region for American national security." In partnership with Americans, Israelis are doing cutting-edge work in such critical areas as missile defense, cyber warfare, port and airport security and intelligence.

Israelis have never asked American soldiers to defend them -- they would not want that. They would, however, like Americans to support their right to defend themselves. Most Americans do. I assume you do, too.

I'm running out of space so here's my last point for today: George Gilder, as I hope you'll agree, is one of contemporary America's most brilliant conservative minds. (And, as you probably know, he doesn't happen to be Jewish.) A few years back he wrote a book called "The Israel Test." His straightforward conclusion: Israel is "the most vulnerable source of Western power and intelligence."

More to the point, Israel is "not only the canary in the coal mine — it is also a crucial part of the mine." If Americans will not defend Israel, they will "prove unable to defend anything else. The Israel test is finally our own test of survival as a free nation."

I think most of the candidates on the stage last week understand how Mr. Gilder reached that conclusion. You clearly don't but you're smart enough to follow Mr. Gilder's reasoning. Unless this is not about reason. Unless this is about something else. In which case, no words or argumentation will convince you.

Jewish Leaders Demand Explanation From New York Times After Publication of Chart Listing Jews in Congress Who Oppose Nuclear Deal

Leading Jewish organizations slammed The New York Times on Thursday for publishing an infographic listing Jewish Congressional Democrats who oppose the Iran nuclear deal.

The chart listed anti-deal Democrats in the House and Senate in columns, one of which was headed "Jewish?" Another showed the lawmakers' "District and estimated Jewish population."

The text accompanying the graphic pointed out that, "Though more Jewish members of Congress support

the deal than oppose it, the Democrats against the deal are more likely to be Jewish or represent Jewish constituencies."

Responding to the publication, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Jewish human rights group, the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), described the chart as "a grotesque insult to the intelligence of those voting on the deal," and warned against the connotations its publication evokes.

Cooper told The Algemeiner that the point The New York Times appeared to be trying to make is "flawed, mistaken and inappropriate."

He said the piece suggests the "core opposition" to the nuclear deal is only from Jews, and that the only possible explanation as to why lawmakers would vote against it is "because of the Jewish factor."

"That is wrong," he said. "The idea of reducing this whole issue to the ethnicity and religion of an American voter is to essentially reduce the entire question about the nuclear deal. It beclouds the issue."

Cooper said it would be "appropriate" for The New York Times to "explain themselves."

"What exactly is the point behind this article?" he asked, and wondered whether such categorization is applied by the paper to other key issues.

"Are we going to see every immigration bill or debate in the U.S. Congress and Capitol Hill analyzed and broken down with graphs by The New York Times based on the Latino population of each district? Is this the new math?"

Jonathan Greenblatt, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, called the chart "offensive," and said he would like to see The New York Times print an "admission of error." He said the graph "reinforces stereotypes about American Jews and dual loyalty" and "distracts from real issues."

Social media has also been abuzz with criticism of the chart. Jeffrey Goldberg, national correspondent for The Atlantic, poked fun at the article on Twitter, saying, "[It] would be helpful if the Times would also tell us just how Jewish each Jewish member of Congress is."

Haaretz correspondent Allison Kaplan Sommer said that only The New York Times would "have the chutzpah to make a Jewcentric chart like this." Asserting that any other media outlet would fear

being accused of antisemitism for publishing such a graph, she concluded, "I confess ... it creeps me out a bit."

Jewish blogger Pop Chassid said the chart conjured up images of the persecution of Jews. "The New York Times just counted which Jews voted against the Iran deal... We Jews remember when we've been counted in history, and we know that it never ends well," he posted on Facebook.

Following the backlash, The New York Times quickly modified its original post — by removing the "Jew" column from its chart of politicians opposing the Iran deal — but did not issue a correction.

On Thursday afternoon, New York Times deputy Washington editor Jonathan Weisman claimed responsibility on Twitter for the article, but refused to apologize for the piece. He also claimed to be shocked by the response it has received.

"I take responsibility, wanted to examine what was motivating few Dems opposed to the deal. I am not self-hating Jew," said Weisman, who is Jewish. "It is an informative graphic & I'm stunned by response. Chill out, people. You've never used a yellow highlighter?"

Poll: Majority of Democrats Think Israel Plays Negative Role in the Middle East
by Jacob Kornbluh

The sharp divide between Democrats and Republicans, as evident by the debate in Congress over the Iran nuclear deal, has been signified by an across the board view of Israel's role in the Middle East and over the enforcement of the Iran deal, according to a Chicago Council on Global Affairs poll released Tuesday.

According to the poll, 74 percent of Democrats, compared to only 46% of Republicans, support the deal. Should Iran violate the terms of the deal, a majority of Republicans (53%) favor sending U.S. troops to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities, while a similar majority of Democrats oppose a 'boots on the ground' military operation.

However, Democrats are more in favor of conducting cyber attacks and air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, although support for military strikes is supported by 66% of Republicans. Similarly, Independents who lean Republican are more likely to support sending US troops to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities; pure and Democratic-leaning Independents more closely

resemble Democrats' view.

"The intense debate over the Iran nuclear agreement has shown that Americans continue to care deeply about foreign affairs but are divided over whether military or diplomatic tools are the best source of U.S. power and influence," Ivo Daalder, president of the Chicago Council, said in a statement.

Republicans and Democrats also differ on support for establishing "an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip." A super majority of Democrats (61%) support an independent Palestinian state while 60 percent of Republicans are opposed. And while both Democrats and Republicans continue to express favorable views of Israel, only 40% of Democrats see Israel's role in the region as positive, compared to 6 in 10 Republicans.

A majority of Democrats say Israel plays a negative role in the Middle East, with strong Democrats (60% vs. 38%) more critical than those who identify as weak Democrats (47% vs. 44%).

Nonetheless, if Israel were attacked by its neighbors, a majority of Americans (53%) would support using US troops to defend Israel. Support for defending Israel crosses party lines, with 49% of Democrats, 46% of Independents and 67% of Republicans supporting the deployments of US troops for this purpose – currently at the highest level recorded since 2010.

"The challenge for all presidential candidates—Republican and Democratic alike—is to balance an appeal to the base with an appeal to the median voter. That challenge is all the greater in 2015 given the deep divisions within the electorate on many of the top foreign policy issues facing America today," the pollsters noted.

Another poll released Wednesday showed that when Americans are aware of the details as to how the monitoring and implementation process will be conducted, support for the deal increased by 6 percentage points.

The ABC News/Washington Times poll asked simply about the deal – 45 percent support the deal with 44 percent opposing it- and another question with information provided to clarify the details of the agreement. In that case, support jumped to 51 percent and opposition fell to 41 percent.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading Ha'azinu - The prophetic song of Ha'azinu

- 1- Moshe begins the song of Ha'azinu calling the heavens and earth as witnesses that Benei Israel is being warned with this song of what will happen if they sin.
- 2- Remember the events of the past (how Hashem punished the bad, and how Hashem took care of us)
- 3- Hashem will give us goodness and we will come to rebel against Hashem
- 4- Hashem will punish us
- 5- Hashem will punish us but at the end he will have mercy
- 6- And Hashem will punish the goyim that attacked us
- 7- Moshe concludes the song of Ha'azinu and tells it to Benei Israel. Hashem tells Moshe to go up to Har Nebo to see the land of Israel and that he will die on this mountain.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

“Who, Hashem, is like You, Who pardons (literally “lifts”) iniquity...He will suppress our iniquities.” (Michah 7:18-20)

When we observed the custom of Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah, we recited the pasuk “ Mi Kel Kamocha” listing Hashem’s 13 attributes of mercy. One is “Nosse Avon”, Hashem lifts and carries our sins. Another part says the opposite, “yichbosh avonotenu”, Hashem pushes down our sins. Rabbi M. Mizrahi asks, which way is it? Does Hashem lift or push down our sins?

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev explains that these two statements are not contradictory, they are two stages in our teshubah, and Hashem responds to them. During Elul and the Ten Days of Teshubah, we examined our past deeds and made improvements, and prayed to Hashem to accept our efforts favorably. Hashem placed our deeds on the scale. Most times our sins outweigh our merits, but in His mercy, Hashem practiced his attribute of “nosse avon.” He buoyed up our sins, thus raising that side of the scale so that the other, the side of merit, turned out to be heavier. The verdict – life!

But it doesn’t end there. Immediately after Yom Kippur, we will turn to erecting our succah and buying the lulab and etrog. We will also provide for those less prosperous than us as well. Our hearts will, we hope, swell with love for Hashem in gratitude for His mercy in forgiving us, judging us for a good year and giving us this joyous holiday season.

Once we have resolved to serve Hashem through love of Him instead of fear, our former sins

are now transformed into merits, as our Sages teach us. Now Hashem calls our former verdict a mistrial! He orders a new accounting and a new weighing in. This time Hashem moves our former sins, which have now changed into merits, over to the other side of the scale. Now He practices His merit of “yichbosh avonotenu”. He pushes them down, thus loading the side of merit with all those former sins. Hashem’s love and mercy is truly amazing. Rabbi Reuven Semah

The Midrash compares the Jews when they wave the lulab, to someone who emerges victorious from a courthouse and waves his hands up in triumph. We see from here that by passing our judgment on Kippur, we are confident of victory and therefore we wave the lulab and other species on the Succot holiday.

We should take that as a symbol that we ought to be proud of our misvot and let them be seen by others. Some of us are embarrassed by our customs and hold the lulab and the other species in an inconspicuous manner so as not to be seen with them. We see from here that this should make us hold them upright in a way that shows we are proud of our misvot. Indeed, the lulab is like the spine of a person which symbolizes the backbone of a Jew, which should be straight and tall. We must always hold ourselves straight and tall and realize that our misvot are what kept us around for all these years. They should make us proud to be a Jew and we should feel that confidence and security in these beautiful symbols. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

PRAY FOR RAIN

“May my teaching drop like rain, may my utterance flow like the dew” (Debarim 32:2)

The Alshich explains this pasuk as a prayer. Moshe asks that the effect of his words shall resemble that produced by rain and dew, in that they lead to the growth of crops. Similarly, may his words have a positive effect in developing the people to bring them closer to Hashem. The Chezkuni explains that the effects of rain are not immediately noticeable. It is only after some time has elapsed and grass begins to sprout, flowers bloom and fruits grow that its worth is appreciated. Similarly, a man cannot be impatient in the study of Torah. He should not despair when he does not realize initial success in his studies. Through patience, resolve and continued study not only will he have scholastic success, but ultimately his character and personality will be molded into that of a true ben-Torah.

There is yet another interpretation to this analogy. Rain has the natural power to spur growth only after the necessary soil preparations have been performed. Plowing, seeding and fertilizing are

necessary prerequisites for rain to achieve successful results. Similarly, Torah study success can only be realized after a person has thoroughly geared himself for it. Unless one invests time and effort to ready himself for its effects, it will be similar to rain that falls on barren unseeded earth; it will be for naught. (Peninim on the Torah)

I APPRECIATE IT

“Is this how you repay Hashem, O vile and unwise nation” (Debarim 32:6)

The Ramban in Parashat Kedoshim (19:2) defines the word *kšc²b* (nabal) as referring to a group or individual whose behavior is vile and shameful. Here, both Rashi and the Ramban understand this vile behavior as a lack of gratitude towards Hashem. Rabenu Yonah in his commentary on Abot (1:3) writes that *hakarat hatob* is basic to proper service of Hashem. One should serve Hashem not in order to receive compensation, but rather because of the countless kindnesses which He has bestowed upon him, and because of the greatness of the Master who is fit to be served this way.

Three times daily in the Amidah we express a general thanks to Hashem, “We shall thank You ... for our lives which are committed to Your power, and for our souls which are entrusted to You, for Your miracles that are with us every day, and for Your wonders and favors of every season, evening, morning and afternoon.”

Often, we take these precious gifts of good health and life for granted, while bemoaning things that are trivial in comparison. For this and other reasons it is proper to visit the sick from time to time. Aside from fulfilling the *misvah* of visiting the sick, one comes in contact with people who only yesterday were healthy and are today ill. This serves as a reminder to be grateful to Hashem for the gifts of good health and life.

There are many instances and situations when gratitude to our parents and fellow man are required. This noble attribute of *hakarat hatob* serves as the primary means for a complete return to Hashem. This trait can inspire us to please Hashem by dedicating our life and our G-d-given resources to His service, and to providing for His Torah's dissemination. (Peninim on the Torah)

A GRAVE MATTER

“[Hashem] buried [Moshe] in the valley, in the land of Moab, opposite bet Peor and no one knows his burial place to this day” (Debarim 34:6)

The Torah is very precise about the location where Moshe was buried. How is it possible that “no one knows his burial place to this day”?

A small Jewish community in Poland was once looking for a rabbi. Upon hearing the fame of a young rabbi who was recently ordained with honors at a prominent yeshivah, they sent a delegation to visit him and invite him to become the Rabbi of their community. They were unable to offer him much financial inducement, and knowing that the community was small and that there were very few scholars learned in the Torah with whom he could associate, he declined the offer.

When the delegation sensed its failure to realize its mission, one of the men spoke up and said, “Do you know that some of the most prominent Torah luminaries, such as the Rambam, Rashi and the Rema are buried in our community?” The Rabbi understood the implication. If he accepted the position he would be successor to a whole galaxy of distinguished Rabbis. Furthermore, after he had lived his span of life on this earth, his earthly remains would come to repose in the cemetery of the community alongside his distinguished predecessors.

The naïve, unsuspecting Rabbi was won over and he accepted the position. It was not long after coming to the community that the rabbi realized he had made a mistake. His salary was nothing to boast of and not having any learned friends in the community, he felt rather lonely. One day, when he was especially lonesome, he decided that he would go and visit the cemetery and see for himself who his great predecessors were. He walked through the length and breadth of the cemetery examining carefully each monument and its inscription, but he found no names that he recognized.

He returned home and sent for the men of the delegation who had visited him in the first place. When these men arrived he said to them, “Gentlemen, you will recall that you told me that you have some of the most prominent and distinguished Rabbis interred in your city. Please tell me who are these Rabbis, these prominent scholars?”

The spokesman for the delegation answered, “Why, Rabbi, in our community you will find Rashi buried. You will also find the Rambam and the Rema interred here.”

At this point the Rabbi became infuriated. “How dare you say these things to me! The Rambam is buried in Tiberias, Rashi is buried in France and the Rema's grave is in Krakow.”

The spokesman answered, “Rabbi, do not get angry with us, for we have spoken the truth. You can go to Tiberias and visit their yeshivahs and shuls and you will see that the Rambam still lives there. He is discussed and his words are studied with the greatest respect. You can go through the Jewish academies of France and you will see that Rashi lives there. Young and old are engaged in studying

his words. He is a part of the life of everyone who learns the Humash and the Gemara. You can go to Krakow and you will see that the Rema, the great Rabbi Moshe Isserles, still lives there. The people live by the rulings he set forth in the Shulhan Aruch.

“However, in our community all these great and prominent leaders of the Jewish people are dead and buried. You will not find anyone here, among our young and old, repeating words of the Rambam or of Rashi or of the Rema. It is true, Rabbi, that all these great masters of Jewish law are ‘buried’ here in this community.”

The Torah is telling us that Moshe is buried in the valley, in a place where Torah light does not penetrate, and where Torah enlightenment is altogether absent. He is buried in the land of Moab, among primitive and uncivilized people. He is buried opposite Bet Peor – idol worshippers may not have heard of Moshe. However, the Torah tells us, in the Jewish community where children go to yeshivah and elders study the Torah, no one knows his burial place to this day. Although Moshe physically died, he still lives on and will continue to live as long as the Torah is studied. (Vedibarta Bam)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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MishnaBerura.com, LearnTorah.com
The History of Sukkot**

The Zohar, in a remarkable passage (Raya Mehemna, Parashat Emor), traces the history of the holiday of Sukkot back to the earliest stages of our nation’s development – to the time of Yaakov and Esav.

The story of Sukkot, the Zohar explains, begins at the time when Yishak informed Esav of his desire to confer upon him his special blessing. Yishak instructed Esav to hunt an animal and bring him delicacies, at which point he would bless him. The Zohar comments that on Rosh Hashanah, the divine attribute of judgment (“Din”), which is symbolized by Yishak, instructs “Esav” – the Satan, who prosecutes against us – to find him “delicacies,” the sins of the Jewish People. But after Esav goes out to “hunt” for these “delicacies,” Ribka, who represents the Shechina, speaks to Yaakov – the Jewish Nation – and tells him he needs to come before Yishak first before Esav arrives with the report of all our sins. Yaakov must go and prepare his own “delicacies” – prayers and Misvot – in order to “sweeten” the judgment that would otherwise be issued against him. And so Yaakov comes before Yishak with his delicacies, and Yishak observes, “Ha’kol Kol Yaakov” – “The voice is the voice of Yaakov!” This refers to the sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah,

whereby we “sweeten” the harsh judgment by infusing it with kindness and compassion.

The Torah goes on to describe how Esav was enraged by having lost the blessings, and vows revenge. After Rosh Hashanah, the Satan, seeing that he was silenced, vows revenge and plots evil against the Jewish People. And so later, as the Torah relates in Parashat Vayishlah, Esav comes to kill Yaakov together with four hundred men. He comes armed with all of the Jews’ sins, ready to prosecute against us. But Yaakov manages to appease Esav by sending him a gift – symbolizing the Se’ir La’azazel, the goat which is offered on Yom Kippur and sent off a mountain. The Zohar views this offering as a gift of appeasement which we give to Esav, the Satan, so he will desist from prosecuting against us. After Yom Kippur, at the conclusion of this tense confrontation with the Satan, “Esav turned around and went along his way to Se’ir.” The Satan once and for all leaves us alone and no longer seeks to cause us harm. The very next verse tells, “Yaakov journeyed to Sukkot...and he constructed Sukkot for his cattle...” Once the Satan leaves, Hashem invites us into the Sukka with Him as a groom takes his bride into his private room.

This is the early history of Sukkot, and this is the reason why Sukkot is “Zeman Simhatenu” – the special holiday of joy. After the tense, difficult period of the Yamim Nora’im, when we were threatened by the Satan who sought to prosecute against us on the basis of the sins we’ve committed, Hashem now wants to celebrate our close relationship with Him. On Sukkot we celebrate the Satan’s defeat, that despite the mistakes we have made, we are still Hashem’s special nation, and He wants us to return to Him and spend this week together with Him in the Sukka, enjoying the unparalleled joy of being in His presence.

Rabbi Wein

Judaism views life itself as the ultimate gift granted to us by Heaven. As such, it takes the highest prominence and priority. However, most humans, when not in situations of danger and emergency, hardly view their lives in such a perspective. Instead of seeing it as a gift, most humans simply see it as a given state of existence to which they are somehow entitled. Because of this view, life itself loses some of its meaning, even to the extent of murder and suicide.

A precious gift is always treasured by the one who receives it. It is not only the value of the item itself that is involved but, even more importantly, it is the

relationship between the one who gave the gift and the recipient. Seeing one's life as a gift from Heaven automatically gives one a connection with the Creator and with eternity. That is what the rabbis of the Talmud meant when they said that rather than complaining about life's vicissitudes one should simply be grateful for the gift of life itself.

During this holy day season through which we are passing, our prayers constantly reemphasize this gift of life. It is axiomatic that without life all of the other blessings are nonexistent. The constant repetition of prayers for life is meant to impress upon us the transient nature of this gift and realization that it is not something that we are automatically entitled to own and have.

The great day of Yom Kippur is also one of the ultimate gifts that Heaven has bestowed upon the Jewish people. We all yearn at different times in our lives to somehow wipe the slate clean, shutdown the past and its consequences, and to somehow start again fresh and anew. For most of our experiences in life, at least in the physical world in which we are engaged, this is a practical impossibility.

We live with our past decisions, no matter whether they were fortuitous or ill advised. However, in spiritual matters regarding our soul, we are granted this great gift of a new start. And this is not just a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity but we are given this chance for renewal on an annual basis, on this holy day of Yom Kippur.

But since our relations with fellow human beings are always measured in the real and physical world, the gift of renewal of Yom Kippur cannot really affect those relationships. Only by personal actions can fences be mended and past hurts and slights be softened and soothed. But God's gift of forgiveness and the relief from the awkwardness and embarrassment of past behavior extends to our spiritual relationship and encounter with Heaven itself. Human relationships are important and should be treasured, but how much more so should be our relationship with our Creator, and with all that this entails. After the gift of life itself, Yom Kippur is the greatest treasure one can receive.

Oftentimes, especially when we are children, we are more interested with the wrappings and the box that the gift came in than we are in appreciating the gift itself. I remember vividly purchasing what I thought to be a most educational and skill-oriented toy for my two-year-old grandchild. When I proudly and graciously delivered the toy to the child I noticed that

the he was more interested in and played with the box rather than with the toy.

To a certain extent we are all children playing with that box. We discuss how long the services took on Yom Kippur, whether the break was sufficiently long or short; whether the Cantor was on tune or not and how much rest we were able to get in during the Rabbi's sermon. But none of this is the toy itself – the treasure of Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur should provide us with the ability to maintain a conversation with Heaven and the eternal. That gift should not be easily squandered or neglected. Yom Kippur may truly erase past sins, mistakes and transgressions. But it can only do so if we wish that those past errors no longer constitute part of our persona and our attitude towards life. I believe that this can only be accomplished if we view the holy day of Yom Kippur as a gift to us and not just as a day of fasting and physical abstention.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Arc of the Moral Universe

In majestic language, Moses breaks into song, investing his final testament to the Israelites with all the power and passion at his command. He begins dramatically but gently, calling heaven and earth to witness what he is about to say, sounding ironically very much like "The quality of mercy is not strained", Portia's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*.

*Listen, you heavens, and I will speak;
Hear, you earth, the words of my mouth.
Let my teaching fall like rain
and my words descend like dew,
like showers on new grass,
like abundant rain on tender plants. (Deut. 32:1-2)*

But this is a mere prelude to the core message Moses wants to convey. It is the idea known as *tzidduk ha-din*, vindicating God's justice. The way Moses puts it is this:

*He is the Rock, His works are perfect,
And all His ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
Upright and just is He. (Deut. 32:4)*

This is a doctrine fundamental to Judaism and its understanding of evil and suffering in the world – a difficult but necessary doctrine. God is just. Why then do bad things happen?

*Is He corrupt? No – the defect is in His children,
a crooked and perverse generation. (Deut. 32:5)*

God requites good with good, evil with evil. When bad things happen to us it is because we have been guilty of doing bad things ourselves. The fault lies not in our stars but ourselves.

Moving into the prophetic mode, Moses foresees what he has already predicted, even before they have crossed the Jordan and entered the land. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy he has been warning of the danger that in their land, once the hardships of the desert and the struggles of battle have been forgotten, the people will become comfortable and complacent. They will attribute their achievements to themselves and they will drift from their faith. When this happens they will bring disaster on themselves:

*Jeshurun grew fat and kicked –
You became fat, thick, gross –
They abandoned the God who made them
and scorned the Rock their Savior ...
You deserted the Rock, who fathered you;
And forgot the God who gave you birth. (Deut. 32:
15-18)*

This, the first use of the word Yeshurun in the Torah – from the root Yashar, upright – is deliberately ironic. Israel once knew what it was to be upright, but it will be led astray by a combination of affluence, security and assimilation to the ways of its neighbours. It will betray the terms of the covenant, and when that happens it will find that God is no longer with it. It will discover that history is a ravaging wolf. Separated from the source of its strength, it will be overpowered by its enemies. All that the nation once enjoyed will be lost. It is a stark and terrifying message.

Yet Moses is here bringing the Torah to a close with a theme that has been there from the beginning. God, creator of the universe, made a world that is fundamentally good: the word that echoes seven times in the first chapter of Genesis. It is humans, granted freewill as God's image and likeness, who introduce evil into the world, and then suffer its consequences. Hence Moses' insistence that when trouble and tragedy appear, we should search for the cause within ourselves, and not blame God. God is upright and just. The defect is in us, His children.

This is perhaps the most difficult idea in the whole of Judaism. It is open to the simplest of objections, one that has sounded in almost every generation. If God is just, why do bad things happen to good people? This is the question asked not by skeptics, doubters, but by the very heroes of faith. We hear it in Abraham's plea, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not

do justice?" We hear it in Moses' challenge, "Why have you done evil to this people?" It sounds again in Jeremiah: "Lord, you are always right when I dispute with You. Yet I must plead my case before You: Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why are evil people so happy?" (Jer. 12:1).

It is an argument that never ceased. It continued through the rabbinic literature. It was heard again in the kinot, the laments, prompted by the persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages. It sounds in the literature produced in the wake of the Spanish expulsion, and echoes still when we recall the Holocaust.

The Talmud says that of all the questions Moses asked God, this was the one to which God did not give an answer.[1] The simplest, deepest interpretation is given in Psalm 92, "The song of the Sabbath day." Though "the wicked spring up like grass," they will eventually be destroyed. The righteous, by contrast, "flourish like a palm tree and grow tall like a cedar in Lebanon." Evil wins in the short term but never in the long. The wicked are like grass, the righteous like a tree. Grass grows overnight but it takes years for a tree to reach its full height. In the long run, tyrannies are defeated. Empires decline and fall. Goodness and rightness win the final battle. As Martin Luther King said in the spirit of the Psalm: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

It is a difficult belief, this commitment to seeing justice in history under the sovereignty of God. Yet consider the alternatives. They are three. The first is to say that there is no meaning in history whatsoever. Homo hominis lupus est, "Man is wolf to man". As Thucydides said in the name of the Athenians: "The strong do as they want, the weak suffer what they must." History is a Darwinian struggle to survive, and justice is no more than the name given to the will of the stronger party.

The second, about which I write in my new book *Not In God's Name*, is dualism, the idea that evil comes not from God but from an independent force: Satan, the Devil, the Antichrist, Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness, and the many other names given to the force that is not God but is opposed to Him and those who worship Him. This idea, which has surfaced in sectarian forms in each of the Abrahamic monotheisms, as well as in modern, secular totalitarianisms, is one of the most dangerous in all of history. It divides humanity into the unshakeably good and the irredeemably evil, giving rise to a long history of bloodshed and barbarism of the kind we see being enacted today in many parts of the world in the name of holy war against the greater and lesser Satan. This

is dualism, not monotheism, and the sages, who called it shtei reshuyot, "two powers or domains"[2], were right to reject it utterly.

The third, debated extensively in the rabbinic literature, is to say that justice ultimately exists in the world to come, in life after death. Yet though this is an essential element of Judaism, it is striking how relatively little Judaism had recourse to it, recognising that the central thrust of Tanakh is on this world, and life before death. For it is here that we must work for justice, fairness, compassion, decency, the alleviation of poverty, and the perfection, as far as lies within our power, of society and our individual lives. Tanakh almost never takes this option. God does not say to Jeremiah or Job that the answer to their question exists in heaven and they will see it as soon as they end their stay on earth. The passion for justice so characteristic of Judaism would dissipate entirely were this the only answer.

Difficult though Jewish faith is, it has had the effect through history of leading us to say: if bad things have happened, let us blame no one but ourselves, and let us labour to make them better. It was this that led Jews, time and again, to emerge from tragedy, shaken, scarred, limping like Jacob after his encounter with the angel, yet resolved to begin again, to rededicate ourselves to our mission and faith, to ascribe our achievements to God and our defeats to ourselves.

Out of such humility, a momentous strength is born.

[1] Berakhot 7a.

[2] Berakhot 33b.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z"TL

A Succah, if properly utilized, can be a place of very great achievement. Here are a few ideas as heard from Rabbi Miller ZT"L on how to maximize this opportunity.

1. Keep in mind that every minute you spend in the Succah, you are performing a positive commandment from the Torah. The longer you sit there and contend "I am doing the will of Hashem", you are getting more Mitzvot. The more kavanah/intent the greater the reward.
2. The Succah is a temporary dwelling which serves to remind us that this world is only temporary. It is the place we prepare, through improvement, in order to gain entry to Olam Haba.
3. The Succah is a symbol of being "in Hashem" all of our lives. "Hashem, m'aon atah h'ayitah lanu." "You are our dwelling, You are our complete protection, You are all around us always."

"Hashem Echod", there is nothing but Hashem in the world. "Yifros alenu succat shelomecha", we are in Hashem's Succah which is all around us. This is why He is called 'Hamakom', The Place.

4. The humility of the Succah is in order to humble us. Reminding us to act with kindness and patience toward people in emulation of Hashem's patience and kindness to us.

The Abot lived in tents in order that they never forget that they are just visitors in this world.

5. The Succah means isolation from the nations of the world. "V'avdil etchem mikol ha'amim", "And I have separated you from all the nations"

6. The 'Peshat', reason for the Mitzvah of Succah, is in order that we should know that Hashem caused Israel to dwell in Succot and took them out of Egypt. We should look at the sechach/roof and remember, "L'maan yedeu derotechem", that we were once in the wilderness unprotected and yet more secure than any other time in our history.

The only true security is Hashem; that is the lesson of Succot. We enter the Succah and endeavor to gain more True Knowledge with sensory perception, that Hashem alone is our Succah and our sole Protection in all matters, forever and in both worlds.

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