

שבת בשבת



Parshat Va'era

No 1658: 1 Shevat 5777 (January 28, 2017)

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Religious Zionists of America

305 Seventh Avenue, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10001

office@rza.org, www.rza.org

Dear Friend of Religious Zionism,

One of the initiatives we are planning, in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem, is an "Honor Roll" to be signed by the leadership of congregations and schools across the country.

- 1) Please have your leadership inform us if they want to be included on our Honor Roll. (We will include the names of all participating institutions in the media).
- 2) Please share this Honor Roll with institutions in your community and encourage participation.
- 3) Please arrange to hang this Honor Roll in the lobbies of your Shuls and Schools. Click [here](#) to print out a copy of the poster OR kindly email us to let us know if you'd like us to mail you a hard copy flyer or poster.

Rabbi Gideon Shloush
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Mr. Martin
Rabbi Leonard Matanky
Dr. Ernest

Please encourage your community leadership to include the paragraph below in

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. On May 22-25 be front and center for a mega-celebration in Israel in partnership with the Religious Zionist of America (RZA) and World Mizrahi. Individuals and communities from around the world will participate in this once in a lifetime opportunity. Celebrating 50 years of a reunited Jerusalem on Yom Yerushalayim. See www.mizrachi.org/YY50.



YOM YERUSHALAYIM

Honor Roll

MY COMMUNITY IS PROUD TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF YOM YERUSHALAYIM.

The fiftieth anniversary of the re-unification of Jerusalem is upon us. Yom Yerushalayim 2017 will take place on Wednesday, May 24th.

In celebration of this historic milestone the RZA-Mizrachi is preparing an Honor Roll of synagogues and schools who will be organizing t'fillot and festivities to mark this occasion.

JERUSALEM HONOR ROLL

Fifty years ago, through the miracle of the Six Day War, the holy city of Jerusalem was reunited. As the soul-stirring cry of "Har Habayit b'yadeinu" rang out, Israel's courageous young soldiers fulfilled the hopes and dreams of countless generations. At long last, the destroyed synagogues of the Old City would be rebuilt; the desecrated graves on the Mount of Olives would be restored; and the Kotel would resume its rightful place at the center of the Jewish universe. Yom Yerushalayim both commemorates that incredible moment in time and symbolizes the joining of G-d, Torah, and the Land of Israel, now and forever. On this 50th anniversary of the reunification of the eternal capital of the Jewish people, we renew our commitment to protecting the safety and sanctity of united Jerusalem.

(signature)

(name of institution)



The Religious Zionists of America is the US affiliate of the 115 year old World Mizrahi movement. The goal of the RZA-Mizrachi is to instill in the American Jewish community a commitment to religious Zionism, the preservation of Jewish political freedom, the enhancement of Jewish religious life in the land of Israel, and the promotion of aliyah. For more information, visit: www.rza.org

In The Spotlight

We are pleased to announce a new initiative: Each week, we will (translate

and) feature a d'var Torah shared by a Rav who teaches at aDati Leumi Hesder Yeshiva in Israel. Our goal is – until we get there ourselves – to bring Torat Yisrael closer to America.

Parshat Va'era

Remembering the Covenant

By Rabbi Haim Sabato, Founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat HaHesder Birkat Moshe Maale Adumim, Israel

Translated by RZA-Aryeh Fellow Nimrod Soll

In the beginning of this week's parshah, God reveals himself to Moshe and tells him his mission. Yet, this is not the first time that God has informed Moshe of his mission, as God has already told Moshe his mission in last week's parshah at the episode of the Burning Bush. So, as is always the case when things are repeated in the Torah, we have to ask ourselves why the repetition?

Let us look at the first time God reveals to Moshe his mission at the Burning Bush. The reason given for Moshe's mission as the redeemer is the distress of Israel and their enslavement in Egypt. Hence, the verse states; "Hashem said, "I have indeed seen the affliction of my people in Egypt and I have heard their outcry because of their taskmasters, for I have known their sufferings." (Shemot 3; 7)

This is in contrast to this week's parshah, where the emphasis for the redemption is not the enslavement, but the covenant God has made with our forefathers. Hence, the verse states; "And I established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their dwelling in which they dwelled." (Shemot 6; 6) According to this week's parshah the affliction of Israel in Egypt 'reminded' God of the covenant, but it is not the reason for the redemption. Moreover, in this week's parshah God tells Moshe that the Children of Israel are to become God's chosen nation. "I shall take you to Me as a nation and I shall be Your God; and You shall know that I am Hashem your God, Who takes you out from the burdens of Egypt." (Shemot 6; 7) Furthermore, in last week's parshah the Land of Israel is referred to as a land flowing with milk and honey, whereas in this week's parshah it is the land that God swore to our forefathers.

In last week's parshah the emphasis is on the affliction of Israel in Egypt, and the Land of Israel is a place of refuge. In contrast, the emphasis in this week's parshah is on the covenant with the forefathers, and the Land of Israel is where the Children of Israel will be transformed fully into God's chosen nation. The two different paths which come out of these two parshiyot are reminiscent of the different ideologies that existed when the Zionist Movement appeared 150 years ago. Among the early Zionist thinkers there were those who emphasized the need for a place of refuge, and therefore if Israel could not be used then another land could suffice. Others, however, argued that the Land of Israel is not only a place of refuge, but the homeland of the Jewish People which could not be substituted with another land.

Now that we have seen the difference between these two episodes of revelations, we must understand why in the first revelation to Moshe God informs him that his mission is to save Israel from their tormentors; whereas in the second revelation, God emphasizes the Divine plan to fulfill the covenant and make the children of Israel into the nation of God. When Moshe first approaches the Children of Israel and informs them of his mission from God the Children of Israel believe him. It states, "And the people believed, and they heard that Hashem had remembered the Children of Israel and that He saw their affliction, and they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves." (Shemot 4; 31) However, when Moshe tells the Children of Israel of his mission after his second revelation with God, they refuse to listen as it states, "So Moshe spoke accordingly to the Children of Israel; but they did not heed Moshe, because of shortness of breath and heard work." (Shemot 6; 9)

When in the end of last week's parshah Pharaoh further burdens the slavery of the Children of Israel, Moshe complains before God that his mission has not succeeded. "Moshe returned to Hashem and said, "My Lord why have You done evil to this people, why have You sent me? From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name he did evil to this people, and You did not rescue Your people." (Shemot 5; 22-23) God responds to Moshe by telling him that his mission isn't merely the alleviation of Israel's suffering, but the fulfillment of the covenant God made with the forefathers. Since that is the case, then God's plan for Israel's redemption from Egypt is much larger, as it is meant to propagate the name of God in the world through the miracles God will perform in Egypt. Therefore, it is necessary to harden Pharaoh's heart so that the miracles through which God's name will be revealed to the world be fulfilled. Additionally, these miracles are meant to instill inside the Children of Israel an eternal belief in God, and transform them into the nation that will accept the Torah.

Thus, we can understand the difference in the Children of Israel's responses to Moshe. When they're informed about the redemption from their slavery they're overjoyed and believe Moshe, but when they're informed that that redemption is part of a much larger plan which will take time they refuse to listen.

However, even in the second revelation to Moshe, which emphasized the covenant, God states that he remembered the covenant due to the suffering of Israel in Egypt. Yet, if we are discussing the covenant, why is a reminder necessary?

Our Sages wished to solve this question through another question. The Sages deal with the fact that while in one place it is written that the enslavement in Egypt will be 400 years, it ends up being only 210 years. In order to answer this, the Sages state that while the enslavement was supposed to be for 400 years, it became so oppressive that God was required to shorten it to save the Jewish People. Thus, even with a covenant, God still needed the suffering of Israel in order to shorten the amount of time they were supposed to be enslaved.

Another answer is based off the Zohar's teaching that every action from Heaven must be precipitated by an action from below (את עוררותא דלתתא שקודמת לאת עוררותא דלעילא). This is a basic principle in the redemption, that despite the fact that the redemption comes from above it is dependent on us to take the first steps. Obviously, it is best if this awakening from below comes out of goodness, but at certain times God makes it so there is an awakening for redemption out of suffering. We see that the Children of Israel cried out to God not out of will, but out of affliction. This is because there is always a need for an awakening from below before there is action from above. Thus, even in the second revelation, which is rooted in the covenant, it is still dependent first upon the outcry of Israel from their affliction.



Rabbi Haim Sabato was born in Cairo, Egypt to a prestigious rabbinic family; he and his family made Aliyah in 1956 during the expulsion of Jews from Arab lands. He studied in Yehivat Hakotel, and in 1977, at age 24, he helped found Yeshivat HaHesder Birkat Moshe in Maale Adumim, Israel, and currently serves as one of its Roshei Yeshivah. Besides for his Torah scholarship, Rabbi Sabato is widely known as a popular author, and his novel "Adjusting Sights" (תיאום כוונות) won the Sapir Prize (akin to Israel's Pulitzer Prize) in 2000.

Nimrod Soll is a rabbinical student at Rabbi Issac Elchanan Theological Seminary and the Bernard Revel Graduate School.



We are pleased to feature a different Religious Zionist rabbi each week from around the country to share a Dvar Torah.

Parshat Va'era

Rabbi Yechiel Morris

Rabbi of Young Israel of Southfield

Southfield, MI

After his initial failure in Parshat Shemot to achieve freedom for the Jewish people, Moshe once again was instructed by Hashem to confront Pharaoh with his demands for emancipation. This new command immediately followed the Jewish people's indifference after hearing Hashem's promise of redemption using the four expressions of Geula.

At this point Moshe could not fathom how his new mission could prove successful. "Behold," Moshe responded, "Bnei Yisrael have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh now listen...?"

Fifteen Pesukim later, the narrative continues with Hashem repeating his instruction and Moshe reiterating his reservations. Finally Moshe acquiesces and departs to confront Pharaoh.

Before imparting these final instructions, the Torah interrupts the narrative and in fifteen Pesukim, records the lineage of the tribes of Reuven, Shimon, and Levi. Although it is interesting to know Moshe's family background, why does the Torah specifically record it at this point?

It would seem that Hashem was reminding Moshe to recall his roots and family history. They too, had suffered setbacks. They also had to overcome great challenges. The Gemara in Sotah (12a) recounts how Amram had separated from his wife Yocheved after hearing Pharaoh's decree to murder all Jewish baby boys. Heroically, their daughter, Miriam, intervened and convinced her parents to reconsider. Although the future appeared difficult and frightening, Amram and Yocheved now understood that they had to act if there was any chance for a better tomorrow. Even amid the darkness and despair they had to come together to create a family and plant these seeds for their people's salvation.

This critical message, of vision, hope and commitment was now being imparted by Hashem to Moshe. Yes, it was doubtful that Pharaoh would change his mind. The Jewish people themselves were in such a state, that they were unable to dream of any change to their current predicament. Moshe, however, had to look beyond all of that. Similar to his parents, he had to act to make a difference. The hallmark of his family was this ability to overcome despair and setback, pick up the pieces and move forward in a positive direction.



It is notable that the tribes of Reuven and Shimon are also mentioned in the genealogy in Parshat Va'era. Perhaps their listing bolstered Hashem's message. Moshe was being reminded to not repeat the regretful and tragic past mistakes of Reuven and Shimon. Each one had been unable to overcome their previous failings. Levi's descendants, Yocheved and Amram, however were able to move beyond Levi's initial failure with his brother, Shimon, in Shechem. They were the model that Moshe was now being told to emulate. Change was possible. A new reality could and would emerge. With effort, focus, and commitment, darkness and setback could be turned into salvation and redemption.

With the creation of the State of Israel less than seventy years ago, the Jewish people have demonstrated that they have internalized this message. With vision, determination, strength and wisdom, our people transformed their past reality and predicament. By not allowing the challenging and often painful past to deter them, they continued to dream and with boldness and heroic effort they turned those dreams into a beautiful and triumphant new reality.

The French Peace Conference: Stacking the Deck

By Dr. Alex Grobman, RZA Board Member

On January 15, 2017 the French government convened a conference hosted by Jean-Marc Ayrault, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, "to signal... the international community's remobilization in support of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians," according to the French Foreign Ministry.

The Ministry noted that more than 70 governments and international organizations including the Quartet (US, European Union, Russia, UN), the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Arab and European partners, G20 countries and "other actors committed to peace" were scheduled to attend.



Why Now?

The French contend the continuing growth of Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria and the ongoing crises in Syria, Iraq and Yemen "have in no way reduced the significance or the symbolic importance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." Under these circumstances, "we cannot remain as onlookers of a deadlocked situation that creates despair and insecurity," they declared.

One aim of the conference is "to create political momentum conducive to new negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians themselves," not to impose their own solutions. A French official quoted in The Wall Street Journal said another objective is to "show to Mr. Trump that there is consensus in the international community for the two-state solution."

Although Israel feared the conference could be used to rationalize a UN resolution recognizing a Palestinian Arab State, The Guardian suggested the EU might use the opportunity to justify increasing the boycott of goods produced by Israelis in Judea and Samaria. More broadly, the conference may well be a portent of the EU's intention of pursuing a foreign policy less dependent on Washington.

Haaretz reported that Secretary of State John Kerry assured Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the peace conference would not precipitate any additional actions at the UN or in any other international forums.

British Response

In a move designed to establish good relations with the Trump administration and to ensure the ongoing "special relationship" with the US, The Guardian reported the British refused to send either a Foreign Office minister or the UK ambassador to France to the conference. Instead, they sent a diplomat who heads the Middle East desk at the Foreign Office, and two

advisers to the UK ambassador to France. The US/British relationship is important to the British, especially if the country leaves the EU within two years as expected.

At the end of the conference, the British Foreign Office expressed the government's reservations about the outcome of the meeting and why Britain declined to sign the conference's final declaration:

"We have particular reservations about an international conference intended to advance peace between the parties that does not involve them—indeed which is taking place against the wishes of the Israelis—and which is taking place just days before the transition to a new American President when the U.S. will be the ultimate guarantor of any agreement. There are risks therefore that this conference hardens positions at a time when we need to be encouraging the conditions for peace.

"That's why we have attended in an observer status and have not signed up to the communique."

French Duplicity

The French had been told by members of Trump's transition team of the president-elect's strenuous disapproval of the conference, knowing that Israel would be subjected to unwarranted pressure, while the Arabs would receive an inexcusable reward. France's extremely partisan position demonstrates an astonishing degree of hypocrisy and moral inconsistency—even for the French.

On January 10, 2017, NGO Monitor, which documents questionable funding and actions of many Israeli NGOs, released a study revealing that the "French government funds numerous French, Israeli and Palestinian organizations that support and promote BDS campaigns against Israel despite the fact that such boycotts are illegal under French law... One of the Platform's government-funded projects is explicitly geared towards influencing elected officials, media and public opinion regarding the conflict—an obvious abuse of taxpayer money."

Whether directly or indirectly, the French even "fund several other NGOs with alleged ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terror group." Not surprisingly, the French Embassy in Israel refused to respond to the charges.

According to The New York Times, a soon-to-be-released study in the journal Psychological Science explains our aversion to hypocrites, which is why so many hold France's behavior toward Israel in such contempt. The "reason people dislike hypocrites," the study found, "is that their outspoken moralizing falsely signals their own virtue... the principal offense of a hypocrite is not that he violates his own principles, but rather that his use of moral proclamations falsely implies that he himself behaves morally."

The West Being Played for Fools—Once Again

Though the conference's final report did not produce anything constructive, and Secretary Kerry promised no further anti-Israel activity will be permitted, the West is still being "played" by the Palestinian Arabs, writes Bassam Tawil, a scholar on the Middle East and a Senior Scholar at the Gatestone Institute. "What members of the international community do not seem to understand," he said, is that "[t]he terrorist who rammed his truck into a German Christmas market did not carry out his attack in outrage at a German settlement or a checkpoint. The terrorist who mowed down French people celebrating Bastille Day was not protesting French occupation.' Abbas and his cohorts, like the terrorists in Europe, are part of just one big global jihad against all 'infidels' – including them."

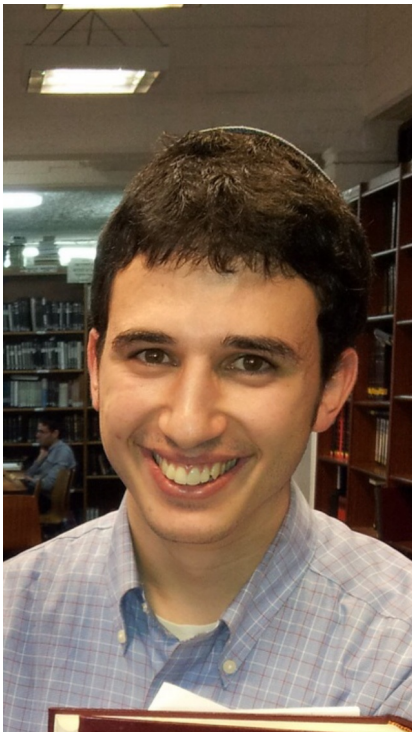
Alex Grobman, a Hebrew University-trained historian, is a consultant to the America-Israel Friendship League, a member of the Council of Scholars for Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME) and a member of the Advisory Board of The Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET).

Article can be found [HERE](#)

Introducing the New RZA-Aryeh Fellowship!

The RZA-Aryeh Fellowship is a new initiative of the RZA-Mizrachi to strengthen the mission of Religious Zionism. Fifty college and graduate school students from around the country have been invited to spend their winter-break in Israel where they will be studying Torah and attending intensive seminars devoted to Religious Zionism education. Upon their return the Aryeh Fellows will focus on their year-long Manhigut (leadership) projects designed to bring the message of Religious Zionism back to communities across America. We are excited to profile a different "Aryeh Fellow" each week.

Meet Adi Ciner



In West (of) Philadelphia, born and raised in a suburb, Lower Merion, Adi Ciner spent most of his childhood days.

Now this is the story of all about how Adi's life got flipped upside down

And I'd like to take a minute, just sit right there

And I'll tell you what else Adi did (besides for watch the Prince of Bel-Air)"

Adi Ciner, a proud product of the Lower Merion community, is a graduate of YUHSB and a survivor of the MTA dorms. Adi spent two spiritually charged years studying in Yeshivat Hakotel, after which he drafted into the IDF. In Tzahal, Adi served as the Mashak Daat, spiritual leader, for Oketz, Israel's elite canine unit. Adi had an impactful experience, gaining exposure to a new culture and receiving valuable opportunities to guide and support others in their religious growth. Adi then returned to the States to study Psychology and Jewish Studies in Yeshiva University, in pursuit of returning to

Eretz Yisroel as an educator. He is currently in his second year at YU, and has found many outlets to share his passions of Torah and Eretz Yisroel with others. Adi runs educational programs and Shabbatons for youth across the country through different shuls, NCSY and Bnei Akiva and volunteers as a student teacher in multiple high schools in the New York area. Adi, just spent his twelfth summer at his beloved haven, Camp Moshava IO, where he has learned in the Beit Midrash and been a counselor and division head over recent years. Adi is thrilled to be a part of this RZA program and he hopes to "fellow" in the footsteps of the religious Zionist leaders whom he has gained so much from.

Manhigut Project Update

Our RZA-Aryeh Fellows have been working hard on planning and implementing their Manhigut project. Click the video below and watch to hear an update about one group's project!

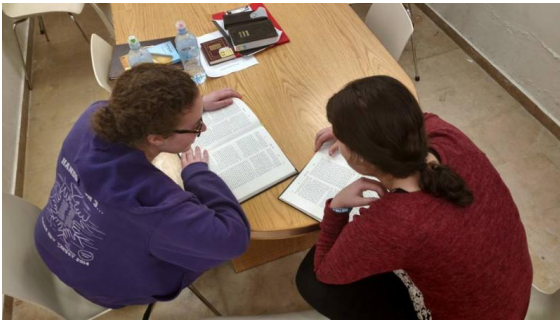


Pictures from our Fellows and the Yom Iyun

On Thursday January 12th, the RZA Aryeh Fellows participated in a Yom Iyun in Jerusalem. The day featured stellar shiurim and panel discussions from leading figures including Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Brigadier Effie Eitam (who participated in the Entebbe rescue) and Rav Yishai Fleisher (the international representative for the Chevron community). Other highlights included a powerful and touching Yonatan Razel concert and the Stayin' Alive satirical comedy show which exposes the double-standards of the BDS movement. In the words of Aryeh Fellow Yishai Pearl, "To say that this is 'recharging' just scratches the surface of the impact this trip is having on me as I'm sure it is having on the other fellows as well."

View the rest of the pictures [HERE](#)





RZA Los Angeles Shabbaton

 Religious Zionists of Los Angeles



and the
Religious Zionists
of America - Mizrachi

Shabbaton
Shabbat, January 28

TRUMP'S AMERICA and its Israel Relations

Special Guest Presenters:



Rabbi Shaul Robinson
Lincoln Square Synagogue,
New York, NY

Shabbat Morning Sermon
Beth Jacob Congregation
Seudah Shlishit
Young Israel of Century City



Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Executive VP
of the RZA-Mizrachi
Congregation Adereth El,
New York, NY

Friday Night
Bnai David-Judea Congregation
Shabbat Morning Sermon
Young Israel of Century City

Melave Malka

Hancock Park • 8:00pm

featuring a conversation with



Rabbi Marvin Hier

Dean & Founder of
the Simon Wiesenthal
Center

*Upon his return from in the
inauguration of President-
elect Donald J. Trump*

Shabbaton Sponsors:

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Pictures from the Stayin' Alive Comedy Show in Chicago

The BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement which advocates the delegitimization of Israel, together with media bias and a general misrepresentation of Israel is being fought with various quality educational initiatives and fact-based programs. Yet the battle is far from over. Stayin' Alive is all about finding a new, effective response. With the encouragement of Israel's Foreign Ministry, World Mizrachi produced a unique hard-hitting show. Developed by some of Israel's top comedy writers, it helps set the record straight, utilizing satire, humor and music to explain Israel's point of view. Mizrachi is proud to present this relevant, uplifting and entertaining satirical show to the Chicago community to shine the glaring light of satire on the BDS misleading comparisons

and deceptive assertions.

Stayin' Alive premiered in Chicago last Saturday night. It was a hit!



Help save the old Jewish cemetery of Vilna

Help save the old Jewish cemetery of Vilna. Please click here for more info:

<https://www.change.org/p/hon-dalia-grybauskaitė-please-move-new-vilnius-convention-center-project-away-from-the-old-jewish-cemetery>

Join us for Yom Yerushalayim!

Please ask your Shul Rabbi and local school to include this in their weekly emails.
Make sure to join us for this once in a lifetime opportunity!



**JOIN THOUSANDS
FOR THE MEGA-
MISSION OF A
LIFETIME**



**May 22-25
Iyar 26-29**
Celebrating 50 YEARS of
a reunited Jerusalem



**For more details
and to book:
www.mizrachi.org/YY50**



In light of the UN Security Council vote, our support for Yerushalayim is needed now more than ever. Register now for this once in a lifetime opportunity. Join Jewish people from around the world as we gather in our holiest city to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. The time is now. Show your support!

SPACES LIMITED



WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM

FOR A MEGA-MISSION OF A LIFETIME
Be Front and Center, Celebrating 50 years of a reunited Jerusalem
over Yom Yerushalayim
MAY 22-25, 2017

Dear RZA-Mizrachi Friends,

We very much look forward to having you take part in our Mizrachi World Movement's "This Year in Jerusalem" Mega-Mission over Yom Yerushalayim. Our aim is to bring thousands of people (including rabbinic and community leaders) from hundreds of communities from across the global Jewish community to learn, experience and celebrate together at this momentous time in Jewish history.

Please see below a personal invitation from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, one of the global leaders of the mission, inviting you to join him on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

More details about the program can be found at the following link - www.mizrachi.org/YY50 - including the draft schedule, highlights, pricing options and booking procedure.

Please note the following:

1. There are 10 hotel options, with a price range depending on hotel choice. Each hotel package includes breakfast, lunch and dinner (excluding Wed evening). The hotel packages also include the entire 4 day program at discounted rates.
2. There is also an option for people who are not staying in hotels - if they have their own accommodation - to join for the 4 day program, at a cost of \$630 per person. It does not include hotel, breakfast and dinner, but does include transport from central meeting points to and from all the venues, lunch each day, and participation in the full program.
3. For those shuls/communities/groups who wish to bring missions and want to extend their trip either before or after our 4 day mission, that can also be arranged by contacting us at YY50@mizrachi.org, and we - together with our partners - will put together a tailor-made package for your group.

Looking forward to celebrating together – in Jerusalem – on this historic occasion.

With excitement and anticipation,

Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Mizrachi – Religious Zionists of America

Rav Doron Perez
Mizrachi World Movement

Click below to see our video!



POINT OF VIEW

The Path to Take Together with President Trump

By Zevulun Orlev

Question Marks

The beginning of Donald Trump's term as President of the United States leaves us with more questions than definitive statements. We do not know what his policies will be with respect to many issues (and quite possibly neither does he). Is his speech the same as the dictates of his heart? Will his declarations before he was chosen be fulfilled? Will he be able to stand up against strong institutionalized professionals in his own administration?

The President of the United States has a profound influence on the entire world in general and on Israel in particular. The vital importance to us of the support by the United States in the areas of international policies, security, and economics is an open secret. We managed to get through the Obama era in terms of security and economic aid, and we are right to show our appreciation for that, but in the international arena we experienced eight tough years which caused us great harm (Obama's Cairo speech, the Iranian nuclear deal, a freeze on construction in Yehuda and the Shomron, the failure to veto UN resolution 2334).

When the results of the elections were announced, a wave of joy spread through our land, and rightly so, as if a rightist Zionist lover of Zion had been elected. We can certainly be happy about such declarations as the intention to move the embassy to Jerusalem, no objections to continued construction in Yehuda and the Shomron, and Trump's appointment of many assistants who strongly support Israel. On the political side, we can certainly be optimistic about the issue of settlements in Yehuda and the Shomron, future negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, and the Iranian problem.

However, the questions which we raised above mean that we must proceed with caution and limit our exaggerated enthusiasm. National decisions should be a result of thorough discussions by the security cabinet and the government, and we must not be dragged into

hastily raising proposals for laws whose sole purpose will be local electoral gains. We must prevent a competition among the ministers and the MK's to see who will be the first to propose laws that exploit President Trump's actions for our advantage. Nobody knows better than I how exciting it can be for a politician to jump ahead, to stand out, to make populist proposals, and even to leak information, all in order to be viewed favorably by the public.

Only if we act with political maturity is there any chance that the Trump era will be an opportunity to advance a national rightist agenda. Moderation is the main ingredient of the recipe for cooperation with the new President. Let us not fool ourselves into thinking that he works for us and will dance to our tunes. If we surprise him with facts on the ground they may come right back to us as a boomerang. Only if we can learn to behave in his manner and not in our way will we be able to achieve our important goals.

Establishing Goals and Priorities

There is no fire that must be put out immediately! Let the cabinet and the government hold serious discussions on national strategy and what our tactics should be, and about our national priorities. Should extending our sovereignty to Maaleh Adumim and its surroundings be our first priority, or should we start with the Jordan Valley? Or, should we perhaps first make a strong effort to revoke the recent UN resolution against our settlements? Is there a need for a concerted strong international movement, led by the United States, against the BDS movement? Perhaps the greatest effort should be the worldwide struggle against terrorism. Should we act to force the Palestinian Authority to stop its hypocrisy in paying salaries to the families of terrorists and honoring them by naming streets for them? Should we fight the wild incitement against Israel by the Palestinians? These are only some of our important goals.

After we have decided on a strategic policy, we can make the effort to convince the President and his friends in the new administration to join us in our efforts. We can argue, we can apply legitimate pressure, and we can try to convince them in a friendly way. Perhaps we will not succeed in all of our goals and in the end we will be forced to compromise in some matters. But issues where we agree should be made into binding laws in the United States, either through passing laws in the Congress or by executive order. It is very important to guarantee stability for later administrations.

I must admit that I have a fear that our democratic behavior at times crosses over into a manner that is uncontrolled and irresponsible. Because of personal struggles and party politics, we sometimes tend to miss out on great opportunities. I hope this time to be pleasantly surprised and to be proved wrong. I hope that in this case the nation will take charge and force its leaders to act in a responsible way. With good planning, we should make not only war but also government policy, diplomacy, and international negotiations. (See Mishlei 20:18.)

With G-d's help we can succeed.

As Shabbat Approaches

Free My Nation and They will Serve Me

By Rabbi Mordechai Greenberg, Rosh Yeshiva, Kerem B'Yavne

In the beginning of this week's portion we read about the mission of Moshe: "And I will rescue you from **your labor**" [Shemot 6:6]. Moshe is told several times, on the other hand, to tell Pharaoh, "Free My nation, and **they will serve Me**" [7:16]. Did the nation leave a house of slavery just so that they would become slaves again?

In his introduction to the Haggada of Pesach, Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook explains that the difference between a slave and a free man is not only one of status or position – that one man happens to be enslaved and another is not. (Olat Re'iyah volume 2, page 245).

It is possible to find a person who is formally considered a slave but who is really free in

spirit. And the opposite is also possible: a man who is free but in essence is a slave, because he is obligated by external factors. For example, consider a man who has great wealth and can do whatever he pleases, without anybody telling him what to do. However, this man does not feel free because of such factors as social pressure, a fear of being criticized by the media, or a desire to find favor with the public. All of his actions are governed by the question, "What will they all say?" Other people might be enslaved by their own lusts which do not allow them any freedom. As opposed to these, there are people who are formally considered slaves to a master or to the government, such as "prisoners of Zion," but whose spirit cannot be broken and who will not be forced to act against their own conscience.

This, then, is the definition of a free man:

"It consists of the exalted spirit of a man and also of an entire nation which rise up because of this spirit to be faithful to their own internal identity... This is not true for one who is spiritually a slave, for whom the content of his life and his feelings never light up with his own spiritual self but rather does what others think is good and proper, and this takes control over him, whether this is in a formal or ethical sense – and then what is good is only what the other person feels is good."

This leads us to the outstanding words of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi: "Those who are obligated to time are slaves of slaves. A slave of G-d is the only one who is truly free." Or, as the sages have written, "The only free person is one who is involved in the Torah." This is true since the Torah is an expression of the shape of the Jewish soul, and one who is involved in its study lives in a way that corresponds to his own character. And then he is really free.

Rav Kook writes: "The study of Torah – halacha, aggada, pilpul (analysis), and all types of Torah – brings the light into the life of Yisrael, from within our souls... Dedicated study of the Torah engraves onto the soul the trait of Yisrael and its unique structure." [Orot HaTorah 6:11-12]. When a person studies the mitzvot and performs them, he is living according to his Yisrael-type traits. This makes him free, since he is living in a way that corresponds to his own internal self and remains faithful to it. Thus, the Exodus from Egypt is separation from the external slavery of Pharaoh and moving on to the natural slavery to G-d. And that is what G-d meant when He promised to take us out of the house of slavery of Pharaoh, so that the people would serve G-d on the mountain.

ZIONIST CHASSIDISM

Love can Lead a Person Astray

By Rabbi Rafi Ostroff, Head of the Religious Council of Gush Etzion

In this week's Torah portion, the Rebbe of Husiatyn discusses a unique phenomenon that appears only among very special and great men of the nation of Yisrael, whose love for Israel was embedded deep in their hearts. These are righteous men, *tzadikim*, who refuse to remain silent in the face of the torment and the suffering of the nation of Yisrael, so much so that if necessary they were even ready to call the Holy One, Blessed be He, to judgement.

However, this phenomenon is not logical, and it is not really possible. How can somebody call "the judge of the entire world" to a court of law? The Rebbe explains:

Indeed, according to the simple interpretation we cannot ask questions about the prophets who sometimes used harsh words. They knew very well and continued to believe that G-d is righteous. But their love for Yisrael was so strong, their pain in the face of such suffering was so great, that their inner self forced them to speak very harshly. Love can lead a person astray, and no person should be punished for what he does when in great suffering.

It is indeed not easy to cry out against G-d. But the great love of these unique righteous men for the nation of Yisrael led them to overcome their usual behavior and to cry and scream out even against G-d (see the Midrash in Berachot 32a).

Where are His Awesome Acts?

According to the Midrash, on seeing the destruction of the Temple Yirmiyahu and Daniel could no longer continue their prayers as before, and they no longer included “the powerful and the awesome one” in their prayers (Yoma 69b). They said: “Strangers are destroying His Temple – where are His awesome acts? Strangers have put His sons in bondage - where is His might?” But the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah returned the original elements to the prayers, as we continue to pray to this day.

The Rebbe asked: What is the difference between Yirmiyahu and the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah? Didn't the prophet also know that G-d is powerful and awesome, in spite of the destruction of the Temple?

And he replied:

It is the will of G-d that the righteous men of the generation should believe with all their heart in the righteousness of the heavenly guidance. But since they suffer with the suffering of the nation, they will still say to Him what they truly feel, sometimes even in belligerent tones. And this is hinted at in two verses: “You rose on high, you took captives” [Tehillim 68:19], and “Eliyahu rose to heaven in a whirlwind” [Melachim II 2:11]. It can happen that a tzadik rises up to heaven in a whirlwind, in a way that is stormy as war. And such lashing out can lead to mercy if it stems from a great love for Yisrael.

It is truly wonderful that heavenly guidance is ready and in fact **wants** the righteous one who fully believes that “G-d is good for all” to come at Him on a warlike path as a whirlwind, with harsh complaints, out of his love for Yisrael and because of his compassion for the nation. G-d has a positive desire for this cry of truth that bursts out from a heart filled with love.

Did the Rebbe of Husiatyn speak from his own heart when he saw the great destruction of a third of the Jewish people? After all, he was personally acquainted with many of those who were murdered, and he saw the loss of the people in his own community who had stayed behind and not come to Eretz Yisrael. Did he have the urge to “lash out” towards heaven with his own personal feelings about the terrible scourge in his own time? And is our generation far enough away for the Rebbe's psychological interpretation to be relevant – that after a long enough time it was possible to return to the complete statement, “G-d who is great and powerful,” with full force? That is how he explains the difference between Yirmiyahu, who was a witness to the destruction, and the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah, who lived in a more comfortable time.

Following in the Paths of the Great Men of Yisrael

We should note that the Rebbe joined a long line of Torah giants in Yisrael in many generations who voiced sharp complaints against the Master of the Universe. It began with Avraham, who asked, “Will You take the lives of the righteous together with the evil ones?” [Bereishit 18:23]. It continued with great people of our nation such as Moshe, Channah, and Eliyahu (see Berachot 32). And closer to our time, Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, was so famous for his complaints based on his great love for the nation.

To end our discussion of this subject, we must quote the profound essay by Uri Tzvi Greenberg in the wake of the Holocaust:

At the end of the roads Rabbi Levi Yitzchak stands and demands an answer from on high. Master of the Universe! I refuse to hear it... Will there no longer be Shabbat and the holidays? Will there no longer be Jews who pray with a tallit and tefillin, will there be a world of Gentiles only? ... You are not used to having a Jew rise up and make demands, You are used to hearing his praise, the trills of his melodies... How much can our hearts weep, does the G-d of our fathers and mothers up to Avraham desire this?

[Uri Tzvi Greenberg, At the End of the Roads, from “At the Streets of the River”]

Note: A summary of the life of Rebbe Yaacov of Husiatyn and his community appeared in issue 1646 for the Torah portion of Noach.

THE ROOTS OF FAITH – Basic Tenets of Jewish Philosophy

The Essence of Humility

By Rabbi Oury Cherki, Machon Meir, Rabbi of Beit Yehuda Congregation, Jerusalem

Baruch Spinoza wrote in his book of ethics (volume 4, pages 53-54) that in spite of the fact that the people of the world think humility is a good thing, it is really bad because it is an emotion of the soul, which is saddened by its failures. Therefore, in his opinion, wise men should not show any humility. On the other hand, he feels that it is good to continue to teach the ignorant masses which are drawn to follow their lusts to show humility, because that is the best way to get them to accept the words of the wise men, with humility. On the other hand, Spinoza is very much opposed to pride (page 55), which he defines as when a man does not know his true status.

Spinoza's approach is diametrically opposed to the Torah outlook, which praises the master of all prophets as "more humble than any other man on the face of the earth" [Bamidbar 12:3].

There must be some substantive theological reason for this difference between the impure and the pure, which can be attributed to the general world outlook of Spinoza, who has a reputation of being a master of ethics. Evidently his rejection of humility stems from his refusal to accept the Divine unique trait, the transcendental aspect of the Creator. Since according to Spinoza's approach G-d is essentially nature, in the end man himself is a deity, and he is therefore not required to belittle himself in deference to anybody else. According to this approach, humility is nothing more than weakness. As opposed to this outlook, those who really know G-d and understand the absolute gap between the infinite deity and the world achieve an exalted type of humility which leads them to an uplifting, and the result is a joyful attachment through a light which is beyond their apprehension.

These considerations can help us solve a dilemma in Ramchal's book, *Messilat Yesharim*. Ramchal first notes that it is necessary to condemn pride in the earliest stages of improving behavior. However, in the details of the trait of "cleanliness" (Chapter 11), which is a necessary trait for a person to fulfill his obligation to become righteous (beginning of Chapter 13), he delays the explanation of the essence of humility until much more advanced stages of ethical development (Chapters 22, 23). This is because it is not possible to achieve real humility without first gaining an understanding of G-d, which can be learned only upon reaching a state of righteousness. If I truly know G-d it follows as a matter of course that I will be filled with humility towards Him. This is not simply a rejection of the foolishness of pride but rather a clear recognition of the status of humanity, which has nothing other than what G-d has given it.

Based on these considerations, it is clear why the Rambam views the concept of humility in a different way than Muhammad Al-Farabi, although the Rambam usually accepts his outlook on the soul. Al-Farabi feels that as for other traits the proper way is the middle road, not to take an extreme position. However, when the Rambam gives practical advice about humility he advises an extreme approach – that is, complete humility. And this is the difference between Yisrael and the other nations.

NATURE AND THE TORAH PORTION

Kussemet

By Dr. Moshe Raanan, Herzog College and the Jerusalem College for Women

"But the wheat and the spelt ("*kussemet*") were not ruined, for they ripened late" [Shemot 9:32].

Wrong Identification

In this week's article we will attempt to identify "*kussemet*" – translated above as "spelt." But first we should correct the "historical error" of "robbing" the name *kussemet* to denote a very different plant known as buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*). This is a European plant from the family Polygonaceae which is of course not a cereal and is not even defined as a legume by botanical criteria, as some people have suggested.

The seeds of this plant are known as "*grissim*" – groats. This is the raw material for the familiar Polish food, "*kasha*." This plant is not at all related to the *kussemet* mentioned in this week's Torah portion (which is called "*kussmin*" by the sages). *Kussemet* appears in a list of grains: "Does he not put down a row of wheat, marking it with barley, and '*kussemet*' along the border?" [Yeshayahu 28:25]. The sages included *kussmin* as one of the "five types" of cereal: "Five grains are obligated for challah: wheat, barley, *kussmin*, oatmeal, and rye – for all of these, challah must be set aside..." [Challah 1:1].

A Possibility of Gluten

The grains are characterized by the fact that they contain gluten and the enzyme beta-amylase, which modifies starch into sugar, so that they are all suitable for baking bread, like wheat. This means that bread made from *kussmin* is suitable for making matza that will be used for the mitzva of Pesach, and might become chametz if care is not taken in baking it. In the wake of renewed interest in one of the grains that some people think is the original *kussemet*, it is usually given the name "*kissmin*," to differentiate it from buckwheat, the modern *kussemet*. This grain is spelt (*Triticum spelta*). But many researchers feel that the ancient *kussmin* in the Tanach and in the literature of the sages is another grain, hulled wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*).

Characteristics of Kussemet – Kussmin

Traditional sources can supply us with some of the characteristics of *kussemet*. The first such source is the description of the Plague of Hail in Egypt. From the passage, it is clear that *kussemet* and wheat ripen slowly as compared to flax and barley. From other verses, it is clear that *kussemet* was prevalent in Egypt, in Eretz Yisrael (Yeshayahu), and in Babylon (Yechezkel).

We are taught in the Mishna, "In the granary, a poor person is given no less than half a kav of wheat and a kav of barley. Rabbi Meir says it is half a kav. Also a kav and a half of *kussmin*, a kav of dried figs or a cake of figs..." [Pei'ah 8:5]. The reason for the different amounts for the grains appears in the Midrash Tana'im: "Let them eat and be satiated – give them enough to satiate them. Therefore we are told not to give less to a poor person in a granary than half a kav of wheat, and a kav of barley." [Devarim 14]. These values imply that the nutritional value of *kussemet* is even less than that of barley, and therefore they were given larger portions of this grain.

Another source that implies that *kussemet* has a relatively low nutritional value is in the Mishna: "One who deposits fruit with his colleague must take spoilage into account. For wheat and rice this is nine half-kav for a kur, for barley and millet nine kav for a kur, for *kussmin* and flax seeds three sa'im for a kur. Everything should be suited to the amounts and the time..." [Bava Metzia 3:7].

This Mishna involves damage done by mice, and clearly the spoilage increases as we gradually move from wheat and rice to barley and millet, and from there to *kussmin* and flax. We can assume that the more nutritious a grain is the less is needed by the mice. Wheat and rice are the most nutritious, they lose only nine half-kav for every kur, while barley and millet lose nine full kav, which is one-and-a-half sa'im. *Kussmin* and flax lose three sa'im – twice as much as barley.

As opposed to the nutritional value of *kussmin* with respect to barley, it was more tasty or generally better for making bread, as can be seen in the Tosefta, in a passage about priority of blessings: "If one has a loaf made from barley and one from wheat, the blessings should be recited on the wheat. If there is a slice made from wheat and a whole loaf from barley, the blessing should be on the slice from wheat. If there is a loaf from barley and a loaf from *kussmin* the blessing should be done on the barley. But we might ask, isn't *kussmin* better than barley? The answer is that barley is one of the seven special species, while *kussmin* is

not." [Berachot, Lieberman, Chapter 4].

The fact that kussmin was not included among the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael was given praise explains why it is mentioned after barley in some places. For example: "If one takes an oath not to eat bread from wheat, or barley, or kussmin, he is given only one punishment... [Mishna, Shevuot 3:2]; "A kav of wheat, a kav of barley, and a kav of kussmin can be lumped together ..." [Tesefta Challah, Lieberman, Chapter 2].

Spelt

Other structural details about kussmin can be found in the commentaries. It is written in Chidushei HaRitva: "Kissmin – Rashi writes that it is spelt, which is similar to wheat but does not have a groove like wheat" [Pesachim 35a]. Rashbatz writes the following in an article about chametz: "Wheat and barley are well known. Kussmin has been described by the Ramban in the tractate of Kela'im as a type of wheat that grows in the desert... And it is called kussmin because its stalk is shortened, reminiscent of the verse, 'kasom yachsemu – their heads are trimmed' [Yechezkel 44:20]... Kussmin is often seen in the Kingdom of Argon. I have seen it, it is similar to wheat but it is of a deeper red color, and thinner and longer."

This description corresponds well to spelt, which usually has short awns (sharp barbs), although there are some strains which do not have any at all.

For more information in Hebrew and for pictures, and to regularly receive articles about plants and animals linked to the Daf Yomi, write e-mail to: raananmoshe1@gmail.com

STRAIGHT TALK

Abba and Imma, There is Something I want to Tell you...

Rabbi Yoni Lavie, Manager, "Chaverim Makshivim" Website

* I heard you complaining with your friends about the fact that you have a son who is reaching maturity. You complained about me and my behavior, and you added, "Small children, small problems – big children, big problems!" Okay, I feel sorry for you, but maybe the time has come when you should feel a bit sorry for me, too. You may not believe this, but being a parent to a maturing child is not much harder than being a child who is growing up...

* In the crazy and mixed-up world where we live, in a sea of hormones, temptation, and tumults of the age of reaching maturity, you serve for me as an anchor of sorts which I can grab for stability in the mess which is all around me. Even if we will not agree on everything, the very fact that you tell me what you think in a way that is consistent, clear, and well defined, helps me to organize my life and give me direction. Please don't ever stop.

* Do not be frightened, do not give up too quickly when you want me to help around the house or to make more of an effort in my studies, even if I start to argue or get upset. That's the way it is. It's part of my role, and I really do it very well. You should do your task too, and demand what is necessary from me, so that I will not miss out on my potential and miss the life I could have.

* Don't be so proud to your friends about the wonderful "friendly link" that we have, don't act towards me in a way that is "cool." Maybe this is cute now and then, but it isn't what I need. I have enough friends, I need two parents who know how to be tough, to tell me "NO" and sometimes to look at me from above, and not only as an equal.

* On the other hand, it is hard for me when you send me down commands and give me instructions just like you did when I was still five years old. I am beyond that point in life. I can even understand and agree with reasonable things. Please speak to me. Explain. Let's have a conversation. Even if we don't reach total agreement in the end, there is a good chance that we can reach some sort of compromise. Isn't that better?

* Even if I pull back now and then when you try to touch me, you have no idea how hungry I am for warmth and a loving touch. In the cold virtual world where I spend so many hours of

my day, there is a lot of talk about love and contact but very little of the real thing. On the touch-screen, there is a lot of screen time but very little touching. Allow yourselves to sneak me a hug now and then, a pet, or at least a pat on the back. You have no idea how much I really need this.

* When you get home from work, do me a favor and turn off your phone for a while. Give us, your children, at least for a few minutes, the feeling that you are spending all your time with us. After you were not home all day, show us that we are more important to you than a few people who are looking for you right now.

* Sometimes when we are sitting and talking, your phone suddenly rings. You should know that if you peek at the screen, even if you decide not to answer it, we get to see your real priorities, and that there are some things which will cause you to shunt us aside...

* We hear your lectures and your preaching, but we listen much harder to your real lives. It does not matter what you say, how loud you shout, and how excitedly you wave your hands – if in fact your behavior tells us a different story. To surf with unprotected internet and to remain pure is like going in for a swim and staying dry. There is no such thing. I am too ashamed to go into any more detail...

* P.S. When I say goodnight to you and take my phone to bed with me (because I use it as an alarm clock...) perhaps the day is over for you, but for me it has just begun. You have no idea how many hours I surfed and how many movies I chugged through while you were deep in your dreams. And then you wonder why I can't manage to wake up in the morning...

* If you tell me to get home by 11 and I don't get in until 1 o'clock, this doesn't mean that I don't care what you say (after all, I didn't get home at 3 o'clock...). I simply cannot do exactly what you say, because I must show you and myself that I am no longer a little boy, and that I have my own life and my own freedom. But I never really totally ignore what you tell me.

* In other words, even if it seems to you that what is most important to me and what influences me most are my friends, the youth movement, and the internet, you have no idea how important you are to me. You are the only parents I have in the whole world.

* Don't lose patience with me or go wild when I rattle off my standard responses, "Okay... nothing much... great..." Or, my greatest jibe, "That's it, enough of your probing!" I really like it that you are interested in me, and I don't want you to stop. Even if I sometimes play hard to get or put obstacles in your way, I would be very upset if you gave up and surrendered to my responses.

* Even if you sometimes get the feeling that "you don't know who I am" or "who knows what will become of him?" – I heard from grandma and grandpa that they said the same things about you thirty years ago, but in the end you turned out not too bad, and even close to what they are. So, who knows what will be in the future...

Signed - Your loving son...



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