

שבת בשבתו



Parshat Vayechi

No 1656: 16 Tevet 5777 (January 14, 2017)

WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER

Membership: \$50.00

CLICK [HERE](#) TO JOIN OR DONATE TO THE RZA

Pillar Membership:

\$180.00

We are in the process of collecting membership dues for 2017.

Please show your support and join as a member or renew your membership at this time.

Religious Zionists of America

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

office@rza.org, www.rza.org

Dear Friends 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. Please share this with your community leaders and encourage them to sign and email/return to us.

**Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Executive Vice President**

PLEASE SIGN:

**"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 fillot and festivities to mark this occasion.

Please reply via the return envelope or by email to office@rza.org if you would like your institution to be included in our HonorRoll. Those who sign on will receive educational material from our office to help you with preparing for this historic anniversary. Your institution's name will also be included when we publicize the participants in national media.

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 Mizrachi 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

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

The Eternal Message of Chushim ben Dan

Rabbi Shalom Axelrod

Rabbi of Young Israel of Woodmere

Woodmere, NY

In Parshas Vayechi, we read how Yakov son's intern him in Ma'aras Hamachpeila. The Torah does not provide many details of this final act of chesed shel emes. The Talmud (Sota 13a) offers a fuller description. As the brothers neared the cave, Eisav came upon them and held up the procession, laying claim to the one remaining plot. A debate ensues between the brothers and Eisav whether the plot was included on the original sale of the *Bechora*. Eisav challenges them to prove it. Lacking the proof, Naftali, being swift as a deer, is called upon to retrieve the document from Egypt. At that point, the

Talmud records the following:

Chushim the son of Dan was there, *Vyakiran Lei Udnei* - he was hard of hearing (Rashi). He asked what was going on and was told that Eisav was holding up the burial as they waited for Naftali to return from Egypt. Chushim said to them, "Until Naftali returns my father's father should lie in a state of denigration?" Enraged, Chushim takes a staff and cuts off Eisav's head. Most commentaries understand that Chushim's actions were the result of his handicap. *Yakiran Lei Udnei* is interpreted as a hearing deficiency. Because Chushim did not hear, his lack of comprehension caused him to be overcome with anger and in the heat of the moment, he struck out at Eisav. While this is certainly the traditional understanding of the Gemora, one can suggest a different perspective of Chushim.



Only one other Medrash mentions Chushim. The Medrash on Parshas Vayigash describes how in response to Binyamin's captivity, Yehuda began to scream and roar like a lion.

Ad Sheshama Chushim ben Dan; until it was heard by Chushim. Upon hearing Yehuda's cry, Chushim jumps to Mitzrayim and joins Yehuda in his cry. While many understand this medrash to imply that Yehuda's cry was so loud that even Chushim, though hard of hearing, was able to hear it. Perhaps the medrash keys us in to a more special trait of Chushim. One that will enhance our understanding of the events surrounding Yakov's burial, and provide us with a paradigm example of Jewish responsiveness.

Chushim derives from the shrosh (root) of *chush*, to feel, to sense. Chushim possesses a sense which others often lack. He has the innate ability to perceive the meaning, to discern the significance of people and events. He is guided by an awareness of people's pain and suffering, and has the intuition to grasp the implications of events. *K'shmo kenhu*, Chushim lives up to his name. Chushim is a man of sense. This is the meaning behind the medrash with Yehuda. After Binyamin was taken and Yehuda responds with a primal cry, only one person hears it. Only one individual responds. Whereas all the rest of Yakov's family heard his cry, Chushim alone heeds the call and immediately responds. In a moment's notice, Yehuda's cry impacts and motivates him to go down to Egypt and join Yehuda in his suffering and pain. If a fellow Jew is in trouble and is calling out in anguish, then Chushim feels it. And his feelings are translated into action. His ability to sense the needs of others obligates him to do what he can to alleviate and share the burden of others. He is truly Chushim. Both the medrash and the gemarah see Chushim in this light. When the Talmud identifies him as *Yakiran Lei Udnei*, it is clueing us in to the special middah, the unique quality of Chushim. The word *yakiran* is derived from root of Yud, Kuf, Resh: *yakar*. It often means heavy as Rashi indicates, but *yakar* also means precious. The Talmud in saying *Yakiran Lei Udnei* is telling us that Chushim possessed the unique quality of having a precious ear. Chushim's level of intuition and perception was the essence of his being. He is a paradigm example of a middah that is often so lacking in people.

With this understanding of Chushim we can now reexamine the events surrounding Yakov's burial. In burying Yakov, Eisav arrived to challenge not only the burial, but more importantly to contest his rights to the Land. The brothers made a mistake. They got caught up in discussing something that was a given. They started to make *cheshbonot*, calculations of legal rights as evidenced by documents. They were frozen, and in their passive reluctance to confront Eisav, they denigrated Yakov. One man saw it. One man understood what was at stake. One man perceived that Eisav's claim was not just about a plot but rather about *hasadeh asher kanah Avraham*. Abraham bought the entire field, the larger Land of Israel. Chushim understood that Eisav's claim of the plot was actually an attempt to extend his claim to the entire land. Eisav was challenging the Jewish right to Eretz Yisrael. While the brothers are frozen, waiting for the correct documents to arrive from Egypt, Chushim senses and acts. Chushim perceives that Eisav's threatens the future of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. Chushim is identified by the Talmud as *Yakiran Lei Udnei*, the one with the

precious ear. He alone possesses the ability to grasp the implications of events, and responds. His act in killing Eisav not only allows for the funeral procession to proceed but more importantly reestablishes the undisputed right of the Jews to the Land of Israel.

For us today, Chushim is the prime example of how the Jewish people should respond to events in Eretz Yisrael. Like Chushim who heard the cry of Yehuda, we too have to hear the cries of our brothers and sisters in Israel. But hearing the cries is not enough. Just as Chushim joined with Yehuda, we too must demonstrate our commitment to Medinat Yisrael. The claims of Eisav are still being articulated in the halls of the UN. *Asa Eisav Ka Me'akev*, the world is coming with its resolutions and wants to stop our claim to a secure Israel. Chushim teaches us to remain steadfast. To understand that we alone are responsible for our welfare. Our times require us all to be like Chushim. In so doing, we will not only be following a man of feeling who sensed the needs of others and perceived the threats to Klal Yisrael's existence, but we will be helping to bring about a time when there will be no more suffering and pain, for the Jewish people will dwell safely and securely in Eretz Yisrael.

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 Jamie Rubin



My name is Jamie Rubin and I am a first year student at Sy Syms School of Business at YU. I went to Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School located in Livingston NJ and went to Yeshivat Lev Hatorah in Ramat Bet Shemesh for one year this past year (which was incredible!). I am an avid sports fan and player. I am really interested in finance, real estate, and math. Most importantly, I love Israel and I can't wait for the day when I step off the plane and officially call Israel my home. I am really looking forward to meeting all of you and I can't wait to take part in this great opportunity!

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:

Dr. Ernie & Susie Agatstein • Walter & Esthie Feinblum • David & Lauren Lunzer
Dr. Berny & Temi Monderer • Steve & Murielle Uretsky

RZA: Paris Conference Will Endanger Israel

The Religious Zionists of America (RZA) is warning that the January 15, 2017 Paris Middle East Peace Conference will be yet another forum for one-sided pressure on Israel to make dangerous concessions.

In a statement, the RZA said: "The French government, which is hosting the conference, is already calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea-Samaria, which would reduce the Israel to just nine miles wide at its midsection. That's less than half the width of the English Channel, which separates England from France. After Hamas has used Israel's withdrawal from Gaza to create a terror-state and rain missiles on Israeli civilians, how can anybody ask Israel to take such extreme risks all over again?"

The statement added: "France, which during the past 14 months has suffered some of the worst terrorist attacks in the world since 9/11, should recognize better than most the folly of appeasing Islamic terrorists, and the dangers of creating what would be a Palestinian Islamic terrorist state."

"We support peace," continued the RZA statement, "but we stand by the principle that peace will only be achieved by direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbors."

The RZA recalled that in the 1980's, the late Yitzhak Rabin, who was then Israel's Minister of Defense, strongly opposed the idea of international conferences. "If they are ready to make peace, let's negotiate [directly]," Rabin said. "If someone wants to undermine any hope of peace, an international conference is the best way." Added Rabin that "whenever anyone mentions umbrella, it reminds me of Chamberlain and Munich."

The Religious Zionists of America, established in 1916, is one of the oldest and largest Zionist organizations in the United States and is a member-organization of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Presidium

Martin Oliner, Lawrence, NY
Rabbi Leonard Matanky, Chicago, IL
Dr. Ernest Agatstein, Los Angeles, CA

Chairman

Rabbi Solomon F. Rybak, Passaic, NJ

TODAY! RZA-Mizrachi Yom Iyun in Jerusalem

Please join us for a Yom Iyun at the World Mizrachi headquarters in Jerusalem on January 12th, 2017. Open to the general public, this Yom Iyun will explore all topics of Religious Zionism and feature exciting speakers. See program schedule below.



**The Mizrahi World Movement/RZA
Winter Break Yom Iyun on Leadership**

14 Tevet 5777 / 12 January 2017
54 King George Street Jerusalem

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|---|
| 09:00 | Bagel breakfast | 17:15 | Special Bar Mitzvah dinner celebration for the son of IDF officer Eliraz Peretz Z"l
Inspirational address by one of Israel's heroic women, Mrs. Miriam Peretz (Eliraz Z"l's mother, and grandmother of Bar-Mitzvah boy) > Musical performance by world-famous musician Yonatan Raziel |
| 09:30 | Rav Doron Perez - CEO Mizrahi World Movement > A Global Vision for Religious Zionism | | |
| 10:15 | Brigadier General (res.) Effie Eitam > Transformational Life Moments | | |
| 11:30 | Rabbanit Shani Taragin > Yosef and Yehuda - the First Religious-Zionist Leaders | 19:00 | 1967 - Religious Destiny vs. Political Reality. What will the next Fifty Years Hold?
> A Panel Discussion
Moderator: Rav Jeremy Gimpel - Founder, Land of Israel Network; Co-host, Israel Inspired radio & TV

Rav Ari Abramowitz - Founder, Land of Israel Network; Co-host, Israel Inspired radio & TV

Rav Yishai Fleisher - Spokesman, Hebron community; journalist & broadcaster, Land of Israel Network. |
| 12:30 | Lunch Speaker: Rav Yonatan Shulman - OU-JLIC Mincha Sefarim sale | | |
| 13:45 | "Stayin' Alive" Comic Satire Show > Followed by a discussion with the audience led by StandWithUs Hilarious production by Mizrahi World Movement, with top Israeli comedians Noam Jacobson & Gady Weisbart, which exposes BDS's double standard, the skewed world media's coverage of Israel and the hypocrisy of the UN's anti-Israel resolutions
 | 20:15 | Maariv, gifts for participants and concluding words |
| 15:45 | Marc Rosenberg - Nefesh B'Nefesh > "My Heart is in the East but my Body is in the West" - How to Keep the Israel Flame Alive when in Chutz La'Aretz
 | | |

Stayin' Alive Comedy Show Coming to Religious Zionists of Chicago (RZC)

What: Stayin' Alive - Israel Comedy Show (in English).

Light Supperserved.

When: SaturdayNight January 21, 2017 at 8 pm

Where: Mayne StageTheater, 1328 W. Morse. Complimentary Valet Parking

How much: \$36 perperson. Sponsorships available as well.

How to reserve: visit betcafe.rzc.us.

Seating is limited so don't delay to make your reservations.

Questions:Contact Rabbi Jerry Isenberg at [847-674-9733](tel:847-674-9733) x 3 or ji@rzc.us

Stayin' Alive: BDS hasmet its match

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 Mizrahi 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. Mizrahi 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.

For info, a promo video, reservations and sponsorships, please click here:
betcafe.rzc.us

If you would like to bring this show to your community, please contact our office at office@rza.org.

MIZRACHI WORLD MOVEMENT PRESENTS



AN ISRAELI COMEDY SHOW

“Stayin’ Alive,” an Israeli multi-faceted comedy show in English—hilarious, wacky, blunt and self-confident with a healthy dose of chutzpa—celebrates Israel: a small country, surrounded by enemies, grappling with constant terror, UN and world media bias, and BDS half-truths and distortions yet with the temerity to go on living a normal life, insisting on forever Stayin’ Alive...

SATURDAY NIGHT BET CAFE

JANUARY 21, 2017
MAYNE STAGE
1328 W. MORSE, CHICAGO
DOORS OPEN 8PM

Complimentary Valet Parking
Light Supper Served
Tickets \$36
Limited seating

For sponsorships and tickets
call 847-674-9733 x2
or visit betcafe.rzc.us



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 Yerushalyaim!

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!



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

Is this “Satanic Prosecution” by the Judges?

By Rabbi Yisrael Rozen, Dean of the Zomet Institute

“If all the judges of the Sanhedrin rule that the defendant is guilty – he is released... Nobody is appointed to the Sanhedrin unless he knows how to show that a vermin is kosher by Torah law.” [Sanhedrin 17a].

A Note to the Honorable Judge: We are at War!

I join at least half of our nation in expressing **total shock to hear the ruling of the judges** that was read by IDF Judge Maya Heller in the case of Elor Azaria, who killed a terrorist

in Chevron. I have no quarrel with the facts, with such issues as the angle of shooting, or the values of “the purity of arms,” which are all part of the arsenal of the honored judge. I do have a dispute with the **tie-wearing military prosecutors, who refused to accept a plea bargain** (as reported by the press), preferring to stick to their religion of legalism, because they are convinced that the law takes precedence over life. And I have a dispute with the blindness of the Chief Judge of the case, who lives in this religious bubble, which seems to be taken from another planet, not the one on which we live.

Has this woman **never heard that we are at war?** Doesn't the honorable judge know that the international laws of war have undergone a revolution, not from the side of the “good guys” but from the side of the evil ones? **They have invented a new weapon for which nobody has yet found a defense: Suicide! These people are living bombs who are willing to die for “the cause.”** Anybody who wants to live is naturally repelled by this weapon and is filled with natural suspicions of fear. But evidently these simple facts have not been recorded in the learned law books. Madam Judge, understand that we are not allowed even in wartime to kill an enemy who is restrained and handcuffed. However, is the honorable judge allowed to put handcuffs on the hands of our fighters, and to restrain their spirits, with ropes that stem from legalisms? Doesn't such a primeval situation rate at least a **small level of consideration, something which is completely missing from the judge's ruling?**

Today, when I am writing this column, we lived through the tragedy of a **truck attack on officer cadets from Bahad 1, in full view of the walls of Jerusalem.** It has been reported that for this terrorist one attack in the “forward” direction was not enough, and he turned the truck back and ran over his victims a second time. My fingers tremble when I consider the following dilemma: If I had been there, or my officer sons or grandsons, **would I have shot at the terrorist in the pause between the two stages of the attack?** In a flicker of indecision, I might have indeed held back, seeing the image of the raised finger of Judge Heller: **“It is forbidden! The attack is over!”**

I agree that we cannot erase the laws of war, but there remain two paths that we can take in Azaria's case: **A reasonable plea bargain, or to quickly grant a pardon** (skipping over the stage of appealing the existing decision, which perpetuates the religion of the absurd).

Is there no Spark of Consideration? Does Everything Point to Guilt?

In Hebrew law there is a rule that at first glance might seem to be absurd, but which in reality is a perfect match for the psychology of judgment. As quoted above, **“If all the judges of the Sanhedrin rule that the defendant is guilty – he is released...”** The commentators explain that if the judges could not find any reason in favor of the defendant, not one single indication of lenience (as is true of the learned decision of the judge in this case) – then we must conclude that this is a **“done deal”** and not an honest trial! The main foundation of judging is to be able to see the “other side” of an issue, and as quoted above to show that a **vermin is kosher by Torah law. If this element is missing, the trial is cancelled.**

Elor Azaria's trial is a perfect example of **iniquity in judgment – the ruling does not include a single word of compassion for the defendant.**

As Shabbat Approaches

“Until Shilo Comes” [Bereishit 49:10] – Rashi: The Mashiach, the King

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

After Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook eulogized Dr. Theodor Herzl, he wrote an article called “The Eulogy in Jerusalem,” where he displayed his outlook about the relationship between the body and the soul of the Jewish nation. His words are relevant for our generation, and we will try to summarize them here.

It is written, “On that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning for Hadad-Rimmon in the Valley of Megiddon” [Zecharya 11:12]. In his translation, Yonatan Ben

Uziel writes: "Like the eulogy for Achav, who was killed by Hadad-Rimmon and like the eulogy for Yoshiyahu, who was killed by Pharaoh Necho in the Valley of Megiddo." The people of Eretz Yisrael were shocked, and Yonatan Ben Uziel apologized, saying that he wrote what he did in order not to increase the controversy in Yisrael.

The sages taught us that this refers to the mourning for Mashiach Ben Yosef, who will be killed. We might ask why we need two messiahs, one descended from Yosef and the other from David. Rav Kook explains that just as a human being is a combination of two basic elements, the body and the soul, so in man there are two basic traits. The task of one of these is to strengthen the body, and the other one acts to improve the soul. The way to achieve perfection is for each side to show appreciation for the other one, and to understand that the person cannot exist without both sides. However, the body must know that the soul should be in the lead.

In our nation too, some forces are involved in building up the nationalistic elements, while other forces work to strengthen the soul of the nation. The goal of both sides is to establish a powerful nation with a healthy soul, and the soul takes the lead in the effort. The two different forces were installed from the beginning in two tribes. Yehuda is the tribe which is responsible for the soul of the nation, and therefore Yehuda was sent ahead of the others to establish a house of learning in Egypt. Yosef is responsible for economic success, and he was therefore sent to Egypt before any of the others. In the end, both forces will be united in the character of David, who was "red-headed, with beautiful eyes" [Shmuel I 16:12], who killed the enemy in wars but only while following instructions from the Sanhedrin. That is what the sages taught us.

After the era of David, the Kingdom was divided, when Yeravam, who was from the tribe of Yosef, split away from Yehuda. "The Holy One, Blessed be He, took hold of Yeravam's cloak and said to him: Change your mind, and I, you, and the son of Yishai will stride together in the Garden of Eden." That is, we will build up the nation of Yisrael together. But the answer to Yeravam's question, "Who will go first?" was, of course, "The son of Yishai will be first," and Yeravam refused. (See Sanhedrin 102.) And from then on the House of Yisrael has been divided. Some parties are involved in emphasizing the nationalistic aspects and tend to ignore the Torah. Others give strong support to the Torah but are not interested in nationalistic aspects at all.

These two segments of the nation can be seen in the actions of Achav and Yoshiyahu. Achav loved the nation and built up Eretz Yisrael, but he turned his back on the Torah. Yoshiyahu was close to the Torah, but he did not see any importance in the nationalistic side. When these two were killed, only their respective parties mourned for them. However, the death of Mashiach Ben Yosef will be a great shock for the nation, and each party will begin to understand how wrong it was to ignore the other one. Therefore, the eulogy for Mashiach will be as great as that related to "**Hadad-Rimmon** in the Valley of **Megiddon**" – the eulogy of Achav, who was killed by the son of **Hadad** – and also the eulogy of **Yoshiyahu**, who was killed in the Valley of Megiddo. Matters cannot be rushed, and the forces cannot be combined before the proper time arrives, and therefore these matters were kept hidden. However, Yonatan Ben Uziel was convinced that this was the root of the disagreements in Yisrael, and he therefore took it upon himself to "reveal the secret."

ZIONIST CHASSIDISM

Relative Merit and Absolute Merit

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

Revealing the End of Days

This week's Torah portion is "*setumah*" – that is, it continues from the end of last week's portion without any intervening space. All the commentators and the Midrash explain that this is a hint of the fact that Yaacov wanted to reveal the end to his sons, but his effort was blocked and he was not able to reveal it.

"In its Proper Time, I will Hasten It"

With this in mind, the Rebbe of Husiatyn relates this week to the two types of end of the exile, as is discussed in the Talmud (Sandhedrin 98): "In its proper time," and "I will hasten it." [Yeshayahu 60:22].

In order to hasten the time of the exile, two factors are needed: (1) Unity; and (2) Repentance.

Unity refers to unity within the nation of Yisrael, in order to fix the known sin of unjustified hatred. However, unity is also an a priori condition for repentance. The mitzvot correspond to the organs in the body, and the organs cannot function without harmony and coordination between them. Thus, without unity in the nation, repentance and performance of the mitzvot is not sufficient.

"Not Because of Your Righteousness"

There are two types of "merit" in the eyes of man and G-d alike. There are those who have absolute merit – this is a righteous person according to all criteria. There are also people with relative merit – a person is righteous when compared to his or her place, community, or people in the generation, but in practical terms he or she is less righteous. This is how the Rebbe explains the above verse:

"It is not because of your righteousness and your upright heart that you come to take possession of the land, but rather it is because of the evil of those nations that your G-d gives you their land' [Devarim 9:5]. That is, your merit is not absolute, but rather relative. Thus, in principle we can get possession of the land even if we have merits in a relative and not an absolute sense."

Jewish Pride

What is our situation today? If we have merits that are only relative and not absolute, will that suffice to bring about the future redemption? The Rebbe replied:

"We thus see that even though we are not at the level of having 'merits' in an absolute sense (because if we did have such merit we would have already been redeemed), we certainly have sufficient relative merits."

And the Rebbe shares with us a vision that he had before the beginning of the Second World War:

"In view of the evil of the other nations in our time, we can say without hesitation and without any doubt that our nation is filled with mitzvot like the number of seeds in a pomegranate. When the Jews of Vienna were forced to give their gold and silver to the evil government, a Jewish woman stood among the crowd and wept. A young Jew with a bare head and the appearance of a Gentile scolded her, saying: Why are you crying? I am happy that because I am a Jew I am being forced to sacrifice (that is, to give them money to the Gentiles). And that is what I say: In relative terms the Jews have certainly reached a status of merit. And we pray that G-d will invoke the principle that 'I will hasten the final redemption,' for we have no remaining strength for all of this suffering. And I am sure that when G-d redeems Yisrael the relative merit will be transformed into absolute merit."

The Rebbe sees a Jew who is proud to be Jewish, even though he must give up his money and to suffer because of it, as people who have relative merit. And based on the fact that we have relative merits we will in the end reach a stage of absolute merit, without any need for comparisons to others.

If we look at our situation today, we might say that not everybody has full merit. Half of the nation lives in exile and there is much assimilation, and many of the people of Israel do not observe the Torah and the mitzvot in the normal way. If the Rebbe were still alive today, would he look at those with relative merit in a positive light?

I am confident that the Rebbe would declare with all his might that we are all full of merit, like the number of seeds in a pomegranate. Our part of the world is filled with great cruelty: half a million people have died in the war in Syria, millions of people have been displaced from their homes, there are mass killings in the name of religion, and many other horrors. There can be no doubt that in a relative sense we have merits, and perhaps we are even close to having sufficient merit in an absolute sense. Let us hope for full redemption in the near future.

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

Science and Religion

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

Those who have discussed religion and science were mainly interested in two aspects of this matter: the age of the world and the origins of life. A common assumption, which we will use in spite of its superficial character, is that science has established that the world is about 16 billion years old and that man developed from an ape-like ancestor, while the Torah feels that the world is about 6000 years old and that man was created directly from primeval mud.

There are four classical approaches about this issue:

(1) The Torah is absolute truth, and therefore it is eminently clear that science is wrong. This is the approach of those who are looking for the warmth of closure.

(2) Science is true, which means that the Torah is in error. This approach can be found in positivist circles.

(3) The Torah tells us the truth, and this can be proven by scientific methods. People who hold this opinion can show proofs that contradict the idea of evolution, and they explain the existence of fossils by postulating that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world with the fossils in the rocks. They also use the concept of relativity of time in order to shorten the astronomical eras of the existence of the world.

(4) Science is the truth, and the Torah affirms that this is so. People who believe this bring proofs of primal eras of millions of years from books of Kabbalah, from statements that the Holy One, Blessed be He, built previous worlds and destroyed them, and that the “days” mentioned in the story of Creation were very long periods of time. They may also mention that the Midrash teaches us that Adam had a tail, and so on.

The common denominator of these four approaches, which is not true, is that the Torah and science are both involved in the same common ground, and that they both come to give answers to the same questions. However, the truth is that when science gives a number for the age of the world it is answering the question “What?” while the Torah is answering a different question, “Why?” Thus, there is no contradiction between the two approaches and they also do not correspond with each other. Rather, they are both relevant for different areas of interest.

In addition to the above, Yeshayahu Leibowitz suggested a fifth approach, one that is so simple that it is very tempting:

(5) There is no common ground at all between Torah and science, just as in essence humanitarianism and science are intrinsically different from each other.

At first glance this seems to agree with what we noted above about the first four approaches, which are based on the erroneous assumption that religion and science try to give answers to the same questions. However, this approach ignores the internal unity that exists in the world that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created. G-d both gave the Torah and also created science. It is therefore clear that there must be a link that joins these two subjects. Therefore, we must adopt the relatively complex approach of Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook:

(6) This approach has two main concepts:

- Religion and science are not linked on the level of facts.

- There is a very deep connection between the Torah and the development of science in that the rate of development of new scientific discoveries is linked to the need to expand

humanity's level of knowledge about G-d. One example is the transition from belief in a flat world into a round one, which puts mankind at the center of existence and further implies the need for an approach full of humility, viewing the round earth as a minute speck of dust in the cosmos. Another example is the move from viewing creation as a sudden act to seeing it as a gradual process of the advent of life, which corresponds to the Kabbalic viewpoint of the progression from one world to another and to the concept of redemption "Kim'a kim'a" – proceeding slowly, step by step.

NATURE AND THE TORAH PORTION

Binyamin the Wolf

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

"Binyamin is a predatory wolf – in the morning he will eat his portion and in the evening he will divide the spoils" [Bereishit 49:27].

In our day-to-day speech we do not differentiate between two Hebrew words that are used to describe the way a wild animal attacks its prey. Today the word "*terifah*" is used for all types of predators. However, in the literature of the sages and the commentators, there is a difference between the verbs "*toreff*" and "*doress*."

Terifah and Chatifah

In the above verse, the wolf is called a "*toreff*" who is active at night. The commentators labored hard over the question of the similarity between history and the nature of Binyamin and the innate characteristics of a wolf. Rashi writes: "Binyamin is a predatory wolf – He is a wolf who will capture others. This is a prophecy that in the future they will become kidnappers. As is written, 'And every man will capture his wife' [Shoftim 21:21], in the affair of the concubine at Giv'a."

According to Rashi, this link between "*terifah*" and "*chatifah*" – kidnapping – can also be found in the Talmud. "A shepherd who was tending his sheep and left them to go to the city, and meanwhile a wolf came and attacked them ("*taraff*") or a lion came and attacked them ("*darass*"), is not required to pay." [Bava Metziya 41a]. Rashi explains, "The way of a lion is to kill its prey at the place where it catches it, while a wolf takes the live prey to a safe place and kills it there." [Ibid, 93b].

According to these commentaries, a wolf does not eat its prey at the place where it catches it but rather carries it to its lair and hides it. This might well be the "kidnapping" that is expected of a wolf. The above phenomenon does indeed exist for the members of a pack of wolves which are at a lowly status. After the dominant pair of wolves finishes eating, the other members of the pack come and tear pieces of flesh for themselves which they drag to their own hiding places.

"It Eats its Prey in Haste"

Observation of wolves that eat their prey at the site where they catch it shows that they eat in a very frantic fashion. The wolves quickly swallow large pieces of meat which they regurgitate later back into their mouths, and they chew this and then swallow it again. Perhaps they developed this manner of eating in order to protect their food from being stolen by larger animals.

Or Hachaim comments as follows:

"Binyamin is a predatory wolf – This is a reference to Shaul, who acted like a wolf, which eats its prey in great haste. The habit of the wolf is not to take its time with its prey but to be in a big hurry. This is similar to the way Shaul acted, he did not wait for the time set by Shmuel but hurried to attack Amalek..."

"Darass" – While Alive; "Taraff" – After Death

In another place, Rashi gives a different way to differentiate between "*derissah*" and "*terifah*."

“Darass’ – this means that it did not kill its prey but ate it alive. This is the normal action of the animal, and it is like damage done ‘by a tooth’ in a public place, for which the owner is not liable. ‘Taraff’ – it killed the prey and then ate it.” [BavaKama 16b]. In his commentary on the passage, the Rashba agrees: “The meaning of ‘darass’ is that it took bites and ate from the live victim, while ‘taraff’ means that it killed the victim and then ate. And that is the difference between the lion and the wolf.”

These commentaries emphasize that the wolf kills its prey and eats it afterwards, as opposed to the words of Rashi in BavaMetziya, that “terifah” includes carrying the living prey to a hiding place. The two different approaches can be reconciled by assuming that they involved different individuals who do not have the same status in the pack. The dominant animals, who are relatively weak as compared to a lion, must make sure that the prey is dead before they start feeding, but the individuals of a lower status carry their portion of the meal to the lair.

“Taraff” – With the Mouth and the Teeth

The Aruch (in item “darass”) gives another explanation for the difference between “derissah” and “terifah,” as follows: “‘Darass and ate’ – If the lion struck the cattle with its forefeet so that it died from its venom and then ate it, the shepherd is not liable, because this is how the lion behaves when it wants to eat, and the law is that ‘damage by teeth’ in a public area does not incur any payment. However, if the lion attacked (‘taraff’) with its mouth and teeth and killed the cattle, the shepherd must pay even if the lion then sat down to eat, since this is not usual for it, and this follows the law of ‘a attack with the horn’ in a public area.”

This paragraph in the Aruch is a precise description of the different methods of attacking prey by a lion and a wolf. A wolf, which in general does not weigh enough to be able to use its body in an attack, kills its prey mainly by biting with its teeth. There are descriptions of wolves pursuing a reindeer or other large ungulates which in the end are overcome by crucially placed bites.

Dividing the Spoils and Night Vision

Rashbam relates to two significant elements that are implied in the verse about Binyamin and the wolves. (1) The wolves share the spoils of their attacks. (2) The wolf is active during the night.

The concept that “he will divide the spoils” can be understood very well in terms of the structure of a wolf pack. This includes a clear hierarchy controlled by a dominant male (the alpha male) and a dominant female (the alpha female), which are the only animals that reproduce. Underneath them is a group of individuals whose status is beta, and the lowest status are the omegas. As noted above, the two dominant wolves are the first ones to feed on prey, and only after they finish can the other members of the pack approach. With respect to wolves (as opposed to other animals of prey), when food is scarce the pups are not allowed to eat, even if this will lead to their death, so that there will remain enough food for the adults.

The second point, related to activity at night, appears in other verses, such as the following: “Their horses are faster than leopards, and they are fiercer than wolves of the night...” [Chabakuk 1:8]. Radak explains, “Wolves go out at night in search of prey.” In fact, wolves are well adapted to night activities. When wolves attack a bear, they utilize the daylight hours to irritate it and wear it down, while they stage their final attack at night, because they have better night vision than their enemies.

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

One Out of Three

By Rabbi Yonie Lavie, "Chaverim Makshivim" Website

What is the greatest strategic threat for the nation of Yisrael today? Well, it all depends on whom you ask.

- We can assume that security experts will talk about the Iranian nuclear threat. If this radical Islamic state manages to develop an atomic bomb, it will pose a direct threat to the State of Israel.

- Social activists will speak about economic gaps and about the increased poverty rate, while others will point out the dangers of the polarization between different segments of the nation, and the growing hatred among the people.

- Religious people might point out the dwindling of our Jewish identity and abandonment of traditional values, or the assimilation and mixed marriages which vigorously nibble away at world Jewry and have even started to appear in Israel.

However, it seems to me that there is one important statistic that remains below the threshold. It is usually treated as a natural phenomenon, such that nothing can be done about it, except to give a brief sigh and then move on to the next topic. However, the truth is that it is serious and destructive, and it has many serious repercussions. The numbers are hard to grasp: **11,114 couples divorced in Israel during the last year. It's true: eleven thousand, one hundred and fourteen!**

To put it another way: Last year, more than ten thousand homes in the State of Israel were blown to bits, leaving behind them a huge and bleeding trail of broken hearts and large numbers of children who have lost their footing, when the two people closest to them have grown apart and often even became bitter enemies.

This is no less than a national epidemic which we must take into account, in order to decide on ways to prevent its spread. The main nucleus from which a nation is built up is the family unit, and this is based on a couple, a man and a woman, who join together in love. This can provide a suitable platform for the growth of healthy and happy children who will – with the help of G-d – establish their own families. The separation of a married couple is not at all like a business partnership that is dissolved or a move to a new home, it is a terrible destruction of a life partnership, of dreams and hopes, and it provides a moral blow to the children involved. Our sages expressed the seriousness of the matter by saying that the Altar sheds tears when a divorce takes place (Sanhedrin 22a).

It is true that sometimes the relationship between the couple is so clouded and negative that the only viable alternative is to separate, but the fact that this has become so common is terrible and frightening, and we must not accept it as inevitable.

We cannot take any comfort from the fact that the situation in Israel is better than in the Western World in general, where divorce rates can be as high as 50 or even 80 percent, but rather we must wake up and do whatever we can to stop this epidemic in our midst, which leaves behind it scorched earth and severe spiritual, economic, and educational damage.

Is Companionship a Result of Intuition?

It is possible to analyze the reasons for the epidemic of divorce and then to propose ways to cope with the situation. But it would seem that beyond all the actions we should take there is a basic realm where essential change is needed.

In the religious sector, it is common for a new couple to go to guidance sessions before their wedding. The formal reason for this is the need to study the laws of family purity, which have not been studied systematically before this point (as opposed to such subjects as Shabbat, kashrut, and so on). Together with the study of formal halacha, practical guidelines are taught which involve intimate matters between the couple. Women attend most of such sessions, but men too tend to go through brief guidance study. As an aside, the young couple is sometimes exposed to the subject of companionship, if this can be squeezed into the busy schedules before the wedding.

The secular community, on the other hand, does not in general have any organized guidance before getting married. (After all, it is assumed that the halacha is not relevant for them, and that they have their own intimate experience in their relationship.) Those who register with the local Rabbinate are given a very brief halachic overview in a single session (which may or

may not succeed), about the concepts of a mikveh and ritual impurity.

What will happen to a new couple right after their wedding? How will they cope with differences and gaps that may appear as they continue to live together? Will they be aware of the different stages of marriage and know how to build up the next stages in their relationship? How will they cope with crises, difficulties, and external threats to their companionship?

In all of these matters, the somewhat surprising answer is that we depend on the natural intuition of the couple, and we hope that the wonderful and complex “ship” of their companionship will manage to navigate through the stormy waters of life, without any prior maps that can show them the proper way, and without experts who can teach them how to cope with an endless number of obstacles that they will encounter.

However, what can we do when it turns out that things just do not work that way? It is a basic truth that everything that is complex and meaningful in life must be studied in depth, it requires ongoing maintenance and a strict adherence to proper behavior patterns. When none of this takes place, we should not be surprised that the “ship” of marriage in the Western World founders like the Titanic...

Teaching Couplehood

There is no alternative to a radical change in awareness. We must develop guidance and accompaniment for new couples not only for the initial stages before a marriage but mainly after the wedding has taken place.

If Israel would take on this challenge in a systematic way (is there some MK who will take hold of this gauntlet?) and build up a national system of seminars which will also include workshops on companionship and personal guidance, we might see an improvement in a very short time. The sessions should be divided according to various styles – religious/chareidi/secular – with free choice for everybody. At least two sessions a year should be held. An incentive of a tax break can be offered for the participants. In this way we can save a multitude of homes from destruction.

The cost of setting up and operating such a system would be small compared to the great economic damage of the destruction of tens of thousands of homes every year, with the resulting loss of work days, unnecessary legal struggles, the need for extra living facilities (for the man and the woman), the psychological damage to the children, and more. The profit of greater stability in Israeli society due to the strengthening of the family unit will be much greater than any financial cost of this new system.

Will anybody rise to the challenge?

For reactions, added material, and to join an e-mail list: milatova.org.il



This publication is distributed by the **RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA – MIZRACHI** and by **THE ZOMET INSTITUTE OF ALON SHVUT**. It is an extract from *Shabbat B'Shabbato*, a weekly bulletin distributed in hundreds of synagogues in Israel and has been translated by Moshe Goldberg. If you are interested in sponsoring an issue of *Shabbat B'Shabbato*, contact the RZA Mizrachi office at **212.465.9234** or mizrachi@rza.org



THE SHABBAT B'SHABBATO IS PUBLISHED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS IN THE DIASPORA - WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION, & THE LOUIS AND ETTA SCHIFF FOUNDATION

The Religious Zionists of America is the US affiliate of the 115 year old [World Mizrachi](#) movement. The goal of the RZA 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 <https://rza.org>.



Religious Zionists of America | 305 Seventh Avenue, Floor 12, New York, NY 10001

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by office@rza.org in collaboration with



Try it free today