

שבת בשבתו



Parshat Vayigash

No 1655: 9 Tevet 5777 (January 7, 2017)

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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.

Membership \$50.00

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Religious Zionists of America

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New York, NY 10001

office@rza.org

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 and encourage participation.

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 Honor Roll. 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 Mizrachimovement. 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 Road Less Traveled

Rabbi E. Samuel Klibanoff

Rabbi of Congregation Etz Chaim, Livingston, NJ

I must admit that Vayigash is my favorite Parsha. The fact that this was my Bar Mitzvah Parsha (only a handful of years ago,) may have something to do with it. However, with each passing year of age and experience, I find new rich meaning in the dénouement of the saga between Yoseif, Yaakov and all the brothers.

Imagine if Yoseif had decided to really punish his brothers as an act of vengeance. While we may not be in favor of such action, we likely could understand why he may have acted that way. After all, Yoseif had suffered a great deal at the hands of his brothers. Instead, we find that Yoseif only silently rebukes his brothers (see Beis Haleivi) and chooses

the high road. Yoseif, as it turns out, has been channeling all of his efforts to put the family back together. This was especially important given the fact that a long and arduous exile was about to commence.

The one thing that plagues the Jewish community endlessly is the lack of unity. Seldom do we choose the path of Yoseif. We often choose the path that makes us "Right" versus the one that makes us happy. We hardly ever take the road less travelled.

As we still have fresh memories of Chanukah in our minds, we should remember what we can accomplish when we have Jewish unity. Our beloved State of Israel is constantly under attack in an arena of warfare that we have not seen before. Nations of the world are gathering together in number to deny our right to our homeland. Students in major universities and colleges all over the world are being indoctrinated with anti-Semitic and anti-Israel vitriol that will formulate their critical thinking as they go out into the world. The last thing we need amongst ourselves is a lack of unity.

Perhaps now more than ever, we should seriously consider taking that trip to Israel. Set the example for your friends, family and colleagues that we are one with our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, regardless of what any newspaper or politician may have to say. Now is the time for us to walk the path of Yoseif Hatzaddik. Now is the time for us to show our support for Israel.

I hope to see you there!



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 Tzvi Wolkenfeld

I am currently an undergraduate student in Touro College in Queens, where I am majoring in Psychology in conjunction with taking most of the science courses. I have aspirations of being a Physical Therapist and eventually open my own clinic and make Aliyah.

My two years in Israel had, perhaps, the biggest effect on my life. I see this for many Americans as well. People talk about their years in Israel with a



passion no matter how long ago they were. Israel is a life-changer, yet slowly over time, people feel like they lose that special connection they developed during those years in Medrasha or Yeshiva.

The dream of making Aliyah seems far away, which is an important reason I'm excited to join the RZA as an Aryeh Fellows – so I can channel my passion and love for Israel with other college students in America. The RZA gives me the opportunity to create, or in my case keep, a connection to Israel for myself and others who don't know where to start. I'm excited to return to Israel during winter break to learn in yeshiva and to lead in the RZA Aryeh Fellow's Manhigut Projects

RZA-Mizrachi Yom Iyun in Jerusalem

Please join us for a Yom Iyun at the World Mizrahi 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

- 09:30 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 Rabanit Shani Taragin > **Yosef and Yehuda - the First Religious-Zionist Leaders**
- 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

- 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**

- 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
- 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.
- 20:15 Maariv, gifts for participants and concluding words

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 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. 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.

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

**MIZRACHI
RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF
CHICAGO**

Rabbi Jerry Isenberg Featured on JM and in AM



On Tuesday, January 3rd, Rabbi Jerry Isenberg, RZA's Vice President of Israel's Relations and Director of Religious Zionists of Chicago, was featured on JM in the AM with Nachum Segal. The interview ([found here](#)) focuses on World Mizrahi's Mega Mission for Yom Yerushalayim and Religious Zionists of Chicago's activities. This radio program takes place Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM-8:30 AM.

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!



**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 Yemenite Saga

By Rabbi Yisrael Rozen, Dean of the Zomet Institute

“We cannot look at the man’s face **if our little brother is not with us**” [Bereishit 44:26].

Exposure

Recently more than two hundred thousand documents were published resulting from the investigation of the affair of the “Children of Yemen.” About a thousand children from among these immigrants “disappeared” in the early years of our country (the era of the “*maabarot*” – the shanty-towns), and their families, prodded on by various organizations, made accusations of scandals in **their definite belief that this was the result of a concerted policy of the government of Israel and its various branches.** According to the many stories that were heard throughout the years, (almost all) the children were sent to hospitals, from which they have not returned to this day. In past years, hundreds (?) of undocumented graves of nameless children have been found, showing that many of the missing children died. On the other hand, everybody agrees that the attitude of social welfare, medical, and absorption authorities **towards the “primitive” Yemenite immigrants was haughty and patronistic.**

One of the main complaints was and continues to be the question of **why nobody took the trouble to find the families** and to tell them about the deaths of their children, and to hand the bodies over to the burial societies. In partial defense, we can say that the inhabitants of the *maabarot* did not live at well-defined addresses, and the circumstances of mass absorption in the early days of the state were very difficult. This was especially true in the case of children, where the Yemenite immigrants did not understand how to manage and were not able to keep track of their children in the hospitals. The heartbreak of the families is touching, **and a dark cloud enveloped the officials of the time,** who showed a severe lack of sensitivity to what was going on. However, it is not reasonable to suggest that there were criminal actions by individuals. Not only has the time run out on the statute of limitations, but the circumstances are clouded and misty, and evidently the new 200,000 documents do

not give any evidence for criminal or negligent behavior.

What about Kidnapping?

So much for a discussion of minor matters in this affair. However, the main accusation which has caused a great tumult in the Yemenite sector is a story that there was an organized movement under the auspices of the government authorities to “kidnap” the babies and hand them over for adoption in Israel and in the United States (to rich families who wanted to adopt a child, or to Holocaust survivors). The accusers also did not hold back from raising suspicions of “medical experiments” and the like. High-level whispers gave a picture of **nightmarish scenarios**, while it can clearly be seen in the new documents that these claims are a **“blood libel”** which has no basis in fact. I always felt that the “Yemenite speculation” against the “Ashkenazic nobility” was patently absurd. Such an operation could not have been carried out without the collusion of dozens of active participants. I cannot believe that in the sixty years that have passed nobody rose up – not a physician, or a nurse, an activist from WIZO or the Jewish Agency, an official from the medical authorities or a border smuggler – to make a **deathbed confession that they took part in such organized crime at a personal and national level**, in order to come to peace with their conscience before passing away. Our objective media investigators have not been able to find any proof of such a massive national conspiracy, which has been beating on our ears for decades. And finally, a very important point: **It would be impossible to conceal massive adoption of Yemenite children by Ashkenazi families from a visual point of view.** This blood libel is shattered by a wall of skin color!

Until now I have kept silent, like many others, out of a fear that the investigatory committees might have indeed found some evidence of criminal activity, as might have been implied by the fact that until now the material has been kept secret. However, now, to my great joy, **the shadows have been pushed away! No evidence has been found of any organized kidnapping or of a system of widespread adoptions out of kindness.**

I am fully aware that the families involved and organizations “for” and “against” will not let a small matter of a lack of evidence interfere with **the historical accusation which has become a fundamental sectorial belief. And what better proof could there be than what has happened with the investigations of Arlozoroff’s assassination?**

** * * * *

The saga of Yosef, kidnapped and sold into slavery, rises up to taunt us anew every year. This fantastic story defies all logic, and in spite of Yosef’s meteoric rise to power we are left with one unsolved key question, a challenge for any commentator – **Why didn’t Yosef take the trouble to tell his father that he was still alive?**

Ramban discusses this question: “We might wonder why he didn’t send a letter to his father to let him know the situation and to console him. After all, Egypt is a mere six-day trip from Chevron, and even if the distance would take a year to cover he should have notified his father, out of respect. The answer is that Yosef acted when he did **in order to fulfill his dream** (where his father and brothers bowed down to him, or to his bale of grain). Other early commentators did not like this explanation (Abarbanel, the “Akeidah”): “The one who sent the dream is responsible for making it come true,” not the dreamer! Others explain that Yosef waited to reveal himself **in order to get the brothers to repent**, specifically with respect to Binyamin. And here are some “modern” commentaries. Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun suggests a surprising idea: **It was all a big mistake!** Yosef expected his father to search for him, and when this did not happen Yosef felt that the Holy One, Blessed be He, had pushed him away like Eisav and Yishmael (“G-d has made me forget” [Bereishit 41:49]). And the late Chanan Porat said: Yosef’s righteous feeling **not to cause his father sorrow and to cover for his brothers** took precedence over his personal emotions. Prof. Shalom Rosenberg suggests this was a case of **repression as a result of trauma.**

As for me, I am all for the approach of **“aman of Tanach at the level of the sages,”** as opposed to psychological reasoning “at eye level.” I therefore accept the mystical solution of the Ramban, based on the approach of the sages: “The tribes were busy with selling Yosef. Yosef was busy with his sackcloth and his fasting. Reuven was busy with his sackcloth and his fasting. And Yaacov was busy with his sackcloth and his fasting. Yehuda was busy looking for a wife. **And the Holy One, Blessed be He, was busy creating the light of the King, the Machiach...**” [Bereishit Rabba, Vayeishev, 85]. There is no point in analyzing

the messianism of Yosef, which is wrapped up in the clouds of redemption...

As Shabbat Approaches

“If Reuven had only Known” – A Sale or a Mission

By Esti Rosenberg, Head of the Midrasha for Women, Migdal Oz

After the tension-filled week since we read about the discovery of the stolen goblet, this week we stand next to Yosef with excitement and pain as he reveals himself to his brothers. We can feel the power what we have experienced all through the book of Bereishit – man is active and creative on the earth, acting according to his own free choice. And at the same time, he takes part in historic Divine events which fashion the characteristics of the nation and the world as a whole.

Yosef's wording is precise: “I am your brother Yosef, whom you sold into Egypt, but now do not be sad... that you sold me... for G-d sent me ahead of you to provide a livelihood... And G-d sent me ahead of you to provide a remainder for you... And now, know that you did not send me here but rather G-d.” [Bereishit 45:4-8]. Yosef reviews for them exactly what happened – they sold him, which was a sin, but at the very same time Yosef was taking part in a Divine mission. The brothers sold him, but the Creator sent him on a mission. Yosef is a brother who is hated, but he is also a messenger of the Creator, to save the world and to change all subsequent human history.

Midrash Rabba explains for us the difficulty of Yosef's life, existing on two different levels at the same time, and points out the missed opportunity from the human side that can happen when an individual does not understand the significance of his own actions.

“If Reuven had known that the Holy One, Blessed be He, would write about him, ‘And Reuven heard, and he rescued him from their hands’ [Bereishit 37:21], he would have carried Yosef back to his father on his shoulders.”

Reuven was not aware of the historic missed opportunity that his actions involved. If he had understood that their family dispute would influence all of human history and would be described in the Torah for all subsequent generations to read, he would certainly have made a bigger effort. The Midrash continues:

“The Torah wants to teach us that when a person performs a mitzva he should do so with all his heart.”

Reuven did not understand, and he did not try as hard as he could have. And this led to Yosef's being sold as part of a Divine process but also to a missed opportunity for humanity which continued to have an effect on Reuven and his brothers later on.

Bereishit teaches us the price paid in pain for Divine missions, where every human act is recorded by the Holy One, Blessed be He, and has consequences that last for all eternity. On one hand, this is a great privilege, but it can also lead to tremendous pain and sorrow. Yaacov mourns for Yosef, and Yosef weeps again and again. Yosef weeps when he sees his brothers and meets them, and he weeps on Binyamin's neck and again on Yaacov's neck. And Yosef weeps when after Yaacov's death the brothers ask him to forgive them. There are huge amounts of tears in the remarkable story of Yosef's rise to a high status. And what about the brothers? They do not weep, but they move around with feelings of guilt and regret for having sold Yosef.

A painful act of selling, an amazing mission, and rivers of tears. We too live on two levels, every daily action that we take is minute, personal, and intimate. But at the same time it is written down by the Holy One, Blessed be He, and it can sometimes change the course of world history – adding joy or tears.

The actions of the patriarchs serve as models for their offspring.

A PARSHA INSIGHT

The Point of View is what Matters

*By Rabbi Asaf Harnoy, Post-Graduate Beit Midrash for Torah and Leadership,
Jerusalem*

This week's Torah portion brings us to the greatest drama in the stories of Yosef and his brothers. Finally, after years of uncertainty, sorrow, and difficulty – Yosef is revealed to his brothers, and he sends a message to his father that he is alive.

One of the most interesting and remarkable aspects of this affair is the significant difference between the way Yosef views the entire process of his descent to Egypt and how his brothers see the same events. The great gap between the two approaches can be compared to **two people who look at the same object, where each one sees something different than the other one.**

The “Efrat” Model

“Efrat” is a name given to a behavioral model which describes the process a person goes through from the time he or she is exposed to an event until reacting to it. A number of therapy techniques have been developed based on this model. It is important because it can help a person understand how to take control of his or her reactions and deeds.

The name “Efrat” is an acronym for a series of successive stages, in Hebrew:

Aleph: The Event (*Ha'Iru'a*) – This is an external and objective stimulus, which comes from the outside and over which we have no control. For example, another person might take a parking place for which we have been waiting patiently for a long time.

Peh: Our interpretation (*Parshanut*) – This is our subjective explanation of why the event took place. For example, we might feel that the other person took the parking space because he cares only about his own needs.

Reish: Feeling (*Regesh*) – This is the emotion that develops inside us, based on our interpretation of the event. For example, we might develop a feeling of anger towards the person who took the parking place.

Tav: The Reaction (*Teguvah*) – This is the action we take as a result of the above feeling. For example, at the very least we might shout at the person for taking the space.

The first stage of this model which depends on us is the interpretation, where we choose how to analyze the event. The way we interpret it will lead to an emotion, and this will give rise to our reaction.

What might happen, for example, if we see that the man who took the parking spot was helping a pregnant woman get out of his car, and that they rushed to the emergency room of a hospital? Without a doubt our interpretation will change, and this will certainly lead to a different emotion and a very different reaction.

Was this a Mission or a Sale?

The story of Yosef and his brothers is one of the most remarkable cases where it is clear that the way we interpret events can change the entire picture. Both Yosef and his brothers describe the way they look at the same event. They all remember when Yosef was thrown into the pit, an act which in the end led him to be brought to Egypt, where he eventually achieved a high royal position.

However, each side interpreted the events in its own unique way.

The brothers saw a superficial picture. They did not sense that the hand of G-d was involved, and therefore they felt that they all shared the guilt for everything that had happened. They therefore developed a strong feeling of shame for what they had done, and eventually

they were even afraid that Yosef might take revenge on them.

Yosef, on the other hand, interpreted the events in a completely different way. He saw himself as a Divine messenger, and felt that “G-d **sent me ahead of you** as a source of livelihood” [Bereishit 45:7]. Yosef understood that he was merely performing a task, and that the events were guided by the hand of G-d. The emotion which welled up in him with respect to his brothers was neither anger nor hatred, and this explains his pleasant and honorable reaction to them.

G-d’s Messenger can be Compared to Him

One of the most important lessons we can learn from Yosef is to look at ourselves and at our lives as taking part in a Divine mission. When we look at things in this way we begin to understand that everything we see and whatever happens to us is part of this heavenly mission, and that it all comes about as a result of a heavenly plan. Such a viewpoint will help us interpret the events in our lives with a greater feeling of security and faith, and it will release positive emotions within us, so that we will treat ourselves, our families, and those who surround us in a way that is all-encompassing and pleasant for everybody.

WHEN THE CHILDREN OPEN THEIR HEARTS

It’s All for the Best

By Meirav Maggeni, Author of Content and Stories in Chemed, the Religious School System

In our family we always say, “It’s all for the best” – especially when something unpleasant happens. To tell the truth, I don’t always agree with this declaration. Especially when Imma says “It’s all for the best,” right after I have lost my wallet. Or when I get sick right before an exciting field trip, and Abba tells me, “It’s all for the best.” How can we repeat the same thing all the time, “It’s all for the best?” I don’t really understand.

But now, after I really saw with my own eyes that “It really is always for the best!” – I have changed my mind. And that is the story I want to tell you today.

One evening, as usual, I went out with my friend Yoav to ride our bikes around the neighborhood. Usually I leave my cellphone home at night, but this time I put it in my pocket, I don’t know why.

We had fun riding together. We had a cool breeze on our faces, and Yoav was in a very good mood. All the time he sang as loud as he could. He shouted out all of our favorite songs. When we got to a downhill path that leads to one of the small neighborhoods in our city, Yoav lost control of his bike, hit a stone, and fell down. He was lying there in the middle of the road in great pain.

He whispered to me, “It’s my foot!” And he pulled his lips tight. “It will be okay,” I tried to calm him down, while I dialed the emergency number on my phone. I told them, “We’re at the corner of Eli Cohen and Kalanit streets ... my friend fell from his bike and he can’t move his foot...”

I told Yoav, “They are already sending an ambulance, everything will be okay.” But Yoav looked quite helpless. I wanted to cheer him up, but I couldn’t find the right words. I gave him a smile and he tried to smile back, but all he could do was make a very sad face filled with pain. Then, without thinking, I blurted out, “In our family, we have a saying: ‘It’s all for the best!’” Yoav mumbled a reply, but I couldn’t hear him, since the ambulance came, with its siren on very loud.

The paramedic in the ambulance, Shmuelik, checked Yoav very thoroughly. He said, “Don’t worry, you will be fine. Thank G-d your spine was not hurt, and your helmet protected your head. We’ll take you to the hospital to treat you. I think your foot is broken, but we’ll see that when we take an x-ray. You are lucky to have a friend here who has a phone – ”

Shmulek never finished his sentence, because we all heard a woman screaming: "Help! My baby, Nili, is choking!" A young woman holding a baby ran to us from one of the nearby houses. Shmulek ran to her and took the baby, and with great skill managed to clear from her throat the food that stuck there and didn't let her breathe. The baby started breathing again, the color came back to her cheeks, and she gave us all a lovely smile. The young mother started crying out of joy. "I can't imagine what would have happened if you were not here... I didn't know what to do... I didn't have time to call for help, and then I suddenly saw your ambulance on the street... Because you were here, Nili was saved." Then, when she calmed down a bit, she saw Yoav lying on the ground. "Are you okay?" she asked him.

Yoav looked with bright eyes at Nili, whose life had been in danger just a few moments before, and who was saved because of the accident that he had on his bike. He said, "It's all for the best!" And now he had a huge smile on his face.

What about you, my readers? Did you ever see an incident which shows that it's all for the best? Write to me about it..

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Holy and Secular

I Give them a Memorial

By Rabbi Amichai Gordin, Yeshivat Har Etzion

***** NOTE:** I wrote this article last year on the occasion of the general day of reciting Kaddish. I am reprinting it this year because of its great importance.

**** * * * ***

Our King, the King of all Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, is a King who desires life, loves peace and pursues peace, who loves His nation Yisrael, and who picked us out from all the other nations. It is not because we are so many that G-d wanted us, for we are the least among all the nations.

And since He loves us when we are so few, each and every one of us has the worth of a full legion, because he or she cannot be easily replaced... If, heaven forbid, a person from Yisrael is missing, the legions of the King have been reduced, and – as it were – His Kingdom has been diminished and has been weakened, heaven forbid. This is because His Kingdom is missing one of its legions, and this lessens His greatness, heaven forbid.

And therefore we pray for every person who has passed on from Yisrael:

"Yitgadal veyitkadash – Let the great name be enhanced and sanctified" – Let the power of G-d be enhanced, let Him not feel any weakening. "Veyitkadash – In the worlds which He created according to His will. And we will not fear for ourselves but rather from His exalted greatness.

"Veyamlich malchutei" – Let His Kingdom be revealed and exposed perfectly, let it never be decreased, heaven forbid...

For if His Kingdom is revealed in the world,

There is peace in the world and also blessing in the world,

And poetry in the world, and much praise in the world,

And great consolation in the world.

[Shai Agnon, "An Introduction to Kaddish"].

In one of his famous comedy sketches, Shaika Ofir told about "Abu El-Banat," an "unfortunate" Jew, who after having nine baby girls in a row is waiting for "a male son." Abu El-Banat tells his friend Albert about his great hopes for his "male son." The hopes rise up and become greater and greater, and they reach their peak at the end:

"Every day he will put on a starched white shirt,

And short pants without an elastic.

He will be a very good boy,

He will honor his father and mother, his grandmother, and all the neighbors.

At eight days – circumcision.

At thirteen years – bar mitzva.

At eighteen, he will join the paratroopers...

After the army, he will get married,

And a year later, another male son will be born, I will be a grandfather...

And when I pass away, Kaddish – with trills in the music..."

In a few short lines, Shaika Ofir abstracted the deep yearning that every person has - for continuity. Such continuity is sometimes expressed by the recitation of Kaddish in a person's memory. In a natural way, when a person passes on, he leaves behind children who recite the Kaddish. The descendants of a person establish his or her name and keep the memory of the deceased alive.

However, not everybody has this privilege.

"The cruelty of the Nazis knew no bounds. However, even when they had not eaten for three or four days and they had not tasted a drop of water, the Jews of Shidlovitza consoled each other by saying, 'They can only conquer our bodies, but not our souls...'

"The train was closed off from the outside by a barbed wire fence. The boxcars were sealed in the manner in which cattle are sent for slaughter. In one car, Reb Yitzchak Steinman lit candles and turned to the Jews around him: 'Since there will not be anybody to say Kaddish for us, let us fulfill our last obligation and say the Kaddish ourselves... *Yitgadal Veyitkadash shemai rabbah...*'

["Ani Maamin"].

"When the State of Israel was established, the Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Herzog and Rabbi Ben Tzion Meir Chai Uziel, chose the day of the Tenth of Tevet as a day for commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust... **It is the obligation of everybody who does not have a father or a mother to say Kaddish on this day for the six million who were murdered in the Holocaust, including half a million children and babies, who did not leave anybody after them to recite the Kaddish.**" [Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, in an interview five years ago].

During the past two years, I have received a number of requests as the Tenth of Tevet approached. They are all the same: "The first generation and the second one carried the torch of the Kaddish for sixty years. Now it is your turn. Even if you are not aware of any relative who died in the Holocaust, do not extinguish the torch of the Kaddish." The letters go

on to describe the excited feeling that the writer had as a child when the entire synagogue was full of people reciting Kaddish in memory of the six million.

I am convinced. I have taken on myself ("bli neder" – not as a formal vow) to pick up the torch, and on the Tenth of Tevet to recite the Kaddish for Gershon, Shmuel, Yaacov, Binyamin, Veichna, Tzeviya, and Batya – the brothers and sisters of my grandfather and my grandmother – and for the millions of others who were murdered and did not leave anybody else behind. The holy torch will not be extinguished.

* * * * *

"And I will give them in My House and within My walls a memorial,

Better than sons and daughters.

I will give them eternal fame,

Which will never be cut off."

[Yeshayahu 56:5].



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