

# שבת בשבת



Parshat Bo

No 1659: 8 Shevat 5777 (4 February 2017)

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Religious Zionists of America

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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.

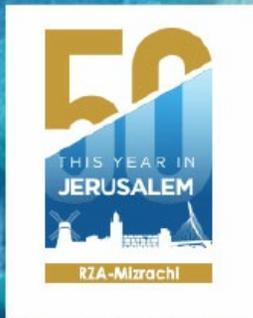
We have more than 40 Shuls signed up. If your community is not yet on our list please let us know.

Rabbi Gideon Shloush  
*Presidium*  
National Director  
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Religious Zionists of America - Mizrahi  
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Mr. Martin  
Rabbi Leonard Matanky  
Dr. Ernest

**Please encourage your community leadership to include the paragraph below in your Shul and School Announcements:**

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 Zionists 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](http://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](http://www.rza.org)

**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 a Dati Leumi Hesder Yeshiva in Israel. Our goal is – until we get there ourselves – to bring Torat Yisrael closer to America.**

## Parshat Bo

Rav Yuval Cherlow

*Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat haHesder Ra'anana, Israel*

*Translated by RZA-Aryeh Fellow Yehudith Dashevsky*

Why do we eat Maror on Pesach? Ostensibly, the answer to this question is so straightforward that it is not I who should be speaking about this, but my pre-school-age grandchild. Why is it so straightforward? Because it is one of the only cases in which the reason for the mitzvah was indicated by Halacha. In general, we do not bother much with reasons for mitzvot, and certainly not in the realm of Halacha. That is, we consider and debate them on philosophical grounds, but we do not determine them in normative law. Yet, here it is said: "Whoever has not said these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation: Pesach, Matzah, and Maror.... Why Maror? We eat Maror because the Egyptians made our forefathers' lives bitter in Egypt." Clearly, the answer to why we eat Maror on Pesach is already part of the Halachic corpus. If that is the case, I should not have asked the question, and once I did, I could have left it as merely rhetorical, because everyone knows why we eat Maror on Pesach.

The problem with this answer is that if you check it directly against the Torah text, it doesn't correspond. The Torah speaks of eating the Korban Pesach with Matzah and Maror as a part of the celebration of redemption and salvation. And then to throw in Maror, as a symbol of bitterness, into the mix? Of course, the answer can be simply, yes. But that does not seem to be the simplest reading of the text.

I would not have dared say this had the Or HaChaim HaKadosh not made this very claim. The Or HaChaim HaKadosh said that as per the simplest understanding of the Torah text, we eat Maror on Pesach for one reason only: because it tastes good. Ask yourselves: When you go to buy shawarma, what is the conversation you have with the seller? The first thing he'll ask you is, Pita or Lafa? The second, Do you want spicy sauce? That is exactly what is written in the verse, "And they shall eat the meat on this night, roasted, and Matzot (pita or lafa) on Maror (bitter, spicy herbs) they shall eat it" (Exodus 12:8). In the words of the Or HaChaim HaKadosh: "For it is the way of all who eat meat to eat it with a spicy food because it gives the palate a pleasant sensation." This is truly the simplest reading of the text.

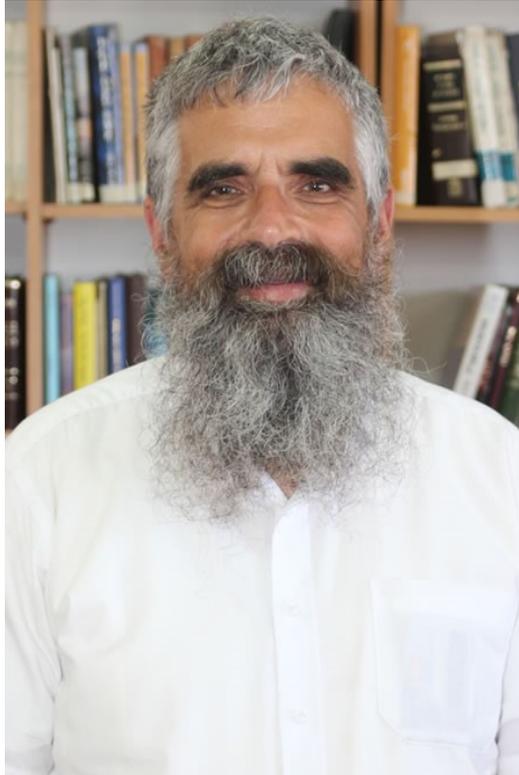
However, it contradicts the Halacha we quoted above. The Halacha is that Maror is eaten because the Egyptians embittered our lives. I once heard a wonderful explanation from Rav Broyer of blessed memory, which I believe can serve as a guide for life. He said the following: The Maror, when taken by itself, is bitter. As in the Halacha, "Because the Egyptians embittered our lives." Normal people, especially from my background, do not eat spicy sauce or dip by the tablespoon. But when this Maror is a part of the sandwich of roasted meat and Matzot, it gives the meat a distinct and special flavor. Similarly, suffering on its own is bad, simply put. Exile, subjugation, and pain are bitter and awful. But when you see your life as a totality, you see that the difficult times, the difficult days, the subjugation, the mishaps - all give life its flavor, give it a singular meaning. They are part of creation, not just destruction. And they are part of the solution, not just part of the problem.

This is the way we relate to pain and suffering. Suffering is not beloved to us. As all the Amoraim say at the beginning of Shas, "not it [suffering] nor its reward." But when suffering does come upon us, we know to remember all the difficulties they comprised, on the one

hand. And on the other, that same suffering, when viewed in the context of a greater process, is what elevates us to a new stratum of life. It grants our lives a meaning that would not have existed without it.

Therefore, on Pesach we eat Maror because it is bitter and painful, yet we are able to see it as part of a greater whole, as those who eat meat with a spicy sauce, because it gives it a pleasant taste.

This is suffering, this is pain, and this is the all-encompassing totality that we are able to see on Seder night.



**Rav Yuval Cherlow** is the head of Yeshivat haHesder Petach Tikva, which changed its name and location to **Yeshivat haHesder Ra'anana**, also known as **Orot Shaul**. Rav Cherlow has published numerous articles and lectures on the internet and has answered more than 70,000 questions about Jewish thought and practice on his online forum "Ask the Rabbi." Rav Cherlow was also one of the founders of Tzohar, a forum that bridges the world of the rabbinate with the wider Israeli public. He has served in many societal roles, including writing position papers for the Knesset concerning religious matters, as well as taking part in the creation of certain laws, such as one regarding testing medications on humans. Rav Cherlow is a sought-after speaker by both the religious and the secular public, speaking at universities all over Israel, as well as in rabbinical forums. In 1997, he received the Minister of Education's prize for Torah creation.

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

## JewishTime Reflected in Jewish History

Rabbi Elie Weinstock

*Rabbi of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun*

*New York, NY*

"Ha-chodesh ha-zeh lachem rosh chadashim – This month shall be the head of the months for you." (Shemot/Exodus 12:1)

The very first commandment given to the entire Jewish people is the mitzvah of the Jewish calendar. They were on the road from slavery to freedom. A slave is not in control of his own person, and his entire existence is subjugated to the master. He certainly does not set his own schedule. The first commandment highlights the freedom the Jews would soon enjoy: they are to

become masters of time. This freedom comes with responsibility. Time is not just something to fritter away. God informs the Jewish people that "Jewish time" means "sacred time." The Jewish calendar – from the set times of the day for prayer to the Shabbat each week to the festivals at specific times of the year – is an exercise in sacred time. The Jewish people must realize that their freedom is not a license to waste time; rather it is a mandate to elevate it.



The Jewish calendar is unique in that it is a lunar calendar, and the Jewish months are dependent on the cycles of the moon.

These cycles are fixed. The new moon starts off very small, just a sliver. It grows until it hits its full size, and then it begins to shrink again. It disappears into nothingness before the cycle begins anew.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt, Germany in the 19th century, notes that this regular cycle of the moon helps reinforce the message of the Jewish calendar. Every month, God provides us with a consistent opportunity to find our way back to Him.

The profound lesson of Jewish time can help us understand the journey of the Jews throughout history. Throughout the ages, we can identify periods of success and failure; light and darkness; growth and diminution.

Think about how some of our darkest moments were followed by bursts of inspiration, creativity, and growth.

After the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash, Jews like Daniel and Mordechai helped blaze a trail for how to live in galut. Upon the return from exile, Ezra and his Beit Din helped develop Jewish prayer so that Jews speaking different languages could unite in prayer. After churban Bayit Sheini, Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai ensured Jewish continuity through Torah while the redaction of the Mishna and then Gemara anchored our connection to Torah.

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 led to the growth of the Jewish communities in Europe and was followed in short order by the codification of Jewish law and then the illumination and impact of Kabbalah. The Chmielnitzky massacres were followed by the rise of the Chasidic movement as well as intensified Torah study and the rise of the Yeshiva.

In the last 100 years, we've seen war, destruction, and Holocaust followed by incredible renewal. A strong diaspora (especially in America) thrives and Jewish learning can be found all over the world at unprecedented levels.

Of course, there is ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו, the first flowering of redemption, as the State of Israel was established. There is no greater example of the possibility of חידוש ימינו כקדם, of being on a path to the great days of our past, than Israel. If Jewish history is a reflection of Jewish time, then Israel represents the alarm clock ringing loudly that we have so much to contribute to the world. Israel is a thriving democracy with a growing economy and cutting edge technology, a true "start up" nation. At the same time, it serves as an inspiration for all Jews to connect with the Torah, traditions, and history of our ancestors. It's a time machine that connects the past and future while inspiring the present.

Just as Jewish time is a constant in our religious lives, so, too, is the march of Jewish history. No matter where we are or how difficult the times, the Jewish calendar reminds us of our ability to sanctify time, connect with the Divine, and have faith that the best is still yet to come.

## Save the Date - Yeshivat HaKotel Dinner

Yeshivat HaKotel will be hosting their 50th Anniversary dinner on Tuesday, Yom

Yerushalayim, May 23, at the Lincoln Square Synagogue in New York City. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Drazin of Montreal will be honored for their many years of support and devotion to Yeshivat Hakotel. The program will include a Tefila Chagigit, Dvar Torah by our Dean of Students Rabbi Reuven Taragin, and music by Eitan Katz.

For those unable to join the mission to Israel, this is an incredible opportunity to celebrate Yom Yerushalayim here in the United States.

More details to follow.

## 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 Shoshana Kott



Shoshana Kott hails from Silver Spring, Maryland. Following her graduation from the Berman Hebrew Academy, Shoshana continued her studies in Midreshet Torah V'Avodah where she found a true passion for learning Torah.

Presently, Shoshana is studying pre-dental in the University of Maryland where she enjoys the vibrant Jewish community, student diversity, and beautiful campus.

In her spare time, Shoshana enjoys camping, singing, and art with her 12(!) siblings. Shoshana prides herself in her openness to try new things and being an active member of her community wherever she goes, and therefore, she is looking forward to being an RZA Aryeh Fellow!

## 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 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.

**There is a new opportunity to bring this hilarious show to your community! Beginning around Purim time, March 13th, 2017, Stayin' Alive will be bringing their show to cities around the United States. If you are interested in hosting this show in your community, please contact our office at [office@za.org](mailto:office@za.org).**



## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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!**



## **Omission of Jews in the Statement by the President on International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

**By Dr. Alex Grobman, RZA Board Member**

The statement read in part: “It is with a heavy heart and somber mind that we remember and honor the victims, survivors, heroes of the Holocaust. It is impossible to fully fathom the depravity and horror inflicted on innocent people by Nazi terror.

“Yet, we know that in the darkest hours of humanity, light shines the brightest. As we remember those who died, we are deeply grateful to those who risked their lives to save the innocent.”

The failure to acknowledge that Jews were the primary victims of the Shoah is a clear oversight, and Jewish organizations rightly criticized the administration for this error. When asked about the omission, administration spokeswoman Hope Hicks told CNN that "despite what the media reports, we are an incredibly inclusive group and we took into account all of those who suffered."



I do not believe this was an act of Holocaust denial as *Haaretz's* Chemi Shalev bizarrely claimed, or meant to demean the experiences and suffering of Holocaust survivors. It was an act of ignorance for which there is no excuse. It should be noted that Hicks quoted an article in *Huffington Post* UK about the six million Jews and the five million non-Jews who were murdered during the Shoah. The source is

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/27/holocaust-non-jewish-victims\\_n\\_6555604.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/27/holocaust-non-jewish-victims_n_6555604.html).)

This myth, which had been exposed years ago has now been resurrected.

### **Numbers Matter if We Are to Learn from History**

One of the most common errors in describing the magnitude of the Shoah is the number of people who died. Figures range from 50 million to 11 million, a reflection of a fundamental misunderstanding of the uniqueness of this catastrophe. The use of 11 million is a particularly egregious historical distortion as it equates the destruction of the Jews of Europe with that of the others who were murdered.

We study the Shoah to understand what transpired, why it happened and what it tells us about the attitude of Western civilization toward Jews and other minorities living in the West. It is not a contest to see which group suffered the most or sustained the greatest numerical losses.

If we are to learn from history, we must be concerned about objective truth, with transmitting what actually ensued and not allowing those with their own particular agenda or ignorance to obscure our understanding of what occurred. Distinguishing between different historical events does not, and should not, lessen or demean the suffering of others.

When we refer to the Holocaust, we mean the systematic bureaucratically administered destruction by the Nazis and their collaborators of six million Jews during the Second World War. The Jews were found "guilty" only because they were viewed inaccurately as a race. The Nazi state orchestrated the attempted mass murder of every person with at least three Jewish grandparents.

Millions of civilians and soldiers were killed as a consequence of war. Communists, political and religious leaders were eliminated because they were viewed as a potential threat to the Nazis. When the Nazis murdered approximately 10,000 Polish intelligentsia, in 1939-1940, and Polish Catholic priesthood in western Poland, for example, they were trying to prevent these groups from becoming a political and spiritual force that could unite the country against them. Similarly, when the Nazis murdered more than two and one-half million Soviet prisoners of war, they were killing a military force that had fought them on the field of battle.

European Jews, on the other hand, were the only people marked for complete destruction. To the Nazi leadership, the Jews were a satanic force that controlled both the East and the West and posed a physical threat to the German nation. There was no way to stop this alleged international Jewish conspiracy from gaining total control of the world, the Nazis reasoned, except to physically destroy every Jewish man, woman, and child. Failure to do so, Hitler believed, "would not lead to a Versailles treaty but the final destruction, indeed, to the annihilation of the German people."

For a number of reasons, we do not know the exact number of Jews who were killed. German historian Wolfgang Benz posits that there were 6,269,027, which is more than earlier studies by Jewish scholars. Six Million is the most accurate term and acceptable.

The Nazis also annihilated a minimum of 300,000 Sinti and Roma from Germany, the Baltic region, Ukraine, Croatia and Serbia, although the precise number cannot be determined. Many thousands of others were also killed: the physically and mentally disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, socialists, communists, trade unionists, and political and religious dissidents.

None of these groups, however, were the primary target of the Nazis—not the mentally disabled, who were killed in the euthanasia centers in Germany (here it is to be noted that the Nazis did not export this program to the civilian populations outside the Reich); not the homosexuals, who were regarded as social deviants but for whom the Nazis did not have a consistent policy (homosexuals were persecuted only in the Reich and in areas annexed to it but not in countries the Germans occupied); not the Gypsies, who were partly seen as "asocial" aliens and Aryans within society and therefore did not have to be annihilated completely; and not the Jehovah's Witnesses, who had refused to swear allegiance to Hitler and who declined to serve in the German army, but who were not marked for extinction; in fact, only a small number were incarcerated in the camps, and most of them were German nationals. The Nazis also did not single out every socialist, communist, trade unionist, or dissident—just those they perceived as a threat to the Reich. The Jews alone were the primary target of the Nazis.

When we use 11 million or any other number than the Six Million to describe the Shoah, we are distorting the historical record. We trivialize the importance of this unprecedented event in modern history, minimize the experiences of all those who suffered and prevent a legitimate understanding of its causes and its universal implications for Western society.

*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).*

## POINT OF VIEW

### A Proposal: Commerce and Culture on Shabbat should be Provided by non-Jews

*By Rabbi Yisrael Rozen, Dean of the Zomet Institute*

"They had (in Egypt) ancient scrolls which they would enjoy reading from one Shabbat to the next, **since they would rest on Shabbat**, stating that the **Holy One, Blessed be He, would redeem them**. Pharaoh said: Let the labor weigh them down, and do not let them rest on Shabbat." [Shemot Rabba 5].

#### Shabbat Legislation

The issue of commerce on Shabbat has come upon us again, although it seems to me that it may not reach the main headlines. I am sorry to say that the public is quite apathetic to the subject, and that includes the religious Zionist community. A committee of general managers of government offices which was appointed by the Prime Minister has recommended **allowing grocery stores to be open on Shabbat on a broad basis**. It is true that the specific issue currently being discussed is a local municipal law in Tel Aviv, but everybody clearly understands that in such matters "we are all Tel Aviv!" The Chareidi Parties are threatening a coalition crisis, but **the Bayit Yehudi Party remains silent**. I can understand the tactical reasons for this position: Let the work be done by others...; Our main banner is the issue of Eretz Yisrael; "Bayit" – the home – includes many irreligious people, and it will be a shame to force them to leave the party, especially right now... **I might be able to understand, but I cannot agree to such an approach!**

I write the following lines **with fear and trepidation**. For the last forty years I have delved into the matter of Shabbat in both the home and in public within the framework of the Zomet Institute. On the public level, I have always believed that it would be possible to reach a legal arrangement with the secular public which appreciates the value of Shabbat as something that reaches beyond day-to-day materialistic goals. I believed that the concept of rest on Shabbat would be recognized **as being good for the family and society as a**

**whole.** I believed that the “nationalists” would be proud that the nation of Yisrael bequeathed to the world the ideal of a weekly day of rest and that they would therefore lend their support to strengthening this goal.

I was also involved in an effort to write **proposed laws which were brought to the Knesset** (by Zevulun Orlev and others) and which by necessity included **elements of accepting and ignoring undesirable activities on Shabbat**. I wrote about this issue in this column for the Torah portion of Beshalach last year (number 1608), with the title, “The Shabbat Law: A Lesser Evil.” I changed my mind in the past month of Elul, the Torah portion of Shoftim (number 1640), in reaction to the dispute about performing maintenance work on the railroads during Shabbat: “Can a New Type of ‘Gashash’ do Railroad Maintenance?” I admit that all of these various proposals failed, among other things, because of rabbinical-halachic objections of the type, **“We cannot waive even the slightest element of halacha.”** This was contrary to the ruling by **Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, in “Coalition Halachot,”** who wrote an opinion based on Torah principles rejecting the **“all or nothing”** approach.

Make use of a “Shabbat Goy”

I give up on any attempts to make agreements curtailing the expansion of commercial and entertainment activities on Shabbat. Thinking “out of the box” brings me to an idea that I do not like but that is one possibility. Let some branches of commerce be operated on Shabbat by **non-Jews, with supervision** (by non-Jews!) according to the Law of Hours of Work and Rest (Chapter 3, Paragraph 7/b.). This establishes that the weekly day of rest will be Shabbat for a Jew, and either Sunday or Friday for a non-Jew. **(We must insist that the pay will be the same as for a normal workday, to avoid any temptations of additional pay for Shabbat work...)**

My “fear and trepidation” about supporting this position is that we will thus be ignoring our responsibility for our Jewish brethren, the consumers of commercial and entertainment business (and evidently transportation) on Shabbat. This suggestion only takes care of the workers! The sales force and the managers in groceries, and all the workers who will be employed to provide for “the Shabbat desecrators” (and perhaps drivers too), will be non-Jews, such as Israelis who have not been converted and foreign workers who will all carry a **“non-Jewish ID-card,” certified by the Chief Rabbinate!** This exactly fits the law and follows the dictates of the halacha, even though it goes against the spirit of Shabbat and the vision of “the public face” of the country and the “image of the Jewish state.”

I must admit **that this is a shocking proposal**. However, in view of the current situation, where commerce and entertainment are wide open, and **in view of the recommendations of the General Managers’ Committee**, which erodes the last element that could have saved the situation (municipal laws), and **in order to oppose the danger of the Supreme Court**, which devoutly defends personal rights to the extreme – there is indeed no alternative to “thinking out of the box,” no matter how depressing our conclusions may be. I feel that for the benefit of hundreds (or thousands) of Jews who work on Shabbat, we must **force them to rest, for the good of the values of society and the family**. Let the holy values of personal rights be supplied by those who are not members of our religion. Let any Jew who has a burning desire to work specifically on Shabbat ... **change his religion**.

\*\* \* \* \* \*

At the beginning of this article, we quoted from the Midrash that even in Egypt Shabbat was observed, until **Pharaoh decided to take it over for his own economic needs...**

## As Shabbat Approaches

“Before I Created you in your Womb, I Knew You”

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

“Even an old image has a moment of birth.” This was written by the poet Natan Alterman. He turned his gaze to the exciting moment of birth. Specifically, he looked at a moment of a

renewed view of an old phenomenon – something familiar and obvious. By looking in a new way it is possible to understand a new and more accurate insight about an old and very familiar event.

Chapter 12 of Shemot is just such an ancient event which can be looked at in a new way, leading to a better understanding of the moment of birth of the community of Yisrael. Moshe leaves Pharaoh in anger. Their next meeting will take place in a somewhat different atmosphere, at midnight. The redemption is about to burst forth, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, turns “to Moshe and to Aharon, in the Land of Egypt, saying...” He maps out before them the vision and the anticipation from the nation before it is created. This can be compared to the dreams and aspirations that are loaded by parents onto their children from the moment of their birth – in clear words and hidden messages, in giving a name to the newly born child, and in raising him or her. And at that point the hopes and demands of the parents become clear and take on an aspect of reality.

“This month is for you the head of the months, it is first for you among the months of the year” [Shemot 12:2]. This is the first mitzva that was given to Yisrael – the community of Yisrael will have its own calendar different from that of the other nations. This is the news that is given to the people before they become a nation.

What does it mean to us? The answer is that we will always be different and separate from the idol worshippers. Using a special calendar is a hint that from the moment we were born the nation of Yisrael was separate from all the other nations, and they will have a different attitude towards time and towards the ability of man to control it. The rest of the world will count its days based on the powerful sun, while Yisrael will be a partner to the Creator in that it sets the time in the calendar. This is a mitzva with day-to-day consequences but also with vision far into eternity. It is the first definition of the sanctity of the nation of Yisrael and the fact that it is separate from the rest of the world. The Holy One, Blessed be He, tells Moshe and Aharon about the demand and the expectation of sanctity while the people are still slaves.

“Speak to the entire community of Yisrael,” is the second definition of the essence of our existence, and it is also the reason for our redemption from Egypt (within a very brief moment...). “Let each man take a lamb for the house of their fathers, one lamb per house...” [12:3].

From that point on, the Holy One, Blessed be He, gives a long list of laws and decrees, commands, and mitzvot, all of which are connected to details of day-to-day life, some of them difficult to understand. This includes some mitzvot that are linked to the eating of the Pesach sacrifice in Egypt, followed by laws and decrees that will be in effect for all generations. The very first commands that are given to Yisrael appear in this chapter. Pesach is known as a holiday with very many laws and customs, a clear desire by G-d that mankind will live according to the Divine commands. This demand was clearly worded to the people before they became a nation. The observance of the Torah and the mitzvot serves as the basis for the redemption from Egypt.

Holiness and the mitzvot are the names that we were given before we were born. All the rest is left for us to learn.

## A PARSHA INSIGHT

### The Art of “Skipping”

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

Twice in its history the nation of Yisrael was in a situation where it made an extreme “jump” from one status to another in a very short time.

The first time was during the Exodus from Egypt. The people “skipped” from being a group of slaves that had become used during several generations to accept a status of bondage

and harsh decrees. In one short night, they became a free nation which had been rescued through a series of great miracles.

The second time was when the State of Israel was established. We went from being a nation in exile for two thousand years, which had just experienced the terrible Holocaust, to a nation with our own independent country, free and safe in our own land.

Such a phenomenon of a lightning fast “jump” of such great significance in such a short time from one extreme to another is very rare in the history of the nations in the world. Such a “skip” requires that the generation where it takes place undergo very special preparations, which can be understood from the importance that the Torah gives to the wealth and the large amount of money that Bnei Yisrael took out of Egypt when they left.

### **Why was the Money Necessary?**

Hundreds of years before the Exodus, at the time of the Covenant of the Pieces, the Holy One, Blessed be He, promised Avraham that his offspring would be made to suffer with harsh labor, but that in the end they would be redeemed and leave the place **with great wealth**.

Mystic writings explain that one of the reasons for great famine that took place in Yosef's time was to gather great wealth in Egypt, as a preparation for the fulfillment of the promise to Avraham that his offspring would leave with money and **great wealth**.

If this was not enough, the Holy One, Blessed be He, turned to Moshe in this week's Torah portion with a direct and clear request that he tell the people not to forget to take with them vessels of silver and gold. **“Please speak** in the ears of the nation, and let them borrow, every man from his friend and every woman from her friend, **vessels of silver and gold”** [Shemot 11:2].

Why does the Holy One, Blessed be He, put such emphasis on the wealth that Bnei Yisrael will take out of Egypt? Why does He promise this at such an early stage, when talking to Avraham? And why does He take the trouble to make sure in advance that Egypt will have wealth, by bringing a famine in the time of Yosef? And, finally, why is it so important to remind Moshe to take the wealth with them?

### **When a Slave becomes a King**

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook explains that the reason for all of these steps was to lift up the spirit of the nation, which until then was under the influence of being in a lowly status of slaves, for such a long time. The great wealth would help get the people used to high expectations, to have an uplifting in their souls, and to stand in a stable manner as a respectable nation which has a message to be disseminated on the stage of world history.

The emphasis put on the wealth in this week's Torah portion and before, is the way that the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave the people the ability to make the tremendous transformation from a downtrodden group of slaves in Egypt to an exalted free nation.

### **Differentiating between Major and Minor Items**

In spite of what we wrote above, we should note that placing such emphasis on wealth can be dangerous and confusing. Excessive focus on wealth and making it the main item of interest is liable to cause the nation to fail in its great mission of sanctifying the holy name of G-d here on the earth.

And therefore, this heavenly action was purposely presented to the people **as a request and not as a command**. **“Please speak** in the ears of the nation...” This is a request – let nobody make the mistake of thinking that it is a major element to which the people are required to aspire. The increase in wealth is important in order to raise the spirits of the nation and to prepare it for its new status as an important and free nation. But it will lead to tragedy if this becomes the central goal of the lives of the people of Yisrael.

The Torah has taught us a great lesson. It is echoed in the words of the sages: “This is the guiding principle: Whenever one food is major and another is minor, a blessing is recited for the main food, and it also covers the minor item” [Berachot 44a].

## WHEN THE CHILDREN OPEN THEIR HEARTS

### When Tanks get Stuck as a Sign of Love

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

I heard the following story from my uncle, David Eldad, a hero who fought in Operation Protective Edge in Gaza. Here is what he said:

\*\* \* \* \* \*

*I was a tank commander. We proceeded towards Azza. Suddenly, without any apparent reason, we got stuck. I reported to my superiors, and they promised to send a mechanical crew as soon as possible. About half an hour later we saw another tank going towards Azza. It came near us and stopped. It turned out that this tank too got stuck for no reason that the soldiers could see. We were all quite amazed. What was going on? After a few hours, we finally saw another tank coming in our direction. I was sure that this was the tank sent to rescue us in the our tanks. But as it approached I saw that it was a regular tank, not suitable for a rescue operation, just like our own. And then this tank too also got stuck! This was unbelievable. In the end, after we waited for a few more hours, a rescue crew arrived, and we were able to return to our base.*

*I couldn't get one thought out of my mind: What strange kind of coincidence was this? Why should three tanks all get stuck for no good reason, one after the other?*

*Four months after this incident, I met a good friend who works in the Intelligence Service. "Hi, Eldad," he greeted me warmly, with a hug. "It's great seeing you, I missed you..." We went into a nearby restaurant and had a great conversation. We spoke about our work and our children.*

*As we were finishing, my friend suddenly remembered a very interesting incident from Operation Protective Edge. He said, "Just listen to this!"*

*"During the operation," he said, "we received a very important intelligence message. A suicide terrorist was planning a mass attack in the middle of the country. We knew the exact time of the attack, and we made plans to thwart it. But in the end the whole thing was much easier than we expected, since we captured the terrorist in Azza, without endangering any of our soldiers.*

*"In his interrogation I asked the terrorist, 'Why didn't you go through with your original plan?' You will not believe what he said. As he was about to leave the area of Azza, he became scared because three Israeli tanks were stationed on the border, watching every move he made. I have no idea who sent the tanks, nobody but our intelligence services knew about the plans for a terrorist attack."*

*I looked at my friend, and I couldn't stop the tears from coming. I said to him, "I was the commander of a tank that got stuck, for no apparent reason. I watched in amazement as two more tanks got stuck in the same place, also without any reason that we could see. Do you understand what happened here? The Holy One, Blessed be He, organized a defense for His people... Just look at how He watches over us. How He must love us indeed..."*

*And then my friend also started to cry. We hugged each other again and went our separate ways.*

\*\* \* \* \* \*

That is the story that my uncle David Eldad told me.

Ever since, when I think of this incident, I am very happy to be part of this nation, which G-d

loves so much. Sometimes I think, "If the Holy One, Blessed be He, loves our nation so much, perhaps the time has come for us to learn our lesson and love each other more than ever before?"

## HOLY AND SECULAR

*For our Children's Future*

*By Rabbi Amichai Gordin, Yeshivat Har Etzion*

In the nineteenth century, the Western World opposed the idea of divorce. The accepted opinion was that a marriage should never be dissolved. At the time, Judaism was accused of being behind the times in that under certain circumstances it allowed marriages to be broken up. Because of these charges, some rabbis who wanted to change the Torah to make it correspond better to the spirit of the times tried to abolish the institution of Jewish divorce.

Much water has passed under the bridge since then. Judaism kept its original premise, allowing a divorce when the marriage has reached a serious problem. Western society, always on the move, reversed its position completely, and it now views divorce as a valuable element suitable for every person who has a desire to improve his or her personal life. And once again Judaism is being attacked for believing that divorce is the proper path only when it is impossible to rehabilitate the marriage, and it is denounced for being overly conservative and irrelevant to modern living.

Recently, my great friend Rabbi Chaim Navon published a book on family matters ("Home Lessons" – "*Sheiurei Bayit*"). In the book Rabbi Navon discusses the significance of the family, based on the approach of Rabbi Soloveitchik. Among other important discussions, Rabbi Navon brings little-known statistics about the status of the family in our times. For various unclear reasons, these statistics have not been widely publicized.

\* \* \* \* \*

***In the nineties of the twentieth century...research results began to appear from the United States and other countries which showed that unfortunately ... the probability that a child from a single-parent family will drop out of school is at least twice the probability for a child who grows up with both parents.***

***The percentage of children who will live below the poverty line as adults is also twice as high among single-parent families. Academic achievement of children who live with a single parent is also significantly lower than those of children who live with both biological parents. The children are also more prone to suffer from various behavioral problems.***

(*Sheiurei Bayit*, page 165)

\* \* \* \* \*

These are just some of the statistics quoted by Rabbi Navon. It is also important to read the continuation of what he writes:

***Of course this is only true of the averages. Many children who grew up in single-parent homes lead very happy and successful lives, in every sense of the word. Many parents who raise their children alone struggle hard to give them everything that they need to grow up in a proper way, and many of them are very successful in their endeavors. There are times when a divorce is the only way out of a harsh and damaging relationship, and many people who choose this path are able to raise wonderful children. But still... the research shows without any doubt that the best framework for the development of children is for them to live with their biological parents, who are married to each other.***

(*Ibid*, page 166).

\* \* \* \* \*

It is important to clarify this point. Rabbi Navon definitely does not recommend that the institution of divorce should be abolished. There are many cases where divorce can rescue the parents and the children from a life of terrible suffering. As far as I can see, the main conclusion from Rabbi Navon's harsh review is that it is important to invest a large effort in enhancing the companionship of the two parents. If we do not do this for the sake of the couple, we should do it for the benefit of the children.

Companionship of a couple is not an obvious matter. Couplehood must be developed. It must be the result of a mutual investment. Couples who do not take the matter of companionship seriously not only harm their commitment to each other but also might be interfering with their children's happiness.

In the past I have quoted the advice of Prof. Zeev Lev (who founded the Lev Institute and was one of the developers of the microwave and the MRI) to a young man about to be married. "You must go out with your wife at least once a week, and not to a wedding or some public affair. Go out and spend some time together, just the two of you. At least once a week."

It is not enough for the discussions between a couple to consist only of how to perform their required tasks. A couple must find time to sit and talk. The subject must be something that touches on them and not a talk about their responsibilities. This is not a luxury, it is a basic obligation, not subject to compromise. It is part of the covenant that the two people join in at the time of their wedding. They are bound together through their souls and through love.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another pitfall in couplehood is not just the failure to "do good" (an investment in developing companionship) but also the necessity to "stay away from evil." There are times when a man finds himself falling in love with another woman (or a woman falls in love with another man). The person says, "What could be done? How can I keep on living with a person I don't love anymore?"

We must never forget that love develops on a basis of personal contact. Nobody wakes up one morning to discover that he or she has fallen in love with somebody new. Love was preceded by personal contact which a person found to be very convenient. Nobody forced this person to start a new love. He or she started a spiritual relationship with somebody else that was able to develop into love.

Let every man and woman who begins to approach another possible mate be aware that they are not only putting their own companionship in danger but also the future of their children. Before starting a new personal relationship stop a moment and think about your children. They will be the ones who pay the heaviest price for your romantic fling.



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