

שבת בשבתו



Parshat Mishpatim

No 1662: 29 Shevat 5777 (February 25, 2017)

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Religious Zionists of America

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

office@rza.org, www.rza.org

Martin Oliner, RZA Presidium Member Interview

Martin Oliner, member of the Presidium of the Religious Zionists of America, spoke with *Arutz Sheva* at the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations about building in Judea and Samaria in the Trump era, Reform subversion of the Friedman appointment, Yair Lapid and Israel's attitude toward halakha. Watch the video interview below:



Two New Florida Events!

Religious Zionists of America-Mizrachi presents

The Future of Religious Zionism in America



with

Rabbi Gideon Shloush

Executive Vice President of RZA-Mizrachi

Boca Raton Synagogue

7900 N Montoya Cir, Boca Raton, FL 33433

Sunday, February 26th, 2017

7:30 PM • Light Refreshments



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Religious Zionists of America-Mizrachi presents

The relevance of
RELIGIOUS ZIONISM
in the
21ST CENTURY



Presenter:

Isaac Blachor

Past chair of the American delegation to the World Zionist Congress and veteran Religious Zionist leader

Young Israel of Hollywood

3291 Stirling Road, Hollywood, FL

MARCH 1, 2017 • 7:30 PM • LIGHT REFRESHMENTS TO BE SERVED



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**RZA Aryeh Fellows presents:
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ל, יחזקאל: לז, הושע: יד, זכריה: א, ב, ח, נחמיה: א, ב, ד, ה, ו

FOR MORE INFO CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK EVENT
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AND SIGN UP @ [TINYURL.COM/RZACHIDON](https://www.tinyurl.com/rzachidon)



Yom Yerushalayim Honor Roll

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 display 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.

Over 125 Shuls and Schools have signed up. If your community is not yet on our list please let us know.

Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Presidium
National Director
Oliner
Religious Zionists of America - Mizrachi
gshloush@rza.org
Agatstein

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 Zionist of America (RZA) and World Mizrachi. 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.

Below is a list of shuls, schools, and organizations that are participating in our Honor Roll:

Beth Jacob Congregation

Beverly Hills, CA
Rabbi Kalman Topp

Young Israel of Orange County

Irvine, CA
Rabbi Dov Fischer

Congregation B'nai David-Judea

Los Angeles, CA
Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy

Los Angeles, CA
Rabbi Yahel Tsaidi

Yeshivat Yavneh

Los Angeles,
Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn

Young Israel of Century City

Los Angeles, CA
Rabbi Elazar Muskin

Shaarey Zedek Congregation

Valley Village, CA
Rabbi Jonathan Rosenberg

Westville Synagogue

New Haven, CT
Rabbi Fred Hyman

Beth David Synagogue

West Hartford, CT
Rabbi Yitzchok Adler

Young Israel of West Hartford

West Hartford, CT

Utopia Jewish Center

Fresh Meadows, NY
Rabbi Yonoson Hirtz

Great Neck Synagogue

Great Neck, NY
Rabbi Dale Polakoff

Young Israel of Hewlett

Hewlett, NY
Rabbi Heshy Blumstein

Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls

Hewlett Bay Park, NY
Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky

Young Israel of Jamaica Estates

Jamaica Estates, NY
Rabbi Shlomo Hochberg

Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills

Kew Gardens Hills
Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld

Rambam Mesivta

Lawrence, NY
Rabbi Zev Friedman

Congregation Beth Sholom

Lawrence, NY
Rabbi Kenneth Hain

HAFTR

Lawrence, NY
Rabbi Gedaliah Oppen

Young Israel of Long Beach

Long Beach, NY

Rabbi Tuvia Brander
Boca Jewish Center
Boca Raton, FL
Rabbi Yaakov Gibber
Boca Raton Synagogue
Boca Raton, FL
Rabbi Efreim Goldberg
Congregation Torah Ohr
Boca Raton, FL
Rabbi Benjamin Yasgur
Katz Yeshiva High School
Boca Raton, FL
Rabbi Jonathan Kroll
Anshei Chesed Congregation
Boynton Beach, FL
Rabbi Avi Billet
Anshei Emuna Congregation
Delray Beach, FL
Rabbi Jack Engel
Young Israel of Hollywood
Hollywood, FL
Rabbi Yosef Weinstock
Hebrew Academy (RASG)
Miami Beach, FL
Rabbi Zvi Kahn
Young Israel of Toco Hills
Atlanta, GA
Rabbi Adam Starr
Congregation Anshe Motele
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Alan Abramson
Cong. Kehillah Jacob Beth Samuel
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Aaron Leibtag
Congregation KINS
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Leonard Matanky
Congregation Or Menorah
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Doug Zelden
Congregation Or Torah
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Zvi Engel
Ida Crown Academy
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Leonard Matanky
Young Israel of West Rogers Park
Chicago, IL
Rabbi Elisha Prero
Congregation Yehuda Moshe
Lincolnwood, IL
Rabbi Joel Gutstein
Hebrew Theological College
Skokie, IL
Rabbi A. Friedman, Rabbi S. Schuman
Kehilat Chovevei Zion
Skokie, IL
Rabbi Shaanan Gelman
Young Israel of Skokie
Skokie, IL
Rabbi Gershon Schaffel
Ohr Torah Congregation
Edison, NJ
Rabbi Yaakov Luban

Rabbi Chaim Wakslak
Congregation Ohav Sholom
Merrick, NY
Rabbi Ira Ebbin
Young Israel of Merrick
Merrick, NY
Rabbi Marc Volk
Community Synagogue of Monsey
Monsey, NY
Rabbi Moshe Tandler
Young Israel of New Hyde Park
New Hyde Park, NY
Rabbi Lawrence Teitelman
Bialystoker Synagogue
New York, NY
Rabbi Zvi Romm
Congregation Adereth El
New York, NY
Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Congregation Ohab Zedek
New York, NY
Rabbi Allen Schwartz
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
New York, NY
Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz
Manhattan Jewish Experience
New York, NY
Rabbi Mark Wildes
The Jewish Center
New York, NY
Rabbi Yosie Levine
Yeshiva University
New York, NY
President Richard M. Joel
Young Israel of New Rochelle
New Rochelle, NY
Rabbi Reuven Fink
Midreshet Shalhevet High School
North Woodmere, NY
Esther Eisenman
Young Israel of Oceanside
Oceanside, NY
Rabbi Jonathan Muskat
Young Israel of Plainview
Plainview, NY
Rabbi Elie Weissman
Young Israel of Hillcrest
Queens, NY
Rabbi Richard Weiss
Congregation Beth Shalom
Rochester, NY
Rabbi Avi Kilimnick
Magen David Sephardic Congregation
Scarsdale, NY
Rabbi Mitchell Serels
Young Israel of Scarsdale
Scarsdale, NY
Rabbi Jonathan Morgenstern
Shaarei Torah Orthodox Congregation
Syracuse, NY
Rabbi Evan Shore
Young Israel of West Hempstead
West Hempstead, NY
Rabbi Yehuda Kelemer

Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva

Edison, NJ

Rabbi Daniel Loew

Congregation Ahavath Torah

Englewood, NJ

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

East Hill Synagogue

Englewood, NJ

Rabbi Zev Reichman

Shomrei Torah

Fair Lawn, NJ

Rabbi Benjamin Yudin

Congregation Ahavas Achim

Highland Park, NJ

Rabbi Steven Miodownik

Congregation Anshe Chesed

Linden, NJ

Rabbi Joshua Hess

Congregation Etz Chaim

Livingston, NJ

Rabbi E. Samuel Klibanoff

Suburban Torah

Livingston, NJ

Rabbi Elie Mischel

Congregation Brothers of Israel

Long Branch, NJ

Rabbi Nasanayl Braun

Hillel Yeshiva

Ocean, NJ

Dr. Ruth Katz

Ben Porat Yosef

Paramus, NJ

Dr. Steven Lorch

National Council of Young Israel

Paramus, NJ

Rabbi Marc Volk

Young Israel of Passaic Clifton

Passaic, NJ

Rabbi Yaakov Glasser

Congregation Israel

Springfield, NJ

Rabbi Chaim Marcus

Congregation Bnai Yeshurun

Teaneck, NJ

Rabbi Steven Pruzansky

Congregation Keter Torah

Teaneck, NJ

Rabbi Shalom Baum

Congregation Rinat Israel

Teaneck, NJ

Rabbi Yosef Adler

Congregation Shaarei Orah

Teaneck, NJ

Rabbi Haim Jachter

Ma'aynot Yeshiva High School for Girls

Teaneck, NJ

Mrs. Rivka Kahan

Torah Academy of Bergen County

Teaneck, NJ

Rabbi Asher Yablok

Congregation AABJ&D

West Orange, NJ

Rabbi Eliezer Zwickler

The Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach

The Hampton Synagogue

Westhampton Beach, NY

Rabbi Avraham Bronstein

DRS Yeshiva High School for Boys

Woodmere, NY

Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky

Hebrew Academy of Long Beach

Woodmere, NY

Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky

Young Israel of Woodmere

Woodmere, NY

Rabbi Hershel Billet

Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

Brighton, MA

Rabbi Jason Strauss

Congregation Beth El-Atereth Israel

Newton, MA

Rabbi Gershon Segal

Congregation Shaarei Tefillah

Newton, MA

Rabbi Benjamin J. Samuels

Young Israel of Sharon

Sharon, MA

Rabbi Noah Cheses

Beth Tfiloh Congregation

Baltimore, MD

Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg

Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community School

Baltimore, MD

Rabbi Mitchell Wohlberg

Rockville Jewish Outreach Center

Rockville, MD

Rabbi Yaacov Benamou

Young Israel of Oak Park

Oak Park, MI

Rabbi Michael Cohen

Young Israel of Southfield

Southfield, MI

Rabbi Yechiel Morris

Nusach Hari B'nai Zion Congregation

St. Louis, MO

Rabbi Ze'ev Smason

Young Israel of St. Louis

St. Louis, MO

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

Young Israel of Las Vegas

Las Vegas, NV

Rabbi Yitzchak Wyne

Congregation Torat Emet

Columbus, OH

Rabbi Howard Zack

Green Road Synagogue

Cleveland, OH

Rabbi Binyamin Blau

Keshar Isarel Congregation

Harrisburg, PA

Rabbi Elisha Friedman

Congregation Mikveh Israel

Philadelphia, PA

Rabbi Albert Gabbai

Congregation Beth Hamedrosh

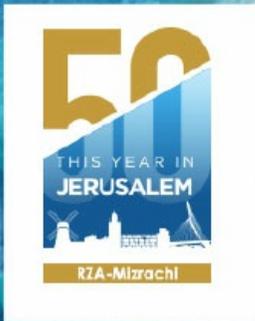
Wynnewood, PA

Rabbi Yonah Gross

Touro Synagogue

Atlantic Beach, NY
Rabbi Ari Perl
Avenue N Jewish Center
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Doniel Eisenbach
Congregation Ahavath Achim
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Ari Kagan
Congregation Beth Torah
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Ari Azancot
Congregation Bnei Yitzhak
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Joseph Beyda
Congregation Pri Eitz Chaim
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Melvin I Burg
Congregation Talmud Torah of Flatbush
Brooklyn, NY
Magen David Yeshiva High School
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Saul Zucker
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park
Brooklyn, NY
Rabbi Elisha Weiss
Yeshiva of Flatbush
Brooklyn, NY
Raymond Harari
Young Israel of Flatbush
Brooklyn, NY
Dr. Norman Rosenblum
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Cedarhurst, NY
Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum
Havurat Yisrael
Forest Hills, NY
Rabbi David Algaze
Young Israel of Forest Hills
Forest Hills, NY
Rabbi Michael Weingarten

Newport, RI
Rabbi Marc Mandel
Baron Hirsch Congregation
Memphis, TN
Rabbi Binyamin Lehrfield
Margolin Hebrew Academy
Memphis, TN
Rabbi Benjy Owen
Congregation Sherith Israel
Nashville, TN
Rabbi Saul Strosberg
Congregation Shaare Tefilla
Dallas, TX
Rabbi Ariel Rackovsky
United Orthodox Synagogues
Houston, TX
Rabbi Barry Gelman
Beth Israel Beth Aaron
Congregation Cote St. Luc, Quebec
Rabbi Reuben J. Poupko
Beth Israel Synagogue
Edmonton, Canada
Rabbi Daniel Friedman
Congregation Machzikei Hadas
Ottawa, Canada
Rabbi Idan Scher
Zichron Yisroel
Thornhill, Canada
Rabbi Charles Grysman
Bnei Akiva Schools
Toronto, Canada
Rabbi Dr. Seth Grauer
Shaarei Shomayim Congregation
Toronto, Canada
Rabbi Chaim Strauchler
Kollel Agudath Achim
Jerusalem, Israel
Rabbi Aharon Ziegler



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 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

In The Spotlight

We are pleased to announce a new initiative: Each week, we will (translate and) feature a d'var Torah from a different Rosh Yeshiva of a Dati L'umi Yeshivat Hesder in Israel. Our goals – until we get there ourselves – to bring Torat Yisrael closer to America.

The Character of Moshe

By Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitz

Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat HaHesder Birkat Moshe in Ma'aleh Adumim

Translated by RZA-Aryeh Fellow Nimrod Soll

The events described at the end of our parashah occurred before the revelation at Mt. Sinai, and the Torah is going back and revealing to us all that occurred during Matan Torah. The Torah states the following: "Moshe Aharon Nadav and Avihu and seventy of the elders of Israel ascended. And they saw the God of Israel and under His feet was that which had the form of a sapphire brick, and was like the appearance of the heavens in purity. And to the nobles of Israel He did not send forth His hand - they viewed God, and they ate and drank." (Shemot 24:9-11).

These verses are extremely difficult to understand, Rashi attempts to clarify them by saying that "They saw the God of Israel" (verse 10) means that; "They looked and glanced and they deserved death, but the Holy One Blessed Be He did not want to mix with the rejoicing of Matan Torah their deaths, so He waited and carried out the death penalty for Nadav and Avihu at the day on the inauguration of the Mishkan."

Even Rashi's explanation is unclear; is it possible to see the image of God when He is not physical?! Moreover, Rashi states that the elders deserved death, and that God delayed their punishment, but what exactly did they do wrong?

In order to understand this better we should look in Parshat Be'halotcha, there the Torah speaks of an episode where the Jewish People complained against God and were punished. "And the Nation was like those who seek pretexts of evil in the ears of God, and God heard and His wrath flared and a fire of God burned against them and it consumed in the edge of the camp" (Bamidbar 11:1) Rashi explains from Cahzal that that the fire didn't consume the edge of camp, but rather the leaders of the camp. (אלתִּיקֵרִי קִצִּינִי הַמַּחֲנֶה אֲלֵא קִצִּינֵיהֶם)

When the Torah discusses the nation was complaining, Rashi states that the nation complained that their journey was too difficult as they had been walking for three days straight. Furthermore, later on in Parshat Behalotcha, the Torah tells us that Moshe also complained before God saying: "And Moshe said to God, Why have You done evil to Your servant; why have I not found favor in Your eyes, that You place the burden of this entire people on me?... And if this is how You deal with me, then kill me now, if I have found favor in Your eyes, and let me not see my evil." (Bamidbar 11:11-15) However, Rashi explains that the last part of verse 15 isn't "my evil", but rather "their, ie the nation's suffering". (אל תִּקְרִי בְרַעְתִּי אֲלֵא בְרַעְתָּם)

Afterwards, God commands Moshe to take 70 men from the elders of Israel to help share the burden of leadership. "And Hashem said to Moshe, Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel whom you know to be the elders of the people and its officers; take them to the Tent of Meeting and have them stand there. And I Will descend and I will speak to you there, and I will increase some of the spirit that is upon you and I will place it upon them etc. (Bamidbar 11:17)

Rashi asks an important question, why does Moshe have to choose new elders, weren't there already seventy elders of Israel? Rashi answers that the original elders had just died by the fire that consumed the camp, but they had already deserved death since Matan Torah where it was stated that they saw God and ate and drank.

Let us now reevaluate the verses. Moshe complains to God that he can't bear to see the suffering of the nation, and that he would rather die than continue to see Israel suffer. This, despite the fact that Moshe understood that the suffering of the nation and the difficulty for their journeying in the desert was for the greater purpose of bringing them to Eretz Yisrael. Nevertheless, Moshe's character is so, that even for a good purpose, he still can't bear to see the suffering of Israel. Thus, God tells Moshe that new elders need to have this quality in them as well. As Rashi states on the verse, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel whom you know to be the elders of the people and its officers." According to Rashi

these were the officers who were appointed by the Egyptians as guards over the Children of Israel in Egypt, and refused to hit fellow Jews during their slavery in Egypt. Due to their refusal to hit the Children of Israel the Egyptians beat the Jewish guards, as it states "The guards of the Children of Israel were beaten" (Shemot 5:14). Thus, God tells Moshe to gather the new elders so that, "I will increase some of the spirit that is upon you and I will place it upon them." In other words, I will increase in them your spirit to care for Israel during their time of distress.

The first elders, however, did not have this quality. When they saw God at Mt. Sinai the Torah tells us they saw "Elokim", which Chazal interpret as the attribute of justice, Middat HaDin. The original elders saw what the nation did not see; that every suffering they were enduring had a purpose and was part of a larger plan. This is why they were not concerned over the suffering they endured while the nation was, because they understood it was part of a larger plan. Yet, God punished them for their lack of connection and understanding with the rest of the nation, because it was improper leadership. Leadership requires understanding and caring about your nation in times of distress, even if their distress is for a good purpose. We see that the original elders did not have this quality, and were therefore punished by God.

In the late 19th century, during the waves of immigration from Eastern Europe many wives were left agunot by their husbands. During this difficult time period, many went to Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector who was the Rav of Kovno (modern day Kaunas, Lithuania). Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan Spector was a brilliant Torah scholar who specialized in agunot, and he worked tirelessly to help as many women as he could. The story goes is that one day a fellow rabbi visited Rabbi Spector, and asked him how he is able to come up with so many chiddushim in order to matir agunot. Rabbi Spector told him to walk with him to the shul of Kovno, and as they reached the shul there was a woman standing there who was crying. Rabbi Spector turned towards his visitor and told him, "You may even be smarter than me in Torah, but every single time I pass go to pray I see women crying begging me for help. This is how I am able to find chiddushim to help."

Our Sages teach us that every Jew has a spark of Moshe's soul within him, and we find that the quality that encompasses Moshe the most is his ability to feel in distress when other Jews are suffering. This quality is true for any type of leadership, as it is a necessary component of a true leader of Israel.



Rabbi Nachum Eleizer Rabinovitz is the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat HaHesder Birkat Moshe in Ma'aleh Adumim. He received his *smeikha* from Ner Yisrael, and has served as a pulpit rabbi in Charleston, South Carolina and Toronto, Canada. He has an M.A. in Mathematics from John Hopkins University and a Pd.D. in Philosophy of Science from the University of Toronto. He is one of the foremost scholars on the Rambam, and has written several books including a commentary called

Yad Peshuta on the Rambam's Mishne Torah

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

A Tale of Two Mountains

Rabbi Howard Zack

Rabbi of Congregation Torat Emet

Rashi famously points out at the very opening of Parashat Mishpatim that it is directly connected to the previous parasha of Yitro. According to this well-known Rashi, the opening phrase ואלה המשפטים, "**And these are the laws...**" teaches that just as the *aseret hadibrot* in last week's parasha were given at Har Sinai, so too, all of the laws in this week's parasha were given at Har Sinai as well. There is also a second connection between the parashiyot.

After presenting over fifty civil commandments, the second half of the parasha returns to the biblical narrative of the revelation at Har Sinai. With this passage, the revelation at Har Sinai forms bookends around Ten Commandments and the Mishpatim creating one spiritual and literary unit.



What seems to upset this symmetry are four verses in the middle of Chapter 23, right at the transition point between the mishpatim and the return to the Sinai narrative. In these verses are the command to observe the *shalosh regalim*, which require us to appear before Hashem in Yerushalayim on the Temple Mount.

Not only is this commandment redundant, as we find it in several other places in the Torah, but it appears to have no relationship to the rest of the parasha.

A meaningful connection can be found in the Midrash Tehillim to Psalm 68. In the Psalm it mentions Har Elokim (v.16) as being located inside the borders of Eretz Yisrael.

However, throughout the Book of Shemot, Har Elokim is understood as a reference to Har Sinai which is beyond Israel's borders. The Midrash Tehillim offers a beautiful explanation to this contradiction:

And as for Sinai – where did it come from? Rabbi Yossi taught:

It was taken and separated from Mount Moriah, as Challa is separated from the dough – from the place where Yitzchak was bound. The Holy One said: Since Yitzchak was bound there, it is appropriate that his descendants receive the Torah upon it. And from where do we know that it is destined to return to its place? As it is written, "The mountain of God's House shall be established at the head of the mountains..."

According to this Midrash, Hashem caused Har Sinai to separate from Har Moriah, and migrate from the Temple Mount to the *midbar*. This Midrash directly links the covenant at Mount Sinai to the Land of Israel and the Temple Mount (Moriah). This would seem to be borne out by the insertion of the commandment to observe the pilgrimage festivals into the middle of the revelation narrative.

This also teaches us that Yerushalayim and the Mount Moriah are inextricably connected to the entire revelation experience; as both its source location and its historical culmination.

*I wish to note that my congregation will be participating in the World Mizrahi Yom Yerushalayim 50 Mega-Mission in May and invite all of you to join us.

Humans of Israel

Welcome to Humans of Israel!

We are proud RZA Aryeh Fellows. Our team, Jonathan Pedoeem, Ilan Atri, and Yishai Pearl, are dedicated to increasing awareness of people that made a significant impact on Israeli society, served in the IDF, and/or made *Aliyah*. While we were in Israel during winter break,

we sat down with our friends who made Aliya and talked with them about their journey. We listened and asked questions to understand why these people made these decisions and the difficulties they went through while executing it.

We took these interviews and are now sharing them with you to expose the true greatness of our brothers and sisters who are making this journey.

Aaron Lieblich is now Shiur Daled at Yeshivat Birkat Moshe in Maale Adumim after serving in Sanchanim in the IDF.



What was your toughest experience while in Israel?

“One of the worse parts of being in the Army is being in the shetach (the field). But, the best thing is that Israel is very small so everywhere you go in the shetach you are going to be near some kind of city, town or road, as a result you are always going to see cars driving by. One time when I

was sitting wet after being in the rain for two days, I see a man in his car driving by on his way home to eat dinner with his family. He drove by not knowing there is a soldier sixty yards from there in a field in the rain. I watched him and I said to myself, I want to be him so badly. I asked myself, why can't I be in that car, but then it hit me, if I weren't here he would not be able to drive home to his family.”

Why did you make Aliya?

“Life in America is too easy. The point of my life is not to get through life. The point is not to not worry. Basically people in America find meaning in what they desire. The fact is that they don't want to care; in Israel it is the opposite.”

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 Mordechai Schmutter

Mordechai Schmutter is a junior at Yeshiva University studying computer science and economics. Although he doesn't plan on living in America long-term, Mordechai is also passionate about American politics and believes that supporting Israel is not only in the best interest of



Israelis or American Jews, but also in the best interest of America as a whole; and, as a patriotic American, that makes Israel's well-being doubly important to him. Mordechai has also enjoyed his time participating in Israel advocacy experiences including Jerusalem U, lobbying for Israel missions to DC, and managing an Israel advocacy Twitter account with a group of fellow college students. Mordechai's dream is to make aliyah and found a new tech company in the Start-Up Nation.

After having been inspired by his time in Israel during his two years at Yeshivat Shaarei Mevaseret Tzion, Mordechai is excited to share his experiences and hopes to spread his passion for Israel throughout the entirety of the religious Jewish community in America during his time with the RZA Aryeh Fellowship.

Emails from Israel

While the RZA Aryeh Fellows were in Israel, some wrote emails back to family and friends describing the incredible experience they've had. Read an excerpt from an email by Briana Friedman below:

"Last year, I participated in the RZA mission for college students over my winter break. This program enabled me to study in my midrasha, Migdal Oz, for a week. This year, I am participating in the RZA Aryeh Fellowship and again I have the opportunity and privilege to return to my beloved midrasha for a week. And yet, as I walk through the doors, I know my stay is limited, my time is short. As it says in Pirkei Avot, היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה, the day is short, but there is plenty to do. I'm reminded of how much there is to learn, how much I want to sit and stay and learn until I've learned and read everything there is. But yet, לא עליך המלאכה - it isn't my job to finish the learning, just to start it. As I walk up that ramp into the land that I love, the Beit Midrash that I love, I'm reminded of the fact that it is a privilege and responsibility to study Torah and visit the land, but it doesn't end when I leave and step on the plane. The reason the two paths are next to each other is to create this exact tension. Right now, my world is the Beit Midrash, the Land of Israel, Pre-Med, New York, and everything in between. This dichotomy may exist but it's my responsibility to live with it, thrive in it and learn and grow as much as possible."



Entebbe 1976: A Shabbat Miracle

"Entebbe 1976: A Shabbat Miracle". Congregation KINS, YU Torah MiTzion Kollel, and Mizrahi - Religious Zionists of Chicago invite the community to an exceptional presentation by special guests **Benny Davidson**, who was hijacked with his family to Entebbe on his way to celebrate his BarMitzvah in the USA, and **Avner Avraham**, who served 28 years in the Mossad, and curated the first exhibition on Operation Yonatan. **Thursday, February 23, 8:00 PM, at Cong. KINS, 2800 W. North Shore. No charge.**

Forty years later, and a lion share of the fascinating stories are just seeing light. An exceptional lecture by two people. One celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in captivity in Uganda. The other, an ex Mossad officer, collected the behind the scenes breathtaking stories. A combination of a story bigger than life, with the exceptional personality of the narrators, and their rare talent of storytelling, promises great excitement and exposure to historic facts that are just now being revealed, 40 years later. A rare opportunity to enjoy the experience first-hand and become virtual passengers in a trip to Entebbe and back.

ENTEBBE

1976

A SHABBAT MIRACLE

Benny Davidson



Benny Davidson was blessed with his family to Entebbe while he was on his way to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah in a coast-to-coast trip in the USA. His personal and emotional story of survival, sanity, and mental courage, in unbearable conditions, together with insights collected over the years, bring about an unforgettable, emotional and powerful event. Benny is a Hi-Tech veteran and entrepreneur in various fields, and is active and volunteers in a number of non-profit organizations. He is a father to four children and lives in the Sharon district. In the recent past, he has chosen to participate and lead projects and ventures in welfare, education and culture that are rendering good service for the community and individuals.

Avner Avraham



Avner Avraham served 28 years in the Mossad - Israel Secret Intelligence Service. His connection to Entebbe began when he created the first exhibition on operation Yonatan. In the process of collecting the testimonials and materials Avner became the de-facto world expert for the subject. Avner composed the materials, interviews and meetings to a coherent narrative and visual, valuable and emotional experience. The spies and scheme stories that Avner collected unveil the behind the scenes stories and facts in an interesting, mysterious and imaginative encounter. Avner is a curator and a producer of exhibitions around the world and is an internationally renowned expert in secret operations research.

THURSDAY FEB 23

8:00 PM

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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 Chagigat, 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.

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

Our Youthful Backyard

By Zevulun Orlev

“Wild Weeds” in the Backyard

We have in our midst young men and women who gain strength from generation to generation in the path of “Torah and Labor,” and we are rightfully proud of them. The disseminating of the values of religious Zionism within our land is to the credit of these

people, and it can be viewed as a success of the religious education they received in their families, from the Chemed religious school system, in the yeshivot and IDF prep schools, in our youth movements, in our communities and settlements. Credit is also due to such religious Zionist organizations as Emunah, the Kibbutz Hadati, and others.

As opposed to our wonderful youths, which number about 250,000 students in all the educational institutions combined, **there are a few hundred youths, including a tough kernel of no more than a few dozen, who have abandoned the yoke of authority and the discipline of their parents, their rabbis, and their educators**, ignoring the public leadership and the laws of the land. They have written their own set of national values, one that is foreign to our Torah and our nation. We cannot ignore the violent struggle of these youths in the synagogue of Amona against police and soldiers, in defiance of the calls by rabbis and community leaders to refrain from violence. The image of the destroyed synagogue is a view of our own young backyard. We can see in sharp detail the image of those who refuse to accept any authority.

What did we do, how did we react to the destruction? Except for a handful of leaders and rabbis we continued with our regular routines as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Some of us reacted calmly: They were twenty fools, they are alone, let the police take care of them. Some of us said, there is nothing we can do, we have no other course of action. Some people stayed away from controversy, saying: "They are not from among us, they are not religious Zionists" – it is not our responsibility to comment on their behavior.

However, this "backyard" causes tremendous harm, first and foremost to the young men and women themselves. Their actions lead to terrible damage to their families, their communities, to religious Zionism as a whole, and to the country. These backyard people do not suffer from damage in terms of intelligence, cognizance, emotions, or the spirit. **Their head is distorted, and their soul is totally corrupt in terms of actions and values.** I am sorry to say that there are some mature adults and organizations which see them as legitimate, lend them their support, encourage them, and even make use of them for their own distorted goals. Government authorities do not prosecute them fully, and the educational and therapeutic institutions have not organized properly in order to stop their downward trend and to bring them back to normative living.

Take on the Responsibility

What should we do? First of all, we must not abandon our responsibility for them and for us to search for ways to bring them back to the fold, or at the very least to prevent others from joining them. They indeed grew up in our families (including some of the most prominent and important ones), they have been living in our towns, they were educated in our youth movements and our yeshivot. They are our biological children, they are our students and members of our youth clubs. No normative family or strong community has immunity that will guarantee that such wild plants will not grow up among us. If we remain indifferent, not only will they not disappear but they will gain strength and increase their numbers without limit.

The good news is that **behavioral distortion and corruption of the spirit and values of the youths can be reduced to a minimum and even corrected by proper treatment.** There are educational and therapeutic models which have been shown to be capable of coping with this phenomenon. We have in our midst excellent professionals who have demonstrated successes in treating these youths. Even though we have not yet developed enough suitable places for them, there are some therapeutic institutions within religious Zionism which have shown impressive results in this matter.

What is still lacking? It is broad recognition and an awareness by us all about this problem. Rabbis, educators, and public leaders must all band together to relate to the situation. Just the acts of awareness and taking on responsibility will help to reduce the dimensions of this backyard. Awareness, responsibility, and recognizing the seriousness of the problem will guarantee that we commit the necessary resources.

Rav Kook wrote: "The objective of education is to guide a person into a proper path, whose central focus is to make him into one who is good and upright... It is clear that at times to go beyond the strict limits of the law becomes the law itself."

It is clear that we are bound by a mitzva to dedicate our educational, spiritual, social, and financial resources to the cause of bringing our youths back to their proper form.

Success in this matter depends first and foremost on our efforts, not on the youths themselves. Let us make the effort, and we can succeed!

As Shabbat Approaches

Justice belongs to G-d

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

In the beginning of his book "Mussar Kodesh," Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook discussed the difference between Divine and human morality.

"Secular morality has no depth and does not enter into the internal nature of the soul... This teaching takes no stand against the attack of various lusts which might awake in strength, and it goes without saying that such weak morality cannot serve as a guide for the general human public in all its depth and broad experience, to penetrate into the depths of the soul – and to transform the hearts of individuals and the community into a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone. **There is no alternative other than being guided by Divine morality.**"

The same can be said about the difference between **human justice and Torah (Divine) justice**. Rav Kook discusses this in "Arfei Tohar:"

"Social punishment, especially in terms of monetary damage, has two sources in the soul: one is good and the other is bad. The first one stems from the recognition that one should never do an injustice, and that one who does so must suffer so that the good attitude (that injustice must be avoided) will gain strength. The second source is a result of a selfish feeling. Another person should not benefit from what is mine or touch what is mine, because the feeling of something being **mine** and of **myself** is stronger and more powerful than anything else... The laws of the Gentiles almost exclusively stem from this crude second source..."

A student of Rav Kook's words explained the above ideas as follows: There is **legal** justice, and there is **moral** justice. The theme of legal justice is: give every person what belongs to him! And the role (of the courts) is to enforce this idea, to protect everybody's possessions from being attacked by anybody else.

However, moral justice (that of the Torah, which is Divine justice) is at a much higher level. It comes to mankind with demands based on the principle that man was created in the image of our G-d, and that therefore we must get rid of animal selfishness. We must rise above it and conquer our corrupting lusts, which destroy the glory of His status.

The main objective of legal justice is to protect other people from me, from my actions. This is not true for moral justice. In this case the main goal is related to me - **to make me into a better person**. (See: R.Z. Pines, Morality of the Torah and the Talmud.)

A similar idea was expressed by the Kli Chemda on the verse, "For justice belongs to G-d" [Devarim 1:17]:

"G-d wants to establish justice – that the judgement of the Torah will be applied to Yisrael. However, when Bnei Noach were commanded to establish courts of law, the reason was **to make the world peaceful** but not to apply the laws of the Torah."

The first to write this was the Maharal of Prague in his book "Tiferet Yisrael" (Chapter 25). He wrote that all the mitzvot of the Torah are Divine and that the Torah is not a natural or behavioral religion, or **"Derech erez (proper behavior) to maintain order... Rather it is Divine**. All of its words are Divine, and therefore one who observes it has the privilege of having a place in the world to come."

The purpose of the laws of the Torah is not simply to institute proper social relationships but rather to "guide us along the paths of mercy... so that we will remain pure in our souls... and to teach us good traits" [Ramban, Devarim].

ZIONIST CHASSIDISM

The Task of the Tzadik

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

In the year 5698 (1938) the Rebbe of Husiatyn gave the following Torah insight in a sermon:

“Come now and let us have a discussion, God says” (Yeshayahu 1:18). The current topic of discussion is Eretz Yisrael.

The nation of Yisrael claims: We are going to Eretz Yisrael. Or, it would be more correct to say, we are being evicted from the lands to which we have been dispersed, and we turn towards Eretz Yisrael. (The people also emigrate to other lands, but only as private people. In response to a general national goal, we go only to Eretz Yisrael. The proof is the offer of Uganda. Even irreligious people wept when they heard this proposal, although they did not yet know if the land that was offered was good or not.) We go to the land based on the promise: “I will give it to you as a heritage, I am G-d” [Shemot 6:8]. And based on this promise in the Torah portion, “I will oppress your oppressors and I will make enemies of your enemies” [Shemot 23:22].

And now, the Jews are coming here, but the British stand at the gate and do not let them in. And those who already came in and built up the land with their blood (or their money – a pun) have encountered a wild breed of men, natives of the desert, who uproot the trees they planted and murder innocent souls. The economic foundations have been destroyed, and all roads are dangerous. (This sermon was delivered at the height of the Arab riots, during the years 5696-99 - 1936-39.)

What is it that G-d claims? He says, the promise I gave you depends on a condition: “Observe everything that I commanded you to do” [Shemot 23:13]. The reply to this condition is that Bnei Yisrael have a special privilege, as noted by Rashi: “Observe everything that I commanded you to do, and do not mention the names of other gods’ – This teaches us that idol worship carries the same weight as all the other mitzvot, and one who observes this mitzva is treated as if he had observed them all.” And as for Yisrael, no matter what else has happened, they do not violate the laws of idol worship, heaven forbid.

And I saw the following in Daat Zekeinim at the end of the Torah portion of Behar: “For Bnei Yisrael are slaves to Me, they are My slaves whom I took out of the Land of Egypt” [Vayikra 25:55]. And then, ‘Do not make gods for you’ [26:1]. Why is this relevant here, when the passage is concerned with the laws of Yovel? I say to you, this comes to explain why we will be redeemed even though we do not observe all the mitzvot, because in any case we did observe the mitzva, ‘Do not have for you other gods’ [Shemot 20:3].

**** * * * ***

The Rebbe of Husiatyn wrote this in 1938, before the great Holocaust took place, but he already saw how the Jews were being expelled from their lands. (If only more had been expelled perhaps they could have been rescued, but who could predict what was about to happen to them?)

What is the Difference between My Son and My Father-in-law's Son?

The required condition for possession of the land is to observe the mitzvot, because this area of land is the entranceway to the King's palace. However, the Rebbe saw the task of the great men of his generation as a need to emphasize the merits of Yisrael, in spite of what he could plainly see – that most of the people in Eretz Yisrael did not observe the mitzvot. He therefore wrote:

“It is the will of G-d that the righteous men and the leaders of the nation in every generation should awaken mercy for the people in this way and find ways to sweeten the harsh

punishments that overcame them, heaven forbid. The best way to do this is to mention the other nations and to compare them to Yisrael. Then we can see the difference between “my son” and “my father-in-law’s son” – and this is the path followed by the Rebbe of Berdichev.

(According to the Talmud, Leah noted that her father-in-law’s son Eisav hated Yaacov to whom he sold the birthright, while her own son Reuven did not hate his brother Yosef who was given the birthright against Reuven’s will. See Berachot 7b.)

And here the Rebbe tells a wonderful story about Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev. He went out into the market late at night and offered some food to the people there. The Gentiles took the food and gobbled it down, while the Jews said that they must first wash their hands.

The Rebbe of Husiatyn emphasizes: The task of the rabbis is to reveal the merits of Yisrael. And in his generation he was able to say that the Jews did not worship idols and were not ready to do so (even though they did not observe the laws of Shabbat and kashrut). Today we sorely miss having such rabbis, who see their main role as a search for the merits of the people, even if the only merit that they can find is that they are not involved in idol worship...

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

Real Freedom

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

What do we mean when we say that all men are free? These words have a legal connotation which has found its way into the Bill of Rights, stating that all men are free as long as their actions do not impinge on the freedom of another person. The exact boundary between conflicting freedoms will be set by specific laws.

However, the legal statement has nothing to say about independent character traits of people. Why do I make the choices that I do? Do I have a tendency to act the way I do because of the influence of factors over which I have no control? We can say that legal freedom is given to a person specifically because it is hard to believe that he is truly free, and it would therefore be patently unfair to demand that he act in a way that is different from his natural tendency.

The approach which denies that man is truly free is called determinism. This approach has taken several forms. One of these is astrology, which feels that the fate of a person is set by the status of the stars at the moment of his birth. There is also biological determinism, which feels that everything depends on genetic factors, and Greek fatalism, which believes in blind fate. Islam believes in prior fate, in that everything is set in advance by a decision of the Creator, or psychoanalytical determinism, which searches for the roots of behavior in basic trauma of childhood, or the historicism of Karl Marx, which blames everything on a class war. There are also some who claim that human behavior depends on effects of society, education, or other factors.

As opposed to all of these approaches, the outlook of Judaism stands out with all its power. It views man as a completely free being with respect to the choice between good and evil. Rambam bases this approach on four points: (1) The very fact that the mitzvot exist assumes that sin is possible (see Shemona Perakim, Chapter 8). (2) Reward and punishment would be unjust if there were no free choice. (3) Study. (4) Preparation toward off damage.

However, we are still left with one basic question. The very fact that we are born into the world is an act of coercion. And here we have a surprising fact in the Talmud which completes the picture. “All of the products of creation agreed to be formed – they were asked if they wanted to be created and they replied in the affirmative.” [Rosh Hashanah 11a, and see Rashi]. That is, every creature chose the conditions under which it would exist and the space where its free choice would have an expression – and this took place before it was created, at a stage where the difference between its own will and that of the Creator was not yet

defined. And this includes the choice of belonging to a specific nation – to Yisrael or to the other nations.

This idea can be seen in the Mishna: Against your will you are created, born, live, die, and give a reckoning of your deeds (Avot 4:29). The unavoidable chain of events begins with “being created.” This corresponds to the stage where a fetus has reached forty days after fertilization (Sanhedrin 91b). This is the point when the biological recognition of existence begins, and not before.

NATURE AND THE TORAH PORTION

The Use of Stones by Man and Animal

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

“If men fight and one of them hits his colleague with a stone or a fist but he does not die, rather he falls down in bed...” [Shemot 21:18].

A Lethal Weapon

In the above verse a stone is used as a murder weapon. Stones also appear in the description of the punishment for some sins, such as a person who passes his son in front of the idol named Molech: “And say to Bnei Yisrael: Any man from Bnei Yisrael and from the stranger who lives among Yisrael who gives his son to Molech shall die. The people of the land shall pelt him with stones.” [Vayikra 20:2].

David also used stones in his battle with Goliath. “And David put his hand into the sack and he took from it a stone. And he fired it and hit the Pelishti in the forehead, and the stone was embedded in his forehead. And he fell on his face to the ground.” [Shmuel I 17:49].

Varied Uses

A weapon is not the most common use of stone. It is more usual to see a mention of stone as a building material for various purposes, such as living quarters or worship (as a monument or an altar), or to install various items. Stone for **construction** is mentioned in connection with the Tower of Babel: “And one man said to another: Let us form bricks and burn them. The bricks became stone, and the mud became mortar.” [Bereishit 11:3]. Stone was also used as a **monument**: “And Yaacov rose early in the morning, and he took the stone which he had placed at his head and he made it into a monument. And he poured oil on its top.” [28:18].

The Torah was engraved on **stone tablets**: “And G-d said to Moshe, ascend to me on the mountain and remain there. And I will give to you the stone tablets and the Torah and the mitzvot which I have written in order to teach them.” [Shemot 24:12]. The **mouth of a well** was blocked with a large stone: “And he looked and saw, and behold, there were three flocks of sheep there... with a large stone at the mouth of the well...” [Bereishit 29:2]. And during the **war against Amalek**, we are told, “Moshe’s hands were heavy, so they took a stone and put it underneath him, and he sat on it. And Aharon and Chur supported his hands from both sides.” [Shemot 17:12]. In addition, stones were used as **weights**: “Do not have in your pocket two stones, one big and one small” [Devarim 25:13].

Animals

As opposed to the varied and widespread use of stones by humans, this is very rare among animals. In this article we will discuss some examples of such uses.

Godol, who studied chimpanzees, described specific cases where the animals threw stones at their enemies. See otters from the family of Mustelids use stones to shatter the shells of clams which they eat. The horned coot, a water bird in South America, builds a huge nest out of pebbles which it gathers into a small island in the shallow water of the lakes. The stones, which can reach a weight of 450 grams, are picked up in their beaks by the pair building the nest. The stones are piled into the shape of a cone about 0.6 meters high, with a base of about 4 sq m and a top of about 1 sq m. The weight of the stones can reach as much as 1.5 tons.

After the base is complete, the top is covered with plants from the water.

Genetic Needs

The blackstart bird which lives in the desert pads the entrance to its nest and the surroundings with small stones. The reason for this strange floor, which is evidently not functional, has been the subject of much research. One hypothesis is that this is a ceremonial act meant to impress the female. The ability of the male to carry relatively heavy stones to the nest is testimony to his genetic suitability.

Stone Tools for Monkeys

One of the early eras in the history of mankind is the Stone Age. The name of this prehistoric era stems from the fact that the most prominent remains from human culture of this era are vessels made of stones which can be carved – mainly various types of flint, basalt, and chalk. The raw materials were fashioned into tools, cutting instruments, and weapons. Surprisingly, archeologists found that some species of monkeys have their own “Stone Age.”

In recent times a new research branch has developed which is called “primate archeology.” In excavations in the rainforests of West Africa, in the forests of Brazil, and on the coast of Thailand, coarse “stone vessels” have been found which were surprisingly used by such primates as chimpanzees, macaque monkeys, and capuchin monkeys.

The significance of these discoveries is that man was not the only creature which left behind testimony of an ancient culture that can be studied using the techniques of archeology. Many groups of animals use such tools, which are usually made of biodegradable materials, such as leaves or twigs. For example, the long-tailed macaque monkey is unusual in that it uses stone tools to crack open nuts, clams, snails, and crabs. By this behavior, the macaque monkeys have become one of the rare species which followed mankind into the “Stone Age.” Research done at the site revealed “stone tools” which can be linked to the monkeys based on the way in which they were used. The age of the tools was estimated based on the age of the clams found at the same strata (as established by carbon 14 analysis). Preliminary analysis shows that the stone implements were first used about 65 years ago, but the researchers hope to be able to dig deeper, which will allow them to reveal the initial source of the use of stone. Similar research with chimpanzees showed that the beginning of their “Stone Age” was about 4,000 years ago. The researchers also hope to discover the factors which led to the beginning of the use of “stone tools” by the population of monkeys.

STRAIGHT TALK

The Challenge of Adar: Downfall or Wonderful?

By Rabbi Yoni Lavie, Manager, "Chaverim Makshivim" Website

The month of Adar is around the corner, and everybody is in high tension. Many children and youths anticipate this period with great enthusiasm. But in many schools the staff goes into a state of getting ready to repel an attack. Many principals have begun a countdown to the end of Purim with a silent prayer that we will come through the next two weeks with as little damage as possible.

The sharpest comment that I heard was by a home-room teacher, who said, “the

School year is divided into two parts. In the first part we educate them, build up their character, point them in the right direction, and push them higher and higher. In the second part we gather the broken pieces and repair the damage. And what separates the two halves? It is Purim...”

Admittedly, that is a harsh description, but there can be no doubt that many people have a strong feeling of missing the mark with respect to the holiday which the ARI described as being as great as (or possibly greater than) Yom Kippur (based on the famous play on words and the similarity of their two names). From one year to the next, we are dragged through event after event which might be more reminiscent of the Ninth of Av than

Blessed is He Who Releases the Prisoners

Why does this happen? Actually, the reason is quite simple. Many of the students see this month as a wonderful opportunity to burst out of all boundaries, with permission to do all sorts of things that are forbidden during the rest of the year. And they can even happily give halachic justification for their conclusion. After all, drinking, which is forbidden all year round, is not only permitted on Purim but becomes a mitzva for one day (see Megillah 7b). This leads them to the “logical” conclusion that of course any other prohibition becomes allowed on this day. All year round you must not offend others, especially if they are older than you and you are supposed to show respect for them. But now, you are allowed to laugh, to mimic, and to poke fun, without any limits. All year round you must keep to modest limits in how you dress and in behavior – but now everything is open and becomes possible. The bottom line is that the scent of Purim reminds you more of the party hosted by Achashverosh and Haman than it makes you think of Mordechai the Jew and Esther the Queen.

Road Markers

So, here are some small reminders related to the wonderful month that we are about to encounter.

(1) The True Test – It is not in vain that the sages taught us that “a person can be recognized through his drink,” and “when wine goes in, the secrets come out” [Eiruvin 65]. These days present us with a **great test**. What is really inside us, and what comes out when the normal boundaries are dropped? This month acts as a **mirror** which shows us how we really stand after all the effort we expended to build up our personalities during the year.

(2) Not the Contents but the Form – The main guideline must be that what changes for this month is the form but not the contents. Whoever believes in an important principle can never give it up just because according to the calendar “Adar” has arrived. If modesty is a true value, it remains valid all the time, even right now. If insulting somebody is a serious sin all year round, there is no way to make an insult and to excuse ourselves just because it is Purim. Just as the law of gravity and other natural laws are not cancelled this month, so the laws and the edicts of the Torah remain one hundred percent valid.

(3) Just the Opposite – the real challenge which we face is how to use the tool of laughter, costumes, and opposites in order to get close to reality and to the events of which it consists, and to look at them from a fresh angle. At times it is just this method – the “Purim” approach – that will allow us to bring out constructive criticism, overcoming pitfalls and obstacles that block us during the rest of the year.

(4) The One who takes the Trouble to Prepare before Shabbat... – Getting ready properly for Adar begins the month before, in Shevat – in fact, in a broader sense it should begin in Elul. How do we go about teaching ourselves and our students what is really important to us, what message we want to convey to the world, and what we are careful to avoid? The more we implant deep inside us the values in which we truly believe, and if we manage to aim higher and higher every year – this will also be revealed in the way we celebrate Purim. This month brings up important questions that are vital for us to understand: What is true joy, and how can we achieve it? Do we have a specific subject for the “coronation” of a Purim rabbi and for the entire month, together with a message that we want to pass on? How can we manage to get the entire class to participate without leaving even one student behind?

(5) Clear Guidelines – It is very important to establish in advance – in a calm manner, without any influence of alcohol – the rules which will be in effect at the moment of truth. No “human sacrifices,” what are our limits in terms of mixing of boys and girls, clothing, drinking, and so on. It is important to understand that these limits are not set in order to stifle joy and block it from bursting forth but rather to channel it in a healthy and proper direction and to protect us from things which we might regret at some later time.

(6) Spiritual Preparation – Every holiday (and especially Purim) has a spiritual content and a treasury of messages that it is willing to share with anybody who will open his heart to receive them. The more spiritual preparations we make in study and introspection, the more

we will manage to produce from this holiday.

(7) The Test of the Day After – One criterion to see if we have succeeded in celebrating Purim as we should is to answer the following question: **What is our appearance on the day after the holiday?** Are we empty, squeezed out, and barely able to carry on until Pesach redeems us, or are we full of new energy, vitality, and freshness in anticipation of the days which are fast approaching, with love?

We wish everybody a successful and happy month!

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



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