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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON BEHAR BECHUKOSAI - 5777

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Tonight, Friday evening will be day 39, which is 5 weeks and 4 days of the Omer.

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman – Parshas Behar 5776

1. Some thoughts on this week's Parsha beginning with the Parsha of the Avadim. More importantly, at the end of Perek 25 in Posuk 55 (כִּי-לֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל, עֲבָדִים). We learn the Parsha of Avadim, we remember that we are Avadim to the Ribbono Shel Olam. The Gemara says in Maseches Kiddushin 22b (12 lines from the top) that it is this Posuk that is the source or the reason for the Tzavaa of the Torah that an Eved Ivri that wants to remain an Eved has to have his ear drilled. (אֵזְרָא שְׁמִיעָה קוֹלִי עַל הָרָסְעָה שְׂאֵמְרָתִי כִּי). (לי בני ישראל עבדים). This ear that heard (כִּי-לֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל, עֲבָדִים) will have his ear drilled if he wants to remain an Eved to a person.

There is a known Kasha. If that is the reason, every Aveira was heard at Sinai and just like (כִּי-לֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל, עֲבָדִים) is a reason to drill the ear which didn't observe it, so too, Lo Signov, or speaking Lashon Hora, or eating non-Kosher food, by all of them we could say (אֵזְרָא שְׁמִיעָה קוֹלִי עַל הָרָסְעָה שְׂאֵמְרָתִי כִּי). Why is this Posuk (כִּי-לֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל, עֲבָדִים) connected to drilling the ear more than any other?

I saw a beautiful Pshat, I believe it is in the Pachad Yitzchok on Sukkos where he says an absolutely wonderful Pshat based on a Rabbeinu Yonah. That is, what is worse, someone who Lo Aleinu is blind or someone who is Lo Aleinu deaf. Which is considered a worse Mum? There seems to be a contradiction in Shas. On the one hand, Suma K'meis. A blind person is as if he is dead. That sounds far worse than someone who is deaf where we don't find that type of an expression. On the other hand, the Gemara says in Maseches Bava Kamma 85b that if someone Lo Aleinu blinds someone else he has to pay him a certain amount of money. (סִימָא אַתְּ) (עינו נותן לו דמי עינו) he pays the value. The Gemara then says (חירשו) if someone makes someone else deaf G-d forbid, (ויהיב ליה דמי כוליה) he has to pay the entire value of the person in whatever way that value is estimated there in the Gemara. But there the Gemara is saying that a Cheiresh, someone who is deaf is in a worse condition than someone who is blind which contradicts the Gemara of Suma K'meis?

Rabbeinu Yonah in Shaarei Teshuva, Shaar Sheini, Derech HaShlishi, Os Yud Bais, says a beautiful answer. Inherently sight is more important. A Suma is K'meis, somebody who is blind is like he is dead. However, when it comes to the Halachos of Mazikin, those Halachos are tied to the value of a person to be sold in the market place as an Eved. In other words, when we talk about blinding or making someone deaf, we estimate the value based on being an Eved. To be able to be an Eved (a servant), hearing is the most important tool because if you can't hear instructions he is not an Eved. If he can't see, there are things he can do and the master can instruct him. So that for the average person sight is more important. But someone who is an Eved hearing is more important.

If so, we come back to our Parsha (כִּי-לֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל, עֲבָדִים). We are talking here about Klal Yisrael the Yiddishe Kinder being Avadim to the Ribbono Shel Olam. To be an Eved, hearing is the most important thing. Listening and accepting that is the most important thing. So Dafka here when it comes to being able to be Mekabeil Avdus, being an Eved, we say if you don't understand (כִּי-לֹא יִשְׁרָאֵל, עֲבָדִים) and you want to be an Eved to another person, your ear needs to be drilled. You are using the Koach Hash'mia improperly. Therefore, the ear is more connected to an Eved than to anything else.

With this, Rav Hutner answers as well why Shema Yisroel the Mitzvah of Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim begins with Shema, listen. Because Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim is again an attribute of Avdus, of accepting HKB"H when you are accepting the Ribbono Shel Olam it is the Koach HaShemiya to be a listener. And so, we learn from this idea the concept that Shemiya, listening, makes one a good Eved, someone who can follow instructions properly.

2. Let's move on to another part of the Parsha. We find also another Mitzvah regarding Avadim and that is the Mitzvah of Ha'anaka. When one lets his Eved Ivri go free at the end of six years the Eved is given a rather elaborate gift.

The Mishnah L'melech in Hilchos Avadim Perek Gimmel Halacha Yud Daled has a Lomdishe Chakira. He says this Halacha that you give a gift to an Eved Ivri when he leaves can be understood in two ways. It could be understood as a Choshen Mishpat Din. Meaning, when you buy an Eved you obligate yourself in certain Choshen Mishpat obligations. That is, you have to pay someone who becomes an Eved Ivri. In addition to paying, when he leaves you have another payment to make, Ha'anaka.

There is a second way to look at it and that is as a Yor'e Dai'a Din. As a Tzedaka/Chesed type of Din. And that is when someone is your Eved you paid him and now when he goes free he is starting life all over again and you should have the Chesed to give a gift. Hanaka is from the source of Chesed. The Nafka Mina between the two whether Hanaka is a Choshen Mishpat Din or a Yor'e Dai'a Din is if someone is the Eved Ivri of a Kotton. A man dies and his son a Kotton inherits the Eved Ivri. When the Eved Ivri goes free do we take from the Kotton's money to give Hanaka? If it is a Choshen Mishpat Din so of course we do. Any Choshen Mishpat obligation of a Kotton is paid on his behalf. But if it is a Chesed type of Din, a Kotton is not obligated in Mitzvos and we can't take his money in order to make him do a Mitzvah.

A second Nafka Mina, the Minchas Chinuch in Mitzvah Taf Pei Beis who quotes this Chakira of the Mishnah L'melech brings another Nafka Mina. If someone refuses to give Hanaka, does Bais Din force him. On Tzedaka, Ein Kofin Al Tzedaka. We don't force someone to give Tzedaka. On Choshen Mishpat Dinnim we do force. That is a second Nafka Mina.

I would add a third Nafka Mina. The Mitzvah of (בְּיוֹמוֹ תִּתֵּן שְׂכָרוֹ) that is found in Devarim 24:15. Which is paying someone who is entitled to payment promptly or on time. Does it apply to Hanaka or not? If it is a Choshen Mishpat Din then it should, however, if it is a Mitzvah of Tzedaka then there is no Din of (בְּיוֹמוֹ תִּתֵּן שְׂכָרוֹ) you have a period of time to give it. This is the Chakira.

It seems that the answer to the Chakira is a B'feirush Shach in Choshen Mishpat Siman ט"ב S'if Kotton Gimmel. There is an interesting Din which you most probably remember from your Yeshiva years called Shibudai D'rav Nosson. If Reuvein owes Shimon money and Shimon owes Levi money, Levi can collect from Reuvein. That is, Levi has a right as he is owed money by Shimon, to go to Shimon's debtor and collect from Reuvein. This is called Shibudai D'rav Nosson. The Halacha is that it doesn't apply to Tzedakah. If Shimon is poor and someone gives Tzedaka to Shimon, Levi who is owed money by Shimon is not allowed to take that money. That is because the one who gives Tzedaka doesn't need to give Tzedaka to pay off his debt, he needs to give Tzedaka to give him food to eat, to give him clothing to wear. Therefore, there is no Shibudai D'rav Nosson when someone is obligated to give Tzedaka to Shimon. His debtor, Levi can't take it.

What about Hanaka? In this Shaila the Shach writes the following. Hadavar Yadu'a She'hanaka Hu Din Tzedaka. Kidimashma Dikroi U'mai'shas U'B'perek Eilu Metzios U'maseches Kiddushin D'kama Duchti. He says it is Mashma in many places. Hanaka is a Tzedaka type of Din. Hanaka is a Chesed Din. Since it is a Chesed type of Din, it is like Tzedaka and there is no Shibudai D'rav Nosson. So it is really a B'feirush a Shach.

The Birchah Avraham on Kiddushin 22 brings a beautiful Raya to this idea. In the Sefer Hamitzvos of the Rambam he counts the Mitzvos not by Parsha as the Chinuch does but by topic. He puts all the Zeraim Mitzvos together, all the Bais Hamikdash Mitzvos together, all the Mitzvos of each type are together. Does he put the Mitzva of Hanaka together with Choshen Mishpat or with the Mitzvah of Chesed?

If you look in Mitzvah Kuf Tzaddik Vav you will see that it is together with the Mitzvos of Chesed. Therefore, the conclusion is that Hanaka is a Chesed type of Din. It is a type of Tzedaka.

With this we understand the Chinuch. The Chinuch writes that in the Shirashei Hamitzvah, Hanaka is the idea to be generous with people that work for you. To be kind, to tip people, to give them something extra. Certainly to tip someone is not a Choshen Mishpat type of Din nowadays. It is not like Hanaka which is an obligation.

How did the Chinuch know to learn it from Hanaka? He knew because he understood that Hanaka is a Chesed, it is sort of a Tzedaka type of Din. Therefore, it teaches us a Hanhaga, a type of behavior. The behavior is to be ready to tip people, to be kind to people who have worked for you and have done things for you. Many people don't realize that if someone comes to your house and does a job, a plumber or an electrician does work, you owe him a debt of gratitude. People say why? I paid him, he owes me a debt of gratitude. Even if you pay someone, if he does Chesed for you (if he does something for you that you need), you owe him a thank you, you owe him a Hanaka. You owe him to be grateful to him. The fact that he is paid should not change that. That we learn from Hanaka. It is an attitude.

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Peninim on the Torah

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum -

Behar

If your brother becomes impoverished... you shall strengthen him. (25:35) The Pele Yoetz writes: "Chesed, performing acts of kindness, is a pillar of the world. It is one of those mitzvos whose fruits are eaten in this world, but whose principal remains for him (generating reward) in Olam Habba, the World to Come." The Chafetz Chaim writes that the performance of chesed can engender such incredible merit that it has the power to overwhelm the Middas HaDin, Attribute of Strict Justice. Rebbetzin Miriam Shmuelevitz, wife of the venerable Rosh Yeshivah of Mir Yerushalayim, was very involved in a successful chesed organization that reached out to Jews all over

Yerushalayim. I will present the following story, which is well-known, with a different twist, in order to impart a powerful lesson which will hopefully carry an inspiring message.

A young kollel fellow who had been suffering the pain of abject poverty was gifted a box of food for Succos from the chesed organization - fish, chicken, soup, salad, challah - sufficient to serve his growing family. Tears rolled down his face as he saw this manna from Heaven. One half hour before the Yom Tov was to commence, he heard a knock at his door. He opened the door to greet an impoverished woman, begging for "something" for Yom Tov; "Perhaps, you might be able to share some food with me? I have nothing. Whatever you can give me will be a lifesaver," she said. "I would love to help you," he began, "but I myself just received my Yom Tov package - barely enough for my family." "Surely, you can give a poor woman something?" she pleaded. "I really have nothing. This is the first time that we received a package of food that was designated specifically for Yom Tov. My children have looked forward for some time to eat a piece of chicken, to savor some hot soup. I would love to help you, but my children..." he said.

A war raged within him. On one hand, he wanted so much to help this woman. On the other hand, he had so little, he had nothing to spare. Back and forth he went, until he decided to go to the fridge and take out the chicken, cut off a piece, and share it with the woman. So, they would all eat less. It was still more than they would otherwise have had. He went to the refrigerator, opened the door, and almost passed out! There before his eyes lay his two-year-old son, blue in the face. He had somehow crept in, and, since he was small, he fit on a shelf as the door closed on him. Immediately, they called Hatzalah who miraculously revived the child. The paramedics told him, "Reb Yaakov - you were just given a child as a gift. Five more minutes, and we would not have been able to save him." The kollel fellow certainly gave the chicken to the woman who "indirectly" had played a role in saving his son's life.

What are we to learn from this story? Rebbetzin Shmuelevitz asked the Rosh Yeshivah for his insight. Horav Chaim, zl, said, "Obviously, the simple, most straightforward lesson to be derived is Tzedakah tatzil mi'maves, 'Charity saves from death.' By giving charity to this poor woman, the kollel fellow performed a mitzvah which ultimately catalyzed his son being saved from death. There is another - even greater - lesson to be derived from here. This Kollel fellow was granted a 'final test' to determine if he was worthy of being his son's father. A 'final test' is not a simple test. It is the last opportunity granted to a person to give him a chance to save himself - or others close to him - from death. If he passes the test, he has earned a zchus, merit, for life. If chas v'shalom, Heaven Forbid, he fails... Our young man was fortunate to have passed the test and saved his son's life. What if he would not have passed the test? What if he would not have opened the refrigerator? Baruch Hashem, he did."

Horav Meir Abuchatzzeira was riding in a car together with his aide, when he suddenly looked up from the sefer he was reading and said, "Stop the truck behind us (on the highway). It was a massive Coca Cola truck. His driver could not fathom what Rav Meir wanted with the Coca Cola truck, but one did not question the holy Rav Meir. Everything that he did was by Heavenly design and for a holy purpose. When they cut off the truck, the driver came out in a "somewhat" upset mood. "What are you doing?" he screamed. "You are on a highway. Traffic must move." Rav Meir's aide asked the driver for a bottle of Coca Cola. The driver began to scream, "For this, you stopped me? I do not sell retail to individuals. You want soda - go to the store!" "But, I am so thirsty," the aide pleaded. "I will pay you fifty shekel for the bottle." The driver turned away angry, and both vehicles continued on the highway. Five minutes later, the truck driver lost control of the truck, which crashed, causing one fatality - the driver. Rav Meir commented, "I sent him one 'final test.' I saw the Malach HaMaves, Angel of Death, dancing on his steering wheel. I tried to save him by according him one last opportunity to perform chesed. Sadly, he did not rise to the occasion; this resulted in his failing the test."

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You Are What You Speak
Rabbi Yosef Levinson

The Torah commands us to conduct our business affairs with honesty. This is a negative precept, as it is written "When you make a sale to your fellow-man or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow-man, do not aggrieve one another (Vayikra 25:14)." This restriction applies equally to both seller and buyer and is known as ona'as mammon (monetary deceit). This restriction is repeated a few verses later: "A man should not aggrieve his fellow-man, and you shall fear G-d; I am Hashem your G-d (Passuk 17)." The Sages explain that this second proscription prohibits ona'as devarim, aggrieving another verbally. We may not cause a fellow Jew anguish and pain with words by insulting, embarrassing or deceiving him. The Mishna and Gemara cite a few examples of ona'as devarim: One should not ask a shopkeeper 'How much is this item?' if he has no intention of buying it. Nor should one remind a ba'al teshuva (returnee) or a ger (convert) of their past deeds. And one should not tell another inflicted with suffering that he is being punished for his sins (Bava Metzia 58b).

Ona'as devarim is not limited to harming another verbally. We can insult or deceive another without even uttering a word. If one eyes merchandise, one gives the seller the impression that he is interested in purchasing it when he may have no intention of doing so. The seller's hopes for a sale are deflated and he experiences needless anguish when the individual walks away. One can insult his fellow Jew by his facial expression, a dirty look or through motioning with his hands and fingers. (Even staring at others can make one feel uncomfortable. It is halachically forbidden to stare at another while he is eating, Orach Chaim 170:4.) Laughing at a fellow Jew is another source of shame and embarrassment.

One who hurts a fellow Jew through ona'as devarim is not only displaying middos ra'os, bad character traits, but as we have seen above, also transgresses one of the 365 negative commandments of the Torah. His actions are comparable to violating one of the laws of Yom Tov or eating chazir, pig. This is true of both verbal and silent ona'ah (see Yereim 180 with So'afos Re'eim).

The necessity for a Biblical restriction against harming others verbally is easily understood. Nevertheless, why did the Torah include ona'as devarim in the passage of ona'as mammon, monetary fraud, even using the same term, ona'ah, to describe both of them? The Netziv suggests that when transacting a business deal, one is likely to become frustrated and is more prone to insult the other party involved in the transaction. Therefore the Torah warns him not to insult his fellow Jew even then. The restriction, though, is binding in all situations. Thus our explanation must go further than this.

Most people respect the property of others. They would find the very thought of stealing a fellow Jew's property repulsive. Nevertheless they would not regard insulting another Jew as being a transgression of the same severity. The Torah therefore compares insulting another to cheating. Ona'as devarim is also a form of thievery; one is robbing his victim of his dignity. The Gemara comments that ona'as devarim is actually more severe than ona'as mammon. The Torah concludes the admonition of ona'as devarim with the words "I am Hashem your G-d." The Torah however, omits this phrase from the restriction against monetary fraud. Additionally, in the case of monetary fraud, the victim loses only his money. When one insults his

fellow, he hurts him personally. Furthermore, Money can always be returned but emotional scars caused by cruel words are not so easily healed.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch offers another comparison between ona'as devarim and ona'as mammon. He writes that ona'ah is the misuse of some weakness in one's fellow man to his disadvantage. In commerce, one commits ona'ah by taking advantage of another person's ignorance and lack of business acumen to cheat him. Ona'as devarim refers to taking advantage of another's vulnerability, by hurting him. More so, this attitude of looking at other people's weaknesses, is the actual cause of ona'ah. A gullible customer is seen as an opportunity to make easy money. Regarding ona'as devarim, one focusses on the other's weaknesses and sees himself as superior to his intended victim. Thus, he feels he has license to ridicule and embarrass him. Therefore the Torah warns, 'lo sonu ish es amiso' - do not aggrieve your fellow man. 'Amiso' means with you - we must view each other as equals. The passuk concludes - 'and I am Hashem your G-d.' We were all created in His image and are considered His beloved children. One's station in life or one's background is of no consequence. If a person is currently a G-d fearing Jew, we must treat him with dignity and respect (see Alshich). Perhaps this is why the Torah inserted this proscription in the passage of Shemitta and Yovel. During Shemitta, one leaves his field ownerless; anyone can come and partake from the produce of the land. There is no distinction between landowner and pauper, all are equal during that year. We must remember this lesson even after the Shemitta year ends and we regain control over our fields. We should see all Jews in the same light that we view ourselves. This attitude shall be applied to all other class distinctions; regardless of one's family or personal history and whether or not one was blessed with good health and good fortune, we are all Hashem's precious children.

The Chovos Levavos writes: a Sage was once asked, "How did you merit to be the leader of your generation?" He answered: "I have never met anyone that I did not regard to be on a higher level than myself. If he was wiser than I, I assumed that he was also more G-d fearing. If I met one who was less wise, I considered that on the day of Judgement, he will be held less accountable than I - for my sins were committed intentionally, while his were committed in error. If I met an older individual, I presumed that he has more merits than I since he was born before me. And if he was younger, I reasoned that his sins were fewer than mine. If the man was richer than I, I assumed that he had more opportunities to serve Hashem because of his wealth. And if he was poorer, I would consider him to be contrite and of a humbler spirit due to his poverty. Therefore I honoured all men and humbled myself before them (Shaar Hakenia ch. 10)."

The Gemara (Kesuvos 111b) states: "When one shows his teeth (in a smile) to his fellow man, it is better than giving him milk to drink." Rabbi Avidgor Miller zt'l elaborates: How highly we would consider a man who gave drinks of milk to passers-by everyday. What a benefactor of mankind! A drink of milk provides essential nourishment and becomes part of all that the recipient does thereafter. Yet, this man does less than one who smiles at his fellow man. The smile enters the mind and heart and stimulates all the glands to produce their secretions in the most beneficial proportion. Every one of the thousands of intricate processes of physical function is optimally motivated (Sing You Righteous p.294)."

Instead of seeing the faults of others, let us focus on their good qualities. Instead of causing pain and anguish with our speech, let us use words of encouragement and cheer. And instead of using body language to make others uncomfortable, let us focus our hand motions and facial expressions to bring happiness to others.

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**Yom Yerushalayim Wed. May 24, 2017 –
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**Yom Yerushalayim: Zion and Jerusalem
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**

Let's Open Our Sefarim This Yom Yerushalayim

Historians have long distinguished between two types of great leaders. On the one hand, there are those who are gifted with mighty talents and unusually powerful personalities. But they are essentially inward people who are not particularly gregarious and whose greatness often sets them at a distance from their followers. On the other hand, there are those who are typically interactive with others, who relate comfortably to crowds, and who use their talents to reach out to other people.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of the Land of Israel, used this distinction to describe the essential difference between Moses and his brother, Aaron. Moses exemplified the leader who had great personal qualities but was not particularly adept at maintaining many close personal relationships. He had his opponents, and even those who admired him kept their distance from him. Aaron, on the other hand, was the one who "loved peace and pursued peace." While he had great spiritual assets, he is best known for being a man of the people.

Rav Kook uses this distinction to help explain an otherwise puzzling comment in the Talmud as it attempts to come to terms with an equally puzzling verse in Psalms. The verse reads, "Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel was among those who call upon His name" (Psalms 99:6). The verse treats Samuel as is somehow equal to Moses and Aaron combined. The Talmud goes further and explicitly insists that the prophet Samuel alone was as lofty as Moses and Aaron taken together.

Do we not usually conceive of Moses as being the incomparable teacher of us all, and Aaron as the model of all future High Priests? How can Samuel, as great a Jewish leader and judge as he was, be compared to even one of those brothers, let alone both of them?

Rav Kook resolves this perplexity quite simply. He maintains that the Talmud does not understand the verse in Psalms to be making a statement about the greatness of Samuel in comparison to Moses and Aaron. Rather, the Talmud wants us to understand that Samuel's greatness was that he combined in his personality both the inner strength of Moses and the outreach skills that Aaron possessed. In that sense, he had some of Moses and some of Aaron within him.

Elsewhere in his writings, Rav Kook makes further use of the dual concepts of inner strength and the capacity for outreach to others. He does so not only in relationship to persons, but also in relationship to places. He points out that numerous biblical verses speak of Zion and Jerusalem. Ordinary students who encounter these verses understand the two to be synonymous terms for the same holy city.

Rav Kook has a different take on these two terms. For him, "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are terms for the two different aspects of the eternal city, two different qualities of the same sacred spot. The term "Zion" is reserved for the inner quality of the city, for its imposing majesty, for its fortress-like qualities. The term "Jerusalem" refers to the city's capacity to radiate outward as a beacon of light to all humanity; indeed, to attract all of humanity to visit her and to worship in her Holy Temple.

In a word, "Zion" represents our nation's autonomy and special strength, while "Jerusalem" symbolizes the dissemination of the dvar HaShem, the Almighty's word, to the rest of the world.

One example of a verse used by Rav Kook to explicate this distinction is found in Isaiah 40:9: "Herald of Zion, ascend a lofty mountain! Herald of Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength, be not afraid!" The metaphor applied to Zion is that of a mountain: grand, mighty, but immovable.

Jerusalem, on the other hand, is not confined to its geographical location. It is not a mountain, but a voice, a voice to be lifted up with strength so that all the world might hear its message.

This week, I have chosen to do something quite different. Instead of examining the portions of the week, I wish to lift my voice on behalf of Jerusalem.

This week, we look forward to Yom Yerushalayim, commemorating that dramatic, nay miraculous, day fifty years ago, when Jerusalem was heroically re-unified. It is on this day that we particularly celebrate the voice of Jerusalem and its uncanny ability to reach all of us wherever we are, geographically and ideologically.

Not once, but at least three times on every weekday, the observant Jew remembers Jerusalem in his or her prayers. After every meal, weekday or holiday or Sabbath, Jerusalem is similarly remembered. Jerusalem reaches out to us all.

The Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, teaches us that of the 19 blessings that comprise the Amidah prayer there are only two during which we bow: the very first blessing, Avot, and the thanksgiving blessing, Modim. Choosing to bow during any of the other 17 blessings is considered unseemly, perhaps even shameful. But the commentaries point out that there is one opinion that allows bowing during another blessing.

That is the opinion of the Maharil, the saintly authority who recorded old practices of the Jewish Ashkenasic communities in the Rhineland of Germany. He encouraged Jews to continue that ancient practice and to bow additionally during the prayer for the welfare of Jerusalem. Other rabbinical authorities discourage this practice, but some defend at least a modest attempt at bowing for Jerusalem. This is but one small example of Jerusalem's ability to reach into the heart of every Jew.

The great early 20th century sage, known as the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Mayer HaKohen, counseled Jewish soldiers who were in the army of the Czar of Russia as to how they could maintain their Jewish identity under the difficult circumstances of their military service. They reported to him that they could not possibly take the time to pray, or even to utter privately the several words of the Shema. Doing so would mean severe punishment, perhaps even death. He instructed them to pronounce no prayers, to say no words, but to simply find one moment each day when they could face the direction of Jerusalem. That seemingly insignificant gesture, he assured them, would suffice to keep them connected to the Almighty and to the Jewish people. The power of Jerusalem!

Many of us take for granted the fact that every synagogue has windows. Ideally, those windows face Jerusalem. As the Talmud in Berachot 34b states, "One should only pray in a house which has windows, as it says, 'And Daniel would enter his house, where there were open windows in his upper chamber facing Jerusalem; three times a day he would kneel and pray.'" (Daniel 6:11)

Windows allow us to look out, to "see" Jerusalem even from afar. But personally, as I look out of the windows of the synagogues I frequent, I feel Jerusalem peering at me through those windows, far away as she may be.

This year, on Wednesday, May 24, the 28th day of the month of Iyar, I encourage you to gaze out of the windows of your own synagogue. Visualize Jerusalem in all its present glory and potential wonder. Allow Jerusalem to reciprocate your gaze. Permit her to regale you with stories of her ancient glory. Ask her to help you envision that moment when "The Torah shall come forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:3)

http://jewishlinknj.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13398:hashem-and-the-six-day-war&catid=156:features&Itemid=585

Thurs. June 2 2016

**Hashem and the Six Day War
By Rabbi Haim Jachter**

Editor's Note: Rabbi Jachter presents a chapter from his upcoming book, "Reason to Believe," in honor of Yom Yerushalayim.

Similar to Israel's remarkable and unanticipated establishment, most believing Jews perceive Israel's stunning victory in the Six Day War as another demonstration of Hashem's omniscient hand guiding the course of Jewish history. The result of this war was so implausible that the manifest conclusion is (as we recite during Hallel, Tehillim 118:23), "Mei'eit Hashem hayetah zot," that this could have been only from Hashem.

A typical expression of this attitude is presented in Lawrence Kelemen's "Permission to Believe" (pp. 79-81):

In 1967, an impatient [Egyptian President] Nasser violated the truce (from the 1956 War between Egypt and Israel) by moving 100,000 troops into the Sinai. On May 19, he ordered the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping units, which complied instantly. On May 22, Nasser blockaded the Gulf of Aqaba, and eight days later he signed a military pact with King Hussein of Jordan. The same day, under Jordanian guidance, Iraqi forces took positions on the Israeli-Jordanian border.

On June 5, reacting to intelligence reports that war was again imminent, Israel launched a preemptive strike. In a single day, it destroyed [almost] the entire Egyptian air force. Jordan and Syria both declared war. In six days, Israel defeated all three armies, each larger than the size of its own. The Israelis retook Sinai, captured [the old city of] Jerusalem [and the West Bank] and Syria's Golan Heights. To this day, many military experts are at a loss to explain the Jews' 1967 victory.

Rav Berel Wein recounts a stirring story illustrating this point. A West Point general once remarked that though the United States Military Academy studies wars fought throughout the world, it does not study the Six Day War because West Point is interested in strategy and tactics, not miracles. Indeed, Rav Yehuda Amital recounted that before the Six Day War there were American Jewish leaders who pleaded with the Israeli government to evacuate the children from Israel, since the annihilation of Israel was expected. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel had designated public parks as burial sites, with over 80,000 deaths expected. The dramatic and highly unexpected turn of events instantly took us "from darkness to light." As in the time of Esther and Mordechai, "The Jews experienced great light and joy" (Esther 8:16).

We would like to point to some of the specific evidence of Hashem's hand in the Six Day War, based on Dr. Michael Oren's authoritative work "Six Days of War" and an insight of the Vilna Gaon. As seen in the events leading to the creation of the State of Israel, we can perceive the hand of God when our enemies act inexplicably foolish. Similarly, in Sefer Shoftim Ch. 3, the Moabite king Eglon and his team of bodyguards foolishly permitted a representative of a conquered nation, Ehud, to speak privately with Eglon. This left Eglon exposed to attack, defenseless. In addition, the Moabite security guards did not properly check Ehud for weapons, enabling him to sneak in the weapon he used to kill Eglon, thereby ending Moabite rule over part of Israel.

Let us now examine some of the foolish actions of the Arab leadership before and during the Six Day War, in an effort to perceive how Hashem was hiding behind the latticework ensuring our victory against all odds. We should clarify that Dr. Oren does not highlight the role of Hashem in the Six Day War, as his work is solely secular. We seek to supplement his excellent book by reiterating that when so many favorable coincidences occur, reason dictates that success should be attributed to Hashem.

The Egyptian Leadership Before the War

The most well-known fiasco was the Egyptian air force leaving almost all of its planes outside their hangars, fully exposed to Israeli attack. Michael Oren (p. 171) records, "Though proposals for constructing concrete hangars had been submitted by the air force and approved, none had ever been implemented." There were many more Egyptian blunders, such as the shocking disorganization of the Egyptian army as it mobilized for an attack on Israel (pp. 159-160):

Thousands of [Egyptian] reservists continued to arrive without equipment or food or a sense of either place or purpose. A report prepared by the army's planning wing concluded that Egypt needed another six months at least to shore up its Sinai defenses for battle, but the recommendation went unheeded and perhaps even unread. Instead, chaos reigned. General Tawfiq 'Abd al-Nabi...arrived in Sinai to take command of an antitank brigade, only to find that he had no artillery, no mortars and only seven tanks borrowed from another unit. His soldiers, moreover, knew nothing of tank warfare. Dozens of units had been exhausted, their vehicles worn out, transferring back and forth across the desert.

Moreover, before the Israeli preemptive strike, the Egyptians—unbeknownst to the Israelis (who, however, suspected that an attack was imminent but were still pursuing diplomatic solutions to the crisis), Americans and even Soviets—were planning an attack on Israel, which they code-named "Operation Dawn" (Oren pp. 92-97). The Israelis communicated their fears of an attack to the Americans who informed the Soviet leaders. The Soviets, in turn, communicated this message to Nasser who erroneously concluded this was proof that the Israelis had accessed Egyptian secrets and compromised them. Nasser canceled the offensive only 15 minutes before it was scheduled to begin, when Egyptian pilots were already in their planes (Oren pp. 119-121).

Oren concludes: "The Egyptian offensive was all but dead, struck down by a chance (emphasis added) intervention just short of the H-hour." Believing Jews do not see this as mere happenstance, but as divine intervention allowing Israel to take control of the crisis with a preemptive strike, rather than be forced to react to an Egyptian attack.

Egyptian Leadership During the War

On the first day of the war, as Israeli warplanes were on their way to destroy the Egyptian planes, the Jordanians (who possessed the most sophisticated radar facility in the Middle East) detected the Israeli attack and communicated the information to the Egyptian defense minister. The Jordanian communication, however, was indecipherable, since (Oren p. 172):

[t]he Egyptians had changed their encoding frequencies the previous day, but without updating the Jordanians... But even if those messages could have been read, the Egyptian defense minister was not present to read them. He had gone to bed only a few hours before [the Israeli attack], leaving strict orders not to be disturbed. Similarly absent were the officers in charge of decoding and the air operations chief... Air force intelligence also reported extensively on the Israeli attack, but the officers at the Supreme Headquarters... ignored them.

The mishaps continued on the second day of the war. The Egyptian leadership (Oren p. 214) understood the situation as far more desperate than it truly was. "Rather than rallying their still extensive forces, digging in during the day and counterattacking at night when the Israeli Air Force's edge was blunted, Egypt's leaders ordered a wholesale and wildly disorganized retreat."

The Jordanian Leadership

Dr. Oren (p. 244) writes that King Hussein of Jordan ignored personal pleas from Israel's Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to end the fighting twice in the course of the war. Hussein's recalcitrance lost Jordan the entire West Bank. Oren (p. 185) explains that Hussein was led astray by Egyptian President Nasser who lied to the Jordanian monarch by reporting massive Israeli losses and the destruction of Israeli airfields. Hussein ignored reports from outside sources that, in reality, the Egyptian air force was annihilated (Oren p. 188). It should be emphasized that King Hussein was a wise leader who ruled Jordan from 1953 until his natural death in 1999. Hussein shrewdly overcame many existential threats to Jordan as well as numerous assassination attempts. Israelis are fond of saying that King Hussein of Jordan made only two mistakes: attacking Israel in 1967 and refraining from invading Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War when we barely survived a two-front attack by Egypt and Syria. Israel, which was woefully unprepared

for the 1973 war, would likely not have survived if Jordan had attacked during that terrible war. This behavior is eerily reminiscent of the behavior of Nachash, the king of Ammon (note that the Jordanian capital is the ancient city of Amman), who attacked us unsuccessfully when King Shaul was rising to power (Shmuel I Ch. 11). Nachash, however, failed to attack us when King Shaul's forces were utterly destroyed in Shmuel I Ch. 28.

Excellent timing worked in favor of the Israeli air force when it found Jordanian fighter planes on the ground refueling. The Israelis were able to eliminate the Jordanian air force within minutes on the first day of the war.

By the third day of the war (Oren p. 247), "Jordanian forces were in total disarray, abandoning vehicles in their rush to reach the East Bank and safety." The Jordanians, for example, had abandoned 40 Patton tanks in pristine condition. Oren (p. 258) records that despite Jordanian soldiers' "courage and determination," they lost due to their commanders' inability to adapt to changing circumstances. Oren (p. 225) also writes that Hussein's "passions obfuscated reality" and made poor choices.

The Syrian Leadership

The Syrian leadership also made stunning errors both before and after the war. An example is how the Syrians failed to recognize damage done to their armed forces by Eli Cohen, a famous Israeli spy. Cohen worked in Syria where he developed close relationships with the political and military hierarchy and became the chief adviser to the minister of defense. He was eventually exposed and executed in Syria in 1965. The intelligence he gathered is claimed to have been an important factor in Israel's success in the Six Day War. His most famous achievement was when he toured the Golan Heights and collected intelligence on the Syrian fortifications there. Pretending to have concern for the Syrian soldiers exposed to the sun, Cohen had eucalyptus trees planted at every position. The trees were used as targeting markers by the Israeli military during the war. It is particularly shocking that in the more than two years between the arrest of Eli Cohen and the Six Day War, the Syrians did not recognize the problem the eucalyptus trees created for them!

During the war, the Syrians inexplicably retreated in many instances (although in certain areas they offered fierce resistance). Oren (p. 295) records scenes where Israeli soldiers fired at Syrian tanks, which turned out to be abandoned. Oren writes:

The Syrians were blowing up their own bunkers, burning documents, and retreating en masse. With their forward communications cut, unwilling to take charge at the front, Syrian commanders had lost all control over the battlefield. Yet, even they were nonplussed when Radio Damascus broadcast that Quneitra (the Syrian headquarters on the Golan Heights) had fallen.

A Syrian officer recalled, "The forces that were supposed to block the enemy's advance pulled out without authorization, without coordination. We knew nothing, and had no choice but to fall back" (Oren p. 301).

When the Syrian government tried to correct the mistaken Quneitra announcement by declaring that Syrian soldiers were still fighting there, the message came too late. The Syrian army was in full flight, abandoning its heavy equipment, jamming the roads. Soviet advisers exhorted the troops to remain at their posts, and orders were issued to shoot deserters on sight. All such efforts proved futile, however; the Soviets were ignored while the commanders charged with executing deserters had themselves abandoned the field. Believing that the entire Golan had already fallen, driven by rumors of Israelis wielding nuclear weapons, some 4,000 Syrian soldiers sought refuge in Jordan, and 3,000 in Lebanon.

Indeed, one of Hashem's methods of assisting us is to bring fear upon our enemies (see Vayikra 26:8, Yehoshua 2:10, and Shoftim 7:14 and 21). This was certainly in evidence on all three fronts during the Six Day War.

The Soviet Leadership

One of Israel's greatest fears was the possibility of Soviet intervention when they launched their preemptive attack. While Israel could grapple with its neighbors, the Soviet superpower presented unrivaled challenges. Moreover, the American government did not respond to an Israeli request for military

assistance in the event of direct Soviet intervention in the war (Oren p. 299). This frightening scenario was resolved, shockingly, by a Soviet failure to assist Arab nations in any substantial manner in their fight against Israel, despite its allies' dramatic losses. Oren (p. 296) explains that there was an internal dispute within the Soviet leadership as to whether to confront the United States in the Middle East. "That quarrel, together with the slow pace of Soviet decision-making—the government met only once weekly, on Thursdays (the war began on Sunday)—had all but paralyzed Soviet diplomacy in the first days of the crisis."

Dr. Oren records (pp. 296-297), "Not only were the Arabs disillusioned with Moscow, but also its allies in Eastern Europe. They were exasperated with Soviet mishandling of this crisis and, to the degree they could, told them so at a summit of Warsaw Pact countries on June 10 [1967]."

Conclusion

Once, while walking in the forest, though deep in thought and meditation, the Ba'al Shem Tov heard a child crying. Following the cry, the Ba'al Shem Tov finally found a little boy, frightened and shivering in the dark. "Why are you here in the forest all by yourself?" he asked the child gently. Looking into the man's kind face, the child was calmed. "I was playing hide-and-seek with my friends. I waited and waited for them to find my hiding place but none of them discovered it. Now it is dark and they have all gone home! I am alone and frightened." With that, the boy began to sob sorrowfully once more. "Do not cry, little boy; I will bring you home," comforted the Ba'al Shem Tov.

The Ba'al Shem Tov explained that this incident is truly a metaphor for God and the Jews. Since our beginning as a people, we have actively searched for God and sought out a meaningful relationship with Him. Even when we were exiled from our land and God was forced to "hide" Himself, we still sincerely searched for Him.

But now, God, like the lost child, cries: "I wait and wait for you to look for Me, to find the inherent Godliness and holiness in everything you do. But it seems you have become tired of the search. In the darkness of today's world, in the confusion of the forest of your mundane lives and material aspiration, you have all gone home and I am alone."

The attribution of our astonishing victory during the Six Day War to the subtle hand of Hashem coordinating the circumstances to lean in our favor, should inspire us to sincerely thank Hashem on Yom Yerushalayim. More important, it should entice us to search for Hashem's understated activities. The Torah promises that if we sincerely make the proper search for Him, we will find Him (Devarim 4:29).

By Rabbi Haim (Howard) Jachter

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Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

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Since this week's *parsha* discusses the *Tochacha*, whose entire purpose is the education of the Jewish people, it is certainly an appropriate time to discuss:

Thoughts on *Chinuch*

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: *Chinuch* or Myself? Is it better to train my children to do *hachmasas orchim*, or to do the mitzvah myself?

Question #2: Who Pays? Whose responsibility is it to pay for the Torah education of those children whose parents cannot afford it?

Question #3: Tongue in Cheek What delicacy should one ideally serve one's guests?

Introduction: The Torah teaches that Avraham Avinu ran to his cattle to *shecht* fresh meat for his guests. According to the *Gemara (Bava Metzia*

86b), which *Rashi* quotes, he slaughtered not one, but three animals, in order to serve a delicacy to each of his guests – an entire tongue, prepared and served with mustard. I have been told that there was an old custom to serve tongue as a delicacy for *Yom Tov* meals, particularly when having guests. (I am disappointed to note that I do not think I have ever been the guest of people who have that custom. Do you know anyone who observes it, and can you figure out how to get me invited?)

In the context of this discussion, *Rashi* is bothered by a question. Immediately after Avraham Avinu slaughters the bulls, while he is acting with total alacrity to perform the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*, the *pasuk* notes that he gave them to “the lad.” The question is: Avraham Avinu was a very wealthy man, with many servants who could have taken care of his guests. Obviously, he wanted to perform the mitzvah himself (*mitzvah bo yoseir mibeshelucho*, see *Kiddushin* 41a). If this is true, why did he give this part of the mitzvah to someone else?

Rashi, quoting the *Midrash Rabbah*, explains that “the lad” is Yishmael, and that Avraham’s goal was to train him in the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*. How does *Rashi* know this? The answer is that otherwise Avraham Avinu would not have allowed someone else to participate in the mitzvah. For this reason, even those who can afford household help should make the beds and prepare the meals for guests, so that they can perform the mitzvah themselves.

Rashi’s explanation assumes that the mitzvah of training your children to perform *mitzvos* is more important than doing the mitzvah yourself, and therefore the *na’ar* must have been Yishmael.

From this it would appear that we see an important lesson in *chinuch*. Often we could gain much more spiritually by performing a mitzvah ourselves than by spending time training our children to do the mitzvah. But some authorities rule that it is our *halachic* responsibility to train our child, even when we seem to gain less spiritually as a result. As we will soon see, not everyone agrees with this assessment.

Chinuch Controversy When the *Gemara* in *Bava Metzia* discusses Avraham’s interaction with the angels, it makes the following statement: “Whatever Avraham did for the angels by himself, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* later performed for his children Himself, and whatever Avraham did via an agent, *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* performed for his children via an agent.” Thus, the *Gemara* implies that there is criticism of Avraham for not doing these *mitzvos* himself.

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that, indeed, Avraham Avinu felt that he should include Yishmael actively in the mitzvah. However, the *Gemara* is teaching that it would have been better *chinuch* for Yishmael to see Avraham Avinu perform all the *chesed* himself and not discharge some of the responsibility (*Dorash Moshe*, new edition).

Chinuch or Myself? We can now address our opening question: Is it better to train my children to do *hachnasas orchim*, or to do the mitzvah myself?

According to Rav Moshe, it is better to do the mitzvah myself in a way that my child knows that I am doing it. I should have the child involved when I cannot perform all the *chesed* myself in an efficient way.

Partners in alacrity We should note that the wording of the *Midrash Rabbah* varies slightly from what *Rashi* writes. The *Midrash Rabbah* states *vayitein el hanaar zeh Yishmael bishvil lezarzo bemitzvos*, which translates as “And he gave it to the lad – this was Yishmael – in order to have him treat *mitzvos* with alacrity.” Whereas when *Rashi* quotes this, he says simply *lechancho bamitzvos*, “to train him in *mitzvos*.” The *Midrash* adds another lesson. Avraham Avinu was not only training Yishmael to perform *hachnasas orchim* himself, but he wanted him to learn to do it with *zerizus*, promptly and with enthusiasm. Avraham Avinu felt that although one usually teaches best by way of example, a child learns the way of his parents not only by observation, but also by participation. When a child becomes a partner in his parents’ *chesed* endeavors, the child’s learns to become a *zariz* in *chesed*.

His brothers or his sons? We find a similar lesson borne out in another *Midrash Rabbah*. The *pasuk* in *Bereishis* (31:46) teaches that to make a covenant with Lavan, Yaakov told “his brothers” to take stones. *Midrash Rabbah* (74:13) points out that Yaakov had only one brother, and that brother, Eisav, was not with him at the moment. The *Midrash*, cited there by *Rashi*, explains that his “brothers” must have been Yaakov’s sons, whom he called his brothers.

The question is, what are the *Midrash* and *Rashi* teaching us here? Why does the Torah refer to Yaakov’s sons as his brothers? Let the Torah call them his sons! Rav Shlomo Wolbe explains that part of *chinuch* is to have your children become your partners. If a child feels that he is a partner in his parent’s mitzvah and *chesed* activities, he does not feel that he is being forced to do something, or that his parents are providing for someone else rather than attending to the child’s needs. Quite the contrary, he feels honored by the responsibility (*Zeriyah Uvinyan Bechinuch*, page 27). Thus, Avraham Avinu understood that the proper *chinuch* is to make your child a partner in the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*, notwithstanding that otherwise one should perform the mitzvah oneself.

Bear in mind that this does not mean that the child does most of the work. The parent does most of the work, and incorporates the child in a way that the child feels honored to be a partner in the parents’ *chesed* endeavors. When the child sees that the parent always runs to do the *chesed* himself or herself, and then involves the child in part of the project, the child understands instinctively that the parent is involving them not because the child is doing the parent a favor, but in order to share the performance of the mitzvah with the child.

Accomplishments of a mechanech Someone who implements the goals of *chinuch* accomplishes tremendous things, as we see in the following passage of *Gemara* (*Taanis* 24a). Rav went to a place that was suffering from a severe drought. In earlier days, when neither piped nor bottled water was available, a drought was a calamitous circumstance. The lives of all individuals in the community, both wealthy and poor, are endangered. One cannot live without water, and one needs water not only for drinking, but also for crops and livestock, without even mentioning the need to bathe and launder clothing.

Rav declared a fast day, which the community began observing, but rain still did not fall, and the fervent prayers of the community did not seem to be having any obvious influence.

The *gabbai* then asked a particular individual to be the *chazzan*. When the individual chosen began reciting the repetition of the *shemoneh esrei* as the representative of the famished and thirsty community, as he said the words *mashiv haruach*, the wind began blowing, and when he recited the words *umorid hagashem*, it began to rain, thus relieving the problem for the entire area. Thus, the merits of the prayers of this one individual saved the entire community not only from financial devastation but from almost certain death!

Rav inquired of the *chazzan* what his occupation was. He answered: “I am a *melamed* of children, and I teach the children of the poor just like the children of the wealthy.” (In those days, this was not a job in a local school, but it was arranged on an individual basis. Usually, the financially stable members of a community could get together and hire an excellent *rebbe* for their children. The poor, unfortunately, sometimes had to do without.)

Continued the *melamed*, “If someone cannot afford to pay my wages, I teach his child without pay. Furthermore, I own fish ponds, and whenever a child misbehaves, I bribe him with fish until I get him to straighten out. I then spend time making him feel good until I succeed in getting him to learn Torah.” Do we have any question why *Hashem* answered the prayers of the *melamed*!

The *Ben Yehoyada* explains in greater depth that this *melamed* was rewarded and listened to because he treated the poor and the wealthy in the same way. Water is a great equalizer. It provides for everyone equally. In a place without any water, the wealthy will die also. Furthermore, there are

machlokos regarding irrigation ditches, because each individual wants more water at the expense of his fellow. This is not so regarding rainwater, since each household receives water directly from Above that others cannot claim.

The *Ben Yehoyada* notes further the method that this *melamed* used to encourage his *talmidim*. In an era when *rabbeyim* would resort to *potching* to get a child to learn, this *melamed* used fish as a positive reward.

In addition, fish are concealed from the eye — no *ayin hora* controls them. Rain is similar; it absorbs into the ground, so no *ayin hora* sees it, and it always flows to a lower place, reflecting humility. This is again similar to the humility so obvious in the behavior of this *melamed* that we are not even told his name. Such recognition would run counter to his way of serving *Hashem*.

Where was the community? There is a question germane to this story: The *Gemara* states that the *melamed* involved was teaching the children of the poor of his own volition. No one in the community was making sure that they had a *rebbe*. However, this story took place hundreds of years after the days of the great *tzadik*, a *kohein gadol* named Yehoshua ben Gamla, who had created a revolution in Torah education by requiring that communities create *yeshivah* schools and support them.

To quote the *Gemara* (*Bava Basra* 21a): Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav, “Indeed, this man named Yehoshua ben Gamla should be remembered favorably, for, were it not for him, Torah would have been forgotten from the Jewish people. Prior to his time, someone who had a father, his father taught him Torah, and one who had no father did not study Torah”. First, Yehoshua ben Gamla introduced that there be *melamedim* available in Yerushalayim to teach Torah without charge to the student. He eventually expanded this program until every city and town had Torah teachers available for every Jewish boy, beginning from the age of six or seven. His ruling established this as a permanent requirement incumbent upon Jewish communities: They are obligated to guarantee that every Jewish boy can study Torah. Subsequent to this time, a community that failed to assume this responsibility was excommunicated, and if this failed to alleviate the situation, destroyed (*Shabbos* 119b; *Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 2:1).

So, the question is raised: Why did it fall upon this *melamed* to provide personally for the poor children in his town? Why did the community not assume responsibility that there be *melamedim* available to teach them?

We do not know why this community had not made arrangements to have Torah taught to all its students. But we do see that this *melamed* took the responsibility on himself when he saw that the need was not being fulfilled. Single-handedly, he was the Rav Yehoshua ben Gamla of his town!

At this point, it is appropriate for us to discuss one of our opening questions: Whose responsibility is it to pay for the Torah education of those children whose parents cannot afford it?

Based on the *Gemara* in *Bava Basra*, we can answer one of our opening questions: We see that the Jewish community must assume this responsibility.

Many students The *Mishnah* at the beginning of *Pirkei Avos* quotes that one of the three lessons that the *Anshei Keneses Hagedolah* emphasized was *he'emidu talmidim harbei*. But the literal translation of the word *he'emidu*, means to “get them to stand up.” What does that mean?

One early anthology, the *Midrash Shmuel*, quotes several approaches. One approach is that it is an instruction to the philanthropists of a community: Provide financial support for as many students as possible. Do not rest on your laurels that you have already been a major backer of Torah! As long as there are more potential students, find means to have them supported.

Growth through teaching The *Midrash Shmuel* mentions another answer to explain the words *he'emidu talmidim harbei*. The *Midrash Shmuel* mentions another answer to explain the words *he'emidu talmidim harbei*. This *Mishnah* addresses the *rebbe*, principal, *rav* or *rosh yeshivah* -- provide instruction to as many students as you can. The more students one teaches, the greater the *rebbe* will grow in learning. One grows in Torah by answering questions of students and by learning how to explain the subject

matter to different minds, each of which thinks somewhat differently. The *Midrash Shmuel* understands that this *Mishnah* is an extension of an idea we find in a different *Mishnah* (*Avos* 2:7) -- *marbeh eitzah marbeh tevuna*, the more advice, the more understanding is produced. In this context, this is understood to mean: The more one is placed in a position of providing quality advice to people, the deeper one's understanding grows. This is something to which any experienced *rav*, social worker, psychologist or community activist will readily agree.

There is also a *halachic* side to this lesson, quoted by the *Midrash Shmuel*. When Rav, the great *amora*, was asked a question in the very complicated laws that determine whether an animal is kosher or not (the laws of *hilchos tereifos*), he would show it to and discuss it with many people before ruling on it. Although clearly his level of Torah erudition was far greater than that of the people with whom he was discussing the question, by explaining to them the issues involved, hearing their questions and sharing insights with them, he grew in his own depth of understanding of the topic.

More talmidei chachamim Yet another approach mentioned by the *Midrash Shmuel* to explain the *Mishnah's* statement *he'emidu talmidim harbei* provides an additional insight to the laws of *chinuch*. In this approach, the *Mishnah* is addressed to a lay person whose sons have demonstrated a particularly strong desire to grow in learning. “Do not have the attitude that since I allowed one of my sons to become a *talmid chacham* I do not need to encourage the others to grow in learning to the same extent. One's other children should also be encouraged to learn to the extent that they can. And, if they demonstrate a facility in learning, one should do whatever possible to encourage them to continue.

Responsibility Returning to the story of the *melamed* whose prayer brought rain on his entire city, we see the tremendous sense of responsibility this *melamed* felt and demonstrated for all the children in his town. This brings to mind a closely related point, also made by Rav Wolbe, based on the following passage of *Gemara*.

The *Gemara* (*Makkos* 11a) mentions that someone who killed a person out of negligence must remain in the city of refuge (*ir miklat*) until the *kohein gadol* dies. The *Gemara* asks: Why is the length of stay in the *ir miklat* dependent on the *kohein gadol*? The *Gemara* explains that the *kohein gadol* was responsible for *davening* that such calamities not occur.

The question is: Where do we find that the *kohein gadol* is responsible for *davening* that things don't go wrong? Rav Wolbe explains that this is a given. Although the Torah never gives us such a commandment, it is understood that if one is responsible for educating people, automatically, this means that he *davens* for them. Just as parents do not need to be told to *daven* for their children's wellbeing, health, and success, a teacher, *rabbi*, *kohein gadol* or anyone else responsible for other individuals does not require to be told to *daven* for them. It should come naturally.

Conclusion We have learned the importance of training a child properly in the fulfillment of *mitzvos*. In prioritizing our lives, we should always place the educating and developing of the future generation at the top of our list, since this is where the future of the Jewish people lies.

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“Shabbat Shalom” – Behar-Bechukotai 5777

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel — “I am the Lord your God who brought you forth from the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan to be your God.” [Lev. 25:38]

Citing the verse above from this week's Torah reading, our Sages make the striking declaration that only one who lives in the Land of Israel has a God, while one living outside the Land of Israel is comparable to someone without a God [Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 110b].

Rashi, in his commentary, offers a slightly different formulation: “Whoever lives in the Land of Israel, I am God to him; whoever goes out of Israel is as one who serves idols.” Here, too, the text equates the exile (or Diaspora) with idolatry, but the transgression of idolatry is specifically assigned to someone who lived in Israel and left, rather than on one who was born in the Diaspora and remained there.

Nevertheless, how are we to understand that to have or not to have a God depends on the stamp in your passport? Do people outside of Israel not also believe in God? Is God only to be found in Israel?

Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk, best known by the name of his Talmudic commentary *Penei Yehoshua*, suggests that the Land of Israel is qualitatively different from any other land in the world in that what happens to the Jewish People within it is a direct result of Divine activity and intervention. Elsewhere, the major influence comes from God’s messengers, so to speak, such as the natural forces of sun, wind, rain and rivers, the stars of the zodiac, and the astrological movements of the heavens. In Israel, God Himself directs the destiny of its inhabitants.

Rabbi Shlomo Efraim Luntchitz, author of *Kli Yakar*, notes that a person could imagine that after allowing the land to lie fallow during the Sabbatical year—and in the event of the Jubilee year, the land would lie fallow for two whole years—the Jews would not have enough to eat during the following year. The fact that they did, demonstrated to them—as well as to the rest of the world—that Israel and her people were directly guided by the Divine, and not by the usual laws of nature, climate and agriculture.

Rabbi Yitzhak Arama, in his Biblical commentary *Akedat Yitzhak*, sees in the Sabbatical-Jubilee cycle an allegory to ultimate world redemption: six years of work and one year of rest are intended to invoke the messianic era that will begin at the end of the sixth millennium when the world as we know it, and the work we do in it, will also come to a halt. At that time, one thousand years of the Sabbath, or the messianic millennium, will commence.

These unique years, as well as ultimate salvation, are inextricably bound up with the Land of Israel, both in terms of the fact that they are laws that apply exclusively to the Holy Land and that all our prophets insist that the acceptance of ethical monotheism and peaceful harmony by all nations of the world will be the result of Torah emanating from Jerusalem against the backdrop of a secure Israel.

I would like to add a more prosaic view to these fascinating interpretations. The Biblical phrase, “a Sabbath unto God” with regard to the Sabbatical year summarizes exactly how our land is different from all other lands: Jews in all lands are commanded to keep the Sabbath, but there is only one place in the world where even the land must keep the Sabbath (six years of work and one of rest)—here in Israel!

The significance of the land keeping the Sabbath is that in the very essence of Israel’s soil lies an expression of the Divine will. In Israel, even the land is literally commanded to obey God’s laws! God thereby becomes intimately involved in the very soil of the Land of Israel, something which does not happen anywhere else.

I would also suggest that every other country in the world distinguishes the religious from the civic, the ritual from the cultural. Only in Israel does there exist an opportunity for the Jew to express his culture and the culture of his environment in religious and Godly terms. Only in Israel can the Jew lead a life not of synthesis but of wholeness, not as a Jew at home and a cultural, national gentleman in the marketplace, but as an indivisible child of God and descendant of Abraham and Sarah. Here we have a unique opportunity to express our spiritual ideals in Mahane Yehuda as well as in the synagogue, in the theater as well as in the study hall.

This sets the stage for a most profound vision of the Sabbatical and Jubilee years: when the values of the Torah permeate both sacred and mundane, then all forms of slavery can be obliterated, financial hardships resolved, and familial homesteads restored. Only in Israel do we have the potential to fully experience God both in the ritual and in the social, political and economic

aspects of our lives. Only in Israel do we have the potential of taking our every step in the presence of the Divine.

Shabbat Shalom