



Compliments of the Institute of Jewish Studies (founded by [Yankel Rosenbaum](#) HY"D) First Published Adar 5761 Vol 22.44
 Printing in part sponsored by **NLZ Imports, D&A Werdiger, Weis Printing** – email: zichron-yaakov@hotmail.com
 (In memory of Moshe Yehuda ben Avrohom Yaakov, Mala Mindel bas Meir, Moshe Tzvi ben Yitzchok Aharon, Gittel bas Sinai,
 Nechemia ben Menachem Mendel, Yaakov ben Menachem Mendel)

Devorim 5783

TELL US YOUR STORY

RABBI LEVI AVTZON (Chabad.org)

Attention grandparents, parents, and anyone who has memories to share: Please write your memoir. Please tell us your story.

Once upon a time, when the world used to change in slow-motion, memoirs didn't play the role they must today. Children identified with the world their parents grew up in—for the most part, it was the same world.

Today the world is evolving at such a rapid pace. Children are educating their moms and dads, teaching them how to maneuver in the book-less, mail-less, cord-less (respect-less?) era we live in. The children are the teachers; their parents are the under-average students ("Um, how do I use this gadget, son?"). A topsy-turvy society.

Amidst all this, we need stability. We need tradition. We need roots. We need parents, who, although they can't beat us in computer games (don't even try), can teach us how to be human and how to be Jewish. They are our link in the chain starting with Avraham and stretching through four millennia, from the Fertile Crescent to the Modern World.

That is why we beg you: Tell us about the home you grew up in, relate the stories your parents reminisced about their upbringing. Tell us about the trolleys in the Lower East Side and the ingenious antics of uncle Hymie, the Europe of old and the Siberian cold. Tell us of a time when people spoke to people, not to radioactive machines, when friends were people you chatted with, not the ones whom you press "accept" on Facebook. Take us into your world.

There is nothing that builds a relationship between parent and child more than an open conversation in which the parent opens up to his or her child, bringing the human dimension to the often un-sentimentality of the home environment. Sitting on Papa's or Grandma's lap eating cookies and sipping milk while listening to stories of a world bygone is the glue that cements the link of generations.

And one more thing: Please write down your stories as well. Your kids don't care about the broken English, the lack of prose, or the choppy sentences; they want your life in your words. Let your life not die in the recesses of your mind; keep it alive by transcribing it for your offspring. They will be grateful forever.

My own grandparents, who unfortunately passed away too early for me to get to know them as much as I'd wish, fortunately left me with their detailed memoirs, they left me a piece of themselves. I know them through their pen and I feel connected.

The fifth book of the Torah is a memoir. For the last 37 days of Moshe's life he spoke and wrote down the collective memoir of the Jews in the desert and the tumultuous relationship he had with his flock throughout the forty-year journey. It's an exciting read.

Why the memoir? Why the need to repeat the story and derive its lessons?

Moshe wished to create that human link from the generation of former slaves that trekked through the desert to the generation reading his memoir on a digital screen. To help us identify our 21st-century lives with those of our ancestors. To show us that much more than what has changed is really the same. He understood the power of a story, the human factor in the iron chain of tradition.

Hence the fifth book of the Torah. Its name is Devarim, "words." The power of words.

Tell your story. Your children will thank you... and know you.

GEOGRAPHY LESSONS

RABBI BEREL WEIN (Torah.org)

This week's Torah reading begins the oration by our teacher Moshe during the final months of his life. In this oration, he reviews the 40 years sojourn of the Jewish people in the Sinai desert, and prophesies regarding their future, first in the Land of Israel. and then throughout succeeding history. The Torah tells us that Moshe began his speech when the Jewish people were located between certain landmarks in the desert of Sinai. Rashi, following the ideas of the Midrash, explains that the locations that were identified were not meant to be specific geographic localities, but, rather, they were intended to highlight events that occurred to the Jewish people during their 40 years in the Sinai desert.

We have a rule that while there is a myriad of interpretations to the eternal words and depth of the narrative verses as written in the Torah, the Talmud cautions us that while we should always be aware of what the Torah really means, the simple explanation of the words is also primary to our understanding of its values and message.

The listing of these geographic locations where Moshe begins his oration to the Jewish people is an intrinsic value by itself. Moshe wants us to realize when and where, and under what circumstances, the message to the Jewish people is being delivered, by describing the place from which he is speaking, and giving it context and background. All statements, no matter how profound and eternal, must be understood within the context of place and time.

It is difficult to communicate any message to a generation that is living miraculously in a barren desert. The audience must require great imagination be able to deal with promises and issues concerning a country that they have never yet seen. It is also very difficult to speak to people about the future, which is always so uncertain, and, to a great extent, mysterious. But Moshe's oration addresses both concerns.

He wants the listener to know that he is speaking from the desert, but that his message is also for the future of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. And Moshe also looks far into the future, warning them of destruction and exile, horrendous events, but yet the eventual redemption and hope. It is the greatness of Moshe that he is able to speak in the present from an identifiable geographic location, and, yet project a message that will last for thousands of years, valid and vital wherever one finds oneself on this planet. This is what makes Moshe the greatest of all prophets of the Jewish people, in all areas of life and faith, and for all eternity.

MOSHE THE TRANSLATOR

RABBI MENACHEM FELDMAN (Chabad.org)

The fifth of the Five Books of Moshe describes the final 37 days of Moshe's life. During this time, Moshe repeats many of the laws he has already taught, rebukes the people, and retells some of the major happenings of the previous 40 years.

Moshe also takes on a new role: translator. Until this point, Moshe had been the conveyer of the Torah, communicating the Divine wisdom to the Jewish people, but now he translated it into 70 languages for them.'

His audience, the Children of Israel about to enter the Promised Land, all

spoke Hebrew and had no practical use for a translation in Egyptian, Babylonian, or Cantonese. Centuries later, when the translation of the Torah would become an important priority, would it not suffice for the great scholars of the time to translate it? Why did Moshe himself have to dedicate the last days of his life to this extensive task?

Language captures culture. It's not enough to translate the word; each language captures a unique perspective, a distinctive way of understanding the world, which is why translation is a tricky business. Moshe understood this. He knew that translating the Torah was not simply a pragmatic matter that could be left to future generations. G-d's infinite will and wisdom is relevant not just in Hebrew and not just to the people living in ancient Israel. The Torah is the ultimate truth, and applicable to all places, times, and cultures, and therefore can, and must, be translated into all languages by someone who deeply understands the nuances and sensitivities.²

There is also a deep mystical significant to the translation. The goal of the Torah is to unite all people with the one G-d. The 70 languages, by contrast, are a source of division. Initially, all people spoke one language, leading to a deep sense of unity, which they tried to preserve by constructing the Tower of Babel. G-d, however, disrupted their unity by confusing their language and forcing them to scatter across the earth.³ The act of translating the Torah, therefore, is an awesome spiritual undertaking—one so radical it had to be spearheaded by Moshe himself. The act of translation is the bridge which brings the unity of G-d into the diversity of existence. It is the thread that transforms diversity into harmony,⁴

As we read about the last precious days of Moshe's life, we take this message to heart. We understand that, yes, the message of the Torah is as true in ancient Hebrew as it is in modern English. We remind ourselves that we too must be translators of the Torah, carrying on the task of connecting the plurality of existence with the oneness of G-d, and revealing that the incredible diversity of the universe is an expression of the one G-d.

1. Devarim 1:5, see Rashi.
2. Maayanah Shel Torah.
3. See Bereshis 11:7-9.
4. See Toras Menachem Vol. 32 p. 388.

DEAD FISH DO NOT FLOAT UPSTREAM

AVROHOM YAAKOV

Moshe describes how he was confronted by the Jewish people with their many complaints and challenges. Finding that he could not deal with each person on an individual basis, he describes how he attempted to set up a delegated system of judges.

“Ready yourselves (to appoint) [upright, desirable] men: wise, understanding, and known [i.e., familiar to you] among your tribes, and I shall set them at your heads” (1:13)

Moshe uses two terms – wise and understanding – to describe his potential delegates. What is the difference?

Rashi explains by citing a Midrash. “This is what Arius asked R. Jose: what is the difference between wise men and understanding men? A wise man is like a rich money changer: when people bring him dinars to value them, he examines them; and when they do not bring to him, he sits and does nothing (he does not go out to seek any). An understanding man, however, is like a merchant money changer: when they bring him coins to examine, he examines them; and when they do not bring to him, he goes about and brings of his own money (i.e. he himself buys coins).”

Both the wise man and the man of understanding are knowledgeable. But, in contemporary parlance, the former is reactive, and latter is proactive. The former identifies the problems while the latter provides solutions. The former maintains the status quo while the latter pushes (or drags) things forward.

As Moshe subsequently attests, he found wise people, but could not find any people of understanding. Things haven't changed in the subsequent millennia.

SMALL FAVORS

RABBI YISSOCHOR FRAND (Torah.org)

I instructed your judges at that time, saying, “Listen among your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother or his litigant. You shall not show favoritism in judgment, small and great alike shall you hear...” (1:16)

Moshe Rabbeinu recounts how he warned the then-newly appointed judges not to show any favoritism that might corrupt the results of a case over which they are presiding.

A recurring theme in the Torah is that personal considerations, especially in

the form of bribes, will cause a judge to view one party more favorably than the other.

The Talmud (Kesubos 105b) teaches that bribes don't necessarily have to come in the form of money. Even seemingly minor exchanges can affect the way a person sees things. The Talmud explains, for instance, that even saying nice things to a judge may be a form of bribery that will cloud his judgment.

The Talmud goes on to list several Amoraim who recused themselves from a case after accepting favors that we would hardly consider bribery.

The Amora Shmuel was having difficulty crossing a rickety footbridge. Someone reached out and helped him cross the bridge. Shmuel asked this man what had brought him to the bridge, and the man answered that he had a case scheduled in Shmuel's beis din. Shmuel disqualified himself from judging the case out of concern that the favor he had received from this man would cause him to subconsciously want to see this man win the case and inadvertently skew the proceedings to make that happen.

Similarly, Ameimar was sitting in beis din, and a feather flew onto his head. A fellow came over and removed the feather. When he told Ameimar that he was there to have his case heard, Ameimar disqualified himself from hearing the case.

Mar Ukva had an instance in which someone spat in front of him, and another person came and covered up the saliva. The second person had a case scheduled in which Mar Ukva was to be the judge, and Mar Ukva disqualified himself.

The final case listed in the Talmud is with Rav Shmuel bar Yose's sharecropper, who would normally deliver Rav Shmuel bar Yose's share of the produce every Friday. One week, the sharecropper had to be in town on Thursday for a monetary case, so he decided to deliver the produce a day early. Rav Shmuel bar Yose recused himself from adjudicating the case of the sharecropper lest he be affected by the favor of having his produce a day early.

Rav Pam wonders: Were these Amoraim so fickle that the slightest favor could influence their judgment? Can you imagine a dayan misjudging a case because someone helped him across the street or cleaned his hat? Shouldn't an Amora give himself more credit than to assume that he would be biased for such trivial reasons?

Rav Pam answers that this Gemara is not so much about judicial integrity or the corrosive nature of bribes as it is about the extent of hakaras hatov (gratitude) we should have for those who do us favors.

These Amoraim weren't fickle; they took people's favors more seriously than we do. To us, such favors might be so insignificant that they don't even register on our radar screens. But people who have worked on appreciating what others do for them consider these “minor” kindnesses worthy of so much gratitude that it might skew their judgment.

Rav Pam goes on to show how many of the problems in society today stem from a lack of hakaras hatov.

Husbands take the daily “small” favors that wives do for them for granted, and wives take their husband's favors for granted. Everyone expects the other party to do the chores and errands they usually do because “it's his (or her) job.”

If each spouse would take favors as seriously as these Amoraim did, said Rav Pam, we would have many more happy, stable marriages, in which everyone would feel that they are appreciated for all they do.

The same holds true for employer-employee relationships, and virtually all other relationships as well. If people would look at what the other party does for them instead of considering it a G-d-given right, they would get along much better.

Perhaps the most compelling example Rav Pam offers is the attitude people display toward yeshivos, Bais Yaakovs, and day schools. If alumni and parents would have the proper hakaras hatov toward the institutions that educated them or their children, they would give generous, ongoing gifts to those schools, and our mosdos wouldn't be in the sorry state of financial collapse they are in. But all too often, the attitude is, “I paid my tuition. I did my job. You did your job. Don't bother me anymore!”

And people who are truly makir tov don't appreciate only the good things that people do for them; they even feel a debt of gratitude to those who hurt them in a way that ultimately ended up helping them.

When Rav Kook was still in Europe, he would spend his summers on the Baltic seacoast in Latvia, along with many other European rabbanim.

The resort had a room set aside for davening. One evening, Rav Reuven Zelig Bengis had yahrtzeit, but there were only nine people in the

improvised shul. One of the nine went outside to look for a tenth man, and found one nearby. Little did he realize that another man who had yahrtzeit had gathered exactly ten people just outside their room, and that the man whom he had summoned into Rav Bengis's minyan was needed for the other minyan.

The person who organized the minyan outside stormed into the room and started yelling at Rav Bengis, heaping insults upon him.

Rav Kook was well known for his great love for every Jew, but this action was beyond the pale, even for Rav Kook. He walked over to the person who was berating Rav Bengis and slapped him across his face for insulting a talmid chacham.

This man grew so furious at Rav Kook that he decided to sue him in a secular court for assault. A commotion ensued. Several people asked Rav Kook to apologize so the matter would not go any further, but Rav Kook refused. "If it was for my own honor, I would apologize," he explained. "But Rav Bengis was shamed. I am not sorry that I slapped a person in order to defend the honor of a talmid chacham. Let him take me to court!"

A few days later, the fellow had a change of heart. He came into Rav Kook, apologized, and told him he was not going to take him to court.

For many years, it seemed that that was the end of the story.

Years later, however, Rav Kook visited the United States. He was approached by the very person whom he had slapped years earlier at the resort.

"I owe the Rav a great debt of gratitude," the man exclaimed, removing a gold watch from his pocket and presenting it to Rav Kook.

He explained that after Rav Kook had slapped him, life in Europe became unbearable for him. He became infamous for being the one who yelled at Rav Bengis and got slapped by Rav Kook. When he could no longer bear the shame, he decided to leave Europe and go to America where no one knew him. He struck it rich in America, eventually becoming a millionaire. He felt his good fortune was all the result of the slap from Rav Kook, and he wanted to give the Rav a gift to express his gratitude.

It is hard to feel gratitude for a slap in the face, be it literal or proverbial. But the least we can do is learn to be as appreciative as the Amoraim were toward those who do us favors.

And that level of hakaras hatov wasn't limited to the generation of the Talmud. The Chofetz Chaim, who lived less than a century ago, was a Kohen and could not attend funerals. But when a woman who had once donated a window to his yeshivah in Radin passed away — and we are not talking about a designer stained-glass window — he followed the casket from a distance all the way to the cemetery in appreciation for her donation.

If we would appreciate the favors others do for us — however small they are — the world would be a far better place!

RECALLING THE STORY, LONG AFTER IT'S TOLD

KAREN WOLFERS-RAPAPORT (Chabad.org)

One of the goals of storytelling is to convey a narrative that endures beyond the initial telling—to create something that lingers in the minds of listeners long after it has been told. In Parshat Devarim, Moshe is a storyteller, transmitting the stories that transpired during the 40 years in that "great and fearful desert." (1:19)

Moshe is speaking to the Israelites as they make their final preparations for entering Israel. But on a deeper level, Moshe, the storyteller, speaks to all of us.

Stories have always been a fundamental form of communication. They are the timeless chronicles that link us to our ancient traditions, archetypes, heroes and heroines. Through stories, we share passions, sadness, hardships and joys.

Stories connect us to value systems—to a larger self and universal truth. Through stories, we share collective meaning and purpose, and learn about mistakes and how not to repeat them.

The emotional content of stories allows the human memory to retain knowledge longer than information or facts alone. According to Daniel Goleman, author of the bestselling book Emotional Intelligence, this is because emotional attachment to information creates learning.

Perhaps Moshe knew this.

So what is Moshe conveying to us in Parshat Devarim?

In his storytelling, Moshe rebukes the children of Israel, and he doesn't beat around the bush. His words are a bit harsh. Moshe uses history to remind the people that a lack of trust in G-d and a failure to obey G-d's commandments will result in disaster, such as the tragic results of believing in the spies.

Moshe is obligated to tell this story to our ancestors who are about to start a new chapter, but he also needs to tell us. Faith is our cornerstone. We need to hear how we encroached on faith. We need to learn and to remember so that when we are once again enticed by doubt, we can recall Moshe's admonishment.

But Moshe does not linger over his people's imperfections. At the same time that he censures the children of Israel, he uses select words to embolden and uplift them. Later, by recalling the victories over neighboring lands and kings, Moshe proclaims that G-d is a warrior who does battle on behalf of Israel: "The Lord, your G-d, who goes before you, He will fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your very eyes." (1:30)

Once again, Moshe is obligated to tell this part of the story—highlighting our triumphs, focusing on our partnership with G-d and reminding us of the power of returning to faith.

Events happen in all of our lives that cannot be changed. People experience poor decision-making and losses that cannot be undone. The children who were about to enter the land could not change the decisions of their fathers, and nor could we. But the ways in which these events are expressed can make a considerable difference on their effects.

Moshe, the storyteller, is communicating to us that despite epic blunders, G-d did not leave us, and we did not leave him. We regained His trust; we regained our passageway into the Land of Israel.

Indeed, Moshe's words seem to have a special ability to penetrate the heart and give us hope.

Something that penetrates the heart penetrates our emotional being. Remember what Goleman asserts? This is how stories help us learn. This is how storytellers help embed memories in us. This is how we share in collective purpose and meaning. This is how we can clarify our own values regarding faith and trust.

"... Watch yourself very well, lest you forget the things that your eyes saw, and lest these things depart from your heart, all the days of your life, and you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children." (4:9)

DON'T RE-WRITE HISTORY

ADAM LIEBERMAN (Aish.com)

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe tells the Jewish people of additional details of events that occurred since they left Egypt. He goes into the disastrous episode of agreeing to let spies go into the Land of Israel, and says that initially:

"The idea was good in my eyes..." (1:23)

The mission of the spies was clearly one of the most devastating events in Jewish history. It was the very act that caused the Jews to wander in the desert for 40 years and resulted in many of them never being able to enter the Land of Israel.

Even though the spies' mission was so catastrophic, Moshe still had the courage to say "the idea was good in my eyes."

How many times have you seen people back-track on something they said if events prove their position wrong? It seems that when people say something and then it doesn't work out as well as they or others had hoped, they'll quickly re-write history by changing the words they said, the ideas they vividly expressed, or views they had just passionately given. But Moshe, being the great person and leader that he was, said to everyone that "the idea was good in my eyes."

This is rarely how leaders or people act today. All too often, heads of corporations, governments, or households back away from their previous words if the results turn out differently than they had believed. This isn't leadership. Leadership is about being honest and having the trust of those who believe in and follow you. Do these leaders really believe that people have that short a memory? The answer is: they really don't care.

They don't care because the real reason why people choose to re-write history is because of their own lack of self-esteem. Like most people, they don't want to look foolish - and they believe that admitting they made a mistake makes them look foolish. It doesn't. Ironically, it shows you to be a man or woman of conviction who isn't afraid to stand up when you make a mistake. Doing this isn't a knock to your self-esteem; in fact it's actually a huge boost to it. This is because taking responsibility will always make you feel great. Not doing so makes you a fraud.

The higher our self-esteem, they more readily we will be to admit our mistakes made because we don't see poor decisions as a reflection of our own self-worth. We hold ourselves in high self-esteem and know that any mistake we make can never damage that. Since people always learn and grow from their mistakes, we can actually GAIN self-esteem if we err

because we know it will only make us BETTER people in the end. People with low esteem, however, fear how people view them if they admit to making a mistake. So instead of owning up to it, like politicians, they chose to re-create the events of the past to be viewed in the best possible light. But again, ironically, your self-image actually gets stronger when you admit you made a mistake.

So, the next time you do or say something that turns out to be the wrong position to have taken, make a statement about who you are. Boldly announce that while initially "the idea was good in my eyes," based upon new information you now see things differently. You will not only gain the credibility, trust, and admiration of others, but you will also gain enormous self-esteem in the process.

PARADISE LOST

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY (Torah.org)

The Book of Devarim is basically Moshe's final lecture to his nation. Sometimes softly, sometimes sternly, Moshe chides the nation about their behavior and misbehavior during their 40 years of wandering in the desert. He does not merely repeat history. From each of his sentences, a lesson can be gleaned. Even his preface which identifies the arid ports-of-call, where the Jews stopped to rest, contains significant meaning.

But one of the most significant rebukes concerns the sin of the spies, who after a 40-day mission to Canaan returned with a report that scared the nation into unshakable despair.

Hashem's retribution turns each day spent spying into a year of wandering thus forty days, becomes a forty-year trek in the desert. But Moshe adds a footnote to the tragedy. A group of Jews regretted their actions and immediately declared, "we will go up and fight like Hashem has commanded. But Hashem said, "Do not arise and fight for I am not with you." The group did not listen. They attempted to conquer the land but the Emorites struck them down" (cf. Devarim 1:41-45)

This episode is mentioned as part of the sin of the spies. But didn't this action show an unrelenting love for the Land of Israel. Weren't their self-sacrificing actions quite noble? Why weren't they successful? Why did Hashem turn away from them? Weren't their actions ones of repentance?

Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch explains that this act was a transitory one that propelled them from criminal cowardice to criminal conceit. But perhaps there is an additional message here.

Rabbi Joshua Fishman, Executive Vice President of Torah Umesorah, tells the following story: It was a Friday afternoon and the holy Mezhritzer Maggid had just immersed himself in the hot mikveh in honor of the Shabbos. As he left the bathhouse he drew toward a wonderful scent, an aroma filled with sincerity and devotion. He spotted a small hut and saw an elderly woman stirring a pot and then he realized what the wonderful scent was fried gribenes, chicken rinds.

Quietly he knocked on the door of the hut and spoke to the women. My dear woman, he began. There is something special in that pot, the aroma I smell comes from the sincerity of your stirring as well as the piety of the slaughterer. The joy of Shabbos is encompassed in those gribenes. So I ask you. Is it possible, that I too can partake in the delicacy that you are preparing for the Shabbos? Please, may I, too, have some of those gribenes?"

The woman stared directly into the Rebbe's eyes. "Holy Rabbi," she countered, "I am sorry. My husband waits for this delicacy the entire week. My grandchildren have come from a distant city and are expecting to have some gribenes, and" she added "we are having our son-in-law's brother for Shabbos. I am sorry but there are not enough gribenes left for you."

The Rebbe nodded solemnly and left.

A few moments later the woman realized what had occurred. "Am I a fool?" she thought. "The Holy Mezhritzer Maggid wanted to eat from my simple pot and I turned him away. Imagine, had the Rebbe partaken from my pot, blessings would bubble from it! Oh! How foolish of me to forego such an opportunity."

With that the woman raced from her hovel and chased after the Rebbe. Sighting the back of his caftan, she thrust the pot forward and began to shout, "Mezhritzer Maggid! Mezhritzer Maggid! Take the whole entire pot Please!"

Slowly the Rebbe turned around and shrugged his shoulders. "My dear woman," he sighed. "I would love to taste your gribenes, but I have lost my appetite."

The Ralbag, a 13th Century commentator, explains, that there are times that Hashem's grace is open to us and opportunity is at our door. It may be in the form of spiritual opportunity or physical and emotional ones as well. We must know that there is a time and a grace for everything,. Moshe reminded

his flock, as he reminds us, that we must respond to opportunity when it knocks. The world does not wait for us to be ready. We have the ability to miraculously overcome great obstacles. But we must be ready to act at the moment that grace shines its light on a dark situation.

FLIGHT TO FREEDOM

RABBI PINCHAS AVRUCH (Torah.org)

This week's portion is the first from the book of Devarim, or Deuteronomy. The dictionary definition of Deuteronomy is "fifth book of the [Bible], derived from the Greek words deuterios ("second") and nomos ("law")...it is a repetition of previous laws with an urgent appeal to obey them." Before the Torah begins its review of the laws, it starts with Moshe's review of the history that brought the Jewish Nation to that point in history, their waning weeks in the wilderness. As they circumvented the lands of Mount Se'ir, the possessions of their cousins, the Children of Esav (Esau), G-d told them, "Enough of your circling this mountain; turn yourselves northward (in Hebrew: "tzaфона")... You shall not provoke [the children of Esav] for I shall not give you of their land – even the right to set foot – for as an inheritance to the Children of Esav I have given Mount Se'ir." (2:3,5)

Yalkut Shimoni (most comprehensive Midrashic anthology, covering the entirety of the Tanach (Bible); attributed to Rabbi Shimon HaDarshan of Frankfurt of the thirteenth century) conveys the Oral Tradition of a deeper message embedded within G-d's words to Moshe. "If you see that [the Children of Esav] want to provoke you, hide ("hatzpinu") yourselves from them. To where do you flee? To the Torah, for there is no protection other than Torah, as stated, 'He has secured ("yitzpohn") the eternal Torah for the upright' (Mishlei/Proverbs 2:7)"

Ramban (Nachmanides, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman; 1135-1204; native of Gerona, Spain, he was one the leading scholars of the Middle Ages and successfully defended Judaism at the famed debate in Barcelona in 1263) expounds that the confrontations our forefather Yaakov (Jacob) had with Esav are the model for the destiny of the Children of Israel in our continuing conflict with our cousins, as the generations of the Jewish People will continually experience history repeating itself. Therefore, we must take hold of and follow the lesson of our righteous forebear and prepare ourselves with the same three tools he utilized: prayer for success, gifts of appeasement and preparations for war and escape.

Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan of Radin; 1838-1933; author of basic works in Jewish law, philosophy and ethics and renowned for his saintly qualities) notes that Ramban's guidance of 750 years ago is no less relevant today in our confrontation with our oppressors. Throughout Jewish history, our utilization of the armaments of our forefather – prayer and faith with a non-aggressive defensive posture – has led to our survival through millennia of persecution. Yet when we embraced the strategies of our enemies – reliance on the sword with conquest defining success – and abandoned the successful formula of our forefathers, we have met with misery and great hardship. Rabbi Kagan closes with a simple prayer: May G-d have mercy on us and restore our Judges to their former positions (i.e. bring the Messiah speedily, thus restoring the religious institutions of old which inspired the masses to maintain their dedication to the Divine path).

One of the great miracles of Jewish history is that no nation has ever survived as an identifiable group after close to 2000 years of exile, dispersion and persecution. But the actualization of this impossibility should not surprise us. Just as the Torah warns us of exile and persecution as the consequence of our misdeeds – commemorated with this coming week's Tisha B'Av observance of the anniversary of the destruction of our Holy Temples in Jerusalem and most of the great tragedies that have befallen our people – the Torah comforts us that G-d will never forsake us. And to arouse the Divine mercy that will end this misery, the Torah offers further instruction: renew our faith in G-d and flee to the Torah.

PAYMENT IN FULL

RABBI NAFTALI REICH (Torah.org)

After forty long years in the desert, the Jewish people stood poised to conquer the Holy Land. But there were complications. Two of their most formidable foes were untouchable. The Torah forbade the Jewish people to attack the nations of Ammon and Moav; they had to circle around to the north even though the direct path of invasion led through the lands of these two nations. The Torah did, however, allow the Jewish invaders to make threaten and intimidate Moav, as long as they stopped short of actual combat.

Why was this special protection granted to these two implacable foes of the

Jewish people?

Our Sages find the answer in an incident that took place five centuries earlier. During a period of famine, the Jewish patriarch Avraham, his beautiful wife Sarah and his nephew Lot went to seek food in Egypt. The pharaoh at that time had a roving eye. Whenever a beautiful woman caught his fancy, he would kill her husband and take her into his harem. Sarah caught his fancy, which led him to focus on Avraham, who had escorted her to Egypt. Had he known Avraham was her husband, he would have killed him on the spot, but Avraham claimed he was her brother and was spared. Lot was standing there when Avraham represented himself to the pharaoh as Sarah's brother. If Lot had said one word or made one gesture to arouse the pharaoh's suspicions, Avraham would have been doomed. But Lot remained silent, and the pharaoh accepted Avraham's story. The Torah rewarded Lot by forbidding the Jewish people to attack Lot's descendants, the nations of Ammon and Moav.

The question arises: Why does the Torah protect Ammon and Moav only from an actual assault? Why does the Torah permit threats and other intimidating actions Moav? True, the Torah does forbid the Jewish people to threaten and intimidate the nation of Ammon, but that is not a reward for Lot's actions. It is a reward for his daughter's efforts to conceal the shameful paternity of her children (which is a subject for a different discussion). Lot's reward for his silence was limited to a protection from assault against his descendants. Why was this so?

The commentators explain that the deficiencies in Lot's reward were measure for measure for the deficiencies in his act of kindness. Lot was indeed silent when Avraham told the Egyptian pharaoh that he was Sarah's brother. But he did not have the sensitivity and consideration to reassure Avraham that he could count on his silence. He could have told Avraham, "Don't worry. You can count on my silence. I won't give your secret away." But he did not. And so, Avraham's heart must have been beating wildly throughout that tense confrontation with the pharaoh. Therefore, the Torah only protects Lot's descendants from actual harm but not from threats and intimidation.

A rich man caught sight of a pauper sitting on a bench and decided to invite him for dinner. But first he had some business to discuss with an associate. A half-hour later, the business was settled. The rich man offered the pauper a gracious invitation and brought him to his house. He seated the pauper in a place of honor and wine and dined him like a king.

Afterwards, the pauper thanked the rich man and prepared to leave.

"Tell me, did I treat you kindly?" said the rich man,

"Oh, yes," said the pauper.

"Could you have been any kinder to you than I was?"

The pauper fidgeted. "Do you want me to be honest?"

"Certainly," said the rich man.

"Well, you could have invited me before you discussed business with your friend. For that half hour I was afraid that I might have to go to sleep hungry tonight."

In our own lives, we need to pay close attention not only to what we do but also to how we do it. The full value and quality of a kind deed is determined by considering it in its full context. Indeed, sometimes the manner in which a kind deed is done is more important than the deed itself.

News, Views & Opinion

PUSHING BACK: 75K RESERVISTS SIGN ANTI-REFUSAL PETITION

DAVID ISRAEL (JewishPress.com 18-7-23)

With little or no financial support and no ad agencies promoting their message, right-leaning and other sane rank & file Israelis are beginning to reverse the tide of the anarchist attack on Israel's democratic institutions, most importantly the ideas of one-man one-vote, and if your side lost the election, you don't get to push your ideas through violence.

And so, on Monday afternoon, Channel 14's host of the popular political show "The Patriots," Yinon Magal, launched an online petition calling on anyone who has served in the IDF to join the side of citizens who oppose the refusal to serve.

"The Reservists' Petition – We Oppose the Refusals!" states: "We, male and female soldiers in the past or the reserves in the IDF oppose the refusals and are loyal to the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. We will serve the State of Israel because it is our only state – and we will protect her at all costs!"

As of 1:13 PM Israel time, 74,314 individuals have signed, which at this point

constitutes 93% of the target, but the original target was 40K, and Magal has already announced that when it hits 80K, the petition's target will be upped to 10K. Incidentally, as a retired IDF soldier, I, too, signed and can attest that the process requires a real email address. So, the numbers are probably real.

Also on Tuesday, Jerusalem-based journalist Inbar Twizer tweeted: "500 Doctors signed a letter of opposition to the strike in the healthcare system and call on the chairman of the Israel Medical Association 'to stop the madness.' One of the signatories is Dr. Amir Barak, until recently the Maccabi HMO's chief orthopedist. 'We apologize to the public for the irresponsible behavior of some of our colleagues in the profession. To strike due to a political position contradicts the Hippocratic oath,' they wrote."

The past 24 hours have seen more and more operational units in the reserves raising the anti-refusal banner. This is a thrill to right-wing Israelis who have been languishing since January, watching the side that lost the election trying with great success to topple the democratically-elected government. Soldiers and officers are beginning to state with growing clarity that they will continue to show up for the defense of the State of Israel, and are even willing to volunteer beyond what is required, in the event that there is a shortage of reservists.

In a letter that was sent on Monday by 130 officers and soldiers from the Research Brigade, graduates of the IDF Intelligence Division, they wrote: "We, the reserves women men of the research division, declare that we will continue to serve our country with love and dedication at all times, to protect the State of Israel under any government. We will not refuse an order and we will not set conditions for our volunteering for the IDF reserves."

Another letter that was published on Monday came from the soldiers of the IDF's special operations unit, who also stated: "We, the undersigned commanders and officers of the special operations unit, have served in complex roles for many years. We decided to break the silence and step out for a moment to say the obvious – we will continue to report to the reserves whenever we are called."

On Monday I reported that among the letters of refusal that were distributed last Friday, calling on the government to stop the judicial reform legislation or else, there was an unusual letter that opposed those refusals and the calls to stop serving in the reserves, even though its signatories disagree with one another on the reform – Sayeret Matkal special force reservists who came out against the phenomenon of refusal and clarified in a letter to the commander of the unit, "If G-d forbid there is a manpower shortage – we will all volunteer to make up for it with additional reserve service days."

And IDF HR's reservist Captain K. told me on Monday that reservists are calling him up day and night, begging him to call them for reserve service.

WHY DO PALESTINIANS ALWAYS DECLARE VICTORY WHEN THEY LOSE?

ELDER OF ZIYON (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 14-7-23)

Hussain Abdul-Hussain, an analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, tweeted a criticism of Arabs who keep declaring "victory" over Israel:

The Arabs have a chronic and permanent feeling that they are on the verge of victory over Israel, and that the passage of time is in their interest. This is how Nasrallah appeared yesterday saying that Israel does not dare to remove his border tent because Israel's deterrence capacity has diminished, and because Israel is no longer as strong as in the past, and Lebanon is also not weak as in the past.

This feeling that Nasrallah transmits regarding the Arab struggle against Israel is improving in favor of the Arabs, is not born yesterday. "Israel is weaker than a spider's web."

Like Nasrallah, Arab Americans feel that anti-Israelism in America and the world is expanding, and that times are changing in favor of the Arabs. Of course, these feelings are not based on facts. Rather, they are from the core of the Arab heritage that replaces truth with poetry, empty pride, and bragging about imaginary heroism and victories.

This Arab non-reality is passed down through the generations. For example, in the closing statement of the Arab League summit held in Tunis in 1979, when Nasrallah was still a teenager, it was stated that the conferees expressed their relief that the world had begun to turn against Israel: Noting with satisfaction the increasing isolation of Israel in the world arena, the shrinking of its international relations, and the growing awareness of the justness of the Palestinian cause and all occupied Arab lands among the world public opinion,

it warns against all attempts aimed at restoring the relations of some countries with the Zionist enemy or recognizing Jerusalem as its capital, and declares that the Arab countries will take the necessary measures to protect Arab rights.

Decades, even centuries, of Arab statements made of pure excrement. Statements aimed at masking the complete Arab collapse (with a few exceptions in the Gulf), often by attempting to divert Arab attention by blaming Israel. Arabs who live in illusions and feelings, there is no measurement of the truth, no appreciation of reality, no comparison between what was in the past and what is today (performance indicators), nor how the future can be, nor how can we deflect its path to our advantage. Only drums and honking, and woe to whoever comes out with a different point of view because he departs from the consensus, and that is treason.

Unlike Hussain, Saudi analyst Abdullah bin Bakhit hates Israel. But he also criticizes the Palestinians for declaring victory, specifically in Jenin, from a completely different angle (which includes a dose of classic antisemitism):

Well-known Palestinian journalist Abdel Bari Atwan wrote the following text on Twitter: "The resistance battalions did not leave Jenin until after the enemy withdrew in defeat. The battalions are entrenched, preparing for the next round, and celebrating the great victory politically and militarily despite their limited capabilities and the failure of the authority and Arab governments to them.. The march of honor, redemption, and resistance continues."

However, all that we saw, heard, and expected was that the Israelis destroyed, killed, displaced, arrested, and accomplished everything they came for, and that day will not be late when they will return to do it again. When Israel uses the most powerful warplanes to bomb Gaza and destroy the already worn-out infrastructure, we hear Palestinian officials and journalists celebrate the great victory achieved by the resistance.

In fact, this is free propaganda for the Israelis, as all their crimes are blotted out by this false victory in front of the world. Thanks to these celebrations, the Palestinian situation worsens, the Palestinian cause recedes from the forefront, and Israel moves closer to the Arab street.

The conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is a struggle between absolute power and absolute weakness. The defenseless Palestinian is fighting against all the forces available in the twenty-first century, tanks, planes, intelligence and unlimited global media support. The Palestinian celebration of the delusional victory misleads not only the Palestinians, but also misleads everyone who wants to extend a helping hand to them.

...

The calamity of the Palestinians began when Yasser Arafat stood at the United Nations platform in the 1970s. Instead of explaining to the world the catastrophe of his people and their pain, he began threatening the world, saying, "Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." The world thought that the man was hiding a mighty force waiting for a signal from him. .

Arafat's speech at the United Nations was the prevailing discourse in the Arab world at the time, and this discourse continued in the conscience of the Palestinian man, who did not want to abandon him. At a time when the Jews continued to weep to this day over the tragedy of their people, and they are the victorious occupiers who own everything in the world of the West. You will hear the representative of Israel at any conference in which he participates, asking those present, with tears welling in his eyes, to pause for the souls of the Jews.

It is clear that the Palestinian mind is still imprisoned in the revolutionary discourse of the sixties, when the process of liberating Palestine was at the door, and it only needed the Nasserite, Baathist and nationalist drums that would accompany the fighters upon entering Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem.

While Hussain's criticisms are reality based, Abdullah bin Bakhit still wants to propagate lies, but his preferred lie is the opposite one. Knowing that the West favors the underdog, he wants to paint the Palestinians as the ultimate losers - who need billions of dollars and political aid.

To my mind, the Palestinian desire to always declare victory - whether in Gaza or Jenin - is mostly a result of honor/shame culture. Losing is ignominious. The only losses that the Arab world admits are those that are too obvious to lie about: 1948 and 1967. Otherwise, everything is a victory - and Israel is always on its last legs.

This denial of reality serves another purpose: it helps Palestinians avoid the compromises necessary for any kind of peace. If they only need to wait until Israel implodes in the next few years to get everything they always wanted, the thinking goes, then they won't have to make any hard choices now. This denial of reality helps fuel intransigence and terror.

Yet no Western leader (with the possible exception of Donald Trump) has

been willing to say, publicly, that the Palestinians are wrong and have always been wrong, and their decisions and self-deception ultimately hurt their own people more than they hurt Israel. Instead, they play into the lie, which leads directly to more terror attacks and more Palestinian enthusiasm that they are winning - which recruits far more into the terrorist camp than losing does.

‘APARTHEID’ PSYOPS

BARRY TIGAY (JNS.org 17-7-23)

Those who use the “apartheid” slur against Israel are seeking to evoke unconscious feelings of black/white conflict. This is an inaccurate portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and of Israel in general.

The Middle East is not black. Israel is not white. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not racial. The groups involved are very similar genetically but have differences in culture, religion, history, economic development, education, politics, language and values.

On an unconscious level, however, manipulated symbols often stir emotions that override reason and analysis.

Race prejudice is a subject that people feel strongly about. Those who have experienced it will sympathize with others who experience it. Thus, portraying yourself as an anti-racist creates a positive emotional reaction towards you.

Psychological operations or “psyops” is a form of psychological warfare that uses public diplomacy, propaganda and other methods to evoke a desired emotional response. This response then prejudices rational argument and decision-making.

Many individuals and groups use psyops. During the Cold War, fanning the flames of racial conflict in the United States was a favorite tactic of the Soviet Union. The Soviets brought this tactic to bear against Israel by playing a key role in the 1975 U.N. Resolution 3379 that proclaimed Zionism a form of racism.

Today's cultural Marxists have replaced the old communist ideology of class struggle with a struggle between identity groups based on race, sexuality and gender. They use the concept of “intersectionality” to build a broad coalition of purportedly marginalized people to fight their “oppressors.” For example, one of their main arguments is that white people are always oppressors and black people are always victims.

The Palestinians have adopted this ideology wholesale and seek to exploit it to their own ends.

For example, Palestinian activist Mohammed El-Kurd said of the apartheid libel, “I think what the word itself as a word—I’m not even talking about the legal definition of the word ‘apartheid’; I’m not talking about the crime against humanity—but the negative word that is ‘apartheid’ and the negative connotation it carries in the psyche of the public. I think it’s capable, and it has been, engineering and establishing a cultural shift in the way people approach and talk about Palestine.”

“But I’m less concerned with the accuracy of the word,” he confessed. “You know, me and my friends have these arguments about, like, ‘it’s settler-colonialism,’ ‘it’s apartheid,’ ‘it’s police brutality,’ ‘it’s ethnic cleansing,’ ‘it’s this, it’s that.’ I don’t care. As long as there is a conversation happening in which the villain is portrayed clearly, I think that’s good.”

This is only one example of the “Red-Green Alliance,” a partnership between Marxist and Islamist ideologues and activists who try to coordinate their messaging and finances to broaden support. In addition to “apartheid Israel,” other slogans they promote are “globalize the intifada,” and “from Ferguson to Palestine.” This psychological warfare asserts that Palestinians and black Americans are both victims of Israeli oppression, as if Israel were the white policemen who are the purported oppressors of black Americans.

Cultural Marxists have influence far beyond their numbers. They have dominated and deformed academia, K-12 education, media, the unions, NGOs and broad swaths of other left-leaning cultural institutions.

Dissidents in these captured spaces often try to counter the “apartheid Israel” slur by arguing that many Israelis aren’t white. This cedes ground by using the same frame of reference as the attackers.

A better argument is that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not about race at all. Apartheid involves a small racial minority dominating a racial majority. Israel and the Palestinians are not different races, largely not in the same country and of roughly equal numbers.

Not all of those who employ the apartheid libel against Israel are involved in psyops. Some may not be conscious of their messaging and are just repeating things they read and hear.

For example, Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.), the Congressional Progressive Caucus chair, called Israel a “racist state” last Saturday after being pressured by a pro-Palestinian mob. She has since said she believes only that the Netanyahu government has racist policies and some members have made racist statements.

This is the leftist worldview in a nutshell: Intimidated by a mob, Jayapal reverted to her default position. Everything leftists don’t like is about race. Everyone they don’t like is a racist. Jayapal was simply playing the game. She is a one-trick pony.

We must reply that Jews are not a race and Jews are not racists. Israel is racially diverse and its citizens enjoy equality under the law. Israel’s rescue of Ethiopian Jewry is a shining example of racial inclusion. There is more racism in most nations than in Israel. There is more racism in most Arab and Muslim-majority countries than in Israel. Jews can be and are friends with Arabs, Muslims and black people.

The one-trick ponies will keep doing their one trick: making everything, including Israel, about race. In response, we must expose and defeat them.

TEACHING TANACH TO THE TIKTOK GENERATION

HANA LEVI JULIAN (JewishPress.com 17-7-23)

How can we make Bible study exciting to kids in Jewish schools, and show that it is still relevant to their daily lives?

This is one of the questions that will be discussed at the Herzog College Yemei Iyun B’Tanach and at the Jewish Educators’ Day for English-speaking teachers, where the 32nd annual Bible Study Conference is taking place this week at Herzog College.

Every summer, thousands of Bible study enthusiasts gather at Herzog College for four days of intensive lectures by the world’s leading Tanach lecturers.

This year there are 125 live lectures in Hebrew and 25 lectures in English, as well as five in French. Some of the live lectures are being live-streamed, and more will be available later for online viewing by Tanach enthusiasts around the world.

The program expands every year, with online virtual Tanach tours around Israel – originally added during the COVID era – plus new evening events taking place this year in Jerusalem and Modi’in.

This year, the Jewish Educators’ Day will focus on the challenges facing today’s Judaic Studies teachers.

Rabbi Dr. Shalom Berger, who runs the English-language program at the Yemei Iyun B’Tanach, explains, “Whether they teach in Jewish day schools in Manchester, Memphis or Melbourne, they need to show that the Tanach is still relevant today, in order to engage the “TikTok generation” with its eternal messages.”

Educators from the United States and from other Jewish communities are participating in workshops discussing how to understand the needs of today’s students and empower them to learn Tanach.

Herzog Global, the international arm of Herzog College, will launch its new story-telling curriculum for community schools, which takes a novel approach to exploring themes of Jewish identity through Biblical stories. The college provides teacher education programs and resources in English and Spanish to Jewish teachers and schools.

The Yemei Iyun B’Tanach traditionally takes place shortly before Tisha B’Av (which begins on the evening on Wednesday, July 16), and every participant will receive links to free online lectures suitable for viewing on Tisha B’Av.

Speakers arriving from the US to speak at this year’s event include Rabbi David Fohrman of Aleph Beta, Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter from Yeshiva University, Rabbi Yehuda Chanales from Teaneck, NJ, and Rabbi Shmuel Feld from Silver Spring, MD.

“Despite the wealth of Tanach material available today on every online platform, over 3,000 people have booked seats at this in-person event, because of the shared excitement that it generates every year.

LONDON EXHIBIT EXPLORES THE ‘TRIUMPHANT’ JEWISH HISTORY OF CRICKET

GEORGIA L. GILHOLY (JNS.org 17-7-23)

Crickets may not be kosher, but the sport played with a bat and ball certainly is ... and has a long Jewish history.

The exhibit “Cricket and the Jewish Community” is on view at Lord’s Cricket Ground in North London in what Lord’s states is the world’s oldest sporting museum. It will run through 2025.

“Jews have contributed at all levels of cricket, both on and off the field of play. Jewish male cricketers have played Test cricket for Australia and South

Africa, and perhaps more remarkably for the West Indies,” the exhibit states. “Jewish batters have scored centuries for the West Indies as well as for Ireland and Scotland. Female Jewish players have been capped by England, Australia and Ireland.”

Jews have been found among the game’s “umpires, administrators, journalists, patrons and have helped to develop the commercial side of the game,” the exhibit adds. “They have captained their countries, been presidents of MCC and even baked cakes for Test Match Special.”

Neil Robinson, head of heritage and collections at the museum, told JNS that the exhibit was conceived in 2019 when Daniel Whiteman, co-author of the book Cricket Grounds from the Air, approached him with the idea of a “relatively small display on Jewish cricket cricketers.”

“I thought, well, that’s a nice idea,” Robinson told JNS. “Then we all got locked down a few months later before we had a chance to develop it.”

Isolation as a result of the coronavirus pandemic thwarted the best-laid plans of cricket exhibition planners yet also afforded the chance to broaden the vision.

Robinson planned a dedicated space in the museum for communities to tell their stories, using museum resources and expertise. Where conventional museum narratives occur top-down, this concept allows communities to reclaim their stories.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis of the United Kingdom is one of several prominent Jewish Brits recorded discussing his links to the sport.

“If you wanted any proof of the fact that there is a connection between cricket and religion, just look at the name of this ground. This is the Lord’s Cricket Ground, in the same way that this is the Lord’s universe,” he told the event.

Two years of preparation resulted in the current exhibit, which spans grassroots to the sport’s pinnacle.

“The exhibition delves not only into the triumphs of Jewish players on the field but also the struggles faced by the community, namely through the pernicious issue of antisemitism,” Robinson told JNS.

Just last October, ex-Yorkshire cricketer Azeem Rafiq was hit with a formal reprimand from the Cricket Discipline Commission for “racist and discriminatory conduct” after antisemitic messages made in a 2011 exchange with fellow cricketer Ateeq Javid.

“As one delves deeper into the annals of cricket history, an intriguing transformation of the sport’s relationship with religion unravels,” said Robinson. “Cricket, once maligned in religious tracts for its Sunday play, gradually found favor with the aristocracy due to its association with gambling.”

From the exhibit “Cricket and the Jewish Community” on view at Lord’s Cricket Ground in North London. Photo by Georgia L. Gilholy.

BY THE 1830S, cricket embraced fully a muscular Christianity—“what certain groups claimed was the embodiment of morality, physical health and mental well-being,” Robinson said. “Cricket has also assumed an indelible role in the British Imperial Project, sometimes outshining the influence of Christianity itself.”

Cricket is particularly popular at upmarket, public schools among Christians, but that didn’t dissuade all Jews from entering the sport, upon which they soon made their mark.

Only one Jewish player has represented England as a Test (international level) cricketer, Nessa Reinberg. In South Africa, many Jewish cricketers overcame discrimination and made the national team.

The exhibit also encourages visitors to consider the cricketers who weren’t comfortable identifying publicly as Jews. Some kept their faith quiet with good reason.

The legendary South African cricketer Norman Gordon was met with “Here comes the rabbi!” taunts when he bowled in a 1938 match. Unphased, Gordon played so well that he shut the heckler up for the remainder of the game, Robinson said.

Images from the life of Baron de Rothschild (Victor Rothschild), who attended Harrow School and later played county cricket for Northamptonshire, are included in the exhibit. During World War II, he was appointed an MI5 expert. (One of his essential jobs was ensuring manually that no one had tampered with Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s Cuban cigars.)

Lesser-known figures also emerge in the show, including the Jamaican-born, Sephardic cricketer Ivan Barrow, who became a symbol of pride for the island’s old but small Jewish community. In 1933, he became the first West Indian to score 100 in an English Test and the first Jew to do so.

Knick-knacks from the life of Fred Trueman, the celebrated Yorkshire and England fast bowler, are also on hand. “The media had discovered that Trueman’s mother had been born to a Jewish family, but given up for adoption and adopted by a Christian family,” Robinson told JNS.

“Trueman didn’t seem to mind the suggestion that he was Jewish at all, on the condition that he was free to continue eating bacon sandwiches—which he simply wasn’t prepared to give up,” Robinson added.

On the other end of the religious-observance spectrum, the exhibit includes a framed pair of tzitzit, which Johannesburg-born cricketer Mandy Yachad wore in a match against India—a testament to the deeply-held faith of many in the exhibit.

A particularly curious episode of the exhibit centers on one Aileen Cohen, a mystery woman with a Jewish surname who pioneered the tradition of baking chocolate cakes for BBC Test Match—a practice to this day.

The delectable tradition began in the early 1980s, when commentator Brian Johnston said he longed for a slice of cake during a match. The local Mrs. Cohen stepped up promptly, delivering a home-baked cake to the ground’s iconic Grace Gate entrance. “We don’t know anything else about her apart from her name,” Robinson told JNS. “If anyone knows more about her, please do contact us.”

The exhibition comes at a precarious time for cricket, following a two-year independent probe into the sport, which claimed that racism, sexism, classism and elitism are “widespread” across the sport in England and Wales. Robinson thinks the exhibit can help the game secure a positive future.

“If you look throughout society, antisemitism has impacted far too many people, as do other types of discrimination. Cricket is obviously going through a period where it’s taking a hard look at itself in terms of prejudice,” he told JNS.

“I think what we are doing in this museum and in this gallery specifically can be part of the process that makes cricket more welcoming,” he said.

Kosher & Halacha Korner

The following article may be at variance to local Kashrus Agencies. When in doubt, contact your local reputable Agency. In Australia, direct any questions to info@kosher.org.au or visit www.kosher.org.au

BIRKAS HA-MAZON OVER BAKED GOODS

RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT (Torah.org)

The minimum amount of any food that obligates one to recite Birkas ha-Mazon or a berachah acharonah is a k’zayis, an amount of food that equals the size of an olive. But how to measure and determine the precise amount of a k’zayis is the subject of heated debate. For the purpose of hilchos berachos, we follow the view of the poskim who hold that that a k’zayis is the amount of food that fills a cup which holds one fluid oz., or 29.5 cc. (1)

To give us a better sense of what a k’zayis of bread is in reality, consider the following: There are about ten k’zaysim in a bagel or in an onion roll, nine in a challah roll, four in a middle slice of a 2 lb. loaf of rye bread or in a pita bread, three in a slice of white bread, and a little more than two k’zaysim in a piece of machine matzah.

In the following pages we will discuss some of the halachos that pertain to the amount of food that is required for Birkas ha-Mazon and Al ha- Michyah. WHEN EATING BREAD:

* Washing hands is required before eating at least a k’zayis, and is strongly recommended when any amount of bread is eaten.(2)

* Al netilas yadayim, the blessing over washing hands, is recited when eating at least two k’zaysim.(3) Some poskim hold that a blessing may be recited even for a k’zayis,(4) and one may follow this view if need be.(5)

* Ha-Motzi is recited before eating any amount of bread, regardless if one washed or recited Al netilas yadayim .(6)

* Birkas ha-Mazon is recited after eating a k’zayis of bread(7) within a time-span of no longer than 3-4(8) minutes. One who is unsure whether or not he ate a k’zayis of bread within 3-4 minutes should not recite Birkas ha-Mazon .(9)

WHEN EATING BAKED GOODS AS A SNACK:

* Mezonos is recited before eating any amount of baked or cooked food made out of any one or combination of the five species of grain.

* Al ha-michyah is recited when a k’zayis is eaten within a time-span of no longer than 3-4 minutes.(10) The k’zayis must be composed entirely of flour the other ingredients do not count towards the minimum).(11) Many people, however, are not accurate in ascertaining the exact amount of flour

they ate and some poskim find a source to excuse their inexactitude (12) if at least the majority of the mixture is pure flour.(13) Fillings such as cream in a seven layer cake, apple filling in a pie, or cheese in a cheese cake, are certainly not counted as part of the k’zayis.(14)

WHEN EATING BAKED GOODS AS A MEAL:

Washing hands, reciting Al netilas yadayim, and reciting Birkas ha-Mazon are required when eating an amount of baked goods that constitutes kevius seudah, i.e., an amount of food that has the halachic status of eating a regular meal (as opposed to a snack). When one eats such a substantial amount, the baked goods are halachically treated like bread.

Important Note: When we refer to baked goods, we are speaking of products such as cake or other baked goods known as pas haba b’ksinin, which have “bread-like” properties and appearance, e.g., cookies, crackers, pretzels, Cheerios, etc. However, pasta, blintzes, farfel, oatmeal cereal and other cooked mezonos items which do not resemble bread at all are not considered baked goods for the purpose of our discussion.

There are several opinions as to the amount of baked goods which is necessary for kevius seudah. Some poskim rule that one who ate as little as eight k’zaysim is obligated to bentsch. Others hold that Birkas ha- Mazon is not recited unless one eats an amount of baked goods equal to the amount of bread he would eat at a main meal. It is exceedingly difficult to figure out what this amount is, since the amount of bread one would eat at a main meal varies according to the differences in eating habits between men and women,(15) different age groups,(16) and different localities.(17) A rough estimate, however, is an amount similar to two bagels, or five middle pieces of a 2 lb. loaf of bread, or about eighteen to twenty k’zaysim.(18)

In general terms, the halachah breaks down as follows. One who eats an amount of baked goods:

* Between one to eight k’zaysim recites Al ha-michyah.

* Over twenty k’zaysim – must wash his hands, recite Al netilas yadayim and recite Birkas ha-Mazon.

* Between eight and twenty k’zaysim (an halachically questionable area), and feels satiated from this amount of food, should recite Birkas ha- Mazon. If he does not feel satiated, he should recite Al ha-michyah.(19) [If he is satiated but only because he ate other foods as well at the same time.]

Here are some practical examples:(20)

* A slice of pizza(21) contains about eight to nine k’zaysim of flour. Typically, a single slice is eaten as a snack and one does not become satiated from it; Al ha-michyah is recited. In the case when it is eaten as a substitute for lunch and the person is satiated from it, Birkas ha- Mazon is required. But if one eats two slices of pizza, which, for most people would constitute a meal, one must definitely bentsch. In the atypical case where one is not satiated from eating two slices, Al ha- michyah will suffice. But one who eats more than two slices is required to bentsch even if he is not satiated from that amount of pizza.

* A standard cupcake is four k’zaysim. One who ate two cupcakes and is satiated is required to bentsch. If, however he is not satiated, he could eat up to five cupcakes before it would be mandatory to recite Birkas ha-Mazon.

* A slice of a standard (3”x3”) seven layer cake an inch thick contains two k’zaysim of flour. One may eat four such slices before running into a question of reciting Birkas ha-Mazon. At what point bentsching is mandatory will depend on how many slices one needs to eat in order to feel satiated. Eating ten such pieces, however, would require bentsching no matter the degree of satiety.

QUESTION: We mentioned earlier that eating one slice of pizza would not necessitate Birkas ha-Mazon since often one is not satiated from it. What if one ate a portion of French fries (four medium-sized French fries total a k’zayis) along with the pizza and is now satiated from the combination of the two foods – is he required to bentsch?

DISCUSSION: It depends on how the foods were eaten. If the pizza and the French fries are eaten together as when bread is eaten together with fish or meat, then we view the pizza as a “bread,” since it is acting as a bread substitute. In that case, Birkas ha-Mazon is required, since one became satiated from a meal with a bread substitute. But if the pizza and the French fries were eaten separately – independent of each other – then the pizza did not serve as a substitute for bread but rather as a separate food; no Birkas ha-Mazon is required. Al ha-michyah and Borei nefashos are said instead.

In other words, for other foods to be counted as part of the kevius seudah and require Birkas ha-Mazon, three conditions must be met: 1) One must be

satiated. 2) At least eight k'zaysim of baked goods must be eaten. (22) 3) The other foods are eaten together or along with the baked goods. (23)

A number of examples to illustrate this point:

* A croissant (made with pure fruit juice for the purpose of a snack) eaten by itself, or at the beginning or end of the meal is mezonos/Al ha-michayah.(24) But if it is eaten together with other foods (e.g., at a lunch together with fish and vegetable salads), and is used as a substitute for bread, Birkas ha-Mazon is required – if one becomes satiated from eight k'zaisyim of croissant roll plus any amount of the other food served at the meal.

* Baked goods which are served as an appetizer and removed from the table, or as a desert after the meal is cleared away, are not being used as bread substitutes. The other foods do not count towards the amount of kevius seudah.

* Tuna fish or chopped liver served together with crackers or flat bread are counted towards the amount of kevius seudah. Thus if one ate eight k'zaysim of crackers (about 48 Tam Tams) or flatbread (about 14 pieces) plus tuna fish or chipped liver and he is satiated, he must recite Birkas ha-Mazon.

Note: The subject discussed here, the formula for determining kevius seudah when combining baked goods with other foods, is an issue intensely debated by the poskim, and there are numerous, often conflicting, approaches. While the approach that we took is based on the decision of several leading poskim,(25) it is by no means the one and only approach. There are more lenient views who hold that the entire amount of kevius seudah must be composed of the baked goods only; other foods do not count at all.(26) There are also more stringent views who hold that Birkas ha-Mazon is recited even when the baked goods are eaten at any time during the meal (and not only if they are eaten together or along with the baked goods), and even if the total amount of baked goods is less than eight k'zaysim.(27) We have chosen a middle-of-the road compromise, which seems to be the prevalent custom, and it is based on the halachic decisions of Harav S.Z. Auerbach.(28)

1 Based on the calculations of Halachos of K'zayis, pg.17-20; 86-88.

2 Mishnah Berurah 158:10.

3 Mishnah Berurah 158:9.

4 Beir ha-Gra quoted in Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 158:9.

5 Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:41; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 15 and pg. 347).

6 Shulchan Aruch Harav 168:7.

7 O.C. 184:6. This is a Rabbinic obligation. Biblically, one does not recite Birkas ha-Mazon unless he has eaten a meal which satiates him.

8 The exact amount of time is in dispute, so l'chatchilah three minutes should be the limit. B'diavad, however, there are many poskim who permit reciting Birkas ha-Mazon if a k'zayis was eaten in four minutes.

9 Mishnah Berurah 184:15. It is proper, however, to wash and eat more bread so that Birkas ha-Mazon can be recited; ibid.

10 O.C. 208:9.

11 See Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:71 and E.H. 1:114; Divrei Yoel 1:13; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 46). This is also the ruling of the Brisker Rav (quoted in Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:132).

12 Mishnah Berurah 208:48; Chazon Ish, O.C. 26:8.

13 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesein Berachah, pg. 530).

14 Minchas Shelomo 1:91-4. See also Halachos of K'zayis, pg. 134 and Yalkut Yosef 3:491.

15 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Vesein Berachah, pg. 488) rules that women and girls who eat less than men have a smaller shiur of kevius seudah.

16 See Beir Halachah 168:6, who rules that kevius seudah for children and elderly people varies according to their individual eating habits.

17 Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:32.

18 There are several factors and many views which must be taken into account when calculating this amount. See Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 28-36 and pg. 219-226 for a lengthy explanation of this very difficult subject. See also Pischei Halachah 8:15-21.

19 Mishnah Berurah 168:24.

20 Based on the calculations of The Halachos of K'zayis, pgs. 31-41.

21 Our Discussion follows the opinion which holds that when pizza is eaten as a snack its berachah is mezonos/Al ha-Michyah. While many poskim hold that one always bentsches over pizza, the custom seems to follow the first opinion.

22 Shulchan Aruch Harav 167:8; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Vesein Berachah, vol. 2, Hebrew section, pg. 10 and pg. 490); Shevet ha-Levi 7:25.

23 Derech ha-Chayim (Mezonos 3); Mishnah Berurah 168:24; Emes l'Yaakov, O.C. 168, note 196; Minchas Yitzchak 1:71-10; Harav C.P. Scheinberg (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 32); Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:125; Lehoros Nossan 7:9. This may be the view of the Chazon Ish as well; see O.C. 26:8; 34:8, Orchos Rabbeinu 1:80 and Pischei Halachah 8:21, note 53. See Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 36 and 220, for an elaboration.

24 See Shevet ha-Levi 8:32.

25 See notes 22 and 23.

26 Birkei Yosef 168:6; Aruch ha-Shulchan 168:17; Kaf ha-Chayim 168:47. Sefaradim conduct themselves according to this view; Yabia Omer 8:22-21.

27 Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:56; 3:32 and 4:41; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 32 and 34); Mekor ha-Berachah, pg. 113.

28 Harav Auerbach's ruling on the subject may be found in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 54, note 132, Vesein Berachah, vol. 2, Hebrew section, pg. 10 and pg. 490, and Vezos ha-Berachah, pg. 32.

Devorim (Melb) 21/7/23, 4 Av 5783: 5:06pm/6:07pm