



Compliments of the Institute of Jewish Studies (founded by [Yankel Rosenbaum](#) HY"D) First Published Adar 5761 Vol 25.07
 Printing in part sponsored by **NLZ Imports, D&A Werdiger, Weis Printing**
 (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)

Bereishis 5786

The Anti-Semites Are Right: the Jews Do Run the World

RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR (Ohr.edu)

"In the beginning..." (1:1)

Our rabbis teach, "Lev Melachim v'sarim b'yad Hashem." This means, "The hearts of kings and ministers are in the Hand of Hashem." When it comes to international affairs, anything that impinges on the future of the world, even the most important leaders have no freedom of choice. They become puppets.

And who pulls the strings of those puppets. We do. The Jewish People.

The very first word in the Torah is "Bereishis." The Midrash expounds 'Bereishis' to read as 'Bishvil Reishis' – 'Because of Reishis.' One of the things the Gemara calls 'Reishis' is the Jewish People. Meaning that the world was created in the merit of the Jewish People.

Hashem set up this world in such a way that our every action, for the good or the not-so-good, ascends through all the spiritual worlds above to the highest possible places. It makes its effect there and then the power of that action descends back down through all those worlds to this, the lowest world, becoming a physical reality. For example, when someone keeps Shabbos in Bristol or in Ramsgate or in Timbuktu, that spiritual energy ascends all the way to the control room of the universe and is sent back down as massive positive energy. A typhoon in the China Sea is cancelled, abundant rain falls in Niger, averting a famine.

The Gemara says, "Pnei Hador, k'pnei hakelev." This means that the face of the generation just before Mashiach is like the face of a dog.

Let's pretend you were a visiting Martian, unfamiliar with Earth creatures and you saw a man and dog out for a walk. You would think that the dog was leading the man because he's out in front. But the dog is constantly looking over its shoulder, finding out which way it should go. The leaders of this world are not in charge. We are. Don't look at the news to find out what the polls say, what the pundits say.

The real news is being created by you. How did you treat your wife this morning? How did you treat your mother? How did you pray? Were you careful about what went into your mouth and were you just a careful about what type of words came out?

The anti-Semites of this world are right: the Jews do run the world. But not in the way they think. It's not the puppets of politics who are the movers and shakers of this world. You are.

THE JOY OF GETTING IT RIGHT THE SECOND TIME

RABBI YOSSEI IVES (Chabad.org)

The creation story at the beginning of Genesis is dominated by key commands that brought the universe into existence: "Let there be light," (1:3) "Let there be water," (1:6) "Let there be luminaries," (1:14) and so on. The rabbis refer to these as "The 10 Utterances." Obviously, creation consists of many more than 10 components, so each of these utterances was broadly inclusive. Why, then, did there even need to be 10 utterances? Couldn't a single, even broader one have been sufficient?

This question is addressed in Pirkei Avot (5:1):

The world was created with 10 utterances. What does this come to teach us, as it could have been created with a single utterance? However, this is in order to get pay-back from the wicked for destroying a world that was created with 10

utterances, and to reward the righteous for sustaining a world that was created with 10 utterances.

In other words, to compound the guilt of the wicked and to increase the merit of the righteous, the world was deliberately created with a larger number of utterances.

It is understandable that the Almighty would create the world in a manner that would afford greater opportunity for reward to those who choose to do good. But why would He want to create the world in a manner that is specifically designed to generate greater punishment for those who do wrong? Surely G-d is the epitome of goodness and would not pursue a scheme to saddle a sinner with the maximum amount of punishment!

THE NEED FOR A VOID

The Rebbe offers a transformative approach to understanding this teaching. For five decades the Rebbe expounded on the core concept of "dura betachtonim," the foundational notion that the purpose of creation is, in the words of the Midrash (Tanchuma Naso 16), "To make for the Blessed One (G-d) a dwelling place in the lower realms."

The entire point of creation is so that there should be a place of relative spiritual darkness and Divine concealment, which we, through our good deeds, will transform into a place filled with goodness and G-dliness.

Human beings are not created as angels and placed in a world of intense spirituality and revealed G-dliness. Rather, we are put into a reality in which there is temptation and sin, and where it is possible to forget about G-d and spiritual matters. The aim of the game is to see through all the distractions and recognize our Divine mission, which is to make the world a better place by fulfilling G-d's commandments.

SINNERS' ADVANTAGE

In the Torah we read about impressive miracles wrought by glittering figures such as Moses and Elijah, and we learn about the saintly lives of the great prophets and teachers. Through their exemplary lives, they brought immense holiness into the world. However, it is those who committed sins and then turned their lives around that have achieved the highest fulfillment of the purpose of creation. Those who acted improperly and then repented for their past misdeeds, they are the ones who have turned bad into good.

While bad deeds subvert the purpose of creation by bringing more darkness into the universe, when a person eventually does true teshuvah (repentance) all their negative acts are transformed into positives. The greater the terribleness of the sins, the greater the grandeur of their atonement.

So, there is something that former sinners can achieve that the forever righteous cannot. When a person had sinned in the past and now has chosen the path of good, all their "negative achievements" can be cashed in for positive ones. That is the ultimate converting darkness into light.

DIVIDENDS OF DARKNESS

Now we can understand what G-d gains from getting payback from the wicked. This does not refer to meting out punishment, but to the repentance of the sinners and the transformation of their bad deeds into good ones.

We were all put on earth to fulfill the purpose of bringing light and sanctity into the world. But what happens when someone chooses to sin instead? They become indebted to their Creator for failing to contribute properly to the goal for which they were created. So, how does such a person repay their debt?

They pay back in the currency most favored by G-d: Repentance. On the one hand, the ideal path is to get it right the first time around – to not sin at all. But in a very real sense, it is the person who at first got it wrong and then corrected their ways who fulfills most fully what life on earth is supposed to accomplish.

So keen is the Almighty to reap the benefits of the former sinner gone right, that He created the world using 10 utterances, even though He could just as well have created it with a single word.

Herein lies a hugely valuable lesson: We may make a mistake and do things wrong. Now we feel a failure and think that we have blotted our paper and it shall never be as good again. This is utterly untrue. When we recognize the power of repentance and change, we can not only fix the past but transform all the negative into positive, bringing tenfold light into the world and bringing delight to our Creator.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot, vol. 30, Parshat Bereishit I.

Why Do We Sleep?

RABBI YANKI TAUBER (Chabad.org)

Every day, many billions of man-hours are slept down the drain. If there are 6,000,000,000 human beings in the world, and each sleeps an average of 7.2 hours a night—well, you do the math. The bottom line is that slumbered time is probably our most wasted human resource.

Why do we spend 25% to 30% of our lives doing nothing? Why do we sleep?

Perhaps this seems a pointless question. Why sleep? Because our body demands it of us. Because that is how we are physiologically constructed—that we require so many hours of rest each day in order to function. But to the Jew, there are no pointless questions. If G-d created us a certain way, there is a reason. If our active hours must always be preceded by what the Talmud calls the "minor death" of sleep, there is a lesson here, a truth that is fundamental to the nature of human achievement.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains: If we didn't sleep, there would be no tomorrow. Life would be a single, seamless today. Our every thought and deed would be an outgrowth of all our previous thoughts and deeds. There would be no new beginnings in our lives, for the very concept of a new beginning would be alien to us.

Sleep means that we have the capacity to not only improve but also transcend ourselves. To open a new chapter in life that is neither predicted nor enabled by what we did and were up until now. To free ourselves of yesterday's constraints and build a new, recreated self.

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov taught that G-d creates the world anew every millisecond of time. If we are His "partners in creation" (as the Talmud says we are), we should be able to do that too—at least once a day.

Wake up tomorrow—and start anew.

Spin Doctor

RABBI JAY KELMAN (TorahinMotion.org)

Spin. The art of manipulating the facts to fit one's agenda has been fine-tuned in the era of mass media. Companies will pay millions to ensure that only their positive side is displayed to the ignorant public. It is their image, not the Divine one, in which they are interested. However, "there is nothing new under the sun". While the methods may be different, today's modern practitioners of spin are just refining an ancient art, one that began with Adam and Eve. "G-d took man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and watch it. G-d gave the man a commandment, saying: you may definitely eat from every tree of the garden. But from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, do not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you will definitely die" (2:15-16).

These instructions seem pretty clear to me—all fruits are "kosher", with one little exception. Yet like the moderns of today, surely man could find some way to claim that the instructions were quite equivocal. Firstly, one must set up layers of command so that one can claim ignorance of the administrative order. Questions, of course, are raised regarding the true original intent of the spoken words. Perhaps the speaker really meant white, even though he appeared to say black. This, of course, is followed by a rewording of the initial order, so that reinterpretation can be applied. Then, certain facts are selectively highlighted and overemphasized, while others are conveniently ignored. And finally, if you have no choice but to admit guilt, the least you can do is put the blame somewhere else. Find someone to be the fall guy.

Lo and behold, these methods were invented by none other than the first man to walk the face of the earth. Though the instruction of not eating from just one tree was given to man only—in fact, Eve was not created until after this first commandment—it is Eve who is the one debating with the snake the true meaning of G-d's command. Not surprisingly, questions are

raised about the true meaning of G-d's order. "Did G-d really say that you may not eat from any of the trees of the garden?" (3:1), the snake asks. Though no one involved had firsthand knowledge of what G-d really said, no one bothered to check with the one person who did know, Adam. Well, answered Eve, "we may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden". So far, so good (true, she leaves out G-d's emphasis on "definitely" eat, but why quibble over such semantics?). "But of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, G-d said, 'Do not eat it and do not even touch it, or else you will die'". A good job of turning G-d's positive order into a harsh decree! All of a sudden, the forbidden tree is in the middle of the garden, and even touching it is forbidden. In "fact", the forbidden tree is now "good for eating" (how did she know?) and "a delight to the eyes". Surely, such a harsh order was not intended to be taken literally. Now one can eat with clear conscience; after all, such food tastes better.

But inevitably, the bubble bursts. Sure, "the man and the wife hid themselves"—but when you are running from G-d, there is no place to hide. Once the justice system begins, the investigation, the denials, and the finger pointing follows. "Did you eat from tree which I commanded you not to eat?" Though one might expect a yes or no response, Adam was much more creative. "The woman that you gave to be with me" (now it's G-d's fault!), "she gave me what I ate from the tree." As the investigation continues, Eve has her alibi at the ready: "The serpent seduced me". Of course, nothing wrong is ever anybody's fault; just blame the animals. In the olam sheker (world of falsehood) that we inhabit, such tricks often work. But we are bidden to strive to live up to our Divine image. And chotamo shel HaKadosh Baruch Hu emet, the signature of the Holy One blessed be He is truth. When there is spin, you can be assured that sin is not far behind. Our Torah is a Torah of truth. Let us be observant of Torah.

The Journey Back

SHIFRA HENDRIE (Chabad.org)

"And G-d commanded the man, saying: 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat of it; for on the day that you eat of it you shall surely die' (2:16-17).

Our world is filled with potential. But all too often we experience life as confusing, dark and overwhelming, and ourselves as disempowered, separate and alone.

When G-d first created Adam and Eve, our original ancestors, the world looked very different from the way it does today. In the beginning of creation, life was illuminated, bright with the glory of the Creator, filled with abundant goodness and entirely void of fear.

THE BIRTH OF THE EGO

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they felt no shame" (2:25).

"And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat... And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked..." (Genesis 3:6-7).

ADAM AND EVE WERE CREATED CONSCIOUS.

To be conscious means to be fully aware. And so they were. Aware of their purpose, their own awesome potential and the infinite presence of G-d. However, with one fateful act – eating from the forbidden Tree of Knowledge – Adam and Eve fell from the bright illuminated state of consciousness to the darkness of self-consciousness. As the Torah relates, they realized that they were naked – shamefully naked - in a physical sense. But more than this, they were naked spiritually and emotionally as well. From the serene perfection of the Garden, they had been plunged into the fearful reality of a world of galut (exile) – a world where something was terribly wrong.

At the dawn of human history, mankind was created living life from the inside out. Attuned to Divine Truth, fully present, free of judgment or self-criticism, guilt and shame, Adam and Eve in their first moments on earth experienced a state of all-encompassing wholeness, devoid of any sense of struggle or lack. But from the instant they bit into the forbidden fruit of the Eitz HaDaat, the Tree of Knowledge, ego and self-consciousness became an intrinsic, inevitable part of the human condition. They felt exposed. They were ashamed. From a profound state of awareness and power, they fell into the depths of confusion, helplessness and fear.

It was at that point that mankind began to live reactively – from the outside in. Instead of being one with themselves, they became, in a sense, two. One self to observe, and the other, the ego-based identity, to interpret, judge and react. And inevitably this reactive state was followed by guilt, regret

and the desire to hide, deny and shift the blame to others.

To make matters worse, Adam and Eve, in their new state of being, were exiled from paradise. Life became a struggle to survive.

Exile from within, exile from without. Not an easy place from which to start our journey of life on earth.

THE DIVINE TEMPLATE FOR CREATION

This entire scenario – the original state of illuminated awareness, the sin, the fall into darkness, and the personal, painful experience of self-consciousness and exile – is actually an integral part of the Divine template for Creation. And the whole point of it all is that, through our own efforts, we return to consciousness once again.

At the beginning of creation, Adam and Eve were in a very high spiritual state. But it was all due to the kindness, the largesse, of the Creator. They themselves were mere recipients – they contributed, essentially, nothing of their own.

And there was another problem. Before the sin, although everything was filled with light, there remained one piece of lurking, unrectified darkness, an Achilles heel to all of creation. The Garden was created with a fundamental evil, the infamous snake.

The sin of eating from the Eitz HaDaat precipitated a terrifying fall. The darkness that once lurked only in unactualized potential, within the seductive snake, was made real. In fact, it became an intrinsic part of the human psyche. But together with that darkness, mankind internalized the potential for transformation – to turn that darkness, through our own desire, our own will and our own efforts – into an even greater light.

Sometimes we don't recognize – or don't actualize – our power to transform. We live in the world of victimhood, helpless in the dark. Sometimes we behave in ways that make the darkness even deeper. But the good news is that every fall, whether cosmic or personal, contains within it the seeds of a far greater redemption. It is never too late.

When you embrace your power to transform you accomplish two things. First, you reveal the inner divine purpose behind every challenge and concealment – the reason that G-d created it in the first place. Once you do that, the very thing that separated you from G-d, that stood in the way of your authentic fulfillment, now connects you. From the perspective of Kabbalah, you have now turned that piece of darkness into light.

And second, as you do so, and do so of your own free will, you stop being a passive recipient of G-d's largesse. Instead, you become a full partner in creation. And that's what G-d planned for you all along.

PRESENT PERFECT

Just as G-d's plan for the world involves the fall into darkness followed by the genesis of a greater light, so too His plan for your life.

As Chassidic teaching explains, there is nothing that happens, even to the falling of a leaf from a tree, that is not deliberately, intentionally orchestrated by G-d. Your life, too, is being custom-created at each moment exactly the way it needs to be in order for you to realize your full potential and purpose on this earth. When you know that, live with it, life becomes illuminated with the realization that nothing is ever wrong. Yes, there may be things – even big things – that need to be improved, changed, corrected, achieved. But it is infinitely empowering to approach those changes from a place of peace, secure in the knowledge that you, and every part of your life, is exactly as it is supposed to be as a starting point for your growth and transformation.

CONSCIOUSNESS: THE JOURNEY BACK

This knowledge is the key, the first step in the journey back to consciousness. And it is a step you can begin to take, if you choose, right now. By practicing the awareness that your life is being created with loving intention at each moment, just as it is supposed to be, the choices you make will automatically be more expansive, illuminated, G-dly. G-d is the director of the show of your life, and you are its star. And as the star, the choices you make will help determine, each and every time, how the next scene unfolds.

If It's to Be It's Up to Me

RABBI YAAKOV LIEDER (Chabad.org)

In the story of Adam and Eve, G-d comes into the garden of Eden and asks Adam: "Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" A simple question — did you or didn't you? Adam replies: "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate." G-d then approaches Eve and asks, "What is that, that you have done?" Eve replies "The serpent deceived me and I ate." By the time that G-d gets to the serpent, he doesn't have a leg to stand on.

Being direct descendants from Adam and Eve, perhaps some of us may have inherited this human weakness — to look for others upon whom we

can place blame when mistakes occur. Some smokers blame the government for allowing cigarettes to be sold in the shops, and some overweight people blame the supermarket for selling fatty foods. We often forget that every time we point a finger at somebody else we are, at the same time, pointing three fingers back at ourselves.

Children may learn this attitude and look for whom they can blame for their mistakes. You can hear them say things like "It's my teacher's fault," "It's my sister's fault," and so on.

One of the best ways of teaching children to own up to their responsibilities is by being living examples. A good leader — and every parent is a "leader" in their family — is one who can stand up and say: "I made a mistake, I'm responsible, and there is an important lesson I have learned about how to avoid such a thing happening in the future."

Some companies have a book in their reception areas titled Mistakes I Have Made and What I Have Learned from Them. Every time someone makes a mistake they go to that book and write down what the mistake was and what they learned from it. In such a positive environment people have no fear of owning up to their mistakes because it is looked upon as a learning and growing experience.

There are some adults who are in their forties and fifties who have difficulty in making choices. When faced with a dilemma, they still go back to their parents, asking them what to do. Perhaps this is because they grew up in an environment where people were afraid to own up to their mistakes.

When a child sees that their parents are not afraid to admit that they made a mistake, and are prepared to take full responsibility for their actions, this child will feel more comfortable and confident in making choices. If things go wrong they learn from them and keep going to become a better and more responsible person.

It would also be helpful if we could teach a child from an early age to make choices themselves, appropriate to their age. To a three-year-old child the parent may suggest, "Do you want to eat breakfast from the red plate or from the blue plate?" As the child gets older, the choices become more sophisticated, with some consequences and lessons which could be learned. He or she will grow up to be a healthy functioning adult making choices, learning and growing.

Try it - you'll like it!

The Clothes Make the Man After Man Makes Amends

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND (Torah.org)

The story of the nachash seducing Chava to eat from the etz ha'daas is well known. "And the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable for comprehension, and she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked; and they sewed together a fig leaf and made themselves aprons. They heard the sound of Hashem walking in the garden toward the direction of the sun; and the man and his wife hid from Hashem among the trees of the garden. Hashem called out to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I am naked, so I hid.' And He said, 'Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me – she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'" [Bereishis 3:6-12].

For the first time in human history, the answer was: "It is my wife's fault!" This is an excuse that we have been using for the last 5785 years! Rashi comments on this pasuk: "Here (Odom) denied a favor (that the Ribono Shel Olam did for him)." Odom had felt he was lacking something. Hashem did a great favor for him and created an ezer k'negdo (help-mate) for him, and now that he has this ezer k'negdo, all he can do is say "It's her fault!"

First the nachash is punished, then Chava is punished, and finally Odom is punished. Odom is punished with the words: "...Accursed is the ground because of you; through suffering shall you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until you return to the ground from which you were taken..." [Bereishis 3:17-19] We have all suffered with this punishment for almost 5800 years now – we all need to work for a living!

What is Odom's reaction to the terrible curse he received from the Almighty? "And Odom called the name of his wife Chava, for she is the mother of all the living." [Bereishis 3:20]. Suddenly, Odom is motivated to not call his wife "isha" (the generic term meaning that she has been taken from man), but rather to call her the prestigious name of Chava, indicating that she will be the progenitor of all human life.

Is this not a strange reaction? He just told the Ribono Shel Olam “It’s all her fault!” The Ribono Shel Olam curses him with the curse “... by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread” and what is Odom’s reaction? “You know what? This wife of mine is the greatest thing on earth!” It does not make any sense! He didn’t call her “Mother of all life” when he first named her. Why is he suddenly calling her that, now of all times? [Bereishis 2:23]. At this point, the pasuk says, “And Elokim made kosnos ohr (garments of skin) for Odom and his wife and dressed them.” [Bereishis 3:21]. Now, the garments Elokim made for Adam and Chava were not just ordinary items of clothing. We don’t know exactly what these “kosnos ohr” were, but whatever they were, they were extremely special. The Medrash mentions that after the passing of Odom, these garments were transferred to his son Shais. After Shais, they were passed down, and eventually they belonged to Noach. From Noach, they were passed to Malki-Tzedek, who gave them to Avraham and from Avraham, they went to Yitzchak, and from Yitzchak they went to Yaakov. They were a very unique set of garments!

It seems somewhat incongruous that this great gift came to Odom and Chava immediately after they were cursed. Hashem did not just give them some wool and say, “Now make some garments to clothe yourselves. You messed up; now take care of yourselves!” Instead, He gave them a priceless and magnificent gift!

How do we explain the sequence of these pesukim? Over (a previous) Simchas Torah, someone told me what I think is the true interpretation: When the Ribono Shel Olam comes to Odom and asks “What did you do?” Odom responds “My wife made me do it.” Here Rashi explains that Odom was an ingrate! Hashem’s reaction is: “Odom, you don’t appreciate what I gave you? Then guess what? You are not going to have any of this. You are out of Gan Eden because you are ungrateful. From now on, you are going to work for a living and you are going to shvitz for your food.” Someone who is ungrateful for what he is given, loses it! “Odom, you are out of here!”

That hit Adam like a ton of bricks. His response: “I am sorry, Ribono Shel Olam. You are right!” How does Odom show that he in fact appreciates what he was given? He renames his wife “Chava,” indicating her prestigious status as “Mother of All Life.” Once Odom acknowledged that he had been a kafui tov by not appreciating what he had been given, then Hashem was prepared to give him something else that was special.

Okay, you need to leave Gan Eden. That decree was sealed because you made a serious mistake. However, Hashem gave them something else to show that they would still merit Divine Protection: He gave them and dressed them in kosnos ohr.

Spreading the Fate

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY (Torah.org)

What began as a good-will gesture turned terribly sour. Worse, it spurred the first murder in history. It could have been avoided if only...

The Torah tells us of Cain’s innovation. He had all the fruit of the world before him and decided to offer his thanks to the Creator, albeit from his cheapest produce — flax. Cain’s brother Hevel (Abel) imitated his brother, by offering a sacrifice, too, but he did it in much grander form. He offered the finest, fattest of his herd. Hevel’s offer was accepted and Cain’s was not. And Cain was reasonably upset.

Hashem appears to Cain and asks him, “Why is your face downtrodden and why are you upset?” Hashem then explains that the choice of good and bad is up to every individual, and that person can make good for himself or find himself on the threshold of sin. Simple as all that. (4:6-7)

Many commentaries are bothered by what seems to be another in a litany of questions that G-d knows the answers to. Obviously, Cain was upset for the apparent rejection of his offering. Why does Hashem seem to rub it in?

The story is told of a construction worker who opened his lunch pail, unwrapped his sandwich and made a sour face. “Peanut Butter!” he would mutter, “I hate peanut butter!” This went on for about two weeks: every day he would take out his sandwich and with the same intensity mutter under his breath. “I hate peanut butter sandwiches!”

Finally, one of his co-workers got sick and tired of his constant complaining. “Listen here,” said the man. “If you hate peanut butter that much why don’t you just tell your wife not to make you any more peanut butter sandwiches? It’s as simple as that.”

The hapless worker sighed. “It’s not that simple. You see, my wife does not pack the sandwiches for me. I make them myself.”

When Hashem asks Cain, “why are you dejected?” it is not a question directed only at Cain. Hashem knew what caused the dejection. He was not waiting to hear a review of the events that transpired. Instead Hashem was asking a question for the ages. He asked a question to all of us who

experience the ramifications of our own moral misdoing. Hashem asked a haunting question to all whose own hands bring about their own misfortunes.

Then they mutter and mope as if the world has caused their misfortunes. “Why are you upset, towards whom are you upset?” asks G-d.

“Is it not the case that if you would better yourself you could withstand the moral failings and their ramifications? Is it not true that if we don’t act properly, eventually, we will be thrust at the door of sin?”

Success and failure of all things spiritual is dependent on our own efforts and actions. Of course Hashem knew what prompted Cain’s dejection. But there was no reason for Cain to be upset. There was no one but himself at whom to be upset. All Cain had to do was correct his misdoing. Dejection does not accomplish that. Correction does.

A person in this world has the ability to teach and inspire both himself as well as others. He can spread the faith that he holds dear. But his action can also spread more than faith. A person is the master of his own moral fate as well. And that type of fate, like a peanut butter sandwich, he can spread as well!

DO WHAT YOU CAN

AVROHOM YAAKOV

Lemech, the sixth generation after Kayin, had two wives.

Rashi explains that the two wives had different functions – one was for bearing children and the other was for ‘companionship’ who would retain her good looks by not going through childbirth.

Being a ‘Lemech’ (incompetent), his plans went awry, and both his wives had children.

“And Ada (the wife for childbearing) bore Yaval: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother’s name was Yuval: he was the father of all such as handle the lyre and pipe. And Žilla (the ‘companion’ wife), she also bore Tuval-qayin, forger of every sharp instrument in brass and iron: and the sister of Tuval-qayin was Na’ama.” (4:20-22)

Commentators (Luchos Even) note that Ada’s children are described as being the ‘father of ...’ They are mentioned here as significant figures in history as they were respectively the first and originators of tent dwelling and musical instruments.

In contrast, Zilla’s son, Tuval Kayin, was not a positive trailblazer or creator. He used the skill that he had for creating weapons rather than constructing implements to improve lives such as tools for building, agriculture and food production. He was the source of negativity and start of the fall of humanity that resulted in the cleansing Flood of Noach. Therefore, the Torah did not use the appellation ‘father of ...’.

But Zilla had a daughter, Naamah, who in the future became the wife of Noach and ultimately the mother of humanity post the Flood.

The upshot is that the one family, the same parents, the same upbringing, can bring both life and death. As parents, we can only do what we can and how the child actually turns out is in G-d’s hands.

Concentric Circles: Contrasting Worlds

RABBI NAFTALI REICH (Torah.org)

As we begin this Shabbos to start reading the Torah afresh, let us take note of the cycle we have just completed. We have come to the end of the Five Books Of The Torah, reading a Torah portion each week of the year. The process just culminated with the joyous holiday of Simchas Torah, when we demonstrated our love and devotion to the Torah with exuberant dancing. That very same day we commenced the reading of the Torah anew, beginning with the portion of Bereishis which we will conclude this Shabbos.

I always find it most inspirational to watch how the Simchas Torah celebration is so focused on the children as they dance and cavort about with their flags, feasting on the candies and nosh we distribute with abandon. Here at Ohr Somayach, we have a time-honored tradition to lift the children high in the air before each hakofah to the tune of “Moshe Emes V’Toroso Emes,” (Moses and his Torah are true). With this prelude to the dancing, we seek to implant within the children a love and desire to absorb the Torah’s internal truths.

An exciting moment for children, this heady experience of being borne aloft to the fervent singing of “Moshe Emes!” Yet perhaps there is more to this ritual than meets the eye.

The custom is connected to the Torah’s overall concept of education. The Torah’s word for education is chinuch, which actually means to mold, to perfect. In a slightly different form, the word is also a Biblical Jewish name,

Chanoch. This name is found twice in this week's Torah portion, referring to two different individuals.

The first Chanoch mentioned in the Torah is the grandson of Adam himself. The Torah tells us that after Kayin killed his brother, Avel, he tried to find solace for his reprehensible act in the world of commerce. He left his traditional agricultural concerns and embarked on business. The Torah tells us he built cities, calling them by the name of Chanoch, his son. Clearly he wanted to impress upon his son that although he lacked spiritual stature, he was a person to be reckoned with and admired for his material accomplishments.

The Torah tells us that after Avel was killed, Adam and Eve had another son, Shais, who after a number of generations gave birth to Chanoch. This second Chanoch was markedly different from his predecessor of the same name. The Torah describes him as a saintly individual who "walked with G-d" and was detached from mundane pursuits. He died at a relatively young age and little more is known about him other than he was the grandfather of Noah.

Comparing the two Chanochs, we find the first one was what we might call today a success story, born into the lap of luxury; a wealthy young man who was heir to his father's great business concerns. The second Chanoch was a saintly person, not the type of individual most of us are eager to emulate. He was aloof from this world; he had no interest in any of the delights that for most people constitute the pursuit of happiness. Yet the Torah tells us the second Chanoch lived on for generations whereas the progeny of the first Chanoch, along with the entire world, were totally destroyed in the flood.

Perhaps we can glean an important educational insight from the respective legacies of the two Chanochs. Our children are highly astute when it comes to sensing our deepest desires and aspirations. If we define success only in material terms, they too will view wealth and luxury as the apex of success. But such a life, devoid of spirituality, is hollow and ephemeral.

If we are mechanech our children by following in the ways of the second Chanoch, however, emphasizing eternal and spiritual values, we will be giving them a priceless and eternal legacy.

So, as we dance with the Torah let us not only embrace the external excitement and hooplah surrounding traditional Simchas Torah celebrations. Let our hearts dance in lockstep with our feet so that our children will absorb our most cherished values and hold them dear throughout their lives.

News & Views

Fighting the Genocide Libel — Two Years After October 7

ZVI S. ROSEN (Algemeiner.org 9-10-25)

Two years ago – it seems unbelievable to say – Hamas terrorists and civilians from Gaza launched a mass attack on land which has always been Israel. Hopped-up on the Syrian-made drug Captagon, several thousand Hamas Qassam Brigade members broke the ceasefire in force and went on a trail of rampage. At the end of the day over 1100 Israelis were dead, and about 250 taken hostage – by private individuals and Hamas.

However, two years later, it seems clear that the familiar tactics of Hamas – murdering and taking hostages – were only the beginning of the plan. The next stage of the plan was to label Israel's response as genocide, whatever it would be. The fact such a charge would prove nonsensical from a legal and moral perspective would prove only mildly inconvenient for many.

Israel's reaction to the October 7 attacks was intense, as the attack's planners surely realized it would be. The damage, both to Hamas and civilians, was tremendous, and the cameras were ready. Where things were not real they were staged, but there was real death and suffering for Hamas and, sadly, for civilians. And as of this writing there are still Israeli hostages in a subterranean hell built with materials and funds meant to improve the infrastructure and lives of the residents of Gaza but which were stolen and instead were mostly funneled to the construction of a massive underground military complex. The usage of hospitals and schools by Hamas as launch points for rockets and military strongholds has been known for decades, and Hamas continued that practice as expected.

The legal response of Hamas and its sponsors was next. Public international law prohibits the standard Hamas practice of using hospitals and schools as launch points for rockets and military strongholds, and permits strikes on civilian institutions – including hospitals and schools – if they are being used for military purposes. This complicates claims that Israel's response was a

war crime when Hamas was obviously engaged in war crimes on a mass scale. However, this was not their plan. Their plan from the morning of October 7 was to label the Israeli response a genocide.

The Genocide Convention of 1948 was the first human rights treaty adopted by the UN, and was directly crafted in the wake of the largest genocide in recent memory, of which Jews had been the primary victims. Unsurprisingly, the Jewish state, which had only recently been declared, and which had just won a war of independence against an enemy whose aims had been explicitly genocidal, signed. Israel has not signed other international human rights treaties since, understanding that international bodies were increasingly under the sway of undemocratic actors and were active participants in an organized campaign of lawfare against Israel. The war crimes of Hamas, including taking hostages, using facilities of international relief organizations and civilians as cover, and taking all measures necessary to prolong Israel's response and increase human suffering, were not just standard-issue barbarism. They were an intentional effort to prolong the conflict to mount a case.

The term "genocide" was being applied to Israel's response extremely early by individuals who would call Israel whatever they could, but it got a patina of legitimacy less than three months after the October 7 attacks, when South Africa commenced proceedings against Israel for violation of the Genocide Convention, in an 84-page document purporting to lay out a case which surely was in the works for some time. To call South Africa's prosecution of an action against Israel for genocide a cynical perversion of the genocide treaty is a gross understatement. It is simply nonsensical to argue that Israel's attempts to destroy the terrorist group Hamas constitute "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group," as the Genocide Convention requires.

As the conflict has continued arguments proffered for genocide have shifted – an argument was made for starvation more recently – once again particularly perverse as Israel was trying to deliver food aid without involving Hamas proxies. Perhaps simply refusing to embrace the existence of a genocidal death cult like Hamas is a form of genocide under this logic? Clearly the flawed comparison of Israel's policies to "apartheid" had insufficient teeth so an even grosser misrepresentation was needed.

There are allegations – at this point unproven – that the nearly bankrupt governing party in South Africa had received a huge financial stimulus from Iran shortly before the action was brought. And this is not just a bit of trivia, it's the key to understanding what scholars are increasingly calling the "genocide libel." The genocide libel is a sophisticated invention, combining ancient hatreds with modern lawfare. The fact that it is legally nonsensical isn't terribly important to those who are pushing it. As long as you tell a lie enough times, people start to believe it or at least equivocate.

And it's worth asking: why genocide? It's such a ill-fitting description of even the worst case of what Israel has done. And this gets to the ultimate goal of the operation and the darkness at its heart. The goal is to erase Israel, and for decades Iran in particular has seen the Holocaust as central to Israel's justification and existence. For this reason Iran has attempted Holocaust denial in various forms for decades with this in mind, including repeated international conferences to minimal success. Likewise, attempts to equate the suffering of Palestinians in the formation of the Israeli state to the holocaust have mostly fallen flat. But if you redefine genocide into simply civilians being collateral damage in a military conflict you've done several things, all of which Iran views as central to their mission to eliminate Israel and its Jewish population by any means necessary. Suddenly in the eyes of many, Israelis are not the victims of a genocide; they are the perpetrators of one. Even beyond this, though, the Holocaust is reduced by analogy to the destruction in Gaza. One would have to be a moral idiot to think the death of 60,000, many of them fighters, is worth comparing or mentioning in the same breath as the industrial murder of 6,000,000 based on ethnicity, but simply labelling both as "genocide" allows people to avoid that realization.

And Hamas and their Iranian allies too have been surprisingly effective in convincing a segment of the world that this is the case. They've carefully brigaded various internet sites including X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and Reddit, helped by both Qatari money and media sources including the Qatari state television network Al Jazeera. Not only have they successfully infiltrated a certain segment of the left, in the past year right-wing influencers have sprung up with a speed that can only be called artificial to parrot the talking points of Qatar and Iran. This electronic assault has drawn in decent people of good conscience who don't have the time or background to understand that the genocide claims are a farce, let alone that the actual genocidal goal is Iran and Hamas's goal of removing the

Jews from the region. Two years after October 7 the genocide libel is among the greatest dangers Israel faces, and it is a directly planned continuation of the actions taken by Hamas on that day.

Two years after that terrible day, we can hope for the return of the remaining hostages as soon as possible, and as of the writing there seems to be more chance than there has been in a while of that happening. However, the genocide libel is now believed by millions of people, and undoing it is a task which needs to be taken seriously.

THE Octopus Doctrine: How Israel Learned to Strike the Sources, Not the Symptoms

ELDER OF ZIYON (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 13-10-25)

There are too many moving parts, too many secrets and too little solid information around the current hostage release and US-brokered/pressured ceasefire to know whether it is a complete victory or not. But we can look at the past two years and see a change in Israel's defense posture and military strategy that definitely helped revolutionize the entire region for the better. Before 2023, Israel's military strategy was always against those who directly attacked it - whether Hamas, West Bank militant groups or Hezbollah. It was no secret that these groups were supported by Iran, Qatar and Turkey but Israel was most reluctant to go after their sponsors because of fears of escalation and international pressure.

After October 7, Israel's posture changed to the realization that the octopus' tentacles will always grow back no matter how many times they are severed. And, crucially, its fear of condemnation by the world went to zero.

It may even be that the slanderous and utterly false charges of "genocide" hurled at Israel in the immediate months after October 7 helped crystallize this strategy, since once the world already accuses you of the worst possible crime, what downside is there to escalate to attack the financial, political and military source of the threat?

Israel's blows against Hezbollah and Iran, both the spectacular attacks on highly visible targets as well as the non-stop lower-level attacks on Iran's supply chain to Hezbollah across Syria, can be seen a year later as being key to the severe degradation of Hezbollah's military and political fortunes. The very acts that prompted the most extreme anti-Israel rhetoric were the ones that contributed most towards a more peaceful Middle East by largely sidelining and silencing Iran. Lebanon is no longer living in fear of Hezbollah, Syria's leader has fallen and (for all the many caveats on its new leadership) Syria has turned into a potential partner for peace.

But while Iran supports Hamas, its real oxygen comes through Doha and Istanbul. And Israel's seemingly failed attempt to assassinate Hamas leaders in Qatar changed the entire calculus of the region.

Even though it seemed at the time to be a major failure and indeed embarrassment, Israel's strike at a Hamas meeting in Doha sent a signal to Hamas' sponsors that if they continue to support the terror group, there is nothing - not even Donald Trump - that restrains Israel's desire to stop them.

This message didn't only reverberate in Qatar but in Turkey as well. Instantly, Hamas went from an asset that can be used to leverage popular support into a major liability. One cannot overstate the importance of honor and shame in the Muslim states of the region, and being hit from thousands of miles away with impunity is a serious source of shame - and hosting Hamas is what enabled that.

Trump recognized this and saw an opportunity to use this new chess board to his advantage. But in the end, Israel's goals for the war - saving the hostages, ending Hamas' rule in Gaza - never wavered. While it is too soon to know for sure, it appears that everyone in the region is finally agreeing with those goals and willing to pressure Hamas to end its rule over Gaza.

The deal is far from perfect, and the devil is in the details of what Hamas' future will be and whether it will be energized by the release of its worst terrorists. Remember that Yahya Sinwar was released from Israeli prisons in the Shalit deal.

But it was Israeli strength, tactical brilliance, unparalleled intelligence, unwavering goals and willingness to go after those who gave Hamas oxygen that led to this day. Israel's regional neighbors received this message loud and clear. Israel's political fortunes can only go up from here, and it has regained the respect and fear of the entire Middle East, which is a prerequisite for any sort of lasting peace.

How can anyone now deny these are 'hate marches'?

FRASER MYERS (Spiked-online.com 13-10-25)

The hostilities in Gaza may have ceased, but Britain's anti-Israel protests are

now roaring back to life. On Saturday, while most Israelis and Palestinians were celebrating the end of a devastating two-year war, 2,200 miles away in London, hundreds of thousands took to the streets to express their anger and dismay at the terms of the peace. The Trump-brokered deal cannot stand, they cried, because it leaves Israel intact.

The return of the 'hate marches' should surprise no one. Peace has never been the aim of the 'pro-Palestine' movement. The slogan, 'Ceasefire now', had long been retired before last weekend's protest. As the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), one of the main organisers of the marches, helpfully spelled out, the demos will not stop until 'Palestine is free, from the river to sea' - that is, until the State of Israel, from the River Jordan in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, is wiped off the map.

PSC's message was reinforced by the attendees. 'We don't want no two-state', one group chanted, 'We want '48' - referencing a time before the modern Israeli state was officially recognised. These are demands not for peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Israelis, but for the destruction of the Jewish State - for the eviction of Jews from the Middle East.

There were other clues on Saturday that these marchers are no peaceniks. Less than two weeks after British Jews were slaughtered in a terror attack in a Manchester synagogue, protesters were out in London chanting for 'intifada'. In the context of the Israel-Palestine debate, it is hard to interpret this as anything other than a demand for terrorist violence. When counter-protesters unveiled a banner stating that 'Globalise the intifada is a call to murder Jews', they were immediately assaulted by the pro-Gaza mob. Apologism and even support for Hamas - the anti-Semitic terror army that started the war in Gaza with its pogrom on 7 October 2023 - was also in abundance. Marching side by side with Jeremy Corbyn, Green Party deputy leader Mothin Ali and Gaza independent MP Iqbal Mohamed was Adnan Hmidan, who has previously said he 'loved' Hamas founder Sheikh Yassin, described the 7 October massacre as 'legitimate self-defence' and even defended Hamas's attacks on Jews in synagogues. Your Party, the upstart party led by Corbyn and Zarah Sultana, promoted the march using an emoji of a red triangle - a symbol used in Hamas propaganda videos to indicate its military targets, which has been widely adopted by Western Palestine activists. One protester brandished a placard urging the UK government to remove Hamas and Hezbollah (an equally anti-Semitic and terroristic outfit based in Lebanon) from its list of proscribed terror groups.

The Palestine marchers reflexively reject the accusation that they are bigoted, hateful or violent. Yet how else can you describe the chant calling for Gazans to 'put Zios in the ground'? According to the student leading the call-and-response, this cry for the death of Zionists - most Jews are Zionists, don't forget - was 'workshopped at Oxford' before it was unveiled to the public. This was not a slip of the tongue, then, but a calculated demand.

Then, as ever, there was the more overt, classical anti-Semitism. Placards showed Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu puppeteering Keir Starmer, in an echo of the Nazi propaganda portraying Jews as the puppet masters of global affairs. One placard said 'the world has a right to defend itself against Israel', essentially accusing the Jewish State of being a threat to all nations. Holocaust inversion was also on display, with Israelis branded as the 'new Nazis', equating the defensive war against the Islamofascists of Hamas with the worst crimes in history.

Every time the keffiyeh-clad mob takes to the streets, you will hear chants for the destruction of Israel. You will see placards comparing Jews to Nazis. You will see Hamas apologists and fan boys leading the pack. So why can't our leaders bring themselves to call out this obvious bigotry?

Saturday's demo confirms that they are not protesting against a war - they are protesting against a people's right to exist and to self-determination. To call them anything other than 'hate marches' would be to indulge a dangerous lie.

Danger ahead: What the West Bank's red signs say about peace

STEPHEN M. FLATOW (JNS.org 11-10-25)

Drive through Judea and Samaria, and you'll see them everywhere: bright-red signs warning Israelis in three languages that entering a Palestinian Authority town is "forbidden, dangerous to your lives and against Israeli law."

Imagine, for a moment, an American community posting a sign that says, "Italians entering do so at their own risk." The outrage would be swift and universal. Yet in Israel's biblical heartland, such warnings are a routine part of the landscape.

These signs exist because they must. They reflect a reality that no peace process slogan can obscure: Israelis who cross into P.A.-controlled areas risk

their lives.

The danger isn't theoretical. In August 2023, a father and son from Ashdod were murdered in Huwara while waiting for their car to be serviced. Hamas proudly claimed responsibility. Just months earlier, two brothers, Hillel and Yagel Yaniv were shot dead in the same town. Across Judea and Samaria, Israeli drivers are routinely pelted with rocks, concrete blocks and Molotov cocktails as they travel along Route 60, the region's main north-south artery.

These attacks aren't random crimes. They're part of a pattern of tolerated violence, celebrated in Palestinian social media and rewarded by the P.A.'s "pay-for-slay" stipends—monthly salaries to terrorists and their families. When killers are glorified and subsidized, no one should be surprised that hatred thrives. The P.A.'s leaders have said openly what many of their supporters believe: a future Palestinian state should be Judenrein, or "free of Jews."

In 2013, chief negotiator Saeb Erekat insisted that not a single Israeli would be permitted to live in a Palestinian state. In 2019, current P.A. leader Mahmoud Abbas repeated that pledge, declaring that "not one Israeli" would remain.

In any other context, the promise of an ethnic-cleansing policy would trigger international condemnation. In the Palestinian context, it's shrugged off as political rhetoric. Yet it explains why those red warning signs exist—not because Israelis want segregation but because Palestinian leadership embraces exclusion.

Meanwhile, the P.A.'s textbooks continue to erase Israel from maps and glorify "martyrs." The result is a generation raised to believe that Jews are intruders to be resisted, not neighbors to be respected.

Israel's critics call the current system unequal. They're right, but they're looking in the wrong direction.

Palestinians enter Israeli cities daily—for work, medical care, shopping—without fear. No Israeli town posts signs warning Arabs that their lives are in danger. And when extremists tried to put up such a sign in the Jewish community of Yitzhar in 2020, Israeli authorities removed it immediately, denouncing it as racist.

The contrast couldn't be clearer: Jews who stray into Palestinian towns risk their lives. Palestinians who enter Jewish towns go home safely. That's not a political imbalance. It's a moral one.

The red signs at Palestinian town entrances are more than traffic warnings; they are monuments to a worldview that still defines peace as the absence of Jews.

For decades, Israel has been told that peace will come when the Palestinians achieve statehood. But what kind of state bars Jews by law? What message does it send when "coexistence" means Jews stay out—or else?

If Palestinian leaders truly sought peace, then they would prepare their people to live alongside Israelis, not without them. They would dismantle the culture of martyrdom, end the stipends to terrorists, and teach children that Jews are part of the region's history and future.

Until then, those red signs will continue to mark more than borders. They mark a moral divide—between a society that protects its neighbors and one that glorifies their murder.

SOME THINGS ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE ... RIGHT, SANDY KOUFAX?

WILLIAM CHOSLOVSKY (JNS.org 8-10-25)

Baseball Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax—one of the best pitchers in the history of the sport—is ironically best known by many for not pitching. It was 60 years ago on Oct. 7, 1965, that Koufax, a Jew, sat out game one of the World Series because it was Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.

In his place, the L.A. Dodgers started another future Hall of Fame member, Don Drysdale, who got hammered by the Minnesota Twins. He gave up seven runs in less than three innings in a game the Dodgers would lose 8-2. When legendary Dodgers' manager Walter Alton walked to the mound to pull Drysdale, he humorously said to Alton: "I bet right now you wish I was Jewish, too."

The Dodgers went on to win the World Series in seven games, with Koufax earning the MVP. Even by Koufax standards, he was unbelievable. He pitched complete-game shutouts in games five and seven. Overall, he struck out 29 batters in 24 innings while yielding just one run (0.38 ERA).

Sixty years later, few remember who won the World Series or that Koufax was MVP. Instead, many people, especially Jews, remember Koufax for what he didn't do that day: pitch. They remember his character, not his

pitching prowess, and his long-lasting legacy and lesson.

What Koufax did was remarkable on many levels, but perhaps most remarkable was that he was not particularly religious. In fact, according to his biographer, he did not even attend synagogue the day he sat out the game, but instead stayed quietly in his hotel room.

To me, that makes him more heroic and noble. He understood the moment was bigger than just him. He understood he had a higher, greater calling for all people, not just for Jews. He understood he could forever change lives by not pitching.

His unstated message was simple: Some things are non-negotiable.

One year later, on Sept. 24, 1966, Koufax was again slotted to pitch on Yom Kippur, this time at Wrigley Field in Chicago. He again refused. It was the last week of the season, and the Dodgers were in a tight pennant race, while the Cubs, as was their custom then, were in last place.

Koufax pitched the next day, instead. The Cubs' pitcher that day was a fellow Jew, Ken Holtzman. Although I wasn't born yet, my father, grandfather and older brother attended that legendary game.

Holtzman was a rookie, and though nobody knew it then, it would be one of Koufax's last games, as he would abruptly retire two weeks later after having one of the best seasons in major league history.

Holtzman took a no-hitter into the ninth inning of the game and outdueled Koufax, winning 2-1. Both men pitched complete games. Both won four World Series rings, but Holtzman, who had a longer career than Koufax, went on to become the winningest Jewish pitcher in history, racking up 174 regular-season wins over Koufax's 165 wins.

The funny thing is, I grew up hating Koufax. It was because of Koufax that, as a kid, I had to miss Little League games that conflicted with Hebrew school. I can still hear my father's voice today: "If Sandy Koufax can miss Game One of the World Series because he's Jewish, you can miss a Little League game."

Thanks for nothing, Koufax.

Fast-forward to today. A good number of Jews play in the major leagues, including stars like Alex Bregman and Max Fried. But not since Shawn Green in 2001 has another Jewish player sat out a game to observe a Jewish holiday. Perhaps in 2025, we don't need athletes to be Jewish role models in the way that Jews needed Hank Greenberg, the first player to sit out on Yom Kippur in 1934, and later Koufax, back at a time when Jews were considered defenseless and non-heroic.

Just the same, though, perhaps we need them more than ever.

LEFTISTS TAKE TO STREETS TO PROTEST END OF GENOCIDE (Satire?)

THE BABYLON BEE (BabylonBee.com 12-10-25)

Leftists across the globe took to the streets over the weekend to protest the ceasefire in Gaza and the end of genocide.

Activists from New York to London called for "another October seventh," demanding military intervention to spark a renewed conflict to keep the ethnic cleansing going.

"What do we want? Genocide! When do we want it? Now!" cried the protesters. "We must stop this ceasefire at all costs. If Israel refuses to keep up the genocide after we give the hostages back, we will have to take more hostages. Whatever it takes to get the evil genocide back going."

Protesters who participated in last weekend's "Stop The Genocide" rally flooded the streets of New York in anger over the announcement that violence would cease. "The evil Jews must be stopped from stopping the genocide," said activist Mahmoud Farooq. "They have murdered 7 billion people in Gaza alone, committing daily war crimes, and it is absolutely disgusting that they would stop just for a few lousy hostages. We must murder as many Jews as is necessary to keep the killing and war crimes coming."

10 Demands Hamas Is Making In The Peace Deal (SATIRE?)

THE BABYLON BEE (BabylonBee.com 9-10-25)

President Trump may have finally achieved what many long thought impossible, as Israel and Hamas have agreed to the first phase of a peace agreement, but this ceasefire didn't come without conditions from Hamas. Here are 10 demands Hamas is making as part of the peace deal:

1. Israel must eliminate 100% of its Jews: This is a dealbreaker for Hamas.
2. New pagers: The last batch had some problems.
3. A new fleet of paragliders: They have assured everyone it's only for recreational purposes.

4. Goats. Lots of goats: They won't say why.
5. Super Bowl tickets: They're apparently huge Bad Bunny fans.
6. 100 virgins each: They will settle for 72 but are setting the bar high for negotiation.
7. Israel must continue to keep Greta Thunberg away from Gaza: The Gazans are terrified she'll eventually reach their shore.
8. Signed 8x10s of Tucker Carlson: Entirely not related to the goats.
9. A nuke: For, like, their power grid or something.
10. The entire land of Israel: All of it. Without all the Israelis. Is that too much to ask?

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

Eating Before Kiddush And Havdalah

RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT (Torah.org)

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

In keeping with the Rabbinical prohibition against eating before one is about to fulfill a mitzvah, it is prohibited to eat before kiddush, both on Friday night and on Shabbos morning. The Rabbis forbade eating prior to fulfilling a mitzvah for fear that one would become distracted during mealtime and forget to perform the mitzvah. But unlike other mitzvos where it is forbidden to have a meal before performing the mitzvah, it is prohibited to have even a morsel of food or a drink of water before reciting kiddush. One of the explanations offered⁽¹⁾ for this stringency is that the Rabbis wanted kiddush to be recited as close as possible to the time when it ought to be recited ideally – right when Shabbos starts on Friday night and immediately after davening on Shabbos morning. To keep the ideal time-frame intact insofar as possible, they prohibited consuming any food or drink⁽²⁾ before kiddush is recited.

Since women, too, are obligated to recite or hear kiddush, they, too, cannot eat before kiddush. But children under the age of bar/bas mitzvah are permitted to eat before kiddush⁽³⁾.

The prohibition against eating begins as soon as one “accepts” Shabbos, or inevitably at sunset. Women generally “accept” Shabbos when they light candles and they should not eat or drink after that. If, however, one is extremely thirsty after lighting candles, she may take a drink until she verbally “accepts” Shabbos upon herself⁽⁴⁾.

One who knows that he will not have wine or any other beverage or challah over which to make kiddush, may eat without reciting kiddush⁽⁵⁾.

On Shabbos morning before davening it is permitted to drink coffee, tea or soda etc., without first making kiddush. This is allowed because kiddush need not be recited until it is zeman seudah, the time when it is permitted to eat a meal. Since one is not allowed to eat a meal before davening, it is not time for kiddush and one may take a drink. Even if one wants to be stringent and recite kiddush before drinking, he may not do so for two reasons: 1) A requirement of Kiddush is that it be followed by a meal, otherwise the kiddush is invalid. Since one is not allowed to eat before davening, he cannot make kiddush. 2) Drinking wine before davening is considered “haughty behavior” and is not permitted.

What about a person who is ill or elderly and is allowed to eat before davening? Mishnah Berurah⁽⁶⁾ rules that such a person should recite kiddush before he eats, for as soon as it is zeman seudah for him, he is obligated to make kiddush. The fact that he is drinking wine before davening is not a problem since he must drink wine in order to eat. He may not even drink water before kiddush, since for him it is already zeman seudah⁽⁷⁾.

The ruling by the Mishnah Berurah regarding an ill or elderly person making kiddush when eating before davening was challenged by some later poskim⁽⁸⁾. While many poskim agree with his basic ruling⁽⁹⁾, they suggest that the practical halachah will depend on what exactly the person in question is going to eat. If he is just going to eat fruit or even cereal and milk or other cooked mezonos items, he should eat without reciting kiddush first. If, however, his health demands that he wash over bread or eat at least

a k'zayis of cake or any other baked mezonos items, he should make kiddush before he eats⁽¹⁰⁾.

WOMEN and CHILDREN

Whether or not women need to make kiddush on Shabbos morning is subject to much debate. In a previous column we wrote that although it is prohibited to eat before davening on weekdays, many women eat breakfast after reciting a brief supplication and finish davening later on in the morning. We noted that the poskim allow them to do so, since they may rely on the view of the Rambam who maintains that women fulfill their davening obligation with a brief supplication. Thus, they are eating after “davening”. On Shabbos morning, though, they are obligated to make kiddush in addition to the daily obligation to daven. As soon as they meet their basic davening obligation by reciting a brief supplication, it is for them zeman seudah and they cannot eat until they make kiddush⁽¹¹⁾.

Many married women, however, do not make kiddush for themselves. They rely upon the poskim who hold that it is not zeman seudah for them until their husbands are ready to eat, which is not until davening is over in shul⁽¹²⁾. Other poskim do not agree with this argument⁽¹³⁾. In either case, unmarried women, including girls who eat at their father's table, do not have this leniency to rely upon.

Children who are allowed to eat before davening do not need to make kiddush before eating⁽¹⁴⁾.

EATING BEFORE HAVDALAH

For the same reason that it is prohibited to eat before kiddush, it is also prohibited to eat before havdalah is recited. Accordingly, it is prohibited to eat or drink once the sun has set and bein hashemashos begins. But, b'dieved, if one did not start eating seudah shelishis – a meal in which both men and women⁽¹⁵⁾ are obligated to partake – before bein hashemashos, he may start his meal until one half hour before nightfall⁽¹⁶⁾.

While it is permitted according to the halachah to drink water before havdalah⁽¹⁷⁾, many people refrain from doing so based on the Kabbalistic teachings of the Arizal that it is “dangerous” to drink water during this time – unless it is part of his Seudah Shelishis⁽¹⁸⁾.

One who began his meal before sunset may continue eating and drinking until after nightfall. But this applies only to a meal that includes bread, not a meal which consists of eating mezonos or drinking wine⁽¹⁹⁾.

Women, who are obligated to hear havdalah just as men are, may not eat before hearing [or reciting] havdalah either. While it is customary that women do not make havdalah for themselves, a woman who cannot hear havdalah recited by a man should recite her own havdalah⁽²⁰⁾.

As with kiddush, children under the age of bar/bas mitzvah can eat and drink before havdalah.

Even if one recited atah chonantonu during Shemoneh Esrei, he still may not eat until he recites or hears havdalah over wine or grape juice, etc.⁽²¹⁾.

One who presently has no wine or other halachically acceptable beverage over which to recite havdalah but expects to obtain some later on, should – if he can – put off eating until he obtains wine etc., up to midday Sunday⁽²²⁾. If he is a weak person who cannot wait so long, or if he does not expect to find wine etc., beverage by that time, he does not need to wait and may eat after davening Maariv and reciting atah chonantonu⁽²³⁾.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Mishnah Berurah 271:11 based on Shulchan Aruch Harav 271:9. See an additional reason in Beur ha-Gra, ibid.

2 Medication, with or without water, may be taken before kiddush.

3 Chayei Adam 66:10; Mishnah Berurah 269:1.

4 See Da'as Torah 271:4. A nursing mother who knows that she will need to drink after lighting candles, should stipulate that she is not “accepting” Shabbos until she is finished drinking; Ketzos ha-Shulchan 74:17.

5 Mishnah Berurah 289:10. If he knows that he will find wine etc., later in the night, he should wait up until midnight to eat, if he can wait that long; ibid.

6 Beir Halachah 289:1 (s.v. chovas).

7 Da'as Torah 289:1; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Nishmas Avraham, vol. 1. pg. 54).

8 Some suggest that the obligation of kiddush begins only after davening – even for a person who is allowed to eat before davening – since only then is it zeman seudah for all; see Keren L'David 84, Igros Moshe O.C. 2:28 and Chelkas Yaakov 4:32.

9 See Emes le-Yaakov O.C. 652:2 who quotes a Taz as a source for this ruling.

10 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:26. Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 52, note 37) holds that it is better to make kiddush and eat cake than to eat cereal etc. without kiddush.

11 Pri Megadim O.C. 289:4; Minchas Yitzchak 3:28; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 52:13.

12 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:101-2.

13 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 52, note 46).

14 Mishnah Berurah 269:1.

15 Shulchan Aruch rules definitively that women are obligated to eat Seudah Shelishis; O.C. 291:6, and it is important that woman should be reminded of this; Aruch ha-Shulchan 291:4. The fact that some women are not careful to perform this mitzvah is very difficult to justify; see Avodas Yisrael (Sukkos, s.v. beparashas, quoting the Arizal.

16 Mishnah Berurah 299:1. One should try to avoid delaying this long, since some poskim disagree and allow Seudah Shelishis to start only a few minutes after sunset (see Igros Moshe O.C. 4:69-6 and Az Nidberu 13:22) and some do not allow starting after sunset at all (see Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 56 note 17).

17 O.C. 299:1.

18 Minchas Shabbos 96:11; Kaf ha-Chayim 299:6 See also Aruch ha-Shulchan 299:1. Mishnah Berurah does not quote this warning.

19 Aruch ha-Shulchan 299:5.

20 Mishnah Berurah 296:35.

21 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 299:5.

22 Mishnah Berurah 296:21. One does not, however, need to put off eating in order to obtain besamim and/or a havdalah candle.

23 Ibid. 17

Candles (Melb) Friday 21 October 2025, 25 Tishrei 5786 7.21p/8.21p