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COVER PHOTO: Rabbi Baruch Weintraub, a shooter in the 9215 Tank Brigade, in Al Burj, Gaza. Rabbi Weintraub is a teacher at Yeshivat Har Etzion and a Rabbi in Tel Mond. (Credit: Eli Sivan, commander of R' Weintraub's tank)

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Hamas' Battle for Jerusalem

Rabbi Doron Perez

The crux of the matter

Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, led by the maniacal Iranian Ayatollahs, are engaged in a fanatical 'holy' war of Islamic extremism. Their barbaric war for Jerusalem is a religious war. Nothing highlights this more than the following story.

Batsheva Sadan, mother of an infantry soldier returning from fighting in Gaza, wrote the following in a remarkable Facebook post. In a conversation with her son who was returning after many months on the front lines, he mentioned that before coming home he wanted to first buy a picture of the *Beit HaMikdash* – the Temple in Jerusalem. Totally surprised, she questioned how that could be more important than first coming home to see his family. He mentioned that the thing that so astonished him in Gaza was that in every home, in every child's bedroom, there was a picture of the Al-Aqsa Mosque which appears on the emblem of Hamas. The same could be found in every government office and in every school classroom in Gaza. He was gobsmacked. He promised himself that when he would return home he would buy a picture of the *Beit HaMikdash* to put up in his room. He said that it is crystal clear what Hamas is fighting for – an all-out battle to conquer Jerusalem. He learned from this how equally clear we ought to be about what it is that we are defending: Jerusalem, the Temple Mount – our holiest and most sacred place.

The Hamas emblem

Indeed, the Hamas emblem shows two crossed swords in front of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The mosque is flanked by two Palestinian flags with a statement in Arabic on each side: "There is no god but Allah" (right flag) and "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah" (left flag). To Hamas, the aim is clear – the destruction of the Jewish state and the conquering of Jerusalem by the sword of Islam. No sharing, no caring, just death and destruction.

The truth is, there is a critical lesson to learn specifically from Israel's enemies. This point is highlighted in a fundamental point that Rav Soloveitchik makes regarding the nature of antisemitism and the spiritual meaning of Zionism and Jewish statehood. He taught that the Jewish people's greatest spiritual endeavor in every generation is invariably met with the greatest opposition and condemnation from her enemies. He sharply observes that it is this very type of opposition that signals the holiness, importance and spirituality of the enterprise itself.¹ Undoubtedly the greatest achievements in the last generation for Jewish collective existence have been the establishment of the State of Israel and the reunification of Jerusalem. And so it is no surprise that the Jewish people's barbaric enemies wish to destroy exactly that – the State of Israel and Jewish Jerusalem. In their brutal hate, Hamas has made the symbol of their destructiveness clear – Jerusalem.

It is important to clarify for ourselves what Jerusalem means to the Jewish people and why it is the crux of Jewish civilization. What is it, indeed, that we are defending? What does Jerusalem represent?

An incredible source

1948 ushered in the miraculous establishment of Jewish sovereignty in our historic homeland and 19 years later the Jewish people returned to the ancient and holy city of Jerusalem. The universal meaning of this return and reunification of Jerusalem is best captured in the following astounding source.

Over 800 years ago, one of Judaism's greatest rabbis and rationalist thinkers, the Rambam, described what Jerusalem and the Temple Mount means to humanity:

"And it is a tradition accepted by all, that the place where David and Shlomo built the altar at the threshing floor of Aravna was the place that Avraham built the altar and bound Yitzchak upon it, and that was the place that Noach built an altar upon when he left the ark, and that was the altar upon which Kayin and Hevel sacrificed

and upon which Adam sacrificed when he was created. And from there was born the saying of the Sages that 'Man was created from the place of his atonement.'"²

The implication is clear. The human saga began here and humanity's spiritual destiny is inextricably linked to Jerusalem. At so many important junctures at the dawn of human destiny, Mount Moriah was pivotal. It was the place from where the clods of earth were taken to fashion Adam and Chava, the father and mother of mankind, and the altars of their children Kayin and Hevel. The greatest spiritual trial of the founding fathers of the Jewish people, Avraham and Yitzchak, transpired here and hence it became the locus of the Temple, the place where Heaven meets earth. The center of the Temple is the Holy of Holies, positioned exactly on top of the very foundation stone from whence Adam was created. So significant is this place that the place of human favor and Divine atonement must be intrinsically linked to it.

Jerusalem, Mecca and the Vatican

Jerusalem is the holiest place to the Jewish people and Judaism, and is the site of our Holy Temple – so much so that Jerusalem and Zion are mentioned over 800 times in the Tanach. Although not mentioned even once in the Quran, Jerusalem does have holy status for the other monotheistic religions and is therefore holy to over three-and-a-half billion people – to Jews, Christians and Muslims.

I always marvel at the following astonishing fact which highlights the difference of the status of Jerusalem as opposed to that of the Vatican and Mecca. The Vatican is undoubtedly the holiest place for Catholics. A state in and of itself, it is the seat of the ultimate religious leader of the Catholic world, the Pope. Mecca and Medina are undoubtedly the holiest places for all Muslims, as both the birth and burial site of Muhammad. What I find incredible is that there are no synagogues or mosques in the Vatican and there are certainly no churches or synagogues in Mecca and Medina. The first is only holy to Catholic Christians and the second only to Islam.

Yet incredibly, the Jewish people's holiest site, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, contains more synagogues, churches and mosques within a one kilometer radius than any other place on earth!

Herein lies a transformative message. All wish to have a stake in Jerusalem, although they have other more holy sites. All somehow understand that whoever holds the keys to the city, holds the key to the spiritual destiny of the world.

Universal Jerusalem

Judaism embraces the universality of Jerusalem. Although the city is the Jewish people's holiest site and place of fervent religious and spiritual worship, it is also the very same place that our great prophets have designated as the place of universal worship for all nations. Biblical literature is replete with this idea, with perhaps the most famous being the prayer we say on all of our three pilgrimage festivals:

וְהִבֵּיאֹתִים אֶל הָר קֹדֶשׁ... כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא
לְכָל הָעַמִּים.

"And I will bring them to My holy mountain... because My house will be a house of prayer for all people." (Yeshayahu 56:7)

In the Jewish worldview, there is no need for everyone to convert to Judaism to be spiritually redeemed. All nations are welcome to the Temple to pray. There is no inherent contradiction between the particularist message of the Jewish people and Torah Judaism and its universal message of being a light and source of blessing to all nations.

Our sages refer to Jerusalem as "אור של עולם, the light of the world." This, of course, is the light of life, of spiritual meaning and

holy fervor which goes hand-in-hand with love of all people and finding a place for all people within its precincts. This could not be more different from the horrific death culture of Hamas. For them, the road to Al-Aqsa means death and destruction, sacrificing as many of their own as necessary without any moral compunction. It is a 'holy' martyrdom driven by fanaticism, hatred and intolerance. While Judaism and the West believe in 'live and let live,' radical Islam believes in murder and death – murdering others and dying in the process. Every fair-minded person knows that this is a clash of civilizations between those who cherish life and are driven by love and acceptance and those who are driven by a culture of murder, death and extreme intolerance.

A House in Every Home

When my wife, Shelley, read Batsheva Sadan's post, she contacted her and told her of an initiative that this post had inspired her to do. Shelley, together with her friend Naomi Feinmesser, initiated a project called "בֵּית בְּכָל בַּיִת, A House in Every Home" to bring a small and beautiful picture of the Temple to every home. Done in the merit of the hostages' speedy return, amongst them our son Daniel, ה' יקום דָּמּוֹ, the hope is that in as many homes as possible, there will be a yearning for the *Beit HaMikdash*. We believe it is important to not only have an unplastered wall to remember the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, but also to have a picture of the *Beit HaMikdash* as a sign of light, love and yearning for closeness to Hashem.

The theme of this magazine is *Milchamta shel Torah*, the battle of Torah. This war

has a deep spiritual element. May the self-sacrifice of our fighters on the front lines, known as סִיּוּף, the sword of Israel's defense, continue to be accompanied by the light and power of Torah, our spiritual *raison d'être*, known as סֵפֶר, the book. The light of Torah and our love of life will prevail over barbaric darkness and culture of death. Jerusalem and Judaism, Yom Yerushalayim and Shavuot, are our annual rendezvous with this critical call.



If you wish to order the *Bayit Lechol Bayit* picture created by Naomi Feinmesser, please scan the QR code or fill out the form at tinyurl.com/bayitform.

They are available for pickup in Yerushalayim.

1. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *Chamesh Drashot* (2nd Edition, Jerusalem, 1975, *Machon Tal Orot*, pp. 110-111). These lectures were delivered at the annual Mizrahi conventions in the United States between 1961 and 1966.
2. Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot Beit HaBechira*, 2:2.



Rabbi Doron Perez
is the Executive Chairman
of World Mizrahi.





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A new opportunity to own your own vineyard

"Anava is a unique opportunity for someone that wants to invest in Israel, and to put their roots and spirit in the soil of Israel."

Adam Montefiore, the well-known Israel wine expert, is incredibly excited about Anava Vineyards. *"To my knowledge, there is nothing quite like this in the Jewish, Kosher or Israeli world,"* he says. *"It so much more than dipping your toes into wine. The opportunity to be involved from the planting of vines, caring for a vineyard and literally growing your own wine is amazing. Anava is a unique opportunity for someone that wants to invest in Israel, and make a commitment to the spirit of Israel. At the end of the day, you will have your own wine to show for it."*

Adam says, since the beginnings of the Jewish people in Biblical times, wine was important as a symbol and it was a mainstay of the economy. *"It gives me the chills to see Anava Vineyards are literally right next to an ancient wine press from 2,000 years ago! Wine is like a thread that connects us to our past – we made wine in this land then, and we are still doing so today. It's almost as if wine connects modern Israel to its ancient roots. It is also a symbol of the success of modern Israel – until a few decades ago, Israeli wine wasn't of such high quality, and now it is winning awards all over the world. Hi-tech is also a symbol of Israeli success – but you can't give a gift of a bottle of hi-tech!"*

Anava Vineyards is located in the Judean Foothills, an important wine growing region in ancient times and it is part of the renaissance of Israeli wine today. *"Anava Vineyards are planted in an area with all the potential that a wine grower would wish for. That's the beauty – each individual can make their vineyards their own, and fashion their wine of their dreams with the assistance of one of the top young winemakers in Israel."*



"Anava have put together a remarkable professional team in the pursuit of excellence. Eyal Drory is the winemaker. He is one of Israel's brightest young talents. He is inventive, innovative and represents the new wave of winemaking. He is really making his mark on Israeli wine today. Avinoam Inbar is the experienced viticulturist, who used to work for Castel, one of the best wineries in Israel. Nadav Jesselson leads and teaches, conveying his overflowing charisma and passion to everyone he meets. The technology being used is among the best in the world. It really is a dream team"

The mission of Anava, to work the land and maintain it for future generations, is even more important since October 7th. *"When you walk the vineyards, you can hear the booms and the sounds of war in Gaza. Working in agriculture, helping the land flourish, is a powerful statement. We are here and we are not going anywhere. Anava also is impressively focused on education, bringing local schoolchildren and students to gain work experience in the vineyards. Teaching the young about the value*

of nature, caring for the environment and our connection to this land, is so important. Getting your hands dirty in the soil is fulfilling and worthwhile. Anava is opportunity to show support and put roots deep into the Land of Israel!"

Parcels of land begin at \$65,000. For more information, contact Anava at info@anavavineyards.com

Achim Anachnu

Commemorating Yom HaZikaron

On the eve of Yom HaZikaron, a moving tekes (ceremony) was held in Binyanei Hauma on the topic of "Achim Anachnu". The evening featured stories of those we have lost this past year, including Yossi HersHKovitz, Karin Journo, and Daniel Perez, as well as hearing first-hand from Col. Golan Vach about his experiences in Gaza.

The evening was accompanied by the music of Yonatan Razel, and was organized by the Department for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Organization headed by Mizrachi's representatives in the national institutions, in partnership with OneFamily.

(PHOTOS: MENDI TUITO)





MIZRACHI

MIZRACHI CELEBRATES YOM HAATZMAUT

The Mizrachi movement led Yom HaAtzmaut celebrations across the Jewish world, from the USA to Sweden, and the UK to Czechia. From bringing top speakers from Israel to communities, and leading *tefillot* and celebrations, Mizrachi impacted tens of thousands of people around the world, to celebrate the 76th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel.



The Simchat Torah Project launch at Mizrachi UK Weekend of Inspiration – see pages 10-11 to learn more!



The Simchat Torah
PROJECT

A PROJECT OF  MIZRACHI

Dancing Through Tears

October 7th was Simchat Torah in Israel. Over 1,200 people were murdered and hundreds more were taken hostage. The Jewish people suffered our most horrific day since the Holocaust. Since that dreadful day, approximately 400 more have lost their lives on the battlefield and in captivity.

Next October will be
the first Simchat Torah
since the horrific events
of October 7th.

Simchat Torah is a day of joy, festivity, and *hakafot* – we dance and celebrate. But Simchat Torah 5785 will also mark the first *yahrzeit* of the victims of October 7th. How do we, the Jewish people, respond? Will we dance? *Should* we dance? How do we commemorate this poignant and difficult anniversary?

King Solomon offers us guidance in Kohelet, which we will read on Sukkot: “There is a time for everything under the Heavens... a time to mourn and a time to dance.” This Simchat Torah, with tears in our eyes, we *will* dance.

Join the Simchat Torah Project as 1,600 communities around the world join to dance with Sifrei Torah bearing the name of one of the victims.

1,600 communities corresponding to the more than 1,600 souls who we have lost, including the many soldiers and hostages who have since died al kiddush Hashem.

On Simchat Torah night when we take out the Torah scrolls, **one Sefer Torah will be adorned with a new *me'il* (Torah cover), designed to mark the first *yahrzeit* of October 7th.** This *me'il* will be identical to those in 1,600 synagogues across the world.

Communities from Argentina to Australia will dance with these Torah scrolls connecting tens of thousands through this project.



The Simchat Torah
PROJECT

A PROJECT OF MIZRACHI

The Project

- ❖ Your community registers on the website to join the project.
- ❖ The team will contact you to confirm details about the Torah cover, *me'il*, the events in Israel and help with fundraising if needed. The basic cost is just \$1,800, which covers the Torah cover as well as an invitation to Israel for the 3-day conference and launch (excluding flights and accommodation).
- ❖ A unique *me'il* will be made for your community, bearing the name of one of the *kedoshim* who were murdered on October 7th.
- ❖ The three-day launch will be on Sunday evening September 1st – Tuesday September 3rd in Israel where you will be receiving your Torah cover (*me'il*) from the bereaved family. There will be a powerful ceremony, broadcast worldwide, from the Kotel where the 1,600 *me'ilim* as well as several newly-written Sifrei Torah will be on display.
- ❖ Your community will also receive materials about the person you are remembering for display on Simchat Torah.

More details about the project, including FAQ and registration form, can be found at:

www.TheSimchatTorahProject.org



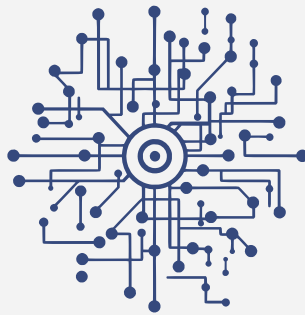
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(PHOTO: GAVI KATZ)

Torat Tzion – the Israeli Talmid Chacham

An Introduction by Rabbi Aron White

“Never in Jewish history have there been so many Torah scholars fighting in a Jewish army” (Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, Nasi of World Mizrahi).

In 1904, Chaim Nachman Bialik wrote one of his most famous poems, *“HaMatmid”*, about the diligent *yeshiva* student. Based on his experiences learning in the Volozhin Yeshiva, it captures the world of the *yeshiva bachur*, poring over his beloved Talmud day and night, away from the bustle and rhythm of the outside seasons and society. Although Bialik had departed from the world of the *yeshiva*, and certain elements of the poem reflect his personal ambivalence toward that world, the beauty of his description makes it one of the finest literary portrayals of the Lithuanian *yeshiva*.

*In the empty yeshiva rests a holy silence,
Which the lad takes in for a moment
There in the corner wait his three friends who await him each day:
A candle, his shtender, and his volume of Talmud,
And not wanting to delay he hurries to those friends, and begins to learn,
And he is fixed there like a nail hammered in,
A full day and half a night, he does not move from his place
To satiate himself there he eats his blackened bread,
Who are you Shamir and Chalamish,
In the face of a Hebrew lad toiling in Torah?*

*So the lad stands every day,
From the crack of dawn to the middle of the night,
He divides his day into units, one for himself and three for the Torah,
And with the isolation of a Nazir, locked away in his corner,
He arises, white faced, furrow browed,
And he creates through the Talmud his whole soul,
He creates – and it is eternally closed to him.*

*“Oh, Rava says! Oh, Abaye says!”
Is this the factory creating the soul of our nation?*

Zionism and the miraculous return to the Land of Israel changed the Jewish people from an embattled minority to a sovereign nation. As we reentered the realms of military, social, and political affairs after a 2,000-year hiatus, a new paradigm of Torah scholarship has emerged. Since the inception of the first Yeshivot Hesder in the 1950s, hundreds of learning institutions have emerged, with dedicated students who also serve in the IDF. In this war, this has been on full display – not only are there tens of thousands of religious

soldiers, but there are countless Torah scholars, rabbis, teachers and future *Gedolei Yisrael* fighting in the IDF today. Some of these figures, including Rav Elisha Loewenstern and Zechariah Haber, have given their lives in this war, others have been injured, and many have been fighting for numerous months. As we celebrate on Yom Yerushalayim and Shavuot, the modern return to Yerushalayim and the eternal Torah that emanates from it, these *talmidei chachamim* are writing a new poem in the pages of the Jewish story.

*The machine guns and artillery fade, as other units begin their operations,
They slump down, exhausted, in their temporary dwelling,
For a few hours of rest – perhaps.*

*And from his backpack he withdraws a paperback Talmud,
Stained with oil and sweat,
The underlined passages from his yeshiva still visible,
Notes from himself – an hour’s drive, a world away.*

*He opens to today’s Daf
Together with the nation he is protecting,
And as he eats his rations, and quenches his thirst,
For Torah, his eyes light up,
The dark room, lit only by a flashlight.*

*His quiet tune blends with the chatter of guns,
The soul of a nation fighting for its body,
And his tired eyes and mind fight on for a few minutes,
In the Milchamta Shel Torah.*

*“Oh, Rava says! Oh, Abaye says!”
Is this the factory creating the soul of our nation?*



Rabbi Aron White
is the Managing Editor of HaMizrahi magazine.

TORAH AND IDF SERVICE

A CONVERSATION WITH RABBI DORON PODLASHUK

Rabbi Doron Podlashuk is the Founder and Director of the Tzurba M'Rabanan English Series, which has so far produced 18 volumes of Tzurba M'Rabanan, learned by tens of thousands around the world. He is also the head of The Selwyn and Ros Smith & Family Manhigut Toranit Program, a five year post-semicha program whose goal is to develop serious rabbinic leaders who will impact communities and strengthen their commitment to Torah, mitzvot and Torat Eretz Yisrael. Since November, he has served as a reservist in the Gush Etzion region. Rabbi Aron White spoke with Rabbi Podlashuk on Yom HaZikaron, the day after he completed almost 6 months of reserve service, to hear about his journey as a Torah teacher and a soldier.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND. WHAT YESHIVA DID YOU GO TO, AND WHERE DID YOU SERVE?

I grew up in South Africa, and came to study at Yeshivat Har Etzion as a *shana aleph chutznik*. I grew up in a strongly Zionist home and in Bnei Akiva, and decided to make *Aliyah*, stay for *shana bet* and join *Hesder*. My older brother made *Aliyah* before me, and I followed in his footsteps. I also had other role models from my community who made *Aliyah* before me, including a high school senior named Doron Perez.

I served in the Golani Brigade, in the 13th Battalion, as part of *Hesder*. In *Hesder*, you have a “*machleket beinish*,” a company of *yeshiva* students. So in my *plugah* of about 100 soldiers, we were a group of 30 *yeshiva* students serving together. After our training, we served in Lebanon for four months, in the security belt that was there before Israel pulled out in 2000.

AS A HESDER STUDENT, HOW DID YOU EXPERIENCE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR TORAH LEARNING AND ARMY SERVICE?

In the army you don't have much time to learn, especially in the beginning during advanced training, but when I did find a few minutes to learn, it was very meaningful – I felt Hashem appreciated it more than usual! When you are in the army, you are also faced with new scenarios and new *halachic* questions you haven't dealt with



before. On one of my first Shabbatot on a base in South Lebanon, I was ordered to clean the floor of the *cheder ochel* on Shabbat. I felt that wasn't allowed – at home, I would never wash the floor on Shabbat with water and a mop! I got into serious trouble for being *mesarev pekuda* (not following an order). However, in reality there is more leeway for a situation like this where it is for *tzorchei rabim*, the needs of the community, to ensure that hundreds of people aren't walking on an unhygienic or slippery floor for hours. Another time, on Sukkot, we were out in the field and wanted to see if we could make a *sukkah*, and how to do that with the limited resources available to us. We ended up making creative use of some nearby trees, whose leaves we could tie together. One of our guys, Yitzchak Bart, would often call Rav Rimon to get answers to these questions.

HEARING THESE KINDS OF STORIES, SOME PEOPLE SAY, "IT IS TOO COMPLICATED, SERVING IN THE ARMY LEADS TO ALL SORTS OF HALACHIC QUESTIONS, AND WE CAN'T PUT 19- AND 20-YEAR-OLD RELIGIOUS MEN IN THESE SCENARIOS." WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT?"

There are a few things. Firstly, the army now has many programs designed for religious soldiers, from *Hesder* to *Nachal Charedi* and more. In these programs, you are with religious soldiers throughout your service, so you are not alone as a soldier with religious requirements. Throughout my service, I was able to *daven* three *tefillot* with a *minyan* almost every day, together with other *yeshiva* students. Secondly, a major difference between the army now and 25 years ago is how many religious commanders and officers there are. When the commanders themselves are religious, they understand the needs and requirements of religious soldiers. In fact, even when the commanders aren't religious, the IDF has many *pekudot matkal* (orders of the General Staff) that protect the rights of religious soldiers to have time for *tefillah*, to be able to keep Shabbat, etc.

But on a more general note, any time somebody goes out into the world, whether it is in the workplace or traveling, one encounters new scenarios and questions, and the job of our educational system is to prepare people for that. As a religious community, we aren't just dropping people unprepared into new scenarios. After years of education and preparation, when a 19- or 20-year-old joins the army in a religious unit, as part of a program like *Hesder*, we believe he is prepared and religiously able to deal with the questions that will arise.



Rabbi Podlashuk giving a Tzurba shiur in Eretz Hemdah, Jerusalem.

He is fulfilling a *mitzvah* by being in the army, and we have prepared him as best as possible to deal with the questions that will arise along the way.

ONCE YOU RETURNED TO YESHIVA, WHAT WAS YOUR PATH THEN TO BECOMING A TEACHER OF TORAH?

I completed *Hesder*, stayed *shana vav*, got married and joined the *kollel*. After completing the Rabbanut *semicha*, we went on *shlichut* to South Africa. I was in South Africa for six-and-a-half years and served as the head of a *beit midrash* and as a community rabbi. All of a sudden I had to deal with real-life questions. I had to learn *sugyas* that I never learned before. My learning was no longer hypothetical. My learning was also more focused, even though I had less time.

After returning to Israel, we moved to Yad Binyamin, and I have had the privilege, together with World Mizrahi and Eretz Hemdah, to be part of training the next generation of *talmidei chachamim*. After completing the program, these *rabbanim* go on *shlichut* and are having an immense impact on communities around the world. At Manhigut Toranit, together with World Mizrahi, we have also been privileged to produce the *sefarim* of Tzurba M'Rabanan in English for the past 7 years. We are about to publish volume 19, and they are being studied by tens of thousands of people around the world.

This has all gone hand in hand with serving for about 20 days of *miluim* each year. One particularly memorable *miluim* was 6 weeks after my twins were born!

WHAT HAPPENED ON SIMCHAT TORAH?

I am 46 years old, and so my *miluim* service has been finished for some time. My unit was closed down even before I turned 40; many units are shut down by age 35.

So I haven't done *miluim* for a while. I live nearby and work closely with Rabbi Doron Perez, and seeing what he was going through was very painful. On the third day of the war, we were already visiting injured soldiers in Beilinson hospital in Petach Tikvah – my niece's husband, Neria, was up north in *yishuv* HaZor'im when he heard about the invasion in the south. He put on his uniform and hitched a ride to the Gaza envelope. He fought and freed people from their shelters in Kissufim, until he was shot and airlifted out. He is a *samech M.P.* (deputy company commander) in tanks, and six weeks later he was back in Gaza as a tank commander. He's now in Rafah. My other niece's husband, Aryeh Eitam, is in Egoz. He was wounded by an RPG in Gaza, and is still in recovery two months later.

Seeing everyone around me doing their part, I felt that I needed to do something. Most of our *avreichim* were called up immediately. One who is in artillery on the northern border, spent months in the rain and cold in the field, shooting at Hezbollah. Other *avreichim* are in tanks and infantry in the south. I felt I needed to do my part, so I called up my cousin Steve Gar, who is a commander in a unit called *Hagmar Etzion*. I said, "If you need *chayalim*, tell them they can call me, I can still fight." He gave me the number of the logistics soldier but when I called, he said: "We aren't calling anyone."

A week later he called and said: "*Tzav shmoneh* (emergency call-up), come tomorrow!" My wife was okay with it – none of us thought I would serve for over 5 months, but I would do it again and so would my wife. I joined because all my *avreichim*, family and friends were serving, and I felt they were doing a lot more than I was. By reenlisting and serving in Gush Etzion, it allows other people to serve in Gaza.

WHAT IS HAGMAR ETZION, AND WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE DURING YOUR HALF A YEAR OF MILUIM?

Hagmar Etzion is in charge of protecting *yishuvim* in Gush Etzion, from Tekoa to Beitar Illit, which is a city of 70,000 *Chareidim*. I moved around the area, spending a month-and-a-half in Beitar Illit, where I met *Charedi* soldiers, which was interesting. We were also on hilltops that are strategically important. I spent a lot of time with *noar gvaot*, hilltop youth, as well as several *yishuvim* that I got to know.

For *Seder* night I was in Beitar Illit, with other soldiers – myself, another soldier who is secular, another guy who is Druze – and all of this at the home of a Chabad family. I did *shmira* with a *Karliner Chassid*, and spent a month with a soldier from such a secular background that he had never heard *kiddush* until he met his girlfriend's family at the age of 23. We had lots of interesting discussions – I had a long chat with an officer, a lawyer from Tel Aviv, who said: "Isn't it amazing that I am prepared to die for you and you for me, but we can't agree on how to live together." Another soldier I served with was living in Hungary, and he felt moved to come back to Israel to fight for his country. He has served for several months.

My cousin Steve Gar who I grew up with in Johannesburg, also went to *yeshiva* and the army and now he is a commander. In South Africa we would walk together every week 9 kilometers to a *shul* to do *kriat haTorah*. Now he is my commander and we are walking and patrolling Judea

and Samaria together. It's amazing being able to learn in *yeshiva* together and serve in the IDF together.

CAN YOU GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF HALACHIC QUESTIONS THAT CAME UP DURING YOUR RESERVE DUTY?

Serving in *miluim*, our *avreichim* from Manhigut Toranit have a WhatsApp group together, where we get to discuss the different *halachic* questions that arise.

Here is a classic example that came up the whole time: If I need to get to a guard post in the middle of Shabbat to take over on *shmira*, can I drive myself there, can I flag down a passing patrol car, or should I walk? In different places, that answer is going to be very different – it depends on how dangerous it is to walk, what the threat level is, and what is going on at that base at the time. In the same base, at one stage of the war I felt it was forbidden to drive to the post and I walked in the middle of winter, but two weeks later I drove on Shabbat because they have changed the definition of the guard post, and it was significant to the operational needs at that time for soldiers to be driving to get there. It's a continuous dynamic. We have guys serving all over the country, and the realities on the ground are different depending on where you're serving.

Another example of this is when it comes to *kashrut* – some soldiers asked about *kashering* pots in requisitioned homes in Gaza before eating from them. Rambam in *Hilchot Melachim* says that in war, soldiers

can eat non-kosher *me'ikar hadin*, so the soldiers do not really need to *kasher* the pots. Does that mean that a person on a base in Judea should do the same? Of course not. You have to realize where you are, what are the needs of the situation at that time.

We have a group of rabbis serving in different places and they give different answers to these kinds of questions, but every situation is different and dynamic. There was a leniency for a soldier to leave Gaza in the middle of Shabbat, but that doesn't apply necessarily in Judea and Samaria.

WHAT ARE YOUR REFLECTIONS ON BEING A TORAH TEACHER AND IDF SOLDIER?

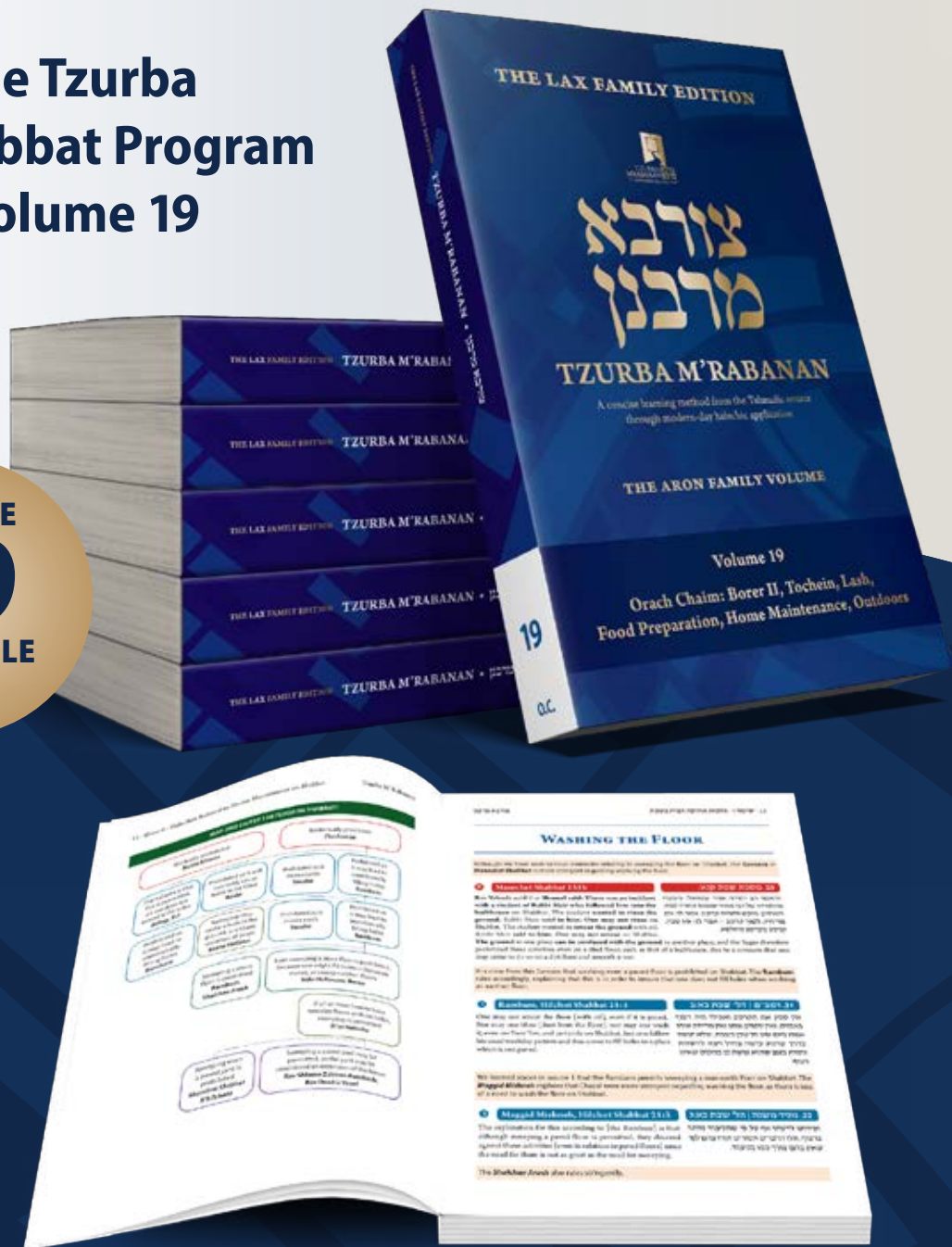
There are *shivim panim l'Torah*, seventy faces to the Torah, and many different opinions about whether *yeshiva* students should be exempt from service. I am not judging anyone else, but I feel it has been a merit for me and my *avreichim* to have learned Torah day and night, but also dedicated to fighting and being part of this *milchemet mitzvah*. Sometimes "*bitula ze hu kiyuma*, nullifying learning is what keeps it going." Sometimes we have to close the Gemara to go to battle, just like the students of Yehoshua Bin Nun and *David HaMelech*. Yes, there are other opinions. But speaking for myself and my *avreichim*, we feel it's a big merit for our program and all of us to serve.

Because of *miluim*, since the war began, we have only been together once. Yet it is a great merit. Sometimes, this is what the Torah demands of us. ■



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ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
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World Zionist Organization
Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora

Rabbi Doron Perez
Head of the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora



Flying the Flag Down South with Yeshiva and Seminary Students

The *Mechilta* on Parshat Yitro (Shemot 19:9) interprets a conversation between Moshe and *Bnei Yisrael* just before *Matan Torah*. According to the *Midrash*, when Hashem tells Moshe to tell *Bnei Yisrael* that during *Matan Torah* they will only “hear” his voice, *Bnei Yisrael* respond that they ask to not only hear Hashem, but to “see” him as well. The reasoning they gave has become a famous saying: “לא דומה שומע לרואה”, one who hears isn’t comparable to one who sees.”

After the terrible day of Simchat Torah of October 7th, the Mizrahi department at the WZO (The Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora, hereafter: “the Center”) decided to allocate a significant portion of its resources to ensure that every *yeshiva* and seminary student will transform from being a “שומע” to becoming a “רואה” regarding what happened on October 7th.

To achieve this, the Center established relationships with *kibbutz* members, soldiers, policemen, and residents of the nearby cities of the Gaza envelope and built several options for a 12-hour delegation down south.

“At first we were told that due to security reasons overseas students aren’t permitted to travel to the Gaza envelope,” says Ariel Chesner, the Director of the Center. “We responded that they are our future ambassadors! How can it be that students, many of whom will be going back to campuses outside of Israel and face antisemitism, won’t be able to testify and say that they saw, that they witnessed the tragedies and stories of October 7th?! That all they will be able to say is that they heard of it?! This was completely unacceptable to us. So, we got to work. We partnered with Masa who helped us with obtaining the permit to operate the delegations and added additional funds to carry out the mission.

“These trips change the students from within. They suddenly understand that October 7th isn’t someone else’s story, it’s theirs. That it’s their brothers and sisters that were murdered, their country that was attacked. And at the same time, they hear stories of true bravery and heroism and they are filled with pride to be a part of the Jewish people.”

After 3 months of intensive work, the Center facilitated over 33 delegations from 30 institutions in which over 2,500 students participated. They plan to continue this important educational activity for next year’s students as well.

The Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora aspires to connect Jews across the world to Israel and to Judaism. To achieve this goal, we are active in projects across the world, as well as unique programs of education and advocacy within Israel for gap year students.



Sha'alvim: Shmuel Bender, New York

"Walking through a desolate home in Kerem Shalom, seeing the bedroom door exploded off the hinges, with gunshots sprayed across the walls, I could barely process the newfound emotions that struck within me. I had seen pictures and videos, heard accounts, and read articles of that dreadful Simchat Torah morning, but nothing compared to the experience of walking through the actual sites of the massacres. Hopelessness and pain pierced through me that so many Jews were killed – just like that, and I was unable to help. But while standing in the Be'eri forest, with newly planted trees growing from the barren ground, I gained a newfound sense of responsibility to tell the world the horrors of what happened and what I saw. I'm now a witness for the Jewish people and will forever spread the memory of those lost on October 7th."



MMY: Sela Shron, East Brunswick, New Jersey/Modi'in

"The trip down south was meaningful and impactful, helping me understand the full scope of the tragedy that befell the people in the south and our nation as a whole."



Machon Maayan: Shayna Kass, Cedarhurst, New York

"It's one thing to hear about the tragedies that occurred on October 7th and an entirely different thing to be at the places that got hurt the most and see the damage through my own eyes. One minute I'm reading the horrible stories circling the internet, and the next suddenly I'm in someone's house, staring at an abandoned Rav Kav lying on a table. This little green card somehow altered my understanding. It was no longer stories, it was startling nightmares that destroyed so many families. Thank you to Mizrachi for this powerful experience."



MTVA: Phoebe Rynhold, Teaneck, New Jersey

"As a non-Israeli, this year I struggled with feeling useless and disconnected to Israeli society after October 7th. MTVA's trip to Otef Aza was able to dissipate this feeling, as we had the opportunity to actually provide immense physical help to Kibbutz Be'eri through farming, and deepen our understanding of the residents' horrific suffering."



Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh: Rav David Zahtz

"Thank you so much Mizrachi for giving us the opportunity to spend time during our bein hazmanim to hear about what happened on October 7th. When holed up in yeshiva it's very hard to feel for Klal Yisrael and understand what is going on in the outside world. You gave us the opportunity to hear what happened that day and told us about the tragedy, but also about the hope and achdut that came from it. It was really meaningful that we got time to walk around and process it, so we don't forget what happened and make a conscious effort to feel connected to it because we are an אָחַד בְּלֵב אָחַד."



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Tikkun Leil Shavuot Tzurba Excerpt – To learn on Shavuot night!

The issue of *chinuch*, training and educating children, span a wide range of topics and halachot, including Kashrut. In this *shiur*, we will analyze some of the fundamental principles of *chinuch* as well as some practical halachic applications, some of which are included within the laws of Kashrut, but many of which are related to the laws of Shabbat.

THE BASIS AND SCOPE OF THE MITZVA OF CHINUCH

There are two fundamental mitzvot incumbent upon the father with regard to the *chinuch* of his children. The first is his obligation to teach them Torah.



Devarim 11:19

And you shall teach them to your sons to speak with them, when you sit in your house and when you walk on the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

1. דברים | יא:יט

וְלַמְדֵתֶם אֹתָם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ
וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ.

The second is to properly educate one's children to serve Hashem in a general sense, which includes how to properly observe the rest of the mitzvot. This is evident from the following *pasuk* in *Mishlei* and the commentary of the **Metzudat David**, who explains that the word *chanoch* means to train and educate the child from a young age to follow the ways of the Torah according to his ability.



Mishlei 22:6

Train a child according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not turn away from it.

2. משלי | כב:ו

חֲנֹךְ לְנַעַר עַל פִּי דְרָכּוֹ גַם כִּי יִזְקֵן לֹא יִסּוּר מִמֶּנָּה:



Metzudat David, ibid.

Train – Initiate and acculturate one who is young, directing him in the service of Hashem according to his own manner of wisdom, whether in small or great measure. After he becomes accustomed to serving Hashem, then “when he grows old, he will not turn away from it,” as he will dedicate himself to succeed in the execution of any given act.

3. מצודת דוד | שם

חנוך – התחל והרגל את הנער בשנים, להוליכו בעבודת ה' לפי דרך חכמתו – אם מעט ואם הרבה. וכשיהיה מורגל בעבודת ה', אז “גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה” – כי ייתן לב להשכיל כשרון המעשה ההיא.

What is the source of this general mitzva of *chinuch*? The **Gemara** in **Nazir** mentions that such a notion exists, but it does not provide the basis or source for it.



Masechet Nazir 29a

Reish Lakish said: In order to educate him in mitzvot...
Reish Lakish holds that a man is obligated to educate his son in mitzvot...

4. מסכת נזיר כט.

אמר ריש לקיש: כדי לחנכו במצות.. קסבר:
איש חייב לחנך בנו במצות...

Is the Mitzva of *Chinuch De'oraita* or *Derabanan*?

The **Meshech Chochma** suggests that just like the obligation of a father to teach his son Torah is a biblical one, so too the mitzva of *chinuch* has a Scriptural basis from a famous *pasuk* concerning Avraham.



Bereishit 18:19

For I have known him because he commands his sons and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord to perform righteousness and justice, in order that the Lord bring upon Avraham that which He spoke concerning him.

5. בראשית | יח:יט

כִּי יָדַעְתִּי לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יַצִּיחַ אֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת
בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דֶּרֶךְ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה
וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה' עַל אַבְרָהָם אֶת
אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלָיו:



Meshech Chochma, ibid.

...The notion that educating one's children is obligatory as a positive mitzva is not mentioned, except for the commandment of "and you shall teach your children," which refers to the study of Torah. And they said in *Nazir 29a* that all agree that a father is obligated to educate his son in mitzvot, and a woman is not obligated to educate her son in mitzvot. This means that it is like the positive mitzva of the study of Torah, with regard to which a woman is exempt. See *Orach Chaim 343* and the commentary of the Gra and the *Magen Avraham*. **And the source of the mitzva of education as a positive mitzva is based on this *pasuk*, from Avraham Avinu, who instructed his children while they were young about the mitzvot.** As for the verse of "train your child according to his way" that the Rambam quotes at the end of *Hilchot Ma'achalot Assurot*, it is considered to be *divrei kabala* (a tradition from the time of the prophets) alone, **but the primary [source] is from Avraham.** And from here it seems that the father is obligated to educate his daughters as well...

6. משך חכמה | שם

...הנה חינוך מצווה לבנים במצוות עשה לא נזכר, רק עשה ד"ולמדתם את בניכם" הוא בתלמוד תורה. ואמרו בנזיר דף כט עמוד א, דברי הכל אב חייב לחנך בנו במצוות, ואין האישה חייבת לחנך בנה במצוות, פירוש: דהוה כמו מצוות עשה של תלמוד תורה, דהאישה פטורה. ויעויין "אורח חיים" סימן שמג בביאורי הגאון רבי אליהו מוילנא וב"מגן אברהם". ומקור מצוות חינוך במצוות עשה מקורו בזה הפסוק, מאברהם אבינו שציווה את בניו בקטנם על המצוות. קרא ד"חנך לנער על פי דרכו" (משלי כב, ו) שהביא הרמב"ם בסוף הלכות מאכלות אסורות (ושם לעניין איסורים) – הווי מדברי קבלה, אבל העיקר מאברהם. וכאן משמע, שאף לבנות מצווה על האב...

Despite the source mentioned by the *Meshech Chochma*, a simple reading of the **Gemara** in *Sukka* seems to indicate that the mitzva of *chinuch* is only *derabanan*, as the Gemara states that a child who is old enough to be educated to perform the mitzva of *sukka* is obligated to do so *miderabanan*.

The Master said in the *baraita*: “All the homeborn shall sit in *sukkot*” (*Vayikra* 23:42) comes **to include the minors** capable of performing the mitzva of sitting in the *sukka*. The Gemara asks: **Didn’t we learn** in the mishna: **Women and slaves and minors are exempt from the mitzva of *sukka*?** The Gemara answers: This is **not difficult**. **Here**, in the *baraita* where it is taught that minors are included, it is referring to **a minor who reached** the age of **training**, whose parents are commanded to train him in the performance of mitzvot and to accustom him to fulfill them. **Here**, in the mishna where it stated that the minor is exempt, it is referring to **a minor who did not yet reach** the age of **training**. The Gemara asks: The obligation of **a minor who reached** the age of **training** to perform mitzvot **is by rabbinic law**, and therefore it is not derived from a verse. The Gemara answers: Indeed, the obligation of the minor is **by rabbinic law** as part of his training, **and the verse is a mere support** alluding to that obligation.¹

אמר מר: “כל” – לרבות את הקטנים. והתנן: נשים ועבדים וקטנים – פטורין מן הסוכה! לא קשיא: כאן – בקטן שהגיע לחינוך, כאן – בקטן שלא הגיע לחינוך. קטן שהגיע לחינוך – מדרבנן הוא! מדרבנן, וקרא – אסמכתא בעלמא הוא.

It seems clear that in terms of the perspective of the halacha, we treat the mitzva of *chinuch* with regard to each particular mitzva as a *derabanan* requirement. The **Shulchan Aruch** records the notion of *chinuch* for positive mitzvot in a number of cases (e.g., *tzitzit* (O.C. 17:3), *megilla* (O.C. 689:1), etc.), including the following concerning *sukka*, where he writes explicitly that the mitzva is *derabanan*.

A child who does not need his mother, which is approximately the age of five or six, is obligated in *sukka* on a rabbinic level in order to train him in mitzvot.

קטן שאינו צריך לאמו, שהוא כבן חמש כבן שש, חייב בסוכה מדברי סופרים כדי לחנכו במצות.

The Mitzva of *Chinuch* Regarding the Mother

As mentioned above, the obligation of *chinuch* is imposed first and foremost upon the father (and some hold that the obligation applies also to the child himself). Does the mitzva of *chinuch* apply to the mother as well or just to the father? Although the Gemara in *Nazir* that we saw above only mentions the father, **Rashi to the Mishna in *Chagiga*** indicates that the mother is also subject to this mitzva.

1. It is possible to explain the *Meshech Chochma* as saying that there is a general, overall directive from the Torah to educate one's children, but the specific injunction for a father to train a child to fulfill each specific mitzva is rabbinic in nature. This is in fact precisely how the *Minchat Asher* (*Bereishit*, *siman* 21) explains this mitzva (without mentioning the *Meshech Chochma*): The desire of the Torah is for a father to educate a child to serve Hashem (even if it is not counted as one of the 613 mitzvot), but the specific directives of how and when to do so were provided by Chazal for each specific mitzva.

נ Mishna, Chagiga 2a

All are obligated [on the three pilgrim Festivals] in the [mitzva of] appearance, [i.e., to appear in the Temple as well as to sacrifice an offering,] except for a deaf-mute, an imbecile, and a minor... Who [has the status of] a minor [with regard to this halacha?] Any [child] who is unable to ride on his father's shoulders and ascend from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount; [this is] the statement of Beit Shammai. And Beit Hillel say: Any [child] who is unable to hold his father's hand and ascend [on foot] from Jerusalem to the Temple Mount, as it is stated: "Three times [regalim]" [(Shemot 23:14)]. Since the term for feet is *raglayim*, Beit Hillel infer from here that the obligation to ascend involves the use of one's legs.]...

ג Rashi, ibid.

Who has the status of a minor – But from that [age] and up, even though he is not biblically obligated, the Sages placed [the impetus] to educate him in mitzvot **upon his father and upon his mother.**

The **Mishna Berura** cites the same conclusion as well from a number of *Acharonim*.

ס Mishna Berura 343:2

Some *Acharonim* hold that the mitzva of education is incumbent upon the mother as well.

Some commentaries cite proof to this position from the **Gemara** in **Sukka** that indicates that *Heleni HaMalka* assisted her sons in sitting in a kosher *sukka*.

נ Masechet Sukka 2b

Rabbi Yehuda said: There was an incident involving Queen Helene in Lod where her *sukka* was more than twenty cubits high, and the Elders were entering and exiting the *sukka* and did not say anything to her about the *sukka* not being fit. The Rabbis **said to him:** Is there **proof from there?** She was, after all, a woman and therefore exempt from the mitzva of *sukka*. Consequently, the fact that her *sukka* was not fit did not warrant a comment from the Elders. Rabbi Yehuda **said to them** in response: **Didn't she have seven sons** and therefore require a fit *sukka*?... **And furthermore, she performed all of her actions only in accordance with the directives of the Sages.**

9. משנה | חגיגה ב.

הכל חייבין בראייה, חוץ מחרש, שוטה, וקטן... איזהו קטן? כל שאינו יכול לרכוב על כתפיו של אביו, ולעלות מירושלים להר הבית – דברי בית שמאי. ובית הלל אומרים: כל שאינו יכול לאחוז בידו של אביו, ולעלות מירושלים להר הבית, שנאמר "שלוש רגלים" (שמות כג, יד)...

10. רש"י | שם

אי זהו קטן כו' – אבל מכאן ואילך, אף על פי שאינו חייב מן התורה – הטילו חכמים על אביו ועל אמו לחנכו במצוות.

11. משנה ברורה | שמגב

יש מאחרונים שסוברין דמצות חינוך מוטל גם על האם.

12. מסכת סוכה ב:

אמר רבי יהודה: מעשה בהילני המלכה בלוד, שהיתה סוכתה גבוהה מעשרים אמה, והיו זקנים נכנסין ויוצאין לשם, ולא אמרו לה דבר. – אמרו לו: משם ראייה? אשה היתה ופטורה מן הסוכה. – אמר להן: והלא שבעה בנים הוּוּ לה, ועוד כל מעשיה היו על פי חכמים.

According to Rabbi Yehuda, a *sukka* that is higher than twenty *amot* (cubits) high is kosher (though this is not the halacha), and he proves this from the fact that the Sages did not comment to *Heleni HaMalka* that her *sukka* was not kosher, even though she had sons who were required to sit in a kosher *sukka*.²

But other *Rishonim*, such as the **Tosafot Yeshanim**, hold that there is no obligation of *chinuch* on the mother, and they deflect the proof from this Gemara.



Tosafot Yeshanim, Yoma 82a, s.v. Ben Shemoneh

...And my teacher says **that education applies only to the father, but education does not apply to anyone else**. Therefore, they are not careful to separate him [from transgressions]. And concerning the incident with Queen Helene where she and her sons sat in the *sukka*, perhaps they had a father who trained them in this matter. And even if they did not have a father, she trained them merely as a mitzva [but not an obligation].

13. תוס' ישנים | יומא פב., ד"ה בן שמונה

...ור' אומר דחינוך לא שייך אלא באב אבל באדם אחר לא שייך ביה חינוך הלכך נמי אין נזהרין להפרישו. ומעשה דהילני המלכה שישבה היא ובניה בסוכה, שמא הוה להם אב וחינכם בכך. ואפילו לא היה להם אב היתה מחנכתם למצוה בעלמא.

Some *Acharonim*, such as the **Sedei Chemed**, even interpret Rashi differently than the simple meaning of his words. They argue that he refers to a case where the father is not present, but if the father is present, then even Rashi agrees that there is no mitzva of *chinuch* upon the mother.



Sedei Chemed 1:8:59

The question of whether the mother is obligated to educate her son is a dispute among the *poskim* of one set vs. the other. ... originally, I thought that from Rashi (*Chagiga 2a*) it is clarified nicely that the mother is also obligated to train her son, but then I saw the *Petach HaDevir* who writes in the name of the *Chikrei Leiv* that when the father dies, all agree that the mother is obligated to educate her son, see there. **And according to this, there is no proof from Rashi, as one could say that the words of Rashi apply when the father died, that then the mother is obligated to train him.**

14. שדי חמד | א:ח:נט

אם האם חייבת לחנך את בנה הוא מחלוקת הפוסקים מערכה מול מערכה... ומריש הוא אמינא דמדברי רש"י בחגיגה ב ע"א ד"ה ואיזהו קטן מתבאר יפה דגם האם חייבת לחנך את בנה, ושוב ראיתי להרב פתח הדביר שכתב בח"ב דף ק ע"ב בשם הגאון חקרי לב דכשמת האב לכולי עלמא חייבת האם לחנך את בנה עיי"ש, ולפי זה אין ראיה מרש"י הנזכר לעיל דיש לומר שדברי רש"י הם בכשמת האב דהאם חייבת לחנכו.

2. In the continuation of the passage, the Gemara explains that since she had seven sons, at least one of them must have reached the age of *chinuch* (which is approximately age six or seven), and the Sages would have said something if the *sukka* was not kosher. Moreover, the reason that Rabbi Yehuda adds that all of her actions were performed based upon the words of the Sages was so that it could not be argued that even if at least one of her children was subject to the rules of *chinuch*, she did not bother to fulfill this halacha. [Addition of the English editors]

CHILDREN VIOLATING PROHIBITIONS IN CASES OF NECESSITY

Although as we have seen, children that have reached the age of understanding should not be allowed to violate any halachic rules, some *poskim* hold that Chazal were lenient in some cases of an *issur derabanan* (rabbinic prohibition) when it is necessary for the benefit and well-being of the child himself. This principle is evident from the **Shulchan Aruch HaRav** quoted below.

Ⓢ **Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim
343:6**

Some say that any case where it is for the need of the child, such as eating or drinking, **the Sages did not decree at all, and it is permitted to directly feed him anything whose prohibition is rabbinic, if he needs it, even though he has reached the age of education.** But if he does not need it, it is forbidden to feed him, even if he is not yet at the age of comprehension (and if he is at the age of comprehension, his father must scold him), even for a rabbinic prohibition, as it is forbidden for him to nurse from his mother's milk after twenty-four months, even though the prohibition of [consuming] breastmilk [while nursing] is only rabbinic, since he does not need it after twenty-four months.⁷ **And one may rely on their words to be lenient concerning a rabbinic matter if he needs it, and there is no gentile to feed him.**⁸

30. שולחן ערוך הרב | או"ח
שמג:ו

ויש אומרים, שכל שהוא לצרכו של תינוק – כגון אכילה ושתייה – לא גזרו בו חכמים כלל, ומותר להאכילו בידיים, כל דבר שאין איסורו אלא מדברי סופרים – אם צריך לכך – אף על פי שהגיע לחינוך. אבל אם אינו צריך לכך – אסור להאכילו, אפילו אינו בר הבנה (ואביו צריך למחות בו, אם הוא בר הבנה), אפילו באיסור דברי סופרים, שהרי אסור להניקו חלב אימו אחר עשרים וארבעה חודש, אף על פי שאין איסור חלב אישה אלא מדברי סופרים, הואיל ואינו צריך לו אחר כ"ד. ויש לסמוך על דבריהם להקל בדברי סופרים, אם הוא צריך לכך, ואין שם נכרי להאכילו על ידו.

One illustration of this principle is given by **Rav Mordechai Eliyahu** in the ***Darkei Halacha***, where he states that if a child of Ashkenazi descent does not have enough food options on Pesach, it is permitted to feed him baby cereal of *kitniyot*.

7. The halacha of not nursing once the child does not need it anymore (after twenty-four months) is mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch* (y.d. 81:7), citing the Gemara in *Ketubot* (60a). The reason for this rabbinic prohibition is that one may think that if it is permitted to drink breastmilk while nursing, then it is also permitted to consume milk from a non-kosher animal (see Rosh, *Ketubot* 5:19, and *Beit Yosef*, y.d. 81:7). It is permitted to drink it, though, once it has been placed in a utensil, since its identity is less obvious, and the afore-mentioned concern is less relevant. [Addition of the English editors]
8. This approach is actually based on the Rashba and the Ran cited by the *Bi'ur Halacha* (s.v. *midivrei sofrim*). However, the *Bi'ur Halacha* opines that the *Shulchan Aruch* does not agree, since he does not differentiate between cases where the child needs the food or other forbidden activity to be done or not. It is thus a *machloket Acharonim* whether one may be lenient in such cases of necessity. Nevertheless, it may be permitted according to all to allow the child to violate the prohibition in such cases if the parent does not explicitly instruct him to do so. For more discussion of these points, see the practical applications discussed in the continuation of this section. [Addition of the English editors]



Darkei Halacha on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 165:3

It is forbidden to feed a forbidden food even to a baby that is one day old. **But for medicinal purposes and for health, it is permitted.** Therefore, it is good not to give infants formula that contains *chalav akum* [in cases where the parents are stringent about it] unless he has nothing else to eat.⁹ Similarly, **it is permitted to give a child cereal on Pesach that contains *kitniyot* that are kosher for Pesach even though the parents do not eat *kitniyot*.**

Other examples of this principle where it is permitted to allow a child to violate a rabbinic prohibition are given in ***Chinuch HaBanim L'mitzvot*.**



Chinuch HaBanim L'mitzvot, Section 47

It is permitted to feed a child milk that had been milked in a permissible manner on that day, such as by a gentile or using a milking machine in a manner that is permitted, if he does not have any milk that was milked before Shabbat, and the child needs the milk...

It is permitted to give a child a Chumash or siddur to bring to shul on Shabbat even via a road that has no *eiruv*, provided that the Chumash or siddur is designated specifically for use of the child, and that the place they walk in is not a full public domain [biblically]...

It is permitted to give a child cake that has letters on it for him to cut and eat, even though an adult is not allowed to do this.¹⁰

It is permitted to feed a child before *davening* and before he hears *kiddush*, even though there is a mitzva to train the child to *daven* and to hear *kiddush*... because there is no prohibition involved in the eating itself, and the child needs it...

In a case of need, it is permitted for an adult to give a haircut to a child on *Chol HaMo'ed*, even if the child has already reached the age of education, and even though he is not allowed to give himself a haircut on *Chol HaMoe'ed* due to the decree of the Sages.

31. דרכי הלכה | על קיצור שולחן ערוך קסה:ג

אסור להאכיל דבר איסור אפילו לתינוק בן-יומו. לצורך רפואה ובריאות מותר. ולכן טוב שלא לתת לתינוקות אבקת חלב נכרים, אלא אם כן אין לו מה יאכל. וכן מותר לתת לתינוק בפסח דייסה מקטניות כשרה לפסח, אף על פי שהוריו אינם אוכלים קטניות.

32. חינוך הבנים למצוות | סעיף מז

מותר להשקות בשבת את הקטן חלב שנחלב בו-ביום בהיתר, כגון על-ידי נכרי או במכונת חליבה באופן המותר, אם אמנם אין בידו חלב שנחלב מבעוד-יום, והקטן צריך את החלב...

מותר ליתן בשבת בידי הילד חומש וסידור שיביאם לבית-הכנסת, אף דרך מקום שאין בו עירוב, והוא שהחומש והסידור יהיו מיועדים לצורך הקטן, ושלא יהא המקום שדרכו יעבירו רשות-הרבים גמורה...

מותר ליתן בשבת בפני קטן עוגה שיש עליה צורת אותיות, כדי שיחתוך ממנה ויאכל, אף-על-פי שהגדול אסור בזה.

מותר להאכיל את הקטן לפני שיתפלל, ולפני שישמע קידוש, אף על פי שמצווה לחנך את הילד לתפילה ולשמיעת הקידוש... מפני שבאכילה עצמה אין משום איסור, והקטן צריך לכך...

בעת הצורך, מותר לגדול לספר את הקטן בחול-המועד, אפילו קטן שכבר הגיע לחינוך, אף-על-פי שמשום גזירה שגזרו חכמינו ז"ל, אסור לו עצמו להסתפר בחול-המועד.

9. This subject was dealt with in detail in Volume 5 in the *shiur* on *chalav akum*, where the different opinions were discussed. [Addition of the English editors]

10. This issue is subject to a dispute among the *poskim* that is discussed in the commentaries to the *Shulchan Aruch* (o.c. 340:3).

The following are two more common scenarios involving children on Shabbat and the approach taken by some contemporary *poskim* in determining the halacha.

QUESTION 1

A young boy (age six) is scared of the dark and his night-light was not turned on before Shabbat. Is it permitted for the parents to instruct or allow him to turn it on himself?

According to the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* quoted above, it would seem that this may be permitted, if we assume that turning on most lights today does not violate an *issur de'oraita*. Nevertheless, the **Piskei Teshuvot** notes that this issue is subject to *machloket*.



Piskei Teshuvot, Orach Chaim 343:13

The Sefardim are generally stringent about this, in accordance with the fact that the *Shulchan Aruch* did not specify [such a leniency], but Ashkenazim who are lenient in the case of a mitzva have upon whom to rely, especially if it is only a happenstance and not a regular occurrence. And even for Sefardim, there is room to be lenient in a happenstance occurrence... but it is forbidden according to all opinions to give him something that is forbidden biblically... even if it is for his need and benefit...

But if the child takes it on his own without... us instructing him to, if it is for his vital physical needs, there is no prohibition according to all, even for a biblical prohibition, and one does not need to separate him from it or rebuke him.

33. פסקי תשובות | או"ח שמג:יג

והספרדים נוהגים להחמיר בזה וכסתימת השלחן ערוך והאשכנזים המקילים לצורך מצוה יש להם על מי לסמוך, ובפרט אם אינו אלא באקראי ולא בקביעות, וגם לספרדים יש מקום להקל בזה באקראי... אבל איסורים דאורייתא לדברי הכל אסור ליתן לו... לעשות אפילו הוא לצרכו ולתועלתו...

ואם הקטן לוקח בעצמו בלא... שנצווהו על כך, אם זה לצרכי גופו הנחוצים, לדברי הכל ליכא איסור, ואפילו באיסורי תורה, ואין צריך להפרישו ולמחות בו.

According to the *Piskei Teshuvot*, telling a child to violate an *issur derabanan* is subject to dispute (as not everyone accepts the opinion of the Rashba and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*), while telling him to violate an *issur de'oraita* is definitely forbidden. In contrast, all agree that it is permitted to let him violate any prohibition on his own without instructing him to do it.

Thus, it would seem that if the child insists on turning on the light, all would agree that the parent need not protest. But instructing the child to turn it on would be subject to the aforementioned *machloket*.¹¹

QUESTION 2

Someone forgot to turn on the heater in a room before Shabbat. May a parent bring his two-year-old son to the heating controls and have him turn it on (if there is no gentile available)?

The answer to this question should be that it is permitted, since as we learned above, it is permitted for a parent to assist a child under the age of understanding (i.e., less than approximately three) in violating

11. The *Piskei Teshuvot* also notes (footnote 148) that all of the leniencies apply only until age nine, but children older than that should not be lenient at all.

a prohibition provided that the parent does not directly tell them to do it. This is indeed the ruling given by **Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen** in his work **Children in Halacha** in the quote below, though the parent should not express obvious satisfaction at the result, such that the child thinks that the parent approves.



34. Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen, *Children in Halacha*, p. 67

We learned... that it is forbidden to instruct or cause a child to violate a prohibition, even if the child is below *chinuch* age... however, it is permitted to place a forbidden item in front of a child, even though the child will make use of that item in a forbidden manner. Accordingly, one is permitted to place a child of less than *chinuch* age in front of a light switch so that the child may turn it on or off. Likewise, if it is not certain that the child will turn the switch, one may even place the child's hand upon it. [One must remember, though, that if switching off the light will benefit only the parent, and the child realizes that, the parent must stop the child from doing so.]

FURTHER IYUN

For further *iyun* concerning the custom of *kitniyot* as it relates to children, see page 152.



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Yom Yerushalayim: A Day of Open Miracles

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

On the eve of the Six-Day War, 5727 (1967), the security situation in Israel was very tense. The Arab nations were preparing for war with Israel, and Israel feared disastrous results that would devastate the country. But when the war broke out, everyone saw miracles with their own eyes. The IDF destroyed large parts of the Egyptian Air Force, and within six days captured half of the Sinai Peninsula, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Golan Heights. It was a brilliant victory!

To mark this victory, which included salvation from death to life, and to mark the liberation of Jerusalem from 2,000 years of the yoke of foreigners, we celebrate the day of the liberation of Jerusalem.

Many of the *halachic* issues surrounding Yom Yerushalayim are similar to the discussions concerning Yom HaAtzmaut: establishing a day of joy, reciting *Hallel* with a blessing, the laws of mourning and Sefirat HaOmer on Yom Yerushalayim.

The *halachic* decision concerning *Hallel* on Yom Yerushalayim is even simpler

than on Yom HaAtzmaut. Concerning Yom HaAtzmaut there is room to discuss whether it was indeed a miracle worthy of praise because the miracle is not yet complete, our enemies are still working to destroy us and the religious state of the country still requires much fixing. But with regard to Yom Yerushalayim, it is easier to establish the recitation of *Hallel* with a blessing, for the victory in the Six-Day War was an overwhelming and unqualified victory, we were saved from death to life, and because we captured Jerusalem, our holy city and our glory.

Chief Rabbi Unterman explained: “There is a certain superiority to the day that symbolizes the very existence of the State when it comes to celebration and joy, and that day [Yom HaAtzmaut] will forever remain the day of the birth of the State of Israel. We hope that our country will flourish and prosper, absorb the ingathering of the exiles and from strength to strength as we pave the way to our redemption. However, concerning the blessing for *Hallel*, the 28th of Iyar is superior, for we saw open miracles like the

collapse of our enemies’ strength in just two days, and we liberated Jerusalem and the surrounding cities. For a day of open miracles, we are obligated to recite *Hallel* with a blessing” (Responso *Shevet miYehudah*, Part II, *Orach Chaim* 59:2).

And so concerning Yom Yerushalayim, the Chief Rabbinate established from the very beginning that we recite *Hallel* with a blessing, and so it is accepted to this day.



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

is the Nasi of World Mizrahi.

He is the Founder and Chairman of Sula-mot and La’Ofek, and serves as the Chief Rabbi of Gush Etzion, and Rosh Yeshivah of the Jerusalem College of Technology.

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AN IDEAL JEWISH ARMY ON A FULL STAGE

RABBI REUVEN TARAGIN

Soldiers are usually not associated with piety or theoretical studies. They are strong physically but often not spiritually or intellectually.

Judaism has a different conception. According to Rav Yossi HaGelili, soldiers who sin, even if only minor infractions, are sent home (*Sotah* 43a). Interestingly, the example of a minor infraction that disqualifies a potential soldier is speaking between the laying of the *tefillin shel yad* and the *tefillin shel rosh*. Many explain that the *tefillin shel yad* symbolizes our actions, while the *tefillin shel rosh* represents our thoughts, faith, and beliefs. A soldier in a Jewish army must ensure that he links his actions to his thoughts and beliefs.

A Purim skit at the Volozhin Yeshiva emphasized the high spiritual bar set for Jewish soldiers. The skit included a re-enactment of the Torah's military selection process. After dismissing those with a new wife, home, or vineyard, the officers dismissed those who had committed even minor sins. At that point, all potential soldiers left the stage except the Vilna Gaon and the P'nei Yehoshua, the only two Jews who could meet that standard.

The ideal Jewish army consists of truly pious soldiers. This is how my ancestor, Rav Avraham, the brother of the Vilna Gaon, explained Yitzchak's message to Ya'akov. After noticing that the son who appeared before him sounded like Ya'akov, but his forearms felt like those of Eisav, Yitzchak exclaimed, "The voice is the voice of Ya'akov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav" (*Bereishit* 27:22). Chazal explain that Eisav's power over us depends on the strength of our "voice" of Torah learning and *tefillah*. Their arms are dominant when our voice is weak; when our voice is strong, their arms are not (*Bereishit Rabbah* 65:20).

Rav Avraham pointed out that Yitzchak's words actually describe Ya'akov's voice and Eisav's hands as coexistent.¹ When Ya'akov's voice is strong, Hashem blesses Ya'akov with the strength of Eisav's arms. When Ya'akov's voice is weak, Eisav maintains his strength. When we are spiritually

strong, we are also physically powerful (*Ma'alot HaTorah*, 71).²

This is the embodiment of the ideal Jewish army: soldiers whose physical strength is not just a result of their training but also rooted in their spiritual fortitude. They are the living proof of the integration of what Chazal referred to as the *safra*, book, and *saifa*, sword (*Avodah Zarah* 17a).

Baruch Hashem, we are witnessing a revolution in this area. Though no soldier can match the Vilna Gaon's or P'nei Yehoshua's piety, thousands of IDF soldiers are deeply committed to *halacha* and Jewish values and are genuine *talmidei chachamim*. Young scholars, many of whom have already finished *Shas*, serve in the regular standing army, and *Roshei Yeshiva* and *Ramim* serve in the reserves.

The founding *Roshei Yeshiva* of the *hesder yeshivot* mostly did not serve in combat roles. As a second and third generation of *Roshei Yeshiva* have emerged, that has changed. Rav Chaim Sabato (Ma'aleh Adumim) and Rav Yaakov Meidan (Har Etzion) fought brutal battles in the Yom Kippur War, while Rav Baruch Wieder (Yeshivat Hakotel) miraculously survived the Lebanon War's bloody tank battles. They and hundreds of others have served as role models for tens of thousands of students over the past fifty years. When forced to leave the *beit midrash* to fight our enemies, these *talmidim* take their *sefarim* with them. They are deeply committed to protecting *Am Yisrael* on the battlefield and continuing their Torah studies and growth while they do so.

Never before in our history have we had such a significant presence of *talmidei chachamim* in a Jewish army.³ If the Volozhin Purim skit took place today, far more than two people would be left standing on the stage. The stage would be full of many units.

While our focus over the past eight months has been on those killed, wounded, and kidnapped, we should also appreciate the special times we are living in – when the vision of a Torah-true army is beginning

to become a reality. As we approach *Chag Matan Torah*, we should take pride in the fact that we are beginning to realize the Torah's conception of what a Jewish army should look like.

May we appreciate the commitment of our holy soldiers to Torah and Torah values. Their dedication is a beacon of hope. May their commitment and dedication merit the arrival of the day when they will no longer have to leave the *beit midrash* for the battlefield.

1. The Vilna Gaon explained the *derashah* as rooted in the fact that the first appearance of the word "kol" is written *chaser* (without the *vav*). This intimates that Eisav's arms are strong when Ya'akov's voice is weak.
2. Chazal explain the significance of Moshe's arms stretched heavenward during the war with Amalek in a similar way. Military victory hinges on "looking heavenward" and remembering that Hashem is responsible for our victory (*Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah* 29a).
3. These soldiers have inspired and are inspired by army rabbis who, in the spirit of the Kohen and the officers the Torah mandates address the soldiers before battle, *daven* and give them words of *chizuk* and then join them in battle. See here for a eulogy for an Army Chief Rabbi who embodied and inspired this model – tinyurl.com/army-chief-rabbi



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Megillat Ruth: Miracles at Midnight

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Yannai, known as the “father of *piyut*,” who lived in the late fifth to early sixth century in the Galilee in Israel, composed a beautiful liturgical poem, “*Vayehi bachatzi haLayla*” recounting numerous miraculous night scenes in Tanach. Each stanza ends with “...and such in the middle of the night.” However, only three events occurred precisely at midnight. There are only three times in the entire Tanach wherein we find redemptive events “*bachatzi haLayla*”!

The first time the phrase “וַיְהִי בַחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה” (Shemot 12:29) appears is in the context of Divine punishment executed upon the Egyptians through the miraculous death of their firstborn at precisely midnight – “In **the middle of the night** Hashem struck down all the [male] firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the cattle.” Hashem’s direct intervention in the dark of the night brought an unprecedented redemption which we are commanded to recount every day and night.

Fast-forward nearly four-hundred years later, when *Am Yisrael*, and particularly the tribe of Yehudah, were suffering under Philistine oppression – consequences for not conquering Gaza, Ashkelon and Ashdod. After a few reactive attempts and personal vendettas, Shimshon acted with divinely-infused strength. “At **midnight** he got up, grasped the doors of the town gate together with the two gate-posts, and pulled them out along with the bar. He placed them on his shoulders and carried them off to the top of the hill that is near Hebron” (Shoftim 16:3). Instead of taking advantage of the miraculous situation by invading and conquering the exposed and vulnerable city of Azza (Gaza), the people of Yehudah remained

passive. By not coming to Shimshon’s aid, they lost an opportunity for potential redemption from their enemies.

In this context, *Shmuel haNavi* authored another work on the same time period as the Book of Shoftim – the Book of Ruth. The story begins with family leader Elimelech from Beit Lechem of Yehudah, who, due to famine, leaves with his wife, Naomi, and sons for the fields of Moav. Years later, bereft of husband and sons, widowed Naomi returned to her homeland empty-handed, accompanied by her Moabite daughter-in-law, Ruth. Though the kindness of Ruth provided Naomi with daily sustenance, Naomi desired the long-term “redemption” of her family name through “*geulat sadeh*” – a process by which a relative purchases and redeems the family field and ideally provides progeny for the long-term redemption of her family name. She sent Ruth to the threshing floor of Boaz to propose pseudo-levirate marriage, and when we would least expect the phrase of anticipated redemption, “וַיְהִי בַחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה,” a dramatic irony unfolded – “And it came to pass at **midnight**, that the man was startled, and turned himself; and, behold, a woman lay at his feet” (Ruth 3:8).

This time, however, there were no manifest miracles! Instead of Divine initiative, reward, and redemption (see Ruth 2:12), Ruth implores redemption from Boaz: “for you are a redeeming kinsman” (Ruth 3:9). Contrary to the “midnight miracle” in Egypt, wherein Pharaoh demanded blessing and chased the Hebrew “strangers” away without provisions in the middle of the night, Boaz blessed Ruth, allowed her to stay the night, and provided her with food to bring home. What initially seemed a disappointing denouement became, in fact, a marvelous message of redemption!

Shmuel HaNavi employs the phrase of Divine midnight miracles to draw our attention to the contrast between them and the opportunity for the common man and woman to provide “human” midnight miracles of kindness, thereby redeeming the names and families of indigent members of society. The kindness of Boaz, the “redeemer,” provided for the redemption of Elimelech’s field, marriage to Ruth, and perpetuation of the family name linked to the land through child. Remarkably, however, the author foreshadowed the outcome of these “small miracles” – i.e. national redemption through King David, founder of messianic monarchy!

Today, in our current war and oppression, instead of passively waiting for Divine miracles at midnight to annihilate our enemy or for super-hero soldiers to destroy the city gates (and tunnels) of Gaza, the story of Ruth and Boaz reminds us that we have the potential to mirror Hashem’s ways by performing individual miracles of kindness, restoring names and building families. A few weeks ago, we witnessed Hashem’s intervention against the Iranian missiles at midnight; now Hashem is waiting for our miracles for the final stages of redemption to unfold!



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YISHMAEL'S RESENTMENT: THE AL-AQSA FLOOD

RABBI ELIE MISCHEL

When Hamas launched its war against Israel on October 7, it gave the attack a fascinating name: “The Al-Aqsa Flood.” The primary reason for the attack, in Hamas’ own words, is “the Israeli Judaization plans to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, its temporal and spatial division attempts, as well as the intensification of the Israeli settlers’ incursions into the holy mosque.” On its face, this is a complete fabrication. The Jordanian Waqf controls the Temple Mount, and neither the Israeli government nor “Israeli settlers” interfere with Al-Aqsa Mosque in any way. If Muslims already control Al-Aqsa, why is Hamas obsessed with “protecting” Al-Aqsa from non-existent Israeli aggression?

The question is only strengthened by the relatively low status of Jerusalem in Islamic thought and practice. Muslims do not pray to Jerusalem, nor is Jerusalem ever explicitly named in their prayers. Throughout history, the city has never been the capital of a sovereign Muslim state nor has it evolved into a hub of cultural or scholarly activities. Historians agree the Prophet Muhammad never stepped foot in Jerusalem. As Daniel Pipes writes, “Jerusalem appears in the Jewish Bible 669 times and Zion (which usually means Jerusalem) 154 times, or 823 times in all... In contrast... Jerusalem and Zion appear as frequently in the Koran as they do in the Hindu Bhagavad-Gita, the Taoist Tao-Te Ching, the Buddhist Dhamapada and the Zoroastrian Zend Avesta – which is to say, not once.” (Daniel Pipes, *The Muslim Claim to Jerusalem*).

Why has Jerusalem become a focal point of fundamentalist Islam and the rallying cry for Hamas? Why do passionate imams regularly whip their followers into an angry frenzy over the supposed evils Israel is committing against Al-Aqsa, after 1,300 years of Muslim indifference?

The unique holiness of the Temple Mount far predates the Temple itself. After the

awesome drama of *Akeidat Yitzchak*, Avraham named the mountain where he and Yitzchak stood. “And Avraham named that place, ‘The L-rd will see,’ as it is said to this day: ‘On the mountain, the L-rd will be seen’” (Bereishit 22:14). What, exactly, will the L-rd see in this place? “The L-rd will choose and see for Himself this place, to cause His Divine Presence to rest therein and for offering sacrifices here. Future generations will say about it, ‘On this mountain, G-d appears to His people’” (Rashi, Bereishit 22:14). The mountain where Avraham was prepared to sacrifice Yitzchak for G-d was none other than the Temple Mount itself.

The story of *Akeidat Yitzchak* is uniquely important for Muslims, even though Islam does not accept the Torah. The Koran contains its own version of the binding story, but unlike the Torah, it does not mention the name of the sacrificial son. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, an 18th century Sunni Muslim scholar, concluded that the sacrificial son must have been Yishmael, for the Koran describes the sacrificial son as Avraham’s “unique son” – which could only have been Yishmael, the forefather of Muhammad.

Who was the beloved and chosen son of Avraham who was bound up as an offering to G-d? Was it Yitzchak, the forefather of Israel, or Yishmael, the forefather of Islam? G-d said to Avraham, “Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, Yitzchak, and go away to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you” (Bereishit 22:2). The contrast between Yitzchak, the chosen son, and Yishmael, banished from Avraham’s home, could not be clearer. It was inevitable that Islamic tradition, while keeping the basic framework of the story, would replace Yitzchak with Yishmael.

Against the background of this ancient rivalry, Hamas’ Al-Aqsa Flood becomes clearer. The Temple Mount is not simply

a contested holy site; it is the root of Yishmael’s age-old resentment of Israel and the passionate hatred that fuels Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah. If the Torah is true, if the Temple Mount is the place where Yitzchak willingly allowed his father to bind him and offer him as a sacrifice, it is a constant reminder of Yishmael’s humiliation and having been overlooked. And so Muslim leaders constantly deny the Jewish people’s historical ties to the city and Temple Mount, assuming that if they repeat the lie for long enough, the international community will believe it.

“Behold! I am making Jerusalem a cup of weakness for all the peoples around... And it shall come to pass on that day that I will make Jerusalem a stone of burden for all peoples; all who bear it shall be gashed, and all the nations of the earth shall gather about it” (Zechariah 12:2-3). Our enemies are obsessed with Jerusalem, but it will be “a cup of weakness” and “a stone of burden” for them that will lead to their destruction. With the Al-Aqsa Flood, Hamas and other jihadists have made Jerusalem the center of their longing, even more than Mecca and Medina – but the “stone of burden” will come crashing down on them.



Rabbi Elie Mischel
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Action and Ideas: The Sinai Formula

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

Intellectuals is the title of a book authored by Paul Johnson, the celebrated modern-day historian. The book is a vivid portrayal of the lives of the most influential public intellectuals in Western culture – Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Bertrand Russell, Jean-Paul Sartre, among many others. But it's no hagiography. In the book, he contrasts the intellectual brilliance of their work with their often-dramatic personal failings; their dysfunctional relationships, their unhappy lives, and most especially, their lack of basic ethics. The point he makes is that brilliant ideas do not necessarily translate into good character or even into creating a better world.

And yet, one of the key Torah teachings is that ideas *can* make the world better.

We are on the eve of celebrating the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, exactly 3,336 years ago, when G-d unveiled a system of ideas that forever changed the world.

Paul Johnson, himself, acknowledged this. In his monumental *A History of the Jews*, he writes:

"Certainly the world without the Jews would have been a radically different place. Humanity might eventually have stumbled upon all the Jewish insights. But we cannot be sure. All the great conceptual discoveries of the intellect seem obvious and inescapable once they have been revealed, but it requires a special genius to formulate them for the first time. The Jews had this gift. To them we owe the idea of equality before the law, both divine and human; of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person; of the individual conscience and so of personal redemption; of the collective conscience and so of social responsibility; of peace as an abstract ideal and love as the foundation of justice, and many other items which constitute the basic moral furniture of the human mind. Without the Jews, it might have been a much emptier place."

Of course, as profound as these comments are, Johnson makes a major error – he seems to attribute these ideas to the "special genius" of the Jewish people, when in fact they were given to us as a gift from G-d, which we celebrate on Shavuot. How else to explain that a group of desert-dwelling nomads could suddenly

produce these revolutionary ideas so many thousands of years ago?

But the transformative power of Torah lies not in ideas alone – but in its unique synthesis of ideas and *action*. Torah is living wisdom; the intersection between philosophy and practice. When G-d gave us the Torah, He did not only give us ideas, He translated those ideas into a programme of action that we call the *mitzvot*. Each *mitzvah* is the product of a powerful idea expressed as a practical action.

This practical action is granular, distilled to the finest detail. The *mitzvot* are derived from the Written Torah, elucidated in the Oral Torah, in the form of the Talmud, and then devolve into a programme of action which we call the *halacha* – a system designed to give practical expression to the Divine ideals that are the kernel of each *mitzvah*.

Thus, the Divine ideal of compassion is translated into detailed practical directives on comforting mourners, visiting the sick, burying the dead, and other ways of alleviating human suffering. The Divine value of kindness is translated into the practical *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, including detailed laws on how much we give, the manner in which we give, and who we give to. The Divine ideal of renewal is translated into the *mitzvah* of Shabbat, including detailed directives on what it means to "rest", and on the various practices that enhance the tranquillity and spiritual connection of the day.

Similarly, the ethereal experience of prayer is given shape and practical expression through various *halachic* specifications around when and how we pray, and through the *halachically* prescribed words of the *siddur*. And even the seemingly abstract concept of historical memory is translated into the Pesach Seder with all its stipulations on what we eat and what we do and what we say to evoke the story of the Exodus.

By translating these grand ideas into practical, tangible, real-world action, G-d has given us the means to transform ourselves and the world in which we live. Abstract ideas can be intellectually stimulating but have no impact or practical significance. For ideas to effect real change, they need to be translated into action.

Really, it's a matter of integrity. The Talmud defines a person of integrity as someone whose "inside is like their outside." Having integrity means being the person we portray ourselves to be, ensuring what we do is a reflection of who we are, living in accordance with our beliefs. Johnson's *Intellectuals* espoused lofty ideals but failed to live up to those ideals. They lacked the programme of action, and the force of commitment, to transport their ideas from the realm of the mind to their heart and soul.

After all, we are composite beings; intellectual and emotional, physical and spiritual. A person whose life is dominated by their intellect, without a programme of action to bring their ideas to fruition, remains rooted in the abstract realm, their ideas unrealised. On the other hand, actions which aren't animated by ideas and intellect are lifeless and empty, without spiritual meaning. It is only in the combination of body and soul, intellect and emotion, that we realise our true greatness. It is only through this synthesis of action and ideal that we change the world.

The Torah is an integrated programme of thought and action that speaks to all the various facets of our makeup. This holistic approach to human development is captured in the two most important two words in Jewish history. When our ancestors stood at the foot of the mountain and G-d presented to them the opportunity to carry out His mission in the world, they responded: "*na'aseh v'nishma*, we will do and we will understand."

These two elements – doing and understanding – are the essence of Torah. They capture the essence of a system of doing and understanding, of action and wisdom, of philosophy and practicality, of ideas and real life.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein
is the Chief Rabbi of South Africa.



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SIVAN RAHAV-MEIR

Fifty-seven years ago we returned to the Kotel. Our brave soldiers led the way, but they were not alone. Incredibly, a song, "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" by Naomi Shemer, had a hand in bringing our people back to the holy city.

A few weeks before the Six-Day War, as the State of Israel celebrated 19 years of independence, we did not know that we would soon be fighting a war that would change everything. The Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, was asked to host a music festival to celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut. He commissioned Naomi Shemer to write a song in honor of the city. Kollek said that there were no songs that expressed *Am Yisrael's* pain over the division of the city. Shemer said that it was hard to write under stress, but in the end the song was born, and it became a hit.

In every verse there are clues, layers of culture, identity, verses, *midrashim*, and countless echoes of Jewish tradition.

The mountain air is clear as wine
And the scent of pines
Is carried on the breeze of twilight
With the sound of bells.
And in the slumber of tree and stone
Captured in her dream
The city sits alone
And in its midst is a wall.

אֵוִיר-הָרִים צָלוּל כֵּינֹר
וְרִיחַ אֲרָנִים
נִשָּׂא בְרוּחַ הָעֶרְבִים
עִם קוֹל פְּעֻמוֹנִים.
וּבְתַרְדֵּמַת אֵילָן וָאֶבֶן
שְׁבוּיָהּ בְּחִלּוּמָהּ
הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּדָד יוֹשֶׁבֶת
וּבְלֶבָהּ חוֹמָה.

"In its midst is a wall." This city has a heart, and it is halved. These words remind us of *Megillat Eicha* which is read on Tisha B'Av. "The city sits alone" reminds us of the first verse, "How lonely sits the city that was full of people" (*Eicha* 1:1), words we read on the day of destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Then the chorus comes for the first time:

Jerusalem of Gold
And of copper, and of light
For all your songs
I am a violin.

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל זָהָב
וְשֶׁל נְחוֹשֶׁת וְשֶׁל אוֹר
הֲלֹא לְכָל שִׁירֶיךָ
אֲנִי כַנּוֹר.

Where did Naomi Shemer take these three words, "Jerusalem of Gold" from? It comes from the Talmud:

"Rabbi Akiva married Rachel, the daughter of Kalba Savua who excluded her from all his possessions. In the winter they slept in a warehouse filled with hay, and he would take the straw out of her hair. He said to her: 'If I was able to, I would give you Jerusalem of Gold'" (*Nedarim* 50a).

This holy couple chose to live a life of poverty and destitution in order to live a life of Torah and substance. But from within this poverty, Rabbi Akiva promised her that one day he would bring her a gold jewel, Jerusalem of Gold.

And what is the meaning of "For all your songs I am a violin"? These words were written 900 years ago by the poet Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, in Spain:

"Zion, will you not ask after the welfare of your prisoners, Who seek your welfare, and are the remnant of your flock?... And when I dream of the return of your Shabbat - I am a violin to your songs."

Being a man of action, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi was not satisfied with songs or writing. In 1141, he embarked on a dangerous journey to the Land of Israel. According to legend, he died in front of the Kotel in Jerusalem, the object of his longing, when the heels of a horse belonging to an Arab ran him over.

"For all your songs I am a violin" is a continuation of "I am a violin to your songs".

How the cisterns have dried
The market square is empty
And there is no one who goes to the
Temple Mount
In the Old City.
And in the caves in the mountains
Winds are howling
And no one goes down to the Dead Sea
From Jericho.

אֵיכָה יִבְשׁוּ בִּזְרוֹת הַמַּיִם
כְּכַר-הַשּׁוּק רִיקָה
וְאֵין פּוֹקֵד אֶת
הַר-הַבַּיִת
בְּעִיר הָעִתִּיקָה.
וּבְמַעְרוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּסַלְעַ
מִלְלוֹת רוּחוֹת
וְאֵין יוֹרֵד אֶל יַם-הַמֶּלַח
בְּדֶרֶךְ יְרִיחוֹ.

This verse was not the original version. Naomi sang the song for Rivka Michaeli, and because of her, this verse was added. Rivka once explained that “Naomi sang me the song and I was excited. But I said to her: ‘You must mention the Old City. My father was born in the Old City, as well as my mother. My father would stand and look towards it through the portholes in the protective wall.’ Naomi responded: ‘Rivka, I already wrote “and in her midst there is a wall.” But I said, ‘That is not enough.’ So Naomi added ‘How the cisterns have dried.’” We are again reminded of *Megillat Eicha*, of the emptiness, desolation, and wasteland.

Now we are brought to the personal, human experience of the individual who sang to her, the one who stands before the great city, before eternity:

But when I come today to sing to you אף בבואי היום לשיר לך
And to you to tie crowns ולך לקשר כתרים
I am less than the youngest of your sons קטנתי מצעיר בניך
And the last of the poets. ומאחרון המשוררים.

The expression “to tie crowns” is once again related to Rabbi Akiva. It is said that he used to tie crowns to all the letters in the Torah, that is, he studied them in depth, delved into them, and discovered their meaning. There is also a sense of smallness here, like Ya'akov, our forefather who declares “I am small” in the book of Bereishit. I am not worthy.

Because your name burns my lips כי שמי צורב את השפתיים
Like a kiss of resin כנשיקת-שרך
If I forget you Jerusalem אם אשכחך ירושלים
Which is all gold. אשר כלה זהב.

This is a phrase that requires no explanation of its source: “If I forget you, O' Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten. May my tongue cling to my palate, if I do not remember you, if I do not bring up Jerusalem at the beginning of my joy” (Tehillim 137:5–6).

This is the historical oath taken at every *chuppah*, because every house that is built in Israel is part of this great story, the story of Jerusalem.

This is where the original song ended, with the addition of Rivka Michaeli. “If I forget you, Jerusalem, which is all gold.” Three weeks after the song was played for the first time, the Six-Day War broke out. The longing described in the song ended, for we returned.

Is there a connection between the song and the liberation of Jerusalem? Between consciousness and reality, between dreams and their realization? Many argue that the song liberated the city. As playwright Dan Almagor said:

“Unwillingly, and without being able to dream about it, this song changed not only her life, but also the life of the country, the region, and to some extent, the life of the entire world. Yes, one song, which was played repeatedly on the radio for the two weeks before the outbreak of the Six-Day War, and suddenly the entire nation, its leaders and champions, felt the guilt that for 19 years, since the fall of the Old City at the hands of Jordan,

no-one seriously bothered to change the situation. Testimonies I personally heard from army generals who served in the General Staff at that time point to evidence that the IDF's Central Command had no serious plan related to the liberation of the Old City.

It is a fact that in the 19 years since 5708, not a single hymn was composed and sung by any Hebrew singer which mentioned the loss of the Old City. The enormous popularity of the song, which was undoubtedly one of the prominent motives that spurred the leadership and the army to respond to the bombardment of King Hussein even when entering an impromptu campaign, which had a heavy cost. In a short time, it transformed the author of the song into a kind of ‘high priestess’ or ‘Devorah the prophet.’”

After the war, Naomi received a request from Teddy Kollek, to add another verse to the song, and she hurried to do so:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| We returned to the cisterns, | חזרנו אל בורות-המים |
| The market and the square. | לשוק ולכפר |
| A shofar calls on the Temple Mount, | שופר קורא בהר-הבית |
| In the Old City. | בעיר העתיקה. |
| And in the caves where | ובמערות אשר בסלע |
| Thousands of suns shine in the rock, | אלפי שמשות זורחות, |
| We will return to the Dead Sea | נשוב נרד אל ים-המלח |
| By way of Jericho. | בדרך יריחו. |

The song that played a part in pushing us back to the Kotel now describes the new reality. This story teaches us the power of culture and how much it influences us, the importance of the songs we hear, and how our playlist shapes reality. We see how deep and ancient our story is, how layers upon layers of culture and history await us, and how much there is for us to create. We must be the ones to write the next stanzas about Jerusalem.

Happy Yom Yerushalayim.



Sivan Rahav-Meir

is a media personality and lecturer. She lives in Jerusalem with her husband, Yedidya, and their five children, and serves as World Mizrahi's Scholar-in-Residence. She is a primetime anchor on Channel 2 News, has a column in Israel's largest newspaper, Yediot Acharonot, and a weekly radio show on Galei Tzahal (Army Radio).



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JEWS with VIEWS

We asked five accomplished Jews from around the world: If you could take only one Sefer with you to a desert island, what would it be?



Rabbi Elad Eshel

As difficult as it is to answer this question, after some thought, I felt there was only one answer for me: The commentary of Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch on the Chumash.

This is a true treasure trove of sharp and eloquent insights. Whether I am looking for a nice idea to share at the Shabbat table, preparing a source sheet for an in-depth analysis of a topic, or I simply have my own question on the *parsha* that I am looking to answer – when I open up this book, I am never disappointed.

The Hebrew translation is clear and accessible; his explanations are always rooted in the text, and yet deep and profound; and his ideas both novel and a true reflection of our tradition.

I would love the time afforded to me on a desert island to properly learn through this *sefer* cover to cover!

Rabbi Elad Eshel together with his wife Lani and their 3 children are the Shlichim for Bnei Akiva UK and Mizrachi UK in Manchester. He earned his semicha through Musmachim, World Mizrachi's semicha program, and the couple are also graduates of Shalhevet, World Mizrachi's shlichut training program.



Chaya Bina-Katz

How can one begin to choose “the” book from our immense and rich array of Jewish learning and literature? It’s a nearly impossible task. But as I reflected I decided that I would take a *siddur* with me to the island – one that includes Pirkei Avot and Tehillim.

The *siddur* is the Jewish centerpiece – our prayers, our hopes, our remembrances, our aspirations, our wisdom all under one cover. We turn to it three times a day, and more. It moves us to song and gives us the words to praise. It connects us to G-d and to each other.

The *siddur* is our lifetime companion and would be my perfect and needed companion always and wherever I am.

Chaya Bina-Katz is Matan's CEO. She joined the Matan staff 15 years ago after practicing law. Her current role as CEO combines her skills, knowledge and passion for Matan and women's Torah learning.



Rabbi Hillel Merzbach

If I could only take one book, I would take the set of “Shirat HaYam”, as they are a summary of the *halachic* opinions from the Gemara to today’s *poskim*.

They were written to help people prepare for the Rabbanut tests of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, and they summarize the *halachic sugyas* from the Gemara, Rishonim, Beit Yosef, all the way to today.

Today, many men and women use these *sefarim*, as they both give the bottom line of the *psak*, as well as understanding the development and chain of *Torah she’ba’al peh*.

I have used these *sefarim* to prepare *shiurim* in my community, and also now during this war as the rabbi of a brigade, these *sefarim* have everything I need to prepare *shiurim*, when we learn together during some rest time.

Rabbi Hillel Merzbach is the rabbi of Yad Binyamin.



Jacqui Austen

The series of *sefarim* that I would take with me would be The Three Pillars by Rabbi David Milston. *Shiur klali* at Midreshet HaRova, which this series is partly inspired by, was one of my absolute favorite parts of my week when I was a student and staff member there. I remember feeling like the Torah Rav Milston gave over was somehow exactly what I needed to hear every single week.

This series gives over profound, thought-provoking ideas on the weekly *parsha* based on the foundation of *Am Yisrael*, *Torat Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*. What I appreciate a lot about this series is that as one changes with time and hopefully grows and develops, seemingly new messages emerge. The person who you used to be would relate to one of the paragraphs or sections and by the next time that *parsha* came back around you would find yourself drawn to something else entirely, something which you previously may not have given much thought to. A book that seemingly grows with a person, to me, is the ideal book to keep with you long-term, desert island or not.

Jacqui Austen made Aliyah from Baltimore, Maryland in 2016. She completed her Masters in International Development at Hebrew University and is currently the Assistant Programs Director at World Mizrahi.



Rabbi Benjy Myers

I would bring with me the Tanach with the Concordance. The Concordance lists all the words in Tanach and arranges them by their Hebrew root letters. It shows where each word appears and, as such, makes it easier to search for themes and also singular uses of words.

I love Tanach, language and order, and the Concordance gives a new depth and understanding to seeing the Tanach as a whole – a story can be illuminated by seeing which words are used, and where else in the Tanach those words are used. It would keep me busy for a long time on the desert island!

Hashem’s first interaction with the world was through words: “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר”. To understand the world and connect to G-d, we need to try and better understand His words transmitted to us through the words of the Tanach.

Rabbi Benjy Myers is the Educational Director of the Beren-Amiel and Straus-Amiel Emissary Training and Placement Institutes. (PHOTO: OLIVER MARSDEN)

The First Yom Yerushalayim

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

Each year during the early hours of Shavuot morning, the streets of Yerushalayim are filled with tens of thousands of people, walking to the Kotel to daven following Tikkun Leil Shavuot. What many do not realize is that this modern custom preserves the memory of Shavuot in 1967, just one week after the Old City was liberated, when the Kotel was opened to the public for the first time. Today a prominent Rosh Yeshiva and posek in the United States, Rabbi Mordechai Willig was a yeshiva student in Yerushalayim on that remarkable Shavuot in 1967. This article was written based on a talk given in Yeshiva University on Yom Yerushalayim 2017 (5777) by Rabbi Willig when he shared his memories from that day, but has been adapted for this publication.

In the spring of 1967, we in Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, together with all of Israel, were literally under the gun. Tens of thousands of enemy troops and tanks were massed at the border, broadcasting that they were going to destroy us, drive us into the sea, and kill us.

The fear was very real. Tragically, in the one case in the history of the State of Israel when the Arabs were in fact victorious and captured a *yishuv*, they carried out their threat. It happened in Kfar Etzion on May 13, 1948, the day before Israel declared its independence. Their threats then were not just words; they massacred everybody. Two Jews escaped to tell the story. A white flag was raised and the Jews surrendered, but the Arabs did not follow international law. They gathered the Jews in a courtyard and murdered them, and those who attempted to escape were pursued and killed. This is the fear we faced in the holy land in 1967.

Speaking of international law, Gamal Abdel Nasser – the leader of Egypt and head of the Arab world – closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, which by international law was a declaration of war on Israel. Nevertheless, Israel was fearful of launching a preemptive strike.

Three weeks of incredible tension and mounting fear passed, both for the Jews in *Eretz Yisrael* and those in Europe and America. We were all afraid of a second holocaust, a mere 22 years after the first.

Though it's hard to grasp this now, before the Six-Day War the mindset in Israel and around the world was that the Old City would remain in the hands of the Arabs until the coming of *Mashiach*. I remember Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh took us on a tour of Jerusalem the month before the war, in Nissan. We thought we would never see the Kotel, that our children and grandchildren would never see it until *Mashiach* came. That was our mindset one month before the War! But the *Ribono Shel Olam* did incredible things in the weeks that followed.

Ten years earlier, the United Nations stationed troops in the Sinai Desert to guarantee there would be peace between Israel and Egypt. Well, guess what? After Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran, he ordered the UN to leave – and they just walked away! Their whole purpose was to prevent this war, yet they just walked away.

The Israeli cabinet debated what to do. Rabin, the chief of staff, had a breakdown

on the eve of the war. Moshe Dayan and Menachem Begin were brought into the government as part of an emergency coalition. Finally, three weeks later, they made their decision. They understood that Israel would be strangled by its Arab enemies if it didn't act, and so they launched a secret preemptive strike. Early in the morning, Israeli planes flew very low over the Sinai Desert to avoid the radar. How we caught the Egyptians off guard on that day is truly miraculous. The Ajloun radar facility in Jordan detected waves of aircraft heading towards Egypt and signaled the code word for “war” up the Egyptian command chain, but communication issues within the Egyptian command structure prevented the warning from reaching the intended airfields. Meanwhile, the general commanding the Egyptian forces told his subordinates the night before that he was going to sleep and that they shouldn't wake him up. These kinds of miracles are what we call *siyata dishmaya*, help that literally comes from Hashem and *shamayim*, the heavens. The Egyptian Air Force was destroyed on the ground, enabling Israeli forces to go into Sinai and remove Nasser's stranglehold.

In the weeks leading up to the war, Israel implored the very conservative King



Hussein of Jordan, "Please do not open a second front, we have enough problems with the Egyptians. If you don't shoot at us, we won't shoot at you." Yet Hussein decided to put his forces under Egyptian command and they attacked Israel. They captured Armon Hanatziv, the UN headquarters, which was an attack on Western Jerusalem. They bombed Western Jerusalem, dropping shells into the population centers. A shell was even dropped on the Mir Yeshiva, which was a kilometer from the border.

The Israeli army fought with great heroism and, with Hashem's help, they were able to vanquish the enemy forces. The IDF reached the Suez Canal and Jordan in about three days. And most amazing of all was the battle for Jerusalem and the Old City, culminating with Rav Goren famously blowing the *shofar* at the Kotel. Two amazing things happened – we were saved from a terrible danger which threatened our lives, and Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, everything west of the Jordan River, was in our hands in the span of three days.

After doing nothing for three weeks, the United Nations woke up after three days of war to demand a ceasefire. If the Jews are winning, there must be a ceasefire!

In Kerem B'Yavneh, there was an air raid siren on the second day of the war. We ran to the bomb shelter, and let me tell you – that was quite a *shacharit*! Nasser said he was coming for Tel Aviv, and we kept looking up to see if he would follow up on his threats. We thought the air raid was part of an attack that would threaten all of Israel. It turns out that one Iraqi plane flew over Netanya, sending half the country into bomb shelters. One woman went on the terrace to see and was killed by the shrapnel, but that was the extent of it.

After a ceasefire was declared following six days of war, we all wanted to go to Yerushalayim. But nineteen years of barbed wire and mines meant we couldn't get in so fast. An engineering corps first had to go in and clear it out.

The government announced that on Shavuot morning, exactly one week after Jerusalem was taken, the public would be allowed in. Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh made a *mishmar* at Heichal Shlomo, we davened *shacharit* and read the Torah. It was 5:30am and we would be the first ones in – but not by a long shot! The city was overwhelmed with people and the police were doing crowd control. If anyone went a few hundred yards too far the police stopped them. Our *rebbe*, Rabbi Yeshayahu Chaim Hadari, led us in singing "*Yerushalayim Habnuya*" to a Sephardic tune as we walked through the streets.

When I met him about 20 years ago, I sang that song for him. He was shocked; it was more than 30 years after that Shavuot morning! He asked me how I remembered the tune, and I said, "Some things you don't forget. That day, I'll never forget. It's etched in my memory."

We marched down Agron, to the end of Yaffo. Because I had been in Israel since the summer before, I remembered that buses would go down Yaffo and make a u-turn by Barclays Bank; you couldn't go any further because there was a barbed wire checkpoint there that was the border. But on that day we walked right through.

"Yerushalayim is built up as a city united together" (Tehillim 122:3). Never in my life have I seen the fulfillment of a verse as I did on that day. Shoulder to shoulder, Jews of every type marched through the Yaffo Gate into the Old City. *Chassidim* with their *shtreimels* and white socks, *yeshiva* boys with black hats, *yeshiva* boys with

their knitted yarmulkes, and bare-headed Israelis with cameras on their shoulders, there to capture the moment on the *Yom Tov*. Everyone put aside their differences.

And then there it was – something we thought we would never see. Not ourselves, nor our children or grandchildren. The government had cleared what is now the plaza, so the Kotel was empty, muddy and full of dirt. We approached the holy wall. We began to daven *mussaf*, and we came to the words "וְהַבִּיאֵנוּ לְצִיּוֹן עִירָךְ בְּרָנָה", Bring us to Zion (Yerushalayim) Your city with gladness." Here we were, living these words!

I will never forget that *mussaf*. We wanted to stay, but the police sent us out of the Old City. There were so many people we couldn't go out the way we came in.

We have a responsibility, a *halachic* obligation, to thank Hashem for the miracles he did for us 50 years ago. In that merit, may we merit the completion of the redemption and the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*, speedily in our days.



Rabbi Mordechai Willig

is a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University, and the Av Beis Din of the Beis Din of America. Since 1974, Rabbi Willig has been the rabbi of the Young Israel of Riverdale in Riverdale, New York. He is the author of the four volume Am Mordechai series.



We Never Forget Jerusalem

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ל"י

There are moments that make Jerusalem feel like no other place on earth; when you feel yourself lifted beyond time and space and embraced, as it were, by *zro'ot olam*, the arms of eternity.

There is no other place in the world where this happens. I want to share with you three such moments that changed my life.

The first took place in 1969. I had come to study in Israel following the completion of my first degree, and was standing on the newly rebuilt Hebrew University campus on Mount Scopus as the sun began to set, bathing the whole landscape in a divine radiance.

As I found myself looking down on the Temple Mount, I recalled the famous story at the end of *Masechet Makkot*, where Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues are looking down at the ruins of the Temple and see a fox walking through the place that was once the Holy of Holies. As the rabbis wept, Rabbi Akiva smiled and laughed, and when asked how he could, Rabbi Akiva retold the two interlinked prophecies of Uriyah – who foresaw the day when Jerusalem would be ruined – and Zechariah – who saw the day it would be rebuilt.

Said Rabbi Akiva, until he saw the first prophecy fulfilled, he was not sure the second would be. Now he had seen the first prophecy fulfilled, he knew the second would one day also come true.

I remember standing at almost that exact spot and being overwhelmed with emotion. For almost 2,000 years, Jews had waited for that moment, and ours was the generation that lived to see Jerusalem reunited and rebuilt. We saw the realization of Zechariah's prophecy 24 centuries ago. We had lived to see in person what our greatest Prophets could only see in a vision.

And I was struck by a question. If only Rabbi Akiva had known how long it would take, would he still have believed? Rabbi Akiva, a supporter of Bar Kochba, thought the rebellion would succeed and believed that the Temple would be rebuilt in his lifetime. If Rabbi Akiva had seen the devastation, persecution and hatred that occurred as a result of the rebellion and after, would he have still believed? The answer is of course he would, because that is what Jews did all through the generations.

No people ever loved a city more. We saw Jerusalem destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, and yet in all those years, wherever Jews lived they never ceased to pray about Jerusalem, face Jerusalem, speak the language of

Jerusalem, remember it at every wedding, in every home they built, and at the high points of the Jewish year.

I ask myself how could Jews believe so much in a city they had been exiled from for so long? The answer, of course, is very powerful and is contained in two words in the story of Jacob. Recall, the brothers return home and show Jacob the blood-stained coat of Joseph. Realizing Joseph has gone, Jacob weeps, and when the brothers move to comfort him we are told, *vayema'ein lehitnachem*, Jacob “refused to be comforted.” Why? There are, after all, laws in Judaism about the limits of grief; there is no such thing as a bereavement for which grief is endless. The answer is that Jacob had not yet given up hope that Joseph was still alive. To refuse to be comforted is to refuse to give up hope.

That is what Jews did with Jerusalem. They remembered the promise that Am Yisrael had made by the waters of Babylon, “*im eshkachech Yerushalayim tishkach yemini*, if I forget Jerusalem, may my right hand lose its skill.” We never forgot Jerusalem. We were never comforted. We never gave up hope that one day we would return and because of that Jews never felt separated from Jerusalem.

And when it happened, in 1967, my Jewish identity was transformed when the world heard “*Har HaBayit beyadeinu*, the Temple Mount is in our hands.” Those three words changed a generation. That was my first moment: That no love was ever as strong as between the Jews and Jerusalem.

The second happened on Jerusalem Day a few years ago. Standing on the streets of the city, I watched youngsters from around the world, waving Israeli flags, singing and dancing with a joy that was overwhelming. As I watched the celebrations, I was overcome with emotion because suddenly I had a vision of the 1.5 million children who were killed in the *Shoah* not because of anything they had done, not because of anything their parents had done, but because their grandparents happened to be Jews.

I remembered how 26 centuries ago, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the Jewish people reduced to a valley of dry bones. G-d asked shall these bones live, and Ezekiel saw them come together, take on flesh, and begin to breathe and live again. G-d promised Ezekiel he would open his peoples' graves and bring them back to the land.

I remembered the first reference to Israel outside the Bible on the *Merneptah Stele*, a block of granite engraved by Merneptah



IV, successor to Ramses II, thought by many to have been the Egyptian Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus. It was an obituary, 'Israel is laid waste, her seed is no more.'

I thought how some of the greatest empires the world has ever known – Egypt of the Pharaohs, Assyria, Babylon, the Alexandrian Empire, the Roman Empire, the medieval empires of Christianity and Islam all the way to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union – were the superpowers of their day that bestrode the narrow world like a colossus, seemingly invulnerable in their time. And yet each tried to write the obituary of the Jewish people, and whilst they have been consigned to history, our people can still stand and sing *Am Yisrael Chai*. That was my second epiphany: The knowledge that what I was seeing on that day in Jerusalem was *techiyat hamaytim*, a collective people being brought back from death to life.

The third moment happened in early 1991. Having come to Israel prior to becoming Chief Rabbi, Elaine and I found ourselves in the middle of the First Gulf War. Towards the end of the war, one late Shabbat afternoon we were staying in Yemin Moshe when we heard beautiful music coming from one of the houses a few doors away. We went to see what was happening and found a group of Romanian Jews – a choir – who had just made *Aliyah* that week. Soon it seemed as though all the residents of Yemin Moshe had been drawn to the sound, people who had come to Jerusalem from all four corners of the world: America, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Eastern Europe and Arab lands.

Twenty-six centuries ago, the Prophet Jeremiah said that a time would come when we would not thank G-d for bringing us out of the land of Egypt, but rather for bringing our people together from all the lands of the earth. This second exodus Jeremiah described would be even more miraculous than the first. We lived to see this day, when Jews from 103 countries speaking 82 languages came to Israel to build not just their lives but the Jewish homeland. After generations it was Jerusalem that brought Jews together from all over the world as one people, in one voice, singing one song.

Whenever Jews remembered Jerusalem, something good came of it. Whenever they forgot Jerusalem, bad things happened.

So long as Jews remembered Jerusalem, we knew we were still on a journey, one in which the Jewish people has been on ever since the first syllables of recorded time: *Lech lecha me'artzecha*

u'mimoladetecha u'mibeit avicha, ("Leave your land, your birthplace and your father's house"). That is what every one of those people in Yemin Moshe that afternoon had done.

That was my third moment: Never has a city had such power over a people's imagination.

Never did G-d love a people more, and never were a people more loyal than our ancestors who endured 20 centuries of exile and persecution so that their children or grandchildren or great-grandchildren could come home to Jerusalem, *ir hakodesh* (the Holy City), the home of the Jewish heart.

When we visit Jerusalem today and see a place of such beauty it takes your breath away. Jerusalem is the place where all the prayers of all the Jews across all the centuries and from all the continents meet and take flight on their way to heaven. It is the place where you feel brushed by the wings of the *Shechinah*.

We have had the privilege to be born in a generation that has seen Jerusalem reunited and rebuilt. We have seen the Jewish people come home.

Today G-d is calling on us all to be Guardians of Zion. Never has this been more important. We must all stand up for the one home our people have ever known and the one city our people have loved more than any other. We are all *shagrireiy Medinat Yisrael* (ambassadors for the State of Israel) and we must all make Israel's case in a world that sometimes fails to see the beauty we know is here. Let us all take on that task. With Hashem's help, we will succeed and we pray that the world will make its peace with Israel so that Israel and Israel's G-d can bring peace to the world.



The Rabbi Sacks Legacy

perpetuates the timeless and universal wisdom of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks as a teacher of Torah, a leader of leaders and a moral voice. Explore the digital archive, containing much of Rabbi Sacks' writings, broadcasts and speeches, at www.rabbisacks.org, and follow The Rabbi Sacks Legacy on social media @RabbiSacks.

Olim Giving Back to Israel

Arye Green

I was born in Israel to parents from the US and Canada. I am a team leader in the *Aliyah* Guidance division at Nefesh B'Nefesh, managing a team of 7 amazing *Aliyah* advisors. In my daily work, I am in charge of overseeing the team's work, being available to help with any questions or deliberations as well as helping them manage their workload and other aspects of work at NBN.

On October 8th, I was called up and proudly joined the Negev Brigade during the current Swords of Iron war. We took over the northern 'Beit Hanoun' neighborhood in the Gaza Strip, where we eliminated several terrorists and destroyed various terror infrastructure sites including tunnels, weapons, rockets and ammunition. I was discharged in late December and have recently been called up again. It was really heartwarming to hear from my wife about the care she got from NBN while I was gone – vouchers for takeout, care packages and just calls to check in. She really felt the love for reservists' families. I have heard from many of my reservist friends who fought alongside me that they had a hard time finding meaning in their daily jobs following such a fulfilling service, protecting the people of Israel. I understand those feelings, but for me they were significantly reduced because

my daily work supports Israel and the Zionist cause by assisting *olim* in making Israel their new home.

The growth in *Aliyah* interest during war has also been a source of comfort and joy for me. Seeing that in times of hardship, Jews from around the world have come together and are more interested in building their future in Israel, really gives me the courage to fight on.



Lauren Shore and Moshe Inger

Lauren: My name is Lauren Shore and I came to Israel 4.5 years ago to study in seminary. During that year, when I got to explore the Land and develop my Jewish identity, I decided I wanted to move to Israel and build a life here.

Moshe: I'm Moshe Inger, I came to Israel 3.5 years ago to learn in *yeshiva*. I realized the incredible opportunity we have in this stage of Jewish history to live in Israel, and decided to stay. After *yeshiva*, I volunteered in *Sherut Leumi* for two years, working with kids with special needs. For my first year, I worked at an after school program for kids with special needs, and was a *madrich* at Yeshivat Orayta in the Old City. This year I'm working at Keren Or, a school for children with vision impairments in addition to physical and mental disabilities, and I give an evening class at Orayta.

Lauren: I gained an appreciation for being a part of something greater than myself as well as a deeper connection to my homeland. I wanted to continue learning so I spent a second year at seminary. That was when my true passion for living in Israel was fueled, leading me to continue my life here by becoming a *madricha* at Tiferet seminary for the next 2.5 years. At the same time, I completed a double Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology at Touro College in Israel. Currently, I am getting my masters in social work through Wurzwiler.

We met through a dating site organized by local *shadchanim*. We instantly realized that our dreams and values matched up and that we both wanted to create a home here in Israel with a love of Judaism. About 3 months later, we got engaged. We know that we want to raise our family in the place our forefathers and mothers walked before us. We are looking forward to building our future in the place that we call home.





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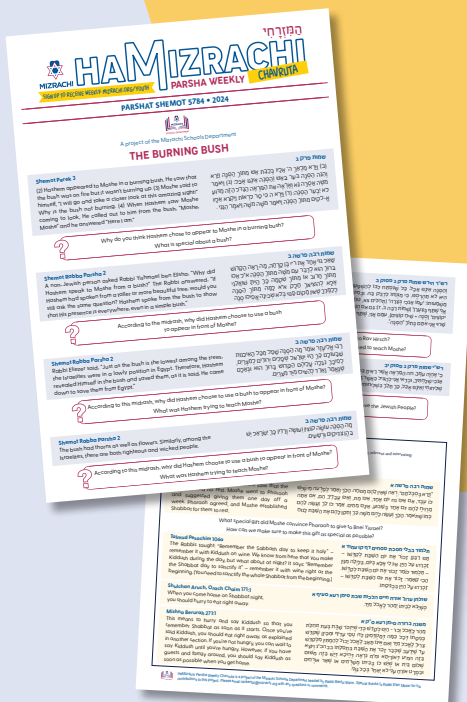


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Unity Saves Lives

Under the visionary leadership of Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, Sulamot has worked tirelessly to support nine communities from the Gaza Envelope region. In an inspiring display of unity, communities from around the world have come together to partner with Sulamot and adopt these communities through Project Atufim.

One such inspiring example is the Bergen County initiative, led by Rabbi Fridman of the Jewish Center of Teaneck. In this exclusive interview, we sit down with Rabbi Fridman to learn more about his involvement with Sulamot, the impact of the Bergen County initiative, and the power of unity in saving lives.

Rabbi Fridman, can you tell us how you first connected with Sulamot, and what inspired you to get involved with Project Atufim?

I'd like to try to frame this within something of a *halachic* context. Rambam makes it clear that the war in which we are engaged is a *milchemet mitzvah*, that is, a war that obligates every member of the Jewish people to make a direct contribution to the war effort. The war against Hamas clearly meets the criterion of "*ezrat Yisrael miyad tzareihim*, saving the Jewish people from an enemy that has come upon them." As such, there was no question that we had to be very intensely involved.

I wanted to work with Rav Rimon's organization for two reasons. First, as a student at Yeshivat Har Etzion two decades ago, I was very taken with Rav Rimon's stature as a *talmid chacham*. Second, I knew that Rav Rimon had done superior work with the evacuees from Gush Katif, and that his organization would be very well positioned to make an immediate difference for those who were displaced.

What made you and your community choose to adopt Kerem Shalom specifically?

Kerem Shalom reflects, in my opinion, the Jewish people's greatest need right now: *achdut*. The fact that those who identify as religious and those who do not live together, not just with mutual toleration but with genuine respect, is not only an example for all of *Am Yisrael*, but it is the single greatest contribution to our national security. United, we will merit help from G-d and we will never be defeated. Divided, G-d forbid, we will continue the path of baseless hatred from the period of Second Temple, and we will not be successful.

From your perspective, how has Sulamot's approach to working with Kerem Shalom been unique or impactful? What have you observed about the way they support the community and the evacuated families?

In this case, please do not take my word for it. Listen to the people in Kerem Shalom, who even under rocket attack to this day, tell me how great a source of strength Sulamot has been for them. The idea that such an outstanding organization is deeply invested in the process not only of rebuilding Kerem Shalom, but of enabling it to reach even greater levels of development, reminds them that their willingness to literally live *al ha-gader*, on the border, is a *shlichut* on behalf of all of *Am Yisrael*. This goes well beyond the financial and material support



Avital Schindler outside her home with the Bergen County delegation. Her home was invaded on October 7th and her husband Amichai was severely injured.

which Sulamot is providing. Sulamot is literally reinforcing the sense of mission that each member of Kerem Shalom has in achieving their mission of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael*.

Can you tell us about the Bergen County delegation's visit to Kerem Shalom and the impact it had?

I have to single out Rav Eli Taragin, Sulamot's CEO, for *hakarat hatov*, for all of his hard work making this aspect of our mission so outstanding. To go to Kerem Shalom and to witness and hear directly from those who saved an entire Jewish community from destruction on October 7th, to meet with the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, Amichai Weitzen and Yedidya Raziell, and the Schindler family, whose home was invaded, may have been, after my wedding and the birth of our children, the most meaningful day of my life. It was an overwhelming experience for all of us. We felt that the bond we have as members of *Am Yisrael* is so profound that it makes the six thousand miles of geographic distance between our communities literally meaningless. We were, as the *midrash* describes in the context of *Matan Torah*, as one person, with one heart.

You mentioned that 17 other rabbis and communities from Bergen County have joined this initiative. Can you share more about how this collaborative effort came together and the significance of having such a diverse group of communities united in this cause?

The mission itself included the spiritual leadership of six of our shuls: Bais Medrash of Bergenfield, Beth Aaron, Ohr Saadya, Rinat Yisrael,



Talia Weitzen (right) addresses the Bergen County delegation. Her husband Amichai was killed in that spot defending the *kibbutz*.



Rabbi Rothwachs and Rabbi Fridman plant a tree in Kerem Shalom in memory of Amichai Weitzen and Yedidya Raziel, who fell saving the *kibbutz* from dozens of terrorists. The tree is located equidistant from the spot where they fell *Al Kiddush Hashem*.

Young Israel of Teaneck, and the Jewish Center of Teaneck. Once we came back, it was obvious to us that this had to be brought to the entire Bergen County community. In this effort, I want to really express deepest gratitude to three of my colleagues, Rabbi Binyamin Krohn, who is the President of the Rabbinical Council of Bergen County, Rabbi Elliot Schrier, Rabbi of Bnai Yeshurun, and Rabbi Eli Shestack, Rabbi of Ahavat Achim in Fair Lawn, who really were instrumental in making all of this possible.

Our community is diverse with differing styles – which we all appreciate – but this project is a reflection of the extent to which Bergen County is in fact deeply unified. Our values are clear and straightforward across our synagogues. We cherish *chesed*, we prize Torah study and *mitzvah* observance, and we love *Eretz Yisrael* and our brothers and sisters who live there. And so, for us, this was a natural choice.

You have powerfully stated “unity saves lives” in the context of Kerem Shalom. Can you elaborate on what this statement means to you and how it relates to the situation in Kerem Shalom and the broader Jewish community?

The story of Kerem Shalom reflects this simple truth. When the established members of Kerem Shalom made the courageous decision to welcome a *gar'in*, a group of young religious families, to join their community, they had in mind the vitality of the *kibbutz*. It was a brave and courageous decision. What they could not have known, of course, was that this would play a great role in saving the *kibbutz* on October 7th, as the heroic actions and incredible *mesirut nefesh* of the *kitat konnenut*, the first response team, many of whose members are religious, saved an entire Jewish community in the Land of Israel.

In my opinion, this is a microcosm of all of *Klal Yisrael*. If we can make room to live together, we will merit much greater Divine assistance in our national struggle for survival. While we must be humble when we speak of what it is that Hashem thinks, we all know as parents the profound *nachat* we have when our children treat one another with compassion and respect, and, G-d forbid, the *ogmat nefesh* we experience when our children perhaps do not behave that way. It is a matter of personal faith for me that this is true of Hashem as well, as He is *Avinu sheBaShamayim*, our Father in Heaven. Perhaps this is the meaning of the statement in *Pirkei Avot*, “He who is pleasing in the eyes of Hashem’s creatures, is pleasing to Hashem. He who is not pleasing to Hashem’s creatures, is not pleasing to Hashem.”

What message do you have for others who may want to get involved and support the families of Kerem Shalom?

Working together with Sulamot on this project has been one of the great privileges of my life. Much of this is a credit to Sulamot under the leadership of Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, whose professionals, Rav Eli

Taragin and his entire team, are some of the most talented people working on behalf of *Am Yisrael* right now. They are the very models of those who are “*oskim b’tzorchai tzibbur be’emunah*,” and it permeates everything that they do.

At the most basic level, the message I would like to share is that this is a historic opportunity, particularly for those of us who live in the Diaspora. There is only one reason why Hamas attacked Be’eri, Nachal Oz, Zikim, Cholit, and Kerem Shalom on Simchat Torah, and not Teaneck, Chicago, London, or Miami: it was closer. Hamas seeks the destruction of the Jewish people. In that sense, the attack on Kerem Shalom was an attack on the entire Jewish people. As such, we have a great responsibility to ensure that Hamas is granted no victories whatsoever in this war, and that Kerem Shalom is rebuilt and expanded, along with all of the communities of the *Otef*, the Gaza Envelope.

In doing so, it seems to me that we will fulfill an aspect of the great *mitzvah* of settling *Eretz Yisrael*, as explained by Ramban. While it is well known that Ramban understood that there was a personal obligation for each and every member of the Jewish people to live in the Land of Israel, he further adds that there is an obligation not to leave the Land of Israel undeveloped, *לֹא תִשָּׁלַח אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְשִׁמְמָהּ*. For those of us who have not yet merited fulfilling the first part of Ramban’s presentation of the *mitzvah* of settling *Eretz Yisrael*, this partnership with Sulamot provides us a historic opportunity to help our beloved brothers and sisters in Kerem Shalom, and thereby ensure that the Land of Israel is not, G-d forbid, left desolate.

May we all merit seeing Kerem Shalom, and all of the communities of the *Otef*, filled with the sounds of song and joy, *עוֹד יִשְׁמַע בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל הָעוֹשִׁי קוֹל שְׂשׂוֹן וְקוֹל שִׁמְחָה*.

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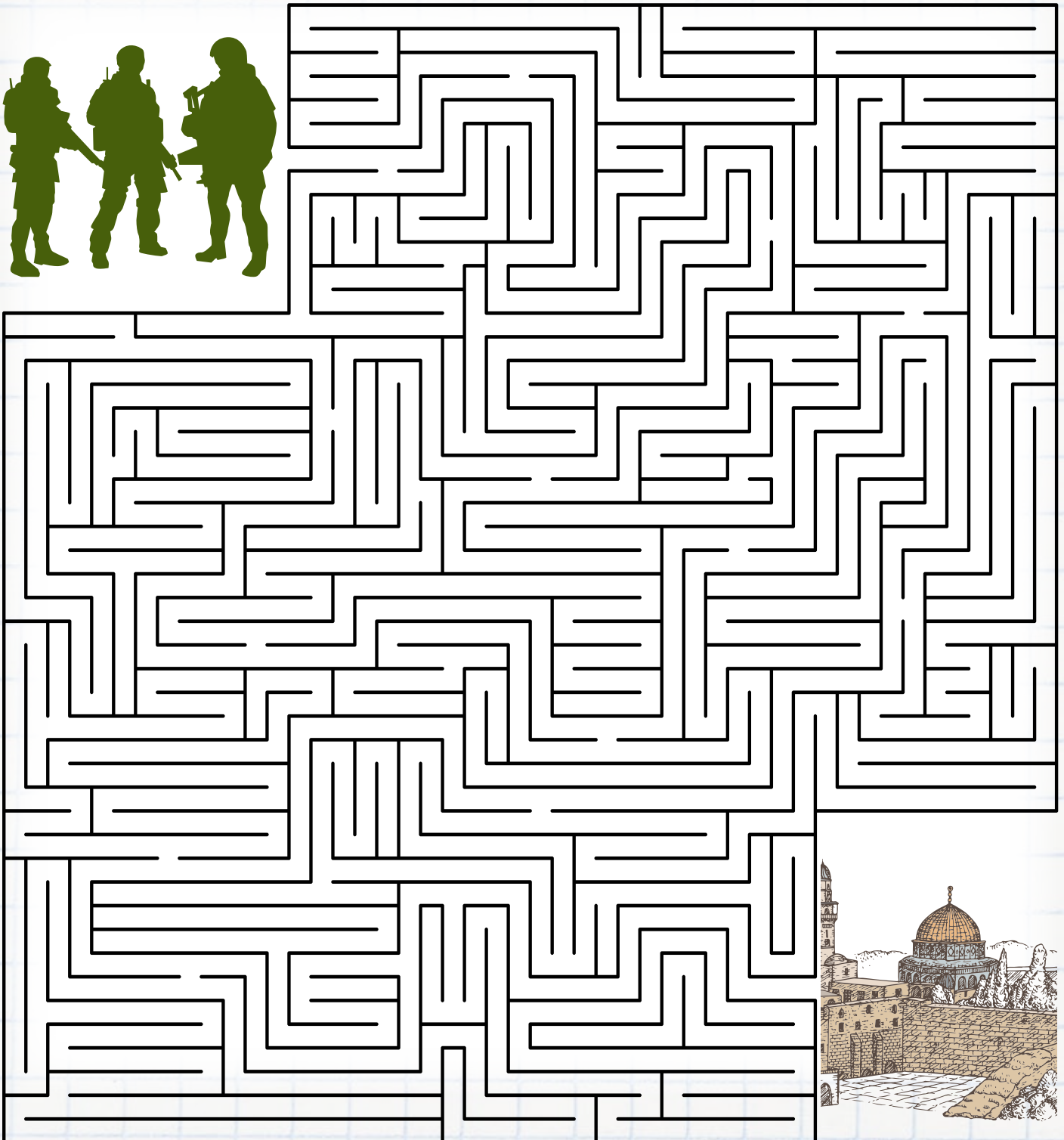
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MEET NAOMI SHEMER

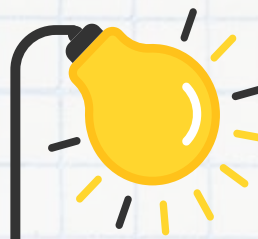


July 13, 1930 - June 26, 2004 (17 Tammuz 5690 - 7 Tammuz 5764)

Naomi was born and raised on Kvutzat Kinneret where her love and talent for music and singing first began. When Naomi began writing music, the first songs she wrote were for children. At the time there were very few Hebrew songs for children. After this, she began writing music for adults. Naomi's goal was for people to be able to sing her songs together. She wrote hundreds of songs, dozens of which were translated into other languages. She wrote songs that were humorous and playful and songs of sadness and loss. On Yom HaAtzmaut 1967 Naomi was asked by Jerusalem's mayor to write a song about Jerusalem. Without knowing what would happen in just a few short weeks, Naomi wrote the song *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*. Three weeks later after the Six-Day War where the Jewish people got back the Old City of Jerusalem, Naomi Shemer's song was known by all for its hope and prophetic nature. Naomi is also known for her other very popular songs such as *Lu Yehi* which was written for the Yom Kippur War, *Al Kol Eleh*, and *Od Lo Ahavti Dai* and are some of the most well known Hebrew songs to this day.



Adapted from *Iconic Jewish Women*
by Dr. Aliza Lavie. Scan the QR code
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DID YOU KNOW?

- Some of the olive trees in Jerusalem are more than 800 years old.
- Shavuot has 4 other names! Yom HaBikkurim, Chag HaKatzir, Atzeret and Zman Matan Torateinu.
- Jerusalem is named more than 900 times in the Torah.

Test Your Knowledge



What is the name of the book we read on Shavuot?

What Hebrew date is Yom Yerushalayim celebrated on?

What color is traditionally worn on Shavuot?

Look for the answers in the Parshat Naso Youth Edition – see below for more details!

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NO-BAKE CHEESECAKE RECIPE FOR SHAVUOT!

Crust:

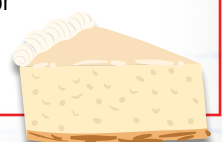
- 2 cups (240g) graham cracker crumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (67g) packed light or dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (8 tbsp; 113g) unsalted butter, melted

Cheesecake:

- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (300ml) heavy whipping cream
- 24oz (678g) high fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (100g) granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp (15g) confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60g) sour cream, at room temperature
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

- Combine all the crust ingredients together and line the bottom of a circle pan with the crust OR line the bottom of cupcake liners with the crust. Place in the freezer for 10-20 minutes.
- In a separate bowl, whip the heavy whipping cream with an electric mixer for 4-5 minutes until the cream gets thick and forms peaks.
- In a separate bowl, beat the cream cheese and granulated sugar together on a medium speed until it's smooth and creamy. Then add in the confectioners' sugar, sour cream, lemon juice and vanilla extract. Beat those all together for 2-3 minutes on medium speed until smooth and combined, with no lumps!
- Using a silicone spatula, fold the whipped cream into the cheesecake filling until combined. Make sure to do it slowly because you don't want the whipped cream to deflate.
- Take your crust out of the freezer and fill in the pan or cupcake liners with the cheesecake filling. Cover it with tin foil or plastic wrap and place in the fridge for 6-8 hours or for the best results, 12 hours.
- Serve and enjoy!



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