

HALACHA V'HALICHA... By Rav Chaim Schabes

Why was it necessary that Bnai Yisrael be separated into two groups, and that the levi'im should face half of them when saying the b'rachos and the other half when saying the curses? The Torah wants to teach us that blessing and curse must be separated and distanced. In reality, one is able to get very close to Hashem even among the wicked, if one stands strong in his service to Hashem; nevertheless, one should stay away from dangerous circumstances. Our responsibility is to try to stay as clear from difficulties as possible, and not to claim great feats in fights against the yetzer hara that were not sent our way. B'racha and its opposite must stay separated.

It is a minhag that when we write a letter between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Yom Kippur, we note that we pray for the recipient that he should have good merit in the forthcoming days of judgment and be inscribed and sealed in the book of good life. Since the month of Elul is designated for t'shuvah, one should review his actions, and before eating and before going to sleep one should spend a few minutes thinking about what he could correct, and to confess over anything he may find improper. One should also be extra diligent in the performance of mitzvos, and some check their t'fillin and mezuzos during this month. Our minhag is to start saying (asking for) s'lichos the Sunday before Rosh Hashana, unless there will be fewer than four days of s'lichos before Rosh Hashana, in which case we start the week before, as we do this year. The most preferred time to recite s'lichos is at the end of the night; nowadays, a majority of the people delay until the beginning of amud hashachar (72 min. bef. sunrise), nevertheless, on the first day of s'lichos, we are meticulous about starting earlier to be able to appropriately recite the pizmonim of בעוד ליל רצה עתירתם בעמדם כלילות and ליל. When one gets up early, one has to say the b'racha of על נטילת ידיים upon washing even though it is still dark, and he must also say birchos haTorah before saying s'lichos, and later, when he is finished and it is light, one should wash again 3 times alternating hands, but he should not repeat the b'racha. The sh'liach tzibur who says s'lichos should wrap himself with a tallis, and if it is still dark, he should not say a b'racha over the tallis, and it is preferable to borrow a tallis from someone else, rather than take one from the tzibur or use his own. If one did use a tallis of the kahal or his own, when z'man tzitzis comes (even in the middle of s'lichos), he should take the tallis off, and recite the b'racha. If there is no tallis available, they could nevertheless say s'lichos. If the sh'liach tzibur didn't put on the tallis until after they said ashrei, he should say some p'sukim before saying kaddish, because of his interruption. The kahal should not start ashrei, until ten people are present, so that they should be able to say the kaddish. After s'lichos, viduy is recited 3 times, while the custom of the Vilna Gaon was to say it only once; נפילת אפים is also said covering one's face with the left arm. It is proper to stand when saying s'lichos, and some sit from זכור רחמך until שמע קולינו; if it is difficult for one to stand, one should stand at least for קל מלא רחמים, the 13 middos and viduy. One should start each selicha with אלוקינו ואלוקי אבותינו, unless it starts with the Hashem's name. Even if it is still dark at the time of נפילת אפים, we do say it; however, it is better to try to delay it until is light outside. We don't say s'lichos before midnight, except on Yom Kippur night. Places that say selichos before midnight should stop doing so, and if one is present in such a Shul, he should rather remain quiet, except for viduy, which he may say with them, but on motz'ai Shabbos, one should not say viduy before midnight. The Thirteen Middos should not be said without a minyan, unless one reads them with the ta'amim as if reading the Torah, but all the rest may be recited without a minyan. The tefillos in Aramaic should also be skipped when a minyan is not present.

THOUGHTS ON THE HAFTARAH ... By Rabbi Yaakov Shapiro (Y'shayahu 60:1-22)

It should be abundantly obvious by now that the core message of 'comfort' that Yeshayahu brings to us centers on the promise of the future geulah. We've read the past weeks of the many great things that await us when Mashiach will come, but we've yet to see any reference to when that will be. In this week's haftara we find 2 clues. In the last pasuk of the haftara the navi says בעתה אחי שנה אני ה' , i.e. "I am Hashem, in its time I will hasten it". The last 2 words are seemingly contradictory; if the geulah is to come in its proper time, how can it be hastened? Rashi, based on the Gemara (Sanhedrin 98b), explains: if we merit it, Hashem will bring the geulah immediately, if not, we will have to wait until the appointed time. The Iyun Yaakov says that it is for this reason that the קץ is hidden from us, for if the precise moment of the geulah were to be known, as the time approached people would no longer feel the need to do teshuva! After all, why bother? It will soon come on its own anyway! Therefore the time is hidden from us to ensure we do all we can to hasten the coming of that great moment. The second clue can be found in the prior pasuk where the navi says ועמך כלם צדיקים. The Gemara uses this pasuk to explain that Mashiach will come in a generation that is either completely good or completely bad. Since the Gemara doesn't qualify its statement, it would seem that a completely bad generation will not only bring Mashiach, but even hasten his arrival! Doesn't that contradict the prior statement of the Gemara? The Maharsha explains: There is but one merit that can cause the arrival of the Mashiach: our nation as a whole doing teshuva. This can come about in one of 2 ways: we either come to the realization on our own that our sins have caused our exile - and we repent; or, our sins can become so universal that Hashem is forced to bring upon us terrible punishments and subjugation, and our pain and suffering will bring us to do teshuva. Therefore, it is only the merit of our complete teshuva that can truly 'hasten' the coming of the Mashiach.

"A GIGANTIC LITTLE SECRET" ... By Rabbi Yosef Schwab

This week's p'aresha begins with the mitzvah of bikkurim. This section, constituting the first 11 pesukim of the p'aresha, contains all the letters of the aleph-bais, except the letter ס. The missing ס alludes to the fact that there is no shiur for bikkurim from the Torah, but Miderabbanan, the minimum proportion that must be brought is 1/60 (ס = 60 in gematria). Similarly, the Torah uses the word סנא for "basket", rather than סל, as סנא in gematria also equals 60.

POINT OF INTEREST ... By R' Jerry Stoller

In the tochacha, the Torah describes 3 types of projects that, as punishment, will go unfinished. Interestingly, these are the same 3 situations that (under better circumstances) exempt a man from having to go to war.

SHABBOS SCHEDULE - KNESSES YISRAEL

שבת

ערב שבת

מערב	מנחה	סוּזק"ש	שחרית	שקעה	מנחה	הדלק"ן
7:46	6:26	9:46	7:00/8:50	6:58	6:43	6:40

SELICHOS מוצ"ש: *drasha* 12:30AM, *selichos* 12:50AM; Mon-Fri 6:35AM

SHACHARIS Sun 7:45, Mon-Fri 7:00; **MAARIV** Mon-Th 9:30; **MINCHA/MAARIV** Mon-Th 6:35, next Fri. 6:31 (candles 6:28)

KNESSES NEWS

MAZEL TOV! to Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Hochman and Mr. and Mrs. Shloime Gruen on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson/great-nephew Elazar Beirish Teichman

KOMMUNITY KORNER

"PURPOSEFUL PARENTING" by Rachma Friedenberg, Mondays 10-11AM at Danesh (487 Viola)

NEW MINYANIM daily Shacharis at 7:40, and daily Mincha at 1:50, at Zichron Yehuda (Rabbi Bronspigel)

MIKVAH OF NEW HEMPSTEAD, 109 Brick Church, is open on Shabbos/Yom Tov, please call 669-0861

SHABBOS MINCHA at Tefilla L'Moshe, 1:30/5:00PM (Sun. 1:30), **MAARIV** 40 mins. after *shki'a*/9:45PM; **SUN SHACHARIS** 7:30 & 8:30

DAILY SHACHARIS at Kehillat New Hempstead 6:00; at Zichron Yehuda (2 Kakiat Ln) 6:40AM; **SUNDAY** 7:30 & 8:10

SUNDAY MINCHA 1:45PM at Zichron Yehuda **MAARIV** daily at 9:15PM; **MINCHA** Sun-Thu, 15 mins. before *shki'a*, at Tefilla L'Moshe

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KONTINUING KLASSES (aka ONGOING SHIURIM)

Daf Yomi: 1 hour before Shacharis (R' Adler)/ 9:45PM (R' Becher) at Knesses Yisrael; 6:00AM at Zichron Yehuda (*chabura*)

Maseches Sanhedrin (by R' Apter) daily 1 hour before Shacharis; **Ahavas Chesed** (by Rabbi Schabes) Tues. 9:10PM, at Knesses Yisrael

Hilchos Shabbos chabura, Shabbos, after the early minyan

Navi Melachim for men, by Rabbi Shmuel Moeller, Sundays 8:30-9:15, at Tefilla L'Moshe

Minchas Chinuch Sun. 8:30PM; *shiur* on **Sha'arei Teshuva** Sun-Thurs. 9:30PM; by R' Bronspigel at Zichron Yehuda

Maseches Bava Metzia, Shabbos afternoon 1 hour before Mincha, by R' Yehoshua Kohl at Kehillat New Hempstead

Ladies Shiur: Shabbos 5:00PM, by Rabbi Zezi Abish, at Lehmann, 76 South Gate Dr.

Mondays 8:40 PM, **Sefer Yehoshua**, by Mrs. Aviva Orlian, at Levy, 29 Fessler

Wednesdays 10:45-11:45AM, **Pareshas Hashavua**, by Mrs. Sussi Brecher, at Lazar, 2 Tracey Ct. (corner of South Gate)

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MECHOCHMAS HAS'FORNO... By Rabbi Shmuel Burstein

In discussing the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* and the "short speech" given by Jews at the ceremony in Yerushalayim, S'forno introduces a subtle yet meaningful lesson in acquiring humility. When a Jew brings *bikkurim* to the Bais HaMikdash (or the Mishkan) he must face the kohen, hand him the *bikkurim*, and make his declaration: the familiar 'ארמני אובד אבי'. Rav Kupperman reminds us that this is the *only* such example by any of the *mat'nos teruma* where a Jew must "read" something at the time of the *matana* (gift). In fact, it is an additional *mitzvah*, counted as one of the 613 *mitzvos*, aside from bringing the fruit themselves. S'forno deftly picks up on the language of this declaration. He tells us the following: "Even though [if] the kohen is not great in *chochmah* you should address him with respect by saying the words ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ (26:3), even though language of this sort (ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ) is reserved for outstanding people such as kings and prophets (it is appropriate to use them when speaking to the kohen). By your bringing him the *bikkurim* it is as if you are bringing a 'present to God', for *He* is the owner of the land. It is therefore befitting that you should speak to the kohen in a manner of respect." The lessons are many. To start, a Jew who approaches the Makom HaMikdash must remember Who is doing what for whom. Everything I own is really His, a bestowal of favor from Hashem. But there is more. The kohen may be a very ordinary Jew, the kind of Jew I would never think of inviting to my Shabbos table. He may not be able to tell over a d'var Torah fitting to share with others. But, as a kohen, he does *me* the favor of receiving my gift to the Almighty. I must not see the kohen as the lucky one who receives my gift, from my wealth. Rather, I am the lucky one, the person who can now actually give something to Hashem (!) only because this humble kohen is there. Rav Kupperman adds that S'forno was keenly aware that any expression of undue *kavod* is forbidden as a form of flattery, called *chanifa*. Why then can the Jew address the kohen in language ("your Lord") we find only by kings and prophets? The answer to this question provides an additional point. There is a message of humility here for the kohen as well. He must not lord himself over the genuinely sincere Jew who brings what little (or much) he has. The kohen must see himself as Hashem's representative. He is nothing more than the vehicle through which I, and others, can approach Hashem with a gift. According to S'forno, therefore, *bikkurim is not really a gift for the kohen at all*, but rather for Hashem. Getting back to the original point, which is S'forno's intention: *mikrah bikkurim* is just one more instance that the Torah provides for me to remember that our presence in Eretz Yisrael is due only to Hashem. The Torah recognizes our need to remember that the gift of Eretz Yisrael is just that, a gift we humbly received. It is not something "coming to us."

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ON LANGUAGE... By R' Moshe Orlian

One of the potential punishments mentioned in the תוכחה (Devarim 28:30). The word תחללנו is from the root חלל, which can have several distinct meanings. In our *passuk*, the underlying meaning is "to profane", or remove from a status of קדושה. Since for the first three years the fruit is קדוש, חלול refers to one's ability to eat it in the fourth year. The noun חולין stems from this meaning as well. A second meaning is "to kill", hence the noun חלל, meaning "corpse". A third meaning connotes "piercing" or "hollowing", giving rise to the nouns חלל, "space", and חליל, "flute", a hollowed-out instrument. Thus, as a verb, חלל also means to play the *chalil*. Fourthly, according to some explanations, חלל can also mean "to begin", as in the literal interpretation of the *passuk* regarding Enosh, ה' הוֹחֵל לְקַרְא בְּשֵׁם ה' (Beraishis 4:26). The common theme of these diverse meanings? All involve some sort of change in status.

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