

THE KTM

DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



TORAH תורה

מִצִּיּוֹן MITZION

KTM MONTREAL

PARASHAT BAMIDBAR

29 IYAR 5768

16 MAY 2026

CANDLE LIGHTING: 8:00 P.M.

HAVDALAH: 9:13 P.M.

KTM WISHES THE WHOLE COMMUNITY YOM YERUSHALAYIM SAMEACHI



JERUSALEM: OUR PARTICULAR CAPITAL AND UNIVERSAL MISSION

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

On the 28th of Iyar 5727 - June 7, 1967 - at approximately 5:00 p.m., IDF paratrooper Eliezer

Sheffer stood within the Dome of the Rock complex on the Temple Mount. Overcome with emotion, he realized where he was standing: the holiest place in the world for the Jewish people, the very site where, in the days of the Beit HaMikdash, only the Kohen Gadol would enter on Yom Kippur.

After the liberation of the Temple Mount, the Kotel, and the Old City - where Sheffer himself had lived as a child before 1948 - the 55th Paratroopers Brigade was dispatched north to assist in the fighting on the Golan Heights, only to arrive after the war had already ended.

On their way back to Jerusalem, as they passed through Jericho, the soldiers encountered groups of Arab refugees. Among them, Sheffer noticed a young girl, no more than nine years old, walking alone along the roadside. Her name was Basima Shafiq. She had fled Jerusalem with her uncle, but during the crossing of the Jordan River he had abandoned her, leaving her stranded and alone.

Exhausted and without water, Basima accepted Sheffer's offer of a drink and a ride back to Jerusalem. During the drive, several soldiers - immigrants from Muslim countries - spoke gently with her in Arabic, trying to calm and reassure her. Eventually, Sheffer and another soldier escorted the girl back to her home in East Jerusalem, where her parents still did not even know that the war had ended.

Years later, reflecting on the encounter, Sheffer remarked that "for Jews in a sovereign Jewish state, the relationship with minorities must be just, moral, and honorable. It is a religious value."

Indeed, this is a sentiment expressed by Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch. In his commentary to the Torah (Shemot 23:9), Rav Hirsch states that "The way a state treats the strangers living within its borders is always an accurate measure of the degree of justice and humanity that prevails in that society."

This story highlights one of the central tensions that emerges from Yom Yerushalayim and the great miracle of the Six-Day War - celebrated today, on Yom Yerushalayim. It is not an ancient tension alone; in many ways, it underpins much of contemporary Jewish discourse nearly fifty-nine years after the reunification of Jerusalem - especially, though certainly not only, in the aftermath of October 7th.

The tension is this: must we care exclusively for ourselves, even at the expense of broader universal

concerns? Or must we emphasize our universality, seeing ourselves primarily as members of a global society?

While leaders of the Reform movement - such as Rabbis Ammiel Hirsch and Diana Fersko - lament liberal Judaism's abandonment of Jewish peoplehood, in many traditional Jewish circles the opposite trend of hyper-particularism is on the rise. This latter is especially pronounced among leaders of Israel's far-right political parties, whose rhetoric and positions have become increasingly isolationist and fundamentalist.

So which is it? Are we a particular people - a "nation that shall dwell alone and not consider itself among the nations" (loosely based on Bamidbar 23:9)? Or are we meant to embrace our mission as a universal people, a "light of the nations" through whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Yeshayahu 49:6; Bereishit 12:3)?

I believe our holy city, Yerushalayim, offers us the answer.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 10:4) teaches:

Rabbi Yishmael said: On the very night that Solomon completed the labor of the Temple, he married Bitya, daughter of Pharaoh. There was rejoicing there—the celebration of the Temple and the celebration over Pharaoh's daughter. The rejoicing over Pharaoh's daughter overshadowed the rejoicing over the Temple... At that moment, the Holy One, blessed be He, considered destroying Jerusalem.

The Midrash criticizes the fact that the celebration of Shlomo's marriage to Bitya - his universal pursuits - eclipsed the celebration of the completion of the Beit HaMikdash - his particularist ones. But this is not a polemic against the inherent value of universalism. Were that the case, God would have objected to the very fact that Shlomo married Pharaoh's daughter.

Yet that is not what the Midrash says. Universalism and particularism are meant to go hand in hand. The problem begins only when one eclipses the other.

It is in Jerusalem that we offer the seventy korbanot of Sukkot, corresponding to the "seventy nations of the world" (Talmud Sukkah 55b). And the prophet foretells that, at the end of days, the nations of the world will ascend to Jerusalem to learn the word of God: "For out of Zion shall Torah go forth, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem"

(Yeshayahu 2:3).

Jerusalem is the city of our covenant: the place where Avraham bound his beloved son Yitzchak, where the Beit HaMikdash stood, and where, please God, it will one day stand again. But Jerusalem is also the epicenter of the projection of our universal message to humanity.

Yom Yerushalayim reminds us that we must never gloss over Jewish peoplehood, nor fear our particular identity. But it must equally remind us of the danger - and the moral bankruptcy - of forgetting our universal mission and responsibility. We are not meant to choose between covenant and humanity; rather, our covenantal mission is itself meant to serve humanity. As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt"l, said:

My particularity is my universality. By being what only I am, I contribute to the common good what only I can give.

Jerusalem is not holy because it ignores humanity in favor of Jewish destiny, nor because it erases Jewish destiny in favor of universal ideals. It is holy because it insists that the two ultimately belong together. We pray for the redemption of the world and the rebuilding of Jerusalem not only for ourselves, but for the whole world (Yeshayahu 56:7):

For My House shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.



ENCOUNTERING THE GIANTS: RABBI YEHUDA HALEVI

BY CHAGAI SHREM

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi (1075–1141), was among the greatest poets, philosophers, and thinkers of the

Golden Age in Spain. He was born in Toledo and served as a physician and courtier in the flourishing Jewish communities of that time.

In his youth, he was known for his wondrous poetry, but as he matured, a deep realization awoke within him that Greek-philosophical culture and the comfort of the Spanish exile were not the true answer for the Jewish soul. From this, he wrote his book 'The Kuzari' (or by its original name: 'The Book of Refutation and Proof on Behalf of the Despised Religion'). The book was written as a dialogue defending Judaism against philosophy, Christianity, and Islam, and emphasizing the uniqueness of the People of Israel. At the end of his life, he immigrated to the Land of Israel.

Question: What is the nature of the connection between the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the People of Israel?

Answer: The connection between the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the People of Israel is not the result of abstract philosophical research, but of living historical testimony. God chose to reveal Himself to the entire nation at the Revelation at Mount Sinai - an event witnessed by multitudes and passed down through tradition from generation to generation as an irrefutable fact. Within the

People of Israel exists a unique virtue known as 'The Divine Matter' ("Halnyan HaElohi"), a kind of spiritual talent for prophecy that is inherited and distinguishes them from other nations.

The People of Israel are 'the heart among the organs' - the most sensitive, suffering when the collective is ill, yet the one that pumps spiritual vitality to the entire world. This connection requires a specific physical place: the Land of Israel. Just as a vineyard requires specific soil to yield fine grapes, so too 'The Divine Matter' requires the soil of the Land of Israel to be revealed. (Kuzari, Part Two, Paragraph 14). The awakening of a Jew's heart to return to his land is not merely a feeling, but a sign of a higher spiritual awakening."

Question: Can the commandments be changed or performed in a way that seems more logical to us?

Answer: Absolutely not. The commandments are a precise "Divine formula," the composition of which only the Creator of the world knows. Rabbi Yehuda Halevi compares this to biological and chemical processes in nature: just as a slight change in temperature will prevent an egg from becoming a chick, so too a slight deviation from the details of a commandment cancels its ability to establish the "Divine Matter" in the world. The human intellect is limited and incapable of estimating the subtle relationships between the physical action and the spiritual result.

"For the actions commanded by the Torah are similar to the creations of nature in that their impressions are estimated only by God, may He be blessed, and it is not within the power of flesh and blood to estimate them." (Kuzari, Part Three, 53).

Question: What is the fundamental difference between the "believer" and the "heretic"?

Answer: The difference is not necessarily in good intention, but in the source of authority. The "believer" is one who accepts the commandments as a "prescription" from the "Great Physician" (God) and fulfills them in all their details even without understanding their mechanism.

In contrast, the "heretic" (or the alchemists and astrologers) is one who, in his arrogance, thinks he can achieve a connection with God through "human wisdom" alone - that is, through rituals and logical inferences he invented from his own reasoning. For Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, the attempt to bring down the Shekhinah (Divine Presence) through intellectual research instead of through Divine command is the root of heresy.

"Behold, one who has attained this knowledge and fulfills according to it, with a whole heart, the commandments of God in all their details and conditions - he is the believer. But one who strives to prepare things for the reception of Divine impressions through human wisdom alone... he is the heretic." (Kuzari, Part One, 79



JERUSALEM: CITY OF UNITY

BY RABBI MOSHE TZVI NERIYA, ZT"l

Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neriya (1913-1995) was an Israeli educator, writer and rosh yeshiva. A few days after the liberation

of the Kotel, and the re-unification of Jerusalem, Rabbi Neriya addressed a group of teachers in Jerusalem. These were his words:

Among the reflections and emotions of these great days, another question emerges - a wonderment: Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, not place Jerusalem in our hands then, in 1948? And by what merit have we now been privileged to have it returned to us? In a miraculous manner, entirely beyond the normal course of nature, Jerusalem slipped from our hands then. And now, once again in a miraculous way, beyond all logic, it has been

given back to us - presented to us anew. The answer to this is hinted at in the ancient wisdom of our sages. Regarding Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Talmud states (Yerushalmi, Bava Kamma 7:7):

"As a city joined together as one" - a city that joins Israel together.

And the same idea is expressed differently in the Babylonian Talmud (Zevachim 114b):

"You may not sacrifice the Pesach offering within any one of your gates" - I spoke only of a time when all of Israel enters through one gate.

Indeed, nineteen years ago, the Palmach broke through by way of Zion Gate, while the fighters of the Etzel were preparing to break through by way of Damascus Gate. We were divided and

fragmented. Had we succeeded then, there would have been "two grasping Jerusalem," each one declaring: "It is entirely mine." Jerusalem would have become a source of division, a cause of strife and conflict. The stones of Jerusalem would have become stones of controversy...

And therefore, only now - when we all entered through one gate, the Lions' Gate, "Behold, a people rises like a lioness and lifts itself like a lion" - only now, when we are united; when a government of national unity stands at our head; when our fighting army is one unified army, the Israel Defense Forces; when behind us stand, with one heart, all our brothers throughout the Jewish Diaspora - only now have we merited this great event. He who restores His Presence to Zion has restored Jerusalem to us!



HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

Question: Can I listen to a voice note or a podcast that was recorded by a Jew on Shabbat? Should I be careful not to send a message to somebody if they may respond on Shabbat?

Answer: A person should do their best not to cause another Jew to perform melacha on Shabbat. Therefore, it is preferable not to send messages close to Shabbat if you are concerned that they may be answered on Shabbat. If a voice note was recorded on Shabbat, the voice note itself does not become prohibited to listen to. The same is true for a podcast. Nevertheless, after Shabbat one should wait the amount of time it would have taken for the person to send it before listening to it (Shu"t Ketav Sofer; Shu"t Har Tzvi). If listening to a podcast supports their desecration of Shabbat, it is preferable not to listen, so that they may be encouraged to record during the week instead.

Question: If my friend falls asleep in tefillin during a shiur, do I need to wake him up?

Answer: The Shulchan Aruch rules (OC 44:1) that one may not sleep in tefillin unless it is a sheinat arai (temporary nap) and the tefillin are covered by clothing. Many mekubalim follow the practice cited by the Kaf HaChaim not to sleep at all in tefillin, even if they are covered and the sleep is temporary. The Tzitz Eliezer rules that when somebody is learning or listening to a shiur and falls asleep, there is no prohibition of sleeping in tefillin. Therefore, you do not need to wake him up.

Question: As our community is building a new beit kneset, we have been davening in the lobby of a nearby building. Should we recite the berachot of Me'ein Sheva (the blessing said after Shemoneh Esrei at Maariv on Shabbat)?

Answer: The Shulchan Aruch rules that the blessing of Me'ein Sheva is only recited at an established minyan (OC 268:10). The Taz understood that the Shulchan Aruch only intended to exclude a sporadic minyan, but that a minyan with consistency — even if not in a synagogue — may still be considered “established.” The Mishnah Berurah rules in accordance with the Taz, and Rav Moshe Feinstein adds that even a minyan that gathers only on Friday night can be considered sufficiently “established” to recite Me'ein Sheva. Therefore, the blessing of Me'ein Sheva may be recited where your community davens.

Question: Is it permissible to use hot water from the faucet on Shabbat if I have a “dud shemesh” (solar water heater)?

Answer: On the roof there are black pipes that absorb heat from the sun. The water passes through these pipes and becomes heated. When you turn on the hot water in your home, new water enters the tank and is subsequently heated through the same process. Poskim discuss whether one may use hot water when doing so indirectly causes new water to be heated. The Tzitz Eliezer views the heating of the water in the pipes as direct cooking through the sun, which is permissible. Therefore, he permits this use. Rav Ovadya Yosef is also lenient, but for a different reason. The person turning on the faucet does not intend for the new water to be heated. Although this inevitably occurs — making it a psik reisha — Rav Ovadya permits it in the context of an issur derabanan.

However, many poskim prohibit this practice. Some argue that the water is being heated through a toladah (secondary effect) of the sun. While direct cooking through sunlight is permitted, cooking through something heated by the sun is rabbinically prohibited (SA OC 318:3). Since the pipes themselves

are heated by the sun, cooking through them is prohibited (Shu"t Minchat Yitzchak). Additionally, the already-heated water in the tank may also contribute to heating the incoming water.

Some poskim are further concerned that permitting this may lead people to leave the boiler on over Shabbat. Since a boiler heats water electrically, causing water to be heated in this way may constitute a Torah prohibition. Therefore, it is preferable to refrain from using hot water even from a solar heater on Shabbat (Shemirat Shabbat Kehilchata). For these reasons, it is preferable to refrain from using hot water on Shabbat from a “dud shemesh”. Nevertheless, as noted above, one who is lenient has authorities upon whom to rely. In cases of need — such as for a sick person or a young child — it appears that one may be lenient even l'chatchilah.

Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.

PARNESS HAYOM :: IYAR

- 3 IYAR | Mrs. Jewel Shoham and Family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her father, Harry Naimer z'l (Zvi ben Moshe Yosef).
- 14 IYAR | Adrienne and Shlomo Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his grandfather, Mayer Sand z'l
- 22 IYAR | Kamal Gabbay, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Menashi Gabbay z'l



Jerusalem Personalities

Rabbi Aryeh Levene (1885-1969) – “Reb Aryeh” – was known as the “Tzadik of Jerusalem” for his work on behalf of the poor and the sick. He would visit members of the Jewish underground imprisoned in the Central Prison of Jerusalem, before the State of Israel was established, and would visit the sick at the “lepers’ hospital” to ensure the patients received care.

According to Simcha Raz, Reb Aryeh was known for his “humility, kindness, and respect for all... He treated everyone he met with love, respect, and dignity. He saw only the good in human beings, even those for whom others rarely had a kind word. He was perpetually involved with deeds of charity and helping the poor.

