



## Shabbat Va'etchanan

**שבת פ' ואתחנן**

Sat. 31 - 1 Aug. 2020 - 11th of Av, 5780

י"א אב תש"פ

Issue Number 963

Baal Koreh <i>Yom Shabbat Kodesh</i>	Rabbi Asher Sebbag	(Page-838).
Mufteer & Haftarah	Mr Jacob Oved (Pres. by Daniel Shemtov)	(Page -1187).

## Birkat Halevana

**ברכת הלבנה**

Shir Hashirim, Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat & Arbit.	18:45
Shabbat Candles.	20:31
Shabbat Shahrit - (Shema 09:12).	08:30
Mincha Shabbat - (Sunset - 20:48).	19:00
Arbit - Motzei Shabbat.	21:50
Shahrit Weekday - (Sunday - 7:30).	06:30
Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a. (ON ZOOM)	17:30
Mincha & Arbit.	19:00
Next Friday: Mincha, Shir Hashirim, Kabbalat Shabbat & Arbit.	18:45
Next Friday: Candles. <b>Shabbat. Ekev</b>	20:19

## **V'etchanan** 5780 (Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11)

Jul 26, 2020 | by [Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig](#)

**GOOD MORNING!** Culminating the mourning period of the “three weeks” beginning with the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, *Tisha B'Av* memorializes the destruction of Jerusalem, the utter annihilation of her inhabitants, and the destruction of the Holy Temples, both of which occurred on the ninth of Av - *Tisha B'Av*. This is a particularly difficult time, and perhaps it is appropriate that we also consider and mourn the losses to the Jewish communities the world over in 2020.

**According** to Jewish Agency Chairman Isaac Herzog, as of the beginning of July, an estimated 2,200 Jews around the world – outside North America

and the former Soviet bloc countries – have died from the coronavirus. Speaking at a press conference conducted over Zoom and attended by leaders of Jewish communities from around the world, Herzog said that although he could not confirm any numbers for North America or the former Soviet bloc countries, “We can assume all in all that there were thousands of Jews who unfortunately passed away in the crisis.”

**Aside** from the tragic personal losses, there has been an unprecedented disruption in the very fabric of Jewish communities all over the world; synagogues and schools closed and the general isolation of the population – particularly those who are most vulnerable. There has been much

pain and suffering and we must take the time to reflect on it. I am mentioning all of this not to depress you, but rather in the hope that it may trigger a path to healing.

**Grieving** involves finding ways to go through the pain and put our loss in perspective and come to a point of acceptance that allows us to find a path to move forward. Although mourning is initially a period of darkness and pain, it is also a passage towards the light and healing. The depth of the emotion that is connected with mourning brings us in touch with our own (and other's) humanity; it softens our hearts and opens our minds.

**Therefore**, while grieving represents a personal loss, the mourning process helps us to reconnect to others and begin to heal. That is why Judaism's period of mourning (known as *shiva*), is a time when family and friends converge to visit the bereaved to express their shared sorrow and pain. This communal connection is crucial to a person's ability to begin to restore their spirit.

**The Shabbat** after *Tisha B'Av* is called *Shabbat Nachamu*, meaning the Shabbat of consolation. It is named after the first words of the *haftarah* (a reading from the scriptures that is read in the synagogue after the weekly Torah portion). This week's *haftarah* comes from Isaiah 40, and begins, "Comfort, comfort my people."

**This Shabbat** brings comfort and relief. *Shabbat Nachamu* is no ordinary Shabbat. There is a long tradition of treating it almost like a holiday. The sages (see Ritva on *Ta'anit* 30a), say that the food we eat on this Shabbat should be extra special, like that of a *chag* – festival. This

is the first of seven Shabbats of consolation, but the only one that has this special elevated status.

**Perhaps fittingly**, this week's Torah portion contains what may very well be the most famous and important verse in Judaism known as the *Shema*:

*Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord;*

**This verse** is the centerpiece of the morning and evening prayer services, and encapsulates the monotheistic essence of Judaism. Indeed, this succinct statement has become so central to the Jewish people and is also the climax of the final prayer of Yom Kippur (*Ne'ilah*). This prayer is recited every night before one goes to sleep and is also traditionally the last words of a Jew as he prepares to leave this earth. This is because it is the very affirmation of our understanding of the essence of the Almighty and how everything in creation is ultimately connected in His singularity. The very structure of this verse is burned into the Jewish psyche from a young age.

**One** of the most well-known builders of Jewish schools and communities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, also known as the Ponevezer Rov. He was a brilliant scholar with an endless devotion and commitment to the Jewish people. After World War II he traveled the world over to help rebuild what was lost, and the stories surrounding him are legendary.

**Shortly after the war**, Rabbi Kahaneman travelled to Europe to gather Jewish orphans and take them home to Israel. Many Jewish children had been entrusted to local convents or Christian orphanages by their doomed parents who

were being deported to the death camps, and the local priests and nuns were loath to give them up.

**In one orphanage**, the priest in charge told Rabbi Kahaneman that there were no Jewish children there. Undeterred, Rabbi Kahaneman stood in front of the orphans and called out in a booming voice the "*Shema Yisroel*" prayer and immediately young children who'd last heard those holy words years before as their parents tucked them into bed, began crying and calling out Mama! Mama! Rabbi Kahaneman triumphed and reclaimed many orphans and brought them to Israel. Their remembrance of this essential prayer ultimately led them to new lives in Israel.

***Man's Search for Meaning***, by Viktor Frankl, has sold more than twelve million copies worldwide. Frankl describes his experiences in the Nazi concentration camps, but more than his travails, he writes as a psychologist about what provided him with the strength to survive.

**Frankl** poignantly describes how prisoners who gave up on life and hope for a future were inevitably the first to die. They died more from the lack of something to live for than from the lack of food. By contrast, Frankl kept himself alive by thinking of his wife and dreaming of lecturing about how his experiences reinforced what was already a central part of his thesis before entering the camps – that the primary motivational force of every person is a search for meaning.

**Frankl's** autobiographical memoir is followed by an outline of his therapeutic doctrine of curing the soul by finding meaning in life. His theory gains credence

from the backdrop of his personal experiences in the concentration camps and how he found meaning while confronting his suffering.

**Shortly after arriving** at Auschwitz, Frankl was stripped of his most precious possession – a manuscript that was his life's work, which he had hidden in his coat pocket and viewed as his "mental child." Realizing that the odds of his survival were small, "no more than one in twenty-eight," he had what he describes as "perhaps his deepest experience in the concentration camps."

**"I had** to undergo and overcome the loss of my mental child. And now it seemed as if nothing and no one would survive me; neither a physical nor a mental child of my own. So I found myself confronted with the question whether under such circumstances my life was ultimately void of meaning.

**"Not yet** did I notice that an answer to this question with which I was wrestling so passionately was already in store for me, and that soon thereafter this answer would be given to me. When I arrived I had to surrender my clothes and, in turn, I inherited the worn-out rags of an inmate who had already been sent to the gas chamber...Instead of the many pages of my manuscript, I found in a pocket of the newly acquired coat one single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, containing the most important Jewish prayer, the '*Shema Yisroel*.' How should I have interpreted such a "coincidence" other than as a challenge to live my thoughts instead of merely putting them on paper?"

**Then**, in the concluding sentence of this best-selling book, one that has been translated into twenty-four languages,

Frankl again draws on this timeless proclamation of faith:

**"Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright with the Lord's Prayer - the *Shema Yisroel* - on his lips."**

**This understating**, that we are all ultimately connected and that everything in the universe is joined through the absolute singularity of the Almighty, is where we must draw our strength to heal and move forward. May it be the will of the Almighty that all those who have suffered losses find hope and consolation, and that our splintered communities become unified and whole once again. Amen.



## TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

### **Va'etchanan, Deuteronomy 3:23 - 7:11**

**Moses pleads** with God to enter the Holy Land, but is turned down. (Remember, God always answers your prayers -- sometimes with a "yes," sometimes with a "no" ... and sometimes with a "not yet".) Moses commands the Children of Israel not to add or subtract from the words of the Torah and to keep all of the Commandments. He then reminds

them that God has no shape or form and that we should not make or worship idols of any kind.

**The cities** of Bezer, Ramot, and Golan are designated as Cities of Refuge east of the Jordan river. Accidental murderers can escape there to avoid revengeful relatives. They then wait there until tried.

**The Ten Commandments** are repeated to the whole Jewish people. Moses expounds the *Shema*, affirming the unity of God, Whom all should love and transmit His commandments to the next generation. A man should wear *tefillin* upon the arm and head. All Jews should put a *mezuzah* (the scroll is the essential part) upon each doorpost of their home (except the bathroom).

**Moses** then relays the Almighty's command not to intermarry, "for they will lead your children away from Me" (*Deuteronomy 7:3-4*).

## “ Quote of the Week ”

**Friends double our joy and halve our grief.**

— Rabbi Kalman Packouz



In loving memory of  
Rabbi Kalman Packouz  
Kalman Moshe ben  
Reuven Avigdor  
1950-2019  
*Shabbat Shalom,*  
Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig

**Security Alert:** Please be very vigilant when you leave the Synagogue. Do not stand in groups and chat, go home without gathering on the main road. Be safe and alert.

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE" TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

10 Av Mrs Vera Wegscheider	20 Av Mr Dr. Maurice Gubbay
11 Av Mr Dr. Maurice Gubbay	21 Av Mr William Yadid
14 Av Mr Sabah Shamash	28 Av Mrs Victoria Shuker
16 Av Mrs Edna Duke	30 Av Mr Meir Lanyado
17 Av Mr Kelly Saltoun	