

Congregation



\*\*\* 2108 Ocean Parkway Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223 \*\*\*

**Rabbi Aharon Farhi**

*Parashat **Hukat***

9<sup>th</sup> Tammuz 5781

**Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President**

*Maqam Raast Haftarat **VeYiftah HaGiladi***

Issue #942

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

*Candle Lighting **8:11pm** \* Shekiah **8:29pm** \* Shir Hashirim **7:00pm** followed by Minha Friday Night  
Shaharit Shabbat **8:15am** \* Minha Shabbat **7:55pm** \* Shabbat Ends **9:11pm** & Rabbenu Tam **9:41pm**  
Time for Talit **3:58am** \* Seasonal Hour **87:00** \* Alot Hashahar **3:41am** \* Netz Hachama **5:25am**  
Weekday Minha **7:00pm** \* Earliest Time for Arbit **7:17pm** \* Tzet Hacoachavim **9:06pm** \* Chatzot **12:57**  
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema **8:02am** \* Latest Time for Morning Amidah **9:29am***

*Those who wish to contact R' Farhi can call (646) 552-3412*

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**2415 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11235**

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After Aharon HaCohen's passing, there are only three Pesukim that follow which discuss how Canaanite kings launched a foray against Bnei Yisrael, assuming that they were now vulnerable. The 1<sup>st</sup> Pasuk speaks about the battle commencing, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pasuk speaks about how Bnei Yisrael promised to consecrate and sanctify anything captured in the event of victory and not keep anything for themselves, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pasuk speaks about how Bnei Yisrael prayed to Hashem for help, how Hashem listened to them, and delivered the Canaanite into their hands. How did the battle begin? The king of Arad heard that Bnei Yisrael were coming by the route of the spies. The Canaanite had initially believed that Hashem would battle on behalf of Bnei Yisrael, without any effort from the nation, and simply deliver the land to His chosen people. This had caused all the nations of the world to tremble. However, upon witnessing that Bnei Yisrael were conducting their strategies in a natural way, sending out spies to scout out the land, the Canaanite king became confident and emboldened that they could in fact overpower them. Hadn't Bnei Yisrael asked for permission from Edom and Moab to be able to pass through their land? Surely there was nothing supernatural going on here to be afraid of! They therefore took the initiative and went out to battle against the Jews. As the battle began, it appeared as if the Canaanite were winning, as it says in the Pasuk that they took a captive from them. Some hold this means they killed Yair Ben Menashe who was considered as a majority of the Sanhedrin. Others hold that this means they took only one captive, a female slave whom the Jews had captured

in a previous skirmish with the Canaanites. Realizing that they were not invincible, Bnei Yisrael raised their voices to Hashem in prayer, made promises and vows, and Hashem fought the Canaanites on their behalf. Bnei Yisrael won, and consecrated those cities as promised. We learn from here the importance of living naturally, conducting the flow of events naturally, not relying on miracles, as Yaakov Avinu prepared for battle against Esav in a natural manner, and also prayed to Hashem to save him against his brother Esav. We too are able to succeed by preparing naturally and then by praying to Hashem for help and victory. Hashem will then listen to our prayers and save us. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

### **Insights on the Parasha**

**1 – Regarding this the poets would say, “Come to Heshbon – let it be built and established as the city of Sihon”.** Simply, this discusses how Sihon the king of Heshbon conquered land from the king of Moab. The poets, as *Rashi* explains, were Bilam and his father Beor, who were both instrumental in Sihon's victory over Moab. Moab had been successfully resisting Sihon's invasion, until he hired Bilam and Beor to curse it. Why is the Torah writing about this? There have been many battles between the nations of the world and land has switched hands countless times. Why is this battle significant? This battle converted Moab's land to become Sihon's land, and therefore allowed our nation to then conquer it from Sihon, as we were not allowed to take it from Moab. The battle for the land of Heshbon was for the sole benefit of the Jewish nation, and that is the message

the Torah is teaching us. The king of Sihon prided himself and his strength after defeating Moab, but he did so erroneously, since the real victory was for the sake of the Jewish nation. It was all Hashem's doing and according to Hashem's plan, in order that it one day become a portion of Reuven's territory. What can we learn from this historical event? Many times, we focus on the near future and how our actions can influence them, instead of realizing and recognizing the extended future, the true outcome that would last far longer and is the actual purpose and intent. Our Sages explain from this Pasuk: the 'poets' can also be translated as those who 'overpower' their desires and inclinations. 'Come to Heshbon' is asking us to make a 'Heshbon' – a personal calculation of our spiritual standings and rectify what has to be improved. If one succeeds, then he will merit being properly 'built and established'. How many times are we faced with the dilemma of whether to go out to do a Mitzvah or to just stay at home, a choice between helping or relaxing? Do not allow time to pass – perform Mitzvot! Even the smallest Mitzvah will provide outstanding everlasting rewards in the world to come, greater than anything in this world. If you do not make a personal calculation and you do not realize the truth of the moment, then you are no better than the king of Sihon and all others of short-sighted mentality. We must realize how much Hashem values even the simplest of righteous deeds and intentions.

***HaGaon Rabbi Avraham Hamra  
Ben Teri Esther ז"ל 1943-2021***

Erev Shabbat Kodesh, on the sixth day of the sixth week, Yesod ShebeYesod, a day holier than all other days of Sefirat HaOmer, we heard the unfortunate news, as a holy soul was returned to our Father in heaven Erev Shabbat Parashat Behar Behukotai. The numerical value of these two Parashiot equals: Behar= *Harav*, Hukotai= *Avraham Hamra* (the first letter *Bet* is not part of the word). What can we say? As we cry bitterly over the broken Aron Hakodesh, a loss which leaves a void, without replacement, the passing of a Tzaddik is like the burning of the Bet Hamikdash. At the young age of 15 in the year 1958 he sang on the radio in Syria and sanctified the name of Hashem amongst Jews and non-Jews alike every Erev Shabbat Kodesh. He passed away on Erev Shabbat in merit of the beautiful songs he sang on Erev Shabbat in honor of Shabbat, as the righteous pass away on Friday. From that young age he grew to be a spiritual leader over the congregation in

Damascus. For more than fifty years he served in Bet Knessets in Damascus, Halab, Israel, New York, and many other places unknown to us, standing tall before each congregation, teaching Torah, Mussar, and leading as Sheliah Sibur during the High Holy Days each year. He had grown in Torah until he became the Rosh Yeshiva and Av Bet Din in Damascus, sitting as Rosh Kehilla, shouldering the congregation on his back, and assisting with all the issues of the people, whether they were spiritual or physical/material/monetary in nature, he served the people day and night. He would greet everyone with a smile, young and old alike, and listened to everyone with self-sacrifice. He even came to great danger with the Syrian police on occasion, and with the help of Hashem he was able to succeed in very difficult ways in order to help his brethren. He would protect with great strength those who were weak and in need against any opposition and enemy. He clarified a number of issues for the congregation with his wisdom and knowledge. Against the Syrian rule, at great personal risk, he built a large building for Talmud Torah. He taught the laws of Shechitah and Milah to the young budding scholars. When the time came to leave Syria, he assisted many families in securing the necessary papers and documents from the Syrian government, which was as tough as splitting the sea in those days. During his last days, he endured terrible pain and bitter suffering. For more than twenty years he worked hard towards building a Bet Knesset in Israel for his congregation, but unfortunately his time ended before he could complete the task, however our holy Hachamim teach us, if one intends to perform and complete a Mitzvah but cannot, it is considered as if he has done so, and now he ascends to heaven with the merit of having built a Bet Knesset in his hand. Many asked Rabbi Aharon Farhi: why wasn't this written in last week's publication? There is no reason besides that everything is decided by Hashem, and we cannot even move a finger unless Hashem allow us to do so. However, we write about this now, during the Parasha in which Aharon HaCohen passes away, because Rabbi Avraham Hamra was a Talmid of Aharon HaCohen, one who loved peace, chased after peace, loved his brethren, and drew others closer to the Torah. May it be Hashem's will that as he stands before Hashem praying for his wife, his children, his grandchildren, and his congregation and students, as well as all of our nation, that there should be an end to our suffering, and may the Final Redemption arrive speedily during our days, may his merits

protect us, and may his soul be bound up in the bonds of eternal life, Amen.

### ***The Road to Health and Recovery***

A person who wants to keep his body healthy must be careful to eat food in moderation, not only a little bit, and not until completely full. Most sicknesses that befall a person are only because he fills his stomach and eats too much. This applies even if you eat light foods that are usually good for health. Too much is always bad. Bad foods harm the body even in smaller amounts. This is what King Solomon said in his wisdom: He who keeps his mouth and his tongue in check, keeps himself from troubles of his soul. Why did he say both the mouth and the tongue? He wanted to teach us that his mouth is separate and his tongue is separate. Keeping his mouth away from eating bad foods, or a lot of any food, and his tongue from speaking Lashon Hara, are both separate bad things that decrease life. The doctors say: Eating a little bit of unhealthy foods does not harm as much as eating too much of even healthy foods. A person in his youth has a strong digestion, therefore he needs to eat more frequently than a man who is in the middle of his life. Older people with weakened strength should eat light foods, in little quantity and a lot of quality, in order to increase strength. During the summer when it is hot, it is better to eat less food than during the days of the cold winter. The doctors explain that one should only eat in the summer sixty percent of what he has eaten during the winter. Before eating, one should walk, work, or exercise until his body warms up, and then he should eat. After eating however, he should not perform any difficult tasks or exercise, because it can cause the food to be squeezed out of the stomach and travel further through the body before it is digested well, which can then cause significant damage.

### ***Mussar: Modesty***

Modesty is one of three character-traits that Hashem requests from our nation, as is stated in the Pasuk. Such a trait can protect a person from the Evil Eye, and save one from terrible sins, as we find by Yosef HaTzaddik who was careful with his modesty and did not look at his master's wife. He was saved from sin because of his diligence and care. Rabi Yossi was once asked by a certain woman: how could it be true that Yosef at the age of 17 had been so successful with his resolve not to sin? In response, he pulled out a Sefer Beresheet and began reading about the incidents with Reuven and Bilhah, Yehuda and

Tamar, and then explained: these were greater men and were still living near their father, yet the Torah does not cover up the truth – do you really believe that the Torah would cover up the truth by Yosef? Certainly not! The Torah begins with the ideas of modesty, as we see by Adam and Chava. Anyone who is careful with modesty is protected from death, as we find by Shaul who was spared by David because of the modesty that David witnessed and decided not to kill him at that moment. Modesty includes that one must dress in lengthened and adequate amounts of clothing that are clean and orderly. If modesty is important for a man, surely it is important for a woman, who must always be very careful with her appearance and character, to always act and present herself in a refined and modest manner. A woman is a princess of Hashem. A woman must make sure to avoid having others look at her, especially if she is married. Because Dina the daughter of Yaakov went out and sampled the styles of the other inhabitants, she caused trouble to come upon herself. The first woman was created from a hidden and modest source, as she was taken from a side bone from man that is usually covered. With every limb that was formed, the intention was that woman should be modest. A bride who makes sure to be careful with her modesty will be blessed with children of regal and royal standing, wise men and prophets. We learn this from Tamar and Rut the Moabite. A woman who is careful with her modesty even at home is fit to marry the Cohen Gadol. A modest woman brings atonement for her husband and her family. Therefore, women must be especially careful to always exercise as much modesty as possible, even at home and especially outside, whether walking, sitting, standing, eating, and with her form and style of clothing. One is forbidden to go near a place that women bathe or swim. Our Sages teach us that a woman who exposes herself or dresses immodestly will not be grouped with her family in the World to Come. She will be placed outside of her family's group and cry in painful regret over what she had done to deserve this. Therefore, women, please have mercy on yourselves and on the livelihood of your husbands, and be careful with the laws of the Torah concerning modesty. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

### ***Laws: 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz***

1 – The fast of the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz will take place Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of June. It begins 3:44am and ends 8:55pm. Those who are strict wait until 9:07pm. The

following is the calculation based on the Ben Ish Hai and Hacham Ovadia Yosef ztl: The fast begins Alot Hashahar which is one and a fifth seasonal hours before Netz, the seasonal hour is 87:00, plus a fifth, 87+17=104 minutes before Netz 5:28am, making Alot Hashahar 3:44am.

**2** – A pregnant or nursing mother within 24 months of childbirth, a lady who miscarried within 24 months, a person who is sick, even if not sick dangerously, a sick person who recovered but is still weak, and an older weak person, are all exempt from this fast. However, they should still eat only what is necessary and not indulge in desires.

**3** – One who cannot last without rinsing out his mouth or brushing his teeth (a sensitive person) may brush, provided that he face downwards and not swallow.

**4** – One who forgot that it was a fast day and ate must continue the fast nonetheless. If he ate a Kezayit, even though he is continuing the fast, he may not say Anenu in Tefillat Minha.

**5** – One who made a Beracha on a drink or food forgetting about the fast, must taste it in order to have the smallest amount of pleasure so as not to have made a Beracha in vain.

**6** – After Anenu, only the Sheliah Tzibur ends off with a separate Beracha of “*Ha’oneh...*” during Chazarah between the ‘*Goel*’ and ‘*Rofeh*’ Berachot. Everyone else, however, just ends off with “*Shomeah Tefillah*”, the regular Beracha of “*Shema Kolenu*” in which they say Anenu.

**7** – If one forgot Anenu, just continue and say it after ‘*Elokai Netzor*’ without a Beracha.

**8** – Smoking is permitted during a fast.

**9** – A boy under the age of 13 and a girl under the age of 12 are exempt from fasting.

**10** – Cohanim is recited and performed during Mincha of a fast only if it is after Pelag HaMinha. If a Minyan is praying Minha Gedola or any time before Pelag HaMinha, then Cohanim is completely skipped.

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*wife Rachel* on the birth of a son **Moshe**, Mabrouk, Amen. \*\*\* **Mr. Victor Guindi, his wife Nadia Chaya, and their children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Refuah Shelemah for **Nadia Chaya Bat Victoria**, Amen. \*\*\* **Mr. Eli Alhalabi, his wife Evon, and their children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat **Yosef Ben Mazal a”h**, Refuah Shelemah for **Kitta**, Amen. \*\*\* **Blessed siblings: Dibo, Mark, Sammy, Touni, Kety, Lina, and Nadia of the Khafif Family.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their mother **Olga Bat Zakie a”h**, Amen. \*\*\* **Mr. Isaac Anbi and his children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their mother **Eva Aysha Bat Liza a”h**, Amen. \*\*\* Askan Tzibur **Mr. Shlomo Cohen, his wife Gila, and their children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat his mother **Kourjie Yaffa Bat Simha a”h**, Amen. \*\*\* **Mr. Victor Maleh, his wife Shirley, and their children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat his father **Yehuda Aslan Ben Jamila a”h**, Amen. \*\*\* **Blessed siblings: Soly and Hillel Bawabe.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their mother **Rachel Bat Shafika a”h**, Amen. \*\*\* **The Janani Family.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat **Jack Yaakov Chaim Ben Sara a”h**, Amen. \*\*\* **Mr. Eli Levy, his wife Becky, and their children.** Blessings, health, and success for the entire family, Mazal Tov to the bride and groom **Josh and Rebecca**, Mabrouk, Amen.

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*Tizku L’Mitzvot, Amen!*

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