

Congregation

◆◆◆"Beth Yosef"◆◆◆

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

**Rabbi Aharon Farhi**  
*Parashat Va'era*  
28<sup>th</sup> Tebet 5782

*Maqam Nawa*  
Issue #966

**Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President**  
*Haftarat Ko Amar*  
January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022

*Candle Lighting 4:20pm \* Shekiah 4:38pm \* Shir Hashirim 4:10pm followed by Minha Friday Night  
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am \* Minha Shabbat 4:00pm \* Shabbat Ends 5:20pm & Rabbenu Tam 5:50pm  
Time for Talit 6:24am \* Seasonal Hour 56:00 \* Alot Hashahar 6:13am \* Netz Hachama 7:20am  
Weekday Minha 4:30pm \* Earliest Time for Arbit 4:05pm \* Tzet Hacoachavim 5:15pm \* Chatzot 11:59  
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 9:01am \* Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:57am*

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Please do not read this bulletin during Tefillah or Keriat Hatorah

From the beginning of creation, throughout the years, at times Hashem reveals His supreme authority over the world. With the ten plagues, we are shown that even before the Torah and Mitzvot were given at Har Sinai, even before reward for Mitzvot and punishment for sins was learned, Hashem judged the wicked and delivered severe punishment when necessary for their evil actions; the Great Flood during the times of Noah, the destruction of Sedom and Amorah, and the ten plagues in Egypt. Why? So that all would recognize and believe in Hashem, Jews and non-Jews alike, and understand that Hashem is, was, and always will be the supreme authority, Who fills the entire world with His presence, and there is nothing else besides Him. These punishments were specifically for sins and crimes committed against one another, man to his fellow. In the times of Noah theft and robbery was acceptable practice, in the times of Sedom abuse, torture, and complete disregard for others was the required law, and in Egypt the Jews were subjugated to slave labor while their newborn sons were thrown into the Nile River to drown. Hashem in all His glory punishes a people who wrong their fellow to such a degree without remorse or even the slightest hesitation. What's more, in this week's Parasha, the Egyptians should have been grateful and appreciative of the Jewish people. Before Yosef came to Egypt, they were a mediocre country at

best. Through Yosef's guidance and leadership, blessed with the divine spirit of Hashem, Egypt not only survived a potentially devastating famine, but came out of the other side as a world superpower that all other nations and countries of the world bowed their head towards. What did Pharaoh do? He forgot Yosef, enslaved the Jews, and killed their children, drowning them and using their bodies as bricks. Hashem punishes severely those who not only mistreat others, but especially those who don't appreciate the kindness and goodness done for them by others and repays evil for good. Those who are deserving are saved from the fate of such people, as Noah was saved from the Great Flood, Lot was saved from Sedom through his connection with Avraham, and the Jewish people in Egypt who although were steeped in the lowest levels of impurity at the time sinning with idolatry, nonetheless Hashem realized their merit and saved them because they did not sin against one another. Hashem punished Egypt with ten terrible plagues to teach us the importance of distancing ourselves as far away as possible from mistreating others. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

**Insights on the Parasha**

The Pasuk says: "Hashem (written "Elokim" – *Midat HaDin* – strict judgment) spoke to Moshe and said that He is Hashem (written "Havaya")

– *Midat HaRahamim* – mercy). Why does the Pasuk begin with judgment and end with mercy? The *Rebbe from Ruzhin, R' Yisrael*, explains: We can learn a great lesson from here: It would seem that when Moshe listened to Hashem and went to Pharaoh as instructed, the situation deteriorated instead of improving. The Pasuk begins with *Midat HaDin*, in reference to the way the current situation could *seem*, void of mercy and kindness. However, the Pasuk ends off with *Midat HaRahamim*, as *in truth* Hashem is orchestrating a master plan that unfolded perfectly and successfully in due course, all with our best interests considered. How did the plan unfold? R' Yisrael explains: a leader of our nation cannot assume the prestigious position unless he is willing to shoulder the pain, sorrow, and suffering of the Jewish people. When Moshe returned from the palace of Pharaoh distraught over the fact that his recent encounter seemed to cause more harm than good, Hashem recognized Moshe as a true leader, someone willing to care for the people and suffer with them, to truly feel their pain and anguish in their times of need. That self-sacrifice was the catalyst that changes the situation from judgment to mercy, and that is the only way a leader can truly deserve his position, in order to bring the redemption.

### ***History in Brief***

*50 years after the Temple's destruction.* After the Romans murdered Rebi Chanina Ben Teradyon, they next sentenced Rebi Yehuda Ben Baba to death. Who was Rebi Yehuda Ben Baba? He lived for seventy years. Since he was eighteen years old, he only ever slept in very short intervals, like a horse. He was a great sage, very wise, often referred to as Rebi Yehuda HaChassid. His colleague Rebi Yehuda Bar Ilai was also called HaChassid. Whenever the Gemara relates a story of a Chassid, it is either referring to Rebi Yehuda Ben Baba or Rebi Yehuda Bar Ilai. He would teach Torah in the Bet Midrash, and would not appreciate when his colleague would err in Halacha. He would call his students Rebbe. He fasted for twenty-six years. After the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash, without the Sanhedrin situated in the regular court, they were no longer able to rule on cases involving a potential death sentence, only cases involving fines and penalties.

When the enemies of our nation tried to stop even that, they could no longer rule with a larger group, rather they relied on Semicha so that a group of three would be able to rule on cases as necessary.

### ***Health and Recovery***

In our generations, factory owners, with the development of technology, have studied and developed various types of synthetic and chemical materials that influence the tongue sensors and make them feel different flavors. These are the variety of ingredients and flavors that we see written on industrial products. For example, you can make apple juice without having a hint of an apple, and the tongue will taste an apple, so you interfere with creation and trick your health. The industry is becoming more and more sophisticated and is learning how to influence taste sensors more and more, with the goal of getting more and more people to eat the same products. Perhaps you will ask yourself why Hashem, who is omnipotent, did not naturally make us sweets like those produced in factories. Isn't it much easier to make a candy than to make a fig? The answer is that Hashem takes care of us like a father, with care and consideration, and He therefore gave us fruits with reasonable sweetness so we would eat enough but not too much, and also gave us the sweetness of the fruit with a concentration that is not strong and accompanied by fruit fibers, so that the sweetness will be best digested while our bodies remain undamaged. If the fruit were as sweet as all the industrially produced sweets then we would not stop eating them and we would be harmed. Therefore we must overcome the physical temptation and prevent any harm to our health. King Solomon compared the troubles that result from eating wrongly, and the troubles that ensued as a result of serious transgressions caused by the tongue, as follows: "Death and life can be decided by the tongue".

### ***Mussar: Zilzul***

Zilzul, or disregard for the honor of another, is an issue that requires much care and consideration. It takes great understanding to know what exactly is classified as Zilzul, whether concerning speech or action. Before speaking or acting, first picture yourself in your friend's situation and then decide whether you would consider it to be Zilzul. If you

would be pained through such speech or actions, then don't do it to your friend. Our Sages teach us: People usually easily realize the faults and problems of others, but not their own. It is actually very hard to recognize and acknowledge your own faults. Many try to flatter the rich or mighty, or just try to collect an audience, by ridiculing and defacing another unjustly. The sins and consequences for such a style of behavior are unbearable. Straightforward and righteous people do not derive pleasure from the imperfections and faults of others. Be especially careful with your wife and workers, for they are not yours to ridicule just because they help you. On the contrary, you must be even more careful with their feelings than anyone else's, because you are expected to show appreciation for their assistance. Just because Hashem granted you a higher position does not mean you can freely rebuke and ridicule those who are subordinate to you. In actuality, on the contrary, you are now more obligated and have a greater responsibility for your actions. Such negative behavior comes from haughtiness and one's chasing after honor. One who fears Hashem will recognize the terrible attribute of haughtiness and distance himself from desiring honor. Do not think you are great just because Hashem has given you potential or power. Think that you will now be held more accountable for your actions than others, and therefore be aware of the outcome and the consequences which will be equivalent in severity. Never be angered or particular when dealing with others, and always try your best to judge others favorably. May Hashem merit us, Amen.

#### ***Rav Nissim Indibo HaCohen***

The chief rabbi of Damascus was born in 1857 and was granted longevity. He died at the age of 114 years, and his mind was clear until his last day, living in close proximity of Bet Knesset Shevet Achim in Damascus. He was one of the students of Rabbi Yitzhak Abulafia, who was born in Damascus in 1830 and was appointed chief rabbi of Damascus in 1873. He was 43 years old when he officiated as rabbinat. He

wrote four books on the parts of the Shulchan Aruch, titled Pnei Yitzchak. In the last year he went to the Holy Land and settled in Tiberias. He passed away in 1910 at the age of 80. His student Rabbi Nissim served as Dayan in the Damascus court. When he died in 1910, he became the chief rabbi of Damascus. He wrote an introduction to the book: Yaskil Abadi, written by Rabbi Ovadia Hedaya of Aleppo. Rabbi Nissim was highly valued by his community and even by the gentiles and the authorities in Damascus. When the Syrian government issued a death sentence to the Israeli spy Eli Cohen, of blessed memory, a special permission was given to Hacham Nissim to visit him in prison and confide with him before his death. On his last day he asked his disciple Rabbi Yitzchak Asa to go home, and after an hour Rabbi Asa hurried to go to work, but Hacham Nissim persuaded him to stay. He told him to take all his sons out of the house, and he then recited confession for himself, read the Shema, and passed away on the seventh of Shevat in 1973. May his merits protect us, Amen.

#### ***Story***

Hagaon Rabbi Avraham Hershberg, chief rabbi of Mexico, passed away in 1994. From his youth, he was considered one of the best Talmidim of the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva in Poland. When the Holocaust began, he was saved from Europe and reached America. He accepted a position as a rabbi in Chicago, on condition that they establish a Yeshiva as well where he can deliver Torah classes. He was not ready to detach from the Yeshiva world. At the time Chicago did not have Yeshivot at all. He went to visit the current Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, father-in-law of the well-known Rebbe Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavitch. When he explained that in Chicago there were no Yeshivot, the Rebbe thought for a moment and responded that there indeed will be Yeshivot in Chicago. He brought ten Chabad Talmidim from New York to Chicago and started a Yeshiva. Rabbi Hershberg was the Rabbi of the congregation in Chicago, and also gave Shiurim in the new

Yeshiva. When Rabbi Hershberg left Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, he kept in close contact with his son-in-law Rabbi Menachem Mendel. After some time, Rabbi Hershberg accepted a position as a rabbi in Mexico. Our story begins in 1979, following the Iranian Revolution which saw the overthrowing of Iran's monarchy and its replacement with an Islamic republic. Rabbi Hershberg, along with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, was directly involved in saving thousands of Iranian Jewish children.

#### **Laws:**

**1** – One should not recite any blessing before washing Netilat Yadayim in the morning, as the Zohar is very strict with this. However, if one hears a blessing or Kaddish, he should at least wipe his hands on cloth or even the wall before reciting Amen.

**2** – If one wakes from thunder noises while sleeping in his bed during the night, he should wipe his hands of nearby material and recite 'Baruch... Shekocho Ugurato Maleh Olam.' If he wakes because he is thirsty, he should wipe his hands and recite Shehakol. If he drinks a Reviit (86 grams) he should recite Boreh Nefashot afterwards as well.

**3** – The Pasuk states that a person should live by what comes out of his mouth – this is explained to mean that a person should mention Hashem in blessings from his mouth and thereby live through eating and drinking after reciting the blessings. If a person mentions Hashem and thanks Hashem for sustenance, in that merit a person will live a long life in health without sickness.

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*Tizku L'Mitzvot, Amen!*

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