

Congregation

◆◆◆ "Beth Yosef" ◆◆◆

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

Rabbi Aharon Farhi

Parashat Vayhi

18th Tevet 5784

Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President

Haftarat Vayikrevu Yeme

December 30th 2023

Maqam Hijaz

Issue #1055

*Candle Lighting 4:18pm * Shekiah 4:37pm * Shir Hashirim 4:15pm followed by Minha Friday Night
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am * Minha Shabbat 4:00pm * Shabbat Ends 5:19pm & Rabbenu Tam 5:49pm
Time for Talit 6:25am * Seasonal Hour 55 * Alot Hashahar 6:14am * Netz Hachama 7:20am
Weekday Minha 4:25pm * Earliest Time for Arbit 4:09pm * Tzet Hacoachavim 5:14pm * Chatzot 11:58
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:59am * Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:54am*

Shovevim Fasting:

Monday January 1st fast starts 6:14am and ends 5:05pm

Thursday January 4th fast starts 6:14am and ends 5:05pm

Those who wish to contact Rabbi Aharon Farhi can call (646) 552-3412

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Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey; he rests between the boundaries. Yaakov Avinu blessed his son Yissachar, who was known for his Torah study, by comparing him to a donkey. Rabi Eliezer raises the question: Why is he compared to a donkey – why not a horse, or a lion, which are more respectable comparisons, as they are stronger and mightier? Perhaps compare him to a leopard, or an eagle, or even a gazelle, all of which are known for their exceptional abilities? What is exceptional about a donkey? The understanding is as follows: the donkey carries a heavy load and does not complain, unlike the other animals that would resent such treatment. It also does not feel haughty and arrogant like the other animals would feel. Yissachar, as well as all Torah scholars, carries the yoke of Torah, without resenting the pressure, without looking for personal honor and glory, and praises Hashem. While the donkey cares not where it rests and is not particular about such petty details, so too the Torah scholar would not mind eating simply and living with modest accommodations, to the point of sleeping on the floor and only eating bread and drinking water, for the sake of his Torah study and to honor Hashem. The Torah scholar distances from desire and pleasure, and lives a life of efficiency. Just as one prays for holiness, he must pray to distance from the mundane and unnecessary luxuries of this

world. The blessing continues: even though he recognizes the goodness that the world has to offer, nonetheless he chooses to forsake the luxuries and instead pursues the Torah. The Orach Chaim explains: the Pasuk uses two different words which appear to be the same: *Tov* and *Na'emah*, which both mean 'good'. However, the difference between the two is that *Tov* is intrinsically good through and through, like the *Olam Haba*, while *Na'emah* is only superficially good, like this world, this lifetime. Yissachar does not worry for the good of this world, as it is superficial – he prefers the genuine goodness that awaits him in the world to come. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

Insights on the Parasha

1 – The Pasuk states that Yaakov blessed his grandchildren *on that day*. Rav Moshe MeKorbin explains that this was a blessing as well. He blessed them to be able to always focus only on the day currently before them, to not be lacking today, and never have to worry about tomorrow.

2 – *From Asher – his bread will have richness, and he will provide kingly delicacies*. If Asher fulfills his role and provides spiritual delicacies in honor of our King, by assisting and strengthening the learning of Torah, then his bread will have richness and he will not need to worry about his

livelihood. It says *from* Asher, since the reward he will enjoy in this world is not drawn from the principle, but only *from* the fruits of his Mitzvot, while the principle reward remains intact for the next world.

History in Brief

130 years after the Hurban, 200AD. The Tanna R' Yehuda Berebbe Ilai was one of the five students of R' Akiva, and a colleague of R' Meir. He was born in lower Galilee. He would say, if you have learned, then you must teach, but if you did not yet learn, then come learn. He learned from R' Tarfon, who would call R' Yehuda his "Son". When he was younger he read Megillat Esther for R' Tarfon. R' Yehuda wrote Sefer Torat Cohanim. He would make hints in order to remember and not err, such as with the ten plagues, he abbreviated as *Detzach Adash B'Achav*. He began clarifying the order of Mishnayot which he received from his Rebbe R' Tarfon, as well as: R' Eliezer, R' Yehoshua, Raban Gamliel, R' Elazar Ben Azaria, R' Yishmael, and R' Yossi Haglili. He passed it on to his student Rabbenu Hakadosh who established the complete Seder of Mishnayot. R' Yochanan would teach: whenever R' Yehuda and R' Meir argue in Halacha, we follow the opinion of R' Yehuda. Also if he is arguing with R' Shimon, we follow R' Yehuda. R' Yehuda lived longer than his colleagues. In his generation there were many poor people who were inundated with financial pressure due to the taxes collected, but they nonetheless sacrificed in order to spend their days learning Torah as heaven fearing Jews. He would teach: eat bread and salt, drink water that is available, sleep on the floor and live in sacrifice, if even that is what is necessary to be able to learn Torah. He would say, be careful with the children of the poor, because they will be great in Torah.

Health and Recovery

The Rambam guarantees a good chance of achieving longevity, with health and strength, both physically and mentally, if certain conditions are met. There are hundreds of thousands of herbs and cures in the world. Some are fruits and vegetables, some are herbs and spices. Hashem created many beneficial forms of produce in order that man should be healthy and productive. The Rambam discusses at length exercises and activities that

strengthen the health of man. He stresses their importance and clarifies that they are not merely important for youngsters – they are vital components to the health of man ranging from all ages. A healthy person can understand the laws of the Torah. Everyone that follows the directions of the Rambam is given a guarantee from the Rambam that he will not suffer sicknesses during his lifetime until he is very old, and he will have no use for doctors. The health of the soul is directly connected with the health of the body. The Rambam began his medical practice in Egypt in the year 1170, where he was the royal doctor of the king and the royal family.

Mussar: The Days of the Shovevim

The days of Shovevim begin Monday January 1st and continue until Thursday February 22nd. The word *Shovevim* is comprised of the initial letters of the six Parashiot included in these weeks: Shemot, Vaera, Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim. During a Jewish leap year, like this year, two more weeks are added to the Shovevim – Terumah and Tetzaveh – known as Shovevim Tat, with the word 'Tat' being formed with the two initial letters of the two extra weeks. This time frame in essence requests from each and every Jew to awaken from their slumber and produce a personal calculation. Ask yourself: What am I doing? What can I do better in order to serve Hashem and improve my spirituality and holiness? We must first fix the mistakes that we do constantly or frequently, and repent, for this is the proper time. "*Behold, the cries of Bnei Yisrael have come before Me.*" – our prayers must be voiced strongly during these days. The clear advice is to increase in Torah learning each day, whether with a study partner or by attending an extra Torah class. Torah has the power to bring repentance, "*Like storm winds upon vegetation*". Some have the custom to fast every Monday and Thursday during this time period from Alot Hashachar – 6:14 AM, until 5:05pm, a ½ hour after Shekiah (this time fluctuates during the six weeks). One who wishes to fast must accept upon himself from Minha of the previous day in *Shema Kolenu*, or at the end of the Amidah if he forgot: "*Behold I accept a Taanit upon myself for tomorrow, Beli Neder.*" This *Kabballah* (acceptance) enables you to say Anenu during the fast. If he did not make a *Kabballah*, he

may not say Anenu, but still fasts. One must be careful with the following: (1) Do Teshuvah (2) Learn Torah (3) Recite Tehillim each day (4) Be careful with Netillat Yadayim (5) Feed the poor (6) Eat the correct amount of bread for blessings (7) Be careful with Birkat Hamazon and all Berachot (8) Answer Amen with concentration (9) Be careful not to talk during Chazara, Kaddish, and Sefer Torah, for it is compared to wasting seed (10) Concentrate during Keriat Shema and pronounce each word clearly (11) Dip in the Mikveh (12) Try to be a Sandak (13) Go up for an Aliyah and read with the reader (14) Say Berich Shemeh when taking out the Torah (15) Give charity each day (16) Be careful with Oneg Shabbat (17) Honor Torah and its learners (18) Pray with concentration and tears (19) Learn Mishnayot (20) Do Mitzvot properly (21) Be careful with Mayim Acharonim and say Birkat Hamazon without stalling (22) Be one of the first ten in Shul (23) Be careful with Tefillin (24) Look into the Torah when it is shown to the congregation (25) Work to make peace between friends and spouses (26) Train children to serve Hashem (27) Bring joy to the bride and groom (28) Guide others to repentance. (29) Complete 100 Berachot each day (30) Distance from fights and problems (31) Don't speak Lashon Hara (32) Speak optimistically about our nation (33) Recite Keriat Shema before going to sleep (34) Be careful with Seudat Shelishit and Melave Malka. (35) These days can help a person return to holiness if treated properly. Therefore, during these days, our responsibility is greater than all other days of the year. All souls can be repaired to the level it was at Har Sinai, during the acceptance of the Torah and the revelation of the Shechinah. Watch over these weeks and Shabbatot with holiness and purity, for they will be beneficial for you in return, and will erase all of our sins. May Hashem merit us, Amen.

**Rishon LeSion: The Humble Gaon
Hacham Yaakov Attieh 1922-2017**

During his time in Beirut, Lebanon, he published the laws of purify in French and distributed it for free to all the Mikvaot, so that these laws would be easily accessible in all households, written clearly and concisely. He worried for the spirituality of the young men, to draw them under the wings of the

Shechinah, so they can learn Torah and become heaven fearing Jews. He would correspond many times with the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir in Brooklyn, Gaon R' Avraham Kalmanowitz zt"l, in order to discuss this topic, how to save our teenagers and help them develop towards Hashem. He would send many students from Beirut to France in order for them to learn in the Yeshiva of Gaon R' Chaim Chajkin, who was a student of the Chafetz Chaim. Despite the chance of danger, he sacrificed in order for many to learn Torah and grow in Yirat Shamayim. Those he helped, grew up to be observant in Torah and Mitzvot. After twenty years in Beirut, he believed it was time to move on, in order to focus on the Jewish education of the younger generation.

Story

A wealthy man named Danki came to Zusha, explained that in two months would be his sixtieth birthday, and he ordered the most fashionable and expensive clothing made from the finest materials. Zusha felt overwhelmed and afraid. This was a very lucrative business opportunity, but the investment would be steep for him until payment, and it was a risk to take on such an expensive job on credit. The customer took out a large deposit and gave it to him, promising the full balance in two months when the job was complete. Over the next couple of weeks, while he worked hard on this order, he overheard a few visitors in his store talking about the upcoming grand banquet in honor of the birthday of Danki, a wealthy dignitary. They said that tens of thousands of Rubles were being spent, no expenses held back. Zusha was relieved to hear this and felt reassured that he too would be paid in full. But Zusha didn't know that these visitors were in fact men who worked for Danki, and the truth was that they had already spent all the money and were just making it look like Zusha would be paid when in fact they had no intention of paying the final few merchants while they completed the party plans. Zusha now thought he would have a long lasting business relationship with a wealthy customer, when in fact he was about to face a very bad financial situation.

Laws

1 – Jealousy, desire, and honor remove a person from this world, and therefore a person must

distance from these characteristics. However, a person must balance himself when it comes to benefiting from this world and should not say that he will completely deprive himself of all enjoyment, vowing not to eat meat, drink wine, or dress nicely, for this is wrong and in fact a sinful approach. As we find, a Nazir who deprives himself of wine and grapes is required afterwards to offer a sacrifice for the sin of depriving himself from things that are not regularly forbidden.

2 – If one is in middle of praying the silent Amidah and he hears the congregation reciting Kedushah, he should pause and listen to the Hazzan recite Kedushah and have in mind to fulfill his obligation along with the congregation. This is only if the Hazzan is someone who knows that he is supposed to fulfill the obligation of those listening to Kedushah and he is a regular Hazzan, however if he is not a regular Hazzan and does not know the Halacha to fulfill the obligation of others with his Kedushah, or if you are unable to hear the words from the Hazzan, then you do not pause in the silent Amidah and instead continue praying.

3 – When a father puts Tefillin on his son who is now Bar Mitzvah, he should recite: Blessed is Hashem who absolves me from consequences. He should make sure to recite this within the first three days of the Bar Mitzvah birthday. Some say within the first thirty days is also acceptable.

4 – The same applies to a father of a daughter who reaches Bat Mitzvah.

5 – If the father is not available to recite this, a grandfather should recite instead.

6 – Before anyone recites a blessing, if his hands are dirty with oily or sticky substances, whether from food or otherwise, he should first wash his hands without a blessing, dry them on a hand towel, and then he could recite a blessing.

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