

Congregation



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

Rabbi Aharon Farhi
Parashat Shoftim
6th Elul 5785

Maqam Ajam
Issue #1130

Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President
Haftarat Anochi Anochi
August 30th 2025

*Candle Lighting 7:14pm * Shekiah 7:32pm * Shir Hashirim 6:45pm followed by Minha Friday Night
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am * Minha Shabbat 6:55pm * Shabbat Ends 8:12pm & Rabbenu Tam 8:42pm
Time for Talit 5:05am * Seasonal Hour 77 * Alot Hashahar 4:50am * Netz Hachama 6:22am
Weekday Minha 7:00pm * Earliest Time for Arbit 6:31pm * Tzet Hacoachavim 8:07pm * Chatzot 12:56
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:39am * Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:56am*

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Please do not read this bulletin during Tefillah or Keriat Hatorah

Every year we read this week's Parasha, Shoftim, in the beginning of the month of Elul, as we begin reciting Selihot daily. Hashem commands Bnei Yisrael: *Judges and officers shall you appoint for yourself.* When proper judgment and consequence is exercised on earth then there is no need for judgment and consequence to be exercised in heaven. This is always read within the month of Elul, while we recite Selihot daily and repent for our misdeeds that we have committed throughout the year and throughout our life, to teach us that before a person can properly repent for his sins and change his ways, he must first inspect himself and scrutinize his deeds and actions. If we are acting responsibly by judging ourselves and correcting our ways in this world on earth, then there will be no need to be judged or prosecuted again up in heaven. We will then be spared from terrible potential suffering. Now that the month of Elul has arrived, which is in essence a month of mercy and repentance, we must use it to the fullest to prepare for the month of Tishre, the powerful month of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when we will be brought to judgment for all of our deeds. Our Mitzvot will be put on one side of the scale, and our sins will be put on the other. All of our pain and suffering will be placed upon the scale along with our Mitzvot to help outweigh the sins – but what can really tip the scale in our favor are our prayers, our

commitments, and our repentance. We must commit to keep our mouths pure for prayer by refraining from Lashon Hara and profane speech. As the Shofar blows from our mouths into our ears, we cleanse sins committed through speech and listening. Charity as well helps tip the scales in our favor. We definitely do not prefer to be cleansed through suffering and pain. Instead, we must take the initiative to act, right now, today, because now is the time to improve on our own, to decide to do Teshuva and change for the better. If we want to live a life of happiness and peace, comfort and satisfaction, then we must draw closer to Hashem! The Mazal of this month is a maiden, clean and pure, as we cleanse ourselves through repentance and commitments to guard all of our actions from misdeeds, and increase in prayers with concentration, with a Minyan, and implement daily attendance to more Shiurim and Torah classes. During these days in history, as Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe Rabbenu spent 40 days praying for our forgiveness and survival, from Rosh Hodesh Elul until Yom Kippur. Hashem listened to his prayers and thereby forgave Bnei Yisrael on his behalf. These days are very special. They are days of repentance, acceptance, and forgiveness. The first Luhot were destroyed, broken, lost, because of our misdeeds, but Hashem forgave Bnei Yisrael and allowed them a second chance

with instructions for Moshe to prepare a second set of Luhot from heaven. We too must make the most of our second chances and awaken from our spiritual slumber with strength and resolve to unite together as a holy spiritual nation, as one, together, to fulfill the words of Hashem and perform all Mitzvot with energy and meaning. Let us use this powerful opportunity to the fullest and bring Hashem into our lives through prayer, Torah learning, and fulfillment of Mitzvot, with unity and strength. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

Insights on the Parasha

There are three points of instruction within the laws concerning the '*unsolved murder and the axed heifer*': 1 – We axe the back of the heifer's neck. 2 – It is done in a harsh valley which cannot be worked or sown. 3 – Atonement is recited. *Rabbenu Bachya* explains the connection between the details of the procedure regarding the axed heifer and the unsolved murder. There are three components to a person's spiritual being: 1 – The animalistic component. 2 – The component of growth. 3 – The intellectual component, specifically speech. Because the murderer deprived the victim of these three components when he caused his soul to leave his body, in order to gain atonement, the procedure must relate to the sin. The axing of the heifer's neck relates to the animalistic component of which the victim had been deprived. The harsh valley which cannot be worked or sown relates to the fact that the victim can no longer enjoy his component of growth. Finally, the atonement that is recited relates to the fact that the victim can no longer enjoy his intellectual component of speech. Our Sages teach us: after the procedure is completed, the axed heifer decomposes into worms, as nature dictates, and one of those worms is miraculously directed by the angel of the 'not workable valley' to fulfill the mission of killing the unknown murderer. How great and perfect are the ways of Hashem!

History in Brief

220 years after the Hurban, calendar year 290. One time, Rebi Chiya went to southern Israel and was a guest by Rebi Yehoshua Ben Levi. They served him twenty-four dishes of food. He asked, if this is what you eat during the week, how do you celebrate and elevate Shabbat? Rebi Yehoshua

replied, they have double on Shabbat! One time, Rebi Yehoshua went to northern Israel and was a guest by Rebi Chiya in Tiberia. Rebi Chiya gave large coins to the students of Rebi Yehoshua and instructed them to prepare a meal for their Rebbe according to his custom. One time, Rabbenu Hakadosh asked Rebi Chiya, if the Bet Hamikdash would be standing today, and he would commit a sin, would he be required to bring the Korban of a Nasi as described in the Torah? In other words, is he considered such a leader for these purposes? Rebi Chiya answered, not necessarily, because in Babel there is a Reish Galuta who is considered the Nasi, as he has a higher position of power, and a Nasi has nobody above him besides Hashem. The story goes that Rebbe changed the Halacha in thirteen instances and taught seven of them to Rebi Chiya, but after Rebbe got sick and weak, he forgot the other six instances. There was a Jewish launderer who knew the other six instances and told them to Rebi Chiya who then told them to Rebbe. Rebbe praised the launderer as fortunate for creating him and Rebi Chiya, because one who teaches his friend Torah is considered to have created him, as it says in the Pasuk, the people that Avraham made in Haran, he made them by teaching them Torah.

Health and Recovery

The foot of a diabetic is a dangerous area of the body from which trouble begins. A diabetic must guard his feet most, because the nerves that communicate sensations to the brain are impaired, so they no longer feel pain or impact like a healthy person. As a result, if they experience sores or cuts on their feet or legs, by the time they realize the damage and potential harm the situation will have already deteriorated to a point that is very difficult. That is why it is important to examine each foot daily. Pay attention to any soreness, redness, or abnormalities, and not walk around barefoot. Maintain good hygiene and cleanliness of your feet and wipe them well after washing. It is advisable to wear cotton socks, as well as wearing properly fitted shoes that will not cause pressure or scraping to the feet. It is important to trim your toenails carefully. Sometimes, neglect can be the difference between healing and amputation. It is imperative for patients with diabetes to be cautious of everything that we have discussed. As well,

much care is required to maintain proper gum health, as neglect in gum treatment can result in the development of heart disease, kidney failure, stroke, and osteoporosis. This is because the gums are saturated with blood vessels, so when there is inflammation, the problem comes into direct contact with the blood.

Mussar: Lashon Hara

It is a terrible sin to speak negatively about another Jew, even if it is the truth. For example, *“This is what so and so did”*, *“These are his ancestors”*, *“This is what I heard about him”*. One who speaks evil and lies about another Jew is called a *“Motzi Shem Ra”*. Our sages teach us that the sin of Lashon Hara is equivalent to idolatry, immorality, and murder all together. Lashon Hara is categorized into different categories: One who speaks negatively about somebody that did something bad to him and others hear and are quiet, since it appears like they agree to what he said, those listeners are also guilty of Lashon Hara; One who speaks Lashon Hara about a person’s ancestors; If someone causes someone else’s face to turn white in public regarding the actions of his ancestors; It is forbidden to tell a son that his father did certain bad things during his lifetime even if the person told the son in private and not within earshot of others; If a person speaks about a Baal Teshuva’s previous sins, this is a great sin because he did Teshuvah and his sins became Zechuyot. Furthermore, he is causing the Baal Teshuvah to stumble and he might go back to his old ways; If you see someone doing a sin privately, do not publicize it because he may do Teshuvah and Hashem will forgive him while you are demeaning him in public; If a Talmid Hacham or Yerei Shamayim sins because the Yetzer Hara got him once, don’t suspect him because for sure he did Teshuvah afterwards; It is forbidden to be happy about your friend’s shame; One who speaks about kosher Gabbaim and says they are thieves, his sin is too great to carry. Hashem should forgive us, Amen.

Rishon LeSion:

Maran Hacham Ovadia Yossef 1921-2013

Three years after his marriage, in 1947 at the age of twenty-six, the Rishon LeSion Gaon R’ Ben-Sion Hai Uziel requested that Hacham Ovadia

move to Cairo to serve as the leader of the Bet Din Rabbinical Court and Authority, and assist the rabbinical leader of Egypt R’ Nahum Effendi, as the previous Av Bet Din R’ Nissim Ohana returned to Israel to serve in the position as rabbinical leader in Haifa. Hacham Ovadia’s Rebbe, Maran Hacham Ezra Attieh, had advised Hacham Ovadia to fill this position, as there was nobody more fitting for the prestigious role. Despite his young age, the Rabbanim understood his potential, his genius, and his natural ability to lead. At the time, the Jewish community in Egypt was one of the largest Kehilot in the Middle East, close to fifty thousand. A large percentage observed Torah and practiced Mitzvot, nonetheless there were enough people who were causing trouble, such as laxity in Kashrut, leniency in marriage, and carelessness in other important areas of Judaism. The Gedolim at the time were concerned about these types of people in Egypt.

Story

Mekubal Rabbi Leib Sarah zt”l 1735-1796

The Rabbi had blessed a Jewish man with a long life to the age of 120. When the man was 104 years old, he had a son who was the age of 80. That year his son’s wife passed away at the age of 80. His son then went and married a younger wife. His father asked him why he remarried, and he explained because he wanted to have more children. And who would raise and support these children? His father hit him. It’s true the Rabbi had blessed him to live until 120 with strength, but he was already 104, and when his son dies, he simply was not in the position to take over raising his child for him. One time, Rabbi Leib borrowed 300 Rubels from a merchant of salt. Rabbi Leib gave him a contract for the loan. One day the contract accidentally fell into the container of salt without the merchant’s knowledge. As a miraculous result, he was able to sell salt from that container for an entire year and the amount never decreased. The following year, when the Rabbi returned to pay back the loan, he asked for the contract to be returned so he can destroy it upon paying back in full. The merchant looked everywhere but couldn’t find it. The Rabbi asked him if he restocked his supply of salt this year, and he answered that Hashem had blessed him with a seemingly endless supply. The Rabbi instructed him to look in the salt

container, and he found the contract. The Rabbi then told him that he didn't need to repay the loan because the loan document itself made sure to repay the full amount on his behalf, even five hundred times more than he actually borrowed.

Laws: Shabbat

1 – We have a very special custom to recite Shir Hashirim on Erev Shabbat, as Rabi Akiva explains that the day Shir Hashirim was given to our nation was a very special and unique day, as all other written works are holy, but Shir Hashirim is holy of holies, greater than all other Shirim.

2 – Through divine revelation Shlomo Hamelech composed Shir Hashirim, portraying a troubled woman who is craving her husband, remembering their unique love, and glorifying her actions as she awaits his return. During our exile we remember Hashem's love for us and await His return with the Final Redemption.

3 – As one cleanses himself Erev Shabbat, wears his nice clothing, and comes to Shul to pray, the special holiness of Shabbat enters him and he is fit to recite the holy Shir Hashirim. Not every day is fit for its recitation.

4 – Therefore, one should not speak or interrupt while reciting Shir Hashirim, and allow the holiness of its recitation as well as the holiness of Shabbat to enter our body and soul, simultaneously allowing blessings to be showered upon us.

5 – Regarding a dangerously ill person, if a doctor needs to drive to administer treatment, someone else is allowed to accompany him in his vehicle during Shabbat to show him directions to the sick, or to help him get there quickly, or if he is needed in any other similar capacity for the sick person.

6 – If there is no doctor available to evaluate whether or not a person is in fact dangerously ill during Shabbat, then anyone who has any familiarity with sicknesses can make an assumption regarding the sick person's condition and decide if it is necessary to desecrate Shabbat on his behalf, because we are lenient when it comes to saving a life.

Sponsors

*** The young man ***Jonathan Boroman, his mother, and his sisters***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Mazal Tov to ***Rabbi Eliyahu Boroman and his wife Devorah*** on the birth of their son ***Daniel***, Mabrouk, Amen. *** ***Mr. Eli Levy, his wife Becky, and their children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Refuah Shelemah, Amen. *** ***Rabbanit Mrs. Violette Shkouri, her husband Hacham Yitzchak, and their children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Mazal Tov on the birth of a great grandchild, Mabrouk, Amen. *** The young man ***Aharon Rachamim Tawil and his brothers***. Blessings, health, and success for the entire family, Amen. *** ***Mrs. Stella Zaafrani Cohen, her husband Hacham Shelomo, and their children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat her mother ***Lidia Bat Alice a"h***, Amen. *** ***Mr. Edmond Saade, his wife Hayat, and their children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat his brother ***Avraham Ben Shafiah a"h***, Amen. *** ***Mrs. Nina Alwaya Nawama, her husband Gavriel, and their children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat her father ***Asher Nawama Ben Sarah a"h***, Amen. *** ***Mrs. Nina Saade and her blessed children: Yosef, Jack, Ziko, Sofia, Dolly, and Karen***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their father ***Avraham Saade Ben Shafiah a"h***, Amen. *** ***Mr. Nissim Alkade, his wife Rima, and their children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat her father ***Yehuda Ben Rima a"h***, and Leilui Nishmat his mother ***Rachel Bat Latifah a"h***, Amen. *** ***Mrs. Adele Hudeidi and her children***. Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat her husband and their father ***Chaim Ben Farha a"h***, Amen.

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