

Congregation



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

**Rabbi Aharon Farhi**  
**Parashat *Debarim***  
4<sup>th</sup> Ab 5786

**Maqam Hijaz**  
Issue #1168

**Mr. Eliyahu Levy, *President***  
**Haftarat *Hazon Obadia***  
July 18<sup>th</sup> 2026

*Candle Lighting 8:06pm \* Shekiah 8:24pm \* Shir Hashirim 7:00pm followed by Minha Friday Night  
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am \* Minha Shabbat 7:45pm \* Shabbat Ends 9:05pm & Rabbenu Tam 9:35pm  
Time for Talit 4:16am \* Seasonal Hour 85 \* Alot Hashahar 3:59am \* Netz Hachama 5:41am  
Weekday Minha 7:00pm \* Earliest Time for Arbit 7:14pm \* Tzet Hacocharim 9:00pm \* Chatzot 1:02  
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:14am \* Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:39am*

***Ereb Tisha Be'ab will be Wednesday July 22nd***  
***Minha 6:30pm \* Fast Begins 8:20pm \* Arbit 8:40pm***  
***Shaharit 6:00am \* Minha 8:00pm \* Fast Ends 8:44pm and 8:56pm for the strict***

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

*To sponsor our weekly publication, please mail your donation to:*

**Vaad Tehilim Torah c/o R' A. Farhi**  
**2415 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11235**

---

Please do not read this bulletin during Tefillah or Keriat Hatorah

---

We read *Parashat Debarim* on the last *Shabbat* of the days of *Ben HaMetzarim* (the Three Weeks). What are the *Ben HaMetzarim*, and what is their significance? As is known, the days of *Ben HaMetzarim* begin on the 17th of *Tammuz* and end on *Tisha B'Ab*. There is a great question here: *Chazal* say that the days of *Ben HaMetzarim* are 3 weeks. In these 3 weeks we read the 3 *haftarot* of punishment on *Shabbat*. However in practice these 3 weeks come out to 22 days, not exactly 3 weeks which would be 21 days — thirteen days in the month of *Tammuz* plus nine days in the month of *Ab* which is 22 days. For example, this year the 17th of *Tammuz* fell on Thursday, July 2nd, and the fast of *Tisha B'Ab* will fall on Thursday, July 23rd. Count all of these days and you arrive at 22 days, not 21! Furthermore, it is known that *Moshe Rabbenu* mentioned the Thirteen *Middot* of Mercy — "*Vaya'avor Hashem al panav...*" on two occasions: once after the sin of the *Egel* (Golden Calf), and a second time after the sin of the *Meraglim* (spies). But there is a difference between them in their number. The first time there were thirteen *middot*, but the second time only nine — *Moshe* left out four *middot*. Why? He mentioned thirteen *middot* to atone for the

sin of the *Egel*, because on the 17th of *Tammuz* *Moshe* came down from the mountain and broke the Tablets. But for the sin of the *Meraglim* he mentioned only nine *middot*, because that sin began on *Tisha B'Ab*, as the *pasuk* says: "*And the people cried on that night*" and that was the night of *Tisha B'Ab*. In other words, the first thirteen *middot* correspond to the thirteen days of *Ben HaMetzarim* in *Tammuz*, and the nine *middot* correspond to the nine days of the month of *Ab*. So we find:  $9 + 13 = 22$ , which are the days of *Ben HaMetzarim*.

Why, then, did they say 3 weeks? The answer is as follows: if we count 22 days, how many hours is that?  $22 \times 24 = 528$  hours. But not all of them are days of mourning. There are three *Shabbatot* during which there is no mourning:  $24 \times 3 = 72$  hours. There is also the day of *Rosh Chodesh Ab* itself — 24 hours. And there are six hours on the day of *Tisha B'Ab* itself, after *chatzot* (midday), during which there is no mourning — we return the *parochet* to the *aron*, we sit on chairs, we sing at *Minha* and *Arbit*, and we read *pesukim* of "*Nachamu nachamu ami.*" So we find that the *Shabbatot*, *Rosh Chodesh*, and the second half of the day of *Tisha B'Ab* after midday total 102 hours in which there

is no mourning. Now, if we subtract these hours from the 528 hours, we find that the days of *Ben HaMetzarim* in practice amount to 426 hours. Therefore *Chazal* said there are 3 weeks of *Ben HaMetzarim* between the 17th of *Tammuz* and *Tisha B'Ab* which contain these 426 hours of mourning. These 426 hours are the *gematria* of the words *Egel Meraglim* which corresponds to the sins of the Golden Calf and the spies. And more, these 426 hours are the *gematria* of the word "*toch*" (within). The *pasuk* says: "*Venikdashiti betoch Bene Yisrael*" (And I shall be sanctified within Bene Yisrael) *Toch* is the 426 hours of mourning. From all this we learn how great the days of *Ben HaMetzarim* are before Hashem when we keep the mourning customs that our *Chachamim* established for us. We elevate ourselves on each and every one of these days, and through this we bring sanctification to Hashem. How fortunate we are, how good is our portion, and how fortunate is the nation of Yisrael, who observe the laws of *Ben HaMetzarim* every single year — for their holiness is lofty and they make an impression in Heaven. Therefore every person should be careful with all of these customs precisely, and not be lenient in even the smallest matter, and may we merit the consolation of *Tzion* speedily in our days, Amen.

### *History in Brief*

#### **220 years after the destruction of the Temple, calendar year 270**

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Come and see how great the humble people are before Hashem. In the days of the *Bet Mikdash*, a person who offered an *olah* (burnt offering) had the merit of an *olah*; one who offered a *chatat* (sin offering) had the merit of a *chatat*; one who offered *shelamim* (peace offerings) had the merit of *shelamim*. But a humble person is considered as if he offered all of the *korbanot* together, as the *pasuk* says: "*Zibche Elokim ruach nishbara*" — "The offerings to Hashem are a broken spirit." Hashem also said: "Like the four winds of the heavens I have spread you out." That is, Hashem scattered us throughout the entire world. Why? Just as the world cannot exist without the winds of the heavens, so too the world cannot exist without Bnei Yisrael. The friend of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi was Rabbi Chanina bar Chama HaKohen, who went up from Babel to Eretz Yisrael and was a student of

*Rabbenu HaKadosh*, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabbi testified about him that he was not a human being but an angel. Once, a servant of the Roman emperor died, and Rabbi instructed Rabbi Chanina bar Chama, saying to him: Go and revive him. He went and revived him and returned to Rabbi — and therefore they called him an angel. He was exceedingly humble. When Rabbi passed away, they wanted to appoint him in Rabbi's place, but he declined and said: There are two *Chachamim* older than me by two and a half years, and I am the third, please appoint them instead. Rabbi Chanina said: When greatness is decreed for a person, if he is humble, then greatness is decreed for him and for his descendants until the end of all generations; but if he becomes arrogant, Hashem lowers him and his descendants after him.

### *Health and Recovery*

Do not drink water for a little while before eating, so that the digestive system does not cool down and then not digest the food properly. Even while eating you should not drink, only wine, and after an hour and a half or two you should drink water. Do not drink after bathing, and especially while bathing. Do not delay for even a minute from going to the bathroom, and do not eat until one has examined himself well enough that he does not need the bathroom. A man should always strive to have his bowels loose all his life, and should be closer to liquid than solid. This is a big rule in medicine. If not, bad sicknesses can come upon him. A person who wants to maintain his health needs to know and be careful of his movements, focusing on joy, worry, anger, and fear, which are mental actions. The educated person should be happy with his portion all the days of his life, and not care about a world that is not his own, nor seek benefits not his own, for then he will be wellhearted, with average joy, with reason to increase in natural warmth. People should not be too joyous or excited while eating, for such emotions can decrease the natural body temperature. In fact, people who are obese, their body temperature is lower due to their narrow arteries decreasing in blood flow speed, which is the source of body heat. This will then cool the body and decrease natural heat from the heart, bringing the person to danger.

### ***Mussar: Imperfection***

Nobody is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes and has their own personal package of flaws. Only Hashem is complete and perfect. Unfortunately, man has the custom to see the flaws of others and often does not see his own. Perhaps his flaws may even be greater than that of his friends. Seek out the truth and develop yourself properly. Go to the Rabbanim and ask for critical advice. Fear heaven and do the right thing, even if you may not fully understand it. Change for the better a little bit each day and declare, 'When will my actions reach the level of my forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov?' Pray for success and truth. Once, a Jewish man in Bagdad came before the great Rav Yosef Chaim, Ben Ish Hai and explained that his neighbor was a sinner. He asked if he must sell his house and move, as the Mishnah states 'Distance from a neighbor that is bad'. The Rav explained that he must read the Mishnah 'Distance a neighbor from bad' – he must pray and work with wisdom to show his neighbor the truth. One mustn't abandon his neighbor just because he is at fault, rather he must find a way to rid his neighbor of the fault, thereby eliminating the need to move altogether. He listened to the Rav and was successful.

### ***Rishon LeTzion -Maran Chacham Ovadia Yosef (1921–2013)***

In 1986, Maran published his *sefer* called *Livyat Chen*. The reason: many of Chacham Obadia's students were learning the *halachot* from the *sefer Mishnah Berurah*, written by the Ashkenazi rabbi, the author of the *Chafetz Chaim*, Rabbenu Yisrael Meir HaKohen — who rules according to the *Rama*, who is also Ashkenazi and at times disagrees with the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the Sephardic Rabbenu Yosef Karo. They therefore asked Chacham Obadia to publish a *sefer* according to the opinions and customs of the Sephardim. Maran agreed and published the *sefer Livyat Chen*, in which he wrote 128 *dinim* that do not follow the opinions and customs of the Ashkenazim. Maran also published two more *sefarim*: the first, *Taharat HaBayit*, and the second, *Mishmeret HaTaharah*, which deal with the laws of *niddah* and her purification, and the laws governing the husband during the days of her *niddah* and purification. These *sefarim* have become popular among the rabbis and *rabbaniot*

and they teach them to the women. In 1990, he began publishing a third *sefer* in the spirit of the new technology, and he completed it in 2006, seven years before his passing.

### ***Damascus - Capital of Syria***

In the 18th century, the wealthy Jewish merchants of Damascus became well-known. They would ship cotton wool to Europe and bring back textiles and clothing from there, and these wealthy Jews also held influence in the court of the Pasha. Among the distinguished families, the *Farhi* family earned a prominent name, playing an important role in the economic life of Syria. Its sons, the brothers *Mosheh*, *Shelomoh*, and *Refael*, were influential figures in Damascus until the beginning of the 19th century due to their closeness to the government. Among the Rabbis of this era was *Rabbi Mordechai Galanti*, author of the book *Gedullat Mordechai*, who passed away in 1781; *Rabbi Mosheh Galanti*, author of the book *Berach Mosheh*; and heading the Karaite community was the great *Nasi Yosef Amasiah*, 1762. At that time, there were 7 synagogues and many houses of study in Damascus. The number of Jews in the year 1848 was 5,000 Jews. By the year 1856, the Karaite settlement had already dissolved, and their synagogue was sold to the Catholics, who turned the building into a church for Christians. In the year 1900, the number of Damascus Jews was 10,000, and in 1910 their number reached 12,000, at which point the emigration to Beirut in Lebanon and to America began, and the number of Jews started to decline. In the year 1926, there were 10,000 souls in the Jewish quarter, and in the year 1932, their number reached 6,266.

### ***Laws: Tisha Be'Ab***

1- After Chatzot (midday) of Erev 9th of Av we only learn what is permitted to learn on the 9th of Av (Iyov, Eichah, Halachot of the 9th of Av, Halachot of a mourner, etc.). We do not take a walk for pleasure on Erev 9th of Av.

2- Fish, two dishes, tea, coffee, wine, beer, and any intoxicating beverage, are not consumed during Seudah Hamafseket.

3- Cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit and vegetables, are not considered a dish. We have the custom to sit upon the floor during the Seudah Hamafseket. Zimun is not performed and all eat alone.

4- Even pregnant and nursing women are obligated to fast. A sick or old person may eat on the 9th of Av if the doctors say it is necessary, and may only eat what is necessary. Children under 13 (boys) and under 12 (girls) do not fast.

5- Some sleep on the ground during the night and place a rock under their pillow, as well as sleep in a slightly less comfortable manner than usual.

6- One must still stand in the presence of an elder, parent, or Rabbi during the 9th of Av.

7- Washing is completely prohibited, whether with cold or hot water. Shaharit and throughout the day we wash until the knuckles and afterwards may apply it to our eyes. Smoking is not allowed during the 9th of Av. One who is addicted and is in great pain may smoke after Chatzot, privately. A Cohen may wash as usual before Birkat Cohanim. One who cannot fast and must eat can wash his hands in the normal fashion.

8- Tehillim isn't recited, but those who are lenient have what to rely upon.

9- Leather shoes may not be worn and "Sheasa Li Kol Tzorki" is not recited in the morning. If it's said accidentally, it's not a wasted blessing.

10- One may not say "Shalom" to another during the 9th of Av, but may nod to someone who accidentally said so to you.

11- Washing the face is prohibited. When we wash our knuckles, we may afterwards apply the wetness to our eyes.

12- Work will not show blessing if performed.

13- During Shaharit one puts on his Talit and Tefillin at home, recites "Kadesh Li" and Shema, and then goes to Shul. Haazinu is recited instead of "Vayosha" and Vayosha is said after the Amida. Some congregations perform Birkat Cohanim and some don't.

14- Meat is not eaten until after the 10th of Av (this year Friday). On Friday night meat may be eaten.

### *Sponsors*

\*\*\* **Mr. Nathan Alfieh, his wife Sabah, their children and their parents.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Amen \*\*\* **Blessed brothers Solly and Hillel Bawabeh and their sisters.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their father **Yitzhak Zaki Bawabeh Ben Simha a"h**, Amen \*\*\* **Mrs. Eva Dahab, her children: Jonathan, Rabbi Eliyahu and Camille** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat her father **Shochet Ne'eman Hacham Eliyahu Abadi Dahab Ben Esther a"h** Amen \*\*\* **Mr. Albert Shaya, his wife Shoshana, and their children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat his father **Moshe Ben Miriam a"h**, Amen \*\*\* **Mr. Victor Harari and his brothers.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their mother **Janet Bat Zakieh 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. \*\*\* **Mrs. Brenda Heffez and her blessed children: Larry, Gabriel, and Jack.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat their father **Avraham Ben Dora a"h**, Amen. \*\*\* **Mrs. Norma Assa and her children.** Blessings and success for the entire family, Leilui Nishmat her husband and their father the Shochet **Hacham Yosef Ben Najla a"h**, Amen.

*This week's sponsorship total is \$550*

*Cost of publication is \$1600*

*351,400 total website visits*

*+2,300 visits since last publication.*

\* \* \* \* \*

***www.BethYosef.com***