

Congregation

★ ★ ★ ★ "Beth Yosef" ★ ★ ★ ★

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

Rabbi Aharon Farhi

Parashat *Ekeb*

18th Ab 5786

Maqam Siga

Issue #1170

Mr. Eliyahu Levy, *President*

Haftarat *Vatomer Tzion*

August 1st 2026

*Candle Lighting 7:54pm * Shekiah 8:12pm * Shir Hashirim 7:00pm followed by Minha Friday Night
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am * Minha Shabbat 7:35pm * Shabbat Ends 8:52pm & Rabbenu Tam 9:22pm
Time for Talit 4:31am * Seasonal Hour 82 * Alot Hashahar 4:14am * Netz Hachama 5:53am
Weekday Minha 7:00pm * Earliest Time for Arbit 7:05pm * Tzet Hacocharim 8:47pm * Chatzot 1:02
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:20am * Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:42am*

Hatarat Elul will be Mosae Shabbat of Parashat Ekeb. This is the true time, and there is no other time for this Hatara. We apologize for the error in last week's newsletter, which said that the Hatara was on Mosae Shabbat Vaetchanan. The correct time is this week, Mosae Shabbat of Ekeb.

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

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Please do not read this bulletin during Tefillah or Keriat Hatorah

Moshe Rabbenu asks something small of Bene Yisrael, saying: "And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem your G-d ask of you? Only to fear Hashem." The Gemara itself asks: "Is fear of Heaven really a small thing?" And it answers: for Moshe, it was a small thing. But here the question is even stronger. How can Moshe say, "And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem ask of you?" — as if it were a small request — when in the very next Pasuk he continues: "to walk in all His ways, to love Him, and to serve Hashem your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul"? Moshe was asking them to keep all the mitzvot of the Torah with all of their conditions — "to love Him," "with all your heart and with all your soul" — he left nothing out. So where is the small thing that Moshe is asking of Bnei Yisrael? Rather, this is what happened. Moshe told them: you must walk in His ways, love Him, and so on. They said to him: Moshe Rabbenu, these are difficult things to fulfill with all of their conditions — with their fine details, with

proper intention, and with self-sacrifice in every matter. This is very hard for us. He answered them: know that man was created in the image of Hashem, and he is a portion of Hashem from above. He has powerful capabilities and can accomplish whatever he sets his mind to. So what is man missing? One small thing — *Yirat Shamayim*. And a person should not think that *Yirat Shamayim* requires him to climb up to the highest heavens and do things beyond his ability. Just a little *Yirat Shamayim*: to believe that everything is in the hands of Heaven, that Hashem is fully capable of fulfilling the wishes of his heart, that His glory fills the entire world and He sees his deeds — an eye sees, an ear hears, and all of his deeds are written in a book — and that there is reward and punishment for everything. Then, easily and with a willing heart, he will pursue Hashem, walk in all His ways, love Him, and keep all the mitzvot without any hesitation.

That is why *Yirat Shamayim* is small — but it accomplishes everything. It accomplishes everything! As the Chachamim gave a parable: a man told his servant, "Buy me a year's supply of wheat for my house," and the servant went and bought him a supply for the entire year. The master asked him, "Did you mix into it the preservative that protects the wheat from worms?" He said, "No." The master said, "Go immediately and put in one spoonful — it is enough for the entire measure." So too here: *Yirat Shamayim* is a small thing, but it brings you to love Hashem with all your heart and with all your soul, and to walk in His ways. May Hashem protect us, Amen.

Insights on the Parasha

"You shall not bring an abomination into your house." Rabbi Levi Yitzchak said: what is the abomination that Hashem asks us to keep far away? It is arrogance, for the pasuk states explicitly: "Every haughty heart is an abomination to Hashem." Keep arrogance away even from the members of your household — and certainly do not let it enter your own heart. There is a story of a young Torah scholar (*abrech*) who came before his rabbi and asked him for advice on how he can get rid of the trait of arrogance. His rabbi said: you have asked a great question. Sit here with me and wait while people come in with their questions, seeking answers and advice. After a few minutes, a man entered and said: Rabbi, my daughter is getting married to a fine young man, but I do not have the means to cover the costs of the wedding meal, which come to at least a few hundred gold coins. The rabbi turned to the *abrech*: please give this poor man 300 gold coins so he can marry off his daughter. The *abrech* said: I do not have a single coin to my name. A short while later, the rabbi of the city came in with a difficult halachic case that had come before him, and he asked the rabbi to help him. The rabbi turned to the waiting *abrech* and said: what do you say? He answered: Rabbi, I have not yet filled myself with *Shas* and *Poskim* (the Talmud

and halachic authorities), and I am not able to issue any ruling. Another hour passed, and one of the great merchants came in and laid out before the rabbi a complicated financial problem he had with a certain nobleman, seeking the rabbi's advice. The rabbi turned to the waiting *abrech*: give him advice and help him. The *abrech* answered: I am not versed in worldly matters or in business. At that moment the rabbi fixed his eyes on that *abrech* and said: *Abrech, abrech* — someone who has no wealth, no worldly experience, no Torah, and no business — he needs advice against arrogance? What arrogance are you even talking about? The *abrech* answered his rabbi: thank you very much, I have learned a great deal from you — and he went on his way.

History in Brief

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

Rabbi Chanina bar Chama was an expert in matters of medicine, and many people sought remedies from him, and he healed them. When he was about eighty years old, he could stand on one foot while removing the shoe from his other foot and putting it back on. They asked him: where do you get this strength? He told them: in my childhood, my mother would wash me with warm water and anoint me with olive oil, and they have stood to help me in my old age. He would also say: everything is in the hands of Heaven except for chills and cold — a person must be careful with these and guard himself from the cold. Rabbi Yochanan suffered from a fever for three and a half years and was not healed. Rabbi Chanina came to visit him, and he said: "Hashem, the Faithful One — He will heal you." And as soon as he said this, Rabbi Yochanan was immediately healed. Later, when Rabbi Chanina himself fell ill, Rabbi Yochanan came to visit him. He asked: how are you feeling? He answered: the suffering is harsh. Rabbi Yochanan said: but its reward is great. He answered: I want neither the suffering nor its reward! Rabbi

Yochanan asked: then why not say the same words you said to me, through which I was healed? He answered: I can help and pray for others, but for myself, I need others to pray on my behalf. And he would say: for every single breath a person breathes in good health, he must thank Hashem.

Health and Recovery

1- A person must train himself to stop and think before putting anything in his mouth. Only eat what is healthy! That thought will make you stronger and help you feel satisfied with an amount that is necessary. Such practice will prevent many sicknesses and visits to the doctor. **2-** One who is suffering with frailty and weakness should consume healthy food that will increase fat, for example he should eat in the morning wet foods such as cereals, and in the evening eat dry foods such as bread and meat. **3-** One who has been eating unhealthy without any discipline for quite some time should not suddenly switch to only healthy and completely change his diet, as it will be harmful and even dangerous if not done gradually. **4-** One should not drink more than a Reviit of wine per day, for it will cause damage, anger, and bad character.

Mussar: Inclination and Desire

The purpose of creation is for man to overpower his Yetzer Hara and earn enjoyment and reward in Olam Haba. If not for the Yetzer Hara we would not be able to deserve reward, just like the angels. When a person is strong and remains in control of himself and his situation, even though the Yetzer Hara is trying to convince him to lose control and act otherwise, he creates great pride and satisfaction for Hashem and he will be rewarded according to his toil. The Sefer Hachasidim explains that one who performs a Mitzvah by controlling himself when he is really being influenced to do otherwise by the Yetzer Hara, will be rewarded a hundred times more than one who performs a Mitzvah under regular circumstances without the pressure. The

great level and heights that a Baal Teshuva can reach is actually so unique that even a completely righteous person cannot reach that level, since a complete Tzadik, although he has overpowered his Yetzer Hara, has never developed bad habits and the sense of regularity towards sins. Therefore, when a Baal Teshuva, which is anyone who has ever committed any sin and now wishes to repent, overpowers his evil inclination, his success is that much greater. When you control your inclinations and desires, it is greater than fearing heaven, since it requires so much more work. Therefore, we should appreciate our Yetzer Hara and use it to grow, gain reward, and create a sense of great pride and satisfaction for Hashem, our Father in heaven, Who wishes to merit us always, Amen.

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

In the year 2003, Maran completed his famous work *Chazon Obadia*. This was the nineteenth volume of the *Chazon Obadia* series, which he had begun in 1953 — meaning Maran labored fifty years to complete it. It covered all the topics of the holidays: Purim, with a commentary on Megillat Esther and the piyut *Mi Kamocha*; a volume on Pesach with a wonderful commentary on the Haggadah as well as a commentary on Megillat Rut. He also included many eulogies he had delivered for the great sages, and he wrote a *Chazon Obadia* on the laws of *pruzbul* (laws dealing with debt during Shemittah year). When he gave the sefer to his son-in-law, the great Rav Aharon Butbul, he told him: learn from this sefer — it has a special quality, for I wrote it in great pain and through severe and difficult suffering. Indeed, while writing the laws of mourning he suffered intense back pain, and he needed to undergo surgery in the middle of writing the sefer. In total, his works numbered 55 sefarim, and the whole world follows in their path.

Halab (Aleppo) - Syria

The *Chacham Bashi* (chief rabbi) of Halab was appointed directly by the Turkish government in Istanbul. The *Chacham Bashi* then had the authority to appoint the rest of the community's Chachamim, each according to his role. In the year 921, the great Rabbi Saadia Gaon visited Halab, lived there for several years, learned with its rabbis, and held halachic discussions with them. Many emissaries would also travel from Babylonia to Halab — which was flourishing economically — in order to collect donations for the great yeshivot of Baghdad. In the year 1191, the Gaon Zecharia ben Barachel left Halab, the city of his birth, and traveled to Baghdad, where he was appointed head of the community there. In that same year, the Rambam sent his student, the Chacham Yosef ben Aknin, to serve as the head of the rabbinical court (*Ab Bet Din*) in Halab. The Rambam himself also visited Halab, and he wrote about his visit: in all the lands of Syria I have not seen a city like Halab, whose people devote themselves to the study of Torah. The traveler Rabbi Binyamin of Tudela visited Halab in the year 1173 and testified that about 3,000 Jews lived there, and that the entire community drank rainwater drawn from wells — every courtyard had a well of its own.

Laws

1- There are things over which no beracha is recited before eating, because there is no enjoyment in eating them — for example, foods that disgust the person eating them, such as drinking plain olive oil or strong vinegar.

2- There are also things that people do not normally eat unless sugar is mixed into them — such as pepper, ginger, or cocoa powder. No beracha is recited over these on their own.

3- There are also things that require no beracha because they have no taste — such as drinking water when one is not thirsty. Similarly, someone choking on food who

drinks water to clear his throat, or someone drinking water in order to swallow medicine, does not recite a beracha. The same applies if he feels that food has not gone down properly and drinks water to help it down.

4- Likewise, someone who is in doubt whether he needs to recite *shehakol* or *boreh nefashot* over something should not drink water just in order to create a definite obligation to recite the beracha, if he is not actually thirsty.

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