

Congregation

★★★★★ **"Beth Yosef"** ★★★★★

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

Rabbi Aharon Farhi

Parashat Re'eh

25th Ab 5786

Maqam Raast

Issue #1171

Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President

Haftarat Ani'ya So'ara

August 8th 2026

*Candle Lighting 7:45pm * Shekiah 8:03pm * Shir Hashirim 7:00pm followed by Minha Friday Night
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am * Minha Shabbat 7:25pm * Shabbat Ends 8:44pm & Rabbenu Tam 9:14pm
Time for Talit 4:39am * Seasonal Hour 81 * Alot Hashahar 4:23am * Netz Hachama 6:00am
Weekday Minha 7:00pm * Earliest Time for Arbit 6:58pm * Tzet Hacocharim 8:39pm * Chatzot 1:01
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:26am * Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:47am*

Rosh Hodesh Elul will be on Thursday August 13th and Friday August 14th

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

We have arrived at *Shabbat Mebarechim* (the Shabbat on which we bless the new month) of *Hodesh Elul*. The Days of Judgment are drawing near. Every man is seized with trembling at the sound of the voice calling out: "The holy *Elul* has arrived!" — and it is said that even the fish in the sea tremble during *Elul*. There is a story told of a Rabbi who was walking along the road and saw a non-Jewish farmer plowing his field, preparing it for the autumn planting. The farmer's son was lazy and plowed the field half-heartedly. His father called out to him and said: "Plow with energy, my son! Whoever is negligent in his work during this month loses the entire year's harvest." The Rabbi was shaken, and said to his students: "Did you understand what he said? The entire year depends on the verdict of *Rosh Hashana*, and the verdict is given according to the quality of one's preparation during the month of *Elul*, the month of mercy and forgiveness. Whoever is negligent during this month — loses the entire coming year, Heaven forbid!" Throughout the whole year, we pursue the "big" mitzvot, the ones that define the

character of our Jewish lives: *Shabbat*, *Kashrut*, *Tahara*, and praying three times a day with a *minyan*. But the mitzvot are so numerous that a person tramples some underfoot without noticing. One person is not careful enough about *lashon hara*, while another is careless with a moment of *bittul Torah*.

Once, a group of people washed their hands before a *Seudat mitzvah*. The *Hazon Ish*, of blessed memory, stood off to the side watching. Afterward he remarked: out of everyone there, only one person washed his hands properly according to *halacha*. We must realize that the Days of Judgment are like "election days," for in Heaven a "vote" is held: the mitzvot are placed on one side of the scale, and the sins on the other. And who knows — perhaps the scales will be perfectly balanced, and one tiny little mitzvah will tip the scale in our favor! Just one more single word of Torah study on one side of the scale — and the entire year will be radiant and bright, happy and joyful. And Heaven forbid, Heaven forbid, one more word of *lashon hara* on the other side — may Hashem have mercy. Therefore, *Elul* is

the time to gather mitzvot "from whatever comes to hand," more and more. We must stockpile them, to add weight to the side of merit! Let us stop and imagine the scene: the Day of Judgment — "the angels rush about, gripped by fear and trembling." The atmosphere is tense. The deeds of all the people of the entire world are resting on the two sides of the scale — a sea of sins, and facing it, treasuries of mitzvot. And every single mitzvah we perform during the month of *Elul* tips the scale toward the good. Then comes a shining countenance from *Hashem Yitbarach*, and the world is saved from terrible calamities — and may Hashem protect us, *Amen*.

Insights on the Parasha

"If there will be among you a poor man, from one of your brothers." Why does the Pasuk say "from one"? It would have been enough to say "if there will be among you a poor man." Rather, *Hazal* said: wherever the Torah says "*one*" or "*from one*," it means someone singular and important among the people. For example, the king is called "*one of the nation*" — the unique one of the nation. "*The sheep from one*" — the choicest sheep of the flock. "*One bull*" — the finest bull of the herd. So too here, says the *Or HaHayim HaKadosh*: when you meet a poor and destitute person, do not look down on him in your heart, thinking that because he has no money he is lowly and unimportant. Just the opposite — it may be that behind the curtain of poverty and destitution hides a precious and refined soul, fragile and sensitive. It is therefore possible that this poor man is "*from one of your brothers*" — the most important and special one of the entire nation.

History in Brief

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

Rabbi Hanina bar Hama had a son who was among the great sages of the generation, named Rabbi Hama bar Hanina. His son-in-law was also a *gaon*, named Rabbi Shemuel bar Nadab. When his daughter

passed away, Rabbi Hanina did not cry over her. His wife said to him, "Was it like a chicken that left your house? Why are you not crying?" He answered, "A mourner who cries over the dead brings blindness to his eyes. What do you want from me — that I should lose my daughter and lose my eyes as well?" There was once a woman who performed witchcraft. She followed behind him and took dirt from under his feet in order to use it for witchcraft. When he saw her, he said to her, "If they are helping you from Heaven to do this, then go and do it — I accept it." She immediately became afraid of him and fled. Another story: a man came before him and asked, "May one leave *Eres Yisrael* for the sake of a Misva — to perform *halisa* or *yibum*?" He answered him, "Your brother left *Eres Yisrael*, and Hashem struck him down and he died without children — and you want to do the same as him? Rather, the *yebama* should come to you here in *Eres Yisrael*, and you will do as you wish." Another story: a student named Shimon bar Baba came before Rabbi Hanina and said, "I ask of you a letter of recommendation so that I can leave *Eres Yisrael* for my livelihood." Rabbi Hanina said to him, "Tomorrow I will go to your forefathers in the next world, and they will say to me: the one tree that we had in *Eres Yisrael* — and you allowed it to leave *Eres Yisrael*?" So the student remained in the Land and did not leave it until the end of his life.

Health and Recovery

Pregnant and nursing women should not eat onions, as it affects the mother's milk, and has a negative effect on the baby. Raw, and especially fried, onions are very effective for those suffering from constipation. One should not eat onions excessively, as it can affect the brain and cause headaches and dehydration. Onions have twenty times more calcium than apples, as well as a few times more iron and vitamin A. It also has something compared to insulin, which regulates the body's sugar levels. It is always best to eat an onion raw rather than cooked or fried, and a diabetic can eat them without limit.

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)

Since Rabbanit Margalit, the wife of Chacham Ovadia, of blessed memory, passed away on the 19th of Ab in 1994, we tell this story about her. Maran had a garden at his home with several kinds of fragrant flowers. Every *Ereb Shabbat*, the Rabbanit, of blessed memory, would prepare all the different kinds for him so he could recite Berachot over them. On Shabbat, Maran would make sure to complete the one hundred Berachot that a person is obligated

to recite every day — especially on Shabbat, when it is difficult to complete one hundred Berachot, since on Shabbat we are missing the Berachot of the *Amida*. When the Rabbanit passed away, they stopped bringing him the flowers. He said nothing, and arranged his hundred Berachot in a different way. He relied on the Rambam, who wrote that on Shabbat a person should eat a little of various vegetables and fruits, reciting a Beracha before and after each, then eat a little of another fruit and recite a Beracha before and after it, counting until he completes one hundred Berachot for the day. Then suddenly, one day, his gardener brought him all the kinds of flowers to bless over. Maran asked him, "What happened to you?" The gardener answered, "The Rabbanit came to me in a dream and said to me: Why did you stop bringing my husband all the kinds of flowers to bless over, the way you used to bring them to me, and I would give them to Maran? Why did you stop? I told her: I did not know — and he never told me either. She said to me: You did not know? Does it need to be said to you? Do just as we did before. And so, honored Maran, I have brought them to you." Maran told his listeners in the *shiur*: from here is a proof of the eternity of the soul, and that *Saddikim* even in their death are called living. For the gardener knew nothing at all about these flowers, and yet she came to him and instructed him on what to do.

Halab (Aleppo) - Syria

The poet Rabbi Yehuda Alharizi visited Halab in the year 1225, and described it as a beautiful city with a distinguished community, home to many rabbis, scribes, and poets. In 1260, Halab was conquered by the Mongols of Genghis Khan, who murdered thousands of Jews and Christians. There was a Muslim man there from the Nahhas family who saved many Jews. He redeemed an entire neighborhood and protected all the Jews of that neighborhood from the rioters. In 1401, the Mongols came to Halab a second time, led by Tamerlane, and many Jews were murdered

by him. In 1492, the years of the expulsion from Spain and Portugal, many expelled Jews came to Halab, and in doing so changed the structure of the community. During the first years, the expelled Jews kept their Spanish language, but afterward they adopted Arabic in order to get along with the Halabis. Among the families that came from Spain were the Laniado, Lofez, Attia, Paredes, Franco, and Sitehon families. Afterward, Jewish merchants from Italy arrived, holding many privileges granted by the Ottoman Sultan — such as the Picciotto, Silvera, and Bijou families. They established a complete community that lasted until the year 1960, when most members of the community left Halab. And when one of these merchants violated a local law, he would be judged only before the consul of his country, and the local authorities could not harm him.

Laws

1- On *besamim* (fragrances) there are four types of Berachot: There are "*boreh asse besamim*" — something that has a fragrance and has a woody branch that remains all year long. There are "*boreh isbe besamim*" — where the stalk is cut and nothing remains in the ground, and the next year it grows anew. There are items where there is a doubt whether they are of the tree type or the herb type, on which we recite "*boreh mineh besamim*." On a liquid fragrance one also recites "*boreh mineh besamim*." The fourth type: on fruits that have a good fragrance, one recites "*hanoten reah tob baperot*."

2- Regarding perfume that is made from impure substances, to which various ingredients are later added in order to produce a good fragrance — Chacham Ovadia first said not to recite a Beracha, and later wrote that one should recite it. Among the Halabis in America, everyone recites the Beracha, and one who recites it loses nothing. This is because there are Poskim who say: we are not concerned with where the base of the perfume came from — since

there is a good fragrance here, why should we not bless?

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