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 ע"ה בני ישראל הלוי ע"ה whose 1st yartzeit was on 20 Elul

&

Sarah & Max Jotkowitz in loving memory of Sarah's father, Jacob Abeles ע"ה
 ע"ה בני אריה יהודה ע"ה whose Yartzeit is this Shabbat 23 Elul



The confirmation earlier this week that we will not be able hold services over the Yamim Noraim, though not surprising, added to the displeasure and frustration that so many people are feeling at this time.

We are not alone in our aspirations for safe opportunities to gather. Leaders of many faith groups have put forward the case for controlled prayer groups to the government, both before and after Sunday's announcements. Indeed, there is hardly an industry or interest group which has not been negatively impacted or sought the government's approval for its activities.

As much as we will miss Shule and each other, we need to resist the temptation to join Tefillot which go against the letter or spirit of the law of the land and/or Halacha.

While feelings of disappointment and exasperation are understandable, we need to be wary of how we manage and channel these emotions. Particularly within our homes, we must ensure that general frustrations are not misdirected at those closest to us. We must be conscious that our general discourse is not negatively impacted by the broader challenges we face, and that we remain kind, patient and respectful to all.

We got through three days of Pesach and we will get through Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur too. Mizrachi is here for you and we will do everything we can to enhance your experience of these days. Our office has been working on great Rosh Hashana resources and materials which we look forward to sharing with you.

Thanks to our branches in Sydney and Perth, we will be able to recite Selichot in full at Halachically appropriate times. Working together with our Mizrachi partners has also enabled us to facilitate almost 150 Kaddish requests during this second lockdown period, providing a meaningful service which is appreciated and acknowledged well beyond our membership.

Next week, all my Shiurim (Monday morning ladies, Tuesday lunchtime and Wednesday night special) will be dedicated to Rosh HaShana, as part of a full program of opportunities, including Bnei Akiva's concert with Eitan Katz on Thursday night.

In this week's Seudah Shlishit slot, Bnei AKiva Merakezet Tali Borowick shares an update on Bnei Akiva's activities, initiatives and upcoming plans.

Shabbat Shalom

FOR THE SHABBAT TABLE



Rabbi Mirvis

"If your dispersed ones shall be at the ends of the Heavens, from there Hashem your Go-d will gather you and from there He will take you. And Hashem your Go-d will bring you to the Land that your forefathers inherited and you shall inherit it, and He will do good for you and He will make you more numerous than your forefathers" (Devarim 30:4-5).

Following the blessings and curses of last week's Parsha, Parshat Nitzavim contains many encouraging sentiments and speaks of repentance and ultimate redemption. Even if our dispersed ones will find themselves "at the ends of the Heavens", Hashem will gather us together and bring us back to Land which he gave to our forefathers.

At first glance, the wording of this promise seems somewhat strange. Surely when describing our gathering in from exile to the Land of Israel, it would have been more appropriate to say, "If your dispersed ones shall be at the ends of the EARTH..." Why does it say, "at the ends of the HEAVENS"?

In truth, the verse is not only speaking of a physical redemption or a geographical ingathering from exile. It is speaking of a spiritual return. Even if we reach the spiritual depths where our dispersed ones are "at the ends of the Heavens", nevertheless, "from there Hashem your Go-d will gather you and from there He will take you".

One of the greatest barriers to Teshuva (repentance) is our lack of faith in our ability to truly return to Hashem. We may feel that certain expectations are beyond us, that we have drifted too far from certain ideals, or that we cannot identify with or aspire to the lofty goals of Teshuva. The message of this week's Parsha is that however dispersed we are from Hashem, the ability to return remains.

As we continue reading through the Parsha, we learn that not only is Teshuva possible, it is entirely within our reach:

"For this commandment (of Teshuva) that I command you today, it is not too wondrous for you and it is not too distant. It is not in Heaven that you should say, "Who will go up to Heaven for us and take it for us, so that we can listen to it and perform it?" And it is not across the sea that you should say, "Who will cross the sea for us and take it for us, so that we can listen to it and perform it?" For the matter is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to perform it". (Devarim 30:11-14)

Teshuva is not far away or beyond our capabilities. The potential for Teshuva is within each and every one of us, "in your mouth and in your heart to perform it". Ramban (Devarim 30:11, based on Eruvin 54a) explains that these words do not only describe the accessibility of Teshuva, but the process of Teshuva as well, involving the heart (recognition of guilt), the mouth (confession) and translation into action, "to perform it".

As Rosh Hashana approaches, we must focus on controlling our mouths and using them for genuine prayer, honest confession and correcting the harm we have done to others. We must direct our hearts towards the service of Hashem and control our hearts to only love that which is appropriate for us. Most importantly, our Teshuva must not be confined to our mouths and our hearts, but must also be translated into action.

By taking advantage of the accessibility of Teshuva and genuinely returning to Hashem, may He accept our repentance and gather us in from the ends of the Heavens and the ends of the earth.



Reb Leor Broh

Riddle for Nitzavim:

The greeting (for men) on Rosh HaShana is "לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם".

In Parshat Nitzavim, (always read before RH) find 4 words in a row, each word containing a letter of the word תכתב, in that order.

Answer to Riddle for Last week (Ki Tavo):

I am an object that appears 4 times in the Parsha. The Torah uses a name for me that is not used anywhere else in Tanach. What am I?

The basket appears 4 times in the Parsha, each time by the name טנא.

It appears twice in the Mitzvah of Bikkurim (26:2) & (26:4).

The Baal HaTurim notes that the Gematria of טנא is 60. This alludes to the Rabbinic requirement of bringing at least 1/60th of the Bikkurim produce to the kohen.

It appears twice in the section containing the blessings and curses section (28:5) & (28:17).
In Shir HaShirim (3:7) the verse reads:-

הַזֶּה מִטְתּוֹ שֶׁלִּשְׁלֹמֹה שְׁשִׁים גְּבָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ מִגְּבֹרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

There is Solomon's couch, Encircled by sixty warriors Of the warriors of Israel,

One Midrash on this verse says that the 60 warriors refers to the 60 letters of the 3 verses making up the Birkat Kohanim (15+20+25), that give strength to Am Yisrael.

אלו ששים אותיות שבברכת כהנים. מגברי ישראל, שהם מגברים את ישראל

The word טנא adding up to 60, is a hint to the power of the Birkat Kohanim through whom Hashem showers blessings upon us and transforms curses into blessings.

אכ"ר



Rabbi James Kennard

The final mitzvah of the Torah is found in the parasha of Vayelech. Having introduced the "song" that will constitute nearly all of the following parasha, Ha'azinu, the people are commanded:

Now therefore write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel (Devarim 31:19)

וְעַתָּה כְּתוּבוּ לָכֶם אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת וְלַמְדֶּה אֶת
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁמָּה בְּפִיהֶם לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה לִּי
הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְעֵד בְּבִנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. (דברים
לא:יט)

This song tells the story of the Jews' fidelity, or lack of it, to Hashem and His mitzvot, and the way in which they are punished, or protected, at various stages of their history. The song must therefore be transcribed, and learnt, so that this message of reward and punishment permeates the Jewish psyche.

In line with the simple meaning of the verse, **Rashi** (11th century France) explains that the words הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת - "this song" - refer to nothing more or less than the verses of Devarim 33:1-43.

The **Ramban** concurs, and adds that it is appropriate to call this section a “song” because it will be recited by the people in a tuneful way, and it is written in the Torah in the style of a song (i.e. with spaces between each clause).

Yet the **Gemara** (Sanhedrin 21b) learns from this verse the mitzvah to write much more than one chapter - but the entire Torah itself. Thus the very last mitzvah in the Torah is the one that ensures the perpetuation of the Torah, by obligating each Jew to create their own copy in the form of a Sefer Torah.

As the **Ralbag** (14th century France) observes, the Torah records that Moshe fulfilled the instruction, with the words (Devarim 31:24):

<p>It happened, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished,</p>	<p>וַיְהִי כְכִלּוֹת מֹשֶׁה לְכַתֵּב אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל סֵפֶר עַד תִּמָּם.</p>
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suggesting that Moshe understood that he was required to write much more than just “the song”. But how can “this song” be interpreted as referring to the entire Torah?

The **Rambam** (12th century Egypt) gives a technical answer to this question. The essence of the obligation is to write the text of the song, but that would constitute an incomplete Sefer Torah (because the other 176 chapters are missing). Since a Sefer Torah cannot be left in an incomplete form, the entire Sefer Torah must be written (Hilchot Sefer Torah 7:1). (The question is asked why this would not apply to a mezuzah or tefillin, which are also “incomplete Sifrei Torah”).

The **Ktav VeKabbalah** (19th century Germany), explains that the essential message of the song (i.e. Devarim 32), is that the Jewish people should remember and fulfil all the mitzvot of the Torah. The relationship between the song and the entire Torah can therefore be compared to that between a doctor’s prescription and the medicine that that prescription mandates. Even without being told, a patient realises that the piece of paper that the doctor gives to them is infinitely less significant than the fulfilment of its instruction to take the appropriate pills. Similarly, the song, which reminds its reciters to keep all of the mitzvot, is nothing without the rest of the Torah to accompany it.

But it is the explanation of the **Emek Dvar** (19th century Lithuania) that I find most beautiful and most inspiring. He asks why the Torah should be called a song, when it is not written in the form of a song? Yet the answer is found in the two crucial characteristics that the Torah shares with a song.

The first is that a song, or a poem, is not as easy to understand as a piece of prose. One who analyses a poem needs to work out that one metaphor alludes to a particular story; another contains a hidden reference to another incident. This is not a “drasha” (rabbinic exegesis) but *the actual meaning of the poem*. But one who has no ability or experience with which to understand the song’s true meaning, will interpret it in absurd ways that were never the intention of the author.

And so it is with the Torah. Its meaning is not easily discernible, and can only be uncovered with effort, practice, and instruction from experts.

The second characteristic of a song is that it may contain additional hints and allusions that are not found in the song's words themselves, but, for instance, in an acrostic that is formed by the initial letters of each line, or in some other structure, which would not be found in a piece of prose. The author may have to twist the language a little in order to make a pattern of words or lines work effectively in this way. Similarly the Torah, in order to convey more obscure messages, will change one word for another, or re-structure a verse.

With this explanation, the Emek Dvar is encapsulating the entire approach that we have to learning Torah. It is not a simple, one-dimensional, text, to be read and understood at first glance (let alone can its true meaning be conveyed in translation). Its profound message can only be revealed by patient and careful study of the many layers of interpretation - some of which may appear quite different from the "simple meaning".

The Emek Dvar states, inter alia, the more that a student of the song works to understand its true message, the sweeter the text becomes. As we come close to the Torah's conclusion, aware that this year, in Melbourne we will not be able to dance with the Torah on Simchat Torah since our lockdown is not yet over, we will have to find another way to express our love for our most sacred book, that sits at the centre of our lives. We can remember that the Torah is a beautiful song, and as we dedicate ourselves to its profound study, we can hear its tune, grow attached to its words, and in that way, the love will grow.



Tali Borowick, Merakezet, Bnei Akiva Melbourne
Bnei Akiva Update

The weeks that have been:

Bnei Akiva Melbourne has many exciting and new projects in the works, including activities, shiurim and concerts coming up for all chanichim/ot and you our community. But first, a recap of the amazing initiatives thus far.

Tisha'a B'av

In honour of Tisha'a B'av we hosted a live show, providing a journey, for over 700 people - young and old, to experience the streets and depth of Jerusalem. Our live and spiritually full reading of Megillat Eicha was joined by almost 200 members of the community and our subsequent Youth

movement Shlichim panel saw a fascinating discussion on the ways we continue to deal with the social tensions in Israel.

Bnei Masks

In July we also launched our official 'Bnei Akiva Masks' to bring some merchandise and fun to the new reality facing Melburnians (which are still available online).

AZYC Training

In August, Madrichim took part in the AZYC's safeguarding children training, focusing on online working, always striving to better ourselves and provide a safe and supportive environment for our chanichim/ot.

'Walk to Israel'

Our Federal campaign - "walking to Israel" also launched and we have so far walked over 2000 km towards Israel! Every step counts so be sure to join! (Details are available on Facebook).

'LnE' and Mishelanu

Lulavim and Etrogim are also now available for purchase - by buying a set you support Bnei Akiva and we would like to thank everyone that has and continues to do so. Subsidies are also available. The Yomim Noraim Mishelanu edition is also now available. For a hard copy, please fill in the google doc available online.

Chessed

Over the last few weeks, madrichim have also been volunteering and delivering CCare packages as part of our Chessed mission, to provide a helping hand especially during such trying times. Only yesterday (Thursday 10/09) did we celebrate R U OK day. Madrichim on Wednesday night gathered for a "takeaway together" event in which everyone brought their dinner for some great vibes, games and important conversations. We were also joined on Thursday night by Rabbi Andrew Saffer on the topic of "how to really be there for someone". A special shout out to our Rosh Chessed Itta Oyberman for her continued work and for providing such meaningful conversations and bettering this movement.

What's coming up!?

But wait! There is more! Next Thursday night (17/09) at 8pm, Bnei will be hosting world renowned singer Eitan Katz for a special pre Rosh Hashonah concert. This is an event sure to bring some ruach before the Yamim Tovim. Fed Bnei will also be providing a special Slichot event (details to come) and all chanichim/ot stay tuned! Big surprise coming all the way to you!

On the regular:

Beit Midrash

As always our amazing Beit Midrash crew have Shiurim organised every Thursday and Sunday night. The past few weeks we have been so fortunate to hear from Rabbanit Tsykin, Rav Samuel Lebens, Rav Dudi Bankier and Rav Zimmerman. This Sunday night (13/09) we will be joined by former Merakezet and legend year 10 Madricha Cohava Rubenstein Sturgess for a special pre Rosh Hashonah Shiur. In coming weeks we will also be fortunate to hear from Rav Tavory, Matti Borowski and many more - details to come!

Also, don't forget to print and download your copy of the Nitz (junior and senior) before shabbat. Indeed, if you are also looking for a good laugh, Bneidio (a special new podcast) is now available. Our amazing shlichim also have a new WhatsApp group with a weekly song - be sure to join! Whilst the current period is by no means easy, we hope our regular and upcoming events continue to bring you Spirit, Torah and Chinuch. A huge thank you to the Hanhaga and the Hanhala for their tireless work and the efforts they put into this movement and of course thank you to the whole mad body for their continued endeavours and strength!

Our love for the Torah and the State of Israel is unwavering and we hope to see you at the many special events we have coming up!

I wish you a Shabbat Shalom and Shana Tova U'Metukah

Tali Borowick