



Re'eh

While it is becoming cliché to describe events as being “different from usual” when they are held online instead of in person, it certainly felt different from usual to make my annual brief AGM appearance via Zoom. It was a pleasure seeing so many of your faces there, but I sensed the absence of certain faces which are usually part of every AGM – the faces of Mizrachi’s Presidents and Rabbis on the walls of the Goldberger Hall.

When looking at the portraits of my esteemed predecessors, I am reminded that the strengths and successes we can be so proud of today are built on the immense efforts, vision and contributions of Mizrachi’s spiritual leadership of years gone by. Last Shabbat marked the 19th Yahrzeit of Rabbi Boruch Abaranok zt”l, and I am pleased to include this week some of his thoughts on Parshat Re’eh, as edited and translated by another one of my predecessors, Rabbi J Simcha Cohen zt”l.

Our community is exceptionally blessed, not only to be able to speak of a proud history, but also of great promise for the future. One of the central ingredients in developing future leadership is Bnei Akiva’s Shnat programs in Israel. My heart goes out to the students and families whose Shnat plans have been frustrated and disrupted this year, and I very much hope that timing and conditions will allow for every single participant to be able to enjoy a meaningful learning experience in Israel at this formative stage of their lives.

This week’s Seudah Shlishit guest contribution comes from Mia Burman on Bnei Akiva’s Limmud program, who describes how against the odds and despite clear challenges, she and her peers are benefiting from a truly remarkable year. I sometimes rest my eyes by asking my phone to read articles to me, and even in Siri’s voice one can sense the enjoyment and passion in Mia’s words. I am grateful to Mia for making time between her demanding Magen David Adom shifts to share her experiences with us.

Shabbat Shalom.



Wednesday night we conducted a most unique Mizrachi Melbourne AGM. We met by Zoom with some 100 members as Covid restrictions continue to impact us all. Remarkably we had participants from Jerusalem (KorbIs) and Sydney (Tolubs). I’d like to thank all the attendees and to particularly thank all those who nominated to take executive and committee positions at Mizrachi and Yavneh.

Often these are thankless tasks, however most volunteer 'לא על מנת לקבל שכר'. We are all the beneficiaries of their contribution to shape a better Jewish and Zionist life downunder. To all the volunteers we say 'וכל מי שעוסקים בצרכי צבור באמונה הקדוש ברוך הוא ישלם שכרם'

Our Parsha this week, amongst many Mitzvot, focusses also on Kashrut. It's therefore timely to spotlight a growing endeavour of Mizrachi which benefits all of Australian Jewry. Treasurer David Brykman highlighted the financial contribution that KA makes to Mizrachi's budget. We thank Rav Hamachshir Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick, Chairman Stephen Shnider and Manager Mr Yanki Wajsbort for their leadership.

The parsha concludes with instructions for the שלש רגלים. We are instructed:

שלוש פעמים בשנה יראה כל זכורך את פני ה' אלקיך במקום אשר יבחר בחג המצות ובחג השבועות ובחג הסוכות

Sadly most of us cannot be in Israel at this time but our thoughts are with our families spread all over Israel, as they too struggle with Covid.

We have another four weeks of the current lockdown. I hope readers will take advantage of all the learning opportunities that are advertised in Mizrachi Matters as we prepare for Chodesh Elul. One such promotion for Thursday 20/8 at 7pm is a joint Mizrachi webinar with Rambam Hospital on 'Prostate Cancer, latest developments and treatments'. Mizrachi Matters also includes the yahrzeits of our members on a weekly basis. One of Mizrachi's services is to schedule Kaddish to be said in Perth and Sydney through the assistance of their Mizrachi centres, for aveilim and yahrzeits through a program called MAK (Mizrachi Australia Kaddish Services) under the administration of Rav Mark Steiner. I personally have been a beneficiary as Kaddish was recited as required over the recently concluded 11 month period since my late mother Ilse Lamm ע"ה passed away. Further this Shabbat is the sixth yahrzeit of my father Erwin Lamm ז"ל.

It has been our practice to condole with the families of members who passed during the last year: Andrew Wyman ע"ה, Michael Neuhauser OAM ע"ה, Bennie Gershov ע"ה, Moshe Gilbert ע"ה, Aharon Tauber ע"ה, Norman Rosenbaum ע"ה.

We wish all their families Arichut Yamim and no more Tza'ar.

Wishing you all a Shabbat (mevarchim Ellul) shalom

Dr. Danny Lamm AM



Rabbi Mirvis

"See, I place before you today blessing and curse. The blessing – when you listen to the commandments of Hashem your Go-d, which I command you today. And the curse, if you do not listen to the

commandments of Hashem your Go-d... And you shall guard to perform all the statutes and the laws which I give before you today" (Devarim 11:26-28, 32).

At the beginning of this week's Parsha, we are encouraged to use our free choice to follow a life of blessed obedience to Hashem. The Torah makes its message perfectly clear – If we keep the Mitzvot, we will be blessed. If we do not, we will suffer the terrible curses.

With the stakes so high, is it not obvious that we should choose to live a life of blessing? Why then, do we need to be told what to choose – "And you shall guard to perform all the statutes and the laws..."? Is this not the most obvious advice ever?

The Midrash explains, based on a similar question on the obvious advice to choose life over death (Devarim 30:19):

"Lest Israel say, 'Since The Holy One Blessed Be He has placed before us two paths - the path of life and the path of death, we can go on whichever one we want'. Therefore, (the Torah) comes to teach us there, 'And you shall choose life, so that you shall live - you and your offspring'" (Sifri, Re'eh 1).

The Midrash then provides the parable of somebody who stands at a fork in the road, at the entrance to two paths. One path is covered with thorns but after a short while becomes enjoyable to walk on. The other path starts off easily but after a short while is entirely covered with thorns. The person at the fork kindly advises passers-by what lies ahead and shows them the correct path to follow.

From these words, we can extract two reasons why the advice to choose a life of blessing is really necessary. Firstly, the great gift of free will contains an inherent danger. Seeing as we have two paths before us, people may erroneously legitimise taking the wrong path. The attitude of "I have free will - I can do whatever I want" is a perversion of the true aim of free will. To avoid any confusion, Hashem sets two paths before us but clearly states that we should choose the path of blessing.

Furthermore, from the parable we see that in truth, the choice is not perfectly simple. In the short term, it may often be the case that the path of blessing appears far less attractive than the path of curse. Religious commitment may seem scary, uncomfortable or overwhelming until we are fully immersed in the path of Torah and Mitzvot. Knowing how tempting it might be to run down the other path, Hashem in His ultimate kindness stands at the fork in the road when presenting us the choice and encourages us to keep the Mitzvot.

By appreciating the gift of free will, and using it for the right decisions, may we only have a life of blessing.



Reb Leor Broh

Riddle for Re'eh: Find a common theme in the following 3 topics that appear in Parshat Re'eh:

The Navi Sheker (false prophet)

The Meisit (one who incites others to do idolatry)

Maaser Sheni (the Second Tithe which had to be eaten in Yerushalayim)

Answer to Riddle for Last week (Ekev): My companions appear in the Parsha, but I don't. Who am I ?
Korach.

See 11:6 where Moshe recalls the earth opening up and swallowing Datan and Aviram , but no mention of Korach who instigated the rebellion.

Many commentaries comment on this.

Ramban answers that Korach and the 250 men who offered the Ketoret were burnt rather than being swallowed up. Being that the earth opening up and swallowing them was of such rarity, Moshe focussed on that.

The Chida (in Chomat Anach) mentions that out of respect for Korach's children who did Teshuvah and survived to build their own families, Moshe does not mention their father here.

See Rabbi Sorotzkin's Oznayim LaTorah in which he explains that Moshe mentions Datan and Aviram because they denigrated the land of Canaan, unlike Korach. He explains this beautifully in the context of the Parsha.



Rabbi Boruch Abaranok zt"l

Edited and translated by, Rabbi J. Simcha Cohen zt"l, published in 2011 for the Tenth Yahrzeit of Rabbi Abaranok zt"l.

In devarim, Parshat R'ai (13:1) the Torah states "Lo Tosif", namely, "Do not add" (to the mitzvot). Of concern is the fact that this prohibition was already noted in a preceding Parasha. In Parshat V'Etchanan, the Torah explicitly says "Lo Tosifu"; "Do not increase or add to the mitzvot." (4:2). Accordingly, the question is why is this prohibition mentioned twice? The Vilna Goan contends that the first time the prohibition is mentioned it is written in the plural construct. This refers to anyone who wishes to add on to the amount of Biblical mitzvot and generate a totally new mitzvah. The second reference in Parshat R'ai is written in the singular. This relates to one who seeks to expand or add on to the requirements of an individual mitzvah. Hence each reference relates to distinctly different phenomena.

A further issue is why our teacher Moshe felt the necessity prior to his death to specifically warn against "adding" to the mitzvot. Why was "Lo Tosif" selected rather than quite a number of other prohibitions? The first mitzvah given to mankind was the prohibition not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. Adam violated this rule. His sin, according to the Midrash, was a result of a violation of the principle of "Lo Tosif". Chava informed Adam that no punishment would befall him for eating of the forbidden fruit. She contended that G-d had informed them that it was forbidden to eat and lean upon the Tree of Knowledge. Adam was told that Chava had leaned upon the Tree of Knowledge and no punishment took place. As such they logically assumed that just as no punishment occurred after

leaning on the Tree so too would no punishment transpire after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Yet, G-d never prohibited leaning on the Tree of Knowledge. This was an unsubstantiated addition. Hence, by adding a command never given by G-d caused the original downfall of Adam. The first mitzvah was violated by the first man due to a lack of concern for the principle of "Lo Tosif". Accordingly, Moshe, prior to his death, wished to caution the Jewish people about the hazards of violating this vital mitzvah. Concerning the sin of "Lo Tosifu" the Talmud notes that when Kohanim (Duchen) they are not to add any blessing above and beyond the three verses of the Biblical Birkat Kohanim. No Kohan is to say, "since the Torah gave me permission to bless the Jewish people I will add a personal blessing....This is prohibited for it is written "Lo Tosifu". (Rosh HaShana 28b).

There are numerous mitzvot that people may seek to enhance by adding on to these mitzvot. Why did the Talmud select Birkat Kohanim as an example of not adding on to mitzvot? Kohanim may mistakenly feel that since G-d wishes to bless Jews, it is permissible to add on to the specific blessings authorized by the Torah. To counter this false concept the Talmud specifically notes that even at Birkat Kohanim, additional blessings are not permitted.

Thus the addition of unnecessary mitzvot may lead to a violation of core commandments.



Rabbi Kennard

This essay is dedicated in honour of the yahrzeit of my mother, Ann Kennard, Chanah bat Yosef, which falls this coming Wednesday night and Thursday. In the absence of saying kaddish or leading a minyan, may the Torah that we learn be a z'chut for the neshama.

The parasha of Re'eh focuses largely on the religious life that the Jews will lead after entering Israel. Sacrifices and consecrated items are to be brought to "the place that (Hashem) will choose". The treatment accorded to this site (i.e. where the mishcan comes to rest and another place where, at some future time, the Bet Mikdash is to be built) is contrasted with the idolatrous infrastructure that the incoming people will encounter.

(ג) וְנִתְצַתֶּם אֶת מִזְבְּחֵיהֶם וְשִׁבְרֵיהֶם וְאֲשֵׁרֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בְּאֵשׁ וּפְסִילֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם תִּגְדְּעוּן וְאִבְדֹתֶם אֶת שְׁמֵם מִן הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא.
 (ד) לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּן כֵּן לַה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם.
 (ה) כִּי אִם אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם מִכָּל שְׁבֵטֵיכֶם לְשׂוּם אֶת שְׁמוֹ שָׁם לְשֹׁכְנוֹ תִדְרָשׁוּ וּבָאתִי שָׁמָּה.

(3) You shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim (deified trees) with fire; and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods; and you shall destroy their name out of that place.

(4) You shall not do so to Hashem your God.

(5) But to the place which Hashem your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put His name there, to his dwelling you shall seek, and there you shall come. (Devarim, Chapter 12)

The idolatrous sites are to be thoroughly destroyed. Hashem's chosen place will be different. It is to be sought. But what is meant by **לְשַׁכְּנוֹ תִּדְרְשׁוּ** - "His habitation (Shechina you shall seek)"? When and how do we fulfil this command?

For **Rashi** (11th century France), quoting the midrashic **Sifrei** (Devarim 62) the implication is simple. One seeks Hashem's presence by going to Shiloh, where the mishcan was located (the Maharaal explains that verse 11 refers to the period from the building of the Bet Mikdash and thereafter; previous verses, including ours, relate to the period of the mishcan).

The **Ibn Ezra** (12th century Spain) expresses a similar idea, but expands the "target" of the seeking, by saying that Hashem is to be sought throughout the land of Israel, "for there is "Hashem's presence". These words of the Ibn Ezra imply that the divine presence elevates the entire land, not just the immediate environs of the Temple (though an alternative version of the Ibn Ezra replaces "land" by "ark", meaning that the Ibn Ezra severely limits, rather than expands, the locus of Hashem's presence). But the **Rambam** (12th century Spain) sees in this mitzvah more than to an existing sanctuary. In the Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Melachim, 1:1) he lists three mitzvot that become pertinent when the Jews enter the land of Israel - to appoint a king, to end Amalek's evil and to build the Bet Mikdash. The source for this third mitzvah is, according to the Rambam, our verse, **"לְשַׁכְּנוֹ תִּדְרְשׁוּ וּבֵאת שָׁמָּה"** - "to His dwelling you shall seek, and there you shall come". "Seeking Hashem's presence" does not just mean "looking for" it, but actually facilitating its residence on earth.

Alas today we have no Bet Mikdash, and most will agree that we are not ready to commence its re-building. Does this mitzvah therefore still apply?

The **Ramban** (13th century Israel) states that "seeking" the presence requires more than going from A to B. It means "you shall ask 'where is the way to the house of Hashem?' and each person shall say to their friend 'let us go and ascend to the mountain of Hashem to the house of the G-d of Ya'akov' (Yeshaya 2:3)". Seeking is the excitement, the emotion, the sharing of the experience with others, as we make the journey to "the house of Hashem". This aspect of the mitzvah we can, and should, maintain even today, when visiting Israel or, as is our current situation, when yearning to do so.

The **Emek Dvar** (19th century Lithuania) explains that the mitzvah is fulfilled every time we pray and turn our faces in the direction of Jerusalem and the Temple. As the Tanach says (Melachim 1 8:35) this is "praying to this place" - i.e. praying to Hashem, while directed towards His place. Clearly this aspect of the mitzvah can be fulfilled anywhere and at any time.

The Mishna (Rosh Hashanna 4:3 and Succah 3:12) states we take the lulav all seven days of Succot **"זָכַר שֶׁלִּמְקֹדֶשׁ"** - in memory of the Bet Mikdash. The Biblical mitzvah of lulav applies for seven days in the place described as "before Hashem" - i.e. the Temple (Vaykira 23:41) - but for only one day outside. Yet, after the destruction, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai instituted that the practice that had been unique to the Temple should be extended throughout the Jewish world.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanna 30a) comments:

ומנלן דעבדינן זכר למקדש? דאמר קרא (ירמיהו ל:ז) **"כִּי אֵעֵלָה אֲרוּכָה לָךְ וּמִמְכוֹתֶיךָ אֲרַפֶּאךָ נָא מֵהַ כִּי נִדְחָה קְרָאוּ לָךְ צִיּוֹן הִיא דוֹרֵשׁ אֵין לָהּ מְכַלֵּל דְּבַעֲיָא דְרִישָׁה:**

And from where do we derive that one performs actions in memory of the Temple? As the verse states: "For I will restore health to you, and I will heal you of your wounds, said Hashem; because they have called you an outcast: She is Zion, there is none who seek her" (Yirmiyahu 30:17). Therefore (Zion) needs seeking.

Rav Soloveitchik (20th century America) distinguishes between customs which were instituted “in memory of the destruction” and those, like the seven-day lulav and others, which were “in memory of the Temple”. The former involve or invoke mourning; the latter are positive not negative, joyous not despondent. They are designed to re-create the sense of being “before Hashem” - which used to be experienced at the Bet Mikdash - wherever a Jew is found. This, say the Gemara is how we “seek His presence”

The **Sfat Emet** (19th century Poland) also addresses the verse from Yirmiyahu and the Gemara’s conclusion of “‘there is none who seek her’, therefore (Zion) needs seeking” by explaining that the Temple’s destruction has removed a source of kedusha (holiness) from the world. But as our opening verses stated (Devarim 12:3-4), whereas the destruction of idolatrous sites removes all vestiges of what was once there, the Bet Mikdash is different (see Devarim 12:4). The kedusha that was to be found there cannot be totally abolished; a remnant will always remain. When the Gemara tells us that “‘there is none who seek her’, therefore (Zion) needs seeking” it is our task to seek that remnant and to elevate it to its former grandeur. This, says the Sfat Emet, we achieve by constantly seeking the Temple’s re-building, praying for it, requesting it with our words and our hearts. As he concludes:

ע"ז יתעורר כח הרשימה הנשאר קיים לעולם ויהי הגאולה ע"ז במהרה בימינו אמן:

And through this (prayer and emotion), the power of the eternally remaining remnant will be awakened, bringing about the redemption, speedily, in our days, Amen” (S’fat Emet, Re’eh, 5637)



The Limmud Experience – Mia Burman

Dear Family and friends back in Melbourne,

I am Mia Burman a graduate of Mount Scopus Memorial College last year and have chosen Bnei Akiva’s Limmud program for my gap year this year. I am extremely grateful to be sharing the myriad of skills, lessons and adventures I have been lucky enough to experience, despite the restrictions and changes that came with the Corona Virus.

The year began with the bringing together of both MTA and Limmud on OzSem, serving as a culmination of socialising, touring Jerusalem and introductory classes that gave us the foundational knowledge that would filter into the differing experiences we were about to be hit with. Moving as a cohesive group to the AZYC seminar, I really appreciated the opportunity to demonstrate our immense collective and individual pride in Bnei’s values; the values that we were about to live and breathe for the coming year. The Limmud Experience truly began at this point. After finally meeting our South African siblings for the year on the first day of our Limmud seminar, we were able to get a glimpse into the meaningful experiences that lay ahead of us and would ultimately unite the group over the year. These experiences began on the infamous Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv. A large aspect of the kibbutz experience was focussed on the concept of Avodah; waking up at the crack of dawn to work in the olive fields, gardening, the kindergarten or even the chicken coup. However, Limmud also facilitated ulpan classes, shiurim and

chavruta time every afternoon or in our spare time to bring together the values of Torah and Avodah. Spending two months living with this schedule allowed for both personal and interpersonal growth between the group as we added to our tank of shared memories. Amongst our crazy schedule, the group spent time bonding over our daily trips to the maayan even in the freezing cold and our weekly Friday tiyulim including visits to the Hermon, Sachne and beautiful hikes. One of our final memories of Kibbutz before Corona hit was celebrating Purim all together. As the first Chag that we were able to celebrate as a group in Israel, the atmosphere was electric throughout the day.

After spending two months on Kibbutz, the news of our move to Migdal Oz was extremely exciting after such an uncertain time with the first round of lockdown beginning. The group went into the experience grateful that we were granted the opportunity to remain together as a unit and to continue programming. The time spent at Migdal Oz during quarantine was made meaningful by the seminars run by both the group and madrichim. These consisted of a week exploring the different decades of Israel's history and a seminar looking at Yom Hazikaron, ending with a powerful ceremony on the day. The transition from Yom Hashoah to Yom Haatzmaut is also an extremely memorable period and a unique experience to both commemorate and celebrate on Israeli soil. One experience that stood out for me during this time was the Pesach Seder that we shared. Being able to sit together as a group of 30 people during a time of worldwide isolation was extremely powerful. We spent the night sharing each of our different traditions, stories and song tunes making it a night of inspiration and true connection between the group. We celebrated Shavuot with 20 extra guests including teachers, past Shlichim and friends. Having them join us was extremely memorable for the group as we were able to spend our Tikkun Leil learning and hearing insights from people we didn't usually hear from. While we had incredible appreciation for the ability and novelty of celebrating Chagim together in Israel, spending 10 weeks together for shabbat with no free weekends created a beautiful structure of weekly challah baking, mifkad and of course hundreds of pre shabbat photos. The familiarity that eventuated from the group Shabbatot was a true highlight of the year for me as it created true quality time that allowed for the flourishing of incredible friendships and time spent together as our incredible group.

As restrictions were eased and we were finally able to leave the walls of our new base, Midgal Oz, we entered the new period of Machon. After being confined to the same 30 people for just over two months, being combined with 200 South Americans as well as 30 other Australian and South Africans from the other youth movements was incredibly overwhelming, yet came with prospects for amazing friendships to be formed over the next three weeks. The Machon program provided us with a breadth of classes ranging from being able to actively counter BDS on university campuses to the foundations of Kabbalah. We were able to engage in all aspects of Zionism, Judasim, Hadracha and other relevant topics that were presented by top educators, making it one of the most fulfilling and stimulating aspects of Limmud. Following Machon, we were incredibly lucky to experience Yom Yerushalayim at the Kotel before setting out to our three days of hiking that were to make up for our missed Shvil hiking experience during quarantine. These days served as a stark reminder of how far we had come as a group, as the last time we had hiked together was as newly formed friendships on our first week of kibbutz, and now as an incredibly tight and comfortable group of friends.

Spending a month at Midreshet Lindenbaum was an incredibly uplifting experience both individually and for the group. It was really interesting to see how they were able to run the institution through a capsule system during these times. Some classes that the group found inspiring were Women in Halacha, Leadership in Bamidbar and our daily Tanach classes.

We were able to spend this time becoming closer as the group of girls before rejoining the boys in our weekend spent in the old city. Being a one minute walk from the Kotel for the weekend was a perfect way to bring together the inspiration we had gathered throughout our experience at Midrasha. We used

this weekend to reconnect as a group as we experienced Kabbalat Shabbat together looking over the Kotel and spent our Shabbat afternoon with a walking tour of the walls of the Old City.

Following Midrasha we got our first full break for the year as we were given a week of chofesh. We all took the opportunity to relax and rejuvenate before the group came back together once again. We spent three days with the incredible organisation Hashomer Hachadash, which aims to foster a connection between the youth of Israel and their land. As a group we hiked and worked the land of the beautiful Golan while sleeping in Bedouin tents. Throughout the year, our group has thrived off these uniquely Israeli experiences where we actualise our appreciation and connection to our land. These few days were the last ones we spent united before we split between our Magen David Adom Volunteering and Marava army experiences. I chose MDA, which included a training course as well as the 5 week volunteering period which we are currently in. The two week training course was a period of fascinating classes and practical preparation for our volunteering period whilst also creating an incredible social experience by bringing together our counterparts on IBC and Ohrsom who also chose the MDA program. I have really enjoyed the multifaceted learning opportunities and rewards that have come from both the independent living and volunteering experience on the ambulances. Once again I am incredibly grateful to Bnei Akiva, and all those that allowed our program to continue and moreover provide us with such an incredible opportunity through such unprecedented times.

Shabbat Shalom

Mia Burman