



Rabbi Levy Sheinfeld

## The Three Weeks

According to the printed calendars, it seems as if the fast of 17th Tammuz and the starting of the 3 weeks will occur as scheduled. The printers have decided we won't be *zoche* to a redemption this year. However, we still are within the wonderful days of Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai, receiving the first set of *luchos*. Destiny is yet to be determined.

In the *Midbar*, at this time, Bnei Yisroel were eagerly anticipating Moshe's return. To our dismay, the satan was victorious when we unfortunately fell victim to the sin of the golden calf. The *luchos* were smashed. Chazal list four other things that happened on the 17th of Tammuz: The Korban Tamid was no longer brought, the walls of Yerushalayim were breached, Apustomus Harasha burnt a sefer Torah, and an avoda zara was set up in the Beis Hamikdash.

Similarly, five things happened on Tisha b'Av, the end of the 3 weeks. In the second year of the Midbar the decree of staying in the desert for 40 years was made, both Batei Mikdash were destroyed, the city of Beitar was destroyed, and Yerushalayim was plowed over.

*continues on page 5*



Rabbi Menachem Kirshner

## Shabbos Serenity

Our weekday Shemoneh Esrei consists of three parts - shevach, tzechav, and hoda'ah - praise, supplications, and thanks. On Shabbos and Yom Tov we substitute tzechav with kedushas hayom - the sanctity of the day. HaRav Yitzchak Sender zt"l, in his Commentator's Gift of Torah, brings down two sources for refraining from supplications on Shabbos. One is a Gemara in Brachos, daf chaf aleph amud aleph, where the Gemara says that the reason a person cannot make supplications on Shabbos is "because the Rabbis did not want to burden them due to kavod haShabbos". The Second is a Medrash Tanchuma in Parshas Vayeira which states that we don't say the middle 12 brachos of Shemona Esrei on Shabbos because "if a person will have a choleh (sick person) in their house they will remember them in the bracha of rofeh cholei amo yisroel which would make them sad, and Shabbos was given for sanctity, enjoyment and rest".

**“According to the Medrash, we are not allowed to make supplications on Shabbos as this would deter the atmosphere that Shabbos invites.”**

*continues on page 4*

This edition of **Toras Yeshurun** has yet to be sponsored



Rabbi Shlomo Rosen

# The Civil War and Jewry

As we approach American Independence Day, July 4, we might consider some American Jewish history during this summer of the Pandemic of Covid-19 and the civil unrest taking place in our urban centers. With perfect faith in Hashem that there is no ‘happenstance’, we express appreciation for our kind existence here in this historical מדינת החסד, Country of Kindness, even as we rely on Him for our salvation.

I recommend American Jewry and the Civil War by Bertram Korn. This is an enduring classic. The book is essential reading for one interested in American Jewish history. The book reveals great personages and issues that affected the American Jewish community. The reader is introduced to influential “rabbinic”<sup>1</sup> figures, Isaac Meyer Wise, Isaac Leeser, and David Einhorn, who shaped the Jewish community. One sees the sympathetic attitude of Abraham Lincoln toward American Jewry, is introduced to his Jewish friends Abraham Jonas and Issachar Zacharie, and is

1. Their rabbinical credentials were dubious – the first ordained rabbi was Abraham Rice of Baltimore circa 1840. He is not well known. In fact, he became a grocer when he understood that his congregation would not accept the rigors of Jewish Law.

mystified by General U. S. Grant's sweeping order 11 to expel the Jewish people from his department. The Northern side's chaplaincy controversy is reminiscent of the Medieval European societal requirement of an oath of fealty to Christianity, in that the Federal government has a stubborn determination not to allow a Jewish chaplain because the military code requires a Christian. In contrast, the Confederate South is filled with simple Jew Hatred, thus never having a controversy!

**“just as Hashem delivered us from the upheaval of the Civil War and its unrest, may He continue to save us..”**

One learns that Isaac Meyer Wise, the most famous 'rabbi' of that era, was a Democrat, suspicious of Lincoln until the assassination and until then excoriates Abolitionism. Isaac Leeser, the staunch

continues on page 3



Rabbi Mordechai Millunchick

# Smiles and Masks

I love my grandfather a”h. On my grandfather’s car rested a pair of vanity plates that read ‘Gib A Kuk’ (translation: Take a look). I’m not quite sure of the history behind these plates but perhaps he was reminding us of an important lesson. Spend time to look, meaning look at the operating forces behind the things we do, look at people and see their needs, look at life and learn.

**One who greets his friend with an upbeat, happy face, it is as if he had given him all the good gifts of the world.**

gradually returning. This causes us to look at how we approach shul in a new light. One thing that has been taken away has been our faces. Facemasks now reign supreme. Perhaps this is a time to look at how we share our faces with others. The smile is the window to the heart. Not only is a smile a sign of one’s inner feelings, it is also an indication about one’s feelings toward others.

Our current corona situation has given us ample opportunity to look, learn and appreciate. For example, our shuls were taken from us and are

Rabbi Yishmael says we should greet everyone with simcha.<sup>1</sup> Rav Yochanan says that ‘when one shows his teeth in a smile to his fellow, it is better

continues on page 3

## The Civil War and Jewry *continued*

reverend who defends 'Shulchan Aruch' Judaism, sees the need for Jewish education and pushes for the 'Maimonides' rabbinical school (that ultimately fails); he rejects David Einhorn's extreme abolitionism and radical reform. The Jewish community's attitude toward slavery resembles regional opinions - Northern Jews generally accept abolition and Southern Jews generally accept States' Rights.

Abraham Lincoln was close to two Jews, Abraham Jonas, a political associate, and Issachar Zacharie, MD, his foot doctor. One sees, nevertheless, Lincoln's real attitude when he rescinds Grant's order of expulsion immediately upon hearing from an anonymous shop keeper from Paducah, KY, one Caesar Kaskel. Lincoln comes off as a real 'father Abraham'.

The infamous order of expulsion is the most antisemitic act in American history. It probably is more a reflection of Grant's frustration with speculators than actual antisemitism (his own father joined the speculators). Korn shows that Grant maintains friendships with Jews before the war and after the war. Nevertheless, his own wife Julia calls the order 'most obnoxious'.<sup>2</sup>

The Union's stubborn refusal to appoint a Jewish chaplain because of a Christian clause in the Military code smacks of the Medieval requirement of fealty to Christianity that prevented the Jewish people

2. Jonathon Sarna of Brandeis shows that Grant rehabilitated himself by appointing more Jews to his administration than anyone else before.

## Smiles and Masks *continued*

than giving him milk to drink.

Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt"l says if a man would give a drink of milk to people every day, such a person deserves a bronze tablet erected in his honor. A drink of milk provides important nourishment and becomes part of all that the recipient does

1 Rabbi Yehuda Goldberg in his מוסר המשנה notes that wherever it says 'האדם' it includes non-Jews. (see תוס' ב"ק לח גיטין סא : - ושואלין בשלום הנכרים מפני דרכי שלום see also ד"ה אלא, and קידושין לג. That Rav Yochanan would rise in front of non-Jewish old people.

from fitting in to the feudal communal structure of Europe. During this controversy we see a persistent demand of freedom and equality from an emerging organized Jewish community which is eventually granted! In contrast, the Confederacy has no clause that would prevent a Jewish chaplain. However, the abundance of anti-Jewish sentiment preclude appointing a Jewish chaplain! The anti-Jewish attitudes were so vehement, for example, that the

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number 2 man in the Confederate government, Judah P. Benjamin, suffers constant abuse because of his Jewish background. This was despite the fact he was completely unobservant in Jewish tradition, and married to a Christian.

The Civil War brought tremendous uncertainty to the Jewish community. The Jew, whether living in the North or South, did not know where his fate would fall. He nevertheless had his faith in Hashem. Hashem removed the uncertainty and danger of the Civil War, making the Jewish community stronger.

Today we live in times of danger and civil unrest. Today, like yesterday, we remain strong in our faith in Hashem. So, just as Hashem delivered us from the upheaval of the Civil War and its unrest, showing His kindness, may He continue to save us from our present day unrest showing us His kindness and usher in an ultimate era of peace with משיח בן דוד במהרה בימינו אמן!!



thereafter. But even he is less than one who smiles to his fellow. The smile enters the recipient's mind and body, and stimulates all the glands to produce their secretions in the most beneficial proportions. An immense mental impression is also created. Smiling also benefits the one smiling as well. Rabbi Zelig Pliskin writes that when one smiles, more oxygen flows to your brain making you feel better and think more clearly.

*continues on page 5*

## Shabbos Serenity *continued*

Let us be me'ayein into whether the Gemara and Medrash are saying the same thing, or perhaps something different, which has practical implications. According to the Gemara, we don't want to place excessive burden on the people. It would seem that there is still an obligation to recite supplications. Perhaps in order to fulfill this, we ask Hashem "kadsheinu b'mitzvosecha...le'ovdecha b'emes" which are certainly supplications. According to the Medrash, we are not allowed to make supplications on Shabbos as this would detract from the atmosphere that Shabbos invites.

Furthermore, what does the Gemara mean when it says that Rabbis "didn't want to burden them due to kavod haShabbos"? What constitutes a burden? Is it that the weekday Shemona Esrei is very long? Well, so is the Shabbos Pesukei Dezimra! And what about Krias HaTorah during the week vs. Shabbos? It certainly cannot be the length that causes the burden. Furthermore, how is Kavod Shabbos defined?

Rav Sender suggests that there is no real difference of opinion between the Gemara and Medrash. When the Gemara says that the Rabbis didn't want to burden them, it must mean, in keeping with the spirit of the Medrash, that petitions are omitted in order not to disturb the serenity of

the holy day. In fact the Avudraham seems to make this connection as well and says "the Rabbis didn't want to burden him in order so that he should not experience sorrow on the Shabbos".

HaRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l, in his Shiurim L'zecher Abba Mori, observes that preparing for Shabbos is very similar to preparation for davening. In both instances, one is required to wash their hands and feet, dress in clean clothes, wrap in tzitzis, and be in a serious mindset. What is the common denominator of these actions? These actions outline prerequisites for standing before the Shechina. Kavod Shabbos means that one must be properly prepared to stand in the presence of the Shechina.

Chazal tell us that the Shechina only dwells upon a person who is full of joy. If kavod Shabbos requires that we be ready to greet the Shechina, then dwelling on our unfulfilled personal needs by reciting the supplications of Shemona Esrei would not only risk driving away the happiness needed to greet the Shechina, but would also dispel the calm and peaceful atmosphere which Shabbos calls for, and would be contrary to the proper spirit of kavod Shabbos.

May we be zoche to greet each Shabbos amidst simcha and kavod! 

**“Kavod Shabbos means that one must be properly prepared to stand in the presence of the Shechina.”**

With feelings of praise and thanks to Hakadosh Baruch Hu,  
We are honored to announce the publication of

### שו"ת שמן זית זך

Teshuvos and Shiurim culled from many years of  
Rabbi Zev Cohen's Shuirim in Adas Yeshurun.

## The Three Weeks *continued*

The Maharal pairs these ten incidents and explains that the five of the 17th of Tammuz aren't "full endgame" punishments. Those are reserved for Tisha b'Av. The broken *luchos* are replaceable, as well as the burnt sefer Torah. The city being plowed and the Korban Tamid not being brought are not the same level of tragedy as the Beis Hamikdash and Beitar being destroyed. So too, with the *avoda zara* in the Beis Hamikdash. Nothing is by chance: the "beginning punishments" all occurred on the 17th of Tammuz, the beginning of the Three Weeks. The "ending punishments" happened on Tisha b'Av, the end of the Three Weeks.

Even after the Three Weeks begin, is not automatic for the Beis Hamikdash to be "re-destroyed" every year. It is only the start, and the ending can be changed. We have the power and ability to make that change. We can start by paying attention to the *parshiyos hashavua* that are usually the *kriah* during the Three Weeks.

In every parsha we have the importance and yearning for the Land of Israel. In Parshas Pinchas we have how the land is going to be divided up, as well as the daughters of Tzela'fchad requesting not to be left out. Parshas Mattos has the Tribes of Reuven and Gad wanting to get a first choice in the land, settling the area on the eastern side of the *Yarden*, the first settlements of Bnei Yisroel as a nation, in Eretz Yisrael. Parshas Maasei deals with setting the borders of Eretz Yisrael. It also contains the intriguing worry of Shevet Menashe that part of their *chelek*, under certain circumstances, could legally get switched to a different *shevet*. They weren't worried about losing it to non-Jews, but even within the Jewish people, there is something to maintaining control over what is rightfully theirs, in Israel. This is a total expression of Love for the land. Parshas Devarim, in recounting the incident with the spies says, "And they said good is the Land that Hashem wants to give us." (Devarim 1:25). In addition, it recounts the initial conquests and settling of the Land.

We cried over getting the land, and we need to change that for the good, to cry over not having the land. IYH we should be *zoche*, and can be *zoche*, to have to reprint our calendars with the coming of Mashiach, *bimheirah b'yamei*  *amein*.

## Smiles and Masks *continued*

Avos D'Rebbe Nasson says that if one would give to his friend all the great gifts of the world with a 'down' face, the recipient views it as if he has received nothing. But one who greets his friend with an upbeat, happy face, even if he gives him nothing, it is as if he had given him all the good gifts of the world.

We always should have a smile on our face and a good word ready for when we see other people. Rabbi Yisroel Salanter says that the face of a person is a public domain; a person is obligated to

always look happy.

During the Second World War, when Rabbi Yisroel Yaakov Lubchanski was incarcerated in the ghetto, his face constantly shone with joy. Wherever he went, he spread words of encouragement and hope. Rabbi Ephraim Oshry asked him how he could be so happy when the situation was so grim. Rabbi Lubchanski replied, 'By nature I am easily frightened. Why should others have to suffer from my fears? I exert myself to remove any signs of fear so I should not cause anyone else to become afraid.'

*concludes on page 6*

**The Three Weeks ... is only the start, and the ending can be changed. We have the power and ability to make that change.**

## Smiles and Masks *continued*

Shammai says we should greet everyone with סבר פנים יפות, with a nice face. One would expect this saying to come from Hillel who said 'one should love Shalom/peace and chase peace,' as opposed to Shammai whose traits were of *middas hadin*. Rabbi E. E. Dessler zt"l explains that we learn from here that the *middas hadin* obligates us to smile. This is what I am obligated to give to others, because the same is due to me. Just as I don't expect others to harm me and put me in a negative mood, so too I shouldn't put other people in a bad mood because of the expression on my face.

Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Katz constantly stressed the importance of greeting others. He would point out that very often a cheery 'Good Morning' can brighten up the entire day for someone who feels a bit dejected. Rabbi Pesach Krohn says 'a smile is a little curve that straightens out a lot of things.'

Rabbi Mattisyahu ben Charash says one should מקדים --predicate-- a greeting to everyone. R' Wolbe explains that one who returns a greeting is fulfilling the mitzvah of derech eretz, but one who offers a greeting is 'shining the sun' to his friend (מזרחו שמש לחבירו). Everyone wants the sun to shine on him from his friend, and everyone should know that he is a shining sun to those he comes in contact with. An infant child can differentiate between a sad face and a happy face, not incidentally called פנים מאירות. If one looks at the child out of love and with a smile, the child is happy and laughs back. Who knows, says R' Wolbe, what is better for a child, the food he is given or the smiles he receives from others! It is well documented that a child who grows up without happy human interaction is like a plant without the sun. It is not possible for the child to be healthy. On the other hand, a child's first smile shows he is greater than animals. With that smile, the child's נשמה shines forth. Smiling at a child shows you love him, and love makes children smart.

**Who knows what is better for a child, the food he is given or the smiles he receives from others!**

The ראש says מאירים אותם וקבל אותם בפנים מאירים. We see that one must have a happy face on display not only to those who come to his house, but even while walking in the street. One should pay attention to the status of his face and always make it look upbeat in order not to pain those who come by him.<sup>2</sup> R' Chaim Freidlander was once asked why he smiles even while talking on the telephone. He replied that while the listener doesn't see the smile, he can hear the smile across the line.

For one to be on a level to smile at all times, to be happy to greet everyone he meets, is not an easy thing to achieve. In fact, it takes a great amount of work to learn this skill properly. It is said about the Saba from Slobodka that he worked for two years on achieving סבר פנים יפות. He was able to attain this to such a degree that even while he was in the ghetto during the hardest of days, the shine never left his face. How is one to work on the trait of smiling? The Mesilas Yesarim says that the outer actions of a person will arouse the inner feelings inside the man. In other words, smile even if you don't mean it, smile even if you don't feel it. The smile will affect you and will arouse the feelings inside of you.

We should remember that our smiles send messages. We are passing along the gift of happiness to those we smile to. We hope that we will soon be able to step out from behind our masks and show our faces. Let's spend the time we have now practicing our smiles. 

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2. We can say that just like there is היזק ראייה of looking at someone else's possessions wrongly, there is also היזק ראייה if people look at you and your face is not happy.