



KMS Post-Nuptial Agreement Signing and Celebration



On the evening of November 2, KMS couples gathered at the Kosher Pastry Oven to sign halachic post-nuptial agreements and make a statement that the condition of *agunot* in the Orthodox community is unacceptable and—with the help of halachic pre-nuptial and post-nuptial agreements—largely preventable. The shul sponsored the occasion to enable couples that did not sign pre-nuptial agreements before their weddings to sign post-nuptial agreements now. While the post-nuptial agreements will likely have little relevance to the couples that signed them (including one couple that has been married for 42 years!), the attendees signed them to promote the goal of making halachic pre-nuptial agreements a routine part of the Jewish marriage process.

Halachic pre- and post-nuptial agreements are perhaps the most effective solution available today for preventing more women from becoming *agunot*. The agreements provide that in the unfortunate event of divorce, the husband and wife agree to refer

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The publication of *Kol MevaSer* is supported by a generous grant from Norman and Suzanne Javitt in memory of Nicholas Markovits, the father and grandfather, respectively, of KMS members Suzanne and Gail Javitt.

Reflections on Gemara Camp

by Maya Bickel and Yael Turitz



Tirzah Cohen was the first woman to complete the Talmud Bagrut in Israel, paving the way for future generations of women's Talmud study. This summer, her son-in-law, Mr. Allen Mansfield, honored her name by sending the two of us on a full scholarship to participate in the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education's Dr. Beth Samuels Summer High School Program. Thanks to his generosity we had an incredible summer. Not only that, but he is enabling other girls to have an amazing five weeks by making this scholarship available on an annual basis.

On the first day of Drisha, the fourteen girls enrolled in the program took a walk to the local Jewish bookstore to purchase

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Do We Measure Up to the Chashmonaim's Example?

by R. Yaakov Bieler, Chanuka 5774



It has been noted by numerous commentators that there is a glaring discrepancy between the overarching theme of the “Al HaNisim” addition to the Amida (the silent devotion) and Birkat HaMazon (grace after meals) for Chanuka¹—

“Al HaNisim”

And [we thank You] for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds, for the saving acts, and for the wonders which You have Wrought for our ancestors in those days, at this time

In the days of Matityahu, the son of Yochanan the High Priest, the Chashmonai and his sons, when the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your People Israel to make them forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your Will. But You, in Your abounding Mercies, Stood by them in the time of their distress. You Waged their battles, Defended their rights, and Avenged the wrong done to them. You Delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the wanton sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah. You Made a great and holy Name for Yourself in Your world, and Effected a great deliverance and redemption for Your People Israel to this very day. Then Your Children entered the shrine of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, kindled lights in Your holy Courtyards, and instituted these eight days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise to Your great Name.²—

and the Talmud's account of why Chanuka is celebrated:

Shabbat 21b

What is [the reason for] Chanuka? For our Rabbis taught: on the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Chanuka, which are eight, on which eulogies for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein. And when the Chashmonai dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient oil for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

Some have explained that since the Chashmonaim were Kohanim, and nevertheless assumed the kingship of the Jewish people,³ a role that was reserved for members of the tribe of Yehuda in general, and descendants of David in particular, the Rabbis, when discussing Chanuka in the Talmud, decided to deemphasize their role in the military victory, and stressed instead the miracle that took place in the Temple. In effect, the editors of the Talmud shifted the center of the Chanuka story, and portrayed as the true hero of the story, the Kohen who secreted the single vial of ritually pure oil in the event of some unforeseen need, rather than the Kohanim who led the fight against the Syrian-Greeks on the battlefield. In effect the Talmud promotes the triumph of metaphysics over historical accounts and national politics that were deemed in the long-term problematic and non-exemplary.

However, R. Adin Steinsaltz⁴ argues that Al HaNissim is not only about how God Aided members of the Jewish people militarily to overcome overwhelming odds in order to regain their autonomy and ability to worship HaShem properly and appropriately, but that it also reflects an attitude toward religion, embodied by the Chashmonaim, which has gone into relative eclipse in recent years. As is often his wont, R. Steinsaltz advocates a somewhat politically incorrect approach, in this case vis-à-vis the Chanuka story. He claims that in order to consolidate their rule, and because they really did not give any serious credence to any of the multiple religions practiced among the peoples comprising their empire, the Hellenist authorities sought to encourage tolerance and acceptance of all sorts of beliefs and worship so that different groups would be able to live together in harmony. But, R. Steinsaltz pointedly comments:

Tolerance toward everything does not indicate respect for others' principles, but rather a general devaluation of principles, which makes possible the acceptance of

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Further Reading

Some of Rabbi Bieler's Divrei Torah, along with podcasts of some of his Shiurim, are available at the synagogue website. To access this material, go to www.kmsynagogue.org and move your cursor to “Rabbi” on the left-hand side of the home page.

Simhat Torah Honorees

On Simhat Torah every year, KMS honors members who are distinguished for their service to the shul and to the larger community. This year's honorees are:

KALLOT

A native Kemp Miller, **Miriam Friedman** is the proud wife of Steve and mother of Matan, Edan, and Merav. Miriam likes to lend a hand when she can. She is involved in several community organizations such as AMIT and Kemp Mill Job-Assist.org, and organizes many chesed events including park clean-ups and youth visits to the Arcola Health and Rehabilitation Center. When not driving carpool, Miriam works as an instructional designer.

Dina Levitt has lived in Kemp Mill for 15 years with her husband, Matt, and their four sons, Tani, Uriel, Yona, and Noam. Dina is an active and involved member of the KMS Women's Tefilla Group, where she has served as gabbait for nearly a decade, and frequently lays Torah and Megillot. Dina is also an active member of the Special Needs Committee. In her professional life, Dina has been teaching math for many

years at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, where she currently chairs the Math Department. She loves to daven at the Youth Minyan where she is able to watch her children daven, lead, and grow in their Yiddishkeit.

Rebekah Rasooly has multiple full-time jobs, but devotes herself to only two of them: geneticist at NIH and wife/mom/grandmother to Avi; Irit and David; Tali and Yoni; Ilan; and Leora. She has been a devoted student of Rabbi Bieler's since high school and felt that coming to KMS in 1999 was like coming home. Rebekah is the past president of the Kemp Mill Civic Association. She has served on the KMS Education Committee since 2000, chairs a kiddush committee, coordinates Divrei Torah for the 8 a.m. minyan, serves on the KMS Board, and is a proud member and former chair of the WTG.

CHATANEI TORAH

Hashkama Minyan

Along with his wife Lily, **Saadia Greenberg** has lived in Kemp Mill for 37 years. Father of two grown daughters, Martha and Susie, Saadia is a regular at the KMS Hashkama Minyan,

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FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tishrei by the Numbers

by Joey Turitz and Allison Newfeld



Amazingly, the deadline for this Chanukah issue of *Kol MevaSer* came right on the heels of a busy and meaningful Tishrei at KMS. We thought it might interest you to know just a bit of what it takes to put together all of the davening, learning, Kiddushim and activities that make our shul's Tishrei so special.

For Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

- 4 Tents
- 9 Committees on Shmira
- 9 Darshanim
- 9 Baalei T'kia
- 10 Sifrei Torah rolled and layned from
- 27 Baalei Tefillah
- 75 people attending the pre-Rosh Hashanah Yom Iyun
- 200+ children in Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur child care
- 500 rental chairs

- 912 assigned seats on Yom Kippur
- 961 assigned seats on Rosh Hashanah

For Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret:

- 6 committees on Kiddush duty
- 7 committees on Shmira
- 1 case of cookies
- 1 case of crackers
- 15 containers of hummus
- 30 bottles of grape juice
- 38 bags of chips
- 150 bottles of soda
- 190 lbs of cookies, muffins, brownies, cinnamon rolls

Perhaps most important, 100+ volunteers contributed to davening, youth, set-up or other activities. This is a testament to our strong volunteer spirit and commitment to helping each other connect with Hashem.

May we continue to go from Chayil to Chayil and grow our community spirit in countless ways.



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Part 30

Av HaRachamim

by R. Yaakov Bieler

Chanuka 5774

As opposed to much of the liturgy on Shabbat morning, which is fairly standardized, the prayer Av HaRachamim ("Father of Compassion," Koren, p. 529), said in the portion of the prayers just before the Tora is returned to the Ark, is sometimes omitted. From the instructions in the Siddur about the occasions when this prayer is not recited—

[It] is omitted on days when Tachanun is not said.¹ It is also omitted on Shabbat Mevorchim (except during Sefirat HaOmer) and on the Arba Parashiot²—

as well as its deliberate inclusion immediately after the completion of Yizkor prayers,³ it becomes apparent that Av HaRachamim is associated with sadness in general, and recalling Jews who have died in particular. Consequently, on days when intense national or personal celebrations are celebrated, the prayer is deemed inappropriate; for days commemorating national mourning,⁴ like Sefirat HaOmer, as well as personal mourning, manifested in the recitation of Yizkor, Av HaRachamim is treated as solidly within the spirit of at least part of the day⁵ and is therefore included.

R. Dr. Joseph Hertz, who served as Chief Rabbi of the British Empire between 1913 and 1946, calls "Av HaRachamim" a "Requiem for the Martyrs."⁶ In other words, this is not a general memorial prayer for those who are no longer with us, but it specifically addresses the unfortunate circumstance that Jews have suffered over the course of much of their history—persecution and oppression. R. Hertz offers the following historical background for the prayer:

[It was] probably composed soon after the First Crusade in 1096, when a large number of communities in Germany^{7,8} were annihilated through massacre or through self-immolation to escape baptism. Its recital originally followed the reading of the list of *martyrs*....^{9,10,11}

However, this prayer does not serve only to memorialize victims of massacres and torture. R. Yisachar Yaakovson¹² notes that the Av HaRachamim prayer can be divided into two distinct parts:

- a) HaShem should remember all those who gave up their lives, sanctifying God's Name, *and*
- b) in turn Avenge their deaths,¹³ with a series of five proof texts drawn from the Tora, the Prophets and the Writings,¹⁴ demonstrating that such a sentiment, i.e., a call for Divine Retribution, is a legitimate part of Jewish

tradition.¹⁵

The proof texts all address the Divine Quality of Meting out just punishments to whoever has oppressed the Jewish people. In this regard, it would appear that Av HaRachamim is similar to the "Shefoch Chamatcha" (pour out your wrath) paragraph that is recited at the beginning of the final portion of the Pesach Seder.¹⁶ The confluence of Pesach with holidays celebrated by other religions sometimes resulted in blood libels and other campaigns against Jews, leading to the incorporation within the Haggada of a call for Divine Justice and Protection.

On the one hand, such dramatic calls for God's Intervention on behalf of persecuted Jews could be viewed as a violation, if not of the letter, than at least of the spirit of the verse in VaYikra:

VaYikra 19:18

Thou shalt not take *vengeance*, nor bear any *grudge* against the children of thy people,¹⁷ but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD.

However, R. S.R. Hirsch explains that there is great difference between carrying out vengeful acts, and appealing to God to Do so:

The one factor which more than anything else has protected us from the base impulse of vengefulness, is constituted by the recital of these portions of our prayer book which teach us that we must leave all vengeance and retribution for that which others may do to us, to none other than God.... It is only due to our trust in these promises (found in the Bible) that we have found the strength to submit to murder without becoming murderers ourselves, to bear strangling without ever becoming hangmen ourselves, and to tolerate robbery at the hands of our foes without ever robbing in return.... These appeals to God have helped us remain human and kind. Such is the fruit yielded by these prayers in which we turn to God as the Avenger of all the innocent.¹⁸

Consequently, the Av HaRachamim prayer and others like it, demonstrate that to feel frustrated and angry when atrocities are perpetrated against the Jewish people is utterly normal and understandable. And certainly, whatever must be done to protect oneself and others from future assaults

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The KMS Rabbinic Transition Committee

by Daphna Raskas and Ilene France

In preparation for Rabbi Yaakov Bieler's retirement at the end of June 2015, KMS has begun conducting rabbinic transition activities. As the first step in the rabbinic transition process, the Board of Directors has created the Rabbinic Transition Committee with a mandate to make research-based recommendations to the Board of Directors about rabbinic transition and search processes, tasks, resources, timelines, and responsibilities. The Rabbinic Transition Committee is a research committee, rather than a decision-making body. It will report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors. The purpose of the Transition Committee is to determine the best methods for designing, conducting and implementing a successful rabbinic transition and search.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Following are answers to frequently asked questions about KMS rabbinic search and transition processes. Additional information about the Rabbinic Transition Committee's mandate, structure, tasks and operations is available on the KMS website, www.kmsynagogue.org. To view the *Rabbinic Transition* section of the website, log in with your email address and password. After logging in, click on *Rabbinic Transition* in the list of links on the left side of the page.

When is Rabbi Bieler, our Morah D'Atra, retiring?

Rabbi Bieler is retiring June 30, 2015.

What is the first phase of the rabbinic search process?

As the first step in the rabbinic transition process, the Board of Directors has created the KMS Rabbinic Transition Committee with a mandate to research, analyze, and make recommendations to the Board of Directors about rabbinic transition and search processes, tasks, resources, timelines, and responsibilities. The Transition Committee is not a decision-making body. It will report its findings and make recommendations to the Board of Directors.

Why do we need a Transition Committee? Why not begin directly with a Search Committee?

An enormous amount of work must be done before we interview candidates for the new rabbi position. There will be opportunities for all members of our congregation to participate in the process and have their voices heard. The Rabbinic Transition Committee is composed of a diverse group of 14 KMS congregants. While this group is large enough to rep-

resent a wide range of KMS members, it is small enough to work effectively and efficiently on behalf of the congregation.

What exactly are the "transition" and "search" processes? How do search and transition activities differ from one another?

The rabbinic transition and search processes are composed of multiple activities and phases—unique and separate, but also overlapping and interdependent. The major components of the processes can be divided broadly into two categories:

Transition Activities

- Conduct preparatory work, including research and developing recommended procedures for rabbinic search process
- Plan and implement Rabbi Yaakov and Dr. Joanie Bieler celebration events
- Prepare to orient, integrate and transition next rabbi and his family

Search Activities

- Identify and interview rabbinic candidates
- Select rabbinic candidates
- Hire KMS rabbi

Who oversees the activities of the Transition and Search Committees?

In its role as the governing body of the synagogue, the KMS Board, under the leadership of the KMS President, is responsible for overseeing transition and search activities. The Board makes decisions based on research and recommendations made by the Transition Committee. The Board of Directors will receive input and recommendations from the Transition Committee and will use those recommendations to determine the structure and parameters of our actual rabbinic search, how and when the search committee will be appointed, how the search committee will operate, and how a final rabbinic selection decision will be made. When the KMS Rabbinic Search Committee is convened (likely in the spring or summer of 2014), it will be tasked with identifying, interviewing, evaluating and recommending rabbinic candidates.

How will members of the Search Committee be selected?

The precise process by which a search committee will be formed is yet to be decided. The Board will determine the process after reviewing the research and recommendations submitted by the Transition Committee.

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Navigating to the *Rabbinic Transition* Page of the KMS Website

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Click on *Rabbinic Transition* in the left column of the screen. You can also go directly to one of the *Rabbinic Transition* pages by clicking on one of the links that open when you hover over *Rabbinic Transition*.



RABBINIC TRANSITION
In preparation for Rabbi Yaakov Bieler's retirement at the end of June 2015, KMS is conducting rabbinic transition activities. As the first step in the rabbinic transition process, the Board of Directors has created the Rabbinic Transition Committee with a mandate to make research-based recommendations to the Board of Directors about rabbinic transition and search processes, tasks, resources, timelines, and responsibilities. The Transition Committee is a research committee, rather than a decision-making body. The Transition Committee will report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Directors. The purpose of the Transition Committee is to determine the best methods for designing, conducting and implementing a successful rabbinic transition and search.

Information about the rabbinic transition and search will be updated as the processes evolve.

TRANSITION COMMITTEE
Following are details about the Transition Committee's mandate, structure, tasks and operations:

[Mandate](#)

[Guiding Principles](#)

[Working Groups](#)

[Estimated Timeline and Milestones](#)

[Transition Committee Roster](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Transition Communication Archive](#)

Click on any of these links for more detailed information about the Rabbinic Transition Committee.

CONTACT THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE
Please share your questions, opinions, ideas suggestions and concerns with the Rabbinic Transition Committee by sending email to KMSRabbinicTransition@gmail.com. All submissions will be acknowledged. Suggestions are confidential to the Transition Committee and the Board of Directors. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted or reviewed.

Online Lookup: KMS Member Directory Available On the Shul Website

by Lauren Shaham

Perhaps one of the best features of KMS's new website is the online member directory, which was launched in October. Once logged in, members can use the directory to look up phone numbers, addresses and email addresses of other KMS members.

Members can choose which information they want to appear in the online directory. This can be edited through the "My Profile" section under "My Account."

We launched the online directory first in order to enable members to update their information before we complete the

new print directory. We expect the print directory to be mailed to members before the end of 2013. The new website will make it more efficient for the shul to print a directory annually.

The online directory has a spot for uploading photos. We hope that many members will contribute photos to help us recognize new families or older ones we may not have met yet.

If you have questions about how to use the online directory or how to update your information, please visit <http://images.shulcloud.com/376/uploads/Pubs/UpdateDirectorySettings.pdf>, or call the office.



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foreign and even opposing ideas.⁵

In the eyes of these Jews (the Jewish Hellenists who wished to accept the demands of their governors), Judaism is just another habit among many others... a collection of customs that are of no real importance and of only sentimental value. Even if a person and the members of his household wish to follow these customs, that commitment is only up to a certain point; he certainly will not be willing to give up his life for them.⁶

In commemoration of the Jewish victory over Hellenism, we celebrate Chanuka as a festival of those people who are still moved by zeal for their Judaism.⁷

R. Steinsaltz is apparently unconcerned about what the Chashmonaim and their descendants may have done improperly in the years following the Chanuka rebellion, and instead focuses upon how they were originally motivated by a powerful holy commitment to Jewish tradition and observance. They simply were not ready to sacrifice their religious principles in order to be accepted and accepting, and instead mounted a revolt so that they could observe “undiluted” Judaism in accordance with their own beliefs. R. Steinsaltz doubts that, confronted with a similar situation today, those specifically committed to both religious observance and involvement with the greater society—he refers to them as the “sensibly religious”—would be ready to literally fight in order to maintain their beliefs as did the Chashmonaim of old.

Applying R. Steinsaltz’ comments to our situation in the United States, we clearly are faced with the dialectical and challenging ongoing situation in which we are expected on the one hand to be deferential and respectful toward those who do not share our specific faith commitments, and yet, on the other, to be committed to the tenets of our own religion and religious tradition to the point where we will accept no deviation or compromise. In his notable essay, “Confrontation,”⁸ R. J.B. Soloveitchik formulates this dilemma as follows:

We Jews have been burdened with a twofold task; we have to cope with the problem of a double confrontation. We think of ourselves as human beings, sharing the destiny of Adam in his general encounter with nature, and as members of a covenantal community which has preserved its identity under most unfavorable conditions, confronted by another faith community. We believe we are the bearers of a double charismatic load, that of the dignity of man, and that of the sanctity of the covenantal community. In this difficult role, we are Summoned by God, Who Revealed Himself at both the level of universal creation and that of the private covenant, to undertake a double mission—the universal human and the exclusive covenantal confrontation.

Furthermore, not only is navigating these competing values a challenge for each of us individually, but it also forces us to consider how we ideally should bring up our children, educate our students, interact with our congregants, function in our workplaces, deal with our neighbors, etc.⁹ Can we engender and maintain passionate commitment to Judaism in an open society that at the same time encourages tolerance and being non-judgmental of our fellow-citizens? Will everything end up being relativized, or is it possible to be open-minded and yet passionately committed at the same time? The recent Pew survey¹⁰ in which the American Jewish community is depicted as generally moving away from affiliation and practice at an alarming rate, and which in turn has precipitated much discussion and even serious alarm in some quarters, is essentially challenging us to reflect upon whether we are being faithful to a major theme associated with Chanuka, as R. Steinsaltz has chosen to present it. While I would personally draw back from R. Steinsaltz’ provocative categorization of Chanuka as a “religious-zealous” holiday,¹¹ nevertheless, using this Chag to think about and discuss the level of our individual religious commitments, as well as to imagine what the conditions were that precipitated the Chashmonai revolt, adds an entirely new and productive dimension to the Chanuka experience.

NOTES:

¹A parallel “Al HaNissim” is inserted into the Amida and Birkat HaMazon on Purim.

After an identical opening paragraph—

And [we thank You] for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds, for the saving acts, and for the wonders which

You have Wrought for our ancestors in those days, at this time—the following summation of the basis for that festival is recited:

In the Days of Mordechai and Esther, in Shushan, the capital, when Haman, the wicked, rose up against them and sought to destroy, to slay, and to exterminate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, on the same day, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions; You, in Your abundant Mercy, Nullified his counsel and Frustrated his intention and Caused his design to return upon his own head and they hanged him and his sons on the gallows. http://www.ou.org/holidays/purim/al_hanisim_section_for_purim/#.UIJFRWnD-wk

²http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/597182/jewish/Val-Hanissim.htm

³RaMBaN on Beraishit 49:10

... the reason for the punishment of the Chashmonaim, who reigned during the Second Temple. They were saints of the Most High, without whom the learning of Tora and the observance of Commandments would have been forgotten in Israel, and despite this, they suffered such great punishment ... they ruled even though they were not the offspring of Yehuda and of the house of David, and thus they completely removed “the scepter” and “the lawgiver” from Yehuda. [“The scepter shall not depart from Yehuda, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, as long

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as men come to Shilo; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.”] And their punishment was measure for measure, as the Holy One, Blessed Be He, Caused their slaves to rule over them [a reference to Herod], and it was they who destroyed them.

RaMBaN Commentary on the Tora, Genesis, trans. R. Charles Chavel, Shilo, New York, 1971, p. 589.

⁴*Change and Renewal: The Essence of the Jewish Holidays, Festivals and Days of Remembrance*, “A Stiff-Necked People,” trans. David Haberman, ed. Yehudit Shabta, Maggid Books, Jerusalem, 2011, pp. 147-53.

⁵*Ibid.* p. 148.

⁶*Ibid.* pp. 150-1.

⁷*Ibid.* p. 152.

⁸*Tradition*, Spring-Summer 1964, p. 17, <http://www.traditiononline.org/news/originals/Volume%206/No.%202/Confrontation.pdf>

⁹Here is a link to an article that I wrote a number of years ago entitled, “Jewish Education for Jewish Commitment,” in which I attempt to outline approaches for thinking about this important issue: http://www.lookstein.org/articles/Jewish_Education_for_Jewish_Commitment.pdf

¹⁰<http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/>

¹¹R. Steinsaltz, p. 152.



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is authorized by Jewish tradition in terms of its concern for survival and self-protection.¹⁹ However, when it is a matter of repaying in kind for no other reason than because it appears to be just or because it makes one feel better, this is not to be a human endeavor, but rather something left to God. In effect, R. Hirsch argues that the call for vengeance should teach us not to take our own revenges, but rather to rely upon some Greater Power, not affected by the vagaries of subjectivity and bias, to even the score.

Who would have thought that “Av HaRachamim” contained such profound sentiments?

NOTES:

¹Koren, p. 145.

Tachanun is not said on: Rosh Chodesh, Chanuka, T’U B’Svat, the 14th and 15th of I Adar, Purim, Shushan Purim, the month of Nisan, Yom HaAtzmaut, the 14th of Iyar, LaG B’Omer, Yom Yerushalayim, from Rosh Chodesh Sivan through the 12th of Sivan, Tisha B’Av, T’U B’Av, Erev Rosh HaShana, and from Erev Yom HaKippurim through Rosh Chodesh MarCheshvan.

Tachanun is also not said on the morning of a Brit, if a Chatan is present on the day of his wedding or during the week of Sheva Berachot, in a house of mourning.

²Shekalim, Zachor, Para and HaChodesh.

³Yizkor is recited on Yom HaKippurim, Shmini Atzeret, the last day of Pesach and the second day of Shavuot.

⁴The listing of Tisha B’Av as a day on which Tachanun is omitted (Av HaRachamim is not an issue because Tisha B’Av cannot occur on Shabbat) is due to the irony that this day is viewed as a form of Yom Tov, based upon Eichah 1:15 “The Lord hath set at naught all my mighty men in the midst of me; He hath called a ‘מַעַד’ against me to crush my young men; the Lord hath trodden as in a winepress the virgin the daughter of Judah.” Some claim that such an approach is essentially Messianic in accordance with the belief that when the Messiah arrives, Tisha B’Av will become a happy day (Zecharia 8:19): “Thus saith the LORD of hosts: the fast of the fourth month, and *the fast of the fifth* [counting Nisan as the first month], and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons; therefore love ye truth and peace.”

⁵As opposed to a day devoted exclusively to mourning, like Tisha B’Av and the other fasts associated with the destruction of the Temple, most other days of the Jewish year reflect dialectical tensions between celebration and sadness. Yizkor on Yom Tov—when there is a Tora Mitzva: (Devarim 16:14) “VeSamachta BeChagecha” (and you will rejoice on your holiday), particularly in Israel when Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Tora are celebrated on the same day—creates a manic sense of being on an emotional roller coaster. To a lesser and quantitatively shorter degree, the combination of Shabbat, regarding which there is a Mitzva of (Yeshaya 58:13) “Oneg Shabbat” (enjoyment of Shabbat), and the prayer “Av HaRachamim,” also creates a sense of dissonance.

⁶*The Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, Bloch Publishing Co., New York, 1963, p. 511.

⁷Probably for this reason R. Hertz notes that “the prayer occurs only in the Ashkenazi Rite.” A parallel split between Ashkenazi and Sepharadi practice, reflecting that the Sepharadi historical experience did not

include the types of persecutions experienced by the Ashkenazim, manifests itself with respect to mourning during Sefirat HaOmer:

Traditionally, Sephardic Jewry accepted the mourning period from Pesach (or rather immediately after Pesach) until Lag BaOmer, because the Gemara (Yevamot 62b) says that this is the period during which the students of Rabbi Akiva died...

Rav Moshe Isserless (known as the Ramo) cites the major Ashkenazi custom to mourn from Rosh Chodesh Iyar until three days before Shavuot, when the Crusaders of the Eleventh Century destroyed the pious Ashkenazi communities around the Rhine river like Speyers, Mainz and Worms.... <http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/features/q&a45.htm>

⁸One of the Kinot recited on Tisha B’Av, #25 “Mi Yitain Rosh Mayim” (would that my head were water; Koren, pp. 455-7), similarly mentions the catastrophes that took place in Speyer, Worms and Mainz, all cities in Germany during the crusades marking the Middle Ages.

⁹The specific association with the Crusades might account for the custom in German synagogues to recite Av HaRachamim only on two Shabbatot during the year:

On the Shabbat before Shavuot, since Shavuot marks the end of the Sephira period when the massacres perpetrated during the Crusades claimed the most victims [in the Kina mentioned in n. 8, the beginning of the month of Sivan—Shavuot is on the 6th of Sivan—is mentioned as the time when the Jewish populations of these three cities were murdered], and on the Shabbat preceding Tisha B’Av, in commemoration of the period of national mourning observed by all the people of Israel.

R. Elie Munk, *The World of Prayer: Commentary and Translation of the Sabbath and Festival Prayers*, Vol. 2, Feldheim, New York, 1963, p. 51.

¹⁰Whereas today, many synagogues contain memorial boards upon which the names of those who have passed away are recorded, this obviously was not possible in earlier times and some means had to be found whereby the names of these individuals could be recalled. While we retain today the practice of reciting “Keil Maleh” on the anniversary of a particular individual’s death, when the numbers of those who died or were killed as the result of persecutions were extremely numerous, a different means by which they could be recalled, but where “Tircha D’Tzibbura” (troubling the congregation) could be avoided, had to be found. Just as we have a day dedicated to “Yom HaShoa,” Av HaRachamim serves a similar purpose on almost a weekly basis, to commemorate the victims of the Crusades, pogroms and other deadly attacks.

¹¹This calls to mind the poster that the One Family organization (<http://www.onefamilytogether.org/pages/Home.aspx>) sends out annually, with snapshots of all those who have died as a result of terrorist attacks in Israel. While there hasn’t developed a specific practice in synagogues to call out the names of these individuals, seeing their photos calls to mind not only the tragedy of individual losses, but the ever-increasing mass of humanity that is being taken from the midst of the Jewish people.

¹²*Netiv Bina: Peirushim Velyunim BaSiddur*, Vol. 2, Sinai, Tel-Aviv, 1968, p. 238-9.

¹³“The Father of Mercy Who Dwells on high in His great Mercy will Remember with compassion the pious, upright and blameless, the holy communities, who laid down their lives for the Sanctification of His Name. They were loved and pleasant in their lives and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions to carry out the Will of their Maker, and the Desire of their Steadfast God. May our Lord Remember them for good, together with the other

righteous of the world, and may He Redress the spilled blood of His Servants.”

¹⁴When proof texts are brought, not from a single text, but rather from all of TaNaCh, i.e., Tora, Nevi'im and Ketuvim, the centrality of the concept is clearly demonstrated. Other instances of comprehensive textual demonstrations are the ten verses that are cited for Malchuyot, Shofrot and Zichronot respectively during the Musaf Amida on Rosh HaShana, as well as the Gemora's contention in Bava Kamma 92b, concerning how the assumption of a particular popular saying can be seen to be reflected in sources both in the Written and Oral Tora traditions:

This matter was written in the Pentateuch, repeated in the Prophets, mentioned a third time in the Hagiographa, and also learnt in a Mishnah and taught in a Baraitha.

¹⁵Devarim 32:43 “Sing aloud, O ye nations, of His people; for He doth *Avenge* the blood of His Servants, and doth *Render vengeance* to His Adversaries, and doth *Make expiation* for the land of His People.”

Yoel 4:21 “And I will hold as *innocent their blood* that I have not held as innocent; and the LORD Dwelleth in Zion.”

Tehillim 79:10 “Wherefore should the nations say: ‘Where is their God?’ Let the *Avenging* of Thy Servants’ blood that is shed be made known among the nations in our sight.”

Ibid. 9:13 “For He that *Avengeth* blood hath Remembered them; He hath not Forgotten the cry of the humble.”

Ibid. 110:6-7 “He will *Judge* among the nations; He *Filleth* it with dead bodies, He *Crusheth* the head over a wide land. He will Drink of the brook in the way; therefore will He Lift up the head.”

¹⁶A series of three verses which also emphasize the theme of Divine Vengeance against the oppressors of Israel:

Tehillim 79:6-7 “Pour out Thy Wrath upon the nations that know Thee not, and upon the kingdoms that call not upon Thy Name. For they have devoured Yaakov, and laid waste his habitation.”

Ibid. 69:25 “Pour out Thine Indignation upon them, and let the fierceness of Thine Anger overtake them.”

Eicha 3:66 “Thou wilt Pursue them in Anger, and Destroy them from under the heavens of the LORD.”

¹⁷Naturally, some might claim that the verse limits the prohibition to how one treats other Jews. The citation from R. Hirsch that follows suggests otherwise.

¹⁸Quoted in Munk, p. 51 (see n. 9).

¹⁹E.g., Berachot 58a “One who comes to murder you, rise up early and kill him.”

Yoma 82a “Nothing stands in the way of saving a life except idolatry, sexual immorality and murder.”



Transition, continued from page 8

When a search committee has been constituted, how will the search be conducted and what is the timeline for the search?

After receiving guidance and recommendations from the Transition Committee, the Board of Directors will determine how and when the search committee will be appointed and will instruct the search committee on the structure and parameters of the actual search for rabbinic candidates. When convened (likely sometime in the spring or summer of 2014), the KMS Rabbinic Search Committee will be tasked with identifying, interviewing, evaluating and recommending rabbinic candidates. We expect that this process will culminate in the hiring of our next rabbi, who will begin leading KMS during the summer of 2015.

Will the membership participate in the transition and search processes?

The Transition Committee wants to hear from every congregant in the search for our new rabbi. There are several ways for you to participate in the search process. The Transition Committee will research best practices for membership participation in rabbinic searches, and present the Board with recommendations for maximizing congregant participation. An online survey will be administered to gather input from the community. You also may submit feedback directly to the committee at any time via email to KMSRab-

binicTransition@gmail.com. In addition, other participation forums will be developed, and member assistance will be sought as needed for various aspects of the transition and search processes.

How can I share my thoughts about the transition and search processes with the Rabbinic Transition Committee?

We value the input, insights, ideas, questions and life experiences of all KMS members. Please share your ideas, suggestions, questions and concerns about the transition and search processes, and your vision for the future of KMS, with members of the Rabbinic Transition Committee personally or email the committee at KMSRabbinicTransition@gmail.com.

Is communication with the Rabbinic Transition Committee confidential?

Yes. All input that we receive is to be held in the strictest confidence and contents will be shared only within the Rabbinic Transition Committee and the KMS Board. The Rabbinic Transition Committee strives to be as open, informative, and accessible as possible in conducting its work, while at the same time protecting the privacy of private communications with congregants and others. However, please understand that anonymous input will not be considered.



where he is a frequent baal shacharit. He is also the compiler of *Likutei Torah*, a collection of Divrei Torah gathered from the Internet. Saadia is a social scientist who retired almost two years ago from the U.S. Administration on Aging and who now spends much of his time traveling with Lily and photographing the world.

Sanctuary Minyan

A KMS member since 1998, **Simmy Schopf** served as a gabbai for several years, including a year as the coordinating gabbai. He has also assumed a variety of roles in producing the annual banquet, including a term as Ad Journal Chair. Simmy and his wife Lisa are the proud parents of Daniel, Ari, and Jacob. When not coaching Little League or watching MJBHA basketball and baseball games, Simmy is a lawyer.

CHATANEI BEREISHIT

Hashkama Minyan

A member of KMS since the Hermleigh house days, **Vic Jacobson** enjoys the intellectual depth of drashot, shiurim and the discussions they elicit (or incite). He appreciates the 8 a.m. Minyan's intimate size and atmosphere. Unable to escape his Army background, Vic serves on the Security Committee, coordinating the weekly shomrim. He is also a member of the Seuda Shlishit set-up team. Since retiring from the military, he has been a Defense contractor.

Sanctuary Minyan

When asked to manage the upgrade of the KMS website, **Jeff Amster** enthusiastically accepted the challenge. Jeff worked with the website team to develop the new site, which was launched successfully in May. The Amsters' four years in Kemp Mill have flown by quickly, and the family (Jeff, Melissa, Eitan, Micah, and Meirav) is still enamored with the Kemp Mill community, cherishing every one of their new friendships. The Amsters look forward to sharing many wonderful smachot in the future with the Kemp Mill community!

CHATANEI MAFTIR

Hashkama Minyan

Howard Goller and his graphic-artist wife Shosh moved to Kemp Mill in 2006 after two decades in Jerusalem and London. Their children, Aviva, Shai, and Ayelet, live in Jerusalem, Manhattan and Silver Spring. Howard enjoys volunteering on Sundays and U.S. holidays at national monuments in Washington, D.C. A journalist, he likens a good Hashkama service to a well-crafted breaking news story: clear, concise, and out first.

Sanctuary Minyan

When **Michael Belgrade** is not serving as gabbai rishon on Shabbat, he enjoys spending time with his wife Shoshanah and their three kids, Netanel, Judah, and Reeva. In his free time, he is an attorney for the Department of Homeland Security and adjunct law professor at American University. He loves learning, music, people, older movies, and getting things done. His favorite color is blue.

YOUTH HONOREES

Josh Bloch has been a participant in the youth minyan for seven years. During this time he has given Divrei Torah, led tefilla, layned and been a consistent presence. Recently, he has also taken a leadership role as a gabbai at Shabbat shacharit.

Moshe Klein has been involved with the youth minyan for the past six years. He has helped the youth community develop during this time in a variety of roles. He has served as a Friday night gabbai, layned, led tefilla, given Divrei Torah and participated in a variety of community-service activities. Moshe also is active in the youth leadership council and youth community development.

Sammy Mellman has participated in the youth minyan for seven years. Sammy has been a consistent and reliable presence during this time. He has been active in leading tefilla and laying. Recently, Sammy has taken an active leadership role as a Shabbat shacharit gabbai and has provided insight in communal development as a member of the youth leadership council.

Ilana Bauman has been an active participant in the youth minyan over the past four years. She has always been a spirited participant in youth events and has taken responsibility for reaching out to younger participants in the youth minyan. Ilana has also been an active and steadying voice in the youth leadership council and has helped guide, develop and coordinate Divrei Torah with fellow teens in the youth minyan.

Yael Turitz has participated in the youth minyan for the past seven years. She has been a consistent presence in the youth minyan and communal events. Over the past two years, Yael has become an active leader through coordinating and executing teen communal activities and being an important voice in the youth leadership council.

Elianna Kronisch has been a group leader for the past four years. During that time Elianna has shown her reliability and dependability as a leader in the community. She has been a consistent role model, inspiration and guiding hand in helping the youth in the community develop and participate in shul activities.



gemaras. For many of the girls, this was the first time they had ever owned their own gemaras. In minutes we were all the closest of friends, bonding over our shared love for learning. By the time classes started the next morning, we were ready to delve completely into the high-level classes and discussions Drisha would have to offer us. Our brand-new gemaras soon became full of papers, notes, translations, and comments. To our pile of gemaras, we added Jastrows, Tanachs, Mishnahs, and many packets! Every day we learned more about each other and more about the texts. One of the highlights of each day was chavruta time, when the beit midrash was bustling with people from every class Drisha offered. We switched chavrutot every week to teach us the skills of learning be'chavruta with all types of people. During these times, we spent hours together honing our skills in reading and interpreting texts.

While we were at Drisha, we attended a wide range of classes given by Drisha's renowned faculty, on subjects from Masechet Yoma to the personal lives of Chazal. We also found time to have a scavenger hunt in Times Square, to watch fireworks on the Fourth of July, and more. We stayed in the Touro College dorms on 85th street, only adding to our New York City experience. Staying together for five weeks brought us all closer, and helped make our time there an all-encompassing experience. And don't worry, we represented Silver Spring with flying colors. The two of us were picked to lead the two color-war teams in a packed day full of learning and competition! But the most significant part of Drisha was the knowledge and skills

we acquired. By the end of the summer, one of us had finished an entire Masechet in Daf Yomi, while the other learned three Sefarim in Nach Yomi.

In Masechet Yoma, we learned a fascinating sugya about whether saving a life takes precedence over Shabbat. In this section, seven Rabbis each bring one instance from the Torah to prove that saving a life does "push off" Shabbat. Each idea that the Rabbis bring is unique and interesting. While each idea has good proof and would technically be enough, the gemara says, "ר' יהודה אמר שמואל אי הואי התם הוה אמינא" (Shmuel says, if I had been there, my proof would be preferable to theirs). Raba takes this further, and claims that every opinion can be disproved except for Shmuel's. The Gemara does exactly that, and disproves the rest of the Rabbis' ideas. Thus, Shmuel's opinion was "טבא חדא פלפלתא חריפא ממלא צנא דקרי" or "Better is one grain of sharp pepper than a basket full of pumpkins."

We've had many insightful learning experiences in the past, but if they had occurred after Drisha, we would have said Drisha is preferable to the rest. Drisha's Dr. Beth Samuels Summer High School Program is like one sharp pepper in a basket full of pumpkins, and we would not have been able to have this incredible learning opportunity and summer experience without the generosity of Mr. Mansfield. We hope that we can follow in Tirzah Cohen's footsteps and encourage other young women to pursue a path of learning lishmah.



Postnup, continued from page 1

their marital dispute to the Beth Din of America (BDA), which will act as an arbitration panel, for a binding decision on all issues related to a *Get*. In addition, the husband's obligation to support his wife, codified in Jewish law, is formalized, so that he is obligated to pay her a certain sum until a Jewish divorce is obtained. This support obligation ends if the wife fails to appear at, or abide by a decision of, the BDA.

Attendees at the November 2 event were treated to delicious food catered by the Pastry Oven and a festive, celebratory

atmosphere. Couples were brought two at a time to sign the agreements, and KMS member Marci Lavine Bloch, a notary, volunteered her services and notarized the agreements, which are now on file with the BDA.

KMS encourages all couples that do not have a halachic pre-nuptial agreement to sign a post-nuptial agreement. For more information, congregants should see Rabbi Bieler and can view the agreement online at <http://theprenup.org/pdf/Postnup.pdf>.



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