



18 Reiner Road, Toronto, Ontario M3H 2K9 416-636-3451

Parshat Shoftim

September 7, 2019 7 Elul 5779

Torah: Page 829 Ch 19, V 14

Maftir: Page 835, Ch 21, V 7 Haftarah: Page 835

Today's kiddush is sponsored by Howard Landau & Cara Marantz honouring the yahrzeit of Howard's late father, Albert Morris Landau. Kiddish will take place in the Belzberg Weisberg Social Hall on the lower level.

Mazel Tov to Nathan & Miriam Birnbaum & Family on the birth of their grandson, Sage Poet Costa, baby brother to Willow.

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Contact the Shul Office to arrange your seats.
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CANDLE LIGHTING & SERVICE TIMES:

Saturday, September 7 Shabbat ends at 8:33pm
Friday, September 13 Light Candles at 7:14pm
Saturday, September 14 Shabbat ends at 8:20pm
Daily Minyan (M-F) begins at 7:30am; Sunday at 9:00am
Shabbat Mornings – Service begins at 9:30am

**USHERS and VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED
for High Holiday 'Shhhh' & Security Duty!
Please contact Ed Saxe edsaxe59@gmail.com
or call the office at 416-636-3451**

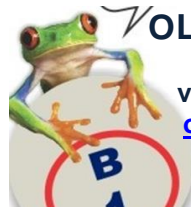
**Are you a member of Beth Radom in
need of a Minyan to say Kaddish?**

If so, please contact the Shul office at least a week or two in advance so we can make the necessary arrangements. Support Beth Radom and show your appreciation to fellow members with a breakfast sponsorships donation!



CHECK OUT BETH RADOM'S MUSEUM AND GALLERY

Have you seen our new video display? It's on our website!
Does your family have things to add to this museum? We appreciate donations of plaques, photos, paperwork, hand written letters, booklets, flyers, old landing papers – anything related to the once thriving, Jewish, City of Radom. And of course we are looking for funding streams to expand the presentation space. Contact Allan afryman@rogers.com for more information.



VOLUNTEERING at BINGO is FUN!

If you are age 18 or older and interested in volunteering, please contact the shul office. office@bethradom.com or 416-636-3451x24
Our Fall schedule can be viewed at www.bethradom.com/bingo.html#

Prayer For Healing

Mi she berach avoteinu מי שברך: אבותינו,
M'kor hab'racha l'imoteinu מקור הברכה לאמותינו
May the source of strength, who blessed the ones before us;
Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing.

Mi she berach imoteinu, מי שברך: אמותינו
M'kor hab'racha l'avoteinu מקור הברכה לאבותינו
Bless those in need of healing with refuah sh'lema
The renewal of body, the renewal of spirit, and let us say: Amen

RABBI: Rabbi Dr. Geoffrey Haber rabbi.haber@bethradom.com
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We wish Refuah Sh'lema to:

Joe Levitan	Bela Davidson	Noam Haber
Anice Stark	Allan Fryman	Howie Meyer
Rose Rosenbaum	Phillip Shadlesky	Joel Zeger
Abe Swimmer	Rosa Weisberg	Gerald Robinson
Morton Allen Cohen		Ruth Leichner

If you know Beth Radom members who would benefit from Clergy outreach or should be part of our Refuah Sh'lema list, please contact office@bethradom.com. We assure you of confidentiality.

**The unveiling for the late Dorothy Shessel will take place
at Dawes Road Cemetery on Sunday, Sept. 8 at 11am.**

With Reverence, We Honour The Yahrzeits Of:

Albert Morris Lando	Late Father of Howard Landau
Anna Buch	Late Mother of Kathy Fleming
Max Kroll	Late Father of Zipora Shapiro
Lillian Flash	Late Mother of Frances Fichtenbaum
	Late Grandmother of Pearl Rosen
Solly Kates	Late Brother-In-Law of Sadie Katz
Miriam Rabovsky	Late Sister of Lottie Glass
Isaac Cordovi	Late Father of David Cordovi

Happy Birthday Wishes To:

Richard Tarek-Kaminker	Eva Nightingale
Melanie Shaver	Anne Eisenberg
Stephen Anisman	Rhona Sallay
Mara Brown	Sierra Bahar
	Taryn Zeger

Happy Anniversary Wishes To:

Michael & Shawna Kreidstein	23 rd Anniversary
Steve & Heather Lamasz	40 th Anniversary
Symon & Lisa Borsook Zucker	25 th Anniversary

THE BLESSING FOR STUDY:

Barukh attah Adonai	ברוך אתה ה
Eloheinu melekh ha-olam	אלהינו מלך-העולם
asher qidshanu b'mitzvotav	אשר קדשנו ב מצוותיו
v'tzivanu la-asoq b'divrei Torah.	ואננו לעסק בדברי-תורה.
Praised are you Adonai, our God, eternal Sovereign of the Universe, Who sanctified us with [God's] commandments and enjoined upon us to study Torah.	

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RABBINIC REFLECTIONS—PARSHAT “SHOFTIM”
Rabbi Geoffrey Haber, MA, DMin, DD (Hon.)

We are fast approaching the High Holidays. Our tradition directs us to the process of teshuvah, of looking within ourselves and thinking about those things we might want to change, to evaluate those things that we feel in our hearts were wrong, and that we don't want to do again. The process is a difficult and painstaking one. First, it involves recognition of what is wrong, and then doing something about it. This involves truly being repentant, expressing heartfelt remorse to God, and if the wrongdoing involved another person, expressing remorse to that person first and then asking God to forgive us for hurting another person. We then have to make certain that we do not commit the same wrong again.

The first step sounds easy: recognizing things that we feel we shouldn't do. It is not as easy as it sounds. We all know that we often find many creative ways in which to make excuses for ourselves. We convince ourselves that it wasn't really wrong; we ignore what is really there. But what we don't realize is that it is also easy to be OVERLY critical of ourselves as we go through the process of teshuvah. We attempt to throw out the baby with the bathwater as it were. Teshuvah is not just about wiping out the past and creating a “tabula rasa,” but rather it is about integrating the past with the future. We need to decide what to throw out, and what to preserve.

Thinking about this integration, I became fascinated by the concept of what we do or do not decide to keep, what does and does not get destroyed, what do we want to integrate and what do we leave behind? In this week's Torah portion, we are told (Deuteronomy 20:20): “Only the trees which you know are not fruit trees you shall destroy and cut down.” The Torah gives us rules of waging war. When you have a city under siege for a long time, we must not destroy its trees. We may eat of them, but we must not cut them down. Rav Saadia Gaon in his comment on this verse explained that the part of the verse which states, “but you must not cut them down,” means that we must differentiate between what is potentially the enemy (i.e. a man) and a tree, which is not the enemy. We need to be careful not to treat the trees like a man hiding from you in a siege. In short, we don't treat everything as though it were the enemy.

What is a possible modern application of his thinking? In more recent times we have the example of the Vietnam War. During this war, there was rampant bombing of the Vietnamese countryside with napalm, destroying the foliage of the forests. There was sharp criticism of this practice. Armies went into

someone else's country and indiscriminately destroyed everything in sight. Armies destroyed the people and the land. Whole forests were devastated. The only thing that mattered was winning—at all costs. It didn't matter what was destroyed in the process. This verse from the Torah, according to Rav Saadia, is warning us not to do this when we are at war. The trees are not our enemies. People may be. The Torah specifically asks (Deuteronomy 20:19), “Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?” Saadia interprets the verse as a rhetorical question with an obvious answer: the tree is not like a man who is to be routed out and destroyed. From these comments Rabbi Jackie Wexler learns an important lesson about teshuvah. Just as in battle we may make the mistake of treating everything in front of us as the enemy, instead of just destroying the enemy, so too with teshuvah we need to differentiate between what experiences are to be destroyed from our past, and which experiences need to be retained because they may later bear fruit.

Rabbi Wexler teaches that these same restrictions, of not wasting precious resources, apply to ourselves, and to our past experiences, at this time of year as well. The entire month of Elul is a time of self-scrutiny, a time to re-evaluate our actions and deeds, to cut down that which needs cutting, and change that which needs changing for the New Year. It is all too easy to go in and simply tear ourselves apart, cutting everything down, and thinking that this will give us a fresh start, when in fact we diminish ourselves in the process. There is a real danger of cutting down the good with the bad, the fruit bearing trees, along with the chaff. We need those building blocks, those trees on which we can bring new growth. A true fresh start allows for growth and renewal. It doesn't wantonly destroy, but rather clears the way for a new beginning.

The tendency in our society is exactly that: to destroy things, or throw them out instead of working on them to make them better. My car last car lasted 15 years. When it was 7 years old and began to have minor problems, it necessitated almost \$1,000 worth of maintenance work and repairs. Many people would have simply gotten rid of the car. But the car was a good one. It had given me virtually no problems for all of the 7 years. Mostly it needed maintenance. Once I had worked on it and renewed it, the car once again drove like the day I purchased it for another 8 years! So why should I get rid of it? All it needed was some work, and once again it had a great future.

The ramifications for our soul-searching are more critical. We need to be careful not to reject out of hand as a total failure that which we mark with failure. It is sometimes easier to see the

whole as a failure and throw it away, instead of working on the part that needs improvement. This call for discrimination means that as we go through this process of self-scrutiny we need to do so with a sense of compassion towards ourselves. When Saadia states that the tree is not like a man who is to be routed out and destroyed, he is telling us that the tree is not the enemy. Some people do teshuvah the same way, choosing to wipe out the past, instead of seeing our past mistakes as the building blocks for future growth. Perhaps we need to be reminded not to cut them away, keeping in mind that WE are not the enemy; that our many fine qualities are not as well. Certainly there are things each year that we feel a need to change, thus we have this opportunity for self-examination and renewal. But we need to do so with compassion towards ourselves, remembering the many building blocks inside of us for good, and always, always nurturing those trees that may later bear fruit.

Shabbat Shalom!



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