



CONGREGATION TIFERETH BETH DAVID JERUSALEM

# Shabbat Bulletin

טז אלול התשפ"ג  
שבת פרשת כי תבא

Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo

September 1 - 2, 2023 / 5783

Please print this bulletin before Shabbat.

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## SHABBAT SHALOM • שבת שלום

Charlie Ava Buch, Bat Mitzvah

### Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo

Haftara: Yeshayahu 60:1 - 60:22

#### Friday, September 1

- 6:30pm Minha et Kabbalat Chabat -
- 7:00pm Minyane Sépharade - Chapel
- 7:14pm Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat
- 7:33pm - Main Sanctuary
- Candle Lighting
- Sh'kiah

#### Shabbat, September 2 / 16 Elul

**TBDJ welcomes Rabbi Eric Grossman who will teach the morning Parsha Shiur and will give the Shabbat Drasha**

- 8:00am Shacharit - Hashkama Minyan
- 8:40am Parsha Shiur
- 9:00am Shacharit - Main Sanctuary
- 9:30am and Minyane Sépharade
- Kef Club Shabbat Programs
- 9:35am for Kids - Lower Level
- Sof Zman K'riyat Shma
- 10:15am The Zone for Grades 1-3 in Library**
- 10:45am The Zone for Grades 4-6 in Library**
- 6:00pm Perek in the Park with
- Rabbi Zolly Claman and
- Rabbi Michael Whitman at
- Applewood Park in Hampstead
- 6:08pm Plag Hamincha
- 6:45pm Minha, Seoudah Shleesheet
- et Shiour - Minyane Sépharade
- 7:05pm Mincha, Seoudah Shleesheet
- and Maariv - Main Sanctuary
- 7:31pm Sh'kiah
- 8:17pm Havdala

### COMMUNITY NEWS

Mazal Tov to **Charlie Buch** on becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Proud parents are **Laurie & Mark Buch**. Sharing in their simcha are Charlie's sisters Casey and Cammie, her grandparents **Elaine & Howard Vineberg** and Shoshana & Philip Buch and many delighted aunts, uncles and cousins.

Mazal Tov to **Alison & Daniel Gal, Rhonda & Leslie Gal** and Angela Nathaniel and their families on the birth of a son and grandson on Wednesday, August 30. Sharing in their simcha are the baby's big brother Robert and many delighted aunts, uncles and cousins. Lovingly remembered at this time are the baby's grandfather Robert Nathaniel z"l and his great grandmother Albertaine Mooallim z"l.

Mazal Tov to **Shirley & Alan Kahan** and Monica & Roy Murad and their families on the birth of granddaughter Emily Addie (Hadassah Addie) Kahan on Wednesday, August 16 in Toronto. Proud first time parents are Rachel & Moishie Kahan. Sharing in their simcha are many delighted aunts, uncles and cousins.

Mazal Tov to **Rachel & Isidore Shanfield** and Lydia Zelouf and their families on the occasion of their granddaughter Hannah Averie Zelouf becoming a Bat Mitzvah. Proud parents are Alona & Andrew Zelouf of London, UK. Sharing in their simcha are Hannah's siblings Ella Jamie and Talia Elizabeth and many delighted aunts, uncles and cousins. Lovingly remembered at this time is Hannah's grandfather Jimmy Zelouf z"l.

Condolences to **Kathleen & Robert Schachter** and their family on the loss of Kathleen's beloved brother Peter Edward Rennert z"l who passed away on Wednesday, August 16 in Mississauga, Ontario. Graveside funeral took place on Thursday, August 17 at Pardes Chaim Cemetery in Richmond Hill, Ontario. Shiva has been observed.

### THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

Kiddush for the Main Sanctuary is sponsored by **Laurie & Mark Buch** in honour of their daughter Charlie becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

Kiddush for the Hashkama Minyan is sponsored anonymously by a member family "with Hakarot Hatov to Hashem."

This Shabbat Bulletin is sponsored by **Monica & Joe Gauze** in memory of Joe's beloved mother Rivkah Peshe Gauze (Rivkah Peshe bat Yosef - 15 Elul) and in memory of Monica's beloved mother Regina Irene Weisz z"l (Sarah Rivka bat David HaLevi - 2 Tishrei).

Kiddush and Seoudah Shleesheet for Minyane Sépharade are sponsored by Wilma & Yossi Suissa in memory of Yossi's beloved father Izshak bar Yamna z"l.

### NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Mincha / Maariv: 7:05pm

#### Shacharit

Sunday and Monday (Labour Day): 8:00am  
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 7:00am  
Thursday: 6:50am

#### Friday, September 8

Mincha - Minyane Sépharade: 18h30  
Mincha - Main Sanctuary: 7:00pm  
Candle Lighting is at 7:01pm

#### Motsa'ei Shabbat, September 9

MUSICAL SLICHOT WITH REV. AMIEL: 10:30PM

For our full schedule, go to [tbdj.org/calendar](http://tbdj.org/calendar).

**Mark your calendars!**  
**Kef Club Season Opener!**  
**Family Apple Picking at**  
**Verge Labonte Orchard**  
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Sunday, Sept. 10, 1:00pm-5:00pm  
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Register now at [www.tbdj.org/KCapples5783](http://www.tbdj.org/KCapples5783)



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**\*Weather permitting**

## The Admonition - תוכחה

We all recognize the number 98 as a high grade on an exam. It is a number that is almost excellent, a number that so many of us have strived for and achieved in our academic pursuits. The number 98 can also be ominous and rather terrifying, as it is concerning this week's Torah reading of Parashat Ki Tavo. This portion features the second admonition in the Torah - known as a "tochecha - תוכחה". There are ninety-eight curses, which spell out the consequences for rejecting Hashem, His Torah and not observing the commandments. On a positive note, Hashem's words of blessing are offered before the curses are mentioned. The blessings cover every area of material life reassuring our nation that upon keeping the commandments, our spiritual accomplishments will bring benefits.

The description of the curses is graphic and unsettling. The *ArtScroll* commentary brings the Ramban's notes that these curses refer to the period of the Second Beit Hamikdash and the exile, commenting that the bulk of the curses were meant for the period of spiritual decline leading up to the destruction - when the Jews suffered invasion, subjugation, siege, and other forms of depredation and suffering which are mentioned in these curses.

Reading the תוכחה verses as the Ba'al Koreh - the Torah Reader - for the congregation, has proved a source of trepidation for myself over the years. Two verses especially stand out every time I read them:

**והיית משגע ממראה עיניך אשר תראה**

***You will go mad from the sight of your eyes that you will see...***

**בבקר תאמר מי-יתן ערב ובערב תאמר מי-יתן בקר מפחד לבבך אשר תפחד וממראה עיניך אשר תראה**

***In the morning you will say "Who can give back last night!" And in the evening you will say, "Who can give back this morning!" for the fright of your heart that you will fear and the sight of your eyes that you will see...***

**Devarim 28:34, 67**

Rashi comments on the last verse, that the conditions will go from bad to worse until even the anguish of yesterday would seem preferable to the suffering of today.

Due to the serious content of its verses, there are customs and practices for the readings of the תוכחה in the two Torah portions that they are found - Bechukotai and Ki Tavo. Over the years, the question has arisen as to who gets the תוכחה aliya to the Torah? Different customs for the assignment of this aliya have developed because people did not want to receive the aliya in which the תוכחה is read. Obviously, this part of the Torah has the same amount of sanctity as the rest: it is an honour and a mitzvah to be called to read from any part of the Torah. Although there is no halachic basis for the concern, we find that people considered it a bad omen to be called up for the aliya in which the תוכחה is read. People considered it bad luck to receive an aliya for a passage foretelling calamity and catastrophe. There was also concern about people negatively certifying the person getting this aliya as someone who deserved to get this difficult aliya which foretells terrible things. Difficulty in finding someone willing to receive this aliya has led to a disgrace to the Torah's honour. To avoid disgracing the Torah, a number of interesting customs have developed regarding the person to be called up for the תוכחה aliya.

The custom in many shuls, including here at TBDJ, is for the Ba'al Koreh himself to receive the aliya for the תוכחה, as opposed to calling up another person. This is described in the *Mishna Berura* (428:16) as a widespread custom and a correct one. Calling up the Ba'al Koreh is considered a good neutral solution in assigning this honour.

Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff wrote that early authorities cited a custom to call up the Rav or other Torah sages for the aliya of the תוכחה. We find sources showing that this custom is very ancient, as implied by the following anecdote recorded by the *Sefer Hassidim*:

*Someone in the community regularly received the aliya of the תוכחה. One time, the gabbai got angry at him, and told him, "I am giving you this for your honor," to which the perennial recipient responded: "If your intent is to honor me by calling me up for the תוכחה, don't call me up!" They called up someone else instead. Later that Shabbos, something calamitous occurred in the household of the perennial תוכחה recipient.*

The *Sefer Hassidim* concludes that, although the perennial recipient had a valid reason to refuse the aliya, he still should not have told this to the gabbai. One who has the opportunity to perform a mitzvah should not turn it down.

An extreme practice is described in the *Biur Halacha* where in the past some communities did not read the Torah at all on the תוכחה parashiot of *Bechukotai* and *Ki Tavo*. The *Biur Halacha* (428:6) contemptuously records and decries this practice, which was enacted to deal with the problem that no one wanted the aliya of the תוכחה. The *Biur Halacha* notes that this approach of leaving out two Torah portions means not fulfilling the mitzvah of reading the Torah every Shabbos morning and therefore not completing the Torah every year.

There are varying practices that have developed concerning the nature of the reading of the תוכחה. Many communities have the practice of reading the תוכחה extremely quickly due to its severe content. Some read it in an undertone, as reading the תוכחה out loud was viewed as courting misfortune. Another idea is to read the תוכחה quietly as to "not open our mouth" to bring negative things. This custom seems at variance with basic halachic requirements for Torah reading. One who does this must be careful to read it loud enough that everyone in the shul can hear it, so it should be read in a voice that we usually call a "stage whisper."

The *Chafetz Chaim* had a completely different approach to the תוכחה and felt that the various customs surrounding its reading were not only overly dramatic but completely wrong. The words of the תוכחה should be read loud and clear and at the normal Torah reading pace. The *Chafetz Chaim* offers the following parable to explain his position:

*A person was warned by others concerned for his safety that he is not to walk on a certain path that had been known to be inhabited by wild animals, and whose landscape was dangerous with thorns. The person who was warned appeared to not heed the alarm of others, and proceeded down the path, but did so with a blindfold covering his eyes so that he wouldn't see all of the danger that he was warned about. This individual obviously missed the intention of the message but now placed himself in even greater danger.*

The *Chafetz Chaim* continued by quoting Shlomo Hamelech's words in Mishlei which encourages us to embrace and not shy away from the mussar that Hashem shares with us. There are those who believe that if they don't hear the words of rebuke, no ill will come upon them. To the contrary, insisted the *Chafetz Chaim*, those who do not hear the words of the תוכחה are placing a blindfold on their eyes and placing themselves in grave danger.

When I read the serious words of the תוכחה in shul I am not my usual Torah reading self. With this in mind I contacted colleagues in various shuls in our city to ask about their thoughts on this. Here are a few of their comments:

*We usually give others aliyahs - I feel like I am taking this aliya upon myself for the tzibbur - the public. Terrible curses - it doesn't get worse than that...*

*More heavy and severe than the first תוכחה in Bechukotai. It is a forewarning towards teshuvah and judgement at this time of year...*

*It's one of the powerful readings that we have. In the harshness, I try to find comfort through some of the Hebrew terms that we use. For example: the word ידבק which in another context would connote cleaving to Hashem - the word dveykus...*

*I try to look at the good in the pesukim. There are seventy faces to the Torah...*

*You have to think positive...*

As we reflect on our history, the words of the תוכחה become a foreboding part of us. The curses relate to us in a frightening, contemporary way and much of the content may be identified with the terrible occurrences of genocide and antisemitism throughout the ages where our people have suffered as victims of countless atrocities. I find that as I approach the Torah reading of the תוכחה in Ki Tavo, I think a lot about Am Yisrael's many serious challenges throughout our history. While these feelings are haunting and unsettling, there is optimism in the knowledge that we are Hashem's עַם סְגוּלָה - chosen people, and have Hashem's guaranteed and eternal promise for the redemption and future of Am Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom,

*Rev. Amiel*





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