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HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Ki Tavo

Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Yitzchak Korn

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RBS Shabbaton Details



Please join us for an exciting and inspiring Shabbat as we welcome for the first time to Ramat Bet Shemesh our Rosh Yeshiva HaRav Aharon Bina, HaRav Amos Luban, HaRav Yitzchak Korn, and Mr. Uri Kari.

The Shabbaton will IY"H take place the Shabbat before Rosh HaShanah, Parshat Nitzavim-VaYeLech 25th of Elul / September 4th.

Shabbaton Schedule:

Friday night Tefilah: 5:25 PM- Ahavat Zion, Nachal Timna 2 (corner of Nachal Dolev). D'var Torah will be given by Rav Korn.

Friday night Oneg: 9:30 PM at the Kelaty home, Nachal Ya'ale 9 (bet). HaRav Bina will be speaking.

Shabbat Shiur by HaRav Amos Luban: 4:15 PM - the Shebson home, Nachal Ya'ale 16

Mincha: 5:15 at Biale Shtiebel, Nachal Dolev 2/2

Seudah Shlishit: 5:45 at the Kelaty home, Nachal Ya'ale 9 (bet). HaRav Bina will be speaking.

Please let us know at afkahn@gmail.com if you would like join us for Seudat Shlishit so we can get an idea of how many people will be coming.

Each alumnus's presence is meaningful. We look forward to an enjoyable and uplifting Shabbat together.

Anyone that would like to help sponsor the Shabbaton or be more involved please be in touch with Fred Kahn at afkahn@gmail.com.

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HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Ki Tavo

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

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"The Sanctity and Power of the Jewish Nation"

The Torah tells us in our Parsha: "You have distinguished Hashem today to be a G-d for you, and to walk in His ways, and to observe His decrees, His commandments, and His statutes, and to hearken to His voice. And Hashem has distinguished you today to be for Him a treasured people, as He spoke to you"(Devarim 26:17-18). The Gemara explains that Hashem is telling the Jewish people here: "you made Me a subject of unique praise in the world" (Brachot 6a) - you made into something unique, something to which nothing can compare "and I will make you a subject of unique praise in the world" (ibid.) - no nation will compare to you. In what way is the Jewish nation unique? "Hashem has distinguished you today to be for Him a treasured people, as He spoke to you ... and to make you supreme over all the nations that He made, for praise, for renown, and for splendor, and so that you will be a holy people to Hashem, your G-d as He spoke" (Devarim 26:18-19).

In what way will we be "supreme over all the nations that He made"? Are we going to rule over them? This cannot be the intent of the pasuk for the Jewish people never had any need or desire to rule over other nations - "the sages and prophets did not yearn for the period of the Moshiach in order to rule over the world, nor was it to be able to

lord over other nations and to have the other nations elevate them ... rather it was in order that they be free to study the Torah and its wisdom" (Rambam Hilchot Melachim 12:4). All we ask is that the other nations of the world cease to bother us, we do not need to lord over them. If so, in what way will Hashem make us "supreme over all the nations"?

The Torah is stating that we will be spiritually superior to all the other nations. When they recognize this, they will de facto allow us to rule over them. This, however, is not our goal. We only wish to lead the other peoples along the path of the ways of Hashem - to be the spiritual light of the world. In fact, what we have just said is written explicitly in the Torah: "and Hashem has distinguished you today to be for Him a treasured people ... and to make you supreme over all the nations that He made". In what way will we be supreme? "So that you will be a holy people to Hashem, your G-d as He spoke". This is the supremacy referred to in the pasuk, spiritual supremacy - not as rulers.

What does the Torah mean when it refers to the Jewish people as "a holy people to Hashem, your G-d"? In a marriage ceremony, the chatan tells the kallah "you are sanctified unto me". Tosafot explain that the chatan means that this woman is totally designated for him and for no other man in the world (see Tosafot Kiddushin 2b "de-asar la"). With this in mind, we can explain that "you will be a holy people to Hashem" refers to a people totally devoted to Hashem, with no other goals in mind except to serve Him.

The Messilat Yesharim is based on the Braita citing the adage of R' Pinchas ben Yair: "the Torah brings one to heedfulness, heedfulness brings one to diligence" (Avoda Zara 20b). R' Pinchas ben Yair continues many levels higher and higher culminating with the status of holiness. Although he then goes on to teach that holiness brings to Divine Inspiration and the Resurrection of the Dead, holiness is the highest level which pertains to man's actions. The Messilat Yesharim writes "the idea of holiness is twofold - it begins with service and culminates in reward, it begins with man's effort and ends with a gift" (Messilat Yesharim beginning of chapter 26). What this means is that a portion of the holiness man can attain through serving Hashem (assuming of course that he attained all the previous levels: Torah, heedfulness, diligence, etc.), while part of it he cannot reach on his own - it is a gift from Hashem after reaching a particular level on his own (the fact is that man cannot reach any level on his own. Divine Assistance is required for everything. In this instance, however, all the service in the world will not be enough - He can only attain it as a Divine gift).

What Kedusha is the Messilat Yesharim referring to? Cleaving to Hashem - "to cleave at all times and all hours to His G-d". Just as a sanctified woman is exclusively for her husband, so too one who is "holy for Hashem" thinks only of Hashem, is involved in Torah, and the "maase merkava". Whatever he is involved in, his thoughts do not cease for a moment from cleaving to Hashem "even when he is involved in worldly matters". Such a person rises so high that "even his physical acts truly become matters of holiness". The Messilat Yesharim elaborates: "the food they eat is as an offering that is brought upon the fires of the Altar". One who gives food to such a person is likened to having brought a sacrifice; in the words of Chazal: "one who desires to offer a wine libation upon the Altar should fill the throats of Torah scholars with wine" (Yoma 71a).

Such a level of holiness is demanded of all of us. The Torah's commandment "you shall be holy" was in fact given to the nation as a whole and not to individuals (see Rashi there). Here too, the Torah tells us "so that you will be a holy people", not holy individuals. The Rambam, however, tells us that only four individuals reached the perfection of this level of holiness - Moshe Rabenu and the three forefathers (when referring to the forefathers, he may have meant to include the matriarchs as well) (see Moreh Nebuchim section 3, chapter 51). The Rambam did not mean, G-d forbid, that no other person who ever lived can be referred to as holy, the Rambam himself tells us

that the way man can attain prophecy is "to become holier ... and to educate himself that he will not think any thoughts of nonsense or vanity. His mind must always be directed upwards" (Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 7:1). According to the Rambam man cannot acquire prophecy without first reaching a level of holiness. Chazal and the tzaddikim of the Tanach may not have been prophets, but we can certainly say of them that they reached particular levels of holiness. All the prophets and sages, each of course according to his own spiritual status attained lofty degrees of holiness. The perfection of this state, however, was only reached, according to the Rambam, by Moshe Rabenu and the forefathers.

Although we have mentioned that holiness is demanded of each of us, "Hashem does not seek excuses to deal harshly with His creations" (Avoda Zara 3a) - Hashem does not expect us to reach levels that are beyond us, but each in accordance with his strengths. I am not able, at least for now, to be an Avraham Avinu. It will be a great mistake to think that beginning tomorrow I will be Avraham Avinu. What then, practically speaking, is demanded of us? I must at least strive to be an Avraham Avinu! I must also do my best to go through the steps mentioned by the Messilat Yesharim (Torah brings to heedfulness, heedfulness bring to diligence, etc.). Each person must reach as far as he can based on his strengths. It is not demanded that he go beyond what he is capable of. It therefore appears that in general we have not tried hard enough to realize our potential, after all, the Torah promises us in our Parsha: "then all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you" (Devarim 28:10). In other words "fear and terror befall them" (Shmot 15:16). We have yet to see the other nations fearing us, this can only be because we have not totally fulfilled "the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over us". Had it been clearly proclaimed, we would have seen a fulfillment of "they will revere you". This means that we have not exhausted all our strengths to attain the appropriate level of Kedusha.

(The Torah also states "You shall safeguard and perform them, for it is your wisdom and discernment in the eyes of the peoples, who shall hear all these decrees and who shall say 'surely a wise and discerning people is this great nation!' For which is a great nation that has a G-d Who is close to it, as is Hashem, our G-d, whenever we call to Him? And which is a great nation that has righteous decrees and ordinances such as this entire Torah that I place before you this day" (Devarim 4:6-8). The Torah immediately follows this with a warning: "only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things" (ibid. 9). Rashi comments "When you will not forget them and you will perform them in their authentic manner, you will be considered wise and understanding, but if you will distort them as a result of forgetting, you will be considered fools". Rashi is not telling us that there will come a time in which people will intentionally forget the dictates of the Torah. The Torah is warning of a distortion of the Torah through forgetfulness. Even then, the nations of the world will no longer say "a wise and discerning people is this great nation!" The Torah is only truth when it is observed in its complete and authentic manner. Any distortion, even of only a small portion of the Torah, detracts from the authenticity of its observance. It is no longer the A-Imighty's Torah being observed - but something else. When we cease to observe Hashem's Torah the other nations will no longer fear us. When we ask ourselves how some of the giants of the world are killed by Arabs in Eretz Yisrael, how tzaddikim like R' Elchanan Wasserman zt"l were killed by the Germans may their name be obliterated, and how others were exiled by the Russians and murdered in Siberia, we have to respond that the Torah was not observed in its complete and perfect state. As great as they may have been, we did not reach that level of perfection, the Torah was partially distorted through forgetfulness. Had we seen clearly and beyond a shadow of a doubt that "the Name of Hashem is proclaimed upon you", then we would have also witnessed a fulfillment of "they will revere you".).

The Parsha continues with warnings of calamities that can befall the Jewish people. This

section, referred to as the "tochachot" contains ninety eight terrible curses (see Rashi Devarim 29:12 "vehu yihye"). The opening psukim of this section would lead us to believe that these terrible things will befall the nation "if you do not hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d" (Devarim 28:15) - laxity in observance of Mitzvot leads to a fulfillment of the "tochachot". The continuation of this section, however, provides another reason for these terrible calamities - "because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of heart, when everything was abundant" (ibid. 47).

This is not referring to people who are violating laws of the Torah, who do not learn, or who do not give tzedaka. They learn Torah, give tzedaka, and observe the Shabbat. What is lacking is the joy. They observe Mitzvot because that is what the Shulchan Aruch or Beit Din require them to do, or simply out of habit, or because this is what the Yeshiva does so I will do it too. It is lack of joy in Mitzvah observance that leads to fulfillment of these terrible "tochachot".

What is so wrong with doing Mitzvot simply out of habit? A Jew wakes up, observes all the Mitzvot but without gladness of heart - is this a reason for such terrible calamities? Observing Mitzvot in this manner means we are not a "holy people". Had this man truly been holy in the way we described before - with his thoughts only directed towards Hashem and toward enhancing the glory of Heaven, he would have rejoiced at every opportunity to fulfill a Mitzvah, at each page of Gemara he learns, and at each penny he gives to the poor. Today I performed a Mitzvah! How happy I am to give tzedaka! I learned a page of Gemara! I restrained myself from violating a particular prohibition, what gladness I feel!

The story is told of R' Natan Adler zt"l who was once riding in a wagon together with his student the Chatam Sofer. When this wagon got caught in the mud. The non-Jewish driver went and found an ox intending to hitch the ox to the wagon so it could assist the horses in pulling it out of the mud. On seeing this R' Natan jumped from the wagon, followed by his student, and began to dance. What was the cause of this great joy? R' Natan explained that never before did he have the opportunity to fulfill the Mitzvah of "you shall not plow with an ox and donkey together" (Devarim 22:10). In the holy congregation of Frankfurt, he spent most of his time inside, when could he possibly have the opportunity to fulfill this Mitzvah? Here in this mud, the Almighty is giving me the chance to keep this Mitzvah! One who totally cleaves to Hashem, rejoices at every opportunity to observe a Mitzvah. A similar story is told of the Chatam Sofer himself who once had the opportunity to lend without taking interest. The Chatam Sofer, after all was not a great banker, and it was rare that he would be able to lend money to someone. For him, the fact that he was able to do so without taking interest was a source of joy.

One who does not derive tremendous joy from performance of Mitzvot has indicated that his thoughts are not completely focused on Hashem. Such a person may fulfill all 613 Mitzvot, but with time he may become more and more careless in his observance. All types of excuses and rationalizations will pop into his head. One with a love for learning will not search for an exemption, one for whom giving tzedaka is a source of joy will not look for reasons not to give. One who is not happy performing Mitzvot will discover all types of excuses, he will say "Baruch Hashem I do not need to learn today, I can close the Gemara". This situation will deteriorate to such an extent that he will eventually desist from observing Mitzvot entirely, G-d forbid.

Lack of joy in fulfillment of Mitzvot can cause difficulties in educating one's children. Regarding cooking on Shabbat, the Talmud states: "a second vessel (one that was not directly on the fire, but rather hot food was transferred to it) is not capable of cooking" (Shabbat 40b). The warmth in a person can be transferred to his children. One who is cold to Torah and Mitzvot, however, cannot transmit any warmth and therefore cannot give over the importance of observing all six hundred thirteen Mitzvot in all its details. Even if the child were to observe the dictates of the Torah from having witnessed his

father doing so, there is little hope for the grandchildren. What do they need these commandments for? This is just one big burden! My father and grandfather never felt any joy in serving Hashem, why should I keep any Mitzvot?

However a child who observes that his father serves Hashem through happiness will more likely be positively influenced. (There is never any guarantee of course, for Yishmael had a father who served Hashem with his full heart and that warmth was not transmitted to him.) This is why "because you did not serve Hashem your G-d amid gladness and goodness of heart" can be one of the causes of the terrible "tochachot" - fulfillment of Mitzvot with such an attitude bodes little hope for any continuity.

Last week we discussed the bracha of Malchuyot recited on Rosh Hashana. We explained that in that bracha we declare Hashem as King, as the only power in this world. He alone decides, He alone acts - everything is heavenly ordained. Today we will elaborate on the bracha that follows Malchuyot - Zichronot. In this bracha we appear to be stating the opposite of what we have declared in Malchuyot. We say that MAN is actually in control. Although Hashem determines everything, His determination is not arbitrary but is in response to man's actions. Although Hashem has the power to bless us or the opposite, who determines whether or not He will do so is MAN! From where is man invested with such power? Of course from Hashem. Yet, Hashem created the world in such a way that His rule is based on man's actions. He could have done otherwise, but this is the way He rules the world. This is what we refer to in Zichronot when we say "You remember the deeds done in the universe ... everything is revealed and known before You". If we could only hear Hashem's response to our request "inscribe us in the Book of Life", it would be to the tune of: "I only write based on what you dictate to me, if you are worthy that I inscribe you in the book of life then I will do so, if not then the opposite, G-d forbid - your actions, your Torah and Mitzvot are what determine things.

David HaMelech wrote "Hashem is your protective Shadow at your right hand" (Tehillim 121:5). Hashem acts with man, the way the shadow acts with his right hand. When a person lifts or lowers his arm, the shadow follows suit. In this manner, Hashem works with man. When we rise higher, Hashem will act as we do and raise us. When we lower ourselves (spiritually), Hashem will G-d forbid, do the same for us and the entire nation (see Nefesh HaChayim shaar 1, chapter 7). It is we who determine what Hashem will inscribe and seal on Rosh Hashana. Hashem's decision is based on our tefillot of Rosh Hashana as well as our actions. Chazal tell us that from the moment Hashem proclaimed at Har Sinai: "See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse" (Devarim 11:26), it became: "It is not from the mouth of the Most High that evil and good emanate" [30] (Eicha 3:38), it is rather man himself who dictates by his actions what Hashem should decree (see Devarim Rabba 4:3).

We say in the bracha of zichronot "You lovingly remembered Noah and You recalled him with words of salvation and mercy, when You brought the waters of the Flood to destroy all living flesh because of the evil of their deeds". What caused the flood that almost destroyed the entire creation? Man's actions! On the other hand, what saved mankind from annihilation? Man's actions as well. One man lived in that generation in whose merit the world was saved. Man has the power to destroy and man has the power to preserve. The actions of Noah, his sons, and their wives during their year in the ark, sustained the entire world, because "the world is built on kindness" (Tehillim 89:3). It was the abundance of theft that almost destroyed the world (see Rashi Bereishit 6:13), and this fault was corrected through an abundance of acts of chesed performed in the ark. An entire world was saved from destruction at that time and their merit continues to sustain us many generations thereafter.

We cannot even imagine the difficult year Noah and his family spent taking care of the other inhabitants. Chazal tell us that they spent an entire year deprived of sleep (see

Tanchuma Parshat Noach). The hotel they ran had thousands of guests and only eight waiters (Noah, his sons, and their wives). Each guest had a different menu - one ate meat, one ate milk, and one ate fish, and others ate other food. In addition, they each preferred their food at different times - some ate during the day, some at night, some immediately prior to "vatikin" (sunrise), and some preferred being fed immediately after. There were even those who ate their meal immediately prior to "tikkun chatzot" (midnight) while some ate immediately after. The difficulty of this task cannot even be properly described. One time Noah arrived late with the lion's food and he was given a painful souvenir (see Rashi Bereishit 7:23). This injury certainly did not make his task any easier. It was these great acts of chesed that help put the world back on its feet.

The sacrifices Noah offered upon leaving the ark have also sustained us throughout the generations. Noah offered sacrifices and as a result of that Hashem swore never to bring another flood upon this world. The rainbow was given as a sign of this oath. Since that day, thousands of rainbows have been seen (with the exception of certain generations of righteous people in which no rainbow was seen, for their own personal merit saved them from a flood and they had no need to rely on Noah's merit (see Rashi Ketubot 7b "im ken"). One righteous person was able to prevent thousands of floods from coming down upon the world. How many offerings could he have brought? He had little to offer save a few animals and birds. Nonetheless it was these sacrifices that prevented thousands of floods over the generations. This is an example of the tremendous power man is invested with - we see how much influence one person can have.

We then mention the bondage in Egypt. It was our sins that brought about this servitude, while it was the merit of our three holy forefathers that brought about our exodus: "Hashem heard their moaning, and Hashem remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov" (Shmot 2:23-24). The merit of these three people alone helped six hundred thousand people leave Egypt and become the Chosen People destined to receive the Torah, to receive the Land of Israel, the World to Come, and eternity - something the entire world did not merit. What caused this? Three people alone! This is but another example of man's power. In the bracha of Malchuyot we declared Hashem as All-Powerful - that He alone acts in this world, and in the bracha of Zichronot we imply the opposite - it is man who has the power to determine how this world is run.

David Hamelech declared "when I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers" (Tehillim 8:4) - what a vast universe we live in measuring tens of millions of light years. David HaMelech continues: "What is frail man that You should remember him, and the son of mortal man that You should be mindful of him" (ibid. 5). Man is so insignificant in so vast a creation. The Milky Way is a minute portion of the creation, the Solar System a small part of the Milky Way, the earth a miniscule portion of the universe, Yerushalayim a very tiny portion of the earth. Me? I am so insignificant, the space I take up in Yerushalayim is hardly noticeable! If so, "what is frail man that You should remember him?" Man appears almost non-existent in this vast universe, he has no value or importance. David, however, immediately claims: "Yet, you have made him but slightly less than Elokim" (ibid. 6). Am I only slightly less than Hashem? Although Chazal tell us that this pasuk refers to Moshe Rabenu (see Rosh Hashana 21b), this is because Moshe was the only one to attain this level. Every human being, however, has the potential to reach this state of perfection. If I am so insignificant, how is it that you have made him but slightly less than Elokim". How can this be? Hashem is infinite and me? I perhaps take up four amot according to the measurement of HaRav Chaim Naeh (certainly not the measurements of the Chazon Ish!). Hashem "lives forever and endures to eternity". Me?

If only I will live my full one hundred and twenty years. Hashem is All-Powerful and knows all, while I have no power and know almost nothing!

The pasuk continues "You give him dominion over Your handiwork, You place everything under his feet" (Tehillim 8:7). Does man rule over creation? If I go out on a hot day I will get a headache, on a cold day I will get a sore throat. If I were to cross the street on a red light, it is not the car that will be under my feet, but G-d forbid the opposite. Where then do we see "you place everything under his feet"? All I see under my feet are shoes and socks!

On a physical level man does not rule over the creation. SPIRITUALLY, however, it is man who rules. Man's Mitzvot, good deeds, (or the contrary) determine how the world is run. Every word of Torah that we learn, every act of chesed we carry out, every prayer we say, even our failures, carry incredible weight. With this in mind, we can now understand the verse "You have made him but slightly less than Elokim". It is man who, so to speak, dictates to Hashem what will be.

What must we do prior to the Day of Judgment. On which actions should we concentrate so as influence the Divine decree? Clearly we must correct our ways so that everything we do follows the ways of Torah. An important part of our preparation for this Day of Judgment, however, is to increase our acts of chesed. When we act with others in ways of chesed, Hashem will act with us with chesed and mercy.

Chazal comment on the pasuk: "'Who is like you Hashem forgiving iniquity and passing by transgression' (Micha 7:18), who is forgiven iniquity? One who passes by transgression" (Rosh Hashana 17a). One who is a "vatran" who is willing to forego rights he may have for the sake of another, will be treated by Hashem in the same manner. Chazal tell us that Hashem is not a "vatran" - one who absolves His people of their sin. In fact, we are told the opposite: "whoever says Hashem is lax in the execution of justice, his life shall be outlawed, as it says 'The Rock! - perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice'" (Devarim 32:4) (Baba Kamma 50a). Hashem may be full of chesed and compassion, but there is no laxity in His judgment - everything is just. If the entire judgment against me is declared null and void because I am considered a "vatran", then Hashem is not acting leniently, but it is His attribute of JUSTICE that requires Him to do so. Each and every one of us is in great need of this, for who can stand up to the A-lmighty in judgment: "If You preserve iniquities, O G-d, O L-rd who could survive?" (Tehillim 130:3). Even Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov would not have been able to withstand Hashem's justice, had they been judged with the full depths of justice (see Erchin 17a). What each of us must do is to be a "vatran" in areas involving man and his fellow man. Of course, with this we must correct all that requires correcting. It is very important, however, to be a "vatran", not to be insistent on what is coming to us from another, to increase our acts of chesed. If we do so, then Hashem will do the same for us and act towards us in ways of chesed. He will then decree for us and the entire Jewish nation good decrees, a good year filled with happiness, without terrorist acts, without traffic accidents, and all other troubles and difficult decrees.

Chazal tell us: "a covenant has been made regarding the Thirteen Attributes that they never return empty-handed" (Rosh Hashana 17b).

Are there not Jews all over the world who recite these Thirteen Attributes and we have still not seen the salvation? Where is the covenant? We can explain with following analogy: there was once a simple couple - villagers, who did not know anything about medicine. One day the man took ill and the wife summoned the local doctor. The doctor arrived, checked the patient and wrote a prescription with instructions to the wife to see to it that her husband take one dosage every two hours. The doctor arrived the next day to see if his patient was improving only to find out that not only did the patient's condition not improve but it worsened. The doctor then asked the wife whether she gave her husband the prescription to which she replied in the affirmative. The doctor asked if he could see the bottle (perhaps the pharmacist had erred and given her

the wrong medication). The wife responded: "what bottle? You gave me a prescription not a bottle. I cut the prescription into twelve equal portions and every two hours I gave him another piece to swallow!

The same may be said regarding the Thirteen Attributes. They are not a medication! Reciting them is only the prescription through which the medicine is prepared. What in fact is the necessary medication? To correct our middot. The covenant does not refer to the recital of the Thirteen Attributes but to their fulfillment (see Etz Yoseph commentary to Ein Yaakov Rosh Hashana 17b in the name of the Alshi"ch). I may not be able to fulfill the attributes "Hashem Hashem", but I can be "Compassionate, and Gracious, Slow to Anger, and Abundant in Kindness and Truth" (Shmot 34:6). As Chazal tell us "'This is my G-d and I will beautify Him, the G-d of my father and I will exalt Him' (Shmot 15:2), be like him - just as G-d is gracious and compassionate, you also should be gracious and compassionate" [44] (Shabbat 133b). It is not enough to mention these attributes. Hashem with His love and chesed may help us in any event, but we on our part must awaken ourselves to ACT with these attributes: to be "compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in kindness. We cannot be "notzer chesed laalafim" "preserver of kindness for thousands of generations" (Shmot 34:7), for who among us will live for thousands of generations. We should, however, during the short lifetime given us in this world, do our utmost to preserve kindness, to have hakarat hatov to the One Who was good to us, and to cleave to all the other attributes.

The prophet Yechezkel speaks of the "maasei merkava - lofty ideas that involve understanding the way Hashem acts and how His Divine Providence works in this world. Why in fact were these revealed to us? First and foremost for our own knowledge, it is a great thing to understand the ways of Hashem, there is, however another reason as well. The Gemara cites: "an incident occurred with Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai who was riding on a donkey, and going along the road ... R' Yochanan ben Zakkai stood up, kissed R' Elazar ben Arach on his head and said: 'blessed is Hashem, G-d of Israel, who has given a son to our forefather Avraham who knows how to comprehend, delve into and expound upon the Maasei Merkava, there are those who expound well but do not practice well, those who practice well but do not expound well, but you, R' Elazar ben Arach are one who expounds well and practices well" (Chagiga 14b). Had the Gemara been speaking of the laws of Shabbat or Shmirat Halashon I could understand what it means that one expounds well as well as practices well. But maasei merkava? How does one practice them well? It must be that maasei merkava are beyond an abstract concept given simply to delve into and understand, but there is a practical side to them as well. They were given to us in order to teach us proper behavior and to enhance our middot as much as is humanly possible.

The Tomer Devora is based on the thirteen attributes cited by the prophet Micha "who is a G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression for the remnant of His heritage? He does not maintain His wrath forever, for He desires kindness" (Micha 7:18). The entire purpose of the book is to show us how to act. Of course, I cannot become completely Hashem, but a bit of these middot I can incorporate into my life. When I anger with someone, I must not "maintain my wrath forever", for example.

As we mentioned, the bracha of Zichronot is meant to teach us that Hashem determines everything based on our middot and actions. When we truly go in the ways of Hashem, the Thirteen Attributes will not return empty-handed. May the One Who answered Moshe in Chorev answer us and hear our supplications today too. May He inscribe and seal us and all of the House of Israel for a good year and for a speedy salvation and redemption. Amen!

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Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Yitzchak Korn



Twice every seven years a Jew living in Eretz Yisrael would be required to make a declaration (before Hashem) known as viduy ma'asrot. The farmer would begin with "I have removed the Holy things from my house" and proceed to declare that he had successfully separated and distributed ma'aser and all other obligations, carefully observing the intricate halachic requirements of each mitzvah (Devarim 26:13-15).

We associate the word viduy with confession for our sins, especially this time of year, as we anxiously await the period of selichot culminating with Yom Kippur when we recite viduy ten times.

Viduy is a prerequisite to teshuva, repentance, which included the dramatic offerings of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. Given that we associate the word viduy with the confession of our sins, we can't help but wonder how viduy is connected to having properly fulfilled the mitzvah of tithe removal from our produce. Viduy, as far as we know, implies realizing our shortcomings, while here we are declaring that we properly observed Hashem's commandments.

Rav Ovadia Sforno (16th century) gives an insightful explanation as to why Chazal refer to this declaration as viduy. Due to our sins, Divine service was taken away from the firstborn and given to the Levites. Had it not been for our sins, the phrase, "I have removed the Holy things from my house", would be inappropriate, as we would not have to remove the sanctified portion of the produce from our homes. The holy people would eat their sanctified foods in every Jewish home.

While it may be true that the actual words of the viduy maaser includes only that which we did correctly, the entire institution and practice is the result of our shortcomings. The fact that the Kohen has been removed from each Jewish home has brought about a fundamental change to the nature of our homes. Imagine what our homes would look like if a member of each family was a true spiritual leader, spending a few weeks each year serving in the Beit HaMikdash.

Although the Kehuna no longer belongs to the firstborn of each family, a remnant of the original system still remains with us.

Tosafot Baba Batra (21a) expound the well-known verse "Ki mitziyon tetze Torah" - "from Zion will the Torah come forth" (Yeshayahu 2:3) by quoting a Sifre (which we do not have) on the pasuk:

"and you shall eat before Hashem, your G-d, ...the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, ...so that you will learn to fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days" (Devarim 14:23).

"This teaches us that Maaser Sheni brings us to Talmud".

How so?

Imagine a farming family of old, that sends off one member to Jerusalem with a truckload of Ma'aser Sheni produce, which must be consumed within the holy walls. At least one family member would spend a considerable amount of time in Yerushalayim eating Maaser Sheni, perhaps bringing Korbanot. While there, he would observe the Kohanim performing their holy service. He would be exposed to, perhaps even study, in one of the glorious Torah academies. This would inspire him greatly to fear Hashem and

study His Torah. Upon returning home, this inspiration would spread to the entire family and community.

This week we welcome a new group of students to Netiv Aryeh. It is our hope that they become deeply inspired from their stay in Yerushalayim and become a beacon of Torah light to their families and communities, fulfilling "Ki MiZion Teitze Torah."

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List



Photo Gallery: [Shana Alef Arrives](#)

Visitor Log

The following people visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Jonny Del Monte (5768-69)
- Michell Steindler (5754)

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- [Alfi](#) (5735, Chairman of the Yeshiva Board) and Orly Fass on the birth of a grandson.
- [Zvi](#) Oppenheimer (5763-64) on his marriage to Atara Norowitz.
- [Sralli](#) (5763-64) and Simi Schwartz on the birth of a baby boy.
- [Ari](#) (5766-67) and Avigayil Strulowitz on the birth of twin baby girls.
- [Noam](#) (5763-65) and Peninah Adler on the birth of a baby boy.
- [Jacob](#) (5755) and Edy Kupietzky on the birth of a baby boy.
- [Michael](#) Epstein (5768-69) on his engagement to Aviva Todfield.

Baruch Dayan Emet

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the loss of:

- The grandmother of [Tal](#) Sharon (5753-54).

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

Printer Friendly Tehillim List

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Ditzza bat Vardit | ● Avraham David ben Miriam Goldeh |
| ● Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel | ● Ephraim Yitzchak ben Golda |
| ● Chaya bat Grunia | ● Margalit bat Rachel |

- Yitzchok ben Shayna Ita
- Moshe Zanvel ben Brindel
- Gershon Yitzchok ben Mottel Tzerel
- Reuven ben Tova Chaya
- Rivka Margalit bat Etta
- Chaya Meira Mindel bas Chava Golda
- Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Elazar ben Nouber
- Na'ava Bat Ami bat Sara Leah
- Gilad ben Aviva
- Edmund ben Nazir
- Devorah Leah bat Hindel
- Avram Gershon ben Tzippah
- Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka
- Dovid ben Miriam
- Evelyn Bat Dina
- Rafael Pinchas ben Esther
- Avraham Pinchas ben Sarah Etel
- Lev ben Esther
- Akiwa ben gittel
- Yaacov ben Baila
- Chaya Tziporah Sheva bat Faiga
- Ester Bas Lea
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Chaya Esther bat Golda Rachel
- Shayna bas Chava
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Fruma bat Rochel
- Yonatan Moshe ben Devorah Tova
- Naomi Sara bas Henna Miriam
- Fruma bas Ita
- Tinok ben Esther Sharon
- Leah Bat Rivkah
- Zacharia Kalman ben Yael Margolit
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa
- David Yosef ben Faige Perel
- Tsilah Blimah bas Tsipporah
- Tuvia ben Yachad
- Lev Ben reuven



And of course we are always davening for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

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Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?**- [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.
Shabbat Shalom,
 Rav Bina, Netiv Aryeh
 Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh