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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON **NITZAVIM VAYELECH** - 5766

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From: owner-weeklydt@torahweb2.org on behalf of torahweb@torahweb.org Sent: September 14, 2006
Subject: Rabbi Mayer Twersky - Teshuva: In Your Mouth and In Your Heart
<http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>

Rabbi Mayer Twersky
Teshuva: In Your Mouth and In Your Heart

"ki hamitzvah hazos asher Anochi metzavcha hayom lo niflais he mimcha vlo rechoka hi...ki karov eilecha hadavar meod bificha vblevavecha laasoso - for the commandment that I command you today is not hidden from you and it is not distant...Rather the matter is very near to you - in your mouth and your hear - to perform it." (Devarim 30:11,14 Artscroll Stone Edition translation)

According to the Ramban, the mitzvah depicted in these verses is the mitzvah of teshuva (repentance). The Torah emphasizes our capacity and ability to repent. It is "in your mouth and your heart" to repent.

Let us focus on the Torah's choice of words - "in your mouth and your heart." Clearly, the Torah is conveying that teshuva is very doable, but that has already been conveyed by the first half of the verse, "[it] is very near to you". What is added by the phrase "in your mouth and your heart"?[1]

This terse, rich phrase anticipates the myriad excuses that we offer for our failures to do teshuva. Our first line of defense is that we do not need to do teshuva. We are not at fault. After all, we are only human. And to be human is to sin. Alternatively, we silence our consciences by reasoning that our sins are not our fault. Our sins are due to our upbringing, society, genetics, etc. In a word, we do not assume responsibility for our sins. The Torah utterly rejects such moral escapism. "Free will is bestowed on every human being...the human species had become unique in the world...there is none who can prevent him from doing that which is good or that which is evil" (Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 5:1). Being human is not a source of extenuation, but rather moral responsibility. "Thus Yirmiyahu [Jeremiah] said 'out of the mouth of the Most High not evil and good'; that is to say, the Creator does not decree either that a man shall be good or that he shall be wicked" (ibid, halacha 2).

The primordial ploy of shifting the blame - "The woman whom you gave to be with me - she gave me of the tree, and I ate" "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Breishis 3:12,13 Artscroll translation) - was rejected by Hakadosh Baruch Hu in time immemorial. The modern equivalents - my

upbringing is responsible, society is to blame, there is no overcoming genetic tendencies - will share the same fate.

Thus the Torah exhorts us that teshuva is "in your mouth...to perform." The teshuva process begins "in your mouth", by confessing and thereby accepting responsibility for our sins.

When our first line of defense for not doing teshuva fails, we seek other justifications for our inaction. One common excuse appeals to age. "I am too old; my habits are too deeply entrenched. After all, you can not teach an old dog new tricks." What is the Torah's response to this hackneyed excuse? "For You do not wish the death of one deserving death, but that he repent from his way and live. Until the day of his death You wait for him; if he repents You will accept him immediately." [Mussaf, Yomim Noraim, Artscroll translation]

At times, we attribute our failures to repent to the magnitude of our sins. "I have sinned too egregiously; I am too mired in sin. How can you expect me to do teshuva?" The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 2:1) paraphrases the Torah's response, "Even if he transgressed throughout his life but repented on the day of his death and died as a penitent all his sins are forgiven." Even a lifelong sinner can, and therefore must, repent.

And, finally, another favorite excuse id "if only someone would help me. If only my Rebbeim z"l were still alive..." The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 17a) debunks this excuse by depicting the teshuva of Rabbe Elazar ben Durdia. Rabbe Elazar had led a life of wanton promiscuity; he had consorted with every harlot in the world. Finally impelled to seek forgiveness he petitioned the mountains and hills to implore on his behalf. They declined, citing their need to pray on their own behalf. Next he addressed himself to heaven and earth, seeking their intervention on his behalf. Their response was identical to that of the mountains and hills. Then Rabbe Elazar appealed to the sun and moon with the same negative results. Finally, he said, "It [i.e. attaining forgiveness] in entirely dependent upon me. He rested his head between his knees and burst out crying until his soul departed. A heavenly voice emerged and proclaimed, 'Rabbe Elazar ben Durdia is prepared and deserving of the world to come'". The "if only" excuse is just that, a shallow, hollow excuse. Ain hadavar taloi ela banu; repentance depends entirely upon us.

The Torah rejects our second line of defense - "I am only human", "I am too old", "if only..." Teshuva "is in your heart to perform". If only we inwardly resolve and strive, we can, with Hakadosh Baruch Hu's help, repent, v'chain yehi ratzon.

[1] Ramban, ad locum, provides a pshat interpretation that "in your mouth" refers to viduy (confession) and "in your heart" adds that, the indispensability of viduy notwithstanding, the essence of teshuva is an inner experience, a kiyum shebalev. What ensues is a homiletical interpretation.

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Sent: September 13, 2006

"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech -

Getting Used To Obscenity

In Parshas Nitzavim, the Torah says, "For you know how you lived in the Land of Egypt and how you traversed the nations whose countries you have passed through. You have seen their abominations and their detestable idols (es shikutzeihem v'es giluleihem) of wood and stone, of silver and gold that were with them." [Devarim 29:15-16] The Torah refers to the pagan idols of the nations in a most derogatory fashion. The word "sheketz" means

disgusting. The root of the word "giluleiheim" is "galal," the word describing human excrement.

The Brisker Rav points out that the above cited pasukim [verses] first refer to the idols of the nations in the most disrespectful of terms – es shikutzeiheim v'es giluleiheim – but then describe them in terms of raw materials – wood and stone (etz v'even), silver and gold (kesef v'zahav). Etz v'even does not sound so bad. Kesef v'zahav even sound attractive. Which is it? Are the idols sheketz and galal or are they kesef and zahav?

The Brisker Rav explained that this pasuk [verse] is teaching that when a person first sees something disgusting, his immediate and natural reaction is one of revulsion. "This is nothing short of disgusting." But human tendency is that after a person sees it for a while and gets used to it, it does not seem as disgusting anymore. It is then perceived in quite neutral terms – like wood and stone. Ultimately, if a person continues to see it and becomes even more accustomed to it, that which the person originally considered revolting and abominable will be considered like silver and gold.

This addresses one of the most basic of human traits that is both the bane of mankind and at the same time is also the salvation of mankind: We can become accustomed to anything. If we could not get accustomed to anything, we would not be able to survive. Sometimes, we see people who went through the concentration camps, where the conditions were unspeakable. How did they do it? The answer is that to some extent, they got used to it. That ability can be very useful. But on the other hand, this same ability can be very destructive. UNFORTUNATELY, we can become accustomed to anything. That which was once disgusting can become the norm.

This is indeed what the Gemara means when it says "This is the way of the evil inclination: Today it advises – do thus. Tomorrow it advises – do thus. Until eventually it advises – go worship idols." [Shabbos 105b] The slippery slope proceeds. At each step, a person rationalizes that which had originally been "unthinkable". It doesn't bother us anymore and in fact becomes the next plateau from which a person sinks lower and lower until the person eventually goes on to worship idolatry.

If a person had been away from this country for ten years and returned today and listened just to the radio -- to family oriented programming -- the person would be startled at the language used and the type of topics being discussed. One merely has to pick up a copy of the daily New York Times to be shocked by things that would have considered obscene 10 years ago. What happened?

We become spiritually deadened by what we see on billboards, by what we see as advertisements on buses or subways, and by what we hear on radio stations. It is mind-boggling!

Ten years ago, this was "shikutzeiheim v'giluleiheim". It was disgusting! Then it became "etz v'even". We became accustomed to it. Now it is even like "kesef v'zahav asher imahem". We already expect it and look forward to hearing and reading it.

Grabbing The Conductor's Hand

I heard the following story from Rabbi Ephraim Waxman. I don't want the same thing that happened to him to happen to me, so I am relating this story at this time:

Rabbi Waxman once davened for the Amud on Yom Kippur in a certain Yeshiva. Before Neilah, he was asked to speak to the congregation to give them spiritual arousal before the final prayers of Yom Kippur. He related the following parable.

There was once a person who had to travel by train between two cities. He inquired as to the price and was told that there was a sliding scale. A regular seat in "Coach" was a certain amount. First class was quite a bit more. However if he would arrive at the train station 4 hours before departure, he could purchase a first class ticket for the same price as coach. The fellow was not keen on spending four hours at the train station waiting for his train so he decided to forgo the first class ticket.

He was then told that if he would arrive 2 hours before departure, he would be guaranteed his choice of coach seats. After that it would be first come, first served. But again he said to himself "Why do I have to go there 2 hours early, waste my time, and sit around? So I won't get my choice of coach seats!"

He was then told that if he arrives a half hour before departure, all the seats will have been sold. The train will have standing room only available. "But," our passenger figures, "it is a short trip. What do I care if I need to stand? I'll come a half hour early and will buy a standing room only ticket."

As things have it, he does not come 4 hours early. He does not come 2 hours early. He does not even come a half hour early. He comes at the last minute. He comes down to the platform and the train is leaving. He starts running and running after the train and he sees that the conductor on the caboose is holding out his hand. If he can just latch onto the conductor's hand, the conductor will pull him onto the train. He runs and runs and tries to grab that hand.

Rabbi Waxman then quoted the sentence from our liturgy "You send forth your hand to sinners" (Ata nosen yad l'poshim). Rabbi Waxman explained that Neilah represents the idea of Ata nosen yad l'poshim. One who waits until Neilah to do Teshuva is like the passenger running after the train to try to grab the conductor's hand.

Rosh Chodesh Elul is like 4 hours before the train leaves. That is when a person can get first class for the price of coach. Rosh HaShanna is like 2 hours before departure time – when a person can still get his selection of coach seats. The Ten Days of Repentance is first come first serve. The earlier prayers on Yom Kippur are like "standing room only." However Neilah is already "Ata nosen yad l'poshim".

Rabbi Waxman then said to the Yeshiva students "My friends, now is the time for "You stretch forth Your hand to the sinners." He proceeded to daven Neilah from the Amud and felt that the atmosphere throughout the room was highly charged with spiritual emotion.

A young student came to him after Neilah and said, "Rebbe, why did you not tell us this story on Rosh Chodesh Elul?" I do not want anyone to blame me for not telling such a story earlier, so I tell it now.

What Should We Worry About Most On Yom Kippur?

"You give a hand to the sinners and Your right hand is stretched out to accept those who repent." The prayers of Selichos, of Rosh HaShannah, of Yom Kippur are all quite repetitive. The same expressions are repeated over and over. The Shmoneh Esrays are the same throughout each day. However, the Amidah of Neilah is unique. There is nowhere else in the entire High Holiday period where we come across the expression "You give a hand to the sinners and Your right hand is stretched out to accept those who repent."

This is unique to Neilah. Neilah represents our last chance. "And you have taught us, Hashem our G-d, to confess over all of our sins, in order that we cease from the oppression that comes from our hands (L'maan nechdal m'oshek yadeinu)."

Suppose someone would want to distill the entire two-week period from the start of Selichos recitation through the end of Yom Kippur to four words. What is it all about? What would those four words be? I maintain it is the words "L'maan nechdal m'oshek yadeinu - in order that we cease from the oppression that comes from our hands." According to what the Machzor states explicitly, this is what we have to worry about most.

Oshkef Yadeinu means theft (Gezeilah). A person should not say (with a sigh of relief) "I do not have to be worried about Gezeilah. I am not a thief." The Chofetz Chaim and other works of mussar teach that Gezeilah includes much more than just shoplifting. According to the Chofetz Chaim, not paying our debts is Oshkef - Gezeilah. So is not paying off bills. So is not paying workers. This is what it comes down to. This is the bottom line on Yom Kippur.

The Otzar HaTefillos writes: "The earlier works have already elaborated on the seriousness of this grave sin. Appreciate the seriousness of this sin:

The Men of the Great Assembly singled it out in the Neilah liturgy. After all the "Ashamnus" (We are guilty confessions...), after all the enumerations of "Al Chet", the only sin that is singled out in the final minutes of Yom Kippur is "L'maan nechdal m'oshek yadeinu." In Neilah, all other sins are spoken of in a global reference (forgive us for ALL our sins), but not this sin of Oshek - Gezel. In fact, the sin of the Generation of the Flood was only sealed because of their crimes involving thievery.

If we want to be able to sincerely recite this solemn prayer at the end of Yom Kippur, we all need to look into our checkbooks and look into our financial records and look into our bills and make sure that we can finally say "L'maan nechdal m'oshek yadeinu." We want to be able to say that we are clean, not only from the crime of actual thievery but from any form of oshek, of withholding wages, not paying bills, being negligent when it comes to our financial obligations or tuition payments. We want to be clear from all things that we owe.

A person can have a bushel full of sins; but Gezel mekatreg b'rosh -- the sin of gezel is the first to prosecute. [Yalkut Shimoni Vayikra 25:660]

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 These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 605, Selling A Sefer Torah. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyeichel.org or visit <http://www.yadyeichel.org/> for further information.

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Chapter 33 from Twerski On Spirituality

**By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski
 To Be Truly Free**

Earlier we noted that humans have the capacity to delay gratification, whereas animals lack this trait. As we have noted, a person may have a strong desire to do something which is completely appropriate -- say, take a luxury cruise -- and may have the money to do so, but because he has a

number of obligations or for other reasons, he decides to postpone his excursion until a more propitious time, which may be weeks or months away. The capacity to postpone is uniquely human, because an animal does whatever it desires when the desire occurs.

In general, animals are not free to make decisions, because they are at the mercy of their bodily impulses. If an animal is hungry, it is driven to look for food and must do so. An animal cannot decide not to eat when it is hungry. It is inconceivable that an animal will decide, "I am going to fast today." This is equally true of all other physical impulses which totally dominate an animal's behavior. Man is alone in being able to resist a bodily urge, and deny himself gratification of a strong desire if he considers it to be inappropriate.

Some philosophers deny that man has freedom of choice, and contend that a person has a number of impulses and ideas, some of which are in

conflict, and that his behavior is determined by whichever impulse or idea happens to be the strongest. They say that because man is aware of the struggle within himself he has an illusion that he is making a choice, whereas the choice is really being made for him. Judaism categorically rejects this concept which, by denying free will, essentially reduces man to an animal level, with the only distinguishing feature being that man is conscious of the struggle between the opposing forces within him. Freedom of choice is a fundamental axiom of Judaism. In fact, Judaism teaches that although G-d is in control of everything in the universe, He has divested himself of control over man's decisions, and does not intervene in man's moral or ethical choices.

The idea that the strongest impulse determines behavior is indeed true of animals. For example, as we previously noted, an animal is driven by hunger to look for food, and cannot resist doing so. Suppose, however, that a hungry jackal that is foraging for food spies a carcass, and has an intense desire to satisfy its hunger by eating it. Unfortunately for the jackal, a huge, ferocious tiger happens to be feasting on the carcass. The hungry jackal will not go anywhere near the carcass, not because it respects the property rights of the tiger, but because it does not want to get killed, which would surely happen if it tried to invade the tiger's territory. The drive to satisfy its hunger is opposed and overcome by the drive for survival, and so the jackal forgoes eating in order to escape the punishment of being killed by the tiger. In other words, animals will resist an impulse if gratifying it is fraught with the possibility of retribution.

Let us suppose that a person who is extremely money hungry is employed in a firm which turns over many millions of dollars each day. Being very savvy on computers, he has figured out a way to divert money from various accounts to his own, and could become very wealthy in a short period of time. His insatiable greed makes him consider this dishonest behavior. He realizes, however, that the auditors will undoubtedly have on their team a person who is equally computer-savvy, and there is a possibility that these transactions could be traced to him. If that were to occur, his ill-begotten money would be confiscated, he would be hit with a hefty fine of \$50,000 or more, and would be sentenced to a long prison term for computer crime. Because the possible consequences of gratifying his greed are too formidable, he does not risk doing so, and abstains from committing the crime. In this case the philosophers are correct. The greedy impulse conflicted with the fear of retribution, and since the latter was the stronger of the two, he desisted from the act. His decision not to steal was not a moral decision, but was very much like the jackal's decision to forego trying to satisfy its hunger because of the fear of being killed by the tiger. This decision was therefore not a uniquely human decision.

When does a person become uniquely human? When he resists a bodily impulse in the absence of the possibility of any form of retribution, solely because he considers it to be morally wrong. This is something which no animal can accomplish.

Suppose a man from a town in northern Maine attends a business convention in Hawaii. There is not a single soul there who knows him. He is seized by a temptation to do something immoral, and he knows that there is no possibility that he will be discovered. Furthermore, given the current libertarian attitudes in society, even the exposure of an immoral act may have little consequence. However, he resists yielding to temptation because he believes such behavior to be morally wrong. He denies a strong physical impulse in absence of any threat of punishment, solely on a moral-ethical basis. This is where man rises above the animal level. No animal can make a moral-ethical decision. Man is thus the only living creature that has true freedom of choice, and the capacity to be truly free is therefore uniquely human, and is a cornerstone of spirituality.

In my work treating addicts, I point out to them that addiction is the most absolute type of slavery the world has ever known. A person who has become addicted to drugs is likely to do things he had never thought possible, but when he is in the grip of addiction, the drug is a ruthless,

totalitarian dictator, and he will do whatever is necessary to obtain his drug. The addict completely loses the unique human distinction of being free.

Addiction to drugs is not the only way a person may lose his freedom. We are often dominated by other drives, which we may not recognize as tyrannical. Yet, when we are under their dominance, we have lost our precious freedom of choice, much the same as the drug addict.

There are people who are true workaholics, and cannot tear themselves away from the office, even though they know they should be with the family. There are people who are so ego driven to achieve recognition or acclaim that they will do anything to get it. There are people who have an insatiable desire to have more money, and cannot restrain themselves from trying to further increase their already enormous wealth, even though they could not possibly consume what they have in a thousand lifetimes. And of course, there are people who very much want to live and be healthy, but cannot resist the impulse to smoke cigarettes, even though they are fully aware of the toxic and even lethal effects of smoking. There are people who, try as they might, succumb to the urge to eat far more than is healthy. In all these situations, something has wrested the freedom of choice from the person. Whenever this happens, the person has become a slave to his particular habit.

In the Haggadah From Bondage to Freedom (Mesorah Publications, 1995), I pointed out that the emphasis given to the Exodus from Egypt indicates that Passover is not merely an "independence day" celebration which lasts a full week. In addition to a full week of total abstinence from chametz, which follows several weeks of meticulous housecleaning and virtual sterilization of the kitchen, we also declare that each Shabbos and all the festivals commemorate the Exodus. The Torah associates many mitzvos with the Exodus: tefillin, tzitzis, kashrus, redemption of the firstborn, forbidden relationships, to name just a few. In fact, the basis of our very belief in G-d is related to the Exodus, as is evident in the first commandment: "I am the Lord, your G-d, Who has delivered you from the land of Egypt."

The repeated reference to the Exodus is to remind us that we are not to be enslaved, neither by a despot such as Pharaoh nor by any habit which becomes despotic and deprives us of our free will. If we feel we cannot throw off the shackles of a habit, we are reminded that G-d delivered us from the enslavement of Egypt, and that if we make a sincere attempt at overcoming our tyrannical habit and turn our lives and will over to G-d as is stated in Ethics of the Fathers (2:4), He will deliver us from our despotic habit as well. Just as in the Exodus the deliverance did not occur until the enslavement surpassed our tolerance and we cried out to G-d (Exodus 2:23), so with any habit that has taken over control of our lives and has enslaved us, we must feel this enslavement as intolerable, because only then will we make a sincere effort to break loose from its grip and invoke G-d's help in becoming free.

Western civilization extols freedom as an inalienable human right. Unfortunately, this love of liberty is too often restricted to political freedom, but in our daily lives we may be oblivious to the fact that we have surrendered our freedom to various drives, and are not masters over our behavior any more than are brute beasts.

Nothing is more central to Jewish spirituality than free will. In his last words to us, Moses said, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, and you should choose life ... to love G-d and to hearken to His words" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). Moses was not referring to physical life, because we see many people who are physically alive although they do not observe the word of G-d. Moses was referring to spiritual life, to live at a human level rather than at an animal level, which constitutes the death of the human spirit. Spiritual life is choice, and we have freedom of choice only when we break loose from the tyranny of our physical, animalistic drives. The Talmud says, "Freedom is inscribed on the Tablets (of the Ten Commandments)" (Ethics of the Fathers 6:2).

As we have noted, animals are dominated by their bodily drives and do not have free choice. Angels, while totally spiritual, are agents of G-d to

carry out assigned missions, and they do not have a choice to obey or disobey. Of all creations, man is the only one that has choice, and in this way man is likened to G-d, because only G-d and man are free to act. Rabbi Dessler says that this is precisely what is meant by man being created in the "image of G-d"; i.e., that man is like G-d in not being compelled in his actions. How careful we must be in using the faculty that we alone share with G-d!

From: rabiwein-owner@torah.org on behalf of **Rabbi Berel Wein** [rbwein@torah.org] Sent: September 14, 2006 1:25 PM To: rabiwein@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Wein - Nitzavim/Vayelech www.RabbiWein.com

Jerusalem Post 22 Elul 5766 / 15 September 2006 HOLY DAYS:
TIME FOR AN ACCOUNTING
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21 The basis for Judaism and its value system can be summed up in one word – accountability. The gift of freedom of choice and action that G-d granted to humans comes, as do most gifts, with a price. And that price is that all of us are completely accountable for our actions and behavior. We each have an account sheet, so to speak, with columns for both credits and debits. How that account sheet looks eventually determines our fate and our eternity. But, there are those intermediary times when we can take stock.

The Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are such times. Our account sheet is reviewed as we pass before the Heavenly court without cover or pretense. The message of the Holy Days is a clear one. We are held accountable for good or for better for our past deeds and also for our future intents. We are deemed to be responsible individuals and therefore our account sheet is of vital importance in determining our status in life and our future.

Just as all publicly held firms must produce an annual fiscal report attested to by reputable accounting firms, so too during these Holy Days do we individually publish our own annual report. And, the Heavenly court that is aware of all of our actions and behavior attests to that report. Because of this it is completely understandable why accountability is the key word to any understanding of Judaism.

One of the ills of our current society is its acceptance of unlimited freedom of choice and behavior but its refusal to be accountable for the results of this uninhibited freedom. One of the hallmarks of our society is its inability to admit error in previous decisions, policies and behavior. No one is held accountable for all of the great mistakes of the past centuries.

The bankruptcy of those Jewish organizations and individuals who fled from Torah and tradition is evident to all by now, but many of them – those still in existence - continue along their merry way as though there was no past to reexamine and no true future to contemplate. But the law of accountability allows for no exceptions and eventually overtakes everyone. That should be apparent to anyone with even rudimentary knowledge of the story of Israel throughout the ages.

The final parshiyot of the Torah read in the synagogue over these past and coming weeks concern themselves almost exclusively with this idea of accountability – of reward and punishment and the aspects of the covenant of Sinai between G-d and Israel. The Torah itself declares that this "covenant shall respond to them even till the end of days." In a covenant, as in a contractual agreement, each side is held bound to its agreed upon terms and conditions. We are bound to our end of the covenant and the Lord, so to speak, states that He also is bound to His commitments. Again, accountability is the key word to the entire covenantal experience and challenge.

One should feel that one is accountable not only to G-d and to one's fellow human beings but perhaps most importantly to one's own self. The primary question addressed by Judaism is: "Of what purpose is my life - why am I here and what is asked of me?" If this question is never really addressed or if it is sloughed off and defined in purely material or monetary

terms then obviously life has little meaning. If it has no deep meaning then no dutiful accounting of behavior can ever arise in our minds and hearts. For life to have any sense of meaning or purpose then the goal of accountability must resonate within each individual.

The prayers of the Holy Days stress not only God's greatness and man's relative puniness but also the coming to terms of each individual with one's own past deeds and future aspirations. True teshuva – repentance – requires this simultaneous look both backwards and forwards regarding our life's actions and our mission and hopes. The concept of rigorous accountability helps us formulate a meaningful answer to our goals and aspirations in life. It allows us to age and mature gracefully and it creates the proper backdrop for our future plans and actions. It therefore is the ultimate blessing in our lives.

Weekly Parsha 22 Elul 5766 / 15 September 2006 NITZAVIM – VAYELECH

<http://rabbiwein.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=2118>

This is the final Shabat of the year 5766. It has been a difficult year for the Jewish people, for the State of Israel and for me personally. This year of war, death, scandal, disappointment, and an overwhelming feeling of uncertainty - which is really the natural human state of being - leaves us somewhat bewildered and downcast. We pray that the new year that now comes upon us will be one of comfort and healing, of good tidings and new and fruitful beginnings, with peace and confidence in our future.

On his final day, Moshe gathers all of Israel to bid them goodbye. He speaks not only to those who stand before him in life but also to those who are no longer here but whose memory and influence are still present amongst the living. He also speaks to the generations of Israel still unborn who are yet to come and shoulder the responsibilities and duties of Jewish achievement and survival. He repeats the unbending and inexorable terms of the covenant between G-d and Israel. But he promises them that in the end all will be right somehow and that the blessings of God's covenant with us will descend upon us to comfort and refresh us.

There probably cannot be any more fitting introduction to our supplications and prayers for the new year than these words of Moshe's that appear in this week's parsha. The parsha places the events of our life into a Godly perspective so that even our tragedies and disappointments take on meaning and purpose. God's covenant with us as individuals and as a people is still operative. We really cannot ask for more.

Moshe goes to his death with faith but also with regret. He is not privileged to enter the Land of Israel, being denied his life's dream and his children will not succeed him in the leadership of the Jewish people. As is the case with human beings, even Moshe, no one passes away having accomplished all that was desired. Yet Moshe dies peacefully, with God's kiss, so to speak, on his face, knowing that the Torah that he taught Israel will guarantee its survival as a people and will be a human force for all eternity. He is comforted in the knowledge that all of his efforts and travails, all of his disappointments and frustrations will, somehow, not be for naught.

The Torah will remain within the Jewish people and will eventually restore them to their land and their faith. No matter how distant they may stray from their faith and mission, the Torah will not abandon them. G-d will employ many different means to keep the covenant effective between Him and Israel. Moshe can therefore say confidently "It [the Torah] is not an empty thing as far as you are concerned but rather it is within your mouths and hearts to fulfill its demands and promises." It is this sense of unending continuity that is the greatest comfort to Moshe on his departure from this earth. It should also be the greatest source of comfort and hope for us as we depart from this year and enter into better and more blessed times.

Shabat shalom.

Rabbi Berel Wein

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From: ZeitlinShelley@aol.com Sent: September 07, 2006

**The Torah Way to go to Sleep
By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**

When preparing ourselves for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, many people concentrate upon character refinement. They might work hard to improve their anger control, they struggle mightily to stamp-out forbidden feelings of hate and jealousy, or they try to purge from their minds sinful thoughts. All of these pursuits are wonderful and absolutely necessary, but I would like to zoom-in on another aspect of personal improvement: On bettering our actual day-to-day religious behavior.

Let's use as an example how we get ready to go to sleep in the evening. The Mishnah Berurah strongly recommends that we make a personal accounting, a Cheshbon Hanefesh, before we retire every night. He suggests that we review the day's events and scrutinize whether we tripped-up with such sins as lying, mockery, speaking Loshon Hora, and he urges a special careful daily audit in the area of bitul Torah, neglecting our Torah study. In a contemporary vein, we might add perhaps that we must analyze the day's events and see whether we lost our temper, whether we were insensitive, and how we behaved with our spouse, our children, our parents, our friends, and our co-workers. Numerous other reflections are possible too. Did we daven with a minyan? Did we pay attention to our prayers? Did we make brochos properly and answer 'Amen' correctly? We might also add the following personal question: Did we invest sufficiently in our Olam HaBa, our Afterlife, on this particular and irreplaceable day?

While this may seem a lot to do when we are on the verge of collapse and ready to turn-in for the night, with some practice it really can be done very quickly and can be very rewarding. The Chofetz Chaim, Zt"l, Zy"a, adds that we should forgive anyone who wronged us or caused us pain during the day just passed. He writes that, in the merit of doing this, we will earn long life. This is easier said than done but, after all, long life is worth some effort and hardship. In a similar vein, the Zohar, in Parshas Mikeitz, teaches us that one who on his own forgives sincerely those who have wronged him - and instead takes steps to do good towards them - will be saved from death. The Shlah Hakodosh writes that it is a Jewish custom to kiss the mezuzah before retiring for the night. The word 'mezuzos' contains the same letters as the words zaz maves, which means that 'death will leave,' hinting to the powerful protection potential of the mezuzah.

Every Torah Jew, including, busy men and women, tired boys and girls, should say at least the first chapter of Krias Shema before going to sleep. It is preferable to say all three parshios-sections, of Shema together with the words 'Kel Melech Ne'emon,' for together they total two hundred and forty-eight words which correspond to the two hundred and forty-eight limbs of the body and affords them special nightly protection. The nighttime blessing of Hamapil should also be said whenever possible.

It is important to realize how vital these nightly rituals are. In Yiddishkeit, we are taught, "Hakal holeich achar hachasom," that everything goes after the finale. As such, what we do at the end of the day is critical in

measuring the success and failure of our entire day. It is said that the saintly Satmar Rebbe R' Yoel Teitelbaum, Zt"l, Zy"a, took more time saying Krias Shema al hamitah and the bracha of Hamapil than the amount of time that he actually slept!!

We must also consider that many of us sleep for about one-third of our lives. In the future, when Hashem judges us, most of us will draw a blank for all of the time we spent sleeping since, after all, we didn't do mitzvahs while we were snoring away in our beds. However, with just a little nightly attention, we can convert a full one-third of our lives into dynamic mitzvah production for we have a halachic rule that Hechsher mitzvah k'mitzvah, the preparation for a mitzvah is considered like a mitzvah itself. Therefore, before we lay down and go to sleep for the night, we should contemplate or even verbalize that we are going to sleep so that we can daven better and learn with greater concentration the next day. Then, our sleep becomes a hechsher mitzvah for davening and Torah study. If a woman, before retiring, thinks to herself that she is going to sleep so that she will be more patient with her children in the morning and fresh and full of vigor for her husband the next day, she converts her sleep into a shalom bais and chinuch activity. Then, after one hundred and twenty years, when we get up to Shamayim, we will be able to present all our years with one hundred percent productivity. In the merit of always trying to improve ourselves may Hashem bless us all with long life, good health and everything wonderful.

To receive a weekly cassette tape or CD directly from Rabbi Weiss, please write to Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss, P.O. Box 140726, Staten Island, NY 10314 or contact him at RMMWSI@aol.com. Attend Rabbi Weiss's weekly shiur at the Landau Shul, Avenue L and East 9th in Flatbush, Tuesday nights at 9:30 p.m. Rabbi Weiss's Daf Yomi shiurim can be heard LIVE on Kol Haloshon at (718) 906-6400. Write to KolHaloshon@gmail.com for details. (Sheldon Zeitlin transcribes Rabbi Weiss' articles. If you wish to receive Rabbi Weiss' articles by email, please send a note to ZeitlinShelley@aol.com.)

From: peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com on behalf of Shema Yisrael Torah Network [shemalist@shemayisrael.com] Sent: September 14, 2006 5:18 AM To: Peninim Parsha Subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - ParshasNitzovim/Vayeilech
PARSHAS NITZAVIM ..

You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d. (29:9)

The commentators address the meaning of the word "today." They explain that "today" is every day. We are to stand before the Almighty on a daily basis and accept the Torah with renewed vigor as we originally did at Har Sinai. In an alternative exposition, the Likutei Torah posits that hayom, "today," is a reference to the most auspicious day of the year: Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment, when we all stand before the Almighty to be judged for our deeds of the past year and to receive the decree for the upcoming year. We stand upright, confident and positive that we will emerge triumphant on this holy day. How does one stand before Hashem on this most decisive day? What "position" should one maintain as he stands in judgment before the King of Kings?

In the Mishnah Rosh Hashanah, Chazal teach us: "On Rosh Hashanah, all who walk the earth pass before Him like bnei maron, young sheep." This refers to the way young sheep pass through a narrow opening in the corral to be counted for the purpose of being tithed. Chazal add two alternative explanations for bnei maron. One interpretation is like maalos bnei maron, a narrow pass on a high mountain which allows for only one person to go through at a time. In another interpretation, bnei maron are soldiers who file by individually before the king. We must endeavor to understand the distinction between these three interpretations. Is there really a difference how we pass before Hashem?

Horav Shabsai Yudelewitz, zl, compares this to three types of people and their individual perspectives on the judgment they are to receive on Rosh Hashanah. He cites the following mashal, analogy, from Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl. A certain merchant went to the market to purchase merchandise for resale. He took with him two million ruble, some of it his own, with the remainder being money from various investors. Hashem was with him, and he succeeded in purchasing an impressive amount of merchandise at a very reasonable price. This would incur a tremendous profit for him and his investors. All he had to do now was bring it home. He rented a large wagon and a driver. He was not, however, prepared to pay the unreasonably

high tariff demanded by the customs inspectors at the border. Therefore, he decided to return home through a somewhat difficult and dangerous route that was seldom traveled and, thus, was basically free from the border patrol.

The wagon driver that he had hired was an expert who showed no fear of the danger that might confront them. They left at night under the cover of darkness, in order not to arouse any attention as to their intentions. It would take a few days to return home. Understandably, the merchant was nervous from the moment of departure. He had much to lose, much more than the wagon driver. This was the scenario on the wagon: The driver was calm and relaxed, while the merchant was a basket case. "Why are you so nervous?" the wagon driver asked. "The earliest possibility of danger is not for three more days. Relax!" His words had no effect on the merchant, who was becoming increasingly agitated with each passing mile. Finally, as they were getting closer to the border, the wagon driver himself started to show signs of stress. Little beads of sweat began to appear on his forehead, and his voice became more sullen as they neared the moment of truth. Suddenly, the merchant asked the driver, "Why are you so nervous? What do you have to lose? I have everything to lose. What is your excuse?"

"Do you think horses grow on trees?" the wagon driver replied. "If I get caught, I will lose my business. My horses are my only source of income." As they approached the border, all was quiet; the merchant was mumbling Tehillim to himself; the wagon driver was sweating profusely; this was the moment of truth. Suddenly, the horses begin to neigh at the top of their lungs. Of all times, now at the most critical point in the trip, they had to create a disturbance. They were horses, however, and they did not realize what there was to lose.

The analogy is very apropos. There are three levels of preparation for the Day of Judgment, each dependent upon one's depth of understanding of the proceedings and what he might lose. The first group are individuals who fear Hashem, whose piety and virtue is their hallmark. They begin to fret from Rosh Chodesh Elul. The moment the shofar is blown, they are acutely aware of the approach of the Yom HaDin, Day of Judgment. They understand what is at stake and how much they have to lose, similar to the soldier who files before the king for inspection and approval after much preparation and training. He realizes how meticulous he must appear. He is sure to come well-prepared.

Members of the next group do not manifest any anxiety until they are on the road for awhile. As Rosh Hashanah approaches, they begin to get their act together and demonstrate some outward signs of concern. They are like the wagon driver who has little to lose and shows it. Only when the border comes into his immediate sight does he become anxious. Like those who climb up the mountain, they manifest no fear until they reach the narrow pass that permits only one person at a time to pass through.

There is, however, yet another group. This group sleeps through Elul, and makes a farce out of Rosh Hashanah; it is all meaningless to these individuals. They simply have no clue what is at stake. Are they different than the senseless horses who pick the most inopportune time to announce their arrival at the border? These people are like the young sheep who pass through the narrow pen. Every tenth one is marked. They have no clue why they go through or why they are marked. When they discover the reason, it is too late. Regrettably, there are those among us who act like those young sheep. By the time we wake up, it is too late to do anything about it, and, instead of making a last resort attempt at salvaging what we have lost, we go back to sleep.

As we approach the Day of Judgment, we should remember what we have to lose and decide what we should do to prevent us from incurring this loss.

Parshas Vayeilech So now, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the Bnei Yisrael. (31:19)

The Talmud Megillah 3A relates the incident in which Yehoshua was laying siege to Yericho, when he met an angel at night. The angel said to him, "This evening you neglected the Korban Tamid Shel Bein Ha'Arbaim, Afternoon sacrifice, and now you have neglected the study of Torah." Yehoshua asked, "In regard to which (of these two sins) have you come?" The angel answered, "Ata basi." "I have come now." Immediately, the next night, (Rashi) Yehoshua studied Torah. The Rivan in Tosfos explains the relationship between the word ata, "now," and Torah study, as being derived from the above pasuk, V'ata, so now, kisvu es ha'shirah ha'zos, "Write this song for yourselves." Chazal teach us that "this song" is a reference to the Torah. We wonder why the angel cited this pasuk to emphasize the sin of bitul Torah, wasting time from studying Torah. Surely, there are other pesukim that state the preeminence of Torah study in our lives. What was the angel alluding to with this pasuk?

The Ponevezer Rav, zl, explains that from the perspective of Torah study alone, quite possibly Yehoshua could have found a dispensation for not studying at that time. After all, it was during a war. They were in the midst of the battlefield in the dead of night. There was sufficient reason to forego any critique concerning their laxity in Torah study. There was an aspect of Torah study, however, which they were missing. Torah is called shirah, song. Just as a melody is refreshing, exciting and

From: Aish.com [mailto:newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: September 10, 2006 9:36 AM Subject: New @ Aish.com - September 10, 2006

9/11 Heroes and Memories

by Jonathan Mark

And there was evening and morning, five years worth, and the world is still unformed and void, with darkness over the face of the deep.

For all the politics, bombs and battles in the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, what strikes the mourners is a more personal and sensual vacancy, the absence of touch and sight and voice, a severing of personal histories.

It is that quest for the senses that has inspired some of this year's private memorials.

Out in the Rockaways, not long ago, firefighter and former lifeguard Steve Belson - one of three Jewish firefighters to die in the World Trade Center -- was celebrated with a morning swim in the ocean just off the sands of Bell's Beach, as Beach 92 was officially renamed in his honor. His friends wanted to feel dripping wet with the memories of him, be buoyed by him, immersed in the ocean of him. At dusk, the day for Bells, as they called him, continued in a restaurant right on the water. A rock band played.

Has it been five years? Not for everyone. It's been 4 ½ years for Jason Zucker, born a few months after his dad, Andrew, disappeared in the South Tower's inferno. He knows his dad was a hero; seven survivors of the World Trade Center came forward to say the young lawyer saved their lives at the expense of his own. But stories are one thing and having no father to kiss is another. Now the boy will have a Torah to kiss, a new Torah with his father's name inscribed on the velvet.

On the Riverdale Jewish Center will finish the writing of a new Torah scroll in honor of Zucker, the local hero. It will be read for the first time on Sept. 11, and will be read for the first time on a Shabbat later that week on the actual yahrtzeit, Elul 23. An Israeli silversmith has crafted silver rimonim (pomegranates), a stylized evocation of the two towers, to adorn the scroll's two wooden handles.

Erica Zucker, Andrew's widow and Jason's mom, said: "Andrew was very connected to the shul, and we still are. I like the idea of something tangible, for something of Andrew to be there; something for Jason to see and touch as he grows up, to see the community's love for Andrew. I can always tell Jason about Andrew and how amazing and supportive the community was and is, but this is also a chance for Jason to see it -- the community writing a Torah in memory of his father."

It is Elul, the season of visiting cemeteries before the New Year. Student groups that fly to Poland to see death camps can now take a subway to Chambers Street. There is a messianic legend that when the Third Temple is built it will descend instantly, whole and complete from Heaven. Now we have a new apocalyptic legend -- a death camp that descended on New York; klieg lights suddenly glaring through the pale, smokey night haze; noses sensing a stench that couldn't quite be placed; soldiers rolling by on lorries; the sense of souls piled upon souls beneath ash and palsied metal.

On Beekman Street, a few blocks from the hallowed ground, Rabbi Meyer Hager, spiritual leader of the Wall Street Synagogue, anticipates the return of that most haunted day. He takes a black hat down from its shelf, the hat he wore on that morning five years ago. The hat is splotchy with an odd pale soot. As if pointing to an object on the Seder plate, he says: "This is the debris. I shook it off but then I caught myself. I thought, maybe I should keep it the way it is, so someone can see and learn what it holds for the future."

He remembers the soot and death that fell as gently "as snow."

Rabbi Hager said he couldn't help but notice that the saddest day of the Jewish year, Tisha b'Av, another day of fire and death, is also 9/11, the ninth day of the 11th Hebrew month.

Sometimes Rabbi Hager walks to the corner and looks up and sees nothing. As rabbi of the nearest synagogue to the World Trade Center, he had lit menorahs in its lobbies. He also stood 110 stories higher, on what seemed like an urban Everest, the roof of the World Trade Center, back in April 1981, to say the Blessing of the Sun, a blessing said only once every 28 years when the heavens are said to be aligned exactly as they were on the fourth day of creation, the sun's biblical birthday. While not quite Neil Armstrong, surely no man before Rabbi Hager ever said the Blessing of the Sun in greater proximity to the sun itself.

Six who died in the World Trade Center were financial supporters of the shul, even if only one or two of them came by even occasionally. When the rabbi thinks of martyred congregants he thinks as easily of the firemen of Engine 6, immediately adjacent to the shul. He remembers seeing firefighter Ben Johnston riding away on a fire truck and never seeing Ben Johnston again. On the first Shabbat after 9/11, firemen came to light the fires of candlelight so the shul could function despite the absence of electricity.

Contrary to the legend that those who prayed were late and therefore immunized from terror, services on that 9/11 ended at about 8:15 a.m., said the rabbi, so everyone had plenty of time to get to their offices in the World Trade Center and no one who prayed at the shul that morning was saved simply by virtue of his virtue.

pulsating, so too, does the Torah add excitement and vibrance to one's life. One who views the Torah as a song will never recuse himself from learning. How could he? It is his life! During battle, deprivation, and throughout any time frame or period, one finds time to study Torah. It is not merely an intellectual pursuit. It is chayim!

The angel criticized Yehoshua for the lack of the v'ata, "and now," referring to the Shira, the song, that Torah is to be. Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, would often relate from Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, who commented, "I cannot fathom any greater enjoyment in Gan Eden than a shtender, a book stand, with a Talmud Nedarim with the commentary of the Ran opened on it." This was life to him! No joy, no sense of satisfaction was comparable to the passion he felt through cheshkas ha'Torah, desire to study Torah. He is impervious to the extraneous hustle and bustle of the world around him. He was content with immersing himself in the sweet melody of the song of Torah.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, zl, was well known for his boundless love of Torah. This was demonstrated by the manner in which he davened, especially when he recited the tefillah of Ahavas olam. He would begin by beseeching Hashem to have mercy on us, and then he would slowly articulate each request accompanied by a torrent of tears. "Please, Hashem," he would supplicate, "V'tein b'libeinu. Place in our hearts (the ability and desire) 'Thavin, to understand, lishmoa, to listen, lilmod, to learn, u'lelamed, and to teach." He would then collapse in uncontrollable weeping as if he were bent over begging for his life. In truth, he was - because he knew no life other than a life of Torah. Without it, he was not alive.

For I shall bring them to the land that I swore for their forefathers... and (they) will turn to gods of others and serve them...It shall be when many evils and distresses come upon it...for I know its inclination, what it does today. (31:21,22)

The pesukim depict the situation and religious climate among the people even before they enter the Promised Land. Rather than sense a feeling of anticipation and holiness in preparation for this seminal event, they turn instead to idols, to the gods of others, to foolishness and absurdity. Afterwards, they have no idea why they are plagued with evils and distresses. Hashem relates that everything is a direct consequence of man's deference to his yetzer hora, evil inclination. We seek out alien cultures, hoping that we will ingratiate ourselves to them, not that they will help us. It is all upon the counsel and guile of the yetzer hora that manipulates us according to its goals. Moshe Rabbeinu presents all of this in the Torah, so that the people will have a clear and lucid picture of what will occur when they are drawn by their yetzer hora to the cultures of surrounding societies. They will wonder why all this is happening to them. The answer will be in the Torah - if they are willing to listen. For some, however, it will be too late.

Horav Eliyahu Schlessinger, Shlita, sees a deeper message in these pesukim, a message that is both timely and pragmatic. The nature of man is to search for a reason whenever something dreadful occurs. He must rationalize everything. He will blame everyone and everything. The last thing that will enter his mind is to blame himself for what has occurred. He is the righteous person, he is faultless. Everybody else is evil, he is a saint. If it sounds familiar, it is because we are all guilty of this offense. At one time or another, we will lay the blame at everyone's doorstep but our own. This pattern has, regrettably, been our trademark throughout history.

The Torah is conveying to us that we are wrong. If you wonder why we are suffering; why we are inundated with distress; why we are plagued with one crisis after another? The answer is that we are to blame; we caused the problem, we initiated the consequence. Hashem recognizes our inclination and knows how low and how far one will go to satisfy the burning desire created by his yetzer hora. Before we lay blame where it does not belong, let us look in the mirror and see from where it all starts.

We derive this lesson from Yonah Ha'Navi. He was traveling by ship, when a raging storm threatened to sink the ship and all of its passengers. Everyone prayed to his own god to no avail. They decided to throw lots to see if this would reveal the reason for the storm. The lot fell on Yonah. They asked him what he had done to incur the wrath of the Almighty. Yonah conceded that he was to blame and had them throw him overboard. Incredible! The ship was filled with idolaters of every shape and form. Certainly, the travelers were not all members of the righteous elite. Yonah could have easily made light of the lottery and blamed any number of people. He did not. Surely, his infraction paled in comparison with those of his fellow passengers. He could have kept quiet and ignored them. He did not, because he did not shirk his responsibility. He had erred, and he would accept the blame. The sooner one owns up to his responsibility, the quicker he can implement the changes necessary to put his mistakes behind him.

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However, said the rabbi, one gentleman who worked in the World Financial Center, taking a route that brought him through the Trade Center plaza, stayed another half-hour in the shul that day because he didn't quite understand his morning Talmud lesson and wanted clarification. By the time he left for work, the first plane had hit and police were turning people back.

But lives saved by coincidence or irony ought not be automatically confused with saintliness. Zucker, an Orthodox Jew and former volunteer firefighter, also put on tefillin and studied before he went to work that morning, and saved not himself but seven of God's children before America knew what hit them.

Madeline Brandstadter, Belson's mother, said she considered herself and her son to be thoroughly secular Jews. But she remembered that Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, FDNY chaplain, remarked in his eulogy: "They said that Steve was not religious. You tell me how someone can run into a burning building to save people and not be religious."

"I'll never forget that," said Belson's mother.

Belson wasn't much of a Jew if Jewish is defined by affiliation. He was more likely to nurture his soul through the Grateful Dead or Hot Tuna. His buddy, Fire Chief Butch Brandes of Battalion 41 in Flatbush, a vice president in the Ner Tamid fraternal organization of Jewish firefighters, remembered how he used to ask Belson all the time to join Ner Tamid.

Belson would say, "Yeah, when I have my 20 years" on the force.

"Then," said Brandes, after 20 years, "sure enough, he joined. And he didn't miss a meeting."

Belson, who had back surgery a few months before 9/11, charged into the burning North Tower and was last heard from on the 40th floor. He was never found.

He's there still.

In another way, Zucker's sister, Cheryl Shames, is there, too, a reader of victims' names on September anniversaries; a volunteer giving tours of the World Trade Center grounds; and soon to be a docent for the Tribute Center that opened on Liberty Street Sept. 6.

"Besides telling them about the World Trade Center," said Cheryl of her tours, "I get to tell them about Andrew. When people look at the Wall of Names, Andrew's name is the second to last, of almost 3,000 names. But if you came on my tour, you'll feel you knew him, that you had a connection to Andrew Zucker. I'm doing it for Andrew. I pass around photographs of Andrew."

Cheryl remembers that last time she saw her brother: "It was two Shabboses before Sept. 11. That Friday night he kept us up until one or two in the morning, talking through the whole timeline of our family's life, remembering the nittiest details. My eyes were closing from tiredness. He needed to talk. That was just days before 9/11."

He likely talked about being active in Jewish student life at the State University at Binghamton; his passion for being a volunteer media ombudsman, defending Israel from misperception; his prescient sense of current affairs, sending out e-mail advisories and petitions about the Taliban and the terrorists "like Hitler," he said, who would soon take his life. He e-mailed, "All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Good men were doing nothing, he said to friends, and he kept saying it until he was more right than he ever imagined.

On a Torah with his name on it will be danced down the street under a wedding canopy, not unlike Zucker's own, though it hurts to watch a wedding canopy going solo. The new Torah will be greeted on the steps of the shul by each of the other Torahs, welcoming Zucker's Torah into the ark. It's a way to think differently of Zucker's resting place; "ark" sharing the same Hebrew word as "casket."

Almost all of us expect further attacks. And yet a Torah is kissed, firemen are swimming and music plays.

And there was evening and there was mourning, five years.

Courtesy of The Jewish Week.



From: Aish.com [mailto:newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: September 10, 2006 9:36 AM Subject: New @ Aish.com - September 10, 2006

Negotiating With Kidnappers

by Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky

Judaism is comprised of a complete and specific system of practical Torah, and through the Talmudic process, sweeping Divine principles are translated into practical application. One must descend from the clouds of theological inspiration, roll up one's sleeves and tediously weigh the bits and pieces until one has ascertained that he is meticulously fulfilling God's will in the most practical of circumstances.

Let us take a most relevant of cases: the three abducted Israeli soldiers and the demands of their kidnappers for the freeing of thousands of terrorists in order to release them.

Before we proceed further, a few caveats. The author of this article is no way a competent enough authority to rule on so weighty an issue; the length of this article is

barely enough to scratch the surface. The real circumstances are known only to the government authorities.

But still this case will provide a fascinating insight into the some of the complexities in Jewish law that a rabbi must consider, and how misleading it is to translate a position into a simple, popular slogan.

The following would be a Talmudic thought process:

1. "Freeing captives is the greatest form of charity and it supersedes all other causes" (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 252, 1). "Anyone delaying this mitzvah is considered as guilty of blood-spilling" (ibid.).

This would seem to urge us to do whatever it takes in order to free a prisoner.

2. The Talmudic sages, however, seeing a terrible consequence of this great mitzvah, enacted the following decree:

"One does not free captives for more than their value (i.e. one would evaluate them as indentured servant -- their potential earning power."

The reason was twofold: (a) Captors demanded ransom that would devastate the community, causing widespread suffering, and (b) great ransom whetted the appetite of kidnappers and encouraged more and more kidnappings.

This would seem to imply that if the demands are outrageous, then one ought not to exchange them.

3. What if the captivity will conclude in the killing of the captive -- do we still refrain from ransoming him at an exorbitant price?

Torah authorities have debated this point and many are of the opinion that if the captive's life is in danger, then the above injunction does not apply.

It would seem that we ought to do whatever it takes to free them, for there is definitely an almost certainty of their being killed.

4. The above principles make sense when we are giving up money in order to save a life; but in the case Israel is presently grappling with, we are giving up murderers who potentially endanger other people's lives. Looking at the whole picture, can it be stated that we are in effect saving lives by agreeing to terrorist demands?

5. Yet another point must be considered. Is the killing of the captives, G-d forbid, a certainty if they are not released? And is the damage done by the release of terrorists to be viewed as a likelihood, not a certainty?

6. One more issue. This injunction applies to the community as a whole. What about the individual himself? If he can negotiate his own release, may he do so at an exorbitant price? What about his immediate family?

The list of issues and sources go on further and further.

Some of these issues had an extraordinary public application about 700 years ago. The leader of Ashkenazic Jewry at the time was Rabbi Meir ben Boruch of Rottenberg. He was imprisoned by a German ruler, Rudolph, whose voracity knew no bounds. Rabbi Meir (known as Maharam Mi'Rottenberg) was imprisoned until his death, and his body was not released. The community did not ransom him, as he himself had ruled. Seven years after his death, a private member of the community paid almost all of his own money to release the body, with the stipulation that he be buried next to him.

It is important to bear in mind when we see the devastated parents of the captives on one hand, and the look on the face of those who lost kin at the hands of terrorists on the other hand, that decisions about life and death should never ever be decided by raw emotions. Torah values, principles and laws must be weighed by the responsible minds of Torah authorities, and only then can we feel that we have done that which is right, price notwithstanding.

Please pray for three kidnapped soldiers: Gilad ben Aviva, Ehud Ben Malka, Eldad Ben Tova

<http://www.anshe.org/parsha.htm#parsha> Parsha Page

by **Fred Toczek** - A Service of Anshe Emes Synagogue (Los Angeles)

NETZAVIM 5757 & 5762

I. Summary

A. A Covenant with Hashem. On the day he was to die, Moshe assembled every man, woman and child of Israel to bring them into a Covenant with Hashem. The Covenant confirmed that they are Hashem's chosen people, and applied not only to those present, but to all future Jewish generations.

B. Curses. A warning was issued to anyone who contemplated rejecting Hashem in the belief that the curses mentioned earlier wouldn't apply to him. Such conduct would arouse Hashem's anger, and the individual would be blotted out from the earth. If the public sinned, the land would be destroyed; when later generations wondered about the cause of this destruction, they would be told that it was the result of the abandonment of Hashem and His ways.

C. Return to Hashem. After the Jews have experienced Hashem's blessing and curse and returned to His fold, Hashem will gather them from dispersion and return them to Israel. Then, the curse would be transferred to their enemies who had persecuted and oppressed them (while the Jews, provided that they accepted Hashem's commandments fully, would then experience the blessings of prosperity and happiness).

D. The Choice Between Life and Death. Thus, the people should realize that the choice between life and death -- between good and evil -- is placed before them. The heaven and earth are eternal witnesses to this offer. If the Jews choose to cling to Hashem, they'll thrive; otherwise, they'll perish.

II. Divrei Torah

A. Living Each Week (R' Avraham Twerski) One Day At A Time.

"You are standing this day, all of you, before G-d . . . to enter the covenant which G-d makes with you this day . . . that He may establish you this day unto Himself." Three times Moshe stresses "this day" - why? In his final words to the Jews, Moshe urges them to follow the commandments of the Torah, telling them that they would be rewarded for doing so (and conversely punished if they deviate from G-d's Word). However, there are moments of temptation when even the promise of reward or threat of punishment are insufficient to control one's behavior. Moshe teaches them that the key to success is "this day" - adapting to a lifestyle of taking it one day at a time. By concentrating only on this day and avoiding worrying about the future or the past, we can easily follow the Torah's commandments.

B. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

1. The Greater Your Desire To Obtain Torah Knowledge, The Easier It Will Be To Overcome Difficulties. "[The Torah] is not in heaven that you should say who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it down to us that we may hear it and do it? Nor it is beyond the sea that you should say who shall go over the sea for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?" The Talmud states on this verse that if the Torah were in heaven, we would be required to climb and reach it. And, if the Torah was across the ocean, we would have to travel and reach it. The Torah is so crucial to our existence that even if it were extremely difficult to acquire, we must make every effort to acquire it. The more we appreciate the value of Torah, the more we will overcome any obstacles that might prevent us from its study.

2. A Deep Commitment To Change Immediately Changes Us. "The matter is very close to you in your mouth and heart to do it." R' Chaim Shmuelovitz commented that no matter how far away we are, if we are committed to becoming a better person we will be to make an immediate transformation of ourselves. When we make a verbal commitment to G-d and ourselves to become a different person, our very words put us into a different place than we were before.

C. Soul of the Torah (Victor Cohen)

1. Unity/Individuality. "You are standing today, all of you before Hashem your G-d." The Lubavitcher Rebbe, z'tl noted that the Parsha begins with Jews standing together before Hashem as an entity - "all of you" - and then details the different groups and types of people. Though the Jews are one unit, each Jew makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution. Each Jew has his/her mission which unites the entire Jewish people. The unity of the Jewish people is created not by everyone being the same, but by each being him/herself and fulfilling the directives of Hashem.

2. The Mother's Role. "Your small children, your women". The Sassover noted that the Torah teaches us that it is the obligation of mothers to train their children to be on the right path of life.

3. An Eternal Legacy. "That you may live." The Tarigraner explained that this means that although we leave this world, if we have decent and honest children, we have not died. (Noam Maggidim).

4. Tell It From The Torah. Our Feelings Will Follow. "For it is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to do." The mouth is mentioned before the heart because sometimes it is harder to get our hearts involved - we must first take action. This is why we don't necessarily feel like we are getting into something, we must not get up. Eventually, our feelings will follow.

D. Something To Say (R' Dovid Goldwasser).

Each Of Us Is A Divine Messenger. "For this commandment, it not hidden from you . . .". As noted above, if the Torah was in heaven, we would be required to pursue it. The Shem MiShmuel wondered how we can go up to heaven to study Torah. Further, he asks, how can a mortal person affect what happens in heaven? He answers that each of us is a messenger of G-d, put on this world to fulfill the mitzvos. A messenger possesses in some measure the traits and attributes of the sender. Therefore, our spiritual power and the good we do it have results that reach to the very heavens.

E. Torah Gems (Aharon Yaakov Greenberg)

1. To Be As Moshe. "You stand this day." The Rambam writes that each of us can be as Moshe, and this is not dependent on our lineage or wealth. Rather, it depends solely on our desire to serve G-d. Thus Moshe said, "You stand this day" - all of you, both great and small, are worth of this. (Divrei Sha'ul)

2. The Power of Repentance. "You shall return to the L-rd your G-d." The Baal Shem Tov noted that if a place is pitch black and one enters it with a candle, the darkness disappears. By the same token, if a person repents, even if he sinned before and sullied his soul, he becomes a new creature. If you return, you will reach all the way "to the L-rd your G-d."

F. Lil'Mode U'ilamed (Rabbi Mordechai Katz)

1. All stand as equals before Hashem. "You are standing this day, all of you, before Hashem your G-d, your leaders, your tribes, your Elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel. Your little ones, your wives, your stranger that is in your camp, from the cutter of your wood to the drawer of your water." This passage underscores that all members of Israel stood together as equals before Hashem. This is dramatic proof that to Hashem each individual, no matter what his station in life, has the same potential for spiritual greatness. Each person can, in his own way, rise to the summit of holiness. No one should consider himself too insignificant to be a partner in the Covenant between the Jews and Hashem. On Rosh Hashonah, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev rose to blow the shofar. As he was about to begin, he stopped, removed the shofar from his lips and put it down. As the delay continued, the people grew restless, for they couldn't understand why the Rabbi delayed. "My friends," said the Rabbi, "in the rear of the shul sits a Jew who was kidnaped as a young child, brought up by a gentile family and drafted into the army. When he was 40 years old, he was finally freed and allowed to return to his people. This man had not been inside a shul since he was a child, until he joined us today. He couldn't possibly remember the prayers he heard so long ago. Yet, he was so overcome with emotion at his return to the House of Hashem. He yearned to join in the expressions of devotion to Hashem. And so I saw him speaking the only remnants of Hebrew that he recalled from his youth -- the letters of the Alef Beis. But he said them with such feeling that they rose straight to heaven. I therefore paused so that his letters will have time to reach Hashem, who will Himself form them into the words of our prayers. Now, we can begin the blowing of the shofar."

2. Searching for the treasure within yourself. "For this commandment which I command you today is not hidden from you, nor is it far off." With this passage, the Torah reminds us that the secret of life lies not in unreachable treasure, but directly in the Torah which is accessible to all.

3. Teshuvah (repentance). Moshe informed the Jews that even if they abandoned the Torah and were plagued with calamities, they could still regain Hashem's favor if they repented. To do so, they had to declare that their sinful ways are wrong and actively change them. Teshuvah, the returning to Hashem's fold, is not a simple matter. It often requires a lengthy and difficult process, complete with frustrations and backslidings. It sometimes takes place in stages; success in improving one aspect of our behavior gives us the impetus to proceed further. One should never become so frustrated by the lack of progress that he gives up the battle for Teshuvah entirely. As long as one is alive, there is still time for repentance. As our Sages say, "repent one day before your death." A man once asked a Rabbi, "How do I do this? How do I know when I will die?" "That is exactly the point," replied the Rabbi. "No one knows when he or she will die; thus, one should start doing Teshuvah immediately."

VAYEILECH 5757

I. Summary

A. Moshe's charge to Yehoshua. Moshe was 120 years old, and announced that his leadership was drawing to its close. He revealed that Yehoshua had been chosen by Hashem as his successor to take command and lead the Jews successfully into Israel. In the presence of the entire assembly, Moshe urged Yehoshua to be strong and courageous, and to place his full trust in Hashem.

B. Writing of the Law/Public Reading on Succos. Moshe then committed the Law to writing and delivered it to the Koheinim and Elders. When there would be a king over Israel, he would be charged with reading it publicly on Succos (during the year after the Shemittah year) to the Israelites assembled at the Sanctuary; thus, every man, woman and child of Israel would be constantly reminded of their obligation to obey Hashem.

C. A Copy of the Law in the Sanctuary. The copy of the Law written by Moshe was to be placed by the Levi'im at the site of the Aron HaKodesh to bear witness against Israel if they were to deviate from its teachings.

D. The Teaching of Ha'azinu. Moshe was told to assemble the people to teach them the passage of Ha'azinu, which would again remind them of the consequences of turning against Hashem.

II. Divrei Torah

A. Growth Through Torah (Rabbi Zelig Pliskin)

1. Help people overcome their fears. "And Moshe went . . ." Ibn Ezra explains that before Moshe died he went to each tribe to notify them that he was about to die, but they should not be afraid because he was leaving them with Yehoshua who would be a reliable leader. We learn from Moshe that we must do everything to alleviate another's fears.

2. When studying Torah properly you will experience much light and consolation. "And now write for you this song." This verse contains the last commandment in the order of the Torah (i.e., to write a Torah scroll). The Chofetz Chaim noted that this mitzvah comes right after the verse which states that Hashem will hide His presence from the people because of their transgressions; this teaches us that even in times of darkness when we engage in Torah study we will find much light and consolation.

3. Give your children positive Jewish experiences. When the king was to read the Torah before the entire Jewish nation, he was told to "gather together the nation, the men, women and the little children . . . in order that they should learn, fear Hashem, and observe the Torah." Rashi cites the Talmud that the children were brought along in order to bring rewards to their parents; the Talmud calls this concept a "precious jewel". What do we learn from this?

a. Even though young children do not understand what is being said, just being present when the king read the Torah before the entire nation would have a major impact on them for the rest of their life. They would gain a sense of the importance of the Torah to the entire Jewish people. Even today, we must do everything we can so that children learn from an early age the importance of the Torah; every experience makes a profound impression.

b. As noted in Peninim on the Torah, the choice of words used to describe the parents -- i.e. those who "bring them", rather than just the "parents" -- teaches us an additional lesson. Perhaps the Talmud wishes to stress the importance of the parents in the child's Jewish educational experience. In order for children to benefit fully from their Jewish education, the parents must be actively involved and come together with them to listen, learn and experience.

From: weekly-halacha-owner@torah.org on behalf of Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: September 11, 2006 10:23 PM To: weekly-halacha@torah.org Subject: Weekly Halacha - Parshas Netzavim/Vayeilech WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5766

By **Rabbi Doniel Neustadt**

Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights

A discussion of Halachic topics.

For final rulings, consult your Rav

SHE'AILOS U'TESHUVOS

QUESTION: When reciting Selichos early in the morning, should the sheliach tzibbur recite a berachah upon putting on his tallis?

DISCUSSION: In many shuls, Selichos is recited early in the morning before the time period known as misheyakir, which is approximately 45 minutes(1) before sunrise. Although it is permitted to don a tallis at that time, it is not permitted to recite the berachah over it, in deference to the Rishonim who maintain that one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of tzitzis at night.(2) What, then, should the sheliach tzibbur - who is required to wear a tallis for Selichos - do? Here(3) are three possible solutions:

* Borrow a tallis from another congregant [with the explicit intention of merely borrowing it, as opposed to halachically "acquiring" it] and put it on without reciting a berachah. This solution is based on the principle that one does not recite a berachah on a borrowed tallis.(4) When Selichos are over, the tallis is returned to its owner and the sheliach tzibbur can then put on his own tallis and recite the berachah.

* Use the shul's tallis without reciting a berachah over it. [Although many poskim require a berachah when a shul's tallis is worn, nowadays, the prevalent custom follows the opinion of the poskim who hold that no berachah is recited on a shul's tallis when worn by the sheliach tzibbur or by a person receiving an aliyah, etc.(5)]

* Put on his own tallis without reciting the berachah. When the time for reciting the berachah arrives, there is no need to remove and put on the tallis again; simply looking at the strings(6) and touching them(7) is sufficient for reciting the berachah at that time. This solution is the least desirable halachically, since all too often one is distracted and forgets to recite the berachah when misheyakir arrives. This third solution should only be employed if the previous ones are not an option. [Those who recite Selichos after chatzos need not be concerned with this issue altogether; the sheliach tzibbur should wear the shul's tallis without reciting the berachah.(8)]

QUESTION: May a safety pin be used on Shabbos and Yom Tov?

DISCUSSION: This issue is widely debated by the poskim. A minority opinion maintains that using a safety pin (or a straight pin) to connect fragments of a torn garment, to pin up a loose hem or to fasten a shank button to a garment, should be avoided on Shabbos and Yom Tov. In their opinion, pinning is included in the Shabbos Labor of Sewing, since the

safety pin binds two (or more) previously disconnected or torn parts of a garment, just as Sewing does.(9)

But the vast majority of the poskim disagree and maintain that it is permitted to use a safety pin on Shabbos without restriction. They explain that using a pin is not considered Sewing at all, since no thread or other bonding agent is being used. In addition, Sewing is defined as connecting two pieces of material into a single solid piece; an entity that could only be separated by the process of tearing or cutting.(10) Using a safety pin to connect two pieces of fabric is similar to buttoning a shirt or zipping a zipper, which is not considered Sewing at all.(11)

The basic halachah follows the lenient opinion.(12) Still, when possible, it is recommended that one or more of the following be done in order to satisfy the more stringent opinion:

* Insert the safety pin only one time into each section of the materials being connected.(13)

* After Shabbos, remove the safety pin and separate the pinned-together pieces.(14)

* Avoid using small, less noticeable safety pins, since they are more likely to be left in place for an extended period of time.

* Use a straight pin rather than a safety pin, since a straight pin is less likely to be left in a garment for an extended period of time.

QUESTION: Many banks offer a service whereby customers may instruct the bank to pay their utility (or other) bills on a specific date of the month. Should one refrain from using this service since eventually a payment will be made on his behalf on a Shabbos (or Yom Tov)?

DISCUSSION: There is no halachic reason not to use this service. While it is true that eventually a payment date will fall on Shabbos, and one may not instruct a non-Jew - even before Shabbos - to perform a service on his behalf on Shabbos,(15) in this case there is no action performed by a non-Jew on Shabbos; the entire process from beginning to end is automated. The bill is actually paid through a computer transaction from one account to the other. There is no halachic restriction on having a machine perform a service on Shabbos on behalf of a Shabbos-observant Jew, if the machine is programmed in advance to do so.(16)

QUESTION: Where should the bayis of the tefillin shel yad be placed if one's left arm is in a cast (or wrapped in a bandage)?

DISCUSSION: It depends on which part of the arm is covered by the cast. If the entire biceps area is covered, then the bayis shel yad should be placed on top of the cast. The bayis must then be covered with the sleeve of the shirt or jacket.(17) No blessing is recited at this time. But when the bayis shel rosh is placed on the head, the two berachos are recited - lehaniach tefillin, followed by al mitzvas tefillin and baruch Sheim.(18)

If, however, the cast does not cover the entire biceps area(19) and there is enough room to place the bayis shel yad directly on the upper arm, then the bayis should be placed there and the retzuos are wound around the cast. The blessing of lehaniach tefillin is recited.(20)

QUESTION: Some women do not blow out the flame of the match, lighter, etc. after lighting candles on erev Shabbos; instead, they allow the flame to extinguish on its own. They do this in order to avoid transgressing a Shabbos Labor - "Extinguishing" - once they have accepted Shabbos with the kindling of the candles. Should all women observe this custom?

DISCUSSION: No, they need not do so. It is permitted to extinguish the flame after lighting candles as long as one does so before reciting the blessing of l'hadlik ner shel Shabbos. Although Shulchan Aruch does note the custom of "some" women who are careful not to put out the flame after lighting candles,(21) this custom no longer applies today when all women (who follow the Ashkenazi custom(22)) recite the blessing over the candles after kindling them. Since Shabbos does not begin until after the blessing is recited, there is ample time to blow out the flame before reciting the blessing.(23)

QUESTION: Does the same halachah apply to Yom Tov?

DISCUSSION: On Yom Tov when many women follow the custom of reciting the blessing before lighting candles,(24) care should be taken not to put out the flame after lighting them. This is because once Yom Tov has begun, it is forbidden to extinguish a fire. The match, therefore, should be carefully put aside and allowed to extinguish on its own or she may hand it over to another person to extinguish it.(25) [A woman who is afraid to allow a match to extinguish on its own should light her candles first, blow out the match, and then recite the blessing, as she does on a regular erev Shabbos.(26) Of course, she may do this only if she lit candles before sunset. If she is lighting after Yom Tov has begun, she may not put out the flame.]

FOOTNOTES: 1 There are several views among contemporary poskim as to when, exactly, *misheyakir* occurs, ranging from 60 to 35 minutes before sunrise. 2 O.C. 18:3 and Mishnah Berurah 10. 3 See Mishnah Berurah 581:6 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 5. 4 O.C. 14:3 and Mishnah Berurah 11. 5 See Beir Halachah O.C. 14:3, s.v. *shalah* and Halichos Shelomo 2:1-1. 6 O.C. 24:3. 7 O.C. 8:10. See *Igros Moshe*, O.C. 4:7. 8 See Halichos Shelomo 2:1-1 and *Shalmei Moed*, pg. 22. Alternatively, he could wear his own without a reciting a *berachah*, since in this case there is no concern that he will forget to recite the *berachah* when the appropriate time arrives. 9 Mishnah Berurah 340:27, quoting *Korban Nesanel*. 10 See *Aruch ha-Shulchan* 317:18. 11 *Aishel Avraham*, O.C. 526; *Chazon Ish*, O.C. 156; *Igros Moshe*, O.C. 2:84; *Be'er Moshe* 2:29; *Tzitz Eliezer* 13:43. See *Binyan Shabbos*, *Tofer* 10:2. 12 *Harav S.Z. Auerbach* (*Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah* 15, note 244). 13 *Minchas Yitzchak* 2:19; *Shevet ha-Levi* 4:35. 14 Based on *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 340:3. 15 O.C. 307:2. [Although in our case there is no direct command to pay the bill on Shabbos but rather to do so on a specific date of the month, it still would be prohibited to specifically tell a non-Jew to do so, since that date will, at one time or another, fall out on Shabbos. This is halachically considered as if he instructed the non-Jew to make payment on Shabbos; based on *Igros Moshe*, O.C. 3:44, s.v. *aval*.] 16 O.C. 252:1. 17 Although when placing the *bayis shel yad* directly on the bare arm one is not required to cover it and it may be exposed (*Rama* 27:11), in this case, when the *bayis* is placed on a *chatzitzah* (an obstruction), the *bayis* must be covered; *Mishnah Berurah* 27:16, 18. See explanation in *Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav* 27:8. 18 *Mishnah Berurah* 27:18. See *Minchas Yitzchak* 2:46. 19 Although the opinion of the *Rama* in O.C. 26:1 is that the proper position of the *bayis shel yad* is at the midpoint of the humerus bone, in this case we may follow the view of the *Gra*, quoted by *Mishnah Berurah* (26:4), who holds that the *bayis shel yad* may be positioned anywhere on the biceps muscle. 20 *Mishnah Berurah* 27:16. 21 O.C. 263:10. 22 Most *Sefaradim*, however, recite the blessing before kindling; *Yechaveh Da'as* 2:33. 23 *Aruch ha-Shulchan* 263:14; *Yechaveh Da'as* 2:33, quoting *Mateh Yehudah* 263:2. [Note that *Mishnah Berurah* does not disagree with this; indeed, he repeatedly rules that Shabbos begins after the blessing is recited; see 263:21 and 27. See also *Da'as Torah* 263:5 (s.v. *v'yesh*).] *Chayei Adam* and *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, too, do not mention the custom of allowing the flame to extinguish by itself. See also addendum to *Shulchan Shelomo*, vol. 1, pg. 19. 24 As ruled by *Mishnah Berurah* 263:27. 25 *Harav S.Z. Auerbach* (*Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah* 43, note 179). 26 Based on the ruling of the *Magen Avraham* (263:12) and *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (75:4), who rule that women should light on erev Yom Tov exactly as they do on erev Shabbos: first light the candles and then recite the blessing.

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