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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIGASH - 5769

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Rabbi Hershel Schachter On Amassing Money

Some sociologists opined that money is an evil of society. The Chaon Ish (Yoreh Deah 72:2) pointed out that halacha does not share that perspective. Rather, even in an ideal Torah world we would use kesef (money) to fulfill mitzvos.

The halacha declares that in most instances shoveh kesef (a commodity which has value) can be used in place of kesef. For example, we get married by having the chosson hand a ring, i.e. shoveh kesef, to the kallah, as opposed to giving her kesef, and this constitutes a form of kidushei kesef. Nonetheless, one can only fulfill the mitzvah of machatzis hashekel by giving kesef to the Beis Hamikdash for the purpose of purchasing the korbanos tzibbur (Bechoros 51a).

A variety of opinions are presented in Shulchan Aruch (Choshem Mishpat 369) regarding the extent to which halacha recognizes dina demalchusa. The Shach (Yoreh Deah 165:8) points out that all agree that dina demalchusa determines what is considered kesef. Whatever currency the government of any given country establishes has the halachic status of kesef. When the second Beis Hamikdash was built there was no Jewish government ruling over Eretz Yisroel. As such, the mitzvah of machatzis hashekel had to be fulfilled by giving a coin recognized as kesef by the ruling non-Jewish government. After several centuries when the Chashmonaim established a Jewish government in Eretz Yisroel and minted their own coins, "Jewish" coins replaced the "non-Jewish" coins for this mitzvah.

The Talmud (Pesachim 54b) speaks of the concept of "money" being part of G-d's initial plan for creating the world, just as the Torah and the mitzvos preceded the creation of the world. The rabbis of the Talmud (Shabbos 33b) tell us that Yaakov Avinu improved the life of the citizens of Shechem by introducing a monetary system for them. Money is something positive. Without money we can not function.

Judaism, as opposed to certain other religions, has never preached that poverty is an ideal. The Rema (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 248) considers making a living something positive, comparable to a mitzvah. As such, one who lives in Eretz Yisroel is permitted to go to chutz la'aretz for the purpose of making a living. Even if one is making ends meet, but wants to go to chutz la'aretz to make a more comfortable living, the accepted opinion is that this too is permissible. However, we would not allow one who already makes a comfortable living to go to chutz la'aretz in order to become wealthy (see Moed Kattan 14a). There is no mitzvah to be poor, but there is also no mitzvah to be rich.

We all need food in order to survive, be healthy, and function. However, we should not love food. Many Americans suffer from obesity because they love food and overeat. Similarly, we all need money to live in this world. However, we should not develop a love for money. Koheles (5:9) teaches us that one who loves money will never be satisfied with the money he has. The Medrash (Koheles Rabbah 1:34) famously comments, "ein adam yotze min haolam vechatzi ta'avaso beyado". When those who love money die, regardless of how much money they have amassed it will not be even half of what they desired.

The Talmud (Avodah Zarah 11a) tells us that R' Yehuda Hanasi was extremely wealthy, which was necessary for his position as chief rabbi. But he did not love the money. In fact, he hardly took any pleasure from this world (Kesubos 104a).

The parsha tells us (Breishis 47:14) that Yosef amassed all of the cash from Egypt and Canaan by selling the grain that he stored. He understood that this was needed for the Egyptian government, and apparently saw this as part of the message of Pharaoh's dream. However, we do not get the impression that he became one who loved money.

The Medrash (Koheles Rabbah 5:8) distinguishes between two types of observant Jews: one who merely observes the mitzvos, and one who loves mitzvos. The one who observes, but does not love, mitzvos will be satisfied with keeping the mitzvos which come his way. But the one who loves mitzvos will always be on the lookout for additional mitzvos. He will never be satisfied with the mitzvos that he may have fulfilled already – "ohev mitzvos lo yisba mitzvos".

Rather than love money, or love food, we should all develop a love for mitzvos.

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Living Each Week

By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski
Parashas Vayigash

Joseph said unto his brothers, "I am Joseph!" (Genesis 45:3).

From the moment the brothers set foot in Egypt they were bewildered by the inexplicable events that were occurring: Why is the viceroy accusing us of being spies? Where in the world did he get that absurd notion? Why is he insisting on our bringing our younger brother? Why did he take Shimon hostage? How did the money we paid for the grain get into our sacks? How does the viceroy know our birth order so precisely? Why the plot to accuse Benjamin of thievery? In their anguish the brothers cried, "What is this that G-d has done to us?" (42:28).

When Joseph uttered the two simple words, "Ani Yosef (I am Joseph)," all their questions were suddenly answered. Everything became crystal clear, everything made perfect sense, and not even the smallest item remained unexplained. No elaborate explanations were needed, and indeed, not a single explanatory word was said. "Ani Yosef" accounted for everything.

"We, too," said the Chofetz Chaim, "are bewildered. We have many vexing questions. 'What is this that G-d is doing to us?' we have so often asked. There are so many unfathomable mysteries. Not even the wisest among us has been able to shed any light on the repetitious suffering and

the tragedies we have experienced throughout history. How can any of this make sense?"

The Chofetz Chaim states that one day G-d will reveal Himself to us and say, "Ani Hashem (I am G-d)," and suddenly everything will make sense. Everything that had heretofore been totally inexplicable will be understood by all. Everything will fall neatly into place, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

We have every right to request an accounting, and indeed, we will receive a full accounting. But there will be no need for long dissertations and complex explanations. As with Joseph and his brothers, when two words were sufficient, the two words "Ani Hashem" will, at that time, explain everything.

Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayigash Jan. 1, 2009

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

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Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayigash These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape #574, Being the Bearer of Bad Tidings. Good Shabbos!

The Krias Shma "Cover Up": When "Seeing" Is "Not Believing"

The following thought is printed in the introduction to the Responsa Kol Aryeh. I originally heard it when Rav Noson Kulefsky cited it at the funeral of his father Rav Yaakov Moshe Kulefsky, ZTL. It made a very profound impression on me at the time and I made a mental note to share it on an appropriate occasion.

As Yaakov was about to descend to Egypt, the Almighty appeared to him and told him: "I am the G-d – G-d of your father. Have no fear of descending to Egypt, for I shall establish you as a great nation there. I shall descend with you to Egypt, and I shall also surely bring you up; and Yosef shall place his hand on your eyes." [Bereshis 46:3-4]. Regarding the words "and Yosef shall place his hand on your eyes" the Zohar comments: "This is what the secret of Krias Shma is all about."

What does this enigmatic comment of the Zohar mean? The Kol Aryeh explains this Zohar based on a Gemara [Pesachim 50a]: "Rav Acha bar Chanina states: This world is not like the next world. In this world one recites the blessing 'Blessed is the One who is good and does good' (HaTov U'Meitiv) on good news one recites the blessing 'Blessed is the True Judge' (Dayan haEmes) and on bad news. However, in the world to come, only 'Blessed is the One who is good and does good' is recited." The Gemara uses this teaching to explain the pasuk [verse] "And Hashem will be King over the entire world; on that day His Name will be One and He will be One." [Zecharia 14:9]

Rav Yechezkel Landau, (who lived in 18th century Prague) explains in his commentary 'Tzlach' on Tractate Pesachim that unfortunately we see things which are tragic in this world. Hopefully, there are occasions when we have good news, but this life is also filled with seemingly tragic events. A Jew must believe (this is easier said than done) that ultimately every thing is for the good. There have been tzadikim throughout the generations who were able to say 'this too is for the best' (gam zu l'tova), no matter what happened to them in their lives. For most people, however, there is a dichotomy in this world between "good things" and "bad things". In the world to come, when we will not be bound by the restrictions of time and we will see everything in the context of the bigger picture, we will be able to perceive that everything in fact is "good". Therefore, we will be capable of reciting – even on those things that appear "bad" – the blessing "HaTov u'Meitiv".

The Kol Aryeh cites his great teacher the Chasam Sofer (who lived 1762-1839 in Hungary), who explains the Almighty's answer to Moshe's request "Show me, please, your glory" [Shmos 33:18]. Based on the Gemara [Brachos 7a], Moshe was thereby asking the profound and age-old

question: "Why are there righteous people who suffer and wicked people who prosper?" The Almighty responded: "Behold! There is a place near Me; you may stand on the rock. When My glory passes by, I shall place you in a cleft of the rock; I shall shield you with My hand until I have passed. Then I shall remove My hand and you will see My back, but My face may not be seen." [Shmos 33:21-23]. The Chasam Sofer explains the idea of seeing G-d from the back but not from the front allegorically.

"My face may not be seen" means understanding things while they are happening. Man is incapable – from his perspective - of understanding the idea of the righteous suffering and the wicked prospering. Only if man "stands with G-d" and can see all of history from beginning to end will he have the ability to understand things in context and appreciate that everything is in fact for the best. "My back" means in retrospect – from the rear.

The belief that G-d always does what is good, is essentially what we say when we recite Krias Shma. Hear O Israel, the L-rd (Hashem) our G-d (Elo-keinu), the L-rd (Hashem) is One.

We are familiar with the idea that the word Elokeinu (our Elo-kim) is the Name of G-d that represents His attribute of Judgment. The name Hashem (Yud-Kay-Vov-Kay) is the Name that represents His attribute of Mercy. The interpretation of the declaration of Shma Yisrael is the following: "Understand O Israel the Name Hashem (Yud-Kay-Vov-Kay) representing mercy and compassion is identical with the Name - Elokeinu – our G-d of Justice; it is all one. He sometimes appears merciful and sometimes as a strict Judge, but we must believe that ultimately it all emerges from the name Hashem – the Name associated with Mercy.

The Talmud states [Berachos 13b] that when Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi recited Krias Shma, he would cover his eyes. Based on this passage, the Tur in Shulchan Aruch rules – and this is the universal practice – that every Jew should cover his eyes when reciting Krias Shma. Why do we do this? Because sometimes, when we try to say Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad [the L-rd our G-d the L-rd is One], attesting to our belief that the attribute of Mercy and the attribute of Justice are all the same, there are too many troubles right before our eyes to allow us to truly believe this testimony. It becomes difficult for us to say that everything is for the good. Therefore, we cover our eyes so that, symbolically at least, we do not see all the troubles.

The Kol Aryeh states if we want an example of this concept - that everything that the Almighty does – regardless of appearances – is truly all for the good, we can find it in the life of the righteous Yosef. His life personifies this belief. He was hated by his brothers, thrown into a pit, sold as a slave, libelously framed by his master's wife, and put into a dungeon where he languished for 12 years. What was he thinking through all of this?

However, eventually, because he was in this dungeon in Egypt, he became known to Pharaoh, he became the second in command in Egypt, he sustained all of Egypt, and eventually saved his brothers and family from starvation. In the end, Yosef saw how all that happened to him indeed was for the best.

Therefore, G-d told Yaakov not to fear the descent to Egypt. Although Yaakov perceived prophetically that this would be the beginning of a long and bitter exile, G-d reassured him by saying, "Yosef will place his hands over your eyes." In other words, G-d was reminding Yaakov of all that happened to Yosef and that despite the trauma and troubles, all had worked out for the best in the end. Yosef personified the idea that apparent troubles can foreshadow great and positive outcomes.

"Yosef will cover your eyes." The Zohar states – "this is the secret of Krias Shma."

Now we understand the Zohar. The secret of Krias Shma is the unification of Hashem [G-d of Mercy] with Elokeinu [our G-d of Judgment]. This is sometimes hard to perceive unless we cover our eyes. Yosef (and all that happened to him in his life) should be our metaphorical model for covering our eyes and allowing ourselves to be convinced of the truth of this declaration of unification of G-d's attributes.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tape series on the weekly Torah portion.

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Parshat Vayigash

Trust and Casualness

Rosh Hayeshiva Rav Mordechai Greenberg shlita

(Translated by Rav Meir Orlin)

In Parshat Vayigash, Yaakov exclaims: "How great! My son Yosef still lives." (Bereishit 45: 28) The Midrash explains this as follows: "How great is the strength of Yosef, that many troubles befell him, yet he is steadfast in his righteousness much more than I, who sinned, for I said, 'My way is hidden from G-d.'" (Bereishit Rabbah 94:4)

Chazal were referring to what Yaakov said, "Why did you cause me bad by telling the man that you had another brother." (43:6) Chazal comment that Yaakov never said anything for naught, except for here. G-d said: I am sitting involved in coronating his son in Egypt, and he says, "Why did you cause me bad?" This is what is says, "Why do you say Yaakov, and speak Yisrael, my way is hidden from Hashem."

In what respect is Yosef's power greater than Yaakov's?

In the Selichot of 10 Tevet, it says: "My fathers, when they trusted in the name of G-d, my Rock, grew and succeeded and also flourished. From the time they were led astray and went with Him casually, they were continually declining until the tenth month." We know that the first Temple was destroyed because of the sins of idolatry, adultery, and murder. Why is the sin of going casually specified here? Furthermore, why is our going casually a contrast to my fathers who trusted in Hashem?

The answer is found in the Rambam (Hil. Taanit 1:1-3):

It is a positive command to cry out and blow trumpets for any trouble that comes upon the community ... This is a manner of repentance, that when trouble comes and they cry out about it and blow, everyone will know that because of their evil actions bad befell them ... However, if they will not cry out and not blow, but rather say that this thing occurred to us of natural consequences, and this trouble came by chance, this is a manner of achzariyut (cruelty), and causes them to hold on to their evil actions, and this trouble will add other troubles.

This is what it says in the Torah: "If despite this you will not heed Me, and you behave toward Me with casualness, I will behave toward you with a fury of casualness." (Vayikra 26:27-28) The belief in Divine Providence brings about self-accounting and repentance, and thereby the end of the

trouble. Lack of belief, though, the thought that everything is casual, does not make the trouble dependent on actions. Thus, there is no repentance; everything continues as usual, and causes additional evil.

This is the difference between the way of teshuva and the way of achzariyut. Achzariyut usually means sadism. Why is achzariyut the contrast to Teshuva? Repentance to Hashem means returning to His closeness; achzariyut means "ach-zar" (only foreign), foreignness, distancing. The person loves only himself, distances from and is foreign to another, and therefore is cruel to him. In the same way, he is also foreign to the Master of the Universe.

It is true that the destruction was because of severe sins. However, there is always hope for returning and correction. However, when going with casualness, when everything is by chance - there is no possibility of correction. Our fathers trusted in G-d, my Rock, and therefore succeeded and flourished. However, we went with casualness, and not with trust in G-d; we did not make the trouble dependent on Divine Providence, and therefore were continually declining, until the destruction, which began in the tenth month.

Yaakov saw a fault in himself when he said, "Why did you cause me bad": i.e., that his way is hidden from G-d, as if there are things that are beyond His Providence. He went with casualness. However, about Yosef it says, "Fortunate is the person who places G-d as his trust." (Tehillim 40:5) A number of times in the parsha, Yosef says: "And now, it was not you who sent me here, but G-d," etc. Yosef's trust in G-d is in contrast to the casualness of Yaakov. In this way, Yosef's strength was greater than Yaakov. In the same way, our fathers trusted, but we went with casualness.

Yerushalayim is the foundation of trust and fear of G-d, the foundation of closeness to G-d: "G-d will see" (Bereishit 22:14); "So that you will learn to fear" (Devarim 14:23); "A song of ascents. Those who trust in Hashem are like Mount Zion that falters not" (Tehillim 125:1); Yerushalayim, mountains wrap it, and Hashem wraps His people." (125:2)

When Hashem is not around His people, and there is no trust in Him, Yerushalayim is not a secure place for Israel. Therefore, when they walk with G-d with casualness, then comes the siege and breaches the walls of Yerushalayim. 10 Tevet is the beginning of the destruction, the siege. Thus, the root cause of the destruction is the going with casualness. Therefore, we fast on 10 Tevet about Yerushalayim, and we emphasize having gone with casualness.

In our days, when there is talk about Yerushalayim, we need to examine whether we are deficient in the trait of trust and are leading our lives with casualness. When we will internalize the trait of trust, and we know that G-d is around His nation, Yerushalayim will also have mountains around it, and Mt. Zion will not falter.

Torah in Motion Torah in Motion <info@torahinmotion.org> date Fri, Jan 2, 2009 at 9:21 AM subject VaYigash: Leavign Canaan

A Thought for the Week: VaYigash Leaving Canaan BY RABBI JAY KELMAN

This week's dvar torah is being sponsored by Tova and Allan Guttenberg on the engagement of their son Daniel to Talya Adler daughter of Rabbi and Mrs. Yitzhak and Leslie Adler. Mazal Tov to the extended families.

A Thought For The Week: VaYigash Rabbi Jay Kelman

"And you shall surely know that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs for 400 years" (15:12). The Jewish people were destined to form their cultural identity in a foreign land. Yet the Torah never specifically mentions that the foreign land would be Egypt, and in fact the Jewish people spent only 210 years in Egypt, and of those only 86 in slavery, the other 190 years being those spent under foreign domination in Canaan.

Yet it is not by chance that the land of the first exile of the Jewish people was Egypt. While the Torah warns us not to follow in the ways of the Egyptians (Vayikra 18:3), and there is a biblical prohibition of returning to

the land of Egypt, there was much to be gained by living in the most advanced country of the day (and of many days). From the biblical account alone we see technological achievement, political order, economic success, even military might. Living in such a society would serve the Jewish people well. The Jewish people achieved great success in the land of Egypt, as the Torah briefly describes in the opening verses of Sefer Shmot, which is further elaborated on by the authors of the Pesach Hagadah. Pharaoh's fear of the Jews stemmed from their great success.

While we think of the period of slavery as a terrible one for the Jewish people and for some it was, our commentaries note that the picture was much more nuanced. The Netziv in his commentary on the hagadah, notes that many Jews lived a life of luxury and riches even if there was a lack of certain freedoms and most - perhaps over 80% - opted to stay behind rather than follow Moses into a barren desert. This idyllic picture of life in Egypt seems to be the simple meaning of the complaining of the Jews in the desert who yearned to return to the land of Egypt as they "fondly remember the fish we ate for free, and the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic (Bamidbar 11:5). Even the bleakest period of baby killing was, as the Ramban notes, very short lived.

In order to produce a great nation one needs to be exposed to and learn from the great nations of history, notwithstanding the moral shortcomings of its society. Yosef tried to protect them from the moral dangers by settling his brothers in their own enclave in the province of Goshen. Not surprisingly the results were mixed at best with the rabbis asserting that the Jewish people in Egypt eventually sunk to extreme lows. It is truly difficult to learn from only the positive aspects of a given society. It was time to move on to Sinai, taking the Divine law and the wisdom of the nations as we headed back to Canaan, now to be called the land of Israel.

Yet in addition to whatever positive aspects we could pick up from our stay in Egypt it seems the Torah was also concerned lest we remain in Canaan and absorb the negative traits of the Canaanite nations. From the time of Abraham the Canaanite people were looked down upon. Abraham insisted his son not marry a Canaanite woman despite the fact that his mechatanim were nothing to write home about. Eisav's initial marriage to Canaanite wives caused his parent great distress (26:34-35) and was the cause of him later marrying foreign women (28:8). In listing the 70 family members who traveled to Egypt the Torah singles out Shimon's son Saul as the son of a Canaanite, implicitly criticizing him for marrying such a woman. The Hizkuni (46:10) claims that the death of Yehudas two sons Er and Onan was a punishment for his marrying a Canaanite woman (38:2). It was not by accident the Egyptian people hated the nomadic ways of the sheppard, the primary occupation of the Canaanite people (46:34).

Changing entrenched cultural norms is a very difficult if not impossible challenge. Often one has to tear down what was as trying to fix things from within just won't work. Abraham left his home in order to set the stage for a great nation to inhabit the land of Canaan. Yet ironically he and his descendants would have to leave that land and come back hundreds of years later in a position to set up their own "culture". Unfortunately we did not succeed and twice we were forced from the land.

Our generation has been given the privilege to return to the Land. We will succeed if we are able to transcend our cultural differences, establishing a society which focuses on moral excellence, the common denominator of Jewish culture throughout history. Shabbat Shalom!

from Kol Torah <koltorah@koltorah.org> date Thu, Jan 1, 2009 at 10:23 PM subject Kol Torah Parashat VaYigash

Kingly Qualities

by Rabbi Yosef Adler

Our Parashah begins with Yehudah's challenge to Yosef in defense of his brother Binyamin. The Midrash, commenting on the Pasuk, "Ki Hineih HaMelachim No'adu," "And behold the kings have entered into battle" (Tehillim 48:5), quips, "Zeh Yehudah VeYosef," "[The kings mentioned in

the Pasuk refer to] Yehudah and Yosef. There is no doubt that Yaakov had planned to anoint Yosef as the king of Israel. The Ketonet Pasim, striped coat, given to Yosef was a sign of royalty. Yosef dreamt of his parents and brothers bowing down to him because Yaakov had planted that seed in his mind. Yet Divine Providence decided that ultimately, Yehudah would defeat Yosef and emerge as the undisputed king of Israel. Why is it that Hashem believed that Yehudah would be more fit for Malchut than Yosef?

The Rav once suggested that Yosef and Yehudah represent two opposing personalities. In the words of Rambam in his introduction to the eighth Perek of Masechet Sanhedrin, Yosef is described as the Chasid Me'uleh, one who naturally gravitates to that which is morally sound and correct. When Potifar's wife tries to seduce him, Yosef repeatedly resists her temptation. When his father Yaakov asks him to check on the welfare of his brothers tending the sheep, he goes without hesitation, despite the fact that he knows fully well that his brothers despise him and wish him harm. As the viceroy in Egypt, he responds to the severe famine by allowing Egyptian citizens to maintain 4/5 of the produce of the land and contribute 1/5 as a tax to the government. The typical sharecropper arrangement features the exact opposite: 4/5 is hoarded by the government and 1/5 kept by the peasant. In each case he acts with ethics, decency, and morality. Yehudah is the Mosheil BeNefesh, one who stumbles and gives in to temptation but ultimately recovers. He enters into a relationship with Tamar thinking that she is but a prostitute. Later he acknowledges that it is he who had impregnated her. Yehudah is responsible for selling Yosef into slavery, yet when it comes to sparing Yaakov the grief over losing Binyamin, it is Yehudah who rises to the occasion. What type of person would be most suited for royalty? What type of person could serve as a role model for each of us to emulate? Yaakov believed it was Yosef, but Hashem insisted that very few people would aspire to reach those heights. Most of us are like Yehudah - we fall, fall again, and are able to correct and learn from our mistakes. It was for this reason that "Lo Yasur Sheivet MiYehudah," "The seat of authority shall never be away from Yehudah" (BeReishit 49:10), and for this reason we should strive to become kings.

A Get in Honolulu - by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Writing a Get in a Locale for the First Time Divorce is always quite a delicate and sensitive matter. Writing and executing a Get (Jewish divorce document) is similarly sensitive and must rigorously conform to the standards set forth in the Shulchan Aruch. Mesadrei Gittin (Get administrators) closely adhere to the venerated practices established by the outstanding rabbis of previous generations, to avoid calling into question any aspect of the Get. Accordingly, it is not surprising that Rav Yechezkel Landau (Teshuvot Noda BiYehuda Even HaEzer 1:87 and 2:105, 116) strongly discourages the writing of Gittin in places where there had not previously been a tradition how to write Gittin, as perhaps earlier generations did not write Gittin there due to Halachic concerns. This practice continues until today, as we do not write Gittin in places where Gittin had not been written previously, unless there is compelling reasons to do so. When contemplating the writing of a Get in a "new" locale, rabbis of eminent stature must be consulted who will investigate every aspect of the issues involved (Aruch Hashulchan E.H. 128:39). In this essay, we shall describe how Rav Mendel Senderovic, the Rosh Kollel of the Milwaukee Kollel and head of the Milwaukee Beit Din who is a leading authority in the area of Gittin and other personal status matters, arrived at a decision in the year 2002 as to the writing of Gittin in Honolulu, Hawaii. He describes (Teshuvot Atzei Besamim number 47) that all efforts were made to avoid the necessity of writing a Get in Honolulu, as no Gittin had been written there previously, but to no avail: the only way the wife would be able to procure a Get in this very difficult situation was to have the Get written in Honolulu. As such all efforts had to be made to establish a manner in which a Get could be written in that locale.

Transliterating Honolulu The first step in this process is to properly transliterate the word "Honolulu" into Hebrew characters. The first syllable is a Patach (a short "o") which Ashkenazic Halachic standards sometimes calls for the writing of the letter Aleph and sometimes does not. In this case, since the Patach is not followed by a Shva Nach (a short "u") an Aleph should be written as we see in Teshuvot Noda BiYehuda (E.H. 2:116) in regards to the writing a Get in the Eastern European city of Rad'vil. Rav Senderovic chose to omit an Aleph to correspond to the "o" after the letter "n" in Honolulu, since it is simply a Shva Na, which does not merit the writing of an Aleph (Ohalei Sheim 10:9). A Vav is written after both Lameds that correspond to the two letters L of the last two syllables of Honolulu, in conformity with undisputed Get practice. Accordingly, "Honolulu" is transliterated as Heh-Aleph-Nun-Lamed-Vav-Lamed-Vav.

The Waters of Honolulu As is well-known, a locale in a Get is identified by the waters upon which it rests (Shulchan Aruch E.H. 128:4). For example, Teaneck, New Jersey is identified in a Get as Teaneck the city on the Hackensack River and the Overpeck Creek; Haifa is referred to as the city on the coast and on well waters; Rio De Janeiro is called the city on the coast and on springs. The practice (cited in Beit Shmuel 128:18 and Teshuvot Noda BiYehuda E.H. 1:86) is that we write a Get only in a place where there are two identifying water features, except for exceptional circumstances where we tolerate writing a Get with only one identifying mark such as Richmond, VA which rests on the James River and Lima, Peru which sits on the coast. Honolulu cannot be identified as being on the coast since it is located in an island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and not on the coast such as Tel Aviv, Boston or Capetown (South Africa). Rav Senderovic instead identifies Honolulu as the city that sits in the sea following the precedent of Venice, Gerba (Tunisia) and Singapore. The second identifying mark is wells since Rav Senderovic was informed that ninety two percent of Honolulu's water supply comes from underground wells. The other eight percent of the water supply comes from springs, which Rav Senderovic did not include as an identifying mark as the springs provide only a very small portion of the water supply and thus do not serve as a meaningful identifying mark. In addition, as Honolulu has the two requisite identifying marks, it was unnecessary to add a third relatively insignificant indicator. Rav Senderovic in this approach follows the ruling of the Maharam MiBrisk (cited in Pitchei Teshuvah 128:31) in regards to the omission of springs as an identifying mark in Brisk (Brest-Litovsk), Lithuania. Rav Senderovic advised me to adopt the same approach in regards to writing Gittin in White Plains, New York. He felt it sufficient to identify it as the city on the Bronx River and the Mamaroneck River but not to add "and well waters" even though a small percentage of the White Plains water supply comes from wells. Rav Elazar Meyer Teitz, chief justice of the Beth Din of Elizabeth, agreed with this approach and it has been adopted in practice since 1997 when we began to write Gittin in White Plains. Rav Senderovic concludes that a Get in Honolulu should be written "Honolulu the city that rests in the sea and on well waters".

Dating a Get in Honolulu A unique issue that faces in Honolulu, however, is the question as to the dating of the Get document. This problem emerges from the celebrated dispute regarding the location of the Halachic International Date Line, an issue that is summarized in an essay written by TABC graduate Willie Roth and is archived at www.koltorah.org. The Chazon Ish (Orach Chaim, Kuntress Eighteen Hours) locates the Date Line as being ninety degrees east of Jerusalem, while Rav Yitzchak Herzog, Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky and other leading Jerusalem rabbis of the 1940's believe that it is one hundred and eighty degrees from Jerusalem. Accordingly, if one writes a Get on what is accepted in Honolulu as Monday, one is faced with a dilemma, since it is located one hundred and seventy degrees from Jerusalem, placing it east of the dateline according to the Chazon Ish but west of the dateline according to Rav Herzog, Rav Tukachinsky and the Jerusalem rabbis. Thus, according to the Chazon Ish the Get should be dated as being written on Monday, while according to Rav Herzog, Rav Tukachinsky and the Jerusalem rabbis the Get should be

dated as being written on Tuesday. Parenthetically, one who travels to Hawaii on vacation is faced with the very serious question whether to observe Shabbat on what is locally referred to as Friday or Saturday. One should consult his Rav about this issue specifically and in general whether it is appropriate to visit Hawaii and be caught in this serious Shabbat issue.

Four Possibilities Rav Senderovic explores four possible means for dating a Get written in Honolulu. One possibility is to write two Gittin, one dated Monday and the other dated Tuesday. Shulchan Aruch (E.H. 129:19) does indeed record that in certain situations we write two Gets due to the inability to resolve certain issues, such as how to properly identify an individual in a Get. This possibility is rejected, for a variety of reasons. The Rama (ad. loc.) writes that two Gittin are to be written only in exceptional situations. Moreover, the Taz (E.H. 122:2) writes "I never saw my forebearers or teachers write two Gittin." Rav David Zvi Hoffman (Teshuvot Melamed Leho'il 3:30) discourages the writing two Gittin due to Halachic concern for the opinion that Ein BeReirah (there is no retroactive determination) and for sociological reasons (it appears absurd to the unlearned Jew). Rav Shlomo Fischer of the Jerusalem Beth Din told me (in 1993) that in Jerusalem two Gittin are never written for one couple (although Rav Mendel Silber of the Satmar Beth Din told me that in his court, writing two or more Gittin for a divorcing couple is rather common). Finally, Teshuvot Noda BiYehudah (E.H. 1:90) writes that two Gittin cannot be written when a Get is executed by agency and in Rav Senderovic's case, the case was to be sent by agent from Honolulu to New York. Rav Senderovic, though, considers the possibility of dating the Get as Monday, even though a predated Get is invalid (Shulchan Aruch E.H. 127:2), since the Gittin executed by agency are delivered in any event on a later date than the day it is written (Shulchan Aruch E.H. 127:5). Rav Senderovic, though, notes that this suggestion is insufficient since the Get was deliberately predated (according to those who believe Hawaii is west of the dateline) and a deliberately predated Get delivered by an agent is acceptable only in a case of great need (Pitchei Teshuvah 127:12). We do not initially write Gittin that are acceptable only in case of great need, unless there are no other viable options. Rav Senderovic then explores the possibility of dating the Get as Tuesday since a postdated Get is acceptable according to Tosafot (Gittin 17a s.v. Reish Lakish) and the Rosh (Gittin 2:5). Indeed, this opinion is presented as the primary opinion in Shulchan Aruch (E.H. 127:9). Moreover, the Get might be acceptable even according to the dissenting opinion of the Rambam (Hilchot Geirushin 1:25) since it is not delivered until after the date written in the Get (Pitchei Teshuvah E.H. 127:14). However, since other opinions (cited ad. loc.) believe the Get to nonetheless be invalid according to the Rambam, Rav Senderovic did not adopt this approach. Rav Senderovic even explores the possibility of omitting the day of the week and month in the Get but rather simply mention the week in the month, based on Shulchan Aruch (E.H. 127:7) which rules that a Get written in such a manner is acceptable. This is not a viable option, though, since a Get written in this manner is acceptable only Bedi'eved (after the fact) and should not initially be written in this manner.

Rav Senderovic's Ruling Rav Senderovic concludes that the Get should be dated as Monday based a different consideration. He notes that the date in a Get is written as such and such date from creation "in the manner in which we count it here etc." This phrase clarifies that even if the date is inaccurate from an objective perspective, it nevertheless does not invalidate the Get since this is the accepted date in the place of the writing of the Get (Pitchei Teshuvah E.H. 127:16). Accordingly, the Get dated as Monday is acceptable even according to those who believe that Hawaii is west of the dateline, since it is Monday according to the manner in which it is counted there.

Conclusion The holiness of the Jewish people is maintained in great part by exercising extraordinary care with the weddings and (heaven forbid) divorces of the members of our community. Thus, Halachic authorities seek to achieve a balance between sensitively meeting the needs of people in a difficult time in their lives but yet maintain the integrity of the

Halachic process. Rav Senderovic's treatment of the question of writing a Get in Honolulu is a fine example of achieving such a delicate balance and keeping with the precedents and accepted standards respected by our people for countless generations.

From: proffox@aol.com [Rabbi David Fox, Ph.D. - Los Angeles CA]

Date: Thu, 01 Jan 2009 14:26:02 -0500 Subject: A thought on Parshas VaYiGash A Thought on Parshas VaYiGash

"...teshvu b'erez Goshen..." "...settle in the land of Goshen..." (46:34)

Yosef, serving as viceroy in Egypt, helped prepare his father and brothers for a long sojourn in that land, which was to be the first national exile of our nation. It is clear that Yosef used all of his skills of leadership in helping his family make plans to endure their exile. The Ralbag writes that the above verse shows the great foresight, and insight, of Yosef. He knew that the Egyptians detested us (as the verse goes on to say). The wisdom of settling the Jews in Goshen, which was a neighboring province largely unoccupied by Egyptians, was based on the theorem that if the Jews would thrive and multiply, this would stir the animosity of their enemies even further. It would be better to stay away from them, and keep to ourselves. The Ralbag posits that if you have antagonists, trying to live among them will only draw more hatred. Settling in Goshen allowed the Jews to keep a distance from their enemies, and their enemies from them. Throughout the centuries of our exiles, we Jews have often overlooked this principle. We aim to merge and to assimilate, only to find that wherever a Jew settles, he will still be viewed as a Jew, even he has lost his own identity in his own eyes. There has always been an element of security in the ghetto, and as long as we maintain a Jewish identity, which includes living with integrity, we stay together. This evening, many parts of Jerusalem are blocked off.

Thousands of Jews from all over have amassed in Geula on Kikar Shabbos. I was part of a multitude of brethren coming to hear the words of Torah leaders mourning the martyred Jews of Mumbai. It is their sh'loshim today. The heavens are drizzling with a cold rainfall as we have stood in the grey evening, mourning our lost ones. Yet, there is something warm in the air, as I realize that we have, at that moment, drawn close as one entity in our own homeland. At our borders, they are shelling us. Across the globe.... well, you who are out there in chutz la'aretz know of your struggles. Wishing you a good Shabbos, and try to integrate the words of the Ralbag here. D Fox

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All My Life's A Cycle

By Andrew J. Neff

In the midst of the current financial crisis, we hear constantly about the "cycle" and where we are in the cycle. The frightening aspect to this crisis is that we don't know what type of cycle it is and where we are in it.

Jewish life is rife with cycles. And it is these cycles that make us strong. They provide us with a stable foundation and an impetus to move forward.

When we look at our lives as Jews, they represent a series of concentric circles.

* Our lives are a cycle – from dust to dust. * The year – with all of its holidays – is also a cycle. And we have an annual cycle for the Torah.

* The month – in our case a lunar month – is also a cycle – a lunar cycle of 29-30 days. * The week is a cycle that begins and ends with Shabbat.

* The day is a cycle of prayer – starting in the morning, then in the afternoon and then in the evening – starting again the next morning.

But cycles are not useful in and of themselves.

The movie "Groundhog Day" was about cycles – but the cycles were pointless because the Bill Murray character always ended up where he started.

What is powerful about cycles in the Jewish concept is that it is not about going back to where you started but it is about renewal. It is about using your new day, week, month to start over and to grow from that point.

The classic case is the laws of family purity. It is based on cycle – a woman's cycle – and its beauty is the renewal and freshness the cycle engenders. Your relationship hopefully does not return to where it was a month ago – but builds to a new level.

The ability to change, however, does not translate to change until you focus on who is the engine of change. You are the engine of change.

In Pirkei Avot – the fourth chapter, the first mishnah – Ben Zoma poses and answers four questions: Who is wise? The person who learns from other people. Who is rich? The person who is happy with what he has. Who is strong? The person who controls himself. Who is honored? The person who honors others.

These are all nice aphorisms on their own, but what is it that ties them together?

They are tied together by the controlling party, and it is YOU who controls each of these characteristics. Only you can make yourself wise, rich, strong, honored. It can only come from you. And, similarly, change can only come from you. You are the agent of change. Not the media, not your buddies, not your siblings. Only you.

That is easier said than done, surrounded and immersed as we are by others and their views.

There is a story about a Reb Zushia. He said: I wanted to change the world, but no one listened. I wanted to change my country, but no one listened. I wanted to change my city, my town, but no one listened. I wanted to change my family but no one listened. Then I focused on changing myself. And when I changed, my family began to respond and change. And my town, my state, my country. And the world changed because I changed myself.

But, again, it is easier said than done because of the countervailing force of peer pressure and worrying about what people might think.

Let me suggest two ideas through two stories: the first is about having the right perspective and the second is about overcoming resistance to change.

First, a story about how I started to wear a kippah at work. I didn't always wear a kippah at work. I used to come into the office and slide the kippah off into my pocket as I was heading in to the office. But one day I forgot to slip it off. And it was a day where – coincidentally – [and coincidentally there are no coincidences] I was giving a presentation to my company.

During the course of the presentation, I happened to reach back and I realized I had left my kippah on my head. What should I do now? I couldn't take it off then because that would imply I was embarrassed. So I left it on. When I sat down – and had my back to the audience. I couldn't take it off because that would mean it was only an accident and I was embarrassed.

After the meeting – no one said anything about the kippah – I went up to my office. Now what should I do? If I took it off, it meant I was embarrassed. So I left it on the rest of the day. The next morning – I woke up – now what should I do? If I didn't wear it, it meant it was an accident the day before. So I wore it that day – and every day since then.

I'm not trying to give you advice as to what you should do in this situation, but I realized for me that I was more concerned about what people thought than what G-d thought. Once I saw it in those terms, it became easier.

A second story. More real-time.

Many of you may have heard or read a talk I gave in July 2008 – From Bear Stearns To Bava Metzia – at the Yeshiva Gedola of Teaneck dinner – it detailed my decision – in the face of the collapse of my company, Bear Stearns – to go to learn in a yeshiva. After 25 years on Wall Street as an award-winning securities analyst, I decided to take time off. I have been spending mornings in one yeshiva and afternoons in a different one – learning prayer, Talmud, Torah, Jewish law. Although my children are "frum from birth," I did not grow up religious and I felt that there were some gaps in my Jewish education. I always said I would deal with

them...when I had time. I never made the time, but fortunately – in my view – G-d made the time for me.

The hardest part of these change has not been the learning itself but dealing with the reactions of those around me. My family – in particular, my wife Nancy – has been very supportive.

But I can sense the questions from my friends and colleagues. That's great, they say, but what do you plan to do after.

Now there will be an "after," but I am still working on it. Whatever it is, it will be different. I spent 25 years on Wall Street. I put in my time being available 24/6 – and it is enough. I want to do something different.

I don't know what it is and I don't have a plan.

I used to have a plan, but I learned that G-d runs the world, and so had to adjust my plan to His plan.

The world is different today. We have to recognize that. If you are looking for a job, take a different approach. Take a look at your spending. Don't worry about what others will think. Focus on what G-d wants.

Developing a new path is a challenge. So here are five action items that I put together to help develop that new path:

1. Tone down the simchas. 2. Support your local yeshivas, kollels and day schools. 3. Become a better listener. 4. Think different. 5. Pray for what you want and for what you need.

Let me go through these five points.

1 – Tone down the simchas.

This will not make me popular with caterers. But we need leaders who are bold enough to tone down their simchas. It doesn't have to be an endless smorgasbord – followed by a six-course meal and with a 10-piece band. The simcha is from within us. It can be done much more simply. But this is where it is up to the leaders of this community to take a stand. People need emotional cover. So take a stand. Do it low-key. Tone down the Kiddush. Blended scotch instead of single malt. If you do it – and it takes courage – others will follow.

Because it's not our money. G-d gave us the money and He tests us to use it responsibly. Our sages ask: why are there poor people? Because if G-d wants people to have money, He could certainly give it to them. We learn that poor people are here as a test for the people who have money.

With all due respect, your rebbeim can not take the lead on this issue, because everyone expects them to say this. It has to come from the lay leadership. And it will take courage.

But, as I once heard: when you do the right thing and people are watching: that is called "courage." When you do the right thing, and no one is watching: that is called "character."

2 – Support yeshivas, kollels and day schools. And other causes.

We are in difficult times. But this is the time where we have to focus on the basics, on the core elements. And this is where the yeshivas, the kollels, the day schools fit in. They are the backbone of our communities. They are the R&D, the future. They develop our children and our young men – and our old men – into mensches. You don't become a mensch from watching TV. There is nothing on CSI or Family Guy or any of the other shows that develops us into mensches. There is very little on the internet that encourages our children or us to behave better.

3 – Become a better listener.

We are in difficult times. People are losing their jobs, their livelihoods. It is very frightening. We can't always help our friends get the next job, but we can listen to them.

The shiva process – after the death of a loved one – is not about making the mourner feel better. Only time and perspective will help. You can't – and shouldn't – try to make them feel better. Feeling pain is important for this process.

But you can be a listener. The talking helps. While the loss is clearly a different level of magnitude, the loss of a job, a career – and the associated financial losses – are also a loss. We can help by being a good listener. How are you doing? And wait for an answer. You can't solve their problems and

we all have problems of our own. But that is the beauty of the shiva process – we can help by being there. Be there for your friends.

4 – Think different.

As a securities analyst, I followed Apple Computer. Now this is not a financial commentary, but I became a big fan of Steve Jobs because of his perspective. I realize that Steve Jobs is not a religious Jew – he is not Jewish and he may not even be religious – but as we see from various points in the Talmud and in current Jewish history, we can learn from everyone. He is one of my heroes. I have many heroes: Rashi, Rambam, David Ben-Gurion, my rebbes – but also Steve Jobs.

This may be hard to recall, but Steve Jobs was faced with the almost-certain demise of Apple Computer when they brought him back as the CEO the second time around. Market share was insignificant, cash was low, products were shoddy. There was no way out. So he had to "Think Different."

Here is the pitch at the time that characterizes what he did to get to where they are today – and it applies to us today.

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes.

The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo.

You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things.

They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward.

Maybe they have to be crazy.

How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written? Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

We are in a more challenging world today. So we have to think differently. G-d is giving us a new set of challenges. But G-d only gives us challenges that we can handle.

Think different about your situation. Your work situation, your financial situation, your learning. Find a creative solution – because it's out there, but you are the only one who can figure it out.

5. Focus on prayer.

As we see from the Torah, G-d is a great writer. But G-d is also a great listener. Non-judgmental. But why pray? If we lost our job, or if we lost money, isn't that part of G-d's plan? Weren't we supposed to lose the money? Moreover, G-d – who is omnipotent, who is infinite – certainly doesn't need our prayers.

We pray for ourselves. We pray for change and to change ourselves. We can pray to become strong, rich, honored, wise – but we will only get it when we change ourselves.

And finally, G-d is a great listener – available 24/7 – and He hears our prayers. He helps us to realize that we are in the midst of the cycle – maybe at the top of the cycle or at the bottom. When we are at the top, we need to focus on perspective. And when we are at the bottom, we can realize that things can change for the better.

Let me close with this thought: cycles make us strong because they renew us and give us a chance to change. But change can only come from within us. G-d gives us the cycles so that we have constant opportunities for renewal and change. We can change our day, our week, our month, our year. But we can change. And when we change ourselves, we change our families, our communities, our world.

After getting his MBA at Harvard Business School, Andrew Neff worked on Wall Street for 25 years as a securities analyst following technology sector, where he was an Institutional Investor All-Star for 16 years and a

Wall Street Journal All-Star for nine years. He now learns in yeshivas in Teaneck, NJ and Riverdale, NY. His previous pieces on ou.org were From Bear Stearns to Bava Metzia (July 2008) and You DO Have A Prayer (September 2008)

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/7618>

Parsha Vayigash 5769: **Jewish Unity, Still As Elusive As Ever**

by Moshe Burt Moshe Burt, an Oleh, is a commentator on news and events in Israel and Founder and Director of the Sefer Torah Recycling Network. He lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh.

Parsha Mikeitz records the whole affair between Yosef and the brothers when they came to Mitzrayim to buy food and were accused by the Viceroy of being spies. We learned how after hearing their story and family history, Yosef demanded that they bring their youngest brother to him and incarcerated Shimon as insurance that the brothers would indeed return with Binyamin, their youngest brother. We learn that in the middle of Parsha Mikeitz, with the imprisonment of Shimon, the brothers recognized and attributed their predicament to the sin they had committed earlier by throwing Yosef into the pit and then selling him to the Mitzriyim. Yosef heard and understood their conversation and left their presence to cry silently. (Perek 42, posukim 21-24)

Then, we learn how when Binyamin was finally brought to Yosef, the brothers were provided with food and it was made to appear as if Binyamin had stolen the Viceroy's silver goblet. The Viceroy detained Binyamin under charges that he had stolen the goblet and released the other brothers to return to their father.

Our Parsha Vayigash begins with Yehuda speaking his appeal to the Viceroy on behalf of his father Yaakov regarding Binyamin's imprisonment.

Upon hearing Yehuda's plea regarding the special love affection which Yaakov had for Binyamin, Yosef could no longer restrain himself and revealed himself as he cried out so loudly that he was heard by Pharaoh.

The brothers had shown Yosef that they had recognized their aveirah, done teshuvah and were unified in their concern for Binyamin's welfare. Yosef embraced his brothers and comforted them and "told them not to be sad that they had sold him, for Hashem had actually sent him here to keep them alive during the years of famine." (L'Mod Ulamed, Parsha Vayigash, page 57).

This unity was crucial for the future travails of enslavement in Mitzrayim as the Jewish nation was forged.

But, in our time, the type of unity expressed by Yehudah for his brother Binyamin is lacking amongst B'nai Yisrael. And many among us do not, and appear as if they are sooo blinded by their pervasive disdain and hatred for who and what they are so as not see the abject error of their ways even as the consequences become ever clearer.

Consider for instance, President Shimon Peres who publically announced at the outset of the major operations currently taking place in Gaza that Israel "will not go into Gaza.... - we didn't leave Gaza in order go back." This is the same Shimon Peres who wouldn't dare be contrite and own-up to his pivotal role in the abject failure called the Oslo process and own-up to his responsibility for loss of hundreds of Jewish lives and the maiming of hundreds or thousands more resulting from that process. And he is just one of the cancerous rot that pervades Israel's politics, institutions, the colleges and universities, the intelligencia, the MSM (mainstream media), politically agendized IDF commanders and more.

All the while, these modern-day hellenists continue their drive toward convergence; nothing less than the eradication of all vestiges and expressions of Jewishness. And the vast majority of those who should know better seem unprepared to put their individual lives on hold and collectively act with unity, as one to do everything necessary to confront the evil.

We haven't learned the brother's lesson yet.

And further, the protexia-class hellenists have learned more than we have — they know our weaknesses intimately and they how to divide and conquer us by our machlokesim — each set against the other.

When the brothers returned to Yaakov, there is a midrash which indicates that they were worried about how to break the news of Yosef to him, that the shock of the news might endanger Yaakov's life. And so, they sent Asher's daughter Serach, with her great spirituality and her special harp playing talent, to gently sing a melody to Yaakov; "My uncle Yosef is still alive; he is ruler over Egypt." (The Midrash Says, Sefer Breish't, page 426)

And from this can be learned a rule of human nature regarding breaking of important news, the old adage; "Break it to me gently."

And so, we've watched the evolution of events over the last at least 17 years; Oslo, Oslo2, Wye, leaving South Lebanon to Hezbollah, "Roadmaps", the Expulsion from Gush Katif and the 4 Shomron Towns, the kidnapping of Jewish soldiers and lack of efforts to rescue them, the two front war of summer 2006 in Gaza and in Lebanon, the so-called "ceasefire" in Lebanon and it's bogus UN UNIFIL "peacekeepers", the successive bogus "ceasefires" in Gaza, the High Court's continued demolition of the other branches of government, Olmert's continuing attempts to bring about "Convergence", the blatant and gross humiliation of Annapolis and much much more. Every intelligent person knows about the above, that the past at least 17 years has seriously damaged Israel on ALL levels. There are no links necessary!

And so, we can look back and surmise that had all of the implications and all that has happened in the past 17 or so years been known to, derived or anticipated by the people when Oslo was first hatched, the Jews would not have stood for it. And so, we were left with the soft refrain when Rabin signed Oslo, "If they're bad boys, we'll just go and take it back."

They were bad boys and the government of Israel did nothing except concede more and more and more. And so I harken back to the lesson of how to boil a frog, or a lobster; turning the heat up gradually, a little at a time, each time allowing it to re-acclimate before the final boil when the heat is turned on full and the frog or lobster dies.

May we, the B'nai Yisrael be zocha that our brethren — the refugee families from Gush Katif be permanently settled and be made totally whole, that our dear brother Jonathan Pollard, captive Gilad Shalit and the other MIAs be liberated alive returned to us in ways befitting Al Kiddush Hashem and that we fulfill Hashem's blueprint of B'nai Yisrael as a Unique people — an Am Segula, not to be reckoned with as with "the nations" and may we be zocha to see the Moshiach, the Ge'ula Shlaima, as Dov Shurin sings; "Yom Hashem V'Kol HaGoyim", the Ultimate Redemption, bim hay v'yameinu — speedily, in our time", — Achshav, Chik Chuk, Miyad, Etmol!!!

Good Shabbos!
