

# Kehillah #41



## THE PERTINENT PARASHA

### A Doubled Milchemes Mitzvah

Rabbi Yeshoshua Pfeffer | Rav of Kehillat Ohr Chadash, Ramot, Jerusalem

Parashas Bereishis includes the first ever case of murder in Cain's murder of his brother, Hevel. It is remarkable that the first murder in the history of humankind should be specifically between brothers. Why is this so?

The first murder of history teaches us that *every murder is between brothers*. There is a basic brotherhood between all of humankind, and an act of murder is a direct betrayal of this brotherhood. Herein lies the terrible evil of murder: it undermines the interpersonal connections upon which the world is founded.

"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of G-d He made man" (Bereishis 9:6). The "image of G-d," our greatest elevation, is our unique ability to be in relationship with others. Murder desecrates the Image. It destroys our most fundamental humanity.

This is why the Torah obligates us to wipe out Amalek from the earth –

for Amalek is a murderous nation for whom killing is a way of life – from their first appearance in the desert, through the murderous Agag, and to Haman who wished to destroy the entire Jewish People. As long as such evil remains upon earth, the Name of Hashem remains concealed.

**Last week, we encountered the hideous face of another manifestation of this ultimate evil in the unspeakable atrocities committed to brethren in the South.**

There are modern manifestations of Amalek, too. The Nazis, of course, for whom murder became the cultural norm, are the ultimate example. Last week, we encountered the hideous face of another manifestation of this ultimate evil in the unspeakable atrocities committed to brethren in the South.





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The war against those who committed these acts of murder thus becomes a *milchemes mitzvah* for two reasons: one is saving the Jewish settlement from the enemy, as the Rambam rules (Melachim Chap. 5:1). The second is obliterating Amalek from the world – albeit not Amalek in the genetic sense, but certainly in the spiritual sense.

There is also a message for us. Shemini Atzeres, the day of intimate closeness with Hashem, was turned into a day of tragedy and calamity that will be marked forever as a disaster of unprecedented proportions. Facing such a *midas ha-din*, we are called to prayer, to beseeching Hashem for compassion. We are also called to reflect on what went wrong.

And there is much that was wrong. Rather than acting as brothers should, over the past few months the Jews dwelling in Zion have been torn apart along political lines, led by extremist voices that bred friction and animosity and drove a wedge between groups, friends, and even family members. Captured terrorists said that the discord and disharmony they saw among Israeli society strengthened their resolve to commit their heinous crimes.

Today, in times of war, we have the opportunity to put everything aside.

**The level of volunteer work over the past days is staggering and heartwarming, a ray of light in the darkness. Let us work to augment the light.**

All of us. To set aside the social criticism, legitimate or otherwise, that we tend to engage in, and to fight our common enemy united, each with whatever he or she can do. And there is so, so much to be done.

The level of volunteer work over the past days is staggering and heartwarming, a ray of light in the darkness. Let us work to augment the light.

As Anglos, many of us have options. We can go back to America or England for a while, to see how things go. But we don't. We stay, because we have thrown our lot with those privileged to live in Israel and be part of Hashem's incredible scheme for His people. The hardship is painful, sometimes excruciating. But the bonds it creates are all the stronger. We are privileged to stay.

Hashem should keep our soldiers safe. They should speedily vanquish our cruel and murderous enemies, and usher in a new era of peace.



## HASHKAFICALLY SPEAKING

### A Prophecy for All Times

by Rabbi Yaacov Haber

The very first Rashi in the Torah makes the following comment. "Really, the Torah should have begun with *Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem* (the *mitzvah* of Rosh Chodesh), but a time will come when the nations of the world will call us burglars for taking the land of Israel. At that time we should tell them how the world was created by G-d and the whole world is His."

The *mitzvah* of Rosh Chodesh appears well into the book of *Shemos*. If the Torah would have started there, we would never have known the story of the creation of the world. We would have never heard of our forefathers, the tribes of Israel, how we descended to Egypt. The story of the Akeidah wouldn't be part of our history. Judaism would have looked completely different.

Yet Rashi, with one sweep, says the Torah could have left it all out if not for what seems to be minor but is really an answer for the nations of the world. I'm not even sure how effective it would be to bring this Rashi into the UN, yet, seemingly, this is the justification for the whole book of *Bereshis*!

### A Million Prophets

The Talmud (*Megillah* 14) asks the following question. We know that the number of prophets who existed in the history of Israel were twice as many as the number of Jews who left Egypt. This means that there were well over a million prophets in the history of the people of Israel. Yet when we count the prophets in the Bible, we find 48 prophets. What happened to the rest? Answers the Talmud, "A prophecy that will be needed by future generations was included in the Torah. If it won't be needed by future generations it was not included."

I once heard an explanation of this in the name of Rav Elchanan Wasserman: In order for something to become "Torah" it has to be *netzach* – eternal. If the message of the prophets was not needed for future generations, then, obviously, it was not an eternal message, and cannot be included in the Torah.

Rashi explains the criteria for eternity: "The prophecy is needed for *teshuva* (repentance) and for *hora'ha* (decisions of Jewish law)." If it teaches us one of these, then it





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became Torah and therefore was written. If not, it did not get written. Let us understand this: 1) Teshuva – probably the other million prophets also spoke of teshuva and thereby had an eternal message. 2) *Horaha* – the Talmud says in *Chulin* that a prophet had no right to introduce a new halachah to the Jewish people. Law came from Moses and could not be added upon or subtracted from by any Jew, even a prophet. So what then was the eternal value of prophecy for halacha?

The Maharatz Chayos asks a similar question. If it's true that a prophet has no ability to create new laws for the Jewish people, how is it that there are many laws that we derive only from the prophets? Something as basic as geirus (conversion) we would know very little about if it weren't for the Book of Ruth. The law that a shochet's knife must be examined before slaughtering is derived from the Book of Joshua, and many more.

The Maharatz Chayos points out that if, indeed, we are not to learn new halachos from the prophets, much of Judaism would look different. The answer is that all the laws that the prophet taught us were well known to the people of Israel for generations. These laws were given to Moses orally and passed

down through the generations. But for some reason, at the time of a particular prophet it was decided by G-d through the prophet that the law should transform from Oral Law to Written Law. So the Prophet said nothing new in terms of halacha but rather made Oral into Written.

In the *Sefer Niviei Emes*, Rav Wolf Zal writes that he asked his teacher the Chazon Ish to explain this

**If the nations of the world, says Rashi, tell us we are thieves insofar as we take the land of Israel undeservedly, we should show them the contract we have with G-d and that it was all part of the deal.**

difficult concept. The Chazon Ish replied that this was indeed an ancient concept, for the Talmud says that Moshe received the whole Torah on Mt. Sinai, but he only wrote down from the beginning until the episode of giving the Torah. He then for the rest of his life prophesized from the Tent of Meeting. It was there that G-d instructed Moshe as to how to write down what he had already known orally. In the words



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of the Talmud, "G-d dictated, and Moses repeated and then wrote." Hence, says the Chazon Ish, Oral Law was transformed to Written Law.

The question remains, what is the significance of having the Oral Law written? The strength of the halacha is not affected by whether it is written or not. And certainly there are many Oral Laws that are better known than Written Laws. Why did G-d, through his prophets starting with Moshe, transfer laws from Oral to Written?

### All Part of the Deal

We find in the Torah that the Torah itself is called *Sefer HaBris*. The Ten Commandments are referred to as the "Two Tablets of the Bris." Bris means covenant or in simpler terms, contract. The Bris is a two-way agreement between G-d and the Jewish people. G-d tells us that if we follow the Torah, we will be blessed. If we don't, we will be cursed. If we didn't, we can repent and be forgiven. This is all part of a deal that G-d made with us when we became the Chosen People.

If the Torah is a contract, the Torah must be written. This is clear from

the Torah itself. "G-d said to Moshe, write down what I am telling you because what I am telling you constitutes a bris." (*Shemos 34: 27*) Rashi quotes the Talmud that from here we learn that the Oral Law must not be written, and the Written Law should not become oral. (Today we write down the Talmud because of extenuating circumstances.)

According to this, it becomes very clear that many of the things that Moshe heard on Mt. Sinai and passed on to the people of Israel were decided by G-d to become part of the agreement – not only directives as per behavior, but actually part of our contract as Jews. The prophets never taught new halachos, but through their prophecy knew what was to become part of the Bris and what wasn't.

Perhaps this could explain that first Rashi in the Torah. Certainly, if the Torah would have begun at *Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem* we still would have known all the stories of creation and of our forefathers. It would have and could have been Oral Law.

In fact, so many stories of Avraham are not written in the Torah (such as, jumping into a fiery furnace). By the fact that it was written in the Torah, however, we could know that



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its significance is not simply historical or even just in its holiness, but it is actually part of the contract between G-d and Israel. In practical terms, this means that the behavior of the Avos is credited towards our deeds and that we have an obligation to live up to that which was set forth for us by our forefathers.

If the nations of the world, says Rashi, tell us we are thieves insofar as we take the land of Israel undeservedly, we should show them the contract we have with G-d and that it was all part of the deal. This is the essence of “a prophecy for all times.”



## MEKOM AVODA Workplace Ethics & Halacha

### Encouraging Someone to Transgress

Rabbi Asher Meir | Torah and Policy Researcher

In our parasha, the serpent incites Chava to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, first drawing her attention to the tree and then contradicting Hashem’s explicit warning (*Bereshis* 1-6). As a result, Hashem curses the serpent (*Bereshis* 14-15).

Rashi points out that, in general, someone who successfully urges someone else to transgress is exempt. It is indeed a general principle in halacha that legal responsibility for a transgression rests solely on the transgressor, not on someone who orders or engages him to transgress. Rashi

explains that the main reason for this exemption is the basic insight: “Obey the master, not the servant.” The transgressor should know that the commandments of G-d supersede those of any human authority.

Rashi explains (based on the Gemara *Sanhedrin* 29a) that the serpent was held responsible because he was considered like a *mesis* – someone who urges others to idol worship. The Torah explicitly makes the *mesis* liable for his incitement (*Devarim* 13:7-9). Even though *mesis* usually applies only to idolatry, the



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commentators explain that the serpent saying that the fruit would make Chava “like G-d” is tantamount to idolatry (*Chizkuni*).

**Encouraging someone to transgress violates *lifnei iver*, which prohibits giving others any harmful instructions or advice, even if it is not acted on.**

### No Excuse

One understanding is that the exceptional liability of *mesis* is an exception to the usual exemption of “Obey the master, not the servant,” for example, because the liability is for the incitement per se, not for the ultimate transgression (*Maharal*). But we can also view it as a logical corollary of the principle. It’s true there is no excuse to obey a colleague who says, “Don’t listen to the boss. Listen to me.”

But if my colleague impersonates the boss by saying, “I am the boss. Listen to me!” then he gives the impression the transgressor is in fact obeying the boss! Encouraging idolatry is like impersonation, as it asserts, in effect, that someone besides Hashem is *chas v’shalom*, the boss. The serpent likewise

denied Hashem’s authority, so he was liable as a *mesis*.

One opinion in the Rishonim is that this impersonation idea is applied generally, and an instigator is liable for any instruction to transgress that appears legitimate (*Mordechai*, cited by *Rema Darchei Moshe, Choshen Mishpat* 348; *Tosafos Bava Kama* 79a s.v. *nasnu*). But most *poskim* limit such liability to cases where the perpetrator is not commanded at all (*Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* 348:8).

According to some *poskim*, the Torah prohibition on inciting (*mesis*) applies to all transgressions, not just idolatry; only the unique punishments are limited to idolatry. (*Chavos Yair* 166, *Shvus Yaakov* III:168, *Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim* I:99.) All agree that encouraging someone to transgress violates *lifnei iver*, which prohibits giving others any harmful instructions or advice, even if it is not acted on.

Even creating the temptation to cheat others is problematic. The Mishna (*Bava Metzia* 60a) states that a person may not sell a barrel of accidentally diluted wine to a middleman. It was unusual for an entire barrel of wine to be diluted, so the middleman would be





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tempted to just sell the barrel “as is” to a wineseller, who in turn would mislead customers who might not be able to readily detect the dilution. The original seller is not exactly enabling a transgression; after all, the middleman is able to dilute the wine himself if he wants, as is the wineseller.

**By far, our most difficult moral battle is against social pressure. It seems that the very first ethical lesson in the Torah is that we human beings are very sensitive to peer pressure.**

### Diluted Responsibility

Indeed, the problem here is exactly that no side is completely responsible. The seller can say to himself, “I informed the middleman that it is diluted.” The middleman can make the excuse, “I never actually told the wine seller that the wine is full strength.” And even if the wineseller suspects the wine is cut, he has the excuse that he had no part in the dilution. The dilution of the wine in this story is an exact parallel

to the dilution of responsibility.

Unfortunately, diluting responsibility in this way is a common feature of a few businesses. I just saw a detailed analysis of “debt buyers” in the U.S., which claimed that it is impossible to turn a profit in this industry without fraudulently intimidating the debtors. Perhaps the credit card company makes the excuse that it’s just selling the debt, not collecting it; the agency owner’s excuse is that it is the agents, not him, who put excessive pressure on debtors; and the agents make the excuse that they are only following orders.

The story of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is only marginally about fighting our evil urge. Chava’s urge for the fruit was awakened only by the serpent, and Adam only ate because of Chava’s urging. By far, our most difficult moral battle is against social pressure. It seems that the very first ethical lesson in the Torah is that we human beings are very sensitive to peer pressure, hence everyone is first of all responsible for the influence he has on other people. But even so, every person is fully responsible towards Hashem for his own actions,



Kehillah is an organization dedicated to serving the Anglo-Torah community living in Israel. It is active in areas of community, education, and leadership.

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## Taking Interest

### Teshuva on Ribbis (Part I)

*This part of the article was inadvertently left out from the Shabbos Shuva issue.*

Just 2 weeks ago was Yom Kippur, the day of doing teshuvah. Chazal established a standard Vidui, in which they mentioned various aveiros. Among them is the aveirah of ribbis – *Al cheit she’chatanu lefanacha b’neshech u’b’marbis.*

How does one do teshuvah on ribbis? As with other aveiros one needs to have *charatah* (to regret his sin), to say vidui, and to make a sincere commitment to avoid ribbis in the future. This can be accomplished by learning the relevant halachos and heightening one’s awareness to be vigilant not to inadvertently borrow or lend with ribbis.

However, teshuvah for ribbis requires another element as well – if one has accepted ribbis funds, he must return them to the owner. This is derived from the pasuk that forbids lending with ribbis, and then continues: *וְחִי אַחִיר עִמָּךְ* (Vayikra, 25:36) which means: Guarantee your brother’s survival – i.e., return his money for future use.

This means that if one lent 99 shekels or dollars and said “pay me back 100,” the extra money is ribbis min haTorah and one is required to return the money. Additionally, one who lent a used bottle of oil, etc. and told the

borrower to return a full bottle, must return the extra oil to the borrower. A bank loan or similar loan that was done without a (proper) heter iska is also in this category.

This point is unique to ribbis – although the money was given by the borrower on his own volition and he’s happy to pay, still the money does not rightfully belong to the lender and must be returned.

This obligation is limited to ribbis min haTorah, which is only when the ribbis was stipulated from the onset of the loan. However, other, more common occurrences, are not *assur min haTorah*. For example: someone who borrows a used bottle of oil and returns a full bottle on his own accord. Likewise, one who borrowed money and returned it along with a bottle of wine. Another common case is the borrower who sends his lender a large *mishloach manos*. All of these scenarios involve ribbis m’drabanon, and therefore the *chiyuv min hatora* of returning what was given does not apply.

Notwithstanding the above, more often than not, even ribbis m’drabanon must still be returned due to other *halachic* considerations which we discussed in the Succos issue.



### Rav Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Herzog

Rabbi Dov Loketch – Rabbi of Agudas Yisrael Mogen Avraham, Detroit

*In our newest installment we turn our eyes to a remarkable Torah scholar and leader who played a crucial role during a critical period in modern Jewish history, but someone whose life, background and achievements are not so well known: Rav Yitzchak Isaac HaLevi Herzog, the first Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel. As we go through this turbulent and harsh time in Israel, it is appropriate to bring to light one of the founding luminaries whose spirit continues to animate Israel's Rabbinate and political institutions.*

#### A Child Prodigy Who Befriended the Gedolim

Yitzchak Isaac was born on the Fourth Night of *Chanukah*, Kislev 28 (December 1), 1889, in the Polish town of Lomza. His father, Rav Yoel Herzog<sup>4</sup>, served as Assistant Rabbi, and Rav Yoel was the young prodigy's only teacher, until Yitzchak Isaac was old enough to learn on his own. Rav Yoel was among the minority of *Rabbanim* in Europe who supported the Chovevei Tzion movement, which worked to promote Jewish immigration to Eretz Yisrael and the development of agricultural communities there. He was a close friend of one of the founders of *Chovevei Tzion*, Rav Shmuel Mohilever, a prominent disciple of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. Later, after a brief tenure as a rabbi in Worcester, Massachusetts, Rav Yoel was invited in 1897 to assume the position of Chief Rabbi of Leeds, England.

Throughout this period, young Yitzchak Isaac learned Torah with great

diligence and passion, mastering Shas, its commentaries, and the classic *Halachic* works. In 1905, at the age of seventeen, Yitzchak Isaac completed the entire Talmud. That same year, he enrolled in the University of London, majoring in mathematics and ancient and Semitic languages. He earned his BA degree four years later, in 1909, at the age of twenty-one.

Although he was not formally taught by any Torah scholars besides his father, Yitzchak Isaac became known among the great sages of his time through written correspondence. For example, he exchanged letters with the renowned Rav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk, and made comments on Rav Meir Simchah's newly-published *Or Sameach*. Rav Meir Simchah received these remarks very warmly.

Yitzchak Isaac also built a close relationship with the *Ridvaz* (Rav Yaakov David Wilovsky) who visited England as part of his effort to raise funds for the publication of his



groundbreaking work on the Talmud Yerushalmi. The *Ridvaz* called Yitzchak Isaac, "*The Rabbi Akiva Eiger of our generation*," lauding his phenomenal memory and razor-sharp, analytical mind. Both these great sages conferred upon Yitzchak Isaac Semichah, in 1910. Rav Yitzchak Isaac also earned the praise of a towering rabbinic figure who was known for not being easily impressed, the Rogatchover Gaon. The Gaon described the young prodigy as "*A proof and a sign that Torah will never be forgotten from Israel*," explaining that in his time, when "the sun of Torah was setting, *a shining star has shone in England*." This is the impression that Rav Yitzchak Isaac made on the Torah luminaries of his time.

#### Searching for the Techeiles

In 1911, Rav Herzog earned his Master's degree. That same year, the Herzog family crossed the English Channel to France, as Rav Yoel assumed the position as Rav of the growing community of Polish and Russian immigrants in Paris. Rav Yitzchak Isaac continued his intensive Torah learning while carefully observing his father's handling of his communal responsibilities. He also enrolled in Paris' Sorbonne University to study the history of the Techeiles, the special blue dye which, in ancient times, was extracted from a snail called the *Chilazon* and used for dyeing one of the *Tzitzis* strings, and several of the

*Bigdei Kehunah* (Priestly Garments). Rav Yitzchak Isaac compellingly disproved the theory that had been advanced several decades earlier, in 1887, by the *Radzhiner Rebbe*, claiming that the Techeiles dye was extracted from the cuttlefish. This creature was not available in the region of Eretz Yisrael, and thus it could not possibly have been the source of Techeiles. Based on available historic and scientific evidence, Rav Herzog pursued the theory identifying the *Chilazon* as a snail called the *murex trunculus*, but he dismissed this hypothesis because the dye of the *murex* is purple, and not blue, as the Gemara describes the Techeiles.

Interestingly enough, Rav Herzog's hypothesis has since been proven correct. Later researchers accidentally left some dye from the *murex* on a window sill, where it was exposed to sunlight, and it gradually changed colors, becoming a beautiful sky blue. It was thus determined that indeed, the *murex* was the *Chilazon* snail from which Techeiles was produced, and the dye would be exposed to sunlight and then turn blue. An organization in Israel called *Ptil Techelet* produces Techeiles from the *murex* and sets of *Tzitzis* containing a thread colored with this dye, claiming that the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* can now once again be fulfilled in its complete form as it was in ancient times until the tradition identifying the *Chilazon* was lost.





## Overnight, Everything Changed

Rebbetzin Ilana Cowland

Relationships coach and author of *The Moderately Anxious Everybody*.

We read Holocaust books starting like that. Or, "The last day of the world as we knew it." Or, "The day my childhood ended." It's surreal to think how quite normal Simchas Torah night was and how recently it was. But overnight, everything changed.

It's one war, but our lives have been affected in many different ways. Entire communities have been destroyed. People are in mourning across the country. Parents are suffering because of what they don't know and others are suffering because of what they do know. Many of us have loved ones serving. Some of us are closer to the South and others closer to the North. One war, but many, many experiences.

Even among members of a single household, there may be a huge range of responses to the situation we're all in. It's very difficult to give great advice about how to deal with "the situation," because while there is one war, there are many, many situations. But perhaps we can share a few helpful tips.

### 7 Coping Strategies:

**1.** You can expect different reactions from different children. What works well for one child triggers another child. One formula will not fit all, but being aware of that already puts you at an advantage. For example, one child will need to be kept away from all news and images because any graphics and too much info are totally frightening. But another child may find that the more she knows, the less she fears.

One child may cope with the idea of Abba being at war by pretending to be a soldier, so he runs around the house with a Nerf gun making loud shooting noises. Good luck if you have another child who's jittery and freaks out whenever there's a loud noise. One family member may feel safe staying put in the comfort of the home, while another may have a strong need to go out and do things to help, running around all day long.

Dealing with conflicting needs and coping strategies is tricky, especially if one child's responses



are similar to yours and another child's bring out a sense of judgment. So take a moment to observe each family member and articulate to yourself their needs. It's not easy meeting all needs, but it's easier when you are clear on what they are.

**2.** For very little children, rocking and cuddling can create a sense of safety, while jumping and shaking their body can let out tension. Do lots of both.

**3.** For kids at the stage when they have feelings you need to help them understand by putting those feelings into words, go ahead and do so. But make sure you're reflecting their feelings and not projecting your own. Sad and scared are very different. Try to avoid suggestions that aren't true of your child.

**4.** Bringing Hashem into the picture is always a good idea. When an anxious child or adult taps into the idea that Hashem is running the show, it's a perspective that can bring immediate relief to anxiety. It's the emunah that has kept us going through thousands of years of persecution.

But please. Don't make the mistake

of burdening your child with a specific outcome. Yes, we should daven for everything we want. And we should have emunah and know Hashem loves us, and we should trust Him. But don't tell your child that if he davens well or if she does enough mitzvos, then x, y, or z will be the outcome. A child should not feel that if he davens hard enough, someone he loves will come home



**When an anxious child or adult taps into the idea that Hashem is running the show, it's a perspective that can bring immediate relief to anxiety.**



safely. It puts too much pressure on the child, and, chas veshalom, if outcomes are different than the ones we want, it can be very damaging to the child.

**5.** Many kids feel safe with routine, and routine tends to go out the window when there's no school. But we can reinstate little pieces of routine and not just give up on it altogether. Made beds, tidy rooms and the like can help recreate a sense of order in the chaos.





6. Helping your child gain awareness of feelings and triggers can help her manage them better. Knowing that we're snappy because we're anxious, down because we're worried, angry because we're frightened, can help us manage ourselves.



**Whether or not disunity got us into this mess, unity is certainly going to get us out of it. That's always been true in our history. It's still true.**



It's an uncomfortable time. But once we stop needing to absolutely avoid those uncomfortable feelings and allow for them, we can ride them out. To say, I'm feeling angry, guilty, scared right now and I'm okay with that, is to give the space for the emotion to be and also to go. Our attitude towards our emotions might be one of **שלום אתה בבואך, שלום אתה בצאתך**. You have to be willing to say hello in order to be able to say goodbye. Don't fight it. Give it space. Telling an emotion that it's welcome to stay is probably the best way to ensure that it leaves.

7. Good old support. Don't do this alone. Try to have your children interact with their friends. We gain tremendous solace from our friends and communities in these times. Tap into that. Whether or not disunity got us into this mess, unity is certainly going to get us out of it. That's always been true in our history. It's still true.

**We Are United**

While these are anxious and difficult times, it's also true to say that something very special is happening. We are focused. We are united. During this time, the whole country is unified by a single goal. And being unified by a single imperative brings with it a profound sense of meaning.

May our regained sense of nationhood merit us to see the end of this war.

May our soldiers and civilians be protected and come home soon.

May our sick recover fully.

May our mourners be comforted.

May this be the last of the pain before the full geula.



**Halachos of Havdalah**

Josh and Tammy Kruger

The silly people in the following story make five mistakes as they try to make havdalah. Can you find them? Can you think of three ways that havdalah is connected with the parasha?

**The Story:**

In the city of Balagan, on a street named Gevalt, lived a couple named Mr. and Mrs. Mevulbal. This family was nice and funny and very, very, very mixed up. One Friday, as Shabbos was about to begin, Mr. Mevulbal called out to his wife, who had her head in the fridge looking for her toothbrush.

"Honey, I just realized that we forgot to say havdalah!"

"Havdalah? Shabbos is going to begin," answered his wife. "Don't you mean that we have to set up our neiros Shabbos?"

"No, we forgot to say havdalah after last week's Shabbos! Quick, pass me the wine from inside the fridge."

Mrs. Mevulbal answered, "But all I can find here is apple juice and beer...we can't use those."

"Oy!" answered Mr. Mevulbal. "That's terrible. Okay, I'll skip that part

of havdalah then. How about the havdalah candle? I think I put it in the dishwasher or maybe the laundry hamper. Please check for me while I look for the besamim."

"Look for the besamim?" laughed Ms. Mevulbal. "It's been sitting right there on the counter since Tuesday. Didn't you notice?"

"I've had a cold since Monday. I haven't been able to smell anything. By the way, your meals have been wonderful over the past few days."

"Okay. Looks like we're ready to make havdalah," they said.

"WAIT!" said a voice from the window. Rabbi Oyvey had been passing by their home and kindly explained some important halachos about making havdalah.

**Discussion:**

What are the 5 mistakes?

1. It's too late to make havdalah. If someone forgot to make havdalah on Saturday night, they can still make havdalah up until sunset on Tuesday. The center of the Jewish week is Shabbos. The first three days of the week belong to the previous Shabbos, and the next







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three days belong to the Shabbos after. They have no connection with the previous Shabbos (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 91:15).

2. If you do not have wine or grape juice available, you can still make a bracha with popular national beverages, such as apple juice or beer. It would not be proper to use water, tea, or coffee because they are considered too plain (Mishna Berurah 296:10).

3. A candle is only used when havdalah is made on a Saturday night. On the first Saturday night of the world, Hashem gave Adam the wisdom to make fire (by rubbing two stones together). Adam recited the bracha of בּוֹרֵא מְאֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ to thank Hashem. Every Saturday night we, too, thank Hashem for teaching Adam how to make fire, and we add this bracha to our havdalah (Pesachim 54a). However, if we make havdalah on a different day of the week, such as motzei yom tov, or if we forget to make the Shabbos havdalah on Saturday night, then it is not the proper time to make the bracha of the fire.

4. Spices (besamim) are also only used when havdalah is made on a Saturday night. During Shabbos, every Jew is given a neshamayeseira

– the neshama becomes larger. At the time of motzei Shabbos the neshama yeseira leaves, and the remaining neshama in our body is sad. A nice smell comforts our neshama and this is why we use spices in the havdalah on Saturday night (Rambam, Hilchot Shabbos 29:28; Tur, Orach Chaim 297). If we make havdalah on another night, then there is no need to comfort our neshama with a special smell.

5. If someone cannot smell, they cannot make the bracha of besamim. This is because it is a bracha of ha'naah (pleasure) and besamim cannot bring pleasure to someone who cannot smell them. Similarly, if someone is blind, G-d forbid, they cannot make the bracha on the candle (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 91:10).

Can you think of 3 ways that havdalah is connected with the parasha?

1. The parasha teaches that Hashem created light and darkness and divided between the two: ויבדל בין האור ובין החושך
2. The parasha introduces the concept of Shabbos.
3. Hashem gave Adam the wisdom of how to use fire.

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