

Shabbat Shalom from Torah MiTzion

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Rabbi Avi Goldberg

The real influence!

The Month of Cheshvan that we have started is considered by many a "gray" month, a month that has no holidays, and is a big fall (double meaning) into the daily routine, especially after the long season of holidays of Tishrei. Adding to this notion many add a prefix to the name of this month, and call it Mar Cheshvan (Mar in Hebrew means bitter, although this word has another meaning to it).

(If you read last weeks' Parsha Sheet you should be familiar with this idea from Elyashivs' article.)

Examining several events and the names of this month can teach us a great lesson about life and about our life during this period of time.

It is mentioned in the book of Kings that the first Temple that was built by King Solomon, took seven years to be constructed, and the building of it was completed on the 11th year for the king Solomon, at the eighth month (Cheshvan) – which is called "bull" (Kings 1, chapter 6, 37-38).

An amazing Medrash on last weeks' Parsha gives us the meaning of the name "bull". According to the Medrash Tanchuma (17) the origin of the name "bull" is from the Hebrew word for flood – "Mabul". Truly one the most meaningful events that took place in the month of Cheshvan was the flood from the time of Noach. The Medrash then continues that every year when Cheshvan started there was a chance for a flood to come again and destroy the whole world. The sky would cover with heavy clouds, and there was a real fear of another flood. Now we understand the name of Cheshvan those days. "Bull" (-flood) was a name that truly described the fear of the people during this month. Such a situation continued until the building of the first Temple. Since King Solomon built the Temple this month stopped being a threatening month, rather it became a month of building.

A flood is an enormous amount of water that ruins anything it meets with no distinction. It doesn't depreciate between objects, it just floods everything with no differentiation. This was a fitting punishment for that generation that sinned by not distinguishing between properties, that stealing was so common that the Gemara (Sanhedrin 108b) inferred from the words of the Torah that the sentence of the generation of Noach was sealed because of stealing. Stealing means taking any property you feel like, without distinguishing at all between your property and other peoples' property. Another sin mentioned in the gen-

eration of Noach was the immoral prohibited sexual relationships between men and women (the end of Parasat Be'rashit), and according to the Rabbis even between animals (inferred from the word that is repeated so much in the description of the entrance of the animals into the ark – "to their species". This reputation is explained by the Rabbis (brought by Rashi for Genesis 6, 12) as a condition for the animals to enter the ark, saying that only animals that kept to their own species were allowed to enter the ark, rather those animals that were messing their sexual relationships with other species were miraculously thrown out of the ark.) The flood was the most fitting punishment for such a generation of confusion and disorientation.

The building of the Temple is exactly the opposite tendency of the generation of Noach. The temple serves a place of orientation for the world, a place that must be in accurate order. It is as if the temple is coming to say to us – "It is right that G-d created the entire world, but he decides to dwell specifically greater in one place, in one nation. The temple is the source of holiness, which means that there are different levels of holiness in the world, and is distinguishing holiness from profane. The same goes for purity and impurity, which is a result of having the temple.

In this weeks' Parsha we read of Avraham. On one hand Avraham was chosen to be the father of all nations, but on the other hand he is designated to be the father of the Jewish nation. This conflict seems to be the source of the events regarding the birth of Yitzchak and Ishmael. In some places it seems that Avraham is concerned for Ishmael even by favoring him over Yitzchak. When G-d apprises Avraham that His wife Sarah will give birth to a child Avraham responds with a request for the life of Ishmael. G-ds' respond is "But your wife will be having a son...." – as if coming to rebuke Avraham for not reacting in the right way (who would care for his son that was born from a slave more than being happy about the information that his beloved wife that he has lead a very long life with will give birth to their child?)

later on when Sarah sees with her motherly instincts that Ishmael has a destroying influence on their son Yitzchak and asks Avraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away, the Torah says that it seemed bad in Avrahams' eyes. G-d had to appear to Avraham and command him to listen to his wife Sarah, and to send away Hagar and Ishmael. **(Con. on page 4)**

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Din Torah: Publicizing the Names of Debtors

Courtesy of: Mishpetey Eretz Institute, Ofra. www.dintora.org

Question

I am a member of the *Va'ad Bayit* (housing committee) of a condominium (comprising 28 residents). A number of residents do not pay their monthly *Va'ad Bayit* maintenance fees. Is it permissible for me to publicize the names of the debtors on the bulletin board so as to cause them to pay off their debts, or would such conduct be forbidden on the grounds of *lashon hara* (evil speech or gossip)?

Answer

The *Chafetz Chaim* (Chapter 10) writes that it is permitted to tell *lashon hara* for a constructive purpose. If so, also in the case at hand it would be permitted to publicize the names of those residents who owe money in order to encourage them to pay off their debts to the housing committee.

However, as the *Chafetz Chaim* himself states, this permit is predicated upon a number of conditions. For our purposes, the permit is conditional upon the treasurer's having tried to collect the debt by all of the conventional methods and the likelihood is that it will not be possible to recoup the debt without publishing the debtors' names.

It is certainly permitted for the treasurer to publish amongst the residents of the building the names of the debtors without posting them on the bulletin board, because it is permitted to tell an individual that someone owes him money, and the defaulting neighbors are debtors of their own neighbors.

Undoubtedly, the debtors will have a host of claims on the basis of which they think that they are exempt from paying. But even if this is the situation, they are not in fact exempt from paying; instead, they must first pay and only afterwards have their claims adjudicated in the Beit Din. This law is based on the words of a responsum of the *Rashba* (*Shu"t ha'Rashba* 3:398) which states that where there is a dispute between a public body and a private individual on a particular issue (taxes, for example), the private individual cannot avoid paying until all of his claims are clarified, but he must first pay and only afterwards air his grievances. To quote the *Rashba's* words: "For otherwise every individual would plead this argument and the tax would never be collected, thus affording a loophole to the fraudsters."

In his work, *Dinei Ha'Bayit Ha'Meshutaf* (*Condominium Law in Israel*), Rav Efraim Korngut writes (on p. 95) that the *Va'ad Bayit* has the same legality as the "public" in this regard and that the resident must, therefore, first pay off his debts and only afterwards clarify any claims he may have before the *Beit Din*.



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down only in routine matters, but also prefers to get involved in education for children and adults and to bring peace between the various sectors and to learn a little bit and to yield results. But the One Who grants man wisdom will provide the necessary strength and mettle, and we will be privileged to sanctify the Name of Heaven and His Torah with honor and splendor."

In addition to his official position as Rechovot's Chief Rabbi, he also served as the religious kibbutzim's "unofficial" Rav. (In those days, most kibbutzim did not have a formal Rav.) My father referred to those who were involved in the religious settlement enterprise as "sanctifying the Name of Heaven". He reached out to them with affection and esteem; maintained warm and continuous ties with them; delved into their problems; issued halachic rulings for

them; delivered *shiurim*; and participated in their joys and sorrows.

He described his relationship to the State of Israel:

"This State in and of itself is a precious vessel, a benevolent gift for us from our Father in Heaven. And it is our obligation to fill the vessel with all of our holy content, which we received at Sinai... We are neither permitted nor able to reject the mission which Providence charged us with when the State was established."

My father served as Rechovot's Chief Rabbi for thirteen years, until he died on 10 Cheshvan 5725 (1964).



Religious Zionist Paragons of Virtue: Rav Aharon Elimelech Bar-Shaul – Chief Rabbi of Rechovot

Written by his daughter, Miriam Shiloh of Mercaz Shapira

rare combination of Meah She'arim's innocence and devotion; Ye-

Rav Aharon Elimelech Bar-Shaul was born in Yerushalayim in 5673 (1913).

When Yerushalayim's New Montefiore neighborhood (today's Kiryat Moshe, then a remote frontier) was established, the family moved to the new neighborhood, and my father attended Yeshivat Etz Chaim. As a young man, he learned in Yeshivat Hevron, and on Shabbat, he would walk over to Yeshivat Mercaz HaRav to hear Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohein Kook *zt"l* speak. My father was enchanted by Rav Kook; he marveled at the Rav's extraordinary personality and ideas.

In 5707, he moved to Rechovot with Yeshivat Kletzk, where he served as *menahel ruchani*. In 5711, he was unanimously elected Chief Rabbi of Rechovot.

My father was a very special man and a very special rabbi. A trailblazer, he always chose the path which expressed his inner truth and suited his unique personality. Rather than adhering to a specific stream or sector, he would "accept the truth from wherever it came."

This was how he lived his life. Although he never identified with a particular political party, he was an avid supporter of the United Religious Front, an alliance of all the religious parties.

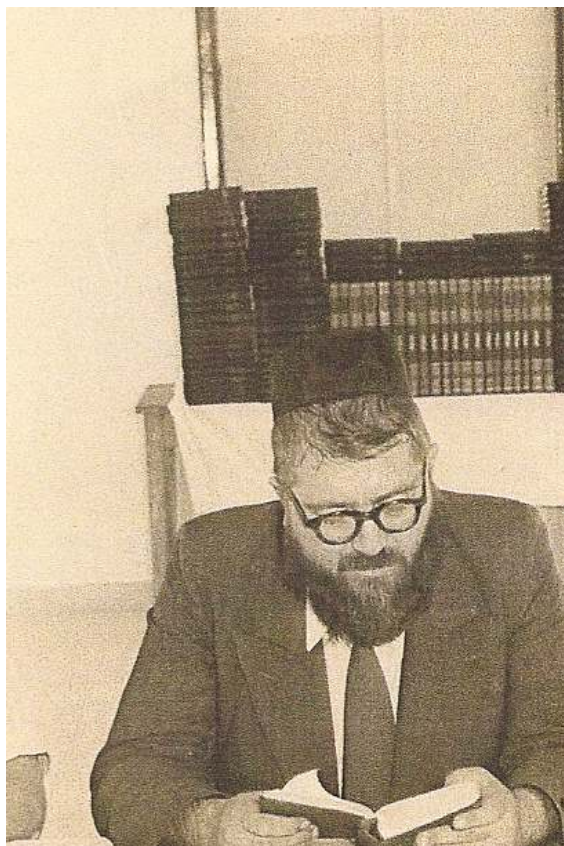
His creative thinking was readily apparent. As he wrote in his book, "*Ma'arichei Lev*":

"There is indeed something special, an original foundation, in every man. And man's mission in the world is to discover that uniqueness within himself, that creative spark within... Every Jew must acquire his portion of the Torah, elicit the Torah's light, and thus discover his soul's Source."

The "Source" of my father's soul was a



the generation of the future, and he would listen carefully to what they had to say. He guided, educated, and encouraged them. He believed with his entire heart that education which was based on love of the Torah, fear of Heaven, and true values would create a new atmosphere for society as a whole.



shivat Hevron's *pilpul* (a method of textual learning) and ethical conduct; Rav Kook's idea of "building the Land and reviving the Nation with the Jewish spirit"; and mainly, his innate love for everyone and his burning desire to illuminate Hashem's Path for each Jew – no matter where he may be found. He spoke softly and cared deeply about each person with whom he came in contact. Although he shunned the trappings of honor, he treated everyone else with great respect and camaraderie. People from every segment of society were drawn to him – religious and secular, scholars and simple folk, young and old.

In particular, my father had an excellent rapport with young people. His entire being was dedicated to religious youths,

He lectured at youth symposiums and traveled around the country to deliver *shiurim* about Jewish law and *hashkafah* or to deal with various issues. Every Friday night, dozens of youngsters would gather in our home for a regular *shiur*. Once the *shiur* ended, the young people would remain for heart to heart discussions which often continued well into the night. Patiently, cheerfully, and directly, my father would address their problems and concerns.

When my father was elected as Rechovot's Chief Rabbi, he wrote:

"The job is difficult and complex, broad and comprehensive. And particularly when one does not want to get bogged

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“Sometimes, a Father Must Say No”

On Sunday, 4 Cheshvan 5755 (October 9, 1994), IDF Sergeant Nachshon Wachsmann *hy”d* was headed home on leave when he was kidnapped by four Hamas terrorists disguised as religious Jews and taken to Bir Naballah, a village just outside of Yerushalayim. The next day, Hamas announced that they had Nachshon and demanded that many terrorists be released from Israeli prisons. All of *Am Yisrael* united in prayer which culminated in a massive prayer rally at the Kotel on Thursday. On Friday night of Shabbat Parshat Lech Lecha, 10 Cheshvan 5755 (October 14, 1994), Sayeret Matkal (the IDF's elite reconnaissance unit) attempted a rescue mission. However, the terrorists murdered Nachshon, and Captain Nir Poraz, the rescue force's commander, was killed as well. At Nachshon's funeral on *Motzai Shabbat*, Rav Mordechai Elon, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Horev, eulogized his student:

I see you here, Nachshon, with that same smile of yours. You, for what you managed to do to the whole nation in the last few days. To the level you brought us all to on these hard, rough days that we are facing with that smile of yours.

I want to tell, that just this week, after years of us knowing each other, I finally had the privilege of discovering the source of your faith, your strength and your spiritual powers.

Last night I came to you parents. Your dad approached me, and made me sit and think about one thing. I tried to comfort and talk but all he had to say was this. "I'm disturbed by one thing - Nachshon brought all of *Am Yisrael* to such a high level of faith I am responsible for it not descending now". That is what disturbed your father, a moment after you were no longer with us. Just last night I understood what you were made of. I always knew just like I knew two nights ago when I was Chazan and thousands and thousands all of *Beit Yisrael* were crying in a united prayer. I knew it all came from some inner strength you possessed which showed in your warm smile.

I don't know what torments you were put through but they didn't break your spirit or stop your smile or even weaken your faith. Your

strength that lives inside us we vow will continue to uphold. We did not get weakened last night, we got stronger and we will continue with your spirit that remains with us.



Your dad continued and added one more sentence, which I also must tell you. "So many requests" so he said "I asked from Hashem, I asked for help when I was sick" and you know how ill he was and then recovered" and I got it, I asked for a family like ours and I got it."

"They asked me last night" your father said "we've been praying so much without an answer and I say we got an answer, the answer was no, a father is allowed to say no." That is what your father said, that is where you come from, and you go to the land where the truth is found.

I have just one little request from you. When you sit there in front of the Heavenly Throne, please ask that they will stop testing us in this types of test of faith and spirit. Please ask that this week will be the last of our homework, please request that we will have the strength to find the inner point that united us all.

Ask it with your smile, with that smile we could never resist. When you ask up there we'll be praying here, with strength that we learnt from you.

Hashem tested Avraham as well just as he does to us, but he merited hearing the Voice that told him not to harm the boy. We have waited for that voice for so long, and we will continue to believe and continue on with faith and strength, just as you would have wanted us to.



The real influence! / Continued from page 1

Many think that influencing the world should be done by taking divisions away, and stopping the differentiation between us and the other nations of the world. It seems that also Avraham thought so, but G-d has a different plan in mind. It is true that all the nations of the world will be blessed via the Jews, but that will take place only if we, the Jews, are sticking to what we are supposed to be. The land of Israel, the Torah and Mitzvot, all separate us from the other nations, in order to influence and progress the world. Avraham gets an addition to his name, and he becomes father of many nations (Genesis 17, 5) exactly when he is informed that he will have his own child from his own wife – Yitzchak. The influence to the world must come through an accurate definition of what Judaism means. A disordered view and confusion are similar to a flood, and to the situation of Noah's generation where the entire world lead a life of a mess with no distinctions.



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