

K0.5 - Breaking The Ice

Aleph Chalutzi Machane 5775 5774



Aims:

1. To be a fat penguin
2. Familiarize ourselves with some basic elements of kvutsa.
3. What is Tanach?
4. Basics of Ha'Am Ba'Aretz

Be a fat Penguin



This is going to be the very first time you met your kvutza and you sit down with them together. It's incredibly important to get to know them as well as for them to become acquainted with you. Make sure to do a variety of games and exercises/chilled discussions to bond. This will set the tone for the rest of your kvutsot.

This is includes:

- Getting to know your chanichim
- Your chanichim getting to know you
- Your chanichim getting to know each other
- Creating a Kvutza identity.

Use ice breaker games to get the group to work together and make sure you know their names. Start checking out what games they enjoy as you have 10 different Kvutzot together.

Welcome them to Machane

Create a Kvutza identity. Maybe make a flag and emblem of your Kvutza, make them proud of your Kvutza name.

Think out of the box

Draw yourself a box. When you brainstorm (not P.C. - sorry) ideas for your K, if it falls in the box throw it in the bin, if it's outside - great! This isn't Shabbat afternoon at sviva anymore; you need to up your game to keep your chanichim interested and with you - if you lose them at this early stage you'll never get them back. Make sure they leave kvutza counting the seconds till the next one!



Tziud

Tziud is an extremely essential part of any kvutza. Tziud means instruments/ apparatus. These are all the physical objects used in a kvutza. The effort involved in making something is usually worth it as Chanichim respond better to physical objects and appreciate seeing the effort you have put in. Make it fun, interesting and relevant - but don't spend the whole of pre-camp making a board game that'll get used for ten minutes!

Remember their age



Our chanichim might be the youngest, but they are not babies. They can be stretched; don't say "they're 11 - let's play bang-bang for an hour!" You've got to keep them interested and try to aim your kvutsah at the correct level. **DON'T JUST PLAY**

GAMES FOR AN HOUR. It's extremely important that the chanchim learn at all times on machane and kvutsa is one of the core times for this. If you ask your chanichim what they learnt after a kvutsa they will hopefully reel off the chomer.

This will only happen if you teach it to them.

Running Shtick

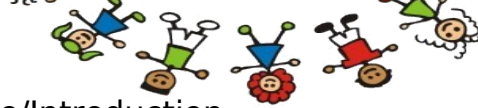
Some madrichim might want to introduce some sort of five-minute shtick for the end of each kvutsa. This is a useful tool for both revising what has been covered already and for showing the chanichim an overarching structure. The chomer is not a selection of interesting individual session based on the avot; it has a theme with specific goals.



A couple of examples:

1. Draw a giant outline of a person on a piece of poster paper. Give the person a name. At the end of each kvutsa add one or two different character traits to the person based on what has been learnt during the kvutsa.
2. Have each chanich create a real-life facebook wall. Put whatever information on it that you want using post-it notes, details of "friends" (other members of the kvutsa), etc. You can have each person "post" on another member's wall each day. One person writes a "status update" which is a summary of the kvutsa and "shares" it with everyone else etc.
3. Draw a "kvutsa tapestry": take a roll of poster paper and draw what happened in that kvutsa in the form of a progressive 2D tapestry. Include what was learnt, what jokes were made, games were played etc.
4. Some choose to focus a bit less on the chinuch stuff for their shtick. You could try a different type of bang-bang every day, do a word of the day, phrase of the day whatever.





What is Tanach?

The Tenach is an acronym made up of the three books, which collated together make the Hebrew Bible. 1. Torah, 2. Neviim (prophets), 3. Ketuvim (writings).

According to the Talmud (Bava Basra 14b-15a, Rashi to Megillah 3a, 14a), much of the contents of the Tanach were compiled by the Men of the Great Assembly ("Anshei K'nesset HaGedolah") a task completed in 450 BCE, and have remained unchanged since that date

The TORAH is made up the five books of Moshe: 1. (בְּרֵאשִׁית / Bereshît) - Genesis, 2. (שְׁמוֹת / Shemot) - Exodus, 3. (וַיִּקְרָא / Vayikra) - Leviticus, 4. (בַּמִּדְבָּר / Bamidbar) - Numbers, 5. (דְּבָרִים / Devārîm) - Deuteronomy.

We have the books of Nevi'im - the prophets. We read bits and pieces throughout the year in our Haftarot.

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|--|--|
| 1. Yehoshua - יהושע – Joshua | i. Hoshea - הושע - Hosea |
| 2. Shoftim - שופטים - Judges | ii. Yoel - יואל - Joel |
| 3. Shmuel (I & II) - שְׁמוּאֵל – Samuel | iii. Amos - עֲמוֹס - Amos |
| 4. Melachim (I & II) - מְלָכִים - Kings | iv. Ovadiah - עֹבַדְיָה - Obadiah |
| 5. Yeshaya - ישעיה - Isaiah | v. Yonah - יוֹנָה - Jonah |
| 6. Yirmiya - יִרְמְיָה - Jeremiah | vi. Micha - מִיכָה - Micah |
| 7. Yechezkel - יְחִזְקֵאל – Ezekiel | vii. Nachum - נְחֻם - Nahum |
| 8. Trei Asar - תְּרֵי עָשָׂר – Twelve Minor Prophets | viii. Chavakuk - חַבְקוּק - Habakkuk |
| | ix. Tzephaniah - צְפַנְיָה - Zephaniah |
| | x. Chaggai - חַגִּי - Haggai |
| | xi. Zechariah - זְכַרְיָה - Zechariah |
| | xii. Malachi - מְלָאכִי – Malachi |

Our chomer is primarily based on the extremely interesting Neviim and covers the entrance into the Land of Israel until the Babylonian captivity of Yehuda. Over the next few days all will be revealed.

We have the 3rd section of Tanach the Ketuvim, or “writings” . We use the books of Ketuvim lots, especially Tehillim which we read from every single day! We also have the Five Megillot in Ketuvim which we read throughout the year.

1. Tehillim - תהלים - Psalms
2. Mishlei - משלי - Proverbs
3. Iyob - איוב - Job
4. Shir HaShirim - שיר השירים – Song of Songs
5. Rut - רות - Ruth
6. Eicha - איכה - Lamentations
7. Kohelet - קהלת - Ecclesiastes
8. Esther - אסתר - Esther
9. Daniel - דניאל - Daniel
10. Ezra-Nechemiah - ונחמיה עזרא – Ezra-Nechemiah
11. Divrei HaYamim (I & II) - דברי הימים – Chronicles

Timeline of Tanach

2488	1272 BCE	Death of Moses/ Yehoshua (Joshua) leads Jews into Israel
Judges Rule Israel		
Jewish Year	Civil Year	Historic Event
2516	1244 BCE	Death of Yehoshua (Joshua)/ Zekainim (Elders) lead the nation of Israel
2533	1227 BCE	Othniel, first Judge leads Israel
2573	1187 BCE	Ehud judges Israel
2654	1106 BCE	Dvorah (Deborah) judges Israel
2694	1066 BCE	Gideon judges Israel
2734	1026 BCE	Avimelech (Abimelech) judges Israel
2779	981 BCE	Yiftach (Jephthah) judges Israel
2810	950 BCE	Shimshon (Samson) judges Israel
2830	930 BCE	Eli the High Priest judges Israel
2871	889 BCE	Shmuel (Shamuel) the Prophet judges Israel
Saul, David & Solomon		
Jewish Year	Civil Year	Historic Event
2881	879 BCE	Saul anointed king over Israel
2883	877 BCE	David anointed king over Israel
2892	868 BCE	King David establishes rule over all of Israel
2924	836 BCE	King Solomon (Shlomo) begins his rule
First Temple Period		
Jewish Year	Civil Year	Historic Event
2928	832 BCE	First Temple construction begins
2935	825 BCE	First Temple completed
2964	796 BCE	Split of the kingdom. Kings Rechavam (Judah) and Yeravam (Israel) begin their rule
3320	510 BCE	Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon conquers Judea. He removes part of the Temple's holy vessels and children of the royal family take them to Babylon (Daniel 1)
3327	503 BCE	Yehoyachim (Yechonia) ben Yehoyakim becomes king and reigns for only three months. Nebuchadnezzar exiles him to Babylon together with 10,000 people and the Torah Sages (II Kings 24:16). Zedekiah ben Yehoyakim becomes the last King of Judea (24:18)
3338	492 BCE	The First Temple is destroyed. It had stood for 410 years.
Purim Events		
Jewish Year	Civil Year	Historic Event

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3392	438 BCE	Achashverosh becomes king of Persia
3405	425 BCE	(13 Adar) - Haman's ten sons executed (14 Adar) - Purim celebration (15 Adar) - Purim celebration in Shushan
3406	424 BCE	The Megillah recorded

Ha'am Ba'aretz

This theme looks at Nach and focuses on the Jewish people living as a nation in the Land of Israel from their entry to the Land until Second Temple times. Nach is essentially a crash course in Bnei Akiva ideology. It is the book of Am Yisrael b'Eretz Yisrael al pi Torat Yisrael – the story of the Jewish people living in the Land of Israel. However, as we will see, Am Yisrael did not always keep the Torat Yisrael as they should, neither did we always value Eretz Yisrael or Am Yisrael as a collective unit the whole time.

We will look at how when the above principles are kept, things go well, and they when they don't, things don't go so well. Along with a host of other important messages we will also look out how Nach is relevant to our lives today.

Like we do right here on machane, the Tanach doesn't educate us by giving us a long list of rules, but rather teaches us through role models to be role models! Yes, we have all the mitzvot that appear in commandment form in the Torah, but first and foremost comes the stories of our ancestors and their deeds, from the good qualities to their not so good qualities, through walking in their footsteps and following the example they led for us we see how we should live our lives as Jews.

K0.5. is your opportunity to get over some basics of this principle, the importance of Am, Eretz and Torah and how Tanach is a guidebook to learn these messages from and how we will see these messages are all relevant and have parallels for us today.

Get creative. This is your chance to teach and inspire.

K1: Yehoshua

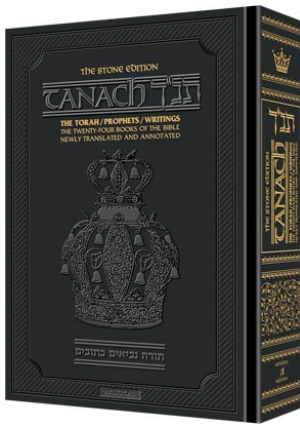
Aleph Chalutzi Machane 5775



Aims:

1. To understand the history of Yehoshua (Joshua) and his wars
2. Discuss the prioritisation of hishtadlut as opposed to bitachon
3. Ethics of war (then and now)

Intro



Sefer Yehoshua (the book of Joshua) depicts the triumphant emergence of Bnei Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael. After years in limbo wandering the desert, the Bnei Yisrael are finally ready to experience Hashem's fulfilment of His earlier promise to deliver them into their own land; with Eretz Yisrael comes the final,

Hadracha Hot Tip

Get your chanichim to write down as many facts as they can about Yehoshua. Let them struggle for a bit! Use this as a trigger to talk about his importance and role.

solidifying part of the Jewish national identity. At first, you might think Sefer Yehoshua is nothing more than a long and technical catalogue of battles, which has limited relevance to our lives today. It's true that war is a central theme of Sefer Yehoshua, and its portrayal provides both the history of Eretz Yisrael and a treatise on the ethics of war.

Military strategy

Hishtadlut is defined as the effort which we are required to exert in order to make things happen in our lives. **Bitachon** is putting our faith in HaShem to help us out.



Just trusting in Hashem and expecting him to do all the legwork isn't enough. Sefer Yehoshua demonstrates this necessity for Hishtadlut within a military context (though this could apply to anything); throughout the Sefer we see Yehoshua implementing effective military strategies, discussing battle tactics with the people and being instructed in warfare by Hashem. In other words, Yehoshua put the effort in to know the business of war, he didn't expect God to do it all for him.

Then, like in Israel today, it was not enough simply to pray for military success and expect Hashem to perform miracles but rather Bnei Yisrael had to put in the Hishtadlut.

Yehoshua starts off his military mission even before the Bnei Yisrael cross the Jordan to enter Israel by sending Calev and Pinchas as spies to scout out Yericho. He sets a precedent of Hishtadlut for all future military action; even though at the opening of the Sefer, Hashem repeatedly reassures Yehoshua: כִּי עִמָּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ



K1: Yehoshua

Yehoshua (see right) still does not stroll casually across the border, but instead cautiously appraises the situation in Yericho through tactical espionage. The in-depth strategic planning that Yehoshua engages in can be particularly seen regarding the ambush at Ai.

From the beginning of Sefer Yehoshua, Bnei Yisrael could no longer rely solely upon Hashem for their food and water but would now have to also work for it as straight after entering the land and offering up the Korban Pesach the Manna stopped falling. Thus, **Hishtadlut** is a theme of Sefer Yehoshua - not just in the context of wars, but in all areas of life, Bnei Yisrael were made to transition to a world in which they had to provide for themselves.

Despite emphasising the importance of Hishtadlut, the message of Sefer Yehoshua is not that we only get something when we put the effort in. Actually, we only get what we want when we put the effort in **and** Hashem allows us to succeed.

The idea of faith in Hashem as a key component of success is expressed as **Bitachon** (יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בַּה' עֲזָרָם) (וּמִגִּבּוֹם הוּא). Thus in one of the most important books of Religious Zionist thought, Eim HaBanim Semeichah, Rav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal says:

“HaShem commanded two things to Yehoshua. First, to be strong and courageous in war...Second...G-d introduces the concept of strength and courage in Torah; to keep and perform all that Moshe commanded in the holy Torah.... the Mabit... writes that in reality Yehoshua was supposed to conquer the Land through war in the natural fashion. Therefore, he attacked with troops and force. However, the Holy One Blessed be He explained to him that his success in conquering the Land was mainly dependent on maintaining Torah study and the performance of mitzvoth, rather than mere military force....although it is necessary for you to be strong and courageous in battle, the main emphasis must be upon strengthening Torah observance....

If we follow the ways of the Torah, as our forefathers did, we will succeed. Yet, if we stray from their path and cease to keep the Torah and its mitzvoth, G-d forbid, we have absolutely no portion in our forefather's inheritance. We would be unsuccessful in conquering the Land, for it would not be rightfully ours.”

Sefer Yehoshua also emphasises the importance of learning Torah whenever possible:

לא-יָמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ, וְהִגִּיתָבוּ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
'This book of the law shall not depart out of your
mouth, but

1:7. Just be strong and very courageous to observe and do in accordance with all of the Torah that Moses My servant has commanded you. Do not stray there from right or left, in order that you succeed wherever you go.

Can we think of situations in our own lives where Hishtadlut is important?

#Tanakhisrelevanttoou
rlives



K1: Yehoshua

The enduring message of Sefer Yehoshua is that Bnei Yisrael's military endeavours will only succeed if that is in accordance with the Divine Will, and Hashem wills that we keep the Torah.

Which is easier: Hishtadlut or Bitachon?

Are there situations where we might need to focus on one more than another?

One way of interpreting Hishtadlut and Bitachon in the military sphere of Sefer Yehoshua is the combination of study of Torah with fighting in the army. This issue is seen today within the Hesder Yeshiva programme. Hesder literally means arrangement; it signifies an arrangement between Yeshivot and the government that religious boys will over 5 years spend approximately 1.4 months army - 3.6 months yeshiva.

The case for hesder rests, then, upon several simple assumptions.

First, during the formative years, a ben Torah should be firmly rooted in a pre-eminently Torah climate, this being crucially important both for his personal spiritual development and for the future of a nation in critical need of broadly based spiritual commitment and moral leadership.

Second, the defence of Israel is an ethical and halachic imperative - be it because, as we believe, the birth of the state was a momentous historical event and its preservation of great spiritual significance or because, even failing that, the physical survival of its three million plus [as of 1998 - approximately four and a half million] Jewish inhabitants is at stake. Third, in light of the country's current military needs - and these should admittedly be reassessed periodically - yeshiva students should participate in its defense, both by undergoing basic and specialized training, thus becoming part of the reserves against the possibility, God forbid, of war, and by performing some actual service even during some period of uneasy peace...

Although stateless centuries have tended to obscure this fact - hesder has been the traditional Jewish way...what were the milieu of Moshe Rabbenu, of Yehoshua, of David, of Rabbi Akiva, as Hazal conceived and described them, but yeshivothesder?...The halachic rationale for hesder rather rests upon a) the simple need for physical survival and b) the fact that military service is often the fullest manifestation of a far broader value: g'miluthasadim, the empathetic concern for others and action on their behalf...When, as in contemporary Israel, the greatest single hesedone can perform is helping to defend his fellows' very lives, the implications for yeshiva education should be obvious...



Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ל"צ, Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshivat Har Etzion

Meanwhile, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky claimed during Operation Pillar of Defence in 2012 that no rockets would hit Bnei Brak because the people of that city study the Torah.

K1: Yehoshua

Secular Jews outnumber religious in Israel, shouldn't religious boys be devoting their time to learning Torah and helping the army that way? On the other hand, is it right that Hesder soldiers serve only half the time that everyone else does?



Q. Do you think that Hesder is the best way of integrating Torah observance with military service?

Q. Who has the best integration of Hishtadlut and Bitachon – Rav Lichtenstein or RavKanievsky?

Ethics of war

The peacetime reign of Shlomo Hamelech with its stable diplomatic relations is generally regarded as a high point in Jewish history, and we look forward the coming of moshiach who will bring world peace and even our standard greeting 'Shalom' points to this ideal. So why does Sefer Yehoshua document so many brutal and bloody wars?

We also recognise that there are certain occasions where it is necessary and justified for the Bnei Yisrael to go to war.

On a halachic level, permissible wars are classified into two categories: '**milchemet mitzvah**' – obligatory war – and '**milchemetreshut**' – optional war.

The Rambam defines the categories:

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, HilchotMelachimMilchamot 5:1

A king should not initiate war unless it is milchemet mitzvah (an Obligatory war) 2. Moses my servant has died; and now arise cross this Jordan, you and all this nation, to the land which I give the children of Israel. 3. Every place on which the soles of your feet will tread I have given to you, as I have spoken to Moses... 4. No man shall stand up before you all the days of your life... 5. No man shall stand up before you all the days of your life... 6. Be strong and have courage; for you will cause this nation to inherit the land that I have sworn to their ancestors to give to them

In the first Perek of Sefer Yehoshua Hashem tells Yehoshua to take the Jewish people and lead them in conquering Eretz Yisrael by vanquishing its inhabitants:

As Jews we do not glorify war for its own sake, Yehoshua's wars were considered 'milchemet mitzva' because Hashem commanded them and because they were waged against the seven nations spoken of by the Rambam.

Equally, a war fought in self-defence is a milchemet mitzva as it is an obligation to defend one's self. The



ability to wage effective and devastating warfare in Yehoshua's time was necessary not just to conquer the land but as a deterrent to prevent other nations from attacking the Bnei Yisrael.

What do you think....?

Are all of the wars fought by the modern State of Israel considered Milchamot Mitzva? If so, do we all have an obligation to serve in the IDF?

We can see from Sefer Yehoshua that a fearsome military reputation was the best defence against enemies who would otherwise attack. Rachav betrays her Canaanite nation to help Pinchas and Calev because she, like the rest of the world, had heard of the Jews' exodus from Egypt and their subsequent defeat of the Amorites; she tells the spies how scared her people are of the Bnei Yisrael's reputation.



Sefer Yehoshua also emphasises the need for ethics in warfare as we repeatedly see Bnei Yisrael acting in an ethical manner towards their enemies. We see that Yehoshua fights with a purpose in mind. He attacks the cities that Hashem instructs him to and he follows Hashem's battle plans to last detail. He does not take the spoils of war when indicated not to by Hashem. We also see that he does not fight just for the sake of fighting but would rather make peace when he can (as long as the allies accept upon themselves the 7 Noachide laws too).



For example, he made a peace treaty with the Giveonim (Gibeonites) whom he thought were from a far away land. It turns out, however, that they were not from a far away land but tricked Yehoshua into making a treaty with them. Although conceivably Yehoshua could have annulled this treaty, seeing that it was made under false pretences, he decides to honour it, because the Israelite's honourable reputation was a Kiddush Hashem, and by perpetuating it a further Kiddush Hashem would be achieved. In fact he even goes to fight in defence of the Gibeonim when the other nations attack them for making a treaty with Bnei Yisrael.



Rachav too, is shown ethical conduct as she makes the spies swear an oath not to harm her family when they conquer Jericho, which they honour.

Instead of bursting into the cities and attacking without warning, the Bnei Yisrael were given specific instructions to engage in diplomatic negotiations first and offer the foreign nations three choices:

K1: Yehoshua

1. Accept the absolute sovereignty of Israel and whatever designation and position Israel would grant them.
2. Leave the land and settle elsewhere.
3. Refuse to be subject to Israel, refuse to leave, and be destroyed.

As Rambam says in HilchotMelachimU'Milchamot:

Rambam, Mishneh Torah, HilchotMelachimu'Milchamot 6:1

One should not make war against anyone until first calling out to them for peace, whether in the case of a Permitted War or in an Obligatory War, as it says: When you come upon a city to make war upon it, you shall call out to it for peace (Deut. 20:10).





While other nations in Yehoshua's time (and today) wage war for greed or power, taking pleasure in violently pillaging cities and abusing inhabitants, the Jewish people were expected to understand that conquering Eretz Yisrael was about serving Hashem and ridding the land of Avodah Zara so that they could settle in it, and not about personal glory or wealth.



Hashem's commandment that the spoils of Yericho should be not touched by BneiYisrael but rather consecrated for Avodas Hashem is a perfect symbol of this and Achan's transgression of the command reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of why BneiYisrael were waging war.

A leader who doesn't hesitate before sending their nation into battle is not fit to be a leader.

Can war ever be justified halachically?

"The saving of life overrides the commandments of the entire Torah; and he shall live by them and not die by them. Desecrate one Sabbath on his account so that he may keep many Sabbaths" (Yoma 85b).

The ethics of warfare that we learn from Sefer Yehoshua are no less relevant today than they were then.



So what did the IDF do in Gaza to meet their obligation to operate within the laws of war?

By Lahav Harkov 04/9/2014 (Jerusalem Post)

Israel's ratio of civilian to military casualties in Operation Protective Edge was only one-fourth of the average in warfare around the world, former commander of British forces in Afghanistan Col. (res.) Richard Kemp told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Wednesday.

Kemp pointed out that, during the operation, there was approximately one civilian casualty for every terrorist killed by the IDF, whereas the average in the world is four civilians for every combatant, and that, when taking into consideration Hamas's use of human shields, this shows how careful the IDF is.

"No army in the world acts with as much discretion and great care as the IDF in order to minimize damage. The US and the UK are careful, but not as much as Israel," he told the committee.

Kemp, who has long openly admired the IDF's military tactics and testified in Israel's favor to the Goldstone Commission following Operation Cast Lead in 2009, visited Israel during Operation Protective Edge.

The retired colonel was invited to the committee by Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman Ze'ev Elkin to share his knowledge on law and ethics in war.

"The IDF's actions during Operation Protective Edge were very reasonable, especially in light of the fact these actions were meant, first and foremost, to strike

“During the whole operation Israel was very careful under all the limitations of international law. Even if there were exceptions, there were very few and in cases when there was no possibility, and there was no intention to hurt civilians.”

According to Kemp, Israel had legitimization, under international law, to strike hospitals, schools and places of religious worship that were being used to store weapons or launch missiles.

The legality of hitting such a site, risking civilian lives, is “a difficult question for anyone to answer,” Kemp said, one that a commander on the ground or ordering an air strike would have to answer in the moment.

“The guiding principles within the laws of armed conflict relate to necessity and proportionality. If it’s a hospital that has civilians, but it’s also being used, let’s say, as a command center” he said, making a reference to Gaza City’s Shifa Hospital, “then the person making the decision will have to say ‘I reckon I will kill 30-40 civilians but I will remove a significant command center, which will bring the collapse of the enemy.’” In other words, he explained the commander has to “justify that the military value of the attack is worth the death of civilians” and that Britain and America make decisions in the same way.

As for legal advisers’ omnipresence in the IDF, Kemp said the situation is the same for the UK and the US, quipping that “the law is everywhere.”

He said that, in any case, commanders should have enough knowledge of the law to make their own decisions, and lawyers often don’t give a clear-cut answer as to the legality of an action.

In response to a question by MK Nissim Ze’ev (Shas) about Muslim extremism in the UK, Kemp said “we didn’t realize it, but we have been fighting this since 2001.”

The retired colonel pointed out that thousands of British Islamists fought in Syria and

“Ultimately our strength is not solely our military power. That's part of our strength. The strength of the Jewish people in the State of Israel and the Land of Israel is first and foremost our profound moral strength. Everything stems from that.

If we were to lower our standards, not to find a solution that meets the highest ethical standards, that would be a mistake with far more, immense significance for us as a nation and a state and as people than the operational error.”

Eliezer Shkedi, Commander in Chief of the IAF 2004-08

- 1. What are the ethical standards we learn from Yehoshua? To what extent should they dictate the attitude of the modern State of Israel towards warfare?**
- 2. War. Huh. Yeah. What is it good for?**



K2: Shoftim (Judges)

Aleph Chaslutzi Machane 5775



Aims:

1. To discuss lessons we ourselves can learn from the Shoftim
2. To know the disastrous cycle of Sefer Shoftim
3. To discuss Devorah as the only female judge

Introduction

Sefer Yehoshua related Am Yisrael's conquering of Eretz Yisrael and Shoftim picks up where it left off, starting with Yehoshua's passing. However, while the narrative of *Sefer Yehoshua* focuses on Yehoshua (as its name would suggest), *Sefer Shoftim* covers a period of almost four hundred years; from the preliminary attempts by the tribes to secure their allotted lands until the eve of the monarchy centuries later. It strings together many different episodes concerning different Shoftim, some of whom are afforded only a few pessukim, while others - such as Devorah, Shimshon and Gidon - are paid more attention to. Sefer Shoftim was written by Shmuel HaNavi who lived after the time period of the Shoftim he writes about. Furthermore, Sefer Shoftim is not written chronologically but rather aims to convey a specific prophetic message to both the people in the time of Shmuel AND all of its future readers. This is done via a cyclical structure that can be summarised in the following steps:



1. Bnei Yisrael live comfortably in peace.
2. They become arrogant and complacent, forgetting their strength comes from G-d.
3. They go off the derech - sexual immorality, Avodah zara (reliance on powers other than G-d) - you name it, they did it.
4. Hashem punishes the people by allowing their oppressors to attack them.
5. They cry out to Hashem through prayer.
6. Hashem has mercy and sends a prophet to save them.
7. Am Yisrael recognise that Hashem has saved them and subsequently do teshuva.
8. Hashem rewards them and they live comfortably and materially wealthy in peace....and they the cycle starts again.....

The period of the *Shoftim* was perhaps the most turbulent in all of Biblical history, as the people of Israel struggled mightily to lay the foundations of their state in the shadow of very powerful and corrosive cultural and moral threats.

Now, Sefer Yehoshua appears to imply that the entire country was conquered:

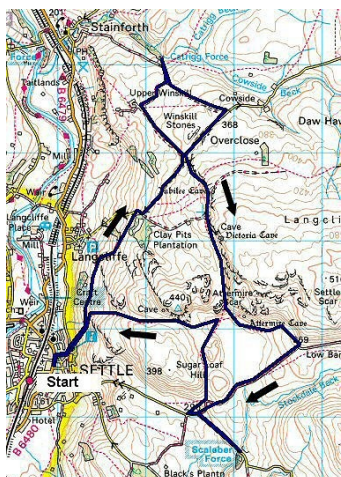
Yehoshua 11:23: **'So Joshua took the whole land**, according to all that the L-RD spoke unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land had rest from war.'

Yehoshua 21:41 So the L-RD gave unto Israel **all the land** which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. However, this wasn't quite the case. Even though Am Yisrael conquered and occupied E"Y on a large scale, there were still idolatrous nations living

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among them. Additionally, Bnei Yisrael didn't actually complete the conquest of the land during the time of Yehoshua [Yehoshua 13:1-5, 18:3, 23:3-13.] After a generation or two, these populations intermingled with Am Yisrael. Cultural exchanges began, sometimes even leading to intermarriage. Bnei Yisrael began to learn and follow the local customs. When farmers needed rain, they were told about a Baal god who could 'deliver the goods' (does anyone have a problem with that??)

"It was only a matter of time, but instead of conquering the land, the 'land' (and its culture) had conquered them." Rav Leibtag



Even though they **conquered** much land under Yehoshua (with Hashem's help!) by the time of the Shoftim they still had to **settle** the land; each Tribe had the responsibility of reinforcing its grip on its own nachala (inheritance/ property) and ridding the land of Avodah Zara (idolatry). For example, in 1967 Israel conquered the whole of Sinai, West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, Golan Heights etc. But all that meant was that our soldiers ran through it and conquered it. It still wasn't settled. As we learned in the last kvutza, Hashem's miracles enabled the Bnei Yisrael to conquer the land initially, but the people now had to take their own initiative and put in Hishtadlut (loosely translated as effort) in order to fight and rid their land of the other nations' corrupting influences.

Unfortunately, as Sefer Shoftim makes clear, either way, Bnei Yisrael were unsuccessful in completing the conquering of the land; the phrase 'these Tribes were not able to kick out the other nations' recurs disapprovingly throughout the Sefer. We have already looked at the ethics of Jewish warfare in K1 and seen how the Jewish people first offered the other nations the option to live in E"Y rather than fighting them - but this was on condition that the nation in question agreed to live by the 7 Noachide laws.

שְׁפָטִים

The nations in Sefer Shoftim that Am Yisrael failed to drive out continued to practice Avodah Zara - which back then included such terrible things as child sacrifices and immoral, sexual rituals in the service of *ba'al peor*, *molech* etc. The continued presence of such Avodah Zara was a real danger to the spiritual health of the Jewish people, always threatening to influence them, just as idolatrous nations had so detrimentally influenced the Bnei Yisrael in the past.

Food for thought (Mmmm, foood....)

Does this mean that living amongst other "nations" is inherently a problem? Does it have other advantages?

How far should we go to eradicate potentially detrimental influences from our lives? There are frum communities in Israel that impose a rigid selection process when new



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people want to move there, in order to ensure a uniform ideology within the community. Can one go too far? Is it different in Israel and in the Diaspora?

Rabbi Zev Leff once said that we, as the Jewish People, are supposed to be “insulated, not isolated”. What does this mean? How can we achieve this?

A crisis of leadership

תלמוד בבלי בבא בתרא טו ע"ב איזה דור שכולו הבל? הוי אומר: זה דורו של שפוט שופטים

Bava Batra 15b: "Which is the generation of foolishness? The generation of the Shoftim."

The scathing attitude of Chazal towards this period in our history is a reflection of the lack of leadership. We can see this if we compare the beginnings of Sefer Yehoshua and Sefer Shoftim, which display a number of parallels. Both Sefarim open with the death of the previous leader and the necessity for a new one. In Sefer Yehoshua, Yehoshua clearly succeeds Moshe as Hashem promises him to be with him as He was with Moshe. But in Sefer Shoftim, there is no clear successor and therein lay a problem, there was no one to unify and direct the tribes on a national level as to how best conquer the rest of EretzYisrael. The Shofet would enter once Bnei Yisrael had hit trouble.



The word Shofet means judge or ruler yet it seems that the key role of a Shofet was to lead Bnei Yisrael into battle to save them from the hands of their enemies and then to keep peace. Would it be more accurate to call the Shofet an Aluf (General)? The only Shofet we are told of that seems to actually judge the people was Devorah HaNevia.

If HaShem only sent Shoftim when Bnei Yisrael cry out under subjugation, was having a Shofet ruling an ideal situation or a non-ideal situation i.e. had Bnei Yisrael rid Eretz Yisrael of Avoda Zara properly would they have needed a Shofet?

Since there was no clear successor after Yehoshua, it was effectively the community in charge, almost like having no Rosh and the camp being run by the Tzevet as a group Is there any merit to this structure?

In Shmuel, the people beg for a king in order to renew national unity and provide strong leadership like the other nations had, but Shmuel the Navi was very reluctant to anoint one for them.

G-D's plan was for Bnei Yisrael to conquer the Land of Israel in order to establish a "Goy Kadosh" - a 'oly nation' that would keep His laws, and by doing so, serve as His 'model' nation that would represent Him before all mankind. [See Devarim 4:5-8.]

Even though Bnei Yisrael had successfully conquered major areas of Eretz Cana'an (see Sefer Yehoshua), they were far less successful in establishing this ideal nation. In Sefer Shoftim we find how the spiritual character of the nation during this time period falls short of God's original expectations. Time and time again, we find that Bnei Yisrael follow Canaanite gods and customs, while rejecting their own heritage. Tragically, the new land (and its local population) exerted too strong an influence.



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Chazal tell us that Sefer Shoftim was written by the prophet Shmuel (see Baba Batra 14b). This information is more than just technical; to appreciate any sefer, and especially a "sefer nevuah", it's always important to understand when, by whom, and for what purpose it was written. Chazal's statement that Shmuel composed Sefer Shoftim implies that the sefer was written AFTER all of its events had taken place. Even though this is a very simple point, it is important to note for we usually understand "nevuah" as foreseeing 'future' events, rather than recording events that had already transpired.

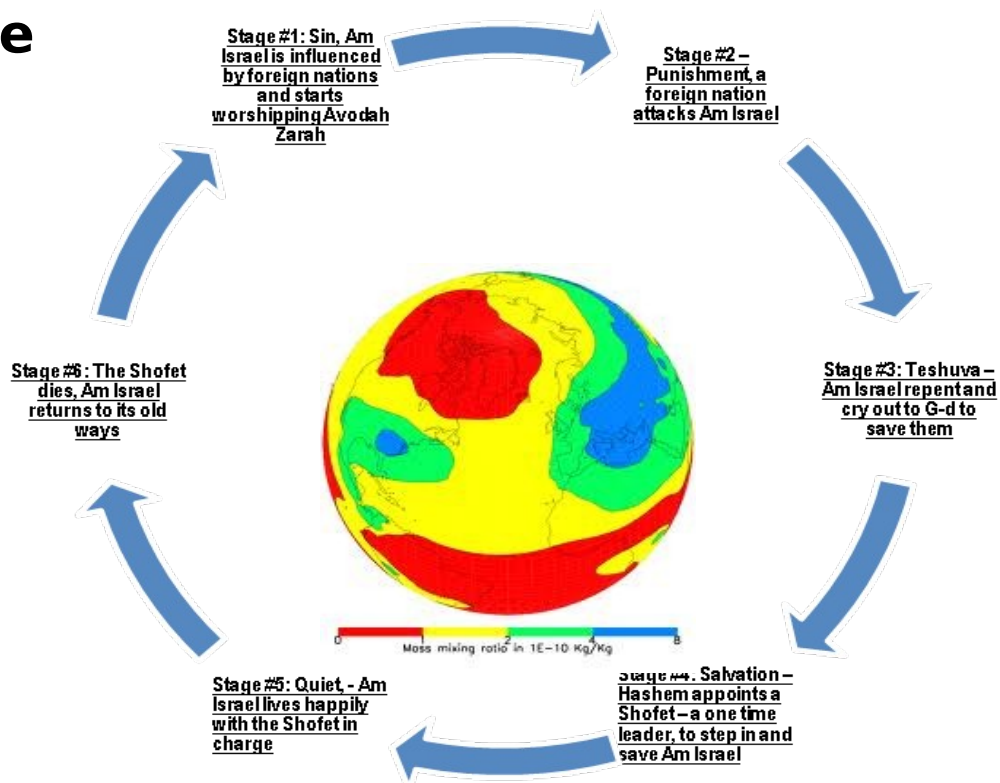
But this is the very point of Sefer Shoftim: Shmuel reviews (and analyses) the events that had taken place since the time of Yehoshua - not to predict what will happen, but rather in order that all future generations of Jews - including us - will learn a lesson from what did happen. In other words, Shmuel has a prophetic 'agenda' that he must explain to his own generation - which saw a renewal of national unity and direction under the leadership of a king - and he presents it in Sefer Shoftim. He emphasises the vacuum left by Yehoshua and anticipates Bnei Yisrael's desire to anoint a king to fill this vacuum and remedy the anarchy that resulted from no strong central leadership. However, the way in which they ask for this Kingship needs to be rectified and some would suggest that Sefer shoftim was written to show Shmuel's generation that reliance and trust in G-d was above all else.



“In those days there was no king in Israel, so each man did as he saw fit...” (Shoftim 21:25)

Hashem, and thus they live in security. But when they start transgressing into idol worship after Yehoshua's death Hashem refrains from helping them win their wars - this is a direct fulfillment of Hashem's condition to Yehoshua: if you keep the Torah, you will be successful. If not, you won't.

So as described earlier: The Shoftim cycle



K2: Shoftim (Judges)

K2: Shoftim (Judges)

Let's take a quick look at some of the Shoftim:

The 'good' shoftim		The 'not so good' shoftim	
Otniel Ben Kenaz	From Shevet Yehuda, a successful military leader and follows Hashem. Rules over all of Bnei Yisrael 40 years	Avlmelech	Killed his 70 brothers to take power
		Tolah ben Puah	Rules from city of Shamir, where later buried, rules for 23 years.
Ahud Ben Geyra & Shamgar	From Shevet Binyamin, strong military leader and follows Hashem. Rules over all of Bnei Yisrael for 80 years (maybe with Shamgar).	Yalr ha'Glladl	had 30 children that rode on their 30 horses, ruled for 22 years.
		Ylftach ha'Glladl	Detailed story, leads to civil war
		Ivtzan m'bet lechem	has 30 sons and 30 daughters who all marry outside his shevet (maybe to forge political alliances), rules for 7 years, buried In Bet Lechem
Devorah (& Barak)	From Shevet Ephraim, successful military conquest led by Barak with Devorah, a Nevia who also judged the people. Did not rule over all of Bnei Yisrael just 6 Shvatim for 40 years	Aylon ha'zvuoni	rules for 10 years, buried In Ayalon.
		Avdon ben Hillel	has 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 horses, rules for 8 years.
Gideon	From Shevet Menashe, successful military leader and we what 'spiritual' leader. Rules over all of and Bnei Yisrael for 40 years	Shimshon	Salvation in around-about' way

The terrible state that Am Yisrael is in by the end of Sefer Shoftim becomes clear as the last three stories of Sefer Shoftim unfold. In each story the following phrase repeats itself...it appears 4 times: "In those days there was no King in Israel (and each man did what was right in his eyes)." (**Shoftim 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25**)

**Clearly, the situation that Am Yisrael is in is a bad one, and Shmuel HaNavi, in the way he writes Sefer Shoftim, is indicating the need for a King in Israel which then leads thematically into Sefer Shmuel and the introduction of Malchut - Kingship, in Israel. More of that in K3 though.

Devorah

Devorah appears in perek 4 when Bnei Yisroel have sinned again leading to the Shoftim cycle starting again and the people being attacked by King Yabin of Canaan from the city of Hazor. This is a new enemy. Before Bnei Yisrael were fighting external enemies, like Moav, etc. Now they were fighting **Canaan** in the north (Hazor was their main city, there are a lot of archeological



digs there), which was an internal nation – one of the nations the Jews were supposed to kick out. Canaan was the local superpower in the Middle East, much more technologically advanced than Am Israel, as evidenced, for example, by their iron chariots. As a result of not finishing the Kibush (conquest) properly, the Bnei Yisrael were under attack by the Canaanites, led by general Sisera and it was up to Devorah to bring the people to victory.

So who is devorah?

Devorah is the only Shofet(et) to be called a Neviah and to actually engage in judging the people. The text also calls her “eshet lapidot” – literally wife of torches, upon which the Mefarshim comment:

- **Rashi** Lapid means wicks – Devorah made wicks for the mikdash
- **Ralbag:** A. Lapid means lightening, which refers to Barak i.e. simply she was Barak’s wife
B. Devorah was an Eshet Chayil, a gibor, and had high level of neviah which appeared like lightening – lapid
- **Metzudat David:** Devorah was an Eshet Chayil, strong like lightening (lapid).



Devorah is thus presented as a very strong leader and it is her, not her husband Barak, who is the main focus. She is also a ‘fiery’ speaker, which is clearly shown when she tries to persuade Barak to go and fight, and also later on in the next perek, in her Shirah, with her “charif” criticism of the shevatim who do not come and fight.

It is important to note that this episode in Sefer Shoftim displays leadership that arrives from **unlikely sources**.

Devorah was a female judge directing the people in war during a time period where it was uncommon for women to be leaders – particularly military leaders. Devorah had to step up and take control because there were no male candidates able to assume leadership. The manner of Devorah’s leadership was also unusual as she did not want to follow the typical formula of a Shofet and only act as a military leader; instead Devorah tries to convince Barak to be the military saviour in

this story and do the fighting alone (ultimately, he refuses to do it without her) while she preferred to lead and guide from the sidelines.

Why would Devorah have preferred this role? Perhaps she felt it pragmatically advantageous to keep military guidance – Barak – separate from spiritual guidance –



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"Yes, we teach it here, but I doubt if 'Women's Studies' is what you think it is."

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herself – or perhaps because a background role was more ‘tzanua’, more in keeping with the traditional role associated with the Jewish woman...We see that Deborah judged the people under a palm tree out in the open. The fact that the people travelled to her rather than vice versa displays the degree of respect they held for her, while the outdoor setting ensured that she would avoid any potential difficulties presented by having to meet men one-on-one indoors.

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Devorah did not struggle with the potential clash between her vocation as a Shofet and her gender but rather used her feminine nature in order to empower herself and be successful in the responsibilities Hashem gave her. During her shira, Devorah sings: **'I arose a mother in Israel'**. Of course she was far more than just a mother: she was a judge; a warrior; a prophetess and a role model for our own generation, for all women looking to define themselves and fulfill their own potential. But Devorah's choice of 'mother' to symbolise herself reflects her maternal attitude towards Bnei Yisrael and her selfless and brave conduct as she commits to leading them to victory against the fearsome Canaanites. At a time when Bnei Yisroel had a distinct lack of men able to lead the people, it is the female Devorah, motivated by considering herself 'the mother of Israel', who steps up to save the day. As it says in Pirkei Avos, **'Bemakom she'eino ish - tishtadel lehiyot ish'** [or, in this case, lihiyot Isha!]

The theme of valiant females continues down the perek as general Sisera flees the battle to the apparent comfort of Yael's tent, where she lures him into a deep sleep before using a hammer to drive a tent peg through his head. Again we see unlikely characters using unlikely methods: Yael doesn't fight with conventional weapons but uses a tent peg and milk to



kill Sisera, not a sword.

It is of course to their credit that these women were able to overcome the challenges before them and use their own unconventional talents to do so, but it still reinforces the reality that Bnei Yisroel lacked a proper leader to guide them in the conventional manner of Moshe or Yehoshua.

Nevertheless, under Devorah's leadership they conquered Emek Yizrael, a very important f territory and dwelled in peace for 40 years.

Q. What lessons about leadership do we learn from Sefer Shoftim? How does today's society relate to its leaders? What do people want most from their leaders?

Q. The State of Israel has many different types of Jewish leaders: Army Chiefs, Roshei Yeshiva, the Government. What do we want from them? Would it be ideal in contemporary Israeli society to have, say, a learned, from Prime Minister, or do we prefer the religious and political to be kept separate? What about in the army? What do we do when the Hesder Rabanim and the army chiefs give conflicting orders?

Q. Does the story of Devorah teach us anything about women's role in Judaism? Do we have female leaders like Devorah today? Should we?

Q. Think back to the cycle of the Shoftim: Jews bad - get attacked - Hashem saves. Can we see a resemblance in the trajectory of Medinat Yisrael's history? What lessons can we relate from then to now?

Extra chomer and info about some of the personalities found in Sefer Shoftim

The 'good' shoftim

Shimson ben Manoach:

Shimshon seems to be destined to be a leader even before his birth. The Sefer describes how Shimshon's mother was barren but then a Malach appeared to her and told her she will have a son. Also already from the womb her son will be dedicated to HaShem as a Nazir.

However, although Shimshon seems to have very lofty origins his actions in adulthood are a bit puzzling and somewhat inappropriate for a leader of Israel and a Nazir.

We see numerous times that HaShem gave him supernatural strength that he is able to kill lions and 1000 men with the jaw bone of an ass. However, he seems to only use this supernatural strength to serve his own needs i.e. when he is in a life threatening situation. He does not use this strength to gather Bnei Yisrael in an army and save them from the subjugation of the Plishtim (who have been ruling them for over 40 years).

On the other hand he is very caring towards his parents although maybe a little over protective. For example he doesn't tell his parents that he beat the lions or where the honey he gave them came from (the carcass of the lion he killed).

Although he has physical strength he seems very naïve about women. First he falls in love with a non-Jewish woman whom he wishes to marry. Her family, however, do not accept him and they force his wife to betray him. Later he goes to a harlot which again gets him into trouble with the Plishtim. Then he falls in love with Delila which is eventually his downfall. Shimshon did not learn from his mistakes. She uses her power over him to force him to divulge the source of his strength which she then betrays to her brethren the Plishtim and they capture him, finally.

We also see that Shimshon was a bit arrogant. During the post-wedding feast to his (first) wife he bets her family that they can't guess a certain hard riddle. When they can not get it they all get angry and a whole series of events unfold which in the end get his wife murdered.

Again we see that Shimshon does not recognise the consequences of his actions. When he goes to visit this harlot after his wife's death the Plishtim use this as an excuse to chase after him. He escapes them and goes to hide in the mountains. So instead the Plishtim threaten to attack Shevet

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Yehuda. Shimshon does not come to their aid, he does not seem to care that he put Am Yisrael in danger. It is Shevet Yehuda who come and convince him to do the right thing, take responsibility and give himself up to save them, especially as he has super strength and is able to save himself from the hands of the Plishtim.

Yet he never seems to take his super strength for granted and he never deliberately puts himself in dangerous situations (from what he can see) and then rely on HaShem giving him super strength to get himself out of them. Also HaShem obviously gave him super strength for a reason.

When he was finally captured and blinded by the Plishtim he prays to HaShem to give him strength one last time and then sacrifices his own life to kill many Plishtim:

ים, ואִנְקָמָה נִקְמ-אַחַת מִשְׁתִּי עֵינַי, אֲאֹדְנֶי. הַ זְכַרְנִי נָא וְחִזְקֵנִי נָא אַךְ הַפְּעַם הַזֶּה, הֲאֵל מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים, “Please remember me and give me strength just this once, HaShem, so I will be able to take revenge on the Plishtim, if only for one of my eyes.”

(Shoftim 16:28)

Shimshon ruled Israel for 20 years. His rule was full of ill judgment; one could say even selfish pursuit of female pleasure; he appears arrogant playing tricks on people and inciting hatred against him. He seems trusting to a fault or just naive. He doesn't seem to care about Am Yisrael as his actions lead directly to the attack of his people and he does not even come to their defence rather they have to come to him to and drag him to give himself up. On the other hand he seems dedicated to his parents and HaShem seems to be with him giving him strength in numerous situations even at the end when it seems HaShem has left him HaShem seems to help Shimshon with his last request.

The failure of Shimshon as leader is reflective of the failure of the Am Yisrael. If this is how the leader behaves, one that seems to have been chosen by HaShem, how much worse must the people be?

Gidon ben Yoash

We see that Gidon is very humble. When the Malach first comes to Gidon to charge him with a mission he doesn't think he can do it - who am I? A kid in the smallest Shevet - I am a nobody! he says (Shoftim 6:15). To make sure Hashem is really talking to him Gidon asks for two signs to happen - one from the Malach - proving that this whole thing is true - with the fire going on the Mizbeach. When Hashem asks him to destroy his father's idol Gidon is afraid to take charge without this sign. In fact even after the sign he still won't break the idol alone and gets 10 men to help him, and even with back up" they are scared to do it during the day and go at night (Shoftim 6:27). However, he did still do what Hashem asked of him despite his fear. In the morning Gidon gets in trouble but instead of standing up for himself, for what he did or for Hashem his father bails him out. Gidon appears weak and passive here. In Pasuk 12 the Malach greeted Gidon by calling him a Gibor Chayil, but really he's only a Gibor in

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the eyes of Hashem, not in the eyes of himself, or the people, or his father. His potential needs to be actualized.

Then Gidon gets Nevuah again- “ve ruach Hashem livsha et Gidon”. Hashem tells him to fight the enemy so Gidon starts to gather an army. However, he only gets some of the tribes to come and join him (again showing disunity amongst Bnei Yisrael). Gidon’s insecurities return and he asks for new sign from Hashem. Now that he has troops to look after he has added responsibility – is he getting stage fright again. He asks for one sign and Hashem gives it to him. However, he doubts it because what he asked for could also occur naturally in nature. So he asks for a second sign and now he wants something totally against nature to happen. This may be to see if Hashem will help him win also in a miraculous way. Hashem grants him the sign showing He will help him.

Gidon is very nervous and has low self esteem as a leader. He needs signs and encouragement at every step of the way. But the potential is there, as we saw in his passionate reply to the Malach. He cares about the nation and Hashem will help him realize his potential to be a great leader. We see this in the way Hashem tells Gidon to fight. Via a series of bizarre tests Hashem cuts Gidon’s already small army (definitely compared to their enemy) to 300 men. Then Hashem gives him a set of militarily genius battle plans. All this may be to a) give confidence to Gidon that he can successfully lead Am Yisrael (with Hashem’s help) and b) to remind Bnei Yisrael that wars are won by Emunah in Hashem and not by military might alone. With Hashem’s instructions Gidon finds the confidence in himself to lead Bnei Yisrael to victory.

With his new found confidence he starts handing out some harsh Mussar to the cities of Succot and Pnuel who did not give him and his soldiers bread on their journey so he kills them. Gidon transforms into a strong leader by actualising the potential that was in him with some help from Hashem. In fact he is such a great leader Bnei Yisrael ask him to be their King. But Gidon’s modesty and love for Hashem prevents him from accepting answering- “lo emshol ani bacherm ve lo yimshol beni bachem, Hashem yimshol bachem”. (Was this the right choice?)

Recap: Actually a great Mashal is Spiderman 2 (don’t laugh) where the main character – Spiderman – wants to give up being a superhero and have a normal life. But at the end he realizes that he can’t deny the powers that he has, and has to use them to be a leader and help others.

The Not so Good Shoftim:

Avimelech ben Gidon:

Avimelech wants power, so he recruits the relatives of his Pilgish mother in Shechem to fund a take over and make him king.

Gidon’s other 70 sons were going to divide the leadership after Gidon’s death but Avimelech was the odd man out as the son of a Pilegish. (**Metzudat David**).

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Avimelech convinces the people of Shechem to make him ruler over them rather than they have 70 rulers paying them all tax. He even gets them to give him the money they would have given them which he uses to hire people to kill his brothers.

We see Avimelech as the opposite of Gidon.

- Gidon is humble and does not want to be king, Avimelech wants to be king and chases after it - has tremendous ga"avah (even in death).
- Gidon's army sends away people who are not of good character (scared, bowed down to drink), Avimelech recruits evil men (9:4: "anashim reikim vepochazim").
- Gidon cares about the people and makes decisions based on this, Avimelech does everything based on what's good for him and his power.
- Avimelech kills brothers on a rock, while Gidon sacrifices a korban on a rock as the first sign.

What makes Avimelech different then all the other Shoftim? Avimelech is the only self-appointed Shofet!! He is NOT appointed by Hashem! And his Melucha is self appointed too over a non Jewish city - Shechem, not the entire nation. This is the opposite of what is supposed to happen.

Avimelech's story is horrible and is the beginning of the downfall of Am Yisrael depicted in Sefer Shoftim (it only gets worse from here).

Mashal Yotam:

Themes:

1. Avimelech is a horrible leader

2. If Gidon had been a king or if good leaders had stepped up this wouldn't have happened.

Yotam, Gidon's only other surviving son, runs to Har Grizim, which was the mountain where the brachot were said (**Devarim 27, 12-13:** "Eleh yaamdu levarech at har grizim, ve'eleh ya'amdu al hakelalal bhar eval"), and gives his Mashal, which is a curse. This shows how backwards everything is, giving a curse on a Bracha mountain, i.e. so too everything is backwards with Avimelech as leader.

The Mashal: Trees are looking for a king but whoever they ask doesn't want to be king. These trees would be suitable leaders if they agreed. But they say no! So it goes to the thornbush, an unsuitable leader who only causes destruction.

Radak 9:14: The thorn doesn't protect, it causes destruction.

Yalkut Shimoni: Just as thorn has no fruit, Avimelech has no good deeds or leadership traits.

The Nimshal: could be that Avimelech is an evil king (and Gidon losing his sons) is a consequence of Gidon not taking the kingship. (Or his sons not being clear on who would step up and lead).

Abarbanel 9:9: Trees didn't want to give up their jobs to serve the nation. To be a leader you have to give up your personal interests and put the nation first.

Even Yotam doesn't step up to the plate and try to overturn Avimelech, he walks away instead. Gidon could have been king and this wouldn't have happened!! Now they have a terrible king.

Then Hashem causes people of Shechem to reject Avimelech and follow a guy called Ga'al..

Zevul, the leader of Shechem, doesn't like Ga'al so he secretly sends message to Avimelech to come attack the city and get rid of Ga'al. Avimelech comes and to help him win Zevul convinces Ga'al that Avimelech's approaching army are mountains. Then when Ga'al finally catches on Zevul convinces him to fight Avimelech, sending him to his death.

Now you think that would be the end, but Avimelech goes back and despite the fact that Zevul helped him, he wipes out the city of Shechem, then chases down the survivors in Migdal Shechem and kills them all. Then he sows the land with salt so nothing will ever grow there again (what Romans did to Bet Hamikdash and Yerushalayim). Then burns a whole tower of men and women and kills 1000 people!!

Why is he doing this? He wants bitter revenge over all the people who turned on him, even if they returned to his side after. What leadership traits does this show?? We see that Avimelech is all about his personal

K2: Shoftim (Judges)

Kavod. Heis going to war for Kavod and revenge, not Hashem or the people. He's the anti-Shofet and anti-Melech!!!

K2: Shoftim (Judges)

We see Avimelech's Ga'avah and obsession with Kavod (both antithesis to Gidon) in his death. A woman throws a millstone "pelach rechev" on his head and mortally wounding him. He's embarrassed to die in a weird way, not in battle and by a woman so he asks a Na'ar to kill him instead.

Recap: Avimelech is a terrible leader - obsessed with power and honor. He is the total opposite of Gidon.

Yiftach HaGiladi

Yiftach is the son of Gilad and a Zona and therefore is ousted by his brothers. But then when Gilad are threatened by Amon they call on Yiftach, a Gibor Chayil, to help them out. He uses this as an opportunity to get ahead and get power i.e. he only agrees to lead them in battle if they promise to make him ruler over them if he wins. The people of Gilad are desperate and Yiftach plays on their vulnerability to get revenge and to assume power.

Once he has that position he tries to negotiate with Amon instead of fighting and incurring loss of life. We can see this as a commendable trait that he tries to make peace without shedding any blood. Also Gilad are obviously outnumbered it would be better to avoid war all together. Or we could interpret this as laziness. Either way Amon are not interested in making peace.

Like Avimelech, Yiftach only rules over his family, Anshey Gilad, and not the whole of Bnei Yisrael. Also he makes no effort to unify with the other Shvatim or the rest of his own Shevet. For example, his Shevet, Shevet Ephraim get very insulted that Yiftach did not ask them to help him fight against Amon so much so that this argument leads to a civil war. Here we see that Yiftach only taking a position of leadership for selfish reasons i.e. power meant he did not even try to unify Bnei Yisrael or lead them appropriately. It also shows his arrogance that he feels he does not need Ephraim's help. Therefore, it is no surprise that civil war breaks out (especially in this vacuum of power).

In preparation for war we see that Yiftach does ask for Hashem's help which shows he does have Emunah in Hashem. However, he makes his worship of Hashem i.e. sacrificing a Korban, conditional on winning. This is not the ideal way in which to serve Hashem. Also the Neder he makes is totally inappropriate and potentially insulting (putting aside the fact that making a Neder in itself is problematic). Yiftach's Neder states that if he wins he will sacrifice to Hashem the first thing that comes to greet him on his return safely home. We see that Yiftach seems to be making a deal with Hashem, almost testing Him, which is not the best way of showing Emunah. Also his Neder is very non-descript. Anything could come to greet him and not everything is appropriate to sacrifice to Hashem e.g. a non-kosher or blemished animal would not be appropriate/allowed. This also shows a misunderstanding of what Hashem really wants from us and that this gesture reflects false piety. As it turns out Yiftach does win and it is his only daughter who is first to greet him as he approaches home... den, den, den!!!

K3: Melachim

Aleph Chalutzi Machane 5775



Aims:

1. Story of Shmuel and the Foundation of the Monarchy
2. Was the Monarchy l'chatchila [ideal] or b'di eved [non ideal situation]?
3. The relevance of this to the State of Israel today

A lot of Nach describes the rule of Kings over Am Yisrael, but where we left off it was Shoftim in charge. What changed?

Let's have a look in Sefer Shmuel (שמואל א:ח):

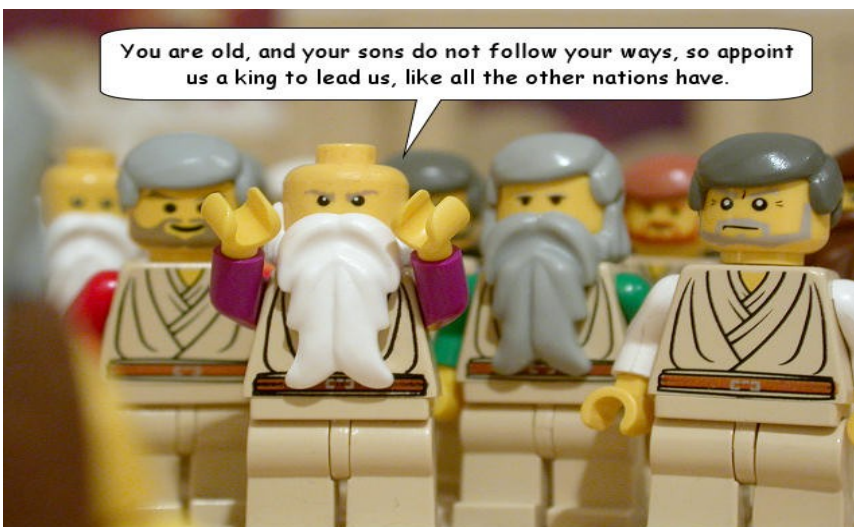
1. And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.
2. And the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba.
3. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after unjust gain, and took bribes, and perverted judgement.
4. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel to Ramah,
5. And said to him, "Behold, you are old, and your sons walk not in your ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.
6. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed to the Lord.
7. And the Lord said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.



According to what we've seen here, does it seem that having a king over Am Yisrael is the ideal situation or not?

Let's contrast Shmuel with pesukim from Devarim, Parshat Shoftim:

יד כִּי-תבא אל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ, וַיִּרְשָׁתָהּ, וַיִּשְׁבְּתָהּ בָּהּ; וְאָמַרְתָּ, אֲשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ, כְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתַי. טו שׁוֹם תִּשִּׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בּוֹ: מִקְּרֹב אַחִיב, תִּשִּׂים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ--לֹא תוּכַל לִתֵּת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ נֹכְרִי, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-אַחִיב הוּא.



14. When you come to the land which the Lord your God gives you, you will possess it, and will live in it, and will say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me;

15. You shall set him king over you, whom the Lord your God shall choose; from amongst your brothers

you will set a king over you; you may permit over you a stranger, who is not your brother.

In what way/s is what we are seeing here in Devarim painting us a different picture to what is implied in Shmuel?

So, is a monarchy the 'lechatchila' [ideal] form of government for Am Yisrael? Or is it just 'b'di eved' [a non ideal situation]?

There is an interesting discussion in Gemara Sanhedin [20b] that includes:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף כ עמוד ב

וכן היה רבי יהודה אומר: שלש מצות נצטוו ישראל בכניסתן לארץ: להעמיד להם מלך, ולהכרית זרעו של עמלק, ולבנות להם בית הבחירה.

רבי נהוראי אומר: לא נאמרה פרשה זו אלא כנגד תרעומתן, שנאמר +דברים י"ז+
'ואמרת אשימה עלי מלך וגו'.

And thus R. Yehuda said: Three commandments were given to Israel when they entered the land: [i] to appoint a king, [ii] to cut off the seed of Amalek, and [iii] to build themselves The Chosen House. While R. Nehorai said: This section was spoken only in anticipation of their future murmurings, as it is written, "And shalt say, I will set a king over me etc".

How Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nehorai interpret things differently is fascinating. Rabbi Yehuda says that the verse in Shoftim is a command, simple as that. In this case it's harder to see why the generation of Shmuel rebelled - surely they were just finally getting round to doing a long-postponed mitzvah?

Rabbi Nehorai considers it a Biblical prophecy of the events that would then take place in Sefer Shmuel, and follows it with a few stipulations about what sort of thing a King should or shouldn't be doing: "Since you're gonna want to place a king over yourselves [though it may not be ideal], if you do, at least do it this way...."
[not too many wives, horses etc.] But what it's not is a

command - Rabbi Nehorai says that the Bible is revealing what the people of Israel *will* do, not what they *should* do.

Q. What other non-ideal mitzvot do we know of in the Torah?

If according to Rabbi Yehuda, having a monarchy is ideal, what did the people do wrong in asking for one? The Tosefta - bits left out of the Mishnah at the back of the Gemara - in Sanhedrin explains that:

a] they asked too soon (possibly insulting Shmuel's authority) or;

b] they said 'in order to be like the other nations'.

The argument continues into the Rishonim, let's take just three opinions. First up is Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon - the Rambam:



K3: Melachim

1. Since appointing a king is a mitzva why did G-d not desire it when the people requested a king from Shmuel?

Because they asked in order to stir up trouble and they did not ask in order to fulfil a mitzvah ... [Hilchot Melachim Perek Alef]

In the *Sefer HaChinuch* [which may have been] written by the 13th century Spanish Rabbi, Rav Aharon HaLevi it says:

2. "The root of the commandment: Because it is impossible to achieve a settled society without appointing one person to be in charge of others, to follow his instructions and to follow his decrees. Because the opinions of men are different from one another and they will never agree to one opinion and this disagreement will lead to wastefulness. Therefore it is necessary to accept upon themselves a sole opinion for good or for bad, so that they will be successful and be able to fruitfully engage in the world". [Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzva Ayin Alef]

Finally, let's have a look at another Spaniard, the Biblical commentator, Rav Don Yitzchak Abarbanel in his commentary to Parshat Shoftim:

3.

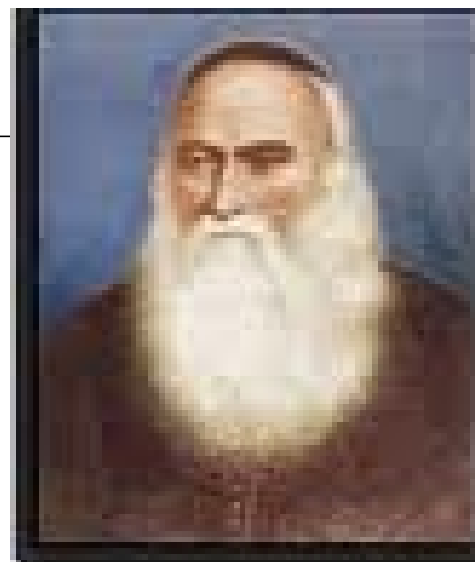
The first point of introduction is to ascertain whether kingship is a positive thing and an independent obligation imposed upon the nation or whether the nation can do without it. The philosophers have already given thought to this matter and considered the relationship between a King and the nation-state like the relationship between the heart and the body in a living being.... Those who have investigated this believe that kingship will result in three benefits:

1. Unity and a lack of dispute.
2. Continuity and a lack of substitution.
3. Absolute authority.

In fact, the truth is that their opinion as to the positive nature of kingship is misleading because these three benefits are not annulled through the leadership of many leaders who come together and agree to one unified solution and this is against the first benefit.

Why should our leaders not reign from one year to another (i.e. temporarily) or for three years or less, like a hired manservant? And when the time comes for other leaders to rule, they will take their place and scrutinise their wrong doings ... And this is against the second benefit.

Why should it not be that the authority of the leader is constrained and fixed by superior rules... And when the leaders' term is temporary and in the future they have to account to the electorate the fear of flesh and blood is upon them. How can we bring logical claims when practical examples show us the benefits of this republicanism?...



At this time we see many lands that are led by temporary rulers chosen by the people and the Divine King is with them.... [he quotes examples of Venice and Florence]

Listen to the true interpretation of the portion of kingship and issue of whether it is a commandment. Behold! When it says "when you shall come to the land that G-d has given you... and you will say 'appoint for me a king like all the nations that surround me'" this is not a commandment at all. G-d is not commanding that they shall say this and ask for a king, it is merely telling us the future.

G-d is saying "after you have been in the chosen land, after you have conquered and divided up the land, I know that you will be ungrateful and you will say of your own volition 'appoint me a king' not because it is necessary to fight the inhabitants of the land and conquer it, because it has already been conquered. You will ask only in order to imitate the nations around you who have appointed kings and this is foolishness...".

When it says "you shall surely appoint a king", this is not an imperative to ask for a king, but is saying that when you voluntarily opt to appoint a king, he should not be of your own choosing, rather he should be chosen by G-d from amongst your brethren.

According to this, kingship is an optional "Mitzvat reshut" contingent on a specific state of affairs (this is also the opinion of the Ibn Ezra.

The opinion of the Abarbanel (and Moses Mendelssohn) was that Israel was meant to come under the direct spiritual, military and judicial rule of God - Kings are bad.

The Netziv wrote that when there was no King, the major organ of state was made up of representatives of the people of Israel, sort of like a parliament, although it wouldn't have been elected. (Rav Aharon Lichtenstein thought this referred to the Sanhedrin.)

Moses Mendelssohn explained that under the Shoftim, God alone ruled and occasionally appointed a Shofet to bolster his rule. With a human King, there was the possibility of a conflict between what God wanted and what the King wanted. As long as this didn't happen, it was alright (just about) to have a King.

"[Samuel] pointed out to them the nature of a human king who had his own requirements and could enlarge them at will, and how hard it would be to satisfy an infirm mortal to whom the rights of the Deity have been transferred."



This means that when God was directly in charge, he would never make unreasonable or self-interested demands of the people, because God doesn't have any needs.

Furthermore, **the question of conflicts between Divine and Kingly wills.**

If the King isn't acting according to the will of God, people will be trapped between their duties to God and the State:



"State and religion were no longer the same, and a conflict of duties was no longer impossible. Such conflicts can't have happened often, as long as the king himself a native of his land and also obeyed the fatherland's laws. But now track the events through all sorts of ups and downs and changes, through many good and bad regimes, God-fearing and godless ones, down to the sad period in which the founder of the Christian religion gave the cautious instruction:

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. Obvious opposition—a conflict of duties!"

So we can see that there are differing opinions as to how **l'chatchila** or **b'di eved** the idea of monarchy is. Indeed, these disagreements continue on till nowadays.....?

In the Chief Rabbi's recent book 'Future Tense', there is an interesting , thought-provoking and perhaps controversial chapter entitled 'A New Zionism' [which you may or may not agree with]. I highly recommend the whole chapter for general reading. In the first half, Rav Sacks touches on a lot of the sources we have just discussed [maybe he went to the same shiur of Baruch Baigel as I did].

I henceforth present a few paragraphs which shed light on some of the issues we have been discussing.

'The thinker who decoded the mystery [talking about the puzzling seeming contradiction between Shmuel and Parshat Shoftim and between Rambam and Abarbanel] was the nineteenth century Talmudist Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Chajes. His argument is that the entire passage is a social contract on Hobbesian lines. According to Hobbes, in a '**state of nature**', that is, in a land without government of any kind, there is unmediated conflict. I want what is yours, you want what is mine, and the result is anarchy and bloodshed, a 'war of every man against every man'. No one is safe. If



K3: Melachim

you hire bodyguards, you have no guarantee that they won't try and rob you. Even if they don't, they can muster yet greater forces to challenge your supremacy. Under this condition, familiar to anyone who has lived where the rule of law has broken down, life is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, short'.

It is therefore to each individual's interest to hand over some of his or her powers of freedom of action to a supreme authority who will make laws and administer them. That authority, whether it was a monarch or some other form of government, he called 'the great Leviathan'. The creation of a central authority was the birth of the state, and thus of political society.

That, says Chajes, is what happened in the days of Samuel. The people conscious of the weakness of a tribal federation without a central ruler, decided that they needed a leviathan of their own, not so much to ensure the rule of law within as to create a defence against enemies without. To be sure, they might have placed their entire faith in G-d and done without a political structure.



But they still had to fight battles, they still had to create a national unity, and G-d was not in principle opposed. If they wished to hand over some of their rights to a king, so be it, within the limitations set out in the book of Deuteronomy [the king must not accumulate wealth, multiply wives or buy horses from Egypt]. Samuel's speech sets out precisely the nature of the social contract and the loss of liberty it will entail.

Later on in the chapter, Rav Sacks writes :

'The form of politics closest in spirit to Judaism at this time is liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is not Athenian democracy. In Ancient Greece, the people existed to serve the state. In Judaism, and liberal democracy, the state exists to serve the people. Liberal democracy respects one of Judaism's most fundamental values: the priority of the personal over the political. It is limited government, of a kind that Judaism favours. The liberal democratic state does not aspire to be a vehicle of redemption; it is there to keep the peace, establish the rule of law, and ensure non-violent transitions of power. Although Judaism does not recognize the concept of separation of



I now have 500 connections on LinkedIn!



Big deal. My 19 year old niece has more than 500 connections on LinkedIn, 1,200 on Facebook and 50,000 Twitter followers.



Give me that back!



church and state [neither for that matter does England, a liberal democracy with an established church], it recognises a no less fundamental idea, namely the separation of powers between king, priest and prophet, the 'three crowns' spoken of by the sages. The Hasmonean kings were criticised by the sages because they combined kingship and priesthood: in effect, they breached the separation between political and religious leadership. Any attempt to see the state as the highest value is, as the late Yeshayahu Leibowitz never tired of saying, a form of idolatry. Judaism exists to etch social relationships with the charisma of grace. That is not the task of politics.'

Thoughts on the back of a postcard please.

What do you think? Which opinion fits better?

Rav Eliezer Waldenberg was one of the great halachic authorities of the last century. Born in 1917, he was a dayan of the Yerushalayim Bet Din and lived very near the Sha'arei Tzedek hospital. As a result, he answered hundreds of new medically-related halachic issues as well as lots of other halachic issues. He died in 2006.

'Therefore also in our days the President, the government and the Knesset (despite their religious shortcomings and despite the fact that their decisions in relation to religion have no power) who are chosen according to the wishes of the majority of Israel who live in their land, and they are also more than 600,000, they stand in the place of a king in relation to everything that affects the general welfare of the nation that is necessary for the time being ... specifically in areas that affect the army and security' ...



Thus it seems that Rav Waldenberg considered the organs of state to be functionally, but not religiously, in place of the King. Many Dati Leumi

Rabbis also believed that the State had the halachic status of a King - but many also believe that the state should never give away any part of Eretz Yisrael, and even that soldiers should refuse orders to do this!

Let's take a Kingly example - David (who is the star of a later kvutza) is typically viewed as a really good King. Why? The Midrash Socher Tov describes David as one of the few people who possessed might, Torah knowledge and humility. It also tells of how David despite his status as King, his power and his wealth, attributed Kingship to HaShem alone and said power and wealth is not mine, but said *"To you HaShem is the wealth and the power"*.

The epitome of Jewish Kingship is to be competent on the one hand, to be the human head of a holy nation - i.e. Torah knowledge as well as physical strength to lead the nation both spiritually and physically, but also the humility to make sure it's still all about Hashem and not human ego.

Points to ponder with your chanichim:

K3: Melachim

If the State of Israel is like a King, is it religiously imperative to do what it says?

Should we want a democratic or a monarchical state of Israel? (or another option?)

K4: Shaul & David

Aleph Chalutz Machane 5775



Aims:

1. Learn about the lives of Shaul & David
2. Why did the Kingship stay with David and not with Shaul
3. What kind of leadership should we want/expect/aspire towards?

K4: - Shaul & David

During Tanach times when all of Am Yisrael dwelt in our homeland there were lots of kings. In this Kvutza we are going to focus on the first two, Shaul and David and the comparisons between them.

The first Jewish king was Shaul [Saul]. Shaul was a very strange King, as Kings go. At first, he really didn't think he should be King. He was from the least prestigious family in the "youngest" tribe, Benjamin. When he was selected to be King, he hid. The political pundits of the day were very sceptical about his credentials, and after first being appointed, Shaul just went back home to become a shepherd.

However, when the people were attacked soon thereafter, Shaul immediately takes up his mantle as King, leads the people into battle and saves the Kingdom. He refused to take revenge on people who opposed his appointment, restores peace, thanks God and everyone's pretty happy.

The Gemara in Moed Katan [16b] tells us that Shaul stood out from everyone else so starkly because of his good deeds.

We are told in Sefer Shmuel that he stood out *'From his shoulders and upward he was better than any of the people'*.

This is understood to mean that he was both literally head and shoulders above [taller] than everyone and that he was also figuratively better than everyone else in greatness.

Basically, Shaul made a pretty fantastic start to being king.

However, Shaul's Kingship went downhill. First of all, he gives a sacrifice wrong, and Samuel says that as a result his reign will be temporary. Then Samuel tells him to destroy Amalek, but he also gets that wrong and God rejects him from being king - Saul continues reigning, but a new chapter of Jewish history begins...

And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him: 'Blessed be thou of the LORD; I have performed the commandment of the LORD.' 14 And Samuel said: 'What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?' 15 **And Saul said:** 'They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.' {P} 16 Then Samuel said unto Saul: 'Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night.' **And he said unto him: 'Say on.'** {S} 17 And Samuel said: 'Though thou be little in thine own

Quick Quote:

I'm not a role model...
Just because I dunk a
basketball doesn't
mean I should raise
your kids.

Charles Barkley



sight, art thou not head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed thee king over Israel; 18 and the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said: Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19 Wherefore then didst thou not hearken to the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst that which was evil in the sight of the LORD?' {S} 20 **And Saul said unto Samuel: 'Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.'** {S} 22 And Samuel said: 'Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in hearkening to the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king.'** {S} 24 **And Saul said unto Samuel: 'I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words; because I feared the people, and hearkened to their voice. 25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.'** 26 And Samuel said unto Saul: 'I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.' {S} 27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent. {S} 28 And Samuel said unto him: 'The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. {S} 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man, that He should repent.'

Note that Shaul only admits his mistake after being told that he has lost the kingship.

As we have seen at the beginning of his kingship Shaul possesses huge amounts of anava [humility]. So much so that Shaul even hides amongst the pots and jugs in order to avoid being appointed as king.

However at this point he appears to be arrogant, arguing that he was right even when a messenger of God says that he was wrong.

When and how much humility is appropriate in a leader - or anyone - and to whom should this humility be addressed?

What do Shaul's actions here teach us about him and his skills as a leader of Am Yisrael?

David and Saul



Here, King David is introduced. He, like Saul is an unlikely king by birth- he's the 7th and youngest son of Yishay, and one of his ancestors (Ruth) was a Moabite.

After Shaul had been told that the kingship will be removed from him, not only is Shaul obviously greatly upset, but so is Shmuel, whom we are told was in 'mourning' over Shaul. G-d tells Shmuel to go to Bet Lechem [Bethlehem] and appoint a new king.

David, like Shaul, (and Moshe, and all the Avot, and others besides) was a shepherd, and also a talented musician, and Tanach even records that he was good looking, but did not otherwise show any particular traits to qualify him to be King.

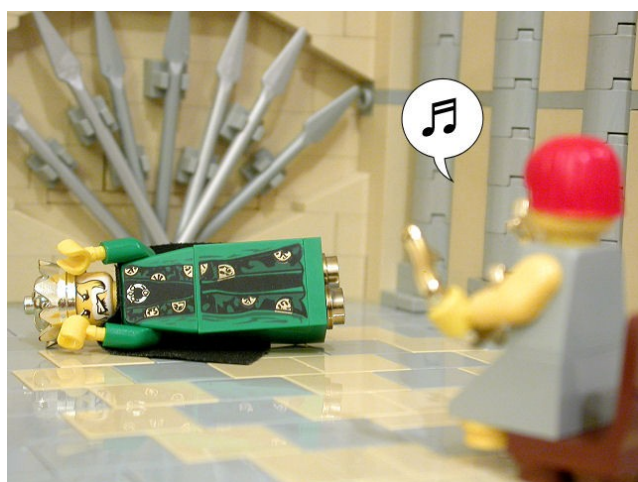
After being (secretly) anointed by Samuel, David is appointed as a musician to Shaul, who is being pestered by spirits sent by God.

David's music soothes the King, and his connection to Shaul's family grows closer through him marrying Shaul's daughter and becoming best mates with Shaul's son Yehonatan.

David ends up killing Goliath (pretty famous story) and everyone thinks he's a hero, which makes Shaul pretty jealous. Shaul develops a sort of paranoia towards David and a series of events occurs in which Shaul repeatedly tries to kill David. David runs away and forms a band of merry men (who are outcasts, criminals, or in debt, much like Robin Hood's band). David has opportunity to kill Shaul twice, and each time doesn't take it - though he certainly takes the opportunity to point out that



he could have done it.



Shaul is a pretty disastrous King from here on, and starts losing wars. Shaul's son Yehonatan along with two of his brothers are killed in a battle with the Plishtim. Shaul, seeing that the battle is turning against him and not wanting the Plishtim to capture the King of Am Yisrael, kills himself.

David

David becomes the new king, at first only for the tribe of Judah. He was pious and righteous, succeeding in uniting all the Israelites under his rule. The Gemara in Bava Batra [17a] tells of how David also conquered his *yetzer hara* so that it had no power over him (despite what we shall see later).

He had in many ways an extremely successful reign defeating foreign enemies and defending Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. He puts down the foundations of the Bet HaMikdash and desires to build it though he is told by Hashem that he is not allowed to.

But David also does some very problematic things, notably the episode with Batsheva. Nonetheless, the royalty is not taken away from him and his family.

When David dies, his young son Shlomo [Solomon] takes over (the first time we see hereditary rule in Tanach). We will see more about Shlomo in a later kvutza, but in short it can be described as possibly, 'the best years of Am Yisrael' living in unity with a Bet HaMikdash, religious observance and a safe and secure Am Yisrael led by a just king.

One question is why Shaul lost the kingship for himself and his family, but David kept it? David also seems to have done a very bad thing [with Batsheva], but doesn't get nearly as severely punished.

Not only that, but the Davidic reign carries on in his family for many years, and even now we ask three times a day for it to be resumed in the Messianic era.

Shaul's main shortcoming for which it is finalised that the kingship will be taken over him, was his failure to fully exterminate Amalek, and the way he reacted to his reprimand as we saw above.

Let's compare this to David. David's sin is that of him sleeping with Batsheva. The story can be understood in a number of different ways and from many different points of view. (Cut a long story short, on face value Batsheva was married to another guy, which didn't stop David... who then tried to cover it up, and then had her husband killed).

Hadracha Hot Tip!

Once you've discussed the story in a little detail, ask the chanichim to draw a quick sketch of the part of the story which they think is most important and ask them why they



But according to all the commentators, starting with the Gemara, it's not that clear cut (The Gemara in Shabbat says that 'Whoever says David sinned [with BatSheva] is mistaken'.)

All in all, after this whole incident, G-d isn't pleased and in 2 Samuel 12, G-d sends the prophet Nathan to reprimand David. Here's what happened:

And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.

²The rich man had very many flocks and herds, ³but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms,^[a] and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." ⁵Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, ⁶and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

⁷Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. ⁸And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more.

⁹Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹²For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'"

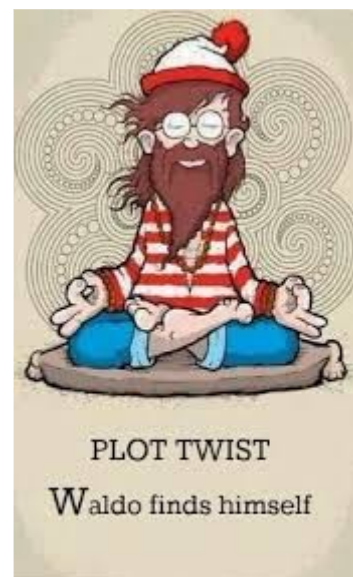
¹³David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

How does David's reaction/s differ from that of Shaul?

What important lessons can be learnt from the way David responded in contrast to the way Shaul responded?

What do we learn here about which qualities are important to be a leader of Am Yisrael?

Unlike Shaul who is insistent on his innocence and only admits his mistake once he has already been told that the kingship is being taken away from him, David when challenged immediately responds 'חטאתי'.



K4: - Shaul & David

Shaul refuses to accept and admit that he has done wrong whereas David realises the importance of accepting that he has erred and is eager to correct his mistakes.

The way that we are relating to this incident allows us to learn an important lesson, that to be a leader in Am Yisrael you are allowed to be human, to make mistakes and to have flaws.

Part of good leadership is that when making mistakes, you are honest enough with yourself and others to admit your mistake and work to correct what you have done wrong.

It is interesting to note that David is the descendant of Yehuda and Tamar. Yehuda, after his relationship with Tamar is the one who immediately owns up and admits his sin rather than hiding it.

How do you think this whole message relevant to us today?

Whether as an individual?

Whether as a Jewish community?

Whether as the State of Israel?



The answers to these above vital, crucial and extremely important questions, will now become the basis for your kvutza, showing us what kind of leadership we want over ourselves, and what kind of leaders we want to be - almost like Tanach is relevant to our lives!

Shlomo & The Golden Years of Tanach

Aleph Chalutzi Machane 5775



Aims:

- K5:**
1. Who was Shlomo and what did he achieve?
 2. The Beit Hamikdash, it's necessity + its importance
 3. Ohr Lagoyim through the Bet HaMikdash and the Golden Years

Introduction

Once King David had consolidated the Israelite empire, under the guidance of Hashem he chose his son Shlomo to be his successor. The reign of this young man became truly legendary. Under Shlomo's rule Am Yisrael reached the pinnacle of wealth and power. Tragically, the glory of Shlomo's kingdom barely outlasted his own lifetime. The reign of Shlomo was probably the best time for Jewish nation throughout all of history. They were living with peace, prosperity, independence, unity and wealth in a Jewish state. They were an example to the rest of the world, and they had a wise and honest leader.



Who was shlomo?

Let's take a look at the first mention on Shlomo:

כד) ...ותלד בן ויקרא ותקרא את שמו שלמה וידוד אהבו:

She gave birth to a boy and called him Solomon, Hashem loved him (Shmuel 2, 12:24)

Shlomo lived for 52 years. Having become king at the age of 12 he reigned for a total of 40 years, he was also married to Pharaoh's daughter for 36 years.

Shlomo was a mighty leader having ruled over all 252 provinces in the world. Shortly after he was anointed, G-d invites him to make a request for himself.

What would you choose as you enter kingship????

Shlomo prayed for wisdom, but not just for his own sake, for the sake of the entire nation. Therefore, because of the fact he asked for it in such a selfless manner, Hashem granted him a vast amount of wisdom. Hashem Himself said that he would be the wisest man in the world, then and in the future.

מלכים א פרק ג פסוק יב

הנה עשיתי כדברך הנה נתתי לך לב חכם ונבון אשר כמוך לא היה לפניך ואחרריך לא יקום כמוך:

"Behold, I have acted in accordance with your words; behold I have given you a wise and understanding heart, such that there has never been anyone like you before, nor will anyone arise like you" (Melachim 1:3:12)

Not only this but Hashem was so impressed with the fact that he asked for wisdom and understanding that He promised to also give him all that which he didn't ask for e.g. riches, honour and a long life.

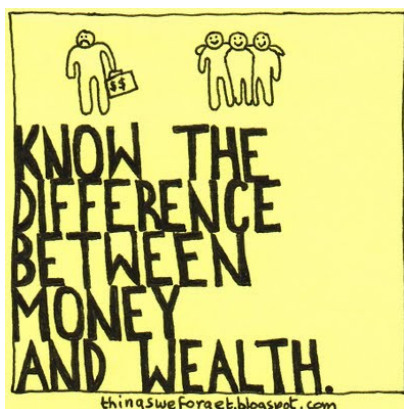
Immediately after comes a very famous story which is a personal favourite of mine (who is me??)! (Perek 3:16) in brief: 2 women who are fighting over a live and a dead baby come to Shlomo to resolve which belongs to whom. Shlomo, in his wisdom, answers that they should cut the baby in half and share the live baby. This helped determine who the real

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mother was based on who was merciless enough to agree to this solution. The real mother, not only pleaded for the baby to stay whole, she was willing to give him up for the sake of his own life, the mother of the dead baby however had her own selfish pursuits in mind and was content with cutting the baby in half if it meant she would benefit in some way.

Unfortunately though, *"In his old age, his wives turned away Solomon's heart after other gods"*. (1 Kings 11:4-5).

The golden years



It says in the Tanach that this was a period of national joy and prosperity. It was a period of unprecedented absolute regional peace throughout the entirety of Shlomo's kingdom and success for the Jewish people. The taxes they paid to the royal treasury were not a burden for them (Malbim).

When Shlomo wanted to build the Beit Hamikdash he contacted Chiram the King of Tzur, a friend of David's. He reminds Chiram of his friendship with David, and that David could not build the Mikdash because of the wars he fought. Chiram is overjoyed

to help Shlomo build the Mikdash.

These 40 years witnessed the realisations of all our goals, the completion of all our projects, the fruition of all our efforts. These years were built on the foundation built by Moshe and David. Moshe succeeded in bringing the infant Jewish nation freedom from slavery and giving them the Torah, the Divinely ordained legal and moral system to govern ourselves for all time. He also prepared us to take possession of our land.

David succeeded in solidifying our national entity, conquering our enemies, and establishing the capital city Jerusalem as well as preparing it to receive the Mikdash, and of raising a son worthy to build it when he couldn't do it himself for prophetically revealed but technical reasons (his hands were too bloody from wars).

But it was Shlomo, the wisest man who ever lived, who saw the opportunity and didn't hesitate, who placed the crown upon the heads of Israel as David had placed the crown on his.



It had taken 480 years since the leaving of Egypt to acquire this status, years of painstaking progress, slow, difficult, always two steps forward, one step back, our chronicles filled with countless failures and victories. But at last we achieved our goal.

And as a result of our newly acquired position we were able to flourish in all areas of life; economic, artistic, intellectual, medical (the cure for all illnesses was known to Shlomo), and spiritual.

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Thus Shlomo was able to fulfil the long awaited goal of the nation of Israel, the construction of the Bet Hamikdash - a permanent resting place for the Aron and the shechina as well as a single central place of unity for the Jews. Admirably he didn't hesitate for political or economic reasons.

What characterised this time period?

Peaceful times

וישב יהודה וישראל לבטח איש תחת גפנו ותחת תאנתו מן ועד באר שבע כל ימי שלמה" (מלכים א' פרק ה' ב'-ה').

And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. (Kings 1, 5)

Economic prosperity

"And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal; (??) ten fat oxen..." (Melachim 1, 4:22)

Security

"And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen" (Melachim 1, 4:26)

הנה עשיתי כדברך הנה נתתי לך לב חכם ונבון אשר כמוך לא היה לפניך ואחרך לא יקום כמוך:

"Behold, I have acted in accordance with your words; behold I have given you a wise and understanding heart, such that there has never been anyone like you before, nor will anyone arise like you" (Melachim 1:3:12)

The bet hamikdash

During 'Mikdash times', Judaism, as a religion was very much focused on the Beit HaMikdash. It was a football-stadium sized, multi-level structure that stood atop Jerusalem's Mt. Moriah. Much more is known about the architecture of the Second Bet HaMikdash than the First.



The centrality of the Bet HaMikdash to Jewish existence is reflected in the fact that many of the Mitzvot in the Torah are related to it: daily and weekly sacrifices, holidays and holiday sacrifices, personal, voluntary and obligatory sacrifices, agricultural tithes, qualifying criteria for the Kohanim and Levi'im, Mikdash rituals and the do's and don't's for all of the above - this is about 180 mitzvot of the 613. Today, all of our daily Tefillot are based around the times and sentiments of the sacrifices; extras are added on Shabbat and holidays to reflect the extra sacrifices in the Mikdash.

Think: The Hebrew word for a sacrifice is Korban - קרבן
What then is the purpose

What are the motivations for having the Bet Hamidash?

Approach 1:

David's initial motivation for building it was because he felt 'how can I live in such a palace and not provide a beautiful place of dwelling for the Aron Kodesh'.

Q) Today, how many families spend large sums of money on home improvement? If this is the case, surely even more so we should be donating to Shuls and places of Torah study out of respect for Hashem? (A Shul is used in place of the BH - a place of worship).

Now cast your minds as far back as the period of Yakov Avinu, when he was running away from Esav. On the way he has a dream following which he feels the immense G-Dliness of the place. To mark the spot he anoints a stone and makes a vow saying "if G-d remains with me, if He protects me on this journey ... if I return safely to my father's house, Hashem will be my G-d and this stone will be a house for G-d" (Bereshit 28:20-22). This place was named Beit Lechem.

Think: what kind of statement is having a beit hamikdash in jersualem making???

A place can be considered a physical representation of our covenant with G-d.

The Mikdash can also be seen as a permanent establishment of Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael.

Approach 2:

Based on Ramban: The mass revelation at Har Sinai had a massive spiritual impact on the Jewish people; how can the Jewish nation cope with just a one off experience of spiritual closeness and awareness in all its lifetime?! - They need a physical place on earth where they can connect to Hashem and feel His presence. Yes there are times when this is possible, e.g. Shabbat and Chagim but a physical place is also seen as vital, as a place to unite Jews and to serve as a Makom Kavua (a fixed place that helps you concentrate).

The Beit HaMikdash provided the most spiritual connection between man and Hashem. It was seen as His "home".

Not only this but it was also used by non Jews as a way of worshipping G-d, they even gave sacrifices!!! This represents the actuality of this Tefilla (said in selichot) and song we often sing!

וְהִבִּיאֹתִים אֶל-הַר קְדֹשִׁי, וְשִׁמְחֹתִים בְּבֵית תַּפְלֵתִי--עוֹלֹתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם
לְבָצוֹן, עַל-מִזְבְּחִי: כִּי בֵיתִי, בֵּית-תַּפְלָה! קְרָא לְכָל-הָעַמִּים

Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be

K5: Shlomo & The Golden Years of Tanach

acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Yishayahu 56)

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Below are 2 areas which define the daily role of the Bet HaMikdash

The centre of Jewish Law (technical role)

The most important institution of Jewish autonomy met regularly in a special hall in the Mikdash yards. This was the Sanhedrin (council). A lot is uncertain about the Sanhedrin at this time but what is clear is that it was the central legislative and judicial institution in the Jewish world. They were responsible for all final decisions relating to Judaism although each region had their own justice system

(Parshat Shoftim). They not only made the law; they enforced it through the system of law courts and judges that it organised. It also sent out delegations on behalf of the Jewish people; it was the diplomatic centre of the Jewish world too.

Religious capital of the world (Spiritual)

Jerusalem had become the undisputed centre of the sacrificial worship in the Jewish world. In the Jewish system sacrifice was still the major way of making a direct personal contact, just like tefilla is today except much more powerful with G-d as well as the major way of atonement for personal and national sin - Jerusalem was essential. Before the Beit Hamikdash was built individuals were allowed to set up their own alter/mizbeach but once the Beit Hamikdash was built, this was entirely forbidden. However this didn't stop certain tribes considering it too much effort to travel all the way to Jerusalem and so some either didn't bother or began to worship idols. For example, after Shlomo's death Israel splintered into the Kingdom of Yehudah in the south and the Kingdom of Israel in the North and Yeravam Ben Nevat, the King in the North, worked hard at preventing the northern tribes from being able to travel to the Beit Hamikdash because he didn't want to lose their loyalty. He set up golden calves for them instead and told them they could use them as a replacement. However, overall the whole system of pilgrimages, based on a thrice-yearly national meeting on the Mikdash Mount was the single largest and strongest element of physical national unity. Hundreds of thousands of Jews would crowd into the yards of the Beit HaMikdash. This was the nation standing before G-d.

Shlomo and the bet hamikdash- what did he do?

- 1) Bringing of the craftsmen and construction materials (including his turning to Chiram regarding craftsmen, cedars, cypress trees and gold).
- 2) Inviting Chiram the brass worker from Tzor, who was responsible for all the brass work.



"Since you insist on defending yourself, I feel April first would be an appropriate trial date."

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- 3) The actual building of all the structures and vessels.
- 4) Bringing the ark up from the city of David to the Mikdash and standing all the vessels in their proper places.
- 5) All aspects of the dedication of the Mikdash—this was done after the completion of the Bet HaMikdash.

How were things different when there was a Bet Hamikdash?

These ideas are truly astounding – but to us in the 21st century, they are not so familiar. It's hard to imagine what life was like in the times of the Beit HaMikdash.

How were things different???

1) For starters, there weren't really shuls like we have today – in fact, whilst the Beit HaMikdash stood it was forbidden to offer sacrifices outside of it.

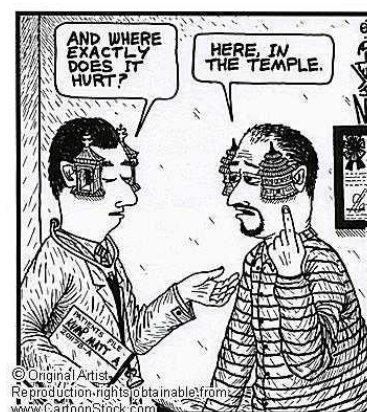
2) Three times a year (Pesach, Shavuot and Succot) every Jewish male would come together to celebrate in the Mikdash. (They would probably bring their families with them too!) The whole of Jerusalem would be packed to the brims but there would always be room to stay! Additionally, it teaches in Pirkey Avot that despite the B'H being extremely crowded with no room to stand, there was always enough room for people to bow stretched over the floor. This was one of the miracles Hashem performed in connection to the B'H

3) Yom Kippur was a very different in Beit Hamikdash times: The Kohen Gadol would enter the Kadosh Kedoshim full of trepidation, and plead for the forgiveness of the people. If he was successful, a pre-tied red string would turn white, symbolising G-d's forgiveness. Then there would be a great celebration for everyone. It was a time of immense closeness with Hashem that we struggle to understand today.4) What we know now as the Kotel was most likely a cattle market to buy Korbanot – the Ben Yehudah Street of its day!

Ohr Lagoyim through the Bet Hamikdash and the golden years

The nations of the world saw the power of the Jewish people at this time, even to the extent that the Queen of Sheba decided to come and pay a visit to the palace. She was overwhelmed with the food, the servants and the passageway from Shlomo's palace to the Bet HaMikdash. They were truly astounded by the Beit HaMikdash. Most importantly, she was so impressed with the passageway because it represented such humility on the King's part. Even though he was a king and had his own palace, he still wanted it to be connected to the BH because he really understood G-d is the King of all Kings and is above him – an example to the world about serving and having a relationship with Hashem.

Worldwide spiritual influence



K5: Shlomo & The Golden Years of Tanach

יבאו מכל העמים לשמוע את חכמת שלמה מאת כל מלכי הארץ אשר
שמעו את חכמתו" (מלכים פרק ה' - יד')

"People of all different nations would come to hear Shlomo's wisdom, from all kingdoms of the world who had heard of his wisdom."

There were musicians, artisans, inventors, scientists, nobles and aristocrats who came from all over the world to view the nation. Unlike other nations in which one in one hundred had acquired wealth at the expense of the rest, each household flourished and the clothing of the common child was made of fine embroidered linen.

And while, as always, there were those who were envious, this time they didn't dare attack, as David had entrenched fear in them. However, in this instance, fear gave way to admiration. They learned that there was a better way and they began to imitate. Israel was at the crossroads geographically between Asia, Africa, and Europe. They came to trade, to tour, to learn and they arrived home having acquired life lessons. There was an explosion of creativity in the world that would last until the end of the classical era.



They gazed at our Mikdash and learned that a building can be sublime. They gazed at our King and learned that a ruler can be benevolent. They gazed at our nation and learned that a people can be loving. They gazed at our laws and learned that there may actually be only one G-d.

Israel was the source of all the great accomplishments that were to soon follow in Europe, Asia and even faraway continents and islands. For who had not heard of Shlomo's fame?

Ohr Lagoyim

A common phrase that is thrown around many Machanot Chomer is the phrase "Ohr Lagoyim"- in loosely translated English "being a light to the nations".

When Ohr lagoyim is said many people will think of Kiddush Hashem. This is certainly one of the main aspects and including in it is publicising Judaism. Remember according to current statistics there are 6,430,856,221 people in the world and 14,596,217 Jews meaning only 0.227% Jews in the World. To put it in simpler terms if we had 440 people in a room in the world 1 would be Jewish. But nevertheless our home country Israel is one of the most talked about things in the World!

So have we adopted this name of "Ohr Lagoyim" because we think we're cool or is there actually a source for this?

The first source is (Yeshayahu 42:6):

אֲנִי הַ קֹּדֵשׁ בְּצִדְקָה, וְאִחְזֵק בְּיָדַי; וְאֶצְרֶב, וְאֶתְנַב לְבְרִית עַם--לְאֹר גּוֹיִם.

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“I, the Lord, have called you in the righteousness, and I will hold your hand, I formed you and I will establish you as a covenant of the people for a light unto the nations”

The second source is (Yeshayahu 60:2-3):

כִּי-הִנֵּה הַחֹשֶׁךְ יִכְסֶה-אֶרֶץ, וְעֲרַפֶּל לְאֻמִּים; וְעֲלִיךָ יִזְרַח ה', וְכְבוֹדוֹ עֲלִיךָ.
יִרְאֶה. ג וְהִלְכוּ גוֹיִם, לְאוֹרְךָ; וּמְלָכִים, לְנִגְיַת זְרַחְךָ.

“For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a thick darkness the nations. But G-d will shine upon you and his honour will be seen over you. Nations shall go by your light and kings by your radiant illumination”



- The Malbim in both these sources explains that the “light” refers to the **light of the Torah** and the “brilliance of your shine” refers to the radiance of G-d. It is G-d and the Torah that are great, not man. The goal is to have the “Goyim” thirsting to cling to G-d and his Torah and be jealous of the privilege and duty that we have acquired for ourselves.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, in the twelfth chapter of his masterpiece, Orot HaTorah, teaches us that the Torah is bound to the collective soul of the Jewish People. When we as individuals study Torah we are contributing to Israel's collective responsibility to be an Ohr LaGoyim, to bring the awareness of G-d's Divine light, to this world that often can seem so dark and bleak.

Opinion: The real question is how do we achieve this status? On the one hand we could take the chareidi view of providing a lighthouse of Torah study that will continue in the world no matter what situation, or taking many candles into the dark corners- Or perhaps we could take Chabad (i.e. reaching out to all the disconnected Jews around the world) or Modern Orthodox (i.e. contributing to the wider development of society) approaches?

Opinion: Can it be enough to just show ourselves positively and be on show for non-Jews to take an example from us or do we actively need to seek to show non-Jews that Judaism is a great religion? Is there a benefit to being an Ohr Lagoyim or just unnecessary attention?

Is it to be achieved on an individual level or a national level?

- Yishayahu was actually talking on a National level

As regards to the community element of Ohr Lagoyim, our homeland could be an example. David Ben Gurion took the term “A light to the nations” and applied it to the State of Israel. His hope was that Israel would be a moral state that would serve as a beacon to all other nations. Practically, in Britain a small possible example is the way the Jewish communities act. How appropriate is our internal behaviour and how do we display it? Does the regular non-Jew perceive the Jewish community to be living within a moral and legal world for example?

Although this is the reality, it is not the ideal...

Is the current State of Israel an example of Ohr Lagoyim???

It takes time to reach the stage of Medinat Yisrael being regarded as Ohr Lagoyim. Like most things it's a process. It takes time. There are ups and downs in the process and while we are getting some things correct we have not yet reached perfection. We strive to arrive at the time when we will be an Ohr Lagoyim because that is the ideal situation and:



אחד והיה ה' מלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו

Then will Hashem be King over all the world, on that day shall Hashem be one and his name be one.

In this Kvutza we have looked at the Golden Ages of Tanach through the Bet Hamikdash and the personality/actions of Shlomo. The actions ensured the Jewish people were respected throughout the world. We need to internalise the messages from Shlomo to build a world where Jewish identity is thriving, where people are proud to be Jewish and Judaism isn't something we hide.



Opinion: are we too defensive over our Judaism today rather than being actively proud?

Extra chomer:

ISRAEL'S GENERAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Israel is the 100th smallest country in the world, with less than 1/100th of the world population, can make the following claims:

- 1) Israel has the highest ratio of university degrees to the population in the world.
- 2) Israel is ranked #2 in the world for venture capital funds right behind the US. Outside the United States and Canada, Israel has the largest number of NASDAQ listed companies.
- 3) Israel has the highest average living standards in the Middle East.
- 4) Israel is the only liberal democracy in the Middle East.
- 5) In 1984 and 1991, Israel airlifted a total of 22, 000 Ethiopian Jews at risk in Ethiopia to safety in Israel.
- 6) With an aerial arsenal of over 250 F-16s, Israel has the largest fleet of aircraft outside of the United States.
- 7) When Golda Meir was elected Prime Minister of Israel in 1969, she became the world's second elected female leader in modern time
- 8) Relative to its population, Israel is the largest immigrant-absorbing nation on earth. Immigrants come in search of democracy, religious freedom, and economic opportunity.
- 9) According to industry officials, Israel designed the airline industry's most impenetrable flight security. U.S. officials now look to Israel for advice on how to handle airborne security threats.
- 10) Israel's Maccabi basketball team won the European championships in 2001.
- 11) 'Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers' was produced by Haim Saban, an Israeli whose family fled persecution in Egypt.
- 12) Israel has the world's second highest per capita of new books.
- 13) Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees.
- 14) Israel has more museums per capita than any other country.

Israeli Achievements in the Field of Medicine

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- 1) Israeli scientists developed the first fully computerized, non-radiation, diagnostic instrumentation for breast cancer.
- 2) An Israeli company developed a computerized system for ensuring proper administration of medications, thus removing human error from medical treatment. Every year in U.S. hospitals 7, 000 patients die from treatment mistakes.
- 3) Israel's Givun imaging developed the first ingestible video camera, so small it fits inside a pill. Used to view the small intestine from the inside, the camera helps doctors diagnose cancer and digestive disorders.
- 4) Researchers in Israel developed a new device that directly helps the heart pump blood, an innovation with the potential to save lives among those with congestive heart failure. The new device is synchronized with the heart's mechanical operations through a sophisticated system of sensors.

Israeli Achievements in the Field of Technology

- 1) In response to serious water shortages, Israeli engineers and agriculturalists developed a revolutionary drip irrigation system to minimize the amount of water used to grow crops.
- 2) Israel has the highest percentage in the world of home computers per capita.
- 3) Israel leads the world in the number of scientists and technicians in the workforce, with 145 per 10, 000, as opposed to 85 in the U.S., over 70 in Japan, and less than 60 in Germany, with over 25% of its work force employed in technical professions. Israel places first in this category as well.
- 4) The cell phone was developed in Israel by Motorola, which has its largest development centre in Israel.
- 5) The Pentium MMX Chip technology was designed in Israel at Intel. Voice mail technology was developed in Israel.
- 6) The technology for AOL Instant Messenger was developed in 1996 by four young Israelis.

#6: End of the kingdoms & exile

Aleph Chalutzi Machane 5775

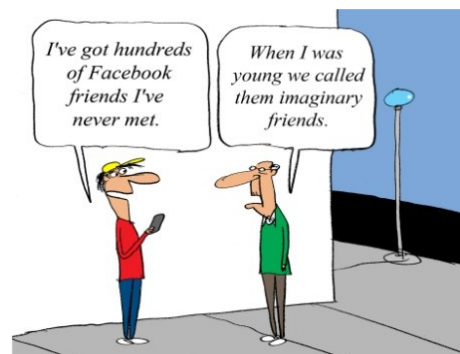


ms:

1. Be aware of the different Kings in Jewish History
2. Danger of Reliance on Geopolitics
3. Trying to go behind G-D's back/out do Him doesn't work!
4. Exile as a necessary step - what do we need to learn from it?
Not just a pointless punishment

Introduction to the kings

From the beginning of David's reign (2884 - 876 BCE) until the destruction of the first Temple and death of the last king of Yehuda (3338 - 422 BCE), there were twenty one kings in Jerusalem. As a punishment for Shlomo's sins later in his life, the kingship was torn away from his descendents - the lineage of David. However because of David's loyalty to G-d, G-d left one region to be ruled by his lineage. Therefore the Kingship was torn from Shlomo's son Rechavam and this created the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Malchut Yisrael, the 10 tribes) and The kingdom of Yehuda (Malchut Yehuda).



Every one of the northern kings was an idol worshipper, and a good majority of the population of the ten northern tribes followed their leaders' example. Nearly half of the kings in Jerusalem were themselves idol worshippers (Achaz, Menashe, Amon etc.), some in a most disgusting and insane of ways.

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But Jewish history is not just a story of kings and their families. The king was responsible for the religious life of his people. When a king was bad, most of the people went with him. When he was good, his people could soar to majestic heights. A Jewish king was a leader in every sense of the word - therein lies the danger of the monarchy. If everything rests on the shoulders of one man, it stands or falls with him. Under the Shoftim (Judges) there was much more room for individual movement. The judge didn't enjoy the all-powerful

influence over the kingdom's daily life that the kings would later inherit, so even if a judge went bad, the nation wasn't centralized enough to be drawn down with him.

Due to the fact that many of the kings were sacrificing to idols it's not surprising to read that they were also relying on idols and false gods rather than the True Source of All - Hashem - to win their battles!

We can't go through every king and their stories in this chomer but it's easy flowing to read through Melachim if you ever want to get an insight into a huge period of our Jewish Biblical History. Therefore we will read a select few cases towards the end of the Melachim period as we approach exile of both the Northern and then later on, the Southern Kingdom of Israel.

Evil kings were the norm for Israel, but the exception for Yehuda. Sadly, Achaz (Melachim 2, Perek 16) was one of those exceptions. He was extremely idolatrous, going so far as to pass his son through fire as a form of worship to the idol Molech. Aram and Israel teamed



up to make war on Yehuda, but they did not defeat Achaz in battle. Aram did recapture one city and they evicted the Jews who were living there. (Some things never change!)

How did Achaz manage to win???

Achaz sent messengers to Tiglas Pileser, the king of Assyria and said **“I am your servant and your son; come and deliver me from the hands of the King of Aram and from the hands of the king of Israel who are attacking me”** . He sent as much gold and silver as was in the Temple and the palace for Assyria to drive away the invading forces of Aram and Israel. Tiglas Pileser drove away the invading armies and killed the king of Aram, but he did not return the captured territory to Yehuda.



Achaz copies Ashur's idols!!

When the idolatrous Achaz went to visit Tiglas Pileser, he saw the altar of the Assyrian idol and had a replica built in the Temple courtyard. He instructed that this was to be the main altar from now on, and Uriah the Cohen Gadol (High Priest) complied.

Not only did this altar not belong in the Temple, Achaz insisted on bringing sacrifices on it, even though he was not a Cohen (priest). The true altar became secondary. Achaz went further to undermine the Temple service. He had the stands under the wash lavers and the "sea" removed and he disposed of the awning that the Kohanim would use for shelter on Shabbos when they changed shifts. He also made a personal shortcut to the palace. (One may not make a shortcut through a synagogue and certainly not through the Temple!)

What just what was he thinking?!?!?!?!

The reign of Achaz was sixteen years. When he died, he was replaced by his son Chizkiyahu (Hezekiah), one of the greatest of all Jewish kings. Chizkiyahu actually got rid of the idols, kept the Torah and acknowledged G-d.

The exile of the Northern Kingdom of Israel

Hoshea, the last king of Israel (the Northern Kingdom of the Ten Tribes) reigned for nine years (Chizkiyahu became king in his 3rd year). He was conquered by Assyria and became a vassal state.

In this time period there are at least four recorded prophets! This seems like a lot for one time period! Hashem must really be trying to get a

K6: End of the kingdoms & exile

message across to the Jewish people!! And guess what - they're not listening! Let's take the prophet Hoshea (who spoke to the Northern Kingdom) for example.

שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר-ה', בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כִּי רִיב לַה' עִם-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ--כִּי אֵין-אֱמֶת וְאֵין-חֶסֶד
וְאֵין-דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים, בְּאָרֶץ.

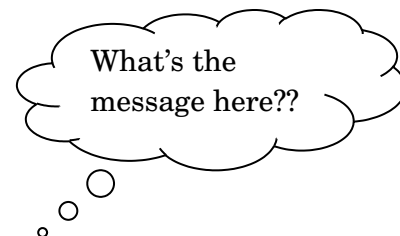
Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel! for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. (Hoshea 4:1)

We read this next part on Shabbat Shuva - the Shabbat of return in between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

הוֹשֵׁעַ פָּרַק יָד
(ב) שׁוּבָה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד יְדוּד אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָשַׁלְתָּ בְּעֹנֶךָ
(ג) קָחֵם עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֵל יְדוּד אֱמָרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּל תִּשָּׂא עֹן וְקָח טוֹב וְנִשְׁלַמָּה
פָּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ:
(ד) אֲשׁוּר לֹא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ עַל סוֹס לֹא נִרְכָּב וְלֹא נֹאמַר עוֹד אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ
אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה יְרַחֵם יְתוּם:

2 Return, O Israel, unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast stumbled in thine iniquity. **3** Take with you words, and return unto the LORD; say unto Him: 'Forgive all iniquity, and accept that which is good; so will we render for bullocks the offering of our lips. **4 Asshur shall not save us;** we will not ride upon horses; neither will we call any more the work of our hands our gods; for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy.'

Let us just focus upon passuk 4: If the Navi has to say to the nation that "Assyria will not save us," and then "We shall not mount horses," then that means that the Navi's words are coming to argue with certain popular opinions current in society at his time. Apparently there were opinion makers - political leaders and advisors, popular movements - who believed and propagated one of two views:



1. The only way to deal with Assyria was to create an alliance, a protectorate with them. (The Liberal Left.)
2. That a resistance be mounted, a coalition of forces to fight and distance Ashur. (The Hawkish Right Wing.)

So what did they do??? - a bit of both really

Israel paid Assyria a yearly tribute. One year, Hoshea did not pay his tribute. **He also tried to get Egypt to help him fight off the Assyrians.** Shalmaneser, then king of Assyria, found out and

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he didn't care much for Hoshea's insubordination. Assyria started a three-year siege of Israel.

Assyria finally captured Shomron (Samaria), the capital of Malchut Yisrael. The people were exiled and resettled in other lands.

Modern Idolatry

That was it for the Ten Tribes. They would not be swayed from their idolatrous ways, even though G-d had corrected them many times. He sent many prophets, but the people persisted. So, G-d *permitted* them to be exiled and only the kingdom of Yehuda (including Benjamin and Levi) remained. Yehuda wasn't perfect, but the kingdom of Israel had pushed away from G-d with both hands. (The Navi describes this in some detail, but that's the gist of it.)

So, the Jews of Israel were exiled and the conquered people of other nations were moved into the Shomron.

Moving back to the period of Chizkiyahu, let's take another example of Sancheriv, king of Ashur (Assyria).

Ashur turn their attention to Yehuda

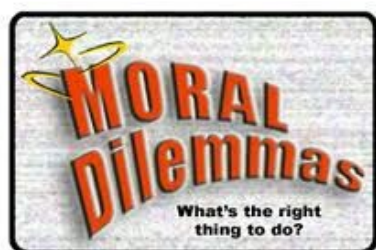
In the fourteenth year of Chizkiyahu's reign, Assyria turned their attention to Yehuda and captured many cities. Chizkiyahu sent a message to Sancheriv king of Assyria, offering to pay whatever he asked if they would just leave. Chizkiyahu would not serve Ashur, he was loyal to G-d. (ב"ה אלוקי-ישראל בטח). Sancheriv imposed a heavy tribute; Chizkiyahu was forced to strip the gold from the Temple doors to meet the payment. (This is looked down upon by chazal.) The Assyrians took the money, but waited for a pretext to resume their conquest.

Sancheriv sent messengers to King Chizkiyahu. They impudently stood outside and called for him. Several of the king's senior officers went out to meet with the Assyrian delegation.

The Assyrian messenger Ravshakeh (who was JEWISH!!!!!!!) said:

"Give Chizkiyahu this message: What are you going to do, rely on Egypt like the Kingdom of Israel did? They'll do you more harm than good! You trust in your G-d? The One Whose altars Chizkiyahu removed? Tell you what, you give us a security deposit to ensure your faithfulness and we'll give you 2,000 horses - as if you have 2,000 horsemen left to use them! Is it against your G-d that we're acting? We're fulfilling the orders of your G-d!"

The earliest source of sarcasm perhaps? - and who said the British



Since all this was going on outside, in public, the Jewish delegation asked the Assyrians to speak in Aramaic so the average person walking by wouldn't

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overhear, but the Assyrians refused (he was Jewish so he knew Hebrew). "Did my king send this message only to your king? It's for all these people! When we conquer you, they'll eat their own waste along with you! Don't let Chizkiyahu fool you! He can't save you. If you give in, the king of Assyria will relocate you all to other lands just as nice as this one, where you can live in peace. **Your G-d won't save you - none of the gods of the other nations we conquered saved them!**"

It appears that some of our biggest enemies/anti-Israel voices are Jews themselves!! Why do you think this is true? Can you think of any examples?

- Now take a look at the famous words of Yishayahu מְהַרְסֵיךָ וּמְסַרְבֵיךָ, thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth from thee.
- Just think of the academic boycott on Israel that was pushed by Israeli professors in England
- The balfour declaration was opposed by a Jew named Edwin Montagu!

How do the Jewish People react to this?? - Who do they believe more? Their own king or their enemies?

In this case Chizkiyahu tells them to keep silent and not reply - so they do. Chizkiyahu was a pretty great king and according to the Gemara (Masechet Sanhedrin 94b) he managed to persuade Jews all over Israel to learn Torah. 'He placed a sword on the gate of the house of learning as a sign that he who will not occupy himself with the Torah shall be slain by the sword.'



So what happens...

Because Chizkiyahu prayed to **Hashem** and also on account of his good deeds) a great miracle occurred: without fighting 185000 Assyrians soldiers drop dead. Later on he shows all the treasures to the Babylonians (chap 20), and Yishayahu tells him exile is on the cards. However, because he prayed to Hashem to prevent exile, Hashem says he won't experience it in his life time.

Chizkiyahu falls ill and is about to die but again he prays to Hashem - Hashem grants him another 15 years of life.

*Anyone notice a reoccurring theme in Chizkiyahu's strategy???

Something to think about...

Is praying always the answer? Think back to K1...

Although he was great, he could have been even greater!!!! Chazal tell us that he was worthy of being Mashiach!! The reason he wasn't was because he didn't say a shira/vote of thanks to Hashem after He performed one of the greatest miracles of all times for him (the soldiers who had surrounded Jerusalem in a siege all died suddenly)

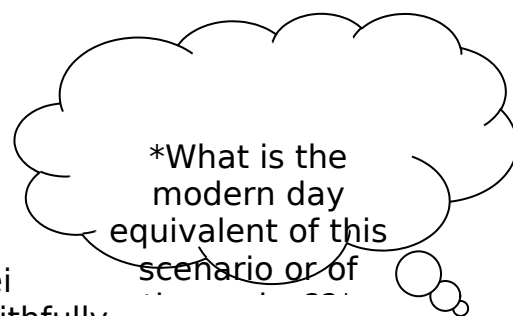
THINK: How could someone worthy of being Moshiach forget to thank Hashem for such a great miracle?! Do we always appreciate the miracles we merit?

Eventually he dies and 'Sometimes, the Apple is Thrown REALLY FAR from the Tree' because his son Menashe,



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one of the most awful kings, takes over! He did terrible things to make Hashem really angry. It is said that "he caused them to do greater evil than the nations that the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites"!



Hashem in many places in Tanach says that Bnei Yisrael will live in Israel in peace 'IF' they faithfully observe His commandments!! (e.g. Devarim 28, Melachim) Hashem is now explaining that Bnei Yisrael did not obey His Word and therefore if they have broken their side of the promise so will He. Although this fact was made known to Bnei Y over and over again, they don't seem to listen. King Menashe (spiritual leader? - leading them astray!) built altars, consulted ghosts, practiced soothsaying as well as sculpturing images of gods. Hashem has had enough - "I will wipe Jerusalem clean as one wipes a dish and turns it upside down!!

And I will cast off the remnant of My own people and deliver them into the hands of their enemies" not only that but even "just hearing about it would be enough to make one's ears ring!"- this is pretty heavy and sincere stuff!

King Uzziya (Azariya) is an example of a good king who turned bad. Because he was loyal to G-d, G-d helped him and he became successful, the problem was he developed a large amount of pride and arrogance due to 'his' success. He then began to act corruptly and do what he wanted,

*Again let's think of some modern day examples of when people put themselves above G-d's rules because either they think they are better or because times are so good they don't notice that what they are doing is actually wrong and

he started bringing forbidden incense when he felt like it at the Temple (remember how Nadav and Avihu died because they brought foreign sacrifices on their own accord). Uzziya displays a certain mode of behaviour: **putting oneself above God's rules**, seeking personal grandeur, the desire to follow one's desire despite the convention and authority that restricts a person.

All of this is a sign of a materialistic indulgent society. Another case is his father Amatzyah who defeats Edom in battle and becomes haughty; he thereupon challenges Yehoash, king of Israel, to war.

So - the problem summed up

According to the Talmud (Yoma 4b), the reason for the destruction of the First Temple was the pernicious and

ineradicable performance of the following sins: idol-worship, sexual immorality, and bloodshed.

Teshuva:

"Fasting" doesn't mean eating fast food!



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During King Yoshiyahu's reign the Torah scroll is discovered. Some commentators say that he started off bad but after discovering the scroll he became a Baal Teshuva as we then read that he really gets busy and starts to get rid of ALL the idolatry etc. unfortunately this not good enough to prevent exile. Evil is too ingrained from Menashe.

Yirmiyahu's does Hakhel – reading Torah out loud for all the people, to try and compel them to do teshuva but sadly this doesn't work.

G-d advised that Jeremiah should announce throughout Judah and Jerusalem to keep covenant and observe the mitzvot of G-d. **Their ancestors were warned every day since leaving Egypt to listen to G-d, but they still refused, each preferring to do as he pleases.** G-d punished them for non-compliance, as He said He would (Deut. 28), but they didn't correct their behaviour: "It's a conspiracy among the people, to return to the sins of earlier generations and to serve idols. The nations of Judah and Israel broke the covenant with G-d, so He will bring inescapable evil upon them. They will cry out to Him, but He won't listen to them. When they're exiled, the people will call upon the idols they worshipped, as if that will do any good." (There was an idol for every city and the streets were full of altars to Baal.)



Prophetess Chulda says destruction WILL come no matter what!

The only consolation is that the good kings e.g. Yoshiyahu and Chizkiyahu who pray sincerely to Hashem die before the exile but the nation as a whole still has to suffer.

As in Perek 7, G-d instructs Yirmiyahu not to pray for the people because He will not listen. Why do the people even bother going to the Temple considering all the evil they plan and do? They even stopped circumcising their children, which is the sign of the covenant with G-d! G-d had compared the people to a good olive tree, laden with fruit, but now the branches of this tree will be broken up and the leaves will be used as fuel for the fire. G-d planted this "tree," but now they must be punished for the evil they've done.

In the last few chapters of Sefer Melachim, Malchut Yehuda are finally exiled by the Babylonians and they mostly end up living there.

The purpose of exile

Why do you think exile needs to happen? What purpose does it serve? Doesn't Hashem want us to be in Israel?

Hashem's punishments are done in order to teach us a lesson and correct our ways, but how will living in a foreign land with foreign people help? – surely that'll just make matters worse!

Hashem appoints the prophet Jeremiah with the following:

רָאָה הַפְּקֹדֶתֶיךָ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, עַל-הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל-הַמַּמְלָכוֹת, לַנְּתוּשׁ וּלְנִתּוּץ,
וּלְהַאֲבִיד וּלְהַרוֹס--לְבָנוֹת

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to overthrow; to build, and to plant.



The fact is that the Jews have gone too far this time. Hashem is not willing to overlook their sins. He is fed up with their fakeness and constant sinning followed by bringing of sacrifices / apologising afterwards as if that makes the sin OK. Hashem finally breaks out and says that He "doesn't need their meat" i.e. there's no point offering sacrifices to appease Him.



This is what needs to happen - in order for the Jews to truly understand how to behave they need to be completely removed from their surroundings. It's not good enough to try and cover up the bad with a few good deeds. They need to be uprooted and placed in a new environment where they can learn from scratch. Only when this method has been achieved can they rebuild and replant and return to Eretz Yisrael.

In the famous words of tehilim, after which the Chafetz Chayim got his name

Turn from evil and then do good טוב וְעָשָׂה טוֹב -

Yirmiyahu tells them to build a life in exile - yes exile is bad and of course we believe in making Aliya, but there is a time and a place for it and they had been told that they were not allowed to return before 70 years was up. They needed to utilize this time in order to change and create a firm and strong Jewish community holding Jewish and religious values as a forefront of their society. (In fact, huge Torah centers were set up in Bavel!)

Am Yisrael are not deserving of Israel unless they keep Hashem's commandments, after all this is the condition He gave it to them!

Extra Chomer: see THE TANACH

We have to explain Menashe's addiction to idolatry, because nowadays we just don't get it. In the Talmud (Sanhedrin 102b), Rav Ashi made a disparaging remark about Menashe. That night, Menashe appeared to Rav Ashi in a dream and asked him an obscure question of Torah knowledge. Rav Ashi didn't know the halacha, but Menashe did. Rav Ashi was flabbergasted. "But - - if you're such a Torah scholar, how could you worship idols?" "You don't know the temptation we had for idolatry," Menashe replied. "If you had lived in my day, you'd have picked up you clothing to run towards the idols!" After that, Rav Ashi referred to Menashe, Ahab and company more respectfully.

The most important criterion driving this evaluation seems to be the extent to which the king inculcated sole loyalty to the God of Israel. Did

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he tolerate the worship of other gods, in place of or together with the worship of the God of Israel? Did he extirpate sacrifice outside of Jerusalem? This evaluation in the book of Kings corresponds to the priorities of the Book of Devarim in the Torah. (Devarim emphasizes sole loyalty to God and the importance of sacrificing only in Jerusalem [that is, in the central location].)

Tzidkiyahu was one of the bad kings and he reigned for 11 years. Perhaps unwisely, he rebelled against the powerful Nebudchadnezzar, who had appointed him.

Bit of an abrupt end here? Explain in a roundup that our establishment and success in the land depends on our fidelity to Hashem, and this is largely directed by the king.

וַאֲמַרְתֶּם לֹא-תִשְׁמָעוּ, לִי; וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ, אֶת כָּל-הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֵלֶּה.
וְאִם-בְּחַקְתִּי תִמְאַסוּ, וְאִם אֶת-מִשְׁפָּטֵי תִגְעַל בְּפִשְׁכֶם, לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת
אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי, לְהַפְרֹכֶם אֶת-בְּרִיתִי. לֹג וְאֶתְכֶם אֲזַרֶּה בְּגוֹיִם, וְהִרִיקְתִּי
אֶחְרֵיכֶם חָרָב; וְהִיְתָה אֶרְצְכֶם שְׂמֵמָה, וְעֵרִיכֶם יִהְיוּ חָרָבָה.

14 But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these commandments;
15 and if ye shall reject My statutes, and if your soul abhor Mine ordinances, so that ye will not do all My commandments, but break My covenant; **33** And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you; and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

K7: prophets of social justice

Aleph Chalutz Machane 5775



Aims:

1. What is prophecy and why is it important
2. The prophets as prophets of social justice
3. The relevance of their messages for us today

Introduction to prophecy

ט כִּי אַתָּה בֵּא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר-הִיא אֶלְקִיךָ נָתַן לָךְ--לֹא-תִלְמַד לַעֲשׂוֹת, כְּתוֹעֵבֹת הַגּוֹיִם הָהֵם. י
 לֹא-יִמָּצֵא בְּךָ, מִעֲבִיר בְּנוֹ-וּבֵתוֹ בְּאֵשׁ, קִסָּם קִסְמִים, מְעוֹנָן וּמִנְחָשׁ וּמִכֶּשֶׁף. יא וְחֹבֵר, חֶבֶר;
 וְשֹׂאֵל אוֹב וְיִדְעוֹנִי, וְדֹרֵשׁ אֶל-הַמְּתִים. יב כִּי-תוֹעֵבֹת הֵן, כָּל-עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים; וּבְגִלְלָה, הַתוֹעֵבֹת הָאֵלֶּה,
 הֵן אֶלְקִיךָ, מוֹרִישׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיךָ. יג תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה, עִם הֵן אֶלְקִיךָ. יד כִּי הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה
 יוֹרֵשׁ אוֹתָם--אֶל-מְעַנְנִים וְאֶל-קִסְמִים, יִשְׁמְעוּ; וְאַתָּה--לֹא כֵן, נָתַן לָךְ הֵן אֶלְקִיךָ. טו נְבִיא
 מִקִּרְבְּךָ מֵאַחֶיךָ כְּמִנִּי, יָקִים לָךְ הֵן אֶלְקִיךָ: אֵלָיו, תִּשְׁמָעוּן. טז כָּל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁאַלְתָּ מֵעַם הֵן
 אֶלְקִיךָ, בְּחָרֵב, בְּיוֹם הַקֶּהֶל, לֵאמֹר: לֹא אֶסָּף, לִשְׁמַע אֶת-קוֹל הֵן אֶלְקִי, וְאַתָּה-הָאֵשׁ הַגְּדֹלָה
 הַזֹּאת לֹא-אֶרְאֶה עוֹד, וְלֹא אָמוֹת. יז וַיֹּאמֶר הֵן, אֵלָי: הִיטִיבוּ, אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתֶּם. יח נְבִיא אֶקִּים לָהֶם
 מִקִּרְבֵּי אַחֵיהֶם, כְּמוֹךָ; וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרִי, בְּפִיו, וְדִבַּרְתֶּם אֵלֵיהֶם, אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה. יט וְהִיא, הָאִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשְׁמַע אֶל-דְּבָרִי, אֲשֶׁר יִדְבַר, בְּשֵׁם--אֲנֹכִי, אֲדַרֵּשׁ מֵעַמּוֹ. כ אֶךְ הַנְּבִיא אֲשֶׁר יִזְדַּ
 לְדַבַּר דְּבַר בְּשֵׁם, אֵת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-צִוִּיתִיו לְדַבַּר, וְאֲשֶׁר יִדְבַר, בְּשֵׁם אֶלְקִים אֲחֵרִים--וּמֵת, הַנְּבִיא
 הַהוּא.

9. When you come to the Land that the L-rd your G-d gives you, you shall not learn to act according to the abominations of those nations. 10. There shall not be found among you one who causes his son or daughter to pass through the fire, one who practices divinations, an astrologer, one who reads omens, a sorcerer. 11. Or an animal charmer, one who inquires of Ov or Yidoni, or one who consults the dead. 12. For anyone who does these is an abomination of the L-rd, and because of these abominations, the L-rd your G-d banishes them [the nations] from before you. 13. You shall be wholehearted/act with simple perfection with the L-rd your G-d. 14. For these nations that you are possessing - they hearken to astrologers and diviners, but as for you - not so has the L-rd your G-d given for you. 15. A Prophet from your midst, from your brethren, like me, shall the L-rd your G-d establish for you - to him shall you hearken. 16. According to all that you asked of the L-rd your G-d, in chorev on the day of the congregation, saying "I will no longer hear the voice of the L-rd, my G-d, and this great fire I will no longer see so that I shall not die". 17. Then the L-rd said to me: They have done well in what they have said. 18. I will establish a prophet for them from among

A prophet is someone who receives prophetic messages from G-d and is instructed to either act on these messages or prophecy these messages to other people.

The Hebrew word for a prophet is a 'navi'. In Devarim, in Parshat Shoftim we are told that:



We see from this that the role of the 'Navi' is to be the mouth of G-d. It is interesting to note that the root of the word are the letters nun, bet, alef which in turn comes from the two-letter root, nun bet, which means openness and



An incorrect example of a

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hollowness. Amongst the qualities of a true navi of Am Yisrael is someone who has made himself open and hollow in order to be able to receive, accept and correctly transmit the flow of prophecy from G-d.

A correct example of a

Hadracha Hot Tip!

Give your kvutsa some time to come up with a social justice project to implement on machane. They will be given time at a meal or whenever to present it to the rest of

There were thousands of Jewish prophets from the time of our ancestor Avraham until the end of the prophetic era in the time of Zecharya, Chagai [who may or may not have been the same guy as Zrubavel] and Malachi [who may or may not have been the same guy as Ezra], yet if you did a quick flick-through of Tanach, or had a look in Gemara Megilla [14a], we only actually know of 55 of them [48 blokes and 7 ladies].

The Gemara indeed goes on to challenge the earlier statement that it had made in that there were only 55 prophets proving that in the generation of Elkana alone there were at least 200 prophets.

Other evidence of the existence of many other prophets may include:

1. In Shmuel [1:10:10] when Shmuel and Shaul arrive at the hill and come across a 'chevel nvi'im' - 'a band of prophets' who then go on to prophesy with Shaul.
2. In Melachim [2:2:3], Elisha comes to Bet-El and is greeted by the 'bney haNvi'im', meaning 'the disciples of the prophets'. The Judaica Press Tanach explains partially quoting Radak that these disciples were themselves prophets who lived in the large towns such as Bet-El and would guide and admonish the people.
3. In Rambam's introduction to his Mishna Torah, he goes through the mesora of Am Yisrael from Har Sinai and beyond, and he explains how each navi learnt from the navi before him 'and his Bet Din'. This may possibly also point to each of the n'vi'im we know of having other n'vi'im around on their Bet Din.
4. A brayta cited in Gemara Megilla [14a] tells that Am Yisrael through the course of its history had double the amount of prophets than men who left Egypt. [which would lead us to the staggering number of 1,200,000 prophesying prophets!]

So all in all, lots of bands of prophets riding through the glen, they were [often but unfortunately not always] feared by the bad and loved by the good. To cheating and corruption they would



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never never yield, but as we shall soon see, they were far cooler than even Robin Hood.

Furthermore, even of the prophets we know of, many of them very few of their prophecies are recorded. For one of the great prophetesses, Chulda we only have a few lines of recorded prophecy from her. Ovadya's recorded prophecy takes up less than one page in the Stone edition green Artscroll Tanach!

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Even more well-known prophets such as Yehoshua, though a large section of Tanach tells his narrative, very little of his prophecy is recorded.

The following points to ponder henceforth [I love that word!] arise.

Why are we only informed of the existence of a **small proportion** of the prophets who existed during the history of Am Yisrael?

And maybe, and perhaps more importantly, **why** is it that of the prophets we know of, **some of**, and in some cases the vast majority of **their prophecies are not recorded down in Tanach?**

What vital, crucial, fundamental, critical, point, **does this tell us about** the relatively small proportion of **prophetic messages which have been passed down to us through our Holy Scriptures?**



Fortunately for us, the same gemara in Megilla we saw earlier, gives us an answer

'אלא נבואה שהוצרכה לדורות נכתבה ושלא הוצרכה לא נכתבה'

Only a prophecy that is needed for [future] generations was written down, and what was not needed [for future generations] was not written down.'

This means that **every** single pasuk and individual word in the recorded prophecies is **directly relevant to us** as individuals and as am yisrael as a whole, nowadays, just as it was when it was first prophesied.

There are a variety of important and fundamental themes which are consistently covered throughout the prophets. These include:

1. Calling to teshuva
2. Prophecies of terrible destruction and exile
3. Prophecies of hope
4. Prophecies of the return of Am Yisrael **to** and the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael
5. Admonishments to Am Yisrael for idol worship and forsaking G-d
6. Admonishments to Am Yisrael for their insincere religious practice and for instead relying on the tokenism of the Bet HaMikdash.

We've decided to focus however on the prophecies admonishing Am Yisrael for their lack of ben adam lechavero and their poor treatment of each other within their society.

The prophets called again and again for **social justice** and just as it importantly the **relevance** this has to **our lives** and to **Am Yisrael** and **Eretz Yisrael today**.

Yeshaya (or Isaiah for those of who are so inclined)

Yeshaya lived a very long life [before he was unfortunately murdered by his own grandson's soldiers] and prophesied for at least 86 years - so much so that



secular academics thought that there were three different people called Isaiah – The discovery of one intact Book of Isaiah when the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered at Qumran however proved them wrong! He prophesied mainly to the Kingdom of Yehuda [Judah] and during the reign of Kings Uziyahu [who also had another name – Azarya], Yotam, Achaz and [Ye]Chizkiya[hu].

The Gemara in Psachim tells us that Yeshaya prophesied during the same time period as Hoshea, Amos and Micha.

For much of Yeshaya's time period, idolatry was widespread and popular across the kingdom. Yeshaya also decried insincere sacrifices and religious worship, people's over-reliance on the Bet HaMikdash and immorality.

On the 'ben adam lechavero' front, there were also no shortage of problems of bribery, corruption, oppression of the weak and vulnerable and dishonesty in business throughout all the levels of society.

Yet despite the fact that, at first glance, Sefer Yeshaya appears to be a book of "doom and gloom", the number of hopeful/messianic prophecies outweigh the number of admonishing ones. Indeed, it is even known as a Sefer Nechama, a book of comfort. Furthermore, unlike many others, much of Yeshaya's prophecies are both for Am Yisrael and for the nations of the world, or for those of you who did/are doing R.S. A-level, 'Isaiah focuses on both a national and universal vision of Messianism'.

Let's take a quick look at one of his early prophecies from Chapter 1 of Sefer Yeshaya, also the Haftora of Parshat Devarim, Yeshaya prophecies the word of G-d and declares:

Which kind of people is this prophecy aimed at?

י שְׁמְעוּ דְבַר-ה' , קְצִינֵי סֹדָם; הֶאֱזִינוּ תוֹרַת אֱלֹקֵינוּ, עִם עַמְכֶּה. יא לָמָּה-לִּי רַב-זְבָחֵיכֶם יֹאמֶר ה', שְׁבַעַתִּי עַלֹּת אֵילִים וְחֶלֶב מְרִיאִים; וְדָם פָּרִים וְכִבְשִׁים וְעֵתוּדִים, לֹא חִפְצָתִי. יב כִּי תִבְאוּ, לְרֵאוֹת פָּנָי-- מִי-בִקַּשׁ זֹאת מִיָּדְכֶם, רִמַּס חֲצִרֵי. יג לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ, הִבִּיא מִנְחַת-שָׁוְא-- קִטְרֹת תוֹעֵבָה הִיא, לִי; חֲדָשׁ וְשֶׁבֶת קִרְא מִקְרָא, לֹא-אוֹכֵל אֲוֹן וְעֶצְרָה. יד חֲדָשִׁיכֶם וּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם שְׁנֵאָה בְּפִשִׁי, הִיוּ עָלַי לְטִרְחָ; וְנִלְאִיתִי, נֶשֶׂא. טו וּבְפִרְשֵׁיכֶם כְּפִיכֶם, אֲעֵלִים עֵינֵי מַכֶּם--גַּם כִּי-תִרְבוּ תִפְלֵה, אֵינֹנִי שֹׁמֵעַ: יִדְיֶכֶם, דְּמַיִם מְלֵאוּ. טז רַחֲצוּ, הַזְּכוּ--הִסִּירוּ רַע מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם, מִנְגֵד עֵינָי: חֲדָלוּ, הֲרַע. יז לִמְדוּ הַיֵּטִב דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט, אֲשֶׁרוֹ חֲמוּץ; שִׁפְטוּ יְתוּם, רִיבוֹ אֶלְמָנָה. {ס}

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. 11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the LORD; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. 12 When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample My courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; it is an offering of abomination unto Me; new moon and

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sabbath, the holding of convocations--I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly. 14 Your new moons and your appointed seasons My soul hateth; they are a burden unto Me; I am weary to bear them. 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. 16 Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes, cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. {S}

What kind of people today do you think this prophecy could be directed at?

What do you think we and our chanichim as individuals can learn from this prophecy? How is such a prophecy relevant for society today in the State of Israel?

Amos was a contemporary of Yeshaya and also had some pretty harsh words to say to the Jewish people. Here's one of his prophecies:

ד שְׁמַעוּ-זֹאת, הַשְׂאֲפִים אָבִיוֹן; וְלִשְׁבִית, עֲנוּי- (עֲנִי-) אֶרֶץ. ה יֹאמֶר, מִתִּי יַעֲבֹר הַחֹדֶשׁ וְנִשְׁבִּיכָה שָׁבֶר, וְהַשְׁבֵּת, וְנִפְתָּחָה-בָּר--לְהַקְטִין אִיפָה וְלְהַגְדִּיל שֶׁקֶל, וְלַעֲוֹת מֵאֲזֵנֵי מִרְמָה. ו לַקְּנוֹת בְּכֶסֶף יְדָלִים, וְאָבִיוֹן בְּעֵבוֹר נְעֻלִים; וּמִפֶּל בֵּר, נִשְׁבִּיר. ז נִשְׁבַּע ה, בְּגֹאֹן יַעֲקֹב; אִם-אֲשַׁכַּח לְנֹצַח, כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם. ח הֲעַל זֹאת לֹא-תִרְגַּז הָאֶרֶץ, וְאֲבַל כָּל-יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ; וְעַלְתָּה כָּאֵר כְּלָה, וְנִגְרָשָׁה וְנִשְׁקָה (וְנִשְׁקָעָה) כִּיֹּאזֵר מִצְרָיִם. {פ} ט וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא, נָאֵם אֲד-נִי ה, וְהִבֵּאתִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, בַּצְּהָרִים; וְהִחֲשַׁכְתִּי לְאֶרֶץ, בַּיּוֹם אֹר. י וְהִפַּכְתִּי חֲגִיכֶם לְאֲבָל, וְכָל-שִׁירֵיכֶם לְקִינָה, וְהִעֲלִיתִי עַל-כָּל-מִתְנַיִם שָׁק, וְעַל-כָּל-רֹאשׁ קִרְחָה; וְשִׁמְתִּיהָ כְּאֲבַל יְחִיד, וְאַחֲרִיתָהּ כַּיּוֹם מָר. {פ}

4 Hear this, O ye that would swallow the needy, and destroy the poor of the land, 5 Saying: 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth corn? making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances of deceit; 6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the corn?' 7 The LORD hath sworn by the pride of Jacob: Surely I will never forget any of their works. 8 Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? Yea, it shall rise up wholly like the River; and it shall be troubled and sink again, like the River of Egypt. {P} 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. 10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. {P}

Right, if you seem a bit perplexed by the above passage, in short Amos is describing to Am Yisrael all the different ways in which the wealthy and powerful of us cheat the destitute and powerless [whom they should be assisting].



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They withheld produce from the market until the next month so that they could drive up the prices and make a greater profit

They hoarded crops till after the Shemitta year when they would be able to charge more.

They were dishonest and used false weights and measures to make more money.

They had impoverished the poorest and most vulnerable members of society so much that the poor were in the end forced to sell themselves into slavery in order to survive.

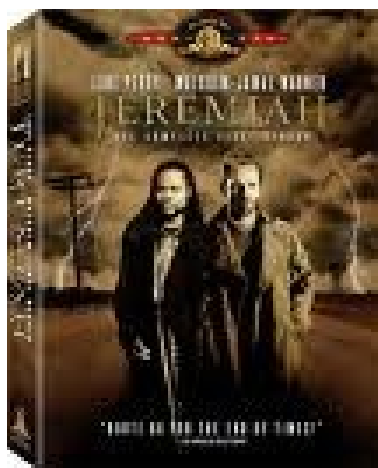
As a result, rather unsurprisingly G-d decides that Am Yisrael needs some very severe punishment.

Other Prophets to be aware of

Yirmiya [Jeremiah] like Yeshaya also prophesied to the Kingdom of Yehuda, though about 80 years approximately after Yeshaya died. Yirmiya prophesied during the reign of kings Yoshiyahu [Josiah], Yhoyakim and Tzidkiyahu [Zedekiah].

(see Last K) Yoshiyahu was a really big tzaddik who fought against idol worship, started a national teshuva movement and repaired the Bet HaMikdash. Yoshiyahu's son Yhoyakim was another baddy who was really just a puppet monarch for Pharoah and is obsequious to Pharoah the whole time.

Tzidkiyahu, another son of Yoshiyahu was the last king of Yehuda and in the ninth year of his reign on the tenth of Tevet, the Babylonians led by Nevuchadnetzar besieged Yerushalayim eventually destroying it as well as burning the Bet HaMikdash and exiling most of Am Yisrael.



Yirmiya consistently prophesied that if Am Yisrael did not mend our ways and do teshuva then Yerushalayim and the Bet HaMikdash would be destroyed and Am Yisrael exiled. The people who thought that the Bet HaMikdash was indestructible and would protect them all didn't listen and chose instead for their own comfort on the plethora of false prophets who Yirmiya had to compete with.

In the years leading up to the destruction, Yirmiya was viewed by the [often corrupt] authorities as a troublemaker. Yehoyakim burned the scroll of Yirmiya's prophecies and Tzidkiyahu chucked Yirmiya into prison.

Not all was doom and gloom though as Yirmiya also prophesied about the redemption and return to the land which would take place after seventy years of exile and of the great things which could happen if we heed G-d's word.

Yechezkel [Ezekiel] also prophesied during the reign of Tzidkiyahu. He however prophesied not in the Holy Land but rather in Babylon. He prophesied to the large numbers of Am Yisrael who had already been exiled to Babylon with the previous king Yehoyachin already prior to the destruction of the Bet HaMikdash.

He also prophesied of the futility of relying on the Bet HaMikdash for protection when the sins of Am Yisrael had become so numerous. Yechezkel gave prophecy to the Jews of Babylon who may have felt detached from Am Yisrael and that 'it was all over' for Judaism. He in many chilling and famous prophetic visions including that of the 'Valley of dry bones', prophesied hope and the eventual renaissance of Am Yisrael and our return to our land.

How are the prophecies of Social Justice relevant to life in the modern State of Israel??

Take a look at these sources and see if you think we've internalised the messages that the prophets of old tried to drum into us...

Source 1: Excerpts from an article from the Ha'aretz newspaper - June 2012

Panel unveils ideas for food-price cuts

Committee, formed in the wake of last summer's cost-of-living protests, wants to increase competition in the retail food sector, but the recommendations are short on practical solutions.



THIS STORY IS BY Ora Coren

The committee tasked with finding ways to lower food prices, formed in the wake of last summer's cost-of-living protests, presented its recommendations Monday.

The committee, headed by Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor Director-General Sharon Kedmi, wants to increase competition in the retail food sector, but the recommendations are short on practical solutions.

The committee's long list of recommendations include: imposing criminal and administrative sanctions against suppliers, retailers and their executives, who collude to keep food prices high; limiting buyouts and mergers by the largest firms in the retail sector; banning suppliers from arranging products on retailers' shelves and forcing retailers to provide smaller suppliers with shelf space; increasing price supervision over products with extremely high profitability; increasing imports of food products along with lower import duties; and taking steps to increase the sales of generic and house brands.

Other recommendations include limiting the number of stores - and their locations - that the large supermarket chains can open, as well as easing licensing and planning requirements for new food stores.

The committee also called for steps that would make it easier for small companies, suppliers and retailers, to find credit and capital, and for the state to find ways for smaller firms to participate in government tenders.

But most of the recommendations face serious opposition from business interests as well as farmers, and it will be a long road until these changes are enacted into legislation.

Another suggestion is to encourage the establishment of online food retailers and help them with government incentives. Increasing the number of farmers markets and opening wholesale markets to consumers is another possibility.

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The Kedmi committee was established almost a year ago in response to last summer's protest movement. All the government committees that studied consumer prices following the cost-of-living protests reached the same conclusion: The cost of food in Israel rose by more than the cost of food in the West in recent years.

The recommendations will be presented first to the Finance and Industry, Trade and Labor ministers, and then to the cabinet for approval.

**Source 2: “Thousands block highway in Tel Aviv at anti-racism protest”
By Adiv Sterman and Narissa Newman May 3, 2015 (Times of Israel)**

Ethiopian-Israeli protest against police brutality turns violent, over a dozen hurt

Ethiopian-Israelis and their supporters staged a large rally in Tel Aviv Sunday afternoon, protesting alleged institutional racism and racist police brutality and blocking a major highway in the center of the city.

The demonstration came days after a large rally in Jerusalem Thursday night turned violent, as hundreds demonstrated against racism following the police beating of an Israeli soldier from the Ethiopian community.

Sunday’s rally commenced at the city’s iconic Azrieli Center at 3 p.m. and was followed by a march toward the bustling Ayalon highway, where protesters blocked the city’s major north-south artery.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said Sunday’s protest was mostly peaceful, though several arrests were made, according to media reports. Protesters chanted “Violent police officers belong in jail.”

Media reports put the number of protesters at several thousand strong.

The protesters were expected to make their way to the central Rabin Square.

The Zionist Union’s MK Stav Shaffir, and former Yesh Atid MK Pnina Tamano-Shata — the first female Ethiopian-born Knesset member — were in attendance at the rally.

“The young generation that grew up in Israel is demanding, rightfully, equal opportunity,” Tamano-Shata told Army Radio. “It is fed up with being discriminated against from a young age.”

“We want to show people that racism is not routine, and that is why we will disrupt their routines — to make them understand that,” activist Inbar Bolgleh told Channel 2 before the event.

“We are Israelis, just like everyone else. A large portion of Ethiopian immigrants are people who were born here and they deserve their rights,” said another activist, Spiano Malko, according to the news site Ynet.

While no official group took charge of organizing the rally, word of the protest spread quickly online over the weekend. Activists on Facebook called on demonstrators to bring cameras and smartphones in order to document any cases of brutality that might be directed at the protesters.

The protesters were galvanized by the publication of a video of an Ethiopian-Israeli soldier being beaten by police in the coastal city of Bat Yam, apparently without provocation. The footage sparked widespread anger in the community and prompted a surge of accusations of lingering institutional discrimination and racism.

At Thursday’s protest in Jerusalem, which was officially staged in order to highlight police brutality against members of Israel’s Ethiopian community, police deployed tear gas, stun grenades and water hoses against the protesters. Meanwhile, pockets of demonstrators threw stones and bottles at police and blocked streets as well as the city’s light rail tracks as they attempted to march on the Prime Minister’s Residence.

K7: Prophets of social justice

Three police officers were injured at the protest, along with as many as 13 demonstrators. Two were arrested. Shortly after 1 a.m. Friday, the last of the protesters went home.

“You will see these protests in every city,” a masked activist told Channel 2 during the demonstration. He explained that he chose to obscure his face to prevent police from identifying him, because “I am afraid of them. Maybe they’ll find me and beat me up when the cameras aren’t around.”

“For years we’ve been putting up with this racism, and the pressure cooker is exploding,” another protester told the Walla news website.

On Friday, Israel Police Commissioner Yohanan Danino defended the officers involved in the clashes with Ethiopian Israelis during the Jerusalem demonstration, insisting that they responded with “restraint” to violence directed at them. “I would like to commend the Jerusalem District and backup officers for the restraint they exhibited,” he said in a letter to officers. Still, police officials said that they had not been sufficiently prepared for the number of protesters who attended the Jerusalem demonstration, Channel 10 reported.

The police have been trying to soothe the resentment in the Ethiopian community over perceived racist and brutal treatment. Channel 2 news reported Friday night that officials planned to review charges against members of the community and withdraw cases in which police conduct was in question.

The demonstration in the capital came in wake of video footage that emerged Monday showing policemen beating an Ethiopian-born IDF soldier, Damas Pakada, who claimed later to have been the target of a racist attack.

“Apparently the streets of Israel must burn like they do in Baltimore in order for someone to finally wake up. The apartheid regime is back, this time in 21st-century Israel,” Gadi Yevarkan, head of the Campaign for Equality for Ethiopian Jews, told Ynet. “To see a soldier in uniform beaten by policemen in uniform is confirmation of official policy that allows police to beat blacks without having to be accountable to state laws,” he said.

Pakada, a 21-year-old orphan who emigrated from Ethiopia with his four siblings seven years ago, told Channel 10 that he was riding his bicycle when he noticed the two officers. He said that he asked them what they were up to and one of them confronted him and pushed him off his bike, saying, “I can do whatever I want.”

He said that the officer threatened to shoot him in the head, and that they only let up after he backed away and lifted a rock. Several police officers then detained the soldier for alleged assault, although the footage showed that Pakada did not attack them with the rock in his hand. After the footage was obtained by Pakada’s family, he was released from custody, with police promising to investigate the matter.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin have both condemned the beating of the soldier, but Netanyahu also urged dialogue rather than violence in dealing with the issues raised by the protesters.

K7: Prophets of social justice

Danino, for his part, said that the officer who was filmed beating the Pakada would be expelled from the police force, pending a hearing. "There is no room for such officers in the Israel Police," he said. On Thursday, Danino met activists from the Ethiopian community, and said he would establish a special team to examine the community's claims and formulate ways to deal with the problem.

Source 3: The Israeli charity 'Latet' [formerly known as 'table to table']

Mission:

LATET (Hebrew for "to give") – Israeli Humanitarian Aid is devoted to assisting populations in need in Israel and around the world on a universal and equal basis. Established in 1996, LATET is dedicated to propulsion and active involvement of the Israeli civil society in the humanitarian field, raising social awareness, inspiring mutual obligation and philanthropy and actively working to diminish poverty.

Values, strengths and capabilities:

- **Independent Organization** – Non-governmental, a-political, nonprofit organization. **Volunteers** – Over 5,000 devoted volunteers nationwide, 200,000 hours of service per year.
- **National Umbrella Organization** – Ongoing collaboration with 150 local nonprofit organizations and associations.
- **Egalitarian and Universal** – Equal assistance to 95 communities of all sectors of Israeli society and aid projects worldwide.
- **Grassroots Activity** – Collection and distribution of 3,000 tons of food products to 50,000 families per year.
- **Civil support and public awareness** – 95% of the donations originate from the Israeli public and business sector.
- **Efficiency** – 7% overhead. For every donation of NIS 1, the value of food distributed reaches at least NIS 5.
- **Business Sector** – Strategic long-term cooperation with leading Israeli companies, food manufacturers, and distributors.
- **Organizational culture and good governance** – Striving toward excellence, professionalism, and leadership. Fully transparent.
- **Professional staff** – Dedicated, loyal, qualitative team of professionals motivated by a desire to influence and bring about change.

Programs and projects:

LATET initiated and operates a number of programs and projects in several fields:

Food for Life

Continuous, effective and efficient nutritional assistance to tens of thousands of families; empowerment and support of local NGOs; raise the public's awareness to nutritional insecurity and poverty in Israel.

In light of the growing phenomena of poverty and nutritional insecurity in Israel, LATET initiated and has been operating for the past 10 years, the "Food for Life" program designed to provide effective assistance to as many needy individuals as possible in their daily struggle to survive through the collection and distribution of food via a network of partner local nonprofit organizations. In addition, the program aspires to raise the Israeli public's awareness to the plague of poverty and hunger.

K7: Prophets of social justice

LATET serves as an umbrella organization to 120 nonprofit organizations (associations, soup kitchens and municipal social services departments) in 80 communities of all sectors of Israeli society including: senior citizens, large families, single parent families, new immigrants, etc. This collaboration produces efficient, continuous aid to over 50,000 families and 200,000 needy individuals.

The "Food for Life" program is modeled after the United States' largest charitable hunger-relief organization, "America's Second Harvest," with three regional logistical distribution centers- in central, northern and southern Israel - that function as Regional Food Banks. Inventory, collection and distribution of the supplies are closely monitored by LATET.

Food collection for the "Food for Life" program is based on 4 main channels:

Strategic cooperation with the Israeli food industry - LATET regularly cooperates with all of Israel's largest food manufacturers and dozens of food distributors.

Food Drives - Over the years, LATET held dozens of food drives in supermarket chains, schools, kibbutzim, towns and companies. Tens of thousands of volunteers participated in these campaigns and some two million Israelis donated tens of thousands of tons of food supplies.

In summary:

Discuss and even more importantly **get your chanichim to discuss**

The relevance of these prophecies to our lives

How do they feel they can learn from these prophecies to help improve their Jewish communities in Britain?

When/if they make aliya, how do they feel they can contribute to improve Israeli society?

Idea: **Copy out some of the prophecies which we have discussed**, [or see some more ones which are listed below] and **discuss** with your kinderlach how **relevant** they feel these messages are to **our lives**, to the **Jewish community** and to the **State of Israel**.

The vision of the prophets was [not to chas vesholom diminish the extreme importance and continual everlasting relevance of mitzvot ben adam laMakom - mitzvot between man and G-d]a vision hugely based on Am Yisrael improving their mitzvot ben adam lechavero and thereby creating an ideal society - **A society which was 100% frum in every way and as an important part of that, a society based on the highest of moral and ethical standards and a beacon of social justice for the entire world.**

This therefore had and b'ezrat HaShem in the future will also have the potential to light up the world with the Glory of G-d when the nations of the world see the role model example Am Yisrael will set.

K7: Prophets of social justice

Other relevant prophecies to look at/discuss include - Make use of your own personalised wonderfully groovy Tanach!:

Criticism of Am Yisrael for lack of social justice: Yeshaya 5:8-23, 32:1-8, 56:1-2, 56:9-12, Micha 2:1-2, 3: Amos 2:6-8, 5:16-27

G-d's lack of interest in korbanot etc. without mitzvot ben adam lechavero: Yeshaya 58:1-12, 66:1-4 Malachi 1:1-14

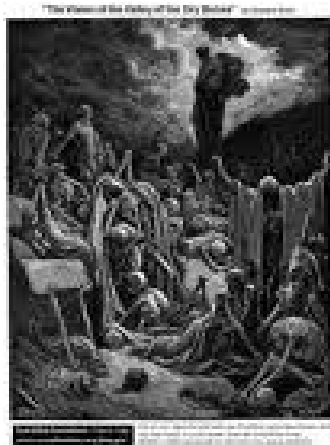
Messianic/futuristic prophecies of social justice and/or Am Yisrael being an example to the world: Yeshaya 2:1-4, 11:1-10, 29: 13-16, 42:1-9 Micha - Beginning of chapter 4.

Extra chomer

Introduction to the sefarim:

There are four books in n'vi'im acharonim. Yeshaya [Isaiah], Yirmiya [Jeremiah] Yechezkel [Ezekiel] and Trei Asar ['The twelve' - they have sometimes been referred to as 'the twelve minor prophets'. This is however a very incorrect Xian translation as they were most certainly not 'minor' at all!].

Some more Prophets for your perusal...



The **Trei Asar** is a collection of the prophecies of twelve different prophets spanning a period of over 350 years. The Gemara in Baba Batra [14b] tells us that they were put together in one scroll in order that they would not be lost.

Hoshea prophesied at the same time as Yeshaya, though Hoshea may have started a bit earlier and also prophesied to the Kingdom of Yisrael as well as Yehuda. Hoshea, according to some opinions may have been Yeshaya's Rebbe. Hoshea being chronologically the first of the n'vi'im acharonim in many ways a 'prophet of transition' and was the first to actively start prophesying to Am Yisrael the concept, that if Am Yisrael don't wake up and do teshuva, they will lose Eretz

Yisrael and the Bet HaMikdash and go into exile.

Amos and **Micha** also prophesied at the same time as Yeshaya and Hoshea. The Gemara in Pesachim says that Hoshea was the greatest of them all.

Amos and Micha both heavily admonished the people for their insincerity in religious practice and for the way they treated the vulnerable members of society as we shall see later. They also, like Yeshaya both prophesied of the amazing Messianic era which would follow and the reward for those who do good.

Yoel also prophesied of the tremendous destruction which would come to the land and also of the redemption which would follow. **Ovadya** gave prophecy of the destruction which would befall Edom and the nations of the world for the way they have treated Am Yisrael. **Yonah** tells of the famous narrative of Yonah and the big fish. **Nachum** prophesies the vengeance



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that will come against Nineveh. **Havakuk** prays and challenges G-d over His 'injustice' and prophecies punishment against Am Yisrael and the enemies. **Tzefanya** pleads with Am Yisrael to do teshuva before it gets too late and prophecies the destruction which will come and also of the great redemption in the end.

Hagai, Zecharya and **Malachi** are the last three prophets and come on the scene already after the destruction of the first Bet HaMikdash when Am Yisrael are already in exile. Their prophetic visions are 'less clear' as the era of prophecy is sadly coming to a close. They prophecy the construction of the second Bet HaMikdash and the return of Am Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael.

Zecharya also gives prophecies of the 'end of days'. Malachi the last of the prophets also pleaded with the people to do teshuva and prophecied of the rapid and widespread teshuva that will take place prior to the arrival of Mashiach.

K8: Esther and Ha'am not Ba'aratz

Aleph Chaslutzi Machane 5775



Aims:

1. The story of Esther/Purim and it's context
2. The danger of Am Yisrael replacing Galut with Geula
3. What happens when we're not Am Echad

Introduction



Megillat Esther is one of the few books in Tanach that is completely set outside the land of Israel. This kvutza will be focussing on the importance of that fact and what we can learn from that today.



Esther plots a little extra humiliation for Haman at her party.

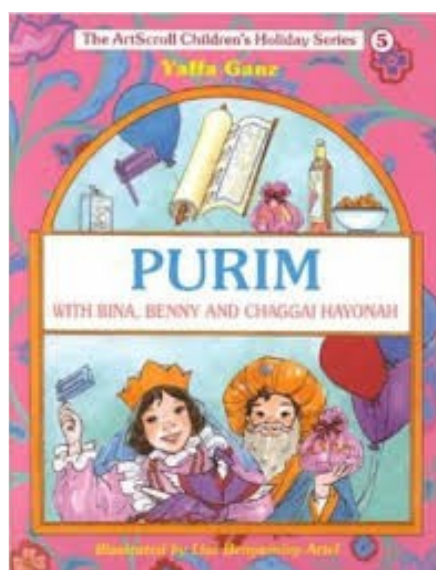
The story of Purim is very well known. There is a big discussion as to when the story took place but for our purposes we will go with one opinion. It all began in Ancient Persia in the 4th century BCE. The Holy Temple that had stood in Jerusalem was destroyed more than 50 years earlier, and the Jews were subjects of the mighty Persian Empire which extended over 127 lands. This incident took place 2 years before the beginning of the building of the 2nd Bet Hamikdash.

Who wrote the megilla?

The Babylonian Talmud attributes the writing to the Anshei Keneset haGedola (men of the Great Assembly), whereas Josephus (a Roman historian) affirmed that Mordechai wrote it. Some Rabbinic circles also believe that Mordechai wrote the book of Esther. However, the mention of Mordechai and his benevolence in Esther 10:3 may argue against Mordechai as the author of the book. But it need not completely eliminate him.



Brief outline of the story



Three years after King Ahasuerus ascended the Persian throne, when he felt secure in his new position, he celebrated by throwing a grand 180-day-long party for all his subjects. Following this extravagant gala, Ahasuerus hosted a smaller week-long party for the residents of the capital city of Shushan. In the palace's women's quarters, Ahasuerus' wife, Queen Vashti, hosted her own party for the Shushanite womenfolk.

On the seventh day of this party, Ahasuerus' heart "was merry with wine," and he commanded his wife Vashti to appear before all the partying men—he wanted to show them all her exquisite beauty. Vashti ignored this request, and at the advice of his advisor Memuchan, Ahasuerus ordered Vashti's execution and there was the beauty contest for the new Queen.

K8: Esther and Ha'am not Ba'aratz

The leader of the Jews at that time was a Shushanite resident named Mordechai. He had a cousin, Esther, who was orphaned as a young girl. Mordechai raised her and treated her as a daughter. Though she had no desire to be the queen, Esther was forcibly taken to the king's palace, to participate in the contest. While all the other contestants beautified themselves with perfumes and lotions, Esther did nothing. But Hashem had His own plans. When Esther appeared before the king, he immediately liked her, and Esther became the new Queen of Persia. But as per Mordechai's directive, Esther refused to divulge her nationality—even to the king.

Meanwhile, Haman (boo), one of Ahasuerus' ministers, was promoted to the position of Prime Minister. Haman was a virulent Jew hater; in fact he was a descendant of the notoriously anti-Semitic nation of Amalek. Haman wanted to kill the Jewish people.

Mordechai had done a favour for the king in stopping him getting assassinated and therefore was praised for this. Acting on Esther's orders he gathered the Jewish people of Shushan together to daven and fast. Esther wanted the king to have 2 feasts and in the 2nd feast Esther then identified Haman as the evil person who wished to perpetrate the atrocity of killing all the Jewish people. On that day, Haman's estate was given to Esther, and Mordechai was appointed Prime Minister instead of Haman. Woohoo!

Mordechai and Esther established a holiday to commemorate these amazing events. Jews worldwide celebrate on the 14th of Adar, while residents of walled cities from the days of Yehoshua - like Shushan - celebrate on the 15th of Adar. Partay. - Very long considering most people already roughly know this story. Shorten a bit?

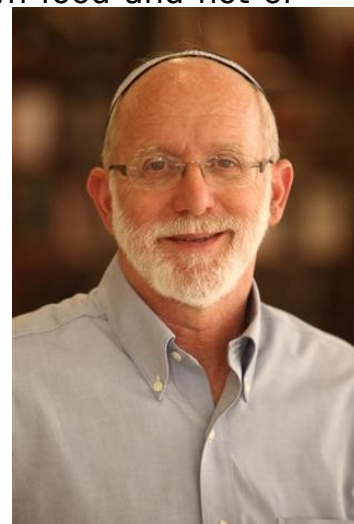
Queen Esther



Let's delve into the character and history of Esther. According to the Megilla when Esther was conceived her father died and when she was born her mother died. Esther was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin. The name Esther means 'star'. This is a derivation of the root name Istahar which the nations of the world called her. Esther was also known as Hadassah which means 'myrtle'. Myrtle branches signify sweetness but bitter in taste - Esther was sweet to Mordechai but bitter to Haman. Esther made sure to only eat of her own food and not of the king's.

Esther and Israel

At first glance the Purim story looks like nothing more than a simple "they tried to kill us. We won. Let's eat" type of story. But behind that is something strange. As we'll discuss later on, the Jews had an opportunity



K8: Esther and Ha'am not Ba'aratz

to go back to Eretz Yisrael and rebuild the Beit Hamikdash. But they didn't. Why?

Rav Leibtag says that the Jews of Persia replaced the Beit Hamikdash with Shushan. We can see it clearly in the quote that we all read out know but not necessarily understand:

אִישׁ יְהוּדִי, הָיָה בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבְּיָרָה; וְשָׁמוּ מְרֹדֶכַי

Esther 2:5

The phrase ISH YEHUDI is mentioned only ONE other time in Tanach - in Zecharia 8:23. There it describes a Jew leading tens of non-Jewish followers seeking God in Jerusalem.

In Divrei Hayamim (Chronicles) the phrase Habira (which translates as Capital) specifically means the Beit Hamikdash which King David instructed his son Shlomo to build. Prior to megillat Esther the word Bira does not appear.

Mordechai comes from the Babylonian word - Marduk who was a Babylonian deity. Today, it would be akin to naming your son Christopher. (although there are more 'Jewish' reasons given for his name in Gemara Megillah... see me for details if concerned)



Crazy stuff. So what is it hinting at? What can we learn?



The entire megilla is filled with phrases alluding to this theme of the Jewish people substituting palace of Achashverosh for the Bet Hamikdash:

The Jews at the party are using the vessels of the Temple according to Chazal.

The Gemara (Megilla 12a) claims that Achashverosh donned the garments of the kohen gadol at his party.

Entry to the inner chamber of the king's palace is forbidden under threat of death; this parallels the Holy of Holies in the Mikdash. (Perhaps another connection between Purim and Yom Ha kippurim...)

The 'waiting area' outside the inner chamber is called the chatzer ha-chitzona where those close to the King - like Haman himself - are allowed to enter freely; this parallels the kodesh where kohanim are permitted to enter.

In front of the palace is gate of the palace where people like Mordechai are permitted to stand; this parallels the azara in the Temple.

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Have we, living in England, replaced the Beit Hamikdash with an alternative?

Interestingly, the megillah is also the first time that the word Jew (יהודי) was used, thus denoting a distinction between the Hebrews, the Israelites, and their Jewish descendants in the diaspora.

We see the turning point where the Jews seem to grasp the reason that they were being punished in chapter 4.

Until here the Jews (as a nation) weren't living the "big three" (am yisrael, be'erezt yisrael, al pi torat yisrael). At the end of the previous chapter, Haman receives the King's signet ring and issues the decree to kill all the Jews. At the start of the fourth chapter Mordechai learns what happens and comes to Esther, who after some hesitation agrees to go to the king. However, she together with the rest of Am Yisrael will fast for three days.

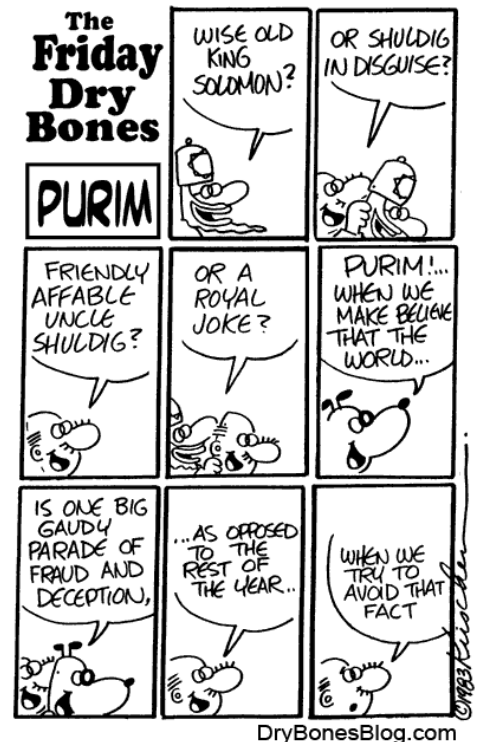
This is really the turning point. Previously to this we have, as Haman puts it so well: Yeshno Am echad mefuzar umeforad bein ha'amim (there is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed amongst the peoples). Why does it say both scattered and dispersed? According to one interpretation Haman used both words to mean that not only are they a nation separate from one another, but they are also lacking in unity.

Gemarah Megilah 13b

There is one people.²⁵ Raba said: There never one who knew how to slander as skillfully as Haman. He said to Ahasuerus, Come, let us destroy them. He replied: I am afraid of their God, lest He do to me as He did to my predecessors. He replied: They are 'negligent' of the precepts. He said, There are Rabbis among them.²⁷ He replied. They are 'one people'. Should you say that I will make a void in your kingdom, [I reply], they are 'scattered abroad among the peoples'. Should you say. There is some

profit in them, I reply, 'they are dispersed' [nifredu], like an isolated bough [peridah] that does not bear fruit. Should you say that they occupy one province, I reply, 'they are in all the provinces of thy kingdom'. 'Their laws are diverse from those of every other people': they do not eat of our food, nor do they marry our women nor give us theirs in marriage, 'Neither keep they the king's laws', since they evade taxes the whole year by their

February 25, 1983



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loitering and sauntering. 'Therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them', because they eat and drink and despise the throne. For if a fly falls into the cup of one of them, he throws it out and drinks the wine, but if my lord the king were to touch his cup, he would dash it on the ground and not drink from it. 'If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver': Resh Lakish said: It was well known beforehand to Him at whose word the world came into being that Haman would one day pay shekels for the destruction of Israel. Therefore He anticipated his shekels with those of Israel. And so we have learnt: 'On the first of Adar³² proclamation is made regarding the shekalim and the mixed seeds'.



However, Esther commands Mordechai to assemble the Jews and uses the language: *Knos et kol hay'hudim* - assemble the Jews. This is to contradict Haman and unify the Jews. It is only once the Jews are united - *am echad*, that they deserved to be saved and that the tables turned.

So of the "big three" they only have the first. At the end of the megillah once the Jews have been saved and

the day of Purim is proclaimed as a festival, we have the line *Kimu v'kiblu hayehudim aleihem* - the Jews confirmed and undertook upon themselves. It was here that they reaccepted the Torah upon themselves.

The Gemara (Shabbat 88a) explains that during *Matan Torah* "they stood under the mount". God had lifted the mountain and placed it over them. God said to them "if you accept the Torah is well; if not, here is your grave." Rav Acha says that this provides an excuse for non-observance since the Torah was imposed by threat if death thus rendering its acceptance invalid. The gemara responds by saying: "Even so, they reaccepted it in the days of *Achashveirosh*".



By the end of the megilla we have 2 out of 3. We have *am yisrael* living *pi torat yisrael*. But this isn't complete.

The story of miracle of the saving of the Jews during the time of the megilla is not a complete victory. If we compare the *Al Hanissim* of Purim to its Chanukah counterpart we see a big difference. The structure of the Chanukah one is one line of the problem and a whole paragraph of how we were saved whereas it's the direct opposite of that with Purim i.e. a

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whole paragraph of the problem and then we were saved. The key difference between them is erez yisrael. With Purim it's more of a temporary release but with Chanukah it's a full victory.

Since the Purim story has taken place, what lessons have we taken on??

Do we still worship the ipads and football teams of England as if they were our temple?

Do we feel so comfortable in the UK that aliyah is a retirement plan?

Are we at least unified as a people?

Have we accepted HaShem's torah of our own accord or have we also operating under a forced inheritance?...

AK9: Ezra and his modern connections

Aleph Chalutz Machane 5775



Aims:

1. To learn about the background and story of Sefer Ezra
2. The parallels and relevance of Ezra to our lives today as individuals, as religious Jews, as a Jewish community and as the State of Israel
3. What we can learn from the mistakes and achievements of Am Yisrael in the time of Ezra and in recent times

Ezra

Background: [Please note: There are a number of different opinions on the chronology of various events in relation to one another. This background follows one opinion, other Rabbinic and historical opinions may disagree.]



The sefer of Ezra, the first half of the twin sefarim of Ezra and Nechemya, deals with the return of Am Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael before the building of the second Bet HaMikdash. (Woohoo!!)

If you recall, there were seventy years of exile in between the destruction of the first Bet HaMikdash and the building of the second one.

A basic timeline of the events goes as follows:

In the Jewish year 3338 [approximately 2500 years ago], the evil Babylonian king Nebuchadnetzar [not to be confused with the hovercraft in the Matrix of the same name] destroyed the first Bet HaMikdash and the whole of Yerushalayim and exiled the remaining Jews to Babylon.



Nebuchadnetzar eventually died and was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach, who as his name suggests was quite evil, though not nearly as bad as his dad.

He was succeeded by Belshazzar, who interestingly enough was the father of Vashti from the Purim story.

Belshazzar was the last Babylonian king because unfortunately for him, his empire was overrun, destroyed and conquered by the Persians led by Daryavesh [Darius] the first [who according to non-Jewish scholars was not called Daryavesh].

One night, a hand and writing appeared on the wall of Belshazzar's palace while he was in the middle of the party. Daniel was called on to interpret it, and he explained that it was telling Belshazzar that G-d had judged him and found him guilty and that his empire would be destroyed.

This whole fascinating scene from the book of Daniel is depicted in a famous painting by the Dutch artist Rembrandt which can be found in the National Gallery. Well worth a trip down to Trafalgar Square to see it!



Anyways, Daryavesh [Darius] 1, died about a year later and was succeeded by the next king of the Persian-Median Empire, Coresh [Cyrus].

Coresh, as we shall soon see, was very good to the Jews and it is during his reign that most of the book of Ezra occurs.

Coresh is succeeded by Achashverosh [yes, the same bloke from the Purim story], who contrary to what you may have learnt in your primary school Purim play, was actually not a good guy at all.

K9: Ezra and his modern connections

After Achashverosh's fourteen years of reign, he is succeeded by his and Esther's son Daryavesh [Darius] the second. It is during the reign of Darius the second that the rest of the story of the book of Ezra is set in.

The first four chapters of Ezra take place before the Purim story and the last six take place after the Purim story.

All in all there had been seventy years in between the destruction of the first Bet HaMikdash and the authorisation of Daryavesh 2nd [who according to non-Jewish scholars was Daryavesh the first, confusing, isn't it?] to finish building the second Bet HaMikdash, just as Yirmiyahu [Jeremiah] had prophesied all those years earlier. Trust the prophets to know!

The Gemara in Megilla tells us that Belshazzar had tried to calculate the seventy years but had made a mistake in his calculation. When, according to his erroneous calculations, the seventy years were up and Am Yisrael had not been redeemed, he thought that G-d had



'forgotten' Am Yisrael and therefore made a party to celebrate in which he used the golden vessels of the Bet HaMikdash. This whole scene is also depicted in that same painting by Rembrandt, who gives fantastic attention to detail using thick, rich oil colours to paint the vessels of the Bet HaMikdash.



Another baddy, Achashverosh, also did his calculations. Achashverosh knew that his father-in-law Belshazzar had got it wrong, so he, as Gemara Megilla tells us tried a different method of calculations. Quelle-surprise, but Achashverosh had also miscalculated [possibly due to the Persian government's dumbing down of Maths GCSE] and when he thought seventy years were up and Am Yisrael had not been redeemed, he also threw a mahussive party where he ate and drank from the vessels of the Bet HaMikdash. This is the exact same party which is spoken of at the beginning of Megillat Esther.

When we stop to appreciate the context of this story we can understand why it was so bad that the Jews had gone and joined in in Achashverosh's booze fest. Best to stick to booze 4 Jews at your local J-soc instead, or even better join Mordechai in wearing sackcloth.

Ok, so back to Ezra. Right at the beginning of Ezra, we are told of Coresh's declaration, which reads as follows [May be read with a Persian accent, if desired]

א ובשנת אחת, לכורש מלך פרס, לכלות דבר-ה, מפי ירמיה: העיר
ה, את-רוח כרש מלך-פרס, ויעבר-קול בכל-מלכותו, וגם-במכתב
לאמר. ב כה אמר, כרש מלך פרס--כל ממלכות הארץ, נתן לי ה
אלקי השמים; והוא-פקד עלי לבנות-לו בית, בירושלם אשר ביהודה.
ג מי-בכם מכל-עמו, יהי אלקיו עמו, ויעל, לירושלם אשר ביהודה;
ויבן, את-בית ה אלקי ישראל--הוא האלקים, אשר בירושלם.
ד וכל-הנשאר, מכל-המקומות אשר הוא גר-שם--ינשאוהו אנשי
מקומו, בכסף ובזהב וברכוש ובבהמה; עם-הנדבה--לבית האלקים,
אשר בירושלם. ה ויקומו ראשי האבות, ליהודה ובנימן, והכהנים,
והלויים; לכל העיר האלקים, את-רוחו, לעלות לבנות, את-בית ה
אשר בירושלם. ו וכל-סביבתיים חזקו בידיהם, בכלי-כסף וזהב
ברכוש ובבהמה ובמגדנות--לבד, על-כל-התנדב. ז והמלך כורש,
הוציא את-כלי בית-ה, אשר הוציא נבוכדנצר מירושלם, ויתנם בבית
אלקיו. ח ויוציאם, כורש מלך פרס, על-יד, מתרדת הגזבר; ויספרם,
לששבצר, הנשיא, ליהודה. ט ואלה, מספרם: אגרטי לזהב שלשים,
אגרטי-לכסף אלף, מחלפים, תשעה ועשרים. י כפורי זהב,
שלשים-- {ס} כפורי כסף משנים, ארבע מאות ועשרה; כלים
אחרים, אלף. {ס} יא כל-כלים לזהב ולכסף, חמשת אלפים
וארבע מאות; הכל העלה ששבצר, עם העלות הגולה--מבבל,
} לירושלם

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying: 2 'Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD, the God of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whosoever there is among you of all His people--his God be with him--let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD, the God of Israel, He is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.' 5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. 6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with

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vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. {S} 7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; 8 even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 9 And this is the number of them: thirty basins of gold, a thousand basins of silver, nine and twenty knives; {S} 10 thirty bowls of gold, {S} silver bowls of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. {S} 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

So, picture the scene: it's about fifty or seventy years [depending from which exact event you are counting from] after the exile of Am Yisrael from Eretz Yisrael by that evil hovercraft from the Matrix, Nevuchadnetzar.

And, suddenly, along comes Coresh, the Emperor of the mightiest, most powerful empire in the known world, the Barack Obama of his day, sends out a letter throughout his empire and announces:

'Jews, I'm gonna let you go back to Israel, and build the Temple in Jerusalem'.



As simple as that, no shenanigans of not being allowed to build in 'East Jerusalem' or of 'peace treaties' with terrorist organisations etc.

Not only that, but according to Rashi's understanding of pasuk daled, the local peeps were instructed to give the Jews loads of dosh so that even the poorest of Jews would be able to afford the peak season El Al fares.



So what do you think would've or should've happened?

Millions of Jews with loads of overweight baggage as usual cramming into the departures terminal at Tehran International Airport?

However, a look at perek bet of Ezra tells us a different story.

64 The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore,

ט כָּל-הַקְּהָל, כְּאַחַד--אַרְבַּע
רְבֹוא, אֲלָפִים שְׁלֹש-מֵאוֹת
שָׁשִׁים.

Only, just over forty-two thousand of the Jews, a tiny fraction of the Jewish population chose to return to the Land of Israel. The vast majority of the

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Jews chose to continue living their lives in the Galut of Tehran, Shushan, Baghdad, Mosul, Qarbala, Tikrit, London, Manchester, Leeds, Hertfordshire, Caerwys, etc. etc.

What is also interesting is that it seems that many of the returnees were not the 'frummet' of the Jews or the communal leaders. A very large amount of them were from semi-Jewish tribes and from families of dubious descent.



Pause for Thought...

Why would so few people choose to go back? And why would there not be more religious Jews amongst the returnees??

These returnees were led by a small group of leaders amongst them Zrubavel, Nechemya and Mordechai [of Purim story fame]. Ezra [who may have been the same person as the prophet Malachi] himself did not ascend yet to the Land of Israel as he was one of the leaders of the Jews of Bavel and was also learning Torah with his Rebbe, Baruch ben Neriya.

Next, come Tishrei of that year, the people 'assembled as one man' and went up to Yerushalayim to start building the Bet HaMikdash. All was going well until some of the enemies of Am Yisrael decided to stir-up some trouble. They snitch on the Jews to Coresh and say some nasty lies about us building Yerushalayim in order that we can rebel against him. As a result, Coresh halts the construction of the Bet HaMikdash which remains partially built for the next eighteen years.

Fast forward eighteen years, and Daryavesh 2nd [known to non-Jews as Daryavesh 1st], the son of Achashverosh and Esther, is ruling the empire. Hagai and Zecharya, two of the last prophets prophesise to start re-building the Bet HaMikdash - the Jews go ahead and do so. Tatnai, the local governor complains to King Daryavesh about this.

King Daryavesh does some investigating in the royal archives and then replies to Tatnai, telling him to 'Leave them Jews alone'

Foreign Office,

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

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and allow them to build the Bet HaMikdash. He goes on to instruct Tatnai to assist the Jews and give 'em everything they need for the Bet HaMikdash. Daryavesh also says that whoever prevents the Jews from doing so will be hanged from a beam in his house and have his house destroyed. Good news for the Jews. 😊

In some ways this is hardly surprising given that Daryavesh had a Jewish mother So, the Bet HaMikdash was successfully built. Yay! And there was a big opening party in Adar and a Korban Pesach soon followed just under six weeks later.

After these things, Ezra [who according to Gemara in Sanhedrin was great enough to have received the Torah from G-d had Moshe not turned up before him!] moves to Eretz Yisrael together with another bunch of Jews he has brought with him and 'set his heart to expound the Torah of G-d, and to do it and teach in Israel it's statute and law' [7:10]. Ezra puts huge efforts into teaching and spreading Torah throughout the Land of Israel.

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It is not necessary to go on further with the rest of Sefer Ezra, but chapters 7-10 explain in detail, the wonderful work Ezra did in spreading Torah, encouraging teshuva, and admonishing sins in Eretz Yisrael.

So how is this relevant to us as Jews today and perhaps to the State of Israel?

If we take an in-depth look, there is almost a déjà vu. The parallels between the narrative of Sefer Ezra and the narrative of the Jewish return to the Land of Israel in the past century are quite numerous. Let's examine just a few.

Remember Koresh's declaration [see above]. That was a declaration proclaimed by the world's most powerful empire, proclaiming Jewish rights to return and rebuild in Eretz Yisrael.

The Balfour declaration was proclaimed in 1917 by the [then] world's most powerful empire. The British foreign minister proclaimed the British Empire's support in favour of Jewish rights to return and rebuild in Eretz Yisrael.

As we read earlier, after Koresh's declaration, sadly only 42,000 Jews went back, most of Am Yisrael stayed in Galut. After 1917, the vast majority of us did not pack our bags and go home but chose to carry on living in USA, England, Germany, Poland, North Africa etc.

It is sad to note that most of Am Yisrael who have returned to Eretz Yisrael have gone because of 'push' factors, the Kishinev pogroms, the Holocaust, persecution in Arab countries, economic collapse in the former Soviet Union, civil war in Ethiopia etc. The amount of us who have actively chosen to move back to Eretz Yisrael is sadly relatively low.

Nearly 100 years after the revolutionary Balfour Declaration, we still stay in Chutz La'aretz. This took place also in the time of Koresh, and even twenty or so years later when Ezra led another group of Jews up. The Gemara in Ketuvot tells us that:

'When Ezra took them up, not all went along, the majority remained in Bavel' [Ketuvot 25a]

The fact that many religious Jews didn't return back to the Land, even caused friction and dispute amongst some of the greatest Rabbis [just like it does today!]. There is a fascinating story from the Gemara in Yoma [9b]



Resh Lakish [who was from Israel] said to Rabba bar bar Chana [who was from Bavel] "By G-d I hate you, because if you had all ascended together to Eretz Yisrael at the time of Ezra, you would have been compared to silver which doesn't decay" [and the redemption would have therefore been a complete redemption and not a temporary one]

Are you ready for comparison number four?

Those 42,000 [who were later joined by a few more thousand] Jews that did make Aliya were on the whole not the most religious at all. Rav

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Ovadya Sforno writes that G-d complained about the righteous Jews who remained in Bavel, because seeing as only the ones who were sinners came, His Shechina was [so to speak] unable to reside in Eretz Yisrael.

Another commentator, Radak, says as follows:

“Most of the people who ascended from Bavel did improper deeds. They married non-Jewish women, desecrated Shabbat, and sinned in other areas as is written in the Book of Ezra”

Rashi differs with Radak and Sforno and explains that as these otherwise irreligious people were involved in building up the Land of Israel, their involvement in such an important mitzva caused them to be treasured by G-d and thought of as righteous.

[This idea with reference to nowadays is very much promulgated in the writings of Rav Kook and in Rav Teichtal's Em HaBanim Semeicha - highly recommended reading!]

Either way, Rashi, Radak and Sforno are all in agreement that most of the olim chadashim from Bavel were not particularly religious and most of the religious guys sadly stayed in Chutz La'aretz.



How does this parallel with the Zionist movement of the 20th Century? [Think about Herzl, Nordau, Weitzman, Ben Gurion etc.]

How might things have been different if the religious community as a whole made aliya and became a part of the Zionist movement? And why didn't this happen?!



Rav Teichtal was one of the leading Rabbis of Hungary/Slovakia. Like most he was quite anti-zionist. However, during the Holocaust he started to see things differently and while in hiding in Budapest in 1942-3 he wrote the groundbreaking book Em HaBanim Semeicha encouraging Orthodox Jews to actively return to Eretz Yisrael to help build the Land and bring the ultimate redemption. He was later killed in the Holocaust. He writes as follows:

“If the Kings grant us permission to return to our Land, this is the Creator's will. It will develop into what should have developed at the time of Coresh, had all the Jews returned. All we have to do is see to it that everyone returns. Then we will attain our heart's desire, the final redemption, b'ezrat

HaShem”

Rav Teichtal also writes as follows:

“Ever since the beginning of this [the Zionist] movement, the G-d fearing, Orthodox Jews separated themselves from it and opposed it. The simpletons on the other hand took the matter into their own hands and exerted themselves greatly to achieve their goals. They toiled and

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laboured until G-d's desire succeeded through them. Now, **since the G-d fearing Jews kept their distance from this entire undertaking, is it surprising that the building was accomplished with a free [non-religious] spirit? Had we all co-operated from the very beginning, an abounding spirit of Torah and devotion would undoubtedly have pervaded the Land.** Now that the simpletons have already established a fine settlement, it is obvious that they are the lords of the Land, for it is the fruit of their labour.....Therefore the G-d fearing Jews must not withdraw from their building effort. **On the contrary they have a sacred obligation to contribute, from now on, to this holy endeavour and untie all of the forces.** They must accompany the initial builders in this lofty endeavour, in order to elevate it higher and higher.....When these simpletons see that we, the Orthodox Jews, do not reject them and that we want to work together with them, they will come closer to us and improve their ways.”

Rav Kook also encouraged and pushed the ‘frummer yidden’ to come and get involved in the building up of the State and suggested that if they did, then their actions would positively influence the Religious make-up of the State.

The fifth and final comparison I wish to look at takes us to the second half of Ezra. Though Ezra was quite successful in [albeit temporarily] stopping some of these practices, intermarriage, desecration of Shabbat [see end of Nechemya] and other major religious problems were a serious issue amongst those who had returned to the Land.

*What can you see about society in the ‘State of Israel’ in the time of Ezra that is **similar** to society in the State of Israel today?*

*How **different** might it have been if the **religious Jews** all came back from Bavel also?*

*How **different** would it be **today** if the **religious Jews** had all come back to Eretz Yisrael in the pre-state years?*

Are there any other relevant parallels between Sefer Ezra and nowadays which you can think of?

In summary:

Get over to the chanichim the important narrative of what happened in the time of Ezra.

Emphasise the **important parallels** between the goings on in the time of Ezra and the goings on in **our times** and in the past century.

Get the chanichim to discuss and debate:

To what extent are their **parallels** between The **Koresh declaration** and the **Balfour declaration**?

To what extent are their **parallels** between the **response** of the majority of **Am Yisrael** to the Koresh declaration and the **response** of the majority of **Am Yisrael** to the Balfour declaration [and to other events leading towards the establishment of the State of Israel]?

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To what extent are their **parallels** between the dispute between the Rabbanim in the Gemara above and similar **disputes between Rabbis today** regarding similar issues?

To what extent are their **parallels** between the **response** and actions of **religious Jews** in the time of Ezra and during the 20th century and **nowadays**?

How **different** may things have been had **religious Jews** taken a more **positive attitude** both in the time of Ezra and in the 20th Century and nowadays?

To what extent are their **parallels** between the **religious observance** of general society in Eretz Yisrael in the time of Ezra and nowadays?

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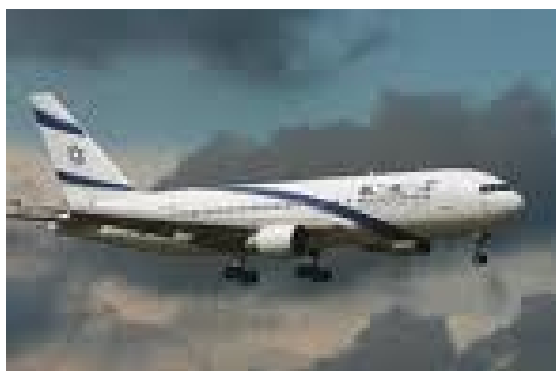
If despite all of the problems of most of Am Yisrael, and most religious Jews not joining in and returning to the Land, and the problems of most of the returnees not being religious, the return to Israel was still considered good enough to be considered 'an end of exile' and could've been the beginning of the final Geula [had it not been destroyed by the Romans a few hundred years later], what may this tell us about the State of Israel today?

Consider - The Sefer Ezra/Nechemia is not in Neviim but instead Ketuvim.

- It took place after Nevuah had ceased to be amongst the Jewish People, although Ezra and Nechemiah still had incredible Ruach Hakodesh.

So why are we including this Sefer at all if it is Ketuvim? Think back over what we have discussed - try and incorporate these messages into your Tochinitot and Kvutsot.

How can we use Ezra as a way of concluding what we have discussed and learnt from the other K's? how does it link the Sefarim?



K10: Sikkum

Aleph Chalutzi Machane 5775



Aims:

1. To look back over the past 10 K's
2. To see the whole of machane as a journey
3. To really understand what B'lkvot Avoteinu means for us as Bnei Akiva
4. Leave on a positive

K1 - Walking Be'ikvot Avoteinu

So it's going to be the final Kvutseh and as well as playing all your favourite games, giving them extra grub and writing notes to each other - it would be good to spend some time chazaring (a Yeshivish word for 'going over') what we have learnt over the past two weeks, consolidating all the many different personalities that we have encountered in our journey through Tanach and understanding where we have reached in our tour of Jewish history.

With anything that we learn, it is always important to do chazarah. Machane, though the most important aspect is having fun - it is still an intense learning environment, our aim is that our chanichim will learn more in two weeks than they have done all year. Often, however, we do not realise how much we have learnt. Through looking back at what we have done, we can see how much we have learnt, reinforce it so we do not forget it and also gain a unique perspective of Tanach as a whole.

We have gone through Nach starting with Yehoshua taking over the reigns from Moshe and leading the Bnei Yisrael in to Eretz Yisrael, right up until Ezra, we have tried, throughout machane to meet and learn from as many different characters as possible within the short time we have. But the journey does not end here. For us, the destruction of Bayit Sheini was really only the beginning of this story. Our story of how we got to where we are today, this field in Caerwys, a religious Zionist youth movement, is all part of what happens next and our chanichim will spend the rest of their Summer machanot learning about this. Until next Summer, however, what are the messages we can take with us?

K2 - Yehoshua, K3 - Shoftim, K4 - Melachim, K5 - Shaul and David, K6 - Shlomo, K7 - End of kingdoms, K8 - Prophets, K9 - Esther.

Firstly, we should look over all the different messages that we have learnt from the different characters we have looked at...

K10 Ezra, **Can you list at least one different message we got from each of these things?**

Make sure you can, because, if you can't your chanichim won't be able to either!

As we said back in K0.5:

"Like we do right here on machane, the Tanach doesn't educate us by giving us a long list of rules, but rather teaches us through role models to be role models! Yes, we have all the mitzvot that appear in commandment form in the Torah, but first and foremost comes the stories of our ancestors and their deeds, from the good qualities to their not so good qualities, through walking in their footsteps and following the example they led for us we see how we should live our lives as Jews."

We learn how we should live our lives as Jews by learning of the footsteps of our fathers and following them and by looking at their journey into Israel and the times of the 1st/2nd Beit hamikdashim. This does not mean copying their every action but internalising properly the messages that they show us and applying them to our own lives.

K1 - Walking Be'ikvot Avoteinu

In what situations in our everyday life do the messages of the people we have learnt about become practical?

K1 - Walking Be'ikvot Avoteinu

The above question seems slightly strange, a bit broad, and that's because the answer should be - like we have said, the reason why we get so many details of the lives of the The Neviim is so that we know how they brought their Avodat HaShem into every facet of their lives especially meaningful to us as Bnei Akiva.

For the past two weeks (three weeks for us) our chanichim have been eating, sleeping and living in a small microcosm of the world that we have created, a world based on the ideals of Bnei Akiva, and before us - the period of Nach. Torah V'Avodah is not just the message of Bnei Akiva - it is the message of our Avot,, Nevvim, Melachim and Shoftim, Yehoshua who fought for Eretz Yisrael whilst ensuring he left time to learn Torah, all of our ancestors lived Torah all day every day - this is the meaning of Torah V'Avodah - nothing in this world is mundane and we have the power to elevate it to a higher level, to sanctify it just as our Avot did. The Tanach tells the story of Am Yisrael B'Eretz Yisrael Al Pi Torat Yisrael, it is our instruction book - it tells us how we can achieve that goal and how we can fail - and ultimately, Aleph Chalutzi has shown us that if we follow in the footsteps of our fathers, we can achieve this ideal - to bring Am Yisrael to be in Eretz Yisrael according to the Torah of Israel.

Ha'am Ba'aratz is not just a theme for this machane - it is a message for life, lets make this K go out with a bang!