

SEPHARDIC COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

# QOL HA-QAHAL

# קול הקהל



Issue 34: Yom Yerushalyim  
IN HONOR OF ALICE AND VICTOR TAWIL



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# QOL HA-QAHAL MISSION

To promote Torah throughout our community  
by providing a platform for our rabbis, lay members, students and institutions.

## CONTENTS

<i>Yerushalyim: Are we Living the Dream of our Destiny?</i> Rabbi Moshe Tessone ...	4
<i>Parashat Be-Huqotai'- Maimonides on 'Torah u-Mada'</i> Rabbi Jack Varon ....	6
<i>A Phenomenon Called Israel</i> Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo .....	8
<i>Sephardim: Natural Born Zionists</i> Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie .....	10
<i>Letter to the Editor</i> Mr. Sam Shamah .....	12
<i>Syrian Jewry in Transition, 1840-1880</i> Professor Yaron Harel .....	13
<i>Food From Heaven</i> Mr. Al Azar .....	14
<i>My Israel Experience on Campus</i> Mrs. Irene Mamiye .....	18
<i>Maqam of the Week</i> .....	19
<i>Qaddish, Mourners, and the Halabi Tradition</i> Mr. Morris Arking .....	20
<i>Rabbi Shelomo Oliveyra and the Importance of Learning Hebrew</i> Rabbi Yosef Bitton .....	22
<i>Torah and Science: Friend or Foe</i> Mr. Harold Shamah .....	24
<i>Q&amp;A with Professor Schroeder and the MDYHS Faculty</i> .....	27
<i>Shabbat-Table Talks: Bemidar</i> Rabbi Ralph Tawil .....	28
<i>Never Forget Our Noble Heritage</i> Mr. Sheldon N. Goldman .....	30

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# THOUGHTS ON ISRAEL

## YERUSHALYIM: ARE WE LIVING THE DREAM OF OUR DESTINY?

Rabbi Moshe Tessone

*Dedicated in memory of my father Yaakov ben Rosa a"h who served in the IDF in 1948 and in honor and tribute to our brave soldiers in the IDF who strengthen the Jewish people all over the world by protecting our homeland.*

In November of 1947 the United Nations had voted and passed a motion for the creation of an independent Jewish State. On that very day my late father, Jack (Yaakov) a"h, was a young 17 year old soldier in the Hagganah on duty in the Old City of Jerusalem. He was told by his commanding officer to go home and get his supplies and notify his family that he may be stationed indefinitely at a particular strategic location near the old city. Quite clearly during the weeks and days where the UN was dealing with the issue of Jewish sovereignty, the political and military tensions were building up in Jerusalem and precautions were being taken to avert any surprise attacks. During the hour that my father went home his replacement was taken prisoner by local Arabs. Quite fortunately and with the good graces of *Boreh Olam* the young soldier who replaced my father's post was released 9 months later.

Naturally this is one of a handful of amazing stories which has become part of the folklore in our family. What seems to be a simple war time story really has more than meets the eye.

The Jews who just happen to be living in Jerusalem or Israel for that matter during that heroic period in our collective history went through trials and tribulations that to us today seem unimaginable and unheard of. We know so little about the immense sacrifices that were being made by our people during those months and years when bold steps were taken to establish the state that we all enjoy today.

What is so remarkable is that the generation preceding that of my father, (I refer to those that settled the land in the late 1800's and early 1900's) were perhaps barely able to conceive of the notion that it would be the next generation, that of their children who fought the enemies head on and established the



foundation which ultimately led to the formation of the Jewish state and the reclamation of Jerusalem.

The generation of my father saw themselves not as victims of history but rather as opportunists of Jewish sovereignty. They did not shun the responsibility thrust upon them but rather embraced it and turned it into the successful enterprise called Israel.

It was only 20 years later that Jerusalem and the temple mount was restored to the original deed holders in June of 1967. The historic and joyful words "*Har-Habayit b'yadenu*" (the Temple Mount is in our hands) where echoed and repeated throughout the chain of command of the IDF and the Israeli citizens. It is for this miracle that we celebrate *Yom Yerushalayim*-the reunification of Jerusalem under Jewish sovereignty.

In July of 1967 in a letter written by **Rabbi Yosef Soloveitchik**, shortly after the passing of his wife, he wrote: "indeed I sinned against the Holy Land. I am among those who have fallen back (in not coming to the Holy Land)." He went on to explain that the dark emotional state he experienced as a result of his wife's passing hindered his ability to approach Jerusalem in the manner he would have liked to. He explained:



“how can I now go up to Jerusalem, while I am despondent and embittered. The inspiration does not rest in a state of depression, sadness and pain.” In spite of all these points, Rabbi Soloveichik explains that the blame is his for not connecting to Jerusalem in the manner that he would have aspired to when he writes: “I am guilty, and the blame rests on my shoulders...” Herein Rav Soloveitchik echoes the sentiment of the renowned Sephardic poet and sage **Rabbi Yehuda Halevy**, “*libi ba’ mizrah, v’ anokhi b’sof ma’arav.*”

In contrast, **Ramban** wrote of the immense personal emotional difficulty he endured in leaving his family and children in Spain, in order to move to the Holy Land during the final years of his life. But in spite of that he overcame those sentiments and made Aliyah at the age of 70, in the year 1267 under conditions that were bitterly difficult only to arrive at a land that was desolate and view the city of Jerusalem in ruins. In spite of what he saw, Ramban encouraged the revitalization of synagogues and Torah institutions in Jerusalem and the environs of Judea inside a homeland that was practically devoid spiritually and perhaps even more barren physically. Unfortunately, Ramban’s impact was short lived as he passed only 3 short years after arriving in the Holy land.

As we celebrate the 49th year of reclaiming Jerusalem, it is utterly amazing to think that just 50 short years ago our claims to an Israeli and Jewish national mandate over the old city were still just a dream perhaps far off on the horizon of Jewish history. And indeed that dream has endured in the midst of our collective Jewish consciousness for more than two millennia and it has in our day become no longer a dream, but a reality that is today’s bustling metropolis, our very own modern day Jerusalem.

Indeed, we are the fortunate generation of Jews who are born into a world of Jewish national independence and a reunified Jerusalem, a reality to us that has been the literal fantasy of our grandparents and every generation that preceded them since the era when the extended Jewish diaspora began after the destruction of our holy Temple.

**Rabbi Yosef Soloveitchik** never moved to Israel, and the Ramban made it to the Holy land but never saw a homeland

thriving (as it is today) and the holy city of Jerusalem shining. Perhaps we can be inspired and learn from those words of longing expressed by Rabbi Soloveitchik and Rabbi Yehuda Halevy. We have the opportunity to see, enjoy, and live in a prosperous Jerusalem that the Rav could not bring himself to live in, and that the Ramban could only imagine.

We must now build on the victories of 1947, 1948, and 1967 by connecting ourselves to Jerusalem in more permanent

ways, both in terms of our individual and family involvement and in terms of our efforts as a united community of Sephardic Jews. Our poetry and *pizmonem* are replete with references and expressions of longing and admiration for Jerusalem, for Zion, and for the rebuilding of the Temple. Our prayers recall and reflect on the centrality of Jerusalem and convey the urgency to see it speedily rebuilt in our days. The book of *Tehillim* speaks of the eternal light of Torah that emanates from the holy city, and of the city’s power to bring together

Jews from all denominations and cultural backgrounds into one magnificent golden melting pot. Indeed the *pasuk* expressing (*Tehillim* 122:2) “*Yerushalayim...k’ir sh’huberah lah yahdav*” “*Jerusalem...a city that is bound firmly together.*”, articulates the power of uniting and combining a scattered devoted people around one local address, a city that is our shared spiritual and physical destiny.

Now the time has come for us to realize that everything that we and our ancestors have sung about and **everything we and our ancestors have prayed for is ripe and ready to welcome us with open arms.** The hard work has been done, the red carpet has been laid out, it is up to us as individuals and as a community to attach ourselves in a more permanent and more meaningful ways to the Jerusalem that our forefathers never saw but longed for, prayed for, and fought for. Their dreams and aspirations can only manifest through our generation and that of our children, by breathing the air of Jerusalem, by walking the streets of Jerusalem, and by connecting our lives and our future to Jerusalem.



*Jerusalem Mountains*

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# PARASHAT BEHUQOTAI

## MAIMONIDES ON 'TORAH U-MADA'

Rabbi Jack Varon

**P**arashat Behuqotai begins with a galvanizing description of the *berakhot* that we will merit if we keep the *misvot* and *huqot* (sin. *hoq*; also appears in the plural form as '*huqim*') outlined in the Torah. *Huqot* makes reference to a genre of *misvot* whose reasoning is difficult to discern. The famed sacrificial procedure of "*parah-adumah*" or "red-heifer" is the paradigmatic example of a *hoq*; as it is not easy to decipher the *ta'am* (the *ta'am* of a *misva* is the reason why we perform a given *misva* – see next paragraph) of some of the halakhic intricacies when carrying out the process of *parah-adumah*.

from Maimonides to teach him a deeper understanding of the Torah and the *misvot*, Maimonides responded by telling him that in addition to learning *Tanakh* and *Talmud* he must also study logic, math and science.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the Guide is filled with analysis that takes the historical context of an event into account in order to ameliorate any perplexities regarding the issue at hand. To illustrate, the reason why there is a prohibition to use honey or yeast in sacrifices, is due to the fact that pagan cultures during biblical times specifically used honey and yeasts in their sacrificial procedure.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the Torah prohibits the latter

*"Maimonides accepted Aristotelian-physics, which was the leading science during the 12th-13th centuries, but not his Metaphysics."*

Maimonides dedicates the last thirty chapters of his Guide for the Perplexed to outlining the rational reasons behind the performance of the *misvot* known as "*Ta'ame ha-misvot*"; including an explanation for the iconic *hoq parah-adumah*. To illustrate, the reasoning behind *misvot* like the *seder*, or celebrating holidays like *Shabu'ot* and *Purim* - are easily discernable and apparent to most; commemorating monumental events in Jewish History and transmitting the lessons of those historical events to the next generation. Moreover, the prohibition of work on those days presents us with ample time to spend with our families. The *misva* of reciting *berakhot* also serves to help define the demarcations of the latter class of *misvot*; the purpose we are obliged to recite *berakhot* many times throughout the day are for us to remember God throughout our day, consequently we will become more aware or conscious of His providence in our daily lives.<sup>1</sup>

According to Maimonides, rational thinking, logic, and sometimes even just some common sense weld together to create a platform of ideas, a perspective, which potentially can decipher the reasoning behind all the *misvot*. It is for this reason that when Maimonides' student, Joseph ibn A'knin, requested

and specifically instructs us to use salt on our *qorbanot*. Thereby establishing a stark contrast of cultures.

The same reasoning applies to the prohibition of milk and meat; during biblical times it was prevalent amongst *ovde avodah* - *zara* (idol worshippers) to cook milk and meat together as part of their worship. Therefore in order to establish a stark demarcation between cultures the Torah prohibited cooking milk and meat together.<sup>4</sup> Other foods were prohibited and deemed non-kosher because the Torah wants us to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Accordingly, Maimonides points out the reason why ham is *asur* is because it has a high concentration of fat in comparison to other types of proteins and is therefore unhealthy.<sup>5</sup> Another reason behind the prohibition of ham is that during biblical times animals were raised on a family's personal property and pigs did not meet the standards of cleanliness set by the Torah. Similarly, *halakhah* holds high standards of cleanliness for a person's clothing. As is reflected in the *halakhah* that a rabbinic scholar (who has a responsibility

<sup>2</sup> See Maimonides, *Introduction to Guide to the Perplexed*

<sup>3</sup> See Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed, Part III, Chap. 46*

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, Chap. 48

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Berakhot 1:3*

to represent Torah values) who has a stain on his clothing - commits a grave sin.<sup>6</sup> The *Halakha* goes on to say that, “The clothing of a rabbinic scholar should not be flamboyant- but nice/neat and clean.”<sup>7</sup>

Although it is evident from the previous paragraphs that Maimonides was outspoken on the idea of “*Torah u-Mada*,” that is integrating rational thinking into Torah scholarship, he also warns his readers, “*hokhma bagoyim ta’amin- Torah bagoyim al ta’amin*.”<sup>8</sup> Which translates to: [If you are told that there is] wisdom/ science amongst the *goyim*- you should accept it as true, [If you are told that there is] theological knowledge amongst the *goyim* – you should not accept it as true. It is for this reason that Maimonides accepted Aristotelian-physics, which was the leading science during the 12th-13th centuries, but not his Metaphysics. Meaning although he accepted science that was verified through experimentation, he rejected Aristotle’s speculative claims on metaphysics; in other words he rejected anything Aristotle divulged on theology. The same follows today, one should be well informed on modern academic issues

*History* -which describes the political interactions between governments and their people - all of whom were created by God. The point being that the *hakhamim* were of the opinion that all facets of knowledge are integral to the study of Torah/ tree of life and branch from it. Maimonides also compares the universe to a book - authored by the one Creator; we just need to know how to relate one chapter with the next. Even when they may seem disparate when we take our first glance at them.

As mentioned above, *Parashat Behuqotai* opens up with an inspirationally charged passage describing all the *berakhot* that we can potentially receive if we keep the *misvot*. The first *berakhah* mentioned is financial prosperity and sustenance, as *pasuq* 26:4 states, “I will provide rain in their appropriate time and the trees of the field will yield fruits.” The *berakhot* continue to describe safe neighborhoods and a safe state/country, as *pasuq* 26:5 states, “And [you] will dwell safely.” Once our physical needs are met the *berakhot* begin to describe spiritual blessings, as *pasuq* 26:12 states, “And I [God] will walk among you and be your God and you will be my people.”

*“...when we look at our schools and synagogues it is hard not to see the spiritual and intellectual growth that surrounds us all.”*

in order to have the ability to discern between truth and what is presented as the latter. Math and logic are also important to study because they sharpen the mind and help one understand the deeper sense of *midrashim* and complicated passages in the *Tanakh*; the *neve’em* and *hakhamim* hid the pulp of esoteric knowledge under many layers of peel, such as parables and similes, in the *Tanakh* and *midrashim* respectively.<sup>9</sup>

In the book of *Qohelet* (12:11), *Shelomo ha-Melekh* refers to the *hakhamim* as ‘*Ba’ale Asupot*’, which translates to those who ‘Aggregate all facets of knowledge’ that branch off the ‘tree of life’ - which is a direct reference to the Torah itself. As the well known *pasuq* in Proverbs (3:18) states, “The Torah is the tree of life.” Since *Hazal* believed in the one God who created everything that exists, they believed that all facets of knowledge, any academic endeavor, describe God’s creations; to illustrate: *Biology* – describes the physical world created by God, *Psychology*- studies the minds of man, which was also created by God and

The *pesuqim* also give us a lot to look forward to by alluding to *Yemot hamashiah* (Messianic Era) and the rebuilding of the *Bet hamiqdash*, as *pasuq* 26:8-9 states:

Your enemies will fall before you. And I will bestow my divine providence upon you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you; and will establish my covenant with you.

It brings a smile to our faces when we go through these blessings, because while we are reading them we realize that *Hashem* already has and continues to bless us with sustenance, safety and prosperity. Moreover, when we look at our schools and synagogues it is hard not to see the spiritual and intellectual growth that surrounds us all. *Be’ezrat Hashem* that we should all see it continue to grow and we should all merit the second part of the blessings referencing the Messianic Era.

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<sup>6</sup> See *Maimonides, Hilkhos De’ot, Chapter five*

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> See *Ekhah Rabbah, 2:13*

<sup>9</sup> See *Maimonides, Introduction to the Guide to the Perplexed*



# A PHENOMENON CALLED ISRAEL

Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo

Throughout the centuries, historians, philosophers, and anthropologists have struggled with the notion called “Israel” more than with nearly any other topic. While attempting to place Israel within the confines of conventional history, they experienced constant academic and philosophical frustration. Any definitions they suggested eventually broke down due to serious inconsistencies. Was

faced moments of insecurity, it is the Jews who have been denied even the smallest share of the dubious security that others possess. Whether Jews were aware of it or not, they always lived on ground that could, at any moment, give way beneath their feet.

In 1948, Israel once again became a country. But

*“In Israel, history and revelation are one.”*

Israel a nation, a religion, or an altogether mysterious entity which would forever remain unexplainable? By some it was seen less as a nation and more as a religion; others believed the reverse to be true. And there were those who claimed that it could not fit into either of these categories.

It was clear to everyone, though, that “Israel” did not fit into any specific definition or known scheme. It resisted all historical concepts and generalities. Its uniqueness thwarted people’s natural desire for an explanation, since explanation generally implies arrangement in categories. Anything that flies in the face of such an attempt is alarming and terribly disturbing. This fact became even more obvious once Titus the Roman forced the Jews out of their country, and specifically after the collapse of the Bar Kochba rebellion. It was at that moment that the Jew was hurled into the abyss of the nations of the world. Since then, the Jew has been confronted with a new condition: ongoing insecurity. While mankind has always

many forgot that while it became a country once more, it was not only a country. All the other dimensions, such as nationhood, religion, mystery, the lack of definition, and insecurity continued to exist. Today, the people of Israel do not find themselves exclusively in the land of Israel, and instead of one Israel, the world now has two. But the second, new Israel, has until now been seen as responding to the demands of history, geography, politics, and journalism. One knows where it is or at least one thinks that one knows where it is. But it becomes clearer and clearer that this new and definable Israel is now seriously on the way to becoming as much a puzzle and mysterious entity as the old Israel always was. In fact, it already is.

Throughout its short history, the State of Israel has gone through the most mysterious events modern man has ever seen. After an exile of nearly two thousand years, during which the old Israel was able to survive in contradiction to all historical criteria, it returned to its homeland. There it found itself surrounded by a massive



Arab population that was, and is, incapable of making peace with the idea that this small mysterious nation lives among them. After having experienced a Holocaust in which it lost six million of its members, it was not permitted to live a life of tranquility on its tiny piece of land. Once again, the Jew was denied the right to feel at home in his own country. From the outset, Israel was forced to fight its enemies on all fronts. It was attacked and condemned for defending its population and fighting for its very existence.

Over the years it had to endure the international community's policy of double standards. Today, as in the

meaning of this otherwise negative phenomenon – the way of faith. From any other viewpoint, the inability of Jews to fit into any category would be intolerable and a meaningless absurdity. What we need to understand is that the Jews' inability to fit into any category is the foundation and meaning of their living avowal of Israel's uniqueness. Israel's very existence is the manifestation of divine intervention in history to which Israel must attest. In Israel, history and revelation are one. Only in Israel do they coincide. While other nations exist as nations, the people of Israel exist as a reminder of God's involvement in world history. Only in Israel is humanity touched by the divine.

### *“Israel was summoned to remind the world of God's existence...”*

past, when it calls for peace it is condemned for creating war. When it tries as no other nation to avoid hurting the citizens of the countries that declared war on it, it is told that it is more brutal than nations that committed, and still commit, atrocities against millions of people. Simultaneously and against all logic, this nation builds its country as no other has done, while fighting war after war. What took other nations hundreds of years, it accomplished in only a few.

While bombs and *katyushas* attack its cities, and calls for its total destruction are heard in many parts of the world, it continues to increase its population, generate unprecedented technology and create a stronger and more stable economy. But the more it succeeds, the more its enemies become frustrated and irritated, and the more dubious Israel's security becomes. The more some nations aspire to destroy it, the more the world is forced to deal with this small people and its survival capacity. By now, its news occupies more space in major newspapers than any other political issue or general topic - as if to say that its dubious security and irritating population are at the center of world history.

Jews must ask themselves what this non-classification really signifies. Is it due merely to lack of vision and insight on the part of the nations? Is it that Jews could really fit into a system but the nations have not yet allowed them entry? Is it a negative phenomenon? A temporary one, until it will rectify itself in the future?

We have only one way to comprehend the positive

The realization of this fact has become modern Israel's great challenge. Its repeated attempts to overcome its geographic and political insecurity by employing world politics will not work. Driven by its desire to overcome its insecurity, it wavers from geography to nationhood, appealing to its history and religious culture while unable to find a place that it can call its existential habitat.

Reading Israel's prophets, we see how they warned against such false notions of security. They predicted that Israel would perish if it would insist on existing only as a political structure. Yet it can survive – and this is the paradox of the reality of Israel – as long as it insists on its vocation of uniqueness.

Israel was summoned to remind the world of God's existence, not only concerning religion but as a historical reality. *There is no security for Israel unless it is secure in its own destiny.* It must assume the burden of its own uniqueness which is nothing other than to assume its role as God's witness. And it must draw strength from this phenomenon, especially in times such as ours when Israel's very existence is again at stake. Once it recognizes its uniqueness, it will – paradoxically – enjoy security and undoubtedly be victorious.

*Rabbi Dr. Cardozo is a prominent lecturer and author who is world renowned for his highly original insights into Judaism and his ability to communicate the relevance of Jewish values and practice in today's complicated world.*

# SEPHARDIM: NATURAL BORN ZIONISTS

*Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie*

With regard to Zionism and the Sephardic community, one unfortunate myth of modern Zionism is still widely believed. Many believe - falsely - that there is an absence of Sephardic participation in the Zionist dream.

We read the history of the appearance of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century without any mention of the Sephardi contribution or participation. To ignore (as it is usually done by the general Jewish world when it comes to Sephardi history, culture and halakhic responsa) the input made by Sephardi Jews to the return to Zion is a grave injustice, not only to us as Sephardim, but also to Jewish history itself. The Sephardi involvement in preserving the longings for Zion and Jerusalem, throughout the many centuries of Jewish exile is undeniable, even though it has gone largely unrecognized.

In fact, Sephardim were always Zionist in the sense that many of them had lived in the Holy Land for centuries while many continued to migrate there from Spain and other Arab countries over the past 1,000 years. Maimonides, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi (whose poem "My heart is in the east" still echoes today), Rabbi Moshe Ben Nahman (Ramban/Nahmanides), all the Sephardic Mystics and Jewish Law codifiers of the 16th century creating the famous colony of Safed (Sefat) are but a few examples of Sephardic Zionists. The relationship of the Sephardim with the land of Israel, unlike those of other Jews, was personal, religious, long standing, and concrete. This special relationship can be appreciated when one sees pictures and films of Sephardic and Jews from Arab countries as they arrived to Israel, before and after its establishment. How they embraced, prostrated and kissed the land. How they shed tears of happiness believing that it was the ultimate redemption that they were experiencing.

It should be noted that Sephardim made up the majority of the Jewish population of the Holy Land at all times, even today.

The institution of Rishon Le'Sion, Chief Rabbi of Israel, is a Sephardic tradition in the land of Israel for the last three centuries. This is when the Sephardic Sages, who immigrated



from Spain and the Ottoman Empire to the Land of Israel, instituted the re-establishment of Rabbinic Ordination.

Fifty years prior to Theodore Herzl's call to the Jewish people to return to Zion, Sephardic leaders such as Rabbi Yehuda Bibas, a native of Gibraltar and Rabbi Yehuda Alkalay from Sarajevo, had envisioned and spoke about establishing a national Jewish Homeland in the Holy Land. Both were seeing the nationalism that was sweeping throughout Greece to free itself from the Ottoman Empire and proposed the creation of Jewish settlements in the Holy Land in the 1830s, in preparation for national redemption. Rabbi Alkalay understood that the relocation of a large number of people in a barren land would require the development of a modern economy and infrastructure. He appealed to European Jews for assistance, proposing such organizations as a Jewish National Fund, in order to purchase lands in Israel, develop land and resettle the Jewish community there. He traveled extensively for support to publicize his ideas. He earned many supporters, including Theodore Herzl's own grandfather Simon Loeb Herzl, one of Rabbi Alkalay's close congregants and most devoted followers. It is believed that Theodore Herzl nursed his first Zionist ideas from the writings of Rabbi Alkalay through Herzl's grandfather. Through his writings, preaching, and activities, Rabbi Alkalay together with Rabbi Yehuda Bibas, were the original fathers of the political Modern Zionist movement



later organized by Herzl. While their names may not be known to most Israelis, including Israeli politicians, these Sephardic rabbis' legacy laid the groundwork for the modern rebirth of the State of Israel.

In 1834, Rabbi Alkalay issued a booklet named *Shema Yisrael* (Hear, O Israel), proposing something, considered radical and unheard of at that time: to create Jewish colonies in the land of Israel as a prelude to national redemption. This concept ran contrary to Jewish belief, among European Jewry; the very religious observant Jews as much as the secular and Reformed Jews. The religiously observant Jews primarily believed that Jews should wait passively for Messianic deliverance. The Reformed secular Jews no longer believed in a redemption of the Jews with the Holy Land as a place for the destiny of the Jewish People.

In his 1845 work *Minhat Yehudah*, Rabbi Alkalay wrote, "our land is waste and desolate, and we shall have to build houses, dig wells, and plant vines and olive trees." "Redemption," he wrote, "must come slowly. The land must, by degrees, be built up and prepared." Rabbi Alkalay suggested the convoking of a "Great Assembly" to administer Jewish national affairs, and an intensifying of efforts to revive Hebrew as a spoken language.



*Rabbi Yehuda Alkalay*

In 1874, at the age of 76, Rabbi Alkalay and his wife made aliya, settling in Jerusalem to fulfill his life-long dream.

The first colony in Jerusalem, outside its walls, was established by the Sephardic philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore, and was known as "Yemin Moshe," which he named after himself in 1880.

In contrast to their European colleagues, Sephardic Rabbis and Sephardic lay leaders tended to be supportive of Zionism from the outset, and were the first to embrace the idea of an independent state for the Jews and its religious significance. For example, the Rishon Le'Sion (Sephardic Chief Rabbi) Rabbi Yisshak Nissim writes in his *Compendium of Laws* that all customs of mourning are canceled on Yom Ha'asmaut.

For Sephardic Rabbis the Zionist movement was a natural form of expression of Judaism. They had been emigrating to the Holy Land for centuries, if not a millennium. Their special intermingling of mystical messianism, halakhic imperative of commandments dependent on the Land of Israel, and historic sentiment was fervent, whether in Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Greece, Libya, or Bulgaria. Once the opportunity to join the Jewish State was real, almost the entire Sephardic world rose up to the occasion of returning to Zion. Once

***"Rabbi Alkalay and his wife made aliya, settling in Jerusalem to fulfill his life-long dream."***

Rabbi Alkalay was especially upset with certain rabbis in Europe and America who renounced the historic connection between Jews and the Holy Land. Now, as much as then, Sephardic Zionism is and was revolutionary but authentic, precisely because it combined Jewish political activism with traditional Judaism based on Torah principles. By contrast, the ideology at the time of the Socialist Zionism of Europe required that Jews find redemption by abandoning their religion, and adapting and adopting Socialist principles to their Zionist ideals. Consequently, it was Rabbi Alkalay's Zionism that tended to resonate with traditional leadership rather than encourage a group of parties and organizations.

the state was established, almost one million Sephardic and Jews of Arab lands immigrated to Israel, thereby fulfilling two millennia of prayers and dreams, all while having to leave behind their possessions, wealth, culture, and ethnic identity.

*Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie is the Rabbi of the Edmond J. Safra Synagogue in New York City, and Director of the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies at Yeshiva University.*



# LETTER THE EDITOR

Throughout my three years at Baruch College, the school has been extremely accommodating to Jewish culture and the Jewish calendar. Firstly, every day at 3:50 there is a room designated for minha, where we get a usual crowd of 30 people. On Mondays, there is a classroom reserved for the Hillel to speak about Israeli news and serve kosher pizza. Regarding the Jewish calendar, Baruch has done an excellent job trying to make life easier for those who observe Jewish holidays. For example, spring break is always set for the week of Passover. While many colleges were off during the end of March for spring break this year, Baruch's spring break was from April 22nd – 30th. This year, like many other years, there are no classes scheduled during Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur. Sometimes they cannot give you off every Jewish holiday, for example, this year Shabuot Monday there are summer classes in session. I have found in my experience that professors will not penalize you for missing class for religious reasons, and will even give extensions on deadlines if you make a reasonable case. I am not familiar with every other New York College academic calendar, but I can tell you that Baruch is certainly on the helpful side.

*Mr. Shamah is a graduating senior at Baruch College.*



*Baruch College Campus, New York, NY*

The SCA would like to thank  
**MR. VICTOR DWECK**  
for his tireless efforts in running  
our social media campaigns.



# BOOK REVIEW

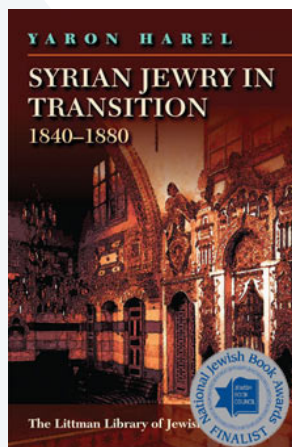
## SYRIAN JEWRY IN TRANSITION, 1840–1880<sup>1</sup>

Professor Yaron Harel (Translated by Dena Ordan)

Detailed and compelling, this pioneering study of Syria's key Jewish communities at an important juncture in their history covers Jewish community life, the legal status of Jews in Syria, their relationship with their Muslim and Christian neighbors, and their links with the West. Drawing on a wide range of archival material in six languages, it brings to light an enormous amount of material and provides a broad, multifaceted perspective on Jewish life in Syria.

This pioneering study offers a comprehensive account of Syria's key Jewish communities at an important juncture in their history that also throws light on the broader effects of modernization in the Ottoman empire.

The Ottoman reforms of the mid-nineteenth century accelerated the process of opening up Syria to European travelers and traders, and gave Syria's Jews access to European Jewish communities. The resulting influx of Western ideas led to a decline in the traditional economy, with serious consequences for the Jewish occupational structure. It also allowed for the introduction of Western education, through schools run by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which influenced the structure and the administration of Jewish society in Syria, and changed the balance of the relationship between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Initially Syria's Jewish communities flourished economically and politically in these new circumstances, but there was a developing recognition that their future lay overseas. After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the bankruptcy of the Ottoman empire in 1875, and the suspension of the Ottoman constitution in 1878, this



feeling intensified. A process of decline set in that ultimately culminated in large-scale Jewish emigration, first to Egypt and then to the West. From that point on, the future for Syrian Jews lay in the West, not the East.

Detailed and compelling, this book covers Jewish communal life, the legal status of Jews in Syria, their relationship with their Muslim and Christian neighbors, and their links with the West. It draws on a wide range of archival material in six languages, including Jewish, Christian Arab, and Muslim Arab sources, Ottoman and European documents, consular reports, travel accounts, and reports from the contemporary press and by emissaries to Syria of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Rabbinic sources, including the archive of the chief rabbinate in Istanbul, are particularly important in opening a window onto Syrian Jewish life and concerns. Together these sources bring to light an enormous amount of material and provide a broad, multifaceted perspective on the Syrian Jewish community.

*Professor Harel is Professor of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University. His contribution to the field of Oriental Jewish history, especially in Syria, has been recognized in a series of awards, including the Aminoah Prize (2000), the Ben-Zvi Prize for Research in Oriental Jewry (2004), and the Zalman Shazar Prize for Research in Jewish History (2009), the latter for the Hebrew edition of his book, Intrigue and Revolution: Chief Rabbis in Aleppo, Baghdad, and Damascus, 1744–1914 (forthcoming from the Littman Library). He is also the author of The Books of Aleppo: The Rabbinic Literature of the Scholars of Aleppo (1997) and of the volume Syria (2009) in the series Jewish Communities in the East in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, and co-editor, with Yom Tov Assis and Miriam Frenkel, of Aleppo Studies - The Jews of Aleppo: Their History and Culture, Volume 1 (2009).*

<sup>1</sup> This review was provided by publisher The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. <http://www.littman.co.uk/cat/harel.html>





# SHABBAT MIRACLE

## FOOD FROM HEAVEN

Mr. Al Azar

*Coincidence and luck have no place in Judaism; everything is orchestrated directly by Hashem. This story, told by Mr. Albert Azar of Deal, New Jersey, is a case in point.*

Mr. Azar was a salesman for children's wear company, and he had to travel around the country for several weeks at a time. Since he was an observant Jew and careful about kashrut, he usually had a good deal of trouble with food on his trips.

Of course, New York, New Jersey, and Detroit offer kosher restaurants, and Mr. Azar usually managed to find something he could eat. His greatest trouble, however, came during his trips down south. Mr. Azar made several inquiries, and he finally managed to locate a reliable kosher restaurant in Memphis, Tennessee. After that, he always arranged his business trips so he can spend Shabbat in Memphis, where he would stock up on food for the following weeks.

In 1972, he began his trip in Birmingham, Alabama, planning as usual to wrap up the week in Memphis for Shabbat. He visited his usual costumers and took care of most of his businesses. Then he went on to attempt something he'd tried on previous trips, with no success: he put through a call to the president of a major corporation to set up an appointment. Mr. Azar had been turned down several times and he wasn't too optimistic about having things go any differently today. He found himself, therefore, quite pleasantly surprised by the man's response.

"Azar," came the president's crisp, clipped tones, "I want to speak with you. I've been getting a lot of calls for your line of merchandise."

What a breakthrough! "When can I see you?" Mr. Azar asked eagerly.

"Not now," the president said. "Come later, about one o'clock."

Mr. Azar arrived right on time, and he sat down to wait. He waited...and waited. Finally, he asked the secretary to tell the president that he was waiting to keep the appointment.

The president came out of his office. "I'm in a meeting now," he told Mr. Azar. "Do you mind waiting?"

It was already late on Thursday afternoon, and Mr. Azar had to get to Memphis for Shabbat. But he also wanted this account. He could always go to Memphis on Friday morning, he reasoned. So he told the president, "not at all," and settled back to wait.

The hours dragged on, and Mr. Azar started to get edgy. At closing time, the president finally came out again.

"I'm sorry, but the meeting lasted longer than I thought it would. Let's set up an appointment for tomorrow morning at nine o'clock."

"Tomorrow is Friday, and I have to get to Memphis early in the day," Mr. Azar said.

"No problem," the president reassured him. "You'll be my first appointment."

Mr. Azar arrived promptly at nine o'clock the following morning. The president was on a conference call. "He'll be with you shortly," the receptionist told him.

Mr. Azar began to pace around the room, waiting for the president to get off the phone. Every so often, the man would come out of his office, reassuring Mr. Azar that he would just be a little longer.

The day was getting on, and Mr. Azar absolutely had to get to Memphis. Every time he decided to walk out, though, he thought about how happy his boss would be to finally get this account. So he changed his flight to Memphis, and continued to wait.

At last, however, it got so late that Mr. Azar really could wait no longer. He couldn't stay in Birmingham because he would have no food for Shabbat or the following week--he had been counting on stocking up in Memphis. So he picked up the phone and called the restaurant in Memphis.

"This is Azar. I'd like to order food for Shabbat."

"Why didn't you call earlier?" asked a harried voice. "It's almost closing time, we aren't taking any more orders!"

"But you can't do this to me. I have no other food for Shabbat!" Mr. Azar pleaded.

"I'm very sorry," the woman said, "but it's quite impossible."

Mr. Azar banged the receiver down. "This is ridiculous!" he shouted. Before the receptionist could stop him, he barged into the president's office.

"I'm leaving at the next flight out," he told the surprised president. "If you want to place an order, do it now. Otherwise, I'm leaving!"

"Hang on a minute," the president said into the phone. He gave Mr. Azar a small order, then turned back to his phone conversation.

Mr. Azar took a taxi to the airport and boarded his flight to Memphis. Throughout the flight, he berated himself for getting into this situation. "And what will I do about food for Shabbat?" he muttered to himself.

As soon as he landed, he made his way to the inexpensive hotel where the company had made reservations for him. Mr. Azar glanced at the hotel and made an instant decision. He might have no food for Shabbat, but at least he could stay in a decent hotel! He turned and marched to the new hotel across the street.

"Do you have a room available?" he asked the woman at the desk.

"Sure." She said, "we're practically empty. You can have any room you like."

"I'm running late," Mr. Azar said, "so any room you give me will be fine."

"How does room 358 sound?"

"Wonderful," he said. He grabbed the keys and raced for the elevator.

Mr. Azar wearily entered the room, dropped his luggage on the floor, and collapsed into the nearest chair. He put his head down on his arms. Why is this happening to me? He thought in despair. Why do I deserve to go hungry for Shabbat?

After a few moments of self-pity, his more pragmatic side took over. It was nearly Shabbat, but he still had a few moments to unpack. Why waste the time he had left?



Mr. Azar opened his suitcase and flung open the closet door to hang up his clothes. He stared into the closet for a full minute before his mind finally registered what he was seeing. Then he slammed the door shut.

I've been thinking about food so much, I'm finally hallucinating, Mr. Azar thought. He opened the closet door, daring his eyes to play tricks on him again.

Everything was still there.

Mr. Azar stretched out a trembling finger and touched a bottle of strictly kosher wine. Accompanying it were two *halot*, six different kinds of packaged meats, pickles, olives,

*Continued on page 15*







*Continued from page 13*

potato salad, coleslaw, cookies, soda, and whiskey. It was enough to feed ten people.

Mr. Azar again collapsed into a chair, but this time he cried tears of happiness. "Thank you, Hashem," he said gratefully. "I'm sorry I questioned You earlier!"

With only minutes to go before Shabbat, he quickly unpacked and got ready. Mr. Azar took his time with the Shabbat prayers, thanking Hashem for providing him with a Shabbat meal. As he ate his heaven-sent food, he continued to marvel at how Hashem had helped him out of his dilemma. But he resolved to keep his little miracle a secret - who would believe it?

After Shabbat, Mr. Azar packed the remainder of the food and organized his plans for the next two weeks. The rest of the trip was uneventful, and soon he was home again.

About three months later, Mr. Azar attended a get-together at his friend Abe Kassin's house. He was talking with some people when he heard Jack Harari ask, "By the way, Abe, did you ever find out what happened to all that food you left at the hotel in Memphis?"

Mr. Azar turned around and stared at Abe. "What are you talking about?" he asked as nonchalantly as he could.

"About three months ago, Ike Hidary and I went to Memphis on business. We went to the restaurant before Shabbat and bought enough food for the following week. We came back to our room, and suddenly I was stricken with terrible stomach pains. It was absolutely unbearable! I didn't want to go to a strange hospital in Tennessee, so I decided to return home. Ike put our luggage in storage, and he took me home.

"In all our haste to get home before Shabbat, we forgot all that food in the hotel room. And we never heard what happened to it."

Mr. Azar looked at Abe for several seconds. "I can tell you what happened to it," he said finally.

Now Abe stared at him. "What do you mean? What happened?"

"I ate it!"

*Mr. Azar is a community member who lives in Deal, NJ.*

The SCA would like to thank  
**IRVING SAFDIEH,**  
**NINA BIDIRICI,**  
**AND RENA NASAR**  
and the entire team that made  
the Yom Ha'asmaut event possible.



# CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT

## MY ISRAEL EXPERIENCE ON CAMPUS

*Mrs. Irene Mamiye*

The impact of my journey as a returning student has crystallized in my mind lately.

Before I made the decision to alter my academic curriculum to Gallatin's interdisciplinary program to include the study of photography I attended NYU's undergraduate program at the school of Continuing and Professional Studies. My last child was himself enrolled at Magen David Yeshivah and I had been indulging in non-accredited classes at ICP (International Center of Photography) and the New School at the rate of one a semester since I was pregnant with my third child who is now 31.

The course load, readings, papers, tests, and homework were a rude awakening! But each course opened a new world, the history of music, gender studies, Renaissance, anthropology, writing, and computer science are just some of the memorable ones.

When selecting a class one semester I noticed the offering: Middle Eastern studies taught by professor Bassam Abed, head of the foreign studies program and thought, "hey I can use a break."

***"...how could a university allow what emerged then as anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian propaganda to become what is now a full out antisemitism crisis on American campuses?"***

The syllabus, which I still have, revealed a course work which included the reading of several books. The professor introduced himself as a Palestinian. As the semester unfolded so did the obvious intent of this course. My background as a refugee from Egypt (even though still in the womb) born and educated in France has imbedded a hypersensitivity to antisemitism, mixed with fear and other emotions.



*New York University Campus Building, New York, NY*

I recall my mother telling the story when she and my father, upon their arrival in France overheard a conversation while at a cafe. There was wild laughter and the mention of Jews "thrown in the ovens!"

My dad who had been dispossessed upon leaving his country of origin needed to find a job in order to survive. He did, but was fired as soon as his employer found out his religion. This occurred three times before he learned to conceal his identity as an Arab Jew and advised me to do the same. Going through my formative years feeling every bit the misfit, in fear and alone in the back of the classroom, prepared me to be vigilant to the events that were about to unfold in Professor Bassam Abed's class.

# MAQAM OF THE WEEK

Sephardic Pizmonim Project, [www.pizmonim.com](http://www.pizmonim.com)

For **Shabbat Behuqotai** (Leviticus 26:3- 27:34), the last perasha of *Sefer Vayiqra*, the morning prayers are conducted in maqam Nawah according to most Aleppo sources, and maqam Bayat according to Damascus sources. The Shabbat that ends a Humash is called *Shabbat Hazaq*, and to mark this occasion, Aleppo custom is to apply maqam Nawah, whereas Damascus custom

is to apply maqam Bayat. Another opinion, based on the content of the Torah portion is maqam Nahwand, a maqam which has the mood of disharmony and conflict. This mood is appropriate as we read through the passages of blessings and curses. *Hazzanut: Semehim: Yerushalayim Shel Zahav* (in honor of Yom Yerushalayim).

*Continued from page 16*

I was beside myself, how could a university allow what emerged then as anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian propaganda to become what is now a full out antisemitism crisis on American campuses? With further research, the enormity of these events struck me as I watched students, a mix of Americans and internationals sitting in a classroom in an Ivy League University absorbing this information as factual. At the time CAMERA, a campus and media watch organization, was an essential resource I encountered in 2006 whose members empowered me by giving me a voice through which to defend and rebuke what I knew were one-sided half-truths!

I found out years later that this was not an isolated incident but a premeditated campaign well formulated by our country's

I am elated to report that recently our community has begun an effort to bring this crisis to light. Hymie Shamah and Murray Mizrahi from the Sephardic Community Alliance as well as Marlene Mamiye have been instrumental in bringing awareness to these issues. Currently we are in the process of creating an event to impact our educators and empower our students to stand up for Israel and their identity. The details of the event are in the works but the goal is to unite our community and educators into addressing these issues in a common forum.

Today we all need to work as a community to raise awareness of this malicious campus agenda. We must share information and resources to empower our students not be discriminative against for their support of Israel. Most

***“Today we all need to work as a community to raise awareness of this malicious campus agenda.”***

most imminent advertising and public relation firms, financed by Saudi Princes and other Gulf State members educated here in the United States. The result of this campaign has been so successful and far-reaching that it effects all major American Universities and in turn our future as Jewish Americans and as Jews in the world. I learned that all of 120 syllabi collected from America's major universities' Middle Eastern study programs similarly demonized Israel as an oppressive colonial force.

importantly as parents we need to be aware of the challenges our children are facing in the classroom in order to support and help them. It is our hope that our planned event will be the first of many.

*Mrs. Mamiye is an artist and currently lives in Manhattan.*





# SEPHARDIC CUSTOMS

## QADDISH, MOURNERS, AND THE HALABI TRADITION

Mr. Morris Arking

An early reference to *qaddish* being recited in memory of the deceased is found in the siddur of Rab 'Amram Gaon from the 9th century in Babylonia. According to this siddur, the hazzan<sup>1</sup> recited *qaddish* at the cemetery after the burial and the recitation of *sidduq hadin* (prayer for mourners). At that point in history we do not find a reference to *qaddish* being recited in memory of the deceased other than at the time of the burial in the cemetery and perhaps only by the hazzan.

The *Or Zarua'* (13th century, Vienna) writes that in some places the mourner recites the *qaddish* towards the end of *shahrit* (after *en k'Elo-henu*) and he attributes that practice to a midrash about Rabbi 'Aqiba who met a person who had already died but came back to this world. He told Rabbi 'Aqiba that he needed his own son to recite *bar'khu* or *qaddish* so that people will answer "*barukh Ad-onai* etc." or "*y'he' sh'meh raba* etc." in order to save his soul in the next world.

Rabbi Yosef Qaro, (Maran, author of *Shulhan 'Arukh*, 16th century, Safed) in his larger work known as the *Bet Yosef* (YD 376) quotes the same midrash that he found in the *Kol Bo* (14th century, Provence). In that version the man who died told Rabbi 'Aqiba that he needed his own son to recite the "*qaddish batra*" (last *qaddish*) or go up for *maftir* and read the *haftarah* to save his soul. Maran continued that based on that midrash it is customary to recite the last *qaddish* for a deceased parent for twelve months and go up for *maftir*. Some mourners are hazzan for '*arbit* every Saturday night since that is when the wicked are returned to *gehinnam* and that prayer might protect them. Maran then quoted an opinion that a son also recites *qaddish* for his deceased mother unless his father is still living and objects to his son reciting *qaddish* during his lifetime. However, further on in the *Bet Yosef* (YD 403) Maran wrote that the custom of the world is to recite *qaddish* in memory of a

deceased mother even during his father's lifetime.

Rabbi Shem Tob Gaguine (20th century Jerusalem, Cairo, and England) wrote in his work *Keter Shem Tob* (a seven volume work about customs and their reasons) that based on these sources it was established that an orphan (mourner) recites the *qaddish* before '*alenu l'shabeah* in *shahrit* and '*arbit*, since these *qaddishim* are followed by *bar'khu*.<sup>2</sup> By saying these *qaddishim* he will lead the congregation to answer both "*amen y'he' sh'meh raba* etc." and "*barukh Ad-onai ham'borakh* etc." which is a tremendous merit. And the son's merit is also a credit to his father, as the gemara states that "a son (through his actions) brings merit to his father..."<sup>3</sup>

However, Rabbi Gaguine writes that in practice, it is customary for mourners to recite the following *qaddishim*: in *shahrit* (3): before *hodu* (or before *barukh she'amar*); after *hoshi'enu*; and before '*alenu*. In *minhah* and '*arbit*: before '*alenu* as well. Beyond that it is customary for the mourners to recite the *qaddish* after *birkat halebanah*, after reading *tehillim*, after a *siyum* or a *d'rashah*, after a *brit milah* or *pidyon haben*, after *sidduq hadin* in the cemetery, and after the reading of the *sefer Torah*.

In some communities, mourners do not recite *qaddish* on Shabbat. This is based on the teaching that the souls of the wicked are not in *gehinnam* on Shabbat and therefore do not need salvation on that day. However according to our custom mourners also recite *qaddish* on Shabbat and Yom Tob. This is based on the *Sha'ar haKavanot* which was written by Rabbi Hayyim Vital (16th century, Damascus and Safed) who was the main student of the ARI"ZAL. He wrote that he heard from his teacher (the ARI"ZAL) that *qaddish* should also be recited in memory of a parent on Shabbat and Yom Tob in order to get their souls into *Gan 'Eden* and elevate them from level to level in *Gan 'Eden*.

<sup>1</sup> According to another version "they say *qaddish*" referring to the mourners

<sup>2</sup> See volume 1-2 pg 110

<sup>3</sup> Sanhedrin 104

Rabbi Yosef Hayyim (Baghdad 1835-1909-author of the *Ben Ish Hai*) wrote in *Rab Pe'alim* (2:14) that:

in these places the custom is that the hazzan only recites *qaddish titqabal*, and the other *qaddishim*, even the *qaddish* after *yishtabah* is recited by orphans (mourners) instead of the hazzan.

The *Ben Ish Hai* supports this custom as he explained, that even though the only *qaddish* that is really for the mourners is the *qaddish* before 'alenu l'shabeah:

in any case it is customary in all of the congregations of Israel that orphans (mourners) recite all of the *qaddishim* that are the obligation of the congregation, on behalf of the congregation, and with this there is benefit and enjoyment to the soul of the deceased, because the orphan (mourner) is saying *qaddish* on behalf of the congregation. And this misvah that the orphan (mourner) does by saying *qaddish* on behalf of the congregation protects the soul of the deceased, and brings the soul great benefit...

In addition to this, Rabbi Hayyim writes in the *Ben Ish Hai*: "In our city (Baghdad) their custom is to say all of the *qaddishim* including the *qaddish* after *yishtabah*, those that are saying *qaddish* in memory of their deceased."<sup>4</sup> However in the *Ben Ish Hai* he raises some problems that are caused by the ignorant when practicing this custom. One problem is that the mourners who are reciting the *qaddish* are unaware that they are reciting those *qaddishim* on behalf of the entire congregation. Another problem is that they recite the *qaddish* too quickly and even skip words. So he made a change in his city. Originally the hazzan only recited the *qaddish* after *yishtabah* on Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur. The *Ben Ish Hai* instituted that practice on Shabbat and Yom Tob as well, but he allowed the mourners to continue reciting the *qaddish* after *yishtabah* on weekdays.

In our Community the hazzan sings the *qaddish* after *yishtabah* on Shabbat and Yom Tob (including Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur) so the mourners only recite it on weekdays, anyway. Another solution to these

problems is for the hazzan to recite that *qaddish* with the mourners so that the congregation is having the *qaddish* recited properly in case the mourners are unable to do so.



Rabbi Yosef Hayyim,  
author of *Ben Ish Hai*

Rabbi Yosef Abadi Shayo (born 1895 in Halab) wrote in his book on the customs of Halab that the "*qaddishim* of the whole prayer are recited by the congregation in memory of the deceased, but *qaddish titqabal* is recited by the hazzan alone." Later he writes that during the year of mourning the mourners "recite all of the *qaddishim* except for *qaddish titqabal*." This is in contrast to the custom in Jerusalem where the mourners only recited the *qaddish* before *hodu* (or *barukh she'amar*), the *qaddish* after *hoshi'enu* and the *qaddish* before 'alenu.<sup>5</sup>

So we see that the original custom of reciting only the last *qaddish* before 'alenu evolved into reciting every *qaddish* 'al Yisrael and y'he' sh'lama in most communities. In Baghdad and Halab the custom extended to *hassi qaddish* (the half *qaddish*) as well. Growing up in the Syrian community in the late 1970s and 80s the custom was that mourners recited every *qaddish* except for *titqabal*, as described by the *Ben Ish Hai* and Rabbi Yosef Abadi Shayo. However, recently, many have begun to abandon this custom and only recite 'al Yisrael and y'he' sh'lama. But since our original custom was recorded and supported by both the *Ben Ish Hai* and Rabbi Yosef Abadi Shayo, we should not change our original custom. It is a legitimate practice and we should maintain it.

Mr. Arking is an expert on Sephardic Minhagim  
and regular contributor to Qol Ha-Qahal.

<sup>4</sup> *Vayigash* 1:16

<sup>5</sup> See *Kaf HaHayyim Sofer* OH 55:20



# SEPHARDIC RABBIS

## RABBI SHELOMO OLIVEYRA (1635-1708) AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING HEBREW

Rabbi Yosef Bitton

**R**abbi Shlomo ben David de Oliveyra Halevy, came from Lisbon, Portugal, from a family of *anusim*, converts in Spain, whose original name was Benveniste. The Oliveyra surname was adopted by the family after the Inquisition, and it was chosen because according to their family tradition they were descendants of Yitzhar, the son of Qehat (Shemot 6:16), of the Tribe of Levi. Yitzhar means “fine olive oil.”

**Darkhe Hashem** (Hebrew) is a compendium of the 613 misvot, (Biblical commandments), arranged in alphabetical order.

Before describing the next books, I would like to explain that Sephardic communities had a very specific order in terms of Torah study, which today many communities have lost. Along with the intensive study of Tanakh (the 24 book of the

*“...Sephardic communities had a very specific order in terms of Torah study...”*

Rabbi Oliveyra served as teacher in Yeshivat Keter Torah in Amsterdam. In 1698, after the death of Rabbbi Ya’aqob Sasportas, he was appointed in his place as Ab Bet Din, Senior Rabbi of the Rabbinical Court of Amsterdam, which later on included all the Sephardic communities in Europe.

The signature and *haskamot* (rabbinic authorizations and introductions to Jewish books) of Rabbi Oliveyra are found in dozens of books published at that time.

Rabbi Oliveyra was a prolific author. And while he wrote several books that are no longer in our hands, such as a commentary on Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah*, we now have access, thanks to the magic of the Internet, to most of his writings.

Here are some of them.

**Darkhe Noam** (Hebrew): A student’s guide to the Talmud. It analyzes many Aramaic terms and especially Talmudic technical expressions. This book is an indispensable tool for beginners who want to study gemara. And it is based on two previous books, which record the way that gemara was studied in Spain: *Mebo Hatalmud*, by Rabbi Shemuel haNagid, and *Darkhe Hatalmud*, by the famous Rab Isaac Canpanton.

Hebrew Bible) one of the first disciplines to which the student was exposed, during elementary school, was the study of *diqduq*, or Hebrew Biblical grammar.

This includes, first, learning to pronounce correctly the Hebrew constants and also know how and when to pronounce the Hebrew vowels (as *sheva*, *qamets qatan* etc.), which is not always evident from the visible text.

This knowledge must also include a total mastering of the *te’amim*, what is known as musical notes, but which really are tonic accents and punctuation marks. If a student did not have a complete mastery of Biblical pronunciation, he was not considered to be yet “literate.”

Only then, once he had learned the precise pronunciation of the words, he would proceed to study Hebrew semantics, that is, the understanding of words.

The same happened with the Aramaic language: for a beginner student, to understand all the books of the Tanakh (including Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah) it was necessary to know Biblical Aramaic, which was also a prerequisite to move into the next level of Aramaic: Talmudic and Rabbinical Aramaic.



Without these basic intellectual tools, Torah study would be deficient. And the student would always be depending on a teacher to translate the basic texts.

A deep and solid knowledge of the Hebrew language was considered a prerequisite for the serious learning of any other Torah discipline, such as mishna, gemara, halakha, etc.

Now, we can proceed to present the literary production of Rabbi Oliveyra, who was literally “a master of the Hebrew language.”

Among his many books we can mention<sup>1</sup>:

**Zayit Ra’anan:** An alphabetical glossary and explanations in Portuguese of many difficult words of the mishna, gemara and medieval philosophical books.

**Te’ame Hate’amim** (Hebrew): Explanation of the *te’amim*, the biblical accents and punctuation marks, especially the *te’ame EMe”T*, that is, *Eyob*, *Mishle* and *Tehilim*, which are different from the rest of Tanakh. This book is mentioned by the Hida in his book *Shem Hagedolim*.

**Yad Lashon:** A treaty of Hebrew grammar, explained in

<sup>1</sup> *Min HaShamayim* (=providentially) I found a link in Google Books with almost all the books of Rabbi Oliveyra in a very clear and readable digital edition. The book is called in the original Portuguese: “*Livro da gramatica Hebrayca and Chaldayca*” (Amsterdam 5449 / 1682).

Portuguese.

**Ets Hayim:** A book of Hebrew semantics, which includes a glossary presented in alphabetical order, with words in Hebrew and Aramaic (translated into Portuguese).

**Dal Sefatayim:** A book that explains the principles Aramaic grammar in Portuguese.

**Sharshot Gablut:** Another book of Hebrew and Aramaic semantics, presenting the roots of the words in alphabetical order. This was an essential tool for writing poetry in Hebrew (learning rhyme and metrics), an area in which Rabbi Oliveyra excelled.

**Ayelet Ahabim:** A long poetic and philosophical composition on *aqadat Yishaq*, (the sacrifice of Isaac).

Rabbi Oliveyra also translated parts of the book *Shene Luhot Haberit* by Rabbi Yesha’yahu Horowitz (the *Shela”h haQadosh*, 1565-1630).

He also translated from Arabic to Portuguese the famous Canon of Medicine by the Persian physician Avicenna.

*Rabbi Bitton is the Rabbi of Ohel David U’shlomo.*



*View of Amsterdam canals*



# COMMUNITY EVENT

## TORAH AND SCIENCE: FRIEND OR FOE

Mr. Harold Shamah

It was an honor to be able to spend the day with someone who has shaped the outlook for so many crucial issues relating to faith and science. Dr. Gerald Schroeder is a world famous scientist, Torah scholar, and bestselling author whose work has been reported in Time, Newsweek, Scientific American, and leading newspapers around the world. His unique vantage point allows him to understand the mechanics of the physical world, and utilize them as a gateway to comprehend the metaphysical. Rambam's position is very clear with regards to science. He calls the laws of nature "the will of God" and clearly argues that in order to come closer to Hashem and absorb His Torah, we must study the grandeur of these laws.

His world-wind day as a scholar-in-residence began at 9:45

not only does science not contradict Torah, but that it indeed validates it, is remarkably inspiring.

The information that follows can be found in detail at [www.geraldschroeder.com](http://www.geraldschroeder.com).

**On the Big Bang:** From the time of the early Greek philosophers until the early part of the 20th century the common rationale for the formation of the universe was the "Steady State Theory." It was basic scientific belief that there was no beginning, that the universe always existed.

In 1924, astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that there are an untold number of galaxies beyond the Milky Way. Previously, scientists believed that not much existed beyond

*"The first sip from the scientific cup nurtures the atheist but it is at the bottom of that cup that we find God."*

in Flatbush high school and continued on to Magen David Yeshivah, the Sephardic Rabbinical College in the afternoon, and ended with an evening in Mikdash Eliyahu. Truth be told, some of what Dr. Schroeder discussed was above my intellectual pay grade. Quantum physics is confusing to those who understand it - but perhaps that is the point. Before me stood a man who spent his life peering into the mind-numbing complexity of the world at a micro and macro level, and saw God. Surely I could gain spiritual benefit from his conclusions, even if I didn't understand all the nuances of his methodology.

Dr. Schroeder explained: "the first sip from the scientific cup nurtures the atheist but it is at the bottom of that cup that we find God." The Big Bang, the age of the universe, and evolution, are just a few of the perplexing issues with which the devout intellectual Jew must contend. To discover that

what was visible to their unsophisticated telescopes. He also discovered a pattern of rapid divergence between the galaxies. Put more simply, Hubble's law states that the universe is expanding like a balloon. If the timeline is reversed, the obvious conclusion is that these galaxies must have originated from a common place and time. These discoveries laid the groundwork for the Big Bang Theory, that there WAS a beginning which could best be described as a vast explosion of light.

Sound familiar? The first words of our Torah are "in the beginning." The third verse of Genesis states "and God said: Let there be light." The Torah is referring to a light that preceded matter. A light from which all matter was formed. Albert Einstein proved the correlation between light and matter with his now renowned discovery,  $E=MC^2$ . Light and matter are two sides of the same coin. How can one

not be in awe of such a remarkable correlation between the words written over 3300 years ago and modern day scientific discoveries?

Professor Robert Jastrow, professor of geophysics at Columbia University, and founding director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies expressed the shame felt by his colleagues when he said:

This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth... [But] for the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; [and] as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.<sup>1</sup>

**On the Age of the Universe:** 5776 or 14 billion years old? The traditional compromise to this contradiction is to view the days as eras. After all, the sun was not even created until the fourth day. Who is to say what a day was during a time as unique as creation? Dr. Schroeder's explanation, which has to do with the perspective with which one views time, is much more compelling.

Clearly, from our vantage point we see evidence of a universe that is roughly 14 billion years old. But, what if we could magically look at the progression from the beginning of time looking forward; from the perspective of the Torah. The reasoning is somewhat complicated but well worth the effort to understand. I will do my best to convey the idea but a review of the article in its entirety is recommended.

At the beginning of time all matter was condensed into a tiny spec. Ramban makes reference to all physicality initially being the size of a mustard seed. From the point of the Big Bang onward, all matter has been expanding at a phenomenal rate. In actuality, space itself, the canvas that contains

everything, is stretching. This effects our perception of time.

An example will hopefully clarify the idea. Imagine an elastic fabric 100 feet long. If we were to roll a ball at one end and then roll another 2 seconds later at the same speed, they would reach the other end two seconds apart. If, however, the elastic fabric was stretching from the moment the first ball was rolled, and ended up twice the size, the second ball would reach the other side 4 seconds after the first. If we did not know the fabric was stretching, we would assume they were rolled 4 seconds apart. Dr. Schroeder explains that this is in essence what is happening with our perception of time:

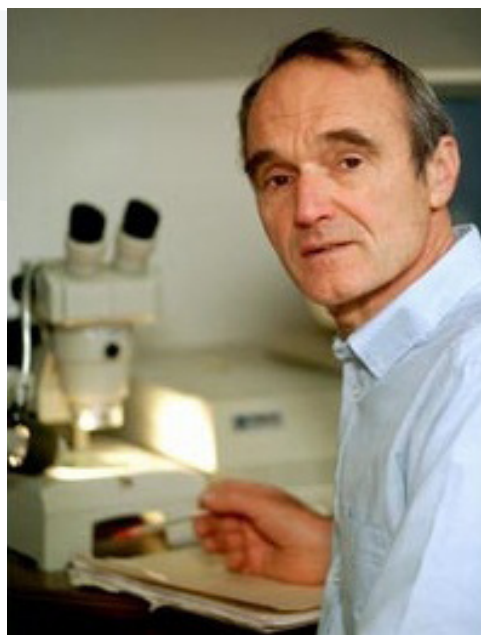
The result of the stretching of space produces the effect that when observing a series of events that took place deep in space, far from our galaxy, as the light of those events travel through space, the timing of the sequence of events is actually stretched out.<sup>2</sup>

Scientists are able to calculate that space has stretched 900 billion times since the Big Bang. If we divide 14 billion years (5,110,000,000,000 days) by 900 billion we get...roughly 5 and a half days! Time as we know it began with the creation of Adam which was in the middle of the 6th day. Astounding. Just astounding. So has it been 5776 or 14 billion years? The answer is yes.

**On Evolution:** There are two aspects to the theory: natural selection and random mutation. The Torah has no problem with the former. We can plainly observe the natural world to see that the strong survive and the weak get selected out. Species adapt to their

environment. However, there is no scientific proof that the mutations that lead to the variation of species were random. The statistical odds of such a complex world developing by chance are infinitesimal.

Dr. Schroeder explained that the typical protein has 300 amino acids. Since there are 20 prevalent amino acids, the



*Dr. Gerald Schroeder*

<sup>2</sup> "The Age of the Universe" by Gerald Schroeder.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (Readers Library, 2000).

*Continued on page 24*



[illegible]

Darwin's theory hits another roadblock when one considers the explosion of life during the Cambrian period. According to Darwin's hypothesis, the development of life occurred gradually over very long periods of time. The fossil record yields no such evidence. Quite the opposite, we see during a relatively short period of time the emergence of all of the current phyla (body types) that exist today. The strata below show only simple forms of life such as one celled bacteria and protozoans. "The abrupt appearance in the fossil record of new species is so common that the journal *Science*, the bastion of pure scientific thinking, featured the title, 'Did Darwin get it all right?' And answered the question: 'no.'"

Most remarkably, even Darwin himself makes reference to a higher power. In the last sentence of the sixth edition, Darwin placed the Creator at the beginning of life on earth:

There is grandeur in this [natural selection] view of

life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Shroeder pointed out that many people would like to forget that Darwin was a believing man who would attribute the world to a creator.

In one of his presentations Dr. Schroder made reference to a famous quote which states: “I don’t know who discovered the water but it certainly wasn’t the fish.” We are so enveloped in our own reality that it is almost impossible to step outside and contemplate the wonders of that very existence. It is easy to lose perspective on both a physical and emotional level. Often anxiety and worry set in when I allow myself to think that we live in a random world, a world void of justice. However, I remind myself that it was Hashem who formed the exquisite laws of nature and I can rest assured that He did not drop the ball when it came to the most important law of all, justice. I can be comforted to know that through prayer, dutiful service, and an honest pursuit of the truth, I can get to a state where I can sense the loving hand of Hashem guiding me through both the joyous and challenging times.

*Mr. Shamah is a community member who lives in Manhattan Beach.*

<sup>3</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, 1860.

The SCA would like to thank

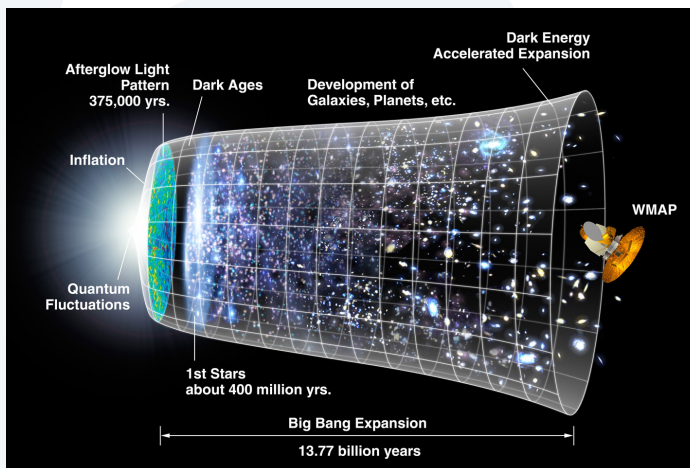
**MR. HAROLD SHAMAH**

for his assistance in arranging a wonderful day  
which inspired so many with Professor Gerald Schroeder.

## Q&A WITH PROFESSOR SCHROEDER AND THE MDYHS FACULTY

**Rabbi Joey Haber (RJH):** How old is the world?

**Professor Gerald Schroeder (PGS):** Rashi and Ramban believed that a day of creation is 24 hours. Einstein said time is “expanding.” Torah sees time as looking forward. How we perceive time changes. *Yom ehad* (day one) vs. *yom rishon* (first day). The details of the length of a day can be found in my book “Science of God.” Due to Einstein’s theory of relativity, we can understand that both a 24-hour time unit and billions of years are possible at the same time. NASA created a diagram on their website based on my book. You can read more about this subject on my website (<http://geraldschroeder.com/>).



**RJH:** How do we understand evolution?

**PGS:** Adam was the first human, the first *Homo sapiens* with the soul of a human, the *neshama*. That is the creation listed in Genesis 1:27. Adam was not the first *Homo sapiens*. Maimonides in the Guide for the Perplexed (part 1 chapter 7) described animals co-existing with Adam that were identical to humans in shape and intelligence, but because they lacked the *neshama*, they were animals. The Guide for the Perplexed was published in the year 1190, seven centuries before Darwin and long before any evidence was popular relative to fossils of cave men and women. The British Museum recognizes the idea of “*neshamah*.” The change in the first large cities first appear 5,500 years ago. Adam is the first man with a “*neshamah*.” God endowed us with the power to tolerate the “other”

and thereby rise above our animal inclination to destroy our competition.

**Rabbi Richard Tobias (RRT):** Can you talk about the origin of species?

**PGS:** Darwin attributes his theories to a “creator.” Many versions of Darwin’s theory edit out any mention of God.

The Torah supports evolution by design. The word “random” is where we run into trouble. There is no data to support a “random” mutation. Random is a theological statement. The legal system can theoretically make it illegal to record mutations as “random” in our children’s text books for introducing a theological statement.

**RRT:** So do we come from chimpanzees?

**PGS:** If an alien came to earth and compared your DNA to a pine tree, the conclusion would be that we are cousins. We did not come from chimpanzees, but chimpanzees and humans come from a common ancestor. We do not know who that common ancestor is.

**RRT:** So how do you understand “*neshamah*”?

**PGS:** Being tolerant of others. Prior to this, one tribe wiped out the other; this allowed humans to build cities and advance to the state we are in today.

**Rabbi Harold Sutton (RHS):** Did the flood fault the dating?

**PGS:** There are 6 radioactive clocks that prove the dates.

**Murray Mizrachi (MM):** So is it possible that excessive amounts of heat, pressure and water altered the archaeological record?

**PGS:** The rate of decay could only be altered with heat as hot as the center of the sun. Between Adam and the flood is tubal Cain- he invents metal fashioning. This matches the bronze age archaeological record which corroborates that the flood did not destroy carbon dating.



# SHABBAT-TABLE TALKS

## BEMIDAR

Rabbi Ralph Tawil

### Value: Accomplishing Difficult Tasks

**F**irst, do all you can. Then, rely on God to help. At times in our lives, we are faced with tasks that although vital, appear impossible. In this week's perasha the Torah teaches us that we must do all we can to accomplish the task in our own way. Only after we have done *all* we can, can we then rely on God's miraculous assistance.

**Text: Bemidbar 1:1-3 (SB)**

Now Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Appointment, on the first (day) after the second New-Moon, in the second year after their going-out from the land of Egypt, saying:

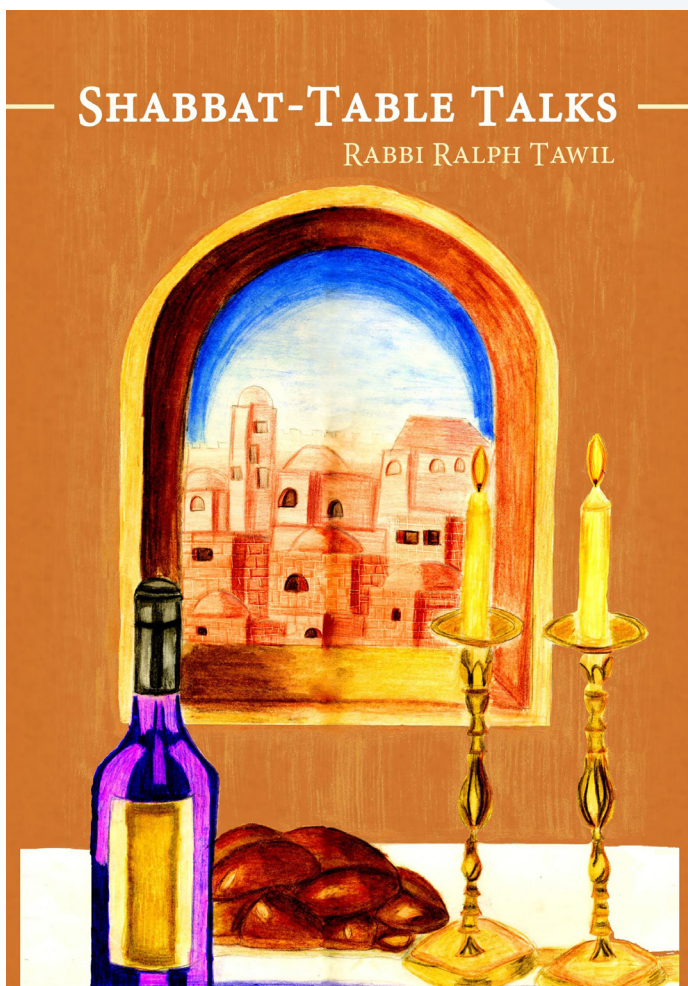
Take up the head-count of the entire community of the Children of Israel, by their clans, by their Fathers' Houses, according to the number of names, every male per capita; from the age of twenty years and upward, everyone going out to the armed-forces in Israel: you are to count them (for battle) according to their forces, you and Aharon.

### Context

Our perasha begins the book of Bemidbar. After building the *mishkan* (at the end of Shemot) and receiving the instructions of sacrifices, purity, and holiness (in Vayiqra), Israel is now ready to march to the land of Canaan and conquer it. This might appear a daunting task for a group of escaped slaves. Of course, they had God helping them. The beginning of our perasha has God asking Moshe to count the children of Israel that are of fighting age. That is, every male from the ages of 20 to 60. Next, the perasha describes how the camp would be arrayed around the *mishkan*. Counting the fighting force is typical of the first actions that a general would take before carrying out a battle. Arraying the camp is also a necessary step. Israel, even though they had God fighting their battles, behaved like any normal army, counting its soldiers and arraying the camp for

battle. This was the meaning of God's commandment. We must do everything in our power to accomplish a task, and only then should we rely on God's miracles.

### Discussion



This value has been embodied in the rabbinic statement of “*en somekhin ‘al hannes*” (“we do not rely on miracles”). Of course, our whole lives are miracles. However, when we have a task to do we should focus on doing all we can to accomplish the task. Relying on miracles too early could lead us to forget an important step that God wanted us to do.

On the other hand, sometimes we face tasks that appear impossible, even though they are critical. We might be lead to despair because the task looks so difficult. We should take the steps that we can to accomplish the essential task, even though it appears impossible. Do not give up in the face of difficult tasks. Do all you can and then rely on God’s assistance.

The above point is also made in Rashi’s commentary on a verse that occurs later in the perasha (3:16). After counting the soldiers, God commanded Moshe to count all the male Levites from the age of one month.

Moshe said to the Holy One, blessed be He: “How can I go into everyone’s houses and tents to know the count of the infants?!” The Holy One, blessed be

Yet that is exactly what Herzl aspired to. Looking back on the accomplishments of these people and the state of Israel, it is clear that there was divine help. The actions of the people served only as the “vessel” to receive the divine intervention. This was so apparent that even David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, was reported to have quipped: “In Israel, if you do not believe in miracles you are not a realist.”

## Applications

Our children sometimes have tasks that seem impossible in their eyes. We should teach our children not to give up. Show them how they can break down the task into manageable steps. Then make them see how they can do the small steps that will eventually lead to the accomplishment of the difficult task. We should also teach them that when we do all we can, God will also help us (when what we are doing is in accordance with His will).

## Application to current events

The ongoing situation in Israel seems impossible. The deep-seated Arab hatred of the Jews is growing

## “we do not rely on miracles”

He said to him: “You do your part and I’ll do Mine.” Moshe went and stood at the opening of the tent, and the *Shekhina* preceded him and a voice came out from the tent saying: “There are such and such infants in this tent.”

This comment which Rashi quotes from the *Tanhuma* expresses the same idea. We are to do our part and not give up when we are faced with difficult tasks.

## Historical Example

The aspirations of the 19th century Zionists (led by Theodor Herzl) appeared absurd. Never before in history has it happened that a people who had lost their national sovereignty and homeland thousands of years earlier should come back to its land and regain its sovereignty.

increasingly virulent with the daily incitement by the Arab leaders and media. Nevertheless, we must take the small steps necessary that we think would lead us to the critical goal of peaceful coexistence in the land. We must also pray that God help us achieve that essential goal.

*Rabbi Tawil is the Author of Shabbat Table Talks.*







# SEPHARDIC HISTORY

## NEVER FORGET OUR NOBLE HERITAGE

NUNCA OLVIDES MUESTRA HISTORIA DESTINGUIDA

נונכה אולבידיס מואיסטרה איסטוריה דיסטינגיידה

Mr. Sheldon N. Goldman

### Chapter 19- Hasdai ibn Shaprut

It is important to note that Hasdai ibn Shaprut felt it was his obligation to try to help and protect his fellow Jews. One of the more fascinating times in the life of Hasdai ibn Shaprut was his correspondence with King Joseph, King of the Khazars. The Khazar people came into existence as early as the second century, but what happened to them in the eighth century was important to Hasdai and the Jewish people. In their early years they were tent dwellers who moved from place to place. They were fond of war and were continually mobilizing their forces and ready for a fight. By the tenth century they were a large and powerful state. Originally they were Turkish people who moved to the southern plains of Russia in the sixth century. They annexed more and more followers as they moved north through what is now Bulgaria, Romania, the Ukraine and around the Black Sea, across Russia to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea. They reached as far north as the Ural Mountains and Kiev. They established their capital on the Volga River in a city called Itil (possibly near Volgograd).

The empire finally fell in 965 when Sviatoslav, duke of Kiev defeated their army. What made the Khazars special was that they converted to Judaism in the eighth century as a compromise between Christianity and Islam. A legend developed that the Khazars, who had been followers of Shamanism (similar to the religion of the American Indians, based on

the doctrine that the workings of good and evil spirits can be influenced by shamans or priests) compared Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and chose Judaism. The legend goes on to say that the king interviewed scholars in the three religions and after a thorough study made his choice. The more practical reason was that the Khazars came to the conclusion that if they adopted Christianity they would be dominated by the Byzantines, and if they adopted Islam, they would be dominated by the Muslims. If they chose Judaism they would be dominated by no one.

Rabbi Judah Halevi, the famous Jewish poet of Toledo, who was born in 1075, some 115 years after the death of Hasdai ibn Shaprut in 970, wrote a book entitled *Kitab Al Khazari* in the form of a dialogue between a rabbi and the King of the Khazars. An excerpt from Halevi's poetic story follows:

The Rabbi: "The root of all knowledge was deposited in the Ark which took the place of the heart (the Ten Commandments), and its branch is the Torah on its side, as it is said: 'Put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God.' From there went forth a twofold knowledge, first, the scriptural knowledge, whose bearers were the priests; secondly, the prophetic knowledge which was in the hands of the prophets. Both classes were, so to speak, the peoples' watchful advisers, who compiled the chronicles. They, therefore, represent the head of the people."



*Sculpture of Rabbi Judah Halevi  
1075 - 1141*

Al Khazari: "So you are today a body without either head or heart."

The Rabbi: "Thou sayest rightly, but we are not even a body, only scattered limbs, like the 'dry bones' which Ezekiel saw in his vision. These bones, however, O king of the Khazars, which have retained a soul, and intellect, are better than certain bodies formed of marble and plaster, endowed with heads, eyes, ears, and all limbs, in which never dwelt the spirit of life, nor can dwell in them, since they are but imitations of man, not man in reality."

Al Khazari: "It is as thou sayest."

As a result of this imagined dialogue, according to Rabbi Judah Halevi, the Khazars became Jews.

Hasdai ibn Shaprut was fascinated by the stories he heard from merchants who came in contact with the Khazars. As successful as Hasdai was in the Muslim kingdom of Abd ar-Rahman III, he was still very apprehensive. Notwithstanding his social and economic success, he faced insults from non-Jews and even from the Caliph himself. Hasdai recognized that all his honors, wealth, status and comforts were only illusory and could vanish in an instant. Therefore, the more he learned about the Khazars the more anxious he was to make contact with them.

*Mr. Goldman is a retired Chemical Engineer who is a member of Congregations Beth Torah and Kol Israel. From 1978 through 1992 he was the Editor of the Beth Torah Bulletin. He was Secretary of Beth Torah from 1980 through 1995 and is still the Editor of the Beth Torah Calendar.*

## UPCOMING HOLIDAYS:

**Yom Yerushalayim: Sunday, June 5**

**Shabuot: Saturday Night-Monday, June 11-13**

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY LECTURES:

**BDS-Confronting a Global Campaign: June 2**

**Educators for Israel: June 7**

**Ko Tomar leBeit Yaakov-Ladies First!: June 8**

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