

A New Yavneh Publication

26 Elul 5768 // 26 September 2008

Minyan Times

Friday Mincha	6:30 PM
Kabbalat Shabbat	After Mincha
Saturday Shacharit	8:45 AM
Saturday Mincha	6:15 PM
Saturday Maariv	7:35 PM
Erev R”H	Monday 9/29
Monday Mincha	6:25PM
Monday Maariv (Day 1)	After Mincha
Tuesday (Day 1) Shacharit	8:30AM
Tuesday (Day 1) Mincha	6:20PM
Tuesday (Day 2) Maariv	7:25PM
Wednesday (Day 2) Shacharit	8:30AM
Wednesday (Day 2) Mincha	6:20PM
Wednesday Maariv	7:30PM

Announcements

- The Talmud Shiurim and lunch and learn will not meet this coming week, due to Rosh Hashana.
- This Thursday is the Fast of Gedaliah—but mishmar will prevail! We’re calling mishmar for after davening: it’ll last for about half an hour without food and then we’ll all break the fast together. Pizza contingent on Levi’s delivering, but there will definitely be some food
- If you’re going to be on campus for Rosh Hashanah and want to eat in the dining hall the first night, please email Sara Wolkenfeld (wsara@)—they won’t keep the dining hall open unless enough people are on campus. (In this case the Wolkenfelds, Chabad, etc., will host people for meals.)

Obscure Halacha

How Frum are You?

By Boaz Haberman

In case of an emergency, this halacha is not exactly obscure—but is very practical. When I was in Beijing this summer, getting Kosher food was somewhat of an issue. Much of what I ate I had to cook myself in the public kitchen, which resulted in innumerable conversations in Chinese about Kashrut with people walking through. (Did you know that there are a lot of “Muslims” in China who, although not especially religious, don’t eat pork?) The problem that immediately arose was that there is no Keilim mikveh in Beijing. As we all know, after buying utensils made of metal or glass from a non-Jew, one must immerse them in a Mikveh before using them.

However, this is not a Kashrut issue, since if you cook food with these dishes, you can still eat the food, and the dishes are still permitted to use if you immerse them later. In addition, if the utensils still belong to the non-Jew you can use them without immersion. This provides a loophole if you’re stuck. For example, the Shulchan Aruch (YD 120.17) states that if you haven’t immersed your utensils and it’s already Shabbos or Yom Tov (immersing utensils is prohibited, since you’re fixing them), you can give them to a non-Jew outright, and then borrow them back. Note that this heter is specific to Shabbos: once Shabbos is over you have to immerse your utensil (Taz). The Rama adds that if you’re in a place without a mikveh, you can do this indefinitely, until you get to a place with a mikveh. So I could buy my utensils in Beijing, give them to my friend, and then use them, knowing that my trick was officially sanctioned.

Want to Write?

Have a good idea for a column? Contact Greg Burnham (gburnham@) if you are interested in writing for this newsletter. We’ll publish most anything relating to Judaism or Judaism at Princeton.

A Quick Thought

By Sara Wolkenfeld

It's Elul, just a few days before Rosh Hashanah, and *teshuvah* (repentance) is in the air. As it turns out, it is in the *parashah* as well. Nitzavim opens with the presentation of the covenant. The nation is to worship God and obey His word, and when they do not the consequences will be severe: exile from the land, and a distant relationship with the God they have angered. The fourth and fifth *aliyot* of Nitzavim consist of ten verses, which describe the reversal of this process.

The section begins as follows:

When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart (*vahashivotah*) [...] and you return (*veshavtah*) to the Lord your God, and you and your children heed His command with all your heart and soul [...] then the Lord your God will restore (*veshav*) your captives and take you back in love.

This section contains what is called a *milah man-chah*, a guiding or key word. The root of “*teshuvah*,” to return or respond, appears seven times over the course of these ten verses. The nation will return to its roots, rethink and reconsider their actions, and in so doing, return to God and his commandments. The spiritual return is linked to the physical, the ingathering of the exiles. God, in turn, will return the people to their land, return to His former relationship with Israel, and “will return to delight in your well-being, as He did in that of your forefathers.” In other words, the process of *teshuvah* will entail change and movement both on the part of the people and of God. If we can rethink the situation and push ourselves to make changes, God simultaneously makes Himself more accessible and manifest in the world.

R. Yitzchak Arama, in his commentary the *Akeidat Yitzchak*, elaborates on the connection between spiritual and physical “*teshuvah*” by isolating different stages of the process of return. The first stage is described in verses 1-2, when the people take their situation to heart and begin their return to God. Immediately following, in verse three, God responds with the beginnings of redemption. This cycle culminates in verse ten, with the people “heeding the Lord your God and keeping his commandments [...] once you return (*tashuv*) to the Lord your God with all your

heart and soul.” Once the nation begins the journey of return, God as redeemer steps in and helps to move things along.

The *Akeidat Yitzchak* cites the Gemara in Sanhedrin, which records a disagreement between Rabbi Natan and Rabbi Eliezer as to which comes first, redemption or repentance. Do we wait for the right time, when we have a sense of spiritual well being and it seems that God is reaching out for us? Or must we create our own space to take on the spiritual work of teshuva before receiving the reward of redemption? Rabbi Natan believes that only after doing teshuvah can one expect redemption, while Rabbi Eliezer believes that only redemption can make teshuvah possible.

These ten verses, according to the *Akeidat Yitzchak*, show the wisdom of both positions. Teshuvah happens in many stages, and there is always a give and take, a balance between human initiative and our need for God's intervention. When Israel reaches out, God is there to help, and so together God and his people progress towards a redeemed world.

A Taste of History

Anecdotes from Yavneh's Past

By Toby Robison

One of the nice things about Stevenson Hall (83 Prospect) was that it was an old, aging building. Here at CJL, on Simchat Torah, if you go downstairs to the auditorium while we're dancing in the shul, you can watch the ceiling bounce a couple of inches. It's scary, and I always wonder whether the architect was told to make sure the shul floor would bear the weight of thirty vigorous dancers with a few dozen spectators. But that's nothing! At Stevenson Hall, the ceiling bounced more than a foot! (That was okay, until somebody noticed. Then it was scary.)