

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
August 8, 2020 *** Av 18, 5780
Parashat Eikev

*Please note that this issue contains a recipe at the very end. Don't miss it!

Kol Rina – An Independent Minyan, is a traditional egalitarian community. We are haimish (homey/folksy), friendly, participatory, warm and welcoming. We hold weekly services in South Orange as well as holiday services and celebrations which are completely lay led. We welcome all to our services and programs from non-Hebrew readers to Jewish communal and education professionals.

Eikev in A Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3041/jewish/Eikev-in-a-Nutshell.htm

In the Parshah of Eikev ("Because"), Moses continues his closing address to the children of Israel, promising them that if they will fulfill the commandments (mitzvot) of the Torah, they will prosper in the Land they are about to conquer and settle in keeping with G-d's promise to their forefathers.

Moses also rebukes them for their failings in their first generation as a people, recalling their worship of the Golden Calf, the rebellion of Korach, the sin of the spies, their angering of G-d at Taveirah, Massah and Kivrot Hataavah ("The Graves of Lust"). "You have been rebellious against G-d," he says to them, "since the day I knew you." But he also speaks of G-d's forgiveness of their sins, and the Second Tablets which G-d inscribed and gave to them following their repentance.

Their forty years in the desert, says Moses to the people, during which G-d sustained them with daily manna from heaven, was to teach them "that man does not live on bread alone, but by the utterance of G-d's mouth does man live."

Moses describes the land they are about to enter as "flowing with milk and honey," blessed with the "seven kinds" (wheat, barley, grapevines, figs, pomegranates, olive oil and dates), and as the place that is the focus of G-d's providence of His world. He commands them to destroy the idols of the land's former masters, and to beware lest they become haughty and begin to believe that "my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth."

A key passage in our Parshah is the second chapter of the Shema, which repeats the fundamental mitzvot enumerated in the Shema's first chapter, and describes the rewards of fulfilling G-d's commandments and the adverse results (famine and exile) of their neglect. It is also the source of the precept of prayer, and includes a reference to the resurrection of the dead in the messianic age.

Haftarah in a Nutshell: Isaiah 49:14 - 51:3

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/543183/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm

This week's haftarah is the second of a series of seven "haftorot of Consolation." These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

The exiled Jewish people express their concern that G-d has abandoned them. G-d reassures them that it is not so, comparing His love and mercy for His people to that of a mother for her children, and even greater than that, too.

The prophet Isaiah then touchingly describes the ingathering of the exiles which will occur with the Messiah's arrival and returning to the initial subject matter of this haftarah, that of the Jewish people's complaint of being abandoned by G-d, he reminds them of their rebellious behavior that brought about the exile and suffering. He concludes with encouraging words, reminding us of what had happened to our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah. Just as they were blessed with a child when they had all but given up hope, so too, G-d will send us the Messiah.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Covenant and the Love (Eikev 5780) by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

<https://rabbisacks.org/eikev-5780/>

An interesting phrase appears at the end of last week's parsha and at the beginning of this week's, and they are the only places where it appears in the Torah. The phrase is ha-brit vaha-chessed (Deuteronomy 7:9) or in this week's parsha, et ha-brit ve-et ha-chessed (Deut. 7:12).

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping the brit and the chessed to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments. (Deut. 7:9)

If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the Lord your God will keep the brit and the chessed with you, as He swore to your ancestors. (Deut. 7:12)

The phrase is strange. The relationship between God and Israel is defined by brit, covenant. That, essentially, is the content of the Torah. What then is added by the word chessed?

The translators have a problem with it. The Jewish Publication Society's translation of the opening verse of our parsha is: "And if you do obey these rules and observe them carefully, the Lord your God will maintain faithfully for you the covenant that He made on oath with your fathers." This translates chessed as "faithfully" and takes it as a qualification of the verb "maintain" or "keep". This is a very stretched translation. A non-Jewish translation, the New International Version, translates ha-brit vaha-chessed as "covenant of love." This is a very Christian translation. The covenant entered into between the Israelites and God was a covenant of law, not just of love. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, in *The Living Torah*, got it right when he translated it as "God your Lord will keep the covenant and love with which He made an oath to your fathers." Not "covenant of love" but "covenant and love." But still: what is the covenant, and what is the love that is distinct from the covenant?

This might seem a minor matter were it not for the fact that this phrase, which is rare in Tanach, makes an appearance at key moments of Jewish history. For example, it figures in King Solomon's great prayer at the consecration of the Temple in Jerusalem:

"Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in Heaven above or on Earth below—You who keep the covenant and love with Your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way." (1 Kings 8:23)

When, after the Babylonian exile, the nation gathered around Ezra and Nehemiah in Jerusalem and renewed the covenant, they said:

"Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps His covenant and love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in Your eyes—the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our Priests and Prophets, on our ancestors and all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. (Neh. 9:32)

At these critical moments, when Moses renewed the covenant on the banks of the Jordan, when Solomon dedicated the Temple, and the people in Ezra and Nehemiah's time rededicated themselves, they took care to define the relationship between God and the people as one of brit and chessed, covenant and love. It seems that both are necessary, or they would not have used this language on these three defining occasions many centuries apart.

What then is the meaning of chessed? Significantly, Maimonides dedicates the penultimate chapter of *The Guide for the Perplexed* to the analysis of three words: chessed, tzedakah and mishpat. On chessed he says:

In our Commentary on *Pirkei Avot* (5:7) we have explained the expression chessed as denoting excess. It is especially used of extraordinary kindness. Loving-kindness is practised in two ways: first, we show kindness to those who have no claim whatever upon us; secondly, we are kind to those to whom it is due, in a greater measure than is due to them ... The very act of creation is an act of God's loving-kindness: "I have said, 'The universe is built in loving-kindness'" (Ps. 89:3)...[1]

The difference between the three terms is that I am legally entitled to mishpat. I am morally entitled to tzedakah. But to chessed, I am not entitled at all. When someone acts toward me in chessed, that is an act of pure grace. I have done nothing to deserve it.

Maimonides notes, citing the phrase from Psalms that "The universe is built in lovingkindness," that creation was an act of pure chessed. No one ever creates something because it deserves to be created. Creations do not exist before they are created.

We can define this in human terms more precisely. The book of Ruth is known as the work, par excellence, of chessed: "Rabbi Zeira said, 'This book does not have anything in it concerned with impurity or purity, forbidden or permitted. Why then was it written? To teach us the greatness of the reward for acts of chessed.'"[2]

There are two key scenes in the book. The first occurs when Naomi, bereaved of her husband and two sons, decides to return to Israel. She says to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me..." She was telling them that they had no further obligations toward her. They had been married to her sons, but now they are widows. Naomi has no other sons. Being Moabite women, they will be strangers in Israel: they have no reason to go there. You owe me nothing, she is saying. You have been kind, you have been good daughters-in-law, but now we must go our separate ways.

The second speech occurs when Ruth has gone to gather grain in the field of Boaz, who treats her with great care and consideration. She asks him: "Why have I found such recognition in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?" The two key words here are "recognition" and "foreigner." "Recognition" means that you have behaved toward me as if you had obligations to me. But "I am a foreigner." The word used here is not "stranger," i.e. a resident alien to whom certain duties are owed. It means, a complete outsider. Ruth is saying to Boaz, you do not owe me anything.

That is what makes Ruth the supreme book of chessed, that is, of good done to another who has no claim whatsoever upon you. What Ruth does for Naomi, and what Boaz does for Ruth, are not mishpat or tzedakah. They are pure chessed.

Now let us return to the question with which we began. Why did Moses, and Solomon, and Nehemiah define the relationship between the Jewish people and God not in terms of a single concept, covenant, but added to it a second idea, namely chessed, meaning an act of love.

Covenant is essentially reciprocal. Two people or entities pledge themselves to one another, each committing to a responsibility. This is how it was defined by God at Mount Sinai: "Now if you obey me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession, for all the earth is Mine" (Exodus 19:5). If you are My people, I will be your God. If you serve me, I will bless you. Every covenant has an if-then quality to it. Therefore, every covenant is inherently vulnerable. That is what Moses emphasised throughout Devarim. Don't take the land or its blessings for granted. If you do well, things will go well, but if you do badly, great dangers lie in store.

That is covenant. Chessed, in contrast, has no if-then quality. It is given out of the goodness of the giver, regardless of the worth of the recipient. When Moses, Solomon and Nehemiah referred to chessed in addition to the covenant, they were making an implicit request of God of the most fundamental significance. Even if we fail to honour the covenant, please God be gracious to us, for You are good even when we are not, and You do good even when we do not deserve it, when we have no claim on You whatsoever – ki le-olam chasdo, for His chessed is eternal.

The verses in our parsha sound conditional: "If you pay attention to these laws ... then the Lord your God will keep the brit and the chessed ..." This suggests that we will be

shown chessed if we deserve it, but if not, not. But it isn't so. At the end of the curses in Bechukotai, God says: "Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them: I am the Lord their God."

God will never break the covenant, even if we do, because of His chessed. Tanach describes the relationship between God and Israel in two primary ways: like a husband and wife, and like a parent and a child. Between husband and wife there can be a divorce. Between parent and child there cannot be. They may be estranged, but the parent is still their parent and the child is still their child. Marriage is a covenant; parenthood is not. Do not forsake us, we say to God, because whatever we have done, You are our parent and we are Your children. Chessed is the kind of love a parent has for a child, whether they deserve it or not. Chessed is unconditional grace.

I believe that chessed is the highest achievement of the moral life. It is what Ruth did for Naomi, and Boaz for Ruth, and from that kindness came David, Israel's greatest king. Reciprocal altruism – I do this for you, and you do this for me – is universal among social animals. Chessed is not. In chessed God created the universe.

In chessed we create moments of moral beauty that bring joy and hope where there was darkness and despair.

Shabbat Shalom [1] The Guide for the Perplexed, III:53. [2] Ruth Rabbah 2:14.

[A Moment That Is Always Present by Benjamin D. Sommer](http://www.jtsa.edu/a-moment-that-is-always-present)

<http://www.jtsa.edu/a-moment-that-is-always-present>

Parashat Eikev is surrounded by matching bookends. The verse that ends the previous parashah, Va'et-hannan, and the verse that begins the subsequent parashah, Re'eh, both contain the word, *hayyom*, or "today":

וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־הַמִּצְוָה וְאֶת־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הֵם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם:

You should carefully carry out the commandment,
the laws, and the statutes, that I command you today.

(Parashat Va'et-hannan: Deut. 7:11)

רְאֵה אָנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיךָ הַסֵּב בְּרִכָּה וּקְלָלָה :

Look: today I set before you a blessing and a curse.

(Parashat Re'eh: Deut. 11:26)

In between those bookends the word *hayyom*, meaning "today," appears no fewer than twelve times. In this respect, Parashat Eikev is typical of the book in which it appears, because the word *hayyom* is a leitmotiv in Deuteronomy, occurring seventy-four times. It serves as what the great Jewish theologians and biblical commentators Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig call a "guiding word": its variations in Deuteronomy provide a key that unlocks a central theme of the book.

Hayyom simply means “today,” but it is not always clear which “today” Deuteronomy intends. The book of Deuteronomy consists largely of several speeches Moses delivered shortly before his death. Since Moses is the speaker, “today” must mean the day Moses delivered the speech, at the end of the Israelites’ forty-year journey to the Promised Land. In some verses, this is explicitly the case. In our parashah (9:1 and 9:3), when Moses refers to the fact that the Israelites are soon to cross over the River Jordan to enter the land of Canaan “today” means the day on which Moses is speaking. But in other verses, Moses, who after all is speaking as a prophet, appears to speak on behalf of God. This is the case in the many verses where we find the phrase אשר אנכי מצוך היום, “that which that I command you today.” God is the one who issues the commands, and so we might infer that *hayyom* refers to the day God revealed the law on top of Mount Horeb, at the very *beginning* of the Israelites’ forty years in the desert. This is clearly the case when the word appears in last week’s parashah at Deuteronomy 5:24.

But in this week’s parashah, it’s clear that the speaker of this phrase is in fact Moses, because the surrounding verses refer to God in the third person; see 8:1, 11, and 19. In those verses “today” must refer to a day at the end of the forty years. However, it’s possible that in some cases both meanings make sense: God commanded the Israelites at Horeb soon after they left Egypt, and Moses conveys those commands to the Israelites a little while before they enter Canaan. The word *hayyom* in the oft-repeated phrase “which I command you today” becomes charged with a double meaning referring to more than one moment in time.

We see this phenomenon toward the end of this week’s parashah. The phrase “which I command you today” occurs in 11:13, and in the two verses that follow God speaks in the first person: “I shall provide timely rain for you . . . I shall provide grass for your cattle.” This suggests that the speaker who commands the people “today” is God. Does that mean that God commands Israel on the day Moses delivers this speech? Or should we understand God’s commanding Israel “today” as referring to the event at Mount Horeb forty years earlier? Elsewhere in the same passage, it is clearly Moses who uses the word “today,” which must refer to the day he delivered his speech (11:8, 27, and 28). In a single passage, the shift between these two “todays” breaks down the specificity of the word’s reference. This repetition disconnects our guiding word from any particular day in the past, allowing Deuteronomy’s audiences through time to understand the word as referring not only to these two events in the past but, most importantly, to their own present, the day on which they read our parashah.

Ultimately, the “today” of which Deuteronomy speaks includes the “today” of the book’s audience—that is, the many “todays” of each person the text addresses. This is especially evident in 11:2–9 where Moses maintains that the members of the generation listening to his speech witnessed God’s miracles at the time of the exodus from Egypt—though in fact his audience is one generation removed from those events. Many of the Israelites in his audience were born during the forty years of

wandering through the desert. Even the oldest among them were but children at the time of the exodus itself, since all the adults who left Egypt (other than Moses, Joshua, and Caleb) died during the forty years of wandering. But Deuteronomy implicitly claims that in each and every generation, people must see themselves as if they had gone forth from Egypt, and so Deuteronomy can refer to the children's generation as having been present at their parents' liberation from slavery. Similarly, in every generation people must regard the lawgiving at Mount Horeb as something they themselves witnessed (as last week's parashah intimated at 5:3).

Deuteronomy wants the audience's acceptance of God's commands to occur "today," not in the past. Religious meaning seems reserved for a moment that knows neither past generations nor future ones, but only an eternal now. This is the reason our parashah, like the book of which it is part, uses the word "today" to refer to several different days: the "today" that matters is whatever day we happen to be reading Deuteronomy. As Jews, we leave Egypt—that is, we accept our freedom—every day, or at least we should. And as Jews, we receive God's command—that is, we accept the responsibility that comes with freedom—every day, or at least we should. Only when we realize that Parashat Eikev addresses each of us directly this Shabbat do we understand Deuteronomy's message: that we need to embrace the law as our own right now.

Deuteronomy is the first Jewish text that emphasizes "today," but hardly the last. The need for divine command to be understood as coming to us in the present is a central theme for what is widely regarded as the greatest work of Jewish philosophy of the twentieth century, Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*. There Rosenzweig writes,

The imperative of commandment makes no provision for the future; it can only conceive the immediacy of obedience . . . Thus the commandment is purely the present . . . All of revelation is subsumed under the great today. God commands "today," and "today" it is incumbent to obey his voice. It is in the today that the love of the lover lives, in this imperative today of the commandment. (The Star of Redemption, trans. William W. Hallo [Boston: Beacon Press, 1972], 177)

Similarly, in his influential essay "The Builders," Rosenzweig proclaims that in order for Jews to observe Jewish law authentically, God's command "must regain that today-ness in which all great Jewish periods have sensed the guarantee for its eternity." (*Zweistromland: Kleinere Schriften zu Glauben und Denken*, ed. Reinhold und Annemarie Mayer [Dordrech: Nijhoff, 1984], 707. Adapted from trans. by Nahum Glatzer)

Abraham Joshua Heschel, too, speaks of the need for commitment to happen in a moment that is always present; this is true of commitments humans have to other humans, and no less so for one's acceptance of commitments to God:

Revelation lasts a moment, acceptance continues . . . Sinai is both an event that happened once and for all, and an event that happens all the time. What God does,

happens both in time and in eternity. Seen from our vantage point, it happened once; seen from His vantage point, it happens all the time. About the arrival of the people at Sinai we read . . . “In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, on this day they came into the wilderness of Sinai” (Exodus 19:1). Here was an expression that puzzled the ancient rabbis: on this day? It should have said, on that day. This can only mean that the day of giving the Torah can never become past; that day is this day, every day. (God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism [New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1955], 213–15)*

The command, or *mitzvah*, that is the heart of Judaism cannot function if we regard it as something from our people’s past. A command can only be a command if God’s commanding, and our accepting, take place today. This week’s parashah, like Deuteronomy as a whole and Rosenzweig and Heschel, comes to remind us, from one bookend to the next, that Judaism is alive only if we understand the Torah commanding us today, every day. (*Benjamin D. Sommer is Professor of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at JTS*)

[Parashat Eikev by Cantor Sandy Horowitz](https://ajrsem.org/teachings/divreitorah/)
<https://ajrsem.org/teachings/divreitorah/>

In an episode of the Peanuts comic strip by Charles Schultz, Linus tells his sister Lucy that he wants to be a doctor. She replies in her big-sister way, “You could never be a doctor, you know why? Because you don’t love mankind, that’s why!” To which Linus replies:

“ I LOVE MANKIND...IT'S *PEOPLE* I CAN'T STAND!!”

This seems to illustrate Moses’ feeling towards the Israelites in Parashat Eikev. One can’t argue with his commitment to the Israelites as a people (“mankind”), while at the same time we experience his deep frustration with their behavior. As they prepare to enter the Promised Land, Moses’ words include a series of rebukes as he tells them, “You have been rebelling against the Lord since the day I have known you” ([Deut. 9:24](#)). He recounts their transgressions in detail – how they built a golden calf idol, and how the scouts who spied on the Promised Land showed little faith in God’s promise – “You did not believe Him, nor did you obey Him” ([Deut. 9:23](#)). He reminds them that God wanted to destroy them out of divine anger at their many transgressions, and that they were saved only because Moses himself argued on their behalf. Moses seems to be having an extended “Linus moment”.

Perhaps, however, Moses’ recounting of the peoples’ sins has a purpose which goes beyond his personal feelings of frustration. He tells them:

“Not because of your righteousness or because of the honesty of your heart, do you come to possess their land... but [rather] in order to fulfill the oath that the Lord swore to your forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ([Deut. 9:5](#)).”

Moses wants them to know that they are not being given the land based on their own merit. For they have little merit. Rather, they are the inheritors of a promise that was

made to their ancestors a very long time ago. And as such, these resentful and rebellious individuals are being reminded that they belong to something greater than themselves. When they enter the land and encounter other nations and other peoples, they must remember that, by means of their heritage, they are one people, God's people, Am Israel.

In the new land, reward and punishment will affect the Israelites in a way that they will not have experienced before. While in the wilderness, punishment was handed out to those who specifically transgressed God's laws or otherwise made God angry. When Miriam was perceived as having spoken against her brother Moses, God afflicted her with skin disease ([Num. 12:1-10](#)); no one else was affected. When Korah staged a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, God caused the earth to swallow him up along with his followers ([Num. 16:31-32](#)), while the non-rebels went unpunished.

In the new land, God's Presence will no longer be so direct. The Israelites will now experience God's pleasure and God's wrath, reward and punishment, by means of divinely-decreed acts of nature: If the people choose to follow the commandments, God tells them, "I will give the rain of your land in its time" ([Deut. 11:14](#)). But if they turn away and worship idols, Moses tells them that "the wrath of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will close off the heavens, and there will be no rain." ([Deut. 11:17](#)).

Providing or withholding rain as a means of reward and punishment means that everyone is equally affected, regardless of who sinned and who did not. Acts of nature do not discriminate. If there is no rain, all the crops will fail; with rain, there is prosperity for everyone. In this post-wilderness existence, the Israelites will be compelled to experience collective responsibility.

Parashat Eikev's teaching about collective responsibility has deep meaning for us, particularly in this time of the global pandemic. For if we honor social distancing, and if we wear our masks while in the presence of others, then – God willing – the threat of Covid-19 will abate. But if we do not heed the laws of science and common sense, if we do not respond to the call to act for the sake of others as well as ourselves, then our future, whether personal, national, or global, will continue to look very bleak.

The same may be said for global warming, or social or economic inequality, or any number of ills that affect us as a community. As with our ancestors, we're all in this together. We don't have to love or even like each other, but we must find a way to care about "mankind" – all of humanity – in order to survive and so that we may prosper. (*Cantor Sandy Horowitz (AJR '14) is an independent cantor and tutor who has served as AJR faculty.*)

[Eikev: 100 Streams by Rabbi Jay Kelman](#)

<https://www.torahinmotion.org/civicrm/mailing/view?reset=1&id=2792>

"And now, Israel, what does G-d, Ma Hashem, want from you but just to fear the Lord your G-d, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to worship the Lord your G-d with all

your heart and all your soul" (Devarim 10:12). In a seemingly strange play on the word ma, The Talmud (Menachot 43b) derives from this verse the obligation to recite me'ah, 100 blessings a day.

According to the Biblical text, the only blessing that one is obligated to say is birchat hamazon after a meal, a mitzvah that appears earlier in our parsha. Though not explicitly mentioned, our Sages derive from the verse "When I call out the name of G-d ascribe greatness to our Lord" (Devarim 32:3) a biblical command to recite birchat hatorah. These blessings, thanking G-d for choosing the Jewish people and giving us the gift of Torah, have been incorporated into our prayer book. All the other many, many brachot that we are so accustomed to saying are rabbinic in nature.

The derivation from this verse of a requirement to say 100 brachot is what is called in rabbinic literature an ashmacha, a rabbinic teaching in which the biblical verse serves as a "hook" to connect a rabbinic law with a verse in the Torah. These rabbinic teachings make no claim to represent the deeper meaning of the biblical text - something they do claim when using, for example, the 13 hermeneutical principles of Rabbi Yishmael teaching how to read between the lines of the biblical text - but serve as an early form of a mnemonic device.

If the Rabbis link a verse to a rabbinic teaching one should expect to find a connection between the two. What specifically does reciting brachot have to do with fear of G-d? Why not somehow derive this teaching from birchat hamazon or even from one of the many blessings bestowed by G-d upon us?

Such a question presumes that fear means to be afraid of. While the notion of being afraid of G-d does exist in our tradition, it plays a secondary role to the ideal meaning of yira'at Hashem which is more properly translated as awe of the Divine Creator. It is this definition that allows the mitzvot of yira'at Hashem and Ahavat Hashem, two of our most basic obligations to the Almighty, to co-exist.

Fear and love are conflicting emotions. We cannot truly love those we fear and those we love are too close to us to actually fear. Each of these mitzvot exists independently of the other. We are commanded to fear our parents^[1] but to love our neighbour.

We can, however, love those whom we are in awe of. We aspire to be like them and to emulate them in whatever ways possible. People in the Western world tend to be in awe of entertainers, star athletes or perhaps successful businesspeople. For the overwhelming majority there is no hope of actually reaching those "goals". Yet paradoxically, despite the unbridgeable gap between human and Divine, we can actually emulate G-d. "The same way He is kind and merciful so you shall be kind and merciful" (Shabbat 133b). This ability to be like G-d, a manifestation of the Divine image of G-d in which we were created, is something that brings in its wake great awe and great love of G-d.

"And G-d blessed them and said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it'" (Breisheet 1:28). The first two blessings appearing in the Torah are to

reproduce - first the animals and then humans. Our likeness to G-d reaches its apex when a new life is brought into this world. It is the greatest blessing we have and greatest we can give. It is truly awe-inspiring.

Bracha, a blessing, comes from the same root as the word breicha, a stream, signifying the giving of sustenance to others. Blessings are one of the ways in which we share what we have with others. G-d has created an awe-inspiring world and has blessed us by creating us. There can be nothing more natural than blessing our Creator at every turn, reminding ourselves of the awesomeness of creation and the Creator.

[1] As love denotes equality, there can be no mitzva to love a parent; rather, we must fear, or shall we say be in awe of them. It is our spouse we must love but never fear. As we discussed here the Netziv explains that was the problem in the relationship between Yitzchak and Rivkah.

A commentary provided by Erwin Mevorah

Perasha - Ekeb- rav Fischel Schacter shilita

The rabbi began his talk this week by saying how people are listing to his class in the "dark"

Due to the power outages that are occurring . How many things says the rabbi we take for granted in life . Asks the rabbi when we walk down a street and we see trees lining the street - do we think for one minute that this tree will fall suddenly . Is this something that we worry about - not really . Says the rabbi - we live our lives and we have things that bother us and things that worries us . The rabbi quoted rav Sadok that we shouldn't waste our time by worrying - because the things that we worry about are things that we shouldn't worry about. What should we worry about is - are we connecting to HASHEM the way we are suppose to , are we serving him properly - this is a few of the things that worrying about is justified . We must pray to HASHEM and ask him - for peace of mind and to pray that we should not worry . We must make our case to HASHEM and we need to do something in order for him to hears us .

Says the rabbi when a person has a negative attitude , and he is angry person -it's as if he is not letting HASHEM run the world .

The rabbi told over about a lady that passed away at the age of over 103 years old - she was born in Germany and she was a world class athlete . She was scheduled to compete in the 1936 Olympics . But due to the fact that she was Jewish - she wasn't allowed to compete . She ran away from her homeland never looking back and not concerned for her future -and she settled in another land . Says the rabbi - she outlived all the Natzis by many decades .

She had the attitude that said -HASHEM this is your world - you are in charge - I'm moving forward and not looking back .

This week we celebrated Tu - Be Ab- the 15 of Ab - a very joyous day. There were many great things that happened to am Yisrael on this day . One of them is that in each of the 40 years that the people were in the wilderness - 15,000 people passed away - due

to the sin of the spies . Now if we do the math - if each year 15,000 people pass away the first year there were still many people of the original 600,000 alive- each year the people would say - It's not going to be me that passes away - it's the other person . Each year the numbers of people decreased . The last year that they were in the wilderness - there were only 15,000 left of the ones that were suppose to pass away .Now those people knew that that was it - they are the only ones remaining - they prayed at that time with all their might - they cried out to HASHEM with everything they had - HASHEM says - this is what I was waiting for . They stopped passing away on that day of Tu be Ab .

Another thing that occurred on this day is that the people of A town called Beiter were allowed to be buried . The Romans were on a rampage - the only place they didn't conquer was Beiter - they put up a fierce battle . Finally when the Romans destroyed Beiter - they didn't allow the people to be buried . Many years later when this decree was overturned - and they were given permission to bury the people - there was a tremendous miracle - the bodies of the people didn't decompose . The people realized the miracle and immediately incorporated into the beracha of Bircat ha Mazon a fourth beracha - Ha tob U Meteb that HASHEM is good and he does good . They appreciated the great miracle .

These are the days before Rosh Hashana where HASHEM re creates the world - we have take this time to re create ourselves .

The rabbi told over how rav Moshe Feinstein zsl - in his older years by doctors order was not allowed to go to the Mikva . The doctor said - you can only go one time per year . One would think what one time will the great rav Moshe pick to go to the Mikva - maybe ereb Rosh ha Shana , or ereb Kippur - the most holy days of the year . But rav Moshe picked - ereb Succot - when asked why - he responded - I want to do what HASHEM wants me to do . When one goes to the Mikva on ereb Succot he is fulfilling the Mitzva of purifying himself before the festival - this is how rav Moshe lived - just to do the will of HASHEM . Says the rabbi - we want to become best friends with HASHEM - how do we accomplish this - by living our lives the way he wants us to .

The beracha of Bricat ha Mazon is said after we finish eating - because when one eats he tends to forget about HASHEM .Now the Torah is commanding us - bless HASHEM - don't forget who gave you this food , don't forget that HASHEM gives us everything . This is where we have the opportunity to connect with him . HASHEM wants our relationship .

Shabbat Shalom

Yahrtzeits

- * Marianne Sender remembers her father Roman Popiel on Sunday the 9th.
- * Harriet Katz remembers her husband Erving Katz on Monday the 10th.
- * Rabbi Lisa Vernon remembers her grandfather David Rosenfeld (David Ben Yosef)on Thursday the 13th.

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And Now A Recipe From by Einat of the Restaurant Taim  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1096915320678667>

Note: I made this recipe and it was delicious. I also used the seasoning from this recipe to make Chicken Schwarma but instead of frying the chicken, I sauted it. I was told that that also was delicious (I'm a vegetarian so I had to find out from my most critical family member).

The recipe for the seasoning makes about 2 cups. There will be a lot left over after making the cauliflower so it can be used for many other meals. If the link above works, it should take you to a video of Einat preparing the cauliflower. I watched it and wrote down the instructions which you will see below. Enjoy.

By the way Taim is a small falafel restaurant chain in the city. It is kosher and quite delicious.

### Schwarma Seasoning

1/2 cup whole cumin seeds

1/2 cup whole coriander seeds

5 cardamom pods

1/3 cup ground turmeric

1/3 cup sweet paprika

1 to 5 tsp freshly ground pepper

2 Tbs baharat

1/3 cup granulated onion

Mix all of the above and put aside.

Mix 2 cups of rice flour\* with two tbs of the Schwarma seasoning and 1 and 1/2 tbs of salt. Mix very well. Put aside.

Cut apart cauliflower into florets.

Put cauliflower into salted boiling water for 3 minutes.

Take cauliflower out of boiling water and put in ice water for 2 minutes.

Drain Cauliflower for at least 2 minutes.

Put cauliflower into flour mixture. Mix around so that cauliflower is covered in flour.

When cauliflower is completely covered with flour put into hot oil. Fry until cauliflower starts to brown.

Take out and sprinkle some Schwarma seasoning on top.

Serve with tahina.

\* You can substitute the rice flour for one cup of all purpose flour and ½ cup of corn starch. The corn starch makes it crispy.

Note: I chose to grind up the seasoning mix although Einat didn't say you should do that. A mortar & pestle worked really well.