

# HAVURAT YISRAEL WEEKLY NEWS

20 Av 5774

Shabbat Eikev

August 15 – 16, 2014

## Shabbat Shalom!

7:00 pm Mincha / Kabbalat Shabbat (All Spring & Summer)  
7:37 pm Candle Lighting

Parsha: p. 980, Haftorah: p.1197  
8:45 am Mishnayot  
9:00 am Shacharit  
9:33 am Latest time for Shema  
11:00 am Drasha  
11:45 am Kiddush  
6:15 pm Perek in the Park  
6:55 pm Gemara Shiur  
7:35 pm Mincha & Seuda Shlisheet  
8:38 pm Maariv & Havdalah

**Kiddush & Seudah Shlisheet** sponsored by HY members.  
Not yet a member? Please join!

## KIDDUSH IS FOR ALL OF US — Be a Sponsor!

☆ August 23—Louis & Rachel Ordentlich

## SHLOSHIOM FOR OLGA ORDENTLICH, Z'L

This Monday, August 18 at 7:30 pm in the shul  
Mincha at 7:30 sharp followed by siyum mishnayot and Maariv.

## Please Support our Weekday Morning Minyan

During the Summer, many people are away making it difficult to assure a minyan every day. Please make a special effort!

**Voice your objection to the Metropolitan Opera's planned performances of "The Death of Klinghoffer."** Email your feelings to General Manager Peter Gelb at [pgelb@metopera.org](mailto:pgelb@metopera.org)

### BUILDING COMMITTEE

(donors of \$50,000 or more)  
David & Debbie Sosnowik  
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**Refuah Shlema** to: Yoseph ben Chava (Fred Isaac), Rachel bat Penina, Nesanel Bezalal ben Golda Hachit (Steve Reichenenthal), Shoshana bat Chana, Micha ben Devorah, Miriam bat Tziporah, Leya bat Mina, Eliyahu ben Chanena, Danit Esther bat Yaira Shoshana, Binyamin ben Ruth, Frida Chanah bat Sarah Leah, Ahava Emunah bat Chava Ehta, Binyamin ben Ruth, Jane Stiefel, Elona bat Shulamit.



## HIGH HOLIDAYS 5775

UNDER THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP OF  
**RABBI DAVID L. ALGAZE**

### ROSH HASHANAH

Thursday September 25 and Friday September 26

### YOM KIPPUR

Friday Evening October 3 (KOL NIDRE)  
Saturday October 4 (YIZKOR at 11:30 am)

OUR WARM & INSPIRING SERVICES WILL BE HELD  
IN OUR CURENT LOCATION 68-60 AUSTIN STREET  
FULLY AIR CONDITIONED

COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE — NON-MEMBERS WELCOME  
TICKETS ON SALE: MEMBERS \$110 / NON-MEMBERS \$125



## Around the Neighborhood

☆ **JEWISH MUSIC UNDER THE STARS**, Cunningham Park, 196th St. & Union Turnpike at 7 pm. Wednesday Aug. 20: **Zalman Mlotok's Magical World of Yiddish Songs**. FREE (bring a blanket or chair)

**Our beautiful new shul is being built now. Be a part of it. Join one of our Building Fund Committees!**



SUNDAY August 17 / 21 Av	MONDAY August 18 / 22 Av	TUESDAY August 19 / 23 Av	WEDNESDAY August 20 / 24 Av	THURSDAY August 21 / 25 Av	FRIDAY August 22 / 26 Av
7:30 am Amud Yomi 8:00 am Shacharit	6:20 am Amud Yomi 6:50 am Shacharit  7:30 pm Mincha, Siyum	6:20 am Amud Yomi 6:50 am Shacharit	6:20 am Amud Yomi 6:50 am Shacharit  8:30 pm R. Kraft's class	6:20 am Amud Yomi 6:50 am Shacharit	6:20 am Amud Yomi 6:50 am Shacharit  7:00 pm Mincha & Kabbalat Shabbat 7:27 pm Candle Lighting

## HAVURAT YISRAEL

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## FEAR IS THE GATEWAY OF TRUE WISDOM

By Rabbi David Algaze

*“And now Israel what does Hashem your G-d ask of you? Only to fear G-d, to walk in all His ways and to love Him and to serve Hashem your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Devarim 10:12)*

What does G-d want from us? What a terrifying yet so relevant question for all people. What does G-d want from me? What do I need to do in the world? Such existential questions have tormented people from time immemorial, yet here we have the answer: “fear G-d.” This concept of *yir’at shamayim* is at the center of Jewish religious thought and it is the epitome of religiosity and piety in the Jewish universe. How can this be? Is all that is expected of us is to fear G-d? Why is “fear” the main requirement for faith and belief? Finally, how can the love of G-d be associated with fear?

First, we need to clarify the meaning of the Hebrew word, *yir’ah*, usually translated as fear. The word fear evokes a very unpalatable emotion. We run away from fear and we do not deem it a desirable feeling; in fact, we are told to avoid, control and conquer it. Why is the Torah urging us to “fear” G-d and how do we reconcile this commandment with the natural tendency in Man to suppress fear?

We ought to conquer fear in general, but this is not the regular fear; this is a specific sensation called the “fear of G-d” and it is only about this fear that the Torah is referring. The feeling of *Yir’ah* of G-d (*yir’at shamayim*) stems from the realization that G-d is infinite and all Powerful and that Man is less meaningful than a worm is to us. That G-d passed over angels, seraphs and other divine creatures to choose as lowly and defective a creature such as Man as His partner should by itself inspire a strong feeling of inadequacy and fear. The proximity to the Infinite, to a Supreme Reason and Light, should induce in us fear and embarrassment. Imagine how we would feel if a president of a country or a king were to visit us in our home while we are unprepared and the house is disheveled and in disarray! The imperfections in Man become more evident as we come closer to the Perfection of the Creator. This is the source of the fear of G-d.

The question is if we develop this feeling naturally, why should there be a request to fear Him? Since that emotion would spring in our hearts as soon as we come close to G-d, then the command appears superfluous and unnecessary. However, the Torah gives a profound insight into the nature of Man. Although we feel a natural sense of fear when experiencing G-d, nevertheless we avoid that uncomfortable sensation by alienating ourselves from Him. By creating a distance between us and G-d, we are able to control that fear and keep it at bay. Thus, we sacrifice the precious closeness with the Creator in order to shun the emotion of fear that makes us so uncomfortable. Hence the need for the commandment to fear G-d. This also explains the Rabbinic dictum, “Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven.” That sentiment can only be the result of our personal decision and choice.

There are two basic reasons why G-d requires us to fear Him. The first may be that G-d wants us to feel close to Him. Acknowledging G-d in our lives and experience the precious gift of closeness with Him gives at the same time a feeling of fear and dread of being near such power of cosmic dimensions. As we hold on to this emotion, this feeling of fear soon transforms itself into a new emotion of a higher nature, perhaps best translated as reverence or awe. This is the impression that we are in the presence of a very great power that transcends all definitions and boundaries and Who has unlimited capacity for action. To be able to acknowledge

this immense power in the world is fundamental to our relationship with G-d despite the fear that accompanies it. This sentiment is at the root of all our living as Jews; it is the premise that we always are under the gaze of G-d and that we are in His presence and that He is in charge of every aspect of our existence. That is enough to generate a feeling of *yir’ah*. Yet, we have a choice: we can either choose to fear Him or to ignore His presence and thus the awe associated with it. G-d has given us everything except this; fear or awe of G-d is the one thing that is entirely in our hands. If we choose to acknowledge and submit to the fact that He is in our world, the logical corollary will be the “Fear of G-d.”

The second reason for the fear of G-d is to induce in Man a correct appreciation of our relationship with the Creator. Although He wants us to feel close to Him we must also acknowledge how small, limited and feeble we are when compared to Him. When confronted with greatness, we can respond with a sense of awe or we can deny the greatness in front of us. Sometimes we are afraid to contemplate the infinite abyss and we attempt to reduce the majesty in front of us so the gap does not appear so forbidding and frightening. This is one of the main obstacles to the belief in G-d. Atheism is the philosophy of Man when he tries to belittle the majesty and awesomeness of the Creator in order to avoid feeling small, dependent and at the mercy of a Supreme Being. By imagining a G-d not so powerful, not so omnipotent, Man can feel less threatened. Thus, Man fights the feeling of inadequacy by attempting to reduce the magnitude of G-d Himself. This is what the Torah asks us to avoid. If you experience the awe or the fear, do not fight it; keep it in your heart as a permanent emotion that will guide you in your relationship to G-d. Fear of G-d thus becomes the basis for all the correct conceptions of G-d, of His infinite powers and unbounded will. This is the one thing He expects of us; this emotion is in our hands. We can either experience this fear and through it see G-d in the correct light or we can choose the path of making form ourselves gods that are not so powerful, gods we can manipulate and control, gods whose laws always adapt to our ever changing mores and tastes.

This fear is the key to all knowledge and especially the knowledge of G-d. As King David says, “The fear of the L-rd is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalms 111:10) Every correct philosophy and every right act starts with *yir’at shamayim*. The Talmud compares *yir’at shamayim* to the gateway to every right idea and knowledge. “Every man who has knowledge of Torah but has no fear of G-d is like a treasurer who has been given the keys of the inner chamber of the treasury but not the keys to the outer one, how shall he get in to the treasure?” (Shabbat 31b) Without “fear of Hashem”—the correct gateway-- no knowledge is valid or true and all knowledge of Torah is false and inexact. Rabbi Hirsch notes that the cantillation notes in this verse render the verbs “to fear”, “to walk” and “to love” as parts of one attitude, parts of the same demand. In other words, fearing G-d leads us also to love Him. The “fear” is not the end; it is the gateway to love G-d and to walk in His ways. As we learn the beautiful and pleasant ways of the Torah and His wisdom, we appreciate the happiness that they bring us and we end up loving the Giver of such wonderful directives for a life of beatitude and happiness. This fear, the fear of G-d, then leads to love and ultimately to true happiness.

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