

# THE CLANTON PARK HERALD

A monthly newsletter, intended to provide timely and pertinent information to *shul* members  
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[bulletin@clantonpark.com](mailto:bulletin@clantonpark.com)

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## From the Rav...

### All the Different Languages

With all the attention that is paid to our *parasha's* preamble, to the *mabul*, to the flood, too little notice is given to the story with which our *parasha* closes, to the story of the generation of dispersion. And so, let us divert our attention towards the story of dispersion and see why and how that story speaks to us.

The *possuk* in 11:1 reads: "*Va'yih kol ha'aretz safa achas u'devarim achadim*," "And the whole earth was of one language and of one common purpose." A shared language does, after all, allow for a common vision. A shared language can help rally an entire group behind a single cause. In this case, that united cause was the impending construction of the infamous tower of *Bavel*. The purpose of this tower is a matter of much debate, but for the objectives of the current discussion, suffice it to say, that the motifs here were sinful ones. To nip this unfolding sin in the bud, Hashem confused the language of the participants; Hashem caused them to start communicating in a plethora of different languages, creating a linguistic bedlam that precluded effective communication. These new language barriers shattered the unity of vision and in the end doomed the entire project.

You read this story and you ask yourself: how did this linguistic division occur? Did the builders simply wake up the next day, each speaking a separate language? Or was there some underlying issue that caused the fragmentation?

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch's perspective, using the etymological approach that was his trademark, is that the differences in language were more than just differences in words and in grammatical structures. Those differences, Rabbi Hirsch claims, were and still are, reflections of differences in national psyche. Those differences in national psyche began developing during this historical period; they were the root cause for the ensuing linguistic differentiation. Those differences in psyche and in perspective can and did shatter a common vision just as effectively as actual differences in language.

Rabbi Hirsch's theory, that language differentiation is the end result of cultural

differentiation, can be culled from an analysis of the terms that different cultures use for similar situations. Take, for example, the different words with which different languages describe a nation or a people. Germans use the word "folk". The word "folk" shares a common root with the word *folgen*, which, in German, means "to follow". The disconcerting picture that comes to mind, borne out, unfortunately, by the tragic events of WWII is of a people who define their national esprit de corps by a willingness to follow their leader, no matter where it is that he is going. We, on the other hand, use the word *am*. *Am's* doppelganger, Rabbi Hirsch notes, is the closely related word *im*, which, like *am*, is formed from the two consonants, *ayin* and *mem*. *Im* in *lashon hakodesh* means, "with." The Jewish nation, the Jewish *am*, is a nation of *im*; it is a people who work with one another, rather than a people who blindly follow the particular leader of the particular moment.

Similar contrasts can be drawn from the words with which different cultures describe their leaders. We use the term, *adon*. *Adon*, does, of course, mean leader or master, but the word *adon* also identifies with its other meaning: support. And yes, the Torah perspective, the Jewish perspective of leadership is of a leader who is also or even more so a base, a foundation of support for the communal enterprise. So very different from the English "lord" or the German *herr*, isn't it?

Differences in psyche have not disappeared, have they? Communities like ours experience this issue on a daily basis, don't they? We all come from the different parts of the different worlds that were destroyed in the maelstroms of the recent past. Even if we all speak to one another in the same language, and even if we are sharing a joint communal enterprise, our backgrounds, our perspectives, are all vastly different from one another. And different psyches are all too common even among people who come from similar backgrounds. And so, *dor haflagah* type problems arise. There are miscommunications; there are faux pas; there are gaffes. And there are no simple ways of preventing all of those faux pas. But we can keep reminding ourselves that these faux pas are neither malevolent, nor are they intentional. They

are simply the little mistakes that happen all the time, when different people who have different backgrounds, different *hashkofos* and different ways of communicating share a joint enterprise. Reminding ourselves, time and again, of the innocuousness of these mistakes, might allow us to be just a bit more forgiving, just a bit little more understanding. In the end, we'll only be better off because of it.

### **Mazel Tovs**

#### **Sponsored by ...**

**ZEMER ORCHESTRA (416) 633-5936**  
"Toronto's Freilich Orchestra!" and....

**WAYNE KURTZ VIDEO PRODUCTIONS**  
(416) 633-4941 "May we only meet b'simcha"

David and Serena Koschitzky, on the bat-mitzvah of their daughter, Nediva. Mazel tov to the entire Koschitzky family.

Norm and Arlene Weisbart, on the engagement of their daughter, Shevy, to Nechemia Weinberg, son of Hershy and Elaine Weinberg. Mazel tov, as well, to great-grandmothers, Ruth Gilbert, and Bernice Zubata.

Dr. Allan and Susan Seidenfeld, on the marriage of their daughter, Ahuva, to Josh Kleiner of New York.

Rabbi Leo and Faygie Davids, and Jack and Esther Erez, on the birth of a granddaughter, to their children, Eli and Leora Davids in Jerusalem.

Chaim and Rachel Fletcher, on the birth of a grandson, Raphael Ayran, to their children, Tzvi and Ilana Fletcher, in Jerusalem.

Marvin and Judy Sigler, on the birth of a grandson, to their children, Moshe and Aviva Sigler.

Eli and Renee Rubinstein, on the birth of a granddaughter, Shira Esther, to their children, Ilan and Dana Rubinstein. Mazel tov, as well, to the great-grandparents, Bill and Judith Rubinstein.

### **Condolences**

To Nathan and Jerry Kirsh, on the passing of their mother, Mrs. Ruth Kirsh.

To Mrs. Blanche Janowski, on the passing of her sister, Gertie Zilberleib.

### **Bikur Cholim**

**May they all have a refuah shleima, and may we see them in our midst bimhera**

Baruch Javasky, 15 Gladiola Ct. (416) 636-6968  
Dovid Tward, 86 DeQuincy Blvd. (416) 635-8129  
Percy Kopstick, at Baycrest  
Izzy Rubenstein, 146 Faywood Blvd (416) 633-1854

Please phone before attempting to visit. If you are aware of any other *cholim*, please inform Irwin Diamond or Joe Edell.

### **Shul News and Rules**

#### **A Message from the Decorum Committee ...**

The Decorum Committee would like to thank the entire *shul* for their cooperation in supporting the initiatives that have been implemented to improve decorum in the *shul*. We believe there has been a marked improvement in the atmosphere during *davening*. With everyone's continued help we hope to carry on with efforts to improve the *ruach* of our *tefilla*. If you are interested in participating on the Decorum Committee please speak to Josh Levi or Bobby Silberstein.

#### **Holocaust Education Week At Clanton Park...**

On Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM, as part of Holocaust Education Week, the *shul* will be screening an award-winning film called "Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance after the Holocaust". The film's director, Menachem Daum, will also be in attendance, and will lead a question and answer discussion after the film. This is the first time that our *shul* is participating in the Holocaust Education Week program, so it would be nice to have a good turnout. The screening will take place in the Meyer Pik Social Hall. Separate seating will be available. Admission is \$5 per person, \$18 per family.

#### **Taking Responsibility for our Children...**

Recently, unattended and unsupervised children playing in front of the *shul*, caused damage to *shul* property. The Executive reminds parents that they are responsible for their children, and parents will be charged for damages caused by their children.

**G'milus Chasadim ...** Anyone interested in making a donation to the *shul's G'milus Chasadim* fund, which helps support needy individuals in our own community, please see Irwin Diamond.

## Youth News

**Youth minyan...** Beginning Parshas Noach, there will be a 10:00 AM youth minyan, for ages 7 to 11, led by Yehuda Levi and Moshe Adler.

**Ticket program...** will re-commence on Shabbos Noach, to be supervised by Martin Hoffmitz, Dr. Judah Habot and Bronya Levi. Beautiful prizes will be awarded to deserving young *daveners*.

### New (Old) Feature

In past versions of the *shul* bulletin, Dr. Leibe Warner would often contribute Torah quizzes, which were challenging and enjoyed by children and adults alike. So, back by popular demand, *The Clanton Park Herald* is proud to present...

#### The Bereishis Quiz

by Dr. Leibe Warner

- 1) Who lived the second longest?
- 2) Name three instances where the number 400 is mentioned?
- 3) What man had a son who had the same name as the man's father?
- 4) Identify a *passuk* that has a total of ten Hebrew Letters?
- 5) Who was the first person to cry?
- 6) What Hebrew letter is absent from the description of the creation of the world?
- 7) Identify the first time that *B'nei Yisrael* is mentioned.
- 8) Name three people who said the word: "*pa-amayim*" ("twice").
- 9) About which two women was it said: "*kach ve'leich*" ("take her and go")?
- 10) Identify four men who said "*lo yadati*" ("I don't know.")

Send your correct answers (after *Shabbos*) to [bulletin@clantonpark.com](mailto:bulletin@clantonpark.com), and your name will be entered into a draw for Raptor tickets.

## D'var Torah

### What is Humility? – Part 2

Ken Stollon

Humility should not be confused with low self-esteem. The story of Shaul *HaMelech*, which is recorded in chapters 9 through 31 of *Shmuel Aleph*, presents such a case. Shaul seems to display the signs of humility. Like Moshe, he unwillingly accepts his role as leader. But, unlike Moshe, whose humility is an expression of inner strength, Shaul's is a humility born of weakness. His lack of inner strength and faith ultimately make him unsuited for royalty.

The initial presentation of Biblical characters – how we first see them – is always significant. In Shaul's "opening scene," he is searching fruitlessly for his father's lost donkeys, not a very auspicious introduction for a future king of Israel. He wanders aimlessly, and eventually gives up on finding the donkeys. He then meets a man who brings him to Shmuel *HaNavi*. Shmuel, forewarned by Hashem of Shaul's arrival, greets Shaul with great *kavod* and ceremony, but Shaul's response, apparently a humble one, only betrays his insecurities: "But I am only a Benjamite, and am from the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and furthermore my family is the youngest of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin; why, then, have you spoken to me this way?" (*Shmuel Aleph* 9:21).

In the next scene, after Shmuel anoints Shaul, the people are gathered together to greet their new king. Shaul, however, cannot be found; he is hiding among the baggage. (*Shmuel Aleph* 10:22). Although some *meforshim* cite this as an indication of his humility, it is certainly exaggerated and almost comical, and in any case inappropriate behaviour for a leader of Israel.

Subsequent successes on the battlefield seem to give Shaul some credibility as a leader, but his true colours are revealed in the war against Amalek. Hashem gives clear instructions to utterly destroy Amalek, men, women, children, and even animals. Yet through some perverted sense of reasoning, Shaul decides to keep Agag, the Amalekite king, alive, and, as well, to spare the lives of the sheep, which were set aside as *korbonos* and were eaten by the soldiers. Killing a king – even a pagan king – is no small feat – and requires a sense of moral fortitude, which Shaul obviously did not possess.

When Shmuel arrives on the scene and sees Agag still alive, he becomes enraged. He slays Agag, but not before he gives a biting indictment of Shaul's "humility". Shmuel sees it for what it is – not true humility – but low self-esteem. He says to Shaul:

"*Ha-lo im katon ata b'eineicha?*" "Are you so small in your own eyes?" (*Shmuel Aleph 15:17*)

This pronouncement brings to mind a similar statement made by the *meraglim*, after returning from their tour of *Eretz Yisrael*:

"*Va'nehi b'eineinu ka-chagavim, v'chen hayeenu b'eineihem.*" "We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes." (*Bamidbar 13:33*)

Like Shaul, the *meraglim* lack the requisite faith in themselves and in Hashem, to accomplish what Hashem meant for them to accomplish, to actualize the goal which was clearly set out for them from the very beginning (i.e., to enter and conquer the land). Both Shaul and the *meraglim* see themselves as small and weak in comparison to others, and find themselves unable to follow Hashem's command. Hashem's punishment for a people who cannot muster the faith, courage and strength of purpose to move forward is a fitting one: to wander aimlessly in the desert for forty years. Not just a punishment, it is the natural consequence of the insecurities of the *meraglim*; not able to move forward, they are forced into a state of "going nowhere". Of course, Shaul's aimless wandering after donkeys resonates with this theme, as well.

The waning days of Shaul's kingship – as he struggles with the threat of David supplanting him – further demonstrate his character weaknesses. In the end, Shaul is a tragic figure, who cannot cope with the challenges of monarchy and cannot compete with the stronger and more charismatic leader, David. Still, there is much to be learned from Shaul – and from the *meraglim* – not about what humility is, but what it is not.

(To be continued, in the next issue of the *Clanton Park Herald*.)

### **Report from Eretz Yisrael**

Quite a few Clanton Parkers spent the *Yom Tov* in Israel. I did a brief mini-interview with two of our members, Paul Tobias and Murray Shore, and asked them about their trip.

"The people we saw were in depression over *Gush Katif*," said Paul Tobias, who spent the *chag* in Rechovot, with his son Gershon and his family. The mood was somewhat sombre over

how "pathetically" the displaced settlers were treated.

Nevertheless, it was quite uplifting to go to the *Kotel* on *Chol Hamoed*. "You could barely walk, the place was so crowded with people. Tourism is obviously up!"

Murray Shore *shepped nachas* as he too *davened* at the *Kotel* on *Yom Tov*, and was able to hear his son *lain* from the Torah. "Not only was my son the *ba'al koreh* at a *minyán* at the *Kotel*, but I got an *aliya* – at the *Kotel*! It doesn't get much better than that!"

Paul Tobias also *kvelled* over his son, whose company, Eldit Systems, after competing with many other international companies, recently won several large Defence contracts from France and the UK. "They saw my son's name on the company roster, and they couldn't say 'no'," states Tobias. "Even though unemployment remains high in the country, Israeli companies are competing well globally. "

Murray Shore summarizes the whole experience: "The best place to spend *Yom Tov*, with your children, grandchildren and – *im yirtze Hashem* – great-grandchildren is *Eretz Yisrael*. Try it!"

### **Left Over Space**

Some extra space, and it's *parashas* Noach ...well, I couldn't help myself ... here are a few Noach jokes...

Q: What did Noach say as he was loading the *teiva*?

A: "Now I herd everything."

Q: Where did Noach keep the bees?

A: In the ark hives.

Q: Where was Noach when the lights went out?

A: In d'ark.

Q: Who ran the first canning factory?

A: Noach. He had a boat full of preserved pairs.

Finally, a submission from our beloved proofreader, David Spiegel, who attributes this to his younger brother, Elliott:

Q: What did Noach serve for dessert on the *teiva*?

A: *Mabul* Cake! (Marble Cake -- when told with a Brooklyn accent, it sounds even better.)