



Edmond J. Safra Synagogue ✧ Joseph S. Jemal Synagogue

✧ Shabbat Ki Tabo Prayer Schedule ✧



Friday, September 16th

Minha & Arbit Shir Hashirim.....6:30 pm

Candle Lighting6:45 pm

Shabbat September 17th

Shahrit.....8:15 am

Classes.....5:20 pm

Minha followed by Seuda Shelisheet.....6:20 pm

Arbit.....7:25 pm

Shabbat Ends.....7:44 pm

*All Shabbat Minyanim will be held in the Edmond J. Safra building.
All weekday Minyanim will be held in the Joseph S. Jemal building.*

High Holiday Seats Reservations

We are now processing seat reservations for the High Holidays. We are certain to be sold out in the main sanctuary. We would like to accommodate those who wish to pray First Minyan. If you are interested, please call our office at 732- 517-1155, or email safrashulnj@gmail.com

We would like to close our books for the season, **please be sure to pay all open balances without delay.**

At this time there still remain a few lifetime seats available for purchase. Please see the committee to assure availability for the High Holidays.

Ki Tabo

APPRECIATION THE KEY TO HAPPY LIVING

What does a Jew do when G-d blesses him with a new crop? As described in this week's *parashah*, he brings the first fruits – the *bikurim* – to the *Beit HaMikdash*, and makes the special *viduy* declaration over them. The purpose of this mitzvah is to declare that one is grateful for all the good that he is given by G-d. This is also the reason why the declaration is called *viduy* – a term that usually means *confession*. The *viduy* over the first fruits is a *confession* of gratitude. This whole procedure was done with pomp and ceremony which included a parade with fancy baskets and bulls adorned in gold. The *viduy* itself was recited in a loud voice.

This is not the only place where the Torah *commands us* to show that we are grateful (*makir tovah*). Wise people know that the difference between the happy and the despondent is usually not due to money, pleasure, honor, or the like. Rather, happy people are happy because they know how to appreciate what they have been given. And if their cup appears to be half empty, they know that it's really half full. Even if they have almost no money/pleasure/honor, they feel appreciative to G-d for bringing up the sun each morning. This alone can fill one's heart with happiness. But aside from the benefit a person derives from perceiving the world this way, the Jew is *obligated* by G-d to thank Him

for the sun every day in the morning prayers. Although many people would be more thankful to G-d for winning the lottery, this is a grave mistake.

If we take a moment to ask ourselves what we need most for survival, we might be inclined to mention money, support, family, friends, house, car, Blackberry, etc. But the *Chovot HaLevovot* helps us see that we are way off base. He makes the following remarkable observation: *What we need most, G-d gives us in the greatest abundance and at the cheapest price – despite the high demand.* The thing we really need most is air. Thus G-d made sure that air is free and freely available. The next most important thing for survival is water. Not surprisingly, water is the second most abundant item on the planet. Third is food – also available in abundance... Just thinking about how much G-d actually supports us should inspire us to be appreciative (and to remember just how much we need Him).

Why do people sometimes avoid feeling appreciation? The answer is that appreciation creates obligation – the obligation to recognize that we are not in power; the obligation to be thankful to G-d, and to obey His every word.

One way to increase our capacity to be appreciative to G-d is to view ourselves as guests in His world. Concerning guests, the Talmud says: *What is the difference between a good guest and a bad one? A good guest says: "Whatever the host made or did was to accommodate me." The bad guest says: "Whatever the host made or did was for*

himself. I am just tagging along" (Berachot 58b). With regard to our visit in this world as well, we have to choose what kind of guest we want to be. Do we want to be a good guest and say: "G-d brought the sun up for me today," or do we want to be a bad guest in this world and say: "G-d had to bring up the sun anyway. I just happen to be here"?

Our Rabbis teach that when we wake up in the morning and bless G-d for opening our eyes, we need to be thankful to G-d for creating light as well – and all the benefits we get from light. We even need to be thankful to G-d for putting it into the human mind to invent glasses. Indeed, the glasses sitting right on our nose can serve as a reminder of all these kindnesses. It seems, by the way, that Moshe Rabbeinu himself made use of a "built-in" reminder to keep G-d's kindness to him in the forefront of his mind. We see this in his reluctance to accept G-d's request that he lead the Jews out of Egyptian slavery. Moshe emphasized that his lisp would prevent him from doing the job effectively. But why, we wonder, didn't Moshe ask G-d to cure the lisp? The explanation seems to be that Moshe did not want to ever forget his gratitude to G-d for saving his life as a baby when Pharaoh put him to the test. The Midrash tells us that a dish of gold and a dish of coals were put in front of the baby Moshe. Had he reached for the gold, this would have "clinched" the stargazers' case that Moshe was destined to be the redeemer of the Jews – and Pharaoh would thus have put him to death. But G-d saved his life by having an angel push his hand away from the gold, and over to the coals. The baby Moshe grabbed some coal, and put it to his lips, causing himself a permanent lisp. Moshe wanted this lisp to remain with him in order to always remember this miracle, and keep up his gratitude to G-d for it. Moshe's level of appreciation may be the reason why he was chosen to be our Teacher.

A Real Jew

The Jew starts his day with the words *אני מודה*. The word *מודה* actually has two connotations. One is *confession* and the other is *thanks*. The two are very much connected, and are reflected in the Hebrew word for Jew,

yehudi. The more we acknowledge and are thankful to G-d for everything He does for us, the better Jews (*yehudim*) we are.

This concept also applies to being thankful to other human beings. The Midrash says:

"One who denies the goodness [received] from a friend will eventually deny the goodness [received] from G-d."

Those who are ungrateful for the goodness received from others will not be happy because they will not feel thankful for the goodness received from G-d. Only gratitude and appreciation can make a person happy throughout life.

Rabbi Yosef Farhi www.thinkingaboutme.org

MAQAM

For Shabbat Ki Tabo, the prayers are conducted in Maqam Sigah. This maqam, which is used for reading the Torah, is used to mark Temple ceremonies as well as when there is a special reading in the perasha. The beginning of the Torah portion discusses the reading of the special portion of the Torah when conducting the ceremony of bringing the first fruits (*bikurim*) to the Temple. In addition, Sigah is the maqam used on the holidays, and making pilgrimage to the Temple is traditionally done on the holidays. In regards to Torah Reading, it is Halabi tradition NOT to stop in the middle of the Tokheha (*rebuke*) portions. According to Mr Haim Shayo, the Halabi tradition of the last generation was that the Aliyah of Samoukh reads from 27:9-28:69 (and not stopping at 28:6). Being that this is the fourth Shabbat associated with the Selihot season (Month of Elul), it is traditional to apply the [Sigah] Selihot melody (Adon Yahid Yasad, page 67) for Semehim Besetam. MISHMARA: Tractate Bikkurim (Sephardic Pizmonim Project, www.pizmonim.com).