



KOL EZRAS ISRAEL



Rabbi's Message

Last week's tragedy in Newtown CT was an event unlike similar events in the United States. Whereas many events cause us to pause and ponder the senselessness of those crimes; the Sandy Hook tragedy impacted us in a deeper way. The news and subsequent images of the victims, particularly the children, spurred much reaction leading to discussions on the issue of gun control pros and cons, and the challenges facing those dealing with mental health issues. There were many who asked the big question of why. Why did it happen, why innocent children? I don't have the answer to these questions as only Hakadosh Boruch Hu knows why. As believing Jews, we know that there are questions that we don't have the answers to. Rather than focus on the why, which is beyond human comprehension, I would like to think about lessons that one can glean from what happened.

I would like to share a thought that I had while reading the news accounts of this tragedy. What has stood out from the many details is the selflessness displayed

by, amongst others, the principal, the school psychologist and the teacher. The principal and the psychologist gave up their lives trying to disarm the shooter, while the teacher shielded the children with her body. The reaction of many was to engage in acts of kindness in response to such evil. Their actions were ones that epitomized the society that they were raised in. I grew up as a child of refugees from Eastern Europe. My parents experienced not just pervasive anti-Semitism both, governmental and non-governmental, but also were surrounded by a society that did not foster the feeling of caring for others. When they came to America, the freedom and benevolence found in many parts of American society made a great impression upon them. What these people from Sandy Hook and the reactions from Americans all over exhibited were the ideals upon which this country was founded. We, as Jews, who have experienced so much suffering in so many lands through the years, should be especially grateful that we are blessed to be living in such a country. Our hearts go out to the victims and their families.

President's Message



When I first took over as President I got all fired up about Shul survival over the long run and what we needed to do to insure that. Then I realized, what was practical and reasonable was to simply offer more to our current members which hopefully also encourage new members to join. As I approach the end of my two year term, the best thing I could do is look around the shul to see what has been done in the past couple of years and what remains to be done.

Here are some of the plusses:

Children's playroom. This fall we totally renovated the childrens' playroom much to the delight of both the children and parents.

Childrens' programming - After recovering from some health issues, Nechama Fellner is now having regular children's programs on shabbos and holidays. She did a recent one for Hanukah which was a big success.

The torah stresses cleanliness and appearance as essential - in this regard we undertook a major junk removal program and removed many eyesores and no longer used siddurim and other documents - still to be done, cleaning and reorganizing the basement .

More lectures and dinners - we now have a solid ongoing program for quarterly shabbos dinners and regular lectures by outstanding speakers. We are

collaborating with other shuls on sponsoring lectures whenever the opportunity arises.

Food quality - we have upgraded the quality of our shabbos kiddush and are always open to suggestions in this regard.

Shul services - we are making an effort to bring more community singing into our shabbos service.

We have a very competent and active board of directors that knows how to get things done. There is no question that one or more of the board members is more than capable of taking over for me as shul president.

Financially we are holding our own. We have added some members but not nearly enough to replace move aways and members who have dropped out for one reason or another (much of it due to competition from other shuls). The life blood of any synagogue is young families with children. Recently I have seen some encouraging signs of some young couples who have moved into the area and are giving us a good look, but we need more to join.

Bottom line - We have made some significant improvements and upgraded many aspects of our operation but to assure long term survival, we must do even more.

Best wishes for a cozy winter

Please become a partner in our work by renewing your Ezras Israel membership in 2013!

Defining the Problem of Insects On Our Food Vegetables, Fruits and Berries (Part 1*)

By Uri Fastovsky

What is the problem? One might think that he never tasted an insect. Yet like many health conscious Americans, you are consuming more and more vegetables, that might be infected. A vegetable in a salad may have more than just salad dressing clinging to it. Aphids Trips and other insects make their home in many of the fruits, vegetables, and berries we eat each day. These insects are hard to remove with a simple washing not being enough to solve the problem.

In the past, the United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) allowed the use of strong pesticides to get rid of insect infestations. Nowadays, the Government has limited the use of pesticides. The USDA states its goal as being to reduce not eliminate insects in crops. Therefore, there are a lot of insects infesting our produce. Note that Organic produce may be even worse.

It is hard to make broad general statements about vegetable and fruit infestation. The problem varies throughout the years due to seasonal variations and insect life cycles. Nowadays a lot of vegetables and fruits are available all year round. Plus, there have been great improvements in refrigeration and produce storage technologies. In addition, it is impossible to track the origin of a particular fruit and vegetable. For example, is Broccoli in the supermarket, which may come from Mexico one week, California another, or Florida the next. Each of these locations could have suffered heavy rains in one location drought in the other and in the third no pesticides have been applied. This makes it necessary to check each head of Broccoli even if in the previous week there have been no infestations. In reality one week's findings may tell us very little about the next weeks produce.

The Torah forbids the eating of Shratzim – Vermin, which includes insects. In fact it is a Mitzva. Rabbi Yishmael, a Tanna who lived during the Talmuds codification taught by virtue of this mitzvah. The Jewish people have been elevated to a unique status. It is known that a consumption of a single Sheretz can be a violation of six negative commandments. As noted above, the consumption of even a single Sheretz can have a detrimental effect on a person, diminishing his or her spirituality.

A terrestrial Sheretz can be defined as any living creature that is visible to the unaided eye, yet so small that its legs can not be seen when it runs. Though, mammalian Shratzim do not pose a threat to the salad eating public. Tolaim – insects and worms do often cling to the vegetables we eat. Although often hidden or camouflaged, many Tolaim are clearly visible to the unaided eye. The Torah does not require to concern ourselves with anything smaller.

*Adapted from The OU Guide to Cleaning Vegetables, Fruits and Berries
http://www.oukosher.org/index.php/learn/fruits_vegetables/

We are certainly not required to use a microscope to search for insects. However, an insect is considered visible if it can be seen even when its features can not be distinguished, provided it can be noticed when moving.

Soft Drinks for Kiddush — By The Numbers

By Mark Lautman

Buying soft drinks is usually a straightforward transaction. The customer goes to one of the local supermarkets or convenience stores, chooses a can, pays for the item, and leaves the store. No mysticism, no analysis, no personal questions.

Things are a bit different when purchasing soft drinks for the Ezras Israel kiddush. That's what I learned when buying drinks for the first time last Fall. It was around 22 Elul. The new year was fast approaching. With all the two-day holidays, festivities, and socializing, the weekly soft drink consumption, usually three bottles per week, shoots up to eight bottles per week. After 22 days of shofar blowing at the Ring House, most people were thinking *teshuva*; I was thinking diet or caffeine free. With only one week to go before Rosh Hashannah, I realized time was short and headed for Giant. I was immediately confronted with an obstacle: all the items in the store were moved! Where there was once Elite Milk Chocolate bars, the ones with the cow on the red wrapping, there were now extra-large latex dishwashing gloves. Instead of Kedem grape juice, there was spicy hot chili oil. Everything was turned around. I went to the customer service center and asked where I can find the soft drinks. "How many bottles do you need?" he asked. "About sixteen," I replied. "That's quite a bit. Are you buying them for yourself?" "No, it's for a synagogue." "Which one?" "Ezras Israel."

"The one on Montrose Road? I pass by there all the time. Tell me, you have a gematria expert there?" "Well, I suppose we do. Listen, I don't have a lot of time..." "See," he continued, ignoring the urgency of my situation, "my brother-in-law tells me that my name, *Menashe*, has the same value as *parnasah*. Do you think that's true?" "I suppose it could be. Now, what aisle are the drinks in?" "Let's take out the calculator. Mem is 40, nun is 50". "I'll try to find the drinks myself," I replied. Surely *Menashe*'s inquiry was a sign from heaven. Since both *Menashe* and *parnasah* end in a hey, I figured I'd try aisle 5. I went down aisle 5, and sure enough all the soft drinks were there. All 10,000 bottles of them, 5,000 on the right side and 5,000

on the left side.

V'hamayim lahem homa mimi-nam u'mismolam. I started taking a variety: two full caffeine-full sugar, two no caffeine-full sugar, two full caffeine-no sugar, two no caffeine-no sugar, two orange, two red. I tried to get all the possible combinations of calories and colors so that everyone would have something they enjoy. As I was loading up the shopping cart, a woman with an earthy, spiritual appearance approached me. "Those drinks are terribly unhealthy. Why are you buying so many?" she probed. "Oh, they're not for me..." I started. "I suppose you're going to tell me you're buying them for kiddush, right?" "I am," I said. "Listen, you can't fool me. I can spot a soft-drink problem when I see one." "No, really, it's for our holiday kiddushim coming up," I insisted. "Denial is never healthy," she replied. "I had the same problem last year. Too much gefilte fish. Now, you can't have gefilte fish without maror, right? So I had that problem, too.


Averah gorret averah. A real maror problem. It got so bad that I could hardly taste the bitterness. So what happened, I was at my sister Pam's house for the seder. We get to eating the maror. Everyone is sniffing and wheezing, and I'm saying to Pam, "This would be great on tacos!" "Ma'am, really, this is for kiddush." "Which synagogue?" "Ezras Israel." "No kidding! Is someone there who has a solid understanding of gematria?" "Could be. The phone number is 240-627-4401, call any time." "Do you know what this means?" she said with enthusiasm. "If you add those numbers together, you get 5,268. Subtract that from the current year, 5773, and you get 505." "That's great, but all I need is 16 bottles, not 505. You think I should get only soda water?" "Don't you see? 505 is the same value as Sarah, which is my name! This means I really should come to your synagogue sometime during this year." "This year is almost over!" I exclaimed. "Please excuse me, I need to go pay for these items."

I went to the self-scan checkout. I pushed the heavy cart up to the scanner, and started passing bottles over the scanner. The automated voice kept repeating "Move your diet soda to the belt, savings 20 cents; move your orange soda to the belt, savings 15 cents." After I scanned all the items, the receipt came out of the dispenser. Believe it or not, at the bottom, after the listing of all the items, I read "You saved \$3.77, times 100 is 377, which equals *Shanah Tova*."

Learning Schedule Shabbat mornings, Rabbi's shiur on the weekly **Parsha**, 8:15am at the shul. Open to all.

- Sunday mornings following Shacharis, Rabbi's **Talmud Class** at the Ring House (men only) **Wednesday Learning Nights** on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm at the shul (men only) (contact Rabbi Kreiser to confirm dates)

Baruchim Habaim New Members: Todd & Sharon Hanik	Are you receiving the weekly Ezras Israel e-mail update? Davening times, upcoming events, and more! To subscribe, visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ezrasisrael
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 **Mazel Tov !** *To Jared & Tami Lempel on the birth and briss of their son Joshua Rachamim !
*To Oleg and Olga Meyerson on the birth of their baby daughter Julia!
*Manny & Nancy Zymelman & Michael and Naomi Weinberger on the bar mitzvah of their grandson and son Akiva, at the kotel!
*To Gedalya & Mati Jacobovits on the engagement of their son Moishy to Fraidy Streicher of Lakewood NJ!
*To Rabbi & Mrs. Baars on the engagement of their son Dovid to Leah Bergos in Israel!
Significant Birthdays: *Ari Nabozny on his 90th! *Beril Sinnreich on his 98th! *Morris Erger on his 100th! **Ad Meah V'Esrim!**

Yasher Koach! *To Nechama Fellner for sponsoring, organizing and running a fabulous Hanukah Party for the shul's children. *Sheldon & Roz Needle, Charlene Saportin-Disler and Judy Lowitz for organizing and setting up for the Shul's Chanukah Dinner *To Mark & Charlene Disler for organizing and sponsoring the Hanukah lecture series ith Rabbi Lopinasky: "Aesthetics in Jewish Tradition," *To Gil Ehrenkranz for sponsoring the Sium Hashas to celebrate the conclusion of our Sunday morning Talmud group finishing Mesechet Brochot	 For sponsoring a kiddush	*Rachmil & Agi Jacobovits for sponsoring the Simchat Torah Auction Dinner and to Dovid Kreiser for running a very successful Auction—A big thank you to all auction bidders! *Rachmil Jacobovits to commemorate his mother's yahrzeit—Devora (Babciu) Jacobovits - Missie Devora bas Moshe Dov (z"l) *Sheldon Needle in memory of his mother Rena Needle (z"l) with a cake contribution from Ilene Van Houter in honor of her son Andrew passing the NY&NJ Bar Exams. *Rachmil Jacobovits in	(z"l) & June Graff of the Yahrzeit of her mother Rachel Mannheimer/ Rachel bas Yaakov (z"l) *Jeremy Roschalb in memory of his mother Irene Roschwalb/Ita bat Tzvi Zev HaLevi (z"l) memory of his paternal grandmother's yahrzeit Gittle bas Yisroel (z"l) *Jerry Roschwalb in memory of his father Samuel Roschwalb/ Shmuel Zanvil ben Yaakov z"l & Mark and Irina Chaimovich in memory of Irina's mother Ida bat David (z"l)
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Shul's Patron Dinner
Rabbi & Perel Kresiser, Guests of Honor
Roz and Sheldon Needle for organizing & hosting,
Mark & Irina Chaimovich,
Mark & Charlene Disler,
Uri Fastovsky,
Joey Franco,
Dottie Franco,
Charlie Futrovsky,
Sam Hurwitz,
Rachmil & Agi Jacobovits,
Michael Richman,
Jerry Roschwalb,
Ted Sandler
& non attending supporters:
Stu & June Graff
Judy Lowitz

Cemetery Spaces Available Gan Zikaron (Garden of Remembrance) is a Jewish community owned and operated cemetery. Spaces are available in the section previously purchased by Ezras Israel Congregation of Rockville for \$1,900 each. You will have the benefit of a tax deduction. Please contact Morris Altschuler at (301) 770-5591 for further information and a tour of the site.	Sponsor a New Sefer to our growing Torah Library There are opportunities to sponsor new sformim for the shul - from a \$50 donation to sponsor a regular Stone Edition Chumash, and \$36 for a new Art Scroll Siddur to a set of Mishnayot or a full Shas, for a small premium above costs. Interested in other sformim sponsorship? Ask Rabbi Kreiser or contact Rachmil.301-461-4984
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Refuah Sheleima

Norman Pollack
Rabbi Lewis Weintraub

Memorialize a loved one with a Memorial Plaque or by Donating a Machzor, Siddur or Chumash Call Rachmil at 301-770-4342 or 301-461-4984 or e-mail milujaco@gmail.com	Donate to the Ezras Israel Hachnosat Orchim Fund to support the hospitality the Rabbi extends to the community.
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For the holidays and all your special occasions, send personalized Chesed Cards and Help Ezras Israel at the same time Call June Graff 301.770.7129	Celebrate a special occasion! Sponsor a Kiddush Call Judith Lowitz- 240-328-7648 or by e-mail judithlowitz@hotmail.com or reserve online at www.ezrasisrael.org
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Kol Ezras Israel

Congregation Ezras Israel
P.O. Box 2281
Rockville, MD 20847

Minyan Times Luach Hazmanim

Date	Day of the week	Parsha - Chag - Event	Candle lighting on Erev	Erev Shabbat Yom Tov Mincha	Latest Time for morning Shema	Shabbat Yom Tov Mincha	Shabbat Yom Tov	Shabbat Yom Tov
4/5 - Jan	Fri-Sat	Shemot - Mevorchim Shvat Sunday	4:41	4:40	9:48A	4:30	5:45	5:45
1/12 - Jan	Fri-Sat	Va'eira - Rosh Chodesh Shevat	4:48	4:50	9:51A	4:35	5:51	5:51
1/19 - Jan	Fri-Sat	Bo -	4:55	4:55	9:51A	4:45	5:58	5:58
2/26 - Jan	Fri-Sat	Beshalach - Shabat Shira - Tu B'Shvat	5:03	5:05	9:50A	4:50	6:06	6:06
1/2 - Feb	Fri-Sat	Yitro	5:11	5:10	9:48A	5:00	6:13	6:13
8/9 - Feb	Fri-Sat	Mishpatim-Shabat Shkalim-Mevorchim Adar - Sun/Mon	5:20	5:20	9:44A	5:05	6:21	6:21
15/16 - Feb	Fri-Sat	Terumah	5:28	5:30	9:40A	5:15	6:28	6:28
21 - Feb	Thu	Fast of Esther Observed - Start 5:32AM / Ends 6:33 PM	xxxx	xxxx	9:37A	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
22/23 - Feb	Fri-Sat	Tezaveh-Shabat Zachor-Megillah Esther @7PM Sat Night	5:35	5:35	9:34A	5:20	6:35	6:35
24 - Feb	Sun	Purim - Shacharit at 7:30 AM in Ring House Room #4	xxxx	xxxx	9:34A	4PM @ Ring House		
1/2 - Mar	Fri-Sat	Ki Sissa - Shabbat Parah	5:43	5:45	9:30A	5:30	6:43	6:43
8/9 - Mar	Fri-Sat	Vayakhel-Pekudei Shabat Ha Chodesh - Mevorchim Nisan	5:50	5:50	9:24A	5:35	6:50	6:50
11/12 - Mar	Mon/Tu	Rosh Chodesh Nissan	xxxx	xxxx	10:21A	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
15/16 - Mar	Fri-Sat	Vaykira - Shema by 10:17A First Shabbat on Daylight Savings	6:57	6:55	10:17A	6:45	7:57	7:57
22/23 - Mar	Fri-Sat	Tzav - Shabat Hagadol	7:04	7:05	10:11A	6:50	8:04	8:04
25/26 - Mar	Mon/Tu	Pesach-Day 1 - Latest Time for eating/burning Chametz Mon 10:44/11:59A	7:07	7:05	10:08A	8:06	8:06	8:06
26/27 - Mar	Tu/Wed	Pesach - Day 2 - No food Prep for Day 2 until after 8:07PM Tue	After 8:07	7:15	10:07A	7:10	8:07	8:07
29/30 - Mar	Fri-Sat	Shabbat Halamoed - 3rd Day of Halamoed	7:11	7:10	10:04A	6:55	8:11	8:11
31 Mar/1 Apr	Sun-Mon	Pesach - 7th Day - No food Prep for Day 2 until after 8:13PM Mon	7:13	7:15	10:02A	7:15	8:13	8:13
1/2 - Apr	Mon-Tu	Pesach - 8th Day - Yizkor at Approx 11AM Tue	After 8:13	7:15	10:01A	7:20	8:14	8:14

Shabbat at Ezras Israel: Call 240-627-1661 for Eruv status.
 Shacharit 9:00 a.m. See above. Followed by Seudah Shlishit and Maariv
 Sunday - Friday Shacharit at Ring House, Activity Room 3:
 8:30 a.m. Followed by Rabbi's shir (men only)
 Monday, Thursday, Thursday, Thursday, Thursday
 8:05 a.m. (Also the time on Rosh Chodes & other weekdays with Torah readings)