

JUNE 5, 2010 23 Sivan 5770 Parshat Shelach

Orthodox Union-West Coast Offices: 9831 W. Pico Blvd., LA CA 90035 [www.ouwestcoast.org](http://www.ouwestcoast.org)

KASHRUTH: 310.229.9000 EXT.1 ■ NCSY: 310.229.9000 EXT.209 ■ OU/SYNAGOGUE SERVICES: 310.229.9000 EXT.200 ■ FAX: 310.229.9011 ■ EMAIL: [westcoast@ou.org](mailto:westcoast@ou.org)

Jews have made complaining into an art form. At times even a career. The persona of the *nebbly* Jewish comedian/actor has become so common that it is almost a stereotype. From Woody Allen to Richard Lewis, to Larry David and the culture of complaining on *Seinfeld*, Jews have perfected voicing displeasure in all shapes and sizes.

Many of the most well known and provocative stories in Sefer Bamidbar are centered around the complaints of the Jewish people. Be it lack of water, wanting to eat meat or getting sick of the *Mon*, the Jewish people find much to complain about. What is causing all this whining?

In our Parsha, Parshat Shelach, we read about one of the most damaging episodes of complaining. After the spies return with a pessimistic report about their chances to conquer the land of Israel, the people predictably lose hope and bemoan their helpless fate. They want to return to Egypt, rather than face the near certain death the spies are predicting. What is the root cause of this attitude?

It's important to realize that the series of complaints are interconnected, not merely a random series of events. In last week's Parsha, Parshat Behalotcha, the initial complaint is actually quite vague.

"The people took to seeking complaints; it was evil in the ears of Hashem, and Hashem heard and His wrath flared, and a fire of Hashem burned them, and it consumed them at the edge of the camp" (Bamidbar 11:1). What's odd about this Pasuk is that the Torah never actually informs us as to what the complaints were about, even though in subsequent episodes, the Torah lets us know in detail as to what they were complaining about. Why doesn't the Torah tell us?

The Ramban says that Torah doesn't tell us what they complained about because it doesn't matter. Hashem wasn't responding to the actual complaints, but rather to the attitude that led to the complaints. Once they left Har Sinai and looked out at the expanse of the desert, and started realizing the difficulties of living there, they started to complain. They had made up their mind that they weren't going to like living in the desert, constantly on the move, and not knowing

what they would eat and drink there. Their complaints were merely a result of their negative attitude. They never gave it a chance.

This attitude continues in our Parsha. The moment the spies come back with their report, the people immediately revert back to the attitude that had gotten them in so much trouble. Why hadn't they learned from the earlier episodes? Why hadn't they realized that complaining wasn't going to do them any good, and that Hashem would surely help them no matter how difficult it would be to conquer the land of Israel? Because deep-rooted skepticism is hard to break. When we have a mindset that things are going to be difficult and not work out, then we jump at the slightest sign that our assumptions were correct. We use it as proof that our assumptions were correct.

This happens so often and it's very destructive. When we have already decided that something won't work, or that we don't like someone, then it can be extremely difficult to see the good. Not only that, but we will constantly find the flaw in any potential positive, and look to minimize any success. Until the fundamental approach has changed, we often won't give ideas, projects or people a chance. However, the reverse is true as well. When we start out wanting to like someone, wanting for something to succeed, we can gain strength from successes and improve the situation. It doesn't mean that we should ignore potential challenges, but it does mean that we'll see them as just that, "challenges", as opposed to a damning indictment as to why this project or person is inherently flawed.

Let's learn this lesson from our ancestors, and look at life's possibilities and opportunities, and not just wallow in negativity and self pity. No matter what Larry David might say.

*Have a good Shabbos.*

**Rabbi Joshua Strulowitz**  
Adath Israel, San Francisco, CA

## UPCOMING EVENTS @ OU WEST COAST

### ➤OU Annual Awards Banquet Tuesday, June 22

*Honoring*

**David & Debbie Schultz  
Seth & Ruth Berkowitz  
Dr. Steve & Linda Tabak**

*and NCSY Awardees*

Nissana Boxstein Perrie Lurie  
Noah Small Benny Statman

### Community Wide Shiva Asar B'Tammuz Mincha-Maariv

**Tuesday JUNE 29, 7:30pm**

*Hosted by*

**Beth Jacob Cong.**  
Beverly Hills

## OU JOB BOARD ONLINE CLASSES

Join the OU Job Board ON-LINE CLASSES -  
Expand YOUR Horizons -[www.oujobs.org](http://www.oujobs.org)  
*Sign Up for a LIVE On-Line Job Workshop NOW!*

POWERPOINT-VIA WEB CAST-MAY 17, 24, JUNE 7, 14,  
21, 28 - 3:30pm- 5:00pm(EDT) or 22:30-24:00 (Israel Time)

WORD&OUTLOOK-VIA WEB CAST- MAY 25 , JUNE  
2,9,16,23,30. 1:30pm-3:00pm(EDT) or 20:30-22:00 (IT)

PHOTOSHOP for Beginners-VIA WEB CAST-May 25,  
JUNE 1,8,15,22,29. -11:45am- 1:25pm(EDT) or 16:45-18:25 (IT)

EXCEL for Beginners-VIA WEB CAST -MAY 26, JUNE  
2,9,16,23,30.- 12:00-1:30pm(EDT) or 17:00-18:30(IT)

WEB DEVELOPMENT Dreamweaver-VIA WEB  
CAST-MAY 26, JUNE 2,9,16,23,30. -2:00-3:30pm (EDT) or  
21:00-22:30 (IT)

QUICKBOOKS for Beginners-VIA WEB CAST- May 27,  
JUNE 3,10,17,24, JULY 1. 1:30-3:00pm (EDT) or 20:30-22:00  
(IT)

LIMITED SPACE-SIGN UP NOW! Go to  
[www.oujobs.org](http://www.oujobs.org) for time/date and more informa-  
tion + registration

*The Orthodox Union only accepts responsibility for  
the kosher status of those advertisers  
under OU certification (310) 229-9000 ext.200*  
[westcoast@ou.org](mailto:westcoast@ou.org)

*Design & Layout by Steve*

**"Lone Jewish High School Student Faces Down Arab Mob in LA"**

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/137844>

## OU SYNAGOGUES AROUND THE REGION

### Beverly Hills: Cong. Beth Jacob (310) 278-1911

- **SUN JUNE 6, 11am:** Brunch: Marcus Sheff--How to Affect the Media & Secure Israel's Future-At the Front lines of the War of Words & Ideas. RSVP
- **Women's Spring Seudah Shlisheit Series with the Rebbetzins:**  
**JULY 10, 6pm:** Rebbetzin/Dr. Hindy Posy @1531 Glenville

### Beverly Hills: Young Israel-North BH: (310) 276-7650 [info@YINBH.org](mailto:info@YINBH.org)

- **Shabbat JUNE 5:** Guest Chazzan Dr. Mark Goldenberg
- **Shabbat JUNE 12:** Guest Rabbi Eliyahu Fink
- **Shabbat JUNE 19:** Guest Rabbi Dr. Daniel Lerner
- **Shabbat JUNE 26:** Guest Elliot Brandt, AIPAC
- **Shabbat JULY 3:** Guest, OU President Steve Savitsky
- **Shabbat JULY 16-17:** S-I-R Rabbi Natan Slifkin, 'The Zoo Rabbi'

Calabasas Shul: (818) 591-7485

Canada-Calgary: House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel (403) 259-3230

Canada-Edmonton: Beth Israel (780) 488-2840

Canada-Vancouver: Schara Tzedek (604) 736-7607

Denver, CO : BMH-BJ Cong (303) 388-4203

### Denver, CO: EDOS (303) 322-7943

- **SUN JUNE 27:** Annual Dessert Reception

Irvine, CA: Beth Jacob (949) 786-5230

LA: Adas Torah (310) 203-9659 [www.adastorah.com](http://www.adastorah.com)

LA: Aish Hatorah (310) 278-8672 x 305 or [tsullivan@aishla.com](mailto:tsullivan@aishla.com)

LA: B'nai David-Judea (310)-276-9269 or [amram@bnaidavid.com](mailto:amram@bnaidavid.com)

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Dinner honoring Lloyd/Sonia Levitin & Duke/Vicki Helfand

LA: Etz Jacob (323) 938-2619

LA: Mogen David Cong. (310) 556-5609

LA: Young Israel of Century City: (310) 273-6954

- **SUN JUNE 13, 10am:** Ariel Avrech Yahrzeit Lecture/Brunch w/ Dennis Prager - "Happiness is a Mitzvah, Not an Emotion"

LA: Young Israel of Hancock Park: (323) 931-4030

LA: Yeshiva of LA (YOLA) 310-203-3197 [yeshivarabbi@juno.com](mailto:yeshivarabbi@juno.com)

MINCHA/MAARIV: SUN-THURS, 15 minutes before Shkiah;  
LATE MAARIV: SUN-THUR 10pm. M-TH am/pm: adults/students chavrusas

Laguna Woods, CA: Beth Torah (949) 587-1967 (a retirement community)

La Jolla: Adat Yeshurun (858) 535-1196

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Shul Banquet Gala
- **SUN JUNE 13, 8:30am-2:30pm:** Blood Drive. [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) Code: CAY

Las Vegas, NV: Shaarei Tefila (702) 384-3565 (Mikva 384-3317)

Oakland, CA: Beth Jacob (510) 482-1147

- **SUN JUNE 6, 5:30pm:** Annual Dinner & Auction

Palm Springs, CA: The Desert Synagogue (760) 327-4848

Palo Alto, CA: Emek Beracha (650) 857-1800 (Mikva 493-5555)

Phoenix, AZ: Beth Joseph (602) 277-8858

Portland, OR: Kesser Israel (503) 222-1239

Sacramento, CA: Keneset Israel Torah Center (916) 481-1159

San Diego, CA: Cong. Beth Jacob (619) 287-9890

San Diego, CA: Kehillat Ahavat Yisrael-KAY (858) 633-0181

San Francisco, CA: Adath Israel (415) 564-5665

Seattle: Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath (206) 721-0970

- **Shabbat JUNE 19-20:** S-I-R Rabbi Dovid Katz
- **SUN JUNE 27:** Gala honoring Elaine/Marshal Hartholz & Joe/Julie Greene

Seattle: Ezra Bessaro (206) 722-5500

Seattle: Sephardic Bikur Holim (206) 723-3028

Valley Village, CA: Shaarey Zedek Cong. (818) 763-0560

Venice, Pacific Jewish Center-The Shul on the Beach: (310) 392-8749

Washington-Mercer Island: Shevet Achim (206) 275-1539

Woodland Hills: Beit HaMidrash (818) 999-2059 (5850 Fallbrook Ave.)

SUNS @ 8:30am: following 8am minyan-Shiur-Baba Kama w/Rabbi Yaakov Rechinitz

West LA: Westwood Kehilla (310) 441-5288x2 [director@kehilla.org](mailto:director@kehilla.org)

- **TUES June 8:** Annual Dinner honoring David & Jean Horwatt

## NCSY-JSU-YACHAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS



**Office contact:** 310-229-9000 x 209 [www.westcoastncsy.com](http://www.westcoastncsy.com)

Start planning your summer, check out our amazing summer programs @ A  
Want to help run a chesed project? call Solly at 310-557-6582

**CITY NCSY:** Call Solly @ 310-557-6582 or [Shess@westcoastncsy.com](mailto:Shess@westcoastncsy.com)

**DNL--MONs 7-8pm:** @ Pizza World 365 S. Fairfax Ave.

**Latte&Learning-TUES 7:30pm:** @CB&T-233 S. Beverly Dr. w/R' Josh Horwitz

**JR. NCSY:** (6-8 grade) Call Josh 310-694-2976 or [ncsyiosh@gmail.com](mailto:ncsyiosh@gmail.com)

... **NCSY Bar/Bat Mitzvah** tutoring available. **Talmud Torah** classes.

**YACHAD:** Call Perri @323-228-4191. **Monday evenings-ongoing activities.**

## B'NEI AKIVA OF LA ANNOUNCEMENTS

→ **Office:** 310-248-2450 [bneiakivaLA@gmail.com](mailto:bneiakivaLA@gmail.com)

→ **Upcoming Events:**

**June 6, 2010** - Bat Ami Farwell 12:00PM - 2:00PM @ the Mirvis

**June 7, 2010** - Los Angeles Farwell Aliyah Reception 6:30-9:00PM @ 6505 Wilshire Blvd. Featuring Consul General Jacob Dayan and the Tsofim Friendship Caravan

**June 13, 2010** - FINAL Za'ach Event! (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Graders) 3:30 - 6:30PM Mini Golf and Arcades @ Sherman Oaks Castle Park!

→ **LAST SNIF OF THE YEAR! - this Shabbat**

SNIF SHLUCHOT (Pico/Robertson, Beverly Hills, Beverlywood) 6:30 PM Walking group - 7:00 PM Snif (At Hillel)



## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

▶ **ONGOING: OU'S WOMEN'S TORAH NETWORK (WTN)**

Classes with Geri Wiener--Summer sessions start June 21 & 23  
→ MONS-Valley (private home): → WEDs-City (OU Hdqtrs):

▶ **For Sale by Owner:** 2 bedroom plus den at end of cul-de-sac on Kirkside Drive in Beverlywood. \$1,300,000.  
email: [KirksideDrive@gmail.com](mailto:KirksideDrive@gmail.com)

▶ **NCSY & JSU \*Raffle\* \$25 Tickets**

**\*Invest in a Jewish Teens future for only \$25**

Prizes include 5 Night Vacation in Cabo. One night at the Luxe, plus more. Call 310 229-9000 ext. 226 for more information!

## ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

### Microalgae discovery could lead to new cholesterol treatment

Israeli researchers have discovered a strain of microalgae that could be used as a treatment to reduce cholesterol, blood pressure and inflammation.

### Keeping online information private and secure

A professor from Israel may have found the way to safeguard your privacy while providing governments and companies with the personal information they require.

### Israel joins the OECD

Gaining entry into the 31-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) club this month doesn't mean that Israeli banks will suddenly have access to bags of money and loans from the World Bank. But it will mean better capital gains in the long-run for Israeli investors. And a financial open book policy will generate a better society for all the country's citizens, according to Dr. Ohad Bar Efrat, an economist and head of International Affairs for the Bank of Israel.

### A new spin on the battery span of mobile devices

An Israeli researcher is working in the spintronics field of nanotech to make existing batteries last 10 times longer and existing processors work 10 times faster.

### Seven solar technologies from Israel that could change our planet

They're on investors' hit lists and the green tech media is keen to monitor their progress. Environmentalists and key policy makers from the United States urge them on. Israeli solar technology innovators are channelling and shaping the sun's energy and breaking America's dependence on oil.

[www.Israel21c.org](http://www.Israel21c.org)

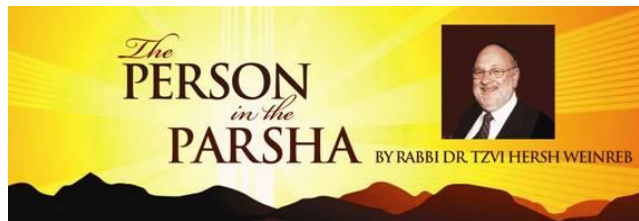
**Product:** Kashkaval Sheep's Cheese

**Company:** Corfu Foods Inc., Bensenville, IL

**Issue:** This product is NOT certified by the OU, and bears an unauthorized OU-D.

The product is being withdrawn from the market. Consumers spotting this product are requested to contact the Orthodox Union at 212-613-8241 or via email at [kshalerts@ou.org](mailto:kshalerts@ou.org)





## Parshat Beha'alotecha

June 5, 2010 – 23 Sivan 5770

To read more articles and essays by Rabbi Weinreb, visit his blog at [www.ou.org/rabbi\\_weinreb](http://www.ou.org/rabbi_weinreb)

### "Caleb at the Crossroads"

Imagine standing at a crossroads. We have all been there. We have all experienced moments in our life's journey when we had to make a crucial choice and decide whether to proceed along one road or along another.

We have all also experienced moments much further along in our journey, often many years later, when we reflected back upon our decision and wondered what would have been if we had pursued the alternative road.

Now imagine standing at a crossroads together with a close friend. Both of you face an identical choice, either this road or that. One of you chooses one road, and the other decides differently and selects the other road.

Each would have an intriguing tale to tell if, after many years, they had to meet and have the opportunity to compare the results of their different decisions.

Throughout my adult life, I have been fascinated by the experiences of survivors of the Holocaust. Whenever I have been fortunate enough to have the time to engage in conversation with one of them, I listened eagerly to their stories. When they permit, and they do not always, I ask them questions not just about their experiences, but about their choices and decisions.

I especially remember the discussions I had with one of them, let us call him Mr. Silver. He often would tell me about the hellish years he spent fleeing and fighting the Nazis in the forests of Poland. He had a companion then, let us call him Simon. Mr. Silver and Simon were boyhood friends who together witnessed the murder of their parents, and who together managed to escape and join the partisans. Eventually, they were both caught and incarcerated in prisons and concentration camps.

In his story, Mr. Silver compared his attitude throughout those horrific times with the attitude of his friend Simon. "You know me," he would say, "and you know how I've always seen the bright side of things, the hopefulness of every situation, however dire." Indeed, I assured him that I could vouch for his consistent optimism.

"As much as I was an idealist," he would continue, "so was Simon a hard-core realist. He saw things as they were and dealt with them accordingly. He had no illusions whatsoever of hope."

Many years after my conversation with Mr. Silver, I finally met Simon and, together with him, was able to compare the

life he led subsequent to the Holocaust, and subsequent to his crossroad decisions, with the life of Mr. Silver. Simon, after the war, chose not to marry and chose to live in a rather remote American community with little contact with other Jews. Mr. Silver married, raised a large family with numerous grandchildren, and was very much involved with Jewish causes, and eventually chose to live out his final years in the state of Israel.

Two individuals at the same crossroads, making different decisions, with starkly different life outcomes.

This week's Torah portion, *Shelach*, gives us the opportunity to witness individuals at the crossroads. Individuals who make radically different decisions and whose lives thereby played out very differently.

Let us focus, for example, on the personalities of Nachbi ben Vofsi, prince of the tribe of Naphtali, and of Caleb ben Yefuneh, prince of the tribe of Judah. Up until the dramatic moment described in this week's Parsha they led almost identical lives. They both experienced the Exodus from Egypt, the miraculous lifting of the Red Sea, the revelation at Mount Sinai, and opportunities for leadership of their respective tribes.

They were both assigned to spy out the land of Canaan, and they both crisscrossed the Promised Land and returned to give their reports. But then we read (*Numbers 13:30-31*), "Caleb... said, 'Let us by all means go up, as we shall gain possession of the land, and we shall surely overcome.' But the men who had gone up with him (one of whom was Nachbi) said, 'We cannot attack that people, for they are stronger than we.'"

Two individuals, at this very same crossroads in their lives; one full of hope and trust and confidence, and the other frightened, albeit very realistic.

How differently their lives played out from this point forward. Nachbi perished in ignominy in the desert while Caleb remained a prince, enhanced his reputation, and was granted his reward, the city of Hebron.

We all face crossroads in our lives; some of great significance, and some seemingly trivial. Our choices can be Nachbi-like – practical and safe, but ultimately cowardly. Or they can be informed by hope, trust, and confidence, and ultimately be brave and heroic.

The choice is ours, and so are the consequences for the rest of our lives.