TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



יתרו

לעילוי נשמת



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Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



Hamaayan is prepared by laymen and published weekly for the edification and enjoyment of the reader who is lacking the time or ability to study the weekly parashah on his own. Hamaayan's goal is to acquaint the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Torah commentary — classical, recent and "obscure" — as well as with aspects of Jewish history and thought. The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah")

וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיֵּשֶׁב מֹשֶׁה לִשְׁפֹּט אֶת־הָעָם - *"It was on the next day that Moshe sat to judge the people…" (18:13)*

What types of property disputes did Bnei Yisrael have in the desert?

R' Shalom Rokeach z"l (1803-1855; the first **Belzer Rebbe**) explains that they were arguing over the booty from the Red Sea. One man said, "This fine object washed up on the beach closest to you. It's yours." The second man replied, "No, you picked it up. It's yours." The first man retorted, "I picked it up on your behalf. It's yours." - Pretty soon, they found themselves in court.

(Quoted in Sefer Maharash)

אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם. לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן אִתִּי אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וֵאלֹהֵי זָהָב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם - "***You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. You shall not make [images of] what is with Me; gods of silver and gods of gold shall you not make for yourselves.***" (20:19-20)

How does the second verse quoted here follow from the first?

R' Shmuel Tayib z"l (early 20th century; Djerba) explains:

Idolatry developed originally because men believed that G-d is too lofty to interact with mankind. Instead, they believed that man could relate only to G-d's intermediaries, such as angels, stars, and planets.

Hashem teaches in our verse that those who held that belief were wrong. "You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven." Therefore, you know that you can interact directly with Me, and you have no need to make "images of what is with Me." (**Afapei Shachar**)

וַיְסַפֵּר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹתְנוֹ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְפַרְעֹה וּלְמִצְרַיִם עַל אוֹדֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת כָּל־הַתְּלָאָה אֲשֶׁר מְצָאָתַם בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַיַּצִּלֵם ה' - "***Moshe told his father-in-law everything that Hashem had done to Pharaoh and Egypt for Israel's sake, all the travail that had befallen them on the way — and that Hashem had rescued them.***" *(18:8)*

R' Yosef Chaim z"l (1832-1909; chief rabbi of Baghdad and prolific author) observes: The letter "heh" in the word הַתְּלָאָה/ the travail" is superfluous. The Torah could have saved a letter by saying that Moshe told Yitro "every travail." However, the "heh," whose gematria is five, alludes to the five troubles Bnei Yisrael encountered in last week's parashah. They were:

(1) Pharaoh chased them;

(2) They traveled three days in the desert without finding water;

(3) They ran out of bread;

(4) They came to Refidim and found no water there; and

(5) The war of Amalek.

But, Moshe related, Hashem also rescued us from these five travails. (**Od Yosef Chai**)



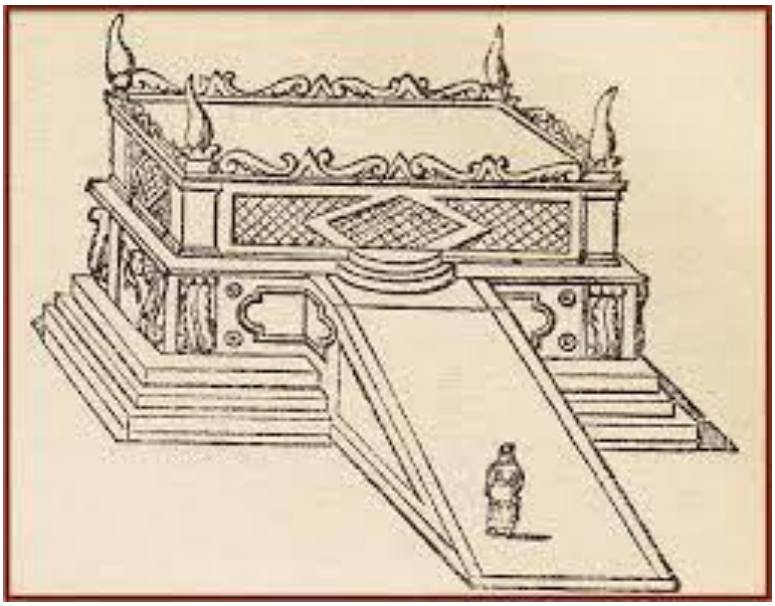
וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם כִּי מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם דִּבַּרְתִּי עִמָּכֶם. אֱלֹהֵי כֶסֶף וֵאלֹהֵי זָהָב לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם - ***"Hashem said to Moshe, 'So shall you say to Bnei Yisrael: "You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven . . . gods of silver and gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves."*** *(20:19-20)*

Why was it necessary for Hashem to repeat the commandment to not make other gods after Bnei Yisrael just heard this in the Aseret Hadibrot?

Throughout history, there have been religions and philosophies that taught that although there is a Creator, he is too great to deal directly with human beings. Those who held that belief prayed to intermediaries (e.g., the heavenly bodies or idols) in order to reach Hashem, in much the same way that one deals with an officer of the king because one cannot gain access to the king himself.

In our verses, Hashem explains why we should not make gods of gold or silver. Hashem emphasizes that He Himself spoke directly to us at Har Sinai, and it therefore should be obvious that we do not need intermediaries. (**Yalkut Me'am Loez**)

וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי - ***"You shall not ascend My altar on steps . . ."*** *(20:23)*



R' Aharon Kahn shlita observed: The Torah declares that a kohen must not use steps when approaching the altar, but rather a ramp. A ramp is an incline; on a ramp, one must either continue to move forward or he will inevitably fall backward. On steps, in contrast, one can rest.

The Torah is teaching that if one does not continually move closer to the altar, closer to Hashem, he will inevitably move farther away.

Seeking Hashem



The story is told of a farmer who came to shul one Erev Shabbat to speak with **R' Meir of Lublin**. The farmer spoke to R' Meir with a sense of urgency: "Please rebbe/my master," he said. "Help me! My cow is ill and refuses to eat. What shall I do?"

R' Meir instructed the farmer to mix water into the cow's feed. This would help the cow digest its food, and the cow would be cured.

The farmer thanked R' Meir and left. R' Meir's students, however, were taken aback by this entire episode. Surely the farmer could

have sought help from a veterinarian. Why did he have to disturb R' Meir?

R' Meir explained: "The farmer is not a learned man. He sees many people asking me deep and difficult questions, and he feels left out. He wants to have a mentor, but of course he cannot ask me the types of questions that learned people ask. Instead, by asking me questions that are relevant to himself, he develops a relationship with me.

"This," said R' Meir, "is the meaning of the verse **כִּי־יָבֹא אֵלַי הָעָם לִדְרֹשׁ אֱלֹקִים** (18:15), '***Because the people come to me to seek G-d***.' - Yitro asked Moshe why people stood in line all day long to see him, and Moshe responded that they came to him to inquire about G-d. At first glance, this does not seem to be true. Were not Bnei Yisrael standing in line to have their arguments settled or to sue for money owed to them?

"The answer is that people came to Moshe to resolve problems, but those problems either were not real or were simple enough to have been resolved without Moshe's intervention. People brought these problems to Moshe because it provided them with an opportunity to see Moshe, the gadol hador/preeminent scholar and tzaddik of the time, to form a relationship with Moshe and, through him, with G-d.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי בָּא אֵלֶיךָ בְּעַב הֶעָנָן בַּעֲבוּר יִשְׁמַע הָעָם בְּדַבְּרִי עִמָּךְ וְגַם־בְּךָ יַאֲמִינוּ לְעוֹלָם - ***"Hashem said to Moshe, 'Behold! I come to you in the thickness of the cloud, so that the people will hear as I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever'." (19:9)***

R' Yochanan Luria z"l (1440-1511; Alsace) asks: Did we not already read in last week's Parashah (14:31), **וַיַּאֲמִינוּ בַּה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ** "***They believed in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant***"?

He explains: The reason Bnei Yisrael believed in Moshe after the splitting of the Sea was because of the miracles that he was Hashem's agent to perform. However, faith based on miracles is

shaky, because someone might come along later and perform equal or greater wonders. If that would happen, our faith in Moshe would be shattered.

In contrast, when Bnei Yisrael heard Hashem speak to Moshe "face-to-face," as a person speaks to his friend, that firmly established their eternal belief in Moshe. Thereafter, anyone who claims to be a prophet equal to Moshe must have Hashem speak to him in front of all the Jewish People, which will never happen. (**Meishiv Nefesh**)

כִּי־יִהְיֶה לָהֶם דָּבָר֙ בָּ֣א אֵלַ֔י וְשָׁפַטְתִּי֙ בֵּ֣ין אִ֔ישׁ וּבֵ֖ין רֵעֵ֑הוּ וְהוֹדַעְתִּי֙ אֶת־חֻקֵּ֣י הָאֱלֹקִ֔ים וְאֶת־תּוֹרֹתָ֖יו - *"When they have a matter, one comes to me, and I judge between a man and his fellow, and I make known the decrees of G-d and His teachings." (18:16)*

R' Menachem Mendel Hager z"l (1768-1826; **Kossover Rebbe**) interprets Moshe Rabbeinu's words as follows: "Unfortunately, people come to me (Moshe) for the wrong reason. When they have a matter–i.e., when they have a personal, material matter – then they come to me, and I judge for them. However, my real goal at such times is to make known the decrees of G-d and His teachings."

R' Hager's descendant, **R' Moshe Yehoshua Hager z"l** (1916-2012; **Vizhnitzer Rebbe**) adds: Many people come to Torah scholars and Chassidic Rebbes to receive blessings for health or sustenance. For some reason, however, they do not feel any need to seek guidance about spiritual matters, such as the education of their children. - They do not see that the Gematria of **בָּ֣א אֵלַ֔י**- "one comes to me" equals the Gematria of "**ילד**" / "child." (**Quoted in Otzrotaihem Shel Tzaddikim**)

"Hashem's love for us is like the sun - always shining even on the cloudiest days." ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

כִּי־יָבֹא אֵלַי הָעָם לִדְרֹשׁ אֱלֹקִים - *'Because the people come to me to seek Elokim'. (18:15)*

R' Menachem Mendel Hager z"l (1886-1941) notes that the Hebrew initials of the phrase, **כִּי־יָבֹא אֵלַי הָעָם לִדְרֹשׁ** "***Because the people come to me to seek Elokim***," spell "**אכילה**" / "eating."

This indicates that Bnei Yisrael sought advice from Moshe Rabbeinu about how to make their physical activities more spiritual.

R' Hager notes that the Hebrew initials of the phrase **לְיִרְאָה אֶת יְ-הֹ-וָ-ה אֱלֹקֶיךָ כָּל־הַיָּמִים** (Devarim 14:23), "***To fear Hashem, your Elokim, all the days***," likewise spell "**אכילה**," indicating that eating can be turned into a form of Divine service. (**Haggadah Shel Pesach She'eirit Menachem p.256**)

וַיִּקַּח יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה עֹלָה וּזְבָחִים לֵאלֹקִים וַיָּבֹא אַהֲרֹן וְכֹל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֶאֱכָל־לֶחֶם עִם־חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים - "***Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, took an olah-offering and feast offerings for Elokim, and Aharon and all the elders of Yisrael came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moshe before Elokim.***" (18:12)



Why did they eat, so-to-speak, before "Elokim"–the Attribute of Justice, which is associated specifically with **יראת שמים**?

R' Mordechai Leifer z"l (1824-1894; **Nadvorna Rebbe**) explains: Praying and studying Torah should in fact be done with love of G-d. However, when it comes to matters of this world–eating, drinking, and other physical needs–the trait of fear of G-d should predominate [in order to promote restraint]. (**Divrei Mordechai p.7**)

וְכָל־הָעָם֮ רֹאִים֒ אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת֙ וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִ֔ם וְאֵת֙ קֹ֣ול הַשֹּׁפָ֔ר וְאֶת־הָהָ֖ר עָשֵׁ֑ן וַיַּ֤רְא הָעָם֙ וַיָּנֻ֔עוּ וַיַּעַמְד֖וּ מֵֽרָחֹֽק - *"The entire people saw the thunder and the flames – 'the people saw and trembled and stood from afar.' (20:15)*



How is it possible to see thunder? And why did the people tremble?

R' Yosef Tzarfati z"l (early 17th century; Adrianople, Turkey) explains: People are more affected by what they see than by what they hear; for example, seeing a person drowning makes a different impression on a bystander than just hearing that someone drowned.

And, people tend to believe what they see more than what hear; thus, we read (Esther 3:4-5), "*They told Haman, to see whether Mordechai's words would hold-up; for he had told them that he was a Jew. When Haman, himself, saw that Mordechai did not bow down and prostrate himself before him, then Haman was filled with rage.*" But, when Haman only heard, he was not filled with rage.

Ordinarily, we see lightning before we hear the associated thunder. However, in preparation for giving the Torah, Hashem "upgraded" Bnei Yisrael's sense of hearing so that it was more sensitive than their sight. He did this so that their hearing the Torah would be make the desired impression on them. - Thus, "The entire people saw the thunder and the flames"–first the thunder, then the flames.

This new experience alarmed the people, and that is why they trembled and stepped back. (**Yad Yosef: Yitro, Drush 1**)

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ - "***Yisro heard*** . . ." (18:1)

R' Yehuda Leib Eiger z"l (chassidic rebbe of Lublin; died 1888) writes: The parashah which contains the Giving of the Torah begins with the word "**וַיִּשְׁמַע**" / "He heard" to indicate that a willingness to listen and absorb is the key to coming closer to Hashem. Even a simple person, and even someone who is distant from Hashem, can draw closer when he is ready to listen to, and absorb, what G-d is saying.

How do I know that this is true? asks R' Eiger. Because a person who studies Torah constantly and performs many mitzvot realizes that he is distant from Hashem. Why then is he considered a meritorious person? Only because he wants to hear what G-d has to say.

It follows, then, that anyone who wants to hear what G-d has to say can likewise draw himself closer. (**Torat Emet**)

This Week in History, Halachah, and Minhag

● Thursday night of the week of Parashat Yitro: It was the custom among the Jews of Tunis to hold a "Seudat / Feast of Yitro" on this night.

Some say that the feast commemorates the feast that Yitro made in this week's parashah (18:12). Others say it celebrates the betrothal of the Jewish People to the Torah (see Rashi to Devarim 33:4). Finally, some say that the occasion is a feast of thanksgiving for the end of a plague that attacked the community's children at an unspecified time in history. (Luach Davar B'ito p.554)

● The Jews of Algiers also celebrated this day with a feast, which they called, "The Feast of Siyum"–an acronym in Hebrew for Seudat Yitro v'Moshe. (Luach Davar B'ito p.554)

● Shabbat Parashat Yitro: It was the custom in Yemen to call all of the children in the congregation to the Torah for the

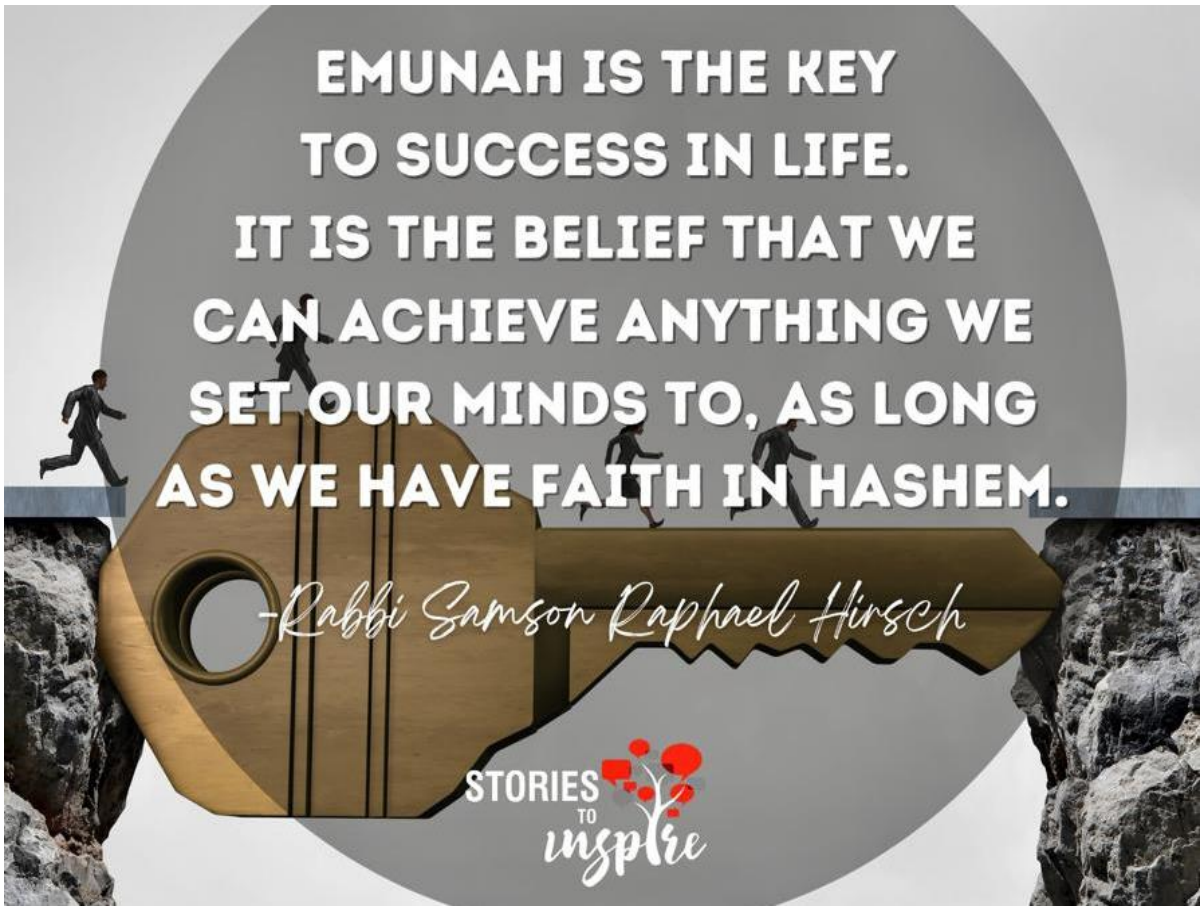
sixth aliyah (which contains the Aseret Ha'dibrot). (Luach Davar B'ito p.357)

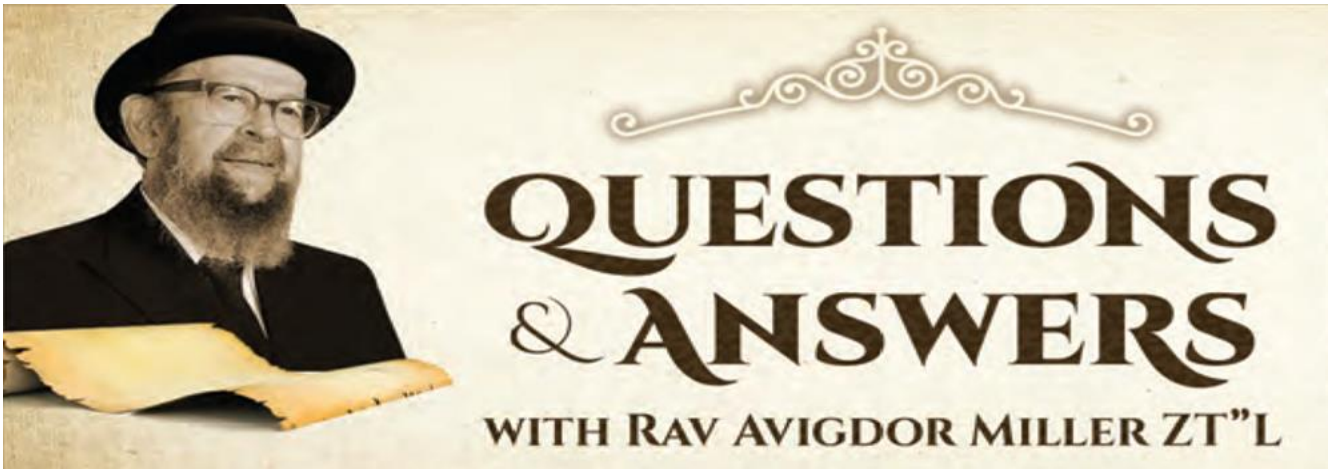
● 23 Shevat: Some people fast on this day, which is the anniversary of beginning of the civil war described in Shoftim, chapter 20. (Shulchan Aruch, O.C., 580:2)

● On this day in 4509 (749 C.E.), a deadly earthquake struck the Kinneret region of Eretz Yisrael. (Luach Davar B'ito p.564)

● **Shabbos** זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ – '***Remember the day of Shabbos to make it sanctified***.' (20:8)

"Ribbono Shel Olom; you gave me wine for Shabbos, challos for Shabbos, fish and meat for Shabbos. - Ribbono Shel Oilom please give me Shabbos for Shabbos". • **Reb Zalmen Brizel ZT"L**







The Gemara says, חָשׁ בְּכָל גּוּפוֹ יַעֲסוֹק בַּתּוֹרָה (Eiruvin 54a). If you are sick, then you should learn Torah in order to heal. - Would the Rav say that one can overlook this chazal and instead go to sleep in order to get better?

When a person is not feeling well, let him look in the Torah. Of course! And what will he see in the Torah? In the Torah he'll see that it says, "*Rapo yi'rapeh*." It says in the Torah that you have to go to the doctor if you are sick. And included in that is that you have to take care of your body so that it can heal.

Someone who damages his fellow must pay, among other things, for refuah. He has to pay for that person's healing. And besides that, the Gemara is full of discussions about healing and health. Everywhere you look, it's full of healing. And therefore there's no question that learning Gemara will teach you that you have to make sure that you heal.

However, suppose that you're not able to diagnose your illness. Or even if it was diagnosed and you're taking medications. Still, the segulah of learning Torah is also a way to heal. And that's because Hashem says, "If you're able to utilize your life for learning Torah, then you deserve to get well and live longer."

If you are not feeling well and you make an effort to be *oisek ba'torah* anyhow, then you are showing that you know why you're in this world – you know how to utilize your time in this world – and just because of that, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will give you more time in this world to accomplish. And therefore, learning is a segulah for getting well.

However, does that mean that you'll stop eating?! No, you have to eat anyhow, even if you're learning Torah. So even if you're learning you'll have to make sure to take your medicines and sleep as much as your body requires to heal.



How can a person refrain from speaking lashon hara without becoming a social outcast?

It means, this person thinks in order to be a *me'urav bein habri'yos*, to be acceptable to people, he has to speak lashon hara. But it's not true; on the contrary he'll be more acceptable when people see that he guards his tongue against criticism. When people see that you don't belittle anybody, people will like you for that.

You should know that a man who shows good character, or a woman who shows good character, is well liked. If a woman sits on the telephone and is catty and talks against people, so all of the other parties may be polite to her, but they're thinking, "What a nasty person she is." Therefore, middos tovos always pay off; good character pays off.

So the question is entirely out of place. By refraining from lashon hara, you become socially acceptable and popular, and people will love you. Of course, if you'll keep your mouth shut when you should say

kind words, then of course you're not *me'urav bein habri'yos*. When people are in distress, you should say a few kind words. You should encourage somebody, even if they didn't ask you for it. People need encouragement and therefore kind words always are in place. And so, silence is required sometimes when there's a peril that you might be saying the wrong thing, but when the right thing is required, good words are certainly rewarded by Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Like it says: **מתברך לעני פרוטה הנותן בשש ברכות, והמפייסו בדברים מתברך בי"א ברכות** When you give a coin to a poor person you receive six blessings from Hashem, but if you encourage him with words you receive eleven blessings.

And so, if you keep your mouth closed and avoid lashon hara and criticism, people will love you – you won't become an outcast. And if you open your mouth only for good things, you're even better off.



If a child comes home every day begging for a TV, should we let him once in a while go to a friend's house in order to prevent him from rebelling?

And the answer is, suppose a child wanted to eat something not kosher. His mouth is watering to eat something treif. Would you yield to him once in a while?

And treifus of the mind is a hundred times worse than treifus that you eat with your mouth. That's the answer. We must know, TV, especially today, is mamesh treif like lard, like chazer schmaltz. And it shouldn't even enter our minds that a child should even view it once in a while.



Should we say that "all is good" even though we don't feel it?

And the answer is yes! Because *v'halachta b'drachav* – you have to walk in the ways of Hashem, and it says in the Torah: **וַיַּ֤רְא אֱלֹקִים֙ אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֔ה וְהִנֵּה־טֹ֖וב מְאֹ֑ד** – ***'Hashem saw all that He had made – and behold the whole thing is very good.'*** (Bereishis 1:31).

Hashem said this is a very good world! And so, instead of walking around and grouching, "It's too hot. It's so humid," or "It's too cold – it's nasty; it's raining;" instead of that, we should always speak well of Hashem's world.

It's hot? Wonderful! The apples are getting red on the trees. The pears are becoming sweet on the trees. If it wasn't hot, they wouldn't become sweet. It's cold? That's also wonderful! The earth now is taking a rest from producing and while it's taking a rest it's recuperating all the minerals it lost, all the materials it lost during the summertime.

Without the winter, there can't be a summer. If it was summer all year, the earth would keep on producing and it would become arid and infertile. That's why the earth takes vacation in the wintertime. Cold is wonderful. Cold forces the earth to stop producing.

Rain is wonderful! Without rain, we're nothing. When it rains, we're coming down from the sky. You came down in the rain once upon a time! We're almost 80% rain. – We came down from the sky once. And people are grouching and complaining about the rain.

Here we were coming down from the clouds and they were complaining against us. That's our chance to come to this world! That's rain! And therefore when rain comes down, all the boys of the *yeshivos* are coming down and their future brides, the *kallos* from

Bais Yaakov, are coming down. They're all coming down together from the sky. So rain is wonderful.

So Hashem says it's a very good world, and He wants us to keep on saying that all the time. **הוֹדוּ לַה' כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ** – Give praises to Hashem that He gave a very good world; and if you keep on saying it, after a while, after some time, you'll begin to feel it.



לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ...וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ – '***Do not covet your friend's house... and everything that belongs to your friend***.' (20:14)



The question is obvious. Why delineate various items that belong (so to speak) to your friend (which you covet) and then conclude the pasuk with, **וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ**, "*And everything that belongs to your friend*"?

The aforementioned items also belong to your friend. Why not simply write: "Do not covet anything that belongs to your friend"?

The simple answer to this question is that a person covets because he sees something that his neighbor has, and this drives him into a frenzy. Why not me? I also want that.

Envy is the driving force behind *chemdah*, coveting, what belongs to someone else. We often forget that everything comes with a price. If my friend has something that I do not have – he is paying for it

with something in his life – a hardship, adversity, or he may have to forgo something later in his life, because he is receiving his reward now.

There is a balance. If my friend has something – I should take a step back and ask myself: Do I want to trade my life for his – despite all of the luxuries that he enjoys? Am I prepared to pay the price of, וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ, "*everything that belongs to your friend*"?

Horav Bentzion Abba Shaul, zl, explains that one of the primary reasons that one does not rise up to the level of sharing his friend's joy is the jealousy that gnaws at him. Why did my neighbor make a killing in the market, when I lost half of my investment? Why did his son get into yeshivah, and my son was told to come back next year? Why did his daughter get into her first seminary choice, while my daughter was relegated to waiting until mid-August to get into her third seminary choice? Why is his daughter engaged to a "top guy," while my daughter has yet to have a date?

The list goes on, and we would be guilty of self-prevarication if we did not concede that we all harbor such feelings of envy. Unfortunately, envy is intrinsic to human nature. Therefore, we either live with it and learn how to transcend it, or we become its captive and drive ourselves into a miserable existence.

Veritably, even one who is fully committed to the observance of the mitzvah, וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ, "*Love your fellow as yourself*," still has hurdles that occasionally challenge him.

A classic example is when two G-d-fearing men have a monetary dispute between them. As observant Jews, they go to the bais din, Jewish court, to adjudicate their dispute. Inevitably, one wins, and one loses.

Now, the one who has lost undoubtedly still feels that he should have emerged the victor. The fact that he lost causes him grief. After all, he was right. Why did he lose? Why did his antagonist win? The

scenario for the scourge of envy to fester and grow into full-scale discord is fertile.

The Chacham explains that envy is unrealistic. Every individual is sent to this world with a mission to fulfill. Each person has his own unique personal mission which only he can achieve. He is granted the tools with which to navigate and execute his mission successfully. Thus, when we see our neighbor blessed with material bounty, physical talents, spiritual proclivities, etc., it is because these are the tools that **he** needs in order to fulfill **his** mission/purpose in life.

It is almost as if Reuven is jealous that his friend has a wide array of tools. It just so happens that Shimon is a carpenter and requires tools to do his work. Likewise, the fellow whose mission it is to be a great baal chesed/baal tzedakah is blessed with the wherewithal for success. - Is that a reason for his friend to be jealous of him? - Each has his own mission.

וְהַר סִינַי עָשַׁן כֻּלּוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו ה׳ בָּאֵשׁ ' ***All Har Sinai was smoking, because Hashem had descended upon it in the fire***.' (19:18)



The most awesome, momentous moment in the history of mankind was the Revelation, during which Hashem descended upon Har Sinai amid an unprecedented display of thunder, smoke, lightning and fire. The background "music" was the accompaniment of shofar blasts.

In Derech Eitz Chaim, the **Ramchal** addresses the idea that the essence of Torah is eish, fire: "Behold! With great precision, it (the Torah) was compared to fire. When one uses an ember which does

not flame (not noticeable), but the energy of the flame is concealed inside, until that moment when one blows (stokes) on it. Then the flame will spread out and go forth. That flame is visible in many colors – which had previously not been visible and are now revealed. (In other words, an ember is a coal that on the outside appears to have no flame, but, deep within it, there is a small flame waiting to be stoked. It will produce a powerful fire/flame that will manifest a number of colors).

So, too, is the Torah which is before us: all of its words and letters are like embers which when ignited (initially) all appear the same. One sees before him only embers which are almost dim. When he exerts himself and expends effort and toil to work on the ember/words of the Torah, every letter produces/reveals a mighty multi-colored flame which comprises the knowledge which is concealed within each letter."

Studying Torah is unlike any other discipline. Torah study is transformative. It requires intense effort to plumb its depths, to extract its profundities. It is multifaceted, thus able to penetrate and reach different people on different levels. The more one stokes the ember, the greater the flame and the greater the number of colors that emanate from it.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, relates an incident that took place concerning the **Chasam Sofer**, which demonstrates his amazing insight and perspective on Torah. Undisputedly, the Chasam Sofer possessed Ruach HaKodesh. He was the recipient of Divine Inspiration, allowing him to see beyond and deeper than the average person.

The Maskillim, members of the Enlightenment, sought every venue to undermine and ultimately destroy traditional Judaism. They sought every opportunity to denigrate and humiliate Torah leadership, conjecturing that if they succeed in belittling the Torah leaders, the people will lose their respect for and faith in them. They

took it upon themselves to prove to the Orthodox followers of the Chasam Sofer that he was not imbued with Divine Inspiration.

The Chasam Sofer had the practice of testing the young students in yeshivah every few weeks. Prior to the next scheduled bechinah, test, they took a young, gentile boy, shaved his head, left over payos, and placed a large black yarmulke on his head. Next, they taught him a few Mishnayos, until he had memorized them perfectly. To the unsuspecting, he looked and sounded like just any other Jewish cheder student.



Judgment day arrived, and the boys entered the room to be tested by the saintly Chasam Sofer. When the turn for the gentile student came, he began to recite the Mishnah perfectly – until the Chasam Sofer told him to stop and asked that the little gentile, be removed from the room.

All who were present stood dumbfounded. How could the Chasam Sofer have known? The boy appeared no different than any Jewish boy.

They asked the Chasam Sofer how he knew. He said, "Did you see the difference between the goy and the other children? When asked to read the Mishnah, every other child accompanied his recital with back-and-forth movement. He shuckled when he recited words of Torah. That is how a Jew learns. He gets "all into it." His entire body is one with the Torah. The gentile knew nothing about Torah. To him, it was just another test. - When Torah enters a person, he becomes enflamed. Is it any wonder that he shuckles? He is all fired up."

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ – '***Honor your father and mother, so that your days will be lengthened***.' (20:12)

The Aseres HaDibros, Ten Commandments, were inscribed on two tablets. Hence, the name: Luchos. The Ten Commandments are divided equally with: five devoted to mitzvos bein adam laMakom, between man and G-d; and five devoted to mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro, between man and his fellow man.

Interestingly, the mitzvah of kibud av v'eim, honoring one's father and mother, is listed on the tablet dedicated to bein adam laMakom. Chazal (Kiddushin 30b) teach that, when one properly honors his parents, it is considered as if he has honored Hashem. This is probably due to the fact that they "partner" with Hashem in the conception and birth of a child.

Horav Avraham Pam, zl, would cite the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 68:6) concerning Yaakov Avinu's leaving home, due to his fear of Eisav and because the time had come to search for a wife. On the way, Elifaz, son of Eisav, attacked him and left him penniless. This was followed by Yaakov's continuing on to the home of the deceitful Lavan, the man who would be his father-in-law.

Despite these hindrances, which would have impeded the goal of a lesser man, Yaakov moved on and established the underpinnings of Klal Yisrael. How did he do it? From where did he garner the strength to overcome these trying situations?

The Midrash explains that it was the knowledge that, "If I give up now, all of the efforts that my mother expended to assist me in obtaining the brachos, blessings, from my father will have been for naught."

Rivkah Imeinu made many sacrifices for her son, Yaakov. She risked her marriage and, quite possibly, her life to guide Yaakov in the ruse to receive his rightful blessings. It was all so that Yaakov would derive the spiritual benefits of those blessings. How could Yaakov

turn his back on his mother; how could he fail her? It was this sense of hakoras hatov, gratitude, based upon a profound acknowledgement of the favor – and everything that went into its realization – that spurred Yaakov on in later life.

We all have obligations to our parents (and to our mentors). How often do we take the time to begin to contemplate our chov kadosh, holy obligation, to honor our parents in the manner they deserve?

The mitzvah of kibbud av v'eim is a command from Hashem, which is not contingent upon one's feelings of gratitude. It is just so much more "meaningful" when one feels a reciprocal responsibility. One who does not experience a feeling of gratitude might very well be expressing a personal deficiency of his own.

Certainly, we find numerous families in which grown children act indifferently toward their parents as a result of a son or daughter's deficient character and self-serving attitude toward life in general and parents in particular. Maintaining a strong sense of gratitude toward parents to the point that one would never let them down as he goes through life is a task which defines one's achievement. We should never forget upon whose shoulders we stand.

Horav Yisrael Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel, never forgot his mother's last-minute gesture. He went through his teenage and early adult life without uttering the word, 'Mameh', until, out of deep respect and admiration for his mother-in-law, he began to call her Mameh.

The last time that he had pronounced this word was when he was seven years old. At the last fraction of a second, his mother pushed him into the arms of his eighteen-year-old brother, as she realized with a mother's intuition that this was the only way to save him:

It was at the train platform in his hometown of Piotrkow, and the accursed Nazis were dividing up the "passengers," men going to one side and women and children to another. Young Yisrael Meir was small

in build; thus, his mother was able to cover him up with an oversized pillow on which she had sewn several straps. In reality, it was a makeshift duffle bag. His mother told him always to hold onto the pillow, because it was his satchel containing his worldly belongings.



Yisrael Meir Lau (8 years old) in the arms of Elazar Schiff, Buchenwald survivors at their arrival at Haifa on 15 July 1945

Standing by the train, his mother realized the consequences of male/female separation. The women and children were being sent to death camps, while the men would be spared, so that they could work until it was their time to be sent away.

With the pillow on his shoulders, the young boy was covered and unnoticeable. He was holding on to his mother's hand, while his older brother stood to the side. His mother was directed toward a railcar, and Yisrael Meir thought that he was joining her. At the very last moment, his mother made an instantaneous decision. She shoved him (with the pillow on his shoulders covering him) in the direction of the men. - The young boy had no idea what was happening. He heard his

mother scream to his brother, "Take Lulek (Yisrael)! Goodbye, Lulek!" and he never saw his mother again.

Mother and son had no time for conversation, no hugs and kisses, no tearful embrace – just a wave, as the Nazis shoved her into the train. His brother did not understand. What would he do with a child, a seven-year-old boy?

Yisrael Meir went into the rail car with the men (He was covered with the pillow, thus unnoticeable.) It was the most difficult moment of the war for him. He never before and never after cried as did on that day that he was separated from his mother.

It took years to understand his mother's sacrifice. By pushing him away, she saved his life.

He never forgot this act of courage. His mother's memory never left him. Indeed, he views this act of heroism as the shoulders upon which he has stood his whole life.

כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב – '***So shall you say to Bais Yaakov***.' (19:3)

Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to give precedence to the women when he delivered Hashem's mandate to the nation.

Rabbeinu Bachya explains that a "good" woman has the power to inspire her son to study Torah with zest and vigor. She creates the excitement, the passion, the inherent joy. This is why I used the word "good" to describe what every Jewish mother should be. It is only if she personally feels a strong affinity for Torah that she can imbue her son (and daughter) with such emotion. The love of Torah should resonate with her son, thus encouraging a long, committed relationship with it.

Horav Aizik Sher, zl, was a strong proponent of a woman's/mother's obligation to be a strong *akeres ha'bayis*, foundation of her home. A mother who is truly devoted to her children makes the difference

in their ultimate success as bnei Torah. The Rosh Yeshivah's deep appreciation of a mother's function was manifest during an incident that took place late one morning:



Rav Aizik had a heart condition that required him to take a daily walk, which he did, accompanied by one of his students. As they were walking one day, a young woman pushing a baby carriage, in an obvious rush, almost bowled them over.

Spectators were shocked at this. The young man accompanying Rav Aizik muttered, "What right does she have to walk like that? Does she think she is the only one on the street?"

The Rosh Yeshivah remained silent until his student had released all of his anger. He then said, "I am speaking now to myself. If you want to listen in, however, you may. I wonder how much I achieved today for myself and how much I accomplished for others!

Rather than deteriorate in bed all day, I arose in the morning, and got dressed. After all, it was cold. I went to shul to daven, because I require a blessing for good health and livelihood. I ate to nourish myself. I studied Torah for myself. In other words, it is now 11:00 a.m., and I have done absolutely nothing for anyone but myself!

This young woman, however, probably slept very little during the night, having gotten up numerous times to take care of her infant. By the time she fell back asleep, she had to get up, so that she could wake her husband for davening. She then prepared sandwiches for her children to take to school. She woke and dressed them, prepared breakfast, bid them goodbye, and then returned to her infant. As

soon as things quieted down, she received a call from the school principal asking if she could come in to substitute for a teacher who was absent. She needed the money to help support her family. So she said, 'Yes,' and ran to school.

Now, should I, who have done nothing for anyone other than myself, criticize this woman who has already done so much for others? Can you imagine?"



Rav Aizik then continued, citing the **Rambam** in Hilchos Shechitah 13, who explains that, concerning the mitzvah of Shiluach ha'kein, the reason we first send away the mother bird and only then take the chicks for ourselves is that we should not take advantage of the mother bird's natural maternal instincts to protect her offspring.

Upon seeing a human being, every bird flies away – except for the mother bird, who never abandons her offspring. Therefore, we may not capture the mother. We send her away.

The Ohr Sameach adds that we accord extraordinary respect towards the mother bird, because she is occupied with raising the next generation. Her function precludes her from being captured.

Rav Aizik concluded, "Surely, a Jewish mother who provides and cares for the future of our nation deserves a little latitude."

וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים - '***And (how) I carried you on wings of eagles***.' (19:4)



It is nothing short of amazing to observe how someone who had been introduced to Torah late in his life is able to grasp its profundities and, in almost no time, to grow in Torah to the point that it is almost difficult to believe that he had not been learning all of his life. - How does this occur?

Horav Simchah Wasserman, zl, attributes this transformation to being carried "on the wings of eagles." - Hashem sees a Jew who is sincere about his learning, who wants to grow in Torah, and He raises him up, so to speak, on the wings of eagles, granting him the ability to soar like never before.

One cannot do it alone. With the support of Hashem, no challenge is insurmountable, no obstacle impedes one's growth. This is how Jews of the generation that was liberated from Egypt were able, in the space of seven weeks, to go from being lowly slaves to accepting the Torah from Hashem Himself.

Hashem helps those who deserve it, who indicate by their sincere endeavor that nothing is more important than growth in Torah. Hashem places them on the "wings of eagles," and they soar.

To obtain a "ticket" for this extraordinary "ride," one must earn it through devotion, commitment and hard work. Essentially, like everything in life, it is Hashem Who really transports us. The "eagles" are only a medium by which He carries out His will.

Why does the pasuk not simply say, "I will carry you?" Why employ eagles as a vehicle of transport?

I think that the eagles are used as a *nisayon*, test. All too often, we pray for a form of salvation to materialize. Anyone with a modicum of intelligence understands that salvation comes only from Hashem. Yet, we often lose sight of our true Benefactor. In other words, we could be riding on "eagles" and lose sight of Who it really is that is moving us forward/upward.

Hashem says to us: "You have come so far to be worthy of siyata diShmaya, Divine Assistance. Do not ruin it by attributing your salvation to the eagles. It is Ani, I, Who is sending and granting power to those eagles."

As long as we do not lose sight of this basic principle, we will encounter no turbulence during our trip.

וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בָּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה – '***Blessed is Hashem Who has rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh***.' (18:10)

The Talmud Sanhedrin 94a makes a striking statement: **גנאי הוא למשה וששים ריבוא שלא אמרו ברוך עד שבא יתרו ואמר ברוך ה'** - "*It was taught in the name of Rabbi Papyas, g'nai hu l'Moshe, it is a shame for Moshe and the 600,000 Jews that they had never uttered, Baruch (Hashem), until Yisro came and said, Baruch Hashem asher hitzil eschem.*'"

This is a strong statement which begs elucidation. Clearly, Klal Yisrael had praised Hashem when they sang the Shirah amid great joy, praising Hashem for the spectacular miracles and wonders which He had wrought. - They did not say the words, "Baruch Hashem." Does that warrant that their inaction be termed a **גנאי**, shame? In other words, Klal Yisrael's gratitude in comparison to that of Yisro was shameful! How are we to understand this?



Horav Mordechai Zuckerman, zl, derives an important lesson concerning appreciation and gratitude from Chazal. Veritably, Klal Yisrael sang Shirah, praising Hashem's lofty power, His outstanding miracles and His absolute control over all of the forces of nature.

They forgot one thing: the personal relationship of those miracles to them. They never thanked Hashem for their personal salvation. Sure, they had offered boundless praise, but what about the simple fact that they were alive and well? This is the g'nai. They praised Hashem's miracles, but forgot to say, "Thank you Hashem for saving me!"

Thus, Chazal use a cogent statement to underscore that each and every one of us must constantly introspect concerning what we owe Hashem. We regularly benefit from His favor; yet, we fail to acknowledge our gratitude. We either do not think, or we have gotten so accustomed to taking that we have lost track of Who is the Giver.

L'sitcha Elyon cites a letter penned by **Horav Chaim Stein, zl,** (who was a close friend of Rav Mordechai Zuckerman), and addressed to his son, **Rav Sholom Rafael Yehuda, zl**, who suffered greatly for years until his untimely passing at a young age. The Rosh Yeshivah lovingly tells him that man is obliged to bless Hashem for every chesed, kindness, which he receives from Him. He must sense this even during those difficult periods when he feels that he is in dire need, and he opens his heart to Hashem in prayer. Even then, when he pleads amid pain and deprivation, he must not lose sight of all of the good that Hashem has done for him.

All too often we remember the source of our good fortune – as long as we experience the good. What about when the tables are reversed, and we are no longer on the receiving end of Hashem's kindness? What if the money stops flowing, the accolades are non-existent, and the pain that was supposed to stop – does not? It is easy to feel grateful when life is good, but when pain sets in, when disaster strikes, we suddenly renege our responsibility to those from whom we have benefitted.

This is not only a grave error; it is a deficiency in one's understanding of the middah, character trait, of hakoras hatov, gratitude. During difficult times, not only will gratitude be helpful, but it is also essential toward maintaining one's level of human decency.

In fact, it is precisely during times of crisis that we have most to gain from a grateful perspective on life. - In the face of brokenness, gratitude gives us strength. In the face of despair, gratitude imbues us with hope. Indeed, gratitude grants us the ability to cope with difficult situations and hard times. We should really distinguish between feeling grateful and being grateful.

Acting in a grateful manner allows us to grow, to transcend the present crisis, to look toward the future with hope. Furthermore, by being grateful we will achieve a level in which we will feel grateful.



וְהִזְהַרְתָּה אֶתְהֶם אֶת־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶת־הַתּוֹרֹת וְהוֹדַעְתָּ לָהֶם אֶת־הַדֶּרֶךְ יֵלְכוּ בָהּ וְאֶת־ הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּן – '***You shall make known to them the path in which they should go and the deeds that they should do***.' (18:20)

הַדֶּרֶךְ יֵלְכוּ בָהּ - "*The path in which they should go.*" **יֵלְכוּ**, "*they should go,*" is a reference to visiting the sick. By virtue of simply "going" to visit someone who is ill, even if he does nothing, the individual has already fulfilled the mitzvah.

What is it about simply visiting that provides mitzvah fulfillment? Obviously, the optimum mitzvah is spending time, talking. Calming the

patient-- encouraging and engendering hope -- is what the patient needs, but the mitzvah at its basic is fulfilled merely with a visit.



Perhaps by understanding the immediate consequences of illness we can better comprehend why visitation in its basic form is a mitzvah.

Illness punctures our self-established defences which conceal the fact that: we are vulnerable to fear; we are really weak and powerless; and, above all, we are alone.

One who is a prisoner to his hospital bed is a victim of profound loneliness. He has time to think, and the thoughts that course through his mind are often far from positive. People may claim that they need no one, but no one wants to be alone. Everyone seeks a connection with someone.

No Jew is ever alone, he is a member of a community, a shul, a school, a chabura, a group. When he is alone in the hospital and all of his friends are out in the world living their lives, talking about their future plans – the patient feels terribly alone. People must make the patient feel that others still care about him.

Out of sight – out of mind is sadly a reality. Ask anyone who has been a patient alone in a hospital. Bikur Cholim means **visiting** the sick. When one enters the room of a sick person, he is conveying a message: "You still matter. You are still connected to your friends. No one has forgotten about you."

By helping him to conquer his loneliness, we are fulfilling the mitzvah of Bikur Cholim. Bikur Cholim is an act of chesed and, as such, demands that the benefactor identify with the beneficiary.

With Bikur Cholim, this means that we must understand as best as possible the meaning of loneliness. How does it feel to be all alone?

Some of us have Baruch Hashem never experienced that feeling; thus, fulfilling the mitzvah of Bikur Cholim takes on a new challenge. I must convey to the sick person that I know what you are going through, and I feel your loneliness. In that way, the patient will not feel that "they are just visiting me to ease their conscience. They do not know what I am going through. They are clueless concerning my loneliness."

If we can psyche ourselves up to understanding the meaning of being a prisoner in a hospital bed, alone at night and most of the day, with no one to share the patient's personal emotions, then we can properly fulfill the mitzvah of Bikur Cholim.



וַיִּסְעוּ מֵרְפִידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי – '***They journeyed from Refidim and arrived in the wilderness of Sinai.***' (19:2)

Rashi asks **מַה תַּ"ל לַחֲזֹר וּלְפָרֵשׁ מֵהֵיכָן נָסְעוּ, וַהֲלֹא כְּבָר כָּתַב שֶׁבִּרְפִידִים הָיוּ חוֹנִים** - *why the Torah found it necessary to relate from whence they journeyed. We already know that they had previously encamped in Refidim.*

He explains **מַה בִּיאָתָן לְמִדְבַּר סִינַי בִּתְשׁוּבָה, אַף נְסִיעָתָן מֵרְפִידִים בִּתְשׁוּבָה** - *that the Torah reiterates their journey from Refidim to teach that, just as they came to Har Sinai in a state of teshuvah, repentance, in preparation for the receiving of the Torah, likewise, during their journey from Refidim they were in a state of teshuvah.*

Having said this, we wonder why teshuvah seems to be a prerequisite for receiving the Torah – to the point that they were in a state of teshuvah on the way to Sinai, as well as when they left.

Teshuvah is an integral component of receiving the Torah. Without teshuvah, we forget exactly what took place, what Torah means to us, and what our responsibility to it is.



Horav Yitzchak Yeruchem Bordiansky, Shlita, Mashgiach at Yeshivas Kol Torah, vividly portrays this idea with a practical image: Imagine a young couple are married amid great pomp and celebration. Much excitement and joy reign until the very end of the wedding when all of the participants return to their respective homes. - Yes, the chassan, groom, goes home, and the kallah, bride, returns to her prenuptial residence. Does this make sense? The wedding was celebrated to unite two people in matrimony. How could they go their separate ways once the wedding is over?

When Klal Yisrael received the Torah at Har Sinai, it was their collective wedding day, as they entered into a lasting covenant between themselves and Hashem and His Torah. Is it possible for one to make a covenant and remain the same person afterwards? In other words, could Klal Yisrael reach Har Sinai, and, after receiving the Torah, move on from there as if nothing had changed?

Clearly not. Har Sinai was transformative. The men were no longer the same people who had earlier journeyed there. Likewise, every year following Shavuos, after having spent an entire festival reaffirming our acceptance of the Torah, could we go back to business as usual? The prerequisite for Kabbolas HaTorah, receiving the Torah, is teshuvah, to shake-off the dust and open a new page in one's rise to spiritual ascendancy.

This idea may be alluded to from the custom that we eat dairy foods on Shavuos, in commemoration of Klal Yisrael who ate dairy following the Giving of the Torah. Once they accepted the Torah, the dishes

from which they had previously eaten were no longer kosher, having absorbed foods which had previously not yet been deemed unfit for Jewish consumption. Likewise, when we accept the Torah, we cannot return to the same keilim, utensils/vessels, through which we previously served Hashem.

After receiving the Torah anew – we, too, must become new people by changing our previous standards of observance. Every instance in life which spiritually inspires us must leave an indelible mark on our character. We cannot continue along the same route because we are no longer the same.



כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻן יָמֶיךָ – '***Honor your father and your mother, so that your days will be lengthened***.' (20:12)

The fifth commandment, to honor one's parents, is a cornerstone of faith in the entire Torah. Our mesorah, tradition, is based upon a chain that has been transmitted throughout the generations from Har Sinai, where the Torah was given. This mesorah continues through this very day, through the vehicle of the parents of every generation. Each parent serves as a link to his child, maintaining this mesorah when he, in turn, becomes a parent.

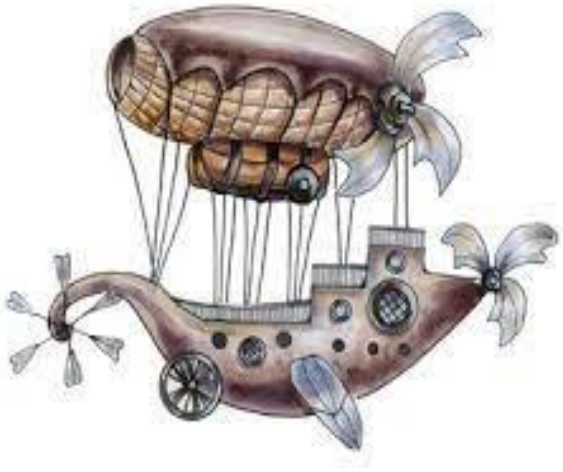
Without the respect demanded in the fifth commandment, we have no assurance that the other commandments will be observed. Hashem, father and mother are partners in the creation of a child. Thus, one must honor his parents because they are partners with Hashem.

All things considered, despite being partners with Hashem, they, too, must honor Him. Thus, they may not ask their child to go against Hashem. Such respect for parents goes against the underlying basis of the goals of this mitzvah.

One question that still remains: While it is true that parents must also honor Hashem, solely from the perspective of the partnership,

one might contend that parents actually comprise the majority of the partnership. Should their demands not be recognized? Indeed, this is a rhetorical question, since there is no such thing as majority partners against Hashem. He grants life to all the partners; therefore, in a sense, He is always the majority partner.

This idea is best explained with an insightful mashal, parable, by the **Maggid, zl, of Dubno**: There were once three brothers who decided to travel to three different parts of the world to develop a more cosmopolitan view of wisdom. They felt that exposing themselves to the varied wisdoms and disciplines of the multifaceted world community would enhance the individual wisdom of each of them.


After one year, they returned to their home base to share with one another the new wisdom which they had mastered. One brother related that he had learned to make a looking glass through which he could see all over the world. The second brother had learned to make a flying machine that could transport him to any destination in the world in a very short time. The third brother also had picked up an important piece of wisdom. He discovered a magic potion that had the ability to heal any ailment. There was no disease in the world that it could not tackle.

The brothers were proud of their individual achievements. Time would tell when and how they could be put to good use. One day, the brother who possessed the wonderful looking glass was gazing

throughout the "world," when he saw a princess in a faraway country who had fallen gravely ill. The doctors who were treating her had already despaired of finding a cure to save her life. Her father, the king, was beside himself. This was his only child. Words cannot describe the scene playing out at the bedside of the young princess.

Seeing this, the brother immediately went into action. He called his two brothers, and they immediately boarded the miraculous flying machine, taking along the cure-all potion which would hopefully save the life of the princess.

They arrived in the kingdom and immediately went to the hospital where the princess was lying in bed, presenting a deathly pallor. Were they in time? The brother who had the magic potion immediately went over to the distraught king to offer his services. What did the king have to lose? His daughter was at death's door. - The brother administered the potion to the princess, and, within minutes, her colour returned. A few hours later, she was sitting up for the first time in weeks. Two days later, the doctors declared her disease-free. She was cured of all illness.

Overjoyed, and beyond belief, the king addressed the three brothers, "As reward for saving my daughter's life, I will give her hand in marriage to one of you. The problem is that the decision concerning who should marry her is something that the three of you must decide among yourselves.

The brothers began debating the issue, each one claiming that, without his contribution, the princess would not have been cured. "Without my looking glass, we would never have been aware of her illness" was the first brother's position. The second brother claimed, "Without my flying machine, we could never have transported the medicine." The last brother argued that the discovery and travel would have been meaningless without his magic potion.

Unable to reach a decision, the king turned to his daughter and said, "You decide which one you should marry." The princess was an astute

young woman. She replied, "All three of you equally deserve to marry me. That, however, concerns the past, but, if I were to become ill again, only the brother who is in possession the miracle cure could save me. It is he whom I want to marry."

The lesson is simple and clear. Yes – there are three partners in a person, and one feels a sense of indebtedness to all of them. This sense of gratitude is only with regard to the past. As far as the future is concerned, we are far more beholden to Hashem than to our parents. Every moment of our lives is a special gift from Hashem. Without His Will, we simply would cease to exist. When parental wishes come into an opposition with those of G-d, the future decides the issue. Without Hashem, we have no tomorrow. In fact, today is dependent upon Him as well! Both the child and his parents are in Hashem's debt.

The question of precedence is a moot issue. Upon perusing Rabbi Yechiel Spero's latest volume, "A Touch of Chizuk," I came across a story which is particularly inspiring and quite relevant to our dvar Torah.



Rabbi Yosef Mendelovich was a Russian refusenik who fought fiercely for the freedom to practice his religion. (He was known as a "Prisoner of Zion." A political activist who has devoted his life to speaking out against religious persecution, especially of Soviet Jewry. One of the first and most famous refuseniks, his devotion and commitment to Judaism served as the standard for others to emulate.) -The dread KGB took special joy in making his life miserable.

While serving time in the Russian Gulag for some trumped up charges, he taught himself to daven and observe mitzvos. The prison

guards were the lowest form of humanity in a country not known for maintaining a very high level of humanity. They did everything within their power to break his spirit. The more they worked at destroying him, the more stoic he became. He showed them that his commitment to Hashem was stronger than their devotion to evil. He had a greater will to fight for freedom than they had to take it from him.



He wanted to wear a head-covering, but yarmulkes were not accepted as part of the prison uniform. Thus, instead of wearing the traditional yarmulke, he took a handkerchief and wrapped it around his head. (Interesting how some of us feel that wearing a yarmulke in public is not pc). It was a constant battle to wear that handkerchief, but it was a battle that he won.

One day, after being locked up for some time, he was informed that his elderly father was coming to visit him. This was very unusual. His father was not a well man and the long journey to the Gulag was not an easy trip.

Once again, the guards were determined to break his spirit by testing his will. Waiting with bated breath for his father's arrival, he sat in the waiting room with his handkerchief on his head. His father had arrived and was waiting on the other side of the door.

One can only begin to imagine the excitement, the yearning of son for father, and father for son. As he was about to go to meet his father, the guard stopped him and said, "Remove your head-covering!" Yosef was confronted with a dilemma. According to Jewish law, there was no problem with removing his head covering.

He knew that his father was waiting anxiously to see him. On the other hand, he also knew that this was a test – a test to see if they could break him. If he gave in and removed his handkerchief – then they had succeeded in defeating him. Once defeated, it would be most difficult to once again ascend the spiritual ladder. So he refused to remove his head covering.

The guards, heartless animals who did not know the meaning of compassion or decency, likewise refused to budge. "No visitation," they said. Instead of running through the open door into his father's embrace, he returned to his cell – miserable, but triumphant. The guards did not succeed in breaking him. Sadly, his father would never see him again. He took ill shortly afterwards and succumbed to his illness.

This is a very sad story – one that has the reader asking, "Was he correct in his refusal to remove his handkerchief? Was he right in taking a stringent stand concerning his observance of this one tradition – at the expense of his aged father's desire to see his son, to have a little nachas, before he died?"

I am not one to decide right or wrong. One thing I am certain of, however, is that when his father's neshamah, soul, ascended to **גנזי מרומים**, the Heavens Above, it viewed the refusal of his son, Yosef, from a different vantage point. The nachas that the neshamah experienced then is indescribable. In fact, I wonder if Yosef Mendelovich's handkerchief in this world did not translate itself into a special crown for his father in the Eternal World.

"Life is not about what is pleasant for me – Life is about what is meaningful for me.

Hashem will always give me what I need to become the greatest and best person I am able to be." ~ Rabbi Yitzchok Breitowitz.

לֹא תִגְנֹב – '*Do not steal*.' (20:13)

The Talmud Sanhedrin 86a, teaches that the **לֹא תִגְנֹב** - "*do not steal*," associated with the Aseres Hadibros, Ten Commandments, is a reference to kidnapping. This is not about stealing money from someone; rather, it is a case of capital punishment for stealing a human life.

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, points out that stealing is often viewed relatively. In other words, if someone appropriates an object illegally, his warped mind will likely convince him that this object is now his, and whoever takes it from him is the thief.

This idea applies across the board to every case of monies finding their way into our possession, in a less than savory manner. We now think that since we have possession it is ours. This is the moral bankruptcy of a twisted mind.

Rav Galinsky relates an incident that occurred in which he was accosted by a less-than-observant Jew, who was furious over the successful efforts of Rav Galinsky and others like him, people who were sacrificing themselves to rescue lost souls who had been forced into abdicating their religious observance.

The man began the conversation with a shout, "Galinsky! When will you do teshuvah, repent?"

Rav Galinsky immediately countered, "What sin have I committed that requires expiation?"

"You are stealing souls away from us!" the man yelled. "How dare you attempt to inculcate 'saved' Jewish children who have been force-fed with your archaic laws and rituals?"

Rav Galinsky replied, "At worst, we are guilty of being gonev min haganov, stealing from a thief. You grabbed innocent Jewish children from their homes, cut off their peyos, side-locks, and infused them with Communism, teaching them a godless lifestyle. All we are guilty

of is taking back what is rightfully ours. Yet, you have the audacity to call us thieves!"

I remind myself of a story that took place in Russia years ago, before the Western Union telegram for wiring money. In those days, when one wanted to send money from place to place, he would dispatch a special messenger to deliver the money. Obviously, since this mission was fraught with danger, the messengers were not your everyday garden-variety citizen. They were powerful, strong and capable men, who could take care of themselves. When confronted with a gun, however, the hardiest messenger turns into butter.

"One such messenger was waylaid by a robber who demanded the money he was carrying in his pouch. Only a fool stands up to a loaded gun, so the messenger turned over the pouch together with everything that he was carrying in his pockets. He was left bereft of all valuables.



The messenger asked the robber, 'Can I ask you for a favour?' (Apparently, it was a more 'cultured' thief.) The man who sent the money is a very suspicious person. He will not believe that I was robbed. Please shoot a hole in my jacket, so that I can prove to him that I was the victim of a robbery.'

"The thief was a practical person. Why not accommodate the victim. So he shot a hole in his jacket. "

'You know, perhaps one is not enough. Can you shoot some more?' Once again, the robber acquiesced putting another two holes in the jacket. "

'Just to be safe, can you shoot another bullet into the bottom of the jacket?' the victim asked. "

'I would love to help you out, but I am clear out of bullets,' the thief replied. "

'If this is the case," the victim declared, "then you have no advantage over me.' He immediately jumped on the thief and pummelled him quite mercilessly. Once he retrieved his pouch with the money, he heard the thief moaning, 'Not only did you beat me within an inch of my life; you took away my pouch with my money!'

"'Your money?!' the victim screamed, 'Your money? I took back what you originally stole from me!'"

Rav Galinsky concluded his tale, "We suddenly become the kidnappers, and you are the victims! We are only taking back what was ours to begin with!"

וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגָּלֶה עֶרְוָתְךָ עָלָיו – '***You shall not ascend My Altar on steps***.' (20:23)



Rashi explains that a ramp was used for the Kohanim to ascend to the Mizbayach, Altar, as a provision to circumvent any suggestion of immodesty.

A ramp allows for the legs to move evenly, thereby not allowing any inappropriate exposure of oneself. I think we might be able to add a homiletic interpretation to the closing pasuk of Parashas Yisro. The Mizbayach symbolizes sacrifice. Indeed, to study Torah, to live a Torah lifestyle, does require a certain element of sacrifice.

Before I continue, the sacrifice is only in the eyes of the beholder. A true ben Torah does not view his devotion to Torah as sacrifice. The correct word should be dedication. Every moment dedicated to Torah is a supreme moment of ecstasy. Sacrifice is in the eyes of the world, who fail to understand the beauty and sweetness associated with Torah. Perhaps there is financial sacrifice, since one who devotes his time to Torah study has little time for anything else. A promising career in commerce, science or law eludes he who trades a financial portfolio for a Gemorah.

The cost of Torah study for those who want to have nachas, spiritual satisfaction, from their children is definitely a sacrifice. On the other hand, my heart goes out to all those who choose secular education over a Torah day school/Yeshivah education. The fruits we reap are often the results of the seeds we sow. After all is said and done, there might be sacrifice to a Torah life, but it is well worth the awesome reward: a reward that cannot be obtained any other way.

This perhaps explains the Altar, but what about the Ramp? Is there a difference if one ascends the heights of Torah via a stairway or a ramp?

Regardless of the means, he has still made it to the top. There is a difference, however, in the quality of the ascent. More effort is exerted in climbing stairs. This is especially true if the space between the steps is high. There is less exertion in going up a ramp, since it is a gradual climb. On the other hand, it is more difficult to stop and rest on the incline of the ramp, while one who has reached the next step does not expend great effort in remaining there.

We, thus, have discerned one primary difference, which allows for a benefit in each means of ascension. Steps are more difficult to climb, but easier when one wants to stop and rest. The ramp is easier to ascend but does not allow for comfortable resting along the way.

Additionally, if the steps are slippery, one can still climb up; while a slippery ramp will prove quite difficult to escalate.

The Torah is teaching us an important principle in avodas Hashem, service to the Almighty. The road to Heaven is not comprised of steps. It is more like an upward ramp. One who wants to ascend to the Torah peak must be acutely aware from the very beginning that there is no resting, no stopping, no vacations, no holidays. It is a steady, upward climb, at times slippery, whereby one could easily fall. He must be careful, focused on the "top" and not allow for status quo.

On the other hand, it does not require one to jump from step to step, go from level to level, in one catapult. It means placing one foot in front of the other and keeping it up until he makes the "top." One cannot say: "I have gone far enough"; "This is how religious I want to be"; "I am comfortable with my present level of Yiddishkeit." If one stops his progression, he begins to slide backward until he is at the bottom.

This idea applies equally on the community level, as it does on an individual basis. The shul that wants to maintain a status quo, a certain level of religious commitment – no more, no less – will eventually have less. A community that refuses to go forward, to move upward, will eventually slide backward.

There are no plateaus in Jewish life. One either grows, or he regresses.

R' Nachman of Breslov zt"l once gave his old tallis to one of his close students. "Show this tallis a lot of respect," he said. "For as many threads as there are in this cloth, that is how many tears I shed in order to be able to understand what a tallis truly means."

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ
'***And Yisro, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about everything that G-d had done for Moshe and for his people, Yisrael.***' (18:1)




When Ariel Sharon, military leader and eventual prime minister of Israel, lost a son in a tragic accident, he was overcome with grief. A mutual friend approached **Horav Aryeh Levine, zl**, and asked him to invite Sharon to his home. Perhaps the general would be moved by the tzaddik's divrei nechamah, words of comfort. Thus far, no one was really having much luck in reaching him. - Sadly, this was not Sharon's first encounter with tragedy, having lost his first wife and a son in a road accident.

The tzaddik absolutely refused to have Sharon come to his house. "It is my mitzvah to comfort the bereaved," Rav Aryeh said. "I will go to his house." This is part and parcel of the mitzvah of nichum aveilim, comforting mourners.

"But the Rav is not well," his friend countered. [Apparently, this meeting took place during one of Rav Aryeh's illnesses, when he was extremely ill.]

"It is no matter. I am going." Rav Aryeh rose from his bed, and, with great determination, went to visit Ariel Sharon. The Rav walked into

his home and encountered a broken man. The grief had taken its toll on him. Rav Aryeh spoke at length about the meaning of tragedy and made a strong attempt at alleviating some of the sadness from Sharon's life.

After returning home to Yerushalayim, Rav Arye purchased mezuzos in silver cases and had them sent to Sharon as a gift. Apparently, when he was there, he had not noticed mezuzos on any of the doorposts.

Ariel Sharon never forgot Rav Aryeh's act of kindness. The well-known tzaddik of Yerushalayim was a busy man. Yet, he made time to comfort a bereaved father. He would never forget this gesture.

Rav Aryeh was so ill that he was later admitted to Hadassah Hospital for a while, during which time Sharon made a special trip to visit him. Rav Aryeh was profoundly moved by this act of kindness. He was a man who commanded the entire Israeli army, the soldiers for whom Rav Aryeh regularly prayed. He would say, "They are angels; not one of us know how to appreciate or to value them properly."

Excited and very pleased to see his visitor, Rav Aryeh embraced the general with unusual warmth. Then Rav Aryeh thought to himself, "What am I to tell him?" It is not as if the two had very much in common.

That Shabbos was Parashas Yisro. So, Rav Aryeh decided to discuss the first pasuk of the parsha. "We read Parashas Yisro this Shabbos: 'And Yisro, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about everything that G-d had done for Moshe and for his people Yisrael.' Rashi asks, 'What did Yisro hear that motivated him to leave his home in Midyan and trek to the wilderness and join the Jewish People?'

Rashi replies: 'He heard about the parting of the Red Sea, and the battle between the Jewish People and Amalek.'

"Why was it necessary for Yisro to hear about two miracles to inspire his coming to the Jewish People? Why was not the Splitting

of the Red Sea sufficient reason for him to come? Was this not a great miracle, indeed, unparalleled in human history? Nothing like this had ever happened before, and, for that matter, never since then has the sea split, allowing for an entire nation to walk through on dry land."

"Still", Rav Aryeh continued, "it seems that it was not enough. For when Yisro heard about it he thought, the Almighty indeed wrought a miracle, but a miracle is something extraordinary, unusual; it happens only once. One cannot predict what the future of Klal Yisrael will be from one miracle. Will they always have miracles if they need them?

"But now, when Yisro heard about the battle with Amalek – a real, actual battle, which the Children of Israel fought with courage and bravery – that it happened through plain warfare, he understood that Klal Yisrael is a unique nation. Then he was convinced that it was necessary and worthwhile for him to come and get to know this firsthand."

Rav Arye paused a moment, and then added, "Well, what happened once will happen once again!"

וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר – '***And Yisrael encamped there opposite the mountain***.' (19:2)

Rashi notes that the verb **וַיִּחַן** is written in the singular. This teaches that the entire nation encamped **כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד**, "as one person with one heart," so great was their sense of unity.

Only when we are united in our commitment to Hashem, each of us maintaining a single, unified desire to serve Him, are we worthy of the name Yisrael. No hatred, no envy, only love and caring – that is how we approached Har Sinai.

Horav Mordechai Ilan, zl, explains that this is why, in the well-known Dayeinu segment of the Haggadah, we say, "If He would have

(just) brought us near to Har Sinai, and not given us the Torah – Dayeinu; it would have been sufficient."

How can this be enough? The purpose of Har Sinai and everything that preceded it, was to receive the Torah. What was to be gained from coming to Har Sinai and leaving without the Torah?

Now that we perceive the unprecedented unity that reigned among the Jewish People, to the point that they all felt as one person, we understand the unique "gift" of coming to Har Sinai. It was worth it alone just to achieve such an overwhelming sense of unity.

Hashem says to the nation, **וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים**, "***And now, if you will earnestly listen to My voice, and will keep My covenant, then you must belong to Me exclusively, more than all the nations***" (19:5).

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, interprets סְגֻלָּה as an exclusive possession to which no one else except its owner is entitled, and which has no relationship to anyone except its owner. Thus, when Hashem applies the word segulah to define our relationship with Him, He is basically saying: "You belong to Me, exclusively and completely with every aspect of our nature, with all our being and with all our aspirations.

He asks that we make all our existence and all our aspirations dependent upon Him alone, to permit Him to shape them all to allow nothing and no one else to direct our lives or influence our actions. That is the definition of Yisrael. One who has achieved harmony of body and soul, who has gained "Yisrael" status, becomes a segulah to Hashem. This is what took place at Har Sinai – and what we can achieve on a regular basis – if we work at it.

"A person who lives with Emunah, and trusts in Hashem, will be saved in a manner that they never could have imagined." ~ R' Pinchus Koritzer.

וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
'***You shall be to Me a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Bnei Yisrael***.' (19:6)

The significance of this pasuk is inspiring. It not only underscores the inherent qualities found within each and every Jew, the amazing potential available to those who seek to maximize it; it also focuses on the future, intimating that our past, regardless how sordid or mediocre, should not hold us back from achieving greatness.

In his Sefer Nitzotzos, **Horav Yitzchok Herskowitz, Shlita**, relates the story of a Kollel fellow, a scholar of note, who would serve as a '*bochein*', tester, in various yeshivos. A few times during the year he would visit various schools and test their students.

He was very impressed with one young teenager whose replies to his questions bespoke a penetrating knowledge of the subject matter. The speed and brilliance with which he rendered a response was equally impressive. It thus struck him as unusual when he came in the middle of the year to test the class and discovered that his prize student, Moishe'le, no longer attended the school. When he asked for his whereabouts and reason for leaving, everyone from the rebbe to the principal hemmed and hawed with evasive answers.

Finally, after continuing to push, he was told that Moishe'le was asked to leave the school. Apparently, Moishe'le befriended a boy from a different school, whose adherence to Torah and mitzvos was, at best, lackadaisical. The relationship regrettably grew, whereby the two teenagers were involved in a house break-in on Yom Kippur, at a time when they knew the inhabitants of the house would be attending shul.

They were caught red-handed by the police. Due to their young age, and being first-time offenders, they were given probation.

Moishele was too embarrassed to return to his original school. The principal cared about Moishe'le and saw to it that he be accepted in

a dormitory school distant from his home, so that he could start over. Everyone deserved a second chance.

The bochein asked for the address of the school and proceeded to draft a letter to Moishe'le.

He wrote: "Dear Moishe'le, I visited your school and was dismayed to learn that you no longer attend there. I miss your brilliant replies, your well-thought-out questions and your all-around wonderful demeanour. I hope that you will achieve your potential in your new school. With your superior mind, I am certain that you are destined to become a great Torah scholar. Please write to me about your studies, and include a special question, or chiddush, original idea, which you had. I am including one hundred shekalim for you to spend as you wish."

Moishe'le received the letter and upon reading it, immediately burst into tears. If the bochein had such confidence in him, it must be that he was not yet aware of his shame. Someone still believed in him. Someone still cared. He would not let him down.

The teenager, who up until this moment had sunk into a state of deep depression, made up his mind to reverse himself and attempt a comeback.

So began an exchange of monthly letters between Moishe'le and the bochein. Every letter from the bochein included, as promised, one hundred shekalim in exchange for Moishe'le's chiddush.

The teenager grew into a fine talmid chacham, Torah scholar, married and raised a beautiful family. He himself became a pedagogue par excellence, having learned the most important lesson in education: give the student a sense of self-confidence. Tell him he can do it. Give him hope.

Rav Hershkowitz explains that this idea may be derived from the Torah's use of the future tense in enjoining us to become a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation. The Jewish People had just been

liberated from a country whose moral turpitude had negatively influenced them, causing them to descend to the forty-ninth level of spiritual impurity. Yet they were told that they were Hashem's treasure from amongst the nations of the world and admonished to become a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation.

This meant they could do it. After all, Hashem believed in them. The past was ignored. Now was the time to look to the future.

This is the Torah way, generating a sense of confidence and hope within a person. This will serve as the catalyst for achieving greatness.

One of the preeminent Mashgichim, ethical supervisors, was asked for the key to his incredible success with students. He explained that he believed in his students – and told them so. Every student who entered the yeshivah was special and capable of becoming a Torah luminary. He treated them this way – and it showed.

In order to maintain this wonderful attitude towards each student, the Mashgiach eschewed playing an active role in the enrollment process, refusing to know anything about a potential student's past. He wanted to believe in every student. Negativity was shunned.

He would reinforce this feeling in the hearts and minds of his students by focusing on the idea of **מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ**. Every student could aspire to become a Moshe Rabbeinu, an Aharon HaKohen. It was up to them.

He raised the bar for each individual student, never settling for mediocrity or even complacency. Everyone had to produce because everyone could produce. Throwing in the towel was unacceptable. It went against their individual potential.

He not only believed in them; he taught them to believe in themselves.

וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־הָעָם יַחְדָּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה׳ נַעֲשֶׂה - 'The entire People responded together and said, "Everything that Hashem has spoken we shall do.' (19:8)



When the **Kesav Sofer** was Rav in Budapest, Hungary, a group of lay people complained concerning a certain Jewish banker who refused to close his bank on Shabbos. They considered this an affront to the entire community. - "The Rav must take action," they demanded.

The Kesav Sofer was visibly depressed. Such an act of disgracing Hashem could not be countenanced in his community. This man was making a mockery of the Jewish religion and openly insulting the Jewish community. He sent for the banker to appear before him.

The banker had no qualms about coming to visit the Rav – but he refused to change his position vis-à-vis Shabbos. "Rebbe, I am **כופר בעיקר**, a heretic; I deny the very existence of G-d. Why should I bother with Shabbos, of all things?"

"If you will not do it for yourself, at least act on behalf of the achdus, unity, of our nation" the Kesav Sofer pleaded. "Why should you be a **פּוֹרֵץ גָּדֵר**, "breach the fence," act outside of the community circle? You are part of the Jewish People. Why disenfranchise yourself from them?"

"I could care less," was the man's retort. "If this is the case," began the Kesav Sofer, "Clearly your ancestors did not stand at the foot of Har Sinai. They did not experience the Revelation."

"Kavod haRav; with all due respect," the banker responded in a much softer, subdued tone, "You may humiliate me and speak of me in the most derogatory manner, but this has nothing to do with my ancestors. They were good people who believed in everything which you extol. I will not allow you to defame my forebears – regardless of my sins of faith!"

"I am not slandering your ancestors," the Kesav Sofer began. "I am only reiterating what appears to be an established verity. If such is the case, there is no slander."

"How do you know this? How can you prove that my ancestors were not actively present at the Revelation?" the banker asked.

The Kesav Sofer was not going to give in to this man unless he was prepared to make a commitment. "I will tell you exactly what I mean. I will prove that your ancestors did not declare **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**, "*We will do, and we will listen*"! as did the rest of the Jewish People. But first you must promise to close your bank on Shabbos."

Surprisingly, the banker agreed, promising to shutter his bank the following Shabbos.

"Now, the banker demanded, "Give me proof that my ancestors were not at Sinai."

The Kesav Sofer began, "In the Talmud Nedarim 20a, Chazal make the following statement. **מִי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ בּוּשֶׁת פָּנִים — בְּיָדוּעַ שֶׁלֹּא עָמְדוּ אֲבוֹתָיו עַל הַר סִינַי** - '*One who does not manifest shyness, inhibition, self-consciousness; it is clear that his ancestors did not stand at Har Sinai.*'

How can the Talmud make such a strong statement? How can they be so "clear" about it?

We must say that included amongst the many Jews who were willing to accept the Torah, were members of the erev rav, mixed multitude. These men were the habitual complainers, malcontents, and heretics, who wanted no part of the Torah. They clearly would

have wanted a way out of accepting the Torah. Surely, they would have sown the seeds of disfavour in the hearts and minds of the people – but they could not. Why? Because the Jewish People all answered in unison, "**נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**"! Once this took place, those derelicts could not exclude themselves from the group. It just did not speak well for them. Thus, because of their sense of embarrassment, not wanting to be humiliated, they, too, declared, "**נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**."

"This indicates that anyone who does not manifest a sense of **בּוֹשֶׁת פָּנִים**; if he has no qualms about separating himself from the community, then clearly, he descends from forebears who did not "attend" the ceremony of the Giving of the Torah. For, otherwise, where is your sense of shame? - If you do not have it, apparently you descend from a family that was not at Har Sinai."

[the *K'sav Sofer*, was born on a very interesting day, on 30 Adar I! What is so interesting about this date? Well, usually, when one is born on 30 Adar I, which only exists in a leap year, he will have Bar Mitzvah in a non-leap year, which does not have such a day – since Adar has only 29 days!

When does one have Bar Mitzvah, which is a *machlokes* in the *Poskim*. Either way, his Bar Mitzvah will not be in Adar whatsoever. It will either be 30 Shevat, or 1 Nissan!

It seems that the K'sav Sofer had his Bar Mitzvah on 30 Shevat.]

"Every man becomes better through his fellow. Since every individual possesses specific qualities that others lack, the realization by disparate people that in essence they comprise one whole, enables them all to be complemented and perfected by each other." ~ R' Schneur Zalman of Liadi zt"l.

וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל־מְלָאכָה – '***And the seventh day is Shabbos to G-d, your G-d, on it you shall not perform any kind of (creative) work***.' (20:10)

Throughout the millennia, when a Jew sought to become more "progressive," to distance himself from "archaic" tradition, the first tenet that went was Shabbos. - The student of history is quite aware that this was the area that caved in first.

Almost two hundred years ago, the self-styled secular Jew in Germany took a more intellectual approach to doing away first, with Shabbos, and then, with the rest of the Torah, by defining the above pasuk as, "*You shall not do any kind of work*." This distorted the entire concept of Shabbos and undermined its laws of observance. This was the home of those who denounced their allegiance to Sinai with the claim "bring the law into line with life," rather than follow the path of the Torah Jew who understands that "life must be brought into line with the law."

Thus, Shabbos, which forms the basis of all Jewish life, was reinterpreted to conform with the demands of life. Accordingly, the melachah which was prohibited on Shabbos was interpreted simply as work, which was then defined incorrectly as any activity involving physical exertion.

Given this misinterpretation, any work that was in fact creative but not physically exertive, was not prohibited. Light physical activities, or tasks performed for intellectual activity, were not forbidden. After all, they were not work. Thus, their idea of reconciling the law with life was accomplished.

Indeed, melachah has a deeper meaning, one which goes to the very core of defining work and its relationship with Hashem's resting from the act of creating the world.

Observance of Shabbos is defined as cessation of all activities classed as "creation", with the desecration of Shabbos being the

direct opposite: performance of melachah, or what might be referred to as intelligent labour, creative work.

In his commentary to the Chumash, **Horav S. R. Hirsch, zl**, notes that the mechallel Shabbos, desecrator of Shabbos, is not one who does not go to the synagogue on Shabbos, but the one who performs a melachah.

The **מקושש עצים**, the first Shabbos desecrator, who gathered brushwood on Shabbos, was sentenced for gathering brushwood. They did not inquire of him if he had already given Shabbos "its due", by attending services or by listening to the rabbi's sermon, as some would have us believe. - If the synagogue is too far from one's house, he either moves closer or does not attend. Driving is not a permissible option – regardless of how "non-exerting" it might be.

Rav Hirsch observes that the actual word melachah is not based upon physical exertion. The term, which occurs almost 200 times in the Torah, is never used in conjunction with strenuous activity. Indeed, the slave labour performed by our ancestors in Egypt was called avodah, derived from eved, slave. It was not melachah.

The term melachah, as explained by Rav Hirsch, is etymologically connected with malach, angel (same root spelling) which does not indicate activities that involve lesser or greater exertion, but, rather, solely activities connected with the intellect carrying out an intention. Therefore, even if we were not aware of Chazal's definition of work, the mere fact that the Torah chose the word melachah, a word used almost 200 times – and never in connection with pure physical exertion, we would know that the pasuk -"*You shall not perform any kind of work on Shabbos*" is a reference to work of creativity – not physical exertion.

Clearly, one sees in the Torah what he wants to see and applies his misinterpretation to suit his personal needs.

וְאִם־מִזְבַּח אֲבָנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה־לִּי לֹא־תִבְנֶה אֶתְהֶן גָּזִית – '***And when you will make an Altar of stones for Me, do not build them hewn***.' (20:22)

Rashi quotes the **Mechilta** where Rabbi Yishmael says: Every example of **אִם** (usually translated as if), in the Torah is referring to something which is optional, except for three times.

The first of them is the above pasuk in which the **אִם** is not discretionary, but rather, translated as "when" you will build an Altar; the second instance (Shemos 22:24), is concerning lending money, **אִם כֶּסֶף תַּלְוֶה אֶת עַמִּי**, "if" you lend money, would be the incorrect translation since one must lend money. Hence, it is read "when" you will lend money. Last, is **וְאִם־תַּקְרִיב מִנְחַת בִּכּוּרִים** (Vayikra 2:14); the pasuk cannot mean "if" you will bring a Minchas (meal-offering) of Bikurim, since the Torah is referring to the Minchas Omer which is an obligation.

Apparently, these three cases of "**אִם**" are not conditional, but rather, absolute, and therefore the interpretation of **אִם** is "when".

While this is all good and well, why would the Torah employ a word that implies discretionary when, in fact, it is an obligation? Mizbayach, lending money and Minchas HaOmer are obligatory; why use a term that implies conditional?

Horav Zev Weinberg, Shlita, explains that there are many activities which are obligatory in nature, but should nonetheless be carried out in such a manner that it appears that the individual is doing it out of a sense of option and generosity.

This is especially true with regard to acts of kindness, which are albeit compulsory, but should be expressed with love and a desire to assist someone in need.

When there is an appeal for assistance, and a person writes out his cheque as if he is about to take some bitter medicine, it takes away from the beauty and spirit of the mitzvah. Likewise, when one offers his first fruits to Hashem, it should not be brought as something

requisite, but out of a feeling of excitement – expressing one's good will and joy in being able to give back and express his gratitude to the Almighty.

Similarly, when one builds a Mizbayach upon which he will bring his offerings to Hashem, it should be with a sense of beneficence – not compulsion.

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ "***Yisro heard… everything that G-d did to Moshe and to Yisrael, His people***." (18:1)



Yisro heard about two events: the miracles at the Red Sea, when the Egyptians were punished for their treachery; and the war against Amalek, when Klal Yisrael triumphed over their archenemy.

Yisro was not the only one who "heard." Many heard; he, however, internalized it and acted positively in response.

Why did Yisro need two incidents to impress upon him the greatness of Hashem and His People? Was not the splitting of the Red Sea a sufficient miracle to influence his way of thinking? Indeed, the war with Amalek could have been misconstrued as a victory effected by Klal Yisrael's military genius. The splitting of the Red Sea, however, was a miracle of the highest order. No one could question it. Why, then, was it necessary for Yisro to hear also about the war with Amalek before he decided to join Klal Yisrael?

Horav Shlomo Gestetner, Shlita, explains that while Krias Yam Suf was an incredible miracle that had no equal, one might err and think that Hashem produced this miracle in order to save Klal Yisrael whose lives were in grave danger. Indeed, if another nation had been pursued by Egypt, Hashem would likely also have saved them from their oppressors. - In other words, Krias Yam Suf does not demonstrate a clear indication that Hashem sought to save Klal Yisrael specifically because they would soon receive the Torah and mitzvos.

Only after Yisro saw that they were rescued from Amalek, whose sole desire was to destroy them spiritually, was he convinced that Klal Yisrael's spiritual destiny was what mattered to Hashem. Their spiritual ascendancy gave the Jewish People pre-eminence over the other nations. This motivated Yisro to leave Midyan and join the Jews.

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ – '***Honour your father and your mother***.' (20:12)



To what extent must one honour his parents?

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, focuses on the degree of kavod, honour, one must accord to a parent who, due to illness or advanced age, has a deteriorated mental capacity. The question becomes stronger in situations when the illness has advanced to the point that there are serious issues of extreme hardship for the children, both as sons or daughters to their parents and as husbands or wives to their respective mates.

How much does one have to sacrifice for a parent? How much hardship, and – at times – abuse must one endure from a parent who is ill and whose mind does not function properly?

Horav Zilberstein writes that when he posed this question before one of the preeminent poskim, halachic arbiters, of the generation, the answer he received was: a son or daughter must do for their parents to the same degree that their parents will do for them. In other words, parents sacrifice their lives for their children, should we not at least do the same for them?

Hashem commands us to honour our parents out of a sense of hakoras hatov, gratitude and appreciation. We owe them. While at times fulfilling our obligation might be extremely difficult, and even crushing, it is our obligation.

Perhaps, when the situation becomes difficult, we should ask ourselves: what would our parents do for us if the situation was reversed? - No one has ever said that life was going to be easy. Regrettably, some of us would rather take than give.

Horav Y. Eliyashiv, zl, feels that a child's obligation goes beyond what a parent would do for a child. There is no comparison. He cites the **Rambam** who says that the chiyuv, obligation, is " **עד שכוחו של הבן מגיע**," – '***as much as the son can physically endure***.'

We might be so bold to add that emotional endurance on the part of the child might also be taken into account.

It is noteworthy that the famous gaon, **Horav Chaim Pelagi, z.l.**, merited to live to a ripe old age. He was revered by all. The Turkish government accorded him the honor due to royalty.

When asked by one of his students to what he attributed his exceptional longevity, he wrote down ten acts that merit longevity. One of them is attending to one's parents, despite their mental infirmity.

There is no doubt that caring for an elderly parent can, at times, be an overwhelming burden. The response to "How much can I take?" is an individual one. People react differently to this burden, and they must acknowledge when they are responding inappropriately.

In the Talmud Kiddushin, Chazal describe a situation in which a son feeds his father the finest delicacies yet loses his reward in Olam Haba. The son places the food before his father. His father asks him from where he obtained the money for such delicacies. The response is a terse, "What difference is it to you? Eat."

Horav Reuven Feinstein, Shlita, questions how such a paradoxical attitude could exist within a human being. On the one hand, the son seeks to provide his father with the finest delicacies. On the other hand, the manner in which he offers the food bespeaks of cruelty and disdain.

He explains that quite possibly, the son has spent more than he could afford for the food. His obligation to provide the very best for his father has guided him. Now that he must come to terms with the cost of the food, he resents his father for placing him in such a position.

Regrettably, such combinations of obligation and resentment, love and hate, joy and bitterness, coexist to one degree or another, when the situation becomes overwhelming. We must consult with a talmid chacham, Torah scholar, and decide whether our inability to cope is overriding our ability to love. We also have to remember that what goes around comes around, and the respect we accord our parents is, in effect, the type of respect we might receive one day from our children.

They are watching us. We must provide them with the proper models for Kibbud Av v'Eim – ourselves. While we might forget how we have acted towards our parents, our children remind us.

כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהָר מָוֹת יוּמָת - "*Whoever touches the mountain shall surely die.*" (19:12)

The mountain represents a sphere of holiness that is beyond the reach of the average person. To penetrate the boundaries around it is intensely dangerous to the welfare of the individual.

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, derives an important lesson concerning the reverence we must accord to a talmid chacham, Torah scholar. A mountain has no intelligence and no feelings. Yet simply because it was the place from which the Torah was given, it attained such an element of kedushah, holiness, that the people were admonished not to touch it.

How much more so should we revere the Torah scholar who is proficient in the Torah, as well as possesses intelligence and feelings. One should be careful not to offend his honor in any way.

Yes, the slightest offensive taint against a talmid chacham, an individual who is the embodiment of Torah, can be extremely dangerous to the offender.

The Talmud Sanhedrin 99a posits that an apikores, heretic, is one who is mevazeh, humiliates/ridicules/denigrates, a talmid chacham. In a second opinion, the Talmud goes so far as to say that even if one were to shame another Jew in the presence of a talmid chacham, he has already demonstrated his lack of respect. Thus, he is deserving of the ignominious title of apikores.

Rabbeinu Yonah (Shaarei Teshuvah 3:155), explains that Chazal are of the opinion that one who does not show proper respect to – or in the presence of – a talmid chacham, has thereby indicated that the Torah possessed by the scholar is not something of great value for which he must demonstrate esteem. Such a person is no different than he who desecrates the Torah!

אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים – *'I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt.'* (20:2)

Hashem identified Himself to Klal Yisrael as the One Who performed the miracles of the Exodus. It would have been logical for Hashem to have identified Himself as the Creator of the Universe, which is clearly a more encompassing title than the Liberator Who freed them from bondage.

While it is true that his liberation involved many miracles which attested to Hashem's awesome powers, they still pale in comparison with the creation of the Universe.

In the **Kuzari, Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, zl**, explains that Hashem spoke of the Exodus because it was a phenomenon that was seen, as the entire nation witnessed it. While they all knew that there had been a Creation, no one had actually been there to substantiate it.

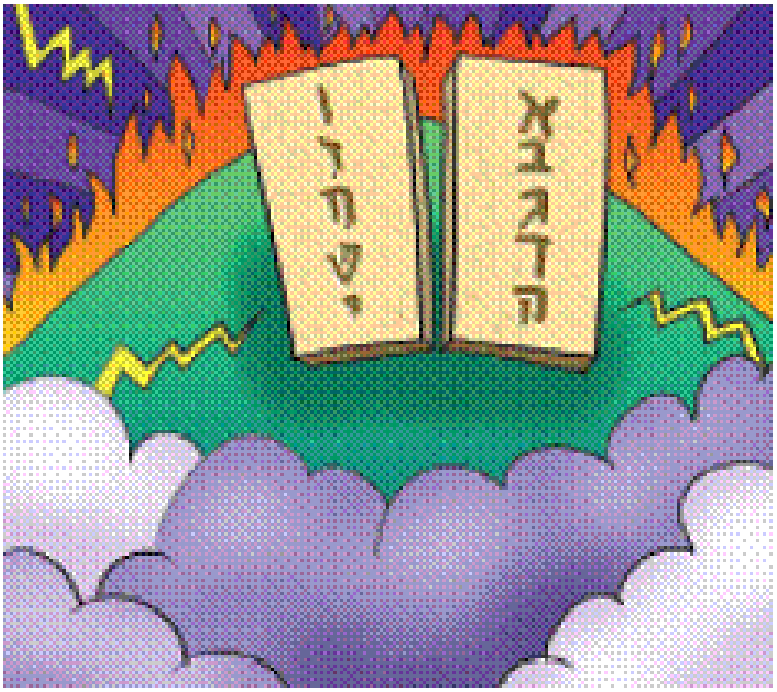
Interestingly, with all of the logical deductions that the world must have been created by a Supreme Being, some still foolishly dispute the concept of Creation ex nihilo. 600,000 men over the age of twenty-years old experienced, and saw with their own two eyes, the Exodus and its many marvels. Hashem followed up these events with the seminal event in history, the Revelation at Sinai. Yet, there are still sceptics who force themselves to dispute this verity of verities.

Ramban writes that the Exodus, with its unprecedented miracles and wonders, availed the nascent nation an unparalleled awareness into the workings of Heaven. They were acutely aware that, without the phenomenon of the Heavenly miracles, they would have never been able to leave Egypt. Thus, the Exodus and the Splitting of the Red Sea are testaments to Hashem's existence and power. It is as if they are the barometers by which we believe in all miracles. They represent Hashem proving Himself, so to speak.

This is why we constantly reiterate a reminder of yetzias Mitzrayim. It was in Egypt that we gained a completely new perspective on

Creation. We learned that each and every one of us has a unique individual responsibility toward Hashem, Who constantly creates the world anew – specifically for him! Each of us is a witness to this phenomenon – constantly, continually.

לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לַשָּׁוְא – *'You shall not take the Name of Hashem, your G-d, in vain.'* (20:7)



The Talmud Shavuos 39a relates that when Hashem said the words of **לֹא תִשָּׂא** …,"*You shall not take the Name of Hashem, your G-d, in vain*," the entire world shook.

We wonder why this particular commandment had such a frightening effect on people, more so than **לֹא תִגְנֹב**, "Do not steal," **לֹא תִרְצָח**, "Do not murder," or any of the other commandments for that matter.

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, explains that, regrettably, some people convince themselves and others that under certain circumstances, for the "greater good," one can find a dispensation to steal – even to murder! It is all done in the name of Heaven:- "I am acting l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven," seems to be the clarion call lately. In the name of Heaven – for the sake of Hashem – one finds ways to circumvent Halachah, to skirt the law, to make the reprehensible a mitzvah. After all, he is doing it for G-d's sake!

The pasuk admonishes us not to use Hashem's Name for personal advantage. The Holy Name is sacred and is to be treated in such a

manner. No wonder the entire world shook with fright when Hashem said, **לֹא תִנְאָף**. No longer would we have dispensations with which to skirt the law.

A similar interpretation is quoted by the **Chidushei HaRim**.

Horav Ezriel Hildesheimer, zl, Rav of Berlin, had occasion to be in Warsaw. While he was in Warsaw, he decided to visit the Chidushei HaRim. Their conversation revolved around Torah and Torah-related topics.

Rav Hildesheimer began the conversation with a question. He quoted the pasuk in our Parshah, **וְכָל־הָעָם֮ רֹאִים֒ אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת֙ וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִ֔ם וְאֵת֙ קֹ֣ול הַשֹּׁפָ֔ר** - "***The entire people saw the sounds/thunder, and the flames***" (Ibid. 20:15).

The Torah is describing the supernatural perception which the Jewish People experienced at Har Sinai. What was the necessity of such a miracle? Was it not enough that they had heard Hashem? Did they have to "see" the words which had been uttered?

The Chidushei HaRim gave a practical, but brilliant, response. In the Hebrew language, a number of words sound alike, but have totally different meanings. For instance, the word **לא** with an aleph means do not, while **לו** with a vav means to/for him.

Imagine, Hashem said **לֹא תִגְנֹב**, "Do not steal," but a person who hears what he wants to hear, can possibly infer that for Him (**לו**, with a vav) – for Hashem – one may steal! For Him – one may murder!

Thus, it was necessary for the people to see the true meaning of the words clearly. - Make no mistake: murder and theft are never permitted – even in the Name of G-d.

"Each and every deed a Yid does, builds the future of Yisroel." ~ Rav Shimshon Pincus zl.

וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי - '***You shall not ascend with steps upon My Altar.***' (20:23)



This simply means that when we build the ramp leading up to the Altar, it must be made smooth and inclined – not with ascending levels (Rashi). Otherwise, the Kohen would be compelled to take wide steps, which might lead to his humiliation.

The word **מַעֲלֹת** has another meaning: qualities, attributes, aspects concerning an individual which, so to speak, elevate him, make him stand out.

The Chafetz Chaim, zl, applied this other definition to a homiletic rendering of the pasuk: When the Kenessiah Gedolah took place in Vienna in 1923, the Chafetz Chaim made a great effort to attend. Frail, and of an advanced age, he felt that the nascent Agudath Israel movement needed everyone's support. In his eyes, however, he was attending as a spectator – not as the senior sage of Klal Yisrael.

As the elder statesman, he was asked to grace the proceedings with his insights. The Chafetz Chaim demurred, refusing the honor of speaking before the foremost Torah leaders of that generation. The presidium asked again – only to be refused once again. Finally, the Chafetz Chaim relented and explained the reason that he had previously declined.

וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי, "*You shall not ascend/approach the Altar (or any position of honor), based upon your maalos, attributes.*" - This

is an exhortation to a Kohen that when he ascends to the Mizbayach, he must remember that he has been selected to represent the nation – not because of his personal maalos, qualities; nor do his ethical character traits play a decisive role in his being singled out for this honor. It is only due to his pedigree. His father was a Kohen. He is a Kohen. This is why he was chosen to represent Klal Yisrael in offering the korbanos, sacrifices.

"When I was asked to address the assemblage, I questioned your reasons for selecting me. When you attributed it to my erudition, I vehemently demurred. I am not a lamden, learned scholar. Again, when you focused on my righteousness, I declined, because I am neither pious nor righteous. It is only after you pointed out that I am a zakein and Kohen, old and a member of the Priestly family that I accepted. - Longevity is a gift from G-d. Kehunah is an inheritance from my father. It is as a result of these two attributes, which are unique gifts from the Almighty, that I will address you."



וַיִּקַּח יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֶת־צִפֹּרָה אֵשֶׁת מֹשֶׁה. וְאֶת שְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ - "***And Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, took Tzipporah, Moshe's wife... and her two sons***." (18:2,3)

It is interesting to note that the Torah refers to Moshe and Tzipporah's sons as "her two sons." Were they only Tzipporah's sons?

Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl, asserts that the education parents impart to their child establishes the tenor of the relationship between them. From the time Moshe left Midyan -- at the behest of Hashem to lead Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt -- until this moment, Tzipporah guided their childrens' education. - This is the reason that they are referred to as "her two sons."

This remarkable insight into parenting and education should serve as a lesson for us all. The education we avail our children will ultimately

make the difference in their relationship with us. All too often our decisions regarding the type of school, the form of education, and its level of religious persuasion are based upon our own life experiences, socioeconomic pressures, and random external factors.

The only motivating factor in determining a child's education should be what is best for the child and where he or she will receive the utmost spiritual refinement. The educational decisions we make for our children when they are youngsters can either be the greatest source of nachas for us or can forever haunt us.

וַיִּתְיַצְּבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר – '***And they stood at the bottom of the mountain***.' (19:17)



In the Talmud Shabbos 88 Chazal say that Bnei Yisrael did not merely stand at the foot of the mountain, but that Hashem lifted up the mountain over their heads, declaring, "If you will accept the Torah, it is good. If not, here will be your burying place."

This implies that Hashem imposed the Torah upon us against our will. He threatened us with extinction if we were not to accept the Torah. Is this true? - The commentators offer a number of explanations to lend insight to Chazal's words:

Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl, views the mountain over Bnei Yisrael's heads as a symbolic lesson about what our attitude in approaching the Torah should be. When Klal Yisrael stood beneath the mountain,

they understood the meaning of the moment. They either accepted the Torah -- or they would die. This same idea forms the basis of perspective through which we are to view the Torah. One either accepts, studies and adheres to it, or his life has no validity or meaning.

One who studies Torah as if it were just another intellectual pursuit, regardless of its profound nature, demeans the Torah. In addition, he will derive nothing from his endeavour. One who studies Torah because it is the lifeblood of our People, the blueprint of our lives, is sustained through his effort.

Torah is a life-sustaining force that nourishes the Jewish soul. The Torah gave the Jewish people throughout the ages the strength and resolution to sacrifice themselves to sanctify Hashem's Name. They understood that without the Torah, the mountain might as well have been dropped on them. The Torah gives meaning to life. -

Without the Torah, we have no life.



לֹא תִרְצָח - "***Do not kill***." (20:13)

One may wonder why the prohibition against murder is included in the Aseres Ha'dibros, Ten Commandments. An obvious explanation is that we should not tamper with human life. Certain forms of "murder" are overlooked because of our lack of sensitivity to others.

The Ibn Ezra writes "Do not kill with your hand or with your tongue by perjuring your testimony against another fellow by blatant or even innocuous forms of slander, or by giving someone harmful advice, knowing fully well the tragic consequences that will occur.

One who is privy to a secret which can save another Jew's life, and does not reveal it to him, is viewed as a murderer." Indeed, justice cannot be meted out on this world for these crimes since an actual murder has not been committed. Hashem, however, reserves retribution for such a selfish miscreant.

The Ibn Ezra's remarks are piercing. If one has the opportunity to save another Jew from death and refrains from doing so, he is considered as a participant in an act of homicide.

How are we to know what connotes a lifesaving act?

Imagine someone alone in a hospital bedridden with a chronic illness. One who visits him to offer him words of encouragement or just to keep him company is actually participating in saving his life!

Do we think about the ramifications of not visiting someone who is ill? Would we find the same excuses for not going out if there was personal gain involved?

Unfortunately, by the time we come to our senses and act as Torah Jews, it might be too late!

The Crane Effect by Rabbi Eliyahu Ohayon



The construction site was bustling with activity, and workers were scurrying around, each one engrossed in their designated tasks.

In one corner of the site, a team of workers was busy with the task of laying large concrete slabs. Each slab weighed several hundred pounds and had to be lifted into place by a crane.

The crane was a towering structure with a long arm that extended from one end of the site to the other. The crane's operator was perched high up in the cab, with a bird's eye view of the entire site, carefully maneuvering the arm to place each slab in its designated spot.

On the ground, a group of workers eagerly awaited the slabs. They were all dressed in hard hats and bright orange safety vests, and they looked like ants scurrying around the crane's base.

As each slab was lowered down to them, they would scramble to catch it, their hands outstretched to guide it into place. It was a delicate dance, and the workers had to ensure they kept the slabs level and straight as they were lowered into position.

Once the slab was in place, the workers would step back and allow the crane to do its work. The arm of the crane would retract with a whirring sound, and the slab would settle into its position with a heavy thud. This process was repeated again and again as the workers moved on to the next slab.

The onlookers stood watching the construction workers moving the large concrete slabs with their bare hands, they were astounded. The slabs were massive, weighing several hundred pounds, yet the workers easily handled them. The onlooker couldn't help but marvel at the strength and skill of the workers. They were puzzled how it was humanly possible to lift such heavy slabs with one's bare hands.

Rav Shimshon Pincus was once asked why in previous generations there weren't many instances of tzaddikim bringing large numbers of people back to Hashem. Yet, in our times, we see that one Rabbi can inspire many people to teshuva.

He answered by sharing this story and explaining that indeed, a person cannot lift such a heavy slab. However, when it is lifted from above by a crane, the worker can maneuver it with ease. - This is similar to doing teshuva.

We have a unique promise from Hashem that before Mashiach comes, all Jewish people will do teshuva. This makes our final generation utterly different from previous generations.

In former times, when a tzaddik wished to bring a Jew to teshuva, he had to "pick him up from the ground," and since the weight of the

person's sins was very great, this was an exceedingly difficult task. But in our generation, Hashem takes each Jew who needs to repent and picks him up Himself, and then anyone who is a little handy can grab him and bring him to teshuva.



Reb Yosef Friedenson was a Holocaust survivor who would refer to himself as 'A graduate of 12 concentration camps'! He recounted an incredible story of his time in the camps: He had a Hungarian bunkmate called Binyomin who was an extremely special person, constantly *davening*.

Each day, two people from each barrack stayed behind to clean up while the rest of them went to work. One day it was the turn of Reb Yosef and Binyomin to clean the barracks. Whilst they were going about their work, they were amazed to discover a loaf of bread! Bread was an unbelievably precious commodity in the concentration camps, and there were stories of previously wealthy *Yieden* trading bags of diamonds for just one loaf of bread!

Binyomin turned to Reb Yosef and said, 'I know who this bread belongs to. It belongs to a Polish goy named Ivan. Let's return it to him, and he will go around the camps saying '***Yieden zenen nisht ganovim***' - ***Jews are not thieves***'!

They returned the bread to Ivan, who indeed from that day on would tell everyone he met how trustworthy and honest the Jews were.

No matter what situation we may find ourselves in, we always have the capability to rise above our situation and surroundings, and to be **מקדש שם שמים**.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Genuinely Great Doctors



The Mishna [Kiddushin 82a] says **טוב שברופאים לגיהנם** – 'even the best of doctors are destined for gehinom.'

Another explanation given in these words is that truly great doctors enter the gehinom of their patients who are suffering immensely. They truly feel their pain.

R' Yitzchak Hutner related that he once visited **Dr. Moshe Wallach** in the Shaarei Tzedek hospital in Yerushalayim. He saw that the doctor would approach the patient before his surgery and ask his mother's name so that he would daven for him.

Gift of a Baby

The father of a newborn baby girl once asked R' Shach if he should make a kidush. R' Shach's reply was if you finally had a baby after 8 years of waiting, you surely would make a kidush. So now that Hashem saved you from all that pain, shouldn't you make a kidush?!

A father of a newborn baby boy called a mohel to hire him for the bris. Because of the palpable excitement of the father that was conveyed on the call, the mohel asked how long he waited to have this child. The father told him that he had been waiting 22 years for this child. This enthused the mohel and he looked forward with excitement to perform a bris on such an occasion.

The day of the bris comes and the mohel arrives, expecting that the event would be teeming with unusual excitement. Of course there was excitement but it was the usual excitement you would expect at a bris, nothing out of the ordinary.

Following the bris, the mohel heard a 21-year-old boy say. "Abba, don't worry. It's after the bris. I'll take care of the younger children and my younger sister will take care of the girls."

The mohel realized that the father had ten children. The mohel then approached the father about this. The father said, "We are married 22 years and each child is a gift from Hashem. Must a person be childless to realize such a gift? - I waited 22 years for this particular child. Each child is unique and special."



Staying Young

It states (Tehillim 71:9) **אל תשליכנו לעת זקנה** - "***Do not cast me away at the time of old age***."

The Baal Shem Tov zt'l explained that this means we shouldn't become old in our avodas Hashem. We should always stay young and fresh.

In Kotzk, people would call a ninety-year-old person a "thirty-year-old three times". They didn't want to become old and inactive. They wanted to stay young and prepared for change and growth.

It states (19:4) **ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואבא אתכם אלי** - "***I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me***."

Rashi (Tehillim 103:5) writes that the bird is called **נשר** because **נשר** also means to shed, and the eagle sheds its feathers every year.

It states (Tehillim 103:5) **תתחדש כנשר נעוריכי** . Rashi writes that this means we should be young like the eagle. Just as the eagle receives

a new set of feathers yearly, so should we become rejuvenated every year.

We should have a youthful spirit, always prepared to grow higher, to know more, and to reach new horizons.

Tribute To Rav Matisyahu Salomon Zt'l on His Shloshim By Rabbi Raphael Fuchs



The Jewish people have been blessed with many remarkable leaders throughout history, and Rabbi Matisyahu Salomon, *zt"l*, is certainly one of them. His influence extended far beyond the walls of the Beis Medrash Govoha (BMG) in Lakewood N.J., where he served as *mashgiach* for the past quarter century, touching the lives of many with his teachings and exemplary way of life. Rav Matisyahu devoted his life to bettering the lives of others and inspired tens of thousands to strengthen themselves in *limud haTorah* and *avodas Hashem*.

Early Life and Education

Rav Matisyahu Salomon was born in London in 1936 to Reb Yaakov and Mrs. Ettil Salomon. From an early age, his passion for Torah study and dedication to Jewish values were evident. He joined the Gateshead Yeshiva, where he became exceptionally close to his *chavrusa*, Rav Chaim Kaufman, who later founded the Gateshead Yeshiva L'Tzeirim.

In 1960, he married Miriam Falk, sister of Rav Eliyahu Falk, *zt"l*. Rav Matisyahu was a *talmid* of Rav Elya Lopian, *zt"l*, in Yeshiva Kfar Chassidim, where he developed his sterling and refined character. Rav Matisyahu considered Rav Lopian to be his *rebbe muvhak*. Rav Matisyahu always believed he would be a *rosh yeshiva*, but Hashem had other plans for him. At the *levaya*, one of his sons-in-law remarked that one of the keys to the massive success that Rav Matisyahu had was that for most of his life he did something that he did not want to do. Rather, he acted out of his selfless devotion to others.

Leadership and Guidance

In the late 1960s, Rav Matisyahu began serving as an assistant *mashgiach* under Rav Moshe Schwab, *zt"l,* and later took over as *mashgiach* of Gateshead Yeshiva. His prowess in Torah learning was so impressive that his appointment as "only" the *mashgiach* of the Gateshead Yeshiva came as a surprise to those who knew him best. Rav Matisyahu served as *mashgiach* in Gateshead for about 30 years, until moving to Lakewood in 1997 to assume the role of *mashgiach* of BMG. Rav Matisyahu's impact has been felt across continents and generations.

Commitment to Excellence

Rav Matisyahu is best known in American circles for his quarter-century tenure as the *mashgiach* of Bais Medrash Govoha. As previously mentioned, Rav Matisyahu's devotion to helping others grow in *avodas Hashem* began much earlier at the yeshiva of Gateshead, where he spent three decades impressing upon thousands a lifelong commitment to excellence.

In 1998, Rav Matisyahu succeeded Rav Nosson Wachtfogel, *zt"l*, as *mashgiach ruchani* of the largest and most prestigious yeshiva in the United States. The Salomons agreed to move to a foreign country for the sole purpose of bettering other people's lives.

During the subsequent years, Rav Matisyahu brought unprecedented enthusiasm to the Lakewood yeshiva. Rav Matisyahu's weekly *schmuessen* at BMG drew over a thousand in attendance. With his warm personality and his commitment to refining the character of *bnei Torah*, the *mashgiach*'s reputation spread. His influence extended beyond his duties as the yeshiva's *mashgiach* as he was transformed into a *hashkafic* mentor of both religious and non-religious *frum* Jews across the globe.

Legacy and Impact

In a world characterized by rapid change, Rav Matisyahu Salomon remains a steadfast beacon of tradition, guiding with wisdom, love and an unwavering commitment to the values that have sustained us throughout history. A significant component of Rav Matisyahu's legacy is his role in raising awareness of the dangers of technology. Rav Matisyahu was a frontrunner in this battle long before many realized the extent of the threat it poses.

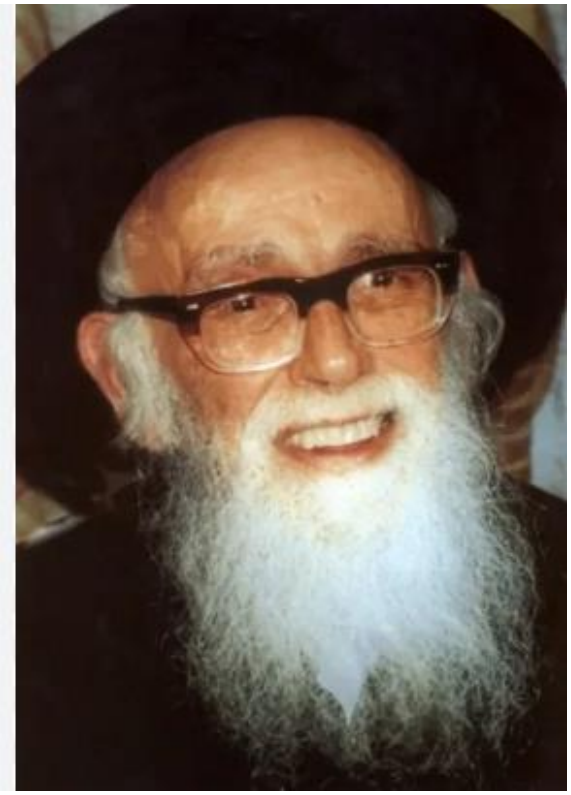
Rav Elya Brudny of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Brooklyn remarked that Rav Matisyahu was fighting the "sin of the generation." Nearly 12 years ago, Rav Matisyahu organized a massive gathering in Citi Field stadium to raise awareness of the dangers of technology. The event drew over fifty thousand people, filling Citi Field and including thousands of others at a nearby stadium with a live hookup.

The Fate of His Personal Well-Being was Not a Factor

Ahead of the gathering, a *gadol* in Eretz Yisrael warned Rav Matisyahu that by doing this he was starting up with the *S"A* (evil angel), which could take "revenge" on him in various ways. Undeterred, the *mashgiach* continued with the gathering; the fate of his personal well-being was not a factor when it came to the needs of *klal Yisrael*, and in technology, he recognized a danger of historic proportions that had to be addressed. Due to Rav Matisyahu's efforts, thousands of people do not have smartphones today and many others have put filters on their devices.

After suffering from a years-long illness, two weeks ago this great leader was taken from us at the age of 86. Rebbetzin Salomon passed away in 2016. Rav Matisyahu Salomon is survived by his wonderful family of children and grandchildren. - May his memory be a blessing.

Your Choice!



One of **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's, zt"l**, grandchildren said about his grandfather, "A Rosh Yeshivah once came to see my grandfather, and complained that he was living a life of Gehenom, and that his life was very difficult. He said that my grandfather's life was a life of Gan Eden, but his was Gehenom.

Rav Shlomo Zalman didn't respond to this, but he listened, and was sympathetic and gave him support and Chizuk."

After he left, Rav Shlomo Zalman told his grandson the following, "It appears that Hashem gave me a life of Gan Eden, and him a life of Gehenom. But that's not true! He is making his life into Gehenom! It all depends on how you view your surroundings.

"By living with Hashem, you see things in a different way. This was not decreed on him. It is what he is decreeing on himself. He is the one responsible for making himself so miserable. It's really up to you," continued Rav Shlomo Zalman. "You can make your life a Gan Eden on this world, or you can make this place a Gehenom!" *[Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.]*

זכרו תורת משה
לעילוי נשמת ר' משה בן החבר צבי זצ"ל ור' משה יצחק בן אברהם צבי הכהן זצ"ל
HEARTWARMING STORIES FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

● "You Can Be a General!"



The doors of the beis midrash opened up, and in came the **Chofetz Chaim**. All the talmidim were eagerly waiting the message that their great rebbi would reveal.

"We know what Napoleon would convey to his army," he said. "'***One who doesn't believe he can be a general, even a soldier he can't be***.' - Besides strength and power, fighting in the army needs 'courage.' The courage needed to fight in an army must be strong, and therefore only the one who believes that he can be a general is fit to fight as a soldier. "So much so," continued the Chofetz Chaim, "applies to serving Hashem; one who believes that he can be great will have the courage and bravery to stand strong, but the one who thinks that he can't be great won't have the courage to stand up and fight." (Sheva Ipol Tzaddik, p. 450)

"There are many who think that they can't reach greatness," says **R' Yitzchak Hutner**. "But this is the kefirah of our generation. The great shortcoming that a person can have, is the feeling that he can't become great, and that we must battle with all our might."

● Inner Greatness



A grandson of a Chassidic Rebbe was waiting for his turn to speak to the **Beis Yisrael of Gur**. As he waited, he said to the gabbai, Reb Chaninah Schiff, "When you bring me to the rebbe, tell him who my grandfather is."

The gabbai replied, "It isn't our custom to do so." But the bachur insisted, so when Reb Chanina Schiff brought him before the Beis Yisrael, he said, "He wants you to know that he is a grandson of the tzaddik."

The Beis Yisrael replied, "**I** should know? **He** should know!" In other words, he should know whom he comes from and stand up to the name.

This is a key for his personal growth. The same is regarding our inner greatness. We should know our yichus. We should know that we are descendants of the holy Avos. This awareness will fill our hearts with pride and joy.

● Self Worth

As a close talmid of **R' Yechezkel Levinstein**, Reb Noach Chofetz was able to learn b'chavrusah with his esteemed rebbi. A couple of years ago, Reb Noach fell ill, and many came to visit him. He told over that as a bachur, he began to go to a particular Chassidic rebbe for Shabbosim, and Reb Yechezkel Levinstein asked him, "What do you get there that you don't have by us?"

Reb Noach replied, "Every morning before Korbanos, we say, **מָה אָנוּ מָה חַיֵּינוּ... וּמוֹתַר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אָיִן כִּי הַכֹּל הָבֶל** — *Who are we? What*

is our life…? Behold, all the mighty are like nothing before You, the famous are non-existent…because most of their deeds are foolishness, and there is no benefit of man over an animal; everything is vain. - **אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ עַמְּךָ בְּנֵי בְרִיתֶךָ, בְּנֵי אַבְרָהָם אֹהַבְךָ... אַשְׁרֵינוּ מַה טּוֹב חֶלְקֵנוּ וּמַה נָּעִים גּוֹרָלֵנוּ** *- "— But we are Your children, the nation of Your covenant, the children of Avraham whom You loved… We are fortunate! How good is our portion! How sweet is our lot! How beautiful is our inheritance!"*

"The lesson of 'Who are we? What is life?' I learned very well from you. You taught me that the gashmiyus of this world is nothing. But the lesson that we are Hashem's beloved nation — that I learn by this Rebbe."

Reb Yechezkel Levenstein praised this answer and told Reb Noach that he should continue going to that Rebbe. Reb Yechezkel then repeated many times to himself, "**אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ**... **אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ**..."

● Respectful Dogs



In 1937, **R' Elchanan Wassermann** set out on a trip to America to raise the necessary funds for the Baranowitz Yeshiva. He traveled all around America for these funds. At one point, he had R' Shmuel Greinamen, the principal of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, while he was staying in the home of R' Zalman Levin, going around with him as a translator.

When they got to upstate New York, they passed a wealthy-looking home, but R' Shmuel walked right by, not giving it much

attention. R' Elchanan questioned why they were skipping that home. "There is a mezuzah on the doorpost." To which R' Shmuel answered there were two vicious-looking dogs at the gateway, preventing any visitors entry, and that's why he avoided it.

R' Elchanan responded that he's going in despite the vicious-looking dogs. He opened the gate and headed toward the front door. Sure enough, the dogs came charging at him, but as soon as they got to him, they immediately paused. He persisted and went to the front door, asking for a donation.

The shocked man answered the door, asking, "How did you get in? Didn't the dogs 'greet' you at the entrance?" R' Elchanan responded that dogs see the tzelem Elokim within every person. Many people lose it along the way, but I managed to keep it clean, and they respected it, and that's why they didn't harm me.

This serves as a great lesson. Even dogs can feel the intrinsic value that's within our neshamah. Even though at times it may not be seen, it is something that's tangibly seen even by dogs. So, although we can't see it, we must remember that this is a very tangible thing.





וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ - "***And now if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth***." (19:5)

What is the intention of the promise "You shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples"? **The Ben Ish Hai** explains this in his book "Ben

Yehoyada". The Gemara (Pesachim 118b) says, **אָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְגַבְרִיאֵל: גְּעוֹר בְּחַיָּה שֶׁכָּל מַעֲשֶׂיהָ נִכְתָּבִין בְּקוּלְמוֹס אֶחָד** - "***Hashem said to Gavriel… Shout at the wicked nation that all their deeds are written with one quill.***"

We need to understand the meaning of "*They are written with one quill.*"

The explanation for this is as follows: The other nations are obligated in the seven Noachide laws only and one can write the number seven with one swipe of a quill. On the other hand, the Jewish nation is obligated to keep the 613 Mitzvot and 613 is written with three swipes of a quill.

And this is what it means when the verse says **וְהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה**- "*And you will be a treasured nation for Me*". - Treasure in Hebrew is Segulah and there is also a vowel in the hebrew alphabet which is '*Segol*' and it is written as three dots. These three dots symbolize the 613 Mitzvot as the number 613 also requires three swipes of a quill to be written.

If Bnai Yisrael listen to Hashem and keep His covenant, they will be a treasured nation as the other nations only have one swipe of laws to keep.

The Beit Avraham from Slonim writes in his book "Michtavei Kodesh" (letter 12) that on each of the Ten Commandments that the Jewish nation heard they answered Amen.

We see a hint to this in the morning Shabbat prayer during the Amidah, 'Tikanta Shabbat'. It is written, **אַז מַסיני נִצטוו**– "From Sinai, they were commanded."

The first letter of each word spells out Amen!

Hints in the giving of the Torah

The main topic in this Parashah is the giving of the Torah which was given in the year 2448, on the sixth day of the third month, which is the month of Sivan, 50 days after the Jews left Egypt. The Torah does not state the year the Torah was given, or the date, but there is nothing that is not hinted to in the Torah. - What is the hint to the year 2448 that the Torah was given in?

We know that we raise the Torah in Shul to show it to everyone and every person in Shul points their finger to the Torah and says "This is the Torah that Mosheh placed before Bnai Yisrael".

What is the explanation of the word "Vezot"- and this is? Why is there an extra letter Vav (which means and) added to the word Zot?

In the word Vezot there is a hint to the year the Torah was given. The letter Vav has the numerical value of 6 and the word Zot has the numerical value of 408 and if we multiple 408 by 6, we get 2448 which is the year the Torah was given. - Therefore, it is important that when the Torah is raised up in Shul for all to see that we say "Vezot" as this is a hint to the year 2448.

There is another hint in the Parashah of Bereishit, "And it was evening and it was morning, (Yom HaShishi) the sixth day". The letter Hey in the word HaShishi is a hint to the five books of the Torah and Shishi which means six is alluding to the sixth day of Sivan that the Torah was given.

Another hint is in the Pasuk, "VeChamushim Yatzu", And they left armed, or you could read it as VeChamishim Yatzu - that fifty day after leaving Egypt you will receive the Torah.

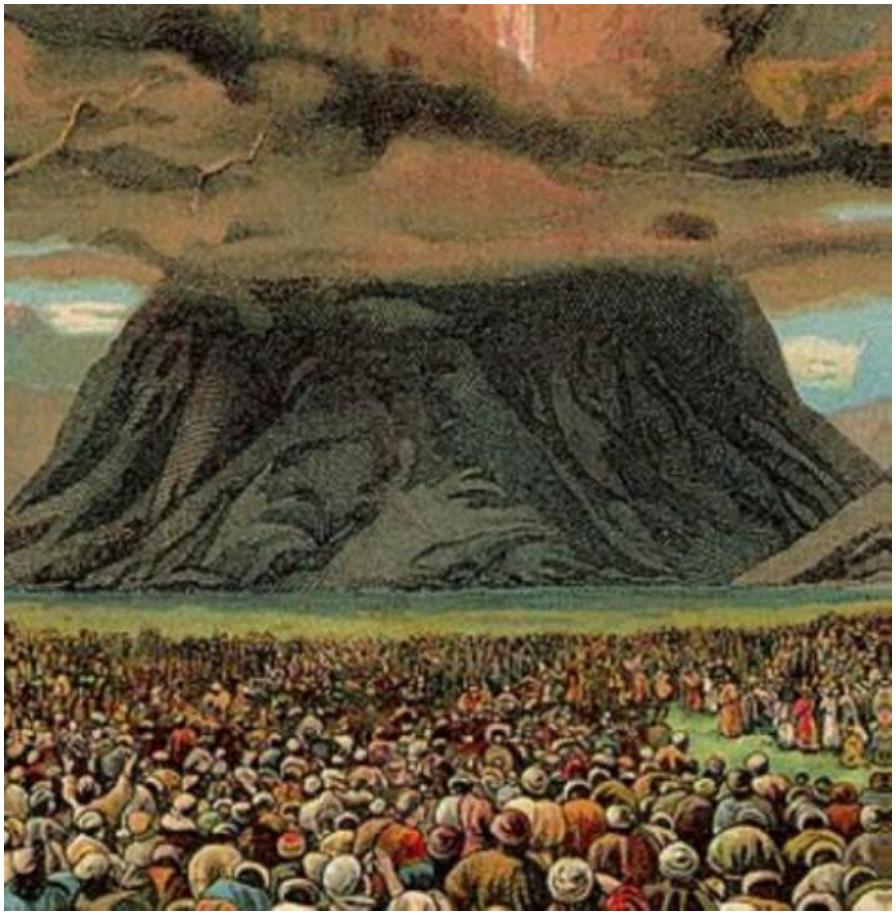
In the Ten Commandments there are 172 words that are equal in numerical value to Ekev in the verse "Vehayah Ekev Tishme'un" - "and it will be because you heed…".

The Ten Commandments: The Ten Commandments have 620 letters. The numerical value of the word Keter - crown is 620. If we merit

to keep the commandments, then we merit the crown of Torah and if we do not merit to keep the commandments, then Heaven forbid, we are cut off from the Jewish people.

The Ten Commandments have 172 words which is the numerical value of the Hebrew word Ekev (because). "Ekev" is the root word of Yaakov. The letter Yud in the word Yaakov has the numerical value 10 which hints to the Ten Commandments and Ekev (the end of the word Yaakov) hints to the 172 words of the Ten Commandments.

וְהִגְבַּלְתָּ אֶת־הָעָם סָבִיב לֵאמֹר הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם עֲלוֹת בָּהָר וּנְגֹעַ בְּקָצֵהוּ כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהָר מוֹת יוּמָת... בִּמְשֹׁךְ הַיֹּבֵל הֵמָּה יַעֲלוּ בָהָר "***And you shall set boundaries for the people around, saying, beware of ascending the mountain or touching its edge. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death…When the ram's horn sounds a long drawn out blast, they may ascend the mountain***" (19, 12-13)



At the time of the giving of the Torah, Har Sinai was the holy of holies, to the point that whoever would touch it would die, but right after it says, "When the ram's horn sounds a long drawn-out blast, they may ascend the mountain."

When the shofar blast was heard, the Shechinah departed and even the animals were able to ascend the mountain as the mountain was not holy of its own accord.

We must understand something here. How is it possible that in such a holy place where the holy Torah was given, no holiness remained? How is it different than the Beit HaMikdash whose holiness remains forever even if it is destroyed?

Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler Zt'l, the supervisor of Yeshivat Ponoevezh explains this: Just like when a person takes a parchment and writes on it the name of Hashem and the parchment becomes holy (the holiness enters the physical), so too with the Beit HaMikdash, the holiness enters into the physical place. Therefore, we are forbidden to enter the area of the Mikdash, but with Har Sinai, there was a revelation of Hashem's presence, but this did not enter into the physical place and therefore it remained void of holiness.

Explanation: At Har Sinai, Bnai Yisrael received a gift, the holiest gift, but this was received without any toil or work on their part. Only after they received the Torah did the work begin. On the other hand Har Hamoriah was a symbol of putting in work as Avraham Avinu brought Yitzhak up as a sacrifice here and all the rest of the sacrifices after were brought here and therefore this place became holy.

Here is an example of toiling in the holy Torah: When Rebbi Mosheh Mordechai, son of **Rebbi Shimon Shkop Zt'l**, became of age to go to Yeshivah, his father escorted him to the Yeshivah of Volozhin. It had been many years since his father had learned in this Yeshivah and right when they arrived in Volozhin, before they even went to meet with the head of the Yeshivah who was the **Netziv**, the father went with his son into the Beit Midrash and he pointed out the bench that he sat on when he was in Yeshivah.

He then turned to his son and said, "Here, on this bench, I sat and learned for six straight years. Here is where I had the best enjoyment day and night. These were the most beautiful years of my life" - and he then became emotional and broke out into tears.

Another example is **Rebbi Yosef Buxbaum Z'l**, the founder of "Mechon Yerushalayim". He merited to live in the same building as the **Great One from Tchebin Tz'l**. A short while after the Rebbi from Tchebin passed away, Rebbi Yosef Buxbaum left his house and he saw **Rav Aryeh Levine Zt'l** standing with a Tehillim in his hand and crying. He approached him and asked him why he was crying.

Rav Aryeh answered and said that someone he knows is sick and he was searching for a place to pour out his heart to Hashem in prayer. In those years, it was not possible to go to the Kotel and pray as the Jordanians ruled over that part of Yerushalayim. Therefore, Rav Aryeh felt that this buliding where **Rebbi Barish Vinefield Ztk'l** lived and toiled in Torah and where so many broken-hearted people would flock to for salvation or comfort would be the perfect place to pray.

When Rebbi Yosef told this story over to **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zt'l**, Rav Shlomo answered that this is correct and such a sensitivity is appropriate for Rav Aryeh Levine and not for us.

Then Rav Shlomo continued and testified about himself, "Even I, when I pass that building, remember the elevated feelings I had when I was in his presence".

It Once Happenned…

Years ago, an Orthodox Jewish man had arrived in Paris, and needed to buy Kosher food. He had no idea where to begin looking for a kosher restaurant or store. He was sitting on the Metro bench in the Paris subway, looking at passersby, trying to see who looked Jewish enough to ask this question.

Suddenly, he saw a Jew with a hat and a suit walk briskly out of the Metro door. This man ran after him calling, "Excuse me Rabbi, where is there a Kosher place to eat? I am starving." The Rebbe stopped abruptly and told this Jew, "Come I'll show you a place."

The Jew followed the Rebbe back into the subway. They traveled a few stops, got out and walked into a building. The Rebbe opened the door and announced to his wife in Yiddish, "*Mir hoben a gast* – we have a guest."

The Rebbe and the man walked into the tiny, immaculate dining room and sat down. There were three settings on the table: set in real cutlery, china, and glassware with cloth napkin. The man said he was in awe of the cleanliness in the tiny Paris apartment, and the regal way the table was set.

The wife brought in fruit as an appetizer, then fish with some vegetables and fruit as a dessert. The Jew was a little surprised that there was no Hamotzi or Mezonot, but did not say anything.

After the meal, the Rebbe apologized for not serving bread or cake. The Rebbe told him that he went to check out the bakeries and was not satisfied with the flour used in baking these foods. Therefore, his wife didn't buy flour at all, even to bake herself.

The Jew thanked them for literally saving his life and left.

Many years later, this Jew was living in New York, and he chanced to see a photo of the Rebbe in the Jewish newspaper. He was so upset realizing that the couple who served him was none other than the **Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rebbetzin**. He was devastated, so he traveled to 770 to ask forgiveness from the Rebbe.

When he saw the Rebbe, he burst out crying asking for forgiveness. The Rebbe recognized him and said, "I have to thank you for giving me the opportunity to do the Mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim!"

"When the clouds get dark, it starts to rain, and the rain makes things grow. – Often, it's the dark moments of your life that bring rain and growth." ~ Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein Zt'l.

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Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

L' Maaseh...



A couple was having serious issues with their sholom bayis. Their rav suggested that the husband speak with an adam gadol about these issues and recommended speaking to **R' Shmuel Kaminetsky shlit"a**.

He made an appointment to meet with the Rosh Yeshiva and drove down to Philadelphia on Sunday morning. When he arrived, R' Shmuel asked if they could speak in the car as he had to go to the hospital to visit someone and of course the man agreed.

They began speaking and said that they would continue their conversation on the way back.

An hour later, R' Shmuel came out and apologized for taking so long, but he had gone to say goodbye … to his wife. Indeed, Rebbetzin Kaminetsky passed away hours later.

R' Shmuel paused a moment and continued, "now that my obligation for sholom bayis is ending, we can begin yours. Let's talk about you…".



When Avraham Avinu set out to daven for the people of Sedom, the posuk says "vayigash" - and he approached.

Rashi there explains that we find this to be a terminology associated with war and battle. To be successful in battle, one must prepare.

An army which just goes to fight or defend itself without having invested any time in preparation will likely fail.

Tefilah also needs preparation and just as one should not wait until he is on the battlefield to develop tactics and strategies, one must adequately prepare for tefilah before he davens.

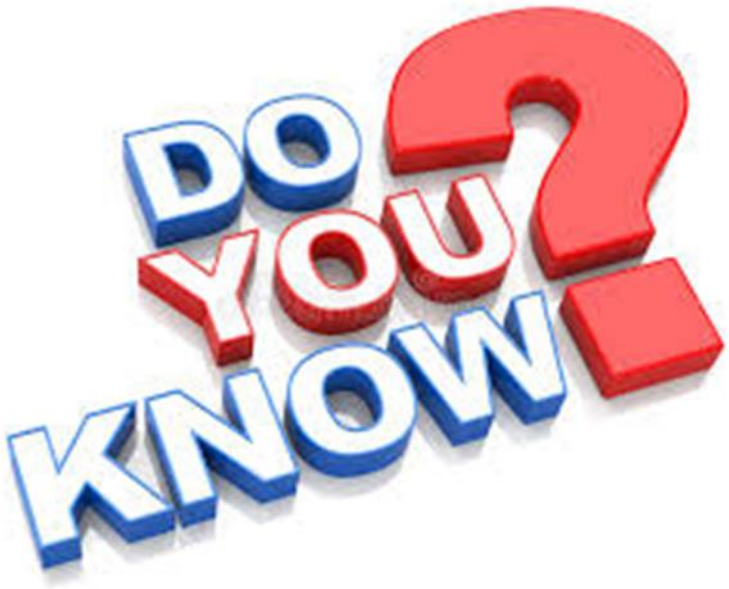
Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that the preparation must also be constant; a person should designate time to learn about tefillah, and it should be often. This way, he will be adequately prepared for every tefillah.

A man came to Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, OH, and met the Rosh HaYeshiva, **Rabbi Mordecai Gifter**. He'd been in the Navy and got interested in his Jewish heritage. R' Gifter asked why he was there.

"I came to find G-d," he replied.

"If it's G-d you're looking for," thundered R' Gifter, "you won't find Him here. - Torah? Torah you can find here, but not "G-d."

"The fellow was taken aback until another rabbi softly explained, "What the Rosh HaYeshiva means is that Judaism isn't just that you eat a kosher salami sandwich and you've arrived. It takes Torah study and time to get to know G-d, and what He wants from you; it isn't something that just happens."



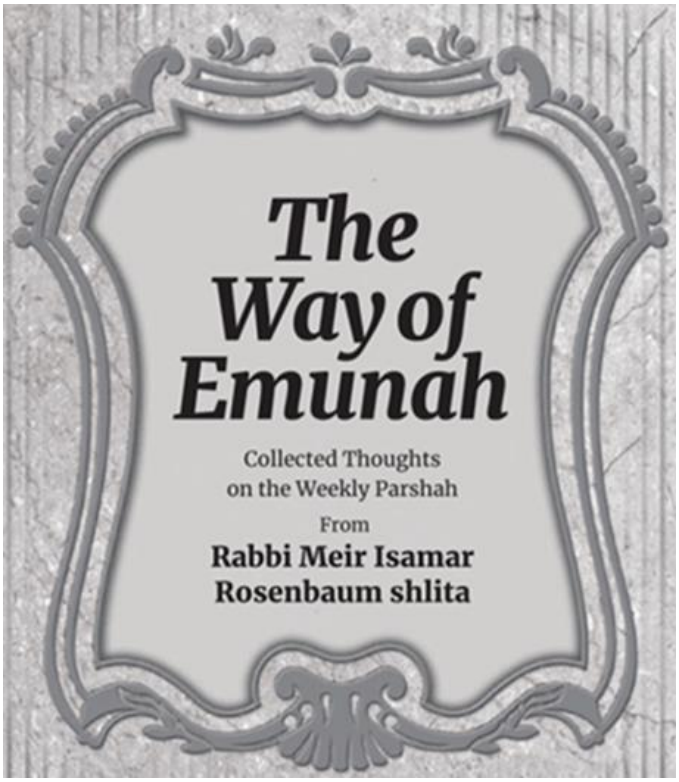
One of the Six Remembrances (found in the siddur after Shacharis) is related to this week's Parsha. It references Matan Torah, the giving of The Torah at Sinai. The pesukim (Devarim 4:9-10) say, רַק הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ וּשְׁמֹר נַפְשְׁךָ מְאֹד פֶּן־תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפֶן־יָסוּרוּ מִלְּבָבְךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְלִבְנֵי בָנֶיךָ. יוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּחֹרֵב... - "***But beware and watch yourself very well, lest you forget the things that your eyes saw, and lest these things depart from your heart, all the days of your life, and you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children; the day you stood before the L-rd your G-d at Horeb*** ... "

When the Torah says these words, it appears that we are not merely remembering that the Torah was given at Sinai. We are also supposed to recall that it was Hashem, Himself, Who gave it to us.

Moreover, we are supposed to recall the experience of that day. We are enjoined to recall the sights and sounds of the fire and smoke; the thunderous sounds that were actually visible to the people; and the general feeling of being there.

It is supposed to be so real to us that when we tell it over to our children, they, too, can experience standing at Har Sinai and being given the Torah by Hashem. So much so that they can tell it to their children too, in the same way and with the same enthusiasm.

"No matter what else we are doing to be Mechanech our children, it all must begin with Tefilah." ~ R Matisysahu Salomon Zt'l.



וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ - '***And Yisro, the priest of Midyan, father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that G-d did for Moshe and for Yisroel His nation***…' (18:1)

● The Need For a Leader

Rashi states: "What did Yisro hear that caused him to come? He heard about the splitting of the Yam Suf and the war with Amalek."

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy"a (quoted in Kol Mevaser, Chelek 1) asks that Yisro was a great and wise man who had tried every idol in the world and come to the conclusion that Hashem is the true G-d. Why was he particularly impressed by these two miracles, as opposed to the other wondrous miracles Hashem performed, such as orchestrating the exodus from Egypt, etc.?

According to the opinion that Yisro came after Matan Torah (Avodah Zara 24A and Zevachim 116A), why was he more impressed by these two miracles that from the giving of the Torah on Har Sinai?

He answers that Yisro saw that the Jewish nation reached a great and lofty level at the Yam Suf, as is stated that a maidservant at the sea experienced a higher level of prophecy than Yechezkel ben Buzi. However, almost immediately afterwards, Amalek attacked the nation. He saw that the powers of evil were still able to influence Amalek even after witnessing such great miracles, which the entire world knew about.

This led him to the revelation that even after one witnesses great miracles, he needs a spiritual leader to guide him in the proper path.

Therefore, he concluded that he can no longer remain on his own and he must go to Moshe Rabenu and accept him as his rebbi.

● Torah is The Antidote to the Yeitzer Hara

The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zy"a explains Rashi's words by saying that Yisro saw that even after the great revelation at the Yam Suf, Amalek's attack still had an effect on the nation and caused their level of emunah to decrease.

He understood that this was a manifestation of Chazal's words (Sukkah 52A) that when one is greater than his friend, his yeitzer hara is also greater. Therefore, he concluded that his only possible course of action to combat the yeitzer hara was to accept the Torah, as Torah is the only force that is powerful enough to serve as an antidote to the yeitzer hara.



וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹתְנוֹ כִּי־יָבֹא אֵלַי הָעָם לִדְרֹשׁ אֱלֹקִים – *'And Moshe said to his father-in-law, when the nation comes to me to inquire of G-d.'* (18:15)

● Listening to the People All Day and All Night

Rav Shmuel Salant zt"l served as Rov of Yerushalaim for close to 70 years. He was appointed to the position as a young man in his late 20's and held it until his passing, when he was well over 90. Throughout his entire life, until his final days, he spent many hours everyday learning Torah non-stop, day and night, and he was available at all hours to answer shailos.

When he reached old age, his family began to worry about his health. They hung a sign on the door to his home with set hours when he the public could meet with him. However, when he found out about it, he vehemently protested and said that people must be allowed it at all hours of the day. He said, "The Torah tells us that when Yisro asked Moshe why he sits by himself and listens to the people's questions

for morning until night, Moshe answered, 'Because the people come to me to inquire of Hashem.'

"What did he mean? Yisro could see for himself that people came at all hours to ask questions. What was Moshe telling him that he didn't already know?

"Rather, Yisro was asking why he accepted people all day and didn't make set hours to answer questions. Moshe's answer was that, as Chazal say (Shabbos 133B), we are meant to conduct ourselves towards others in the way that Hashem acts towards us. Hashem listens to our prayers whenever we say them, no matter what time of day. So too, he said that he must listen to people and help them, no matter the time.

"He was saying that people came to him to 'inquire of Hashem', meaning that they expected him to emulate Hashem and listen to them at all times. - That is also what I must do."

● **One Can Always Visit Such a Tzadik's Resting Place**

A number of years ago, my father shlita visited the kever of **Rav Mordchele of Nadvorna zy"a** in the city of Bustina, accompanied by a group of chasidim. They went at the beginning of the month of Av, as it is known that Rav Mordchele said that anyone in need of a yeshua should come to him during the Nine Days, and, indeed, many people have merited personal salvations from doing so.

During this trip, the group also stopped in Kerestir and visited the gravesite of **Rav Shayala zy"a**. At that time, my father said that, in truth, our minhag is not to go to kivrei tzadikim very often. We only go on the days that are mentioned in Sefarim Hakedoshim as times when the neshama comes down from their places of rest in Shomayim to their gravesites.

Those days are: Erev Rosh Chodesh, the 15th day of the month, the 28th of Elul, and on the Yahrzeit. He added, however, that this only applies to tzadikim who people were not able to have access to at

any time of day during their lifetimes, and who only had set hours to meet with the public. Therefore, even after their deaths, there only are set times when one can go to their kevarim.

Rav Shayala of Kerestir, however, always kept his home open to visitors at all times of day. Even in the middle of the night, he would get out of bed to welcome guests and take care of them. Therefore, one can certainly visit his kever at any time.

● The Brachos Shall Reach You

The following incredible story, which was related by the **Ben Ish Chai zt"l**, depicts how Hashem sends His salvations to people in wondrous ways:



There once was a Jewish man who lacked a good source of livelihood. He decided to advertise himself as a fortune teller who could see into the future and to charge for his services. When people came to him, he would assure them that their future looked bright, that they would be successful, etc., so that they would like what he said and would continue to come back.

One day, thieves broke into the king's palace and stole some precious treasures. No matter how hard the police investigated, they could not locate the thieves. They had heard about the Jewish fortune teller and informed the king about his supposed abilities. The king summoned him and ordered him to reveal the identities of the thieves.

The Jew began to panic, unsure of what to say, as he knew he would be severely punished if he couldn't come up with an answer.

He told the king, "I can't answer you right now. I need 30 days to look into it before I can have an answer. I also need 30 apples…"

In those days, apples were a rare and expensive treat. The man thought that if he was going to be killed anyway, he might at well enjoy himself a little first.

He came home and gave his mother the apples and told her what had happened.

That night, he ate the first apple and, as he finished it, he said out loud, "I finished one."

Meanwhile, the thieves had heard that the king had hired a fortune teller to find them. One of them was sent to stand outside the door and spy on him, to determine if he really had the ability to identify them. When he heard him call out that he had finished one, he thought he meant that he had figured out the identity of one of the thieves, assuming it was himself. He ran back to his friends and reported to their leader what he had heard.

The next day, another thief was sent to spy on the Jew. That evening, he ate a second apple and said, "I finished two!"

This thief also got scared that his intent was that he had discovered his identity.

On the third day, the leader of the thieves went himself to spy. When he heard the Jew say, "I finished the third one!", he thought that he himself had been identified. In a panic, he ran into the Jew's house and confessed that he and his friends had stolen the king's treasures. He promised to return everything and begged him not to turn them in.

Thus, on the designated day, the Jew returned all of the stolen treasures to the king, and earned the king's admiration for doing so.

The king was tremendously impressed by the man, and at a gathering of his friends, he greatly praised him and his abilities. The king's

friends were sceptical and said that they wanted to test him out themselves. They asked to meet him, and messengers were sent to bring him to the palace.

Right before he came, the king's friends attempted to trap some birds. The first two birds escaped, but they managed to catch the third one.

When the man was brought before them, they asked him, "What were we doing right before you got here?"

He thought and thought but he could not come up with a good response. Finally, he blurted out, "The bird got away twice, but it was caught on the third time!" He actually was referring to himself. He meant to say that he managed to save himself once or twice, but he was now caught, with no way out. However, everyone else thought he had successfully deduced what they had done.

They were amazed by him and gave him many gifts. A short while later, the man hurried to the palace and asked to speak with the king. The guards refused to let him in and said that the king was taking a bath at that time. He ignored them and ran through the door. He found the king preparing to take a bath, ran over to him and slapped him. He then fled. - The king was shocked, and he ran after him. As soon as he exited the room he was in, the roof caved in. The Jew had saved him from being crushed to death!

The king asked him, "How did you know this was about to happen?"

The man replied, "I can't reveal that secret to you."

"But why did you slap me?" the king asked.

The Jew answered, "If I had told you that you needed to run outside, you would have asked me what was going on and by the time I answered you, the roof would have fallen already."

The Ben Ish Chai concluded by saying, "When Hashem wants to help a person, the person doesn't need to possess much talent, wisdom or

intellect. Hashem just takes care of him in ways that could never be foreseen. This is as is stated (Devarim 25:2) **וּבָאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל־הַבְּרָכוֹת וְהִשִּׂיגֻךָ כִּי תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ** - '***All the blessings will come to you and reach you.***' - Even if a person runs away from the brachos of Hashem, if He wants to give them to him, they will reach him."

● Ahavas Yisroel Leads to Ahavas Hashem

The following is related by **Rav of Sambor zy"a**, in the introduction to his Sefer Tefillah L'Moshe:

A tzadik once said to the **Rebbe of Stretin zy"a**, "I have heard that you give people segulos, which provide great benefit to them. Please give me a segulah for yiras shomayim."

The Rebbe replied, "There is no segulah for yiras shomayim. There only is a segulah for ahavas shomayim."

The tzadik said, "Ahavas shomayim is even better than yiras shomayim. Please give me that segulah."

The Rebbe told him, "Ahavas Yisroel is a segulah for ahavas shomayim. If one genuinely loves Jews, he will come to love Hashem."

● Moshe Still Speaks Today

The Bais Aharon of Stolin zy"a (quoted in Sefer Birchas Aharon, page 118) notes that the verse says that Moshe "will speak", in the future tense, rather than "spoke", in the past tense.

He discerns from this that Moshe is still speaking today!

After saying this, the Rebbe tapped his ear and exclaimed, "Whoever wants to hear it, can hear it!"



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"L

Klal Yisrael is Hashem's Treasure

וְהִיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים כִּי לִי כָּל הָאָרֶץ - '***You will be My treasure from among all the nations, because all the earth is Mine***.' (19:5)



Once when I had a trip planned to the US, a friend asked me to bring along for him a big wad of money. Thousands of dollars. I put the bundle of bills in my pocket, and I sewed up the pocket from all sides.

When I was on the flight, every quarter of an hour I put out my hand to feel the pocket and make sure everything is okay... I didn't forget about it for a moment.

When I dozed off for a few minutes, I dreamed that someone came and took the wad of money from me...

Hashem says to the Jewish people: **וְהִיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים** – "You will be My treasure from among all the nations." It doesn't say

"diamond," "money" or "gold." It says *segulah*, which Rashi translates as a precious treasure. Unimaginable wealth!

If I watched over a few thousand dollars with such zealousness, we understand how *Hashem* watches over us like the apple of His eye.

Now, someone might claim that the reason why *Hashem* loves us so much is because He doesn't have anyone better. In Yiddish there is an expression, "*When a worm sits in horseradish, it thinks there's nothing sweeter*." The worm in the horseradish never tasted an apple, it knows only the bitter horseradish, so it thinks that horseradish is sweet.

Along these lines, someone might claim that *Hashem* had no better people than the Jews, and that's why He treasures them. Therefore the *pasuk* goes on to say, "Because all the earth is Mine." *Hashem* has everything and everyone to choose from. And He found nothing more precious in His eyes than the Jewish people.

Parshah Pearls

● Enjoying the Shabbos to the Full

זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ - *"Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it"* (20:8).

The Ramban cites this Pasuk as the source to remember Shabbos during the week – starting already from Sunday, as Chazal have said 'From Sunday (start preparing already) for Shabbos'. (Beitzah 12b)

And this was the way of R. Yosef Chayim. That is why he adopted the custom to discard the walking-stick that he used during the week, already on Friday. It was inconvenient for him to walk without his stick, and he felt that to stop using it only from the moment Shabbos came in, would detract from Oneg Shabbos.

Stopping a day earlier on the other hand, would enable him to become more accustomed to going without it by the time Shabbos entered,

minimizing the inconvenience, and maximizing the Oneg Shabbos. He remembered Shabbos during the week and increased his Oneg Shabbos at one and the same time.

● **And the Deeds That They Shall Do …,** …This Refers to Going Beyond the Letter of the Law (Bava Metzi'a 32)

Here is are some stories in this connection, typical of the Tzadik about whom they are written *(adapted from the Seifer Chochmas Chayim)*

● **At the Eleventh Hour**



Like all true leaders of K'lal Yisrael, **R, Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld** also served as father of the poor. Widows, orphans, poor brides and bridegrooms, all turned to him in their time of need, the burden falling fairly and squarely on his shoulders.

It happened once that a large sum of money meant for the poor of Yerushalayim had somehow been delayed along the way. The time of the year was just before Pesach and a great despondency fell upon many Yerushalmi families, who lacked money with which to purchase even the basics for the forthcoming Yom-Tov.

Erev Pesach morning arrived, and all the sources of Tzedakah had already shut down. The money had still not arrived, and the people, frantic with worry, walked around in a daze, not knowing what to do or where to turn.

Suddenly, there was a cry! The Sheli'ach had arrived with the money – at the eleventh hour, on Erev Pesach before midday! But how does

one distribute money to all those who desperately needed it on Erev Pesach afternoon? Who is available at such a time, when everyone is preparing for the Seider, due to begin in a matter of hours?

The Rav had no problem with this! To be sure, the Rebbetzen, like all Yidishe housewives, was busy with the numerous Pesach issues, arranging the Pesach dishes and cooking for the Seider, with the numerous Chumros that accompany these chores, so that Pesach should arrive ke'Das u'ke'Din.

Yet the Rav did not hesitate. He called his wife ('Ishto ke'Gufo'), and after explaining to her that there was really nobody else to send, he asked her sweetly whether she would not volunteer to take on the job. The Rebbetzen did not hesitate either ('Eishes Chaver ke'Chaver').

She took the money and went round the houses of Yerushalayim, distributing it so that the poor should be able to purchase their Pesach needs, a task that took up the remainder of the day, depriving her of the last chance of preparing her own house for Pesach and for the Seider.

But who cared? What mattered was the fact that the people of Yeryshalayim were able to celebrate Yom-Tov! The simchas Yom-tov in the houses of Yerushalayim that year was immense, but most of all in the home of R. Yosef Chayim Sonnenfeld.

● Chesed in the Snow

Someone close to R. Yosef Chayim who lived in the neighborhood of Yemin Moshe, once turned to him with a request to speak with Rav Mordechai Leib Rubin, whose assistance he required regarding a certain matter.

The following night, Yerushalayim experienced a heavy snowstorm. When the inhabitants awoke the next morning, they found the city covered in a thick blanket of snow, which covered its roofs and its streets.

The man who had asked R. Yosef Chayim for the favour, wrapped in his winter-coat, was standing by his window taking in the scene. He was looking at the pile of snow in front of the raised stone steps of Yemin Moshe, when suddenly he froze on the spot. An elderly man picking his way through the soft snow caught his eye.

Could it be … R. Yosef Chayim. Shocked, he rushed outside, and sure enough, there was the Rav walking in his direction, on his way, he assumed (correctly, as it transpired) towards the Rav whose assistance he required, who lived in Yemin Moshe, too.

Terribly shaken at having troubled the Rav to such a degree, he burst into tears and begged him for forgiveness.

The Rav responded by raising himself to his full height, and looking him straight in the eye, he declared in an authoritative voice 'And do you really think for one moment, that a Yid with a white beard is forbidden to trouble himself over a Mitzvah? Have Chazal not said 'If a Mitzvah comes to hand, to not let it 'turn sour'!' Do it at once!

Bear in mind that R. Yosef Chayim refused to allow others to carry his stick from one place to another (so as not to trouble a Yid).

Here are two examples of this.

● **Not to Trouble a Child …**

At a wedding of a granddaughter, R. Yosef Chayim was walking to his seat, when he found a little boy sitting sedately on a chair blocking the gangway. The Rav stood patiently waiting for the little boy to get up and let him pass. The child however, seemingly oblivious to the Tzadik's presence, remained seated.

When the little boy's father realized what was happening, the embarrassed man began to berate his son for not getting up to let the Gaon pass.

But R. Yosef Chayim would have none of it. 'Please don't tell him off,' he said softly with a laugh. 'How can I trouble a child who may yet

become the Gadol ha'Dor. I'm afraid that I have missed the opportunity of achieving what he may yet achieve'.

● **A Performing Chesed with the Chevra Kadisha**

Once in the last year of his life in 5691, when he felt exceptionally weak, he raised his eyes heavenwards and said 'Ribono shel Olam! I have always accepted whatever You decreed upon me with love, and so I will continue to do.

But please, do not torment me in my old age, by forcing me to require other people's services, because that is something that I have never done before'. 'A tzadik decrees and G-d fulfills', because, until virtually the last day of his life, he managed without the help of others.

That same summer, R. Yosef Chayim, who went to convalesce as he did in previous years, urged his family to take him home earlier than usual. The doctor and his family however, felt that the air was good for him, and tried to prevail upon him to remain longer. But he stood his ground, insisting that he leave there and then. When they pressed him for a reason, he told them that he felt weak and that he knew that his end was near.

Not knowing exactly when that would occur, he was afraid that he would die in the convalescent home, and seeing as in those days, they used to carry the coffin on their shoulders all the way to Har ha'Zeisim, he wanted to spare the Chevra Kadisha the extra burden of carrying him the additional mileage from the convalescent home.

● **Thinking of Others**

One particularly stormy night, R. Yosef Chayim was learning with one of his grandchildren. The rain was pouring down and the wind howling, when they thought they heard the sound of a thud coming from the direction of the steps leading towards the Ashpos Gate. Quick as a flash, R. Chayim was out of his seat, had donned his winter coat and had rushed outside to investigate.

Imagine his family's surprise, when he returned a short while later, carrying over his shoulders an elderly man who had slipped and fallen down the steps and who looked in a bad way. He took the unconscious man straight to his bedroom, laid him on his bed and worked on him for a long time until he came to. He then called a doctor to see to him.

And the old man remained in R. Yosef Chayim's house until the weather improved and his health was fully restored.

R. Yosef Chayim was always the first in Shul, and the last out, nor could any power on earth keep him away from Shul. Imagine the surprise of the Mispalelim when, one Shabbos morning, in the middle of Shachris, during Pesukei de'Zimrah, the Rav walked out of Shul for no apparent reason.

Thinking that perhaps he was feeling ill, they went to search for him in his residence underneath the Shul. When they did not find him there, their surprise turned to worry. Perhaps they thought, the Rav was feeling ill.

They soon found him however, axe in hand, in the process of chopping down the door of a single, childless man, whom he found inside lying on his bed – dead.

This was a man who Davened regularly in the same Minyan as R. Yosef Chayim, and who always stood in the same place in Shul. Having noticed his absence that Shabbos morning, he realized that something must be wrong, and went immediately to investigate.

The rain was coming down in torrents, and a woman from Batei Machseh (where R. Yosef Chayim resided) was standing underneath a protruding roof near Machaneh Yehudah market, baby in arm, when suddenly a horse-drawn carriage stopped beside her. The door of the carriage opened, and out jumped R. Yosef Chayim, who it appears, had just returned from a B'ris in the old Sha'arei Tzedek hospital, and who was at the time, almost eighty.

Hopping sprightly on to the seat beside the driver, he bade the woman enter the carriage and take his place. The woman, who felt uncomfortable at ousting the Rav from the carriage in the pouring rain, initially declined his offer, and it was only when he explained to her that having give up his seat for an act of Chesed, there was no way that he would reclaim it, that she gratefully entered the carriage.

● No Gifts Please

R. Yosef Chayim never accepted gifts, and rarely loans either (as we noted above). Whenever he discovered a sum of money that someone had placed underneath his tablecloth, with the good intention of improving the Rav's precarious financial situation, he would make the necessary enquiries until he discovered the owner, and return the money. Failing that, he would hand the money to the Gabai of the public Tzedakah fund to distribute to the poor.

There was only one exception. It happened once at the wedding of one of his sons that he accepted a gift of a sum of money that was handed to him discreetly, because he knew with certainty that the donor was his Rebbe **R. Yehoshua Leib Diskind**.

● A Mitzvah Must Be Free of Sin

A Hungarian woman, who was still childless after many years of marriage, once approached the Rav of her city with a request. The woman, whose wealthy husband's business affairs she helped manage, had brought with her four hundred gold pieces as Pidyon Nefesh (an atonement). She wished to donate this sum to a Tzadik to do with as he saw fit, and in return, the Tzadik would Daven for her to give birth to a child. She asked the Rav to take the money and to hand it to the Tzadik of his choice on her behalf.

The Rav named R. Chayim Sonnenfeld in Yerushalayim as the best candidate and took the money from her, which he immediately sent to Yerushalayim.

Three weeks passed, and the woman's husband came to see the Rav, to complain to him about the large donation that his wife had given to Tzedakah without his knowledge. The Rav replied that he had assumed, when accepting the money, that she was acting with his consent.

The husband however, demanded that the Rav retrieve the money from R. Yosef Chayim and return it to him. The Rav was naturally reluctant to do so, and offered to return the entire sum out of his own pocket, to be paid in installments, should the husband persist.

Even as they sat discussing the issue, the postman arrived with a special delivery package from Yerushalayim, which he handed to the Rav. The latter opened the package, and to his utter amazement, it contained a letter from R. Yosef Chayim, together with the four hundred gold coins that he had sent him.

Overjoyed, the Rav handed the money to the deeply moved husband, who was curious to know what was written in the letter. This is roughly what R. Yosef Chayim had written ...

'I received your letter together with the money. However, seeing as you wrote that the woman handed you the money, I suspect that she may have done so without her husband's consent. Consequently, I am returning the full amount, with the request that you return it to her as soon as possible.

It goes without saying however, that this has not detered me from praying for the woman's request to be fulfilled. May Hashem accept my Tefilos with mercy'. - The eyes of both men filled with tears.

By Davening and verbalizing our needs, we are impressing upon ourselves that we are totally dependent on Hashem for everything. ~ Chovos Halevavos

Parsha Points to Ponder

How was Yisro able to communicate his arrival to Moshe (18:6) if the Jews were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory, which did not allow gentiles to enter?

The Tur writes that when Yisro reached the Jewish encampment and discovered that there was no way for him to enter the impenetrable Clouds of Glory, he wrote a note stating that he was Moshe's father-in-law, and he had come together with Moshe's wife and two sons to see him. Yisro attached the note to an arrow and shot it toward the Jewish camp.

Although the Clouds of Glory normally would have intercepted the arrow and denied it entry as they did with the projectiles shot by the pursuing Egyptians (Rashi 19:4), they made an exception in this case and permitted it to enter, where the Midrash says it fell near Moshe, who picked it up, read it, and went out to welcome his father-in-law.

Hamaayan by Shlomo Katz

אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ - *"I am Hashem, your Elokim* . . ." (20:2)

Why did Hashem use the word "Anochi," instead of the more common "Ani" (both of which mean "I")?

R' Mordechai Neugroschl shlita writes: The Hebrew word "Anach" means a plumb line or level. Thus, the first word of the Aseret Ha'dibrot is teaching us that the Torah is the tool by which we can tell if we are on a straight path.

In contrast, if a person's only "plumb line," his only frame of reference, is his own sense of right and wrong, he will end up disoriented, like a pilot with vertigo. (*Mi'darchei Ha'lev Ha'yehudi)*

בס"ד

למודי משה

יתרו – גליון ר"ה

Shabbos Watches Over Those Who Watch Over It

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו - *"Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it"* (*Shemos* 20:8)

Horav Moshe Zalmen Grossman, *zt"l*, believed that the term *shomer* Shabbos aptly translated, "You shall guard the Shabbos," is an exhortation to watch over the Shabbos. A soldier who is charged with guard duty does not dare sleep. Thus, Rav Zalmen Shomer Shabbos, as he was consequently called, remained awake the entire Shabbos, engaged in learning and singing, delving into esoteric studies.

It was known that Rav Zalmen could be found all Friday night in the Karliner *beis hamedrash* in Meah Shearim. In those days, poverty was the primary concern of Yerusholayim's observant community. People simply had no money to purchase the bare staples of life. Furthermore, if they became ill, they could neither afford to visit a doctor nor purchase the necessary medicine that was critical to their cure.

To this end, Rav Zalmen formed the Ezras Cholim, Help for the Sick, organization which provides funds for doctor visits and medicine. Since he had no one from whom to raise these funds, it is understandable that Rav Zalmen racked up huge debts. He realized that he would have to go to America to raise funds.

He took leave of his family, travelled halfway around the world, and arrived in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. He rented a small apartment, which became his home away from home for the next few years.

A certain Karliner *chossid* woke up one Friday night with a miserable migraine headache. The man was beside himself with pain. Nothing he did or took relieved his excruciating pain. He decided to get dressed and take a walk.

A migraine can cause a person to walk trance-like, which was the case here. He realized after a while that he had strayed from his house. Where does one go in middle of the night when he has no clue how to return to his apartment? He decided that the best place would be Rav Zalmen's apartment. He was awake all Friday night. He would knock on his door. Perhaps, by elevating his Shabbos experience with someone like Rav Zalmen, he could moderate some of the pain.

The *chossid* knocked on Rav Zalmen's door – to no avail. This was very strange. Surely Rav Zalmen was home. Where else would he be in middle of the night? He began to worry; something must be very wrong.

When he pressed his ear against the door, he thought he heard faint cries from within, as if someone in intense pain was crying for help. He did not need more than that. He woke up a neighbor whose son immediately ran to the police station.

An officer promptly returned and broke open the door to Rav Zalmen's apartment. They found Rav Zalmen writhing on the floor in excruciating agony, the victim of a burst appendix. He was rushed to the hospital, where it was touch and go for a little while. Finally, the doctor declared that Rav Zalmen's life had been saved.

His friend, who could not sleep and wandered the streets in middle of the night, had been Hashem's agent to save Rav Zalmen's life. Rav Zalmen, who had in the past always guarded over Shabbos, earning for himself the nom de plume, Rav Zalmen Shomer Shabbos, now had a new saying: *Ki eshmerah Shabbos, Keil Yishmeraini*, "If I watch over Shabbos, Hashem will watch over me." (**Peninim on the Torah**)



הוא היה אומר

R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan *zt"l* (Chofetz Chaim) would say:

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ־וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתֶךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ- We don't find by any other *mitzvah* that the *Torah* warns us to be careful, *'You, your son's, and your daughter's ...'* like we find by *Shabbos*.

This is to tell us that a person has to watch over *Shabbos* so that not only **he** should not desecrate it, but rather *Shabbos* is not desecrated by **anyone** in his house."



Short And Sweet Story of The Week by R'yoni Schwartz

During the years of World War I in Tomshovar, a small town in Romania, Rav Chaim Zilber was standing with his family around the Shabbos table. He was serene and focused, making Friday night Kiddush over the beautiful Shabbos candles illuminating their warm home.

Suddenly he heard, "Bang! Bang! Bang!", violent knocking at his door. These were the days when Russia invaded Romania and all the

Romanians were required to host the Russian soldiers or risk getting thrown out of their house.

Nevertheless, he continued his Kiddush with perfect concentration, unfazed by the soldiers' knocking, as if nobody was there. Scared, his wife ran to open the door, but the soldiers angrily pushed her out of the way. The captain barged inside in a rage but was immediately mesmerized by the angelic sight of Rav Zilber making Kiddush, basking in the Shabbos beauty, still unfazed by their presence. The captain asked his men to wait outside.

After Kiddush, when the Rav offered the captain some wine he burst into tears and began to share his story. When he was just three, Russian soldiers abducted him from his parents. As he was being ripped away, the last thing he remembered was his father calling out, "Shmuel - remember that you are a Jew! Never forget it!" He explained, "I can still see my father standing making Kiddush."

"After all the years," he continued, "I forgot where I came from. Only now as I watch you holding the cup exactly like my father, did it all come back to me." Shmuel sat with them and finished the Shabbos seudah. He would come back every Shabbos to learn about his Jewish heritage and the Torah which his ancestors have been the guardians of for the last three thousand years since receiving it at Har Sinai.

R' Moshe of Korbin zt"l

When Rabbi Moshe of Korbin was seven years old, there was a severe famine in Lithuania. Poor people wandered from village to village in search of food. Many of them flocked to the home of Rav Moshe's mother, who readily cooked and baked for them.

Once a very large number of the poor came to her home and she had to cook for them in shifts. When some individuals grew impatient

and insulted her, she began to cry, since she felt that she was doing her utmost for them.

Her young son, the future Rabbi of Korbin, said to her, "Why should their insults trouble you? Don't their insults help you perform the mitzvah with sincerity? If they had praised you, your merit would be less, since you might be doing the kindness to gain their praise, rather than to fulfill the Almighty's command." ~ Ohr Yeshorim as quoted by R' Zelig Pliskin.



Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

הַגְבֵּל אֶת־הָהָר וְקִדַּשְׁתּוֹ – '***Set a boundary around the mountain and sanctify it***.' (19:23)

The Bnei Yisroel are told not to go on the mountain but rather to surround the mountain when receiving the Aseres HaDibros. How can we understand this Pasuk?

The Panim Yafos finds a Remez. The letters in the Aleph-Bais that are surrounding the letters ה and ר of the word הר create a 'holy boundary'. The letters before and after the ה are ד and ו (דהו), and the letters before and after the ר are ק and ש (קרש). These 'surrounding' letters spell '**קדוש**'- 'holy', and this is how the mountain is bounded by sanctity.

Our hope is to fulfil the Pasuk in Yeshayahu (27:13): 'And we will bow to Hashem, **בהר הקודש**, on the holy mountain, in Yerushalayim!'

Parshah Thoughts – Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The story of Yisro is placed next to the receiving of the Torah.

Rav Leibele Eiger of Lublin explains that this relationship should teach us that we can never give up on ourselves. If Yisro, who had been a priest of idolatry, was able to take part in the Torah, we, who are nowhere near that level of being removed from the Torah, are certainly capable of taking part in the Torah!

Sterling Character

Anger is a terribly evil Middah, and one should distance himself from it exceedingly. - One should accustom himself to never become angry, even over something that it is fitting to become angry over. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 29:4)



A Lifetime Career



There are many Chazal that teach how bad the Middah of anger is, and it is all based on Pesukim in Tanach.

In Pesachim (66b), Reish Lakish says that any person who becomes angry, if he is a Talmid Chacham, his wisdom departs from him, and if he is a Navi, his prophecy departs from him. Rav Mani bar Patish taught that whoever becomes angry, even if it was decided in Shamayim that greatness should go to him, he is lowered from this greatness.

In Kiddushin (40b-41a), Bar Kapara teaches that an angry person will acquire only anger, and Rashi explains that nothing beneficial comes through anger, and in the end, all he is left with is nothing but the anger itself.

In Nedarim (22b), Rabbah bar Rav Huna said that anyone who gets angry, at that moment, even the Shechinah, the Divine Presence Itself, is not important to him, as the Pasuk in Tehilim (10:4) states, that the wicked person, in the height of his anger, will only think: There is no G-d. Rav Yirmiya MiDifti says that anyone who gets angry will forget his learning, and will increase in foolishness. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak taught in regard to one who gets angry, that it can be known about him that he has more Aveiros than Zechuyos, merits.

A story is told about **Rav Sholom Schwadron**, that he was once discussing an important matter of Torah with **Rav Chaim Hirschler**, and a group of children was playing very loudly outside the Shul where they were having their meeting. Rav Chaim asked Rav Sholom

if he could please step outside and ask the children to either play a little quieter, or to move to another location.

Rav Sholom was surprised at this request because Rav Chaim was known to never ask anyone to do something that he could do himself. Rav Sholom was curious about this and asked Rav Chaim about it, and Rav Chaim replied that he had a temper, and he was afraid that he would get angry at the children, and that was why he had asked Rav Shalom to take care of the matter.

Rav Sholom went outside and spoke with the children that were making so much noise, and they agreed to play a little quieter.

Rav Shalom later discussed what had happened with his brother-in-law, **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach**, and he commented that he could not remember Rav Chaim ever showing a temper. He was always so easy-going!

Rav Shlomo Zalman said that when Rav Chaim was young, he had only a slight temper, but he had worked on himself for many years to control it. Rav Shlomo Zalman added, "But you can see that in spite of how little a problem it was and how much he has worked on it, how careful he still is about it!"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

The Alter of Novardok, zt"l, would wonder about people who put in unnecessary Hishtadlus, effort. He said, "This world is like a five-star hotel. If you wait patiently, you will be served dinner in your room. If you are impatient, and you go down to the kitchen to get dinner, you will have to fill your plate yourself. You will get all the food, but it will be with effort.

The same is with Parnasah. If you wait patiently and do just the amount of Hishtadlus that is required of you, you will get all that you need. However, if you try too hard, you will also get Parnasah, but only after a lot of work and heartache!"

The Alter also compared someone who works extra hard for Parnasah to someone riding a train, and he pushes the walls of the train with his hands, to make the train go quicker. Obviously, this will not accomplish anything because his effort at pushing is not accomplishing anything.

Similarly, not every effort at Hishtadlus creates results. When one overworks his efforts for Parnasah, it will not necessarily mean that he will have more money!



Rabbi Daniel Glatstein related the following story:

Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon was honored by the Lakewood Yeshiva at the Brooklyn Marriott about 20 years ago. When he went up to speak at the dinner honoring him, he got up and turned the whole thing on its head. He said, "This is not a dinner to honor me. This is really a dinner to honor my mother. Without a doubt, I want to tell you why Hashem has given me the zchus to be the mashgiach of **Rav Aharon Kotler's** Yeshiva."

You see, in 1941, Rav Aharon's Yeshiva had to relocate to Vilna because of the war. The Vaad Hatzalah had a deal in place to rescue Rav Aharon, but they didn't know whether it was going to be to America or to Israel. They did know that it was going to be through England.

Meanwhile, this was during the Blitz of 1941 when England was being bombed nightly by Germany under Hermann Göring. They were dropping hundreds of bombs and incendiary devices nightly. Someone from the Vaad Hatzalah in England needed to be waiting at the phone at the designated date in case the call would come in that they would be able to rescue Rav Aharon via England.

It was finally identified that the designated date would be on a Friday night, on Shabbos. They needed somebody to wait in a secured bunker at a secured phone in the black of the darkness of

the night of the bombing, in case a call would come in detailing how to save HaGaon Rav Aharon Kotler.

A young lady, Ethel Salomon, volunteered. She volunteered to wait at the phone for 24 hours over the Shabbos in a secure, dark bunker in case the phone would ring to save Rav Aharon.

More than 75 years later, Ethel Salomon's son, HaRav Mattisyahu Solomon, declared that the merit of his mother who waited on that Shabbos for 24 hours by the phone in case they needed to save Rav Aharon, in the merit of his mother, her son, was zocheh to become the Mashgiach of Rav Aharon Kotler's Yeshiva.

What we do in this world makes a difference. The decisions we make make a difference. The choices we make, they reverberate. The Conductor of the world has empowered us to be conductors in this world. Our choices, and our decisions, and our actions, and our thoughts, and our words, reverberate forever. They affect our lives. They affect the lives of our children. And they will continue to affect the lives of our descendants forever.



An incredible first-hand testimony was relayed by Sapir, one of the female hostages who was recently released from Gaza.

A few months ago, Sapir felt unwell and discovered that she had a virus. She was advised to say **פרק כ״ז** in **תהילים** for a month, which begins **לדוד ה׳ אורי וישעי**. Sapir couldn't understand why she was saying that particular **פרק** which doesn't discuss illness, but rather talks about **בטחון** in **הקב״ה** amidst war.

The last day of the month fell on the 7th of October. Sapir was in Kibbutz Nir Oz, and when she awoke to the sounds of sirens and

rockets, she hid for hours under a blanket, sweating and trembling with fright. She heard the bloodthirsty cries of the terrorists who had infiltrated the Kibbutz, and the blood-curdling screams of the **קדושים** who were being murdered.

She was eventually discovered and was abducted and taken by motorcycle into Gaza. When she arrived, she was met by throngs of people taking pictures of her and taunting her. Many 'civilians' were beating her with their fists and sticks, and the terrorists had to shield her simply to keep her alive.

Throughout her 55 days in captivity, the **פסוק** of **אם תחנה עלי מחנה לא ייירא לבי אם תקום עלי מלחמה בזאת אני בוטח** was constantly on her lips and it kept her in a positive and upbeat mood.

She finally understood why she had been saying this particular **פרק** of **תהילים** for the past month, and how **הקב"ה** had been **מקדים רפואה למכה**, so that it could give her **חיזוק** for the incredibly tough 55 days ahead of her until she was finally released…



Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman ZT"L was once walking with **Rav Yisroel Meir Friedman Ben-Shalom ZT"L** and found a coin lying on the road. Rav Shteinman picked it up and was intent on keeping it.

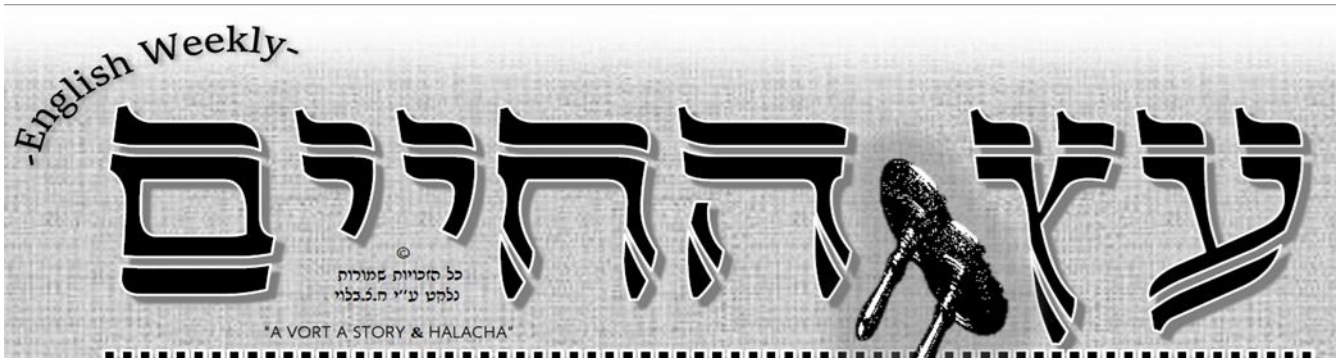
Sensing his intent, Rabbi Friedman Ben-Shalom, a scion of the Ruzhyn Chasidic dynasty, remarked that it is the custom to give "found money" to Tzedakah. It is best not to keep it, since we cannot be sure of the origin of the money and that it was not stolen.

Rav Shteinman disagreed. "On the contrary," he said. "This is the most honest money in the world. The Halacha states that when a coin

is found and there is no Siman (identifying sign of ownership) on it, there is Yi'ush (despair by the owner of ever finding it) and therefore Halachically, this money rightfully belongs to me – there is no doubt about it. - If the Halacha says it is rightfully mine, I can be sure that it is. I am most definitely going to keep it.

However, when we receive money from our jobs, how can we be certain that we were completely honest with our employer. For example, did we come late without our employer's consent? Were we overly distracted with personal matters while we were at work? Therefore, the money that we receive from our jobs may be tainted.

There is indeed however, a custom to give found money with no Siman to Tzedakah. Rav Shteinman explained the reason for the custom using the same rationale. - Since the money is Halachically yours, it is yours unequivocally, and the most ideal way to perform the Mitzvah of Tzedakah is to give money that is definitely yours - free from the possibility of any taint of theft.



In the sefer **טובך יביעו** it is written the following story:

Rav Zilberstein said over that he witnessed how **Rav Shach** once entered one of the big shuls in **בני ברק** to daven **מנחה** on **שבת**. Rav Shach inadvertently sat down in someone else's seat.

This person did not recognize Rav Shach, and he began to yell and scream at the top of his lungs, "How dare you have the *chutzpah* to steal my place and sit in my seat?!!?!

Rav Zilberstein said, "I watched how Rav Shach immediately got up and gave the man a huge hug and a kiss, telling him 'I am so terribly sorry I never would have sat here if he had known that it was your seat…' "

באר היטב Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev. פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק

● And Yisro heard וישמע יתרו

The Kotzker said on this verse – '*And Yisro heard*', Yisro "***hut derhert***". He understood and put his listening into action, not just simply hearing. • Sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh.

הפטורה - מעשה מרכבה ישעיה פ״ו פ״ג

קָדֹושׁ קָדֹושׁ קָדֹושׁ ה׳ צְבָ-אֹות מְלֹא כָל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדֹו

"Tell me where Hashem is," A father said to his young child, "And I will give you a ruble."

"Tell me where Hashem is not, and I will give you two rubles," replied the intelligent child. • Sipurei Chasidim.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn

In the 1940's there was a Rav in a town called Dobrich [Bulgaria]. His name was Rabbi Morderchai Avigdor. R'l he, his wife and his four children (two boys and two girls) were taken by the Nazis Y'S. They were taken from one ghetto to another ghetto, and then from one concentration camp to another concentration camp. One was worse than the other.

Nebech, in July 1944, Mrs Avigdor was taken out with a group of other women, and they were all killed.

A few days later, Rabbi Avigdor and the rest of his children were taken on a train to a large area. Rabbi Avigdor and his two sons were put in one place, and the girls were put somewhere else. Then they switched things around and put Rabbi Avigdor with the girls.

He realised that this was because he was elderly and the girls were weak, and what the implications of this was. He knew what was in store for them.

Rabbi Avigdor attempted to sidle over to the other side with his two girls, to group together with the boys, as he knew that the boys were strong, and most likely be headed for a work camp rather than an extermination camp. - At least they would have a chance for survival.

They were beaten and pushed back. So, Rabbi Avigdor shouted to his elder son (Yitzchok 24)," Make sure to look after your brother (Avrohom 15) and to try to stay together. Always keep your eyes on him and never let him out of your sight. Ensure that you both survive together." – Those were the last words that they heard as a family.

The boys were in Mauthausen concentration camp for a year. They were worked to the bone. They became so frail, pale and thin. At the end, they survived and were liberated. So many of their brethren had been killed, and they eventually managed to get to Milan. Yitzchok together with Avrohom hoped to eventually make their way to Eretz Yisroel.

One day in Milan, a woman comes up to Yitzchok, and he recognizes her. It's Pesha, the daughter of the Chazzan of Dobrich. He said, "Pesha, what are you doing here?"

She said, "I'm looking for my husband, we were in the camp together, but they took my husband away. I was able to survive, but I never knew what became of him. I have been wandering for the last few years seeing if I can find out where he is, and if he survived. I've been going from camp to camp and DP place to DP place trying to find him."

Yitzchok was heartbroken, because he knew that her husband had been killed. He was there at the time he had been killed and saw it himself. He didn't know how to tell this devastating news to Pesha, who no longer has a husband.

He told her the terrible news slowly and with compassion. – "I have no choice, but I have to tell you that I myself saw that your husband is no longer alive."

She started crying and screaming, "My life is over, I'm finished! I will never re-marry; he was the one that I loved. I've been looking for him for years, and now I know that it's over."

She was about to leave, but Yitzchok told her to stay overnight.

The next morning as she's about to leave, he says, "Here, let me give you a letter that states that I saw your husband being killed, because everybody is trying to re-marry, and if you don't have definitive proof of death, you will be considered an Agunah, and it will be impossible for you to get married again."

She said, "I don't need it, I'm never going to re-marry. Don't give it to me, I don't care about marriage now – my life is over."

He said, "Don't be silly, take the letter." - She didn't want to take it, but he wrote it anyway and stuffed it into her bag.

She left and went to Bergen Belsen. She was there for a few weeks, and eventually she met a young man, and somehow her life began to change, and she thought, "Maybe I should get married to this fellow." - She knew that in Bergen Belsen there were Rabbonim there, and no one could get married without the permission of the Beis Din.

She got into a long line waiting to speak to the Rav. She's so impatient, but finally she gets to the head of the line. She says to the Rav, "I want to get married."

The Rav says, "Were you married before?"

She says, "Yes."

He says, "Do you have proof?"

She said, "Yes, I met somebody who told me that he was killed."

"Yes, but what proof do you have?"

"Well, he gave me this letter."

"Ok, but this is not an official letter, I can't judge your case on the basis of this."

She says, "But I just saw this man in Milan, just two weeks ago, and he assured me that he was there and saw everything." – And she throws down the letter in front of the Rav.

Rabbi Avigdor sees the letter signed by his own son! – "You saw this man? He's alive?"

She said, "yes."

He said, "That's my son! I had no idea that he's still alive, where is he?"

She said, "He's in Milan."

Right afterwards, rabbi Avigdor calls Rabbi Yaakov Griffel who was head of The Jewish Rescue Committee in Milan, and he says, "Is it true? Did my son survive?

Rabbi Griffel calls him back a few days later, and says, "Yes, both your sons survived, and they are here in Milan."

Rabbi Avigdor says, "Please tell them that I am going to come for them. I want to meet up with them."

It took three months until he was able to get out of Bergen Belsen. He arranged with Rabbi Griffel that he would meet up with the boys in the Milan train station.

He arrives at the Milan train station, and there are thousands of Italian soldiers all over. There is such a tumult there. It was

impossible to recognize anybody in the crowd. The father is looking for his sons, and the sons are searching for their father. They had already passed each other numerous times. He could not see or recognize his sons as they were so frail, thin and looked quite differently to before.

Finally, Rav Avigdor yelled, "Yitzchok, Avrohom – where are you, my sons!"

Then, the boys heard the voice of their father, and they ran towards him. They embraced, and they were re-united.

****

Many years ago on Har Sinai, our Father in Heaven gave us a gift, the greatest gift of all time – The Torah. But over the years, Klal Yisroel has distanced themselves, they have fallen far away from Hashem.

Hashem is calling out to His children – "Come close to Me!" – Our Father is looking for us, and we are looking for Him!

Chabad.ORG

From our Sages

וַיִּחַנּוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר – *'They camped in the desert.' (19:2)*

Why was the Torah given in the desert?

To teach us that if a person does not surrender himself to it like the desert, he cannot merit the words of Torah. And to teach us that just as the desert is endless, so is the Torah without end.

(Pesikta d'Rav Kahana)

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלַאכְתֶּךָ – '*Six days shall you labour.*' *(20:9)*

This, too, is a divine decree. Just as the people of Israel were commanded to rest on Shabbat, so too were they commanded to work on the other days of the week. (**Mechilta d'Rashbi**)



וְאִם־מִזְבַּח אֲבָנִים תַּעֲשֶׂה־לִּי לֹא־תִבְנֶה אֹתָהֶן גָּזִית כִּי חַרְבְּךָ הֵנַפְתָּ עָלֶיהָ וַתְּחַלְלֶהָ – '*When you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone, for if you lift up your sword upon it, you have defiled it.*' *(20:22)*

Iron was created to shorten the life of man, and the altar was created to lengthen the life of man. So it is not fitting that that which shortens should be lifted upon that which lengthens. (**Talmud, Middot 3:4**)



Rabbi Shlomo Kluger zt"l

● **Why did Moshe ask about Yisro's welfare, and not vice versa?**

וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה לִקְרַאת חֹתְנוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ וַיִּשַּׁק־לוֹ וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ אִישׁ־לְרֵעֵהוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ הָאֹהֱלָה (18,7) "*So Moshe went out towards Yisro, and he bowed down to him, and kissed him, and they greeted one to the other, and they entered the tent.*"

Rashi explains that it was Moshe who greeted Yisro, asking about his welfare. If so, we have to ask why indeed Moshe asked Yisro, but Yisro did not in return ask about Moshe's welfare, as is customary.

We can understand this with the following analogy: If a poor relative comes a long distance to his wealthy, honored cousin, to ask him for

assistance, it would be normal for the wealthy man to ask his poor cousin how things are with him, and what can he do for him. But the poor man will not ask about the wealthy cousin's welfare, and if he does ask, the wealthy man would respond to him: If you are doubtful about my situation, why did trouble yourself to travel such a long distance based on a doubt. So, certainly you already heard whilst you were in your home that I am wealthy and honored, and that my situation is good, and therefore you came to me for assistance. So why are you asking about my welfare.

Here too, Moshe needed to ask about Yisro's welfare, because he did not know, but Yisro did not need to ask, because if he did not already know that Moshe's situation was very good, he would not have come to the wilderness. Indeed, the posuk says explicitly, "Yisro heard all that G-d had done for Moshe and for Yisrael, His people". So we see that he clearly knew about Moshe's greatness, and thus Rashi's explanation that Moshe asked Yisro, but not vice versa, is very good.

● **Why did Moshe relate to Yisro the wonders of Hashem? Surely he already knew this, and that is why he came!**

וַיְסַפֵּר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹתְנוֹ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' לְפַרְעֹה וּלְמִצְרַיִם (18,8) "***Moshe told his father-in-law all that Hashem had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians…***"

Rashi explains that Moshe related all this in order to draw his heart, to bring him near to the Torah. The question here is why didn't Rashi explain the more obvious explanation, that he was informing Yisro about all the wonders that Hashem had done.

But it seems that Rashi had a difficulty explaining this way, because it already says, "Yisro heard all that G-d had done for Moshe and for Yisrael, His people". If so, why would Moshe need to tell him again. Therefore he explained differently, in accordance with what

Chazal said: One should not get up to pray except when he is in a state of joy, like one who does a mitzvah. The Rabbis explained that this refers to saying "Ashrei" before praying. It is clear from the gemora, that this applies also to learning Torah, that one should be in a joyful frame of mind before starting to learn. If so, just as saying Ashrei and thereby relating the wonders of Hashem is a fitting preparation for praying with a joyful heart, so too with learning Torah, one should start by relating Hashem's wonders, and then when he starts to learn, it will be with joy.

This is what our posuk is saying, "Moshe related to his father-in-law all that Hashem had done to Pharaoh…", in order to draw his heart to Torah, that is, to get up to learn Torah from the joy of a mitzvah, and to afterwards start learning with him Torah.

● Why did Hashem not address Yisrael directly?



וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹקִים אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר (20,1) "***And G-d spoke all of these things, saying.***"

The Midrash says that this posuk can be explained by the posuk in Amos 3:8 "if a lion roars, who is not afraid?". What does the Midrash mean?

We can explain the meaning according to what the sefer Ma'asei Hashem writes, that the reason why Hashem spoke to Moshe and not to all of Yisrael is because if a king tells Reuven directly to do a certain thing, he will be overcome by a great fear and not be able to understand anything the king tells him. But if the king tells Shimon to tell Reuven to do a certain thing, even if if Reuven is listening to the king telling Shimon since the king is not addressing him directly he will not be so afraid.

This what the Midrash is teaching us. The Midrash had a difficulty with the word "saying" which appears to be superfluous, and so must be interpreted to mean that Hashem said to Moshe that he should tell Yisrael. But since Yisrael were also standing next to Mount Sinai and heard Hashem speaking, why did Hashem need to address Moshe and not Yisrael themselves? Therefore the Midrash says "if a lion roars, who is not afraid?", that if Hashem would have addressed Yisrael directly they would have not understood anything due to their great fear. Therefore, He told Moshe to tell them so that they would not be so afraid and would be able to understand what Hashem was saying.



◣ Listening Ear - Kotzker Rebbe

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ
"***And Yisro minister of Midian, father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that Hashem did to Moshe and to Israel His people***." (18:1)

What Yisro heard, others heard as well. But there are those who hear but do not listen, as the words do not penetrate their ears, hearts, and minds. - Yisro's attribute was that he heard and he knew what he heard!

"Hashem's presence may be concealed, but His fingerprints can be seen in every aspect of creation." ~ The Kotzker Rebbe.

◣ Thanking For Others - Radomsker Rebbe

וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בָּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה - "***Yisro said, 'Blessed is Hashem, Who rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh.'***" (18:10)

Those few words of Yisro taught us the importance of thanking Hashem for the kindness He shows others.

◣ Impartial Judgements - Reb Alexander Zusia Friedman

כִּי־יִהְיֶה לָהֶם דָּבָר בָּא אֵלַי וְשָׁפַטְתִּי - "***When they have a matter, it comes to me...***" (18:16)

Why doesn't the text read: "When they have a matter, they come to me?"

Because Moshe viewed each case as if the matter, rather than the individuals involved, had come before him. This means that he treated each "matter" impartially and objectively, without regard to personalities or other extraneous considerations involved.

◣ Torah Education For All - Rabbi Dovid Hoffman

וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו ה' מִן־הָהָר לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתַגֵּיד לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - "***And Hashem called to him from the mountain, saying, 'This is what you shall say to the House of Yaakov and tell to the Bnei Yisrael...'***" (19:3)

When the Jewish people received the Torah, Moshe taught the general principles of the Torah to the Jewish women, the Bais Yaakov, after which he learned the minutiae of the laws with the men. The general principles came first, after which the details and particulars followed.

In his later years, a group of men came to the home of the **Chafetz Chaim zt'l** to inform him about a new "breach" in the ramparts of

Torah tradition: the Bais Yaakov women's seminary that had been established in Krakow. They argued that the Torah forbids all such innovations and cited the Gemara that teaching a girl Torah is like teaching her tiflus (folly) (Sotah 20a).

While they were trying to persuade the Chafetz Chaim to condemn the seminary, a second group arrived to ask for his blessing for the same institution. The first group was confident that they had proven conclusively that the existence of such a seminary was strictly forbidden, and they were sure that the elderly sage would denounce the newcomers in no uncertain terms. - His response, however, was the exact opposite of what they expected.

"Oy," he cried, "such a holy undertaking, and I have no part in it!" - The Chafetz Chaim explained how he could say such a thing, even after hearing all the arguments of the first group. "True," he began, "Chazal did compare teaching a girl Torah to teaching her tiflus, but they were talking about a time when girls absorbed an outlook of pure and simple faith in their homes from earliest childhood. In such times, Chazal said that girls should continue to receive an upbringing at home and not go out to study Torah in a school setting."

"Now, however, the choice is no longer between an education at home or in school. Girls cannot avoid being exposed to profane influences that are found everywhere in contemporary society. This seminary is providing the only way of saving girls from those influences, and there is not the slightest question that all Jewish girls should be required to attend!"

"Know, my friend, that in life you will fall time and time again, and there will be battles you will lose. But in the end, you will emerge victorious and wear the crown of success on your head." ~ Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980).

◣ Always Treasured - Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

וְהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ - "***You shall be a special treasure to Me among all the nations, for all the earth is Mine***." (19:5)



Rav Dovid Lelover explained this pasuk homiletically: When Hashem describes Klal Yisrael as a treasure - **סגולה**, this alludes to the Hebrew vowel segol **סגול**. A segol, with its two dots on top and one dot directly below the center between them, looks the same no matter how you turn it. Turn it sideways, it still looks the same.

So too, every Jew, no matter what situation you are in, even if you completely turned from Hashem, you remain a Jew in His eyes. Don't give up hope. Hashem treasures you.

◣ Dependence On Each Other - Reb Meir Simcha Of Dvinsk

וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־הָעָם יַחְדָּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה - "***And all the people answered together and said, 'Everything that Hashem has spoken we shall do***!'" (19:8)

It is impossible for everyone to perform all the mitzvot. There are mitzvot for the Kohanim, some for the Levites, others for the Kohen G-del, and others for owners of fields or private property.

That is why the Israelites "answered together" - we are partners in the observance of all the commandments, and not individuals.

"The greatest tragedy is not realizing the full extent of your potential. Don't settle for mediocrity when you are capable of greatness." ~ Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986).

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Small gestures, sometimes, seemingly, go unnoticed, but the impact could be huge.

Recently, when the staff of Agudath Israel gathered for a meeting to discuss plans for the annual fundraising campaign, Rabbi Naftali Miller, Agudah's Director of Development, shared the following: New York State's Governor Andrew Cuomo earned a notorious reputation in *frum* communities when he, specifically, singled out neighbourhoods with significant *frum* populations as "red zones" and ordered their shuls and yeshivos shut, due to Covid 19 restrictions. Acting upon the direction of the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah, the Agudah filed a lawsuit against the governor, and a frenzied media reported breathlessly on the Orthodox group's challenge. Boruch Hashem, this enabled shuls and yeshivas to reopen.

[Agudath Israel of America has become an important and enormous organisation. Working under the direction of the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah, it seeks to meet the needs of the Charedi community, advocating for its religious and civil rights, and services its constituents through charitable, educational, and social service projects across North America. It employs several hundred people and has an annual turnover of over ten million dollars.]

The night after the lawsuit was filed, Rabbi Miller's office phone rang, with a secular-sounding name and an out-of-town area code showing up on the caller ID. Rabbi Miller cautiously answered the phone. "Is this the Agudath Israel?" asked the caller in an unmistakable Boston accent. When Rabbi Miller confirmed that it was, the fellow sounded relieved. 'Well," he said. "I want to help you guys cover your legal fees for your recent lawsuit against the governor. I hope you can send me an address that I can send a cheque to." The man explained that he abhorred what was being done to religion in the name of health and wanted to contribute to an organisation that was standing up and fighting the good fight.

Rabbi Miller thanked the man, gave him the relevant information, and figured he'd receive a nominal donation.

One week later, an envelope landed on Rabbi Miller's desk. The cheque featured a distinctly non-Jewish name, a Massachusetts address – and was made out to $90,000 "for legal fees."

A few months later, Rabbi Miller was in Boston and cleared some time from his schedule in order to pay a visit to this mysterious benefactor. He pulled up at a nondescript brick home, not knowing what to expect. He knocked on the door, and a genial-looking man opened up and extended his hand to Rabbi Miller, who explained that he was from the Agudath Israel organisation. After thanking him for the donation, Rabbi Miller asked him why he'd decided to give his money to a Jewish Orthodox advocacy group. Surely, there were other organisations involved in upholding religious rights against government prejudices.

The man's answer left Rabbi Miller stunned. "My dad worked for the district attorney's office here in town," he explained, "and, as such, was in a position of considerable power. Every year during the holiday season, our mailbox would overflow with cards from folks who wanted to stay on good terms with the DA's office. Eventually my father retired – and that year, instead of the 300 cards we were used to receiving, we received just two dozen or so. His friends, suddenly, left us and sent their tidings and gifts to his successor at the DA's office. Yet from those few cards we did get that year, we realized that most of them were sent by my dad's Jewish acquaintances. My dad never forgot that kindness, and I wanted to send my money to a People I knew I could trust."

The seemly small action by just a few individual people, collectively made a huge impression on a stranger to *yiddishkeit.*

Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

From Public School to Bais Yaakov!

In this week's Parsha Yisro says **וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בָּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶת־הָעָם מִתַּחַת יַד־מִצְרָיִם**, ***blessed is Hashem who saved the Jewish people from the hands of the Egyptians***.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (94a) says that Yisro was the first person to ever recite these words baruch Hashem.

I would like to share with you a question that I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita: **The Radomsker Rebbe** asks: It is unconceivable and unfathomable to think that the Jewish people themselves never said baruch Hashem, blessed is Hashem. After all, they stood at the sea and they sang the shirah, the great song in euphoria and jubilation. They said baruch Hashem countless times! How can it be that Yisro was the first person to say it?

Answers the Radomsker that Yisro was indeed the first person to say Baruch Hashem – thanking Hashem for a miracle that happened to **someone else**. Thanking Hashem that someone else had success. That someone else had a salvation.

The lesson to us is as follows: It's easy for us to revel and it's easy for us to take joy when a miracle happens to us, when we're saved G-d forbid from a tragedy or a terrible predicament. But how many of us take joy and pleasure in other people's successes? In other people's victories? In other people's miracles?

That is what differentiated Yisro. Yisro said baruch Hashem. He was the first person. He wasn't there. He didn't experience it personally. It had nothing to do with him. He had no vested interest. And yet he took joy in someone else, in another people, in a foreign people. That is why he's credited as saying Baruch Hashem.

There was a woman who decided to send her child, her little girl, to Bais Yaakov instead of sending her to public school. She was not a religious woman, and she initially wanted to send her daughter to public school. Someone asked her why did you send your daughter to a religious school instead of the public school?

The lady answered that one time she was on the bus and there was a little religious girl, a six-year-old girl sitting there. Suddenly, an ambulance passed by, and she saw the little girl murmuring. She saw her whispering something. So, this lady asked the little girl's mother what is your daughter doing? The mother answered that her daughter was taught in school that anytime she hears the sirens, she hears an ambulance, she should say Tehillim for whoever it is that needs a recovery.

When this secular woman heard this, she said if that's what they teach in religious schools, that's where my daughter will go.

Let's start thinking about others. Let's get beyond ourselves and start sharing in the joy and the pain of others and saying Baruch Hashem, blessed is Hashem for other people's successes and for other people's joy! - In this zechus may we all merit to see the ultimate joy of Moshiach in our days!

Middle Child Syndrome

וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד אֱלִיעֶזֶר - *"And The name of the first son was Eliezer …"* (18:4)

In this week's Parsha it says that the name of Moshe Rabbeinu's son was Gershom. The Torah then tells us the name of his second son. Surprisingly, it says, referring to the second son, "And the name of the first son was Eliezer" (Shemos 18:4).

The first son was not Eliezer, but rather Gershom. Why does the Torah express itself this way? It's obviously not a mistake.

I heard from Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita an incredible thought from the **Malbim**: Very often a second child is considered to be inferior to the first child. The second child suffers a sort of "middle child syndrome." - Here the Torah is telling us that every child has to be treated as an only child. "*And the name of the first one*" is a true statement even as it applies to the third child or fourth child – and certainly the second child.

Each child says the Malbim, brings a special and distinct power to the parent along with mazel – a unique blessing. Every child deserves to be treated as if they are your only one. Every child is special, every child is your only one, and every child is extraordinary.



From Minister to Jew

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ - *'Yisro, the minister of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard everything that Hashem did to Moshe and to Yisrael, His people.'* (18:1).

Yisro heard about the Splitting of the Sea and the Jews' battle with Amalek, and this inspired him to join the nation (Rashi, citing Zevachim 116a).

In Sefer Kol Rom **Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l** asks: while the Splitting of the Sea was obviously a miracle, what was so outstanding about the war with Amalek? Perhaps the Jews simply defeated Amalek by natural means. Additionally, if the Jewish

victory was so impressive, why didn't Yisro mention it when he thanked Hashem for saving the Jews from the Egyptians – which included the miracles at the Sea (below, pasuk 10)?

As a non-Jew, Yisro could have attained spiritual fulfillment, a share in the World to Come, and be considered a "pious non-Jew" by simply observing the Seven Noachide Commandments. Indeed, the Exodus from Egypt and its attendant miracles incontrovertibly showed Yisro that there is a G-d, and this demanded that he observe those seven G-d-given laws. Why, then, was he inspired to convert to Judaism?

What caught Yisro's attention about the war with Amalek was not the Jews' victory, but the Amalekite attack. After the Splitting of the Sea, there was universal awe of the Jewish People; "*The chieftains of Edom were confounded, trembling gripped the powers of Moab, all the dwellers of Canaan dissolved*" (above, 15:15). Yet Amalek was able to overcome that fear and ignore the many obvious miracles in order to attack the Jews.

This taught Yisro that without Torah, it is possible for a person – even an entire nation – to ignore all the miracles and even the dangers of attacking a nation obviously protected by Hashem. Amalek could still be so blinded by hatred as to attack Hashem's people! When Yisro saw that, he decided that it would not be enough for him simply to be a good, fulfilled non-Jew. He would still be in danger of making serious errors. To avoid that risk, he decided to become part of the Torah nation.

So, Rav Moshe explains that true, the war with Amalek was part of the reason he joined the Bnei Yisrael, but it was not the Jewish victory that motivated him. It was the recognition that without Torah, an entire nation could make incomprehensible, even fatal, errors. It was that dimension of the battle that inspired him.

Sharing Your Dough

There is a perplexing episode recorded at the beginning of this week's Parsha as Moshe Rabbeinu and his father-in-law Yisro reunite once again.

וַיִּקַּח יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה עֹלָה וּזְבָחִים לֵאלֹקִים וַיָּבֹא אַהֲרֹן וְכֹל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֶאֱכָל־לֶחֶם עִם־חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹקִים - '***And Yisro - Moshe's father-in-law - took an elevation offering and sacrifices for the A-lmighty, and Aharon came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moshe's father-in- law before the A-lmighty***.' (Shemos 18:12)

Although there is no surprise that any Jewish family reunion includes a large festive meal, from where did they get the extra bread for Yisro in the middle of the Wilderness?

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin beautifully explains in his magnum opus Oznayim LaTorah (Shemos 18:12) that the bread eaten at the reunion meal was indeed the Heavenly mann, but since Yisro arrived at the camp later in the day, a portion did not descend for him.

Nonetheless, Rav Sorotzkin quotes a Midrash saying – **אלה שנתאחרו ללקט המן היה עושים אחרים עמהם חסד ונותנים משלהם ולא היה חסר אצלם** – those who delayed in collecting their mann were given some of the Divine nourishment by others sharing their own portion, and those who gave of their mann miraculously didn't lose any of their own mann." - So too, other people kindly gave Yisro their own portion of food to enjoy in this meal, and incredibly weren't missing anything.

Although it may be difficult to donate our talents and gifts to others, we can never underestimate the power of sharing our resources.

"Just as the Jews in the desert had a cloud to guide them, we too have signs and signals from Hashem – If only we would open our eyes to see them." ~ Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz.

The author of Emunei Am Segulah, Mordechai Gerlitz, brilliantly describes the impact of a story in the preface of his book: "The cosmic force of a story and its great effect on a person are known and famous since the times of the Dor Dei'ah, who received the Torah at Sinai."

Moshe Rabbeinu harnessed the tremendous force of a story to affect his father-in- law, Yisro, and draw his heart close to serve Hashem, as it is written, 'And Moshe related to his father-in-law all that Hashem had done' (Shemos 18:8). Rashi elucidates: "To draw the heart, to draw him close to Torah."

The Imrei Emes of Gur asks an intriguing question on the pasuk, "And Yisro says, 'Blessed is G-d for saving you...for saving the nation..."" (ibid. 18:10): How did Yisro recite a blessing on a miracle without witnessing where it took place? The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 218) rules that, "Only one who sees the place where miracles were performed for Yisrael recites the blessing."

The Imrei Emes replies that Moshe Rabbeinu's retelling of the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim and the ensuing miracles was so powerfully descriptive and compelling that Yisro could actually see the events unfolding before his very eyes! - This exemplifies the power of description and words to draw one's heart close to Torah.

The Brisker Rav adds that Moshe's recounting of the events leading up to Yisro's arrival was not in vain, but that it is actually a halachic obligation to share and publicize miracles and wonders of Hashem, as written, "And they told His actions with joy" (Tehillim 107:22) and, "Sing to Him, play music to Him, speak of all His wonders" (ibid. 105:2).

We have a duty to relate Hashem's miracles. Prior to Yisro's arrival, there was no need to share them or relate them; since all of Bnei Yisrael had witnessed the miracles and wonders with their own eyes, there was nothing new to share. However, as soon as Moshe Rabbeinu's father-in-law arrived-and he knew only the basic outline

without the minor details of each miracle since he had not personally experienced them as they unfolded-Moshe immediately sought to fulfill this mitzvah by sharing all that had transpired in Mitzrayim and thereafter.



● Approaching to See

One of the great secrets of this world is that the great wish of all of Mankind is to see our King – in the depths of our souls we are seeking only one thing and that is to be close to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Maaveh zeh adam, the Gemara says – "The Seeker" refers to Man; because Man is the insatiable seeker. No matter how much money a man has, he's never happy, he wants more.

Why is it that a man is never satisfied? The answer is because he's always seeking something more. Hakadosh Baruch Hu put into Mankind an immense yearning, and that yearning makes man a maaveh. It cannot rest! It will never find respite. It never will have any tranquility because the neshamah is unable to forget the source it came from. That's what makes man a maaveh, a seeker. And this most noble attribute of Mankind, is actually the cause of all the trouble in the world. The longing to come close to Hashem is one of

the most pure instincts of human beings and at the same time it is the cause of most of the disturbances, wickedness and misfortune in the world. It's only because Mankind has this longing, but he doesn't know what exactly it is that he longs for — he can't put his finger on it – that's what causes all the trouble in the world. He seeks and he seeks and he seeks more, but because he doesn't know what he seeks, he becomes the biggest troublemaker.

● **An Ear that Listens**

It says וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ - he heard, he listened. What did Yisro listen to? אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ. – all that Hashem had done for Moshe and for Israel. The report of Yetzias Mitzrayim and Kriyas Yam Suf arrived in Midyan – that was the news of the day – and Yisro was listening.

The nations heard but they didn't listen to the lessons. What does it have to do with me? That's the attitude of people – they hear but they don't hear anything. But Yisro was different — he heard the same thing that everyone else heard but vayishma Yisro, Yisro was listening! That's what made Yisro different: Shama uva! – He heard and he came. He was so moved by what he heard, that he changed his life because of it.

A successful listener has his ears open; he's waiting to hear something that's talking to him. That's why Rav Yisroel Salanter's shittah in learning mussar was to sit down and to say a maamar chazal over and over to yourself, many, many times.

When I came to Slobodka, I experienced that – I discovered that they learned one line for a half hour every night. That was mussar seder. The same line for a half hour! And on motza'ei Shabbos, after seudas shlishis, we all sat in the dark. They didn't have any lights in the Yeshiva and so we were sitting in the dark, each one of us saying a line by himself, aloud. Louder and louder and louder and louder. At the end, everyone was shouting. The whole Yeshiva was shouting! All of our kochos, all our strength, went into that one line.

I recall certain things that I always had known before, but because of those mussar sedorim in the Yeshiva it became illuminated in my mind and thereafter I could never forget them anymore. It was like going through a mikveh, a mikveh of fire, of kedusha. One line for an hour! It was electrifying! A full hour in the darkness!

● Consulting The Sages

You know how a live rebbe is different than a sefer? I'll tell you one very important difference. Human beings have eyes and ears. Here's a man, he's studying a Tosfos. So while he's thinking, he puts his hand in his bosom, and he picks under his arm, his armpit. Tosfos doesn't tell him, "Feh!" But a rebbe will say it!

Ah, that's a rebbe! When you come into the yeshiva or into the shul or beis medrash to learn from a living human being, so your rebbe looks at you; he studies your behavior. If you don't have good manners he corrects you. If there's something wrong with your character, he criticizes you.

When people came to Moshe and they asked him, "We want to come close to Hashem," he said, "To come close to Hashem you shouldn't wipe your nose with the back of your hand". "You shouldn't cough on somebody's face". "You shouldn't talk when somebody else is talking; don't interrupt". "You should be polite to people and say 'thank you'."

Moshe Rabbeinu said these things and thousands more. And that's how the people who came to Moshe Rabbeinu came closer to Hashem. He gave over everything together with the laws of the Torah. Along with the halachos, the people also swallowed a big dose of derech eretz and good middos. You heard words of mussar and yirah and emunah and good character; how to behave with your fellowman, how people should behave to their wives, how wives should behave to husbands, how children should behave to their parents, how you should behave to elderly people, many things you learned. After a while of being close to Moshe, your character changed and you learned to become a perfect servant of Hashem. And that is why

Torah shebaal peh has to be learned from the sages. You want to learn about the real function of Torah? If you just read the Bible, you are walking in darkness. If you just learn Torah, Nevi'im and Kesuvim, as great as they are, you are living a life of error.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

What Would You Do?



It was a bleak night many years ago. A blaze broke out on the deck of a naval ship, with flames so monstrous that the rescue helicopters were unable to fly close enough to the ship to save the crew. On that night, three hundred navy officers perished at sea.

During seudah shlishis that week, **Rav Yisroel Chaim Kaplan**, mashgiach of Beis Medrash Elyon in Monsey, entered the yeshivah dining room to deliver his weekly shmuess to the bachurim and began with a question that caught his talmidim by surprise.

"Did you hear about the fire on the navy ship?"

When the bachurim replied affirmatively, the mashgiach continued,

"What did you do when you heard about the fire?"

The bachurim exchanged puzzled looks and stared bewildered at their revered mashgiach. What could they possibly do, especially when they were nowhere near the ship?

Rav Yisroel Chaim gazed at his bachurim in anguish. "Of course you could have done something! Do you know what I did? Throughout the night, I didn't sleep a wink. Instead I wept and recited Tehillim,

begging Hashem for mercy in case there is even one Yid on that boat. Who knows? Perhaps because of my tears and tefillos, that one young Jewish soldier will be spared. Perhaps he'll marry and bring a Jewish child into the world, and that Jewish boy or girl will return to our people and bear generations of children who are yerei Shamayim and ovdei Hashem?

The bachurim listened, absorbing the gentle rebuke of their saintly mashgiach. Yet only many years later did one alumnus of the yeshivah discover how Rav Kaplan's words had truly been on the mark.

At my parents' sheva brachos, my paternal grandfather, a talmid of Rav Yisroel Chaim, was deep in discussion with his mechutan, and in the course of the conversation, the man related that he was one of the survivors of that deadly fire. My grandfather, who still recalled the mashgiach's compelling words on that Shabbos afternoon, couldn't contain his amazement and requested the permission of the guests to speak. He repeated the long-ago episode, the mashgiach's musings that his tefillos may have saved the life of a Yid and concluded that the Yid he saved was sitting right there in the room!

Many years later, my father told me the story, which I found incredible. Right then and there, I resolved that I would name my next son after Rav Yisroel Chaim Kaplan, as an expression of hakaras hatov to the tzaddik whose tefillos had spared my maternal grandfather.

One year later, I cradled my newborn son and recalled the promise I'd made then. Yet as the day of the bris approached, I realized that I faced a difficult decision since the yahrtzeit of Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, who had been my father's rebbi muvhak and the spiritual guide of our entire family, fell precisely on the day of the bris.

I considered naming this baby Chaim after the venerable rosh ye-shivah of Mir and to name my next son, im yirtzeh Hashem, after

the mashgiach, until a second later I realized that it was impossible, since both were named Chaim.

Ultimately, I decided to name for Rav Kaplan, in whose merit my entire family is alive. After the bris, when my father asked me about my decision, I confessed that it had been a tough decision, but I believed that had we asked Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz himself, he would have responded that hakaras hatov takes precedence.

My father burst into tears and replied, "Yes, that's exactly what Rav Chaim would have said!"

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Unity

The pasuk says **וַיִּסְעוּ מֵרְפִידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי וַיִּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר** – '***<u>They</u> journeyed from Rephidim, and <u>they</u> arrived in the desert of Sinai, and <u>they</u> encamped in the desert, and Israel (singular) encamped there opposite the mountain***.' 19:2

Why does the pasuk change from the plural to the singular?

Rashi famously says **כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד**, *as one man with one heart*.

Why mention the achdus now? Were Klal Yisrael not united earlier? Was there no achdus in Mitzrayim or by the Yam Suf? During the difficult times we weren't b'achdus?

Rashi seems to imply that in previous times there wasn't - **אֲבָל שְׁאָר כָּל הַחֲנִיּוֹת בְּתַרְעוֹמוֹת וּבְמַחֲלֹקֶת** - *but all the other encampments were [divided] with complaints and with strife.*

Rabbi Bender tells the following story: There was a man whose wife was very ill. He had to spend several days in Shaarei Tzedek hospital including Yom Kippur. He spent most of Yom Kippur sitting with his wife. The doctor came to him and said, "Your wife is now stable, I can see that you are a religious man – why don't you go down to the basement where we have a synagogue, and you can pray there till after Yom Kippur?"

So, he left his wife and went off to the shul. He looked around at the mispallelim and he was very taken. He saw all different types of Yidden gathered with their own *pekel* – Kippa Srugas, black Cappel, Striemles etc – all walks of Jewish life.

He asked permission to say a few words before Neilah as there was no rav there. He says, "Isn't it amazing – we are gathered here in this beis haknesses at the high point in the Jewish year, and I can see many different diverse minhagim and backgrounds – Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Chasidim, misnagdim etc. And yet we are all davening together with achdus between us. And yet, this is how we accomplish achdus – by being in hospital? Can't we achieve achdus on regular happier occasions?

We know that **Rav Noson Zvi Finkle** the famous Mir Rosh Yeshiva suffered from the debilitating illness of Parkinsons. The effort to do anything was a major challenge. One time, he was at a wedding in Bayit V'Gan. This particular hall had a roof terrace overlooking the city of Yerushalayim. He requested that one of the bochurim take him up to the terrace.

For Rav Noson Zvi to go upstairs was a major challenge and excruciatingly painful for him. But he was known to push himself beyond human endurance.

The bachur said, "Rebbe, what do you want to see?"

He said, "I heard that the Chevron Yeshiva has got a big building expansion going on, and I would like to see it with my own eyes."

The bachur could see the simcha that this sight of Torah growth gave Rav Noson Zvi - even though they were 'the competitors'!

Chazal are highlighting to us that it is easy to feel connection at times of distress, but harder in good times. Klal Yisrael were united not only during difficult times, but also here during best of times, at the peak of their national history.

Hakaros Hatov

The opening pasuk in this week's sedra says **וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ** - '***Now Moshe's father-in-law, Yisro, the chieftain of Midian, heard all that Hashem had done for Moshe and for Israel, His people***.'

Rashi famously explains - **מַה שְׁמוּעָה שָׁמַע וּבָא? קְרִיעַת יַם סוּף וּמִלְחֶמֶת עֲמָלֵק** - What news did he hear that made such an impression that he came? -The splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek.

The difficulty is, that I can understand that **קְרִיעַת יַם סוּף** was an unbelievable and spectacular miracle that would impress anyone. But what was so impressive about the war with Amalek that made Yisro want to join Klal Yisrael?

The Chasam Sofer says that Yisro was questioning as to why Klal Yisrael didn't fight back against the Egyptians at the Yam Suf? There were a substantial number of Yidden who could fight?

Yisro thought, maybe they just weren't fighters. But when they got to the other side of the Yam Suf, they fought with Amalek – So they could fight? – So, how come with Mitzrayim they didn't fight but by Amalek they did fight?

He concludes that the only reason why they didn't fight against Mitzrayim was because they felt a certain debt of gratitude towards Mitzrayim for the good years that they had there. They had hakaros hatov to the host nation! Therefore, they felt that they couldn't fight back against them.

A nation that has gratitude, that is engrained in their DNA – That is a nation to aspire to and look up to. And it was because of this says the Chasam Sofer that encouraged and inspired Yisro to want to join the ranks of Klal Yisrael!

זכר ליציאת מצרים



Perhaps the most central aspect of this week's sedra is **מתן תורה**. And yet it hardly features in our daily lives. In as much as, **יציאת מצרים** is spoken about the whole time.

In the Torah itself, **מתן תורה** is referred to in just two places – here and parshas Vaeschanan whereas **יציאת מצרים** is referred to over fifty times! Why is there such a big dichotomy? Moreover, so many mitzvos that we have are **להזכיר יציאת מצרים** – Seder night, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Kiddush etc. – Why is there such a big focus on **זכר יציאת מצרים** and not on **מתן תורה**?

Rabbi Hartman says that it is only possible to have a **זכר** for something that is history. [See Rashi Vayikra 26:42] Therefore it is not possible to have a **זכר** for **מתן תורה** as it is still present, it is an ongoing event. – When we bentch Birchas HaTorah every morning, we don't say **נתן התורה** [the Torah was given] but **נותן התורה** [the Torah is being given]. When a person learns Torah, he's engaged in a process of **מתן תורה**. [See Rashi Shemos 19:1] –

There is no such thing as a **זכר** for something that is happening right now.

"Every detail of the world is guided by Divine Providence even a leaf turning in the wind happens because Hashem willed it for a purpose." ~ Baal Shem Tov.

There Is Listening And There Is Listening

Not long ago, I was looking at a photo of a wedding that took place nearly thirty years ago. The photo was of the guests sitting listening to a speech. The first thing that struck me was that people were actually listening. They were not looking at their phones - it was after all a world before mobile phones.

This week's sedra begins with the words: "**וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ**" – "Yisro heard". What exactly did Yisro hear?

Rashi tells us it was krias yam suf and milchemes Amalek, the splitting of the sea and the victory against Amalek. But didn't everyone hear that? This was front page news!

The answer of course is that there is hearing and there is hearing. Whilst the rest of mankind may have heard, Yisro really heard.

In his excellent sefer on the 48 Kinyonei Torah, in the chapter on **שמיעת האוזן** – attentive listening, Rav Ephraim Nisenbaum tells the following anecdote:

Rav Elchanan Wasserman was the Chafetz Chaim's premier student. A Torah giant in his own right, each year he would leave his own yeshiva in Baranovich and travel to spend Rosh Hashana with his Rebbe.

One year, after the Chafetz Chaim finished delivering words if inspiration to the yeshiva, Rav Shalom Eishishoker leaned over to Reb Elchanan and whispered, "I think he said the exact same thing last year."

Reb Elchanan whispered back, "No, this year there were eight words different!"

There is listening and there is listening!

The Weekly Vort

וְכָל־הָעָם֮ רֹאִים֒ אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת֙ וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִ֔ם וְאֵת֙ קֹ֣ול הַשֹּׁפָ֔ר וְאֶת־הָהָ֖ר עָשֵׁ֑ן וַיַּ֤רְא הָעָם֙ וַיָּנֻ֔עוּ וַיַּעַמְד֖וּ מֵֽרָחֹֽק – *'And all the nation saw the sounds, the flames, the sound of the shofar, and the mountain in smoke, and the people saw and trembled, and stood from afar.'* (20:15).

The Rebbe of Rizhin explains: "What does it mean that the people stood from afar?

Miraculous and wondrous occurrences are for non-believers, to whom Hashem must prove His existence by supernatural phenomena. True believers do not need any proof. Their faith is secure." There is a popular saying, "Seeing is believing." This is patently incorrect. Belief is when one does *not* see. When one sees something, there is no longer any need for belief.

Having faith in Hashem is necessary precisely because we cannot see Him. Those who have such faith stand close to Him. Those who require miracles stand from afar. (Living Each Day)



Honour your father and mother by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

In this week's Parsha, the Jews reach the culmination of the exodus by receiving the Torah at Har Sinai. The fifth of the Ten commandments is **כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻון יָמֶיךָ** - "Honor your father and mother in order that Hashem lengthens your days on this earth".

The Gemorah in Kidushin says that if one properly fulfills this crucial commandment, Hashem himself will dwell with them, and it is as if they honored Hashem Himself. Furthermore, we find something unique in this commandment that the Torah explicitly delineates the

reward for a person who honors their parents. This is only found by one other Mitzvah in the Torah – the Mitzvah of Shiluach Haken – to send away the mother bird when one wants to take the chicks or the eggs. Regarding this Mitzvah, the Torah also says that if one sends away the mother bird, he will enjoy the same good treatment in this world and the next.

My father-in-Law, R' Elimelech Meller offers a profound explanation to understand the connections between these two colossal Mitzvos and why these are the only two which the Torah actually spells out the reward for. Both of these commandments require one to have a fundamental attribute of gratitude.

The Midrash explains that the reason we send away the mother bird is in appreciation of her tremendous dedication to the concept of bringing children into the world which benefits the entire world.

Most animals, when they sense danger near, flee in order to save their own lives. Not this bird. She stays until the bitter end, trying desperately to save her children, even by putting her own life in peril. In appreciation of this wonderful display of chivalry and goodness, we in turn do not take her offspring while she is watching, but rather are commanded to send her away and save her that pain.

Similarly, honoring one's parents should be borne out of a deep appreciation that they brought one into the world. My father-in-law adds (based on the Sefer Hachinuch) that with this understanding, we can explain why Chazal say that when one honors one's parents, it is as if they honored G-d Himself. Based on what we have said, the connection is simple. If we have appreciation to our parents, who brought us into this world, and continually perform myriads of kindnesses for us, we will certainly learn to honor Hashem by appreciating the infinite kindness that *He* does for us on a daily basis.

Why should a person show such respect to his parents?

The Sefer Hachinuch says what we mentioned earlier – that a person must respect his parents merely because they brought him into the world, and also because of the endless kindness that they do in raising him.

The Ramban says that even if one's parents didn't raise a person, he still has to be incredibly appreciative toward them for having given birth to him.

My great uncle, the **Meshech Chochma** in Parshas Ve'eschanan says on the verse, "Honor you parents like Hashem commanded you" – where did Hashem command the Jews to honor their parents? - In the dessert.

The reason why their location is so relevant and the Torah went out of its way to state the location, is because in the desert, the Jews had no physical needs. Food fell directly from the sky. Their clothes were washed and ironed by the Clouds of Glory. The Jews in the dessert were completely carefree. And the reason why Hashem commanded the Jews to honor their parents specifically in the desert was to imbue in them this message – that regardless of whether or not their parents ever give them anything, they have to treat their parents respectfully with unswerving dedication and this is Hashem's specific commandment.

The Pele Yoetz has a lengthy explanation in which he enumerates in detail the exact specifications which Jewish Law demands in order to properly honor one's parents. He points out that the Torah's standards are so high, that it is nearly impossible for a person to successfully fulfill all of them. The Gemorah in Kidushin goes so far as to say, "Lucky is the person who never met his parents" – meaning that the requirements of this commandment are so stringent, that a person is better off never meeting his parents and not taking the chance of being punished on their account.

One thing is clear – anyone who **does** know their parents, must do that best he can to honor them in every way. He must be meticulous

in never causing them any pain and anticipating any need that they might have and fulfilling it right away with a smile in order to have a chance at fulfilling this commandment properly.

The Pele Yoetz ends by saying that even though we know that a father has the right to forego the honors due him, if a son allows his father to do this, he will still be punished.

I would just like to conclude by citing a couple of examples which might give a person an inkling to what degree one must attempt to fulfill this commandment. **The Chazon Ish** was reputed to have visited his mother daily and to have never missed a day. **The Chofetz Chaim** was seen constantly in his mother's house and whenever he left, he always told her and amusing anecdote and asked her permission to leave. **R' Baruch Ber Libowitz** took care of his sick father with unswerving dedication until his dying day at the tender age of 80. And when he did pass away, R' Baruch Ber was so nervous that perhaps he didn't do enough for his father that he became physically ill. The Chofetz Chaim had to call him in to reassure him that he had done enough and only then did he calm down.

I personally know someone who hosted R' Baruch Ber in their Aunt's house and noticed that he always walked around with an unlit cigarette in his mouth. When asked about this strange behavior, he responded with a shrug that since he was a young man in Yeshiva, he had become a very heavy smoker, (as was popular in Yeshivas many years ago before it was known how dangerous smoking is), and at one point, his father had indicated to him that he would prefer if his son didn't smoke. From then on, R' Baruch Ber never lit another cigarette.

May we all strengthen ourselves in this crucial Mitzvah and elevate ourselves by performing it consciously in all its detail!

Yisro Heard

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ
This week's Parsha opens with Yisro coming out to the desert where Moshe and the Jewish people were with the intention to join the Jewish race forever. The verse says that after Yisro heard all that Hashem had done for the Jewish people in Egypt and during the exodus, he was so moved that he felt compelled to unite himself with their faith.

Chazal try to identify what point exactly inspired Yisro so much that he was ready to make this life-changing decision. They explain that what impressed Yisro the most was the splitting of the Reed Sea and the war with Amalek.

Let us analyze this Chazal for a moment. One can understand the persuasive power that the splitting of the sea would have on a person. Chazal say that a maidservant at the sea saw more than the greatest of our prophets. But what was so impressive about the war with Amalek? Was that any more impressive then the ten plagues that Hashem brought upon the Egyptians or the Manna or any of the other plethora of miracles that were performed for us? Indeed, based on the amount of miracles that occurred for the Jews during the extraction from Egypt and their safe arrival in the land of Israel, it is a wonder that every nation in the world did not convert to Judaism! Furthermore, if one examines the language of Chazal carefully, one notices that Chazal don't say that it was the victory of the Jewish people that inspired Yisro, but rather it was the war that was so notable to Yisro. What was so remarkable about the war?

The answer to these questions is the same. Yisro was convinced early on, based on the miracles that were performed, as indeed all the nations of the world were, that Hashem was the one true G-d and that the Jews were the chosen people. The verse itself says that when all the nations heard what Hashem did for the Jewish people, they had a tremendous awe and belief in G-d. But he reasoned that

it was enough to accept this belief in his heart, and that there was no need to take any action on account of this belief. However when Yisro saw the vicious attack that Amalek launched on the Jews, despite the fact that they too believed in the oneness of G-d and His choice of nations, he began to question his theory. (The Slonimer Rebbe).

He came to the conclusion that if Amalek had witnessed all the same miracles that he had, and were convinced of the omnipotence of the Creator, yet they could still fall to the depraved level in which they would attack His people, then he too could fall to that level. Yisro realized that although he now believed in G-d with complete conviction, if nothing were to be done about that belief, it would rapidly fade away. This explains why after the war with Amalek, Yisro decided to go out to the desert and convert to Judaism. He wisely grasped that it was not enough to believe in one's heart in Hashem, rather one must take action and accept upon himself the whole Torah if he wants to capture the inspiration that a miracle offers and make it last, otherwise, that inspiration will grow fainter in no time and eventually die away completely just as it had for Amalek.

R' Leib Shteinman once said that a Jew can reach tremendous heights of inspiration, whether through a well written article, or a powerful orator, but these feelings will not last unless he puts it into some kind of action. If a person gets aroused by some element to heighten his Mitzvah observance but does not do anything practically to incorporate that arousal to his daily life, that feeling will soon fade away and will have been completely useless on a practical level.

"Hashem's love for us is like the sun - always shining, even on the cloudiest days." ~ Rabbi Nachman Of Breslov (1772-1810).

The Benefit of Hardships

Yisro, Moshe Rabbeinu's father-in-law, decides to join Klal Yisrael after they miraculously left Egypt. Moshe went out to his father-in-law, Aharon followed, Nadav and Avihu came after them and once the Jews saw such important people giving honor to Yisro, they all went out to honor him as well (Rashi, Shemos 18:4).

Yisro had been basking in honor in Midian but left all this behind, setting out to the desolation of the desert to join the Jewish People. For this, Hashem declared that Yisro would receive exceptional honor. "Since Yisro came to Me with pure intentions, I caused him this show of honor" (Shemos Rabba 27:2).

Moreover, Yisro merited a parsha of the Torah in his name (Shmos Rabba 27:8), all because of his willingness to forego his own honor to come close to Hashem.

Another Midrash presents a very different picture, however. Moshe sends Yisro back to Midian. Hashem explains: "My children were toiling in mortar and bricks while he was in his house. How can he join us in the joy of receiving the Torah?" (Yalkut Shimoni 18)

Hashem demonstrates how much he values Yisro's willingness to forego the honor he received at home and join the Jews in the desert. On the other, since Yisro did not suffer slavery at the hands of the Egyptians as did the Jews, he does not deserve to receive the Torah with them. Why? He came all this way, and left so much behind? And Hashem recognizes the greatness of his sacrifice!

Harav Aharon Kotler explains that Yisro surely deserved praise for leaving behind all he had in order to join the Jewish People. However, this was not enough to merit receiving the Torah. Torah is acquired through *yissurim* — hardships (Brachos 5a).

In order to reach a level of understanding in Torah, a Jew needs some special merit. If a person goes through *yissurim* and accepts them willingly, this gives him that merit (see Megila 6b).

Rav Kotler goes on to note *yissurim* help in another way: If learning comes easy to a person, as they say, "easy come, easy go." The Torah he learns is not really in his head. If he has to put in efforts, the Torah penetrates deeper into his way of thinking and stays with him. One who undergoes *yissurim* and remains steadfast in his learning appreciates Torah more. The more he puts into it, the more the Torah becomes a part of him.

This should provide us with chizuk, because we all have difficulties of some sort. Be it a chronic headache, financial problems, tensions in the home, etc., such *yissurim* try to pull us away from learning. They can also make us depressed, thinking: "Why is Hashem doing this to me? Without this, I could be accomplishing much more!"

We should try to appreciate that these *yissurim* are in fact bringing us closer to Torah. If we pass the test of *yissurim,* they give us merit, and the more we have to work for Torah, the better we will acquire it. *Yissurim* are in fact a gift. If a Jew finds himself beset by *yissurim,* he should think to himself: Now is really the opportunity to acquire Torah!

Harav Nosson Tzvi Finkel was for our generation a radiant example of how one can keep learning despite *yissurim*, even Parkinson's Disease. Although he rarely spoke about his illness, once, when he was a guest in the home of R' Nachum Stillerman, his host began crying as he beheld his suffering.

"Why are you crying?" Rav Nosson Tzvi asked R' Stillerman.

"I just don't understand; why is this happening to you?"

"I've thought about this," began Rav Nosson Tzvi. "I always loved learning, but maybe my learning was lacking in *lishma*. Now, Hashem gave me these *yissurim* so that my Torah would be more *lishma*."

May our *yissurim* help us grow in Torah!

The Need For The Second Crown

"*Naaseh Venishma* — We shall do [the mitzvos] and we shall listen [and obey them]" (Shmos 24:7). With these words the Jewish People accepted upon themselves the yoke of Torah and mitzvos. The Gemara (Shabbos 88a) states that in the merit of putting Naaseh before Nishma, 600,000 angels came and tied two crowns on the head of every Jew — one for *Naaseh* and the other for *Nishma*.

What is so special about putting Naaseh before Nishma? The simple understanding is that the Jews reached such a level of devotion to Hashem that without even knowing what He would ask of them, they declared their willingness to do it. However, this explains only the crown given for putting Naaseh first. Had the nation declared Nishma Venaaseh, it would have indicated that they first wanted to hear about the mitzvos and only then do them. Naaseh demonstrated their devotion to Hashem, but why should Nishma deserve a crown as well? At some point they surely would have to hear about what Hashem wanted them to do.

Rav Moshe Shwab explains that Nishma meant more than simply learning what they were required to do. Nishma meant "we will *obey*, even when obeying requires going beyond our natural abilities." It means: "I will learn Torah, even if my intelligence seems insufficient," or "I will keep mitzvos, even if it seems to demand more strength or means than I have." I will begin, and Hashem will give me the ability to compete the task.

Why is learning for its own sake so important that it gets its own crown? The Nefesh Hachaim (4:10) states that Torah study for its own sake is clinging to Hashem (*deveikus*). Torah is "the will and speech of Hashem" (Zohar Yisro 90b), and saying over Hashem's ideas and making His speech our own is the greatest form of *deveikus*.

Rav Refael Shmuelevitz recalled once how his father, **Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz**, cried tears of joy once upon entering a beis medrash.

When asked why he was crying, Rav Chaim answered: "Look at all these young boys! What are they doing? They are devoting their time and energy to know Hashem's will. They are connecting themselves to Him!"

Avos D'Rebbe Nassan 20a states that "whoever puts words of Torah on his heart annuls the negative thoughts that can cause a person to sin." The kedusha of Torah study has the power to undo all the negative attributes such as jealousy and lust within a person.

Once, the **Beis Halevi** saw one of his grandchildren suffer a fall, and it put him into a state of shock. He was so frightened and shaken by the incident that he developed a wart on his neck that became swollen with blood. His doctor determined that he would need to have this wart surgically removed and sent him to a hospital in Warsaw.

Before the operation, the Beis Halevi refused to accept anesthesia (either out of concern for the kashrus of the drug or that it would cause him to forget his learning). He then began thinking intently about a sugya, and finished the operation without anesthesia.

The gentile surgeon was so impressed by this that he declared: "Rabbi, I see from you that there is a G-d. Only from clinging to Him could you have withstood so much pain."

Six days later, the Beis Halevi recovered from the operation. The surgeon again exclaimed: "Rabbi, how could you recover so quickly! Only young people recover in 6 days, whereas people your age require a month! This is because older people invariably sink into such negative traits as jealousy and lusts, and this thickens their blood. A young person has not had the time to develop such thick blood. You are so holy that your blood is as fluid as a baby's!"

May we be *zoche* to cling to Hashem and His Torah!

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages

There's a great story about the Tzadik, **Rav Zalman Brizel, zt"l**. One time, when he had returned from a fundraising trip in Chutz L'Aretz, he couldn't find the travel bag where he had stored the money. While his family frantically searched all over for the money, they soon saw Rav Zalman dancing. They immediately thought that he must have found the money, but when they asked him where the money had been, he replied, "I don't know. It's still lost."

They were perplexed and asked him, "Then why are you dancing?"

He responded, "I know that I lost the money, but should I also lose my mind? - The first part is hard enough. I don't have to make it worse than it is!"

Yisro – Take Action by Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky

Parshas Yisro is the Parsha of Matan Torah, but it starts with Yisro, who represents the Gerei Hatzedek, those who come and join the Jewish nation throughout history. Yisro was the epitome of the ger (convert) who comes and makes his lot with the Jewish people. There is a Rashi (Shemos 18:1) that asks what Yisro heard that made him switch teams. He answers: "[It was] the splitting of the Red Sea and the war against Amalek."

Yisro saw how the whole world was moved and then he saw how everyone lost it. He said to himself, "Unless I do something dramatic now, change will never happen." One must act when the inspiration hits them, or one will most certainly lose it.

Many times, we see people who experienced miracles, and they recognize them and are inspired by them, but if they don't make the change right away, time goes on and people forget and lose the inspiration.

As such, let us take the inspiration and turn it into action. Someone once rented their apartment out to **Rav Don Segal**. As he was leaving, he remarked, "Do you appreciate the beautiful view you have from your window?"

The guy took a look out the window and replied, "Yeah, it's nice."

Rav Segal replied, "No, you don't truly appreciate it. I knew the first time I saw it how incredible it was, so every morning when I got up, I looked out the window and said a Pasuk (Tehillim 104:24), **מָה־רַבּוּ מַעֲשֶׂיךָ ה' כֻּלָּם בְּחָכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנֶךָ** - *'How many are the things You have made, Hashem. You have made them all with wisdom; the earth is full of Your creations.'* - This way, I acted on the inspiration that I felt and concretized it."

Let us take the inspiration and turn it l'ma'aseh – something real and sustainable in our lives.

It says in this week's Parsha... **אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי** - "***You have seen what I did to Egypt and that I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me.***" (19:4)

Why did Hashem single out the eagle as an example of his connection with the Jewish people?

R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev teaches that in Hebrew an eagle is known as "nesher," because the word "nesher" means "falling off." The eagle's feathers are constantly falling off and being replaced. (Psalms 103:5, Rashi) Therefore, the choice of the eagle to symbolize Hashem's relationship with the Jewish people alludes to the fact that even if a Jew should, G-d forbid, "lose his feathers" — fail in his observance of Torah and mitzvot — his case is not hopeless. He always has the opportunity to do teshuvah and grow "new feathers" which will enable him to soar to the Heavens.

HONORING PARENTS

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻן יָמֶיךָ 20:12

The idea of honoring and respecting one's elders has been out of style in Western culture for the last several decades. In a culture which prizes youth, modernity and advancement above all else, it is not surprising to find that people do not hold the older generation in high esteem. However, the eternal laws of the Torah include the obligation to respect parents.

The fact that this mitzvah is one of the Ten Commandments indicates how important this precept is. Why should this be? Honoring one's parents expresses gratitude for their assuming the responsibility of raising children and taking care of their essential needs. On a deeper level, honoring parents underscores the importance of each previous generation's role in transmitting the Jewish tradition. Finally, respecting one's parents enables us to acknowledge and appreciate that it is ultimately Hashem who brought us into existence, and sustains and guides the world.

● **The Mitzvah of Kibud Av Ve-Eim (Honoring Parents)**

The mitzvah of honoring parents is placed prominently in the Torah as one of the Ten Commandments. In addition to the mitzvah to honor them, there is also a mitzvah to revere them and prohibitions against mistreating them. Many places in the Torah discuss honoring parents and treating them with respect.

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ – Vayikra 19:3 - A person naturally honors his mother more than his father and naturally has more reverence of his father than of his mother. The Torah wants to teach us to honor and revere both parents equally, even when it does not come naturally. Additionally, the Torah says that one must neither hit (Shemot 21:15), curse (Shemot 21: 17), nor dishonor (Devarim 27: 16) one's parents.

● **High Standards For Honoring Parents**

Since honoring parents is so important, the Torah places very high standards for the fulfillment of this mitzvah. Although they may seem unattainable, these expectations are in place to impress upon us the importance of this mitzvah.

Eved hamelech, Yitro – Visualize Hashem coming into your home, and treat parents the same way! - Even were one to honor his father and mother as he would a king and queen, he would still not fulfill his obligation [of honoring them], since the Torah compares their honor to the honor due to Hashem Himself. Therefore one should imagine how he would feel if Hashem were to show up at his doorstep – with what trepidation would he receive Him! - The child should honor his parents with that same attitude.

● **The Extent One Needs To Go To When Honoring Parents. [Yerushalmi Peah 3b]** –

'Rabbi Tarfon's mother went to her courtyard to take a walk on Shabbat [and her shoe tore and she could not continue to wear them]. Rabbi Tarfon went and placed his two hands under her feet, and she walked on them until she reached her bed. One time Rabbi Tarfon became ill, and the sages came to visit him. His mother said to them, "Pray on behalf of my son, for he conducts himself with exceptional honor towards me." They said to her, "What does he do for you?" and she relayed the occurrence to them. They said to her, "Even if he were to do this thousands upon thousands [of times], he would not approach one half of the honor that is stipulated in the Torah."'

● **What Bracha Is Recited Before Performing The Mitzvah Of Kibud Av V'em?**

Sdei Chemed, Volume 6, Berachot 1:16 – No blessing is recited for fulfilling this mitzvah, because one never knows if he has fulfilled it properly.

'Why do we not recite a blessing before performing the mitzvah of honoring parents [as we do before other mitzvot]? One reason is that the mitzvah of honoring parents has such high standards that it is exceedingly difficult to properly fulfill one's obligation. One might think that he has honored his parents enough and in fact he has not even approached half his duty! Therefore, one does not say a blessing, for it might be said in vain…for not every person merits fulfilling this commandment properly.'

● From The Parent's Perspective

We have seen so far how a child should relate to his parents, and to what extent he must show them honor. Since the laws of honoring parents may be abused by a parent, our Sages advised parents not to be too demanding of their children with regard to their own honor.

Shulchan aruch, Yoreh Deah 240:19 – *'Parents are obligated not to be demanding when it comes to their honor.'*

'It is forbidden for a person to burden his children by being particular about them honoring him. [This is so that] he will not pose a stumbling block before them, rather he should forego [his honor] and close his eyes to their actions…'

Nevertheless, parents should teach their children about the importance of kibud av v'em, but should not demand honor from them.

● Why Should I Respect Them?

In an age when treating parents with respect is out of style, understanding the reasons for the obligation to honor parents can help us appreciate this mitzvah. The basic concept is that by honoring our parents, we express gratitude for what they have done for us. But this is only the surface of the mitzvah; there are much deeper reasons for honoring parents as well.

The most basic reason for honoring parents is to show gratitude to them for all they have done for us.

Sefer HaChinuch 33 – The root of honoring parents is gratitude.

'It is only appropriate for one to recognize and reciprocate kindness to those who have dealt kindly with him, and certainly not to act in a vile manner, estranging oneself and being an ingrate, for this is a bad character trait that is completely despised by both Hashem and human beings. One should appreciate the fact that his parents are the source of his very existence in this world, and it is therefore appropriate for him to act as respectfully and beneficially as he can. Besides having brought him into the world, they also expended tremendous effort in raising him as a child.'

Sefer Chareidim 1:37 – We owe our parents a debt of gratitude.

'The Midrash teaches that honoring parents is the debt that one owes his father and mother for all that they have done for him.'

● Developing An Awareness of Hashem

The Ten Commandments were given to the Jewish people inscribed on two tablets, five commandments on each. The first five are mitzvot regarding one's obligations to G-d, whereas the second five are mitzvot concerning one's duty towards individuals. Why, then, is honoring parents listed among the first five? Would it not be more appropriate to include it in the commandments which deal with relating to other people?

The answer is that by honoring our parents we come to honor Hashem too. Through acquiring the sentiment of expressing gratitude to our parents, we come to recognize and appreciate Hashem for all that He does for us. Hashem gave us the mitzvah of honoring our parents as a stepping stone towards honoring Him.

Kiddushin 30b – By honoring our parents we honor Hashem, the third Partner in our creation.

The Sages teach: There are three partners in the creation of each human being: Hashem, the father and the mother. When one honors

his father and mother, Hashem says, "I consider it as if I live among this family and they show Me honor."

The son of a noted mathematician was a yeshiva high-school student who excelled in his studies. Like his father, he was bright and articulate, but his primary passion was Torah study, and he wanted to devote himself entirely to learning Torah after his graduation. His parents, however, wanted him to go to college and prepare for a professional career…

The father came to ***Rabbi Moshe Feinstein*** *and said, "I am a mathematician, and I would like my son to enter the same field. I know that you would rather that he continue his Torah studies, but the rabbis teach (Kiddushin 30b), 'There are three partners in a person: G-d, his father and his mother.' You represent G-d's point of view – that my son should remain with his Torah studies, but my wife and I don't feel that way. We want him to go to college, and we are a majority of two to one. Doesn't the Torah say (Shemot 23:2), 'follow the majority'?"*

Reb Moshe smiled at the father and said, "Your arithmetic is incorrect. Let us think of the partnership in your son as nine shares. G-d has three-ninths, and you and your wife have three-ninths each (nine-ninths equals one whole unit). but G-d is a part of each of you as well, so you can speak for only two-thirds of your own self – the other third belongs to G-d. "Therefore," explained Reb Moshe, "three-ninths of your son, which is G-d's share, votes for him to remain in learning. One-third of both you and your wife – the part which is G-d's – also wants him to learn. if you add it all together, you have five-ninths in favor and only four-ninths against. Thus, the majority rules, and he should continue in yeshiva." (Rabbi Paysach Krohn, Along the Maggid's Journey, pp. 65-66.)

Sefer Keren leDavid, Yitro – Our faith is based on the transmission of our ancestors; disrespect for parents is disrespect for the tradition they bequeath to us.

'The Sages have taught that the honor due to parents is compared to that due to Hashem Himself. One explanation of why the Torah is so demanding of honoring parents is because we are descendents of generations believing in G-d. We received our faith from our parents and ancestors who transmitted to us the miracles and wonders that G-d performed for us during the Exodus from Egypt, in the desert, and at the revelation at Sinai. Therefore, someone who shows disregard towards his parents and ancestors undermines the strength of the tradition he receives, for how can he know that his faith is true if he disrespects those who have transmitted it?'

On a flight back to the United States from Israel, **Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky** was accompanied by his son Rabbi Avraham Kamenetsky and by one of his granddaughters. Sitting in the next seat to Reb Yaakov was one of the heads of the Histadrut (the Israeli labor federation). The two discussed many issues, among them difficult passages in Tanach, throughout the flight. All the while Reb Yaakov's son and granddaughter came regularly to see if he needed anything.

Reb Yaakov's seatmate couldn't contain his amazement. "Rabbi," he said, "I rarely see my grandchildren, and certainly do not enjoy that type of relationship with them; I don't think I ever would receive such loving treatment from my children and grandchildren. Tell me, Rabbi, what is the secret of your close connection with your family?"

Reb Yaakov replied, "For those who believe in Darwin and his theory of random evolution, every successive generation is more refined and developed than its predecessors. Why, then, should the young honor the old? However, in our tradition, every earlier generation is closer to the Sinai experience and the source of our specialness as a people. - My children and grandchildren look up to me because it is through me that they have a connection to our people."

● **The Reward**

As stated in the Ten Commandments, Hashem promises that the reward for honoring one's parents is longevity. Personal benefit is always a good motivation.

Rabbeinu Bachya, Shemot 20: 12 – The time "lost" on fulfilling this mitzvah will be compensated.

Rav Saadia Gaon explains that the reason the Torah promises longevity to those who honor their parents is that often, parents eventually live with their children for many years and become a burden on them, causing it to be difficult to honor them. Therefore, the Torah promises long life for keeping this mitzvah, i.e., by your honoring them, you will merit a long life. - One who views his parents' longevity as an imposition on his life should realize that his own lifespan is really a function of how he cares for his parents!

● **What If I Feel My Parents Have Wronged Me?**

We are in a generation where many children have "issues" with their parents and find it very difficult to honor them. Whereas ideally one should honor parents from a feeling of gratitude, the Torah requires that we honor parents even when they may not deserve our respect.

Rabbi Moshe Lieber - Even if children grew up in challenging circumstances, the parents must be honored. Children must honor and revere parents even if the parents, for whatever reason, did not tend to their needs as they were growing up. Even if the children grew up in an orphanage, in foster care or were adopted, they must fulfill their obligations toward their parents. Likewise, if one's parents were divorced, and he had limited or no connection to one of his parents, he is nonetheless fully obligated to honor that parent.

Meshech Chochma, Devarim 5: 16 – One is commanded to honor parents even when they have not taken care of the children's basic needs.

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ – Even under circumstances that your father and mother abandoned you and did not raise you, you should still honor them "as Hashem your L-rd has commanded you."

'*In the desert, where raising children did not take much effort – the manna fell from the sky, water was supplied from the well, meat from the quail and the clouds ironed their clothing – even so, Hashem commanded you to honor your father and mother – for all generations.*'

Even if all our parents did for us was give us life, that alone would be sufficient reason to honor them.

● How to Honor Parents

We learned that we have proactive mitzvot to honor and fear our parents, as well as prohibitions against striking, cursing and dishonoring our parents. The prohibitions seem fairly straightforward. However, in what specific ways are we to exhibit honor and fear for our parents?

We will learn here about the nature and extent of the obligation of Kibud Av, honoring parents. The obligation to honor parents has many different facets – tending to their physical needs, pleasing them through our words and actions, and infusing our deeds with a genuine feeling of love.

An important part of the Torah's definition of honor is to provide material benefit to parents by fulfilling basic needs like feeding and dressing.

Kiddushin 31b – Honor means showing respect by tending to a parent's physical needs.

'*The Rabbis taught: What is [meant] by honoring [one's parents]? Honor means serving food and drink, helping them get dressed, and welcoming them when they enter and escorting them when they leave the home.*'

Rabbeinu Yonah, Iggeret Hateshuvah, 3:70 – The focus of honoring parents is to cause them satisfaction - **לעשות להם נחת רוח**.The main way to honor parents is to bring them gratification, whether through words or deeds.

● **Reverence**

The Torah's concept of reverence implies looking up to parents and treating them as authority figures.

Kiddushin, 31b. – Reverence means demonstrating awareness that one's parent is not his equal.

'*The Rabbis taught: What is [meant] by revering [one's parents]? Reverence [means] neither standing in his customary place [i.e. in the synagogue] nor sitting in his seat, not contradicting his words and not passing judgment over his father's opinion.*'

● **Respect**

External actions are not enough; we need to develop feelings of genuine respect as well.

Sefer Chareidim, Ch. 1:35 – The Torah is not interested in our simply going through the motions.

"Honor your father and your mother" – This honor applies to one's feelings and emotions as well as actions. If one displays honor for parents only in (superficial) speech and deed (without heartfelt concern), he shows that in reality he considers them to be lowly people and honors them only "because Hashem says so." - Rather, he must develop an attitude wherein he sees them as truly great and honorable people, and this is the main aspect of honoring parents. Once one has developed this attitude, it will be easy for him to honor them sincerely in his speech and action as well.'

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Sefer Chareidim (9:35) teaches that a child should never degrade parents, even in one's heart, although one may feel "justified."

● **Love**

Sefer Chareidim 9:37 – It is not enough to respect one's parents; one must love them as well.

'*The Zohar praises "the son who looks after his father and mother and who loves them more than his own self, to the point that he would be willing to give up everything he had if only to do the will of his parents and to serve them." This depiction teaches us that our Sages understood that the obligation to honor one's parents includes loving them.*'

● **Posthumus Honor**

The mitzvah to honor one's parents does not end when they die. Even after their death, Judaism teaches there are ways to honor parents.

Peleh Yoetz 1:20, "Kibud v Va'em" – Being a source of merit for them after their death.

'*A central form of honoring parents is remembering them after their death and doing whatever one can to serve as a source of merit for them.*'

Derech Pikudecha, Mitzvah 33 – Saying Kaddish is a way to honor parents after they die.

'Included in the mitzvah of honoring parents is the universal practice of the son reciting Kaddish during the year after the passing of his parent. This brings great contentedness to the parent's soul…'

A student once asked the Chofetz Chaim, "What is the greatest mitzvah I can do?" - Instead of answering, the Chofetz Chaim walked over to the door, held it open for a stranger, and then returned. - "Sometimes," he said, "the greatest mitzvah is the one right in front of you. Never underestimate the power of small acts." ~ The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan.

Timeless Truths



The city of Nikolsburg had a custom that upon an installation of a new Rav, the town's ledger would be brought before him, and he would write down a new takanah, an ordinance he felt would vastly improve the religious life of his community.

When Rav Shmelke was appointed Rav, as they placed the ledger in front of him, he smiled and said that his new enactment contains matters of piety (mili dachasidusa). - He then proceeded to inscribe the Ten Commandments!



A Father-In-Law's Gentle Reminder To His Son-In-Law

Rav Elyakim Schlessinger makes the following observation, in his work Beis Av:

The Torah teaches: "Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, took Zipporah, the wife of Moshe, after her having been sent away; and her two sons; of whom the name of one was Gershom, for he had said, 'I was a sojourner in a strange land'; and the name of the other was Eliezer for 'the G-d of my father came to my aid, and He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.'" [Shemos 18:2-3]

This narration takes place well after the birth of Moshe's two sons. For this reason, it is unusual that the Torah tells us why they received those names.

It is the style of the Torah to often tell us why various children were given specific names. Typically, they are named because of specific events that are engendered by their birth. It is appropriate to provide these descriptions when a child is born. But here, since these children were born much earlier, the Torah should simply record their names, not the reasons why they had them. By this point, the reasons are ancient history!

Rav Schlessinger suggests that Yisro was sending a pointed message to his son-in-law, Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe's real leadership task was now about to begin. The taxing career that Moshe had as the leader of the Jewish people was starting. When a person is faced with a situation where he has an entire congregation or — in this case — an entire nation to worry about, it is very easy for the person's own children to slip through the cracks.

The logic is simple: "I need to worry about Klal Yisrael. So if the teacher gives my son a bad report card, I don't have time to worry about it. I simply have bigger things on my mind, worrying about the macro problems of leading the Jewish people."

Yisro wanted to bring home to Moshe Rabbeinu the idea that he should never forget the importance of the individual — of the microcosm that makes up the bigger group. One person CAN make all the difference in the world. Your children too — if they are properly tended to — could grow up to become great leaders too.

History is not made up of the deeds of nations. It is made up of the deeds of individuals. Yisro is reminding Moshe that although he has the overwhelming responsibility of leading Klal Yisrael, he has responsibility for his two young sons as well.

Yisro Did More Than Just Point Out The Problem

The pasuk in the beginning of Parshas Yisro says, "And Yisro the minister of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard all that G-d did to Moshe and to Israel, His people — that Hashem took Israel out of Egypt." [Shemos 18:1] Rashi tells us that Yisro had seven names: Reuel, Yeser, Yisro, Hovav, Hever, Keini, and Putiel. The reason he is called Yeser (meaning extra) is that an extra portion was added to the Torah because of him — namely the portion beginning with the words "And you see…" [Shemos 18:21-23] where he gave Moshe the advice to set up a hierarchical system of judges to relieve him of having to personally hear and rule on everyone's disputes.

I saw an interesting observation in a Sefer called Yismach Yehudah from a Rabbi Jacobowitz in Lakewood. Why does Rashi say that the section Yisro was responsible for adding to the Torah was the *pasukim* beginning with the words "And you shall see…" which introduces Yisro's proposed solution to the problem of inefficiency caused by Moshe personally having to hear all the cases? Rashi should have said that the section Yisro was responsible for adding were the *pasukim* appearing 7 pesukim earlier starting with the words "What is this thing that you do to the people? Why do you sit alone with all the people standing by you from morning to evening?" [Shemos 18:14]

The Yismach Yehudah answers that we see from here that many times we encounter situations where things are not right and people complain. Anyone can point out problems. The trick is to provide a solution, to offer sage counsel that solves the problem. The *kuntz* is not to find problems; the *kuntz* is to solve them!

Yisro did not only point out the problem. He did not only say, "This is not right." He also said, "I will tell you what to do about it." This is the suggestion of "And you shall see from among the entire people, men of means, G-d-fearing people, men of truth, people who despise

money, and you shall appoint them leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens…" That is why Rashi said that the section that was added to the Torah in the merit of Yisro was the section beginning with the words "And you shall see…" Yisro does not receive this credit and merit an extra portion in the Torah for pointing out a problem. He receives this credit specifically for proposing a good solution.

Everyone can complain. What's the proof? Come to shul. Everybody has what to complain about. Everyone sees what is not right. But how many people have solutions? It is meritorious to come up with the solution, not merely to come up with the problem.

Basic Honor Due To *Any Tzelem Elokim*

The pasuk states: Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, came to Moshe with his sons and wife, to the wilderness where he was encamped, by the Mountain of G-d. He said to Moshe, 'I, your father-in-law Yisro, have come to you with your wife and her two sons with her.'" [Shemos 18:5-6]

Rashi points out that Yisro's statement appears to be obvious. Clearly Moshe would recognize his father-in-law, wife, and children. Yisro and family had no need to identify themselves to Moshe. Rashi explains that Yisro's statement was delivered to Moshe by a messenger, ahead of his arrival in the camp. Rashi continues that the message delivered by Yisro's agent had the following nuance: If you do not come out to greet us in my honor, come out in honor of your wife, and if you do not come out in honor of your wife, at least come out in honor of your two sons.

The Maharal in the Gur Aryeh notes: "There are those who ask –" (it is in fact the **Chizkuni** that asks this question), "Are we to assume that Yisro, who was a great personality, was an honor seeker who demanded a welcoming reception in his honor?"

The Maharal answers with a very important principle. He says the question is not a question. This is not a matter of running after honor — it is simply an attempt by Yisro to avoid insult and humiliation.

Every person — even a righteous and pious person — is particular about not being offended. A person has a legitimate right to protect his humanity and his integrity. A person has an obligation to ensure that he is not humiliated. Since it is normal protocol to honor a guest and certainly that is so in the case of a father-in-law, if Moshe would not personally come out to greet him, it would be a matter of great shame and embarrassment.

Yisro merely requested the respect that was due to him. Not providing a person such as Yisro with that respect would be a slap in his face. No person no matter how great should ever subject himself to shame and humiliation. This is not called chasing after honor.

We see that someone who "cares about his humiliation" does not possess a character defect — it is an obligation. A person should care about his humiliation because every person is created in the Image of G-d (*Tzelem Elokim*). When someone humiliates someone else and does not give him his proper due, this is not only a slap in the face of the person; it is a slap in the Face of the Almighty who created him.

Rav Hutner writes in a letter to a student that a *Talmid Chochom* is due certain respect and when he is not given the honor due him, it is a **dis**honor to him and he has a right to object. Sometimes we see *Talmidei Chachomim* who object that they were not treated properly. People might be taken aback — is it appropriate for a *Talmid Chochom* to be so particular about his *kavod*? The answer is yes. People need to be treated in a certain way. Not providing people with their due respect is equivalent to shaming them. Shaming a person affects his *Tzelem Elokim*.

Personally, I try not to do this, but often times I go to a bank and somebody will be talking on his cell phone as he walks into the bank. He are waiting in line for the teller and he is still on the cell phone. He gets up to the window and gives his deposit slip to the teller and he is still on his cell phone. The teller makes the transaction for him, he takes the receipt and he is still on the cell phone the entire time.

This is grossly disrespectful to the bank teller. If you want to talk on your cell phone while you do your banking — then go to an ATM machine. At least say "Excuse me, do you mind? I am on an important call." However, to come in and totally ignore the person who is providing you with service is shameful.

A student told me that one of the people on the kitchen staff at the Yeshiva is a woman named Beverly. A boy came into the kitchen while on his cell phone and stuck out his plate toward Beverly expecting that she would put food on it for him. She refused. She told him "If you do not have the decency to put your call on hold and ask me nicely for your portion, I am insulted and will not give you any food!" This applies to all people, regardless of religion and race. We are created in the Image of G-d and we deserve courtesy and respect.

Rashi over here is telling us that certain people require greater respect and when one fails to provide that respect, this is called an insult. It is called humiliating the person. A person has the right and obligation to demand that he not be humiliated. It such circumstances, he is merely demanding the honor of the Almighty who created him in the Image of G-d.

"Hashem's love for you not contingent; it is constant and consistent." ~ Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz (1902-1979)

If They Were Just Rich Men, They Still Would Not Necessarily Be 'Anshei Chayil'

Parshas Yisro begins with Yisro's arrival and his taking notice that people were standing from morning until evening waiting for adjudication from Moshe Rabbeinu. Yisro came up with the idea that there should be a judicial system of lower courts and higher courts to improve the efficiency of the adjudication process. Yisro advised his son-in-law, "And you shall see from among the entire people, men of means, G-d fearing people, men of truth, people who despise money, and you shall appoint them leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens." (Shemos 18:21)

Moshe Rabbeinu accepted Yisro's plan: "Moshe chose *anshei chayil* (men of accomplishment) from among all Israel and appointed them heads of the people, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens." (Shemos 18:25). Rashi explains the expression "*anshei chayil*" as "*ashirim*" (rich people, who have no need to worry about flattering other people or showing favoritism)." (Shemos 18:21) In other words, an independently wealthy individual is a good person to have as a judge.

Not everyone explains "*anshei chayil*" in this fashion. For example, the **Ibn Ezra** interprets the term as "patient people." There is something called "judicial temperament." People can get very testy about *dinei Torah*. A judge needs to have a certain calmness and emotional discipline to maintain the appropriate decorum between litigants. **The Ramban** has a third interpretation: "*hachacham, hazariz v'ha'yashar*" (someone who is wise, diligent, and has integrity).

At any rate, Rashi says that *anshei chayil* means rich people. The *pasuk* also lists several other qualities, in addition to *anshei chayil*: G-d fearing, men of truth, and those who hate corruption. What would we consider as the number one quality of a judge? I

would think that the top two qualities would be "G-d fearing" and "men of truth". It is certainly nice for a person to be wealthy and not beholden to others, but why should that be priority number one on the list of qualifications for the job?

A second question may be asked: The Gemara says (Bechoros 5b) that every Jew who left *Mitzrayim* had ninety donkeys laden with silver and gold. Everyone was rich! If that is the case, there should have been no need at all to specify that the judges chosen should be rich. Pick a number out of a hat! Look in the phone book! Everyone met this criterion!

The Tolner Rebbe says that when Rashi says that he must be a wealthy individual who does not flatter people, Rashi is not talking about the candidate's bank account or stock portfolio. Rashi is saying that the judge must have the essence of an *ashir* (rich man)." A person who is by essence an "*ashir*" is a person who is not going to lower himself by trying to curry favor with flattery of individuals. That is beneath his dignity. That is not who he is.

Possessing money is not good enough to qualify someone as a judge. The person needs to have the essence and the mentality of an *ashir*. On occasion, people win lotteries worth mega millions. Overnight, these people are worth a couple hundred million dollars. Are they *ashirim*? They may have money, but they are not *ashirim*. An *ashir* is a person who has a certain standard, a certain approach and dignity. That is what Rashi means when he comments that *anshei chayil* = *ashirim*, as the number one criterion for a judge.

The colloquial term for a rich man is a "*gvir*." **Rav Leib Steimann** once commented that a "*gvir*" must be a *gibor* (possessing strength of character)! A person can have a lot of money but that alone does not make him into a *gvir*. A *gvir* means a person who is in charge of himself. Who is the *gibor* – one who conquers his evil inclination (Avos 4:1).

Many of us remember Rav Moshe Reichmann of Toronto. By all standards he was an *ashir*. But not only was he a person who had a lot of money, he was an *ashir* because of the way he conducted himself and the way he treated others. He was not just an *ashir*. He was a *gvir*.

Of all the stories I read about Rav Moshe Reichmann, the following made the most lasting impression on me: He was suffering from cancer at the end of his life. He had an aide who used to take him for treatments. After his treatments, he was very thirsty. After one of his treatments, he asked his aide to get him a glass of water. The aide came back with a bottle of water and no cup. Rav Moshe Reichmann refused the water. He said that since the time he was a baby, he never drank out of a bottle and he did not intend to start now. That is a certain dignity and presence of how a person holds himself. That is an *ashir*! That is a *gvir*!

So sure, all the people in Klal Yisrael had ninety donkeys laden with silver and gold. But that only makes them into people with a lot of money. It does not make them into *ashirim*. It does not make them into *anshei chayil* (according to Rashi's interpretation of the term.)

A Sense of Embarrassment Kept People In Their Places — But No Longer

Following the listing of the Asserres HaDibros [Ten 'Commandments'], the Torah says that the people became afraid of the experience of hearing the Words of the Almighty. They begged that Moshe relay G-d's message to them instead. Moshe responded: "Do not fear, for in order to elevate you has G-d come; so that the awe of Him shall be upon your faces (**וּבַעֲבוּר תִּהְיֶה יִרְאָתוֹ עַל־פְּנֵיכֶם לְבִלְתִּי תֶּחֱטָאוּ**) so that you shall not sin." [Shemos 20:17]

The Mechilta comments that the expression "**תִּהְיֶה יִרְאָתוֹ עַל־פְּנֵיכֶם**" refers to shame, the fact that people have a sense of

embarrassment. - **Rabbeinu B'Chayei** asks how does the Mechilta takes a pasuk which seems to speak of Yiras HaShem and refers it to busha. What's the connection?

Rabbeinu B'Chayei answers that Fear comes from the heart. We do not normally speak of "fear appearing on a person's face". The attribute that IS evident on a person's face is the attribute of shame, which is noticeable when a person turns red from embarrassment. If the pasuk is speaking of something that "shall be upon your faces," it must be referring to shame – busha.

The idea conveyed by the Mechilta is that a sense of shame brings a person to fear sin. If a person has a strong sense of busha — which emerges from recognition of his great and ongoing debt to the Almighty, he will not be able to sin. A sense of embarrassment keeps a person in his place.

Rav Schach once met with a group of educators and asked them to state their opinions as to why the spiritual level of our society in today's times has deteriorated to such a low level. Rav Schach went around the table. Each teacher expressed his opinion.

One educator mentioned the concept of the yeridas haDoros. Rav Schach took issue with this theory and told him , "This is incorrect. In my time, when I was young, Europe was far from perfect. There were all sorts of philosophies and movements that entrapped people with their attraction: Socialism, communism, Bundism, humanism, the Yiddishists. There are many people that went off the straight and narrow path and left the fold. However, it was nothing like what is happening today. What is the difference?

Rav Schach finally explained that up until very recently, there was a sense of shame that existed in society. People were never perfect. They always had their foibles. But at least there was a sense of embarrassment. There are certain things you just do not say. There are certain things you just do not talk about. People's inhibitions have always put a certain moral constraint on society."

Today we are seeing a fulfillment of what the Mishneh says at the end of tractate Sotah — that in the period leading up to the coming of Moshiach (Ikvesa d'Mishicha), brazenness will become blatant. The problem we see today is not just the natural decline of every generation, as it moves one generation further away from Sinai. Today we are seeing a breakdown in society that has nothing to do with Jews or with Judaism. It has to do with humanity. Human beings (as opposed to animals) have always had a sense of embarrassment. Animals do anything in public because they do not realize that there is anything to be embarrassed about. Human beings used to refrain from doing certain things in public because of a sense of shame. "You just do not do that or talk about that in the open."

This generation has removed the sense of busha from humanity. All a person needs to do is turn on the radio or even look in the newspaper. Things that people would not have dreamed of saying 20 years ago have become common language.

Our problem, especially the problem that we have with our children, is that society has lost its sense of BUSHA and children have lost their sense of BUSHA. The genie is out of the bottle. Unfortunately, I do not think it is going to be put back into the bottle until the coming of our Moshiach Tzidkaynu, may he come speedily in our days.

Rav Yonason Eibshitz in his sefer יערות דבש writes בשם the אריז"ל that most of the reason for the long and bitter גלות is because we are not doing the mitzvos and serving Hashem with simchah.

Rav Moshe Feinstein said: The greatest strength of a Torah Jew is to stand by the truth, even when the entire world says otherwise.

Let Us Keep Idolatry Away From Our Homes

This week's reading contains the first time that the Torah prohibits idolatry. The second of the Asseres Hadibros [Ten "Commandments"] states: "You shall have no other gods before Me. Do not represent [such gods] by any carved statue or picture of anything in the heaven above, on the earth below, or in the water below the land." [Shemos 20: 3-4] This is the first of many varieties of prohibitions in the Torah relating to Avodah Zarah [literally: foreign worship]. The Torah is replete with such warnings.

Anyone with even a superficial knowledge of Tanach is aware that the problem of 'Avodah Zarah' plagued the Jewish people throughout all of their existence — up until the time that, as recorded in the Talmud [Sanhedrin 64a], the Men of the Great Assembly prayed for the destruction of the desire, the evil inclination (Yetzer HaRah), for Avodah Zarah.

In our day and age, it is very difficult for us to contemplate how anyone could be attracted to graven images, never mind going to such extremes as burning their children for the sake of Avodah Zarah. The abominations that were performed in the name of Avodah Zarah are mind boggling to us.

Given the fact that no such Yetzer HaRah exists today, it would seem that all of the Torah's many prohibitions relating to Avodah Zarah do not really apply to us. We never find ourselves 'tested' in this area. - Ostensibly, in our lifetime, we are never going to be tempted with any moral dilemma relating to idolatry.

The Radziner Rebbe (1839-1891) comments that likely, we will indeed be 'tested' in the area of Avodah Zarah.

The Talmud teaches [Shabbos 105b] "Any person who loses his temper, it is as if he worshipped idols." The Gemara derives this from the pasuk [verse] "Lo Yiheyeh becha el zar" — "There should not be in your midst a foreign god" [Tehillim 81:10]. What foreign

god is in a person's own midst? This foreign god is the person's own ego. When a person becomes angry, that is a form of Avodah Zarah.

Part of the reason why a person becomes angry is because things are not going "his way". A person becomes angry when he wants something to happen or someone to listen to him and it does not happen. Why do I become so angry? Because my will has been thwarted. I feel that things should go "my way". The underlying reason why a person becomes angry is because his image of himself is too great. This is a subtle form of Avodah Zarah.

The only being for whom everything goes His way is the Master of the World. If we truly believed that fact, then we would not become angry. We would realize that we do not call the shots. He calls the shots! Therefore, the Talmud teaches that if someone becomes angry, it is as if he worshipped foreign gods. Which foreign god did he serve? He served himself, the exaggerated self-image, the exaggerated ego.

The Radziner Rebbe advises that the next time a person is about to become angry, he should remember that he is becoming involved in a subtle form of Avodah Zarah. When one avoids becoming angry, although so tempted, he has successfully withstood the "test" — in our time — of avoiding Avodah Zarah.

An incident is told about the **Vizhnitzer Rebbe** (1860-1938), that he once went to bake matzos on Erev Pesach [the day before Passover]. Baking matzos Erev Pesach is a very tricky business. If anything goes wrong, one can encounter a problem of Chometz [unleavened bread]. One of the people who was baking the matzos did something wrong and someone else became very angry with him. The Rebbe asked, "Why are you becoming so angry?" The person responded, "But Rebbe, Chametz is prohibited in even the smallest quantity (b'mah-shehu)." The Rebbe responded (in Yiddish) "The smallest quantity of anger is worse that the smallest quantity of

chometz". We fail to realize the severity of the sin of losing one's temper.

The Gemara equates it with Avodah Zarah. The Gemara does not equate just 'any' prohibition with Avodah Zarah.

Therefore, no matter what the situation, we must remember this week's Parsha. Whether the children do not behave as well as we think they should, or when we do not receive the honor that we thought we deserved… When we are about to become angry, we must remember this week's Parsha. "Do not have other gods before Me." Let us make a pledge: This Week, we will not have any Avodah Zarah in our homes!

Honoring Parents

The fifth of the Ten Commandments is the command "Honor your father and your mother, in order that your days be lengthened on the land that I am giving to you" [Shemos 20:12].

There is a famous Gemara in Kiddushin [31a] that many of us have heard, but I recently saw a different insight into this Gemara. Rav Eliezer was asked, "How far does honoring one's Parents extend?" He related the famous story of the gentile, Dama son of Nesinah in Ashkelon, who turned down an offer to purchase a precious stone because the key to the chest where it was stored was under his father's pillow. He passed up a tremendous profit so as not to disturb his father's sleep.

On a simple level, this Gemara seems to be teaching us that we learn the parameters of the mitzvah of Honoring One's Parents from Dama son of Nesinah. **The Avnei Shoham** however says that this is not what the Gemara is telling us. We are not learning halachos (Jewish law) from Dama son of Nesinah – we are learning human nature from him.

When children are born, parents must have patience with them. But there comes a time in life when children have to have patience with their parents. There comes a time in life when parents become what can be perceived as a burden. Parents become old; they sometimes become demanding. One needs to have patience with parents.

Is there not a limit to patience? How much patience is required? How much patience is a human being capable of? Is there not a point where it becomes too much of a burden to 'get along' with one's parents, where one has a right to 'run out of patience'?

The Gemara says "come and see the case of the gentile in Ashkelon". Dama is not teaching us a mitzvah — he is teaching us human nature. Imagine the patience that Dama must have had. The Sages were at the door, certified check in hand. He was waiting and thinking, "When will Dad wake up?" "Maybe I'll make some noise and he'll wake up." "Maybe I'll just sneak under the pillow…" This is what he is teaching us — the human capacity for having patience for a parent.

If a human being is capable of such patience, then that level of patience is possible within human nature and consequently it becomes the definition of the extent of our mitzvah.

The Avnei Shoham goes on to say a beautiful insight into this Gemara. When the Rabbis use the expression "the keys were under his father's pillow and he didn't bother him (וְלֹא צִיעֲרוֹ)" the interpretation is not that Dama didn't bother him, meaning his father. Rather, וְלֹא צִיעֲרוֹ - it didn't bother him, Dama himself, that he had to pass up a great profit by not waking his father. He had such patience and such respect that losing this great sum did not even bother him — he didn't even try to wake his father up.

If Dama the Akum is capable of this, then we — the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yakov — certainly should not only aspire to this, but this becomes our obligation.

Spilling Wine Like Water Is a Positive Omen for the Home

In Hilchos Havdalah (Orach Chaim 296), the *Ramo* cites a custom of spilling out some of the Havdalah wine on the floor before concluding the *Borei pri hagafen bracha*to avoid the problem of "*kos pagum*". (This is **not** a widely practiced custom.) The *Ramo* explains the reason for this custom: "For we say that any house in which wine is not spilled like water does not possess a '*siman bracha,*' so we do this as a sign of blessing at the beginning of a new week."

The *Taz* comments on this *Ramo* : First of all, the whole concept of "*kos pagum*" only applies to a *kos* (or bottle) from which someone previously directly drank some wine. Furthermore, it is not an appropriate practice to start reciting a blessing and then pour the wine on the ground. There is no greater shame to a *bracha* than this! As written, this comment of the *Ramo* makes no sense whatsoever.

The *Taz* therefore prefers the practice he found recorded in the *sefer Yesh Nochalin*, to fill up the cup prior to Havdalah such that it flows over the side of the wine goblet. In other words, you fill the *kos* so full that it spills over onto the ground. This is the intended *siman bracha* symbolism of wine spilling like water.

The *Taz* clarifies the concept of "a house in which wine is not poured out like water": The *chachomim* are **not** advocating pouring out wine as if it was water. That would be *baal tashchis*. There is no *baal tashchis* on water, but there **is** *baal tashchis* on wine! It is incomprehensible that we should be taught to spill out good wine as if it were water.

The *Taz* notes that the statement "any house in which wine **was not poured** like water will not see signs of blessing" is written as a "b'dieved" expression. If they were advocating a positive practice then it should have said "any house where they **do not pour** wine like water…" Rather, the intended lesson is "when something gets broken in your house, don't lose your temper!" In other words, if you have an expensive bottle of wine in your cabinet and your child spills the

bottle of wine out, don't make a federal case out of it. Such an incident should not cause you to lose your temper.

The *chachomim* were not only talking about a bottle of wine. Children break things, your wife breaks things, you yourself break things. Don't get so upset about these kinds of things. Even if you suffer a loss from the incident, accidents happen. The wine spilled, the glass broke, the china chipped. Don't cry about it. People's natural instinct is to get angry about such matters, therefore the *chachomim*, hoping to counteract this gut reaction stated: Any house in which wine is not (unintentionally) spilled out like water will not see *siman bracha*. That is the proper attitude to have when something spills, breaks or gets damaged. It is a bad omen if wine spilling causes more trauma in a house than water spilling. This loss came about from the *yad Hashem*, so why are you getting angry?

It must be that you are getting angry because you think you are in charge. You think that you call the shots. You think that you determine your profit and loss for the year. The *Ribono shel Olam* says "I will show you, and I will bring poverty to your house, because you are not really a believer in the source of your financial stability. "Therefore, if a person does **not** lose his temper over such things but rather calmly accepts them as '*bashert*' (it was meant to be), such *Emunah* will be a *siman bracha* because as a reward for such faith, the *Ribono shel Olam* will replace the loss suffered.

We need to truly believe that everything emanates from Hashem – including all our material wealth and possessions, our good times and our bad times, our profits and our losses. They are all from Him. A person with such deeply-held *Emunah* will never be angry.

The lesson of the *Taz* is that any house in which wine is spilled like water (in other words, that has the attitude that it is as if the wine that spilled is only water, so it is nothing to get upset about) will see a *siman bracha* as a result of its true *Emunah*.

Torah is Acquired Through Effort, Not Brain Power

Parshas Yisro contains the narration of the giving of the Aseres Hadibros (Ten Commandments) on Har Sinai, which is the most fundamental event in the history of the Jewish people, even more fundamental than Yetzias Mitzrayim (the exodus from Egypt).

We should not think that *Hashem* gave the Torah to the Jewish people because they were so smart. We might have chauvinistically claimed that others are not worthy of receiving and dealing with the Divine Wisdom contained in the Torah. The Ohr HaChaim points out that there are many very smart—even brilliant—non-Jews in the world.

This demonstrates that we were not chosen for our brains. The *Ribono shel Olam* chose us to be His people as part of a Divine Kindness, and because of His love for our patriarchs. We were chosen for our *yichus* (lineage). We are the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov whom the *Ribono shel Olam* loved.

There is another lesson here, beside the fact that brain power was not the reason why we merited Torah: It was not brain power in Parshas Yisro which caused *Hashem* to choose us, it was the *shvitzing* over the Torah.

This is a key lesson. The way a person acquires Torah is not through brain power. It is not necessarily acquired by the smartest kid in the class. It is be acquired by the person who *shvitzes*, who works the hardest.

The Ponnevezer Rav said a fantastic thing. Why were there people in Europe who, compared to today (with rare exceptions), were such great *gedolim*? We do not have someone like Rav Chaim Ozer. We do not have a Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk or a Rav Chaim Soleveitchik of Brisk. This is not to knock anyone, but is this because they were so much smarter in pre-war Europe?

The Ponnevezer Rav answered that the reason they were so much bigger was because they *shvitzed* for it. They were *moser nefesh* for it.

Today, we sit in air-conditioned *Batei Midrash*. We have everything at our fingertips. It is beautiful. I am not belittling it. The amount of Torah today exceeds what existed in Europe. Europe was not utopia. But the *gedolim* emerged as a result of their *shvitzing*.

Rav Shach—before he arrived to Eretz Yisroel—owned one shirt. He washed the shirt on Erev Shabbos so he would have something clean to wear for Shabbos. He slept on a bench in the Beis Medrash. There were days when he literally starved for lack of food. That does not exist today. The key to Torah acquisition is not brain power, but rather the pain and effort that a person endures in the acquisition of Torah.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt – Build Fences



It is written **וְהִגְבַּלְתָּ אֶת־הָהָר וְקִדַּשְׁתּוֹ - *make a boundary around the mountain and sanctify it 19:23***—since Hashem didn't want the nation ascending Har Sinai at Matan Torah. This also teaches us about setting limitations to avoid sin, as this is one of the preparations for receiving Torah. **הגבל את ההר** can also be translated to take the letters that are on the boundaries of **הר** . That is, the letters prior and that come

after ה (ד,ו) and ר (ק,ש). These four letters spell **קדוש** because when one sets protective fences for Torah, he makes himself holy as the Pasuk continues **וקדשתו** .

We are told (Devorim 22:8).. **כִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חָדָשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה לְגַגֶּךָ וְלֹא־ תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ כִּי־יִפֹּל הַנֹּפֵל מִמֶּנּוּ** - if you build a new house, you shall make a fence for your roof so that you will not place blood in your house if a fallen one falls from it. The word **גגך** has a Gematria of 26, the same sum as **י- ה- ו- ה**. Consequently, it refers to actual Torah laws. On this, we should make fences—**מעקה** . Then, even if we fall (**יפל הנפל**), it will only be from the fence (**ממנו**) and not the actual Torah law.

For going beyond the call of duty (having protective fences), one receives reward here, as this is above what is required. This is how we can explain what it says when Bilaam was travelling to curse us—**במשעל הכרמים גדר מזה וגדר מזה**, *stood in the path of the vineyards, a fence on this side and a fence on that side*. **במשעל** is an acronym for **שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא** the reward for fulfilling a Mitzva is not given in this world, as Bilaam thought he could curse us and our Mitzvos wouldn't protect since there is no reward for it in this world. This was a mistake, as the Pasuk continues, because **גדר מזה וגדר מזה** —because we made fences to avoid sin thereby going beyond the call of duty, we are rewarded in this world as well.

Abolishing The Laws Of Nature

The Ohr Hachaim tells us that Hashem made it that creation is subservient to the Torah and to those who toil over it and to do that which they decree. They can rule over it just as Hashem does.

The following are some of the numerous examples that show this:

1) In the time of Yehoshua, the Jordan River split.

2) The sun stood still in middle of the sky for Yehoshua.

3) The daughter of R' Chanina Ben Dosa mistook a container of vinegar for oil to light for Shabbos. This lit the entire Shabbos as her father said that the one who commanded oil to burn can command vinegar to burn.

4) The Ginai River split for R' Pinchas Ben Yair.

A boy came to the **Chazon Ish** for advice regarding a medical issue which seemingly required surgery. The Chazon Ish told him to arrange the surgery in a certain hospital by a specific doctor. After the advice was given, the boy asked permission to speak with the Chazon Ish in learning. For the next hour, he discussed Seder Kodshim with him in which the Chazon Ish got much pleasure from this. The Chazon Ish then said that he doesn't need to go through surgery as he explained that originally, he advised according to the normal way of the world. Now that he saw that the boy is from those who toil in Torah, he instructed that there shouldn't be surgery because Hashem acts differently with those who toil in Torah.

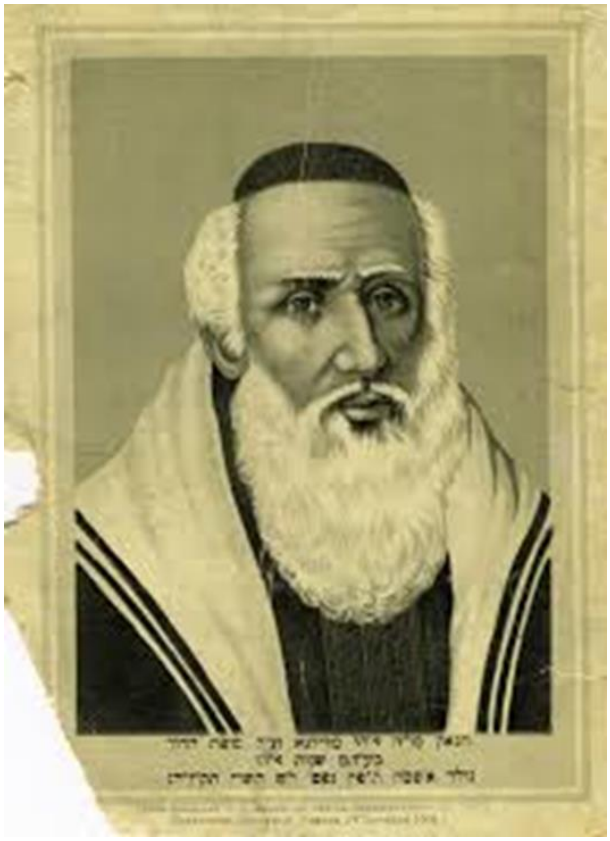


This story was being told in Lakewood by **R' Malkiel Kotler** and an elderly man present there said that he was the one it happened to!

Let us cite the unbelievable words of the **Chassam Sofer**: the Torah is **אמת** ; truth and this world is **שקר** - falsehood. Just as a little candle can push away a house full of darkness so too a bit of **אמת** can push away all the **שקר**.

310 Worlds

The last Mishna in Shas Mishnayos tells us that Hashem will endow each righteous person (**כל צדיק וצדיק**) with 310 worlds- as it says **להנחיל אהבי יש ואצרתיהם אמלא** These worlds are hinted to in the word **בראשית** , where everything is hinted to, as when it is rearranged it spells **בראת שי** - He created 310 (Gematria of **שי**) [worlds]. This is also alluded to in the name **ישששכר** which is a contraction of **יש שכר** , there is reward, as **יש** has a Gematria of 310.



Where does this number 310 come from? Many explanations are given. **The Sefer Hamaor Hagadol** cites seven distinct approaches from the Gra.

R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver has a 40-page discussion of the topic. **The Kuntres Melachim Shai** has a collection of 155 interpretations, many of them Kabbalistic. Let us cite some of the explanations.

1) There are 613 Mitzvos in the Torah and Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach, giving a total of 620. 620 worlds divided into two is 310—for the division of rewards between the Yissachar and the Zevulun, where Yissachar learns Torah and Zevulun supports him.

2) A different explanation given by the **Toras Chaim** is that although each Mitzva corresponds to an entire world, one person can't take all 620 worlds since man was created as a pair, as it says **זכר ונקבה ברא אתם** - Hashem created **אדם** (man) male and female. When a man and woman join together and observe all of the Mitzvos, they then merit all 620 worlds and divide the worlds among them—each one receives 310 worlds.

3) **The Birchas Yitzchak Al HaTorah** explains it this way: 310 is two times 155. The two times 155 correspond to the two words **קנה** in **קנה חכמה קנה בינה** - acquire wisdom, acquire understanding. The 310 worlds correspond to two acquisitions that one acquires through Torah and Mitzvos, Chochma and Binah.

4) **The Gra** relates an incredible calculation: There are 613 Mitzvos along with seven Rabbinical Mitzvos, giving a total of 620. From each Mitzva we perform we create a Malach, as the Mishna says. One who does all 620 mitzvos creates 620 Malachim. Each Malach is 2,000 Parsaos. Consequently, one who does all the Mitzvos creates 1,240,000 Parsaos of Malachim (620 multiplied by 2,000). Since the world is 4,000 Parsaos, to contain all these Malachim we need 310 worlds (1,240,000 divided by 4,000 is 310)!

When do you learn?

What are some of the secrets of those that merit to become great in Torah? Their consistency and persistency in their learning.

The older brother of the **Maharal- R' Chaim** (1515- 1588)- authored Igeres Hatiyul and Sefer Hachaim. This was written during a plague in 1578. Being confined to his home for nearly two months and unable to concentrate on complicated Talmudic discourse because of the situation, he composed these Sefarim.

R' Aryeh Henkin related that he once met ***'Avraham Yeshaya the shopkeeper'*** whom he assumed was unlearned and tried to encourage him to devote part of his day to studying Torah. He asked do you learn any Torah? The response: whenever I find time. He managed to find time 18 hours daily. This Avraham Yeshaya is also known as the great **Chazon Ish**!

It is not just the amount of time learning but also the quality of learning. The learning of the **Pnei Yehoshua** was so intense that he would sit in the cold without noticing.



One bitter cold day, his students couldn't leave their homes until the sun came out in the afternoon. When they arrived by their Rebbe, they found him still wrapped in his Tallis and Tefilin learning with icicles hanging from his beard.

Besides the quantity and quality of learning, one should also be careful not to waste the spare moments that arise. **The Chassam Sofer** remarked that he became who he was from utilizing these spare minutes.

Today we have so many opportunities to do this- whether it is waiting for…a doctor, a bus, a Chupah to begin and the like. When driving a car, one can listen to a Shiur. After all, it is said the average person spends two weeks of his life waiting for a red light to change, let alone of the amount of time he spends traveling. One can do the same when he is exercising. One who travels by bus can take a Sefer with him. Although we may not become the Chassam Sofer through this, we can become the greatest we were meant to be.

Partners in a Mitzvah

Rav Yeruchim Levovitz zt"l, Mashgiach of Yeshivas Mir, said, "The mitzvah of kibud av v'eim was not created because we have parents and we, therefore, must honour them. Rather, Hashem wanted to grant us the mitzvah of kibud, therefore, He included parents as his partners in a child's creation."

Smile!

Receiving a person with a pleasant countenance makes him feel good. We are therefore instructed to receive everyone **בסבר פנים יפות** - with a pleasant facial expression.

In **Avos Drebi Nosson** we are told that one who receives another with a pleasant facial expression even if he gave him nothing else, it is as if he gave him all the **מתנות טובות** - wonderful gifts in the world. This contrasts with one who gives his friend all the **מתנות טובות** in the world but has an unpleasant facial expression as it is as if he gave him nothing.



The Gemara Kesubos 111b says **שינים טוב המלבין** … *one who displays the whiteness of his teeth to his friend (smile) is better than one who gives him milk to drink.*

A smile has the ability to change one's day. A smile says you make me happy, I am so glad to see you. The saying goes "a smile is a curve that sets everything straight."

Here is something intriguing that was written about a smile:

The value of a smile- it costs nothing, but creates much.

It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give.

It happens in a flash and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.

None are so rich they can get along without it, and none are so poor but are richer for its benefits.

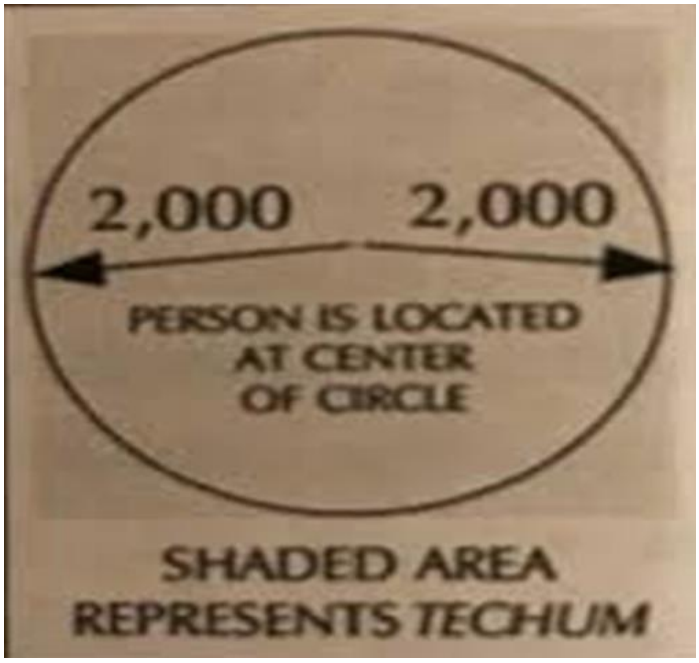
It creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friends.

It is rest to the weary, daylight to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and Nature's best antidote for the trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen for it is something that is no earthly good to anybody till it is given away.

And if in the last-minute rush, we are too tired to give you a smile, may we ask you to leave one of yours?

For nobody needs a smile so much as those who have none left to give!



Eruvai Techumin

Hashem says **אל יצא איש ממקמו** - no man may leave his place on Shabbos. **Rashi** says this refers to the 2,000 Amos of **תחום שבת**; Shabbos boundary, but this law is not stated explicitly (**ולא במפורש**).

The wording **לא במפורש** can also be understood that these 2,000 Amos are hinted to here meaning it is not stated explicitly. To illustrate: taking the word **יצא** and multiplying its letters with each other- as the **Migdal Dovid** tells us- let us see what we get. Multiplying י (10) and צ (90) we get 900. Now let us do the reverse- צ and י- and again we have 900. Adding the two together we get 1,800. Now let us multiply צ (90) with א (1). This is 90. Doing the reverse- א with צ, we again have 90. 90 and 90 is 180. This brings our total to 1,980. Lastly, let us multiply י (10) with א (1) and we get 10. Doing the reverse- א with י- we again get 10. That is 20 in total. Adding 20 to our existing 1,980, we come to a grand total of 2,000!!!

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

"And Yisro rejoiced over all the good that Hashem had done for the Jews, that he saved them from Egypt. Now I know that Hashem is greater than all idols, for the very thing that they had planned came upon them". (18:9,11)



There was a very wealthy man living in Pressburg, Slovakia. Although he was blind, he lived alone and took care of himself. A group of robbers wanted to rob him of his wealth. They noticed that he left his home every day at the same time and walked the same route, through a public park. They dug a hole in the middle of the route and covered it with twigs. They figured that the blind man would fall into the hole and hurt his ankle. The robbers would then appear and "kindly" offer to carry the man into his home. Once inside, they would rob him.

The blind man exited his home and began his daily stroll. He took the exact route that he always did. He walked to within ten feet of the hole and inexplicably turned around and returned home. That was something that he had never done before, and it saved him from being robbed. He never knew that Hashem had saved him from harm.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer zt"l, known as the **Chasam Sofer,** somehow heard about this story that had occurred in his town. He said that this story illustrates what King David meant in Tehillim (117). King David says that all the nations should praise Hashem's kindness to

the Jewish People. Why should the nations praise Hashem for that which would most likely cause them unhappiness?

The **Chasam Sofer** explains that the nations know that their evil plots against the Jews that didn't come to fruition because of Hashem's kindness to the Jews. The nations should praise Hashem because they alone clearly see the hand of Hashem protecting the Jews from harm.

How many times does Hashem save us from pain and sorrow that we are not even aware of?

Rashi says that Yisro rejoiced after hearing all that Hashem did to punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians for treating the Jewish People harshly. Furthermore, Yisro said, "Now I know that Hashem is greater than all idols". What brought Yisro to come to this conclusion? **Rashi**, explains that it was the way that Hashem punished the Egyptians. Their punishment wasn't arbitrary. Rather, it mirrored the evil that they did to the Jews. They were punished by the same means that they used against the Jews.



Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l explains, when one sees the truth in Hashem's justice it leads one to repentance. In Yisro's case, it led him to recognize Hashem as the only true Supreme Being. One sees the beauty and righteousness of Hashem's judgement when the punishment exactly matches the crime. It shows, with clarity, that there is a "master plan" by a true King.

The **Talmud** (Sanhedrin 106A) says that Yisro was aware! Yisro was one of Pharaoh's three advisors and had the inside knowledge of all the Egyptian's evil plans against the Jewish People. Yisro, alone, was able to appreciate "**all**" the good that

Hashem did for the Jews. Only he could properly praise Hashem for saving the Jews for all the evil that the Egyptians had planned.

Even though we have many challenge's in life, we have so much to be thankful for. Hashem does so much good for us. We must be appreciative of all the good that we see and for all the good that we are not even aware of.

The Cure Without Medicine



R' Yonah comments- a glad heart is as beneficial as a cure (Mishlei 17:22), that happiness can heal one from illness. It can therefore be understood that happiness can purify one's bones from sickness. In the words of the **Gra** (to Mishlei 18:14)- when one is constantly B'Simcha, he can get rid of an illness. This is shown in Ki BSimcha Saitzaiu (Yeshaya 55:12)- with Simcha, the illness goes away.

In his youth, **R' Moshe Kobriner** was hospitalized for a long period in a Lithuanian hospital. Before leaving the hospital, he asked the head doctor if there is any remedy that doctors are certain of. The reply: the patient's happy thoughts that come from the trust that he will become better are very instrumental for his recovery.

The Rambam writes the most beneficial of all types of exercise is physical stimulation to the point that the soul becomes influenced and rejoices, such as ball games. This is because the emotion of happiness will often suffice to heal the body just by its very presence.

Joy and happiness alone make many people's illnesses milder. With this we can grasp why Torah heals as in Ulchol Besaro Marpeh; a healing to his entire flesh (Mishlei 4:22) as well as Chash Brosho; one who feels pain in his head, throat, stomach or bones should study Torah (Eruvin 54a) since Torah makes one happy. In fact, this is why we can't learn on Tisha B'av (Orach Chaim 554:1)- Pikudai Hashem Yesharim Mesamchei Lev; the orders of Hashem are gladdening of the heart (Tehillim 19:9).

In 1995, Dr. Madan Kataria- an Indian physician- and his wife devised what they call laughter yoga. His technique has been adopted by over 6,000 Laughter Yoga Clubs in over 60 countries in places such as nursing homes, police departments, prisons and institutions for the blind. There is a world laughter day (first Sunday in May) which began in Mumbai, India in 1998.

In 1964, a man named Norman Cousins (his daughter is the writer Sarah Shapiro who lives in Yerusholayim) was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis, a rare disease of the connective tissues, which left him in almost constant pain. Although he was told he had only a few months to live, he disagreed. He reasoned that if stress contributed to his illness, then positive emotions should help him feel better. With his doctors' consent, he checked himself out of the hospital and into a hotel across the street and began taking extremely high doses of vitamin C (He had read and discovered that both his disease and the medicines he was taking were depleting his body of vitamin C, among other things) while exposing himself to a continuous stream of humorous films and the like. His condition steadily improved and he slowly regained the use of his limbs. Within six months he was back on his feet and within two years he was able to return to his fulltime job.

On November 30, 1990 he passed away, having survived years longer than his doctors predicted: 10 years after his first heart attack, 16

years after his collagen illness, and 26 years after his doctors first diagnosed his heart disease.



Dr. Lee Berk of the Loma Linda University of Medicine showed a comedy film to his lab staff and took blood samples when they were roaring with laughter. When he placed the samples under a microscope, he saw the blood contained an increased number of natural killer cells. The positive effect continued until the next day with the good cells remaining high 12 hours later.

In another experiment, Dr. Berk asked heart patients that were on the same medical regimen to break up into two groups. One group he asked to watch a half hour comedy every day for a year. The group that laughed needed fewer medications than those who didn't. Furthermore, only 8% of the watchers suffered a second heart attack compared to 42% in the second group.

Today, many hospitals have laughter clubs, especially for cancer patients. Tangentially, the Gemoro (Taanis 22a) speaks of two people that were destined for the next world since they were comedians and would cheer up those who were depressed.

Another Gemoro (Shabbos 30b) relates that before Rabba taught his students, he would say something humorous followed by his students laughing.

Laughter promotes relaxation and reduces stress. It speeds up metabolism, balances one's blood pressure, raises one's energy level, promotes circulation, increases oxygen level in the bloodstream as well as triggering the release of endorphins- a chemical that relieves pain and elevates one's mood. It also increases immune cells and

infection fighting antibodies, thus improving one's resistance to disease. Additionally, it diminishes anxiety and stress hormones.

Laughter loosens up the body relieving physical tension and leaving muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes. It strengthens relationships and improves teamwork. The saying goes "laughter is the best medicine". Laughter is a wondrous therapy because it costs nothing, has no side effects and is accessible to everyone, even those confined to a bed or wheelchair. It therefore has been advised to relate funny stories, read funny material and spend time with friends that are fun to be around.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]



"And when you make for Me an altar of stones, do not build them hewn, for you will have raised your sword over it and desecrated it. You shall not accept My altar on steps, so that your nakedness will not be uncovered upon it."(Shmos 20:22-23)

In this week's Parsha, the Torah teaches us two beautiful lessons in our relationships between people.

Any stones to be used for the altar in the Beis HaMikdash (the Holy Temple) were considered unfit if they were cut by an iron tool.

Rashi explains that the altar established peace between the Jewish People and Hashem. It wouldn't be appropriate to use a tool of violence in its construction. In fact, when the Beis HaMikdash was

constructed, the stones were cut with a special worm, called the shamir. Rashi continues: "Stones do not see, hear, or speak, but because they establish peace, the Torah said that you should not lift up your metal implement upon it; therefore, someone who makes peace between a man and his wife; between one family and another family, or between man and his fellow man, will surely merit that no harm shall befall him." - If you make peace between two parties that are quarrelling, you will merit protection from harm.

The next pasuk instructs that the approach to the altar be a ramp rather than steps. Why?

Rashi explains, "If there would have been steps, the kohanim would have widened their paces; and although it is not an actual uncovering of nakedness… nevertheless the widening of one's paces ascending and descending steps is akin to uncovering nakedness and this would be considered acting toward the altar in a disrespectful manner…" Rashi continues: "The stones of the altar have no understanding or sensitivity to shame, yet the Torah says, since they fill a need you must not act toward them in a disrespectful manner. How much more so should you not act disrespectfully toward your fellow man who is an image of your Creator and is sensitive to his shame."

What a beautiful lesson. We must treat our fellow man with more respect than we would treat the holy altar.

Rabbi Zelig Pliskin puts this idea in a beautiful way: The Kosel, the Western Wall, has less holiness than the altar. "If someone were to sling mud at the Kosel, everyone present would run to stop him. How much greater is our obligation to prevent someone from slinging verbal mud at another person!"

We must treat everyone with the utmost respect, both in our actions and in our words.

On Your Mind from Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky

Hashem gave the Torah to the Jews, and with a thunderous voice, called out the first of the Ten Commandments, "***I am Hashem your G-d who has taken you out of Egypt!"***

The century-old question is asked by a variety of commentators. "Why did the Almighty attribute his power over the world with this particular fact? Why not declare, ***'I am Hashem who*** created Heaven and Earth, along with everything in it!'"



The Gerrer Rebbe known as the "Beis Yisroel," had a chassid who came to him to bid farewell and receive his blessing before he departed on a business trip to France. The Rebbe gave him his blessing and wished him much success and then asked of him an unusual request. "In France," the Rebbe said, "There is a unique brand of cigars that is sold. Please find out where they sell those cigars and bring me back a box." The Rebbe then described exactly which cigars he wanted. The chassid, although taken aback by the Rebbe's strange request, readily accepted his mission, and promised the Rebbe that he will do his best to bring back those cigars.'

When he arrived in France, he tried to locate those cigars, yet he was unsuccessful. He went from store to store and even traveled to a few different towns to find those cigars, yet no one carried them. He even skipped a few scheduled meetings in order to spend more time fulfilling his Rebbe's request, yet he was still unsuccessful.

After spending two weeks in France, the majority of his time and efforts on locating those said cigars, he was forced to return home, disappointed that he had nothing to bring his Rebbe.

Upon his return, he went back into the Rebbe, and cried out, "Rebbe! I looked all over, and even searched in many towns, yet I don't have the cigars! I'm terribly sorry!"

Rav Yisroel looked at his chassid, and asked him, "Do you think I needed those cigars? I don't need those cigars. But I knew that you are entering into a foreign country where their values contradict the values of the Torah. I was afraid that during your stay in France, you may be influenced by the temptations that await you there. So, I told you to look for those cigars, and I knew that you would be thinking about your Rebbe the entire time! That is was saved you from spiritual downfall!"

Hashem treated the Jews in Egypt like infants. They were, indeed, a newborn nation. Hashem held on to them, showing them open miracles, one after another, enabling them to completely feel his presence. But as the Jewish nation traveled to their own destiny, they matured as a nation Hashem "loosened his grip" and no longer allowed his miracles to be unrestricted and easily noticed. Despite that, the Jewish Nation is expected to know and to feel the presence of Hashem, through the disguise of nature. He is watching us and every move we make, ensuring our safety.

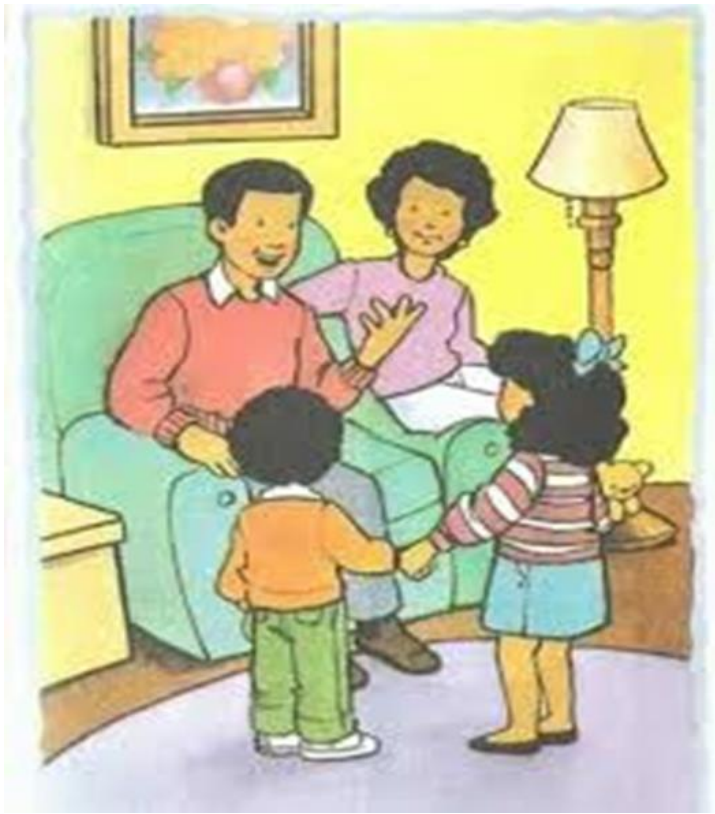
Hashem taught us this lesson at Sinai. The generation of yetzias Mitzrayim was not alive at the creation of the world, and therefore could not connect to it to relive that inspiration. Yet they all remembered the miracles of the exodus. Hashem wanted to remind them of those great miracles as a lesson for us all in the future. For down the road of life, we will always need to look back at those miracles which we experienced, in order to realize and appreciate the small miracles, the small hints of Divine intervention in our lives around which we must think about constantly.



Midei Shabbos BeShabbato: by Rabbi Eliezer Chrysler

The Magic of Seven

"Zochor es yom ha'Shabbos le'kadsho" is the seventh posuk of the Aseres ha'Dibros, and it begins with a 'zayin' – because Shabbos is the seventh day. By the same token, seven people are mentioned here – ***"you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your slave-girl, your animal and the ger toshov within your gates"***. Corresponding to them, Chazal instituted seven times 'menuchah' in the Shabbos Minchah Amidah **(*Ba'al ha'Turim*)**.



Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

כבד את אביך ואת אמך Honour your father and your mother. (20:12)

The Sefer Hachinuch explains that the shoresh, root, of the mitzvah of Kibbud Av v'Eim, honoring parents, is a sense of hakoras hatov, gratitude, to those who have acted kindly towards him. One who is a kafui tov, ingrate, is a naval, abominable person. He acts as if his benefactor, in this case his parents, are strangers to him. He quickly ignores the fact that his

parents are the reason that he is here altogether. For this alone, he should honor them. One who does not honor his parents will soon present a similar attitude toward his Father in Heaven.

One has a relationship with his parents that is unlike any other relationship, because parents are his reason for being. They are a part of him, as he carries their DNA.

While honouring parents is (should be) a given, it becomes especially difficult when parents age, or become infirm, physically or emotionally. It requires extraordinary patience, commitment, love and extreme dedication to execute this mitzvah to the fullest extent when conditions such as age, infirmity, and cognitive impairment prevail.

We would do well to consider – over and over again – another aspect of parents: Parents never give up hope on their child – regardless of age and circumstance. Parents never forget about their child, because one does not forget about himself. The following incredible story underscores this verity.

It was October of 1973; the Yom Kippur war had broken out. **Horav Yisrael Lau**, then chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, sought an opportunity to alleviate to some degree the sad state of those young soldiers who had been wounded, and were suffering both physically and emotionally. He was told that the best place for him was the hospital, which meant working round the clock to address the needs of the wounded and tend to various crises that arose from their traumas. Some soldiers were hanging onto life by a thread. Rav Lau's presence and ability to talk to the soldiers could make a major difference in their attitude and willingness to fight for life.

Rav Lau immediately acted on the advice and proceeded to the local hospital, prepared to do whatever was asked of him. It happened to be that this hospital was a burn unit that cared for those who had been wounded in explosions and fires, and those whose bodies had been critically burned. The pain that these brave men sustained was

beyond description. The screams that one heard from the rooms was something out of a bitter nightmare.

The Rav went from room to room, bed to bed, offering whatever hope and solace he could provide. Alas, it was insufficient to assuage the terrible suffering these men were experiencing.



At the end of his visit, he entered a room where two physicians, a nurse and a middle-aged woman stood around the bed of a soldier who was yelling uncontrollably. The two doctors and the nurse were in the midst of speaking with the young man's mother. Rav Lau entered and immediately asked what he could do. The doctor replied that the soldier had been burned from head to toe. "There is nothing we can do for him. We keep on raising his morphine level to give him some relief. Nothing. We have been unsuccessful in our attempts to calm him down."

Rav Lau whispered into the soldier's ear; perhaps his soothing words would help. Nothing. "Try to sleep," he said, "so that you will not feel the pain." Once again, the response was continued screaming. Seeing that he could do nothing, the Rav left to stop by another room.

To hear a young, fellow Jew screaming loudly in response to excruciating pain is a devastating, emotionally painful experience. Rav Lau was shaken, his heart pounding, due to his feelings for the soldier and his inability to help him in any way. He paced back and

forth, thinking to himself, "What can I do? What can be done to help this young man who had yet to commence the long road to recovery?"

Ten minutes passed, and Rav Lau realized that it had suddenly become quiet. No screams were coming from the soldier's room. He stopped pacing, owning up to the realization that if the screaming had suddenly ceased, something terrible must have happened. He ran to the room, tears flowing freely from his eyes. As a Rav, he would don his "other hat" and pay his final respects to this brave young man.

The Rav went to the room and walked in to find the soldier sleeping peacefully with his mother sitting next to his bed. Rav Lau was incredulous, and it was quite obvious. "What happened?" he asked. "I was here fifteen minutes ago and your son was hysterical. How did this radical change take place?"

"Rav Lau," the mother began, "my son was burned from head to toe, from top to bottom. Everywhere his skin is raw. During the entire time that he was screaming, I kept looking, searching for one spot, anything that was left unburned. Finally, I found a small spot behind his knee, about three inches in diameter, that I could put my finger on. I began to caress this spot and gently whisper to him, 'It is okay. Mommy is here. Mommy will not leave you.' I kept repeating this litany, as I continued to smooth his unburned skin. Before long, my son stopped crying and fell asleep."

An incredible story. Now for the postscript, and its connection to the concept of Kibbud Av v'Eim. Years later, Rav Lau would relate the story and add his own observation concerning a major verity in life (one which I feel we ignore more often than we care to admit):

"Who was the one to give solace to the soldier? Who was the one to be able to quiet him down and help him forget about his pain? His mother. Not the doctor, not the nurse, not his friend, not even the Rav. It was his mother, whose entire goal in life was to care for her child and love him unequivocally. Someone like that who really, really

cares never gives up. She will search and search (in every nook and cranny) until she finds that one clear, unburned spot for her to caress and give comfort."

Parents never give up on us. They always find a way to reach out and give comfort and hope. Why should we do the opposite?

Natural Love





A father has special love for a child that a child doesn't have for the father. This is because, as **R' Baruch Halevi Epstein** (1860-1941) writes, Adam was created from the ground, so he didn't have a father. As a result, there was no feeling of love of a son to father. However, Adam did have a son. Consequently, there is the love of a father to a son naturally.

With this, he explains why the Torah doesn't command fathers on raising their children and feeding them rather we just find that it is a father's obligation to teach his son Torah, a craft and so on. But the Torah itself doesn't command this. However, in the ten commandments, children are commanded on honouring their parents. Why? Because the love of a father to a son is rooted in nature, there doesn't need to be a command on that. However, the love of a son to a father is not and therefore needs to be commanded.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

"And Yisro, the Priest of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe heard all that Hashem did for Moshe and to His People, Israel." (Shmos 18:1)

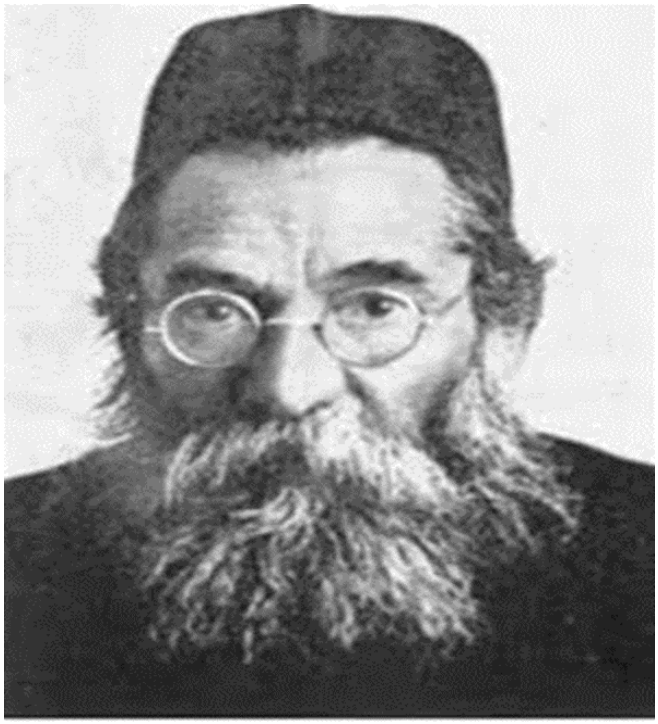
Chaim, an irreligious Jew once told a young **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l** that although he knew absolutely nothing about Sabbath observance he still had a very strong belief in Hashem. He then went on to tell Rav Shlomo Zalman his story. He was drafted into the Russian army just as World War I started. Both sides dug holes (called foxholes) and shot at each other. After many hours there was a ceasefire to gather the dead and wounded. During that time, Chaim noticed religious Jews praying to Hashem with great intensity. When their prayers were complete their faces showed calm and comfort. Chaim could not feel that comfort because he was not religious and did not know how to pray.

During one particularly fierce day of fighting, Chaim called out. G-D, it is not my fault that I don't know how to speak to you. My father never taught me. Please send me a sign that You are here, on the battlefield and I will learn what it means to be a good Jew. A moment later a single bullet hit Chaim's finger and he lost consciousness. When he awoke, in the hospital, he reinforced his commitment to learn about Judaism. After the war, Chaim remembered his commitment. He decided to postpone his learning for three months so that he could finish his degree and be able to earn a living.

After the three months he began to study Torah but didn't feel his initial enthusiasm. He eventually gave-up and remained as ignorant as before. Had he seized his moment of inspiration and first studied Torah before finishing his degree, he very likely would have been a totally different person. He would have learned Torah and acquired an understanding of how to speak to Hashem. *(based on a true story from Rabbi Pesach Krohn)*

Rashi asks, what did Yisro hear to make him want to join the Jewish people? **Rashi**, quoting the Talmud, says that he heard the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek.

Hashem had freed the Jewish nation from Egypt. When they approached the Red Sea, it split for them. So many open miracles occurred. The Sea split into 12 pathways, one for each tribe. The muddy floor became marble to make it easy to walk on. Fruit trees sprang up and fresh water became available. These are only a few of the numerous miracles that occurred. The roar of the waters splitting was even heard in distant countries. At that moment, all water in the world also split. The entire world knew about this miracle.



Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman was the spiritual mentor of the Chevron Yeshiva in 1927. He asked, what was unique about Yisro? The entire world also heard about the same events. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Chasman answered that Yisro didn't merely hear. He took action. Others may have been moved and inspired for a short while but remained where they were. Yisro, on the other hand, was inspired and acted upon it. He left his home and went to join the Jewish nation, thus changing his entire direction in life.

Throughout our lives we have moments of inspiration. We are inspired for a short while and then return to our regular routines. If we want the moments of inspiration to last and bring us closer to Hashem, we must act upon them. We must "Seize the Moment of Inspiration" and do an action to concretize those feelings; Whether

it is saying extra Tehillim, davening with more intensity or concentration (even for one tefillah) or learning a little extra.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto discusses doing mitzvos with quickness. We can apply his idea here. He says that we should rush to do a mitzvah when the opportunity to do it presents itself or even when we think of doing it. "There is no greater danger than to delay the mitzvah for each new minute can bring a hindrance to doing the mitzvah". Similarly, there is no greater danger than to delay doing a concrete, positive action when inspired. For if we don't "Seize That Moment of Inspiration" we may lose it forever, losing our opportunity for personal growth.

We must seize our moments of inspiration and act upon them immediately!

Torah Tavlin

18:21 **וְאַתָּה תֶּחֱזֶה מִכָּל־הָעָם אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל יִרְאֵי אֱלֹקִים אַנְשֵׁי אֱמֶת**

The Czar of Russia was a well-known tyrant and autocrat who commanded fear and respect wherever he went. His subjects scurried about in terror when he was around, as he was unpredictable and would kill his subjects at whim. Government Ministers who had close ties with the Czar were also greatly feared, as they wielded tremendous influence and power, by virtue of their royal connections. A meeting was once convened in the city of Brisk, and one of the highest-ranking members of the Czar's inner circle was in attendance. Every important person in Brisk was ordered to be at the meeting, including city leaders, priests and other religious figureheads, as well as the rabbi of Brisk, at the time **R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin zt"l**.

Every single person in attendance trembled whenever the minister so much as looked his way, except for the Brisker Rov, who sat quietly and calmly and looked totally at peace where he was. A talmid

who was with him later asked him how he could be so calm in the presence of the Czar's minister, and he replied, "The posuk **את ה' אלקיך תירא** commands us to fear Hashem with all 248 limbs and 365 tendons. Thus, I channel all my 'fear' into Hashem, and I have no other fear left with which to use for a human being of flesh and blood!"

R' Meir Soloveitchik zt"l explains that when Yisro told Moshe, "You shall choose out of the entire nation men of substance (**אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל**), G-d fearers (**יִרְאֵי אֱלֹקִים**)..." he was showing him how to know who were men of substance. The men who have Yiras Hashem, and fear G-d with all their might, are true **אַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל** - *men of great substance and worth*. These men fear no one except for Hashem and therefore have no other fear in them at all (Ibn Ezra). Such men are worthy of being judges and leaders of the nation for these people will not be swayed by the threats of others since they do not fear anyone or anything - only Hashem. Moshe Rabbeinu used this very technique to appoint proper judges over the people.

L'Maaseh

Shloime Kaufman's eyes moved rapidly across the familiar faces of the men packed into shul on this sunny Shabbos morning. As Gabbai, he had been going through this routine for the past twenty years, looking out over the congregation and choosing a few each week for aliyos. He always recalled the famous words of the Yerushalmi (Megilla 4) that Krias HaTorah is likened to the Maamad of Kabbolas HaTorah and a Gabbai is akin to Hakadosh Boruch Hu on Har Sinai, as he gives out the aliyos.

This was a job that came with its challenges, but it also gave him an opportunity to count his blessings. The world Shloime Kaufman had known as a child and young man in Poland had been erased. It had collapsed all around him, snuffing out the lives of his loved ones. At the time, he didn't know what would become of the Jewish people.

And yet, here he was, the grandfather of a beautiful, Torah-observant family, Gabbai of a thriving shul, surrounded by friends and family.

Shloime scanned the rows of men as the Torah was removed from the ark. His eyes rested upon an unfamiliar face, a man about his own age with a short grey beard. He hadn't seen him in shul before, must be a guest. Suddenly, the man's features and expression jarred loose a powerful flash of recognition! It was Menachem Reiner, his closest childhood friend! It was Menachem, the boy with whom he had grown up in their small Polish shtetl, with whom he had attended yeshivah in Bialystock. It was Menachem, the young man to whom he had clung, and who had clung to him, as they began their cattle-car journey into the fearsome blackness of Auschwitz. They had stuck together and given each other courage and hope.



Bearing the numbers the Nazis had tattooed on their arms, they had found in each other the strength to hold onto their humanity and resist becoming only numbers. They had vowed to help each other survive, both in body and soul. And they did survive, Boruch Hashem. But when the war ended, each went his own way, eager to begin anew. For sanity's sake, they each tucked the past away into a deep, locked box that would be opened only on rare occasions.

Menachem had settled in Israel and Shloime Kaufman had obtained a visa for America. They had lost touch with each other. That was many years ago. Now with unbelieving eyes and trembling hands,

Shloime Kaufman beheld the unmistakable face of his friend once again. Shlomie decided in his mind: Menachem Reiner would get the sixth aliyah. As the Torah reading began, the Gabbai felt as if his heart could not be contained in his chest. Nevertheless, he clamped a tight lid on his emotions and performed his duty, calling up each aliyah with the traditional chant of "Yaamod" followed by the man's Hebrew name. By the fifth aliyah, however, beads of sweat were sparkling on his forehead and tears were welling up in his eyes. He prayed that when the time came to call up number six, his voice would be able to break free of his tight throat. He knew the name - he could never forget Menachem ben Yehoshua. But when the time came, Shloime could not open his mouth. There were no words fit for this moment. All the suffering locked away in that figurative box was now out in the open, laid out before his eyes, and it was too much to bear.

The congregation began murmuring and looking toward their once fearless leader, fearing that the pale, trembling man was becoming ill. And then, a deep cry rose up inside the Gabbai, a cry to Hashem that contained in its broken sound all of His children's cries of anguish. Shloime Kaufman turned in the direction of his friend and at last found his voice. "Yaamod, 57200148!" he called.

The baffled men in the shul did not understand. What was this number? What had become of Shloime Kaufman? But in the back of the room, one man understood. The number was Menachem's number, tattooed on his arm as a lifetime reminder of the darkest period of Jewish history, the epic tragedy of his people which he had witnessed with his own eyes. The entire shul sat in stony silence as Menachem moved slowly toward the bima.

Menachem needed no introduction. With tears coursing down his cheeks, he cried out, "Shloimele! Shloimele! Is it really you?" "Yes, Menachem, it's really me!" They wept on each other's shoulders, rocking gently. Words were powerless to carry the chaotic emotions.

The entire shul sat spellbound, witnessing a moment that could have melted a heart of iron. As these two men stood together, living witnesses to the Jewish people's miraculous survival, it seemed clear that Hashem would never forsake His people - *the Am Segula!*

Project Mesorah - Rabbi Paysach Krohn's inspiring Erev Shabbos Bracha

Rav Pam brings down a very interesting **Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh**.





Rav Pam once went to visit a Rav, a friend of his, who was in a hospice, *nebech* dying. He wanted to bring him something, so he brought him some fresh oranges. The rabbi was not interested in them. However, he did have a neighbour in the room who was unfortunately paralysed from the chest down. He was able to move his hands, and Rav Pam gave this man the oranges. The poor fellow was so thirsty that he grabbed the oranges, and he sucked out the juices.

Rav Pam indicated that he had done a good deed, so maybe Hashem should have paid him back right away. But Hashem waited, because many years later, there was a time when Rav Pam was dehydrated, and he was able to get hold of a lemon and suck out the juice to quench his thirst and to prevent him fainting.

He brings the **Ohr Hachaim Hakodosh,** who says on the pasuk וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לַאֲלָפִים לְאֹהֲבַי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי. 20:6 **ועשה חסד לאלפים, "*and Who performs deeds of loving kindness even to thousands.*"**

שגם עושה חסד אין הקדוש ברוך הוא משלם לו כל חסדו תיכף ומיד אלא בוחר לו אופן פרעון הנאות לו לדורות והולך ופורע בכל דור אשר יצטרך אליו ויש בו דבר המעמיד הגנה והצלה עד אלפים . *The main point is that even when G'd pays a reward He does not pay the entire reward in one generation but chooses the instalments of such a reward in such a way that it maximises enjoyment of it over many generations. In a certain sense the reward is a form of protection against harmful experiences in store for subsequent generations.* Hashem does chessed, sometimes thousands of generations later. *Hashem doesn't pay one back straight away for the good that one does. Hashem waits to pay back, sometimes generations later.*

You could be driving, and you are about to get into an accident. All of a sudden you realise; it's not going to happen. It is a miracle- you know why? Because thirty years ago, your grandfather or grandmother did something special.



When you do something good, you might feel, how come other people seem to have a lot of wonderful things and we don't.

Hashem keeps a scorecard! He doesn't pay back right away. Your grandson or granddaughter is going to receive that help or reward, all because of the wonderful things that you did. So let us never lose faith, and never get impatient, because Hashem always pays back eventually, just not always right away.

You should have a frailichen Shabbos and a lichtige Shabbos.

Torah Tavlin



The Vilna Gaon zt"l (Hamaor Hagadol) is quoted as follows: "The last Mishna in Shas tells us that Hashem will endow each righteous person with 310 worlds (ש'י) as it says **להנחיל אהבי יש ואצרתיהם אמלא**. There are 613 mitzvos along with seven Rabbinical mitzvos, giving a total of 620. From each mitzvah we perform we create a malach. One who does all 620 mitzvos creates 620 malachim. Each malach is 2,000 Parsaos (Chullin 91b. A Parsah is 8,000 Amos.) Consequently, one who does all the mitzvos creates 1,240,000 Parsaos of malachim (620 multiplied by 2,000). Since the world is 4,000 Parsaos (see Pesachim 94a and Tosafos, excluding the desert which is a place that lacks water and life), to contain all these malachim we need 310 worlds (1,240,000 divided by 4,000 is 310)!"

Rabbi Alexander (Sender) Linchner z"l, the Founder of Boys Town Jerusalem, was born and raised in the United States, right after the turn of the 20th century. He was one of the few American bochurim to study at the great yeshivos of Eastern Europe before the Holocaust. During the course of his studies at the Yeshivah at Radin, Poland, he came under the direct, personal influence of the holy **Chofetz Chaim, R' Yisroel Meir Kagan zt"l**, and for the rest of his life, he always considered the Chofetz Chaim as his personal mentor.

He returned to the United States before the outbreak of World War II, where he became principal at Yeshivah Torah Vodaath, in Brooklyn, NY, working under the guiding hand of his father-in-law, **R' Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz zt"l**, who was also the founder of

Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. He and his son-in-law trained and inspired a generation of Jewish educators who founded Jewish day schools in many American Jewish communities, forming the backbone of Jewish education in this country.

While still learning in Radin, Sender was surprised when one day, a few months into the zman, he received a message that the Chofetz Chaim wished to speak with him. Understandably, this made the young American bochur nervous and anxious. The Chofetz Chaim was already an old man, well on in his years, and he generally did not meet with any of the students in a private setting. In fact, not only did Sender Linchner never merit to speak with the Chofetz Chaim before, he had even only managed to briefly see his holy countenance just a few times.

As he entered the home of the Tzaddik, he was quite anxious and tense, but the warmth exuded by the Chofetz Chaim helped him relax quite a bit. The Chofetz Chaim began by asking him how he was faring in yeshivah, how often he is in touch with his family back in the United States, and other personal questions about his general well-being. Sender felt better that the Chofetz Chaim was taking an interest in his needs and really cared. He then showered him with a multitude of berachos and well wishes that Sender should have much success with his learning, and with all his endeavours.

When Sender Linchner returned to the yeshivah, a crowd gathered around him, as everyone was curious to know what the highly unusual meeting was about. Sender shrugged his shoulders and explained to them that he himself had no idea why he was invited to meet with the Chofetz Chaim, and based on the conversation, there was nothing specific that the Tzaddik wished to tell him. Of course, he was still thrilled, and it was an experience he cherished and never forgot.

A few days later, the reason for the meeting became known. It was only a few weeks before Pesach and there was a severe shortage of

flour in Russia. Always thinking about the needs of Klal Yisroel before his own, the Chofetz Chaim was very concerned that millions of Jews living in Russia would not be able to procure matzos for Pesach.



One evening, the Chofetz Chaim received the incredible news that the government of the United States of America, delivered a huge emergency shipment of flour intended for the starving Russian people. The Chofetz Chaim was ecstatic about the news. The Russian Jews will now have matzah for Pesach. It was a tremendous relief for him. Wanting to express his great appreciation to the United States for the kindness and largesse they carried out, the Chofetz Chaim was well aware that simply writing a letter addressed to the American Government would probably not do the trick. Yet, he still very much wished to somehow express his appreciation to the American people.

The Chofetz Chaim therefore invited the only American bochur at that time learning in the Radin Yeshivah to his house where he made him feel very special and showered him with berachos. This was the only way he could show a measure of Hakaras Hatov to the United States for the kindness it had done. Although he knew that the American Government and the American people would never hear about his gesture of thanks, he nevertheless understood that gratitude was something that a person must show, regardless if the person who extended the kindness is aware of the thanks or not. ***We must always recognize the good in others as well as the good done for us by others.***

Torah Tavlin

וַיָּעָף אֵלַי אֶחָד מִן־הַשְּׂרָפִים וּבְיָדוֹ רִצְפָּה בְּמֶלְקָחַיִם לָקַח [ישעי׳ו:ו]

And one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal; with tongs..



The Haftorah says, just as all of Klal Yisroel experienced the awesome "vision" of Hashem on Har Sinai, Yeshaya HaNavi's vision of the heavenly Merkavah revealed Hashem surrounded by Seraphim in all His glory. The Navi describes how an angel used special tongs to transport a fiery coal. Why did Yeshaya deem it necessary to recount the specific tool that the angel used to carry the coal? Doesn't that seem like a trivial piece of information in the context of the incredible vision?

R' Shimon zt"l of Frankfurt quotes the **Yalkut** that as the angel attempted to cleanse the Navi's lips from his "misdeed" the angel burnt himself while Yeshaya remained unscathed. An incredibly powerful lesson to learn is that the power and heights which a person can reach is unimaginable. The angel which was tasked with transporting the fiery coal to Yeshaya HaNavi was in the highest spheres imaginable, yet the Navi who was a mere human was able to withstand the fiery coal without the aid of special tongs due to his high level of Kedusha. However, the angel who used the tool got burnt.

At Har Sinai every Jewish soul stood and saw the holy Shechina and the effects of that incredible experience are embedded in the very fibre of every Jewish soul placing him on a tremendous level of Kedusha. To attain an even higher level, a person must fuel his inner drive that will make him want to continue growing in righteousness and Kedusha.

Concepts In Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

וַיֶּחַדְ יִתְרוֹ עַל כָּל־הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה ה' לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הִצִּילוֹ מִיַּד מִצְרָיִם



The moment Yisro arrived in the desert and was informed of all the great miracles that occurred to the Jewish people, the posuk states: **וַיֶּחַדְ יִתְרוֹ**. Chazal tell us "*He (Yisro) circumcised himself and converted.*" Rashi explains that the word **וַיֶּחַדְ** means he took a sharp knife – **לשון חד** - and performed a Bris Milah on himself. Here, in Parshas Yisro, however, Rashi translates the word **ויחד** as **וישמח** - Yisro was happy for all the good that Hashem did for Bnei Yisroel, such as the mann, the **באר**, the Torah, and their **הצלה**. The question is: **ממה נפשך** - either **ויחד** is related to Bris Milah or to simcha. If **ויחד** refers to the sharp knife of the Milah, then the Torah should have said **וימל יתרו** . If **ויחד** is related to simcha, then the Torah should have used the words **וישמח יתרו** to make it clear that Yisro was indeed happy.

I once heard a vort directly from the **Bobover Rebbe, R' Shlomo Halberstam ZT"L**, who quoted a gemara **שבת קל.** which states that every mitzvah a Yid does with simcha, gives him merit that all his

future **דורות** will continue to do that mitzvah with simcha. There is great simcha by the mitzvah of Milah, as the Mohel recites the posuk from Tehillim **...שש אנכי על** , as well as the posuk from Mishlei **ישמח אביך ואמך** and thus it continues from generation to generation. However, if the posuk would just say **וימל יתרו**, then we would never realize that Yisro did this mitzvah b'simcha. On the other hand, if the posuk would just say **וישמח יתרו**, we would never understand how it relates to Bris Milah altogether. In order to project both objectives at the same time, the Torah employed one word that encompasses both meanings - **ויחד** - a sharp instrument for Milah, and also simcha, as Rashi and the Targum translates as well.

May we all be zocheh that our mitzvos be done **בנחת ובשמחה רבה** so that all our future **דורות** will continue following in our footsteps.

Concepts In Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

18:6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲנִי חֹתָנְךָ יִתְרוֹ בָּא אֵלֶיךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ עִמָּהּ



I once asked the **Alter Bluzhever Rebbe zt"l** a question: When Yisro came to the desert, he told Moshe, "I have come to you - **וְאִשְׁתְּךָ** - with your wife - **וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ עִמָּהּ** - and with her two sons. Weren't they his sons as well? The Rebbe answered me, "I lost my first Rebbetzin and family in the Holocaust. Hashem was good to me and gave me a second wife along with her two young children that I adopted as my own. But she stipulated that she would be in charge of their chinuch; to guide, mould, and teach them to grow into ehrliche Bnei Torah." This is what the Rebbe answered me: Tzippora was the wife of Moshe, but she

was in charge of the chinuch of her children, and the choshuver Bluzhever Rebbetzin followed her example. Yisro said to Moshe, "Your wife, Tzippora, is in charge of bringing up her two sons as true Bnei Torah and as such, the children are hers!"



This reminds me of a story of **R' Isaac Sher zt"l**,(1875-1952) who was once walking with a talmid when a young woman carelessly pushing a baby carriage, almost knocked him over. The talmid said, "What a chutzpa! Does she think she owns the entire sidewalk?" The Rosh Yeshivah replied, "Look, it is now 11:00 am. All I did this morning was take care of myself; washing, davening, eating, and walking for my health, but I have done nothing for anyone else. This young woman surely slept very little last night; got up early for her husband and children, waking them, dressing them, feeding them, kissing them, and sending them off to school to learn. How can I complain and criticize this woman who has already done so much for others?"

By Shiluach Hakan, we send away the mother bird before we take the chicks because it is a mother's natural instinct to stay and protect her little ones (Rambam). **The Ohr Sameach** adds: she has special protection from Hashem because she is occupied with raising her next generation. Surely a Jewish mother who cares for her children's future deserves all the credit in the world!

"Nothing is as lost as lost time".- The Chofetz Chaim, Zt''l



Drush V'Chiddush

וְאֵת שְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם הָאֶחָד גֵּרְשֹׁם כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי 18:3

When Yisro arrived in the desert, he brought Moshe's two sons with him. The Torah specifically points out their names: "Gershom, because he (Moshe) said, '*I was a stranger in a foreign land. And Eliezer, because he said, 'The G-d of my father came to my aid and rescued me from Pharaoh's sword.'*" Why does the Torah recount this now? What is so timely and important about these names?



R' Simche Zissel Broide zt"l provides us with a great lesson. Moshe Rabbeinu had just witnessed - and even personally participated in - miracles the likes of which the world had never seen. The Makkos, Krias Yam Suf and its many accompanying miracles, the war against Amalek and the Mann. Yet, Moshe Rabbeinu did not forget the "smaller" miracles that he personally experienced in his own lifetime; whether it was having a child, staying alive in golus, or being rescued from Pharaoh's executioner.

One's personal miracles, one's daily survival, is something that should not be overshadowed, even by something as powerful as the Geulah - the ultimate redemption - itself! When we say "Modim Anachnu Lach," three times a day, and we give thanks to Hashem, - "*for the*

miracles that are with us daily," we recognize that life itself is a miracle. A big miracle. We eat, sleep and breathe, because Hashem allows us to. We survive in this harsh golus because it is the will of Hashem. But at the same time, we should try to name - or at least think about - some of the smaller miracles that pertain to our personal lives, just as Moshe named his sons to remind him of the "small" miracles. Then, we will realize that we are thanking Hashem for these gifts forever, even after we witness the ultimate miracles of the Geulah Shelaima, speedily and in our days!

וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ 19:5



On November 3, 1957, the Soviet Union sent a spacecraft (Sputnik 2) into orbit around the earth, with a dog named Laika inside. The dog was a stray taken off a Moscow street and strapped to a flight harness. The whole world held its breath in captivated amazement over the fabulous accomplishment of a living and breathing being circling the earth. It was the early days of the "Space Race." The Sputnik and its canine passenger were the talk of town. Even in the local synagogues, this amazing journey was discussed.

When one of the prominent Chassidim in Russia in those days heard about the feat, he commented: "I hope that we don't behave like

that dog in the spacecraft." The others looked at him oddly and he explained his words.

"The dog is sitting there inside the Sputnik rocket eating, drinking and doing nothing. He doesn't know how to fly a spacecraft. He has no idea whatsoever about what is going on around him. He is not aware of the fact that millions of people are following the orbit of his spacecraft with bated breath. Neither does he understand that he is sent as a messenger fulfilling a vital task.

In fact, every Jew has been given an incomparable greater mission than that dog. We are constantly being watched from Heaven in every action we perform, with the hope that we shall succeed in our mission in this world. What would be if we'd only eat and drink and just take care of our own needs like that dog, not realizing our most important mission?"

The Jewish Nation is an "Am Segula" - a nation of princes, chosen to perform a mission in this world. Our mission is to spread the glorious Name of Hashem to every corner of the world - not to sit back and act like an idle dog!



Chacham Rabbeinu Yehudah Birdogo zt"l (Mayim Amukim) would say: וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר 19:2

Chazal tell us that at Har Sinai, Moshe Rabbeinu was instructed to teach the men separately from the women, as the posuk states, '*So shall you say to the House of Yaakov*' - referring to the women - '*and you shall tell to Bnei Yisroel*' referring to the men.

Why did the women precede the men in this context? Because the posuk clearly states: 'And Yisroel encamped there across from the mountain,' which refers only to the males. The women, in keeping with the proper observance of tznius stood a bit further away. To emphasize that their distance was not a demonstration of disrespect towards the women, but rather in keeping with standards of modesty, they were instructed first, to show that this is the proper path of service of Hashem, by separating the genders."



Our Sages teach us that the Kabollas HaTorah of our forefathers, thousands of years ago, was not an isolated incident. In fact, in every generation, we revisit this "Kaballah" - this unique acceptance of Torah primacy in our lives, and in return, the Torah uplifts us, guides us and protects us. With our great leaders showing us the way, each and every Jew, can have an impact on the world, not only for himself and his family, but with the power of his "Kabollas HaTorah" on any level, he can affect the lives of others in a great and meaningful way.

A couple living abroad was married for over twenty years but unfortunately, they were not blessed with children. They went to doctors for treatment and prayed at holy sites, year after year, to no avail.

Someone suggested that they should move to the Holy Land, for Chazal tell us that settling in Eretz Yisroel is a segulah for children.

They followed this advice and uprooted their lives, but three years later, however, there was still no change in their situation.

One day, they bumped into an old friend, a neighbour from their former city. He inquired how they were faring and when he heard that they were still waiting for children, he tried to console them. "Please, don't be sad," he said to them. "If after twenty-three years nothing has changed, you have no reason to keep hoping for children. There are many couples without children, and it's not the end of the world; there are many other mitzvos in the Torah that you can fulfil."

This man did not mean any harm, he was simply ignorant. He saw the sadness on their faces, and he thought that he was comforting them, helping them face their disappointment, and giving them strength to carry on with their lives. When this man returned to his home abroad, he told his wife that he met the couple and what he had said. She scolded him harshly, "How can you say such a thing? Why did you have to mix into other people's business?"

The man tried to defend himself. "They looked so sad, if you would have seen their miserable faces, you would have tried to console them as well," he replied to his wife.

But she wouldn't hear of it. "How do you know they'll never have children? Even after all this time, how can you be so sure?" she asked.

The man thought for a moment. "You know what?" he finally said, "If they do have children, after twenty-three years, I will sell my entire business, move to Eretz Yisroel, and become a kollel yungerman! How would you like that?" She agreed to his off-hand proposition, and the subject didn't come up for another two years, until they heard the miraculous news: Amazingly, after two years of tearful davening and hopeful treatments, the couple was blessed with twins, a girl and a boy! It was the talk of the town. Everyone was elated.

Everyone, except for one man who had opened his mouth foolishly, and now he began to panic. He took the first flight to Israel and drove straight to Bnei Brak to **R' Chaim Kanievsky**.

As soon as he was admitted, he told him the whole story. He wanted to know what should he do? "What's the question?" asked R' Chaim, dismissively. "Keep your word!" The man began to panic again. "Can't I do hataras nedarim?" he asked with great urgency. "No! Your neder was in the category of a neder mitzvah, which cannot be annulled," replied R' Chaim.

Practically hyperventilating, the man tried one last time. "Maybe I can appoint a shaliach who will learn instead of me in kollel? I will support him and provide him with all his needs. He will lack for nothing!" R' Chaim looked at him and smiled. "That's actually a good idea, to appoint a shaliach. But you should do it in the opposite direction. You learn in kollel, and the shaliach will run the business!" R' Chaim was quiet for a moment and then with a piercing glance, he added, "Maybe they had children in the merit of your neder to learn in kollel!"

R' Shlomo Levenstein shlit'a who told this story, comments: "Amazing! This Yid hadn't begun learning yet. All he did was make a neder to start and already, in the zechus of his kaballah, a barren woman had children! Is it not clear to everyone that Torah study is oxygen! It provides vitality for the entire world. It causes barren woman to have children; it heals all illnesses. Nothing is greater!"

***Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, zt"l, the Kotzker Rebbe**, would say, "**If I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you. But if I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you!**"*

Concepts In Avodas Halev - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman

וְאֵת שְׁנֵי בָנָיהָ אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם הָאֶחָד גֵּרְשֹׁם כִּי אָמַר גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נָכְרִיָּה וְשֵׁם הָאֶחָד אֱלִיעֶזֶר 18:3-4



Rabbeinu Bechaye notes that according to proper dikduk, the posuk should say, "The name of the first (son) was Gershom ... and the second (**השני**) was Eliezer." Why does it say **שֵׁם הָאֶחָד** by both sons? He answers that since they had such tremendous achdus with one another, they were considered **אֶחָד**- "like one." My machshava here that Moshe was teaching us a lesson in raising children. Two brothers who grow up together should always be considered equal, on the same standard, without one being singled out over the other, just as the Torah equates Moshe and Aharon in Parshas Vaera. Thus, it says **שֵׁם הָאֶחָד** by each child to reinforce this notion that there isn't a "first" and "second", but rather each one is individualized.

This lesson applies to the mitzvah of Kibud Av V'em as well. Children must respect both parents and not disregard one over the other. The Torah could have written, **כבד את אביך ואמך** - "Honour your father and mother." However, it says, **ואת אמך** - with the extra word, placing both father and mother on the same pedestal, for they both must be honoured, they both must be individually respected. And if parents, as they age, want their children to show them the proper respect, they must realize that each child is like a growing tree which not only needs water and nurturing but also needs the proper care, attention, love and respect. True, we are all busy today -

working, learning, simchos, chessed - and many times we lose sight of finding time for our children.

A story is told of a young girl who stole the afikoman at the Pesach Seder and before bentching her father turned to her and asked, "Rochel, what do you want in return for the afikoman?" With tears in her eyes she said, "Tatty, all I want is a five-minute conversation and a good-night kiss once in a while." This is something that money, gifts and trips cannot buy.

If we treat each child like an **אחד**, it will be returned to us in our old age with their **כבוד אב ואם** and our beracha of **אריכות ימים**. Remember: the best presents a parent can give their children is their presence, which will be returned to them in their old age.



In Sivan 5771 (June 2011), HaGaon R' Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l underwent surgery to repair an artery near his heart. The surgery was performed at Shaarei Tzedek Medical Center in Jerusalem by Dr. Daniel Clair, Chairman of the Department of Vascular Surgery at the Cleveland Clinic, who was flown in especially for the complicated surgery.

The day after the operation, which was deemed a success, Rav Elyashiv was seen holding a Gemara, learning at every possible moment. At one point, Rav Elyashiv asked one of his close confidants how to say "Thank you" in English. He wished to personally thank Dr. Clair for his exceptional work.

That very day, Rav Elyashiv took the doctor's hand and said in English, "Thank you!" Dr. Clair was visibly moved. Later, he was asked why he needed to say these words in English, when someone could

have translated it for him. Rav Elyashiv replied, "Although in davening we have a shaliach tzibbur who repeats the Shemona Esrai out loud, when it comes to 'Modim D'Rabbanan' each person is obligated to say it himself. Why? Because an inner feeling of gratitude is not something one can give over to a shaliach. A person must give thanks in his own words. I am extremely grateful to the good doctor, and I wanted to tell him myself!"

As soon as Yisro heard about all the great miracles that Bnei Yisroel experienced, he immediately thanked Hashem and recognized Him as the One true G-d. Not only that, but Chazal tell us that Yisro's outpouring of thanks for a miracle he only heard about and did not even see, was greater than all the gratitude of Moshe and Klal Yisroel. As the Gemara states: "It was a disgrace to Moshe and the 600,000 (Jews) who did not say **ברוך** (blessed) until Yisro came along and said **ברוך ה'** - 'Blessed is Hashem.'" Gratitude must be put into words - and it must come straight from the heart!



From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman

וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגָּלֶה עֶרְוָתְךָ עָלָיו
20:23

Parshas Yisro is one of the most fascinating, inspiring, and uplifting parshiyos in the Torah as we read the account of Matan Torah at Har Sinai. In this parsha we affirm that the Torah is **מן השמים**, and was received by all of Klal Yisroel through Moshe Rabbeinu. These fundamental principles of faith are recorded here and embraced forever by the Jewish people.

After the entire episode of Matan Torah takes place in all its glory, the parsha concludes with a message for all future generations. The final posuk discusses a seemingly unrelated law about building a ramp for the kohanim to walk on when they bring sacrifices up to the mizbeach (altar), as opposed to steps going up. Now, what could possibly be the connection between these two seemingly unrelated topics? What does Kabolas HaTorah have to do with building a ramp for the mizbeach?



Rashi tells us something fascinating - a foundation of the entire Torah. He writes that the reason we are commanded to make a ramp rather than steps is to avoid **גילוי ערוה** by taking large strides walking up steps. It is a disgrace for the holy stones of the mizbeach to be exposed to the "Ervah" - nakedness, of the kohanim (the kohanim wore loose pants under their outer garments) and therefore to protect the honour of the mizbeach a ramp is built rather than steps!

Now, if we must go to such lengths to protect the honour of **stones**, denotes Rashi, how much more must we be exceedingly careful with the honour of our fellow Jews?

With this idea, the account of the giving of the Torah is concluded because without proper respect for a fellow Jew's honour, there is no way one can truly be mekabel the Torah and live a proper life!

Matan Torah begins with the unity of the Jewish encampment at Har Sinai and ends with a lesson on honour and respect. In fact, this is the beginning, the ending, and the entire body of the Torah - without which one can only dream of being a true member of the **Am Segula** that we are meant to be!

The chassidic dynasty of Belz is one rich in tradition and righteous devotion. The sleepy little Galician town of Belz may have been small in size, but it was a towering bastion of chassidic zeal and piety. Beginning with the holy **Sar Shalom** who became the first Belzer Rebbe in 1817, Belzer Rebbes have led their flock for close to two hundred years and during that span, most have emerged as leading lights, not only for their followers, but for all of Klal Yisroel.

The previous Belzer Rebbe, **R' Aharon Rokeach ZT"L**, was a spiritual giant and a true saint in the literal sense of the word. Although he was a mere mortal, he was viewed by many followers in the pre-war generation, Jews and gentiles alike - and even contemporaries - as nothing less than a malach, an angel!

Shortly after his wedding, R' Aharon, the young future Rebbe, came down with a life-threatening illness which took a terrible toll on his already weak and frail physical state. His ravaged body became extremely susceptible to infection and his doctor warned him against any form of contact which could make him sicker. He especially forbade him from going to the mikvah, a practice he would do each and every morning since he was a little child, for the risk of contracting an illness there was especially high.

His father, **R' Yissachar Dov ZT"L**, suspected that his son might not take the doctor's dire warning to heart and so he called R' Aharon in to his private study and told him in no uncertain terms that he must obey the doctor's orders. "I hereby command you, as your father, that you may not go into the mikvah under any circumstances until you are all better and cleared by the doctor to do so."

One cold wintry morning, a relative noticed R' Aharon leave his house in the pre-dawn hour and walk in the direction of the mikvah. He watched as R' Aharon entered the mikvah building and did not re-emerge for another fifteen minutes. The relative was shocked for it was known in the family that the Rebbe has strictly commanded

his son not to go to the mikvah. He couldn't believe that R' Aharon would so blatantly disregard his father's stern command.

The next morning, he decided to see for himself. Waking up extremely early, he hid himself inside the mikvah building and waited to see what R' Aharon would do. Sure enough, it wasn't long before he saw a lone figure stealthily making his way through the darkness to the mikvah building. It was R' Aharon, and the relative watched with curious anticipation as R' Aharon walked inside and didn't even bother to turn on the lights. He quickly walked over to one of the benches and unhesitatingly removed his clothing. The room was unheated and quite cold at that hour, but the young future Rebbe didn't seem to notice.

Placing his clothes on a bench, he strode over to the pool of water and walked down the few steps leading to the water. The relative was stunned as it appeared that R' Aharon was about to immerse himself in the water, in direct contravention to his father's orders. But then, R' Aharon suddenly stopped. Standing on the final step, peering into the water's depth, he announced evenly: *"Behold, I am prepared and ready to fulfil the commandment of obeying (my) father not to immerse in the mikvah."* At that, R' Aharon turned around, walked up the steps and back to the bench where his clothing was piled. He got dressed quickly, walked out of the mikvah building and went straight home.

The relative remained in his hiding place for some time after, mesmerized by what he had just witnessed. R' Aharon was forbidden by his father from immersing in the mikvah, but that did not mean that he would spare himself from the burden of walking in the cold and frost to the mikvah or save himself the trouble of getting undressed and then redressed again. The only thing he could not do was go into the mikvah's water - because that was what his father expressly forbade him from doing!

Torah Gems

19:19 וַיְהִי֙ קוֹל֣ הַשֹּׁפָ֔ר הוֹלֵ֥ךְ וְחָזֵ֖ק מְאֹ֑ד מֹשֶׁ֤ה יְדַבֵּר֙ וְהָאֱלֹקִ֣ים יַעֲנֶ֔נּוּ בְּקֽוֹל



One of the differences between Moshe Rabbeinu and the other Neviim was that they were unable to speak to Hashem; they simply heard His message. Moshe, however, could converse directly with the Almighty. This distinction between Moshe and the other prophets is made by the Rambam, who further notes that Bnei Yisroel did not have complete faith in Moshe until they witnessed the events at Har Sinai. Hence, Moshe's uniqueness was clearly demonstrated at that time, when the people saw with their own eyes how he approached the mountain and heard him speak directly to Hashem.

Every year at the annual Agudath Israel convention, a large crowd gathers to hear and be inspired by words of Torah and hashkafa from Gedolei Yisroel, Rabbanim and important lay leaders. One of the regulars at the annual convention in years past was a man who came in from out of-town specially to hear the speech delivered by **R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L**.

Year after year, at great expense and effort to himself, he would arrive in time to hear R' Moshe speak and then he would leave. Many people knew him as he was an annual participant, but what most people did not know was that this man did not speak a word of Yiddish - and R' Moshe addressed the crowd only in Yiddish! And yet,

he came, every year without fail, and sat through R' Moshe's keynote address, concentrating and appreciating every single word.

Someone who knew him finally asked him, "Why do you come running here specially to hear R' Moshe when you don't even understand what he is saying?"

"What? Do you think I need to understand what R' Moshe is saying?" retorted the man. "When Moshe Rabbeinu spoke at Har Sinai, it says **משה ידבר** - but only Hashem could hear him. The words are not important. I just need to look at the tzaddik and my neshama understands everything he says!"



From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה 18;1 **וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ**

What did Yisro hear that made him pick himself up and change his entire life by becoming a member of the Jewish people? Yisro heard about the splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek. (Rashi)

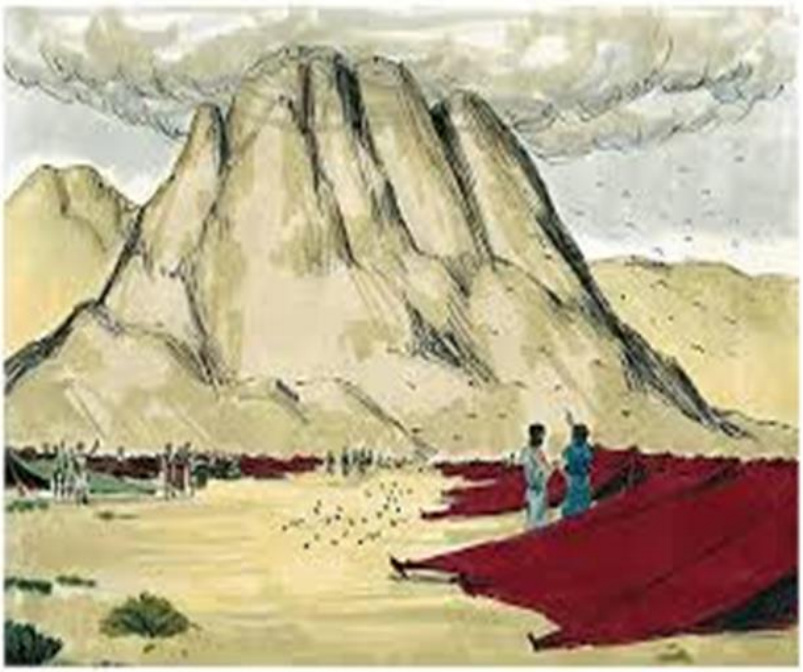
R' Elya Lopian ZT"L asks: It is understandable that Yisro was inspired by Krias Yam Suf. The Divine revelation throughout the entire world was incredible and the lofty level that every Jew reached at that time was truly extraordinary. But what was inspirational about the war against Amalek. Why would a malicious battle against the Jewish nation cause someone to wish to become a Jew himself?

He explains that these two episodes were proof to Yisro how crucial it is for one to be connected to Hashem. Krias Yam Suf was the

epitome of attachment to Hashem, as the Jewish people pointed with their fingers and declared: "This is my G-d and I will glorify Him!" Their one desire was to sanctify Hashem's name by living the lives of loyal and dedicated Jews.

The war with Amalek was exactly the opposite. Amalek attacked the Jewish people in a cruel manner, at their most vulnerable moment. If a human being, who lives without Hashem in his life, can stoop so low, reasoned Yisro, then that is the furthest thing in the world that I would want to be! It was obvious to Yisro that only by being connected to Hashem, can a person live with real values.

In fact, this middah is found in the name **יתרו** as well. Yisro's greatness lay in his ability to find the **יתרון** - the advantage, the lesson to be learned from every single person and from everything in life. We, too, must emulate Yisro and remember that in every situation - positive or negative - there is something to be gained.



Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim ZT"L of Baghdad (Ben Ish Chai) would say: "The posuk tells of the unity **אחדות** of the Jewish people but also of their holiness. 'And Yisroel encamped opposite the mountain.' The letters that are 'opposite' (around) the word **הר** spell out **ק ו ד ש**, to imply that Bnei Yisroel were truly on a high level of sanctity when they received the Torah and the presence of the Shechina."

Torah Gems 18;1

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ

"What news did Yisro hear (that caused him) to come (and join the Jewish people)? The splitting of the sea and the war with Amalek."

(Rashi quoting the Mechilta) Without question, Yisro was tremendously inspired by the wonders of Krias Yam Suf. Already then, he was convinced that Hashem was the true G-d and that He alone was to be served. However, Yisro saw no reason at that point to rush from his homeland in Midyan and join Bnei Yisroel in the Wilderness. First he heard about he splitting of the sea, but he only acted when he heard about the war with Amalek. True, he had been inspired, but uprooting himself could wait. The question is why?



The Manchester Rosh Yeshivah, R' Yehudah Zev Segal ZT"L, explains that the war with Amalek changed Yisro's thinking. From it he learned that mere **התעוררות** - spiritual awakening, is not a guarantee against regression. It was clear that when Moshe lifted his arms up to Heaven, the Jews became victorious; when his arms faltered, so did the soldiers on the battlefield. The army of Bnei Yisroel had in the same day experienced moments of spiritual revival, only to falter later in not dedicating their thoughts totally to their Father in Heaven. It then became clear to Yisro that **התעוררות** is not an end unto itself, but merely a tool to spiritual achievement that must be acted upon

immediately, lest its effects wear off and leave nothing behind. At that moment, he picked himself up and made the move to the desert - his own personal spiritual revival.

A Jew should seek means of arousal, as he forever strives to enhance his Avodas Hashem. However, when such an arousal comes, one must not tarry in seizing the moment of opportunity and immediately using this awakening to improve his service in a practical way.



A guest was once invited to share the afternoon meal with R' Chaim Shmuelevitz ZT"L, Rosh Yeshivah of Mir, in his home. The rebbetzin was more than happy to serve the guest and set two place settings at the table. When she placed two bowls of soup down on the table, R' Chaim immediately began eating at an unusually quick pace. Before the guest could even finish half his bowl, R' Chaim was already asking for seconds. This bowl, too, he quickly downed and after commenting on how delicious the soup was, he requested a third bowl.

The guest was surprised and questioned R' Chaim. "Do you always eat this fast with three bowls of soup at a typical meal? I wouldn't have expected it from the Rosh Yeshivah." R' Chaim smiled and explained. "When I give a shiur in yeshivah, and students come over afterwards and want to go over it with me again and again, this gives me great pleasure. Well, this soup - including all the time and effort that the rebbetzin put into making this soup - this is her shiur! When I ask

for doubles and triples, I'm 'chazering' the shiur with her over and over, and this gives her great pleasure!"

Hashem instructed Moshe to speak to the Jewish women about accepting the Torah even before talking to the men, since the women are the ones who influence their husbands and their children in the proper path. No matter what a woman does in her home on behalf of her family, she must always be appreciated and complimented since this is her way of imparting wisdom - the lessons of life - which become the guiding force in her family.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

19:5 וְהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ



Hashem expresses His great love for the Jewish People in this week's parsha by calling them His **עם סגולה** - "Treasured Nation." **The Lelover Rebbe, R' Dovid Biderman ZT"L**, explains that **סגולה** comes from the root of the nikud **סגול** which teaches us that just as one turns a **סגול** around and around and it always retains the same form, so too, no matter how much a Jew may turn away and stray from the proper path, he will always maintain a unique bond with Hashem. The form of his pure Jewish neshama will never be lost nor severed from its Maker.

R' Chaim Shmulevitz ZT"L writes that a Jew's closeness to Hashem is dependent on his love for other Jews, because if one goes out of his way to show love, honour and respect toward others, Hashem will show these back to him!

This is learned from Shmuel Hanavi who went out to the people to address them, and in return, Hashem came to him. Shmuel imbibed this lesson from his mother, Chana, who showed her never-ending love for her only son in so many ways. This tremendous show of love from his mother manifested itself in the way Shmuel dealt with other people.

The love a parent shows a child instils in that child a deep feeling of being loved and appreciated and thus, later in life, this person will truly be able to express his love and appreciation for others. We must always continue to transmit true unconditional love to our children so that they will express their love to future generations. By doing so, we will reciprocate the special connection of love and affection that every Jew retains with his Maker, Hashem.



כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה 20:12

The reason, writes **R' Saadya Gaon ZT"L**, that one merits a long life and increased years for fulfilling the mitzvah of **כיבוד אב ואם** is because when one properly bestows honour on his parents, his own children will see and learn to honour their parents, thereby enhancing and prolonging the quality of their parents' lives. On the other hand, if one is disrespectful to his parents, his own children will, in turn, return him the favour, causing him anguish, pain and a lack of endurance for a life not worth living.

It was not uncommon for people to travel from far and wide to the quaint Southern Israeli city of Netivot for one reason - and one reason alone: To seek blessings, guidance and kabbalistic remedies from the great Tzaddik and Mekubal, **R' Yisroel Abuchatzeira ZT"L**, known throughout the world as the **Baba Sali**. Tales of his Ruach Hakodesh - Divine Spirit, and the miracles that he performed are legendary, and the great tzaddik's name is often associated with supernatural wonders, healing and salvation. Yet, the Baba Sali's clarity, extraordinary wisdom and understanding of daily, down-to-

earth situations brought solace and respite to the countless visitors who came to see him.

One such woman made the arduous trip to see the great Baba Sali. A bit dishevelled and harried, she brought along a teenage boy who appeared to be about the age of seventeen. Whereas it was generally understood that when one came to visit a holy man, one dressed respectably with appropriately conservative attire, this young man seemed to have made a point of trying to stand out. Flaunting a bright and flashy t-shirt and the latest raggedly fashionable pair of jeans, the boy sat sullenly in the waiting area, looking for all the world like a youth at risk of being swallowed up in the wayward patterns of secular life. His hair was a mass of overgrown locks and his token-size Kipah appeared lost among the underbrush. How his mother dragged him to this holy place was anybody's guess. Eventually, their turn came. With a great sigh of relief, the mother gathered her belongings and anxiously bade her son to hurry up and join her.

In the manner of teenage kids the world over, the boy took his time, rolled his eyes, and with an exaggerated sigh to match the genuine one of his mother, he seemed to expend all his energy just heaving himself off his chair. Dragging his feet in an unhurried manner, he followed his mother into the inner sanctum of the Baba Sali.

When they were seated, the mother instantly burst into tears. "Rebbi," she cried, "what can I do? My son doesn't listen to a word I say, he is insulting and condescending. His friends influence him to disobey me, and he twists my words around to use them against me. Please, Rebbi, please....." The boy sat there listening to his mother with a blank "I've heard it all before" expression. Let's get this over with, he thought, waiting for the rabbi to lash out at him.

But instead, an amazing thing happened: the Baba Sali didn't scream or carry on. His eyes welled up with tears and he shook his head in an expression of unmitigating melancholy. "Ach .... if only I had a

mother .... if my mother was still alive .... what I wouldn't do for my mother .... I would carry her on my shoulders!" The tears flowed from his eyes.

More than any harsh words of criticism, the Baba Sali's pained expression broke through the outer layer of the teenager's heart and within moments, his moist eyes began shedding tears in unison.



Rabbi E Biderman- Torah Wellsprings Emunah Pshutah

When Yosef HaTzaddik was seventeen years old, he was called naar (child). He was also called a yeled, which implies an even younger child.

The Yeitav Leiv explains that this was because Yosef believed in Hashem with simple belief, with emunah pshutah, as a child believes. Yosef was extremely wise. The Torah calls him, ben zekunim (Bereishis 37:3) and according to one explanation in Rashi, this means he was a bar chakim (scholar). Yet, when it came to emunah, Yosef believed in Hashem with simplicity, like a child.

When a person becomes older, he begins to realize that not everything is black and white; there are grey areas as well. Often, even in regard to emunah, people rationalize and they think, maybe there are conditions, exceptions, etc.? Maybe this case is different? And therefore, their emunah isn't firm. A child, on the other hand, takes things at face value, without questions and investigations. Yosef believed in Hashem in this pure manner.

ילד is roshei teivos for **יַאמין לַכל דָבר** (someone who believes everything). There were no questions for Yosef, concerning emunah. Everything is from Hashem; everything is for the good; Hashem leads us and cares about us… All of these ideas were accepted and were firm in his heart as a clear truth, without any doubts.

We say in the tefillah of Rosh Hashanah, **הבן יקיר לי אפרים אם ילד שעשועים** . This passuk tells of Hashem's special love to Bnei Yisrael.

The word **ילד** is used, which represents **יַאמין לַכל דָבר** (someone who believes everything) because this is the trait which makes us beloved to Hashem. The mazal of chodesh Shevat is **דלי** (bucket) which is also roshei teivos for **יַאמין לַכל דָבר**. This is a month when we should strive to work on emunah peshutah.

Shabbos, My Bride by Rav Yaakov Haber



The Slonimer Rebbe, of blessed memory, asked: On Friday night, when we sit down to our Shabbos meal, the first thing we do is welcome the malochim (angels) into our home. "Sholom Aleichem, Malachei HaShoreis!" Hashem sends the holiest guests to our home when we make Shabbos. "Borchuni Lesholom!" We ask these holy malochim of peace to bless us and our homes with peace. What can be greater than to know that we actually have Hashem's malochim joining us at our Shabbos table? But then, after a few short moments we say, "Tzeis'chem L'sholom! – Farewell holy malochim!" It is as if the malochim have just arrived and we are already asking them to leave! Why don't we beg them to stay? (Indeed, there is an opinion that for this reason we don't say Tzeis'chem L'sholom. See Sefer Tosfos Shabbos 262 – of course we should stick with the common custom of saying the entire Sholom Aleichem.)

The Slonimer Rebbe answered: Think about a bride and groom who are bidding farewell to their guests after a beautiful, meaningful, and festive wedding. They feel so privileged that their guests

honoured them and blessed them. But the time has come for their honoured guests to go home; the bride and groom wish to spend time together all alone. We feel so privileged that the malochim have honoured us at our Shabbos meal. We welcome them, we honour them, and we seek their blessing. But then we must say to them, "Holy malochim! We appreciate so much that you came to our homes, we cherish your presence and we treasure your blessings – come again; but please forgive us if we ask you to leave – right now we want to be alone with Hashem." Shabbos is so many things: a day of rest, a day of faith, a family day and a day of celebrating Hashem's creation of the world. Of course it is all true. Yet Shabbos is so much more; it is a day when we can be alone with Hashem, or in Kabbalistic language, Yichud Elyon.

I have often wondered why we begin the Shabbos with Lechu Neraneno L'Hashem… "Come! – let us sing to Hashem…let us greet Him with thanksgiving". Of course it makes sense to greet the Shabbos – after all, we are reciting the Kabbolas Shabbos, and we are welcoming the Shabbos. But why are we "greeting Him with thanksgiving"? Is Hashem here more today than He was yesterday?

The answer is that of course Hashem is with us and present all the time, but on Shabbos we can actually enjoy and experience the presence of His Shechina. We can experience a new level of light, of holiness, of spirituality and of peace. As Shabbos comes in, we offer a special welcome to Hashem in our lives. What preparations must we make to merit the presence of Hashem in our lives?

The Ari HaKodosh taught that whenever we reach deep into ourselves to find and express praise for Hashem, Hashem responds by resting His Shechina upon us. This is why we praise Hashem in pesukei d'zimra before we daven to Him in the morning, why we say Ashrei before we daven to Him in the afternoon and why we extol His greatness as we begin the Shemoneh Esrei. This is also why we begin the Shabbos by "greeting Him with thanksgiving". In the

Aseres HaDibros (Ten Commandments), Hashem asks us to keep Shabbos. Life is busy, the world is complicated – there is so much to do. And so, Hashem says, "Let us have a time that we spend together." Let us maintain our relationship of gratitude and love, just with Him. Good Shabbos!



The Nesivos Shalom of Slonim zy"a told the following incident, that happened during the war years, when he was a child, living in Baranovitz, Lithuania. During WWII, Baranovitz was a city on the border, shared between Russia and Germany.

One day, German soldiers came, and told all the Yidden to line up, and face a wall. Everyone understood that they were planning to murder them. The Nesivos Shalom's father asked his son to bring him a cup of water. He wanted to say a shehakol before his demise, because it is written in sefarim that it is very good to say a shehakol before dying.

He took the cup in his hand, and with fervour and kavanah he said 'baruch… shehakol nehiyeh bidvoro.' A few short moments afterwards, they heard shooting from behind them. They turned around and saw that the Russians had come. All the Germans soldiers ran to join the battle, and their lives were spared.

People said to the Nesivos Shalom's father, "You saved our lives! It was a miracle." "It isn't a miracle," he said. "I just said shehakol, with emunah peshutah that Hashem does everything. This emunah

saved us from imminent danger." Because although wisdom is a great virtue, when it comes to emunah, simple faith is ideal. As **Rebbe Dovid Lelover zy"a** would say, "For emunah, one must be a **פתי מאמין לכל דבר** ***"like a fool, who believes everything"*** *(Mishlei 14:15).*

Me'oros Ha'tzaddikim Rav Yehuda Zev Segal -22nd of Shevat - The Manchester Rosh Yeshiva



During World War II, Rav Yehuda Zev secured sanctuary visas in England for as many war refugees as possible, and the Manchester Yeshiva opened its doors to young refugees fleeing the Nazi inferno. As the war intensified, the Yeshiva its rescue and relief efforts, organizing daily shiurim for young men who, due to the war, were unable to attend Yeshiva time. Rav Yehuda Zev opened his own home to many of the young refugees. During this period, Rebbetzin Segal assisted her husband in all of his rescue efforts and was one of the organize community's efforts to prepare food packages for new arrivals from the displaced persons camps. She also helped her husband raise funds for the and was like a mother to its students. On April 16, 1950/5710, he was officially inducted as Rosh Yeshiva.

Rav Yehuda Zev is probably best known for his dissemination of the awareness of the importance of not speaking loshon horah. It is said that Rav Yehuda Zev Segal underwent a marked transformation in his outlook and behaviour at the age of eight.

This sounds rather far-fetched; how many eight-year-olds have real outlooks, and how many are capable of changing their behaviour and attitudes at such a young age?

Rav Yehuda Zev, however, was no ordinary youngster. At the age of eight, an incident occurred that changed his life forever, as he told a close talmid more than fifty years later.

"As I was crossing the street in London," he told his talmid, "a city bus suddenly veered toward me. The driver turned on the brakes, and the bus halted only inches away from me. I was only eight at the time. Nonetheless, after this incident I realized that if life in this world can end within a second, then we certainly weren't created in order to enjoy the here and now. I also felt that so great a miracle obligated me to dedicate myself to the service of Hashem.



R' Chaim Zaitchik ZT"L (Maayanei HaChaim) would say: "The peace and serenity that are integral ingredients of the Shabbos, should become part of a person's nature the entire week.

As Chazal tell us: ***"Whoever makes the Shabbos delightful will be granted a heritage with no limitations."*** **שבת קיח**

The inner peace that one experiences on Shabbos should be internalized so that its positive effect will be noticeable in one's relationship all week long with family and friends."

Shabbos Treasures



The question has been asked, why is it that on Shabbos we have three meals, but the same obligation is not required on any of the Yomim Tovim?

The Me'am Loez (Beshalach 16:36) answers that on Shabbos we have a Neshamah Yeseirah, an extra Neshamah that is given to us just for Shabbos. Therefore, since there is 'more' to us on Shabbos, we eat more on Shabbos than other days. There is no Neshamah Yeseirah on Yom Tov, and therefore there is no need for us to have an extra meal.

Migdal Ohr – Rabbi J. Gewirtz



As a boy, "Max" was serious and dedicated to learning. He was a bright boy but had one thing that would stand him in good stead more than anything else: clear goals. Like many children these days, Max had photos of great Tzaddikim on his wall: **the Vilna Gaon**; **the Chasam Sofer**; and others. Then he had one more frame that was empty. In it were written the words, "Why not me?" His goals were solid and so was his success.

Today, it is his picture, the photo of **R' Mordechai Gifter z"l**, which hangs on the walls of other men and boys who wish to emulate him.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah



וַיְהִי קֹלֹת וּבְרָקִים יט:טז There was thunder and lightning *(19:16)* The Sefer "Ta'amei HaMinhagim" brings down in the name of the Tashbeitz that the reason that the Chassan and Kallah are accompanied by candles (torches) as they walk down to the Chuppah is to hint to Mattan Torah – the Giving of the Torah, as the Pasuk states, 'And there was thunder and lightning'.

Take this general rule in your hand: All the customs of the Chassan and Kallah we learn from Mattan Torah, since Hashem showed Himself to Israel as a Chassan before the Kallah. (Umatuk HaOhr)



Rav Avigdor Miller on Snow and Da'as Hashem

QUESTION: What is the benefit of snow, ice and sleet?

ANSWER: Ice, snow, sleet. "Mashlich karcho ki'fitim" (Tehillim 147-17). Hashem casts ice on the world like bread. Ice is bread. Snow is bread. Snow lasts a long time. It melts slowly. It soaks into the earth. Not like the rain which runs down into the rivers and oceans.

No, no. It melts slowly and it soaks into the earth. And it becomes bread. The melting water of the ice and snow is absorbed gradually into the earth instead of running off and that's what the earth needs in order to produce. That's why the Gemara says that one snow is as valuable as five rains (Ta'anis 3b).

Of course, on the city streets it may seem like a nuisance. No, no. On the city streets the snow is there to remind you of the miracle of ice and snow. It's beautiful and it can be a nuisance as well. And that's meant to remind you of the miracle of bread. When you eat bread and delicious fruit in the Spring, you'll be doing so because of the snow that falls in the winter.

If you were a farmer on the field, you'd love the ice. It melts very gradually and gives the field a good drink of water. And in the Spring you'll have a good crop as a result. So, "Mashlich karcho," He throws His ice, "ki'fitim," like pieces of bread. And don't forget that. Ice is bread. No question about that.

And in the city streets the snow is da'as Hashem. It's there to remind you of the chesed Hashem of snow and bread and food. It's beautiful and it can be a nuisance. And that's to remind you of the snow in the fields and mountains. When you see the snow, you are seeing the chesed Hashem of food. Yes, that's a very important purpose of the snow in the city.

So when you're shoveling the snow or walking on the curb, don't waste that opportunity. Look at the snow and remind yourself that Hashem is preparing the earth for the Spring and Summer. That's what it's there for. That's what the snow in the city is for.



A Wise Man would say: "If you want to know how rich you are, count all the things you have that money can't buy."



L'Maaseh

Rabbi Nachman Seltzer relates a fascinating story. One day, Rav Golden, a Rabbi in Los Angeles, received a phone call from Rav Finkelman in Lakewood, asking for his help. Rav Finkelman explained that there was an elderly woman named Rose Shapiro who passed away in an old-age home not far from Rav Golden's home. Rose had no family, and the home's policy in these situations was to cremate the body.

Rav Finkelman explained that he did not know this woman, but he asked Rav Golden to please make sure that she received a proper Jewish burial. Rav Golden was more than willing to do this Mitzvah. He contacted the old-age home, and asked that they release the body into his care so that he could have the woman buried according to Jewish law.

The home was very happy to accommodate, as it was much easier for them not to have to bother with the matter. Rav Golden was able to arrange for her burial in a local cemetery and felt overjoyed that he was able to perform a Chessed Shel Emes, but one thing was still unclear to him. How did Rav Finkelman from Lakewood, come to be involved with Rose Shapiro, an irreligious Jewish woman in Los Angeles?

He called Rav Finkelman, who explained the amazing turn of events. He explained, a nurse named Anne Treverson who worked in the old-age home, is a devoted caretaker who loves her patients. She felt the home truly cared for their residents, but they were lacking in the way they handle death.

It always bothered her when a patient with no family would be cremated. Anne knew that many non-Jews did not care about this, but she also knew that in the Jewish religion it was forbidden. Though it bothered her, there was not much she could do about it.

When Rose passed away, Anne knew that Rose was a Jewish woman, and Anne did not want her to be cremated. She felt strongly that it was just not right. She looked through Rose's drawers, hoping she would find some kind of family member who would be willing to save Rose, but she found nothing.

Anne did not give up. She went to the bookkeeper's office and asked to see Rose's file. She was not sure what she was searching for, but she was hopeful she would find something.



Suddenly, she found a charity receipt from a Yeshivah in a place called Lakewood, along with a letter of appreciation. Anne dialed the number printed on the receipt and she reached the Lakewood Yeshivah. That was how Rav Finkelman knew about Rose Shapiro.

Rav Golden asked one more question, "How much money did this woman usually send to the Yeshivah? Was it a large donation?" Rav Finkelman laughed and said, "She would usually send a cheque for ten dollars on her birthday!"

Rabbi Seltzer explains that Rose's ten-dollar cheque to Tzedakah was sufficient enough for her to merit being saved from being cremated! If just ten dollars can bring about such a great outcome, imagine the outcome when greater amounts are given!

"The more a man understands, the more is expected of him". - The Chofetz Chaim, Zt''l

The Baal Haturim on 7's! Written by Benjamin A Rose

The Baal HaTurim says that the pasuk of "Zachor Es Yom HaShabbos" is the seventh pasuk in the Aseres HaDibros. It also starts with the letter Zayin which has the numerical equivalent of seven. Two pasukim later the pasuk "Ata U'Bincha U'Bitecha …" lists seven people in it. All these sevens are in honor of the seventh day Shabbos.

The pasuk of Zachor itself has five words to show that whoever keeps Shabbos it is as if he kept the entire Chamisha Chumshei Torah.

Who Are These "Other gods"?! Written by Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



Do not have other gods in my presence (20:3)

When the Torah warns us not to follow other gods, it implies that there *are* other gods. However, the Torah declares, as we do everyday שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד – Hear Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is [the only] One". Obviously, there is no god except for Hashem, so what is the Torah telling us, and considering that the Torah was written for every generation to follow, how do we apply this commandment today?

The *Baalei Mussar* answer that the 'other gods' that we serve today are not images carved from wood or stone, they are *anything* that we are subservient to other than Hashem. For instance, if one

arrives a minute late to Shul because he 'just had to look at the news headlines' then he is showing that he is subservient to the news, placing it in front of Hashem. Similarly, one who compromises on his integrity when a lot of money is at stake has placed financial gain ahead of His Creator.

Therefore, we see that this commandment is certainly no less relevant today than it always was. In fact, with the recent colossal advancement in technology, many would argue that *we* are more at risk of transgressing this commandment than any other generation of recent times.

3 Thoughts In One!: דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה (heard from Rav Yechiel Emmanuel) Written by Jonny Caller



The 1st half of the 10 Commandments are 'bein adam leMakom', between man and Hashem, and the 2nd half are 'bein adam lechavero', between man and man. **The Mabit** points out that the 'bein adam lechavero' commandments were written on the tablets in much fewer words, though in much bigger font size, than the bein adam leMakom commandments. This was in order to emphasize to us the importance of the mitzvot that are bein adam lechavora. Derech eretz, being a mentsch, behaving correctly towards others, is a pre-requiste to receiving the Torah.

– The last mishna of the 1st chapter of pirkei avot statesthat the world endures on 3 things: justice, truth and peace. **The Akeidat Yitzchak** points out that these correspond to the 3 sections of

parshat Yitro: 1) Moshe's family and the existence of shalom bayit 2) The setting up of a justice system, spreading their shalom to the whole nation 3) The giving of the Torah. The Akeidat Yitzchak comments that the Torah is teaching us through this order, that before one can receive the Torah, one must have shalom with others. i.e. Derech eretz is a pre-requisite for receiving the Torah.

– **Rav Chaim Vital** points out that Sefer Berishit is essentially a Sefer that teaches us derech eretz, through many stories, and the reason why the Torah chose to place the sefer of derech eretz before the giving of the Torah is that 'derech eretz kadma laTorah' 'Behaving correctly towards others comes before the Torah'. Derech Eretz is a pre-requisite for receiving the Torah.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - Clean Your Windows and Look Inside

Mark was without question a great guy. Very affable, respectable and caring. Unfortunately, though, he struggled with a drinking problem which took its toll on him and his wife, Melissa. It was all too familiar a scene for Mark to return home late at night inebriated and topsy-turvy. Understandably so, Melissa confronted him and demanded that he seek the proper treatment and avoid any further drinking sprees. Mark nodded his head in acknowledgement and agreement.

But it didn't last long. Mark returned home, time and again, intoxicated. Melissa now approached Mark one last time, but now she had a different message. "Mark, if this happens once more, I am going to have no other choice than forcibly take you to treatment and have you stay there. I love you dearly, but this can happen no more." Her words resonated with Mark. He absorbed her heartfelt words and felt different. He was inspired and motivated to, once and

for all, put an end to his problem. And with that, both Mark and Melissa went to sleep.

No less than two hours later, Mark awoke, his palms sweaty and heart racing. And all so soon, disregarding his word to Melissa, he snuck out of the house to find a couple of drinks.

A few hours later, he returned home and turned his head from side to side in disbelief. "I can't believe it! Look what I did!" Needing to now hide any evidence of his escapade, Mark figured he would grab a drink of soda, wash his face and freshen himself up. "This will never happen again!" he promised himself. And so, off went Mark to the refrigerator, grabbing himself a bottle of Coca-Cola and heading upstairs.



But, alas, amid Mark's drunken stupor, he lost his footing as he moved up the stairs and fell. Gaining composure, he shook himself off and stood up. But he was not left unscathed. The glass bottle had cracked, sending flying shards onto the carpeted floor all over and scratching his face. Mark shuddered to think what would happen now. But then the perfect idea popped into his head. He would tell his wife that he had gotten up in the middle of the night to get a bottle of soda because he was thirsty, and on his way up the stairs, he accidently tripped and the bottle broke, causing remnants to scatter everywhere and leave a few scratches on his face. He had the perfect alibi.

From the stairs, Mark headed to the restroom, where he found a couple of band-aids and washed himself up. And with that, he tiptoed back into bed and fell fast asleep.

6:50 a.m. "Mark! Mark!" Melissa exclaimed, as she abruptly moved him around. "What happened? I told you no more drinking!" Mark, sitting himself up in bed, rubbed his eyes and yawned.

"What are you talking about? Last night I went downstairs…" But before Mark could get out another word, Melissa grabbed him by the hand and led him to the bathroom.

"Uh-oh," he said, as his heart sank and stomach dropped. He had placed the band-aids not on his face, but on the mirror!

While the message of realizing that honesty and integrity is beyond paramount is evident in this anecdote, there is something more to be gleaned. When engaging in introspection and striving to make a change in our lives, it can be tempting to look outward at others and not inward at ourselves. We are inclined to make changes to our ourselves as we appear to others and not on the inside as we are deep-down. We make the same mistake of putting the band-aid on the mirror – on the image we project and portray.

True introspection and real-lasting change, however, removes the mirror and allows us to investigate our deepest selves. We place the focus on who we are truly, deep-down and not on how others relate to us, perceive us or compare to us. We ask ourselves, "What can I can do to upgrade my life? What areas of my life do I wish I was better in?"

If we choose to put the band-aid on our own, real self by changing our self-conception and reclaiming our life, we will then see genuine transformation. We will understand ourselves and the world in new ways and find that we do not need to change, control or correct other people to attain success. It is all within us ourselves.

But there is another point to remember, which can be best understood by way of the following.



It was just a day after the young couple had gotten married that they sat down to breakfast together in their new apartment. Looking around at the beautiful interior of their new home, the wife's gaze soon noticed something strangely bizarre. Turning to her husband, she asked rather startingly, "Why did our neighbours hang up dirty laundry outside? I don't understand; why are they using detergent that is not cleaning the clothing well?" While the wife wondered why someone would choose to do so, she nonetheless carried on with the rest of her day as if nothing had happened.

Yet the next morning, again at the breakfast table, she looked out and saw once again, her neighbour's dirty laundry hanging up. Still perturbed, she asked her husband for an explanation. But he had nothing to offer.

This scenario carried on for considerable time. Until one morning, as the wife sat down to the table, she gasped. "Oh wow! Look, look, the laundry is clean! Who showed the neighbor how to clean the clothing properly?" The husband glanced at his wife, a small smile forming at the corners of his mouth. "Would you like to know a little secret?" The wife's eyebrows raised in curiosity. "This morning, I woke up and cleaned the windows." The wife grew completely silent. "What do you mean?" "It was never the clothing that was dirty; it was our windows. Now that I've cleaned them, you can see our neighbour's clothing as they really are – perfectly clean."

To put it in once sentence, how we look at others is a direct reflection of ourselves. If our outlook is filled with dirt and negativity, it tells us something about our own seeing, thinking and feeling. In order to have an honest and clear look at anything, we must first and foremost clean our own lenses. If and when we do, we will oftentimes realize that the problem lies not with others, but with ourselves. In many instances, the "dirt" we see is not a reflection of their problems and failures, but of our own. Considering this, the solution is rather straightforward. If we clean our own windows, we will see the world with greater clarity and honesty.

As with Mark and the newlywed wife, the key is to self-reflect and introspect. Above all, look how you can fix yourself on the inside. Look inward for resolving the problem, and not outward where your attention is focused on other people's perceptions and perspectives. And secondly, whenever you endeavour on this mission, remember to clean and cleanse your heart and mind beforehand. Otherwise, everything you look at, including yourself, will look like dirty laundry.

This two-fold process for growth and self-improvement is both simple and profound. Clean your windows and look inside. They are simple key ingredients which can be sure to bear phenomenal results and leave us profoundly changed as deeper and more developed individuals.



R' Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ZT"L (Chofetz Chaim) would say: ***"From Har Sinai we learn how careful we must be in honouring a Talmid Chacham. If a mountain that has no feeling or mind, was held in such sanctity that Bnei Yisroel were warned not to touch it lest they die, how much more so must we be careful with a Talmid Chacham who has a mind and feelings!"***



Parsha Points to Ponder



In the Pesach Haggadah, we say **אילו קרבנו לפני הר סיני ולא נתן לנו את התורה דיינו**- If Hashem had brought us before Mount Sinai, but not given us the Torah, it would have been enough for us. What would have been the benefit of coming to Mount Sinai if Hashem did not give us the Torah?

The **K'sav Sofer** suggests that the value would have been the tremendous levels of unity and harmony that they reached when camping at Sinai (Rashi 19:2).

The Night that the Town's Rov Didn't Come Home By Rabbi Dov Brezak

This true story that is told by **Rav Y. Zilbershtein** , who mentions that it was heard from very reliable sources.

The gaon **Rebbi Ben Zion of Ostrova** was the Av Beis Din of the city Gustinin. In this city although most people would leave the community shul to go home after the last maariv minyan in the winter the candles in the shul and the heater oven were still left burning for another three hours. The reason being that the rov would stay in shul to learn after maariv. He would encourage others to do the same and as was often the case-numerous people would often remain with the rov in shul after maariv to learn.

On one freezing cold winter night the rebbetzin awoke at midnight only to find that the rov had not yet come home from shul. She

calmed herself by saying that her husband had probably come home already but had to go out and help someone in the community that needed help.

But when she awoke again at 3 am and saw that her husband was not home she woke up her sons and asked them to go looking for their father, the rov.

The boys began searching all the streets in town but to their dismay he was nowhere to be found. As the other sons continued searching, one of them thought to go searching in the community shul. Perhaps our father is still there for some reason, he said to himself.

Sure enough, as he opened the door to the shul there was their father sitting in his chair. As he entered the shul his father kept whispering, "Quiet quiet, please do not make noise."



As the son moved closer, he saw something very strange. Next to his father was a peasant man sleeping on the bench. Apparently this simple Jew who had been passing through the town needed a place to sleep and he went into the shul and laid down on the bench.

But why had his father remained in shul this entire time?

What became clear was, just as the son had thought, that while the rov was sitting and learning this passerby came into shul laid down on the bench and went to sleep. He placed his heavy sack on the bench beneath his head and used it as a pillow.

Without realizing the other end of the sack was on the rov's coat. The man sunk into a deep sleep and the rov was afraid that if he would move to get up the sack would move and fall on the floor. This would cause the man to get up. And that is something the rov was not prepared to do.

So sat the rav of Gustinin for hours without moving even a bit. All this in order not to wake up the stranger, who came into shul, parked himself on the shul bench, and went to sleep.

The son of the rov used all kinds of hand motions to try and convince his father to stand up carefully and carefully remove his coat from under the sack but the rov was too afraid to do so.

He remained his chair without moving until dawn. As the people began coming into shul for shacharis they were in shock by what they saw. At the same time, they were astounded and awed by the greatness of their rov.

When the man woke up the people of the shul told him what had happened. He felt very bad for the discomfort he had caused the rov and at the same time was amazed by the greatness of Rabbi Ben Zion, Rav of Gustinin. He approached the rov and asked his forgiveness.

After the rov gladly forgave him, the man made known that from here on he will be remaining in this beis hamedrash and he will be dedicating his life for learning Torah.

"The way the rov conducted himself shows me clearly that this shul and this community is a special place where truth and peace reside."

The man remained true to his word and within a short few years he went on to become a very big talmid chochom and a great yirei shamayim.

Rav Shteinman's Kitchen



Rav Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman, zt"l, lived very simply, and his home and lifestyle demonstrated this. Anyone who visited Rav Shteinman's small apartment in Bnei Brak was amazed at the humble conditions he lived in, and would describe the dilapidated closets and cabinets, and walls with peeling paint.

Once, the Israeli Ambassador to Japan needed to discuss an important matter with Rav Shteinman and went to see him. When he left, he marveled at the tiny residence and was astonished at the condition of the apartment in which one of the leading sages of Israel lived in and said, "I have never seen anything like it in my life."

For decades, Rav Shteinman slept on a plank bed that he had received when he moved to Israel, and only recently, due to his advanced age, was his bed replaced by a hospital bed.

Rav Shteinman learned on a simple stool in which he had the legs extended, and this was so that his feet would not reach the floor and reduced the chances of him falling asleep while he was learning.

The family received many offers from others to purchase their home for a large amount of money so they could buy a nicer place to live, and they got many offers of donations of nicer furniture, but Rav Shteinman always refused, insisting that he had everything he needed and seeks no more.

This remarkable way of living a simple life was an inspiration to many others. Once, a couple had come to seek his advice regarding an issue they were having in their marriage. They were in a conflict over whether or not they should invest in renovating their house.

When they came to see Rav Shteinman and were waiting to speak with him, the wife took one look at Rav Shteinman's kitchen and immediately cancelled their appointment and said that it was no longer necessary for them to speak with him. She said, "If the Gadol HaDor can live this way, then so can I!"

A Parable of the Ben Ish Hai By Rabbi Reuven Semah

"*That which is in the heavens above or on the earth below*" (Ten Commandments 20:4)

The Ben Ish Hai teaches us a seemingly simple parable that contains a profound message, with which he homiletically explains a pasuk in the Ten Commandments.



Once, a property owner decided to take apart a wooden ladder that was attached to his house. He felt the ladder gave robbers and trespassers easy access to his roof, so he told his servant to take it apart. The servant, who wasn't blessed with much intelligence, started his job. As he steadily climbed up the ladder, on each step he broke the rung beneath him.

He managed to make it all the way to the roof, but then looking down, he discovered that he had no way to get down. Some bystanders got him down with difficulty and gave him advice. "First you should have

gone up to the roof and taken apart the ladder as you came down, from top to bottom."

The next day, the boss told his servant to take apart a ladder that went into a deep pit in the backyard. The servant remembered the advice, "top to bottom," and started working. As he went down into the pit, he made sure to break every rung above him. When he got to the bottom, he was stuck with no way out.

Everyone laughed at him. "But you told me top to bottom," he said. They explained that it all depends on the circumstances. "When you are working on a ladder up to a roof, you work top to bottom," they told him. "But when you are dealing with a ladder descending into a pit, you break it as you go bottom to top."

The Ben Ish Hai says a person has both physical and spiritual needs. We have a tendency to constantly compare ourselves with those around us. We have two choices. We can either contrast ourselves with those "above" us – those who have more than we do – or those "below" us, who have less than we do.

When it comes to material needs, some tend to look at those who have more, yet when it comes to their spiritual health, their eyes aim to those below them. In essence, they are acting just like the foolish servant and are the laughingstock of the universe.

This week the Torah says, "which is in the heavens above or in the earth below" (20:4). The road to a successful, happy life is to know when to look where. When it comes to heavens, matters of spirituality, one should always look up. Compare your spiritual condition with those greater than you. When it comes to the earth, material matters, look down and compare yourself with those who have less.

Happiness is not about wealth and comfort but about perspective and attitude.



The Friday Classified Ad for Candle Lighting By Rabbi Yechiel Spero

J.J. Gross, an observant Jew, works as an advertising executive at one of the top marketing agencies in the New York area. One day an inspirational thought crossed J.J.'s mind. What if the most widely read paper in the world, the New York Times, ran an ad across the bottom of the front page every Friday listing candle lighting time? Who knows how many people it may inspire?

Among his many clients are some members of the Lubavitch community. Therefore, J.J. suggested the idea to some of the more influential members within the Lubavitch organization and before long, a Lubavitcher agreed to donate $1,800 to sponsor the ad every week.

There were times when the production manager of The Times would contact Mr. Gross at the 11th hour trying to find out what time candle lighting was on that particular Friday evening. The man was of Irish Catholic descent, and he was concerned that the paper would go to print before the time for candle lighting was listed!

From the mid-1990's until June 1999 the ad ran each and every week across the bottom of the front page. But then the philanthropist who had been sponsoring the ad cut back on his pledges, the candle lighting ad among them. However, J.J. felt that the discontinuation of the ad mere days before the fast day of the seventeenth of Tammuz was just not appropriate. So he decided to sponsor it himself for just one more week. And that was the last time it appeared. Or so he thought...

For a special Millennium issue, The New York Times ran three different front pages. One was from January 1, 1900. The second

was from January 1, 2000 and a third projected future events for the beginning of the 22nd century — January 1, 2100. Among the news stories in this fictional issue was the establishment of the fifty-first state of the U.S.A.: Cuba. Another article covered the question of whether robots should be allowed to vote, and so on.

Although the candle lighting ad did not appear in the other two front pages, surprisingly it did turn up on the front page of the January 1, 2100 Friday newspaper. This odd inclusion piqued the curiosity of many individuals, including J.J.

When the production Irish-Catholic manager of The Times was questioned about the inclusion his response was astounding. "We don't know what will happen in the year 2100. It is impossible to predict the future. But of one thing you can be certain — that in the year 2100 Jewish women will be lighting Shabbos candles."

Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein – *A Shabbos Vort*

וַיָּבֹא יִתְרוֹ חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה וּבָנָיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה 18:5 ***Yisro, Moishe's father-in-law, came to Moishe.***

R' Yehoshua of Belz asked: Why does the Pasuk state, "Yisro came -וַיָּבֹא and not Yisro went וילך toward Charan?

The word *Vayelech* connotes an individual's leaving slowly and against his will. But *Vayovo* implies a going that is full of joy and eagerness.

Yaakov Avinu did not want to leave his home in Eretz Yisrael, but he was forced to do so and go to Charan on account of Esav's wicked intentions. His departure is therefore aptly described as *Vayelech.* But Yisro was eager to become part of the Jewish people and to find his place under the protection of Hashem's Divine presence. For him then, the appropriate wordingDivine presence came eagerly and full of joy.

Mr. Charlie Harary -Returning Home

כבד את אביך ואת אמך Honour your father and your mother 20:12

It seemed to be just another Thursday afternoon for the Amtrak train traveling from New York to Baltimore. As one man walked down the aisle slowly and glanced from side to side, no seat seemed to be available. But then, all the way in the corner, he found what he was looking for. One seat was open. Manoeuvring his way around and about, the man settled himself down. But then it hit him.

The man realized why in fact this had been the only seat available. The boy sitting in the adjacent seat had an intense worried look on his face and could not stop fidgeting. Something was clearly disturbing him. Wishing to be amiable and perhaps even helpful, the man gently said to the boy, "Is everything alright? Can I help you with something?" The boy stared back at the man. "You wouldn't understand." For the next few minutes, the two of them just sat there silently. But then the man spoke up again.

"Are you sure everything is alright? You look awfully unnerved. I've been looking at you for some time. Tell me, what is wrong?" But all the boy could do was reiterate himself. "I can tell you, but you will not get it." "Try me," the man said.

"I grew up in a small town outside of Baltimore. For the larger part of my youth, I had no friends and spent a lot of time by myself. One day, my parents approached me and said, 'We have something for you.' They handed me a wrapped box, which I excitingly opened and looked at with intrigue. It was a computer. I slowly began learning how to use it, and no sooner than later, gained great proficiency at understanding numbers and statistics. At the same time, my favorite baseball team was the Baltimore Orioles. I spent a large amount of time computing the team's statistics for each game they played and kept it on record.

"This went on for some time, until my cousin one day approached me. 'What's going on with you?' he asked. 'Well, I got this computer and figured out a way of tracking all the baseball player's statistics.' 'Really?' he said. 'People would love having this information at their disposal. You could make a whole business out of it.' I wasn't sure what my cousin meant, but he continued to explain. 'Why don't we start a website where these statistics can be posted and everyone can view?' I had no idea how to organize this, but my cousin assured me that he would take care of it all. It sounded good to me.

"The next thing I knew, my cousin called me and said, 'I have all the paperwork done and we are in business!' Next week when I returned home, I noticed a check for fifty dollars addressed to my name. It was from someone who had subscribed to the website. I was quite surprised. But then I received another check for $100, then $500, $1,000 and $5,000. I was soon making a total of $20,000 a month as a tenth grader. All of a sudden, I became extremely popular and gained a handful of new friends.

"As my parents heard about my success, they told me, 'If you keep it up, you can make this into a career.' While, in truth, they were communicating sound advice, as a young teenager, I thought too much of myself. I was too self-centred and conceited that I disrespectfully dismissed this suggestion and just about any other advice they gave me. 'I am making more money than they are,' I thought to myself. I figured that I could take care of myself. And so, I began coming home late and acting out. Eventually, I told my parents, 'I don't need you! I can manage all alone! Goodbye!' And with that, I headed to New York and bought a private, fully furnished loft which was quite expensive.

"I would regularly invite people over and extend invitations to all of my friends from Baltimore to come and visit me. I felt that I had made it big. Everything was going perfect. I was young and rich and no one could stop me.

"Until one day, when my cousin walked into my apartment and sat on the couch. I could tell something was wrong. 'Do you have any other skills?' he asked. 'What do you mean?' I said. 'Well, I hate to tell you, but our whole genius idea is over. ESPN, one of the major sports reporting websites, now features all the statistics of every professional athletic team. And it's all for free. Our business is about to spiral downward.'

"When I heard this, my heart sank. The money which had been coming my way faster than I could count now began to dwindle even quicker. And there was nothing I could do. I was forced to sell my couches, electronic appliances and finally, my apartment. I was pretty much both financially broke and emotionally broken. I tried getting a job at a local fast-food restaurant, but because I didn't know how to accept orders from any higher authority, I was soon asked to leave. I then started playing music in the corner of a subway station, but that didn't get me too far either. So, there I was, all alone with no money, no friends and no home. Gloomy and depressed, I wandered off by myself to a park and took a seat on a bench, staring down at the floor.

"And then I thought to myself. 'What about my parents?' Taking out a pen and paper, I wrote the following letter to my mother and father:

"Mom and dad, I know I caused you a lot of distress growing up and you probably never want to see me; but I am down and out and have nowhere to turn. I am going to get on the train leaving Amtrak next Thursday and make my way down to Baltimore. But let me just mention one thing. As you may know, right next to the train station, there is a large tree. If you want me home, put one white flag on the tree. If you don't want me home, just leave the tree empty. I will then continue along on the train to Washington D.C. and see if I can start a new life there. Love, your son."

"And with that, I got a hold of an envelope and sent off the letter to my parents." "So, what did they do?" the man seated next to the boy telling this story asked. "I am on the train right now," replied the boy. Now, it was the man who was fidgeting and nervous.

As the train neared closer and closer to the train station, the boy could not bear to keep his eyes open. "I can't look," he repeated again and again. But the man, who was now nearly as tense as the boy, reassured him. "Don't worry; I'll look for you." Picking his head up over the boy, the man peered out the window and squinted as best as he could. And then he fell back into his seat.

After a moment of silence and with tears in his eyes, the man said, "There's no white flag." The boy, whose heart was by now racing, mustered the courage to look outside the window.



And there he saw that the tree did not have one white flag. The entire tree was draped in white.

And then he saw two older people, who stood near the tree with tears streaming down their faces, anticipatingly awaiting someone. And that someone was none other than him, their beloved son.

While we may at times make mistakes in life, we can never forget that our Father in Heaven always awaits our return. Each and every day, he longs for us to recognize who we are and who we can become. For us, as His children, the tree is always draped in white. Hashem is always waiting, waiting and waiting our return home…

The Man who Sold Disposable Cups



A story is told of a man who wasn't so successful in his parnasah, but someone suggested that he go into business selling disposable cups. He tried it but it was difficult in the beginning. He was doing all right but was not earning as much as he expected to.

One day, he came up with an idea to put one less cup in the package. Instead of the 150 cups that were supposed to be in it, he would put in 149. People won't notice, he thought, and he'd be able to make extra money.

Sure enough, his plan worked – but he got even greedier. He started putting 148 cups, and then 147 cups. Eventually, he went down to 142 cups per package. At that time, he met a religious man who started learning Torah with him, and he himself became more religious.



He felt terrible about his thievery and wanted to do *teshuvah*, so he decided to seek counsel from a great Rabbi. He set up a meeting with Rav Elyashiv and told him what he had done. After thinking about it, the Rabbi instructed him that from then on he should add eight extra cups to his packages – for a total of 158 - to pay back the public.

This was obviously going to be very detrimental to his profits, but he accepted the words of the great sage and began adding cups.

After a while, he saw that he was losing money, but he continued to follow the Rabbi's directive.

One day, someone showed him a newspaper article. It was about companies trying to cut corners and cheat their customers in the disposable cups market. There was a list of many companies who were including fewer cups than the packaging indicated.

Then the article mentioned that there was one company that was giving eight extra cups – probably in case the package contained a few damaged ones. This company is very reputable, the article concluded and recommended buying from them.

He eventually made millions as he added plastic plates, cutlery and many different lines to his disposable plastic cup business which continued to grow to be extremely successful. All this because he took that ***"Leap of Faith"*** and decided to follow in the ways of the Torah and adhere to the direction and advice of our gedoliim!

R' Boruch HaLevi Epstein ZT"L (Torah Temimah) would say: "In the Aseres Hadibros, the first word **אנכי** is an acronym for the words, **אָנא נֶפשי כָּתיבת יְהבית** - 'I Myself have given the script.' The Almighty is saying in this one word that if a person wants to know who I am - My character and My methods - then he should study My writing - My script.

Similar to the concept that by analysing a person's handwriting and language, one can get a good idea of his personality and outlook on life, so too, one who studies the Torah - Hashem's script - will attain a greater knowledge of Hashem."

"What the child says out in the street comes either from his father or his mother". - Talmud: Sukkah 56b

The Lesson of Two Yuds or Yidden



Rebbe Dovid of Lelov was once watching a Rebbe teaching a child. The Rebbe said to the child, "Hashem's Name is very holy, and that's why the Chumash doesn't write out Hashem's Name. Instead, the Chumash puts two Yuds, and these two Yuds should be read as Hashem's Name."

When the Rebbe reached the end of a Pasuk, where there are two dots, the Rebbe didn't say Hashem's Name. The child asked, "Rebbe, there are two Yuds here. Why don't you read it as Hashem's Name?"

The Rebbe replied, "When two Yuds are next to each other, it's Hashem's Name. But when one Yud is higher than the other, it's called a Sof Pasuk, which separates between one Pasuk and the next one."

Reb Dovid of Lelov said that he learned from this a valuable lesson, that when two Yidden, which are two Yuds, feel equal to each other, no one feels greater than the other one, Hashem's Name is there. But when one Yid feels higher than the other, it separates them, and Hashem's Name cannot be there!

Rabbi Avraham J. Twerski Zt'l- Responding to stress





There is something I want to tell you about stress and how we have to look at it. I was sitting in the dentists looking at an article entitled "How do lobsters grow".- I don't really care how lobsters grow, but it piqued my interest.

It turns out that lobsters are a soft mushy animal that lives inside of a rigid shell. That shell does not expand. Well, how does the lobster grow? As the lobster grows, its shell becomes very confining. The lobster feels uncomfortable and under pressure. It goes under a rock to protect itself from predatory fish and it casts off the shell and produces a new one Well, eventually that shell also becomes very uncomfortable, so it goes back under the rocks and the sequence is repeated numerous times.

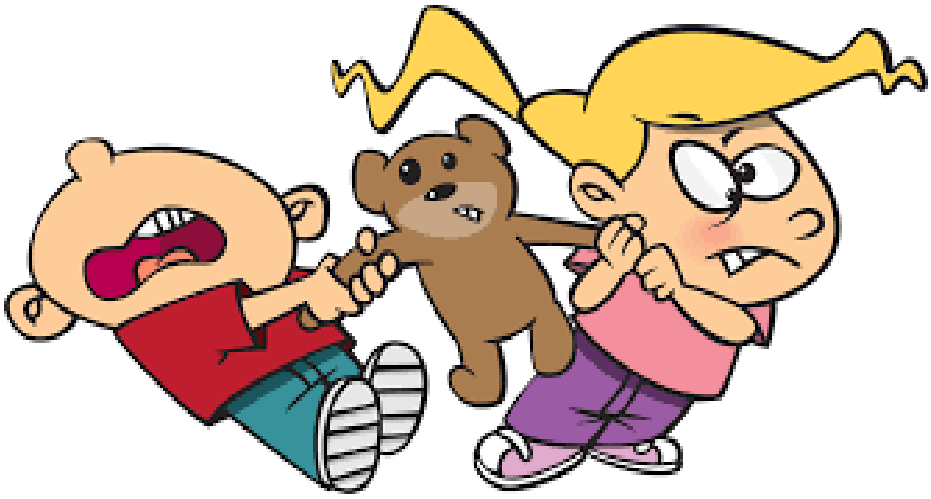
[Lobsters grow by moulting their hard exoskeleton, and they do so a lot: the average lobster can moult 44 times before it's a year old. By the time lobsters reach the age of seven, they moult once a year, and after that, once every two to three years, growing larger with each successive shedding of its exoskeleton].

The stimulus for the lobster to be able to grow is that it feels uncomfortable. Now if lobsters had doctors, they wouldn't grow, because as soon as the lobster feels uncomfortable, it would go to the doctor to get some pain killers or Valium to relieve the discomfort. It would never release itself from its shell.

I think that we must realize that times of stress are also times for signals of growth. If we use adversity properly, then we can grow through adversity.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld- Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid

Parshas Yiro is the parsha of Kabbolas Hatorah. And we have this week the Asseres Hadibros. It says in the Pasuk **לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ. לֹא־תַחְמֹד אֵשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדּוֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וַחֲמֹרוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ** 20:14 . ***Don't be jealous of the house of your friend. Don't be jealous of your friend's wife and servants, animals and everything that he has.***



It is very interesting that the last of the Asseres Hadibros - our foundations of Yiddishkeit, tells us not to be jealous of certain things. Don't be jealous of his house, his wife, his car, all the Gashmiyus that he has. And then the Pasuk ends **וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ** everything that he has.

The obvious question is, that if you just gave us a list of specific things to not be jealous of, then why end with "*everything that he has*", which includes all the previously mentioned items? Just tell us "Don't be jealous of everything he has". Why give us the specific details?

The answer is very simple, and a very big *Yesod* for our lives. Often, we look at someone else's life and we look at one particular detail of that life, and we say, "Wow, look what he's got. He's got this, he's

got that. He's just got a new car; he's just gone on holiday. Wow, he has got an unbelievable life. That is amazing. I want that".

The Torah is telling you, that if you are going to look at someone else's life, always look **וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ** – look at the whole picture. Look at everything. The moment that you look at everything, not just at that one detail that you highlighted, suddenly you will not get so jealous of him. Because he has other problems in life. Problems with finances, problems with the kids, maybe a health problem. It is a package deal.

All of a sudden, it doesn't become so exciting to desire that person's life. That is what the Torah is telling us. Don't look just at the details, look at the entire picture. One of the ways that we have to learn to do this, is not only through this, but to look within ourselves and see the good that we have.

If we would concentrate on and highlight all the good that we have in our own lives, then what everybody else is doing or has, won't bother us. It is not going to be of interest to us. Because we essentially understand that we were sent down to this world with our own particular things. For example, if someone works with diamonds, he requires very small delicate tools. He is not going to be jealous of someone who has a massive drill or huge hammer, that they use to do their work, because that is what they need.

This is what we must understand that everyone must work on. If we concentrate on more about what we have been given by the Riboino Shel Olam, than suddenly, what everybody else has, or what everybody does, means nothing to us.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

"A mother understands what a child does not say".



19:17 וַיִּתְיַצְּבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר ***and they stood at the bottom of the mountain.***

The very next Pasuk begins with the words וְהַר סִינַי

The Baal Haturim explains that the Torah duplicated the word הַר by writing it twice in a row- to teach us that Hashem uprooted Har Sinai from its place, as if there were two mountains, one on top of the other.

The Gemara tells us in Mesechta Bava Basra on דף ח. That we will be gathered in from the exiles in the merit of learning Torah. The mountain on which the Torah was given, was uprooted, symbolizing the uprooting of the exiles through Torah study.

This is why the word **הר** itself is gematria of **בבל- מדי- יון- אדום**

And the two mountains on top of each other hint to our future redeemers: **הר + הר = 410 = אליהו משיח** *(Alfei Menashe)*

Berina Yiktzoru - A summary of the points in the Parashah

1. Yitro hears about Bnai Yisrael leaving Egypt and therefore he came to Mosheh, his son-in-law, with Tziporah and Mosheh's two sons, he converts, blesses Hashem and brings the Shlamim sacrifice.

2. *"And you will oversee"*, the advice of Yitro to Mosheh to appoint judges. Afterwards Yitro returns to Midyan to convert his household (18).

3. Bnai Yisrael arrive at the Sinai Desert with one heart. The next day Hashem gives Mosheh an introduction to receiving the Torah: You saw My love for you, the Egyptians punishment and if you listen

to Me you will be a treasured nation. Bnai Yisrael said, "*Whatever Hashem says, we will do*".

4. The next day, Mosheh goes up on the mountain and Hashem gives him instructions on the preparations for receiving the Torah at Har Sinai (19, 1-25).

A. The three days of preparation, purity and holiness, the prohibition of going up the mountain.

B. On the third day (the day of receiving the Torah), thunder and lightning, and a strong Shofar sound. The nation stands at the edge of the mountain and Hashem warns again that they should not step out of the boundary.

C. The Ten Commandments.

D. When Bnai Yisrael heard Hashem speaking, they asked Mosheh from fear that he should tell them the words of Hashem (20, 1-14).

5. Reiteration about the prohibition of idolatry and warnings about the holiness of the tabernacle and its shape (20, 15-23).

Berina Yiktzoru

וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ 19:5 ***"And now if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth"***

What is the intention of the promise "*You shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples*"?

The Ben Ish Hai explains this in his book "Ben Yehoyada". The Gemara (Pesachim 118) says, "*Hashem said to Gavriel… Shout at the wicked nation that all their deeds are written with one quill*". We need to understand the meaning of "*They are written with one quill*".



The explanation for this is as follows: The other nations are obligated in the seven Noachide laws only and one can write the number seven with one swipe of a quill. One the other hand, the Jewish nation is obligated to keep the 613 Mitzvot and 613 is written with three swipes of a quill.

And this is what it means when the verse says *"And you will be a treasured nation for Me"*. Treasure in Hebrew is Segulah and there is also a vowel in the hebrew alphabet which is Segol and it is written as three dots. These three dots symbolize the 613 Mitzvot as the number 613 also requires three swipes of a quill to be written. If Bnai Yisrael listen to Hashem and keep His covenant, they will be a treasured nation as the other nations only have one swipe of laws to keep.

וְכָל־הָעָם֙ רֹאִ֣ים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹ֔ת *The entire people saw the sounds.20:15*



Even as a young child, the **Chiddushei Harim- R'Yitzchok Meir of Gur** was hailed as a future gadol b' Yisrael. He was diligent and intellectually gifted. The scholars of his city very much enjoyed engaging him in Torah discussions.

"Perhaps you can tell me," said one of the scholars to the young Yitzchok Meir, "why the Torah tells us that *the entire people saw the sounds?* Would it not have been enough if they had only

heard the sounds that came from Hashem? Why did they have to *see* the sounds as well?"

"Imagine for a moment" answered the child, "what would have happened had they not seen His voice. All the thieves would have claimed that when Hashem said *lo signov*, He meant *lo* spelled with a *vav*, which means his you **should** steal, so there is nothing wrong with stealing! Hashem therefore made a miracle that enabled everyone to see His voice. This way, it would be clear that Hashem said *lo signov* with the word *lo* spelled with a *lamed* and an *alef*, meaning "Do not steal".

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרָיִם וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי 19:4 The Riboino tells Klal Yisroel, ***"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me"***



What does that mean, that I transported you on eagles' wings? Says Rashi - *Like an eagle, which carries its young on its wings, for all other birds place their young between their feet since they fear another bird flying above them. The eagle, however, fears only man, lest he shoot an arrow at it, because no other bird flies above it. Therefore, it places them [its young] on its wings. It says, "Rather the arrow pierces me and not my children." I*

[G-d] too did that: "Then the angel of G-d…moved, …And he came between the camp of Egypt, etc." (Exod. 14:19, 20), and the Egyptians shot arrows and catapult stones, and the cloud absorbed them.

This is an analogy as to how the Riboino Shel Olam looks after Klal Yisroel. I heard once b'shem **R'Meir Shapiro,** what's going on here?

How do other birds carry their young? They swoop down and pick up their young with their claws and fly off. But how do the eagle's young get on their back? They must jump on.

We are compared to the eagle's young. We are carried on the back of Hashem so to speak. But how do we get there? We have to make that first step, we have to do that *hishtadlus* first and then the Riboino Shel Olam will make us soar far beyond anything that we have had before.

Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ 18:1 ***And Yiro heard..***

What did he hear? Rashi tells us that Yisro heard about krias Yam Suf and the battle with Amalek.



Amalek brazenly attacked the Bnei Yisrael after they crossed the Yam Suf. This was not the first time in our history that the enemy attacked us after we crossed a body of water. Back in parshas Vayishlach, Amalek's grandfather- *Esav*- attacked Yaakov Avinu after he crossed over the stream of water. Following in the evil ways of the zaide Esav, Amalek pounced on Yaakov's descendants after they crossed the Yam Suf.

The Imrei Noam finds a remez to this in the first word of our parsha. - **וַיִּשְׁמַע = ים עשו** Which as Rashi explains, refers to Krias Yam Suf and Amalek- who learned from Esav!

Vechol Maaminim

Why Don't Kohanim Make a Brachah "She'asani Kohein"?

ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש (יט ו) . Chazal learn from this passuk that *"all of Am Yisrael were worthy of eating the Kodshim as long as they did not make the Eigel. After the Eigel it [this privilege] was taken from them and given to the Kohanim."*



Based on this, the **Imrei Emes** explained the reason that the Kohanim did not thank Hashem each morning for their special mitzvos with the brachah "She'asani Kohein," the same way Am Yisrael thanks for the mitzvos that they are given in the brachah of "Shelo Asani Goy." It is because the Kohanim merited this unique status only because of something shameful that Am Yisrael did, and which they lost after they sinned with the Eigel. Therefore, the Kohanim do not make a brachah on this, because it would be considered "miskabed biklon chaveiro," reaping honor on account of his friend's shame.

Additionally, the Imrei Emes explained the words of the Baal Haturim here, that in the future, Kehunah will be restored to Am Yisrael. From here we learn that the virtue of the Kohanim is

destined to be taken from them, and therefore, it was not instituted that they recite a brachah.

Maaseh Emunim - The Doctor's Amazing Secret

Rabbi Doctor A. is a well-known frum doctor who lives in London, but his reputation has spread far beyond. Over the many years he has been practicing, he has treated tens of thousands of patients, and he has acquired expertise in a number of medical fields. His clinic was constantly busy.



Dr. A. had acquired a reputation of being a thorough, precise physician, whose diagnoses were clear and sharp. This drew streams of patients from all over the United Kingdom seeking cures for their ailments. His recommendations were accepted without any doubts. Even today, at an advanced age, Dr. A. continues to engage in his profession, although more in a consultancy role than a clinical one. He continues to work, because he views his work as a mission.

Gedolei hador in the past, such as the **Steipler Gaon, zt"l**, trusted him, and today as well, rabbanim from all over the world consult him on halachicmedical questions. They know that he is a yarei Shamayim and that he will not give them an answer before he weighs the halachic ramifications on the medical questions involved. Many of his acquaintances, both doctors and laymen, wonder about his unique success.

What is the secret through which he merits to bring reprieve to so many people? For years, they tried to understand, until it was

revealed in a coincidental fashion. This story happened more than twenty years ago, when Dr. A. was at the peak of his activities, and it was related by the well-known doctor from Bnei Brak, Rabbi Dr. Meshulamn Hart: The S. family, patients of Dr. A., were travelling in their car late one night on the highway near London. Rabbi S., the father, was driving relatively slowly, when he noticed a vehicle on the shoulder of the road. The driver appeared to be frum. "If a Jew is in trouble he needs to be helped," Rabbi S. said as he signalled and pulled the car over to the shoulder of the road and stopped a bit ahead of the 'stuck' car.

Rabbi S. got out of the car and took out his toolkit that he always carries. "The car must be stuck because of a flat tire or another technical issue," Rabbi S. had a lot of experience in car mechanics, and he often found himself utilizing this ability to help people who were stuck on the way.

Over the years, he had even put together a "rescue kit" – large bag filled with all the tools he needed for a "first aid" vehicle rescue. He was sure this was another one of those incidents. He was very surprised that when he approached the car, he saw that the driver was none other than Dr. A. His head was leaning on the steering wheel, and his shoulders shook with sobs. "Why is the doctor crying like that?" Rabbi S. wondered to himself. "Maybe he's been stuck here for a long time already?!"

He quickly knocked at the window of the car. The doctor sat up in alarm and opened the window. Red-eyed, he looked at his uninvited guest, wondering who would disturb him in such a quiet place. It took him a few moments to recognize the person. "Rabbi S.!" he called in surprise, "What are you doing here at this late hour?" "I was sure the doctor was stuck with his car, so I thought I could help…" Rabbi S. said apologetically. "Everything is fine, baruch Hashem," the doctor reassured him. He seemed to be deliberating whether to

explain to Rabbi S. the real reason that he was parked on the shoulder of the road and crying.

Finally, Dr. S. decided that he would offer an explanation. "I am on my way back from the hospital, where I was summoned urgently by one of my patients, a young man who is in a serious medical state and needed to undergo a complicated treatment. The man wanted to consult with me before the treatment and asked me to be present while it was being done.



"As I doctor, I can say that I did everything in my power to help the man get through the treatment in the best way possible. Regretfully, he is still in very serious condition. Because I have exhausted all the options in my capacity as a doctor, I have no recourse now other than to do for him with I think is the best hishtadlus on his behalf – to daven from the depths of my heart, with tears, to the Healer of all flesh, to send him a refuah sheleimah, among the sick of Am Yisrael. "I do that always," the doctor concluded, without realizing that by saying this, he was revealing the secret behind his success.

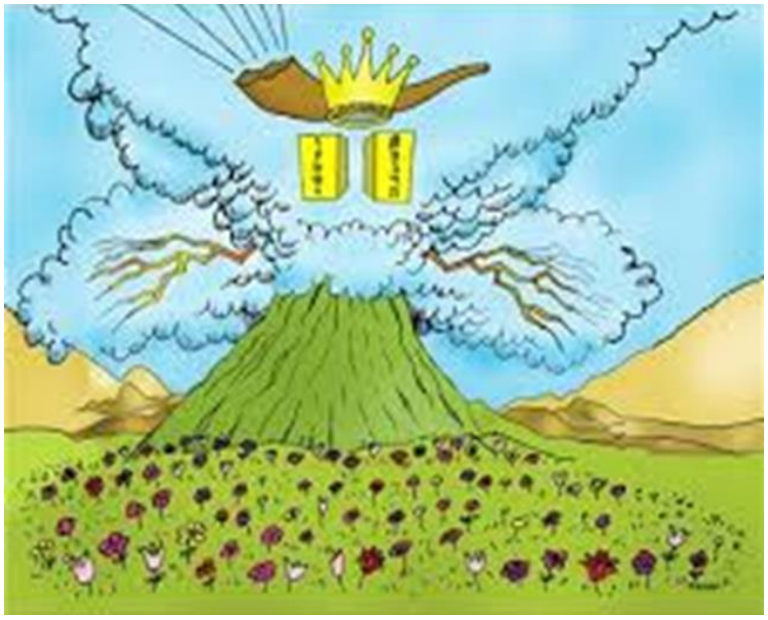
All at once, the mystery that many had wondered about was solved. The secret of how the doctor has been a faithful emissary for so many was not clear. The doctor did not suffice with mere expansive medical knowledge to help his patients. Knowing that the true key to healing was in the power of tefillah, he made sure to daven for each one of his patients, and it was his tefillah that bore the fruits of his success.

Hints in the giving of the Torah

The main topic in this Parashah is the giving of the Torah which was given in the year 2448, on the sixth day of the third month, which is the month of Sivan, 50 days after the Jews left Egypt. The Torah does not state the year the Torah was given, or the date, but there is nothing that is not hinted to in the Torah.

What is the hint to the year 2448 that the Torah was given in?

We know that we raise the Torah in Shul to show it to everyone and every person in Shul points their finger to the Torah and says "*This is the Torah that Mosheh placed before Bnai Yisrael*". What is the explanation of the word "Vezot"- and this is? Why is there an extra letter Vav (which means and) added to the word Zot? In the word Vezot there is a hint to the year the Torah was given.



The letter Vav has the numerical value of 6 and the word Zot has the numerical value of 408 and if we multiple 408 by 6, we get 2448 which is the year the Torah was given. Therefore, it is important that when the Torah is raised up in Shul for all to see that we say "Vezot" as this is a hint to the year 2448. There is another hint in the Parashah of Bereishit, "And it was evening and it was morning, (Yom HaShishi) the sixth day". The letter Hey in the word HaShishi is a hint to the five books of the Torah and Shishi which means six is alluding to the sixth day of Sivan that the Torah was given.

Another hint is in the Pasuk, "VeChamushim Yatzu", And they left armed, or you could read it as VeChamishim Yatzu - that fifty day after leaving Egypt you will receive the Torah. In the Ten

Commandments there are 172 words that are equal in numerical value to Ekev in the verse "Vehayah Ekev Tishme'un" – *"and it will be because you heed…".*



The Beit Avraham from Slonim writes in his book "Michtavei Kodesh" that on each of the Ten Commandments that the Jewish nation heard they answered Amen.

We see a hint to this in the morning Shabbat prayer during the Amidah, 'Tikanta Shabbat'. It is written, **אז מסיני נצטוו** – "From Sinai, they were commanded." The first letter of each word spells out Amen.

Rabbi E Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

When Do We Receive Reward for the Mitzvos That We Perform?

There were once two brothers who worked together, composing music. Their compositions were sold and enjoyed around the world. One time, as they were working on a particular piece, there was a massive explosion in their studio, and both brothers lost their sense of hearing.

One of them decided to leave the world of music and go into another field of work. He explained that he anyway couldn't enjoy the music he composes. The other musician continued writing music by heart. Although he could not hear his music, he knew that people around the world were enjoying it. Years passed, and advances were made in the field of medicine. The brothers underwent an operation, and they got back their sense of hearing. The brother who composed

songs all along was now able to listen to and enjoy the beautiful music he created.

The nimshal is that if at the moment, you are not yet experiencing the joy and the sweetness of avodas Hashem, don't stop performing good deeds. Continue doing the mitzvos because eventually, you will enjoy everything you are accomplishing – in the next world, and even in this world. In the present era of Corona, many people temporarily lost their sense of smell and taste, but they forced themselves to eat because they knew that they needed to eat in order to live.

Reb Gamliel Rabinowitz said that this hints that those who lost their taste and enjoyment in Torah and tefillah should continue performing good deeds, for eventually they will get their taste back. They will once again experience the pleasure of Torah and mitzvos.



The Siddur Speaks

When Yitzchak Avinu and Rivka Imeinu Davened to be Bentched with a child, the Pasuk says (25:21) that Yitzchak Davened opposite wife, 'because she was barren'.

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz, Shlit"a, says that we see from here that despite Yitzchak Avinu knowing that his wife was barren, this did not stop him from Davening! We can learn from this that even if we Daven and we see that our Tefilos are not accepted, and even if we see that our request is out of the ordinary, we must not give up and ever stop Davening, because HaKadosh Baruch Hu hears every Tefilah. There is no such thing as a Tefilah that is not heard, and if we Daven and do not see salvation, we must believe that when the time comes, every Tefilah will have an effect!

Weekly Wisdom - Pondering the Parshah

This week's Parshah has the most monumental event in Jewish history – the giving of the Torah. In it, we have the Aseres Hadibros (which is actually 13 Mitzvos) recorded for the first time, which contain the fundamentals of being a Yid. The first five Mitzvos are Bein Adam L'Makom, from Man to Hashem, and the other five are Bein Adam L'Chavero, from Man to his fellow. If you read the Pesukim, you will see that the first five Dibros are very long, with a total of 143 words. The next five, which are the Bein Adam L'Chavero Mitzvos, are only 26 words. Why the huge difference?



Before we move onto that question, we have another question. In the Torah, there are six Parshiyos with a person's name in the title (Noach, Chayei Sara, Yisro, Pinchas, Balak, and Korach). In all the other Parshiyos, the names are more understandable. They are the main character of the Parshah! However, Parshas Yisro is seemingly more about Matan Torah and Klal Yisroel in general, rather than just Yisro (so, why is it called Parshas Yisro)!?

Due to the size difference in the two halves of the Dibros, they looked slightly lopsided. The Meforshim explain that this was done purposely by Hashem (as everything else in this world) because Hashem wants us to focus more on Bein Adam L'Chavero, rather than Bein Adam L'Makom. Since the two halves of the Luchos were the same size, the side of Bein Adam L'Chavero had much bigger sized words. Hashem is throwing away his Kavod and wants us to be nicer to our fellows than Him. However, once we bring in our Middos, and are kind to another, we automatically turn to do Bein Adam L'Makom

Mitzvos. Yisro was the ultimate recipient of Bein Adam L'Chavero. Right when he joined Klal Yisrael, Moshe, Aharon, and the Zekeinim welcomed him with open arms, fulfilling Bein Adam L'Chavero. Yisro himself then turned and started doing his own Bein Adam L'Makom, giving suggestions on how to judge the nation. This is why the Parshah is called Yisro, and we must always try to embody both of these traits.

The Ten Commandments:



The Ten Commandments have 620 letters. The numerical value of the word Keter - crown is 620. If we merit to keep the commandments, then we merit the crown of Torah and if we do not merit to keep the commandments, then Heaven forbid, we are cut off from the Jewish people.

The Ten Commandments have 172 words which is the numerical value of the Hebrew word Ekev (because). "Ekev" is the root word of Yaakov. The letter Yud in the word Yaakov has the numerical value 10 which hints to the Ten Commandments and Ekev (the end of the word Yaakov) hints to the 172 words of the Ten Commandments.

"Who is rich? Who has a wife lovely in her deeds." ~~ Talmud, Shabbat

Reward for Kibud Av v'Em



The Seder HaDoros relates that heaven revealed to Reb Yehoshua ben Elam in a dream, "*Be happy, rejoice, because you will be in Gan Eden together with the butcher Nanas. Your portion and his portion are the same.*" Reb Yehoshua ben Elam said, "Woe to me that this will be my portion in Gan Eden! I feared Hashem since my youth. My only occupation was Torah study. I never walked four amos without wearing tzitzis and tefillin. I have eighty students. Do all my good deeds and Torah equal up only to the butcher Nanas?"

Reb Yehoshua ben Elam and his students immediately set out to find out who this Nanas is and his deeds. After asking many people for directions, they finally arrived at the town where Nanas the butcher lived. Reb Yehoshua asked the people of the city to direct him to Nanas's home. He was ready to go there himself, to speak with Nanas. The townspeople said, "It isn't proper for a talmid chacham and respected person like yourself to go to Nanas." Reb Yehoshua said, "Tell him that I want to meet him." The townspeople repeated this to Nanas. He responded, "Who am I that Reb Yehoshua should inquire about me?" They replied, "The fact is that he wants to speak to you. You should come immediately." Nanas didn't believe them. He thought they were teasing him. He replied, "You are just making fun of me. I won't go." The townspeople told Reb Yehoshua what happened. Reb Yehoshua told them, "So I will go to him. I won't leave this town before I meet Nanas."

Reb Yehoshua arrived at Nanas's home. Nanas fell before Reb Yehoshua's feet and said, "What is special today that the crown of Yisrael has come to the home of his servant?" Reb Yehoshua said, "There is something that I have to speak with you about." "Please speak," Nanas said. Reb Yehoshua said, "Tell me your deeds. What do you do?" Nanas replied, "My master, I'm a butcher. My mother and father are old, and they can't stand on their own. Every morning I dress them, feed them, and I wash them up."

Reb Yehoshua stood up and kissed him on his head. He said, "My son, אשריך ואשרי גורלך מה טוב ומה נעים, *you are fortunate and fortunate is your lot…* And I am fortunate that I will merit being your neighbour in Gan Eden." We see that for honouring parents, one can earn a reward equal to the reward of a holy tana. The reward is enormous.

Reb Moshe Turk davened every morning with the **Chazon Ish zt'l**, and he considered it a zechus to receive the Chazon Ish's daily "good morning" blessing. After shacharis, Reb Moshe Turk would go off to a cheder in Tel Aviv where he taught. Once, he brought his class to Bnei Brak to daven shacharis with the Chazon Ish. After shacharis, one of the students wanted to ask a question from his rebbe, Reb Moshe Turk, but Reb Moshe stopped him. He said, "In the presence of the Chazon Ish it is derech eretz to remain silent."

The class passed by the Chazon Ish and received his brachos. When the child who had a question passed the Chazon Ish, the Chazon Ish asked him to tell him what he wanted to ask. The child looked up at Reb Moshe Turk, wondering whether it was derech eretz to speak, and Reb Moshe Turk replied, "If the Chazon Ish asks, you may reply." The student asked a question that only a child can ask. He said, "How did the Chazon Ish become the Chazon Ish?" The Chazon Ish replied, "It was because I never wasted a moment of my time, and I was always careful with the mitzvah of kibud av ve'em"

Bikur Cholim



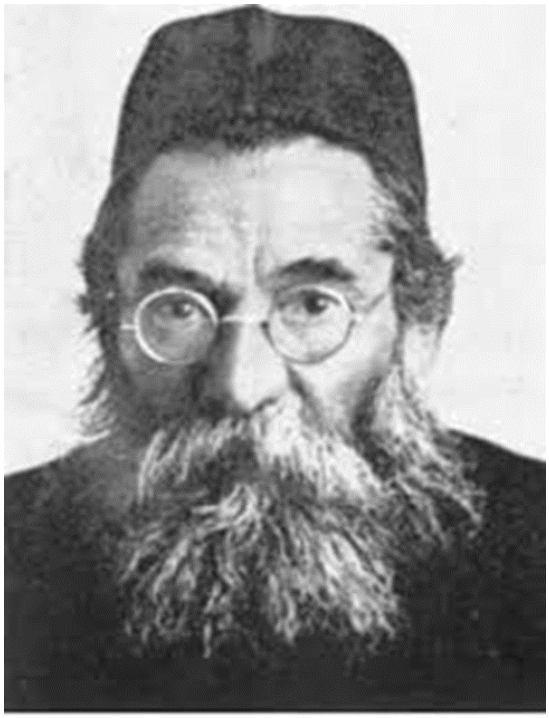
Apparently, bikur cholim is called, **ילכו** ,***to go***, because one goes to the home of the sick. There is another explanation, taught by **Baron (Nasan) Rothschild**. This is the story: For many years, the **Ksav Sofer zt'l** and Baron Rothschild went to the same vacation/health resort, and the Baron spent a lot of time enjoying the Ksav Sofer's divrei Torah.

One year, the Baron cut his visit short. The Ksav Sofer asked him why he wasn't staying longer. The Baron replied, "Chazal call visiting the sick **ילכו**, to go. Why?

This is because when you visit the sick, you have to recognize when you should get up and leave. Perhaps your visit is a burden for the ill person. And perhaps the ill person is embarrassed to be seen in this state. Therefore, the Torah says **ילכו** ,one must know when to leave…" The Ksav Sofer often repeated this vort he heard from Baron Rothschild.

Rabbi Nachman - *A taste of the world to come*

When a person knows that everything that happens to him is for his own good, this is a foretaste of the world to come. To be serene and patient regardless of what you encounter in life is the highest level of knowledge and understanding of G-d. Have faith that everything is for your ultimate good.~ Likutey Moharan I, 4.



R' Leib Chasman, famed mussar giant of the Chevron Yeshiva in Jerusalem in the early twentieth century, was speaking to a boy who had come to him asking how to improve his service of Hashem. After some discussion, R' Leib asked the bochur to go to the Rebbetzin in the kitchen and ask her for a cup of tea for him. The boy jumped up to do as he was asked. As he did, R' Leib grabbed his arm. "Wait! Why did you jump up so quickly?"

The boy hesitated, thought a moment, and then replied, "I guess I ran because I have the opportunity to serve a Talmid Chacham!" "Oy," sighed R' Leib. "It is exactly as I thought. A young man is presented with the chance to improve his Avodas Hashem by doing a true kindness for another and bringing a feeble old man a cup of tea. However, instead of focusing on doing kindness for its own sake, he chooses to focus on other considerations like serving Torah scholars, which in my case is even questionable."

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS YISRO

Why Jews Don't Follow The Majority of Others By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

Rabbi Yonasan Eibashitz was the chief rabbi of Prague some 300 years ago and a champion of the Jewish people. This was not an easy task in those days; all of Europe was either Catholic or Protestant and, as someone once said; they worshiped a suffering Jew and tried to make as many Jews suffer as possible.

One day the Bishop of Prague stopped Rabbi Yonasan in the street and asked him a question.

"Rabbi, I have just been thinking. In fact, I've been thinking of this for several days…. You Jews certainly believe what it says in the Old Testament that we must go after the majority; (Ex. 23:2) correct? Well then, why do you not comply with your own rules and follow the vast majority who follow the Gospels? Why, I would estimate that you are outnumbered over a hundred to one!"

The Rabbi knew he was in trouble; if he didn't give an answer, it would be interpreted as defeat and forced conversions could result. But if he angered the Bishop by saying one wrong word against their religion it could bring a wholesale massacre.

He pretended to ponder over the question as he prayed to G-d for help. Suddenly he had an idea! He took a deep breath and replied.

"Your highness, action speaks louder than words. You have asked a very wise question, and I will try to give a befitting answer. Please let us go to the town square."



They walked together until they were standing in the middle of the open marketplace. Only a few people were there when the Rabbi turned to the Bishop and said quietly, "Now, your Excellency, please do as I do; look up and don't stop pointing to the sky".

The Bishop did so and in a short time people, seeing these two honourable men pointing to the clouds began to gather around and look up as well. "What do you see, your highness?" One of the braver members of the crowd asked.

"The arch-angel Michael" whispered the Rabbi in feigned awe, "There he is in the clouds."

"The Angel Michael!!" Whispered the man in reply as he crossed his heart, squinted even harder on high and fell to his knees in trepidation.

In seconds the word spread, and thousands of people were crowded in the square in various poses of submission. Women were weeping; grown men stood transfixed, hands raised in supplication. All were pointing above and echoing the words, "The Angel Michael!! The Angel Michael.

"Now" said the Rabbi to the Bishop, "let us leave them and move to the Jewish sector".

The Rabbi led the way through the twisting streets into the Jewish ghetto and soon they were again standing in the middle of the much smaller Jewish marketplace. This time the Rabbi pointed heavenward until a small group of people gathered around. "What is your honour pointing at? Someone asked the Rabbi politely.

"The Archangel Michael" he answered. "There he is in the clouds!"

In no time a crowd of Jews had gathered with heads craned upward. "What is it?" someone asked. "What are we looking at?"

"Dunno" someone else answered, "The Rabbi says he sees an angel up there. Do you see anything? All I see is clouds." "Maybe he just has a stiff neck" someone whispered jokingly.

People were scratching their heads, shrugging their shoulders and squinting at the sky until finally someone got up the courage to go up to the Rabbi and ask,"Excuse me Rabbi but are we supposed to see something up there? I mean, is the Rabbi sure he sees an angel? Is the Rabbi feeling all right?"

The Rabbi stopped looking up, apologized for the error and, motioning to the Bishop, walked away toward the nearest shul with the Bishop following at his heels.

"Please try to understand, your highness, I'm not trying to be rude but," he turned to the Bishop as they reached the door of the Shul, "But I'll have to ask you to hide that cross around your neck before we enter."

The congregation was just about to begin the reading of the Torah. and when everyone saw the Rabbi enter, they stood in honour, although they were surprised to see him accompanied by the Bishop.

The Rabbi asked if he could read from the Torah. Of course no one objected, indeed they were honoured. He walked to the podium, the first man was called up, made the blessing, (The reading was 'Yisro', just like this week and it begins with the words 'Vayishma YISRO'..) the Rabbi opened the scroll and began to read in the ancient melody:

"Vayishma MISRO.." Immediately the entire crowd yelled out in unison to correct the obvious mistake. "YISRO! YISRO!"

When things quieted down the Rabbi again began: "VaYishma FISRO…"

And again the crowd yelled "YISRO!!, RABBI, IT'S YISRO!! NOT FISRO!!" Three people ran up to look into the Torah scroll for a spelling error and when they saw that there was none, they politely asked the Rabbi if he would please let someone else read.

The Rabbi stepped down, excused himself and motioned for the Bishop to follow him outside. - "You see, your Excellency" he said to the Bishop, "This is why we don't follow your 'majority'.

These people are for the most part simple folk and they revere me as their Rabbi and leader. But when I tried to make them see an imaginary angel or made just one small mistake in the Torah reading, they refused to accept it.

"But as you see, your followers don't care so much about the truth. Just as they just now bowed to a non-existent angel so they believe that a person can be G-d and can alter the meaning of the entire Torah. So how can we leave the Torah which we have been reading publicly four times a week for three thousand years for ideas that have no basis in truth? So that is why we can't follow your majority."

Shopping for Success

Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzira, known to all as **Baba Sali**, sought to implant his own unwavering faith in his disciples, as well as in the many, many followers who flocked to him for blessings and help, first in Morocco and then in Israel after his aliyah. They loved and honoured him because he always found the apt word of comfort and encouragement for people troubled by difficult problems. He guided them in turning directly to G-d in prayer, with the confidence that the One Above could and would help them out of their various predicaments.

Once, a young man came to Baba Sali. Married several years without having been blessed with children, he begged Baba Sali to promise that his desire be fulfilled. "Are you so certain that my prayer will be effective?" asked Baba Sali. "Absolutely!" replied the young man. "Very well. Then go shopping with your wife. Buy all the things needed for a new-born infant. When you have made all your purchases, come back to me."



The young man was surprised by the advice but dutifully went home and reported to his wife what he had been told. He and she then made up a long list of things a baby needs and set out to purchase them. When everything was in their home, he returned to Baba Sali for further instructions.

The sage was very pleased. "You have passed the test. By following my advice, you have shown your good faith and trust. Now I am certain that your prayers will be answered, for when one prays to

the Al-mighty, he must show a full measure of trust." Baba Sali was right. Within the year, the young couple was blessed with a son. (Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from Rabbenu Yisrael Abuchatzira)

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser Highlights the Importance of Promoting Shalom Bayis By Daniel Keren



One of the featured speakers at last month's Martin Luther King Jr. Hakhel Legal Day Yarchei Kallah Event was Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, internationally renowned Maggid Shiur and Rav of Congregation Bais Yitzchok. He spoke on the topic of "Halachich Perspectives for Current Times."

Rabbi Goldwasser quoted the **Chiddushei Harim (Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter**, 1799-1866) who said that if a person makes an effort to study halacha to determine what one should do, he can separate kedusha from tumah Rabbi Goldwasser noted that one of the major areas that he frequently get calls from people is regarding the subject of shalom bayis. There is no greater zechus than to help restore harmony between a husband and wife.

Oftentimes, the quality of being mevater (giving in to satisfy another person) is essential towards promoting shalom bayis. A newly married wife grew up in a home when before Yom Kippur, the family would go together to perform the ritual of kapporas by shlugging (waving) a chicken over their heads while reciting verses from the Yom Kippur machzor.

In the week before Yom Kippur she asked her husband to do the kapporas ceremony with her. He was a Litvak (a Jew whose family

came from Lithuania) and he happily went to get the machzor and some money. His wife was shocked and said that this was not the way she wanted to perform the ceremony, but with real chickens.



Not knowing how to handle the crisis he went to **Rav Elazar Shach**, 1899-2001, the Rosh Hayeshiva of Ponevezh in Bnei Brak and was told to do kapporas as his wife desired. The husband complained that this would take up extra time from his learning Torah. He also asked Rav Shach how he performed kapporas. The Rosh Hayeshiva admitted that he also performs the ceremony with money but that for the sake of shalom bayis, the new husband should be mevater to the wishes of his wife. Rabbi Goldwasser explained that in order to ensure shalom bayis, a person may sometimes have to take a few steps back and swallow his pride.

Rabbi Goldwasser recalls a person who stopped him on the street and told him that he was involved in a major business deal and if it would become successful, he would want to give Rabbi Goldwasser a large amount of money from his profits to distribute for tzedakah. Rabbi Goldwasser told the gentleman that if he wants a zechus that his business deal should indeed turn out well, he should give now a small amount of tzedakah and once the deals works out, follow through with his desire to give a larger amount to help Jews in need.

Rabbi Goldwasser told a story about a chiloni (secular) Israeli reserve soldier who was sent into battle. He was confronted by an Arab enemy who had a grenade and was preparing to throw it at the helpless soldier. At that moment, this Jew who had no previous thoughts of becoming a baal teshuvah declared out loud in a vow to Hashem that if He would save his life, he would do teshuvah and

become a Gerrer chassid. At that moment the grenade blew up in the hand of the Arab before he could throw it at the Jew and the soldier's life was saved while his enemy died a very painful and deserved death.

Afterwards, this Jew when returning to civilian life discovered that being a Gerrer Chasid was maybe after all not such a simple thing. He still wanted to do teshuvah and become Torah observant. But did he have to go the whole route of wearing white socks and black clothes? Someone told him that if he would daven in the Gerrer shteibel once a week or once a month, that might qualify as his fulfilling his vow to Hashem to become a Gerrer chassid, while he could still dress in a more moderate but non-Chassidic manner without the white socks.

However, when **Rav Moshe Sternbuch**, the Av Beis Din of the Eidah Chareidis in Yerushalayim heard of that solution, he disagreed. He said something more substantial was required. Before Jewish holidays this baal teshuvah must like other Gerrer chassidim come before the Gerrer rebbe and request a brocha and give tzedakah money. That would qualify as fulfilling his vow to become a Gerrer chassid.

The Baal Shem Tov's Partner in Olam Haba

One day, it was revealed to the **Baal Shem Tov** that he had merited that a great Neshamah would be his partner in Olam Haba. The identity of this Neshamah was also revealed to him as being someone who lived in a backwoods village many miles from his home.

Desiring to learn more about his destined partner, the Baal Shem Tov journeyed to this village and asked for the person whose name he had been given. When he met him, the man turned out to be a simple and ignorant Jew, who was hardly literate enough to Daven properly or even to learn a few Pesukim of Chumash.

A few villagers had described this man as an unintelligent individual, and a glutton, as he was quite large. The Baal Shem Tov asked him if he could tell him a little about himself, and the man responded, "I am a simple, uneducated Jew, who earns his living off the land. There is nothing special about me."

The Baal Shem Tov decided to rent a room in the man's house and observed his behavior for several days. Indeed, as was his reputation, the man seemed to be very ordinary, acting in the way of a simple peasant. Never did the Baal Shem Tov see him learning with an open Sefer, and the only book he saw the man open was a Siddur, which he used very quickly to Daven from every day. It seemed that there wasn't any exemplary behavior in any area.



The only thing remarkable about this man was his diet. He consumed a vast quantity of food. At a single meal he would eat what the average person would eat in a week, and his girth was witness to his eating habits. - Finally, the Baal Shem Tov asked him directly. "I have reliable information that you are held in great esteem in Shamayim. Perhaps you can tell me why this is so?"

The man just reiterated, "There is nothing special about me. Maybe you should check your sources again."

The Baal Shem Tov persisted though, and said, "Have you ever, in your life, done a great deed? Perhaps you once saved a life, or gave a great amount to Tzedakah, or made some other great sacrifice for the sake of Hashem?"

The man replied, "I'm sorry to disappoint you, but you have the wrong fellow. I have never done anything of that sort. I'm just a simple

farmer. The only extraordinary thing about me is the amount of food I eat. No one eats as much as I do."



The Baal Shem Tov asked, "Why do you eat so much?" The man responded, "It is because of my father." He explained, "My father died Al Kiddush Hashem, and he sanctified Hashem's Name at the end of his life.

Many years ago, at a Pogrom, he was dragged from his bed out into the street, and he was given the choice to convert from Judaism, or he would be put to death. When he refused to convert, they set the barn on fire and threw him into the flames. My father was a very slight, and skinny man, and in just a few moments, he was completely consumed by the fire. There was hardly anything there to burn.

I resolved at that time that if that should ever happen to me, it would never be that way. If it should ever happen that I am ever given the choice to convert from being a Jew or else I must burn for the sake of Hashem's holy Name, I will never convert, just like my father did, but with me it will be different, and I will burn for a very, very, long time!"

The Baal Shem Tov was astounded at this story. It turned out this simple Yid was eating his every bite L'Sheim Shamayim, solely so he could die Al Kiddush Hashem, if the time ever came to it.

The Baal Shem Tov kissed the man on his forehead and said, "I am so fortunate to be able to spend eternity in Olam Haba with such a special individual!"

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah



הגבל את ההר וקדשתו Set a boundary around the mountain and sanctify it. *19:23*

The Bnei Yisroel are told not to go on the mountain but rather to surround the mountain when receiving the Aseres HaDibros. How can we understand this pasuk?

The Panim Yafos finds a remez (hint). The letters in the Aleph-Bais that are surrounding the letters **ה** and **ר** of the word **הר** *create a 'holy boundary'.*

The letters before and after the **ה** are **ד** and **ו** - דהו and the letters before and after the **ר** are **ק** and **ש** - קרש. These 'surrounding' letters spell '**קדוש**' ,'holy', and this is how the mountain is bounded by sanctity.

Our hope is to fulfil the pasuk in Yeshayahu (27:13): 'And we will bow to Hashem, **בהר הקודש**, on the holy mountain, in Yerushalayim!'

Did You Know?

The mitzvah of kiddush Hashem is more beloved than any other mitzvah in the world.(Shnei Luchos HaBris, Sha'ar Ha'Osiyos, Os Aleph, 60)

Hashem elevated and chose the Jewish people and gave them the Torah and mitzvos so that they should be mekadesh Hashem. (Shaarei Teshuvah, 3:158)

L'Maaseh



Rebbetzin Elyashiv, wife of the Gadol HaDor, **Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, zt"l**, had a child when she was already 'of her old age', and went to her daughter's school one night for parent-teacher meetings, together with all the other young mothers. The Rebbetzin waited patiently for her turn, although many of the other mothers tried to offer their appointment to her, so she could go before them. When it was her turn, she spoke with the teacher for a few minutes and then left the room.

At the end of the long evening, the teacher had finally finished speaking with all the mothers of her students and was ready to head home. As she left her classroom, she was very surprised to see Rebbetzin Elyashiv sitting and waiting in the hallway, long after her session had been completed.

The Morah got very worried when she saw her, and said, "Rebbetzin, did I say anything wrong? I told you that your daughter was a wonderful, fine girl, and she is doing very well in school. Was there something else you wanted to talk about?"

With a pleasant smile, Rebbetzin Elyashiv responded, "I saw how many people were here waiting to speak with you, and I knew that it was going to be a late night for you. How could I leave you to be in such a deserted building at night all alone? I waited for you so that we could walk out together."

The teacher was very touched by the kindness of the Rebbetzin, and thanked her. As they left the school the Morah said how honoured she was to be walking home with the Rebbetzin. Rebbetzin Elyashiv responded, "You can't imagine how happy and excited my daughter will be when I tell her that I had the honour of walking home with her Morah!" *(Aleinu L'Shabei'ach, Shemos).*

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

וישמע יתרו - מהר"י שטייף 18:1 What did Yisro hear that made him want to join Klal Yisroel?



Gittin 56b – Titus the wicked, Yemach Shemo, said that Hakodosh Boruch Hu only has power on the water. Perhaps Yisro could have erred and thought so as well. However, Yisro heard about Krias Yam Suf and about Milchemes Amalek – one on water and one on dry land, he knew that Hakodosh Boruch Hu's power had no limitations, and he knew that He was the Absolute Ruler of the world. This caused him to want to join Klal Yisroel.

"Consider your words before you utter them!" ~~ Derech Eretz Zuta



Rav Avigdor Miller On Kosher Earrings

QUESTION: Should frum girls have their ears pierced for earrings?

ANSWER: Why not? If the earrings are kosher to wear, why not? Probably Jewish women have the right to wear earrings like anybody else. When Rivkah was given *nezamim* by her *chosson*, it was because Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants to make the bride more attractive to the *chosson*. Why not? He wants people to get married; and even after they marry, He wants women to be attractive for their husbands. It's a mitzvah for a woman to be attractive for her husband.

And therefore, nothing can be considered as wrong if it is a matter of maintaining her appearance. Not for the street though. You don't dress up for strange men. But to dress up for your own husband, absolutely.

Revach L'Neshama – Kotzker Rebbe - The Loud Boom Of A Cheap Imitation

וְכָל־הָעָם֙ רֹאִ֣ים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹ֔ת; "At Matan Torah the whole nation saw the sounds." (Yisro 20:15) How does one see sounds?

The difference between sight and sound is that sight can only tell you what is on the exterior. In order to understand something or someone more completely you need to know what is on the inside. Seeing a person cannot tell you much about them, but speaking to them can truly enlighten you as to what they are all about.

Rav Menchem Mendel of Kotzk explained that the sounds were the voice of Hashem and the mitzvos. These deep words were meant to be heard and digested internally. However, the nation only saw the fireworks display, the exterior part of the mitzvos. The were only impressed by the externalities of the mitzvos and not the deep avodah within. **וַיַּעֲמֹד הָעָם מֵרָחֹק** "The nation stood at a distance." (Yisro 20:18) **ומשֶׁה נִגַּשׁ אֶל־הָעֲרָפֶל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם הָאֱלֹקִים**; Only Moshe Rabbeinu came close and went into the pnimius of the mitzvos. Moshe Rabeinu heard but we only saw.

Revach L'Neshama - Rav Shlomo Of Radomsk - Yisro Is The First To Proclaim "Boruch Hashem"





Yisro said, **וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בָּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה** (Yisro 18:10). The gemara (Sanhendrin 94a) says that this was disgrace to Moshe and all of Am Yisroel that until Yisro came, no one said "Boruch Hashem". **The Iturei Torah** brings the **Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk** who asks, did the Bnei Yisroel not show Hakoras Hatov when saying Az Yashir?

He answers that Yisro took Hakaras HaTov to a new level. It is easy to see and appreciate Hashem's kindness when you are the recipient. To be sensitive enough to recognize and appreciate the hand of Hashem when someone else is the beneficiary, is even more special.

Yisro sat comfortably in his house, far out of harm's way. Yet he possessed the noble spirit to excitedly proclaim, "Boruch Hashem Asher Hitzil Eschem…" blessed is Hashem who saved "you".

Revach L'Neshama – Rav Yehoshua MiKutna - Yisro's Happiness Mixed With Tears

וַיִּֽחַדְ יִתְרֹו֙ עַ֣ל כָּל־הַטּוֹבָ֔ה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂ֥ה ה' לְיִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל (Yisro 18:9).



Rashi in his second pshat says that Vayichad means his skin was full of bumps out of sadness for Mitzrayim's downfall, although he was happy for Bnei Yisroel. What compelled Rashi to interpret the word Vayichad to mean that Yisro was sad?

Rav Yehoshua MiKutna says that there are three terms to describe happiness. ***Simcha*** which means happiness for something that is occurring for the first time. The second is ***Sasson***, which means happiness for something that was returned after you already had it and then lost it. By a Chosson and Kalla we use the word Sasson because the neshamos are reunited after being separated upon entering the world.

The third is ***Chedva***, which means happiness despite the fact that you have something to cry about. Ezra told the older people who cried after the completion of the second Bais HaMikdash, to rejoice, Chedva, because it was a happy occasion despite that it did not match the greatness of the first Bais HaMikdash that they so vividly remembered.

Vayichad is from the word Chedva. The choice of this word shows that Yisro was happy although he had reason to cry. That is why Rashi explains that as a newly inculcated Jew, and still not far from his non-Jewish roots, he was sad over the downfall of the great Mitzri empire.

Revach L'Neshama – The Kotzker Rebbe - It Takes A Mountain To Be A Man

The gemara in Sotah (5a) says that Hashem chose to give the Torah on Har Sinai because it was a low mountain and more humble than the rest. Hashem wanted to teach us that the torah is most at home in a humble person. If so, asks Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, why didn't Hashem give the torah on the plain or in a valley? Wouldn't that be better lesson in anava?

The Kotzker Rebbe answers with one of the fundamental Kotzker ideas. He says that it is very easy for someone with no special qualities to be modest. (In fact Chazal (Pesachim 113b) say that one of the things a human mind cannot tolerate is a poor person who shows off.) When you are a person of great stature and many fine qualities and still act modestly, that is true anivus.



Hashem taught us this lesson at Har Sinai. Har Sinai was a real mountain, yet it acted humble unlike all the other mountains that rose with great pride above the earth. We first need to become great mountains, and then we can work on our humility. Until then we need to just take an honest look in the mirror using a just a smidgeon of common sense, and surely any false sense of pride we feel will fall straight into the valley.

Revach L'Neshama – Alter Of Novhardok - Three Days To Prepare

הֱיֻ֥ו נְכֹנִ֖ים לִשְׁלֹ֣שֶׁת יָמִ֑ים (Yisro 19:15). Before Kabalas HaTorah Moshe told the Bnei Yisrael to prepare for three days to receive the Torah. Chazal tell us that preparations for a child being formed start, **ארבעים יום קודם יצירת הולד**; 40 days before formation."

Rav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, the Alter of Novhardok ,says that we see from here that giving over the Torah is much easier than making a Mentch!

Revach L'Neshama – Vilna Gaon - Keep Shabbos And Never Work Another Day In Your Life

לֹ֣א תַעֲשֶׂ֣ה כָל־מְלָאכָ֗ה אַתָּ֤ה וּבִנְךָ֙־וּבִתֶּ֔ךָ עַבְדְּךָ֥ וַאֲמָתֶ֖ךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּ֑ךָ וְגֵרְךָ֖ אֲשֶׁ֥ר בִּשְׁעָרֶֽיךָ (Yisro 20:10). This pasuk that warns us not to do Melacha on Shabbos says also your son and daughter. Then it says also your slave but it doesn't say a Vav or "and" before slave why not?

The Vilna Gaon answers that the gemara in Brachos (35b) says that when we do the will of Hashem, we will not need to work and others will do our work for us. If we don't do the Ratzon Hashem then we need to do our work, and the work of others. If we keep Shabbos we surely doing the Ratzon of Hashem, since the gemara in Shabbos says that if someone keeps Shabbos properly, even if he worshipped Avodah Zara Hashem forgives his aveiros. With this says the Vilna Gaon, we can explain the Pasukim. **זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת**, if our Shabbos is merely a remembrance and we are not doing the real Ratzon Hashem, then **שֵׁ֥שֶׁת יָמִ֖ים תַּעֲבֹ֑ד**, we will need to work six days a week. However if, **וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי֙ שַׁבָּ֣ת לַה֔' אֱלֹקֶ֑יךָ**, Shabbos is



totally dedicated to Hashem, then we are doing the Ratzon of Hashem.

In that case, **לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל־מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ־וּבִתֶּךָ**, you and you children will not work. Who will do the work then? **עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ**.

This is why, says the Vilna Gaon, there is no Vav by **עַבְדְּךָ**.

Revach L'Neshama – Bais HaLevi - Check It Out With The Wife First



When Bnei Yisroel arrives at har Sinai, Moshe ascends to Shamayim and receives his first instructions for Bnei Yisroel in preparation of Kabalas HaTorah. Hashem tells him (Yisro 19:3), **כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב**, go say the women. **וְתַגִּיד לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, and tell to the men. This refers to the willingness of Bnei Yisroel to be Mikabel the Torah to which they responded **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**. Why did Hashem tell Moshe to ask the women first?

The Bais HaLevi answers that the halacha is, if a person purchases land from a husband, the woman must give her consent. Her consent is only valid before the husband agreed to sell it. However, if the husband already agreed to sell, her consent is not valid since she can always say that she didn't really want to sell the land but in deference to her husband she consented.

The Torah was given to both men and women and Hashem needed consent from both of them, says the Bais HaLevi. In order to get true consent from the women, he needed to get their okay, before their husbands would choose to accept it or else it would not be true consent.

Revach L'Neshama – Chasam Sofer - Malachim With Torah?



When Moshe went up to Shamayim to take the Torah, the Malachim told Hashem that humans cannot have the Torah. Hashem told Moshe to answer them back. Moshe was afraid, so Hashem told him to hold on to the Kisei HaKavod. Moshe then asked them if they went to Mitzrayim, a major theme of many mitzvos. Before Moshe asked his questions what were the Malachim thinking? Did they not know already that Torah is all about being human and not meant for Malachim who don't have any physicality?

The Chasam Sofer answers that the Torah as it is before Hashem, is a collection of unconnected letters. Each world combines the letters in a manner that is relevant to that world. The Malachim cherished the Torah in their own way and did not want to see it on earth with sinful people. They wanted the Torah to be kept in a Heavenly realm and not sullied by man who can never reach the Heavens.

Hashem told Moshe to answer them but first hold on to the Kisei HaKavod. What this represented was that while man can learn the Torah in an earthly manner that the Malachim cannot, still man can reach great heights and learn the Torah in a Heavenly manner. Man can grasp Torah as it is interpreted in Shamayim near the Kisei HaKavod. Man can learn Torah way down below on earth and still ascend all the way to the top. To this the Malachim had no answer and Moshe took the Torah.

Revach L'Neshama – Hashem Killed Bnei Yisroel With His Voice



Chazal tell us that at first Hashem started to say the Dibros, but His voice caused the Neshamos of Bnei Yisroel to leave their bodies. Hashem then brought them back to life by sprinkling them with dew. Why did Hashem do this? He obviously knew they would not survive and would die at the foot of the mountain before Kabalas HaTorah.

When Hashem created the world he looked into the Torah which was the blueprint. All creation, all wisdom, and all morality come from the Torah. The world is simply an illusion meant to deceive us and tempt us away from the Torah. Any morality in the world not consistent with the Torah is not true morality but rather corruption cloaked in morality.

Any person raised on worldly values cannot truly embrace and fully embody Torah until he rids himself of his worldly values and begins anew. Rather than learn from the Torah how one should live his life,

instead he will try to read his preconceived notions into the Torah. This would be not only a corruption of his own life, but he would corrupt the Torah as well in order to suit his needs.

Bnei Yisroel after centuries of Egyptian exile and absorbing their mentality, could not continue to exist in their current state when confronted with pure unadulterated Torah. After "dying" and eradicating their existing notions, Hashem sprinkled them with the "Tal Torah". He brought them back into existence with a clear slate, on the basis of Torah. Only then did Hashem hand over His precious Torah to the descendants of his beloved followers.

Revach L'Neshama - The Delicate Job Of Geirus

After Hashem tells Moshe His plan for Klal Yisroel to accept the Torah, Hashem says **אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, these are the words you should tell them (Yisro 19:6). Rashi adds, from the Mechilta, that Hashem instructed Moshe to repeat this speech word for word and not add or detract. **The Maharal** explains that Hashem did not want Moshe to add his own pitch to what Hashem already said.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky (Taama Dikra) says that we see from here that in other places where Hashem instructed Moshe to tell something to Klal Yisroel, Moshe had free rein to add his own thoughts to the matter. Why was this different?

Rav Chaim answers that over here the matter at stake was the Geirus of Bnei Yisroel. They needed to decide if they wanted to become the Am Hanivchar. The halacha is that when someone comes to be Migayer, he must make this choice on his own volition. The Jewish nation does not proselytize. You cannot try to persuade them, nor do we scare them off with all the consequences of not being a good Jew.

This is a delicate line to walk. Therefore Hashem told Moshe exactly how to say it. He them warned Moshe that adding one word in either direction in his enthusiasm, would upset this delicate balance and undermine the geirus process at this critical juncture of history.

Revach L'Neshama - What Is In The Name Yisro

Rashi brings from the Medrash that Yisro had seven names. "The reason," says Rashi, "that he was called Yisro was because another name he had, was Yeser and when he was Migayer and took on the Mitzvos a 'Vav'was added to his name." Why a Vav?

The Maharal MiPrague in Gur Aryeh says that Yisro with a Vav has a gematria 616. That includes the 613 mitzvos plus the three that a Ger must do to be Migayer, which includes Mila, Tvila, and bringing a Korban. Mila is not double counted as he still has a mitzva to do Mila on his children.

The Maskil L'Dovid says that Yisro includes all his names. Yeser was one name, plus the Vav means he had six other names.

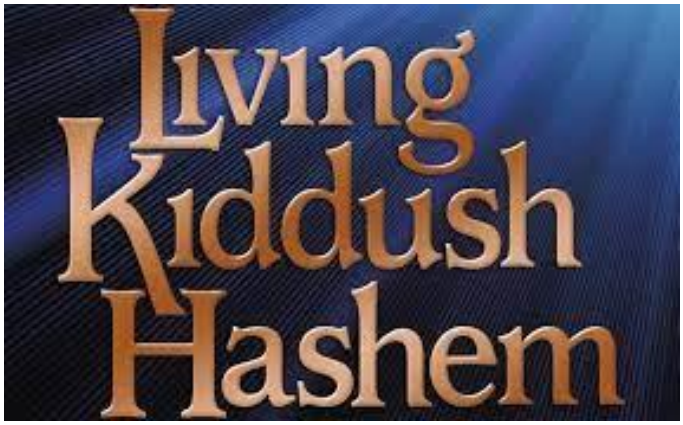
Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

The *Chofetz Chaim* was once giving a shiur towards the end of Shabbos. As the sky darkened and Shabbos was soon to end, he noticed many people in the *shiur* start shifting in their seats and looking at the clock to see how much time was left until Shabbos was over.

The *Chofetz Chaim* asked, "Why are you in a such a rush to leave the day of *brachah*?"

בשבתך - Beshivticha

Mind the Gap - A Taking the Next Step



We are accustomed to thinking that a kiddush Hashem is something that is done with a big crowd, a lot of publicity, and a terribly difficult challenge, or a particularly wonderful deed. If that is the definition of a kiddush Hashem, it would be difficult indeed to accomplish such a task — how often would we have the opportunity?

However, this is not the definition of a kiddush Hashem. The Rambam writes, "Anyone who avoids an aveirah or does a mitzvah solely for the sake of Hashem, is mekadesh Hashem." The implication is clear, even if one were alone, and did what they could to serve Hashem properly, they are within the parameters of kiddush Hashem.

Living according to Hashem's Will is itself a kiddush Hashem, whether we are watched or otherwise. With this newfound understanding of kiddush Hashem, the opportunities to be mekadesh shem shomayim are always around us — let's take advantage!

"You shall not mistreat a needy and destitute labourer, whether a fellow countryman or a foreigner in your communities. You shall pay him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets, for he is in want and urgently depends on it." ~~ (Devarim 24:14-15)

"There are men who travel far to look for something that they can find in their own homes. " ~~ Mishle Yehoshua

Who loves you?



R' Noach Weinberg z"l, who devoted his life to teaching people how to return to Hashem, was once approached by one who told him, "I don't need your Yeshiva. I already have a great relationship with G-d. He loves me the way I am and does miracles for me."

Impressed, R' Noach asked for details. "I ride a motorcycle," he explained. "Once, I was riding on a narrow road and a truck came around the corner out of nowhere. I swerved and went over a cliff. As I began to fall, I called out to G-d to save me.

Suddenly, my bike caught between two rocks and I was thrown into a soft hedge. I lived to tell the tale. See? G-d does miracles for me. I don't need to learn your Torah." R' Noach smiled, then asked the young man: "And Who do you think sent the truck? Do you want Hashem to send you another reminder of how much He loves you?"

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

"וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה" - *"Yisro the High Priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard."* (18:1)

QUESTION: Why does the Torah *now* cite Yisro's already-mentioned relationship to Moshe and his position?

ANSWER: In the times of King David and King Shlomo the Jews did not accept converts because the Jewish people were then at the height of their glory, and it was suspected that the motivation of

the would-be convert was not Torah and *mitzvos,* but rather to share in the prosperity and glory of the Jewish people.

If so, why did King Shlomo accept the daughter of Pharaoh as a convert and then marry her? The answer is that she was an exception to the rule. As the daughter of a King, she did not lack glory, and therefore her only interest in converting was her love for Torah and *mitzvos (Yevamos* 24b, see *Tosafos).*

When the Jews left Egypt and the sea split, the entire world witnessed the greatness of the Jewish people. From all over people wanted to convert and become part of the Jewish nation. They were motivated by the glory of the Jewish people rather than by sincere love for *Yiddishkeit,* and so were rejected.

However, when Yitro decided to convert, he was accepted because, as the famous High Priest of Midian, he could not be suspected as a seeker of glory. In addition, it was unlikely that he was converting out of fear of the Jewish people, because nobody would harm the father-in-law of Moshe. (**ילקוט האורים**)

Vedibarta Bam

ויחד יתרו על כל הטובה אשר עשה ה' לישראל אשר הצילו מיד מצרים
***"Yisro was happy for all the good that Hashem did for the Jews for saving him from the hand of the Egyptians."* (18:9)**

QUESTION: Why did Yisro use the singular expression *"hitzilo"* — saving *him* — and not the plural *"hitzilam"* — "saving *them*"?

ANSWER: Pharaoh had three advisors, Iyov, Yisro and Bilaam. Considering the Jewish people a serious threat to him and the land of Egypt, he called his advisors and consulted with them. At the conference, Bilaam suggested the idea of drowning all new-born Jewish boys. Iyov was silent. Not wanting to be present when plans were being made against the Jewish people, Yisro ran away. In the end, Bilaam was killed, Iyov endured his famous sufferings, and Yisro

was rewarded to have Moshe as his son-in-law and his descendants as members of the *Sanhedrin* (*Sotah* 11a).



When Yisro heard of the rescue through the drowning of Egyptians, he was happy for the good Hashem did for the Jewish people. In addition, he was happy and grateful that Hashem had given *him* the idea to run away from Pharaoh. Thanks to this, ***he*** was prevented from suffering or perishing with the Egyptians. (**באר מים חיים**)

Vedibarta Bam

"עתה ידעתי כי גדול ה' מכל האלהים" ***"Now I know that G-d is the greatest of all deities."*** **(18:11)**



QUESTION: To say that Hashem is the *greatest* of all the gods is heresy because it implies that other gods have some kind of greatness too. Why would Yisro say such a thing?

ANSWER: This statement is not one of relative comparison, but of total rejection. Yisro was the High Priest of Midian and a prominent theologian. He was familiar with all the gods the pagans worshipped. After learning of the miracles Hashem performed, he was convinced of the worthlessness of all other deities and that Hashem is the one and only G-d of the world.

Hence, he proudly proclaimed, "Now I know that G-d is great! I have reached this conclusion, *'mikol ha'elohim'* — through realizing the falsehood of all the gods of the pagan world. I know that they are indeed nothing and that Hashem is omnipotent." (**אלשיך**)

"כי יהיה להם דבר בא אלי ושפטתי בין איש ובין רעהו" *"When they have a matter, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his friend."* (18:16)



QUESTION: 1) In the *midbar*, all the needs of the Jewish people were provided for by Hashem. Their clothing grew with them, and their food came from heaven. Why were there so many *Din-Torahs?*

2) Yisro's plan to appoint judges was logical and simple. Why didn't Moshe think of it himself?

ANSWERS: When the Jews left Egypt, a group of Egyptians known as the *"eirev rav"* — "the mixed multitude" — joined them. When the Egyptians drowned in the sea, their jewellery washed up on the shore and the Jews took it. The people of the *eirev rav* fought with the Jews, arguing that the drowned people were their relatives and that they were their heirs. Therefore, many *Din-Torahs* took place over this issue. (The term *"rei'eihu"* can refer to an Egyptian, see *Shemos* 11:2).

A judge is qualified to preside over a *Din-Torah* only if he has no personal interest in the matter. *All* the Jews except Moshe took the wealth of the Egyptians. Therefore, he was the *only* judge qualified to handle all the *Din-Torahs.* (**בנין אריאל**)



Vedibarta Bam

"ומשה עלה אל האלקים"
***"And Moshe went up to G-d."* (19:3)**

QUESTION: What took place in heaven when Moshe appeared?

ANSWER: According to the *Midrash Rabbah* (28:1), the angels wanted to attack Moshe for coming to take the Torah down to earth. Hashem altered his face to resemble Avraham's and said to them, "Aren't you ashamed to attack the person from whose hospitality you benefited?" Consequently, thanks to the food that Avraham gave the angels, we were able to receive the Torah.

This is alluded to in *Pirkei Avos* (3:17), **אִם אֵין קֶמַח, אֵין תּוֹרָה** — Were it not for the food that Avraham had given to the angels, we would not have been able to take the Torah away from them. **אִם אֵין תּוֹרָה, אֵין קֶמַח** — Were it not for Avraham's desire that his children should learn Torah, he would not have offered food to his heavenly guests. **(מהר"ם שי"ף)**

Vedibarta Bam

"ויענו כל העם יחדו ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה" ***"And all the people answered together and said, 'All that G-d has spoken we will do.'"* (19:8)**

QUESTION: Each individual Jew should have responded **"e'eseh"** — **"I will do."** Why did they all answer in the plural, **"na'aseh"?**

ANSWER: When the Jews heard about the Torah and realized its beauty and importance, each individual took upon himself not only to observe it, but also to be responsible for all other Jews doing so.

Each one responded in the plural "*na'aseh,*" meaning "I will do, and also see to it that *other* Jews will do."

This may be an additional source for the Talmudic dictum: **ערבים שכל ישראל זה בזה— *"Each Jew is a guarantor for his fellow"*** (*Shavuot* 39a). (**חידושי הרי"ם**)

Vedibarta Bam

אתם ראיתם אשר עשיתי למצרים ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואביא אתכם אלי *"You have seen what I did to Egypt and that I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to me."* (19:4)

QUESTION: Why did Hashem single out the eagle as an example of his connection with the Jewish people?



ANSWER: In Hebrew an eagle is known as "*nesher,*" because the word "*nesher*" means "falling off." The eagle's feathers are constantly falling off and being replaced (Psalms 103:5 Rashi). here is a Midrash Aggadah about a type of eagle that returns to its youth when it becomes old.

Therefore, the choice of the eagle to symbolize Hashem's relationship with the Jewish people alludes to the fact that even if a Jew should, G-d forbid, "lose his feathers" — fail in his observance of Torah and *mitzvos* — his case is not hopeless. He always has the opportunity to do *teshuvah* and grow "new feathers." (**ר' לוי יצחק זצ"ל מברדיטשוב**)

Vedibarta Bam

"וידבר אלקים את כל הדברים האלה" ***"And G-d spoke all these words."*** **(20:1)**



QUESTION: Why is the giving of the Torah recorded in *Parshas Yisro?*

ANSWER: Regarding the Torah it is stated: *"Ein tov ela Torah* — The true good is only Torah. As it is written, *'Ki lekach tov natati lachem'* — 'I have given you a good teaching — the Torah.' *(Pirkei Avot* 6:3).

The word *"tov"* (**טוב**) has the numerical value of 17. Counting from the first *parshah* of the Torah *(Bereishis), Yisro* is the 17th *parshah*. Thus, it is most appropriate that the ultimate good be expounded in the 17th *parshah.*

Vedibarta Bam

"כבד את אביך ואת אמך" ***- "Honour your father and your mother."*** **(20:12)**

QUESTION: The *Gemara (Kiddushin* 30b) states, "There are three partners in the forming of man: Hashem, his father, and his mother. When one honours his father and mother, Hashem considers it as though He abided in their midst and they rendered honour to Him." What allusion is there in our *pasuk* to this?
ANSWER: The word "**אביך**" in *mispar katan* (single numerals, disregarding the zero in the numerical value of the Hebrew letter so that **כ=2, ל=3**, etc.) has the numerical value of six.

The word "**אמך**" in single numerals has the numerical value of seven. Together they add up to 13, which is the numerical value of "**אחד**" which alludes to the One and Only — Hashem.

When a person honours his father and mother, he merits "**אחד**"— Hashem's presence. (**שפתי כהן**)

"כבד את אביך" ***"Honour your father."*** **(20:12)**

QUESTION: The verse could have stated *"kabeid avicha"* — "honour your father"; the word *"es"* (**את**) is superfluous?

ANSWER: According to *halachah,* a person is obligated to honour his father at all times. However, the father cannot order his child to violate a law of the Torah.



The first letters of the words "**כַבד אַת אַביך**" have the numerical value of 22. This suggests that one should only honour his father when his requests are in accordance with the Torah, written with the twenty-two letters of the *alef-beit*.

Moreover, the last letters of the words "**כבדַ אתַ אביךָ**"— spell the word *"kedat"* (**כדת**). This comes to further emphasize that one must honour his father when the request is **כדת** — in harmony with *halachah*. (**בית יעקב ר' יעקב הכהן ז"ל טראב – מסלתון ראב"ד ביירות**)

"Emunah is not just believing that Hashem exists – It's knowing that He's there for you." – Rabbi Shlom Wolbe

"אנכי...אשר לרעך" *"I am...which belongs to your friends."* (20:2-14)



QUESTION: Why are there 620 letters in the **עשרת הדיברות**?

ANSWER: In the Torah there are 613 *mitzvot*. In addition to this, there are seven *mitzvot* which were added by our sages. Each letter in the *Aseret Hadibrot* corresponds to one of the *mitzvot*.

The last two words, **אשר לרעך** have seven letters, representing the seven *mitzvot* instituted by Rabbinic ordinance:

א = **אֲבילות**, the laws of mourning.

ש = **שִׂמחת חתן וכלה** , the seven days of celebration for a groom and bride.

ר = **רְחיצה**, the laws of *nitilat yadayim* — washing of hands before a meal.

ל = **לֶחם**, the laws of saying a *berachah* before eating food and also that breads and foods baked or cooked by Gentiles are forbidden to us, even if there is no problem about the *kashrut* of the ingredients.

ר = **רְשויות**, the laws added by the Rabbis regarding domains where it is forbidden to carry on *Shabbat*, and also the distance permissible to walk out of residential area.

ע = **עֲמלק** , the laws pertaining to reading the *Megillah* on *Purim*, and the other *mitzvot* of *Purim* — Haman was a descendant of Amalek, and *Purim* commemorates the victory over him.

ך = **כֲהנים**, the miracle of *Chanukah*, which was brought about through the *Kohanim* of the family of Mattisyahu. (**חתם סופר**)

Vedibarta Bam

"למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה אשר ה' אלקיך נתן לך"
***"So that your days will be lengthened upon the land that G-d your G-d gives you."* (20:12)**

QUESTION: The word **למען** — "in order that" — seems superfluous. Could it not have just said, *"veya'arichun yamecha"?*

ANSWER: The Jewish people is eagerly awaiting *Mashiach's* coming, which is referred to as the **קץ**. The word *"lema'an"* (**למען**) is numerically equivalent to 190, which is also the numerical value of the word *"keitz."* This teaches us that through honouring our parents we will hasten the coming of *Mashiach* and have a long life.

The last letters of the words "**כבד את אביך**" have the numerical value of 424, which is the same numerical value as *Mashiach Ben David* (**משיח בן דוד**), who will speedily be revealed through the great *mitzvah* of honouring parents. (**בית יעקב**)

Vedibarta Bam

"וכל העם ראים את הקולת" ***"The entire people saw the thunder [that issued from the mouth of Hashem — Rashi]."* (20:15)**

QUESTION: The *Midrash Rabbah* (28:5) states that the voice was unique in that it had no echo. Usually, the stronger the voice, the stronger the echo. Isn't the lack of echo from the voice of Hashem a sign of weakness?

ANSWER: The distance a voice can travel depends on the person's strength. When the voice reaches a wall, it rebounds, producing an echo. The *Midrash* is implying that the voice of Hashem was so powerful that it penetrated and permeated every person and every part of the universe so that there was no echo. (**לקוטי שיחות חלק ה**)

L'Maaseh… A tale to remember



One Shabbos night at the Shabbos *seudah*, when the ***Berditchover Rebbe*** took a bite from his piece of *challah*, his face glowed with happiness and joy! He cried out, "*Oneg Shabbos! Oneg Shabbos!*" Everyone who saw this was affected by how much the *rebbe* enjoyed Shabbos.

A simple coachman was standing in the back of the room watching this, and he was extremely touched by the *Rav's* happiness. He said, "Rebbe, I've always spent my money on buying drinks and having fun, but I never experienced anything that made me feel as happy as the *Rav* is feeling now, just by eating *challah*!"

L'Maaseh… A tale to remember

Once, a man came to **Rav Elazar M. Shach, *zt"l*,** and said that he was experiencing many troubles. He wanted the *tzaddik* to advise him as to what he could do— something special, that would help him grow so that Hashem would help ease his problems.

Rav Shach said, "I will tell you something powerful. It is a small thing to do, but you must accept it on yourself and never miss doing it even once!" The man said, "*Rebbe*, what is it?" since he was willing to do anything to help his situation. Rav Shach told him, "Make sure you always *bentch* from a *bentcher*!"

When Rav Shach saw the man's surprised reaction to accepting on himself such a simple thing, the *tzaddik* added, "It's also what I'm working on as well!" (*Haggadah Shel Pesach Kinyan Torah*)

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

The *Gemara* teaches us (*Shabbos* 119b) that on Shabbos, the two *Malachim* that escort us home from *shul* place their hands on our heads and say a *pasuk*: "*Your aveiros will go away and be forgiven*"! (*Yeshaya* 6:7).

Rav Shimshon Pincus, *zt"l*, says that on Shabbos we enter 'The House of Hashem', because Shabbos is similar to the *Beis HaMikdash*. In Hashem's House, there are no *aveiros*— that's why our *aveiros* are forgiven! (*Nefesh Shimshon)*

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ 19:5 ***"And now if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth"***

Rebbe Dovid'l Biderman of Lelov explains the word **סגולה** as relating to the vowel **סגול**, which are three dots arranged in a triangle. This is what Hashem actually promises the Bnei Yisrael: "You are to Me as the vowelisation **סגול** — any way you turn it, the essential configuration remains the same— a triangle."

So too is *Bnei Yisrael*. Even if they should **חלילה** sin, and they turn from their previous position and stature, some inner aspect of each and every one in *Klal Yisrael* remains complete as it originally was— the *Pinetele Yid*. (*Parperaos LaTorah*)

Break the Cycle

"Habit blinds the heart. Awareness reopens the eyes and restores direction." ~ Rabbeinu Yonah.

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

The mitzvah of *Kibud Av V'Eim*, Honouring Parents, is a great mitzvah. The *Chinuch* (*Yisro*, *Mitzvah* 33) explains that this mitzvah teaches us how much *hakaras ha'tov*, thanks and recognition of good that we should have for those who do things for us. Moreover, it will help us realize just how much Hashem does for us, and this will lead us to constantly thank Hashem.

This is one of the few *mitzvos* that the Torah (*Yisro* 20:12) tells us the reward for doing it— long life. It says in *Tanna D'vei Eliyahu* (*Rabbah*, 26:25) that the reason why the mitzvah of honouring Parents is mentioned after the mitzvah of Shabbos in the *Aseres HaDibros*, is to teach us that whoever desires to have an honourable, long life in this world *and* eternal life in *Olam Haba*, should carry out Hashem's will and our parents' will as well.

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וישמע יתרו (יח:א) ***And Yisro heard*** (18:1)

The *Kotzker Rebbe* asks: Was Yisro the only one who heard? Everybody heard! As it says in the *Shirah*, **שמעו עמים ירגזון (טו:יד)**, *"People heard– they trembled"* (15:14)?

The *Rebbe* answers: To hear, many people can hear, but only a few can understand and internalize what they heard. Many people hear and the words do enter their ears, and then enter their hearts and souls.

The virtue of Yisro was that he heard and he also internalized that which he heard. This brought him closer to the Holy One, Blessed is He. (*Peninim*, Rav Yosef Berger)

L'Maaseh… A tale to remember

One winter day, **Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, *zt"l*,** was at the airport about to embark on a trip to New York. One of his close students was getting married and had sent nine airplane tickets inside the invitation to his wedding. Rabbi Mordechai Gifter and eight of his students were going to attend the *chasunah*.

They boarded the aircraft, and just after they settled in their seats, the pilot announced that due to a blizzard in New York, they would not be able to land at Kennedy Airport. They would be heading towards Washington National Airport instead and make their way to New York when they were able to.



When they arrived at the Washington airport, Rav Gifter and his students soon realized that they were not going to make it to New York in time for the wedding. When it was time to *daven Maariv*, they searched for a private place, and asked a worker who was mopping the floor if he knew of a quiet place for them to pray. The man's reaction startled them, because he dropped his mop in alarm and it clattered to the floor. He stared at them, and then directed them to a storage room where they could *daven* undisturbed.

The group commenced their prayers, but instead of leaving, the cleaner stood silently at the door, watching them with a dazed expression on his face. When they had finished, they were astonished to hear him ask, "Why don't you say *Kaddish*?" One of the boys explained, "We need a *minyan* of ten men for *Kaddish*, and we're missing one man."

To their surprise, the cleaner responded, "I am a Jew. I can join your group to complete the *minyan*. Please," he asked, "let me say the *Kaddish*."

Rabbi Gifter helped the man recite the unfamiliar words, and after he had finished, the worker took a deep breath and said, "As you can see, I wasn't brought up as a practicing Jew, and I barely know anything about Judaism. My father passed away a number of years ago, and last night he appeared to me in a dream. He said, 'Tomorrow night is my *yahrtzeit*, please say *Kaddish* for my soul with a *minyan* of ten Jewish men!' I cried out, 'How can I say *Kaddish*?! I barely know how to say the words! And how will I find a *minyan*?' My father said, 'I will arrange it for you', and then I woke up. Now, here you are, exactly nine of you," continued the worker, his voice full of emotion, "Sent from Heaven so that I can say *Kaddish* for the benefit of my father's departed soul!"

Rabbi Gifter then told him their side of the story, how they had only arrived there due to a snowstorm in New York. Rav Gifter said, "Look how Hashem runs the world! See how He orchestrated our meeting together? Nine invitations to a wedding, a blizzard in New York, the airplane's rerouting to Washington National Airport, and missing the wedding— all this happened so that you should be able to say *Kaddish* for your father!"

The amazing chain of events had such a profound impact on the airport employee that it did not take much persuading on the part of Rabbi Gifter to encourage him to continue saying *Kaddish* with a *minyan*. And that was the starting point of this man's complete return to his Jewish roots!

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

A person should not wait for suffering to come and then pray, but rather he should daven before any calamity strikes. (Sanhedrin 44b)

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

A Talmid Chacham once brought the manuscript of a *Sefer* he had written on *Tefilah* to show the ***Vilna Gaon***, hoping to get his approval for the *Sefer*. There was a rather simple idea presented near the beginning of the *Sefer*.

The *Vilna Gaon* enjoyed the idea very much, and he told the author that it would be worth publishing the *Sefer* even for only for that one small piece! Later, someone asked the *Brisker Rav* why the *Vilna Gaon* was so excited that idea, and he said, "After all, it really is a simple concept."

The *Brisker Rav* answered, "If the *Vilna Gaon* got excited about it, that means it is *Emes*, completely true. When it comes to *Emes* there is no difference between small and simple, or big and complicated!"

Besamei HaTorah by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים I am Hashem, your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves. *(20:2)*

The *Ibn Ezra* brings down the question of Rebbe Yehuda *HaLevi*, regarding why the *Torah* mentions, 'I am Hashem, Your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt', and it does not state, 'That I made Heaven and Earth'?

It seems that it is easier to grasp that *Hashem Yisbarach* created the world, but to know that *Hashem* continues to rule the world by Himself, even after He created the world— and He does this forever, we only know this from the Exodus from Egypt. (*Kol Ram – Rav Moshe Feinstein*)



Besamei HaTorah by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו *Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it.* *(20:8)*

By remembering *Shabbos* every day, you will come to honour it. There are three *Mitzvos* mentioned regarding *Shabbos*:

1. ***Shmiras Shabbos*** – Keeping *Shabbos*. That is, to keep *Shabbos* and all its laws, and to do this, one must learn the laws of *Shabbos*.

2. ***Kavod Shabbos*** – Honouring *Shabbos*. To do this, one has to wear nice clothes, and set the table with a tablecloth and nice utensils.

3. ***Oneg Shabbos*** – Enjoyment of *Shabbos*. That is, to enjoy *Shabbos* with delicious food and fine drinks. All these *Mitzvos* are included in, *"Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it"*.

Additionally, there is a *Mitzvah* in the *Torah* of '***Shamor es Yom HaShabbos Le'kadsho***' – *Keep the Shabbos day to sanctify it*. This is a *Mitzvah* of '*Sheiv V'al Ta'aseh*' – to sit and do not act. Do not desecrate the *Shabbos* and do not speak prohibited things on *Shabbos*. (*Doresh Tzion – Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi*)

L'Maaseh

Rebbetzin Elyashiv, wife of the *Gadol HaDor*, **Rav Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, *zt"l***, had a child when she was already 'of her old age', and went to her daughter's school one night for parent-teacher meetings, together with all the other young mothers.

The *Rebbetzin* waited patiently for her turn, although many of the other mothers tried to offer their appointment to her, so she could

go before them. When it was her turn, she spoke with the teacher for a few minutes and then left the room.

At the end of the long evening, the teacher had finally finished speaking with all the mothers of her students and was ready to head home. As she left her classroom, she was very surprised to see *Rebbetzin* Elyashiv sitting and waiting in the hallway, long after her session had been completed.

The *Morah* got very worried when she saw her, and said, "*Rebbetzin*, did I say anything wrong? I told you that your daughter was a wonderful, fine girl, and she is doing very well in school. Was there something else you wanted to talk about?"

With a pleasant smile, *Rebbetzin* Elyashiv responded, "I saw how many people were here waiting to speak with you, and I knew that it was going to be a late night for you. How could I leave you to be in such a deserted building at night all alone?

I waited for you so that we could walk out together." The teacher was very touched by the kindness of the *Rebbetzin*, and thanked her. As they left the school the *Morah* said how honoured she was to be walking home with the *Rebbetzin*.

Rebbetzin Elyashiv responded, "You can't imagine how happy and excited my daughter will be when I tell her that *I* had the honour of walking home with her *Morah*!" (*Aleinu L'Shabei'ach)*

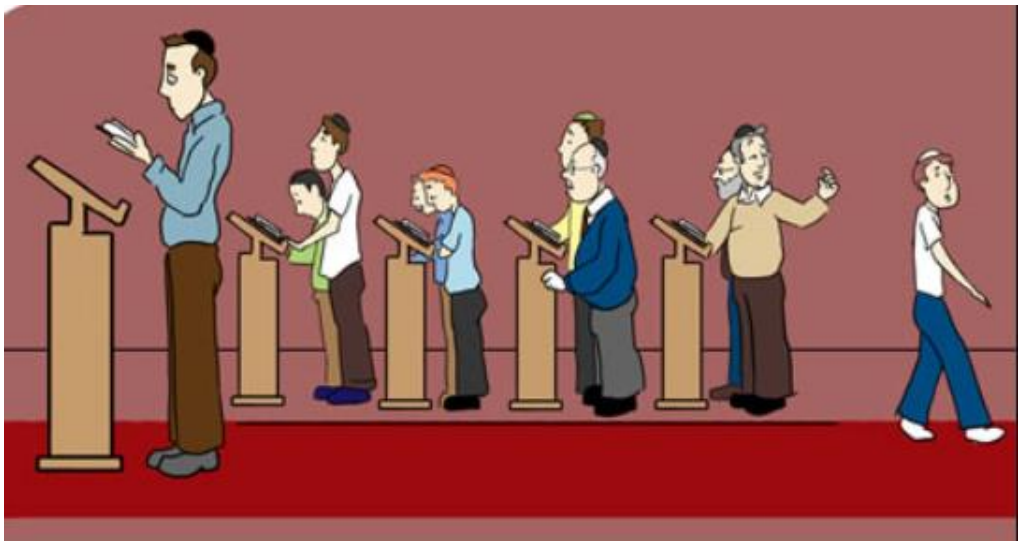
Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos

According to the ***Arizal*** (*Shaar HaKavanos*), when we come home from *shul* on Shabbos night, we should enter the house with great *simchah* and in a loud voice say, 'Good Shabbos!'

The children should then go over to their mother and kiss her hand. (*Meoros HaArizal*)

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS YISRO

The Tenth Man by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg



Rav A. Leib Scheinbaum relates the following story. In a resort hotel in Eretz Yisroel outside Yerushalayim, the Mashgiach, the Kosher supervisor, would see to it that there was a daily Minyan for Minchah. It happened that one day he had a very difficult time completing the Minyan, and he decided to go outside to search for a tenth man.

He soon met a Jew who neither had a clue about what a Minyan was, nor about what the Mashgiach wanted from him. After the Mashgiach explained the significance of Minyan and the incredible reward in store for those who participate in a Minyan, the stranger agreed to join them as the tenth person. He went with the Mashgiach into the building and began walking up the stairs to the dining hall, where the Minyan took place.

Suddenly, someone told the Mashgiach that the son of one of the regular people at the Minyan had arrived, and they now had a Minyan. The Mashgiach turned to the Jew who had only walked up the steps, and told him that their Minyan problem had just been solved. He thanked him for his good intentions and wished him a good day.

Ten years went by. One night, when the Mashgiach was sleeping, he had a dream. In the dream, the man whom he had called in to be the tenth man appeared before him, and his face was shining brilliantly.

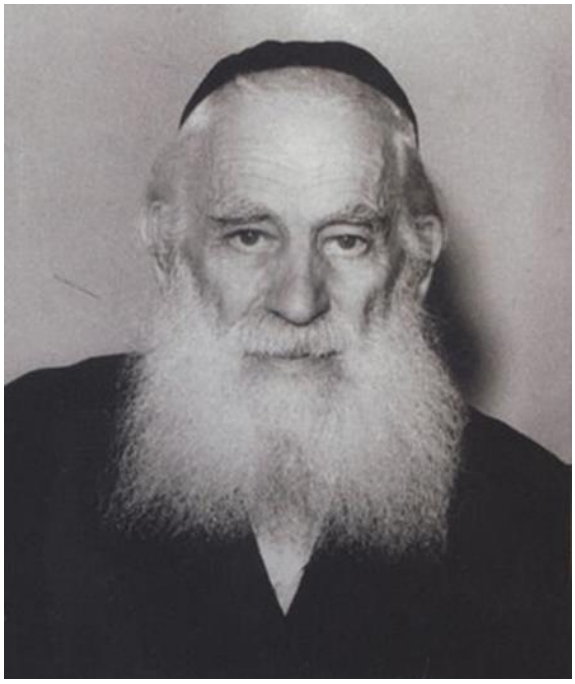
The man related to him that he had passed away from this world during the previous month.

He said, "I have come to thank you for attempting to include me in your Minyan. You have no idea of the incredible spiritual reward I have received because of the few steps I walked up in order to complete the Minyan."

He added, "I have one favor to ask of you. I have one son who lives in Yerushalayim. He is non-observant. In fact, he is very estranged from a life of Torah and Mitzvos. Please go to him and ask him to recite Kaddish for me. It will mean so much."

The Mashgiach, of course, met with the son of this man, and was successful in convincing him to say Kaddish for his father. Rav Scheinbaum commented, "This man got great reward, and it was all a result of him going a few steps out of his way. Can we even begin to imagine the reward for actually completing a Mitzvah? The S'char must be astounding!"

The Great Cry and Scream of the Tzadik



In his youth, the **Ponovezher Rav**, O"BM, was one of the brilliant young students of the famous Yeshiva of Telz. At some point, he decided to transfer from Telz to the fabled yeshiva of Novardok. On his way, he passed through the town of Radin, where the renowned tzaddik the **Chafeitz Chaim**, O"BM, lived, and decided to visit the elderly sage.

He entered the Chafeitz Chaim's home during the early evening, and the Rebbitzen told him to take a seat,

saying the Rav would be with him shortly. Suddenly, there was a great cry and screaming.

R' Yosef Shlomo bolted from his seat to see what had happened. "Don't be alarmed," the Rebbitzen said. "Someone just came to tell my husband that his wife is going through a difficult childbirth. He is praying for her." On the spot, the Ponovezher Rav made up his mind to stay in Radin and study under the Chafeitz Chaim!

Dudi's Gratitude to Hashem on Losing His Sight



Dudi, living in Eretz Yisroel, was having pains in his eyes. He went to the doctor for a checkup, and after examining his eyes, the doctor worriedly told Dudi, "Your eyes are in serious danger. You must get on a plane and fly to America and go to a specific doctor who specializes in this type of procedure. This is an emergency situation, and you cannot afford to wait until tomorrow - you must leave today. You cannot fly alone in case something happens along the way."

Dudi arranged his flights and was off to America that day with a friend. As soon as they landed, they immediately headed to the doctor's office. The doctor examined his eyes and told him as follows:

"According to your results, you have an extremely dangerous tumour in your eyes. You have a choice between two things. Either we do emergency surgery tomorrow to remove the tumor, and you will become blind and remain blind for the rest of your life; or you can leave it and the tumor can spread and take your life in a short amount of time. You must make your decision today."

Dudi responded that he was going to go ahead with the surgery. After leaving the office, Dudi asked his companion where he could find a beis knesses where he could spend the night alone – for this would be the last night in his life that he would be able to see.

They found a shul whose Gabbai gave permission for Dudi to stay there with the door locked overnight. Dudi remained in the shul all night undisturbed. The next morning when his friend came he asked him, "What did you do the entire night?"

Dudi answered the following, "I knew this was the last night that I would be able to see. Therefore, I spent the entire night crying and thanking Hashem for giving me the gift of being able to see up until this point in my life – now I am giving my eyes back to Him. I thanked Hashem and I was mispallel."

They headed to the doctor for the surgery. The nurses began the pre-op and did one last examination before beginning the emergency surgery. A little bit later the doctor came in utterly amazed, and told Dudi, "I'm not sure I believe what I am seeing, but the tumour that we saw yesterday, has completely disappeared as though it never existed."

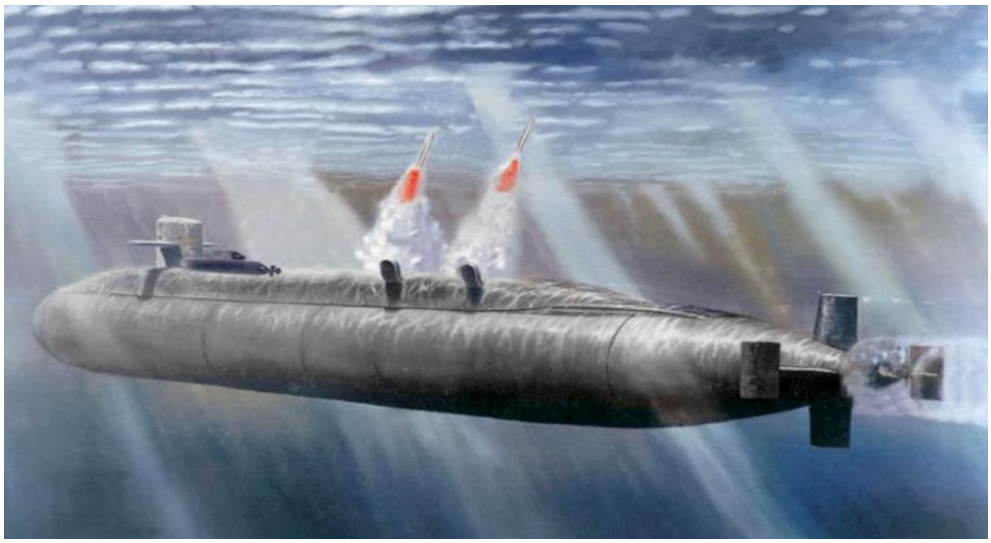
A Jew Aboard a Downed U.S. Naval Submarine By Rabbi Yosef Weiss

Lt. Shmuel Kahan began his active duty with the U.S. Navy in the early 1960's. A Rav and a Torah scholar, R' Shmuel remained firm in his Torah principals throughout his military career and gained the admiration and respect of both his superiors and subordinates. All of his religious needs were accommodated. He also gained much esteem with his superiors when, on many occasions, his astute and incisive mind formulated brilliant solutions to problem which his superiors grappled with.

One day, on his way to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to board his submarine, he passed an old Army-Navy surplus store. He peered into the window and saw an old hand generator covered with rust and dirt. On impulse, he asked for the price. The store owner explained that the item was from WWI, and the price was $35.

R' Shmuel asked how much it would cost to have it refurbished. The proprietor said he could make it look as good as new, but it would increase the price to $75. R' Shmuel felt inexplicably drawn to purchase this item, and agreed to the deal, insisting however, that the generator be refurbished to perfect condition.

One week later, he picked up his newly furbished hand generator; the owner threw in a handsome leather case. After that, R' Shmuel always took his generator with him whenever he boarded a submarine, stowing it under his bunk bed.



During the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, R' Shmuel was stationed in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. One day, during a routine maneuver on the submarine which R' Shmuel commanded, an ordinary dive suddenly went awry. A complete loss of power sent the submarine sinking straight down to the bottom of the ocean.

R' Shmuel realized that they were quickly reaching the depth at which the submarine would no longer be able to withstand the terrific ocean water pressure. R' Shmuel silently recited Tehillim while he managed to calm his frightened crew. The vessel suddenly shuddered and a loud thump resounded through the submarine. R' Shmuel assured them that they had landed on a small ledge sticking

out from one of the underwater mountains, fortunately saving them from reaching the breaking pressure point.

But his sea legs told him that any sudden movement could cause the vessel to slip off the ledge and resume its sinking to the ocean floor. He ordered his men to hit the deck and remain perfectly still. The fear and tension were palpable.

Suddenly, a 17-year-old sailor panicked and screamed hysterically. He was slapped and calmed. The hysteria was controlled, but R' Shmuel sensed the tension of his crewmen was growing more intolerable by the minute.

He ordered that every crewman be given a pistol with a single bullet; in case the sub began to implode, each person would have the option of ending it all with a bullet, instead of suffering death by drowning.

One boson's mate asked R' Shmuel, "Sir, why aren't you taking a pistol?"

R' Shmuel replied, "I'm not taking a pistol because I don't need one. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm coming out of this alive. I have complete faith in our Creator."

R' Shmuel buoyed their confidence. Hours passed, and without electrical power, they had only a few days of air left. R' Shmuel had to find a solution – and then it came to him in a flash. The generator under his bunk bed!

His crew was astonished as he hooked it up to radio the base. "Gray lady down – S.O.S," he transmitted. He also signaled that an electrical cable needed to be lowered. Communication was only one way at that point. They waited tensely for several days.

Finally, they heard something tapping on the sub. The electric cable! A crewman was sent in diving gear to very gently snag the cable and pull it into the torpedo room, carefully avoiding any sudden movement that would cause the sub to plunge. Finally, the submarine, with a renewed burst of electricity, surfaced above the water.

Close to a hundred ships had gathered at that spot, waiting to lend a hand. As the crew emerged, all the ships simultaneously blasted their whistles, rocketing streams of water into the air in salute.

Admiral O'Donnell saluted Lt. Shmuel Kahan. Then, putting all formality aside, the Admiral heartily embraced his friend. "I knew I could count on you," he whispered. R' Shmuel fervently offered thanks to Hashem for His Divine Providence. (Visions of Greatness, Vol. 5)

Rabbi Chaim Ben Atar – The Miracle of the Fig Tree

One of the many old Jerusalem synagogues destroyed by the Arabs in the War of Independence was the "Ohr hachayim beit Midrash". It was called by that name in honour of the classic commentary on Chumash written by the great sage **Rabbi chaim ben Atar**, who arrived in yerushalayim more than 260 years ago after a long, dangerous journey.

The author of **"Ohr hachaim"** spent most of his time studying in this synagogue wrapped in *tallit* and *tefillin*, his face beaming with an angelic radiance.

There was, however, one obstacle to his intense Torah study. In the courtyard of the synagogue was a fig tree that attracted the local Arab youngsters whose loud activity of picking the fruit greatly disturbed his ability to concentrate.

The sage thereupon commanded the tree to cease producing fruit, and this barren tree stood for many years in the courtyard as a monument to the value which heaven placed on the Torah study of Rabbi chaim ben Atar.

Rav Elya Lopian

A student once came to Rav Elya Lopian, of belessed memory, and told him that he wished to leave the Yeshivah to learn an occupation so that he could earn a living in the future.

R'Elya asked the student what was spurring him to worry about his career. The student started explaining, "Well, I'm about to start dating. When I marry…"

Rav Elya interrupted him: "How do you know that you will marry?"

The student was taken aback and asked if the Rebbi was cursing him, saying, "I am relying on Hashem that just as He helps everyone find the right marriage partner, He will help me, as well; and when I get marriage, we will have children…"

"Who is promising that you will have children?" the Rav's voice interrupted.

Again, the student was dumbfounded and asked: "Is the Rav cursing me not to have kids? I know Hashem will help with children's birth and their raising."

Rav Lopian once again asked the student where his "guarantees" are coming from.

"I'm relying on Hashem," the student restated.

Finally, the Rav said: "I see that you are on a very high level of Emunah. You trust that Hashem will get you married, get you kids, have them grow up – only when it comes to earning a living, you don't rely on Him that He will find you the job and financial support needed?"

"The highest form of wisdom is kindness." —Talmud, Brachot 17a

Shabbos Heals

The holy Zohar teaches us, that "Anyone who keeps the Shabbos, it is as if he has fulfilled the entire Torah." (Zohar, Part 2, 92a) The only way truly to understand this piece of Kabbalah is for one to keep Shabbos. Because, keeping Shabbos empowers a Jew to reach the highest spiritual heights. A Jew can only reach his potential with Shabbos.

We read about Shabbos this week in the 10 Commandments. As the Holy Torah commands us in the fourth commandment: "Six days you shall work… but the seventh day is Shabbos to Hashem, your G-d, you shall not do any work…" (Shemos 20:9-10)

The Sages have taught us that more than the Jewish people have kept the Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jewish people. The following amazing true story, told by Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Gruskin, Rav of Congregation Bnai Zion in Detroit, Michigan, illustrates the power of Shabbos.

Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Gruskin, of blessed memory, was a chaplain of the State of Michigan. Part of his duties involve making rounds in hospitals for the mentally ill. Every year before Pesach, a secular Jewish man named Milton helped Rabbi Gruskin in the distribution of Pesach boxes to the mentally ill. One Sunday morning, Rabbi Gruskin received an unexpected phone call.

"Hello, Rabbi. This is Milton." "Milton! How are you?" There was a short silence. Then, "I'm calling from Sinai Hospital, Rabbi." Milton's voice broke. "Rabbi, please pray for me. I'm very ill." "I'm so sorry to hear that, Milton. Not only will I pray for you, but I'll also come down to see you as soon as I can."

Rabbi Gruskin went to see Milton the very next day. He had lost weight, his cheeks looked sunken, and his complexion appeared jaundiced. "Rabbi, please pray for me," Milton begged. The doctors say that I have a tumor in my pancreas."

"Milton," Rabbi Gruskin began, "You're a kindhearted person, and you've helped me a lot during the past few years. I am certainly going to pray for you. But I have to tell you that there is someone else you should consider asking to pray for you-someone whose prayers will be answered faster than mine will."

"Who is it, Rabbi?" Milton asked anxiously. "I must call him immediately!" Shabbos, Milton. The Shabbos can pray for you." "What do you mean?" Milton asked. "Milton, start keeping the Shabbos," Rabbi Gruskin said. "In that merit, she [Shabbos] will pray to the Almighty to heal you."

Milton thought for a moment. "But I don't know anything about keeping Shabbos!" "Don't worry ," Rabbi Gruskin told him. "I will send you books that will introduce you to Shabbos and describe everything that you have to do."

Several days after Rabbi Gruskin brought the books, Rabbi Gruskin dropped in for another visit. Milton was in a somber mood. "They think the tumor is malignant," Milton told him "and they want to operate." He paused for a moment. "I thought about our conversation, and I decided that I will keep Shabbos."

Milton pressed the call button for the nurse, and sat silently until she arrived. When the nurse came in, he said to her, "Tomorrow is the Sabbath. I don't want the television on, and I won't be taking any phone calls. I am going to observe the Sabbath from now on." Rabbi Gruskin turned to Milton and said "Let's shake on it." Milton took his hand and shook it vigorously.

Rabbi Gruskin came to visit Milton on the day of the operation. It was after 4 p.m. by the time he arrived at the hospital and he was sure that the operation would have long since finished, with Milton already out of the recovery room. But Milton's bed was empty. He must still be in the recovery room, Rabbi Gruskin thought. But he wasn't there either.

Nervously, he went downstairs to the surgical lounge, where he found Milton's family waiting on tenterhooks for news of the patient's condition. Just as he arrived, a doctor entered the corridor to meet the family and report on Milton's progress. The expression on his face already told them that the news was not good.

"The tumor was malignant. As we had suspected," the doctor said. "But that's not our problem now. We're having difficulty closing the incision, and he's hemorrhaging badly." He paused. "We don't expect him to make it through the night." Milton's wife broke down crying.

Rabbi Gruskin calmed her down the best he could. After she was somewhat calmed, Rabbi Gruskin said," As long as Milton is with us, we must do everything we can. I'm going to shul now for the afternoon prayers, and afterwards I'll add the name Rafael to his name. We are in Hashem's Hands now."

After davening Minchah, the men recited Tehillim for Milton, and the name Rafael was added to his Hebrew name. (Rafael means "Heal him, G-d. " It is commonly added to the name of a seriously ill person as a prayer and plea to Hashem)

Rabbi Gruskin went back to the hospital at eleven-thirty that night. He found the family still sitting in the waiting room, hoping to hear good news from the doctors. Rabbi Gruskin stayed for several hours, giving them some badly needed emotional support. When he finally left, he reassured them that he would return immediately after davening Shacharis the following morning.

As soon as Rabbi Gruskin walked in the door of his home, the phone rang. "This is Bill, Milton's brother," a tired voice said. "The doctor just told us that he doesn't think Milton will live another hour. Do you think you could come back to stay with us during Milton's last moments?" "I'll be right over." Said Rabbi Gruskin.

Rabbi Gruskin returned to the hospital, and he went to where the family was waiting. He asked the doctors for permission to see

Milton. The doctors gave their consent, and Rabbi Gruskin quietly entered the room, with the family filing in behind him.

Milton lay quietly in bed, with tubes in his nose and mouth helping to keep him alive. As Rabbi Gruskin came closer, Milton suddenly opened his eyes. He looked at Rabbi Gruskin, looked at his family, and then raised his hand. He tapped his fingers against his thumb and pointed toward heaven. "Do you want us to pray for you?" Rabbi Gruskin asked. Milton shook his head, no. Rabbi Gruskin was puzzled; he could not figure out what Milton was trying to tell him.

Rabbi Gruskin went over to the doctor. "Is it possible to remove those tubes?" he asked. "It might be important to know what he is trying to tell us." The doctor thought for a moment. "I suppose it's all right," he said finally. Rabbi Gruskin turned to Milton. "Do you want the doctor to take the tubes out of your mouth, so you can speak?" he asked. Milton nodded vigorously. So the doctor removed the tubes and stepped back.

To everyone's surprise, Milton sat up in bed and began speaking. His voice was hoarse, and they had to strain to hear him. "All of you can go home, I am going to be all right," he whispered. "Rabbi please stay here." Milton's wife was in shock. The doctor was staring open-mouthed at his patient.

They filed out slowly, turning their heads for one final look at Milton as they left the room. After they had gone, Milton said, "I had to ask them to leave, because they wouldn't understand what I'm about to tell you. The truth is that since the operation began, I have not been on this world-I have been in heaven."

Rabbi Gruskin looked at Milton a bit dubiously. It sounded like the effects of anesthesia to him. But Milton shook his head emphatically. "I know what it sounds like, Rabbi, but it's the truth. They told me up there that if the Rabbi will be at your bedside when you first open your eyes, you'll know that you'll live. But if he's not

there, you will die." Milton stopped to catch his breath. "When I opened my eyes and saw you, I knew I was going to make it."

From that point on, Milton began the long slow road to recovery. Shortly after the operation, Milton told Rabbi Gruskin, "Thank you for praying for me. It saved my life." Rabbi Gruskin took hold of Milton's hands. "No, Milton, it wasn't me. It was Shabbos."

Milton stayed in the hospital for seven months, running up a medical bill that exceeded $260,000. When he was finally able to go home, he weighed a mere eighty-three pounds-and he is six feet tall! The horrible disease in the pancreas kills quickly-usually two or three months after diagnosis-but more than thirteen years have passed since Milton's operation. His oncologist says that Milton is a medical miracle.

Today, Milton fully observes Torah and mitzvos. Every weekday he drives twenty-five miles to daven in shul. And for many years before Pesach, he continued to help Rabbi Gruskin deliver packages to the inner city. (from Visions of Greatness, p.26, Rabbi Yosef Weiss)

More than the Jewish people has kept the Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jewish People. Let this encourage you to be more dedicated to keeping Shabbos properly.



עשרת הדיברות

The Beis Avraham from Slonim writes in his book "Michtavei Kodesh" (letter 12) that on each of the Ten Commandments that the Jewish nation heard they answered Amen. We see a hint to this in the morning Shabbat prayer during the Amidah, 'Tikanta Shabbat'. It is written, **אַז מִסיני נִצטוו** – ***"From Sinai, they were commanded."*** The first letter of each word spells out Amen.



Shalom Bayis - Harmony in the Home



At a recent Flatbush Hakhel Yarchei Kallah, Rabbi Maimon Elbaz, director of Torah Shows, presented a powerful presentation on Shalom Bayis. We provide below just a few highlights of the very moving presentation:

A. A Rav took his daughter out to eat in a restaurant the night before her Chasunah: "Why are you doing this, Tatty?" she asked. He responded: "For one reason -- I want you to see how the waitress serves and smiles, is pleasant and cooperative--no matter how her day has been. Your job is much more important than hers--and I want you to always be reminded of her pleasant disposition at all times!"

B. One should try to keep two diaries -- one of the chassodim, the kindnesses that his spouse performs on his behalf [and perhaps on behalf of others], and a second diary which lists what his spouse really likes or loves--so that he can provide a much appreciated present or surprise from time-to-time.

C. Rabbi Frand teaches that before a teacher enters a classroom, he should recognize how significant his words will be by remembering the teaching of Shlomo HaMelech in Mishlei: "*HaMaves V'HaChaim B'Yad HaLashon* -- what I say will make the difference between death and life." Rabbi Frand's teaching can be applied before one enters his home -- even after a difficult day. By one's words and actions, one can literally change the temperature of the home.

D. To paraphrase a well-known instruction: "Do not ask what your spouse can do for you…ask what you can do for your spouse!"

E. An important acronym that one can always apply is AAA -- Attention, Affection and Appreciation. There is a related phrase: Give, Forgive and Give-In.

F. Shlomo HaMelech (Mishlei 31:12) teaches: "*Gemalasu Tov V'Lo Ra'ah* -- she responds to him with good and not bad." Even if he has not acted properly towards her..she is still *Gemalasu Tov*!

G. A couple married for 65 years was asked how they were able to stay together for so long. They responded: "We were born in a time that if something was broken we would fix it -- not throw it away!"

H. According to police reports…no husband was ever shot when doing the dishes!

I. The Midrash teaches that Aharon HaKohen had 80,000 boys named after him by the couples whose Shalom Bayis he had helped. If Aharon made peace for 80,000 couples, then we can certainly begin…helping ourselves and others.

J. A Rav was asked how long a Chosson is *Domeh L'Melech* for. He responded that it is for as long as he treats his wife as a queen!

The Importance Of Hearing By Rabbi Shmuel Choueka



וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ **"*And Yisro heard*."** (18:1)

This is the perashah which tells us about the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, perhaps the greatest event that ever took place in the world. Wouldn't it be proper to have the entire perashah devoted to that special occurrence, rather than begin with Yitro joining the Jewish? What was so important about Yitro that this had to precede Matan Torah?

The answer is the first word – **וַיִּשְׁמַע** /and he (Yisro) heard!" The Torah is teaching us that if we don't hear, we will not be able to receive the Torah.

Hearing means being able to concentrate and focus on someone else and not only on ourselves. It means to accept that we're not perfect and we can hear advice and criticism.

The whole world was aware that the Jews came out of Egypt with great miracles but did nothing about it. Yisro, however, heard and came. Because he was willing to truly hear and understand, he changed his own life and ultimately gave some very useful advice to Moshe. That is why the giving of the Torah must be preceded by the story of Yisro, to teach us what hearing can bring.

We often ask others how they are, but do we really hear their answers? Our kids are constantly talking to us, but are we truly listening? Even if we do allow the words of others to enter our ears, do we hear "between the lines"?

Let us learn from Yisro to truly hear and listen to what's around us and this will make our lives a little bit better.

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Before giving *Bnei Yisroel* the *Torah*, *Hashem* emphasized that if we will listen and hear His voice and observe His covenant, we will become His chosen nation (19:5).

The *Ohr HaChaim* explains the directive to listen and to hear. If we will listen to a little bit of *Torah* and really expose ourselves to it, then we will *want* to listen. If we truly allow ourselves to experience its sweetness, we will desire more *Torah*!

Peninim on The Torah

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it. (20:8)

Horav Moshe Zalmen Grossman, zl, believed that the term *shomer Shabbos* aptly translated, "You shall guard the *Shabbos*," is an exhortation to watch over the *Shabbos*. A soldier who is charged with guard duty does not dare sleep. Thus, *Rav* Zalmen *Shomer Shabbos*, as he was consequently called, remained awake the entire *Shabbos*, engaged in learning and singing, delving into esoteric studies.

It was known that *Rav* Zalmen could be found all Friday night in the Karliner *bais hamedrash* in Meah Shearim. In those days, poverty was the primary concern of Yerushalayim's observant community. People simply had no money to purchase the bare staples of life. Furthermore, if they became ill, they could neither afford to visit a doctor nor purchase the necessary medicine that was critical to their cure. To this end, *Rav* Zalmen formed the *Ezras Cholim*, Help for the Sick, organisation which provides funds for doctor visits and medicine. Since he had no one from whom to raise these funds, it is understandable that *Rav* Zalmen racked up huge debts.

He realised that he would have to go to America to raise funds. He took leave of his family, travelled halfway around the world, and arrived in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. He rented a small apartment, which became his home for the next few years.

A certain Karliner *chassid* woke up one Friday night with a miserable migraine headache. The man was beside himself with pain. Nothing he did or took relieved his excruciating pain. He decided to get dressed and take a walk. A migraine can cause a person to walk trance-like, which was the case with this *chassid*.

He realised after a while that he had strayed from his house. Where does one go in middle of the night when he has no clue how to return

to his apartment? He decided that the best place would be *Rav* Zalmen's apartment. He was awake all Friday night. He would knock on his door. Perhaps, by elevating his *Shabbos* experience with someone like *Rav* Zalmen, he could moderate some of the pain.

The *chassid* knocked on *Rav* Zalmen's door – to no avail. This was very strange. Surely *Rav* Zalmen was home. Where else would he be in middle of the night? He began to worry; something must be very wrong. When he pressed his ear against the door, he thought he heard faint cries from within, as if someone in intense pain was crying for help. He did not need more than that. He woke up a neighbour whose son immediately ran to the police station.

An officer promptly returned and broke open the door to *Rav* Zalmen's apartment. They found *Rav* Zalmen writhing on the floor in excruciating agony, the victim of a burst appendix. He was rushed to the hospital, where it was touch and go for a little while. Finally, the doctor declared that *Rav* Zalmen's life had been saved. His friend, who could not sleep and wandered the streets in middle of the night, had been Hashem's agent to save *Rav* Zalmen's life.

Rav Zalmen, who had in the past always guarded over *Shabbos*, earning for himself the *nom de plume*, *Rav* Zalmen *Shomer Shabbos*, now had a new saying: *Ki eshmerah Shabbos, Keil Yishmeraini*, "If I watch over *Shabbos*, Hashem will watch over me."



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Casual silence has value.

Casual talk is nothing but chatter.- Chassidei Vorka

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport - Buried In A Barrel



The Talmud (Shabbos 88a) teaches that when the Jewish people were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, G-d lifted the mountain above them like a barrel and threatened them that if they won't accept the Torah, **קבורתכם תהא שם** - there will be your burial place.

If G-d's intention was to frighten them so that they would accept the Torah, why did He transform the mountain into a barrel, which isn't particularly scary, instead of simply picking it up and leaving it looming over their heads like the scary mountain that it already was?

Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik of Zurich (V'HaIsh Moshe) explains that a person who is trapped inside of a barrel is technically capable of surviving for a long period of time. However, his life will be incredibly limited, as he is barely able to move or experience any variety in his life. Similarly, if the Jews had declined to accept the Torah, they would have theoretically been able to survive in this world just like the other nations of the world. However, just like the person trapped in the barrel, their existence would have been limited to fulfilling mundane needs, without exceptional growth or spirituality.

G-d transformed the mountain into a barrel to symbolize that if they refused to accept the Torah, they could continue to survive, but their lives would be limited and empty. When G-d said that if they didn't accept the Torah they would be buried there, He didn't mean that the mountain would crush and bury them, but that they would live as if they were trapped in barrels, which is the spiritual equivalent of death.

Mitzvos On Opposite Sides of the Luchos Go In Opposite Directions By Rav Yissochor Frand



Parshas Yisro contains the Aseres HaDibbros. According to tradition, the Ten Commandments are divided into two categories. The first five statements are Mitzvos Bain Odom Lamakom [laws between man and G-d] and the second five are Mitzvos Bain Odom Lchavayro [laws between man and his fellow man].

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch makes the following comment. The Mitzvos between man and G-d begin with Mitzvos that are intellectual concepts, more theory than practice. But although they begin with 'cerebral' commands such as "I am the L-rd your Gd" and "You shall have no other gods before me," they progress to commands that involve concrete actions — "Remember the Sabbath Day…" and "Honour thy Parents".

If Mitzvos between man and G-d do not ultimately climax in specific actions then we have been remiss in the whole nature of these Mitzvos. They must begin in the brain but end with concrete actions. On the other hand, the progression of Mitzvos between a man and his fellow man are just the opposite. The first commands in this category require that a person be good in deed – "Do not murder, etc." However, these Mitzvos cannot be mere actions. Ultimately, these Mitzvos must lead us from the world of practice into the world of theory. We cannot merely be content with the fact that we do not harm our fellow man. We must reach a level where we have the proper feelings and thoughts towards our fellow man. These Mitzvos

must lead us to the point where we feel close enough to our fellow man that we will not covet what belongs to him or be jealous of him.

Regarding Mitzvos between man and his fellow man, it is not sufficient to remain in the realm of (abstinence from) action. The Mitzvos between man and his fellow man must develop from the world of action to the world of thought and emotion, while the Mitzvos between man and G-d must evolve from the world of thought and emotion to the world of action.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman – Time is Precious

Early one morning, the **Rebbe of Radishitz *zt'l*** announced, "A special guest arrived today. It's his first visit, and he won't ever come back again, so I want to honour him properly."

He explained that the guest is 'Today.' "It came today, and a day like today will never come back."

Each day of our lives is unique. Everyone can testify to that. Each day there are new trials and challenges, things that make us happy, and factors that cause us distress. No two days are ever alike.



The Arizal explains that spiritually, too, each day is a different entity. Therefore, it is important to make the most of every day because today comes only once in a lifetime. The key is to use time well.

Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* compared time to a travel bag. If you pack your bag in an orderly fashion, there will be lots of space for your belongings. But if you throw in your clothes and items without folding

them and without order, the bag will soon be full, and there won't be any room for more.

Time is similar. If one is careful with his time, he will find enough time in his day for Torah, tefillah, spending time with the family, work, *chesed*, and more. But if one is careless with time, the day passes quickly, and he doesn't have time for anything.

People say, "If you need a favour, ask a busy person." He will find time to help you. But someone lazy doesn't find time for anything. How will he have time for you if he doesn't have time for himself?

The yeshiva of Kelm had a short *seder* of five minutes a day (in addition to their longer daily *sedarim*). The purpose of this short *seder* was to show the students how much they could accomplish in just five minutes.

A person told me that when his wife shops, he drives her to the stores. He stays in the car and studies Gemara as she shops. During the day, he studies other areas in Torah, but at these moments, he studies *Shas*. - He said that he went through Shas just from learning while waiting in the car.

Reb Yonoson Eibshitz writes that every ill person would be prepared to give away a lot of money just to be able to live one extra day. Because at this moment of his life, he appreciates the value of time. But when one is healthy, he can waste a day, "kill time," and that's a great loss.

A gold watch is a traditional gift given to *chasanim*. The gold watch reminds the *chasan* that time is gold. **The Lev Simchah *zy'a*** added that the packaging of a gift is always less valuable than the item it contains.

Time (the watch) is packaged in gold, which means time itself is even more precious because with time, one can acquire Torah and mitzvos, which are more precious than gold.

Parsha Thoughts By: Mordechai Sapoznick



The פָּסוּק says, **וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־הָעָם יַחְדָּו וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה׳ נַעֲשֶׂה** - The entire people responded together and said, "Everything that Hashem has spoken we shall do!" 19:8

TheOhr HaChaim says that the word **יַחְדָּו** - together, indicates that all of Bnei Yisroel said it together and had the same intention in mind, and no one said it faster or slower than anyone else. The Ohr Hachaim writes, ***"Fortunate is the world in which such a nation exists!"***

The Klausenberger Rebbe, Horav Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam זצ״ל once spoke at a meeting at America. He said that if the frum yidden in America want to help protect the frum yidden in Eretz Yisroel from the irreligious government, all groups of frum yidden have to get together and cooperate as one unit. Someone asked the Rebbe how is it possibleto be one unit if some yidden are litvish and some are chassidish and have different minhagim?

The Rebbe answered that in America there are fifty states. Each state has its own constitution, yet they all share the same language and goal. All yidden, whatever nusach of tefillah they daven, share the same Father, **אבינו שבשמים**, and if all yidden will be one unit, then Hashem will protect the frum yidden in Eretz Yisroel.

Elevation in the Merit of Rising Early

ומשה עלה אל האלקים ויקרא אליו ה' מן ההר לאמר כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל (יט ג)

With regard to the time of Moshe Rabbeinu's ascent, Rashi writes (according to Shabbos 86a): ***"And all his ascents were early in the morning, as it says (Shemos 34:4) and Moshe arose in the morning [and went up Har Sinai]."***

The Chelkas Yehoshua of Biala said that the words of Rashi "And all his ascents (aliyos) were b'hashkamah, early in the morning" serve as a hint that anyone who wants to ascend in avodas Hashem should be strict about "hashkamas beis hamedrash," rising early to go to shul.



The Virtue of Am Yisrael Is More Elevated than Any Language

ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש אלה הדברים אשר תדבר אל בני ישראל (יט ו)

The birchas hayom in Shemoneh Esreh for the Shalosh Regalim begins with the words **אַתָּה בְחַרְתָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אָהַבְתָּ אוֹתָנוּ וְרָצִיתָ בָּנוּ וְרוֹמַמְתָּנוּ מִכָּל הַלְּשׁוֹנוֹת**

It would seem that the meaning of "You have chosen us from all the nations" is the same as the meaning "and elevated us above all the languages." Why do we repeat this concept twice?

Harav Bunim of Peshischa explained: When one wants to express the virtue of a certain thing, he can do so in any language. Even if there is something whose virtues are hard to define in a certain language, there will always be another language through which one can express it perfectly.

There is one thing whose deep virtues cannot be defined in any language, and that is "Am Yisrael." That is what we mean when we say **וְרוֹמַמְתָּנוּ מִכָּל הַלְּשׁוֹנוֹת** – the loftiness of Am Yisrael is so great that there is no language that has the suitable words to properly define it. (Kol Simchah, Likutim)

Short Vort: Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

. . . וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים ***And you will be for me a Nation of Kohanim.*** (19:6)

How can Hashem call the Jewish People "a kingdom of Kohanim" when we are made up of all different tribes, not just Kohanim?

The Seforno answers that this phrase is not a *description* of the Jewish People; rather, it is the *mission* of the Jewish People! For, just as the Kohanim were the teachers of the Nation, so too, we *all* have to be teachers to the entire world — a kingdom of teachers!

This sounds like quite a daunting task, and it is indeed our mission as an individual and a nation to teach the entire world about Hashem; however, if we bear in mind the famous words of **Rav Yisrael Salanter** we may find the task more approachable. Rav Yisrael said:

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. But I found it was too difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my People. But when I found I couldn't change my People, I began to focus on my town. But I couldn't even change my town, so I tried to change my family, but wasn't successful. Then I realized that the only thing I can change is myself. But now that I have changed myself, I realize that I can then make an impact on my family. My family can then make an impact on our town. The town's impact will then change the entire People, and this will lead to changing the world.



בית יעקב

It states (*Shemos* 19:3), **כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל** "So shall you say to the house of Yaakov and tell Bnei Yisrael." If men are called **בני ישראל** shouldn't women be called **בנות ישראל** or perhaps **בנות יעקב**?

Why are they called **בית יעקב**, the house of Yaakov? House is mentioned because the house is so important for women, as we explained.

The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 3) states, **כל שבח נעורים לאביה**. *B'derech remez*, this phrase implies that it is the **בית אביה**, the father's home, permeated with Torah and *yiras shamayim*, which brings forth **כל שבח נעורים** - the goodness and the righteousness of the Jewish girls.

Chizuk – Inspiration

Before World War Two, Ephraim Greenberg, a Belzer Chasid, made a living as a jeweller and developed a reputation as a scrupulously honest businessman. As a result, his business thrived. During the War, his business was shuttered and he was sent to the concentration camps. Ephraim survived the tortuous ordeal, but he emerged from the camps a broken man. He went to Sweden to heal his mind and spirit.

In Sweden he started anew, reopened his jewellery shop and also began to offer watch repair services. One day, a very well-dressed non-Jewish woman entered the store and asked to have her expensive watch repaired. She asked how much it would cost to fix

her watch. Ephraim explained that the only way he could tell how much it would cost to repair it is if he opened the watch. She was skeptical - after all, once the watch was opened, it could not be closed without him and she would be at his mercy. Who knows how much he would charge her to fix it? However, she decided to trust Ephraim and allowed him to open the watch.

Ephraim opened the watch and had good news. The watch needed a minor repair which would cost very little. The woman was impressed with Ephraim's honesty and she thanked him sincerely. Ephraim explained to her that throughout his life, he always made a point of being truthful and it was always worthwhile. As they continued talking, she noticed that some of his teeth were missing and others were rotten due to years of malnutrition in the camps. She kindly offered the services of her husband, an expert dentist, to fix his teeth free of charge.

The dentist was happy to honour his wife's generous offer, and in a few hours Ephraim walked out of the dentist's office with a brand new set of teeth. During further conversation with the dentist and his wife, the wife spoke of her admiration for the Jewish people. Then she revealed something startling, "I am so impressed with the Jewish people that I have taken upon myself to care for two Jewish young girls who are currently living in my home. Their families were destroyed so I am raising them as my own. In fact, I plan on marrying them off to members of my own family." Ephraim felt awful - two young girls who appeared destined to intermarry. Ephraim asked if he could meet them. The woman readily agreed.

As soon as Ephraim saw the girls, he had a startling thought: How would he be able to connect with them? Who knew how long it had been since they had seen another Jew? He called out the first Hebrew phrase that came to mind, "Modeh Ani Le'fanecha…". Suddenly, the girls burst out crying. They could not believe that there were other Jews alive. When Ephraim assured them that

there were thousands of other Jews alive and looking to reconstruct their lives, they yearned to reconnect with their heritage.

Ephraim spoke to the well-meaning Swedish woman and explained that it would be best for the girls to live with other Jews. The next day the girls moved out of the house and in no time, they were reconnected with other Jewish girls their age, and more importantly with their religion and faith. The girls eventually married fine Jewish men, and each built beautiful families in Israel.

What is amazing about this story is that the girls' salvation came about because of a broken Jew's honesty. Ephraim was certainly desperate for the money and no one would have known if he would have overcharged the non-Jewish woman to fix her watch. However, because of his honesty, the non-Jewish woman trusted him and confided in him that she was caring for the Jewish girls - and with that, they and ensuing generations were saved. **("One Small Spark" by Rabbi Yechiel Spero)**



The Beit Avraham from Slonim writes in "Michtavei Kodesh" (letter 12) that on each of the Ten Commandments that the Jewish nation heard they answered Amen.

We see a hint to this in the morning Shabbat prayer during the Amidah, 'Tikanta Shabbat'. It is written **אז מסיני נצטוו** - "From Sinai, they were commanded." The first letter of each word spells out Amen.

Rabbi Yisrael Bronstein – A Shabbos Vort

וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר 19:2 ***"And Israel camped there facing the mountain" (19:2)***

Rashi points out that the word וַיִּחַן is in the singular, despite the fact that the Torah was describing the encampment of thousands of Jews.

This teaches us, says Rashi, that at this particular encampment the Jewish people were united — as one man, with one heart.

In the Pesach Haggadah, asked **R' Yitzchak of Vorki**, it states, "Had He brought us before Har Sinai, but not given us the Torah, it would have sufficed us," These words are perplexing, for why would simply arriving at Har Sinai suffice for us if it would not have resulted in our receiving the Torah?



The answer, said the rebbe, is as follows: When describing the Jewish nation's encampment at Har Sinai, the Torah tells us, "And Israel encamped there facing the mountain" — as one man, with one heart.

Even had we not received the Torah, it would have been worthwhile for us to be brought before Har Sinai just so that we could achieve such complete unity.

"Our Trust in Hashem should be so strong that we feel as though we are completely in Hashem's hands, and therefore – fear nothing!" – Rabbi Yonasan Eybescutz

Half the Pain By R' Shlomo Farhi



When someone is smelling, for example a bunch of flowers, which is giving off a beautiful aroma. You smell the magnificent perfume from the bouquet of flowers. Do you know what you just did?

The flowers are emoting their smell, and you just inhaled tiny atoms and particles of the flower itself! You took some of that flower and brought it into your nostrils.

If, when you smell that flower, you took some of that actual flower inside of yourself, then when you listen to someone's problems, you take some of that person inside of yourself!

Do you realise what this means?

The Pasuk (Mishlei 12:25) says - דְּאָגָה בְלֵב־אִישׁ יַשְׁחֶנָּה וְדָבָר טוֹב יְשַׂמְּחֶנָּה – ***'If there is concern in a man's heart, let him cast it down, and a good word will make it cheerful.'***

'A problem shared is a problem halved.' Even if you didn't do anything but listen – "What's going on? What's bothering you?" What have you done?

You have taken another Jewish person, and you have brought them into your heart! You do so much just by listening!

"The physician should not treat the disease but the patient who is suffering from it." - Rambam

Chazu Bonai - Chizuk In The Siddur

יהי כבוד ה' הפיר עצת גויים הניא מחשבות עמים *Hashem annuls the counsel of nations, He turns down the designs of peoples.*



One of the greatest, if not the greatest **נס** that we can see today, is the remarkable story of the endurance of **עם ישראל** despite all the trials and challenges of **גלות**. This is so incredible that **ר' יעקב עמדין זצ"ל** referred to it as being greater than **יציאת מצרים**!

There is no question about it, that according to the laws of nature, history, and even geography, a small persecuted, scattered nation stands no chance of survival. The only way that we could have survived is with **הקב"ה** 's protective Hand looking after us, saving us from from all those who have sought to harm us throughout the generations.

In fact, the **של"ה הקדוש** says on the above **פסוק** that even if all the nations of the world would join together as one to destroy us, nonetheless **הקב"ה** would still save us from their hands.

The amazing thing about this, is that we have literally no idea how many times each and every day **הקב"ה** foils our enemies' plans. Therefore, when we say this **פסוק**, we should do so with an even greater feeling of appreciation!

"Bitachon is the antidote to worry and anxiety, because it allows us to relinquish our fears to Hashem." – Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman – Shabbos

A Rosh Yeshiva said he saw a sefer on hilchos Shabbos for children. It taught the 39 malachos, and everything that is prohibited on Shabbos. This Rosh Yeshiva commented that he would have preferred if the first few pages of the sefer would describe the mitzvah of *oneg* Shabbos and the pleasure we have on Shabbos.

Children shouldn't view Shabbos as a day of restrictions, rather as a day of pleasure and joy. And then they can study the restrictions and the halachos, too.

וְקַל כַּנָּשֶׁר - "*be light like an eagle*,"



Pirkei Avos says, וְקַל כַּנָּשֶׁר "***be light like an eagle***," because one should serve Hashem with agility like an eagle. There are lighter matters than an eagle. A piece of paper is lighter, a feather is lighter. However, when a feather or when a piece of paper is dropped, it will eventually hit the ground and stay there.

But an eagle will not fall. It picks itself up again and soars to the heavens. The Mishnah says, be like an eagle that doesn't let itself drop. Regardless of the errors of the past, pick yourself up again.

The Eagle is the symbolic importance of the "King of the Birds" to many nations of the past and present. To the Roman caesars, as to the German emperors and Russian czars, the eagle served as a symbol of power. The United States adopted the Bald Eagle on its national emblem as a symbol of independence.

However, long before these nations adopted the eagle for their national emblems and coats-of-arms, the eagle, as a symbol, meant something quite different to the Yidden.

In his famous Song Haazinu, Moshe Rabbenu says: כְּנֶשֶׁר יָעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל־גּוֹזָלָיו יְרַחֵף יִפְרֹשׂ כְּנָפָיו יִקָּחֵהוּ יִשָּׂאֵהוּ עַל־אֶבְרָתוֹ ***As an eagle stirs up his nest, flutters over his young; Spreads over his wings, takes them, Bears them on his wing***. *(Deut. 32:11).*

The eagle is an enormous bird. Seen up close, it looks more like an animal than a bird, due to its size and power. The wingspread of an eagle is awesome! When an eagle returns to its nest and hovers over the little eaglets, it takes great care not to frighten the still young, immature, and fragile little birds. Out of compassion for these little birds, the eagle does not suddenly swoop down onto its nest. Rather, she bangs her wings against the tree branches so that the little birds know the mother is about to come, the mother is about to land. The little eaglets are forewarned. They can brace themselves and prepare themselves so that the eagle's landing will not damage them.

But we must never forget that the Almighty is also Avinu [Our Father]. As Rashi says, He is like the eagle that has compassion and mercy upon its young. He is the father that loves us. There is no father in the world that loves his child more than the Almighty loves us. We tend to forget this.

Shlome Hamelech marvels at the דֶּרֶךְ הַנֶּשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמָיִם – "way of the eagle in the sky" (Mishlei 30:19). A wonderful sight it is indeed to see an eagle soaring majestically high in the air, until it is but a speck in the sky. It constantly yearns to soar upwards to the heavens above. We should all have a desire to get closer to Hashem.

אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי ***You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagles wings, and I brought you to Me. Ex 19:4***

Why did the Hashem choose the imagery of an eagle to describe His love for and care over us? After all, the eagle is not even a kosher bird.

Hashem chose the eagle to express His unconditional love for us.



Rashi's comment is perhaps the most famous. ***"All other birds carry their young in their talons- claws, out of fear of a larger predator attacking them from behind and above. The eagle, however, fears no other bird, only man.*** For this reason, it carries its young on its wings, reasoning that if it is attacked by arrows, it would suffer the injury, not their young. This is a reference to the Anonei Hakavd - Pillar of Cloud, which Hashem placed between the fleeing Bnei Yisrael and the pursuing Egyptians, which absorbed all the arrows, which the Egyptians shot at them.

Rabbi Meir Shapiro says another, beautiful point to note, and that is that the young birds must take the first step by climbing onto their mother's back. It is this trust that the young have that enable it to be protected. We must trust in Hashem. We are compared to the eagle's young. We are carried on the back of Hashem so to speak. But how do we get there? We have to make that first step, we have to do that *hishtadlus* first and then the Riboino Shel Olam will make us soar far beyond anything that we have had before.

While Rashi's interpretation stresses Hashem's love and protection, the ***Chasam Sofer*** (Rabbi Moshe Sofer, 1762-1839, famed rabbi of Pressburg, Slovakia) offers a view that focuses on the B'nei Yisrael. The eagle possesses all four symbols of non-kosher animals. Hashem

therefore chose the eagle to express His unconditional love for us, which extends to us even if we are not perfect. For this reason, the pasuk ends, "And I have brought you to Me."

Be Kind: The eagle is the symbol of mercy *(rachamim)* in Jewish thought. Even though the eagle is a bird of prey and it needs to eat small animals to survive, it is kind at heart, and the bird will always prefer to feed on dead animals if any can be found.

Naturalists are amazed by the delicate and gentle consideration an eagle will show to its children, or eaglets. For example, a mother eagle arrives at its nest with a noisy swoosh of wings, but it will land very slowly and gently on the edge of the nest without disturbing the sleeping eaglets.

We should learn to be compassionate to all creatures, even if they have done nothing to deserve it. How much more so to other people.

Rabbi Judah Ben Tema, said, **הֱוֵי עַז כַּנָּמֵר וְקַל כַּנָּשֶׁר, רָץ כַּצְּבִי וְגִבּוֹר כָּאֲרִי לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אָבִיךָ שֶׁבַּשָּׁמַיִם** *"Be light as an eagle … to do the will of our Father in Heaven."* This quote was chosen as the opening words of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. Here are some ways we can emulate an eagle's flight:

Swerve: Just like an eagle can swerve sharply to circumvent obstacles, so should a person avoid negative thoughts or actions that may come his way.

Spiral: Eagles catch rising masses of warm air, or thermals, to carry them in a spiral manner high into the sky. Eventually they can reach an altitude of 10,000 feet or more. By reviewing our studies over and over and "circling" over the material, we can reach great heights.

Soar: The eagle is a large bird, up to 3 feet tall, but its large wings enable it to soar into the heavens. By nature, our physical body resists any attempt to refine it, but with the right wings we can soar to the highest spiritual levels. These wings are love and awe of G-d.

Yeshayahu - 40:31 **וְקַוֵּי ה' יַחֲלִיפוּ כֹחַ יַעֲלוּ אֵבֶר כַּנְּשָׁרִים יָרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיגָעוּ יֵלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיעָפוּ** ***– But those who put their hope in Hashem shall renew [their] vigour, they shall raise wings as eagles; they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not tire.***



As we mentioned before, the eagle has an enormous wingspan – up to 8-Foot wide! We say in the tefillah of Nishmas (Shabbos morning) all the amazing and wonderful things that Hashem does for us. **וְיָדֵינוּ פְרוּשׂוֹת כְּנִשְׁרֵי שָׁמָיִם** – If our hands were as wide as the eagles wingspan, we would not be able to sufficiently thank Him.

I would like to finish with the beautiful comments of **Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Miberditchev**. The Yidden can be compared to an eagle. It says in Tehillim (103:5) **תִּתְחַדֵּשׁ כַּנֶּשֶׁר נְעוּרָיְכִי** ***–Your youth is renewed like the eagle's.***



The feathers of the eagle fall off at the end of each year and are replaced with new feathers, thus the name Nesher is from the Hebrew 'to fall'. Hashem gave the Jewish people this characteristic of the eagle; we have the ability to renew ourselves, to change our ways, to become better people. We can put the past behind us and strive towards the truth and to come closer to Hashem.

Radak says: **תתחדש כנשר נעוריכי. אומרים כי הנשר מתחלף לעשר שנים ויעלה מאד על פני רקיע השמים ויקרב לחום האש היסודי ויפיל עצמו בים מרוב חום וימות, ויתחדש ויעלה אבר וישוב לימי עלומיו**

'It is said that the eagle changes for ten years and will rise very high across the firmament of the sky and will approach the heat of the elemental fire and will fall into the sea due to the heat and die and will be renewed and will ascend a limb and will return to its unknown days.'

אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי:שמות יט:ד ***You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me.***

יְשַׁעְיָהוּ וְקוֵי ה' יַחֲלִיפוּ כֹּחַ יַעֲלוּ אֵבֶר כַּנְשָׁרִים יָרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיגָעוּ יֵלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיעָפוּ מ:לא ***- But those who put their hope in the L-rd shall renew [their] vigour, they shall raise wings as eagles; they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not tire.***

כְּנֶשֶׁר יָעִיר קִנּוֹ עַל־גּוֹזָלָיו יְרַחֵף יִפְרֹשׂ כְּנָפָיו יִקָּחֵהוּ יִשָּׂאֵהוּ עַל־אֶבְרָתוֹ ***As an eagle awakens its nest, hovering over its fledglings, it spreads its wings, taking them and carrying them on its pinions*** **. דברים לב:יא**

שָׁאוּל וְיהוֹנָתָן הַנֶּאֱהָבִים וְהַנְּעִימִם בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וּבְמוֹתָם לֹא נִפְרָדוּ מִנְּשָׁרִים קַלּוּ מֵאֲרָיוֹת גָּבֵרוּ:שמואל ב -א:כג ***- Saul and Jonathan, his son, who were beloved and pleasant in their lifetime, and in their death they were not separated. They were swifter than eagles, and mightier than lions.***



Do parent eagles push their eaglets out of the nest to learn how to fly? Absolutely not! Eagles are the most hands-on parents in the animal kingdom. Their nests, called eyries, will always have one parent present who will take care of the eaglets, providing shade

from the sun and warmth to combat the cold. Even after young eagles learn how to fly, their parents will continue to teach and support them for another four to five weeks.

Eagles have two anatomical features to fly as high as 20,000 feet above sea level and as fast as 200 mph. Would you believe they have hollow bones to reduce their weight? The bald eagle's entire skeletal structure weighs slightly more than half a pound. Most of their weight is feathers. Eagles also have slotted wings that can separate, letting them soar on updrafts of warm air.

'Eagle eyed.' There is a reason why we have this idiom. Eagles have around a million light-sensitive sensory cells per square millimetre of the retina, which is five times what we have. An eagle's eyes with their impressive vision can detect a rabbit 2 miles away from them.

Eagles fearlessly fly into raging storms. Due to their wings' design, they can ride the strong current to rise higher without consuming much energy, soaring above storm clouds to much more peaceful air.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld - Rearranging Your Mind

Mr. Jones was a ninety-two-year-old man admitted into a nursing home, shortly after the passing of his beloved wife. If you'd take a look at him and engage in conversation, you'd find that his mind was sharp, coordination right on point and outfit well kempt. His eyesight had dwindled in the past years, but was still good enough for him to get around. Considering everything, though, he believed that being in a watchful and supportive environment would serve him best.

He arrived at the nursing home one morning and mentioned the room number he was told he'd be residing in. "Good morning Mr. Jones! In just a few moments, everything will be ready for you," the secretary called out. - And then he was called up. "Your room is ready." Mr. Jones shot up, a smile overwhelming his face, reminiscent of a child about to receive candy. As he was led to his room down the hall, the

attendant began telling him about the room. "So your room, Mr. Jones, is furnished with blue carpet, some pleasant pictures hanging on the wall, ample closet space near the bed area …" Mr. Jones smile only grew wider. "Mr. Jones, it's so nice to see you so happy even though we haven't arrived at your room yet." He looked back, not losing his enthusiasm at all.

"Happiness is not how you arrange the furniture in your room," he piped up, his smile creasing at the corners of his eyes, "it's about how you arrange your mind. I've already decided to love it."

In life, we have so much good. Hashem has given us such great gifts. Life itself is filled with blessings to no end. Being able to walk, articulate your words, see with clear vision, touch and feel with your fingers, possess the cognitive abilities to comprehend. We can be quick to overlook these gifts because there's always something else or something better. But that's missing the beauty. That's setting up your life's furniture in a non-sensible way.

Set up your mind in the right way and everything around will look beautiful.

R' Yitzchok Zilberstein shlita said that his father-in-law, Reb Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, once said to a patient: "Just like during Matan Torah all sick people were cured, so too this השפעה is renewed every year. One can ask of Hakadosh Baruch Hu for a רפואה for all types of illnesses, even those that naturally do not seem to have a cure"

The patient asked: "When can this be acquired?", And Reb Elyashiv replied: "While reading the Aseres Hadibros on Shabbos Parshas Yisro.

Let's make the most of this opportunity during Krias HaTorah this week.

The Siddur Speaks

Rav Yisroel of Ruzhin, zt"l, once related the following story to a group that had gathered around him.



There was a Chasid who earned a comfortable living as a fur merchant. Once a year, he travelled to a large fair and invested all his money in fur-lined coats, hats, and boots. He sold these items throughout the freezing cold winter and made a very nice profit. This was how he supported his family.

One year, there was an unusually warm winter, and nobody bought his fur garments. The merchant was stuck with all of his merchandise, and his family began to go hungry.

One morning, just as the Chasid was leaving for Shul, the Poritz's wagon pulled up to his home. The Poritz said to the merchant, "Good morning! I would like to buy your entire stock of fur." The Chasid replied, "I'm sorry, but I don't do business before Davening."

And here, Rav Yisroel fell silent, and he smiled at the crowd.

Those gathered just looked him, and finally, someone said, "Nu? And how does the story end?"

Rav Yisroel exclaimed, "End? That's the end of the story! Just look at the extent of a Jew's Emunah and Bitachon in Hashem, that a huge business deal came his way, and he turned it down to go Daven!"

It's On My Way By R' Reuven Epstein

Rav Shimshon Pinkcus Zt'l lived in Ofakim in the Negev, approximately one and a half hours away from Yerushalayim. He was somebody who just loved chesed. A couple of hours before the onset of Shabbos, he would drive around to see if anyone was in need of a ride home for Shabbos. He was always running after chesed.



He was once at home in Ofakim, and he heard that a local couple had just given birth to a premature baby and was in hospital in Yerushalayim. He went to visit them, and the couple mentioned to Rav Shimshon that the doctor said that the child is allowed regular milk powder, but it would certainly be advantageous if the child would have natural milk at least for the next two weeks.

Rav Shimshon said that he needs to be in Yerushalayim the next morning and offered to take the milk. They were very grateful. The next day, when he picked up the milk, he said, "I need to be in a Yeshiva every morning for the next two weeks, so I'll be happy to do this for you."

After two weeks, the parents came to the hospital, and the nurse said to them, "You know, your Rabbi is really dedicated."

They asked, "What do you mean?"

She replied that he realised that the doctor did not have the time or patience to freeze/defrost the mother's milk, so the doctor was going to give the baby formula milk instead, as it was easier.

'Your Rabbi came every day and personally saw to it that everything was done properly. He fed the baby every meal, everyday – for 2 weeks straight! What a Rabbi!'

He did this to ensure that the baby got all the best nutrients that a mother can give the baby over formula milk, in order that the baby's immune system should be that little bit stronger!

The couple found out afterwards, that Rav Shimshon had no valid reason to be in Yerushalayim! He made up the whole story, in order to do this incredible chessed – to care for somebody else's baby, a couple of hours away – for two straight weeks!!

Rav Shimshon didn't just do chesed – he was a person who was on fire running to carry out chesed. It was in his bones. He lived chesed – He loved chesed!

Working on our Middos

Rav Avraham Yaakov Pam, zt"l, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Torah Vodaas, was renowned for his humility and sensitivity to every Jew. Whenever he rode on a bus with the Yeshivah Bochurim, he always tried to sit next to a group of younger boys and strike up a friendly conversation. He would ask them their names, and what they had learned in Yeshivah that day.

Once, when he was asked for the reason behind this interesting practice, and why he didn't choose to sit with the older Bochurim, he explained, "Of course, I would also enjoy sitting with the older Bochurim and talking in learning with them, but I am worried that they might feel uncomfortable with me asking them about their learning. They might feel like I'm testing them. The younger boys, however, are not afraid of this. Therefore, I choose to sit with the younger boys, to spare the older boys any discomfort!"



Admor Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto - No Need To Worry.. Be Strong with Emuna.

No need to worry- we must be strong with Emunah. You must know that with everything, we must believe with strong Emunah. Hashem takes care of it. We damage many things, because from the beginning, we think, "It's not right… It won't work out. I have no mazal and I won't have any luck.."

So, you damage the thing before you even get started. But if you think strongly: 'Yes, I will make it… It will be fine-This is excellent-I'm sure it will work.. This will work out good,' Than you are creating a reality where things can work out.

If you are negative, it will make you lose all the blessings. But, if you start with joy: 'It will be alright… Everything will be ok – Hashem will help. You will have help from Heaven that things will work out for you.

This is an important principle in life that everyone must know and practice with all their strength. If you start with despair, things won't work out. However, if you start with Emunah and Bitachon, everything will work out!

"Hashem desired to grant merit to the Jewish nation, and so He gave them the torah and mitzvos. Hashem also desired to grant the Jewish nation a taste of their spiritual reward and pleasure in the world to come. For that, He gave them the gift of Shabbos." ~ Kedushas Levi.

His Honour • Rabbi Eli Mansour



The Slonimer Rebbe - Rabbi Sholom Noach Berezovsky Zt'l in his sefer entitled Nesivos Sholom (Pirkei Avos) reminds us that every person has G-d given talents and abilities.

These are gifts, and these gifts are granted from Above. The Boirei Olam distributes these gifts differently. Some people have organisational skills. Some have the ability to teach. Some have the ability to make money in business. Some are geared towards medicine, and others towards writing.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives of His talents, because Hashem is **כל יכול** – ***Omnipotent***, and He divides it amongst all of us.

So, all of us without exception, have a piece of the talent of Hashem within us!

And what is our responsibility as Yidden?

Firstly, we must identify this talent. No two Yidden are the same. We are all unique – Each one of us has his/her special talent. We have to figure out – What am I good at? What is my strength? Where does my energy lie?

Because, all our powers, talents and strengths come from Hashem. They're not ours – they belong to The Borei Olam.

The Boirei Olam doesn't want everybody to be the same. If the Glory of G-d is to fill the entire world, then everybody has to be a little different – So that together, we can all be in harmony, coming together as one symphony.

Once we figure out what our niche talent is – Once we figure out who the real you is, what are we supposed to do with it?

You must contribute it. But to where?

Not to the society – You must contribute it back to Hashem. Using it to bring Kavod Shamayim back into the world.

שמואל זנוויל כהנא Shmuel Zanvil Kahana Zt'l (Chief Rabbi of Persian Jewry)

The Rabbi's Partner In Heaven

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ "*Honour your father and your mother*" (20:12)



One famous rabbi longed very much to know who would be his partner in heaven. One night he dreamed that the angels showed him heaven. They took him to a room where there was a chair, a table, a crown and holy books, and told him: "This is your place." "And now," said the rabbi, "I would really like to know who will be my partner." Even before the angel could answer, the rabbi heard the neighing of a horse.

"What is?" he asked, seeing a horse harnessed to a cart galloping towards the room. On the coachman's seat sat a man with a whip in his hand, shouting: "Dio, Dio!" And to the rabbi's astonishment, the angel told him that the same coachman was the one who was going to be his partner in heaven.

"But - I don't understand!" said the rabbi. "Who is the man, and where does he live?" "This is Knowles, from Lublin," replied the angel; And the rabbi woke up from his dream.

The next day, the rabbi went to Lublin and asked everyone there: "Is there a man here named Knowles? Where can he be found?"

Everyone was surprised that such a respected rabbi would ask about a man like Knowles; And yet they sent him a messenger to call him to come to the rabbi. But Knowles told them he couldn't come.

They sent him a second messenger, but Knowles also said to him: "Tell the rabbi that I cannot come to see him. If the rabbi wants to see me, please tell him that I will be at home all day." The people were very angry at Knowles' insolence and asked themselves: "How can a man like him refuse to come to the Great Rabbi?"

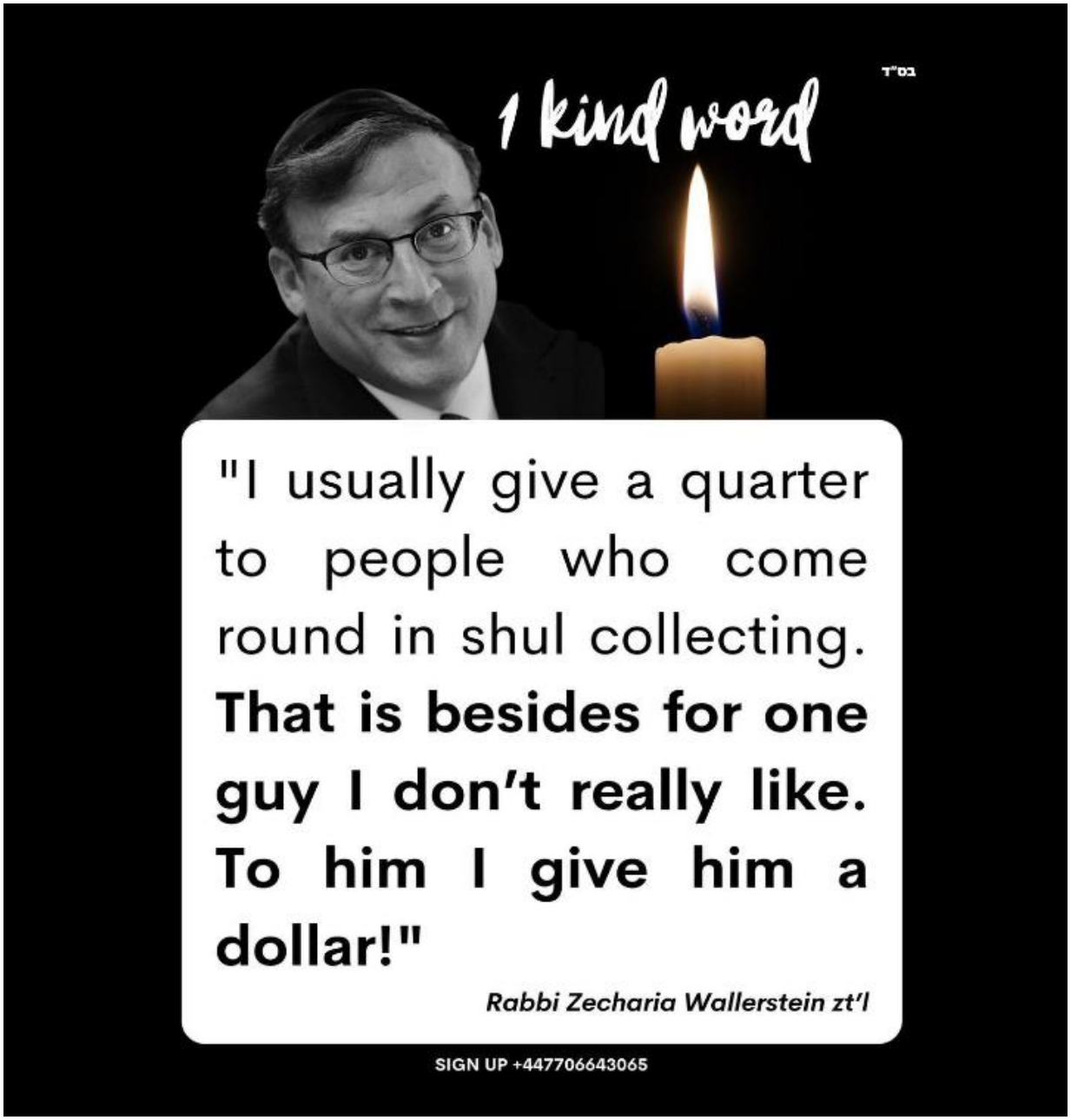
And yet the rabbi decided to come to Knowles' house. When Knowles saw him, he excused himself and said: "My mother is very sick, and there is no one who can take care of her; therefore I must stay with her all day. In the early evening, when she falls asleep, I take my horse and cart and try to earn a few pennies, so that I can buy her I eat. That's what I've been doing for ten years."

On the same day, the rabbi delivered a sermon to his congregation on the topic: How great is the commandment to honour parents; He who honours his father and mother is guaranteed a place in heaven.

Respecting parents is the foundation of the family, and the family is the foundation of society. In the Talmud (Kiddoshin 3:2) it is said: "When a person honours his father and mother, Hashem said: I will exalt them as if I had made a covenant between them and honoured them."

Where there is respect for parents there is also respect for authority, and then the nation is strong.

"Trust in Hashem and let Him take care of everything else." – The Chofetz Chaim



Rabbi Shmuel Donn Remez

וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בִּהְיֹת הַבֹּקֶר וַיְהִי קֹלֹת וּבְרָקִים וְעָנָן כָּבֵד עַל־הָהָר וְקֹל שֹׁפָר חָזָק מְאֹד וַיֶּחֱרַד כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה 19:16

It came to pass on the third day when it was morning, that there were thunderclaps and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud was upon the mountain, and a very powerful blast of a shofar, and the entire nation that was in the camp shuddered...

According to the Gemara in Mesechta Shabbos (86b) the Torah was given on Shabbos.



The Gemara says in Mesechta Berachos (57b) that Shabbos is likened to The Next World – **עולם הבא**.

The Medrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 16:27) says that Olam Habah is referred to as **בקר** which explains our Pasuk.

בְּהִיְּת הַבֹּקֶר – Since the Torah was given on Shabbos – which is compared to the next world, and just like Shabbos is a fixed/set time every week with all of it's unique mitzvos and requirements… So too, the Torah is FIXED/ **קבע**.

As we learn in Pirkei Avos (1:15) – Our daily schedules must always accommodate a fixed time for the Torah - **קבע**.

The Ben Ish Chai says that the Remez is found in the thunder, lightning and cloud mentioned here in our Pasuk: **קֹלֹת בְּרָקִים עָנָן** – The Roshe Teivos spell out **- קבע /FIXED**.

The Final Test

It is related that a man once came to the **Chazon Ish** and said that it is very challenging for him to fulfil the mitzvah of kibud av v'eim.

The Chazon Ish told him, "***You should know that the mitzvah of kibud av v'eim is the final challenge***." (It is the ultimate test to prove a person's value.)

"Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavour."

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

וַיִּסְעוּ מֵרְפִידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר 'They (plural tense) journeyed from Rephidim, and they (plural tense) arrived in the desert of Sinai, and they (plural tense) encamped in the desert, and Israel encamped there (singular tense) opposite the mountain..' (19:2)



Rashi explains כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד-'as one man with one heart.'

Many understand this to mean that because there was *achdus*, this is the reason why they were zoche to receive the Torah.

However, that is not the reason why they got the Torah now. The reason why they received the Torah now, was because this was the opportune time for them to receive the Torah.

Torah is impossible to keep unless there is achdus. It wasn't just because they were unified.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (Pikudei) says that כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה׳ אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כֵּן עָשׂוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת כָּל־הָעֲבֹדָה 'All the work of the Mishkan of the Tent of Meeting was completed; the children of Israel had done it.' 39:32 But wasn't it Betzallel and the Chachmei lev who made it on their behalf? It wasn't actually Klal Yisrael making it – we had representatives doing it for us.

His first answer is : שלוחו של אדם כמותו וכאילו כל ישראל עשו *The Torah teaches that a person's delegate is accounted as like the person who has delegated him. The Torah here credits all of the Israelites with having constructed the Holy Tabernacle although it*

was only Betzalel (and his helpers) who had actually performed all the work.

He brings a second reason: 'It appears that the Torah teaches us a general rule about the way Torah can be observed successfully by showing how the Israelites conferred merits one upon the other.

The Torah (in its entirety) is only capable of fulfilment by means of the entire Jewish nation. Every individual Jew is charged with the duty to perform those commandments which **he** is able to fulfil, keeping in mind his individual status [an Israelite cannot perform service in the Temple, for instance].

It is impossible for every Yid to keep all 613 Mitzvos on his own. (some are for women, Cohanim, Leviyim etc).

Therefore, by keeping the Mitzva of **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** and being B'Achdus, this enabled Klal Yisrael to be unified as one entity – and could now be zoche to receive the Torah in its entirety!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

I once heard a vort from the Gateshead **Rav Shraga Feivel Zimmerman**, who said it over from his grandfather – **Rabbi Yosef Yonah Tzvi Horowitz, Rav of Unsdorf and Frankfurt** Zt'l.

The word **כֹּה** is mentioned various times in the Torah. There are 3 times that the word **כֹּה** is mentioned in the Torah and it has been passed down that there is a connection specifically between these three.

1. כֹּה יִהְיֶה זַרְעֶךָ - "***So will be your seed.***" (**בראשית טו:ה**)
2. וַאֲנִי וְהַנַּעַר נֵלְכָה עַד־כֹּה – "***And I and the lad will go yonder.***" (**בראשית כב:ה**)
3. כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתַגֵּיד לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל -"***So shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel.***" (**שמות יט:ג**)

The connection between these three, is in the way we are going to educate the next generation.

כֹּה יִהְיֶה זַרְעֶךָ – It doesn't matter how I am, this is what you have to be. You do this and that. (I once saw a father in shul shushing his young son who was talking to a friend in the middle of davening.. a few minutes later, the father was chatting to a friend who had just come in. So the kid turns around to his father and asked, "So, when am I going to be old enough to talk in shul?!")

וַאֲנִי וְהַנַּעַר נֵלְכָה עַד־כֹּה - A person must educate his children by leading by example. One must walk together with the next generation to show them the ropes, and accompany them as a guide.

That's all very well talking about the father. What about the mother? Are they singing from the same song sheet? If not, it will also lead to a disaster.

So our Pasuk tells us : **כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתַגֵּיד לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – this is referring to the mothers, who also have an active part in the education of the children!

When this happens, the children will be blessed with all the brachos that there are.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ (20:8) We are Mekadesh Shabbos using wine. We make kiddush on wine.

There is an interesting sefer (?) that was written by someone who lived approximately 100 years ago. He lived in Brisk and was a shochet there. He moved to Eretz Yisrael and is buried in Taveriya. He wrote a story about **David ha-Levi Segal** (c. 1586 –1667), also known as the **Turei Zahav- Taz ט״ז.**

The Taz who was the son-in -law of the **Bach**, was the Rav in a place called **Poznań** (Poland). He was one of the giants of Torah at that

time. He lived an extremely poverty-stricken lifestyle. He learnt all day and all night.



Occasionally, when he needed some inspiration, he would go to the local tavern for a schnapps! This would warm him up, get the juices working again, and he would continue learning.

However, because he was so poverty stricken, he didn't have the money to pay for his drinks straight away, and as they did in those days, he put it on the TAB (*A* **T***ax* **A***nticipation* **B***ill* - a running total of charges that a guest accumulates throughout their time at a bar). When it reached a certain limit, the Taz somehow managed to pay the debt owed.

The TABs were written on a blackboard hanging up behind the bar. (*A bar tab of a 1787 farewell party for George Washington is still extant. According to the bill, those present drank 54 bottles of Madeira, 60 bottles of claret, 8 bottles of whiskey, 22 bottles of port, 8 bottles of strong cider, 12 kegs of beer and 7 bowls of alcoholic punch – There were only 55 attendees!*)

Some of the local kehilla also frequented the local tavern. Once when they were a little bit more bored than usual, they decided to pass the time by reading the TAB! They were astonished to see the Taz's name on the board, and how much and often he drank!

It didn't take long for this news to spread around town that their Rav frequents the local tavern! They did not like this and called for an EGM (Extraordinary/Emergency General Meeting.)

They dismissed him instantly without notice or pay because of gross misconduct and deported him the next day!

It didn't take long for the old community of Ostroh, in Volhynia which was a paragon of Torah in those days to hear that the Taz was on a free transfer, so they were delighted to give him the ***shteller***. He established a famous *yeshiva*, and was soon recognized as one of the greatest halakhic authorities of his time. (1641).



Some time later in Poznań, they heard that the Taz had written his first manuscript on Shulchan Aruch. In it, (Siman **רע"ב**) he wrote that on Shabbos day, there is for some people, a minhag to make kiddush on schnapps! (***Authors note: My Oppappa always made kiddush during the day on a full Reviyis of Shlivowitz***!) But the exception was in the town of Poznań, where schnapps could not be considered the Chamar Medina!

When they heard about this, they went to visit the Taz. As they were waiting for him, his wife laid out some *Lekach* (cakes) for them. They were uneasy at how the Taz would react to them, so they didn't touch the refreshments.

The Taz came in and said, "*Nu, nem a bissel, mach a bracha.*" -So they replied, "Lekach is not the *ikker* - schnapps is the ikker!"

The Taz replied, "Oh, I see, I thought in your town that you are against schnapps!"

They said, "No, of course we like schnapps. We just didn't like it that our Rav liked it so much! However, we have come to ask for mechila."
***

The Taz says, that to be mekaddish Shabbos with schnapps, it must be *chamar medina*. (not like his old town of Poznań!)

Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan

I was just at a Bris Milah, and an old student walked up to me. It doesn't take a lot to make me cry – but he made me cry!

He said, "Rebbi, I want to tell you something…I appreciate that you put your heart and soul into me during high school and got me the chance to go to a decent yeshiva. But there was one moment in which you changed my life forever…"



'At the end of 12th grade, we took a graduation trip to the *kossel* together. I tear *kriah*, and I cried my heart out like a baby. You should know that my crying is out of happiness, more than out of pain. When I tear kriah, I am in pain for Hashem, because it is like a father who no longer has any children at home. He is waiting for his kids to return home. And we are waiting for him to come back to us.

But I'm incredibly happy – It is a cry of happiness, because when I arrive at the kossel, I can't believe I'm here. I have to pinch myself – I'm really here!

I happened to be standing right behind you at the kossel. Rebbi, I will never forget what happened next. – You walked up to the wall. You put your outstretched hands onto the wall, you kissed the stones, and you said, "***Abba, thank you for the opportunity of letting me come back home again*! *Thank you Abba for letting me come back here again*!"

I said to myself when I heard you say that – 'Abba?- Who's he talking to? Who's the Rabbi talking to? He's talking to the stones? Maybe

the jet-lag hit him? I stopped, and I said to myself, ' ***Who's Abba?*** Who's he talking to?



Suddenly it hit me - You were talking to Abba! Abba! Wow! At that moment in front of the stones, it hit me like a tonne of bricks (pun intended!). He's talking to Abba! But he's really talking to Him!

As a 12th grader, I looked at you, and then I thought – Hashem is real – You're real! He's here – This is His house! I'm knocking on His front door! My Rabbi is actually talking to Him!

From that day on, I refer to Hashem – as Abba! Every prayer, every Amidah, every tefillah – I don't say G-d, I don't even say Hashem - I say Abba!

Every time I say that, I think of you, up against the Kossel wall, and it does something to me, so that I put all my heart into whatever I'm davening for. And you should know, that this has changed me forever. It has turned my life around. It has turned my learning around. It has turned everything around for me – You & Abba!

Where would I be without Abba?! Where would any of us be without Abba?

As we approach this Shabbos of Kabbolas HaTorah, it is the unity and achdus of Klal Yisroel that will bring us one step closer to the ultimate joy and celebration of Moshiach - "אין שמחה כשמחת התורה"!

– Have a wonderful Shabbos.



וַיְסַפֵּר מֹשֶׁה לְחֹתְנוֹ אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה'... וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בָּרוּךְ ה' אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם
Moshe told his father-in-law everything that Hashem had done… Yisro said, "Blessed is Hashem Who has rescued you." (18:8,10)

The power that a story has to impact a person cannot be overstated. ***Horav Nachman Breslover, zl***, teaches, "There is nothing that revives the spirit, purifies the heart, deepens the thought, or draws us close to our Father in Heaven more than telling a story (obviously, there is an art to telling a story). Indeed, prior to giving us the *mitzvos* of the Torah, Hashem preceded it with the story of Creation."

Moshe *Rabbeinu* employed the effectiveness of a story to inspire Yisro and draw his heart close to Hashem, "Moshe related to his father-in-law all that Hashem had done."

Rashi comments, "To draw the heart, to draw him close to Hashem." As a result, we find Yisro making a *b'rachah*, blessing, "Blessed be Hashem for saving you…for saving the nation." To make such a blessing, one must have personally witnessed the miracle where it occurred.

The *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 218 rules, "Only one who sees the place where miracles were performed for *Klal Yisrael* recites the blessing."

The *Imrei Emes, zl*, of Gur offers a powerful explanation which lends us a window into the influence a story, well-told, can have on a person. He says that Moshe *Rabbeinu's* relating the story of the exodus from Egypt, with the accompanying events preceding and

succeeding it, was so geographically clear and compelling that Yisro could actually see the events unfolding before his very eyes!

By virtue of his uncanny ability, a storyteller is able to transport his audience to a different place and time, to the point that they personally sense and experience the events of the story.



Through Moshe, Yisro was present, participating with the nation. Thus, he made a blessing.

The *Brisker Rav, zl*, adds that for Moshe it was a *halachic* imperative to share with Yisro to publicise the events and wonders up to – including and the aftermath of – the Exodus. When Hashem wrought miracles for us, we must publicise them, share them with whomever we can to the point that the listener feels a kinship with the experience as if he were a participant.

Why was it so important to relate the story to Yisro? Because he was the first one who had not personally experienced the event. He was not present, thus Moshe made him feel as if he had been there.

***And Yisro Heard* ויישמע יתרו**

The Kotzker Zy"a said on this verse - Yisro "hut derhert". He understood and put his listening into action, not just simply hearing. • Siach Sarfei Kodesh

Smoking On Shabbos



A young woman became a *baalas teshuvah*, returned to religious observance, despite having been raised totally assimilated. She had been estranged from Torah life and *mitzvah* observance. It was all foreign to her.

Bit by bit, ever so slowly, she felt comfortable with observance, except for one thing. Having smoked cigarettes her entire adult life, she just found it nearly impossible to give up smoking on *Shabbos*. She made the attempt a number of times. Despite her determination to succeed, however, she always fell short. She even became ill as a result of abstaining from cigarettes.

The *rabbanim* who were involved in her return to observance turned to ***Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl***, wondering if he would render a *halachic* decision/dispensation concerning her problem.

Rav Elyashiv's immediate response was, "Check her lineage, I suspect that she is not Jewish!"

The *rabbanim* were taken aback by this strange reply, but, when the *gadol ha'dor*, pre-eminent Torah giant of the generation, speaks, one listens. They investigated and, after a complete background check, it was discovered that, indeed, her mother was not Jewish.

They immediately arranged for her conversion to Judaism, to which she readily agreed. Suddenly, her addiction to smoking on *Shabbos* ceased!

Obviously, everyone involved sought an explanation. *Rav* Elyashiv explained that *Chazal* teach that it is prohibited for a non-Jew to observe *Shabbos*. This woman was wholly sincere in her desire to serve Hashem. As a result, the Almighty created a situation whereby

she would be unable to give up smoking, thus preventing her from transgressing His will.

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ ***Honour your father and mother, so that your days will be lengthened****. (20:12)*

Horav Chaim Kanievsky, zl, writes (*Orchos Yosher*) that, for many *mitzvos* and transgressions, the reward or punishment is reserved for the World to Come. *Kibbud av v'eim,* however, does not brook such postponement. The Almighty punishes or rewards for the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim* in this world. Therefore, in all likelihood, the way one acts towards his/her parents might very well be the precursor for the manner in which their children will act toward them.

Someone who was asked to speak to a group of youngsters asked *Rav* Chaim, "What *mitzvah* should I emphasise and encourage them to perform to its fullest extent?"

His almost immediate response was: *kibbud av v'eim*. He was further asked, concerning a boy who had just turned *bar mitzvah,* which *mitzvah* he should be *mekabel*, accept upon himself, to carry out scrupulously.

Rav Chaim replied that his father, the ***Steipler Gaon, zl***, was asked the same question, and he replied that it should be *mitzvas kibbud av v'eim*.

Horav Chaim Brim, zl, was wont to say, "The barometer for ascertaining one's level of *yiraas Shomayim*, fear of Heaven, is in the manner in which he fulfils the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim.*" Need we say more?

Rabbi Shlomo Landau

Harav Mordechai Eliyahu Zt'l Was a very close Yedid of the **Babi Sali Zt'l**. One time, they met each other at a wedding.



In a light moment, Harav Mordechai Eliyahu looks at the Babi Sali and says, "Please explain something to me - How is it possible that you have the power to heal people from illnesses, and somehow bring about miraculous recovery for them? How is it possible that you can help barren women to suddenly have children? Where do you get that power from?



If you are going to tell me that it is in the "**זכות אבות**" that you have this power, - I also have "**זכות אבות**". If you are going to tell me it's because of your "**תלמוד תורה**" – I also learn Torah proficiently. Maybe you will tell me it's because you go to the Mikveh often? I also go regularly to the Mikveh."

"Tell me Rabeinu – What is it that gives you this tremendous power?" The Babi Sali thought for a moment and replied – It's "**שמירת עיניים**". From when I was a little child, until today, I have never been **נכשל** in "**שמירת עיניים**"!

If you had the same level of "**שמירת עיניים**" as me, you would be able to do exactly what I'm able to do!

But that's not all. You see, about 40 years ago in Eretz Yisrael, there was a terrible period at that time where there were men taken captive in Syria. Nobody knew if they were alive or dead. It was assumed that they were dead, and their wives were left as *Agunos*.

They didn't know what to do. After having looked at the evidence, the Beis Din in Eretz Yisrael paskened that the chances of their husbands being alive, were virtually nil. They permitted these women to re-marry.

One woman was not comfortable with this p'sak, and she went to the Babi Sali and told him the whole story and the p'sak.

The Babi Sali said, "You can't get re-married – Your husband is still alive, I see him, he is right next to a bathtub!"

Not long after, there was a prisoner exchange. Her husband was one of those who came back home, alive and well!

She asked her husband, 'Where were you being held captive?'

He replied that he was being held in a large mansion, and he was handcuffed to the faucet of a bathtub!

The Baba Sali was able to see clearly and vividly, somebody else who was in a different country! How did he acquire this power? Through a lifetime of "**שמירת עיניים**"!

In our own lives, we need to see things clearly. One amazing way is to invest in **שמירת עיניים**. The results can be staggering!

Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel זצ"ל , and **יבל"ח** his brother, Rav Gedalia, used to go every Friday to eat breakfast by their mother. When Rav Nosson Tzvi got sick with Parkinsons, he still continued to go, even though it was very hard for him. His mother tried to convince him to let her come to his house. However, Rav Nosson Tzvi insisted on continuing to go to his mother for breakfast every week!



Emunah

Reb Yechezkel Abramsky zt'l told the **Rayatz of Lubavitz zt'l** that when he was in Siberia, one morning he woke up, said *Modeh Ani*, and then asked himself, "Why do I praise Hashem for giving me another day of life?

What purpose does my life have? I don't have mitzvos to perform; I don't have tefillin, and I don't have a Gemara. Why should I live?

But then I told myself that I have *emunah*, and to live in Siberia with *Emunah* is a great service for Hashem. My *emunah* certainly gives Hashem a *nachas ruach*. For *emunah* alone, I decided, it is worth living!"

The Rayatz replied, "Reb Yechezkel! It is worth it for Hakadosh Baruch Hu all the hardships and sorrows of His beloved children in *galus* just to hear those beautiful, sweet words of *emunah*."

Torah learning

In a *drashah*, **Reb Chaim Kreisworth zt'l** said: Two people came to me for a *din Torah*. One was a wealthy diamond dealer, and the other was his sales agent. The agent claimed they agreed to a .06% commission, while the dealer argued that the agreement was .05%.

Reb Chaim Kreisworth noticed that some people listening to his *drashah* were laughing. They considered it absurd that a *din* Torah should be over .01%. Wealthy people shouldn't be bickering over such a small amount. Reb Chaim Kreisworth told them to stop laughing

because the sales were for a billion dollars. 01%, therefore, was a million dollars, a substantial amount according to everyone's standards.

Reb Chaim concluded, "There are people who think that their Torah learning doesn't have value, they think that they don't learn *l'shmah*, etc. But the reward of Torah is so great, even if one only receives .01% of the reward of Torah, it is also extremely valuable."

There was a talmid chacham in Yerushalayim who suffered from Alzheimer's. Before his grandchild's chasunah, they gave him a strong pill that helped him think clearly for several hours. They did this so he could participate in the chasunah, but he was found in the beis medresh, studying Torah. He said, "Now that I finally have a clear mind, I want to use it for Torah study."

The lesson for us is that people are busy and don't have much time for Torah, but it sometimes happens that there is time for Torah. Be wise and grasp those moments for Torah study.

The Chofetz Chaim writes, "A wise person should keep in mind that every time he joins a group of idle-talkers, and every time he wastes time reading the newspaper about issues that aren't related to Him, Hakadosh Baruch Hu cries over this loss of time. He could have used this time to study Torah to acquire diamonds and pearls, illuminating his lot eternally and granting him honour and greatness. And he exchanges them for matters that have no benefit.

When a person thinks about this, he will study Torah whenever he has a free moment, for this is his good fortune and eternal life."



"ישועת השם כהרף עין"-There is always hope. With Hashem, everything can change in an instant. [Stories to Inspire]



Bikur Cholim



The Seder HaYom writes, "*Bikur cholim* is the from highest forms of *gemilus chasadim*. Sometimes, with clever, encouraging, and kind words, one can revive a sick person and grant him life.

We have seen this happen many times. Sometimes a person visits the sick for an hour or two, and the ill person says, 'I feel like a new person. My *neshamah* came back to me,' and we see that the illness became lighter."

Happiness is a cure for all illnesses, and this is one of the services we do for the ill when we visit them. We make them happy, which makes their condition easier to bear, and sometimes it can cure them.

It states (*Mishlei* 18:14) **רוח איש יכלכל מחלהו ורוח נכאה מי ישאנה** "*A man's spirit will sustain his sickness, but who can support a broken spirit*."

The Vilna Gaon zt'l explains that *ruach* means happiness. "When a person is happy, he can handle his illness… His joy will annul it. But when one is sad, who can carry it?"

The Rambam writes, "Tell an ill person happy stories that will gladden his heart. Tell him interesting news that will take his mind off his illness, make him laugh, and make the people caring for him laugh. When you choose someone to be with a sick person, choose someone who can make him happy because this is what is needed."

Sodi Razyah writes, "When one visits the sick, he should speak to his heart comforting and encouraging words." These encouraging words will bring joy and at times, *refuah*, too.

The Gemara (*Nedarim* 40.) writes the many rewards of visiting and caring for the ill. Among them is that he will be saved from Gehinom, and is granted long life, protection from the yetzer hara, he is saved from afflictions, everyone honours him, and he will have good friends who give him good counsel, and he will be saved from bad friends who give bad counsel.

R' Michael Rothschild-Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation



In Auschwitz, there was a vicious SS officer called Otto Tibet. He always came up with ingenious ways to hurt Jews.

After the war, researchers were building cases against many SS officers who perpetrated crimes against humanity – to bring them to justice.

They noticed a strange pattern of behaviour when it came to Otto Tibet. Every time a Jew was to be hung or shot, Otto would be on the scene, and come up with an ingenious alternative punishment – that would invariably cause the Jew to survive!

Do you know why?

Because, beneath the skull and crossbones of his cap, and the long black leather jacket, and the infamous jackboots – was beating the heart of a holy frum Yid!

Otto was a frum Jew who had infiltrated the SS for the specific purpose of attempting to save as many of his brothers as possible!

His real name was Klohr, his family was from Vienna. He was tall, blond, had crystal blue eyes, and spoke a flawless German. He had the most important thing a spy must have – He had nerves of steel.

He convinced the British Intelligence to parachute him into Germany, where soon after he managed to join the SS, and got himself stationed in Auschwitz.

He probably saved hundreds of Jews. One of them was Yiddel Wallis. He was the father of the Director of Arachim- Rabbi Yossi Wallis.

Hashem created a super-neshama called Klal Yisrael. You and me, and everyone you like and dislike, are all part of that one neshama. That's why we can say with such surety- **כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה**. We are all responsible for one another. Your friends neshama is completely connected to your neshama- He is you, and you are him!

Some people are dressed differently, but under the clothes, beats the heart of a pure, holy Jew. If you have respect and mercy on someone like a brother, you will awaken Hashem's attribute of mercy upon you and all your loved ones!

Toiling In The Holy Torah

When Rebbi Mosheh Mordechai, son of **Rebbi Shimon Shkop Zt'l**, became of age to go to Yeshivah, his father escorted him to the Yeshivah of Volozhin. It had been many years since his father had learned in this Yeshivah and right when they arrived in Volozhin, before they even went to meet with the head of the Yeshivah who was the **Netziv**, the father went with his son into the Beit Midrash and he pointed out the bench that he sat on when he was in Yeshivah.

He then turned to his son and said, "Here, on this bench, I sat and learned for six straight years. Here is where I had the best enjoyment day and night. These were the most beautiful years of my life" and he then became emotional and broke out into tears.

Rebbi Yosef Buxbaum Z'l, the founder of "Mechon Yerushalayim". He merited to live in the same building as the **Great One from Tchebin Tz'l**. A short while after the Rebbi from Tchebin passed

away, Rebbi Yosef Buxbaum left his house and he saw **Rav Aryeh Levine Zt'l** standing with a Tehillim in his hand and crying. He approached him and asked him why he was crying.

Rav Aryeh answered and said that someone he knows is sick and he was searching for a place to pour out his heart to Hashem in prayer.

In those years, it was not possible to go to the Kotel and pray as the Jordanians ruled over that part of Yerushalayim. Therefore, Rav Aryeh felt that this building where **Rebbi Barish Vinefield Ztk'l** lived and toiled in Torah and where so many broken-hearted people would flock to for salvation or comfort would be the perfect place to pray.

When Rebbi Yosef told this story over to **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zt'l**, Rav Shlomo answered that this is correct and such a sensitivity is appropriate for Rav Aryeh Levine and not for us.

Then Rav Shlomo continued and testified about himself, "Even I, when I pass that building, remember the elevated feelings I had when I was in his presence".



A Chicken in Every Pot

Mrs. Epstein was waiting in line at the butcher shop, and when at last her turn came two youngsters entered the store. "You won't mind waiting a few more minutes, will you, Mrs. Epstein?" the butcher asked. "I'll be done with these kids in a moment."

She did mind, as she was very tired, but didn't say anything. She watched as the butcher proceeded to gather up chicken legs,

gizzards, necks and other leftover parts, weigh it and scoop it all into a bag. He handed the bag to the children, and the older of the two said, "Please put it on our account."

Mrs. Epstein was appalled. Didn't the butcher earn enough without having to charge obviously needy people for the garbage he would have discarded? Too weary to engage in a heated discussion, she allowed the issue to pass...until the following week, when precisely the same incident transpired. "How can you do such a thing?" Mrs. Epstein demanded of the butcher.

"I'll tell you," the butcher replied. "Their mother had been a good customer for many years, when suddenly her husband fell ill. He couldn't pay his bills, mine included, but I couldn't allow a family with nine children to starve, could I? I carried them for month after month, until their account stretched back over three years. It was a tidy sum, and I couldn't afford to carry them much longer. So I started saving all the trimmings that would normally be discarded, and I'd give it to them for Shabbat. Each week, they tell me to put it on their account, and each week I...don't. Oh, sure I weigh it and make a show of entering the amount in my book to maintain their dignity."

Tears welled up in Mrs. Epstein's eyes - tears of pity for the needy family and tears of shame for misjudging the kindly butcher. She opened her purse and pulled out her checkbook. "I want you to send two chickens to them at once," she said, "not only today, but every Friday. But you must never reveal my identity to them." The butcher happily complied, and knowing Mrs. Epstein was a woman of very modest means herself, charged her well below the wholesale price.

But the story doesn't end here. When Mrs. Epstein related her tale to a friend, that friend also withdrew her checkbook, anxious to participate in this beautiful *misvah*. "It's funny you should do that," Mrs. Epstein said, "because this story actually took place a number of years ago, and everyone to whom I've related it has reacted in an

identical fashion. *Baruch Hashem*, I now have nineteen families whom I supply with Shabbat chickens, and countless anonymous people who generously share my *misvah* with me. And all because of my failure to judge my fellow man favorably!

All too often, failures like Mrs. Epstein's do not have such positive results. Our Sages have affirmed that the way one judges his fellow man is the way G-d will judge him. This, along with the fact that it is a positive commandment from the Torah, should be sufficient incentive to judge others favorably. Inevitably, observance of this *misvah* also makes for a happier life. (*A Midrash* and a *Ma'aseh*)

The Rebbe and the Innkeeper



Yankel the innkeeper lived in an isolated hamlet for so long that he hardly remembered that he was a Jew. Shabbat was a word he hardly recalled. Day and night he served the Polish peasants who bought drinks in his little inn. Nothing new ever happened and one year slipped unnoticed into the next.

One day, however, a stately-looking Jew entered Yankel's inn and disturbed Yankel's quiet existence. This visitor was none other than the famous tzadik, **Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov**, who had leased a hut in the middle of a forest in order to meditate and pray in the stillness of the woods.

At times, however, he came to the inn to purchase food, and that is how he came to know Yankel. When the tzadik had first entered his

inn, something deep inside Yankel stirred and prompted him to say to the rabbi, "know, Sir, I too, am a Jew."

"How can you live in a place where there are no other Jews?" the tzadik queried him. "Why, it seems you have even forgotten our holy traditions. My poor brother, why, even the animals of Jews refrain from work on the Shabbat. Can you do even less than that?"

Yankel blushed at Rabbi Moshe Leib's words. "But, Rabbi," he continued, "I have to stay open on Shabbat or the peasants buy their drinks elsewhere, and I will be destitute!"

"Nevertheless," Rabbi Moshe Leib insisted, "you must close on Shabbat. How can a holy Jewish soul do less than the donkey of a Jew who is kept from working on the Sabbath day?"

When Yankel saw that the tzadik was adamant, he began to think and he resolved to close the inn on Shabbat. Yankel's announcement provoked a bitter reaction from his customers. "If you refuse to sell us liquor, we'll...we'll... complain to the landlord! He'll throw you out! You can't do this to us!"

Yankel knew they were as good as their words – particularly when it touched the issue of vodka. He walked deep into the forest until he found the hut of the tzadik. "The peasants are threatening to ruin me," Yankel cried.

"Don't worry. Bolt the doors. If the landlord questions you, do not hesitate to tell him that your G-d commanded Jews to keep the Sabbath day holy," replied Rabbi Moshe Leib.

The innkeeper was very frightened, but he resolved to do as the tzadik said. Shabbat arrived and Yankel bolted the door of his inn. The peasants arrived and began to pound on the door and windows trying to get in. Finally, the voice of the landlord could be heard outside, demanding that Yankel open up the inn.

Yankel had no choice but to open, and it was a very angry poritz who entered the inn crying, "Who do you think you are, denying vodka to

your customers!? Why else did I lease this inn, except to make a profit?"

"Sire," began a frightened Yankel, "surely you know I am a Jew. Just recently I was told by a holy Jew that our Torah forbids us to work on the Sabbath day. That is why I have closed the inn today."

The directness of the reply intrigued the landowner. "Where is this person? Bring him to me!"

Soon, Rabbi Moshe Leib was standing before the landlord.

"Tell me, Jew, does this prohibition against working apply to a Jew who is in danger of losing his livelihood?" he asked, in a cutting tone.

"Sire, it applies even in such a case," was the tzadik's reply.

"Why do you torment this man? I doubt your answer would be the same if it applied to you. I will find out, and if you are really sincere, I will permit the inn to close on the Sabbath."

The landlord left, a plan hatching in his mind. The following Shabbat, the landowner rode into the forest with a bag of gold coins. When he saw Rabbi Moshe Leib leaving his hut, he scattered the coins on the floor of the forest and waited to see what would transpire. At first the tzadik passed right by the coins, but then he returned and examined them closely. The landlord waited gleefully for the fatal moment when the Jew would eagerly scoop them into his hands. But no, he continued walking.

The landowner then rushed out of his hiding place. "I am very impressed, and I will keep my end of the deal. But tell me, why did you first ignore the money and then bend down to examine it?"

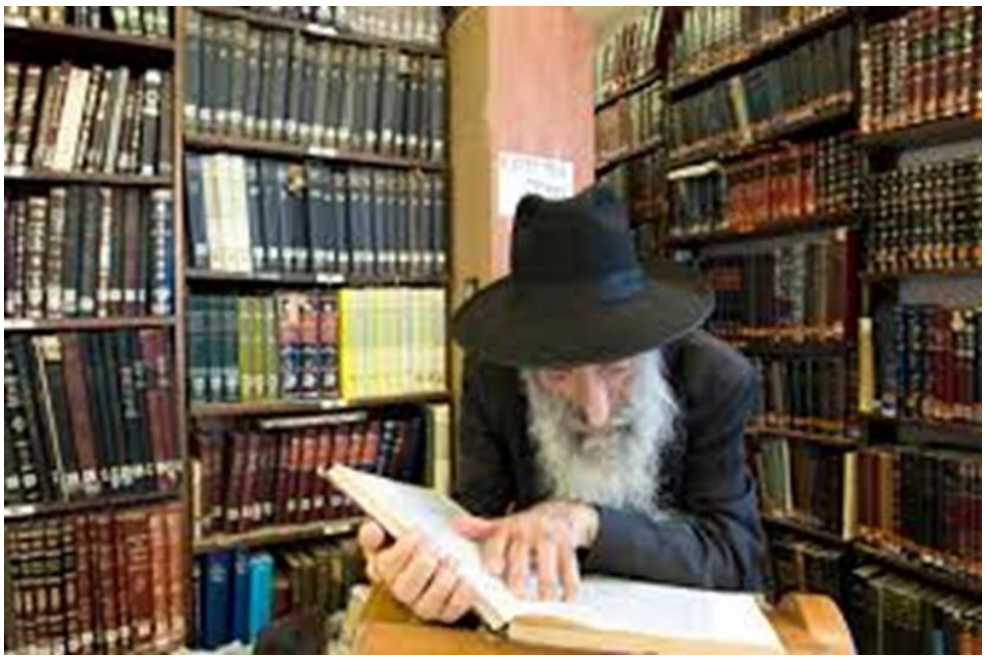
"I will explain," began Rabbi Moshe Leib. "At first, I ignored the money, for it was Shabbat. But then, I began to think how I needed the money to rescue many imprisoned Jews. Perhaps that mitzva overrides the prohibitions of the Shabbat. I became confused, and

then I prayed to G-d to give me direction. Suddenly I understood. G-d could certainly provide me with the money in a permissible way.

Sire, if I had taken or hidden the money, you would not have understood my motives. You would have assumed that I was taking it for my own desires. I have always scrupulously observed the Shabbat, and now Heaven has protected me from coming to any harm. Surely, now you can see the importance of keeping the holiness of the Sabbath."

Incident in a Book Store in Meah Shearim

A man, who we'll call Reuven, was shopping for *sefarim* in a book store in Meah Shearim. He picked up a *sefer* and started flipping through it. Then he noticed, out of the corner of his eye, that a man (who we'll call Shimon) was facing him from the other side of the store, and appeared to be staring at him. Reuven looked into the *sefer* and tried to ignore him, but he began to feel uncomfortable.



A few moments later, Reuven felt a tap on his shoulder. He looked up and saw Shimon standing right in front of him, with that same staring look. Shimon said, "Excuse me, but are you planning on buying this *sefer*?

Reuven was a bit startled, and said, "Yes. Do you have a problem with that?"

Shimon said, "Please forgive me. I don't want to be nosy, but if you are planning on buying it, please let me pay for it."

This caught Reuven by surprise. "Why would you want to do that? he asked.

Simon answered, "I am almost blind. I will soon never again be able to study Torah from the *sefarim* that meant so much to me. I want to pay for your *sefer* so that you will learn from it as much as possible. When your eyes become tired and you are ready to close the *sefer*, please think of me and keep it open a little longer."

Reuven eyes began to tear, and he accepted Shimon's offer. The storekeeper later confirmed that Shimon would routinely do this a few times a week to various customers. This was his way of continuing to learn Torah. Reuven resolved that he would not put that *sefer* down lightly. When he would be tired, he would push himself to learn a little more.

After a while, this attitude spread to his other learning as well. He had a new appreciation of his ability to see, and the value of learning from a *sefer* took on a new meaning for him.

Short Story Of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

Rav Elya Svei ZT"L the Rosh Yeshiva of the Philadelphia. Yeshiva, once made a comment at the shivah of a Jew who had fought against Communism and successfully provided his children with a Torah education. Rav Elya said that the Communists knew what they were doing. They suppressed the yeshivos as a means of killing the Jewish spirit.

He said that "there were three Jews living near Minsk who immigrated to America. Their names were **R' Aharon Kotler** (Lakewood), **R' Yaakov Kamenetzky** (Torah Voda'as), and **R' Yaakov Ruderman** (Baltimore). Look at the revolution that these three individuals were able to make in America! If three Jews could make

such a revolution, imagine what the Yeshivos could have produced if they were unfettered in Communist Russia!" (On the Shoulders of Giants, page 374)

Comment: Although Pharaoh attempted to break the spirit of the Jewish People, he was ultimately unsuccessful. 600,000 men, plus women and children, triumphantly exited Egypt and surrounded Har Sinai. They were then gifted with the Torah, which has allowed our Nation to persevere through thousands of years of exile. Klal Yisroel must always recognize that Torah education is the key to our survival as a people.

Name Changer by Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky

Yisro, a former Midayanite priest, and father-in-law of our leader, comes to join the Jewish people. In the first documented case of a "ger" – convert, to the Jewish people, Yisro gains a new identity.

Yisro had seven names. He was called Yeser, Yisro, and Chovav, among others. Some were recently added on.

Rashi explains. Yeser was his original name. The name Yisro is formed from adding the letter "vav" to his name – thus becoming Yisro – containing the letters "yud, tav, reish, and vav."

The Baal Haturim explains that his new name now represented his new identity. The yud, whose numerical value is ten, represents the ten commandments which he accepted. And the remaining three letters have a numerical value of 606 – the number of mitzvos he accepted upon himself anew, added onto the 7 Noahide commandments, to equal the grand total of 613.

Additionally, says Rashi, the name "Chovav" was added, signified his love for Torah. If one letter was enough to signify Yisro's dedication to Torah, why did he then need a whole name added?

Yehuda Geberer, noted Jewish historian and producer of Jewish History Soundbites podcast, shared a video of Rav Nota Greenblatt shlit"a, of Memphis TN, a close friend of my zaide from his days in Yeshivas Rabeinu Yisroel Meir Hakohen, under the leadership of their beloved Rosh Yeshiva **Rav Dovid Liebowitz zt"l**. This story he told illustrates the love his great rebbe had for bnei Torah.

In the 1920s, there was a meeting of the "Agudas Harabanim" with many prominent Rabbis in attendance. Among the various topics discussed was the future of Jewish education in America, and if it was indeed possible to educate a new generation of American boys to produce the same caliber Talmudic scholars as their European counterparts.

One certain Rabbi got up and declared, "American boys will never be bnei Torah! They are all either 'Dodgers' or 'Yankers'! (Referring to their alliances to whichever team won the World Series that year)

Rav Dovid zt"l jumped up. "Reb Yossel! What are you, crazy!" he screamed out to the Rabbi, with whom he was friends with in Slobodka yeshiva in Europe. "American bnei Torah are more probable to be bnei Torah than European boys!"

He did not explain himself, but another story comes to mind, illustrating Rav Dovid's love for yeshiva students. When **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l** first travelled to America, Rav Dovid Leibowitz told him, "If you are coming to raise money, there is no money here. But if you are coming to teach Torah, the ground is fertile with boys eager to learn!"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, zt"l, answered. When one accepts the yolk of Heaven, he becomes a new person. Yes, one added letter to Yisro's name changed his name, changed his identity, and signified his spiritual reality.

But there is more. There are many facets of Judaism which one can put his strengths and his passion. Some people are passionate about

chessed, some about tzedakah, and some about the love of the land of Israel. They are all wonderful and important. But above all, one who is passionate about Torah – the study of Torah, the prominence of Torah, and the exalting of those who are "Bnei Torah", is most treasured.

Yisro, says Rashi, loved the Torah. He loved talmidei chachmim and all that they stood for. This love for the Torah, the "chavivus," merited Yisro not just another letter, but "Chovev' – another full name.

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וַיִּסְעוּ מֵרְפִידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי וַיַּחֲנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיִּחַן־שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר



When Klal Yisroel stood at Har Sinai, Rashi tells us they were, "like one man with one heart." We were so unified that 600,000 people were like one person.

We all know that Jews are called "am kshei oref", a stiff-necked people, strong and stubborn in our opinions. As they say, "two Jews with three opinions!" So, how was it possible that we were like one man with one heart?

The answer lies in the word "Heart". Rashi does not say we were like one man with one mind, or one opinion. No. That is not the Jewish way. We are headstrong in our ideas and thoughts. But here is the secret to getting along with people. You don't have to always agree with someone - you can choose

to love someone in your heart, even if you are worlds apart in your views.

If you found out that you had a long-lost sister or brother that you have not seen in 40 years, what wouldn't you do to meet them? And what would you do when you would finally meet?

You would shower that sibling with love. You would embrace him or her and truly feel like you are one. Certainly they will be very different than you. They had a different upbringing and were raised with different ideas. But it doesn't matter. He is your brother. You come from the same source. As much as you don't have in common, there is so much that you do. You choose to focus on the positive, because this is your flesh and blood.

R' Noach Weinberg zt"l used to explain what love is. He would say, "Love is the pleasure you feel when you appreciate the goodness in another person." The Torah commands us to love our fellow Jews as much as we love ourselves.

That seems impossible. But the Torah does not ask from us things that are impossible. The Torah does not say that we must agree with all Jews. The fact that I don't see eye to eye with you does not mean I cannot love you.

We must choose to focus on the goodness in our fellow Jews and ignore the different opinions that divide us. We must go back to that special moment in time when we were one, and recreate that oneness to bring about our ultimate redemption, which will finally come in the merit of our achdus.

"One should never despair, no matter how difficult their circumstances may be, because Hashem always has a plan." – Rav Chaim Kanievsky Zt'l

Torah Tavlin



An Airbus 380 airplane is making its way peacefully across the Atlantic Ocean. It is flying consistently at 800 km/h, an altitude of 30,000 feet, when suddenly a Eurofighter Jet with a Tempo Mach 2 appears alongside it. The pilot of the fighter jet slows down, flies alongside the Airbus and greets the pilot of the passenger plane by radio: "Airbus, boring flight, isn't it? Now have a look here!"

In one smooth manoeuvre, he rolls his jet on its back, accelerates sharply, breaks through the sound barrier, rises rapidly to a dizzying height, and then swoops down almost to sea level in a breath-taking dive. What an incredible display of aeronautic aptitude and skill. He loops back next to the Airbus and smirks. "Well, how was that?" he asked.

"Very impressive," the Airbus pilot answers, "but watch this!" The jet pilot watches the Airbus, but nothing happens. It continues to fly straight at the same speed. Five minutes ... ten minutes ... nothing happens.

Finally, after fifteen minutes, the Airbus pilot radios, "Well, how was that?" Confused, the jet pilot asks, "Huh, what did you do?" The Airbus pilot laughs and says: "I got up, stretched my legs, walked to the back of the aircraft to use the washroom, then got a cup of coffee and a chocolate fudge pastry..."

When a person is young, speed and adrenaline seems to be great. But Yisro tried all these joys of life, and nothing satisfied him. As he

got older and wiser, he realized that truth and peace are the most important things in life. Only that could bring him full satisfaction in life, but that can only be accomplished by serving and placing his full trust in Hakadosh Boruch Hu. For this he was willing to give up everything and go live out in the desert.

Rabbi YY Jacobson - My Angel



Sol Teichman of Los Angeles, California was a beloved man, known to the community as someone who had an open heart and open door to anyone in need. Someone once asked him, "Why are you always so giving? Why does no one leave your home empty handed?" He shared the following.

"I came from Munkatch, Ukraine, and it was 1944. We were sent to Auschwitz aboard cattle cars, and I was but a seventeen-year-old boy. We were in line, and I had no idea that at the end of it all was a selection, where I'd either be sent to life or to my death. Joseph Mengele would make that decision.

"A man approached me, a beard and *yarmulke* framing his face, but I had no idea who he was. "Where are you from?" he asked. "I'm from Munkatch," I said. "When were you born?" "1927," I replied again. "No you weren't," the man shot back. "You were born in 1925." "No, no," I corrected him, "I was born in 1927." "I remember your *bris*!" he countered, his voice growing deeper and forceful. "You were born in 1925!" But I knew otherwise, and how would this stranger know more than me? "It was 1927," I said yet again, matching his intensity. But the man wasn't ready to let it go.

"How do you know it was 1927?" "My father told me!" I said. "Your father made a mistake. I was there, when you were born in Munkatch and you were born in 1925." There I was, standing in line in Auschwitz, arguing with a man I never met before about my birthday.

At some point, the man turned to me, and said with more care and authenticity in his voice than anyone had ever spoken to me, "Trust me, you were born in 1925." I froze. But then the man went on. "And now I'm going to ask you again: when were you born?" "1925," I responded. And then he looked at me, yet again, and said, "Remember, you were born in 1925."

The man then disappeared.

A few moments later, I was standing in front of Joseph Mengele *ym"s*.

He looked at me and said, "When were you born?"

"1925," I said.

He then motioned with his thumb for me to go to the right, where I was taken to the barracks to work.

A few hours later I learned that those who were born in 1927 or later were sent immediately to the gas chambers.

I realized that this man I had met – who never told me who he was and claimed that he was at my *bris* – was an angel who saved my life. And I'm here today, and I have a family because of him.

And then Sol continued:

"Some time ago, I was thinking, 'What is my wish for myself in my life?' I said to myself, 'I had an angel who appeared at my feet, in Auschwitz, and took me out of death and brought me to life. I still don't know who that person was. But it's almost irrelevant. For me, he was an angel.

"I want to be such an angel. I want to be that angel for other people. Just like I had an angel who at that bleak moment in history was there for me, I want to be that angel, so that other people, when they think back to their greatest moments in life, should know that they had an angel too who was there for them, to save their lives.

"That is when I made a decision that no one is going to leave my home without encouragement, without love, without help. Nobody will be left alone. I want to be an angel for others as I had an angel there for me."



Rabbi Duvi Bensoussan - Revisiting the Pit

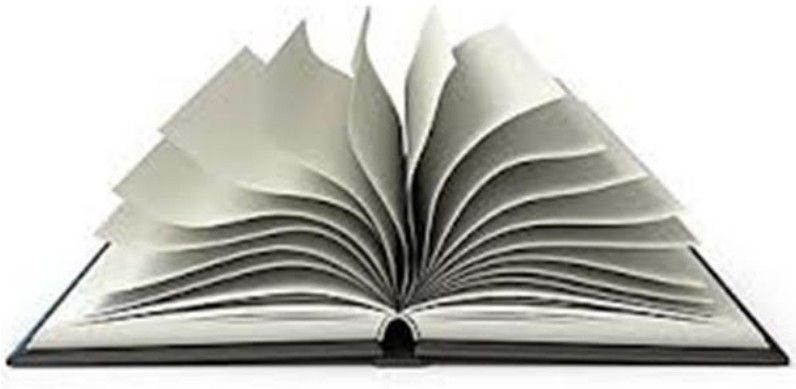
In life, it's important that we occasionally revisit the "pits" in our life. Our ancestor Reuven did it for his brother, Yosef, when he was cast into the deep and dangerous pit of his own life and it's a timeless lesson to us all.

The pits in our life are those lonely, cold and uninviting places in our past; those dark moments and dreary experiences when we were at our lowest and didn't know what to do or what our future held. But here we are today, miles or months, or even years away. We may not fully appreciate what Hashem has done for us or value the growth we've personally had. It's human nature, as the colloquialism goes, "You don't see the grass grow in your own backyard." Growth is incremental and we often don't see that growth within ourselves. As a result, however, it's quite easy to overlook G-d from the picture too. We can miss the kindness Hashem has provided us along the journey to where we are today.

When this is true, sometimes, the only way to realize what we have is to walk ourselves back, in our hearts and minds, to our shadowy, low points in our past and contemplate how much Hashem has helped pave the way for us and bring us to our brighter and better life.

If you ever feel stuck or lost in life, the antidote is exactly that: travel back to the pits of your life, measure the distance from where you were to where you are, and know that if Hashem has helped you rise to a better place, great things lie ahead for you in your future.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld - Open Book



Imagine that right now, at this very moment, a book is begin written about you and your life. You've made it into the pantheon of the greats and earned a place among those honorable many.

The truth is, it's not hyperbole. A book is being written about you … in Heaven. This very moment, being inscribed in Heaven is every thought passing through your mind, every word communicated to another, and every action you take. It's all being recorded. But there's something I haven't yet mentioned.

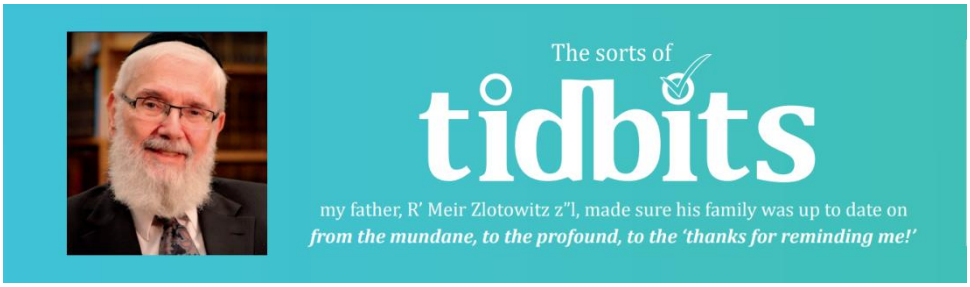
It's going to be published. The date?

The day your soul returns to Heaven.

We all have the choice to make. What do we want the book to be about? What are we going to fill it with? After one hundred and twenty years, what do you want your book to be titled?

How you want to be remembered is determined by what you do with your life. And you don't live once; you live every day.

Make every one count. Because, truthfully, it is being counted – up There.



For the Shabbos Table

לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ לֹא־תַחְמֹד אֵשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדּוֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וַחֲמֹרוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ "***You shall not covet your fellow's home; You shall not covet your fellow's wife, servant, maidservant, ox, donkey or anything that belongs to your fellow man***" (20:14)

In the prohibition of coveting another's possessions, the Torah first details various items and then concludes by prohibiting "anything that belongs to your fellow man." Why does the Torah first list these various items if the conclusion is that everything is prohibited?

Rav Yaakov Galinsky zt"l explains that it seems to be a difficult task for a human being to not desire something he likes. To address this, the Torah writes sage advice on how to curb jealousy. "**וְכֹל** (everything) **אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ**" explains that although your friend's home seems so appealing, you must take **all** of the homeowner's life circumstances and burdens into account - "**all** that is his."

One would need to accept problems, issues, worries, and challenges that accompany this coveted item. We can understand each person's unique circumstances and provisions with a parable from the **Chofetz Chaim**.

A man enters a shop seeking to purchase an axe with which to chop firewood. The proprietor has no axes in stock, but the salesman offers him a quality saw used for cutting metal, and he implores the man to buy it.

The man responds, "I am a woodchopper and have no need for blacksmith tools."

The Chofetz Chaim explains that one must recognize that Hashem provides each person with a custom-tailored package of wife, slave,

etc. he needs for his unique mission. Then, after the Torah lists these individual items, it guides us to understand that each of these possessions is uniquely suited to its owner.

Through acceptance of this reality, jealousy dissipates quickly and easily, as one views his situation from its correct perspective.

Baal Teshuva

'When I was in Auschwitz, I found myself in the presence of the **Rebbe of Sanz, Rabbi Yekutiel Halberstam Zt'l**. I heard him provide some teaching on the verse **מִזְמ֑וֹר שִׁ֥ירוּ לַ֝יהוָ֗ה שִׁ֣יר חָדָ֣שׁ כִּֽי־נִפְלָא֣וֹת עָשָׂ֔ה הוֹשִׁ֥יעָה־לּ֖וֹ יְמִינ֣וֹ וּזְרֹ֥עַ קָדְשֽׁוֹ** "***Sing a new song to Hashem, for He has done wondrous things; He has saved by His right hand and His holy arm***." (Tehilim 98:1)

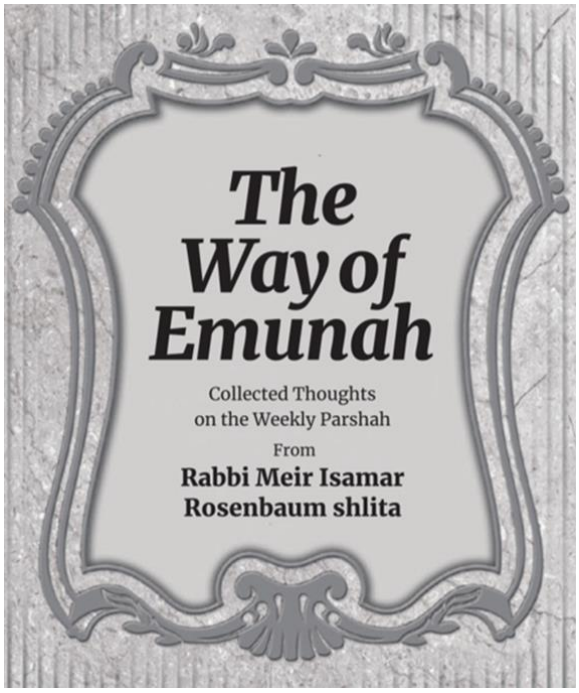
The Rebbe said whatever he said, first translating each word into Yiddish so all would understand. I couldn't understand at that time exactly what he was saying, but the verse alone awakened such fury within me: What am I hearing from this man?!

Where in Auschwitz are the "wonders"?! Where is "His arm"?

Even so, as the years passed and many experiences later, I recalled that event once again and suddenly it occurred to me: was that scene itself not a "wonder"?

Is it not an incredible thing that in the midst of the hell of Auschwitz there is a Jew who believes in G-d and has faith in Him and is heartened by the miracles that He will yet perform?

It was this understanding that caused me, albeit very belatedly, to return to Judaism. (Lapid HaEsh, p. 211)



Everyone Can Change

וַיִּשְׁמַע יִתְרוֹ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן חֹתֵן מֹשֶׁה אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹקִים לְמֹשֶׁה וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ כִּי־הוֹצִיא ה' אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם

And Yisro the priest of Midyan, the father-in-law of Moshe, heard…that Hashem had taken out Yisroel from Egypt. (18:1)

Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Liska zy"a (Sefer Ach Pri Tevuah) writes that the Torah is teaching us that a person can completely transform himself from one extreme to the other.

Yisro was originally a priest in Midyan. He served idols. But he then became the father- in-law of Moshe Rabenu!

This is also seen from the words "that Hashem took out Yisroel from Mitzrayim."

This is a hint that everyone has the ability to get out of the boundaries (the word "Mitzrayim" also connotes "meitzarim", boundaries) that surround him. When Yisro realized this, he left his past and went to the desert to learn Torah.

Similarly, **Rav Avrohom of Slonim zy"a** explains the pasuk in this week's Parashah (19:6): "And you shall be for Me, a kingdom of kohanim and a goy kadosh (holy nation)" to mean that even that even someone who fell to the lowly level of a "goy" still has the ability to change and improve himself and become "kadosh".

"Emunah is the ability to see the world as it truly is, with all its challenges and difficulties – and still believe that Hashem is in control." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

Crying For The Mitzvah of Kibbud Eim

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ
'***Honour your father and your mother in order that you should lengthen your days on the land that Hashem your G-d, will give you***.' (20:12)

The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim zy"a related that the mother of **Rav Avrohom of Kalisk zy"a** was nifter at a very old age. Still and all, her son wept very much when she died.

Someone asked him, "Why are you crying so much? Your mother was a very old lady." - He replied, "I am not crying for her. Rather, I am crying because I won't be able to do the mitzvah of kibud eim anymore! I am pained over the fact that I have lost the opportunity to perform this mitzvah!"

All of The Goodness of This World and The Next

Chazal tell us (Yalkut Shimoni, Parshas Va'eschonon): "***Anyone who wants to live a long life and who wants wealth, possessions, honour and life in this world, and much life in Olam Haba should do the will of his Father in Heaven and honour his father and mother***."

We see from this that in the merit of honouring one's parents, he can obtain every good thing that he could possibly imagine.

Kibud Av From a Distance

Sefer Eser Tzichtzichos relates that the father of **Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov zy"a** lived in the city of Brod, and he would fulfil the mitzvah of kibud av every day by sending bread and other foods to him through messengers!

A Son's Obligation to His Father

A simple Jew once approached the **Yismach Yisroel of Alexander zy"a** and told him, "In my village, I own a large, fancy house. My father lives in this house, together with my family. We have plenty of room and I have more than enough parnassah to support him and my family. The only problem is that there are very few Jews in my village. There isn't even a minyan. It bothers me a lot that I can't daven with a tzibur.

"In the big city, there are many shuls and batei medrash. There are mikvahs and yeshivos where my sons could learn and develop into bnei Torah. However, since it costs a lot more to live in the city, if I would move there I would have to live in a small house, which would be very uncomfortable for my father.

Am I allowed to move from my village to the big city?"

The Yismach Yisroel listened to his question and then thought deeply for a few minutes. He then stood up, lifted his hands in the air, and said, "***Even though it is easier to live the life of a good Jew in the city, you should remain in the village because your first obligation is to worry about your father***!"

And Yisro the priest of Midian, Moshe's father-in-law...and Yitro, father-in-law of Moshe (18:1,2)

Why is "father-in-law" mentioned twice in describing Yitro? Yitro was an important man in his own right. As the "priest of Midian," he already enjoyed a high status. Yet he chose to be known as "Moshe's father-in-law," for he knew this was his true claim to greatness. (**Ohr Hachayim**)

Help Your Brother

A rich businessman came to the **Chasam Sofer** crying that while he was once one of the most successful traders in the city, a series of bad dealings has wiped him out. He requested advice and a bracha from the Tzaddik. - The Chasam Sofer said he'd heard about his terrible plight, but also knew the man had a brother living in poverty whom he had not helped.

"Please forgive me," said the man, "but right now I am not in any position to help. If Hashem helps me get back on my feet, I promise I will help my brother."

The Chasam Sofer told him, "Hashem says to Moshe (VaEirah 6:5), וְגַם אֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת־נַאֲקַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – '***I have also heard the groaning of the B'nei Yisrael***.' - Who else heard the cries of Bnei Yisrael that Hashem says He has 'also' heard?

The answer must be, that despite the terrible ordeal each Jew in Egypt was going through, he still managed to feel the pain of his fellow Yid and tried to alleviate it in some way."

Hashem said, "B'zchus each person hearing the cries of his friend, I too will listen to each one's own tears and I will redeem them."

"Despite your difficult predicament," said the Chasam Sofer, "go help your brother right now in any way you can, and in this merit, Hashem will rescue you from you troubles."

כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה׳ נַעֲשֶׂה ***All that G-d has spoken we will do***. (19:8)

Instead of each individual answering, "I will do," the Jews all responded together, "We will do." Each individual Jew not only took upon himself to observe the Torah, but to be responsible for other Jews doing so. (**Chidushei HaRim**)

Sparks Of Shabbos

Generally, we understand that while food is necessary to sustain life, it is somewhat of an antithesis to the neshama.

Someone who already ate a well-balanced meal, but then passes a restaurant and indulges in fine cuisine has plunged into serving his body, distancing himself further from the needs of his neshama. Yet, on Shabbos, we prepare extra fine delicious foods, more than we need. Indeed, it is a mitzva to enjoy delicious foods on Shabbos.

The Baba Sali would serve ***36 dips*** and salads on his Shabbos table, when during the week, he would sustain on a bare minimum!

HaRav Shimshon Pinkus zt"l explains that food connects. It connects us to our bodies, and in connects us to other people who we eat with.

It is for this reason why Chazal forbade bread and foods prepared by non-Jews, lest we connect to them.

On Shabbos, we sit together with the Ribono shel Olam at the table and as we dine with Him, we become more connected to our Creator.

The Bracha For Kibud Av V'eim

The Kamarna Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Shluchan Hatahor, Siman 188) writes:

I once saw my uncle and teacher, the **Ateres Tzvi of Ziditchoiv zy"a**, carrying a cup of wine to his mother. Before he picked it up, he said, "***Boruch ata Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam al mitzvos kibud eim***!"

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman-Torah Wellsprings

Step by Step

וְלֹא־תַעֲלֶה בְמַעֲלֹת עַל־מִזְבְּחִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִגָּלֶה עֶרְוָתְךָ עָלָיו '***Do not ascend My altar with steps***' (Shemos 20:23).

When going up stairs, every upward step is noticeable because every step is distinct. When going up a ramp though, one's ascent is much more subtle and less noticeable.

Hashem is telling Klal Yisrael, "Don't go up steps towards my alter, meaning: I don't want massive strides in your personal growth - Go up "***the ramp***" slowly".

Hashem only wants from you what you can actually do. If all you can do now is take a small step, then that's all Hashem wants and that is incredibly precious to him.

לֹא תִרְצָח - You Shall Not Murder



In this week's parsha, one of the Aseres Hadibros is **לֹא תִרְצָח** - ***You Shall Not Murder***.(20:13)

The B'nei Yissaschar (Sefer Derech Pikudecha) says some incredibly powerful words: "Worrying and anxiety that are unrelated to a Mitzvah, are a form of **לֹא תִרְצָח**!

He states that it is a Halacha! Why worry? You have Hashem!

If it is not about a Mitzvah, it is not permitted! This means that before you worry about something, you have to call the Rav, to see whether that kind of worrying is permitted, to ensure that it is not

considered לֹא תִרְצָח! You need to find out whether you're allowed to worry!

If you can't call the Rav because it's 2am, but you're unable to fall asleep because of anxiety, you will need to put off your worrying until you're able to reach the Rav! It may be a form of לֹא תִרְצָח !

Nefesh Shimshon - From The Teachings Of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l



Come to Sinai

בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינָי *On this day they came to the wilderness of Sinai.* (*Shemos* 19:1)

The Torah could have just written, "On that day." What is the meaning of "On this

day"? [It comes to teach us] that the words of the Torah should be new to you as if they were given today. (*Rashi*)

We should relate to Torah every day as if it was brand-new to us, as if we just got it today. But why is this message written here? The *Pasuk* isn't even talking about the Giving of the Torah. It is just mentioning when the Jewish people came to the wilderness of Sinai, in preparation for receiving the Torah a number of days later.

The question is the answer. We see that arriving at *Midbar Sinai* was actually the beginning of *Kabbalas Hatorah,* so this is an appropriate place for a message about how to learn Torah.

This resolves a well-known question on something we say in the *Pesach Hagadah*. We say, "If He would have brought us to *Har Sinai* and not given us the Torah, דיינו – it would have been enough for us."

But coming to Sinai is just a means to an end, which is receiving the Torah. Why would it be enough to just come there?

Because coming to *Har Sinai* was more than just a step bringing us closer to *Matan Torah*. It was actually the beginning of *Kabbalas Hatorah* itself.

How so? We will explain by way of allegory.

A great *tzaddik* comes to a mass gathering attended by tens of thousands of people. The crowd is packed in from all sides and it is almost impossible to even get close to the *tzaddik*.

Now the *tzaddik* calls a certain person in the audience to come over to him. This person is understandably excited. But he will be even more excited if, when he comes over, the *Rav* doesn't just shake his hand but gives him a kiss. And if the *Rav* also invites him for a visit at home, he will feel that something incredibly amazing is happening to him.

This is how it was at *Har Sinai*. We owe Hashem special thanks just for bringing us there, close to Him. Coming to *Har Sinai*, where the *Shechinah* to come down, represented taking part in a life that we share with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

This alone is reason to thank and praise Him. Because *Yiddishkeit* is all about living a life shared with *Hashem*, in love and affection. A Life together with *Hashem!*

However, *Hashem* also gave us *mitzvos*, because without the *mitzvos* we won't be able to keep up this life shared with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

"Trusting in Hashem means having faith that He will provide for us, even when we cannot see how." – Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov



The Emes Parsha Sheet

This week's Parsha is named after Yisro. How did Yisro merit to have a Parsha named after him? **Rabbi Moshe Pivovitz ZT"L** was one of the Alter Mirrers (senior members of the Mir Yeshiva) and one of the greatest students of **Rav Yechezkel Levenstein ZT"L** the Mashgiach of the Mir Yeshiva in Shanghai, China. He served as a Rav in the lower east side of Manhattan and was the Mashgiach of the Chasan Sofer Yeshiva in Brooklyn.

Rav Pivovitz writes of Yisro's initial encounter with his future son-in-law Moshe. Moshe had arrived in Midyan after he had run away from Pharoah for killing the Egyptian who was unjustly abusing a Jew. Before he had a chance to flee, Moshe was taken to Pharoah and was sentenced to death. Were it not for the miracle of Moshe's neck turning to marble when it was struck by the executioner's sword, Moshe would have died. We see that Moshe getting involved in the affair of another to remedy an injustice (killing the Egyptian to save the Jew) didn't really turn out well for Moshe. He was almost killed and had to flee Egypt.

Rav Pivovitz explains that one would think that after that experience, Moshe may have been justified in being more hesitant to become involved in the affairs of another to correct an injustice. However, when Moshe flees Egypt to Midyan, he encounters another injustice and does not hesitate to get involved. Shepherds drove away the daughters of Yisro who were trying to draw water for their father's flock. Moshe sees this injustice and immediately stands up for them.

Yisro takes note of this quality of Moshe – an Ish Emes (a man of truth) who stands up for justice, no matter the consequences. Similarly, when Yisro, who was a priest of other faiths, perceived their falsehood, he stepped down from the high office that he held because it was not the truth. He paid for the strength of his convictions – so much so, that people did not want to deal with Yisro. He became a pariah and that is why his daughters were tending to his sheep. He could not find a shepherd who was willing to work for him.

Now, in this week's Parsha, he perceives the truth of Torah and Moshe's leadership. He wants to meet with Moshe. In his humility, he sends a message to Moshe telling him that if he is unworthy of meeting with him, then Moshe should meet with him for the sake of his wife, Tzipporah. Moshe of course, welcomes him with honor and open arms. And yet, within a very short period of time, the humble Yisro sees injustice. The way Moshe Rabbeinu is managing the affairs of the people is inefficient. Every dispute that Bnei Yisrael had was coming to Moshe for adjudication. This caused a backlog and resulted in members of Bnei Yisrael," …to stand about you from morning until evening" waiting for their turn to have their cases heard.

Yisro recognized this as an injustice as it was a subtle compromise of the honour and dignity of the Bnei Yisrael. Setting his humility aside, he comes before the leader and redeemer of the nation of Israel and criticizes Moshe without worrying about the repercussions.

"Come and see," says Rav Pivovitz. "A person who is ready to forego truth and remains silent to one who is conducting himself improperly only because he is afraid of him and thinks, 'This person was nice to me yesterday, how can I criticize him now?' is wrong and he must know that one is forbidden to forego the truth. Difficult as this may be, it is a sign that he does not truly value Emes."

When Yisro asked to meet with Moshe, Moshe welcomed him with open arms. Further, Moshe was the undisputed leader and redeemer of Bnei Yisrael and criticizing him could have come with dire consequences. Yisro could have been fearful and said to himself, "Moshe is the leader of the Bnei Yisrael and he has been so gracious and welcoming to me, I have no right to criticize him. I will look the other way."

However, he set those concerns and fears aside because he was an Ish Emes. Because he valued Emes, he merited to have this week's Parsha named after him.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Rashi writes (18:1) that when Yisro heard about the splitting of the Yam Suf and the battle against Amalek, he came to join the Jewish people in the wilderness. Which splitting of the Red Sea did he hear about that inspired him to come and convert?

The Targum Yonason Ben Uziel says that Dasan and Aviram remained behind in Egypt when the rest of the nation left after the final plague. **The Be'er Mayim Chaim and Maharil Diskin** write that although Dasan and Aviram did not cross the Yam Suf together with the other Jews, it opened for them a second time to enable them to pass through and re-join their brethren.

Rashi writes that when Amalek attacked, they struck the stragglers whose transgressions caused them to become weak and expelled from the protection of the Clouds of Glory. **Rav Moshe Wolfson** suggests that it was the second splitting of the sea that Hashem did for these two serial sinners and the battle the Jews fought to avenge the weary wrongdoers that impressed Yisro and made him want to be part of such a nation.

Parsha Points to Ponder

How was Yisro able to communicate his arrival to Moshe (18:6) if the Jews were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory, which did not allow gentiles to enter?

The Tur writes that when Yisro reached the Jewish encampment and discovered that there was no way for him to enter the impenetrable Clouds of Glory, he wrote a note stating that he was Moshe's father-in-law, and he had come together with Moshe's wife and two sons to see him. Yisro attached the note to an arrow and shot it toward the Jewish camp. Although the Clouds of Glory normally would have intercepted the arrow and denied it entry as they did with the projectiles shot by the pursuing Egyptians (Rashi 19:4), they made an exception in this case and permitted it to enter, where the Midrash says it fell near Moshe, who picked it up, read it, and went out to welcome his father-in-law!

Limuday Moshe – Murdering Time - R' Moshe Harris



In this week's parsha we were given the Aseres HaDibros [Ten Commandments]. One of the Aseres HaDibros is, **לא תרצח** - "***You shall not murder***" (Shemos 20:13).

R' Moshe Sternbuch asks: Why does it not say "you shall not shed blood"? R' Moshe explains as follows:

Someone who touches a goses [a dying person] is considered a murderer. Even though the goses will die shortly anyway, by hastening his death by even several moments the person is considered to have shed his blood.

The Derech Pikudecha (written by the author of **Bnei Yissochor**) says in the name of **Rav Menachem Mendel of Riminov** that someone who wastes his friend's time — or even his own time — thereby preventing the friend or himself from learning Torah during that time, is considered to have shed blood, because the main purpose of our existence in this world is to delve into Torah, so that stealing someone's time and depriving him of a life of Torah is deemed a kind of temporary murder for the duration of the deprivation.

In a similar vein, the **Chofetz Chaim** would say, "***People say that time is money, but I say time is a chunk of life***."

Based on this, R' Moshe suggests that the Torah specifically prohibits murder instead of shedding blood in order to include all kinds of murder, such as depriving a person of his life force by wasting his time, even without actually shedding his blood.

Rav Moshe Schneider would explain the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 10b) that "Rebbi cried and said, 'There are those who acquire their World (to Come) in an hour", that he was crying about the severity of wasting even a minute. If one hour is so important that you can acquire eternal afterlife through it, then someone who wastes even a minute, how much more so many hours, is likely to be severely punished for it.

All our successes in life are due to Hashem, and not because of our shrewdness or brilliance. Everything that we own belongs to Hashem. Hashem graciously gives it to us both for our own use and to benefit others. We are just executors whose job it is to distribute the funds properly.

When we can attain this level of belief, it will be easier for us to give more of what we "have" to help others.

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM

Lights Of Our Righteous

Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz Toldos Yitzchok (Shevat 21)

Always On The Table

The Tosher rebbe once related: Rav Mottel Neshchizer used to keep a copy of the Rambam's Yad haChazaka on his table at all times. When his son, Rav Yitzchok of Neshchiz was questioned as to why his father had this custom, he explained: My father had a vision in which the **Rambam** appeared before him with a complaint: "Why do you not study my sefer?"

"I apologize," answered my father, "but with people coming to me day and night with their problems, I just don't have the time; I am simply unable to help them and also find time to study your sefer."

The Rambam then returned, "At least keep a copy of my sefer on your table," I promise that if you keep a copy before you on your table at all times, whenever you need to help a Jew and achieve some yeshua for someone, just open my Sefer and take a look inside. I assure you that you will find some cure and manner of healing." That is the reason for this custom, he concluded. (L'Yesharim Tehilla, see also Avodas Avoda Sichos Shemos)

"Fear and Bitachon are two opposites; When one grows, the other diminishes." – Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk

Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern Kotzker Rebbe, Ohel Torah (Shevat 22)

Sick Of Money And Food

Rav Feivel of Gritza, (father of Rav Yechiel of Alexander) once approached the Seraph of Kotzk and said, "Good news! The wealthy Jewess Tamarel is supposed to arrive tomorrow and then we will have some money to relieve the abject poverty.

The Kotzker bellowed, "Money!!! Fech (Disgusting)!"

"From that moment on," related Rav Feivel, "money disgusted me so, that I simply could not handle any without becoming so nauseous that I almost vomited. It took me over six months before I was able to even touch money again without becoming sick."

Rav Chanoch Henich of Alexander once told the Kotzker, "Tonight I am preparing a seuda with fish and meat." The Kotzker thundered back, "Meat? Fish? Who needs those?! Bread and borscht are plenty!"

"From then on," admitted Rav Henich, "I could taste no flavour in any food save bread and borscht for the rest of my life. Every other food was loathsome to me, all except bread and borscht." When he travelled on Shabbos to the Gerrer Rebbe, the Chiddushei HaRim, he ordered that they cook borscht for Rav Henich so he could delight in the taste of Oneg Shabbos, otherwise what would he enjoy? (Bais Kotzk 29)

"The more we trust in Hashem, the more we are able to live in the present moment without being weighed down by regrets about the past or worries about the future."

Rav Yehuda Arye Leib Eiger Toras Emes, Reb Leibele (Shevat 22) A Leap Of True Faith For Yiras Shomayim

A great example of Rav Leibele's yiras shomayim (fear of heaven) is a story told about him in his youth, as a young avreich in his father-in-law's home, as he sat studying Torah.

Oblivious to his surroundings, he did not notice that he had a visitor. It seems that the wife of the local duke had come to see Rav Leibele's wife about some matter.

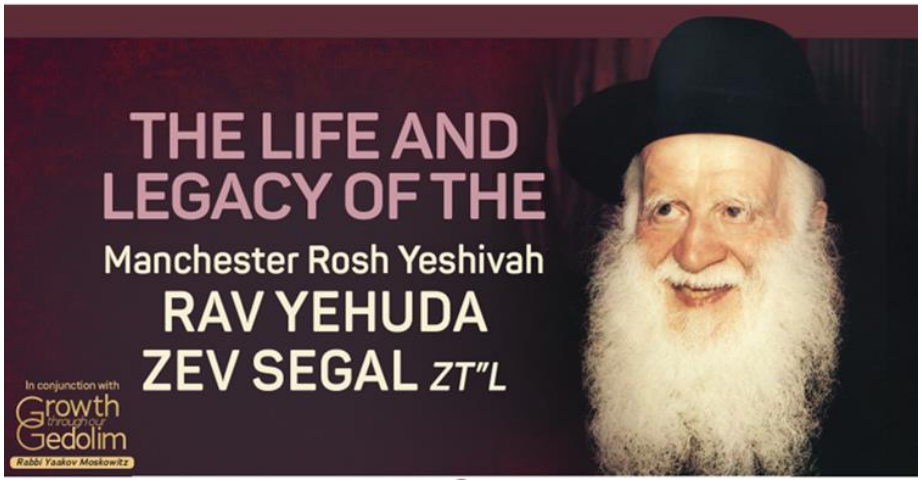
After knocking and receiving no answer, she pushed open the door and was mesmerized by the Tzaddik's singsong voice as he learned, totally absorbed. Eventually, she grew somewhat annoyed that he had not even noticed her, and she made her presence known.

Rav Leibele saw her and, not knowing who she was or why she had come, he thought of only one thing – he was now alone with a woman who not modestly attired and who was not his wife! - His eyes darted to the door but she was standing in front of it and seeing no other escape from the issur yichud, he did the only thing he could: he jumped out of the second-story window to the ground below!

I believe he limped for the rest of his life. But his immeasurable mesirus nefesh and yiras shomayim is a lesson for us for all generations.

The Chofetz Chaim on Moshiach

G-d forbid that we despair of Moshiach's coming because of his delay. We must stand ready and await salvation as it is written (Habakuk 2:3): "Await him..." One must stand alert for Moshiach as one would stand awaiting another person. Perhaps at this very moment he is already standing behind the wall. *(The Chofetz Chaim)*



Rav Yehuda Zev Segal Manchester Rosh Yeshiva (Shevat 22)

During World War II, Rav Yehuda Zev secured sanctuary visas in England for as many war refugees as possible, and the Manchester Yeshiva opened its doors to young refugees fleeing the Nazi inferno. As the war intensified, the Yeshiva expanded its rescue and relief efforts, organizing daily shiurim for young men who, due to the war, were unable to attend Yeshiva full time.

Rav Yehuda Zev opened his own home to many of the young refugees. During this period, Rebbetzin Segal assisted her husband in all of his rescue efforts and was one of the organizers of the community's efforts to prepare food packages for new arrivals from the displaced persons camps. She also helped her husband raise funds for the Yeshiva and was like a mother to its students.

On April 16, 1950/5710, he was officially inducted as Rosh Yeshiva. Rav Yehuda Zev is probably best known for his dissemination of the awareness of the importance of not speaking loshon hora. "I have set Hashem before me always," was Rav Yehuda Zev's guiding principle.

Rav Yehuda Zev Segal was born in London on the 17th of Sivan 5670/1910 to Rav Moshe Yitzchok and Roize Segal. Rav Moshe Yitzchok, a talmid of the Alter of Novardok, was an outstanding Talmid Chochom, who received semicha from Rav Yechiel Michel Epstein, the Aruch HaShulchon.

At the age of nineteen, Rav Moshe Yitzchok was drafted into the Czar's army, where he insisted on observing mitzvos as well as he

could, and on fulfilling the mitzva of netilas yodayim when required by halacha, in particular. Each time Rav Moshe Yitzchok searched for water for netilas yodayim, a soldier would follow him. After a while, the soldier grew tired of running after him and permitted him to search for water alone. One day, as Rav Moshe Yitzchok was searching for water, he fled to the border and crossed over to Germany. From there, he headed to England, where he began to study in the Machzikei HaDas Shul.

In time, he was appointed shochet of the community. This position paid well and enabled him to save up a sizable sum, which he used to found the Eitz Chaim Yeshiva of London, the only Yeshiva at that time in England.

A number of years later, Rav Yehoshua Dov Silverstone and Rav Tzvi Hirsch Ferber founded a Yeshiva in Manchester, and invited Rav Moshe Yitzchok to head it. He accepted the position. Rav Yehuda Zev was only three years old when his family moved to Manchester. At that time, there was no Jewish primary (elementary) school in the city.

Since British law obligated all children under the age of fourteen to attend school, Rav Moshe Yitzchok was forced to enroll Yehuda Zev in the local "Jewish school" whose curriculum was entirely secular. However, when Yehuda Zev returned home each afternoon, Rav Moshe Yitzchok studied Torah with him, providing him with a full Torah chinuch.

Rav Yehuda Zev's unique home environment, together with his deep piety and his resolve to dedicate himself to Hashem, were the factors that fashioned his personality at that time.

Rav Mordechai Smith was twenty-two when he studied with the thirteen-year-old Yehuda Zev. He recalls, "Already then, Rav Yehuda Zev was very sensitive to the needs of others. Our study session began very early in the morning. In order to avoid making noise as he walked downstairs, he would climb out of a window on the second

story of his house and slide down a drainpipe, reaching the backyard without having woken anyone!"

Rav Yehuda Zev's father, Rav Moshe Yitzchok, was niftar on the 12th of Cheshvan 5707/1947 after a serious illness, leaving the Yeshiva bereft. Soon after his petira, the Yeshiva's board of directors began to search for a new Rosh Yeshiva.

Although Rav Yehuda Zev was already serving unofficially as Rosh Yeshiva, some of the modern members of the board felt that due to his high standards of kedusha and meticulous mitzva observance, he might be unable to relate to the average layman. As a result, they strongly opposed his appointment.

Rav Yehuda Zev, who was aware of this opposition, showed no interest in the position, in order not to foster ill will among the board members. As a result, the position remained vacant for a number of months.

In February 5708/1948, Rav Yechezkel Abramsky arrived in Manchester to participate in a ceremony at which outstanding students received awards. At a meeting with the board, Rav Yechezkel declared that Rav Yehuda Zev was best suited for the position of Rosh Yeshiva and that the Yeshiva would greatly benefit from him.

Seeing the opposition to the appointment, he then suggested that Rav Yehuda Zev be appointed "acting Rosh Yeshiva", adding that he was certain that if someone more qualified were found, Rav Yehuda Zev would not only step down, but would also warmly welcome the new Rosh Yeshiva.

During the next year and a half, many Talmidei Chachomim came to Manchester to apply for the position of Rosh Yeshiva. Throughout this period, Rav Yehuda Zev never displayed resentment or ill will. In 5709/1949, the Ponovezher Rav, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, invited Rav Yehuda Zev to join the leadership of the Ponovezh

Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. Rav Yehuda Zev accepted the offer and prepared to leave England.

But then the president of the Yeshiva's board, the eminent and pious Rav Shaul Rosenberg, fell seriously ill. As he lay in the hospital, he told a close acquaintance about a frightening dream he had just had.

In the dream, he had been told that he had fallen ill because Rav Moshe Yitzchok was upset by the board's failure to appoint Rav Yehuda Zev to the position he rightfully deserved. Although Rav Shaul had not opposed Rav Yehuda Zev's appointment, he feared that he had also not done enough to secure it for him. As a result, he sent a family member to Rav Moshe Yitzchok's grave and begged his forgiveness, promising to rectify the matter immediately.

Amazingly, Rav Shaul, who had seemed on the brink of death, soon recovered in full. When he was released from the hospital, he called an emergency meeting of the board and convinced its members that Rav Yehuda Zev was the best possible candidate for the position.

The board unanimously appointed Rav Yehuda Zev as Rosh Yeshiva. However, Rav Yehuda had already made plans to leave for Bnei Brak. At a farewell gathering in his honour, Dayan Yitzchok Golditch publicly asked him not to leave Manchester.

That evening, Rav Yehuda Zev wrote to Rav Eliyohu Dessler, the mashgiach of Ponovezh, asking him to discuss the issue with the Chazon Ish. Rav Dessler took the matter to the Chazon Ish, who replied that Rav Yehuda Zev should remain in Manchester.

On April 16, 5710/1950, Rav Yehuda Zev Segal was officially inducted as Rosh Yeshiva by Rav Yechezkel Abramsky. His appointment was supported by Dayan Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss, the Minchas Yitzchok, head of the Manchester Bais Din at that time.

During subsequent years, Rav Yehuda Zev was greatly assisted by Rav Shaul Rosenberg, who assumed responsibility for all of the Yeshiva's fundraising activities. He would often say, "The Rosh

Yeshiva and I have an understanding between ourselves. He doesn't get involved with the budget, and I don't mix in with the chinuch."

Rav Shaul was also a model of kibbud Talmidei Chachomim, a ba'al chessed and supporter of Torah. As Rosh Yeshiva As Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev's sole concern was developing his students' full potential.

When a student enrolled in the Yeshiva, Rav Yehuda Zev would ask him for his complete Hebrew name as well as his mother's, so that he could daven that he grow spiritually. Every morning, before Shacharis, he would give tzedoka and then daven that he merit to see all his talmidim following the path of Torah.

As Rosh Yeshiva, he was very warm and loving toward his students. If a student was ill, he would summon a doctor for him, visit him in the dormitory and even bring him tea. As a result, students would jokingly say, "If you want the Rosh Yeshiva's special attention, become sick!"

When the Rosh Yeshiva felt that a student would develop best somewhere else, he would help him to transfer to a different Yeshiva. But if he thought that a student who was having difficulties should nonetheless remain in the Yeshiva, he would make an all-out effort to achieve that goal.

Thus, when parents of a French student told their son to return home to pursue a career, Rav Yehuda Zev and his wife travelled all the way to Paris to convince them to let him remain in Yeshiva.

Despite his warm and caring nature, Rav Yehuda Zev maintained strict discipline in the Yeshiva, inspiring his students to awe and revere him. He did this because he believed that holding one's Torah mentors in awe is crucial for a ben Torah's development, as it is written, "The awe of your Torah teacher should be like the awe of Shomayim" (Pirkei Avos, 4:12).

Once, a mother called him on the phone and when he picked up the phone to speak to her, he automatically took off his glasses because that is what he did when he spoke to women in person!

Many former students called Rav Yehuda Zev every Friday to wish him a good Shabbos. Others would call to report on the progress of their children or about simchas in their families.

One time, the Yeshiva students hosted a sheva berochos for one of Rav Yehuda Zev's grandchildren. When he rose to speak, he said, "It is written that one should not mix one festive occasion with another. This gathering is a double simcha for me, since it affords me the opportunity to be with my talmidim, too. However, a sheva berochos is a family affair – and my talmidim are my children, too."

As Rosh Yeshiva, he would stress that talmidim should use their Yeshiva years for optimal growth, especially with respect to amassing Torah knowledge. With an eye toward their future, he told them that the more knowledge they acquired during those years, the greater would be their influence later on.

With his unique hasmoda, he was a role model for such spiritual growth and love of Torah.

Before beginning his morning tefillos, Rav Yehuda Zev would daven that Hashem help him daven with kavona. To achieve this goal, he recited every single tefilla from a text, even Asher Yotzar, which one says a number of times a day. He would recite this prayer with the same kavona and emotion that one recites Ne'ila on Yom Kippur.

When eating, Rav Yehuda Zev would also recite berochos from a text. Since he could not always carry a siddur with him, he kept a card in his pocket that had the various berochos printed on it. Before making a berocha, he would recite a preparatory tefilla, such as, "I am about to utter the blessing of shehakol…"

On Shabbos, when the Shemoneh Esrei is shorter than during the week, it is more difficult to accrue the hundred berochos one is

required to recite daily. To solve the problem, on Shabbos Rav Yehuda Zev calculated how many blessing he had already made, and during the day he ate small pieces of food in order to arrive at the requisite number of berochos.

Quite soon, he became renowned for his manner of tefillos, and people from all over the world would seek his berochos. Great Torah sages such as Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky would advise people in distress to seek the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva's berochos.

When Rav Yaakov himself was ill, he asked someone who was going to Manchester to ask that Rav Yehuda Zev daven for him.

Similarly, the late Satmar Rav told someone who had approached him for a berocha, "Why seek a berocha from me when you can go to the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva?"

During the last decades of his life, Rav Yehuda Zev was flooded by requests for berochos, and he related to every single request with deep emotion. Yet in his humility, he often said of his berochos, "A berocha given by an ordinary person should never be insignificant in one's eyes."

One of his students was diagnosed with a malignant disease. When the boy's father, who had hoped that his son would study a profession, asked Rav Yehuda Zev for a berocha for the boy's recovery, Rav Yehuda Zev replied, "If your son dedicates his life to Torah study, he will recover fully."

That night, as Rav Yehuda Zev davened Shemoneh Esrei, he was heard saying, "Tatte, I promised him." Not long afterward, the young man recovered.

On another occasion, Rav Yehuda Zev joined a group traveling to Eastern Europe to daven at the graves of Tzaddikim. At the Chasam Sofer's grave, he took out a sheet with a long list of names of people who needed a yeshua, and began to daven for each one.

A short while later, the group was ready to leave, but Rav Yehuda Zev still hadn't finished davening for everyone on his list. Having no other choice, he clutched the sheet to his chest and cried out with intense emotion, "Ribbono Shel Olam, may the requests of all who those whose names are on this list be fulfilled for the good."

Rav Yehuda Zev tried to perform at least one chessed each morning before Shacharis in order to enhance the efficacy of his tefillos.

When he lived in his daughter's home, he would prepare a thermos of hot water before going to shul, so that his son-in-law could have a hot drink before leaving the house. While at his summer resort, he would prepare negel vasser for those of his companions who awoke after him.

In his mussar talks, he would stress that no opportunity to perform chessed – big or small – should be overlooked. This was a lesson he taught by personal example. Whenever he washed his hands, for instance, he filled the cup for the next person. And when he returned home from Yeshiva at night, he deposited his students' letters in a mailbox on his way. Before dropping these letters into the box he would say, "Hareini mechaven lekayem mitzvas asei shel chessed – I intend to full the positive command to do chessed."

Visiting the sick was a chessed to which Rav Yehuda Zev dedicated his time. Every Friday, he would visit the aged and the bedridden members of the community, comforting and encouraging them.

Rav Yehuda Zev saw a siddur that contained an inscription praising the ill man's son for excellence in tefilla. With a glowing smile, Rav Yehuda said, "You must be so proud of your son." Then he noticed a picture of the boy on the wall and exclaimed, "That boy looks like a Tzaddik. May you have much nachas from him."

Rav Yehuda Zev shared both the pain and the joy of others. He once told his doctor before an operation that he was worried that the operation would interfere with his ability to dance at weddings.

The doctor jokingly replied, "I didn't know that people your age still dance." Of course, the doctor did not realize that dancing at weddings was a form of chessed for the Rosh Yeshiva, not a form of recreation.

During the Gulf War, Rav Yehuda Zev constantly davened for Eretz Yisrael's Jews. When people asked if he was worried about a particular relative in Eretz Yisrael, he would reply, "Klal Yisrael is in Eretz Yisrael. I am worried about them all."

Rav Yehuda Zev is probably best known for his dissemination of the awareness of the importance of not speaking loshon hora. It all began at the end of Rav Yehuda Zev's first zman in the Mir Yeshiva, when he went to Radin to visit the Chofetz Chaim.

After that meeting, Rav Yehuda Zev became deeply attached to the Chofetz Chaim and his works. When Rav Yehuda Zev joined a shiur in the Manchester Yeshiva in 5700/1940, he inspired his students to study Sefer Chofetz Chaim.

In 5727/1967, he suggested that a group of students study Sefer Chofetz Chaim every day, according to a fixed schedule. Later, these students prepared a written schedule of the halochos to be studied each day of the year, and hung it in the Bais Medrash.

In this manner, the first yearly cycle of shemiras haloshon study was launched. Every year, from then on, Rav Yehuda Zev published a shemiras haloshon calendar, which contained a schedule for the daily study of two halochos from Sefer Chofetz Chaim and one page from Sefer Shemiras HaLoshon, which explains the concepts behind the halochos.

In time, students of the Manchester Yeshiva spread the idea of studying two halochos a day from the Chofetz Chaim's seforim to other Yeshivos and Kollelim. Rav Yehuda Zev himself was very active in organizing shemiras haloshon study groups and classes not just in England, but also throughout the world.

He often said that a home in which shemiras haloshon is observed and studied is saturated with kedusha. For the remainder of his life, Rav Yehuda Zev devoted great amounts of time to disseminating this calendar, which he called his "passport to Olam HaBa".

It is said that every family that studies these halochos according to the daily schedule will surely merit yeshuos.

Until the last days of his life, Rav Yehuda Zev was in full possession of all his faculties, maintaining his regular learning schedules and accepting visitors as usual.

Shortly before Shabbos Kodesh, the 21st of Shevat, 5753/1993, he suffered a stroke and was rushed to the hospital. On Friday night, the 22nd of Shevat, he returned his pure soul to its Maker.

Thousands of people attended his levaya. In accordance with a request he had made while alive, he was buried in Manchester – and not in Eretz Yisrael – so that England's Jews would have a place to visit and pour out their hearts. He had also asked to be buried among children, and in a place where kohanim are able to daven.

All of Torah Jewry owes Rav Yehuda Zev a tremendous debt of gratitude, especially for his efforts to inculcate Klal Yisrael with the importance of shemiras haloshon.

As a result of these efforts, thousands of Jews worldwide regularly study the halochos, and many have experienced long-awaited yeshuos. In his merit, may Klal Yisrael soon be delivered from all its tzoros.

"Thanking Hashem is an act of humility and submission to His will. It is also an expression of trust that Hashem has our best interests at heart." – Rabbi Abraham J Twerski



At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ ***Honour your father and your mother (20:12).***

חַיָּיב אָדָם לַעֲמוֹד מִפְּנֵי אָבִיו. ***Children are obligated to stand for parents*** *(Shulchan Aruch 240:7).*

I was at a fundraising dinner for Yeshivas Torah Ore. There were many familiar faces, but as it turned out, seated next to me at the table was someone I had never met before. Yitzchak Goodman introduced himself, and in the course of our conversation, he mentioned that he was scheduled to speak the next night at an NCSY convention, where he'd been asked to give an inspirational talk on overcoming disabilities.

It was a long evening, and we had plenty of time to talk. It was an unforgettable one, because that night, Yitzchak, a double amputee, told me his story.

"In 2005, I was in a horrific car crash. I was driving my Mitsubishi and was hit head-on. My car was thrown off the road into a ditch.

"I was knocked unconscious. I had to be cut out of the car. I was rushed to the hospital, fighting for my life. Much later, when the police showed us pictures of the wreck, it was impossible to imagine anyone surviving.

Miraculously, I did survive, but my legs didn't.

"I spent six weeks in the ICU and then another eight months in the hospital for continued treatment. It was a long haul.

"A year after the accident, I was fitted for prosthetics. It wasn't going well. There were infections, chafing, and I almost gave up. At

first, I didn't want them. I knew I would be spending most of my time in a wheelchair, since the effort to walk was sapping my strength. In the end, I reconsidered and took the prosthetics."

I'm sitting next to Yitzchak, and there were no prosthetics in sight. I guess he must have read my thoughts, because he said to me, "They're in the car. I only use them occasionally."

When is that? I was thinking.

"***I need them for only one thing. I use them to stand up for my parents***!"

Kaballas Shabbos - R' Shimshon Pincus zt"l

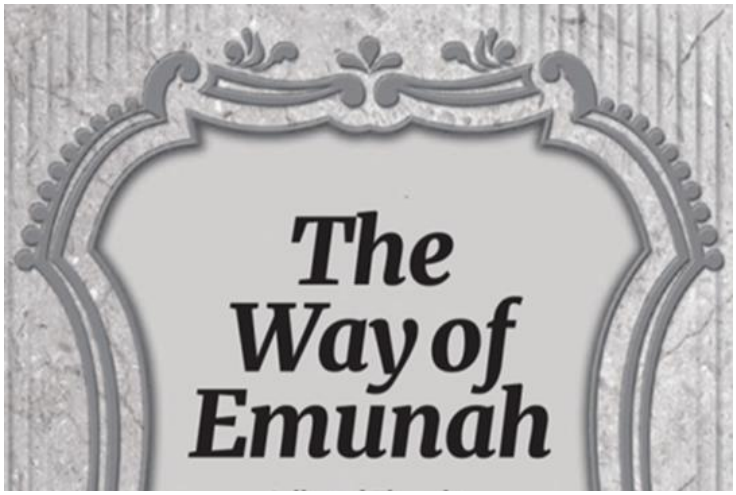
The way Bnei Yisroel were commanded to prepare for Kaballas Hatorah parallels to the way we are supposed to prepare for Shabbos. They were told to wash their garments, to be ready for the third day and to go out to greet the shechina.

When Shabbos begins, we are supposed to be dressed in special clothing (not a zip up sweatshirt or t-shirt and long skirt). Also, we should not be busy rushing until the last minute; we should try to be really ready when shabbos starts.

We greet shabbos with special tefillos of Kaballas Shabbos, because we are actually greeting the shechina itself!

May we upgrade our shabbos preparations by getting dressed in beautiful clothing, being ready on time and greeting the shechina with the special tefillos of shabbos!

"Rely on Hashem, not just as a last resort, but as a first resort. Turn to Him for guidance and support." – Rabbi Avigdor Miller



Learning Torah Has No Value Without Also Honouring One's Parents

It is related that when the mekubal, **Rav Salman Mutzafi zt"l**, was a young man, he learned together with **Rav Tzadka Chutzin zt"l**, a Dayan on the Eidus Hachareidus Hasefardis and founder of the Shemesh Tzedakah Bais Medrash in Yerushalaim.

One time, Rav Salman's mother entered the room while they were learning. He rose slightly from his chair, but he did not stand up all the way in her honour.

When Rav Tzadka saw this, he closed his Gemara and told Rav Salman, "I won't learn with you anymore. What good is the Torah you study if you don't fulfil what you learn?

We learned the Mishnah (Avos 1:7) that says: '***The learning is not the main thing. The action is***.'

We also learned the Gemara (Kiddushin 40B) that says: '***Learning is great when it leads to action***.' So why should I learn with you if you don't put what you learn into action?

I can only continue to learn with you if you accept that from on you will honour your mother properly by standing up fully when she enters the room!"

"Accomplishments have nothing to do with how big or small, how old or young one is. Remember, age is of no importance unless you are a cheese!" ~ R' N. Weinberg.

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכֻון יָמֶיךָ

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh (Shemos 20:12) writes, "There are mitzvos that have wonderful segulos attached to them, in addition to the reward that Hashem will give for those mitzvos. And for this mitzvah [of kibud av v'em], the Torah revealed that its mesugal for living a long life."

Rabbeinu b'Chaya writes, "We see clearly that those who honour their parents live long lives, or they have success and serenity in all their ways."

The Beis Ahron of Stolin zt"l said that he attained his spiritual levels from performing the mitzvah of kibud av v'em.

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



The Pasuk says (Shemos 20:8), זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ "Remember Shabbos to make it holy."

The Or HaChaim Ha'kodosh comments on this that we should remember the name of the day, which is Shabbos, and when you articulate the name, that is how we make the day holy. Just saying the word, "Shabbos" brings holiness into the world. Therefore, saying "Gut Shabbos!" on Shabbos, creates Kedushah!

The sole purpose Hashem gave the Torah to the Jewish people, is for them to place their bitachon in Him…for the main thing is complete bitachon in Hashem, which encompasses all the commandments. ~ The Vilna Gaon zt"l.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS YISRO

The Helpful Guide



Baron Shimon Rothschild

A needy Jew once traveled to Frankfurt to solicit financial help from Baron Shimon Rothschild Zyl. When he arrived in town, he asked a man for directions to the baron's house.

Eager to help the man who had come all that way to see Baron Rothschild, the man offered to escort him to the baron's residence. As they approached the mansion, the visitor, realizing that his escort was a very helpful person, asked for another favor.

"You know, I'm tired and perspiring from the long trip. Perhaps it would be a good idea if I showered and freshened up before my meeting. Would you be so kind as to show me to the nearest bathhouse?"

"Of course," replied the man with a smile, and he took him to the bathhouse. Once there, the man even went so far as to help wash the weary traveler and then left the man to finish on his own.

Feeling clean and refreshed, the needy man made his way back to the mansion, and the doors were immediately opened for him. He was quickly ushered into the baron's meeting room.

Sitting in his plush armchair, waiting to greet him, was none other than the man who had escorted him down the street and even helped him wash himself. As wealthy and important as he was, it wasn't below Baron Rothschild's dignity to personally help a needy Jew.

The Sh'lah and the Bagel Peddler



A story is told about **Rav Yeshaya Horowitz, zt"l, of Prague, the Sh"lah Ha'kadosh**. There was a poor, blind, bagel peddler who would sit on the curb outside the home of the Sh"lah, and sell his bagels every day. One day, a policeman came by and confiscated his entire basket of bagels.

The beggar wept, "What am I supposed to do now? How will I earn a living? How can I return home empty-handed?"

The Sh"lah overheard his weeping and rushed over to him, asking kindly, "How much were the bagels in your basket worth?"

The man cried out, "Ten rubles!" The Sh"lah gave him ten rubles, and the blind man showered him with Brachos. The next day, the Sh"lah waited for the blind peddler to arrive, and as soon as he appeared, he bought his entire batch and paid him ten rubles. Day after day, he would wait for the peddler and buy the whole basket of bagels.

When the Sh"lah's family noticed this new daily routine, they asked him why he didn't just give the peddler a monthly sum, instead of waiting for him, day after day, and then buying all his bagels. Wouldn't it be much easier for both of them?

The Sh"lah answered, "It might be easier that way, but the blind peddler thinks that he is a good businessman, and that I buy his bagels because they are so good. This way he feels like he is earning a respectable living. Isn't it difficult enough for him to be blind? Why should I take away from him one of the only satisfactions he has in life?" - *(Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.)*

The Weekly Vort

■ **כבד את אביך ואת אמך** – ***Honor your father and your mother*** (20:12).

A man approached **R' Chaim Brisker** with the following query: His father, who lived in a faraway city, was not feeling well. In order to comply with the *mitzvah* of honoring one's father, he felt it was his duty to travel there in order to visit him on his sickbed. Inasmuch as the *halacha* explicitly states that all expenditures incurred in fulfilment of this *mitzvah* are paid by the father, and since his travel expenses would be considerable, he wanted to know whether under these circumstances he would be exempt from making this visit. R' Chaim replied, "True indeed, you are exempt from traveling by train. Therefore, go there on foot!" [Memayeanos Ha'netzach]



Inspired by Time - Shabbos Kabbalas HaTorah – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Why Do We Call It Parshas Yisro?

It is striking that the parsha which contains the most awesome moment in all of Jewish history – Matan Torah – is not called Parshas Matan Torah, nor Parshas Kabbalas HaTorah. Even more curiously, the parsha does not even begin with the revelation at Sinai. Instead, it bears the name of Yisro. - Why?

This question becomes even sharper when we consider why Yisro came to join Klal Yisrael. The Torah tells us that Yisro heard about Krias Yam Suf and Milchemes Amalek. - We understand that Krias Yam Suf shook the world. The sea split, every body of water split, nature itself was torn open, and the Hand of Hashem was revealed with breathtaking clarity. But Milchemes Amalek? Yes, there were

miracles, but far less dramatic than the makkos in Mitzrayim or the splitting of the sea. What was so unique about Amalek that it was the decisive factor which brought Yisro?



To answer this, let us begin with a powerful mashal from **Reb Shalom Shwadron zt"l**.

During the Six Day War, there was a photographer who saw a once-in- a-lifetime opportunity. He worked tirelessly to obtain a rare military combat license that would allow him to enter the most dangerous battle zones. It was exhausting, frightening work, but he succeeded in capturing extraordinary close-up photographs of the fighting – moments no civilian had ever documented before. He was convinced these photos would make him a fortune. The demand would be enormous.

After the war, he rushed home and brought his camera to be developed. That is when the technician looked at him in disbelief and said, "There's no film in this camera!"

Reb Shalom would end the story sharply: You can be in the best place. You can witness the greatest events from the closest vantage point. But if there is no film, you will come home with nothing.

In life, a person can be inspired, uplifted, moved to tears. But if he does nothing to internalize the moment, to engrave it into his heart, the inspiration evaporates. It leaves no trace.

This, explains Reb Shalom, is what Yisro understood. Krias Yam Suf was overwhelming. The entire world trembled. Even Yisro was shaken. But he made a fatal assumption – the same one many people make. He believed that seeing such a revelation was enough. Once

you witness Hashem so clearly, you are set for life. There is no need to act, no urgency to change, no demand to move.

Then came Amalek. Amalek saw everything. They saw the sea split. They saw the miracles. They knew Hashem was real. And yet, almost immediately, they descended to the lowest depths and attacked Klal Yisrael. - How could that happen?

Yisro understood the answer with terrifying clarity. They had no "film." They experienced revelation, but they did nothing with it. They did not translate inspiration into action. They did not anchor the moment through commitment, sacrifice, or change. And therefore, the inspiration died.

At that moment, Yisro realized that inspiration without action is not only ineffective – it is dangerous. It creates the illusion of growth while leaving the person unchanged. And so Yisro acted. Immediately. Decisively. He left everything behind and joined Klal Yisrael. - Now we can begin to understand why this parsha is called Parshas Yisro.

Being on a High – Staying on a High!

Klal Yisrael were standing on the threshold of the most electrifying, awe-inspiring moment of their lives – and of all history. They were about to receive the Torah, to encounter the greatest giluy Shechinah the world has ever known.

This was not only a defining moment for a nation, but a moment that reshaped creation itself. The entire world fell silent. Chazal tell us that the birds stopped chirping, the lions ceased roaring, and the seas stood perfectly still. Every force of nature froze in place, as if all of existence was holding its breath, waiting.

Then came choshech, anan, va'arafel – darkness, cloud, and thick mist enveloped Har Sinai. The mountain trembled and shook as Hashem Himself descended upon it. Fire surged upward, piercing the

heavens, while thunder and lightning filled the air. Heaven and earth met in a single, overwhelming moment of revelation.

And then Klal Yisrael heard the unimaginable. The first of the Aseres HaDibros were spoken directly by Hashem, mi'pi ha'gevurah, without any intermediary. The kol was so powerful, so penetrating, that it entered the very depths of their beings.



The experience was beyond the limits of human endurance. Their souls flew from their bodies, unable to contain the intensity of such closeness to the Divine, until Hashem revived them.

The Torah warns: do not fool yourself. Even the greatest revelation means nothing if it remains only an experience. If a person witnesses Matan Torah but does nothing to absorb it, nothing to internalize it, nothing to carry it forward into life – then it will not last.

That is why this parsha is not called Parshas Matan Torah. It is called Parshas Yisro. Because without the critical lesson embodied by Yisro – that inspiration must lead to action – even Matan Torah itself cannot endure. - Revelation without commitment fades. Awe without change evaporates.

This is why the Torah gives us a daily mitzvah, spoken with unusual urgency and force. Because experiencing Sinai without internalizing it, without ensuring it shapes who we are and how we live, is worth no more than a breathtaking photograph taken with no film in the camera!



Here's a story that's off the charts. Rabbi Chaim is a well-known rabbi in Israel. He speaks all over the place. People love his stories and his inspiration. One day he's traveling somewhere and he walks into a discount grocery store called Rami Levi. It's a large chain of stores all over Israel. He walks in there to buy one item. He walks down the aisle and all of a sudden a woman comes over to him in a panic and she says to him, you're the famous Rabbi Chaim. You're the speaker, the rabbi, the lecturer.

He says, yeah, how can I help you? She says, I have a sholom bayis issue. I'm having conflict with my husband. You must help me. He says, right here? In the supermarket? Why don't you make an appointment? Maybe we could talk it through. She goes, yeah, no, no, no. The conflict is right here. He says, where? She says, please come with me. A few aisles over.



He follows her. And they come to the meat section. And standing at the meat section is her husband. They already have three shopping carts full of food. Turns out they're making a simcha that Shabbos. And they're inviting tons of family and company.

And they had a little bit of a spat at the meat section. He says, what's your issue? What's the problem? And her husband shows that they're planning on serving ribeye steak for the Friday night seuda. And that there's two options. A questionable kashrus supervision. It's only 65 shekel a kilo. And then there's mehadrin, a

much more scrupulous type of kashrus supervision. And that's twice as much.

I told my husband we have to buy the better one, even if it costs us much more money. And he says, usually I don't mind. There's a huge amount of money difference between this and this. Who says we have to buy the better one? No, I don't want to pay for the one that's a higher quality of kashrus. - Rab Chaim, tell us what to do. Help us. We can't come to a resolution.

Reb Chaim looks at the husband and he says to him, listen, I'm not getting involved here. You need to figure it out. But I want to tell you one thing. That when a person invests for Hashem, they never ever lose. - As we say every day in davenning, **בָּרוּךְ מְשַׁלֵּם שָׂכָר טוֹב לִירֵאָיו**. 'HaKadosh Baruch Hu pays excellent reward, to those that fear him, those that follow him.' That's all I have to say. It should be with a lot of hatzacha and he walks away.

Later that day, his phone rings. He picks up the phone and it's a familiar voice. And a guy says, hey, it's me from Rami Levy from the discount store. He says, yeah, what do you want? How'd you get my number? He says, it took me some time, but I got your number.

I have to tell you the craziest thing. He says, what? He says, do you know that Rami Levy, the owner of this multi-chain superstore, each week goes to a different store location? No one knows who he is. He looks like a regular shopper. He takes a shopping cart, and he walks around to make sure that things are the way they're supposed to be. And this way, he's hands-on about each of his chain stores.

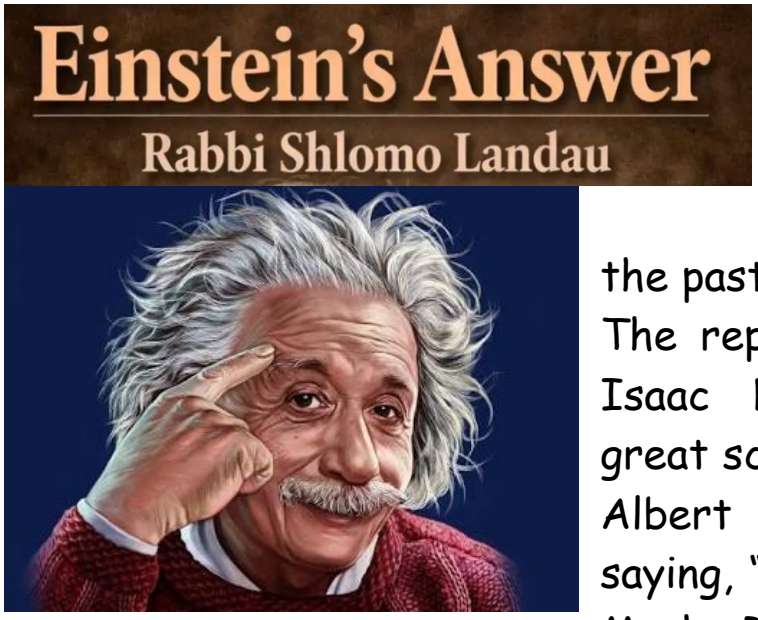
He also has a beautiful custom. Every time that he shows up at one of the branches, he randomly selects somebody, and he gives them their groceries for free!

He says, Rav Chaim, what does that have to do with me? He says, we're standing in line with our groceries. We decided to buy the better one, the more mehadrin one, the better hechsher.

We have three or four shopping carts packed with stuff, thousands of shekel. He comes in there, he looks at us, he goes, wow, you guys are making a pretty large order. I said, yeah, sure, we're making a simcha. He looks at them and says, your simcha is on me.

I said, what are you talking about? He says, shalom, I'm Rami Levi. I'm the owner of the store. Mazal tov, you don't have to pay, leave. We got our entire order covered, thousands of shekel for free!

When you invest, you push yourself to do Ratzon Hashem, the will of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, **בָּרוּךְ מְשַׁלֵּם שָׂכָר טוֹב לִירֵאָיו**. He always comes through.



Here is something absolutely fascinating. Albert Einstein was once asked by a reporter if he could meet anyone from the past, who he would want to meet? The reporter assumed he'd say Sir Isaac Newton, Archimedes, some great scientist or mathematician. But Albert Einstein shocked him by saying, "Moses, I would want to meet Moshe Rabbeinu."

The reporter pushed him and said to him, 'why? He's not scientific'.

He said, 'I would just want to ask him one simple question. Did you ever envision that the Jewish people would still be keeping the Torah and the mitzvahs thousands of years after you transmitted it to them?'

Isn't that wondrous? At the heart of even Albert Einstein, a man dedicated to science and nature, was a quest to understand the supernatural. - That is the depth of a Jewish soul.

You Think That You Won, But You Really Lost!



The Torah says, **וְאֵלֶּה֙ הַמִּשְׁפָּטִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר תָּשִׂ֖ים לִפְנֵיהֶֽם** - "*And these are the judgments that you shall set before them*" (Shemos 21:1).

Interestingly, **The Ba'al Haturim** comments that the word **הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים** is a mnemonic for, **הַדִּין מִצְוָה שֶׁיֵּעָשֶׂה פְּשָׁרָה טֶרֶם יֵעָשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט**. That is, the judge is commanded to negotiate a compromise before entering into judgment. (**סנהדרין ו' ע"ב**)

In this week's Parsha, Moshe had achieved atonement for the Jewish People for the sin of the Golden Calf. That day was Yom Kippur. Rashi says that the following day, Moshe made himself available to judge any disputes among the Jewish People. - The Torah tells us that Moshe judged them from morning until evening (18:13).

Moshe's father-in-law, Yisro, was not happy about that. He told Moshe, "You are going to wear yourself out …. You cannot do it alone (18:18)."

Yisro suggested that Moshe set up a court system so that Moshe would only have to judge the more difficult cases. Yisro told Moshe, "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws and shall show them the path wherein they shall walk and the action that they must perform (18:20)."

The Talmud (Bava Metzia 30B) cites this pasuk as the source for going beyond the letter of the law in the performance of mitzvos. "The "*The path in which they should go*" refers to the letter of the law and "*the deeds that they should do*" refers to action beyond the letter of the law (*lifnim m'shuras hadin*).

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org) explains that *Sinas chinam* results from a society where people are constantly taking each other to court. They may have been legally permitted to take each other to court, and they may have been 100% correct and may have won their cases, but going to court causes unwarranted hatred. There is a winner in court and a loser. The loser never forgets that he lost. That baseless hatred permeated society and caused the destruction of Jerusalem.

To prevent these feelings of hatred, the Jewish court advises that the two parties try to settle their dispute by compromising. They recommend this even if the court realizes that one of the parties is probably correct.

The **Semah**, one of the commentaries on Shulchan Aruch, questions why the judges are allowed to advise a person to compromise when the judges feel that one of the sides is 100 percent correct? Isn't that acting against the Torah which forbids one to give bad advice?

The **Semah** answers that suggesting a compromise **is** giving good advice! The long-term advantage of emerging from the dispute as friends rather than enemies outweighs any financial loss. One might win the case and receive money but at the same time he is buying an enemy for the rest of his life.

This is what the **Semah** is teaching. One may likely win the case, but at the cost of acquiring an enemy for life. The best advice is to compromise!

The **Chofetz Chaim** says that this was also Yisro's advice to Moshe. Besides suggesting a court system, Yisro wanted Moshe to teach the Jewish people the concept of 'lifnim m'shuras hadin'. It is not always necessary to insist upon one's rights. There is a place for, and a value in, compromise. That, in and of itself, was part of the solution to lighten the judicial burden. People would not always be running to court with every argument. They would start settling by compromise, outside of court.

The idea of compromise does not exclusively refer to a court case. Throughout life, we meet people who have different opinions. Even if we feel that our idea is best, we should look to compromise with others.

The willingness to compromise shows that we have respect for the opinions of others. That will help maintain peace and will help bring Moshiach more speedily. (Based largely from Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Torah.org) (Also see Rabbi Chaim Berlin)

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Burst of Inspiration



There is an amazing **Abarbanel** in this week's Sedra in Parshas Yisro. Of course, the Aseres HaDibros is the central aspect of this week's Sedra, and we know the Aseres HaDibris are divided into two groups. The first five are Bein Odom Lamokom, and the next Bein Odom Lachaveiro.

But if you think about it, you can categorize all ten of the Aseres HaDibros into three categories:

Machshava (Thought)

Dibur (Speech)

Meisa (Action)

The Pattern of Thought-Speech-Action

First Five Commandments (Ben Odom l'Makom): Progression from Thought → Speech → Action:

The commandments start with inner belief and thought (no other gods, no idols). Followed by appropriate speech (not taking Hashem's

name in vain, sanctifying Shabbos). Culminating in physical actions (honouring parents).

Second Five Commandments (Ben Odom l'Chaveiro): Reverse progression from Action → Speech → Thought.

Begins with prohibitions on harmful actions (adultery, murder, kidnapping). Continues with speech (not bearing false witness). Ends with thought (not coveting or jealousy).

So how fascinating. The first five go from machshava to dibur to maaiseh, and then the second five go from maaiseh to dibur to machshava. What is that about? - The Abarbanel says something astonishing.

The first five, a person is perhaps tending to think that it's okay to be a Jew at heart. I'm a good person, I'm a Jew at heart, but I don't actually have to speak anything about Judaism, I don't have to do anything. - HaKadosh Baruch Hu says no. Not only have you got to think like a Jew, but you've got to speak like a Jew, and you've got to act like a Jew. It's not enough to say I'm a Jew at heart, you've got to actually put on tefillin, you've got to act, you've got to do things.

But when it comes to bein Adam lechavero, the thinking is often the opposite. It's, I'll help the old lady across the street, but what I say about her and what I think about her, that's not so important. He says, no, no, no, that's what the Torah is telling us. Not only have you got to do an action to help your friend, but you've got to speak nicely about them and think nicely about them!

And the Torah therefore sets it in this way to teach us that not only when it comes to Bein Odom L'makom, not only do we have to think, but we also have to speak and do. And when it comes to Bein Odom L'chavero, not only do we have to do, but we have to speak and think in the right way!

The Litmus Test To Check If You Are Really Listening



A teacher confronted his student for sleeping in class. The student defended himself. "Your voice is so sweet; that's why I am getting sleep." - The teacher then wanted to know why other students were not sleeping. - The student replied, "Oh, that's because they are not listening to you!"

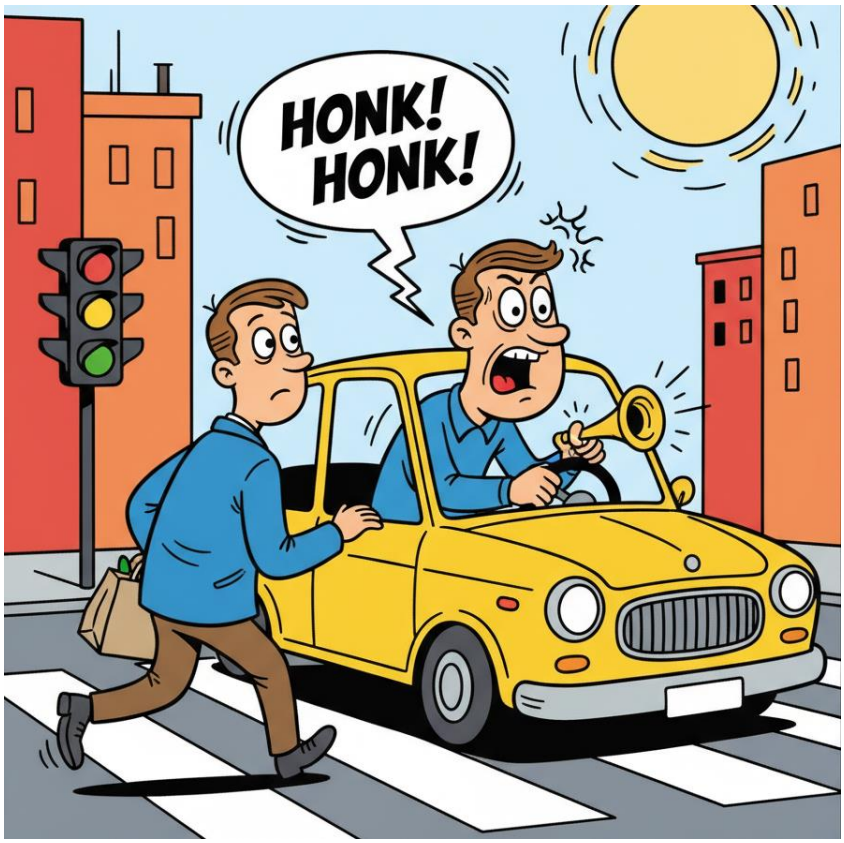
Parshas Yisro opens with the Pasuk (Shemos 18:1), "Yisro, the former ruler of Midian, Moshe's father-in-law, heard about all that Hashem had done for Moshe and for His people Israel," and joined the Jewish nation by converting.

The Oznayim L'Torah (ibid.) comments that three groups of people "heard", each one coming to a different conclusion. The nations of the world heard what Hashem did and became very frightened (they trembled and became frozen from fear, see Shemos 15:16). However, no action was taken whatsoever. Amalek heard, too, and as a result, they came to do battle against the Jewish people. The third response was from Yisro, who changed his life when he heard.

The Oznayim L'Torah teaches that it's not the miracle that can inspire people; rather, it's the willingness of the person to be inspired that will make an impact. Yisro, who was seeking to find the truth in the world, and due to this openness, he was moved. This refutes the argument of those who claim they will become believers if they see miracles.

Teaches **Rav Yitzchak Isbee, ZT"L**, The reality is that if one is not a soul-searcher, no miracle will move them. Rashi (ibid.) writes: "What did Yisro hear that he came? The splitting of the Red Sea and the war with Amalek." - The commentators state that what was bothering Rashi is the possibility that Yisro heard something other

than what others heard, and answers that everyone heard the same thing; only Yisro acted on it.



On this Rashi, the Shailos Torah brings a mashal of a man who was walking on a road filled with heavy traffic. He was walking in the middle of the street and obstructing the cars. One of the drivers beeped lightly, but there was no reaction. The driver honked again - still to no response. Finally, the motorist blasted his horn right next to the interloper, to which the latter replied, "Why are you making so much noise? I heard you the first time." The driver countered with, "If you had 'heard' me, you would've gone onto the sidewalk. It's not hearing when you continue to do the same thing."

The same applies to the nations of the world that "heard" about what Hashem's miracles but went on their merry way. That's not called hearing.

Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, ZT"L, once traveled with his student to a faraway town to speak to an old man who saw **Rabbi Akiva Eiger**. "We heard that you saw the great Gaon, Reb Akiva Eiger," Rav Baruch Ber said. The man replied, "Oh, you mean the Rabbi of Posen?"

When Rav Baruch Ber heard that, he turned around to leave: "If all this man can say without any awe that he saw the Rabbi of Posen, then he didn't see the holy Rabbi Akiva that we were looking for."

This is why this insight into Yisro's elevated status is the introduction to the giving of the Torah. The prerequisite to accepting the Torah is to seek the truth and be open to inspiration. We should keep our eyes and ears open always!

Short Story by Yoni Schwartz

Rav Shmuel Birnbaum, ZT"L, Rosh Yeshivah of the Mir, had a son who was on a trip in northern Israel. He rented a bed in a small bungalow; however, when he came across another young man who didn't have a bed, he let him use his bed, and since it was beautiful weather outside, he decided to sleep outdoors.

There were soldiers patrolling the area, and when they saw somebody lying in the grass outside a bungalow in at night, they thought he was a terrorist. They yelled at him multiple times to identify himself to see if he was a terrorist or not. He didn't hear them and, unfortunately, was shot.



When Rav Birnbaum heard this, he was heartbroken. When he went to **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, ZT"L**, to talk about it, he lamented how great a person his son was, how much he loved to learn Torah and do chessed. - Rav Chaim began crying with him, and for fifteen minutes they were bawling together.

Rav Chaim picked his tearful face up from the Gemara and said, "Oy! I messed up this Tosafos."

Rav Birnbaum responded, "By the way, how did you learn that Tosafos?"

Rav Chaim gave his answer.

Rav Birnbaum responded, "How can you learn it like that? What about the Gemara in Maseches Yumah which says something else?"

Rav Chaim responded, "What? That's not what the Gemara is talking about - it's talking about something else entirely!"

Rav Birnbaum replied, "How can you say that? What about the Rashba?"

The heated discussion went back and forth like this for ten minutes. One of Rav Birnbaum's talmidim was sitting there in the room, looking on in utter confusion. "What just happened?" he thought. He asked Rav Birnbaum, "Rebbe, both of you were crying uncontrollably, and in less than a minute, the tone changed 180 degrees?"

Rav Birnbaum responded, "Of course! What do you think they lived for? What do you think they died for? This is what's keeping them alive. This is how we move on. Without our Torah, we would be crying all day, but if we want to memorialize them, this is how we do it."

Comment: In this week's parsha, Yisro, we receive the Torah on Har Sinai. The Torah has been our lifeblood throughout our national history. Someone once said, "The Torah is the portable homeland of the Jews." It unites Jews across time and space and is the only thing that can connect a simple Jew living in 21st Century America to the greatest of rabbis living in 5th Century Babylonia or our ancestors at Har Sinai 3,338 years ago.

"Hashem's love for you is not based on your achievements or perfection, but on the essence of who you are. Embrace His love, and let it empower you." – Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם֮ בְּכָל־עֵת֒ וְהָיָה֙ כָּל־הַדָּבָ֣ר הַגָּדֹ֔ל יְבִיאוּ֙ אֵלֶ֔יךָ וְכָל־ הַדָּבָ֥ר הַקָּטֹ֖ן יִשְׁפְּטוּ־הֵ֣ם וְהָקֵ֣ל מֵעָלֶ֑יךָ וְנָשְׂא֖וּ אִתָּֽךְ׃ 18:22

Yisro advises Moshe to appoint judges because handling everything alone would exhaust both him and the people, whose access to Torah would become bottlenecked. Simpler cases are delegated, while the most complex matters remain with Moshe, creating an efficient system that shares leadership while preserving centralized halachic authority.



The *Gaon* and *Posek Hador*, **R' Chaim Yisroel Belsky *zt"l*** was often described as a "multifaceted genius" because he possessed a rare grasp of literally *kol haTorah kuloh*, as well as every facet of the natural world. His truly dazzling intellect gave him the unique ability to bridge abstract Talmudic theory and concrete physical reality. His time, though, was limited, and he often bemoaned the fact that he could not assist more people.

He once told a *talmid*, "They think they're helping me by shutting my phones off, but they are really killing me! They make it much harder for people with questions to reach me. What else am I here for if not to answer people's questions and help them with *shver sugyos* (difficult topics) in *Torah*?!"

The following story was told over by the current *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Torah Vodaath*, **R' Yisroel Reisman *shlita***.

A kollel fellow in *Eretz Yisroel* stumbled upon a very difficult, obscure *shailah* (halachic question). It wasn't a standard question about milk and meat or *Shabbos* times; it was a complex reality that

didn't seem to have a clear precedent. Troubled by the issue, he went to his *kollel* in Jerusalem and approached the *Rosh Kollel*, a man of significant learning, and laid out the complexities of the case.

The *Rosh Kollel* furrowed his brow and said, "Ah, a *geshmake shailah*! I have truly never heard such a scenario before. I cannot answer you on the spot, I need to be *meiyen* (delve deep) into the *sugya*. Give me some time."

The young man waited, but his anxiety grew. That evening, he approached his local *Rav*, a seasoned community *posek*, yet the *Rav's* reaction was identical. "What a difficult *shailah*," he remarked, shaking his head. "I cannot give you a ruling yet. Come back tomorrow."

On his way home, he asked a third *Talmid Chacham* but he too, had no clue how to *pasken*.

When he returned home that night, his wife asked, "*Nu*? Did you get an answer?" The man shook his head disappointedly. "Nobody knows the answer. They all need time to research it."

She looked at him for a moment and then said, "Why don't you just pick up the phone and call Rav Belsky? You know him from when you lived in Brooklyn, correct?"

The young man hesitated. Rav Belsky was one of the greatest *Poskim* in America, a *Rosh Yeshivah* at *Torah Vodaath*, and a senior decisor for OU Kosher. He was surely overwhelmed with major communal issues. Was it right to bother him with a personal call from across the ocean? He thought about it for a moment and then, mustering his courage, dialed the number.

The phone rang, and to his surprise, Rav Belsky himself picked up the phone. The young man, a bit baffled by the unexpected voice on the other line, stammered for a bit but the *Rav* calmed him down. Soon, he was able to lay out the complex details of his unusual query.

He waited for the silence, expecting Rav Belsky to also say he needed time to think. Instead, Rav Belsky gave a warm laugh and told him, "You know, it is such an unusual *shailah*, I haven't heard it in years ... and yet, you are the fourth person to call me with this exact question since yesterday!" - He then launched into a complicated but clear treatise, emerging shortly with a decisive ruling on the spot!

R' Yisroel Reisman concluded: "There are so many amazing things to take out of this story - it isn't just that Rav Belsky knew the answer or that all four *Rabbonim* knew who to call in time of need. Rather that all of them got through to him!"

Sugary Saying by Rabbi Menachem Lomner

"When dealing with others we must be extra careful not to say something that can hurt their feelings."

The Pasuk says that Moshe told Yisro all the things that Hashem did for the Jews when He took us out of Mitzrayim. Then, the Torah (Shemos 18:9) says that Yisro got goose bumps from the stories.

Why did this happen? - The Gemara (Sanhedrin 106a) says that this was because Yisro was originally from Mitzrayim. Even though he had abandoned that land and its culture, it still hurt him hearing about the bad things that happened there.

From this, the Gemara (ibid. 94a) says that even ten generations later, don't say something that can hurt someone's feelings. We see how much we must be careful in this way to only say things that will be helpful and not hurtful.

"Prayer has the power to change reality. What the stars say tefillah can change." ~ R' Shimshon Dovid Pincus Zt"l.

Two Levels of Shemiras Shabbos

"Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it. Six days you shall work ... And on the seventh day it is Shabbos for Hashem your G-d, do not do any work ... " (20:8-10).

There are those who keep Shabbos only because they remember how their parents kept Shabbos, but not because it means anything to them. And then there are those who keep Shabbos because it is a Mitzvah that G-d commanded us to observe it.

These two levels are hinted in these Pesukim.

Regarding those who keep Shabbos only because they remember..., the Torah writes "***Six days you shall work***".

Whereas with regard to those who keep Shabbos because it is Hashem's special day, it writes "***You shall not do any work***" - because you will merit that your work will be done through others (**P'ninei Torah in the name of the G'ro**).

Longevity and Honoring Parents

"Honour your father and your mother, in order that you will live long on the ground that Hashem your G-d gives you" (20:12).

One of the only Mitzvos that are assigned a specific reward is the Mitzvah of Kibud Av va'Eim.

The Chochmas Chayim explains this in the following way. A person is likely to say that although he knows about the Mitzvah of honouring parents, this does not mean that he is obligated to spend his precious time fulfilling it, just as, strictly speaking, one is not obligated to using one's own money (since Chazal have confined the basic obligation to using the money belonging to one's parents).

So, the Torah prescribes longevity for performing the Mitzvah, assuring the person who spends time on it that he will be re-

compensated later with extra years of life. The more time one spends, the more extra years one will earn.

In similar vein, they once asked the **Chasam Sofer** why he Davened such a long Amidah, since the excessive time constituted 'Bitul Torah'.

Back came the reply that this did not worry him, as Chazal have said that someone who Davens long, will enjoy extended days and years. In that case, he said, all the time he spent Davening would be repaid later, and then he would be able to make up for the learning that he 'lost'.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory



The Luchos, the two stone tablets Moshe received at Har Sinai, each contained five commandments. They are generally viewed as being five of Bain Adam L'Makom, between Man and G-d, and five of Bain Adam L'Chaveiro, mitzvos to be observed between people. - The ones between people, such as not stealing or killing cannot apply to G-d as it is not possible to hurt Hashem or to take anything from Him. Not having other gods or making idols relate to Hashem's status as the One deity in the Universe and beyond, and don't apply to people.

Yet, there is one commandment on the "Man and G-d" side which seems out of place. The mitzvah of "Honor your father and mother" would seem to be between Man and Man and should therefore properly have been placed on the other tablet.

In truth, though, this mitzvah transcends the normal human relationships and connects to one's relationship with G-d as well. When a person honors his or her parents, it's not only fulfilling a decree from Hashem but a testament to the appreciation a person should have to those who care for and look after him.

Extrapolating from how one's parents take care of his every need from birth and on until he is able to take care of himself, one can recognize that Hashem never stops caring, protecting, and providing for him. Therefore, He is ultimately deserving of this honor, and the mitzva correctly belongs on the side of Bain Adam L'Makom.

Parsha Points to Ponder

Q Rashi writes (Shemos 18:1) that upon hearing of the splitting of the Yam Suf and the battle against Amalek, Yisro came to join Moshe and the Jews in the wilderness.

Why did he wait to hear about the war with Amalek instead of coming immediately after the miracles at the Red Sea, and why did a war impress him more than all the miracles at the Yam Suf?

A The **Manchester Rosh Yeshiva** explains that Yisro was certainly moved when he heard about Kriyas Yam Suf. However, he assumed that he would retain his spark of inspiration, so there was no need to do anything about it.

The Mishnah (Rosh Hashana 3:8) says that during the battle against Amalek, whenever Moshe's hands were raised, Bnei Yisroel looked at them and directed their thoughts toward heaven, which enabled them to prevail, but when Moshe lowered his hands, they forgot about Hashem and fell.

Yisro was shocked to hear that, in the course of a brief battle, the people could be motivated by Moshe's raised hands, yet a short while later, when he lowered them, their boost was gone. This recognition taught Yisro that feeling uplifted by the miracles at the Red Sea

was insufficient. His inspiration would soon dissipate unless he did something concrete to make it permanent, so he decided to join the Jews in the midbar and convert.

Rabbi Mordechai Becher - Climbing the Mountain



The Imrei Emes cites a teaching in the name of the **Kotzker Rebbe**, Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, on the verse describing the revelation at Mount Sinai. Hashem warns the Jewish people: "**הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם עֲלוֹת בָּהָר וּנְגֹעַ בְּקָצֵהוּ**" - *Be exceedingly careful not to ascend the mountain, nor to touch even its edge.* "**כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהָר מוֹת יוּמָת**" - *Whoever touches the mountain shall surely die*" (*Shemos* 19:12).

On a simple level, the meaning is clear and straightforward. The sanctity of Sinai was absolute. The people were forbidden not only from ascending the mountain, but even from brushing against its perimeter. Any violation, even at the margins, carried fatal consequence.

But the Kotzker Rebbe read the verse in a radically different way.

He explained it not as a prohibition, but as a challenge. If you wish to ascend the mountain—if you aspire to Sinai—then do not content yourself with merely touching the edges. **הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם**: beware of superficial engagement. **עֲלוֹת בָּהָר וּנְגֹעַ בְּקָצֵהוּ**: if all you are doing is grazing the margins, that is empty, even pathetic. True ascent demands total commitment.

כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהָר מָוֹת יוּמָת - to truly touch the mountain, to truly encounter Sinai, requires readiness for complete self-investment, even self-sacrifice. Not literally to die, but to give oneself over entirely.

This is not *pshat;* it is not the plain meaning of the verse. But it is profoundly beautiful.

What the Kotzker is teaching is that Sinai is not a historical location. Sinai is any mitzvah. It is Torah study. It is *chesed*. It is *avodas Hashem* in all its forms. As the ***Chovos HaLevavos*** teaches, virtually any permissible act can become a mitzvah depending on one's *kavanah*. Intention transforms action.

But transformation only occurs when one is fully present. If I am merely "touching the edge"—half-engaged, distracted, hedging my commitment—I receive nothing. Sinai demands immersion. It demands wholeness. It demands that I bring my entire self into the experience.

That is the Kotzker's warning: do not dare approach holiness tentatively. If you want the mountain, you must give your life to it—not in martyrdom, but in meaning.

And the key to sustaining such total engagement is *simcha*.

There is a well-known story about **Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshischa**, the rebbe of the Kotzker. Before he became a rebbe, and even before he became a pharmacist, Rav Simcha Bunim served as the manager, effectively the CEO, of a lumber enterprise in Danzig. One day, he was walking along the riverbank with several students when one of them slipped in the mud and was swept into the river by the current. None of them could swim; swimming simply was not part of nineteenth-century Polish Hasidic life.

As the man was being carried away, the group ran helplessly along the riverbank, unable to intervene. Suddenly, Rav Simcha Bunim called out to him in Yiddish, "Give my regards to the Leviathan."

It sounded absurd. A man is drowning, and you send greetings to the mythical sea creature? It was the last thing anyone expected, and it was utterly impractical.

But something extraordinary happened. The man in the water smiled. That moment of levity pierced his despair. He began thrashing again, fighting the current with renewed energy, managing to maneuver himself close enough to the bank for the others to pull him out. His life was saved.

Later, the *chassidim* asked Rav Simcha Bunim what he had been thinking. He explained by quoting the verse in Isaiah (55:12): "כִּי־בְשִׂמְחָה תֵּצֵאוּ." - We usually translate it as "You shall go out with joy." But Rav Simcha Bunim read it literally: *With simcha, you can get out of anything.*

"All I saw on his face," he said, "was *yei'ush*, despair. If I could inject even a moment of *simcha*, I knew it would shift his inner state. One thought would spark another, his body would follow his mind, and he would save himself." - And he did.

This insight reaches far beyond that riverbank. *Simcha* is not a superficial emotion; it is a cognitive and spiritual force. In modern terms, *simcha* moves us out of compulsive dopamine-driven distraction and into a state of meaning, reflection, and flow; what psychologists might associate with serotonin and sustained engagement.

That is Sinai. Not touching the edge, but climbing the mountain with joy, wholeness, and total presence.

"Hashem's love for you is beyond measure. You are His beloved child, and He rejoices in every step you take towards Him." ~ Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan.

Rabbi Shlomo Hoff Shlita - לֹא תַחְמֹד 20:14

לֹא תַחְמֹד "Do not covet"



אבן עזרא asks an insightful question… - How can the Torah can legislate against a person's desires and emotions? It is very natural for a person driving a jalopy to be jealous of a person who has a new car and does not have to worry about leaking oil and whether the car will start each time he turns the key in the ignition.

If this is readily understandable in terms of our neighbour's car, it is certainly understandable in terms of more meaningful things in life. We see their families, we see their position, etc., etc.

How then does the Torah command a person not to be jealous? How can the Torah command an emotion?

The **Ramban** says that the Torah is not forbidding the emotion per say, but **לֹא תַחְמֹד** is a prohibition on **taking action** to acquire someone else's property —through persuasion, pressure, or payment.

The **Raavad** says **לֹא תַחְמֹד** is violated only when you actually succeed in acquiring the item through pressure or manipulation. Merely desiring it is *not* a violation of **לֹא תַחְמֹד**.

It says in Shir Hashirim - **שְׁנֵי שָׁדַיִךְ כִּשְׁנֵי עֳפָרִים תְּאוֹמֵי צְבִיָּה הָרֹעִים בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים** - *Your two breasts are like two fawns, the twins of a gazelle, who graze among the roses. (4:5)*

Rashi explains that '**Your two breasts**' symbolize the **לוּחוֹת**. The '**twins of a gazelle**' shows us that each of the five commandments on one side of the **לוּחוֹת** corresponds to the five commandments on the other side, each commandment corresponding to the opposite commandment. - Hence, **לֹא תַחְמֹד** would correspond to **כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ**. What is their correlation?

I think the answer could possibly be as follows:

The whole concept of **כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ** is that we should have **הַכָּרַת הַטּוֹב** to our parents for doing everything for us. This brings us to a greater appreciation for everything that Hashem does for us.

Therefore, if a person covets another's belongings, it displays a lack of gratitude from Hashem Who provides us with all our needs. Coveting would be impossible when you truly understand that what belongs to someone else is simply not destined for you.

The antidote a person must employ to avoid coveting, says Ibn Ezra, is Emunah. Namely, the faith that all his possessions are what Hashem wants him to have and all of his neighbour's possessions are what Hashem wants his neighbour to have.

The Ramban advises, the way to overcome jealousy is to love one's neighbour as much as he loves himself.

כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ

Honouring parents is placed among the commandments between man and Hashem because parents are partners with Hashem in the creation of a person. Therefore, one must honour them as one honours the Creator — for they brought him into existence, raised him, and invested effort and care into him.

One who denies the good done by his parents may ultimately deny the good of Hashem Himself. ~ Ramban.

The Boy Who Stayed Silent - by Rabbi Joey Haber

Rabbi Eli Semach of Lakewood once related an incident that took place years ago at one of the most prominent yeshivot in America — the Philadelphia Yeshiva, led by Rabbi Elya Svei and Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky. - As was customary, prospective students would come to take entrance exams. One day, a Chassidic boy arrived with his father. He was coming from ninth grade into tenth grade and had been learning Masechet Chullin — a tractate not always learned in mainstream yeshivot, as Chassidic yeshivot sometimes follow different learning schedules.

Now, the first two chapters of Masechet Chullin have very similar names. One is called "HaKol Shochtin," and the other is "HaShochet." Both relate to the laws of shechitah, slaughtering.

Rabbi Svei asked the father, "Which perek is your son learning?" The father mistakenly answered, "He is learning Perek HaShochet." In truth, the boy had been learning Perek HaKol Shochtin. It was an honest mistake.

Rabbi Svei then began testing the boy — on the wrong chapter. The boy did not know a single answer. He had never learned it.

After the test, the father came in and asked how his son had done.

Rabbi Svei, the Gadol HaDor, leaned forward and said simply, "The bochur doesn't know anything."

The father was stunned. On the drive home, he turned to his son and said, "What happened? The Rabbi said you didn't know anything!"

The boy replied quietly, "Tatty, you told the Rabbi I was learning Perek HaShochet. I'm actually learning Perek HaKol Shochtin. He tested me on the wrong chapter."

The father asked, "So why didn't you correct him?"

The boy answered, "In front of the Rabbi, I'm going to correct my father? I would never do that."

He chose to remain silent, to protect his father's dignity — even though it meant failing the entrance exam to one of the most prestigious yeshivot in America.

When they got home, the father immediately called Rabbi Svei and explained what had happened — that he had made the mistake, not his son.

Rabbi Svei responded with extraordinary words: "A bochur who is willing to sacrifice his entire future in order not to embarrass his father does not need another test. He is accepted."

The boy had not answered one question correctly. It did not matter. If he possessed that level of respect, that level of kibbud av, he belonged in the yeshiva.

That is who we are meant to be.



כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ

The root of this mitzvah is that a person should recognize and repay kindness. One should realize that his father and mother are the cause of his existence in this world; therefore it is fitting for him to honour them in every way possible. Through habituating oneself in gratitude toward human benefactors, one will come to recognize the goodness of the Holy One, Who is the ultimate source of all existence. ~ Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 33.



R' Yisroel Salanter ZT'L would say:

'On Judgement Day, I will not be afraid of the question why I was not like Moshe Rabbeinu. The question I have to keep in mind is why I was not everything that Yisroel Salanter could have been!'



Rabbi Shlomo Hoff Shlita

Rabboisai, as we approach this week, the great Shabbos of **קבלת התורה**, it is worth reminding ourselves of the setting in which the **רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם** gave the Torah to **כְּלַל יִשְׂרָאֵל**. We need to understand **קבלת התורה** in the context of the great **אַהֲבָה** with which **הקב״ה** approached Klal Yisrael.

The **פָּסוּק** says:

וַיּוֹצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם לִקְרַאת הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְיַצְּבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר

Rashi explains: **שֶׁהַשְּׁכִינָה יָצְאָה לִקְרָאתָם כְּחָתָן הַיּוֹצֵא לִקְרַאת כַּלָּה**— the **שְׁכִינָה** came out towards them like a **חתן** going out to meet his **כלה**.

What a beautiful description of **קבלת התורה**! **הקב״ה** came out to meet **כְּלַל יִשְׂרָאֵל**, and Klal Yisrael came towards **הקב״ה**. It describes the giving of the Torah as an encounter of tremendous **אַהֲבָה וְקִרְבָה**.

But then we find something seemingly contradictory. The same **פָּסוּק** says **וַיִּתְיַצְּבוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר**, and Rashi famously explains that **הקב״ה** held the mountain over them like a barrel and told them that if they did not accept the Torah, there they would be buried. In other words, there was an element of **כְּפִיָּה**— coercion.

So which is it? On the one hand, **כְּחָתָן הַיּוֹצֵא לִקְרַאת כַּלָּה**— an expression of **אַהֲבָה**. On the other hand, **כָּפָה עֲלֵיהֶם הַר כְּגִיגִית**— an expression of force. Why are these two ideas found together?

The **הפלאה**, in his **הקדמה**, addresses the famous question of **תוספות**: Klal Yisrael had already said **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**. They willingly accepted the Torah. So why was it necessary for **הקב״ה** to force them to accept it?

The **הפלאה** gives a beautiful answer.

There are different levels of **אַהֲבָה**. There is the love between friends. A good friend will go to great lengths for another friend. He will spend money, make an effort, and even travel long distances to help him. But there is a limit: a friend will not normally force

another friend to do something because he knows it is ultimately good for him.

The relationship between a parent and child, however, is different. A parent sometimes makes a child do something that the child does not want to do — not because the parent wants to control him, but because the parent knows that it is good for him.

That is a deeper form of **אַהֲבָה**. It is not merely, "I want to make you happy and give you what you want." It is, "I care about you so deeply that I want you to have what I know is truly best for you."

And this, explains the **הפלאה**, is what happened at **קבלת התורה**.

When **הקב"ה** gave the Torah to Klal Yisrael, He was not merely saying, "You want the Torah? Wonderful — here it is." That would indeed be an expression of friendship and love.

Rather, **הקב"ה** wanted to demonstrate a far deeper **אַהֲבָה**: I am giving you the Torah because I love you and because I know that the Torah is the greatest possible **טובה** for you. Therefore, even though you have willingly said **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע**, I am showing you that the Torah is something you **need** — something so essential to your existence that I will ensure that you receive it.

So **כְּחָתָן הַיּוֹצֵא לְקִרַאת כַּלָּה** and **כָּפָה עֲלֵיהֶם הַר כְּגִיגִית** are not contradictory. They are two expressions of the same **אַהֲבָה**— one is the love of a **חתן**, and the other reflects the deeper, protective love of a parent for a child.

And perhaps this is something we need to remember constantly. We should not view Torah merely as something we are required to do — as an obligation or a burden. We should understand that the **תּוֹרָה** is ultimately the greatest **טוֹבָה** that **הקב"ה** has given us. He gave it to us **מתוך אַהֲבָה**, because He wants us to have what is truly best for us.

So as we come to **שַׁבָּת קַבָּלַת הַתּוֹרָה**, let us try to see the Torah differently. Not merely as something we have to do, but as the greatest expression of the **אַהֲבָה** of **הקב"ה** towards us.

May the רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם help us appreciate that great love, and may we be זוֹכֶה to receive our חֵלֶק בַּתּוֹרָה, to strengthen our connection to Torah and to הקב"ה, and to have a קַבָּלַת הַתּוֹרָה with genuine אַהֲבָה, שִׂמְחָה וְקִרְבָה.

אַ גוטן שַׁבָּת, אַ ליכטיגן שַׁבָּת, און אַ קַבָּלַת הַתּוֹרָה!

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

וכל העם רואים את הקולות ואת הלפידים ואת קול השופר וכו' (כ-טו)

Many great Rabbonim and Tzaddikim of yesteryear were considered child prodigies - incredible geniuses with a sharp and quick wit. One of the most noted prodigies was the great Gerrer Rebbe, **R' Yitzchok Meir ZT'L, the Chiddushei Hari'm**, who, as a very young child, possessed a high level of intelligence and a **התמדה** and fervor for learning Torah. Many Talmidei Chachomim and Lamdanim would seek out young Yitzchok Meir'l, as he was called, to engage him in Torah discussions, posing difficult questions and listening with amazement and enjoyment to his clever and truthful answers.

One such question was once posed to Yitzchok Meir'l: In the Parshah of Matan Torah, it says '**וכל העם רואים את הקולות**' - And the entire nation viewed the voices and the sounds. The question is, why was it absolutely necessary for Bnei Yisroel to actually see the sounds - would it not have been enough had they just heard the **עשרת הדברות** and absorbed it that way? For what reason did they need to see it as well?

The young, future Rebbe smiled at his questioner and replied, "Just think about it. What would have happened had our forefathers only heard the Dibros - the commandments, and not also have seen them at Har Sinai? It would have opened up a plausible excuse for the sinners to declare, 'We heard from the mouth of G-d, the words, **לו תגנוב, לו תרצח, לו תנאף**, which would mean that stealing, killing or adultery is permitted provided that one does so **לשים שמים** - in

Heaven's name (**לו - לשמו**)! This would allow them to perpetrate all kinds of Aveiros, **כביכול**, and claim that they were done for the sake of Hashem!"

Young Yitzchok Meir'l paused for a moment, and then said, "For this reason, it was absolutely necessary for Hashem to miraculously project his words at Matan Torah in a way that all of Bnei Yisroel could actually see them. Thereby, no one could say that what Hashem actually said was '**לו תגנוב** ' - One may steal L'shem Shomayim, but rather '**לא תגנוב** ' - It is forbidden to steal, not giving the sinners any kind of legitimate excuse for their wretched actions!"

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

'Do Not Disturb' - Rav Yitzchak Isaac Hertzog zt'l and Rav Dovid Povarsky zt'l on Kavod HaTorah and Hakaras Hatov

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת יתרו**.

The late **תלמיד חכם** and therapist, **רב שלמה הופמן**, had many, many interactions with **גדולי ישראל** over his life. One of them happened when he was a young **ישיבה בחור** in the **חברון ישיבה**, and his close friend, **רב בערל שוורצמן זצ"ל**, who went on to become a great **ראש ישיבה** and one of the greatest **גאונים** of the generation, had made a mistake in his paperwork with the Israeli army authorities, and even though full-time **ישיבה** students were deferred from drafting into the army, he took a trip to **חוץ לארץ** without letting them know, and he was about to be drafted immediately.

Now, at the time, the **ועד הישיבות**, the official organization which really organized all these things, the registration of **ישיבה** students, and the presenting of the list to the army for deferral, was headed by two great **רבנים**. One was the **רב הראשי**, the Chief Rabbi, **רב יצחק אייזיק הלוי הרצוג זצ"ל**, and the other was **רב איסר זלמן מלצר זצ"ל**, the famous **ראש ישיבה** of **עץ חיים**. Now, **רב בערל שוורצמן** was actually at

this point I believe already related to **רב איסר זלמן** by marriage. So his friend, **רב שלמה הופמן**, went running to the house of **רב הרצוג** first, and he came, he knocked on the door. The door opened a crack, and **רב הרצוג**'s wife, the **רביצין**, whispered very quietly that the **רב** is very sick and he can't see anybody right now.

And **רב שלמה הופמן** said, "This is something that has to be taken care of immediately. There's really no time to spare."

And she was explaining to him that this is serious and the **רב** is sick and he must rest. Meanwhile, as this argument was going on, so they heard the **רב**'s voice saying, "Who's there? Send him in."

So **רב שלמה** came in and he saw that **רב הרצוג** was lying in bed, wrapped up in a blanket, and his face was clearly on fire. It was clear that he had a high fever. It turned out that it was a fever of 40, which is about 104 in Fahrenheit.

So **רב שלמה** told him about the problem, and **רב הרצוג** said, "I have never used my influence to influence this process at all, because I've been afraid that if I ask for a favor, so things are going to be asked for me in return return and there might be pressure on me to agree to things that I don't want to agree."

So **רב שלמה** said to him, "I'm surprised that the **רב** didn't ask me why I didn't go first to **רב איסר זלמן מלצר**."

So **רב הרצוג** said, "What's the answer?"

He says, "Because I knew how upset **רב איסר זלמן** would be to hear about this and I didn't want to cause him distress. I didn't want to upset **רב איסר זלמן**."

When he heard this, **רב הרצוג** sat up in bed. He said, "**רב איסר זלמן** would be upset?" And he immediately put on his shoes and went to the table and wrote a letter and stamped it and sent him off.

In this week's **פרשה**, we see that **יתרו** was so distressed at **משה רבינו**'s huge workload, his fear that **משה רבינו** would be worn out, it

would be bad for the people. Here, we see this combination of **כבוד התורה** that a great **גאון** like **רב הרצוג** had for **רב איסר זלמן** and worrying about his distress to the extent that he both went got out of bed in his illness and did something that he hadn't done before to help this situation, because he didn't want **רב איסר זלמן** to be upset or distressed.

Now, there's a continuation to this story.

רב שלום פוברסקי, the son of the great **ראש ישיבה** in **פוניבז׳**, **רב דוד פוברסקי זצ״ל**, once met **רב שלמה הופמן** in the street. He said, "Oh, **רב שלמה**, I know that you spent a lot of time with **רב הרצוג**. Do you have any stories about **רב הרצוג** that I could tell my father?"

So this was the story that **רב שלמה** told him. And **רב שלום** was so happy and grateful. He said, "Oh, thank you so much." He said.

רב שלמה asked him, "Why why are you so overjoyed with this?"

He says, "You see, my father had tremendous **הכרת הטוב** to **רב הרצוג**, because **רב הרצוג** was the one who got him the **סרטיפיקט**, the visa, the entry paper papers that enabled him to enter **ארץ ישראל**. So he's always looking, as part of his **הכרת הטוב**, as part of his recognition of the good to **רב הרצוג**, to hear more and more stories about the greatness and the righteousness of **רב הרצוג**."

So aside from the beautiful **מדה** that this expresses, it really gives a different understanding of the term **הכרת הטוב**.

הכרת הטוב we always explain as meaning to recognize the good action that was done, recognize the benefit that I received from someone. From **רב דוד**'s idea of trying to hear more and more about how good the person is, how good his benefactor is, that **הכרת הטוב** is not just recognizing the good of the act, it's recognizing the good of the person who did the act. And that when someone benefited you, part of your **הכרת הטוב** is to learn more and more and to be able to see more and more about the good of that person.

This **פרשה** also is a **פרשה** of **יתרו, הכרת הטוב**'s famous expression, **ברוך השם אשר הציל אתכם מיד מצרים ומיד פרעה**, the praise to **השם** when he heard about how **השם** saved **בני ישראל**.

So, in the **זכות** of these **צדיקים**, right, we may we have a **שבת** of **קבלת התורה**, which involves the **בין אדם למקום**, the **בין אדם לחבירו**, the care and empathy for others, the **כבוד** of **תורה** which was expressed by **הר סיני**, and the **הכרת הטוב** for **הקדוש ברוך הוא** for all that He has done for us, and hopefully for all the good that He will be doing for us in the near future as **עם ישראל** will see **ישועות בקרוב**.

Have a wonderful **שבת**.

Parsha Thoughts By Mordechai Sapoznick

The Mechilta says that by **מַתַּן תּוֹרָה**, everyone's blemishes were healed. However, Moshe Rabeinu had a speech defect that was not healed. Why?

Moshe didn't want people to think that he convinced Bnei Yisroel to accept the Torah so that he should be healed. Therefore, Moshe asked Hashem not to fix his defect so everyone would realize that Bnei Yisroel accepted the Torah only because of their love of Hashem and His Torah.

R' Chaim Ozer Grodzenski ZT"L would say:

"Even humility must have a limit. I just wish that I knew that limit, for then I could fully develop this all-important trait."

R' Chaim Volozhiner ZT"L would say:

"A person accomplishes much more through patience and even a little bit of understanding than with all the anger in the world."