TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry





ואתחנן

לעילוי נשמת



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Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה' בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר... אֶעְבְּרָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן - *"I implored Hashem at that time, saying, '. . . Let me now cross and see the good Land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain and the Lebanon'." (3:23,25)*

R' Avraham Saba z"l (1440-1508; Spain and Italy) writes: At the end of last week's Parashah, Moshe commanded his designated successor, Yehoshua, regarding conquering Eretz Yisrael. Seemingly, Moshe was acknowledging that he would not enter the Land. Nevertheless, Moshe prayed that he be allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael in fulfillment of the teaching of the Gemara (Berachot 10b), "Even if one has a sharp sword against his throat, he should not hold himself back from praying." (*Tzror Ha'mor*)

The more you give to a person, the more you love that person. A stranger is simply someone you have not yet helped. Doing acts of kindness for everyone will fill your world with friends and loved ones. ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (1892-1953)

וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ - "***And you shall repeat them to your sons and speak of them, when you sit in your homes***." (6:7)



R' Daniel Movshovitz z"l hy"d (head of the yeshiva in Kelm, Lithuania; killed in the Holocaust) writes that the reference here to the home does not refer to the wood and stone structure. It refers to the family. The beginning of a person's judgement in Heaven will address whether he set aside times for Torah study and, in particular, whether he dedicated times to study Torah and discuss the subjects of faith and trust in G-d with his family.

It doesn't matter so much what one learns at these times. **R' Yerucham Levovitz z"l**, a great teacher of mussar, used to read the Tze'enah u'Re'enah (a Yiddish translation and commentary on the Torah) at meals. The simple lessons of faith contained in that work often make a more long-lasting impression than do complicated discourses. (Kitvei Ha'Saba Mi'Kelm V'talmidav p. 610)

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד - "***Hear, O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the One and Only.***" (6:4)

We read in the Pesach Haggadah that five sages sat through the night relating the story of the Exodus from Egypt. They continued their discussion until their students entered and said, "Our teachers, the time has come to recite the Shema of Shacharit."

R' Levi Yitzchak Horowitz shlita (the "Bostoner Rebbe") writes: The word that the Haggadah uses for "telling a story" is "me'saprim."

This word shares a root with the gem "sapir" / sapphire. This alludes to the fact that through their story, these sages illuminated the darkness of the exile. [These sages lived shortly after the destruction of the second Bet Hamikdash.]



R' Horowitz continues: When we recite Shema, we are supposed to accept Heaven's yoke upon ourselves. And, though not everyone is capable of achieving the same level of subordination to G-d, through the spiritual light which these Sages brought about that night, everyone achieved a higher level.

That morning's Shema was recited equally well by each of the Four Sons of the Haggadah. It was a Shema of "Shacharit" – an acronym for: She'aino yodea lish'ol / the one who does not know how to ask; Chacham / the wise one; Rasha / the wicked one; and Tam / the innocent one. (Haggadah Shel Pesach Ezrat Avoteinu p. 82)

וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּמָצָאתָ כִּי תִדְרְשֶׁנּוּ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ - "***From there you will seek Hashem, your Elokim, and you will find Him, if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul***." (4:29)

R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischa z"l (1765-1827) comments: Some people seek G-d "there," i.e., in philosophical inquiries. In reality, the place to find G-d is in your heart. Once someone purifies his midot / character traits, he will find Hashem in his heart. (Torat Simcha)

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקינוּ ה' אֶחָד - "*Hear, Israel, Hashem is our Elokim, Hashem is One*!" (6:4)

R' Yehoshua Rokeach z"l (1825-1894; Belzer Rebbe) asks: When we recite Shema, we are accepting G-d as our King. Why then is it customary to sit when reciting Shema? One would expect that we would stand out of reverence!

He explains: Accepting G-d as King is a mitzvah that one is obligated to perform constantly. But, of course, no one can stand all of the time. By reciting Shema seated, we are emphasizing that one must accept G-d as King no matter where he finds himself.



R' Yissachar Dov Rokeach z"l (1851-1926; Belzer Rebbe) once commented to one of his housekeeping staff, a man known as Reb Mordechai Shamash: "It is Elul, time to repent."

Reb Mordechai replied, "The Rebbe should repent."

"For what?" asked the Rebbe, and Reb Mordechai answered that the Rebbe took too long to say Shema and kept the congregation waiting when it was hungry and thirsty. [In fact, the Rebbe was known as a quick davener, except for his Kriat Shema which took between 15 and 45 minutes.]

The Rebbe replied, "What can I do? Look how long Rashi's commentary on Shema is! At a minimum, a person who says Shema needs to have in mind the plain meaning of the words, i.e., all of Rashi's commentary." (Quoted in Orchot Rabboteinu p.26)

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה' בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר -***"I implored Hashem at that time."*** *(3:23)*



R' Chaim Meir Hager z"l (the Vizhnitzer Rebbe; died 1972) offers the following suggestions for improving the quality of our prayers:

1. One should demand of himself during his prayers not to look to his sides and not to hear anything that is going on around him.

2. One should make a supreme effort with all his strength to focus on the words. One should imagine that the entire world is desolate and nothing exists besides himself and the words of the prayers.

3. One should pray with joy and great enthusiasm, and with love and awe for G-d. One should not allow thoughts of his past sins to interfere with his prayers, for such thoughts are the work of the yetzer hara.

4. One should reflect on the fact that angels must wait until their appointed times to praise G-d [see Rashi to Bereishit 32:27], while lowly man can praise G-d at any time. [This is indicates how much G-d values man's prayers.]

5. One should pray from a siddur, for this drives away foreign thoughts.

6. If one has recited part of the prayers without the proper kavanah / focus, he should not lose heart. He should simply start to focus from that point onward.

7. One should pray with the congregation, not come late and "jump on the moving train" at Yehi Khavod and jump off at U'va Le'tziyon.

8. One should not speak from the beginning of the prayers until the end. One must remember that he is standing before the Great and Awesome G-d! - (Quoted in Chaim Me'irim, 8 Nissan 5762, p. 56)

On the same subject, R' Hager related the following story:

A chassid once came to **R' Chaim Hager of Kossov z"l** (1795-1854; known as the "Torat Chaim") and complained that he was bothered by "foreign thoughts" during his prayers. R' Chaim told him:

"If a Jew wakes up, washes his hands in the manner of G-d- fearing people, recites Birchot Ha'Torah as required, immerses in the mikveh, studies Mishnah or Gemara or Zohar, or recites Tehilim (each person according to his own level), and then goes to pray, and even so, he is bothered by mundane thoughts – those can be called `foreign thoughts.'

"However, if a person wakes up, balances his checkbook or reviews other business matters, and then goes to pray with no preparation, the mundane thoughts that enter his head are not `foreign' – they are that person's own thoughts!"



וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ - "*You shall teach them thoroughly . . ." (6:7)*

The word "**וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם**" also can mean "you shall sharpen." Thus, our Sages teach that one must study Torah until its words are "sharp in your mouth," i.e., until one knows the material thoroughly and clearly.

R' Avraham Yaakov Hakohen Pam z'l (rosh yeshiva of Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn; died 2001) writes: The work Birkat Shmuel [by **R' Boruch Ber Leibowitz z"l**; died 1940] notes that a person's obligation to study Torah has two components, one

qualitative and the other quantitative. Our verse alludes to the quality of one's Torah learning. As for quantity, we read (Yehoshua 1:8), "You shall contemplate it day and night."

However, R' Pam continues, one is exempt from studying Torah at any moment in which he must work for a living. One should not think that earning a living merely mitigates the prohibition of bittul Torah / wasting time from Torah study. To the contrary, at a time when one must work, that is his mitzvah, not studying Torah. After all, we are commanded (Devarim 11:14), "You shall gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil." (See Berachot 35b.)

Of course, writes R' Pam, the opposite side of the coin is that one must be honest with himself. One who is working more than he must to attain luxuries is not exempt from Torah study. One should remember that "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread" (Bereishit 3:19) was a curse.

The story is told of a chance meeting in approximately 1916 between **R' Yosef Eliyahu Henkin** (rabbi in Russia and later on New York's Lower East Side; died 1973) and **R' Avraham Yishayahu Karelitz z"l** (the Chazon Ish; 1878-1953) in the waiting room of the rabbi of Stuyepitz, **R' Yoel Sorotzkin z"l**. Although older than R' Henkin, the Chazon Ish was unknown to most people at that time. While both men waited for the Stuyepitz Rabbi, R' Henkin said to his fellow visitor, "Shalom aleichem! What is your name?"

"Avraham Yishayahu Karelitz," came the answer.

"What do you do?"

"I am a storekeeper." (In fact, Mrs. Karelitz kept a store while her husband learned full time.)

"And when does a Jew learn?" R' Henkin prodded.

"When there is time, one learns," the unknown visitor responded.

"And what brings you here?"

"The rabbi has sent for me."

R' Henkin imagined that his fellow visitor had been sent for because one of his customers or suppliers had lodged a complaint against him with the rabbi. How great was R' Henkin's surprise when he learned why R' Sorotzkin has sent for R' Karelitz – he wished to ask R' Karelitz to serve as rabbi of Stuyepitz while R' Sorotzkin had to travel away from the town for several months.

Was the Chazon Ish being flippant when he said, "When there is time, one learns"? No, says R' Pam. That is in fact one's obligation! (Atarah La'melech p. 156)



But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d – you are alive today… you shall safeguard and perform them, for it is your wisdom and discernment… as this is the Torah. (4:4,6,8)

We have been bequeathed an incredible gift: the Torah. It is the source of our wisdom, understanding, character refinement, religious observance; indeed, it is chaim kulchem hayom, our life – today – and every day. Without Torah in its entirety, we are lost. We may not accept the Torah piecemeal in accordance with our comfort zone. That is not Torah. It is everything – or else it is simply intellectual knowledge. It is a life source only when it is imbibed, seen, studied, understood and observed.

What about someone who has had little opportunity to learn or has started late? What about the fellow whose acumen does not tolerate the Torah's dialectic? Does the person who spends most of his day

engrossed in earning a livelihood have less a "life" of Torah, because he has little time to learn?

First, everyone, regardless of his intellectual capacity, should learn. Success is not measured by how much one grasps or by how much one knows. Success is measured by how much effort one expends, how much free time one devotes to Torah study.

Everyone should have a set time for studying Torah. Everyone has been gifted with varied intellectual abilities. If Hashem has given one a sharp, analytical mind, he is expected to use his gift to develop a greater and deeper knowledge of Torah. Each person should maximize his potential based upon his ability and time. The working person should devote a set time to learn. The individual who is challenged by the difficulty in grasping Torah should study what comes easier – until he is able to ascend to the next level. No one is excused from studying Torah.

Furthermore, it all depends on what is a person's primary focus: is it the mundane, the secular, or is it Torah?

Chazal teach that, attached to the walls of the Bais Hamikdash, were several small chambers called *lishkos*. Some were built within the parameters of the Bais Hamikdash, while others were built facing the outside of the Bais Hamikdash. Interestingly, the location of the room did not determine its sanctity. The determining factor was the placement of the doors. - Chazal (Mishnayos Maaser Sheini 3:8) say that, if the door opened into the Bais Hamikdash, the chamber was considered holy on the level of the Bais Hamikdash. This was true even if the *lishkah* was built outside the confines of the Azarah of the Bais Hamikdash. Nonetheless, as long as the door opened to the Bais Hamikdash, it was holy. If, however, the door opened to the outside, even if the room was built within the parameters of the Bais Hamikdash, it was not holy. - The door made the difference.

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, derives from this halachah that the determining factor which decides whether a person is within the confines of kedushah is where his thoughts are.

One can spend the day in a bais hamedrash studying Torah, but his mind is actually elsewhere. He really is not in the bais hamedrash. His body may be situated in the study hall, but -- if his thoughts are elsewhere -- he is elsewhere. Conversely, one may spend the majority of his day occupied with the mundane physical reality of earning a living; yet he makes time early in the morning and late in the evening to study Torah. If these two hours are where his head is focused, if these salvaged hours are the true centerpiece of his day, then this is where he is. - After all is said and done, it is not where one is situated that determines whether he is in the sphere of holiness or not – it is where his thoughts, his intentions, his desires are.

Perhaps we might add that, if someone were really situated in the bais hamedrash, if his learning were truly absolute, his mind would not wander. One does not entertain thoughts of the mundane unless something is lacking in his learning. Thus, the locus of his holiness is questionable.



לֹא יַרְפְּךָ וְלֹא יַשְׁחִיתֶךָ וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח אֶת־בְּרִית אֲבֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם - '***For Hashem, your G-d, is a merciful G-d, He will not abandon you nor destroy you***.' (4:31)

לֹא יַרְפְּךָ, "***He will not loosen His hold on you***." Rashi adds, "From holding onto you with His Hands… He will not separate you from being next to Him."

Hashem will never let go of us. Great! So, why are so many people lost in a spiritual maze, floundering, alone, without direction, with little to no faith? Is He still holding on?

Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, derives a frightening lesson from Rashi. Hashem holds on to us with both Hands. He never lets go/abandons

a Jew. How is it possible for a Jew to disengage from Hashem? Only one way: the Jew breaks away! He has chosen an alternative route from the one designated by Hashem. Although the Almighty is directing him one way, the Jew decides this path is not to his liking, so, he breaks away. - This is no different than the mother who walks down the street holding on to her young child, only to have the energetic child break from her grip and run away.

When we run around, we are actually running away from Hashem. This notion is what Moshe Rabbeinu passed on to his flock as he prepared to take leave of them. "Hashem is holding on to your hands; do not fear anyone, because to fear mortals while simultaneously holding on to Hashem's Hand is a sign that one does not truly believe in Hashem's power to protect him. Strengthen yourselves in your service; fear no one, for Hashem is with you."

To conjure up such imagery requires the tenacity of faith which was evinced by Jews of old: Jews of emunah p'shutah, simple faith, who (sort of) related to Hashem as a father, who was very real and very much a part of their lives.

While it is inappropriate, perhaps even ludicrous, to refer to Hashem in corporeal terms or to have such feelings of closeness, these people felt Hashem; they truly felt that they were holding on to Him.

My mother, A.H., survived six years of Nazi persecution with such conviction. She would "talk" to G-d all of the time. Today, due to our technological "advances," we have lost much of this simple feeling of closeness with the Almighty.

A popular author, a Chabad shliach, describes such a scenario which unfolded before his eyes during a hospital visit on Rosh Hashanah. It was a sombre morning, wet outside and depressing inside, as this young rabbi visited the geriatric ward of the local hospital. A few elderly women (bubby, each called herself) had gathered (actually, were wheeled in) to hear the sound of the Shofar. The shliach reminisced that this was a yearly project and that every year at

least one of the patients would break down in tears when the sound of the Shofar blast was heard. (We should be so fortunate to have such sensitivity to the sound of the Shofar: it comes with a belief in Hashem that is palpable.)



That special year, one bubby did not act as if she was that old. She appeared to be with it, actually brimming with excitement at the sight of the Shofar. Sharing memories of her childhood with the rabbi, she said that she hailed from a Chassidic background, steeped in warmth, soul and song. Even in the cold Pacific Northwest (where this story took place), it had never left her. She still felt she was (a young girl) at home (probably Russia/Ukraine).

The bubby recited the blessing, and the rabbi blew the Shofar – then the tears began to flow. She cried quietly, as the Shofar blasts permeated the room. The rabbi continued blowing until he completed the required blasts.

She continued to weep – and then she spoke to Him – to Hashem, Oy zisseh G-tt! Taierah, zisseh G-tt! Mein zisseh G-tt! "Oh sweet G-d! Dear sweet G-d! My sweet G-d!" she cried as if she were holding Hashem in her hands, in the hands of an elderly grandmother, old, wrinkled, discolored, but she "held" Hashem in her hands for dear life.

This elderly Jewess was holding on to an infinite, timeless G-d. She was speaking to Hashem intimately, as one speaks to a husband, a father, a son; as one speaks to someone whom she knows will never leave her. This is the way this woman was raised. She was taught

that Hashem is very real, very close – which, of course, He is. It is just that in our politically correct English language, we do not express ourselves with such reality. We neither refer to Hashem as "sweet," nor do we act as if we are holding His Hand. In Yiddish, which was this woman's native tongue, this was the way she spoke. Furthermore, this is how she felt.

We philosophize; we seek intellectual rationale; we talk about spiritual journeys and mind-blowing experiences, but, when it comes to the reality of Hashem, we are at a loss. This woman "saw" and "felt" Hashem in her presence. She experienced the Revelation on a constant basis. - Perhaps if we would theorize less and rely on simple conviction, we, too, would experience Hashem in our lives.

לֹא תְנַסּוּ אֶת ה׳ – '***You shall not test Hashem***'. (6:16)

One does not test Hashem to see whether He will fulfill His promises, because we are clueless as to the workings of the Divine. So many factors are included in the Heavenly calculations of which we are unaware. It is ludicrous to second-guess the Almighty, since we know so little of the true past and even less of the future – all of which are factored into everyone's reward and punishment.

There is one mitzvah, however, explains **Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl**, that we are allowed -- nay, encouraged -- to test Hashem: tzedakah, Maaser/tithe/charity.

We may "test" Hashem by giving tzedakah and observing how this act of generosity, in fact, ratchets up one's relationship with Hashem, the Source of all good. Rav Pincus explains that, for every other mitzvah in the Torah, Hashem promised reward for its successful completion, the actual reward being contingent upon the person's suitability and worthiness to receive said reward. For instance, one who honors his father and mother is promised longevity. If the son who is so good to his parents happens to be a

thief, obviously his unscrupulous activities will preclude him from receiving reward for honoring his parents.

This might be compared to the fellow who visits a doctor to treat a troubling ailment. The doctor prescribes a regimen of medication which will effect a cure in about a week. The patient then decides to drink a glass of poison or take a walk off the roof of the sixth floor. Can one blame the doctor's prescription for not working? Can one complain to the doctor that his advice did not save the man?

Likewise, the Torah promises arichas yamim, longevity, for Kibbud av v'eim, but, if he decides to jump off the roof, he is acting against the Torah. Tzedakah is different. It is much like a respirator that neither heals nor alters the quality of one's life but does keep the patient breathing indefinitely.

צְדָקָה תַּצִּיל מִמָּוֶת – '*charity saves from death*' – is a verity. Charity sustains a person. Try it; go ahead; test Hashem.

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ – '***Honor your father and mother***'. (5:16)

To render honor to one's parents is an awesome task. Honor means much more than respect. It means: to value; to cherish; to appreciate; to understand that one's presence in this world is attributed to his parents.

The Sefer HaChinuch writes (*33): **הָאָב וְהָאֵם הֵם סִבַּת הֱיוֹתוֹ בָּעוֹלָם, וְעַל כֵּן בְּאֱמֶת רָאוּי לוֹ לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם כָּל כָּבוֹד וְכָל תּוֹעֶלֶת שֶׁיוּכַל, כִּי הֵם הֱבִיאוּהוּ לָעוֹלָם** , "They are the cause of his being in this world."

When one realizes that his basic "being" is due to them, he should be filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Honor should be the result of this emotion.

Sadly, this emotion, or lack thereof, can backfire, when one has determined for himself that he owes his parents nothing. There are individuals raised in families that function only by some Divine

miracle, who feel that whatever they have achieved in life is despite their parents. Thus, they have little to no respect for their parents, because, in their minds, they owe their parents absolutely nothing. Understandably, this is not a Torah-oriented perspective on the mitzvah of Kibbud Av v'Eim. Hashem commands us to respect parents, because they partner with Him in our creation. To honor parents is to honor Hashem. To disrespect parents is to dishonor Hashem.

For some, the respect they harbor for their parents is the last vestige of what is left of their relationship with Yiddishkeit. They have long reneged the yoke of mitzvos, turned their backs on Judaism in general, but, out of respect for their parents, they return home during the year for milestone celebrations and traditional festival family gatherings.

There are those who wake up too late to accord their parents the respect they deserve. By the time they return to their senses, their parents are in the Olam HaEmes, World of Truth. So, they memorialize their parents in shul via the Yizkor service. This affords them the opportunity to visit the synagogue four times each year for the specific purpose of reciting a memorial prayer in honor of their parents.

The following story underscores this idea: Prior to World War II, Germany was a den of iniquity. The wave of assimilation had taken its toll on German Jewry. What the secular movements had initiated over a century past had long devastated the spiritual relationship the Jews had with Hashem.

For the most part, traditional Judaism had become a relic of the past, mitzvah observance being adhered to only by a small minority who still clung to the Torah as their anchor in a sea of confusion. The most illustrious families had been breached, especially in the larger cities, such as Berlin. Nonetheless, there were still those who clung steadfastly to the Torah, guided by such illustrious leaders as



Horav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, zl, author of the Seridei Eish, and rector, Rosh Yeshivah of the Hildsheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin. In Western Europe at that time, Rav Weinberg was the posek acharon, final adjudicator, of Torah law. A brilliant talmid chacham, Torah scholar, he held the respect of the entire frum, observant, world. In addition to his encyclopedic knowledge of the Torah, he was a symbol of middos tovos, positive character traits. His eidelkeit, pleasant disposition, and humanity were the products of the many years he had spent in Slabodka Yeshivah under the guidance of **Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zl**, reverently known as the Alter of Slabodka.

One day, **Rav Weingort** was asked by a resident of Modiin to deliver a lecture in the community shul. Rav Weingort acceded to the request and delivered a shiur, lecture, on the topic of the mitzvah of Kibbud Av v'Eim. During the course of the lecture, Rav Weingort reminded himself of an incident that had occurred many years earlier in Berlin. Since there is nothing like a good story to concretize an idea, he related the story in middle of his shiur.

The central Orthodox synagogue in Berlin was filled to capacity during the Yamim Noraim, High Holy Days. For many members of Berlin's Jewish community, this was the one and only time that they entered the holy sanctuary of a shul to pray. While prayer was not part of their daily ritual, and public prayer was certainly not their norm, Rosh Hashanah, and especially Yom Kippur were special days. The spark of Judaism, the Pintele Yid, which is concealed within each and every one of us, begins to burn and glow brightly on these days.

Indeed, the Jew to whom these holy days have no significance is truly distant from his source of life.

On Yom Kippur, Rav Weinberg would walk the long distance from his home to the central synagogue, because he wanted to daven with the community. A special place in the front of the shul was reserved for the leader of Western European Jewry. The davening was in accordance with tradition, adhering to all of the minhagim of the Berlin community. Each Jew prayed, conversing with Hashem, expressing his regrets over the past and articulating his aspirations for the future. It was a solemn worship service, since, after all, it was Yom Kippur. There was no looking back – only looking forward, praying, beseeching Hashem to accept their sincere teshuvah, repentance, and grant them and their families another year of life.

Finally came that solemn moment when the gabbai, sexton, called out, "Yizkor!" The time had come for the reciting of the prayer memorializing the dead. The young people, whose parents were still counted among the living, made their way to the exits. This was a time when the senior members of the shul, those who had sustained the loss of parents, were to be alone, to pray for the dead, and to be inspired by the temporal nature of life.

The doors to the sanctuary were closed, and the prayer of Yizkor was about to begin when suddenly a government limousine pulled up to shul. In front of the limousine rode two motorcycle police and two other motorcyclists brought up the rear of the motorcade.

The doors to the limousine were opened and out stepped Walter Rathenau, the Foreign Minister of the Weimar Republic. He was one of the most powerful statesmen of the German government. (He was assassinated on June 24, 1922 an act of violent murder which many believe was the result of anti-Semitism due to his Jewish heritage.)

The minister walked up the steps of the synagogue and entered the sanctuary. It was Yizkor. He was here to recite the prayer service for his Jewish parents.



A tumult broke out in the shul. This man was probably the most infamous assimilated Jew in Berlin. How dare he enter the sanctuary on this holiest day of the Jewish calendar year? This man had long ago turned his back on the religion of his ancestors. Yom Kippur certainly had no meaning to him. He did not acknowledge his Jewish heritage. Why would he be coming to shul? They were outraged.

Walter Rathenau did not care what people might have been whispering. He was the Foreign Minister – a Jew like everyone else in the synagogue. He wanted to recite the prayer for his parents. It was as simple as that.

As soon as he concluded his prayer, he left the synagogue, went to the limousine and was driven off. The worshippers were in a furor. The chutzpah, nerve, of this apostate Jew: To come by car and publicly desecrate the holiest day of the year was an outrage! He had profaned Yom Kippur and humiliated the Jewish community.

The chazzan, cantor, ascended to the lectern and was about to begin Tefillas Mussaf, when suddenly Rav Weinberg left his seat and walked up to the lectern and asked everyone to be seated. A lull fell over the entire assemblage. Not a sound was heard, as everyone sat quietly to listen to the Rav.

"Rabbosai! My friends," the Rav began, "how does it enter your minds to shame a Jew who came to shul to honor his parents? The man had no ulterior motive, other than a sincere desire to pay his respects to his departed parents."

The Rav was silent for a moment, and then he raised his voice, declaring, "Anyone who honors the memory of his parents is assured

that one day his descendants will return to the embrace of the Jewish people!"

With these words, Rav Weinberg returned to his seat, and the Mussaf service commenced. His words impacted the worshippers. No one would ever forget what the Rav had said.

Rav Weingort concluded the story and waited to see how it would impact the audience that had sat on edge to listen to him. Suddenly, one of the members of the audience stood up and asked to be recognized. The man seemed quite nervous, actually shaking, as he asked Rav Weingort, "Did the Rav say Rathenau? My name is Rathenau, and the Foreign Minister about whom the Rav is speaking was my great-grandfather! He was my father's grandfather!"

When asked how it occurred that he, the great-grandson of Walter Rathenau was frum, he explained that his father was chozeir b'teshuvah, having become an observant Jew when he moved to Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Weinberg's words rang true. When one honors the memory of his parents, his descendants will ultimately become observant.

כִּי שְׁאַל־נָא לְיָמִים רִאשֹׁנִים אֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ לְמִן־הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים אָדָם עַל־ הָאָרֶץ וּלְמִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד־קְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם הֲנִהְיָה כַּדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה אוֹ הֲנִשְׁמַע כָּמֹהוּ -"***For inquire now regarding the early days… from the day when G- d created man on the earth…Has there ever been anything like this great thing or has anything like it ever been heard?***" (4:32)

Horav Nissan Alpert z.l., offers an anecdote in explanation of this pasuk: A Jew once stood before a gentile magistrate, attempting to describe to him the greatness of the saintly **Chafetz Chaim z.l.** He told how the Chafetz Chaim's prayers penetrated the Heavens to implore the Almighty's blessing for those in need. He described the Chafetz Chaim's spiritual eminence and his ability to have miracles

made for him. The judge brushed him aside, refusing to believe all of the stories.

Hearing the disdain in the gentile's voice, the Jew looked into his eyes and, in an accusing voice said, "My lord, if the stories about the great Chafetz Chaim are not true, then why do they not relate such stories about you? We must, therefore, assume that the stories are true."

This is what the Torah is saying to us. If we need some "proof" of the validity of the Revelation and the Giving of the Torah, we have to take into consideration that we are the only nation about whom history records the Revelation at Sinai. The fact that this magnificent occurrence is not attributed to any other nation, in itself provides indisputable proof of our selection as the chosen people



וְלֹא תִגְנֹב – '***And you shall not steal***'. (5:17)

We live in a day and age during which the idea of theft has lost much of its aura of malevolence. Stealing used to be an anathema. Regrettably, people have discovered loopholes whereby what used to be evil no longer carries such a negative stigma.

Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, relates the story of a distinguished student of the **Arizal**, a wealthy businessman who owned two factories in Tzfas. In one factory, he employed only men; in the other factory, only women.

One day, the student visited his revered Rebbe. When he entered the room, the Rebbe said, "I see on your forehead a speck of gezel, theft." Apparently, the holy Ari was able to see what the average man could not. He looked at his student and saw a taint of misappropriated funds.

The student immediately replied, "Rebbe, I have never taken anything from anyone. How could I be suspected of theft?"

The Ari told him to introspect, because it was definitely there – someplace.

The next day, the student entered his two factories. He placed a bag of silver in front of all of his workers and declared, "Anyone who has any monetary claim against me, please come forward and take what is your due. Even if you remotely think that I owe you money – take it please! If anyone feels that he or she has sustained a monetary loss because of me – come forward and take your money!"

No one came forward. The silence was palpable. Finally, a middle-aged widow slowly came forward and took three pennies. She felt that this sum of money, although a mere pittance, was owed to her. Until now, she had never felt like complaining over such a paltry sum, but the owner of the factory was literally "begging" someone to come forward and relieve him of his money. Until now she had been embarrassed to complain. But, now, the situation had changed.

The Ari's student was overjoyed to return to his Rebbe with a clean slate. Indeed, the Ari no longer noticed the telltale sign on his student's forehead. Apparently, the issue had been resolved.

We now have an idea of the perspective in which a tzaddik, righteous person, views thievery. A mere three pennies, which a woman felt in her heart rightfully belonged to her, comprised a breach in the transgression of Lo signov, "Do not steal." - It is not how much. The mere fact that another person feels degraded is sufficient cause for the act of theft to leave a spiritual blemish on a person's forehead. - Can we imagine what our foreheads must look like?

The Ari's student was spiritually blemished due to three pennies of which he was unaware, but a poor widow was. We play with people's lives – hiring, firing at will, disregarding the emotions of the worker, the financial loss – as long as our bottom line appears healthy. - Lo Signov!

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה' בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר - '*I implored Hashem at that time*.' (3:23)

In the Zera Kodesh, **the Ropshitzer Rebbe, zl**, observes that the pasuk neglects to identify "that time." Was Moshe Rabbeinu referring to a specific time?

The Ropshitzer explains that this omission is by design. The Torah is teaching us a critical lesson with regard to tefillah, prayer. No specific time is established for petitioning Hashem. We can approach the Almighty at any time. No "appointments" are necessary. A son need not have a special time to speak with his father. (If he does, both father and son have a problem.) Hashem is our Heavenly Father, Who waits for our entreaty with a warm welcome. Even if the response is not what we are hoping for, our supplication will be heard, our emotions felt and saved. No prayer is lost; no tear is wasted.

The Rebbe says that a person should never say to himself, "Right now, at this moment, I do not have the lucidity to pray. I need to be in a proper presence of mind to be able to articulate my needs correctly. Later on, when I am free of some of the burdensome pressures that are overwhelming me, I will be able to daven like a mentch.

This is an incorrect way of thinking. One should daven whenever the need arises, regardless of his frame of mind. No wrong time exists to speak to a father.

Horav Yechezkel Abramsky, zl, would daven to Hashem in the most natural manner, as if this were the only way he could ever accomplish or obtain anything. When he would return from praying at the Kosel Maaravi, he would remark in Yiddish, "I asked Him for this or that."

Everyone knew that "Him" was a reference to Hashem. This was his usual vernacular – He spoke with "Him." His relationship with Hashem was very real, like a son to his father.



Rav Abramsky's Shabbos table was set with its fine linen, dishes and flatware as early as Friday morning. A student who was visiting that morning inquired why the family was preparing for Shabbos so early in the day.

He explained that, years earlier, upon immigrating to Eretz Yisrael, his wife's grandfather, the venerable **Radbaz, zl**, moved to Tzfas where he maintained a yeshivah. He became gravely ill and the medical establishment had already despaired his returning to good health.

He suddenly spoke the following: "Hashem, what is it You want of me? I study Torah all day. I authored a commentary on the Yerushalmi (which no one else had really achieved). If You want me to write a commentary to Bavli, You already have so many other commentaries that cover the gamut of Bavli."

As soon as he concluded his short "request" of Hashem, he closed his eyes and appeared to be drifting off into a deep sleep. A few minutes passed, and he opened his eyes and spoke. He turned to his rebbetzin and made a request, "Please, I ask that every Friday morning when I return home from Shacharis that the Shabbos table should already be set. - I was told by 'Heaven' that my cure is dependent upon this."

Rav Abramsky said, "In deference to the Zaide's custom, we, too, set our table early." (The purpose of redacting this story is to show how the Radbaz prayed to Hashem. It was his conversation with the Almighty.)

Rav Abramsky would walk over to the Kosel and place his face close to it and speak to the stones. His close students wanted to know what their saintly Rebbe said to the stones. As the Rav was lost in his conversation with the stones, they carefully moved closer in order to listen.

This is what they heard: "Ribbono shel olam," he wept, "You are the greatest Rebbe of all. How do I know this? It is written, Hamelameid Torah l'Amo Yisrael. 'How will Moshiach know Torah?' Where will he study it? Not in Brisk, Ger, Porat Yosef or Ponovez. Where then? Apparently, You, Hashem will teach him. - So I ask, 'If you can teach Torah to Moshiach Tziddkeinu, what would be if you would learn Torah with me?'"

This is how Rav Abramsky prayed to Hashem! He conversed with the Almighty like a son to his father. Raising good, G-d-fearing, Torah-abiding children does not just happen. It requires much vigilance, hard work, and, most of all, prayer, or, as the **Brisker Rav** was wont to say: Tehillim mit treren, "Tehillim accompanied by copious weeping."

He observed that his father, **Horav Chaim, zl**, cried for him even after he was a Rosh Yeshivah! Indeed, Rav Chaim's father, the **Bais HaLevi, zl**, davened for his son even after he was Rav in Brisk.

Likewise, someone once asked the saintly **Chasam Sofer** how he merited to have such a holy son as the **Ksav Sofer**. The Chasam Sofer removed his hat, turned it over and said, "I filled this hat with tears to merit having such a precious son."

We all want good children – on our terms. We check off all the boxes on the parenting guides to make certain that we do everything correctly. What about tefillah, prayer? Perhaps, because it is not included in all the parenting guidebooks, it is not necessary. - We maintain otherwise. It is our first and only line of defence. Without Hashem's participation and blessing, the guidebooks are meaningless.

If we do not petition His blessing, then we are failing our children as parents.

Rabbeinu Bachya (Shemos 19:3) writes: "It is befitting for a woman to daven to Hashem following the lighting of candles, for this is a mitzvah that helps her very much. This is the time in which she should daven that Hashem grant her children who are enlightened with Torah."

Parents once came to one of the gedolim and cried concerning their son's spiritual status, which had dwindled terribly. Sadly, he had deviated from the Torah way. What could they do? The gadol replied that the mother should light and accept Shabbos upon herself thirty minutes prior to candle-lighting time. This should be followed by intense prayer from the depth of her heart, with tears and pleading to Hashem. Their child would return. - He did.

Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl, said that whenever he had a difficulty or a problem with a child, the first thing he did was speak to Hashem and ask for His help and guidance. He asked that Hashem give him sound counsel on how to speak with his child effectively in addressing the different situations that they faced.

As I wrote in the beginning: Nothing just happens. We must ask – nay, beg – for it. Only then can we hope to merit Hashem's blessing.

"No matter what occurs, remember that Hashem is our loving father Who only has our best interests in mind. When we internalise this truth, nothing in this world will upset us." ~ Rabbi Shimshon Rephael Hirsch.

"Prayer is the ladder of the soul – reaching upwards towards Hashem." ~ The Pele Yoetz.





What should be our attitude towards moving to Eretz Yisroel? Should we be preparing for making aliyah to Israel?

What should be our attitude towards preparing to move to Eretz Yisroel? Or to Israel?

Well, there's a big difference between those two. We should prepare every day to go to Eretz Yisroel. Every day you should be ready because when Moshiach comes you won't have much time to prepare. You should know that the Chofetz Chaim was busy preparing. He wrote seforim on kodshim and the avodas beis hamikdash, the laws that will be in place when we rebuild the beis hamikdash, so that we should know what to do when we get there.

So this type of preparation surely should be made. You should be preparing all the time for that great day when Moshiach comes. Now, if you're thinking about preparing to go there soon yourself, without Moshiach, then it depends on your circumstances. If you're going to go live in a very Orthodox neighborhood, which will be better than your present environment, then there's no reason why you shouldn't improve yourself. Why not? However if you're just going there, to Eretz Yisrael, because it's Israel, to settle anyplace, then it doesn't pay. Because you can move to places in Israel that are just like

Chicago; like the bad neighborhoods in Chicago. If you move to Tel-Aviv, to certain neighborhoods in Tel-Aviv, and many other places in the State of Israel, then it's no different than moving to Chicago.

So you have to know where you want to move. But if you have a good place to move to, where it will improve you, then why not? As long as you have parnassah, why not?



How do we celebrate chamisha asar b'Av?

We celebrate it, first of all, by saying **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַמַּעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים** – '***Thank You Hashem for the night***.' How wonderful it is to have nighttime! Nighttime is a very great blessing; you have to study the nighttime. It's not just lack of the day. No! Nighttime is made with wisdom. So start studying the wonders of nighttime.

And tomorrow morning say **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת** . Thank Hashem for the sun. And at breakfast, say **בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים** - He gives us food with flavors and with colors and aromas. Food is delectable! So thank Him for the food you ate. And so on and so on during the rest of the day. And that's a good way to celebrate chamisha asar B'Av and shisha asar B'Av and shiva asar B'Av! Every day in Av and every day in Elul too.

Now, in the days of the Beis Hamikdash, there were no happier days for the Am Yisroel than the 15th of Av. In those days, Chamisha Asar B'Av was celebrated with the kedusha that existed at that time. I don't have time to explain it right now but today it's different. And therefore we're not able to celebrate anymore like they did in the days of old.



Is there a problem with taking children to concerts where *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos* will be singing kosher songs?

I will tell you my private opinion. I don't think that children should become accustomed to unnecessary and superfluous things. Don't train your children to become accustomed to going places that cost money. They don't need it and you're ruining them in the process.

You can train them to take walks. They can take walks and get fresh air. They could play a little in the street with a ball and get some exercise, but don't take them to concerts and things like that. I don't believe in that at all.

I don't believe in taking children to travel at all. Don't get them accustomed to luxuries. A child should be taught how to live a frugal life and to desire only what is necessary. Today, people are feeding children all kinds of ideas – all kinds of wrong ideas. And people think it's normal. Even to send your daughter to Seminary in, let's say, Gateshead, I don't believe in it anymore. It's a very good place, Gateshead, but send your daughter to Boro Park or to Yeshiva of Brooklyn. There are very good places here.

And don't let your daughter travel to Eretz Yisroel either. A man approached me the other day. His daughter wants to go to Eretz Yisroel. She's a frum girl. He wants to know what I think about it. What does she have to go to Eretz Yisroel for?! It costs a lot of money to go to Eretz Yisroel. What does she have to go to Eretz Yisroel for?! An unmarried girl should waste money on going to Eretz Yisroel?!

No, I don't believe in these things.

Teach your children to save their money. They'll need it someday. A bank account is better than traveling – a savings account in a bank. Teach them to save money for themselves. And you want to train them to spend money on unnecessary things?! No, I disapprove of that.

While Its Still Hot – Rabbi Eliezer Zeytouneh



A father comes into the house, and he brings a pizza pie home. The pizza is beautiful, hot, and crispy. He takes two slices and gives it to the older child. He has another son who is only 4-years old. His father gives him one slice.

The boy looks at his older brother's plate, with two slices, and he only has one slice – and he has a tantrum and bursts out crying! "I want two slices, I want two slices. How come he got two slices, and I only got one? It's not fair, I also want two slices."

He rolls around on the floor crying for 20 minutes because he wants two slices.

What happens after a while? The father starts getting dizzy from the child, caves in and gives him a second slice, and puts it on his plate.

The kid quietens down, and starts eating it, but very quickly realizes that the pizza isn't hot anymore, and it's soggy now. So, even though he's got two slices now, they're no longer appealing or pleasant to eat. - He could have enjoyed one piece of hot crispy pizza. He was so busy complaining about what he didn't have, that what he did have, he now wasn't able to enjoy.

And that's what it means - "אֵיזֶהוּ עָשִׁיר הַשָּׂמֵחַ בְּחֶלְקוֹ?" Do you want to know who a wealthy person is? The one who enjoys his slice while it's hot. Enjoy the slice while it is in front of you. Don't think about what you don't have, or what your neighbour does have, or what the person across the street has. Or what your big brother has, or your little brother has.

It doesn't make a difference what they have. – "***The slice on your plate is hot beautiful and delicious***!"

But if you don't want to enjoy it now, and you still complain, when the time comes for you to enjoy it, - it will be cold and soggy! It's no longer appetizing.

Tzitzis – What A Hot Deal by Rabbi Yaakov Singer



"One of the simplest commandments to perform is the Mitzvah of Tzitzis. Buy it, maintain it, wear it. You put it on in the morning and then you are on automatic pilot throughout the rest of the day without having to do anything else. Imagine being able to earn while not working. That's Tzitis, earning Mitzvos every second with very little effort. An insurance protection policy, offering unprecedented benefits to the individual wearing them. It's a deal no one can afford to pass up.

My Rosh Hayeshiva, **HoRav HaGoan Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg Zt"l** was known far and wide for his uncompromising performance of this Mitzvah. He wore many pairs and when asked why, he would joke and say, "I wear for for all those that don't".

How foolish on our part would it be to forfeit such a priceless opportunity.

As a student in the Yeshiva, I had the privilege of sitting right next to him. One day he gave a Halocha Shuir about the importance of wearing Tzitis. He also encouraged everyone at that time to try and wear a woolen garment, even in the hot summer months. When I asked what was wrong with wearing cotton, since its cooler, he simply responded that wool was the higher standard. Then he laughed pointing to the pile of woolen Tzitzis he was wearing and remarked,

"better to be hot in this world and cold in the other world, then cold in this world and hot in the other world".

He trained us by example, to try and perform all Mitzvos in the best way possible. He would say "when it comes to your personal endeavors do you settle for second best, then don't settle for second best when it comes to performing Hashem's Mitzvos. Live by a higher standard."



R' Aharon Kotler *zt"l*, was one of American Jewry's greatest *Torah* leaders. After the turbulent years of WWII, when the Jewish world was in need of so much guidance and direction, especially in America, R' Aharon was at the forefront of it all. He was personally involved in assisting countless groups and individuals, as well as leading and directing many communities and organizations.

Once, **Reb Meir Pantel *z"l*** and **Reb Yosef Friedenson *z"l***, were talking with R' Aharon about an important communal matter. Suddenly, R' Aharon stood up and apologized for not being able to

talk with them any longer. He had an urgent matter elsewhere, he explained, and had to immediately attend. - R' Aharon was on edge. It was obvious that he was anxious and in a big rush.

Just then, his *Rebbetzin* came in and reminded him that he wouldn't have time to *daven mincha* later, and she advised he *daven* now and then immediately go.

Well, that "quick" *shemona esrei* took the great *Rosh Yeshivah* 45 minutes!

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN תורת הצבי על הפטרות

נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי

The *Haftorah* of *Shabbos Nachamu* and its famous words of **נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי** - ***"[be] comforted, [be] comforted, My Nation"*** (Yeshayahu 40:1) is the declaration of *Hashem* through his emissary *Yeshaya HaNavi*, comforting *Klal Yisroel* in the aftermath of the terrible *Churban*.

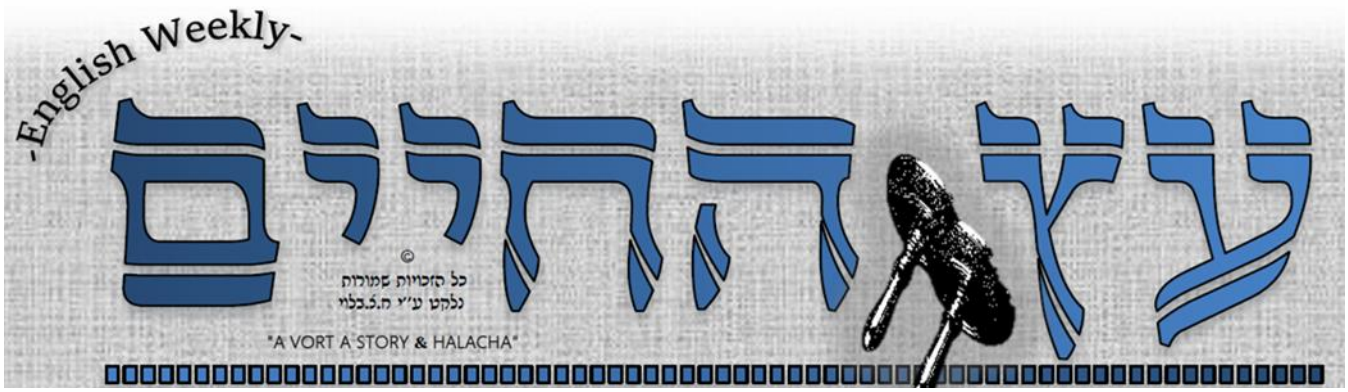
"Nachamu Nachamu Ami!" These are the eternal words of *Yeshaya HaNavi* who declared that *Hashem* wishes for His children to be comforted even after deserving of and receiving terrible punishments.

But while these words are meant as a present comfort in the aftermath of the terrible destruction and pain wrought on *Klal Yisroel*, it is interesting to note that the *Navi* made this declaration years before the actual *Churban* took place.

R' Tuvia Lesitzin *zt"l* (Sefer Kerem Tuvia) says that this interesting point is in fact what underscores a fundamental ideal of Judaism. - He explains that *Chazal* teach us that Jews should always try and see the positive in difficult situations and while we do our best, it is by no means an easy feat.

Yeshaya HaNavi made this declaration prior to the actual destruction so that when *Klal Yisroel* will be forced into exile, they will have some vestige of hope to cling to. As they were being bound, shackled and dragged down to *Bavel*, they already knew that they could rely on *Hashem* to comfort them and ultimately redeem them.

What is truly amazing is that *Yeshaya HaNavi's* timeless message, while it offered *Klal Yisroel* an assertion of comfort which helped them back then get through the tough times, is still a relevant message of comfort which enables us – thousands of years later – to draw comfort in the knowledge that the coming of *Moshiach* and the ultimate *geula* is just around the corner.



Ahavah

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ.There is a mitzvah in the torah [in this week's sedra] "And you should **love** Hashem, your G-d".

The big question that many Rishonim ask on this mitzvah is that "Ahavah" is an emotional feeling, if so, how is it that Hashem commands us something which is a feeling in our heart? *In other words*, it is very understandable a type of commandment which obligates us to **do** an action such as putting on Teffilin, eating Matzah and so on. Whereas, "love" is a **feeling**, what if I just don't have the feeling?

Some Rishonim answer that Hashem made the world in such a way that if one just pays attention to Hashem's world, His creations, His

awesomeness, His wisdom that He put into every single of the billions and billions of creations. Creations that even the smartest professor, even if he would spend billions of years, he would still never manage to perform an iota of the mass and vast **חכמה** Hashem put into the entire **בריאה**, into every human being, into every blade of grass into the skies, the stars, the galaxies, the **חכמה** is literally endless. Even the little bit of chochmah that the smartest person of the world has comes from Hashem too!

The Rashba and **The Rambam** both say that when a person is mesboinen in all this, it immediately infuses them with a tremendous, tremendous **אהבה** toward Hakadosh Boruch Hu.

So yes, it's true, **אהבה is** an emotional feeling, but Hashem gave us the tools to ignite the emotional feeling of **אהבה** toward Him by way of being **מתבונן** in His beautiful and amazing creations and His incredible and amazing world!

אהבה is gematria **אחד**.

The reason is because the more **ONE,** the more connected you feel with another person, the more **אהבה** you will have toward the person. It is pashut. *Therefore*, the same applies toward Hashem, the closer connected we feel to Hashem, the more **אהבה** we will have and feel toward Hashem as well!

Another point is that the more you love someone, the more you will shower praises on them. So too, the more you love Hashem, the more you will praise Hashem as well, you will praise what Hashem made you will not stop praising His Torah hakedoshah, His world, His everything, His people!

Besides for loving hashem in our hearts, there is also a way to show Hashem we love Him with our actions.

The Mesilas Yesharem tells us the secret. The regular day in-day-out acts that we do in our Avodas Hashem is definitely required.

However, that does not necessarily show our true love to the Hashem.

Which actions show that we really want a close relationship with Hashem and that we "live" Hashem?

It's the little additions that we put effort into our Yiddishkeit that are sort of not even expected of us. These small "extras" can be phrased, "The cinnamon mint tea moments of our life."

What do I mean?

Rav Shmuel Barron Shlit"a coined this phrase and brought out this Yesod from the Mesilas Yesharim with an incredible Mashel:

There was once a Yid who came home late one night from his friend's Chasuna. He was on the phone talking to someone about the wedding and he said, "You won't believe it, they had my favorite tea in the world by the Chasunah - cinnamon mint tea. I had one cup, then I had a second cup and then I gulped down a third… I must have drunk twenty cups of cinnamon mint tea…" - Meanwhile his son was sitting in the next room and he overheard the entire conversation.

A few weeks later the father was not feeling well and all that they had in the house was some cheap simple tea. The father was lying in bed asked his son if he could make him a tea. The son dashed out of the house without his father knowing and bought a box of cinnamon mint tea. He ran home, prepared the tea and handed it to his father.

The father thanked the son, made a bracha and took a sip. The father could not believe what he was tasting. He was utterly shocked! He said to his son, "Cinnamon mint tea? How did you know it's my favorite tea?! "

I am sure he wanted to give his son a big kiss on his cheek…

This is the yesod. Doing the unexpected is extremely valuable and that is what the Mesilas Yesharim says shows true Ahavas Hashem.



Dancing At The Foot Of The Jail

During the summer months, many yeshivos in Brooklyn bring their students to the Catskills Mountains. The boys experience a pleasant atmosphere where they learn and at the same time rejuvenate for the upcoming school year.

The Satmar Yeshiva was no different. All the students of the yeshiva moved up to the yeshiva's private campsites for the summer months. In the summer of 2018, one of the yeshiva's *rebbeim*, **R' Eliezer Steinberg**, was impressed with their learning and wanted to reward them by taking them on a daytrip. He arranged a special outing to an amusement park.

The day came, and the boys excitingly boarded the buses. After an hour-long ride, they were very disappointed to discover that the amusement park was closed! But, having come so far, R' Steinberg didn't want to just go straight back to camp. He knew that there was a prison close by, so he told the driver to bring them there. Unfortunately, there are Jewish inmates there, he thought, so they'd try their luck — maybe the jail will grant them admission, and the yeshiva boys would pay them a visit.

Hearing the plan, the boys were once again cheered up. Visiting a jail wasn't something that many of them had done, and they were excited over the adventure.

Thinking that they weren't going to be granted entry too easily, the *rebbi* instructed the driver to pull up to the prison's fence, hoping that they would be able to at least greet some of its Jewish inmates from the other side. However, there were no inmates in sight; they were all indoors.

R' Steinberg then noticed that the prison gate was open. He told the driver to proceed in, hoping that they can greet some of the inmates.

Within a half a minute, they heard sirens heading their way. It was a police jeep charging toward them - and they knew why. They were in for trouble. The jeep stopped right in front of the bus, and a corrections officer got out, and started screaming, "Why didn't you obey the rules? The entrance clearly stated 'No entrance!'"

Seeing the officer's anger, the *rebbi* knew he would have to step up and settle this. R' Steinberg invited the officer onto the bus. There, he explained to the officer what brought them here.

Pointing to the group of boys, the *rebbi* explained, "We've traveled a long journey, only to find that the amusement park we were travelling to is closed. It's a big letdown for all these boys, and I was simply trying to cheer them. Bringing them to the jail is certainly an exploration for them, and that's all I was trying to do."

Hearing their plight, the officer's heart softened. "You have two minutes," he told them. "But two minutes is two minutes! You are to leave right after." With that, the *rebbi* agreed, and the officer got off the bus.

As the bus drove up closer to the prison building, the *rebbi* turned to the boys and asked them how they should utilize their two minutes. On the spot, they came to the same conclusion—they would give words of *chizuk* to the Jewish prisoners there, however they could.

The boys were thrilled with the plan. When they were in earshot of the jail cells, the yeshiva students got off the bus and started hollering, "Yidden, don't be afraid! Yidden, strengthen yourselves with Emunah in Hashem…!"

While they were screaming this, they saw many Jewish inmates peeking out of the windows. In particular, they noticed a non-observant Jew marvelling at them from the third floor, cheering

them on. Seeing his reaction invigorated them to start singing. They spontaneously formed into a circle and sang the renowned song, "Nur Emunah, Nur Emunah…"

From the little they could see, they realized how all the Jewish inmates — and especially the fellow on the third floor — were taking it all in. In the mere thirty seconds of dancing, they saw how many inmates were uplifted and inspired.

The corrections officer, on the other hand, was not inspired. Seeing what was going on, he zipped right back and yelled, "This is not why I granted you permission! Leave!"

They obeyed his instructions and left without hesitation. The boys were thrilled with their experience and were ecstatic over the fact that they were able to encourage other fellow Jews. It had been a trip of a lifetime—they certainly wouldn't forget it.

But the story only gets better.

Jail's Aftermath

Thirty-six months passed, and at one of the Satmar camps, a fellow Yid came to deliver inspirational talk. He was traveling from camp-to-camp, inspiring audiences with his story. He spoke about his challenging youth and all the troubles he'd faced. He had, unfortunately, grown up non-observant, and somewhere along the line he'd gotten into trouble with the law, to the point that he'd gotten convicted with a ten-year sentence.

"My upbringing was completely removed from Yiddishkeit," he explained. "I was so removed that even when the prison chaplain would invite me to join the minyan, I declined. I had nowhere else to run, but I still felt so removed.

"The chaplain tried every day—for years—to get me to come. 'Give it a try,' he'd say. 'You're not going anywhere anyway. What do you have to lose?' But his argument fell on my deaf ears – every time.

"One day, I heard my fellow inmates calling me to the window. A commotion was taking place; someone was calling to the Yidden from the road, and the other inmates figured they'd call all the Jewish inmates to see what was going on. I didn't know what the commotion was, but as soon as I got to the window, I felt it. Some kids were giving us positive words and expressions of courage and trust; knowing that I was a Yid, they wanted me to partake.

"Seeing their enthusiasm evoked in me my inner spark. It ignited the fire within, and ever since I wanted to connect to Yiddishkeit.

"The next day, when the chaplain came around, I took him up on the offer. After davening, the chaplain was very happy about me coming and attending, and he approached me to talk. My very first question to him was: What was the song that those boys had sung? It struck my inner core.

"The chaplain explained that the song had been composed by the *heiligeh* **Kaliver Rebbe**. He had written it during the Holocaust. He'd lost everything then: his wife, his children—even his very own beard, which had been brutally yanked out. "And yet, despite all that, he set his life's mission to strengthen and encourage others. He would uplift them by strengthening their relationship with Hashem and implanting in them the fundamentals of Yiddishkeit.

"One of the Kaliver Rebbe's many unique talents was music. He was very musical. He used his talent to bring Yidden back to Yiddishkeit through his heartwarming *nigunim*. Through his heartfelt songs, he would touch the core of many Yidden and bring them from their broken state of mind, leaving them with a passion for Torah and mitzvos.

"The chaplain went on to explain the meaning of the song 'Nur Emunah.' Through Emunah, he said, a person can achieve a pleasant life in This World and in the Next. That touched me. I'd always thought that keeping Torah and mitzvos was only good in the Next World, at a price of 'sacrificing' one's enjoyment in This World. But

now, I learnt that living by the Torah values provides a meaningful life in This World as well as the Next World.

"That night, I twisted and turned unable to fall into even the slightest sleep. That encounter left me with food for thought. I became obsessed about Yiddishkeit. Why had those boys shown so much interest in Jewish prisoners like me? They don't know us at all, and in all likeliness they'll never know. I realized that they did it because all Yidden are part of one happy family, and they therefore cared for us.

"From that day on, even before the chaplain started his rounds, I was waiting to partake in the minyan. Experiencing that sense of courage and unity, I asked the chaplain for *sefarim* so that I could research more about Yiddishkeit, and slowly I became more informed about it.

"My remaining years in jail were filled with learning about observing Torah and mitzvos and listening to many insightful classes. When my ten-year term was up, I left as a fully observant Yid. "I entered jail as a non-observant Jew, and I left as a fully observing one."

After his speech concluded, R' Steinberg called him into a side room, sharing with him some of the yeshiva's pictures from previous years. The former prison inmate was delighted to discover that he'd found the very *rebbi* who'd given him that inspiration. The yeshiva boys had never known what their trip to the prison had led to, but now they saw firsthand how much of an impact it had.

We never know how far our actions can go. The impact of several words can change the mindset of someone — and can change him for life. His mindset toward Yiddishkeit can be impacted with merely a few positive words. At the time, it isn't visible as to what the impact will be, but its impact can be very far and great.

Words have power! Words are powerful!



Review of the הלכות relevant to the Holidays

Kashering Cookers - After all cookers and ovens have been properly cleaned…

1} **Electric hobs** can be kashered by putting the hob on highest setting and leaving on for a few minutes once it has reached its highest temperature. The base and surrounding areas should be covered appropriately with foil.

2} **Ceramic hobs** – both halachically and practically Ceramic hobs are difficult to kasher.

If no alternative cooking facilities are available, one can use this hob by properly wrapping the base of the pot with silver foil.

3} **Induction hobs** – Induction hobs cannot be kashered. The simple method of enabling an induction hob to be used for kosher cooking is by covering with an induction stove protector mat. There are several products available on the market. Courtesy of R' Yitzchok Grosberg נ"י the Rov has made these available for those who require. Covering the hob with silver foil is also usually effective.

Important note regarding induction hobs is a Shabbos consideration. Because removing the pot automatically switches off the heat, this cooker is generally unsuitable to use for Shabbos.

4} **Ovens**

Electric or microwave ovens are generally not kashered. They can both be used when the food placed inside them is double wrapped, with wrappers which **remain sealed** during the heating process.

Tevilas Keilim

If one did not bring suitable pots for the specific requirements of an induction cooker, new appropriate pots may have to be purchased.

Attention would need to be given to the requirement of Tevilas keilim [and so too for any other food preparing utensils which are purchased on holiday]. Because toiveling facilities are unlikely to be available, one can [for short term use] give the utensil to a non-Jew to acquire and then use as a borrowed item. The acquisition should be done by the non-Jew lifting the item and lechatchila by him also making a nominal payment.

Some Brief Hilchos Shabbos considerations discussed: -

1} **No "Blech" available**.

Where a blech is not available, it would be permissible to leave the food on the stove without a "blech" so long as the food is at least half cooked before Shabbos. (Under these circumstances ideally the food should be fully cooked before Shabbos.) Without a blech, it would **not** be permissible to put back any pot onto the stove once removed.

2} **Electric water pump system**.

In rural areas, there are many houses/cottages which have a specially installed electric water system to boost the water pressure. If you notice that a pump is being heard when you draw water [or you have been informed that this system is relevant to your accommodation], the simple way of remedying the obvious Shabbos problem would be to leave a running tap somewhere within the premises such that the pump would remain activated throughout.

3} **Fridge lights**.

Please remember to remove bulb, or Sellotape down the activating switch before Shabbos. If neither is an option, consider putting the plug of the fridge on a timer so that you could open the fridge when disconnected. On some modern fridges it may be possible to disconnect the light with a strong magnet appropriately positioned before Shabbos. If none of these options are available, one can allow a non-Jew to open the fridge for the Seudas Shabbos requirements.

Please feel free to ask any queries that have come your way. Enjoy a Kosher Holiday!



The Eternal People

This Shabbos is called Shabbos Nachamu because the *haftorah* starts with Hashem's words to the Navi Yeshaya: *Nachamu, nachamu ami* ("Be consoled, be consoled My nation"). This week's *haftorah* is the first of seven *haftoros* consoling the Jewish people. After the Three Weeks of darkness and destruction, the Ribbono Shel Olam consoles us through the words of His prophet Yeshayahu. Each week, the consoling grows more and more powerful.

Since this is the first *haftorah* of consolation, shouldn't we begin with one *nachamu* — a basic level of comfort — and adding as we go in the coming weeks? What is the idea of starting off with a double expression of consoling?

Many answers have been given to this question. Perhaps we can say that the implication of this double expression is an emphasis. The consolation will be great and powerful. It is not merely a hope for consolation, it is a promise. Klal Yisroel **will** be consoled. To understand that we must take a step back and get a wider vantage point. (*Rabbi Ben Zion Shafier*)

"Growth is not achieved instantly, rather takes time and steady effort." ~ R Mordechai Gifter.



Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The Chofetz Chaim once visited a potential supporter of his Yeshivah, and while talking, he sensed that the conversation was heading towards Lashon Hara. The Chofetz Chaim noticed a telegram on the man's desk, and said, "It seems as if you've rewritten this telegram a few times."

"Yes," said the man, "Every word costs money. I've taken great care to write only what is necessary."

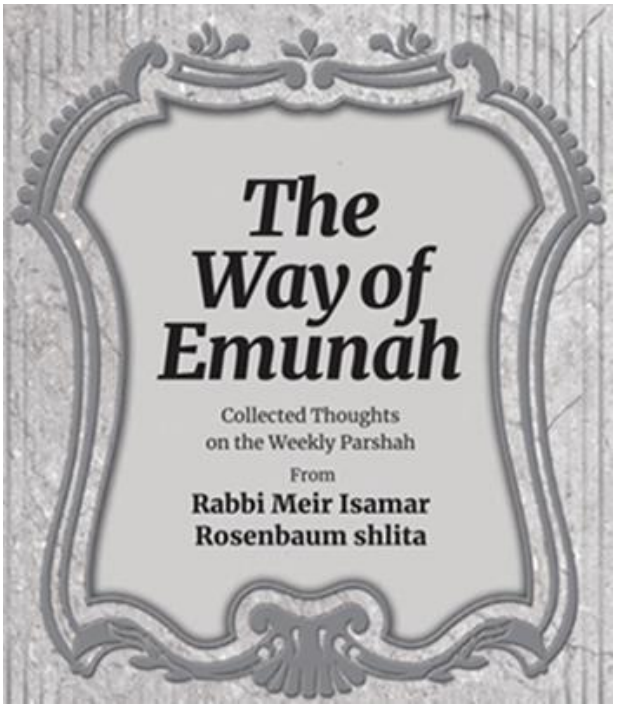
The Chofetz Chaim responded, "If only people were so careful with the words they speak as you are with your telegram."

After that comment, the man reflected on the conversation they were having, and resolved to always think about what he was going to say before he said it!

- **אֵין עוֹד** 4:39 means "there is none other" or "there is nothing else." "The Hashem is G-d in heaven above and on the earth below" can be explained to mean: there is nothing else we need to know, for this one fact is the foundation and root of all knowledge in the world.

- **Mayonei Shel Torah**

נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי - ***"[be] comforted, [be] comforted, My Nation"*** (Yeshayahu 40:1) - Comfort yourselves, simply with the fact that - Ami - you are My nation. Such should be by you the greatest comfort. ~ The Binei Yissoschor ZY"A - Der Torah Kvall



כִּי מִי־גּוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֱלֹקִים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו כַּה׳ אֱלֹקֵינוּ בְּכָל־קָרְאֵנוּ אֵלָיו – '***For who is the great nation that Hashem is close… like Hashem your G-d whenever you call to Him…***' (4:7)

● Turning to the Master Himself

A man once came to the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l** and said that he is coming as a messenger of his friend to ask for a bracha for him.

The Chofetz Chaim said sadly, "Oy vavoy! One butcher sends another butcher to obtain a blessing from a third butcher. Isn't that ridiculous! Wouldn't it be better to turn the Master himself? - The Torah says that he is close to all who call out to Him, so anyone can ask for His help!"

וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה׳ אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּמָצָאתָ כִּי תִדְרְשֶׁנּוּ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ - '***And from there you will seek Hashem, your G-d, and you will find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.***' (4:29)

● Like the Tefillah of the Tzadik Hador

Rav Aharon of Karlin zy"a would say that tefillah b'tzibur is more effective than the tefillos of the tzadik hador.

"Every moment of life, even if accompanied by the worst suffering, is the greatest gift that a person can have." ~ Rav Chaim Kanievsky.

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלקֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ - '*And you shall love Hashem your G-d with your entire heart…*' (6:5)

● **Reciprocated Love**

Rav Akiva Eiger zt"l asks how one can be commanded to love Hashem. Love is a feeling – and how can one be told what to feel?

He says that the answer is found in the concluding words of the tefillah of "Ahavah Rabbah." We recite: "Who chooses His nation Yisroel with love." - If we recognize that Hashem loves us, it is incumbent upon us to love Him in return.

It is stated that "like reflections from water, so is the heart of man." - It is up to us to recognize His love, and once we do so, we will naturally love Him.

L'Maaseh

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l never wasted a second and during krias ha'Torah, he would fill the time between aliyos by learning mishnayos. He cherished every moment of limud ha'Torah, but not just his own.

One time, someone was learning in the beis medrash and got up to look at a certain sefer. As he was standing near the bimah looking up something, he noticed that R' Moshe, who would usually sit for hours at his seat writing, was pacing back and forth. When the student closed the sefer, R' Moshe approached him and asked him if he could make a phone call for him in English. It was an important matter, but R' Moshe didn't want to disturb anyone while they were learning.

It was always his practice to look for someone from outside the beis medrash if he needed to have somebody sign as a witness; better to bother someone outside rather than disturb someone's learning even for a moment.

Those who attach themselves to Hashem are alive. - How is it possible for a person to attach himself to Hashem?

Rather, a person who makes it his business to benefit talmidei chachamim are considered as sticking to Hashem.

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל



You probably knew that it's praiseworthy to speak pleasantly with other people. But did you that when a person speaks pleasantly to others, he is fulfilling the words of the Torah from this week's parsha?!

The verse says וְעָשִׂיתָ הַיָּשָׁר וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵי ה' - '***And you shall do what is proper and good in the eyes of Hashem***.' (Devorim 6:18).

The Ramban comments on this verse and says that when a person speaks pleasantly with others, he is fulfilling the words of the Torah in that verse!

"Everything in the world has one main overall purpose, – to make us aware of Hashem. – Becoming more and more aware of Hashem, that is Emunah!" ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.

Now that the mourning days are behind us, our Avoda is simcha! What is a recipe for true simcha?

HaRav Shimshon D. Pinkus ztz"l writes in his sefer Nefesh Shimshon (Tefilla, chapter "Tefilla MiToch Simcha): "Anyone who believes in "Sh'ma Yisrael" and [thereby] knows that Hashem is our G-d, is immersed in constant joy."

In the same chapter Rav Shimshon writes: "...Because a person that believes that he has Abba in Shamayim that loves him and that He has the strength to help him in all endeavours, why should he be sad?"

The message of HaRav Shimshon Pinkus ztz"l is that the secret to achieving real, constant happiness is simple: all you need is just to have true emunah in **שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד** - Because by having emunah in "Sh'ma Yisrael" you know that the one who takes care of you is your Father in Shamayim.

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From our Sages

וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ – 'From there you will seek the L-rd your G-d, and you will find Him.' *(4:29)*

The Torah stresses that when you seek G-d *from there*, from your place of exile "among the nations," you will find Him. For G-d is to be found everywhere, and every corner of His creation can serve as the vehicle to reach Him. If divine providence has dispatched you to a certain place and life, your surest path to Him is from there. (**Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov**)

אֲ-דֹנָי ה' אַתָּה הַחִלּוֹתָ לְהַרְאוֹת אֶת־עַבְדְּךָ אֶת־גָּדְלְךָ וְאֶת־יָדְךָ הַחֲזָקָה – ***'You, O G-d, have begun to show Your servant Your greatness.' (3:24)***

Moshe was G-d's faithful servant, the greatest of the prophets, the recipient of the Torah from G-d. Yet after 120 years of the most G-dly life ever lived, he sees himself as only *having begun* in his relationship with G-d! (**Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov**)

אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ – ***'There is none else beside Him.' (4:35)***

Rabbi Binyamin Kletzker, a chassid of **Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi**, was a lumber merchant. One year, while he was adding up the annual accounts, he inadvertently filled in under a column of figures: "TOTAL: *Ein od milvado* ('There is none else beside Him')."

A fellow chassid admonished him for his absentmindedness. "Don't you know, Reb Binyamin, that everything has its time and place?" he admonished. "There's a time for chassidic philosophizing, and a time to engage in worldly matters. A person's business dealings are also an important part of his service of the A-lmighty and must be properly attended to."

Said Rabbi Binyamin: "We consider it perfectly natural if, during prayer, one's mind wanders off to the fair in Leipzig. So what's so terrible if, when involved in business, an 'alien thought' regarding the oneness of G-d infiltrates the mind?" (**Told by the Lubavitcher Rebbe**)

"A rabbi who replies to people's questions works harder than a doctor dealing with a case of life and death. The doctor is responsible only to the patient, but the rabbi is responsible to G-d." ~ R Moshe Feinstein

Machzikei Hadass, Manchester Community weekly news-sheet written by Elozor Reich continued

Matzos (Continued).

For a considerable period the MH Matzo flour was ground at an old stone mill in Central Manchester. This was in Spear St., near Piccadilly and was owned by Messrs Yates (of Wine Lodge fame). In the late 1950s, the MH also used this same facility to organise the supply of flour for the Adass Kehilla of London, by arrangement with their meticulous Dayan Eliezer Posen.

Although this 'commercial' relationship, which lasted for only a few years, barely covered its costs, the nexus occasioned a claim for an introductory fee (Dmay Sirsur or Shadchanus) from a distinguished London based Talmid Chochom; one with strong Manchester connections. More than one erudite letter with recondite Halachic citations was received and tactful, yet firm responses were drafted. Our files do not record whether he was more successful in pursuing his suit with the Adass.

During the post-war period of bread rationing, sourcing of wheat was an additional problem. An offer from an English Bachad (MizrachiHachsharah) farm had to be turned down when their samples provedto be too moist for their intended use.

At that time little could be done without Government licences. Those for Matzo flour supplies were, in effect, controlled by some self-important 'machers' in the Board of Deputies, officially known as the Conjoint Flour Committee. Obtaining their certificate was another tiresome formality.

For most of the period from 1937 until 1957 the Matzo bakery at Bonns in Carlisle was used by the MH. Each year the Rabbi Feldman or, later, Rabbi D. Schneebalg would make the trip over Shap Fell accompanied by several volunteer Mashgichim. This corps often

including Reb S B Bamberger OH, Reb D Reich and Reb J Sanger in a shooting-brake belonging to Reb Pinchos Weisz OH.

In 1958 it was decided to change to a Zurich bakery belonging to a Herr Guggenheim, where, it was thought, higher standards of Kashrus could be implemented. It took some lengthy negotiations for Guggenheims to agree to use our flour. The arrangements with Guggenheims only lasted until 1962. In 1963 a French connection was established, via Rabbi Horowitz (the Mechutan of Rabbi Schneebalg) of Strasbourg, with a small bakery, Neymans, in nearby Wasselonne. The unit was small, the machinery slower and simpler, but it could be adequately supervised by the Dayan with the support of only one aide.

Incidentally, the mid 1960s saw the formation of a (regrettably short-lived) MH Kashrus Committee in which Mr J C Sufrin and Rabbi Hershel Goldstein were prominent.

In 1967 this writer commissioned the design of the Mehadrin trade mark, which has appeared on all subsequent Kehilloh products, manufactured and supervised.

The MH continued to bake at Strasbourg until 1981. After Rabbi Horowitz's emigration it was then decided to change to Yehuda (Ludmir) Matzos in Jerusalem; an arrangement which continues to this day.

Omar Rabbon Shimon ben Gamliel, Af onu mechavevim es hatzoros, ayla sh'im boonu lichtov ayn onu maspikim (Shabbos 13b) A wise man once said that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it.

The topic of Shechitah has been mentioned several times in these instalments. It will now be given a more comprehensive treatment.

Although the provision of reliable Shechitah is probably not the single most important function of this or any Kehilloh, it surely is the most troublesome and demanding. Looking through old MH records, it is evident that more than 60% of the Executive's time

was occupied, directly or indirectly, in ensuring continuity of meat supplies and the maintenance of the standards.

As has been mentioned earlier, the MH had its own Rav and Shochet by 1935. Did it then have its own Shechitah? Yes and no. In the early 1930s a new Act of Parliament created restrictions. Shochetim had to have Government licences and these were issued by the Rabbinical Commission, a London-based body unsympathetic to 'rival' Kehillos.

In effect, until 1955 the MH Shochetim were employed by the Manchester Shechita Board. Reb Yossel Halpern, Reb Hershel Schneck (from 1944) and Reb Chaim Katz (from 1948) all had their basic wages paid by the Board, who, in turn, received all Shechitah fees from the MH supervised butchers, Mr Jonas Halberstadt and his similarly named successor.

The arrangement was unsatisfactory and the cause of much dissension. The MH claimed, (a) that their Shochetim were paid less than those working solely for the Board; and as a result their salaries had to be supplemented. In addition the MH had the added costs of supervision and sealing. (b) that their Shochet was treated as a step-child, frequently having to travel to Liverpool, the local casting pen being 'unavailable'.

(c) that the MH butcher often had difficulties of supply due to arrangements with the wholesaler (d) the Board was making a substantial profit from these arrangements at the expense of the MH.

Not having had access to the Board's records, this writer cannot vouch for the accuracy of these claims, but constant tension and more than occasional argument were the backdrop to the relationship.

One episode from 1939 is indicative. Some refugee Bachurim at the Manchester Yeshivah, including R'Shmuel Unsdorfer and the Hirschler brothers, preferred the MH Shechita. The Yeshivah

Committee adhered to their traditional loyalties. For a time the dining room had separate tables for the alternative supplies. Curiously, a comparable episode recurred many years later when R' Yehuda Zeev Segal was the Rosh Yeshivah.

In 1944/5 there were complaints from Mr R Barrow-Sicree, President of the Shechita Board, about the higher percentage of Treifos from the MH Shochet (Reb J Halpern), compared to that of the Board. Rabbi Feldman corresponded with the Shechitah Boards of Glasgow, Liverpool and Gateshead. All provided statistics of their own Treifah proportions. These showed that the MH record was not untoward. - The relationship with the Board remained uneasy.

Complete independence for MH Shechita was thought desirable, but little could be done to change matters during the War. Even after the War, meat rationing (lasting until 1954) and other Governmental controls inhibited any alteration of arrangements. In mid-1951, in order to increase the Shochet's meagre salary (a constant source of aggravation) and raise it to that of the Board's employees, a new trial agreement with the Board was negotiated. In essence this allowed and obliged Reb Chaim Katz to slaughter for the Board as well as for the MH.

A letter to the President, Reb H Reich (dated 24 July 1951) from the redoubtable Clerk to the Board, Reb Sigmund Margulies, confirmed the new agreement. Its style is indicative of their condescending attitude.

It starts "Mr Samuel Davies, President of this Board, reported to his colleagues on the interview which he granted recently to representatives of your Congregation." Later, it goes on to say "... but that his (i.e. Reb C. Katz's) combined output of kosher killed cattle and poultry will be equivalent to the average shechitah of the other Shochetim of the Board".

This last clever sentence means that to justify his equal wage, Reb

Chaim was not only obliged to Shecht as much as the Board's Shochetim, but that his lower Kosher yield (his Kosher ratio did not seem to be higher than that of an earlier MH incumbent, as deplored by Mr Barrow-Sicree - see above), had to be made up by extra work.

The response (26 August 1951) of the MH included, "The stipulation as to Kosher-killed is not in accordance with Jewish Law and Practice ..."

This Summer of '51 agreement with the Board was the source of considerable aggravation. Besides the above productivity quibble, there was constant correspondence between the two parties about detailed interpretation - pension contributions, double Yom Tov pay and more.

More importantly, many in the MH felt that we had abandoned our founding principles and compromised our independent status. The situation came to a head at a stormy General Meeting held on 20 January 1952. Although the Executive defended its actions and was supported by Rabbi Yisroel Ehrentreu and Dr Menachem Rottenberg, others, led by Reb W Dresdner and and Reb S B Bamberger, were highly critical. Matters were exacerbated when it transpired that the Dayan, R'Dovid Schneebalg, had not been consulted and was unhappy with the new arrangement.

After several Executive crisis meetings, the MH wrote to the Board on 10 February 1952 cancelling the trial arrangement. We were back to square one.

Throughout 1952 and 1953 there were a number of cordial meetings with the Shechita Board but the main differences remained unresolved. During that period new legislation affecting Shechita was in the offing, and there was much internal discussion as to whether we should make our representations via the Board of Deputies or directly to sympathetic MPs. As far as this writer can discover the proposed new legislation was dropped.

In mid-1954 meat rationing and its associated controls ended. This presented both opportunities and challenges to the MH. New efforts were made began to solve the practical and financial problems of the MH Shechitah. These have been outlined in earlier instalments. In addition, the MH butcher, Mr Halberstadt had serious problems in running his business and these led to a strains in his relationship with the MH.

Local wholesale supplies of meat were under the control of the Jewish Butchers Trading Company, in which the butchers were members. The higher the proportion of Treifos, the smaller were their profits. - As mentioned before, the MH's proportion of Treifos was higher than that of the Board. Mr Halberstadt complained of supply difficulties and threats from the wholesaler to bar his membership, and so entirely cut off his sources. Naturally, he was extremely worried about this threat to his livelihood. He asked the MH for long-term guarantees, which they felt unable to provide.

The first priority of the MH had to be to its members. In order to ensure continuity of supply two new ventures began to be mooted. The first was opening an additional retail outlet, one owned by the Kehilla. We will come back to this later. The second was the possibility of arranging Shechita away from Manchester, with all its local complications.

Even before the end of rationing, in 1953, Reb Chaim Katz, was travelling regularly to Dublin to Shecht for both the Board and Messrs Frohwein under the aegis of the London Adass. Neither the Dayan nor the MH were pleased with this arrangement at the time, but the Irish connection became very useful later.

Early in 1954, the desirability of total independence was a constant theme at Executive meetings. Rabbi Dr Shlome Schonfeld, rabbinical head of the London Adass, whose Kehilla had just begun to Shecht in Letchworth, strongly recommended our following this route and

promised practical help. Mr Harry Goodman, President of the British Agudah, also gave similar advice.

In July 1954, with the end of meat rationing, the MH wrote to the Chief Rabbi Brodie informing him of our wish to achieve total independence. He requested a meeting and some weeks later a delegation from the MH travelled to London to meet him and present our reasons. He suggested that we should try once more to come to terms with the Board and offered to act personally as mediator.

to be continued…..



◣ Praying In The Moment - Reb Noson of Nemirov

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר -"***And I pleaded to Hashem at that time, saying…***" (3:23)

Specifically, "at that time." - Moshe knew that each time is different. The way a person feels today is different from the way he felt yesterday and the way he will feel tomorrow. Moshe always pleaded with G-d according to how he felt at the specific moment.

"The greatest mistake a person can make is to forget their intrinsic greatness and value as a child of Hashem, a child of Royalty." ~ Rabbi Shlomo Of Karlin (1738-1792)

◣ Boundless Kindness – Divrei Shmuel

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר -"***And I pleaded to Hashem at that time, saying…***" (3:23)

Moshe prayed his heart out to Hashem "at that time" – at the time of prayer. – Each and every time a person prays, he hopes for a positive response from Hashem. However, there are times when he has merits to deserve such a response, and at other times, unfortunately, he does not. – This is why Moshe Rabbeinu prayed for "matnas chinam" – a free gift. For Hashem's kindness knows no bounds or time limitations.

◣ Don't Procrastinate – Reb Naftali of Ropshitz

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר -"***And I pleaded to Hashem at that time, saying…***" (3:23) - The Torah does not mention any specific time. This is to point out that one should never say that he had no time, patience, or thought at that time, but at another time or when the occasion arises, he will pray.

◣ The Good Land - Kotzker Rebbe

אֶעְבְּרָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה - "***Let me go over, I pray You, and see the good Land…***" (3:25)

Why were the words "and see" used here? Is it not obvious that if he entered the land, he would see it?

It was Moshe's prayer that if he should enter the land that he should "see the good land," not the land that the spies had seen as negative.

"There is something unique Hashem loves about you that only He knows about." ~ Chiddushei Harim, Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter

◣ Follow The Recipe - Reb Yehonoson Eibeshutz

לֹא תֹסִפוּ עַל־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ לִשְׁמֹר אֶת־מִצְוֹת ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם - "*You shall not add to the word that I command you, neither shall you diminish from it, but keep the commandments of your G-d*..." (4:2)

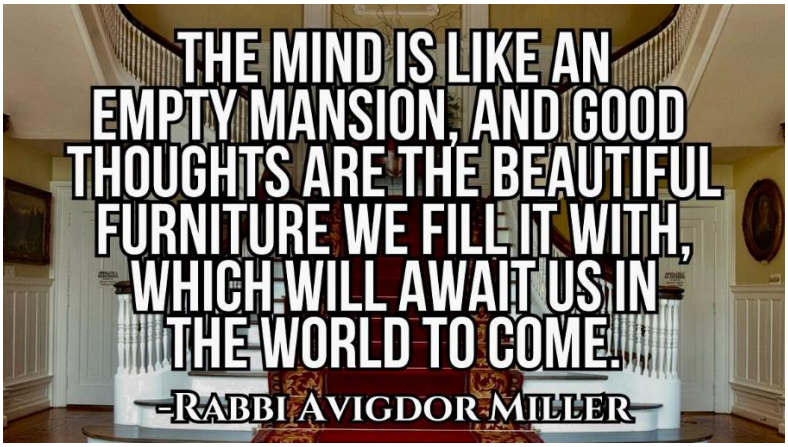
The Torah is described as a "sam ha'chaim" - elixir of life, a medicine able to purify those who take it. Thus, we are warned not to add nor detract from the Torah's words - "you shall not add or take away."

A medicine is a precise mixture of various substances, and changing the proportions can have toxic effects. So, too, are the commandments of the Torah given in the exact and correct proportions, and to change even one single word can have a terrible and deleterious effect.

◣ The One And Only - Rav Tzadok Hakohen

אַתָּה הָרְאֵתָ לָדַעַת כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ - "*You were shown in order to know that Hashem, He is G-d! There is nothing other than Him.*" (4:35)

When we learn Torah, listen to the words of Torah, or sing Shabbat songs at the table, all these become absorbed in our essence, which leads us to the level of knowledge that "there is none beside Him."



Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

Operation Golden Hands



Some stories may not consist of many words, but the message can, nevertheless, be loud and clear.

Many would have heard the good news about the miraculous and incredible rescue of two hostages from Gaza, and how they were saved, *bechasdei Hashem.* The IDF together with the air force, Shin Beth and others, conducted a daring and well-planned raid into Rafah, Gaza, in an operation they called 'Golden Hands', rescuing Fernando Simon Marman, aged 60, and Louis Har, aged 70. The two were abducted from Nir Yitzchak on Oct 7th.

What makes this news story so powerful and extra special is what, actually, occurred a week before.

Rinat and Natali, the daughters of Louis Har, and other members of their family, were in New York, where they visited the *ohel* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, zy"a, and davened for the speedy rescue of all the hostages being held in Gaza.

The visitors were hosted by the Chabad House in the Five Towns.

During the visit, an event was held one evening, for the special visitors at the Chabad House (The Shul of Bal Harbour). "What do you need from us?" they were asked. "Do you need us to raise money? To do something? Just tell us what?"

"No," they responded, "we just want to raise awareness. People have gone back to their lives, everything has gone back to normal, but our father is still captive in Gaza with the other hostages."

At that point Rebbitzen (Chanie) Lipsker (wife of the Chabad Shliach) rose and made the following comment. "The Israeli government can't truly help nor the IDF. It's all Hashem and the solution will come from Him alone. I ask you to accept something on yourselves in Torah and Mitzvos – something that's hard for you – so that you can say to Hashem – I was *moser nefesh* – now please make a neis for me."

One daughter took upon herself to light Shabbos candles. Her husband agreed to put on *tefillin,* but asked, "Can I start next week?"

Rebbitzen Lipsker answered, "No, you need to start tomorrow! So that there will be a vessel for blessings (*Kli brachah).*"

The son-in-law agreed, and the shul members collected money, there and then, to buy a pair of tefillin for him. His wife burst into tears and asked if they would be willing to donate another pair of tefillin for her father for when he's released. Of course, the shul members agreed.

A week later Fernando Simon Marman and Louis Har were rescued. *Baruch Hashem.*

מאין יבא עזרי? עזרי מעם ד' Taking on more Torah and Mitzvos is the *kli brachah* for *Yeshuos* and to bring benefits from the *Eibishters Golden Hand.*

May the remaining hostages be released very soon.

Good Shabbos

"Emunah is the root of all joy and all success." ~ Sefer Zohar.

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

Health at Sinai

In this week's Parsha (4:15) the Torah commands us, **וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם מְאֹד לְנַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כִּי לֹא רְאִיתֶם כָּל־תְּמוּנָה** … – we must take care of and safeguard our health because when Hashem came down to Sinai he didn't come down in a form or image. The Torah is charging us to be strong and healthy when serving Hashem. There is an obvious question here: What is the connection between the first and second parts of the pasuk? What is the correlation between taking care of one's health and the fact of how Hashem presented himself at Sinai? Why the juxtaposition? What does one thing have to do with the other?

The Chozeh of Lublin says that this is teaching us an incredible idea: Hashem is telling us that if you want to be religious and serve Hashem, if you want to be spiritual and godly – you must be careful. Don't neglect your body. Don't forsake your physical health. One may think of himself as being super spiritual when in essence he is playing the wrong part, he is playing the wrong role.

How do we know this? When Hashem came down to Sinai, He didn't come down in an image wanting to be physical. Hashem maintained and preserved exactly who he was – totally spiritual as a lesson for us. Says the Rebbe of Lublin, when you try to be godly don't try to be too spiritual. Understand that you are human and that there are certain parameters. Understand that you are physical and that physical people have physical needs. Hashem understands that we are human. He wants us to eat well, sleep well, and be well-balanced to be able to observe Him with joy.

Rav Zelig Pliskin shlita relates that one morning, a grandson of the **Chofetz Chaim** sadly passed away. There was great mourning and

sorrow in the Chofetz Chaim's house. Everyone sat and cried. Amidst all this, the Chofetz Chaim called someone over and asked him if he could bring food to be served to the entire family. The man was surprised that Chofetz Chaim wanted everyone to eat before the funeral. In response, the Chofetz Chaim said, "The *levayah* will take a long time and the burial will be very late, therefore, everyone should eat now."

This, commented **Rav Yeruchem**, is the behavior of a great person like the Chofetz Chaim. The Chofetz Chaim was careful to observe the natural laws of eating. He viewed them as an obligation and a mitzvah like every other mitzvah in the Torah. There is an obligation to mourn and cry over the death of a loved one, but the order of eating and rules of health must still be kept. We must be sure to safeguard our health and take care of ourselves. This way we will be able to serve Hashem with boundless joy and energy!



וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזֻזֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ 6:9

Rav Ahron Kotler Zt"L once visited America [before Rav Ahron moved there] and rented a room in Broadway Central (a hotel). Rav Ahron traveled around throughout the day, and would return to the hotel room late at night.

One late night, as R' Ahron returned to his room, he immediately turned around and raced out of the hotel. He ran to the home of **R' Yakov Yosef Herman zt"l**. Rav Ahron explained to Rav Yakov Yosef that it was the 30th day that he was in the hotel and his room didn't have a **מזוזה**. (In **חו"ל** when someone rents an apartment, for up to

30 days they are not **חייב** to put up a **מזוזה**) He continued to explain that he can't possibly stay in the hotel without a **מזוזה**!

R' Yakov Yosef got hold of a **סופר** in middle of the night to write a **מזוזה** for R' Ahron. R' Ahron waited until 1:30 a.m. for the **סופר** to finish writing the **מזוזה** and then continued to wait until 3:30 a.m. for the ink to dry! Only then did R' Ahron return to his hotel room for the remainder of the night.

We see the **חשיבות ואהבה בכל פרט ופרט** that R' Ahron had for each and every **מצוה** and his Yiras Shamayim.

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – What's Your Potential?

There is a Gemara in Berachos 17a : When the Sages who had been studying there took leave of the study hall of Rabbi Ami, and some say it was the study hall of Rabbi Chanina, they would say to him the following blessing: **עוֹלָמְךָ תִּרְאֶה בְּחַיֶּיךָ** – '***May you benefit from all of the good in the world, in your lifetime***…'

It's a very unusual expression. What does this mean?

Rabbi Shimon Shwab says something magnificent: The word **עוֹלָם** (world) comes from the word **נֶעֱלָם** or **הֶעֱלֵם** (Hidden). This refers to the potential of a person; that which is hidden within a person.

So, the blessing that they would give the person leaving the study hall was – "**עוֹלָמְךָ** – that which is hidden within you (i.e. your potential), **תִּרְאֶה בְּחַיֶּיךָ** – you should be zoche to see it in your lifetime. [and fulfil your potential]."

There is no greater bracha than this that a Rebbi or parent could give a talmid/child! And if you realize your potential, then **וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ** – '*And you shall be to Me a kingdom of princes and a holy nation.*' (Shemos 19:6) You will be a source of nachas to your parents and Hashem.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Honour Thy Parents

In *Mesichta Kiddushin* (31a) the *gemara* asks a very important question that applies to all of us here: **עַד הֵיכָן כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם** – *How far does a child have to extend himself in the matter of kibud av v'eim?* And it's an important question because when we read the *Aseres Hadibros* in this week's *parsha* we see that it's number five on the list – it means that it's one of the fundamental principles of the Torah. And so we're going to listen now to the words of Chazal to understand, *ad heichan,* how far a good Jew has to go in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of respecting his father and mother.

The *Gemara* answers like this: **צְאוּ וּרְאוּ מַה עָשָׂה גּוֹי אֶחָד בְּאַשְׁקְלוֹן** – *Go out and see what a certain person once did,* **וְדָמָא בֶּן נְתִינָה שְׁמוֹ** – *his name was Dama ben Nesina.* What did he do? Once, the *chachamim* needed certain rare stones for the vestments of the *Kohen Gadol*. And so they came to the house of Dama ben Nesina – he was a certain gentile who traded in precious jewels – and they offered him a lot of money for the gems they needed.

The *Gemara* says that he would have made a profit of six hundred thousand gold *dinarim!* That's one opinion – another sage says it was a profit of eight hundred thousand gold coins! So when they made

their offer he went right away to the back room where the key to the jewel chest was hidden – for such money you want to close the deal right away – and he found his father sleeping and under his pillow was the key!

● **Waking Papa**

So he tapped his father on the shoulder and he said, "Pa! Get up please. Emergency! I need the key!" No, no, he didn't do that. The *Gemara* says that Dama ben Nesina tiptoed out to where the *chachomim* were waiting with the bags of money and he said, "I'm sorry. I can't do any business with you right now." He didn't know how long his father would be resting there, and he wasn't going to disturb him. "I can't help you," he said and the *chachamim* went away. They went to look elsewhere.

Now, that was a loss of a tremendous sum of money. It was a very big business deal that Dama ben Nesina gave away for the sake of *kibud av.* You don't have to worry about him, though. The *Gemara* tells us that Hakodosh Boruch Hu repaid him. The following year, Hakodosh Boruch Hu caused a perfectly red cow to be born in his herd – a *parah adumah temimah!* Now, *that* is worth a fortune of money!

And this time, when the *chachamim* came, his father wasn't sleeping on the cow! And so, Dama sold them the *parah adumah* and he made up for what he had lost the previous year – with interest! He didn't lose out! Hakodosh Boruch Hu made sure of that.

● **Learning From Our Great Men**

It's a remarkable *Gemara* – a remarkable story about a remarkable gentile. But for us, a big question arises: When we want to learn the Torah of *kibud av v'eim*, do we have to go to a gentile?! Don't we have our own great men who fulfilled this *mitzvah?!*

The *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* there brings other stories too. It says that Rabbi Tarfon had an elderly mother who whenever she needed

to climb into bed, he would bend down onto the floor so she could step on his back. He didn't bring a stool for her – he leaned over so that she could use *him* as a stool. And when she got out of bed, the same thing.

Tosfos there brings another story about Rabbi Tarfon, that once when his mother left her slippers outside and she insisted on going out and finding them on her own, Rabbi Tarfon put his hands down on the ground so that she would walk on his hands and not get her feet dirty!

So we have stories too! Why do we need to look at Dama ben Nesina for our inspiration?! We need to look outside?! Where else do we find an example from gentiles how to perform a *mitzvah* of the Torah?!

● The Torah of Common Sense

And so we're beginning to see now that the *mitzvah* of *kibud av v'eim* is *not* a matter of Torah. It's in the Torah – oh yes! Not just in the Torah – it's in the *Aseres Hadibros!* But still, it's a matter of human nature; it's expected to be the common-sense reaction of all human beings! Gratitude! Even a gentile should know what that means! Only an ingrate, a person whose *neshama* is so sullied with conceit that he can't recognize the good that his parents have done with him, wouldn't understand that.

Even if all our parents had done for us was to bring us into this world, that itself is a happiness. It's fun to be alive! That's a very great truth! Unfortunately, people don't want to talk about it, but the mere fact that you're sitting and breathing is a great happiness. Your heart is pumping away and your blood is circulating through all of your arteries and veins. Your lungs are expanding and contracting constantly; everything is working perfectly. There's nothing like the great happiness of being alive in this world! And it's your parents who gave you that happiness.

● Life And So Much More

Therefore, as long as we have it, we're expected to respond properly, with the greatest gratitude. Don't say, "Who asked them to bring me into this world?" You should never fall into that wicked attitude of asking such a question; it's based on selfishness, on a failure to think. I'll prove it to you – if someone told you that you had a fatal illness, *chas v'shalom*, and a certain doctor could save you, you'd run to the doctor. You wouldn't wait a second! Because you really like being alive and you want to enjoy the thrill as long as possible. And therefore, just because of that, just because of the life that your parents gave you, you owe them a gratitude of respect to no end.

But that's only the beginning. Your parents fed you too. They could have said, "Look, we gave you life. Take care of yourself from now on. Go look for food yourself. Scrounge. You can't afford a grocery store? So go someplace in the country. Maybe you'll find wild berries to eat; there's grass that's edible too. I gave you life; I have to support you too?" But your parents didn't abandon you in the woods – not only did they bring you into this sweet world, but they brought you up. They gave you whatever you needed for so many years.

Gratitude towards parents is a matter of common sense! And so the *Gemara* comes to teach us *how much* common sense is expected of us – that even to this extreme, the great sacrifice that Dama ben Nesina made, that's also included in the common sense that a human being naturally has. Certainly you have to lose a tremendous amount of money in order not to wake up your father! What's the question?! Even a gentile's *seichel* knows that! And that's what Dama ben Nesina came along to teach us – that gratitude, respect and loyalty towards our parents is expected *al pi svara*, common sense, even if there was no Torah.

● A Vast Obligation

Now, the question is, why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu put something that's common sense into the Torah? Why did He have to announce

from Har Sinai, with such great fanfare, "Honor your father and your mother? **לָמָּה לִי קְרָא סְבָרָא הוּא** – *Why do we need a possuk to teach us something that we can figure out on our own?* (Kesuvos 22a).

The answer is this, Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "Common sense is good, but I can't rely on it. I want you to understand how vast is the obligation of gratitude and that's why I'm putting it into the *aseres hadibros;* that's why I'm writing it on the *luchos* with the *etzba Elokim*. I'm telling you now that it's much more than common sense – now it's the *d'var Hashem!*"

All of a sudden, a new *mitzvah* has been given to you, no less than putting on *tefillin,* no less than the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah*. When a person listens to his parents who ask him to do this or to do that, he's becoming rich in the most important achievement – he's becoming wealthy in *mitzvos*! When your mother tells you, "Chaim, carry the garbage outside to the street," it's a glorious opportunity. It's much more than the common sense of Dama ben Nesina; now it's the mind of Hakodosh Boruch Hu you're listening to. It's a *mitzvah d'oraysa* not less than *tefillin*. If I would tell you to do something, it's no *mitzvah.* But if your father or mother tells you, it's a tremendous *mitzvah! A* tremendous opportunity!

● Today's Nonsense

Now, the truth is that today, just to do the *mitzvah* because of common sense is already a great accomplishment. Society today is so broken down that common sense has gone lost; the elementary principle of gratitude now requires intense study.

A child who grows up in a house where from the beginning his parents fed and clothed him and housed him, does it enter his mind to feel gratitude to his parents? No – it could be he will never think about that all his life. He will never look back with gratitude to the fact that his father paid rent for him. It didn't occur to him that if he didn't exist, the apartment could have been smaller and cost less rent; or that it costs good money to feed a child. He thinks he was

doing his mother a favor. She begged him to eat; she got on her knees and said, "Please, Chaim'l, eat." And when he condescended to eat, he was the one doing the favor to her. He doesn't look back with gratitude on all those years that his mother spoon-fed him and surely when she nursed him.

If a *frum* Jew today would stand up and say, "I value my parents and will honor them; I appreciate that they gave me life and clothing and love and shelter," the world would look at him like he fell off the moon.

Once upon a time, maybe, people's minds were capable of having some common sense. When the world didn't have any newspapers – when there was no literature to corrupt the minds of men – so it was possible for a person to think on his own and to have common sense.

● A Spoiled Generation

But today, we are a ruined generation of spoiled children; adults too – we're spoiled. People who are surfeited with *gashmiyus*, their characters are ruined and they forget the fundamentals of gratitude. And therefore, it's only ingratitude, plain ingratitude, that leads to the world rebelling today against parents. Today, American boys and girls say to their parents, "Who told you to bring me into the world? Now you have to support me and buy me a car and give me money for narcotics and every kind of wicked fun that I want to have." The Jewish boys don't say it, but they think it. And their parents are dumb enough to do it for them because even the parents have no common sense today.

And therefore, anyone today who will buck the tide and say, "I honor my parents because I owe them my life," he's already a great man! But suppose he goes a step further and remembers that Hashem put it into the *luchos,* that it's a *possuk* in the *Aseres Hadibros? Ooooh, wah!* - Now he's already an eved Hashem. Instead of doing it by habit, he says "I'm taking out the garbage now to fulfill the mitzvah d'oraysah of kibud av v'eim." Now, it's a form of avodas Hashem.

Here's a man — a man in our *shul* — who in the morning, after the prayers, he stops in the grocery store and does some shopping to save his parents the work. And when he drops by to give them what he bought, he stops outside the door before he comes in and he puts a smile on his face for his parents. He's serving Hashem now, so he prepares himself first. And then he greets his father and his mother with a *sever panim yafos* and he speaks some kind words, as a loyal and polite son does. When they ask him to do something, he jots it down in his memo book and then he makes sure to fulfill it during the day. This man is a tzaddik — he understands what this mitzvah means. He knows what Hakodosh Boruch Hu expects from him.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - Whom Do You Trust?

This story took place many years ago in Eretz Yisrael, in the home of a G-d-fearing Jew whose eldest daughter had become engaged. Joyously the two families gathered for the l'chaim and to set a date for the wedding.

There was one problem: the kallah's father was in dire financial straits. He couldn't even afford to buy a watch for the chassan. How would he pay for a wedding? His income was meagre, and now he desperately needed a miracle.

He went to his rav with tears in his eyes and a broken heart. "Rebbi, we're thankful to Hashem that our daughter is engaged to a wonderful boy, but I don't have even a penny. What am I going to do?"

"First of all," the rav said, "mazel tov." As for your concern, my advice to you is that if your situation is so dire and there is little time until the wedding, fly to America and go fundraising. With the help of Hashem, you'll return with the money you need."

The kallah's father started sobbing. "Rebbi, I've never asked for a handout in my life, and I'm no fundraiser. I know that only Hashem can provide me with what I need."

"This is why you need to go to chutz l'Aretz, just to make the necessary effort. After that, it's in Hashem hands. You open the door, and Hashem will send the yeshuah."

Feeling hopeful, the kallah's father bought a cheap plane ticket that day. During the flight, he peered out the window at the heavens while beseeching Hashem for His aid, begging that he not have to rely on human assistance. He arrived in America feeling that he had made the required effort.

Now it's all in Your hands, Hashem.

The first thing he did when he landed was to find a beis midrash and sit down to learn. One of the men in shul noticed the newcomer and went over to greet him.

"Shalom aleichem! Where are you from?"

The visitor from Eretz Yisrael thanked him for his interest and told him what had brought him to America.

The other man's expression turned serious as he asked, "How much do you need?"

The visitor was flabbergasted by the question. But he named the required sum, a sum that amounted to tens of thousands of dollars- a sum that for him was astronomical.

"Please come with me."

The man led the visitor to his house, which was close by, and offered him a meal and a place to sleep. In the morning, he handed a fat envelope to his guest and said, "This is for you.'

The visitor from Eretz Yisrael opened the envelope, and his hands began to shake. Inside was the entire sum he needed to marry off his daughter. He thanked his host profusely and showered him with

blessings. Immediately he booked a flight home, all the while murmuring thanks and praise to Hashem for the huge yeshuah. His family was overjoyed, and his daughter got married with dignity and joy.

A year later, her sister became engaged, also to an outstanding boy. This time her father didn't panic. He packed a suitcase and departed for America, promising to return with the funds needed to pay for all the wedding expenses.

His plane landed, and this time he went straight to his benefactor's house. When the philanthropist opened the door, the father gave him a huge smile. "Shalom aleichem! How are you doing?"

"Baruch Hashem! What are you doing in America?"

"My second daughter is engaged. But once again, I don't have the funds to pay the wedding expenses. I was hoping you could help." The man turned and went back inside the house to retrieve his wallet and pulled out eighteen dollars.

The visitor from Eretz Yisrael was dumbfounded. That was it? His former benefactor noticed his surprise. Then he explained. "Know, my friend, that I'm not a wealthy man. I'm a simple man who works hard for my living. But last year someone in my family was diagnosed with a serious illness. I davened to Hashem that He send the cure, and I promised Him that the first Jew I met who needed financial help, I would come to his aid without a second thought. I went to shul and that's when I met you.

"I brought you to my house, and while you rested, I went to the bank and took out all my savings. A few days later, the doctors declared the miracle: there was no trace of the illness. I gave you everything I had. Now I can give you only eighteen dollars, my regular contribution."

The visitor from Eretz Yisrael thanked him, his face a little pale, and turned on his heel.

Now I understand everything, he thought to himself. Last year I came to America with total trust in Hakadosh Baruch Hu and relied only on Him to send help. I only flew here because I had to make the minimal effort. But this time, I came here calm and composed, trusting in a person instead of placing my trust in Hashem.

Someone who doesn't put his trust in Hashem is putting his trust in others. (Chovos Halevavos)



Tefilla

In this week's parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu beseeches Hashem to let him into Eretz Yisrael. Rashi notes that the term used to describe Moshe's prayer—"**ואתחנן**"— is a specific kind of request in which the hopeful aspirant entreats whom he is requesting to be gracious unto him and grant his request regardless of his merit.

Although Moshe clearly had enough merit to gain entry into Eretz Yisrael, Moshe didn't choose to make demands based on his personal merit but rather davened that Hashem be gracious and grant his request regardless of his own spiritual accomplishments.

Therefore, since we all daven without relying on our merits, we shouldn't think that one's spiritual stature makes one's tefilla inherently more powerful. The Midrash in Shmos Rabba 21:4 even says that Moshe Rabbeinu's tefilla is in fact no different than anyone else's. What matters in tefilla is how sincerely one davens, not who he is. The gemara in Sanhedrin 44b says that anyone, even one lacking merit, who exerts himself in tefilla will have no enemies from above.

Rav Dessler explains that in order for one to truly exert himself in davening he must come to the conclusion that he is truly unworthy before Hashem. When one comes to such a powerful realization and cries out to G-d, placing his heart in His Hands, he eliminates all of the prosecuting angels that can even threaten the continuity of his existence. When one davens to Hashem in such a way, he is building a powerful relationship with Hashem that will ultimately protect him from any claim that the Heavenly Court can make on why he is unworthy. Incredibly, it is through our heartfelt tefillos that we can create a true bond with Hashem and through this we can fully justify our entire existence. This is how Moshe Rabbeinu davened, and we should all aspire to emulate this lofty form of tefilla.

However, one may still feel disturbed by the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu's tefilla wasn't answered. Despite Moshe's lofty tefilla, Hashem nevertheless denied Moshe's request to enter Eretz Yisrael. If Moshe's tefilla was really so special, why wasn't it accepted?

The Steipler answers that in truth every time one davens properly, his tefilla *is* answered. It may be true that not every prayer is fully actualized and accepted. However, certainly a truly sincere prayer is answered to a certain extent. For instance, the gemara in Brachos 32b says that even though Moshe Rabbeinu didn't get to see Eretz Yisrael by entering the land and living there, Hashem did show him the entire country in a prophetic vision nonetheless. We should appreciate that just because the Highest Wisdom has deemed it fitting not to answer our prayers doesn't mean that Hashem has fully rejected our wishes. We just need to look a little more closely and see for ourselves just how much Hashem has answered us.

There are many pieces of advice one can give as far as how to increasing one's humility in davening. However, **Rav Moshe Mendel** encouraged others that a good davening should ultimately bring one to tears. When one cries in his davening and feels as if he has nothing in the world but the hope that Hashem will listen to his tefillos, the

gates of heaven are open. Rav Moshe commented that every time he cried during davening, his tefillos were answered.

May we all be zoche to daven to Hashem with true passion!!!



The Easy Commandment

'Honor your father and mother, as the L-rd your G-d has commanded you, so that you may live long.' (Devarim 5:16)

Why should we honor our fathers and mothers? The Torah gives us one reason in Parashas Shemos (20:12), "So that you may live long." In Parashas Vaes'chanan, however, the Torah gives an additional reason, "As the L-rd your G-d has commanded you." What is the significance of this additional phrase?

The Meshech Chachmah refers to the Talmud Yerushalmi that considers honoring parents an "easy commandment." Every person understands that debts have to be repaid. If someone lends you $100,000 when you need it, you would be only too happy to repay the money once you have enough of your own. It would not be a hard thing to do.

By the same token, every person also understands that he has a moral obligation to repay his debt of gratitude to his parents. After all, the cost of raising a child must be at least between $100,000 and $200,000. Not to mention the time, effort and energy parents invest in their children. Therefore, the least people can do is honor their parents. It is not a hard thing to make such a small payment on such a large debt.

The Torah tells us here that this is not the proper motivation for honoring parents. It is not the self-evident obligation to make at least a small payment on a debt owed the parents. It is an obligation incumbent on us solely because "the L-rd your G-d has commanded you" to do so.

The Torah waited until Parashas Vaes'chanan to make this point, because it becomes most clear after forty years in the desert. During those years, raising children was easier than it ever was, before or since. They did not have to be fed. There was manna from heaven. They did not need to be given to drink. There was water from Miriam's Well. They did not need new shoes and clothing all the time. Nothing ever wore out. Most likely they didn't need orthodontic braces either, because life in the desert was paradise. And still, the Torah demanded that parents be honored. Clearly, the obligation was to obey Hashem's commandment rather than repay a debt of gratitude. By the time the Jewish people had lived through the era of the desert, they could relate to the mitzvah of honoring parents as an independent obligation.

How far does this go? How much do you have to do for your parents? The Talmud responds (Kiddushin 31a) to this question with the famous story about a non-Jew from Ashkelon by the name of Dama bar Nesinah.

The Sages once needed a stone for the Urim v'Tumim, and they heard that Dama had exactly the stone they needed. A delegation came to see him and offer to pay him a princely sum for the stone. The stone was in a strongbox, with the key under his father's pillow. Dama did not disturb him.

"I cannot help you," he told the Sages. "My father is sleeping, and I wouldn't disturb his sleep."

The Sages left.

A year later, a perfect red heifer, suitable for a parah adumah, was born in Dama's herd. The Sages came to purchase it.

"How much do you want for it?"

"I know that you would give me any price I ask," he replied. "But I only want the amount of money I lost by not waking my father last year."

This story establishes the parameters of the mitzvah of honoring parents. The Talmud uses this story to establish the parameters of human nature.

As parents get older, they can become querulous and demanding. They can test the patience of their children. Sometimes, honoring parents under such circumstances can take a lot of patience and forbearance. Is there a limit to such patience? How much patience can be expected of a person? Is there a point where a person is allowed to run out of patience and be exempt from this mitzvah?

This is what the story about Dama bar Nesinah teaches us. The Sages were offering him a huge sum of money for the single stone they needed for the Urim v'Tumim. He knew that if he could only get the key, the money would be his. What thoughts must have gone through his mind? Maybe I'll make a little noise and he'll wake up. Maybe I'll slide my hand under the pillow very slowly so that I'll be able to get the key without waking him up. He must have been very tempted. But he didn't give in. He was able to honor his father even under such circumstances. This was the extent of what human nature is capable.

It follows that if Dama bar Nesinah could have the forbearance to forgo such a huge sum of money and allow his father to sleep, certainly a descendant of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov can find it in himself to honor his parents under any and all circumstances.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman



The Gaon and Tzaddik **Reb Yisroel Dovid Schlesinger shlita** was a talmid in the Tchebiner Yeshiva around 50 years ago.

There was a certain windowsill where all the bachurim kept their tefillin, and next to that there was a public telephone. Once, when he was putting away his tefillin, the public phone was ringing non-stop. [Anyone who has been to yeshiva knows what a pain it is to answer the public phone, as you have to search the building for the recipient of the call, which can be quite time consuming – So most of the time, the phone is left ringing.] Nobody bothered to answer it.

Eventually, he watched **Rabbi Avrohom Genechovsky** walk over and pick up the phone. - "Hello?" - On the other end of the line was an American Yid who urgently needed to know – "Who won the elections?" [This was right after the Israeli elections.]

Rabbi Avrohom Genechovsky had no idea, but he went to ask some of the bachurim if anyone knew who'd won! After finding out, he returned to the phone and gave over the answer. Reb Yisroel Dovid was standing nearby watching the scene play out. Some random person calling to find out who won the elections and why did Rav Avrohom Genechovsky find it important enough to bother with?

As he stood there puzzled, Rav Avrohom came over to him and said, "Yisroel Dovid – today I have already fulfilled my obligation to give Tzedaka before davening. – I already gave Tzedaka today! That person for some reason wanted to know who'd won the elections, what does it matter? – It was an opportunity to help out another!" - Ahavas Chinam can be done in all kinds of ways.

Nishmas – *A Listening Ear*



It is well known that the **Divrei Shmuel** put great emphasis into the tefillah of 'Nishmas.' Until today, Nishmas is still something special in Slonim.

Reb Yoel Ashkenazi repeated a vort that he heard from the Divrei Shmuel. The Divrei Shmuel once told him the following:

"One needs to know that lending an ear to a fellow Yid, and giving him a good feeling, is worth no less than saying the tefilla of Nishmas 1000 times!"

The Imrei Emes says: 'By hearing somebody out, and lifting his spirits, you can literally save his life! Even if you don't respond – Even if you have nothing to say to him!'



The **Kaf HaChaim** brings down a seemingly simple method from **Reb Yehuda HaChossid,** used by many during trying times to actually trigger salvation: A commitment to publicly recite Nishmas when the crisis passes. By making this commitment, we acknowledge that the outcome is entirely in *Hashem's* hands. - This in itself is a *zechus* to turn the situation around.

Committing to recite *Nishmas* once a crisis has been averted, demonstrates that we rely solely on *Hashem* to bring the salvation. The *yeshuas Hashem* can be easily forgotten in the aftermath, but we publicly declare our thanks to *Hashem*. Our commitment guarantees we will maintain our focus, even once the

difficulties pass. - *Acknowledging Hashem's control of the situation is a zechus to bring salvation.*

If we combine this with actively observing *Hashem's* involvement in our lives, we will benefit from an extra level of *menuchas hanefesh* throughout this crisis – and when facing difficulties in the future.

Nishmas is one of the most powerful and significant tefillos. This tefillah is traced back to the generation of the Tannaim. It is also well known that the tefillah has been recommended by many gedolim throughout the generations as a powerful segulah.

The Navi Yeshayahu (43:21) teaches us that the entire purpose of our existence is to give praise to Hashem, and the primary vehicle for that is our attachment to the tefillah of Nishmas. We also develop a greater appreciation for how HaKadosh Baruch Hu controls every facet of our lives, both big and small. With that in mind, our appreciation for HaKadosh Baruch Hu should be that much greater.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu loves and waits for the shirah of Klal Yisrael. The ultimate tefillah of shirah, is Nishmas (see Pesachim 118a). Whenever Hashem gives even the smallest gift, regardless of whether we will see the ultimate yeshuah. When Hashem hears such shirah, He wants to keep giving more good news and more gifts so that the shirah, the "Nishmas moments," will continue.

The recitation of Nishmas was always taken very seriously by our gedolim. **The Bobover Rebbe, Rav Shlomo z"l**, used to relate that the father of **Reb Naftali Ropshitzer, Reb Mendel Linsker**, put so much effort into saying Nishmas that afterward he would faint from exhaustion. His wife prepared honey biscuits that were smaller than a k'zayis and put them into the pocket of his Shabbos beketshe, and he referred to them as "Nishmas cookies."

So many gedolim mention in their writings that when a person is faced with a serious challenge, he should commit to say Nishmas

after it passes, and this will stand as a segulah that helps bring that about (**Reb Yehudah Hachassid, Ben Ish Chai, Kaf Hachayim, Rav Chaim Palagi**, and many others as well). **Rav Yisrael Gustman** said his rebbi, **Rav Shimon Shkop**, advised that saying Nishmas would be a segulah for avoiding being drafted by the Polish army. This message was shared by both the **Steipler Gaon** and his son **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**.

I recently read a story about the great gadol **Rav Shlomo Heiman ztz"l**, related by his student **Rav Avrohom Pam ztz"l** (see sefer Moreh Tzedek).

Rav Shlomo was only in his fifties when he was diagnosed with an incurable disease that left him only a few months to live. He traveled from New York to the Mayo Clinic to undergo a risky operation that would hopefully be able to save his life. He underwent surgery, but the desease had already advanced so far that there was nothing the doctors could do to ameliorate it.

Upon his return to New York, Rav Heiman made a special seudas hoda'ah. His students approached him and asked him, "Why make a seudas hoda'ah, when they were not able to help you?"

Rav Shlomo explained that this was a dangerous operation, and the fact that he survived it, even if it didn't help him, was enough of a reason to thank Hashem and make a special seudas hoda'ah!

Rav Pam, who participated in the seudah, was so moved by this that he spoke about it for decades later.

"Every word that we speak in prayer is a priceless seed entrusted in the hands of hashem for safekeeping. The day will come when it will bring forth the most generous harvest." ~ Rabbi Shimshon Pincus (1944-2001)

SHABBOS STORIES To Help Others to Be Happy



The Kovno Rav, Rav Yitzchok Elchonon Spector, was the Poseik HaDor, the leading Halachic authority of the generation, in the early 1900's. He was once speaking with someone, when there was a knock his door. A student came in to tell Rav Yitzchok Elchonon of great news, that an older Bachur had finally got engaged.

The Rav was thrilled to hear the great news and thanked the boy who told him. A few minutes later, there was another knock on the door and someone else told the Rav the same news. The Rav was once again thrilled and thanked him. A few moments later, the same occurrence repeated itself, and then yet once more, someone again came to tell the Rav the good news.

Finally, the man asked the Rav, "Rebbe, please explain to me. The same news was told to you four times over, yet each time you heard it, you reacted as if it was the first time!?"

Rav Yitzchok Elchonon answered, "They come to tell me the news for they know I will be happy to hear it. This makes them happy, so it's worth their efforts. If I didn't act surprised to hear the news, their efforts would have been for nothing, and I would have deprived them of their joy. Therefore, I allow them to have the pleasure of informing me of the exciting news!"

"Every heart has hidden wounds. Blessed is the one who can see them in another and offer comfort." ~ The Divrei Chaim, Reb Chaim Halberstam of Sanz (1793–1876)

Caring for His Wife By R' Yoni Schwartz



The way **Rav Dovid Feinstein, ZT"L**, treated his wife was a prime example of how one should respect their spouse. Years ago, Rav Dovid Feinstein and Rebbetzin Feinstein were at the engagement party of one of their grandchildren. The time was dragging on and on.

A curious person approached Rav Dovid and asked, "Doesn't the Gadol Hador have better things to do with his time than sit here for so long?"

In his gentle voice, Rav Dovid said, "The Rebbetzin is having a nice time. As long as she is enjoying herself, I am going nowhere."

There was another time when one of Rav Dovid Feinstein's children got married, the soon-to-be daughter-in-law visited his house on Friday afternoon to meet her new mother-in-law. After she entered, she heard the sound of a vacuum cleaner emanating from one of the rooms and followed the sound. After turning a couple corners and weaving her way through the halls of the house, she finally found the room where the sound was coming from.

As her head peeped the corner, expecting to see Rebbetzin Feinstein, she was surprised when she saw Rav Dovid, the Gadol Hador, vacuuming the floor. "Doesn't the Rav have more important matters to attend to," she wondered, and Rav Dovid saw a curious look on her face. He explained that on Fridays his wife works, and he wanted to do something nice to help around the house. In fact, Rav Dovid would often make kugels and cakes and give them out to the kids.

It Must Have Been a Mistake by Rabbi Reuven Semah

One great educator in Jerusalem said something very powerful. "You know with children it's important to bear in mind the power of parental judgment and the narrative they carry about their children. Never say, 'We knew all along he was going to turn out bad.' That's called a self-fulfilling prophecy." There are so many ways to avoid the self-fulfilling prophecy. Our words can be so powerful in helping to form a different perception.

Rav Aharon of Belz zt"l once hired a local handyman to do some minor repairs in his home. While the man was busy taking care of the work, the Rebbe overheard others in the room whisper in an undertone, "I can't believe that the Rebbe hired him. It's well-known that this Jew works on Shabbos!"

The Belzer Rebbe immediately spoke up and said loudly, "That's impossible! And if he did work on Shabbos, it must have been a mistake. He must have confused the days and thought it was Friday!"

The Rebbe then turned to the workman who had clearly heard the whole exchange and had remained silent. The Rebbe said gently, "Isn't that right? You got confused and thought it was Friday and not Shabbos?"

The worker looked abashed and didn't say a word. The Rebbe again said softly, "You must have mixed up the days and thought it was Friday, correct?"

But the worker stood stock still and wouldn't open his mouth. For the third time, the Rebbe pleaded with great feeling, "Didn't you really believe it was Friday and not the holy Shabbos?"

At the Rebbe's final, exquisitely gentle insistence, the Jewish laborer mouthed, "Yes," and then burst into tears! The entire room was astounded at the depth of his emotion. And from that moment the handyman became a Shomer Shabbos.

Staying in Debt by Rabbi Yisroel Besser

A chassid once went to speak with the **Slonimer Rebbe (Rabbi Sholom Noach Berezovsky)**, The chassid had been involved in a serious vehicular accident, and he had miraculously emerged without injury.

He wanted to express his gratitude to the Ribbono shel Olam, and he asked the Rebbe to guide him as to how to properly repay the debt.

"If you are asking my advice," the Nesivos Shalom said, "then I would suggest that you do not repay the debt!"

The Rebbe explained. "If you find some symbolic way of expressing hoda'ah, then you will have discharged this obligation, and then you will move on. Rather, instead of doing something, I think you should live your life like a baal chov, someone who is in debt, aware at every moment, with each decision and choice that you make, that He gave you your life as a gift."

The Reward for Eating in a Refined Matter by Rabbi Chaim Zaid

Here's a story I heard from **Rabbi Avrum Mordechai Malach** that took place a few years ago in Eretz Yisroel. It's about someone I don't know but whom nonetheless I consider as one of my heroes. I will call him Avi.

The story begins on Yom Ha'atzma'ut, which is essentially a legal holiday for most people in Eretz Yisroel. Kiruv workers use that opportunity to schedule special learning programs for Jews of all backgrounds. Rabbi Chaim Zaid, a Sephardic kiruv rabbi, gave an introductory shiur tailored to a diverse audience that included an assortment of kippot – knitted, colored, black – along with several bare heads. Some of the kippot looked like they had been taken out of a drawer for the special occasion.

He began by reviewing the laws of Netilat Yadayim. He followed by discussing eating b'kedushah, with holiness, explaining that a Jew is supposed to approach eating and drinking in a refined manner: a Jew sits down, makes a bracha before and after eating, and cuts his food into bite-sized pieces. Eating in a refined manner, he assured his audience, is propitious for Divine help in being granted a good living.

When he finished speaking, Avi who had worked in a bakery for years and was now unemployed, approached Rabbi Zaid and exclaimed, "I am accepting always to eat in a refined manner."

(I wondered if Rabbi Zaid thought to himself, should I tell him to first keep Shabbat, wear tefillin, and eat kosher - he nevertheless encouraged Avi much success with his commitment.)

The following Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Rabbi Zaid spoke at the same venue. Afterwards, a very pious looking Jew approached and said, "Shalom aleichem, Mori veRabi. Do you remember me? I was the non-religious Jew who told you he was only going to eat in refined manner."

Now, Rabbi Zaid remembered the man.

"Do you want to hear my story?" Avi asked.

"Absolutely!" was the reply.

"Last year, I took very seriously what the Rav said about eating with kedusha. The Rav mentioned that a Jew eats and cuts his food with a knife into smaller pieces and then eats. I said to myself, granted I am not Orthodox, but I am not an animal. I can still eat like a refined person. I accepted upon myself to only eat after cutting my food into small pieces, and made my whole family do the same.

"After a while we started making brachos on our food. We didn't wear kippot, but we learned when to make a Shehakol, Mezonot and Ha'eitz."

"One day, I went with my kids to a park. They ran around and played for a while and had a good time. After a while they became hungry

but I had nothing to feed them. Then, we saw a delivery truck for one of the big bakeries in Israel. My kids said, 'Aba, there is a bakery truck. Maybe you can buy us something?'

"I said, 'They only sell wholesale.'

"They responded, 'We are so hungry. Please ask anyway.'

"I went to the driver and asked if I could buy something for my children. He confirmed that they don't sell retail. But then he said, 'You asked so nicely …' He opened the back of the truck and there were these fresh chocolate Danishes, oozing with chocolate. I bought a few and we sat down to enjoy.

"As the kids were about to eat, I said, 'One minute, remember, we eat civilized. Let me get a knife and eat like Jews.' - "'Of course,' the kids said.

"As I was cutting, I noticed, mixed in with the chocolate were these small green spots. Since I had worked in a bakery, I knew you can have some sugar or chocolate that is not mixed well, but this was different. The color was strange. I pulled off a small piece and sniffed it carefully. It smelled like engine oil!

"All the Danishes I'd purchased were the same. It was clear, whether by accident or by intention, a worker had added engine oil to the mix. I ran to the driver and shouted to stop him from pulling away, yelling, 'Everyone is in danger!'

"He thought I was crazy. I told him I had worked in a bakery a long time. 'I know! This is poison!'"

"He checked the rest of the Danishes. They were all adulterated. He called the boss. The boss halted all of the trucks in the fleet."

As he recounted his story, Avi reflected on what had happened. "If I hadn't cut them up, because of all of the chocolate and sugar, we wouldn't have noticed until it was too late."

Due to a seemingly small commitment regarding kedushat ha'achila, Avi and his family changed their lives forever. (The icing on the cake: the boss offered Avi to be his general manager. The segula for eating b'kedushah was realized!)

This story illustrates what can happen when we are careful with something seemingly small – we allow special Divine influences to affect our lives and usher in significant growth.

"Good Morning Mr. Miller"

Our words can carve out destinies, life or death—our own or of others. The following story illustrates the immense power of just one word.

Rav Shmuel Shapiro, the chief rabbi of the Polish town of Pruchnik, was known for his pleasant demeanor and was well loved. He would greet everyone he encountered, Jew or gentile, with warmth and conviviality. One of those he greeted each day on his morning walk was a farmer who lived on the outskirts of the town.

At first, when the rabbi started taking walks for the sake of his health, and always gave the non-Jew a hearty greeting, the farmer, whose name was Miller, would simply stand there in stoic silence.

This wasn't surprising. Relations between Jews and non-Jews weren't particularly friendly in the town. But Rav Shapiro didn't pay that any attention, and day after day he would give the stoic Mr. Miller a warm greeting until finally the farmer began to respond with a raise of his hat and a hint of a smile.

This routine continued for many years but ceased abruptly with the arrival of the Nazis. Rav Shapiro and his family, together with Pruchnik's other Jews, were sent to a concentration camp. Rav Shapiro was transferred from one camp to another until he came to his final stop: Auschwitz.

He stepped down from the cattle car with the others and went to stand in line for the selection. His heart pounded as the line shifted forward. Soon it would be his turn. What would the verdict be? Left, to death, or right-to life?

Now there was one person in front of him. He was next. Despite his fear, he gave in to his curiosity and looked at the face of the SS officer making the selection. The officer looked at him at the very same moment.

Rav Shapiro's eyes widened. He couldn't believe it. His heart pounding, he stepped forward and murmured, "Good morning, Mr. Miller."

Mr. Miller's eyes, which had been cold and shuttered, changed in a fraction of a second. "Good morning, Rabbi," he said quietly, and added, more loudly, "Right!"

This is the power of a good word.

The Rosh Yeshivah's Intuition

One year on Sukkos, **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l** appeared to be particularly joyous, even more than usual. Rav Shlomo Zalman explained that a certain avreich had come to visit him with his wife and children, and the visit had made him extremely happy.

"With all due respect, you have thousands of talmidim," those present pointed out. "What was special about this visit?"

"I'll tell you the story of this avreich, and then you'll understand." This is the story that Rav Shlomo Zalman told.

There was a bachur learning in Yeshivas Kol Torah who had many challenges. His father wasn't religious at all, and his mother was a ba'alas teshuvah who insisted that her son learn in yeshivah. The parents argued over the issue for a long time until they decided to part ways.

The boy felt terrible remorse for being the cause of his parents' divorce. He felt broken and began having trouble with his learning. Eventually his friends also abandoned him to his anguish until he felt like he was all alone. He started sleeping a lot, was late to the tefillos and learning seder, and received numerous reprimands until he reached the point of giving up completely.

Chazal tell us that a person doesn't sin unless a "spirit of folly" enters him. In his despairing state, the boy ended up doing something that he would otherwise never have done: he left the yeshivah one Shabbos, went out into the street, and hitched a ride somewhere.

Since he did it right next to the yeshivah, many bachurim saw it happen. They told the rebbeim in the yeshivah what they had seen, and on Sunday, when the boy returned, the rebbeim told him to pack his things and leave. There was no place for desecrators of Shabbos in the yeshivah. The boy packed his belongings and went outside with his baggage. A taxi pulled up and I was inside it. I saw the boy standing there with his suitcases, and I went over and asked him why he was leaving the yeshivah. The boy burst into tears. I called over another bachur and told him to send a message that I would be late to the shiur. Then I told the sobbing bachur to follow me to my office.

When we sat down, I asked him for the entire story, and he told me that he had been thrown out of the yeshivah.

"How can they throw a boy out of the yeshivah without consulting me?" Rav Shlomo Zalman asked. He was, after all, the rosh yeshivah. "I did something so bad it didn't require asking the rosh yeshivah," the boy confessed.

At first he was embarrassed to tell me what he had done, but after I insisted, he started crying again as he told me everything: how his parents had gotten divorced, how he had started having trouble with his learning, how he had come to the point where he could desecrate

Shabbos.

"Tell me,' I said. "When you were riding in the car on Shabbos, what were you thinking?"

"Rebbi, after two minutes I told the driver to stop and let me out. I just couldn't do it."

"Would you ever do it again?"

"Never!" the boy answered emphatically. "I have no desire to do such a thing again."

"In that case, unpack your suitcase and go back to your learning." "But after what I did, no one will want to learn with me," the boy said, his voice threaded with pain.

"Don't worry. I'll take care of it."

I went into the beis midrash, went over to one of the best bachurim in the yeshivah and asked him to learn with this bachur.

"I'm concerned he'll be a bad influence," the bachur responded hesitantly.

"The Gemara says, 'Heat produces heat' (Shabbos 41a). If you instill in his heart the 'heat' of learning, then the heat of Torah will purge all the sins and wrongful desires within him."

Then I went over to two other bachurim and arranged for them to learn with the boy. He returned to his learning and soon became one of the top bachurim in the yeshivah.

He is the avreich who came to visit me today with his family. How could I not be filled with joy?"

This story was recounted by Rabbi Goel Elkarif along with a message to the mechanchim of Klal Yisrael not to give up on those who have strayed from the derech and hit rock-bottom. With love and warmth, they can always be brought back.

Holiday Chizuk from Rav Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

What is the connection of Tisha B'Av to the holiday period?

Parshas V'aeschanan falls out on the Shabbos after Tisha B'Av. One of the central themes of this parsha is the inyan of tefillah. Before we start our tefillah, we must praise the chessed and might of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **כִּי מִי־גּוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֱלֹקים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו כַּה' אֱלֹקינוּ בְּכָל־קָרְאֵנוּ אֵלָיו** – *'For what great nation is there that has G-d so near to it, as Hashem our G-d is at all times that we call upon Him'?* 4:7

וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקיךָ וּמָצָאתָ כִּי תִדְרְשֶׁנּוּ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ – *'And from there you will seek Hashem your G-d, and you will find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.'* 4:29

Tisha B'Av is a time when we connect to Hashem and try to understand the significance of the Beis Hamikdash. We are also meant to strengthen ourselves in our avodah connected to the Mikdash. As we know, one of the integral parts of the Mikdash was the bringing of korbonos. The korban Tamid sacrifices brought selicha (forgiveness) and "kapara" (atonement). They were mevatel gezeiros. They brought mazel bracha and parnossoh. -

We no longer have this powerhouse of deveikus and bracha from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But, Chazal say **תפילות במקום קרבנות תקנום**. Rabbeinu Yonah in **שַׁעֲרֵי הָעֲבוֹדָה** says –

ח. [הַקְּרְבָּנוֹת וְהַתְּפִלָּה] עִנְיָן אֶחָד לָהֶם - צְרִיכִין כַּוָּנַת הַלֵּב וּמַחֲשָׁבָה טְהוֹרָה, וְשֶׁיִּתְנַדֵּב הָאָדָם עַצְמוֹ לַעֲבֹד אֶת בּוֹרְאוֹ בְּכָל לְבָבוֹ וּבְכָל נַפְשׁוֹ וּבְכָל מְאֹדוֹ, וּבָהֶם יִתְקָרֵב הָאָדָם אֶל בּוֹרְאוֹ לְהִדָּבֵק אֵלָיו דְּבֵקוּת גְּמוּרָה לְבִלְתִּי הֱיוֹת מְחִיצָה מַפְסֶקֶת בֵּינֵיהֶם.

Korbonos and Tefillah both achieve similar results that a person can become close and cleave to his Creator. So tefillah nowadays affords us the possibility that we can still have this connection that the Yidden had when the Beis Hamikdash was extanct.

So parshas Va'eschanan which talks about Tefillah, is the continuation of Tisha B'Av which is about our loss of the Beis Hamikdash. We still retain a very powerful tool with which we can regain and retain our connection and closeness with The Ribbono Shel Olam.

The holiday season is a time where we can be mechazek ourselves with a purposeful davening. We should daven at a fixed time, and not just when it works out conveniently. It should lead to a **דבקות גמורה** [as the Rabbeinu Yona says]. Daven slowly with concentration to allow the words to penetrate and be absorbed.

Bein Hazemanim is a time when one usually finds himself with more time to be available, especially with the family members, or even for himself. I feel that the holiday time is a very important time for preparation for Elul. We have time to think about what things we need to work on in our own **תכלית החיים** - meaning of life.

But specifically, within our family, there is something very important that we sometimes overlook. And that's not just spending time with family, but we must be mechazek all those people around us. – Make people feel good. Be complimentary towards others. Take the opportunity to tell people just how good they are.

The story of Kamtza and bar Kamtza ultimately lead to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. This is the result of embarrassing somebody.

What we understand from this is the following: Sinas Chinam is highly destructive, catastrophic, ruinous, calamitous, and annihilating.

Rabboisai – I want you to understand from this a positive message. In the same way that embarrassing someone can bring about catastrophe (Challila), complimenting people and giving them chizuk can build them, can build generations. We can build Klal Yisrael and

a Beis Hamikdash with kind words. – We are going to be builders and not destroyers.

You should all have a good Shabbos, **בשורות טובות**. Everybody should spend their holiday time well in happiness and we should get together again safely B'Ezras Hashem. Have happy and safe journeys – **כל טוב** good Shabbos and warm regards to **כל בני קהילתנו**.

A "Chef"a of Berachah – Rabbi Shlomo Landau

I had the wonderful experience of taking a group of men from our community on a week-long trip to Eretz Yisrael. The trip was an action-packed, non-stop blend of touring, learning, and growth.

We spent one of the days touring the north of Eretz Yisrael, and toward evening, we traveled to a winery where we would be eating dinner. By the time we arrived at the winery, the fellows had worked up quite an appetite, and we were treated to a delectable repast of Middle Eastern cuisine served elegantly on an outdoor terrace. The guys ate their fill and enjoyed the wine as spirits ran high. There was a certain unity and joy and a very special vibe.

Toward the end of the meal, I suddenly had an idea. I approached one of the waiters and asked him if he could direct me to the kitchen. I entered the kitchen and asked to speak to the chef. A member of the kitchen staff went ahead to tell the chef that one of the Americans wanted to speak with her. I was led to the back of the kitchen to an exhausted-looking Sephardic woman with a kerchief on her head and a large white apron.

Upon seeing me, she was initially alarmed and asked if there was a problem with any of the food. Smiling widely, I shared that there was absolutely nothing wrong with the food and that on the contrary, everything was absolutely delicious. I mentioned that the fellows had arrived exceedingly hungry and had absolutely enjoyed her delicious cuisine, so much so that their mood was nothing short of

joyous! I concluded that my visit to the kitchen was to thank her on behalf of the entire group.

Suddenly, she burst into tears and buried her face in her apron. I was taken aback and asked if everything was okay. After she had calmed down a bit, she replied, "I am a mother of many kids, and we struggle a lot to make ends meet. It is now dinner-time and I know that I belong at home with my kids, but I don't really have a choice, as we desperately need this income. Even so, I constantly feel a certain lack of fulfillment as I contemplate being closeted in a kitchen surrounded by pots, and I contrast that to being at home surrounded by my children."

Smiling wistfully, she continued, "This evening you gave me perspective. I am not just a cook locked up in a large institutional kitchen. I am a Jewish woman bringing joy and happiness to the Ribbono Shel Olam's children. Thanks so much for coming into the kitchen and letting me know that my sacrifice is worthwhile."

I walked out into the starry night, smiling with the knowledge that a little bit of hakaras hatov can make a world of difference.

The Weekly Vort

● **ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם** – ***And you shall beware greatly for your souls*** (4:15). - The Gemara (Brachos 32b) teaches that this *pasuk* commands us to take utmost care to safeguard our bodies and maintain our physical well-being.

A person once asked **R' Yisroel Salanter** why people are often careless about their health, will disregard even a doctor's explicit instructions with regard to diet or medication, and wish to consume precisely that which is most injurious to themselves.

R' Yisroel Salanter explained: A person who is ill is exempt from all *mitzvos* that will adversely affect his health. However, no matter

how ill one might be, he must still perform the *mitzvah* stated in this *pasuk*, "*And you shall beware greatly for your souls.*"

The *yetzer hora* wishes to cause the patient to transgress even this *mitzvah;* he therefore exerts himself to introduce into the person an overwhelming desire for those things that are most detrimental to his health. (The Torah Treasury)

● **ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר – *And I implored Hashem at that time, saying*** (3:23)

Moshe Rabbeinu was not simply reminiscing; he repeated his *tefillah* to display before Klal Yisroel his great love of Eretz Yisroel. He intended to imbue the nation with a measure of that same love.

Moshe hoped that their love for the Holy Land would encourage the people to cleave faithfully to Hashem's wishes, so that Hashem would never exile them from the Land. [Ibn Ezra] (The Torah Treasury)



Are You Protected?

During WWII, **Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik,** travelled from Warsaw to Vilna to escape from the advancing Nazis. The roads were full of German soldiers and travel was very dangerous. Keeping the words of **Rav Chaim Volozhin** in mind, Rav Soloveitchik concentrated on the idea that everything that happens is from Hashem. No human can harm a person unless Hashem wills it. That concentration enabled Rav Soloveitchik to pass by many Nazis, without being harmed.

Once, he lost his concentration and was stopped by a German soldier who wanted to kill him. After returning to his thoughts that "there

is no other besides Hashem", the German soldier left abruptly, without harming him. (Sefer Talelei Oros)

One day, a Jewish merchant ran into the home of **Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik**. The Russian police were searching the stores in the area for black market goods. Anyone who was caught would be sent to Siberia. This merchant was terrified because his store was full of such goods. As soon as Rabbi Soloveitchik heard about the danger, he took the sefer Nefesh HaChaim from his shelf and started learning it with the merchant. They reviewed Rabbi Chaim Volozhin's wonderous segulah to protect one from harm.

After learning the sefer for two hours, the merchant's wife ran into the room, screaming that they were saved. The police had skipped their store.

What had happened? - The soldiers were about to take a lunch break when they approached the store. They put a mark on the store to remember which store they were up to. After lunch, the soldiers had a quarrel among themselves. Some said that that their mark meant they had not yet checked this store. Others said that it meant that this was the last store that they had already checked. They decided that they had already checked the store.

The merchant was spared because of the powerful protection that was taught by Rav Chaim Volozhin!

אַתָּה֙ הָרְאֵ֣תָ לָדַ֔עַת כִּ֥י ה֖' הוּא֣ הָאֱלֹהִ֑ים אֵ֥ין עֹ֖וד מִלְבַדֹּֽו - "***You have come to know that Hashem is the L-rd, there is no other besides Him***" (Devarim 4:35).

The recognition that Hashem is the only power in the world, that no one else can harm us, can help us overcome all of life's trials and tribulations. Problems that had seemed insurmountable, can disappear.

HaRav Yechezkel Levenstein zt"l writes that this idea that "there is no other besides Hashem" is a foundation of our emunah, our belief

in Hashem. He says that the goal of our tefillah and brachos is to reinforce this idea.

Rev Henach Leibowitz zt"l explains that the Jewish People had various challenges while traveling in the desert, after leaving Egypt. They did not camp in one place. Sometimes their resting place was not comfortable. Sometimes they were there for such a short time that they had no time to settle in, making it difficult to feel relaxed. Despite that, their experience WAS restful because they had total emunah, faith in Hashem.

Rav Chaim Volozhin zt"l wrote in his sefer, Nefesh haChaim, having the awareness that everything comes from Hashem, is a wonderous segulah; It is a very powerful force which can protect us from harm.

The Alter of Slobodka zt"l says that Avraham arose early in the morning, on the day that he went to sacrifice his son. That infers that he slept peacefully the night before. How was he able to sleep at all, knowing he would soon be sacrificing his beloved son? The answer is, since he had total faith in Hashem, he was able to feel totally calm, despite the magnitude of his "test".

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto zt"l says that all the events that occur in the world are to help us come to this understanding that Hashem can do everything and that there is no other power other than Hashem.

"The foundation of righteousness and the root of Avodas Hashem is that a person should place the goal of benefiting others at the centre of his life... All of one's thoughts, desires, and ambitions should be directed toward the good of the Klal. This is the entire essence of the Tzelem Elokim in man — to be a giver, like Hashem, Who is the ultimate Giver." — R' Shimon Shkop [Shaarei Yosher, Introduction.]

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory



Many reasons exist for Tu B'Av being a happy day in Jewish History. Several of them are related to marriage, such as the end of the ban on inter-tribal marriages, so ancestral lands wouldn't shift from Tribe to Tribe, and when the ban on marrying into the Tribe of Benjamin ended.

The unity of the Jewish People enables us to go from a day of sorrow like Tisha B'Av, to one of joy less than a week later. This unity was highlighted in the practice of Tu B'Av.

On this day, the single young women would go out into the vineyards in white dresses and dance. Young men looking for wives would come to choose a bride. - There were two special requirements about the dresses. First, they had to be borrowed. This is because we would not want someone to be embarrassed if she didn't have a proper dress of her own. Therefore, even the king's daughter had to borrow a dress for this event.

Second, the dresses had to ritually immersed in a mikveh to ensure they were pure, in case whoever owned the dress hadn't been careful with ritual purity. What we see is that a prerequisite for relationships is being concerned about the other person's feelings and making sure you follow the laws even if they don't. Your job isn't to berate people for not living up to their potential, but to love them and let them feel how great you think they are, so they will be inspired and want to live up to that ideal.

This Shabbos is referred to as Shabbos Nachamu, the "Shabbos of Solace", based on the introductory words of the Haftorah, 'Nachamu Nachamu Ami (Yeshaya 40:1).

A question which begs to be asked, following an intense day like Tisha B'av, is: what has changed over the past few days that we are ready for comfort? Are we not still in exile without the Bais HaMikdash?

Rav Avraham Schorr answers that from the beginning of the Parsha we can understand the consolation. The Parsha discusses Moshe's utilizing prayer in an attempt to attain passage into Eretz Yisrael/Israel. - This teaches us a fundamental aspect of davening/prayer, that although we are still not home, through prayer we can connect with Hashem and all that we have lost. Although physically not much may have changed since before Tisha B'av, we have comfort in these difficult times knowing that we still have a deep connection with Hashem.

Kiddush Hashem

Gershon had been learning at the Telshe Yeshivah in Cleveland, Ohio. As a bachur, he had demonstrated great promise, and he seemed to have a stellar future in the beis medrash. But Gershon's parents wanted him to pursue a career, and with great reluctance, he agreed to leave the yeshivah to obtain a secular degree.

On his last day in the yeshivah, Gershon was learning diligently in the beis medrash when he was summoned to the office of the rosh yeshivah, **Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz**, for a last farewell conversation. Gershon was certain that the rosh yeshivah would admonish him to maintain his learning sedarim or to continue to daven with a minyan when he entered the business world. But Rav Katz had something else in mind.

"Gershon," he said, "you are about to leave the shelter of the yeshiva's walls and venture into the outside world, where every step

you take will be a test. You must always have one ambition, one concern above all else: to sanctify Hashem's Name. Remember that everything you do will be either a kiddush Hashem or a chillul Hashem and choose accordingly!"

Gershon took the rosh yeshivah's words to heart, and that principle became the guiding light of his career.



Nachamu - Feeling The Closeness

Rav Shach זצוק"ל once called over a bochur who was walking in the street and asked him what he was thinking about. The bochur got a shock and did not have any good answer. Rav Shach taught the bochur a lesson for the rest of his life, a lesson that he would never forget.

Rav Shach explained to the bochur that one has to have something in his mind [in Torah] to think about while he is walking, not just to let the mind drift around. The way to do so is by preparing a machshava in Torah before going out.

Did you know that **HaRav Avigdor Miller זצוק"ל** wrote an entire sefer on pirush of Tefilla by taking a small part of Tefillah and thinking about a few words on his walks? Of course, each person should choose what works for them and not everyone to know what a groisa Tzaddik you are.

In any event, there is a great Jew by the name of **Rav Kalman Rosenbaum Shlit"a**. Every time I meet him, he is always resonating a massive smile mamesh full of life and true Simchas Hachaim.

Rav Kalmen Rosenbaum Shlit'a was tovea me like Rav Shach was toivea that bochur. Rav Kalmen himself always has some vort that he is thinking about, and he shares with others that he bumps into.

On one occasion while I was walking somewhere I met Rav Kalmen. He quoted to me a Posuk in this week's Parsha. The pasuk is "V"Atem Hadveikem B'Hashem Eloikeichem Chaim Kulchem Hayom". How many words are there in this Pasuk? Seven. Rav Kalmen said to me that when wrapping the Tefilin around one's arm, instead of counting with numbers one can think this Possuk which will lead you to the number seven. While we are performing the mitzvah of Tefillin which is a form of dveikus we can also think about this Pasuk of dveikus.



The Shemirah of Shabbos by Rabbi Shlomo Landau

When the Nazis entered the town of Telz in Lithuania, they turned a city that had been a vibrant Torah center into a living Gehinnom: a ghetto, disappearances, and finally the systematic and brutal murder of the town's Yidden on the 20th of Tammuz. Yet, one sixteen-year-old girl by the name of Beckerman somehow managed to escape into the surrounding forests, constantly on the run from the Nazis and their Lithuanian sympathizers. Remarkably, for the next three years she wandered from forest to forest and district to district, consistently concealing her identity.

During her third year on the run, she found a sympathetic family who was willing to hide and shelter her at great personal risk. They created a small underground bunker beneath their floorboards and placed a large rug on top of the floor. The arrangement was that

during daytime hours when the risk was greater, she would remain concealed in the bunker, but late at night they permitted her to come out of hiding and they would provide her with meager food and an opportunity to stretch her cramped limbs. In return for their dedication and devotion, the Beckerman girl, who was already a talented seamstress, offered to mend, sew, and embroider anything that the family needed done. They would often take her up on her offer and she would sew and mend late into the night.

Even So, the family was not fully aware of her dedication and commitment to her Yiddishkeit and particularly to shemiras Shabbos. Whenever she realized that there was mending or sewing to be done, she would make sure to do it on Thursday night, often working straight through the night to ensure that she would not have to be mechallel Shabbos. And then in the contracted darkness of her tiny underground bunker, she would attempt to create some type of a Shabbos aura by trying to remember her family's Shabbos table and even by softly humming zemiros to herself.

This arrangement worked well until one Shabbos morning when she heard the rug being lifted and the woman of the house calling to her to come out, as she needed her help. She climbed out of the bunker and the woman shared that she was going to town that morning and that she needed her coat mended right away. Now the Beckerman girl was in a quandary; in her three years on the run, she had never been mechallel Shabbos and she was not about to do so now. On the other hand, if she refused, who knows what could happen!

Initially, she tried to give excuses that her hands were sore and that she was tired, but her mistress quickly rebuffed her, saying that it was a small repair and would take only a few minutes. Finally, left with no other choice, she explained that it was Shabbos and that somehow, she had always managed to keep Shabbos, and she pleaded with the woman to let her wait until Shabbos had ended and not to make her desecrate Shabbos by sewing. The woman replied that it

could not wait as she needed the coat immediately. The woman irately continued that it was the least that she could do in return for the kindness that they had shown her. "My sincerest apologies, but I just cannot desecrate Shabbos," the girl responded, but this only served to further enrage the woman.

"This is your last chance! Mend my coat right here and right now or leave this house this minute and never come back!"

With overwhelming inner strength and with a pounding heart, the girl fled the home. She knew that she was in extreme danger, as every fiber of her disheveled appearance indicated her identity. Quickly and quietly, she fled to the outskirts of the city where there were tall wheat fields and hid among the tall sheaves of wheat. She was petrified about what the future had in store for her, but at the same time, she was proud of the fact that she had stood strong in her shemiras Shabbos.

Just a short while later, she saw a figure approaching from the distance and begin walking through the tall sheaves. A few moments later she heard a woman frantically calling her name. Cautiously, she lifted her head from within the sheaves. It was none other than the woman who had sheltered her.

Breathlessly, she shared, "You are never going to believe what just happened..... Almost immediately after you left, there was a pounding on the door. It was Nazi officers who had come to search our home after someone had informed them that we were sheltering a Jew. They turned the entire house over but found no one! Please come back; your G-d is clearly watching over you and I was wrong to ask you to disobey His will!"

Miraculously, the Beckerman girl survived the war and went on to establish a beautiful Jewish home where she carefully guarded the Shabbos that had so miraculously guarded her!



The Shabbos after Tisha B'Av is named 'Shabbos Nachamu' after the very first words of the Haftorah this week - נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי- **"*Console, console My people*"**. It's celebrated as a time of healing and comfort, after the pain and agony that we just experienced on Tisha B'Av. – That's why it's even more surprising that when we get up from the floor in search of comfort, we read this week's parsha – Vaeschanan, which is almost identical in its content to the parsha that we read on Tisha B'Av.

How is it possible that the portion that we read on the day of Tisha B'Av, is read again just when we are looking for comfort on Shabbos Nachamu?

Rav Zeev Leff Shlita once suggested that this was done deliberately in order to teach us that, "*the comfort that we are seeking cannot only be found when life circumstances change around for the better, but rather, inside the painful struggles that we experience now. - If we are able to turn it around and look at it from a different perspective, that is the true comfort, because that reveals the silver lining.*"

A talmid of mine works in Hatzalah, and he told me the following story:

One summer he was called to a Hatzalah call to one of the colonies. There was a child who hit his head and injured himself as he dived into the swimming pool. He made his way to the child and found that the injury was not too serious. He checked out the child, and Baruch Hashem everything was ok. But he did something extra that he didn't

understand the reason why. – He carefully checked the youngster's pulse and found it to be very weak. He suggested to the family that that go straight away and have it checked out.

They straight away took him to the hospital for checks, and they found out that this child had an underlying medical issue that was not known to them prior. He required emergency medical intervention. - They would have never found out about this condition had he not hit his head on the pool.

Sometimes, the greatest bracha is only found through the hardest times.

After reading this portion with its negative focus on Tisha B'Av, we read it again this week – Why? To show us that if you're looking out for consolation, change your perspective and the way you look at something. Even through the hardest of times and the greatest struggles – they can also have a silver lining, if only we look at them with a different perspective.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!



Shabbos Nachamu

We experience the saddest day of the year on *Tishab'Av*, but yet as soon as it's over we get excited to eat meat again, get haircuts and shave, listen to music, resume life as normal, and enjoy the summer the way we'd like to.

Where is our continued sense of mourning? We haven't seen the Beis Hamikdash (the 3rd Temple) rebuilt – why aren't we still sad? Why do we just continue with life as is and not carry the sense of mourning like we did on Tishab'Av throughout the year?

As this Shabbos, is known as *Shabbos Nachamu*, three thoughts come to mind that help me personally reconcile this paradox:

1. A Jew must be happy: In *Parshas Ki Savo*, which we'll be reading in a few weeks, Moshe relates all the curses that the Jews will receive for not following in the ways of Hashem and the Torah. But the systemic cause and underlying reason that they do not follow in the ways of Hashem and the Torah is because they didn't live life as HAPPY Jews: *"because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of heart…"*(Deuteronomy 28:47).

Although it might be sad and extremely depressing that the *BeisHaMikdash* hasn't been rebuilt, Hashem wants to see us serving him out of happiness.

The Kotzker Rebbe explains that for the month of Av we must lessen our happiness, and for the month of Adar we must increase our happiness, but we only could lessen and increase because we are ALWAYS happy as Jews.

2. Live for the moment but look to the future: How do we approach life that we'll always be in a state of happiness?

There is a famous *Gemara* at the end of Tractate Makkos [24a]: **Rabbi Akiva was walking with several other Rabbis in the ruins of Jerusalem and when they reached the Temple Mount they saw a fox emerging from the place of the Holy of Holies. The Rabbis all started weeping, except Rabbi Akiva who laughed. The Rabbis explained that they were weeping because a place so holy was now desecrated with a fox walking through it. Rabbi Akiva explained to them that he was laughing because that alongside the prophecy that the Temple will be destroyed was the prophecy that it will be rebuilt. With these words his colleagues replied to him: "Akiva, you have consoled us! Akiva, you have consoled us!"**

Rabbi Akiva understood that Hashem runs the world and that if one aspect of what he promised has come true, so will everything else. We must live this way as well. If we trust Hashem and understand that although times are tough and we've suffered a lot

as Jews, His promise will be kept and we will experience the building of the BeisHaMikdash soon in our days.

3. Hashem is here, Hashem is there, Hashem is truly everywhere: The Talmud [Bava Basra 121b] teaches us that along with Yom Kippur, the 15 of Av, known as Tub'Av is celebrated as one of the happiest days of the year.

There are several reasons, however one of them really teaches us that in the direst of circumstances we could feel Hashem's presence and celebrate. The story of *Beitar*, where Jews were brutally murdered after the Bar Kochba rebellion teaches us this. Millions were killed and the Romans refused to let their bodies be buried, however 17 years later the Jews were finally granted permission to return this city, and they found the bodies which were not decomposed at all. This was a true miracle.

When a *neshama* leaves a body, it decays. With the destruction of the second Beis HaMikdash, the Jewish people thought that Hashem's presence was to leave them as well. This miracle showed the Jews that although they lost the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem's presence had not left them. It indicated to them that they as Jews still had Hashem with them, that they remained as G-d's chosen nation, and that they were still able to access spirituality. - Even in the direst of situations and circumstances, Hashem is with us and running every aspect of the world.

On *Shabbos Nachamu*, we should merit to feel Hashem's warm embrace and love of his people. We should look to incorporate happiness into every aspect of our lives, live for the moment but look to the future, and realize that Hashem is truly everywhere!

May we merit the coming of Mashiach and the third Beis HaMikdash speedily in our days!



An Investment For a Tremendous Return By Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon

As everyone knows, one of the ways of acquiring something is by making a trade, I will give you one of my belongings and in turn you will give me one of yours. The more valuable the item that you desire is, the more you will give up.

After the *histalkus* of a certain tzaddik, his children sat down to divide his personal items. Before they began they all agreed that it must be done in the spirit of their father, without any friction or hard feelings. For example, they put all of his seforim in a manner that they could all be seen and they all received an equal amount, allowing everyone to state their preferences etc.

After that they divided a second category, let us say his personal items, such as his kiddish bechers the seder plate, menorah etc.

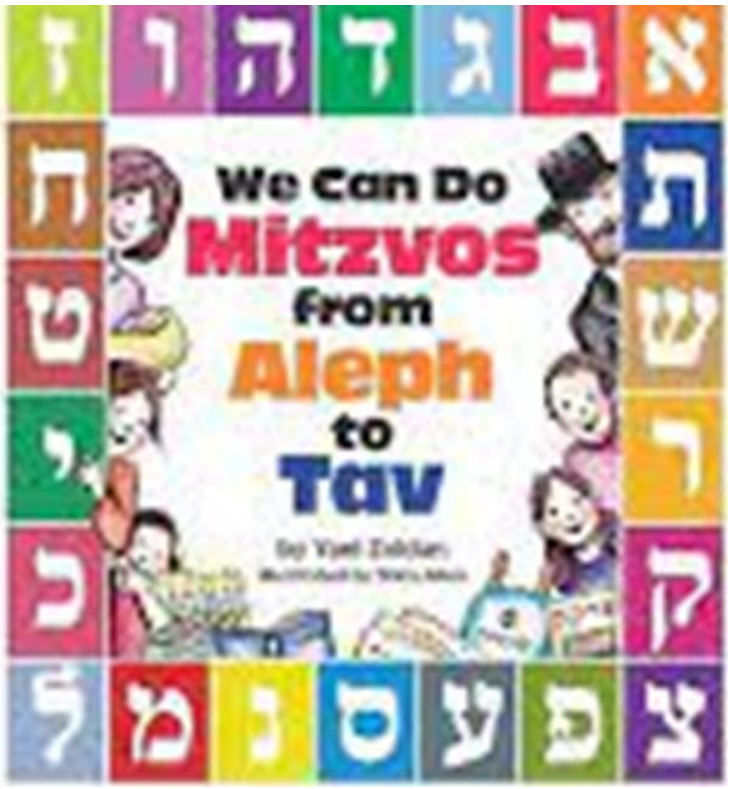
The final item that had to be received was his tefillin, but how could that be divided, and especially as everyone truly desired to obtain it?

After much thought they decided that each one would write what they are willing to give up to obtain it. One son wrote, "I will give up ta certain item from each category we divided". Another wrote, "I am willing to allow you to choose any item from each category", and so on. Finally, they opened the last note, in which it was written, I will give away everything I received for the tefillin.

All of the sons saw that he treasured it more than they did and said unanimously that he deserves to receive it.

Torah Tavlin - R' Dovid Shlomo Eibshitz zt"l (Arvei Nachal) would say:

רְאֵה לִמַּדְתִּי אֶתְכֶם חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים .. לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בָּאִים שָׁמָּה 4:5



There are people who properly observe Torah and mitzvos at home, but when they are away or on business, they make compromises. Moshe told the people, 'I have given over to you Hashem's Torah and you are to live in accordance with it 'b'kerev ha'aretz' - even when you will be in the midst of the land - not only in the confines of your home or neighbourhood, but also when you are in the company of non-observant people or in a secularly oriented neighbourhood.'

Regardless of where a Jew lives or with whom he comes in contact, he must adhere tenaciously to his Torah convictions and conduct himself accordingly.

אָנֹכִי עֹמֵד בֵּין ה' וּבֵינֵיכֶם ***I stand between your G-d and you*** (5:5).

Early chasidim used to explain that the "I," the awareness of self, the ego, stands between the person and his efforts to come closer to G-d. (**the Mezritcher Maggid**)

Smile - it is the key that fits the lock of everybody's heart.

R' Yehonason Eibeschutz zt"l (Tiferes Yehonason) would say: לֹא תֹסִפוּ ...וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ – 4:2. ***Do not add to the word which I command you, nor diminish from it.***



The Torah is described as a **סם החיים** - ***'A prescription for life,'*** a medicine able to purify those who take it. Thus, we are warned not to add nor detract from the Torah's words. A prescription drug is a precise mixture of various substances and changing the proportions can have toxic effects. So, too, are the commandments of the Torah given in the exact and correct proportions, and to change even one single word can have a terrible and deleterious effect.

R' Yoel Pinchasi Shlit"a would say: כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת אֵין עוֹד- 4:39.

After witnessing terrorists in Eretz Yisroel attempting to maim, kill and kidnap Jews with rockets in the air and tunnels under the ground, we have a new appreciation of the posuk which tells us that there is only one Protector of the Jewish nation - **בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל**- from the rockets high in the sky, and **עַל הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת** - tunnels underneath the ground. Only Hashem protects Bnei Yisroel - **אֵין עוֹד** - there is no other!"

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִיכֻן יָמֶיךָ וּלְמַעַן יִיטַב לָךְ עַל הָאֲדָמָה 5:16. ***Honour your father and your mother as the L-rd your G-d commanded you, in order that your days be lengthened.***

The Torah tells us we must honour our parents. However, in Parshas Yisro the Torah gives us one reason: " **לְמַעַן יַאֲרִיכֻן יָמֶיךָ** " - so that you may merit a long life, while in Parshas Vaeschanan, the Torah adds the words, " **כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ** " - because Hashem commanded us.



What is the significance of this additional phrase? The Meshech Chochma refers to the Talmud Yerushalmi that considers **כבוד אב ואם** a repayment of a debt of gratitude to one's parents. After all, consider the enormous amounts of money, food, clothing, tuition ... not to mention the time, effort, and energy, that parents invest in their children. The least children can do is honour their parents as a small token of gratitude for such a large debt.

However, the Torah here is telling us that **הכרת הטוב** (gratitude) is not the only motivation for this mitzvah. Rather, it is an obligation, a **מצות עשה**, incumbent upon us solely because Hashem commanded us to do so. The Torah waited until this parsha to tell us " **כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ** " it is a direct commandment from Hashem, rather than a repayment of the debt of gratitude.

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l held that one cannot be **יוצא** hearing Megillas Esther through a hearing aid. As a result, he taught

himself how to read the megillah and would do so every year for his hearing-impaired mother. She would always remove her hearing aid and R' Shlomo Zalman would lain the megillah loud and clear right near her ear, so that she could be **יוצא**.

As she grew older, R' Shlomo Zalman's children were concerned that she could not hear all the words despite his great efforts and wondered why he continued to do it year after year. He answered that, in truth, he was never sure all the years if she was actually **יוצא** the mitzvah, but he continued laining anyway just to perform the mitzvah of **כבוד אב ואם**.

The Frum Car

וְיוֹם֙ הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י שַׁבָּ֥ת לַיהוָ֖ה אֱלֹקֶ֑יךָ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂ֨ה כָל־מְלָאכָ֜ה ...וְשׁוֹרְךָ֣ וַחֲמֹרֶ֗ךָ וְכָל־בְּהֶמְתֶּ֔ךָ
5:14



An Israeli man was in the market for a used car. He spent weeks searching for just the right one and was pleased when he felt he found precisely what he was looking for at the right price. He met with the owner, paid for the car, and had the related documents transferred to his name. Just before he drove off in his new acquisition, though, the former owner, a religious Jew, told him, "You should know that this car never 'drove' on Shabbos. I would appreciate it very much if it would continue to 'be observant.'

The purchaser grinned from ear to ear. What a cute joke! Of course, it never drove on Shabbos. He, too, was Shomer Shabbos and the request was totally unnecessary. One tries not to hold on to a used

car too long, and, three years later, he was now advertising his used car for sale.

When an Israeli teenager named Roni, showed up to execute the deal, he felt uncomfortable. He excused himself for a few moments and went into the next room to call his wife. She immediately understood what was wrong and told her husband, "You are upset because the car never drove on Shabbos and now it will be owned by someone who is non-observant. My suggestion to you is to simply tell him the truth - that the car is 'religious.' How could he tell this potential buyer about his issue? Roni would turn and run away, thinking the seller was crazy.

In the end, he decided he would just tell him the facts and let Roni decide for himself. Before completing the deal, the man said to Roni," You should know that this car never 'drove' on Shabbos, and I would appreciate it very much if it would continue to 'be observant.'" Roni looked dubious, and he quickly added, "Of course, I cannot obligate you to this condition."

The deal went through. Two years later, a few days before Rosh Hashanah, the man decided to go to the Kosel, the Western Wall, to join in the Selichos prayers. Amidst the hullabaloo of hundreds of men praying, a group of lively Breslover Chassidim were dancing and singing, "Uman, Uman, Rosh Hashanah ...."

Suddenly, one of the chassidim left the circle and walked over to the Israeli man. Without a word, he pulled him into the circle, and began dancing with him in earnest. There was another man, a Breslover Chasid, staring at him intently. When the dance was over, that fellow approached and warmly wished him a good New Year. Then he asked if he recognized him. The Israeli stared at the young man, dressed in Chassidic garb, a full beard and payos flowing, and could not identify him.

Finally, the Chasid said to him, "Don't you remember selling me your car two years ago?" What a shock! There was absolutely no

resemblance between non-observant Roni and the ultra-Orthodox chasid standing before him. Before he could ask what had brought upon this transformation, Roni told him his story.

"The first Friday night after I bought the car from you, I got into it to drive somewhere. To my great chagrin, for the first time that entire week, the motor refused to start. I was upset, but that's what happens when you buy an old car, I thought to myself. To my great surprise and relief, on Sunday morning the car started up normally. To make sure there were no further problems, I even had it checked out by a mechanic and he said that he could find nothing wrong. "However, the following Friday night, the same thing repeated itself! The car absolutely refused to start. I realized that this was not just a coincidence and I remembered that you had warned me that the car 'was religious.'

I was extremely impressed and deeply moved. I began to think, if this car stubbornly keeps Shabbos, then maybe I can do so as well." "And as you see," Roni concluded, "the spark which wouldn't ignite the car, instead ignited the Jewish spark within my soul!" (*Ish L'Rayahu*)

Reb Hershy Jacob z"l, president of Chevra Hatzolah, leading askan of the Lower East Side community, and celebrated baal chessed, who passed away on 17 Sivan (June 23 2016). Hershy was remembered for his natural drive to help others, and shortly after his marriage in 1966, became one of the first volunteers for the newly founded Chevra Hatzolah. It was a job that naturally suited his instinctive inclination to go above and beyond the call of duty, as well as his sincere dedication to the needs of Klal Yisroel.

At the same time that he joined Hatzolah, a newly married Hershy took a job in a brokerage firm, where he and other men were given lists of names to call to try to sell people stock. On his first Monday at work, the manager called the office together and gave a short

speech. He said, "We have this amazing stock, and we want you guys to sell as much of it as you can." He gave a few details about the company, a few more on what to tell prospective clients and then he sent them to the phones. Hershy was a natural salesman and did quite well. In fact, he did so well that in the first week alone, he made twelve sales. For a rookie in the business, that was exceptional.

But Hershy went even further. After a full week of singing the praises of this stock, he decided to buy some of his own. He took $500 of his wedding money and sunk it into the stock. The next Monday morning, Hershy came to work, and the manager again called a meeting to discuss another fantastic stock. He told them about another great company, even better than the first, and how he wanted them to sell this stock.

Hershy was surprised. After hearing about the first company it was hard to believe that the second stock was as good as the first. But he was a good salesman and did his best. He sold stock in the second company, but he didn't have as good a week as the first. On the third Monday, when he was told about a third stock, better than the first two, he became apprehensive. He could not contain his suspicions and he approached the manager with a question. "Listen," he said to the man, "I understand you have one great stock, maybe even two, but three in three weeks? Is that even possible?"

The manager said, "Do you think I know anything about these stocks?" he said sternly. "I have no idea if they're good or bad. If they make money or not. I just want to sell as much of it to as many people as we can! The more we sell, the more commissions we make!"

Hershy Jacob was shocked. He couldn't believe it. This was not his way. On the spot he told the manager, "I am very sorry, but I cannot work here anymore. I was not born this way. I quit!"

He thanked the man for giving him the opportunity, shook his hand, picked up his hat and coat and walked out. Hershy was young and

caught on with another firm. But the nature of the brokerage business was not for him and soon after, he left the industry.

He worked in various jobs over the next few decades, with varying amounts of success. Eventually, he found himself working for the city of New York, in the office of Mr. Harrison Goldin. Harrison Goldin was the Controller of the city of New York for over twelve years. But he had greater political aspirations and in 1989, he ran in the Democratic primary for the mayor's office.

He lost and when the new administration came into power, Goldin and his staff were let go. Hershy Jacob was out of a job and he remained in this status for over a year and a half. Times were tough and with a growing family, Hershy was under a great deal of pressure.

His nephew relates how he visited his uncle and saw how frustrated and discouraged he was. It seemed as if he was at the end of his rope. He never saw his uncle at such a low point in his life.

What happened next was nothing short of a miracle. Hershy received a call from a brokerage firm who told him that in the course of computerizing their files, they came across stock notes showing that a broker by the name of Harold Jacob had sold stock in a company, Franklin Resources Inc., to 12 individuals, and he had bought stock himself. They were pleased to report that the company was evaluating the shares and they were worth quite a bit of money! (In 1989, Franklin's assets were worth over $40 billion!)

Hershy was asked to locate the other twelve stockholders, so he can report to them that their shares in the company were worth millions! It took over a quarter-century, but in the blink of an eye, Hershy Jacob became a wealthy man - and he used his wealth to always assist others. "**ישועת ה' כהרף עין**" - Sometimes when a person thinks he is at his lowest point, Hashem is there to save him in a split second!

Torah Tavlin

וְאַתֶּם֙ הַדְּבֵקִ֣ים בַּה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶ֔ם חַיִּ֥ים כֻּלְּכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם ***But you who cleave to the L-rd your G-d are alive, all of you, this day*** *4:4*

R' Ephraim M'Sedlikov zt"l (Degel Machane Ephraim) would say: The seforim tell us that when one recites the 248 words of Krias Shema, he infuses his 248 limbs (**רמ"ח איברים**) with strength and life.



In truth, Shema only contains 247 words - the final word **אמת** is added on to **ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** to complete the count. This is hinted to here: **וְאַתֶּם֙ הַדְּבֵקִ֣ים בַּה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶ֔ם** - when you will attach the word **אמת** (same letters as **אַתֶּם֙**) to **ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** at the end of Shema, **חַיִּ֥ים כֻּלְּכֶ֖ם הַיּֽוֹם** - you will be strengthened with life."

Parshah Thoughts -Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Moshe warns the nation that when they go into the Land of Israel, they will find cities and homes to move into, and that they should be cautious not to forget Hashem (6:10-15).

Sforno explains Moshe's concern. When a person receives wealth without having to put in any effort for it, the natural course will be that they will follow their desires and thereby come to forget Hashem. Since the *Bnei Yisroel* were getting so much without having to put much in for it, they have to be so much more careful not to lose sight of the Benefactor, Hashem, and that is why Moshe warned them.

R' Naftali Tzvi Hurvitz ZT"L (Rebbe of Ropschitz) would say: **וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה' בָּעֵת הַהִוא - Moshe beseeched the Almighty בָּעֵת הַהִוא - '*in that time*'** although the Torah doesn't tell us exactly what time it was.



From here we can learn an important lesson, that ***anytime*** is the right time to daven to Hashem. A person should never feel like he is unable to pray – he has no time, patience, or he's 'not in the mood' to daven, because every second of every day, Hashem is waiting anxiously for our tefillos. 'In that time,' is always!"

Pearls of Wisdom…A Word for the Ages



The *Mishnah Brurah* (290:7) teaches that *Shabbos* was only given so that *Bnei Yisroel* should learn *Torah* on that day. All week long we are busy, but on *Shabbos* we are free to learn *Torah*.

The *Ibn Ezra* comments on the *Pasuk* in *Yeshayahu* (58:13) that the *Neshamah* delights with words of *Torah* that are studied on *Shabbos*!

6:8 וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדֶךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ



A non-religious physician once asked **R' Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman ZT"L**, "What is the great importance you attach to Tefillin, such that the Sages say, 'Anyone who does not don Tefillin is considered as one of the rebellious sinners of Israel'? Anyone can see that they are just leather boxes containing some biblical verses on parchment!" R' Ruderman responded with a question. "You are a doctor. Surely, you've studied anatomy. If so, then you have certainly seen what the human brain looks like - a grey, shrivelled, wrinkled tangle of tissue, not much larger than a fist." The physician nodded in assent. "Perhaps, then, you can explain to me why people make such a fuss about the brain? it looks like an overgrown walnut, no more! What is the difference between the brain of a genius and that of an idiot? Do they not appear the same?

The answer is that the importance of the brain lies not in its outward appearance, but in its actions and accomplishments. It is not the physical look of the brain, but the invisible power of intelligence and spirit that is housed within it that determines its significance."

R' Ruderman concluded by completing the analogy. "Don't you see? Tefillin, as well as the other mitzvos of the Torah, are the same as the brain. Externally, they may appear to be quite unimpressive, but the spiritual power embodied in them is overwhelming. Although it may not be detectable to the human eye, there is a tremendous effect that the performance of the mitzvos has upon a Jew's spirit, his neshama, and indeed upon the whole world!

The fact that these effects may be invisible to the naked eye does not diminish their importance in the least!"

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא 3:23



Moshe is telling the Jewish people how he poured out his heart to Hashem to allow him to enter the Land of Israel and yet Hashem said no. He tried everything. He said 515 different prayers, the numerical value of **וָאֶתְחַנַּן** and yet Hashem told him, "Moshe, stop praying! You cannot enter the land." This may seem harsh, but Hashem was only thinking about the good of His children. Hashem knew that if Moshe entered the land, he would immediately build a Bais Hamikdash that would contain such immense holiness that it could never be destroyed. And then later, when the Jews would sin, Hashem would have no means to atone for their sins and He would be forced to destroy them.

How ironic! The greatest kindness to the Jewish people was that Moshe did not enter Eretz Yisroel so that eventually Hashem would not be forced to destroy His people. So why do we daven? If Hashem will in any case, do what is best, what does prayer accomplish? This is a crucial question! And the answer is even more crucial.

In this Parsha, Moshe teaches us that the purpose of prayer is not getting what we want or what we ask for. Of course, when we pray, we beg Hashem for what we want and very often, Hashem answers those prayers, and our requests are fulfilled. However, when we don't get what we asked for, or what we want and think is best, we must realize that all of our prayers are surely not in vain. For the

purpose of prayer is to become close to Hashem. The more we pray, we plead and pour out our hearts and innermost desires and feelings, we develop a real, genuine, strong, unbreakable bond with our Father in Heaven, which is greater than anything in the world we could possibly ask for.



A non-religious Israeli was taking a scenic drive with his wife alongside the Kinneret river. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a hysterical woman jumped onto the main road and began screaming and waving her arms, frantically trying to flag someone down. He quickly braked to a halt. "My daughters ... my two girls .... they can't swim," she screamed hysterically, and pointed down to a beach area. "Please, somebody help them. They're drowning!"

The man jumped out of his car and ripped off his jacket. His wife began yelling, "Come back, it's too dangerous. You must be careful after your heart attack!" But he paid her no mind and dove right into the cool waters of the Kinneret. After a long agonizing moment, he surfaced holding up the convulsing body of one of the girls and brought her to shore.

"Please," cried the mother, "I have another daughter still in the water! Please save her!" The man turned and dove back into the water and a moment later, he came out dragging a limp body in his arms. "Hold her head up," someone cried, "She needs to get oxygen." He hadn't realized that as he was carrying her out, her head had fallen below the water's surface and she had stopped moving. He

quickly pulled her head up out of the water and dragged her to the beach where someone performed CPR and an ambulance was called.

It all happened so quickly, and the girl was taken to the hospital where the prognosis was grim: Her head had been in the water for far too long and the doctors felt that her chances were not good. The family prayed for a miracle and Tehillim was said around the clock. The next day, the doctors took a scan of the girl's brain and were amazed to find that everything was perfectly normal. "I can't believe it, regular brain activity has resumed," said the astounded physician. The girl woke up soon after and was well enough to leave the hospital only two days later. The doctors said they had never seen anything like it. She was deprived of oxygen for so long; medically speaking, it was impossible to have this outcome.

A Seudas Hoda'ah was in order, and the family of the two rescued girls was determined to locate their rescuer. When he called the hospital to find out about the girls and left his number, the family managed to get hold of him and begged him to come. He was not religious at all, but he felt that he wanted to be part of their simcha.

At the meal, he told his story. He was recovering from a heart attack before this incident, and he and his wife were headed up north for a vacation. When he saw the charedi woman in the street, his wife said keep driving - "She's a meshuganah" - but he decided to stop.

Incredibly, just the previous week, as part of his therapy for his heart attack, he was in a hotel that had a pool, and he started to swim laps during the week. He was a former Olympic swimmer but hadn't swam in years. He had no doubt that had he not been swimming laps, he would not have been in shape to rescue their daughters. But he was, and after saving the first girl, he went back in for the second girl.

To his dismay, he hadn't realized that her head was still bobbing about in the water, and he almost lost his mind from grief at what he had neglected.

He was furious with himself and when he got home, he screamed, "It was my all fault; she could have lived!" He cried out, "G-d, I have never prayed before. This is the first time in my life I'm praying to you. Please, G-d, consider it as if I prayed to you my whole life, and combine all those prayers that I could have said, and use them to save this girl. Please G-d, I'll never be able to go on living, knowing that I caused her death!" He cried like that for hours. Finally, he went home and called the hospital. "They told me,"he said, "that an hour ago, as I was saying this prayer, your daughter woke up!"

Life Lesson



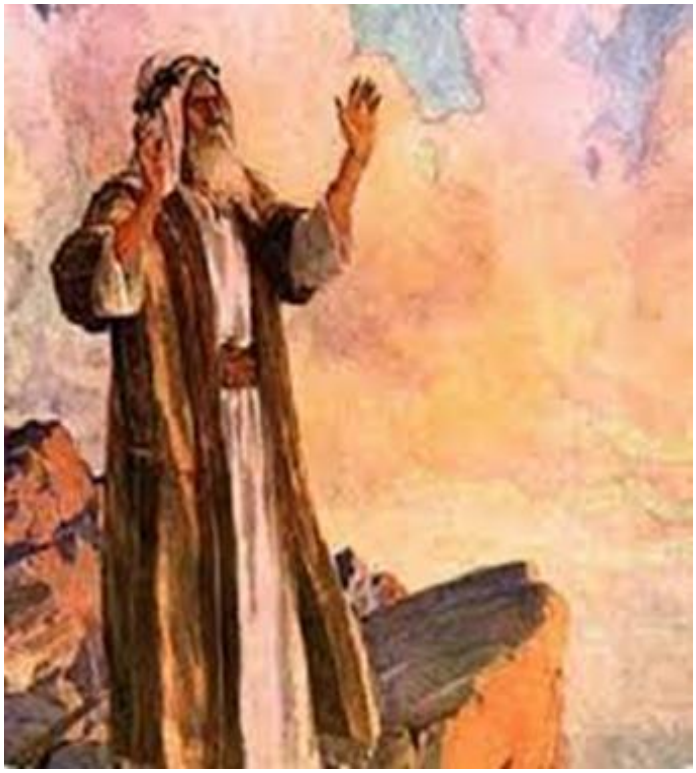
A Philosophy professor in class one day picked up a large empty jar and proceeded to fill it to the top with rocks. He then asked his students if the jar was full? They unanimously agreed that the jar was full. He then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. He then asked his students again if the jar was full. Again, they unanimously agreed that the jar was full. Then the professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

The professor said, "I want you to recognize that this is your life. The rocks are the important things: your family, your friends, your health, and all the critical stuff. The pebbles are the secondary things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is

everything else. Remember, if you put the sand into the jar first, there is no room for anything else - like the pebbles or the rocks!

The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. The goal of our lives is to serve Hashem and teach our children to do the same, in the best possible way. By showing them that what's important comes first, we can live our lives to the fullest.

Torah Tavlin



(3:26) **וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ אֵלַי רַב־לָךְ אַל־תּוֹסֶף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה׃**

The posuk tells us that Moshe implored Hashem to allow him to enter Eretz Yisroel. The Ribono Shel Olam responded by saying, "*It is enough for you. Do not continue to speak with me about this.*"

The Medrash Tanchuma quotes the words of (יח:כג) **משלי** to describe the exchange between Hashem and Moshe Rabbeinu: "**תַּחֲנוּנִים יְדַבֶּר־רָשׁ**" - "*Petitions spoken by the destitute*" - this is Moshe. **וְעָשִׁיר יַעֲנֶה עַזּוּת** - "*And the rich man responds brazenly* - this is Hashem, who told Moshe *'It is enough for you.'*"

The Medrash is astounding: Because Hashem refuses to give in to Moshe, He is described as **עַזּוּת** - "Brazen"?

When R' Tanchumah arrived at the gates of the Heavenly Court, he was immediately confronted with this question and a reply was demanded.

The Yid Hakodosh of Pshischa ZT"L illustrates the scene and provides R' Tanchumah's response: Although Moshe truly wished to enter the land and bring the ultimate redemption to his people, he was not allowed to do so since this can only be brought about through Moshiach Ben Dovid, the descendants of King David. This is the meaning of Hashem's words **רַב־לָךְ** - "It is enough for you" - the word **רַב** is roshei teivos of **רות** and **בעז**, the forebearers of the Davidic dynasty, from whom will eventually emerge the saviour of Bnei Yisroel, and not from the descendants of Moshe Rabbeinu.

Elaborating on this concept, R' Tanchumah added to the words "**רַב־לָךְ** spoken by Hashem, the words of Mishley, **יַעֲנֶה עַזּוּת**. If one takes the **ב** of **רב** and adds the letters **עז**, it spells out **בעז**. So too, the **ר** when connected to the letters **ות** spell out "**רות**".

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא 3:23



The Baal HaTurim notes that the word **וָאֶתְחַנַּן** - ***"implored"*** has the same gematria as the word **שירה** - "Song"which is the same gematriah as 515. We learn from here that Moshe sang before Hashem in order that his prayer should be accepted.

The Rebbe, R' Feivel of Zabriz ZT"L explains this idea in a fascinating light. Every simple prayer that a Jew prays will, at times, have some complaint against it that will cause it to not be accepted in Heaven. The reason being, that the person saying the prayer was not worthy at that exact time that this prayer was to be heard. However, it is brought down that if this prayer is said with song and

extra praise of Hashem, then it is guaranteed that it will be accepted and there is nothing that can be brought as a complaint against it.

It is therefore important that the person who is praying should sing some of the prayer, or add some type of special praise to Hashem, and have in mind that His help will come to him because of this song or praise.

This is the meaning of the posuk in Tehillim יוֹמָם יְצַוֶּה ה׳ חַסְדּוֹ וּבַלַּיְלָה שִׁירָה עִמִּי תְּפִלָּה - "***By day Hashem will command his mercy and by night my people sing their prayer***".42:9

When Jews turn their prayers into song, Hashem commands His mercy and help is sent to them. Likewise, the word תְּפִלָּה - "Prayer" is also the same gematria as "**שירה**" - "Song".(515)

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אל ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר 23:3 - בן איש חי

The Shem Havayah in its written form is, **י-ה-ו-ה** which is the Gematria of 26, and it is said as, **א -ד- נ- י** – which is the Gematria of 65. Together it is a total of 91.

The difference between the Gematria of **ישראל** - 541 and the Shemois Hashem of 91 is 450. The name of, **משה** in its full form(**מ״ם, שי״ן, ה״ה**) is the Gematria of 450, the difference between Hashem and Klal Yisroel. Devorim 5:5

אנכי עומד בין ד׳ וביניכם בעת ההיא להגיד לכם את דבר ד׳ Moshe Rabbeinu was saying that he stands between Hashem and Klal Yisroel at that time, and he would be the one to convey the words of Hashem to them. Moshe Rabbeinu was always Davening for the good of Klal Yisroel

Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

רפאנו ד׳ ונרפא ***Heal us Hashem and we will be healed.***



We ask Hashem to heal us from pre-existing illnesses and to see to it that v'neirafei, "we will remain healthy" and not contract any future illness.

The Talmud Shabbos 32b teaches that a person should always pray that his health is maintained and that he does not become ill because, once illness strikes, it requires greater merit to warrant Hashem's cure.

Rabbeinu Bachya notes that, with regard to healing provided by a human physician, the Torah employs two words v'rapo yerapei, "He shall surely heal" (Shemos 21:19). In both words, the fay has a dot in it, which transforms the sound to pay, which has a harsher sound. This implies that the medical treatment proffered by a doctor is often painful and harsh tasting. They must use needles, syringes, scalpels.

In Shemoneh Esrai, we petition Hashem to heal us. We use the easy – on the ears sound of fay – refaeinu, which signifies that Hashem's cure is gentle, sensitive and painless.

Parsha Thoughts By Mordechai Sapoznick

One of the **עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבְּרוֹת** is - **זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ** – '***Safeguard the Shabbos day to make it holy.***'

The Pri Megadim says that one who adds from the weekday to Shabbos receives added life. In other words, someone who starts Shabbos earlier than the scheduled time, Hashem will bless him with a long life. [**ספר עלינו לשבח**]

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע"ה]



The Haftora begins **נחמו נחמו עמי**. Why the repetition? The consolation is referring to the Batei Mikdash that were destroyed. We therefore have the double wording since it is alluding to both Batei Mikdash.

At times when one is going through a difficult seemingly never-ending trouble in his life, he may wonder to himself does this ever end. He may say to himself **מאין יבא עזרי** - from where will the help come. Tehillim 121:1.

This may include dating, an illness and the like. The same applies with the loss of the Beis Hamikdash and Galus. We need to realize **עזרי מעם י-ה-ו-ה** - the help will come from Hashem. This is the meaning in **עמי** נחמו נחמו as the consolation for the Beis Hamikdash is that the help will come from Hashem.

וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּמָצָאתָ כִּי תִדְרְשֶׁנּוּ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ

"From there you will seek Hashem, your Elokim, and you will find Him, if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul." *(4:29)*

R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischa z"l (1765-1827; chassidic rebbe in Poland) comments: Some people seek G-d "there," i.e., in philosophical inquiries. In reality, the place to find G-d is in your heart. Once someone purifies his midot / character traits, he will find Hashem in his heart. (Torat Simcha No.133)

Penninim Al Hatorah

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ Honour your father and mother. (5:16)



To render honour to one's parents is an awesome task. Honour means much more than respect. It means: to value; to cherish; to appreciate; to understand that one's presence in this world is attributed to his parents.

The Sefer HaChinuch writes: *Heim sibas heyoso b'olam,* "They are the cause of his being in this world." When one realises that his basic "being" is due to them, he should be filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Honour should be the result of this emotion. Hashem commands us to respect parents, because they partner with Him in our creation. To honour parents is to honour Hashem. To disrespect parents is to dishonour Hashem.

One of the, famously, sharf vorts of the Kotzker Rebbe zt"l, centres on the command Hashem gave Bnei Yisroel after Mattan Torah, שׁוּבוּ לָכֶם לְאָהֳלֵיכֶם - 'Go back to your tents.' (5:27)

When you are standing at Har Sinai, exposed to the glory of the Creator, with Moshe Rabbeinu in front of you, then it's easy to be an ehrliche Yid, said the Kotzker. But the trick is to hold on to that yiras Shomayim when you go back home, when you're far from Har Sinai, in the marketplace or a roadside tavern.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקינוּ ה' אֶחָד 6:4



When we say Shema,we declare that Hashem is **אחד** - One. What will our reward be?

The Rabbeinu b'Chaya teaches that we will merit Gan Eden, and we will be saved from Gehinom. He explains that **אחד** is *gematriya* thirteen. **גן** (Gan Eden) is written thirteen times in *Bereishis* and **אש** is written thirteen times in *Va'eschanan*. This indicates that by saying **ה' אחד** one merits Gan Eden and is saved from the fire of Gehinom.

Partnership

The following story was told over by **R' Yitzchok Zilberstein shlit'a**, who marvels at the greatness of a Jew to become a "partner" with Hakadosh Boruch Hu and merit tremendous zechusim and even miracles on his behalf.

A wealthy Jew did business in a number of African countries. He would travel all over the continent in the course of his business dealings. Recognizing the dangers inherent for a religious Jew in some of these far-flung outposts, the pious and sincere man would say, "Before each and every trip I take to Africa, I daven that Hashem should be my 'partner' and He should protect me and help me be successful. With the proceeds of my dealings, I support numerous yeshivos and mosdos and in this way, I honour my part of the 'partnership.'"

The Jew relates how on one of his trips, he found himself in an African village far away from civilization. He was walking back to his

quarters on a dirt path. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a huge mountain of a man blocked his way. The man was so large, he had never come across a human of this size. The towering and intimidating African man came a few feet closer and the Jew began to recite viduy, thinking that this hulking interloper meant him deadly harm. To his surprise, though, the African man let out a whimper, turned and ran into the brush. The Jew stood still in his place for a few minutes just trying to catch his breath. He did not recall how long he was standing in that spot when he heard more noises and people running toward him.



A group of uniformed African policemen suddenly appeared, and they asked him if he had seen a huge man running down this path. The Jew finally managed to talk, and he said that he had just been accosted by him not more than a few minutes ago on this very dirt road. The policemen paused and began asking him questions. What did the man look like? What was he wearing? In which direction did he run?

The Jew answered to the best of his recollection and pointed off to the brush. A few policemen took off in pursuit and one stayed behind. He explained that they were searching for the most wanted murderer in all of Africa. This man had killed many people and was brutal in nature. It took many years to bring him to justice and he was serving a lifetime sentence in a secluded prison which happened to be not far from this village. Unfortunately, continued the officer, the man escaped just the other day and a nationwide manhunt was underway to locate him. Even in the past 24-48 hours, this monster had killed and robbed a handful of people. He was brutal and ruthless and would stop at nothing to take whatever he wanted.

The officer looked at the slight Jew and wondered aloud why he hadn't harmed him, especially since he was standing right in front of him! He could have easily killed him. It took a few days but wonder of wonder, they actually caught the murderer. His face was plastered on the front page of every newspaper and the story of his capture was headline news for days.

The Jew received a phone call from the police, and they told him that during the interrogation process, they asked the hulking African if he remembers encountering a short Jewish man in the village. He said he did remember, and they asked him why, if he had killed so many others, did he leave this one man alive?

The man said that as he was running, he came across this little man, but the two massive bodyguards surrounding him was what made him run away. At the time, he thought he could take out one, but since both looked serious and dangerous, he didn't bother and ran way instead. The police were surprised since when they saw the Jew, he was all alone. Where were his bodyguards?

The Jew understood that with the Almighty as his 'business partner,' Hashem had sent His angels to protect him. He was awed to be the beneficiary of such Divine assistance and he kept up his generous ways.

R' Simcha Zissel Broide ZT"L (Alter from Kelm) would say: "It would be worthy for Hashem to create the entire universe and cause it to exist for 6000 years just so that one Jew would say 'Boruch Hu U'voruch Shemo' one time!

However, 1000 'Boruch Hu U'voruch Shemos,' are not equal to one 'Amen'! Nevertheless, 1000 'Amens' are not equal to one 'Amen Yehei Shmei Raba'! Yet, 1000 'Amen Yehei Shmei Rabas' are not equal to one single word of Torah learned by one Jew!"

Torah Tavlin

R' Shmuel Pesach Bugomilsky shlit'a (Vedibarta Bam) would say: **וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה' בָּעֵת הַהִוא... וַיִּתְעַבֵּר ה' בִּי לְמַעַנְכֶם** - 3:23/26.

According to the **Ramban**, Moshe concluded his rebuke to the Jewish people saying, '*Hashem became angry with me because of you.*' When Moshe realized that his end was near, he prayed and beseeched Hashem for the opportunity to enter Eretz Yisroel. He offered a total of 515 prayers.

As he was delivering his parting message to his beloved people, he exclaimed in exasperation, **וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה'** - 'I (alone) implored Hashem' - I hoped that the entire community would raise an uproar on my behalf, just as I was ready to give my life for the community. You should have said to Hashem, 'We will not go without Moshe.' Unfortunately, your feelings for me did not match my love for you."

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

The *Gaon*, Rav Meir Shapiro, *zt"l*, the Rav of Lublin, was the founder of the *Daf Yomi*— the learning of one page of *Gemara* each day. When he was a young boy, his family was forced to move several times from house to house, and from city to city. However, the constant moving did not disturb his mother at all, and she always kept calm and level-headed throughout their journeys.

There was only one thing that would ever bother her, and that was if her son was not learning Torah. On one occasion, as they were yet again preparing to move, Rav Meir Shapiro's mother had an idea to help her son learn, even as they were in the midst of relocating. She contacted a local tutor in the town to which they were moving, and arranged that he should meet them by the gate of the city when they arrived. He would then be able to learn with the young Rav Meir Shapiro as soon as they entered the town. When they finally arrived at the city entrance, however, the tutor was nowhere to be found.

They waited and waited, but it became apparent that he was not going to turn up.



Rav Meir Shapiro's mother eventually sat down next to the wagon and cried for a long time. Trying to console her, Rav Meir Shapiro said, "Mommy, Mommy, why are you crying? I'll just learn Torah tomorrow!" His mother answered, "My little Meir'l, You don't yet know how to appreciate the meaning of one day's learning of Torah, and how precious even one day is! Once the day is over, you will never get it back! To waste even a single day is unthinkable!"

This story may reveal to us the actual origins of Rav Meir Shapiro's idea to institute the *Daf Yomi*. (***Chayim Sheyash Bahem)***



Peninim on the Torah – פנינים על התורה

שבכל עת ערב ובקר וצהרים (For Your miracles and favours) that are with us every season, evening, morning and afternoon.

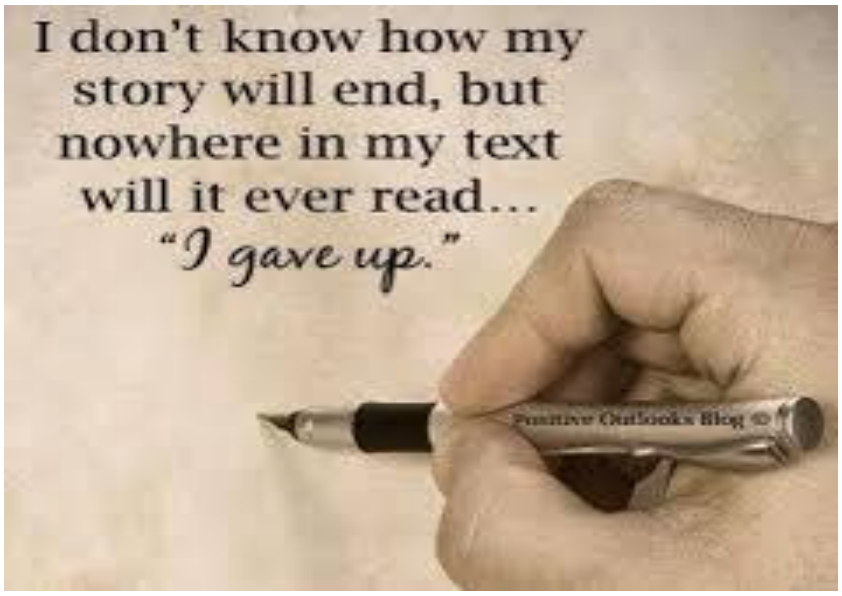


At first glance, this *tefillah*, prayer, thanks Hashem for the many miracles and favours that He provides for all of us all the time. For this, we express our gratitude thrice daily in the accompanying prayer.

Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, takes it a step further, offering an alternative practical and insightful meaning. *Erev, boker* and *tzaharaim* refer to the moods or circumstances in which one finds himself. One may be in an emotional state of *erev*, evening, darkness, melancholy. It could be caused by age, lack of *mazel*, poor health, family issues; it is always something and, as a result, he is down. Or he could be experiencing the exact opposite. Life is great: it is daylight, the sun is shining, and everything seems to be going his way. Last, it could be afternoon: the sun appears to be shining, then it begins to get cloudy, and the sun begins to set. Darkness is setting in and beginning to overwhelm the sunshine.

We thank Hashem for guiding us through these periods/circumstances. We might become depressed in darkness, haughty in sunshine, and filled with ambiguity as the sun begins to set and the sunshine is waning. Nonetheless, we know that Hashem is always present. For this, we express our gratitude.

The Jewish weekly



The first Passuk of this week's Parshah Va'etchanan, tells us that Moshe cried out to Hashem, and we learn based on the numeric value of the word **ואתחנן** which is 515, that Moshe prayed 515 separate times to be able to go into the land of Eretz Yisrael. 515 is also the numerical value of the word **תפילה** - prayer and **שירה** - song.

Chazzal tell us that, had Moshe cried just one more time, he would have been allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael. It is interesting to note that the words **צער גידול בנים** - the pain of raising children, equals to 515.

Just as a person always must pray and not give up, so too with his children, he or she can never give up on their children, and we must always continue praying for their success.

In all of my years of dealing with Jewish adolescents who, for one reason or another, left the fold, and Torah way of life, and distanced themselves from their Creator, I always found it fascinating why some kids make it back and some unfortunately don't. What I started noticing was, that the parents who stood by their children and always supported them when they needed it most, their children always came back. The ones who were not there for their children, were not as lucky to see such results.

We need to beg the Baal HaRachamim to show His Rachmanut on these souls of Klal Yisrael. How dare we sit by the side and say it is not my problem. Dearest friends, it is our problem. These are our children, our friends. It needs to matter to us.

May we merit to a true Nechama and an end to all of our suffering, and that the words of our Haftorah "Nachamu Nachamu Ami" come true with the coming of Moshiach speedily in our days, So let us join together to pray with all our hearts, for the recovery of all the sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most amazing and sweet Shabbat.

Yesoidos M'Hasedra -Sparks of Shabbos



Many chasidim have a minhag to take a nap on erev Shabbos, and it is said that **R' Aharon Karliner** would say that one who doesn't nap on Friday eats a regular weekday supper on Friday night.

Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that the need to take a nap on erev Pesach is more readily understood, but most of us view it as a necessity to stay awake at night. The truth is however, that by napping on erev Pesach, one proclaims that he is preparing for a very important event, and so by napping on Friday, one declares that his Shabbos seudah is of great importance. If he doesn't, his seudah is just a meal spiced with zemiros and divrei Torah because that is the Jewish custom, but by properly preparing for it, his kiddush can achieve the kedusha of a Yom Kippur musaf and the zemiros can serve as a climax like u'nesaneh tokef does.

Achieving this does not require any exceptional efforts other than remaining calm and in a state of simcha as he relates to his family and guests.

Rabbi Yisroel Majeski -Somebody Needs It



One Friday afternoon, a few months ago, I received a call from a fellow living in New York. He relayed that during the earlier stages of the Coronavirus, prior to Pesach, many families were in need of purchasing food for Yom Tov, but were at a loss to do so.

One particular storeowner had taken the initiative to contact this man, a noted *askan* who devoted time and energy to helping Jewish individuals and families with their financial needs, and asked that he do what he could to collect some money, which would be given to the storeowner, and enable him to freely provide needy families with whatever necessary and use the funding provided by the askan as payment. The man got to work, and came back to the storeowner days later with a check for $26,000. But just as he handed over the check, which was graciously accepted, the owner slipped in that eighteen more families had come to him, needing food for Yom Tov. Looking back at the askan, who had now shown his capability to raise needed funds, he requested that he go back for another round. "I don't know what I can bring in, but I will try," replied the askan.

Days later, on a Thursday afternoon, the man returned with a check for $18,000. The storeowner looked at him, a smile breaking out across his face. "Thanks, but no thanks," he said. The askan was puzzled. "It might be hard for you to imagine what it took for me to raise this. Maybe you can just hold onto it, and if some other families need it, you'll have it ready for them." But the storeowner would not hear it. "Thank you, but I don't need the money."

The man didn't understand. The storeowner would need to explain. "Monday afternoon, a woman was shopping and she paid in cash, and

I was supposed to give her $50 in change. As I was gathering the bills together, she said to me, 'You know what? Keep the change. I'm sure there will be another family who needs it.

"The lady standing behind and hearing our dialogue followed suit, swiping her card and telling me, 'Add on another $300; I'm sure there will be somebody else who needs it.'

"People started talking to one another and, I don't know how, but from Monday to Thursday, our store raised over $100,000 for people in need."As of now," the storeowner concluded, "I don't need your $18,000 check."

Mi K'amcha Yisroel. Who is like our nation, the Jewish people.

Torah U' Tefilah- Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

In this week's Parshah (6:4-9) we have the Pasuk of Shema Yisroel, as well as the first paragraph of Shema. We are commanded (6:5) to love Hashem our G-d.



A question is raised— how can one be commanded to love? It is impossible to force someone to love! Love is an emotion that is felt and is not automatic.

Rav Akiva Eiger, zt"l, gave a beautiful explanation. Loving Hashem is a natural feeling. Since He loves us— it is only natural that we should love Him too! With this he explains that right before Shema we say, "HaBocher B'Amo Yisroel B'Ahavah", Who chooses His nation with love. Only after we acknowledge this do we say in Shema about the commandment to love Hashem.

Brooklyn Torah Gazette-Answering Amen-Rabbi David Ashear

The power of our words is enormous. A word of giving someone chizuk, a word of tefilla, a word of praise to Hashem. We have no concept of their true value.



Rabbi Elyahu Lopian said it was worth it for Hashem to create this enormous world, with all the different galaxies and planets and stars, all for one Jew to say amen one time.

That word amen, is one of the most powerful words that we know of. **The Zohar HaKadosh** in parashat Vayelech speaks about how much abundance and goodness Hashem brings down to the world in the merit of each amen that we say. Saying amen properly, with kavana, could ward off decrees, it could even take away tzarot. The Gemara in Masechet Sanhedrin asks, from when is a little child zocheh to be called a ben Olam Haba? Rabbi Meir answered, when the child answers amen for the first time, and therefore, the Rema rules that parents should train their children from very young to answer amen.

Rav Chaim of Volozhin had a minhag to never say a beracha unless someone else was present to answer amen to it. The reason for his minhag is because it says in the Zohar, that saying a beracha without someone answering is like having an unopened letter.

One time, very late at night, while the Rabbi was learning, he was extremely thirsty, but everyone in his house was already sleeping

and there was no one there to answer amen. Rav Chaim refrained from quenching his thirst, but after another half hour, he really needed to drink. He felt it was actually dangerous for his health to hold back anymore. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. It was a student from his yeshiva who had a question on the Gemara he was learning.

Rav Chaim was elated to see him. He asked the boy to please answer amen to his beracha. He drank the water and then he happily explained the answer to the boy's question. The Rabbi made Boreh Nefashot, the student answered amen and went back to the dormitory.

The next morning, Rav Chaim went over to that student to thank him again for coming so late and for being there to answer amen when he needed. The boy looked at the Rabbi in bewilderment. He said, "Rabbi, are you sure it wasn't someone else? I didn't come to your house last night."

Rav Chaim realized Hashem had sent him an angel that looked like that student. Rav Chaim did everything in his power to keep his kabbala of having someone answer amen to his berachot and, in that merit, Hashem sent him an angel to help him continue with it.

Resh Lakish said in Masechet Shabbat, whoever answers amen with all of his strength and kavana will have the gates of Gan Eden open for him. The Sefer Chasidim writes, whoever is careful to say amen in this world will be granted the opportunity to say amen in the Next World.

When we say amen to a beracha, we're supposed to think, the words we just heard are the truth and we fully accept them. Every amen is extremely precious. We should train ourselves and our families to say all berachot out loud and give the zechut to all those around us to answer amen.

Parsha Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport - Parsha Points to Ponder



The first paragraph of Shema begins (Devarim 6:5) with a commandment to love G-d with our entire heart. How can G-d command and require a person to love Him, as one's emotions must be genuine and sincere, and mandated love is hardly an ideal level to strive for?

Rabbi Akiva Eiger suggests that our feelings of love toward G-d should indeed come naturally, as it is human nature to instinctively love a person who we feel loves us.

King Solomon writes in Proverbs (27:19) that just as water reflects back the face of the person looking into it, so too does the human heart mirror the emotions it receives from others. We need merely focus on contemplating and accepting the unconditional love that G-d feels for every Jew, and reciprocal feelings of love will automatically well up in our hearts.

It is for this reason that we conclude the blessing which immediately precedes the morning recitation of Shema with the words, "Who chooses His people Israel with love" and the evening recitation with the words, "Who loves His people Israel." As we think about these words and internalize their message, reminding us of the tremendous love that G-d feels for us, we can't help but experience reciprocal feelings of love, which will allow us to recite Shema with the proper emotions and concentration.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע"ה]

Bridging The Gap

We need to internalize that which we know and become one with our knowledge as in **והשבת אל לבבך** ; take to your heart. This is hinted to in **תוכו כברו** (Brachos 28a) one's insides should be like his outsides, meaning to be sincere in spirituality. The inner letters of **כו-תוכו** have a Gematria of 26, the same as **י-ה-ו-ה** representing spirituality. Likewise, the external letters of **כברו** are **כו** . We need to integrate the spirituality we know internally and externally.

This is also alluded to in the hidden and revealed letters of the word **סיני** (which represents spirituality as the Torah was given there). The hidden letters - **סמך יוד נן יוד**, - have an identical numerical value to the outer letters. **ס** has a Gematria of 60, the same as **מ,ך** . **י** is 10, the same as **ו,ד** .

R' Yisrael Salanter once was absent from shul from Kol Nidrei on Yom Kippur. This was because he went to take care of a crying infant whose mother had left him alone while she went to shul.

It once happened that while **R' Simcha Bunim** (1765- 1827) was in bed, he wanted to smell some snuff tobacco. However, the case of tobacco was in the other room. He then made the analysis that "If I get up and go to the other room for the tobacco, I will be giving in to my desires. On the other hand, if I do not go, it could stem from laziness." He decided to walk to the other room. He approached the tobacco and without touching it he returned to his room.



Achdus



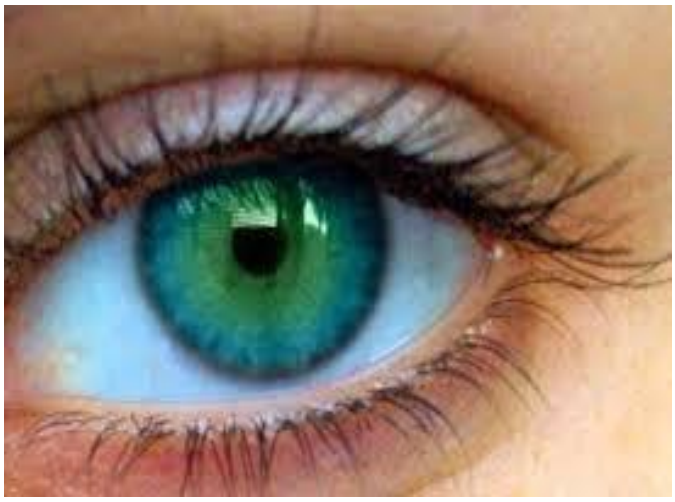
Rashi notes the beautiful demonstration of achdus (unity) which the Jews demonstrated upon their arrival at Har Sinai, writing (Shemot 19:2) that they camped by the mountain like one person with one heart. What makes this unity so unique when Rashi also writes (Shemot 14:10) that the Egyptians pursued the Jews to the Reed Sea with a similar display of harmony, with one heart like one person?

Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner and Rabbi Avrohom Bornstein, better known as the **Avnei Nezer**, ex-plain that there is a fundamental difference between the achdut of the Jews and that of other nations which is subtly hinted to by Rashi.

The Jewish people are intrinsically connected as part of one large entity, whereas the members of other nations are fundamentally disassociated and are out for their own personal interests. Only when their desires coincide do they team up in pursuit of a common goal, but not because of any deep bond. As soon as their goals inevitably diverge, they will go their separate ways.

While Rashi used the same expression for the Jews at Har Sinai and for the Egyptians at the Reed Sea, he carefully reversed the order to make this point. The Egyptians didn't have any true unity, but for a brief moment they were united with one heart **(בלב אחד)** in a common desire to recapture their fleeing slaves, and they therefore pursued them as one **(כאיש אחד)**. The Jewish people, on the other hand, are intrinsically bonded together as one person **(כאיש אחד)**, and one person automatically has only one heart **(בלב אחד)**.

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah



Many years ago, there was a magid shiur called Rabbi Avrohom Dinkles in the Yeshiva of Rosh Hayeshiva **Rav Shloime Zalman Aurbach**. He said to Rav Shloime Zalman that he had to go to check out a certain apartment that his family was about to move into. Rav Shloime Zalman insisted that he was going to go along with him. Rabbi Avrohom said, "but your time is so precious, why would you want to come?" He replied, "don't worry, let me know when you are going, and we will go together".

When they came into the house, Rav Shloime Zalman said, " Is this the playroom where the children will play? Is this the dining room where the family will eat? He went through the whole house and after, Rabbi Dinkles asked him, "why did you do this?" Rav Shloime Zalman replied, "because I wanted to put an Ayin Tova on the house".

If you look at the Pasuk 3:25 אֶעְבְּרָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה ***Pray let me cross over and see the good land*** **The Seforno** tells us that, the reason that Moishe Rabeinu wanted to do this was that, " *I want to put my eye on it for good, so that it will always be good for Klal Yisroel"*

We know that there is such a thing as Ayin Hara, but there is also something called Ayin Tova. Let us always look on things in a good and positive way so that there will be Bracha.

The Ramban in Bamidbar 1:19 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּמִדְבַּר סִינָי tells us that when the Yidden were counted, Hashem wanted that Aaron and Moishe should look at them and see and put their eyes on them for the good.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Take Care of Yourself



We must take care of our health and as it says **ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם** . **R' Moshe Meir Yashar** writes about his Rebbe, **the Chofetz Chaim:** the rooms were large and airy …. He was meticulous about only eating healthy foods. His clothes and shoes were scrupulously clean. … He would explain that the entire Torah depends on the Mitzva of preserving one's health.

The Chazon Ish wrote in a letter to someone …you must stop your learning for two weeks and eat healthy, sleep more, take walks and so on.

In an article entitled Orchos Tzadik by R' Pesachya Menkin- a student in the Yeshiva in Radin- in appreciation of the Chofetz Chaim one year after his passing, he wrote the following: …every Monday and Thursday before Maariv the Chofetz Chaim inspired the students of the Yeshiva with a discourse in Mussar in the Ezras Nashim of the Beis Midrash.

I remember how surprised I was, early in the summer of 5663/ 1903, to hear him deliver the following Mussar speech. Don't learn an overly excessive amount of Torah. A person must protect his body from illness and weakness. Therefore, it is necessary to rest, take a break and breathe fresh air. It is necessary to take a walk in the late afternoon or to sit in your room and rest.

When possible, you should bathe in the river in order to strengthen the body because excessive study is the counsel of the Yetzer Hara, to get us to toil too hard so that the body becomes weakened and so

that eventually the person will be forced to stop learning altogether. Then his loss will override his gain.

I know this from my own experience. In my youth, I strained to study Torah beyond my capacity. My eyes became seriously damaged, and the doctors ordered me to stop reading altogether for 2 years… And if as a result of excessive persistence in Torah study a person fails to take care of his health and becomes ill, Chas Vshalom, his normal lifespan of 70 years can be cut short and he will surely be held accountable in heaven! The Chofetz Chaim continued in this vein for about another 20 minutes and this was the entire subject of his Mussar shiur that evening.

The Chofetz Chaim would sometimes come into the Yeshiva late at night and gently but firmly order the boys to close their Sefarim and go to bed. Sometimes he would climb onto a bench and extinguish the lamps that were illuminating the Beis Midrash.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Not in The Mood



At times we may feel like we are not in the mood to daven. We may feel we don't have the right mindset to daven. Nevertheless, we must still daven and not say at a different time, I'll daven properly. This is hinted to in **ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא** as it doesn't say a specific time. This is to teach us even when we are not in the proper state of mind, we must still daven.

Likewise, we can interpret **ובקשתם משם**... as it says **משם** without a time or place. So, it means to seek out Hashem wherever we find ourselves. Then as the Pasuk continues we will find Him if we search for Him.

Approximately 40 years ago, a newly observant Jew went to daven in Beis Midrash Elyon in Monsey. Being that the congregation was davening with passion and fervour while he wasn't yet so accustomed to Tefila, he looked around observing.

A little boy approached him and asked why don't you daven? Caught off guard by the question, he responded 'I don't feel like it.' The little boy retorted ***'who said Hashem wants your Tefilos only when you feel like it!'***

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Building Brick by Brick



The Midrash tells us **ואתחנן** has the sum of 515, hinting to us that Moshe davened 515 times to enter Eretz Yisrael.

R' Elchonon Wasserman met **R' Ahron of Belz** and asked him what the significance of this number is. He responded that Hashem along with a **מחנה** of **מלאכים** established the first wall of the Beis Hamikdash.

The Vilna Gaon and the B'nei Yisoschor say that Adam Horishon called the **מקום המקדש - מחנה** . Therefore, a wall is represented with the number 103 since this is the sum of the word **מחנה**.

Now, in reference to Avraham, the Beis Hamikdash is called a **הר** This has a sum of 206- 103 doubled- telling us that he added the second wall.

Regarding Yizchak who added the third wall, it is referred to as **שדה שדה** . has a numerical value of 309- 3 times 103.

The fourth wall is from Yaakov who called it **בית** . **בית** has a Gematria of 412, 4 times 103.

The Belzer Rebbe then said that the number 515- 5 times 103- represents that Moshe added the roof (as it is the 5th side of the Beis Hamikdash).

1) This is how the Beis Hamikdash was originally established. Now that we don't have it, how do we rebuild it?

2) Many times daily we say **בונה ירושלים** builder of Yerushalayim- present tense. Shouldn't we say **יבנה**; it will be built?

3) The Yerushalmi says: **כל דור שאינו נבנה בימיו עלין כאילו הוא החריבו עליו** - any generation in whose days the Beis Hamikdash is not rebuilt is as if they destroyed it.

The Sefas Emes wonders of the Tzadikim of the past generations, as can we say this statement applies to them?! When we utilize our time for Avodas Hashem we build the Beis Hamikdash. In this way we can comprehend **במהרה בימינו** : that the Beis Hamikdash be built speedily with our days, through maximizing our days with Avodas Hashem- as **ב** also means **with**.

In the same fashion we can understand …**כל דור שאינו נבנה בימיו** , as we must build the Beis Hamikdash through making the most of our days with Avodas Hashem.

After the funeral of the **Sefas Emes** (1847-1905) who passed away at the age of 58, one son turned to the other and said, "At least our father had **אריכת ימים**." The other son was bewildered as he exclaimed, "Our father passed away at age 58!" He responded, "I didn't say our father had **אריכת שנים** rather **אריכת ימים**." That is to say, he utilized his time!

The Beis Hamikdash



The Beis Hamikdash is built on team effort, as each person has their section that they can build. How is this done? Through each of our good actions we put another brick in the building of the Beis Hamikdash. Depending on the quality of our actions is the quality of the bricks we create. With this we can comprehend why **בונה ירושלים** is in present tense, as we are currently building it with each of our good actions.

The Zera Kodesh says that some build an entire row in one day whereas some just place a brick- each according to the way they serve Hashem.

The Noam Elimelech related that there was once a church that collapsed. Everyday thousands of workers attempted to rebuild it but to no avail. This was because when the **Chozeh of Lublin** davened Shemoneh Esrei he knocked down what they built. Through constructing the walls of Yerushalayim he knocked down the walls of the church as it says **כשזה קם זה נופל**; when this one rises, the other one falls.

Each generation has the ability to help build the Beis Hamikdash. Through the collective effort of all the generations, the Beis Hamikdash is built. After all, the generation of the Geula is not worthy enough to bring the Geula alone. Therefore, **כאילו החריבו כל דור שאינו נבנה בימיו** - if a generation didn't assist in its building, then it's **כאילו החריבו**.

I heard the following addition from **Rav Yechiel Emanuel**, who heard it from his rebbe, **Rav Chaim Kaufman**.

515 is the number of tefillos that Moishe Rabeinu said, so that he could enter Eretz Yisrael to build the beis hamikdash. If you add an additional 103 onto this 515, you get a total of 618. When a man and woman get married, it says that **שכינה שורה בינהם** and that **ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם**. The gematriah of **שורה בינהם** is equal to 618!

The gematriah of **איש** is 311. The gematria of **אשה** is 306 which equals 617. If you add an extra 1 representing the **שכינה**, you get 618! This represents the **מקדש מעט**.

Each generation and every individual needs to build their part. The Tzadikim of our past may have helped build the Beis Hamikdash, but they built their part. We now have to do ours. The construction of the third, final, eternal Beis Hamikdash began a long time ago, now it just needs to be completed.

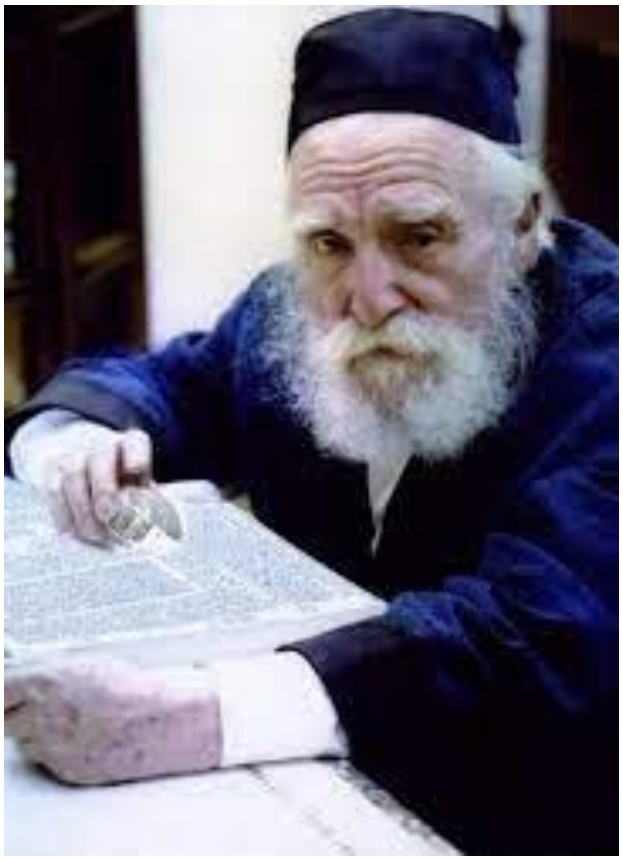
Thoughts that Count for Our Parsha

וְנִשְׁמַרְתֶּם מְאֹד לְנַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם *'Take therefore good heed of yourselves'* (4:15)

According to Torah law, a Jew is required to take care of his body and refrain from things that are harmful. But a person must never place too much emphasis on his own physical welfare, while treating someone else's spirituality as his own domain, i.e., offering unasked-for reprimands and comments about the other person's conduct.

In fact, the correct order is the reverse: As regards the self, an individual's primary focus should be spiritual. But when relating to others, the primary concern should be helping with material needs. (**Rabbi Yisrael of Salant**)

Torah Tavlin



It was well known that every morning, after Shachris, **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l** would walk from his yeshivah on the Lower East Side, to his home a few blocks away. People would wait for him on the street and talk to him in learning or ask him halachic shailos as he walked. R' Moshe was always gracious and never turned anyone away.

R' Moshe Mordechai Shulsinger zt"l recalls how on one occasion, an elderly Jew was standing outside Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim and watched in fascination as people continuously approached R' Moshe and asked him questions from all over Shulchan Aruch. R' Moshe answered each one on the spot and humbly continued walking.

The unlearned Jew could not contain himself and in a loud voice, called out, "What is going on here? Is this the way to pasken shailos?" R' Moshe heard the man's outburst and turned to face him He understood that the man was not saying these words in a meanspirited way - he was moved by what he saw, and he needed to understand.

With a huge smile, R' Moshe stuck out his hand to shake the elderly Jew's hand. "Let me tell you something," R' Moshe said as he looked at the other man. "If one learns the four chalakim of Shulchan Aruch 375 times, then yes, this is a way he can pasken shailos ...." Then he turned and continued walking home.

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

Among the many mitzvos in parshas Vaeschanan, we have a very interesting one. It says in the pasuk **לֹא תֹסִפוּ עַל־הַדָּבָר֙ אֲשֶׁ֣ר אָנֹכִ֣י מְצַוֶּ֔ה וְלֹ֥א תִגְרְעוּ֖ מִמֶּ֑נּוּ לִשְׁמֹ֗ר אֶת־מִצְוֹת֙ ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶ֔ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר אָנֹכִ֖י מְצַוֶּ֥ה אֶתְכֶֽם** 4:2. ***Don't add to any of the mitzvos***.

The Torah is giving us a very clear commandment. You are not allowed to take away/subtract anything from any of the mitzvos. You are also not allowed to add anything.

The question is an obvious one. The commentators ask: It is understandable why it is forbidden to delete a part of a mitsvah, but why would it be forbidden to add to one?

What is the problem? Why should it be wrong to add to the mitzvos?



The Dubner Maggid answered with a parable: A man borrowed utensils from his neighbour on several occasions, and when he would return them, he would give back twice as much as he borrowed. If he borrowed one cup, he would return two cups; one spoon, he would return two. When the neighbour asked him why he was returning more than he borrowed, he would reply nonchalantly, "It's simple, the cup you loaned me gave birth to another cup, so I'm returning both."

The neighbour didn't press the issue, and naturally, was delighted to lend his utensils. On one occasion the man knocked on his neighbour's door and asked to borrow his elegant silver candelabra. The neighbour was overjoyed to lend it to him, and eagerly anticipated

its return accompanied by its new "offspring." However, the man never brought back the candelabra.

After a few months, the neighbour went to the borrower and asked him about the candelabra. "Oh, you didn't hear about it?" the man replied innocently. "Your candelabra died." "Died!" shouted the neighbour. "How in the world can a candelabra die?!" "I don't understand you," said the borrower. "If utensils can give birth, why can't they die?"

Says the Dubno maggid, the nimshal is that you must not add. If you do extra, you will end up taking away. Why? Because the yesod is that we have to do what Hashem wants us to do.

Concluded the Dubner Maggid. If people are free to add to mitzvos according to their whims, they show that they do not believe that the mitzvos are of Divine origin, and just as they can expand upon certain mitzvos, they can diminish from or eliminate completely, other ones.



There is a mitzva in this week's parsha - **וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ** 6:5 We say it in Kriyas Shema every day. We have to love the Riboino Shel Olam with all of our heart. How do we do this? We do this, by fulfilling Hakadosh Boruch Hu's will. We do this, by listening to every word that He says. He loves us, and we have a reciprocal mitzva to love Him back, for all the love and all the chesed and the *shefa* and bracha that Hashem gives us.

We Just had a Tisha B'Av. We just sat on the floor mourning the fact that The Riboino Shel Olam does not have a place for His Shechina to reside in Yerushalayim ir hakodesh. It is incumbent for

us, right now at this time to take everything that Hashem gave us; to take the mitzvos, to take our lives, and use them for a kiddush Hashem and love The Riboino Shel Olam.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Jewish Education Program Queens - Loving Hashem Means Loving His Children and Getting Involved!

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלֹקיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ 6:5 "And you shall love Hashem, your G-D with all your heart…" (Devarim 6:5)



Sholom lost his job. When his friend, Menashe, heard about it, he arranged for food to be delivered to Sholom. Then Menashe helped Sholom find another job. When Sholom's car would not start, Menashe gave his car a boost. When Sholom had to go to the hospital, Menashe arranged childcare for Sholom's family. Menashe cared so much for Sholom and took care of him. Sholom truly loved Menashe. At every opportunity, Sholom would tell others how special Menashe was.

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l says that it is a positive mitzvah to love Hashem with all your heart, soul, and resources. **The Rambam** says that this mitzvah comprises bringing others closer to Hashem; to serve Hashem and to believe in Hashem. The Chofetz Chaim continues that, when you love someone, you praise him and encourage others to love him as well. This what our forefather Avraham did. Avraham loved Hashem and spent his life trying to bring others to an awareness and love of Hashem.

The Talmud (Gittin 55B) quotes a famous story. There was a wealthy man who lived at the time of the Second Temple. The Talmud does not tell us his name. This man had a close friend, Kamtza, and a bitter enemy named Bar Kamtza. - He was having a party and instructed his servant to deliver an invitation to his good friend Kamtza. The servant mistakenly delivered the invitation to Bar Kamtza. Bar Kamtza assumed that he was purposely invited in an attempt at reconciliation (see the Maharsha). Thus, he went to the party.

When the host saw Bar Kamtza, he flew into a rage and wanted to know why he had the audacity to come to his party, as they were hated enemies of one another. Bar Kamtza explained that the host's servant had mistakenly invited him. The host did not care and ordered Bar Kamtza to leave immediately.

Bar Kamtza, seeking to avoid humiliation, offered to pay for whatever he would eat at the party. When this offer was refused, he offered to pay for half of the party. When this was refused, Bar Kamtza offered to pay for the entire party! The host angrily turned this down as well, physically grabbed Bar Kamtza, and threw him out!

As the story continues, Bar Kamtza became very upset that the rabbis who were present did not intervene when he was humiliated. (The Maharsha gives two reasons explaining the rabbi's inactions). Bar Kamtza responded by visiting the Roman Caesar and falsely accusing the Jews of rebelling against Rome. That led to a chain of events which ended with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, along with the destruction of the Temple.

The Talmud blames the destruction of Jerusalem on the actions of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza. Bar Kamtza was the person who falsely informed on the Jews.

Rabbi Yaakov Reischer zt"l, in his commentary Iyun Yaakov, asks, what did Kamtza do!? Why was his name included as a villain? Furthermore, the party's host was quite nasty. Why wasn't his name

recorded, together with Bar Kamtza, as the ones who caused the destruction?

During this era, the Jews learned Torah and performed mitzvos. Unfortunately, they had sinas chinum. They felt unwarranted hatred to one-another. There was too much divisiveness. That hatred caused the destruction of the Temple.

Chacham Yosef Chaim Ben Yehoyada zt"l, known as the **Ben Ish Chai**, answers the Iyun Yaakov's question. Rashi explains that Kamtza and Bar Kamtza were two people who were not related. The Talmud says that Kamtza was a "beloved friend" of the host of this party.

As such, when he observed Bar Kamtza being publicly humiliated, he should have said something to his friend. He could have explained that this was an honest mistake. He could have said that Bar Kamtza only came because he thought that the host invited him to make peace (see Maharsha), so maybe the host should accept that offer of peace. Or perhaps he could have told the host that he was 100% correct but that he should not embarrass Bar Kamtza publicly. The point is that he was able to prevent this outrage, yet he did nothing!

According to the **Maharsha**, Kamtza and Bar Kamtza were father and son. If so, Kamtza must have known the hatred that this host had for his son. Even before this party, he was obligated to try to end the strife and promote peace. Had he done so, then Bar Kamtza would not have been humiliated at the party and the catastrophic, ensuing events would not have occurred. Therefore, Kamtza was culpable and the devastating episode is also called in his name.

We often find ourselves in a position where we can be a helping guide others to do the right thing. If we shirk our responsibility, then we, too, are accountable for what happens. When we actively work at creating peace and bridging happiness, we are showing how much we love Hashem and His children.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Grab Them While You Can!



אָז יַבְדִּיל מֹשֶׁה שָׁלֹשׁ עָרִים בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן "Then Moshe set aside three cities on the bank of the Jordan…" (Devarim 4:41)

When the Jews would eventually settle in the Land of Israel, some cities would be set aside as "safe (refuge) cities". A person who killed accidentally could run to one of those six "safe cities" and be protected from harm (from the victim's relatives).

Before Moshe died, he designated three cities on the side of the Jordan River, outside the Land of Israel. These cities would serve as "safe cities" for the two and a half tribes that would live there.

Why did Moshe go to the trouble of designating these three cities? What did he accomplish? After all, these cities would not be open and operating as "safe cities" until the Jews were totally settled in the Land of Israel and the rest of the "safe cities" would be designated. That would not happen for numerous years. Why was Moshe "wasting his time" doing a meaningless action?

Rashi answers, Moshe felt very strongly that he should do any mitzvah he possibly could. Even if he couldn't complete it, at least he should start it.

The Sforno adds that Moshe had just finished telling the Jewish people the importance of keeping the mitzvos. Now he wanted to

demonstrate to the Jews this very important lesson. He wanted them to understand how meaningful and significant it is to do a mitzvah.

We see a beautiful lesson in the importance of doing mitzvos. Do as much as you can; grab as many mitzvos as possible! Start them even if you will not be able to complete them!

There is a beautiful story from the Chofetz Chaim illustrating this point:

A poor person sailed to a far-off island in hope of becoming rich. When he arrived, he started pocketing diamonds that were all-over the street. He soon stopped, after the natives laughed at his foolishness. Diamonds had no value in their country as they were freely strewn all over. Instead, he spent his time earning chicken fat, which was valuable there. After a year, the man returned home. He realized that he had wasted his time when he was on that island instead of gathering diamonds which were truly valuable to him.

The Chofetz Chaim explains that we are in this World to collect as many mitzvos (which are true riches, like the diamonds in the story) as we can. Many mitzvos are so easy to do (just as it was easy to collect the diamonds which were just lying in the streets). Unfortunately, many people spend their time collecting money and things at the expense of collecting mitzvos.

We can't lose focus on what "true wealth" is – the performance of mitzvos.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

חמשה עשר באב is *gematriya* **כתיבה וחתימה טובה** *(928)* In a certain sense, the High Holy Days begin now. Some tzaddikim would start wishing their Chassidim **כתיבה וחתימה טובה** from this day on.

Guard your Soul - Written by Rabbi Daniel Leeman



We have been commanded to "guard your soul" רַק הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ וּשְׁמֹר נַפְשְׁךָ מְאֹד 4:9. This is the positive commandment to look after our bodies. Our body of course houses our soul, and a healthy soul might even depend upon a healthy body, but nevertheless being that the commandment is to practically look after our physical health, why are we not explicitly commanded to look after our 'body' rather than our "soul"?

In 1926, the revered **Chafetz Chaim** was asked to speak at a meeting regarding the building of a certain hospital. Several wealthy men were present who gave honourable donations and the Chafetz Chaim praised them accordingly.

During the meeting,some yeshiva students appeared wishing to see the Chafetz Chaim. He welcomed them in and seated them at the head table. This caused some raised eyebrows and one of the wealthy men became irritated and asked outright "And how many beds in the hospital are these students donating?" Without hesitating the Chafetz Chaim responded "they are each donating fifty beds!" "Fifty beds?" the wealthy man gaped incredulously. "How is that possible? We are all wealthy men and none of us are donating more than ten. And you mean to tell me that these students are each donating fifty beds?" "Yes" replied the Chafetz Chaim. "Each is giving the hospital fifty beds that do not exist: It is their Torah study that protects the townspeople from illness, and these young men are studying Torah,

thus ensuring that there will be fewer sick people in town. They are reducing the number of hospital beds needed by fifty a piece!"

Of course, we must also make our physical efforts, but a person who "guards his soul" is indeed guarding his body in the best possible manner.

Stories Of Our Gedolim



In one of the last years of the **Chofetz Chaim's zt"l** life, the Polish government decreed that every Rav was required to learn the Polish language (another version has it that Polish was going to be mandatory to be taught in the yeshivas). In light of the decree, the Chofetz Chaim called for a meeting of Poland's eminent Rabonim.

At the meeting, the Chofetz Chaim declared that this decree could cause the churban of Torah. The Rabonim decided that it was necessary to arrange a meeting with a very high ranking Government official of Poland to attempt to annul the decree. The Chofetz Chaim let it be known that he himself would travel to meet with the official, and several Rabonim agreed to accompany him. - R' Leib, the Chofetz Chaim's shamash, accompanied him to the meeting in Varshaw, and later said eidus of what had occurred there. The Rabonim travelled to Varshaw for the meeting, and the Chofetz Chaim was presented as the "Chief Rabbi".

The members of the Polish government were astounded that such a feeble man, who was almost unable to walk, was the "Chief Rabbi".

The Chofetz Chaim began to speak in Yiddish. "Our Torah says to daven for the welfare of the kingdom. We're living now in golus under the rule of Poland, and every day after davening, I daven for the welfare of the Polish government. We came here now to discuss the decree that every Rav must know Polish. We are sure that this will be the churban of Yahadus. If the government of Poland does not interfere with our Yiddishkeit, we submit completely to your rule, and will pay all your taxes. But we are obligated to guard our Yiddishkeit as we see fit. If you interfere with our Yiddishkeit, you'll experience a downfall like all our enemies suffered in all the generations, beginning from Pharaoh the Rasha."

The Chofetz Chaim finished speaking, and the translator's face paled. How could he possibly translate what the Chofetz Chaim said? On the other hand, he was afraid to change the words of the Chofetz Chaim, because he knew that the Chofetz Chaim would surely realize that his words were not translated accurately. But if he would translate exactly what the Chofetz Chaim said, he could not imagine the repercussions!

As he was still pondering what to do and say, the high-ranking official arose and said to him, "You can sit down, you don't need to translate a word; just tell me in essence what he wants". The translator hurried to say that the Chofetz Chaim is requesting to annul the decree on the Rabonim to learn Polish.

The President answered, "There are many languages in the world, and one who speaks Polish may not know English, and one who speaks English may not know Polish, but there is one language which everybody understands, and that is the language of the heart. The Rav spoke with the language of the heart. There is no need to translate, I understood everything." He immediately sat down and signed a paper cancelling the decree.

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l

What is Love? What does love mean? How can we love?

You have within you a fountain of love. You can love almost anybody. The truth is every man has somebody that loves him. Even a gangster has people that love him. However, every person should know, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* put into you a fountain of *hergeishim*, of emotions. And once you start practicing, opening up the faucet, it starts coming out more and more strongly, and you can learn to love people, you can learn to love people.



Practice up loving your wife. You see your wife from a distance, say "I love that woman." Don't tell it to her. You can tell it to her too, but if you don't tell her, it's worthwhile, too. Say "I love that woman". Don't think it's a small thing. Look through the window, your wife is coming from the store, "I love that woman".

It's a silly thing? It's not silly at all; it's a *Mitzvah D'oraisa, V'ahavtah L'reiacha Kamocha*. Your wife is a fellow Jew; you have to love your fellow Jew. If you keep on saying it, then in the course of time you'll begin loving.

How do you love? If you don't want to do it, then you're going to fail in it and you'll fail in your purpose in life, because loving your close ones is the biggest obligation. You have to love every Jew, it's not so easy! But to love those that are close to you is certainly a *chiyuv*, and you cannot avoid that, and you must start practicing right now.

Is Our Best Really Our Best? Written By Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ I *pleaded with Hashem (3:23)*



The Medrash tells us that when Moshe was told by Hashem that he would not be allowed to enter into Eretz Yisrael, he immersed himself in prayer. After the 515th request, Hashem commanded him to stop, because with one more prayer, Hashem would have been obligated to annul His decree.

In life we always try to do our best. The question is, is our best really our best? If Moshe would have asked to be let into Eretz Yisroel and been rejected, perhaps that would have been considered "his best"; after all, he tried very hard and received a "no." Perhaps after 100 times, he would have considered that he has done "his best." After all, after pleading with Hashem 100 times, one could certainly say that he exhausted all options. Yet, Moshe continued until he was physically told to stop praying.

How may times do we put in great effort towards attaining a goal and but not succeeding? We tell ourselves that we tried our best; we put in all possible effort. Yet, in truth, our best is only attained once we make a diligent appraisal of our goal and then to push ourselves out of our comfort zone to achieve it. Unless we have reached that point, perhaps we have not truly tried our best.

Rav Tzvi Mayer related the following true story about a boy he knows who didn't give up:

There was a young boy called Yoselle who lived with his mother. Ever since his father passed away, there was very little money in the house and Yoselle had to work from a very young age. Towards the time of his bar mitzvah, his mother told him about his obligation to learn Torah, and Yossele immediately ran to the cheder to be accepted.

He met the principal and asked to be enrolled. The principal asked him which Gemara he can be tested on, but Yossele said that he knew no Gemara. "Then which Mishnayos do you know?" asked the principal. But Yossele said that he knew no Mishnayos. "Then what can I test you on?" asked the bewildered Principal. "You can test me on Siddur. We only have a Siddur at home and I know it very well," answered Yossele.

"But the post-Siddur class is for 6-year-olds," responded the principal. "Then let me join that class," answered Yossele. "But there's no room for you, I'm afraid." Disheartened, Yossele said the principal. "Will you write that on a piece of paper?"

"Excuse me? Why do you want me to do that?"

"Because after 120 years when I go to Heaven and meet my father, he is going to ask me what Torah I have learned. I'll explain to him that when I was 12, I came to Cheder and was even willing to embarrass myself day-in-day-out by sitting with the 6 year-olds, but the Principal still wouldn't let me. Then, not believing me, my father will say, "What kind of principal would every do such a thing?" Then I'll show him your paper!"

Upon hearing this, the principal allows Yossele to join the cheder, and he grew up to be a learned scholar and a widely respected Rav.

The Mezuzah is a reminder that Hashem is standing guard on the outside while we are protected on the inside.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings-Shirah The Baal HaTurim writes, **ואתחנן** is gematriya **שירה**, since Moshe said **שירה** to Hashem, so his tefillah would be answered." This is the reason we say Pesukei DiZimrah, songs and praises to Hashem, before we say Shemonah Esrei. The first three brachos of Shemonah Esrei are also praises. The praises help the tefillah be answered.

Let us understand the profundity of this concept. Someone has a problem that's sitting heavily on his heart. He shouldn't go to Hashem and immediately ask for a salvation. First he should thank Hashem for all the good that Hashem gave him, and then he can ask for his needs.

Moshe Rabbeinu yearned and pined to come to Eretz Yisrael, but he didn't begin with requests. He began by praising Hashem, and that's the reason that **ואתחנן** is gematriya **שירה**.



One of the purposes of praising Hashem before requesting is because we should never lose sight to all the good that we receive. Even in times of hardships, chas veshalom, don't allow these struggles to dull your awareness of all the good you have. There's always so much goodness in our lives, and we should remember them, and praise Hashem for them. Afterwards we can ask for what we want.

Reb Zalman Brizel zt'l (one of the tzaddikim of Yerushalayim) once said to his son Reb Nota, "Don't even ask what happened to me today. I had such a hard day."

"What happened?" the son asked. "I awoke in the morning [at two a.m. as was his daily schedule] and when I wanted to put on my shoes, I found them without the shoelaces. Apparently, the grandchildren who visited yesterday took them out and hid them somewhere." "So what did you do?" Reb Nota asked.

"Don't ask. I looked all over the house for the shoelaces, until I found one of them. I thanked Hashem for that, but I still couldn't go anywhere with just one shoelace. I searched the house some more, which isn't an easy feat for an old man like me, until I finally found the other one. I went to the mikveh. When I came out of the water, my clothes weren't there. Someone took them!

I considered sending Reb Kalman [a respected Rav who would often help Reb Zalman] to bring me another set of clothes, but then I decided against it, because if your mother would hear that someone stole my clothes, she would come and make a commotion."

"So what did you do?" Reb Nota asked. "What I did? I woke up in the morning and my shoelaces where in the shoes. I went to the mikveh, and my clothes weren't stolen, and everything was fine and well." This story is a reminder for us to stay focused on all the good things in life. There are always issues; no one is exempt from life's challenges. There's always something to daven for; always something that lies heavily on the heart. But these issues shouldn't prevent us from remembering Hashem's kindness. There's lots of chessed as well.

Here's another story about Reb Zalman Brizel zt'l. For his parnassah, he sold glass milk bottles. (In those days, people had their own glass milk bottles, which the milkman would fill every morning.) One day, Reb Zalman didn't make any sales. He knew that his wife would be upset, as they needed the cash. So before heading home, he wrapped his hand in a towel, so it appeared as though it was hurt, and he came home with a pained expression on his face. His wife looked his bandaged hand and asked, "What happened?!" In an

exasperated voice, Reb Brizel said, "The streets in Yerushalayim; they are so steep. If I slip with my wagon filled with milk bottles, everything could topple over and break."

"So what happened!" He took off his bandage, "I didn't slip, my hand isn't hurt, and the wagon didn't turn over. And although I didn't make a single sale today, it's also not the end of the world…" This story is another indication that we should never lose our focus on the good we have.

Now, for a third story: Reb Zalman Brizel's children and grandchildren came to his home on the night of Pesach to wish him a gut yom tov.



One of the children knocked over the special Seder matzos the, and they all broke. Reb Zalman raised his hands heavenward and said, "Baruch Hashem, that you gave me children and grandchildren…" Praises and gratitude should never cease from our lips. Only after praising and thanking Hashem, can we ask for our needs.

The Rebbe of Ruzhin zt'l once heard his daughter bemoaning something. The Rebbe told her that it isn't good to complain, "Because a sigh brings on more tzaros, and praise brings more goodness."

"Everyone has inside them a piece of good news. The good news is you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is."

Today Not Yesterday!! Written By B Rose

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לְבָבֶךָ ***"And these words I command you today shall be upon your heart"*** (6:6)



Rashi says on the word "today": *"Let the words of Torah not be as an old royal edict which people don't attach much importance, but rather let them be like a new royal edict which everyone runs to hear"*

Rav Chaim of Brisk explained this Rashi as follows. A persons responsibilities change from day to day. Today's mission is not necessarily yesterday's or tomorrow's. Too often people become entrenched in a routine and frame of mind that was appropriate yesterday but now is irrelevant and can even be harmful. This posuk is telling us that a person should always reflect upon his way of life and be sure that he is doing the Rotzon Hashem as it expresses itself at the present time! Today!

אֶעְבְּרָה־נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הָהָר הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהַלְּבָנוֹן ***'I beg you, let me go over, and see the good land'*** (3:25)

At first glance, Moshe's request that he "see the good land" seems superfluous; if G-d allowed him to cross over the Jordan, wouldn't he automatically "see" the land?

Rather, Moshe was praying to avoid the same transgression as the Twelve Spies, and see only the "good" in the Land of Israel. (**Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk**)

"You shall love Hashem…" Written by Benjamin A Rose

6:5 וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל־לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדֶךָ

"You shall love Hashem.." The word **אהבה** – love – has a root of **הב** which means give. We are commanded in this weeks parsha to Love Hashem. We read this posuk at least twice daily in the shema. But how does one love Hashem??

In Judaism we believe that love is based on giving hence the root of the word **אהבה** – love is **הב** – give. You cannot love somebody unless you are willing to give 100% of the time in all sorts of ways. This love is reciprocated by the other person. However true Love is giving just for the sake of giving, and not giving just so you get something back!



So again, how do we love Hashem? and does Hashem Love us?

Hashem has given us everything we could ever ask for and continues to give all the time!! So that answers our second question but we still haven't answered our first question.. How do we love an immortal, non-tangible being??

G-d gave us things to do, in return by doing these things (mitzvos) we are giving to Hashem. to truly love Him would be to give 100% in every Mitzvah. For example, not doing it half-heartedly. Do it not because you want reward but do it because you know that's what Hashem means when He says Love Him! If you give just to receive that is not true love. May we all give our all in service to Hashem and to our fellow Jew and give not only to receive but just because that's what He wants!.

The Odd One Out Of The 6 Remembrances - D Fine



After shacharis, many have the wonderful custom to say the six remembrance psukim printed in the siddurim just before the 13 articles of faith. They are the remembering of maaseh miriam, of mattan torah, of korach, yetzias mitzrayim, the egel hazahav, and shabbos. And appropriately, all six start with 'remember,' Well, nearly all six. The exception is psukim of the remembering of mattan torah which are found in our sedra. Here, instead of saying 'remember,' the psukim just say 'do not forget.' Why is this?

Mattan torah instilled emunah within us as a people. And whether or not people want to recognise it, they have this emunah deep inside their personality [which explains stories where suddenly people had life-changing spiritual moments and changes their lives around]. Just like one knows that they exist(they do not need to prove it), they have a deep ingrained emunah and link to torah Judaism.

Thus, the Ramban answers our question by saying that we do not need a positive warning to remember mattan torah – we were there, and it lives on inside of us. We just need to be told not to forget and ignore it.

A gentle word, a kind look, a good-natured smile can work wonders and accomplish miracles.

whY I Matter - Young Israel of Midwood

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד ***"Hear, Israel, Hashem is our Elokim, Hashem is One!"*** (6:4)



R' Yehoshua Rokeach z"l (1825-1894; Belzer Rebbe) asks: When we recite Shema, we are accepting G-d as our King. Why then is it customary to sit when reciting Shema? One would expect that we would stand out of reverence!

He explains: Accepting G-d as King is a mitzvah that one is obligated to perform constantly. But, of course, no one can stand all of the time. By reciting Shema seated, we are emphasizing that one must accept G-d as King no matter where he finds himself.

Accomplishing Many Things With Tefillah

רַב־לָךְ אַל־תּוֹסֶף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עוֹד בַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה ***'It is enough for you; speak to Me no more***... ' (3:26)

The **Kretchnifer Rebbe zy"a** (quoted in Gilyon Kol Emunah) notes that it seems as if Moshe did not accomplish anything with all of his 515 tefillos. However, the truth is that he accomplished many things.

Although he did not merit entering Eretz Yisroel, he did accomplish many other things. Therefore, Hashem told him not to speak anymore about "this matter." He was saying that his tefillos would not help for this matter - but they would help for many other things.

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

The Close Relationship



Rebbe Moshe Midner zy'a would say that one should pray in the manner a son pleads with his father. When a child begs for something, he isn't embarrassed or shy to express himself, and we should daven the same way. If one isn't able to express himself fully by tefillah, it indicates distance from Hashem. He doesn't view himself a child to Hashem. Reb Moshe Midner also said, "Whenever one needs a yeshuah he should say two chapters of Tehillim, and afterwards clearly express his needs before Hashem, in simple, straightforward words.

Tefilla

The concept of tefillah is mentioned in this week's parashah by the following words: **כִּי מִי־גּוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ אֱלֹקים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו כַּה' אֱלֹקינוּ בְּכָל־ קָרְאֵנוּ אֵלָיו** "***Which great nation has a god close to them as Hashem our G-d is close to us whenever we call out to Him***" (Devarim 4:7).

The Megaleh Amukos once announced to his congregation that he had decided to leave his rabbinic post in Krakow and go elsewhere, but he didn't want to tell them the reason behind his decision. The community begged him to stay, but he wouldn't be persuaded. When the final day of his tenure arrived, he let the community know that he changed his mind and would stay with them.



The people of the city were overjoyed, but also perplexed. They said, "Why were you planning to leave, and what caused you to change your mind?" The Megaleh Amukos replied, "I will still not tell you why I originally planned to leave, but I will tell you about a din Torah that came before me just yesterday, which caused me to reassess my decision and I decided to stay." The people listened attentively as their great rav told them about the din Torah:

"There's a certain pauper in our city; he earns his parnassah by selling breads. His wife bakes them, and he sits on the roadside, like the standard poor peddler, selling breads to the passers-by. A couple of months ago, a wealthy person recognized him. "Aren't you the son of so-and-so?" "Yes, that's me." "You're a talmid chacham, this job is beneath your dignity. I also know your prestigious lineage. How did it happen that you ended up like this?" "This is what I do for a living," the pauper answered simply. The wealthy man said, "I will support you. You can remain in beis medresh and learn Torah, as is fitting for a scholar like yourself, and I will send you a weekly stipend. It will be even more than you earn now…"

The pauper agreed, and this arrangement continued for a couple of months. But recently, the wealthy man caught the pauper on the street again, selling breads. "What happened? We made an agreement. Why are you outdoors selling breads again?" The pauper replied, "I decided to back out of the deal." "You can't back out without my consent. We made a deal, and like every agreement, you can't back out on your own. It needs to be done before a beis din."

The Megaleh Amukos continued, "Yesterday they presented this unusual din Torah to my beis din. The wealthy person wants to continue supporting, and the pauper doesn't want to accept. "I asked

the pauper why he wants to break the agreement, and this was his response:

"As a peddler, my wife and I are continuously davening. When my wife kneads the dough, we pray the dough should rise properly. We pray that I should find dry firewood (wet wood creates smoke, which ruins the breads), and we also daven to sell the breads. Our entire day revolves on our tefillos and we continually trust in Hashem. But ever since the wealthy person supported us, we almost stopped davening. We feel that we can manage with the weekly gift that he sends us, and we forget to daven to Hashem. We've become detached from Hashem. I want to be a peddler again."

"When I heard this poor man's words I said, I want to remain in this city, to be around people like this."

A similar story happened with the **Bas Ayin**. He arrived in Eretz Yisrael in the month of Elul. Originally his plan was to stay in Tzefas until after the holidays, and then move to Yerushalayim. But just as he was about to leave, he heard a woman tell her son, "Yerachmiel! We have to protect the schach from rain. On Simchas Torah we benched geshem and it will rain very soon."

When the Bas Ayin heard this, he decided to stay. He wanted to be among people who believe with a complete faith in the power of tefillah.

A person once came to the **rebbe of Kotzk** and told him about his many problems. The rebbe said, "So why don't you daven to Hashem to help you?" "Rebbe," he answered, "I would love to daven, but I don't have peace of mind. The tzaros overcome my ability to think straight and I can't pour my heart out in tefillah."

The Rebbe of Kotzk said, "Not being able to daven is your greatest problem. Why did you tell me all your other problems first and leave this problem for last? This is the first thing you should have told me, because it is the greatest problem of them all."



The Rebbe of Gustantin zy'a would tell the people who came to him that they should daven. They came to him, because they wanted him to daven for them, and he would respond that they should daven for themselves. Often, he would recommend which chapters of Tehillim to say each day until they have their salvation. Many people were helped in this manner.

The Noam Elimelech zy'a writes that davening for yourself is the highest form of tefillah – even greater than the tefillos of tzaddikim – because it emanates from the depths of the heart. Let us therefore maximize and utilize our potential for tefillah. With tefillah, all our hearts' desires can be attained.

Yesurim –Averting the Focus



A tzaddik from Yerushalayim, who is also lo aleinu a baal yesurim, told me the following: "A person carrying a heavy package on his shoulders appears crushed and bent over. But when he places the package on the ground, he can stand on it and become elevated. Similarly, someone who carries his problems on his shoulders will feel crushed. But when he throws the package off his

shoulders to the ground, because he knows that Hashem is leading him in the best way, he will only grow from those hardships."

When suffering from a hardship, it is a good idea to ignore it. Obviously, one should do hishtadlus first to prevent or fix the problem, but afterwards it is wise not to make a big issue out of it. It will only draw him down. It is better to avert your attention from the pressing issue and to think about happier things. - This is alluded to in this week's parashah. It says **וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר**.

Rebbe Moshe Leib of Sassov zy'a explained (figuratively) that Moshe Rabbeinu was saying, **וָאֶתְחַנַּן**, I prayed, **בָּעֵת הַהִוא** that I should only focus on the moment, and that I should have the strength to ignore the worries of the past and future.

Remember and focus on the idea that Hashem is G-d and He will certainly help you. Focus on bitachon, and don't allow yourself despair because of your worries.

The halachah is that one reads the tochachah (in parashas Bechukosei and in Ki Savo) without stopping in the middle. Only one aliyah reads through the entire section. Why? The stops are intended to allow the student of Torah time to think things over (see Rashi in beginning of Vayikra). But when going through hard times, often the best counsel is to keep on moving and not stop to think about those troubling matters at all. Focusing on your troubles will often aggravate them, and make things worse.

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר - ***At that time, saying*** (3:23) Moshe beseeched **הקב״ה** that in later generations -- "at that time"- - when the Jews will find themselves in the depths of exile, unable to even muster up the proper intentions before praying and only capable of uttering the words, their prayers should be acceptable before **הקב״ה**. (***The Amshinover Rebbe***)

Chazak Weekly

During a shiur given on Tisha B'av, **Harav Matisyahu Salomon shlita**, the Lakewood Mashgiach, related the following personal story:



"When I was a young man, I was a student in the Gateshead Yeshiva. The yeshiva had a hundred and twenty-five students; not large quantitatively, but qualitatively tremendous. The building was fairly small, and we were packed onto the benches. The tables were so narrow that the volumes of gemara before us all overlapped each other. If a student wanted to turn the page, he had to ask everyone around him to lift their gemaras first. Yet despite it all we sat and studied with tremendous diligence.

"One day a Dayan from London came to visit the yeshiva. When he addressed the student body, he explained that he did not wish to deliver a lecture. Rather he wanted to read to us a page from an American journal that he had read the week prior. "The article was written by an obviously irreligious Jew, albeit who possessed an appreciation for Jewish history.

In the article the author explained that, along with a group of journalists, he was invited on a European tour. When they arrived in England one of the places they visited was a village in Northeast England called Wallsend.

Wallsend is an ancient village that dates back almost two millennia. When the Romans invaded and conquered England, they constructed a wall to serve as a barrier to keep the mighty Scottish Picks out of England. The wall was called Hadrian's Wall after the Roman

Emperor. The village where the wall ended was aptly called Wallsend. Today there is nothing left of the wall except for a few moss-covered stones in the village of Wallsend. It is nothing more than a tourist attraction .



The day the journalist arrived at Wallsend he recalled that he had yahrtzeit for his mother and he wanted to recite kaddish in her memory. When he asked the tour guide if there were any Jewish Services in the area, the guide replied that there was a school in the village of Gateshead ten miles away. There he would be sure to find any religious service he needed.

The journalist wrote that he arrived at the yeshiva in the middle of the afternoon. He had never been in a yeshiva before and the sight that greeted him was extraordinary. There were tens of young men huddled together on small benches studying, debating, and arguing with passion and vibrancy. The journalist did not comprehend anything they were saying, but he stood and watched spellbound. But then he overheard something which caught his attention. One student called out to his friend, "But Rabbi Akiva says…!" Those words reverberated in his ears.

Even after they destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem, the Romans understood that their job was incomplete. In order to destroy the Jewish People, they had to stop the public study and teaching of Torah.

Rabbi Akiva's execution was commissioned by the Roman Emperor Hadrian. His crime was that he taught Torah publicly. Hadrian

ordered Rabbi Akiva to be killed in a most barbaric and heinous fashion to serve as an example of the severe consequences for teaching Torah. Yet today, centuries later, Hadrian and the Roman Empire are long gone, relegated to the history books and symbolized by a few moss-covered stones. Rabbi Akiva, on the other hand, is alive and well. His teachings and legacy are still being promulgated and studied today!

Rabbi Salomon concluded that the story gave him so much encouragement because it serves as a powerful representation of G-d's Promise, "But despite all this , when they will be in the land of their enemies, I will not have been revolted by them nor will I have rejected them to obliterate them, to annul My covenant with them – for I am Hashem, their G-d ."

Rashi explains that a Jew must never think that the atrocities of exile prove that G-d no longer loves and favours Klal Yisroel. His love for us is boundless, and even in exile the covenant remains in full force. All of the empires and countries that have sought to vanquish and obliterate us are gone. Yet we remain. That is the greatest sign of His love for us.

Shemonah Esrei

The Megaleh Amukos teaches: Hashem's name (Yud Keh Vov Keh) is gematriya twenty-six. In Shemonah Esrei we say Hashem's name twenty-six times. 26 x 26 = 676, the same gematriya as the word **רעות** [suffering]. This implies that by davening the Shemonah Esrei all forms of suffering are abolished.

This is the meaning of the passuk, **צדיק רעות רבות**, "a lot of suffering **רעות** befall the tzaddik, **ומכולם יצילנו ה'** and Hashem's name (which is said in Shemonah Esrei twenty-six times) saves him from all of them" (Tehillim 34:20).

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk - It Doesn't Add Up



"I have a surprise for you," said the man's wife. "I made your mother's chocolate nut cake for dessert!" The man looked forward to the treat but after one bite he stopped eating. Seeing his reaction his wife was annoyed. "Well, if you don't like it, don't blame me," said the woman testily. "It's your mother's recipe." "Um… This doesn't taste like hers," he replied. "Are you sure you didn't change anything?" "Well," she answered, "I didn't have four egg whites, so I just used two whole eggs. And I don't like slivered almonds so I used peanuts. Instead of applesauce, I substituted stewed prunes which I think are healthier. Otherwise it's exactly your mother's recipe!"

Is it any wonder that with those changes it was a recipe for disaster? In Parshas Va'eschanan, Moshe is preparing the Jews for life after his death. He would recount the Ten Commandments, teach them the Shema, and he also taught them a law commonly known as, "Bal Tosif," meaning, "Do not add." The Torah says, "Do not add to the thing I command you, and don't detract from it, to keep the law of HaShem, your G-d, as I am commanding you."

What kind of adding are we talking about? It's not praying or studying too much Torah. It's not giving too much charity or helping too many old ladies across the street. Rashi, the foremost commentary on Chumash gives us some examples. He says, "You shouldn't add a fifth parchment to the Tefillen, or a fifth species to the mitzvah of Lulav, or a fifth fringe of tzitzis on a garment. Similarly, you should not lessen any mitzvos." In essence, this

commandment is not about not doing something multiple times but rather not changing the actual act of the commandment.

It's interesting to note that Rashi gave three examples of cases in which something with four had a fifth added, and gave no examples of removing an item, such as only putting THREE parchments in the Tefillin. Presumably, people would understand that you cannot reduce the act of the mitzvah, but what's wrong with adding? Especially adding a fifth item so now it parallels the Five Books of Moses, the Chumash! Wouldn't that be more meaningful?

And that's exactly the point. We would think that we are able to improve on G-d's design. We would imagine we can apply our human thought processes to His Divine one and build a better mousetrap. But that is something we consider when we don't understand the nature of the Torah. The Torah is perfect and immutable. It doesn't change nor does it need to. All the wisdom of the Universe is embedded in it and were we to think we could improve it, we would actually be damaging and reducing its efficacy and power.

This is why Rashi gives these examples, to tell us that even when we've got "a really good idea," the fact that it didn't make it into the Torah means it really isn't. Only after we realize this message and internalize G-d's mastery over the world are we ready for the rest of the Parsha, with the Ten Commandments and the Shema. They remind us to listen to what G-d is saying, because our knowledge is light years away from His.

True Emuna

"When a person has true emuna in Hashem, suffering does not break him, and good fortune does not make him drunk with pleasure." ~ R' Avraham Farbstein zt"l

Rabbi Yossi Goldberg – Something for Nothing



וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר And I davened to Hashem at that time

On the word וָאֶתְחַנַּן Rashi tells us from Chazal that Moshe davened in the way of Tzadikim. Meaning, that even though he could have Davened for his request to be answered because of the good deeds that he had done; he Davened to Hashem that he should be answered just as a free gift from Him.

The question is, why is this way of Davening so great that it is the way of Tzadikim? Imagine a man who comes into a shop to buy something and instead of paying for the goods, he asks for a favour from the shopkeeper, "Please can I have these goods for free?" Is that greatness?? Isn't it a greater Tefilah when someone actually davens to Hashem for something because he has done such great deeds and feels therefore that he deserves it? Why is it better to just come along and ask, "Please can I have this for free?" If Davening would be a business transaction, then this would be a valid point. But Tefilah is not about giving anything to Hashem - in fact Hashem already knows full well what we need and what we want without us even having to ask for it!

The purpose of Davening is purely to build our relationship with Him because for any relationship to work - there has to be constant communication. In this, the way of Tzadikim is different to the way of average people because they feel closer to Hashem, as we will explain.

Normally, when two people share a genuine and close connection, one person does not feel bad to ask the other one for a free favour since he is confident in the strength of their relationship. However, if their connection was only surface level, a person would think twice before he justifies his request for a free favour.

A true sign of shared love is when one can ask of another for something and offer nothing in return. Tzadikim feel so close to Hashem and they know that He too loves us. Therefore, their Davening is a sign of greatness because they feel that they can Daven for something and offer nothing in return.

We should never hesitate from Davening to Hashem for all our needs. And we should learn from the way that the Tzadikim Daven that our relationship with Hashem is truly strong and deep enough to justify all our requests, even if we feel that we don't deserve them.

A couple in Beit Shemesh were really trying to make ends meet but despite their best efforts they began to fall into debt. Very quickly they had amounted debts of thousands of dollars. Desperate for some advice they went to speak with their Rov. "Maybe you could ask your father for some help?" the Rov suggested helpfully after hearing their plight. "I don't have a father," the woman replied tearfully. "He was niftar when I was very young." The Rov nodded in understanding. "But in that case you have our Merciful Father in heaven who takes the place of your father and He looks after all his children very well! So just ask Him for help!"



The woman looked uncomfortable with this idea; it seemed strange to talk to Hashem so normally like that. The Rov encouraged her, and the couple left his house. A few days later he received a call. The lady's Tefilos had been answered! A major mistake in their USA tax returns meant that they were owed thousands of dollars in pay out. And yes, the total that they were owed in tax returns was exactly the same amount of money that they were in debt!

Parsha Potpourri - Rav Ozer Alport

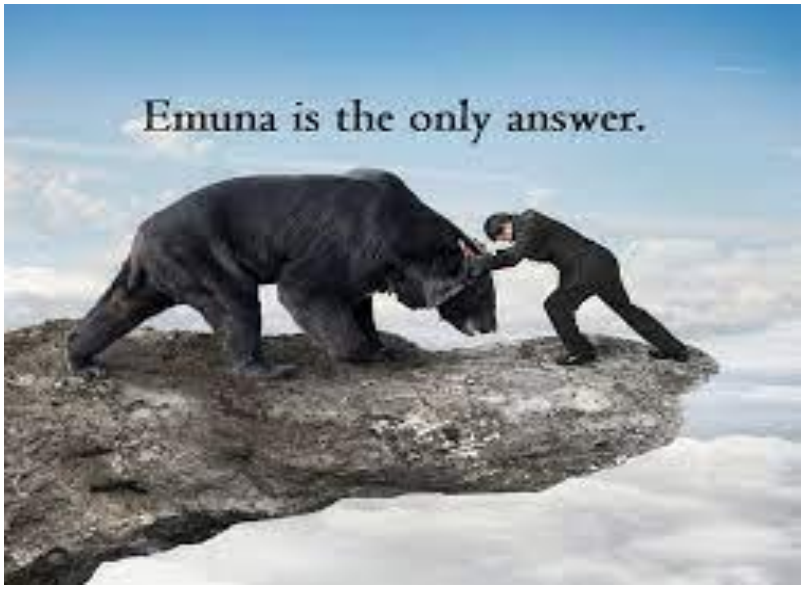
The Shabbos after Tisha B'Av is known as Shabbos Nachamu, based on the Haftorah which is read this week that begins **נחמו נחמו עמי** - ***comfort, comfort My people*** (Yeshaya 40:1) – and it is celebrated as a time of healing and consolation after the bitter mourning and agony that we experienced on Tisha B'Av. However, it is surprising that as we get up from the floor in search of comfort, the Torah portion that we read this Shabbos – Vaeschanan – is the identical parsha that we read on Tisha B'Av.

How is it possible that the very portion that was selected to be read on Tisha B'Av due to its threats of destruction for wrongdoing is appropriate to also be read on Shabbos Nachamu?

Rav Zev Leff suggests that this was done deliberately in order to teach us that the comfort that we are seeking can be found not only when life circumstances turn around and change for the better, but also in the painful struggles themselves, which when viewed from a different perspective often reveal a silver lining.

Therefore, only days after reading Parshas Vaeschanan with a negative focus on Tisha B'Av, we read it a second time on Shabbos Nachamu to allude to the fact when seen from a different angle, positive aspects can be found even amongst the most difficult and painful setbacks.

Etz Chaim - Rabbi Ezra Zafrani



Moshe Rabeinu pleaded to Hashem, "Give me more time to serve You in this world, another Mitzva, which is eternity in Olam Haba!" Time is valuable if used properly. Even in the times of distress and anguish, time has its important treasures.

When the Gaon, **Harav Yeheskel Abramsky Zt"l** was sent to Siberia, under the ruthless Russian guards and unrelenting tortures, he lamented daily at his morbid situation saying, "What is ahead of me each day, torture, abuse! If only I had a little time to learn and pray, that would give me some solace. And when I say the Modeh Ani Lifanecha each day, and I could praise You for my new life each day, when I don't even have that what am I thanking You for each day? Then I continue in this praise, and I realize there is plenty to praise You for! You give me fortitude to serve You daily, and that is **רבה אמונתך**.Everything was taken from me except my Emunah in You Hashem – that You love me, care for me, and that no one can take from me. My daily existence in this world just to have Emunah in You is worth every second of life!"

Let us take a big lesson from this, to appreciate and value each moment of life and to view each Mitzvah as an opportunity that will build an everlasting relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Making one person smile can change the world. Maybe not the whole world…. But their world!

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"ואתחנן אל ה" "And I implored Hashem." (3:23)

According to the Midrash Rabbah (11:10) the word "Va'etchanan" (ואתחנן) which has the numerical value of five hundred and fifteen, teaches us, that Moshe prayed five hundred and fifteen prayers to Hashem to be permitted to enter Eretz Yisrael.Why specifically five hundred and fifteen?



The spies returned with their evil report against *Eretz Yisrael* on the ninth of *Av*. Since the people cried bitterly and refused to go to *Eretz Yisrael*, Hashem decreed that the entire nation between the ages of twenty and sixty would die in the wilderness. Annually, on the ninth of *Av*, graves were dug and the people would sleep in them. In the morning those who were alive would climb out of the graves, and those who had expired would be buried where they were. This went on for all the years of the sojourn in the wilderness.

On the fortieth-year graves were dug for the people to sleep in, but surprisingly, they all emerged alive. The people began to wonder, "Perhaps we have miscalculated and yesterday was not really the ninth of *Av*." Therefore, they continued sleeping in graves on the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth. When they noticed a full moon on the fifteenth of *Av*, they were certain that the ninth had already passed, and obviously the punishment was completed (see *Bava Batra* 121a).

Thus, on the fifteenth of *Av* the Jewish people celebrated the fact that no one else would be punished for the spy episode, and Moshe thought that it was an opportune time to pray to Hashem to permit him to enter the land.

The Hebrew calendar, which is based on the lunar system, normally has six months of twenty-nine days and six months of thirty days. From the month of *Elul* (which follows *Av*) till the month of *Adar*, in which Moshe passed away, there are six months. Counting three of them as full months (thirty days) and three as incomplete ones (twenty-nine days), there is a total of one hundred and seventy-seven days. Adding to this, sixteen days from the fifteenth to the thirtieth of the month of *Av*, and seven days of the month of *Adar* until Moshe's passing, there is a total of two hundred days.

A Jew is required to pray three times a day. In each prayer he may include personal requests, except on *Shabbat*, when personal needs may not be mentioned (see Jerusalem Talmud *Shabbat* 15:3, *Orach Chaim* 294:1. However, on *Yom Tov* it is permissible, see *Magen Avraham* 128:70). Since in a two-hundred-day period there are twenty-eight *Shabbatot*, one hundred and seventy-two days remain, in which a person prays three times a day and may include personal requests, which totals five hundred and sixteen prayers.

On the night of the fifteenth, after seeing the full moon, they realized their sins were forgiven, and they thus celebrated the following day. Hence, Moshe started praying from the morning of the fifteenth of *Av*, till *Minchah* of the seventh of *Adar*, uttering exactly a total of five hundred and fifteen prayers before his passing. (**פני יהושע, ברכות ל״ב ע״א**)

When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.

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"ובקשתם משם את ה' אלקיך ומצאת" "From there you will seek G-d, your G-d, and you will find Him." (4:29)

Why does the *pasuk* start *"uvikashtem"* — "you will seek" — in the plural and concludes *"umatzata"* — "you will find" — in the singular?



While it is permissible for one to pray individually, our sages (*Berachot* 8a) have emphasized the importance of praying with a quorum of ten men *(minyan).* Praying in a group is known as *"tefillah betzibur."* The word *"tzibur"* (**צבור**) is an acronym for **צ**דיקים (righteous), **ב**ינונים (intermediate), and **ר**שעים (wicked).

One who prays individually is under much scrutiny in Heaven, but when he prays together with a group, even one who is a *"rasha"* can successfully "sail through" on the merit of the other congregants. The Torah alludes to this by telling us, *'uvikashem'* — 'if you do your seeking together with the public' — and not individually, be assured that *'umatzata'* — 'you will find' — that is, receive your desires from Hashem. - (**ר' שמחה בונים זצ"ל מפשיסכא**)

"One who truly loves to learn Torah for its own sake can never be tired of it and never be satiated. Have you ever heard a drunk say that he's had enough to drink?" ~ R' Mordechai Gifter zt"l

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"כבד את אביך ואת אמך כאשר צוך ה' אלקיך"
"Honour your father and mother as G-d, your G-d, has commanded you."
(5:16)

Rashi explains that, "as G-d has commanded you," means that the commandment to honor parents was first given at Marah (see *Shemot* 15:25). Why is it necessary to tell us this in the Ten Commandments?

Many mistakenly interpret the commandment of honouring parents as reciprocation for the care the parents bestowed upon their children. Torah, however, regards this as an erroneous rationale. In the wilderness, everyone, young and old, children and parents, were sustained through the manna which fell from heaven. Their clothes miraculously grew with them and were cleaned and pressed by the clouds of heaven. The parents did not have to work to earn a livelihood in order to be able to provide for their children. Nonetheless, under such circumstances Hashem commanded the honouring of parents. Thus, honouring parents is not an act of reciprocity in which the parents are "paid back" by the children, but even when parents do nothing for their children, they must be honoured merely because of who they are. (**כתב סופר**)

"The world is full of nice people. If you can't find one, be one."

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"ושננתם לבנך ודברת בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך"
"You shall teach them to your children and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you go on the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."
(6:7) It should have first said, "*vedibarta bam*" — "*you* shall speak of them" and then "*veshinantam levanecha*" — "you shall teach them to your children"?



It is the fervent wish of all parents to see their children immersed in Torah study. The Torah therefore tells us, "*veshinantam levanecha*" — if you want to teach Torah to your children and inspire them to study it diligently, the way to do this is through, "*vedibarta bam*" — "you shall speak of them" — when they see you studying Torah "when *you* sit in your house and when *you* go on the way and when *you* lie down and when *you* rise up," they will be encouraged to do likewise.

Parents must always remember that they are a model for their children and that their children try to emulate them.

(ר' יוסף זצ"ל גרינוואלד מפאפא)

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"שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד... בשכבך ובקומך" ***"Hear O Israel G-d is our G-d, G-d is the One and Only... and when you lie down and when you rise up"*** **(6:4,7)**



Why is the *Shema* read in the evening and repeated again in the morning?

"Night" represents dark and difficult times and "day" represents good and pleasant periods. In the *Shema* the Jew accepts upon himself absolute submission to the yoke of heaven. The recitation of *Shema* in the evening and again in the morning is a message that under all conditions, regardless if things are good or difficult, pleasant or gloomy, a person should never forsake his attachment to Hashem.

The daily recitals of *Shema* start in the evening to emphasize that, while it is easy to praise Hashem when things are going well, one must also praise Hashem "in the evening" when things seem dark and difficult. (**כתב סופר, ועי' רשימות כ"ק אדמו"ר חוברת י"ג**)

If you can trust a puzzle Company to make sure every piece is in the box to complete the puzzle, then why can't you trust Hashem that every piece of your life is there for a reason? Makes sense, no??

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שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד
***"Hear O Israel G-d is our G-d, G-d is the One and Only."* (6:4)**

Instead of "*shema*" — "hear" — it should have said "*da*" — "know, understand"?

The word "*shema*" (**שמע**) is an acronym for שׂאו מרום עיניכם — "raise your eyes on high." [To whom?] To שׂ-ד-י מלך עולם — A-mighty King of the world. [When?] שׂחרית, מנחה, ערבית — morning, afternoon, and evening. One who heeds this dictum will merit to acquire עול מלכות שׂמים, absolute submission to the yoke of heaven. (**אבודרהם**)

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שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד" "Hear O Israel, G-d our G-d, G-d is the One and Only." (6:4)

Why is the *Shema* recited in the *Kedushah* of the *Musaf Amidah* on *Shabbat*?

There was a Persian king named Yusgader (see *Zevachim* 19a) who issued a decree forbidding the daily recital of the *Shema*. In order that it not be forgotten entirely, the sages inserted it into

the *Kedushah* prayers. The Talmudic sage Rav Ashi prayed for the abolishment of the decree, and miraculously a crocodile appeared in the king's bedroom and swallowed him up in broad daylight, and the decree was nullified.

The recital of *Shema* was thus reinstated, and removed from the *Kedushah* of *Shacharit*. However, in order that this miracle be remembered, it was left in the *Kedushah* of *Musaf*, since there is otherwise no reciting of the *Shema* during the prayer. It is also not mentioned, however, in the *Rosh Chodesh Musaf Amidah*, because *Rosh Chodesh* is often on a weekday when the attendance for public prayer is not so large and there would not be such a publicizing of the miracle. (**שבולי הלקט אות מ"ה, ועי' לבוש סי' תכ"א**)

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"וכתבתם על מזזות ביתך ובשעריך" *"And write them on the doorposts of your house and upon your gates."* (6:9)



What is the significance of the **"ש"** on the exterior of a *mezuzah* and why is the *mezuzah* affixed to the doorpost in a slanted position?

On the exterior of every *mezuzah* is a *"shin"* which connotes Hashem's name **"ש-ד-י"** This name is written on the *mezuzah* because it is an abbreviation for *"Shomer daltei Yisrael"* (שומר דלתי ישראל) — "the Protector of the Jewish [doors] homes." The *mezuzah* protects the home and its inhabitants not only when they are at home, but even when they are away.

For a home to have the proper atmosphere, *shalom bayit* — harmony and peace — must prevail among all those who dwell in it, and this is achieved by promoting a spirit of cooperation. Putting the *mezuzah* on an angle instead of upright is thus a message that all those who enter the home must be willing to bend in conflicts with other people.

It is related that when the famous Onkelos, son of Kallonymos became a proselyte, it aroused the wrath of the Roman Emperor and he sent a group of Romans to influence him to change his mind. When they started disputing with him, he convinced them of the truth of his ideas, and they, too, became proselytes.

The emperor then sent another company of soldiers, ordering them to seize him without discussion. They had him in custody and were about to bring him before the emperor, when, leaving the house, he put his hand on the *mezuzah* and smiled.

Asked for an explanation, he said, "It is the custom of the world that a king sits in his palace and his servants guard on the outside. Our King, the King of the universe, lets his servants sit inside, while He guards them." The soldiers were so impressed that they, too, became proselytes. (**מסכת עבודה זרה י״א ע״ב**)

A prominent Jew named Artabun sent a precious stone as a gift to Rebbe (Rabbi Yehudah *HaNasi*) and asked that he reciprocate with something of equal value. Rebbe sent him a *mezuzah*. Artabun was upset and sent a message to Rebbe, "I sent you an item which is priceless and you sent me an item which is worth very little." Rebbe responded, "It is worth more than anything you or I can desire. Moreover, you sent me something which I will have to protect, and I sent you something which will protect you at all times." (**עי׳ פני משה ירושלמי פאה פ״א, ועי׳ שו״ת באר שבע סי׳ ל״ז שי״א שהי׳ נכרי**)

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"ודברת בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך"
***"And you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you go on the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."* (6:7)**



What is the significance of these four periods of Torah study?

In Torah study itself there are many gradations, and all these gradations are explained here:

"When you sit in your house," refers to the soul's occupation with Torah when it is in the treasury of souls, before its descent to this lowly world.

"When you go on the way," refers to the time during which the soul descends from world to world, from plane to plane, until it comes down to this lowest world to be invested in a physical body. There the soul "goes in the way" of this world until the time of old age, until —.

"When you lie down," — when man's appointed time arrives to leave this earthly world. Then, too, the Torah will protect him as explained in *Avot* (6:9), and continues to do so until —

"When you rise up," — *Techiyat Hameitim* — the resurrection, as it is said, "When you awaken [it shall be your discourse]" (Proverbs 6:22). (**היום יום י״ג מנ״א**)

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

(ג:כג) .ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההוא לאמר

And I implored Hashem at that time, saying. (3:23)



Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the *Chasam Sofer*, explains this *pasuk* in the following way. The *Medrash* in *Parashas V'Zos HaBrachah* teaches that Moshe *davened* to Hashem 515 times which is the *gematria* (numerical value) of both the word **ואתחנן** and the word **תפלה** .

If we add to this number the numerical value of the four-letter Name of Hashem, which is 26, we have the total of 541. This is the *gematria* of the word **ישראל** . The hint is thus; when *Yisroel* clings to *HaKadosh Boruch Hu*, their *tefilos* are answered. As it says a little further in our *parshah* **ואתם הדבקים בה' אלקיכם חיים כולכם היום (ד:ד)** ***But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d – you are all alive today.***

Furthermore, *Chachmei Yisroel* say that the numerical value of **ואתחנן** is the same numerical value of **תפלה** and it is also the numerical value of **שירה** song (515). Thus hinting that when we *daven* to Hashem, it is with **שירה וזמרה**, song and rejoicing.

(***Parperaos LaTorah***)

"Bitter people are never grateful; grateful people are never bitter." ~ R' Lazer Brody.

Crack the Layers By R' YY Jacobson

Of all the thoughts that you may have, that keep you in ***that*** place, of judging yourself absolutely negatively. Not judging an action that you did, but judging yourself, de- legitimizing yourself. Believing that Hashem is disappointed with you. That Hashem doesn't like you. That Judaism hates you.

Chas V'Sholom, chas V'Sholom. You have to eject the old CD, throw it in the garbage, and replace your brain with a new CD. And that CD that plays should say : ***'היא חלק אלוק ממעל 'And Israel is a part of Hashem from above'.***

Do you want to know who you are? - you are a piece of Hashem! You are a fragment of infinity. You are as beautiful, as gorgeous, as spectacular, as dazzling, as light, as luminescent and bright as Hashem Himself. Because you are a chelek of the **אין סוף**. That's who you are.



Now there are multiple layers- ok, we have to deal with the layers. But they are only layers that conceal and eclipse your essence. These are called ***klipos – shells.*** So, we have to peel these shells. Some shells are thick, like a walnut and you have to crack. Some shells are thin, that you can easily peel. Some are so thin, you can eat them with the fruit, like a grape.

But these are all shells. So a person has shells and layers. But your core being is ***gevaldig – unbelievable.***

Remove the layers. The core is who you really are!

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

שמור את יום השבת לקדשו (ה:יב) ***Guard the Shabbos day to sanctify it*** (5:12)

The Yerushalmi Chacham, Rebbe Yaakov Moshe Charlap, translates the word **שמור** in this pasuk as an expression of anticipation and waiting, as it says in Bereishis (37:11) **ואביו שמר את הדבר** , and his father waited for (anticipated) the matter. This means that Yaakov Avinu waited and anticipated the realization of Yosef's dream.



The Torah is teaching here in this pasuk, that it is incumbent on every Jewish person that he should anticipate the holiness of Shabbos (**קדושת שבת**) every day of the week. One should await for its arrival as if one were anxiously awaiting the arrival of an extremely important guest, counting the days and hours for the expected arrival. (***Parperaos LaTorah***)

Rebbe of Piaseczna (Aish Kodesh)

"The task of chinuch is to awaken the inner fire of the child. Every soul contains a spark that longs for greatness. The educator's role is to fan that spark until it becomes a flame that illuminates the child's entire being."

Torah U' Tefilah- R' Shmuel Winzelberg

לא תספו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ד:ב You shall not add to the word that I command you (4:2)



Rashi brings examples of 'do not add' and all of them are additions of **'five'** added on to four: 'For example, adding **five** passages of Torah in *Tefillin* (instead of four), taking **five** species in the *lulav* bundle (instead of four), and putting **five** *tzitziyos* strings on a garment (again instead of four).'

There is an amazing thing here, and this is even hinted at with the *trop* (cantillation) on the words **'do not add'** – which is ***munach reveii***, to tell us **leave four** things with you and do not add five, as the words ***munach reveii*** translate to mean – 'leave four'. (***Taamei HaTaamim as brought in Mesukim M'Dvash***)

ספר טללי אורות



When **Horav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach זצ"ל** was older, it was getting hard for him to see, and it was hard for him to read from seforim.

Horav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל offered to get Horav Shach a magnifying glass to help him read. Horav Shach said he can't learn from a sefer with a magnifying glass because it would be hard for him to hug the sefer as he usually did while learning!

Shabbos Treasures - The Precious Gift of Shabbos



Shabbos Nachamu is a Shabbos of joy and celebration. **The *Maharil*** (Minhagim 27) explains that the entire nation should rejoice on this special Shabbos, and that we should express our trust and faith that *Moshiach* will surely arrive soon to redeem and comfort us.

Because of this, it is customary to treat this Shabbos differently than another Shabbos. *Sefer Drashos Even Sho'eiv* states that we should treat *Shabbos Nachamu* like a *Yom Tov*. **The *Ritva*** writes (*Taanis* 30b) that the food preparations on this Shabbos should be like *Yom Tov*, and more elaborate than for a regular Shabbos. Additionally, *Shabbos Nachamu* always falls out on *Parashas Va'eschanan*, when we read the *Aseres HaDibros*, which is reminiscent of the *Yom Tov* of *Shavuos*.

No Rush

The Imrei Chaim zt'l said that the custom is that the parents walk the chasan and kallah slowly to the chuppah. This is to tell the young couple that they can walk. They don't need to run. They are beginning their life together in a world where people are always rushing.

We walk them calmly, to teach them that everything is in Hashem's hands and with Hashem's help, everything will work out well. There is no need to rush.

Shabbos Treasures



At one time in his life, the ***Z'viler Rebbe*, Rav Gedaliah Moshe Goldman**, was imprisoned in a Siberian labour camp. It was a miserable, back-breaking experience, and the only comforting thought the prisoners had was that it was not a Nazi extermination camp.

One Shabbos, the commandant summoned both the *Rebbe* and another Jew, a frail, older man, to his office. He told them, "You are both free to go. All you have to do is sign these papers and you may leave."

Rav Gedaliah Moshe reached for the papers and stopped. How could he write on Shabbos? True, it was a release, but could he desecrate the holy Shabbos? After all, as bad as it was, it was not life-threatening. He reasoned that he was young and strong, and even if he would be detained there for a few more years, he would survive.

He replied, "I am sorry, sir. While I appreciate your kind gesture, I cannot desecrate my Shabbos, and I can't sign the papers today." The commandant screamed, "Are you crazy? I am granting you freedom! How can you waste such an opportunity?!" The Rebbe said, "I understand and appreciate your kindness, but it is my day of rest, and I may not write."

With disgust, the commandant said, "If you do not sign, you will rot in this place," and he pushed the papers towards the old Jew. He said, "Sign and you can leave." The man thought to himself that if the Rav wouldn't sign, how could he? "I am afraid that I cannot sign either. Today is Shabbos and the same law applies to me." The commandant took his papers back and said, "If that is your choice, you both will never leave here."

Rav Gedaliah Moshe then yelled, "Wait! Please let him go free! I will sign the papers for him!" The commandant was surprised and said, "I don't understand. You just told me that you can't write on Shabbos, and yet you are willing to sign his papers? Have you lost your mind?! Why are his papers different from yours?"

The Rebbe explained, "There is a major difference. I am younger and stronger than he is, and I am not in immediate danger. I can survive here. He, on the other hand, is old and weak, and He will not make it. Therefore, if he is not prepared to sign, I will sign for him in order to save his life!"

The commandant was speechless. He was so impressed by this act of selflessness that he said, "I am allowing you both to leave without demanding your signatures. You are both free to go," and he tore up the documents!

Rabbi Yechiel Spero - Don't Forget It

A special tzaddik by the name of **Rav Gadola Eisner**, the Mashgiach in the Gerrer yeshiva in Tel Aviv, was beloved by many. Having gone through the war, he not only survived, but helped other survive as well. You may assume it was his prayers or dedication to mitzvos, and I am sure he did both of that.

But one of the main ways he survived and helped others survive was… humour. Encouraging others to be upbeat when everything around them reminded them to be broken and sad.

One night, Rav Gadola laid down on a concrete slab along with eight others in the barracks. It was the middle of the night, and Rav Gadola, who was situated on one end, turned to his friend and gave him a little jab, right near his rib cage. The other fellow looked up, perturbed. "What do you want?" Rav Gadola let out a slow smile. "Pass it on…" "Pass it on?" the fellow questioned. "Yeah, go ahead…!"



Not probing any further, he went along and gave the fellow closest to him a slight nudge and passed along the same message. This went on until everyone awoke and looked to Rav Gadola. "Rebbe," they all said even without speaking a word, their facing calling with curiosity, "what do you want?"

"In some time, we'll all be out of here. We'll be back at the Gerrer yeshiva, dining at a large tisch, basking in all the singing and delights we can imagine. We'll be pushing and shoving and squished like sardines. I don't want you to forget what it feels like, so I gave you all a little push, a little reminder."

They all let out a hearty smile and warming laugh, heading back to sleep, their spirits lifted.

When going through difficult times, the likes of Tisha B'av, a pandemic or both, one way to make it through is with an uplifted spirit. A positivity which looks towards great times ahead and carries with it unrelenting optimism and belief that it is right around the corner.

"The Torah demands that a person feel the pain of another so deeply that it becomes his own. True rachamim is not pity from a distance — it is shared humanity." ~ Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz.

Pearls of Wisdom



In a *Shiur* on the *Halachos* of *Shabbos*, **Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul, *zt"l***, mentioned the *Halachah* that if a house is burning down, *R"L*, one may not be *Mechalel Shabbos* to save it. Someone in the audience couldn't believe this and said, "What? We should just sit and watch the house burn down?"

The *Rav* replied, "I didn't say you should sit and watch. You shouldn't just sit and watch. You should sing and dance for the opportunity to fulfil the *Mitzvah* of loving *Hashem— B'Chol Me'odecha*, with all of your money!"

The Torah Any Times Newsletter

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein - Don't Let Go

One day in early June of 2013, my phone rang. It was a woman requesting permission to forward my number to a mother of a three-and-a-half-year-old girl who was not doing well. From stomach aches to blood tests to a diagnosis of leukemia. Penina, a beautiful young girl, was dying.

The mother's call to me was a crying plea for support, and I unhesitatingly offered to meet with her and her daughter. When they walked in together, my eyes fell upon Penina, a youthful,

spirited Jewish girl with beautiful hair, big eyes and a squeaky voice. I sunk in my chair.

"Hi Rabbi Wallerstein!" came her voice. I trembled as I replied with my own hello. I am not a doctor, nor a therapist, and so I knew the reason for their visit. Chizuk, encouragement. But I wanted to give Penina and her mother something more than words. Thinking for a moment, it came to me.



Some time before, **Rav Meshulam Feish Lowy**, fondly known as the **Tosher Rebbe**, sent me a few gebentched' hei's, as they are called. These are silver pieces in the shape of the letter Hei, representative of the name of Hashem, which the Rebbe would give to people as a token of blessing. They can be attached to a necklace or the like and are intended to be a symbol and sign of heavenly blessing and goodness for the recipient.

Asking for a minute, I went upstairs and returned with one of these hei's and stuck out my hand. "Paulette," as I called the young girl, "do you see this hei?" She nodded. "Attach this to your necklace, and for the rest of your life, never take it off." "What's the hei for?" she curiously asked, a gentleness stroking her voice. "It represents Hashem. He will protect you and always be with you in your life and in your heart."

Five weeks later, Erev Tisha B'av, I received another call. "Rabbi Wallerstein…" I noticed whose voice it was. Penina's mother. "I have to tell you what happened."

"Penina, in undergoing a series of tests, needed to have a port placed in her shoulder for the chemo to be put in. But before doing so, they

needed to place her under anaesthetic. When the nurse told Penina that she would need her to remove the necklace for the purposes of the operation, Penina, who you know as a sweet, quiet-minded girl, began to scream. I had rarely seen her this way before. 'You can't take my necklace off!' she refused. 'Why not?' asked the nurse. 'Because Rabbi Wallerstein gave me this hei and I am never going to take it off.' 'We would like to remove it just for the operation and then we will put it right back on." But Penina would not see to it. "No one is allowed to touch it.'

"Rabbi," explained the mother, "Penina was so adamant about having it removed, because every time she felt pain from the chemo, she would hold the hei and say, 'Hashem, take away my pain.'"

In life, we need to feel the same way. Always hold on to Hashem and say, "Hashem, take away my pain."

But the story is not over.

The nurse realized that she wouldn't be able to remove the hei from Penina. There was no choice but to proceed forward with the operation with it on.

The anesthesiologist put her out, and only afterwards removed the hei, and placed it in a little plastic bag next to Penina's head. After finishing the operation, the hei was replaced on her neck, just as it had been before. The doctor and nurses knew that the necklace belonged there, around her small neck, resting against her heart.

Waking up, the first move Penina made was to feel her hei. It was there.

"Rabbi Wallerstein," cried the mother to me, "I want to thank Hashem for giving me my daughter back."

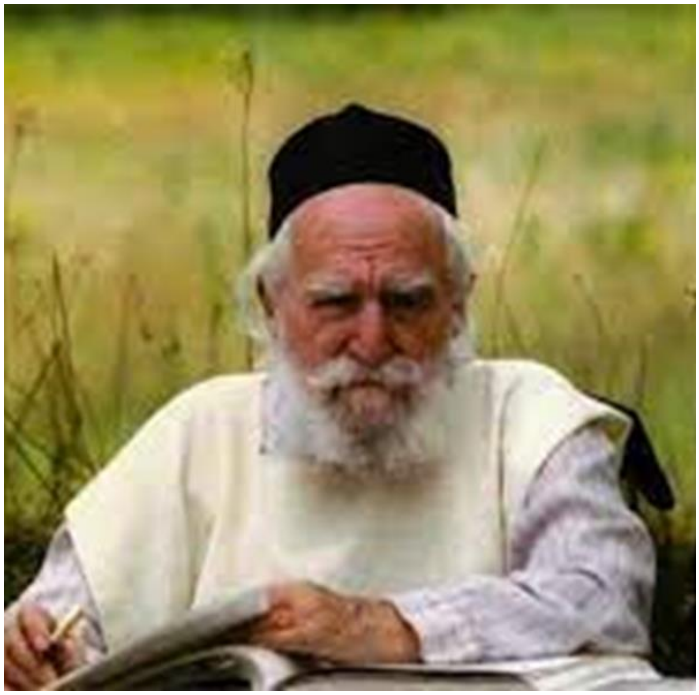
But she had one more piece of information to share with me. My heart began beating unnervingly, as if the moment of awaiting her next words was lasting for eternity.

"The tests came back, and there is not one cell of leukemia left in her body."

I stared speechless into the distance, a look of peaceful resonance overwhelming my face and sinking into my heart. I knew the truth, and this mother and Penina knew it too. Don't let go of that hei. Don't let go of Hashem. Ever.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR VA'ESCHANAN

The Question of Rav Moshe's Kavod or Lack Thereof



There was once a couple that was experiencing shalom bayis problems. Counseling and therapy sessions did not help and it was decided that a divorce was necessary. Inquiries were made and a date and time was set for the husband and wife to appear in Beis Din, however, the woman refused to attend. She was bitter. She felt she was terribly wronged in the process and insisted that she would not accept a get under any conditions.

The husband arranged for the get to be written in the Beis Din of **R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l**, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and afterward, R' Moshe appointed one of his talmidim to serve as a shaliach, a messenger, to deliver the get to the woman in the presence of two witness who were to accompany him.

The group set off for the woman's apartment, located in one of the more seedier sections of Manhattan, but when they arrived, she

refused to let them in and absolutely refused to accept the get. She yelled and screamed at them, but would not let them in. They had no choice but to come back to R' Moshe and report that their mission was unsuccessful.

R' Moshe was undaunted. In a flash, he grabbed his hat and coat and headed out the door, telling the messenger and witnesses to follow him. Together, they traveled back to the woman's apartment, navigated through some unwelcome aspects of the city, and traipsed up four flights of stairs as the building elevator was not in service. R' Moshe was not a young man and this trip was a bit arduous for him, but he never complained even once the entire time.

They knocked at the apartment door and a man opened it. It was her father. He saw the group of rabbis standing there in rabbinic garb and immediately let loose a barrage of insults, profanity and vitriolic words, in essence telling them to get out of here and his daughter was not going to listen to them.

R' Moshe just stood there and waited for the man to finish. When he finally did, the Gadol Hador gently explained that if he would allow them a few short minutes, they would be gone right away. It took some more convincing but eventually, the man allowed the group into the apartment.

The woman emerged from a side room and recognized R' Moshe. She listened to him calmly explain how tragic it would be for so many people involved if this situation would continue to linger, and how important it is for her to accept the get and move on in life. His words struck a chord, and it wasn't long before she willingly accepted the get.

R' Moshe led the group of men outside and they began to walk back to his home. One of the men could not contain his curiosity and asked, "Rebbi, please forgive me for asking, but why did the Rav have to come in person? He is a widely respected Rosh Yeshivah and the head of the Beis Din. He could have sent numerous people, an

unlimited amount of messengers until the job was done; yet he went himself and was made to suffer the indignity of insults, the strain of traveling and the effort of climbing so many flights of stairs. It is surely beneath his kavod to do these things."

R' Moshe stopped walking and looked at the man. "I don't understand your issue. Do you think that in these types of situations, I need to be concerned with my own kavod? What about kavod shamayim? What about the honor of Hashem Yisborach? If she were to not accept the get and later got married again, can you imagine the disrespect to kavod shamayim that would bring? Is there a greater level of indignity and insult than that?" ***(Torah Tavlin.)***

Sometimes, It's Not Really Just Luck



Photo of a B-17 warplane from the Second World War

This story is confirmed in Elmer Bendiner's book, "The Fall of Fortresses". Elmer Bendiner was a navigator in a B-17 during WWII. He tells the story of a World War II bombing run over Kassel, Germany, and the unexpected result of a direct hit on their gas tanks.

"Our B-17, the 'Tondelayo', was barraged by flak from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. That was not unusual, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit. Later, as I reflected on the miracle of a 20 millimetre shell piercing the fuel tank without setting off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was not that simple.

On the morning following the raid, Bohn had gone down to ask our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck.

The crew chief told Bohn that not just one shell but 11 had been found in the gas tanks. 11 unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had been parted for us.

A near-miracle, I thought. Even after 35 years, this awesome event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn. He was told that the shells had been sent to our armorers to be defused.

The armorers told him that our Intelligence Unit had picked them up. They could not say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer. Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were as clean as a whistle and just as harmless.

Empty? Not all of them! One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper. On it was a scrawl in Czech. The Intelligence people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually they found one to decipher the note. It set us marveling.

Translated, the note read: ***"This is all we can do for you now… Using Jewish slave labour is never a good idea."***

(Oneg Shabbos (London, U.K.)

"Don't watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going."

Rav Moshe and True Tzedakah



Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, was once on his way to an important meeting when someone approached him and asked for Tzedakah. Although he was in a hurry, Rav Moshe took out his wallet and handed the man some money.

Thankful for the donation, the Yid began talking to the Tzaddik for a number of minutes, while Rav Moshe listened patiently. Finally, the man finished, and Rav Moshe continued on his way.

One of the accompanying students then asked Rav Moshe why he used so much of his precious time to listen to the man, and asked, "Wouldn't it have been enough to simply just give him some money and left?"

Rav Moshe answered, "My talking to that man was far more important to him than the money I gave. The Mitzvah of Tzedakah also includes showing that you care and are interested in the recipient, and that you are not too busy to listen!"

(Torah U'Tefilah as compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg.)

Rav Shlomo Wolbe (Mussar)

"Every child is a world unto himself. Chinuch requires seeing the unique soul before you, not the child you wish he were. The educator must listen deeply, understand the child's inner world, and guide him according to his individual path."

What Motivates You? By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss

I want to share with my dear readers a sobering true story that warns us about one of the baser sides of the human psyche. There was a man who had a very hard time making a living. He decided to move to Jerusalem and opened a small grocery in the Old City of Yerushalyim. Business took off and by the sweat of his brow he eked out a living and raised, together with his wife, a beautiful family of seven children. All his life he worked very hard and saw his children and grandchildren flourish. To help support his growing family, he continued to work full-time until he was seventy years old.

After the passing of his wife, his strength began to ebb and he could no longer work. He spent his days going to shul, saying Tehillim, and listening to shiurim. But his golden years were marred by a powerful bitterness. His children and grandchildren, for whom he slaved all his life, barely spent any time with him. They were all wrapped-up in their own lives and hardly came to visit. They would pop in, give a sniff to see whether he was still alive, and disappear.



Finally, when he got so fed up with their disappointing behavior, he went to the great sage, **Rav Shmuel Salant, Zt"l**, to pour out his heart. Rav Salant listened carefully and told him the following instruction.

"Go to a blacksmith and buy an expensive, heavy safe. Bring it home and put it in a very noticeable place." When the man asked Rav Salant how this would help, the Rav said, "Just leave it to me." Mystified, he followed the Rav's instructions and waited to see what would happen.

The next time his first-born popped in for a quick visit, he noticed the safe right away. Curious, he asked "Totty, what's in the safe?" His father answered noncommittedly, "Oh, just some things I've saved over the years." His son told his siblings, "You know, our father has an expensive safe! I tried to move it and it was quite heavy. He must have saved up all of those years he was working."

Like wildfire, news traveled through the whole *mishpacha* and practically overnight, things started to change. He would get regular Sunday visits with the grandchildren in tow, his daughters in-law suddenly started offering to cook meals, his granddaughters came over to clean the house while his grandsons came to show him their report cards. For the next ten years, he enjoyed his *nachas* immensely.

One night, he peacefully passed away in his sleep. After the funeral, his children came to divide the estate. They immediately went to the safe and started looking for the key – which was nowhere to be found. Finally, after looking through his papers, they found a letter that said, "My Dear Children, The key to the safe is with Rav Shmuel Salant." Quickly, they went to the Rav who gave them the key with a smile upon his lips. Hurriedly, they returned back to the home and excitedly opened the safe. To their shock and dismay, they found it full of odds and ends with no value at all.

They got very angry. Their father duped them all of these years. They ran back to Rav Salant to complain about their father's behavior. Rav Salant smiled at them. "Don't be angry at your father. It was my idea. He bitterly complained to me that none of you were visiting him. I told him that you needed some incentive so I created an imaginary pot of gold and you took the bait, hook, line, and sinker. Don't be disappointed. Although it wasn't sincere, you still benefitted greatly from doing ten years of *kivud av v'eim*."

What a chilling story about what drives humanity. There is a grim saying: "Hakesef yaneh es hakol – Money is the answer to

everything." As our parents grow older, let's make sure that we honor them and spend time with them, not because of what they have to offer but out of a sense of *hakoros hatov*, lifelong gratitude to them, and in fulfillment of the Fifth Commandment to honor our father and our mother.

But, this is not only true in regards to *kivud av v'eim*. It pertains to friendships as well. They should not hinge on whether there is money or not. Nor, should the quality of a *shidduch* be based on one's latest tax return form.

In the merit of being sincere in our responsibilities, may Hashem bless us with long life, good health, and everything wonderful.

Time to Ask Questions



A young man came to **Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l**, with a long list of questions. Reb Chaim seemed a bit preoccupied but the visitor insisted in asking the questions, to which Reb Chaim responded, one by one.

Suddenly, Reb Chaim began tidying himself up and put on a recently pressed kapote and new hat, and asked the young man's indulgence. He had to go somewhere but he allowed the visitor to accompany him. The younger man did, peppering him with questions the entire way. They walked a few blocks until they reached a wedding hall. Upon entering, Reb Chaim embraced the groom with a warm hug and kiss, and apologized for the delay. Reb Chaim sat himself among the prestigious Rabbonim who graced the dais as they prepared the marriage documents.

The persistent questioner was almost oblivious to the scene and continued to ask more questions and eliciting responses. Reb Chaim tried to juggle the needs of the groom while trying to accommodate the visitor who had besieged him with problems.

The persistent questioner received the shock of his life when, as the music began, heralding the march to the Badekin, where the groom, flanked by his father and father-in-law, met the bride and covered her face with the veil.

The groom stood and immediately his future father-in-law took hold of his arm. The groom's father took hold of the other arm. Before he did so, the groom's father turned around and apologized to the stranger who he had been talking to for the last hour. He said that he would be unable to help him until after the ceremony.

Then, Rabbi Kanievsky nodded Mazel Tov to the hundreds of well-wishers and began the procession to his own son's wedding! (From R.M. Kamenetzky)



Parsha Thoughts by Mordechai Sapoznick

The פָּסוּק says, אֶעְבְּרָה אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הָהָר הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהַלְּבָנוֹן - ***Let me please go over and see the good land.*** Why did Moshe find it necessary to ask to be allowed to see the land of Eretz Yisroel? If his request to go into Eretz Yisroel was accepted, then he would surely be able to see the land?

The Kotzker Rebbe זצ"ל answers that Moshe was not asking Hashem to be able to physically see the land but Moshe wanted the ability to be able to see the kedusha of Eretz Yisroel. **[ספר טללי אורות]**

The Siddur Speaks

Many people would regularly visit with *Rebbetzin* Kanievsky, *z"l*, seeking her advice and guidance, and she was often asked about *Tefilos* that seemingly went unanswered.

People frequently said that although they *Daven* with seriousness and *Kavanah*, their *Tefilos* did not seem to bring about the desired results. The *Rebbetzin* would always answer this with a *Dvar Torah*.

She said, "We see in *Parashas Va'es'chanan* that Moshe *Rabbeinu* wanted so much to go to *Eretz Yisroel*. He *Davened* so many times, yet *Hashem* didn't allow him to enter *Eretz Yisroel*. We are taught, though, that had Moshe *Rabbeinu Davened* just once more for his heart's desire, *Hashem* would have acquiesced and Moshe would have been allowed to enter *Eretz Yisroel*.

This shows us that every single *Tefilah* counts! We just have no way of knowing which *Tefilah* will be answered, and when it will be answered."

She further said that when she asked her husband, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**, what she should answer to people who say that their *Tefilos* have not yet been answered, Rav Chaim responded, "If someone sees that he has *Davened* and was not answered, he should *Daven* again, as it says in *Tehilim* (27:14), קַוֵּה אֶל־יְהוָה חֲזַק וְיַאֲמֵץ לִבֶּךָ וְקַוֵּה אֶל־יְהוָה *"Hope in Hashem, strengthen yourself and He will give you courage, and hope to Hashem!"*

"Children learn not from speeches but from sincerity. When a parent's Yiddishkeit is lived with joy, consistency, and truth, the child absorbs it naturally. Chinuch is not an act but a way of being — the quiet transmission of values through the life one lives." ~ Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky.

Chizuk In Our Lives

This week's story was told over by the **Chazon Ish זצ"ל.**

There was a wealthy carpenter living in Yerusholayim called Avrohom. One night a thief broke into his house and stole a pouch of gold coins. The thief fled to Ein Gedi but on the way he became overheated, dehydrated and died. He was found by a young man called Ephraim who buried him and took the gold coins. A short while later, Ephraim got word that his father was ill and travelled to visit him. When he arrived he hid the coins in a hollow of a small tree in his father's back garden.

A few days later a storm uprooted the tree and blew it into Yissochor the neighbour's garden. Yissochor took the tree to market and sold it as lumber to none other than Avrohom the carpenter…Our story continues with Ephraim finding himself an apprentice job with none other than Avrohom the carpenter.

One day they were chatting about past experiences when Ephraim mentioned how he had bizarrely found this pouch of gold and hidden it in a tree only for it to be blown away in a storm. Avrohom was flabbergasted!



"That was my treasure!" he exclaimed, and immediately offered to reward Ephraim for helping him recover it. But Ephraim refused. So Avrohom's wife hid some of the coins in a loaf of bread which she gave to Ephraim who was going on a trip. At a border crossing, a soldier offered to buy the delicious-looking bread off Ephraim, who sold it to him happily for next to nothing. The soldier then proceeded to

Yerushalayim to visit his friend Avrohom with whom he decided to share his new loaf of bread!

Imagine their surprise when the gold coins tumbled out. By now it was clear that Hashem was driving this entire story and so when Ephraim returned from his trip the *shidduch* was *redt* for Avrohom's daughter…

The Chasam Sofer's Question to a Very Old Man



The **Chasam Sofer,** O"BM, once met a very old man and asked him the secret to his longevity. The great sage said, "Tell me, what exemplary act did you do that merited you these long years?"

The old man looked up and smiled. "Actually, I did nothing special. You see, I have a different theory about long life. I stuck to my theory, and it worked!"

"And what is that theory?" the great sage inquired.

The old man wrinkled his deeply lined face. "My friends, like myself, went through their share of misfortunes. However, they're not here any longer, but I am still alive."

"Why?" prodded the Chasam Sofer. "That was exactly my question. What is the secret of your longevity? Yes! We all have our challenges. But they didn't break you! What is the difference between you and your friends?"

"You see," answered the old man, "my friends asked 'Why?' I, however, did not."

The Chasam Sofer seemed puzzled, but the man continued his monologue. "Every time tragedy struck, my friends would ask the Almighty, why did this happen? How did I come to deserve this? They would plead and prod the Creator for answers that no mortal mind could understand. And you know what happened?"

The Chasam Sofer shook his head, careful not to interrupt the man's train of thought.

"Hashem said, 'Do you really want to understand? Come, I will show you.' And so, He took them to a place where all the mysteries of life are revealed, a place where the past and the future collide and today's actions are the answers to history's expostulations."

The man continued, "I, on the other, hand, was not so curious. And if I was, I did not turn to Hashem and ask, 'Why?' Rather, I accepted what happened." Then, the man's face began to glow. "And you know what? He never invited me upstairs to explain anything!" (*Story by* ***Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky****)*

Comment: Sometimes, "injustices" occur, and we demand some sort of explanation from Hashem. Let's be careful what we wish for - we just might get what we ask for. Hashem has a plan and purpose for every moment of our lives, including the moments of pain and struggle. Let's not rush the explanation. Rest assured that after 120 years – or with the coming of Mashiach – we will know.

"Bitachon does not mean that everything will turn out as we wish. It means the calm certainty that nothing happens by chance, and that Hashem's plan is perfect even when hidden. The heart that trusts does not demand outcomes; it rests in the knowledge that it is held by the One who knows all." ~ Chazon Ish.

Working on our Middos

There was once an older Bochur who lived with his elderly mother. This boy was looking for a Shidduch. However, he was looking for a girl that would agree to allow his mother to live with them after they got married, so that he could continue to care for her. His mother was part of the package. There weren't too many interested candidates, and some concerned relatives went to see Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, and asked him to get involved and tell this Bochur that he had unreasonable expectations.

However, Rav Shlomo Zalman defended this boy.



He said, "One doesn't throw a mother out," and when the relatives argued, he reiterated his position. "You don't throw out a mother."

Eventually, this Bochur found a wonderful girl and got engaged, and he went to visit Rav Shlomo Zalman to get a Brachah from him. Rav Shlomo Zalman wished him a Mazel Tov and told him, "You wanted a Kallah who is a Baalas Chesed, someone with a good, compassionate Neshamah, and Baruch Hashem, you found her. Her willingness to live with your mother is a very good thing. However, you should know that when it comes down to it, living with your mother isn't a good thing for your marriage. I'm asking you, now that you found the Baalas Chesed you were looking for, to look into making other good arrangements for your mother."

Rav Shlomo Zalman later explained that he couldn't tell this boy earlier, because he wasn't yet ready to hear it. Only now that he was engaged was he able to tell him!

The Smiles of the Gedolim



The family of **Maran Harav Chaim Kanievsky** tell over a story that happened with Rav Chaim on Erev Rosh Chodesh Tamuz in 5783.

Rav Chaim passed the refrigerator and noticed that there were many pictures of the gedolei yisroel hanging on the fridge including a picture of **Rav Shteinman, zt"l and Rav Elyashiv, zt"l**, each one with a broad smile across his face.

Rav Chaim said to the grandson that was accompanying him, "Behold, behold! This is exactly how Hakadosh Baruch Hu showed them to Adam Harishon, just like this as they are smiling". - Rav Chaim continued and explained what he meant.

It says in chazal that Hashem showed Adam Harishon each generation and its leaders , each generation and its zaddikim and so on.

It appears from the words of our sages (Avos of Rav Nosson Chapter 31) that Hashem showed them to Adam Harishon while they were smiling before Hashem. Why?

Because Adam Harishon saw the struggles and sufferings of all the generations. Hashem, therefore wanted to show him that even so, they will be smiling.

Despite everything, and amidst all the difficulties they suffer for the klal and with the klal, the Gedolei Yisroel will remain joyful and happy before Hashem.

The Rebbe Defends a Young Man's Shidduch By Rabbi Tuvia Bolton



A religious family from Hungary lived near 770 Eastern Parkway, [in the Crown Heights section of] Brooklyn which is the Rebbe's Synagogue-headquarters-Yeshiva. They decided to send their son to learn Torah in a Chabad yeshiva. The boy took to it like a fish in water and became a Chabad Chassid. His parents were happy that their son was happy until something happened.

Around his twentieth birthday suggestions for marriage began coming in and after a while he met a young lady that he really liked. Together they decided to write to the Rebbe to ask for his blessing to marry and, mazal tov, The Rebbe gave his blessing and everything was going wonderfully.

Until the young man told his parents and they began to ask questions about the girl and her family. As the details were revealed their faces became sour and their heads began wagging from side to side. They rejected the entire idea and gave all sorts of reasons for their decision.

But their son, being that he had become a firm follower of the Rebbe and had his blessing, and also because he could find nothing wrong with the girl, didn't accept their reasons and didn't want to break off the match. He wrote again to the Rebbe and told him of his predicament.

The Rebbe replied that according to the Torah one must give honor to his parents in all matters save two; matters of where to learn Torah and whom to marry.

So our hero informed his parents that he really loved and respected them and, as pleasantly as he could, told them that he had decided to go ahead with his plans because the Rebbe gave his blessing twice.

Whereupon they informed him that not only would they not attend the wedding but they were cutting him off forever and his mother swore that he wouldn't get away with this. And she meant it. The next day his mother and father showed up in the Rebbe's Synagogue where her son and a few hundred other young men were learning Torah, she walked angrily up to her son and gave him a stingingly loud slap in the face!

Seeing that things had gotten totally out of control, one of the other pupils in the yeshiva approached, and tried to reason with her. He told her that she and her husband certainly were aware that when they enrolled their son into this Yeshiva that he would become a Chassid of the Rebbe and would listen only to the Rebbe's advice. He suggested that if they had arguments or complaints they should take them to the Rebbe, who was a very reasonable and intelligent man, and talk it over with him.

The words hit home and the next evening after all the arrangements were made, they entered the Rebbe's office with fire in their eyes, ready for a 'showdown'! But just five minutes later they came out of the office smiling and beaming and announced to their son and his friends (about a hundred of them) who were waiting outside with great anticipation that the wedding was….ON!

The same student that had spoken to the mother the day before approached her again and asked the obvious question; what did the Rebbe do or say in such a short time that turned them completely around?!

She explained. "When we entered the Rebbe was very cordial. He apologized for the misunderstanding, but he explained that when our son first asked for his agreement to the marriage he didn't agree without first going up into the 'upper worlds' and checking the 'books'

to see if the marriage would work. And only when he saw there was no opposition 'there' did he give his blessing. He said he didn't expect we would react the way we did

But when he heard of our negative reaction he said he thought that perhaps he had missed one of the 'books' so he went 'up' again. But when he saw that, in fact, he had missed nothing he just repeated the blessing."

She looked at the young man and concluded. "If a holy Tzaddik like the Rebbe said that he went up into the heavens and looked at the books, then who are we to disagree?"

Leica and the Jews by George Gilbert



The Leica is the pioneer 35mm camera. It is a German product - precise, minimalist, and utterly efficient.

Behind its worldwide acceptance as a creative tool was a family-owned, socially oriented firm that, during the Nazi era, acted with uncommon grace, generosity and modesty. E. Leitz Inc., designer and manufacturer of Germany 's most famous photographic product, saved its Jews.

And Ernst Leitz II, the steely-eyed Protestant patriarch who headed the closely held firm as the Holocaust loomed across Europe, acted in such a way as to earn the title, "the photography industry's Schindler."

As soon as Adolf Hitler was named chancellor of Germany in 1933, Ernst Leitz II began receiving frantic calls from Jewish associates, asking for his help in getting them and their families out of the

country. As Christians, Leitz and his family were immune to Nazi Germany's Nuremberg laws, which restricted the movement of Jews and limited their professional activities.

To help his Jewish workers and colleagues, Leitz quietly established what has become known among historians of the Holocaust as "the Leica Freedom Train," a covert means of allowing Jews to leave Germany in the guise of Leitz employees being assigned overseas.

Employees, retailers, family members, even friends of family members were "assigned" to Leitz sales offices in France, Britain, Hong Kong and the United States, Leitz's activities intensified after the Kristallnacht of November 1938, during which synagogues and Jewish shops were burned across Germany.

Before long, German "employees" were disembarking from the ocean liner Bremen at a New York pier and making their way to the Manhattan office of Leitz Inc., where executives quickly found them jobs in the photographic industry.

Each new arrival had around his or her neck the symbol of freedom - a new Leica camera.

The refugees were paid a stipend until they could find work. Out of this migration came designers, repair technicians, salespeople, marketers and writers for the photographic press.

Keeping the story quiet The "Leica Freedom Train" was at its height in 1938 and early 1939,delivering groups of refugees to New York every few weeks. Then, with the invasion of Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, Germany closed its borders.

By that time, hundreds of endangered Jews had escaped to America, thanks to the Leitzes' efforts. How did Ernst Leitz II and his staff get away with it?

Leitz, Inc. was an internationally recognized brand that reflected credit on the newly resurgent Reich. The company produced cameras, range-finders and other optical systems for the German

military. Also, the Nazi government desperately needed hard currency from abroad, and Leitz's single biggest market for optical goods was the United States.

Even so, members of the Leitz family and firm suffered for their good works. A top executive, Alfred Turk, was jailed for working to help Jews and freed only after the payment of a large bribe.

Leitz's daughter, Elsie Kuhn-Leitz, was imprisoned by the Gestapo after she was caught at the border, helping Jewish women cross into Switzerland . She eventually was freed but endured rough treatment in the course of questioning. She also fell under suspicion when she attempted to improve the living conditions of 700 to 800 Ukrainian slave laborers, all of them women, who had been assigned to work in the plant during the 1940s.

After the war, Kuhn-Leitz received numerous honors for her humanitarian efforts, among them the Officer d'honneur des Palms Academic from France in 1965 and the Aristide Briand Medal from the European Academy in the 1970s.

Why has no one told this story until now? According to the late Norman Lipton, a freelance writer and editor, the Leitz family wanted no publicity for its heroic efforts. Only after the last member of the Leitz family was dead did the "Leica Freedom Train" finally come to light.

"Every Jew has a unique portion in Torah, a spark of Divine wisdom that only he can reveal. When a person learns Torah with sincerity, he uncovers his own inner light, and that light becomes part of the eternal Torah of Klal Yisrael." ~ Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin.

Every Moment is Precious From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

In his youth, **Rabbi Shalom of Belz** [1779 - 27 Elul 1855] had the habit of smoking a pipe excessively. In particular, he would smoke while learning in the beit hamidrash.

One day, he witnessed something that led him to kick the habit.



While in the midst of his studies, he saw someone in the beit hamidrash preparing to smoke a pipe. The man cleaned the bowl of his pipe, then filled it carefully with tobacco.

After all his preparations, he finally lit up and began to smoke. During the time that it took the man to make his preparations, Rabbi Shalom managed to learn a full page of Talmud!

At that moment, the Belzer put down his own pipe and said, "If this object is capable of causing a person to lose out on learning a page of Talmud, it is not going to enter my mouth ever again!"

And from that day on, he never smoked again.

"Tefillah is not a ritual but a relationship. Hashem desires our words, our hearts, our presence. When a person speaks to Hashem with simplicity and truth, even a few words can open the gates of heaven." ~ Rav Shimshon Pincus.

Horav Boruch Ber Leibowitz זצ"ל



Horav Boruch Ber Leibowitz זצ"ל was once travelling by horse and wagon. Someone on the wagon started to ask Rav Boruch Ber a question of apikurses.



As soon as Rav Boruch Ber heard the question, he asked the driver to stop the wagon, and he quickly got off so that he would not be near a rasha.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein zt"l - My Biggest Life Lesson

My grandparents, after escaping from Holland towards the end of the Holocaust, moved to New York. At that time, where they lived, there were many poor families along with homeless Jews who would sleep on the street benches.

As a young boy visiting my grandparents for Shabbos, I couldn't eat in the dining room with my grandparents and all the guests they always had over. The room reeked with the smell of the street and sewage. This was the scene I saw every single week, all throughout my childhood years, and also how my father was brought up.

Now let me tell you the effect this had on my father and our family.

One day, my father returned home with a new friend. But I was shocked. Mr. Goldstein, as he went on to introduce himself, not only

looked dirty, but smelled filthy. There he stood, right in our own home. I had seen these types of guests in my grandparents' home, and now it was becoming a regular occurrence in my parents' home.

For years, Mr. Goldstein came to our house for Shabbos, becoming almost family to us all. If not for my father having been brought up by my grandparents and seen the same welcoming generosity and indiscriminate hospitality, I don't think Mr. Goldstein would have become as close as he did to our family. It was thanks to my father's upbringing that he in turn acted towards strangers with such love and care.

One day, as my mother cleaned through the house, including Mr. Goldstein's guest room, she noticed the Wall Street Journal open. She picked it up nonchalantly, only to do a double take. A long list of stocks were circled. As soon as my mother saw this, it hit her. She didn't think this was my father's doing, as he'd never done so before. Her next hunch was Mr. Goldstein. Could it be that, all along, he really wasn't poor?



Sure enough, that was it. Mr. Goldstein wasn't poor as he made out to be.

When my father learned of this and began realizing how Mr. Goldstein had misrepresented himself, absolutely nothing changed. My family was shocked. "Why not tell him off? He's not poor, and for years, he scammed us!"

"Look," said my father, "he may not be poor financially, but one thing we know, he is a poor man at mind. He lives like a poor man and acts that way too. He's not healthy and his mindset doesn't allow him to live according to his means. So, for all intents and purposes, he is poor and needs our help. And we'll continue to do so."

A while later, on one Friday afternoon, my father drove over to pick him up and bring him to our home for Shabbos. But there was no sight of him. He never came downstairs. As it turned out, he had passed away.

And then we learned of the full story.

In their Sunday obituary, The New York Times described this Mr. Goldstein as having three-and-a-half million dollar in stock certificates. As I read this, I was certain that this would be it. My father would feel defeated. Mr. Goldstein was not only financially secure; he was a multi-millionaire. And boy, had he fooled us!

My father wasn't bothered at all. "He's in Gan Eden," my father said. "What we did was right, and I don't regret it one iota." That was who my father was.

But that wasn't it.

My teaching career began at a school called *Torah V'Emunah* in the Bronx. In those days, the houses and streets were run down, and the lifestyle lived by the tenants was substandard compared to neighbouring cities. I loved my middle-school boys I taught, and decided to invite them one Shabbos to my parents' home in Monsey, New York.

We had a great Shabbos together. Between the *cholent* and camaraderie and laughing and learning, it was spectacular from start to finish. But we didn't call it quits as soon as Shabbos ended. We headed off to the bowling alley.

A couple hours later, we returned, and my mother pulled me aside. "I need to talk to you, Zechariah," she said, unnerved. "When you were out bowling, I walked by the room the boys have been staying in and noticed some clothing sprawled out all over the place. I figured that I'd do them a favour and organize it for them, so that when they'd return, they'd have all their clothes and belongings nicely arranged and ready to be taken home. But as I glanced down,

I noticed that stashed into their suitcases was all my jewellery and silverware."

And then it hit me. When we had gone to daven earlier that day, one of the boys had said that he wasn't feeling well. The truth was otherwise.

Wondering what to do, I headed to my father. "Do not say a word to them," he stated firmly. "Why not? They stole Mom's jewelry and your silver. Why would I just let this go?" "Zechariah," he continued, "we took all the jewelry and silver back. When they open their suitcases, they'll realize that we knew. There's no reason to say anything to them."

But my father wasn't done with this. "Invite them again for Shabbos," he said. "Dad, what are you talking about?" I shot back. "Next time, we'll hide everything," he said.

Where did my father's attitude and perspective come from? From his own parents. He had lived at his parents' home, which was filled with *chesed*. He had seen the way his own parents accorded respect to poor strangers and looked at them with compassion. And that same quality came through him. It was *chinuch* at its finest.

Chinuch is not telling your children what to do. It's showing your children what to do.

The Power of Bitachon

The concept of bitachon (that Hashem will provide for all the needs of one who truly trusts and relies on Him) is not dependent on merit, for even if he is a person who does not act properly, since he strengthened his bitachon in Hashem, the power of bitachon protects him, and Hashem will act kindly towards him.~ Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, Sefer Shem Olam 2:8

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein zt"l - Always a Smile



Chaim was an eighty-year-old man whose wife had recently passed away and left him with no children or grandchildren. Aside from this, he wasn't well-to-do, and he was riddled with several illnesses. Everyone would have expected him to look tired and worn out, but it was nothing of the sort. He always had a smile.

One day he was approached by a fellow in *shul*, wondering what his secret was. "I don't get it," the fellow said. "You don't have children, you don't have money, you are often sick, and yet you always smiling. How can you do that?"

"Let me tell you," he said. "There was once a man who was looking for an apartment. After searching high and low for the one that would fit his liking, he came across one that was perfect. It was exactly what he was looking for. The problem was, knew the man, that the price would certainly break his wallet. There was no way it would be within his budget to afford such a monthly rent.

Until he was told the price. Free. "Excuse me? I don't understand." "Until the day you die, you don't need to pay me one penny," said the owner." When asked why, all the owner would respond was, "Just because." The man couldn't believe it. It was the happiest day of his life.

"Now," said Chaim," looking at the man standing across him in *shul*. "If you were that man who was just offered free rent for the rest of his life, wouldn't you feel happy and smile?" "Of course I would! I've never heard of such a thing!"

"I'm living in this world rent free. Hashem gives me water, sunshine and food and He never asks me to send him a check. He asks that I

thank Him and make blessings, acknowledging Him, but that's it. Why shouldn't I be smiling? Everyone should!"

This man knew the meaning of *hakaras hatov*. And he lived it, all in his smile.

Polio, Rockland County, and Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l by Rabbi Yair Hoffman



The resurgence of one case of polio in Ramapo, reminds us all of Rav Aharon Kotler's remarkable example regarding vaccinations.

Those who grew up in the nineteen fifties remember it well. The fear throughout the country was palpable. True, polio epidemics had been in the United States since 1894, but the epidemic was never so virulent. In 1952, there were 57,879 cases. In that year there were also 3145 deaths from that disease, rachmana litzlan.

And then on March 22, 1953, at 10:45 PM, Dr. Jonas Salk, a Jewish researcher from Brooklyn, announced that tremendous progress was being made. He said that clinical trials were optimistic but that there was still no vaccine available. Finally, on April 12th, 1955, Salk announced that a safe and effective vaccine was now available. The entire country let out a collective sigh of relief and Dr. Salk became a national hero.

Soon, the U.S. government went into action in regard to the Salk vaccine. On August 12th, The Poliomyelitis Vaccination Assistance

Act of 1955 was passed. This established a temporary federal aid program that would help each state carry out mass inoculations with the Salk vaccine. On February 15, 1956 more funding was made available and the free vaccines were also made available to more people.

New Jersey's then governor, the Honourable Robert Mayner, took New Jersey's allocation and distributed the vaccine at no charge to as many New Jersey residents as he could.

One institution that received the vaccines was Beth Midrash Gavoha of Lakewood – then located at 617 7th Street at the corner of Forest Avenue. There were about 80 bochurim in the Yeshiva and a fledgling Kollel that numbered about one dozen.



A nurse was dispatched to the Yeshiva to administer the vaccines, paid for by the state of New Jersey. At the time, there were both questions and dissent. "Is it safe?" "Should we take this injection?" There were a number of people that were not supportive of the vaccine. But soon enough, the dissent was rapidly dispelled.

One of the very first people to get the vaccine, was none other than BMG's own Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Aharon zt"l himself.

"I remember being right outside his office at the time," recalled Rav Yaakov Schnaidman, the current Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Beis Moshe in Scranton. "There were a few other bochurim there. Rav Aharon rolled up his sleeve and received the injection. After that, there was just no more dissent."

Rav Aharon's office was an outside porch that was covered, and glass panes were put up around so everyone could see inside. His office door was always open. Aside from the Bais Medrash there was a room outside and Rav Aharon's office was adjacent to it.

Rav Yechiel Perr, Shlita, added, "Rav Aharon [zt"l], was very meticulous in listening to doctors. If a doctor instructed him to take his medication every four hours – he would look at his watch and take it every four hours – on the dot."

In the 1950's there were approximately 12,000 deaths from Polio and almost a quarter million Polio cases. Taking into account the population of the United States at the time this means that about 1 in 600 people were stricken by it. In the 1960's, on account of the polio vaccines, In the 1960's there were less than 2500 cases, and in the entire 1970's there were only 171 total cases. This was on account of the vaccinations. In the 1980's there were only 100 cases. In the 1990's there were 59 cases and in the 2000's there only two cases.

"The Polio vaccines were essential in virtually eliminating this disease from the country," remarks Breindy Koschitzki a Nurse Practioner who specializes in Internal Medicine. "Nowadays, his vaccine is the only one in use in this country."

Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l's initiative had, Boruch Hashem, set the tone that was necessary to ensure compliance with the vaccination program that saved so many lives.

"The greatest kiddush Hashem is when a Jew's honesty is so natural, so unquestioned, that people trust him without hesitation. Torah must shape a person until truth becomes his instinct." ~ Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky.

30 Days Left By R' Yaakov Mizrahi

Rabbi Yechiel Spero brings a story:

Rav Shach Zt'l, was the Gadol Hador and Rosh Yeshiva of Ponevezh Yeshiva. The Mashgiach at the time was **Rabbi Chaim Friedlander Zt'l,** one of the biggest *baaleh mussar* of the time. Towards the end of Reb Chaim's life, when he was very ill, the doctors gave him some bad news. After hearing what the doctor said, he went to the great Rosh Yeshiva to get some advice from the Gadol Hador.



He went to Rav Shach's house and sat down in the waiting room. There was a bachur already waiting in front of him. There was a yeshiva faculty meeting in progress. The bachur said to Reb Chaim you should be inside and barged open the door to allow Reb Chaim to enter straight away.

All present at the meeting turn around and see a fragile Reb Chaim slowly making his way into the room. They all stand up for the great Rabbi. He made his way to the other end of the room, where Rav Shach was standing.

What should have taken maybe a few seconds to get there, took him a considerably long time due to his infirmity. Everyone present were tearful at this very emotional scene.

Reb Chaim whispers something into Rav Shach's ear, and Rav Shach whispers something back to Reb Chaim. Everyone is confused and wondering as to what is going on and what was said.

The next day, the bachur went to one of the *Hanhalo* and asked him to please explain exactly what transpired. He said, "I will tell you on

condition that you don't tell anybody for the next 30 days." The bachur agreed.

He said, "Reb Chaim just returned from a doctor's visit, and the doctor said that in his medical experience, Reb Chaim doesn't have any more than 30 days to live. So, he wanted to ask Rav Shach what a person should work on, who has only 30 days to live. That was his question to The Gadol Hador.

What should I spend doing with my time left for the next 30 days? Should I be spending the time with my wife and family? Time with my Talmidim? Time learning Torah? Time writing my sefarim? Time doing mitzvas and *chassadim tovim*?

Rav Shach whispered back into Reb Chaim's ear one word --**Middos**! – character traits!" [Note: we are talking about one of the greatest baalei mussar who spent decades already working on his middos! And Rav Shach said **עם כל זה** if you want to work on something, continue to work on your beautiful sterling middos.]

That is who we are. ***We are our middos***. As important as learning Torah and doing mitzvas are, we should never belittle the importance of continually working on our character traits all our life.



A Guaranteed Win By R' Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro

I was once asked to translate the word **מוותר.** The best definition of the word **מוותר** is to be **מוותר!**

How exactly do you want to translate it? To let bygones be bygones? To forgive and forget? To move on? To waive, renounce, relinquish, concede, forgo, cede, surrender?



They are all very good definitions.

Rav Shach Zt'l at over the age of 100 once said, ***"I never met somebody who was mevater that didn't win. And I never met somebody that wasn't mevater who didn't lose."***

If you are mevater, you are a winner. That's what it means, getting along, going back to basics. Leaning the art of *vitur*, learning the art of being a *pikeach*.

There is so much at stake, but the good news is, that it is so within our grasp to recalibrate and go back to basics.

Let's do it together. It doesn't take that much effort. We all have it within our power. Letting go is an automatic win!

"The essence of love is giving. One does not give to those he loves; rather, one loves those to whom he gives. Giving creates connection, and connection creates love." ~ Rav Dessler (Michtav Me'Eliyahu).

You Still Have Time By R' David Ashear



The Vilna Gaon Zt'l writes that after a person leaves this world, when they are shown what could have accomplished and they realise now that they no longer have the ability to do things, and they can no longer chose between right and wrong, the regret that a person will have at that time will be so strong, that even if a millionth of that type of pain would have existed while he was alive, he would have died right away!

The regret for what we could have accomplished is going to be so intense. But it doesn't have to be that way. We know in advance that there is going to be a day of reckoning. We know how much potential Hashem gave us.

If someone would look into Shamayim and see at the time of his sin how much damage he was doing to his neshama, there is no way we would ever sin. It's not worth it.

If we would see the value of a mitzva, we would never stop chasing in doing them. If we realised how much potential we had and wouldn't put ourselves down, we would realise that we have a piece of Hashem inside of us.

You still have time to improve, don't wait until it's too late.

"Rabbi Chanina says, anyone who prays long enough doesn't go away empty-handed!" ~ Talmud – Berachos 32b

Who cares?

My good chaver Yoseph Yitzchok Coleman recently went to visit his grandmother Mrs B. Schwinger [wife of Modchai A'H] in the Beenstock Home. On his way out, he smiled at another lady called Mrs. Esther Steinberg – wife of Baruch A'H and daughter of Saul Rosenberg A'H, both stalwarts of Manchester Yeshivah.

Mrs Steinberg asked her friend to call YY back. She asked him why he smiled at her. Does he know her?

He replied that he didn't know her, but that's what he does – a friendly smile to all. She told him that she really appreciates it, and it means a lot to her.

That Friday night, her son Philip just so happened to sit next to me in shul. I told him what happened. He said to me, "I'm not surprised. As a young girl his mother was known to always smile and greet people." [She is 97 years old Kn'h]

Rabbi Shais Taub told over a very powerful and poignant story. I have decided not to include this in the '***Torah Treats***' due to the sensitive subject matter. However, I will repeat one thing that he said –

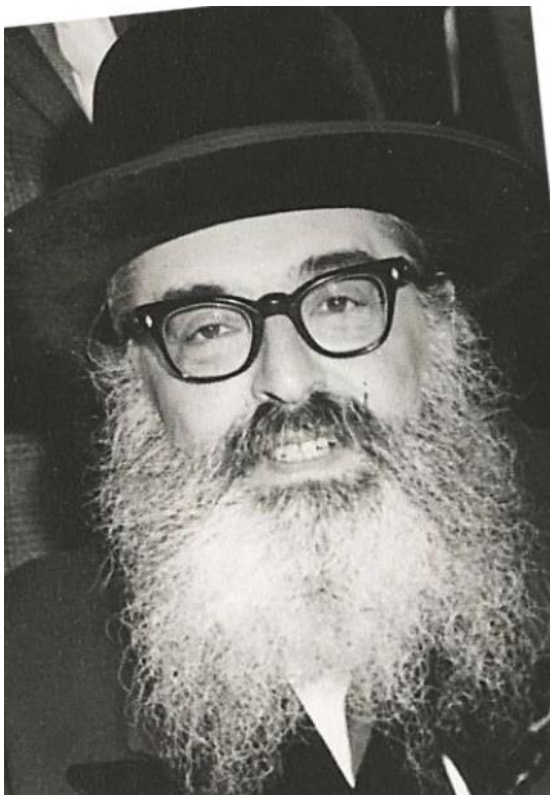
'Do not underestimate the fact that you could be that person for somebody else. You can be the one who cares. You can be the one who reaches out to somebody else.

To the world you may be one person, but to one person- you may be the world!'

"A Jew must know that Torah is not an addition to life, nor a decoration to life — it is life. Everything else is only meaningful to the extent that it supports Torah." ~ Rav Shach.

Etz Hachaim -Saved by Mommy - Rabbi CT Blau

Bizchus NoShim Tzidkonios



Rav Hutner זצ"ל said over that what saved him from joining the maskilim is one act that his mother did . The day before he was about to join the maskilim as a young bochur, he came home and he saw his mother dressed in Shabbos clothing.

"I asked my mother why she was dressed this way for what occasion? She told me that I had told her that I had just finished a certain **מס'** and she was so excited that she wanted to celebrate with a **סיום** and therefore she put on her most special clothing.

Rav Hutner said that from that moment he changed his mind that he would never hurt his mother and join the maskilim if this is how much his Yiddishkeit meant to her.

She never said a word to him, but she saw it all and the world got a Rav Hutner who lit up the world with his Torah.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz (Sichos Mussar)

"The warning not to forget the day of standing at Sinai is not a command to remember an event but to preserve an experience. Sinai was the moment when every Jew felt absolute clarity of truth. The task of life is to keep that clarity alive even when the world becomes clouded."

Etz Hachaim - Rabbi CT Blau

The Major Role of a Yiddishe Mama



The mother of harav Yosef Stern, זצוק״ל (the grandfather of Harav Moshe Aharon זצ״ל and Harav Yosef Stern זצ״ל), once told Harav Yosef's wife that when Harav Yosef was seven years old, someone taught him how to play cards. When his mother found out about it, it was a cause of great concern for her. "*Which friends will my child be playing cards with? It may,* **ח״ו** *, cause him to go away from the* **דרך ה׳** !"

She was a learned woman, and she told her son, "Yosse'la, if you want to play cards, play with me. I am willing to play cards with you on one condition: After every game of cards, we will learn a **פרק** of **נ״ך** together." Through this deal, they completed the entire **נביאים וכתובים** after their card games…

We, as parents, are terribly busy. Still, if we do not give up time for our children now, **ח״ו** we can pay for it in the future. We must be careful not to give up on the education of our children, as giving them time now can spare us heartache in later years. The opposite is also true. If we give our children our time, we will **בעזרת ה׳** reap the fruits of our labour for generations. Many **גדולי ישראל** became what they became due to the diligence of their parents, and especially, their mothers. The *posuk* says, **ואל תתוש תורת אמיך** . Although it is obviously true that fathers play a major role in **חינוך** , mothers must know that the education that they give over will play a major part in the **חינוך** of her children (especially because they tend to spend more time with their children than fathers do).

Etz Hachaim - Rabbi CT Blau - A Big Talmid Chochom



The Vilna Gaon had a brother Rav Avrohom who lived in a town near Vilna. After Rav Avrohom's children got married they moved to Vilna. As Rav Avrohom and his Rebbetzin got older, naturally, they needed their children' s help more often. Their children tried to help as much as they could, but it was hard as there were no taxis or easy way of transportation. Their children begged them to please come to live with them in Vilna.

Their father was almost convinced, but their mother would not agree to move. They asked, "Why?" and she finally agreed to reveal her reason. She explained as follows, "When I was **זוכה** to get married to Tatty, my father was a rich man, and he bought us a big nice house, and he also gave us money for all our expenses to live every month.

The years went by, and the family got bigger, and my father wasn't able to support us anymore. Tatty was learning Gemara all day. What should we do? And I thought to myself, 'What can I do so that Tatty can sit and learn **תורה** ?'

And then I thought of a great idea, 'We have this big, nice house, we ca n buy a small house and sell our big house. I don't need such a big house, and with the money, Tatty can sit and learn Torah.'

Tatty asked me, 'Are you sure you are ready to lose the house that you got from your father?' And I answered, 'I'm not losing anything, I am making the best business deal of my life, because, I'd rather a husband who is a big **תלמיד חכם** , and a small house, than a big house and a husband who is a small **תלמיד חכם**.

Sure enough, we sold the house, and put the money aside, and Tatty sat and learned, day and night, until he became one of the biggest **תלמדי חכמים** of the generation."

Their mother continued to explain, "We are at the age that we don't have appetite, we eat because we need fuel. Sleep. We get up every hour. We don't live **עולם הזה** anymore. But every morning, I go to shul, and on my way home, I don't go straight to our house. I take a detour and I go passed the street where the big house that we once owned is, and I stand in front of that house and tears of joy come to my eyes. And I look up to **שמים** and I say, **רבונו של עולם** - Thank You for giving me the courage and the brains to give up this house so that Tatty can sit and learn Torah. Because I wanted that I should have a husband a big **תלמיד חכם**, and a small house, rather than a big house and a husband who is a small **תלמיד חכם**.'

So dear children, this house is what gives me the chizuk and the **כח** to go on." "You want me to leave this town?!"



R' Elazar Simcha Wasserman zt"l (brought in Kovetz Hearos) writes: **וירד הגבל ומחה על כתף ים כנרת קדמה** - There are two seas in Eretz Yisroel. One is the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) and the other is Yam Hamelech (Dead Sea).

The Dead Sea is a 'Mekabel' it only takes from other bodies of water but does not give of its own to others. That is why it is very salty and 'Dead'.

The Kinneret does not only accept other waters but also gives of its own to others and that is why it is considered alive. The lesson to be learned is that a giver is always alive!"

Rabbi Eliyahu Maksumov - The Optimist



American President Ronald Reagan was known to be an optimist. In one of his speeches prior to his presidency, he related the following.

An experiment was once conducted wherein two boys were placed under scrutiny, one of them being described as joyful, playful and positive and the other negative and down.

A variety of toys were placed in one room, for the boy who generally had a dispirited attitude to look at and play with. But he saw only problems with each of the toys. "This one is too blue, this one is too big." Each toy was more problematic and faultier than the previous.

The one who kept to a positive and optimistic attitude was placed in a room which smelled of a donkey's live-in stall. Reeking of manure, no one anticipated that the boy, despite his jovial attitude, would be able to tolerate the discomfort. And yet, there he was, joyful and playful, enjoying the moment.



The observers were shocked. Inquiring of the boys how he could remain so upbeat, the boy told them why. "I knew that if I was placed in this stall with donkey manure, there must be a donkey awaiting me to play with!"

Our attitude is a choice. It's not something that chooses us, but something we choose. If you want to have a happy life, go create it. You'll find that happiness surrounds you wherever you go.

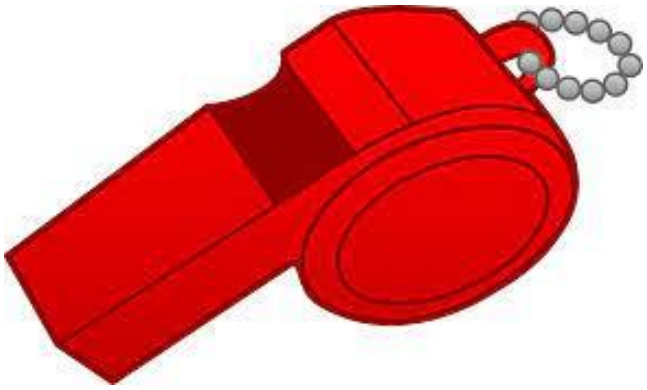
Chizuk In Our Lives

A mother took her sick son to a hospital to see a *frum*, world-renowned specialist who could treat him. Whilst she was speaking to the doctor, she realised something strange. Every time another doctor or nurse walked into the room, the doctor would put his hand into his jacket pocket. She quizzed him about it, but he said, 'it's nothing, don't worry about it'.

After noticing this unusual behaviour a few more times, she pressed him on it. He finally relented and said, 'let me explain'.

'I graduated top of my class in medical school. I landed a job in a prestigious hospital and was on top of the world, my ego sky-high.

One day a baby was rushed into the emergency room with a weird, high-pitched wheezing, and I was about to perform a complicated, risky procedure to try and save his life. As I was about to start, a nurse came rushing over and said, 'Doctor, wait a minute'!



I was irritated and looked at her with disdain, asking her what she wanted. She stuck her fingers into the baby's mouth and pulled out a small toy whistle. The boy started breathing normally again and my ego plummeted down to earth.

I now keep that whistle in my pocket, and each time I feel myself becoming arrogant, I stick my hand into my pocket and touch that whistle, to remember that 'ה is the true healer, and I am only His messenger'.

"Moshe's prayers opened gates that every Jew can walk through."
~ Noam Elimelech.

Rabbi Shloime Zalman Hoff שליט״א

וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע אֶל־הַחֻקִּים וְאֶל־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם And now, Yisrael, hearken to the statutes and to the judgments which I teach you to do..

The word וְעַתָּה – '***and now***', appears to be superfluous, what do we learn from its inclusion?

There are many times that when you ask somebody to do something, that they reply, "Not now, maybe later."

Moshe Rabeinu is telling the Yidden, that NOW is the time to listen and keep what I am telling you, not later!



The Sfas Emess says a very powerful vort.

It is well known that the word וָאֶתְחַנַּן has the numerical value of 515. Moshe Rabeinu davened to Hashem 515 times asking to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael. Parenthetically, the Baalei Mussar say that people sometimes complain, saying that, "I've davened so many times already, what will one more prayer do?"

Reb Yid, do you know what 515 prayers mean? If Chazal point out the exact number – 515 prayers, it means that Hashem takes note of every single tefilla! Every tefilla is precious to Him! There is an exact count of each and every one.

The Sfas Emess asks, where were Klal Yisrael? Moshe Rabeinu beseeched Hashem 515 times. Chazal tell us that had he davened

once more, he would have been permitted to enter Eretz Yisrael. That is why Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu, "Don't speak to me anymore regarding this matter." Therefore, Hashem warned him to stop praying for it.

But where was Klal Yisrael? They could of and should have davened for Moshe Rabbeinu?

The Medrash tells us, the Moshe did in fact hint to the Yidden to daven for him, but he didn't want to ask the explicitly, as Hashem had forbidden him from davening anymore.

So why didn't the Yidden daven for him?

Because the Yidden were thinking- "Why would our tefillos accomplish anything?" If Moshe rabbenu, the leading prophet, davened 515 times to no avail, how would our prayers help?

It was due to such thoughts that Moshe Rabbeinu didn't enter Eretz Yisrael. They assumed wrongly that their davening wouldn't help.

What do you know about Hashem's acceptance of prayers? Do you have any comprehension of their value?

Hashem is ready and waiting for every person and every tefilla! Yes, that means YOU!

Your G-D

This week, we read in the haftarah (Yeshayah 40:1), **נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמַר אֱלֹקֵיכֶם** - ***Console, console My nation, says Hashem.***

How exactly are we consoled? Has the Beis Hamikdash been re-built? Aren't we still in galus as we were before Tisha B'aV ?

The answer is **אֱלֹקֵיכֶם**, knowing that Hashem - our G-d who loves us was the one who brought the tzaros. People reprimand their own children because they care about them.

We must remember that this applies to our personal churbanos as well. Hashem only sends us challenges because it's ultimately for our best.

Tu B'Av

The Holy Rebbe Rav Yaakov Moshe of Komarna, Zatzal, said that he received as a tradition from his Rebbe and mentor the **Trisker Maggid** who in turn received this tradition from the **Meor Eynaim of Chernobyl**, who received this from the holy **Ba'al Shem Tov** who in turn got this direct from his Rebbe **Achiya HaShiloni:**

From the date of Tu B'Av until Rosh HaShana, as many times as a person blesses and wishes his friends a Kesiva V'chasima Tova that is the same number of Melietzim Tovim - read heavenly advocates or angelic defence lawyers, you get in Shomayim which will be Melamed zechus on his behalf - by giving him the benefit of the doubt and teaches his merits when Rosh HaShana arrives and all the world comes before Hashem in judgment like a flock of cattle being counted by their Shepherd.

So here goes! A Kesiva Ve'chasima Tova! **א כתיבה וחתימה טובה** pass it on and 'bashaf- nuch' a Malach - meileitz yosher far dir!!! Create a good advocate for yourself...

שיק ווייטער באשאף נאך א מלאך מיליץ יושר

Facebuker Shabbos Table Talk

This week we celebrated Tu B'Av, the 15th of Av, known as one of the happiest days of the Jewish calendar. The Gemara relates a number of things that took place on that day which were causes for celebration. Also, and more well-known, on the 15th of Av, girls in borrowed white dresses would dance in the vineyards and single men would come to choose a bride.



Far from a Jewish version of a pagan holiday, this ritual was very meaningful. Perhaps one message of making matches in a vineyard is that just as wine gets better with age, but requires special care and proper maintenance, so is marriage a result of the time, care, and effort invested in it. If one goes into it looking for instant gratification, he may be sadly disappointed. However, if he's in it for the long game, and willing to work on it, then as the years go by, it will get better and better. The great part is that this works not only for marriage but any relationship.



It says in this week's Parasha... שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹקינוּ ה' אֶחָד ... Hear O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the One and Only...וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ – and when you lie down and when you rise up" (6:4,7)

Why is the Shema read in the evening and repeated again in the morning?

"Night" represents dark and difficult times and "day" represents good and pleasant periods. In the Shema, the Jew accepts upon himself absolute submission to the yoke of heaven. The recitation of Shema in the evening and again in the morning is a

message that under all conditions, regardless if things are good or difficult, pleasant or gloomy, a person should never forsake his attachment to Hashem.

The daily recitals of Shema start in the evening to emphasize that, while it is easy to praise Hashem when things are going well, one must also make it a priority to praise Hashem "in the evening" when things seem dark and difficult. (Ksav Sofer)

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser - Borrowed and Beautiful

The Gemara (*Taanis* 26b) tells us, "There were never such great holidays to the Jewish nation like the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur, during which the daughters of Jerusalem would go out with borrowed, plain white clothing and dance in the vineyard." In addition to this, they would tell the Jewish boys, "Raise up your eyes and choose for yourself a bride."

One particular detail in the above Gemara is that every girl would borrow plain white clothing from their friend. The reason for this is so that the Jewish boys would not have their decision-making process impacted by the external aspects of beauty, by the clothing which the Jewish girls would adorn themselves with. Rather, they would turn to the inner character of each person.

The Noam Elimelech once remarked that the gematria, of chassan v'kallah is chesed v'emes, kindness and truthfulness.

These are two qualities which stand as foundational and fundamental to good character. If the person lives here or there, went to this or that school, that has far less consequence than their commitment to kindness and truth.

'Forgetting Sinai means forgetting who you are.'- Nesivos Shalom

Circle Time - This Date in Jewish History

The 16th of Av is the yahrtzeit of the famed philanthropist and Jewish advocate, **Sir Moses Montefiore z"l**, who died at age 101 (5545/1784- 5645/1885). Born in Livorno, Italy, of Sephardic descent, he moved to England as a young child and later made a fortune as a broker at the London Stock Exchange. He was the brother-in-law of **Reb Nosson Meyer Rothschild**, one of the wealthiest Jews in Europe. He was also Sheriff of London and knighted by Queen Victoria.



Reb Moshe retired from business at age 40 and devoted the rest of his life to tzedakah and chessed. Reb Moshe almost singlehandedly blocked the Reform movement from establishing itself in England. He travelled to the Sultan of Turkey in 1840 to defend the Jews of Damascus against a blood libel; to Rome in 1858 to try and free the Jewish boy Edgar Mortara, who was kidnapped and baptized by his nurse; to Russia, Morocco, and other places to ask government authorities to stop persecution of the Jews.

Eretz Yisrael was dear to his heart. He visited seven times, setting up tzedakos, building industry, education and health, and sponsoring several agricultural settlements. In Yerushalayim, he established the first neighbourhood outside the protective walls of the Old City. The windmill he built to provide the kehillah with parnassah still stands. Most famously, he had workers add to the height of the Kosel; the small upper stones were added through his sponsorship.

Circle Time – Gematria

וְהֵפִיץ ה' אֶתְכֶם בָּעַמִּים וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם מְתֵי מִסְפָּר בַּגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר יְנַהֵג ה' אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה
And Hashem will scatter you among the nations, in the peoples that He will lead you there… (4:27)

The four words describing the nations among whom we will be exiled hint at the four main exiles of Klal Yisrael: Bavel, Paras/Madai, Greece, and Rome

בָּעַמִּים = 162 = בין הבבליים (between the Babylonians)

בַּגּוֹיִם = 62 = ובמדי (and in Media)

יְנַהֵג = 68 = ביון (in Greece)

שָׁמָּה = 345 = מרומיים (from the Romans)

Nefesh Shimshon - Keep Davening

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל ה' דברים ג, כג . ***I pleaded to Hashem. (3:23)***

Moshe Rabbeinu stood and prayed to be let into *Eretz Yisrael,* and *Chazal* say he in fact prayed 515 *tefilos*, which is the *gematriya* of **ואתחנן** , "I pleaded."

What does this teach us? That when a person needs a certain thing, such as healing for a sick person, or help with financial troubles, and he sees that he is not being answered by Heaven, he should *daven* more and more prayers and keep on asking for the thing he needs, to the point that he doesn't give *Hashem* rest, so to speak, and He must grant his wish.

This is what *Moshe Rabbeinu* did. He offered all sorts of different pleas and arguments, over and over again, that he should be allowed to enter *Eretz Yisrael.*

It says also about Yitzchak that he was **ויעתר**, he implored *Hashem*, and Rashi explains that he offered many prayers and kept on begging. Channah, too, prayed and prayed until her request was

granted, and *Chazal* learn from her story that anyone who prays again and again will be answered.

This is how *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* treats us. If we just keep on asking and begging and *davening* without stop, even if we don't really deserve that our prayers should be answered, *Hashem* will grant our wishes nonetheless, as long as it is not harmful to us.

Chazal say that if Moshe had continued to pray even just one more prayer, he would have been answered, and allowed into *Eretz Yisrael.* This teaches us that a person should not give up. He should pray another prayer and another supplication and another set of *Tehillim,* and this will cause *Hashem* to answer his prayers and grant his requests.

Torah Tavlin - "Nachamu Nachamu Ami ..."

We just concluded a period of mourning and despair. Now, we must realize that the geula is coming and rejoice in its imminent arrival! Hope amidst despair - this was the middah of the great Rabbi Akiva.

While all the other Tannaim saw destruction and cried in despair, only Rabbi Akiva foresaw the rebuilding and smiled for the future.

Although we just mourned over the Churban Bais Hamikdash, we can still be comforted this Shabbos Nachamu with an even greater nechama as we anticipate the Geulah Shleima.

"Love of Hashem is born from giving. When a person gives his time, his energy, his thoughts, and his desires to Hashem, he discovers that his heart is drawn toward Him. Ahavah is not an emotion that descends from heaven; it is the fruit of a life invested in the Divine." ~ Rav Dessler (Michtav Me'Eliyahu).

Short And Sweet Story of The Week

Rav Shlomo Wolbe, ZT"L, a very soft-spoken man. In his quiet manner and measured words, whose messages impacted thousands through profound talks and prolific writings. **Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky** visited him one day and was discussing a bit about his Swedish roots and European topography.

They came to the subject of the Swiss Alps, and Rabbi Kamenetzky mentioned that he heard in the name of the **Brisker Rav, ZT"L,** the revered mentor of Rav Wolbe's generation, that when the Moshiach will come, he will transport the Swiss Alps and transplant them in Israel. Upon hearing Rabbi Kamenetzky say those words, Rav Wolbe's tranquil demeanour changed immediately. He stood up to his full height with fire in his eyes.

"The Brisker Rav could never have said that!" he boomed. Rav Wolbe continued with a soliloquy whose passion was palpable: "There are no mountains as beautiful as those in Tzfas, there are no lakes as beautiful as the Kineres, and there is no city that sparkles like Jerusalem! Mashiach need not bring anything here! It is all here!"

Comment: Moshe Rabbeinu begins this week's Parsha by telling the Jewish people how he pleaded with the Hashem to let him see the Land of Israel. We find that Moshe was pleading to enter as an expression of the Jew's eternal longing, appreciation, and passion for Eretz Yisrael.

Moshe's statement, (Devarim 3:24) "Hashem, you have just started to show me the power and the glory" was though Moshe understood that all the miracles, the splitting of the sea, the miraculous manna, the water from the rock, were only a prelude to Eretz Yisrael and would not compare to the greatness attainable from the majestic experience of entering the land.

Working on our Middos



Rav Akiva Eiger, zt"l, became known as a great genius at a very young age. By the time he was fifteen years old, he was said to have an extraordinary command of Shas and Poskim.

A wealthy man, who was also a Talmid Chacham, heard about this young genius, and he thought Rav Akiva would make a good husband for his daughter. Accompanied by two other Talmidei Chachamim, he set off to meet the young Rav Akiva, and see if the reports about his genius were true.

When they met with him, the wealthy man and his companions began discussing a complicated Sugya in Shas. Young Rav Akiva Eiger listened carefully but added nothing to the conversation. He sat in complete silence, as if he were having trouble following what the men were discussing.

Baffled, the men left and set off for home. They wondered, "Is this what people call a genius? How come we didn't see any signs of even ordinary intelligence?" they asked each other.

After their guests had left, Rav Akiva's father turned to him and asked, "What happened? Why didn't you participate in the conversation? Didn't you understand what they were talking about?"

Rav Akiva replied, "I knew you must be wondering about my behaviour. I couldn't offer any answers to their questions, because the questions were not properly formulated. One of the men forgot an explicit Gemara, and another was mistaken in reference to a Tosafos. Since they're both older than I am, I didn't want to point out their mistakes and embarrass them. "I couldn't answer their

questions, because they weren't really questions at all, so I chose to remain silent."

Rav Akiva's father then said, "But now the father of the girl will no longer want to take you as a Chasan for his daughter."

Rav Akiva responded, "It is better that the Shidduch come to nothing, than to be guilty of embarrassing another person!"

Torah Tavlin

כִּי הִוא חָכְמַתְכֶם וּבִינַתְכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים – for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the people

When the Communists took over White Russia, Jewish children were required to attend public schools where the teachers tried to indoctrinate them with the "religion" of the state - atheism.

One female secondary school teacher in Luban became infuriated when the children under her charge countered her virulent attacks on religion by quoting their "Rabbiner," their rabbi who eventually became the renowned Gadol Hador, **HaGaon R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l**.

The teacher began to denigrate R' Moshe, poking fun at the ignorant "Rabbiner" who couldn't even do simple mathematics like a proper Soviet citizen.

In order to cast doubt on R' Moshe's reputation for brilliance, the teacher sent him a calculus problem that she had obtained from her university professor, a problem deemed far too difficult for someone who had studied elementary mathematics.

When the young children presented R' Moshe with the calculus problem, he asked one of the youngsters for his textbook. The Tzaddik sat down for a few minutes and read through the textbook. Then, he wrote a solution to the question posed. The teacher was astounded and sent a second problem which R' Moshe solved within

minutes, asking the students to return it immediately so that the teacher would know he had not sought help from anyone else.

The teacher insisted on meeting the rabbi and soon became his protector. As the laws against the rabbinate became more and more severe, she would tell the local Communist officials that these laws did not apply to this Rabbiner, who was a great scholar in mathematics and not a "useless parasite."

The Torah tells us that through its diligent study and observance, it will serve as "proof" of our wisdom and discernment to other nations, who will say, "Surely, that great Nation is a wise and discerning people!"

Peninim on the Torah - Emunah

The Brisker Rav, zl, once asked his father, **Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl**, why the mitzvah of emunah is called by that name. Does one not know that Hashem is in control of everything in the world? One would have to be totally without his faculties to deny or even ignore this reality. Any person with a modicum of intelligence knows that the level of wisdom inherent in creating and guiding this world from Creation throughout history is beyond the scope of our cognitive ability. Certainly, a G-d exists! It is not conjecture. It is not a theory; it is a dogmatic reality.



Rav Chaim explained that two concepts are working together in tandem, one taking over when the other reaches its limit. This means: We have clear intellectual acceptance that the Ribono Shel Olam created and directs every aspect of our world. When one's cognition achieves its limit, however, emunah, faith, kicks in. Certain

occurrences defy our ability to rationalise, producing questions such as: What preceded our world? Why did Hashem create the world when He did?

Once we know that a Creator exists, we are then obliged to believe in Him. Where seichel -- understanding and common sense -- end, emunah begins. Sadly, some people still cannot grasp the notion that their finite, limited minds cannot understand the concept of infinity, an infinite G-d in an infinite world, not bound by time and space.

Veritably, adds **Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita**, living in such times as we are, in the midst of galus, exile, surrounded by tzaros, troubles, and hester panim, Divine concealment, one must have emunah to survive emotionally. We have no other way to live. One who merits emunah and lives a life of bitachon, trust, in Hashem is availed the opportunity to live a life of peaceful serenity. He knows that whatever happens, whatever he experiences, is Hashem's edict, which is good, even if he does not understand the "why." Kavei el Hashem, chazak v'yaametz libecha v'kavei el Hashem, "Hope to Hashem, strengthen yourself and He will give you courage; and hope to Hashem" (Tehillim 18:32). The gist of the Pasuk is to never give up hope. If at first one does not succeed, i.e. receive an "answer," he should try again. One should continue praying and hoping.

The Brisker Rav explains the pasuk as providing a sequence. First, one is supposed to kavei el Hashem, focus his hopes on Hashem. Once he has sincerely projected all of his hope on the Almighty, then he will merit that Hashem will strengthen his heart, so that he will continue focusing his hopes on Hashem. Thus, he will never have worries, because he has "hoped," developed a trust in Hashem.

We must initiate hope; afterwards, Hashem will do the rest and give us the ability to continue our undivided trust in Him. One who is one with Hashem has no worries.

Parshah Pearls *(Adapted from the Ma'yanah shel Torah)*

Moshe's Look, עֲלֵה רֹאשׁ הַפִּסְגָּה וְשָׂא עֵינֶיךָ "Ascend to the top of the cliff and raise your eyes … " (3:27).

It is well known that had Moshe entered Eretz Yisrael, Yisrael would never have been able to leave it.

Now that he was at least able to look at it, that too, had a permanent effect on the land, in that its Kedushah is permanent. In addition, the Gemara in Bava Basra (158) states that the very air of Eretz Yisrael makes a person wise. All because Moshe looked at it!

When King Louis IX Tried to Wipe Out Judaism by aish.com

Louis XVI lived with Marie Antoinette. Louis XV had his thing about furniture. But do you know about Louis IX, the king who tried to wipe out Judaism once and for all?

Crowned in 1226, Louis IX was the type of king who liked to take justice into his own hands. He'd often personally judge cases and deliver punishments in his Great Hall in Paris. And he also had a thing about the Jews. He forced Jews into manual labour with the Ordinance of Melun in 1230 and liked to debate Jews about their religion.

In 1232, Pope Gregory IX received a letter claiming that the Talmud, the enormous Jewish text that had defined Jewish practice since being compiled in the fifth century, attacked the Catholic Church at least 35 times and needed to be destroyed. If the Pope agreed, there would be no more Talmud, and, as an added bonus, no more Jewish practice.

The Pope announced that the Talmud was going to be put on trial and instructed all Catholic institutions in France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal to seize all copies in their midst.

Officials burst into synagogues and confiscated precious, hand-written volumes of the Talmud from synagogues across Europe. Two months later the Talmud was put on trial, and can you guess who oversaw it? Yup, this guy.

King Louis IX ordered four prominent rabbis to defend the Talmud. They faced off against Nicholas Donin, a Parisian Jew who had abandoned his faith and converted to Catholicism. Donin was not a fan of Judaism; he was also the one who'd written the damning letter to the Pope that started this crisis.

King Louis set the rules. Rule number 1: The Rabbis couldn't criticize Christianity in any way. And if rule number 2 could have been announced, it would've been that there's no way the Jews can win.

The trial did not go well. At one point, King Louis got so enraged, he shouted that a good Christian would plunge his sword into a Jew and not debate. One rabbi had to flee for his life. The remaining prominent rabbis argued all they could, but the Talmud was found "guilty" and condemned to burning.

Two years later, official searched all over France for any remaining volumes of Talmud and other Hebrew books. On June 17, 1242, 24 wagons deposited close to 10,000 books at the Place de Greve, near Notre Dame Cathedral, where they were burned.



After the trial, King Louis expelled the Jews from France and led Crusades to the holy land that targeted Jewish communities along the way. And even with his crimes against the Jews, they still named a city after him. How about that for history?

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך ושננתם לבניך ודברת בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך (6:6-7)

Rav Yisroel Salanter writes in Ohr Yisroel (27) that the mitzvah of learning Torah isn't merely a requirement to spend one's time engaged in the study of Torah, but rather it additionally contains a second component: the mitzvah of y'dias ha'Torah – knowing the entire Torah.



A group of yeshiva students once approached **Rav Shach** in the middle of the winter to "speak in learning" with him. They began discussing the sugyos (topics) which are dealt with near the beginning of the tractate their yeshiva was studying at that time. Rav Shach, who was known for his strong opposition to the slow pace of study which has become prevalent in most yeshivos, chided them, "It's your fault that we are currently in the midst of a severe draught.

When Hashem looks down at the earth and sees that the yeshiva students are only up to daf ד, He assumes that the winter z'man (semester) has only just begun, and the time for rain hasn't yet arrived. If you would be learning at a faster pace and covering the ground you're capable of, Hashem would realize how much of the z'man has elapsed and how desperately we need the rains to come!"

"Torah is not wisdom added to life, it is life." ~ R' Aharon Kotler



Consolation

The Chofetz Chaim once said before a large crowd, "In our generation, everyone who has a mouth must use it to give *chizuk* to others."

In the Chofetz Chaim's generation, many people began being lenient with Shabbos observance, family purity, etc. The Chofetz Chaim encouraged anyone who could do so to give drashos and to rouse people to teshuvah.

When the Chofetz Chaim went off the podium, he heard people saying, "The Chofetz Chaim is a tzaddik! He can speak to people and rouse them to *teshuvah*, but what can we do?"

The Chofetz Chaim overheard them and immediately returned to the podium to add this essential *mashal*:

There was a *poritz* who demanded that his servants serve him purified water. Once, someone brought him regular water to drink, and after taking a sip, he immediately spat out the water. "Why did you bring me dirty water? When you bring me water, it must be purified first. "

Sometime later, there was a fire in the *poritz's* home. "Fire! Fire!" the *poritz* shouted, but it took a long time before people came with water to put out the fire.

"What took you so long?" the *poritz* complained. "By the time you came with buckets of water, half my home burned down!"



"You told us to purify the water first," the servants explained. "We purified the water and came as quickly as we could."

The *poritz* said, "When there is a fire, any water will do."

The Chofetz Chaim said, "The same is with delivering speeches in our generation. There were generations when one needed to be a tzaddik before he could speak in public. But now, a fire is raging. Whoever has the ability to speak must do so."

In our generation, people need to hear a good word. It isn't rebuke that people need to hear; they need to hear that Hashem loves us, that they can succeed in *avodas* Hashem, that they are good, etc. Anyone with a mouth must use it to quench this fire and help their fellow man.



"To teach Torah is to awaken the soul of the student.

Every child possesses a hidden fire, and the educator's task is to fan that fire until it burns with its own light." ~ Piaseczna Rebbe (Chovas HaTalmidim).

The Way of Emuna – Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר Davening to Hashem in Difficult Times

Rav Hersh of Rimanov zy"a (Sefer Be'eros Mayim) explains the pasuk by saying that Moshe Rabeinu davened to Hashem "at that time" – meaning that he prayed to Him even when he was in a difficult and challenging time.

This is hinted to from the word "b'ais", at the time, which also can mean "b'ito", in a time of fright. Even in such a time, he remained strong in his faith and trust in Hashem and spoke to Him. He was still "laymor, to say". He still spoke to Hashem with the same love as always, even though times were difficult.

Tefillah With a Broken Heart

Sefer Keser Shem Tov writes that a tefillah should be said with a broken heart and annulment of oneself to Hashem. He explains with a moshol: Every lock has a key that opens it. The key is designed to fit the lock and the lock will not open unless the right key is inserted.

However, there are thieves who open a lock without a key. They simply break the lock. So too, there is key to open every door to Heaven, but the simplest way to get in is to break the lock.

The way to do this is to break one's heart and annul oneself to Hashem. In this way, the lock that separates us from Hashem is broken and our tefillos can ascend straight to Him.

This is stated in **Zohar Hakadosh** (Shemos): "If someone davens and screams to Hashem until he can no longer speak with his lips, this is a perfect tefillah that is with the heart, and it will never be returned emptyhanded."

Tefillah With Kavanah

Rabbenu Efraim, one of the great Rishonim, notes that "**וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳,**" (551+3 words=554) has the same gematria as **תן חנם** - ('give freely'). (548+6 - 5 Letters and 1 Kolel =554) This indicates that anyone who davens to Hashem with concentration and devotion will have his prayers answered. Even if he does not deserve it, his prayers will be answered as a free gift.

Tefillah With Joy

Sefer Tzavaas HaRivash states that when a is uttered with joy, it is more readily accepted by Hashem than a tefillah said with sadness.

Reward For an Unanswered Prayer

Rashi says: **רב לך הרבה מזה שמור לך, רב טוב הצפון לך** –***"It is enough for you. More than this is reserved for you: Much is the goodness that is kept for you."***

The Mabit explains this to mean that reward was reserved for him in the World to Come also for this tefillah, in addition to being given the reward of being able to view the land from outside and being informed about what will occur until the end of days.

He adds that the same applies to every individual who davens to Hashem with devotion. Even if he does not receive exactly what he asked Hashem for, his prayers are not wasted. He will be rewarded greatly. And even if his prayer is answered and he does receive what he asked for, he also will be rewarded in the World to Come.

We see from his words that no tefillah goes to waste. Every tefillah creates a great impression in Shomayim and will be rewarded.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR VAETCHANAN

The Friday Night Barber

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein said that when he once visited **Rav Eliyahu Broide**, the Rav of the Ramat HaChayal neighbourhood in Tel Aviv, Rav Broide introduced him to a Torah observant Jew with an interesting story.

"This man," Rav Broide said, "was a barber by profession, who kept his shop open on Friday nights. When I asked him why he desecrates Shabbos so blatantly, he explained that many pilots from the air force live in his neighborhood, and since they are busy all week with their flights, the only time they can get a haircut is on Friday night. Therefore, there was no way he can close his shop during these hours."



Rav Broide added that he tried to persuade the man to close the barber shop on Shabbos for one month, and then calculate whether or not it caused him a loss. Rav Broide said emphatically, "I promise you that you will earn thirty percent more than you earned up until now!"

The barber decided to give it a try. After closing his shop on Friday nights for an entire month, he realized that his profits had grown, not only thirty percent as the Rav said, but by fifty percent! Since then, he and his family have become Frum!

Rav Zilberstein said, "I was very impressed by this story, and I wondered if it is permissible to test Hashem in such a way? After all, it says in Devarim (16:16) not to test Hashem. However, it seems

that when it comes to sanctifying the Name of Hashem, and together with Tefilah, it is permissible to do so, as Eliyahu HaNavi did on Har HaKarmel.

Rav Zilberstein added that he approached his brother-in-law, **Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l,** with this question.

Rav Chaim quoted a different source from Sefer Daniel (Ch. 1), when the king said to feed Daniel bread, Daniel asked one of the ministers to feed him only seeds, suggesting a ten-day trial to examine whether the seeds will sustain his body. Rav Zilberstein said, "We see that when it comes to sanctifying Hashem's Name, it is permissible to test Hashem. Especially when relating to Shabbos, which is the source of all Brachah!"



R' Moshe Hoff zt'l ('Moshe' the Tzaddik!)

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה' בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר - *I entreated Hashem* ***at that time****, saying.* - What does Moshe Rabeinu mean with the words **בָּעֵת הַהִוא** ***- at that time?***

In parshas Chukas when Hashem commanded Moshe to speak to the rock, and he hit it instead, the repercussion was that Hashem put a geziro on him. The Pasuk says - **וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן יַעַן לֹא־ הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לָהֶם** ***- Hashem said to Moshe and Aaron, "Since you did not have faith in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly to the Land which I have given them.***

Rabbi Yonason Eibeshitz Zt'l says (Tiferes Yoinasan) that Moshe Rabeinu was entreating Hashem with the words **בָּעֵת הַהִוא** – Aron is no longer alive, the people who were in the midbar have all died, so maybe You will rescind the gezaira as it no longer applies!



How Does One Learn to Love Hashem

"When drinking a cup of water, learn to love Him for it; when you wear an overcoat in winter, love Him for it; when you enter from the cold street into your warm home, love Him for it; when you put your head on the pillow and your ears folds back comfortably, love Him for it; love Him for restful sleep, pain-free days, for your daily bread, and for all that He gives constantly." ~ **R' Avigdor Miller zt"l**

Which Plea?

"When the **Imrei Emes** succeeded his father (**the Sfas Emes**) as *Gerrer* Rebbe, a group of older *Chasidim* asked him, 'Your father promised us that if we would recite the verse *Ana Hashem* (Please Hashem) in the *Hallel* service with great devotion and intent, all our wishes would be granted from Heaven. Rebbe, we tried. Why didn't it work?'

The new Rebbe replied: 'Which *Ana Hashem* do you think my father meant: *Ana Hashem Hoshiya Na* (Please Hashem, save now?!) No. He meant *Ana Hashem Ki Ani Avdicha*, (Please Hashem, for I am Your servant (Psalms 116:16)).

Just as a mortal master must provide all the needs of his servants, so Hashem provides for His true servants. But first, we must commit ourselves to His service." ~ **The Pirkei Avos Treasury**.

"Moshe Rabbeinu teaches that tefillah is not a ritual but a relationship. The word 'eschanan' implies asking for a free gift — because the deepest tefillah is when a person throws himself entirely on Hashem's mercy, knowing that everything is a gift." ~ Rav Shimshon Pincus.

Reb Shmuel Donn - Remez

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר *'I entreated Hashem at that time, saying.'* (3:23)

Moshe Rabbeinu pleaded with Hashem and davened to be allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael.

The most powerful tefilla is one that is expressed by way of song or praise. When we show Hashem that we recognise that everything that we have comes from Him, and we voice our gratitude with songs of thanks, then our tefillos are much more effective.

Says the **Baal Haturim**: This is why **וָאֶתְחַנַּן** is the same gematria as **שירה**. (515) This hints to the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu SANG his tefillos to Hashem. The power of his prayer was so great, that Hashem had to stop him continuing - **אַל־תֹּוסֶף דַּבֵּר אֵלַי עֹוד בַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה** *'It is enough for you; speak to Me no more regarding this matter.'* (3:26)

Such is the influence of a tefillah sung to Hashem out of gratefulness. Had Moshe continued to daven, he would have uprooted the decree against him entering the land – which sadly, was not meant to be.

From where did Moshe Rabbeinu learn this powerful art of singing tefillos? Which great person in our history was famous for being accustomed to giving thanks to Hashem and praising Him for His kindness?

It was **לאה אמנו**.

The Medrash Rabbah (71:5) makes the following observation with regards to Leah in parshas **ויצא**. **לאה תפסה פלך הודיה** – *'Leah held the craft of thankful recognition. She passed down this trait to her children, after naming her 4th son Yehudah (thankfulness).'*

Leah was Moshe's role model with regard to tefillah. Her every prayer was laced with gratitude and thanks to Hashem. And this is

alluded to in the roshei teivos of the words of the Medrash above: **תפלה = ל-אה ת-פסה פ-לך ה-ודיה.**

Moshe's **תפלה** was also through praise and **שירה** to Hashem. **תפלה** is also the gematriah of **וָאֶתְחַנַּן**

Like the Baal Haturim says – Moshe Rabbeinu davened with **שירה** to Hashem. [**Sefas Emes**]

Everybody Needs It by R' Ephraim Eliyahu Shapiro

CHIZUK MISSION
Ignite. Connect. Empower. Shine

Very often there is a topic that is spoken about that applies to about 70-80% of the audience, and it can be accomplished by about 60-90% of the audience.

One of the unique features of the topic of giving chizuk is that – '***everybody needs chizuk, period***'. Whether it is financial, emotional, physical, psychological – whatever it is. Everybody, everybody, everybody needs chizuk of some type, to some degree! That's 100%. The good news is that – 100% of people could give chizuk, men woman and children, all in their unique way.

But hear these words clearly, "***Don't underestimate your ability to give chizuk. Everybody needs chizuk, and everyone (100%) can give chizuk and strength of some sort!***"

Restraint

"From books, one can learn what to say; a rebbe teaches him what not to say." ~ R' Chaim Soloveichik.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Rav Shraga Feivel Frank ZT"L, a student of **Rav Yisroel Salanter ZT"L**, was a very wealthy leather and skin dealer who lived in Alexut, a suburb of Kovno. He left in his will that his four daughters should marry Torah scholars. They did, and their descendants became the progenitors of the leading Yeshivos in Eretz Yisrael and America. Their descendants established Lakewood, Ner Yisroel, Chevron and Slabodka.

Once, an out-of-town businessman came to Rav Shraga Feivel's factory and was interested in purchasing a large order of skins but asked for a heavily discounted price. Reb Shraga Feivel felt that his prices were very competitive already, so he refused to negotiate with the businessman. The businessman decided to take his business elsewhere. He thanked Rav Shraga Feivel for his time and left.

The businessman proceeded to visit other dealers and discovered that, in fact, Rav Shraga Feivel's prices were significantly less than those of his competitors. He returned to Rav Shraga Feivel's factory and told him that he had decided to purchase the skins at the original price that Rav Shraga Feivel had quoted him.

Rav Shraga Feivel responded that after he had left, he reexamined his profit margins and decided to give the businessman the order at the discounted price he requested, should he decide to return to his store. Since he committed in his heart to give the businessman the discounted price, he refused to take the original, higher price the businessman was now willing to pay.

למען תירא את ה' - "True yirah is not terror but awe — the awe that comes when a person senses the nearness of Hashem. The closer one feels to Hashem, the more profound the awe becomes." ~ Rav Aharon of Karlin.

Rabbi Shlomo Landau - I Met Rashi

If I would tell you that I personally met **Rashi** yesterday, would you believe me? Probably not. Rashi lived close to a thousand years ago; how could I have met him?

Rav Chaim Palagi (sefer Torah V'Chaim) writes that when you learn the words of someone else—whether it be one of the rabbis of the Mishna, Gemara or later authorities—that Neshama (soul) descends from on High to the place you are learning. If you are therefore learning Rashi, Rashi is there with you. If you are learning the commentary of the **Ramban**, the Ramban is there with you. If you are learning an insight from the **Vilna Gaon**, the Vilna Gaon is there with you. That alone is amazing and sounds heard to believe. But it's explicit in the **Zohar**.

But there's even more to it. Could Rashi really come to my study and be with me?

Yes. It's a Mishna in Pirkei Avos (3:6).

בְּכָל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַזְכִּיר אֶת שְׁמִי אָבֹא אֵלֶיךָ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ – "If one person is learning Torah, the Shechina (Divine Presence) descends and dwells with you." If Hashem Himself comes to the place you are learning, then all the more so other souls. It is not a stretch that Rashi can be with you, or the Ramban or the **Chofetz Chaim**.

The power that we have when we are learning is beyond belief. It can bring into our very midst the soul of the greatest of those who have lived in this world, and even brings Hashem.

"The one who relies on Hashem is not afraid of anything." – Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner.





You said last week that there's no such a thing as bad weather. Is it a chisaron if a person enjoys a warm mild day more than a rainy day or a very hot day?

When a person enjoys a certain kind of weather he is justified; there's nothing wrong with that. And not only is he justified but he is a wise man for appreciating it. Of course, if he understands that *all* weather is good — even though he may not enjoy it, but he understands that it's a benefit for him, then he's even wiser.

The fact that a person enjoys spring time more than any other season doesn't detract from the fact that he can understand that summer is very important. After all, springtime is not the time when the apples are ripe and when the pears are ripe. In the summer is when they begin turning red. Their cheeks display a color which makes them more and more attractive as they become sweeter and softer. And therefore, despite the heat of summer, he's able to appreciate it because of the benefit it provides.

So, the fact that one season is more beloved than others, doesn't detract from the fact that you understand that all seasons are valuable. And so, if you're a wise man then you learn to enjoy the summertime. Oh yes, the summer has many attractions. You know, there are songs about the summer. They sing about July and August. Then there's a song about September; *Nothing Like September*

Morning. Ahh, a September morning is pleasure. For every month of the year there are poems.

And we have to learn to sing the songs of every month – not the gentile songs; you can sing your own songs. If we'll sing all the songs, so we'll start by singing songs in January – January is very good! The bracing cold of January is a blessing for the world. February? *Ah mechayah*! Walk outside in February, well dressed, and enjoy the brisk fresh air. March, April, May; every month has its blessing. Nissan, Iyar, Sivan, Tamuz, Av, Elul; every one of them is a time of special *brochos*. And the person who learns to appreciate them, that's a **שמח בחלקו**.

Is this Really Proper Shabbos Hospitality?



I should have allowed myself more time to travel to my Shabbos destination! I was running late and hadn't figured in traffic into my travel time. I knew it was irresponsible. So, I decided to stop in a community in which I knew absolutely no one, counting on my fellow Jews being praised as "mi ke'amcha Yisroel" in their chessed.

I parked my car in front of a house that had a mezuzah, and decided to try my luck. I was glad the man who answered the door was frum. After I explained that I wouldn't be able to reach my destination before the onset of Shabbos, and needed a place to stay, the man was welcoming, but on one condition.

He said that he could only accommodate me if I gave him a considerable sum of money for my Shabbos stay. I was taken aback,

but with sunset approaching and no other option, I reluctantly agreed. I gave him a nice sum of cash.

After we returned from Maariv that night, I enjoyed a nice se'udah with my hosts. They were nice and decent people, but I could not help feeling somewhat resentful that they had demanded money for my Shabbos stay. Well, so much for my hosts being the "mi ke'amcha Yisroel" type!

But I decided that since I was paying for it anyway, I might as well get my money's worth. I had no compunctions about eating to my heart's content, taking second and third servings of the various dishes served. I probably gained a few pounds that Shabbos, but I was determined to get my money's worth from this host whom I thought was rather brazen for charging me for the Shabbos, taking advantage of my need, even though he was not obligated to host me for free. - What happened to chessed? What kind of upbringing did he have? Didn't he ever learn about hachnosas orchim?

Before I departed on Motzoei Shabbos, my host told me that it was his custom to give a gift to each of his guests so that they would remember him. I thought to myself, "You don't need to give me a gift to remember you! I'll never forget this experience as long as I live!"

My host handed me an envelope containing the exact sum of money that I had given him for accommodation and meals. I asked, "Why did you return the money I gave you?"

He explained that he only took it to make me feel comfortable. He wanted me to unhesitatingly eat to my heart's content without feeling embarrassed of being the recipient of a last-minute kindness.

A Wise Man would say: "Success is not about never making mistakes but never making the same mistake a second time."

זכרו תורת משה

Renewal

The Birkas Avraham once travelled to Italy with his uncle, Reb Zelig Lider, who was an esrog merchant. They stopped at a hotel in Trieste and found a small sefer there. The sefer discusses what we say in Shacharis: "Mechadesh b'chol yom tamid maaseh bereishis—Hashem creates the world anew each day."

The sefer asked: Why does Hashem create the world anew? Hashem could have created the world once, and it would stand forever. What's the reason for constant renewal?

The Birkas Avraham told him, "I'll tell you the answer. The reason that Hashem recreates the world daily is for us. It's to remind man that just as the world constantly renews itself, he too, can renew. The fact that the world constantly renew itself also allows us to renew, since it's a new world from what was a moment ago. A new world allows us to disconnect from the past and create a new and better future. The past doesn't have to be connected."

New Interior

Reb Shimshon Pincus, zt"l, used the following mashal to explain this point: A town was situated at rock-bottom mountain, and the supermarket was situated up on top. The townspeople had to climb up and down the mountain for their shopping, which was a tough task.

There was a baal chessed in town who bought a van to help people get to and from the supermarket. He advertised that he would go up and down the mountain three times a day and take whoever came, free of charge. The van filled up to capacity on each trip. He drove them to the store, and then back home again.

After a while, the vans wear and tear took its toll. The seats were ripped, the air-conditioner no longer worked, and the engine was

weak. People had to push the van from outside to get the motor running.

The supervisors of the town spoke with this baal chessed and said, "You did a great mitzvah for our city, but it is time to get you a new van. Everyone in the town will chip in and buy it for you."

The baal chessed, however, refused. He proclaimed, that he performed so many mitzvos with the van, and how could he stop using it? "I simply can't depart from it."

The town leaders convened and decided that if he didn't want to change the van, at least they could change the interior of the van. The exterior will be the same, but it will have a new motor, air conditioner, etc. They came up with an excuse for why they needed to borrow the keys for the night, and in the middle of the night, they redid his van.

In the morning, people filled up the van, and as usual, the baal chessed said, "Some people have to go outside to push the van, for that's the only way we'll get it started." "Put the key in the ignition and try it," they told him. He tried, and the van worked. He said, "How did this happen? Yesterday, it was so different!" He turned on the air-conditioner, and it was working too, and they told him what had happened during the night. He said, "Externally, the van seems the same. But internally, everything is different."

The nimshal is that we go to sleep every night, and in the morning, we wake up like a new person. We appear the same, but we aren't the same. If we believe that we have become a new person, we can serve Hashem with renewed energy, and we might discover that things are now different. Even if we weren't able to daven with kavanah or learn well yesterday, things might have changed. Since we have become new people, new things can happen.



Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"Never did I want something before I attained it; as long as I did not possess it – I knew I did not need it…"

– Harav Yechiel Michel, Maggid of Zlotoshov.



Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld – Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid

כִּי־תוֹלִיד בָּנִים וּבְנֵי בָנִים וְנוֹשַׁנְתֶּם בָּאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁחַתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנַת כֹּל וַעֲשִׂיתֶם הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְהַכְעִיסוֹ (4:25) - ***When you beget children and children's children, and you will be long established in the land, and you become corrupt and make a graven image, the likeness of anything, and do evil in the eyes of Hashem your G-d, to provoke Him to anger.***

The Torah goes on to describe all the terrible things that a person could do.

The question is – 'What is the connection of doing all these bad things related to having children and grandchildren?'

The answer is in the word – וְנוֹשַׁנְתֶּם – ***'and you will be long established.'*** This means that a person has grown old and become so accustomed to the gifts that Hashem has given him, he no longer appreciates those very gifts. He has children and grandchildren – so much to be thankful for, yet he has grown old and neglected to give thanks to Hashem for all the good.



There was a blind boy sitting at the top of a staircase in a railway station, and he held a hat out in front of him collecting money. There was a sign next to him that read, "***I'm blind, please can you help?***"

There was a man who was watching from a distance. He noticed that hardly anybody stopped to donate any money. He had compassion on the boy, so he took the sign and wrote something on the back of it, returned it to its place, and he left.

He returned at the end of the day, and he noticed that the hat was overflowing with donations! The blind boy recognised the footsteps of the man, and said, "Excuse me, but are you the person who was here earlier and wrote something on my sign?

"Yes, that was me."

"Could you please tell me what you wrote?"

"I wrote – ***Today is a beautiful day, I just can't see it…***" I changed your sign which concentrated only on you being blind, to convey the message, that those that can see, should be grateful.

There are times in our lives, where situations crop up and are full of challenges, trials and tribulations. It is very easy to see our problems. But, what we have to do is concentrate on the good. Don't grow old – have Hakaros Hatov, be thankful.

Hashem gave us the gift of 86,400 seconds today – Have you just used a few of them to thank Him?

Have a beautiful Shabbos!

כבד את אביך ואת אמך... למען יאריכון ימיך ולמען ייטב לך

Honor your father and your mother… so that your days will be lengthened and so that it will be good for you*. (5:16)*

The commandment to honour one's parents is included in the *Aseres HaDibros*, Ten Commandments, which in and of itself indicates its significance. Indeed, it carries such weight that, when *Klal Yisrael* were still in Marah prior to receiving the Torah, they had already been commanded to observe this *mitzvah*.

Furthermore, rarely does a *mitzvah* publicise its accompanying reward, as the Torah does regarding the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim*. *Arichas yamim*, longevity, is nothing to disdain. We should all merit such reward.

The *Tolner Rebbe, Shlita*, related that he had heard from an elderly Jew about an incident that had taken place fifty years earlier. This man had developed a serious illness which the doctors, whom he had consulted, all felt would have a negative effect on his lifespan.

Hearing the devastating news, the man was filled with dread. At the time, he was relatively young, with hopefully a long and productive life ahead of him. He could neither eat nor sleep as a result of his overwhelming anxiety. To allay his nerves, he decided to travel to Bnei Brak to seek the sage advice and blessing of the ***Chazon Ish***.

It took him a few days to scrape together the funds to pay for the trip. He arrived at the home of the saintly *gadol hador*, the pre-eminent leader of the generation. After a short while, he was ushered into the *Chazon Ish's* room, where he broke down delineating his immediate concern and fears.

The *Chazon Ish* listened and then asked, "Do you have a father or mother (who are still alive)?" He shook his head affirmatively. "How much did it cost you to travel to Bnei Brak?" The man replied with the exact number.

The *Chazon Ish* looked at the man contemplatively and asked, "When was the last time that you spent (even) one fifth of this sum (for the trip) on your parents? Rather than spend money on a "sure" (reward) *mitzvah*, you travelled instead to Bnei Brak which is sometimes "open" and sometimes "closed" (reference to the sage's ability to see his blessings pierce the Heaven and effect a positive response), and even when it is open, a positive response is not guaranteed."

The man said, "The simplicity and straightforwardness in which the *Chazon Ish* expressed himself shook me so that I immediately immersed myself in the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v'eim* with utmost fervour. *Baruch Hashem,* it seems to have paid off. The disease has not affected my longevity."

Kibbud av v'eim is a *mitzvah* which is demanding, because one never knows if he has fulfilled it properly. It goes without saying that, as parents age, giving them the proper honour, providing for their needs, can present challenges. This is especially true if a parent is ill or alone. Children have their own familial obligations and responsibilities to consider. One may not ignore the fact that one's spouse enters into the equation. In an ideal situation, everyone is on board with sincere devotion and respect for the parents, but how many situations are ideal?

This story can happen to anyone. It demonstrates the reality of life and the weaknesses of the living.

למען תירא את ה'

"Yirah is not fear of punishment but the trembling awareness of standing before the Infinite. It is the sensitivity of a soul that recognizes the greatness of Hashem and the preciousness of every moment lived in His presence." ~ Chazon Ish.

כיבוד אב ואם



A fine young man, whom we will call Yossi, started his morning realising that he had parked his car in a no parking zone. To his chagrin (and slow anger), he found a 500-*shekel* ticket on his windshield. He just knew it was not going to be a "good" day.

He removed the ticket, placed it in his pocket, and proceeded to drive to his office in one of the government ministries. Traffic was far from light, but moving. His anxiety level was high to begin with when he realised that the driver in front of him was travelling at half the speed limit. He honked his horn to no avail. He then noticed the sign on the back of the windshield: New Driver.

No other lane was available. No one would let him in. Finally, he saw an opening to pass the driver, who was literally crawling. It meant crossing in a double yellow zone. He would take his chances. If he was careful, nothing would happen.

Foolishly, he forgot to look in his rear-view mirror where he would have noticed the police cruiser that was driving right behind him. This time, the ticket amounted to 1,000 *shekel*. It was beginning to be a very expensive day. Fifteen hundred shekel was a hefty sum to pay for carelessness.

Rather than arriving at work early, he entered his office an hour late. His superior was not happy, since a major government conference was taking place and everyone in the office was involved in its preparation. Yossi had a high position in the ministry. Thus, he was critical to its success.

Everything seemed to have smoothed out, until an hour later Yossi received a call from the nursing home in which his father was a

resident, "Your father refuses to eat. This could prove dangerous to his already frail health." Now what? How could he ignore his father?

He had no one else. On the other hand, he had a responsibility to his office. When he shared his dilemma with his supervisor, the response was, "We are counting on you. This conference could be the turning point in your career." His superior was not happy, and he made his feelings quite evident. Nonetheless, Yossi said that his father needed him.

While Yossi did the right thing, his attitude after a day of mishaps was far from positive. He was beside himself with anger, "How could my father do this to me?"



He burst into the nursing home's dining room and made a beeline for his father who was sitting in his wheelchair reading a book. "*Abba*, how could you do this to me?" he screamed. "I have a life and a job. Please eat your food, so that I can go back to work – if I still have a job."

His father continued to refuse to eat. This pushed the button that catalysed Yossi's diatribe, "Do you realise how much time and money I spend on you? Why can you not eat like everyone else? This is the last time that I will put up with this nonsense!"

Yossi had lost it. His father had aged and was weak, both physically and cognitively, but he understood enough to know that his son had hurt him. He began to cry. He tried to wipe away the tears but was unable to.

He did everything to preserve his own dignity, "Go, my son. I will take care of myself. Go back to your job. I will make it." His father turned his wheelchair around and proceeded to wheel himself out of the dining room.

Yossi screamed, "*Abba*, where do you think you are going? You have not eaten. This is why I dropped everything to come here."

His father was no longer listening. He was on his way to his room. He had suffered enough indignity for one day.

Yossi's father had been reading a book, which, in his haste and tension, he had left on the table. Yossi picked it up and began to read. It was his father's diary – dated 1971.

"*Today I refused to go into work to attend an important event being held outside of the city. Our Yossi was having ear surgery. How could I leave him? The money I will lose? Yossi is more important. I will do anything for my child.*

"I spent the night in the hospital with him. I held his hand to assure him that I was there and would not leave him. It was difficult for him to eat, but I fed him slowly, small spoons of food. What does a father not do for his child? I held him in my arms and said, 'Yossi, Abba will never leave you. I love you more than anything.'"

The story has a sad ending, but it does not have to end this way. We all have our moments, when, after tension and anxiety overwhelms us, the first ones we lash out on are the people who are most vulnerable – our aged parents.

Kibbud av v'eim presents many challenges, but, with the right attitude, we can triumph over them.

Someone told a gadol about his shalom bayis problems. The gadol told him, "The solution is to be mevater."

The man replied, "I know that, and I tell it to my wife all the time, but she doesn't get it. She isn't willing to be mevater...!"

This demonstrates people's tendency to think that only others have a problem, and not themselves.

From The Wellsprings of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

כִּי אִתָּנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ אֵלֶּה פֹּה הַיּוֹם כֻּלָּנוּ חַיִּים – *'but with us, we, all of whom are here alive today.' (5:3)*

The word חַיִּים means life. It is an unusual word. Even when describing one life (singular), we use the word חַיִּים (plural). Furthermore, most plural words end in *"im"* as in שנים ימים. The word "חַיִּים" ends with *"ayim"* such as the words רגלים - עינים. What is the difference?

Well, feet (רגלים) work together because they work opposite each other. When one foot is up, the other foot is down. This is the only way one can walk. It is the same with our eyes (עינים). We don't just have two eyes that see exactly the same thing, as one. It is precisely because we have two eyes that are complementing one another that we can enjoy the depth and perception of the world around us.

Thus, we can understand that the word חַיִּים refers to life, whereby a person lives with the ability to work and interact with others that are opposite him. This is what *Hashem* wants from us in this life.

R' Yisroel Reisman *shlita* explains that people are under the misconception that a day in which everything goes their way and everyone agrees with them on everything (!?) is a great day! What a life! Nobody argues with anything they say, and they can do whatever they want, whenever they want to. On the other hand, a day in which there are differences of opinions, feelings, and even opposing outlooks or views, is a stressful and bad day.

How wrong they are! Truly LIVING - the way *Hashem* wants us to - is by working side by side, in tandem, with those who are completely different than we are. Rather than getting annoyed by our differences, we must choose to focus on the strengths that can be brought out by complementing each other.

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבֵקִים בַּה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם חַיִּים כֻּלְּכֶם הַיּוֹם - if we truly want to be close (דְּבֵקִים) to *Hashem*, "חַיִּים כֻּלְּכֶם הַיּוֹם" - then ALL of you (כֻּלְּכֶם), no

matter how opposite you are from one another, must learn to work together as a team. Life is about opposites attracting and coming together in unity. Then, and only then will you be truly ALIVE, achieving the purpose of LIFE.

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN תורת הצבי על הפטרות

נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי

The *Haftorah* of *Shabbos Nachamu* and its famous words of **נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי** - ***"[be] comforted, [be] comforted, My Nation"*** (Yeshayahu 40:1) is the declaration of *Hashem* through his emissary *Yeshaya HaNavi*, comforting *Klal Yisroel* in the aftermath of the terrible *Churban*.

The question here is famous and there are many approaches to understand it: Being that every word in *Tanach* is measured, it is quite striking that the *Navi* – and by extension the Almighty Himself - seemingly used the same word "**נַחֲמוּ**" twice to bring home the same point. Why?

R' Avraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra *zt"l* explains that when one suffers a tragedy - even something minor - it can take quite a while for him to work past it and get back to his life.

More often than not, human nature is to wallow in our own misery and feel depressed for a period of time. A person will often gravitate towards taking some measure of solace in feeling bad for himself. That is where it is everyone else's job to come by and comfort the person who is depressed and lift him up out of his state of misery and sorrow.

So, just like it may take more than one person to lift another out of grief, the repetition of the words **נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ** is *Hashem's* way of indicating that His Divine comfort will be administered immediately to His beloved Nation, and will do it repeatedly.

Despite the destruction and devastation wrought by the *Churban*, *Hashem* informs *Klal Yisroel* that he will see to it that His children will be comforted - even if it takes repeated attempts.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

This Shabbos is referred to as Shabbos Nachamu, the "Shabbos of Solace", based on the introductory words of the Haftorah, נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי /Be Comforted, Be Comforted, My nation (Yeshaya 40:1).

A question which begs to be asked, following an intense day like Tisha B'av, is: what has changed over the past few days that we are ready for comfort? Are we not still in exile without the Bais HaMikdash?



Rav Avraham Schorr answers that from the beginning of the Parsha we can understand the consolation. The Parsha discusses Moshe's utilizing prayer in an attempt to attain passage in to Eretz Yisrael. This teaches us a fundamental aspect of davening, that although we are still not at home, through prayer we can connect with Hashem and all that we have lost.

Although physically not much may have changed since before Tisha B'av, we have comfort in these difficult times knowing that we still have a deep connection with Hashem.

"Moshe teaches that tefillah is not asking — it is attaching." ~ Rav Shimshon Pincus.

L'Maaseh

There was once a young man who learned in Yeshivas Ner Yisroel in Baltimore, who was moving to Eretz Yisroel. He went to **Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, zt"l**, the Rosh Yeshivah, and asked for a Brachah. The Rosh Yeshivah wished him well and gave him some advice. "Whatever you do, wherever you live, make sure to be connected to a Yeshivah.



Years later, this young man was drafted to do military service, and the commanding officer delivered a speech to his group. In his address he mocked the idea of G-d, R"L, and spoke about the power of man and the might of the Israeli Army.

The young man was deeply hurt by his words. He was bursting with rage, but he could not find the courage to protest. As he stood there seething with anger, a voice came screaming from the other side of the room. "Kefirah! You Heretic!" came the pained cry. "How dare you speak with such arrogance! The reality is that that there is a Master of the Universe, Hashem, and He is in charge, and not you!"

The protester, a Sephardic man, kept shouting, and he was thrown into a military jail for several days.

When he was released and was allowed to rejoin the group, the young man from Baltimore hurried to welcome him back and asked, "How is it that I, who learned in Yeshivah and still learn Torah seriously, could not bring myself to speak up, and you, who do not appear to be a Kollel man, did not even hesitate? What do you do for a living?"

The Sephardic man nodded and simply replied, "I am the cook in the Ponovezh Yeshivah" he said simply.

In a flash, Rav Ruderman's words from years earlier came back to him, "Make sure to be connected to a Yeshivah."

The young man realized that when one connects to a Yeshivah, he is able to connect to life itself!

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

The Haftorah read on the Shabbos following Tisha B'Av is Nachamu (Yeshaya 40).

The first Pasuk is, "**נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמַר אֱלֹקֵיכֶם**", "***Your G-d will say, 'Be comforted, be comforted, My nation.'***"

Rav Meilich Biderman notes that the tense used by Yeshaya HaNavi when he said these words of comfort is a future tense, and it emphasizes that Hashem will tell us this in the future.

Not only was Hashem trying to comfort us over the loss of the Bais HaMikdash, He will comfort us in all of our future pains and challenges. Hashem was with us in Mitzrayim and through the destructions of both Batei Mikdash. He was with us during the crusades and throughout each exile. He was with us in the Holocaust, and He is with us in the challenges that we face today.

לֹא תֹסִפוּ עַל־הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ— *Do not add or subtract*

"The Kotzker taught that adding to the Torah is as dangerous as subtracting from it, because both come from the same root — the desire to replace Hashem's will with one's own. True avodah is to serve Hashem as He commands, not as one imagines."

L'Maaseh



After **Rav Breuer zt"l**, was niftar, the chevra kadisha discovered a challah roll in the pocket of his pajamas. This sort of conduct seemed odd for any regular person but for the esteemed rav of the Washington Heights community, it was completely out of character and left everyone bewildered until someone close to the rav understood and explained: There was a Jewish but non-observant nurse who had been taking care of Rabbi Breuer in his final days. When the Rav realized that he would be niftar on Shabbos, he understood that the nurse would likely move his body which would be considered muktza, since a corpse serves no function or purpose.

However, in an effort to preserve the dignity of the deceased, Chazal gave a special dispensation that a deceased may be moved together with a loaf of bread, effectively viewing the body as secondary to the bread being moved with it. So, in Rav Breuer's final moments, he placed a roll in his pocket in order to save the nurse from unnecessarily desecrating Shabbos.

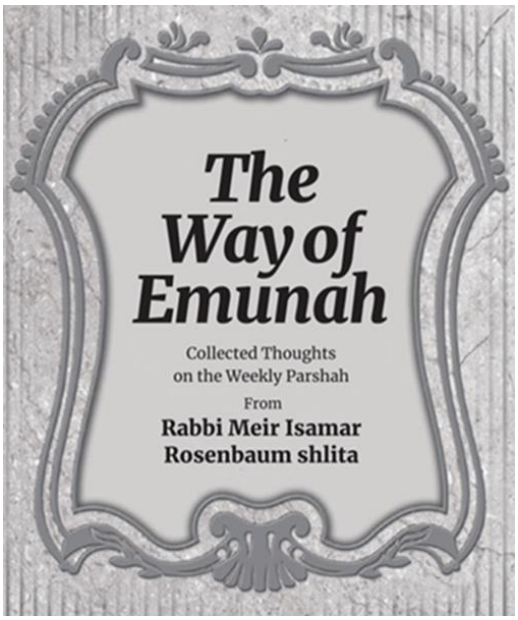
Sparks Of Shabbos

Many chasidim have a minhag to take a nap on erev Shabbos, and it is said that **R' Aharon Karliner** would say that one who doesn't nap on Friday eats a regular weekday supper on Friday night.

Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that the need to take a nap on erev Pesach is more readily understood, but most of us view it as a necessity in order to stay awake at night. The truth is however, that by napping on erev Pesach, one proclaims that he is preparing for a

very important event, and so by napping on Friday, one declares that his Shabbos seudah is of great importance. If he doesn't, his seudah is just a meal spiced with zemiros and divrei Torah because that is the Jewish custom, but by properly preparing for it, his kiddush can achieve the kedusha of a Yom Kippur musaf and the zemiros can serve as a climax like u'nesaneh tokef does.

Achieving this does not require any exceptional efforts other than remaining calm and in a state of simcha as he relates to his family and guests.



He Included All Future Prayers in His Tefillah

The Zera Kodesh explains the words "at that time" by saying that Moshe Rabenu opened the gates of tefillah with his prayer and left them open for all future generations to have their tefillos accepted.

The pasuk is thus saying that he included all future prayers in his tefillah. It does not say when he davened. Rather, it says that he prayed "at that time saying", meaning that any prayer said at any future time will be included in his tefillah.

"Moshe's desire to enter the Land was the yearning of the soul to complete its mission. Every Jew has such a longing — a holy desire to bring more light into the world — and even when the request is not granted, the yearning itself creates spiritual worlds." ~ Rizhiner Rebbe.

Daven to Hashem, Even When One Cannot Properly Concentrate

Sefer Zera Kodesh asks why it says that Moshe davened to Hashem "at that time", without specifying what time it was.

He answers that this is meant to teach us that a person can daven to Hashem at any time. One should never say: I don't have the head to daven now. When I am able to concentrate and focus properly, I will daven. Rather, one should always daven at any time. No matter how busy or unfocused a person feels, he should stop and daven to Hashem.

He uses this idea to explain the pasuk (Devarim 4:29): **וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם מִשָּׁם אֶת־ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּמָצָאתָ** – "***And from there you will seek Hashem your G-d, and you will find Him***."

Wherever a person is, whatever situation one finds himself in, he should daven to Hashem "from there" and he will find Him.

The Power of Prayer With Tears

Rashi says that the word "chanun" always indicates asking for a "matnas chinam" (a free gift). My ancestor, the **Kretchnifer Rebbe zy"a** (Sefer Raza D'Shabbos), explains by quoting the Gemara (Brachos 32B) that states: "Rav Elazar says: From the day that the Bais Hamikdosh was destroyed, the gates of prayer are closed but the gates of tears are not closed, as is stated (Tehillim 39:13): **שִׁמְעָה־תְפִלָּתִי ה' וְשַׁוְעָתִי הַאֲזִינָה אֶל־דִּמְעָתִי** '***Hear my prayer, Hashem, and hearken to my cry. Be not silent to my tears***.'"

Tears are representative of a free gift, as one who asks for something for free often asks for it with tears and weeping. It is also known that that Moshe's prayers "at that time" represent the final redemption, as Yirmiyahu Hanavi says (Yirmiyahu 50:9): "At that time, they will look for sins amongst Yisroel and there will be

none." The entire timespan from the present until Hashem sends the geulah is called "at that time."

Accordingly, the pasuk is saying that Moshe davened "at that time", meaning that he prayed that the tefillos said during times of golus should be effective. But how can those tefillos be heard if the gates of prayer are closed?

For this reason, it says that he asked for a "free gift", which is a reference to tears. In the merit of tears, even prayers said during times of exile can be heard.

Regarding the power of tefillos said with tears, the Sefer Hachasidim (Ois 130) writes: "Some people are not deserving of having their prayers accepted by Hashem but because they pray strongly and with tears, and they constantly cry and entreat Hashem, He accepts their prayers and performs their will, even if they have no merits or good deeds."

Sefer Otzros Hatorah relates the following story that was related by **Rav Chaim Chaikin zt"l**, Rosh Yeshiva Ax-El-Bain, France, and a student of the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l**: A resident of Radin once came to the home of the Chofetz Chaim and told him that he was in need of a salvation. He asked the Chofetz Chaim to daven for him. The Chofetz Chaim asked him, "Did you daven yourself yet?" The man replied that he had. The Chofetz Chaim then told him, "Go home and bring me the Sefer Tehillim you used to daven."

The man lived nearby, so he was able to run home and come back with his Tehillim very quickly. The Chofetz Chaim took the book in his hands and opened it up. He turned to one page after another and then said to the man, "Why did you say that you davened? I can tell that you didn't daven sufficiently."

The Chofetz Chaim then walked over to his bookcase, got up on a chair and took down an old Sefer Tehillim. He handed it to the man,

who opened it up and saw that the pages were yellowed with age and were stained by the many tears that had been cried over this sefer.

The Chofetz Chaim told him, "This is the Sefer Tehillim that my mother a"h used. Do you see the stains made by her tears? That is what it means to daven!"



Is there a problem with taking children to concerts where shomrei Torah u'mitzvos will be singing kosher songs?

I will tell you my private opinion. I don't think that children should become accustomed to unnecessary and superfluous things. Don't train your children to become accustomed to going places that cost money. They don't need it and you're ruining them in the process.

You can train them to take walks. They can take walks and get fresh air. They could play a little in the street with a ball and get some exercise, but don't take them to concerts and things like that. I don't believe in that at all. I don't believe in taking children to travel at all. Don't get them accustomed to luxuries. A child should be taught how to live a frugal life and to desire only what is necessary. Today, people are feeding children all kinds of ideas – all kinds of wrong ideas. And people think it's normal.

Even to send your daughter to Seminary in, let's say, Gateshead, I don't believe in it anymore. It's a very good place, Gateshead, but send your daughter to Boro Park or to Yeshiva of Brooklyn. There are very good places here.

And don't let your daughter travel to Eretz Yisroel either. A man approached me the other day. His daughter wants to go to Eretz Yisroel. She's a frum girl. He wants to know what I think about it. What does she have to go to Eretz Yisroel for?! It costs a lot of money to go to Eretz Yisroel. What does she have to go to Eretz Yisroel for?! An unmarried girl should waste money on going to Eretz Yisroel?!

No, I don't believe in these things.

Teach your children to save their money. They'll need it someday. A bank account is better than traveling – a savings account in a bank. Teach them to save money for themselves. And you want to train them to spend money on unnecessary things?! - No, I disapprove of that.

Tu B'Av Established as Yomtov Because of Shemiras Einayim

The Gemara states (Tainis 26B): "*Rav Shimon ben Gamliel said: Yisroel did not have yomim tovim like the 15th of Av and Yom Kippurim. On this day, Jewish girls would go out with borrowed white clothing so as not to shame the ones who didn't have…And what did they say, "Young man, lift up your eyes and see what you want to choose. Don't set your sights on beauty. Set your sights on family…*"

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen quotes **Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy"a** as explaining the greatness of this day as follows: From the fact that the girls had to tell the bochurim to lift up their eyes to look at them in order to choose one of them to marry, we can discern that they normally never lifted their eyes.

It is worthwhile to establish a Yomtov to commemorate their incredible level of shemiras einayim.

Unfortunately, there was a time in the city of Ramat Elchanan in Eretz Yisroel that many tragedies were happening. The Rabbonim went to **Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman זצ"ל** to ask him what they can do for a zechus that Hashem should stop the tragedies. Rav Shteinman said that they should be mekabel Shabbos ten minutes earlier than the scheduled time.



Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv זצ"ל



Horav Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman זצ"ל

When **Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv זצ"ל** heard what Rav Shteinman advised, he agreed, and gave the people of Ramat Elchanan a beracha that the tragedies should stop.

Short And Sweet Story Of The Week With Rabbi Mordechai Levin

A man told **Rav Chaim Kanievsky ZT"L**: "I own a large amusement-style park in Northern Israel that is very popular with tourists, families, and school groups. Recently, I became more religious, and decided to close the park on Shabbos. I feared that losing the income from the busiest day of the week, Saturday, would hurt the business terribly. Unfortunately, my fears were realized, and I am

now suffering tremendous losses. Rabbi, he concluded, I do not regret accepting to keep Shabbos, but I am asking for a *bracha* that I should be able to save my business."



Reb Chaim looked at him lovingly and answered with a smile on his holy face: "So it is when one does a good deed. Initially, the Yeitzer Harah fights us and tries to break our resolve. However, if you hold strong and continue keeping Shabbos, you will see that you will have tremendous bracha with your business."

Months later, a relative of Reb Chaim visited the park with his family. The owner greeted them warmly and updated them: "When I came to the Rav, I was absorbing tremendous losses to the tune of hundreds of thousands shekalim. The temptation to reopen on Shabbos was immense, so I went to Reb Chaim for a bracha. His response pushed me to continue keeping Shabbos. Today, my business is flourishing, with over 10,000 customers in the past few months. In fact, have jumped from 50th place to 3rd place on the list of amusement parks!

I have no doubt that the credit goes to my keeping Shabbos, and to the bracha from Reb Chaim! I have also already convinced some friends to close their businesses on Shabbos!"

Comment: After internalizing the lessons of Tisha B'Av, many Jews choose to better themselves and make positive spiritual changes in order to help bring Mashiach and the Third Bais Hamikdash. Reb Chaim's words are so timely; initially, the Yeitzer Harah will fight

fiercely to block our lofty attempts. We must try to persevere, and eventually, we will succeed in bettering ourselves, and will bring the Geulah (Final Redemption)!



Parsha Potpourri by R' Ozer Alport - Tu B'Av

The 15th day of the month of Av is commonly referred to as Tu B'Av, and it traditionally falls close to Shabbos Parshas Vaeschanan. The Mishnah says (Taanis 4:8) that it is one of the two most festive days in the Jewish calendar (the other being Yom Kippur). The Gemora (Taanis 30b) questions what is so unique about this date and proceeds to enumerate six different joyous episodes in Jewish history that all occurred on this day.

Rav Yitzchok Breitowitz points out that when counting from Tisha B'Av, the 15th day of Av is the seventh day, which symbolically represents the fact that we have now completed the traditional 7-day mourning period, and we are now picking ourselves up and moving on with life. In this light, he brilliantly suggests that the six causes of joy on Tu B'Av parallel the five tragedies that occurred on Tisha B'Av (Taanis 4:6).

Tisha B'Av is the emotional climax of a 3-week period during which we mourn devastation and destruction. On Tu B'Av, we figuratively "get up" from shiva, as we focus on moving on and rebuilding, just as our Gedolim taught us by example after the Holocaust. In fact, Chazal teach that before creating the world in which we live, Hashem first created many other worlds and destroyed them all, which teaches that the proper response to destruction – even the destruction of an entire world – is to channel our energy and efforts into rebuilding anew.

As we now begin the seven-week period of comfort, we should strengthen ourselves through the recognition that no matter what challenges and tragedies we may be dealt in life, Hashem will never

forsake us, and we always have the opportunity to follow in His footsteps by continuing to grow and rebuild.

The Mattress Magnate



The following is an amazing story told in **Rabbi Yoel Gold's** Stories to Inspire series.

A bride and groom walked into a big furniture supplier and looked around and noticed the clear financial success of the incredible company. The father of the groom approached the owner and asked him how he achieved such success in his life. The owner told him, "It's a funny story, actually."

"Years ago, my rabbi suggested to me that I become a councilman for my city. This position never really crossed my mind before, so I wasn't planning on taking the race too seriously. But since my rabbi wanted me to try, I decided to go for it.

"Another Jewish man in the race really wanted to win. I didn't take it personally, since I wasn't attached to winning, but he was determined to get me to lose the race. He got hold of my cell number and took out these big, elaborate ads in all the newspapers and magazines, and with my number, posted MATTRESSES ½ PRICE!"

The owner continued, "When the ads started running, my phone began to ring off the hook. I got a ton of phone calls, saying, 'Hi, I'd like two twin mattresses, please.' I said, "Mattresses? I don't sell mattresses.' This went on for a few days before I saw the ad myself and caught on.

"I spoke to my rabbi, and he said if I wanted to, I was allowed to explain to the callers that the ad was published to undermine me in the race for councilman. I thought about it and remembered that if Hashem does everything for the best, then I could make the best of this strange situation."

"During the next phone call I received, I took measurements and an exact specific order from the caller. I started to take all the orders and record them in a little notebook. After one week, I counted all my orders and took it to a mattress supplier. I had orders for over 1,400 mattresses!!

"I ran the numbers and requested to pay a specific, low price since it was a tremendous bulk buy, and I would be making a small profit on each one. I hired a delivery guy and delivered the orders within the next week, and every purchase was paid in full. It was a huge success!"

"With word-of-mouth and amazing Siyata Deshmaya, somehow, before I knew it, I was selling mattresses, and then bedroom sets, then dining room sets, and then I opened up a storefront, and the company grew and grew before my eyes!!! Instead of making an enemy of someone who tried to cut me down, I chose to accept Hashem's Will with love, and I know He was and is the source of my wonderful parnasah."



וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ

"The Sfas Emes teaches that Torah is transmitted not only through words but through the inner light of the soul. When a parent or teacher learns Torah with sincerity, that light enters the heart of the child even without speech."



The Miraculous Eyeglasses From the Desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



Around 200 years ago, in the city of Lemberg in Galicia, a baby boy was born into a Jewish family with the last name Brill. According to legend their name was derived from the "brillen" (glasses' in Yiddish) at the heart of this story. The parents' joy was short- lived, however, when it was discovered that the child was blind. As the doctors could do nothing to help, the parents accepted the Divine decree and loved their child even more.

The boy's first name is not known, but for our purposes we will call him Micha. When Micha was three years old, he was given his first haircut and brought to school. Although he obviously could not learn to read, the teacher began to teach him the blessings and prayers by heart. It soon became apparent that the child was unusually intelligent. Whatever he heard was immediately remembered.

Over the next 'few years he memorized the entire prayer book, many books of the Bible and many tractates of Mishna. The child acquired a vast amount of Torah knowledge and was beloved by all. Micha was especially drawn to sefarim, Jewish holy books. Even though he couldn't read, he would remove them from their shelves and lovingly caress their pages. Passing his fingers over the holy letters, he seemed to absorb their sanctity. Each book received a kiss before being put back.

One time Micha asked his brother to bring him to the main study hall in Lemberg. As was his habit, he began to take the sefarim off the shelves and straighten out their pages. He came across a very thick volume covered with dust; it was obvious that no one had used it in a very long time. He opened it and was surprised to feel

something hard between the pages. It was a glasses case that someone had forgotten.

The boy opened the case, took out the glasses, and playfully put them on. He thought he would faint: unbelievably, he could see! The entire world suddenly came into focus. Micha thought he must be dreaming. He took off the glasses and again was blind. Putting them back on, he could see his younger brother and the square-shaped letters on the pages before him. It was a miracle. Micha fought against the urge to cry out about what had happened. But he was still in shock and needed a little more time to assimilate the change.

Instead, he put the glasses in his pocket and asked his brother to take him home. Micha 's parents could see that something was wrong. The poor boy's hands were trembling; he was deathly pale and could barely eat. But when they asked him what was the matter, he insisted that everything was fine. That night he waited until everyone had gone to sleep to try on the glasses. Again, he could see as if he had never been blind!

A few days later he could no longer keep the secret to himself, and told his parents about the miraculous glasses. Needless to say, the entire household was filled with gladness and light. Soon, the whole city of Lemberg marveled at the miracle. Everyone agreed that there was no one more deserving of such good fortune than he. Moreover, now Micha could begin studying Torah in earnest.

Sometime later Micha went back to the study hall to take a good look at the book in which he had discovered the glasses. It was an ancient volume of Kabala (mysticism), and although he had made great strides in his studies, he could not understand much of what was written. Micha was determined to learn more about the book and the glasses, but no one was able to answer his questions.

Finally, he found a very old man who remembered that as a young child, he had often seen the Rabbi of the town poring over that particular volume and wearing similar glasses. Further questioning

revealed that the rabbi was none other than the famous Torah scholar known as the "**Pnei Yehoshua**" for his celebrated commentary on the Talmud.

Astoundingly, Micha later learned that he had found the glasses on the exact date of the rabbi's passing, the 14th of the Jewish month of Sh'vat! For the rest of his life, he observed the Pnei Yehoshua's yahrzeit as a special day of thanksgiving. Micha Brill grew up to be not only a Torah scholar but also a successful businessman who gave generously to charity.

Years later, when he passed away after a long and fruitful life, his many descendants gathered to divide up their inheritance. Everyone was willing to relinquish everything their father/grandfather had left them in exchange for the miraculous glasses. In the course of their argument the glasses fell to the floor and shattered, and so each of his children ended up with nothing but a small sliver of glass.

Guess Who I Prank Called by Moshe Gelber



Moshe Gelber in the early 1980s

I used to love coming to 770 as a young boy whenever the Rebbe held a late-night farbrengen, because it meant that I could stay up instead of going to bed on time. I knew the Rebbe was a great man, but I was a naive kid and didn't really understand all of the things he was saying. So, while he would be delivering these groundbreaking talks about how we have to better our lives, I would

be sitting under the bleachers with my cousins, tying people's shoelaces together.



It was the 1970s, and although I was growing up in Flatbush, I attended the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Crown Heights: My uncle, Dr. Moshe Feldman, served as a physician for the Lubavitch community and he influenced my parents to send me to that yeshivah. I would also get in trouble there, because I was a troublemaker.

My antics were mostly harmless practical jokes, which I did because I was trying to be funny, not to hurt anybody. They used to tell stories about a man named Reb Hershel of Ostropol, who was like the jester in the chasidic court of Rabbi Boruch of Mezhibuzh, and I think every generation has its pranksters. So, I was just carrying on that tradition.

One of the ways my cousins and I would be mischievous was by making prank calls. One day in the early '80s, when I was eleven, we were playing in my uncle's office, and saw a note. It said "Schneerson, 1304 President Street," and underneath that was a phone number.

We looked at each other. "Schneerson... that's the Rebbe's house!"

Then my cousin gave me another look. He wasn't as mischievous as I was, but he was a good instigator. "I dare you to call it." I called the number. A sweet old woman answered the phone – and I got scared. Instead of saying anything, I just made some animal noises, mooing like a cow for a few seconds, and then I hung up the phone. Five minutes later, I did it again, although this time I made some goat sounds.

About six months later, it was Sukkot, in the intermediate days of the festival, and I was back at my uncle's house. Our family was getting ready to have lunch together, so they were all outside in the sukkah when I was sent back into the house for some napkins and cups.

When I went back into the house, the red phone was ringing: Aside from the regular house phone, my uncle had a red phone reserved for medical emergencies. Only a few people in the community had the number for the red phone, and we children were instructed to never play with it, or even to touch it. But since it was ringing and no one else was in the house, I decided to answer it. I also decided to answer it like an idiot: "Hellooooo, who is it?" I inquired, in a ridiculous, high-pitched voice. The woman on the other end was slightly taken aback. "I'm sorry," she said. "I must have called the wrong number. I'm trying to reach Dr. Feldman."

"But this is Dr. Feldman's house," I replied. "He's just outside, in the sukkah, and I can go get him for you. Who's calling please?"

"This is Mrs. Schneerson from President Street," she said. "Okay, hold on a minute."

I went to my uncle and told him who was on the phone, and he ran into the house. A minute later, he came back out.

"How dare you?" he fumed. "I've told you so many times not to ever play games on the red phone. If somebody is calling that phone, it could be a life-threatening emergency and you could be delaying their medical care with your jokes. Do you know who was on the phone now?"

"Mrs. Schneerson from President Street?"

"Don't be a wise guy! That was the Rebbetzin! She's not feeling well and she asked me to come over. Now get your coat because you're coming along. She wants to meet you."

I was terrified. As we began walking, my uncle added: "And how dare you make prank calls to her!"

How does he know about that?, I wondered, but I got my answer before I could ask. "The Rebbetzin recognized your voice! 'That's the little boy who called me a few months ago, once as a cow and another time as a goat,' she said!"

I'm going to be punished in ways I don't even comprehend, I thought. When we got to the Rebbe's house, the door was unlocked. My uncle just turned the knob, we walked inside, and he started going up the staircase to the right, before turning back to me. "You stay right over there," he warned. "Don't touch anything!" As he walked up, the Rebbetzin appeared at the top of the staircase. She looked down, smiled at me, and waved. I waved back, and she disappeared back into a room, with my uncle behind her. That's it? I wondered. She just wanted to wave? That's not so bad.

Then, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around to see a man standing there with a stern look in his eye. His name was Gansburg, as I later found out, and he worked as an assistant in the Rebbe's house. "Are you Moshe?" he queried.

"Yes." A sense of dread came over me: He must be the executioner.

"Come with me, please." Shalom Ber Gansburg led me though the living room, into the kitchen, past the bright orange and yellow floral trim on top of the kitchen wallpaper, and through a door at the back of the kitchen. The door led directly into a sukkah, where a table was set.

"The Rebbetzin prepared lunch for you," he informed me. "Please sit down and enjoy."

There were two challah rolls, salad, a piece of baked salmon, and a cup of orange juice – already poured and ready to drink. I still remember how delicious it all was. As I sat there and ate, I mused about this unexpected turn of events. I thought I was going to be

severely punished for my little joke, and now I had been invited into the Rebbe's private sukkah, to eat a meal that the Rebbetzin had prepared! I don't know of anyone else in the community who had ever received such an honor. I'm going to brag to all of my friends about this, I gloated inside. I'm the man!

But the moral of the story is about the character of the Rebbetzin. I was mischievous, but she saw the bigger picture and knew that I really wasn't a bad kid; I was just trying to be funny. I think she had a sense of humor about it too. So even though she wasn't feeling well, she went out of her way to make sure I had a nice lunch to eat. Looking back, I'm still inspired by the act of kindness and love that the Rebbetzin showed me so many years ago. She was a great woman and she loved all of us, like a grandmother loves her grandkids even when they make trouble. Maybe that is how G-d loves all of us, even though at times we don't do what we're supposed to.

What You See Is Not What You Get - The Story Begins… by Rabbi Yechiel Spero

It was the third day of Elul zman, the start of a new year, when the boys were still on their best behavior. The Gemaros were brand-new, the notebooks fresh and appealing. The attitude of "anything can happen this year if I put my best foot forward" permeated the atmosphere.

That morning, something caught the eye of R' Lieberson, the menahel. Motti, a fine boy, already in eleventh grade, walked down the halls wearing a yarmulke that was completely out of dress code. The boys were expected to wear a black velvet yarmulke. It was standard and no one ever veered from it. But this yarmulke was bright, unusual, and drew undue attention.

R' Lieberson was nonplused. This wasn't Motti's style at all. He wondered if something had happened over the summer that caused

Motti to start heading in a different direction. Should R' Lieberson say something? Or would it be better to wait and see?

After some thought, he decided to hold back. If Motti wore the same yarmulke the next day, the menahel would address it then.

The following morning, Motti came in wearing his regular black velvet yarmulke. R' Lieberson went over to him, and, with a smile, said, "I like your yarmulke today," adding with a wink, "It's an improvement over yesterday's."

Motti grinned. "Rebbi, I want to tell you what happened." Yesterday, one of the boys came to yeshivah by mistake wearing the yarmulke he uses for sleeping, his "shluff kappel." He was so embarrassed. Seeing how mortified he was, I told him, "Don't worry, we'll switch. You wear mine, and I'll wear yours."

At first, he was hesitant, but when he saw I was sincere, he took me up on my offer and was extremely relieved. It was like the weight of the world was taken off of his shoulders. And I was happy to do it.

R' Lieberson felt a wave of admiration. Motti hadn't just done something harmless; he had done something beautiful. He had taken another boy's embarrassment onto his own head. Literally.

How often do we think we know exactly what we're looking at, only to find out later that the truth is completely different! We see a student yawning in class and assume he's bored, when really he was up late helping care for a younger sibling. We notice a neighbor avoiding eye contact and think he's unfriendly, when he's simply going through a hard time. We pass someone in shul still wearing weekday clothes on Friday night and judge, not realizing he's coming straight from the hospital.

Life is full of moments where what seems wrong at first is actually something very right.

Short Story by Yoni Schwartz

Baruch was a very gifted student who studied in the Chofetz Chaim's yeshiva. When he was preparing to leave, he visited the **Chofetz Chaim, ZT"L**, hoping to receive words of encouragement, and perhaps even a blessing.

He received neither. Instead, the Chofetz Chaim made him promise - not once or twice, but three times - that he would keep Shabbos.

He walked out both disappointed and confused; there he was, one of the top students in the yeshiva, and all he was being told to do was keep Shabbos?!

Fast forward a couple of years. The Nazis were taking over Europe and parts of Russia. Somehow, Baruch was lucky enough to obtain visas for himself, his wife, and his children. When they came to America, they quickly realized that it was not a land flowing with milk and honey. It was the middle of the Great Depression, and everyone was living in dire poverty. Baruch's family was barely scraping by from meal to meal; his children were hungry, and their clothes were full of holes.

One day, as he was already on edge, his boss called him into his office and said that if he didn't agree to start working on Shabbos, he would be fired. Already under an enormous amount of pressure, with his family almost starving, he and his wife decided to give in.

As he was about to step onto the train, the Chofetz Chaim's words flashed through his mind, and he said, "No! I will not break Shabbos!" He turned around and went back home.

The next day, his boss came to his house and said, "Congratulations! You passed the test."

"What test?" Baruch replied.

"My partner and I made a bet. He thought that religious Jews are just money hungry people with no values. He bet that you'd break

Shabbos if we pressured you. Congratulations! Not only did you win the bet, but starting Monday, you are promoted to the new manager, and here's an extra $1,000 for the trouble we put you through."



Reverence During Prayer

In the Sephardic community, reverence during prayer is considered a sacred tradition. For generations, congregants were careful not to speak during *tefillah*, especially during the *Torah* reading. Silence was seen as an expression of respect, a way of honoring the holiness of the words being recited.

True leadership is not always about pleasing the crowd. Sometimes it requires bold, even shocking actions to protect values that matter most. Respect for sacred moments - whether in prayer, in learning, or in community life - must be guarded fiercely. Silence in the synagogue became not just a rule, but a renewed expression of reverence.

It is said that when a prominent member of the Baghdad community once whispered something to a friend in middle of *Chazarat Hashatz*, the **Ben Ish Chai *zt"l*** stopped the *chazzan* in mid-blessing and turned towards the man. His face was calm, but his voice carried the weight of *Torah*. "My son, when the angels hear the *chazzan* repeat the *Amidah*, they tremble. And you speak? Do you know what you are interrupting?"

The man immediately fell silent, shaken by the rebuke. After the *tefillah*, the *Ben Ish Chai* approached him privately and added gently: "I did not mean to embarrass you. I spoke because the *Shechinah* is here, and we must not forget before Whom we stand."

The man later said that from that day forward, he never uttered a word during prayer again.





An incredible story is written in the memoir of an American soldier when he describes when he liberated the Dachau concentration camp. In 1945, they entered Dachau and there they found what they called 'the living dead' - bodies all over. They couldn't distinguish between the ones that were alive and the ones that were dead.

Even the ones that were alive didn't weigh more than 80 pounds. And as he describes, they were no more than bone, skin, and a soul. Going through the camps, they came into a room with hundreds of Yiddish kinder laying there motionless. Their eyes were closed. The playfulness that children usually have on their faces was gone. They helped them down and told them, we're going to have food for you. And all the kids lined up to get food, something so precious they didn't have in who knows how long.



His eyes fell onto one child standing at the back of the line. He couldn't anymore. He ran over to the child, and not knowing his native language, he spoke the language of the heart. He gave him a tight hug, and he started crying. And he tells him in English, you're going through a tough time now. I could just imagine. You don't know if your parents are alive somewhere, or they were shot or burned to death. Let me tell you something.

Out there in the world, there are people that care for you. Out there in the world, there are people that love you. Don't worry. Now you're going through a hard time. But don't forget, after the darkness comes the light. As he opened his tear-filled eyes, he couldn't believe what he saw. All the children that were waiting in line to get their precious food, all the children that were waiting to eat something finally, were all standing behind him, waiting to get their hug, to get their personal message of hope, to get their personal courage.

The soldier writes, there are times when hugs are more needed than food. When an embrace is more satisfying than sustenance. Our bodies require calories, but our souls must feel the warmth conveyed by a loved one.

In our generation of **עקבתא דמשיחא**, (an era characterised by extreme spiritual and social challenges, as well as significant physical upheaval), there are so many Chesed organizations. In every given place, time, in any situation, as the Baal Shem Tov said **הישועה תבוא על ידי הרחמים והחסדים** – 'Redemption will come through mercy and acts of loving-kindness.' With your middah of Chesed, that's how we're going to end this horrible Golus.

The soldier's story underlines that words of encouragement and compliments ("chizuk") can be as powerful as physical aid, highlighting the emotional and spiritual needs of individuals facing adversity. Sometimes a good word of chizuk, of encouragement, a compliment can be way more – because words matter.

"The Karliner Rebbes taught that love of Hashem must be fiery, alive, and overflowing. The mitzvah of 'V'ahavta' is not a quiet sentiment but a burning passion that fills the heart. When a Jew says Shema, he should feel as if his soul is ascending in flame."



The great Gaon, Rav Eliyahu Dessler, the famous Mashgiach, the Panovich, he also used to say 'shmoozin' for girls in the seminary in London. And one day he was berated by a Rav who said, why are you wasting your time? You're wasting your life.



And Reb Eliyahu Dessler, not only didn't he answer back, but he also just said, "I appreciate your Musar." And even though he was firm, and we all saw the results of the great impact he had, like Soroh Schneerer had on the girls the same way he had this great impact and success with the girls in England.

But not only that, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler said, this Rav is going to merit to get Gan Eden. You know why? Because he means it L'shem Shamaim. Even though he disagreed with him, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler still had no problems swallowing and absorbing whatever this Rav said.

One day this Rav was invited to speak in the central shul in England, and Rav Dessler, even though he usually didn't go, he made it his business that he should be there from the beginning to the end, because he wanted to show kavod to this Rav. - I may not agree with you. I am in a disagreement. I have a different opinion from you. But

the kavod I have to have for you, just like I have for anybody else. - And we see from here, the great impact Rav Dessler had on all of Klal Yisrael, because of those middos, because of the way he spoke, because of the positivity within him.

And this is what we have to practice. It's not something that comes automatically. It takes practice. But once you practice, then you become an expert at it, and then you will have the hatzlacha and the siyata d'shmayeh to accomplish all the wonderful things that The רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם is expecting from us.

So let's get started right now. We start with Hatzlacha, being positive and thinking before we say something. Is it worth it to say something negative about anybody else? Absolutely not. Let's just speak positive and HaKadosh Baruch Hu will shower us with all Nachas and Hatzlacha.

The Power of a Smile

One Erev Yom Kippur, **Rav Yisroel Salanter, zt"l**, the founder the Mussar movement, met a person on the way to Shul for Kol Nidrei. Rav Yisroel greeted him warmly, but this person was so absorbed with the seriousness of Yom Kippur, that he did not return the greeting.

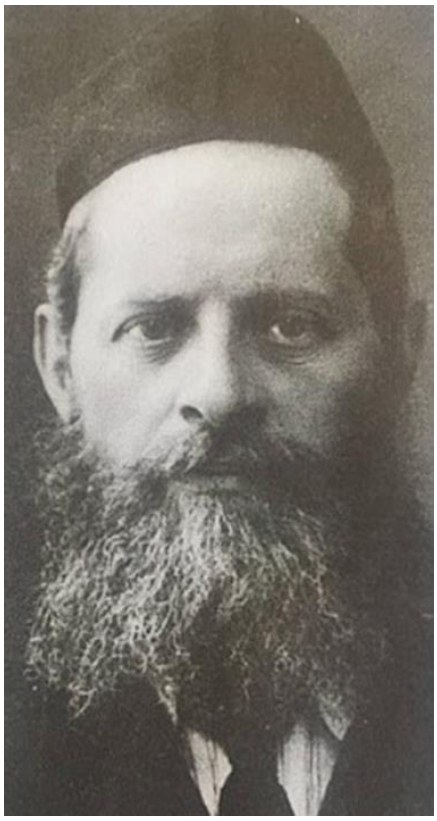
Rav Yisroel then remarked to his student, **Rav Itzele Peterburg**, "Why must I suffer because of his preoccupation with the Yom HaDin?"

Rav Yisroel taught that regardless of one's mood, he has a responsibility to greet everyone in a cheerful and pleasant manner. Rav Yisroel Salanter further taught that one's face is a Reshus HaRabim, as it is in the public.

One's thoughts and mood are in his mind, and that is in Reshus HaYachid, on private property, and one should keep that to himself. But his face is something that everyone can see and it is part of the

public domain, and one must make sure that others see pleasantness on him.

The Alter of Slabodka, Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt"l, expanded this idea and taught that the expression on one's face can affect the mood of those around him, and that is why the face is considered to be within the public domain. As proof of this, he would point out that when one is walking about outside, he will never actually see his own face, other than through a reflection. But the look on his face is visible to everyone else.



Rav Avraham Grodzinsky, zt"l, exemplified this teaching. He would spend a great deal of time in front of the mirror practicing his smile, and he worked for two full years to acquire this Middah of greeting others cheerfully, and he did this even while living through the horrors of the Holocaust.

In the ghettos during World War II, his face was always shining, despite the horrible challenges. **Rav Shlomo Wolbe, zt"l**, would talk about his father-in-law,

Rav Avraham Grodzinsky, and how he spent much time working on how he would greet people with a smile.

Rav Wolbe would tell people, "Look in the mirror and smile until you see a smile that you want to greet other people with. A smile doesn't cost any money, and it doesn't take any time, but with it, you are accomplishing great things. You are doing Chesed with your smile!"

In fact, **Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen** would say that the reason mirrors were created is so that we can practice our smiles!



Menachem is a friend of mine and a very special Yid. For Parnassah, he's an Amazon seller. Yesterday, he shared the following remarkable story with me. In June of 2024, he received an email from the United States Department of Energy informing him that he was under investigation.





The issue was that he'd been selling incandescent light bulbs, which under new Biden regulations had become illegal to sell. According to the government, every bulb carried a penalty of about $525. When you add everything up, they said he owned $5.2 million in fines. Menachem immediately contacted a lawyer. After a lot of back and forth with the government, the lawyer managed to bring the number down to around $300,000, $400,000.

The lawyer told him this was a very good settlement, and he should probably take it. Menachem told his lawyer he didn't even intend to give the United States government 300 cents. He explained that if you looked on the Department of Energy website, the exact bulb that he was selling was listed as a specialty bulb, which meant it was allowed to be sold. The government had countered that the website simply hadn't been updated yet.

Menachem said, 'What do you mean? It's your website. It's not my problem if you don't update your website.' - Still, as they say, you

can't fight City Hall. The government had all the time and all the resources. So the case stayed open. For almost a year and a half, Menachem lived with that cloud hanging over his head.- Sleepless nights, unrelenting stress.

Right before Rosh Hashanah, Menachem gets a call from a woman in Eretz Yisrael. She was raising money to buy dresses and suits for kids from very poor families. Zero overhead. Every penny went directly to buy these kids' clothing.

The woman was extremely stressed and asked if he could help. On the spot, Menachem said, count me in for $10,000. He clarified that he wasn't promising to write a $10,000 check himself. His plan was to raise the money. He couldn't raise it. Then he would give it himself.

The very next day, Menachem comes into the office and receives a purchase order, something that's not at all common in his business. When he calculated the profit from that order, you guessed it, it was $10,000, the full amount of money that he had committed to Tzedakah.

But that's nothing compared to what happened five days later. Menachem gets an email from the United States Government Department of Energy informing him that the entire case had been completely dismissed. He didn't owe anything.

After almost a year and a half, the case was simply and inexplicably closed. Menachem realized with absolute clarity he had helped Hashem's kinderlech, children who needed clothing for Yomtov, and then Hashem had helped him with Parnassah. But more importantly, Hashem had miraculously extracted him from a situation that had been hanging over him for almost a year and a half.

Look at the incredible power of helping others.





I have a friend, he's a very Chosheve rov in Ramat Bet Shemesh, his name is Rav Aaron Pessin. Rav Aaron told me that he travels to Connecticut many times to visit mishpacha. And when he's there, he davens in either one of two cities. And one of the two cities, he tells me, there's always a minyan. Every time I go, I always find a minyan. The other city, he tells me, it was almost impossible to find a minyan.

I would come to Shul and there wouldn't be a minyan. It's very strange for me. How come there's never a minyan there?

One day he tells me, I'm in Shul waiting for a minyan, and I hear two people talking. One says to the other one, did you try out the new kosher restaurant in town? It's amazing. The other one said, yeah, it was great.

So I'm thinking to myself, wait, you have enough people to support a kosher restaurant, but you don't have enough people to get a minyan for mincha? What's going on over here? So I go over to the Gabbai. I said to the Gabbai, I have a question for you. How could it be that you have enough people to support a kosher restaurant, but you don't have enough people to get a minyan for mincha?

The Gabbai says, let me make your question stronger. We have **two** kosher restaurants.

I said, okay, what's pshat? He says, it all goes back to the curse of the rabbi. Many, many, many years ago, there was a rabbi in town. He was one of the first rabbis in America. And he started one of the first yeshivas in America. And he was a real rav, like a real European type of rav. But the city was a real American city. And he cracked

down on the butchers of the city. If they wanted a hashkacha, he He was makpid on them to make sure they did what they needed to do.

The butchers didn't like him. Now, butchers, they're tough guys. So the butchers decided to take revenge on the rabbi. What did they do? Purim came.



That Purim, they delivered Shalach Manas to the house of the rabbi. A Beautifully wrapped package. The rebbetzen opened the package. She didn't know that inside the package there were rats! They were crazed. They had been starved, and they were killing each other.

When the Rebbetzin saw this. The Rebbetzin lost her mind. She had to be hospitalized. And when the Rav saw what happened to his wife, the Rav said, I curse you, this city, you'll never be a Makom Torah.

So the Gabbai said ... The curse of the rabbi came true. People try to start yeshivas and people try to start things. People don't come to minyan. It's the rabbi's curse.

So Rav Aaron Pessin said, 'Wait a second. Did you ever go to ask for mechila from the rabbi? Did you ever go to his grave?'

He said, 'I tried. I've tried to put together a minyan to go to the grave. But every time I try, something happens.' I'll give you an example. He said, a number of years ago, I tried to put together a group of people to go. And we set a date. And then there was the

biggest storm that we saw in the last 20 years on the eastern seaboard. - You can look it up, he told him. We get there, but it didn't work out.

So Aaron told him, look, I'm in America for a few more days. Here's my phone number. If you see you can put together a minyan, let me know and I'm going to come. I want to join you.

He didn't call. But when Aaron went back to Israel, he went and told Reb Elyashiv. He asked him, does this city have a chiyuv to ask mechila from the Rav? So Reb Elyashiv wrote a teshuva back.

The city doesn't mamash have a chiyuv here because it's not them, it's their grandparents or whatever, the great-grandparents. However, that said, there was a tremendous bizayon talmid chachom in the city, and therefore the right thing would be for the olam to go to the Beis Hakvaros and ask mechila from the Rav.

Rav Aaron sent the psak that Rav Elyashiv had written, and he sent it to the Gabbai.

The Gabbai organized, not just a group, but a big group from the city, and they went out to the beis olam. They said Tehillim, they davened, and they asked for mechila from the Rav.

Rav Pessin told me, I came back to the city a few weeks later. I went to Shul. There was a minyan and more than a minyan. Unbelievable. The curse had been broken.

But what do we see from here? The Rav, in his moment of anguish, he said a line. 'I curse you', he said. "This city will never be a Makom Torah!"

There's tremendous power in the words that we speak. It wasn't until 100 years later until they went to the Beis Hakevaros and asked Mechila and only then was the curse broken.

We see an incredible thing over here. How careful we must be with what we say. We say, ah, maybe it's 2,000 years ago. Then there

was, you know, words had power. No, 100 years ago, and even 20 years ago, and even today, everything we say has power.

So before we speak, don't take five minutes. Maybe take half a second. Should I say this? Should I not? Remember, **הַחַיִּים וְהַמָּוֶת בְּיַד הַלָּשׁוֹן** (*Life and death are in the hands of the tongue*).

Chizuk - Inspiration

On a frigid Thursday, January 14th, 1937, the RMS Aquitania glided into New York Harbor, carrying among its third-class passengers a penniless refugee rabbi, his wife, and three young children. The man who disembarked that day brought with him no material wealth — only the clothes on his back, and a few possessions.

That man was **Rav Moshe Feinstein**. He had survived pogroms and Communist persecution in Soviet Russia. He arrived in America with nothing. During his early years at Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem, Rav Moshe's salary was $35 a week. Because he could not afford the carfare home, Rav Moshe slept all week on a bench in the Bais Medrash (house of Torah study).

During these early years in America, an incident occurred that would prove decisive in establishing Rav Moshe's reputation as a Posek (leading Halachic authority) who could not be influenced by considerations of politics or power. He was asked to adjudicate a major dispute between some of the most powerful Rabbanim in the United States and some Shochtim — ritual slaughterers who worked in the slaughterhouses that these Rabbanim supervised. The dispute involved complex questions of Jewish labor law and the authority of rabbinic supervisors over the workers they managed.

The powerful rabbis expected a ruling in their favor. They were well-connected, established, and politically formidable. Rav Moshe was a newcomer — a refugee with no connections, position or power.

He ruled in favor of the Shochtim.

The response was swift and fierce. The establishment rabbis were furious. They reportedly warned that Rav Moshe would be "finished in America."

That was not to be. That was actually Rav Moshe's beginning in America. A new Posek had emerged - one who could not be intimidated. One who ruled solely on his understanding of Halachah and one who was willing to contradict powerful figures when he believed they were wrong.

This was precisely the quality that people wanted in a Posek - absolute integrity, freedom from political influence, commitment to truth above all else.

The long-term consequences of this incident were exactly the opposite of what the angry Rabbanim had threatened. Rather than being "finished in America," Rav Moshe's reputation was made. Thereafter, every difficult Din Torah (Jewish court case) in America was referred to Rav Moshe. People who feared the political power of the establishment, who worried that established rabbinical courts might be influenced by considerations beyond pure Halachah, who needed a Posek they could trust to be completely objective, turned to Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"L.

"The greatness of Israel is not measured by miracles or wonders, but by the nearness of Hashem that rests upon them at all times. Even when a Jew feels distant, the Shechinah stands beside him. The Rizhiner taught that this is the meaning of כִּי מִי־גּוֹי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־ לוֹ אֱלֹקִים קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו קְרֹבִים אֵלָיו — the closeness is not earned; it is inherent. A Jew may forget Hashem, but Hashem never forgets the Jew." ~ Rizhiner Rebbe.



The following story I heard from the great Gaon and Tzaddik **Rav Shloima Brevda** זצוק"ל. **The Chasam Soifer** was the Gadol Hador in his time, answering shailos from all over. Every summer, after Tishaa B'av, for about two weeks, the Chasam Soifer would go to a small town and rent a cottage from a non-Jew. In that town there was a handful of simple Jews.

One year, one of those Jews asked the Chasam Soifer, "Why do you rent from the non-Jew? I also have rooms. Why don't you stay by me?" - The next summer the Chasam Soifer rented by this Jew.

In the summer the Chasam Soifer changed a little from his regular schedule. After davening on Shabbos morning, he would make kiddush in his room, eat a shtikel mezonos, and then he had a specific limud that he learned before the seuda. After the limud, the Chasam Soifer did not make kiddush again. He washed and began to eat by the host. The host besides for being an am ha'aretz, did not know that the Chasam Soifer had already made kiddush. When the host saw that the Chasam Soifer did not make kiddush, he was in shock. When he got to shul he made a huge uproar by his amai aretz friends.

By the time the Chasam Soifer came to shul for mincha they made a huge demonstration against the Chasam Soifer. - The Chasam Soifer patently and calmly explained that indeed he had made kiddush.

On the Chasam Soifer's way back from shul, he walked together with a Talmid Chochom. The Chasam Soifer told him two things. Number one, "The reason why this happened to me was because of my sin of going against the divrei Chazal. Chazal who say that a Talmid Chochom should not stay by the home of even a pious am ha'aretz."

The second point the Chasam Soifer said was, "Because of what just happened, I am put at ease. Why am I put at ease? You see the waves of Reform and Haskalah are rampant, and I am afraid that since Yidden naturally have reverence from anyone that is called Rabbi or Rav, they will fall prey to those false "rabbis". Because of their reverence and kavod and emunas Chachomim, they will not question them and they give them full respect and not judge their ways. This was the way for many generations. I was afraid that this will cause many to go astray.

However, today I saw that this is not the case anymore. They do not have the same awe and respect for Rabanim anymore and just as they challenged me, they will challenge those 'rabbis' as well!" - "Therefore", said the Chasam Soifer, "I am put at ease from the situation that just happened."

Talk About a Kiddush HaShem...WOW! By: Rabbi Dovid Saks, Jewish Heritage Connection

Every once in a while, there is a story published about those among us that do live up to the Torah's mandate to be a light unto the nations. It has happened more than once in recent times where a religious Jew showed what Jewish ethics really all about.

It happened again. Only this time the Kiddush HaShem resulted in an immediate tangible result. A result that was an unintended consequence of his actions. Which makes the Kiddush HaShem even greater since there was no ulterior motive for what Sol Werdiger did. He did it because it was the right thing to do. Not for any personal or communal gain.

This past weekend I heard an amazing story: Mr. Sol Werdiger, CEO of Outerstuff, a company that produces sports apparel, received a phone call from Mr. Oh Joon, the South Korean UN Ambassador asking to meet him for lunch at a Kosher restaurant in Manhattan.

Although Sol did not know the purpose of the meeting he agreed to meet with Mr. Joon.

When they met, Mr. Joon told him the following, "I have always heard negative stereotypes about Jews and Israel, and I took it at face value. Then, my daughter took an internship working on design in your company. Throughout the year, she has been telling me how wonderful it is to work at your company."

Mr. Joon continued, "There are four areas which stood out and impressed my daughter. 1) Everyday, at 1:30 p.m., no matter what was going on at the office, all the men including those from neighboring offices, retreated into a room to pray with sincerity and calm. 2) Every Friday the office shuts down early in the afternoon in preparation for your holy Sabbath and is closed on the Sabbath - this includes all workers no matter which faith or religion they maintain. 3) My daughter observed that each petitioner for charity - and there were many - were treated with respect and left with a check in hand. 4) My daughter was treated with the utmost respect and dignity."

Because of the amazing experience and lessons the company taught his daughter, Mr. Joon took out his checkbook and was ready to write a check returning all his daughter's earnings! Mr. Werdiger wouldn't hear from it. "Your daughter worked and earned her salary and rightfully deserves her pay, I will not accept any remuneration."

Then the Ambassador relayed the most amazing thing. "As you know, I have voting privileges at the UN. Because of my renewed appreciation of the Jewish people, I abstained from voting on resolutions against Israel on three occasions. At one resolution I was the ninth vote needed to pass the motion and resolution against Israel and because I abstained, it did not pass!"

Mr. Werdiger told me that no one at the office had any idea that this girl was the daughter of an Ambassador, and no one ever

imagined what type of impact their typical conduct at work had on her or how this impacted the votes against Israel.

Mr. Werdiger happens to be the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Agudath Israel of America. Which speaks highly of their lay leadership if he is typical of them.

Hashem has entrusted us to follow the example of our forefather Avraham to be trailblazers and to set examples becoming a light to all nations by living exemplary lives as outlined by the laws, personalities and experiences of our precious and timeless Torah!



I'm close with a young couple that about a half a year ago decided to pick themselves up with their little baby and travel Asia. They've been to Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam. They've seen incredible summits, beautiful beaches, islands, white sand. But what's most fascinating is that their baby, where has that baby been? You could say they've been in this beautiful location and that beautiful location. But the truth is, the baby's really just been in one place, in its parents' arms.

If you think about it for a moment, this is really our perspective that we need to have when we travel through life's journeys. Dovid HaMelech writes in Tehillim (131:2) that a person needs to find tranquility, peace of mind, from the understanding that כְּגָמֻל, עָלַי אִמּוֹ, That our relationship with Hashem is like a mother carrying a little small baby. - They can travel and traverse the entire world, but that baby remains in one spot, in its mother's arms.

I think if we take a step back and try to internalize that concept, that no matter where we are in life, and no matter what life throws

at us, in essence, we're in one place, in Hashem's arms. That will give us tremendous tranquility, security, and peace of mind.



Prison Saved His Life by Rabbi Shlomo Landau

A rabbi once gave a Daf Yomi shiur inside a prison. Not a white-collar prison — a prison filled with hardened criminals.

One day he noticed someone unusual attending the shiur. The man had a large black yarmulke, a white beard, and looked like a regular frum Jew. He didn't look like someone who belonged among the inmates there. After the shiur, the rabbi approached him. "Can we speak for a few minutes?" he asked. - "Of course."

The rabbi looked at him carefully and said, "Who are you? And what are you doing here?"

The man sighed. "You have a few minutes?" he asked. "Because if you do, I'll tell you why I'm really here." And he began to tell his story.

He had been driving out of Haifa one day when he noticed two young men hitchhiking on the side of the road. Wanting to do a chesed, he pulled over. "Where are you going?" They mentioned a destination that was along his route. "Sure," he said. "Hop in." The two men placed large bags into the trunk and got into the car.

They began driving and making small talk. About fifteen or twenty minutes into the trip, while they were on the highway, several police cars suddenly surrounded them and forced the car to pull over. The police ordered everyone out of the car and told them to lie face-down on the ground. All three men were arrested.

The driver was shocked. "What's going on?"

One of the officers explained: "These two men you picked up are wanted criminals. They've been robbing jewelry stores and committing a series of thefts. The bags in your trunk are filled with

stolen jewelry. As far as we're concerned, you're their accomplice — the getaway driver."

The man tried to explain. "I'm telling you the truth. I just gave two hitchhikers a ride. I had no idea who they were." The officer told him he could explain that to the judge.

When he appeared in court, he repeated the same story. But the judge didn't believe him. He was sentenced to six months in prison. Not a minimum-security prison. A prison filled with hardened criminals.

For this man, the experience was unbearable. He was separated from his family, sitting in prison for a crime he never committed. The people around him were violent criminals. The language, the behavior, the environment — it felt like he had been thrown into a cesspool of humanity. Every day he asked himself the same question: "Hashem, why? What did I do to deserve this?"

Early in his time there, he found a book in the prison library — a basic first-aid manual. It explained CPR, heart attacks, and how to recognize the symptoms of cardiac arrest. Desperate to escape the prison even temporarily, he came up with a plan. He would fake a heart attack.

One day he suddenly collapsed and began acting as if he were having severe chest pains. The prison staff panicked. An ambulance was called immediately, and he was rushed to Rambam Hospital. The doctors began running tests.

A short while later, a doctor walked into his room. "You're going into emergency surgery," the doctor said. "What? Why?" the man asked.

"You have severe blockage in your arteries," the doctor explained. "This is life-threatening."

The man was stunned. "But I feel fine!"

The doctors didn't take chances. They rushed him into surgery.

After the operation, when he woke up in recovery, the surgeon was standing beside his bed. The doctor looked at him and said, "You look like a religious Jew. You should probably make a kiddush."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

The surgeon explained: "When we opened your arteries, you were 89 percent blocked. With that level of blockage, you would not have survived the week. The fact that you came to the hospital when you did literally saved your life."

The man sat there stunned. He later told the rabbi who gave the shiur in prison: "They eventually sent me back to jail. There was nothing anyone could do about the sentence. But now I understood everything."

"You asked me why I'm in prison," he said. "I'm in prison because Hashem wanted me to find that book. So I would stage the heart attack. So they would take me to Rambam Hospital. So they would discover the blockage. So they could save my life."

Then he said something unforgettable. "You think I'm in prison because of those hitchhikers? No." "I'm in prison because Hashem wanted to give me my life back."

"For me," he said, "this was techiyas hameisim — bringing the dead back to life."

The lesson is powerful. Often when we go through difficult situations, we cry out: "Hashem, why are You doing this to me?" We don't understand. But, if we hold on to emunah and trust the process, eventually Hashem allows us to look back and see the plan.

This man was fortunate — he saw it quickly. For others it may take years. And sometimes we only understand the reason in the Next World. But the message is clear: Even when life feels confusing or painful, Hashem is always running the story.

When Hashem Changed Their Plans by Rabbi Mike Bengio

Rabbi Mike Bengio shared a deeply personal story that forever changed the way he views life's disappointments.

Several years ago, Rabbi Bengio was leading an inspirational outreach trip for Jewish teenagers in South America. During the trip, his personal backpack was stolen. Fortunately, there wasn't anything especially valuable inside. Except for one thing. Both of his passports - his American passport and his Chilean passport - were gone. Normally, replacing a passport would simply be an inconvenience. But this time was different. He was scheduled to return home on Sunday, and the very next day he was supposed to fly to an important conference. There wasn't enough time to replace the passports. Even obtaining an emergency passport seemed nearly impossible.

The person responsible for watching the backpack felt terrible. "I'm so sorry," he said. "This conference is so important. What are you going to do?"

Rabbi Bengio remained calm. "If Hashem doesn't want me to travel," he replied, "then I won't travel."

The man looked at him in surprise. "You're taking this incredibly well."

Rabbi Bengio smiled. "I'll tell you the truth," he said. "It's not because I'm such a great tzaddik. I simply learned this lesson many years ago." Then he shared the experience that changed his life forever.

It was 1996. His family had traveled from Chile to Miami for a vacation. Like every child, when the vacation was coming to an end, he and his siblings begged their parents to stay longer. Their parents smiled but said no. "We've had a wonderful vacation," they explained. "Now it's time to go home. You have school, and we have work." Everything was packed. The family was ready to leave.

Then, on the morning of their flight, something unexpected happened. It was pouring rain. As Rabbi Bengio's mother walked down the steps outside the hotel, she slipped on the wet surface. She tumbled down the staircase. The fall was severe. She couldn't move. Hotel staff rushed to help her and immediately called an ambulance. She was taken to the hospital while the children waited anxiously back at the hotel.

The family's vacation was suddenly over… or so they thought. Doctors weren't sure if Mrs. Bengio would ever walk again. The situation looked very serious. Baruch Hashem, after extensive examinations and much tefillah, an incredible miracle occurred. The very next morning, she stood up. She could walk. The family was overjoyed. As children, all they could think about was one thing: "We get another week in Miami!" - But they had no idea what had really happened.



The following day, they learned the shocking news. The flight they had been scheduled to board - Aeroperu Flight 603 - had crashed on October 2, 1996. Due to a tragic technical malfunction, the aircraft crashed into the Pacific Ocean. All 70 people on board lost their lives. There were no survivors. - Rabbi Bengio's entire family had been scheduled to be on that flight. Instead… they were alive because of what had seemed like a terrible accident.

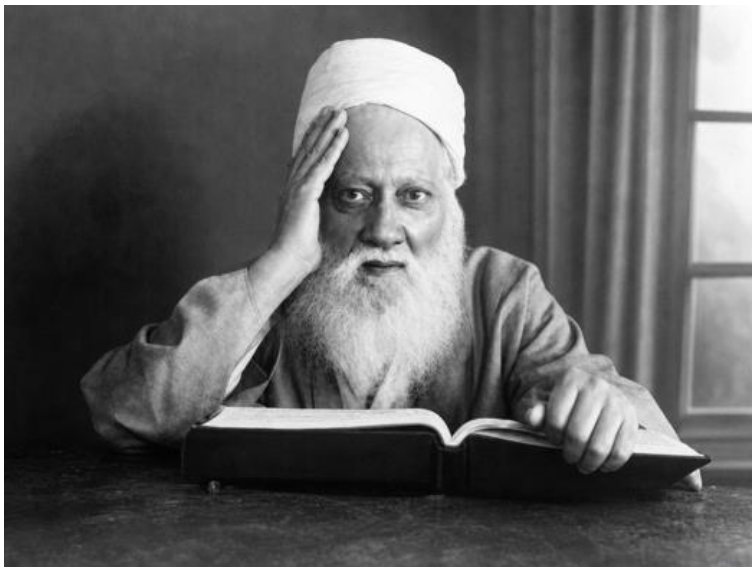
Looking back, everything suddenly became clear. What had appeared to be a tragedy… had

actually been Hashem's protection. Rabbi Bengio concluded: "Now you understand why I don't panic when my plans suddenly change." "If Hashem doesn't want me on a certain plane… I don't want to be on that plane either."

He explained that we don't always understand why Hashem changes our plans. Sometimes we ask, "Why is this happening to me?" At first, we see only confusion. Only later, if we are fortunate, does Hashem allow us to understand. Sometimes He gives us a glimpse of the reason. Sometimes He doesn't. But the lesson remains the same. Hashem is present at the beginning of the story… just as much as He is at the end. Even when we don't understand His plan, we can trust that He does. Because sometimes… what feels like the greatest disappointment… is actually Hashem's greatest protection.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

The Kabbalist Who Stopped Hitler



During World War II, the German army advanced to El Alamein in Egypt. It was widely known that their intent was to continue through Syria and from there invade Eretz Yisrael, to wipe out the Jewish population living there. In response, many spiritual efforts were undertaken, including intensified tefillah, teshuvah and visits to kivrei tzadikim.

Among those leading these efforts was **R' Yehuda Fetaya**. He organized four groups and sent them to the four corners of Yerushalayim to recite special tefillos. After the tefillos, R' Yehuda Fetaya declared: "Today's tefillos were effective. They confused

the Sar (malach) of Hitler, exchanging the word **סוריה** (Syria) with **רוסיה** (Russia), which contains the same letters. There he will fall."

A few days later, it is said that **R' Yaakov Abuchatzeira** (1806-1880), who was the grandfather of the **Baba Sali**, appeared in a dream to R' Yitzchak Alfiyah (1878-1955), instructing him to travel with others to his kever in Damanhur, Egypt, and daven for the salvation of the Jewish people.

R' Yitzchak along with a group traveled there and davened at the kever for three days. On the third day of their tefillos, the German forces suffered their decisive defeat at the Battle of El Alamein.

Historically, Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union proved disastrous for Nazi Germany. After launching Operation Barbarossa, the German army advanced deep into Russian territory using the 'Blitzkrieg' tactic. However, their supply lines became dangerously overstretched, eventually leaving frontline troops with severe shortages.

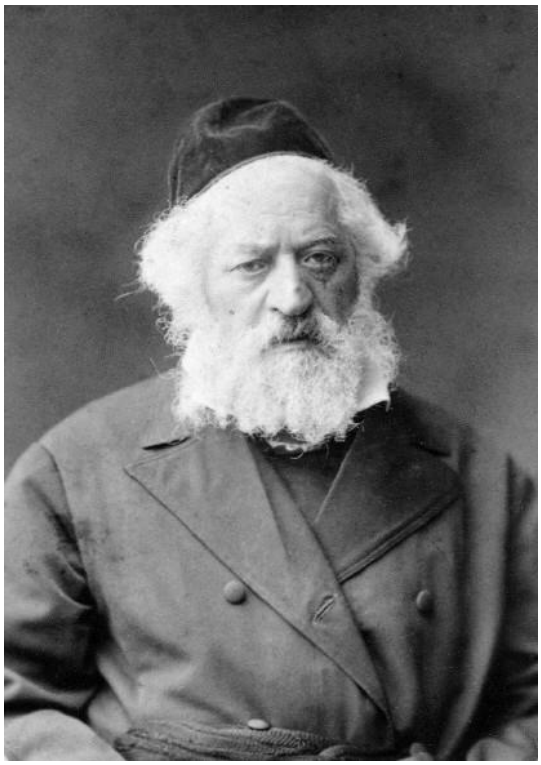
Combined with the vastness of Russia, the brutal winter conditions, difficult terrain, and strong Soviet resistance, the campaign became catastrophic for the Germans. It turned into a deadly quagmire, resulting in enormous losses. In fact, the majority of German military casualties during World War II occurred on the Russian front.

Timeless Truths by Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev was once asked why each tractate of Talmud begins on page 2.

He answered, "Because even once you conclude the tractate, you must understand that you haven't even begun to study its first page!" (Chassidim Mesaprim, Rabbi Y.L. Levin, z"l)

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים



The story is told that once while travelling to a distant city to address and strengthen the Orthodox community in the ways of Torah and Mitzvos, **R' Yitzchok Elchanan Spektor ZT"L**, happened to be on the same train as a "modern" Jew - one who had modernized his Judaism by practically throwing away most of it.

As the train entered the Vilna station, the modern man saw that the entire platform, as far as the eye could see, was packed - wall to wall - with people. "Surely, there must be some member of the royalty on this train," thought the reformist, "or possibly even a high government dignitary." When he asked who everyone had come to see, though, he was told that all were waiting to catch a glimpse of R' Yitzchok Elchanan.

"Well, if he's on the train, I can understand it," thought the man to himself, "He's known as one of our leading Rabbis, and I've read how he meets with the greatest of dignitaries." Determined to see this great Rabbi for himself, the man went over to the first-class carriage. How could so distinguished a Rabbi travel in anything else?

"No one here by that name," said the conductor. The man thought he might then be in the second-class carriage and went off to look for him. Again, he was unsuccessful. Finally, he went to the third-class carriage.

"Yes, he's here," a man told him, pointing to an old Jew with a long white beard standing in the corner. And what an embarrassment! He was standing there davening in his Tallis and Tefillin - right in front

of all the non-Jews! The man waited until R' Yitzchok Elchanan finished and then went over and introduced himself.

"Rabbi," he said, "I'd heard so much about you and what you've done for the Jewish people. I naturally assumed that you were more modern."

"Indeed I am," said R' Yitzchok Elchanan forcefully, "Those people who keep the Mitzvos are the "modern" ones. It is those Jews who don't keep the Mitzvos who are old-fashioned, having reverted back to the practices of Terach, father of Avrohom, who was an idol worshipper!"



I'd like to share with you an incredible story. Late one Thursday evening, two young men living in Eretz Yisrael decided to drive from Ashdod to the Kotel. They drive there, they daven there, they spend some time there, and then they return to Ashdod around 2:00 a.m. As they pass a local shul, they noticed something unusual. The lights were on, and they wondered: Why would the lights be on if no one is inside? It's a waste of electricity.

They go inside, they see a kollel yungerman in his thirties. He's sitting there on the bench and he's crying. They walk over to him, they ask him: What's wrong? And he says: My wife threw me out of the house tonight. She told me: I may be learning Torah, but I'm not taking care of my family. There's no food in the house and the children went to bed hungry. We don't even have a piece of bread in the house, no soap to wash the kids. I didn't know where else to go,

so I came here. And I turned to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and I asked: What do I do now?

The two young men said to him: We have some bread, we have some soap, we have some basics. We'll go home and be right back.

But as they stepped out of the Beis Medrash, they thought to themselves: Some bread and shampoo alone won't solve this problem. So between them, they had 400 shekel. So they decided to find a supermarket and buy this kollel yungerman everything that he would need for Shabbos.

But at 2:00 in the morning in Ashdod, there was only one place open, a convenience store called 24/7. They were uncomfortable shopping there because it was open on Shabbos, literally 24/7. But they knew that this yungerman could not go home empty-handed. So they went inside and they bought him some challah and meat and fish and groceries and soap and shampoo.

Everything he needs. Every shekel they had was spent. As they loaded the bags in their car, they realized that he would be uneasy if he knew that the food came from a store that was open on Shabbos. So they began transferring everything into plain bags.

Unbeknownst to them, the store owner had been watching, and he approached them and he asked: What are you doing? And they explained their dilemma. They expected anger and mockery from the store owner. But instead, the man broke down crying. He said to them: I'm not yet religious. But I've been growing. I was learning regularly with a chavrusa two hours a week and it changed my life. But now he moved away. I lost that connection.

Tonight, I prayed to Hashem: I want to come closer to You, please help me reconnect. And now at 2:00 in the morning, you walk into my store to help a kollel yungerman. And then the owner of the market turns to these two yingelait and he makes them an offer: Convince this kollel yungerman to learn with me two hours a week, and I will

give him ma'aser from my store and he will have steady support. Ve'kach havah, and so it was.

He was able to continue learning in kollel and his home stabilized. And the store owner, he began learning again and he continued growing in his Yiddishkeit.

But this is not the end of the story. A few months later, the store changed its name and its sign. No longer 24/7, it became 24/6!

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - Baba Meir and the Illiterate Jew

The Midrash Tanchuma (Tazria 6) tells the story of a kohen who made his livelihood by diagnosing tzara'as. His parnassah wasn't doing so well, so he decided to leave Eretz Yisrael. Before he left, he said to his wife, "Because people come to ask if their lesions are tzara'as, I will tell you how we know.

"Each hair grows from its own follicle and has its own source of nourishment. If you see that the hairs are dry, it means that its source of nourishment has run dry, and he has tzara'as."

"I don't understand," his wife retorted. "You're saying that Hashem supports the life of every single hair within its follicle, but for people, He doesn't provide parnassah? Why do you have to travel abroad to look for yours?"

He stayed in Eretz Yisrael and found parnassah there.

In connection to this midrash, **Rav Dovid Abuchatzeira, shlita**, tells this story about his great ancestor, **Rav Meir Abuchatzeira, zt"l**:

A Yid came to R' Meir in Morocco, crying. He had come to say, "good-bye" because he was moving to Eretz Yisrael.

"Why are you crying?" R' Meir wondered. "You should be happy you're moving to Eretz Yisrael!"

"But I don't know how to read or write. I heard that everyone there is smart. How can someone illiterate like me make a parnassah?"

"Don't worry," R' Meir said. "You will make a good parnassah because you don't know how to read or write!"

Relief bloomed in the man's heart, and he boarded the plane happily.

"Why are you so happy?" people asked him.

"What do you mean? The tzaddik promised me that I will have a good parnassah in Eretz Yisrael!"

"You will make a good parnassah in Eretz Yisrael?" They shook their heads. "Everyone there is educated and you are illiterate; no one will hire you."

And what happened in the end? One of his sons got work in a military factory. One day, the son's commander told him they had a problem. "We have tons of top-secret paperwork to shred, and no one has any time to do it."

The son didn't understand. "What's the problem? Hire someone."

"That's out of the question!" the commander scolded him. "We can't just let 'someone' do it. It's very sensitive material."

"Listen, I have an idea for you," the son said. "Bring in someone who can't read or write."

"You really think there's someone living in this country who is totally illiterate?" - "Yes. My father!"

They brought the father to the factory. They tested him to see if he really was illiterate, and when they saw that he was, he got the job. They told him what to shred and what to tear up and throw out, and he got a very good salary for it.

Upon his retirement, they realized there was no one who could do the job, so they brought him back and he continued to work until a very old age.

Contrary to popular belief, the only thing that can be acquired without hard work is parnassah! One can receive an inheritance without working, or a gift, or even win the lottery. Why? Because it's parnassah. But exactly in this area, people invest the most time!

If we compare all the rich people in the world, is there a common denominator between them? Are they all smart? No. Are they all industrious? Also, no. What are they all?

Nothing.

Because parnassah is a decree from Hashem. Hashem has decreed that everyone will get his parnassah, with some working harder and others working less hard. Some have a little more, while others, a little less. There are not that many rich people — and every one of them has a story to explain how he got rich.

Hashem brings each and every person his parnassah. They just need to know to turn to the correct address — the Ribono Shel Olam!



"הִנֵּה מַה־טּוֹב וּמַה־נָּעִים שֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם־יָחַד" - "***Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers also to dwell together***!" (Tehillim 133:1)

A Pasuk We Sing, But Rarely Think About

We say "הִנֵּה מַה־טּוֹב" at simchos, at Shabbos tables, at gatherings. It's a song, a niggun, a moment of joy. But David HaMelech wasn't writing a song — he was teaching a deep truth about human life.

He wasn't just saying that unity is good. He wasn't just saying that unity is pleasant. He was saying something far more subtle:

Most things in life are either good or pleasant — but rarely both. Achdus is the exception.

The **Malbim** explains that "טוב" means **objectively good** — beneficial, constructive, elevating — even if it doesn't feel enjoyable. And "נעים" means **subjectively pleasant** — enjoyable, sweet, comfortable — even if it isn't necessarily good.

Life is full of examples:

- Exercise is **good**, but not always **pleasant**.
- Indulgence is **pleasant**, but not always **good**.
- Discipline is **good**, but rarely **pleasant**.
- Relaxation is **pleasant**, but not always **good**.



We live constantly in the tension between what is good for us and what feels good to us. But David HaMelech says: Look at achdus — unity, harmony, togetherness. It is the rare thing in life that is both.

Chazal say that when Klal Yisrael is united, no force can overcome them. There is nothing sweeter than sitting with people who care for each other, who listen to each other, who see each other as brothers.

This is why the pasuk says: **"שֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם־יָחַד"** — **sitting together as brothers.** Not working together. Not fighting battles together. Just *sitting* together — because even the simplest moment becomes beautiful when there is unity.

"גם יחד" — The Secret Word

The Malbim notes that the word **"גם"** teaches that unity is not only good and pleasant — it is **more than the sum of its parts**.

When Jews come together, something happens that cannot happen alone. The goodness multiplies. The pleasantness deepens. The blessing expands. - Achdus doesn't add — it **amplifies**.

David HaMelech reminds us: ***Unity is not a luxury. It is a necessity.*** It is both good for us and pleasant for us. It is the foundation of blessing. - When we sit together — truly together — we create a space where Hashem's presence rests.

So when we say **"הִנֵּה מַה־טּוֹב"**, let's not just sing it. Let's live it.

Let's choose achdus. Let's choose warmth. Let's choose to see each other as brothers. Because unity is the rare gift in life that is **both good and pleasant** — and when we embrace it, we bring the Shechinah into our homes, our shuls, and our hearts.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Less-Successful Road?

There was a Yerushalmi family with seven talented and successful sons. The first six learned in a certain very prominent yeshivah, and afterward, made very good shidduchim.

The seventh, talented as the rest, was a bit more delicate. During the *farher* for the same yeshivah his brothers had gone to, he became nervous and flustered, and wasn't able to express himself clearly.

To his horror, he didn't get into the yeshivah. His parents tried to take advantage of all their connections; after all, this was a good boy from a good home, whose six brothers had learned successfully in the yeshivah.

How great was their shock when they heard that the *hanhalah* refused to accept him! As much as they tried to push, they saw that the door would not budge. The answer was clear as day: "There is nothing to talk about. We have seen enough." They refused to accept the bachur.

Left with no choice, the parents turned to other channels, and the bachur quickly found a different yeshivah.

It was a good solution. The yeshivah had a good name, its alumni were outstanding — but the bachur was brokenhearted. The rejection, the fact that instead of learning together with a thousand bachurim, he had to make do with a tiny yeshivah of just one hundred and fifty, depressed him very much.

He walked around broken, feeling very different from everyone, wondering what would be with him. As he wandered around, an older chareidi woman came up to him and said, "Are you a yeshivah bachur?" When he answered in the affirmative, she continued, "I want to host a Pirkei Avos shiur in my house; would you be willing to give the shiur every Shabbos?"

He thought about it for a moment, then decided, "Why not? If I'm not going to be like my brothers in any case, why not do something else they didn't do...?" And so began the weekly Pirkei Avos shiur.

The woman managed to gather a small group of elderly people, and every Shabbos afternoon, while his friends were resting, he gave a short shiur. The participants enjoyed the shiur very much, and when they finished Pirkei Avos, they asked him to continue with other subjects. He began to give shiurim in parshas hashavua and Navi, and before every Yom Tov, something connected to the theme.

The shiur continued for six years — the number of years he was in that yeshivah.

He soon reached marriageable age. His brothers had received nice amounts of money, as appropriate for bachurim who had attended

the top-tier yeshivah. They had each gotten enough money to put a down payment on an apartment in Yerushalayim, while they paid the mortgage.

It was different for this bachur. He was suggested to a fine girl from an excellent family — but money was nowhere on the menu. They got engaged, but despite his joy, the issue weighed heavily on him. He knew they wouldn't be able to afford an apartment in Yerushalayim; he only hoped they'd be able to manage one elsewhere.

Ribono Shel Olam, why? he lamented. Why did You take me down the "less-successful" road? I didn't get accepted to the yeshivah I wanted, I'm not getting an apartment — why? Am I that much worse than the others?

He understood that he must work on himself and stay strong, but he still felt a little bitter and inferior to everyone else.

One day, the lady who had hosted the shiur for six years asked him to come over. She had something important to tell him.

When he got to her house, another fellow was also there. She told him a shocking story:

She was the daughter of a Nazi commander, who had killed many Jews during the Holocaust. When she realized what he had done, she was so ashamed of his cruelty and wickedness that she decided to join the very nation he had so persecuted, and converted to Yiddishkeit.

Her family was very wealthy (maybe as a result of the money that the father had stolen from the Jews), and she had no problem buying a four-bedroom apartment for herself in Rechavia.

"Over the years," the woman recounted, "I have decided that I must atone, if only just a little bit, for my father's crimes. I decided that I would give the beautiful apartment that I had bought myself to a true ben Torah.

"For six years, you gave a shiur in my house for free, so I have decided that you will be that ben Torah."

Then and there, she signed over the house to him in the presence of the other fellow present, who turned out to be a lawyer. The bachur became the owner of a luxurious apartment that was worth quite a lot of money.

The bewildered bachur, who still didn't quite believe what had just happened, traveled straight from there to the Kosel.

"Ribono Shel Olam, I'm sorry! Please forgive me! For six years, I've been questioning why You brought only me, and not my brothers, to Rechavia, and now I see that You wanted to give me experience in public speaking. And You also knew that my shidduch would be made with no financial agreement to speak of, and You arranged for a free apartment for me in advance, without any mortgage, unlike my brothers.

"You have shown me that You arrange everything in the best way possible. You gave me a fine future wife, and money from a different source."

She davened hard and merited a ben Torah, and I got everything on a silver platter. Forgive me that I complained about the 'bad things' that You gave me, which have turned out to be great blessings!"

That bachur is now a rav of a fine neighborhood. He credits a good part of his rhetorical skills to that weekly shiur. It prepared him for life.

This story is but a small example of great things that look at first glance to be bad, and it reinforces within us the understanding that everything that Hashem does is for the good, whether we come to understand it in This World or not. In any case, we must bow our heads and accept everything with love, and whoever does so will be zocheh to unparalleled brachos and yeshuos.

הואהית אמר

R' Moshe Sofer ZT"L (Chasam Sofer) would say:

"There are many times in a person's life when he has one minute to waste, one minute to kill — standing on line, waiting for a minyan, waiting to meet someone. I always took those precious minutes and used them to delve into Torah. Thus, I became a gadol in one minute!"

R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk ZT"L would say:

"Shlomo Hamelech said, 'The greater the wisdom, the greater the pain.' - If you ask me, so what if wisdom causes pain? Be wise even if it hurts!"

R' Shlomo of Karlin ZT"L would say:

"May I love the greatest tzaddik as Hashem loves the greatest Rasha!"

R' Yitzchok Hutner ZT"L would say:

"When a person feels that he is not making progress in Torah study or spiritual growth, let him look back a few years and see how much he has actually grown since he first began!"

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch ZT"L would say:

"When someone talks in circles, he is either trying to deceive others or he himself doesn't understand the meaning and purpose of his words. The wise person makes himself easily understood!"

Moving From Mourning

When someone is mourning, he should not think that the loss is final. Rather, he should remember that this period will pass. The Hebrew word אָבֵל, mourner, can be read as אֲבָל, but, meaning, even though now he's mourning, but there will be *techiyas hameisim*. - Therefore, one should not become completely consumed by grief.

The same idea applies to other mourning such as the Beis Hamikdash. We grieve over its destruction, אֲבָל, but we also look forward to the third Beis Hamikdash. [Chelkas Shlomo, Volume 6, Mattos-Masei.]

Precious Moments With Rav Chaim - Artscroll

Torah Is Our Life

Rav Chaim is focused on his learning even though he's been learning since the middle of the night, and it has been many hours since then, and he is old. When he learns, he is wide awake and excited about his learning.

One time, while learning with his son-in-law Rav Elazar David Epstein, something unusual happened. Rav Chaim fell asleep for a few moments. It was very odd.

When he woke up, he told his *chavrusa* he was sorry and said, "I didn't sleep last night. An *avreich* came to me with two questions, one about the *halachos* of *kilayim* and one on a *baraisa* about building the Mishkan. I didn't know what to tell him. I couldn't sleep until I found an answer."

Torah is Rav Chaim's entire life. How can he sleep if he has questions without answers? He works and works until the questions are answered, even if it means a sleepless night.

In the Chazon Ish's Room

A man knocks on the Chazon Ish's door. He has to speak to him privately. He enters the room and thinks he's come at the wrong time because Rav Chaim is sitting in the room, learning. This can't be the time to tell the Chazon Ish about his private problem. He stumbles backward, thinking that he'll come back later. Then he has an idea. "Would it be possible," he asks the Chazon Ish, while pointing at Rav Chaim, "for this young man to leave the room?"

"Don't worry about him," the Chazon Ish says. "He doesn't hear a word while he's learning."

A Letter to the Teacher

Rav Chaim's beloved grandson Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky said that after Rav Chaim passed away, a former classmate of Rav Yaakov Yisrael from Talmud Torah days phoned to tell him, "I've found something interesting."

"He brought me a letter that the Sar HaTorah wrote to my sixth-grade teacher," said Rav Yaakov Yisrael. "It said:

"'To the rebbi,

"'On Shabbos, I tested my grandson Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky on what he'd learned in cheder, and he knew it very well. I can see the rebbi puts a lot into teaching.'

"I'd never heard about that note.

"My grandfather, the Sar HaTorah, who learned so much every day — most people couldn't learn that much in a month — and who received visitors and wrote sefarim and answered so many letters every day, didn't forget even this small matter: He wrote a letter to his grandson's rebbi after he learned with him on Shabbos."

The One Who Understands What Is Hidden

For forty years, hundreds of people came to Rav Chaim every day, says his grandson Rav Shlomo Koledetzky. Rav Chaim answered questions on all parts of the Torah and gave advice about any area of life. When he had the energy, he spoke to his visitors at length. He also answered hundreds of letters that were sent to him with questions about all areas of Torah study and of life. Letters, by the hundreds, were sent to him by people who needed his berachah. With endless patience, he gave each one a berachah.

"At night, he would bring me the pages he'd collected that day and ask me to arrange them by size. Then he could go through the papers, one at a time, and mention the names of the letter writers in his tefillos," Rav Shlomo Koledetzky remembers.

"When the stacks of papers reached tens of thousands of pages, he sent us to the genizah with them. He told us, 'People's sorrows should not be thrown in the garbage.'

"We saw, with our own eyes, that he took all pain to heart, whether it was the pain of one person or of all Klal Yisrael. I often saw him cry together with the people who were telling him their troubles."

People from all over the world leaned on Rav Chaim. Some flew in from America just to spend a moment in his room. It was worth their while to make the long trip and to spend the money for the one moment they spent with him while he gave them a berachah.

Muscles only become stronger after facing resistance. The weight that challenges you today may be the very thing building the strength you'll need tomorrow. ~ Inspired by the teachings of Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980)



There was a soldier who was manning his unit and suddenly he was under fire from snipers in *Eretz Yisrael* and he got hit and he went down and he was losing consciousness and he sees that his fellow soldier comes over to him and says don't worry I'm going to help you and he starts to bandage him. The next thing the soldier realizes was he was knocked out. He finds himself in a hospital when he wakes up. He sees all the bandages, and they tell him that a soldier saved your life. Your life was saved today by this unknown soldier.

He says who? I want to thank him. So we don't know who. He came here, he brought you here, he got you here, he bandaged you up, he saved your life, but then he left.

I want to thank him. How am I going to thank him? He tells his parents how are we going to find the soldier.

So the parents ran a grocery store I believe in *Kiryat Gat* and they ran this grocery store and they put up signs. If anyone comes in if anyone knows who the soldier is that saved our son's life on this and this day please let us know.

One day a woman comes in and says I think I know who that soldier was - my son.

Is it really? Call up the son.

It's confirmed and they make a grand *Seudat Hoda'ah* when the son finally comes out of the hospital and they invite this fellow soldier and the parents and it's *mamash* a big *simcha* it's a tremendous

simcha. And then in middle the mother of the soldier who saved the son comes over to this other mother and says you know I want to tell you something. I was in your store 20 years ago. - Really?

And you helped me back then. You're not going to believe this story.

And this woman tells her I came into your store I was expecting a child and I was so poor I had no money and I wasn't religious and I said you know what I'm not going to be able to afford this baby. Can't afford to raise a child.

I wasn't religious at all. I didn't really know that this is against *halacha* and then you spoke to me and you gave me words of *chizuk* and you told me that don't worry I'm going to help you. I'm going to give you money you could shop over here for free.

I saw the love that you have for me the care and I decided you know what come what may we're going to go ahead with it - we're going to raise this child and because of you my child was born and you helped me and over the years I became religious.

Because of you, my son ended up being the one to save your son. Little did you know that when you helped me 20 years ago you helped me with my child, you were really helping to save your own child.

An amazing story that teaches us we never know the *hashpa'ah* that we have. When we invest and we do our best you never know how *Hashem's* going to take care of you and sometimes you can think oh no what am I going to do I'm in trouble. But **ישועת השם כהרף עין**. *Hashem's yeshuah* comes in a moment.

So let's be strong let's stand up let's stand proud let's become a little more spiritual a little more *ruchnius* in our lives let's bring it in and reach up to *Hashem* and then whatever we need it most *Hashem* will be there to help us with whatever we need.

The Siddur Speaks

How does one concentrate and have Kavanah on Davening? How does one separate himself from all that is around him, in order that he focus on Hashem and his relationship with Hashem, so that he can Daven to Him properly?

Rav Yechiel Spero relates a story in which **Rav Aharon of Karlin, zt"l**, was asked how he prepared himself properly for Davening.

He replied, "I imagine that I am lying in bed, weak and dying. Slowly my strength is declining, until I die. The Chevrah Kadishah, the Jewish Burial Society, come and make their necessary preparations. My body is washed, the Taharah, purification, is performed in the Mikvah, and I am dressed in my Tachrichim, burial shrouds. As they are about to leave, they each stop by my body and ask Mechilah, forgiveness, in case anything inappropriate was done to my body during the preparations. They place me in the casket, and I am taken out of the room. After a short walk, the casket is in the cemetery, about to be lowered into the ground. They are about to begin my final descent to the grave, and suddenly, a voice is heard, 'Stop the Levayah! A decree has been issued in Shamayim that Hashem is granting this Jew one more chance to open his mouth in Tefilah!'" - Rav Aharon concluded, "One more prayer, and that is all. After that Tefilah, the funeral will continue."

Rav Aharon looked at the one who asked him the question and said, "This is how I prepare for Tefilah!"

A Positive Perspective

Strive to see the good in every person, the positive in every circumstance, and the opportunity in every challenge. ~ The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

The Baal Shem Tov taught that the main rule in serving Hashem is that one should keep himself from sadness to the very best of his ability, because without Simchah, it is impossible to constantly be attached to Hashem.

The Sefer HaMiddos writes that when one performs a Mitzvah with Simchah, it is a sign that his heart is completely with Hashem. Nothing in the world is more pleasant than a Mitzvah that is done with Simchah!



Stories and Insights into What Bein Hazmanim Was by Various Gedolei Yisrael

Gedolei Yisrael have often traveled to recuperation spots to replenish their strength for *avodas hakodesh*. In recent centuries, as physical weakness has become more widespread throughout the world, the institution of *bein hazmanim* took root. Nowadays, even the most eminent *Gedolei Yisrael* sometimes feel the need for a rest.

There is an incredible letter written by the ***Chazon Ish*** (*Kovetz Igros*, letter 35) where he expresses that sometimes there is a need to take a break. He writes:

"Know, my dear, that there is no sin and no guilt here from the laws of nature in becoming tired, and one should not belittle the laws of nature. It is therefore your obligation to stop your learning entirely for two weeks, to eat more, to increase nourishing food, to add to your sleep and walking, and to pursue other matters of rest … Fortunate are you that you have toiled in Torah and exhausted your strength upon it!"

Rav Shach, at the beginning of summer *zeman*, Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5752 (*Machsheves Musar Torah*, pg. 454) explained the idea of *bein hazmanim* with a Rashi in *Vayikra* (1:10). The *pasuk* says - **ואם מן הצאן**. Rashi explains that the *'vav'* comes to connect this *pasuk* to the previous *inyan*. Rashi then asks: If the *'vav'* is coming to connect this *pasuk* to the previous *inyan*, why did the Torah make an interruption?

Rashi answers: **ליתן ריוח למשה להתבונן בין פרשה לפרשה** — "to give Moshe space to reflect between each section."

We see that sometimes a break is necessary even for someone like Moshe Rabbeinu.

Rav Eliyohu Boruch Finkel once said in a *shmooze*: Some *bochurim* mistakenly think that learning Torah is a time-bound *mitzvas aseh*, and during *bein hazmanim* there is no obligation to learn. However, does one stop breathing *bein hazmanim* too? No, Torah is no different, Torah is life and one can't just stop learning.

He added: the *Chayei Adam* named his *sefer* "Chayei Adam" — Life of Man — precisely so that no one would produce a "*Kitzur Chayei Adam*," a shortcut through human life.

Torah is life, and we must avoid shortcuts.

The story goes that one time the **Brisker Rav** met the ***Birchas Shmuel*** at a holiday resort. They were both taking a walk enjoying the fresh air, and the *Birchas Shmuel* remarked: "There is good air here."

The Brisker Rav turned to him: "Since when does the Rav know whether the air is good or not?"

The *Birchas Shmuel* replied: "Since I clearly understood what we were just discussing in our learning — that proves the air here is

good, as good air helps sharpen the mind and makes it easier to understand Torah."

We find this idea in *Megillah* (28b) where the Gemara teaches: **שמעתא בעא צילותא כיומא דאסתנא** — "Learning requires a clear mind, like a clear winters day."

Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner: The *Ba'al Shevet HaLevi,* Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner traveled abroad every year for health reasons — to Switzerland or Austria. For decades he stayed at Yeshivas Luzern which at the time was headed by **Rav Yitzchak Kopelman**, and he stayed in an apartment near Rav Kopelman's home.

Numerous *Teshuvos* in *Shevet HaLevi* and in other *seforim* were composed during those stays in Obernahe near Luzern.

Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Ruderman once met. Rav Ruderman mentioned he had skipped his *shiur* because he was not feeling well.

Rav Aharon replied that he does the opposite — when unwell, giving the *shiur* is what makes him feel better.

Rav Ruderman smiled: "If I were as confident in my *shiur* as you are in yours, the same would be true for me."

Rav Nosson Meir Wachtfogel, the *mashgiach* of Yeshivas Lakewood would say (printed in *Kovetz Sichos*) that one must not permit *bitul* Torah during *bein hazmanim* — for Elul comes immediately after, and how can one enter the gravity of *din* from a state of idleness?

Rav Michal Yehuda Lefkovitz likewise addressed this at length (*Darkei HaChaim* pg. 257), declaring that there is simply no justification for *bitul Torah* during *bein hazmanim*.

The Steipler Gaon likewise stated (*Peninei Rabbeinu HaKoheles Yaakov*, Vol. 1, pg. 10): Some *bochurim* imagine that *bein hazmanim* is *hefker* — a free-for-all in which they are exempt from learning Torah. This is simply an error. There is no time that exempts a person from the obligation to learn Torah when he is capable of doing so.

Rav Chaim Greineman once commented about *bein hazmanim*: Since there are no formal *sedorim*, there is also no "*bein hasedorim*." One can learn straight through, day and night, as long as the heart desires.

ביטולה זהו קיומה — Suspension That Itself Constitutes Preservation

Even if by taking a vacation one currently loses Torah learning, often, this is still worthwhile, as when one returns from the vacation, he will be able to learn better.

It is related that there were several months when the ***Chofetz Chaim*** was unable to learn, and once he recovered, he was able to write *seforim* that illuminated the eyes of the entire Klal Yisrael.

Tefilla Transcends Time

וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ה׳ בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר - "***And I entreated Hashem at that time, saying…***" (3:23)

The heilige *Ropshitzer* points out in *Zera Kodesh* that the *pasuk* neglects to tell us at which time Moshe entreated Hashem.

He explains that this omission of time is done on purpose to teach us the profound lesson that there is no set time for asking Hashem; we can always approach Him whenever we wish.

A person, says the *Ropshitzer*, should never say to himself, "Right now, at this moment, I don't have the wits to pray. I am not in the

correct frame of mind. Later, when I am free and I have the time and my mind is unburdened – then I will *daven* to Hashem."

This is an incorrect manner of thinking. Instead, *daven* now, at any time, in any way, in any frame of mind. There is no wrong time to ask and *daven; daven* at any time, no matter what time it is and what is going on with you and around you at that time.

This is the meaning behind the *pasuk (Devorim* 4:29), "And from there seek out Hashem, your G-d, and you will find Him". There the *pasuk* also does not specify the time or location.

The explanation of that *pasuk* is similar: at any time and in any place, no matter where you are or when you are – from that place seek Hashem and you will find Him.

Another explanation given in *Zera Kodesh* is that Moshe asked Hashem to open up the gates of prayer for him at any time. And Moshe's *tefillos* were indeed accepted. Moshe was asking, explains the *Ropshitzer,* that any type of *tefilla* that a Jew *davens,* at any time, should be included and incorporated into his own prayer.

That is why the *pasuk* says "at that time" and does not specify when that time is. Moshe was saying that all future *tefillos* that will be said for all time to come will all be incorporated and included in this *tefilla* that he was *davening.*

Another explanation given by the *Ropshitzer* in *Zera Kodesh* is that Moshe davened and asked that *Klal Yisrael* should be able to *daven* properly whenever they wish, that even in *Golus* they should be able to *daven* properly.

That is why the *pasuk* says *bo'eis hahi* – "at that time". The *pasuk* does not specify a time because it refers to all times, that we should be able to *daven* to Hashem at all times, even now in *Golus,* when we *daven* for the pain and anguish of the *Shechina,* so to speak.

Furthermore, the *Ropshitzer* cites the *pasuk* in *Tehillim:* 69:14 "And I, may my prayers be to You, Hashem, at an *eis rotzon* – an auspicious

time". - The *Zera Kodesh* says that Moshe *davened* to *Hashem* asking further that whenever we *daven,* at any time, it should be an *eis rotzon,* a favorable and auspicious time to draw down Hashem's will from the attributes of mercy, where *Hashem* said (*Shemos* 33:19) that He would favor whomever He found favorable, even if they are unworthy.

Another explanation that the *Ropshitzer* gives in *Zera Kodesh* is that a person must serve Hashem in all ways, even with the material world. Even through such physical acts as eating and drinking, a person should not think to fulfill his desires; rather, his intentions should be loftier: to eat in order to have strength to serve Hashem with Torah and *tefilla.*

This is because when we use our mouths to vocalize our Torah study and *tefillos,* we release breath, called *hevel.*

The letters that spell *hevel* are hei, *lamed* and *bais,* alluding to *hei,* the five books of the *Chumash* and *lamed bais,* the first and last letters of the Torah (which begins with the *bais* of *Bereishis* and concludes with the *lamed* of Yisrael at the end of the last *pasuk* in *Devorim).* The letters of *hevel* also spell *lahav,* "flame" and *halev,* "the heart" because when we vocalize words of Torah and tefilla, the heat of our breath inflames us with excitement, which is generated from our hearts. This is why we eat – to have the strength to engage in Torah study and *tefilla,* and so we have demonstrated how to serve Hashem even through physical acts.

There are two limbs in the human body that correspond to these two types of divine service: the throat and the windpipe. The windpipe is used to express the heat of breath that forms the vocal sounds of our spiritual prayers and Torah study, whereas the throat is used to swallow food and drink to nourish the body physically.

Man must see to it that his actions by eating through the throat should serve the windpipe, that he should eat to nourish and strengthen himself so as to be able to properly express *hevel* and

lahav from *halev* through his windpipe in vocalizing the words of Torah and *tefilla*. This is the primary reason for Creation – to serve and praise Hashem.

This is all hinted at in our *pasuk*: **וָאֶתְחַנַּן אֶל־ ה׳**, whose initials are *vov, alef, yud* and spell *ayo* – "where?" **בָּעֵת הַהִוא לֵאמֹר** – the initials are *bais, hei, lamed* and spell *hevel*, asking, "Where is Hevel?

MEOROS HATZADDIKIM
Lights Of Our Righteous

Rav Hillel Paritsher, Pelach Harimon (Av 11) (1795-1864)

He was among the greatest chassidim and mashpi'im of Chabad across the generations. He was a chossid of the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek.



Tailor To The Rescue

Rav Hillel of Paritsch was renowned for his punctilious observance of the *mitzvos*, prepared to risk his life for the merest detail ordained by *Chazal*.

The Czarist regime of his day decreed that all Jews were to shave off their *peyos*, and some unscrupulous informer told the local authorities that Rav Hillel's *peyos* were still intact.

They decided to shear them off by force, but Rav Hillel covered them tightly with his hands to protect them. The soldiers drew their swords and forcefully began hitting his hands and head, causing him to scream. His neighbor, a Jewish tailor who had a good relationship

with the officers in charge, heard him and came running, and after promising them gifts, convinced them to leave. Grateful for his help, Rav Hillel blessed the man, and promised him that "after a hundred and twenty years" he would be rewarded by being buried next to him.

[Rav Hillel once explained that his dedication to maintaining his *peyos* and beard came from having seen a hand-written essay of the *Tzaddik* **Rav Pinchas of Koretz**, in which he wrote that adopting non-Jewish clothing styles and appearance was the fiftieth Gate of Impurity, which would have rendered the Jews unable to be redeemed from Egypt, had they fallen one more level (into it).

Similarly, in the times preceding the revelation of *Moshiach*, there will be an endeavor to make the Jews change their clothing and appearance, and unfortunately it will succeed. Only in the merit of those individuals who refuse to change their appearance even at the risk of their lives will all the Jews be blessed with the *Ge'ula*.

Rav Hillel concluded, "Anyone who had this manuscript would of course be willing to give up his life for the sake of traditional Jewish dress and appearance."]

Many years passed. Rav Hillel, in the meantime, became Rav of Babruisk, and would travel every year around the provinces and to the cities of Kherson and Yekatrinoslav, teaching *Torah* as well to the farmers of the Jewish agricultural colonies, who greatly admired him.

In the summer of 1864, at age sixty-nine, he suddenly fell ill while staying in Kherson – which is very far from Babruisk and Paritsch in White Russia – and was *niftar* there. On the following day, amidst widespread mourning, he was brought to burial, and his *talmidim* and admirers flocked there for many years thereafter to *daven* at the graveside of this *Tzaddik*.

Sometime later, on a bitterly cold and stormy day, an unknown elderly traveler passed away in the town's communal hostelry. The

Chevra Kaddisha (Jewish Burial Society) prepared his body and took him to be buried, intending to place him in the section for unknown people. However, due to the fierce winter snow, they unknowingly buried him near Rav Hillel.

A day or two later, it was noticed that the new grave had been dug right next to the resting place of the illustrious Rav Hillel. When the facts came to light, a great hubbub arose in town: was it proper that an unknown traveler whom no respectable citizen even knew, a nobody who had passed away in the communal poorhouse – that such a one should be buried next to the *Tzaddik*?

It was too late, though, to change things: the Torah would never allow it. At least let them find out just who this individual was. His identification papers disclosed his name and that of his father, and the fact that he came from Paritsch. The communal worthies of Kherson therefore wrote to their counterparts in Paritsch, asking to be told at least whatever they knew about this man.

The answer from Paritsch identified him clearly: he was a retired tailor, who had been traveling in order to live with one of his children. They added that this same tailor had many long years earlier been promised by Rav Hillel that "after a hundred and twenty years" he would be brought to rest next to his own resting place.

And so, the decades-old promise of Rav Hillel of Paritsch came to fruition.

R' Yeruchom Levovitz of Mir ZT"L would say:

"Most people are capable of withstanding major stress. The real test of a person is how he reacts to minor challenges for it is when dealing with ostensibly petty matters that a person reveals his true character."

Pupa Rav, R' Yosef Greenwald *zt"l* would say:

"It should have first said, **וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם**- *'you shall speak of them'* and then **וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ**- *'you shall teach them to your children'*? No. If you want to teach *Torah* to your children and inspire them to study diligently, the way to do this is **וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם** - when they see YOU studying *Torah* in the house or during your busy day, they will be encouraged to do likewise.

Parents must always remember that they are a model for their children and that their children try to emulate them at all times."

מחשבת הלב CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN ZT"L

Each day we recite a *beracha* that echoes the words of this *posuk*: **"אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר־בָּנוּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן־לָנוּ אֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ"** — these are the words of *Birchas haTorah*.

The Ramban says that the word **"בְּחִירָה"**— "choosing", connotes choosing from other options. The question asked is that Hashem went to all the other nations of the world asking if they would accept the Torah. They all quickly declined. The last nation "standing" was the Yidden. In what way was that a **בְּחִירָה**? There was no one else left but us! So it should've said **we** chose Hashem, as opposed to the *goyim* who refused the offer.

Perhaps this week of *Shabbos Nachamu* contains part of the answer. Granted, we accepted the offer while they did not. But what happens when the going gets rough? When we rebel? When we sin and desert Him? Hashem could have easily terminated our relationship with Him, ending our destiny. Yet He did not. Through thick and thin, He kept us as His chosen nation. [And we reciprocated, remaining steadfastedly true to Him throughout our exiles.]

As Chazal teach us **"בָּנִים אַתֶּם"**, even when we sin, **" בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם"**— we are referred to as the "sons of the Almighty." Hence,

even if the *goyim* would have accepted the Torah, it wouldn't have been to such a degree, on such an "intimate" level. Only *Klal Yisroel* was *zoche* to such a close relationship. That was the **בְּחִירָה** that Hashem exhibited.

R' Matisyahu Salomon zt"l once quoted his *rebbi*, ***R' Elya Lopian zt"l***: If we'd have asked **"מָה כָּתוּב בָּהּ?"** the way the *goyim* did, what would Hashem have said?

Reb Elya ventured to answer that Hashem would have told us that the Torah prohibits **לָשׁוֹן הָרָע**; a most daunting challenge.

On this special *Shabbos* when we continue to revel in our bond with Hashem, and while anticipating *Moshiach's* imminent arrival, we must continue to improve in our *lashon tov*, showing **אַהֲבַת חִנָּם** in place of **שִׂנְאַת חִנָּם**. And that will, **בִּזְכוּת זֶה**, facilitate the speedy rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash* **בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ אָמֵן**. **נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי**





Shabbos Nachamu

As we have discussed in the past, certain exclusive Shabbosim throughout the year are given specific titles. For example, Shabbos Shuvah is the Shabbos immediately preceding Yom Kippur. Shabbos HaGadol is named for the incredible miracle that occurred in Egypt when the Yidden carried their lambs past the Mitzrim. The Mitzrim watched helplessly, unable to harm them; thus, it is known as the "Great Shabbos" before Pesach. Shabbos Nachamu likewise bears a unique

name, derived from the Haftarah that begins, "Nachamu Nachamu Ami" - "Comfort, comfort My people."

However, if the Beis Hamikdash has not yet been rebuilt and we still await its restoration, what is our true consolation? Why do we celebrate this Shabbos so joyfully?

Shabbos Nachamu is a unique time when it is customary to prepare a larger feast than usual, particularly as it leads into the week of Tu B'Av. Many significant milestones occurred on Tu B'Av: the Yidden in the midbar ceased dying, the shevatim were permitted to intermarry, and the ban on Shevet Binyamin was lifted.

We celebrate Shabbos Nachamu in anticipation of these great mercies. Furthermore, **Reb Tzadok** emphasizes that Moshiach is reborn anew every single year.

What does that mean? However, the **Maharal** states that we rejoice and feast on Shabbos Nachamu to encourage each other and strengthen our emunah. The celebration serves as a comfort in believing that Moshiach, and the final geula, is on its way.

In other words, the Maharal is teaching us that mourning on Tisha B'Av, if done in isolation, could lead to despair. It could potentially break a person's spirit to the point where their emunah becomes weakened. He explains that weeping for the Beis HaMikdash must be linked with bitachon - trust in HaKadosh Baruch Hu. It must be supplemented by an anticipation of Moshiach's arrival and the belief that very soon Klal Yisroel will return to their former glory, and the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt.

This is the focus of Shabbos Nachamu. On Tisha B'Av, we sat on the ground and wept but now begins the second phase. We must be joyful. We must celebrate because the future holds consolation; the future will bring the Beis HaMikdash.

The Kozhnitzer Maggid shares a profound insight: Moshiach's birth at midday refers not only to a historical event but to a spiritual

rejuvenation that every Yiddishe child experiences each Tisha B'Av. He explains that we become like newborn infants, granted a fresh mind and new understanding - a transformation that recurs annually. Moshiach was not only born at the time the Beis HaMikdash was burned; rather, Moshiach is reborn every single year. If so, it means that the spark of Moshiach within each of our hearts is also reborn on that day.



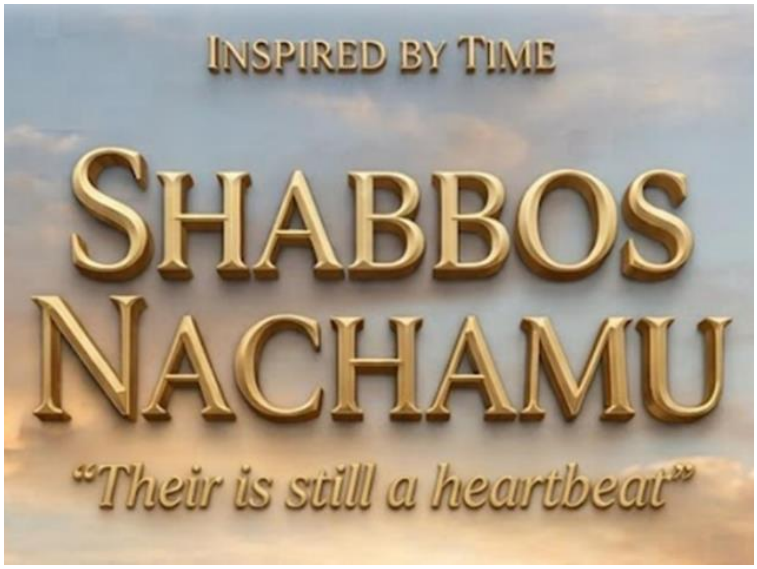
We often wonder why the Ribbono Shel Olam hasn't yet brought Moshiach. Since only He has the power to bring the Geula, what is the delay?

The answer is that if it were up to Hashem alone, He would rebuild the Beis HaMikdash and bring Moshiach immediately. However, the first and second Beis HaMikdash were both destroyed, Yerushalayim was ruined, and Klal Yisroel went into exile. Hashem doesn't want His children to go into exile again, nor does He want the Beis HaMikdash burned once more. This time, He wants an eternal geula when He brings Moshiach.

There's another deep concept that applies to Shabbos Nachamu. Tisha B'Av at midday, we rise from the floor. We discontinue all the mourning practices we observed from the previous night. What is the significance of this?

Moshiach was born on Tisha B'Av, with some specifying it was at midday. We highlight this point because while Klal Yisroel mourned the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, there was a simultaneous rebirth of redemption. The question is though; how can we ensure that the Beis HaMikdash doesn't get destroyed again? There's a way.

If we return in teshuva and serve Hashem with our whole heart, then the stones used to build the Third Beis HaMikdash will be fireproof. These fireproof stones are created through our sincerity. This means doing a complete teshuva, davening with total devotion, learning with all our heart, working on our middos, and being nice to one another. Through our heartfelt actions the Third Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt, and it will be indestructible.



Nachamu - There is Still A Heartbeat!

Only one day ago, we were sitting on the floor, mourning the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. And now, almost immediately, we hear the sweet and comforting words of the Navi: "Nachamu, nachamu ami."

Yet what has actually changed? Are we no longer living in the churban? Has the Beis Hamikdash been rebuilt? Have the persecution, suffering, and killing of Klal Yisrael come to an end? How can we move so quickly from the deepest mourning of Tisha b'Av to the comforting words of "Nachamu, na- chamu ami"?

Rav Yehudah Tzadka explains this with a deeply moving insight:

A person may have a close relative who is seriously ill. He tends to him with great devotion, constantly worrying about his condition and

doing everything in his power to help. Even when he is not physically at his side - perhaps because he is abroad - his thoughts remain with him. He wonders how he is feeling, worries about every change, davens for his recovery, and carries the burden of his illness wherever he goes.

This can continue day after day, week after week, for many months and even years. The worry does not simply fade. The concern remains alive, because the situation itself is still alive.

When a person, Hashem yerachem, loses a relative, the process is very different. At first, the pain is overwhelming. There is bitter crying, deep grief, and a sense of terrible loss. Then come the seven days of aveilus. Afterward come the thirty days, when the intensity of the pain slowly begins to weaken. As the months pass, the loss is no longer constantly on the person's mind, and after a year he gradually begins to move forward.

What is the difference?

The answer is simple, but profound. However ill a person may be, he is still alive. As long as there is life, there is hope. Perhaps he will recover. Perhaps the doctors will find a treatment. Perhaps the day will come when he will once again return home healthy and whole.

And because there is still hope, the family never stops thinking about him. They never stop worrying, never stop davening, and never stop waiting.

The same is true of our mourning for the Beis Hamikdash. Ordinary aveilus becomes weaker with time. Yet our mourning for the Beis Hamikdash moves in the opposite direction. As the Three Weeks progress, the mourning becomes deeper and more intense. We begin with Shivah Asar b'Tammuz, continue into the Nine Days, and finally reach Tisha b'Av, when we sit on the floor and cry over a loss that took place almost two thousand years ago.

What does that show?

It shows that the Beis Hamikdash is not dead. Our connection to Hashem is not dead. We may be very far from where we should be. Our relationship may be weak, damaged, and desperately in need of healing. But it is still alive.

The fact that, after almost two thousand years, a Yid can still sit on the floor and cry for the Beis Hamikdash reveals that somewhere deep within him there is still a powerful yearning for the return of the Shechina.

Imagine a man whose father is critically ill. For weeks, the family has watched his condition deteriorate. They have stood at his bedside, davened with all their hearts, and clung to every small sign of improvement. But now the doctors tell them that there is nothing more they can do.

As the Chevrah Kadisha arrives, the family gathers around the bedside to say their final goodbyes. The pain is entirely overwhelming as they weep, watching him depart from this world, believing in their minds that they have lost their beloved father.

Then, suddenly, one of the doctors notices something. "There is still a heartbeat." It is faint. His condition remains critical, and the road ahead will be long and uncertain. There may be difficult treatments, painful procedures, and many months of recovery. But in that moment, everything changes. Their father is still alive. As long as his heart is beating, they can still hope, still daven, and still believe that one day he may return home to them.

This is the nechama of Shabbos Nachamu. Throughout the Three Weeks, we mourn the loss of the Beis Hamikdash. On Tisha b'Av, we sit on the floor and cry as though we have lost it forever. Yet those very tears reveal that there is still a heartbeat.

After almost two thousand years, the yearning is still alive. The connection between Klal Yisrael and Hashem has not been severed.

And once we hear that heartbeat, the nechama begins. The road back may be long, and much avoda may still be required, but there is hope. - The Shechina will return, and the Beis Hamikdash will be rebuilt.



Parsha Potpourri by Rav Ozer Alport

The Shabbos after Tisha B'Av is known as Shabbos Nachamu, based on the Haftorah that is read this week that begins **נחמו נחמו עמי**- Comfort, comfort My people (Yeshaya 40:1), and it is celebrated as a time of healing and consolation after the bitter mourning and agony that we experienced on Tisha B'Av.

However, it is surprising that as we get up from the floor in search of comfort, the Torah portion we read this Shabbos – Vaeschanan – is the same parsha that we read on Tisha B'Av.

How is it possible that the very parsha that was chosen to be read on Tisha B'Av due to its threats of destruction for wrongdoing is also appropriate to be read on Shabbos Nachamu?

Rav Zev Leff suggests that this was done deliberately to teach us that the comfort we are seeking can be found not only when life circumstances change for the better, but also in the painful struggles themselves, which when viewed from a different perspective often re veal a silver lining.

Therefore, only days after reading Parshas Vaeschanan with a negative focus on Tisha B'Av, we read it a second time on Shabbos Nachamu to allude to the fact that, when viewed from a different angle, positive aspects can be found even among the most difficult and painful setbacks.

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

א גוט ערב שבת, my dear friends of Project **מסורה**. This is your friend **ר׳ פסח קראן** speaking to you after **תשעה באב, ערב שבת פרשת ואתחנן**. We know **ואתחנן** is a very notable **פרשה** because not only does it have the **עשרת הדברות**, but it has the first **פרשה** of **שמע ישראל**.

Now **Reb Elchonon Wasserman** once quoted his **רבי** the **חפץ חיים** saying that in the words of **שמע** we have **בכל מאדך**. And he said **מאדך** if you look at the **רמב״ן**, the **רמב״ן** says **מאד מאד**.

מאד means 'very'. And the **חפץ חיים** brings out that that which a person has that's 'very', each one of us is blessed with certain good things and certain talents.

Some have a beautiful home they could use for **הכנסת אורחים**. Some have a beautiful voice they could use it to be a **בעל תפילה**. Some have they know how to bake or to cook, they could help to cook for **שלום זכר** or for somebody's engagement. So each one of us has different talents and you have to use the **מאד** that the **אייבישטער** gave you, to use it either for other people or to use it for **הקדוש ברוך הוא לשם שמים** for **מצוות** and to help other people in **כלל ישראל**.

And so therefore that's really what we're saying in this, that's the **ברכה** of this week, that to make sure that you use the **מאד** that you were blessed with, that you should be able to use it for other people and use it **לשם שמים** for **תורה מצוות** and for **כלל ישראל**..

And just remember as I once said **אדם** is the **אותיות** of **מאד**. Every **אדם** has **מאד** in them, every one of us has something special that we can help other people and do for **כלל ישראל** and do for **הקדוש ברוך הוא** and do for **תורה מצוות**. Make sure you use your **מאד** for other people and for **תורה מצוות** to enhance the life of yourself in **רוחניות** not only in **גשמיות** and then the main thing is also that you should be able to help other people. - **א פרייליכן גוט שבת** and **א לוסטיגן שבת**.



The **פסוק** in this week's **פרשה**, one that we say numerous times a day says, **ואהבת את השם אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך**. You should love **השם** with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources.

There's a fascinating **אור החיים הקדוש** on this **פסוק**. He explains that this **פסוק** is commanding us to feel love for **השם** on a level that you would feel under the following circumstances: Imagine a man married for years, childless, living in poverty, and then becomes really ill. Then, all of a sudden, a **נביא** comes in with a message directly from **השם** that he will recover completely, his wife will have a child, and he'll make a business deal that would make him very wealthy. The love that this man would feel for **השם** at this moment is the level that's commanded of every single one of us to have at all times.

הרב דוד אשיאר says over this story. It's amazing.

A man experienced chest pains after the fast of **י"ז בתמוז**. When the pains persisted, he called **הצלה**.

הצלה planned on taking him to the closest hospital just a few minutes from his home, but his wife insisted they go to a further hospital, known to be slightly better. When the man was checked by the doctor, everything seemed to be fine.

They performed an EKG and even took blood, and his numbers were normal. As a precaution, they kept him overnight. In the middle of the night, they did more testing and again everything was fine. The next morning, they did a third test, another EKG and more blood work, and once again the numbers were fine.

However, just to be sure, the doctor wanted to do an angiogram. There were twenty-four people scheduled for angiograms that day, but they rushed this man in to be the first one of the day. After it was finished, the doctor told him he had put in two stents and one in his main artery, which was ninety-nine percent blocked. A little more blockage could have caused a massive heart attack.

The artery is called the 'widow-maker' because when it becomes fully clogged, the odds of survival are low, **רחמנא ליצלן**. As you can imagine, this man was singing the praises of **השם**.

They later found out that the other hospital that they were originally going to go to didn't even do angiograms on the site. Furthermore, the man's cousin, a doctor in a different hospital, said that with all the tests that they did, it didn't make sense that they even did an angiogram since all his numbers looked totally fine.

Nobody had any idea of the danger this man was really in.

השם saved his life. The love that this man had for **השם** when he was told the news is the level that every single one of us is meant to have. True, you could say he was able to see it openly, but in all of our lives, if we just look, if we just look at those moments when **הקדוש ברוך הוא** is with us, when He's holding our hands, when He saves us, then the love comes shining through.

That's the command of this week's **פרשה**. Look and see what **השם** does for you on a daily basis and then you'll come to real love of **השם**. Have an amazing **שבת**.

R' Simcha Bunim ZT"L would say:

"A person should see his own faults through a convex lens (magnifying lens), and the faults of others through a concave lens which reduces their size."

Rabbi Shlomo Hoff Shlita

רבותי - so we're just coming round again from another **תשעה באב** having done whatever we were able to do to relate to the **גלות** and the **אבילות** and the **חורבן** and immediately we're turning round to a **שבת נחמו** and many want to understand what's changed where's the **נחמה** what's happened since yesterday and there are lots of different ideas which are mentioned in this context.

I just would like to understand it remind ourselves of a **יסוד** the following. There are two perspectives of relating to the **חורבן**. When we relate to the **חורבן** to understand where we've got to what's happened to us and what our current situation is, so it's very difficult it's very bitter it's distance from **הקדוש ברוך הוא** - it's far from what it's supposed to be and that's what the **אבילות** of **תשעה באב** all comes to commemorate to relate to that's what we come to bring home to ourselves.

However there's a different perspective and that's the perspective of looking forward that's expecting to look towards the future of how things can and will be so different. From the history of **גלות** to the future of **גאולה** is what changes between **תשעה באב** and **נחמו**. Both of them are perspectives of **גלות**. We are not in the situation of **גאולים** and we realize that we're in a state of **גלות** distance from **הקדוש ברוך הוא** in a difficult state **בגוף ובנפש**.

But we can look forward to things being different. And as we look forward to things being different we acknowledge on the one hand the **גלות** but we give ourselves the **חיזוק** and the encouragement of the fact that we have what to look forward to to be things which will be so bright inspiring and beautiful for us all. And that's what **נחמו** comes to tell us **נחמו עמי** we look ourselves in **גלות** but change the perspective from the past to the future and find **נחמה**. That's in a word what needs to happen.

You know in the **מזמורים** that we say to remind ourselves of the **גלות** there's something which is supposed to be said **על נהרות בבל**. You

have a meal during the week and we want to remember the **חורבן על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו גם בכינו**. On **שבת** we say something different **שיר המעלות בשובת ציון** we talk about the return of the **גלות** and the bright future the wonderful future of **כלל ישראל בוא יבוא ברנה**. Both of them are reminding **גלות**.

One of them is a remembering **גלות** from the perspective of the past of the bitterness of the history **על נהרות בבל שם ישבנו** and the other one is reminding ourselves how the future will be so bright and different how we can look forward to releasing ourselves towards something which is so special in the **גאולה** of **כלל ישראל**.

That's the **שבת** and that's the week. The **שבת** look forward to the future the week is insteeped in the past. And as we come to **שבת נחמו** we tell every **ייד** yes we've done what we can to relate to the **גלות** that itself will bring **גאולה** and we have to remind ourselves that the future of us for all of us even in the present the presence of the future can be so much brighter than the situation that we're in.

We look forward to the future of hope and that's what **שבת נחמו** is there the landmark of the platform of **שבת נחמו**.

Just a very short **וואס** I heard a delightful little **הערה** in the **בעל הטורים** at the beginning of this week's **פרשה**.

ואתחנן and I **דאוועט** to **הקדוש ברוך הוא**. So the **בעל הטורים משה רבינו** had an extra little bit of a slant in how he was asking for **רחמים**.

At the end of **פרשת דברים** it says **לא תיראום כי ה' אלקיכם הוא הנלחם לכם**. Don't fear - Hashem gave great **חיזוק** to **כלל ישראל**, you're going to come to **ארץ ישראל**, you're going to have wars that you need to fight but have no fear **רבונו של עולם** will be on your side and he'll help you to be victorious. That's the end of **דברים**. And then I **דאוועט** to **הקדוש ברוך הוא** I also want to be part of this **ואתחנן אל ה' בעת ההיא**.

What's the **בעת ההיא** which time does this refer to that he **דאוועט** for his own **תפילה**? And the **בעל הטורים** says a delightful **טייטש** says **חיזקתי את ישראל** I gave them **חיזוק** - I told them not to fear I told

them come to **ארץ ישראל** and believe in yourselves and know that you'll be victorious. On the back of that I asked **הקדוש ברוך הוא אולי ירחם עלי**. Having been **מחזק** others that gives me perhaps a **כח** and a **פתח** that for my own **תפילות** will also be answered.

בעת ההיא when I **דאוועט** and cared and give **חיזוק** to others I ask **הקדוש ברוך הוא** because when we do **חסד בצדק אחזה פניך** when we do **חסד** for others the **כח** of our **תפילה** is so much enhanced.

יתן ה' נחמו עמי everybody should be able to look forward to the future to be able to get off the floor and see **גאולה** and see **רחמים** in his own lives and **כלל ישראל**'s lives collectively. Know that the future is there for us the future from today in all parts of our life can and will be so much brighter.

ואתחנן and when we're **מחזק** the people, the **כח** of **תפילה** is enhanced greatly in **פרשת ואתחנן**.

דער אייבערשטער זאל העלפן א לעכטיגע שבת and a **נחמה** and a **ישועה** for always that all of us look forward to - **כל טוב, א גוטן שבת**.

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Unforgettable Fish

רב אהרן of **בעלז**, who lived in **תל אביב** when he made it to **ארץ ישראל**, used to come for the summers to **ירושלים** for a period of years, and there he would stay in the neighborhood of **קטמון**. Recently I had the privilege of meeting a gentleman whose family were the ones who hosted the **רבי**, meaning they provided him with an apartment that was part of their house, and that's where the **רבי** stayed and had his **דאוועגען** and all of those things when he was in **ירושלים** in the summertime.

So **רב גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א** said he once met a **ירושלמי** Jew who said, "I was a little boy, and when the **רבי** was there in the summer, I used to come to the **טיש**, and the **טיש** would be very late Friday

night, because **שבת** itself was late, and the **רבי** would come out very late, so there weren't that many people there. So even though I was just a little boy, I was able to get close."

The **רבי** began the **טיש** one week, and he gave out **שריים** from the fish, it's what the **רבי** shares from the food that he has in his plate with everyone who was there. At one point the **רבי** looked up, he often would keep his eyes down even though he saw much more than many other people who have their heads up, and he looked to see that everyone had received fish. Then he noticed me, said the man, a little boy, eating fish, and he smiled at me and he said, "**אינגל**, little boy, **גיב אכטונג פון די ביינער**, be careful of the bones." And then a little bit later, he again looked up and looked to me, and he said again, "**אכטונג געבן פון די ביינער**, be careful of the bones."

And he said, "Until I finished the fish, he would look up every now and then and remind me to be careful not to swallow or choke on the bones."

The man said that, "For the rest of my life," he said, "that connection that I felt at the time, the fact that the **רבי** paid attention to me, a little boy among older **חסידים**, cared about me so much to make sure that he I knew that he was watching and trying to make sure that no harm would come to me," he said, "Every time I remember that, it gave me strength in many of the challenging times that I faced in my life."

That is an expression of love, and obviously during this time, before, during, after **תשעה באב**, when we speak about the idea of **אהבת חנם** instead of **שנאת חנם**, we realize that expressing love is both connecting with the person, giving to the person, and also caring for the person and trying to ensure that they don't come to harm.

In this week's **פרשה**, **הקדוש ברוך הוא** , says that He loves **עם ישראל, מאהבתו אתכם, לא מרובכם**, not because we were many people and He chose us because we're the nation with the greatest population,

specifically that we are the **מעט**, we are small and we're also humble, but He chose us because He loves us.

The expression of that love is also in this **פרשה**, in the giving of the **תורה**.

פרשת ואתחנן, **משה רבינו** goes over the giving of the **תורה** that took place at **סיני**, and there we find both elements. The **מצוות**, which are the positive **מצוות**, **מצוות עשה**, are so to speak the fish, right, that **הקדוש ברוך הוא** gives us, and the **מצוות לא תעשה**, where He tells us to be careful of the bones, to make sure that we don't come to harm, those are the negative commandments that tell us what not to do.

So hopefully we'll be able to have a true **נחמה** this year, with the true outpouring of **הקדוש ברוך הוא**'s love, with the rebuilding of **ציון וירושלים**, and may all those who've suffered pain have true **נחמה**, true consolation, and may we rejoice together in the rebuilding of the **בית המקדש**. - Have a wonderful **שבת**.